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9 – *Reflections on a Katana –* *The Japanese Pursuit of Performative Mastery*

One moon shows in every pool; in every pool, the one moon.
Zen Saying[1]

Thirty spokes converge on a hub/but it's the emptiness/that makes the wheel work/pots are fashioned from clay/but it's the hollow that makes a pot work/windows and doors are carved for a house/but it's the spaces/that make a house work/existence makes something useful/but nonexistence makes it work.
Laozi[2]

Not think:
Before and after,
In front, behind;
Only freedom
At the middle point
Poem about *Kendō*[3]

Japanese culture has a distinctive talent that suits admirably well the underlying personal perfectionism of *Skillful Striving*. This gift turns a putative weakness into a strength. Cultivating its own "personal" perfection, Japan has turned apparent limitations into patent opportunities. The land is not particularly endowed with natural riches, and its people have not been disposed to change the world through radically original contributions.[4] Customarily, they have looked to other cultures for inspiration. To explain in the context of martial arts, these were largely incorporated from Chinese *wushu* (武術), traditional martial arts. They also imported metallurgical knowledge for weaponry: their Chinese imitation swords broke or bent when confronting the Mongol invading troops arrived in Japan in the thirteenth century. The much-touted relation between Zen and the samurai, which resulted in the warrior code of *bushidō (*武士道), and lucid acceptance of death, was largely due to the introduction of Buddhism in the sixth century. Native *Shintō* (神道), literally way of the spirit, was quite averse to any serious consideration of death. Likewise, the *bunbu ryodō* (文武両道), the two ways of the pen and the sword, was also, if not imported, then at least preceded by the Hwarang warriors from the Silla

Kingdom in what today is Korea. In short, none of these developments originate from or are unique to the Japanese. What the Japanese *did* do was to adopt and refine them to unparalleled levels.

Martial arts acquired levels of sophistication as *educational* practices nowhere else matched; their famed katana swords improved on the Korean and Chinese blades, far surpassing these and perfectly adapted to their martial needs. By the time of the second invasion the katana could take on any Mongol warrior. They also improved on European-imported technologies: during the brief period of time during which they used firearms for warfare they greatly improved the European's original models.[5] This pattern is replicated across Japanese culture, whether it be technology or cultural practices. Much the same applies to the cultivation of excellence through various praxes, many of them performative. Accordingly, in Japan we find an advantageous way to continue this inquiry, specifically, in its *dō*. As arts of self-cultivation, *dō* are outstanding contemplative *and* active paths toward excellence: they combine theory and praxis, and moreover seek to integrate and refine a genuinely holistic and enactive bodymind. In fact, the argument is that philosophical analysis from this Eastern perspective of sport and other performative pursuits, particularly in their most refined expression, can bypass the mind-body problem and traditional western ontology. Rather than dueling with it on ontological grounds, a deft sidestepping à la *Aikidō* can redirect the momentum toward functionality and a personalized view of any individual's holistic integration.

This essay takes up again one argument laid out in the opening essay, *Nothing New Under the Sun.* Therein, it was discussed how Reid (2012), along with MacIntyre (1984), argued that virtues and skills differ because the former can be expressed in various ways whereas the latter have very narrow applications. Generally true for most people in many situations, the stated intention was to reclaim a thick and vigorous normativity for skills. In *refined* expressions, skills are virtuous because they make the virtues realizable, while the virtues display the skills in their fullest form. Given our holistic commitments, virtue and skill *can* be continuous wholes distinguishable only conceptually. Those are instances of skillful and fluent striving. The following shows that, even more than an ideal to inspire us, this vision is actually *already* embedded in concrete practices (which does not mean that particular manifestations may not fall short of these practices' own ideals). As such it is even more inspiring because we find the ideal incarnate in outstanding individuals. While we were "riding the wind" in the seventh essay, this skillful fluency was connected with a radically enactive spontaneity that is cognitively contentless. Presently, we fill this void with nothing(ness).

We begin with Japanese ideas as they relate to a holistic bodymind, contemplating the many ways these allow to engage the bodymind. Following this, we explore the ways Japanese *dō* cultivate our skills and character. Nishida 's thought acts as a bridge between *dō* and our skillful strivings as we endeavor for perfected execution. Then, we expound on spontaneity, and show how these arts, in particular the way of the sword, are theoretically wise concerning expert skill, cohere with contentless cognition, and are practically shrewd as a remedy for fractured performance. This closes with a comparison between martial arts and sports primarily.

1. *The Japanese Integrative Bodymind*

The Japanese conception of bodymind follows closely the Chinese one as described in *Zhuangzi – Playful Wanderer*. Japanese people call the bodymind *shin*, and use the same pictogram, 心 (called a *kanji* in Japanese). Nonetheless, Japanese culture affords a level of discrimination regarding the holistic bodymind that, in consonance with the opening paragraph, is nothing short of astounding. Francisco Varela bemoaned the fact that English, compared to German, lacks the convenient distinction between the body as lived and vital, *leib,* and the material, purely physical body, *körper* (2013). This is but the most basic distinction the Japanese draw. The objective of this section is to review the Japanese view on the bodymind and explore the remarkable affinity with thick holism and the "existential pedagogy" that animates both. It furnishes us with outstanding descriptive and classificatory possibilities.

The Japanese have developed a sophisticated taxonomy that emphasizes functional aspects of the bodymind over ontological classification. That is, various factors—kinaesthetic, organic, performative, cultural, social, and political—specify the role that the bodymind plays.[6] The following presents the most crucial categorizations pertinent for this section, although more aspects could be discussed. Redolent of a target with its concentric circles, this begins with the "individual" spaces and gradually expands its scope to social ones. Unlike the target, there are no clear or specific demarcating lines, and rather than being a two-dimensional affair this is a multi-dimensional phenomenon with psychophysical, spatial, social, and temporal/historical expressions.

In consonance with the Germanic distinction, the Japanese use *karada* (体) to capture the idea of the Greek *soma* or anatomical body, and *shintai* (身体) to refer to the acting and lived human body (this is analogous to the Chinese notion of shen (身). *Shintai* is obviously suitable to discuss performative skills. Presently, rather than lived body, and to keep consistently with the emphasis on the gerund, it is preferable to render *shintai* as *living* body. Were we discussing the performance of a table tennis player, say his quick reflexes and hand-eye coordination, *shintai* would be the term to use; describing the muscles and tendons involved in the gripping of the racket, *karada* is applicable. Yet, and expanding on the Germanic notion, even *karada* is amenable to being coupled with living processes in some contexts without eliding into *shintai*. Fukumoto Maaya (2013) discussed how *karada-hogushi,* a pedagogical technique introduced in Japanese physical education classes, seeks to heighten awareness of the bodymind processes, improved bodily regulation, and enhancement of communication skills.[7] In other words, *karada* – as the soma – can also be part of a dynamic pedagogy as anatomical and biomechanical structures are contextualized within techniques that rely on *shintai*. This is similar to the Chinese *xing* (形) as bodily shape engaged in movement. When they wish to specify the psyche, the Japanese use *shin*, (神) and "is indicative "of the 'core' of the mind, as exemplified by "*sei-shin* (精神 = energy + mind = psychological)." (Sakai and Bennett 2010, 147) *Seishin*, is sometimes translated as 'spirit,' but as Yuasa Yasuo specifies, unlike the disembodiment it suggests in the West, it actually "means both material and spiritual energy" (1993, 197 n. 5).[8] Ortega's (essay 4) phenomenological analysis of 'spirit' as involving both cognition and volition, 'soul' implicating feelings, and 'vitality' as concerned with sensations is well aligned with this framework where what matter are functional continuities and not ontological entities. In this case, *seishin* is concerned with the nervousness of a cliff diver as she is about dive from 20 meters. High cliff

diving gives pause to even the most seasoned professional. Orlando Duque, with nine world championships and two Guinness world records avows how before each jump he is seriously worried—until he jumps (Murphy and Yasukawa 2013). It is not simply the very idea of the jump, or the apprehension or anxiety, but how the trepidation is actually felt: it resonates kinesthetically radiating outwardly from the abdomen. Put otherwise, anxiety (or elation) is not at one extreme of the body(mind) (the 'mental' in a non-holistic framework) but rather is experienced as part of a fulsome animate being.

The closer counterpart to the minimal notion of a holistic bodymind presently operative is the Japanese *shinshin* (心身). It stands for an *integrative* bodymind where the three former notions are functionally incorporated and regulated in virtue of how they are executed performatively. In this case, and indicative of the continuity that underlies bodymind functions, the kanji are homophonous: respectively they refer to 'mind' (心) and 'body' (身). But, they work in unison and context also imbues them with a flexibility that, as with *karada,* means that they are not statically grounded as either soma or psyche.[9] In fact, and very expediently, *shinshin* can also emphasize the requisite bodymind function as needed. Reversing the order of the kanji stresses one or the other aspect. Thus, 心身 has a tendency to emphasizes the 'mindful' function, whereas 身心 accentuates the bodily facet. Again, these are never split as autonomous and separate entities; they are functionally continuous and in a dynamic process of integration or disintegration. The convention of parenthetic bracketing regarding the bodymind and thick holism amenably coheres with this analysis. Body(mind) then is functionally equivalent to 身心, and (Body)mind is so for 心身. When emphasizing a gymnast's anxiety and loss of concentration on the balance beam, (body)mind – 心身 characterizes this, as the psychic supersedes the bodily; when the increasing pain in a runner's hamstring sets off thoughts of self-doubt, Body(mind) – 身心 indicates where the imbalance is accentuated. Of course, given the dynamic nature of our comings and goings, these can, and often do, change quickly. E.g., pain in the hamstring can set off worries that may in turn cause more tension in the leg, and so on, with the corresponding switches of emphasis in the bodymind dynamics.

These Japanese terms bring a level of refinement, precision, and terseness not possible in Indo-European languages.[10] To give this more bite, oftentimes translation of Japanese texts lose these nuances. For instance, Yuasa's book title, which would refer to *shintai,* is translated simply as *The Body* (1987). The richness and subtlety of his analysis and taxonomy are a translator's nightmare; they are also the readers' loss every time they encounter the word 'body' and the usual associations with the objectified *karada* or *körper* are elicited. When reading translations from Japanese texts, it is therefore advisable to keep forefront that terms like 'body,' 'mind,' or 'spirit' rarely have Western connotations. The easiest way to handle this is to simply realize that *any* of them are holistic. In one way or another they concern the bodymind but simply emphasize different functional aspects.

Most notably, this integration is not a factum but something we are to achieve. It is integrative rather than integrated because the latter suggests an achievement, whereas the former specifies this as an ongoing process: it is integrative in the sense that the unification of the bodymind comes in various degrees and is subject to a continuous process of either improvement or deterioration, much as an athlete's form. In the context of skills, actual performance is required.

It is through the very execution that our skills 'become, ' not only giving evidence of integration to others and us, but above all because they can only happen through performance. On the tennis court we cannot simply think our way to a *perfected* smash. At its highest level there is a specific characterization, *shinshin ichinyo* (心身一如), which can be translated as 'oneness of bodymind.' It seeks Zhuangzian spontaneity through discipline, and for Yuasa, it leads to superior execution (1987, 200). At this level, the performer, putatively in a state of *mushin* (無心; *wushin* in Chinese) unfolds as a non-deliberative acting intuition as per Nishida Kitarō (section 2) where action and judgment, will, thought, and emotion fluidly coalesce. A master *kendōka* (剣道家) parrying an attack and instantaneously responding with a simultaneous riposte and countercut operates as harmonized bodymind. Its opposite counterpart is not the mere lack of skills, as it may be supposed, but the choke and its failure of already mastered skill. Dewey is right at home here. Shusterman exposes how Dewey's bodymind, rather than ontological is a "progressive goal of dynamic, harmonious functioning that we should continually strive to attain" where "integration is an achievement rather than a datum" (2008, 165).

Additionally, *kokoro* captures our bodymind's ever-present emotional tonality. It is another functional term with very strong affective connotations. It proves difficult to translate; Saito Yuriko translates it as essence or spirit (1985). While this is adequate to suggest a general sense for her purposes, it needs refinement. Its conceptual range makes it coterminous with *shinshin*, but it emphasizes the emotional component and relates it to our willfulness. As such, it is closer to the original pictogram of the heart pumping blood, and fittingly uses the same kanji 心 to denote it. We can speak of someone having a big or small *kokoro* as someone having more or less courage, for instance. Describing the serenity of the target shooter to remain calm as the clock time runs would rely on *kokoro.* It is a particularly important concept in Japanese aesthetics and its arts, where its function is to enable us to sympathize with natural objects and situations (Saito 1985). This means that it is ecologically broader, and that its sphere of applicability extends from our self and into the environment, social and natural.

The wider social context, as noted at various points, is crucial for the refinement of skills and the very existence of those manifested through specific sports, martial arts, and performative endeavors. There are also unique Japanese terms to describe our bodymind from the social perspective; these are situated notions cognitively speaking. Two are relevant now: *mi* (身), and *mi bun* (身分). Simply – if a bit loosely – *mi* denotes the personal facet, and *bun* the social one. *Mi* refers to *our* bodymind as socialized.[11] In other words, it is our deportment, the appearance and bearing with which we conduct ourselves, including our very way of moving. It is imbued with ethical connotations and also assesses character in relation to behavioral cues and actions. In the West we say that the eyes are the "window to the soul" or that someone's character is "etched on their face". Poetic as these are, they are less apt to capture the complex relation between character, body, and socialization. The former's appeal to the immaterial soul places a veil of mystery while the latter simply alludes to the process that has etched character the way rain shapes the passive rock. Our character is shaped actively however, by our habits and our interactions with the broader socio-historical environment. When a rider becomes the *patró*n or boss of the Tour de France after years of domination, as Eddy Merckx, Bernard Hinault, or Miguel Induráin did, it is not only the distinctive yellow jersey that marks them. The way they carry themselves in the *peloton*, projecting confidence, means that other riders move aside as the *patró*n moves around the pack. *Mi* affords normative judgments in terms of ethical comportment

as virtuous or vicious, or other personal qualities, as when we assess someone as thoughtful or kind. In short, *mi* perceptually and performatively manifests *our* qualities to others.

Looking at this now *from* the others' perspective readily leads to the intersubjective term of *mi bun*. It adds more explicit and richer social and political connotations that require familiarity with institutions and cultural mores. This time, *mi bun* captures our social standing, and includes not just our bearing and behavior as in *mi*, but also our clothing, hairstyle, and other marks of social station such as kind and quality of professional implements. This would permit to differentiate between samurai(侍), literally those who serve, and *ashigaru* (足軽), regular levied troops, for example. The former would not only behave and walk differently, demanding deference by those of lower status; they would be dressed more smartly and carry two swords rather than one or none. *Mi bun* then brings into play sociopolitical assessments. Originally, in Japan's feudal caste system, it was tied to social class, and it denoted higher or lower status. In contemporary Japan (and elsewhere where there are no castes), we can connect this more deeply to social respect as warranted by our achievements also. For instance, in the context of sports, consider a softball or baseball coach and her or his players. They stand in this relation of respect in virtue of station, demeanor, attitude, and in recognition of expertise and accomplishments. One last point is that to discriminate suitable attributes *bun* requires to be privy to apposite social and historical connotations, i.e., we can ascribe to the softball or baseball players a samurai spirit, or aretē to a track athlete, *only if* we know enough about samurai and bushidō, or understand the role the Ancient Greek ideal played for the Greeks.

We can analyze these psychosocial aspects of the bodymind further, and see how the personal *mi* facet happens in and through the social one from the very beginning (the historical component is explored further in *Everything Mysterious Under the Moon* in connection with generative phenomenology). Our unique morphological characteristics are affordances and constraints that no doubt restrict as much as enable the ways we can move: a longer or shorter Achilles tendon gives more or less bounce and elasticity to how we run or jump. But, the incisive work of French anthropologist Marcel Mauss (1950) shows how our upbringing within a specific society gives us our basic movement patterns, bringing affordances and constraints of its own.[1] Clearly, we learn through and from others how to walk, swim, or use eating utensils, and this within a set of synchronized patterns, as Thelen and Smith's (1995) work on dynamic systems shows. There are, moreover, culturally prevalent ways of walking or swimming that we adopt and to which we sync up as we develop our habits through instruction, overt or implicit. For instance, American women walked very differently than French women in the 1930's, and Japanese people swam with different stroke styles than European ones (Mauss 1950). This takes place not only during our childhood, but also anytime we become habituated to a new practice, e.g., the varied ways armies march in different countries.

The martial, performing, and sports worlds clearly demonstrate these social patternings. In the martial arts, Kono Yoshinori, the most renown Japanese sensei of *koryū* (古流), literally 'old style,' or traditional martial arts that hark back before the Meiji Restoration (1868), illustrates the intricacies of Mauss' ideas. He describes how martial arts instruction brought deep changes to

[1] He directly influenced Michel Foucault's ideas on the care of the self (1988) and power (1979; 1980) and Pierre Bordieu's on the *habitus* (1984). See Ilundáin-Agurruza 2008 for an analysis of the Athletic body and the bodies of athletes in terms of aesthetics and power relations.

the pupils' movements (Tamaki 2010). In a recent video Kono shows how the 'ancient' martial artists avoided twisting, bracing, and energy build-up, staples of today's martial arts (Kono and Geikiryudo 2012). Samurai had a peculiar way of walking, legs spread apart and with a low center of gravity focused on the *hara* (腹) or lower abdomen, always on the ready. They also held the sword differently than nowadays is taught, with the hands close together and near the *tsuba* (鍔), guard, rather than apart and further from the guard. These were the normal and established patterns that samurai adopted that Kono tries to inculcate. Educated eyes can pick out different and distinctive ways of running, swimming, dancing, fighting, or playing a game. For instance, consider the distinctive Brazilian creative *jogo bonito* style of playing football, with its genial and jovial spontaneity (excepting the recent tenure of national coach Luis Felipe Scolari); in the world of dance, choreographers' 'progeny' is remarkably patent as we see with Merce Cunningham's, Pina Bausch's, or Alvin Ailey's dancers. In today's ever more globalized world, fashions spread and bring more or less uniformity precisely in this way; acculturation provides for and shapes our habits (of course, this does not determine how we may personally modulate them). This offers further insight into how a "kinetic lineage" may be inherited (see *Zhuangzi – Playful Wanderer*), with players inheriting kinetic patternings from *sensei*, mentors, or schools. The opening citation in that essay described how Izzy, a teammate of Skrimshander, mirrored the former's batting stance just as Skrimmer evoked Aparicio's stance. *Mi* (and) *bun* capture and probe the complex personal but culturally modulated qualities of our bodymind and our performances.

This level of discrimination and ability to describe our bodymind provides a better way to conceptualize its dynamics, if not by adopting the terminology, then at least by showing us the conceptual spaces and explicitly making us aware of them. The terminological exactitude also affords further analytic precision. Shusterman (2008) points out that Dewey measured a culture as more civilized the less it differentiated between the mental and the physical. Japanese culture would be the zenith for the pragmatist, then. This nomenclature also offers interpretive possibilities that cannot be fully pursued presently. But to sketchily discuss one to suggest the tantalizing prospects, we can profitably relate *kokoro* to scholar Motoori Norinaga's (1730-1801) influential theory of *mono no aware* (物の哀れ). Saito Yuriko translates *mono no aware* as 'sensitivity or pathos of things', which "refers to the essential experience of sympathetic identification with natural objects or situations." (1985, 243) It basically permits an empathic identification where our emotional state matches or is attuned to the situation. This ability to harmonize with the state of a natural object or a situation can be adapted to the sporting and martial scenario in terms of attunement between whitewater kayaker and water, climber and mountain, cyclist and mountain pass or trail, or martial artist and sword. Further, this also offers interesting possibilities to reconceptualize the normative ethical and aesthetic unity, being conceived performatively and in terms of achievement.

The elucidations in *Riding the Wind* on *kalon* and *kalokagathia* are pertinent in this contest also. Similar interpretations and connections are possible for the above terms. The main idea to highlight, pursued next in more depth, is that the bodymind unity is conceived as a performative achievement. Unsurprisingly this accords with Dewey, for whom, let us recall, "Integration is an achievement rather than a datum." (1988, 30) Moreover, as Asian scholar Roger Ames writes, "the body is a variable statement of meaning and value achieved in effort to refine and enhance human life within the changing parameters of context." (1993, 166) While he asserts this in the

context of Chinese philosophy, the trickle effect to this exposition is clear. The context of the arts of self-cultivation will detail how discipline and dedication affect the meanings of the bodymind.

Some preliminary distinctions between West and East frame this examination. Mainstream views in the West have tendency to consider matters ontologically. The relation between and the metaphysical status of the mind and the body abut on the hard problem of consciousness (Chalmers 1995). In Japan, however, Kasulis and Nagatomo expound in their introduction to Yuasa's work, theories focus on performances and achievements, and study baseball and batting over simpler actions such as spontaneously raising an arm to demonstrate non-determined movement (Yuasa 1987). The questions they raise are threefold, "What are the relationships among the intellectual *theory* of the swing, the somatic *practice* of the swing, and the integrated *achievemen*t of the skill?" (Yuasa 1987, 4, their emphasis) This helps highlight three ideas.

First, the view that this integration is about achievement: different people are at different stages of bodymind integrative harmony and more or less advanced levels of proficient action. In the West the average performer establishes the norm and is the object of study. We see this in the numerous studies in biomechanics and physiology that draw general conclusions from target populations. Moreover, Kasulis and Nagatomo explain how the focus falls on the universal rather than the exceptional and, interestingly, also the diseased or pathological is what captures the attention of most researchers (Yuasa 1987). There are good reasons for this, as Gallagher and Zahavi argue, "Pathological cases can function heuristically to make manifest what is normally or simply taken for granted" to gain distance from the familiar (2008:140). And yet, there is something to be said for considering the exceptional. As Yuasa explains, Japan favors exemplary individuals who excel and embrace *shugyō* (lifelong practice, see below*):*

> the traditional Eastern pattern of thinking takes as its standard people who after a long period of training have acquired a higher capacity than the average person, rather than the average condition of most people. It proceeds to investigate the mind-body relationship in light of exceptional cases such as, for example, a genius or the masters of various disciplines. (1993, 61)

These exceptional cases establish the norm. Here 'norm,' then does not take on the sense of 'average,' but rather is to be taken as the norm to be followed. It is normative, and as such it can be inspiring. "It is both the ideal state and the potential state which promise a *possibility* to all people." (Yuasa 1993, 62-63 his emphasis)

Second, the underlying assumption is that, "we are capable of increasing levels of integration" (Kasulis 1993, 298). The level of bodymind integration that a beginner sailor has developed is incomparably far less developed than, for example, Ellen MaCarthur. In 2005 she broke the record for the fastest solo sailing circumnavigation of the globe. We can echo Kasulis words, adapted to our purposes, and wonder about how strange it is that Occidental philosophy assumes that the bodymind is equally integrated in both sailors. And third, this framework also means that we can test this integration through actions. We actually see how we perform, and this readily informs us as to our level of integration just as athletic competition bears witness to our ability in that context.[12] This is relevant, because oftentimes one hears claims about mysterious, private, and occult "mental" powers. Before forging ahead, it bears saying that there are many

and rich points of contact between East and West, as this project itself shows. Nonetheless, it is in the differences that we find insights for now.

There is a deep Buddhist framework on which Japanese thought builds. Two Buddhist monks stand out because of their philosophical and phenomenologically sophisticated writings: Shingon school founder Kūkai (774-835 C.E.) and Soto Zen patriarch Dōgen (1200-1253 C.E.). Both, idiosyncratically, emphasized the key role of the *living* bodymind, *shintai*, as it develops toward the integration of *shinshin ichinyo,* the oneness of bodymind that seeks spontaneity through discipline and results in superior execution. For Kūkai we become Buddha through our very *shintai*; Dōgen stresses the role of seated meditation, *shikan taza* (只管打坐), thereby emphasizing the role of practice, bringing in the notion of achievement as part of the process, and a Zhuangzian self-forgetting.[13] As a practitioner progresses from the initial insight of *kenshō* (見性) toward *satori* (悟り – *samādhi* in Sanskrit), and ultimate enlightenment, the idea is to remove (sa) distinctions (tori) to attain an absolute stillness where the dichotomy of body and mind falls off and subject and object unite.[14] Person and movement, agent and action, become one. This is decidedly and radically enactive as it is best accounted for in terms of capacities and contentless cognition. Eugen Herrigel writes in his famed *Zen in the Art of Archery*, "bow, arrow, goal and ego, all melt into one another, so that I can no longer separate them. And even then the need to separate them has gone […] Now at last, the Master broke in. "The bowstring has cut right through you." (1989, 61) Suzuki Daisetz, in his preface to Herrigel's book says that,

> In the case of archery, the hitter and the hit are no longer two opposing objects, but are one reality. The archer ceases to be conscious of himself as the one who is engaged in hitting the bull's-eye which confronts him. This state of unconsciousness is realized only when, completely empty and rid of the self, he becomes one with the perfecting of his technical skill" (Herrigel 1989, viii).

Herrigel then explains that state of mind sought is "charged with spiritual awareness and is therefore also called "right presence of mind." This means that the mind or spirit is present everywhere, because it is nowhere attached to any particular place." (1989, 37)

The esoteric flavor of such statements needs to be unpacked if we are to engage them with a philosophical rigor that leads to a better understanding.[15] What does it mean to become one with any object, movement, or action? How does the mind not reside anywhere? As Hyland (1990) elucidates there is a certain aura of inaccessibility due to Zen's rhetoric. Moreover, Shoji Yamada (2001) also casts doubt on the accuracy of Herrigel's account, arguing that the Zen aspect of his *kyudō* (弓道), way of the bow, training is overwrought since his sensei Kenzo Awa was just beginning to develop his ideas. There are two sides to East Asian esotericism from a Western perspective. One results from the expected difficulties of translation between such divergent languages and lack of familiarity with the traditions that inform these statements. Language and concepts that would be readily clear to many in East Asia sound arcane. But this is no different from how much of the West's philosophical or Judeo-Christian tradition would have sounded to the Japanese in the 20th century. This is largely a cultural matter that suitable contextualization can redress to a large extent. The other side pertains to dubious claims of mysterious functions, powers, or abilities that defy belief. Tales of lore are indeed embellished, and what was perhaps a warrior's victory over half a dozen adversaries becomes an army. *Ki* or

qi 氣, life force or vital energy (Japanese and Chinese transliterations respectively), already discussed with Zhuangzi, elicits much skepticism also. Some claims, particularly when connected with geomancy (earth divination) and divining powers, are indeed dubious. Yet much of it is similar to how we explain bodily processes in terms of energy and electrical and chemical signals (which many Westerners understand nothing about beyond their familiarity with the electric current that powers their gadgets and homes). Next, Yuasa helps refine and elucidate *dō* and set up the subsequent discussion in section 3 of Nishida's complex views, which help explain how this seemingly mysterious unity and presence of mind comes to be.

2. *The arts of self-cultivation – Japanese Dō and the Path of Skillful Striving*

Japanese *dō* are paths toward excellence. Contemplative and *active*, they also integrate theory and praxis. Prominent examples, some already enumerated in *Nothing New Under the Sun*, are *sodō* (書道), art of calligraphy, *Nō* (能) acting, *yakimono* (陶磁), art of pottery, *chanoyu* (茶の湯), *sadō, or chadō* (茶道) which refer to the way of tea, *ikebana*(生け花) or *kadō* (華道), art of flower arrangement, and of course, martial arts such as *Kyudō*, sumo (相撲) wrestling, and *kendō* (剣道) as the way of the sword. Each *dō* has methodological particularities that amount to different routes to the same ultimate goal. In a deep sense, *dō* realize an old saying known as *mumonkan* (無門關),The Gateless Gate: "The Great Way is gateless/Approached in a thousand ways/Once past this checkpoint /You stride through the Universe" (Sekida 2005, 26). They are all methods, ways, to get to enlightenment should they be engaged properly.

These paths are remarkable practical and normative ways that impart ethical, aesthetic, and existential principles and values. Steeped in the millennial Eastern traditions of *Shintō,* Confucianism, and Buddhism, particularly the latter's quintessential Japanese manifestation of Zen, they are soteriological practices in so far as they seek enlightenment through personal perfection. Yamamoto Tsunetomo (1659-1719) stated, "Throughout your life advance daily, becoming more skillful than yesterday, more skillful than today. This is *never* ending." (1979, 27, my emphasis) In advance of the later focus on swordsmanship,[16] we can conceive of the process of engaging in a *dō* as self-cultivation much like the making of a sword blade, which can be a path. Ueshiba Morihei, founder of *Aikidō* (合気道), the way of harmonious spirit, affirms that, "iron is full of impurities that weaken it, through forging, it becomes steel and is transformed into a razor-sharp sword. Human Beings develop in the same fashion." (1992, 56) Ueshiba is thinking of how swordsmiths refine the steel by pounding and folding it to the count of several million layers, a process called *tanren* (鍛錬), which translates as disciplining or forging. This perfection is an ideal to be sought endlessly, as Tsunetomo says. Staying with theme of the blade, renown swordsmith Kunihira Kawachi inscribed in the tang of a Katana "discipline your mind with this sword," (Kawachi & Manabe 2006, 27); and Michael Bell, who continues Yoshihara Yoshindo's lineage of sword making writes that, "when I polish a sword several hours a day for three months, I am polishing my soul." (2012)[17] Ueshiba summarizes this ethos nicely, "Those who are enlightened never stop polishing themselves" (1992, 52). As performative praxes, that is, activities that need to be performed, these are not simply paths to enlightenment, but enlightenment in themselves; something Kasulis corroborates from a different angle (1993). The very procedures, techniques and movements *constitute* the path (hence also the specificity).

How one must understand praxis in this context is as a mode of expression and not a technique to achieve a goal (Kasulis, 1993). It is telling that religious practice halls, and those of other *dō* such as martial arts ones, are called *dōjō* (道場). Its Sanskrit roots mean "place of enlightenment" (Suzuki 1993, 128). To sum up, following the path of a *dō* means engaging an enlightening practice reflectively and with full dedication. And this, for a *long* time—ideally for a lifetime. This lifelong dedication, framed by specific standards of excellence takes us to the realm of *shugyō* (修行).

Usually rendered as lifelong self-cultivation, *shugyō* is a complex concept. It derives originally form the Buddhist practice of *sennichi shugyō* (千日修行), one thousand days of practice. Embedded in traditional *dō*, s*hugyō* objectively and performatively grounds excellence. In essence, it is an endeavor to excel in a lifelong commitment (this does not mean one has to stay with one particular practice; it is about the habit). It begins by training the living body, *shintai*. And generally, it happens in and through movement however deft or delicate this may be, as the just-so turning of a wrist in *sodō, the* art of calligraphy. It involves our bodymind and demands relentless dedication to generate that elusive integration that seeks to avoid either body(mind) or (body)mind imbalances. As Robert Carter specifies, "It is never a casual undertaking but an ultimately serious journey as some form of spiritual awakening, or realization" (2008, 4). Sakai and Bennett cite *kendo* master Moriji Mochida,

> It took me fifty years to learn the fundamentals of kendo with my body. It was not until turning fifty that I started true kendo training. It was then that I could do kendo with all my heart (*kokoro*). When I became sixty, my legs and back weakened. It was my spirit that enabled me to compensate for this weakness […] When I become seventy years of age, my entire body weakened. The next step was to train by not moving the spirit […] When I turned eighty, I achieved a state of immovable spirit, but sometimes random thoughts entered my mind. I continue striving to eradicate such superfluous thoughts. (2010, 325)

This clearly exemplifies the kind of endeavor that *shugyō* demands. Even when one's faculties diminish because of age or illness, one adapts and presses on. As it is clarified below, in the end it is not about prowess or technique but mastery over oneself. This requires a habit, dedication, and discipline that few are willing or able to endure. Sport philosopher Abe Shinobu says regarding his own *kendō* practice, "I see practice as a never-ending struggle with myself to correct my faults" (1986, 47). Musashi Miyamoto (1584-1645), Japan's most renowned swordsman, won sixty duels to the death (some against multiple combatants) between the ages of 14 and 29. Luckily for his would be challengers, Musashi had an epiphany and never killed any one else. Instead, he simply outmaneuvered opponents with a *bokken,* 木剣 (wooden sword). In his *Go Rin No Sho* (五輪書), *Book of Five Rings*, he tells that it was not until he turned 30 that he realized he was lacking in true understanding; training from morning until night he was 50 when he finally saw the deepest secrets (Sakai & Bennett 2010; Scott Wilson 2004; Tokitsu 2004). At the end of the Scroll of Water Musashi writes, "A thousand days of training to develop, ten thousand days of training to polish." (Tokitsu 2004, 167) The former number is famously tied to empirical research, which establishes either 10 years or 10,000 hours of deliberate practice (Ericsson, Krampe & Tesch-Römer 1993). But, the second one is equivalent

to about thirty years of eight-hour days. Musashi did train relentlessly everyday until his death. He also appreciated all too well that such prowess is subject to the ebbs and flows of 'being in form.' During his later years he pursued, quite successfully, other arts such as painting or sculpture. Perhaps, a popular saying attributed to various people can help think of this in a brighter manner: "We do not stop playing because we grow old, we grow old because we stop playing."[18] *Shugyō* then is this eternal spirit to remain playfully dedicated. Such dedication is in itself formative and normative, it builds character. Carter's assessment is that, "There is nothing like these understanding in the West, which does not employ its arts and crafts, or its sports to achieve spiritual self-transformation." (2008, 4) Now, because of its centrality in Japanese *dō* and for this project, as well as its inherent complexity and difficult translation, it is important to provide detailed analysis and contextualization.

The kanji for *shugyō* derive from the Chinese characters "to master" and "practice," so literally it means to master a practice (Yuasa 1993, 196 n.1) As Yuasa's translators Nagatomo and Hull clarify, the term 'self' is not part of this, and is adopted in deference to the West's individualistic orientation (ibid). This works for the initial stages of the process but because the ultimate goal is to achieve the state of 'no-mind" or "no-self" it does not do justice to the full meaning of the original phrase." (Ibid.) Yuasa further considers the adequacy of 'cultivation,' its connection with tilling the land and raising crops, and related notions like refinement and education. He then concludes, "It appears difficult for European languages to express the connotations by the Japanese word […] which carries the sense of strengthening the mind (spirit) and enhancing the personality, as a human being, by training the body." (Yuasa 1993, 10) (Here *seishin* and *shintai* are the pertinent words for 'spirit' and 'body'; (body)mind and living body(mind) respectively.) He considers 'austerity' and 'asceticism' but rules against them on account of their dualistic roots in monastic values that chastised the body. Self-cultivation is the default, if somewhat misleading, translation adopted in the literature.

In order to sidestep these complexities, *shugyō* is reformulated in a way that situates it with the aims of this project as a resilient and enduring *skillful striving*. The applicable notion of resilience is derived from J. S Russell's (2014) insightful analysis of this virtue. His working definition sees resilience "as the ability to come back from or to respond effectively to some sort of setback, failure, or adversity," and further considers that it is "arguably the central virtue in sport." (Ibid.) Indeed, resilience is a virtue that sports, martial arts, and life need in spades—but competitive sport particularly so. The notion of endurance is related to resilience, but emphasizes the fact that this is for the *long* run. The Japanese saying cited in the previous essay, "Seven times down, eight times up!" becomes fully meaningful in the context of *shugyō*. It is not about "toughing it out" for the duration of a long and hard event, not even a three-week bicycle race or a Himalayan summit attempt that might take weeks in deplorable conditions; tenacity is more appropriate in these cases. It is about enduring significant adversity over a considerable span of our life and fostering this virtue over its whole course. This is an ethos that is Orteguian to the core (as seen in essays 4 and 8) we are to persevere even when we (know that we) are destined to suffer shipwreck. Finally, *shugyō* is also about developing and refining skills with which to tackle challenges.

Life requires performative skills, and *dō* are precisely such endeavors. In the context of these endeavors, and in terms of how the bodymind is engaged, we can conceptually distinguish two

main emphases: a) a body(mind), for example, morphologically, the strong and lean legs of runners, the muscular torsos of gymnasts; or kinetically, in the way we move, say energetically, lethargically, elastically, and b) as (body)mind that expresses our *ki*, inner energy (our vitality *and* soul for Ortega). These two modes give us our kinetic signature—the uniquely personal mien with which we impart our movements. When harmonized we get a holistically fluid bodymind. Ueshiba writes, "A good stance and posture reflect a proper state of mind." (1992, 68) In this case, *mi*, how we carry ourselves reflects our *seishin* (not forgetting its connection to *shintai*, the living body). This bearing is the result of our habits, as Dewey would emphasize. Last, it is something we strive to achieve. *Shugyō* is modulated according to our talents and limitations. This also elicits an Orteguian attitude where we do our best given our abilities when what counts is the quality of the effort. In agreement, Ueshiba states: "Everyone has a spirit that can be refined, a body that can be trained in some manner, a suitable path to follow." (1992, 13) These further show the genuine and rich conceptual overlaps between *shugyō* and this project, further supporting its rendition as 'skillful striving.'

With *shugyō* and self-cultivation recast as skillful striving we can further explore its implications and its connection with *dō*. Given its epiphanic qualities, existentially rich gnostic truths are readily available within its framework. These truths are tightly bound with how we feel, with the proprioceptive and kinesthetic dynamics that speak the language of our moving bodies. We pursue certain performative paths because our tastes or preferences are premised on narrative (sometimes theoretical) affinities, affective undertones, and kinetic dimensions that fit our ways-of-feeling-and-moving-in-the-world. They are also performative truths that necessitate being acted out (sometimes to find out whether we are found wanting, sometimes for the sheer joy of it). Hence, *shugyō* grounds excellence performatively while circumventing reductionist temptations and tendencies, and emphasizes the Jamesian continuities in our experiences. In short, the goal is the holistic development of the person and her abilities, where holism means bodymind integration within an ecologically and socially rich context.

Shugyō has a strong normative dimension, both ethical and aesthetic. In its skillful striving after personal perfection it follows specific standards of excellence. Thus, beyond, or rather, behind, lies a community that provides said standards and values. Given the scope of *shugyō*, its congruence with MacIntyre's (1984) argument that virtue should be expressed across one's life in a uniform way is noteworthy. In the case of *dō* it involves, particularly if not uniquely, those virtues inscribed in *bushidō* inherited from a larger socio-historical context. Emphasizing process and reflection, *shugyō* becomes truly educational in its aspiration to bring out the best in us. With this difference in mind, we can consider just how skills (and not just virtues) become normatively rich and extend over our life in the context of *dō*. In the setting of the Confucian virtue of *li* (礼), Ames highlights how rites and rituals can provide order and allow to formalize natural processes as rules of conduct in a way that "integration represented by physical efficacy is a characteristic of the consummating person" (1993, 167). Analogously, performative *dō* become formalized kinetically and through bodymind functions.

Robert Carter stresses the normativity of *dō*. He premises *The Japanese Arts of Self-Cultivation* on the hypothesis that "ethics is primarily taught through the various arts, and not learned as an abstract theory" (2008, 2). He explains further that in Japan ethics falls within the scope of virtue ethics, centered on character, rather than dealing with metaethical disquisition on criteria

for right or wrong actions (ibid.). And, expanding on the idea mentioned above that these paths are themselves enlightenment, through *shugyō* "each of the arts is a pathway, a road […], and also signifies a way of life […] leading to a transformation of who a person is. In short, each of these arts, *if seriously* engaged in, is itself enlightenment in some form." (Ibid., 3, my emphasis). They are transformative in and of themselves. The very way of engaging *dō* means their constitutive skills can be virtuous in two ways. First, the mode, manner, and attitude when performing the various skills can be virtuous themselves. Under the aegis of *bushidō*, tasks are accomplished with an explicit and pervasive sense of honor and service, in this case to the task and the way. It is very much like the Orteguian *pundonor* (essay 4), a high sense of honor in doing things in the best possible way. The second way – more controversial but interesting – is that the very skills enact virtuous dispositions, or rather, that in enacting themselves they become virtues. This is a matter of performing mindfully in the present, with dedication to perfected execution and technique, *and* engaging the practice reflectively afterwards such that insights coalesce.

For Aristotle this reduces *aretē* to techn*ē*, which he would object to. If anything, this underscores the difference the underlying socio-cultural milieu and the competing philosophical paradigms make. In an Ancient Greek context, and under an Aristotelian framework, such reduction would impoverish *arête*. Yet, in the Japanese context, they enrich each other mutually as the very performative skills are the path or enlightenment itself. Further, the Deweyan sense of deliberation supports the Japanese case in the context of a holistic and enactive account. As we saw with Wallace (essay 1) Dewey's deliberation is exploratory and integrative as it strives to harmonize opposing dispositions (which parallels the pursuit of an integrative bodymind). This does not mean discarding an Aristotelian account of virtue (as pointed out in the first essay, his views of deliberation are applicable in contexts with clearly set goals). In fact, and as the next point shows, there are legitimate points in common.

Putatively, a virtuous character that exercises phronesis is reflective. Issai Chozansi (nom de plume of Chozan Niwa, 1659-1741), a samurai who embodies the *bunbu ryodō* (two ways of sword and pen) to a superlative degree, wrote *Tengu Geijutsuron* (天狗芸術論), the *Demon Sermon of the Martial Arts.* This is a difficult yet discerning work that turns swordsmanship into a diaphanous reflexive practice. He writes, speaking though the mouth of the *Tengu* (Demon),[19] "Generally speaking, the person who has gained proficiency in an art is constantly employing his mind. " (Chozan 2006, 120) Readers will surely think of the many athletes that unfortunately reaffirm the stereotype of being "unthinking blokes." Proficiency then is not to be equated with thoughtfulness generally but exceptionally. Perhaps. But, *now*, we need to realize that a) this 'mind,' as *seishin* or even *kokoro*, *still* is incarnate; b) this applies to *dō*, not sports; c) it involves *shugyō* not *keikō* (稽古), training; and d) that here the purported mind is not a Cartesian one but rather a bodymind in a specific stage of integration and development through apposite skills. Thus, as progress (or regress) is made, this reflexivity happens through the body(mind) not just the (body)mind.

Accordingly, technique, implemented through the various *waza* (技)*,* specific and specified techniques, is the means, the very conduit for skillful *and* virtuous practice. The virtue is embodied in the skill in this context. As the *kendōka* (剣道家) performs the various sequences of moves in a *kata* (型), form as choreographed patterns of movements, each movement is

mindfully performed with *pundonor*, and embodies *kalon*. The very movements and the accompanying kinesthetic, kinetic, and proprioceptive dynamics become meaningful patternings where the very performative standards are embedded and felt: these move the *shinai* (竹刀), bamboo sword, in precise sequences where minute deviations are felt, which the *kendōka* endeavors to correct and perfect. Coupled to reflection, technique and principle merge, as Chozan constantly states and explains in many different ways. At one point the *Tengu* explains, "As you become skillful in technique, ch'i harmonizes and the principle of the place that contains that ch'i is manifested on its own. When this has completely penetrated the mind and no more doubts remain, technique and principle become one" (Chozan 2006, 96-97). This integration happens through practice.

Three examples illustrate how the skills as performed movements become virtuous. "The practitioner of the *Jigen-ryū school of* swordsmanship conducts '*Asa ni sanzen, yu ni hassen*,' (3,000 in the morning and 8,000 in the evening) blows with his wooden sword." (Turnbull 2010, 53) These are meant to be 'mindful' blows where the person concentrates her *ki* on each blow. The art of drawing the sword, *iaidō* (居合道) provides another extreme example. In the temple of Hayahizaki there are records of *iai* masters who drew their swords thirty or forty thousand times over several days, with three of them having drawn over ninety thousand times in a week (Tokitsu 2004). Yamaoka Tesshū (1836-1888) was a veritable *kensei* (剣聖),sword saint. This refers to a truly peerless master and implies not only exceptional skill but also a high degree of moral perfection. As Stevens (2001) details, his top students were tested in a ruthless way: a seven day, 1400 set of combat matches (200 a day) with *bokken* (木剣), wooden swords, where the candidate dueled bout after bout against fresh opponents.

Such almost abusive training regimens aim at: a) surpassing one's limits while b) cultivating skillful fluency through bodily integration by c) quieting thought through mindful and strenuous yet precise work to d) teach what cannot be taught verbally because it entails gnostic truths (again another point of contact with the enactive view presently endorsed). Within the context of Buddhist soteriology, each stroke, draw, cut, parry, or countercut whittles away at the self or ego. This renders the performer selfless and enables a state of mindful presence, *mushin* (this egolessness, central to this Japanese paradigm, is clarified with Nishida, and especially in section 4; it also engages enactive bodyminds). Such practice further tested the performer's tenacity. Being a matter of *shugyō* means that resilience will be needed, as life spares no one of turmoil. In the case of Yamaoka's students, this meant bravery to face the fresh opponents knowing that after a few dozen matches the blows would come unstoppable. The overt lessons and reflection that accompany such practice are drilled into the bodymind, literally, through strenuous practice. The moral lesson needs to be performed and felt in the flesh: egolessness is only achieved in the doing and paring away; bravery becomes courage of character as it is pounded in blow by blow.[20] There are no shortcuts.

Merely reading or being told about this, no matter the stature of the *sensei* (先生), master, does not suffice. Chozan recounts the story of an old and slow but matchless cat when it comes to prevailing over a rat that has bested all the cats in the neighborhood and even a sword-wielding samurai (2006). The story concludes with the cat declaring, "A teacher can only transmit a technique or enlighten you to principle, but receiving the truth of the matter is something within yourself." (Chozan 2006, 190) Nonetheless, we should not think that any given *dō* in itself

suffices: our concerns must be broader. The necessary and central role of practice is a banality that sport psychology and cognitive science validate. But as Janelle and Hillman write, the question must "move forward to understanding the *what* and the *how* of practice" (2003, 28). Unless we know how and what to train, the effort could be misspent. We need to take this further.

A truly ecological and holistic model would also add, *why?* A story in the *Liezi* (列子) presents the eponymous Daoist sage as a character where he describes how when he learned archery and became a good shot he asked the opinion of Guanyinzi (関尹子). The latter asked him if he knew *why* he hit the target. As expected, a dumbfounded Lieze replied negatively. Guanyinzi sentenced, "Then you are not good enough yet,"(Lao Tzu et al. 2013, 201). After three years of assiduous practice, he returns to the same question "Do you know *why* you hit the target?" Upon Liezi's affirmative answer Guanyinzi's retort was, "In that case all is well. Hold that knowledge fast, and do not let it slip." (ibid.) Blind commitment to a practice will not suffice.

Realizing these deeper reasons is what makes the practices themselves meaningful in the first place; they are the source of a deeper motivation where it is not merely about shooting the target to bits or getting a medal. In fact, truly facing this 'why' with a gnostic attitude also has consequences for the quality of our performance. Barry Allen (2013) argues that martial arts are unique, compared to sport and dance, in that the intention of the movement is essential for it to count as a genuine successful and beautiful martial arts action. Indeed, there is a certain commitment required to effect some of these movements. In swordsmanship, (in both the East and the West) there are certain techniques that require total commitment. Kim Taylor explains they "require the swordsman to stay directly on the line of attack," we present a target to draw the opponent and wait until he is "committed his swing." (2010, 133) He continues "once this happens, there is little time to react and defeat him […] everything is bet on a single swing and response. There is no room for error or adjustment. They either work or they do not." (Ibid.). We must have very good reasons to do this. Lacking good enough reasons our commitment wavers and we become stale—or are cut down. Anders Ericsson, whose psychological work centers on expertise, writes, "At some point in their career, however, some experts eventually give up their commitment to seek excellence. They stop engaging in deliberate practice and focus only on maintaining their performance, which results in automatism (and "arrested development")." (2003, 65) This marks the point of inflexion where the reasons behind the 'why' do not match the sacrifice. Moreover, this automatization means that we become disengaged from the process, and that our very skills begin to deteriorate. Automatization is useful to drive efficiently to the grocery store while thinking about a project, but it is a death knoll to our creative, flourishing, and inspiring skillful strivings. Better answers to the 'why,' in this context, give us better reasons to become better versions of ourselves.

This way of conceiving a practice then expands the frontiers of the MacInterian view on skills, and addresses the old Aristotelian problem whereby excellence in any given practice does not necessarily lead to overall or moral excellence. Superb artists, outstanding scientists, or wondrous athletes sometimes incarnate moral turpitude. The tight connection between the actual techniques, *waza*, and moral development in Japanese *dō* brings a continuity that leaves no gaps. If a person is to truly exemplify the spirit of the practice, moral excellence is *also* her goal. And technique, as mentioned earlier does not suffice. Carter cites Saotome, "Physical technique is

not the true object, but a tool for personal refinement and spiritual growth" (2008, 46). This growth and refinement are intimately tied to and becomes virtuous as just argued. Therefore, we find moral exemplars and not merely role models. Put differently, exemplarity is already structured as part of the praxes themselves, just as the soteriology toward self-awareness and enlightenment. When the distinction needs to be drawn for the sake of precision and rigor, and with this in place, exemplarity and excellence is henceforth reserved for moral exemplars whose virtues extend beyond the practice, and expert and expertise, and similar epithets are applied to role models within a specific practice (otherwise neutral terms such as 'superb' and the like are used to cover both cases.) To return to the argument, Carter explains that it seems better to think of the goal in terms of self-awareness rather than self-realization, because the former entails an awakening to our selflessness and spontaneous forgetting of the self (1987, 114). This is not only better aligned with the Buddhist ethos but also the objective of *mushin* as means toward that self-awareness.

If so, self-awareness is both process and terminus, and underscores that a) we become more skillful by practicing the skill itself not merely theorizing about it, and b) it is a process with no end in sight except the continuous improvement. Moreover, such enlightenment can take place through martial arts practice. Carl Becker discusses the sense in which enlightenment as world-transforming is grounded in Martial Arts (1982). He speaks of three levels: 1) a basic one where animal movements are turned into martial moves; 2) as ritual that changes the practitioner's mores; and 3) "a more elevated level […where] we gain knowledge of the ebb and flow of the universe itself by forming the forms and dancing the dances of the martial arts." (Becker 1982, 25) This is thickly holistic, as "it is founded upon a different, more wholistic, and more *living* view of the universe" (ibid.). In advance of the last section that contrasts East and West, we can ask: Might this not be part of Western athletics?

Discussing how the endurance athlete (some insights are sport specific) embodies the cultivating process, and in particular the dedication it takes, Lally writes, "What is necessary is the profound feeling that such efforts improve the person, connecting the athlete to a world larger than himself, one that is rich in meaning. This realized improvement within training does not come to the athlete in the form of an epiphany, exploding in one's consciousness as a single moment of clarity." (2012, 180-181) Lally then characterizes this athletic cultivation as an 'unfolding' of our diffused everyday existence into something that transcends it (ibid., 181). Given Dewey's holistic credentials, this is close to *shugyō* methodologically, and to *dō* ontologically. But it is not the same either in terms of the richness of the qualitative experience itself or the extent of its integration into a practice with an *explicit* normative telos. And, this is so not merely because of the truism (perhaps) that there are cultural differences (there is a way to deepen this that transcends the intellectual poverty of cultural relativity; see the last essay). Nor is this less eligible because it is about some sort of instantaneous epiphany. There are Zen schools that favor both instantaneous enlightenment (Rinzai) and gradual awakening (Soto). The difference lies in the very method, process, and goals.

As to the method, the issue is that the quest for normatively rich gnostic insights is not built into the framework of endurance or other sports the way it is into *dō* (see section 5). Concerning the process, there is another relevant concept that pairs up with *shugyō*, namely, *keikō* (稽古), training, and which captures better the sort of activity most athletes engage in day in and day out.

Keikō stresses physical effort, training, tactics, and results. Thus, *keikō* or training better capture what most endurance athletes do. This is the emphasis in the West and in modern 'sportified' martial arts (Asian or Western). Even if, as stated above, the normative insights happen through and are built into the techniques, it is not reduced to this in the case of *shugyō*. Techniques are necessary for all, whether gifted and average, but not sufficient, as mentioned above. The literature emphasizes unanimously this, from early medieval manuals on Zen or martial arts all the way to contemporary writers (Chozan 2006; Suzuki 1993; Yagyū 2003; Yuasa 1987 & 1983). In short, *keikō* training is not about gnostic insights but achieving athletic goals, while the reverse is true of *shugyō*. And, as far as the aim, because of the influence of Zen, *shugyō* seeks to actually dwell into the 'ordinary' experience; it does not seek the transcendence Lally mentions. To clarify, it seeks to make of the extraordinary but ordinary while preserving the character of both. Explaining this conundrum, which has broad implications for skillful and expert action, takes us to Nishida.

3. *Nishida - Finding Unity in Difference*

Nishida Kitarō (1870-1945) was Japan's 20th Century preeminent philosopher. He spearheaded the Kyoto school of philosophy. Nishida is another philosopher who *lived out* his philosophy. As Yuasa points out, Nishida's living experience *taiken* (体験) and his *zazen* (坐禅), seated meditation, deeply informed his views (1987).[21] The kanji for tai,体, should alert readers that it is the living bodymind in active practice. Dewey's notion of *an experience* fits well this Japanese framework, which also includes *keiken* (経験) to refer to self-conscious experience and reflection upon the living experience. That is, *taiken* is concerned with experience itself, the kinesthetic and proprioceptive dynamics for example, and is imbued with ineffability; *keiken* has to do with the articulation of that primal experience. The import of this is that *taiken* is where we *live*-in-the-doing, and that *keiken's* articulation complements it. Living experience and reflection go hand in hand. In a simplified way, bringing these into full integration was Nishida's aim. Overall, he sought to bypass the traditional dichotomies that beset philosophy: subject/object, one and many, mind and body, and particularly is/ought because it directly connects with how we live our life. Because the complexity and breadth of his thought precludes full discussion, the focus is on those ideas that help understand the integrative and enactive bodymind: pure experience, acting intuition, logic of place, absolute nothingness, and unity of contradictories.[22]

William James's views on pure experience were seminal for Nishida's own development as he sought to overcome the is/ought gap while maintaining a meaningful connection to Japanese culture generally and Zen specifically.[23] Nishida's 1911 maiden work, *An Inquiry into the Good* (1990) first explained this integration in terms of pure experience, one without any deliberative discrimination at all. For Nishida pure experience lies beneath ordinary experience. It is not to be transcended but accessed. In fact, for Nishida, pure experience is normatively the richest of experiences, as Dilworth says, when understood in terms of Zen emptiness or nothingness (Carter 1997). And this is normative since we cultivate our capacity to experience this through meditative practices. The emphasis in Asian traditions is on the method, the means or path to our insights, and not necessarily the answer itself. They focus on the 'how' rather than the 'why'; but a deep 'how' that ironically functions as a why as it reveals experience without relying on language (ibid). He initially conceptualized this process whereby we access pure experience as

an intellectual intuition. His early writings suggest that this unity is achieved through the (body)mind, where the intellectual facet prevails over the bodily one. Interestingly, and foreshadowing a later stance congruent with an integrative bodymind, he exemplifies this with an inspired painter where he and brush move spontaneously. This sets up his later notion of *acting intuition*.

Whereas intuition traditionally has had a passive element, in Nishida's mature thinking it becomes creative and active. As he writes in one of his later works when discussing the act of consciousness as a dynamic interpenetration of subjectivity and objectivity,

> My concept of active intuition as a transformational vector is a formulation of this. It is the creative world that transcends the self in the depth of the self. The more the self becomes aware, the more it realizes it […] Intuition always has this significance of dynamic, historical expression. (1987, 84)

Yuasa (1987) explains that there are two levels in Nishida's acting intuition, a surface one, the intuition, which is conscious and passive, and a deeper and unconscious one, the acting component. This reflects the state of ordinary experience and the level of the empirical self. But when we advance toward the absolute nothingness, this is reversed, and intuition becomes active and the acting component passive. (Yuasa 1987, 68) Then intuition becomes creative. As far as the mind body relationship within this schema (as per the translators' words; bodymind dynamics would be more apt), Yuasa elucidates that in the everyday self, while body(objectivity) and mind (subjectivity) "are inseparably conjoined, they are still distinguishable into subjectivity [mind] and objectivity [body]," which "means that the respective functions of the mind and body are not completely one" (1987, 69). The deeper acting intuition brings about the transformation; we become integrated. Of note are two aspects now. One, Nishida stresses that this intuition "is a transformative structure" (ibid., 102). As such, acting intuition is a normative affair: the pure intuition bypasses any subject and object divide into a unity of contradictories that comes in degrees and can be improved upon through disciplined striving (cultivation). And two, and specifically relevant for performative endeavors, this highlights the bodymind in action on its path toward *shinshin ichinyo,* that oneness of the integrative and harmonious bodymind. As integration improves, the aim is a balanced bodymind. How this engages active pursuits is illustrated after presenting the concepts of nothingness and contradictories.

Nishida's stance is decidedly holistic. His acting intuition integrates intellect, emotion, and volition already in his early stages of thinking (Nishida 1990), and is only accentuated in later ones (Nishida 2011a), where intersubjectivity also becomes prominent. The union of the subjective and objective, and in turn, the union of 'I' and 'thou', is to be found in the state of pure experience. Eventually this expands to include the environment as co-created in mutual influence with us. Detailing the ways in which Nishida's views on the environment and our relation to it lies beyond the scope of this project. Briefly, his conception sees a mutual influence between the environment and us. This is in line with Dewey, Ortega, and situated enactivists, but he does give it a more sophisticated twist. Carter explains, "Either way, the interaction is *mutual*. And therefore, the contradiction is also mutual: the individual is (partially) negated (changed) as an individual through its encounter with the environment; the environment is (partially) altered (negated) by the individual acting on it." (1997, 68) His personal

imprimatur is that the coupling and adaptation is not seamless; he keeps alive the tension that his unity of contradictories affords (explained momentarily). In his last period (Nishida 2011b), pushed by Tanabe Hajime's criticisms and work (Tanabe 2011), included a historical dimension that firms up even more his holistic commitments (the historical dimension is briefly addressed in the last essay). In these late writings Nishida also makes it clear that this acting intuition is a continuous process, "At the depths of our self-awareness, there is something that transcends our self. The deeper our self-awareness grows, the more this holds true." (2011b, 665) Usefully recapitulating several key ideas, Nishida scholar John Maraldo states that what acting intuition emphasizes "is a bodily achievement, the performance of an embodied individual who in turn is formed by the world; again, both body and world must be conceived as historical. (2012, 18)

Nishida developed a complex framework around the logic of *basho* (場所), place or topos (after Plato), to further his analysis. This transcends both the empirical and the transcendental self (which he calls 'being' and 'relative nothingness' respectively) and embraces absolute nothingness, *mu* (無). As Abe states, *mu* becomes Nishida's primary concept (1987). This is the place where the subject and object distinction is overcome, becoming an action—Nishida's acting intuition. In other words, in absolute nothingness the dissolution of our self brings about the integration of pure experience with reality. In the context of knowledge and spirituality Nishida writes,

> The workings of cognition come about in this contradictory self-identity of the knower and the known … This is precisely what I mean by "acting intuition. […] The true self functions "immanently *'qua'* transcendently, transcendently qua immanently," that is, in a contradictorily self-identical manner […] acting intuition is the dialectical process mediated by this kind of negation, (2011b, 665)

Maraldo clarifies that Nishida used "the language of transcendence to explain absolute nothingness, saying it transcended the opposition between being and non-being for example; but language did not indicate any thing, power, or consciousness beyond the world." (2012, 13) Absolute nothingness establishes the unity of contradictories, or a contradictory unity of opposites, where the perennial dissonances of philosophy, the dichotomies abovementioned, can be harmonized as a higher but still tensed chord. "Nothingness *is* the world as contradictory identity." (Carter 1997, 69, his emphasis) The unity of contraries keeps the tension between the one and the many, unity and difference, mind and body, without solving it for either one. As Carter explains, "the one is self-contradictorily composed of the many, while each of the many are self-contradictorily one with all of the others, forming a unity."(1997, 70) Unlike a Hegelian synthetic solution to the thesis-antithesis entente, Nishida keeps the conflict inherent in both opposites; they remain separate yet conjoined. Thus, there is no "synthesis, but a unity-in-contradiction, an identity-of-opposites," yet, and coevally, "absolute nothingness as the ultimate and final universal [..] is itself beyond all characterization, and therefore beyond all contradictoriness." (Carter 1997, 70) In other words, instead of an Aristotelian logic of contradiction and a Hegelian synthesis, Nishida advances a logic of both/and (Zhuangzi also posited such logic, if less robustly). Simply put, Nishida underlines how opposites are connected while keeping the inherent tension. Nishida illustrated this highly abstract notion with art, as adduced above: "when inspiration arises in a painter and the brush moves spontaneously, a unifying reality is operating behind this complex activity"(1990, 32). Maraldo elaborates,

> Both artist and work are formed mutually and are reflected in one another. While this mutual formation can be described in terms of a causative process taking time, with the person first intuiting or internalizing and then acting or externalizing, Nishida described it in terms of the place or topos wherein intuiting entails acting and acting intuiting, and wherein the difference between internal and external collapses. (2012, 18)

This situation is applicable not only in the arts, but extends to all disciplined behavior (Nishida 1990). Martial arts, dance, musical performance, combat and team sports incarnate this process in a more interesting, or at least complex, way than the arts arguably: even if for Nishida canvas and painter change and affect each other mutually, performative endeavors involve much more dynamic relations where mutual intersubjective and environmental adaptation in-the-moment is paramount. As the ice hockey players glide in myriad combinations, slamming into one another, passing the puck, making formations and plays, there are constant *and* variable encounters of opposites. Both contraries *and* teammates are opposites precisely because they *inter*-act with each other, whether it be a passing play or one where the puck is blocked or stolen. Two players are inherently distinct yet they become one for the duration of the mutual action they create during a play. The play is enacted, constituted, and made possible because of this meeting of opposites. Ultimately this resolves not in a duality or even mutuality, but a complete unit. In such action, there is "the state of oneness of subject and object, a fusion of knowing and willing. In the mutual forgetting of the self and the object, the object does not move the self and the self does not move the object" […] we find" "simply one world, one scene," writes Nishida (1990, 32). In sport, if we follow Nishida, we pursue the action itself, the very process of exercise (Abe, 47). Abe states, "Applying Nishida's theory to sport, in sport the self is lost but finally the true Self is found. The moment an athlete putts the shot, the instant a kendo master's sword strikes his or her opponent—every moment the athlete springs into action—body and mind are integrated as an action of the self. At that brief moment, mind is transformed to body and body to mind." (1987, 46) The details of this process are yet to be laid out as fully as needed. Fukasawa Koyo begins this task when he explains,

> the Judoka sometimes experiences a moment when he/she can flip down his/her opponent without all the might in his/her body. At that moment, he/she becomes unconscious and doesn't have the awareness of flipping the opponent, nor the opponent has the awareness of having been flipped. What it seems that happens is that both bodies automatically move together. As they become nothing their experience are [sic] something they cannot express with words at that moment. But after having flipped the opponent they may try to articulate or remember it. (2104, 50)

This aptly describes the unity found through an identity of opposites. The claim that the archer, the bow, and the shooting and target become one is not so mysterious anymore. The last two sentences evoke the notions of *kaiken*, the experience itself, and *taiken*, its conceptualization. For now, there is one amendment to Fukawawa's apt narrative. It concerns the moment of fusion where the opponents are unaware of being flipped. His narrative is sensibly aligned with prevailing views in the literature on this point: experts operate at a subpersonal and automatic level where the implicit system takes care of skill and the 'physical' side of things (looked at from the conventional perspective). Nevertheless, that moment of unity is a more complex

phenomenon than seems; even in the fusion of perspectival horizons and the spontaneous movements, there is room for creative spontaneity as well as judgment and awareness. To show this, it is requisite to open the scope of the examination in various ways to capture the intricate layering and dynamics involved, during, *and* before and after (see next subsection and essay 10). Next follows another amendment, to Nishida now.

For Nishida, the process just described "is an extremely ordinary phenomenon." (1990, 32.) Yuasa criticizes Nishida on this point because he does not "demarcate ordinary experience from the experience of *basho.*" (1987, 72) What Yuasa means is that the experience of unity, of fluid performance (e.g., in a state of *mushin*) is not as common as Nishida would have us believe, even if it underlies all experience. It needs to be revealed. We do "so through *practice.* […] Thus, the disintegration of the distinction between consciousness as subjectivity and the body as objectivity is overcome; the functions of mind and body become one." (Ibid., 70, his emphasis) Put differently, it is an experience to be *earned* through assiduous practice, not a given. That is, it is a normative achievement and not an ontological entitlement. There are various stages, as befits increasing expertise and skill development. In ordinary experience there is a lack of harmony in the bodymind, with either body(mind) or (body)mind imbalances. An uncoordinated dancer who tries to think through her steps clearly shows the latter, whereas an inexperienced runner who begins at too fast a pace a long race evinces the former. But, there is hope, for as he says, "Nonetheless, by training the body-mind continuously, it is possible for even an ordinary person to have a *glimpse* of this dimension." (Yuasa 1987, 200, my emphasis) He illustrates this superior dimension across a broad range of performative endeavors when he eludicates that the,

> smallest gap between the movements of the body and mind on such occasions as a gymnast's [sic] performing his or her best techniques in a state of no-mind, or a master pianist's performing in total absorption, or an experienced actor's acting out his role on a stage, becoming the role itself. These people are […] in a state of "the oneness of body-mind" (*shinshin ichinyo*). (Yuasa 1987, 200)

In methodological terms we can say that Nishida's thinking is a philosophical *dō* engaged in the spirit of *shugyō*. He rethinks intuition as active, and provides a flexible and expedient conceptual framework that keeps opposites in a constant dynamic dialogical tension. This brings a more sophisticated intuition into the realm of performance. It enables us to understand movement and action in a subtler way. His key contributions to this project are that he accounts for how experience is structured phenomenologically *and* logically and constitutively without resorting to a transcendental step. An additional benefit – that evokes Zhuangzi's usefulness of the useless – is the expediency nothingness (or emptiness if considered functionally) has in terms of cognition and performance. This enactive stance is further developed in the next section.

4. *Mushin – Freedom and Creativity in Mindful Awareness*

In the context of skillful fluency and expertise, much like Cerberus, the three-headed dog from Hades, we can speak of the tyranny of automatization, mindless coping, and attentional focus. They are connected through a common theoretical body, for automatization allows mindless

coping to a large extent, and this also makes selective focus possible. *All* three clamp on our ability to act spontaneously, creatively, and effectively to changing circumstances. Having dealt with the middle head of mindless coping in essay 7, it is time to finally muzzle the first one, automatization, and tie the second one, attentional focus. This opens the way to enjoy the freedom of mindful awareness—*mushin*.

If there is one claim collectively held as true by laypeople and academics alike, it is that we perform skillfully better when we leave matters to automatized and subpersonal processes. There is indeed a justified appreciation for the role that automatized functions play in evolutionary terms, but those who have wrestled with the issue also realize there is a tension that means one of the heads seems to always free itself to bite. The next three academics exemplify this from different angles. A preliminary clarification is necessary though. First, length constraints advise against separate and detailed exposition on attention, focus, awareness, and mindfulness, which are instead briefly explained *in situ* as and where pertinent.

Brian Bruya (2010) centers on what he calls 'effortless attention." It can be briefly summarized as the ability to focus attentionally such that it improves our performance at no extra or even at a lessened cost (metabolically or subjectively). Action and attention correlate positively with effort; the higher the demands of the task the more effort that we need to be attentive and efficacious. In short, attention and focus come at a price. But, "there are times, however, when attention and action seem to flow effortlessly, allowing a person to meet an increase in demand with a sustained level of efficacy but *without an increase in felt effort*—even, *at the best of times with a decrease*" (Bruya 2010, 1, my emphasis). Researchers differentiate between objective effort, which incurs in metabolic expenditure, and subjective one, effort as *felt*. Of course, and besides difficulties in measuring quantitatively subjective felt effort, this seems to contravene the law of conservation of energy (and its associated maxim that there is no free lunch in the universe!). But, the longstanding skepticism is receding. In fact, there is recent empirical evidence for this kind of effortlessness on both counts, objective and quantitative, and subjective (ibid.), as many of the essays in Bruya's (2010) anthology show.

Bruya discusses automaticity in the context of attention, which researchers disagree on whether it comes early or late in attention. He cites Jeannerod, who "suggests that the automated steps of an action come in for conscious access when there is discord between intention and actuality—when the perceptual representation does not match the action representation." (Bruya 2010, 15) (See essay 6 for Jeannerod's views on representation.) Bruya also mentions how findings suggest that "much more behavior than previously thought is outside of voluntary consciousness" and acquiesces that this "would help explain why effortless action often seems outside of conscious awareness." (Ibid., 16) Yet, Bruya makes the tension palpable when he notices the risk of leaving it all to a subpersonal level beyond the reaches of reflective consciousness. He asserts, "it would also seem to leave a high-level effortless action as purely automated, thereby seeming to preclude credit to a subject for creativity, insight, emotional expression, and so forth." (Ibid.) The issue is how to account for the effortlessness without giving up all control. Next, a Japanese analysis arrives to the same place through a different route.

Suzuki Daisetz (1993), from the perspective of Zen Buddhism as it relates to samurai and swordsmanship, *frequently* alludes to the role of the 'unconscious' to explain states of

performance in a *mushin* state.[24] He considers that *mushin* "may be regarded in a way as corresponding to the concept of the unconscious." (Ibid., 94) (*Mushin* is more accurately discussed later). He elaborates, already building some tension as he attempts to bridge this back to consciousness,

> Psychologically speaking, this state of mind gives itself up unreservedly to an unknown "power" that comes to one from nowhere and yet seems strong enough to possess the whole field of consciousness and make it work for the unknown. Hereby he becomes a kind of automaton, so to speak, as far as his own consciousness is concerned. (Suzuki 1993, 94)

Clearly Suzuki wants to leave some room for the role of consciousness, but yet he is still strongly swayed by the powers of the unconscious, turning the performer in the state of *mushin* into a robot. Dreyfusian mindless coping fits with this view also (Dreyfus & Dreyfus 1986). Yet, in the very next sentence he states, "But as Takuan explains, it ought not to be confused with the helpless passivity of an inorganic thing, such as a piece of rock or a block of wood." Obviously, Zen monk Takuan Soho (1573-1645) has a sharper view than Suzuki, who settles for the person in *mushin* being "unconsciously conscious" or "consciously unconscious." (Daisetz 1993, 94-95) A number of issues arise here.

First, this makes it quite patent that the swordsperson is not really an automaton, else she would hack at the opponent or any old tree trunk nearby. Takuan's keen analysis (discussed momentarily) is perceptive and fits better the facts. For him, it is not an automaton but rather a performer able to work and switch between such states fluidly. Ironically and interestingly, Suzuki keeps explaining the experts' performance by validating the role of the unconscious while denigrating that of conscious action, "The man must turn himself into a puppet in the hands of the unconscious" (ibid., 117; see also110, 119, 127, 165 fn. 19, 191, 209 among others). Yet, he at times echoes *again* Takuan's analysis in the context of Buddhism's nirvana (Suzuki 1993, 140) or swordsmanship as a free and creative performance (ibid., 142 fn. 3). In addition to the strain between the two levels and how they relate to each other, it is hard to see how something truly unconscious and not under our control can be said to be a matter of choice and freedom (it can be a matter of degree, but he does not consider this).

Second, Suzuki mentions how Takuan sees that *mushin* "means the "everyday mind" (*heijo shin*), and when this is attained, everything goes well," (1993, 147) Suzuki explains that once technique is mastered, any kind of conscious dwelling will interfere. Ironically again, since he was close to Nishida in a scholarly and personal way (Yusa 2002), his analysis does not afford the possibility of a flexible bridge between or alternative to the two levels of awareness and action. Nishida's views on the relation between ordinary experience and acting intuition allow to explain more subtly and accurately the relation between the two levels and between everyday mind and superb performance while keeping that tension between the two alive. Nonetheless, Suzuki's translations and analyses of treatises on swordsmanship in relation to Japanese culture and Zen are still quite revealing in other respects. If anything, this stresses the difficulty of capturing just how *mushin* unfolds in exemplary and expert performance and what the relation between subpersonal and reflective processes is. This is made more patent when a careful and

insightful a commentator of Nishida as Carter also mischaracterizes unfolding expertise in the moment.

Carter brings Nishida to bear on this when he discusses the Japanese philosopher's acting intuition. He writes about the master swordsman who anticipates the opponent's movements "without calculation or analysis, and without a decision taken which is at all separate from the initial intuition. The surface consciousness is not engaged, nor are its tools of deliberation and calculation involved" (Carter 1997, 106). Rightly, and echoing the critique advanced earlier against computational views of the mind and performance (essay 6), he adduces that, "There simply would not be time, for what is required is instant recognition of the circumstances, and an intuitively instantaneous response (which, nonetheless, has been honed by years or even decades of preparatory practice." (Ibid.) Correctly also, he speaks of the long period of training and spontaneity. But, just in what sense said spontaneity is intuitive needs to be spelled out. Carter cites Nishida, for whom judgment and meaning are necessarily states of disunity whereas in "the state of pure experience, self and other, subject and object, true and false, meaning and the meaningless, "are mutually submerged, and the universe [as unity] is the only reality …"" (1997, 5). In this case, we could argue that judgment and propositional meaning parenthetically bracket the bodymind as either (body)mind or body(mind). Yet, the pure state, as a contradictory unity, makes it possible to operate at both levels in a contentless state, as posited by radical enactivism. Nonetheless, Carter's analysis still emphasizes offline processes.

In a different work, Carter cites Masino in the context of the *dō* of Japanese garden design (日本庭園), "In other words, when the mind, hands, body, time, and materials merge into one, then an unconscious mind, which goes beyond the bounds od consciousness, is responsible for creating things." (2008, 64) Carter then goes on to explain that a

> martial artist responds to any and all situations without thinking, a Nō actor becomes the character and the gestures depicted, the *sumi-e* [ink-wash painting] artist becomes one with the branch of the cherry tree which she is about to paint in a series of almost instantaneous strokes on rice paper which allows no hesitation or reconsideration; the tea master folds the ceremonial napkin *without thinking*, yet is *fully aware* […] Virtuosity always appears effortless and graceful. (Ibid., 65, my emphases)

As with Bruya and Suzuki, Carter's account captures much of what goes on in superb performance. He also rightly clarifies that even if mastery appears spontaneous and effortless, "it is achieved through great effort, constant practice, and the unrelenting courage to continue." (Carter 2008, 65) Nonetheless, the tension between the "without thinking" and the "fully aware" goes unnoticed. It is precisely in that tension that Nishida's ideas prove powerful and helpful shortly (as does an enactive account).

Effortless automatization, unconscious operation, the implicit system, offline processes, all work wonderfully well for many tasks and for *competent* performance. But, it is inherently contrary to a skillful striving that deliberately seeks continuous thriving and improvement in the most challenging circumstances. First, they do not account for outstanding performance, or rather they fall short of explaining how it works. Hence the difficulty all three have in working with the tension, whether aware of it as Bruya is, or not fully 'conscious' of it, pace Suzuki and Carter.

Moreover, from a merely pragmatic stance, automatization is also counterproductive for superior performance. Ericsson explains,

> Based on an earlier account […] my proposal is that the development of typical novice performance is prematurely arrested in an effortless automated form; experts however, engage in an extended and continued refinement of mechanisms that mediate improvements in their performance […] most amateurs do not improve their performance only because they have reached (in their minds) and acceptable level! (2003, 63)

Ericsson mentions how this applies to some experts. This rightly emphasizes deliberate practice, which as presented in essay 8, is indeed a major component many researchers often ignore. On the other side, we must limit the scope of this deliberateness functionally, conceptually, and chronologically. Functionally, it need not be necessarily a representational affair (even if Ericsson makes it so). We can deliberate kinetically, kinesthetically, and proprioceptively as we try to figure out whether sweeping with the sword overhead and downward has the right feel and meets the opponent's blade at the suitable angle. Conceptually, it helps to distinguish between being deliberate in our practice as being willful or mindful, and deliberating in the sense of calculating. The latter implicates a more theoretical and intellectualized approach that, again, may but need not be the case (see the closing comments on Dewey's alternative view of deliberation below). Lastly, deliberation and reflection take place during training for the most part, not during 'moments' of truth' and competition (in fast paced sports, or 'on' moments in more protracted sports). These previous deliberate reflections and training set up the spontaneity, often misconstrued as automatization.

Handling the tension between deliberation and automatization, and between representation and non-contentful cognition may be like playing with a two-edged sword and courting a bad cut on the unforgiving edge of contradiction between mutually exclusive phenomena. In Japanese *ai uchi* (相打) refers to a mutual kill between two swordsmen. This is better than getting killed and having the opponent gloating over one's dead body, but hardly. The desirable outcome is an *ai nuke* (抜き), a mutual escape, where mutual admiration over polished swordsmanship leads to a toast. An understanding of *mushin,* Nishida, and radical enactivism averts the deadly and contradictory outcome and splits matters right down the middle. A few historical remarks help contextualize the role that swordsmanship plays here.

Among *dō,* swordsmanship and Japanese medieval training manuals are particularly suited to show what *mushin* is and how it is related to cognition and skillful striving. Primarily because,

> it involves the problem of death in the most immediately threatening manner. If the man makes one false movement he is doomed forever, and he has no time for conceptualization or calculated acts. Everything he does must come right out of his inner mechanism, which is not under the control of consciousness. He must act instinctually and not intellectually. (Suzuki 1993, 182)

It is the lethality of the practice that makes it particularly relevant. With so much as stake, it is imperative to learn what to automatize, but also when to have ready and explicit access to specific and even basic skills if need be. And how to remain mindfully aware. Suzuki and most

commentators commit the fallacy of the excluded middle, as it were. Not everything should be relegated to either instinctiveness or explicitness.

Nowadays, *kendō* has formalized and sublimated the mortal element, but the times when many of the authors and sensei to be enlisted next lived were fraught with deadly opportunities. There was a common practice in medieval Japan called *mushashugyō* (武者修行), a sort of wandering pilgrimage similar to feudal knight errantry that some samurai undertook as part of their education. In its most severe manifestation it involved looking for the strongest swordsmen and challenging them to a duel that sometimes was to the death. This explains Musashi Miyamoto's 60 fights to the death. The point is that the insights discussed below were attained as part of a practice where death was indeed a likely possibility. Today we often speak of "do or die" situations when feeling substantial pressure, as in closing a major business deal or putting a difficult golf shot on which the championship hinges (Beilock 2010), however, excepting risk sports, few activities carry a veritable deadly threat.[25]

What began as *kenjutsu* (剣術), deadly warrior techniques with the sword, during the Tokugawa era (1600-1868) gradually became the less lethal *kendō* (all other *jutsus,* each specific to a weapon, became *dō* as well). This period marks the unification of Japan after centuries of an internecine warfare that gave the samurai much opportunity to sharpen their skill in the kill. During the first few decades of this era, and with many samurai becoming *ronin* (浪人), masterless warriors (wave men, literally), there were occasions aplenty for duels either for testing skills or to impress potential employers, among other reasons. The frequency and bloodshed led to an eventual ban on duels by the *bakufu* (幕府) or shogunate government, but the initial decades impressed the need to develop techniques to survive. Here Zen Buddhism with its emphasis on detachment from desires and life proved a boon. This began a slow process where concern with killing the opponent and outward focus turned into self-development and an inward awareness. That is, the deadly sword, through *shugyō*, became a way of the sword and life, a *dō*. This also changed the code of *bushidō* (of which there are many different versions) as a warrior's code into *budō*, a set of principles and attitudes within a framework of self-growth.

In the way of the sword, one of these principles is *ki ken tai no ichi* (気剣体の一), which can be translated as 'spirit, sword, and body as one.' *Ichi* in this context refers to 'one' in the sense of unity.[26] In concert with thick holism, the idea is that all these elements are in agreement and work seamlessly as one: the person's *ki* or vital energy, the living body, and the sword as a tool integrated into her schematizing and bodymind in what fencing masters refer to as '*le sentiment du fer,*' the feeling of steel where the fencer and sword become one much like Merleau-Ponty's (1962) blind man and his cane. Achieving this requires much practice and refined techniques. But even if necessary, they do not suffice. In accord with Suzuki, Abe points out that technique was not sufficient, that the swordsman had to overcome fear of death and delusion" (1986, 47). Once a sufficiently high level of expertise is achieved, emotional control in those 'do or die' situations is paramount. *Mushin* is the way to this unflappability.

After some prefatory comments, the discussion turns to spontaneity before returning to the aforementioned tension with Nishida.[27] There are two common misperceptions, held by lay people and academics alike, that it behooves us to correct. First, *mushin* is often equated with flow in sports. They share much functionally and experientially, but ultimately there are two

important differences on account of the cultural framework: the experience is structured differently in some key aspects, and, unlike flow in sports, such state is explicitly cultivated whether it be in the context of Zen and *satori* or martial arts and *mushin* (Ilundáin & Hata 2015). Krein and Ilundáin write, "Even if it were assumed that the two phenomena begin with the "same" raw sensations, when they are filtered through Japanese culture, and martial arts conducted under the aegis of a *dō,* the two will differ phenomenologically." (2014, 159) Further, given the different cultural context, the two will "in the long run, acquire different qualitative properties" (ibid., 160-161). This stated, because of the rich overlap and to simplify matters, unless the context clearly applies to *mushin* alone both are discussed together. To avert any translation-prone misleading connotations, the Japanese term is used when it is specifically tied to Japanese writings or contexts. Otherwise, 'empty mindfulness' is the more neutral term employed to capture states of performative excellence by a holistic and enactive bodymind. The second confusion concerns its literal translation as 'no-mind'. Since it relies on spontaneity and results in superior performance generally, it is usually related to mindless coping states and automaticity, as just seen. The aims now are to dispel this and build a positive case that clarifies the tension without doing away with it. This is important, functionally, for successful *mushin* states.

It helps to consider first what *mushin* (or flow) is not. It is anything but no-mindedness, automaticity, or mindless coping. The sort of performance that it produces requires a finely tuned and fluid responsiveness to a changing situation where much is on the line. For this reason, and as just seen above, those erroneous epithets are often mixed with attributions of being concentrated, paying attention, or staying focused. Leaving the unresolved tension aside, 'concentration' is not a good descriptive choice because this emphasizes effortful focus. *Mushin*'s operative awareness takes effort, obviously, but as seen with Bruya, whether as flow or *mushin*, it is felt as effortless. Second, *mushin s*tates are more economical and efficient on account of this lessened cognitive load. Third, and partially from the previous two points, it is more effective than concentration allows *ceteris paribus*, unless extraneous elements interfere, e.g., a mishap with equipment or similar unpredictable event (and even then, a performer in *mushin* will likely handle these better). As legendary samurai Yagyū Munenori (1571-1646), author of the *Heihō Kadensho* (兵法家伝書) says, "Whatever you do, if you keep the idea of doing it before you do it with singleminded concentration you will be uncoordinated," (Yagyū 2005, 121) This reflection comes from the pen and sword of a man who singlehandedly killed six enemy samurai bent on killing his lord. 'Paying attention' is less contentious but not adequate. It overly narrows the attentional scope to a specific stimulus and is too static to account for the fluidity at play. 'Staying' or 'being focused' is the default go-to phrasing. Yet, 'focus' lacks clarity and relatedly is guilty by association, given its close conceptual bond with the former two notions, as their common interchangeableness in usage shows.

In their stead, 'mindful awareness' is the descriptor that best corresponds to the phenomenon. 'Mindful' brings with it the requisite sense of attentiveness without the literal hang-ups of the aforementioned terms. It also fits readily the notion of emptiness in a paradoxically suitable way, as the ongoing discussion shows. Further, it retains 'mind' in the phrasing. 'Awareness,' since it comes in degrees, from subpersonal to partial to acute, takes on naturally the requisite connotation of fluidity, and above all works as a capacity for performative perception. It also can be directed outward or inwardly. This results in the specialized spontaneity characteristic of *mushin*. Said spontaneity is characterized by a dynamic and active *engagement*. It is deliberate

yet displays skillful fluency. It is a Zhuangzian spontaneity that results from a forgetting and fasting of the bodymind characterized by calmness, serenity, equanimity, and being absorbed, but mindfully so, even in the midst of turmoil, like the ferryman in the rapids (see essay 5). That essay also lays the first cornerstone of the conceptual explanation: the notion of emptiness. Verily, emptiness is full of possibility. It is in virtue of its very nothingness that a plenitude of performance is possible (which also relates to Nishida). It also endows *mushin* states with creativity: we can generate novel responses to best suit environmental constraints and to turn these into affordances and opportunities. This coheres with the holistic and enactive account here developed (see also essay 10 and its appendix). A slightly built *aikidōka* (合気道家) not only uses her agility but her opponents brawn and reliance on size and power to maneuver him effortlessly by redirecting the inertia of his movements; she empties herself of intent and works with the spaces around her to redirect him.

Performers in *mushin* are fully and smoothly engaged in the action and disengaged form themselves. They are skillfully fluid and fluent. Their bodymind is unstoppable, in the sense that it is immovable. This "means unmoving, " Takuan Soho explains in his *Fudōchi Shinmyōroku* (不動智神妙録), a long and dense letter he penned for Munenori (Takuan 1987, 20). Cleary clarifies that here 'immovable' means 'imperturbable' (2005, 103).[28] Janelle and Hillman inform how studies report that, "Elite athletes appear to be both capable of regulating reactions to anxiety-producing stimuli as well as perceiving potentially threatening situations as either positive or challenging." (2002, 37) The control of any distracting thoughts as well as emotions is paramount for elite performers, particularly those in contemporary risk sports or any who had to face a sword-wielding opponent. Munenori helps clarify what it means practically for our bodymind to flow unperturbed, "…there will be actions in your arms, legs, and body but none in your mind […] and neither demons not heresies will be able to find it. Training is done for the purpose of reaching this state. With successful training, training falls away." (Yagyū 2003, 75) 'Training' here can also take the broader meaning of 'learning' in the context of *dō* and Zen if we take Cleary's translation (Cleary 2005, 24). Takuan (1986) also speaks of this fluidity as the no abiding mind (1987), which is meant to "abide where there is no abiding" as Suzuki puts it, reflecting a Zen paradox (Suzuki, 1993, 172 fn.25). Importantly, "Fluidity and emptiness are convertible terms" as Suzuki states (1993, 158). The swordsman or the risk sportsperson are to cultivate a state of emptiness that avoids obstructing action. Now, how can we account for this emptiness conceptually in a satisfactory way?

Laozi's opening citation shows the Daoist roots that inform emptiness in East Asia, and which go deep into Buddhist and Hindu notions of *Śūnyatā* (see Ilundáin-Agurruza and Hata 2015) (the next essay and the appendix examine this further). Effectively then, *mushin* is a capacity. The underlying idea is that we are capable of emptying ourselves of the self, thoughts, desires, ambitions, fears, distractions, and, of course, in a suitably enactive fashion, any sort of "mental chatter" that articulates thoughts propositionally. To bring this back to the concrete world of performance with Takuan,

> If we put this in terms of your martial art, the mind is not detained by the hand that brandishes the sword. Completely oblivious to the hand that wields the sword, one strikes and cut his opponent down. He does not put his mind in his adversary. The opponent is Emptiness. I am Emptiness. The hand that holds the sword, the sword itself,

> is Emptiness. Understand this, but *do not le your mind be taken by emptiness*. (1986, 37, my emphasis)

Analogously, in one of his later works Nishida writes, "It is by truly emptying itself that the field of consciousness is able to reflect objects just as they are." (1987a, 656) We can elucidate these remarks in connection with Nishida's mature views and radical enactivism.[29] Let's recall that contentless cognition does away with representations, posits basic minds, and thinks of these in virtue of capacities. This lack of content is conceptually congruent with an Asian notion of emptiness. Contrary to what the labeling of basic minds might suggest, this can be observed not just in simple actions, but also is characteristic of complex actions and particularly of the highest expression of skillful performance. Beyond representations, rules, words, and categorizations, the subpersonal and the reflective, the explicit and implicit systems become one in action. We do not operate at a subpersonal level or with deliberate control and focus. Rather there is a seamless transition between the two in action that, without becoming a synthesis, keeps the dialectic fluid as the circumstances need. Therein lies the geniality of Nishida's and the Asian path. A synthesis that blended the two would result in a metaphysically distinct third element with neither empirical nor phenomenological basis. The dialectical tension means that both are separate yet united in the action; it does away with the distinction functionally while remaining ontologically parsimonious; expert performers move seamlessly between the two levels as they adapt to the situation and its outward and inward stimuli (James' fringe plays the role of this emptiness as that hinge that is a phenomenological function that structures our experience and not a mechanism).

In less complex terms, because *mushin* and flow lack representational cognitive content—being capacities-in-the-happening—both sides of the equation are empty. There are no explicit rules, representations, articulated thoughts, nor *specified* conditions of satisfaction either reflectively or subpersonally operating. In acting intuition, successful performers just act: the swordswoman becomes one with her sword, archer, bow, and shooting become integrated. They act spontaneously, engaged, fluid and empty. It is the realization of capacities attuned to the moment, tools (if needed) and environment, and of the latter becoming integrated with the former: skydivers, BASE jumpers with wing suits, hang gliders work with the air, their suits or gliders, and the wind currents, and these also adapt respectively, with surfaces and shapes offered to wind and performer to them. We find that the fluidity of boundaries and the switching between the implicit and explicit systems cancel each other out in the very acknowledgment of each other. If the Jamesian fringe of consciousness explains this process phenomenologically, and Billeter's view of Zhuangzian spontaneity as an ironic and removed regard does so perspectivally, Nishida provides the conceptual underpinning.

It is worth citing the *Tengu's* words in Chozansi's work at length while commenting on them,

> Following the perceptions of the mind, the speed of practical application is like opening a door and the moonlight immediately shining in […] Victory and defeat are the traces of practical application. But if you don't have *conceptualization*, form will not have aspect. Aspect is the shadow of concept, and is what manifests form. If there is no aspect to form, the opponent you are supposed to face will not exist. (2006, 118, my emphasis)

This lack of conceptualization and immediacy of reaction is readily incorporated into a radically enactive framework. It does away with concepts that manifest form and discriminations. The *Tengu* continues,

> This is what is meant when we say that neither my opponent nor I exist. If I exist, my opponent exists. Because I do not exist, even the insignificant thought of good or evil, perversion or properness, by the man coming at me will be reflected as in a mirror. And *this is not reflected from me*. It is simply that he arrives and moves on […] If I tried to divert it from myself, *it would become a thought* […] (Chozansi 2006, 118-119, my emphasis)

This illustrates that the unity of contradictories just discussed, whether it be the opponent or the antagonism between implicit and explicit cognitive systems, or the subpersonal and reflective levels of awareness. The *Tengu* observes,

> The person who comes and goes like a god neither thinking not enacting the unfettered mysterious function—this is the swordsman who can be said to have attained enlightenment. (2006, 19)

Once the self (empirical and transcendental) is overcome as absolute nothingness, there is no self, only action and the unity of opposites. This no self, *muga* (無我), is crucial in Buddhist soteriology to overcome attachments to desire and life, and surmount the fear of death; it is crucial to performative activities in 'do or die' situations to conquer anxiety; it is crucial for cognition to be truly contentless. *Dō* are designed to instil the capacity to reliably operate so.

Zen monk Deshimaru Taishen, who also popularized Zen in the West, vacillates as he describes action in Japanese martial arts, but more pertinently, [30] engages contentless thinking,

> "There is no choosing. It happens unconsciously, automatically, naturally. There can be no thought, because if there is a thought, there is a time of thought [when an instantaneous flash is needed] and that means a flaw. For the right moment to occur there must be a permanent, totally alert awareness of the entire situation" (1991, 32).

The context Deshimari uses is that there must be a complete unity of mind, technique, and body—*shin*, *waza* (技)*, tai*—clearly a holistic understanding. Indeed, spontaneous action predicated on deliberation, habit, and reflection underwrites this ability to work in the radically enactive space of contentless minds. Wertz, insightfully calls attention to Deshimaru's idea of *hishiryo* (非思量), non-thinking "a state of thought beyond thought" (1991, 10), and which he relates to Heidegger's *Gelassenheit* as he explains that this refers to "a state of meditative thought beyond calculative thought" (138; also 238 endnote 38). In Western terms, the better way to think about this thinking beyond thinking and calculation is in a holistically and radically enactive way.

Chozansi makes reference to a mirror and the moonlight shining above. Both tropes, the moon reflecting on water and the mirror have a long tradition in Asia, and Buddhism especially. They are popular images to capture what and how *mushin* is supposed to be like when confronting an

antagonist (whether human, animal, or other, as when climbing mountain). Munenori (Yagyū 1992 & 2003) expounds at length as he weaves Buddhist exegesis with technical advice to keep the bodymind fluid and avoid tarrying. The *Tengu* elucidates that the moon on water "is a metaphor for when you can move and respond with spontaneity and No Mind." (Chozan 2006, 133) Both Munenori and Chozansi make it clear that it is a matter or instantaneous action that happens faster than a blink, something only a contentless cognitive system can produce. This instantaneity is built on patient work, however, as the next essay explains.

Similarly, a mirror *itself* is contentless and reflects instantaneously– but I East Asia, it has a richer meaning. Oshima details the strength of the metaphor discussing what mirrors were like in Zhuangzi's time (fourth century BCE): they were made of bronze, and crucially, imbued with magical properties given that they could not only reflect, but also generate fire from the sun at certain times of the year, be like calm water (and thus like sages at rest), and also produce water through condensation on moon nights (1983, 74-79). Thus, the underlying sense is that mirrors are creative and productive, not merely passive reflectors; much like Nishida's acting intuition and contentless bodyminds in action. In a suitably Daoist fashion, the limitations of mirrors (contra Plato's misgivings) are turned into advantages.

Scottish trials cyclist Danny MacAskill embodies wonderfully expertise as a non-Asian mastery that fits the above performatively (phenomenologically, flow is a different matter as mentioned). In his latest 7-minute online film, *The Ridge,* he goes to the "Isle of Skye in Scotland to take on a death-defying ride along the Cuillin Ridgeline." (Thomson & Macaskill, 2014) As he rides up and down the ridge, at times on a sliver of ground barely a couple of feet wide and sheer drops on either side, the ease and nonchalance is obvious, as is his patent mindful awareness. He creates movements and possibilities through his skills where no one else would find spaces. Emptiness, nothingness, and no-self are full of creative opportunity and displayed on all their glory in the film. For Suzuki, emptiness harbors "infinite possibilities" (1998, 149). How to actually and effectively choose the right or better course of action can be a problem onto itself. Much as the rules in games and sports create possibilities, the constraint of practice is the door to freedom in performance.

The spontaneity of *mushin* is not a matter of unplanned movements and reactions either. It is the result of much practice and training, and deliberation. For Nishida acting intuition at its creative best is a deliberate and arduous process (even if the performance itself may seem effortless, this is built atop relentless discipline). He writes, making a point that easily extends to performative endeavors, "Artistic intuition, for instance, though it appear simple and unreflective, is never without an element of reflection, and its obedience to [...] reflective self-development can involve a strenuous and painful effort." (1987b, 34) *Mushin* and flow are the result of Deweyan habit. His unorthodox views on deliberation shed further light (see essay 3). For him deliberation "responds in action to the stimuli of the environment" (Dewey 1988, 139), and is a "dramatic rehearsal (in imagination) of various competing possible lines of action" (ibid.,132) that arises from an excess of preferences (ibid., 134). Deliberation checks overt action and rehearses imaginatively the possibilities, until the right confluence, which he calls the 'object of thought' leads to the energetic release (ibid.) Contrary to common assumptions, it is wonderfully efficient: "Nothing is more extraordinary than the delicacy, promptness and ingenuity with which deliberation is capable of making eliminations and recombinations in projecting the course

of a possible activity." (Ibid., 135) *This* kind of deliberation is a mark of consummate experts. They train for calamity; they carry out these imaginative deliberations continually, running scenarios of possible mishaps, possibilities, and 'unpredictables."

Ski guide and author Allen O'Bannon once fell 300 feet while ice-climbing. Florence Williams describes this experience thus: "Time slowed. An image game to his mind from a conversation he'd had with another ice climber who'd survived a fall […] O'Bannon pulled in his arms and legs until his rope finally arrested him […] Now 50 and a risk manager […] he tells his clients, mostly scientists, about the power of preparation." (2014, 84-85) O'Bannon explains that in a crisis while some panic and some stay cool, most people fall into what he terms "the bewildered state" and pretty much do nothing. As for O'Bannon, Williams quotes,

> "I push training in as many simulations as you can," […] "At what distance will you pull your bear spray" How will you react when you fall into a river? The idea is to know what failure is like. If you can't train, visualize. Then your response becomes automatic." (Ibid., 85)

Visualization is a technique that Tsunetomo already in the seventeenth century recommended, telling in gruesome detail to imagine all kinds of deaths to get used to the possibility of death (Yamamoto 1983). But much like O'Bannon, many mistakenly conceptualize their responses as automatic, intuitive, even unconscious processes. But they do remember in detail what they do, and their in-the-moment 'reactions' owe their effectiveness to a Deweyan deliberative process built on a relentless training and deliberative loop. These scenarios are not run as mere hypotheticals, but rather hinge on the present, for our "judgment of future joys and sorrows is but a projection of what *now* satisfies and annoys" us (Dewey 1988, 142, my emphasis). As Dewey explains,

> The moral is to develop conscientiousness, ability to judge the significance of what we are doing and to use that judgment in directing what we do not by means of direct cultivation of something called conscience or reason, or a faculty of moral knowledge, but by fostering those impulses and habits which experience has shown to make us sensitive, generous, imaginative, impartial in perceiving the tendency of our inchoate dawning activities. Therefore the important thing is the fostering of those habits and impulses which lead to a broad, just, sympathetic survey of situations. (1988, 144)

The opening poem to this essay about *kendō* speaks to this: "Not think:/Before and after,/In front, behind;/Only freedom/At the middle point." Freedom lies at the middle point between past and future, in the here and now. Our present interests then modulate our choices. This lays down habits, which furnish "the necessity of forward action in one case as instinct does in the other. Carter explains how practice and spontaneity come together in *dō*, as these are ways "towards spontaneity via disciplined cultivation" (1998, 107). These are the source of Deweyan habits. Again, freedom is found within constraints, like Kant's dove needs the air's resistance to fly.

The end result of *mushin* is utterly philosophical (and congruent with the lessons that failure affords us, as seen in the earlier essay). The *Tengu* concludes at the end, "In both learning and swordsmanship, just consider it to be your main business to know yourselves." (Chozansi 2006,

170) At heart, *mushin* is an decidedly philosophical process of self-knowledge that seeks to transcend itself immanently (contrary to sport experts and flow, it explicitly seeks this). Sword master Hori Kintayu says to his pupil Kimura Kyuho, as per the latter's account, that whether one succeeds technically is not important, "the main business is to seek it [deeper understanding] not in things external but within oneself" (Suzuki 1993, 135). Two final ideas: First, this happens through embodied practice. It needs to be stressed that this is not a matter of purely intellectual insight, propositional knowledge, or rational process, but that it is a gnostic truth that is lived and cultivated through the bodymind in action. Second, and foreshadowing a theme the last essay delves into, *mushin* is an existential pedagogy. *Mushin* is not only about superb performance primarily or about self-enlightenment, but about transmission to others.

To close now on a redemptive note for Henry Skrimshander's return to baseball (readers interested in reading the novel should skip the rest of this paragraph.) Emptiness is much at the heart of return from that catastrophic slump that ends his baseball career and wrecks his life. Yet, at the end, we find him returning to the diamond one morning—just to throw some balls. Then, we read how he "spun his hips and whipped his arm, feeling nothing, less than nothing, no sense of foreboding and anticipation, no liveliness, no weight, no itch or sentience in his fingertips, no fear, no hope. The ball bore through the morning mist on what seemed like a true path." (Harbach 2011, 512) When Henry allows this nothingness to fill him, he is back where he started. Only all the wiser, much as mountains are mountains, the ball is the ball (see Essay 8, fn.4). Once again.

5. *East & West – Martial Arts and Sports Face-off*

Aparicio's fictional book "The Art of Fielding" within Harbach's eponymous novel deftly combines Western mores with Eastern lore. But, off the pages of fiction, how do both 'worlds' relate, specifically, within the scope of sport and performative practices? There are a few studies of such comparative nature in the philosophy of sport. Some evaluate philosophically martial arts on their own (Becker 1982, Abe 1986, Bäck & Kim 1979; Oda & Kondo 2014), others compare them in relation to sport (Wertz 1977), sport, art and dance (Allen 2013), virtue (Reid 2010), Nietzschean self-overcoming (Monahan 2007), enlightenment (Bäck and Kim (1979)[31], or provide an eclectic collection of essays (Priest & Young 2014). Rather than a detailed commentary and re-exposition of what others have covered, punctual comments engage pertinent ideas in line with *skillful striving* (both as process of self-cultivation and this project itself). That is, skills and abilities are the prism to look at these sources.

Having said that, it is worth beginning with commentary on a seminal piece. Spencer Wertz was one of the first sport philosophers to conduct comparative analyses of sport and Asian practices (1977 & 1984).[32] Contrary to Becker's (1982) dismissal of these as strewn with cute Zen-like phrases, they are perceptive examinations. Wertz (1991) provides two main lines of inquiry. One considers the way Western sport shares in *mushin*-like states, what today we refer to as flow. He explores this in the world of tennis through the work of Tim Gallwey. The other considers Zen monk Deshimaru Taishen's (1991) book on Zen and martial arts, where Deshimaru draws a sharp contrast between both practices. He uses the former to establish some putative cases of excellent performance in *mushin*-like states that may match those of Eastern masters. This is not

contested nowadays, but was doubted then (we should also keep in mind the differences). He looks at such cases in order to dispute some of Deshimaru's claims and find genuine affinities between Western sports and Eastern martial arts, Zen and Yoga. Of note is that Deshimaru' stance on sport "reflects the concept of *recreation*." (Wertz 1991, 131, his emphasis)

This last point should encourage us to keep in mind the diversity of sports and martial arts vertically and horizontally, that is, their historical and geographical extensive manifestations. Both have evolved in very complex ways, sometimes interrelated over time in numerous places. Insights applicable to some sports and martial arts may not be appropriate to others. Just as we find competitive, recreational, and risk sports for instance, each with specific manifestations, in East Asia *alone,* there are a number of classifications. We have already mentioned *koryū* as traditional martial arts as *jutsus*, or warfare techniques; and while they directly precede *dō*, they are quite different.[33] We find also *kakutogi* (格闘技), sportified martial arts, e.g., karate (空手), *tae-kwon-do* (태권도), or *kungfu* (功夫, *gongfu* in pinyin). And today there are the popular *sogo kakutogi* (総合格闘技), mixed martial arts. In the ensuing, and for reasons of practicality, the rubric of traditional martial arts covers both *Koryū* and *budō*.

Wertz also points out how many of Deshimaru's claims regarding sporting shortcomings vis à vis martial arts are true of "the experience of sport for *average* athletes" (1991, 140). This is consistent with the study of the normal as average in the West generally, as mentioned above along with Yuasa. But when we consider the exceptional, there are significant differences. Sometimes these are positive, as much of the foregoing evinces. Sometimes these are negative. Next, we consider some differences. How they could benefit from each other, and other salient themes—e.g., the means and end (process and results) entente, or competition—have their philosophical denouement in the last essay.[34]

A number of studies have remarked on some unique differences between the martial and sportive worlds. Allen writes of the different kind of aesthetic value and beauty that martial arts manifest, as it happens only when the movements are effective and intentional in actual engagement (2013). Oda and Kondo's (2014) study of *kendō,* highlights the role that *zanshin* (残心), a relaxed awareness that maintains intent and alert posture after a successful strike, plays. It is a unique aesthetic judgment on two counts that sets it apart from other aesthetic sports (as per Best's (1979) distinction between purposive and aesthetic ones: the judgment takes into account the intention of the performer, and how this needs to determine "a subjective, internal state by appealing to intersubjective criteria: the observation of the kendo-ka's actions" (Oda & Kondo 2014, 13). A more contested difference considers the moral tendencies of both practices.

For Bäck (2009), martial arts are sources of good moral character whiles sports stand out for their vice-inducing tendencies. He argues that we are better off taking up martial arts rather than sports, and giving up competition (the last essay forwards an alternative model of competition immune to his critique). Nonetheless, he takes a rather monolithic view of sport, lumping all of them and their different categorizations together. McNamee (2008) has challenged the reliability of his sources (see also Reid 2012). Nonetheless, some of his points are applicable to the subset of competitive and elite sports. Bill Morgan's (2006) extensive and deep analysis of American sports shows the complex ways in which institutionalized and corporate interests, and free market values can 'encourage' misbehavior.[35] Let us suppose for argument's sake that virtues in

sport do exist, but they do not transfer as readily to other areas in comparison to martial arts. How do we account for this? This issues from crucial methodological differences. Put succinctly, the martial sphere explicitly sets out to cultivate character, unlike the sportive one.

There is no overarching philosophical and spiritual framework that enfolds the training in sports. As Robert Carter states, "There is nothing like this understanding in the West, which does not employ its arts and crafts, or its sports, to teach the deepest religious and ethical thoughts of its culture" (2008, 3). Sports may inculcate sportsmanship, he continues, but only in Japan is this overtly about self-transformation (ibid., 4). Takuan specifically unites the two: "Technique and principle are like the two wheels of a cart" (1986, 4), where principle is the underlying philosophic and religious framework that frees one from attachments and effortful focus. If Takuan writes about it, Munenori embodies this. He was a consummate swordsman yet reflective and cultured, and his treatise magisterially combines Buddhist phenomenological insight and practical know-how in contrast to Takuan's strictly philosophical writings and Musashi's tactical and practical *Book of Five Rings*.

In the West, we find psychological procedures meant to help athletes either improve attitude and focus or mitigate specific stressors or neuroses with the narrow goal of performance; it is not about self-realization. Japanese (and Asian) ways opt for indirect ways to induce and cultivate existential realizations (still connected to the practice at hand). As Takuan writes with regards to the acquisition of existential insights "there is no transmitting it by words or speech, no learning it by any doctrine" (1983, 89). Thus, the role of hard work is to teach the lessons to facilitate a gnostic realization. Moreover, *outstanding* martial (or sporting) performances and actions cannot be 'taught' propositionally. They are not reducible to rules. Says Takuan, "There is no established rule for manifesting this ability" (1983, 91).[36] Through all this, these masters remain reflectively aware that any given *do* is nothing more than that, and that full self-cultivation is much broader and deeper. This applies well beyond martial arts or Zen. As Herrigel puts it, "What is true of archery and swordsmanship is true of all the other arts" (1989, 77). Lest we get carried away, Chozansi has a sobering rejoinder, "Though one art may seem trivial, one should not take it lightly. But again, do not make the mistake of considering that art to be the Way." (Chozan 2006, 93)

Finally, Yuasa specifies, "the standpoint of praxis has been regarded as more important than that of theoria (1993, 35), explaining how sports begin from the mind while the martial arts start with the body (ibid., 30). It is telling that Sekida states, "only after we have dealt with the practical aspects of Zen training […] do we go on to consider its theoretical and philosophical aspects (1985, 37). In other words, martial arts integrate mindfully technical and philosophical facets with the actual pragmatics of the practice at hand. This is exemplified most dramatically in how it extends to the very tools they rely upon. Chozansi asserts, "The highest principles are contained within the techniques and follow the self-nature of the utensil" (2006, 96). Athletes, of course, achieve an equivalent mastery and identification with their tools, yet, there is a difference akin to that between *mushin* and flow. The saying goes, 'the sword is the soul of the samurai.' In Japan, the tool becomes integrated as part of the holistic bodymind as a performative element, but is also imbued with deep spiritual meaning.

The martials arts may look as polished as the blade of a katana, but closer inspection shows some imperfections. Some are easily buffed away. As already mentioned, their esotericism makes them overly cryptic quite often. But suitable translation and contextualization can handle this. Martial arts are also often associated with the supernatural, with common attribution of superpowers to some practitioners. This is but a is *peccadillo,* as already addressed. Moreover, Dohrenwend clarifies, these exaggerated legends that attribute extraordinary and often supernatural skills to legendary masters are stories "traditionally used for entertainment purposes in China, and Chinese acrobats are trained specifically for their representation." (2012, 10) Those familiar with the tradition will take them as such. This is an issue only when dealing with the gullible or gross mischaracterization by frauds. Bäck & Kim (1979), among others, satisfactorily address objections regarding the incongruence between the violent origins and techniques of martial arts and the view that they develop character and promote non-violence. But some blemishes may indicate a corrosion that needs a more thorough polishing.

Bäck's extols how martial arts face real danger, and thus virtues learned through them are extensible to our complete lives (2009). He writes,

> Again, a martial art is not play, despite its training conventions. Nor is it merely dance, despite its emphasis on formal patterns. Its danger and its preoccupation with handling violence and aggression give it a realism lacking in play or art. If you are wounded in a war dance, you are not really hurt; excelling in a war dance does not make you a warrior. Here a martial art has some common ground with dangerous sports: fostering virtues of perseverance and courage, but perhaps without the drawbacks. (Bäck 2009, 230)

Their virtues can extend across a whole life and permeate character—they go beyond the *dōjō*'s walls—but for reasons that have little to do with *real* danger (or at least not *necessarily* so, unlike risk sports). Martial arts nowadays are not dangerous in the ways that saw Suzuki write about swordsmanship and the problem of death. To validate his point, Bäck speaks of soldiers' use of martial arts in combat. But, that is an *application* of martial arts in combat by *soldiers* (who may train in martial arts as they train in CPR). It is not different from how running is also useful for soldiers, or swimming for Navy Seals. We would not think running itself as dangerous because soldiers in combat run. Today few, if any, martial artists emulate kung-fu master Shi Dejian's exercises on cliff tops (essay 5). Thankfully, *budō* prevailed, and today casualties are the rarest occurrence in the *dōjō* when considering fully-fledged martial arts practices. To compare, between 1998 and 2007 there have been 2 deaths in mixed martial arts and 70 in boxing (Impact MMA). In fact, in boxing there have been 339 deaths from head injuries between 1950 and 2007 (Baird et al. 2010). In mountaineering, arguably the most dangerous sport in terms of fatalities, deaths are counted by the hundreds (or thousands over the years): just in Mount Everest alone over 200 people have died since 1922 (Adventure Stats). Granted these compare different timescales and variables, but they do give a fair estimate of the respective relative danger.[37]

Why martial arts virtues extend to our complete lives has to do more with their underlying framework of explicit character development as *shugyō* than with danger, be it real or not. The true heirs to the martial spirit are actually the very dangerous sports he associates with the same ills of sports in general. Molinuevo explained, in the fourth essay, how for Ortega the

"sportsman is the heir of the warrior who has disappeared" (1995: 26, my trans.). Risk sports and activities may not be the historical heirs to martial sobriety in the face of death, but are closer as existential and performative inheritors. They must perform in situations analogous to those that gave rise to the keen insights that swordsmanship afforded *mushin*. Accomplished martial artists and adventurous sportspeople evince comparable bodymind integration in the face of danger. That said, what kind of insights they draw are likely to differ, not because sports are 'vicious' and martial arts are virtuous, as Bäck suggests, but because they do not inculcate explicitly reflection on their experience—nor do they preclude it either.

Bäck rightly states that, "there are other options, other ways to acquire those same virtues [e.g., self-affirmation]" namely, "training in the martial arts." (224) Interestingly, he then ties martial arts to danger. Given the tenuous connection to veritable danger, this undercuts the connection between martial arts and virtue. Bäck also wonders about what values dangerous sport may provide (2009, 234 fn.6). In addition to Russell's (2005) value of self-affirmation, here are a number of possibilities: 1) they can encourage an ethos of authenticity when encountering nature (Anderson 2001); 2) truly facing the possibility of death can lead to an appreciation of the sublime itself as part of a performative process where the very structure of the sublime is paralleled by our bodymind dynamics (Ilundáin-Agurruza 2007); 3) the make possible a particular kind of self-knowledge of one's self in nature and remote places (Howe 2008); 4) they provide meaning-conferring encounters with death or meaning-depriving meetings with our finitude, and can be transformative in a Nietzschean way while embracing an Orteguian aesthetic sense of life (Ilundáin-Agurruza 2008); 5) In addition to self-affirming values, there are self-negating ones (Sailors 2010); and 6) they can also be the source of gnostic truths and alternative values such as self-abnegation or uniquely sporting ones like the cultivation of 'style' (Ilundáin-Agurruza, forthcoming-b).

Bäck builds on Russell's (2005) admission that his views are more prescriptive than descriptive in so far as self-affirmation is embodied by the best exemplars, and points out that for Russell, "winning the competition, the contest, seems to have dropped out. He seeks to return to the Victorian conception of sport—or perhaps to transform a dangerous sport into something like a martial art." (2009, 224) Bäck advice is to do away with completion, as mentioned. Recent developments in the martial word, however, cast doubt on their ability to advance moral character and seem to bring martial arts closer to the prescriptive sphere. Malizszewski explains on developing trends he has observed over the last twenty years since he began writing on martial arts: "there has been a decline in the depth that has characterized the more traditional systems." (2010, 18) He continues, "The spiritual or meditative focus is more "generic" in the sense that any loose association with the ethereal is deemed spiritual or metaphysical." (ibid.) The core of what sets them apart has eroded.

In a related manner, whenever there is a lack of *veritable* competition (versus staged) in the *dōjō,* this impoverishes the martial arts. Or, at least, it limits their ability to cultivate values that can be found best or only through these modes. They lose their backbone for self-knowledge as an epistemic virtue, on which other virtues may build, e.g., this happens whenever that deference for the *sensei,* due to rank and respect (or intimidation), reflect less than the performers' actual abilities (whether deliberate or unintended). Many a 'contest' between *sensei* and students has the former reign supreme. Surely, the context is often one of training or demonstrations; but the

fact is that students often hold themselves back (even if inadvertently). Outside of athletic-like competition as one where our capacities are tested to the maximum (which Bäck rules out), we cannot determine the *actual* abilities of the performer under pressure. Numerous online videos show matches where the *sensei*, usually older, even venerable, throws around much stronger, faster, and younger opponents (of advanced rank), who patiently wait their cue to attack; we see how the *sensei*'s *bokken* finds the mark every time while the challenger's always slices well outside of the line of cut. Actually, there is a sense of competition, as taking the risk to find out our actual ability, that Bäck does not consider. This would redeem martial arts to some extent. *Kyudō*, a very safe martial art (short of standing on the wrong end of the *dōjō* when shooting is taking place), is a truer martial art in this respect. Onuma Hideharu sensei says, "The bow never lies. It is honest and unbiased, an excellent teacher of truth." (1993, 4)

It is true that we are more likely to find moral exemplars in *traditional* martial arts, *koryū*, than in sports and 'sportified' martial arts, *kakutogi*. But, if sports could do with more explicit (self)reflection and educational aims, *traditional* martial arts could bring more contest-like intensity.

Finally, sports and martial arts are both are found wanting in one aspect. To put it bluntly, some striking martial abilities and astonishing athletic skills, and their accompanying theoretical and philosophical inclinations are not the fruit of intellectually admirable qualities. Suzuki explains how Zen's directness, simplicity, practicality, and disregard for strict and explicit moral training, and applicability to handle death (foremost for warriors) was a natural fit for the comparatively *unsophisticated mind* of the samurai (1993, 61-63; 72, my emphasis).

Competitive athletes and zealous sportspeople share much in common with samurai in this regard. Many of them (misguidedly as seen above) think they react automatically, instinctively., and underplay the role of deliberation and spontaneity (shortchanging themselves in the process). The very internal goods and ways of achieving them necessitate this lack of reflectivity sometimes: the practical problems that samurai faced, namely the problem of death (Suzuki 1993, 124), and that sportspeople engage require immediate, unreflective action. In other words, the need for quick and unreflective action may become impulsive. This is not *necessarily* negative. Turning a weakness into a strength, we can say that there is a virtue in this. As Suzuki puts it, scoring one against academics who like to pontificate from their chairs,

> One great advantage the sword has over the mere book-reading is that once you make a false move you are sure to give the opponent a chance to beat you. You have to be on the alert all the time [which] keeps you true to yourself: that is to say, you are not allowed to indulge in idle thinking. (1993, 132-133)

And what goes for the swordsman goes for the superb sportsperson or performer. There are times when rational, calculating, representational thinking gets in the way, as the discussion on *mushin* shows. Instead, those moments on the edge call for spontaneous and radically enactive action. This does not mean that there is no room for deliberation before or after—and this is where those walking a *dō* differ from many athletes and risk sportspersons. The mutually life-saving *ai-nuke* takes place in the next essay. There East and West collaborate within the context of social practices where holistic and enactive ways are taught and flourish.

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[1] Shigematsu 1981, 23.
[2] Laozi 1996 (chapter 11), 32.
[3] Deshimaru 1991, 78.
[4] Of course, as happens with generalizations, this is easily falsified, we need only think of Shikibu Murasaki's *Tale of Genji* (源氏物語 *Genji monogatari*), touted as the world's first novel. There are, however, recognizable patterns that sustain these generalizations.
[5] See Noël Perrin's (1979) *Giving Up the Gun* for an account of the Japanese reversal from the gun to the sword. Japan is the only culture that has deliberately given up technologically advantageous warfare technology, and this due to a number of normative factors that included aesthetic, martial, and ethical considerations.
[6] I am very grateful to Fukasawa Koyo for his explanations regarding this complex terminology and his patient consideration of all my questions.
[7] Following Japanese custom, family name is given first; with some historical figures first name is used afterwards.
[8] Yuasa has developed the most sophisticated analysis of *shintai,* in recent Japanese thought. Nagatomo Shigenori' *Attunement Through the Body* (1992) gives a clear and thorough account of Yuasa's views. Nagatomo's own views are expressed in this book as well. Space limitations preclude integrating his otherwise original and insightful ideas.
[9] Context helps determine the sense in which to read different kanji with the same pronunciation, as here with *shinsin*; alternatively we can have the same kanji but different words and concepts, as with *shin* □ and *mi* □.
[10] I happily learned about this coincidence with the much more elegant Japanese changeable emphasis once I had adopted the bracketing convention for bodymind. I am thankful to Aramaki Ai for pointing this out, as well as for her help with ensuring the correctness of the kanji concerning the bodymind terms.
[11] Interestingly in consideration of the role that swordsmanship plays below, *Mi,* in addition to the body as one's self and station or condition of life, also takes the meaning of the edge of a sword blade (Hepburn 1873, 164). *Mi bun* refers to social position in the sense of rank or condition (ibid).
[12] To further contrast West and East consider the issue of the mind/body relationship as it relates to free will. The Occidental view of this relationship places it on the empirical level, neuroscience probes the brain for clues to our mental life, and one explains free will as either being present or not: your choice to read these words right now is conceptualized in terms of whether free will is operative, depending on whether causality is binding at *all* levels. The Japanese stance finds a correlative interaction between mind and body that implies there are degrees of freedom, whether you are more or less compelled to read this hangs on a number of factors, foremost among these being whether you have good or better reasons to justify it (this essay being *really* interesting being a very good and self-serving one for both of us). See Nishida (1990) for a contemporary elucidation of this.
[13] Yuasa (1987) expounds on their views in chapters six and seven. See also the last essay and the appendix for further analysis of fasting of the self.

[14] These concepts are deeply intertwined with Chinese practices, and these in turn derive from Indian Hindu and Buddhist ones. This is too complex to discuss presently. See Ilundáin-Agurruza and Hata (2015) for a discussion of related issues in the context of Eastern and sport philosophy.
[15] Some claims of "superhuman" strength or ability, such as the "unraisable body," where three people cannot lift the *sensei*, can be explained through physics. What may seem mysterious is simply good technique aligned with the forces of physics. See Daniel (2004).
[16] 'Swordmanship' covers both genders presently. Unlike other adaptations such as 'sportspersonship,' the epithet 'swordspersonship' proves too cumbersome even for the most open ears.
[17] In Japan each different part of the sword is crafted by a different person, with a swordsmith forging the blade, the polisher sharpening and giving it the mirror finish, another person making the *saya* (□) scabbard out of wood, etc. Yoshihara was a maverick that mastered all the arts and could make a complete sword. Michael Bell is another consummate artist who also makes the whole katana, from blade to accouterments such as the *koshirae* □□. I have been fortunate to forge two blades with him and learn much about the making of katana and its rich tradition. For samples of his splendid work see http://dragonflyforge.com/photo-galleries/katana-photo-gallery/.
[18] This has been attributed to a number of people, such as Benjamin Franklin, George Bernard Shaw, and others. Apparently, the original source is Karl Groos. http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Growing_old Accessed October 12, 2014.
[19] *Tengu* were mythical creatures, half-human half-bird that inhabited the forests and came in different degrees of mischievousness, from the prankster to the dangerous. They were famous and feared for the martial skills.
[20] Courage is here seen as a central virtue that permeates our whole character, with bravery in the physically active portion being instrumental to it.
[21] This distinction is relevant for the discussion of the articulation of experience in essay 10.
[22] From early on, Nishida emphasizes religion, among many reasons, because it is a phenomenon familiar to all (1987). But his views apply deeply across the board. His coinages are difficult to translate, and there are various versions for many of them. Presently I choose those that best fit the underlying argumentative tenor of this project or that are clearest for the concept at hand. When citing, the translator's choice is used.
[23] See Ilundáin-Agurruza, Fukasawa, and Takemura (2014) for a discussion of Nishida and sport philosophy.
[24] Becker, has a fairly critical view of Suzuki on account of historical inaccuracies and for muddling terminology (1982, 24 & 28 fn. 6). This is true to some extent. But Becker's (at times caustic) demeanor is prone to throw the baby with the bathwater. Outright dismissal is not advisable either; there are insights to be gleaned from a cross-sectional analysis of his words with those of other writers as well as conceptual analysis, as done presently.
[25] See Ilundáin-Agurruza (forthcoming-a) for an analysis of risk activities in terms of self-knowledge in an East-West comparative framework.
[26] Shrewdly, Mike McNamee remarks how, after all the subtle conceptual distinctions, this is the same word as when counting the numerical; rather than a different or specific "one" attuned to organic complexity.
[27] For more in-depth discussions of *mushin* in relation to flow see Krein & Ilundáin (2014); in connection with Eastern philosophy generally see Ilundáin & Hata (2015); and in relation to choking in sports see Ilundáin-Agurruza (forthcoming-a).
[28]This is a short but complex text of notoriously difficult translation. See Takuan (1987). Hiroaki Sato (1985) has a commentated translation; Cleary's (2005) translation is also annotated. Much the same applies to Yagyū Munenori's treatise, of which the following are recommended (1986; 1993; 2003; 2005; and 2008)). Suzuki (1993) translates most of Takuan's work and paraphrases many of Munenori's key ideas. Similarly, for Musashi's book recommended translations are 1987 & 2011.
[29] Asian thought and praxis have broad theoretical affinities with a radically enactive view of cognition as contentless that stays close to our experiential dynamics. It has traditionally been suspicious of language as an adequate method toward the truths of experience. This does not mean that we should do away with attempts to articulate experience, as essay 10 discusses. Also, we need to distinguish between an account of these experiences and of highly refined skills themselves in terms of nonrepresentational capacities, and the very articulation of this, which, of course, is propositional.
[30] The underlying assumption is that non-thinking or lack of content needs to be subpersonal, unconscious and automatic. This is that false dichotomy again. Unsurprisingly, and like Suzuki, he says in the very next page that, "Only consciousness can seize upon the opportunity for action, the empty space in which one must act" (ibid., 33). Deshimaru also makes the erroneous claim that martial arts happen in a flash while in sports there is a moment of doubt (ibid.). Wertz corrects this (1991, 132).

[31] They consider how engaging in martial arts promotes moral character, no-violence, and leads to enlightenment. They associate the latter to *Samādhi* and satori, which they relate, problematically, to the analytic clarity of the Cartesian methodology ((1979 27-28), since the overly rational process they describe leaves the bodymind behind.
[32] In his 1991 book he incorporates expanded versions of both.
[33] See Léo Tamaki's (2010) interview of Kono Yoshinori for his interesting and iconoclastic reflections on this.
[34] For an alternative comparative consideration of sport and martial arts see Ilundáin & Hata 2015). To summarize briefly some of the more pertinent differences *not* mentioned presently: the West emphasizes physiological quantitative approaches and psychological techniques inclusive of neuroimaging, and there is a preponderance of explicit instruction. It also stresses training (*keikō*) and flow states are ancillary and secondary to results in competition (or health is chief for many non-competitive sportspeople). Emotional control and temperance are secondary to performance as outbursts by amateurs and professionals alike show; sometimes these are means toward victory, i.e., consider trash talking and verbal intimidation. On the other side, Eastern *traditional* ways center on *shugyō,* see results as less important than the process, and bodymind integration prevails. Additionally, spiritual meaning and emotional control is crucial for the martial arts, see (Yuasa, 1993).
[35] The recent 2011 scandal in sumo wrestling is an exception that also validates Morgan's analysis in the Japanese scene, since finances were central. Interestingly, yet unsurprisingly, given the Confucian communitarian values in Japan, it also differed radically from the more individualistic Western model in that many of the fixed matches were arranged to help opponents either move up or not lose their standing or job. In a way, this also then stands in contrast to Western prevalent mores and may signal how Western sporting, individualizing, and free market values may be a pernicious influence as Morgan contends.
[36] Incidentally, this can be fruitfully contrasted with Kant's ideas on genius.
[37] We could compare martial arts to other sports in terms of number of injuries and their seriousness. Martial arts are on the whole safer and less injury prone than other sports. In mixed martial arts, "The injury rate in MMA competitions is compatible with other combat sports involving striking. The lower knockout rates in MMA compared to boxing may help prevent brain injury in MMA events." (Bledsoe et al. 2006) This can easily be extrapolated to other combat forms in martial arts. There are always risks associated with injuries from sprains or misdirected hits, but this is not the kind of danger Bäck is considering, as his target are dangerous sports.