

“Bodyheartminding” (Xin 心): Reconceiving the Inner Self and the Outer World in the Language of Holographic Focus and Field¹

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In *Body Consciousness: A Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics*, Richard Shusterman further expands upon a professional oeuvre in which his exploration of the phenomenon of somaticity has affected nothing less than a somatic turn in the contemporary Western philosophical narrative. But his contribution does not end there.

Over the past two decades, the reach and influence of somaesthetics has been extended to the shores of China to become a theme engaged by scholars of China’s indigenous philosophical

traditions, thus establishing a platform for a further edifying conversation between the Chinese and Western philosophical traditions.² Indeed, it is this conversation as it has been inspired by Shusterman’s work that I propose to join in this short essay.

In *Body Consciousness*, Shusterman tells the story of how John Dewey advances the pragmatic project of not only understanding the body, but, indeed, of applying the Alexander Technique as his way of using his own body properly.³ Dewey has been a prominent resource for Shusterman in his development of somaesthetics, and for Dewey, in turn, William James’s *Principles of Psychology* was a self-confessed inspiration for the development of his own evolving interpretation of pragmatism.⁴

Indeed, one way of reading Dewey’s philosophical career and his thirty-seven-volume opus is that it is a sustained effort to take the radical “stream-of-consciousness” insights developed in James’s *Principles* to their logical, systematic conclusion. In pursuing this project, Dewey is at times impatient with James’s dualistic lapses—in which he continues to separate individuals from community, mind from body, emotions from

¹ Originally published in *Frontiers of Philosophy in China* 10, no. 2 (2015): 167–180.

² Most of Shusterman’s most prominent monographs now have Chinese language translations and publications: *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 实用主义美学: 生活之美, 艺术之思, trans. Peng Feng 彭锋 (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2002); *Practicing Philosophy: Pragmatism and the Philosophical Life* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 哲学实践, trans. Peng Feng 彭锋 (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2002); *Performing Live: Aesthetic Alternatives for the Ends of Art* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 生活即审美——审美经验和生活艺术, trans. Peng Feng 彭锋 (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2007); *Surface and Depth: Dialectics of Criticism and Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 表面与深度: 批评与文化的辩证法, trans. Li

Luning (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2014); *Body Consciousness: A Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 身体意识与身体美学, trans. Cheng Xiangzhan (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2011).

³ Shusterman expresses some bemusement at Dewey’s ardent and uncritical advocacy of F.M. Alexander’s approach to somatic consciousness, entailing as it does an inflated dependence upon a narrow sense of rational control while at the same time eschewing the importance of scientific scrutiny and experimentation.

⁴ Shusterman cites Dewey’s daughter, Jane M. Dewey, who states with Dewey’s approval that “William James’s *Principles of Psychology* was much the greatest single influence in changing the direction of Dewey’s philosophical thinking.” See Jane M. Dewey, “Biography of John Dewey,” in *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, edited by Paul A. Schilpp & Lewis E. Hahn (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1939), 3–45.

intellect, agents from actions, and theory from practice. These unfortunate reversions to old ways of thinking serve only to confound James's holistic doctrines of pure experience and radical empiricism. Given Dewey's own postulate of immediate and continuous empiricism, one way we have of tracking his journey from having been inspired by James's biological naturalism to achieving his own philosophical coherence is to register his unrelenting aversion to dualism in any form.

By way of contrast, in the correlative vocabulary of Chinese process cosmology, expressions such as *yinyang* (陰陽), *tianren* (天人), and *zhibixing* (知行), primacy is given to vital relationality as concrete pattern rather than abstract relation, and the continuity such patterns entails. It is not putting two things together that is referenced with these binomials, but the deepening of the horizon of constitutive, internal relationships that transforms the two aspects qualitatively into

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But Dewey himself was not always consistent in this respect. Shusterman gives an account of the early neo-Hegelian Dewey, who, affirming the familiar transcendent conception of soul we associate with idealism, not surprisingly embraces a clear soul and body dualism. And in spite of the philosophically mature Dewey's best efforts to think "process," he has no choice but to use a language and a grammar freighted with substance ontology that resists his more holistic insights.

On occasion, even while trying to remain consistent in his thinking, Dewey seems to fall victim to terminology that, if not dualistic, is, at best, equivocal. Dewey's struggle against this problem of equivocation is particularly apparent in some of the language he appeals to in attempting to put the humpty-dumpty of mind and body together again. In his effort to register the irreducible continuity and inseparability of the non-analytic, aspectual abstractions we call body and mind—the ontological givenness or "hadness" of "bodyminding"—Dewey still, at times, invokes terms such as "combination," "integration," "unity," and so on, that take as their suppressed premise "two things becoming one."

harmonics (*he* 和) for *yinyang*, sagacity (*sheng* 聖) for *tianren*, and acting wisely (*zhi* 智) for *zhibixing*.

In each instance, the two aspects themselves are simply conceptual abstractions from a complex relational process. The proper and effective measure (*du* 度) sought in this Confucian cosmology is not more or less of two distinct things—taking mind and body as our example—but rather a qualitative and transformative change that occurs within the constitutive relationships themselves.

Certainly, Shusterman has Dewey right when he characterizes his "body-mind unity" in the following terms:

In the forward-looking, melioristic spirit of pragmatism, Dewey sees body-mind unity less as an ontological given in which we can smugly rest than as a desired, progressive goal of dynamic, harmonious function that we should continually

strive to attain. As with the unity of habit, “integration is an achievement rather than a datum.”⁵

The inconsistency that seems to emerge between Dewey’s assumption, on the one hand, of an ontological continuity between “mind” and “body,” and the problem of having to use an analytic language of discreteness and integration, on the other, is not lost on Dewey himself. He struggles to find a vocabulary to express the qualitative transformation of experience that can be achieved by invoking the “three levels” of the physical, the psycho-physical, and the mental.

Shusterman summarizes Dewey’s position in the following language:

The “psycho-physical” is not a special substance that opposes the physical ... Instead it signifies the emergence of a more complex level of organization of physical materials and energies through which the organism generates purposive efforts to achieve the satisfaction of its survival needs ... Mind, in Dewey’s view, is a still higher level of organization that emerges from psycho-physical experience only when language comes into play ... Mind remains in the realm of natural events, but Dewey’s linguistic requirement for mind also places it squarely in the realm of culture. No inconsistency is involved in this double status. Just as mind is not opposed to but is rather an emergent expression of the human body, so culture is not the contradiction of nature but rather its fulfillment and reshaping.⁶

Dewey, in proposing these three distinct levels, can be misread as ascribing a baser and prior

status to the physical as the erstwhile source of the mental, and a means/end relationship between the physical, on the one hand, and the mental/cultural, on the other. Where body, mind, and culture should be treated as merely explanatory categories that allow for qualitative, aspectual distinctions, these terms, for Dewey, seem at times to take on an analytic—even distinctly ontological—character.

Let me be clear. I am sure that Dewey and, usually, James too, are trying to give expression to the wholeness of the body, mind, and cultural experience and its variable qualitative attainments. But do they have the language available to them that would facilitate consistency in such expression? And might process cosmology as the ambient interpretive context for Confucian philosophy provide us with an alternative correlative language for getting past this problem of a lingering dualism?

What I propose to do here is to try to turn the tables on a profound asymmetry that continues to plague our best attempts to make responsible comparisons between the Chinese and Western philosophical narratives.⁷ To state the problem simply: we have been given to relentlessly theorizing the Chinese tradition according to our Western philosophical assumptions, shoehorning Chinese concepts into categories that are not its own.

We are given to pondering: “Is Mohist utilitarianism agent-neutral or agent-relative?” but it would not occur to us to ask if John Stuart Mill is a Mohist.

⁵ Richard Shusterman, *Body Consciousness: A Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 185.

⁶ Shusterman, *Body Consciousness*, 186.

⁷ Kwong-loi Shun has made much of this asymmetry: there is a trend in comparative studies to approach Chinese thought from a Western philosophical perspective, by reference to frameworks, concepts, or issues found in Western philosophical discussions. This trend is seen not

only in works published in the English language, but also in those published in Chinese. Conversely, in the contemporary literature, we rarely find attempts to approach Western philosophical thought by reference to frameworks, concepts, or issues found in Chinese philosophical discussions. See Kwong-loi Shun, “Studying Confucian and Comparative Ethics: Methodological Reflections,” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 36, no. 3 (2009): 455–78.

Again, we are given to inquiring: “Is Confucian ethics an Aristotelian aretaic ethic or a Humean-inspired sentimentalist ethic?” But it would not occur to us to ask if Aristotle, and Hume too, are Confucians.

This problem is as true of contemporary Chinese, Japanese, and Korean intellectuals as it is of their Western counterparts—speaking as they do a vernacular language transformed by its encounter with the cultural imperialism of a dominating Western modernity, and thus deploying a largely Western conceptual structure even while speaking their own Chinese, Japanese, and Korean languages.⁸

I want to invoke the language of classical Confucian philosophy to think through Dewey’s best efforts to escape the mind-body and nature-nurture dualisms—that is, to offer an alternative vocabulary that might lend further clarity to Dewey’s revolutionary insights by appealing to the processual categories of Chinese cosmology.

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What I will try to do first is to refocus Dewey’s explanation of the relationship between mind and body through the lens of a process Confucian cosmology. And then, to make the case for James and Dewey, I will return to the radical, im-

agistic language they invoke to try and make the argument that this proces-

sual, holistic understanding of “bodyminding” is in fact what they were trying to say all along.

The resolutely correlative language of Confucian cosmology can perhaps offer a way forward in reconceiving what is being expressed as the conjunction, combination, and production of erst-

while separate things—body, mind, and culture—to be in fact a qualitative transformation in the relational dynamics of a complexly inclusive yet continuous experience. Said another way, Confucian cosmology offers a gestalt shift from perceiving discrete “things” defined by a doctrine of external relations to living in

⁸ 5 During the second half of the nineteenth and first part of the twentieth century, Japanese and then Chinese and Korean intellectuals, at once enamored of, and overwhelmed by, Western modernity, created a Sinitic vocabulary to appropriate and give voice to the conceptual and theoretical language of Western academic culture. In thinking through modern Chinese literature, Lydia H. Liu (劉禾) probes the “discursive construct of the Chinese modern.”

I am fascinated by what has happened to the modern Chinese language, especially the written form, since its early exposure to English, modern Japanese, and other foreign languages . . . The true object of my theoretical interest is the legitimation of the “modern” and the “West” in Chinese literary discourse as well as the ambivalence of Chinese agency in these mediated processes of legitimation. (See Lydia H. Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity—China, 1900–1937*

(Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), xvi–xviii.)

Pointedly alluding to Foucault’s concern of the role of power relations and authority in the process of cultural translation, Liu cites Talal Asad as offering certainly an apposite critique of the British ethnographic tradition, but also a critique that has relevance to cultural translation broadly:

To put it crudely, because the languages of the Third World societies—including of course, the societies that social anthropologists have traditionally studied—are “weaker” in relation to Western languages (and today, especially to English), they are more likely to submit to forcible transformation in the translation process than the other way around. The reason for this is, first, that in their political-economic relations with Third World countries, Western nations have the greater ability to manipulate the latter. And, second, Western languages produce and deploy desired knowledge more readily than Third World languages do. (Liu, *Translingual Practice*, 3.)

continuous “events” defined in terms of intrinsic, constitutive relations. Specifically, *xin* (心) in this cosmology— frequently translated as “heart-and-mind” or simply as “heartmind,” but better understood as an evolving process of “bodyheartminding”—is a continuous, gerundive event rather than a conjoining of nominative things that can be separated as body, heart, and mind; it is a qualitative disclosure of a continuous, holistic experience rather than the integration of disparate things. *Xin* is at once body, heart, and mind—an existentially and somatically experienced process of thoughtful feeling—that is profoundly normative as well as descriptive.

To begin, as we must, from a doctrine of internal relations, we might cite Peter Hershock, who offers a rather straightforward and uncontested account of these internal, constitutive relations in diagnosing the persistent problem that we have in seeing the world as being comprised of discrete “things:”

Autonomous subjects and objects are, finally, only artifacts of abstraction ... What we refer to as “things”—whether mountains, human beings, or complex phenomena like histories—are simply the experienced results of having established relatively constant horizons of value or relevance (“things”). They are not, as common sense insists, natural occurring realities or [things]. Indeed, what we take to be objects existing independently of ourselves are, in actuality, simply a function of habitual patterns of relationships.⁹

Hershock offers us an intellectual cure that allows us to see “through the conceit that relations are second-order realities contingent upon pre-existing actors.”

A doctrine of constitutive relations requires a different common sense: “This amounts to an ontological gestalt shift from taking independent and dependent actors to be first order realities and relations among them as second order, to seeing relationality as first order (or ultimate) reality and all individual actors as (conventionally) abstracted or derived from them.”¹⁰

In classical Chinese cosmology, the animating, transforming *qi* (氣) begins from a doctrine of internal relations, and was conceptualized in terms of what in modern parlance we might call a “vital energy field.” This field is not only pervasive as a condition of all things, but is also the medium through which all things are constituted. There is neither *qi* without form nor form without *qi*. Indeed, “form” and “animating *qi*” are two nonanalytic aspects of the same transforming reality, where “transitivity” and “form” are both implicit ways of understanding the transformative process. By nonanalytic, I mean that form and animation are simply two ways of looking at the same phenomenon, and that they are separable only by foregrounding one as opposed to the other. As such, “animating *qi*” and the various ways of saying “forming” or “constructing” are an explanatory rather than an ontological vocabulary. That is, we need both terms to give an account of what we experience.

One consequence of this unwillingness in the tradition to separate time from matter is that there is no warrant, in Aristotle’s language, to distinguish an active, efficient cause from a passive, material cause. In fact, expressions such as *ziran* (自然) and *tiandi* (天地), conventionally translated “nature” and “the world” do not simply refer to a world or the world; they refer to an active, ongoing, autogenerative process as experienced from within it: what Tang Junyi has called “world as such.”

⁹ Peter D. Hershock, *Buddhism in the Public Sphere: Reorienting Global Interdependence* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 140.

¹⁰ Hershock, *Buddhism in the Public Sphere*, 147.

A corollary to this notion of “invigorated world-ing” is the absence of any final boundary between the sentient and insentient, animate and inanimate, living and lifeless. It is a commonplace in classical Western interpretations of the vital and spiritual character of things to appeal to a physical and spiritual dichotomy, assuming that the animating principle is distinguishable from the things it animates. But with respect to the notion of *qi*, there are no separable things to be animated. There is only the field of *qi* and its many animated focal manifestations. “Things” are simply persistent yet transitory perturbations of energy subject to the relentless process of flux, and ultimately of transformation. *Qi* cosmology is thus “hylozoistic”: that is, life and matter are inseparable aspects of the same reality, two ways of looking at the same thing.

Qi as energizing field is expressed as the unique and always changing foci of everything that constitutes our experience. The resolute uniqueness of these always situated “things”—this “myriad of phenomena (*wanwu* 萬物)” —precludes the existence of forms or ideas or categories or principles or inviolate species that would provide a basis for “natural kinds.” Thus, things are individuated in the field of *qi* by analogy. Marcel Granet puts it this way:

Instead of observing successions of phenomena, the Chinese registered alternations of aspects. If two aspects seemed to them to be connected, it was not by means of a cause and effect relationship, but rather “paired” like the obverse and reverse of something, or to use a metaphor from the *Book of Changes*, like echo and sound, or shadow and light.¹¹

Discriminations are made in terms of observed and conventionalized classifications associated

with diurnal and seasonal changes, directions, deities, colors, tastes, sounds, numbers, smells, body parts, and so forth.

Such discriminations, far from being final or causal in any sense, are described by Joseph Needham as processive and diffusive, “patterns simultaneously appearing in a vast field of force, the dynamic structure of which we do not yet understand.”¹² As Needham goes on to report, it is the aggregation of these productive correlations or associations that enables us to act effectively: “The sum of wisdom consisted in adding to the number of intuited analogical correspondences in the repertory of correlations.”¹³

We might appeal to the pervasive use of *xin* that, as a commonplace, is understood to resist any analytic separation between the cognitive and affective as a way of further exploring what is also a holographic continuity between the physical and the intellectual—between mind and body. Body and mind thus understood are aspectual abstractions from a complex event in which, as continuities among the contents of the life of any particular person are brought into fuller resolution, the lived experience of this person achieves a heightening qualitative transformation. In achieving this commitment and resolve, persons become focal sources of meaning within their unbounded fields. In the Confucian vocabulary, they achieve a consummatory (*ren* 仁) and exemplary (*junzi* 君子) quality in their lived narratives.

The focus-field notion of person assumed in this cosmology stands in stark contrast to a metaphysical realist conception of an inner, private domain and a shared outer world. It begins from this doctrine of internal, constitutive relations and requires a fundamentally different understanding of persons in which their particular identities and the unsummed totality—their

¹¹ Marcel Granet, *La Pensée Chinoise* (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1934), 329.

¹² Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation, Vol. II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), 291.

¹³ Needham, *Science and Civilisation*, 290.

foregrounded focus and its field—are two holographic and thus mutually entailing ways of perceiving the same phenomenon. Just as each played note in a symphony has implicated within it the entire performance, so each focal event has implicated within it its entire field. Indeed, to grasp this holographic understanding of *xin* the following, oft-cited passage from the Mencius that calls into question the distinction between an inner self and an outer world might require a more literal reading than it usually receives:

7A4: 孟子曰：萬物皆備於我矣。Mengzi said, “The myriad happenings of the world are all implicated here in me.”

Corollary to the reconceiving of this inner-outer dynamic as a vital, nonanalytic continuity of bodyheartminding is an alternative reading of the full range of such dualistic distinctions—subjective and objective, self and other, agent and action, the cognitive and the affective, nature and nurture, and so on.

In order to make sense of this Mencian claim—“the myriad happenings of the world are all implicated here in me”—we will need an alternative to our common sense understanding of the inner and outer as two separate domains. We must clarify the background cosmological assumptions about the processive nature and the radical contextuality of the human experience, and about the perceived relationship between particular persons and their experienced world. In this effort, we might want to attempt to recover the way in which the Mencian notion of *xin* is understood within this early cosmology.

Most obviously, as noted above, it is a commonplace that *xin* does the work of both cognizing and feeling in a life experience that includes both felt thoughts and cognitively informed feelings. Similarly, there is no strict dichotomy

between intellection and sensation, between body and mind, between structure and function, between thinking and doing, between center and context, between nature and culture. These aspectual distinctions are nonanalytic and mutually entailing; they do not serve to separate and isolate different components within bodyheartminding nor fragment the activities that are defining of it.

Taking our cue from Chinese medicine as a practical application of this cosmology, we have to avoid the formalism that comes with a doctrine of external relations by acknowledging the inseparability of physiology and anatomy, of function and structure. Indeed, it is because traditional Chinese medicine has a dynamic, symbiotic understanding of the coterminous relationship between structure and function often captured in the expression “forming and functioning” (*tiyong* 體用)—or perhaps more simply, as “trans-form-ing”—that it can provide us with a significantly different way of understanding the myriad “things” that Mencius finds to be “all implicated here in me.” As medical anthropologist Judith Farquhar observes in her attempt to make sense of what we might call this Chinese *qi* cosmology: “*Qi* is both structural and functional, a unification of material and temporal forms that loses all coherence when reduced to one or the other ‘aspect.’”¹⁴

Systemic physiological functions have parity if not privilege over the more persistent, localized anatomical structures in traditional Chinese medical sensibilities, requiring that explanations be holistic and inclusive rather than being overly specific and thus exclusive. These functions also have an existential as well as a more objective character. The term *zhenmai* (診脈), for example, is certainly localized as “taking this pulse,” but more importantly it is using one’s tactile

¹⁴ Judith Farquhar, *Knowing Practice: The Clinical Encounter of Chinese Medicine* (Boulder: Westview, 1934), 34.

sensitivity to feel and interpret the visceral dynamics of the living body holistically, and as such, has synoptic reference not only to the organism itself as experience from within, but also to the organic, lived relationship this organism has with its external landscape. In “taking this pulse,” the medical practitioner is ultimately feeling the pulse of the living cosmos.

If we use the language of focus and field to give an account of “bodyheartminding,” it is first and foremost the dynamic focus of a specific systemic center of thinking and feeling that extends out radially as a physiological, psychological, and sociological experience to the furthest reaches of the unbounded cosmos as its contextualizing field. Indeed, *xin* is only derivatively and abstractly taken to be the physical organ that then becomes metonymic for a full complex of interactions and events, where this one focal aspect is isolated as a symbol for the holistic and eventful functions—both physical and psychic—that constitute a continuing human life.

We might cite a second related passage in the Mencius that describes and advocates for the symbiotic and mutually entailing phases of making the most of our “bodyheartminding,” an effort that in turn enables us to grow our initial conditions in family and community fully and to make our own distinctive contribution to the realization of our cosmic context:

7A1: 盡其心者知其性也。知其性則知天矣。存其心養其性所以事天也。Those who make the most of their “bodyheartminding” (*xin*) realize their natural tendencies (*xing*). And in realizing their natural tendencies they are realizing their natural and cultural context (*tian*).

Sustaining their bodyheartminding and nourishing their natural tendencies is the way to do service to nature and culture (*tian*).¹⁵

The familiar dualistic separation of inner and outer domains appeals to a doctrine of external relations and brings with it a familiar exercise called “introspection,” where introspection is usually understood as turning from a normal outward orientation to a reflective examination of one’s own internal mental states and feelings.

Inspired by this Mencian understanding of “bodyheartminding,” however, we might want to challenge this definition of what takes place

when we look “inward” by inventing an alternative term—“intra-spection.” Such a neologism would signal the fact that the process of “looking into our own bodyheartminding” is at the same time a looking outward into the quality of the coalescence this “bodyheartminding” has achieved with its contextualizing world.

Indeed, such “intra-spection” as a looking “into” the productive connectivity of our bodyheartminding with the “outer” world is both inner and outer at the same time. The point is that bodyheartminding is holographic, and indeed, since “everything is here in me,” in “making the most of our bodyheartminding,” we are literally bringing the entire cosmos into more meaningful focus and resolution from our own unique perspectives. And in so doing, we thus come to function most productively and influentially in our relations with what is happening in the world around us.

We might recall the first Mencius passage cited above, but now consider the whole passage

Mengzi said, “The myriad happenings of the world are all implicated here in me.”

¹⁵ It is because it is important to appreciate the performative and perlocutionary implications of *zhi* (知)—conventionally translated as “knowing”—that I have rendered it

here as “realizing” something in the sense of “making it real” rather than simply “knowing” something cognitively.

rather than just the first phrase. It again expresses this “inner-outer” focus-field dynamic:

7A4: 孟子曰：萬物皆備於我矣。反身而誠，樂莫大焉。強恕而行，求仁莫近焉。 Mengzi said, “Is there any enjoyment greater than, with the myriad happenings of the world all implicated here in me, to turn personally inward and to thus find resolution with these happenings. Is there any way of seeking to become consummate in my person more immediate than making every effort to act empathetically by extending myself into the places of others.

Again in this passage we see that becoming consummate as a human being is holographic process, where the inner resolution of our connectivity with all of the happenings in the world and the outer reach and influence we are to have on other things are coterminous and mutually entailing.

There is a symbiosis between consolidating our relations within the focus and thereby bringing these relations into clear and meaningful resolution (*cheng* 誠), on the one hand, and extending the field of relevance of this focal identity outward by deferring to and producing meaning in our expanding circle of personal relations (*shu* 恕). Sincerity and resolve as achieved in our relations “within” are manifested as consummate conduct in our relations “without.” In this way, not only are the myriad happenings of the world implicated here in me, but more importantly, they are made optimally meaningful by my capacity to give full resolution to my connectivity with them in my own person.

Another way of getting at this more holistic understanding of how our specific acts of conduct occur within an unbounded “field” of action might be to return to our pragmatists and

borrow some powerful images provided by Dewey and James themselves. The first point Dewey would make is that we need to abandon our commonsense assumption that we live our lives inside our skins and recognize the extent to which life is “out there” in a way that is organic, interactive, and fully collaborative with the changing world:

The thing essential to bear in mind is that living as an empirical affair is not something which goes on below the skin-surface of an organism: it is always an inclusive affair involving connection, interaction of what is within the organic body and what lies outside in space and time, and with higher organisms, far outside.¹⁶

On this basis, Dewey offers us a societal, dynamic, and interactive conception of how mind itself comes into being, where it is “located” in “the qualities of organic action,” and how it functions as “a characteristic way of inter-activity.” This Deweyan conception of “mind” as a dynamic, extended habitude resonates interestingly with the Mencian notion of a diffused yet centered process of “bodyheartminding” as we have described it above.

Domination by spatial considerations leads some thinkers to ask where mind is.

accepting for the moment the standpoint of the questioner (which ignores the locus of discourse, institutions, and social arts), limiting the question to the organic individual, we may say that the “seat” or locus of mind—its static phase—is the qualities of organic action, as far as these qualities have been conditioned by language and its consequences. It is usual for those who are posed by the question of “where” and who are reluctant to answer that mind is “where” there is a spaceless separate realm of existence, to fall

¹⁶ John Dewey, *The Essential Dewey, Vol. 1*, edited by Larry A. Hickman & Thomas M. Alexander (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 147.

back in general on the nervous system, and specifically upon the brain or its cortex as the “seat” of the mind. But the organism is not just a structure; it is a characteristic way of inter-activity which is not simultaneous, all at once, but serial. It is a way impossible without structure for its mechanism, but it differs from structure as walking differs from legs or breathing from lungs.¹⁷

Dewey’s point is that “mind” is both focused as a locus of persistent habits and diffused as an unbounded field of psychophysical activities being carried out in the world.

This participatory, eventful understanding of mind can for Dewey be further clarified in the idiomatic, non-doctrinal, and organismic way that we use the word “soul:”

To say emphatically of a particular person that he has soul or a great soul ... expresses the conviction that the man or woman in question has in marked degree qualities of sensitive, rich and coordinated participation in all situations of life ... To see the organism in nature ... they will be seen to be *in*, not as marbles are in a box but as events are in history, in a moving, growing never finished process.¹⁸

And Dewey provides an image that illustrates how the holographic focus of our habitual behaviors in having both “everything” and “all the time” as their penumbra is thus a construal of the synchronic and diachronic totality from one particular perspective:

We find also in all these higher organisms that what is done is conditioned by consequences of prior activities; we find the fact of learning or habit-formation ... Thus an environment both extensive and enduring is immediately implicated in present behavior. Operatively speaking, the remote and the past are “in” behavior making it what it is. The action called “organic” is not just

that of internal structures; it is an integration of organic-environmental connections. It may be a mystery that there should be thinking but it is no mystery that if there is thinking it should contain in a “present” phase, affairs remote in space and in time, even to geologic ages, future eclipses and far away stellar systems. It is only a question of how far what is “in” its actual experience is extricated and becomes focal.¹⁹

In *A Pluralistic Universe*, William James uses a phenomenology of consciousness to reflect on and to give vivid expression to what he calls “the pulse of inner life,” a pulsation that, in being both holistic and specific at the same time, requires that we abandon any notion of “inner” and “outer” as exclusive domains. As we did with the Mencian notion of *xin*, we must reconceive the relationship between inner and outer in focus-field, holographic terms where they are simply two ways of foregrounding and emphasizing different aspects of the same phenomenon:

Feeling, however dimly and subconsciously, all these things, your pulse of inner life is continuous with them, belongs to them and they to it ... The real units of our immediately felt life are unlike the units that intellectualist logic holds to and makes its calculations with. They are not separate from their own others, and you have to take them at widely separated dates to find any two of them that seem unblent ... my present field of consciousness is a centre surrounded by a fringe that shades insensibly into a subconscious more ... Which part of it properly is in my consciousness, which out? If I name what is out, it already has come in. The centre works in one way while the margins work in another, and presently overpower the centre and are central themselves. What we conceptually identify ourselves with and say we are thinking of at any time is the centre; but our full self is the whole field, with all

¹⁷ Dewey, *The Essential Dewey*, 151.

¹⁸ Dewey, *The Essential Dewey*, 152.

¹⁹ Dewey, *The Essential Dewey*, 146–47.

those indefinitely radiating subconscious possibilities of increase.²⁰

If we want to invoke Chinese cosmological language to restate what Dewey and James are saying here, it would be to recognize that *dao* (道) is the unbounded field of experience always construed from one perspective as opposed to another, and *de* (德) is the insistent particular that construes the field of experience from this perspective or that.

In other words, *dao* as the continuous field of experience and the unsummed totality of *de*, as “everything that is happening” (*wanwu* 萬物, or *wanyou* 萬有) are simply two ways of expressing the same phenomenon save with a different emphasis on either the continuity of, or the multiplicity, perspectivity, and particularity in, the content of experience. Every unique “thing” or event has implicated within it the continuous totality of all things, and the totality of all things is always construed from some particular insistent perspective.

When we are able to achieve resolve—that is, commitment and focus in our own lives—we are best able to transform the full content of our experience in its most meaningful way. We are able to achieve the holistic “somaesthetic consciousness” Shusterman has argued for as “the living, feeling, sentient, purposive body” that makes “body consciousness” nothing less than a cosmic source of meaning.²¹

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²⁰ William James, *A Pluralistic Universe* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1912), 286–88.

²¹ Shusterman, *Body Consciousness*, xii.