

To Dream, To Body (Verbs)

"The current cognitive sciences have been discovering the term embodiment for themselves, often implying a kind of dualism. It is, for instance, described in the following ways: . . .

It not only seems to be true that the body is the proverbial 'mirror of the soul'; the opposite case is also possible: the soul serves, to some extent, as the mirror of the body. Psychic processes always take place in a physical embedding.

(Tschacher & Storch, 2010, p.4, Schilling's translation)

Embodied cognition, as we saw above, usually implies some kind of dualism. . . . The use of the term 'mirror' in both directions, as well as 'embedded,' imply an understanding of 'soul and body' as distinct units, that then interact, which is a kind of mechanistic understanding of interaction." Astrid Schilling. "Focusing with the Whole Body." *Emerging Practice in Focusing-Oriented Psychotherapy*. Greg Madison, ed. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. 2014. Chapter 21.

"In the earliest thought of Western civilization there was none of our modern tendency to compartmentalize people into body, mind, spirit, and so on. For example, the old Hebrew understanding of soul (*nephesh*) was that it referred to the totality of a person. As Aeled Squire (*Asking the Fathers* 1976) says, 'Man does not have a soul, he is a soul.' . . . Thus soul and spirit are not 'things' in which one may choose to believe or not to believe. They are simply descriptive aspects of our existence . . ." (32). Gerald G. May. *Will and Spirit*. New York: HarperCollins. 1982.

Earthworms

Lynn Unger

Imagine. The only thing that
God requires of them
is a persistent, wriggling, moving forward,
passing the earth through
the wrinkled tube of their bodies
in a motion less like chewing
than like song.

They say the job of angels
is to sing to God in serried choirs.
Perhaps. But most jobs
aren't so glamorous.
Mostly the world depends upon
the silent chanting underneath our feet.
To every grain that enters: "Welcome."

Everything they encounter
goes through them,
as if sunsets, drug store clerks,
diesel fumes and sidewalks
were to move through our very centers
and emerge subtly different
for having fed us — looser somehow,
more open to the possibility of life.

Poetry of Presence. Phylis Cole-Dai and Ruby R. Wilson, eds. West Hartford, CT: Grayson Books, 2017

“When I use the word ‘body,’ I mean much more than the physical machine. Not only do you physically live the circumstances around you, but also those you only think of in your mind. Your physically felt body is in fact part of a gigantic system of here and other places, now and other times, you and other people — in fact, the whole universe. This sense of being bodily alive in a vast system is the body as it is felt from inside” (77). Eugene Gendlin. *Focusing*. London: Rider Random House, 2003. First published 1978.

“We cannot even know what a concept ‘means’ or use it meaningfully without the ‘feel’ of its meaning. No amount of symbols, definitions, and the like can be used in the place of the *felt* meaning. If we do not have the meaning of the concept, we haven’t got the concept at all — only a verbal noise. Nor can we *think* without *felt* meaning. . . . This felt experiencing, not verbalizations, makes up all but a small part of what we think. Concepts are not meaning at all, except in relation to experiencing” (5). Eugene Gendlin. *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern U. Press. First published 1962.

“. . . [Y]ou and every other living thing aren’t an inert object, like a rock, but a dynamic pattern playing out over time. The real challenge for physics, however, is that the patterns that make up life are *self-organized*. . . “[T]he components of a living organism yield something new and unexpected, a phenomenon called ‘emergence.’” Adam Frank. “The Truth Physics Can No Longer Ignore.” *Atlantic.com*, 12/15/2025.

“The first stage is learning what the dream is about. But this alone may not yet tell you anything you did not know before. The second stage is getting something new from the dream for your own development” (Eugene Gendlin. *Let Your Body Interpret Your Dreams*. Wilmette, IL: Chiron Publications. Back cover.)

“Parlamento.” *Istanpitta Medieval Dances*. Early Music New York. Frederick Renz, director. Glen Velez, guest artist. Accessed on Spotify.

Also of interest to dreamwork and the body: Leslie Ellis. drleslieellis.com