4· Here Comes EveryBody

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Bodymind and life

If every living system is guided from within, does a body have a guide inside?

Does it have a life?

We normally recognize living bodies by the way they move or change themselves, while other things are only moved, modified or programmed by something or someone else. We can simulate life to some degree by including a power supply and a guidance system among the components of an artificial body. But what makes a natural body alive? Can we specify a component that accounts for its behavior? And what about your own body? Do you have something inside which enables your action, perception, experience or consciousness?

We had names for such 'inner beings' – *heart*, *mind*, *psyche* (ψυχή), *anima*, *soul*, *self* and so forth – long before we started to ask what kind of entities they are, or whether they are entities at all. We think of them as 'inner' because they are not visible in the way that bodies are, and yet their presence or absence appears to make the difference between a living body and a dead one – thus they appear to be hidden inside the visible body, *animating* it from within, and departing or disappearing at death. Our ancestors named them after other invisible things – for instance, Greek ψυχή and Latin *anima* both meant 'breath.' *Spirit* is likewise related to

respiration. The equivalent term in New Testament Greek is πνεῦμα, which primarily means 'wind' (the breath of the biosphere). The King James translation of *John* 3:8 illustrates the intimacy of wind and spirit:

> The wind [πνεῦμα] bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the spirit [πνεύματος].

Concepts like these tend to proliferate and overlap in their polyversity, making their names difficult to translate accurately from one language to another, or even to distinguish within the same language. For instance the Greek *psyche*, now imported for English use, can be equivalent to *mind*, *soul*, or both at once (or neither), depending on circumstances.

The ψυχή in ancient Greek was no less ambiguous. Heraclitus said that 'you will not find out the limits of the *psyche* even if you travel every path, so deep is its *logos*.' For him it was 'primarily a principle of rational cognition' but 'also a physical principle' (Kahn 1979, 127-8). Plato, in the *Phaedo* and other dialogues, portrayed the *psyche* as the real and permanent person temporarily imprisoned in a dispensible body (σῶμα), and the true philosopher as the man whose aim is to shake off this unruly *soma*, sense experience and all, in favor of intellectual contemplation. But for Aristotle, biological form was no less worthy of systematic investigation than ideal mathematical form, and philosophy meant inquiry into all natural forms, including *psyche*. His Περί Ψυχής (Latin *De Anima*, English *On the Soul*) begins by saying that inquiry about the *psyche* is 'of first importance' partly because 'it relates to higher and more wonderful things,' but also because it is central to 'the study of nature [φύσις]; for the soul is in a sense the principle of animal life' (ἀρχη των ζῴων; 402a). In other words, the soul is what makes a body self-motivated in the way that only animal bodies are. The English word *animal* imports the Latin *anima* to designate a body moved and guided by a soul. The notion of a disembodied soul makes little sense in this context, as Aristotle pointed out (414a).

In early Christian times, however, Platonic contempt for the

body proved more influential, and the soul took on a life of its own. This in turn led to a further twist in modern times, when some people claimed that *animals* do not have *souls*, without recognizing the statement as self-contradictory. This was part of a concerted human effort to secede from the animal kingdom by claiming a monopoly on 'soul' (and 'mind' as well, both now declared independent from body) – thus driving a wedge, as it were, between *human* and *nature*. The splitting of *psyche* from *physis* left the concept of 'body' in a dessicated state. In this cloven vision 'the world' also became a desert, to be abandoned by a more permanent self living on in a higher dimension after shuffling off this mortal coil. The dark side of this vision is all too clearly self-confirming, as humanity continues to prove itself superior to embodied life by turning its earthly matrix into a wasteland. But where the soul is going is not so clear.

The notion of a permanent selfhood securing its immortal essence by refusing to mingle with the mortal body has been taken up by some religious traditions, but it also has a parallel in some scientific discourses. Richard Dawkins, for instance, says that *genetic information* 'passes through bodies and affects them, but it is not affected by them on its way through' (1995, 4). For Dawkins, what 'lies at the heart of every living thing' is like an internal scripture composed of 'a billion discrete, digital characters carved in tablets of crystal' (Dawkins 1987, 112) – a scripture unsoiled by the hands of its embodied vehicles. Dawkins has a similar vision of 'memes,' units of cultural information analogous to genes and equally 'selfish.' Others like to think of mind as software, rising above the breakdown of any hardware vehicle by being eternally saved somewhere else. All of these stories do make sense of one kind or another – except when they make their distinctions 'with an axe, leaving as the ultimate elements, unrelated chunks of being' (Peirce, EP2:2).

Such intimations of immortality, like all the works and plays of imagination, are drawn from the well of embodied experience, where the water of life is the flow of energy and of *time*. Yet there are always factions whose fondest wish is to rise above this flow, transcending birth and death. According to esoteric doctrines going back to Pythagoras and Plato, the pure and eternal truths of mathematics transcend the changes and chances of the temporal

world. This attitude was updated in the 17th century when Newton's laws of motion appeared to conquer time by rendering it reversible. In this 'physics' the same equations can be used to calculate from current observations either where a body has been or where it will be, while the 'laws' governing motion are themselves permanent. But this victory over impermanence was achieved by narrowing the scope of 'physics' to a small corner of what the ancient Greeks called *physis*. The living, organic, irreversible face of nature was hidden behind a predictable mask of mechanics. In modern times, other sciences – even psychology – tried to match the success of Newtonian physics by emulating its rigorously mechanistic approach to everything. Meanwhile, Western religion took up the stone rejected by the builders of science, exalting the 'spiritual' over the 'material' – same split, different spin.

This conceptual fault line is reflected in current usage of the English noun 'matter.' In Shakespeare's *As You Like It* (II.i), when the banished Duke says that his friend Jacques is 'full of matter,' he means that the fellow has deeply meaningful things to say. This was the usual sense of the noun in Shakespeare's time, but then it was drawn into the orbit of Newtonian physics, where the very nature of *matter* is 'lifelessness or inertia' (Thompson 2007, 140). Peirce, who was trained and employed in physics and chemistry, swam against this current in the 19th century by declaring that 'what we call matter is not completely dead, but is merely mind hidebound with habits' (EP1:331). Since then, as we will see in Chapter 11, physics has outgrown its mechanistic myopia, and *matter* will rise again in Chapter 15. But the *physical* remains a shrunken concept in everyday English, and a *body* understood as a 'physical' or 'material' thing seems to be dead by default. In that case consciousness, experience or even life itself appears to be a mysterious intrusion into the nature of things – hence the 'mind-body problem,' the 'hard problem of consciousness' (Chalmers 1995), and the notion of soul as 'ghost in the machine' (Gilbert Ryle).

Soul incorporated

The human/nature gap closes when we recognize that living things are, after all, no less *things* for being living. Human bodies, like other animal bodies, are both *experienced* and *experiencing*. Under the rubric of 'phenomenology,' Merleau-Ponty and others have drawn attention to the dual aspect of embodiment. 'Phenomenologists distinguish between two ways the body can be disclosed or constituted in experience – as a material thing (*Körper*) and as a living subject of experience or lived body (*Leib*)' (Thompson 2007, 235). These are two different ways of *appearing* (*phenomenon* comes from the Greek for 'appear'), not two separate entities – and both are a body's ways of appearing *to itself*. The body is both sensed and sensing, and likewise both the actor and her act, the player and his game. 'The lived body *is* the living body; it is a dynamic condition of the living body. We could say that our lived body is a performance of our living body, something our body enacts in living' (Thompson 2007, 237). We could also say that *psyche* in the full sense is a synonym for *Leib*, or body as subject; and as for 'living body' as *Körper*, we can affirm with Blake's prophetic voice that 'Man has no Body distinct from his Soul, for that called Body is a portion of Soul discerned by the five Senses' (*MHH* 4).

According to Thomas Metzinger (2003b, 380), German is the only language with two completely separate words for the two 'views' of body: *Leib* for the body which is 'connected to a soul, or, in more modern parlance, the body *as subject*'; and *Körper* for 'the body *as inanimate object*.' (This 'modern parlance' is not entirely consistent with the semiotic sense of 'object,' as we'll see in Chapter 12.) But New Testament Greek is another language offering a similar choice between two different 'body' words: *soma* and *sarx*. The latter (usually translated 'flesh') is not exactly 'inanimate,' as it does have desires, but *sarx* is connected with death because its impulses can corrupt the will and lead the living astray. The English derivatives *sarcastic* and *sarcophagus* preserve the vicious and deathly overtones of the word. A preacher like St. Paul can use it to bring a taste of death into his discourse, enhancing by contrast the flavor of salvation. 'Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead' (*Ephesians* 5:14): for you are virtually dead, even in the midst of life, if the 'flesh' dominates your spirit. The usual senses of 'life' and 'death' are thus transformed –

but such a transformation has no meaning unless your embodied experience, as *Leib* or soul, bears witness to it.

Turning now to *soma*: in Paul's epistle to the *Ephesians*, the difference between a live body and a dead one is that the live one has been eternally saved by God's grace through Christ, so that he lives in Christ and Christ in him. He is a member of the body (σῶμα) of Christ, in whom 'dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily' (ἐν αὐτῷ κατοικεῖ πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος σωματικῶς, *Colossians* 2:9). The 'dead' on the other hand follow 'the desires of the flesh' (σάρξ), which 'are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would' (*Galatians* 5:17, RSV). In the context of this epistle, 'the law' is necessary to control and subjugate the evil 'desires of the flesh' when they conflict with the 'desires of the Spirit.' This conflict is itself a symptom of one's fallen state, and is resolved by living 'in Christ,' becoming a member of his *soma*. Healing that split between 'flesh' and 'spirit' reunites the will, and the result is a 'new creation' (*Gal.* 6:15) as embodied spirit.

In *1 Corinthians* 15:44 we find another contrast between two kinds of 'body': *soma psychikon* and *soma pneumatikon*, translated by the RSV as 'physical body' and 'spiritual body' respectively: at the moment of resurrection, what is 'sown a physical body' is 'raised a spiritual body.' You might well wonder how *psychikon* can translate to 'physical,' given the English usage in which the 'psychical' (i.e. 'mental') is taken to be radically different from the 'physical.' Earlier in *1 Corinthians*, where the same adjectives are applied to people (*anthropoi*), RSV translates *psychikos anthropos* as 'unspiritual man'; the King James version has 'natural man.' It seems that the distinction between psychical and physical, or mind and matter, is not as simple as it seems! Sometimes the *psyche* appears to side with the *sarx* against the *pneuma* – 'soul' vs. 'spirit.' On the other hand, Paul tells us near the end of *Ephesians* that the real battle for guidance is not against 'the flesh' at all, but 'against spiritual wickedness in high places':

> For we are not contending against flesh [σάρκα] and blood, but against the principalities [ἀρχάς], against the powers [ἐξουσίας], against the world rulers

> [κοσμοκράτορας] of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts [πνευματικὰ] of wickedness in the heavenly places.
>
> — *Ephesians* 6:12 (RSV)

The Valentinian gnostics, who produced some of the texts preserved in the Nag Hammadi library, placed great emphasis on this passage, and on Paul's distinction between the *pneumatic* and the *psychic*, which they interpreted as inner and outer circles of the Christian community (Pagels 1975). The church fathers defended the unity of the *ecclesia*, and their own authority over it, by declaring the Valentinians heretics. But the *psychic/pneumatic* duality, like the *soma/sarx*, is most plausibly read as two kinds of embodiment, two different ways of living.

Ultimately and intimately, *all* of these terms draw their meaning from embodied experience. The same goes for all the sacred stories we tell about 'salvation,' 'enlightenment,' 'resurrection' and 'life after death.' It may be humbling to realize this, given the habit of contempt for 'the body' and 'the material world' that lingers on in some religious traditions, but those same religions tend to regard humility as an essential virtue. It is the virtue which makes dialog possible, for it curbs the arrogance of the *pneumatika* in high places who would claim authority or power over others, and thus it opens up a safe space for each partner in the dialog to speak directly from experience. Besides, it's the very soul of common sense.

> The human is embedded in nature (and not at all a separate alienated pole, though we may think of ourselves that way). Reason and language are embedded in behavior and the body.
>
> — Eugene Gendlin (1998, VII-A.g)

> Human conceptual categories have properties that are, at least in part, determined by the bodily nature of the people doing the categorizing rather than solely by the properties of the category members.
>
> — George Lakoff (1987, 371)

In the court of awareness, the body as subject is always the

material witness to 'the Spirit' (or 'Christ' or 'the Buddha-nature' or whatever you choose to call it). Many of us still use the word 'body' only for that bulky thing which is always in the way, and 'soul' for the separate ethereal essence of the person – but what if the soul is nothing less than the *integrity* of bodymind?

The biology of meaning

The unique features of human consciousness are grounded in 'the deep continuity of mind and life' (Thompson 2007). If we want to see *how* the mental, moral and spiritual realities of our own lives are 'embedded in behavior and the body,' we need to look into the nervous system. By 500 BC, physiological investigations had already convinced Alcmaeon of Croton that all sense perception is connected with the brain (Kirk and Raven 1957, 233). He also held (as did Aristotle) that human understanding and thought, although grounded in the sense perception which is characteristic of all animals, also build something more on that foundation. But how exactly does this newer kind of cognition differ from the older? This is still an open question, but the answers grow more specific all the time – which is just what developing bodies do, as we will see below.

What we call mind, soul or *psyche* develops as the body develops, its growth guided partly by genetic information and partly by environmental circumstance, but all according to the inherent principles of self-organization. These have been elucidated in our time by researchers such as Thelen and Smith, who 'approach the mystery of human development with the conviction that the acquisition of mental life is continuous with all biological growth of form and function' (1994, xiii). The continuity of biological growth applies not only to development (ontogeny) but also to the larger time scale of evolution (phylogeny), though the processes differ in their details.

> Through advances in molecular biology and neuroscience, we can now understand better than ever just how deeply we share our heritage – physical and mental – with all the creatures with whom we share

our planet.

— Gary Marcus (2004, 87)

As the human bodymind evolves, each individual embodiment of it follows roughly the same course of development. On the other hand, 'the devil is in the details,' and as the brain turns, so does the mind. By studying some of the stranger turns taken by their patients' lives, neuropsychologists such as Luria, Sacks, Damasio and their colleagues open windows on the workings of the brain. Case after case shows how closely our thoughts, feelings and perceptions are correlated with physical, chemical and biological functions of the nervous system. When something goes wrong with that system, its ordinary functions lose their transparency for the subject who normally sees *through* them, while their embodiment becomes more visible from the outside, to the careful and compassionate observer. Third-person theorizing collaborates with first and second persons in searching for the physical ground of minding and personality.

Take for example cases of *anosognosia*, a condition in which the left side of the body is paralyzed (usually by a stroke), and the subject is *unable to know* of this paralysis. Such a patient will typically deny that there's anything wrong with him even when the doctor asks him to move his left arm and he is unable to do it. Ten minutes later, the same patient will swear that he has the full use of his left arm. This bizarre condition of unknowing is caused by damage quite specifically localized in the right hemisphere of the brain (Damasio 1999, 211). A stroke affecting the corresponding areas on the *left* side of the brain will lead to paralysis on the right side of the body, but not to anosognosia – that patient will be fully aware of her paralysis.

Perhaps even stranger is the discovery by neurologist V.S. Ramachandran that anosognosia can be temporarily cured by squirting cold water into the patient's left ear (Ramachandran and Blakeslee 1998, 144). He also discovered surprising ways of dealing with pain in the *phantom limbs* often felt by amputees. By clever use of mirrors, the subject can fool his own brain into representing the body in a different way. Although you can't directly *will* your pain away, we can often devise devious means of altering the brain's presentation of your body to you, and that's

where the *feel* of your body lives. '*Your own body* is a phantom, one that your brain has temporarily constructed purely for convenience' (Ramachandran and Blakeslee 1998, 58). But for *whose* convenience? This 'construction' is what *you* experience (from the inside) as your body, because your brain works transparently to present this image to you as a *feeling*. But this feeling/image is the *interpretant* of a *sign* embodied in brain dynamics, having as its dynamic *object* the current state of the body. In other words your brain, as part of your body, is representing other parts to the whole which is *you*. Your 'first-person perspective' or 'sense of self' is grounded in your body-image, which is simply your body to you and simply an image in the discourse of neuroscience. This internal semiosis is quite beyond your conscious control, which is why it can't be talked into changing the way it works, but has to be fooled into changing its habits.

By incorporating this theoretical perspective into your own first-person view, you can have a double vision of your own body as immediate feeling and as 'phantom' or theoretical phenomenon. Maybe you can't have both at once – 'when one side is illumined the other is dark' – but learning to switch from one to the other can bring you to a new level of 'convenience,' just as amputees can learn to control their own phantom pain with Ramachandran's technique. His trick with mirrors is a scientific parallel to the buddha's use of 'skillful means' to show sentient beings the way out of suffering (as in the *Lotus Sutra*, Chapter 2). The way is simply to embody your inherent buddha-nature, and the skillful means is nothing but this very buddha-dharma. Skillful means appear magical or miraculous (if they appear at all) to those who can't explain how they work, but the Buddhist will say that *Leib*, *Körper* and consensual mind are all *empty*, and that is the essence of their *reality*. Likewise in the terms of neuroscience, there is no *other* being 'inside' your body viewing it all from within. The whole body senses because it is a self-organizing process. You are inside the system not as a solid thing is inside a container, but as a move is in the game or an act is *in time* as part of a process. The 'third-person' view of your body from without is in another, more public process, and only from there can we talk about your brain as 'constructor' of your experience.

Another very specific sign of the broken brain's effect on bodymind is *alexia*, a disability resulting from damage to a particular small region in the left hemisphere, but not from damage to the corresponding region on the right. The alexic person is completely unable to read text on a page: he can see (and say) that there are letters and words on the page, but can make no sense of them. He can write down a text as it is dictated to him, and understand what it says; yet five minutes later he will be totally unable to read the very text he has just written down. However, if he knows a written language which uses ideograms instead of a phonetic alphabet, his ability to read that language will be unimpaired. Other specific deficits result from lesions in nearby (and equally specific) parts of the brain: *color anomia*, in which the subject sees colors normally but is unable to name them; and *achromatopsia*, in which the subject sees no color at all – his whole world is in black and white and shades of grey (Houshmand et al. 1999, 64-5; on achromatopsia see Sacks 1995). Such cases dramatically demonstrate that when we investigate mental functions and dysfunctions, we find them to be intimately related to something going on in the brain. It's no longer worth questioning that 'body, brain and mind are manifestations of a single organism' (Damasio 2003, 195) – just as semiosis is a single continuing process which includes every act of meaning.

> The biology of meaning includes the entire brain and body, with the history built by experience into bones, muscles, endocrine glands and neural connections.
>
> — Walter Freeman (1999a, 157)

Developing intent

> To sum up: as animals we have bodies connected to the natural world, such that our consciousness and rationality are tied to our bodily orientations and interactions in and with our environment. Our embodiment is essential to who we are, to what meaning is, and to our ability to draw rational inferences and to be creative.

— Mark Johnson (1987, xxxviii)

We understand human nature by understanding its embodiment. And as Eugene Gendlin puts it, 'we must reunderstand animal bodies in order to understand our own body' (Gendlin 1997a). Chapter 3 introduced this reunderstanding of living bodies in terms of *autonomous agents*. As Damasio explains, such a description applies all the way down to microscopic levels:

> A simple organism made up of one single cell, say, an amoeba, is not just alive but bent on staying alive. Being a brainless and mindless creature, an amoeba does not know of its own organism's intentions in the sense that we know of our equivalent intentions. But the form of an intention is there, nonetheless, expressed by the manner in which the little creature manages to keep the chemical profile of its internal milieu in balance while around it, in the environment external to it, all hell may be breaking loose.
>
> — Damasio (1999, 136)

The amoeba keeps its balance by acting into its world as autopoiesis demands. Moving up from the microscopic to the basic level, the 'home scale' most familiar to humans, let's observe a cat watching a hole from which he expects a mouse to emerge. When you say that the cat is *intent* on catching the mouse, or *intends* to pounce on it, you have the essence of intentionality: an *inner tension* which 'stretches,' and sometimes strains, toward actual expression. The mouse too is moved by intent: if she does emerge from the hole, it's because she intends to go somewhere, perhaps to find food. Neither the mouse nor the cat is consciously planning to achieve some goal, or thinking about it in anything like a human language, but *intentionality* in this sense is the seed from which conscious purpose develops. (For the time being we will leave aside the other senses of *intentionality* recognized by philosophers of mind.)

The development of intentionality toward consciousness (and *conscience*) is an example of the 'growth' process through which simple systems become more complex by differentiation of their parts. The growth of an individual body also entails that he, she or

it becomes more distinctive over time, more different from other bodyminds of its type. The embryo is relatively indeterminate, but every time it takes a specific development path or a new habit, other paths or habits it could have taken become closed to it. The child's history of growth partially determines the form embodied by the adult. Though nothing in life is *completely* determinate, self-organization begets self-determination, which begets self-control.

The systems we use to classify things show a parallel pattern, whereby *general* types are divided into more *specific* types. I have already outlined one example in the chapter on dialogue: an *idiom* is a specific kind of *dialect*, which in turn is a variety of a *language* (such as English or Spanish), which belongs to a grouping which itself may be a member of a language *family*, which is in turn a branching from the single 'trunk' of the universal human faculty for language. All concepts are general – that is, every concept is a sign applicable to many individual instances or members – but some are more general than others. Stanley N. Salthe (1993) devised a notation for representing what he called *specification hierarchies* (and later, as in Salthe 2012, *subsumptive hierarchies*). Terms are arranged with the most specific level placed in {brackets} *inside* of the lower levels in the hierarchy, and the outer (higher) levels *subsume* the inner. The 'language' example given above can be mapped this way:

{ language { Indo-European { Romance { Spanish { Castilian }}}}}

In this example the Castilian dialect is the highest level simply because i don't know the name of any specific idiom of Castilian; and i could have included the whole hierarchy inside 'semiosis,' which subsumes 'language' as 'language' subsumes the other terms.

We often use the *tree* metaphor to imagine these relationships, as implied for instance by the word 'branching' above. If we add the dimension of time to this spatial metaphor, we get the "tree" (or "bush") "of life" as a depiction of the differentiation process which began with the earliest and simplest life forms on Earth and generated every species appearing since then. This process also involves the *emergence* of *complexity*, which will be taken up in

later chapters; as a first step, we can use the Salthean notation to map some different levels of *intentionality*:

{ natural tendency { biological function { psychological habit { conscious purpose }}}}

What this implies, reading from the highest (innermost) level down, is that consciousness is a special case of mental organization, which is a special case of biological organization, which is a special case of physical organization; and reading in the other direction, intentionality evolves from level to level. In other words, conscious choice is natural selection honed to a fine edge and souped up to warp speed. When we say that water 'seeks' the lowest level, we are simply extending the significance of the 'intentional' verb 'seek' to lower levels in the hierarchy. This is one very common kind of metaphor; and extending significance upward in the hierarchy is equally common. For instance, we might speak of 'God's plan,' where 'God' is creator and sustainer of the universe and we project our human experience of conscious purposefulness and deliberation onto this higher-level being. This is one of the ways in which we create 'God' in our own image (while we congratulate ourselves on being created in God's image).

Meaning and causing

Reading the world, for social animals like ourselves, means reading other people, or the signs they give, for a sense of their *intentions* – either what they mean to do, or what they mean to say (as in the 'intended meaning' of an utterance). The difference here is the difference between *meaning-to* and *meaning-that*. *Meaning to* do something is *intending* to do it. *Meaning-that* is, for us language users, intending somebody to understand something by means of some symbol we are using for the purpose. More broadly, and often below the conscious level, it is *signifying* something by means of signs – the process of semiosis. Smoke means (signifies) that something is burning, even when nobody *intended* it to have that meaning. 'Body language' works the same way.

Animals can read the signs of the objects around them and

direct themselves accordingly, without *knowing that* they do this. Thanks to semiosis, animals are aware of things and other beings that matter to them, but most are not aware of their *relations* with other subjects, because these intersubjective relations are not directly perceptible. The evolution of semiosis toward semiotics has enabled humans to talk about such relations, to make signs and sign-relations the objects of other signs. This in turn enables another layer of self-direction, namely conscious *self-control*: we can change our intentions intentionally if we can get a semiosic handle on them. These handles evolve into symbolic guidance systems, through a semiosic process which is in itself unintended, even though every step is taken by *intent*. In human consciousness, the intertwining of meaning-to and meaning-that has become so complex that we live and move in a 'virtual' world mostly imperceptible to other animals. We not only direct ourselves, but often wonder how we do it and how to do it better, trying to explicate the implicit, developing self-control. In a sense, the peculiarly human level of consciousness consists of catching ourselves in the act of meaning.

A human *intending* to catch a mouse will probably use a mousetrap *intended* for that purpose (or perhaps even design a better one). Human intentionality is often entangled with artifice – with artifacts devised for some purpose, or for the communication of an 'intended meaning' by means of symbols. In the course of cultural evolution, our bodies too have grown all sorts of artificial extensions which become 'second nature' to us, as Andy Clark (2003) shows. You are using at least one of those extensions at the moment, though not (until now) consciously. In everyday language, we typically describe an act as 'intentional' in order to distinguish it from unconscious (accidental, automatic, unthinking) acts. But every *act* has some element of purposefulness to it, just as every turn of events has some *cause* (or complex of causes) behind it. The deeper we look into what goes on in the organic world, the harder it is to draw a firm line between *cause* and *purpose*.

Aristotle recognized that purposefulness does not have to be artificial or conscious: 'For just as mind acts with some purpose in view, so too does nature [φύσις], and this purpose is its end [τέλος]' (*On the Soul*, 415b). The *psyche* was 'the cause [αἰτία] and first principle [ἀρχη] of the living body' and 'also the cause in the

final sense' – that is, the soul is both the source and the 'final cause' or *telos* of bodily movement, growth and change. This is perhaps a vague way of saying that living systems are autonomous, self-organizing agents, embodying intentionality not only in their behavior but also in their development. For instance, human development (*ontogeny*) from fertilized egg to embryo to child to adult has an obvious *direction* to it, though nobody would say that the child grows 'on purpose.' The 'final cause' determines what sort of outcome a developmental process is likely to have, but not the precise path by which it will reach that destination; nor does it guarantee attainment of the fully developed form which Aristotle called ἐντελέχεια. According to his view, the body (*soma*) cannot be the *entelechy* of the *psyche*, but the *psyche* is ideally the *entelechy* of the body, the most perfect realization of its potential (Περί Ψυχής 414 a 19).

This may seem an odd way to talk about 'causes,' since the scope of the word in current English is narrow compared to Aristotle's αίτία. From that word we get the medical term *etiology* for the study of the causes of diseases (an appropriate development, since Aristotle had a medical background), but this study is considerably broader than the notion of 'cause' in Newtonian physics with its mechanistic focus on linear chains of 'causes,' each pushing the next like a line of dominoes. Aristotle's concept of *aitia* was more organic:

> A cause is that upon which something depends in being. If the something is an individual, there is not only the question of the cause of the generation, the *efficient cause*; there is also the question of what the individual is made out of, the *material* cause; and the question of what makes it to be this kind of individual (a horse, say, or a human being) rather than some other kind, the *formal cause*; and there is the question of how it develops from an initial to a mature state, from a seed to a full-grown organism of that type, the *final cause*. Were it only a question of moving things around in space, efficient causality in a diminished form – like a shove – would be enough. But to explain, along with beginning and ceasing to be, growth and

> development – quantitative and qualitative change as well as local motion – we need cause in this fourfold sense.
>
> — Deely (2001, 64)

Just as final causality explains development, *intentionality* explains behavior; the time scale is the main difference. 'Intentionality first emerges in nature in the form of autopoiesis and sense-making' (Thompson 2007, 159), and consciousness emerges as cognitive systems grow more complex. Conscious purpose, or conscious will, is a highly refined and enhanced version of the intentionality that characterizes all living beings. Not all intentions are conscious, but *all consciousness is intentional*. (Chapter 7 will venture further into this subject.)

Suppose we now jump from the time scale of an individual life to the higher scale of the human *species* evolving. Can we say that this process too is preconsciously intentional, guided by some final cause? There is no reason to rule this out, but there is a problem in applying it, because we have not yet seen the *end* of the process, as we have many times over in the case of individual development (ontogeny). Thus we can't even begin to specify the final cause of the evolutionary process as we can with ontogeny – though some theologians have tried, misappropriating Aristotle's concept of *telos* to invent a 'teleology' quite external to the process, and even a 'God' who had these purposes *consciously* before the process began, thus rendering all of 'nature' artificial. This idea seems to have had some appeal for the English masters of the industrial revolution, shaping the cultural milieu into which first Blake and then Darwin dropped their visionary bombs. Even today this designer god is popular in some circles, especially among those who like to place themselves close to the centre of the divine Design.

But the elements of *telos* in the evolutionary process run far deeper than such human projections. A reproducing entity takes on a specific form, and modifies it over the course of many generations, because it is *adapting* itself to an ecological niche. For instance, predators (such as cats) have eyes structured and frontally placed in a way that enables them to focus intently on their prey, while prey (such as mice) have eyes on the sides of the

head, which gives them greater peripheral vision and enables them to spot predators coming from almost any direction. This design is obviously no accident; it is *functional*; and thus it is sensible enough to say that the 'purpose' of the rabbit's big ears, powerful hind legs and evasive running style is to help it avoid getting caught by the fox. If we take human conscious intentions as the primary meaning of 'purposes,' then this usage in biology is a metaphor, just as theological references to the creator's 'purposes' or plans are metaphors projected from our own internal guidance systems. On the other hand, if conscious purpose is really just the flowering of a *telos* more deeply rooted in nature, then we can say with Peirce that such a 'final cause may be conceived to operate without having been the purpose of any mind' (CP 1.204, 1902) – although it also operates in the 'law of mind' which 'implies a teleological harmony in ideas.'

> … in the case of personality this teleology is more than a mere purposive pursuit of a predeterminate end; it is a developmental teleology. This is personal character. A general idea, living and conscious now, it is already determinative of acts in the future to an extent to which it is not now conscious.
>
> Peirce, EP1:331

The primal person

Person is another word we can use for a bodymind. Aristotle could perhaps have said that the mature *person* is the *entelechy* of human development. Yet in the 20th century, the term 'person' was also applied in law to a *corporation* – which reflects the dark side of polyversity, given the inhumanity of which corporations are capable.

As a person, you are first of all an organic system: your bodily structure and habits are determined by the way you self-organize to carry on your dialogue with your environment. Operationally and structurally, each organism is enclosed in its own organization. But development and learning push the envelope. Intentions push from the inside, and whatever pushes back from the outside (or

happens to be in the way) gives form to intention – *informs* it – by prompting the organism to change its own habit-structure, its inner *habitation*. In mammals, at least, the brain monitors both intent and the external world, and maps the relationship between them. This leads in human experience to a 'first-person perspective,' a sense of *being somebody*, along with a 'third-person perspective' on other bodies.

These 'perspectives' develop in parallel with the three grammatical 'persons,' as outlined in Chapter 2; they are a triad, none of which could function apart from the functionality of the other two. The first-person perspective can only be taken by someone who has already distinguished between self and other. The grammatical first person is a means of indicating oneself, as distinguished from other people, *to* other people. There is no *I* without *you* and *them*. Language being a communal phenomenon, anyone using the first person is already playing a role in the community. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the Latin word *persona* means 'mask.' An actor on the classical stage would 'sound through' (*per-sonare*) a mask appropriate to his role in the drama. Later the *person* comes to mean the role itself, and one's *personality* determines the kind of role one can play on the stage of the lifeworld. A role is a *part*, separate by definition from the other parts in the play. As the person settles into her social role, the mask becomes the face, and the wholeness of human being is hidden behind the *persona*, the personality.

> Souls, personalities, and egos are masks, spectres, concealing our unity as body. For it is as one biological species that mankind is one … so that to become conscious of ourselves as body is to become conscious of mankind as one.
>
> — N.O. Brown (1966, 82)

How do we become conscious of ourselves as *one* body when our selves, our bodyminds, are so obviously plural? One way, perhaps, is to become conscious of ourselves as signs and interpretants as well as objects, and to connect with one another in both reading and being signs of life on this planet. For as we heard from Peirce in the Chapter 1: 'If any signs are connected, no matter how, the

resulting system constitutes one sign.' The singular object of that sign-system could be called *the Presence*, or perhaps *the time*. Is there a single bodymind who can speak for the Presence, or speak from the time, through symbolic media such as natural languages? Suppose there is – or rather, let us propose the hypothesis that such a one is possible. Since this One *speaks through* those media, let us call it the *primal person*, the voice behind all the *personae*, the λόγος ἐν ἀρχῇ. The primal *arché* is the source of the *archetypes* of Jung and Eliade, the origin from which flows the very *current* of time, before time was laid out like a corpse on the line of history, before presence exploded into distant spaces and myriad locations. The primal person is the one who speaks from that source, before the split into *self* and *other*.

Many a meditative discipline offers access to this source, but the practice of *dipping* into it, to use Eugene Gendlin's term, is not reserved for initiates only. Gendlin calls it *focusing*, and the following thumbnail sketch may serve as an introduction to it.

Observe what happens when you try to express your experience in writing. Various ways of saying it may occur to you. How do you know which terms really *work*, or tell the whole truth, and which do not? Certainly you are guided by your knowledge of the language and its conventions, but that guidance alone is not enough to tell you which expressions actually say what *needs* to be said in this very situation. So there must be another guide at work in this *needing* itself, but deeper than any pattern yet formulated. This nameless guide or inner source enables you to try naming the feeling, and to recognize the *right* name when you hear it. Gendlin refers to this as a *felt sense*.

> This is felt in the body, yet it has meanings. It has all the meanings one is already living with because one lives in situations with one's body. A felt sense is body *and* mind before they were split apart.
>
> — Gendlin (1981, 165)

Before we find a 'handle' on it, the unformed quality of the felt sense makes it seem vague, dim, obscure, as the Tao is said to be. Yet the need can be sharp indeed, and the process of finding the form that articulates it exquisitely precise. The poet searching for

just the right word, or the physicist looking for the promising hypothesis, may have to reject many candidates before the right one comes to her, but will recognize it when it does come, and meanwhile see that the others just won't do.

In describing the process of feeling for the next line in an unfinished poem, Gendlin uses the symbol '.....' to represent the place which the unwritten line must take. In this situation the poet is acutely aware of a blank, a niche, a **.....**, calling to be filled:

> The blank is *vague, but it is also more precise* than the poet can as yet say. It cannot be said in common phrases. Poetry creates new phrases to say something new. This **.....** demands and implies a new phrase that has not yet come. So the **.....** is actually more precise than what has ever been said before in the history of the world.
>
> Of course, in a way the blank *is said* by the lines leading up to it. The poet can have (get back, keep a hold of, hear, sense, ...) this blank by re-reading and listening to the already written lines – over and over. So they do seem to say it, or, more precisely: They have a role in saying what is further to be said.
>
> But when the next line does come, it nearly always forces some revision of these already written lines. The written lines imply something that will revise – those very lines.
>
> — Gendlin (1992a, A-3)

The next line has to *come* – it cannot be manufactured, manipulated or forced into place, for it is *implied* by the whole situation, or *felt* by the whole body. This *implying* is real precisely to the extent that it eludes conscious control. Michael Polanyi calls the implicit realm the *tacit dimension*, referring to 'the well-known fact *that the aim of a skilful performance is achieved by the observance of a set of rules which are not known as such to the person following them*' (Polanyi 1962, 49, his italics). It is not the *implying* of propositional logic, for 'our logically controlled thoughts compose a small part of the mind, the mere blossom of a vast complexus which we may call the instinctive mind' (Peirce,

EP2:241). It has an intricate order that explication can draw upon, or *dip* into, but cannot finalize as long as it lives. In his writings, Gendlin constantly reminds us of this 'implicit intricacy' by filling a niche in a sentence with not one but several alternative terms, adding '.....' at the end, as if to say that your felt sense of what's being said here may call for a term different from any of these suggested, or may even call for you to leave the gap open for the time being. (See his second paragraph in the quotation just above for an example.) More briefly, you could say that '.....' symbolizes *implying* itself. This directs us to 'a process-order, a form*ing* rather than a form*ed* type of order' (Gendlin 1987).

Felt sense as *experiencing*, then, is both formless in itself and intricate in its implications, because in any situation it breathes life into some symbols and leaves many others untouched. When any of these living implications are explicitly symbolized (expressed, articulated, specified, ...), the whole situation is *carried forward* in some self-defining direction. This forward *feeling* is the current that powers the process of *meaning*. It is the flow that enables both change and continuity. According to Heraclitus, you can't step into the same river twice; but into this river we step and do not step, for it is in itself neither the same nor different. We *dip* into it for the water of life, drawing upon the *implicit intricacy* to refresh and realign our guidance systems.

Resurrection of the body

The primal person finds expression by opening lines of communication between conscious and preconscious embodiment. When that expression uses language, it must wear at least one of the three 'persons' like a mask, even while urging the interpreter to see through that mask.

Consider the universe of public discourse, the consensual world made up of communal attention to the public objects of our common signs. Some of these objects are also *subjects* (things, systems, processes, ...) existing independently of our awareness of them. Since we too are subjects, our knowledge of them is *intersubjective* and generates Thomas Berry's *communion of subjects*. Other objects of signs, such as fictional characters, have no

such independent existence, being grounded only in the subjectivity of their creators, the makers of those signs. Still others are *relations*, or connections, between things or objects – and some of these relations are more *real* (or mind-independent) than others. Some of these, including some triadic sign-relations, can be real regardless of whether the entities thus related are real things (subjects) in themselves or not (Deely 2009). Since we can talk about such relations, there's nothing to stop us talking about relations between relations, and so on to higher and higher levels of abstraction, as long as we confine ourselves to *third-person language*, as we generally do in scientific discourse. Implicit (often buried) in this discourse is *second-person* or intersubjective language, 'speech acts' and other sayings uttered by one self for the sake of their effect on the thoughts, feelings, actions or habits of another. (The classical term for the study of how this works is *rhetoric*.) Meanwhile, as we know, 'it is always the first person speaking,' since the only *felt sense* you can dip into is your own. Yet the reader in touch with the implicit intricacy, and alive to the deeper situation, can still hear the voice of the primal person through all these masks.

The primal person does not divide 'internal' from 'external' reality or 'subjective' from 'objective' knowing. The primal does not speak as a private self separate from others or dwelling within any social or physical space. There is no other, there is only *here*, eternally living the time. Yet the true Source can sometimes make an appearance to your bodymind or mine by venturing into the weeds and mud of three-personal language.

In the ordinary discourse which lubricates the social wheels, you pretend to know what the speaker is talking about for polite or politic reasons. This pretense continues when it's your turn to talk, in order to keep the conversation going. But you have to cut off all this pretending in order to speak from the heart of the matter. Somehow you have to collaborate with the others without getting lost in an alien logic. That may mean bending the rules and breaking the mold of linguistic habitation – or taking on the voice of *prophecy*, as Blake would say. In the light of all this, let us turn once more to the *Gospel of Thomas*.

Jesus said, 'If the flesh came into being because of spirit,

> it is a wonder. But if spirit came into being because of the body, it is a wonder of wonders. Indeed, I am amazed at how this great wealth has made its home in this poverty.'
>
> — *Gospel of Thomas* 29 (Lambdin)

Since the spirit seems to be 'wealth' and the body 'poverty,' it is easy to read this as expressing 'disdain for the body of flesh just as it does for the material world' (5G, 60). But is this the only way to read it? Indeed, i am amazed myself that consciousness and conscience have come into being 'because of the body,' *and* that the spirit of intentionality has come to be embodied in beings who are capable of wondering, not only about life as we know it, but about life as it really is beyond our knowing. The story of evolution as 'coming into being' provokes that sense of wonder. (Besides, the metaphors of 'wealth' and 'poverty' had their own polyversity in early Christian times, as they still do in some enduring spiritual traditions. Dedication to the life of the spirit often includes a vow of poverty, while 'wealth' and 'materialism' often go hand in hand.)

If such an ambiguity seems a bit strange, even more curious are two other sayings in the *Gospel of Thomas*, both of which use a word translatable as 'body.' These two sayings are almost identical twins except for the 'body' word used in the Coptic manuscript. One uses a transliteration of σῶμα, Paul's word for the body of Christ in which we *live* if we are saved; the other uses πτώμα, which was generally used of a *dead* body. *Ptoma* (source of our 'ptomaine poisoning') seems to have a negative spin like *sarx* ('the flesh') in John and Paul – yet on another level, they are not so different, except that one word spits while the other hisses. In *Mark* 15:43, after the crucifixion of Jesus, Joseph of Arimathea asks for his σῶμα; and Pilate, after ascertaining that Jesus was indeed dead, grants him the πτώμα (15:45).

Here are the twin sayings in *Thomas*:

> Jesus said, 'Whoever has come to know the world [κοσμος] has discovered a carcass [πτωμα], and whoever has discovered a carcass, of that person the world is not worthy.'
>
> — *Gospel of Thomas* 56 (Meyer), substituting the Greek letterforms for the Coptic

> Jesus said, 'Whoever has come to know the world has discovered the body [σωμα], and whoever has discovered the body, of that person the world is not worthy.'
>
> — *Gospel of Thomas* 80 (Meyer)

Saying 56 appears quite straightforward in its expression of disdain for both body and world, and in its claim of superiority. In order to discover or know anything, one has to be alive, and we all (by default) value life over death; so 'whoever has come to know the world' has risen above the rubbish heap of the world precisely by *seeing it as* a rubbish heap. This is the superiority of the meaning-maker or interpreter over less creative subjects.

We could read Saying 80 as a repetition or paraphrase of 56 – which would make it redundant. But if we read it in the context developed by our dialog thus far, a tiny difference in the text can trigger a major shift, even a reversal, in its interpretant. Suppose, then, that the discovery intimated here is that *world and body are not distinct*, and neither are body and soul: they are aspects of a single reality. Suppose 'the world' including the 'material' body is merely the projection of a 'mind hidebound with habits' which the living body (σῶμα, "subject of experience") can shake off to *start again*. That moment is an awakening, a coming alive – a *resurrection of the body*.

The Christian idiom brings yet another dimension to this: for the *resurrected* body arises from the *crucified* body. The crucifixion is not a central focus in *Thomas*, which mentions the cross only once (in Saying 55, which we will take up later); but *Thomas* 56 and 80 may be related to *Luke* 17:37:

> ὅπου τὸ σῶμα, ἐκεῖ καὶ οἱ ἀετοὶ ἐπισυναχθήσονται.
>
> Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together. (KJV)
>
> Where the corpse is, there the vultures will gather. (New English Bible)

Thomas Traherne (*First Century*, 56) puts it thus: 'Where the carcass is thither will the eagles be gathered together.' The Greek word translated as 'eagles' or 'vultures,' ἀετοὶ, is as ambiguous as

σῶμα or 'body.' Traherne is referring here to the crucified Christ, 'to the contemplation and serious meditation of his bloody sufferings,' whereby we 'enter into the heart of the universe.' Contemplation of this 'carcass' draws all humanity together into the resurrected body of Christ – not at the end of history but at *this* eternal center around or within which time revolves, the moment of manifest *presence*.

The *Gospel of Philip*, which follows the *Gospel of Thomas* in Nag Hammadi Codex II, says,

> People who say they will first die and then arise are wrong. If they do not receive the resurrection first, while they are alive, they will receive nothing when they die. So it is said of baptism, 'Great is baptism,' for if people receive it, they will live.
>
> — (Meyer 2005, 73)

This implies that baptism and resurrection are functionally equivalent, and those who receive neither in their lifetimes do not 'live'; to 'live' is clearly a cut above being 'alive.' There is more than one level of life. The source of it all is *intent*, which makes us "subjects of experience" (i.e. experiencing beings), and thus bestows upon us a world of objects – and of *other subjects*. The recognition of others as other *selves* is absolutely crucial to human subjectivity; you have developed the concept of a private self because you noticed first that there were autonomous agents out there in your world, and then that you appeared likewise to them. You learn to use, name, identify and imagine objects by implicit collaboration with those other selves. And yet – this world is *your* world.

> You never enjoy the world aright till the sea itself floweth in your veins, till you are clothed with the heavens and crowned with the stars; and perceive yourself to be the sole heir of the whole world, and more than so, because men are in it who are every one sole heirs as well as you.
>
> — Traherne, *The First Century*, 29

Or, as we have already heard from *Gospel of Thomas* 3,

> When you come to know yourselves, then you will become known, and you will realize that it is you who are the sons of the living father. But if you will not know yourselves, you dwell in poverty and it is you who are that poverty.

In this revelation we seem to have a twin paradox. First, you are told that you are really the king of the world, sole heir of the kingdom, and not just one of many subjects as you commonly believe. Second, you yourselves appear to be both singular and plural, since all the kings have this in common, that they are every one sole heirs as well as you. This knot is not untied until it dawns upon the primal person that .....

The world is inside out.