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While philosophers of mind have been arguing over the status of mental representations in cognitive science, cognitive scientists have been quietly engaged in studying perception, action, and cognition without explaining them in terms of mental representation. In this book, Anthony Chemero describes this nonrepresentational approach (which he terms radical embodied cognitive science), puts it in historical and conceptual context, and applies it to traditional problems in the philosophy of mind.

Radical embodied cognitive science is a direct descendant of the American naturalist psychology of William James and John Dewey, and it follows them in viewing perception and cognition to be understandable only in terms of action in the environment. Chemero argues that cognition should be described in terms of agent-environment dynamics rather than in terms of computation and representation. After outlining this orientation to cognition, Chemero proposes a methodology: dynamical systems theory, which would explain things dynamically and without reference to representation. He also advances a background theory: Gibsonian ecological psychology, "shored up" and clarified. Chemero then looks at some traditional philosophical problems (reductionism, epistemological skepticism, metaphysical realism, consciousness) through the lens of radical embodied cognitive science and concludes that the comparative ease with which it resolves these problems, combined with its empirical promise, makes this approach to cognitive science a rewarding one.