

He That Hath Not That Earth That He Is

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Bodies are supposed to come to rest in death. It is not enough for human remains to be restored to their long home, the earth from which the name 'human' insists they came: we seem to feel, or want to seem to feel, that bodies should be returned to the particular plot of ground from which they have sprung, or set down roots. This is perhaps to be regarded as a doubling of the desire to assert and preserve the integrity of the body after death, in a reestablishing of a primordial compact, or unitary body of earthly place and person. This, however, is in the face of the fact that our language declares that the body from which the soul has removed itself has become by that token pluralised, merely a loose collection of fleshly things: my body constitutes my *mortal remains*.

Of course, there are exceptions. The growing popularity of cremation during the second half of the nineteenth century brought in its train the ritual of scattering ashes. Even in these cases, though, there is a kind of gathering together even in the act of scattering; the ashes of the deceased will typically be scattered in some spot of special significance. This applies even in the case of the sending of ashes into orbit, which has become a minor industry in recent years. What seems to remain scandalous or intolerable is an unwilled or arbitrary errancy – the soldier condemned to lie in some unsuspected corner of a foreign field, the bureaucratic reshufflings of bones in the Paris catacombs, with their neatly-stacked piles of femurs and ribcages. The human body is distinguished from other kinds of bodies, and most particularly the bodies of animals, in our deep need to imagine it coming home, or rounding out a journey in death. The thought of a body that is undergoing dissolution, which is to say, resigning its place in space, in the wrong place, is disquieting enough. The humiliation is multiplied by the fate of a scattered body, the *membra disjecta* of which come to pieces in different places simultaneously.

Hereafter, I speculate on the ways in which the ways in which the bodies of the dead, as they are or are not imagined, communicate with the phenomenology of the lived body, especially as regards our always-changing

inhabitation of space and time of that body. How do we live out our relation to the mortal flesh that we have no choice but one day to become?

Anastasis

Among countless different methods for disposing of the dead, and among similarly various attitudes taken towards corpses by different people at different times, Christian societies are marked by a particular and highly distinctive ambivalence with regard to mortal remains. The desire to ensure the integrity of the body in death is animated by the long history of anxiety provoked by the hilarious Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the body. In fact, such a belief is already hinted at in certain Hebrew texts in the Old Testament, and openly embraced by both by the Pharisees and the Essenes, being proclaimed particularly emphatically in Apocryphal writings of Pharisaic origin, but it is given a new prominence in Christianity. The doctrine of the resurrection seems to have encouraged a powerfully distinctive set of intuitions about the dead body. Paul insists that the risen Christ is the prefiguring of a spiritual rather than literally physical resurrection: 'It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body' (I Cor 15, 43-5). But the Christian imagination of the spirit clings – ridiculously, grotesquely, yet with what I cannot but see as a kind of obstinately infantile wisdom – to the fate of the body, refusing to believe that persons can be other than embodied, or that, whatever it is that the soul, identity, consciousness or the subject may be, they could survive, or revive, other than in, as, a body. On this score at least, the Christian doctrine of the resurrection is strikingly at one with the radically atheist philosophy of a phenomenologist like Jean-Paul Sartre, who declares 'the body is what this consciousness *is*; it is not even anything except body' (Sartre 1984, 330). It was the doctrine of the resurrected body which, more than any other in this upstart sect, amused, astonished and outraged Greek commentators like Celsus and Marcion, whose contempt in its turn seems to have encouraged the early Church fathers to cleave to it in the most perversely literal of terms. Rattled perhaps by the scornfulness of his opponent Celsus, Origen tried to finesse the issue by proposing a distinction between the matter of the body, which is always in flux, and the unchanging form or *eidos* of the body, maintaining that it was the latter which would be resurrected (Chadwick 1948, 98-9; Kelly 1993, 471-2; Bynum 1995, 64). Others, like Origen's opponent Methodius, thought this gave away too much ground to Platonist dualism, and found in the resurrected Christ warrant for a reasserted faith in the resurrection of the actual matter of the body. Tertullian is similarly, and characteristically uncompromising on the matter:

Ita vocabulum mortuum non est nisi quod amisit animam, de cuius facultate vivebat. Corpus est quod amittit animam et amittendo fit mortuum; ita mortui vocabulum corpori competit. Si resurrectio mortui est, mortuum autem non aliud est quam corpus, corporis erit resurrectio.

By the word dead is meant none other than that which loses a soul, by which faculty it lives. A body is what loses its soul and by that loss becomes dead; thus the word 'dead' applies to a body. If resurrection is of the dead, and if the dead thing is none other than a body, then resurrection will be of a body (Tertullian 1972, 5:9.3, 562)

Aquinas goes even further than most:

If the resurrection of the body is denied, it is not easy but rather difficult to maintain the immortality of the soul. For it is plain that the soul is naturally united with the body and is separated from it against its nature and per accidens. So a soul that is stripped of its body is incomplete for as long as it exists without its body...the soul, since it is *part* of the human body, is not the whole human being, and my soul is not I. (Aquinas 2002, 411)

As the pagan objectors gleefully pointed out, the theological problems of how a corrupt body can be made spiritual were as nothing to the purely logical problems that flow from the fact of the body's mutability. These problems all come to their most difficult point with the problem of the dissolution and dispersal of bodies through and into each other. Augustine insists that the revocation of time at the resurrection will be a restoration of the locative integrity of the body, of that which currently has sole and exclusive tenancy of a particular space:

Absit autem, ut ad resuscitanda corpora vitaeque reddenda non possit omnipotentia Creatoris omnia revocare, quae vel bestiae vel ignis absumpsit, vel in pulverem cineremve conlapsum vel in umorem solutum vel in auras est exhalatum.

Perish the thought, then, that, for the resuscitation and restoring of life to bodies, the omnipotence of God cannot recall everything which has been consumed by beasts or by fire, or has been ground into dust or ashes, or dissolved in liquid, or exhaled into vapours (Augustine n.d., 22.20)

Augustine clings to the idea of the singularity of souls, the fact that souls cannot exhibit the mixed or interpenetrating condition that bodies can. That is, he attributes to the soul the quality of unique occupancy of space that is more usually understood to be a feature of bodies. This is why he describes as a conundrum more difficult than any other - 'difficilior videtur ceteris' – the following question, which was actually a favourite among commentators on this question: 'cum caro mortui hominis etiam alterius fit viventis caro, cui potius eorum in resurrectione reddatur' – 'when the flesh of a dead man has become the flesh of another living man, to whom will the flesh be restored at the resurrection?' (Augustine n.d. 22.20). Augustine's answer is that the flesh is to be regarded merely as on loan to the consumer of it, and will be returned to the one who had first claim on it – leaving aside the question of what exactly, in a matter of this kind, 'first' could possibly mean. For his part, Aquinas worried intensely about the fate of the body's excrements, especially hair and nails, which, in the section entitled 'Of the Integrity of the Bodies in the Resurrection' which forms part of the Supplement to the Third Part of the *Summa Theologica*, he decided constituted essential ornaments of the body and would thus rise again, though one should not expect the restoration to the body of a lifetime's clippings and razorings. He had a more complicated answer to the question of whether one's sweat, urine, and other humours excreted over a lifetime would rise again, distinguishing between those humours which are superfluous and those which are essential to the body at the time of its awakening from mortuary slumber (Aquinas 1947, Part 3, Supp., Qu 80.2-5)

Orthodox Christian doctrine, especially, of course, in its Protestant forms, has tended over the last couple of centuries to downplay the resurrection of the body, but it has often surfaced as a topic of real concern in popular and unorthodox forms of religious belief, which has steadfastly refused to be fobbed off with theological glozings and sophistications. Unlettered people want their bodies back and are instinctively suspicious of anything less. An Aquinan unease attaches in particular to the problem of amputated limbs; can the wearers of wooden legs expect to have their ablegated members returned to them at the last trump? Horror and absurdity commingle in Dickens's magnificent variation on this theme in *Our Mutual Friend*, in which Silas Wegg keeps an anxious eye on the fortunes of his own amputated limb, which he is trying either to get settled into a dignified new home, or to raise enough cash to buy back from the articulator of skeletons, Mr Venus.

'Resurrection riots', as they were called in the contemporary press, took place in Britain and the US regularly during the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth centuries, prompted by the (often well-founded) belief that medical schools were using for the purposes of dissection not just the bodies of suicides and executed criminals, but bodies disinterred from

cemeteries. The first recorded such instance seems to have been in Philadelphia in 1765, when the carriage and house of Dr William Shippen were attacked by a mob who suspected him of grave-robbing. Even more violent riots took place in Baltimore and New York in 1788, and further riots in Baltimore in 1807 forced the closure of the newly established medical college of the University of Maryland. Such attacks continued at intervals into the 1850s (Edwards 1951).

The largely Protestant cultures of North America encouraged the theological separation of the spirit from the body, and therefore downplayed funerary ceremony and ostentation. But the traditional Catholic doctrine of the physical resurrection survived vigorously in some quarters, for example in the writings of John Williamson Nevin, a leader of the German Reformed church. Nevin asserted in his *The Mystical Presence* that there was no separation of body and soul, such that ‘When the resurrection body appears, it will not be as a new frame abruptly created for the occasion, and brought to the soul in the way of outward addition and supplement. It will be found to hold in strict organic continuity with the body, as it existed before death’ (Nevin 1966, 4.169, quoted Laderman 1996, 54).

Haunting

What do haggings over the doctrine of the resurrection have to do with the intransigent, or repeatedly resurgent belief that bodies should come home preparatory to rising again? And what might such concerns about the dead body have to do with experiences of the living body? Having already raised an eyebrow or two perhaps by observing a parallel between Christian thought on the body and the philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre, I may as well spend a little time trying to develop from Sartre’s work a sort of phenomenology, or lived experience of the dead body.

Jean-Paul Sartre points to the contingency of the body, the necessity of contingency that the body exemplifies. It is the fact that I have a body which means that my own being must escape me, for ‘I am my own motivation without being my own foundation, the fact that I am nothing without having to be what I am and yet in so far as I have to be what I am, I am without having to be’ (Sartre 1984, 309). If in one sense all human beings are all born prematurely, coming into physical existence earlier than we come into aware, adult being, this same fact also makes us congenitally belated with respect to ourselves. (Oddly enough, the word that Sartre uses to describe this coming into being, ‘upsurge’ (Sartre 1984, 318), has a resurrectionist ring.) By the time we come to consciousness of being, we are

always already after the fact of our being there, and in the morning of our awareness always shows us having come to rest atop an inaccessible continent of contingent preexistence. For Sartre, the body, 'since it is surpassed, is the Past' (Sartre 1984, 326), and so we are always future to ourselves. Sartre sees the future as that which is perpetually made or chosen, by means of the surpassing or nihilation of this contingency. But there is a kind of futurity of the body too, over which we equally have no control, and in which it is very difficult for us to disclaim all interest, since to do so would be to deny the fundamental fact of existence, namely, that it must always be embodied existence. For the body that is revealed to have been there without and before me, will also be there for some considerable time beyond and without me. In death, the body seems to become the nihilation of the nihilation that I am. Now, though in the most obvious sense I have gone before or beyond it, my body also seems to surpass or to survive me, to live on in some mode beyond me, which, because I will have no knowledge of or coeval partaking of it, will resemble the numb and mute continent of facticity that precedes my coming into being as a conscious being.

For Sartre, the body-for-others is no different from the corpse, and is completely distinct from my experience of my body, the body for the *pour-soi*. Reversing this, we might say that corpse might be regarded as simply and uninterestingly the body-for-others, rather than the body *pour-soi*. As such, it really should be no concern of mine. Still, the fact that it is no concern of mine concerns me, and I cannot eschew the making of all choices in relation to it. My father was a hospital porter, charged with preparing the dead, which included cleaning up after suicides, of which the cutters of throats were the most universally despised among his mystery. The unforgiving attitudes of London commuters to those who insert themselves under Tube trains in the rush hour is evidence of the same belief, that we cannot without blame throw off all responsibility for the afterlife of our bodies. My body is a going concern.

This kind of concern is evidenced in emerging debates about the commodification of the body. A number of recent high profile cases have highlighted the difficulty of maintaining, in the face of the very considerable material asset that a human body represents, the principle of common law that I do not in fact own my own body. As Donna Dickenson argues in her recent book *Body Shopping*, it seems strange that a corporation can make an enormous profit from cell-lines derived from my body, in which I am not permitted to share. If others can own and capitalise upon my body, than surely they have appropriated something that is, or might also be mine? Common sense would say yes: common law continues, for the time being, to say no (Dickenson 2008, 22-42).

Still, this kind of concern is arguably a very different thing from the concern I have for my body when it is living, or I am living it. For my concern for my body is then part of the constitution of the way of being that Sartre calls the ‘for-itself’, that is, that kind of being such that its being constitutes a question for itself, which is primarily to be identified with the lived and living body. In order to understand this apparently paradoxical concern for the body beyond the point of death, we may usefully return to what Sartre affirms of the my relation to my body. For Sartre, to be embodied is always to surpass my body. But in surpassing my body, I do not at any point cease to be it. My body is instinct in my very mode of surpassing it, so that my body may be said to haunt its surpassing in me, if only in the mode of what Sartre describes as the ‘perpetual apprehension on the part of my for-itself of an insipid taste which I cannot place, which accompanies me even in my efforts to get away from it, and is *my* taste’ (Sartre 1984, 338) – an apprehension he knows as ‘nausea’.

My relation to my body under these circumstances is what Sartre refers to as an *existing* of it; by existing it, I make it exist, as the finitude that resists but also conditions my surpassing of it. By existing my body, I make it an issue for itself. I cause it to exist by resiling from it, just as, by resisting my efforts to surpass it, it determines my existence. The living being is haunted by its embodiment.

Now, those raised in a framework of Christian thought about the dead body will find it natural enough to employ the same structure of thought in imagining the life beyond the body, which will continue to be, in Sartre’s sense, body-haunted. In the relation that we all establish to the bodies of the ex-existent, those who have definitively exited existence, we *exist* our corpses, giving them the burden of embodying our hopes for restoration or continuance. The radically anomalous objects we call human remains are objects *en-soi* haunted by the fact that they themselves once haunted or ‘nauseated’ a for-itself, a singular for-itself which nevertheless derived its very singularity from the purely contingent singularity provided by its body. Human remains are haunted by the fact that they were once the haunt of life.

A Fine and Private Place

Sartre’s account of embodiment has two sides. On the one hand, to be embodied means simply to have a point of view, since ‘orientation is a constitutive structure of the thing’ (Sartre 1984, 316). To be embodied means to occupy a particular position in the midst of things rather than standing neutrally in front of them, and therefore to occupy a particular here

and now that nobody else can occupy, to be ‘the point of view on which there can not be a point of view’ (Sartre 1984, 329-30). To be embodied means simply never being able to be in two places at once. And yet we know this only because in some sense we are never quite on the spot, and are always in some sense external to ourselves, are always, to use the Sartrean word, constituted as ‘projects’, if only in the form of disgust with where or what we happen to be - projectile vomit. The body is that which goes beyond itself, whether longing for rest, reaching for a forehead, or gathering for a spring. So the body is at once locative and ecstatic. There is no better example of the Sartrean locking in of the body to every project of body-surpassing I may launch than the imaging of so-called out-of-body experiences. One who imagines himself, as so many do, hovering just below the ceiling and looking down at his body on the operating table may have surrendered weight, but is far from having surrendered position. In so far as he still occupies a point of view, indeed, in so far as he is now nothing but this imagined point of view, he is still as embodied as ever. A truly out-of-body experience would have to be one in which one was nowhere or everywhere at once, which would therefore scarcely qualify as any kind of experience at all.

The problem of how to treat the body after death is usually conceived as a problem of ensuring persistence, or preventing further decay, even, in some cases, reversing decay that has already occurred. But, in death, as in life, this temporal matter has a spatial dimension; indeed, might be regarded fundamentally as a ‘chronotope’, or spatialisation of time. In particular, there is the impulse to believe in the relation between persistence and consistency. It is not enough for matter in general to be eternal and indestructible: my personal persistence through time is not to be separated from the requirement for the particular arrangement of matter that is my body to be kept in one piece, and in one place. According to this way of thinking, the ordinary process of decay is to be identified with delocalisation, with diffusion, scattering, and the holding together of the body with the concentration of place.

The phrase ‘somebody just walked over my grave’, or, in some interesting American variants, ‘a goose, or rabbit, just walked over my grave’ is a speaking illustration of this folding together of time and space. The suggestion is that I am connected to all the spaces in which my body will have resided, and that this space has the power to concertina different times. I will always already and in advance be in the place where I am to end up, even though that eventual ‘place’ has the power to reconfigure space. The time of my life is gathered up proleptically in my grave-plot.

The bodily imagination attaching to human remains has certainly had to be responsive to new pressures on, and expansions of our locative coenesthesia in relation to the living body. Just as we are forced to imagine ourselves ecstatically in life, focussing on our projects, permeations and pregnability, rather than on our centred existence, so the fantasy of a final coming to rest in the grave itself begins to diffuse. And yet, there is also abundant evidence of a residual or resurgent desire to secure the fantasy of the compact between the person and its space, most particularly in the successful attempts by various peoples to secure the return of their remains. After the coming into force of section 47 of the Human Tissues Act 2004, nine national museums in the UK, the British Museum, the Natural History Museum, the National Maritime Museum, Imperial War Museum, the Royal Armouries, the Museum of London, the V&A, the Science Museum, and the National Museums Liverpool were given powers to move human remains out of their collections (Lewis 2005). In September 2007, a repatriation ceremony was held to mark the return of various human remains from the Field Museum, originally acquired after the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, to the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa) in Wellington (Field Museum 2007). More recently, the Museum of Natural History in Oxford agreed to the return of a number of Maori skulls, jawbones, teeth, pelvis and collarbones to the same museum. Most requests of this kind received so far have been from aboriginal groups in Australia and New Zealand and American Indians, but groups claiming to represent Britain's pre-Christian populations have also lodged claims for human remains and grave goods from pre-Christian burials to be 'returned' to them. In January 2007, the Council of British Druid Orders mounted a demonstration outside the Alexander Keiller Museum in Wiltshire to publicise their demand that a child skeleton excavated in 1929 be reburied; Paul Davies, reburial officer for the Council of British Druid Orders said "They are not samples, they are bits of body, they are bits of people, bits of spirit." (Randerson 2007). We are in fact seeing a 'global repatriation campaign' for such remains (Donnelly 2008).

On the whole there is now very little reluctance on the part of museums to these measures, although the French Government, so anxious to prevent the commodification of 'French DNA' (Rabinow 1999, Dickenson 2008, 109), have so far proved more resistant. But even France has agreed to some restitutions, the most notable of which has probably been the human remains of Saartjie Baartman, the 'Hottentot Venus', who was exhibited as a curiosity in London and Paris, largely on account of her large buttocks and elongated labia. Her remains were on display at the French Musée de l'Homme in Paris until 1976 and, after many years of refusal, her skeleton, and preserved brain and genitals were sent back in 2002 to South Africa, where she was buried on 10th August 2002 (Anon 2002b).

Much was made of the final homecoming. Patrick McKenzie, the provincial minister of culture, said at the ceremony marking her return “I think that Saartjie, on her dying bed, alone in a foreign country, had one wish: to be buried in the country of her birth one day” (Swarns 2002). Ironically, there had been an attempt in Saartjie Baartman’s lifetime to rescue her from her life as a performer and send her home. In 1810, the African Institution issued a writ of habeas corpus in respect of Baartman, who was at that time giving shows in Piccadilly, alleging that she was being forced to exhibit herself against her will, and proposing that a free passage be provided for her to return to her own country. The case foundered when Baartman, interviewed in Afrikaans, insisted that she had entered freely into her contract and had ‘no desire whatever of returning to her own country’ (Holmes 2007, 102).

On her arrival, almost two centuries later, at Cape Town International Airport, Baartman’s coffin was draped in the South African flag. Peter Marais, the premier of the Western Cape province, affirmed ‘ “This is not the homecoming of a single person. This is the homecoming of [a] nation” ’ (Murphy 2002). I don’t think we can be certain of what, as a member of one of the nomadic Khoisan tribes who regularly traversed the Botswanan and Southern Cape area at the end of the eighteenth century, she would have made of being made a native of a nation that had no existence when she left the region that would later become South Africa. But this should not surprise us, for, whenever it is believed that something has come back to where it really and immemorially belongs, the time will always have been pulled out of joint. At one point, Patrick McKenzie commented that it would be an excellent idea to bury the remains of Saartjie Baartman in the Company Gardens, in the centre of Cape Town, since this was ‘was a place Baartman might have walked through when she lived at the Cape... “if we really do that for Saartjie there, it could enhance the whole thing of... bringing the Gardens back to the people” ’ (Anon 2002a). Since in the first place, place is mined with a motion, one can only ever come back to the future. We like to think of place as the urn of time, but it is in reality continuously churned by it.

The dream of absolute entirety and integrity is one with which we haunt our bodies. The desire to make the state of the body in the grave conform to this ideal consistency with itself accounts for the practices of embalming, which attempt to preserve the body from decay. Ironically, this has often been the cause of a division of the body from itself, since exenteration, or the removal of the viscera, is an essential feature of most embalming procedures. Charles Bradford suggests that the practice of burying the bodies of the faithful in the walls of churches meant that steps needed to be taken to prevent the contamination of sacred atmospheres by the odour of

corruption, which meant that ‘it indirectly brought about that very division of the body which earlier had excited Christian aversion’ (Bradford, 1931, 19). This encouraged the development of rituals for the seemingly disposition and preservation of the sequestered vitals, in particular the practice of burying the heart, as the seat of the soul, separately from the body. The heart seems paradoxically to be that part of the partitioned body of the departed that most embodies their surviving entirety. The spread of this kind of division of the body prompted Pope Boniface VIII to issue in 1299 the Bull *Detestandae feritatis abusum*, in which he condemned the dismemberment of the dead, and threatened those guilty of abusing corpses in this way with excommunication (Friedberg 1959, 2, cols 1272-3879). Nevertheless, the practice continued to flourish among the wealthy and powerful, which is to say, those whose corpses were most likely to be exhibited and revered rather than put quickly out of sight. Henry VIII had his entrails and bowels removed and buried separately in the chapel at Whitehall, while the rest of his body was interred under St. George’s Chapel in Windsor. The heart of Mary I was similarly interred in the chapel at St James’s Palace (Bradley 1931, 150). Elizabeth I, attempting to maintain that strict jurisdiction over her bodily image which she exercised in life, left instructions that her body was neither to be incised nor exhibited after her death, but she was embalmed anyway, though so hurriedly and hamfistedly that it resulted in an explosion of gas which split open her coffin (Bradley 1931, 169).

Thomas Browne remarked that ‘[t]o be knav’d out of our graves, to have our sculs made drinking-bowls, and our bones turned into Pipes, to delight and sport our Enemies, are Tragicall abominations, escaped in burning Burials’ (Browne 1977, 295), but he also reminds us that few desire the absolute destruction of the body, so that most ‘have wished that their bones would lie soft, and the earth be light upon them; Even such as hope to rise again, would not be content with centrall interment, or so desperately to place their reliques as to lie beyond discovery, and in no way to be seen again’ (Browne 1977, 267). Indeed, it is the very desire to secure the phantasm of bodily integrity that is most likely to produce the disturbance and scattering of the remains of the notable. Among those whose heads passed from hand to hand after their deaths were Oliver Cromwell and Mozart, both of them disinterred. Shelley was cremated on the shore where his body had been washed up, since Italian quarantine laws prevented the transportation of the body to the English cemetery at Leghorn. But his heart was plucked from the bonfire and conveyed to Mary Shelley, who kept it in a drawer in her desk until her death. Thomas Hardy gave directions that he wished to be buried in Stinsford Churchyard alongside his first wife Emma, but, following his death in 1928, J.M. Barrie led a successful campaign for him to be buried in Westminster Abbey. A compromise was worked out

whereby his heart would be removed and posted to Dorset with the remains of his remains being cremated and interred in Poets' Corner. There is a persistent story that the heart was sent down to Dorset in a biscuit-tin, which being left unattended by Florence Hardy, attracted the interest of a cat, who grabbed the heart and ate it (Murphy 1995, 52-6). There is much less evidence for the story than there is for people's enjoyment of the idea of Hardy himself becoming one of time's laughingstocks. But there is much better warrant for the indignity that lay veritably in store rather than merely in story for the heart of Louis XIV, which was stolen from his tomb in St. Denis after his death in 1715 and found its way through several hands to Frank Buckland, the founder of the Society for the Acclimatization of Animals in the United Kingdom, which aimed to encourage Britons to vary their diet with the meat of exotic animals. It is reported that he de-accessioned the heart of Louis XIV from his collection of curios and producing it on a plate during a dinner-party, serenely consumed it in front of his startled guests (Murphy 1995, 63-4). Perhaps the most grotesque sequences of resurrections was endured by Tom Paine. His writings on freedom had made the Englishman a hero of the new American republic, though, by the time he died in 1809 his attacks on George Washington had made him less popular. As a result, he was not buried in pomp, but in a corner of his own farm in New Rochelle, outside New York City. Eight years later this came to the notice of the English radical William Cobbett, who was disgusted that his hero should lie 'in a little hole under the grass and weeds of an obscure farm in America' (Murphy 1995, 128). In 1819, Cobbett dug up Paine's corpse, without permission, and managed to transport it undetected across the Atlantic. There his efforts to use Paine's remains, which he exhibited in 'bone-rallies', to rouse working men to a more lively sense of the injustice of their condition, provoked puzzlement, indifference and disgust, so Cobbett eventually gave up the idea and put Paine's bones under his bed, where they remained until his death in 1835. He willed the bones to his son, who may either have buried them or sold them on; but thereafter the trail goes cold (Murphy 1995, 130-1).

In all of these, the most bitter-delicious irony is that it has been the very desire to bring the body to its proper, destined place of rest that has resulted in such grotesque and inglorious peregrinations. These secular wanderings recall the energetic and centuries-long diffusion of magical body parts in the Christian cult of saints' relics. Sartre's views of the surpassing of the body may again help us understand the magical logic involved in such surpassing bodies. We may say that the body is the primal subject of fantasies of power, even and especially if those fantasies are fantasies of the surpassing of the body's own limits and fragilities – the superpowers of flight, strength, percipience, etc. Perhaps the strongest of these primal fantasies is the one that is both rooted in and surpasses the fundamentally locative nature of the

body – that it limits us in time and place. The fantasy of the outdoing of the body, which is firmly grounded in the actual relation of surpassing that, according to Sartre, always characterises the relation of the *pour-soi* to the *en-soi*, will therefore always have a bodily cast or composition; it will be the body that will have to bear out its own surpassing, conditioning and concentrating the powers of escaping it. It will always be the body that will escape itself.

This may help us to understand the essential paradox enacted in the cult of relics. As long as it remains intact, the saint's or martyr's dead body, is subject to the same material conditions as their live body, namely that they are capable of existing only in one place at any one time. But, of course, in another sense, this dead body is capable of being dismembered and dispersed into many different places, in a way that the living body cannot while yet continuing to draw breath. The characteristic of the saint's body is that it can be divided in this way without surrendering any of the sanctity concentrated in the original body. The power which had been concentrated in the saint's body while he or she was alive remains indivisible, no matter what degree of dicing and mincing the body may undergo. This is assisted by the fact that so many martyrs' deaths themselves involve a literal *sparagmos*, or dismemberment of the body, with breasts torn off, hands, limbs and heads severed, and whole bodies drawn apart by horses, or chopped up on griddles. This is echoed and amplified in the well-known and, among Reformation Protestants, much-derided fact of the inflationary multiplication of holy bodies, with the huge quantities of wood made up by all the alleged fragments of the True Cross, which, as Calvin jeered, if collected together 'would form a whole ship's cargo' (Calvin 1854, 233), the prestidigitatory proliferation of holy fingers, the tetracephalic St. Gregory the Great, or the Welsh St. Teilo, who obligingly and miraculously partitioned himself into three complete, separate bodies to satisfy the demand of the faithful for relics (Bentley 1985, 29, 32).

Saints' relics have many different executive powers – they can cure diseases, punish the impious, provide intercession, aid childbirth, even halt the eruption of volcanoes, etc – but we may say that their fundamental power is their holiness, which, deriving from OE *hál*, free from injury, hale, simply means their wholeness, their paradoxical capacity to remain entire in the condition of diffusion. Theirs is not a power that happens contingently not to be diminished by diffusion; it is the very power of diffusion-without-diminution as such. Indeed, they seem at times to embody an inflationary economy, in which the more corporeal currency is minted, the more the more valuable each piece seems to be.

Thinking psychoanalytically, we might be struck by the way in which such practices seem to allow an ideal cooperation of a sadistic desire to sever or tear the body into fragments – a form of assault which, taken to its ultimate, represents the obliteration even of the body's tenure of space – with an ideal preservation, which allows the body to overcome the impediment of space. This compounding of violation and veneration might account for the peculiar practice of 'relic humiliation', in which, at set times in the year, relics may be taken out of the reliquary and lamented over, or thorns and ashes laid against them (Bentley 1985, 73-4), and the fact that relics that have come about through acts of violence or sundering are so subject themselves during their long careers to further such sunderings or dislocations, followed by reassemblies and reparations. In Kleinian terms, the relic would allow at once the most extreme form of splitting characteristic of the paranoid-schizoid phase of mental life, in which the ego cannot tolerate or think together its aggressive and libidinal impulses, and the most assured and consoling form of reparation or reincorporation.

Prepossessing

The hope of the resurrection was always a dream of absolute space, a dream, that is, of reversing the complications of space effected by time. At the Day of Judgement, space would be purged of time, matter purged of movement, mixtures and compounds analysed into the ideal and absolute elementarity of separate and entire spaces. Bringing the body home, to its proper, perfected resting place, is the last refuge of the fantasy of the whole body, the body ideally intrinsic to its life, and implicate of itself, a space that has both suspended and consumed time, rather than being consumed by it. But because bodies are in the phenomenological sense, ecstatic, a notion I have wanted here to bring into proximity with the double negative of the Pauline *anastasis*, they are never at home, *chez-soi* or *en-soi*, in the first place, are never themselves merely a first or for that matter, last place. Of the lived body (whether one takes the word 'lived' as referring to a present or a past condition, lived in or lived out), one may say much the same as Sartre repeatedly says of the *pour-soi*, that is not what it is, and is what it is not. One would be, as Donne similarly says, even if to almost exactly opposite intent, '[h]e that hath no more of this world but a grave; he that hath his grave but lent him till a better man or another man must be buried in the same grave; he that hath no grave but a dunghill, he that hath no more earth but that which he carries, but that which he is, he that hath not that earth which he is' (Donne 2003, 14).

We often nowadays hear the claim that we are leaving the body behind. On the contrary we are in the process – we probably *are* the process – of

continuing to invent our embodiment. This has involved, not the coming together with the body, or not only that, but the creation of an ever more complex mixed body, a body that, because it is less and less capable of abstracting itself from its temporalities, less and less knows its place, adds up to or coincides with itself. The long history of fantasies of the risen or redeemed body are actually part of the resulting commerce, ever more compounded, of life and death, here and there, now and then. The body is simultaneously the comic impediment to all my dreams of reach and ubiquity and that which will never allow me to exist as a simple *Da-sein*, or being-there. It is an anthology of times, the X marking the spot that I will never quite succeed in having occupied. So, far from making up my composition of place, my dead body, the body I will be in no position to own as mine, nor, for the same reason, ever able to disown or dis sever from, is also going to enact my losing of the plot; it will be a kind of pure exposure, to the riddling, muddling accidents of any-place-whatever, and the proof that I should be, in the words of Thomas Browne, '[r]eady to be any thing, in the extasie of being ever, and as content with six foot as the Moles of *Adrianus*' (Browne 1977, 315).

The way in which the body often tries to inhabit this simultaneously here and everywhere condition is in the state we call ecstasy, of which one of the most ordinarily available modes is laughter, the bodily solution to the predicament of being in two or more intellectual and affective places at once. There are those who have disconcertingly refused to take their deaths seriously: Dorothy Parker who suggested 'Excuse My Dust' as her epitaph (Murphy 221-3), or the notorious Mary Frith, known as Mal or Moll Cutpurse, who asked to be buried breech upwards 'that she might be as preposterous in her Death as she had been all along in her infamous Life' (Johnson 1734, 194). The richly ridiculous vicissitudes of the posthumously itinerant body, abhorred, adored, vandalised, violated, mangled, wrangled-over, bear wry witness to the fact that, if existence precedes essence, as Sartre would have it, it is set to succeed it too. Bergson thought that laughter was the compensatory upsurge of the *élan vital* in response to the otherwise humiliating spectacle of life reduced to the condition of the inanimate. Perhaps, for those of us who have it, our sense of the irresistible comedy of all this is less the ventriloquised bellylaugh of life than the sardonic *risus*, raised in us before its time, with the time that yet remains, of that preposterousness.

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