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This dissertation is dedicated to my parents,
in loving gratitude for their patience and support.

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ABSTRACT

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The question "What is the nature of experience?" is of perennial philosophical concern. It deals not only with the nature of experience *qua* experience, but additionally with related questions about the experiencing subject and that which is experienced. In other words, to speak of the philosophical problem of experience, one must also address questions about mind, world, and the various relations that link them together. Both William James and Kitarō Nishida were deeply concerned with these issues. Their shared notion of "pure experience" is the conceptual cornerstone of their attempt to deal with the philosophical problem of experience. This dissertation is an analysis of "pure experience" and its relevance to several issues in contemporary philosophy of mind. Drawing upon James's and Nishida's "pure experience", I argue both for a sensorimotor-based, "extended" conception of consciousness and a bodily skills-based account of moral psychology.

In the first chapter, I discuss James's "pure experience" as developed in *Essays in Radical Empiricism*. I argue for a phenomenological interpretation of pure experience. I contend that a phenomenological rendering of pure experience respects James's claim that consciousness and perception are modes of bodily activity: not things that *happen* to us but rather things that we *do*. I draw out pure experience's implicit claims about the prereflective continuity of conscious self and world, and I make explicit the way that the body's world-engaged, sensorimotor systems secure this prereflective continuity within pure experience.

In the second chapter, I argue that James's "pure experience" can be used to develop an extended view of mind. I argue that mind—including the content of phenomenal consciousness—is a dynamic, temporally-extended process that is distributed beyond the skin and skull of the subject. The extended model of consciousness I develop avoids the intractable skepticism of internalist, representation-based models of mind while, at the same time, remaining faithful to the phenomenology of our embodied and embedded experience. I discuss how recent experimental research—including work on change blindness, inattentional blindness, blindsight, neonate empathy and cross-modal perception—supports this extended conception of mentality.

In the third chapter, I argue for a phenomenological interpretation of Nishida's pure largely consonant with James's formulation. According to Nishida, pure experience points to the fact that, via the changing forms of its prereflective adaptive action, body is functionally integrated with world in a nondual or "pure" manner. Embodied mind and world are thus intimately coupled. I examine Nishida's phenomenological descriptions of aesthetic creativity and moral action as they express this feature of pure experience. Along the way, I contextualize Nishida's pure experience first within Buddhist thought, generally construed, and then more pointedly within the Zen Buddhist tradition which greatly influenced Nishida's work as a whole.

In the fourth chapter, I argue for an enactive, sensorimotor-based conception of moral psychology as *skillful action*. Drawing upon classical Buddhism and Nishida on pure experience and "acting-intuition", I develop a phenomenological analysis of the structure of morally skillful action. I argue that traditional western cognitivist views of moral cognition, emphasizing critical-rational analysis concerned with *a priori* justifications of subsequent actions, overlook the fundamentally situated and spontaneous nature of the bulk of our moral experience. I argue that moral consciousness expresses itself primarily in and through immediate, skillful responses to concrete situations. In short, I argue for a moral psychology of *involvement*. I discuss experimental research on neural and perceptual plasticity, synaesthesia, meditation, and empathy, all of which I contend supports a bodily skills-based model of moral psychology.

CHAPTER ONE
JAMES ON CONSCIOUSNESS AND PURE EXPERIENCE

Introduction

In this chapter and those that follow, I investigate the idea of "pure experience" as developed in the hands of William James and Kitarō Nishida. Both thinkers discuss this idea at length; "pure experience" is arguably the cornerstone of their respective philosophies. James's "radical empiricism"—the mature articulation of his philosophical life's work—rests upon this idea. (Unfortunately, this has not meant that pure experience has been clearly understood by James's many admirers and critics. I argue below that it in fact hasn't, and try to set this straight). Similarly, Nishida's formulation of pure experience—influenced by James, as Nishida openly concedes—is the most distinctive aspect of his early Zen Buddhist-inspired philosophy. Though he moves away from using the term "pure experience" in his mature work, the themes and ideas implicitly contained therein are central features of his life-long philosophical project. To understand Nishida's development of "pure experience" is thus to go a long way towards understanding what is respectfully referred to as "Nishida Philosophy".

The dissertation's main argument—that pure experience is a coherent idea with important contemporary application, particularly in philosophy of mind and moral psychology—will be developed over four chapters. The present chapter focuses on James's particular formulation of pure experience. I argue for a phenomenological interpretation of Jamesian pure experience. I then show how pure experience, given this phenomenological reading, underwrites James's sophisticated treatment of mind and experience. The next chapter builds on the discussion of James and pure experience and argues that pure experience, given a phenomenological reading, can fund an "extended"

or distributed conception of mind and experience very much in-step with contemporary discussions in current philosophy of mind and cognitive science. I bring in recent empirical research to support this contention. This third chapter turns to Nishida. I draw out the distinctive Zen Buddhist strands of his formulation of pure experience and confront similarities and differences with James. I will be particularly interested in Nishida's view of the moral significance of pure experience, a concerted emphasis that sets Nishida's analysis apart from James. The final chapter develops a sensorimotor or bodily skills-based account of moral psychology influenced by Nishida's discussion of the moral significance of "pure experience" and "acting-intuition". I conclude by bringing in more empirical research to support my claims.

James on Consciousness and Experience

To begin to understand James's notion of "pure experience", it is first important to get clear about how James conceives of consciousness. Understanding James's particular rendering of consciousness will then, by extension, lead us into an analysis of his conception of experiences both pure and impure. I will here be concerned mainly with James's characterization of consciousness as developed in his *Principles of Psychology* (1890/1950), and the way that this characterization is later assimilated into and refined within his broader program of radical empiricism, as developed in his *Essays in Radical Empiricism* (1912/1996).

Simply put, consciousness for James is not a property or process localized inside the skull of the subject. Consciousness is instead a world-engaged, exploratory activity of the entire embodied creature. This characterization will be developed as we go along. Broadening things somewhat, we will see that James makes at least three central claims about consciousness that are still highly relevant and very much alive in contemporary discussions of mind. These claims are:

1. Consciousness is intrinsically experiential

2. Consciousness harbors highly-structured content determined by the sensorimotor capacities of the world-engaged body (thus, James's primary characterization of consciousness as a "selecting agency").
3. Consciousness is not a monadic property or process localized exclusively in the head (or for James, consciousness thought of as an "external functional relation").

In what follows, I will consider how these three claims emerge from James's characterization of consciousness in *Principles* and *Radical Empiricism*. This will in turn prepare us to see how these three claims are implicitly contained in his notion of "pure experience", and how "pure experience" can underwrite an extended or externalist conception of cognition of the sort developed in the following chapter.

First, James from the beginning claims that consciousness is intrinsically experiential. The felt mental and bodily phenomena that together constitute the flow or "stream" (1890/1950 1, 239) of conscious experience are bound together by what James in *Essays in Radical Empiricism* refers to as a "conjunctive relation" (1912/1996, 47). This "conjunctive relation" is simply meant to highlight two invariant structural features of the flow of conscious experience: its *continuity* and its *unity*. (In the *Principles*, James speaks of the "sensibly continuous" (1890/1950 1, 237) nature of consciousness which encompasses both of these two structural features of the flow of experience).

For James, the series of conscious states constituting our individual experience of the world—our "personal histories" (1912/1996, 48)—harbor "real empirical 'content'" (1912/1996, 50) that is both made continuous and unified within our subjective stance on the world. First, consciousness exhibits a basic *continuity* between the moment-to-moment flow of its individual states. One state is made naturally continuous both with the state(s) that came before it and with those that follow. Furthermore, this moment-to-moment continuity is *itself* embedded in the larger *unity* that is the holistic structure of our "personal history": in other words, the sum total of our life experiences taken as a whole.

Finally, the fact that conscious states are both made continuous with one another and collectively unified within our personal experience of them is precisely what

provides consciousness with its felt experiential quality. Conscious states always flow *for* a subject, a subject to whom they are given. The continuity and unity of consciousness, as structural features of the flow, articulates the "personal form" (1890/1950 1, 225) of consciousness. The important point is simply put: for James, the structural coherence of the flow is our subjectivity. This is because, for James, consciousness is not a *substance* but a *structure*: a dynamic, embodied, and fluid structure functionally integrated with its environment. (The "not a substance but a structure" formula will resurface at multiple points in what follows in this chapter and in chapter two). Thus, when analyzing consciousness, this "passing of one experience into another when they belong to the same self" (1912/1996, 50)—the conjunctive relations binding together conscious phenomena—must be taken at "face value". He continues:

> …and to take it at its face value means first of all to take it just as we feel it, and not confuse ourselves with abstract talk *about* it, involving words that drive us to invent secondary conceptions in order to neutralize their suggestions to make our actual experience again seem rationally possible (1912/1996, 48).

The inner experiential structure of consciousness thus exhibits its own sort of organizational affective logic. It must be analyzed on its own terms—in other words, from within the inner textures and movement of the flow itself. For James, then, an inside-out phenomenological investigation of consciousness is central for understanding mind and experience.

Again, James insists that consciousness is intrinsically experiential. And he insists that any scientific study of consciousness must be organized in both its methods and goals so as to account for this basic fact. As we'll see in a moment, this claim emerges several decades before *Essays in Radical Empiricism* with James's first sustained discussion of consciousness in the *Principles of Psychology*, found in Chapter IX. However, it is also important to recall that the bulk of Chapters I-VIII of the *Principles* is concerned with first examining the neurobiological underpinnings of mind. In doing so, James looks to establish a methodology and orientation for psychology as a natural science. For James, mind is a natural phenomenon and should be studied accordingly. Consciousness may be intrinsically experiential. But this should not distract us from the

fact that minds are natural "*objects*, in a world of other objects" which inhabit "definite portions of a real space and a real time" (1890/1950 1, 183). However, this naturalistic characterization should not be read as intimating a species of reductivism or hard-nosed materialism. As we've just seen, James has no intention of jettisoning or explaining away the felt qualities of experience. Rather, James is looking to carve out analytical space for a conception of mind that preserves both the phenomenal features of our first-person subjective experience *as well as* the neurobiological dynamics of the brain and body process that underwrite them.

James thus argues at the outset that any science of consciousness worthy of the name must encompass both its first- and third-person aspects within the scope of its inquiry. This "double-barreled" approach is captured in James's opening statements in the *Principles* about what psychology, as a formal discipline, should be. With his first sentence, James announces that "Psychology is the Science of Mental Life, both its phenomena and their conditions" (1890/1950 1, 1). "Phenomena", as James here uses this term, refers to the particular mental events constitutive of experiential consciousness. They include things like "feelings, desires, cognitions, reasonings, decisions, and the like…" (1890/1950 1, 1)—in other words, the first-person states and processes that comprise subjective experience. Elsewhere, he often describes these states as "phenomenal facts". The "conditions" of Mental Life are then for James the neurobiological dynamics or "[physiological] conditions antecedent to mental states" (1890/1950 1, 5) or "phenomenal facts". Most pertinent to our present concerns is the fact that, according to James, the physiological conditions of subjective phenomena include not just brain states but also the sensorimotor processes of the world-engaged body. In fact, James insists that the subjective phenomena of our Mental Life are both rooted in and structured by bodily processes. (This claim will prove central to our analysis of pure experience below, as well as the discussion in the next chapter). James writes: "Mental phenomena are not only conditioned *a parte ante* by bodily processes; but they lead to them *a parte post*" (1890/1950 1, 5). In short, cognition is contoured by bodily corporeality. And a methodological consequence of this body-based account of mind is that "Bodily experiences, therefore, and more particularly brain-experiences, must take a

place among those conditions of the mental life of which Psychology need take account" (1890/1950 1, 4). In fact, "*the quest of the* [neurobiological] *conditions* becomes the psychologist's most interesting task" (1890/1950 1, 3). As James's work matures, the faint brain-bias evident here will be replaced with an even stronger insistence on the holistic and distributed nature of mind as it is enacted within the interplay of brain, body, and world. This topic is explored at length in the following chapter. For now, the important point is this: from his earliest investigations of consciousness and experience, James is equally attuned to the explanatory significance of both first- and third-person data. As Seigfried (1990) notes, James's "original contributions to the emerging field of psychology involved bringing philosophy and biology together on a new basis which he hoped would eventuate in a synthesis of philosophic, biological, and psychic discoveries" (57). Similarly, Meyers (1986) argues that, for James, the central task of psychology involved "improving our knowledge of mind-body relationships by drawing upon the new science of human physiology" (54).

Given the above considerations, I suggest that James is advocating a research program akin to what has recently been termed "neurophenomenology" (Varela 1996; Lutz and Thompson 2003). Neurophenomenology looks to systematically integrate phenomenological description with neurobiological empirical analysis in a rigorous, reciprocally-illuminating fashion. Theoretically, neurophenomenology "stresses the importance of gathering first-person data from the phenomenologically trained subjects as a heuristic strategy for describing and quantifying the physiological processes relevant to consciousness" (Lutz and Thompson 2003, 32). Methodologically speaking, this is cashed out by (1) obtaining first-person data through regimented and trained phenomenological analysis, which (2) is then used to uncover third-person data about the relevant physiological dynamics.[1] This integration of first- and third-person data offers a more robust and faithful picture of consciousness, according to neurophenomenologists. It includes both its experiential and physiological aspects, and harbors a sensitivity of the extent to which the two are co-determinative.[2]

Again, James affirms this dual emphasis.[3] In addition to his proto-neurophenomenological concern with both the phenomenal and the neurobiological, the

remarks from the *Principles* cited above further indicate that James is working towards a strongly *embodied* approach to cognition (Johnson 1987, Varela *et al* 1991, Clark 1997). More precisely, I suggest that we can understand James to be articulating the general contours of what has recently been termed an "enactive" (Varela *et al* 1991) view of embodied cognition and consciousness. If neurophenomenology is put forth as a formal research program integrating first- and third-person data—which for James is the proper goal for psychology, as he envisioned it—enactive views of mind are more general theoretical conceptions of mentality that view cognition as a mode of bodily activity. Cognition emerges from the dynamic sensorimotor coupling of agent and environment. According to the enactivist, cognition is a form of embodied action (Thompson 2005). And mind is therefore an achievement of the whole organism. It is enacted within and distributed throughout the sensorimotor structures of the embodied and embedded creature. Construed in this way, enactive views of cognition directly challenge neuroreductivist claims such as Francis Crick's (1994) "astonishing hypothesis" that the conscious self is "nothing but a pack of neurons" (2). As we'll see a bit later, James will offer his own challenge to the various forms of reductivism prevalent in his day. His embodied and enactive conception of consciousness—which is first articulated in the *Principles*, and later refined in *Essays in Radical Empiricism*—is precisely James's most focused effort to safeguard against reductivism of all kinds.

To return to the main thread: despite his strong interest in the neurobiological basis of cognition, for James the phenomenal qualities of subjective experience are of central importance for understanding the pragmatic significance of mind. In addition to the healthy respect for the phenomenal built into James's "double-barreled" methodology discussed above, the centrality of subjectivity is again reasserted at the beginning of Chapter IX ("Stream of Thought") of the *Principles*, James's first sustained treatment of consciousness. Here, James leaves no doubt that his approach to investigating consciousness will in fact be an inside-out, experience-based approach. He announces in the first sentence that "We now begin our study of the mind from within" (1890/1950 1, 224). For James, the properly "empirical method of investigation" (1890/1950 1, 224) is phenomenological and descriptive. Under a section entitled "The Methods of

Investigation", he writes that "*Introspective Observation is what we have to rely on first and foremost and always*" (1890/1950 1, 185). What this means, then, is this: to be faithful to the phenomena at hand, the researcher must begin with a descriptive analysis of the states, events, processes and objects of experience *in their phenomenal manifestation* within the flow of the "personal consciousness" of the experiencer. In other words, inquiry into consciousness must accept as basic fact that "Consciousness, from our natal day, is of a teeming multiplicity of objects and relations" (1890/1950 1, 224). It is a rich, highly-structured and temporally-extended experience that, as we've seen, is for James both intrinsically experiential, and is furthermore contoured by the sensorimotor capacities of the world-embedded agent. Mind sciences must thus remain equally attuned to the invariant structures that comprise conscious experience on both a neurobiological as well as a phenomenological level. Consciousness for James is thoroughly embodied. Furthermore, the content of consciousness—the "multiplicity of objects and relations" that constitutes the flow of our subjective life—is largely specified by the particular ways that an embodied consciousness transacts with its living world. Phenomenological analysis must be utilized to determine precisely how this is so.

There is an importance consequence of this embodied and enactive view of consciousness, as I'll refer to it from here on out, that reaffirms James's relevance to contemporary discussions of mind. I've already made brief reference to it. It is James's later implicit claim—which I'll argue emerges primarily in *Essays in Radical Empiricism*—that mind isn't a monadic predicate or property localized exclusively in the head. Rather, mind is very literally *extended* out into the world of people and things.[4] Consciousness states are thus both caused as well as, importantly, constituted by things external to the conscious agent—things that become constitutive features of that agent's cognitive processes. Cognitive content is (at times) constituted by extra-cranial worldly "stuff". In addition to developing both an embodied and enactive view of cognition, James is in this way furthermore erecting the general framework for what is now referred to as an "extended" or "distributed" approach to cognition (Clark 1997; Hurley 1998; Noë 2004). Faithful to James's double-barreled neurophenomenological approach, this extended conception of mind has both phenomenological and neurobiological import.

However, James's extended conception of mind and experience doesn't take its mature form until "pure experience" comes along in the *Essays in Radical Empiricism*. Since I'm going to discuss pure experience at some length momentarily, I'll save further discussion of the extended mind for later.

Before turning to pure experience, I'd now like to briefly say a bit about the development of James's metaphysics, and specifically how this development shaped his thinking about consciousness. As we've just seen, James develops a remarkably current conception of consciousness that anticipates in a number of ways ongoing contemporary debates. He argues that consciousness is intrinsically experiential, that its content is structured by the sensorimotor capacities of the body, and (as we'll see) that it's not a predicate or property located exclusively inside the skull of the subject. In sum, he articulates a sophisticated embodied and enactive model of mind attuned to both its first- and third person aspects.

However, at the time of the *Principles*, James was still grappling with many of the metaphysical difficulties that his *Essays in Radical Empiricism* would look to dissolve by reconfiguring the explanatory framework that generated these metaphysical difficulties. This is evident by the fact that the *Principles* ultimately adheres to a kind of mind-brain, psychophysical parallelism. James calls this view "empirical parallelism" (1890/1950 1, 182). He first develops this view in chapter XI, "The Mind-Stuff Theory". James announces that this chapter, and his articulation therein of empirical parallelism, "is exclusively metaphysical"—which for James (at least at this point in his career) means "nothing but an unusually obstinate effort to think clearly" (1890/1950 1, 145).[5] In a section of chapter XI entitled "Difficulty Stating the Connection Between Mind and Brain" (1890/1950 1, 176), James explains what motivates his adoption of empirical parallelism. First, he states the view's basic principle. Empirical parallelism says that "consciousness, which is itself an integral thing not made of parts, 'corresponds' to the entire activity of the brain, whatever that may be, at the moment" (1890/1950 1, 177). Put differently, there exists an "empirical concomitance" of some kind between brain states and mental particulars. As James immediately notes, this construction is quite vague. But this is necessarily so, James insists, because "Before the connection between thought and

brain can be explained, it must at least be *stated* in an elementary form" and the issue of mind-brain relations reduced "to its lowest terms" (1890/1950 1, 177).

Construed in this elementary fashion, empirical parallelism is thus "a way of expressing the relation of mind and brain from which I shall not depart during the remainder of the book, because it expresses the bare phenomenal fact with no hypothesis" (1890/1950 1, 177). The "hypothesis" James here references involves the ontological status of consciousness. By invoking a general claim that only concedes the existence of *some* sort of relation obtaining between brain states and mental particulars (whether this relation is causal or constitutive or other is intentionally not specified), James thinks that he can develop a rich descriptive analysis of the "phenomenal facts" of consciousness without making any firm metaphysical commitments as to its precise ontological status. James's critical survey of a number of competing metaphysical models of mind and chronicling of their respective failures—a survey conducted just after the above-quoted statements—makes it clear that James has little confidence that some sort of satisfactory resolution can be reached in this regard. But he is not unaware of the brittleness and insubstantiality of his own view on this point. In fact, James writes that if empirical parallelism as he formulates it is taken to imply anything more than "a mere empirical law of concomitance between our thoughts and our brain", the whole thing "tumbles to pieces entirely if we assume to represent anything more intimate or ultimate than it" (1890/1950 1, 177). Empirical parallelism is therefore offered as a metaphysically neutral compromise. It is intended to both preserve the experiential features of consciousness and concede their lawful empirical relation to some relevant neurobiological substrate *without* specifying anything particular about what, precisely, the nature of that lawful relation, or even consciousness, *is*.

However, it's not clear that James can consistently take this tack, given the methodological constraints he has set up both for himself and for psychology as a natural science. His naturalistic conception of mind, explored above, is informed by his own metaphysical presuppositions that aren't easily shed simply by offering a vaguely formulated empirical parallelism. Moreover, these presuppositions determine the investigative approach he thinks proper for psychology as a formal discipline. For

example, James says that the goal of an empirically-minded science of the mind must be to

> find the minimal mental fact whose being reposes directly on a brain-fact; and we must similarly find the minimal brain-event which will have a mental counterpart at all. Between the mental and the physical minima thus found there will be an immediate relation, the expression of which, if we had it, would be the elementary psycho-physic law (1890/1950 1, 177).

First, James is presupposing that there exist observable, lawful relations or correlations between brain states and mental states. His assertion that a "minimal brain-event" will have a correlate "mental counterpart" suggests a nomological dependency of some sort. Certainly this is an entirely reasonable thesis. The fact that there exists an "empirical concomitance" between alterations of the brain and body, and consequent alterations of mental particulars can be readily affirmed both phenomenologically and empirically. A collision between one's skull and a fast-moving softball produces clear phenomenological affects. A tumor involving both frontal lobes of the left and right cerebral hemispheres can cause (among other things) profound personality changes, memory deficiency and impaired judgment. Clearly some sort of empirical relation exists between mental states and brain structure and events. (Chapter II of the *Principles* consists precisely of a neurological excursion into "the ways in which [the brain's] states may be supposed to condition those of the mind" (1890/1950 1, 15). But this "empirical concomitance" view of mind-brain relations *is* a metaphysical position, however straightforward and underdeveloped it may be in James's presentation of it.

Given the double-barreled approach of the *Principles* discussed earlier, one way to understand James here might be to read him as advocating a *supervenience* relation between brain events and mental states. Put simply, the claim that mental states supervene on brain states amounts to the claim that the character of a mental state is determined by the nature of its physical substrate. But for non-reductive materialist positions, the concept of supervenience—articulated in various forms—has been summoned to explain how consciousness might *depend* upon the relevant neurobiology without the former being *reduced* to the latter. One strategy is to argue that higher-level

properties, such as consciousness, emerge from the presence of lower-level "basal conditions" upon which higher-level properties are dependent and by which their character is determined—but that this emergence is the emergence of a novel property *irreducible* to that property's basal conditions. The empirical task of neuroscience (or psychology, as James conceives of it) is then to discover the "bridge laws"—or as James puts it, the "elementary psycho-physic law" (1890/1950 1, 177)—linking higher and lower-level basal properties ("phenomenal facts" and neurobiological "conditions"). This view, its adherents claim, acknowledges the clear "empirical concomitance" of both the mental and the physical while resisting the reduction of the phenomenal to the neurobiological.[6] *Dependency* without *reduction* is thus the upshot.

The broader and more significant point of this metaphysical excursion is this. From the beginning, James is looking for a metaphysically and methodologically satisfying way to develop a naturalistic mode of inquiry into consciousness that honors both its first and third person aspects. His strategy in the *Principles* is therefore to provide both an empirical account of the neurobiological dynamics of mind as well as a careful phenomenological-descriptive analysis of its experiential features. However, the metaphysical system needed to *bridge* these two aspects of mind—other than to simply say that, clearly, there is some sort of "empirical concomitance" between them—still eludes James. By his own admission this is explanatorily unsatisfactory. James expresses a muted dissatisfaction when he writes somewhat meekly that

> By keeping to [empirical parallelism[, our psychology will remain positivistic and non-metaphysical; and although this is certainly only a provisional halting-place, and things must some day be more thoroughly thought out, we shall abide there in this book…" (1890/1950 1, 182).

"Pure experience" will eventually be James's attempt to move beyond the "provisional halting-place" of empirical parallelism,

His metaphysical struggles here disclose the fact that James was attuned to various aspects of what David Chalmers (1995, 1996) has influentially termed the "Hard Problem" of consciousness. For Chalmers (and James), the Hard Problem involves accounting for the fact of subjectivity. In other words, the metaphysical significance of

the Hard Problem of consciousness is this: How does the physical system of the brain and body give rise to the richness of phenomenal experience?[7] The epistemological problem of the Hard Problem, according to Joseph Levine, is that there exists an "explanatory gap" between subjective experience and its physical realization. Gerald Meyers (1986) highlights James's sensitivity to this issue when he writes that, for James

> Mental states (also called feelings and thoughts in *Principles*) have five major characteristics: they belong to a personal consciousness, are always changing, are sensibly continuous, intentionally have objects other than themselves, and always favor some objects over others…these characteristics appear to distinguish consciousness from anything physical (60).

Despite James's unwavering commitment to account for the physiological factors responsible for our conscious life, he remains quite aware of the difficulties involved in carving out space for subjective experience in a purely physicalist model of the universe. This hesitancy explains why James remains open to the possibility that consciousness of *some* sort might continue to exist outside of its neurobiological realization.[8]

While writing the *Principles*, James puts forth a methodology for mind-sciences that takes phenomenal experience as an irreducible fact. But given the naturalistic constraints on his conception of psychology, he is acutely aware, as we've seen, of the metaphysical and epistemological significance of the Hard Problem. His "empirical parallelism" is thus offered as a kind of truce. It is a way of temporarily bracketing off the difficulties of this issue while he develops the larger framework for psychology as a formal discipline. More pointedly, James "bracketed metaphysical presuppositions in order to describe the phenomenal conditions of our being in the world" (Seigfried 1972, 79)—a central project of psychology inquiry for James. However, this bracketing was only a temporary solution. James continues to be haunted by the Hard Problem throughout the remainder of his career.[9]

In what follows, I argue that both his discussion of "pure experience" and his embodied and enactive view of consciousness, both developed in *Essays in Radical Empiricism,* is James's attempt to come to terms with the difficulties of the Hard Problem. By the time of the *Essays*, James will have abandoned the empirical parallelism

of the *Principles* for a robust experiential monism. (I clarify what I mean by this below). In doing so, James looks to expose the Hard Problem, thusly defined, as a category mistake. His metaphysics of pure experience therefore grows out of a continuing concern for properly characterizing the physical nature of the brain-body-world relationship in a manner that preserves phenomenal experience. In this sense, James's concern with consciousness and experience is the Archimedean point of his life's work. I further suggest that, with his notion of pure experience, James is going to emphasize the primacy of phenomenological analysis, over and above metaphysical speculation. This phenomenological analysis will point towards a way around the Hard Problem.

James on Pure Experience

James's formulation of what he termed "pure experience" greatly vexed his peers.[10] The notion was largely dismissed as ill-conceived and, for the most part, appears to have been misunderstood. (Pierce and Dewey are two notable exceptions here). This fact likely disappointed James, who initially hoped that his radical empiricism (of which "pure experience" is a core aspect) would "serve as a possible ferment of new growths or a nucleus of new crystallization" (1912/1996, 41). In an important sense, "pure experience" was and continues to be seen as an integral part of James's larger program of Radical Empiricism. But exactly *what to do* with "pure experience", how precisely to connect it up with other core feature of radical empiricism and then what sort of hard philosophical labor we can expect it to offer us, remains little understood.

In what follows, I want to put James's "pure experience" to work. I will argue that this idea can found an enactive and extended view of mind, one that is both theoretically viable and that, additionally, is supported by recent empirical research. The groundwork for this claim will begin with the following interpretive analysis in which I offer a novel reading of James's formulation of "pure experience". The discussion will then continue in the next chapter, where I build on this reading and use pure experience to construct an extended conception of mind. Chapter two and the conclusion of chapter four will also

contain a discussion of recent empirical work that affirms many of James's central claims.

The Purpose of Pure Experience

The source for James's formulation of pure experience is his *Essays in Radical Empiricism* (1912/1996). This book is a collection of twelve essays published between 1904 and 1906. Though the twelve essays were selected by James himself as representative of the basic tenants of his radical empiricism, *Essays* wasn't actually published until 1912, two years after James's death. However, as was James's intention, the book should be regarded as the foundation of his radical empiricism and as articulating his mature views of mind, knowledge and reality. The guiding thread of James's views is always the same: an unwavering "radical" commitment to the primacy and immediacy of lived experience.

As we saw above with the discussion of James's conception of consciousness, both the origin and terminus James's thought—an orientation manifest in arguably everything James committed to paper—is a deeply empirical concern. His work as a whole is founded upon a consideration of concrete experience: the world as experienced by an embodied, embedded, and acting agent.[11] Explicating the agential and perceptual structures of our uniquely human way of being in the world, James insists, is the key to understanding the antecedent categorizations, conceptualizations, and other intellectual ways of organizing the world that are founded upon these experiential structures, and which emerge through our bodily-perceptual engagement with the world. These intellectual structures ultimately reflect the practical concerns of human beings as they simultaneously shape and are shaped by the world they inhabit and act within. But bodily-perceptual experience remains primary. James's "concrete analysis," as he terms this emphasis, thus provides the methodological trajectory of his philosophical considerations. He writes that "concreteness as radical as ours is not so obvious. The whole originality of pragmatism, the whole point of it, is its use of the concrete way of thinking." (1975, 115-116). And this holds for all philosophical reflection as well. As an

intellectual movement away from a more concrete analysis into abstract conceptual theorizing, philosophy—at least in its classical guise—must remember to honor the primacy and immediacy of our pre-theoretical engagement with the world if it is to remain faithful to lived experience. Russell Goodman (2004) puts this point well when he writes that, according to James, "Philosophy should seek a return from a life in concepts to a thicker life of intuition, empathy and activity" (6). The mode of this "thicker" life for James is pure experience. The human capacity for intuition, empathy and activity all originate from within it. Pure experience is thus truly the foundation of James's radical empiricism.

So how exactly does pure experience fit into James's experiential vision? The answer to this question depends largely upon the answer to another question, which can be put this way: Is pure experience something we *begin with* or rather *end up at*? If it's the former, pure experience is then a kind of foundational concept serving as the touchstone for James's radical empiricism as a whole. If it's the latter, pure experience might conceivably be seen as akin to the various kinds of unitive awakening experiences described in spiritual traditions such as Christian mysticism, Hinduism and Buddhism.[12] If the latter, it's not clear that pure experience's explanatory application will be as broad, since these are very subtle and occasional experiences that, alas, few have. Though the case might conceivably be made for both readings, I favor the first interpretation.[13] Pure experience is the touchstone of James's radical empiricism. In what follows, I trust that it will become clear that pure experience for James is a foundational concept with both neurobiological and phenomenological significance. In short, it refers to the basic, irreducible fact of our sensorimotor engagement with the world. For James, pure experience is enacted on the pre-theoretical level of our bodily agency, where body and world are functionally integrated and thus one.[14]

First, some general remarks. James's radical empiricism is an attempt to ground philosophy on the raw material of experience as given. Of his radical empiricism, he writes: "The postulate is that the only things that shall be debatable among philosophers shall be things definable in terms drawn from experience" (1955, 199). With his notion of pure experience, James looks to probe what he perceived to be the underlying

experiential unity behind language and reflective or conceptual thought. Mirroring a basic Zen Buddhist presupposition that, as we'll see in the next chapter, Kitarō Nishida will later utilize for his own ends, James argues that conceptual analysis cannot provide an exhaustive account of human experience in its phenomenal richness and becoming. Like Nishida and Zen, a deep suspicion of concepts and conceptual analysis informs James's formulation of pure experience. This suspicion is one reason why some contemporary critics dismissed his claims on this point as endorsing a kind of undisciplined irrationalism, and has contributed to a lingering caricature of James as anti-logical.[15]

Why the suspicion of concepts in James, and what does this have to do with pure experience? To begin simply, James was suspicious of the idea that conceptual or propositional thought functions as the primitive—and thus irreducible—interface between self and world. On this conceptualist or "intellectualist" line, as James refers to it, all thinking and experience involves concepts in some way. Experience is thus conceptual *all the way down*.[16] James instead argues that the phenomenal content of embodied experience *as experienced* outstrips our capacity to conceptually or linguistically articulate it. In other words, James insists that many of our basic experiences harbor nonconceptual content.[17] That is, many of our experiences have a rich phenomenal content that is too fine-grained and sensuously detailed to lend itself to an exhaustive conceptual analysis.[18] For example, though the human perceiver can visually discriminate, at least on some estimates, upwards of ten million colors, surely no one has the many corresponding color concepts. Therefore, to perceive a color for which we lack a corresponding concept is an example of experience with *phenomenal* content that nonetheless lacks *conceptual* content. Similarly, I can find a certain melody or progression in a piece of music deeply poignant without having the technical training in music composition and theory—and hence the requisite concepts and language—to say why this is so. Nonetheless, my phenomenal experience of this passage is no less rich. I say much more about nonconceptual content in chapter four.

Although he doesn't address the notion of nonconceptual content as explicitly as do many contemporary philosophers of mind, James does continually insist that there is a truth to our immediate, concrete experience of reality-in-becoming that conceptual

analysis and the formal truths of logic cannot explicate. This sentiment moves James to write the following passage, which not surprisingly caused considerable consternation among many of his contemporary commentators:

> I have finally found myself compelled to *give up the logic*, fairly, squarely, and irrevocably. It has an imperishable use in human life, but that use is not to make us theoretically acquainted with the essential nature of reality. Reality, life, expedience, concreteness, immediacy, use what words you will, exceeds our logic, overflows and surrounds it (1909/1996, 96-97).

To understand James's basic contention here, it is important to note that he does not dismiss the instrumental utility of concepts. (This point is one which a number of his critics failed to see). And James is certainly not suggesting that we disregard the formal truths of logic altogether, of course. Rather, his insistence that logic can be "given up" is an insistence that the problem at stake is not with concepts and logical truths *per se*, but rather with the way that philosophers (especially, once again, those endorsing an "intellectualist" view) habitually *relate* to conceptual and logical analysis. James urges that concepts are merely organizational tools. They are "map[s] which the mind frames out" (1910/1979, 43). Their usefulness lies in the way that they enable us to provisionally organize and cope with a particular aspect of reality making up the environment(s) with which we are at that moment concerned. In the *Principles*, he writes that "the only meaning of essences is teleological, and…classification and conceptions are purely teleological weapons of the mind" (1890/1950 2, 335). Concepts are thus retrospective reconstructions of the portion of reality that demands our attention at any given moment. In this way, concepts have a clear instrumental necessity. They are invaluable for organizing our experiences as well as for enabling us to report, share, and discuss our experiences with other language users.

But concepts, James insists, do *not* capture the irreducible essence of that which they purport to describe. For, there is always another aspect under which a thing can present itself, another way that a thing can be investigated and categorized. Indeed, "*There is no property ABSOLUTELY essential to any one thing*" (1890/1950 2, 333). Therefore, concepts pick out whatever properties of a thing that "is so *important for my*

interests that in comparison with it I may neglect the rest" (1890/1950 2, 335). Accordingly, concepts "characterize *us* more than they characterize the thing" (1890/1950 2, 335). Moreover, concepts are always *retrospective* reconstructions of experience gone by. This is especially so with the introspective concepts that we apply to phenomenal experience, since "a feeling, to be named, judged, or perceived, must be already past" (quoted in Meyers 1986, 65). This is because, quoting Kierkegaard via Professor Höffding in "Is Empiricism Solipsistic?", James notes that "we live forward, but we understand backwards" (1912/1996, 238). Conceptual analysis is a kind of backward living. And this propensity for relying too heavily on an "understanding backwards is, it must be confessed, a very frequent weakness of philosophers" (1912/1996, 238). By situating its analysis within the living stream of pure experience, however, James says that "radical empiricism alone insists on understanding forwards also, and refuses to substitute static concepts of the understanding for transitions in our moving life" (1912/1996, 238).

For James, then, philosophical confusions ultimately arise when the structures of our conceptual "maps" are thought to provide an isomorphic blueprint of the inner structure of reality itself. James would likely say that this is mistaking the *map* for that which is *mapped*. In Zen parlance, this presumption of isomorphism constitutes a "clinging" to thoughts and concepts. According to James, this is the heart of the intellectualist's error. For as long as we recognize the instrumental utility of concepts, which indicates both their necessity for human life and communication, as well as their intrinsic limitations when it comes to delivering over the reality and momentum of a life as experienced, we can use them effectively. But James insists that when logic and concepts, which are a "static incomplete abstraction" (1909/1977, 94) of a more dynamic reality-in-becoming feeding our phenomenal experience, are taken to be a literal reflection of reality, our intelligence becomes distorted. In other words, conceptual models become "distortive if understood as a complete or totally accurate expression of the fullness of experience" (Seigfried and Seigfried 1995, 149). The "static incomplete abstraction" is mistaken for the real—the map is taken for the mapped—and the vibrancy of phenomenal experience is crystallized into static categories that fail to do justice to its

lived richness. In the well-known Zen expression, this is mistaking the finger pointing to the moon for the moon itself. James drives this point home when he insists in "The Thing and its Relations" that, when we return "into the stream of sensible presentation", we find that "nouns and adjectives, and *thats* and abstract *whats*, grow confluent again, and the word 'is' names all these experiences of conjunction" (1912/1996, 117). Conceptual discriminations produce "certain *whats*" that "*as originally experienced in the concrete*" are confluent "with new sensible experiences in which they recur as 'the same'" (1912/1996, 117). In other words, conceptual analysis constructs disjunctive *whats* out of an originally *con*juctive *that*. As we'll see below, James will term this conjuctive *that* "pure experience".[19]

Not only do concepts fail to capture the phenomenal richness of the world as experienced. Additionally, they fail to capture the *particularity* of each state of consciousness, as well as its object (Goodman 2004, 7). Concepts deal with static generalizations and not living novelty. This is, of course, because concepts are universal. Therefore, no amount of conceptual description can pick out every aspect, every singular nuance and shading, of a particular thing. At a certain point, conceptual description runs dry and the thing must be allowed to speak itself simply by *being* itself. In *Some Problems of Philosophy*, James puts the point this way:

> …novelty finds no representation in the conceptual method, for concepts are abstracted from experience already seen or given, and he who uses them to divine the new can never do so but in ready-made and ancient terms…Properly speaking, concepts are post-mortem preparations; and when we use them to define the universe prospectively we ought to realize that they can give only a bare abstract outline or approximate sketch, in the filling out of which perception must be invoked (1910/1979, 54; quoted in Goodman 2004).

Conceptual analysis is thus inadequate for two reasons. First, it can never account for the richness of our experience of the world-in-becoming. Experience speaks a subtle phenomenal language and exhibits a movement and dynamism that far exceeds the limited lexicon of conceptual analysis. Secondly, concepts—as universal—pass over the particularity and novelty of individual things and states of affairs. Once more, however, it

is our bodily-perceptual experience that, for James, is attuned to this novelty and which thus must "fill out" the gaps in our conceptual analysis. As Hilary Putnam (1990) writes, "James wants to remind us that even though the rationalistic way of thinking has its place…once it becomes one's only way of thinking, one is bound to lose the world for a beautiful model (236). Given this view of concepts, James urges that "our intelligence cannot wall itself up alive" in logic and conceptual analysis but must instead "at any cost keep on speaking terms with the universe that engendered it" (1909/1977, 94). This universe is the universe of pure experience.

At this point, it's worth pausing to note a couple of things. First, James's view of the inadequacy of conceptual analysis and the primacy of bodily-perceptual experience is very much in step with Zen Buddhism. I've already scattered a few comments to this effect throughout the above analysis. However, as we'll see in more depth in chapter three, Nishida—reflecting the conventional Zen Buddhist view—articulates a position almost identical to James's on this point. His argument is exceedingly close to James, which isn't all that surprising given the influence James exerted over Nishida's early work. Secondly, this criticism of conceptual analysis and logic, paired with James's insistence on the primacy of bodily-perceptual experience, are keys to understanding the place of pure experience in James's work. According to James, pure experience is our original mode of experience *prior* to conceptual thought. Pure experience for James—or so I will argue—is a dynamic, bodily-perceptual mode of engagement with the world. It is our basic way of connecting up with the world and things in it. Theoretically speaking, pure experience is thus James's attempt to ensure that philosophy remains on "speaking terms" with this foundational and pervasive level of experience, which he argues feeds all subsequent forms of intellection. This is pure experience's purpose.

The Place of Pure Experience – A Prelude

I'd now like to talk about the "place" of pure experience. This place metaphor, as I use it here, has two meanings. More broadly, as the discussion unfolds I hope to situate pure experience within the larger context of James's radical empiricism. I want to show

its place within his thought as a whole. Much of what went on with the above analysis has already been towards this end. More pointedly, however, I want to uncover the place where pure experience is *enacted*, its place within the ontology of the brain-body-world interrelation. In other words, I want to argue that the place of pure experience is also the place where mind and consciousness are enacted. To uncover this place will require a discussion of the phenomenological and neurobiological significance of pure experience as James understands it. This discussion will continue throughout this chapter and into the next.

The two most important essays in *Essays in Radical Empiricism*—at least for understanding pure experience—are "Does Consciousness Exist?" and "A World of Pure Experience". Though I'll say more about the first essay in chapter two, a few comments about it are here warranted. The essay is an extended defense of the following thesis: consciousness "is the name of a nonentity, and has no right to a place among first principles" (1912/1996, 2). Elaborating this bold claim somewhat, James clarifies by saying that he means only to deny that consciousness exists as a determinate *entity*, some neurobiological thing or autonomous ethereal "mindstuff". However, he insists "most emphatically" that consciousness *does* exist as "a function" (1912/1996, 3). In other words, there is a "function in experience which thoughts perform" and "that function is knowing" (1912/1996, 3-4). Later, he says that "consciousness connotes a kind of external relation" (1912/1996, 25). The significance of these and other statements will be unpacked in chapter two, with a discussion of pure experience and how it informs James's extended conception of mind. But for now, the important point here is that consciousness for James is not some preexistent property or transcendental entity that stands outside of experience, governing it and organizing its content. Rather, consciousness is enacted *within* experience. To repeat a slogan introduced earlier: consciousness is not a *substance* but a *structure*. It is the dynamic mechanism by which we engage directly with the world. And as a dynamic structure, it consists equally of bits of brain, body *and* world, taken together. Put differently, it is a functional element—or perhaps, a "microstructure"—nested in the larger dynamic system of the brain-body-world relationship, considered as a single unit. In short, it is a part of the larger dynamic

system that James calls "pure experience." Therefore, consciousness is only understood by looking at it as it emerges within this larger dynamic system—that is to say, as it emerges within the unified structure of pure experience.

Much of "A World of Pure Experience" is concerned with a discussion of various kinds of *relations*. James notes that "Relations are of different degrees of intimacy" (1912/1996, 44). One of the purposes of pure experience, as James will formulate it, is to stress the primacy and irreducibility of the relation—or ontological *intimacy*—between embodied mind and world. James's formulation of pure experience will be an attempt to situate felt or *affective* relations back into the basic mode of our relatedness to the world, and to articulate how affective relations—and indeed, experience more generally—emerges from our world-directed actions.

James's radical empiricism and his notion of pure experience are both attempts to map out the "true landscape" of our concrete relations with and experiences of the world—a bodily-perceptual landscape "less clipped, straight-edged and artificial" than the overly formal conceptualist renderings of reality found in rationalist and idealist traditions (1912/1996, 40). What this means for James is that he will begin at the level of "life [that] is confused and abundant" (1912/1996, 39): in other words, our foundational bodily-perceptual mode of engagement with the world. For, it is on this level that we first discover the various kinds of relations that structure all subsequent forms and expressions of our experience of the world. Pure experience is therefore a way of articulating the inner structure or flow of experience, the living stream, which founds our every thought, perception and action.

Given this firm bodily-perceptual or phenomenological emphasis, it is perhaps somewhat odd that James's first way of articulating pure experience is overtly metaphysical—and frankly, not terribly clear. In "Does 'Consciousness' Exist?", he offers his thesis of pure experience when he writes that:

> My thesis is that if we start with the supposition that there is only one primal stuff or material in the world, a stuff of which everything is composed, and if we call that stuff 'pure experience'; then knowing can easily be explained as a particular sort of relation towards one another into which portions of pure experience may

> enter. The relation itself is a part of pure experience; one of its 'terms becomes the subject or bearer of the knowledge, the knower, the other becomes the object known (1912/1996, 4).

This initial introduction of pure experience is intended to establish a couple of things. It's important to get clear about these points right from the start. I'll come to them momentarily. However, before doing that, it is perhaps even more crucial to note the following. Pure experience is *not* (at least primarily) intended to be what at first blush it appears most likely *to* be: namely, a strongly metaphysical thesis positing the necessary existence of some basic substance or monistic "stuff" out of which everything is made. James is not venturing into speculative metaphysics here. Of course, many have read him as doing just this. Russell is a prominent example.[20] His own arguments for neutral monism—the view that realty is ultimately of one kind, whose intrinsic nature is neither mental or physical but a "neutral" other—are influenced by James, and his critical engagements with James generally dwell on this reading of pure experience as advocating a similar view.

Admittedly, James's wording in this passage can easily give the impression that he is in fact offering his pure experience as a kind of strong monism. After all, he speaks of a "primal stuff or material of the world" right out of the gate. This is metaphysically loaded, Ultimate Reality-speak, to be sure. However, it's vital to note what James says a bit later in "Does Consciousness Exist?", after he has laid out some of the general features of radical empiricism and pure experience. James concludes his essay by responding to several potential objections to his views. He imagines one interlocutor demanding that James "Say *what* [pure experience] consists of—for it must consist of something—or be willing to give it up!" (1912/1996, 26). James's reply here is instructive. He notes that his earlier discussion of "a stuff of pure experience" was used for "fluency's sake" (1912/1996, 26). However, he now intends to be a bit more careful with his language. He writes:

> …I have now to say that there is no *general* stuff of which experience at large is made. There are as many stuffs as there are 'natures' in the things experienced. If you ask what any one bit of pure experience is made of, the answer is always the

> same: "It is made of *that*, of just what appears, of space, of intensity, of flatness, brownness, heaviness, or what not" (1912/1996, 27).

To drive the point home, James insists once more that pure experience, as he formulates it, does not refer to a basic substance or substrate out of which everything that *is* takes its being. He concludes:

> Experience is only a collective name for all these sensible natures, and save for time and space (and, if you like, for 'being') there appears no universal element of which all things are made (1912/1996, 27).

Several things are going on here, I think. First, the fact that James takes the time to formulate and respond to this particular objection speaks to how concerned he was that pure experience *not* be taken as advocating the existence a neutral, Russellian type of world-stuff. Rather than one stuff, James insists immediately that there "as many stuffs as there are 'natures' in the things experienced" (1912/1996, 27). Thus, for James there is no stuff or "element" basic to everything that is. Next, precisely what James means can be clarified somewhat by looking at a later remark from "The Place of Affectional Facts in a World of Pure Experience". Therein, James says that his "central thesis [is] that subjectivity and objectivity are affairs not of what an experience is aboriginally made of, but of its classification" (1912/1996, 141). To return to a point made earlier, it is conceptual and linguistic analysis that divides and discriminates experience into discrete elements—*classifies* it, in other words. Experientially speaking, that is to say *phenomenologically*, these conceptual and linguistic classifications hold no absolute traction. The dualistic distinctions established by reflexive (i.e. conceptual and linguistic) consciousness thus reflect an abstracted perspective that is removed from the living flow and relational dynamism of the stream of experience. Within pure experience, things can be said to have as many "natures" as they can be *experienced* as having—even if conceptual analysis cannot grip this phenomenal variance but instead always looks to fix an 'inner/outer', 'mental/physical' label on an item or state of affairs and pronounce it properly accounted for. Experientially, this conceptual fixedness simply doesn't hold. Subject-object, inner-outer, consciousness-content are distinctions fixed only in retrospection. And the conceptual distinctions established retrospectively are just that: a

conceptual dualism that doesn't reflect a deeper inner dualism of substance (Taylor and Wozniak 1996, xvi). Within pure experience, there is just *that*, as James puts it, and not a collection of discrete *whats*. The *whats* are conceptual fictions. Pure experience is thus James's attempt to offer a unified schema that nonetheless leaves space for a variety of possible "natures". If it is monism—which it seems fair to say that it is—it is a kind of *pluralistic* monism, a dynamic and shifting monism infinitely variegated in its nature(s). For James, "all that which exists is pure experience and pure experience is all that exists" (Taylor and Wozniak 1996, xv).

Additional support for this reading is summoned by remaining mindful of James's overarching commitment to pluralism in all its guises. James is open to the possibility that spiritual or nonphysical "stuffs" might somehow be part of the furniture of the universe. He published *The Varieties of Religious Experience* in 1902, several years prior to the articles on radical empiricism collected in the *Essays*. In *The Varieties*, James undertakes a serious investigation of various kinds of reports concerning mystical experiences and paranormal phenomena. He consistently takes the tack that these reports and descriptions might actually refer to *real phenomena*. In other words, there might actually exist a "present reality more diffused and general than that which our special senses yield", that is, an ontology housing "quasi-sensible realities" that don't fit neatly into our present scientific accounts of the universe (1902/1982 63, 64). James thus leaves open the possibility that the universe is the sort of place where both physical and nonphysical "stuffs" might happily coincide. We have no warrant to reject the possibility of spiritual stuffs *a priori* simply because we're not entirely sure what to do with them.

This commitment to a robust pluralism subsequently shapes James's suspicion of metaphysical analysis—and similarly, his suspicion of conceptual analysis, which we looked at above. As Seigfried (1990) notes, "It is possible to develop from the Jamesian texts a systematic method of interpretation, a concrete hermeneutics, but not a systematic explanation of reality from a privileged or ontologically objective standpoint" (350)—in other words, a unified, systematic metaphysics. As embodied and embedded minds, we are inextricably bound up within the bodily-perceptual structures of pure experience, according to James. Moreover, human reality is situated, temporal, finite and contingent.

Therefore, the very idea of taking a purely objective and unconditioned stance on things, a stance somehow outside of our situated experience, is a non-starter. This is because what it means to be a human being *is* precisely to always already be *in* a subjective stance, to be in the thick of a concrete life involved with the practical world of shared human interactions. But to be this way is to already be situated firmly in the world, to have a necessarily specific (and limited) perspective on things. Thus, we have no way to verify if our purportedly perspectiveless metaphysical claims really map onto ultimate reality, considered from a "perspectiveless perspective"—a view from nowhere—precisely because we have no idea what such a perspectiveless perspective would look like in the first place! Simply put, we can never get outside of our situated stance within pure experience. Reality is too rich, complex and variegated to ever fit tidily into one all-embracing schema. All we can ever know for certain is this richness, complexity and variety *as we experience it*. But this shouldn't be read as a kind of Kantian solipsism, as we'll see in a moment. Rather, James is simply remaining mindful of the irreducibly situated and perspectival nature of all truth claims. Moreover, he steadfastly affirms that we do in fact have direct perceptual access to the real world, however complex and variegated it is. Therefore, James's "recognition that there is no Archimedean point outside of experience that could objectively grasp reality as a total system means that he does not have a metaphysics" (Seigfried 1990, 350), at least as this term is classically understood. And to take a strongly metaphysical reading of pure experience—again, like Russell did—is to attribute explanatory aspirations to James that he simply didn't have. More egregiously, to do so is distort the real concrete work that pure experience is intended to do.

What I'm arguing here and in what follows can be put this way. Despite some initially misleading language, James ultimately intends pure experience to be primarily a *phenomenological*, and not *metaphysical*, claim. It is intended to open up the nature of our embodied and embedded experience of the world, and to explain how this experience takes shape and emerges from within our active involvement with the world and the things in it. Simply put, pure experience is the "place" where mind is enacted. Of course, insofar as James is discussing the nature of mind and its relationship to reality, pure

experience clearly has some sort of metaphysical significance. This is unavoidable. But I suggest that there's reason to think that this metaphysical significance of pure experience is for James secondary to his phenomenological concerns. As the discussion of pure experience progresses, I trust that I'll make this case more adequately.

At any rate, from here on out I'll speak of James's view here as a kind of *experiential monism*. What I mean by this expression is this: for James, pure experience includes body, mind, world, and—crucially—the various relations, such as perception-action feedback loops and affective relations, that couple these things together in different ways. *All* of these elements are constitutive parts of the same reality. But none is more basic than any other; rather, they are integrated and interrelated within pure experience. This fundamental connectedness is the "full fact" of our embodied existence, according to James, our "full self". In this sense, James *is* advocating a kind of monism, since body, mind, world, and the various forms of their coupling(s) taken together again *all* comprise basic reality. But to reify any element and treat it as discrete or substantially separate from the others is to distort this fundamental interconnectedness. Dichotomies like subject and object, consciousness and content, thought and thing, self and world are "functional attributes, discovered retrospectively according to which context is being considered" (Seigfried 1978, 53). Moreover, this "full fact"—the inextricability of mind, body and world and their coupling relations—is first disclosed to us in the prereflective modes of our bodily-perceptual, worldly engagement. Paying careful attention to experience *as experienced* discloses this intimacy, this interconnectedness. Hence, James's monism is an *experiential* monism. But it is not a passive monism. Rather, it is a monism grounded in activity (Pred 2005, 47). And James's method is method for getting at this foundational[21] experiential dimension is phenomenological analysis.

The Place of Pure Experience in Perception and Action

I've now argued for a reading of James that is clear about what pure experience doesn't mean. In what remains, I now want to spell out precisely what it *does* mean. Pure experience for James is a foundational concept intended both to get at the nature of the

mind-world relation and to explain the generative conditions for consciousness and experience. Simply put, pure experience for James refers to the unbroken continuity of subject and object within our original, prereflective experience of the environment. Pure experience is thus a relationship of self-world, perceiver-environment continuity. This continuity is established within the sensorimotor patterns of the subject's bodily-perceptual engagement with the world and things in it. Recall the earlier discussion of James's view of concepts in which he argued that perceptual consciousness conjoins what intellection retrospectively disjoins. The dynamics of the body's sensorimotor system links brain, body, and world. Pure experience is then the fact of this sensorimotor coupling. In other words, pure experience refers to the coordination of perception and action in the dynamical flow of everyday concrete experience. Again, on this foundational phenomenological level, the acting body is functionally integrated with salient features of its environment via perception-action feedback loops—and at this level subject-object, consciousness-content, self-other distinctions fail to find traction. As Seigfried (1990) writes, "…the distinction between phenomena and noumena ultimately collapses into a single world of experience" (356). This basic subject-object continuity is the primary mode of our worldly engagement. Pure experience is thus James's attempt to penetrate the nature and structure of this mode of engagement.

There are two primary aspects to pure experience that I think are crucial for understanding James's explanatory intentions. In James's hands, pure experience refers to both:

1. The prereflective continuity of subject-object, perceiver-environment.
2. The integration of perception and action in the body's adaptive intelligence—which underwrites subject-object, perceiver-environment continuity.

The first point has both ontological and phenomenological significance. Ontologically, pure experience for James refers to the reciprocity and mutuality of the mind-world relation. Both the structure and content of consciousness is dependent upon the forms of its environmental embeddedness. Simply put, world shapes mind. Conversely, however, the structure and content of consciousness shapes the way that the world is presented to consciousness. As James notes elsewhere, the trail of the human

serpent is over everything. Consciousness thus shapes world. And experience in James's hands is modeled as a dynamic, temporally-extended transaction between the two. Consciousness is not a passive receptacle for housing inner ideas and sensations. And the world is not a static arena of lifeless objects. Rather, consciousness is an activity or distributed process informing and informed by the living, meaning-laden world of which it is a part. The two are inextricably co-mingled. The phenomenological significance of this first claim for James is disclosed by looking at the body's prereflective action as it navigates and explores its world. At this level, the perceiver is perceptually attuned to its environment. Subject-object dualism is not operative.

The second aspect of pure experience, the emphasis on the integration of perception and action in the performance of the body's adaptive intelligence, informs the first aspect. The body is an intelligent agent, for James. Because it has the sort of sensorimotor system that it does, it is able to be knowingly in touch with salient features of its environment and is further able to respond to them in spontaneous and appropriate ways. James puts the point this way when he insists that, when one adopts an embodied and situation approach to cognition, we find that "Mental facts cannot be properly studied apart from the physical environment of which they take cognizance…our inner faculties are *adapted* in advance to the features of the world in which we dwell" (1900, 3). As we'll see throughout the next few chapters, this adaptive bodily intelligence is prior to anterior forms of intellection. In these adaptive responses, perception and action are integrated within the real-time interplay of embodied consciousness and world. Thus, to artificially sever perception and action into distinct modules—to construe the former as a passive reception of sensible input, and the latter as world-directed output, both of which are mediated by the inner symbol-manipulation that is thought[22]—is to mischaracterize the way that the body knows its world. Perception and action for James are thus activities of sensorimotor knowing prior to later forms of cognitive knowing. Pure experience is James's attempt to characterize the integrated nature of perception and action within the structure of the body's intelligent, prereflective worldly engagement. Perception—or more broadly, *experience*—is for James therefore an *action* or *skill*. This is because "the human organism is selective on every level, from nonconscious physiological screenings

processes to highly abstract conscious ones" (Seigfried 1990, 587). As Alva Noë writes, experience "is not something that happens to us, or in us. It is something we do" (2004, 2). James agrees.

The upshot of this construal of pure experience is that, for James, pure experience is offered as a characterization of consciousness and experience as they are enacted and lived through in the flow of our daily life. Neither of these phenomena can be accounted for when considered outside of the real concrete contexts of their *use*—in other words, their use in coping with the world and things in it. To abstract consciousness from the embodied and embedded sensorimotor structures in which it is always realized—to *reify* it, in other words—is a form of conceptual analysis that distorts its real nature and functioning. This reification lifts consciousness out of the various relations linking it to the world, body-based relations that make consciousness the world-directed activity that it is.

Pure experience as the prereflective continuity of subject-object, perceiver-environment

I want to consider these two aspects of pure experience in turn. First, the continuity of subject and object, which is vital for understanding the reading of James I am proposing. To appropriate Zen Buddhist terminology, one of pure experience's core features for James is its *nonduality*. He articulates this nonduality in a number of places and manners. In "How Two Minds Can Know One Thing", James describes the originally nondual mode of our worldly engagement this way: "It is a *that*, an Absolute, a 'pure' experience on an enormous scale, undifferentiated and undifferentiable into thought and thing (1912/1996, 134)." In "Does Consciousness Exist?", James says that, originally,

> *Experience…has no such inner duplicity; and the separation of it into consciousness and content comes, not by way of subtraction, but by way of addition…* (1912/1996, 9).

Experience, *as experienced*, as lived though in its concretion and perceptual dynamism, is unitive and integrated. It is a fluid and flowing *that*, and not a collection of discrete *whats*.

James is very much attuned to this inner unity or "fluency" of experience, as he terms it, when he notes that

> Experience in its immediacy seems perfectly fluent. The active sense of living which we all enjoy, before reflection shatters our instinctive world for us, is self-luminous and suggests no paradoxes. Its difficulties…are not intellectual contradictions (1912/1996, 92).

On its own terms, prereflective or "pure" experience exhibits a subtle cohesiveness, its own sort of inner logic. When the "reflective intellect gets at work", however, this inner experiential or affective logic is replaced with logic of a different sort: conceptual and linguistic analysis, which functions by constructing universal categories and distinctions. These categories and distinctions are not originally part of the flowing structure of pure experience, however. The result is that the reflective intellect "discovers incomprehensibilities in the flowing process…distinguishing its elements and parts, [giving] them separate names, and what it disjoins it can not easily put together" (1912/1996, 92). With his notion of pure experience, James is thus looking to get to the inner flow of our experiential life-as-lived and to rejoin the "elements and parts" disjoined by retrospective conceptual analysis. In other words, James is looking to return to the home ground of our original experience of the world. David Lapoujade (2000) writes that "pure experience…is the name William James gives to the plane of immanence" (190). Lapuojade continues that, according to James, "one must begin from within an unlimited field in which dualistic distinctions, physical world and psychic world, the world of thought and the world of matter, subject and object, have yet to be made, and in which they cannot be made without experience ceasing to be pure, without immanence being lost" (2000, 192). Pure experience is thus a bottom-up approach to getting at the inner structures of experience. This bottom-up methodology begins at the bedrock phenomenological level—the "stream of life" (1912/1996, 106)—where in our

everyday perceiving and movement in the world "ego and world are perceptually inseparable" (Neisser 1976, 117).

This foundational inseparability or continuity is irreducible, according to James. For the bulk of our lives, we navigate, manipulate, probe and explore living environments with which we enjoy a temporally-extended nondual relation of this sort. In "A World of Pure Experience", James puts the point this way: "Knowledge of sensible realities thus comes to life inside the tissue of experience. It is *made*; and made by relations that unroll themselves in time" (1912/1996, 57). Our bodily-perceptual relationship with the world enables this prereflective knowing of the world or ongoing "skilled coping", as Hubert Dreyfus refers to it.[23] Skilled coping consists of perceptual relations that "unroll themselves in time". For instance, when I get in my car, start it up and begin driving—while taking a call on my cell phone and trying to slither out of my coat, no less—I am fluidly engaging with and responding to my environment in a direct and "thoughtless" way. To speak of an autonomous subject over against a world of objects in this instance is to artificially sever the broader practical-holistic structure of that pure experience *as a whole, in its unfolding*. My acting body, the cell phone I'm speaking into and the person I'm talking to, the coat I'm struggling out of, the road I'm maneuvering down, the town I'm driving through, etc. are all elements of the unified structure of that "pure" experience. Each part—including my acting body, which for James is the locus of selfhood—is functionally integrated with each other part. And as long as things go smoothly in that context, I'm not aware of any substantial divisions between these elements. When the bodily-perceptual anticipations I have in that context are fulfilled—the car responds appropriately to steering adjustments, my cell phone continues to convey my conversation-partner's voice, my seatbelt stays fastened when I click it into place, the seat back remains firm despite my postural adjustments—the flow of the experience remains fluid and unbroken.

However, say I unthinkingly reach down to turn on my car stereo while still looking at the road in front of me and it fails to respond. The stereo is dead. Pressing the power button does nothing. At that moment of an unfulfilled bodily-perceptual anticipation, the phenomenological structure of that pure experience abruptly changes.

The pure experience dissolves. I am suddenly consciousness of my not-working stereo—I *select* it, to use James's terminology—and in doing so am jolted out of the smooth, functionally integrated relationship I had with my environment up to that moment. In the *Principles*, James describes this phenomenon:

> We have a most extremely delicate foreshadowing of the sensory effects…*Surprise* can only come from getting a sensation which differs from the one we expect. But the truth is when we know the objects well, the very slightest difference from the expected weight will surprise us, or at least attract our notice (1890/1950 2, 502).

In this activity-situation, the act of focusing in on the broken stereo introduces a dualistic structure within the experience that was not there prior to this global breakdown. The dead stereo suddenly demands my attention in a way that foregrounds its presence in my phenomenal field and abstracts it away from its prior embeddedness within the larger context. My bodily-perceptual anticipation of the stereo being turned on—an anticipation which has been satisfied hundreds of times before after pressing the power button—is abruptly *un*satisfied. I am phenomenally *surprised*, as James puts it. I don't receive the anticipated perceptual result. And thus I am suddenly aware of myself over against the dead stereo as something distinct from me that now must be dealt with and accounted for. The fluidity of that pure experience is broken. The nondual continuity of subject and object is ruptured via the imposition of consciousness's selective activity in that moment.

An extended analysis of the phenomenological structure of skilled coping will be undertaken more in the next chapter and especially in chapter four. For now, I'm interested in exploring how this nondual continuity between subject-object, perceiver-environment emerges from James's particular characterization of pure experience. One of the key points to remember here is that, as we're going to see at some length in chapter three, consciousness for James is at all times a "selecting agency". According to James, consciousness

> *is always interested more in one part of its object than in another, and welcomes and rejects, or chooses, all the while it thinks* (James 1890/1950 1, 284).

Put bluntly, consciousness is the mechanism for establishing duality in the world. It introduces a subject-object structure within the originally unitive nature of pure experience. Its function is to pick out certain features of pure experience, to emphasize and focus on saliencies that introduce divisions and dichotomies—subject-object, consciousness-content, self-other, conceptual and linguistic discriminations—that are originally collapsed within pure experience. Pure experience, in its originally nondual state, thus provides the material for consciousness-as-a-selecting-agency to do its work and establish dualistic division and structure (Heft 2001, 27). Again, pure experience is the sensorimotor site where consciousness as a selecting agency is *enacted*.

So what precisely is pure experience's nature that it funds consciousness in this way? Again, I am contending that pure experience for James can be understood as the sensorimotor mode of our bodily-perceptual engagement with the world. And I am furthermore contending that this mode is an originally unified and nondual mode of relationality: hence its "purity". In its normal patterns of everyday interaction with the world, the body is functionally integrated into its lived environment in a smooth and responsive manner via the continual unfolding of action-perception feedback loops. This action-perception feedback pattern is the basic relationship coupling self and world.

To bring this point out, James's more vivid and well-known descriptions of pure experience—after he's gone through the metaphysically loaded and potentially misleading characterization discussed in the previous section—offer a phenomenological portrayal of pure experience emphasizing the immediacy of this subject-object continuity. In "The Thing and Its Relations", James writes that

> Pure experience is the name I give to the immediate flux of life which furnishes the material to our later reflection with its conceptual categories…a *that*, which is not yet any definite *what*, tho' ready to be all sorts of whats…Pure experience in this state is but another name for feeling or sensation" (1912/1996, 94).

Similarly, in "Does Consciousness Exist?" James elaborates this idea a bit when he writes:

> The instant field of the present is at all times what I call 'pure' experience. It is only virtually or potentially either object or a subject as yet. For the time being, it

> is plain, unqualified actuality, or existence, a simple *that*. In this *naïf* immediacy it is of course *valid*; it is *there*, we *act* upon it; and the doubling of it in retrospection into a state of mind and a reality intended thereby, is just one of the acts (1912/1996, 24).

At the prereflective level of pure experience, the relational poles of subject-object, perceiver-environment exist only as functional nodes of the same unbroken circuit of experience. Therefore, at this level experience is best characterized as "a simple *that*", according to James. Experience is simply *happening*. Subject and object remain integrated within the flow of this happening. My body perceives and responds to its environment "thoughtlessly" and spontaneously. But because reflexive consciousness and its "conceptual categories" are not operative, this happening is as yet only "virtually or potentially" dichotomized into distinct poles. This is because, in pure experience

> …no dualism of being represented and representing resides in the experience *per se*…Its subjectivity and objectivity are functional attributes solely, realized only when the experience is 'taken'; *i.e.*, talked-of, twice, considered along with its two differing contexts respectively, by a new retrospective experience, of which that whole past complication forms the fresh content (1912/1996, 23).

In the "acting upon it", James insists, pure experience remains integrated and nondual. The prereflective sensorimotor patterns of our bodily engagement preserve this continuity. But it is the upwelling of consciousness-as-a-selecting-agency—the "doubling of it in retrospection", or taking it up in a *new* "retrospective experience"—that breaks up this continuity and establishes the familiar dichotomies not present in pure experience's prereflective or purest form. The acting body's sensorimotor integration into its environment thus *precedes* reflexive consciousness for James. Consciousness is enacted and emerges within the sensorimotor place of the body's integration with its world. More simply, body precedes thought, and drives and contours all experience of the world. Pure experience's emphasis on the prereflective continuity of subject and object captures this fact.

Pure experience as the integration of perception and action in the body's adaptive intelligence

In addition to stressing the basic prereflective continuity of subject-object, perceiver-environment, James's formulation of pure experience draws attention to the integration of perception and action in the real-time performance of the body's adaptive, environmentally-sensitive intelligence. This fluid and ongoing integration is actually what enables subject and object, perceiver and environment to exist in a relationship of prereflective continuity. In other words, the sensorimotor systems of the acting body provide the structural coupling, we might say, that links self and world in an originally nondual (or *pure*) relation. This integration of perception and action thus establishes the prereflective continuity of self and world. Since the idea of adaptive and intelligent bodily action will be covered at length in chapters two and four, I'll withhold a more focused analysis until then. For now, I simply want to argue for an understanding of James's formulation of pure experience that is sensitive to these features of embodied experience.

Though he's not often thought of as such, James is very much a philosopher of the body. As Richard Shusterman notes, "the body is clearly the animating core of his philosophy" (2005, 419). This includes his philosophy of pure experience. In his essay "The Experience of Activity", which is part of the collected essays articulating James's radical empiricism, he includes the following in a lengthy footnote:

> The world experienced (otherwise called the 'field of consciousness') comes at all times with our body at its centre, centre of vision, centre of action, centre of interest. Where the body is is 'here'; when the body acts is 'now'; what the body touches is 'this'; all other things are 'there' and 'then' and 'that'. These words of emphasized position imply a systematization of things with reference to a focus of action and interest which lies in the body…The body is the storm centre, the origin of co-ordinates, the constant place of stress in all that experience-train. Everything circles round it, and is felt from its point of view (1912/1996, 170).

Phenomenologically speaking, the body is the center-point or perspectival anchor for our every experience of the world. In James's language, it is the "storm centre" around which the world arranges itself in order to become a world *for me*, a world that constitutes my experience of it. The sensorimotor systems of the body configure the world—they imply a "systematization of things"—around my living and acting body. The world takes shape and conveys meaning through my perception of and action within it.

Note James's contention here that it is the "focus of action and interest which lies in the body" that causes the world to arrange itself a certain way in my experience of it. Because we have the sorts of bodies that we do, James insists, the world subsequently is given to us a being a certain way. Action and (perceptual) interest are the sensorimotor capacities that structure the world as a *lived* world, as a meaning-laden human environment with real possibilities for us. Put differently, it is the body's adaptive intelligence—realized in action-perception feedback loops—that makes sense of the "chaos", as James elsewhere terms it, of pure experience.

But it is precisely these capacities that allow the body to remain functionally integrated into its world in a nondual manner. This is so because, as James recognizes and his notion of pure experience is meant to capture, the body is a fluid structure. To use Dewey's way of putting it, the body is a "transactional" entity co-constituted by both its own structure as well as that of its lived environment.[24] As James writes in "The Place of Affectional Facts", "Our body itself is the palmary instance of the ambiguous" (1912/1996, 153). The body is more than a biological organism with fixed anatomical and epidermal boundaries. Beyond this, it is a living structure that can be extended to incorporate other features of the environment into itself. In other words, it can be expanded and enlarged. It is thus *distributed*. Looking carefully at the nature of perception and action—and their real-time integration—affirms this fact, and tells how the body (and subsequently, consciousness) becomes a distributed phenomenon, integrated with its environment. Pure experience is James's attempt to capture this bodily fluidity.

Anticipating some of Merleau-Ponty's most important insights, James is attuned to the Janus-faced nature of the living body, which can assume the role of both subject and object. The body's dual nature is noted in the following passage:

> Sometimes I treat my body purely as a part of outer nature. Sometimes, again, I think of it as 'mine', I sort it with the 'me', and then certain local changes and determinations in it pass for spiritual [or *immaterial*] happenings. Its breathing is my 'thinking', its sensorial adjustments are my 'attention', its kinesthetic alterations are my 'efforts', its visceral perturbations are my 'emotions' (1912/1996, 153).

As James notes, much of my life is spent living my body as *subject*—my body as lived from the inside, as it were, my body thought of and experienced as "mine". Merleau-Ponty terms this mode of being the *body-subject*. This mode of existence is a first-person experience of oneself and one's relation to the things of the world. This is the body as *lived through*, as the locus or "storm center" of one's agency and phenomenal subjective life. I feel things in and through this body and recognize the world as affording certain action potentials that are opened up and constrained by my having the kind of body that I do.

However, the body is an utterly unique being, as both James and Merleau-Ponty note, in that we also at times experience it as "a part of outer nature"—or in Merleau-Ponty's language, as an *object-body*. When I sense the unwavering gaze of a stranger, bang my shin on a coffee table while navigating my living room in the dark, or look in the mirror first thing in the morning, I am abruptly aware of my body as a physical object, an objected situated in a physical world of other physical objects with which it causally interacts. I recognize that my subject body is rooted in a physical structure. This is a kind of third-person awareness of my body, standing in contrast to but nonetheless complementing its normal first-person mode of givenness. The "ambiguity" of the body according to James is thus precisely its ability to simultaneously encompass *both* of these modes of being. And for both James and Merleau-Ponty—and Nishida, too, as we'll see—the experience of selfhood arises from a fluctuation between these two poles. Whatever experience of self we can be said to have is constituted by the dialectical

interaction of body, mind, and environment—a dialectical interaction made possible by our body having the kind of sensorimotor systems that it does. The brain-body-world nodes of this relational circuit are what *collectively* generate our sense of self: an "ambiguous" and fluid self whose boundaries are continually shifting and changing. But these nodes are still elements of a single pure experience. The fluid structure of the body thus mirrors the fluid nature of pure experience.

To continue with the Merleau-Ponty connection a bit more will highlight some crucial features of James's claims about the body and experience. Like James, Merleau-Ponty also argues that conceptual analysis of experience is a kind of artificial doubling or reconstruction of experience that is not faithful to our originally nondual mode of sensorimotor engagement with the world. In *The Structure of Behavior*, he writes that, in conceptual analysis,

> The world is doubled: there will be the real world as it is outside my body and the world as it is for me, numerically distinct from the first; the external cause of perception and the internal object from which it contemplates will have to be separated (1983, 190).

Again in step with James, Merleau-Ponty affirms the irreducibly *nondual* nature of our prereflective immersion in the world. At the level of experience James is probing with his notion of pure experience, Merleau-Ponty similarly argues (in a passage worth quoting at length) that

> The subject does not live in a world of states of consciousness or representations from which he would believe himself able to act on and know external things by a sort of miracle. He lives in a universe of experience, in a milieu *is neutral with regard to the substantial distinctions between the organism, thought and extension*; he lives in direct commerce with beings, things and his own body. The ego as center from which his intentions radiate, the body which carries them and the beings and things to which they are addressed are not confused: *but they are only three sectors of a unique field* (1983, 189, emphasis mine).

The functional integration of body and world is secured by the structural ambiguity of the body. More precisely, the body's sensorimotor systems are what disclose the body to

itself as (virtually) both a subject *and* an object. Because the body is ambiguous in its being, it can be extended into the environment to encompass parts of the world into itself, effectively erasing neatly defined self-world, subject-object boundaries boundaries. The skin is thus only a provisional boundary to the lived body, since I prereflectively exceed this epidermal boundary on a daily basis. For instance, the myriad forms of skilled coping that define the pragmatic trajectory of our everyday lives—intelligent bodily activities exhibiting a "thoughtless" coordination of perception and action, like maneuvering a car through traffic, the probing of a sidewalk surface with a cane by a blind person, or one's ability to deftly handle meat on a searing-hot grill with various tongs and other utensils—are all examples of how the subject-body is extended and distributed into the world via the augmentation of my object-body. Tools, artifacts, technologies and perhaps even linguistic practices and cultural institutions in this way supply different "scaffoldings" that distributes body—and thus consciousness—out into the world. We become part of the world and, very literally, it becomes part of us. More on this in the next chapter. For now, we can recall James's way of summarizing this idea:

> We must not forget, namely, in talking of the ultimate character of our activity-experiences, that each of them is but a portion of a wider world, one link in a vast chain of processes of experience out of which history is made. Each partial process…[is] a provisional halting place, and the subjectively felt activity would be [rightly] seen to continue into objective activities that led far beyond (1912/1996, 173).

Given this distributed conception of mind and self, James urges that we should "acquire a habit, in discussing activity-experiences, of defining them by their relation to something more" (1912/1996 173). This "something more" can be understood a number of ways, several of which I will explore in the next chapter. For now, this "something more", I suggest, refers to the way that various things in the world extend mind outside of the head of the subject. These "something mores", by their becoming incorporated within the sensorimotor patterns of our worldly engagement, mean that mind isn't a self-contained thing that ends at the inner limits of the skin and skull. Rather, mind is something more. It is part of the living world of pure experience.

Summary

I have argued for a particular reading of James's pure experience in which I have stressed its phenomenological significance over and above its metaphysical significance. Given the centrality of the acting body and perception in James's work as a whole, I think this is the right way to go. The argument for this phenomenological reading of pure experience proceeded in this way. First, I looked at James on consciousness and experience. I argued that, for James, consciousness is not an inner static thing but rather an enactive process or world-directed activity of the entire creature. Moreover, consciousness for James is intrinsically experiential, it harbors content structured by the sensorimotor capacities of the world-engaged body, and it is an enactive process extended out in the world. As we're going to see in the next chapter, these claims about consciousness find strong empirical support from recent experimental work in cognitive science.

Next, I argued that, based upon this enactive conception of consciousness, pure experience can and should be given a strongly phenomenological reading. As a foundational concept, the purpose of pure experience, I suggested, is to ensure pure that philosophy remain on "speaking terms" with the primordial bodily-perceptual level of experience that links us to the world and which feeds all subsequent forms of intellection, according to James. Mind is only understood by beginning with and working through the body. This "body first" approach entails careful phenomenological analysis. The place of pure experience in James's hands then becomes the structures of our sensorimotor patterns of action and perception that make possible the kind of originally nondual relationship we enjoy with the world, a nondual relationship which underwrites consciousness and experience. The continuity of subject and object within pure experience, as well as the way that the "thoughtless" coordination of perception and action within everyday activity preserves this continuity, was then explored. With this analysis complete, a phenomenological reading of pure experience is now in place. Importantly, we are now ready to see how James's extended conception of mind and experience emerges from this phenomenological characterization of pure experience.

Additionally, we are prepared to see how many of James's most important insights are being confirmed by ongoing empirical research. This investigation is the project of the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO
JAMES'S PURE EXPERIENCE AND THE EXTENDED MIND

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I offered a sensorimotor-based interpretation of James's notion of "pure experience". I argued for pure experience's phenomenological importance, over and above its metaphysical significance. I suggested that this phenomenological reading is more consistent with James's continual insistence on the bodily nature of cognition and experience than a strongly metaphysical reading. Moreover, I suggested that a phenomenological, sensorimotor-based reading of pure experience might be fruitfully engaged with ongoing contemporary discussions about the embodied and enactive nature of consciousness and experience in a way that both sheds light on James's insights while, at the same time, furthering current debates. Mindful of these possibilities, this chapter is therefore a continuation of my earlier stated wish to put pure experience to work. The last chapter was largely interpretive. Now, I want to put pure experience to work in a constructive way by using this idea to provide the basis for an extended conception of mind and experience.

The main argument of the chapter can be stated more precisely. In what follows, I argue that James's phenomenological formulation of "pure experience" and his characterization of consciousness as a "selecting agency" can be used to develop and defend what I term a "pragmatic externalist" view of mind and experience. Put simply, an externalist view of mentality urges that mind is not simply a property or process localized in the head of the subject. And not all mental phenomena are intracranial phenomena. Rather, in a very real sense, mind and mental phenomena extended beyond the skin and skull, out into the world of people and things.

To elaborate a bit: I will argue that this model of the extended mind is coextensive with James's insistence that experience is not something that simply happens to us, but rather something that we do. Conscious experience is thus an *action*. Therefore, perception and action are not discrete processes but rather thoroughly integrated and mutually-informing occurrences. In this sense, consciousness and experience are constructed or, to use a more current term, *enacted*, through our embodied engagement with the world. For James, consciousness and experience are forged within the various forms of our body's exploratory activities. We enact mind by engaging with the world.

The chapter proceeds as follows: First, I begin with some definitions and terminological clarifications. I then look at a prototypical internalist view of consciousness and phenomenal content. Next, I discuss James on consciousness, and show how James's externalist view of consciousness offers several trenchant criticisms of internalist views of mind and phenomenal content. I then develop an externalist view of consciousness and experience which draws upon James's formulation of pure experience and consciousness-as-a-selecting agency. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how recent empirical research supports James's sensorimotor-based externalist conception of mind and experience.

Definitions

First, some definitions. In what follows, I will say a fair bit about *internalism* and *externalism*. *Internalism*, as I use the term, is the view that mental states are internal and autonomous. In other words, mental states and their content are independent of the surrounding world. This is because internal states fix the content of beliefs, desires and experiences. Thus all mental events, states, and processes occur inside the skin and skull of the individual who has them. There is no necessary *constitutive* relation between an individual's mental states and their environment. Internalists can deny a constitutive relation between mind and world while still conceding some sort of *causal* relation. For example, the internalist can acknowledge that a juicy red apple "out there in the world" can *cause* a visual experience of a juicy red apple as being "out there in the world". But

the experience itself, according to this internalist line, is nonetheless *constituted* entirely by neurobiological states and mental particulars inside the head of the subject. To understand mind and experience, then, we must look to the (mental, neural) "stuff" inside the head.

Stated thusly, there are two central commitments of this internalist view that pragmatic externalism (defined momentarily) denies: the location claim, and the ontological claim.[25] The location claim is the claim that all mental particulars are exclusively spatially located inside the skin and skull of the subject who has them. This is the claim that everything important for mentality happens inside of the head. (Of course, for most of those doing work in some particular area of cognitive science, this means that everything interesting happens within the physical structure of the brain). Connectedly, the ontological claim is an identity claim: the claim that mental particulars are *constituted* by properties and processes exclusively located inside the head of the subject. Whatever the nature of mentality ultimately proves to be, it is metaphysically determined by intracranial states, events and processes. In short, to look at mind we must look at (or more accurately, *in*) the head. The location claim and ontological claim confirms this view.

Externalism, as I use the term, denies both the location claim and the ontological claim of internalism. The pragmatic externalism I am here arguing for—a view that I claim is both supported both by James's rendering of pure experience as well as recent empirical research—offers what at first blush likely appears to be a counterintuitive thesis. The claim is this: *pace* internalism, mind is (at least partially) external to the head. Via our active probing and manipulation of the world, mentality is distributed beyond the skin and skull, out into the world of people and things. Thus, not only is there a causal relation between mind and world. More strongly, there is also a necessary *constitutive* relation between (at least some) of an individual's mental states and their environment. Not all mental phenomena are inside the head of the conscious subject. Rather, mental content is not in principle independent of the world and autonomous but rather context-dependent. In short, pragmatic externalism claims that mentality is both inside *and* outside of the head. Mental states are not simply *caused* but, more radically, sometimes

even *constituted* by the world and the things in it. To appropriate Putnam's famous slogan: Consciousness ain't (just) in the head! Put differently, mind is part of world and world is, very literally, part of mind. The embodied mind's sensorimotor capacities are what enable this dynamic coupling. By labeling this form of externalism "pragmatic", I am emphasizing the enactive, content-constituting role that action, selectivity, and movement plays in constructing experience. Finally, I contend that James's twin notions of "pure experience" and "consciousness-as-a-selecting agency" offer theoretical antecedents for this view.[26]

Before defending an externalist account of mind, it is important to note what sort of approaches fly under the flag of internalism. Of course, our old friend Descartes is widely cited as the most egregious of internalists. As is well-known, according to Descartes, mind is a nonphysical substance. More pertinent for our present concerns is Descartes' connected characterization of mind as a monadic, self-contained entity. Accordingly, all mental phenomena are both localized and constituted somewhere within the inner limits of the head of conscious subjects. And while mental phenomena causally interact with physical phenomena, the *nature* of mental phenomena—and more broadly, mind itself—remains unchanged by this interaction (Rowlands 1999, 5) for Descartes.

The number of psycho-physical dualists has thinned in recent years.[27] However, while most contemporary approaches to mind have rejected Descartes' nonphysical characterization of mind for brain-based materialist accounts, they have nonetheless retained a Cartesian commitment to the two internalist principles referenced above. Their arguments can be glossed as follows: internal states, events, properties and processes—specifically, those occurring within the brain and central nervous system—*metaphysically determine* that subject's conscious experience. Mental properties should thus be assimilated to internal physical properties. This is because mental phenomena are ultimately caused by, correlated with or reducible to physical processes in the brain and central nervous system. This gloss expresses the basic physicalist presupposition animating mind-brain identity theories. Of course, there are important conceptual differences between views such as type, token, eliminative and nonreductive physicalism. However, the point salient to this discussion is the fact that for all of these views,

mentality is best understood by focusing in on neurophysiological happenings in the brain and central nervous system. Mentality, including consciousness, is in one sense or another a physical process both located within and constituted by neural events in the head of the subject.[28] Internalism holds sway in contemporary cognitive science.

In fact, cognitive science's most energetic field of research, the ongoing search for the "neural correlates of consciousness" (or "NCCs," as they're referred to in the literature)—the brain-based substratum purportedly responsible for generating consciousness—also reflects this internalist bias.[29] Indeed, the NCC program as a whole is predicated on an internalist conception of mind and consciousness. Most neuroscientists now believe that, for every conscious state *E*, there exists a neural substrate or complex *N* nomically sufficient for the occurrence of that state (Noë and Thompson 2004). Noë and Thompson call this the *minimally sufficient neural substrate* thesis, and suggest that "This minimal substrate thesis is a ground-level metaphysical and/or methodological commitment of many scientists and philosophers interested in the neural basis of consciousness" (2004, 4). Metaphysically, it is assumed that conscious states are wholly constituted by and realized within intracranial processes and structures. Methodologically speaking, then, cognitive science's primary task is to focus in on the patterns of neural activity putatively responsible for various types of conscious states and to formulate an explanatory link between the activity of a neural substrate *N* and its correlate experience *E*.

The distinguished scientist Francis Crick (1996) argues just this. He writes that it is now cognitive science's main responsibility "to discover the neural correlates of consciousness" (Crick 1996, 496). A happy consequence of this NCC program, Crick charitably suggests, is that consciousness researchers no longer "need endure the tedium of philosophers perpetually disagreeing with each other…[since] consciousness is now largely a scientific problem" (1996 496). In fact, this view leads Crick to confidently tell us elsewhere that, in terms of the consciousness self, "you're nothing but a pack of neurons" (1994, 3). This is the internalist-materialist credo in a concise formula. In a similarly succinct way, Patricia Churchland expresses this view when she says near the beginning of her influential *Neurophilosophy* that "I am a materialist and hence believe

that the mind is the brain" (Churchland 1986, ix). This internalist bias is also prevalent in more purely philosophical approaches to mind and experience. John Perry (2001) writes in a recent book that "It seems pretty clear…that the subjective character of a mental state is not a historical or contextual property of it. It is a property determined by current inner events…The states of our body, often carrying information about the external world, put our brains in states it is like something to be in" (44, 46). To talk of consciousness, then—including its phenomenal or subjective qualities—is to talk about inner states of our body, which carry derivative "information about the external world". Philosophy and cognitive science thus have the project of explaining precisely how these inner representational states accurately convey information about a world ontologically distinct from them.

In sum, nearly *all* of the most prominent contemporary approaches to mind in cognitive science and philosophy can rightly be called internalist, as I use the term. They all affirm the location and the ontological claims of internalism discussed above. In fact, it's now commonplace to assume that these presuppositions are necessary components of any serious, empirically-verifiable account of mentality. To understand mind, we must look at the neural structures and states that underwrite it. And quite obviously, this entails looking at all sorts of interesting things that go on in the head. Recent developments in fMRI and EEG technology have given many researchers the hope that we now have the resources to study consciousness not in its behavioral expression or via first-person introspective reports, but rather in its neurobiological "nudity", so to speak. In other words, this enthusiasm stems from the belief that current technology affords us the ability to see consciousness *in action*—that is to say, consciousness as *neural-representational* action. For many in cognitive science, this neural activity simply *is* consciousness. When we look at fMRI scans of brain activity we are looking at denuded consciousness.

Construed thusly, however, it's clear that materialist accounts of mind and consciousness are still infected with a deep Cartesian prejudice. I suggest—and I think James would agree, given my interpretation of him in the last chapter—that contemporary physicalist accounts have substituted one form of dualism for another. This means that many of the same deep Cartesian difficulties remain. More precisely, this

Cartesian prejudice or materialist *isolationism*, we might say, is reflected in the way that mind, though no longer thought of as a nonphysical substance, is nonetheless construed as a physical property or process insulated from the world within the physical structure of the brain (and possibly the central nervous system). Metaphysically and methodologically, mind-as-brain is seen as functionally continuous with but *ontologically distinct* from its environment. Metaphysically, brain activity is seen as both necessary and, importantly, sufficient for mentality.[30] Methodologically, cognitive science needs then only pay attention to that which is necessary and sufficient for its subject matter. Jerry Fodor (1980, 1981), for instance, is explicit about this internalist emphasis when he says that mind research should utilize "methodological solipsism": the assumption that mentality is localized in the brain and thus should be studied independently of its contextuality. In other words, cognitive science should limit its inquiry to happenings in the head. Once more, internalism is the order of the day.

In this way, contemporary internalist brain-based views of mind and cognition affirm what Teed Rockwell calls "Cartesian materialism" (Rockwell 2005). Echoing their psycho-physical dualistic forbearers, Cartesian materialist views still carve off the mind from the living world in which it is embedded. The difference now is that that which is carved off is a physical substance—an ongoing pattern of neural activity—and not a nonphysical and unextended substance. Rockwell writes that "The basic dogma of Cartesian materialism is that only neural activity in the cranium is functionally essential for the emergence of mind" (2005, 13). Cartesian materialism is thus part and parcel of a larger internalist conception of mind dominating contemporary debates.

But given this Cartesian prejudice, difficulties still haunt this brain-based "machine in the machine" (Rockwell 2005, 10) model of mind. On one hand, if mind-as-brain is a physical substance situated in a world of physical substances, the seemingly insurmountable question of how metaphysically *distinct* substances can interact—the question perpetually undercutting Cartesian psycho-physical dualism—is no longer an issue. However, another more persistent worry lingers. The problem might be put this way: If mentality is an inner property or process localized in the brain, how does it come

to have the world outside of it as its experiential content? More simply, how does an inner mind represent an outer world at all?

These questions are questions about *intentionality*. And questions about intentionality—the question of how mental phenomena can be about the world and things in it—are deep and complex questions, which open up into a large family of related issues. However, this family of issues can perhaps be distilled into a core theme common to them all: that is, the notion of *representation*. In other words, how can be mental phenomena (such as perception, beliefs and desires), or the activity of neural circuitry, represent things other than themselves? To be a bit more precise, we can frame this intentionality-representation issue as involving two aspects: the question of the (1) *nature* and (2) *function* of representations. Concerning their nature, some questions are: What *is* a representation, exactly? What is its ontological status? Concerning their function: How exactly does an inner representation successfully represent an outer world? What is its function such that it is able to take the external world as its content and represent it to the subject as being a certain way?

The questions will be explored as we go along. Note, however, that if one accepts the internalist-materialist characterization of mentality discussed above, Cartesian difficulties loom large. According to these internalist-materialist models, everything mental is localized in the physical structure of the brain. Intentionality is generally thought to be a feature of mentality, which links mind and world in some sort of causal relationship. Intentionality, too, must thus be localized in the physical structure of the brain. But if this is so, how does intentionality get out of the brain and into the world? How does mind represent the world as being a certain way? How do representations *re-present*? As with psycho-physical dualism, mind under this characterization is fundamentally severed from the external world. It is isolated within the inner limits of the skin and skull. To overcome this isolation, internalist-materialist accounts of mentality must tell a story about how representations take mind out of the skull and, in a sense, into the world. The question of mental representation—or the broader question of intentionality—is thus a question about fundamental relationship between mind and

world. However, the current situation is complicated by the fact that, at present, cognitive science has no clearly defined concept of representation (Clapin 2002, 19).

There are a number of contenders, however. Quite obviously, items like words, numbers, maps, blueprints, and paintings represent things other than themselves. However, these are not mental items, which have the property of intentionality and thus differ from representing artifacts. So what kind of mental items represent? The cognitive science literature speaks of, among other things, *mental* and *physiological* (or *neural*) representations. Fodor's (1975, 1981, 1987) "language of thought" hypothesis–the claim that cognition is made up of language-like inner representations or "mentalese"—is one famous characterization of mental representations. Stated roughly, thought just is, according to Fodor, the computational manipulation of these inner language-like tokens. The act of thinking is the sequential tokening of syntactically and semantically structured mental representations, tokens of symbol systems locally realized within the physical structure of the brain. These mental tokens thus represent that which they are about. As Fodor puts it, "at the heart of the [Representational Theory of Mind] is the postulation of a language of thought: an infinite set of 'mental representations' which function both as the immediate objects of propositional attitudes and as the domains of mental processes (1987, 16-17).

In the cognitive science literature, the label "mental representations" can refer to a range of mental items including thoughts, concepts, ideas, percepts, etc. These are internally-occurring mental constructs that carry information, or represent, features of the things or states of affairs that are their *content*. David Marr's (1980) influential theory of visual perception—or theory of "pure vision" (Churchland *et al* 1994) as it's been called—is another example of a kind of mental representation. Again, to put things simply: according to Marr, vision consists of a process by which the brain constructs an internal representation of the world as seen by a visual subject. This detailed internal representation is constructed from the information present in the retinal image. And when we see, then, we are seeing not the thing itself or even the retinal image—which is inverted, two-dimensional and saccadic—but rather the inner, brain-constructed representation, which stands in for the thing itself and is stable and three-dimensional. In

short, we see mental representations in the head. According to Marr, vision "is the process of discovering from images what is present in the world, and where it is" (1980, 3).

In addition to mental representations, cognitive science also speaks of *physiological* or *neural* representations. Neural representations refer to certain areas and structures within the brain that are activated during specific task states. For example, neuroimaging technology has implicated several occipito-temporal areas of the brain that area active during facial recognition (Nakamura *et al* 2000). These areas, or more precisely, the neural circuitry within them, thus might be said to carry information relevant to the task of facial recognition. In other words, the neural circuitry of the brain can be characterized as an information-bearing structure or representational system capable of representing a thing or state of affairs (in this case, a face) as being a certain way (in this case, familiar or unfamiliar). Similarly, psychologist Bernard Baars (1997) writes that

> Every waking moment we construct a smooth visual reality out of dozens of narrow jumpy snapshots collected over many separate fixations...Thus your experience…emerges from a great deal of brainwork (106).

Again, we experience the end-product of our brainwork—inner neural representations—and not that which the brainwork is *about*. We experience an inner model of the world, and not the world itself.[31]

To return to the main thread: all of these representational contenders—mental, neural-physiological, or otherwise—face the same Cartesian isolationist difficulty. Whatever their nature, representations are characterized as the *interface* necessarily mediating the world and our experience of it. This is their function. And this interface view of representations only serves to isolate mind from the external world all the more. This is because if some sort of representation(s) necessarily mediates between experience and world, our experience of the world is always indirect. We experience only representations of things, and not the things themselves. Hilary Putnam (1999) describes the genesis of this interface view. He writes:

> If one assumes that the mind is an *organ*, and one goes on to identify the mind with the brain, it well then become irresistible to (1) think of some of the "representations" as analogous to the classical theorist's "impressions" (the cerebral computer, or mind, makes *inferences* from at least some of the "representations", the outputs of the perceptual processes, just as the mind makes inferences from impressions, on the classical story) and (2) to think that those "representations are linked to the objects in the organism's environment only causally, and not cognitively (just as impressions were linked to "externals objects" only causally, and not cognitively (10).

In spelling out the consequences of this view, Putnam refers to James's criticism of internalist interface conceptions of experience. Putnam notes that

> James's idea is that the traditional claim that we must conceive of our sensory experiences as *intermediaries* between us and the world has no sound arguments to support it and, worse, makes it impossible to see how persons can be in genuine cognitive contact with the world at all (1999 11).

Vicious skepticism is thus the consequence of interface views of experience. And an internalist-materialist conception of the mental fares no better than its Cartesian psycho-physical antecedent. This is because even "the materialist version conceives [of representations as inner intermediaries]; it is just that for this version alterations of our brain states is what affectations of our subjectivity *are* (1999 181 n24).

> Daniel Dennett expresses this precisely idea when he says that
> Somehow, the syntactical virtuosity of our brains permits us to be interpreted at another level as semantic engines—systems that (indirectly) discriminate the significance of the impingments on them (1982 26-7; quoted in McDowell 2002 452).

In other words, what seems to be the inner, introspectable phenomenological content of our experience of the world is, according to Dennett, merely the selective accessing of certain parts of *sub-personal* informational content being worked over by the physiological processes comprising our perceptual systems. More simply, we only have access to the physiological representations (in the sense discussed above) of our inner

information-processing systems. But as John McDowell (2002) notes in criticizing Dennett on this point, this means that we only come to have knowledge of the world indirectly, through our inner representations. Therefore, it is "as if we were in the predicament of our nervous systems, blocked off from the environment…No wonder our status as semantic engines becomes a mystery ("somehow")…" (McDowell 2002, 452-3). The upshot of all of this is that any view that construes the mind-world relation as necessarily representational "all the way down" is faced with the undesirable consequence of concluding that mind is utterly isolated from world of which it is a part. We can have no contact with anything but our representations, whatever their nature. We are isolated machines in the machine.

James offers a way out of this internalist isolationism. The pragmatic externalism that I attribute to him, and which I think is an extension of his development of pure experience, characterizes intentionality as the world-directed, situated activity of the whole creature. For James, action, perception, and thought are seamlessly integrated within our intentional engagement with the world. Thus, for James intentionality is not an intrinsic property of representational or neural activity but a relational property of the mind-body-world dynamic or pure experience. . Again, the whole embedded and embodied creature—which includes parts of the world, as we'll see—is an intentional organism. Thus, there is no theoretical need to posit inner representations or models that somehow mediate our access to the world. Rather, we have direct access to the things themselves, which speak their natures to us through our bodily-perceptual engagement with them. The world is allowed to be that which it is: its own best model. Intentionality is thus not a *causal* relation, for James, referring to the way that thing in the world press themselves onto the mind as passive spectator—resulting in an elaborate inner picture re-presenting the real object at the other end of the casual chain. Rather, whole-creature intentionality is a *constitutive* relation. It is enacted by our exploring, handling, probing and manipulating the world and things in it. Intentionality is a dynamic process coupling brain, body and world.

Putnam notes that "one of the things James wants to do is change our idea of what "experience" *is*" (1990, 238). James's development of pure experience is his most

focused attempt to do just this. Pure experience is offered as a challenge to the dualism implicit in an interface or mental intermediary view of experience. James argues to the contrary that there's no good reason to think of subject and world as anything other than a dynamic unity, and as mind as a body-based, transactive relation that emerges between them. As contemporary internalist-materialist accounts of mind are still representationalist or interface views of one sort or another, as we've seen, James's challenge is still highly relevant.

Internalism and Phenomenal Content

Before spelling out James's pragmatic externalism with a discussion of perceptual consciousness, I now want to take a moment and look more carefully at an internalist view of perception—specifically, an internalist account of phenomenal content. Later, I'm going to criticize this internalist account and show why a Jamesian pragmatic externalist account is more satisfactory. James says a great deal about perceptual consciousness from the time of the *Principles* all the way up through *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, so this topic is clearly central to James's larger conception of mind and experience.

In his recent book *Knowledge, Possibility, and Consciousness*, philosopher John Perry (2001) argues for what he terms "antecedent physicalism". This is essentially the view that, until a better option is shown to the case, or physicalism is shown to entail contradictions, incoherencies, or distortions of our commonsense descriptions of experience, the individual antecedently committed to physicalism need not abandon this view. According to Perry, physicalism is simply the view that all mental states, including subjective or phenomenal states of consciousness, can be given at least potentially be given a physical explanation (2001 26). In other words, mental states are, like everything else, part of the physical furniture of the universe. Perry establishes his position by defending the central claims of antecedent physicalism from several common qualia-friendly, antiphysicalist arguments (such as the zombie argument, to name one). My interest here is not in Perry's responses to various antiphysicalist arguments. Rather, my

intention is to question the larger internalist presupposition informing Perry's physicalism—an internalist presupposition shared by other physicalist conceptions of mentality.

Of immediate interest to the present discussion is Perry's following claim: "It seems pretty clear…that the subjective character of a mental state is not a historical or contextual property of it. It is a property determined by current inner events."(Perry 2001, 44). He later continues: "The states of our body, often carrying information about the external world, put our brains in states it is like something to be in. Amazing, but true." (Perry 2001, 46). Thus, to account for the phenomenal character of my visual experience of an apple, for instance, I need to tell a story about how "my perception of an apple is caused by events in my eyes and the optic nerve, themselves caused by external light and apples" (Perry 2001, 37). Physiological, causal analysis of inner brain and body states is therefore sufficient to give us ontological-constitutive explanation of the subjective character of experience.

For Perry, then, the subjective character of mental states is ultimately type-identical to internal physical states. External things may *cause* subjective experiences. However, the subjective character of experience is not *constituted* by external things or properties, but rather "inner events" in the brain and central nervous system. Thus Perry endorses both the location and the ontological claims of internalism as laid out above. The subjective character of experience is located in various brain states that "it is like something to be in". And it is the various physiological "states of our body", which carry information or represent the external world, that constitutes the kinds of experiences we think of as comprising phenomenal consciousness. Moreover, this internalist bias is for Perry an unargued for assumption, "pretty clear" enough, he says, to not require some sort of developed defense.

Note also that Perry's brief comment about what a story of visual perception entails—a causal-physiological account of events in the eye and optic nerve, and the way that like strikes both the object-as-seen and the retina, which forms an image then transferred to relevant processing centers in the brain—commits him to the representationalist-isolationaist view of experience discussed above. For again, if visual

perception is exhaustively described by physiological occurrences localized within the anatomy of our visual system (retina, optic nerve, brain, etc.), we are not visually perceiving the objects we take ourselves to be seeing but rather a brain-based representation of them. Once more, the image on the retina is inverted, two-dimensional, and unstable (due to the saccadic movements of the eye). But the world we perceive is generally right-side-up, three dimensional, and relatively stable. How this transformation takes place is the problem of "inverse optics" (Marr, 1980). And again, the point here relevant is that since the world *is* generally perceived as right-side-up, three dimensional, and stable, we are perceiving a finished inner "snapshot" or representation that is assembled somewhere in the relevant areas of the brain. We are seeing a picture of the world, and not the world itself. Under this casual theory of perception, the world and things in it strike our visual systems in certain ways. We then see the brain-based representation that is the end-product of this causal impact. These inner representations are subjective experience, the phenomenal content of experiential consciousness.

I've taken a moment to spell out Perry's characterization of phenomenal content to serve as a prototype internalist formulation of phenomenal consciousness. But I think Perry's account here is wrong for several reasons. It's plagued by some Cartesian difficulties already mentioned, difficulties that haunt other internalist conceptions of mind and experience. Using some of James's insights, I'd now like to say more precisely why this is so. First, however, I'll examine James's view of consciousness. Then I'll build off of this discussion to establish a pragmatic externalist account of perceptual consciousness and phenomenal content.

James on Consciousness and Selectivity

There are two distinctive characterizations of consciousness offered by James that will serve as the basis for the pragmatic externalist account of phenomenal consciousness developed below. I mentioned one of these characteristics in the previous chapter. I now want to say a bit more about it and introduce its companion concept. According to James, consciousness is both (1) an *external functional relation*, and (2) a *selecting agency*.

First, James characterizes consciousness as an *external functional relation*. In "Does 'Consciousness' Exist?" James famously answers the question posed by the title of the essay in the negative. More precisely, James denies that consciousness exists as a substance or entity—some sort of ethereal mind-stuff over against the things and relations of the physical world. Rather, consciousness is a mode of bodily activity, part of the brain-body-world dynamic that is pure experience. While not a *thing*, strictly speaking, James insists "most emphatically that [consciousness] does stand for a function" (1912/1996, 3), and furthermore that "that function is *knowing*" (1912/1996, 4). Later in the same essay, James continues: "consciousness connotes a kind of external relation, and does not denote a special stuff or way of being" (James 1912/1996, 25).

The ontological import of this passage is clear: consciousness is not a "special" Cartesian substance. But what about the positive characterization of consciousness as "a kind of external relation"? This somewhat mysterious attribution can be made clearer when we recall that James affirms a kind of naïve realism about perceptual content. Naïve realism, or what is now more commonly referred to as the "theory of direct perception", is simply the claim that, in experience via any sensory modality, we have immediate and noninferential awareness of the objects or states of affairs that we take ourselves to be experiencing. In other words, theories of direct perception deny the existence of any sort of intramental intermediaries—mental or neural representations, sense data, ideas, impressions, and the like—that serve as the true objects of experience. Again, the claim is that we have direct access to things in the world through our experiences of them. And thus the *content* of our phenomenal experiences of things and states of affairs is simply *the things and states of affairs themselves*. James says just this when he writes that perception "is a kind of knowledge…in which the mind enjoys direct 'acquaintance' with a present object" (James 1912/1996, 54). But importantly for James, consciousness is not aware simply of a world of brute objects. We do not experience a world of lifeless things-in-themselves. For even at a pretheoretical level, consciousness engages with a world of meaning—situations filled with affordances that exert an affective, qualitative grip on us, offering opportunities for action and response. Experience, for James, is thus always a kind of interpretation. Seigfried puts the point this

way: “We are so constituted as bodily beings in the world, that the object intended is actually known before curiosity can arise as to how feelings can intend just that object” (1990, 276). I return to this idea below in section five.

So how does this clarify James’s characterization of consciousness as an external functional relation? In this way, I think. First, James is clearly denying that consciousness is a monadic predicate or property. Rather, James is instead arguing that consciousness is a *relational* property or function constituted by its “hooking up” with things and states of affairs in the world. To recall a formula used in the previous chapter, we might say the following: For James, consciousness is not a *substance* but rather a fluid and dynamic *structure*. And as a dynamic structure—as the mechanism by which we have direct access to the objects of experience—consciousness is enacted in and through our experiential engagement with the world and the things in it. This characterization is a bit vague, but it will have to do for the moment.

However, an important clarification is needed: When James speaks of consciousness as a “functional” relation, we must be careful not to assume that this term has the same significance for James that it does for contemporary theorists who endorse functionalist accounts of consciousness. According to the latter, mental states are individuated *not* by their intrinsic properties (such as the phenomenal feel of viewing a sunset, sipping a single malt scotch, or working out a logical proof) but rather by their *functional* or *causal relations*: relations to stimulus inputs, other internal states, and behavioral outputs. These relational properties are what individuate all mental states as being the sort of states that they are. Crudely put: a physical system (such as the brain and central nervous system) takes in a physical input, runs it through a sequence of internal cause-and-effect relations, and then produces a physical output. Under this rendering, mental states are thus functional or computational states. And the salient point here is that there are no intrinsic phenomenal properties of consciousness, according to this functionalist line.

James is not interested in offering an abstract functional portrayal of consciousness decontextualized from its bodily-perceptual situatedness. James does share contemporary functionalism’s *relational* portrayal of consciousness. But *contra*

functionalism, James *does* want to insist upon (at least one) intrinsic property of phenomenal consciousness, as we'll see below. As a preview, I'll simply note that this intrinsic property of phenomenal consciousness is an *implicit bodily self-awareness*. But again, while implicit bodily self-awareness is an intrinsic feature of phenomenal states, it is also a *relational* property constituted, at least in part, by external sensorimotor relations with things in the world. James is much too phenomenologically sensitive to go all the way with his "functional" portrayal and allow the subjective character of experience to become epiphenomenally extraneous. (This is of course precisely the criticism of contemporary functionalism levied by thinkers such as Searle (1992), Block (2004), and Shoemaker (2004), as well as many from within the phenomenological tradition). In sum: consciousness, for James, is not a substance but a dynamic structure. It is an external functional relation constituted by the sensorimotor structures and patterns of our worldly engagement.

Next, James characterizes consciousness as a *selecting agency*. This is perhaps his most substantive positive portrayal of consciousness. It is also this characterization of consciousness which further clarifies what James means by portraying consciousness as an external functional relation. To understand James's point, we must recall his insistence, discussed in the previous chapter, on the interdependence of activity and experience. In "The Experience of Activity", James defines activity, construed as broadly as possible, as "the sense of life" (James 1912/1996, 161). James then insists that the *experience* of activity is a basic constituent of "our own subjective life" (James 1912/1996, 161). Our self-awareness of our *agency*, prior to reflective self-awareness of ourselves as bare *cognizers*, is an invariant structural feature of our subjectivity, our phenomenal experience of the world. According to James, there is thus an irreducible interrelation between agency and experience. In an important sense, agency (activity both realized and implicitly recognized as possible) structures or determines experience. Insofar as I am aware of myself, according to James, I am aware of myself as a locus of possible creative activity.

But this somewhat vague construal requires refinement. James offers this refinement when he continues by saying that all activity "comes with definite

direction…with desire and sense of goal" (James 1912/1996,162). Agency structures experience, and experience is always "shot through" with selective interests and goals respective to the agent. Moreover, the world and events in it also exhibit their own structure and direction. Thus, James notes that "To know an object is here to lead it through a context which the world supplies" (1909/1975, 35). This teleological conception of experience is an entailment of his earlier well-known claim, running throughout the *Principles of Psychology*, that "consciousness is at all times primarily a *selecting agency*" (James 1890/1950 Vol. I 142). Thus, consciousness

> *is always interested more in one part of its object than in another, and welcomes and rejects, or chooses, all the while it thinks* (James 1890/1950 1, 273).

Importantly, on the side of the agent, the selective function of consciousness structures the phenomenal field of perceptual experience.

James's point here is not simply the claim that objects of consciousness always present themselves *aspectually*. This weaker "aspectual" claim is summed up as follows: I never see the apple on my kitchen table in its totality, for instance, but only certain aspects or profiles relative to my embodied spatial relationship to the apple. Certainly James would concede this simple point about the aspectual nature of perception. However, by characterizing consciousness as a selecting agency, James is making a broader and ultimately stronger point. Again, to put the matter simply: the selectivity of consciousness very literally structures its world of experience. By accentuating and emphasizing certain objects and aspects as they make themselves present to us within the *total field of pure experience*—and thus simultaneously excluding or overlooking others—we literally reconfigure our phenomenal field of experience in a way that reflects these individual accentuations and emphases. As opposed to internalist renderings of phenomenal experience, under which an external world presses itself onto the mind-as-passive recipient of sensible input, resulting in the compilation of inner representations of an outer world, James instead insists here on the world-directed *activity* of consciousness. Consciousness is an open-ended action. Only by insisting that phenomenal experience is an action can we accommodate "so patent a fact as the *perceptual* presence of selective attention" (James 1890/1950 1, 402, emphasis mine). The psychologist Ulrich Neisser

(1976) puts the point this way. He writes that, like tennis or driving a car, "perception is also a skill" (Neisser 1976, 52). Perception is an exploratory activity of the whole situated creature, designed to pick up and respond to information about the environments within which it is situated. Thus, "perception is inherently selective" (Neisser 1976, 55).

Some examples will help clarify James's claim here. After receiving an especially unflattering haircut, I am suddenly acutely aware the following day of the haircuts of my students and the people I encounter on the street—all of whom seem to have somehow escaped the indignity of receiving a haircut similar to my own. This is not to say that I don't normally experience others' haircuts. But post-bad hair cut, others' haircuts are suddenly foregrounded in my experience, with a vividness and persistency, not normally the case. Very literally, I notice almost nothing *but* others' haircuts.

More happily, this experience is also replicated in other more pleasant contexts: for example, when one's beloved suddenly enters the restaurant, looking especially fetching that evening. The upshot of this is that the phenomenal field is *malleable*. I can literally reconfigure it by accentuating certain features while de-emphasizing others. As a selecting agency, consciousness fixes onto phenomenal saliencies relevant to the agent's interests and ends that temporarily mask or occlude other features of the same field of experience. An overgrown backyard in need of a mow for the philosopher becomes a circus of floral fascinations, blooming and buzzing with myriad saliencies under the gaze of the trained botanist. Similarly, the basketball court alights with dynamic lines and vectors of possible action and creative expression for the professional basketball player in a way that makes the cold geometry of the philosopher's court appear radically impoverished. Again, the point is simply put: consciousness, as a selecting agency, actively structures its phenomenal field. This is its functional significance.

However, it must be immediately noted that James is *not* advocating an idealist position, wherein consciousness literally *creates* the objects that it experiences. Again, James affirms a theory of direct perception. There is a world of real things, for James, and we have unmediated access to it.[32] Recall his earlier comment to this effect. Moreover, James's formulation of pure experience ensures that subject, world, and coupling relations all exist as part of the same ontology of the world of pure experience.

However, our individual interests and goals—coupled with embodied agency, our active sensorimotor engagement with the world—configure *how* we access this world, and *how* the phenomenal content of our experience presents itself to us *in* our experience of the world.

In sum: consciousness, for James, is not a substance but a dynamic structure. It is an external functional relation constituted by our worldly engagement. Additionally, consciousness is a selecting agency. Through our active engagement with the world, we literally *construct* our field of phenomenal experience. In short, embodied agency determines phenomenal content.

Bodily Self-Awareness, Agency, and Externalism about Phenomenal Content

I'd now like to develop James's characterization of consciousness as discussed above and put together a pragmatic externalist account of phenomenal content. I will also bring Merleau-Ponty into the discussion once more, as his views are consonant with James on a number of relevant points. I proceed in this manner: First, I contend that there are two features of James's characterization of consciousness which illuminate essential features of phenomenal experience ignored by Perry's internalist rendering (and other views that share his isolationaist presuppositions): (1) implicit bodily self-awareness, and (2) implicit awareness of the body's basic sensorimotor capacities. (2) is parasitic upon (1). Secondly, these two features point to the way that the subjective character of experience is constituted (at least in part) *externally*. At times, parts of the world are constitutive components of subjective experience. I discuss these two features and their externalist implications below. I do so by arguing that these features of experience help account for two puzzles of perceptual presence: first, the puzzle of the phenomenal *presence* of *absence*, or "The Problem of Absent Aspects" as I'll refer to it; second, the puzzle of *perceptual constancy*.[33]

I start with the Problem of Absent Aspects. To begin with a visual example: solid opaque objects are seen aspectually. To use Perry's example, I only see one side (or aspect) of an apple and not the other side (or aspect). No solid opaque object is seen in its

entirety. Certainly, there is nothing controversial about this basic fact about the necessarily *perspectival* nature of experience. Phenomenologists such as Husserl, Heidegger, and Sartre made much of this fact in developing their analysis of the experiential structures of our irreducibly situated and perspectival human subjectivity.

Things quickly get more complicated, however. For we also *experience* (though we don't strictly speaking *see*) the "hidden" sides or aspects of solid opaque objects like apples. The visual *absence* of these occluded sides is nonetheless perceptually *present* in my experience of the apple in its lush red density and fruity roundness. I don't experience the apple as two-dimensional or as lacking a backside. Similarly, I somehow see a plate on its side as both circular and elliptical. When I see a dog standing behind a picket fence, I experience not only the parts of the dog I *see* amidst the slats of the fence, but I *experience* the dog in his fluffy canine fullness (including the "hidden" parts of Rover occluded by the fence slats).[34] These sorts of observations clarify the import of Merleau-Ponty's somewhat mysterious remark that "we must recognize the indeterminate as a positive phenomenon" (1962, 7). But the question remains: how is this "positive" experience of indeterminateness phenomenally possible? How do we perceive absent aspects?

First, it's not a matter of representing the outer world via inner "ideas", as Perry, acknowledging this "quaint" usage, refers to individual representations of things, places, and properties (Perry 2001, 50). For, strictly speaking, I only represent (or in Perry's terminology, *have an idea of*) the part of the apple facing me or the elliptical shape of a plate on its side or the bits of Rover not hidden by the fence. The exposed sides are the parts of the things I see doing the physical work here: reflecting light in certain ways that then strikes my retina and causes my visual system to react in a particular manner. But there's more going on this a causal-representational story gives us. For, again, the hidden bits of objects are very much *in* my experience of them. These absent aspects are somehow phenomenally present. However, causal-representational theories of perception flounder in their attempts to account for the phenomenal presence of these hidden bits. But by fleshing out the subjective character of experience with the structural features of consciousness introduced above—again, (1) implicit bodily self-awareness, and (2)

implicit understanding of the body's sensorimotor capacities—we can discern how phenomenal content can simultaneously include both the "presence" and "absence" of the sort discussed above. I'd like to look at these features more closely.

First, the subjective character of experience includes an *implicit bodily self-awareness*. This is an implicit self-awareness of my body as standing in a determinate spatial relation to the object of experience. This perspectival aspect of the content of my experience is determined both by where I am in relation to the object of my experience and where I could possibly *be*, if I decide to take three steps to the left, for instance. This "could be" is a sensorimotor possibility. But the relation I have to the objects of my experience—a *spatial* relation—is determined by my *bodily* relation to these objects. For example, the direction of the sound of a car suddenly backfiring is specified in relation to my body, and I become aware of it as "slightly behind me and to my left". There is no confusion about where the sound is in relation to me. Nor do I need to make an inference of some sort. I simply *know*. Similarly, the apple is always specified as "directly in front of me" or "on the table to my right". This spatial relationship is not geometrical space, but rather a *lived* or *bodily* space: live connections to the world and the things in it. My immediate activity-situations lights up with felt affordances for action, oriented in relation to my embodied perspective. And this perspectival self-awareness is a bodily self-awareness that is operative without immediately and noninferentially, without conceptual or reflective articulation. Every situation I come into automatically organizes itself around my body as the locus of my agency. Again, recall James's rich claim in a footnote to "The Experience of Activity" where he sums up this idea in the following manner:

> The world experienced (otherwise called the 'field of consciousness') comes at all times with our body as its centre, centre of vision, centre of action, centre of interest. Where the body is is 'here'; when the body acts is 'now'; what the body touches is 'this'; all other things are 'there' and 'then' and 'that'. These words of emphasized position imply a systematization of things with reference to a focus of action and interest which lies in the body...The body is the storm centre, the origin of co-ordinates, the constant place of stress in all that experience-train. Everything

> circles round it, and is felt from its point of view (James 1904/1977 283, footnote 180).

Another way to put this is that the *orientational structure* of my perceptual field always harbors an implicit self-referentiality to the embodied perspective I take on the world and the experiences I have of the things in it *from* this embodied perspective. The furniture of the world is always specified in relation to my body. And the content of my experience is coupled to the fact of my embodied agency. Importantly, this bodily self-*referentiality* is not equivalent to a higher-order cognitive self-*reflexivity*, however, but is in fact more phenomenologically basic. It gives itself immediately, without reflective thought. I don't infer where things are in relation to my body. I just know.

Even closing my eyes and pondering a logical proof in the dark involves an implicit self-awareness that I am closing my eyes and pondering a logical proof in an "activity-situation", as James refers to it. The latter is defined as the environment surrounding my body, arranged in relation to my self-awareness of my body as standing in certain relationships to things comprising that situation: the chair I'm sitting on, the desk in front of me, the sleeping dog lying behind me and slightly to the left on the floor. Every activity-situation is thus structurally determined by my bodily orientation as a persistent "frame" of experience. In every experience, I implicitly recognized my body as *here*. Echoing James, Merleau-Ponty says that this bodily *here* refers not "to a determinate position in relation to other positions of external coordinates, but the laying down of first coordinates, the anchoring of my body to an object, the situation of the body in the face of its tasks" (1945/2002 115). Activity-situations course with affective valences that allow my body to continually "interpret" relevant action-possibilities, arranged like bicycle spokes around the hub of my bodily self-awareness.

But this bodily self-awareness—an intrinsic feature of experience—is only constituted by my bodily relation to *external* things, not *inner* mental representations or alterations of a neural substrate. It is to objects in the world to which my body becomes "anchored", and around which situations bloom into possibilities for action and response. Thus this bodily self-awareness is an "inner" structural feature of every experience that nonetheless is "externally" constituted by spatial relationships (respective to my body)

outside of whatever is going on in my head. This aspect of the subjective character of experience is not wholly reducible to inner events. It is a relational property that requires the world and the things in it as *relata*. It is a coupling relation linking brain-body and world within pure experience.

Second, the subjective character of experience also includes *an implicit understanding of the body's sensorimotor capacities*. According to James, this is an awareness of the body as a "center of action". I implicitly know that I can do certain things because I have the kind of body and sensorimotor capacities that I do—and importantly, because this body is embedded in the kind of world that it finds itself in. Again, the world always supplies the context for my bodily action, James insists, and thus plays a constitutive role in shaping both the form and significance of my experience.[35] Similarly, Merleau-Ponty argues that it is our bodily *motility*, our basic capacities for action that, when coupled to concrete activity-situations, generate whatever meaning the lived world has. Our bodily-perceptual activities, working in concert with worldly structures, open up the world as a place for creative action. Thus he writes, in a remark that James would surely endorse, that our experience of the world is not "in the first place a matter of 'I think that' but of 'I can'" (Merleau-Ponty 1945/2002, 159).

This implicit recognition of the world as a field of "I cans" is parasitic upon our implicit bodily self-awareness. The "situation" in which I always find myself is experienced as a field of activity and affectivity. My body, and the perspective I take on a situation, opens up vectors or lines of possible action: possibilities of locomotion, navigation, manipulation, etc. These "I can" possibilities are opened up in virtue of this implicit bodily self-awareness. Moreover, I have a pretheoretical understanding of my body's agential possibilities. I implicitly understand that, *as* embodied, I can pick up the apple and view the other side. I know that I can assume a different vantage point on the plate, which looks elliptical from *here*, and see it as circular from *there*. I can walk *around* the fence and see Rover in his fluffy canine fullness. I can crane my neck, squint, back up or move forward to get a better view of or handle on things. I experience both the presence and absence of partially occluded objects in virtue of my implicit awareness that I can potentially assume different perspectives on them, perspectives which will make

present that which is currently *hidden*. I know that things have density and extension because I can explore them. They enter into and become part of my bodily space, which means that I can engage with them in exploratory ways and in doing so disclose their features. This is an implicit understanding of the body's sensorimotor capacities, a kind of proprioceptive or actional self-awareness. But this proprioceptive action-awareness, which is an intrinsic feature of the subjective character of experience, is again relationally determined by properties and things *out there*, in the situation in which I find myself.

Noë and O'Regan (2002) refer to these "I can" features of experience as "sensorimotor contingencies". Sensorimotor contingencies are the various bodily-perceptual relationships that obtain between perceive and environment. These sensorimotor contingencies specify the kinds of things a perceiving agent can do in a given environment relative both to the structure of that particular environment and the body of the perceiver. They also specify the meaningful affordances that shape our concretely experienced situations. For example, if I fall down into a deep well with sheer walls, climbing those walls to escape is not a legitimate sensorimotor possibility. Similarly, most people immediately recognize that single-handedly lifting up a car is not an option for the majority of us, given our physiological limitations. According to a sensorimotor view of experience, perceptual information is thus a function not of inner representations but rather of the subject's exploratory movements throughout and interactions with its environment both actualized as well as recognized as implicitly possible (Noë and O'Regan 2002, 567). In other words, perceptual sensitivity is an embodied skill. It is active information pickup. And it "consists in the ability to explore the environment in ways mediated by implicit knowledge of the patterns of sensorimotor contingency that govern perceptual modes of exploration" (2002, 569).

James is sensitive to these "I can" features of phenomenal experience. Recall from the earlier discussion of "pure experience" James's insistence that *relations* of all sorts are part of the "full fact" of our embodied experience of the world, that is to say, part of pure experience. One of the things he discusses is the "something more" relation. James insisted that we be mindful of the way that our every activity-situation is "but a portion of a wider world", and that these activity-situations should always be defined "by

their relation to something more" (1912/1996, 173). This "something more" has both phenomenological and ontological significance. Phenomenologically, this relation refers to the way that implicitly recognized "I can" possibilities, or sensorimotor contingencies, are part of the structure of my subjective experience of the world. They determine the mode of presentation of phenomenal content. Thus, an apple is experienced not just as an apple but as an apple *that I can pick up and eat* or *that I can throw at my neighbor and his unconscionably loud leaf blower*. If I'm 6'10", a doorway isn't a neutral opening but an opening *that I must duck to get under*. A painting from a distance is a piece of art *that will become clearer once I walk closer for a better view*.[36] James's "something more" relation, which is part of the phenomenological structure of every activity-situation experienced as such, thus calls attention to the way that *perception* and *proprioception* are integrated at the foundational level of pure experience. And one of the ways that the body exhibits the prereflective adaptive intelligence that it does is therefore because these "I can" relations, or sensorimotor contingencies, are structural features of our basic bodily-perceptual engagement with the world.

Ontologically, embodied and enactive consciousness is not made up entirely of inner representations or alterations of a neural substrate but of temporally-extended patterns of transactive perceiver-environment relations. Mind is a modality of bodily behavior, linked to things in the world. These temporally-extended transactions are what conjoin brain, body, and world within an integrated dynamic—again, an integrated dynamic within pure experience. It is this dynamic *taken together*—brain, body and world taken as a single enactive unity—that is the most accurate portrayal of how consciousness is constituted within the adaptive flow of its world-engaged activity. Consciousness is enacted within the coupling of biological body and meaningful environment, linked together by unfolding patterns of sensorimotor contingencies or "I can" relations. In this sense (and in others, discussed below), the world is a constitutive part of subjectivity. Thus, the ontological-constitutive significance of this "I can" feature of experience challenges Perry's internalist picture, and those who endorse a similar line. Once more, the subjective character of experience is (at least partially) driven and constituted by the external environment. And therefore Perry's internalist rendering of

phenomenal content remains inadequate so long as it excludes these "I can" structural features of experience and confines mind within the skin and skull. Unlike the pragmatic externalism of James, Perry's view cannot provide a satisfactory resolution to the Problem of Absent Aspects.

So what about puzzle of "perceptual constancy" mentioned earlier? This puzzle concerns another basic fact about experience: namely, the constancy of a perceptual *object* throughout variations in perceptual *content*. Another example will help here. When I have a visual experience of an apple, the redness of the apple is, properly speaking, one of the objects of my perception. Even a young child who has learned the ability to give color reports will identify an apple as red. But the puzzle of perceptual constancy arises from the fact that the apple I *see* is not uniformly red. Rather, I *experience* the redness as somehow a uniform constant *behind* the shadows, texture variations, and skin discolorations that I *see*, and which break up the apple's redness in my seeing it. When I move around the apple, the play of light and shadow changes the redness of the apple I see respective to my current position and ambient light sources. Once more, though, I still experience the redness of the apple-*as-perceptual-object* to be stable and constant—despite the fact that the *content* of my perception of the apple-*as-seen* consists of shadows and texture variations that render an uneven redness. How is this so?

Once more, it's not simply a matter of Perry's inner "ideas". A causal-physiological story about light refraction, retinal images, and other inner events in the eyes and optic nerve tells us only about the *seeing*: again, the seeing of an uneven redness. The simultaneous phenomenal *experience* of perceptual constancy (the uniform redness of the apple) remains mysterious. But the second feature of consciousness experience discussed above—again, an implicit awareness of the body's sensorimotor capacities—*can* explain this puzzle. Here's how. First, the embodied approach to experience I am here arguing for insists that objects, as experienced, are always experienced *in their entirety*. (This was one of the central points of the Problem of the Absent Aspect, discussed earlier). In other words, I never experience independent properties or features of the object, such as a color patch of the redness of the apple, somehow divorced from the whole apple itself or detached from the larger context in

which the apple is situated. Rather, I experience the apple *as* a whole, *as* embedded in a larger context that determines *how* I experience the apple as a whole. Thus, if the apple is sitting on a windowsill in my kitchen during a sunny afternoon and I stand directly in front of it, I experience the *whole* apple *as* red—despite the fact that I likely *see* only the frontal aspect of the apple, and likely *see* it *as* black (due to intense backlighting). The important idea here is this. I *experience* the apple as red because I implicitly (i.e. noninferentially) recognize both that certain environmental conditions presently obtain which cause the frontal aspect of the apple to be cast in dark shadow, and furthermore, that I can *move* to a new location or *pick up* the apple (or both) and see it in its redness. In other words, I can transform certain environmental conditions, including my bodily-spatial relationship to the apple and subsequently, ambient lighting conditions, that will then afford *new* experiences of the apple in its redness (or at least, something *closer* to its redness). This implicit awareness of possibilities for action and manipulation of my environment, and the subsequent effects these possibilities have on the phenomenal content of my experience, are again the sensorimotor contingencies that obtain between perceiver and environment at any moment. At a given moment of experience, I have a noninferential bodily "knowledge" of the many sensorimotor contingencies that exist between my body and my lived environment. This is an extension of the implicit bodily-self awareness that James and Merleau-Ponty correctly argue is an invariant structural feature of all experience. Beyond this implicit bodily self-awareness, however, I again have an implicit understanding of the ways in which existing sensorimotor contingencies shape the phenomenal content of my experience, including such features as color, size, shape, and distance. The point can be summed up rather simply. With every experience of the world, I implicitly know that both (1) moving throughout, exploring, and manipulating my world is a possibility, and that (2) actualizing these sensorimotor possibilities will change the way that I experience the world. I thus actively construct the content of my phenomenal experience. Situated agency determines phenomenal content.

Importantly, note that this sensorimotor or enactive view of phenomenal content developed above is a thoroughly externalist one, in that the *vehicles* of phenomenal content (or, at least *some* of them) are distributed outside the head. The "vehicles" of

mentality are simply the events, states, and processes that carry mental "content", where the latter are the *objects* of events, states, and processes.[37] According to materialist-isolationist views of cognition, the vehicles of cognition, as we've seen, are thought to be relevant patterns of neural activity realized within the physical structure of the brain. Vehicles of thought are thus localized within the neuroanatomy of the subject. They are affectations of the brain-based biological circuitry that enables representation. "Content" is that which is represented by affectations of this biological circuitry. And content is given or carried via some sort of intramental or interneural representation, as we discussed earlier—again, mental and/or neural representations both located in and constituted by biological circuitry in the head of the subject.

James's notion of pure experience and his pragmatic externalism looks to broaden our understanding of experience to include brain, body, world *and* coupling relations within the same experiential dynamic. In doing so, he dissolves a hard and fast distinction between vehicle and content, as these concepts are traditionally understood. Each of these elements—brain, body, world, and coupling relation—plays a crucial constitutive role in structuring mind and mental processes. Brain is functionally integrated with animate body, which—via sensorimotor coupling relations—is functionally (nondually) integrated with world. All of these components are unified within the same pure experience. What this means, however, is that vehicles of cognition are not simply reducible to internal syntactic or neural processes (inner representations, ideas, or neural structures). Rather, the vehicles of content under the view I have developed above involves both bodily-sensorimotor features *as well as* environmental features. Vehicles are *distributed* processes that include brain, body, world, *and* the sensorimotor relations that link them. The whole issue of how inner representations can represent an outer world is now sidestepped, since brain, body and world are conceived of as an integrated, enactive unit. Experiential consciousness is a temporally-extended process distributed *across* this enactive unit. Inner/outer, vehicle/content distinctions are therefore weakened or dissolved altogether since to carve up this enactive unit into discrete elements—mind, body, or world considered locally—is to artificially sever the organic unity of pure

experience. This, of course, is James's basic contention. Manzotti (2006) expresses the idea here this way when he writes that

> A process-oriented standpoint solves the problem of re-presentation and that of the 'intrinsic intentionality' of mental representations. There is no more a separation between the representing vehicles and what has to be represented. What is relevant is the occurrence of a process spanning time and space (22).

Pure experience is the temporally extended process that included both vehicle (body-based sensorimotor contingencies) *and* content (thing itself, as disclosed via sensorimotor contingencies) as constitutive parts.

Thus, when I perceive the apple on my windowsill, the content of my phenomenal experience is enacted by the various sensorimotor contingencies that I use to engage with the apple itself and the apple's surrounding environment. For, it is the coupling of both my body's sensorimotor contingencies *and* the environment itself that serves as the vehicle for my phenomenal experience. These two cannot be separated without distorting the experience. In this way, phenomenal experience is literally constructed *within* this active coupling. My probing, manipulating, moving about and exploring—as embedded, embodied activities—become the vehicles by which I enact my experience of the world. Neural processes localized in the head, while clearly necessary, aren't themselves sufficient to explain this process. And the broader point, then, is that for James, distributed body-based *skills*, and inner not representations, are fundamental to consciousness and experience. These adaptive bodily skills are what allow us to enact experience and to extend mind out into the world.

Empirical Support

I want to conclude this chapter by offering some empirical support for the enactive and extended view of consciousness and experience I have developed, and which I have suggested is at least implicitly contained in James's radical empiricism. As we saw in the last chapter, James was deeply concerned with offering an experience-based analysis of consciousness that preserves its subjective or phenomenal qualities.

However, James the experimental psychologist was also interested in exploring the neurobiological dynamics that underwrite these subjective qualities. Therefore, a glance at empirical work that supports some of James's central claims is very much in the pluralistic, neurophenomenological spirit of his approach to consciousness and experience. Specifically, I want to look at experimental support for James's characterization of consciousness-as-a-selecting agency, and also for his claim about the phenomenological importance of prereflective bodily self-awareness and the body's adaptive intelligence.

Consciousness-as-a-selecting Agency

First, James's insistence on the close link between attentional consciousness and phenomenal content—captured in his characterization of consciousness-as-a-selecting-agency—receives support from recent work on *change blindness*, *inattentional blindness*, and *blindsight*. Recall that James's contention is that situated agency determines phenomenal content. The selective perceptuo-motor forms of our engagement with the world determine *how* the things of the world present themselves to us *in* our experience of them. A consequence of this view is that perception is to a large degree dependent up attentive selectivity. By attending to certain parts of the environment, we actively structure the content of our experience. If we don't pay attention to something, we most likely won't have an experience of it. According to James, this characterization of consciousness-as-a-selecting-agency does justice to "so patent a fact as the perceptual presence of selective attention" (1890/1950 1, 402).

Change blindness, inattentional and blindsight blindness studies confirm this characterization of consciousness. Change blindness is the phenomenon where individuals fail to detect certain changes—often quite prominent and seemingly obvious—in their visual environment (O'Regan 1992; O'Regan *et al.*, 1996, 1999; Rensik *et al* 1997). For example, in one experiment, observers are asked to view computer-generated pictures of natural scenes (O'Regan *et al* 1999). The subject's eye movements are then monitored while she views the display. As her eye moves around the

scene, taking it in, various changes are clandestinely introduced: a change in the color of flowers, cars, or buildings; a walking path appearing in a portion of the landscape where there was previously undisturbed foliage; an entire structure, such as a barn or shed, appearing or disappearing. Normally, these sorts of changes would trigger a transient signal in the visual system, which would then be detected by low-level visual mechanisms (O'Regan and Noë 2001, 954). This visual transient would draw attention to the change, meaning that it would be immediately detected by the observer.

However, in the experiments, several techniques were used to mask the visual transient. For example, the changes described above were introduced between individual saccades (rapid conjugate movements of the eye between fixations, lasting 20-30ms each), during an eye blink or a global flicker of the screen, or between film cuts. Other experiments introduced "distractors": extraneous transients distributed over the screen simultaneous with the change, somewhat akin to mud splashes on a car window (O'Regan *et al*, 1999). These various distractions mask motion cues—the visual transient—that might otherwise draw the observer's attention to the change and result in detection. The important and surprising result of these experiments is the fact that many individuals failed to detect large scale changes, despite the fact that were *fully open to view*. In fact, by measuring observers' eye movement, it was also discovered that many observers could be looking directly at the change when it occurred and still fail to detect it (O'Regan *et al*, 1999). Unless the observer's attention was directed toward the change itself, there was a very good chance that the observer would *look* at it without actually *seeing* it. Real attention was absent, which meant that the change failed to become content for the observer's visual perception.

Another more striking (and indeed amusing) change blindness experiment was conducted in a real-world setting, away from the artificial constraints of the laboratory. In this experiment, Simons and Levin (1997) had an experimenter pretend to be "lost" on the Cornell campus. The experimenter would approach a passer-by and ask for directions. As the passer-by would begin to give directions, two individuals carrying a large door would abruptly walk between the experimenter and the passer-by. This distraction would occlude the experimenter from the passer-by's vision long enough for the experimenter to

duck behind the door and be replaced by one of the individuals carrying the door. When the passer-by would resume her direction-giving, only 50% noticed that they were now speaking to a different person. This occurred despite the fact that the experimenters wore different clothes, were different heights, etc. Simons and Levin (1997) conclude from these and similar experiments that we fail to detect even radical changes such as these because "we lack a precise representation of our usual world from one view to the next" (266). Andy Clark (2002) similarly concludes from these results that

> We encode only a kind of 'rough gist' of the current scene—just enough to support a broad sense of what's going on *insofar as it matters to us*, and to guide further intelligent information-retrieval as and when needed (185).

Again, the point here is simply put: attention must be present for a subject to become phenomenally conscious of an object or scene. Unless parts of the world are actively attended to, they fail to become part of our phenomenal consciousness.

A related phenomenon is *inattentional blindness*: a kind of "looking without seeing" (Mack and Rock 1998). It is the phenomenon where an object or scene is not fully seen because attention is not focused on the object or scene. On the surface, this phenomenon appears similar to inattentional blindness. However, there are some important distinctions between experiments on inattentional blindness and change blindness. First, whereas change blindness work is concerned with detecting change over time, work on inattentional blindness is largely concerned with what is detected (or *not* detected) in *static* scenes (Rensik 2000). Moreover, the changes in the change blindness experiments occurred when the participants were distracted by some sort of visual transient, or when their view was otherwise momentarily disrupted. The inattentional blindness experiments demonstrated that participants often failed to detect objects or scenes that were fully present to view, not masked by any sort of distraction, but which held no immediate relevance to the participant's task at hand. In the experiments that first labeled this phenomenon (Mack and Rock 1998), the experiments would proceed roughly in this manner: participants were briefly shown a small cross on a computer screen. Then, the participants were asked to determine which arm of the cross was longer. After several trials, an unexpected object—such as a brightly colored square or a moving bar—would

appear along with the cross. Even when the unexpected object appeared at the center of their field of vision, 75% of participants failed to notice it. However, participants *were* more likely to notice more meaningful stimuli, such as their own name or a smiley face. In another famous study, participants are asked to watch a video recording of two teams playing with a basketball, and to count the number of times one of the teams passed the ball back and forth (Neisser 1976; Simons and Chabris 1999). During the video, a person in a gorilla suit strolls out to the middle of the court, dances briefly while facing the audience, and then nonchalantly strolls off the court. The experimenters discovered, remarkably, that most perceivers failed to notice the dancing gorilla since they were attentively absorbed with counting the number of passes between the basketball players.

Finally, *blindsight*—a clinical syndrome first diagnosed in the late 70's by Lawrence Weiskrantz (1990). Blindsight occurs when patients suffer lesions in the visual cortex. Specifically, they suffer damage in area V1, the place in the visual cortex where optic radiations first reach the cortex. As a result of this condition, patients seem to receive visual information from the world but nonetheless insist that they are not conscious of it. They vehemently insist that they have no visual experience of certain objects or scenes—despite the fact that, under experimental conditions, they can point to objects, locate them by grasping them, detect differences in pattern and color, and even visually track objects with a surprisingly high degree of accuracy (Baars 1997, 66). (As an aside, studies now indicate that other sensory systems can suffer analogous damage. For example, neuropsychologists have discovered patients suffering from "deaf hearing" after damage to the first auditory area, and "blind touch" from damage to the first somatosensory area. See Baars 1997). Again, it seems that blindsight, like change blindness and inattentional blindness, is a phenomenon that points to the intimate link between phenomenal consciousness and attention. Blindsighters are somehow able to *look* at objects without actually *seeing* them, in the sense that their looking is missing a critical component: attention. And their visual system is somehow processing environmental information, but, and this is the key point, this information is not *experienced* by the blindsighter. Again, without attentive selectivity, perceptual information fails to become content for phenomenal consciousness. In this way, the three

phenomena discussed above—change blindness, inattentional blindness, and blindsight—all affirm James's characterization of consciousness as a selecting agency. Put simply, attention has to be co-present with consciousness for full-blown phenomenal experience to occur.

Two other important consequences emerge from these studies which support other claims James makes about consciousness. First, they seem to confirm James's enactive characterization of consciousness as a world-directed *action*, rather than an organ for passively receiving world-to-mind sensory input. According to James, consciousness and perception are body-based skills. They are enacted through our attentional selection of environmentally salient features of the world that are drawn from the situations we move throughout, explore and manipulate. Perception is active information pickup. This attentive information pickup "alone gives accent and emphasis, light and shade, background and foreground—intelligible perspective, in a word" (James 1890/1950 1, 402). This enactive view of perceptual consciousness thus cuts against the grain of the passive, world-to-mind internalist theories of sensory input James attributes to thinkers like "Locke, Hume, Hartley, the Mills and Spencer", who he says are all writers "bent on showing how…experience is supposed to be something simply *given*" (1890/1950 1, 402). (The visual theory of David Marr, discussed briefly above, is a more recent variation on this internalist Passive Input theme). As consciousness is merely the passive recipient of external input from world to mind, under these Passive Input theories of perceptual consciousness, "attention, implying a degree of reactive spontaneity" (1890/1950 1, 402) has no place in this process, according to James. The perceiver takes no active role in how she actually *receives* the content of experience or, phenomenally speaking, what she actually *does* with that content. The world presses itself onto us whether we want it to or not. But this is both phenomenologically and empirically off key, as the studies cited above indicate. James's enactive model of perceptual consciousness as a spontaneous and active selecting agency in this way looks to correct this Passive Input view and resituate agency at the center of perceptual consciousness. As the attention and blindsight studies demonstrate, perceptually speaking, the world doesn't come to *us*. Rather, we selectively go to *it*.

These studies also seem to draw into question the interface view of experience, according to which all experience is indirect, not of the world but of intracranial (mental or neurophysiological) representations. According to this interface view, perceptual consciousness consists of detailed inner representations of the world, mental "snapshots" that capture every nuance and shading of the scene standing before us at a given moment. As Noë (2004) notes, "It seems to us that we enjoy a visual impression of the environment in sharp focus and detail" (53). But the change blindness and inattentional blindness cases show that this is actually false. The fine-grained detail we take ourselves to be experiencing, and which interface views of perception suggest we experience, is actually an illusion (Noë 2004, 53). We experience much less than we generally think we do. Ever the careful phenomenological observer, James notes that "We actually *ignore* most of the things before us" (1890/1950 1, 284).

So if we're not experiencing rich, highly-detailed inner models of the world, what *are* we experiencing? In short, we're experiencing the world—but only *part* of it. In other words, the part(s) we're paying attention to at any given moment. In addition to James's insistence that this is a consequence of consciousness' selecting function, he is attuned to how this fact phenomenologically presents itself to us with his *focus-fringe* analysis. According to James, the phenomenal field of consciousness at any moment exhibits a kind of gestalt structure. It is comprised of both a *focus*, or part of the world crystallized within the selective gaze of consciousness-as-a-selecting agency, and a *fringe*, or a surrounding halo of "relations and objects but dimly perceived" that fill out the phenomenal background, in a "nascent" or "unarticulated" way, of our experience at any moment (1890/1950 1, 258-9). The salient point is that it is only the objects that we selectively attend to, or focus on, that are thrown into high relief. The rest of the world falls away into successively fainter regions of the fringe. "There is always more to see than anyone sees, and more to know than anyone knows" (Neisser 1976, 79).

Why is this so? This answer is quite simple. We can't experience the world all at once because we simply lack the perceptual capacities to do so. As Ulric Neisser (1976) puts it:

> Formally speaking, every human being filters out cosmic rays, insect pheromones, and every other kind of information that does not affect his behavior…The perceiver simply does not pick [this information] up because he is not equipped to do so (79-80).

Even if we *could* experience everything present to us at one time, it would be cognitively crippling trying to sort through it all. But importantly, *we don't have to*. The world already stores much of the information for us. And because we have the kind of sensorimotor skills that we do—and the perceptually attuned relationship with the world that we do—we can retrieve this information at a moment's notice. Once the "inner snapshot" interface view of experience is discarded, we can see how the world is allowed to serve as its "own best model" (Brooks 1991), a kind of "outside memory" (O'Regan 1992) that stores perceptual information for us until we decide to selectively pick it up. In other words, we off-load information onto the world, easing our cognitive burden until we come back later to access it. Some information we *can't* pick up, even if we wanted to, such as cosmic rays and insect pheromones. But other information is readily accessible to us whenever we need it, even though we don't carry it around with us any every moment of the day. Our lives are made that much easier because of this.

Example: What color is the fourth book on the bottom shelf of the bookcase in your office? Very likely, you can't answer this question, despite the fact that you look at your bookcase many times each day. You don't perceptually *notice* that book regularly because most of the time *you don't need to*. *That* information is on a need-to-know basis and can safely be left out in the world until needed. Think of the impossible cognitive burden of trying to recall *every* bit of similar experiential minutiae. Thankfully, there's no need to. Since we're always already immersed within dynamic activity-situations, we can selectively transact with the world and retrieve whatever we need to know whenever we need it. And the interactive process of *accessing* this information, then—the coupling of mind, body and world—*together* comprises an extended cognitive process. This sensorimotor coupling is the externalized vehicle for this particular cognitive act that distributes mind out into the world.

Phenomenological Primacy of Prereflective Bodily Self-Awareness

Another of James's important claims, explored in this chapter and the previous one, is that acting body is both an adaptive, intelligent organism and the seat of personal identity. The body is implicitly aware of itself and its actional capacities. This implicit proprioceptive self-referentiality specifies the phenomenal content of experience, as we've seen. Because I know (immediately and noninferentially) that I have a body that can do certain things, the world discloses itself to me as being a certain way *in* my bodily-perceptual experience of it. The structures of our situated agency shape phenomenal content. And via the spontaneous deployment of its native sensorimotor skills, the body thus knowingly responds to features its continually-changing environment in a prereflectively intelligent or "thoughtless" way. In other words, the acting body is functionally integrated into its world in a nondual manner through its adaptive activity. James's discussion of the continuity of subject and object within pure experience highlights this fact about the body's adaptive intelligence. Additionally, James's discussion of bodily agency reinforces his contention that proprioceptive self-awareness, or body-based "agency-awareness", is a foundational form of self-awareness operative prior to reflexive cognitive self-awareness. In short, I first immediately know myself *as* and *through* my body. Bodily self-awareness is thus the most primitive form of self-understanding, according to James. But this understanding is Janus-faced. For in recognizing myself first and foremost as an embodied organism with certain sensorimotor skills that enable me to do certain things, I see that this recognition is only given with reference to the world in which these sensorimotor skills can be deployed. In other words, my bodily self-awareness is always co-given with reference to the world as the arena for my agency. Bodily self and world are thus co-given at this foundational phenomenological level. Again, a phenomenological rendering of pure experience highlights this basic intimacy of embodied self and world.

Once more, recent empirical work supports both of these claims. To start with the latter claim, James's insistence on the primacy of bodily self-awareness and its simultaneous disclosure of the world as arena for action, we can note that recent work in

developmental psychology on neonate empathy provides strong empirical support for this characterization of the foundational continuity of bodily self and world. Traditionally, empathy has been thought to consist of a kind of high-level cognitive activity. The two dominant theories of empathy in psychology and cognitive science retain this cognitivist emphasis. According to these theories, empathic awareness—or world-directed openness—arises one of two ways. Empathy is either (1) the product of a kind of "mindreading" by which we form predictive theories about other's mental states and their behavior, (Baron-Cohen 1989, 288), or (2) it is the result of our introspective scanning of our *own* mental states, which we then use to imaginatively "simulate" the inner states of another person (Goldman 1989). Importantly, both of these views of empathy, "Theory Theory" and "Simulation Theory", respectively, model empathic awareness as a high-level cognitive achievement, located within the representational states, events and processes that occur within the empathic subject. Put differently, empathy is a cognitive or conceptual achievement that somehow hooks up an autonomous interiority with a conceptually represented exteriority.

Melzoff and Moore's (1977, 1983, 1997) work on neonate empathy challenges this cognitivist rendering of empathy and buttresses James's claims about the phenomenological primacy of prereflective bodily self-awareness. Traditionally, infants were thought to be incapable of what the child psychologist Jean Piaget (1954) termed "invisible imitation": a kind of skill-based bodily empathy that involves an infants' ability to imitate another person's movements using parts of their bodies currently "invisible" to them, such as their facial muscles. A newborn infant lacks both an experience and conceptual understanding of its face. Thus, Piaget and other theorists assumed that infants in fact cannot "invisibly" imitate. This is because

> The intellectual mechanisms of the child will not allow him to imitate movements he sees made by others when the corresponding movements of this own body are known to him only tactually or kinesthetically, and not visually (as, for instance, putting out his tongue)… (Piaget 1962 19).

Meltzoff and Moore's (1977, 1983, 1997) findings refute this claim. Their experiments demonstrate that normal and alert neonates (one as young as 42 minutes

old!) *can* successfully and repeatedly imitate expressions and facial gestures. Newborn infants are thus capable of invisible imitation. They can recognize another's bodily gesture both *as* imitatable, and also recognize the gesture as imitatable *by them*. Moreover, neonates can imitate *a wide range of* expression and gestures, do so *after a delay*, and actually *improve* their imitating performance over time—all features that indicate that this imitation is more than reflex. Given that neonates lack the conceptual mechanisms required for empathy according to traditional cognitivist renderings, how is this empathic exhibition possible?

One reading, echoing James's insights into situated bodily agency, is to suggest that empathic awareness is an invariant structural feature of experience, present from the very onset of consciousness. More precisely, empathic awareness is an invariant structural feature of *embodied* and *enacted* experience: in other words, the sensorimotor structures that underwrite phenomenal consciousness. We are literally born empathizing, open to the world and things in it.

What this means is then, is that, first, neonates seem to possess a nonconceptual self-awareness of themselves *as* embodied—and in virtue of this bodily self-awareness, *as* possessing certain action potentials. Neonates possess an immediate proprioceptive awareness of their *interiority*. The body is nonconceptually "known" in its *agency*, as something that can be made to do things. Hands can be clenched, and legs contracted and extended. Tongues can be made protrude from all sorts of angles. Lips can be pursed, and mouths opened.

But what leads from an immediate awareness of one's interiority to an empathic awareness of otherness, an awareness of *exteriority*? Again, it's not conceptual cognition—theory-making or representational simulation—since infants lack the necessary conceptual mechanisms needed to formulate theories or simulations that enable us to "enter into" other minds or the world in this way. Rather, it seems that the nonconceptual bodily self-awareness discussed above—*interiority—itself* harbors *exteriority* as one of its "enabling conditions". The body and its agency is disclosed to the world through the world displayed as an arena *for* bodily agency, and vice-versa. Body and world co-specify one another. Meltzoff (2005) speaks similarly when he writes

that "metaphorically speaking…exteroception (perception of others) and proprioception (perception of self) speak the same language from birth" (72). Via proprioceptive, exploratory action-perception feedback loops, infants systematically gain an "inner" understanding of the body's agency as they engage with their immediate "outer" surroundings. This includes what Meltzoff and Moore (1997) term "bodily babbling": dynamic patterns of repetitive bodily play that build up an infant's proprioceptive monitoring of their body's sensorimotor possibilities. But phenomenologically speaking, "inner" and "outer" are somewhat arbitrary designations, since at this early stage both arise together and mutually inform the other.

The infant thus implicitly "knows" (nonconceptually, in a bodily-perceptual sense) both that it is an embodied agent and that it is an object for *other* embodied agents. The child is not born a "solipsist" (Piaget 1954) or in a state of "normal autism" (Mahler *et al* 1975). Rather, to again quote Meltzoff (2005): "The findings from developmental science suggest that infants already register the equivalence between acts of self and other. It is innate. This equivalence colors infants' very first interactions and interpretations of the social world and is foundational for human development" (76). In terms of the infant's developmental psychology, world and self are mutually disclosing. A phenomenological prehension of the continuity of subject and object (the world as a whole, the world of pure experience) is present from birth.

The psychologists James J. Gibson (1966, 1979) and Ulric Neisser (1976) make similar points. Both argue for the importance of pre-reflective bodily awareness, particularly for understanding the nature of perceptual consciousness and the perceiver-environment relation more generally. More precisely, both Gibson and Neisser argue for the existence of self-specifying invariants within the structure of perceptual experience that point to the mutual disclosure of self and world *within* perceptual experience as it unfolds in time. Anticipating findings from the research on neonate imitation discussed above, both argue that this self-world mutual disclosure is phenomenologically present from birth. For example, according to Gibson's ecological optics (1966, 1979), perception is a temporally-extended, exploratory activity of the whole embodied and embedded creature. The human organism taken as a whole—including the various motor

capacities that enable action and movement—is thus a perceptual system. Within the visual field of the animate perceiver, according to Gibson, there are *perceptual invariants* which both lend structure and order to experience as well as specifying certain facts about the embodied nature of the perceiver and the perceiver's relationship to the world. For instance, take the experience of perceiving an apple on a table. As I walk towards the apple, the part of the apple I selectively attend to remains relatively fixed in my field of vision, relative to my movement towards the apple. This is a *structural invariant* according to Gibson. At the same time, however, the "fringe" of my visual field, as James would refer to it, exhibits what Gibson terms a patterned *optic flow*. Roughly, this optic flow is way that textured and illuminated surfaces radiate outward from the fixed point of the structural invariant (in this case, the apple on a table). This outward radiating of the optic flow Gibson terms *transformational invariants*. The optic flow is motivated and patterned respective to the bodily movements I make in relation to the fixed point of the structural invariant. (If I tilt my head or bend over while walking towards the apple, the optic flow changes accordingly). And the point, then, is that these invariant structures of the visual field—this organized pattern of fixedness and flow— specify information about the perceiver and the way that the perceiver is related to the world she perceives. This is because "the outline and contours of the body impose a high-order invariant structure on the field of vision, which will vary, of course, across individuals as well as across species" (Bermudez 1998, 109). The phenomenal field *itself* discloses to the perceiver how the perceiver's body and bodily movements alter her experience of the world. In this prereflective disclosure, the perceiver thus receives information not simply about an external world but also about *herself* as an animate perceiver exploring and engaging with her world. Perceptually speaking, proprioception and exteroception mutually arise. And they do so from birth. Therefore, the self disclosed in active perceiving is a self fundamentally integrated with its world: an "ecological self", as Gibson and Neisser refer to it. Construed in this way, their "ecological self" is the self of James's pure experience.

Recent empirical research also supports James's contention that the body is an intelligent adaptive organism. Bermudez (1998) and Gallagher (2005) both discuss the

phenomenological structures of adaptive bodily intelligence and how this adaptive intelligence thoughtlessly integrates bodily self and world. Much of the research they discuss confirms Merleau-Ponty's (1945/2002) insight, anticipated by James, that perception is cross-modally integrated. For example, the neonate studies discussed above can be seen as pointing to the cross-modal integration of proprioceptive and visual information. Bermudez (1998) interprets these studies as suggesting that "Facial imitation requires a complex cross-modal integration of tactile proprioception and vision" (140). In other words, neonates don't simply register the facial gestures of others as internally represented visual input. Their experience (and indeed ours) is cross-modally richer, in that they literally *see* these facial gestures as *proprioceptive possibilities*. Visual input resonates with motor significance. From birth, it seems, neonates are capable of this kind of "kinesthetic seeing". Bermudez (1998) and Gallagher (2005) also cite research involving the neurophysiological mechanisms implicated in spontaneously grasping for objects (such as how one's hand automatically conforms to the object it is reaching for), exploratory haptic perception (such as running fingers over an object in the dark), and choice reaction-time tasks (timed tasks involving multiple stimuli in which a subject must make a selective response), which they say are studies demonstrating the link between somatic proprioception and vision. According to Gallagher and Bermudez—and much of the empirical research they cite—a plausible interpretation of this data is that, in addition to confirming the cross-modal nature of experience, it additionally confirms that the body is an intelligent organism, functionally integrated into its world at a prereflective level of experience. Of course, James argues for this very point. Gallagher's (2005) work in particular is an extended defense of the thesis that "Your body is already acting 'before you know it'…It anticipates its encounters in both expressive and instrumental contexts. Even in my encounters with others, prenoetically, before I know it, I seem to have a sense of how it is with them" (237).

More evidence for the phenomenological continuity of self and world and the cross-modal nature of perception comes from mirror neuron literature. One of the most important discoveries in recent neuroscientific research has been the discovery of the "mirror-neuron system": a class of visuomotor neurons that discharge both when an agent

performs an intentional goal-directed action as well as when the agent *watches* someone *else* perform that same action (Rizolatti and Craighero 2004). These neurons were initially discovered in the premotor cortex of Macaque monkeys. However, there are indications that the human brain itself has multiple mirror-neuron systems. And there is much speculation in the rapidly-expanding mirror neuron literature that these mirror neuron systems potentially bear upon many of the rich features of human social and moral cognition, including imitation, empathy, and language learning.

Research in this area is still young and the significance of its preliminary findings cannot be adequately distilled into a few sentences. Nor can the explanatory scope of mirror neurons be accurately predicted at this time, despite the excitement their discovery has generated. However, the salient point is that mirror neuron research again seems to confirm, on a neurological level, James's claim that exteriority is a constituent feature of interiority, and that empathic awareness is first and foremost a modality of bodily-perceptual relatedness. When I perceive the actions of others, the discharge of mirror neuron systems in my pre-motor cortex triggers what has been termed "motor resonance" (Rizolatti and Craighero 2004): a kind of non-mentalistic *felt* understanding that, as embodied and embedded, I, too, can do the sorts of actions that I am perceiving. Others' actions thus affectively "resonate" within the somatic space of my own motor possibilities. Therefore, my empathic understanding of the other at this level is a product of the sensorimotor structures of the world-engaged body. I experience the world as an arena for live motor possibilities—and importantly, I experience *myself* as someone capable of *enacting* these motor possibilities.

An important consequence of all of this research confirming the cross-modal nature of perception and the body's prereflective sensorimotor immersion in its environment is that experience is inherently spatial (Bermudez 1998, 142). As James noted well over one hundred years ago in the *Principles*, experience always organizes itself around the body—the "storm centre" of experience, as he refers to it. What this means is that animate perceivers "move through a space that is already pragmatically organized by the construction, the very shape, of the body"; that is, an egocentric space "defined relative to the perceiving body" (Gallagher 2005, 140). But experience

organizes itself only around an *acting* body, an animate body acting *in relation to the world*. In other words, experience is inherently spatial, organized around the inherently *relational* nature of the world-engaged acting and perceiving body. The sensorimotor coupling or prereflective unity of the embodied self-world structure is the extended *vehicle* for the spatiality of experience—and as we've seen, also specifies the phenomenal content of experience. In short, body and world working together jointly shape experiential mind. And what this means, then, is that the human world *as perceived* is contoured by the structure and capacities of the human body and its perceptual systems. In other words, there is a great deal of phenomenological and empirical research to suggest that "perceived environments vary with body design across species" (Gallagher 2005, 140). The world never presents itself to us in neutral terms. Rather, as James puts it in a well-known saying, "the trail of the human serpent is over everything". And experience is only rightly characterized and understood once we move beyond an "in the head" story and take account of the holistic brain-body-world dynamic *as a whole* within which consciousness and experience are enacted. Self and world are thus not distinct substances but rather two aspects of this larger integrated whole. This is perhaps the most enduring and relevant insight of a phenomenological rendering of James's pure experience.

Summary

In this chapter, I argued that James's formulation of "pure experience" and his characterization of consciousness as a "selecting agency" can be used to develop and defend an externalist view of mind. I suggested that James can rightly be seen to offer what I termed a "pragmatic externalist" account of consciousness. According to James, mind is not an inner property, process or even organ localized in the head of cognitive subjects. Rather, mind is an extended pattern of activity that emerges from the body's selective worldly engagement. Put differently, the mind—including the content of phenomenal consciousness—is a dynamic and temporally process that, in an important sense, is distributed beyond the skin and skull of the subject. A consequence of this

rendering of mind is that, for James, conscious experience is an *action*, and not simply something that happens to us. Consciousness, perception, and experience are world-engaged activities. They are things that we do. I thus argued that James offers us the conceptual resources for modeling a non-Cartesian, naturalistic and integrative model of the mind-world relationship that, as I attempted to show in the final section, is supported by recent empirical work in the cognitive sciences. James's pragmatic externalism is both phenomenologically sound and empirically verifiable. The phenomenological significance of "pure experience" is the starting point for this model of the extended mind.

As Hilary Putnam remarked earlier, James's notion of "pure experience" urges us to rethink the nature of everyday concrete experience. Looking more carefully at this idea, we've seen that, for James, this also entails a rethinking of the nature of mind and the way that mind, as embodied and embedded, relates to the world. One of the most important lessons from James's work is that the relation between embodied mind and world is inherently meaningful. This fundamental meaning can be articulated at a number of levels of description. Whether at the pre-theoretical level of our skillful bodily engagement with the world, where "activity-situations" and perceptual affordances stand out for us because we have the sorts of bodies that we do, or at the "higher" levels of more particular cultural, aesthetic and ethical experiences, which reflect individual and collective values, preferences and judgments, our world is value-laden. In short, the world of pure experience is a continuum of interconnected meanings, both actualized and latent as possibilities. Even James's central characterization of consciousness-as-selecting-agency points to the fact that humans cannot escape their fundamental project as situated creatures: creating a meaningful world. For every selecting act of consciousness is, at the same time, an *exclusionary* act—and thus reflects values, preferences, and judgments of some sort. For James, then, selection runs all the way down. And our world—the whole complex of biological, physical, social, cultural and religious environments that are continually spilling into one another—is a pervasively qualitative world. As situated agents, both creators and discoverers of meaning, we are woven into the very fabric of that world. "Pure experience" honors this fact by taking the

interconnectedness of body, mind, and world—and the meaning-relations that link them—as its irreducible starting point.

I want to explore the issue even further, however. In other words, I want to ask a more precise question: what exactly is ethical "cash value" of the ecological self of pure experience? Stated differently, what is the ethical import of discarding the Cartesian self-contained subject and adopting an ecological or extended conception of mind that very literally bleeds the subject out into the world (and conversely, the world into the subject)? Does this deeply integrative view of self and world alter the way that we think about a world that, in a literal sense, is part of the self? And does this view change how we relate to other people?

Kitarō Nishida's appropriation of James's pure experience includes a consideration of these and other questions, pitched in an ethical key. Nishida shares James's concern for the phenomenological significance of pure experience. As we'll see, his development of pure experience is in many ways quite similar to James. However, I suggest that Nishida refocuses James's project here in a crucial way when he strives to articulate pure experience's profound ethical significance.[38] Deeply influenced by Zen Buddhism, Nishida's philosophy will be largely an attempt to do just this. Specifically, Nishida is concerned with exploring the ethical significance of what pure experience has to say about the nature of human intersubjectivity. In the next two chapters, I will consider Nishida's James-inspired articulation of pure experience. Chapter three will be a focused investigation of Nishida on pure experience. I will be concerned with looking both at how Nishida's pure experience echoes many of James's important insights, as well as how it integrates them into a more focused consideration of the ethical and relational implications of pure experience. I will be especially concerned with how these ethical concerns emerge from Nishida's encounter with Zen Buddhism. The final chapter, chapter four, will build off Nishida's and James's discussion of pure experience to develop a bodily skills-based account of moral psychology and moral perception, incorporating both phenomenological analysis and recent empirical research from cognitive science.

CHAPTER THREE
NISHIDA ON CONSCIOUSNESS AND PURE EXPERIENCE

Introduction

This chapter is an analysis of Kitarō Nishida's (1870-1945) concept of "pure experience". Nishida's development of pure experience is, by his own admission, deeply influenced by James. Yet unlike James, the idea of pure experience is a concept that Nishida articulates early in his philosophical career and then spends the rest of life revisiting and reworking. In fact, given that nearly *everything* Nishida wrote comes back to his notion of pure experience in one sense or another, a comprehensive analysis of the idea's progressive evolution within Nishida's work—including how pure experience is rearticulated through the many conceptual and grammatical shifts characteristic of Nishida's philosophical development—falls outside the scope of present concerns. Such a project would be more a matter of interpretation. Ultimately, I am instead most concerned with the real-world application of Nishida's pure experience (though some interpretation is of course necessary). The analysis which follows will reflect this emphasis.

As the discussion develops, I will focus on one particular aspect of Nishida's notion of pure experience that I suggest brings it in line with James's analysis and which, in light of the previous chapters' discussion, renders the idea intelligible. (As we'll see, though, Nishida parts ways with James in several important ways). Moreover, I will suggest that this aspect of pure experience gets to the heart of the broader, overarching philosophical concerns that determined the trajectory of Nishida's life's work. In short, the aspect of pure experience I am here concerned with is the relationship between pure experience and the situated, acting body. This emphasis on the somatic nature of pure experience will allow us to generalize Nishida's analysis not only to the sensorimotor

structures of the *individual* situated body, but additionally to the various *communities* of situated human bodies that, collectively, comprise our human experience of what Nishida refers to as the "social-historical world". Put differently, this body-based analysis of experience will focus on both the subjective as well as the intersubjective aspects of pure experience and its companion concept "acting-intuition".

In developing the argument that follows, I will be undertaking a creative engagement with Nishida's work. It must be noted at the outset that Nishida is a difficult writer, even to a sympathetic reader familiar with the Zen Buddhist tradition informing his thought. As Yuasa (1987) notes:

> ..his writings do tend to be a recondite soliloquy, lacking clear theoretical organization and method. Moreover, Nishida supposedly never touched his manuscripts once they were completed. Perhaps for this reason there are many intuitive leaps in his process of reasoning, and he tends to change subtly the meanings of his concepts as he uses them (1987).

Given the inherent difficulty in interpreting Nishida's texts, my goal is therefore to bring some systematicity and conceptual clarity to the central notions of pure experience and acting-intuition. In addition to clarifying these concepts, I also want to show how they are mutually informing, and how, when taken together, they underwrite Nishida's claims about the nature of consciousness, experience, and moral relatedness. In preparation for the next chapter's discussion, my creative interpretation of Nishida will also be an attempt to bring him into some ongoing discussions in contemporary philosophy of mind. In doing so, I intend to remain faithful to the spirit of Nishida's insights. But I won't hesitate to go a bit beyond what is actually given in the texts, when needed, in order to clarify some of the murkier parts of Nishida's thinking.

A final note about how I intend to approach Nishida's work. As with my analysis of James, I am going to argue that Nishida is, first and foremost, working from within the phenomenological tradition—even if (like James) he isn't normally identified as part of this tradition. As we saw previously, James's preferred philosophical method, simply put, is an inside-out, first-person analysis of the structures of consciousness. Additionally, James's phenomenological concerns always take account of the *situated* nature of mind

and experience. James is concerned with consciousness' irreducibly embodied and embedded nature, and how the embodied mind's embeddedness shapes our experience of the world and things in it. Even his concern with the third-person neurobiological dynamics of mind—most prevalent in *Principles*—is always secondary to this phenomenological emphasis. For as James rightly notes, every act of scientific analysis is itself a situated human activity invoking the phenomenological perspective of the researcher and the researcher's methods. A purely objective or third-person engagement with the world is therefore in principle impossible. We can never wholly step outside of our situatedness. Thus, a phenomenological analysis of human situatedness—which means beginning with an exploration of embodied and embedded consciousness—must be primary.

Similarly, there is little doubt that Nishida is in fact a phenomenologist. In addition to James, Nishida read both Husserl and Heidegger, and commented extensively on Husserl in many of his works. In a late essay, "The Historical Body" (1937/1998), Nishida announces that, after a period of time during which he tried to develop some of his views in the language of post-Kantian and Hegelian logic (an approach *en vogue* in early 20th century Japanese philosophical circles) , he is now refocusing his analysis on the structures of "everyday experience" (38). This concession is significant. For Nishida, "our world of everyday experience is the human-historical world" (1937/1998, 38). Furthermore, Nishida insists that, despite his use of different terminology over the years, this emphasis on everyday experience is in fact something that has been a common element in all of his writings—beginning, he says, with the idea of "pure experience". Nishida's late work is therefore an attempt to bring the phenomenological concerns of his early work full circle. Statements such as these reaffirm Nishida's status as a phenomenologist. Therefore, we can concur with Nitta, Tatematsu, and Shimomissē (1978) when they write that

> First, the *fundamental attitude of Nishida's philosophizing* may well be compared with that of Husserl and other phenomenologists. Second, like Husserl's, Nishida's philosophy undergoes an incessant radicalization of his *return to the more primordial reality and of its beholding and description*. At different stages

> of his philosophical development, it was called "pure experience" or "intellectual intuition", "self-conscious will" or sometime later absolute "reflection", "concrete self-conscious universal", "locus" or "field" as nothingness, "intuition in action" in distinction from "expressive determination", and finally the "world of historical reality" (8).
>
> Nishida was the first to introduce phenomenology and phenomenological philosophy into Japanese academic intellectuals and among intellectuals in 1910-1920…His rather liberal use of some of the basic insights and concepts of phenomenology allowed him to elaborate effectively in an original way his own philosophy (10).

In short, then, the phenomenological significance of pure experience is both the origin and terminus of Nishida's lifelong philosophical preoccupations. To understand this idea and what it means for Nishida—as well as how it emerges from its Zen Buddhist intellectual lineage—we must therefore approach pure experience via the same methodology used by Nishida: namely, phenomenological analysis.[39]

To sum up: I argue in what follows that, simply put, Nishida's pure experience is best understood as a *somatic* phenomenon. For Nishida, it is our basic mode of relatedness to the world and other people. Unlike James, Nishida insists (reflecting his Zen Buddhist heritage) that pure experience, as a somatic phenomenon, is not just an ontological and phenomenological given but is, rather, also a progressive achievement. It can be realized—or rather, realized more deeply and profoundly in our everyday experience of things. Construed in this way, it offers important explanatory as well as practical resources for understanding the nature of mind and moral relatedness. I turn now to a discussion of the intellectual foundations of Nishida's pure experience.[40]

Foundations of Nishida's Pure Experience

Nishida is widely regarded as Japan's most prominent modern philosopher. He is the founder of what has come to be known as the Kyoto School of Japanese philosophy. His work is equally influenced by two main strands of thought: Zen Buddhist philosophy

(and the experiential insights gleaned from his own brief practice of seated meditation (Jap: *zazen*), and the work of western philosophical luminaries such as Plato and Aristotle, Augustine, Spinoza, Hume, Kant, Hegel, and Husserl, among others. Nishida's work as a whole is an exercise in east-west syncretism. James Heisig (2006) notes that the basic problem occupying Nishida throughout his professional life was "how to reconcile the intuitive, nonreflective consciousness cultivated in the east with the logical, reflective consciousness cultivated in western philosophy" (30). One of Nishida's earliest attempts to accomplish this goal is found in his initial discussion of pure experience, an idea Nishida openly appropriated from William James. Takeuchi (1982) writes that Nishida was "much inspired by the philosophy of William James and tried to interpret his own basic insights philosophically with the use of psychological concepts borrowed from James" (180). The most important concept Nishida borrowed from James was that of "pure experience".

Nishida began reading James around 1905. During this initial reading, he seems to have been preoccupied with a problem set very similar to the concerns that occupied James, concerns that in part motivated James to develop his particular notion of pure experience. According to Yusa (2002), "In his notes on psychology, Nishida observed that, concerning the relationship between the mind and the body, the traditional theories of materialism, spiritualism, dualism, and parallelism were all defective in that they failed to explain what we experience. Instead of subscribing to a certain theory, Nishida proceeded to focus on experience itself" (96). Recall James's (1955) similar insistence that the foundational tenant of radical empiricism is that "the only things that shall be debatable among philosophers shall be things definable in terms drawn from experience" (199). Nishida in this way shared James's preoccupation with remaining faithful to the phenomenology of our worldly experience. Rather than forcing experience into the pre-established contours of a favored philosophical theory, Nishida was content to begin his analysis in the thick of experience itself, and to then let experience "speak" its own inner form and nature. Like James, Nishida uses the idea of pure experience to ground his inside-out approach to consciousness and experience.

While reading James, Nishida quickly honed in on a feature of James's notion of pure experience that he felt resonated with Zen Buddhist overtones: namely, that it was a prereflective state of experience *prior* to subject-object distinctions and thus more basic than cognitive reflection or conceptual and linguistic analysis. According to Takeuchi (1982), "the concept of pure experience…is the Western philosophical mold into which Nishida poured his own religious experience cultivated by his Zen training" (182). Simply put, pure experience for Nishida is the primordial foundation of human experience. It is, as he titles chapter nine of *An Inquiry into the Good* (his first major work), "the fundamental mode of true reality". Nishida thus shares James's insistence that pure experience is a kind of phenomenologically basic unitive state. In *An Inquiry into the Good*—which is largely a sustained treatment of the phenomenological and ethical significance of pure experience— Nishida says that "The idea that the unifier and the unified are two separate things derives from abstract thinking—in concrete reality the two cannot be separate" (1911/1990, 57). Elsewhere he repeats this characterization when he writes that "From the standpoint of pure experience, there is no such thing as an object divorced from the subject" (1911/1990, 23). More pointedly, three sentences into *An Inquiry into the Good*, Nishida says that "pure experience is identical with direct experience. When one directly experience's ones own state of consciousness, there is not yet a subject or an object, and knowing and its object are completely unified. This is the most refined type of experience" (1911/1990, 4-5).

This latter characterization is really the heart of both *An Inquiry into the Good* and Nishida's conception of pure experience, upon which the former rests. The remainder of this chapter will be concerned with unpacking the philosophical significance of this excerpt. To accomplish this task, we will eventually move beyond *Inquiry* and look at some later texts. First, however, it is first important to note how Nishida begins *Inquiry*. His very first sentence announces both that the themes treated in this text will be experience-based—in other words, Nishida will be concerned with exploring the relation between mind and world—and additionally, that Nishida will be arguing for a particular kind of experience, or mind-world relation, that he terms "pure".

He begins the text in this way: "To experience means to know facts just as they are, to know in accordance with facts by completely relinquishing ones own fabrication. What we usually refer to as experience is adulterated with some sort of thought, so by *pure* I am referring to the state of experience just as it is without the least addition of deliberative discrimination" (1911/1990, 3). For Nishida, genuine experience entails a direct relation with the objects of experience, which is then "to know facts just as they are". In other words, genuine experience is *unmediated*.[41] It is, as he insists a few sentences later, "direct". It involves a knowledge component[42] by which we are directly acquainted with the objects of experience without some sort of "deliberative discrimination" or mental intermediary standing in-between experiencer and experienced. This direct mode of experiencing and knowing the world is for Nishida the "most refined" type of experience. What this will mean, according to Nishida, is that it can in fact be cultivated. Via a "shift of attention" (1911/1990, 6), pure experience can be realized.

In addition to characterizing pure experience as "direct", Nishida says that pure experience is prior to meaning—insofar as the latter consists of imposing "judgments" or "deliberative discriminations" on the content of experience. By "deliberative discriminations", Nishida seems to mean something akin conceptual content: intentional content that represents the world as being a certain way and whose form is specified by the relevant concepts in a subject's conceptual repertoire. (I return to this topic in detail in chapter four. Thus Nishida writes that "A truly pure experience has no meaning whatsoever; it is simply a present consciousness of facts as they are" (1911/1990, 4). This prereflective or nonconceptual kind of experience includes "the so-called fringe of consciousness", which consists of "the various relations between experiential facts…like sensation and perception" (1911/1990, 4-5). Nishida's claim here that pure experience is prior to meaning is consistent with Zen discussions of the immediacy and spontaneity of "thoughtless" experience, as we'll see later, but it's a bit difficult to render entirely intelligible—particularly given Nishida's own examples in this section and some later claims that seem to stand at odds with this characterization. But we'll return to these interpretive matters momentarily. For now, I want to note that, in order to characterize

pure experience as a direct mode of world-directed experience somehow prior to meaning and judgment, Nishida will follow James's lead (as I have argued in the prior two chapters) and look to situate pure experience at the level of our pre-reflective, situated bodily activity. It is at this level that pure experience can be said to have intentional or experiential content that lacks conceptual articulation, or "judgments" and "deliberative discrimination". It is thus a kind of body-based nonconceptual experience. Again, we'll return to this below.

In addition to characterizing pure experience as both direct and prereflective (or nonconceptual), Nishida's says that "pure experience is always a simple fact" (1911/1990, 5). He elaborates when he writes that "From the perspective of pure experience, then, all experiences are distinct and in each case they are simple and original" (1911/1990, 5). What Nishida seems to intend here is the idea that each moment of pure experience is self-sufficient and, in a sense, autonomous. This is because "at the moment it occurs", pure experience is "simple" and "original", given without reference to the experiences that either proceeded it or those that will follow (Nishida 1911/1990, 5).[43] The moment we *reflect* on pure experience, however, the experience is made "impure" by being situated within the successive linearity of reflective consciousness. The reflective character of experience is always specified in relation to past experiences and an anticipated future. However, pure experience is the timeless "state where subject and object have not been separated" (1911/1990, 6). And this timeless state can be disclosed via "a shift of [our] attention", "without adding the least bit of thought", since the latter compromises pure experience's "purity" (1990/1911, 6). In other words, pure experience can again be *realized*. In realizing pure experience, we discover the last of its features I want to discuss: namely, that "there is no fundamental distinction between internal and external in experience"—for "what makes an experience pure is its unity, not its kind" (1911/1990, 7). In other words, pure experience for Nishida can be realized within different forms of our worldly engagement. It is the unitive *form* of pure experience that defines it as such. This unitive form is the "selfless" phenomenology of pure experience, the erasure of inner-outer, subject-object polarities, as realized within

different modalities of bodily action. Therefore, we can note that, first and foremost, "pure experience is activity" (Wargo 2005, 46).

In sum, Nishida's initial formulation of pure experience in the first chapter of *An Inquiry into the Good* argues the pure experience has the following features:

1. Pure experience is a direct experience of the world.
2. Pure experience is prereflective, or nonconceptual.
3. Pure experience is a simple fact.
4. Pure experience dissolves internal-external, subject-object distinctions.

There is more to be said about each of these characteristics of pure experience. For now, this list will serves as an initial schematization of Nishida's pure experience. I'll return to these features in the later analysis. First, however, I want to say a bit about the Zen Buddhist influence on Nishida's thinking.

Nishida's Pure Experience in its Zen Buddhist Context

There is no question that Nishida's thought as a whole is suffused with Zen Buddhist insights. Nishida practiced Zen meditation for a time, and this encounter clearly left a lasting imprint on his life and work. However, by the time *An Inquiry into the Good* appeared in 1911, Nishida was no longer formally practicing *zazen* (Jap: "seated meditation") or *sanzen* (Jap: private interviews with a Zen master). But this does not mean that Nishda left Zen behind once his formal practice ceased and he redirected his energies to academic scholarship. As Yusa (2002) notes in her monumental biography of Nishida,

> Zen was for Nishida the fountain head and unifying force of his philosophical vision. But he realized early on in his career that it was best not to mention his Zen background, for this public knowledge had given rise to a school of interpretation that reduced his thought into a philosophy of "satori" that only a few select enlightened people could hope to understand (xx).

Nishida hoped to develop a "global philosophy" in the sense that he wanted his work to be both accessible and applicable to all people of all ethnicities, including those lacking

formal training in Zen Buddhism. Thus he resisted being identified as a "Zen thinker". But the influence is clearly there. And to attempt an exposition of Nishida's thought without being mindful of this central Zen element is to ignore what is perhaps most distinctive and important about Nishida's syncretic vision. The following quote gives insight into how Nishida himself viewed the relationship between his academic work and the Zen Buddhist tradition. In a letter to Keiji Nishitani, another important Kyoto School figure, Nishida writes:

> You are absolutely right to say that something of Zen is in the background of my thought. I am not an expert of Zen, but I do believe that people generally misunderstand what Zen is all about. I think the life of Zen consists in "getting at reality". It has been my dearest wish since my thirties to unite Zen and philosophy, even though that is impossible. Certainly, it is fine if *you* say [that Zen elements are present in my thought], but if ordinary uniformed people call my thought "Zen", I would strongly object, because they do not understand either Zen or my thought. They simply bundle together X and Y as the same thing, which is to misunderstand both my thought and Zen (Quoted in Yusa 2002 xx).

In sum, then, to understand Nishida's philosophy, we must understand something of the Zen context that informs Nishida's philosophy.

A comprehensive historical discussion of Zen Buddhism is clearly outside of the scope of present concerns. In what follows, I want to provide a brief overview of the Zen Buddhist conception of mind and experience, two topical concerns that are arguably the foundational themes of both classical Zen and Nishida's work, and in doing so show how the Zen influence thoroughly permeated Nishida's philosophical writings. This will prepare us for a deeper engagement with Nishida's conception of pure experience.

Traditionally, Buddhism has been very much concerned with the nature and transformative possibilities of human experience. The heart of Buddhist theory and practice—the Four Noble Truths: the Truth of Suffering; the Truth of the Origin of Suffering; the Truth of Cessation of Suffering; the Truth of the Path to Cessation—stress the experiential centrality of *self-cultivation* within the processes of spiritual maturation. Self-cultivation in this sense involves a heightened mindfulness to the relational

structures of our everyday experience that link us to the world and the people and things in it. The central aspect of self-cultivation, for Buddhism, therefore entails an empirical study of mind: an exploration of the various ways that mind engages with the physical world, and a further exploration of the various ways that the different *forms* of this engagement might be (at least potentially) given more satisfactory and compassionate expression.

In short, Buddhism endorses a decidedly empirical and experience-based approach to investigating mind. Methodologically, Buddhism stresses the need for careful and lucid phenomenological analysis of the mind-world relationship. Meditation is therefore a phenomenological investigation of mind. The Dalai Lama (2003) writes: "The Buddha said that if one trains the mind there is joy, and if the mind is undisciplined there is suffering. In this way the Buddha placed great emphasis on the mind" (93). Towards this end, Buddhism offers a kind of science of mind. Buddhist literature abounds with rigorous examples of inquiry into the typologies and constituents—the Husserlian *essences*, if you like—of mental phenomena. But of course, this phenomenological and empirical analysis is always a function of Buddhism's broader *soteriological* concerns. Meditation—a phenomenological analysis of mind and experience—is only pertinent insofar as it leads to genuine transformation: again, the elimination of needless suffering, and the simultaneous realization of wisdom and joyful compassion within the various forms of our worldly relationships. Importantly, then, Buddhism's concern with mind is always a function of broader *soteriological* concerns. This is a crucial point, and one which will be a key aspect of Nishida's discussion of mind and experience in this chapter and the next.

The emphasis on understanding the nature of mind is also a foundational element of Zen Buddhism.[44] To understand the specifically Zen view of mind, we must first get clear about the Zen conception of self—or rather, "no-self" (Skrt: *anātman*). Zen famously denies the existence of a fixed or enduring self. This idea of "no-self" rather emphasizes the irreducibly *relational* and *context-bound* nature of selfhood and personal identity. For, outside of the relational contexts that give meaning and significance to our activities—and which allow us to create a provisional identity *within* those contexts and

through those activities—there is no pregiven self, according to Zen. To use the parlance of contemporary western approaches to mind, this is the claim that mind and self are, in addition to being embodied, also thoroughly embedded in shifting biological and cultural contexts. But again, outside of the unique set of contextual interrelationships that at any moment constitute our (provisional) embedded identity, *we have no separate identity*. As Thomas Kasulis (1981) writes, "…the context defines and elaborates the individual, rather than vice-versa" (8).

This emphasis on the embedded, contextual and interdependent nature of self-identity is offered as a corrective to our tendency to reify, or confer independent existence upon, core features of experience—including the *experiencer* herself. Reification posits phenomena as having autonomous and self-subsistent identity. But according to Zen Buddhism, this reification is both ontologically and ethically a mistaken characterization of our basic relationship with the world. Since all things are fundamentally interrelated, reification establishes separation and distance where there is actually connectedness and intimacy. Language and concepts are singled out by Zen as paradigmatic "reification tools", since they only ever offer partial approximations of their referents. For Zen, we misuse these approximations when we come to assume that language and concepts are capable of re-presenting the full reality of these referents. In other words, the phenomenal content of our embodied and embedded experience always outstrips our conceptual and linguistic categories. Kasulis (1981) puts the point this way: "The Zen Buddhist view is that intellectualizations, concepts, even language itself are inadequate for expressing our experience *as it is experienced*" (55). Discussing the reifying tendencies of language and thought, David Galin (2003) writes that "The most common misuse of [reifying] approximations is the overemphasizing of features and entities and the neglect of explicating contexts and relations. It is certainly the most common in Western "scientific" culture" (133). Simply put, the misuse of approximations is a tendency to confer absolute existence upon *parts* while ignoring their basic interdependence upon larger relational *wholes*.

In short, the problem with reification, according to Zen Buddhism, is thus that it leads to a kind of metaphysical squinting. Reification narrows our vision in a way that

artificially constrains our ability to recognize the broader dependent, relational and context-bound existence of all things. In other words, we come to experience only abridged approximations of the world and the things in it. When *approximations* are taken to be *absolutes*, the richness of the world's dynamic interrelatedness is lost. Reification thus blinds us to our basic ontological interrelatedness with all other things. Rather than remaining attuned to the "dynamics of the world manifold" (Galin 2003, 136)—the interrelationships and explicating contexts that constitute an entity's identity-conditions—reification excludes this world manifold by narrowing our vision to pick out individual features or characteristics of an entity that offer only an artificially abridged approximation of that entity's full interdependent reality. This most commonly happens in our thinking about the self. According to Zen, to think of the ego-self as an independent, autonomous and self-sufficient entity that exhibits intrinsic properties and features setting it apart from all other ego-selves and the world as a whole is to fall prey to the most tantalizing and pernicious of approximations. In this reifying mode of thought, the self is abstracted and decontextualized away from its basic ontological interdependence with all things.

In addition to safeguarding against the reifying tendencies of language and discursive thought, Zen's emphasis on the embedded relational self is a feature of classical Buddhism's more general insistence on the *somatic* and *sensorimotor* basis of mind and experience. Classical Buddhism held that the physical form of the body is composed of four elements and is one of the five aggregates (Skrt: *skandhas*) that make up all things. The four elements comprising the body are the same four elements that comprise the natural world: Earth, Water, Fire and Wind. This is important because, as Shigenori Nagatomo (1992) notes, "What is philosophically presupposed here is a correlation between macrocosm qua…physical nature and microcosm qua the human body" (82). In other words, the body is inextricably *embedded* within the natural order. It is conditioned and constituted by the natural elements that condition and constitute *all* things. Furthermore, since the material form (Skrt: *rūpa*) of the physical body is the first of five interdependent aggregates that arise interdependently—sensation (Skrt: *vedanā*) , perception (Skrt: *samjna*), volition (Skrt: *samskāra*) and consciousness (Skrt: *vijnāna*) are

the other four—consciousness is thus a constitutive element of the ontology of our bodily existence. Nagatomo (1992) continues that, for both classical Buddhism and Zen, "consciousness included in the human body is a somatic or incarnate consciousness in the sense that it is rooted in the human *soma*, or body" (84). Mind is thoroughly integrated with body and body is rooted in world.

Zen Buddhism thus offers a naturalized characterization of the embodied and embedded mind sensitive to both its 1st and 3rd person ontology (Kopf 2001, 38). Additionally, Zen Buddhism's emphasis on the transitional, impermanent nature of mind and experience means that mind and self are inherently fluid. To again use the language of western cognitive science, this feature refers to the real-time *adaptability* of the embodied mind. Our situated coping with continually-changing biological and cultural environments is ongoing and time-pressured. We are, as Andy Clark (1997) puts it, "minds on the hoof". Cognition emerges from within the real-time, situationally-specific integration of perception and action. *Adaptive bodily action* is thus the engine of cognition. Expressing precisely this insight, Nishida writes: "It is not that there is experience because there is an individual, but that there is an individual because there is an experience" (1911/1990, 19). We are literally constructed with the situated dynamics of our worldly activities.

Quick summary: We've seen that, according to Zen Buddhism, consciousness is thoroughly (1) embodied, (2) embedded, and (3) adaptive, and (4) it emerges from the context-sensitive integration of sensation, perception, volition, and action. Once more, consciousness is activity rooted in bodily-perceptual sensorimotor transactions with the world. I suggest that these general observations show that Zen offers what the late neuroscientist and Buddhist practitioner Francisco Varela (1991) termed an "enactive" view of mind. Enactive views of mind, according to Varela, emphasize that "cognition is not the representation of a pregiven world by a pregiven mind but is rather the enactment of a world and a mind on the basis of a history…of actions that a being in the world performs" (9). In other words, according to Varela and Zen, mind and world con-constitute one another—they are mutually *enacted*—through their dynamic coupling. Similarly, the cognitive scientist Edwin Hutchins (1995) writes: "Humans create their

cognitive powers by creating the environments in which they exercise those powers" (xvi).

For classical Buddhism and Zen, then, mind is not a monadic property localized in the head. Rather, it is a relational property of the *whole person*. Mind emerges through the embodied practices of agents interacting with continually-changing biological and cultural contexts. Again, what is important to note is that even more than classical Indian Buddhism, Zen Buddhism stresses the importance of both bodily-perceptual meditative practices and, connectedly, a direct or nonconceptual experience of the world and other people. Zen's primary concern is articulating a transformative theory of mind and experience. In other words, Zen Buddhism from its origins offers a model of mind and experience that stresses the inherent *plasticity* of our worldly engagement: the idea that our experience of world, and indeed the mind itself, is what it is due to its embodiment and therefore can be shaped and transformed by the bodily practices of the individual.

Bodhidharma, traditionally said to be the founder of Zen (or *Ch'an* in Chinese), is thought to have summed up the core teachings of the Zen experience in a concise stanza:

> A special tradition outside the scriptures;
> With no dependence upon words and letters.
> A direct pointing into the mind;
> Seeing there one's own nature, and attaining Buddhahood.[45]

In these brief lines (which would ultimately shape the practical orientation of both Chinese and Japanese Zen), Bodhidharma insists that spiritual awakening and genuine connectedness with the world and other people only emerges "outside" of the reifying strictures of "words and letters". The "direct pointing into the mind" he refers to, and the subsequent ability to engage with the world in a compassionate manner, all invoke a spontaneous, nonconceptual way of seeing (or becoming perceptually attuned and awakened to) the true nature of self and world. Body and mind are literally transformed and reconfigured with the realization of their fundamental and unified nature. Next, I want to look at the work of the Dōgen Kigen (1200-153 CE), founder of the Japanese Sōtō school of Zen Buddhism[46], and how his work further articulates the transformative possibilities of perception and action. Dōgen is now widely regarded as one of the most

important and profound thinkers within the Zen Buddhist tradition. A closer examination of his body-based conception of mind and experience will therefore clarify many of the themes we have been discussing and offer a glimpse of the philosophical richness of Zen thought. Additionally, it will enable us to return to Nishida and to see how these themes emerge in his articulation of pure experience.[47]

Dōgen on the Bodily Basis of (No-)Mind and (No-)Self

According to Dōgen, mind and self emerge from our world-engaged *action*. In his masterwork, the *Shōbōgenzō*, he writes:

> Our body-mind and its environment are dependent upon activities…Although activity is not what worldly people are likely to care for, it is every human's only true refuge. It should be examined and understood thoroughly that *dependent origination is activity* [emphasis mine]…(Quoted in Kim 2004, 75).

This passage hints at the basic phenomenological orientation informing Dōgen's considerations of mind and action. David Shaner (1985) notes that "The phenomenological rigor of *Shōbōgenzō* is characterized by Dōgen's argumentation based on reference to everyday experience. Dōgen's foremost intention…is to describe the most primordial mode of experience in which the world is presented to consciousness" (144). Dōgen's analysis always begins with the irreducible fact of our embodied and embedded agency. Like Nishida, Dōgen can thus rightfully be seen as a phenomenologist concerned with uncovering the bodily-perceptual structures of our worldly existence. (Of course, like classical Buddhism, Dōgen's phenomenological analysis is always conducted under the aspect of broader soteriological concerns). Looking at Dōgen's phenomenological analysis of bodily action will prepare us to return to Nishida's treatment of this topic.

In this passage cited above, it is important to note that for Dōgen, both "bodymind"[48] *and* "its environment" are structured by human activity. Agency is always situated, for Dōgen. Human action is dependently conditioned by the situation in which it occurs—again, action is always adaptive and context-specific—and thus mind and self, too, are contextually conditioned—precisely because they emerge from adaptive,

dependently conditioned activity. Simply put, body-mind and world co-constitute one another through their dynamic coupling.

According to Dōgen, the embodied mind discloses its adaptive and hybrid nature through the changing forms of its worldly engagement. By paying close attention to the various forms of our worldly engagement, Dōgen insists, we come to appreciate the ontological intimacy of self and world. In this way, Dōgen urges us to become phenomenologists attuned to our own body and its transformative possibilities. In other words, "his conception of *zazen* as *living body*" entails attentiveness to "the human body engaged in a mutual interplay within its environment, the *living ambiance*" of our situatedness in the world (Kopf 2001, 68). Thus Dōgen writes: "The Way is surely attained with the body" (Quoted in Kim 2004, 101). Elsewhere, he insists that "To study the way with the body means to study the way with your own body", for "the body comes forth from the study of the way" (Quoted in Shaner1985, 91). In short, the body is the primary vehicle for spiritual realization.

With this in mind, what I want to refer to as Dōgen's *enactive*, or agency-based, view of mind and experience can be teased out of the following rather cryptic remark:

> What is called "mind" is the mountains, rivers, lands, and the sun, the moon and the stars. However, if you carry this statement further, it becomes inadequate. If you stop short of it, it becomes excessive. The mind *qua* mountains, rivers, and lands is mountains, rivers and lands (Quoted in Nagatomo 1992, 159).

Admittedly, this passage is far from transparent. But what I think is going on here is something like this. First, Dōgen is setting up and then rejecting two common and contrasting views of mind: materialism and subjective idealism. Materialism occurs if we "carry further" Dōgen's identification of mind and the natural world. We end up with a *reductive* materialism under which the experiential mind is *nothing but* neuronal activity or processes in the brain and central nervous system (in Dōgen's terminology mind is *nothing but* "mountains, rivers, and lands", etc.). But as Dōgen notes, this is surely "inadequate". This view eliminates the relational and phenomenal aspects of experience—essential features of mind, according to Dogen. As a phenomenologist, Dōgen has no intention of jettisoning the phenomenology of lived experience. On the

other hand, subjective idealism occurs if we "stop short of" saying that mind is mountain, rivers, lands, etc. By underemphasizing or denying mind's material basis, subjective idealism retreats back into the self-inclosed *inner* realm of phenomenal experience. But this view, too, is "excessive", as Dōgen notes. It ignores the embedded, open-ended nature of mind and its co-constitutive relationship with the world. Neither option is therefore viable.

So what *is* Dōgen's positive view, exactly? Given his emphasis on the interdependence of action, perception, and thought, I suggest the following: Dōgen proposes an enactive approach to cognition that navigates a middle way between the *reification* inherent in both materialism and subjective idealism. Simply put, Dogen insists that the acting body is a sensorimotor unity that dependently arises with the world. But this unity is not a *reflexive* unity. The latter is defined by the positing of a cognitive "I", a fixed subject who is the initiator of activity. The reflexive "I", once established, constructs the illusion that it is an enduring or permanent self somehow behind the phenomena of experience, orchestrating the show, so to speak. In other words, the reflexive "I" is what creates the illusion of a transcendental subjectivity. It does so by constituting a subject-object structure within the flow of experience. Against the ceaseless flow of environmental change, the reflexive "I" thus posits itself as a stable subject. Dōgen notes this when he writes:

> If a person, who rides in a boat, looks at the shore turning her/his eyes back, s/he misjudges the shore to be moving. If s/he directs the eyes to the boat, s/he knows that the boat progresses. Likewise, if someone discriminates and affirms the myriad dharmas while being deluded about body and mind, s/he misjudges her/his mind and nature to be permanent. (Quoted in Kopf 2001, 61).

But it is only by turning a sensitive phenomenological eye to the perpetually open-ended forms of our bodily action that we see through the illusion of the enduring reflexive "I" and thus avoid "being deluded about body and mind". At the prereflective level of bodily experience, the body spontaneously adapts to the changing saliencies of its environment. But—and this is the key point—it does so *prior* to the subject-object binary structure erected by the reflexive "I", or cogito. In and through its activity, the body is

functionally integrated with its world. It is therefore a "selfless" self whose unity is established not via reflection, but rather through the dynamical coherence of its adaptive activities *in relation to the changing environment in which it is embedded*. The integrated body-structure remains open-ended and "impermanent", we might say. Whatever unity it has is constituted within its prereflective engagement with the world and things in it. Put differently, we are not somehow *behind* this functioning—rather, "we *are* that dynamic functioning" (Stambaugh 1999, 25). Importantly, the body is *nondually* integrated with the world through its sensorimotor patterns of action. This enactive bodymind-world unit is what Dōgen terms the "total body" (Jap: *zenshin*). At this level, there is no ego obstruction or intramental token or representation standing between body-mind and world-as-engaged. Nor is there the illusion of a permanent cognitive "I", established by the reflexive cogito. Instead, there is simply *action*: the fluid integration of adaptive body-mind and world, considered as an integrated unity. Dōgen expresses just this idea when writes: "When one is total body, there is no obstruction for it; it is graciously smooth and tumbles [freely]" throughout the world (Quoted in Kim 2004, 168). Bodymind and world are functionally integrated in a smooth and unmediated manner at the prereflective level of our sensorimotor activity. The world makes certain demands upon the acting body and it unthinkingly responds. Mind emerges precisely at this juncture, within the dynamism of the world-directed body and the responsive world.

According to Dōgen, then, both materialism and subjective idealism reify (or confer independent existence upon) one *part* of the larger integrated *whole* that is the body-mind and world. But this reification cuts against the Buddhist idea that all things are interrelated and dependently co-arising. Materialism points exclusively to neural structures in the head and says "this is the real essence of mind". Subjective idealism points exclusively to the phenomenal content of experience and says "No, *this* is the real essence of mind". But again, both reify one part of mentality and ignore the larger relational whole that is the embodied mind embedded within a living world. Dōgen's body-based, enactive view of cognition avoids this reification.

Interestingly, several contemporary critics echo Dōgen's challenge here. One perhaps surprising example is John Searle. Searle, at least in one sense, offers an

argument very similar to Dōgen's. Searle argues that any adequate theory of mind needs to encompass both the irreducible 1st person ontology of our subjective life *as well as* the 3rd person ontology of our subjective life's biological implementation. In short, we require an embodied naturalistic view of mind with subjectivity firmly at its center. (Whether Searle's brain-based "biological naturalism" heeds his own call is debate for another paper). If my reading of the above passages from Dōgen is correct, Dōgen is arguing for precisely the same thing. And in a move that Dogen would also likely endorse, Searle further argues that our traditional dualistic Cartesian vocabulary contributes to the reifying tendencies that mislead our mind-related inquiries. Searle (1998) provocatively writes:

> I am suggesting that we must abandon…the traditional categories of "mind", "consciousness", "matter", "mental", "physical" and all the rest as they are traditionally construed in our philosophical debates…The traditional [mind-body] problem only arises if you accept the vocabulary with its mutually exclusive categories of mental and physical, mind and matter, spirit and flesh (53).

I suggest that Dōgen's unique lexicon, including terms like "body-mind", "total body" "activity-situations", and "without-thinking", is an attempt to do just what Searle is calling for.

Even more pointedly, Dōgen would additionally argue that the relentless quest to pinpoint the Neural Correlates of Consciousness ("NCCs"), which currently occupies much of contemporary cognitive and neuroscience, is yet another kind of misleading reification. The idea that if we only "dig deep enough" into the hidden microstructure of the brain we'll eventually hit upon the seat of consciousness is, once more, a kind of metaphysical squinting. By focusing our search so narrowly on one particular cause of mind, we miss the broader relational structures that, working in concert with features of our brain and central nervous system, *also* condition and constitute mentality. A brain-based bottom-up causal story can't disclose mentality's many top-down *constitutive* relations—relations essential to understanding the qualitative dimensions of mind.

In sum, I suggest that Dōgen's agency-based model of mind and experience offers an embodied, embedded and enactive model of mind animated by two central claims.

First, Dōgen sharply criticizes the *reification* inherent in either our tendency to think about mind and world as substantially distinct entities, on one hand, or conversely, in our attempts to argue for the metaphysical primacy of one of these two relational poles. Secondly, Dōgen stresses the dependent, co-constitutive relationship of mind and world as an antidote to this reification. A broader, if implicit, claim in Dōgen's view as I've developed them here is the claim that the world-engaged self is not only (or even *primarily*) a cognitive self, but rather a sensorimotor or *bodily* self that is affectively coupled to its lived world. To use Nagatomo's (1992) terminology, the lived body is affectively "attuned" to its world by *feelingly* engaging with its "lived ambiance". And as Kopf (2001) notes, "this somatic affectiveness connects the self with the seemingly external world and constitutes the matrix of their interaction and rapport, ultimately bridging the gap between self and world through the *unifying activity* (Jap: *tōitsu sayō*) of the self" (221). In short, the affectively charged activity of the body is the place where self and world are nondually conjoined.

With Dōgen's Zen Buddhist conception of the embodied mind and situated action in place, I now want to return to Nishida on the bodily self. As we'll see, Nishida's account of the body, as it emerges from his discussions of pure experience and acting-intuition, shares a number of important structural features with Dogen's account. Though Nishida doesn't mention Dōgen by name in the works discussed below, it will become clear that Nishida's discussion of the body is in many ways consonant with Dōgen's account. In particular, Dōgen's insistence that self and world are united within the sensorimotor and affective capacities of the prereflective, acting body will prove central to understanding Nishida's claims.

Acting-Intuition and the Embodiment of Pure Experience

A Problem with Pure Experience

Before delving into Nishida's bodily model of mind and self, I want to return to a tension in his initial formulation of pure experience which I briefly mentioned above. In short, the tension is this: as Nishida himself later acknowledged, pure experience—at least as developed in *An Inquiry into the Good*—remains an intramental phenomenon. In other words, Nishida seems to put pure experience "in the head", as it were, as an aspect of consciousness. Or at the very least, whatever Nishida says about pure experience is always validated by an appeal to pure experience thought of as "the cause of all mental phenomena" (Nishida 1911/1990, 5). He continues by saying that "When we think critically, we realize that reality does not exist apart from the facts of pure experience and we can explain the character of these notions psychologically" (1911/1990, 15). Construed in this way, pure experience remains vulnerable to the charge of being a mentalistic phenomenon isolated within the inner, introspective content of personal experience. And if this is so, it's not clear how pure experience can function as the sort of grounding concept Nishida seems to want it to without forcing Nishida to adopt some idealist variant—bringing with it a host of metaphysical and skeptical difficulties.

This tension didn't escape Nishida's readers. For instance, in his book-length treatment of Nishida's thought, Keiji Nishitani (1991) notes that, "from start to finish [in *An Inquiry into the Good*] pure experience is stipulated as "consciousness"" (100). Given this equivocation of pure experience and consciousness, Nishitani then asks: "Does this not amount to a kind of psychologism or subjectivism?" (1991, 100). Indeed, Nishida himself was certainly aware of this difficulty. In a 1936 essay, "Upon Resetting the Type", Nishida writes, "As I look at it now, the standpoint of [*An Inquiry into the Good*] is that of consciousness, and it might be thought of as a kind of psychologism" (Quoted in Nishida 1911/1990, xxi). But he also is quick to add: "I do think that what lay deep in my thought when I wrote it was not something psychological" (1911/1990, xxi).

Nishida's early development of pure experience therefore faced a difficult problem. Pure experience was supposed to offer an explanatory framework from within which Nishida could argue for the primordial and irreducible mutuality (Jap: *sōgo*) of self and world. For, as Kopf (2001) notes, "like Dōgen, Nishida adheres to the doctrine of "oneness of body and mind" (Jap: *shinjin ichinyo*)—and even that of self and *ambiance*" (74). But Nishida's initial overly-psychologistic rendering of pure experience collapses back into precisely the sort of inner-directed idealism he hopes to overcome. In other words, the mutuality of embodied self and world becomes subsumed beneath the autonomy of the individual phenomenal self. Nishida's initial formulation of pure experience in *An Inquiry into the Good* is thus deficient in two regards. First, it fails to adequately capture the phenomenological structure of the body-based, sensorimotor dynamics that secures the mutuality of self and world. Secondly, it conceptually splits apart precisely that which Nishida is trying to unify: again, self and world, existing in a nondual relation of reciprocity and mutuality.

Nishida's later formulation of the concept "acting-intuition" is his attempt to de-psychologize pure experience and avoid these difficulties. With "acting-intuition", Nishida makes a move anticipated by Dōgen: that is, he situates pure experience at the prereflective level of the acting, world-engaged body. Doing so, Nishida believes, overcomes the two deficiencies of his early formulation of pure experience referenced above. Additionally, by taking pure experience down to the level of the body, Nishida discovers the phenomenological resources to articulate more adequately how pure experience—via acting-intuition—is *cultivated*. And as Yuasa (1987) points out, this move very much reflects Nishida's eastern philosophical and religious heritage—of which Dōgen is a powerful representative—which insists that "true knowledge cannot be obtained simply by means of theoretical thinking, but only through "bodily recognition or realization" (Jap: *tainin* or *taitoku*), that is, through the utilization of one's total mind and body" (25). In short, pure experience in the later Nishida—along side its companion concept, "acting-intuition"—becomes a robust *bodily* phenomenon. Sensorimotor dynamics secure our nondual relation with the world. Therefore, via acting-intuition, the

acting body for Nishida becomes the place (Jap: *basho*) where pure experience is realized—or, to use a term introduced in prior chapters, *enacted*.

The Sensorimotor, Intersubjective, and Social-Historical Dynamics of Acting-Intuition

Acting-Intuition and Sensorimotor Skillfulness

To understand Nishida's corporealization of pure experience, we need to first acquaint ourselves with a general account of "acting-intuition". As with most of his core ideas, Nishida uses a number of different definitions of acting-intuition throughout his writings. For example, some definitions attempt a more logical characterization, while later renderings offer a situated, phenomenological characterization of the idea. I think the latter approach is clearer, and ultimately more successful in addressing the psycholgism of *An Inquiry into the Good*. My focus will therefore be on the more phenomenological renderings of acting-intuition and its relation to pure experience. The core of the idea can be simply put, however. For Nishida, acting-intuition refers to the body's primary mode of relatedness to the world. It denotes "the structural relationship between self and world"—which is, "more than anything else, a bodily relation to that world-space" (Yuasa 1987, 55). However, for Nishida the embedded, world-engaged human body is not simply the sum total of its biological parts or physical capacities. Rather, it is a fluid and open-ended "functional structure"[49] that both penetrates and is penetrated by the world in which it moves and acts. This "world" includes both the body's immediate biological environments, as well as the more encompassing cultural and historical contexts that contour our actions and self-understanding. To reiterate: acting-intuition for Nishida captures the active-passive circuit of relatedness through which the body both enters into and receives its world. This circuit of relatedness is a bodily phenomenon. Importantly, it can be *cultivated* such that we realize a nondual (or *pure*) experience of the world. Self and world are thus, to use Nishida's term, "co-implicative" (Nishida 1937/1998, 44). Yuasa notes that "Nishida's theory of acting intuition can be interpreted as an attempt to grasp afresh the notion of pure

experience…from the viewpoint of a mind-body theory" (1987 65)—and in particular, how mind, body and world are united within the phenomenological structure of pure experience.

Taken along with some of the central insights of pure experience discussed previously, acting-intuition is in this way the cornerstone of what we might refer to as Nishida's agency-based model of mind, experience, and moral relatedness. Concerning this agency-based model, Kopf (2001) notes the following:

> Nishida, like Merleau-Ponty, proposes the interconnectedness of action and perception, which he refers to as *acting-intuition* (Jap: *koiteki chokkan*), comprising the activity of acting directed towards the world, as well as the passivity of experiencing. He also identifies this form of existential engagement, comprising the "unity of acting and seeing" [ ], with the human body (Jap: *shintai*) that is the living body (72).

Put differently, acting-intuition is Nishida's attempt to articulate the phenomenologically ambiguous structure of the acting, world-engaged body, a structure that enables the body to serve as the "union point"[50] within which self, other, and world are intermingled. But what enables this convergence of self, other and world is not reflective consciousness or discursive thought. Rather, it is the body's capacity for a nonconceptual *felt* integration with its world: a connectedness that emerges from "affective feeling [which] can be described as a unity underlying various intellectual forces" (1920/1978, 223). In other words, the acting body—"an a priori of a priori" (1920/1979, 223) operative beneath the binary subject-object structure of reflective consciousness—is the vehicle for realizing a nondual mode of relatedness with all things. Understood in this light, for Nishida the body thus becomes the foundation of mind, experience, and moral relatedness. Understanding the body's ambiguous structure, as well as its capacity for a prereflective, affective coupling with its world, is crucial for understanding Nishida's insights into acting-intuition and pure experience.

So what exactly does Nishida say about the ambiguity of the body and how does it relate to his development of acting-intuition? In what follows, I want to differentiate what I think are two critical phenomenological aspects of Nishida's acting-intuition. I

will consider acting-intuition on the (1) sensorimotor, and (2) intersubjective and social-historical level. Discussing these two levels in turn will then culminate with an analysis of how acting-intuition, as the bodily realization of pure experience, enables the cultivation of an other-directed ethical *ethos*, a discussion that will spill over into the next chapter and comprise the bulk of its content.

To begin with the sensorimotor dimension of acting-intuition: we can first note that Nishida both echoes James and anticipates Merleau-Ponty when discussing the structural ambiguity that is perhaps the body's defining phenomenological feature. Recall James's comments in his essay, "The Place of Affectional Facts", discussed in chapter one, that "Our body itself is the palmary instance of the ambiguous" (1912/1996, 153). As James noted, the acting body has a Janus-faced phenomenological structure. It is an utterly unique entity in that it can be taken both as subject and as object. In fact, our experience of being an embodied self emerges, according to both Nishida and James, from the dialectical interplay of the body-as-subject and the body-as-object. James captures this ambiguity when he notes: "Sometimes I treat my body purely as a part of outer nature. Sometimes, again, I think of it as 'mine', I sort it with the 'me', and then certain local changes and determinations in it pass for spiritual happenings." (1912/1996, 153). Taken as "mine", the body becomes subject. As subject, the body is not an object of or for perception. Rather, it is lived through. It is experienced from the "inside", as it were. And the subject-body is malleable, in that it can be enlarged and extended.

Marking the distinction between body as subject and as object, Merleau-Ponty (1945/2002) famously writes that certain common "perceptual habits" extend the subject-body beyond epidermal boundaries (or the limit of the body as object). He writes:

> …every habit is both motor and perceptual, because it…sets boundaries to our field of vision and our field of action. Learning to find one's way among things with a stick…is equally an example of perceptual habit. Once the stick has become a familiar instrument, the world of feelable things recedes and now begins, not at the outer skin of the hand, but at the end of the stick…It is a bodily auxiliary, and extension of the bodily synthesis (175-176).

The perceptual habits and skilled coping making up most of our everyday, prereflective activity (discussed at some length in chapters two and four) enables the subject-body to regularly extend itself beyond its epidermal boundary. But something as simple as banging one's shin on a coffee table, looking in a mirror, or feeling the long stare of a stranger abruptly shifts the balance of this ambiguity towards an experience of the body as *object*: a "skin-bag", in Dōgen's colorful language, situated amongst other skin-bags and physical objects in the world.

According to Nishida, this structural ambiguity of the body means that the body has a fundamentally "self-contradictory" structure. In a sense, it is both itself and, simultaneously, not-itself. He writes:

> The very life of our selves, which are possessed of *historical bodies* and are acting-intuitional, is self-contradictory. Historical life itself is self-contradictory. It cannot be the case that what knows is what is known. Our self-awareness is self-contradictory. Our body is also a thing. Things are what is seen. But our body is what sees at the same time that it is what works… (Quoted in Kazashi 1999, 113).

Again, the self-contradictory nature of the body, for Nishida, lies first with the fact that the body is simultaneously both subject and object. Consider Merleau-Ponty's (1964) similar remarks in his essay "Eye and Mind", when he writes that "The enigma is that my body simultaneously sees and is seen. That which looks at all things can also look at itself and recognize, in what it sees, the "other side of its power of looking" (162). The experience of an embodied self, situated in and interacting with a dynamic world, emerges from the dialectical movement between the subject and object poles of the body's phenomenologically ambiguous structure.

Though he doesn't always draw out these claims as explicitly as one might like, I suggest Nishida argues that this phenomenological ambiguity is significant for a number of reasons. First, it points to the *fluid* and *provisional* nature of the self which arises from our experience of the world. There is no necessarily fixed substantive self continually standing behind our activities. Rather, there is simply "a dynamic unity of acts" (Nishida 1920/1978, 225) that emerges from the body-world relation. The dynamic, processual

coherence of our world-directed activity itself constitutes a provisional "self"—or "self-in-action"—that transforms with the arising of each different activity-situation. Put differently, this fluidity or provisional dynamic unity discloses the fundamentally *impermanent* nature of selfhood while, secondly, hinting at possibilities for creative self-transformation that *arise* from the fluid and impermanent nature of the self. Our skilled coping with tools of various sorts is a prime example of this fact. To return to Merleau-Ponty's example, the simple act of incorporating a tool into our bodily-perceptual skillful repertoire (such as a blind person's cane, Heidegger's famous hammer, a golfer's golf club, a bicycle, or an artist's instrument) enhances the bodily self by opening up new forms of experience and possibilities for action. Simply put, things in the world augment and enhance my body by allowing it to do things it couldn't otherwise do. They do so by inhabiting the phenomenological space of my bodily self. By becoming incorporated into repeated activity-cycles, they transform my bodily structure and, by extension, my experience of embodied selfhood and its action-potentials. Thus, we come to feel a bodily *empathy* for things in the world and, by engaging with them skillfully, "the self expands, [and] a larger and deeper self" emerges (Nishida 1920/1938, 228).

Additionally, skilled activities hint at the potential for the bodily cultivation of *selfless* action. For example, the pianist on intimate phenomenological terms with her piano—an intimacy realized by cultivating the bodily skills needed to play the piano in an expert way—is capable of greater performances than is the novice for whom the piano is am imposing thing, somewhat strange and unfamiliar in its unforgiving density. But while absorbed in her expert playing, the skilled pianist is not a substantial self simply manipulating a lifeless object. Rather, there is a "thoughtless" or "selfless" bodily intelligence at work. The piano enters into the pianist's "lived body space" (Nagatomo 1989) and enables the pianist to literally play without thinking. In this skillful mode of engagement, artist and instrument come together *as a single enactive unit* within the extended structure of the music-event. Bodily self and piano are therefore "co-implicated" in the process of making music. As Nishida (1923) puts it in *Art and Morality*, "aesthetic creativity in this sense is an active dialectical unity of internal and external planes" (46) in which subject and object binary distinctions are uprooted and

dissolved. The malleable structure of the bodily self expands to encompass phenomenologically salient parts of the world and, in doing so, dissolves the sense of a fixed cognitive-intentional subject as over against a world of fixed objects.[51]

According to Nishida, this highly refined sensorimotor skillfulness is a form of perceptual "sensitivity acquired through discipline" (1923/1973, 32). In other words, it can be progressively cultivated. Nishida insists that this activity "is not mere mechanical habit" (1923/1973, 32). Rather, it is adaptive, skillful, expressive, and context-sensitive. In *An Inquiry into the Good*, Nishida already speaks of the unitive structure of exhibiting a "skillful knack" for some practical discipline. He writes:

> Just as ordinary perception is thought to be only passive, so too intellectual intuition is thought to be only a passive, contemplative state. But true intellectual intuition is the unifying act itself in pure experience; it is a capturing of life. That is, it is like a *skillful knack* or, in a more profound sense, it is the spirit of the arts. For example, there is a unifying something operative behind the complex function wherein the artist is engrossed and the brush moves itself…Here there is a state in which subject and object are not differentiated and the intellect and will are merged. It is a state in which the self and things are *mutually responsive* to each other; things do not move the self nor vice versa. There is only one world, one scene (Quoted in Yuasa 1987, 69, emphasis mine).

Prereflective bodily action is here offered as a paradigmatic example of how one realizes pure experience. But as he is still working from within the psychologistic language of *Inquiry*, the "unifying something" Nishida speaks of is still ultimately conceived as "primordial consciousness" (1911/1990 ,13). Twelve years later, however, Nishida's language has changed. The body is now the locus of pure experience. Nishida puts the point this way:

> In the case of a painter painting a picture, he, of course, does not follow conceptual judgment; but his painting is not merely spontaneous movement, either. His movement must have the self-awareness of power. It is not reflective self-awareness, but self-awareness in action. "Style" is such a self-awareness in action (1923/1973, 32).

The somatic "style" of acting-intuition is a mode of relationality in which "consciousness…has become nothing" and "is not hindered by action" (1923/1973, 32). It is emptied of its usual dualistic subject-object structure. But once again, dissolving this binary relation does not mean that acting-intuition is blind. Functionally speaking, the knowing body actually becomes more *intimately integrated* with its world and the things in it, and is subsequently able act in a more situationally-appropriate, creative and responsive way. Sensorimotor skillfulness is a deeper *affective* mode of relationality than is cognitive-intentional reflexivity, according to Nishida (and Dōgen, as we saw earlier). This is because, within the ambiguous structure of the body as "union point", self and world are coupled together more intimately than is possible within the mode of reflective or conceptual consciousness, which functions precisely by establishing dualistic and asymmetrical separation between experiencer and experienced. As Kopf (2001) notes, "both Dōgen and Nishida suggest that the *cogito* constructs a world consisting of individual, seemingly real objects, which have an essence or self-nature, are clearly identifiable, and possess attributes" (213). However, "pure feeling has its own intentional structure" (1920/1978, 233), according to Nishida. That intentional structure is the prereflective structure of acting-intuition. It is "dynamic, and…is spontaneously accompanied by the activity of the body" (1920/1978, 233). At the prereflective level of our sensorimotor engagement with the world, intelligent bodily action unfolds "without the slightest crack…for thinking to enter" (Nishida 1911/1990, 6). Thus "there is no fundamental distinction between internal and external in [pure] experience, and what makes an experience pure is its unity, not its kind" (Nishida 1911/1990, 7). This mode of affective relationality is operative *prior* to the reflexive *cogito*, and is thus not specified by a dualistic or binary structure. Here, self and world are one, symmetrically related and mutually interpenetrating within the sensorimotor dynamic of acting-intuition. Clarifying Nishida on this point, Yuasa (1987) writes that, within the skillful phenomenology of acting-intuition

> …the body loses its heaviness and becomes unopposed to the mind's functioning. The body qua object is gradually made, as it were, subjective. At the same time, my mind comes to lose it character of being a subject opposed to objects. In this

> way, the body as object is subjectivized and mind as subject loses its opposition to objects; it gives up being an ego-consciousness…By saying acting-intuition "becomes a thing and exhausts it", Nishida claims that the ambiguity between subjectivity and objectivity disappears (72).

To sum up this first point: The sensorimotor "style" of acting-intuition Nishida here speaks of is bodily-perceptual skillfulness. Put differently, it refers to a noncognitive *ethos* or bodily-perceptual *affective* comportment enabling one to realize pure experience: a nondual mode of engagement with the world and things in it. Importantly, it is a form of embodiment that can be progressively cultivated. Nishida's acting-intuition thus suggests the possibility of a deeper mode of nondual (selfless or "pure") relationality with the world than is attainable merely through reflective analysis or the conceptual machinations of the *cogito*. Once more, it is the acting body, in virtue of its ambiguous "self-contradictory" structure, that becomes the vehicle for realizing the nondual relationality of pure experience. In short, the body's sensorimotor possibilities enable the somatic realization of pure experience.

We've just seen how, for Nishida (echoing both James and Merleau-Ponty), the body is not a static biological entity with fixed boundaries. Rather, it is a fluid structure—housing a structural ambiguity or "self-contradictory" nature—that, in virtue of this nature, is able to become intimately attuned to the world in a skillful manner devoid of reflective or discursive dualities. Despite different terminologies, these thinkers are all attentive to the "double modality" unique to the world-engaged human body. All three thinkers discuss both the phenomenological nature and significance of this double modality. Nishida's discussion of acting-intuition is unique amongst these men, however. Reflecting the Zen apparatus informing his thought, Nishida, like Dōgen, looks to develop the *ethical* significance of this double modality. By taking pure experience down to the level of the situated, acting body, pure experience takes on an *ethical ethos* in Nishida's hands. This ethos is a kind of perceptual attunement that deepens and enriches our perceptual and affective connection with the world and other people, and is realized by "the placing of the body into a definite *form*" (Yuasa 1987, 119). As we've seen, this "form" is acting-intuition. More will be said of the specific form of this attunement in

chapter four. For now, I want to lay the theoretical groundwork for chapter four's concrete analysis and application of this idea by clarifying what Nishida has to say about how the bodily basis of pure experience and acting-intuition comes to assume the social-historical and ethical significance he insists that it has. To understand this progression, we must now move our analysis from the sensorimotor level of acting-intuition to the intersubjective and social-historical level.

Acting-Intuition, Intersubjectivity and the Social-Historical World

According to Nishida, acting-intuition—as the bodily realization of pure experience—originates at the prereflective level of our sensorimotor engagement with the world. But neither its significance nor its efficacy ends there. Rather, the sensorimotor level of pure experience opens up into an intersubjective level of activity that imbues both acting-intuition and pure experience with a profound relational and ethical significance. In other words, both "Dōgen and Nishida hold that the human body discloses the key to the world of otherness, the world which transcends individuality and opens an entrance to interpersonality" (Kopf 2001, 223). Again, the structural ambiguity of the body—and not the self-reflexive *cogito*—is what enables this other-directed openness.

In his essay "Logic and Life"[52], written in 1936 (or twenty-five years after *Inquiry*), Nishida deals extensively with acting-intuition. He reiterates the body-based nature of his analysis when he writes that

> There is no ego without a body…Even our own bodies are seen from the outside. Yet our body is that which sees as well as that which is seen. There is no seeing without a body. (Quoted in Yuasa 1987, 51).

The previous section looked at how these insights relate to this "self-contradictory" nature of the living, active body, which can assume the role of both subject and object. This is an important phenomenological insight, and both James and Merleau-Ponty, in addition to Nishida, have much to say about it. However, this passage is significant for understanding how Nishida moves away from these thinkers in developing the

interpersonal and relational significance of the body in its modality of acting-intuition. To see how this is so, note that Nishida's characterization of the body as "that which sees as well as that which is seen" stresses the following important fact: *subjectivity* always co-arises alongside *intersubjectivity*. In other words, "Nishida implicitly presupposes the existence of *others* in the life-space" of the human world (Yuasa 1987, 51). The body-as-object is more often than not seen by *other* subject-bodies, for whom I become an object-body. Of course, as a subject-body, I can see my own body-as-object by simply examining its various parts or by looking in the mirror. Even the experience of pain (such as with a sprained ankle or a severe cut), despite its vivid phenomenal quality, highlights my physicality in a way normally "hidden" behind the more common experience of my body-as-subject, or as lived from the inside. In pain experience, I am acutely aware of my body as a "broken" object. But when I experience my body as "that which is seen" by others, indeed *everybody*, I am abruptly brought into the intersubjective matrix of my relatedness to other animate bodies. Since I am not only *embodied* but also *embedded*, my subjectivity *as* a bodily self is always co-constituted through my encounter with the otherness of other bodies. In short, my bodily self is dependently conditioned by every other bodily self. And it is the "self-contradictory" phenomenological structure of the embedded body that discloses this fact.

James, of course, also makes this observation. (This was discussed at length in the last chapter). But whereas for James this observation tells us a number of interesting things about the social or extended nature of the bodily self and the irreducibly *spatial* nature of experience, Nishida imbues this fact with profound *ethical* significance. For James, Merleau-Ponty, and other phenomenologists, the bodily self's dependence on others is a phenomenological and ontological given. But Nishida parts ways with James and other phenomenologists with his insistence—again, stemming from the Zen Buddhist themes at play in his work—that this relational aspect of our somatic nature can in fact be *cultivated*. This is a key point. Put differently, our bodily existence, according to Nishida, including its intersubjective aspects, is an *achievement*.[53] Embodiment can thus be developed. We can alter the very structure of our embodied relationship to the world and other people, and in doing so cultivate a perceptually and affectively charged *ethical*

ethos that deepens the various modalities of our relatedness. The form of our intersubjectivity can be transformed and refined.[54]

To see how this is so, it is important to note that, once again, the idea of bodily cultivation, or creative enactment, is particularly important here. For Nishida, "acting-intuition is the structure and dynamic of all creative activity" (Takeuchi 1982 198). This creative activity includes how we relate to other people and the world as a whole, and the things that we do and make to facilitate these relationships. Nishida's phenomenological analysis of the structures of our everyday situated existence in this way characterizes our worldly existence as "an existence which, in its relational orientation, is fundamentally ethical" (Mayeda 2006, 23). This relational orientation of the living body is a function of the body's situatedness. In his essay, "The Unity of Opposites"(1958), Nishida writes (echoing James's similar comments) that "we usually call reality the place where we are with our body" (170). Our every experience of the world is always contoured by the bodily perspective we take on the world. Our active body is the immediate point of contact with worldly things and provides the profile from within which things in the world disclose themselves to us. But our body is always embedded in shifting biological and cultural contexts that both sustain and constrain our activities, as well as giving them meaning and significance. Moreover, the different forms of our worldly engagement become the vehicles by which we *achieve* embodiment in all its dimensions (including a rich ethical *ethos*). According to Nishida (1958), the embodied self is always rooted in the "social-historical world" (170) of everyday experience. He continues:

> The historical-social world is essentially "from the formed towards the forming". Without the social element, there is no "from the formed towards the forming", there is no "poiesis". The standpoint of out thinking is necessarily in the historical-social world. (1958, 170).

A short while later, he writes:

> The individual is essentially acting, and determining itself. Action means negation of the other…but it also means, on the other hand, that the Self denies itself, and becomes a part of the world (1958, 171).

These passages then culminate with a definition of "acting-intuition", which according to Nishida means that "activity, contradicting itself, is contained in the object" (1958, 172). Later, he adds that "the reality of acting-intuition is always the place of contradiction" (1958, 193).

These excerpts (and indeed much of "The Unity of Opposites") are not entirely clear. But some things we've already discussed can help make what Nishida is trying to say here a bit less opaque. In short, Nishida's claim is that the bodily self and "historical-social world" are co-constituting. Their relation is one of creative interpenetration and structural reciprocity. We make our world and, simultaneously, it us. Intersubjectivity (including culture, which is intersubjectivity *writ large*) thus becomes an "enabling condition" for subjectivity-constitution—and vice versa. Therefore, the process of bodily cultivation—the *enactment* of our embodiment within the world—is, in virtue of our situatedness, at the same time a modification of the "historical-social world", an environmental modification which then redounds back onto us and shapes our subsequent engagements with and modifications of the world, and so on and so forth. In the language of "The Unity of Opposites", we "negate the other" when we act and, in our acting, affirm ourselves and our agency, our existence. But when we act, the acting self at the same time "denies itself, and becomes a part of the world". This self-negation in action releases us into the world of otherness. Our situated agency—our active existence within the "social-historical world"—in this way highlights our "self-contradictory" or ambiguous nature not just on a prereflective sensorimotor or phenomenological level, but on a broader and more encompassing intersubjective and social level as well. Social existence is an ethical meeting in which an interdependent "in-between" identity is realized, for Nishida, not neatly captured by dualistic terms like "self" and "other". This is acting-intuition's second-personal significance, which will have important ethical consequences as we progress.

To further clarify the import of this claim and Nishida's discussion of acting-intuition more generally, it is helpful to note that with this later essay—and especially both the already-referenced "Logic and Life" (1936), as well as "The Historical Body" (1937)—Nishida insists that he has "returned to the concept of everyday experience"

(1937/1998, 37). Nishida is quick to add that, although the language of bodily "acting-intuition" perhaps suggests a sharp break from the psychologism of *Inquiry*, there is in fact continuity to his thinking. For Nishida says that "the idea of "pure experience set forth in *Zen no kenkyu* [*An Inquiry into the Good*] was the first manifestation of what I have come to refocus in my later concept of "everyday experience" (1937/1998, 38). What this amounts to, then, is that Nishida feels he has finally found the phenomenological vocabulary to articulate the experientially-grounded insights of his early formulation of "pure experience" without falling back into the solipsism and psychologism that hindered that analysis. In other words, he has taken his analysis out of the phenomenalistic categories of *Inquiry* and has now placed it within the bodily-perceptual structures of our situated agency—which are only truly understood in conjunction with the "world of human activity", or the "world in which we are actively involved" (1937/1998, 39).

The essay "The Historical Body" is thankfully a much clearer exposition of Nishida's intent with "The Unity of Opposites" and provides a great deal of clarity about Nishida's thoughts on situated agency and the intersubjective and social-historical dimensions of acting-intuition. I want to focus on this essay more carefully for a moment. In this essay, Nishida returns to an analysis of the body. He suggests that we need to redefine the term "body" to foreground the structural ambiguity that is its nature, noting that "the problem of the body has not been sufficiently considered in philosophy" (1937/1998, 42). His analysis of the bodily basis of acting-intuition is thus offered as a corrective to this relative neglect. And he reaffirms that "without our body, our self does not exist" (1937/1998, 42). But he then adds a bit later: "if we push farther ahead, the meaning of our body turns out to be broader than only the meaning of the biological body that has been thought up to know" (1937/1998, 44). His analysis must thus go beyond the sensorimotor structures of acting-intuition. So what is this new "broader" body Nishida is trying to disclose with his phenomenological analysis, and how does it connect back up with his discussion of acting-intuition?

Again, to return to the language of the last chapter: for Nishida, our body is literally a *social* or *extended* body, whose structure consists of both (bodily) self and

world co-existing in a relation of interpenetration and reciprocity. It is the body considered not simply in its first or third person aspects, but in its *second*-personal relatedness. And to return to our Jamesian formula: the body under this rendering is not a fixed *substance* but rather a fluid *structure*, a dynamic process that is both formed and informed by the world. Using James's very term, Nishida insists that we must think of the body not simply as "the physiological…animal and the biological body" (1937/1998, 44) but instead in terms of its world-engaged "function". The body is not merely a *thing* that relates to other things. Rather, it is *relatedness itself*. As relation, the extended body consists of both biological and nonbiological parts. Nishida's functional analysis of the body—already implicit in his phenomenological characterization of its "self-contradictory" nature—now expands to encompass the fact that "environment and life are co-implicative" (1937/1998, 44). What this means, in short, is that body and world create one another within their dynamic coupling. Our acting body is very much a "historical" body, constituted within the coupling-relation linking self and world (understood to encompass both biological and cultural, or "social-historical", contexts).

Like Dōgen, Nishida's argument here emerges from a theme characteristic of his mature philosophy: an analysis of human activity. Yuasa notes that "Nishida's theory of acting-intuition grasps human being-in-the-world as originally having the character of *action*; the essential mode is to act on the world, and not to cognize it" (1987, 68). Nishida insists that human action "is various, and irreducible to a merely physical or chemical substratum" (1937/1998, 45). To offer a purely reductivist or materialistic account of human activity overlooks the *creativity* that is its defining feature. (Echoing Dōgen, Nishida would also insist that it is a distorting reification, in that it mistakenly reduces the complex structure of our embodiment to single category: the object-body). Nishida then urges that one must additionally always account for the *situated* nature of our agency. He says that any analysis of "human activity raises the question of what place it has in relation to the whole—or of what work [the body] performs in relation to the whole" (1937/1998, 45) of its encompassing environments. He continues: "The activity which the body has in relation to that whole—that is, to the historical world—I also think can be clarified in the functionality which the body possesses" (1947/1998, 45). Put

differently, the body is, once more, the union point where self and world are co-constitutive. Thus, to understand the nature of the world in which the body is *embedded*, we must first look at how this world emerges from the unique forms of our situated *embodiment*, or the body's "functionality". In fact, the forms of our embeddedness linking us to our world are actually constitutive of our embodiment as world-engaged agents. The sensorimotor dimension of acting-intuition already established the malleability of the subject-body, or our phenomenal experience of embodied selfhood. Now, Nishida will argue that the object-body—as a point of contact with the physical world—is *itself* transformed and constituted (at least partially) by its activity in the world. The world is very literally part of the body, just as much as body is part of world.

Characteristically, Nishida turns to his favored "paradigmatic case" (1937/1998, 40) of activity—aesthetic creativity—to argue more carefully for this point. Striking a Deweyan chord, he notes that all "human activity is productive activity" (1937/1998, 39). But activity is not simply an inside-out process involving thought and will (or processes just on the subject-body side of the subject-body/object-body dialectic). According to Nishida, this voluntarist rendering of activity mistakenly characterizes activity "as merely subjective behavior" (1937/1998, 39). Instead, Nishida insists that "activity in the true sense…has an objective component as well" (1937/1998, 39). For example, the carpenter who builds a house sees "his activity…objectively embodied in the form that the house is actually built" (1937/1998, 39). A similarly situation holds for "the output of the poet, the artist, and so on" (1937/1948, 39). The creative output of human activity—such as a painting, a poem, a house or a cultural institution—exhibits a material structure that reflects the sensorimotor capacities of the agent who created it. In short, all things created by humans are recognizable as being created by human (object-)bodies.

The key point comes next. For Nishida, "an art work [or any output of human activity] combines both—the subjective activity and objective result. It is not that the artist just act subjectively; rather, from the objective side, *he is also acted upon by the thing*" (1938/1998, 39, emphasis mine). A bit later, he continues this line: "The artwork is realized from a mutual transaction—or reciprocal transaction—of subjectivity and objectivity…Therefore, in this mutual transaction, we are—so to speak—*made* by

making" (1937/1998, 40). Again, self and (social-historical) world are co-constituting. Nishida says just this when he writes that "Previous conceptions of the world have been of a world that has stood over against the self; but the real world is a transactional world that we simultaneously make and by which we are in turn made" (1937/1998, 40).

Nishida's analysis of language—which he suggests "first develops in a bodily mode" (1937/1998, 47)—can be fleshed out a bit to offer a particularly effective example of his point here about the co-constitutive relation of self and world. Nishida's actual remarks about language are brief. But some creative interpretation draws out an intriguing—and remarkably current—model of the relationship between embodiment and language. In short, Nishida suggests that language, or rather the holistic structure of an entire language game *as played*, is a kind of creative tool. It creates both a social-historical world *as well as* the bodily inhabitants of that world, since "the body is a creative element of the world" (1937/1998, 48). How is this so?

Language isn't simply a matter of vocal utterances or inventing semantic tags that we stick onto things in the world. Rather, the social matrix of a situated language game is literally an extension of our body: a practical augmentation that *socializes* our biological body and, in doing so, opens up new avenues of thought and action. The functional structure of the world-engaged body is thus *extended* by our progressively more skillful participation within a local language game, leading to more sophisticated modes of self understanding and interpersonal relatedness. Language, in short, becomes a nonbiological prop that enlarges the body, its basic capacities, and its relational possibilities. Therefore, Nishida writes that "It is not that a man understands his body from within it but rather from its interaction with the external world" (1937/1998, 47). Language facilitates our interaction with the world and other people and thus facilitates deeper self-understanding. According to Nishida, participating in a language game is an enactment of our embodiment. Because the body is not prefigured by its biological boundaries but again is a fluid structure or socially extended system, it is amenable to this sort of extension. It *emerges* through the forms of its worldly adaptation and engagement. Language, as a constitutive aspect of the body's functional structure, is an example of how this occurs.

Andy Clark (1998, 2006), a prolific proponent of extended cognition, has recently defended a similar view of language that can be used to further explore Nishida's point here. According to Clark, language should be seen as transcranial "scaffolding" that literally *externalizes* some of an agent's cognitive processes such that they loop out into the world and become proper objects of perception and manipulation. In short, language (at least potentially) extends the mind beyond the head. The term "scaffolding" for Clark (1998) "denotes a broad class of physical, cognitive and social augmentations—augmentations which allow us to achieve some goal which would otherwise be beyond us" (2). As an external scaffolding, language "make[s] available concepts, strategies, and learning trajectories which are simply not available to individual, un-augmented brains" (1998, 10). This view (which I am also attributing to Nishida) respects the *materiality* of language-as-external-scaffolding—language as action—and not simply language's semantic or representational properties. Thus, "words and sentences may form part of the process of thinking, and…they do so not merely in virtue of the contents but also in virtue of their very materiality: their physical existence as encountered and perceptible items, as sounds in the air or as words on the printed page" (2006, 2). Simply put, we extend our embodied capacities—and open up new forms of thought, reason, and action—by manipulating publicly-available linguistic scaffoldings. Language enables minds to leave their heads and to converge out in the world. Additionally, this view points to a more subtle (but no less important) aspect of language: its ethical significance. Under this rendering, language shapes both my being in the world as well as the comportment of others participating in the same language game. Language plays a constitutive role in shaping identity, and in contouring different forms of interrelatedness. And language-in-action is further a mode of access to the other by which I literally enter into them. Speaking is an empathic penetration of other people. More on the ethical significance of language-in-action in a moment.

Clark offers several cases that he argues shows language's "externalizing" propensity. As my interest here is in clarifying Nishida's thought, I will only mention a few of them, passing over the particulars of Clark's argument. One important example involves *memory augmentation*. By using the "artifactual world of texts, diaries,

notebooks and the like as a means of storing large and often complex bodies of data", we enhance the capacities of our "on-board" biological recall (Clark 1998, 7). A note on a mirror or the refrigerator, or a reminder inscribed in the text program of a computer, PDA, or cell phone serves as an external memory aid: linguistic scaffolding that we bodily engage with and manipulate to prompt our biological memory.

Another example Clark mentions involves *environmental simplification*. Quite obviously, affixing linguistic labels to things in our world enables us to perceptually navigate environments that are often exceedingly complex. Thus, "signs for the cloakroom, for nightclubs, and for city centers all fulfill this role" (Clark 1998, 7) of easing our cognitive burden by introducing predictability and constancy to our life-world—environmental properties that then redound back onto the body by giving our bodily *comportment* in these environments a more confident, economical and efficient expression. Linguistic scaffoldings make our environmental transactions more successful by enhancing our sensorimotor skillfulness. Construed in this way, language affects both structures of world *and* body.

Even the production of poetry—which is an example Nishida also uses—affirms the world-constituting character of language. Clark (1998) writes that "In constructing a poem, we do not simply use words to express thoughts. Rather, it is often the properties of the words (their structure and cadence) which determine the thoughts that the poem comes to express" (11). The materiality of poetry—the lyrical structure of the verses when read, the cadence of the words, resonances of meter and rhyme, the vividness of poetic images—blooms with a perceptual affect that (potentially, at least) refines our sensorimotor skillfulness. A poem can transform our bodily comportment by rendering the sensitive listener more perceptually attuned to the real-world analogue of that which is being discussed in a poem. For instance, one cannot read Rilke's "The Bowl of Roses" (1907/1984, 193), I suggest, without then seeing real roses in an entirely new light. Poetry becomes an exercise in transformative phenomenology that changes how we experience the everyday world. In this way, poetic language—as an aspect of the "social-historical" world, to return to Nishida's phrase—alters the sensorimotor structure of the body's worldly engagement. And once a poem (or indeed, any other form of writing) is

committed to the page, we can then "inspect and re-inspect the same ideas, coming at them from many different angles and in many different frames of mind. We can hold the original ideas steady so that we may judge them, and safely experiment with subtle alterations…In these ways…the real properties of physical text transform the space of possible thoughts", reasons, and forms of our world-directed activities (Clark 1998, 11). To return to Nishida: in this sense, then, does "an artistic production…becomes an objective *work* independent of the artist himself" (1937/1998, 40), a work that, as part of the dynamic structure of the social-historical world, transforms the bodily-perceptual experience and capacities of agents embedded in that world.

One does not have to adopt Clark's cognitive scientific treatment of embodied mind and language to see how else language games—or linguistic "scaffoldings"—simultaneously shape both social-historical world and the situated body. More immediate examples abound. For instance, consider children at play. Children can in the span of a moment erect a micro-world merely by uttering a few choice words, such as "Now let's play *X*. You be *a,* and I'll be *b*!" Other participants immediately respond to this instruction and assume their proper roles within this micro-world. And language here resonates with a bodily efficacy. A child's exuberance and spontaneous joy in the face of this newly-created world is transcribed within the tense, coiled comportment of their body, a corporeal instantiation of poised action-at-the-ready. It is distributed throughout their energetic patterns of movement and play. The ease with which a child assumes a new role in play—now Fireman, now Superman, now Hero, now Villain—speaks to the way that language and activity facilitates the emergence of new bodily selves (particularly in pliable young minds unhindered by the conceptual baggage of maturity). The child is literally transfigured into whatever role he or she embodies at that moment, and language—again, as a scaffolding of this social-historical world—becomes a constitutive part of this transformation. Once more, body shapes world and world shapes body.

Similarly, the oppressive weight of sexist language in the office is noticeably transcribed within the timid, restless movements of the secretary waiting for the next uncomfortable encounter with her boss or co-worker. The language that has textured this

social-historical world also shapes the woman's bodily-perceptual comportment. Liberated from this environment, however, a new somatic self emerges. Suddenly timidity is transfigured into a confident posture and measured, self-aware movement while back home or amongst friends. Movement through different social-historical worlds in this way is often accompanied by the emergence of new bodily selves.

There are certainly other ways to generalize Nishida's claims about the co-constitutive nature of the body-world relationship, such as with the linguistic and ritualistic scaffoldings that make up familial, political and religious micro-worlds, to name three. These micro or "social-historical" worlds inscribe themselves differently into the bodily comportment of those who come to inhabit them. But the examples discussed above are sufficient to understand Nishida's following remark, which encapsulates his claim about the reciprocity of body and world: "Bodily existence consists in the fact that it functions in relation to the historical world…And therefore such a thing as human society as well, *which is an extension of the body in the widest sense*, should be said to be a historical body possessing bodily characteristics" (1937/1998, 51).

Nishida's broader claim, then—again, implicit in his category of "acting-intuition"—is that the human body arises within an active-passive circuit of relatedness to the living world. The body is not merely a thing but is instead a *relation*. As such, it both enters into and is penetrated by the world. Society and culture are extensions of the body whose character is determined by the ethical function of the body via acting-intuition. And it is in this way constituted by "this dynamic relation of subjectivity and objectivity" (1937/1998, 48), having both a personal phenomenological existence as well as a socially-distributed or extended existence. Not only is the body constituted by the dialectical interplay of the subject and object poles of its self-contradictory phenomenological nature, then. Additionally, it is constituted by the public, nonbiological "scaffoldings" (such as language and cultural institutions) of its social-historical world. The body's "self-contradictory" nature thus manifest on a prereflective sensorimotor level as well on a culturally-embedded, intersubjective and social-historical level. (Of course, this intersubjective aspect of acting-intuition only comes to the fore once Nishida has moved away from the subjectivism of his early analysis and has broadened his view

to encompass the holistic structures of the situated body). As Nishida puts it: "Life, too, always illustrates this fact of contradictory identity. Life is precisely what connects these contradictory dimensions" (1937/1998, 53). The self-contradictory poles of the life of the body are united within the dynamics of action-intuition. Self, world, and Other meet within the body.

Summary

I want to conclude with a bit of summary. I also want to raise some critical questions that will set up the next chapter's analysis. I began the chapter by discussing the phenomenological significance of pure experience. Nishida was deeply influenced by James's development of this idea. Like James, Nishida argues that the concept of "pure experience" discloses the primitive nondual relationality of embodied self and world. For both men, it is a unitive mode of experience in which subject-object binary dualities have been overcome (or more accurately, perhaps, have not yet arisen). But whereas James argues that pure experience is an originally *primordial* state that, as selecting agencies, we are forever moving away from, Nishida argues instead that pure experience can in fact be a mode of experience that we (at least potentially) *end up at*. In other words, pure experience for Nishida is an originary as well as a *realizable* state. It can be cultivated and refined. Though much of our waking life is spent in an "impure" state of (provisional) separation from the world—a separation constructed by the reifying activity of reflective consciousness—certain forms of experience can reintegrate us back into our world in an authentically nondual or selfless way, with important ethical consequences. Thus, we've seen that there is a great deal of similarity between the two thinkers in terms of their respective formulations of pure experience. This is not entirely surprising, of course, given the fact that Nishida was deeply and openly influenced by his reading of James—particularly James's discussion of pure experience. Despite their differing philosophical heritages, both thinkers offer parallel articulations of how the selective functioning of the situated, animate body is ultimately responsible for the emergence of experience on both an individual and social-cultural level. In other words, the acting body

structures both phenomenal consciousness as well as the distributed and shared structures of what Nishida calls the "social-historical world". However, it is important to be mindful of the fact that, unlike James, Nishida insists on the ultimate realizability of pure experience.

To further explore this idea—and to highlight the Zen Buddhist context in which Nishida's formulation of pure experience emerged—I next turned to a discussion of the Japanese Zen thinker Dōgen. Dōgen, too, argues that a nondual or pure relation with the world is achievable. However, for Dōgen, pure experience is not an achievement of consciousness. Rather, it is *somatically* realized. It is an achievement of the acting body. The dynamic patterns of the body's sensorimotor engagement with the world—patterns that, importantly, are operative *prior* to reflective consciousness—are what integrate us into our living world. For Dōgen, then, pure experience is somatically realized.

I then returned to Nishida. I showed how his later notion of "acting-intuition" mirrored Dōgen's body-based characterization of pure experience. Acting-intuition is developed in Nishida as a response to the solipsistic psychologism that hindered his discussion of pure experience in *An Inquiry into the Good*. With acting-intuition, Nishida situates pure experience at the prereflective level of the acting, world-engaged body. For Nishida, acting-intuition refers to the fact that the body harbors an ambiguous structure within its being. It is both active and passive: it acts upon the world and extends itself into it while, at the same time, passively opening up to the world to allow the world to enter back into itself. I showed how this relational circuit of activity and passivity emerges from the phenomenological ambiguity of the human body, which can assume the role of both subject and object. (James, of course, had much to say about this as well). In virtue of this double modality—unique, it should be noted, to the human body—the body thus becomes the vehicle or "place" where pure experience is enacted, according to Nishida. I discussed this idea and its relevance on both a sensorimotor as well as on an intersubjective, social-historical level.

It's time to take stock. So where does this analysis leave us, exactly? There are a couple of points to be made, I think. First, despite the fact that I argued early on that Nishida is best understood as a phenomenologist, the above analysis said very little of

consciousness proper. But clearly, it did speak at length of various modalities of experience. What I suggest here is that, like James, Nishida is *externalizing* consciousness—or perhaps *expanding* it, we might say, to encompass the holistic structures of our embodiment and embeddedness. Again, for Nishida, consciousness is ultimately a modality of *action*. It emerges from the prereflective sensorimotor structures that couple self and world. Therefore, like James, consciousness for Nishida is not some substantial thing localized in the head of the subject. It is neither reducible to a nonphysical substance nor a "physical or chemical substratum", as he says. Rather, consciousness is a *function*. It is an extended structure distributed throughout the different forms of our embodied and embedded relations with the world. Even more radically, consciousness is externalized within the products of our embodied agency: tools, works of art, linguistic scaffoldings, and political, cultural, and religious institutions, to name a few. These things very literally become part of consciousness processes. And mind is thus both a bodily as well as a socially distributed phenomenon.

Echoing Dōgen's characterization of mind, Nishida argues, I suggest, that the structures of both body and world—brought together within the "self-contradictory" movement of acting-intuition—become the dynamically coherent but fluid and ever-changing supervenience base of the extended mind. Mind and world exists in a two-way causal relation of co-constitution and mutual reciprocity. Things of the world are functionally poised to become part of my body—and my body, in virtue of its ambiguous structure and practical comportment, is equipped to incorporate them into the schema of its lived space. What this means, in sum, is that the body is the union point where mind and world meet, interpenetrate, and give birth to the dependent co-arising of our conscious experience of the world and one another, as well as society, culture, morality, and aesthetics.

Next, we can note that the above summary of Nishida's agency-based model of mind and experience reminds us of the primacy of somatic *affectivity* within his analysis. It is not the intellect but rather affectivity that melds us to the world in a nondual manner. Nishida (1920/1978) writes that our affective relatedness to the world flourishes when the body "is entirely focused into one activity—when the self is one with its world" (227).

Thus, this affectivity is a kind of knowing or, better, *intuition*. It exhibits its own pre-theoretical adaptive intelligence. And once more, the body is the vehicle for this affective and empathic connection to the world and things in it. As Nishida puts it, "While we *empathize* with the movement of the tightrope walker, we do not *think* we are the tightrope walker. We become one with his activity in the transcendental realm" of somatic affectivity (1920/1978, 233). On a personal sensorimotor level, this affective relationality emerges when we lose ourselves within our skilled coping with the environment, such as when playing an instrument or participating in a sport. On a more encompassing intersubjective or social-historical level, our affective relationality manifests within our unthinking engagement with the linguistic scaffoldings constituting different language games (and their corresponding micro-worlds), or the way that these different micro-worlds transcribe themselves into the affective tonalities of our bodily comportment (such as with the examples discussed earlier of the children at play, or the secretary working in a hostile office). The body's affective tonalities allow us to "feelingly" negotiate our continually-changing world. Therefore, Nishida argues that "abstract, formal morality is not true morality" (1923/1973, 61), but rather a static, intellectual abstraction that emerges from a deeper "empathy…[which] is the development of a concrete life that exists before the existence of subject and object (1923/1973, 27)—a primordial bodily affectivity which underwrites our concrete relatedness with others. This affective relatedness is not a neutral *being-with* but instead a morally-charged *relatedness-to*. Empathy is the foundational dynamic of social relatedness.

However, at this point a simple but important question arises: How do these experiences take on a *moral* significance? Put differently, how do these affective tonalities, or the felt body-world unity operative prior to reflective consciousness, come to underwrite our moral relatedness to others? And how exactly do we *realize* this state of pure experience such that it takes on a normative significance, allowing us to become more morally developed human beings? How do we deepen our empathic relations to others? Nishida clearly wants to suggest that this mode of experience *is* morally significant. Compassion, the central virtue of Buddhist ethics, is said to emerge from the

realization of pure experience. But despite the centrality of the body and the notion of somatic cultivation in his work, Nishida says little of this progressive bodily-perceptual transformation. Nishida's insights into acting-intuition never adequately draw out the transformative possibilities of our "ambiguous" embodiment. His phenomenological analysis is richly *descriptive* but, practically speaking, not terribly *instructive*.

Given this pragmatic limitation with Nishida's analysis, I want to pick up the discussion in the next chapter. In what follows, I develop a phenomenological account of the bodily-perceptual *moral* cultivation Nishida hints at but never explicitly describes, and I further want to argue for its normative, acting-guiding significance. In other words, I want to take pure experience into the realm of moral psychology. I will build off of Nishida's discussion of both pure experience and acting-intuition and develop a bodily skills-based conception of moral psychology. Along the way, I will offer clear examples of how, exactly, this conception of moral skillfulness is achievable within our everyday relationships with other people. In other words, I will analyze the concrete cultivation of bodily empathy. Furthermore, I will argue that a cultivation of the moral skillfulness I discuss is a critical, though often overlooked, aspect of our moral development. I turn to these considerations now.

CHAPTER FOUR
NISHIDA'S PURE EXPERIENCE AND MORAL SKILLFULNESS

Introduction

Until recently, a dominant assumption of Western philosophy has been the belief that the various modes of human thought and experience are, in one sense or another, conceptual. In other words, concepts are thought to structure all of the content of a concept-bearer's experience. They are thus thought to serve as the irreducible interface between mind and world. Kant's arguments that experiences are both objectified and unified when subsumed beneath the sovereignty of concepts perhaps serves as the most enduring and powerful example of this line of thinking. However, recent discussions have begun to consider various alternative ways of engaging with and experiencing the world that lack Kant's conceptualist emphasis: in other words, experiences harboring "nonconceptual content".[55] As we saw earlier, both William James and Kitarō Nishida offer analysis of different kinds of nonconceptual experiences. Both thinkers were deeply attuned to the explanatory importance of nonconceptual content. This is especially the case for their respective analyses of perception and embodied action. Some of the themes they treat have been rejuvenated by recent work on nonconceptual content in the philosophy of mind and cognitive science literature.[56] However, despite this resurgence of interest, there is far from a unitary understanding of nonconceptual content. Debate remains not only about what the purported nature of nonconceptual content might be, but whether or not it even exists at all. More salient to present concerns, the significance of nonconceptual content for moral cognition has received scant interest. This chapter attempts to rectify this inattention.

In what follows, I want to extend the discussion of the previous chapters into a consideration of moral psychology. Nishida, as we saw, developed a phenomenological rendering of pure experience very much in-step with James, whom Nishida acknowledged was a strong influence. Like James, Nishida developed his conception of pure experience to get at the foundational bodily-perceptual structures that link self and world. According to Nishida, pure experience is not an abstract metaphysical principle but rather a mode of our world-engaged agency. However, as indicated by the previous chapter's discussion, Nishida's orientation here is bit different than is James's in that he focuses primarily on pure experience's moral significance. (This emphasis is a result of the Zen Buddhist soteriological concerns informing much of Nishida's writing). Continuing this discussion of the moral significance of pure experience will be the focus of this chapter.

In this chapter, I argue for an enactive, sensorimotor-based conception of moral psychology as *skillful action*. I work from Nishida's account of "pure experience" and "acting-intuition" to develop a phenomenological analysis of the structure of morally skillful action. Along the way, I argue that the traditional western cognitivist view of moral cognition, which emphasizes a critical-rational analysis concerned with *a priori* justifications of the "rightness" of subsequent actions, overlooks the fundamentally *embodied* and *contextual* nature of the bulk of our moral experience. I argue to the contrary that moral consciousness expresses itself primarily in and through intuitive responses to concrete situations. Against a critical-rational detached morality, I therefore argue for a morality of *involvement*, based on nonconceptual practical-bodily comportment. Under this characterization, moral expertise is understood to consist of a synthesis of (1) an intuitive *perception* of the morally salient features of a given situation (realized by the affecting of a nondual gestalt shift), coupled with (2) spontaneous *(re-)actions* that immediately respond to these perceived saliencies via a nonconceptual mode of bodily activity. More simply, I argue that embodied moral expertise, or Nishida's "acting-intuition", consists of a synthesis of (1) skilled *perception* and (2) responsive nonconceptual *action*. I begin with some definitions.

Definitions

What does it mean to refer to something as "moral"? This is a daunting question, to say the least. As will be the case with a number of definitions in this paper, I aim to keep things simple and relatively straightforward. I have little interest in getting caught up in definitional squabbles, and as the paper proceeds I trust that it will become clear why latching onto a precise definition of "moral" or "morality" at the outset isn't going to be a hindrance to the development of the main argument. With this in mind, I will say the following. When I use the term "moral", I intend to refer to the sorts of behavior in a given situation that reflects a genuinely compassionate sensitivity toward the presence and plight of other people. "Moral expertise" or "moral skillfulness" is an ability to deploy this perceptual sensitivity in different forms of compassionate *praxis*. It begins by simply learning to pay attention to others in a careful way.

Mahāyāna Buddhism[57] speaks of two central moral qualities that have deep moral significance: "compassion" (Skrt: *karunā*) and "wisdom" (Skrt: *prajnā*). "Compassion", as I'm using the term here, refers to our capacity to be perceptually and affectively attuned to the suffering of others. It denotes an other-directed, concernful attentiveness. However, it's more than simply *noticing* other people and their individual circumstance. This attentiveness is the cultivation of a profound empathy or felt connectedness that leads to self-emptying action which seeks to remove suffering from others in skillful ways. It is an affectively resonant condition in which I literally penetrate into the suffering of the other and feel their plight from the inside. This felt understanding, or empathy, is the consequence of becoming perceptually attuned to others, affirming the other as singularly valuable, and (ideally) leads to action that seeks to bring about the happiness others in creative, skillful and situationally-appropriate forms. The ability to respond to another's suffering appropriately is thus true wisdom (Skrt: *prajnā*): the pragmatic understanding that enables us to see the other in a manner that evokes authentic compassion—to existentially *embrace* the other, as it were, within "pure experience". And finally, the Sanskrit term *upāya*, or "skillful means", points to the fact the *expressive form* of our compassion and empathy may differ from situation to

situation. This is because, for Buddhism, moral wisdom is a practical skill-set. That is, it is fundamentally "embodied in how one responds to others rather than an abstract conception of the world, and reflects an ongoing concern with the soteriological effectiveness of the Buddhist teaching" (Schroeder 2001, 3). Collectively, these notions form the practical heart of classical Mahāyānist and Zen Buddhist conceptions of morality. What is important for our concerns is that this relatively economical conception of morality is thoroughly *embodied*. Based in pure experience, morality is bodily-perceptual, skilled coping—adaptive *praxis* that can be expressed in novel and creative ways. Bodies are thus morally intelligent. Following this Buddhist conception of morality, I am primarily concerned in what follows with morality on a "local" scale, morality as it is played out within the situated, interpersonal transactions that fill up the bulk of our days. More to the point, I am concerned with the phenomenological structure of moral practice—and not the logical form of moral discourse or deliberation.

To reiterate a critical point: The perceptual sensitivity I am speaking of here is a kind of empathic awareness.[58] To be perceptually attuned to a situation in this way is to disclose that situation *as* being morally significant in the first place. Simply possessing moral principles is not, in and of itself, sufficient for this to happen. One can possess relevant moral principles and still fail to recognize a situation as being a situation in which those principles can and should come into play. This failure, I contend, is not a failure of moral reasoning but of moral *perception*. Thus, perceptual attunement of the moral sort opens up situations *as* moral, and lights up their constituent features *as having* a kind of moral significance that demands a response. It reframes our entire way of experiencing and relating to the world and other people, and is more fundamental to our moral experience of the world than is the conscious possession of action-governing rules and principles. Or so I will argue.

Given my concern with the phenomenological structure of our moral practices, I am going to argue for a strong connection between morality (and moral behavior) and perception—being perceptively attuned to another's presence and plight, ready to recognize it and to respond to it in a compassionate manner. Note that *how* we compassionately respond to our perception of another's plight—in the sense of what,

exactly, we do about it—isn't specified by my definition. Just as a house can be painted different colors by different painters and still be painted *well*, or a tennis match decisively won by employing any number of different strategies, compassion, too, can take many forms. And the same moral situation can be resolved in many different compassionate ways. Recall, this is the practical import of the Buddhist notion of *upāya*. Compassion (*karuna*) can be discharged in different forms of "skillful means" (*upāya*). This sort of fluidity might frustrate some as soft, wishy-washy and too vague to be of any use. Part of the ambiguity in this rendering of morality lies with the way that morality, as I use the term, doesn't refer to fixed principles or a pre-given code of conduct—neatly specifiable in advance of their deployment—but rather to an embodied skillfulness that can change not only from context to context but even multiple times *within* the same context. Thus, following Nishida and Buddhism, my local or situated concern with morality will connect up the term moral not with the idea of "good" but rather with the idea of "skillfulness". Morality—or moral expertise—involves perceptual attunement and (oftentimes) egoless[59], spontaneous and skillful (re-)action. This claim is the centerpiece of nearly everything that follows.

Now a bit about "content", "concepts" and "conceptual content". "Content", as I use the term, refers to the particular object that is (conceptual, perceptually, etc.) represented—including the *way* that that a thing is represented. "Content" thus refers to the *thing itself, as it is represented*. For example, when I see a glass of scotch, the phenomenal content of my visual perception is the glass of scotch itself, which my perceptual systems represent to me from a certain perspective, and as having a certain shape, color, texture, etc., and which I may recognize as being *my* glass of scotch. Content is the "stuff" of experience—and that "stuff", generally speaking, is the "stuff" of the world itself. Following Noë and Thompson (2004, 14)—and James, as was established in the first two chapters—I'm going to argue that perceptual content exhibits the features of being structurally coherent, intrinsically experiential, and active and attentional. These features will be developed as we progress.

On to "concepts" and "conceptual content". Since I am not interested in wading into the deep waters of the debate over what concepts *are*, exactly—my intentions with

this paper lie elsewhere—I will once more keep the front end of this discussion as simple as possible.[60] When I speak of concepts, I am referring to nothing more than the internal representations (words, ideas, definitions, etc.) that we use to think about the world and the things in it. Put differently, concepts are the mode of presentation by which a thing, property, relation, or states of affairs is given to us. Concepts are thus classificatory tools, "teleological weapons of the mind", according to James. Among other things, they allow us to keep track of things in the world by representing those things that we want to keep track of in particular ways. Therefore, concepts are semantic entities in that they are constitutive of the representational content through which we are able keep track of things in the world.

Propositional attitudes, such as beliefs, are a clear example of how concepts are constitutive of representational content. For example, there seem to be many different concepts making up my belief *that my glass of scotch is empty*. Minimally, I need to at least possess the concepts "glass", "scotch", and "empty" for this belief to have any sort of representational content, or to portray a state of affairs in the world as being a certain way. These concepts (and certainly others) are part of the content of the mental state that is my belief *that my glass of scotch is empty*. Mental states with conceptual content thus involve reference to things in the world (including glum affairs like empty glasses of scotch, etc.) that I keep track of by representing in particular ways. In sum, I'll follow York Gunther here and say that that conceptual content acts "like a set of directions that determines a thing(s), property(ies), relations(s), or state of affairs—in a word, a set of normative conditions"(Gunther 2003, 8) that determines the representational structure of a thing's mode of presentation.

Three Kinds of Nonconceptual Content

Now I'd like to say a bit about the notion of "nonconceptual content". Mental states bearing nonconceptual content are those states which have certain features (phenomenal properties, for example) for which the subject of those states may not have the relevant concept(s). More simply, nonconceptual content, as I discuss it here, is

experiential content that cannot be explicated by any of the concepts within a subject's conceptual repertoire. Fineness of grain of visual perception is a vivid example. Human perceivers can visually discriminate millions of different colors. Some estimates place the number at something approaching ten million. However, no one possesses nearly that many color concepts. But we can nonetheless certainly have an *experience* of colors for which we lack the requisite concepts. In such cases, it is arguably the case that the phenomenal content of the experience of viewing a previously unencountered shade of magenta, for example, is an example of an experience bearing nonconceptual content. My experience of viewing the novel shade of magenta is not in any way phenomenally impoverished simply because I lack the corresponding color concept. Phenomenally speaking, I still experience rich "magenta-ness", as it were, though I lack the proper concept "magenta".

However, just because content is nonconceptual does not mean that it is necessarily *nonrepresentational* in nature.[61] When I have a visual experience of a vase colored this novel shade of magenta, my visual experience can be said to represent a part of the world (a vase) as being a particular way: namely, as being a previously unencountered shade of magenta. My field of perceptual experience thus represents the vase *as being* this strange and new color, even though I lack the corresponding concept and color term. And the workings of my perceptual systems ensure that the experience has a highly structured phenomenal content: the magenta colored vase has a determinate shape and rests upon a table, both of which stand out against a background of other objects, all arranged in a particular configuration respective to my bodily perspective on the scene and to one another, which as a whole is illumined by the optical structure of the interplay of light, shadow, and color of the various surfaces (both visible and occluded) of the scene's objects, etc. In this way, the phenomenal content of my experience in this instance has a kind of structured representational character, even if, once again, the content is nonconceptual. Concepts need not be present for an experience to represent the world as being a certain way. Perceptual content is thus an example of nonconceptual representational content.

As the above remarks indicate, I am here concerned with nonconceptual content that remains at the personal or phenomenal level, in that content of this sort makes up part of our *lived* and *felt* experience of the world. Other writers have discussed nonconceptual content as a way of characterizing the content of subpersonal states, such as with David Marr's (1980) computational analysis of vision. This potential characterization of nonconceptual content, which (at least in Marr's case) places nonconceptual content within the domain of the subpersonal computational mechanisms underwriting visual experience, is intriguing but it falls outside the scope of this paper's concerns. To reiterate, the nonconceptual content I discuss lacks both conceptual and propositional content but it retains rich phenomenal content. States bearing such content therefore lend themselves to phenomenological articulation, even if they elude full conceptual or linguistic analysis.

I want to clarify this notion of "nonconceptual content" a bit more. Gunther (2003, 14) suggests that there are at least three possible renderings of nonconceptual content. The content of a mental state might be nonconceptual

1. if it in principle *cannot* be represented conceptually
2. if an individual lacks the conceptual apparatus to fully articulate the state's content
3. if an individual *does not* or *cannot exercise* the concepts involved in its articulation.

An example of the first rendering, a kind of experiential content that in principle cannot be rendered conceptually, is developed in the accounts of mystical experiences found in both western and eastern religious traditions. In these instances, the semantic value of a mystical experience—an unmediated encounter between the individual and God or the Absolute, variously defined—*by its nature* outstrips the very possibility of any conceptual and/or linguistic articulation. These traditions speak of a highly refined state of awareness or experience of "pure consciousness" that is somehow *prior to* or *outside of* discursive and interpretive structures, or the categories of thought and language. The fullness of the Divine continually exceeds the possibility of any conceptual representation and must therefore be confronted in a manner that is "emptied" of any interpretive or

discursive structure. And indeed, such experiences—at least if one believes the reports of those who claim to have had them—are on the whole devoid of any conceptual or spatial-temporal content, as well as any discernible empirical qualities. One description of such an experience is found in the writings of the German Christian mystic Meister Eckhart. He uses the term "*gezucket*" to refer to a rapturous, nondual encounter with God, which he describes in the following manner:

> The more completely you are able to draw in your powers to a unity and forget all those things and their images which you have absorbed, and the further you can get from creatures and their images…[into a state of awareness where] memory no longer functioned, nor understanding, nor the senses, nor the powers that should function so as to govern and grace the body…In this way a man should flee his senses, turn his power inward and sink into an oblivion of all things and himself (Quoted in Forman 1990, 103).

The essence of God, for Eckhart, is thus in principle unknowable, and must be intuited in a wholly nonconceptual manner. While these accounts of nonconceptual content are interesting, they enter metaphysical terrain beyond present concerns and won't be addressed.

The second rendering of nonconceptual content, a kind of content that cannot be articulated by the individual who possesses it in virtue of their lacking the necessary conceptual apparatus, is perhaps more accessible for the non-mystics among us. Again, some observations about the nature of perceptual experience, similar to those already referenced above, seem to support this second rendering. Both Michael Tye (1995) and Christopher Peacocke (1998, 2001), among others, have argued that when describing the content of a given perceptual experience, the content of the experience in question—*as experienced*—will be more richly fine-grained and sensuously detailed than can be described given the concepts possessed by the experiencing subject. Thus we can have a visual experience of colors and shapes of things for which we lack the relevant concepts. And this is true of other sensory modalities as well. Our ability to describe or report a wide-range of tastes and smells lags far behind our capacity to actually *have an experience of* a nearly infinite spectrum of tastes and smells. In other words, the

deliverances of our various sensory modalities continually run ahead of both our descriptive vocabularies as well as our conceptual abilities. As we explored in some length in chapters one and two, James also argues for a similar point.

The third rendering of nonconceptual content, where an individual *does not* or *cannot* exercise the concepts involved in the articulation of a state's content, is perhaps the weakest of the three. The content of an individual's mental state may in principle be conceptualizable (against the first rendering of nonconceptual) and, furthermore, the individual may possess the relevant conceptual apparatus to articulate the state's content (against the second rendering of nonconceptual content). But under this third rendering, the individual comes to possess experiential content that is, for whatever reason, not given *full* or possibly even *partial* conceptual articulation. A practical skill-oriented performance is a helpful example here. Thanks to years of coaching and first-hand experience, a professional basketball player possesses the relevant concepts determining how best to shoot a basketball. But proficiency and, ultimately, *expertise* at shooting a basketball is precisely the ability to consistently shoot a basketball in an expert manner smoothly, spontaneously, and intuitively—*without* deliberatively invoking learned coaching principles or instructive concepts each and every time one shoots the ball. In other words, expert skillful performance is a *nonconceptual* and *intuitive* mode of bodily action. Indeed, this ability to "act without thinking about it" is precisely determinative of athletic expertise. When athletes speak of "being in the zone" or "being on fire" after a particularly stellar performance, they are speaking of these sorts of instances of acting without thinking. Other practical skill-governed domains (such as touch-typing or playing a musical instrument) are examples of this third rendering of nonconceptual content, where an individual possesses clear experiential content that nonetheless is not given comprehensive (or perhaps even *partial*) conceptual articulation.[62]

While all three renderings of nonconceptual content deserve further analysis, I will be most concerned with the third rendering of nonconceptual content. Specifically, I will discuss this third picture of nonconceptual content and its implications for understanding moral psychology. Before doing this, however, I want to look a bit more carefully at this sort of nonconceptual content and its connection with skilled coping.

Much of what follows flows from James's and Nishida's analysis of the skilled body, and I'd like to return to this topic now by introducing some more contemporary ways of talking about bodily phenomena that both James and Nishida we deeply interested in.

Nonconceptual Content and Skilled Coping

As we've already established, there is precedence for a discussion of this third sort of nonconceptual content. Zen Buddhist training, for instance, is traditionally thought to enable one to act in a free and liberated manner that does not depend upon planning or calculative thinking. According to the tradition, one acts spontaneously and appropriately but does so *without* invoking conceptual content. This is action characteristic of the "empty" mind or "no mind"—a kind of bare experiential awareness in which things are allowed to present themselves as they are in themselves. The neuroscientist and Zen practitioner James Austin (1998, 668) offers the following six characterizations of enlightened Zen behaviors. He says that enlightened behaviors are

1. without initial hesitation
2. quick in execution
3. simple but efficient
4. highly creative, improvisational, yet capable of resolving both the immediate situation and of addressing the big picture as well
5. expressed from a foundation of poise
6. liberated from word-thoughts and personal concerns

Since Zen Buddhism will be discussed in more detail below, I will set it aside for now.

In western thought, both James (1912/1996) and Dewey (1922/1988) and the phenomenological tradition of western philosophy have been particularly sensitive to the relationship between nonconceptual content and the body-based coping skills that underwrite our everyday experiences of the world. Hubert Dreyfus's (1992, 2002, 2005a) work in particular has brought phenomenology into dialogue with cognitive science on this matter. Drawing heavily upon both Heidegger (1927/1962) and Merleau-Ponty (1945/2002), Dreyfus argues that bodies exhibit "thoughtless" adaptive intelligence. His

arguments center around an analysis of the phenomenological importance of what he terms "skilled" or "absorbed coping": nonrepresentational intelligent action.

According to Dreyfus, skilled coping is a universally prevalent form of thoughtless adaptive activity. Dreyfus argues that the universality of skilled coping can be summoned to criticize some of the general assumptions informing artificial intelligence research and cognitivist philosophies of mind.[63] According to John Haugeland (1998), "Cognitivism in psychology and philosophy is roughly the position that intelligent behavior can be explained (only) by appeal to internal "cognitive processes"—that is, rational thought in a broad sense" (9). "Cognitivist" approaches are those approaches which view all human thought, perception and action as a kind internal information-processing—and therefore as ultimately rule-governed and representation-based. Generally speaking, cognitivist approaches to mind are computational-representational. They accept the following three theses: (1) Mental representations (variously defined) are part of human ontology. (2) Algorithmic-computational processes (which operate on mental representations) are also part of human ontology. (3) Intelligent thought and action in humans is produced by the application of algorithmic-computational processes to mental representations.[64] As Susan Hurley (1998, 401) aptly notes, classical cognitivist views of mind portray the mind as a kind of *sandwich*. The mind is thought to decompose vertically, with cognition serving as the "filling" or interface between the distinct modules of perception and action. Cognitive "filling" is thus distinct from both perception and action, which are in turn also distinct from one another. And the "filling" is where *real* cognition happens, according to this model. In other words, processes involving symbols and recombinant syntactic structure are localized with the "meat" of the cognitive filling, which operates distinct from peripheral sensorimotor processes (Hurley 1998, 401).

Dreyfus's discussion of the way that skilled coping "thoughtlessly" integrates perception and action within fluid, real-time responses to changing environments—an integration which couples acting agent and environment—is used to critique representation and rule-based "sandwich" models of cognition. According to Dreyfus (2002), "skills" are sensorimotor capacities "acquired by dealing with things and

situations, and in turn they determine how things and situations show up for us as requiring our responses" (368). "Skilled coping" is thus an instance when these skills are deployed within concrete situations. Notably, it is for Dreyfus a body-based form of goal-directed intelligence operative *without* mental representations or inferential rule following. This is the heart of his criticism in a word.

"Skilled coping" thus refers to the general form of our adaptive bodily engagement with the world. More precisely, the form of our worldly engagement (or skilled coping) is determined by both our sensorimotor capacities as well as the practical skills that emerge from these sensorimotor capacities, which allow humans to smoothly navigate, manipulate, explore and respond to the world and the things in it. In addition to Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, Dreyfus points to Dewey's discussion of habit as anticipating his characterization of skilled coping. Dewey (1922/1988) writes

> We may, indeed, be said to *know how* by means of our habits…We walk and read aloud, we get off and on street cars, we dress and undress, and do a thousand useful acts without thinking about them. We know something, namely, how to do them (124).

As Dreyfus argues at length, however, this practical "know-how" can be cultivated and refined. We can become skillful experts at deploying these body-based skills *without* having to think explicitly about them. Important for Dreyfus's criticisms of cognitivism, then, is his claim that this sort of intelligent coping is cognitively transparent (Dreyfus 1992). It is deployed without the imposition of action-guiding mental representations or rules. Instead, it is a body-based nonconceptual coping that is operative "thoughtlessly" and spontaneously. In this sense, skilled coping can be seen as a bodily know-how or practical intelligence that doesn't depend upon mental representation or propositional knowledge, conscious or unconscious inferences, or rule following. It is a body-based account of knowing more fundamental to human ontology than are the computational models of action, perception and thought posited by cognitivist paradigms. For, as Merleau-Ponty (1945/2002) argues:

> Our bodily experience of movement is not a particular case of [propositional or conceptual] knowledge; it provides us with a way of access to the world and the

> object…which has to be recognized as original and primary. My body has its world, or understands its world, without having to make use of my "symbolic" or "objectifying function" (162).

What is most relevant to our concerns is the fact that, for Dreyfus, this mode of bodily knowing is nonconceptual. It is a rich experience of the world—and thus skilled coping can be said to bear representational phenomenal content—but it is experiential content that is, once more, nonconceptual. Some examples will elaborate this characterization.

One of Dreyfus's favored examples of skilled coping is playing chess. According to Dreyfus, master chess experts rely on nonrepresentational, intuitive expertise—and not inferential rule-following or explicit reasoning processes—to appraise the situation and respond with the best move. Chess expertise is thus a prime example of nonconceptual expert action. In support of this claim, Hubert and Stuart Dreyfus (1992) conducted an experiment in which Julio Kaplan, an international chess master, added numbers (presented in the form of a series of beeps, roughly one number per second) while playing chess against another master level player. The player was only slightly weaker than Kaplan's level. Even though he was distracted by the analytical project of adding numbers in the form of beeps, Kaplan "more than held his own in a series of games" against the other master player (Dreyfus and Dreyfus 1992). Dreyfus and Dreyfus concluded that Kaplan was so successful precisely because he was able to respond expertly and spontaneously *without* relying on reasoned deliberation or calculative planning. Rather, "he spontaneously does what has normally worked and, naturally, it normally does" (Dreyfus and Dreyfus 1992). Clearly Kaplan's experiences in this instance have phenomenal or representational content. His visual experience of the chessboard, for instance, represents the configuration of the pieces *as being* a certain way. But his adaptive responses are not motivated by any sort of calculative *conceptual* representation(s) of how the board is arranged or what the proper course of action is given his opponent's position, etc. Rather, his skilled coping is bodily action motivated by nonconceptual content. According to Dreyfus (and Dewey), this sort of skilled coping generalizes to other aspects of our everyday life. It functions "smoothly and transparently

so as to free us to be aware of other aspects of our lives where we are not so skillful" (Dreyfus and Dreyfus 2002).

James J. Gibson's (1966, 1979) ecological approach to perception and animal-environment relations offers a similar conception of skilled coping, though Gibson's terminology and focus is a bit different than is Dreyfus's. Gibson was a psychologist. As such, he was concerned with articulating the phenomenological structure and physiological form of our perceptual relationship with the world. His focus was primarily on visual perception. Gibson's (1979) project begins with a rejection of classical stimulus-response "sensation-based theories of perception" (54), under which visual perception is the result of subpersonal response-processes in the brain that build up inner models or "snapshots" of the external world from discrete stimuli—patterned bits of light on the retina, in the case of vision. Gibson (1979) writes that, according to these views, "We cannot see surfaces or objects or the environment directly…All we ever see is what directly stimulates the eye, light" (54). Perception is thus always indirect and mediated. It consists of seeing the "built-up" inner snapshots of the world constructed by various subpersonal processes in the brain and visual system.

Gibson (1966, 1979) challenges this view. He argues both that perception is direct, that we have an immediate contact with the world and things in it, and furthermore that perception is an active, exploratory achievement of the whole animal as it navigates the environments in which it is embedded. Perception does not consist of the subpersonal assemblage of discrete stimuli into coherent wholes. Rather, it is a world-engaged activity of the *whole perceptual organism*. It is a temporally-extended, embodied and intentional action. (Of course, Gibson does not deny that some of the processes of our perceptual systems operate at a threshold beneath the level of conscious awareness). Gibson's work is rich, complex, and controversial. I refer to the reader to Reed (1989) for an elegant overview of his work.

What is pertinent to our concerns is Gibson's characterization of visual perception as "information pickup" (1979, 56). When we explore our environments, according to Gibson, we perceive information about the environment (and importantly, ourselves) via the "ambient optic array"—the optical structure of ambient light that specifies

organizational features of the environment. Via the information extracted from the ambient optic array, we intuitively recognize the bodily-perceptual "meanings" of environmental features: what Gibson terms "affordances" (1966, 1979). Environmental affordances are "what it [the environment] *offers* animal, what is *provides* or *furnishes*, either for good or ill" (Gibson 1979, 127). Affordances are directly perceived, dynamical features of the animal-environment relation that are intuitively (nonconceptually) perceived as opportunities for action. According to Gibson, affordances specify structural features of both animal *and* environment. As such, they are "neither an objective property nor a subjective property; or both if you like. An affordance cuts across the dichotomy of subjective and objective…An affordance points both ways, to the environment and to the observer" (1979, 129). For some animate creatures, tables are stand-on-able or get-under-able—but not for all. For others, chairs are sit-on-able. Certain surfaces are fall-off-able—but the same surfaces don't afford this possibility in relation to all creatures. The same goes for small crevices, cracks in a wall, and caves, which for some creatures are hide-in-able. Bodies of water are swim-in-able and, potentially, live-in-able. These things *afford* different forms of sensorimotor interaction for different creatures. But the opportunities for interaction they afford are specified in relation to the particular sensorimotor capacities of the particular creature engaging with them. According to Gibson, creatures are intuitively attuned to the various affordances that comprise their own environments. In this way, affordances-as-perceived are Janus-face, in that they disclose information about both animal and environment.

For Gibson, perception is thus the pickup of affordances. It is an achievement of the whole animal—brain and body—as it navigates and explores its world. Perceptual information pickup is a skillful process of enacting the sensorimotor meanings of various features of our environments. Our perceptual engagement with the world represents this information, which is then used to specify our adaptive responses. But again, this information is represented and known *nonconceptually*. It is enacted through our skillful coping with the world and the things in it.

In sum, what Dreyfus's and Gibson's phenomenological analysis of skilled coping demonstrates is that bodies are intelligent organisms. Bodies know their worlds.

But they do so nonconceptually. Animate bodies provide us with what we might term "sensible affect-knowledge": a kind of felt, nonconceptual and adaptive understanding of the world rooted in the sensorimotor structures of the living, acting body. To be more precise: the body *affectively* knows its world. It knows its world by feelingly engaging with it. This bodily sensible affect-knowledge is a kind of "emotional intelligence" (Nussbaum 2001), and includes both a self-monitoring or an understanding of modulations of the body's internal states (Damasio 1994, 1999) as well as "proprioceptive feedback or musculoskeletal actuation…informing and enhancing our decision-making abilities" (Schulkin 2004, 26). Moreover, the body's perceptual systems don't simply respond to external stimuli but rather transactively engage in information pickup (Gibson 1979, 149). They perceive environmental affordances that tell the body what can be done in a given environment and how the body might go about doing it. In other words, the adaptive sensorimotor forms of the body's worldly engagement give it a nonconceptual understanding of both itself and its changing environments.[65] Via perception and action feedback loops, the body selectively transacts with its world and picks up perceptual-affective meanings and values—affordances—that determine the possible forms of its worldly engagement (Johnson 1987; Todes 2001). In short, both the body and its world are meaningfully disclosed to the body in and through its intelligent activity.

Taken seriously, then, these sorts of considerations should remind us that the body itself is a source of genuine (though nonconceptual) knowledge. For our "bodily responses are rich in adaptation; no mere passive organ, the body is the vehicle by which we navigate the world, inform our decision making, and make accurate predictions" (Schulkin 2004, 17). This nonconceptual bodily intelligence, I will argue, has important application in the realm of moral psychology. The notions of skilled coping and sensible affect-knowledge will be an important part of what follows.

Buddhist Moral Psychology and Nonconceptual Content

I now want to switch gears slightly and turn to a discussion of Zen Buddhism's conception of moral psychology and nonconceptual content. Zen Buddhism has traditionally offered a conception of moral experience that challenges some of the basic assumptions and general orientation of modern western cognitivist ethical theories. As a gloss of these theories, we can say that, generally speaking, modern western cognitivist ethical theories portray moral cognition as an exercise in detached, critical-rational evaluation of *a priori* principles concerned with determining the "rightness" of subsequent actions. In other words, the formulation of reasoned, universalizable principles always precedes the particular actions these principles are meant to govern. Whatever else morality is, it is first and foremost thought to be a rational enterprise.

This critical-rational tradition of "morality as the formulation of moral judgments" is of course best exemplified by the Kantian tradition. And though the form of the debate perhaps changed somewhat in the twentieth century, the analysis of moral language, and discussion of both the logic and the universalizability of moral judgments which dominated early to mid twentieth century debates retained this critical-rational emphasis.[66] This "strangely bloodless" (Rachels 1995, 5) discourse which comprised early to mid twentieth century ethical debates—a bloodless discourse that remained oddly silent while tragic events like the holocaust, the Great Depression, two world wars, and gender and racial struggles were unfolding around it—remains an enduring example of a conception of ethics concerned with the formal conditions of the possibility of ethics and ethical discourse, and not its situated bodily-perceptual content. During this era, Rachels (1995) notes, critics argue that "moral philosophy seemed to have drifted away from the human concerns that gave it life" (5).

While there are certainly contemporary exceptions to this disembodied approach (see footnote sixty-six), the critical-rational tradition is alive and well. Two prominent and influential examples are the work of the developmental psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg and the philosopher Jürgen Habermas. Kohlberg's work on moral psychology is an example of an explicit critical-rational approach to moral development and expertise.

Kohlberg's (1976, 1981) experimental work, and his well-known model of the six stages or levels of moral development, rests upon the claim that moral maturity is ultimately linked to the sophistication of one's ability to engage in principled moral reasoning.[67] The highest level of moral development (Stage 6) is described by Kohlberg as follows:

> Regarding what is right, Stage 6 is guided by universal ethical principles…These are not merely values that are recognized, but are also principles used to generate particular decisions (1981, 412).

For Kohlberg, as this quote clearly demonstrates, moral excellence depends upon the formulation of and adherence to universalizable, action-guiding principles. Moral expertise is then the ability to reason our way through morally significant situations. This "reasoning through" is what generates subsequent action. Kohlberg's model of moral development is thus thoroughly cognitivist.

The discourse ethics of Jürgen Habermas (1992) provides another example of cognitivist, critical-rational approaches to moral expertise. In fact, Kohlberg's research has exerted a strong influence of Habermas's work in particular, which can be seen (in part) as an attempt to reinvigorate and reformulate Kantian deontological ethics. Habermas sees his project as offering the theoretical extension of Kohlberg's empirical findings. According to Habermas, the highest stages of moral development are defined precisely by their level of critical *detachment*. This critical detachment is what enables the moral expert to formulate universalizeable, action-guiding principles. But this highest stage of moral consciousness is only realized when we develop the ability "to consider moral questions from the hypothetical and disinterested perspective" (Habermas 1982, 253). Again, moral expertise is a thoroughly rational project. It entails the ability to detach ourselves *away* from the situated, bodily-perceptual nature of our concrete encounters with one another and to assume a critical-rational standpoint from which we first deliberate and, only later, act.

As has already been noted, Zen Buddhism assumes a markedly different view of ethics and moral cognition.[68] According to Zen Buddhism, moral cognition is not primarily a critical-rational "bloodless" enterprise detached from particular contexts, but rather a situated form of skilled coping. In other words, moral cognition for Zen

Buddhism is initially (and primarily) *intuitive embodied action*. We embody morality within the fluid integration of perception and action. Importantly, we do it *nonconceptually*. As mentioned earlier, the term "*upāya*" refers to the adaptive forms of certain actions that specifies those actions as being morally "skillful". This quality is thought to be present to the degree that an individual is able to integrate perception and action within an empathic and context-appropriate response to the moral significance of a given situation. Additionally, this quality is articulated in spontaneous action that is not the product of deliberative reflection. Moral skillfulness is thus seen as embedded in the shifting structures of our embodied sensorimotor engagement with the world and other people. It is not a critical exercise but a spontaneous bodily skill.

The late Chilean neuroscientist and Buddhist practitioner Francisco Varela defines "embodiment" in a way that is helpful for present concerns. According to Varela (1999, 12), embodiment entails the following:

1. cognition dependent upon the kinds of experience that come from having a body with various sensorimotor capacities, and
2. individual sensorimotor capacities that are themselves embedded in a more encompassing biological and cultural context.

For Zen Buddhism, then, moral cognition is tied to the perceptual structures of our bodily agency. It is rooted in our sensorimotor capacities, which are always immersed within the living ambiance of changing biological and cultural contexts. Moral cognition is therefore construed as moral *action*, or a context-dependent synthesis of perceptual attunement and spontaneous response. And moral perception and action thus *precede* moral thought, where the latter is understood to be a rational evaluation of moral judgments or universal principles. More importantly for our present concerns, moral-cognition-as-embodied-action is enacted via a *spontaneous*, *nonconceptual response to the immediacy of a concrete moral situation*. Under this model, our moral life is largely a matter of immediate (or cognitively transparent) coping. Moral skillfulness involves the cultivation of a body-based pragmatic "know-how" or kind of fine-grained moral perception attuned to the specific moral content of a given situation—moral content that

presents itself spontaneously without any conceptual articulation (or principled "knowing-that"). Again, moral psychology is a matter of nonconceptual perception.

I'd now like to begin refining these comments somewhat. Discussions of both the importance and experience of nonconceptual content are found throughout Buddhist literature. Buddhism originated on the Indian subcontinent around the sixth century BCE, with the birth of Siddhartha Gautama (who would become the *Buddha*, or the "Awakened One"). From the beginning, the Buddha placed a high value on experiencing the world in a manner free from what he felt where the narrowing confines of language and concepts. According to the Buddha, linguistic and conceptual analysis failed to convey the full richness of how the things of the world are interrelated within the dynamic flow of our experience of them. Put differently, concepts and language for the Buddha create artificial distance and difference where there is in fact only connectedness and dependence. And to experience the world in a direct manner free of language and concepts is to realize a spontaneous, *felt intimacy* with the things of the world that eludes our retrospectively-constructed conceptual and linguistic representations of them. To be clear, however, it should be noted that "the Buddha did not deny that human beings are rational nor that reason has importance. But he did not think reason has the significance most western philosophers have assigned to it…" (Gowans 2003, 54). As Buddhism developed, it came to emphasize alternative nonconceptual ways of engaging with and "knowing" the world.

Nishida's analysis of pure experience, and particularly his insistence on the bodily and somatic nature of its realization, reflects this developmental trajectory. Consistent with the fundamental principles of Zen Buddhism, Nishida's use of "pure" is, as we've seen, normative. That is, he argues that experience is "richest in its own subjective immediacy, after it has been 'emptied' of the noise of meanings or the illusions of words and ideas" (Dilworth, 98). As we've further discussed, pure experience for Nishida is an experience prior to conceptual judgment. For, according to Nishida "meanings and judgments are an abstracted part of the original experience, and compared with the original experience they are meager in content" (1911/1990, 9). Pure experience is thus superior to any other mode of experience in which conceptual discriminations of any kind

have comprised the phenomenal immediacy and spontaneity of an experience without dualistic subject-object bifurcations. More simply, pure experience is a kind of pure "seeing" of the world that discloses the interrelated nature of reality *behind* the false divisions created by language and concepts.

However, Nishida's notion of pure experience is not simply a claim about the phenomenal content of perceptual experience. Nor is it primarily a metaphysical postulate. Most importantly, it founds his understanding of moral experience as context-dependent embodied action. Nishida critiques detached, critical morality concerned with the justification of universal principles—what he refers to as a "rational theory" (19/111990, 112) of ethics—by arguing that such a conception of moral cognition excludes *the* fundamental aspect of moral experience: *moral conduct*. "Moral conduct" for Nishida refers to the situated fact-to-face encounters that comprise our intersubjective life. It is within these situated encounters—and importantly, our responses to them—that the substantive content of moral experience arises. And for the morally skilled, this content, Nishida argues, often eludes comprehensive conceptual articulation. Thus expert moral conduct is a kind of embodied "pure experience". Sounding vaguely Kantian on this point, Nishida (1911/1990) writes that

> The power of formal understanding provides only laws, such as the so-called three laws of thought in logic—it cannot give any content (113).

Unlike Kant, however, experiential content can present itself *without* the imposition of conceptual structure. In other words, we can cultivate genuinely "pure" experiences of the world—including moral skillfulness—that harbor nonconceptual representational content.

True moral maturity for Nishida, or proper "moral conduct", is therefore expressed through a particular kind of spontaneous and nonconceptual bodily coping. What is intuitive moral conduct? Though Nishida isn't always entirely explicit with an answer, I propose the following interpretation. According to Nishida, moral conduct is a nondeliberative, egoless response that arises spontaneously in the face of encountered situations. The "moral expert" (1) first directly perceives the morally relevant features of a situation, before then (2) spontaneously reacting to those features in a manner that

reflects both their intuitive grasp of these moral saliencies as well as direct apprehension of the proper response(s) called for by these perceived saliencies. Again, moral expertise is an intuitive synthesizing of (1) moral perception with (2) moral action. Generally speaking, deliberative judgment does not enter into this process.

Importantly for present concerns, both moral perception and moral action, thusly described, are aspects of an experience bearing nonconceptual content. And Nishida (1911/1990) furthermore claims that by acting in a nondeliberative and egoless manner pertinent to a given context,

> the true personality comes forth when a person eradicates [self-directed concerns] and forgets his or her self. But this is not an activity of Kant's pure reason, which is common to each individual and totally separate from the content of experience (130).

Rather, intuitive moral conduct or embodied activity

> is a pure and simple activity that comes forth of itself, unhindered by oneself…and no separation of subject and object (1911/1990, 130-131).
>
> We reach the quintessence of good conduct only when subject and object merge, self and things forget each other… (1990, 135).

Why does Nishida insist that intuitive moral conduct is egoless? And how can we make intelligible his claim that, through intuitive moral conduct, "subject and object merge, self and things forget each other" within the nonconceptual content of such an experience? It turns out that these two claims are coextensive with one another. Furthermore, they reinforce Nishida's contention that intuitive moral conduct is a skillful integration of perception and egoless (re-)action. I now will explain Nishida's claims more carefully.

According to Nishida, moral skillfulness is an experience rich in phenomenal content but lacking conceptual articulation. What he seems to mean by this can be understood as follows. When he says that intuitive moral conduct is an egoless "pure experience"—spontaneous embodied action "that comes forth of itself", in which the moral agent "forgets his or herself", leaving "no separation of subject or object"—Nishida is arguing that this is a mode of experience lacking conceptual content. Nishida

is entitled to make this claim because he disputes the picture of consciousness as essentially intentional or representational. That is, Nishida claims instead that intuitive skillful moral conduct is activated within an experiential dimension lacking *cognitive* intentionality: in other words, a prereflective mode of bodily experience operative *prior* to cognitive intentionality. (I will argue for prereflective bodily experience, or "bodily knowing", in the next section of this paper). With his claim that pure experience is realized within prereflective bodily activity, Nishida is mounting an implicit charge that cognitive-intentional relations retain a dualistic (subject-object) structure. The first mark of pure experience (and intuitive moral conduct) for Nishida, is of course its *nonduality*.[69] Pure experience is precisely that experience in which

> there is no opposition between subject and object and no distinction between mind and matter; matter in itself is mind and mind in itself is matter, and there is only one actuality…the unity of spirit and nature is not a unity of two types of systems—fundamentally they exist in one and the same unity (1911/1990, 160-161).

For Nishida, then, consciousness as intentionality thus cannot be the mechanism for a nondual union between self and world, nor the ground of intuitive moral conduct. In its most minimal sense, a picture of consciousness as essentially intentional—such as Husserl's (1973)—involves a particular cognitive relation obtaining between a noetic act of consciousness (*noēsis*) and the act's content (*noēma*). Thus consciousness is always *of* or *about* some object (existent or otherwise) that is its content. But Nishida and Zen find any dualistic separation between consciousness and its content problematic. Perceptions, beliefs, desires, and intentions—and the entire range of propositional attitudes—under Husserl's model of cognitive intentionality become the propositional content of a given conscious act. Objects of experience are thus reduced to the status of content *for* an intentional subject. Yet the relation between consciousness and its object in this model is never a *nondual* one. As Husserl puts it, this sort of inquiry into conscious experience "concerns two sides" (1973, 77): the noetic and the noematic. Moreover, any propositional content has always already been "worked over" (in Merleau-Ponty's phrase) or "carved up" (according to Zen) by conceptual and linguistic categories—and a

subject-object dualism subsequently established within this conceptual articulation of the act's content. Recall the discussion at the beginning of the paper, in which it was argued that concepts are constitutive of propositional attitudes, which conceptually represent parts of the world as being particular ways.

Thus cognitive-intentional experiences are not "pure" in Nishida's sense of the term. And therefore Nishida will argue that it is only through our body—specifically, within the prereflective activity of our skilled bodily coping—that we can realize an authentically nondual, and thus *pure*, relation with the world. Recall that Nishida refers to this mode of activity as the standpoint of "acting-intuition": a kind of *knowing by becoming*. According to Nishida, as we saw in the previous chapter, acting-intuition is the bodily-perceptual realization of "pure experience". One of the nuances of this term refers t the fact that it is a spontaneous and thoughtless mode of experience, an unthinking skilled action, since "to make an object of experience is to shatter its unity as pure experience and to devitalize it" (Wargo 2005, 46). Put differently, acting-intuition "is experienced as a working in which one participates fully aware but without setting oneself up in the position of either passive spectator or active controller of what is wrought" (Heisig 2003, 53). The ethical dynamic of pure experience, in its bodily-perceptual realization, is a compassionate interpenetration in which the acting self is integrated wholly into the world in which it acts. Acting-intuition, as the bodily realization of pure experience, is thus an experience of profound, egoless empathy.

Aron Gurwitsch (1979) writes similarly of the phenomenological structure of "thoughtless" moments of absorbed coping. Gurwitsch emphasizes the situated and practical nature of these experiences, arguing that the context both defines the appropriate course of action itself and then draws the appropriate ego-less action *out of* the skillful agent:

> What is imposed on us to do is not determined by us as someone standing outside of the situation simply looking on at it; what occurs and is imposed are rather prescribed by the situation and its own structure; and we do more and greater justice to it the more we let ourselves be guided by it, i.e. the less reserved we are in immersing ourselves in it and subordinating ourselves to it. We find ourselves

> in a situation and are interwoven with it, encompassed by it, indeed just "absorbed" into it. (1979, 67).

Again, the important idea here is that the situation itself summons the appropriate action out of the agent, "thoughtless" absorbed by the encompassing context.

Acting-intuition for Nishida is in this way a kind of egoless, noncognitive "bodily knowing". However, this is not to say that Nishida denies the utility of cognitive-intentionality altogether. To do so, of course, would be absurd. His claim is both that there exists a *deeper* or prior mode of practical relationality—founded within bodily activity—than cognitive-intentional relations, and furthermore that this mode of bodily relationality serves as the ground of skilled, intuitive moral conduct. Subject-object, cognitive-intentional dualism is therefore only a provisional dualism, founded in a deeper ontological unity. In this way, then, we see Nishida's claim that moral conduct is the product of "egoless" action can be given a coherent phenomenological articulation, and need not simply be dismissed as mystical obscurantism.

The Phenomenological Structure of Moral Skillfulness in Action

I now would like to sketch a preliminary phenomenological framework for a bodily skills-based account of moral psychology and nonconceptual content. To do this, I will use Nishida's Zen Buddhist-inspired insights into the structure of moral cognition as embodied coping. I'll then look at some empirical support for this view. Before continuing, however, I'd like to briefly summarize Nishida's key claims about the structure of moral cognition as discussed above. Deeply influenced by the Zen Buddhist tradition that contoured the majority of his work, Nishida argues that:

1. Moral cognition is primarily pragmatic and action-based.
2. Moral cognition primarily entails intuitive moral conduct—bodily-perceptual skilled coping—and not reflective judgment or inferential deduction of and adjudication between competing principles.
3. Moral cognition is therefore a form of situated, immediate coping, and not detached information-processing.

4. Moral expertise entails an intuitive, egoless response appropriate to the salient features of a particular moral context.
5. Moral expertise, as a nonconceptual intuitive response, is a form of prereflective bodily activity or "bodily-knowing".

In short, I will follow Nishida and Zen Buddhism and argue that moral conduct is a skill. Moral expertise is the skilled integration of perception and action within adaptive, context-sensitive, and compassionate responses. And moral development thus entails the cultivation of a kind of bodily comportment or skilled perceiving that enables one to skillfully and intuitively respond to the morally salient features of concrete situations. More simply, I am arguing that the vast majority of our moral life involves moral *action* before it does moral *thought*. One long-term consequence of this view is that our discussions of how to educate morality need to be reconfigured to take account of this primary fact.

In what follows, I sketch out this skills-based account of moral expertise by developing its two major components. These components, again, are intuitive perception and compassionate action. The first component will be developed by a phenomenological articulation of the perceptual reframing or *gestalt shif*t that occurs within moral expertise—a gestalt shift that, coupled with moral action, results in intuitive moral conduct or Nishida's "acting-intuition". A phenomenological articulation of this gestalt shift will enable us to understand how acting-intuition realizes a *nondual* mode of relationality in which an egoless and compassionate response becomes possible. The second component will be an analysis of spontaneous moral action as emergent from expert moral perception—in other words, moral expertise as a mode of activity involving nonconceptual content, or a kind of prereflective "bodily knowing" that does not entail the imposition of reflective judgments or rational action-guiding principles.

The Nondual Gestalt Structure of Skillful Moral Perception[70]

When I speak of expert moral perception as entailing a nondual gestalt shift, I have in mind something like the following. In expert moral perception, the morally

skillful individual immediately and intuitively perceives the morally salient features of an encountered concrete situation. The morally salient features of a given situation can be of a nearly infinite variety, and vary greatly in intensity and degree: the slight blush of someone whom I've abruptly made uncomfortable with an ill-considered comment; a twenty dollar bill that slips out of the pocket of a person in front of me as they continue down the street unaware; a sudden cry for help just around the corner; the expectant glance of a lone child waiting to be acknowledged in a room full of adults; the subtlest change in facial expression or alteration of bodily posture; a slight break in a voice or barely discernible change of intonation that betrays a hidden emotion.

Via this immediate and intuitive perception of the morally salient features of an encountered situation, a gestalt shift or perspectival reorganization is affected. What is normally in the *foreground* of the moral expert's experience—egocentric self-interests; self-directed concerns with one's own well-being and immediate desires—abruptly shift to the *background*. And what is normally in the *background* of a moral expert's experience—other-directed concerns and considerations; a global awareness of moral saliencies not directly relevant to one's own self-interests—shifts abruptly to the *foreground* of their experiential field. By intuitively fixing onto these morally salient features, the perceptual organization of the moral context is reconfigured in a profound way. The very phenomenological structure of the moral situation itself has changed. The figure-ground shift that I am speaking of entails a thorough moral *refocusing*. What is normally *figure* (self-directed concern) is resituated as *ground*, and what is normally ground (other-directed attentiveness) is resituated as figure. And by intuitively foregrounding an other-directed attentiveness—where my self-directed concern is no longer experienced as *over against* the needs of the other as they present themselves to me—I become capable of an immediate egoless response to the particular demands of the situation. By foregrounding the immediate needs of the other, I *enter into* their experience openly, ready to act. And thus this perspectival reorganization enables me to experience and respond to this situation in a *nondual* (or truly *selfless*) manner.

This description is, of course, a description of the shift that must occur for genuine empathy to arise. This perspectival shift enables the cultivation of a felt

connection with the unique presence and plight of another. But as James (1899/1977) notes, for this deep level of felt connectedness to become actualized—to affectively register the real humanity, singularity and irreducibility of the other, within their unique context—"the whole scheme of our customary [self-directed] values gets confounded" and "our self…riven and its narrow interests fly to pieces", enabling the birth of "a new centre and a new perspective" (634). In short, the self dissolves within the perceptual reorientation of this empathic openness. Moral skillfulness is thus the ability to affect this perceptual reorientation and to discharge this reorientation in skillful, compassionate activity.

Some examples will perhaps help clarify. Consider the following scenario:

> At work one day, I am walking down the hall when I encounter a co-worker with whom I'm on generally friendly terms. However, this individual, Jane, is not an especially close friend of mine. Though our relationship is on the whole congenial, it does not extend outside of work-related situations. During this particular encounter, Jane seems unusually cold and indifferent. She is curt in her response to my greeting and barely meets my gaze before continuing on her way. Later in the day we have a similarly frosty encounter. The workday then concludes with Jane walking briskly by my desk, head down, without offering so much as a quick "See you tomorrow", which has generally been her habit in the past.
>
> Mulling over this series of encounters that evening, I become deeply offended. I'm convinced that I have done nothing to deserve this sort of treatment. In fact, I've gone out of my way to be consistently pleasant and affable to Jane. I thus decide that Jane is clearly a moody individual, more so than I had previously realized. Thinking back over the course of our work-relationship, I begin to fixate on other previous encounters with her that, in light of today's experience, I now see discreetly hinted at this propensity to sullenness—but that did so in such a subtle and understated manner that I now conclude that I had failed to "read" these earlier signs properly. Thinking about the matter even more, I decide that Jane is simply an unpleasant person. Furthermore, I tell myself that I've *always*

really felt this way about her; today's experience simply confirmed my intuition. And I am grateful that today's encounters finally revealed her true character. I anticipate future encounters with Jane and begin planning on how I will utilize this new-found realization when communicating with her—as well as when discussing Jane with other co-workers. For surely, I conclude before falling asleep, I'm not the only person who has come to see Jane's true colors.

Things abruptly change the following day. Shortly after arriving at work, I see Jane and another co-worker, John, chatting quietly at the end of the hall. I begin walking towards them, steeling myself for what I expect to be the first of many icy encounters with Jane. However, as I am suddenly within earshot of my two co-workers, Jane looks up at me with swollen eyes and musters a faint smile. Simultaneously, John leans closer to Jane and says, "I'm so very sorry about your mother's passing. I know the two of you were very close". At the moment, I experience an abrupt and comprehensive *moral refocusing*. What was previously at the foreground of my moral perception—feelings of resentment and anger, an anticipation of future unpleasant encounters that would reinforce my resentment—now *recede into the background* and subsequently disappear. A profound perspectival shift has been affected. I move beyond the self-directed considerations that had colored my experience until this moment, and I am immediately aware of the morally salient features of the current situation, features I'd previously overlooked. I see Jane for what she is: a daughter who is coping with the death of her mother. Jane is an individual suffering in the face of a great personal tragedy, a person in need of selfless compassion and sensitivity. In a very important sense, I *enter into* Jane's grief by foregrounding her immediate needs. And in doing so, I am in a position to spontaneously respond to these needs in an authentically selfless (or *nondual*) manner, as my prior bitterness has now dissipated completely into the background via this moral gestalt shift.

In failing to be perceptually attuned to the morally salient features of my previous day's encounters with Jane—the fact that her curt behavior was in fact *not* consistent with our personal history; an uncharacteristic heaviness of spirit or telling melancholy that

would have disclosed itself had I been more attentive—I reaffirm my status as a moral novice. I failed to pick up the morally relevant perceptual information that was distributed in front of me. My own self-directed feelings and concerns were thoroughly foregrounded in my experience, and colored my intersubjective encounters throughout the day. It is only through a comprehensive gestalt shift, triggered by my sudden awareness of Jane's palpable grief over her mother's death that I am "jolted", as it were, out of my egocentrism and into a nondual moral figure-ground shift that places me in a morally attuned state of readiness-to-respond. However, a more morally skillful individual would have been poised to affect such a shift much earlier. She would have been more sensitively attuned to the relevant perceptual saliencies that affect such a shift. This perpetual moral attunement, or bodily-perceptual *poise*[71], is what differentiates the skillful individual from the novice. Bodily-perceptual poise in this context refers to a perpetual readiness-to-respond via affecting the gestalt shift described above. It is heightened adaptive attentiveness, a readiness (1) to intuitively perceive the morally salient features of a concrete situation, as it is in itself, and (2) to respond to them with spontaneous and compassionate (re-)action.

Far from being an isolated experience, the vast majority of our moral life is comprised of experiences similar to the one depicted above. For these kinds of micro-encounters constitute the very marrow of our moral life. They are the "stuff" of our intersubjective relations. Throughout our everyday lives, we are all confronted with endless concrete situations that call for an immediate moral response—and by and large, *we simply respond*. Most importantly, we do so *without thinking*. The situation itself draws a response out of us. Maurice Mandelbaum (1955) makes a similar point. Though he ultimately assumes an intellectualist approach to moral experience—focusing on rational deliberation and judgment in his book, *The Phenomenology of Moral Experience*—Mandelbaum speaks of a spontaneous ethical comportment of the sort I am discussing when he writes that moral experience begins when

> I sense the embarrassment of a person, and turn the conversation aside; I see a child in danger and catch hold of its hand; I hear a crash and become alert to help (1955, 48).

> Actions such as these (of which our daily lives are in no small measure composed) do not…seem to spring from the self: in such cases I am reacting directly and spontaneously to what confronts me…[I]t is appropriate to speak of "reactions" and "responses," for in them no sense of initiative or feeling of responsibility is present…[W]e can only say that we acted as we did because the situation extorted the action from us (1955, 48).

Ethical comportment, as a readiness-for-action that is a "reacting directly and spontaneously to what confronts me", is the very definition of Nishida's conception of acting-intuition as intuitive moral conduct. Again, it is this kind of behavior that determines our status as moral novices or morally skilled individuals.

The upshot of this sensorimotor skills-based model of moral psychology is that moral expertise is seen as a primarily progressive skill cultivation—and *not*, then, solely as a progressive refinement of moral principles. Moral skillfulness is viewed as a pragmatic know-*how* and not a reasoned knowing-*that*. As we develop and age, move throughout our lives and accumulate experiences, we find ourselves encountering and responding to an increasing number and variety of concrete moral situations. Moral maturity develops through our bodily-perceptual engagement with these concrete situations. The world begins to disclose itself as a morally significant arena of action. And genuine moral maturity is therefore realized not primarily through reflective thinking or deductive principles, but rather in embodied *praxis*: a progressively developed ability to intuitively perceive the morally salient features of a given situation and to affect a nondual gestalt shift or perceptual reorganization similar in its pragmatic expression to the one described above. This skillfulness pragmatically structures encountered situations and discloses their morally salient features. Sensitive moral perception thus generates skilled moral action. It is to a consideration of expert moral action as a nonconceptual coping or "bodily knowing" that I turn next.

Skillful Moral Action as Bodily-Knowing

Earlier, I offered reasons for taking seriously the idea that bodies are intelligent organisms. I discussed Hubert Dreyfus's and James Gibson's respective characterizations of how, exactly, the body is a source of genuine knowledge. I then discussed the importance of what I termed "sensible affect-knowledge" in understanding how bodily actions exhibit an adaptive, felt and nonconceptual understanding of the world. And I stressed how this adaptive intelligence is rooted in the body's sensorimotor structures that enable the body to feelingly engage with its world, to come to know it by perceiving, navigating throughout and manipulating its lived environments. I'd now like to return to these ideas and contextualize them more carefully within the current phenomenological characterization of moral skillfulness.

For the morally skillful, moral perception of the sort just described generates a form of spontaneous intuitive action that does not require rational deliberation. More precisely, this form of intuitive moral action is a pre-reflective or nonconceptual mode of activity: in short, a "bodily knowing"[72] or skilled coping that expresses moral expertise without invoking rational or inferential deliberation. It is this nonconceptual bodily knowing that is reported in moral cases where one claims to have "acted without thinking about it". Bodily knowing is thus a goal-directed, pragmatic and situationally-specific mode of response that is operative without explicit conceptual articulation.

To return again to Nishida, we can see that he once more reflects a Zen-like characterization of skilled action when he speaks of nonconceptual skill cultivation and sensitive perception in the context of both ethical and aesthetic disciplines. Nishida (1923/1973) writes that

> 'Consciousness that has become nothing' is not something that is hindered by action; it must be something that internalizes action.
>
> 'Sensitivity' acquired through discipline is not mere mechanical habit. In the case of a painter painting a picture, he, of course, does not follow conceptual judgment; but his painting is not mere spontaneous movement, either. His movement must have the self-awareness of power. It is not reflective self-

> awareness, but self-awareness in action. 'Style' is such a self-awareness in action (32).

Nishida's use of the term "style" here is interesting. It seems similar to Merleau-Ponty's (1945/2002) use of the term, and refers for both Nishida and Merleau-Ponty to one's habitual bodily comportment or way of carrying oneself within the world. One's bodily style "speaks" to the world in this way. It encompasses things like the personal repertoire of postures, gestures, movements and habitual responses that individuate each one of us as inhabiting our body (and world) in a particular manner. Additionally, Nishida is here using this idea to argue for the genuine spontaneity of creative activity that results from the integration of perception and action within the bodily style of "thoughtless" skilled actions. Such action is purposeful and directed—it is "self-aware" in a nonconceptual bodily sense, and thus expresses the "self-awareness of [bodily] power", as Nishida puts it—but it is not calculative or pre-determined. It is cognitively transparent coping in which the cognitive self is made, well, *transparent*. Echoing Nishida on this point, Varela (1999) writes that "When one *is* the action, no residue of self-consciousness remains to observe the action externally" (34). Again, both Nishida and Varela argue that, in action-intuition as a nondual (or "pure") experience, there is no distinction between agent and action: our agency *is* our action, the action as it is performed in a fluidly expert (spontaneous, intuitive, and nonconceptual) manner.

Within many practical skill domains, this kind of directed "thoughtless" action is precisely what specifies the transparent agent *as* an expert. Again, recall the earlier discussion of the expert athlete who simply performs without being conscious of the coaching principles or rules governing expert performance. Within this expert action, our bodily intuitively knows the context and its holistic structure. And thus it intuitively knows the proper response. This is a consequence of the body's adaptive intelligence, discussed above. As Merleau-Ponty (1947/1964) writes, this adaptive intelligence or bodily knowing discloses the fact that "perception is a nascent *logos*…that [] summons us to the tasks of knowledge and action" (25). Skilled perception opens up salient features of encountered situations. It is "perceptual habit as coming into possession of a world" (Merleau-Ponty 1945/2002, 176). And in the expert action that flows from the skilled

"possession" of the world via sensitive perception, we therefore do not conceptualize antecedent "conditions of satisfaction" or represent specific "success conditions" (Searle 1983, 90) that must be subsequently met for a particular action to be considered a successful one. For the successful resolution of an action-context can take different forms, and the situation successfully resolved in different ways. Going into a situation, it's not always clear—even to the expert—what will constitute a successful resolution. Often, this is not known until *after* a resolution has been enacted. Nor do we represent ourselves *to* ourselves through a kind of higher-order global monitoring system that trains a watchful eye on the self as it acts. Again, these characterizations posit a *conceptual* representation of some predetermined goal or representation of the self-in-action that is at odds with the nonconceptual phenomenology of our absorbed coping. Moreover, conceptually pre-determined goals would compromise the genuine *spontaneity* of the majority of our responses. Most of our activity as situated coping—including our situated moral encounters with others—doesn't involve long-term calculation or elaborate planning. As moral experts, we don't generally *think* about morally acting—*we simply act*. Only later do we formulate explicit *reasons* for our action.

I'd like to say a bit more about the twin notions of "bodily knowing" and "sensible affect-knowledge". By labeling this form of adaptive action "bodily-knowing", I want to be clear that about the fact that our nonconceptual bodily responses to moral encounters of the sorts described above are not merely instinctual or mechanistic "blind" responses. This sort of stimulus-response characterization fails to capture the environmentally-integrated and purposive nature of the bodily action here under consideration. For these adaptive responses exhibit a directedness and situational appropriateness that differentiates them from simple instinct (though again, this directedness and appropriateness in not conceptually represented via antecedent "conditions of satisfaction"). Moreover, these nonconceptual bodily responses qualify as legitimate knowledge: real bodily intelligence. This is because expert moral coping exhibits *goal-directedness*—even if this goal directedness cannot be exhaustively conceptually specified at the outset. Rather, this goal-directedness is a practical know-how, a pragmatic understanding of how best to respond to concrete situations based upon

the various situational saliencies that *solicit* a response. In the flow of transparent coping, the expert tennis player knows immediately how best to respond to shifting environmental saliencies, such as weather conditions, the angle of her opponent's oncoming forehand, and her own fatigue. The skilled instructor is attuned to the global context of her classroom, her students, and their individual "styles"—which collectively structure the ambiance of that particular classroom—and immediately recognizes if a vaguely challenging remark from a student is worthy of a sharp response or a more gentle, considered rebuke.

Samuel Todes' (2001) phenomenological description of "poise" can be summoned for our purposes here. In his *Body and World*, Todes discusses what he terms "the actual a priori of poised response" (2001, 64). According to Todes,

> I have to "catch onto," or "get," whatever I know by anticipating it, and then somehow confirming this anticipation by an actual (present) response to the thing anticipated. It is the terminal (postanticipatory) response to a thing that enables me to know it…The final (actual, present) response to a (future) anticipated project enables me to *know* that object because the response, as my *self-produced movement*, is directly and evidently known to me in virtue of its mere existence or occurrence. *For effective movement, and only for effective movement, to be is to be known. I know what I am doing just insofar as I am really doing it* (2001, 64).

Again, this echoes Nishida's earlier claim that acting-intuition—as a moral-aesthetic bodily comportment—is enacted as a kind of "knowing by becoming". This nonconceptual "knowing by becoming" is a function of the body's skilled sensorimotor engagement with the world. And according to Todes,

> "poise" then simply is this intention of the active body…in dealing with the things and persons around us. It is sharply to be distinguished from its correlate, the *pose* of the inactive body. Poise is always a way of responding to, of dealing with, objects around one…Poise does not, when successful, "coincide" or "agree" with its later "effects," as does will with its achievements. Rather, when successful, poise *is* its own effect "(2001, 65).

Poise, as "its own effect", enables us to know the things of the world that we respond to and deal with in an intimately practical way. This is because

> the success of poise is not in its *execution*, but in its very *existence*, by which the body is, to begin with, knowingly in touch with the objects around it. As soon as I am poised in my circumstances, I know…something about those objects to which I am doing something with my body (2001, 66).

The kind of knowledge that poise enables us to pick up via our sensorimotor transactions with the world is "sensible affect-knowledge": the pragmatic meanings and values—the *affordances*, to return to Gibson—that are opened by the modalities of our perceptual systems, and which structure our lived environments in relation to the sensorimotor possibilities of the living, acting body. Sensible affect-knowledge is *perceptual* knowledge, not *conceptual* knowledge. I literally feel sensorimotor possibilities within certain environments that I cannot exhaustively conceptualize or antecedently represent. This feeling discloses the affective rootedness that, within each context, functionally integrates us into the structure of our world.

Thus, sensible affect-knowledge is a kind of nonconceptual representational content. Our perceptual systems represent environments *as being* certain ways—as pragmatic configurations soliciting a response or series of responses. Moreover, our bodies explore lived "space[s]…already pragmatically organized by the construction, the very shape, of the body" (Gallagher 2005, 140). Whatever perceptual affordances show up for us are functions of our having the kinds of bodies that we do. The world as perceived is phenomenologically structured by the sensorimotor skills of our body (Gallagher 2005, 140). The causal connection between perceptual content and the sensorimotor structure of the body can be affirmed by considering a number of facts. For instance, depth perception is causally linked to the contingent fact that human bodies perceive with two eyes set apart from one at a certain distance. To calculate the depth of objects "the brain uses the fact that the images appear at different coordinates on each retina" (Shapiro 2004, 187). Additionally, certain stages of visual processing—including depth perception and parallax—are causally dependent upon movements of the head, neck, and body (Shapiro 2004, 188; Noë 2004). However, if human bodies came with

three or more eyes, or if we lacked our particular locomotive capacities, or if our eyes were set farther apart or our trunks were incapable of the same range of motion we currently enjoy, the physiological processes comprising visual perception would need to be dramatically recalibrated (Shapiro 2004, 187). We would literally see the world differently. Similarly, if our eyes were in our knees, our world would disclose itself to us in a dramatically different fashion. It would afford different action-possibilities (and importantly, *impossibilities*). Perceptual content thus is causally dependent upon the sensorimotor structure of the body.

But once more, this representational perceptual content—the world disclosed by our perceptual systems as being certain ways, as offering certain possibilities for action—is not a kind of conceptual content. For one thing, this sort of sensible affect-knowledge is available to creatures that lack concepts, such as animals and young children. Animals both domesticated and wild are skilled perceivers who intuitively perceive and respond to environmental saliencies that afford different sorts of action. They recognize threats, shelter, prey and features of the terrain (among many other things) that constrain their range of possible actions in a given context. Infants learn about themselves, including their own sensorimotor capacities and those of others, by exploring their new worlds with their body (Meltzoff 2005). But these cases are examples of bodily learning or knowing that develops from rich perceptual experience, not conceptual understanding or judgment. For example, the fact that perception is perspectival and 1st personally structured provides proprioceptive information to the infant about the body's relation to the world, and the way that its bodily agency alters and affects the perceptual content of experience. But the infant comes to know this information nonconceptually (Meltzoff 2005; Gallagher 2005, 73). The nonconceptual representational content of the body's experience of the world thus exhibits its own affective logic. This affective logic is instructive and normative, in that it guides action and adaptation. But it does so nonconceptually.

Additionally, much of the content of sensible affect-knowledge is so tightly coupled to the content of *other* sensible affect-knowledge that it cannot be specified conceptually—or de-coupled from its relatedness to other sensible affect-knowledge and given conceptual representation—without distorting its lived perceptual meaning. Less

abstractly, I have in mind here something like what Searle (1983) terms "the Background"[73] or what Dreyfus (2005b) might term "everyday expertise": the holistic network of *a priori* coping skills and tacit understandings that allow us to do and think just about anything.

For example, when I get out of bed to get a drink of water in the middle of the night, I do so only against an ever-present background of common sense knowledge—beliefs and practical skills that rarely, if ever, come to the forefront of that experience. This common sense knowledge includes my belief that the floor will not abruptly cave in as I walk towards the kitchen or a meteor come crashing through my ceiling; my assurance that my dog has not, for his amusement, set up obstacles in my way for me to stumble over in the dark; my locomotive ability to avoid walls and furniture, and to open the cupboard, retrieve a glass and fill it with water in the dark; etc. This unthought, common-sense Background of tacit understandings and pragmatic sensorimotor skills, a tightly coupled network consisting of nearly an infinite number of capacities, is carried into my every worldly transaction. But it's not clear that this background can ever be exhaustively conceptually articulated. It's simply too big and extends too far.[74] Thus, it is simply *intuitive*. In our "every expertise", the Background is allowed to recede into its proper place *as* Background—as nonconceptual content informing the context of our current activity. And again, this sensible affect-knowledge is normative—it constrains actions and judgments I make within the shifting contexts of my everyday experience, determining appropriateness and rightness of fit—but it is directive without being conceptually articulated.[75] This is the "poise" of everydayness.

To return to the moral significance of all this: "poise", in this context, refers to a moral attunement or readiness-to-respond. The skilled moral expert is continually poised to affect the perceptual reframing outline in the previous section and to spontaneously enact the appropriate response. The twin notions of "poise" and "sensible affect-knowledge" thus reiterate the fact that our body is knowingly in touch with those objects in its environment towards which it is perceptually attuned—including moral saliencies. In the same way that expert tennis player intuitively responds to the shifting saliencies of the tennis match in its unfolding, so, too does the moral expert seize upon and react to

moral affordances distributed throughout the many intersubjective contexts that constitute our lives.

The Buddhist notion of compassion (*karuna*) is again here relevant. Recall that compassion for Buddhism refers to our ability to cultivate a perceptual attunement to the suffering of others, to refine our seeing such that we pick up moral saliencies that elude the less attuned. We immediately *know* (in a nonconceptual sense) the other's presence and plight. This empathic understanding is the affective consequence of this perceptual attunement—a felt connectedness or empathic inter-resonance that discloses our basic relatedness to the presence and plight of others, as well as the possibilities for response afforded by the particular context of this encounter. Thus, this sort of nonconceptual knowledge is "affectively charged (Kasulis 2002, 119). In this way, there is "a natural transition from intimately knowing another person's plight to empathizing with it in a responsive manner"—an immediate and skillful response where "there need be no recourse to evaluating abstract or general moral principles" (Kasulis 2002, 119).

Similarly, Dreyfus (2005b) points out that, very often, it is not emotional detachment but rather passionate *involvement* in skillful activity that inaugurates the transformation from novice to expert. Dreyfus (2005b) notes that a recent study of student nurses found that those nurses who remained detached from their patients and duties and who followed strict rules of conduct never progressed beyond bare competence. However, those who affectively responded to both success and failure, taking to heart the highs and lows of their developmental progression and their duties and responsibilities, were the nurse who developed expertise in their craft. Those nurses developed loving kindness, the responsive poise of real intimacy for both their patients and their duties. And this loving kindness was then deployed in increasingly refined forms of skillful means. The nurses became more skillful and creative care givers by relying less upon reasoned judgment and more upon nonconceptual sensible affect-knowledge. In other words, they gave bodily expression to Nishida's "acting-intuition".

Before looking at empirical support for the views discussed here in the next section, I now want to sum up and weave together a number of disparate lines of analysis that have emerged from the previous discussion. I also want to draw out some further

themes, relevant to the present discussion, that have yet to be explicitly addressed. First, the philosophical and practical significance of Nishida's acting-intuition, as we've seen, is that it offers a skills-based, bodily conception of moral psychology. Acting-intuition is the bodily realization of pure experience within our active engagement with other people (and the world more generally). Our moral psychology is thus rooted in the sensorimotor structure of the world-directed body. And moral *praxis* emerges from the nonconceptual, affectively charged bodily knowing that opens up situations as being morally significant and as affording compassionately responsive possibilities. Moral skillfulness entails the fluid integration of perception and action, predicated on a prior openness and receptivity to the concrete situations we continually encounter. Importantly, it is a bodily skill that can be cultivated and refined. But this cultivation is not something that is accomplished solely through the refinement of our rational moral principles. Rather, it is a genuine somatic skill-set, and must be approached as such. We must train our perceptual capacities if we are to become more morally skillful. But traditional cognitivist conceptions of moral psychology, several examples of which were discussed earlier, offer little practical assistance in suggesting how we go about doing this. Moreover, they over-intellectualize what is primarily and embodied and embedded phenomenon.

In the context of a complete moral education, however, a body-based moral skillfulness is only part of our moral development. Cultivating perceptual openness and receptivity—the necessary preconditions for compassionate action, which seeks to remove the suffering of others— is vital. But this does not negate the important role that moral reasoning can and indeed does play in our moral development. In *Inquiry into the Good*, Nishida refers to pure experience as both the "alpha" and "omega" of thought and experience. Like James, pure experience for Nishida refers to the originary unity of embodied self and world. In this sense, it is the "alpha" or starting point of human reality. This is its phenomenological significance, which explains for both men how we are able to skillfully cope with the world as smoothly and thoughtlessly as we do. But as we've seen, Nishida parts with James by suggesting that pure experience can be realized in compassionate forms of other-directed praxis—and that it is thus also the "omega" of our moral development. What this means, however, is that thinking often plays an

intermediary role in our moral training.[76] For it's not clear that one can become morally skillful without ever engaging in any sort of reflective analysis of one's moral activities and choices. And indeed, if one *never* engages in any reflective analysis of one's behavior *at all*, genuinely uncompassionate and immoral patterns of activity can end up becoming habitual responses. When this happens, one's empathic capacities are severely damaged and moral development blocked.

The upshot of all of this is that moral reflection—in other words, thinking and conceptual experience—is an important part of our moral development. Nishida certainly wouldn't deny this. James, too, is quite adamant that concepts have an instrumental use. For just as a sports coach uses concepts to assist an athlete's training or a parent formulates simple moral maxims to instruct a child in proper behavior, so, too, can reflection and conceptual thought provide a corrective to action that increases, as opposed to removing, the suffering of others. And it is important to be able to give retrospective reasons for one's actions, and to be able to defend our responses. But moral skillfulness involves more than reason-giving. The bulk of our intersubjective relatedness, I've suggested, is fleshed out in spontaneous responses to the situations we are continually navigating throughout. These "on the fly" responses comprise the "content", as Nishida puts it, of our moral life. Our basic intersubjective relatedness is a function of the fact that, in pure experience, we are always already dynamically related to the world and others on a fundamental level. Therefore, with his discussion of the moral significance of acting-intuition, Nishida's ultimate point is this: moral reflection, while important, is fed by a more primitive bodily-affective responsiveness to others that must be cultivated if real moral development is to occur. For the body—as both James and Nishida argue—is an intelligent and adaptive organism affectively bound up with its world of pure experience. In short, it is empathically coupled to the world through the sensorimotor structures of its activity, its skilled coping. The bodily self is an active agent prior to being a reflecting subject. This fact, systematically ignored by much of western philosophy, therefore has consequences for the forms our moral relatedness. Conceptual lessons are helpful, but principles and maxims must be psychosomatically assimilated for genuine moral skillfulness to occur. Once this happens, morally skillfully individuals,

animated by compassion and empathy, are equipped to move beyond conceptual lessons and creatively respond to the particularities and nuances of concrete situations. In this way is the body's sensorimotor skillfulness is both the origin and terminus, "alpha" and "omega", of moral development.

One final point. A fair question to ask here is the following: what is it that *compels* us to act in a morally skillful way? In other words, where is the source of our moral motivation? And how exactly does compassion enter the picture? Nishida and Buddhism—and indeed James as well—have a simple answer: *empathy*. The affective coupling of bodily self and world within pure experience exhibits an empathic structure that begins at the prereflective level of the body and redounds back up into the higher levels of our intersubjective relatedness to other people. Simply put, we are empathically bound up with our world on a number of levels. On a primitive phenomenological level, skillful coping is possible because the relation between the body's sensorimotor structures and the structures of our lived environments is one of *empathic resonance*. The world discloses itself to me as being a certain way because I have the sort of body that I do. I empathize with the world as a whole and, more pointedly, with specific features of my environment. And I can therefore skillfully manipulate and navigate my world because I affectively—that is to say, empathically—feel the environmental affordances that open up my world as being capable of acting in and upon. This is a central claim of James's and Nishida's respective characterizations of the world-engaged body, as I've tried to show all throughout the previous chapters.

This is not the only form of operative empathy, however. Nishida and Buddhism argue that this primitive bodily empathy funds more mature forms of moral relatedness. To use Nishida's language: pure experience refers to the primitive empathic coupling of bodily self and world. However, acting-intuition is the more focused bodily-perceptual expression of this basic empathic coupling as it is directed towards particular people and situations. Compassion emerges at the level of acting-intuition. Note that empathy is a robustly bodily phenomenon, for Nishida (and indeed James).[77] And bodily empathy is thus the precondition for moral performance: in other word, compassionate moral action that responds to the particularities of the other's unique needs. As mentioned a moment

ago, according to both James and Nishida, the body's basic relationship to the world is one of empathic relatedness. Thus every body is, to a certain degree, an empathic organism.

Building off of the idea that embodiment is not a fixed thing but rather a progressive achievement, Nishida and Buddhism further insist that we must sharpen our empathic possibilities (and in doing so, develop latent capacities of our embodiment). In short, we can refine the expressive forms of our empathy. For what motivates us to move beyond a primitive empathic coupling with the world (pure experience) and developed more refined, empathic responses to specific situations (via acting-intuition) is a *felt inter-resonance* with the real humanity of the other. Conversely, it is precisely my clinging to views such as "Blacks are inferior and subhuman" or "Gays are sinful and ought to be shunned" that blocks me from realizing this bodily empathy. To cultivate this empathy, it is not enough to simply formulate abstract principles such as "All people are equal, regardless of color, race or creed." Reasoned principles are not sufficient for compassion. Nishida and Buddhism rather argue that, *contra* cognitivist ethics, which insists that "the foundation of ethics must be sought in what is truly universal and exempt from empirical-historical change' (Vetlesen 1994, 302), it is instead the immediate encounter with the concrete other that motivates moral responses. In short, affectivity—not pure rationality—motivates action. One cannot be *reasoned* into authentic compassion. Affectivity, in the form of bodily empathy, is what opens up concrete situation as morally significant—and perceptual attentiveness and receptivity then allows the other to present him/herself as a unique other, exhibiting particular forms of suffering that I can seek to alleviate in creative ways. [78]

For Nishida and Buddhism, then, the motivation to act compassionately flows from an experiential connectedness with other people. The previous chapters endeavored to show how things in the world, including other people, are very literally constitutive elements of my embodied mind. Thus, the boundary between self and other is fundamentally indeterminate; in some important ways, I am forever spilling out of myself while the world and other people are flowing back into me. Once more, the previous chapter's analysis attempted to argue that such talk is more than mere hyperbole or

Hallmark sentiment. However, much of our life is spent ignoring this fundamental interpenetration and connectedness. Acting-intuition, therefore, is the mode of experience according to Nishida in which the interpenetration of self-world, self-other becomes affectively present to me. Simply put, I *feel* the inter-resonance of self and world, including my experiential solidarity with the humanity of the other. Moreover, I recognize the extent to which my identity is *dependently conditioned* by the things and people in the world. Take away the unique web of interrelations in which I am always embedded and you have taken away the conditioning factors that constitute my very self-identity. My identity, indeed my individual humanity, is not therefore reducible to some metaphysical or biological substrate intrinsic to me and me alone. On the contrary, my identity is an extended and distributed structure buttressed and constituted by the interrelations that define my unique situatedness in the world. In short, my identity is constituted *relationally*, wholly dependent upon the forms of my relatedness to others. The affective realization of this interdependency in acting-intuition is thus the precondition for moral skillfulness.

This unitive affectivity is expressed in other moments, too—athletic exertion, aesthetic experience, etc.—and therefore we have hints of this experiential solidarity throughout our lives. Importantly, it is a mode of experience accessible to everyone, not a select few. Once more, it is realizable in action, and not simply higher forms of sophisticated moral reasoning. Therefore, to cultivate the perceptual sensitivity and mindfulness needed to perpetually enact this unitive affectivity, and then to bring it into our concrete encounters with others so that we may compassionately respond to their unique needs, is precisely the definition of moral skillfulness. It is the realization of pure experience in acting-intuition.

Empirical Support

The analysis and argument of the previous section was largely descriptive and phenomenological. However, there are a number of recent empirical studies—drawn from experimental psychology and neuroscience—that can be cited in support of the

previous section's two-pronged phenomenological argument. Thus, the skills-based model of moral expertise I discuss can be squared with illuminating scientific findings; phenomenology can be supplemented with neurobiology. In this section, I look at some of these findings and discuss how they buttress key features of a sensorimotor skills-based account of moral expertise. Specifically, I am concerned with looking at empirical evidence for the following claims: (1) our perceptual skills can be refined in the manner discussed above, enabling us to become more sensitively attuned moral experts; (2) moral-perceptual attentiveness generates "selfless" and nonconceptual skilled action in which egocentric concern, along with a strong sense of localized agency, dissolves. I will look at research supporting these claims in turn.

In chapter two, I discussed empirical support for the characterization of the body as an intelligent organism capable of thoughtless, context-sensitive intentional action. This was evidence that the body routinely is capable of actualizing nonconceptual activity. I also discussed support for the idea that perception is to a large degree cross-modal. I want to return to this idea and look at even more evidence in support of the "plasticity" of perception. In the above account, moral expertise was said to involve a kind of perceptual reframing of encountered situations. By situating moral expertise within the sensorimotor structures of our embodied coping, one of the consequences of this account is that moral skillfulness is said to involve the ability to affect a perceptual reframing that, in a very basic and phenomenologically primitive way, alters how we experience the world and other people. In other words, an implicit presupposition of both this model and its Buddhist antecedents is the idea that we have the ability to cultivate and refine our level of moral-perceptual attunement. Our perceptual engagement with the world *itself* is also, at least to a degree, skillful. Perceptual awareness is not fixed. Rather, it can be heightened and refined. It is "plastic".

The fact that the phenomenal field of experience is plastic is certainly not a far-fetched claim. As we've already seen, James's characterization of consciousness-as-a-selecting-agency rests upon the idea that the phenomenal field is malleable, its content relative to our individual interests and ends. The change blindness and inattentional blindness studies discussed in chapter two offer empirical support for this

characterization. Indeed, one does not have to look far to find common examples of everyday perceptual reframing. To return to an earlier example: a skilled tennis player intuitively picks up salient perceptual details that less skilled players overlook. This includes things like the direction of periodic wind gusts, worn balls that must be compensated for by adopting a new play strategy, damp patches on the court that will affect the game at some point, subtle gestures of soreness, fatigue, or lack of confidence in an opponent's bodily comportment, etc. Thus, two individuals can view the same court and play the same opponent. However, thanks to the possession of refined bodily-perceptual sensorimotor skills, the tennis expert's perceptual experience of the court and the game, as it unfolds, is going to be framed differently than is the novice's. Relevant scenario-details will be foregrounded in the expert's experience in a way not the case for the novice.

Motivated by James Gibson's ecological approach to perception and drawing upon a wealth of studies culled from developmental psychology, Eleanor Gibson and Anne Pick (2000) argue for a similar point. According to Gibson and Pick, perceptual learning is not primarily a matter of *enrichment*—being able to make inferences and cognitive judgments that give meaning to, or enrich, semantically impoverished sensory stimuli—but rather *differentiation*. Put differently, according to Gibson and Pick, the world is already alive with rich perceptual meanings in the forms of *affordances*: possibilities for perceiver-environment interactions, as discussed previously. Perceptual-learning-as-differentiation, then, is the ability to progressively detect new information or affordances. Perceivers learn about the world by perceiving novel ways of interacting with it. They come to differentiate new, previously unresponded-to affordances. And this affordance-based view of learning means that development is the process of the perceiver realizing a tighter bodily-perceptual coupling with its environment. In other words, perceivers become more intimately attuned to their worlds. As Gibson and Pick note, "this kind of perceptual change happens as learning in an adult, as perception becomes more skilled and fine-tuned for certain occupations, such as tea tasting or differentiating qualities of snow or performances of ballet dancers. Most important, it has implications for developments, as children in the normal course of growing up distinguish among

more and more features of the world that they encounter" (Gibson and Pick 2000, 10). In short, under this view learning is most importantly a matter of learning how to become a more skilled perceiver.

Moving to a slightly different context, the ability to both heighten and refine perceptual awareness—the capacity to become a skilled perceiver, in other words—is presupposed by the world's contemplative religious traditions (Walsh 2005, 12). Most of these traditions offer practical meditation-based programs intended to accomplish just this. The upshot of this body-based practice is the idea that mediation facilitates the development of sensorimotor skills enabling the "awakened" individual to see, experience, and engage with the world differently than the "unawakened" individual. In short, they are able to pick up perceptual information in a more refined manner than the unawakened. Spiritual growth is perceptual development. Thus, progressively refining bodily-perceptual awareness is an integral aspect of these contemplative religious approaches.

Recently, many recent empirical findings have affirmed the possibility of this kind of refining of perceptual consciousness. Toward the end of chapter two, I discussed empirical evidence suggesting that our normal everyday experience of the world is to a degree intrinsically cross-modal. However, other research offers striking evidence that human perceivers may actually have *some level of control* over the extent of this cross-modal integration. For example, Roger Walsh's (2005) study of advanced Buddhist meditators' abilities to cultivate synaesthesia strongly suggests that the basic form of perceptual awareness is indeed "plastic". Walsh's experimental research found that synaesthesia—pronounced "cross-modal" perception, or a condition wherein individuals experience sensations in one or more sensory modalities when stimulated in another, such as "hearing" an F# as being red—is not an aberrant or exceedingly rare experience, as has traditionally been thought.[79] Not only does it seem to be more widespread a phenomenon than previously realized, as well as admitting a greater complexity of causes and varieties (Walsh 2005, 6). Additionally, Walsh (2005) found that there is further evidence that it can in fact be systematically cultivated (12).

Walsh found a high incidence of reports of synaesthesia in advanced Buddhist practitioners. Based upon this high incidence, he formulated the "perceptual transformation hypothesis": in his words, the hypothesis that "mediation induces either the process of synaesthesia, or a heightened awareness of it, or both" (Walsh 2005, 11). This hypothesis encompasses a number of connected findings from his experimental research. Important for our concerns is Walsh's broader conclusion that "mediation affects perception in multiple ways, including enhancing perceptual sensitivity" (2005, 11). In short, advanced meditators are perceptually attuned to the world in an unusually sensitive and selective manner. Very literally, they perceive the world differently than do others who lack their advanced training—including being able to perceive it in a cross-modal manner. In fact, this research seems to square with the claim that "five-fold synaesthesia" (Ramachandran and Hubbard 2003), in which all five sensory modalities blend together, is at least for some traditions a defining feature of awakening. Walsh offers the following quote from a Taoist contemplative who claimed that, upon his awakening experience, "I heard with my eyes and saw with my ears. I used my nose as my mouth and my mouth as my nose" (Quoted in Walsh 2005, 14). Again, this radical perceptual reframing is a product of developing certain sensorimotor skills within meditative practice. Perceptual refinement, including our ability to cross-modally perceive the world, can thus be cultivated. Other research affirms the link between perceptual refinement and body-based meditative training. For instance, experienced meditators report heightened sensitivity to both inner and outer stimuli (Goldstein 1983; Walsh 1997; West 1977)—a deepened sensitivity to proprioceptive and exteroceptive information—that results in a richer and more attuned awareness to the world and the meditator's relation to it.[80]

Walsh's findings, coupled with Ramachandran's and Hubbards (2001, 2003) conclusions that synaesthesia is a genuine sensory phenomenon and not a high-level memory association, affirms the plasticity of perception. Our perceptual capacities can in fact be cultivated and refined. We can learn to perceive in novel ways, and we can learn to perceive *better*. We can sharpen and refine our perceptual skills and deepen our felt connectedness with the world. Refined perceptual skills enable us to become attuned to

features of the world that might escape less skilled perceivers. Moreover, the *form* of the skilled perceiver's perceptual attunement can differ in important ways from the less skilled perceiver. Walsh's work on synaesthesia and meditation shows that, for skilled perceivers, objects of perception can be given a richer, deeper *cross-modal* phenomenal presentation that discloses the objects in qualitatively different ways to skilled perceivers than to less skilled perceivers. Phenomenologically, a new world is born within the perceptual experience of skilled meditators.

It is not just our perceptual skills that are plastic. Antoine Lutz (Lutz *et al* 2004) has collected EEG data indicating that long-term Buddhist practitioners of compassion meditation exhibit higher levels of high-amplitude gamma activity (associated with attention and perception, among other things) than do unskilled novices. Skilled meditators therefore exhibit dramatically different degrees of brain activity than do unskilled novices performing the same sort of meditation. In fact, Richard Davidson, one of Lutz's collaborators, said that "the longtime practitioners showed brain activation on a scale we've never seen before. Their mental practice is having an effect on the brain in the same way golf or tennis practice will enhance performance" (Kaufman January 3, 2005). Lutz and his collaborators conclude that these finding are consistent "with the idea that attention and affective processes, which gamma-band EEG synchronization may reflect, are *flexible skills that can be trained*" (Lutz *et al* 2004, 16373, emphasis mine). Thus, not only are the sensorimotor structures of perceptual awareness plastic. Additionally, the neurophysiological structure of the brain *itself* is plastic to a degree. Self-cultivation can literally transform both the phenomenal field of experience *as well as* the physical brain, which clearly plays an important causal role in shaping our experience of the world. As James Austin (1998) notes, this sort of research seems to affirm the simple core message of Zen Buddhism and other meditation-based religious practices, repeated down through the centuries: namely, that "the human brain can be shaped, etched, and transformed by years of practice" (3).

So what about the second claim, that moral-perceptual attentiveness generates "selfless" and nonconceptual skilled action in which egocentric concern, along with a strong sense of localized agency, dissolves? Recent work on the neurophenomenology of

certain strenuous sensorimotor activities seems to confirm this claim as well. Goldberg *et al* (2006) conducted fMRI studies in which they found that brain processes related to introspective self-reflection are not necessarily engaged, and in fact may be suppressed, during perceptually demanding sensorimotor tasks. Their results showed "a clear segregation between regions engaged during self-related introspective processes and cortical regions involved in sensorimotor processing" (Goldberg *et al* 2006, 330). In other words, their research indicated that, in short, "self-related [neural] activity is actually shut off during highly demanding sensory tasks" (Goldberg *et al* 2006, 337). Very literally, the self is so acutely focused on the object(s) of perception during certain tasks that, phenomenologically speaking, it is taken outside of itself. The self is somehow "lost" into whatever it is attending to. And therefore, the "common idiom "losing yourself in the act"" is a phenomenological descriptive with a pronounced neurophysiological correlate (Goldberg *et al* 2006, 330).

To return to an earlier discussion, these sorts of "in the zone" experiences are often reported by athletes absorbed in the flow of competition—clearly a strenuous sensorimotor task. However, I have also characterized moral expertise as a perceptually demanding exercise. I have argued that moral expertise is a sensorimotor skill, involving an attentive engagement of the whole person. It entails learning to pay attention to other people to a degree where self-directed concerns are no longer present. And as was discussed previously, it is widely recognized that "absorption" experiences, in which a strong sense of localized self-awareness is lost, are in fact desirable occurrences when it comes to expert performance within certain skill-domains. The ability to perform a skill "thoughtlessly" and spontaneously, in a manner devoid of over-thinking or excessive self-consciousness, is a mark of expertise in that skill-domain. Self-less performance is thought to free one to perform at a significantly higher and more creative level. The self is no longer "in the way", as it were. Rather, the situation unfolds and calls forth an appropriate response—which the "self-less" self is ready to enact.

Goldberg *et al* (2006) note that their findings "clearly argue against the inclusion of self-related representations in the list of ingredients necessary for the emergence of subjective awareness" (337). Furthermore, they conclude that "during intense perceptual

engagement, all neuronal resources are focused on sensory cortex, and the distracting self-related cortex is inactive" (Goldberg *et al* 2006, 337). To enable the person to be a skilled perceiver, the brain must summon its resources wholly to the sensorimotor task at hand. This focus eases the neuronal burden of managing two simultaneous and demanding tasks: self-monitoring and sensorimotor processing. To enable expert sensorimotor processing, the brain must thus lose the self. This conclusion echoes the well-known Zen Buddhist insistence that it is only once we eliminate self-directed concerns that we come to truly *see* the world and other people as they are in their "suchness" (Skrt: *tathatā*).[81] This connection doesn't escape the researchers. They conclude their article within the following claim: "This themes ["losing yourself"] has a tantalizing echoing in Eastern philosophies such as Zen teachings, which emphasize the need to enter into a "mindless", selfless mental state to achieve a true sense of reality" (Goldberg *et al*, 337).

In sum, there is now strong empirical evidence in support of both prongs of the phenomenological argument for a bodily skills-based conception of moral psychology developed earlier. Extending Buddhism's and Kitarō Nishida's insights into moral action, I argued that moral expertise is rightly characterized as the skillful synthesis of sensitive, selective perception and spontaneous and selfless (re-)action. Just how these two features of moral expertise come together and are enacted within a particularly compassionate form of life has been powerfully articulated in the final empirical research I want to discuss: some recent studies conducted by the psychologist Paul Ekman.[82] Ekman is a leading expert on the science of emotion and facial expression. In his study on expert meditators' empathic sensitivity and ability to read emotion, Ekman recently conceded that "we found things we've never found before" (Goleman 2003, 14). In this particular study—the first of four related studies that Ekman conducted—a Tibetan mediation expert and an advanced western meditator were asked to watch a videotape of a series of faces briefly showing a variety of expressions. (The individual expressions are shown on-screen for only one-fifth or one-thirtieth of a second). The subjects were then asked to identify which emotion was indicated by the facial indicators they'd fleetingly witnessed. They chose their response from a set of six emotions that, according to Ekman, are

biologically fixed. These emotions are expressed the same way throughout cultures around the globe. And the fleeting facial expressions that *betray* a particular emotion—"microexpressions"—"happen outside the awareness of both the person who displays them and the person observing them" (Goleman 2003, 14). This is significant. Since these microexpressions occur so quickly, they can't be censored or otherwise managed by the person who has them. Therefore, they reveal "if only for a short moment…how the person truly feels" (Goleman 2003, 14). Most of use fail to be attuned to these microexpressions, however, and thus don't see into this "unique window on another person's emotional reality" (Goleman 2003, 14).

Ekman's findings indicated that the two expert meditators scored significantly higher than any of the other five thousand people Ekman had previously tested. In fact, they were two standard deviations above the norm when it came to picking up on fleeting microexpressions. Ekman noted that the meditators did "better than policeman, lawyers, psychiatrists, customs officials, judges—even Secret Service agents" (Goleman 2003, 14), which had previously been the group most capable of accurately reading microexpressions.[83] Their level of perceptual attunement was unprecedented, as was their ability to pick up salient moral information in this context generally missed by most perceivers.

Ekman then conducted another study in which he measured the Tibetan meditator's "startle reflex": the rapid series of muscle contractions generally activated in response to a loud noise. The startle reflex invokes the same five facial muscles in all people. It generally starts about two-tenths of a second after hearing the sound and ends roughly half a second after hearing the sound. Importantly, the startle reflex is normally thought to lie beyond the range of voluntary regulation. It manifests despite our bests efforts to suppress it. And according to Ekman, the startle reflex has a broader emotional significance. It is a predictor of an individual's propensity to experience negative (universal) emotions such as fear, anger, sadness and disgust. The more pronounced the startle reflex, the greater the magnitude of these negative emotions.

Ekman's study involved measuring the Tibetan meditator's physiological responses (heart rate, sweat rate, facial expressions) to the firing of a pistol at close range.

Goleman reports that "a classic study in the 1940s shows that it's impossible to prevent the startle reflex, despite the most intense, purposeful efforts to suppress the muscle spasms…even police marksmen, who fire guns routinely, are unable to keep themselves from startling" (Goleman 2003, 16). However, the Tibetan meditator was able to suppress his startle reflex. Ekman reports that "We've never found anyone who can do that. Nor have any other researchers. This is a spectacular accomplishment. We don't have any idea of the anatomy that would allow him to suppress the startle reflex" (Goleman 2003, 17). It seems that the Tibetan meditator's bodily-perceptual training resulted in an abnormally high degree of muscular self-mastery. As Goleman notes, this performance suggests "a remarkable level of emotional equanimity" (Goleman 2003, 17). This emotional equanimity, I propose, is what enables the meditator—and those who exhibit a similar degree of skilled perceiving—to become empathically attuned to the emotional microexpressions of other people, resulting in an uncanny ability to perceptually read emotions. Bodily-perceptual self-mastery, or the disciplined self-cultivation characteristic of the meditative practices of Buddhist and other spiritual traditions, facilitates this highly refined seeing. Perceptual skills can be developed and refined. And as Ekman's studies indicate, this physiological fact has enormous moral and phenomenological significance.

Summary

In this chapter, I have argued that moral psychology is best understood by looking at is as an embodied and embedded action. Moral maturity, I claimed, is a sensorimotor skill: the spontaneous integration of perception and context-sensitive (re-)action. In other words, moral maturity is (primarily, though not exclusively) a kind of skilled, nonconceptual coping. I first discussed several possible understandings of nonconceptual content, focusing in particular on how this notion is important for understanding the nature of the body's "thoughtless" adaptive intelligence. (This discussion was an extension of the last chapter, as well as a continuation of themes treated in earlier discussions of James's analysis of the intelligent body). I then carried this embodied characterization of nonconceptual content over into a discussion of moral psychology. I

discussed how Zen Buddhism and Nishida's work offer precedence for a situated, body-based moral psychology utilizing the notion of nonconceptual content. (I also discussed how James, too, anticipated many of the points discussed). Nishida's twin notions of "pure experience" and "acting-intuition", in particular, offer theoretical resources for developing a phenomenological analysis of the structure of moral maturity understood as nonconceptual skilled coping. I then looked at recent empirical research in support of the chapter's main argument.

Again, I want to be clear that I am not claiming that there is neither a place nor a need for moral reasoning in the complex topography of our moral experience. Not all moral contexts can be neatly resolved by employing the sort of skilled coping discussed above. However, many concrete contexts can. As Dreyfus rightly notes, we distort the situated nature of our absorbed moral coping when we "[read] the structure of deliberation back into the spontaneous response. This intellectualizes the phenomenon. One will then assume that intentional content…underlies all moral comportment" (Dreyfus 1991, 238). A consequence of this conceptualist "distortion" is how we approach moral education. Under a cognitivist model such as Kohlberg's, moral education is primarily a matter of learning to rationally deliberate. We are taught to always think through moral contexts. However, this sort of training misses the immediate, face-to-face and irreducibly perceptual nature of the bulk of our everyday moral encounters. Thus, just as athletics involves learning to give care and attention to the various bodily micropractices that enable one to be a better athlete, so, too, does moral development necessitate a body-centered program for learning how to embody our moral ideals. In short, moral education needs to include a dimension of bodily training. Moral agents must first learn how to *see* both the world and other people as morally significant before then coming to *think* about the world and other people in a morally sophisticated way. To do so, we must first learn to live out our morality on a bodily-perceptual level. For it is on this level that empathic connectedness originates and is cultivated. Since the body's sensorimotor systems are in place at birth, this is a sort of education that can begin almost immediately.

Moral education, therefore, to fully acknowledge both the practical and the theoretical dimensions of agency, must recognize that embodied encounters of the kind discussed above are absolutely fundamental for our moral life. And it must then work to articulate programs for cultivating a bodily sensitivity that enables us to become morally mature agents: skilled synthesizers of intuitive moral perception and nonconceptual bodily action. As James (1899/1977) notes, it is at this bodily level of primitive empathy that "a new centre and a new perspective must be found" (634). Therefore, just as the development of skillfulness in other domains requires practice, repetition, and a familiarity emerging from the accumulation of real-world encounters, so too, does our development as moral agents arise from these same components. With the over-emphasis on the rational aspect of our moral agency—at the expense of the practical and embodied dimension—western cognitivist moral theories have consistently neglected a vital dimension of our moral experience and, concomitantly, the possibility for a genuinely selfless and caring engagement with others. It is this final feature of moral experience that must be present if we are to exhibit the full expression of our moral capacities.

This ultimately is the practical significance of Nishida's notion of pure experience (along with its companion concept, acting-intuition)—the idea's "cash value", as James would put it. And though he comes at ethical and moral questions from a different orientation than does Nishida's Zen Buddhist perspective, James would likely be open to considering the ways that pure experience, morally speaking, might be put to work. After all, James and Nishida both were concerned with developing living philosophical viewpoints—transformative philosophies, we might say—whose efficacy extends beyond the mere theoretical adherence to a set of propositions. Instead, both men worked to establish philosophical vantage points that opened up experiential horizons for real growth and change in the lives of those who read them. As we saw in previous chapters, James's "world of pure experience" was first and foremost a world of value and meaning, dynamically constituted by the choices and decisions we make that chart the trajectories of our individual and collective existences.

As the previous chapters have argued, both James and Nishida developed several similar core themes in their work that remain highly relevant today. These themes grow

out of their respective conception of pure experience. First, both thinkers are very much philosophers of the body, arguing that questions of identity and selfhood, mind and consciousness, and moral, ethical and aesthetic issues all must begin with a considered account of the embedded body, and how the sensorimotor structures of the body relate it to the world and other people. Their research programs align neatly with ongoing programs in embodied cognition and consciousness, and anticipate many of these program's central issues. Moreover, in my interpretation of them, both James and Nishida argue for a more radical claim: namely, that the embodied mind is a distributed phenomenon, extending beyond the skin and skull, out into the world of people and things. Put differently, mind and self are not autonomous and self-contained entities but rather open-ended, temporally-distributed and *transactional* processes lacking clearly defined inner/outer, subject/object binary structures. We are fluid selves, in other words, melded into the very heart of our world of pure experience.

This extended view of embodied cognition is now being debated with much vigor in contemporary cognitive science and consciousness studies. James's and Nishida's embodied approaches to cognition and experience—again, both of which grow out their discussions of pure experience—thus anticipated the trajectory of many current discussions. Moreover, both offer naturalistic, empirically responsible conceptions of mind that have an important place in ongoing debates. Contemporary consciousness studies is an energetic and continually-expanding discipline. From a scientific perspective, there is an almost continual stream of new and exciting discoveries coming down the pike. Yet consciousness studies in the west remains a discipline still very much in its infancy. There are nearly as many theories of consciousness as there are researchers working in this area. And one of consciousness studies' core issues involves how to relate third-person data about consciousness from the "outside", such as the neurobiological dynamics of brain processes, with the first-person phenomenological data of consciousness "from the inside", from the perspective of the subject. Both James and Nishida were deeply attuned to the importance of integrating both perspectives within a cohesive view of mind. Though neither thinker provides a comprehensive program for accomplishing this project, James's pure experience-based radical empiricism and

Nishida's philosophy of pure experience both offer forward-looking theoretical resources that, even today, can be used to deepen contemporary analyses. Moreover, both men where concerned with exploring how thinking through the nature of mind and world in new and creative ways can make a real, that is to say, a concrete and *pragmatic* difference in our everyday experience of others. There is an ethical undercurrent to their respective corpuses, in other words, that shapes both how they approach the problems they take on as well as, importantly, how they strive to connect their solutions back up to the lives and concerns of their readers. This emphasis on the concrete relevance of theorizing and ideas is one that contemporary cognitive science would do well to heed. In conclusion, the work of James and Nishida remains vital and relevant on a number of levels. It remains for us to mine its many riches.

NOTES

CHAPTER ONE

[1] Meyers (1986, 68-69) looks at James's summary of how introspective observation might be tested and supplemented by experimental methods.
[2] See also Petitot *et al* (1999). For critical appraisals of some aspects of neurophenomenology and the project of naturalizing phenomenology, see Lutz (2005).
[3] If attributing a proto-neurophenomenological motivation to James is well-founded, it draws into question Wilshire's (1968) and Edie's (1987) claim that James's phenomenological sensitivity caused him to eventually abandon the naturalistic program of the *Principles* while developing his radical empiricism and principle of pure experience. From the beginning, James was clearly looking for a way to situate the 1st and 3rd personal aspects of experience within a phenomenologically sensitive, neurobiologically grounded conception of consciousness—and this concern remained with James throughout his career. See Cooper (1990) for more on this.
[4] In "A Suggestion About Mysticism", James puts the point this way when he writes of consciousness that "For the purposes of my hypothesis, I have to postulate its existence; and once postulating it, I prefer not to set any definite bounds to its extent" (quoted in Meyers 1986, 503 footnote 11).
[5] Though this comment may suggest otherwise, James is rarely an uncritical advocate of the sweeping explanatory systematization and drive towards unification that informs much metaphysical speculation. This is especially the case with conscious experience, which James—particularly in *Essays in Radical Empiricism*—will argue is too rich and variegated to consistently lend itself to tidy metaphysical analysis. But that doesn't curb James's life-long desire to develop a coherent metaphysic, which James feels ought to be part of any pluralistic explanatory system. For more on this tension in James, see Seigfried (1990), especially chapters 12 and 13, which discuss James's understanding of the relationship between concrete experience, science, and metaphysical analysis. See also Seigfried (1986) for a discussion of James's early attempt to reconcile psychology and metaphysical analysis by redefining the parameters of the latter.
[6] The literature on the various types of supervenience and this notion's relevance to philosophy of mind and cognitive science is vast and complex. I have no interest in entering the fray here. My discussion of supervenience in this context is simply to point out the fact that James's claims here are not as metaphysically neutral as he seems to want us to believe. For a clear discussion of the concept of "supervenience" and its relevance to consciousness studies, see Chalmers (1996) and Kim (2000).

[7] According to Chalmers (1995), the so-called "easy" problems of consciousness involve more particular questions about various functions and phenomena associated with consciousness, including things like the ability to discriminate, categorize, and react to environmental stimuli; the ability of a conscious system to access its own internal states; the focus and limitations of attention, etc.

[8] See James (1898).

[9] It should be noted that James moved away from the psychophysical parallelism (and concomitant dualism) of *Principles* very soon after its publication, and gradually began working his way toward the experiential monism characteristic of *Essays in Radical Empiricism* and its central idea of pure experience. One of the major reasons James came to question the philosophical opposition of mental to physical implicit in his parallelism was because careful introspection revealed the extent to which the former is thoroughly permeated and conditioned by physiological aspects of our embodiment. In other words, introspection—which is supposed to be the hallmark of the Cartesian self-sufficient reflective consciousness, revealing its ontological autonomy—is precisely the activity which discloses how intimately the physical, animate body enters into and shapes mind. (See for instance "The Experience of Activity", where James argues that sensorimotor patterns of activity are "the ultimate qualia" coloring our every mental state). Moreover, introspection doesn't reveal some *thing* that is consciousness, over against its content. Rather, James insists that "It is very difficult, or even absolutely impossible, to know solely by intimate examination whether certain phenomena are of a physical nature—occupying space, etc.—or whether they are of a pure psychical and inner nature" (Quoted in Meyers 1986, 63). Similarly, he writes in "The Knowing of Things Together" that "The paper seen and the seeing of it are only two names for one indivisible fact which, properly named, is *the datum, the phenomenon, or the experience*. The paper is in the mind and the mind is around the paper, because paper and mind are only two names that are given later to the one experience, when, taken in a larger world of which it forms a part, its connections are traced in different directions" (1895/1977, 157). In other words, Descartes was an inattentive phenomenologist. To appeal to a dualistic parallelism is therefore to ignore basic facts of experience—which for James is always a source of grievous philosophical error (such as that bequeathed to us by Cartesianism). Chapter two of the present work further explores this "body in mind" idea in James, and discusses how his notion of "pure experience" emerges from an insistence that mental processes are always suffused by the sensorimotor physiology of the body (as well as the worldly situations) in which there are realized. This is nowhere more evident than in James's characterization of consciousness as a "selecting-agency", which serves as James's argument against epiphenomenalism as well as his attempt to show what a critical role body plays in shaping mind. See especially section four of the following chapter for further discussion,

[10] See Taylor and Wozniak (1996).

[11] See Seigfried (1990) and (1992) for in-depth treatments of James's understanding of "concrete experience" and the centrality of concreteness in James's overarching philosophical concerns.

[12] Of course, James takes these sorts of experiences seriously, as evidenced by his brilliant phenomenological analysis in the well-known "Mysticism" chapter of his *Varieties of Religious Experience*. In this chapter, James describes the various features of mystical states that seem to be "pure" in his sense, in that they are "states of insight into depths of truth unplumbed by the discursive intellect" (1902/1982, 380). However, I think the evidence is strong that "pure experience" as developed in *Essays in Radical Empiricism* does not have this same transcendent mystical connotation.

[13] As we'll see below, Nishida argues that pure experience is in fact *both*.

[14] It is important to be clear about how the term "foundational" is being used in this context. James is not attempting to situate his views here on some purportedly objective reality-in-itself, ontologically and phenomenologically independent of or somehow "behind" human interpretation and experience. Nor is James advocating an empiricist, atomistic sensationalism , according to which a mosaic of discrete experiential "nuggets" forms the foundation for our knowledge of the world. James is highly critical of both of these bedrock views, and his radical empiricism is largely a response to the philosophical excesses of each. James insists many times that he is a "realist". But he furthermore insists that realty is always *reality-for-us*, since as he notes in "The Sentiment of Rationality", "every particular way of classifying a thing is but a way of handling it for some particular purpose" (1979/1977, 320). An observer-independent reality-in-itself is thus a philosophical fiction. And like classical empiricism, James looks to provide an experiential grounding for his views. But James also insists that empirical atomism distorts concrete experience as lived, since "A pure sensation [is]…an abstraction, never realized in adult life"—and once "you have broken reality into concepts you can never reconstruct it in its wholeness" (quoted in Seigfried 1992, 150, 151). His radical empiricism—and more precisely, his notion of pure experience—is therefore James's attempt to navigate these two extremes of reality-in-itself and subjectivism by insisting that we begin with a conception of the human knower as irreducibly situated, and all knowledge as perspectival. What emerges from this starting point is a conception of reality as *construction*: a thoroughly transactive affair reflecting both worldly conditions *and* human agents, interests and ends that together generate whatever structure and organization our world has. Put differently, the objectively "real" world and our transactive experiences and engagements with it are two aspects of a single organic continuum. Knower and world-as-known are biologically and socially coupled; any divisions between them are instrumental in nature, not ultimate and metaphysical. For James, then, the "foundational" element of reality pure experience opens up is not a fixed, timeless substratum of being but rather the dynamic, continually-shifting couplings of situated self and world—"bridges without piers"—that, over time, create meaningful environments alive with value and human significance. Thus, James's is a kind of "fluid" foundationalism in which "metaphysics is replaced with an analysis of the structures of human interaction in the world" (Seigfried 1990, 352). I return to this issue in chapter two and discuss how the world, even at the pre-theoretical level of our bodily agency, is shot through with human significance. See also Seigfried (1992) for more on James and foundationalism.

[15] Critical reactions to James's perceived "anti-logical" stance are discussed in Perry (1996).
[16] Kant, of course, is a powerful defender of this view. McDowell (1996) offers a subtle contemporary defense of conceptualism.
[17] For an in-depth discussion of James and the nonconceptual, see Goodman (2004).
[18] For contemporary discussions of nonconceptual content, see Gunther (2003).
[19] For more about James on conceptual analysis, see Seigfried (1982) and Seigfried and Seigfried (1995).
[20] See Russell (1921/2005).
[21] Again, recall the earlier comments on James's "fluid" foundationalism in footnote thirteen.
[22] This is a common, if exceedingly general, characterization of contemporary computationalist models of the relationship between perception, action and thought. See Hurley (1998) for discussion and criticism.
[23] Dreyfus (1991, 2002). I discuss Dreyfus and skilled coping at length in chapter four.
[24] See Sullivan (2001) for an excellent exposition of a pragmatist-inspired "transactional" conception of the body. Sullivan focuses primarily on Dewey's notions of "body-mind" and "transaction", but as I suggest in this section, James, too, offers a transactional account of embodiment with his discussion of the body's inherently "ambiguous" nature.

CHAPTER TWO

[25] See Rowlands (2003) for more on this distinction.
[26] Several contemporary writers argue powerfully for some form of an extended or externalist conception of mind. See especially Varela *et al* (1992), Clark (1997), Clark and Chalmers (1998), Hurley (1998), Rowlands (2003), and Nöe (2004). Their work greatly influenced the discussion that follows, even where not explicitly cited. Additionally, James Gibson's (1966, 1979) ecological psychology is an important precursor to these contemporary discussions.
[27] This is not to say that there is an abundance of empty bunks in the dualist camp. David Chalmers (1996) is a notable (property) dualist. And after many years as a powerful proponent of physicalist-reductivist strategies, Jaegwon Kim (2005) has recently endorsed an epiphenomenalist view of property dualism about qualia. There are others who, if not necessarily dualists of one stripe or another, are nonetheless highly suspicious of materialist accounts of the mental, including Alvin Plantinga, Richard Swineburne, Saul Kripke, and Tyler Burge.
[28] Functionalism, at least under a certain formulation, is potentially immune to this characterization. According to functionalism there are potentially many different ways that a physical system, given the right functional configuration, can instantiate mentality. Functionalism thus grants mentality a certain ontological independence and, as Teed Rockwell notes, "leaves open the possibility that whatever replaces the concept of mind might not be a precisely bordered chunk of biological stuff" (2005, 4). In other words,

since functionalism offers a characterization of mentality abstracted away from its neurobiological implementation—mind is thus "multiply realizable"—it might (potentially) be given an externalist formulation. See Rockwell (2005, 3-4) for more on this. For a discussion of why the multiple realizability thesis is actually a deficiency for a functionalist view of consciousness, see Shapiro (2004).

[29] See Mezinger (2000) for different perspectives on current NCC research.

[30] The preponderance of "brain in a vat" thought-experiments in the philosophy of mind literature reflects this view.

[31] For more on the concept of "representation" and its place in contemporary cognitive science, see Haugeland (1998) and Clapin (2002).

[32] Again, however, for James all experience—as a function of consciousness' selecting activity—is itself a kind of interpretation, even if that interpretation is a nonconceptual felt interpretation of environmental affordances. I discuss this idea at some length in the following section, section five.

[33] The analysis that follows is indebted to the discussion of similar phenomenon in Noë (2004) and Kelly (1999). The influence of both Gibson (1966, 1979) and Nessier (1976), insofar as they helped shape Noë's enactive conception of perceptual consciousness in particular, is also very much present in this discussion. Noë (2004) addresses both the issues here discussed—the phenomenal presence of absence as well as perceptual constancy—whereas Kelly (1999) deals most explicitly with the latter.

[34] The plate and dog case are two of Noë's (2004) favored examples.

[35] For an extended consideration of the way that social, cultural and historical worlds—in addition our physical environments—shape embodied experience, see section 4.2 of the following chapter.

[36] Of course, these examples immediately call to mind Gibson's (1966, 1979) famous theory of "affordances". A discussion of Gibson's affordance theory of perception and action will be taken up at some length in chapter four.

[37] For a discussion of the importance of the vehicle/content distinction for cognitive science, see Dennett (1991) and Hurley (1998).

[38] This is not to suggest that James was either unaware of or unconcerned with ethical questions. Quite the contrary. Indeed, as stated a moment ago, this chapter and the last have been concerned with looking at James's insistence that human agency is always meaningfully bound up with a qualitatively significant human world—even down to the pre-conscious level of our adaptive bodily action. Moreover, as Charlene Seigfried has pointed out in private correspondence, James's concern with the "cash value" of pure experience—and pragmatism and radical empiricism more generally—is reflected by the fact the majority of his essays and books conclude by James pointing out how whatever he's just finished discussing is relevant for thinking through religious and moral issues. In other words, the issue isn't properly considered, philosophically speaking, until its religious and moral worth has been articulated. Only then will James concede that the issue been given its due. Quite obviously, however, Nishida is working from within a very different philosophical and religious *ethos* than is James. And despite the congruence of their thinking on a number of key issues, this difference of *ethos* means that the interests and values shaping Nishida's discussion of pure experience are going to

differ from James's analysis. Some of these differences will be made apparent by looking at how Nishida gets to the heart of pure experience's ethical significance.

CHAPTER THREE

[39]This is not to suggest that Nishida uncritically adopted the phenomenological method. See Ogawa (1978) for more on Nishida's criticisms of Husserlian phenomenology.
[40] The reader already familiar with Nishida's thought will notice in what follows a conspicuous lack of discussion of two interrelated concepts central to Nishida's mature work: the concepts "place" (Jap: *basho*) and "Absolute Nothingness". This omission is intentional. As has already been mentioned, Nishida's work, considered in its entirety, is distinctive in that it continually revisits core themes and concerns already at play in his earliest major work—*An Inquiry into the Good*. Throughout his life, Nishida will continually return to the original problem of pure experience. But he does so by repeatedly adopting new perspectives and methods from which to address the concerns already implicit in this concept. When reading Nishida, one has the impression—much like James, actually—that the text represents Nishida's thinking *in its happening*. There is palpable sense of struggle and effort as Nishida continually works up new theoretical frameworks and new forms of expression from within which he hopes to finally articulate the fullness of his philosophical vision. (Like Hegel, Nishida is indeed a "philosopher of everything" who works to articulate a comprehensive system of Ultimate Reality. And like Hegel, Nishida is often circular, opaque, and excessively repetitious). With this in mind, we can perhaps delineate two interrelated frameworks used by Nishida to develop the problem and significance of pure experience: *logical analysis* (understood in a Hegelian, or dialectical sense) and *phenomenological method* (beginning with an analysis of embodied and embedded consciousness). Most of Nishida's most well-known terms—such as "pure experience", "intellectual intuition", "self-conscious will", "concrete universal", "locus" or "field of nothingness", "absolute nothingness", "acting-intuition", "social-historical world", etc.—are at one time or another in his work given both a logical as well as a phenomenological technical specification. However, as I've already stated, I am here concerned almost exclusively with Nishida's phenomenological approach. Therefore I will say little of the logical dimension of these terms. I find Nishida's phenomenological approach more intelligible, and I suggest that such an approach is more amenable to the practical application of Nishida's views which I offer in the next chapter. Nishida himself would not likely make the separation I am making between the logical and phenomenological features of his thought, any more than Hegel would. As the discussion unfolds, however, I trust that it will become clear why, as with James, I've focused my attention of Nishida's phenomenological method. Of course, a comprehensive understanding of Nishida's work entails an understanding of the logical strand of his thinking intertwined with his phenomenological concerns. In particular, Nishida's "logic of *basho*", insofar as it underwrites his transition from his earliest discussion of pure experience to his mature discussions of Absolute Nothingness, is a

central aspect of his philosophical development.For more on Nishida's logical analysis, and especially his "logic of *basho*", see especially Carter (1997) and Wargo (2005).

[41] For James, recall that experience is interpretive all the way down. Therefore, even though we have direct access to the world—i.e. unmediated by inner representations—we are nonetheless selectively engaging with and interpreting our world and things in it at every moment. Nishida, as we'll see, seems to think of pure experience as pre-interpretive, in the sense that we engage with things without interpreting, selecting, or thinking about what we are engaged with. James would counter that this is incoherent, given the structures of our body and perceptual systems. I think that the two men are here more closely aligned than they appear to be, however. I'll develop this claim as I go along. Also, I'll argue that the "meaninglessness" of pure experience in Nishida is inconsistent with some of his later claims, and that he actually espouses a position, again, not far removed from that of James,

[42] The idea of a "knowledge component" of pure experience will emerge as a central tenant of Nishida's later analysis. We'll come to this a bit later in the discussion. For now, I'll simply say by way of a preview that the knowledge component of pure experience is not the product of a conceptual or discursive act, but rather the body's *affective* immersion in its world—a result of its situated agency. In other words, it is a nonconceptual *bodily knowing*. More on this below, as well as in chapter four.

[43] James would likely challenge this description as phenomenologically misguided—and precisely what he has in mind when he talks about the myth of the "specious present".

[44] Zen Buddhism first emerged from Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism. The Indian meditation master Bodhidharma is thought to have arrived in China from India about 470 CE, where he settled into a mountain retreat, gathered disciples around himself and then taught them the importance of silent and sustained mediation, as discussed in the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*. Zen eventually made its way to Japan during the Kamakura Period (1185-1333). For the historical origins and development of Zen Buddhism, see Mitchell (2001, 200). For an in-depth philosophical and phenomenological analysis of the experiential aspects of Zen, see Kasulis (1981).

[45] Quoted in Mitchell (2001).

[46] See Kim (2004) for an excellent introduction to Dōgen's thought, and chapters 6 and 7 of Kasulis (1981) for a philosophical analysis of his writings.

[47] Before looking at the relationship between Dōgen and Nishida, it is important to note the following. Nishida was likely not very familiar with Dōgen's writings and didn't appreciate them even to the extent that Nishda's immediate followers (such as Nishitani) did, who saw fruitful affinities between Dōgen and Nishida. *Linji's Record* (Jap: *Rinzairoku*) was the Zen text that probably exerted the most influence over Nishida's thinking. There are at least two main reasons for this. First, Nishida had training in Rinzai rather than Sōtō Zen. Sectarian rivalries were strong enough at the time that Zen scholars generally quoted from sources within their own tradition. Nishida would therefore likely have paid little attention to Dōgen, as the founder and most important figure of the Sōtō school. Second, Nishida's major informant on Zen scholarship was D.T. Suzuki, who had little respect for Dōgen. However, as I stress—and as was noted by many of Nishida's successors—Nishida's emphasis on the bodily basis of mind and moral interrelatedness

bears close resemblance to many of Dōgens' provocative views on these issues. Nishida is thus thematically closer to Dōgen than he is Linji. To be clear, however, I do not want to claim that Nishida was directly influenced by Dōgen. Instead, I am arguing that Nishida's work can be better understood by taking a closer look at some of Dōgen's most fundamental claims.

[48] Shaner (1985) uses the term "bodymind" to emphasize Dōgen's insistence on the dynamic integration of body and mind within enlightened action. As an interesting comparative aside, Dewey uses precisely the same term in *Experience and Nature* (1958) to similar ends. Dewey writes that "the "solution" of the problem of mind-body is to be found in a revision of the preliminary assumptions about existence which generate the problem" (1958 263). An important initial revision of these Cartesian assumptions, according to Dewey, is to move away from conceiving of mind and body as substantially discrete entities, and to instead emphasize their mutual integration within the world-directed, situated activities of living organisms.

[49] Nishida uses these terms in his essay "The Historical Body" (1937/1998), discussed below.

[50] In an early essay entitled "The Union Point of the True, the Good, and the Beautiful", Nishida defines the human "person" (Jap: *jinkaku*) as the "union point" (Jap: *gōitten*) within which self and world, subject-body and object-body are brought together. See Kopf (2001 267 footnote.23).

[51] See chapter four for a more in-depth discussion of this phenomenon, including supporting empirical research.

[52] This essay is not yet translated into English. Therefore, I note the various sources from which I borrowed relevant quotes from this essay.

[53] For more on the idea of embodiment as achievement, see Yuasa (1987), including Kasulis's introduction.

[54] This claim will be central to the analysis of the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

[55] See Gunther (2003)

[56] For discussions of nonconceptual content in this vein, see in particular Peacocke (1992), Tye (1995), Bermudez (1998), Kelly (2001), and Dreyfus (2002).

[57] Theravāda Buddhism argues that "loving kindness" (Skrt: *maitrī*) ought to be the core moral virtue animating one's intersubjective relations. In Theravādin morality, loving kindness is generally thought to be a less emotional condition than is compassion, and is thus preferred. However, I am focusing in the analysis that follows on compassion and wisdom—the two moral virtues emphasized by Mahāyānists. I do this because Zen Buddhism, which deeply influenced Nishida, developed out of the Mahāyāna tradition and therefore also emphasizes the moral significance of these qualities. Moreover, the ideal of compassion and wisdom in Mahāyāna (and Zen) is said to entail an affective resonance or empathy (literally, a "feeling into") that allows one to enter into the

suffering of others and respond accordingly. This emphasis on the bodily and affective connectedness to the world and other people is prominent in Nishida, as we'll see.

[58] See Vetlesen (1994) for an intriguing discussion of moral perception and empathy.

[59] In this context, "egoless" refers to the lack of conceptual mental content in those instances of our skilled coping. In these instances, we are so utterly absorbed within the dynamic flow of experience that we often lose our sense of individual selfhood or ego-self and are aware only of the larger structure of the entire experience in its unfolding. The feeling of our solitary agency dissolves and we are left with the action itself. Becoming absorbed in the ebb and flow of a basketball game, driving a car through tight quarters, or expertly playing a musical instrument are examples of this phenomenon. And again, since my concerns here are phenomenological and descriptive, "egoless" should not be read as being equivalent with "selfless". Of course, a situationally-appropriate compassionate response *may be* a "selfless" action done without regard for one's own well-being or self-interest. Or, the compassionate response in a situation might in fact be to prioritize one's own self-interests and to act in a way that reflects this prioritization. (Perhaps an instance of this is a parent refusing to interrupt an important project to play with the young child requesting their attention. This response allows the parent to finish what they are doing while demonstrating to the child that the child's immediate desires are not always going to be filled and that displaying patience and a healthy respect for the needs of others is in fact an important moral skill).

[60] For a bold navigation of these dark waters, see Peacocke (1992).

[61] For a clear treatment of nonconceptual representation and phenomenal consciousness that goes well beyond the present rather cursory remarks, see Tye (1995).

[62] An objection to this "skilled coping" portrayal of nonconceptual content might be that these examples don't actually refer to real experiential cases of nonconceptual content. Rather, in these cases the skilled performer has simply internalized certain learned rules and principles to the extent that they are now no longer explicitly brought to mind each time a particular action they are meant to govern is performed. But the skilled performer certainly knows them, the objection goes, and is clear about their action-guiding application. Thus, the skilled performer can't be said to have an experience of nonconceptual content in this context since the relevant rules are present, in some sense, to the performer. However, this objection can be met with a "paucity of rules" rejoinder. In short: there aren't enough rules to encompass the broad range of context-sensitive responses a genuine expert may potentially enact. Skilled athletes, for instance, are coached along a variety of lines. Basketball players receive a wealth of "micro" coaching tips about things like the proper form for shooting free throws. This "micro" coaching is generally tailored respective to the free-throw shooting ability of an individual player. Thus the rules players are given governing how best to shoot a free throw might vary from player to player, relative to their current skill level. (A poor shooter like Shaquille O'Neal is going to require more free-throw coaching than an expert free-throw shooter like Steve Nash, who led the NBA in free-throw shooting percentage during the 2005-2006 season). They also receive a fair bit of "macro" coaching about things like their particular role in a certain offensive play or strategy. (This is "macro" coaching since it concerns their relationship to their teammates, as well as the responses of the other

teams' defenders). They relevant point is that, no matter how much "micro" and/or "macro" coaching a player receives, in-game situations will always arise that are not covered by the rules and principles a player has been taught. Despite the best laid plans, situations break down and unanticipated developments occur. In these breakdown cases, the best players respond accordingly, relying on athletic intuition and spontaneous creativity that may reflect their coaching or may in fact deviate from it greatly. In other words—and this holds for situations beyond competitive athletics, of course—skillful expertise is precisely an ability to *go beyond* learned rules and principles in creative, novel and intuitive (i.e. unrehearsed) ways not governed by previously learned rules. This "going beyond" reflects the fact few situations can be exhaustively covered by *a priori* action-governing rules anticipating every potential contingency.

[63] For a critical discussion of Dreyfus's application of "skilled coping", including Drefyus's response to his critics, see Wrathall and Malpas (2000).

[64] For examples of this approach, see Fodor (1981), Newell and Simon (1972), Newell (1990), Pinker (1994, 2002), and Smith and Nisbett (1992).

[65] Dewey (1922/1988) refers to this phenomenon as the body nonconceptually knowing how to maintain a dynamic "equilibrium" between itself and its changing environments. According to Dewey, this practical knowledge "lives in the muscles, not in consciousness" (1922/1988, 124).

[66] As with all glosses, this one, too, is potentially misleading. It is of course the case that not all modern western thinkers endorse the critical-rational, deliberative approach to ethics caricatured with this gloss. Contemporary challenges to this view are increasingly abundant, and include Aristotelian-inspired virtue ethics (including G.E.M. Anscombe and, more recently, MacIntyre), Gilligan's and Baier's (and others) "ethics of care", and the work of Iris Murdoch and John McDowell, to name a few. However, these are all relatively recent correctives to a critical-rational view that has largely held sway until the latter portion of the twentieth century. And the view I am here arguing for foregrounds the sensorimotor, bodily-perceptual and spontaneous nature of moral coping in a way that differentiates it from these other alternatives. The phenomenological account of moral expertise provided by Hubert and Stuart Dreyfus (1991) comes very close to the view I am advocating, however. Hubert Dreyfus' work on the phenomenology of skilled coping has influenced significant portions of this paper—see particularly sections 4 and 5—and his work has been exceedingly helpful in thinking through a number of key points.

[67] See Gilligan (1982) for a trenchant critique of Kohlberg.

[68] For those unfamiliar with the religious and philosophical dimensions of the Buddhist tradition, Mitchell (2001) is a helpful place to begin.

[69] The terms "nondual" and "nonduality" abound in translations of and commentaries on Buddhist literature. This is particularly the case with Zen Buddhism. In short, these terms refer to a unitive state in which one realizes an experiential immediacy with the world—generally through the performance of some "thoughtless" action, such as meditation or becoming absorbed in the flow of playing a musical instrument. (See footnote 3 for more on this). These terms can thus be rightly thought of as phenomenological descriptives. Such experiences are "nondual" in that our usual "dualistic" subject-object mode of experience is not operative, phenomenologically speaking. And for Buddhism, these

experiences are ethically significant, in that they point to the fundamental interrelatedness—the ontological co-dependency—of all things. The true self is experienced as primordially related to the world as a whole. My very existence has both the nature and form that it has only in relation to all other things, and vice versa. This is one meaning of the central Buddhist notion of "dependent co-arising" or "dependent origination". See Takeuchi (1983) for a more in-depth discussion of the metaphysical and existential significance of "dependent origination" within Buddhism.

[70] This section is influenced by Peggy DesAutels' (1996) discussion of the phenomenon I am describing.

[71] I am appropriating this term as it is discussed by Samuel Todes (2001).

[72] See Garry Young (2004) for another discussion of bodily knowing. Young's discussion of habit and nonconceptual bodily action as a legitimate form of knowledge is illuminating, and assisted the developments of several aspects of this section. However, Young ultimately argues that bodily knowing is action lacking experiential content, whereas I am arguing for a form of bodily action that in fact harbors experiential (perceptual) content but not *conceptual* content.

[73] Searle (1983) offers a significantly more mentalistic characterization of the Background than the one here developed, however, when he says that "the Background is a set of nonrepresentational *mental capacities* that enable all representing to take place" (143, emphasis mine). My argument for recognizing the legitimacy of adaptive bodily intelligence is precisely an attempt to show that coping skills extend down into the sensorimotor structures of the body itself—that they aren't confined to the mental, in other words.

[74] Of course, this was precisely this difficulty that ultimately proved so insurmountable for artificial intelligence research. See Dreyfus (1992) for a lengthier discussion and analysis.

[75] See Dreyfus (2005b) for more on this.

[76] I am grateful to Professors Charlene Seigfried, Donald Mitchell, and Thomas Kasulis for pressing this point.

[77] Recall also the discussion of bodily agency and empathy in chapter two. James, too, offers a body-based conception of empathic relatedness in explaining how the acting body pre-reflectively knows its world.

[78] This experiential solidarity with the other (or what I've termed "affective inter-resonance") therefore affirms that skillfulness, in and of itself, is not sufficient to secure moral responsiveness. Experiential solidarity with the other must also be present. To return to the Buddhist terms discussed earlier, both "compassion" (Skrt: *karunā*) and "wisdom" (Skrt: *prajnā*) must be co-present for a response to qualify as morally skillful. Thus, the Nazi prison guard can exhibit a high degree of skillfulness while efficiently executing large numbers of Jewish prisoners day after day. However, this is clearly a perverse sort of skillfulness in that experiential solidarity with the humanity of the executed is lacking. Due to the guards commitment to certain principles, such as "Jews are subhuman and need to be exterminated," he has blocked himself from realizing bodily empathy towards the prisoners he is executing. It is precisely the blocking of affective

inter-resonance with the prisoners that then enables the guard to commit such atrocities during the day and go home at night to be a loving husband and father.

[79] According to Marks (2001), "colored hearing," where sounds are associated with a particular color, is the most common form of synaesthesia.

[80] See Walsh (2005 12) for a short survey of experimental findings on meditation effects. Andresen (2000) provides an exceedingly thorough survey of the current state of experimental research on meditation.

[81] In the Zen Buddhist tradition, to see things in their "suchness" means simply to see things as they are in themselves, and not as things *for* the perceiving ego: things to be attained, used, or desired. Put differently, to see things in their "suchness" is to recognize both their *universality* and their *particularity*. The skilled perceiver sees that each thing *is* what it is only in-relation to all *other* things. Whatever identity a thing has is constituted by the holistic network of interrelations that define that thing as such. Conversely, only *that* thing has the particular set of defining interrelationships that it does, and thus that *particular* thing is utterly individual and unique. The "suchness" of things encompasses both of these aspects. "Suchness" is thus connected with the notion of "dependent co-arising". For more on the idea of "suchness", see Nishitani (1982).

[82] The summary of this study and the one that follows is taken from Goleman (2003).

[83] Ekman also conducted several other studies that monitored the Tibetan meditator's physiological reaction to interpersonal aggression and scenes of human suffering. In all of these cases, the meditator exhibited an usually high degree of compassion and equanimity. Ekman attributes these unusual findings to the meditator's highly developed bodily-perceptual cultivation, or meditative training. See Goleman (2003, 17-21).

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Articles

"*Wuwei* and Know-how: Taoism and Dewey on Ethos, Expertise, and Effortless Action", *The Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, special edition: "American Philosophy and Chinese Philosophy" (forthcoming).

"Concrete Consciousness: A Sartrean Critique of Functionalist Accounts of Mind", *Sartre Studies International* 12(2), 2006.

"James on Experience and the Extended Mind", *Contemporary Pragmatism* 3(1), June 2006.

"The Varieties of Pure Experience: William James and Kitarō Nishida on Consciousness and Embodiment", *William James Studies*, 1(1), June 2006.

Chapters in Books

"A Daoist Critique of Searle on Mind and Action", in edited book anthology *Searle's Philosophy and Chinese Philosophy: Constructive Engagement*. Bo Mou, ed. Brill Academic Publishers, forthcoming.

"Ethical Education as Bodily Training: Kitarō Nishida's Moral Phenomenology of "Acting-Intuition"", in edited book anthology *Educations and their Purposes: A Philosophical Dialogue Among Cultures*. Roger Ames, ed. University of Hawaii Press, forthcoming.

"Consciousness", in *Encyclopedia of American Philosophy,* eds. John Lachs and Robert Talisse. New York: Routledge, 2007.

"Stream of Consciousness", in *Encyclopedia of American Philosophy*, eds. John Lachs and Robert Talisse. New York: Routledge, 2007.

Articles Under Review

"Moral Psychology and Nonconceptual Content"

"Skillful Action, Field-Self: *Wuwei* in the *Daodejing* and Embodied Approaches to Cognition"

"Levinasian Reflections on Somaticity and the Ethical Self"

"Dōgen, Dewey, "Body-mind", Experience: Comparative Analysis and Contemporary Application"

"The Extended Mind in Classical Buddhism and Contemporary Cognitive Science"

Articles in Progress

"Ethics of the Extended Mind"

"Found Sound: Music, Manipulation, and the Enactive Dimensions of Deep Listening"

Presentations

"Transactional Bodies, Material Symbols", to be delivered to the National Communication Association annual meeting, Chicago, IL, November 2007.

""Body-Mind" and Experience in Dōgen and Dewey", delivered to the Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy panel at the 2007 meeting of the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC, March 2007.

"The Extended (No-)Self in Classical Zen Buddhism and Contemporary Philosophy of Mind", delivered to the Association of Chinese Philosophers in North America meeting at the 2006 Eastern Division American Philosophical Association meeting, Washington DC, December 2006.

"Somatic Dimensions of Empathy", delivered to the National Communication Association annual meeting, San Antonio, TX, November 2006.

"Found Sound: Music, Manipulation, and the Enactive Dimensions of Deep Listening", delivered to the 2006 meeting of the Society for Phenomenology and the Human Sciences, Philadelphia, October 2006.

"Extended Minds and Disappearing Selves in Buddhism and Cognitive Science", delivered to the 10th Annual Meeting of the Consciousness and Experiential Psychology Section of the British Psychological Society, St. Anne's College, Oxford, UK, September 2006.

"Skillful Action, Field-Self: *Wuwei* from the Perspective of Cognitive Science", accepted for presentation to the 9th Annual International Institute for Field-Being and the Non-Substantialistic Turn, Ontario, Canada, August 2006.

"Levinasian Reflections on Somaticity and Moral Perception", delivered to the 1st Annual North American Levinas Society meeting, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN, May 2006.

"Empathy Externalized: Kitarō Nishida, Zen, and the Structure of the Extended Mind" (poster presentation), presented at the 2006 Towards a Science of Consciousness Conference, University of Arizona, Tucson, April 2006.

"The Extended (No-)Self in Classical Zen Buddhism and Contemporary Philosophy of Mind", delivered to the 3rd Annual Midwestern Conference on East Asian Thought, Carbondale, IL, March-April 2006.

Invited Respondent to Annual Coss Lecture, Martin Jay (U.C. Berkeley), "The Debate Over Lived Experience", delivered to the 2006 meeting of the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy, San Antonio, TX, March 2006.

"James's Pragmatic Externalism: Experience Outside of the Head", delivered to the 2006 meeting of the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy, San Antonio, TX, March 2006.

""Doing Without Trying": Taoism, Cognitive Science, and Embodied Cognition", delivered to the Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy meeting at the 2005 Eastern Division American Philosophical Association meeting, New York, December 2005.

""Spiritualizing" the Flesh: Nietzsche and Dōgen on Embodiment as Spiritual *Praxis*", delivered to the 2005 American Academy of Religion annual meeting, Philadelphia, November 2005.

"Kitarō Nishida on the Dialectic of "I-and-Thou", accepted for presentation at the 2005 Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy Conference, Pacific Grove, CA, October 2005. (Illness prevented attendance).

"Real Empathy: Empathic Awareness and a Second Person Approach to Consciousness", delivered to the 2005 meeting of the Society for Phenomenology and the Human Sciences, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, October 2005.

"Embodied Action and the Construction of Phenomenal Experience", delivered to the 9th Annual Meeting of the Consciousness and Experiential Psychology Section of the British Psychological Society, St. Anne's College, Oxford, UK, September 2005.

"James on Experience and the Extended Mind", accepted for presentation at the 9th Annual Meeting of the Midwest Pragmatist Study Group for the Society of the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy, Loyola University, Chicago, IL, September 2005. (Illness prevented attendance).

"*WuWei*-ing the Alternatives: A Taoist Critique of Searle on Mind and Action" (response to keynote John Searle), delivered to the International Society for Comparative Studies of Chinese and Western Philosophy 2nd International Conference, "Philosophical Engagement: Searle's Philosophy and Chinese Philosophy", Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Hong Kong, China, June 2005.

"Ethical Education as Bodily Training: Kitarō Nishida's Moral Phenomenology of "Acting-Intuition"", delivered at the 9th East-West Philosopher's Conference, University of Hawaii, May-June 2005.

"Merleau-Ponty on Agency, Perception, and Phenomenal Content", delivered to the 5th Annual Phenomenology Roundtable, Loyola University, Chicago, IL, May 2005.

"The Cognitive and Normative Significance of "Pure Experience"", invited lecture delivered at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, WI, April 2005.

"Relating Without Representing", delivered to the Graduate Conference on Philosophical Approaches to Intersubjectivity, "Encounters with the Other", Loyola University, Chicago, IL, March 2005.
"Concrete Consciousness: Sartre's Relevance to Contemporary Philosophy of Mind", delivered to the 14th Biennial Meeting of the North American Sartre Society, University of San Francisco, February 2005.

"Emptiness and Empathy: Nishitani and Levinas on Ethical Relatedness", delivered to the 2004 Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy Conference, Pacific Grove, CA, June 2004.

"The Possibility of Pure Experience: A Phenomenological Investigation of Experience without a Subject", delivered to the 4th Annual Phenomenology Roundtable, Purdue University, May 2004.

"The "I" of the Storm: Functionalism, Phenomenology, and Implicit Self-Awareness", delivered to the Fifteenth Annual Philosophy, Interpretation, and Culture Conference, SUNY Binghamton, April 2004.

"The Varieties of Pure Experience: William James and Kitarō Nishida on Consciousness and Embodiment", delivered to the Fourth Annual Donald G. Wester Conference, "William James's Philosophy of Mind", Oklahoma State University, April 2004.

"Being Useless: Kierkegaard and Westphal on the Transparent Dynamic of Prayer and Sacrifice" (response to keynote Merold Westphal), delivered to Identifications: Faith, Theory, and Identity-Making conference, Purdue University, February 2004.

"Bodily Self-Awareness as an Intrinsic Feature of Experience: A Critique of Computational Functionalism", delivered to Purdue University Philosophy Graduate Student Colloquium, November 2003.

"The (Mis)Pronunciation of Nothing: Keiji Nishitani's Critique of Sartrean Nothingness", delivered to 13th Biennial Meeting of the North American Sartre Society, Purdue University, September 2003.

"Thinking at the Limit: Levinas, Nishitani, and the Destruction of Intentionality", delivered to 5th Annual PGSA Conference "On Intentionality", Marquette University, April 2003.

Awards and Honors

North American Sartre Society: Travel Grant, 2005.
Purdue University: Graduate Student Travel Grant, 2004-2005.

Academic Appointments

Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Danish National Research Foundation: Center for Subjectivity Research, University of Copenhagen, 2007-2009
Instructor, John A. Logan College, Fall 2006-2007
Instructor, Southern Illinois University, Fall 2005-2007
Graduate Teaching Assistant, Purdue University, Spring 2002-Spring 2005.
Graduate Teaching Assistant, San Francisco State University, Spring 2000-Spring 2001.

Teaching Experience

Instructor

PHL 111 Ethics and Moral Problems (John A. Logan College)
PHL 131 Introduction to Philosophy (John A. Logan College)
PHL 102 Introduction to Philosophy (Southern Illinois University)
PHIL 308-I Asian Religions (Southern Illinois University)
PHIL 491 Independent Study: Cross-Cultural Approaches to Consciousness (Southern Illinois University)
PHIL 219 Introduction to Existentialism (Purdue University)
PHIL 330 Religions of the East (Purdue University)
CORE 7 India and China (St. Joseph's University Extension Course)
COM 114 Fundamental Principles of Communication (Purdue University)
SPCM 101 Introduction to Oral Communication: Speech, Self, and Society (Southern Illinois University)

Teaching Assistant

COM 204 Critical Perspectives on Communication (Professor Josh Boyd, Purdue, Spring 2004).
PHIL 525 The Nature of Religious Experience (Professor Jacob Needleman, San Francisco State, Fall 2000, Spring 2001)
PHIL 301 Ancient Philosophy (Professor John Glanville, San Francisco State, Spring 2000).

Graduate Courses

Metaphysics and Epistemology

- Consciousness (via University of Arizona, Bernard J. Baars, Katherine A. McGovern, Thomas Z. Ramsøy)
- William James (Audit, Purdue, Charlene Haddock Seigfried)
- Phenomenology (Purdue, Daniel W. Smith)
- Existentialism (Purdue, William L. McBride)
- Philosophy of Mind (Purdue. Rod Bertolet)
- The Presocratics (Purdue, Patricia Curd)
- Deleuze (Purdue, Daniel W. Smith)
- Kierkegaard (Purdue, Martin Beck Matustik)
- Nietzsche (Purdue, Daniel W. Smith)
- British Empiricism (Purdue, Michael Jacovides)
- Medieval Philosophy (San Francisco State, John Glanville)
- Modern Philosophy (San Francisco State, James Syfers)
- Plato and Platonism (San Francisco State, John Glanville)
- Early Medieval Philosophy (San Francisco State, John Glanville)
- Ancient Philosophy and Culture (San Francisco State, John Glanville)
- Fundamental Philosophical Texts (San Francisco State, Multiple Faculty)

Ethics, Aesthetics, Value Theory

- Contemporary Ethical Theory (Purdue, Patrick Kaine)
- Levinas (Purdue, Sandor Goodhart)
- Ethics (San Francisco State, Mary Anne Warren)
- Projects in Teaching Philosophy (San Francisco State, Jacob Needleman)

Logic and Language

- Symbolic Logic (Purdue, Dolph E. Ulrich)
- 20th Century Analytic Philosophy (Purdue, Rod Bertolet)
- Philosophy of Language (Purdue, Rod Bertolet)
- Formal Logic (San Francisco State, Craig Harrison)
- Philosophy of Language (San Francisco State, Kent Bach)
- Wittgenstein (San Francisco State, Peter Radcliff)

Philosophy of Religion, Religious Studies

- Philosophy of Religion (Purdue, William L. Rowe)
- Eastern Philosophy (Purdue, Donald W. Mitchell)
- Indian Philosophy (Purdue, Donald W. Mitchell)
- The Hebrew Bible (Audit, San Francisco State, Fred Astren)
- Judaism, Christianity, Islam (San Francisco State, Fred Astren)
- World Religions (San Francisco State, Pamela Hood)
- Spiritual Traditions of China (San Francisco State, Ronald Epstein)

- Comparative Religious Thought (San Francisco State, Jacob Needleman)

Academic Service

International Society for the Comparative Study of Chinese and Western Philosophy
Election Committee Member, 2005.
Undergraduate Philosophy Society Advisor, Purdue University, 2004-2005.
Organizer, Moderator and Commentator, *Faith, Theory and Identity-Making Conference*, Purdue University, February 2004.

Professional Memberships

American Philosophical Association
Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy
Society for Phenomenology and the Human Sciences
Phenomenology Roundtable
Merleau-Ponty Circle
The William James Society
The Society for Philosophy and Psychology
Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy
American Academy of Religion
Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy
Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies
The International Society for Comparative Study of Chinese and Western Philosophy

Language

French (reading).

References

Letters Included with Dossier

Charlene Haddock Seigfried, Purdue University
Donald W. Mitchell, Purdue University
Daniel W. Smith, Purdue University
Christopher Pincock, Purdue University (Teaching Letter)

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Dossier

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