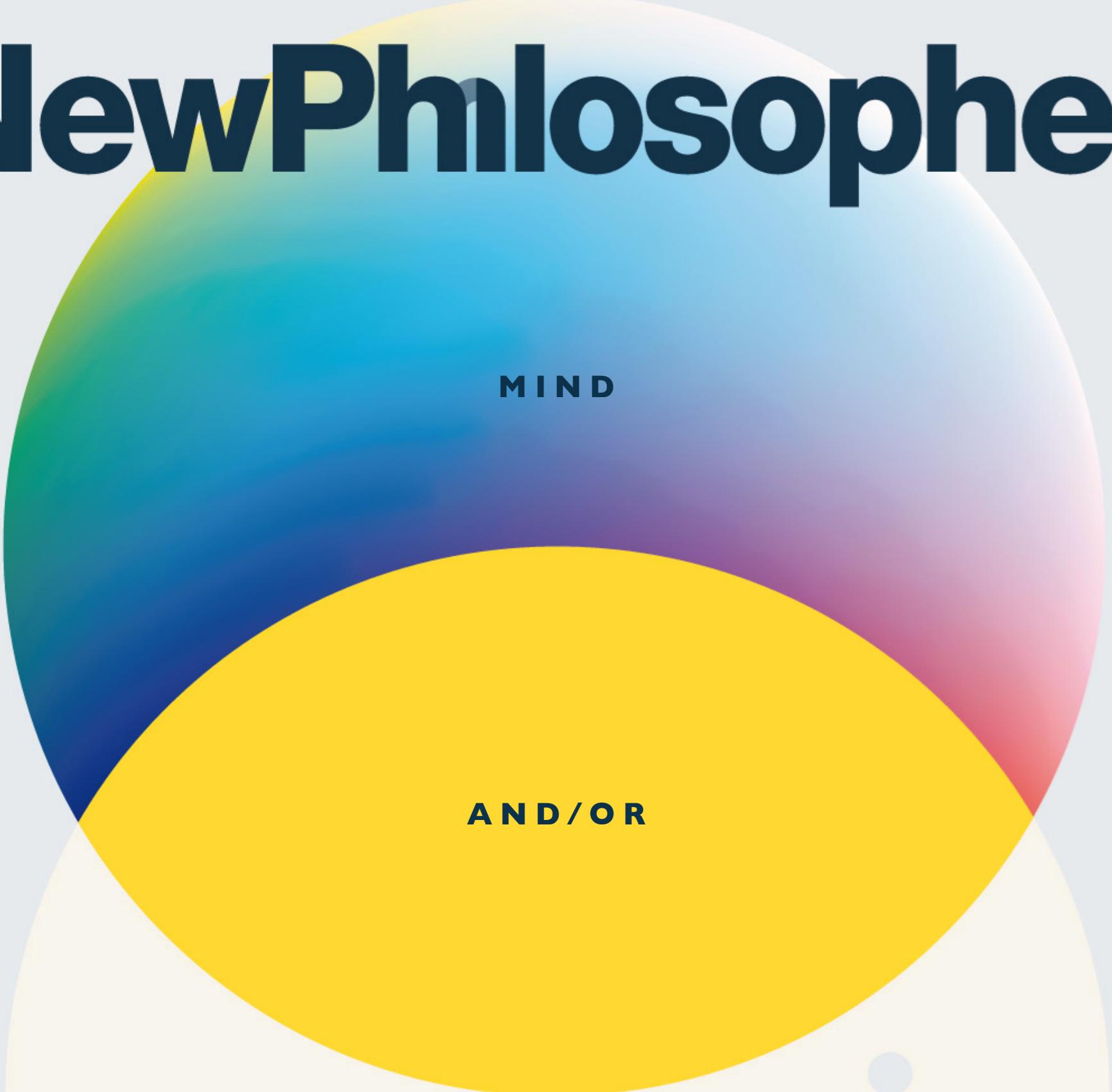


WHEN THE BODY BETRAYS US

NewPhilosopher



MIND

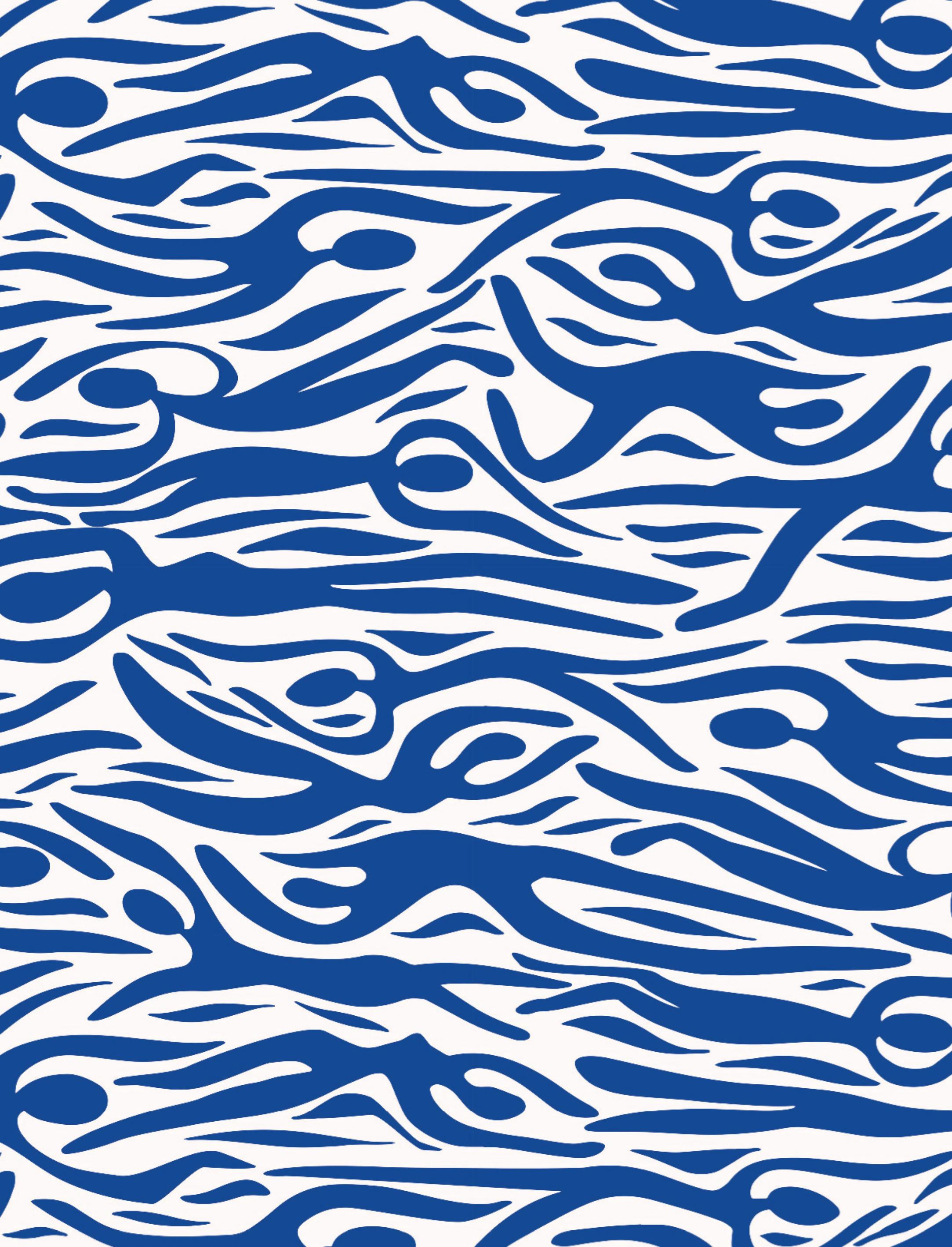
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BODY?

ANTONIA CASE
Disembodied delinquents

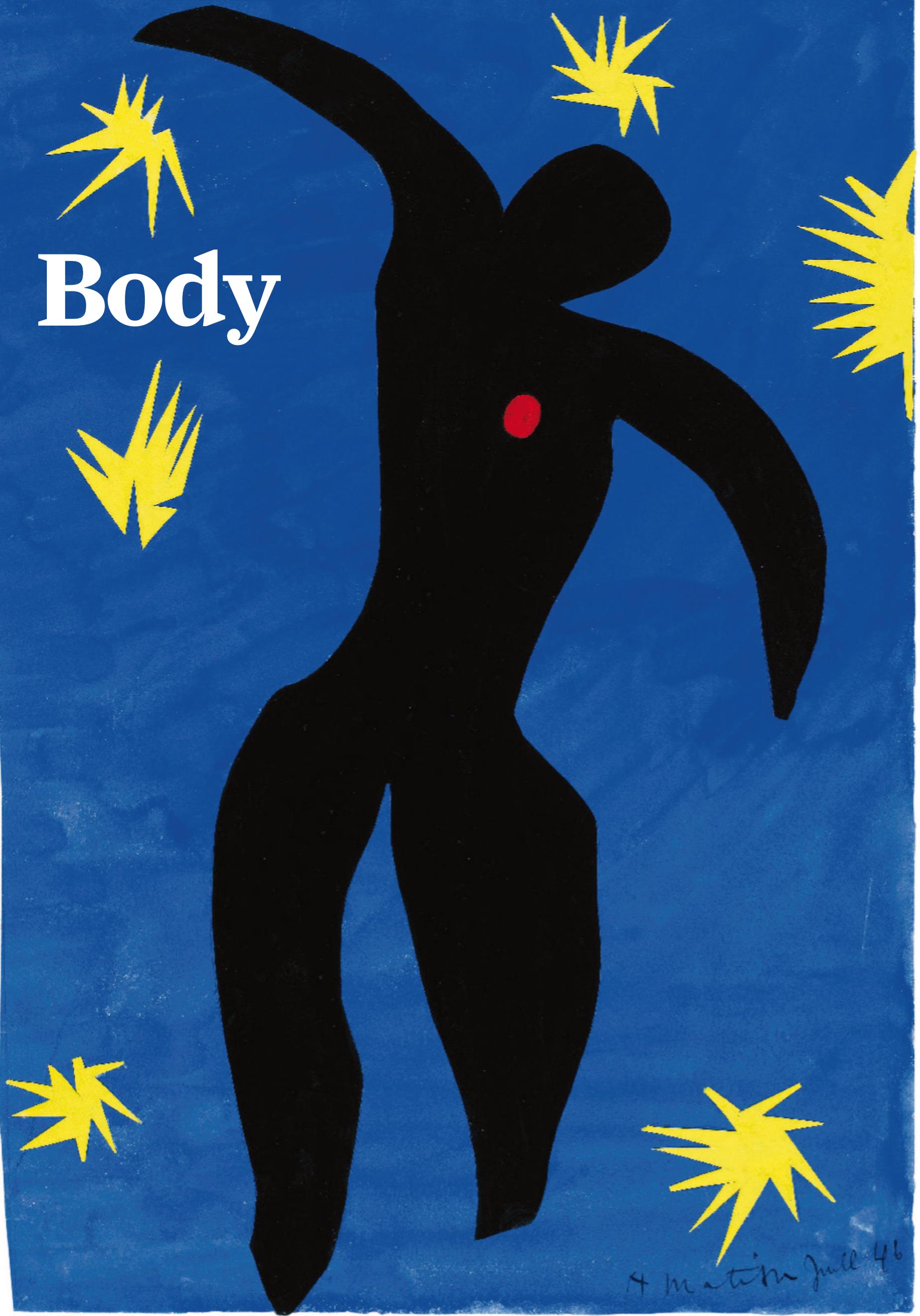
MARK ROWLANDS
Running with the pack

PATRICK STOKES
The body replaced





Body



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“A healthy mind in a healthy body.”

— Juvenal

When you decide to run for exercise you don't expect much other than sore calf muscles and tired lungs. You don't expect to discover your purpose in life, or to somehow work through a worry that has plagued you for months. But oddly enough, some 30 minutes into a run, a voice from nowhere can descend – rational, optimistic, measured, hopeful – and suddenly you have some clarity.

ASICS, the running shoe brand, is an acronym for the Latin phrase *anima sana in corpore sano*, or “a healthy mind in a healthy body”. The phrase derives from a satirical poem by Roman poet Juvenal, who argued that our ambitions for wealth, power, and personal beauty would lead to disappointment, and so, instead, we should pray for a healthy mind in a healthy body. He seemed to want to remind us to prioritise the stuff that matters.

While Juvenal, in ancient Rome, viewed health from the perspective of mind and body, in the intervening years, we've split the human body into its various parts, and somehow forgotten the whole. “The body has been divided from one whole into four different ‘bodies’,” Christer Bjurvill writes in *The Philosophy of the Body*. “Science has appropriated one part of the body, the inside; philosophy the mind; and medicine the organism.” Lastly, there are the artists – sculptors, poets, and dancers – who concern themselves with the outside of the head, the face and its expressions, as well as outside of the body, the limbs and their various movements.

We all have our body interests – philosophers on what goes on inside the head, on thought and intellect; theologians, to the interior realm, or soul; psychologists, our senses and perceptions; and sportspeople, artists, and physiotherapists, on the exterior of the body – its gestures, postures, and motor performances. And then there's the special part of the body, which “has been at the centre of interest for physicians”, adds Bjurvill, and that is the anatomical construction and physiological functioning of the body. The body, indeed, has been a rich universe to poke and prod, but how the body's interconnected parts can work together to restore, heal, and improve ourselves has taken a back seat due to our fixation on each of these four different bodies.

It's tempting to focus on strategies of the mind when we suffer mentally, or to fixate further on the body when we are physically unwell. Although it does feel counter-intuitive, there has been some research into the benefits of doing the reverse – to commit to physical exercise when we are

mentally plagued or take up matters of the mind like philosophy when we are physically unwell. Like a tightrope walker, the good life requires a continual adjustment of mind and body.

Plato was a wrestler, and a believer in the importance of balancing the twin poles of physical training and cultivating the mind. “The purpose is to bring the two elements into tune with one another by adjusting the tension of each to the right pitch,” he asserts in *The Republic*. Too much of one can be at the detriment of the other and can contribute to difficulties or suffering we may encounter in life. “Have you noticed how a lifelong devotion to physical exercise, to the exclusion of anything else, produces a certain type of mind? Just as neglect of it produces another?” Plato writes. “Excessive emphasis on athletics produces an excessively uncivilised type, while a purely literary training leaves men indecently soft.”

Today, in Central Park, New York, there are psychotherapists who walk with their clients, wandering down paths to relay traumas and hurt, rather than laying back on a couch. The rhythmic pattern of brisk walking, the fresh air and overhanging trees, the accelerated heart rate, the eyes that look outwards towards the future, all contribute to a better prognosis. In moments of movement, the body talks.

In recent years, there has been mounting evidence of the chemical effects of exercise – from cannabis-style highs to elevated levels of so-called ‘bliss molecules’. Similarly, at the other end of the spectrum, athletes have shown enhanced performance when applying mind-control techniques to quell unease and keep the body fluid and relaxed.

Even mindfulness, which one might suspect would be overflowing with techniques to order the mind, often channels the mind not backwards upon itself, but directly at parts of the body. Techniques such as the ‘body scan’ roll the mind from the scalp to the toes and back again, massaging the body with the mind. Tranquillity can be found, it seems, when the mind's universe becomes the body, and the body's universe becomes the mind – when we are no longer fragmented parts of four bodies, but a singular whole.



Antonia Case, Editor

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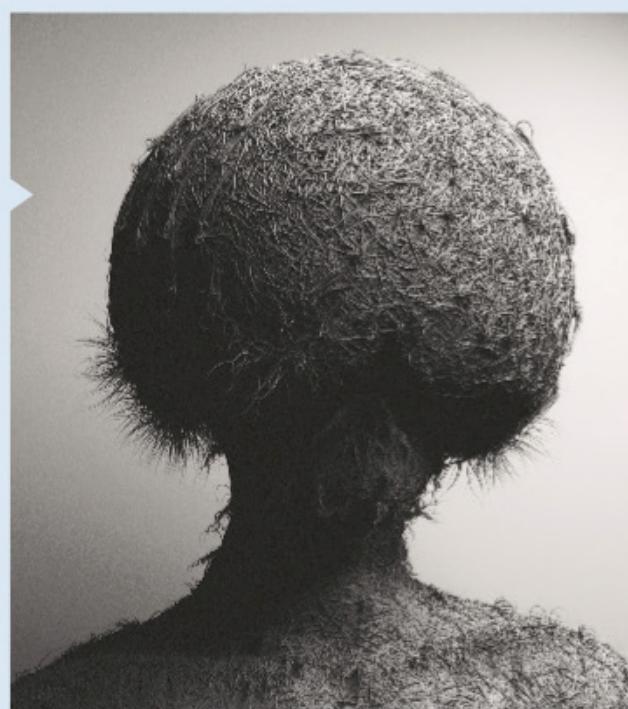
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Contributors

Mark Rowlands

Mark Rowlands is a Welsh writer and philosopher. He is Professor and Chair of Philosophy at the University of Miami, and the author of several books on the philosophy of mind, the moral status of non-human animals, and cultural criticism. His works include *Animal Rights*, *The Body in Mind*, *The Nature of Consciousness*, *Animals Like Us*, and the personal memoirs, *The Philosopher and the Wolf* and *Running with the Pack*.

Zan Boag

Zan Boag is the former Editor and current Publisher of *New Philosopher*, Editorial Director of the international magazine *Womankind*, and Director of poet bookstore. In 2017 he won the Australasian Association of Philosophy Media Professionals' Award and was shortlisted for Editor of the Year in the international Stack Awards. Boag speaks regularly on philosophy, technology, the media, and ethics, and was the co-founder and host of the monthly philosophical discussion series *Bright Thinking*.

Patrick Stokes

Patrick Stokes is a lecturer in philosophy at Deakin University, Melbourne. He specialises in 19th and 20th century European philosophy, personal identity, narrative selfhood, moral psychology, and death and remembrance. A particular focus is bringing Kierkegaard into dialogue with contemporary analytic philosophy of personal identity and moral psychology. Stokes was awarded the 2014 AAP media prize.

Nigel Warburton

Nigel Warburton is a freelance philosopher, podcaster, writer, and the Editor-at-large of *New Philosopher*. Described as “one of the most-read popular philosophers of our time”, his books include *A Little History of Philosophy*, *Thinking from A to Z*, and *Philosophy: The Classics*. The interviewer for the Philosophy Bites podcast, Warburton was previously Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at the Open University and Lecturer in Philosophy at Nottingham University.

Mariana Alessandri

Mariana Alessandri is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. She has written for *The New York Times*, *Philosophy Today*, *Womankind magazine*, *Times Higher Education*, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, and many academic journals. Alessandri is the author of the forthcoming book, *Night Vision: Seeing Wisdom in our Darker Moods*, and her teaching interests include Existentialism and Mexican-American Philosophy.

Jacqueline Winspear

Jacqueline Winspear has written 16 novels in the award-winning Maisie Dobbs historical mystery series, including the *New York Times* bestseller *The American Agent*. Her standalone novel, *The Care and Management of Lies*, was also a *New York Times* and National Bestseller, and a finalist for the Dayton Literary Peace Prize. Winspear has published two non-fiction books: *What Would Maisie Do?* based upon the series, and a memoir, *This Time Next Year We'll Be Laughing*.

Antonia Case

Antonia Case is Editor of *New Philosopher* and *Womankind*, and is an award-winning writer and journalist. Her book on personal identity and change is forthcoming with Bloomsbury. She was the winner of the 2013 Australasian Association of Philosophy Media Professionals' Award and in 2016 was shortlisted for Editor of the Year in the Stack Awards. Case was selected as ‘philosopher in residence’ for the 2016 Brisbane Writers’ Festival.

Clarissa Sebag-Montefiore

Clarissa Sebag-Montefiore lived in China from 2009 to 2014 during which time she worked as the associate editor for *Time Out Beijing*, the art editor for *Time Out Shanghai*, and as an oped columnist for the *International New York Times*, reporting from China for the blog Latitude: Views From Around the World. She writes for *The Guardian*, *The Economist*, *Financial Times*, *The New York Times*, *Womankind*, *Wall Street Journal*, *New Statesman*, *New Internationalist*, *The Huffington Post*, and *Time* magazine.

Christine Caldwell

Christine Caldwell is the founder of and professor emeritus in the Somatic Counselling Program at Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado, where she taught course work in somatic counselling theory and skills, clinical neuroscience, research, and diversity issues. Her work began 40 years ago with studies in anthropology, dance therapy, bodywork, and Gestalt therapy, and has developed into innovations in the field of body-centred psychotherapy.

Tom Chatfield

Tom Chatfield is a British writer, broadcaster, and tech philosopher. He is the author of six books, including *Netymology*, *Live This Book!*, and *How to Thrive in the Digital Age*, and speaks around the world on technology, the arts, and media. Chatfield was launch columnist for the BBC's worldwide technology site, BBC Future, is a Visiting Associate at the Oxford Internet Institute, and is a senior expert at the Global Governance Institute.

André Dao

André Dao is a writer and editor who is co-founder of *Behind the Wire*, an oral history project documenting people's experience of immigration detention, and a producer of the Walkley award winning podcast, *The Messenger*. His work has appeared in *The Monthly*, *SBS True Stories*, *Meanjin*, and *Al Jazeera English*. Formerly the editor-in-chief of human rights publication *Right Now*, Dao was a finalist for the Australian Human Rights Commission's Young People's Medal in 2011.

Wolfgang Lettl

Wolfgang Lettl was a surrealist painter who was born and died in Augsburg, Germany. His retrospective was exhibited at the Schaezlerpalais in 2019. In 1963 he participated in the Grosse Kunstausstellung München, becoming a member of the Neue Münchener Künstlergenossenschaft. In 1992, during a retrospective exhibition at the Toskan Hall of Columns, he offered his paintings to the city of Augsburg on permanent loan.

Can Pekdemir

Can Pekdemir is a Turkish sculptor living and working in Istanbul, who teaches at Bahçeşehir University. His studies are focused on reconstructing and deforming bodies by altering the physical conditions in which they exist, and treating them as test subjects for virtual experiments. He does this while reshaping systems and documenting how they evolve over time. His work has been featured in magazines and exhibitions around the world.

Charles Boag

Charles Boag is a former journalist with *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Bulletin* and was newspaper editor of the *Blacktown and Parramatta Suns*. He has a Bachelor of Arts, Sydney University, Master of Arts from UNSW, and a post-graduate diploma in environmental studies from Macquarie. He is the author of fiction and non-fiction books. His recent work includes the seven-part *Mister Rainbow* crime novels.

Russel Herneman

Russel Herneman is an award-winning cartoonist whose work has appeared in *The Times of London*, *Private Eye*, *Prospect*, *The Spectator*, and many others. In 2018 he won Pocket Cartoon of the Year 2018 in the Political Cartoon Awards, European Newspaper Design award for illustration, and Society of News Design Award of excellence for Illustration. He was an exhibitor at the Society of Graphic Fine Art Draw 18 at Mennier Gallery, London.

Timothy Booth

Tim Booth is a UK based fine arts photographer who has worked for magazines and newspapers in the UK, Africa, Pakistan and South East Asia. He was voted the number one black and white photographer working in the UK today by *OneEyeLand*. His 'A Show of Hands' series, which culminated in a book, features hand portraits shot over a 20-year period. Booth believes that hands offer an evocative insight into a sitter's life and profession.

Genís Carreras

Genís Carreras is the cover designer of *New Philosopher* magazine and the creator of *Philographics: Big Ideas in Simple Shapes*. Carreras's work has been recognised in the AOI World Illustration Awards, the Laus Awards, and the Stocks Taylor Benson Awards, and his work has been featured in the books *MIN: New Simplicity in Graphic Design*, *Playing with Type*, *Geometry Makes Me Happy*, and *Geo/Graphics*.

Isabel Miramontes

Isabel Miramontes is a Spanish-born Belgian sculptor known for disproportionate bronze sculptures of the human figure. Miramontes resides in Belgium, where she was raised and attended the Institute Sainte Marie and Saint Gilles. She aims to convey not just the physical activity but also the emotional one – representing the psyche's ambiguous power and fragility, dreams and successes, or desire for isolation and freedom.

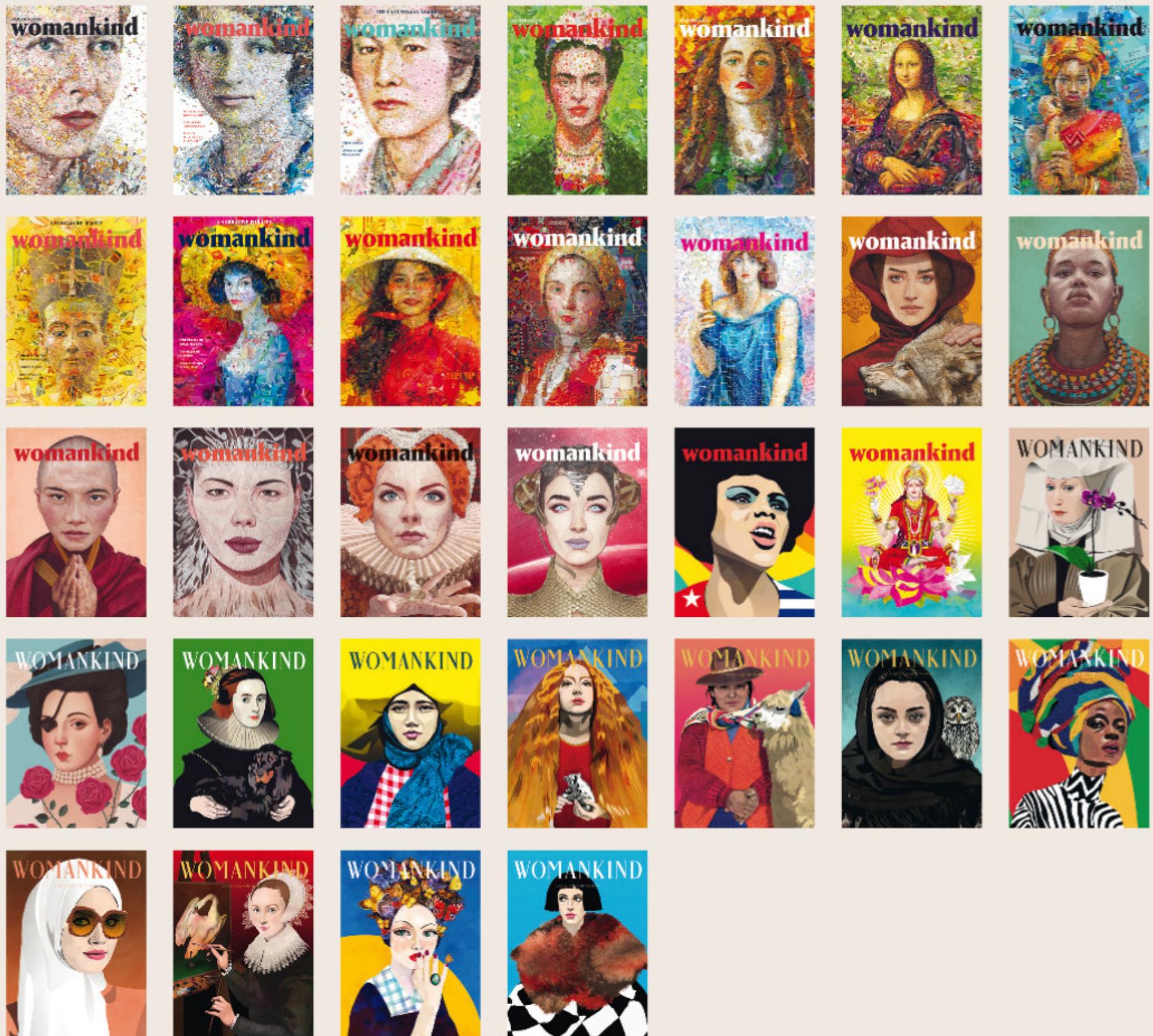
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“The body loaded by the excess of yesterday, depresses the mind also.”

— Horace

The decision to go for a run, or pump some iron at the gym, feels like a rather straightforward exercise. We do it to keep fit and healthy, to feel better about ourselves. We don't hit the gym for profit, not unless we are a personal trainer, or a boxer. But according to French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, the decision to get fit is comparable to embarking on a course of study to increase one's cultural capital (knowledge and skills obtained through education) or economic capital from a better-paid job (material wealth), or to attend a networking party for the sheer hope of boosting one's social capital (social network). We rely on these forms of capital – cultural, economic, and social – to navigate our way in the world, and the fourth type of capital, body capital, is little different.

When you put on a pressed shirt, tidy your hair, and clean your shoes, you are working on your body capital. If you are a director at a bank, for example, then a pin-striped suit with dazzling cufflinks will give you authority; it may motivate your staff to work harder; it may help you get important deals over the line; plus, it might aide your chances of getting promoted. A trim muscular body and taut face, too, may augment your body capital, which is why city gym windows are filled with red-faced corporates on steppers, climbing their way up the corporate ladder, so to speak.

Body capital is much easier to understand when it refers to people who make money from their bodies, like body builders and models – ‘embodied elites’, who trade on their appearance for money. But, according to scholars, when the everyday person invests time and energy into their bodies – via exercise, cosmetics, clothing, hair, diet, or cosmetic surgery – they do so with an expectation of gain of some sort.

The mind-body problem

René Descartes is perhaps best-known for the philosophical cliché *Cogito, ergo sum*, “I think, therefore I am.” But arguably his more enduring contribution is in cementing mind-body dualism into western philosophy for centuries. In his *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Descartes argues that while I could exist without my body, I could not exist without thinking. We essentially are thinking things, and thinking is, on Descartes’ telling, the activity of an immaterial soul, not a physical body.

Mind-body dualism has a certain intuitive appeal. It is hard to imagine how the feeling of anxiety, or the taste

of ginger, might be composed of atoms in the same way as a finger or a tongue. As a bonus, dualism as Descartes understood it seems to secure immortality, for immaterial things cannot decay.

But dualism runs into a big problem: interaction. How does the ‘ghost in the machine’ work the levers? We assume that when we act deliberately, our mind causes our body to do something, while things like fatigue and drugs suggest our mind in turn can be influenced by the condition of our body. But if mental properties and bodily properties are two totally different things, how can one interact with the other? How can mental

properties cause physical changes, and vice versa? Even sensation poses a problem for the mind-body dualist, who needs an explanation of how light hitting our retinas and air waves hitting our eardrums produce the sensation of a beautiful sunset and the sound of birdsong.

In his final book, *The Passions of the Soul*, Descartes claims that the soul “exercises its functions” via the pineal gland, a tiny structure deep in the brain. He knew this didn’t really answer the interaction problem, though, and Descartes’ soul left his body before he could come up with a better explanation.





“Flesh is our indisputable commonality. Whatever our race, our religion, our politics, we are faced every morning with the fact of our bodies.”

— Clive Barker

BEING HUMAN

Exiled to the desolate island of Fuerteventura, 100 km off the north-western coast of Africa, Spanish philosopher Miguel de Unamuno set himself up in Hotel Fuerteventura. It was February 1924, and the exiled philosopher's opposition to General Miguel Primo de Rivera's rule in Spain landed him in the Canary Islands. Based in Fuerteventura, the writer suffered from the isolation of his forced exile. He wrote letters back home about the desolation, the lack of trees and water, and a melancholy and desolate landscape.

The state of suffering had always been foremost on Unamuno's mind. In his book, *The Tragic Sense of Life*, he argues that suffering is an essential part of being human: “Suffering is the substance of life and the root of personality, for it is only suffering that makes us persons.”

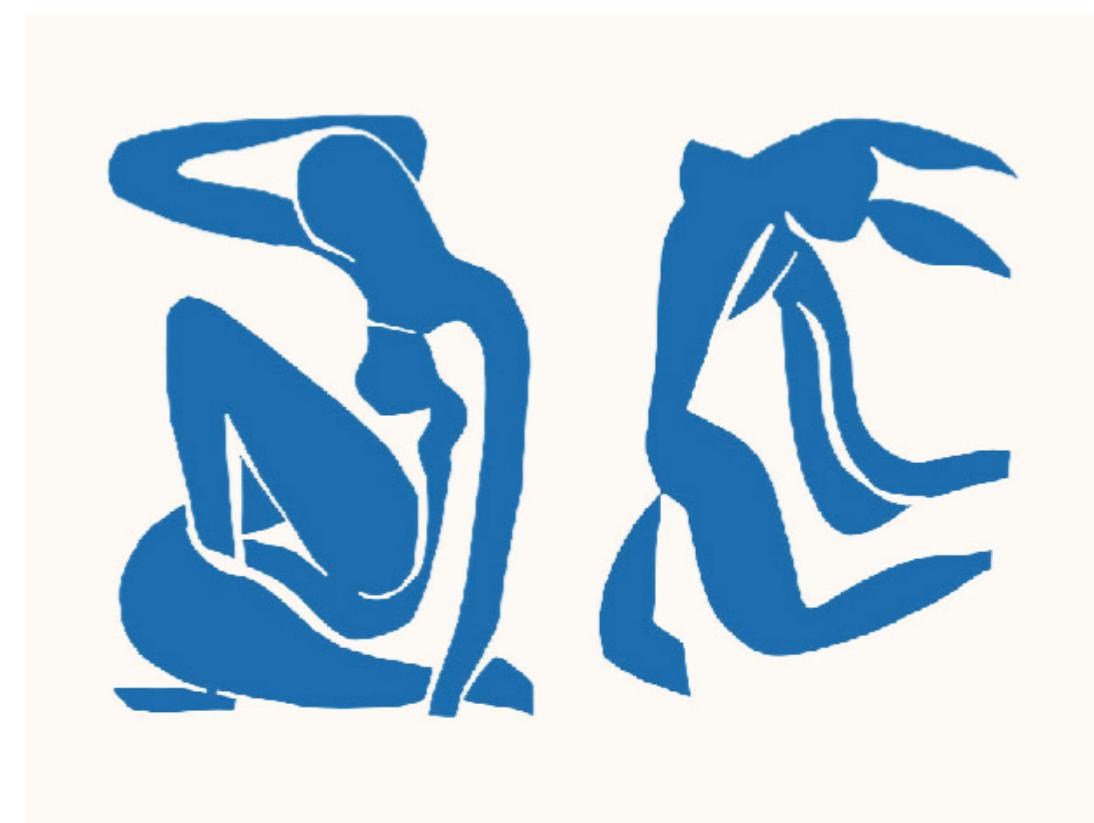
We may suffer from bodily pain, or from the emotional pain of hurt, regret, worry, or indignation. But rather than trying to detach ourselves from such suffering, or to somehow struggle to overcome it, Unamuno instead urges us to embrace it. Consciousness of our mortality, our limitations, our

regrets and worries, is what makes us human; it lends weight and substance to our lives. To turn away from suffering is to turn away from consciousness itself.

“There is no true love save in suffering, and in this world we have to choose either love, which is suffering, or happiness,” he writes in *The Tragic Sense of Life*. “The satisfied, the happy,

do not love; they fall asleep in habit, near neighbour to annihilation. To fall into a habit is to begin to cease to be. We are the more – that is, the more divine – the greater our capacity for suffering, or, rather, for anguish.” Not only does he believe that suffering makes us more fully human, it also, argues Unamuno, makes us more capable of loving others.

Blue nudes, Matisse, 1952



Smugglerius, by William Pink, 1834



A diminished body

On the day of Barack Obama's inauguration, sworn in as the 44th President of the United States of America, the outgoing Vice-President, Dick Cheney, left the White House in a wheelchair. The American public watched Cheney make a slow descent on a makeshift ramp from the doorsteps of the White House to the limo. "There was clear evidence that all the authority, intellectual ability, and economic success the Vice-President possessed were not forces strong enough to dispel the limitations of his fragile and compromised body," notes Maurizio Antoninetti and Mario Garrett in the paper 'Body Capital and the Geography of Ageing'. "His diminished body capital also seemed to have diminished him as an individual," they write.

As it happened, the outgoing Vice President had pulled a back muscle while moving boxes into his new home outside Washington. Cheney, age 67, was dealing with a body that had suddenly become more precarious. He faced diminished body capital – in other words, a body that could no longer walk confidently down the stairs but relied on a wheelchair, a ramp, and a helper. Suddenly, Cheney looked 'unnatural' in his environment.

"It is true that the combination of economic wealth, skills, knowledge, and social power can successfully satisfy one's desires. It is equally true though that the same enjoyment can be altered and transformed by the diminishing psychological and physical conditions of an ageing person," the academics write. Age, ill health, and injuries can all affect the body capital of a person, regardless of age, and sometimes almost overnight. And when this happens, our usual spaces can become very foreign – stairs that can no longer be ascended, baths that can't be stepped into, or cars that can no longer be

driven out of the driveway. Spaces that were once useful and convenient can become menacing obstacles to living. "Most older adults," write the academics, "are now living in urban/suburban environments that were not originally designed for frail and vulnerable adults."

Much like Cheney, when Gregor Samsa woke one morning from a troubled sleep, he found his body suddenly changed. Raising his head a little, he managed to see an arched brown belly, and numerous legs waving feebly before his eyes. Samsa, the protagonist in Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, had transformed overnight into a cockroach. While his body had shifted overnight, his space or environment had not. Samsa was still lying on his bed, between four familiar walls, in his little "normal human room". Thinking it best to go back to sleep, to forget "about all this nonsense", Samsa realised that this was quite impossible. Accustomed to sleeping on his right side, in his present state, "he kept rocking on to his back".

In his present body, as a cockroach, Samsa could no longer work at his job as a salesman. In fact, he couldn't even get out of bed. "He would have needed arms and legs with which to get up; instead of which all he had were those numerous little legs." To his dismay, even his usual delicacy of sweetened milk with floating white bread was abhorrent to the tongue, and instead he sucked hungrily on spoiled cheese. He soon finds hanging from the ceiling more comfortable than laying on the floor.

Kafka's *Metamorphosis* tells the tale of diminished body capital causing undesirable and unplanned transformations in established routines in everyday life. Our body operates in space, but sometimes that space no longer serves – becoming a hindrance rather than a help.

“There are bitter tears in human flesh.”

— Sumerian proverb



MINDS AND BODIES



Allez-Viens, by Spanish-born Belgian sculptor, Isabel Miramontes.

Fascinated with the body's movement, Miramontes creates bronze sculptures of the human figure. Her creations have a sense of motion within their twisted forms, often topped by a head which appears still in comparison. Miramontes is represented by the Canfin Gallery in New York. More of her work is displayed on page 25.

"I suppose, accordingly, that all the things which I see are false; I believe that none of those objects which my fallacious memory represents ever existed; I suppose that I possess no senses; I believe that body, figure, extension, motion, and place are merely fictions of my mind. What is there, then, that can be esteemed true? Perhaps this only, that there is absolutely nothing certain.

But how do I know that there is not something different altogether from the objects I have now enumerated, of which it is impossible to entertain the slightest doubt? Is there not a God, or some being, by whatever name I may designate him, who causes these thoughts to arise in my mind? But why suppose such a being, for it may be I myself am capable of producing them? Am I, then, at least not something? But I before denied that I possessed senses or a body; I hesitate, however, for what follows from that? Am I so dependent on the body and the senses that without these I cannot exist? But I had the persuasion that there was absolutely nothing in the world, that there was no sky and no earth, neither minds nor bodies; was I not, therefore, at the same time, persuaded that I did not exist? Far from it; I assuredly existed, since I was persuaded. But there is I know not what being, who is possessed at once of the highest power and the deepest cunning, who is constantly employing all his ingenuity in deceiving me. Doubtless, then, I exist, since I am deceived; and, let him deceive me as he may, he can never bring it about that I am nothing, so long as I shall be conscious that I am something. So that it must, in fine, be maintained, all things being maturely and carefully considered, that this proposition I am, I exist, is necessarily true each time it is expressed by me, or conceived in my mind."

René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, 1641



Pyromaniacs, 1995, Wolfgang Lettl





The Birmingham Mummy, X-Ray



WHERE THOUGHTS
BECOME PATHS

by Antonia Case

By his mid-twenties, Friedrich Nietzsche was walking six to eight hours a day. He set out about two hours before the sun rose over the mountain and he'd continue to walk as the shadows lengthened into afternoon and early evening. With notebook in hand, and an umbrella to protect his eyes from the sun, Nietzsche composed his thoughts while walking, which perhaps explains why his writings at that time were somewhat unstructured, and pregnant with pithy aphorisms, a style of writing he recommended one should "dip into" rather than to read straight through, such as, "We do not belong to those who only get their thought from books, or at the prompting of books, – it is our custom to think in the open air, walking, leaping, climbing, or dancing on lonesome mountains by preference, or close to the sea, where even the paths become thoughtful."

Nietzsche was especially enamoured with mountains, and as he struggled to ascend a steep slope, his thoughts naturally gravitated to our basic predicament in life as striving creatures who face hardships

and push through resistance. "What is happiness? The feeling that power is growing, that resistance is overcome," he writes. Ironically, Nietzsche, one of the most influential thinkers of the late 19th century, was in many ways a bit of a compulsive exerciser, "Sit as little as possible; do not believe any idea that was not born in the open air and of free movement – in which the muscles do not also revel," he notes.

For Nietzsche, endurance walking was his way of coping, much like the monarch butterfly claps her wings and pushes trapped air underneath to propel her through the air. We are not trees rooted to the ground, rather we have been born with two legs attached to our torso which can bend, jump, dash, and leap.

Renowned biologist and ultramarathon runner Bernd Heinrich was fascinated by human movement, especially running. Heinrich, who once wrote a paper on why honeybees must be warm to fly, also sought to understand why humans run. In his book, *Why We Run: A Natural History*, Heinrich studies the endurance of birds, antelopes, and camels to better understand human physiology. "Movement is almost synonymous with life," he writes. Even plants, he argues, "with elongating stems and



twirling tendrils... race one another toward light."

But humans have also been gifted with a powerful brain, one that can write, read, think, and create, that can fix a car engine and faulty fuse on an oven, that can philosophise and speculate. Why then should we need these spindly legs at all? Today, humans tap energy from coal and oil to move far beyond the speed we can go by muscle means alone. We also harness energy from the wind, water, sun, and other animals. "But for millions of years," writes Heinrich, "our ultimate form of locomotion was running. We are, deep down, still runners, whether or not we declare it by our actions. And our minds, as much as our lungs and muscles, are a vital force that empowers our running." Heinrich argues that movement, and in particular running, has played an important role in human evolution. As early humans, our ancestors ran for their dinner, and some days, they ran a very long way. Heinrich believes that persistence hunting has had an enduring effect on our minds. "We are a different sort of predator," he writes. "We can't outsprint most prey. We are psychologically evolved to pursue long-range goals, because through millions of years that is what we on average *had* to do in order to eat. To us, even an old deer that had not yet been caught would have required a very long chase. It would have required strategy, knowledge, and persistence. Those hominids who didn't have the taste for the long hunt, as such, perhaps for its own sake, would very seldom have been successful. They left fewer descendants."

In other words, humans evolved to chase long-term goals, and our minds worked with our bodies to hunt down

and advance upon our target. We strategised, planned, and executed our attack, and we motivated ourselves when times were tough. "Our ancient type of hunting – where we were superior relative to other predators – required us to maintain long-term vision that both rewarded us by the chase itself and that held the prize in our imagination even when it was out of sight, smell, and hearing. It was not just the sweat glands that made us premier endurance predators. It was also our minds fuelled by passion."

It could partly explain why humans like to chase long-term goals, whether that's to train for a marathon, set up a business, or study for a new career. We like to have a target ahead and to pursue it with vigour. It gives us purpose and sets us on a course of action. We can become listless without a goal ahead, even if it's as simple as planning for our next holiday. "A great pounce-and-kill requires no dream," adds Heinrich. "Dreams are the beacons that carry us far ahead into the hunt, into the future, and into a marathon. We can visualise far ahead. We see our quarry even as it recedes over the hills and into the mists. It is still in our mind's eye, still a target, and imagination becomes the main motivator. It is the *pull* that allows us to reach into the future, whether it is to kill a mammoth or an antelope, or to write a book, or to achieve record time in a race." The chase is in our biological makeup.

In 1879, Nietzsche left his professorship. He wrote in a letter at the time, "I have resigned my professorship and am going into the mountains. I am on the verge of desperation and have scarcely any hope left. My sufferings have been too great, too persistent."

We like to have a target ahead and to pursue it with vigour. It gives us purpose and sets us on a course of action.



Plagued with headaches, pain, and fatigue, Nietzsche took to the Alpine tracks, aware that the exercise would do him the world of good. And indeed, research proves that physical exercise is as beneficial to the brain as it is for the heart, lungs, bones, and muscles.

In his book *Running Is My Therapy, Relieve Stress and Anxiety, Fight Depression, and Live Happier*, journalist Scott Douglas describes his personal account of living with depression, and how regular running was far and away his best medicine. “I almost always finish a run feeling better mentally, often with a renewed sense that I can tackle my life’s problems,” he writes. As a journalist on running, Douglas came across many others who started running to lose weight or to get fit but found that running was equally transformative for their mental health. And the reason for this is not limited to feel-good chemicals, such as endorphins and serotonin, that are released into the brain during intense exercise, or the simple fact that running increases body temperature, which reduces muscle tension, making one feel more relaxed and calmer – it’s also because running provides a chase, or a goal to complete, and reaching running goals can “spur a cognitive breakthrough towards life’s challenges”, writes Douglas. “On a day-to-day basis, postrun satisfaction with yourself for winning the battle with inertia and doing what you know is good for you can improve your mood.”

For Nietzsche, his mountain walks were clearly cathartic. What is good for the body is good for the soul. “In the mountains of truth you will never climb in vain,” he writes. “Either you will get up higher today or you will exercise your strength so as to be able to get up higher tomorrow.” ■



Bercé mon cœur sur fond, by Isabel Miramontes

Either you will get up higher today or you will exercise your strength so as to be able to get up higher tomorrow.





by Clarissa Sebag-Montefiore

All in the mind

Kenneth R. Miller's late father was diagnosed with schizophrenia in the 1950s – leading to despair, distress, and, eventually, hospitalisation. Then psychiatrists prescribed him with psychotropic drugs.

"His mental illness just melted away," recalls Miller, a professor of biology at Brown University and author of *The Human Instinct: How We Evolved to Have Reason, Consciousness and Free Will*. "My dad often told me it was a great relief to him to know that the symptoms of his mental illness were caused not by some personal or moral defect but by a chemical imbalance in his brain, which these drugs helped to correct."

The episode remains for Miller a very personal example of one fact: that our mind, he believes, is a function of the brain.

"The mind is what the physical organ called the brain does," he says. "And I mean that in the same way I would say that movement is what our

muscles do. I am absolutely convinced that there is absolutely nothing that happens [in the mind] that cannot be explained by the laws of physics and chemistry and the cell biology of neural connection."

For centuries, human beings have grappled with the question about what exactly makes up the mind. Namely, is the mind an essence, distinct from our physical body and just temporarily housed there? Or is it a product of our physical body and unable to function without it? When we pass away does our mind live on outside of our decaying corpse – or does it die with it?

Modern understanding of mind/body dualism – or the belief that the mind and the body are separate – is in large part derived from the 17th century French philosopher and mathematician René Descartes. It was Descartes who coined the phrase, "I think, therefore I am", and it was Descartes who developed a theory, built on beliefs that pre-existed him, that the mind is immaterial.

As such, western philosophy has often elevated the workings of the mind above the more prosaic and humdrum workings of the body. American feminist author and professor Bell Hooks noted that "many of us have accepted the notion that there is a split between the body and the mind. Believing this, individuals enter the classroom to teach as though only the mind is present, and not the body."

Science begs to differ. "The prevailing consensus in neuroscience is that consciousness is an emergent property of the brain and its metabolism," notes psychologist Clifford N. Lazarus. "When the brain dies, the mind and consciousness of the being to whom that brain belonged ceases to exist. In other words, without a brain, there can be no consciousness."

This is not a new idea. Roman poet and philosopher Lucretius believed that the "mind cannot arise alone without body, or apart from sinews and blood... You must admit, therefore, that

“Holding dualistic beliefs leads people to perceive their body as a mere ‘shell’ and, thus, to neglect it.”

when the body has perished, there is an end also of the spirit diffused through it.” Ancient Greek physician Hippocrates, meanwhile, insisted: “Men ought to know that from the brain, and from the brain alone, arise our pleasures, joys, laughter and jests, as well as our sorrows, pains, griefs, and tears.”

Case studies of brain injuries have since backed up such visionary ideas. In 1848, American railway foreman, Phineas Gage – who was viewed as likeable, hard-working, and honest – suffered a severe injury to the brain. While it did not leave him intellectually impaired, he became “vulgar, irresponsible, capricious and prone to profanity,” writes Dr Sunil K. Pandya in his paper ‘Understanding Brain, Mind and Soul: Contributions from Neurology and Neurosurgery’. Gage’s frontal lobe was damaged, which can lead to “a wide spectrum of abnormal behaviour” – from “compulsive and explosive actions” to “lack of inhibition” and “maniacal suspicion”.

For many, this is a scary thought. It means that who we are as conscious, reflective individuals – our thoughts, our

emotions, our memories; who we love, who we like, who we hate; our aesthetic conception of beauty and ugliness; our urges, our intellectual capacity, and our ideas – is not incorporeal, or even a gift from the gods, but very much bound in physicality. And that injury inflicted to different parts of the brain could split or decimate our sense of self – by removing the ability to use language, say, or by stopping us from being able to emote and empathise with others.

Most disturbing to some people might be that our perception of our own self, of being special and unique, is not due to something indefinable – for example a soul – but is, in fact, a result of physical chemistry.

Stanford University psychologist Kelly McGonigal believes, however, that knowing “the mind is in the body” is empowering. “I don’t find it alarming or depressing that rich psychological experiences may be rooted in the body,” she muses in a 2012 article. “It doesn’t make falling in love less meaningful, art less creative... Instead, I find it inspiring. Working from this premise, we can understand puzzles like why loneliness increases your risk of heart disease, or how brain injuries transform personalities. We can also explore how mind-body practices like yoga can change your mood, or why working out improves memory.”

This mind-body connection means that providing the right drugs can help relieve or cure incapacitating mental illness, as in the case of Miller’s late father. It also means that our moods, and our idea of who we are, can be changed positively by what we eat, how we

move, and the ways in which we treat our bodies. Just as filling our bodies with narcotics can alter our mind and sense of self, so, to some degree, can exercise, posture, and diet.

Indeed, one 2012 study, which McGonigal’s article explored, discovered that belief in mind/body dualism can in fact be detrimental to our health. Researchers at the University of Cologne found that people who were primed with dualistic beliefs were more likely to eat unhealthy food and were less likely to take good care of their health or keep fit. In the paper, published in *Psychological Science*, researchers theorised that “holding dualistic beliefs leads people to perceive their body as a mere ‘shell’ and, thus, to neglect it”.

But what about our spiritual health? If the seemingly magical spark of the self can be explained away by bodily function, where does that leave faith and free will?

Miller, a practising Roman Catholic, still believes in his own particular version of free will – the ability “to look at the world around us, to consider what we see, and to make individual choices”, as he puts it. “Understanding that the brain acts as what you might call a chemical machine is an important bit of knowledge to have,” he says. “I don’t think that realisation takes away our sense of individuality or free will. The brain is much, much more complicated than any computer could even imagine. I take it as a given that it is entirely possible to build free will into that complicated organic machine.” ■



“The mind cannot arise alone without body, or apart from sinews and blood.”

Lucretius

Interviewee: Tim Booth
Interviewer: Zan Boag

A show of hands



skin, it's the shell. Even when you're taking a portrait, you start with the shell, and then think, "Well, can I get anything out of that? Can I get some personality out?" But you're very much starting this under a structural, external outlook. Obviously, I'm obsessed with the aesthetic because I'm a photographer, but once I was able to park the aesthetic part, it was really about trying to get inside the person a bit more, but with less information.

I'm a victim, we're all victims to it, but you can walk down the street and look at someone, and make so many judgements based on your own experience of what other people who look like that might have been like; and suddenly, you poke everyone with that, which is incredibly short-sighted. But we are fairly basic animals, and I don't know whether it's a primal thing, the way we look at people. Partly it's shape recognition, I think; we'll look at a certain shape of mouth, eyes, and nose and make judgements based on that shape, which is just so wrong. But

we can't help doing it. It's like a knee-jerk reaction.

In focusing on the hands, you're setting aside the other physical elements that we do tend to focus on – the face, the figure, the clothes someone wears – and you reduce it to one single aspect, a body part that has been very important to humans over the course of the centuries. The hands of the subjects in A Show of Hands have been used in a wide variety of ways. Why did you choose these particular subjects in the series?

I started looking for people who were very reliant on their hands. Everyone is reliant on their hands for their work, but the work they did, or the job they did, was very focused on hand ability, manipulation, hand-eye coordination, that sort of thing. It broadened out with time because I thought, "Oh god, I haven't done that profession." The way it started was as a profession tick list, but then I realised that there were far too many professions for me to cover.

Zan Boag: Over the years, you've covered all aspects of the body. I'm particularly interested in the series that you did on hands, but, of course, it's difficult to ignore the body as a photographer.

Tim Booth: 'A Show of Hands' was the first time I'd really gone deeper, because a lot of the stuff that I do as a photographer, it's very much the







Just to backtrack a bit, initially, no one had email addresses, so I had to write to people. So, it narrowed down the list. Now, I could contact pretty much anyone. In those days, I wrote a letter, sent it off, hoped they'd write back, they wrote back, sometimes with a phone number, sometimes not, so I'd have to write again. It was very slow, so it was really who I could get. I needed to get a baker and I thought, "Well, I don't just want to go down to my local bakery and ask." It was a question of asking lots of people, "Does anybody know a baker? And does any-

one..." And then finding a baker who I thought was interesting or had interesting hands, and then one who would say yes.

Like any photographic project – in fact, most projects of any sort really – it's 99% administration and 1% actually getting around to doing it. It's an awful lot of paperwork and farting around. I was really after people who used their hands, and musicians were my first thought. I thought, "Well, obviously the hands are everything for a musician." Those are the ones I lined up first, and then obvious ones like a

mechanic, or a baker, or an embalmer. [With the embalmer,] I went into the mortuary, and there was a body on the slab, and it was all very real. I thought, "What am I going to do? What am I going to do?" And then I saw these jars on the wall and just went, "Oh, you've got to put your hands in a jar." And he was up for it.

We all know the expression that you know something like the back of your hand, but in reality, many people don't really know their hands that well at all. We use them constantly, but we're looking



Photo: Sharon Bindon, falconer

out to the world, or we're looking at the objects we're dealing with. How did your subjects respond to these photos when they saw their hands?

Different people reacted in different ways. Some people didn't like their hands. I got some interesting letters back from some who basically said what you said, that they'd never looked at their hands before, and in a way, they felt that, having had their hands highlighted, they'd become more fragile. They suddenly realised their hands were more important to them than before. They might have loved their guitar, but not really thought about their hands which, of course, is what translated that lump of wood into music, and they said, "Oh, well, I think I'm going to take better care of my hands now." We do take them for granted. I've always really liked my hands for some reason. I've always been very conscious of my hands, whereas my feet, I don't really give a toss about them.

I have always been struck by the fact that hands are so contradictory. They can feel the absolute micro microns of pressure – the slightest touch, even the slightest breeze, they'll notice, and yet, you'll quite happily shove in a drawing pin or smack the side of a horse or use them as tools, and they'll take it. They'll take tremendous battering, and yet still provide you with incredible sensitivity. I can't think of another part of the body that can take that kind of variation. You can't hammer your feet. You bang your foot, and you really know it. You bang your hand, and within an hour, you don't even notice, it's back up again.

What do you think our hands say about us? All these people, their hands

developed in different ways because of the way they use them. Now, if the eyes are the window to the soul, what are the hands?

It does depend on the viewer. To me, they're quite telling because I've looked at an awful lot of hands, but I think if you're talking about the perspective of the population in general, then I think it's far more basic – big hands, small hands, delicate hands, fine hands, people have put them into blocks that are readily identifiable. You see someone with big working hands or big farm hands, and you make a judgment on the sort of person that might own those hands, but I'm not sure that's an accurate representation. I don't think my hands show who I am. I think if I took all the names and titles out of the pictures and just showed the pictures on their own, and didn't show what they did, I'm not sure you could work out the profession.

You'll never work out the profession because you might go, "Well, if it's a pianist, they're going to have really long, intricate hands that are manicured, et cetera." But I photographed a pianist who had bear-like paws and quite short stubby fingers. They were not the hands you'd imagine a pianist to have. And then someone like Jonny Wilkinson's hands, he's a rugby player – I'd like to talk about him later because he was one of my highlights, not because I'm into rugby, but just because he was such a fabulous person – his hands were very clean. They were quite manicured, which he didn't do for the shot. They're slightly hairy, which he hates, but they're not a reflection of him.

I don't think hands are a window to the soul, but then again, to be honest, if I photographed eyes as a photograph, I don't think they'd be a window to the

I have always been struck by the fact that hands are so contradictory. They'll feel the... slightest touch, even the slightest breeze, they'll notice, and yet, you'll quite happily shove in a drawing pin or smack the side of a horse or use them as tools, and they'll take it.



John Makepeace, furniture designer



Rosemary Verey, gardener



Photo: Peter Layton, glassblower

soul because the whole point about eyes is their animation. It's the same with hands. The way people move them and use them to express themselves and touch things, touch people, that's the giveaway rather than purely the structure. I think the structure can be disingenuous in terms of telling you anything about the person.

I like your comparison to the eyes and to the face in general because just as our hands can't really reveal who we are, neither can our face nor our eyes. It's simply the face or eyes that we have. As you were saying earlier, right at the beginning, we make an assumption as to who someone is based on the way they look. Each one of us is stuck with our face, stuck with our eyes, just as we are with our hands. So, yes, it is the way we express ourselves and use our eyes, use our hands that is far more telling. I'd like to come back to Jonny Wilkinson because I wanted to know, of all the people you photographed in this series, who had the biggest effect on you. Now, it seems that it was Jonny Wilkinson. Why was that?

There are a hundred of them, so picking one is quite hard, but I think it's because Jonny Wilkinson was such a surprise. He was incredibly nice and very generous with his time. You know how sometimes you meet people and there's just something there, you go, "I really like you without any information, and I didn't get it from your hands, and I didn't get it from your eyes, but there's something I really like." But it wasn't so much that. It was that he'd really thought about his hands, and he'd thought about his hands prior to

me asking if I could photograph them. Because the hands were my baby, and I really like it when somebody else is on the same wavelength.

He valued his hands more than his feet, more than anything. That was how he talked to people on the pitch because no one can hear him because there's so much noise. He uses his hands to communicate with his team. He was on the same wavelength as me when it came to hands. I really like that because when I shot Virginia Wade – and I could never use the picture, unfortunately – it was like I could have been talking to an elephant. There was just no communication there at all, no understanding of what I was trying to do, no affinity to her hands at all. She was the opposite of Jonny Wilkinson. I just wanted her to make a tennis ball shape with her hands.

But there are others whose story got to me a lot. I sat with a miner who was in a retirement home in Eastbourne. He was a Welsh miner, and I just sat listening to him tell his story about working in the mines in the 1960s and '70s, and it was just like, "Really? That sounds like the 1800s." His hands definitely had a story. He still had coal dust deep in his skin from 30 years ago. And the ferryman I loved because it was quite sad, he has died now. Well, a lot of them have died. It was quite a long time ago, but he basically rode people across the Thames up at Ham, which is up from Putney, around Hampton Court. And he rowed the equivalent of Singapore and back across the Thames.

The only time he wasn't there was during the war because he was *in* the

He valued his hands more than his feet, more than his anything. That was how he talked to people on the pitch because no one can hear him because there's so much noise.



Sir Ranulph Fiennes, explorer

war, but otherwise he did it every day, rain or shine, and there's something about a ferryman in a rowboat, very simple, very visceral life, just taking people where they wanted to go every day. I love the story, it was charming. He said, "I rely on them for everything," and he had amazing callouses, but I didn't want to photograph the callouses because that just would've been like a medical shot.

A few of your subjects experienced trauma to their hands through the way that they used them: the explorer or the baker. In a way, as we age, we don't inhabit the same body as when we were babies or teenagers or so on. The hands change as well, but you mentioned earlier that when the subjects saw their hands, some of them hadn't viewed their hands that way and thought that they were a bit more fragile. Do you think this is

because their hands had aged – that they weren't the same hands that they thought they had?

I suppose that happens with faces too. I photograph people's faces and they go, "Christ, I look awful." Humans are pretty weird – we externalise so much. As much as we're very self-obsessed, when we look at ourselves we see what we want to see; but that's probably the same with the way we look at the world.

Ranulph Fiennes, for instance, apart from telling the story, he couldn't have been less interested in whether he had a thumb or didn't have a thumb. He lost a lot of the ends with frostbite. Once you've gotten used to not having a thumb or losing the end of your finger – and he lost it doing something he really wanted to do – it's kind of a badge, rather than a hindrance. The baker

lost his finger, but that was in a bike accident.

You've got children; your child falls over or breaks an arm or anything, it's heartbreaking and it hurts you. But when you break your arm, it's just inconvenient, isn't it? You just deal with it.

But something I want to come back to is the people who did have things wrong with their hands... We love looking at faces and making judgements about people. In the same instance, we're really bad at looking at anything that's different, which is why we have racism, sexism, and all sorts of judgements about people who are disabled because it doesn't fit our little puzzle. People look away or they stare or whatever, and we almost can't control it.

But with the hands, I never felt that... I never got that with the hands.



And I wonder why you noticed it; it was a question you brought up about the people who'd hurt their hands, or had them damaged. I just didn't see it at all, or I saw it as "ooh, there's a point of interest, there's something I can really get my focus on". But I didn't feel any of the normal things I feel when I see something that isn't as I'd expect it to be. It did make me question why we are so obsessed with how we think things should be, rather than just accepting things for what they are.

There's also a photograph of your hands, which are essential to your job too, as they're essential to most people's jobs. After having taken the photographs, did you become more aware of your own hands?

Slightly embarrassing... I've always been a little bit into my own hands. I don't know whether it was something my mother said to me when I was very young about my hands and it stuck. I've always liked my hands, and I always wanted them to look older than they did. I just had to wait, and now, I'm beginning to

think, "Wouldn't mind clocking them back a bit." Because I've always been into them, I don't appreciate them any more than I did beforehand. I've always really liked my hands, very much appreciated my hands and their flexibility. I hate it when they let me down because I'm getting older now. Occasionally, if I've been gripping something for a long time and I suddenly get a cramp, I think, "No, I really don't want you to go." I'd almost rather lose my sight than my hands, even though I'm a photographer.

Tim Booth, photographer







by Patrick Stokes

The body replaced

it was not consumed; he put it into a mill, but it could not be pounded; he placed it upon an anvil and struck it with a hammer, but the anvil split and the hammer was broken.”

Your local crematorium can confirm that you don’t, in fact, have any such indestructible bones. Still, the *luz* is an ingenious answer to a knotty problem. What neither Hadrian nor Rabbi ben Chanania might have understood, however, is that this is not simply a theological problem about bodily resurrection, but a question that applies to living bodies too.

Bodies are dynamic systems that are continually losing and replacing matter. Some stomach lining cells only live a couple of days, while you get a completely new skin every few weeks (on the other hand, most brain cells don’t regenerate at all). All the while, replacement is happening on the atomic level too. This generates a fleshy version of the classic ‘Ship of

Theseus’ problem: if every time a ship comes to port some of its timbers are replaced, does it remain the same ship even when none of the original timber remains? Are you still the person you were ten years ago if so little of the bodily matter you had then is still there? What, if anything, makes your body at 80 the same body as at 30 or at 6 months?

Here’s one way to think about the problem: how much of your body could you lose and yet still be you? Probably quite a lot. You don’t stop being the person you are because you lose a tooth or have your appendix taken out. Monty Python’s infamous Black Knight (from *The Holy Grail*) is still himself even after his limbs have all been sliced off. But suppose I surgically remove your brain and put it in a vat of chemicals that keep it alive, albeit with no sensory input. (I throw out the rest of your body.) Would that brain still be you?

According to medieval Jewish texts, the Roman emperor Hadrian once asked Rabbi Joshua ben Chanania about the doctrine of bodily resurrection. How, the emperor asked, could God reassemble bodies that had long since turned to dust? The Rabbi replied that when resurrected, people would be rebuilt around the *luz*, or ‘nut’, a small bone in the spine that could not be destroyed. To prove his point, the Rabbi took such a bone and “immersed it in water, but it was not softened; he put it into the fire, but



Hermaphrodite Idol, by Carlo Carra, 1917



People tend to answer “yes”. We call this tendency to assume that identity goes wherever consciousness goes the ‘transplant intuition’, and it seems to be very widespread. There are problems with brain-in-a-vat cases, however. For one thing, some enactivist philosophers argue that thinking is something bodies do, not brains alone, and so a brain in a vat would not really be thinking. At the other end of the spectrum, some very different approaches to personal identity would argue that you don’t even need most of your brain, and none of the bits that are conscious, in order to survive. So long as you still have the same living brain stem – the organ that sustains the life of an individual animal by

controlling heartbeat, breathing and so on – then you’re still you. Obviously, these answers are wildly incompatible.

Here’s another way to think about the problem of bodily continuity and identity, taken from the work of Derek Parfit. Imagine your body was very gradually replaced with synthetic materials. Every day you have an operation which replaces 1% of your cells with silicon-based cells that do the same job. So on day one you are 100% organic. At the end of day two you’re 99% organic, then 98%, 97%... and by day 100 your bodily matter is 100% artificial. Because the process is so gradual, there’s no clear, non-arbitrary point where you suddenly switch from being a human being to a

There are problems with brain-in-a-vat cases, however.



“Oh no, it’s the gene of the lamp!”

non-organic creature. So, is it still you on Day 100, and if not, when did you cease to exist? Can we really survive having 100% of our body removed and replaced, even gradually?

What I've sketched here look like two separate questions, one about synchronic identity – *How much of your body do you need to retain at once?*; and one about diachronic identity – *How much of your body could you replace over time?*. Yet in both cases the same problem is at work. There's no clear dividing line, no point at which we can say one body has gone out of existence, or a new body has come into being. It seems to be a continuum. But that's not how personal identity works: either you still exist, or you don't. You can't 51% exist.

Perhaps the answer here isn't to be found in metaphysics at all, but in psychology. John Locke, writing in the 1690s, glosses 'self' as "that conscious thinking thing" which is "concerned for itself, as far as that consciousness extends". My little finger, says Locke, is part of me because I am concerned about it; "should this consciousness go along with the little finger, and leave the rest of the body, it is evident the little finger would be the person, the same person; and self then would have nothing to do with the rest of the body". (There's

that Transplant Intuition again.) Of course, when someone is unlucky enough to lose a finger, consciousness does not go with the finger, and so we lose our self-regarding concern for what happens to the finger after that (unless we hope to have it reattached).

So it could be that I am identical with my vat-dwelling brain or silicone successor because I can anticipate having his experiences – whether I look forward to them or fear them – or because I can care about what happens to him in the same distinctive way in which I care about what happens to me as I am now. The perspective of other people matters here too: would you rather your loved one lived on as a brain in a vat, was gradually replaced with silicone cells, or simply died? I suspect most of us, all things being equal, would prefer either of the first two options over the third.

But if we could survive as a brain in a vat, then it seems we already are brains right now. And if we couldn't survive gradual replacement, then the fact we are being gradually replaced all the time would mean we already don't survive across time at all – a conclusion which seems absurd. Faced with these sorts of scenarios, the idea that we're tethered to existence by a bone that can't be broken starts to look pretty attractive. ■





...perception, soul and body... the first in each pair is superior to the second both in reality and in goodness." *Bertrand Russell*

*Ancient Egypt Head of an Unknown Scribe Figure, 18th Dynasty,
c. 1360 BC, Neues Museum, Berlin*

by Antonia Case

Disembodied delinquents



When Griffin had fully digested the fact that his body had disappeared for good, his mood suddenly shifted from one of frustration at the world to pure exaltation. “I was invisible, and I was only just beginning to realise the extraordinary advantage my invisibility gave me. My head was already teeming with plans of all the wild and wonderful things I had now impunity to do.”

Although we rarely contemplate it, our body is the starting point of our world and the object we know best. We can see and touch our body, and as American phenomenologist Aron Gurwitsch notes, “we are immediately and directly aware of our body, at least in marginal form, at every moment of

our lives, under all circumstances, and at whatever place we might happen to find ourselves... the body is the only individual mundane object which is thus permanently present.” Gurwitsch claims that not only are we aware of our body, but we are conscious of its position and state, even if that awareness at most times is dim, vague, and indistinct. While frequently inattentive of our own bodily position, it’s forever there at the margin of our awareness.

So what happens when our body disappears? In other words, what happens when we become bodiless? William James wrote, “We think, and as we think, we feel our bodily selves as the seat of our thinking.” So, what happens to our thinking when we can no longer see our bodily selves?

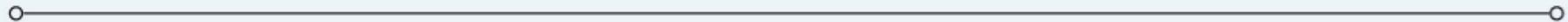
When Griffin walked downstairs for the first time without a body, he encountered an unexpected difficulty – he could not see his feet upon the stairs and stumbled twice. Griffin, the protagonist in H.G. Wells’s book *The*

Invisible Man, suddenly found that his body had disappeared. Following a night of racking anguish and sickness where the young scientist had “processed” himself – a scientific experiment he’d spent years developing to send objects invisible – his limbs became glassy, and then his bones and arteries faded. Struggling to his feet, he stepped with limbs he could not see. “I went and stared at nothing in my shaving-glass.” Although Griffin could still feel his body – he shivered with cold when he plunged his naked body into the streets – he could no longer see his body, and neither could anyone else.

Although invisible, Griffin’s body was still foremost on his mind. “My back had now become very stiff and sore, my tonsils were painful... and the skin of my neck had been scratched... my feet hurt exceedingly and I was lame from a little cut on one foot.” Although he’d processed himself invisible, bodily sensations were still very much present.



Bathers, Kazimir Malevich, 1911



At first, for Griffin, being invisible was a riot of opportunity. He felt like a seeing man in the land of the blind. “I experienced a wild impulse to jest, to startle people, to clap men on the back, fling people’s hats astray, and generally revel in my extraordinary advantage.” But this powerful feeling of invincibility almost immediately slid into delinquency as the invisible man turned to arson, then theft, battery, and other ill wills, eventually desirous of establishing a “reign of terror” over the township of Burdock. “Not wanton killing, but a judicious slaying,” declares Griffin with relish.

As Wells demonstrates in the *Invisible Man*, profound disturbances occur when “the warmth and intimacy... of the same old body always there,” as James puts it, disappear from sight. Speaking of Griffin, a fellow scientist declares: “He is mad... inhuman. He is pure selfishness. He thinks of nothing but his own advantage, his own safety.” Griffin’s colleague labels it “brutal self-seeking” and warns, “He will create a panic. Nothing can stop him... he dreams of a reign of terror!” As a futurist and social critic, Wells, it seems, forewarns that invisibility is likely to produce unfavourable consequences.

Today’s ‘invisible man’ sits at a computer console, digesting food with all

five senses intact and interacting with others online as a disembodied being. When humans chat online, leave messages, or write posts, they do so without a physical presence; in other words, cyber behaviour is bodiless. And since the advent of the internet, human civilisation has witnessed the emergence of a new character type: the cyber troll.

The official definition of a troll is a person who antagonises others online by deliberately posting inflammatory, irrelevant, or offensive comments or other disruptive content. The activities of trolls online are so disruptive that the Australia Institute estimates that trolling has cost the Australian economy upwards of \$3.7 billion in health costs and lost income. The victims of cyber trolls suffer acutely, particularly the young who don’t understand the underlying complexities – which is that trolls, who regularly operate in packs or syndicates and who revel in creating confusion, mostly do it for pure entertainment. Trolls find it fun to disrupt, just like the invisible man who experienced a wild impulse to jest and startle people.

When journalists have sought out invisible cyber trolls in the real world, they are often surprised by the embodied people they meet. Usually polite, with full-time jobs and partners, hard-core cyber trolls are relatively

normal people in bodily form. But when they become disembodied online, something clicks, and cyber trolls turn into a 21st century version of the invisible man: desirous of creating panic, thinking nothing other than of their own advantage, some even setting out to establish a reign of terror across the internet.

“Power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society,” writes French philosopher Michel Foucault. In the situation of the world of the internet, nameless and faceless cyber trolls discover their power, which might involve getting someone fired or removed from a position of power, or belittling and humiliating someone, mostly strangers. Cyber trolls, like the invisible man, explore the range of their powers of being unseen, and they win when they get a reaction in the ‘real world’ – when their antics online spill across into real life. The most effective recourse you have against an cyber troll, of course, is to ignore them, ban them, block them. It cuts off their power supply.

“We have to consider all that invisibility means, all that it does not mean,” begins Griffin who concludes

Cyber trolls, like the invisible man, explore the range of their powers of being unseen, and they win when they get a reaction.

that invisibility is not so helpful for eavesdropping or stealing, as one can be heard. “This invisibility, in fact, is only good in two cases: it’s useful in getting away, it’s useful in approaching. It’s particularly useful, therefore, in killing. One can walk round a man, whatever weapon he has, choose my point, strike as I like. Dodge as I like. Escape as I like.” Like the cyber troll wielding multiple social media accounts, there are limits to the power of being invisible. And so it is that the invisible man decides, after all, that creating havoc in a township is purposeful enough. His motto becomes to “terrify and dominate”. Why? Because that’s the limit of his powers.

The phenomenon of invisibility, and its startling consequences, are not contained to fiction, unfortunately, particularly as technological advances in

artificial intelligence and virtual reality continue to march in the direction of human disembodiment. If today we suffer the ills of cyber trolling, what will tomorrow bring?

In the final pages of *The Invisible Man*, a group of men grip, clutch, and tear at the unseen man. A tram conductor grabs his neck and shoulders and drags him back. There’s savage kicking, a wild scream of “Mercy! Mercy!” that dies down to a sound like choking, and eventually, like the slow spreading of a poison, the invisible man returns to bodily form – “a hazy grey sketch of a limb, then the glassy bones and intricate arteries, then the flesh and skin.” When at last the crowd stands back to view the body before them, “there lay,” writes Wells, “naked and pitiful on the ground, the bruised and broken body of a young man about thirty.” ■



*“You were annoying at 30.
You were annoying at 50.
You’re annoying now.”*





Artwork: *The Death of Chatterton*, by Henry Wallis, 1856



The Critics, 1986, Wolfgang Lettl

by Tom Chatfield

Digital bodies

According to the organisation previously known as Facebook, a technological revolution is brewing that will make the ubiquity of smartphones look minor by comparison. Meta – as it has been known since 2021 – has spent the last few years pouring billions of dollars into its eponymous metaverse. And while plenty of hand-waving has surrounded the precise form this virtual environment will take, the claim underlying its existence is clear enough. We are entering an era of digital bodily presence – and, sooner or later, this fact will transform our lives.

Like many observers, I'm sceptical about the banalities of Meta's marketing ("we're building new ways to help you explore your interests and connect with the people you care about") but not about the transformative potential of the technologies underpinning it. To use even the smartest of smartphones, today, is to be a disembodied denizen of the digital realm: a pair of watching eyeballs and tapping fingers.

No matter how sophisticated the app, its interface remains a bright window overlooking a two-dimensional world. By contrast, virtual and augmented reality promise 'immersion': a buzzword whose etymology (it comes from the Latin *immergere*, meaning 'to plunge into' or 'submerge') sketches what's at stake. These are digital experiences that can be inhabited and explored like real locations; that fill your field of view and follow your gaze; that exist in three dimensions and, via motion-tracking and touch-based feedback, can extend their compass to your entire body. At least in theory, they invite a fundamentally new relationship between minds and media: one where we aren't so much its audience as its inhabitants.

Students of tech history will know that we've been here before – and that it was, last time around, neither sufficiently compelling nor convenient to revolutionise anything. In the early 1990s, virtual reality (VR) burst into public consciousness in the form of

bulky headsets, pods shaped like disused dodgems and movies depicting the delights of everything 'cyber' (I'm looking at you, 1992's *The Lawnmower Man*). The rhetoric was captivating, but the technology required to realise it was neither ready nor imminent. Instead, VR's pioneers were confounded by both the complexity of conjuring convincing computer-generated environments and the disorientating, even nauseating, experience of immersion within them. The more of someone's body you involve, the more you need to account for that body's needs: something that's particularly tricky when there's a clash between actual and simulated sense data.

In the decades since, virtual reality has begun to deliver on some of its early promises. But it remains a disappointingly (at least to its creators) niche pursuit, partly because immersion isn't something most people want to spend most of their time experiencing. Flying around an impossible city is a dazzling way to spend half



What does it mean for your bodily movements and impulses to be ever-more closely tracked?

an hour. But you can't dip into it fifty times daily like you do a social media feed – or slip the hardware into and out of your pocket in a supermarket. So far as bodily preferences are concerned, a device you can clutch in the palm of your hand is often more practical than one that transports you into unreal elsewhere.

This is where augmented reality (AR) comes in. Rather than placing you inside a simulation, it overlays an additional layer onto the world around you. A pair of AR glasses – which have already started to appear in shops, although they remain in their infancy – can map digital elements onto whatever you're looking at, in real time. Also known as 'mixed' reality, the promise here isn't so much escape as enhancement. No more fiddling with screens or stumbling distractedly into obstacles: mixed reality can turn every inch of the world into something else, with search results and satnav directions integrated into your gaze as seamlessly as Pokémons or

video calls. Add in voice-recognition, motion-tracking, biometrics, and a selection of smart wearables, and the cyborg future is ready and waiting.

Does all this sound somewhat dystopian, or improbable, or both? I'm tempted to agree with the first of these; but the reality it describes is marching steadily closer. It's only twenty-four years since the philosophers David Chalmers and Andy Clark published their paper 'The Extended Mind' in *Analysis*, yet already a thesis that seemed outlandish at the time has come to feel commonplace: that some technologies can literally embody aspects of cognition; that our minds can be extended and altered by their presence in profound ways; and that the ethical questions raised by this kind of extension are among the most urgent of the 21st century.

For the author and technologist Jaron Lanier, who both coined the phrase "virtual reality" and helped create its first examples, what we're doing when we devise these technologies is nothing less than reverse-engineering our own sensory apparatus. As he puts it in his 2017 book *Dawn of the New Everything*, "You can think of an ideal virtual reality setup as a sensorimotor mirror; an inversion of the human body... In order for the visual aspect of VR to work, for example, you have to calculate what your eyes should see in the virtual world as you look around... Wherever the human body has a sensor, like an eye or an ear, a VR system must present a stimulus

to that body part." It's this mirroring that sets virtual and mixed reality technologies apart from all that came before. Every one of their components echoes some aspect of the human body, with their perfection marking the point at which real and simulated stimuli become indistinguishable.

Even in its relatively primitive present forms, this kind of interface embodies new kinds of power – and hazard. What does it mean for your bodily movements and impulses to be ever-more closely tracked; or for digital artefacts informed by these to be projected into your perceptions? Freedom and agency are, above all, matters of the body; and the more closely our bodies are monitored and manipulated, the more alarming becomes the possibility of abuse.

For Lanier, technologies that exploit the full gamut of human senses have the potential to be transformative in the best sense: to engage us more fully in mediated realms that for too long have been sensorily thin, disembodied, and unable to tap into our true natures. But the risks that accompany this are also extraordinary. "Control someone's reality and you control the person," he writes, with an eye to the "sadistically false" ways in which it's possible to mix the artificial and the actual. Given our species' prodigious capacities for both creativity and reality-denial – for rational insight and dogmatic untruth – it seems likely that both the best and the worst are yet to come. ■



"The body is a house of many windows: there we all sit, showing ourselves and crying on the passers-by to come and love us."

Robert Louis Stevenson

Interviewee: Mark Rowlands
Interviewer: Zan Boag

Running with the pack



Zan Boag: It has been some nine years since you've published *Running with the Pack*, and 14 years since *The Philosopher and the Wolf*. For those who haven't read your books, they wouldn't know that you had a wolf called Brenin as a companion – you used to run regularly with him, and some other dogs. Could you explain in a bit more detail that period of your life?

Mark Rowlands: I was 27. I was in my first real job at the University of Alabama, in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. I was having a great time, but I missed dogs. I'd grown up with large dogs. And I thought, since it looked like I was going to be here for a while, maybe I should consider getting a dog. So, I was leafing through the local newspaper, pre-internet times, of course, and an advert jumped out at me: *Wolf Cubs for sale 96%*.

I thought, well, this is something I've got to see. And, so, I came to acquire Brenin – he was sold to me as a wolf but I'm pretty sure he was a wolf-dog mix, a wolf-malamute mix.

We spent the next 11 years, living and travelling together. Brenin had certain issues, notably severe separa-

tion anxiety. If I left him on his own, even for a few minutes, he would destroy everything he could lay his jaws on. Anything that wasn't screwed to the ceiling was fair game as far as he was concerned. The cardinal rule was, at no point was he ever to be left on his own. And so, the classes I taught at the university of Alabama, I basically had to take him in with me. Any socialising I did, bars and parties, he would come along too. And as part of this arrangement, I decided it would probably be a good idea if he were kept constantly exhausted, and thus began my life of running as an adult. Unfortunately, if predictably, he was much better at running than I was, and so I tended to be the exhausted one, not him. But I did the best I could.

Do you still run regularly? Is this something that is it as important to you now, as it was then?

I'm going to be 60 years old next month, and my knees are shot. The menisci that remain are wafer thin, and prone to tears, which I'm told there's

no point trying to fix any more. They heal on their own, but it takes a long time. So, it seems these days I'm either out injured or coming back from injury, neither of which are much fun. So, I still run when I can, but it is not always the regular occurrence of old.

And how has that changed you, dealing with the changes in your body? Is it something that you've been able to take easily, or have you struggled with it?

Well, I run when I can, and I do other things. The art of getting old is learning to train around injuries and other infirmities. I do quite a bit of strength work now, weights and so on. Not barbell squats of course – that's a lumbar herniation waiting to happen. I still do martial arts, boxing especially, but mostly on bags now because I'm not as quick as I used to be, and I don't really care for people punching me in the face. I get the cardio in whatever ways I can. I get on a bike quite regularly, even though I don't like it as much as running. But, generally speaking, I just do what I can when I can.



Indian Running with Dog, by Paul Manship, 1922

Throughout your books, you talk about running and thinking, and in Running with the Pack, you write, "Most of the serious thinking that I have done over the past 20 years has been done while running." Thinking while moving has been very popular with philosophers, right through the ages – way back to Aristotle, as well as Rousseau, Kant, Nietzsche, and, more recently, the French philosopher Frederick Gros, who said that walking is a route to "entirely being ourselves and experiencing the sublime". Does running enable a different type of thinking than you can achieve while walking or doing other exercise?

I can only describe how it works for me. I only walk if I can't run, so I can't really speak to the cognitive benefits of walking. I think for me, the benefits of running mirrored the way I used to write when I had the time to do this. The method was quite brutal and amounted to what I think is a form of ego-depletion. First, I would sit down for eight hours and just write. No interruptions – that doesn't happen anymore – just writing. But that was just setting things up. After around eight hours or so, when my brain was completely

fried, that's when the interesting stuff started to happen – at least, I thought so. Before that, any thought or idea that emerged had 'me' stamped all over it. I had one of those thoughts, and I would think to myself: "oh, yes, that's just what I would think". Not very interesting. But when the brain gets exhausted enough, more interesting things start to happen. Then thoughts start appearing – showing up, unannounced. And I'm not really sure where they came from. The thoughts that emerge in the first eight hours, they would be sort of sifted and sieved through a kind of a framework for thinking about things, a way of looking at things that is, basically, me. But this framework can be broken down through the right sorts of exhaustion. Then more interesting ideas start to emerge. It's as if the thinker has gone but the thoughts keep on coming and they are much more interesting than thoughts tethered to a thinker. I think, for me, running was an extension of this kind of method.

That is an interesting idea. I think that's very true, when you get tired, you do access a different part of your brain, and

different thoughts arise. When you talk about running, you often refer to the 'four stages' of running. The first one you describe as the embodied self, and the next three stages you've named after philosophers.

First, when I would start out there would be the embodied stage. Basically for this stage, I'd be worried about what injury was going to manifest itself that day. Therefore, I would be highly attuned to any bodily disturbances; keenly aware of my body – especially serial offending parts of my body such as my calves, which were a perennial thorn in my side. Today, to be honest, I'm more likely to be attuned to the tightness in my chest rather than my calves, but the principle remains the same. In the embodied stage, I am focused on the body and things going on in it. I am this body.

After a while, when the tiredness begins to take hold, I forget about the body. This is the second phase. Now, the body is no longer me, but a tool or instrument I am using to get what I want. I make deals with this body – "Just get me to the corner of Old Cutler Road and 104th Street, and then I'll let you walk for a bit." I am the one making the deals – a thinking subject with its

In the embodied stage, I am focused on the body and things going on in it. I am this body. Now, the body is no longer me, but a tool or instrument I am using to get what I want.

bodily puppet. This is, in many ways, like Descartes' view of the person. Therefore, I labelled it the Cartesian phase.

As the run continues, miles later, the thinking subject also seems to fade into the background. Now, there are just thoughts, one flowing into another, and it is not quite clear where they come from or where they're going, or what they mean even a lot of the time. And this struck me as something like sort of David Hume's account with the self. In his account, there is not a thinking subject, a thinking thing in the way Descartes thought there was, there was just a collection or bundle of thoughts. I, therefore, christened this phase of the run the Humean phase.

The final phase only comes when I'm very, very tried. I realise that none of these thoughts are really me at all. But I'm nothing at all. I named this phase after Sartre, who famously claimed that consciousness is nothingness, it's a wind blowing towards the world, and nothing else.

I once ran the Miami marathon after a severely curtailed training regime – my calf went, and I couldn't run for the two months leading up to the race. I think I never properly understood Sartre's notion of freedom before this. When Sartre talked of freedom, I think he understood freedom in terms of the idea that your motives can never compel you. We are all, in this sense, beyond the authority of motives – and related states such as decisions. Around the 16-mile mark, I was very tired, in quite a bit of pain, and very motivated to stop. But I realised this motive had no power over me. It can't make me do anything at all. I think that's the sort of idea Sartre had in mind when he talked about freedom. Our motives cannot compel

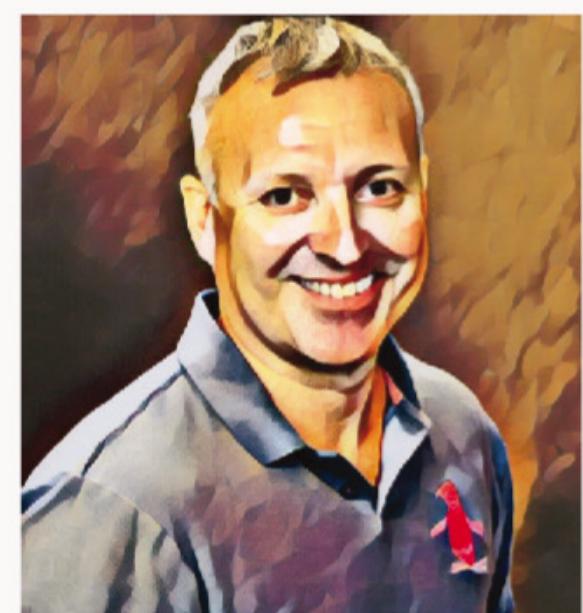
us. We stand outside, or beyond, the authority of our motives in this sense. Nothing you have chosen, nothing you decide, nothing you choose can make you do anything at all. And to this extent you're free.

And what sort of feeling do you get when you're at that point, where you can override the pain barrier?

Well, in that particular circumstance, the feeling was elation, realising that I'm beyond the authority of motives. Sartre on the other hand, possibly a rather negative person, talked of anguish. The experience of freedom is an experience of anguish. If so, then I suspect anguish can sometimes be quite pleasant.

One quote that struck me from The Philosopher and the Wolf was: "I suppose, in one sense, the book is about loss. A primary way of losing things is that we get older, we lose our strength, we lose our youth. In the end time is going to take everything from us. That's the human condition really. What we have to do is find a way to live with that." How can we deal with the inevitable physical decline that we experience? How have you dealt with it?

That's the trillion-dollar question. I'm coming around to the idea that the ability to laugh at yourself is crucial. Sometimes, say when a run is going particularly badly – an increasingly common occurrence – I can't help bursting into laughter at how hopeless I am now. Camus concluded his study of the myth of Sisyphus with the observation – perhaps it was advice – that one must imagine Sisyphus happy. Humour is one of the most important forms of defiance we can bring to bear on our own decline. *The Philosopher and*



Humour is one of the most important forms of defiance we can bring to bear on our own decline.

the Wolf was all about defiance, and as a still youngish man I tended to think of this as shaking your fist at the world. By the time I wrote *Running with the Pack*, then the idea of defiance had expanded to things like compassion, universal compassion in the face of a very brutal and unpleasant world whose basic design principles seem to leave very little room for it. Compassion is a form of defiance too. I would now expand that list to humour, including self-deprecation. We can't take ourselves too seriously – the world certainly doesn't.

It's interesting, compassion is something that you do have to learn over the course of the years, and potentially it takes ageing and a weakening body, and you not quite being at what you might call your prime to have that



sort of compassion. When you're younger and brasher, then often you can lack compassion. It can sometimes be all about you and your physical prowess. In an interview in The Scotsman, you touched on this as well, you said, "We get older and thorough and weaker, but arguably nicer as well. It's a trade-off, I guess." I suppose this is what you're referring to about compassion. Now, does our physical decline have an influence on who we are and how we behave?

Am I nicer now? That's for others to say. I'll have to ask around. And if I'm not then, well, everyone will just have to be patient. But seriously, I think you're right in the sense that experiencing vulnerability yourself allows you to empathise with others and their vulnerabilities more easily.

Well, you went through quite a bit with Brenin. One of the moments you had to go through was his end – you watched him go through cancer and saw how he dealt with it. This is another quote from The Philosopher and the Wolf, "Watching Brenin, I realised that we are at our best when death is leaning over our shoulder, but we can say in this moment, I feel

good and strong. In the end time will take our strength, but it can never take from us who we were in our best moments." Do you think our best moments are linked to physical wellbeing?

I certainly hope not, because that is something we're going to lose. No, that was a specific example of a highest moment, but I wouldn't want to suggest that they're linked to physical wellbeing though. I think some of your highest moments can be linked to the lack of physical wellbeing.

Well, this idea of, time takes everything from us in the end, right? What redeemed us in *The Philosopher and the Wolf* at least was our defiance: it is only our defiance that redeems us. I don't disagree with this, but my understanding of defiance has broadened over the years.

Camus concludes his study of the myth of Sisyphus, he concludes it with, "One must imagine Sisyphus happy." When Sisyphus laughs at these gods, these enormously powerful, but nevertheless petty and vicious beings that have imposed this punishment on him, there's nothing else he can do. Not even die. But, in his

contempt for the gods and his refusal to be broken by them, he possesses a kind of dignity and happiness of a sort. This happiness-born-of-defiance was Sisyphus's highest moment.

For us, time plays the part of the gods. And I think our highest moments too are probably all ones of defiance, but in a broader sense than I envisaged when I wrote *The Philosopher and the Wolf*. A defiance that incorporates compassion when it's needed, and the ability to laugh at yourself in the face of your decline.

Well, it's clear that French philosophers had quite an influence on you, particularly Camus, because your concept of the absurd as well is tied in with Camus's thinking. How did this come about? Was it something that interested you while you were studying philosophy, or is this something you came across a little bit later – that is, French philosophical thinking?

It's mostly by accident, as most good things in my life are. I think in part, I became interested in the phenomenological tradition of philosophy quite early on when I was an

Experiencing vulnerability yourself allows you to empathise with others and their vulnerabilities more easily.

Arguably, I can string a sequence of thoughts together better than a wolf. But a wolf can run much better than I can.

undergraduate student. And that's tended to shape a lot of my thought about various things. Wearing one of my other hats, for example, involves me thinking a lot about embodied, embedded, enacted, and extended cognition. And my defence of this general way of looking at the mind – 4E cognition, as it has become known – is influenced by phenomenologists such as Husserl and Sartre. I was also fortunate to spend quite a bit of my adult life in France. I learned the language, and I became capable of reading it, haltingly. And so, when the mood took me, I was able read Sartre and Camus in French, which might explain some of my fondness for them.

We humans have put ourselves right at the top of the tree. We claim intellect is the most important factor in judging superiority, but we don't really fare so well when it comes to physical prowess. Now, does the brain trump the body? Can we even separate them?

There is no independent, objective, standard relative to which we can compare and grade things like intelligence versus things like speed or endurance. Arguably, I can string a sequence of thoughts together better than a wolf.

But a wolf can run much better than I can. We humans are inclined to say, "Yes, but thinking is more important than running." But then the question is, well, by what independent, objective standard can you make this judgment? It is difficult to imagine what such a standard would even look like, still less what could justify it. For us, thinking may be more useful given the kind of world we live in. But, for wolves, running is far more important. And that, I think, is all there is to it.

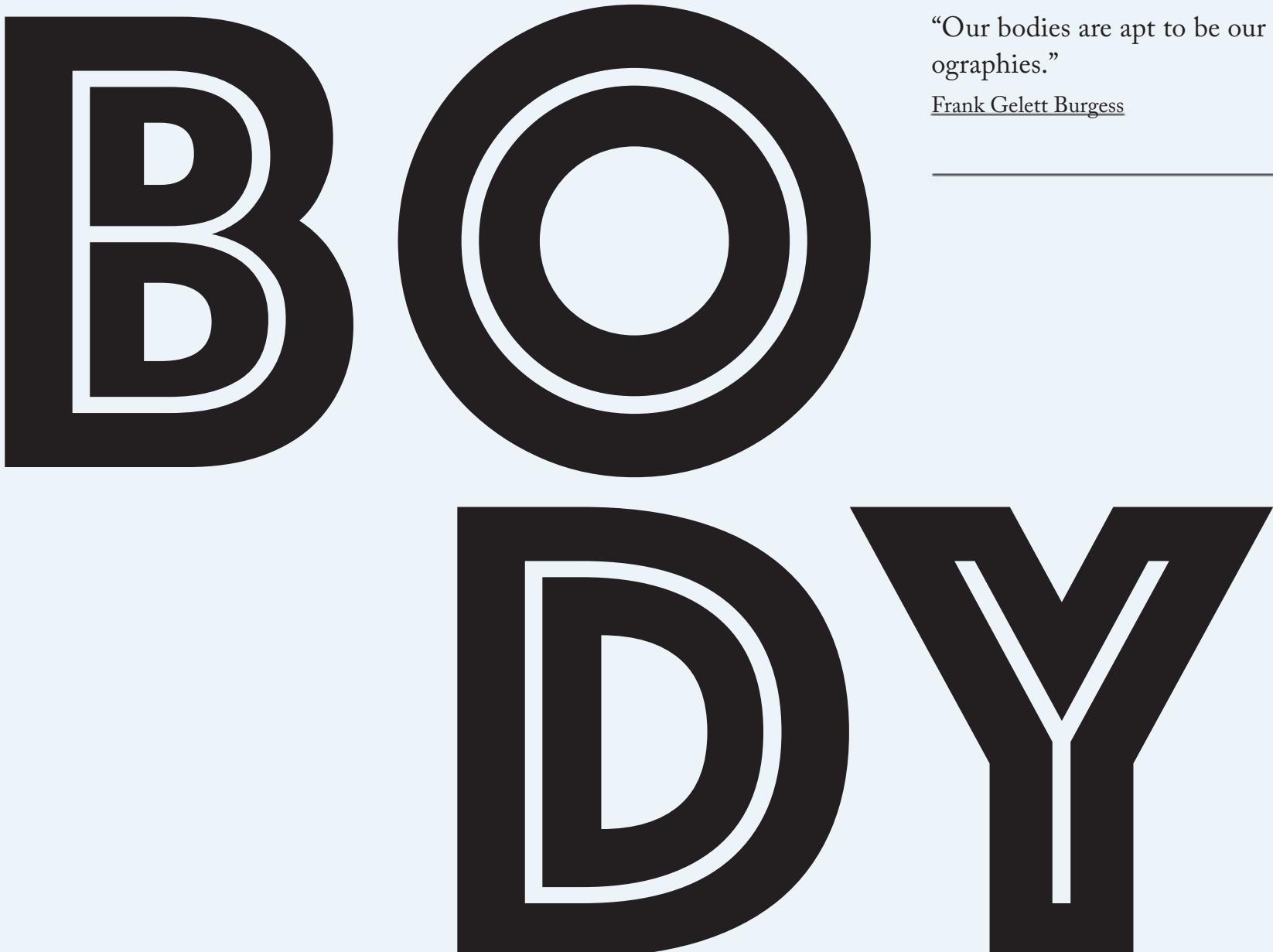
Given the importance of running and thinking to you, what's the most valuable idea you've had or conclusion you've reached while running, or while doing any sort of physical activity?

What was most valuable wasn't a specific idea or conclusion but a method of thinking, that complemented and reinforced the method I brought to writing. This method involves breaking down me – chipping away at the framework through which I see and think about the world – and finding out what happens then. It's hard, brutal work, sometimes experientially very unpleasant. That is something that thinking and running have in common. ■

“A house is not a home unless it contains food and fire for the mind as well as the body.”

Margaret Fuller

“The body tries to tell the truth.”
— Jim Morrison



“We are bound to our bodies like an oyster is to its shell.”

Plato

“A feeble body weakens the mind.”

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

“A healthy body is a guest chamber for the soul; a sick body is a prison.”

Francis Bacon

“If I read a book and it makes my whole body so cold no fire can ever warm me, I know that is poetry.”

Emily Dickinson

“The chief function of the body is to carry the brain around.”

[Thomas A. Edison](#)

“There is more wisdom in your body than in your deepest philosophy.”

[Friedrich Nietzsche](#)

“Good is in the hands. Evil is also in the hands.”

[Sumerian proverb](#)

“Life without liberty is like a body without spirit.”

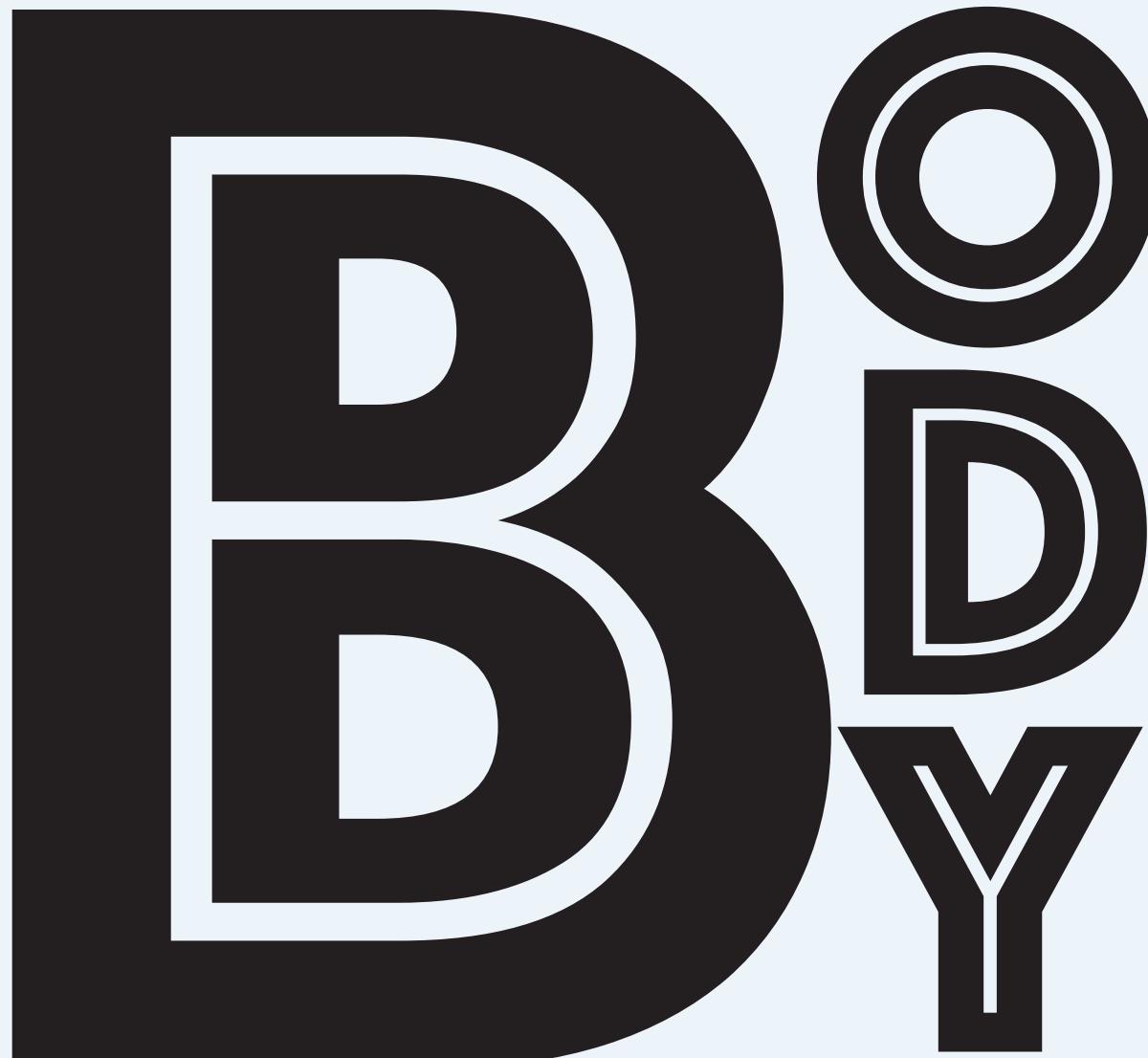
[Khalil Gibran](#)

“I drink to separate my body from my soul.”

[Oscar Wilde](#)

“The best cure for the body is a quiet mind.”

[Napoleon Bonaparte](#)



“I believe that a simple and unassuming manner of life is best for everyone, best both for the body and the mind.”

[Albert Einstein](#)

“The body may perish – not so the essence which survives in the living and lasting page.”

[Letitia Elizabeth Landon](#)

“‘Mera Jism Meri Marzi’. Like a man, it is a woman’s right to choose whatever happens with her body.”

[Rameeza Ahmad](#)

“Bodily decay is gloomy in prospect, but of all human contemplations the most abhorrent is body without mind.”

[Thomas Jefferson](#)

“The diseases of the mind are more and more destructive than those of the body.”

[Cicero](#)

By Jacqueline Winspear

Walking as medication

really going in,” wrote John Muir, the legendary naturalist, mountaineer, and environmentalist. Even as a child I understood the notion of “going in”.

Much has been written about the physical, emotional, spiritual, and psychological effect of walking, to the point where doctors in Britain are now writing ‘social prescriptions’, giving patients instructions to walk for a given length of time each day. In a number of towns local physicians are leading hikes into the countryside, supported by new findings indicating that leg exercise directs the brain to produce neurons that help us cope with stress and change. It is well documented that walking leads to reduced blood pressure while boosting the immune system, with research underlining the fact that walking lifts depression. In short, walking helps us flourish.

From the moment I was able to stand on two feet, I became a walker. Growing up in a rural area with an infrequent bus service, walking was not only a means of getting from A to B, but also my recreation. Walking opened my world, yet by the time I was eleven, it was also an escape, a time to think, to recalibrate myself after school. “I only went for a walk and finally concluded to stay out till sundown, for going out, I found, was

Psychologist, life coach, and long-distance walker Brook Montagna loved being outdoors from childhood. However, it was when Montagna moved to California that she discovered hiking. “We have mountains in California – and I fell in love with being in high country and remote areas.” Montagna’s affinity for mountains struck a chord. For a number of years I, too, was a life coach, and given my love of walking in the natural world – especially in places that commanded a view across the land – I incorporated it into my work with clients, ensuring that one of our four meetings each month took place while on a hike. I found that a person’s idea of what was possible in life was enhanced by reaching a place with a view, as if seeing into the distance or across a different landscape expanded their thinking, their perception of what was possible,





and with it the language they used to articulate thoughts and feelings.

"People have an affinity for landscapes," says Montagna. "Mine is mountains. It feels expansive, open, the place where I can reset my whole psyche – it's awe-inspiring." One location Montagna has returned to time and again is Arizona's Grand Canyon. "It's my spiritual home," she says. "Being there gives me an incredible sense of perspective. I'm descending the canyon through billions of years; there are the colours, and the air is different. There's a sense of what we're all doing here."

The effect of walking long-distance on those who engage in the act of pilgrimage can last for a lifetime. Betsy Burke, a former senior attorney specialising in international law enforcement with the US Justice Department, completed the Camino del Santiago – the 600-mile route through Spain to the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia

– over the course of four years, returning each year to walk another section. According to Burke, the pilgrimage was the culmination of a lifetime's affinity with the outdoors that continues to this day. Growing up in a family of boys, Burke was determined to keep pace with her brothers, so physical activity was a given. "Hiking, being in the outdoors was a family legacy," says Burke, who has two grown sons. "We hiked with our kids even before they could walk, carrying them in daypacks, and when they were older we took them to the Alps for hut-walking, then to the Andes in Central America – it was so we could share the passion and beauty of being alive."

Of her decision to embark upon the pilgrimage, Burke says, "I'd reached a point in my life when the children were leaving home. I had voids as well as new freedoms, and the Camino spoke to me. It was romantic, exotic, and spiritually challenging." She gave a lot of thought to preparing for the

journey, "It's really important to consider what you're carrying with you – your literal and internal 'baggage', and your company." Burke's walking companion was an FBI agent who was also married with grown children. "She knew my career, so we could support one another in a deep way, and we were both mothers." Of spreading the pilgrimage over four years, Burke adds, "It did not diminish the experience. We reinvigorated one other. We had time to revisit the experience, to see things anew. The Camino is a pilgrimage where you are looking at spiritual growth and physical exertion, so you really become aware of your whole being." The sentiment is echoed by Brook Montagna. "You're losing the small self. There is more connection – by going on a hike you're committing time to your greater self."

In her book *The Living Mountain* Nan Shepherd wrote, "The presence of another person does not detract from, but enhances the silence, if the other

"I'd reached a point in my life when the children were leaving home. I had voids as well as new freedoms, and the Camino spoke to me. It was romantic, exotic and spiritually challenging."

is the right sort of hill companion... one whose identity is for the time being merged in that of the mountains, as you feel your own to be." Anyone who commits to the daily or weekly walk with a companion is not only making a promise to the self, but to another person and the inner and outer worlds you inhabit together. There is the ritual of seeing the same people on the path and the exchange of goodwill. "There's the sharing," says Burke. "The memories you can draw upon and the connections."

Not everyone has access to the mountains, forests, and rural footpaths, but as Rebecca Solnit points out in her book *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*, "Walkers are 'practitioners of the city', for the city is made to be walked. A city is a language, a repository of possibilities, and walking is the act of speaking that language." I left the rural area where I grew up to attend college in London, and soon found my psyche aching for the great

expanse of land. Yet I found solace in walking the streets for hours, observing people, connecting where I could, drinking in ancient architecture or a modern building; seeking my greater self among the lanes, highways, and byways of centuries of human existence.

One of the advantages of walking is that it is an inexpensive physical endeavour offering the time and opportunity for meditation, reflection, and creative thought. Annabel Abbs – who was inspired to write *Windswept: Walking the Paths of Trailblazing Women* when she realised that most books on walking were authored by men – wrote, "Virginia Woolf believed women needed a room. Me? I think women need a route of their own. Outdoors... between the earth and the sky." I'll be embarking upon my daily route soon, down to the beach, a favourite place because whether I turn toward the land behind me or the sea before me, I am at both the end and the beginning. Enough to inspire me for a long time. ▀



"I still feel like an ugly duckling."

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Where the rational mind ends

Artist: Wolfgang Lettl



In his vast collection of over 500 artworks, German-born surrealist painter Wolfgang Lettl rarely misses the opportunity to depict the human body, although not in the form we are accustomed to seeing in real life – a severed hand or head, a punctured body, missing limbs and torsos, elongated legs. The human figure is an enduring source of fascination for the surrealists, as it was for artists in classical Greece, who idealised the beauty and athleticism of the human form, or artists in the Italian Renaissance, who became anatomical masters in their quest to produce a more lifelike portrayal of the human figure – even going as far, historians have noted rather grimly, as skinning human bodies to investigate the muscles, tendons, and bones that lie beneath.

The Florentine sculptor Baccio Bandinelli, a rival of Michelangelo, once said to a duke who considered hiring him, “I will show you that I know how to dissect

the brain, and also living men, as I have dissected dead ones to learn my art.” The young Michelangelo, too, it is believed, made anatomical studies of corpses at a convent hospital to gain closer insight into the underlying workings of the human form.

For Renaissance artists, the life drawing class became the mainstay of art education, inspired by the precision of classical anatomical study. Italian architect Leon Battista Alberti describes the significance of life drawing for aspiring artists in his 1435 treatise *On Painting*: “Before dressing a man we first draw him nude, then we enfold him in draperies. So in painting the nude we place first his bones and muscles which we then cover with flesh so that it is not difficult to understand where each muscle is beneath.”

Anatomical perfection, or the idealised and beautifully-proportioned nudes in Renaissance art, were not the goal of the surrealists, however. Rather, as Lettl,

who became exposed to surrealism while working as a communications officer in occupied Paris from 1940 to 1943, puts it: “Surrealism attempts to retrieve images from the unconscious.” Adding, “They are not realistic images, but fantasies, strange, unreal, confusing, beyond our grasp.” Interestingly, the human body still features prominently in surrealist art, even if the bodies are often distorted or deformed in some way.

French writer and poet André Breton, the leader of the surrealist poets and artists in Paris, defined the art movement in his *Surrealist Manifesto* (1924), as “pure psychic automation, by which one proposes to express, either verbally, in writing, or by any other manner, the real functioning of thought”. During art-making, the artists suppress conscious control over the making process, as happens, for instance, in ‘automatic drawing’, which involves moving a hand freely across the paper.



Endstation, 1958, Wolfgang Lettl



Online, 1995, Wolfgang Lettl

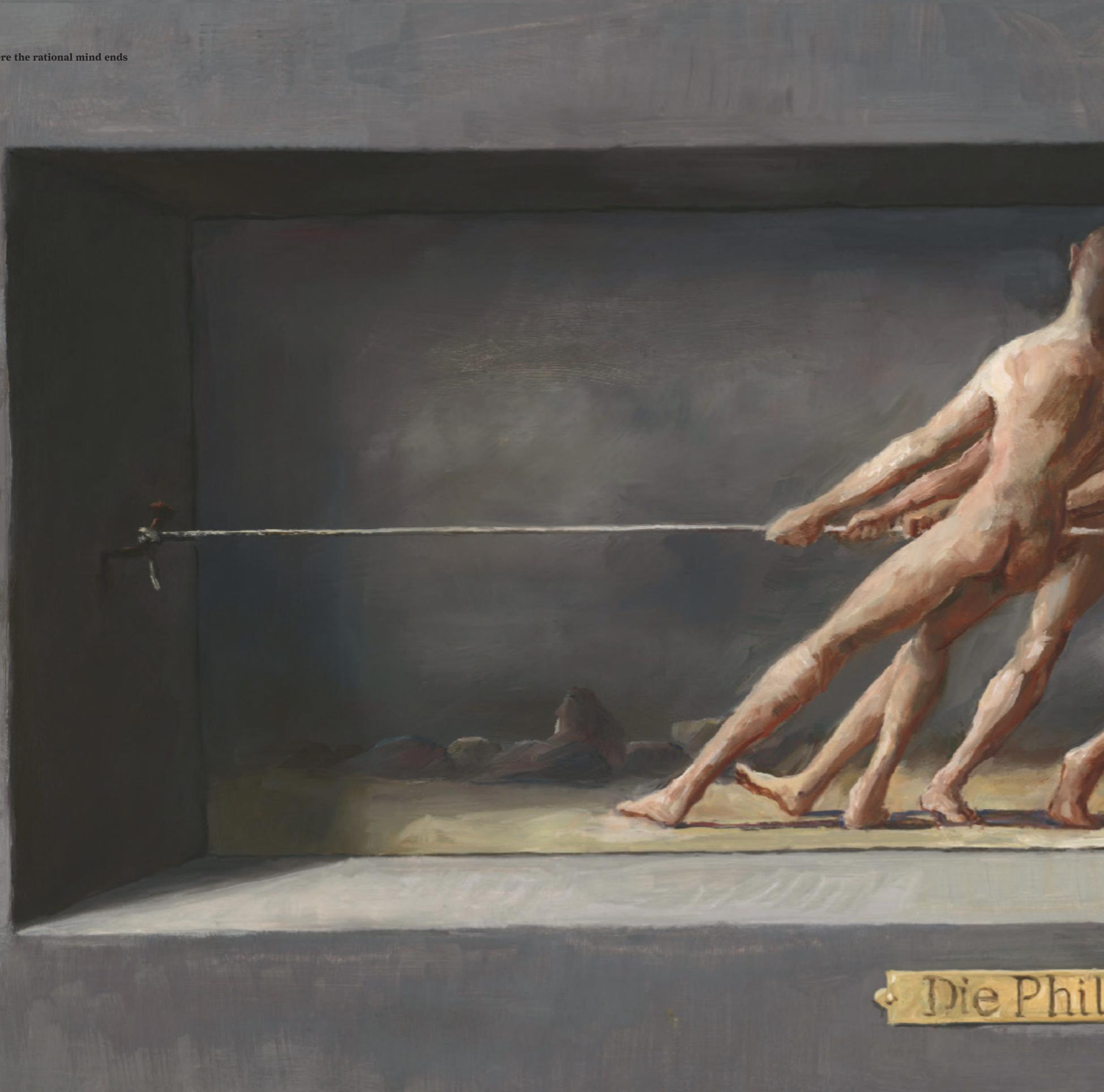


Composition with Harp, 1956, Wolfgang Lettl

Lettl returned to his hometown Augsburg in 1945 and worked as a freelance painter from 1945 until 1948, not committing to art full-time until 1954. In Lettl's *The Tower*, 1963 (displayed on page 26) the head of a man is positioned in a house-like structure on top of a number of piled blocks, on which a hand points both skyward and westward; the setting is desolate and barren, dotted with a bloodied carcass and abandoned tires. A figure lies under a blanket at the base of the tower, asleep or dead, we are not to know.

In an interview with British surrealist Leonora Carrington, who lived most of her adult life in Mexico City, the mind of the surrealist is subtly uncovered. Carrington's cousin Joanna Moorhead speaks to Carrington in her final years, an attempt, perhaps, to gain an insight into the workings of the surrealist mind – Carrington being one of the last surviving participants in the surrealist movement of the 1930s.

Moorhead enquires into Carrington's childhood, her mother, nanny, seeking to know what may have sparked her artistic inclinations, and Carrington leans forward towards her, abruptly silencing her relentless and awkward questioning: "You are trying to intellectualise something desperately, and you are wasting your time," she asserts. "That's not a way of understanding, to make a kind of... mini logic." She shakes her head, continuing, "You will never understand by that road." She interjects again to say that understanding comes from "your own feelings about things... It's a visual world. You want to turn things into a kind of intellectual game, and it's not. It's a visual world that is totally different." Carrington describes the surrealist world as viewing a series of



Die Philosophen, 1987, Wolfgang Lettl

objects in space, which concurs with Lettl's feelings when he too attempts to sum up the surrealist approach. "Here is the recipe: paint existing and non-existent objects as exactly and with as much plasticity as possible. Combine them as incongruously as possible and put them into a space where they don't belong."

In Lettl's painting, *The Philosophers*, five naked men tug at a rope to

remove a nail from a wall. The philosophers are trapped inside a frame, and upon the ledge of the frame is a light globe. "Philosophers are people who go to great lengths to try and solve problems that lie outside our normal world of experience," says Lettl. "They want to unearth the truth from other dimensions. In the process they find out that they reach their limits very fast. Pulling a nail from a wall

in a different dimension can become a life's work and an unsolvable problem." The surrealists, it seems, stand on the far side of the room to philosophers, who will rationalise and debate and intellectualise topics until daybreak and beyond. For surrealists, their fantastical images only begin to materialise on canvas when the rational mind is turned down; preferably turned off. You can't begin to

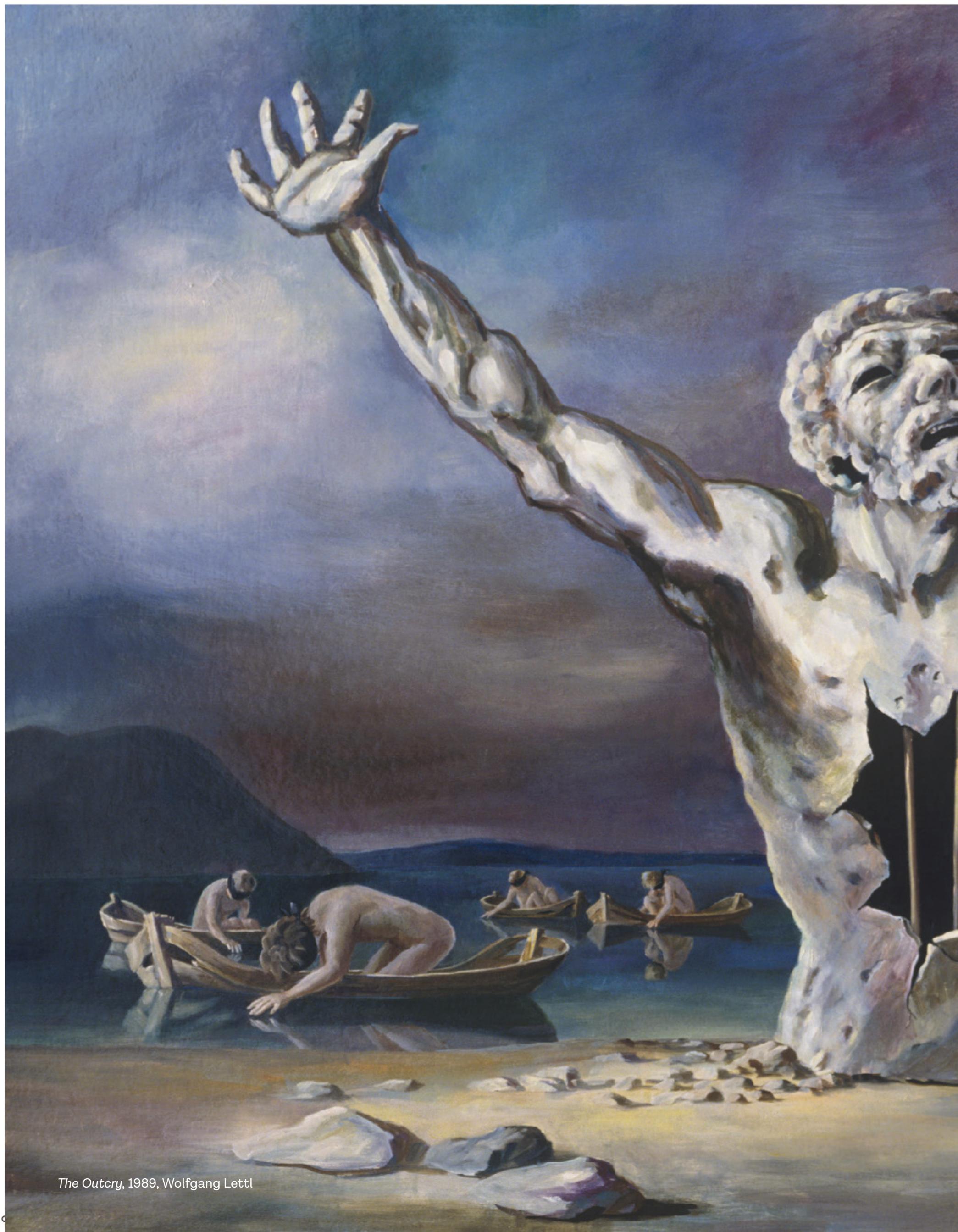


paint a broken scene of bodies, limbs, and wheels floating between cylindrical openings (see *Online*, on the previous page) by simply thinking things through. Indeed, the fantastical and magical world of surrealism begins where the rational mind ends.

In a 1992 retrospective exhibition at the Toskan Hall of Columns, Lettl offered his paintings to the city of Augsburg on permanent loan, followed

by the opening of the Lettl Atrium – Museum for Surreal Art in Augsburg in 1993. Lettl died in 2008 and is buried alongside his wife Franziska in Augsburg, leaving behind a little something else for philosophers to ponder, “We know that unconscious thought determines who we are to a much greater extent than conscious thought, and that it is not advisable to ignore this.”

The Lettl Museum temporarily closed in 2013, only to reopen again on Lettl’s 100th birthday on December 19, 2019 – offering a 650m² space in the centre of Augsburg. Lettl’s work is also displayed on pages 12, 19, 26, 56 and 59.



The Outcry, 1989, Wolfgang Lettl





Loneliness, 1917, Carlo Carrà

by Nigel Warburton

Donating bodies

It's not clear what we should do with dead bodies, but we certainly shouldn't do what a 16-year-old Damien Hirst did: pose for a photograph grinning next to the corpse of a man in a Leeds morgue. The man's face is distorted in a grimace. The young Hirst seems to be making a smiley contrast with his sad expression, a bit like the comic and tragic masks sometimes displayed above the stage in a theatre. That black-and-white photograph, entitled 'Dead Head', has been displayed in Tate Modern and elsewhere. Yet the man in the image had donated his body to medical science, not to be a prop in a young British artist's *memento mori*, and the man's children might well have seen this disrespectful gesture and been deeply upset by it.

One of the first people known to have donated his own body to medical science was the philosopher Jeremy Bentham. As early as 1769, when he came of age, he'd drawn up a will specifying that it should be used in

that way. At the time, medical students got their supply of cadavers from the gallows, or ordered them from grave-robbers.

Later, inspired by a pamphlet on the topic of bodies for medical practice by his friend the surgeon Thomas Southwood Smith, Bentham wrote a response entitled 'Auto-Icon; or the farther uses of the dead for the living'. As a utilitarian, he wanted to maximise the pleasure derived from his body after death, and left instructions for it to be dissected in public, then to have his head preserved by mummification, and his skeleton stripped of flesh and reconstructed. The resulting 'auto-icon', a doll-like statue made from human body parts, was to be dressed and put on display. In the end, his mummified head looked so grotesque, despite the bright blue glass eyes that he'd had made for it, that his friends decided to opt for a less-gruesome waxwork head with real hair. This is now on display as part of his auto-icon in University

College London. His real head is also occasionally put on show.

Bentham's surprising decision about what should be done with his corpse was in part intended to challenge taboos about what happened to the body after death, many of them stemming from Christian concerns about the need to have an intact body for it to be resurrected. In the 17th century there had been complicated philosophical debates about what happened on the day of resurrection if you had been unfortunate enough to have been devoured by cannibals. Since parts of your body would have been re-integrated into theirs, there would be a *prima facie* conflict of flesh ownership on the Day of Judgement.

Bentham imagined that instead of admiring statues, we could visit the shrivelled bodies of the dead. Actually, though, as far as displaying dead bodies as quasi-statues goes, the Capuchin monks of Palermo in Sicily got there hundreds of years before him. From at

If Damien Hirst outlives me, I really don't care if he wants to take a selfie with my corpse either.

least 1599 they were leaving corpses to dry out on shelves in the catacomb, and these were regularly visited by friends and relatives. There are some eight thousand of them there, all dressed in their best clothes. A modern version of this is the travelling show *Body Worlds*, devised by Gunther von Hagens. He has preserved numerous corpses – using a process he calls plastination – and displayed them in his exhibition. For von Hagens, the point is anatomical education and the bodies are anonymous.

Most people don't look their best at the point of death, and that makes the idea of preserving bodies for posterity less appealing than it might otherwise, though obviously a bit of aesthetic remodelling is possible. But quite apart from that, with the world population so huge, this wouldn't pass the Kantian test of 'what if everyone did that?'. There just isn't room for so many dried or plastinated bodies.

So perhaps we should just follow the first aspect of Bentham's wishes and donate our bodies to medical science. That seems a good way to help people after our death. But how many dead bodies does medical science need? Not everyone's, clearly.

So what of more conventional options? Burying has always been popular. The new twist is to do this in a green way, with a biodegradable coffin, and plant trees on the grave site. That has to be more considerate to posterity than the way this was done in the past. Some go one step further and have devised composting bins for corpses. That seems a good idea too. Cremation is another common option as it seems to get rid of the body quickly. But it uses lots of energy in the process and unleashes by-products into the atmosphere which can pollute or add to the climate crisis. So perhaps it isn't as neat a solution as it seems.

When asked how he should be buried, Diogenes the Cynic said that his body should be tossed over the city wall and left where the dogs scavenge. He asked for a stick to be thrown over too, so he could drive the hungry animals away. His point was that once he was dead there would be no need for him to worry about what happened to his body – he wouldn't be around to care about dogs eating his corpse,

and obviously wouldn't be able to use that stick.

That suggests that it really doesn't matter what happens to a corpse after death, whether it is mutilated, becomes a meal, or even is subject to necrophilia. Personally, I have no problem with the idea of being turned into dog food after my death. Or any of the rest. If Damien Hirst outlives me, I really don't care if he wants to take a selfie with my corpse either. But plenty of people would have problems with that happening to their corpses. I realise I might be an outlier here. And I do recognise that those who outlive me and care for me might not want those things to happen to my body. We are so much our bodies in life that it is hard to recognise that a dead body is really dead and won't be coming back to life. But dead bodies don't wake. It is those who survive the dead who can be harmed in this situation, harmed at the point where they are just coming to terms with the loss of someone dear to them.

Beyond being the focus for grief, and a celebration of a life, though, a dead body isn't of much use to anyone, and I'd be happy if someone manages to find something useful to do with mine, whether that be turning me into compost, or giving me to medical students for dissection practice. Except I won't be happy, sad, or even indifferent, because at that point I won't exist. ■



“We must no more ask whether the soul and body are one than ask whether the wax and the figure impressed on it are one.”

Aristotle

WHEN THE BODY BETRAYS US



By Charles Boag

The Poor Poet, by Carl Spitzweg, 1839



The joy I feel shovelling compost on this bright winter's day is close to delirium. Our latest load of grandchildren has just been to stay, the weather is unseasonably warm with the sun slamming my shadow hard against the back of the compost bay, and magpies, currawongs, and cockatoos are singing somewhat wildly after the recent rain, and I think: "Oh, what a feeling!", in much the same way the purchaser of a well-known brand of car did in the even better-known television commercial.

Perhaps I'm hallucinating. A few hundred years ago, and if I were a woman, I might have been burnt at the stake for a witch. As it is, as a male in 21st century Australia, the worst that can happen is a neighbour might demand I turn down the volume of the Beethoven belting away in my overalls pocket.

Lately life has got to me like that. It might be hysteria but on the other hand it might just be good, old, honest, genuine delight at being alive. I don't think it warrants epiphany status but, since a near-death experience almost exactly a year ago, I've taken to reacting to events that life throws at me somewhat differently to what I once might have regarded as normal.

All life is luck, as we know, perhaps with a bit of free will and reflection thrown in. In the beginning, one of 250

million rat-tailed sperm hits an egg and the omelette that is each individual begins to form, and what happens after that is in the lap of the gods. Does your mum drink? Does she fall off a horse while you're incubating? Does she take the wrong pill by mistake or get a disease or jump out a window in a fit of pique because her number didn't come up in that year's Melbourne Cup?

As luck would have it, I got a pretty good deal. Mum didn't defenestrate herself and everything worked. *Mens sana in corpore sano* – a healthy mind in a healthy body – seemed my lot in life. But as time went on, I found I was as weird – as prone to illness, anyway – as anyone else on this planet. At age 50, I contracted osteoarthritis and had two legs – or at least their hip sections – replaced. After that came a steel plate in my right wrist. Followed by a couple of dental implants. And so on.

Then, when I was 77, due to a slight pain in my stomach I was admitted into our little country hospital where I underwent emergency surgery for the advanced bowel cancer of which I'd had numerous warnings over the years but for which I'd refused to have any tests. There goes a bit of bowel.

I thought that was the end of the matter but, as so often at critical times in my life, I was wrong. The extent of

my wrongness provides a sobering insight into what can happen when our bodies decide to do the dirty on us.

For the operation, I stopped taking my prostate-reduction pills (80 per cent of men over 70 suffer benign prostatic hyperplasia – an enlarged prostate – and I was doing my bit to keep up the average) and within 48 hours I was devoutly wishing a certain sperm had never cosied up to the egg that turned out to be me: my prostate swelled to urethra-occluding size, and I couldn't urinate.

Inability to urinate must be up there with the worst afflictions in the world. The night nurse had no sympathy. Take a painkiller, she suggested – a powder, anyway. The next morning I was close to suicidal. Several attempts at an undignified procedure known as catheterisation – without anaesthetic and conducted in an open ward – resulted only in the drawing of blood and I had to be rushed by my wife Judith (due to Covid, an ambulance wasn't available) to another hospital a rocky hour's drive away.

This time – in a better-endowed hospital, under general anaesthetic and with the aid of a camera – the job was finally done. Unfortunately, an infection was inserted along with the catheter, causing my testicles to swell to



abnormal size and my having to max out on antibiotics and wait several months until that particular part of my anatomy decided to play ball and I was deemed fit enough for the next stage in my treatment for cancer.

As it turned out I wasn't fit at all: my body failed me spectacularly. I'd undergone only a few weeks of a planned six months' chemotherapy when reaction set in and my body gave way to a violent bout of diarrhoea, followed by vomiting, which earned me rapid re-entry to the hospital I thought I'd seen the last of, at least for a while. Judith researched my condition and advised that I was at something called Stage 4 in my reaction to chemo, and that Stage 5 was death.

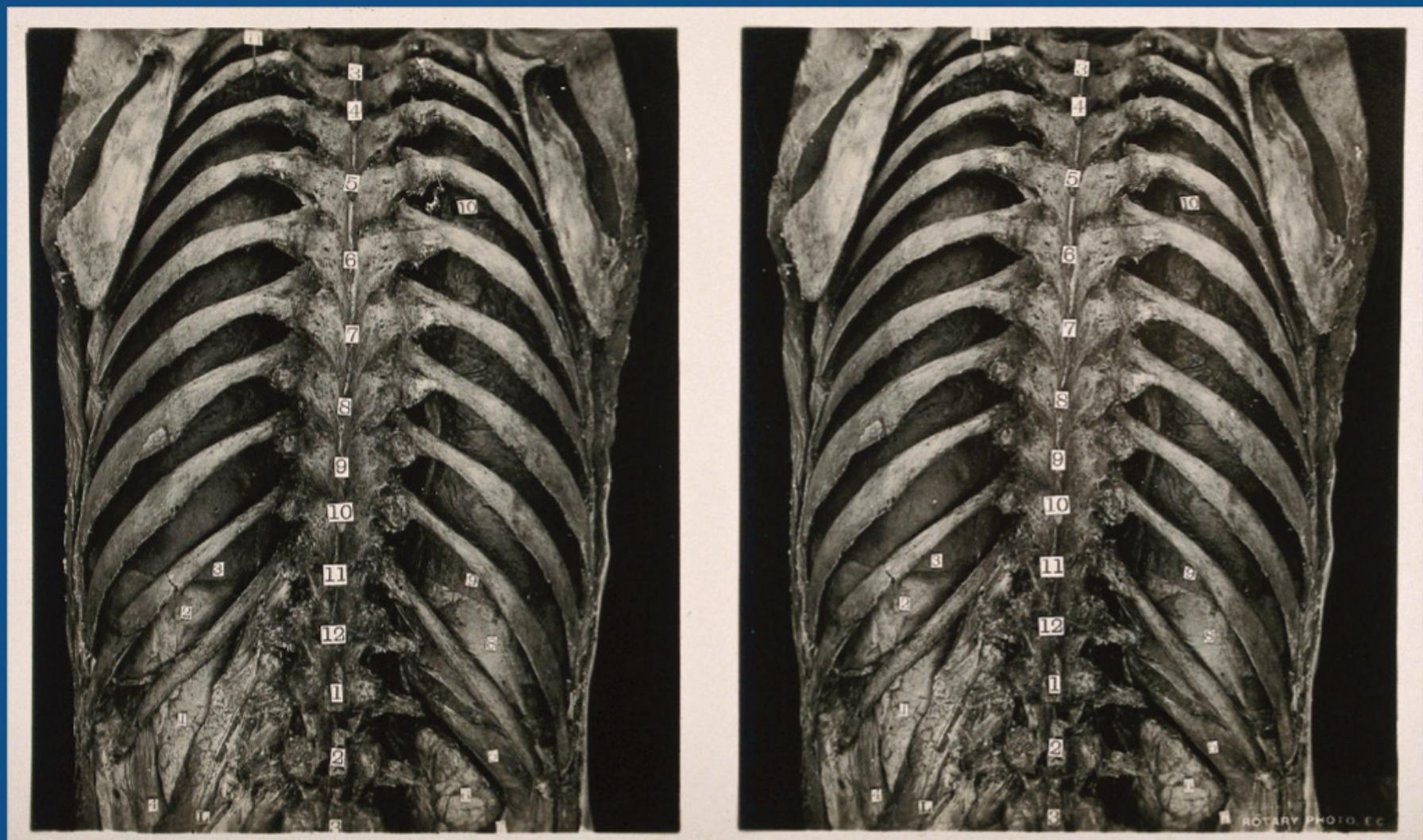
After three weeks in holding pattern (I was kept alive but made little improvement) I was airlifted to a Sydney hospital where – like the doctors in *Now We Are Six* who couldn't get their heads around Christopher Robin's wheezles and sneezles – the gastroenterologist said he didn't have a clue what was wrong but took me off all medication, got rid of what remained of the contents of my stomach, conducted a colonoscopy which revealed nothing and, starting from scratch, set about getting me going (sorry, stopping) again.

I was released the day before my 78th birthday. The diarrhoea was cured but I was still quite ill. For several months I had no energy. My legs got into the act and became horribly

swollen. My blood pressure plummeted. The number of doctors shaking their heads over me multiplied. Judith researched my condition online once more and told me I wasn't well.

* * *

But now, 12 months after the initial surgery, what's left of my body seems to be holding up. I've refused further chemotherapy but my latest scan shows, for the moment anyway, that I'm free of cancer. I'm writing and painting again, as old men do. My energy has returned. My back plays up occasionally and we're tweaking the prostate medication and contemplating surgery on the offending organ but all in all I appear fit enough despite



Photograph: Dissection of the thorax – the back, ca. 1900

panic attacks, brought about by recurring stomach pains, giving rise to the certainty that at any moment the cancer will return, and I shall die.

Trust my body? Why should I? Covid has killed over six million people worldwide, among them 12,000 Australians, and promises far worse before it has finished. Older people like me, with what's popularly called a 'pre-existing condition', are in the firing line. I'm told there's a 50:50 chance my cancer will recur. All in all, I'm lucky to be approaching my 79th birthday and still alive.

So, no, I don't trust my body. Strangely enough, for most of my life – but far more so now – I've regarded my mind as more real than my corporeal self. The mind is where the action is, while the body just comes along for the ride.

But I've also always been aware I should keep fit because physical health is helpful if you're to get the most out of your mind: you need a body to get the brain around. In one of Roald Dahl's weirder stories, an eye (or perhaps it was a brain) subsisted in a laboratory without the benefit of a body. But that was fiction and anyway I wouldn't want to be at the mercy of a scientist, and certainly not in the hands of someone like Roald Dahl.

When it was all over, the gastroenterologist said he still didn't know what was wrong with me,

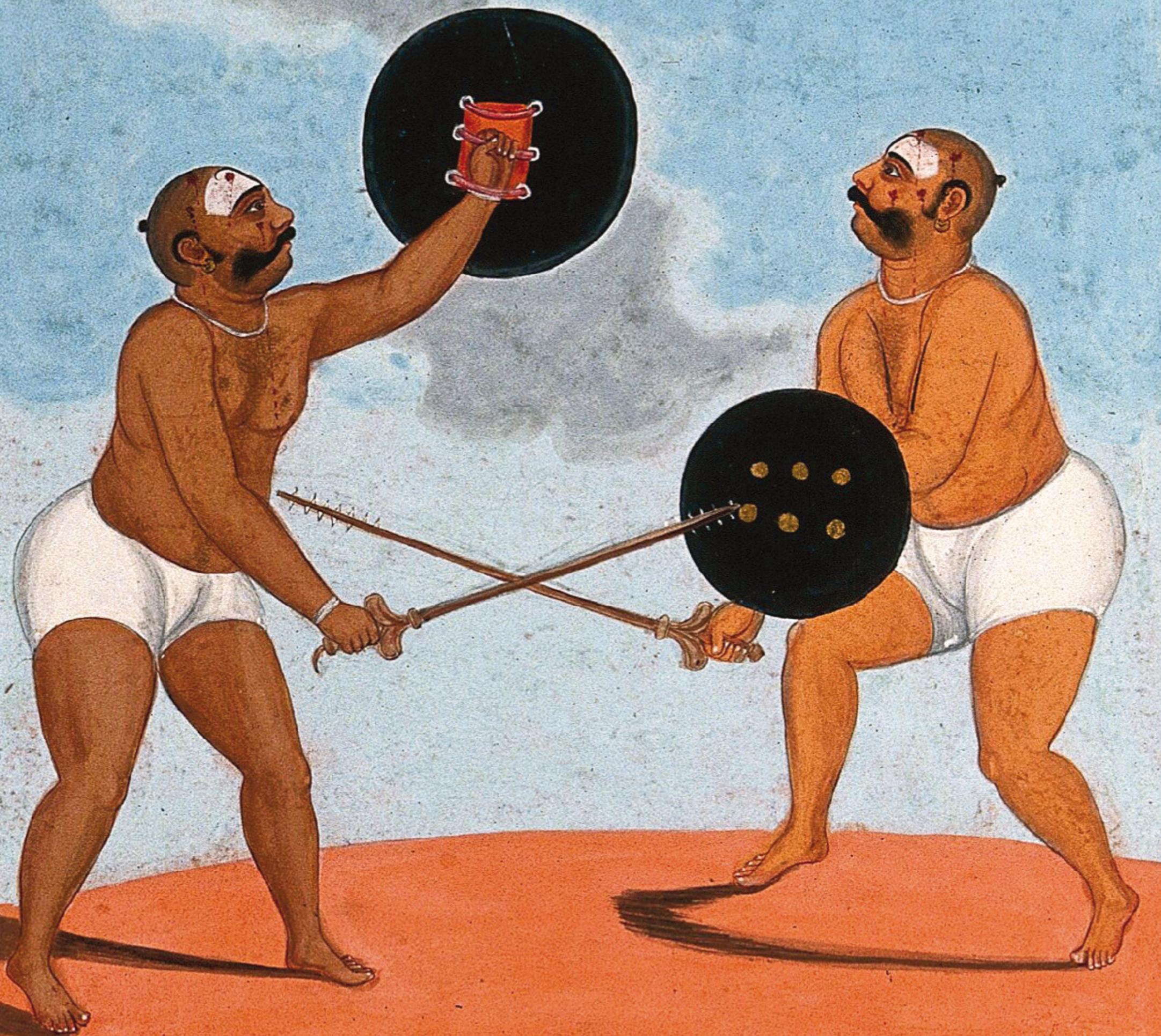
apart from a little common-or-garden chemo poisoning, and quoted Voltaire as saying: "The art of medicine consists in amusing the patient while nature cures the disease." Clever old Voltaire, who also said words to the effect that what really matters in life is cultivating one's own garden.

I revel in our garden's life-and-death cycle, in celebration of which I've built, out of recycled bricks under a 100-year-old deodar, a three-bay compost pit where so-called dead matter transforms itself into soil to nurture plants that will one day become dead matter that will turn again into soil which will nurture more plants, and so on, ad infinitum – or at least until the solar plague gets us.

And so, yes, I expect my body to fail because that is what a body ultimately does. But, like a one-legged seagull, one adapts.

The joy I get from the process of making compost is due not only to the physicality it involves – my shortcomings notwithstanding – but also because I acknowledge, deeply and comfortably within myself, that, along with the birds and the bees and the flowers and the trees on this unseasonably warm winter's day, in which I exult, that, in my faltering self, I am and will remain an integral part of it. ■

For most of my life – but far more so now – I've regarded my mind as more real than my corporeal self. The mind is where the action is, while the body just comes along for the ride.



A pair of Indian wrestlers, by a painter from Tanjore, 1840

BODY

/ 'bɒdi/

noun:

1. The physical structure, including the bones, flesh, and organs, of a person or an animal;
2. A corpse;
3. The physical and mortal aspect of a person as opposed to the soul or spirit;
4. A person's body regarded as an object of sexual desire;
5. An organised group of people with a common purpose or function.

Origin:

Old English *bodig*, of unknown origin.

Source: Oxford English Dictionary

by Antonia Case

Mind games

At the close of the game against Australian tennis player Nick Kyrgios, defeated Greek tennis star Stefanos Tsitsipas faced the press at Wimbledon, evidently downcast. He scratched his head. “I don’t know what went through my head,” he said.

His game against Kyrgios lasted three hours and 16 minutes, time for both players to receive penalties, the larger of the fines handed to the Greek tennis champion for smashing a ball into the crowd, narrowly missing a spectator.

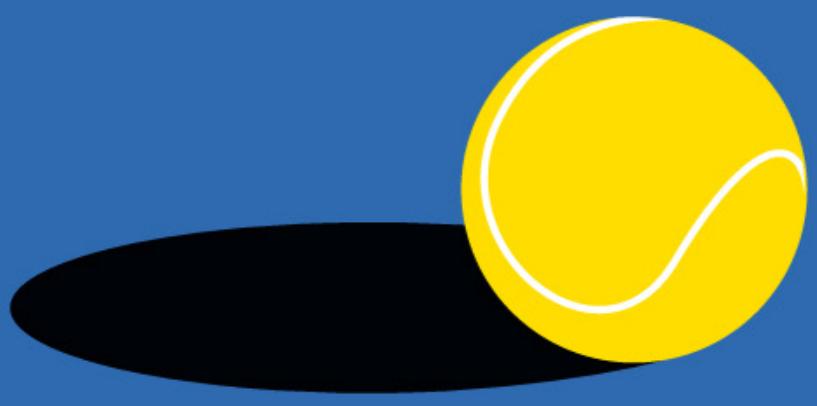
When a journalist asked Tsitsipas why he had attempted to whack Kyrgios with the ball several times during the match, the Greek player shrugged his shoulders and responded, “Just to stop, you know, this needs to stop, it’s not OK.”

Back in the 1930s, Coleman R. Griffith, research director in athletics at Illinois University, wrote a paper on how physical education had a one-sided view of the fundamental nature of human beings. “When an athlete goes out on the field for a contest he does not leave his mind tucked away in a locker with his shoes, his watch, and his hat.” Indeed, while coaches busily measured height, weight, and speed, and the strength of various muscle groups, little attention at that time dwelt on the mind of the athlete and the use of psychological tactics to win in sport.

In Griffith’s view, the psychological factor is often “far more important” than the physical in sport. “It takes but a moment... to realise that the best athletes use almost every faculty of their minds when they go into a contest... when we go to athletic competition with an open eye to psychological matters, we cannot help but come away with the belief that all athletic

competition is purposeful, clever, intelligent, emotional, and skilful, and not merely mechanical.” So intent on demonstrating the role of the mind in sport, Griffith went on to establish the first sports psychology laboratory in the US and its first coaching school.

Tsitsipas is 6-5 up in the first set, and Kyrgios argues a line call. He shouts at the umpire, and the crowd freezes. He returns to court, and fires serves in quick succession, leaving Tsitsipas little time to prepare. His body movements are shotgun-like: distracting and unpredictable. He interacts with the crowd in a manner implying the crowd is on his side, flattening the ego of his opponent. He serves underarm, causing Tsitsipas to scramble towards the net like a clown, tripping on his own feet. A few points later, Kyrgios gets a code violation for swearing and he jokes with the crowd like a pub comedian. He talks to himself, to an invisible person in the crowd, he talks between points, and by





the end of the set, the umpire looks exhausted and Tsitsipas is well and truly out of his zone. Kyrgios, known for creating a ‘circus’, prowls the court like a circus tiger that has got loose. Who is he going to attack next? All eyes are on him.

For professionals in any field – musicians, actors, authors, surgeons, and so on – ‘being in the zone’ is when peak performance happens. As Kobe Bryant, NBA champion with the LA Lakers put it, reported in the book, *The Genius of Athletes*, “When you get in that zone, it’s just a supreme confidence that you know it’s going in. It’s not a matter of if or this or that; it’s going in! Things just slow down... and you just have supreme confidence... You have to really try to stay in the present and not let anything break that rhythm. When you get in the zone, you just stay there, you become oblivious to everything that is going on. You don’t think about your surroundings or what’s going on with the crowd or the team. You’re just locked in.”

For sportspeople, strategies are learnt and rehearsed to keep within the zone, to keep the flow of routine happening, to keep processes predictable. In fact, in life, humans are programmed to do much the same. We love our routines and experience fear and anxiety when our routines are interrupted. As neuroscientist Dr Judson Brewer puts it, “How quickly do we get frazzled when someone messes with our routine. Our brains are wired to resist change, or at least to tell us

that something is off or out of the ordinary.” In other words, when the unpredictable happens, panic erupts in the brain’s amygdala, triggering a number of automatic physiological reactions: an accelerated heart rate, tense muscles, and sweaty palms. There’s not much we can do about it, as mind-hacker Brewer asserts; “As prediction machines, our brains are aiming to make the future more certain. Our brains don’t like change.” Our brains “alert us to when something is different, not fitting into our routine or habit, usually in the form of some kind of discomfort. Routine is comfortable, not knowing what is going to come next can be uncomfortable or anxiety provoking in itself.”

The unpredictable can be so devastating to performance in sport that top coaches will specifically prepare for it. It’s called ‘if-then’ planning: “If this happens, then I will do this.” American swimmer Michael Phelps is one athlete who was trained to manage the unpredictable. Phelps’s coach, Bob Bowman, once deliberately stepped and cracked Phelps’s swimming goggles before a World Cup race in Australia. Phelps dived in, and water burst through the crack in his goggles, obscuring his vision. But Phelps, who had trained to stay in his zone if his goggles broke, immediately focused on counting his strokes – 21 strokes to the end of the pool. What could have been a disaster, became nothing more than an annoyance for the most successful Olympic athlete of all

time. Golfing champion Tiger Woods, too, was trained by his father, Earl, on techniques to deal with unpredictable events. As a kid golfer learning to putt, Earl would rattle change in his pocket or throw keys or other objects in his son’s line of sight.

Unlike football or cricket matches, however, professional tennis matches are especially quiet affairs. The audience is expected to remain silent during play, seated and still, toilet and food breaks are permitted at set times and certainly not during play. Distraction for players is minimised. Much like theatre actors, this stage-like bubble creates space for players to perform, freed from the worry of rattling change or objects being thrown in their line of sight. In fact, toilet breaks, medical time outs, and excessive delays between serves are some of the few psychological tactics employed by some players to break their opponent’s rhythm. But typically, silence on court gives players the space to work with not only their bodies, but more importantly, their minds.

In the book, *The Genius of Athletes*, Noel Brick and Scott Douglas describe the many ways sportspeople manage their minds during physically taxing moments on court or on the track. As one elite runner put it in the book, “You cannot stand at the start line of a marathon and go, ‘I am going to run 26.2 miles today.’ You’d go insane!” Instead, the marathon runner describes the process of breaking the run into “really small chunks”. He says, “I break it into

The unpredictable can be so devastating to performance in sport that top coaches will especially train for it. It’s called ‘if-then’ planning.

five-mile chunks, and I think ‘How will I feel when I get to 10 miles?’”

Called ‘chunking’, sportspeople aim to conquer short-term goals – for example, serving an ace down the T, rather than winning the match. Longer-term goals are broken into smaller targets, much like a novelist will aim to complete just one chapter rather than tackling the gargantuan task of penning a book. Other mind games employed by sportspeople involve grounding strategies such as the 5-4-3-2-1 technique. This strategy involves listing five things you can see, four things you can feel or touch, three things you can hear, two things you can smell, and one thing you can taste. It sets the mind on a treasure hunt of immediate sensory experiences, which settles the mind, and curbs its tendency to fixate on distracting or negative thoughts.

Author and journalist Douglas personally used this grounding technique during a four-hour training run. His usual strategy of chunking the remaining time, and his frequent pep talks, weren’t working. Instead, his mind was complaining, “I don’t want to do this. I’m not even halfway, and then I’ll still have another two hours to go. Too much of my life is spent waiting things out rather than enjoying myself.”

Just as Douglas was about to cut the run short, he used the 5-4-3-2-1 grounding technique, and methodically went through his five senses checklist. He struggled to find taste sensations, and he could barely make out anything he heard on his first cycle

through the exercise, but he persisted. By the time Douglas completed his second cycle through the exercise, he’d been running for close to two hours.

Interestingly, the practice of ‘mindfulness’, which teaches the art of staying present in the world rather than repeatedly slipping into negative thought streams, is as much about the body as it is about the mind. Mindfulness practitioners teach body awareness in equal measure to being mindful of negative thought patterns. “Where do you feel tension or stress in the body?” they enquire. “In your chest, your shoulders, your neck? Can you point to this tension in your body? Can you breathe into it?” As America’s first sports psychologist suggested back in the 1920s, a comment that could well be applied to humans in daily life and not just sportspeople, “The athlete who goes into a contest is a mind-body organism and not merely a physiological machine.”

When Tsitsipas fires a cranky shot towards the crowd, Kyrgios explodes at the umpire for not defaulting him. “Are you dumb?” he shouts at the umpire. “It’s a default brother. It’s a default bro!” He demands a supervisor, declaring, “I don’t care – I’m not playing until we get to the bottom of it.”

Kyrgios’s frenzied antics on court align with his self-image as a disrupter. And, “we are motivated to do things that verify who we are,” continues neuroscientist Brewer. “And then we do things to keep this going.” Interestingly, a study from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, on

“The athlete who goes into a contest is a mind-body organism and not merely a physiological machine.”

While he entrenches himself within his own comfort zone, he pushes his opponent far outside the ring.

62 female participants, showed how depressed people will typically choose to listen to music, and choose imagery, that makes them feel depressed, and will even select emotional regulation strategies that made them feel worse, even when they have an alternative. The researchers noted that depressed people in the study chose strategies to make themselves feel worse because such moods were more familiar to them. "It suggests that depressed individuals may sometimes be unsuccessful in decreasing their sadness in daily life because, in some sense, they hold on to it," author Yael Millgram concludes. In other words, depressed people are motivated to experience sadness to verify their emotional selves. If that involves staring at negative images or putting on depressing music, so be it. If we are depressed, we identify with that feeling: "Yep, I'm that depressed guy," explains Brewer, and then "we do things to keep this going."

For Kyrgios, disruption serves three purposes on the tennis court. It keeps him well within his 'disruptive' comfort zone of *I'm the kind of guy who disrupts*.

But, perhaps more importantly, it disrupts the mindset of his opponent. While he entrenches himself within his own comfort zone, he pushes his opponent far outside the ring.

But lastly, it lowers the stakes of the game for Kyrgios. Because if he happens to lose the point, his serve, the game, or even the entire match, that's just because he isn't taking things seriously. It's because he is joking with the crowd, talking too much, yelling at the umpire, throwing chairs, spitting at spectators. If only he took tennis seriously, then, as the narrative runs, he'd be a real contender. So, in contrast to other players on the tour who must suffer the loss of defeat, who find themselves head down staring blankly at their shoelaces as their opponent lifts a trophy high in the air, Kyrgios can shrug it off as another example of when he threw the match for being too hot-headed, and not taking tennis seriously enough, much like the precocious child at school who insists they never study for an exam. As he implied in an post-match press conference, tennis isn't the main game: "When I'm back home and you see my every day and who I am competing with on the basketball court, like, these guys are dogs. The people I am playing at Wimbledon, it's soft... I go up against guys that are true competitors."

While psychological tactics in sport are hardly commented on enough by sports commentators, America's first sports psychologist warned of the downsides. "If athletic competition is going to stand against its enemies and if it is going to make strides in realising

the best hopes of its friends, we must have an ever-growing regard for athletic ideals. Honour, sportsmanship, courage, fair play, and other fine things must be the daily accompaniments of competition if our stadia and our monuments to athletic prowess are to mean anything in our national life."

Back on court, Kyrgios hits another underarm serve, causing Tsitsipas to hit the ball on the run, and it ricochets off the back wall, scoring him a point penalty which further puts him off his game. The commentator laments, "Tsitsipas has been driven mad by this performance from Kyrgios," – the same Kyrgios who is later found lying face flat on the court, seemingly unable to move. As neuroscientists warn us, the unexpected sends immediate stress chemicals into the brain, and there's not much we can do about it. "When we experience tense emotions like fear or anxiety under psychological pressure, our innate stress responses can hijack our performance," conclude Brick and Douglas.

During the post-match press conference, Tsitsipas, world number three, reflected on his loss to the disruptive lower-ranked player. Even after running through the match with journalists, the 23-year-old Greek still looked confused as to what had happened. "It comes to a point when you really get tired of it... the constant talking, the constant complaining... because why would you be talking, it makes no sense." But then, as if suddenly a light shone, he concludes, "I don't think he can play without having a circus around... it is the way he likes things being done." ■



“When we experience tense emotions like fear or anxiety under psychological pressure, our innate stress responses can hijack our performance.”

Noel Brick and Scott Douglas, *The Genius of Athletes*

Photo: French Open 2013



Female Torso, Kazimir Malevich, 1933

by Mariana Alessandri

Gender outlines



is imagining gender as a spectrum the best metaphor we can think of?

In 1994, gender was not a spectrum, at least not in New York City where I grew up. I was the co-captain of my junior varsity basketball team, and though I was likely mediocre, I felt unstoppable. I practised daily, and the basketball gods rewarded me with a feeling of excellence I have not had since. What seems even more remarkable, given how I think twenty-eight years later, is that using my strong body so aggressively never made me doubt that I was 100% girl.

At forty-three, I've started playing basketball again, perhaps in pursuit of what my eight-year-old is obsessed with: 'glory'. I want to touch excellence, but at this point competence would feel like excellence. Trouble is, I find my body changed. When I double the waistband of my shorts onto my hips, my twice-used, now abandoned kangaroo pouch hangs over the drawstring. More significantly, my haircut and gym clothes make me look and feel androgynous. Still, the other players (all male) must have read me as female when I walked in as 'wife' to a basketball-playing, male-presenting male. During the game, the players apologised when they ran into me, never mind that I had set

my body to be run into. But when I began scoring, they stopped apologising. They no longer treated my body as defenceless or weak. Playing middle-aged basketball gives me the 'man' feeling I crave, like I could walk home alone in the dark or get into a fist fight.

Thinking outside the binary has helped me become a self who doesn't wear make-up, uses only sports bras and men's deodorant, and prefers barbers. Likewise, thinking along the spectrum has freed me to wonder if I am masculine of centre.

But the spectrum metaphor exacts a price. Although I have always been 'boyish', it is only since gender has become a spectrum that my masculinity pulls from my femininity. Recent salsa lessons with my husband reveal me as awkward, even though I have danced all my life. The body growing stronger on the basketball court now struggles to follow a male lead on the dance floor. It's not that men don't dance or that women don't play basketball, but the spectrum is making a slide switch out of my gender. These days, when I wear a dress, I worry that I am betraying myself, acquiescing to cultural expectations. I did not feel so conflicted when gender was a binary.

When the hairdresser asked why I decided to shave the underside of my head I answered: "To make my outsides match my insides." I might as well have referenced Nietzsche, telling her that I wanted to become who I am. Since I had spent my twenties and thirties becoming someone else – a professor, a mother, a wife – I figured my forties was a good decade to become myself. I suspected that my haircut would throw my gender into question, but I was willing to think in the flesh. I didn't predict that words would fail me.

The proliferating terms surrounding gender – from non-binary to spectrum to fluidity to androgyny – rush to the aid of teens who ask social media users to name them. But when words clump as these do, it's unclear whether we are trying to preserve gender or destroy it. I wondered: is the gender binary toxic by necessity or only by misuse? Similarly,



The flaw in the spectrum language, at least for me, is precisely the existential discomfort I now feel dancing. Is there a metaphor for gender that doesn't divide us into percentages?

I live on the US-Mexico border, so I see a lot of binaries, boundaries, either/ors. I see policing and patrolling. I see people swayed by the politics of purity: language, food, culture, etc. But I also see rebellion: both/ands, neither/nors, and delightfully confusing middles.

Nationality is no spectrum: a Mexican-American is both/and, and can choose to highlight one or the other, like the social media challenge where users posted side-by-side photos of themselves as masculine and feminine. No betrayal here, just different looks on different days. Perhaps some of these individuals identify as bi-gender, but I suspect not all. A year ago, unbeknownst to social media and with considerable confusion, I did an experiment: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays were my 'masculine' days, and Tuesdays and Thursdays were my 'feminine' ones. I modelled my gender presentation on

my bilingual home, where we alternate between Spanish and English days. But when I read the captions on those social media photos, including "I both", and *ellos* (an amalgam of *el* [he] and *ella* [she]) – it hit me that borders can tolerate both-ing, just not at once.

If the border forces us to choose (or at least alternate) between genders, the borderlands that Gloria Anzaldúa described so richly is home to thirds, misfits, and *mitad y mitades* (half-and-halves). Spanglish speakers do not alternate between Spanish and English; they play with the border, celebrate the holy abundance of words, and honour a multiplicity of languages. The first time I saw a student on campus rock a beard and high heels I saw the Spanglish of gender incarnate. Not a spectrum in sight. In the borderlands we are genderful, we code switch, we are both at once.

Gendering as a Latinx in the borderlands has taught me that what's wrong with the binary is not the fact of two, or even of contrast, but the politics of purity. The Aztecs had binary pairs, including 'male' and 'female', but they were

not either/ors; they could occur in one body. The primordial god Ometeotl, for instance, represented both male and female by wearing a skirt and a loin cloth.

The American poet Alok Vaid-Menon defines beauty as "looking like yourself", which in my case would mean presenting sometimes as masculine and sometimes as feminine; sometimes as an ambiguous body and sometimes an androgynous one. If my husband and I ever decide to have a recommitment ceremony, I will wear a tuxedo. It will look odd outside the borderlands, because in 2022, the recognisable pairs are: two men, two women, or a man and a woman. But a masculine-presenting male paired with a masculine-presenting female isn't yet legible inland. It's always been up to the borderlands to give us new looks and new languages; new words for middles and mashups. If more people could appreciate the borderlands, lots of us would have an easier time of gender. We could cross the border but not destroy it; we could speak Spanglish and shapeshift; we could play basketball and dance. ■

I did an experiment: Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays were my 'masculine' days, and Tuesdays and Thursdays were my 'feminine' ones.

تصویر اعصاب

تصویر اعضاء

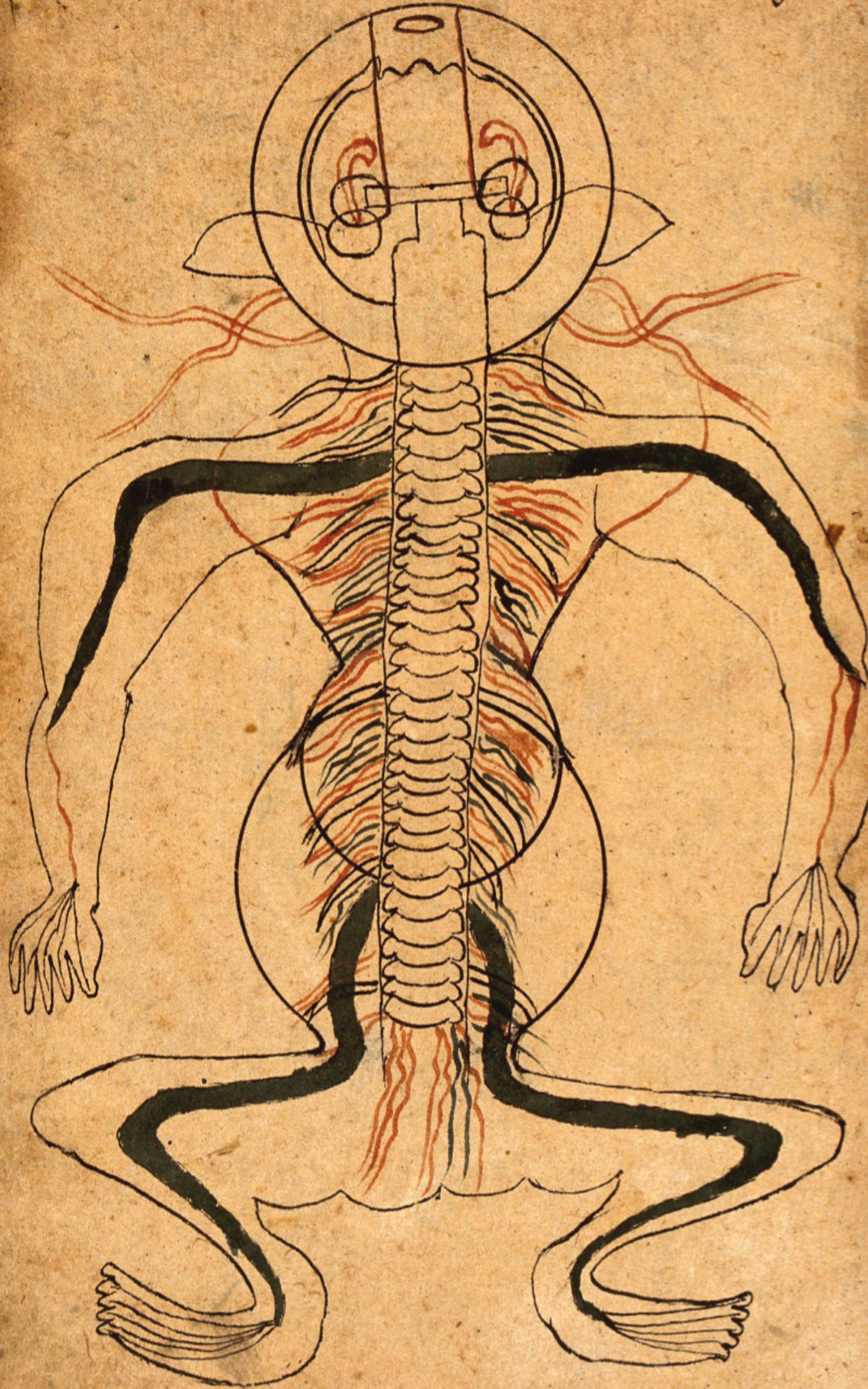
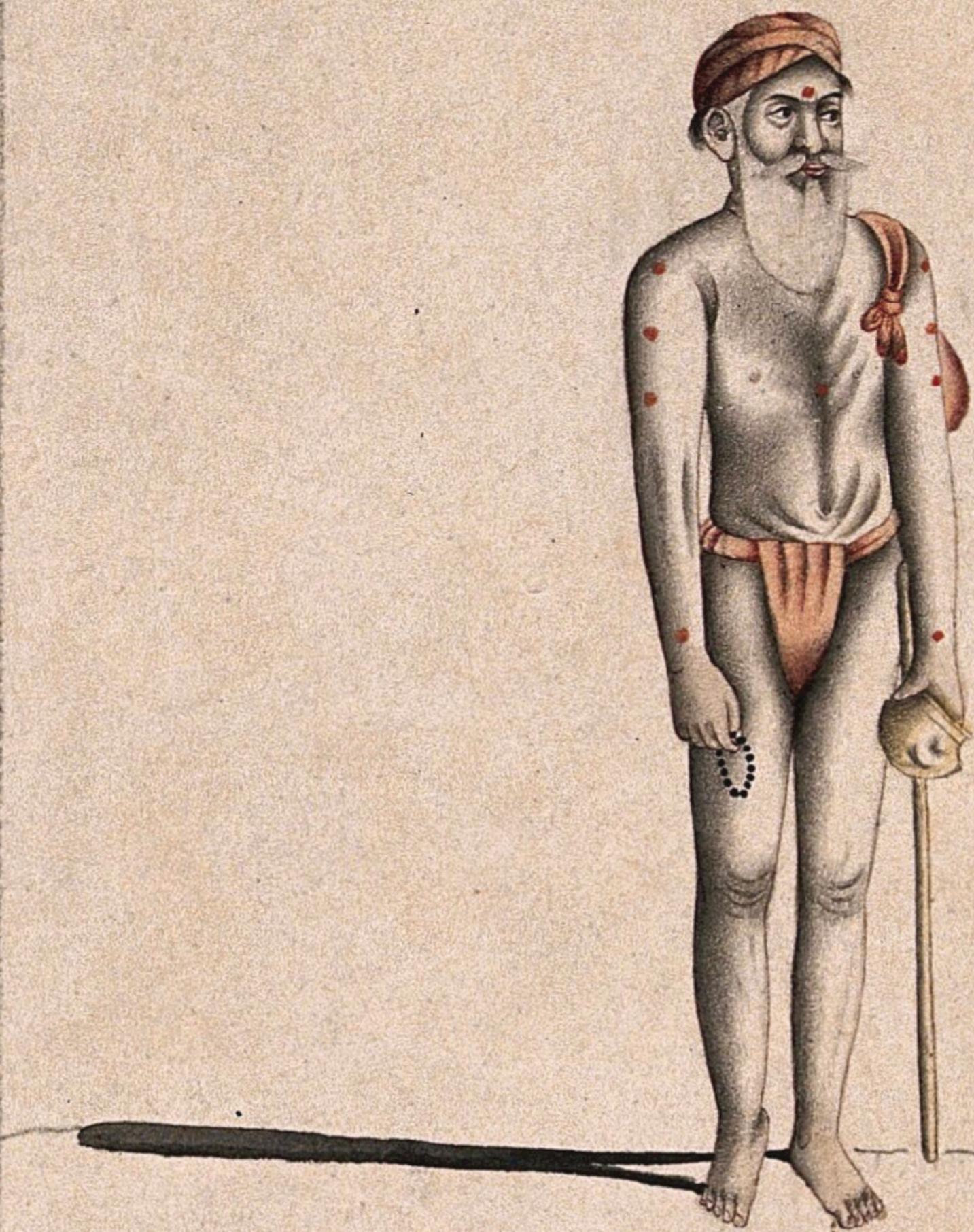


Image: Nerves of the human body, Persian, 19th century



The Sacred Body

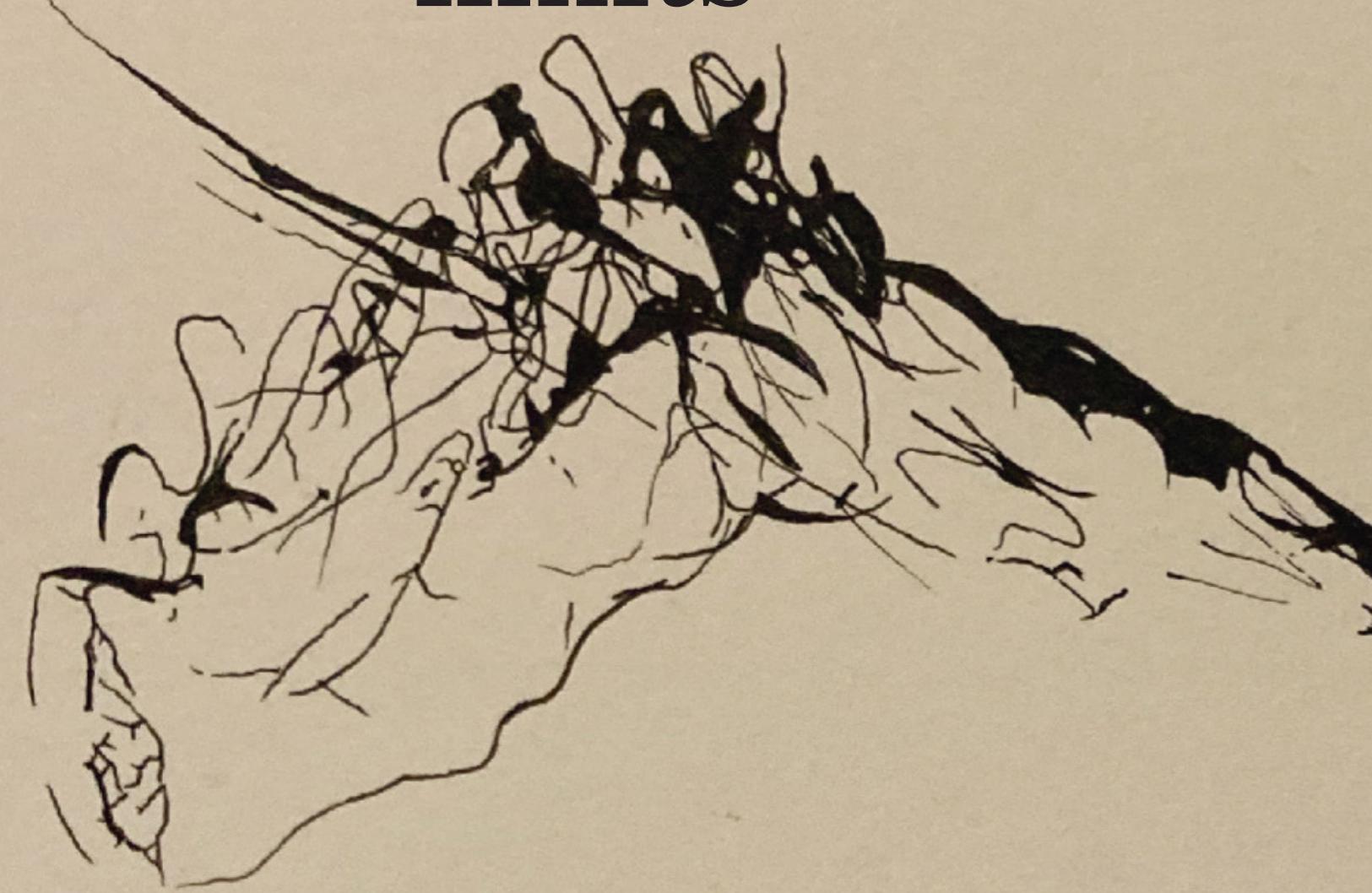
The man's body is sacred and the woman's body is sacred,
No matter who it is, it is sacred—is it the meanest one in the labourers' gang?
Is it one of the dull-faced immigrants just landed on the wharf?
Each belongs here or anywhere just as much as the well-off, just as much as you,
Each has his or her place in the procession.

(All is a procession,
The universe is a procession with measured and perfect motion.)

Do you know so much yourself that you call the meanest ignorant?
Do you suppose you have a right to a good sight, and he or she has no right to a sight?
Do you think matter has cohered together from its diffuse float, and the soil is on the surface, and water runs and vegetation sprouts,
For you only, and not for him and her?

By Walt Whitman, from *I Sing The Body Electric*

Changing limits



Nocturnals, Spinal Cord, by Can Pekdimir, 2021

By Can Pekdemir

You grew up and live in Turkey – how has your upbringing and environment influenced your work?

Well, around high school, 1996, my dad bought me and my brother a PC that we used together. We didn't have internet for the first years, so we mostly tried to connect to a network called BBS (Bulletin Board System) by phone. This had a graphical user interface made by texts (ANSII ASCII art), which took

my attention. This BBS also had messaging groups where you could communicate with people with the same interests. Those times were the times of an underground digital art movement called the Demo Scene where independent coders, digital artists, and musicians created a group with their nicknames. It all started for me by joining a group and creating some graphics for them.

My family was supportive, but they were mostly engineers and pushed me in that direction – I was in a high school where maths and sciences were the priority. Close to graduation I changed my mind and attended an arts and design faculty where I later

ended up being a lecturer and still I am.

You say that you are focused on reconstructing and deforming the bodies – what prompted you to go down this path?

At the arts and design faculty I focused more on 3D computer graphics where I could model, texture, lighten any object and create compositions, which was incredibly exciting.

Reconstruction and deformation happened by accident, and I believe

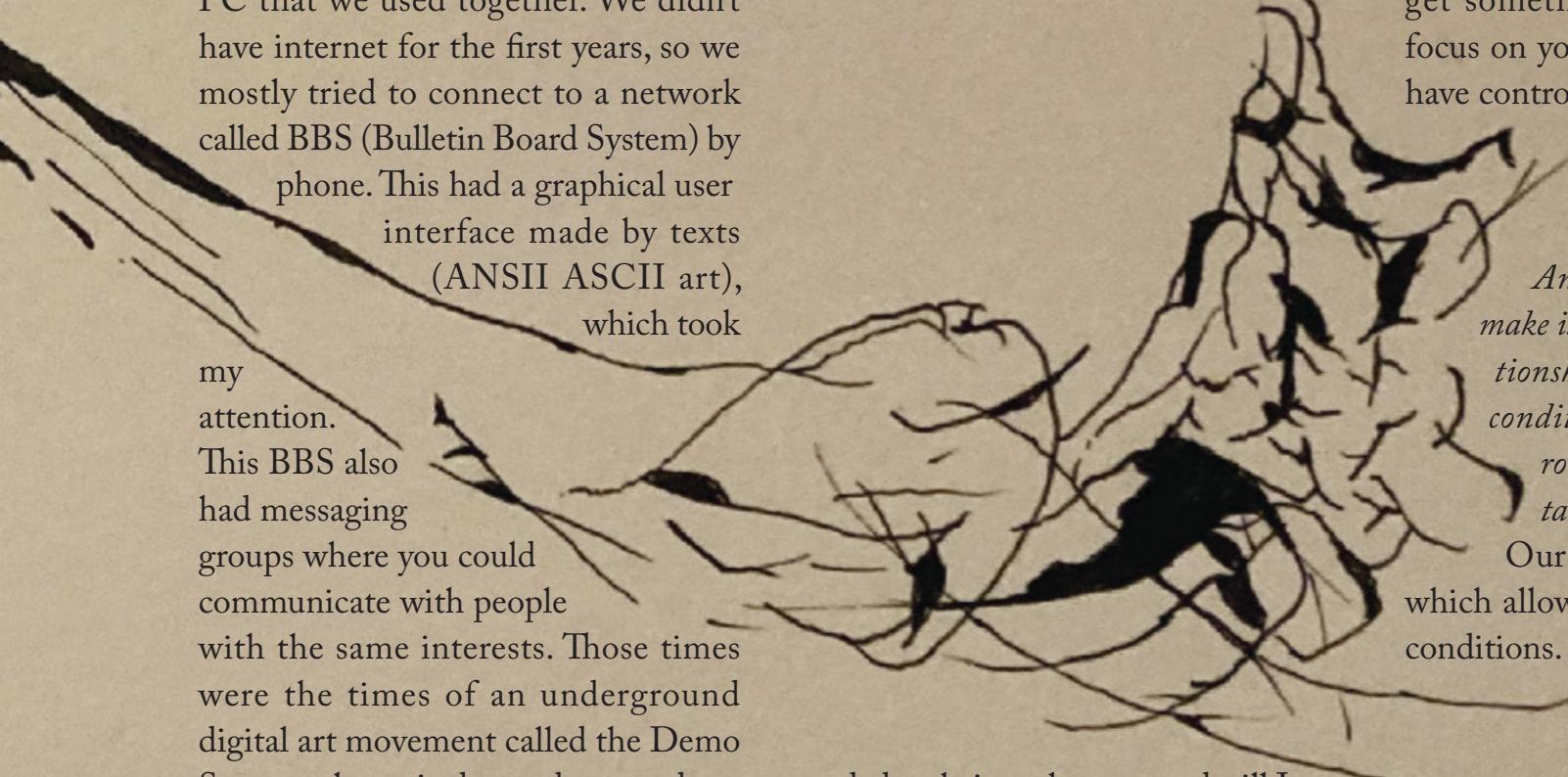
accidents can end up creating infinite possibilities if you focus on them. As an example: if you enter a value to modify or texture a realistic form to something it shouldn't be, then you get something abstract. And if you focus on your mistakes and somehow have control over them, then they can turn out to be a body of work.

An interesting comment you make is that our bodies have a relationship with the environmental conditions by which we are surrounded. How do environmental conditions affect our bodies?

Our bodies evolved to a system which allows us to live in our planet's conditions. With the same system we wouldn't survive on other planets, which we know have different conditions where temperature, gravity, and air changes.

In your work, you observe and document the deformation of bodily forms as they are affected by gravity, pressure or temperature. How do you determine how these forces will alter the human body?

I am not a scientist, so my works are not scientific results but more artistic ones. I come up with questions





regarding changes in the laws of physics and try to deform the subjects accordingly. If I do use physical simulations – as I did in my first body of work – I change the values to non-realistic ones, but this is rare. I also like to think of changing the limits of certain parts of our body. As an example, our bones don't bend much – they break – and some bones don't move at all, like the cranium. So I try to recreate a form with bones which *can* bend or move, even though they cannot in real life.

In a way, by observing how the body is affected by change you are doing virtual experiments on the subjects of your work – is that right?

Yes, totally correct.

You're not just looking at physical changes, you are also trying to look at the emotional state of people under these changing conditions, aren't you?

I don't know why, but most of the time I choose to make them to be in a state of solitude and in comfort, not in pain.

How did your work on this series change how you viewed human bodies?

In the last few years, I started to get more interested in medical imaging techniques, where we can see inside the body. I have my own chest and heart tomographies and turned them into 3D models. Currently I am working on deformation of my inner structures using the CT scans as a reference to create a series of work. ▀

Can Pekdemir is an artist based in Turkey.



Fur V: Variations, by Can Pekdemir, 2015

Our bodies evolved to a system which makes us live in our planet's conditions.



Fur V: Variations, by Can Pekdemir, 2015





Bones Resisting to Movement II, Stage I, by Can Pekdemir, 2015

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Taking risks

For me, uncertainty is absolutely any situation that isn't completely specified and known and determined, which essentially means every aspect of life.

Our ticking clock

Consider a few of the things I did in the last 24 hours: I watched an hour-long episode of a TV drama my friends had recommended, long after it became clear it wasn't one for me.

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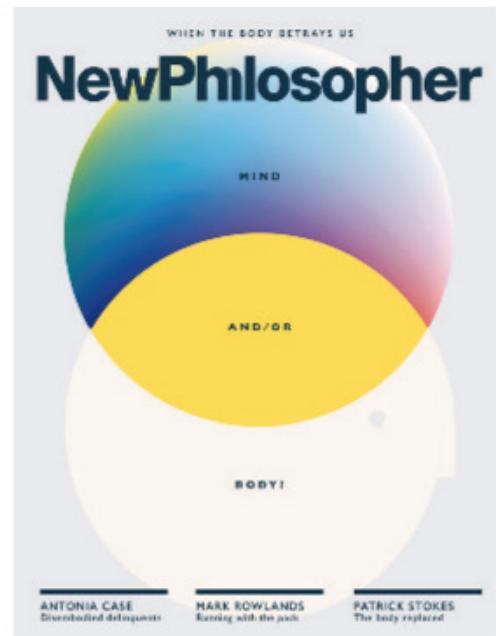
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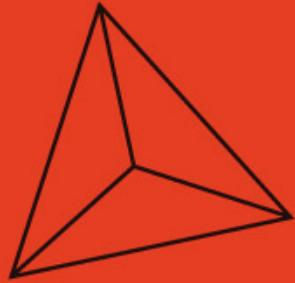
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more could one ask?”

Who owns my body?



Mother and daughter, Carlo Carrà, 1917

by André Dao

Who owns my body?

when we decide to go on an icy morning swim (or to have another glass of wine), or when we teach children about personal space.

So much for everyday life and conversation. What does the law say about owning your own body? Rights to abortion and from being assaulted or trafficked are, of course, enshrined in laws. But while these rights are grounded on a common-sense understanding of self-ownership, that is distinct from a legal understanding of ownership. Officially, the legal position is that there can be ‘no property in the body as such’.

What’s the basis for this distinction between a broad understanding of ownership, and the strict legal sense of it? Well, strictly speaking, legal ownership is concerned, as we have just seen, with property. Property rights are, according to legal scholar Justine Pila, “transferable rights to exclude all others from one or more use of a certain thing”. Two elements of that definition are problematic when it comes to human bodies. First, is my body really a thing? Second, if property rights are

transferable, then bodies subject to property rights would be buyable and sellable. The moral objections are obvious – having ‘property in the body as such’ would amount to slavery.

With that in mind, the default position in law is that in the absence of property rights in the body, people are more or less free to do what they like with their bodies (within certain very broad regulations, including the no harm principle, and, obviously, the prohibition against selling one’s body). The irony, then, is that to protect our common-sense notions of self-ownership, the law holds that no one can own your body.

You might have noticed a curious addendum to the legal maxim about property in the body – it only applies to the body ‘as such’. This is where matters get more complicated: the ‘as such’ carves out a whole suite of exceptions for all sorts of objects that are related to, but not quite, bodies: namely, detached bodily materials and corpses. A familiar example is hair – there seems to be little moral resistance to the buying and selling of human hair. Perhaps

Who owns my body? In everyday life and conversation, the answer is straightforward: of course I own my body. Who else could? It is, after all *my* body – anything apart from self-ownership is a denial of a basic freedom. From this intuition, thinkers have constructed political philosophies as far apart as liberalism and anarchism. Many of our cherished ideals – from autonomy to human dignity – find their genesis, and ultimate expression, in our bodies. Choosing what we do – and what is done – to our bodies grounds women’s right to an abortion, the ban on human trafficking, and the prohibitions against physical and sexual assault, to name a few obvious cases. More prosaically, our intuition that our bodies are our own reveals itself in such mundane moments as



that has something to do with hair's specific features: that it can be painlessly detached from the 'body as such', and that it is readily replenishable.

As with any good legal exception, things get weirder as one digs into the case law. Take, for instance, a UK case from the 1970s involving an (alleged) drink driver. In that case, the driver had been taken to a police station to provide a urine sample. But when the supervising police officer's back was turned, the driver took the opportunity to pour the sample down the sink. The case turned on whether the driver had committed the criminal offence of property theft. The driver argued that it was, after all, his urine, and as there is no property in the body, no offence was committed. The court was having none of it: at least for the purposes of theft, urine can be subject to property rights (and, in this case, the urine had become the property of the police the moment it was deposited in the sampler).

Another theft case in the late 1990s – again from the UK – tested the property rule in relation to corpses. That case concerned Anthony-Noel Kelly, a British artist who had been given permission to draw anatomical specimens held by the Royal College of Surgeons. Once there, Kelly convinced a lab technician to smuggle out the dissected remains of some 40 bodies – including three heads, six arms, ten legs, and part of a brain. Kelly then used the body

parts to create casts that were painted silver and exhibited at the London Contemporary Art Fair. After being convicted of theft, Kelly and the lab technician appealed on the basis that the body parts were not bodies 'as such', and so could not constitute property. But the appeal court disagreed, find-

use of dissection and preservation techniques by the Royal College of Surgeons on cadavers was analogous to the craftsman's use of their skills on some natural object, such as timber – in both cases, the worked-upon object has become a new thing, capable of being owned.

Here we see how the law can come full circle. We started off with the common-sense notion of self-ownership, and then distinguished that from the legal idea of property ownership. But in the case of Kelly and the cadavers, we saw the application of the Lockean theory of property, which ultimately derives precisely from a concept of self-ownership. Locke derived the idea that we own our own labour from the assumption that we own our own bodies. As Locke himself wrote, "every Man has a Property in his own Person".

This confusion in law's underpinnings results in an ever-expanding realm of exceptions to the 'no property in the body as such' rule. Genetic material, for instance, has been held to be ownable because of the skill applied to extracting it from human bodies. The upshot of that is the increasing commercialisation of the most basic elements of not only our bodies but of humanity itself. It is yet another irony, then, that a doctrine with its basis in self-ownership might well lead to a future where ownership of one's body – in the colloquial sense – is available only to the few. ■

Kelly and the technician appealed on the basis that the body parts were not bodies 'as such'.

ing that while parts of corpses are not ordinarily property, they may become so through the application of effort and skill.

In doing so, the court applied John Locke's labour theory of property. Locke, writing in the 17th century, had argued that though God gave the whole earth to all of humanity in common, people nevertheless own the fruits of their own labour. Thus, natural objects, whether land or raw materials, may become the property of the person who expends their labour on them. Fast forwarding to the 20th century, the court argued that the



“Many of our cherished ideals – from autonomy to human dignity – find their genesis, and ultimate expression, in our bodies.”



Martha Graham and Peter Sparling, *Seraphic Dialogue*, 1978

THE BODY

Interviewee: Christine Caldwell
Interviewer: Antonia Case

Dr Christine Caldwell is the founder of and professor emeritus in the Somatic Counselling Program at Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado, where she teaches course work in somatic counselling theory and skills, and clinical neuroscience. Her work began forty years ago with studies in anthropology, dance therapy, body-work, and Gestalt therapy, and has developed into innovations in the field of body-centred psychotherapy. She calls her work the *Moving Cycle*. This system goes beyond the limitations of therapy and emphasises lifelong personal and social evolution through trusting and following body states. The *Moving Cycle* spotlights natural play, early physical imprinting, bodily authority, and the transformational effect of fully sequenced movement processes. Her books include *Getting Our Bodies Back*, *Getting In Touch*, *Oppression and the Body*, and *Bodyfulness*.

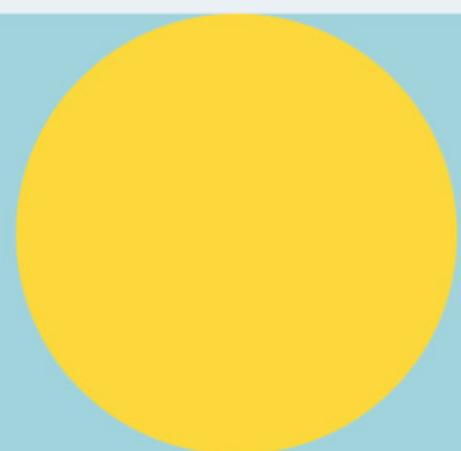
Antonia Case: Where did your journey with somatic psychology begin?

Christine Caldwell: I got into this field quite early in many ways. I was raised in the Los Angeles area and at the time it was a very juicy place, a lot going on. I went to college there and I was getting my degree in anthropology, and I was also experimenting with a lot of what, at the time, were alternative methods. When I was in my anthropology classes, we would sometimes have films about people from different cultures. And whenever they did dance rituals in the films, I would almost fall into them. I was so amazed and smitten with this idea that you could use movement or dance rituals to heal, because a lot of these dance rituals were about healing, whether it was on a personal or community level.

And so, I decided to play with that a little bit. And I went to the dance

department, this was at UCLA, and stumbled into my mentors who guided me toward dance therapy. And then at the time, I was also experimenting with body work. I was interested in different movement awareness techniques, and it all came together. And it felt to me, on an individual, family, and community level, there was something going on with the body – that the body was thinking, and the feeling was strongly networked to how the body was moving. And also, what kinds of tension patterns in the body were present. They were driving a lot of feeling and thinking as well as feeling and thinking driving a lot of what the body was experiencing. So, it was something of a fringe idea at the time, that this whole system that's called 'me' would be interconnected and interdependent. I jumped in with both feet and over the years it's been very interesting because now it's really not a fringe idea anymore.

CYCLE



While not every person's anger is justified or point to moral truths, many expressions of it do.

It's quite mainstream. And it's really gratifying to see that we all hung in there to see this day where we are really going further and further into how it's not even just this idea that the body and the mind are connected, but that they are one system that's doing different things and coordinating what I call 'me' and what I call 'life'. So, again, I'm really thrilled to be a part of that.

When counselling clients in the past, you have noticed how many had addictive body habits, like nail picking or face rubbing. You wanted to explore why your clients had such habits and whether it was associated with something mental. Can you describe this for us?

We all have them – these habits are present in all of us. And I think it even goes further than that, in that the body is always commenting on or signalling our emotional state – and so, the idea that we've got, in a sense, these parallel processes of speaking where my verbal self is speaking, but also my embodied self is speaking at the same time. We can see it as a form of non-verbal communication if we look at it through one lens. But if we look at it through another lens, we can see that the body is really actively working to manage, particularly, our

emotional state. When I first began to investigate this idea, I called them "tags" at the time, but over the years I've come to understand them as what I call "micro-movements". Now I tend to use the word micro-movement and I've really come to understand that these micro-movements are in some cases a form of non-verbal communication. So, I might say, "I'm not angry", and my body's sort of projecting what really is going on, which is at odds, at that point, with what I'm saying. But it is also moving and changing different tension patterns in the body as we feel and experience continually – our interaction with both the inside world and the outside world – so, it's really interesting to see how, when I first was looking at this idea, what I was picking up was people trying to manage their experience. And in some ways, it was to try to repress it, right? To try to repress a feeling. But it was also just to shape it and to make it, for instance, socially acceptable, things like that. So, these micro-movements are actually an ongoing management, for better or for worse.

In many cases, they're actually doing a very good job and a very important job. And in other cases, they're really involved in a dysfunction that is causing the person to suffer. Because what's there, what's inside, that's being controlled or suppressed, is needing its time in the sun, I guess you could say.

So much of mindfulness practices centre on the body. You write about the term 'bodyfulness', instead, as a more appropriate term for such practices.

The idea that there is this wonderful thing called 'me' and that my sense of who I am, my identity, seems to stem largely from how I was taught as a child, is in many different cultures: I am a mental being and I am in this body temporarily and I have to

use the body to support this wonderful thing called the mind. I actually think that's a misperception that our identity is essentially a mental being, I think our identity is all of this. And, in fact, I have a tendency to take the radical notion that we are actually only a body, really that's who we are, a body, and that thinking, our mental lives, is just one thing that our body does along with breathing and moving and digesting and all of those things. And so, the idea of how we think and what we think – and certainly meditation traditions are really crucial and important in the idea that we want to be able to have a kind of athleticism to our mental muscles; we want to be able to focus our attention on something and really hold our attention there; we want to be able to think logically and we want to be able to avoid different biases, different kinds of thinking, or mental biases that are normal but are important to always – again, I like to use the metaphor of *athleticism* – to really have a toned thinking process as well as a toned body.

Are you almost suggesting that the mind is secondary, that the body comes first?

No, I think that would be another example of just an opposite bias. Right? It's just the opposite bias. It's a great question, by the way. And no, I don't think that we can... I think if we put this idea of primary and secondary and all of that, if we overlay it, I think we're making a mistake. So, who I am as I unfold in all the different successive present moments, who I am is always putting something a little bit more in the foreground and putting other things in the background. So, there are moments where my thinking body is in the foreground, and then there are moments when my sensing body is in the foreground, and moments when my

moving body is in the foreground. And so, it's a constant kind of foreground and background, whatever is useful at the time.

Technology seems to be moving us further away from our bodies and into our minds. So much of our entertainment today comes from screens, which require us to sit still. What are the repercussions for society in that we are not using our bodies as much?

When I'm in front of a screen, I am paying attention to something that is going on in the screen. And so, my attention is not in 'the real world'. And what I mean is that we could say it's not in the phenomenological world. Another way to put it is that we're not in the present moment; we're not in the here and the now, we've sort of fallen into the screen and we're in another place; we are not present in our ongoing embodied experience. I certainly don't want to advocate for not using screens, and in many cases it facilitates very interesting discussions. But when we fall into a screen, we are someplace else. And certainly, humans have always enjoyed going to other places, right? Going away from the present moment, the here and the now. And certainly, we go there when we sleep and dream. And so, it's not essentially a bad thing. But what happens when I go away from my here and now present moment experience too consistently, or too much, is

I unbalance my being. I unbalance my identity and my experience of the world. And, it's self-reinforcing for one thing, it's addictive, and this is a huge problem. We see it a lot, particularly when we give screens to young people too soon – they fall into it and the more you fall into it, the more you get a reward from it, and that's self-reinforcing.

There's lots of little practical things that happen there; for instance, we're now seeing that when you adjust your eyes on something that's six inches to two feet in front of you, it actually doesn't exercise the muscles around your eyes that need to look into the long distance on an ongoing basis. And so, we start to lose the ability for our eyes to focus back and forth between short and long distances and we start to need glasses. And we start to not see very well. But also, we are not able to, again, exercise important muscles that help us *be* in the world, including a long view of a mountain or a river or something like that, or a city scene.

I read an article the other day that talked about how our increasingly excessive use of GPS to get us anywhere is actually eroding our sense of direction. And so, while we're driving in the car or whatever, we're not physically engaging with, "OK, now my body's turning right in this landscape, and now it's going straight. And now it's turning left in this landscape." And you don't have that embodied experience of navigation.

Our sense of direction is eroding, our sense of being able to figure out where we are in space is eroding the more we use GPS. And so, those are just two examples of how very directly the body is influenced by the use of technology. There's something addictive about screens that we have to address as a society.

Landscape and physical markers are very much keyed into memory, or how we remember our lives. It would be interesting to learn whether people who do use devices a lot have an impaired memory when it comes to remembering many of their life experiences.

I think your idea about its influence on memories has some good research behind it. So, a lot of times memory is preserved through near matches of experience. And so, you have more memory of your mother when you call her on the phone, when she's there in your life, and it keeps memories of your mother vivid and more present because you're having 'present moment' experiences. Whether in person or just in thought and idea. So yes, memory is affected as well. And a lot of memory, what we remember is a reconstruction, and it's a story that we tell. And a lot of what I get interested in is the idea that the stories that we tell about ourselves and about each other, and about the world, form a lot of our sense of ourselves, our identity. There's actually a whole field called 'narrative identity' that says that,

What happens when I go away from my here and now present moment experience too consistently, or too much, is I unbalance my being.

in a sense, we – our self-image and our self-concept and our identity – is actually formed by these stories that we tell. And so, what we remember and what we hold onto as a memory and what we let go of, or repress as a memory, then shapes who we are.

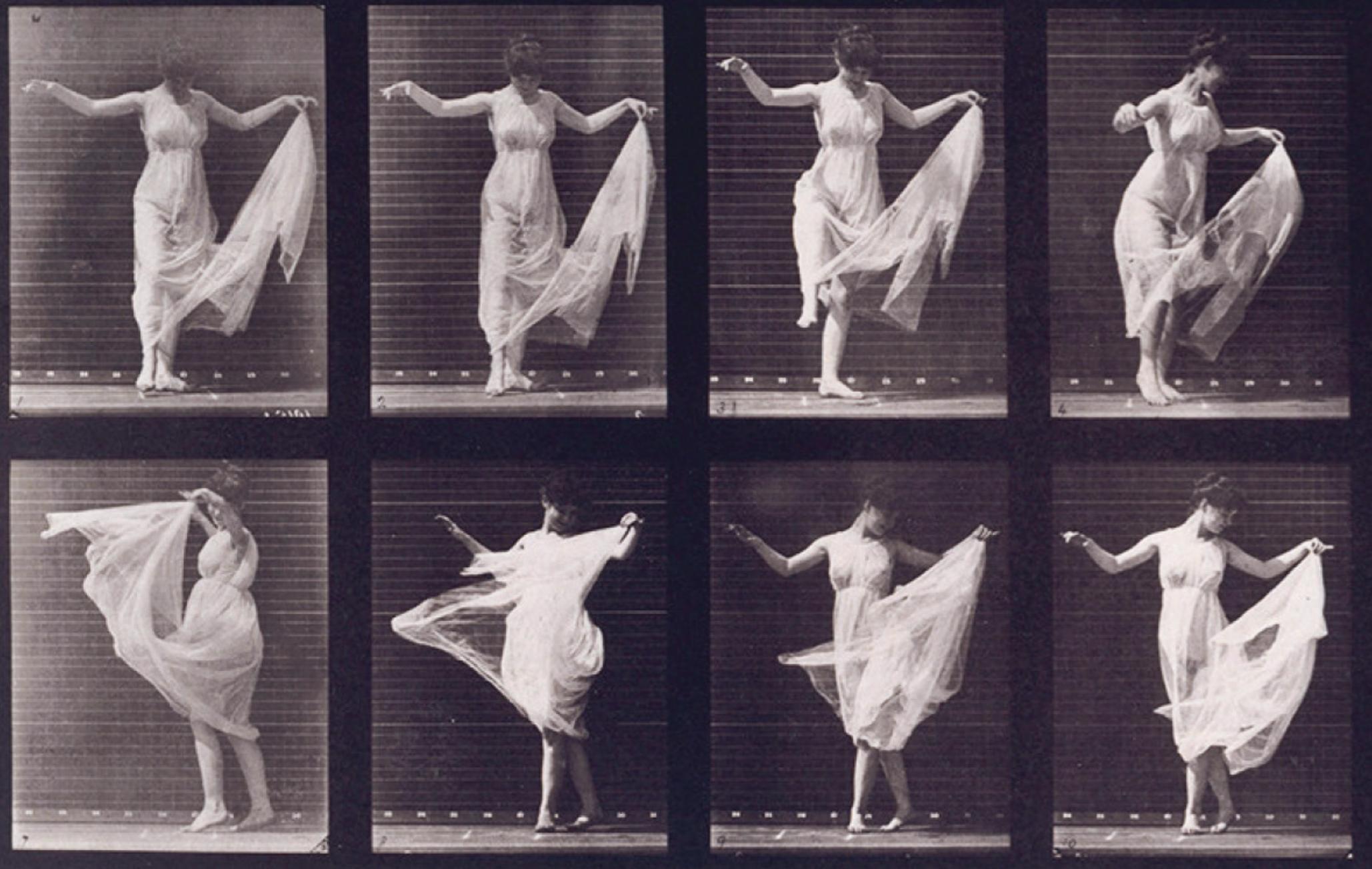
Finally, in what ways can we become more in touch with our bodies from a somatic psychology standpoint? What can we do?

I think that there are thousands of options, which is the good news, right? And we want to see it in a sense, along a continuum. So, the continuum starts from just very tiny, ordinary moments where we choose to, for instance, look up from a screen and look out and just appreciate, like right now I'm looking at a little painting that my grandson made that's on the wall. And to have a direct experience with that little painting and to remember when he gave it to me for Mother's Day. And to feel my present moment experience as I'm looking at that is a wonderful reinforcement of my actual being, of my balance in the world. And so, I think that a lot of it is actually embedded in these tiny moment-to-moment interactions with, I could say the 'real world', with people, with things, with images, with whatever is inside and outside of us. And that's, in a sense, the athleticism of embodiment. That's the real muscularity that we can get. But I think there's also a lot of different practices that can be standalone things that we can do. And there, those practices are along a continuum. So, on this end of the continuum, there's what I might call 'received practices', practices that have been handed down to us through time and through culture.

So, for instance, an ubiquitous practice right now is yoga. There's this idea that a very specific pose, a very specific positioning of yourself in space can be very health-providing, and certainly, there's a lot of studies that show

that this is true. And so, there's these 'received practices'. I go to a yoga class, and then on the other end of that continuum, there's again spontaneous practices. I like the idea that we have both received practices and then maybe in the middle of the continuum, we have practices that we are playing with. So, I sort of do a yoga pose, but a piece of music is on and I'm kind of playing with it and having fun with it. And so, I'm adapting it and loosening it and having a present moment experience with it. I'm not rigidly only doing that pose. That's in the middle of the continuum. And then out here are practices where I allow myself to just really stay very awake, just be very awake, and just to really play with what is coming up, what is emerging in my ongoing experience, and to move with that, to allow that. So here, down here, we could say on this continuum, I am moving, right? I'm doing a yoga pose. And on this end of the continuum, I would say, I am being moved. I am being moved by my present moment experience. I am relinquishing a lot of control and management functions and just allowing the basic life processes that are present to play with the least amount of control possible. And we see that there's actually some traditions there. Dance therapy has a tradition that's called 'authentic movement'. There are some people doing things – 'contemplative dance', for instance.

And my new book, my fifth book, which I'm writing now with my students, is going to be called *Conscious Moving*. And it's out at this end of the spectrum where I really play with what wants to emerge and that can be used in a lot of different applications. I specialise in using it as a form of healing. I actually see it as a primary form of psychotherapy, but I think it's also involved in what we do in art making. And it's also involved in what we do in education, in learning processes. And so, I get very interested in how we can use that emerging, just allowing ourselves to be moved, as a practice as well. ■



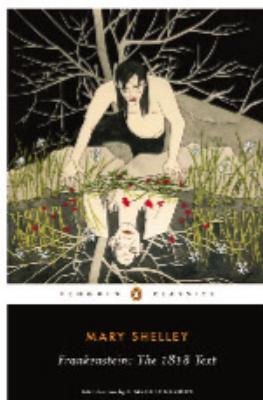
“Some dance to remember, some dance to forget.”

Don Burgess, ‘Hotel California’



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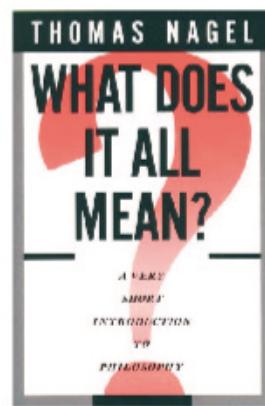
Frankenstein



Mary Shelley *Infusing life*

The different accidents of life are not so changeable as the feelings of human nature. I had worked hard for nearly two years, for the sole purpose of infusing life into an inanimate body. For this I had deprived myself of rest and health. I had desired it with an ardour that far exceeded moderation; but now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart. Unable to endure the aspect of the being I had created, I rushed out of the room and continued a long time traversing my bed-chamber, unable to compose my mind to sleep.

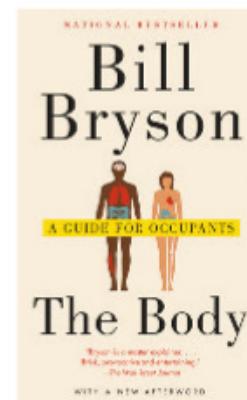
What Does it all Mean?



Thomas Nagel *Body and soul*

Dualism is the view that you consist of a body plus a soul, and that your mental life goes on in your soul. Physicalism is the view that your mental life consists of physical processes in your brain. But another possibility is that your mental life goes on in your brain, yet that all those experiences, feelings, thoughts, and desires are not physical processes in your brain. This would mean that the grey mass of billions of nerve cells in your skull is not just a physical object. It has lots of physical properties – great quantities of chemical and electrical activity go on in it – but it has mental processes going on in it as well.

The Body – A Guide For Occupants

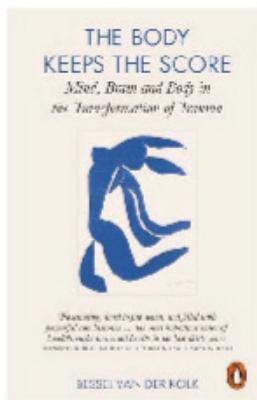


Bill Bryson *A modest thing*

For all it does, the heart is a surprisingly modest thing. It weighs less than a pound and is divided into four simple chambers: two atria and two ventricles. Blood enters through the atria (Latin for “entry rooms”) and exits via the ventricles (from another Latin word for “chambers”). The heart is not really one pump but two: one that sends blood to the lungs and one that sends it around the body. The output of the two must be in balance, every single time, for it all to work correctly. Of all the blood pumped out of your heart, the brain takes 15 per cent, but actually the greatest amount, 20 per cent, goes to the kidneys. The journey of blood around your body takes about fifty seconds to complete. Curiously, the blood passing through the chambers of the heart does nothing for the heart itself.

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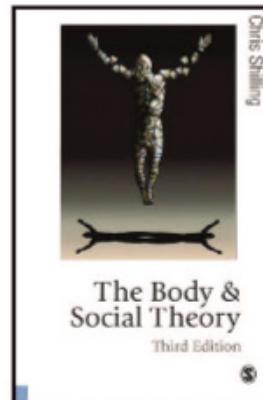
The Body Keeps the Score



Bessel Van Der Kolk
Connected and attached

During every stage of my medical training, whether I was studying surgery, cardiology, or paediatrics, it was obvious to me that the key to healing was understanding how the human organism works. When I began my psychiatry rotation, however, I was struck by the contrast between the incredible complexity of the mind and the ways that we human beings are connected and attached to one another, and how little psychiatrists knew about the origins of the problems they were treating. Would it be possible one day to know as much about brains, minds, and love as we do about the other systems that make up our organism?

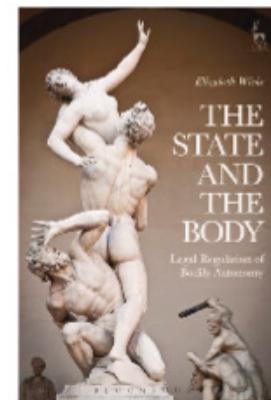
The Body and Social Theory



Chris Shilling
Surface phenomena

By the 1990s, indeed, it became clear that the body had assumed the status of an underdetermined concept that was able to 'stand in' as a malleable signifier for things other than itself. The body was a surface phenomena which had become a malleable marker of commercial value subject to the vagaries of fashion for theorists of consumer culture. It was a sexed object that had been used as a means of justifying women's subordination for feminists. It was an object that had been rendered passive by changing modes of control for analysts of governmentality. It was changed into an uncertain and even a rapidly disappearing remnant of pre-technological culture for those interested in the meeting of meat and machines which had occurred with the development of 'cyborgs'.

The State and the Body



Elizabeth Wicks
Landmark events

My body is my home, my transport, my clothing, my identity. It is my greatest asset and my worst enemy. It is my constant companion, my means of financial support, a source of pain, a receptacle of pleasure, and one day it will kill me. We use our bodies in so many diverse ways: to give us pleasure, to earn a living; to portray our identities to the world; and to reproduce. Our bodies are central to the landmark events of our lives: being born, growing up, making love, having children, falling ill, and dying. They are also, increasingly, changeable. We are no longer stuck with the body into which we were born.





Human-shaped statue from 'Ain-Ghazal, c. 7000 BCE

Body and soul

“With prevention rather than cure, and health rather than disease, as the focal points of the new medicine, the psychological side of the mind-body process becomes increasingly the object of scientific investigation. The Cartesian notion of a mechanical body presided over by an independent entity called the soul is replaced, as the “matter” of theoretical physics becomes more attenuated, by the notion of the transformation within the organism of mind-states into body-states, and vice-versa. The dualism of the dead mechanical body, belonging to the world of matter, and the vital transcendental soul, belonging to the spiritual realm, disappears before the increasing insight, derived from physiology on one hand and the investigation of neuroses on the other, of a dynamic interpenetration and conversion within the boundaries of organic structures and functions. Now the physical and the psyche become different aspects of the organic process, in much the same way that heat and light are both aspects of

energy, differentiated only by the situation to which they refer and by the particular set of receptors upon which they act. This development lays the specialisation and isolation of functions, upon which so many mechanical operations are based, open to suspicion.

The integral life of the organism is not compatible with extreme isolation of functions: even mechanical efficiency is seriously affected by sexual anxiety and lack of animal health. The fact that simple repetitive operations agree with the psychological constitution of the feeble-minded constitutes a warning as to the limits of sub-divided labour. Mass production under conditions which confirm these limits may exact too high a human price for its cheap products. What is not mechanical enough for a machine to perform may not be human enough for a living man. Efficiency must begin with the utilisation of the whole man; and efforts to increase mechanical performance must cease when the balance of the whole man is threatened.”

by Lewis Mumford, from
Technics and Civilization

Documentaries

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Mind your body



Running for good



After being diagnosed with an autoimmune disease at age 24, Shannon Harvey travels the world in search of an answer. She interviews world leading scientists and doctors, and meets people with remarkable stories of recovery from severe back pain, heart disease, infertility, cancer, and multiple sclerosis. On her

journey to health, Shannon realises that in order to change her health she must change her mind. This documentary delves into the link between our mind and body, showing how emotions can impact the course of an illness for better or for worse, and can even be the difference between life and death.

World record marathon runner Fiona Oakes is the fastest woman in the world to run a marathon on all seven continents and the North Pole. Oakes has competed internationally in more than 50 marathons and set five marathon course records around the globe, including Antarctica. In 2015, she ran six marathons in six days on six con-

tinents. Oakes's achievements are all the more astounding considering at age 14 she was told she'd never walk properly, let alone run, after more than 17 knee surgeries, including the removal of her right kneecap. The documentary tracks Oakes's attempt to complete yet another endurance feat, a 250 km race through the Sahara Desert.



“A fool, overwhelmed by ignorance, thinks of [the body] as beautiful, but when it lies dead, swollen up and discoloured, cast away in a cemetery, relatives have no regard for it.”

Gautama Buddha

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me that the types of issues we are
grappling with today are similar to
those grappled with by philosophers
for centuries.

I love this magazine. I no longer like
reading or listening to mainstream
news as it is not good for my health.
Your magazine is good for me. It has
real discussions that relate to life rather
than reporting sensational 'news'.
Thank you.

what our readers say

Your magazine is so helpful and is
churning up the little grey cells, as
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Thank you, this world is brighter,
more aware, and more meaningful
with your publication in it.

Great magazine. Finally one worth
reading. Will recommend it to all
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lucid, lively, and beautifully designed
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A magazine that treats its audience as
intellectual equals, that doesn't insult
their intelligence by simplifying or
manipulating concepts or appealing to
crass consumerism as do most of the
publications out there. Thank you for
creating something that brings philosophy
out of the sandstone universities
and into our lounge rooms without
losing its depth or critical stance.

WHEN THE BODY BETRAYS US
NewPhilosopher



You have introduced such a wonderfully fresh & intelligent publication to expand our minds & hearts. Thank you.

I feel like I have been waiting for this magazine all my life.

In a country so defined by the shallow, crass propaganda and cognitive conformity coming out of its papers, magazines, and broadcasters, yours is a true gem. You have no idea how happy I was to discover it, it has given me hope for the future of this country's media landscape and for the public discussion emanating from it.

I have to say that it is a tremendous relief and joy that your publication has arrived. Your magazine provides oxygen to the soul. I have often felt alone, alienated or old-fashioned in my outlook but now know I have a soulmate to reflect and take action with, namely *New Philosopher*.

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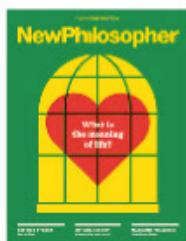
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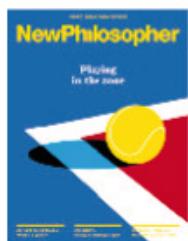
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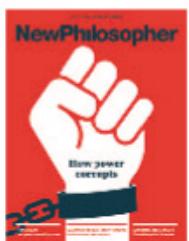
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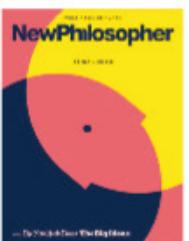
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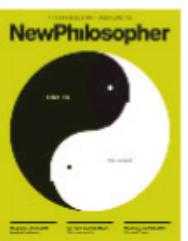
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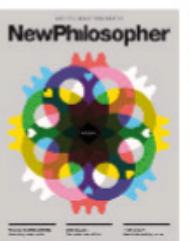
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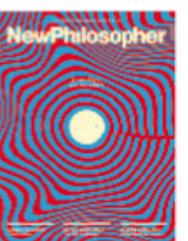
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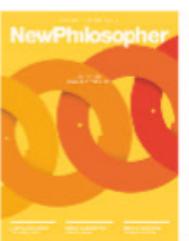
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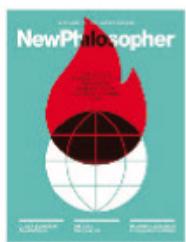
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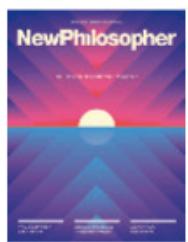
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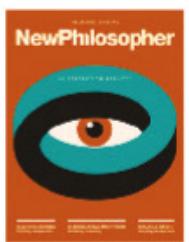
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#28 'climate'



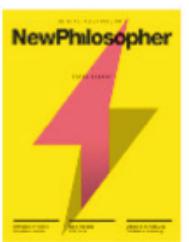
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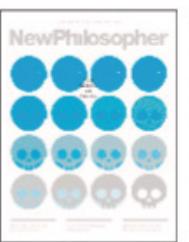
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#32 'energy'



#33 'identity'



#34 'truth'



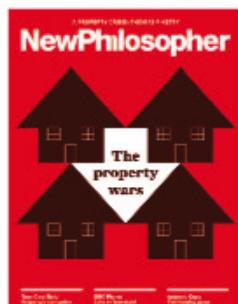
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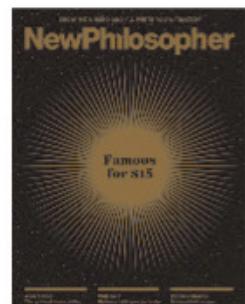
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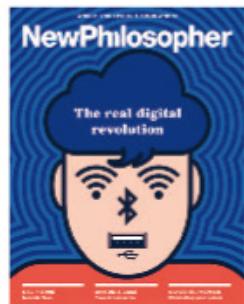
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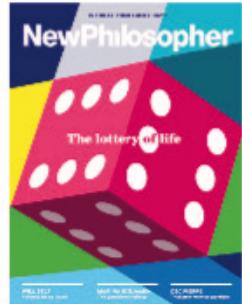
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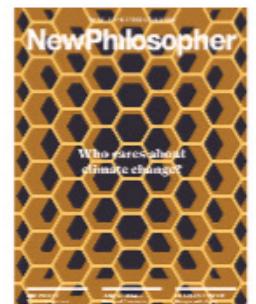
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#11 'technology'



#13 'luck'



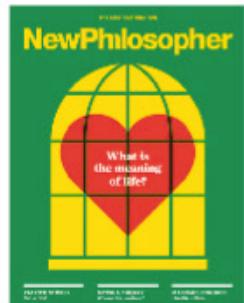
#14 'nature'



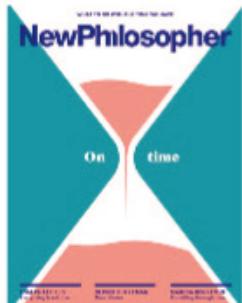
#16 'food'



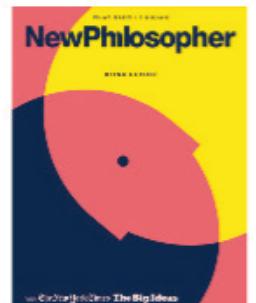
#17 'communication'



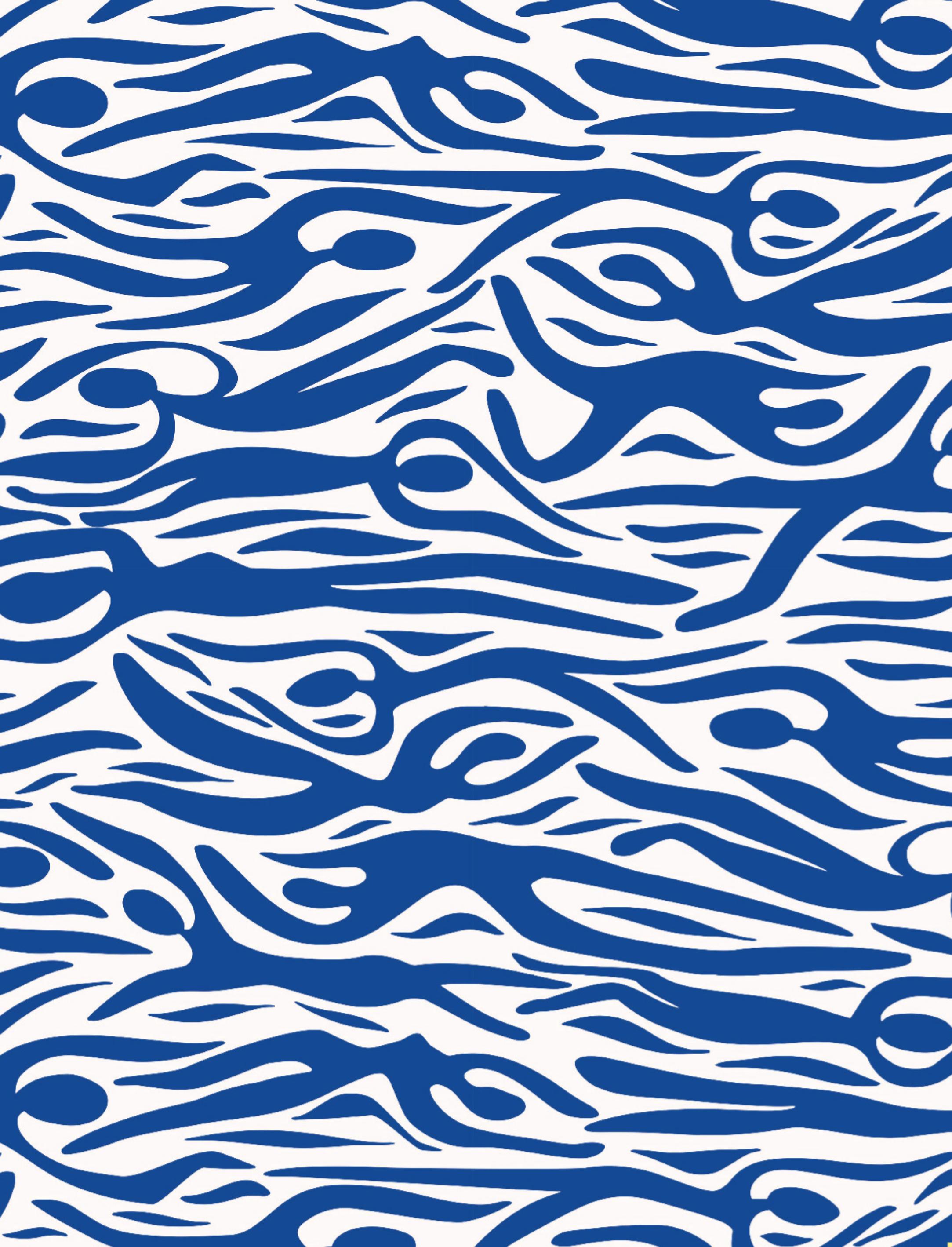
#19 'life'



#22 'time'



#23 'being human'





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