

## INTRODUCTION

## SYMPTOMS AND SUBJECTS

Nothing drives us to ask why like the austere truth of human suffering. Hesiod, the first didactic poet in the Greek literary tradition, takes up the question on a grand scale early in the *Works and Days*, where we learn that conditions were not always bleak. In a past age, labor and suffering were unknown: the earth readily yielded food; men lived as companions to the gods. Everything changes when Prometheus, working on behalf of humankind, contests Zeus's omniscience with a ruse. Zeus, angered, takes fire away from people, only to have Prometheus steal it back in the stalk of a fennel plant. Zeus responds this time not by withholding gifts but by giving them: Pandora, the original woman, and the countless afflictions that scatter when she opens her infamous jar. From this time on, diseases have wandered the earth day and night. They overtake us in silence, because Zeus has taken away their voices. The stealth of their approach proves the poem's core axiom—"so it is in no way possible to escape the mind of Zeus" (*Op.* 105)—while the trauma they cause on arrival conflates the impossibility of escape with the inevitability of pain. In the world after Pandora, humans live and relive Zeus's decisive assertion of his power. Aeschylus will call this *pathei mathos*, knowledge through suffering (*Ag.* 177).

It is with a quite different view of the knowledge acquired through suffering that Plutarch, in the first centuries CE, comes back to Hesiod's explanation of disease and, more specifically, to the adverb on which it hinges: "silently."

For all the diseases wander the earth not, as Hesiod says, "silently, since counselor Zeus has taken away their voice," but most of them have indigestion and sluggishness as their harbingers and forerunners and heralds, as it were. (*Mor.* 127D)<sup>1</sup>

In support of his point, Plutarch quotes from the *Aphorisms* of Hippocrates, still considered one of the foremost medical authorities of the day some five hundred years after his alleged floruit.<sup>2</sup> Plutarch is working with some assumptions that are absent from Hesiod's poem. Whereas, in the *Works and Days*, disease is a nebulous daemonic being, for Plutarch it is a process that unfolds

<sup>1</sup> οὐ γὰρ ἅπασαι κατὰ τὸν Ἡσίοδον ἐπιφοιτῶσιν αἱ νόσοι 'σιγῇ, ἐπεὶ φωνὴν ἐξείλετο μητίετα Ζεὺς, 'ἀλλ' αἱ πλείσται καθάπερ προαγγέλους καὶ προδρόμους καὶ κήρυκας ἔχουσιν ἀπεψίας καὶ δυσκινήσιος.

<sup>2</sup> *Aph.* II.5 (Li 4.470 = 108 Jones).

inside the hidden space of the body. And although the disease remains concealed, Plutarch believes that the pre-sufferings and pre-sensations produced by the body as it falls ill cue us to its presence. The disease that we fail to avoid thus holds different lessons for Plutarch. It proves that we have not been properly vigilant about what is happening inside us, while suggesting, too, that a body left on its own strays toward disaster.

Despite these differences, Hesiod and Plutarch are engaged in a similar task: each is trying to figure out where symptoms come from. For the purposes of this book, a symptom is a disruption—without obvious cause and often, though not always, painful—either to the experience of self or to the outward presentation of self. Insistently real, symptoms point to an imperceptible dimension of reality that cuts across the world that we do perceive. In one sense, this hidden world can be laid bare. After Athena lifts the mist from Diomedes' eyes in book 5 of the *Iliad*, for example, the gods on the battlefield are suddenly bathed in light. When, just after this revelation, Diomedes cuts the Trojan fighter Hyperion “beside the shoulder through the collar-bone with the great sword, so that neck and back were hewn free of the shoulder” (5.146–47), he confronts the inner body that will become so important to the learned Greco-Roman medical tradition and remains at the center of contemporary biomedicine. Yet symptoms reveal neither the “fictional” tableau of Greek gods nor the “real” mess of blood and flesh beneath the skin. Rather, for the ancients as for us, symptoms give rise to a way of seeing built on leaps, both logical and imaginative, into an unseen world—inferences about causes, reasons, and motivations. Like other spectacular anomalies, such as thunder or eclipses, symptoms demand interpretation. In fact, because they mark a catastrophic breach of the boundaries of a person, symptoms carry an unusually creative charge, asking us to imagine the nature and the limits of a human being and to “see” unseen agents and powers capable of causing harm. For this reason, I approach symptoms not as windows onto hidden worlds (innards or gods) but as phenomena that help to generate and sustain worldviews.

One such worldview, which had become entrenched by the time of Plutarch, is organized around what I will call the physical body. The central argument of this book is that this body, designated in Greek by the word *sōma*, emerges through changes in the interpretation of symptoms in the Greek world of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE. Beginning with Homer, moving through the fragments of the sixth- and fifth-century “physicists” and the classical-era medical treatises, and closing with the medical analogies of early philosophical ethics and the diseases of Euripidean tragedy, I analyze how, as the physical body “comes into the visible”—to adopt the medical writers' own language—it transforms the stories that can be told not only about human suffering but also about human nature.<sup>3</sup> The result, I argue, is a new kind of ethical subject.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> ἔς τὸ φανερόν ἀφικνεῖται (*Vict.* I 10, Li 6.486 = 134,12–13 Joly-Byl).

<sup>4</sup> By “ethical,” I mean the human being as he (rarely she) is situated in a larger community that shares a set of values in relation to which judgments of praise and blame are made. The “subject” has been

The physical body on this account first materializes within what was called, at least by the end of the fifth century, the “inquiry into nature,” which was advanced by a loose group of thinkers who attempted to conceptualize the forces underlying the visible world as impersonal.<sup>5</sup> The question of how human beings participate in this nonhuman web of power is taken up with particular vigor by the classical medical writers. What the early physicians “saw,” as one medical writer succinctly declares, is that the things constituting the larger world “are inside a human being and they hurt him” (ἐν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ἐνεόντα καὶ λυμαινόμενα τὸν ἄνθρωπον).<sup>6</sup> This “inside” in Greek medicine is the physical body, where life processes take place and disease unfolds, often below the threshold of consciousness. Because this domain is largely hidden, most of what happens there can be detected only through symptoms, just as the unseen forces and stuffs in the inquiry into nature can be seen only “through the phenomena,” as a famous dictum attributed to Anaxagoras states.<sup>7</sup> Symptoms thus work as springboards into an unseen world that has been adventurously reconceptualized. If Hesiod and other early poets plot the edges of a human being against an invisible realm of gods and *daimones*,<sup>8</sup> the medical writers encourage people to rethink that hidden realm in terms of powers like “the hot” and “the cold.” At the same time, they extend this realm into the *sōma*, thereby redrawing the boundaries of the human.

---

an organizing idea in twentieth-century semiotics and critical theory: see Silverman 1983, esp. 3–53, 126–93. I adopt the term here in order to emphasize not only the conscious, rational aspects of a human being but also the nonconscious forces that work through him or her, forces that have figured prominently in recent critical theory. But rather than applying contemporary models of the subject, which are often developed in reaction to postclassical thinkers (e.g., Descartes, Kant), to classical antiquity, I am interested in how the very idea of nonconscious forces is conceptualized at a particular historical moment and applied to human nature. I have generally reserved “subject” for my discussions of the ethical implications of the physical body’s emergence.

<sup>5</sup> “Inquiry into nature” (περὶ φύσεως ἱστορία): Pl. *Phd.* 96a8; cf. *Phdr.* 270a1 (μετεωρολογίας φύσεως πέρι); X. *Mem.* 1.1.14, with Leszl 2006.366–69. See also the references in late fifth-century medical texts, e.g., *Carn.* 15 (Li 8.604 = 197,26–198,1 Joly): φύσιν συγγράφοντες; *VM* 20 (Li 1.620 = 146,5 Jouanna): οἱ περὶ φύσιος γεγράφασιν. Aristotle will refer to those engaged in the inquiry as *physiologoi* (e.g., *Metaph.* 990a3) and *phusikoi* (e.g., *Phys.* 184b17). But what the “inquiry into nature” encompassed continues to be a subject of debate: Laks 2006.7–12 identifies two basic characteristics—its totalizing ambitions, on which see also Long 1999b, and its focus on origins—while arguing that the identity of the earlier thinkers cannot be exhausted by the term “naturalistes” (2006. 18–21). Cf. Graham 2006, who makes an Ionian tradition of naturalizing explanation the backbone of early Greek philosophy. I discuss this debate in more detail in chapter 2. On the meaning of *phusis*, see further below, chapter 2, n.3.

<sup>6</sup> *VM* 14 (Li 1.602 = 136,9 Jouanna).

<sup>7</sup> *DK*59 B21a: ὄψις ἀδήλων τὰ φαινόμενα (“The vision of unseen things is through the phenomena”).

<sup>8</sup> The divine and the daemonic (τὸ θεῖον . . . καὶ τὸ δαμόνιον) are the two classes of explanation given by magico-religious healers, according to the author of *On the Sacred Disease* (1, Li 6.358 = 6,19 Jouanna). While the notion of a god is relatively clear, that of a *daimōn* or *daimonion* is not. Throughout this book, I adopt the term “daemonic” to capture the uncertainty that characterizes responses to the symptom, the hostility believed to motivate that symptom, and the sense of the symptom as a disruption from another plane of reality.

In the second part of the book, I explore and defend the claim that the physical body plays a pivotal but unacknowledged role in ideas about the human in the fifth and early fourth centuries, as well as in the formation of a new kind of ethical subjectivity centered on practices of caring for the self. I explain the strength of its influence in terms of its dual identity. On the one hand, the physical body is a model of intelligibility: although its workings are hidden, a physician trained in the medical *tekhnē*, “science” or “art,” may reconstruct them through reasoning. Doing so allows him both to intervene in disease and to manage health. On the other hand, that body is an untrustworthy and unfamiliar thing: it is prone to disorder, largely estranged from consciousness, and animated not by intentions but by impersonal, asocial powers. Its very strangeness, I argue, encourages ancient thinkers to take an increasing interest in the *psukhē* as the locus of the person.<sup>9</sup> The *sōma*, however, is not simply a foil to the *psukhē*. In its guise as an intelligible physical object, it is also its analogue, thereby contributing to the creation of the *psukhē* as an object of both knowledge and care in early philosophical ethics. Through these affinities with the *sōma*, the *psukhē* comes to be haunted by its daemonic energies, energies that also begin to infect tragic subjects in the latter part of the fifth century, particularly in the plays of Euripides.<sup>10</sup>

We continue to live with and in a body imagined as both an object of scientific knowledge and mastery and an unruly, threatening, inhuman thing. So entrenched is this body in modern Western culture that it is difficult to conceive of its absence. Yet it is precisely because medicine, biology, and the cognitive sciences increasingly inform so many of the stories we tell about ourselves that we must interrogate the body that these disciplines assume. In recent decades, path-breaking scholars have begun to piece together the history of the Western body. The body has also become increasingly visible in the practice of history itself, where it has come to serve as the primary locus for the imposition and expression of sociopolitical power: Michel Foucault, for example, famously describes the task of genealogy as the recovery of “a body totally imprinted by history”; cultural analysis informed by the theories of Pierre Bourdieu has probed how embodied practices embed us in social and cultural systems.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup>While the concept of the person has been historicized over the past century (see esp. Mauss 1985; see also Detienne 1973) and taken up as a specific category in contemporary philosophy (see C. Gill 1991), I use “person” in a loose sense to speak of the human being *qua* sentient, speaking, thinking being (and implicitly opposed to the impersonal).

<sup>10</sup>Other fifth-century genres, such as historiography and comedy, undeniably bear the imprint of medical ideas. Limits of time and space keep me from including them in this study. For an overview of the cultural influence of medical ideas in this period, see G. Lloyd 2003.

<sup>11</sup>A body imprinted by history: Foucault 1977b.148. In *Birth of the Clinic* (1973) and *Discipline and Punish* (1977a), the body materializes through institutions of power (the hospital and the prison, respectively) as an object of knowledge as well as an object of state regulation. For Bourdieu’s use of the *habitus*, see Bourdieu 1977; 1990, esp. 52–79. For overviews of the role of “the body” in social and cultural analysis, see Lambek and Strathern 1998a.5–13; Joyce 2005.

Such work continues apace, even as its focus in some quarters has shifted away from the body's subjection to ideologies and institutions to lived experience.<sup>12</sup>

In ancient Greco-Roman studies, as in the humanities and the social sciences more generally, over the past few decades the body has been "a growth industry."<sup>13</sup> Yet, while we have compelling stories about how Christianity transforms classical concepts of the body, as well as ample evidence of the persistence of classical models, there is still little sense of how these concepts arise.<sup>14</sup> In neglecting this inquiry, we have left a larger question unexplored—namely, how the very concept of "the body" arises. J. I. Porter wrote a decade ago:

But what about the category of "the body" itself? When does it come into existence? The issue has been discussed, mainly in speculative philological and philosophical contexts, but so far the nexus of problems implicating the results of Foucault-inspired research in more traditional problems of identity, likewise organized around the body, has not been addressed. As a result, the category of the body is generally assumed, not queried.<sup>15</sup>

Foucault himself, despite—or perhaps because of—his long-standing fascination with the making of the modern Western body, treats classical antiquity as the "before" to the "afters" that interest him (e.g., asceticism, psychoanalysis, biopower).<sup>16</sup> As a result, even his studies of ancient "techniques of the self" assume a body that is already given.<sup>17</sup> This book, starting from the assumption that the physical body is not given, aims to shed light on its emergence in classical Greek culture.

The idea that "the body" might not be given may seem strange. After all, the body would seem to have a good claim on always just being there. This, anyway, has long been the contention of those skeptical of Bruno Snell's striking claim that Homer does not have a concept of the unified, living body (*sōma*, on

<sup>12</sup>For a phenomenological approach to the body, see Merleau-Ponty 1962; 1968. See also, e.g., Csordas 1990, esp. 6–7; 1993; Mullarkey 1994; Joyce 2005; Young 2005.6–9.

<sup>13</sup>Growth industry: Stewart 1997.7. The first surge of interest in the body in classics accompanied the rise of gender and sexuality studies: see M. Katz 1989; Richlin 1997; Montserrat 1998; Wyke 1998; 1999. The introduction to Hopkins and Wyke 2005 indicates increasing interest in the lived body; this has been especially true in the study of material culture (e.g., Meskell 1996). Medical historians, however, have largely resisted the relevance of "the body" to their field: see, e.g., Nutton 2002.254; cf. G. Lloyd 1992.118–19.

<sup>14</sup>On the early Christian body, see P. Brown 1988; Rousselle 1988. On the Western medieval body: Bynum 1991; 1995.13–19. Laqueur 1990 begins his story with Aristotle, with a few references to the Hippocratics. For the humoral body in Western Europe, see, e.g., Duden 1991; Schoenfeldt 1999.

<sup>15</sup>Porter 1999b.3–4. See also Porter and Buchan 2004.9.

<sup>16</sup>See Porter 2005.

<sup>17</sup>For Foucault's work on the ancient world, see Foucault 1985; 1986; 1997.175–301; 2005. Cf. Hadot 1995.206–13, criticizing Foucault's work on freedom and self-fashioning in the first centuries CE as anachronistic. Post-Foucauldian work on biopolitics tends to begin with Aristotle without acknowledging his debts to physical and medical inquiry: see, e.g., Agamben 2004.13–16.

the few occasions that it does appear, is reserved for corpses).<sup>18</sup> Others, however, have thought that Snell is on to something important.<sup>19</sup> When we speak of “the” body, we imply that there is something of us that is not body: the person, the soul, or the mind. That we are not simply our bodies is a point that Socrates makes in *Alcibiades I*, probably one of Plato’s earliest works, when he gets Alcibiades to agree that, because the *sōma* cannot use or rule itself, it must have a user and a ruler; Socrates calls this user and ruler *psukhē* and equates it with the person (130a1–c6). In the Homeric poems, though, we find no such duality. It is true that at the moment of death the hero splits into a corpse and a *psukhē*. Even then, however, the *psukhē* is merely a wraith that disappears to Hades, while the heroes themselves are said to remain on the battlefield.<sup>20</sup> *Sōma*, moreover, is not Homer’s usual word for “corpse,” as we will see. People, then, do not seem to “have” bodies in the Homeric poems, or at least the bodies they have in later Greek texts. So what does it mean to “have” a body?

This is not a question that interests Snell. Snell, in truth, cares little about bodies—his attention is focused on the soul. Once the Greeks discover this, or, rather, the distinction between body and soul, he speculates, they use *sōma* to cover everything that is not *psukhē*.<sup>21</sup> The integrated, living body thus falls back into just being there, as it has all along for Snell’s critics, and Snell’s dramatic gesture of withholding “the” body from the Greeks comes to a perfunctory end. While Snell’s supporters have modified his claims over the years, they have concentrated on freeing Homeric disunity from the charge of primitivism and reframing it as “unity in multiplicity,” leaving the fate of the body virtually untouched.<sup>22</sup> Neither Snell nor those sympathetic to his arguments have given much thought to how (what Snell sees as) the integrated, living body appears under the sign of the *sōma* in the late archaic and classical periods.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Snell 1953.1–22. Snell’s views on this point are unchanged in the fourth German edition, published in 1975. On the meaning of *sōma* in Homer, see below.

<sup>19</sup> E.g., Dodds 1951.15–17; Vivante 1955; Koller 1958.276; Detienne 1973.46–47; Fränkel 1975.76; Laser 1983.3; Ferwerda 1986.111–12; Redfield 1994.175; Clarke 1999.115–19; De Hart 1999.357–58.

<sup>20</sup> See *Il.* 1.3–5. Vivante 1983 argues that one plausible candidate for describing the body in Homer is simply *autos*: what we call body is coextensive with the person until the moment of death.

<sup>21</sup> “Apparently [sc. *soma* and *psyche*] were evolved as complementary terms, and more likely than not it was *psyche* which first started on its course, perhaps under the influence of notions concerning the immortality of the soul . . . it may be inferred that, because the eschatological *psyche* had been correlated with the *soma* of the dead, the new *psyche*, the ‘soul,’ *demanding a body to suit it*, caused the term *soma* to be extended so that it was ultimately used also of the living body. But whatever the details of this evolution, the distinction between body and soul represents a ‘discovery’ which so impressed people’s minds that it was thereafter accepted as self-evident, in spite of the fact that the relation between body and soul, and the nature of the soul itself, continued to be a topic of lively speculation” (Snell 1953.16–17, emphasis added).

<sup>22</sup> Homeric “unity in multiplicity”: see Padel 1992.45–46 (the term is Norman Austin’s). See also Bremmer 1983.66–69; Redfield 1985; Bolens 1999; 2000.55–59; Clarke 1999; Spatafora 1999. The thesis gains credibility from Jahn 1987. On the multiple “body” terms in Homer, see Vivante 1955.

<sup>23</sup> When Jean-Pierre Vernant, who accepts Snell’s conclusions, speaks of the “discovery of the human body,” he is referring to “a progressive conquest of its form . . . What is meant is evidently not a

Snell's controversial claims about the *sōma* are at once insightful and limited. Their limits are due, first, to the fact that the lexical evidence, albeit sparse before the fifth century, suggests that the word *sōma* had a wider semantic field than Snell allows. Limited, too, is the concept of the body that Snell declares missing in the Homeric poems, insofar as its absence denies a basic sense of self to the early Greeks.<sup>24</sup> By reopening the question of the body's historicity, we can move toward a more complex notion of what appears missing from Homer and other early Greek sources. Such an inquiry can, in turn, lead us to reconsider the role of the *sōma* not only in Snell's story but also in other genealogies of dualism that privilege *psukhē*. Such narratives largely concur in the assumption that the body is something self-evident that must be transcended. In contrast, I reject the idea of a self-evident, ahistorical body in order to explore the specific ways in which *sōma* is conceptualized in the classical period as a physical object that needs to be separated from the human and, more specifically, the ethical subject. By approaching the physical body not as something to be left behind but as an object of and an impetus to thought and imagination, we can begin to understand how it was generating ideas about the human in the fifth and fourth centuries. It is this conceptual productivity, together with its lasting consequences, that makes Snell's language of discovery insightful.

There are, of course, problems with Snell's model of historical change. Snell uses the trope of discovery to ground what he sees as the spiritual truth of the Western intellectual tradition—its grasp of the mind—in the Greek world, thereby making the Greeks our true ancestors. The teleology of his story now meets with a healthy distrust; the self he sees discovered in antiquity has been revealed to be an anachronistic projection, one that no longer even has a purchase on spiritual truth.<sup>25</sup> And yet, despite harsh criticism on a number of

---

question of the human body as an organic and physiological reality on which the self relies for its support" (1991e.159), though he elsewhere credits Greek medicine for contributing to the objectification of the body in anatomical and physiological terms (1991b.28; see also Detienne 1973.46). Bolens 1999 recognizes differing "logics of the body" in Homer and Plato but does not trace the relationship between them.

<sup>24</sup>That is, Snell fails to distinguish a basic human self-awareness from the specific kind of self-awareness that develops in certain quarters of the Greco-Roman world. For critical responses to Snell's argument that the early Greeks lack a unified sense of self, see the next note. The idea that all humans share a basic notion of mind-body (and/or soul-body) dualism has been defended in recent years on the basis of evidence from both anthropology (e.g., Lambek 1998) and cognitive psychology (e.g., Richert and Harris 2006, with further bibliography), though these accounts leave room for the cultural and historical factors that give different dualisms their specific shape (including what is often just called Western dualism, which on my argument requires the physical body).

<sup>25</sup>Half a century ago it was not uncommon for scholars to chart dramatic changes (usually "improvements") to the idea of the self between Homer and Plato without necessarily following Snell's route. See, e.g., Dodds 1951; Adkins 1960; Fränkel 1975. In recent years, however, part of the critique of Snell has involved downplaying or denying diachronic change: see, e.g., Halliwell 1990; C. Gill 1996a; Porter and Buchan 2004. See also Williams 1993, who calls Snell's general argument "a systematic failure" (28–29) but does see a difference between the concept of the subject found in Homer and tragedy and that found in Plato and Aristotle: the philosophers are distinguished by

fronts, Snell's presence is as strong as ever.<sup>26</sup> The questions he raises about the Greek subject do not go away. For, insofar as "the Greek past," as Bernard Williams once wrote, "is specially the past of modernity," these questions force us to keep surveying the ground on which we encounter the Greeks and reassessing what is at stake in that encounter for a present often impatient with history.<sup>27</sup> It is true that by asking the Greek past to tell us about ourselves we increase the risk of distorting it. But, when we insist too much on the Otherness of the Greeks, we run a similar risk of distortion. My aim here is to unsettle our sense of something so familiar that it has remained largely external to our critical apparatus, that is, the physical body. In so doing, I am neither defending that body as a found object, whether philosophical or scientific, nor casting it as the construction of culture. I prefer to see it, rather, as a uniquely powerful "conceptual object," a term I explain in greater detail below. By attending to the emergence of this object, we can perhaps recuperate some of the boldness of Snell's approach: his commitment to substantial changes in how subjectivity was imagined in the classical Greek world and his belief in the cascading implications of those changes for subsequent centuries, right up to the present.

I would like to stress again that what I am calling the physical body does not map onto the body that Snell thought was absent from the Homeric poems. The misalignment of these bodies is due in part to my interest in embedding the *sōma* more deeply in a history of ideas and practices. More fundamentally, however, I depart from Snell in my understanding of what it takes to "see" the body that comes to be taken for granted in the West, and here is where the symptom becomes central to this book. I thus use the rest of the introduction to explain in more detail what I am doing with the symptom and what I mean when I say that the physical body emerges at a specific historical moment. I begin by orienting my approach to symptoms in relationship to scholarship in the field of ancient medicine and science. I then briefly sketch how my project intersects with recent work on "the body" in classical antiquity. Finally, I return to Snell's claims about the *sōma* in order to set up a different framework for

---

their attempt to fit human ethical interests to the larger world. Williams nevertheless rejects narratives of change that privilege notions of agency, the will, or moral responsibility. For criticisms of Snell's view of the Greek self as anachronistic, see esp. Williams 1993.21–49 and C. Gill 1996a, who attributes to the Greeks a notion of identity in which psychological processes are seen as "functional components of an organic (or inorganic) system, and not as constituting a distinct category (that of the 'mental') as in Cartesian theory" (43, 34–41, on Snell's debts to Descartes, Kant, and Hegel). For other critiques of Snell along these lines, see Sharples 1983; Gaskin 1990; Halliwell 1990; Pelliccia 1995.17–27. Other scholars have defended the "fragmented" subject of Homeric poetry: see Padel 1992 and 1995, working from an anthropological perspective, and Porter and Buchan 2004, who, placing fragmentation under the sign of Lacanian psychoanalysis, argue that all but the fantasy of a unified self is foreclosed for both ancients and moderns.

<sup>26</sup> The final pages of Kurke 1999, for example, frame her ambitious project as a "materialist critique" of Snell's work. She argues that Snell's "seductive periodization" and belief in "authentic and pre-existent subjectivity" remain influential (335–36). See also Porter and Buchan 2004.7–8.

<sup>27</sup> Williams 1993.3. See also Snell 1953.258–63.

understanding the development of dualism by rethinking the problem of the *sōma* in the Homeric poems. Elaborating how the problem posed by the Homeric *sōma* becomes the problem not only of having a body but also of being an ethical subject is the task of the remaining chapters.

### SEEING THROUGH SYMPTOMS

The language of discovery is not Snell's alone. Discovery was for many years—and, in some circles, continues to be—a core motif in histories of early Greek science and philosophy. These histories followed how the Greeks succeeded in recognizing the nature of the physical world, long obscured by superstition and myth. In a similar vein, historians of medicine celebrated the authors of early medical texts for offering naturalistic explanations of disease without enlisting gods or *daimones*.<sup>28</sup> Rudolph Siegel, for example, in his account of “the evolution of the diagnostic art,” credits the classical Greek medical writers with the discovery of the symptom, that is, “a phenomenon constituting a departure from a normal bodily constitution or function.”<sup>29</sup> Because such a definition depends on the Greeks' knowledge of bodily constitutions and functions, it is not a stretch to place the physical body itself within the reality grasped through the “Greek miracle,” whose history has been described by Karl Popper as “a splendid story . . . almost too good to be true.”<sup>30</sup>

In recent years, however, the Greek miracle has, indeed, come to seem too good to be true, as we have become less comfortable conflating the ideas and

<sup>28</sup> The gods are never mentioned as causes of disease in the extant medical treatises. The author of *On the Sacred Disease* entertains the idea that one can be defiled *not* by a god but by “something else” (ὅψ' ἑτέρου) and, hence, may require purification (1, Li 6.364 = 9,10–13 Jouanna). But it is not clear if he makes the claim in earnest or if it is part of his polemic against magico-religious healers. Moreover, he distinguishes defilement from disease and emphatically denies that a god or “something daemonic” can cause disease (1, Li 6.364 = 9,8–10 Jouanna; 11, Li 6.382 = 22,3–4 Jouanna); see also *Aer.* 22 (Li 2.80 = 241,5–9 Jouanna). Remarks that diseases are divine or might have “something divine” (τὸ θεῖον) in them do not imply agents. The gods are very rarely mentioned as potential healers: at *Vict.* IV 87 (Li 6.642 = 218,21–22 Joly-Byl), in addition to praying, one should also “help oneself”; *Morb. Sacr.* 1 (Li 6.364 = 9,13–15 Jouanna) implies that the gods should heal τὰ ἀμαρτήματα, “moral errors.” Cf. *Virg.* 3 (Li 8.468 = 24,7–10 Lami), with Lami 2007.52–54: women wrongly thank Artemis for their release from the disease of virgins. On the place of the gods and the sacred in the *Oath*, see von Staden 1996; 2008, esp. 429–36. In short, while it may be true that “Hippocratic medicine does not rule out divine intervention” (Horstmanshoff and Stol 2004.6), the medical writers leave little room for it, “effectively, and in some cases deliberately, block[ing] any move to explain diseases—both particular types of diseases and individual incidences of them—by invoking divine or supernatural agencies” (G. Lloyd 1987.11); see also Hankinson 1998b.16–17, 34.

<sup>29</sup> Siegel 1964.299. Siegel takes his definition from the *New Century Dictionary* (London, 1927). For work in a similar vein, see, e.g., Riese 1944; Major 1957; Jandolo 1967. Cf. Joly 1966; Edelstein 1967d. “Whiggish” notions of medical history are now rare, but see von Staden 1992c and Flemming 2000.3–28 on other forms of presentism in the study of ancient science.

<sup>30</sup> Popper 1969.149.

practices associated with ancient inquiries into the natural world with those of early modern science and the present day. Scholars have shifted their focus from the physical theories of the early Greek philosophers to epistemology, politics, and ethics; they have paid more attention to the social and historical conditions of early Greek philosophy.<sup>31</sup> Historians of medicine have been engaged in what is arguably an even more sweeping intellectual renaissance. They have challenged the medical writers' grasp of anatomy and physiology, stressing instead continuities with older models.<sup>32</sup> They have highlighted the "divine" elements in ancient medicine and reevaluated the medical writers' self-distancing from traditional healers as a rhetorical stratagem in an agonistic "medical marketplace."<sup>33</sup> Such research has persuasively shown that the medical writers, while lively polemicists, in many cases provided new justification for conventional wisdom. The constructed and "fantastic" nature of what the medical writers believe about the body is particularly evident in their ideas about the female body, which dovetail neatly with long-held cultural stereotypes about female inferiority and women's childbearing function.<sup>34</sup> Even when these writers describe things that look familiar, such as the *facies Hippocratica* or "Hippocratic fingers," we are no longer confident that we see the same things as they did. Seeing in both cases is a highly motivated act that outstrips the phenomenon in the desire to grasp and manipulate an underlying reality.

Changes in the field of ancient medicine, as well as in the study of ancient philosophy more generally, have struck a serious blow to the once-celebrated positivism and secularity of the Greek miracle. Historians have thus been led to reexamine the ancient thinkers' methodologies for criteria to distinguish between a mythic worldview and one that, despite some modification, continues

<sup>31</sup> Long 1999b.5–10; G. Lloyd 2005.13–15; Naddaf 2005. Cf. Graham 2006, focused on the physical theories and unabashedly enthusiastic about miracles, intellectual leaps, and teleology (e.g., 2006.98, 106, 299). On social and political conditions, see below, n.76.

<sup>32</sup> This renaissance owes much to the work of G.E.R. Lloyd. Lloyd sees Greek medicine and science as distinct from magico-religious healing; see esp. Lloyd 1979; 1987. Yet he also challenges the notion of a rupture between two vast "mentalities" and seeks lines of continuity between the archaic and classical periods (Lloyd 1990). On these continuities, see also Joly 1966; Bratescu 1975; Jouanna 1988a; 1990a; von Staden 1992a; 1992b; Laskaris 1999; 2002; Hoessly 2001.247–313. For overviews of changes to the field, see G. Lloyd 1992, esp. 129–32; Nutton 2002; Horstmannshoff and Stol 2004.1–10; van der Eijk 2005b.1–8.

<sup>33</sup> On the divine in Hippocratic medicine: H. Miller 1953; Thivel 1975; Ducatillon 1990; Oberhelman 1990; Prioireschi 1992; von Staden 1996; Hankinson 1998b; Bratescu 2002; Collins 2003.24–26; van der Eijk 2004; 2005b.45–73. For the argument that medicine's success depends on the rhetorical skill of its advocates, see esp. A. Hanson 1991.81–87, emphasizing the fit between physical explanations and the ability of the Hippocratic physician to intervene. On medicine in relation to diverse healing practices, see G. Lloyd 1979.37–49; 1983.119–35; 1990.30–31; Nutton 1992 (introducing the term "medical marketplace"); 1995.

<sup>34</sup> On "fantastical" elements, see Joly 1966; G. Lloyd 1967.30–31; 1979.146–60; 1983; 1992.122–24. On medical representations of the female body, see below, pp. 185–87. See also Flemming 2000.3–9, cautioning that we cannot gauge whether ancient physicians had the same power to influence these stereotypes as their eighteenth- and nineteenth-century counterparts.

to be characterized as rational. Several factors have come to the fore: the use of proof, signs, and inferential reasoning in fifth-century authors; these authors' commitment to public argument and the criticism of opposing views; their concerns about epistemology and error; and their interest in systematization and explanation.<sup>35</sup> In this context, the medical writers have been deemed particularly relevant to the lively, cosmopolitan intellectual milieu of the classical Greek world—"too important to be left exclusively to the history of medicine."<sup>36</sup> One reason for their wider relevance lies in the use they make of symptoms. Indeed, the medical symptom has benefited considerably from the increased attention in recent years to methodological questions and sign reasoning, sometimes being pegged as an important precursor to the logico-inferential sign in Aristotelian semiotics.<sup>37</sup>

There are, however, several limitations to a strictly semiotic approach to the symptom. Reviewing these limitations will allow me to situate my approach to the symptom in relationship to recent work on the medical writers. First, such an approach has entailed a narrow focus on cases where the language of witnessing and proof—for example, *sēmeion/sēmēion*, "sign"; *marturion*, "witness"; and *tekmērion*, "proof"—is explicit. Yet, in practice, such language is quite rare.<sup>38</sup> In fact, the word *sumptōma*, "symptom," is not found in the extant fifth- and fourth-century medical texts, nor is there a word that "symptom" could be said to supersede when it does take on a medical cast in Hellenistic and imperial-age texts.<sup>39</sup> In most cases, the medical writers simply use demonstrative pronouns (τόδε, τάδε, τοῦτο, ταῦτα, τούτων τι) to refer to the bodily phenomena from which they build inferences. They are constantly creating inferences,

<sup>35</sup> For a definition of the rationality of Greek medicine in these terms, see van der Eijk 2005b.9 n.17. See also, on the rationality of early Greek philosophy, G. Lloyd 1967.32–34; Long 1999b.13–14; Graham 2006.10–13.

<sup>36</sup> Thomas 2000.24. See also Jaeger 1944, esp. 7–15. On the intellectual milieu of the fifth century, see esp. Thomas 1993; 2000, esp. 1–27, 249–69. On the public sphere of medicine, see Jouanna 1999.177–285; Craik 2001a.81–82; G. Lloyd and Sivin 2002.118–33; Schiefsky 2005a.5–71, esp. 38–46. Not every physician, of course, was interested in intellectual discourse or promulgated it. As social historians have stressed, the physician's status was often that of a simple craftsman: see esp. Temkin 1953; Horstmanshoff 1990; Nutton 1992.

<sup>37</sup> See Diller 1932; Perilli 1991; 1994; G. Manetti 1993.70–91; 1994; Thomas 2000.168–212; Fausti 2002.

<sup>38</sup> Di Benedetto 1986.118 n.2; Langholf 1997–2004.914.

<sup>39</sup> The word appears once in the Hippocratic Corpus, at *Dec.* 6 (Li 9.234 = 27,14 Heiberg), but the treatise where it is used almost certainly dates from the late Hellenistic period. See also *Ep.* 16 (Li 9.346 = 72,19 Smith), another Hellenistic text. At *Flat.* 3 (Li 6.94 = 106,2–3 Jouanna), συμπτωμάτων (*M*) is a *varia lectio*: editors have almost uniformly adopted the reading of *A*, πάντων (Littré, Nelson, Jouanna; Ermerins emended to συμπάντων). The word πάθημα, particularly in the plural, comes closest to the later meaning of σύμπτωμα: it appears roughly sixty times in fifth- and fourth-century medical writing: see, e.g., *Epid.* I 2 (Li 2.606 = 182,1 Kühlewein); *Hum.* 8 (Li 5.488 = 78 Jones); *Mul.* I 1 (Li 8.10 = 88,12 Grensemann); *Prog.* 1 (Li 2.110 = 193,7 Alex). The plural ἀλγήματα can also denote the patient's sufferings: *Aff.* 27 (Li 6.240 = 48 Potter); *Flat.* 9 (Li 6.104 = 115,10 Jouanna).

turning the seen into knowledge about the unseen and using beliefs about the unseen to interpret the seen. But we miss out on much of this work if our criteria are lexical or if we limit ourselves to writers who are self-conscious about how they know what they know. Symptoms can serve as nodes of methodological reflection. Yet they also densely populate medicine's more mundane reaches.

A semiotic approach is also restricted in that it encourages scholars to analyze how the medical writers make inferences at the cost of neglecting what it is exactly that symptoms allow them to see. That the medical writers take such an interest in inferential reasoning is surely worth noting. But symptoms, precisely because they are perceived as alien without revealing the source of their otherness, provoke all kinds of inferences about invisible causes.<sup>40</sup> These inferences rely on both innate cognitive intuitions about causality and sociocultural and contextual frameworks of interpretation. In Peircean semiotics, they are classed as abductions.<sup>41</sup> Whereas in deduction, for example, each claim follows necessarily from prior claims, abduction involves a conjecture about the relationship of a particular event to a general rule.<sup>42</sup> Given that abduction involves an inferential leap, it is as possible for someone speculating about the hidden causes of disease to refer symptoms to unseen agents as it is for him or her to offer a naturalizing explanation.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, as recent cognitive-based approaches to religion have emphasized, the inference of agency is a likely response for people to have to symptoms and similar phenomena.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, as Elaine Scarry has argued,

<sup>40</sup> See further below, pp. 46–47, on the relationship between the perceptual indeterminacy of symptoms and inference.

<sup>41</sup> On Peirce, see Silverman 1983.14–25. See also G. Manetti 1993.48–51, discussing abduction in the medical writers.

<sup>42</sup> Peirce famously distinguishes deduction, induction, and abduction thus: in deduction, the rule is “all the beans from this bag are white,” the case is “these beans are from this bag,” which leads to the result, “these beans are white”; in induction, the case is “these beans are from this bag,” the result is “these beans are white,” leading to the rule, “all the beans from this bag are white”; in abduction, the rule is “all the beans from this bag are white,” the result is “these beans are white,” leading to the case, “these beans are from this bag.”

<sup>43</sup> The anthropologist Alfred Gell defines an agent as “one who has the capacity to initiate causal events in his/her vicinity, which cannot be ascribed to the current state of the physical cosmos, but only to a special category of mental states; that is, intentions” (1998.19). On early Greek concepts of intention, see Williams 1993, esp. 21–55. Note that in conventional semiotics, symptoms are defined by the *absence* of intention: Sebeok 1976.124–27.

<sup>44</sup> The literature for cognitive approaches to religion is large and growing rapidly: for recent overviews, see Boyer 2001; J. Barrett 2007. I am not suggesting that abductions of agency, discussed further in the next chapter, are *more* natural, that is, more intuitive, than naturalizing explanations. Such a position threatens to reinstate a teleological account of the transition from religion (primitive) to science (intellectually complex). But, more important, it is an oversimplification. Recent research suggests—though the evidence is far from decisive—that, in the face of symptoms, people have a tendency to infer both unseen agents and natural causes (Keil et al. 1999). The activation of these inferential models depends not only on the symptoms (e.g., epileptic symptoms may be particularly conducive to agent-based explanations) but also on prevailing cultural frameworks. That is, *both* agent-based inferences and naturalizing ones are open to cultural elaboration, and that

one of the experiences that appears especially likely to make the mind imagine unseen agents and symbols of agency is pain.<sup>45</sup> Although we have only limited knowledge of magico-religious interpretations of symptoms in ancient Greece, the evidence that we do have exploits the explanatory force of gods, *daimones*, and heroes endowed with intentions, desires, emotions, and ideas about justice and purity—that is, social and ethical agents.<sup>46</sup> If we dismiss these agent-based explanations of symptoms as philosophically uninteresting (i.e., mere superstition) or turn them into sterile markers of Greek Otherness, we risk overlooking what gets lost when these explanations are challenged by new ways of imagining the unseen. Even more important, we fail to register the very strangeness of an unseen world understood in physical terms. Yet it may be because this world is not immediately intuitive in the cultural context of the mid- to late fifth century that the medical writers spend so much energy implicating it through inferential reasoning in the visible, tangible world.

One of the major claims of this book, as I have indicated, is that by explaining disease in terms of the physical body, rather than daemonic agents, medical writers and physicians are facilitating that body's emergence as a conceptual object. If we are going to see this process, we need to denaturalize the idea of natural causality. To this end, it is worth recalling Michael Frede's account of how the concept of a cause as "something which in some sense does something or other so as to produce or bring about an effect" develops in the ancient world.<sup>47</sup> Such a concept depends

on the assumption that for everything to be explained there is something which plays with reference to it a role analogous to that which the person responsible plays with reference to what has gone wrong; i.e., the extension of the use of "*aitia*" across the board is only intelligible on the assumption that with reference to everything there is something which by doing something or other is responsible for it.<sup>48</sup>

---

cultural work, in turn, determines specific acts of interpretation, perhaps overriding in some cases what may be more "implicitly" held theories of biological phenomena (Keil et al. 1999.289). On the cultural webs of meaning that inform the interpretation of symptoms, see also Good and DelVecchio Good 1981; Kleinman 1988.

<sup>45</sup> Scarry 1985, esp. 15–18.

<sup>46</sup> By "social," I mean these agents have intentions that are comprehensible within a human community; I use the adjective "ethical" to indicate agents (usually divine) who could be seen as upholding social norms and laws: though some notion of ethical is implicit in the idea of the social, there appears to be a difference between divine-daemonic agents who respond to transgressions against them and those divine-daemonic agents who are entrusted by the human community with upholding notions of justice and a social good. See, on social agency in Greece, Collins 2003.37–44. On social agency and intuitive psychology more generally: Gell 1998, esp. 4–11, 16–23; Boyer 2001.120–31.

<sup>47</sup> M. Frede 1987.125. Frede credits the Stoics with first theorizing the "active" cause. Vegetti 1999.276–79 makes the medical writers central to an earlier process of substituting impersonal causes for personal agents in the fifth century. See also Mansfeld 1980.379–81.

<sup>48</sup> M. Frede 1987.132.

Much depends here on the weight of the “thing” in Frede’s “something.” There are plenty of things in archaic poetry, both inside and outside the person, but they are deeply lodged in networks of intentionality, particularly when harm is involved. In medical writing, despite the remarkable variation in style, audience, and content we find under the rubric of the Hippocratic Corpus,<sup>49</sup> explanations of symptoms turn primarily on a struggle between different things inside the physical body, stuffs like “the sweet” or bile or “the hot,” each capable of acting and suffering in a specific and strictly impersonal way (e.g., moistening, heating).<sup>50</sup> These things, together with the things outside the physical body, assume responsibility for causing damage. Reading the medical writers with care, we observe natural causality being put to work again and again.

It might not be so easy, however, for something to take over for someone. The difficulty is particularly acute when that someone is a god or a *daimōn*, agents whose intentions are uncommonly efficacious. Because gods and *daimones* achieve what they want so easily, their weapons are not so much instruments of power as symbols of unfettered agency, which mark “daemonic advantage over the human: that power to hurt, that aggressiveness.”<sup>51</sup> What happens, then, when this power is vested in things? One possible answer is that it fragments. The result is that while disease continues to be objectified in medical writing—it is often closely associated with corrupted humors; it has a *phusis*—it is primarily understood as a process that is precipitated by external causes before taking hold within the physical body: what is passive in one encounter (e.g., tissue, bile) becomes, once damaged, part of the problem. The gods’ “power to hurt” thus has to be built up through a series of events in which stuffs inside the physical body are systematically turned against life: daemonic agency breaks down into a series of mechanisms. This fragmentation, I suggest, frustrates the clean transfer of responsibility from the personal to the impersonal: cause is no longer synonymous with an intention but is distributed over a series of

<sup>49</sup>This variation has generated unease about lumping the medical texts together: see Laskaris 2002.2 n.5; van der Eijk 2005b.22–23. For an overview of attempts to organize medical writing according to genre and subgenre, see Wittern 1998.17–22. See also van Groningen 1958; Maloney, Potter, and Frohn 1979; Thivel 1981.119–51; Pigeaud 1988; Kollesch 1991; van der Eijk 1997. A. Hanson 1996, esp. 304–11, looks at the compositional contexts of the Hippocratic texts. Nevertheless, variation is a relative term: the perception of similarity is produced against the backdrop of what is different. For my purposes, it is often accurate to speak of medicine vis-à-vis magico-religious healing or the inquiry into nature or philosophical ethics. I consider internal diversity in the corpus in more detail in chapters 3 and 4.

<sup>50</sup>In addition to the extant texts and fragments, we have the Anonymous Londinensis papyrus, a doxography of late fifth- and fourth-century BCE medical opinions that was probably written in the first century CE and based on a fourth-century BCE Peripatetic history of medicine: see D. Manetti 1999 for further discussion. The author divides theories of disease into those that blame residues of digestion and those based on the idea that because our bodies are composed of a combination of elements, disease is “due to the elements” (4.26–28 = 6 Diels; 14.6–11 = 20–21 Diels). Extant treatises largely reflect the latter approach (though both theories assume that what *phusis* fails to assimilate becomes hostile). See also the disease theory outlined at Pl. *Ti.* 82a–86a.

<sup>51</sup>Padel 1992.152.

micro-events. Moreover, even if specific things are called *aitioi*, such as the brain in *On the Sacred Disease*, there is a sense that blame fails to stick to things whose antipathy toward the person at any moment is physical, rather than emotional and grounded in intersubjective relations.

The idea that the physical body both assumes causal responsibility for symptoms and yet deflects blame gives rise to another of this book's major claims—namely, that the physical body becomes an ethical responsibility for the embodied person or, more accurately, for persons believed to be capable of exercising mastery over themselves. What this means is that the emergence of the physical body, far from negating the moral framework of disease, as is sometimes supposed, transforms the field of social and ethical relations in which the person is embedded and, indeed, the very identity of the person as a social, ethical agent.

The importance of the person exposes one last limitation in strictly semiotic approaches to the symptom—namely, that these approaches have tended to downplay the fact that medical signs most often give access to the inside of a human being. By inside, I do not mean the place where a Homeric hero hides winged words, or even an anatomical cutaway. I am speaking, rather, of a space largely beyond what the physician can see and, crucially, below the threshold of consciousness, a space I refer to as the cavity.<sup>52</sup> The medical writers understand this as contained space, often designating it with the preposition “in” (ἐν) and putting weight on the related notions of surface, orifice, influx, efflux, concealment, and revelation. Even a cursory reading of the Hippocratic Corpus yields abundant evidence of these writers' fascination with the cavity's silent, automated workings.

It is both the silence and the automation of the cavity that makes it so uncanny. First, the silence of the physical body is the heir to the dangerous silence of the diseases unleashed when Pandora opens her jar. The reason symptoms feel daemonic even when they erupt from within us is that we are largely unaware of what goes on inside the cavity, allowing trouble to develop without our knowledge. Symptoms are always belated. They appear only after “the healthy” has been mastered by “the diseased,” as we are told by the author of *On Regimen*, who claims to have invented the “pre-symptoms” wielded by Plutarch some centuries later in his argument against Hesiod.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>52</sup> “Cavity” roughly translates the medical writers' term κοιλίη, which is used of the whole chest cavity or, in a more restricted sense, of the belly: on both senses, see Jouanna 2003.258. I adopt it here to designate all of the *sōma*'s inner space.

<sup>53</sup> *Vict.* I 2 (Li 6.472 = 124,28–126,3 Joly-Byl); cf. III 69 (Li 6.606 = 200,28–32 Joly-Byl); *Art.* 11 (Li 6.20–22 = 238,15–20 Jouanna). The idea that symptoms are always belated, together with the idea of imperceptible inner space, is one of the main elements that distinguishes this book from Ruth Padel's excellent studies of interiority in the archaic and classical periods (1992; 1995). Padel writes, “That you could have a virus, or madness, and no one know, is not a concept available in ancient Greece” (1995.35; see also 43). For Padel, denying the modern notion of latency is one way to establish the historical specificity of ancient concepts of madness. Yet it is untrue that the concept of a hidden disease was not available to the ancient Greeks. Of course, we have to be wary of collapsing distinctions between, say, cancer cells and the things inside the body in the medical writers.

Symptoms are daemonic, too, because they are messengers from a foreign world, a world automated by forces that we are unable to control simply by intending or exhorting or supplicating: not only are we incapable of moving our heart in the way we move our legs, but we cannot check our bile as an Iliadic warrior can check his *thumos*. We can hardly be persuaded, as Aristotle observes, not to get hot or feel hunger (*EN* 1113b26–30). And while we may know intuitively how to cool or feed ourselves—though the physicians will contest this—in other cases we are subjected to symptoms precisely because we fail to understand their causes. If we were one day put in charge of our livers, Lewis Thomas once noted, we would soon be dead.<sup>54</sup> We need experts to interpret our symptoms and to counter the forces that produce them.

But however estranged we are from the cavity and all that it contains, we remain affected by it, bound by it, perhaps even created by it. Elizabeth Grosz writes:

The body is a most peculiar “thing,” for it is never quite reducible to being merely a thing; nor does it ever quite manage to rise above the status of thing. Thus it is both a thing and a nonthing, an object, but an object which somehow contains or coexists with an interiority, an object able to take itself and others as subjects, a unique kind of object not reducible to other objects. Human bodies, indeed all animate bodies, stretch and extend the notion of physicality that dominates the physical sciences, for animate bodies are objects necessarily different from other objects; they are materialities that are uncontainable in physicalist terms alone. If bodies are objects or things, they are like no others, for they are the centers of perspective, insight, reflection, desire, agency.<sup>55</sup>

The physical body is, thus, no ordinary object of inquiry, no neutral producer of signs. Rather, it is a privileged site for the translation of the inquiry into nature into human terms. On this terrain, the shift of responsibility from agents to things matters deeply. It matters not only because health and life are at stake but also because the things in question at some level *belong* to a person. But what is the proper place of the person in naturalizing explanations of the symptom? Where does he meet the physical body? These questions loom large as we explore what symptoms mean for the subjects through whom they occur.

Here, then, is the approach I adopt toward symptoms in naturalizing Greek medicine. I understand them, on the one hand, as a means of seeing that proceeds through inferential leaps from phenomena into an unseen world; and, on the other hand, as points of passage into an unseen world that has been reimagined and, more specifically, reimagined in relationship to the person. In other

---

Nevertheless, that wariness should extend in the other direction as well, as I have indicated: the danger of presentism finds its complement in the danger of establishing historical difference by simply negating the present.

<sup>54</sup> Cited in Leder 1990.48.

<sup>55</sup> Grosz 1994.xi.

words, what is seen is as important as how it is seen; the how of seeing is crucial to understanding the nature of what is seen.

So what is this unseen reality? In addition to macrocosmic webs of power, it encompasses tissues, bones, and sinews; the cavity; the things inside it; how and why they act and suffer; the overall nature of the physical body; and the concatenation of events that together represent the disease. I do not want to deny that Greek physicians, by thinking in these terms, are on to something fundamental about what I am happy to call the physical reality of disease. Yet I am not interested in defending a neopositivist position that naturalizing interpretations of the symptom are correct. I am advocating, rather, a third way between the old rationalizing histories and the more recent emphasis on the cultural provenance of corporeal signs. I argue that classical medical interpretations of symptoms allow physicians and their patients to “see” a cluster of things and ideas that constitute the physical body.

How should we understand this seeing? Scholars have challenged and complicated the idea of discovering the body, but they have not thrown it out altogether.<sup>56</sup> Snell believed that the mind needed to be discovered because it was immaterial, beyond the boundaries of the terrestrial world. The physical body, we might say, is largely submerged in the hidden regions of that world. What these regions look like and what goes on there can be glimpsed only through clues and fragments—effluvia, glimpses of the innards through wounds or lesions, sensations that communicate trouble imprecisely. Hence, the physical body is primarily seen through what one Hippocratic author calls the “vision of the mind” (ἡ τῆς γνώμης ὄψις, *Art.* 11, Li 6.20 = 237,11–13 Jouanna).<sup>57</sup> So crucial is this idea of mental seeing to the learned Greek medical tradition that even when, in third-century BCE Alexandria, physicians become better acquainted with the anatomical body through systematic human dissection, they often end up treating it as another surface concealing even smaller parts visible only to reason.<sup>58</sup> The prominence of mental seeing in the learned medical tradition

<sup>56</sup> Studies of the Hellenistic anatomists, for example, still acknowledge their contributions to modern models of the body: see von Staden 1989. Such work need not be incompatible with attention to historically embedded ways of seeing, as von Staden’s scholarship amply demonstrates.

<sup>57</sup> Although significant for contemplative metaphysics, the idea of the vision of the mind seems to have first appeared in medical texts: see also *Flat.* 3 (Li 6.94 = 106,9–10 Jouanna); *Vict.* I 4 (Li 6.474–76 = 126,28–128,3 Joly-Byl). Cf. *Democr.* (DK68) B11, with the comments of Jouanna 1988b.178 on the fragment’s relationship to *Art.* 11. Andrea Nightingale, seeking “the foundational construction of theoretical philosophy in its intellectual and its cultural context” (2004.7), neglects the medical writers, leading her to posit too strong a break between fourth-century philosophy and its predecessors. Certainly Plato will endow the concept of “seeing with the mind” with new meaning. Yet it is misleading to claim that, “There is no ‘vision’ of truth in . . . philosophical texts of the early period” (33). The importance of vision in Greek medicine is most apparent in a comparative context: see Kuriyama 1999, who draws a contrast with the significance of touch in ancient Chinese medicine. On visibility more generally in Greek culture, see Stewart 1997.14–23.

<sup>58</sup> On the “anatomical urge” in Greek medicine, see Kuriyama 1999.116–29. On the prehistory of systematic dissection, see Edelstein 1967e; G. Lloyd 1975a; Mansfeld 1975; von Staden 1989.141,

reminds us that the physical body is not a static, bounded object independent of a viewer and her (psychological, disciplinary, cultural) habits of seeing but, rather, a constellation of phenomena filtered through ideas about power, causality, and the unseen, phenomena that are often isolated in order to be investigated and manipulated.

Given both the thingness of the physical body and the nature of its materialization, it is perhaps best understood as a kind of conceptual object, an “epistemic thing,” to adopt a term introduced by the historian of science Hans-Jörg Rheinberger.<sup>59</sup> We might see it as the prototype of a range of objects within the Western scientific tradition that flicker into perceptibility and are objectified against a horizon of expectations, then gain a foothold through textual transmission and institutionalized practices of inquiry and experimentation.<sup>60</sup> We must, of course, be cautious about projecting later conditions of seeing into the past. Words like empirical or experimental are often of limited usefulness—“experience” is a loaded term.<sup>61</sup> What interests me, in any event, is something very basic, something presupposed by scholarship on the later scientific tradition but downplayed in recent work on ancient medicine, with its focus on the divine and sociocultural context. It is simply this: the formation of a framework within which the *sōma* is described, explained, and manipulated *qua* natural thing, composite and changeable, yet sustained by the powers of heating, cooling, growing, disintegrating, absorbing, excreting—powers organized in the service of life. Many aspects of this body have always been available to the senses. Yet sensory perception alone has not determined its conceptual unfolding. It is

---

with n.6; 1992e; Annoni and Barras 1993. The idea of things “seen with the mind” is formalized in Hellenistic medicine as Erasistratus’s τὰ λόγῳ θεωρητά (fr. 76–77 Garofalo).

<sup>59</sup> Rheinberger 1997.11–23, and esp. 28–31. See also Daston 2000 and J. Taylor 2005 (with further bibliography) on both contemporary Western and cross-cultural practices of materializing the body and other natural objects.

<sup>60</sup> For the importance of institutions to the survival of conceptual objects, see Latour 1999.145–73. On the generation of scientific objects, see also the comments at Csordas 1990.38.

<sup>61</sup> The debate over the empirical foundations of the inquiry into nature dates from Bacon’s *New Science*. It culminated in the past century with the clash between Popper and Kirk, on which see G. Lloyd 1967; see also G. Lloyd 1979.129–46, reviewing the evidence for empiricism in the inquiry into nature. Some medical writers do develop the idea that knowledge ought to arise from and be tested against phenomena. Moreover, however theory-laden the concepts or however overriding the desire for coherence in medicine, the treatment of the physical body as a site of observation and praxis is crucial to how that body is conceptualized. At the same time, the desire of some medical writers to offer empirical evidence in support of their claims does not license us to collapse the difference between their practices of seeing and those of modern laboratories: see G. Lloyd 1979.146–69, esp. 151: “The drawback, in this field of inquiry [i.e., empirical research], was that their investigations were not open-ended, but designed specifically to provide support for theories that appear to have been adopted usually on the basis of general, often philosophical, considerations and arguments.” Lloyd does see a growing open-endedness in the Hellenistic and imperial periods. But cf. von Staden 1975.179–85 on the conditions that are conducive to experimentation at Alexandria: his analysis of the Empiricists’ rejection of experimentation undermines teleological views of its history (185–93). For two recent discussions of the “scientific” nature of ancient science, see G. Lloyd 2004.12–23; Graham 2006.1–18, 93–106, 294–307.

precisely because the physical body is as much an object of mental vision as it is of the senses that it is itself so conceptually fertile, capable of producing new narratives and transforming existing ones.

### THE PHYSICAL IMAGINATION

If this book departs from previous studies of the medical symptom because of its focus on the physical body and the embodied subject, it is the symptom, with its relationship to an unseen interior that distinguishes it from recent work on “the” body in classical antiquity. Scholarship on the ancient Greek body has been strongly influenced by research on the ideologies of the classical Greek city-states, especially Athens, as well as by the escalation of interest in the body and sexuality across the disciplines.<sup>62</sup> In his influential genealogy of the “democratic body,” for example, David Halperin points to Solon’s alleged elimination of debt bondage, as well as to cultural anxiety about passive homosexuality, in order to argue that the early Athenian *polis* used ideals of corporeal integrity and autarchy, rather than wealth or lineage, as the qualification for enfranchisement.<sup>63</sup> Halperin’s claim is part of an influential line of research that has focused attention on how political actors in the classical period are defined through the gendered body: Froma Zeitlin’s work on the performance and transgression of gender in tragedy and comedy; Nicole Loraux’s studies of how the Athenian imaginary depends on a vulnerable, feminized body; the research of Leslie Kurke, Victoria Wohl, and others on the ways in which ideals of corporeal integrity operate at the juncture of aristocratic and democratic ideology.<sup>64</sup> Scholars

<sup>62</sup> On the latter, see, e.g., Halperin, Winkler, and Zeitlin 1990; Porter 1999a.

<sup>63</sup> Halperin 1990. See also Winkler 1990a; 1990b.45–70; Hunter 1992; Bassi 1998; Humphreys 1999; Sissa 1999. For the rights of the citizen vis-à-vis the *sōma*, see Dem. 22.55. The slave, conversely, is not master of his body: Ar. Pl. 6; neither is a woman: A. Pr. 859; E. Med. 232–34. These sources are all Athenian, but the concerns about autonomy they highlight surface in non-Athenian sources as well (e.g., Democritus: see below, chapter 5).

<sup>64</sup> See the works by Loraux in the bibliography, esp. Loraux 1995 and 1997. Loraux appropriates the psychoanalytic notion of the imaginary to describe the schemas and images mobilized by members of a given culture to organize their experience. Tragic bodies: Zeitlin 1996, esp. 123–284, 341–74. See also Loraux 1987; Murnaghan 1988; Faranda 1993; Serghidou 1997; Worman 1997; 1999; 2000; Bassi 1998; Hawley 1998; Cuny 2002; Rehm 2002.168–214; Crippa 2006; Holmes 2008. Comic bodies: Zeitlin 1996.375–416; Fletcher 1999; Foley 2000; Stehle 2002; Piqueux 2006. On embodied aristocratic ideals: Kurke 1999, esp. 142–51, 275–95; Wohl 2002; see also Hawhee 2004. On the semiotics of gendered bodies, see Worman 2002 and, for the imperial period, Gleason 1990; 1995. Although scholarship on the gendered body in the classical world predates Foucault, Foucault’s argument that the categories “homosexuality” and “heterosexuality” are culturally constructed helped to popularize Kenneth Dover’s division of bodies into penetrating (active) and penetrated (passive) and spurred new debate about gender and desire. For sympathetic readings of Foucault, see Halperin 1990 and Winkler 1990b; see also the essays in Halperin, Winkler, and Zeitlin 1990. Cf. Richlin 1993, challenging the idea of homosexuality as historically constructed; H. Parker 1997.60–63; J. Davidson 2001, who critiques the penetrated-penetrating binary. Feminists have

have also reevaluated the rise of naturalism in Greek art in the fifth century, historically framed as a sweeping transformation of the representation of the human body, in terms of the “parent culture’s politics of truth.”<sup>65</sup> It is difficult to overstate the importance of this work, which, in demonstrating the ways in which concepts of the body respond to sociopolitical factors and cultural norms, has eroded the assumption that bodies are given.

How does this work on the body relate to what I am calling the physical body? It may be useful here to reintroduce the category of the body. Doing so allows us to ask, Does “the democratic body” or the naturalistic body of early fifth-century sculpture or the gendered body describe the relationship that a citizen, or an idealized male subject, or a woman has to the *sōma*? Or is it our own rather slippery term “body” that organizes these topics?<sup>66</sup> If, indeed, *sōma* is the organizing term, is it informed by ideas about what we might call physicality, ideas essential to our own concept of the body? If so, where do these ideas come from and what role do they play in fifth-century Greek culture?

I raise these questions in part because the body has become broadly visible in both the humanities and the social sciences as a precondition of any self: it is now axiomatic that we must understand human beings as embodied subjects.<sup>67</sup> It is widely held that the body is engaged via a mental, albeit nonconscious, representation variably called a body schema or a body image. This schema, understood as an ahistorical, biological fact, allows our countless feelings and perceptions to be referred to a relatively unitary identity.<sup>68</sup> At the same time, the identity sustained by the body image is molded by stimuli and prone to fragmentation.

---

also criticized Foucault, pointing to the absence of women in his account of ancient sexuality: see Richlin 1991; 1998; Dean-Jones 1992; Greene 1996; Foxhall 1998, noting that many feminist ancient historians have nevertheless taken a “Foucauldian” approach to the female body (122). For a broad survey of Foucault’s influence in classics, see the essays in Larmour, Miller, and Platter 1998.  
<sup>65</sup> Stewart 1997.23. Cf. Elsner 2006, esp. 87, 92–95, privileging aesthetic form over political and social factors.

<sup>66</sup> As Caroline Bynum observed more than a decade ago, “There is no clear set of structures, behaviors, events, objects, experiences, words, and moments to which *body* currently refers” (1995.5, emphasis in original).

<sup>67</sup> Csordas 1993.135, drawing on the work of Merleau-Ponty, defines embodiment as “an indeterminate methodological field defined by perceptual experience and the mode of presence and engagement in the world” against the body understood as “a biological, material entity.” See also Lambek and Strathern 1998a.13–19, treating embodiment as a category of sociocultural analysis; van Wolputte 2004 (with further bibliography).

<sup>68</sup> For overviews of body image, see Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987.16–18; Grosz 1994.27–111, esp. 62–85. The neurologist Henry Head first developed the idea of a “postural schema.” The concept was extended by Freud to describe the way in which the ego unifies the mass of our sensations to create the representation not of any anatomical “reality” but of a body shaped by the history of our libidinal investments, both pleasurable and painful, more or less intense, in its different zones (1923.25–26). What facilitates this imposition of unity in psychoanalysis is the child’s perception of others’ bodies as discrete and autonomous: see esp. Lacan 1977. For phenomenological approaches to body image, see Csordas 1993 (on “somatic modes of attention”); Mullarkey 1994.

Because body images not only shape but are also shaped by experience, one way of historicizing the body is by exploring how culture, ideology, visual media, religion, and science inflect embodied identities in different times and cultures as they are both lived and performed.<sup>69</sup> We can assume that body images responded to these various influences in ancient Greece as well.<sup>70</sup> What we cannot assume, however, is that identity thus formed was understood primarily in terms of the *sōma*.

The body may also be approached as a historically specific conceptual object used within a culture to express the unity of a human being (as a conscious field, as a discrete form) against internal and external worlds in flux. It can be used, too, to describe the part of a human being seen as the foil to something called the soul, the mind, or the person. If the *sōma* plays these roles in ancient Greece, it would seem to share conceptual ground with our own notion of “body” (without necessarily covering the same semantic field as “body” in contemporary scholarship). Do we find it used in these ways?

In a word, yes. In the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, I suggest, *sōma* can act both as a unifying term and as a foil to the person. Its capacity to fulfill these roles, however, is largely determined by its development into a physical object.<sup>71</sup> Consider, first, its relationship to the boundaries of a human being. In the archaic period, symptoms are commonly blamed on gods and daemonic agents capable of trespassing into the “felt” space of the self. If this felt space is contiguous with a daemonic world, we must conclude that it has boundaries that cannot be reduced to those of a “seen” three-dimensional object. I suggest, however, that, with the emergence of the physical body, the visible body acquires another dimension, namely a concealed inner space implicated in automatic physical processes. As a result, the skin, together with its orifices, becomes newly important as a barrier, attracting concerns about the opacity and the porosity of the self.<sup>72</sup> The self, in turn, is allied more closely with the body *qua* object.

<sup>69</sup> See, e.g., Young 1980; Butler 1993.57–91; Weiss 1999. Cf. Cheah 1996.112–21, critiquing the “hy-pertrophied” power attributed by Butler to the cultural and the historical as formative of bodies. On physical influences on the formation of body images, see Grosz 2005.4–7, 14–52; Lock 2007.275–79, developing the concept of “local biologies” to register the impact of environmental and genetic factors.

<sup>70</sup> The task of recovering historical body images, however, is particularly difficult for those working on the ancient world: see the methodological discussion in De Hart 1999. De Hart relates the new body image in classical Greek medicine to the “appearance of the new discrete citizen (*politēs*) in the city-state” (1999.359; cf. 369, 375–79). While I am in broad sympathy with De Hart’s findings, I do not see the body image in medical writing as merely an effect of primarily political transformations (see further below, pp. 22–23).

<sup>71</sup> *Sōma* can stand for the person without a sense of physicality (as I have defined it) in some contexts, particularly in tragedy and the orators: see Hirzel 1914.8–28. But cf. below, n.119, where I argue against Hirzel’s equation of the *sōma* and the person in Homer. (Hirzel’s notion of person as a fundamental unity, moreover, does not always capture the nuances of the word’s uses.)

<sup>72</sup> For evidence of how individual and cultural factors determine the skin’s role as a “metaphysical boundary,” see Knappett 2006.240–41, with further bibliography.

Second, as the physical body becomes increasingly important to accounts of human nature, it puts pressure on notions of the mind or the soul, precisely because it is conceptualized and imagined in such *impersonal*, *inhuman* terms. It has been argued that some form of mind-body dualism is part of the human condition.<sup>73</sup> What seems to distinguish the mind-body or soul-body problem in the West is “the sense of urgency regarding precise clarification of the points of separation or connection” between these two parts of a human being.<sup>74</sup> Traditionally, scholars interested in exploring how this problem takes shape in classical Greece have focused on changing ideas about the *psukhē*. I argue that we may better understand the defining urgency of Western dualism by exploring how *sōma* comes to be conceptualized in physical terms, thereby creating the need for an account of mind or soul in terms compatible with human experience and agency.

I do not wish to deny that there are areas of overlap between the semantic field of *sōma*, which I discuss below, and our notion of body that fall outside the domain of the physical body. Nevertheless, I suggest that as a conceptual object, the *sōma* is most coherent and most recognizable to us once it is endowed with a *phusis*. By refusing to take the “category” of the physical body for granted, we can begin to see in its emergence the potential for conceptual and cultural disruption.

It is worth asking anew, then, what seeing the hidden dimensions of reality in physical terms means for the concept of the *sōma*.<sup>75</sup> In focusing on this question, I depart from those approaches that inquire into the ideological or social pressures that shape the concept of the physical body; I do not try to reconstruct the historical context of the inquiry into nature itself.<sup>76</sup> The story I tell here goes in the other direction: from the question of how the physical body

<sup>73</sup> See above, n.24.

<sup>74</sup> Lambek 1998b.109.

<sup>75</sup> For interaction between the inquiry into nature and medicine, see Wellmann 1930; Jouanna 1961; Longrigg 1963; 1989; 1999; Vegetti 1976; 1998; Thivel 1981, esp. 338–57. See also Jouanna 1992, esp. 99–111, on moving beyond simple relations of influence to recognizing the interest in the physical body shared by physicians and those writing on nature in general.

<sup>76</sup> Previous decades have witnessed considerable speculation about the impact of social, political, and economic factors on the inquiry into nature and secular medicine in Greece. Vernant 1983.213–33, 385–97, 404 and, more recently, Naddaf 2005 have argued that philosophy has its roots in the birth of the *polis*. G.E.R. Lloyd, too, has focused on the (democratic) *polis* as a necessary condition for the rise of Greek philosophy and science. In the past twenty years, he has worked comparatively with evidence from ancient China: G. Lloyd 1990; 1996; 2002a; 2004; 2005; Lloyd and Sivin 2002. Cf. von Staden 1992c on the danger inherent in privileging politics when “most ancient Greek science was neither manifestly born out of Athenian democracy nor borne by it” (590). Seaford 2004.175–89 challenges the arguments of both Lloyd and Vernant; in his own account of philosophy’s origins, he privileges the advent of monetization in eastern Greece (a factor discussed at Vernant 1983.390–94). See also the more sympathetic critique of Vernant’s position in Laks 2006.86–99. Babylonian and Egyptian medical and philosophical traditions also remain highly relevant to speculation on the origins of Greek philosophy and medicine. For the connection with the Near

emerges within speculative and pragmatic inquiries into its nature to the impact of that body on ideas of the person in a broader cultural context. It is a story that not only explores the ways in which physicality was conceptualized, imagined, and investigated but also recognizes these processes as generative in their own right and, thus, capable of contributing to classical Greek notions of human nature.

One of the basic assumptions of the approach I adopt is that the inquiry into nature shares with other traditions of knowledge and praxis (e.g., the production of Attic tragedy, sculpture, the exegesis of oracles) a kind of internal momentum through which it acquires its own complex density.<sup>77</sup> G.E.R. Lloyd has written, “If the concepts of ‘nature’ and of ‘causation’ develop from certain implicit assumptions, those ideas had, again, to be made explicit and generalised. These conceptual moves sound simple: but they could not be made without allowing fundamental aspects of traditional beliefs to come under threat.”<sup>78</sup> Not only traditional beliefs undergo change. Lloyd suggests that as concepts of “nature” and “causation” are made explicit and generalized as objects of inquiry and debate, they themselves begin to behave in different ways. By encroaching on the domain previously ceded to social agents, they encourage the conceptualization of new mechanisms of power to fill the space once occupied by the god’s weapons or his intentions. Thus, while the inquiry into nature is undoubtedly not independent of a given historical and cultural milieu, neither that milieu nor, for that matter, an “enlightened” grasp of the physical world can account for its particular conceptual momentum. This momentum can, in turn, have an impact on other assumptions. For, as much as every genre or inquiry has its own internal momentum, there is also interaction between mutually implicated spheres. That is, concepts developed in one domain may gain sufficient traction in another to spark divergent inquiries or hybridize popular ways of thinking.<sup>79</sup>

The physical body, I suggest, is such a concept.<sup>80</sup> It first takes shape as part of a process through which sixth- and fifth-century physicists are rethinking the unseen world and the relationships of power behind phenomenal states and events. Indeed, fragments and testimonia indicate that many of these thinkers

---

East, see Burkert 1983; 1992; and the essays in Horstmanshoff and Stol 2004. For Egyptian medicine, see von Staden 1989.1–31, with further bibliography at 3 nn.8–10.

<sup>77</sup> G. Lloyd 2002b warns against assuming strict parameters of specialization before Plato. But cf. Laks 2006.63–81.

<sup>78</sup> G. Lloyd 1979.265. See also G. Lloyd 1987.1–49; 1991b.

<sup>79</sup> See the comments on “speciation” at Allen 2006.193–94.

<sup>80</sup> I do not assume, however, that the physical body had a uniform impact throughout the Greek world. We know little about its influence beyond an elite clientele, although *On Regimen* assumes both an audience of leisure and one of people who cannot devote themselves full-time to their health. Still, evidence from other periods suggests that ideas about the body in a lay public are slow to change: see Duden 1991.37, 179–84. It is likely, then, that the impact of the physical body on our textual record exaggerates its impact on the Greek world as a whole.

engaged questions of biology and physiology, presumably within a macrocosm-microcosm framework like the one found in Plato's *Timaeus*. Aristotle observes that the best physicists ended their studies with an examination of medical principles.<sup>81</sup> But the very fact that Aristotle classifies these principles as medical suggests that, at least by the fourth century, medicine had acquired a special purchase on the question of where the inquiry into nature intersects the human. It is possible, then, to see the physical body as a concept first developed as part of a larger inquiry into nature and elaborated under the rubric of medicine.

From where we stand, there are at least two reasons to privilege medicine in an account of the physical body's emergence. The first is practical. Regrettably, only fragments remain from those who wrote on nature, and much of this evidence has been compromised by its transmission.<sup>82</sup> Medical writing, on the other hand, represents one of the largest corpora from the classical period, with some sixty texts from the fifth and fourth centuries BCE attributed to "Hippocrates" extant, although it is certain that these texts are from multiple authors, none of whom can be reliably identified as the historical Hippocrates.<sup>83</sup> The sheer volume of evidence offered by the corpus makes it an obvious resource for anyone trying to investigate early Greek ideas about the nature of the *sōma*.

But it is not simply by default of textual survival that medical writing is so important to understanding the physical body. Evidence from the late fifth century confirms what Aristotle implies about medicine's special claim to the body—namely, that physicians were establishing a degree of independence vis-à-vis those studying "the things up above and the things below the earth" and, at least in one case, establishing that independence on the grounds that only through medicine can one investigate "what a human being is" (ὅ τι ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος).<sup>84</sup> Medical treatises circulated widely; public debates on medical

<sup>81</sup> Arist. *Resp.* 480b26–30; *Sens.* 436a17–22. On biological and medical research in the inquiry into nature, see the overview in Jouanna 1999.262–68 and the relevant subchapters in Guthrie 1962–69.

<sup>82</sup> On the problems with the sources for early Greek philosophy, see Mansfeld 1999; Mejer 2006. For the use of the medical writers to make claims about Greek natural philosophy more generally, see G. Lloyd 1967.27–32; 1979.

<sup>83</sup> The earliest treatises of the Hippocratic Corpus are conventionally dated to the latter third of the fifth century: for the dating of individual treatises, see appendix 3 in Jouanna 1999. The prehistory of "Hippocrates" is a very old problem. The doxographers do not seem to have evidence for earlier medicine see, e.g., Plin. *NH* 29.1–2; Str. 14.2.19 for the later stories created to account for this lacuna. The author of the pseudo-Galenic *Definitiones medicae* appears to have been familiar with pre-Hippocratic texts but notes that they are few (Kühn 19.347). For references to earlier medical writings in works from the corpus, see *Acut.* 1–3 (Li 2.224–28, ch. 1 = 36,2–37,10 Joly); *Vict.* I 1 (Li 6.466–48 = 122,3–21 Joly-Byl). See also Jouanna 1974; W. Smith 1989.87–91. On the demise of the "Hippocratic Question," that is, the question of which treatises are by Hippocrates, see Edelstein 1967c; G. Lloyd 1975b. On the formation of the corpus in the Hellenistic period: W. Smith 1979.178–245.

<sup>84</sup> *VM* 1 (Li 1.572 = 119,7 Jouanna); 20 (Li 1.620 = 146,2 Jouanna). On "things up above . . ." see Pl. *Ap.* 23d5–6.

topics were common.<sup>85</sup> Crucial to both the autonomy and the authority of medicine was its status as a *tekhnē*, that is, a corpus of knowledge that enables our active intervention in the world to make it more amenable to our needs and desires, achieves predictable outcomes, explains why those outcomes occur or fail to occur, and may be communicated to others.<sup>86</sup> When we acknowledge that physicians play an important role in the emergence of the physical body, we are also acknowledging that the contours of this body are in part determined by its position as an object of technical knowledge and manipulation.

Physicians secure their authority over the nature of the *sōma* in part by claiming to understand the causes of its sufferings. They are also fascinated, however, by the space in the relationship of causes to effects that is open to disruption and intercalation, what the early twentieth-century thinker Eugène Dupréel referred to as the interval.<sup>87</sup> We can understand this interval in two ways. On the one hand, the physician himself occupies the interval when he intervenes in the processes of disease and health. These processes are imagined to be internal to the nature of the *sōma*; the *tekhnē* enables the physician to manipulate them intentionally. The key term here is “intentionally,” which signals the presence of an agent whose intelligence is in some sense discontinuous with both the *sōma*’s vital forces and the death drive of the disease. When the physician intervenes in the physical body, then, he is recuperating a place for agency within the cavity. In fact, in the classical period, the physician seems to represent a kind of idealized intelligent agency.<sup>88</sup> Such agency is then extended to the

<sup>85</sup> On the circulation of medical texts: X. *Mem.* 4.2.10. Aristophanes refers to a tribe of *iatrotekhnaí* at *Nu.* 332. On public debates and sophistic discussions about *phusis*, see *Gorg. Hel.* 13; *Pl. Prt.* 315c5–6; and G. Lloyd 1979.87 n.146; Thomas 2000.249–57.

<sup>86</sup> In Herodotus, Darius refers to medicine simply as [the] *tekhnē* (3.129–30, cited at Thomas 2000.41). Predictable outcomes: *Art.* 4–7 (Li 6.6–12 = 227,6–232,11 Jouanna); explanatory work: *Pl. Grg.* 465a2–6; *Arist. Metaph.* 981a28–30; teachable: *Art.* 9 (Li 6.16 = 235,7–8 Jouanna); *Arist. Metaph.* 981b8–10. See further Reeve 2000; Nussbaum 2001.94–99; Schiefsky 2005a.5–18. Mastery and manipulation are also important to those who wrote “on nature.” Heidegger’s opposition between “mastering knowledge” and the “essential knowing” of a thinker like Parmenides (1992.5–6; cf. 53, 86–87, 128) is, thus, misleading for early Greek philosophy, given that a number of Presocratics treat knowledge as something that benefits the knower as an instrument of well-being; see Kingsley 1995.217–32, 335–47, on Empedocles and the Pythagoreans, in particular. Yet the idea of beneficial knowledge appears to have been most closely associated with medicine—hence, the importance of medical analogy. The idea that wisdom has no practical benefit is fully articulated in Aristotle (*Metaph.* 982b11–21); see Nightingale 2004.187–252.

<sup>87</sup> “There is always, between our two terms, a place for something intercalated, for the unexpected, for what is not given by the specific relationship of causality that links one term to the other” (Dupréel 1933.11, my translation). The interval, as Dupréel defines it, cannot be so small that there is no recognizable difference or threshold that distinguishes cause from effect or so large that there is no way to maintain a plausible connection between the two events. The concept of indeterminacy within causal series, and particularly microphysical contingency within living beings, was a popular subject of inquiry in the first part of the twentieth century; see Čapek 1992.

<sup>88</sup> See, e.g., *Arist. Metaph.* 1032b6–9, where the physician models the ability to reason inferentially and apply that reasoning to produce a desired result (i.e., health).

embodied patient through the practices of self-care (*epimeleia*) that flourish in the fifth and fourth centuries.

On the other hand, however, if physicians build the *tekhnē* on the idea that there is something to master, they also recognize that their quarry may at any moment slip away. Physicians face a number of obstacles in their attempts to bind effects to causes: the opacity of the *sōma*, the infinite variability of bodily constitutions, the fluid dynamics of the humors, and so on. Each body contains factors (existing levels of a humor, a patient's constitution) that help or hinder the disease. Interposed between catalyst and symptom, physical bodies are spaces of multiple possibilities that exceed what medicine can map. The *sōma* is, then, not simply an object of rational control but also something that evades control.

The *sōma* thus contributes to a concept of vulnerability that is different from that limned in Hesiod's *Works and Days*. It is not because of the god's anger or malicious *daimones* that we suffer—the world, it turns out, is rather indifferent to us. Our susceptibility to pain is due, rather, to the potentially harmful things unstably configured inside us; it is compounded by the fact we cannot see what is happening to us and, hence, avert disaster. While the *tekhnē* can manage these problems, it can also fail; and in failing, it challenges not only the physician's authority but also the capacity of embodied subjects to control their own physicality. In sum, the physical body materializes in medicine as an object of epistemic and technical control and yet is unstable, inhuman, daemonic. It may be because the narratives taking shape around the *sōma* in medical writing are so rich that it acquires such a powerful capacity for cultural provocation.<sup>89</sup>

The notion of cultural provocation raises the question of the impact of the physical body outside medicine. Earlier, I asked whether contemporary scholars are talking about *sōma* when they talk about the body in the ancient world; and if so, to what extent is *sōma* defined in physical terms. What I provisionally propose in response is this: to the extent the person in the classical *polis* is defined as an ethical subject through his proprietary relationship to his *sōma*, as Halperin and others have argued, this relationship is transformed by concerns about physicality in the latter part of the fifth century.<sup>90</sup> Consider, for example, the second book of Thucydides' *Histories*: the autarchic *sōma* (τὸ σῶμα αὐτάρκης, 2.41), here with the sense primarily of person, features prominently in Pericles' praise of the Athenian citizen, only to resurface ten chapters later in the account of the plague as an ideal that fails to be upheld by doctors: "No

<sup>89</sup> Gillian Beer makes this point about nineteenth-century evolutionary theory: "The multiplicity of stories implicit in evolution was *in itself* an element in its power over the cultural imagination: what mattered was not only the specific stories it told, but the fact that it told many and diverse ones" (2000.106, emphasis in original). See also Kurke 1999.334: "It is the messiness of practice that gives it such power and endurance."

<sup>90</sup> Similar arguments have been proposed about Greek sculpture: representations of the human form (not necessarily identified as *sōma*) may have been influenced by emerging notions of the physical body in the fifth century: see Leftwich 1995; Métraux 1995.

*sōma*, strong or weak, showed itself autarchic in the face of the disease, which seized all alike, even those treated with every kind of regimen” (σώμα τε αὐταρκες ὄν οὐδὲν διεφάνη πρὸς αὐτὸ ἰσχύος πέρι ἢ ἀσθενείας, ἀλλὰ πάντα ξυγγήρει καὶ τὰ πάση διαίτη θεραπευόμενα, 2.51).<sup>91</sup> Thucydides here stages the collapse of the autarchic *sōma* from inside a worldview that has imbued concepts of the person with physicality. For, in pointing to the limits of medicine’s power in the face of the plague, he is also acknowledging it, together with the body assumed by medicine.<sup>92</sup> In this context, Thucydides is interested in Athenian citizens, for whom the plague poses a specific and unexpected threat, realized through the physical body, to the ideal of autarchy. If we expand our focus, we find that the threat to autarchy could be attributed to the very nature of the *sōma*: by the late fifth century, the identities of those excluded from full personhood—women, slaves, barbarians—are being increasingly understood in terms of the difficulty or impossibility of mastering the daemonic tendencies in their bodies, while the identities of free men grow more dependent on their capacity for keeping the body under control. In order to understand the concerns about self-mastery that have been brought to light by much recent work in classics on the ancient Greek body, we need a better grasp of how these concerns are influenced by a concept of the physical body.

The body that slips away finds a natural home on the tragic stage. Tragedians necessarily rely on symptoms to realize pain and madness in dramatic space. Over the course of the fifth century, however, they expand the referential field of these symptoms to encompass not only a magico-religious worldview but the world of the physicians as well. This expansion is particularly evident in Euripides, who, I argue, turns symptoms in tragedies like the *Heracles*, the *Orestes*, and the *Hippolytus* into charged sites of overdetermination that attract explanations involving both daemonic agents and daemonic innards and natures. This is not to say that in Euripides “the gods have become diseases.”<sup>93</sup> Rather, through stories of disease and madness, Euripides engages the implications of incorporating the daemonic into human nature alongside the implications of blaming our suffering on the gods. In doing so, he makes full use of the breadth of poetic imagination, its capacity to blur and entangle different versions of the real, and, most important, tragedy’s drive to pursue the *meaning* of suffering in all its chaotic complexity.

The physical body assumes what is arguably its most tragic role not onstage but in an author whose suspicion of tragedy is widely known: Plato. In the *Ti-maeus*, usually placed among Plato’s latest dialogues, the *sōma* is described as a composite thing, “always gaining or losing something,” exposed to strong

<sup>91</sup> Loraux 1997.235 brilliantly equates this lost body with the hidden interior of the citizen body.

<sup>92</sup> Craik 2001b shows that, despite Thucydides’ well-known skepticism about the causes of the Athenian plague, his description of it is shaped by humoral pathology. For references to regimen and mastery of the body, see Th. 6.15, 8.45. On Thucydides and Hippocratic medicine, there is a vast bibliography: see Craik 2001b.102–4 nn.1, 3–4.

<sup>93</sup> Carl Jung’s complaint against modern literature, cited in Calasso 2001.169.

powers that “dissolve it . . . and make it waste away by bringing on diseases and old age,” and necessarily subject to strong motions (perception, love, fear, anger), motions that must be mastered if our lives are to have value (33a2–6, 42a3–b2). Although it is a necessary condition of human life, the *sōma* is described by Plato as alien to our true nature, akin, rather, to what is feminine and bestial.<sup>94</sup> Its strangeness makes it an important resource as he tries to explain why humans fail to flourish, even as his commitment to the Socratic idea that we err through ignorance of the good leads him to develop an increasingly complex model of the *psukhē* and its diseases.<sup>95</sup>

Understood in terms of its threatening physicality, the body can seem remarkably familiar. It is not hard to see why. Plato, after all, is often placed at the origin of the body-soul problem and its close cousin, the mind-body problem, both problems we are still living with.<sup>96</sup> Yet it may be just because the Platonic body has had such a lasting impact on the Western philosophical and religious traditions that it has influenced the way we see the pre-Platonic world. Recall how easily the body falls into place in Snell’s account of the discovery of the mind. Its anticlimactic arrival can be understood in part by the fact that there has always been a body waiting in the wings, not *the* body (timeless, real) but something like the body in Plato, or at least the body traditionally called Platonic. That is, if the body developed and transmitted by Plato’s dialogues remains internal to our understanding of the body, it may have obscured its own historical emergence.<sup>97</sup>

It is Plato himself who models how to forget about the physical body. In the *Philebus*, another late dialogue, Socrates asks whether everything having to do with the *sōma* could ever just stop happening: no hunger and thirst, no pleasure and pain, no change at all (42d9–10). Protarchus, his interlocutor, can hardly imagine such a scenario, convinced as he is by the physicists that embodied life is nothing but flux. So Socrates finds another way out: everything in us might always be going “up and down,” but this endless becoming will escape our notice if its peaks and valleys are leveled. It is possible, in other words, to cultivate a kind of *lēthē*, “amnesia,” about the *sōma*.<sup>98</sup> But the very idea that the *sōma* could be forgotten in this way should flag our attention. For, by assuming that the body can be kept to a murmur largely submerged below the threshold of

<sup>94</sup> On the *sōma* as foreign to us, see, e.g., *Phd.* 114e1–3.

<sup>95</sup> Plato sometimes lays the blame for error and disorder on the *sōma*, sometimes on the lower parts of the *psukhē* ruled by appetite, pleasure, and pain: see below, chapter 5, n.31.

<sup>96</sup> E.g., Spelman 1982; Leder 1990.3; Grosz 1994.5. Carone 2005a.229, 231, with nn.7, 13, cites examples of this positioning of Plato within the analytic tradition. See also Dillon 1995 on the afterlife of Plato’s ideas about the body in Platonism.

<sup>97</sup> It is worth noting that “Platonic dualism” is often an oversimplification. Plato’s ideas about the body and the soul are fluid and complex: see the overview in T. Robinson 2000.

<sup>98</sup> The verb that Socrates uses to describe how a process like growth escapes the notice of the living being is *λανθάνω* (43b3). Cf. 33d2–34a5: in truth, Socrates says, this is not a kind of forgetting (*λήθη*), because one cannot forget what has never happened, but, rather, insensitivity (*ἀναίσθησια*) to the body.

consciousness, Plato shows himself to be already embedded in the conceptual-imaginative framework that I have been sketching. But because this framework has remained largely below the threshold of our own historical consciousness, what is needed is a process of *a-lētheia*, understood in the sense of non-forgetting, where it is not the “real” body brought to light but, rather, the physical body *qua* conceptual object.<sup>99</sup> The following chapters aim to contribute to this process. But before turning to them, I would like to circle back to Snell’s account of the discovery of dualism to sketch an alternative framework for thinking about the respective roles of *sōma* and *psukhē* in this “discovery” and, specifically, the prehistory of *sōma*.

### RETHINKING SŌMA AND PSUKHĒ

In *The Discovery of the Mind*, the *sōma* that appears when the mind is discovered is peripheral and inert. Snell is not the only scholar to have accorded the *sōma* so little importance, nor is his indifference a thing of the past.<sup>100</sup> Even for those who do not accept Snell’s evolutionary tale, it has long been standard practice to give the development of the *psukhē* credit for the birth of philosophy’s subject of reason or the flowering of the individual in the West. These genealogies have treated the *sōma* as virtually invisible. Nevertheless, as in Snell, they take a concept of the body for granted, insofar as they assume that a transformative notion of soul requires a robust concept of dualism.

The significance of dualism to changing concepts of the soul can be explained in part by recalling that, already in Homer, the *psukhē* is essentially born of a split: it flies away at the moment of death, leaving the corpse behind. But it is also true that scholarship on the archaic period is often shadowed by what lies ahead. A sense of teleology (material to immaterial, concrete to abstract) is particularly strong in narratives of the discovery of the soul, which, in anticipating the moment when the body-soul divide becomes “self-evident,” approach the body as something to transcend.<sup>101</sup> In his first chapter, for example, Snell sets

<sup>99</sup> On *alētheia* and unveiling, see Heidegger 1992; Detienne 1996.

<sup>100</sup> Michael Clarke, for example, after a lengthy and sensitive study whose main premise is the absence of a body-soul distinction in Homer, concludes by following Snell in assuming that “the new category of ‘soul’ will march with a new category of ‘body’” (1999,315). See also Williams 1993,26: “We do indeed have a concept of the body, and we agree that each of us has a body. We do not, *pace* Plato, Descartes, Christianity, and Snell, all agree that we each have a soul. Soul is, in a sense, a more speculative or theoretical conception than body.” David Claus, to whose powerful suggestion that the body helps shape the soul through the figure of medical analogy I return below, writes that, “because ψυχή is the word that in time allows human life to be characterized as a composite of body and soul, its history is central to one of the most important and influential achievements of Greek thought” (1981.1). See also Laks 1999,253; Hankinson 2006.41.

<sup>101</sup> Self-evident: Snell 1953,17, cited above, n.21. Material to immaterial: e.g., Renehan 1980. Concrete to abstract: Onians 1954; Furley 1956,1–2. See also Nilsson 1941,1–2: “I cannot give up the historical development of humanity from lower to ever higher stages.”

out to show that Homer “was *not yet* capable of understanding the soul as basically opposed to the body.”<sup>102</sup> Homer, on Snell’s reading, is hampered in two ways. Because he lacks awareness of the body and the soul as natural complements, he gives us heroes who are nothing but fragmented aggregates; however, if the definition of the soul requires us to recognize not-body, then “body” must be logically prior to soul: it is *all there is* before soul. Here, body describes not an organic unity but, rather, the corporeality that constrains Homer’s understanding of the person. Bereft of a soul concept, Homer represents thought, emotion, and perception as continuous with other human faculties and experiences. Some scholars have taken this to mean that Homer’s heroes are more, rather than less, unified.<sup>103</sup> For Snell, however, unity arises only when corporeality has been disciplined by being restricted to the body. The discovery of the mind thus imposes both an overarching unity on the aggregate of parts and a limit to the materiality of the self.

Snell’s stance reflects a broader interest among historians in a soul defined against the material limits of the person. At least since Erwin Rohde published *Psyche: Seelencult und Unsterblichkeitsglaube der Griechen* in 1894, stories of how the pale Homeric soul is transformed from *Totengeist* to true self have foregrounded the transcendental aspirations of Orphism and Pythagoreanism.<sup>104</sup> Different scholars have stressed different factors associated with the mystery cults: a developed idea of personal survival after death, a heightened sense of moral accountability in the afterlife, an interest in purifying practices in life, and exposure to shamanistic techniques of mental dissociation.<sup>105</sup> Yet they largely concur that these cults privilege an ethereal soul and its life beyond death over embodied life. In what Rohde takes as a watershed passage in the history of the soul, Pindar describes the *sōma* as subject to overpowering death, while a “living *eidōlon* of life remains, for it alone is from the gods.” During life, Pindar goes on, this *eidōlon*, “image,” slumbers while the limbs are active and reveals the future during sleep (fr. 131b S–M). Moreover, many fifth-century thinkers associated with the inquiry into nature seem to have conceived of mind as uniquely fine and mobile stuff, qualities that imbue it with the capacity for intelligence and perhaps survival beyond death.<sup>106</sup> Empedocles, for example,

<sup>102</sup> Snell 1953.69, emphasis added.

<sup>103</sup> E.g., Clarke 1999.

<sup>104</sup> Rohde 1925 (English translation of the eighth edition). See also Hirzel 1914.29–30; Burnet 1916; Nilsson 1941; Jaeger 1947.73–89 (with the criticisms of Vlastos 1952.117–18); Dodds 1951.135–78; Furley 1956.4, 10–11; Burkert 1972.134 n.78, 136; Vernant 1983.381–85. A recent survey of mind-body dualism in Plato takes for granted the dominant “Orphic” genealogy of the Platonic soul, locating the care of the soul within this framework (T. Robinson 2000.37–38).

<sup>105</sup> On shamanism, see esp. Dodds 1951.140–56, with the cautionary remarks of Burkert 1972.164–65 and Bremmer 1983.24–39, 43–53.

<sup>106</sup> See Renehan 1980.111–27. Renehan disputes, however, that there is a genuine opposition between materiality (or corporeality) and immateriality (or incorporeality) in the Presocratics (and in all pre-Platonic thinkers) on the grounds that they lack concepts of body and matter as spatial extension (118–19, with n.33). Renehan’s main target here is H. Gomperz 1932, who claimed to

makes reference to a holy *phrēn*, “mind,” that survives multiple incarnations (DK31 B134).<sup>107</sup> Beliefs in the special nature of mind, such as we find in the fragments of Anaxagoras, have suggested to some that it might stand apart from the physical self—perhaps even in life—as easily as the *psukhē* distances itself from the corpse in the Homeric poems.

What is interesting, however, is that *psukhē* is not the standard term in these contexts: Pindar speaks of *eidōlon*; Empedocles, of *phrēn* and also *daimōn*; Anaxagoras, of *nous*. *Psukhē* does appear in relationship to metempsychosis, as well as in the fragments of Heraclitus, who uses it to designate that with which we grasp the *logos* of the entire physical world.<sup>108</sup> Nevertheless, we have very little evidence about the appearance of a new transcendental soul or mind concept in the late archaic period and even less evidence that it was identified with *psukhē*.<sup>109</sup> The standard story, then, according to which intuitions of the immateriality of the soul drive new concepts of the self, while the body is simply there, solid and passive, is largely speculative. This is not intended as an argument from silence: Plato’s eschatological views, for example, undoubtedly owe much to the Orphic-Pythagorean tradition.<sup>110</sup> My claim, rather, is that the lacunose nature of our evidence has combined with preconceived ideas of corporeality and incorporeality—sometimes allied with the Cartesian opposition between *res extensa* and *res cogitans*, sometimes with Christian doctrines of resurrection and the intellectual puzzles to which they gave rise—to create a situation where the body-soul dualism that becomes dominant in the West, a dualism organized by concerns about materiality, is mysteriously discovered when history is not looking. This situation has kept us from investigating whether this dualism and the definitions of *sōma* and *psukhē* that it makes possible are part of a complex historical process for which we have more evidence

---

have found pre-Platonic uses of ἀσώματος with the sense of incorporeality: see esp. Renehan 1980.119–27; see also Huffman 1993.411–14, arguing that Philol. [DK44] B22, one of Gomperz’s examples, is spurious.

<sup>107</sup> On Empedocles’ relationship to mystery cults and Pythagoreanism, see Kingsley 1995.

<sup>108</sup> Metempsychosis: Xenoph. (DK21) B7, usually taken as referring to Pythagoras; see also Hdt. 2.123 and the discussion in Burkert 1972.120–36. For Heraclitus, see esp. DK22 B45; B85; B107; B115, with Nussbaum 1972. Two other Presocratic fragments featuring *psukhē* are problematic. Aristotle (*De an.* 405a19–21 = DK11 A22) attributes to Thales the idea that *psukhē* is a cause of motion (κίνητικόν τι), but Clarke 1995.297–98 persuasively argues that Aristotle supplies *psukhē* where Thales refers to *theos*. The representation of *psukhē* as a hegemonic principle at Anaximenes (DK13) B2 is also suspect: see Claus 1981.122–25.

<sup>109</sup> The origins of the doctrines on reincarnation, for example, “are lost in obscurity” (Schibli 1990.107–8, with bibliography at n.10). See also Claus 1981.111–21, downplaying eschatological influences in the prehistory of Platonic dualism. There is a further question of how well eschatologically oriented theories of the soul articulated its relationship to the body: see Arist. *De an.* 407b15–26 (mentioning the Pythagoreans by name). The well-known σῶμα-σῆμα pun attributed to the Orphics by Plato (*Cra.* 400b9–c9; *Grg.* 493a1–3) gives little indication of how they might have specified the body’s relationship to the soul.

<sup>110</sup> See Kingsley 1995.79–171, 328–30; Bernabé 2007. On Plato and Pythagoreanism more generally, see Burkert 1972.15–28, 83–96.

than we think. If we allow that the concept of the *sōma* has a history, we can see how the *sōma* itself helps to shape different ideas of what lies “beyond” its boundaries in the fifth and fourth centuries, and particularly the idea of a *psukhē* seen as the locus of reason, perceiving and sensing, emotion, desire, beliefs, value judgments, and intentional actions—in short, a *psukhē* understood as the locus of ethical subjectivity defined by the imperative to live well.

But how much history do we want to grant the *sōma*? After all, given the state of the evidence, it is hazardous to make claims about the meaning of *sōma* before the fifth century. Nevertheless, it is worth revisiting the debate about early concepts of the *sōma* if only to draw attention to an unexamined tension within its arguments that can shed light on later concepts of the *sōma*. Snell, we can recall, claims that, for Homer, *sōma* means corpse. His critics have countered that the idea of *sōma* as a (living) body “plain and simple . . . as bulk” or “as a lump” is, indeed, available to Homer; the poet, or, rather, the tradition, simply has no use for it.<sup>111</sup> They have asked how, if *sōma* does mean corpse in Homer, it could have migrated so easily into the sphere of life.<sup>112</sup> This last question is a good one. Yet it is hard to see how we get around the problem posed by *sōma*’s undeniably morbid connotations in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* by making “living body” a possible meaning of *sōma* for Homer. Rather, we will have only displaced the problem: *sōma* becomes a point of tension between life and death in our earliest evidence. In fact, on inspection, this seems to be the case.

Let us begin with the passages where Snell’s critics have argued that *sōma* could mean living body. In one of these passages, from the *Odyssey*, Circe, explaining to Odysseus the treacherous passage past the Planktai, describes the sea as thick with the wreckage of ships and the *sōmata* of mortals. These *sōmata* might be alive. Yet, in aligning them with the planks of broken ships, the poet does little to suggest intact survivors.<sup>113</sup> We can better grasp the word’s meaning by considering its two other appearances in the poem. In one case, *sōma* refers to the body of Elpenor, who, unbeknownst to his companions, falls off a roof to his death on Circe’s island (11.53); in another, it refers to the suitors’ unburied, unmourned corpses (24.187). These passages suggest that *sōma* is used of dead bodies that have been abandoned, forgotten, or are otherwise *akēdea*, “uncared for.” It looks like a fitting term, then, for corpses lost at sea.<sup>114</sup>

<sup>111</sup> Bulk: Renehan 1979.278. Lump: West 1978.295. The philological critique is partly strategic, because no amount of ingenuity has made the one word that would decisively eliminate the fragmentation of the Homeric hero, that is, *psukhē*, mean “self” in Homer. Arguments focused on the mind-soul-self thus tend to reject lexical analysis: against Snell’s strong “lexical bias,” see Gaskin 1990.2–5; Halliwell 1990.37–38. Conversely, Renehan 1979.272 argues that a rebuttal of Snell’s claims about *sōma* on philological grounds would weaken, if not refute, his entire argument about the fragmentation of the Homeric hero.

<sup>112</sup> Hirzel 1914.7; Herter 1957.209–10; West 1978.295; Renehan 1979.271.

<sup>113</sup> See *Od.* 12.67: πῖνακας τε νεῶν καὶ σώματα φωτῶν. Notice the parallel construction: noun plus dependent genitive. Cf. Koller 1958.277; Renehan 1979.272.

<sup>114</sup> On κῆδος in epic: Lynn-George 1996.

In a second passage whose meaning has been deemed ambiguous, this time from the *Iliad*, Menelaus comes upon Paris and rejoices like a lion happening upon a great *sōma*, a stag or a wild goat.<sup>115</sup>

τὸν δ' ὥς οὖν ἐνόησεν ἀρηϊφίλος Μενέλαος  
 ἐρχόμενον προπάροιθεν ὀμίλου μακρὰ βιβάντα,  
 ὥς τε λέων ἐχάρη μεγάλῳ ἐπὶ σώματι κύρσας,  
 εὐρῶν ἢ ἔλαφον κεραδὸν ἢ ἄγριον αἶγα  
 πεινάων· μάλα γάρ τε κατεσθείη, εἴ περ ἂν αὐτὸν  
 σεύωνται ταχέες τε κύνες θαλεροί τ' αἰζηοί·  
 ὥς ἐχάρη Μενέλαος Ἀλέξανδρον θεοειδέα  
 ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἰδῶν.

(*Il.* 3.21–28)

Now as soon as Menelaus the warlike caught sight of him making his way with long strides out in front of the army, he was glad, like a lion who comes on a mighty carcass, in his hunger chancing upon the *sōma* of a horned stag or wild goat; who eats it eagerly, although against him are hastening the hounds in their speed and the stalwart young men: thus Menelaus was happy finding godlike Alexandros there in front of his eyes.

Snell's critics, wondering why Paris would be likened to dead meat, have argued that the *sōma* here is still living. Yet the simile is primarily targeting affinities between Menelaus and the lion: bloodlust and unexpected good fortune in the hunt.<sup>116</sup> Although we cannot rule out the possibility that the felled stag or goat is still breathing, the most salient characteristic of *sōma* is that it is edible.

Edibility, like the idea of being “uncared for,” may be more than incidentally important to the meaning of *sōma* in the Homeric poems. For the word does not simply denote “corpse,” for which Homer overwhelmingly prefers *nekus* and *nekros*. Nor does *sōma*, which occurs only eight times in both epics combined, function as the natural complement of *psukhē*.<sup>117</sup> *Sōma* cues, rather, a world markedly indifferent to the human and defined, especially in the *Iliad*, by animality (*sōma*, but not *nekus* or *nekros*, is used of animals, as we have just seen).

<sup>115</sup> See also *Il.* 18.161; [Hes.] *Sc.* 426–28. Critics have wavered on whether the *sōma* here is alive or dead: see esp. Herter 1957. See also Redfield 1994.279 n.46: “*Soma* is used of a living body only when it is the prey of animals,” with Koller 1958, who derives *sōma* from σίνομαι, “to plunder,” and Merkelbach 1975.222.

<sup>116</sup> See Lonsdale 1990.50, emphasizing the repetition of ἐχάρη (23, 27).

<sup>117</sup> *Il.* 3.23, 7.79, 18.161, 22.342, 23.169; *Od.* 11.53, 12.67, 24.187. There are two passages where *sōma* and *psukhē* are found in close proximity (*Od.* 11.51–54, 24.186–91). In both cases, *psukhai* in Hades complain about their unburied *sōmata*: the stress here is on the denial of burial. Vernant's (1991c.63; 1991d.84) use of *sōma* as a generic term for corpse opposed to the *psukhē* in Homer or made into “the” body that is created at the moment of death is thus misleading.

*Sōma* is thus a charged term. Its force is perhaps most evident in one of the *Iliad*'s culminating scenes when Hector, mortally wounded, supplicates Achilles not to feed him to the dogs but to return his *sōma* to his parents (22.338–43). This request is remarkably foreshadowed in book 7. Proposing a duel to settle the war, Hector sets the following terms: if he should die, his opponent has the right to strip his armor, but he must return the *sōma* to the Trojans for a proper burial (7.76–80). Hector's words may have been deliberately jarring to the audience: this is the only time in the *Iliad*—with the notable exception of 22.342—that *sōma* is used of a dead human body. In any event, when Hector repeats the request in book 22, Achilles' shocking refusal brings out the word's dark undertones: "I wish only that my spirit and fury would drive me to hack your meat away and eat it raw for the things that you have done to me" (αἶ γάρ πῶς αὐτόν με μένος καὶ θυμὸς ἀνείη / ὧμ' ἀποταμνόμενον κρέα ἔδμεναι, οἶα μ' ἔοργας, 22.346–47).

Flesh denied burial is *the* raw nerve of the *Iliad*'s final books.<sup>118</sup> In exploring the idea of a death beyond a death—a death, that is, that comes from denying the hero the posthumous rites that memorialize his death and confer social recognition on it—the poet appears to accord *sōma* particular weight. Whereas the *psukhē* or the *eidōlon* preserves the visible identity of the person (but lacks solidity and density), *sōma* occupies the point when form is yielding to formlessness. It is closely related to the idea of flesh that passes into an animal economy (dogs, worms, birds, fish), an economy vividly described by Jean-Pierre Vernant:

To hand someone over to wild animals does not mean only to deprive him of the status of a dead man by preventing his funeral. It is also to dissolve him into confusion and return him to chaos, utter nonhumanity. In the belly of the beasts that have devoured him, he becomes the flesh and blood of wild animals, and there is no longer the slightest appearance or trace of humanity: he is no longer in any way a person.<sup>119</sup>

The "utter nonhumanity" awaiting the corpse denied care is the fate of the *sōma*.

Both the corpse and the animal remain relevant to the semantic field of *sōma* in the later archaic and classical periods.<sup>120</sup> Yet this field appears messier as we accumulate evidence. The word *sōma* seems to lose its fraught relation-

<sup>118</sup> Segal 1971.36–41 notes the crescendo of animal images in book 22. See also Lonsdale 1990.90–102; Redfield 1994.167–69, 193–203; Bouvier 2005.

<sup>119</sup> Vernant 1991c.71–72. It is in the belly of the animal that the hero encounters the most radical version of the thingness that Simone Weil described as the product of force in the *Iliad*: "To define force—it is that *x* that turns anybody who is subjected into it into a *thing*. Exercised to the limit, it turns man into a thing in the most literal sense: it makes a corpse out of him. Somebody was here, and the next minute there is nobody here at all; this is a spectacle the *Iliad* never wearies of showing us" (2005.3, emphasis in original). Given these associations, it seems unlikely that *sōma* expresses personhood in Homer, as Hirzel 1914.5–8 argues.

<sup>120</sup> Animals (both dead and alive): e.g., A. Pr. 463; E. Cyc. 225; Hdt. 2.39–40; Pi. N. 3.47; S. OC 1568.

ship to the ritual recuperation of the dead person, readily designating what is covered by earth or burned on the pyre.<sup>121</sup> It is used in poetry and inscriptions as a foil to more ethereal and intangible entities: *psukhē*, but also *pneuma*, “air, breath”; *aretē*, “virtue”; and *noos*, “mind.”<sup>122</sup>

There is, moreover, another, more serious challenge to the semantic boundaries of *sōma* that have been inferred from the Homeric evidence, a challenge that undercuts the diachronic orientation of Snell’s account. Regardless of whether Homer can use *sōma* to designate the living body, Hesiod uses it in just this sense in the *Works and Days*, dated to the late eighth century BCE. He exhorts his audience to put on a cloak in the winter so that the hairs all over the *sōma* will not bristle, an exhortation found in a broadly “animalistic” context—Hesiod is talking about how various species withstand the winter cold—but one where animals are unambiguously alive.<sup>123</sup> In 1974, when the Cologne Epode, attributed to the seventh-century BCE poet Archilochus, was published, it offered further archaic evidence of *sōma* as living body (in this case as an object of the narrator’s sexual predation).<sup>124</sup> Later material expands our sense of the living *sōma*. *Sōma* offers a surface for paint, oil, and perfume.<sup>125</sup> It drips with sweat.<sup>126</sup> It is endowed with strength and courage, gifts that flee in old age.<sup>127</sup> It can be embraced or struck.<sup>128</sup>

In these examples, *sōma* feels like a more ordinary word than it does in Homer. And the references to the living *sōma* in Hesiod and Archilochus should make us uneasy about creating a history of the word’s semantic field on the

<sup>121</sup> For the *sōma* prepared for or associated with burial: And. 1.138; E. *HF* 703; *IT* 633; Hdt. 2.86, 4.71. On the pyre: E. *IT* 1155; *Supp.* 1019, 1211; Pi. *N.* 9.23; S. *El.* 758; *Tr.* 1197. See also the expression *nektrōn sōmata* at E. *Pho.* 1563; *Supp.* 358; *Tro.* 599. If the *sōma* is unburied (E. *Supp.* 62) or abused (S. *Ant.* 1198), it is explicitly identified as such.

<sup>122</sup> See Bacch. 3.91 (ἀρετή); E. *Supp.* 534 (πνεῦμα); fr. 734K (= *Temenos* fr. 7 J.-V.L.) (ἀρετή); and the epigram for the dead of Potideia (*IG* 1<sup>3</sup> 1179 II): αἰθήρ μὲν ψυχὰς ὑπεδέχαστο, σῶμα[τα δὲ χθόν] τὸνδε (the aether received the souls of these men, the earth their bodies). One of the earliest “mind-body” oppositions is found in the Theognidea, at fr. 649–50 (*W*<sup>2</sup>): ἄ δειλὴ Πενίη, τί ἐμοῖς ἐπικειμένη ὦμοις / σῶμα καταισχύνας καὶ νόον ἡμέτερον (oh wretched Poverty, why lying on the shoulders do you shame our body and mind?). It is interesting to compare these lines to *Od.* 10.239–40, where Circe turns Odysseus’s men into swine (οἱ δὲ συῶν μὲν ἔχον κεφαλὰς φωνήν τε τρίχας τε / καὶ δέμας, αὐτὰρ νοῦς ἦν ἔμπεδος [they had the head, voice, hair, and build of pigs, but the mind was firm]). That *nous* in the *Odyssey* passage is set against an aggregate (head-voice-hair-*demas*) lends support to the claim that Homer does not recognize *sōma* as an appropriate term for the living body. Clarke 1999.118 arrives at a similar conclusion.

<sup>123</sup> Hes. *Op.* 539–40; the *sōma* at [Hes.] *Sc.* 426 is also quite clearly alive. On clothing the *sōma*: e.g., A. *Pers.* 199; E. *Cyc.* 330; *El.* 544; Hdt. 7.61.

<sup>124</sup> Archil. fr. 196a.51 (*W*<sup>2</sup>). Merkelbach 1975 tried to adapt the idea of “prey” to the new Archilochean evidence. The result was an inadvertently feminist reading of the poem, in which the speaker’s treatment of the girl turns her into a mere object (222). Slings 1975 is skeptical and takes the Archilochean passage as one of the oldest attestations of *sōma* as living body.

<sup>125</sup> Cephisod. fr. 3.1 (*PCG*); Hdt. 1.195, 4.191, 7.69.

<sup>126</sup> E. *Ba.* 620; Hdt. 3.125.

<sup>127</sup> Strength: E. *Rh.* 382; Hdt. 1.31; Th. 7.75. Loss of strength in old age: S. *OC* 610.

<sup>128</sup> Embrace: E. *El.* 1325; *Ion* 519; S. *OC* 200. Struck: A. *Th.* 896; Antiphon 3.4; Hdt. 6.117.

basis of the Homeric poems alone. What these poems give us, however, is the sense of coiled possibility inside the word *sōma*. They embed the *sōma* in a web of concerns—about formlessness and disintegration, vulnerability and our need for care, animality and interincorporation, and the “mute earth” (κωφή γαῖα, *Il.* 24.54) that swallows up the human—that may be more or less urgently expressed in other texts. In the classical sources, for example, *sōma* is often bound to the idea of life at risk. The threat may be external. But it may also arise from the nature of the *sōma* itself. In fact, I suggest that in the classical period, the physical body that emerges in biological and medical contexts realizes the semantic possibilities inherent in the Homeric usage while transferring the scene of their realization from the corpse to the living body.

From this perspective, we can imagine the world to which the Homeric *sōma* is condemned as a kind of precursor to the worlds described by the physicists, worlds populated by composite bodies caught up in intercorporeal flux. If, as I argue, the physical body emerges as the primary site through which human beings are *necessarily* implicated in such a world, then we can see that body as the site where the tension in Homer between the integrity of the person and the collapse into formlessness at death comes to be managed *in life*. Of course, in Homer, too, the living person is porous, caught in a field of forces trafficked between the mortal and immortal worlds; the self is forged in part through encounters with these forces, which are often expressed as daemonic intentions. It is therefore possible to understand the heirs to these intentions as the various stuffs and forces that impinge upon the physical body in medicine. Yet this is not the whole story. For, with the arrival of the physical body, the nonhuman abyss represented by the unburied corpse in Homer encroaches upon the living, not simply as a foreign element, but as the hollow, hidden core of the person. That is, the cavity becomes the ground of the physical body's ongoing struggle to maintain life against the constant threat of disorder, loss of self, and death, a threat posed not just by things coming into the cavity but by the things always inside it. Whereas the dead *sōma* in epic requires a single act of care to rescue it from disintegration, the physical body will demand constant attention in order to maintain its integrity. So great is its demand for care that it eventually comes to rival concerns about the wishes and the intentions of the gods.

If the physical body takes on elements of what Vernant calls “utter non-humanity,” it is not only the boundary between that body and the world that matters but also the boundary between the cavity and the sentient, thinking, social person. The medical writers routinely acknowledge this boundary in distinguishing between the *sōma* and *ho anthrōpos*, the “person” or “the human being.” Yet, in their attempts to explain not only seizures and coughs but also cognition, emotion, and character in terms of the humors, they often treat that boundary as negligible. Perhaps because of the physicians' relative indifference to this boundary, thinkers outside medicine in the later fifth century begin to imagine an object of care that is both like and unlike the physical body. Some of them begin to call this part of a human being, responsive to words and images

and subject to its own diseases, *psukhē*. Around this object a new kind of care begins to unfold in the late fifth century, catalyzed by a medical analogy that becomes integral to philosophical ethics in antiquity.

The medical analogy in one sense reverses the conventional arc of dualist genealogy by granting creative force to the physical body. The importance of that body has been stressed by David Claus who, having tracked the idea of the *psukhē* as “life-force” from Homer to Plato, concludes that the eventual understanding of the *psukhē* as an ethical-psychological agent may be indebted to “the development of an oblique analogy between body and soul by which rationalistic ideas of the body and its φύσις are transferred to the soul.”<sup>129</sup> Yet because Claus remains focused on the soul, rather than the body, he does not elaborate this suggestion. As a result, the idea of the physical body as a generative concept vis-à-vis the soul remains a tantalizing hypothesis.

But analogy does not simply reverse the traditional story in which soul generates body. It also troubles the very notion of linear development by foregrounding the dynamic interaction of sameness and difference, rather than simple opposition, in the relationship between body and soul. Inquiries into the nature of the soul, undertaken in part to establish its difference from the body, end up restaging concerns about the fragility of the human in a physical world, thereby creating a renewed commitment to techniques of taking care. At the same time, such techniques help to delineate the body as a specific object of care. Even, then, as the emergence of the physical body encourages attempts to orient true human nature, that is, our social and ethical nature, around the soul, that body haunts us from within as a part of us that is both alien to the self and intimately implicated in it. I am thus interested both in how the physical body informs concepts of the soul (similarity) and in how it acts as a limit against which the human is formed (difference). Pursuing this approach, I hope, can shed new light on the knot of problems that first forms around the relationship between the body and the soul in the late fifth century.

## TELLING STORIES

I begin this study by going back to the Homeric epics in an effort to deepen our sense of what is different about the physical body and the ethical subjectivity,

<sup>129</sup> Claus 1981.182; see also Vlastos 1945; 1946; 1952.121–23, on Presocratic naturalizing approaches to the soul. Claus decisively opposes his own approach to studies focused on the *psukhē* as transcendent: see esp. 1981.1–7; on the *psukhē* as a life-force or the emotional seat, see also Burnet 1916.253–56; Furley 1956.6–7; Darcus 1979a; Bremmer 1983.13–69 (on “body souls” that endow body with life and consciousness); Laks 1999.250–51; Lorenz 2003. In reaching his conclusions, Claus downplays the evidence from Heraclitus that suggests he saw *psukhē* as a rational agent (see esp. 1981.125–38). But this does not seriously affect Claus’s claim about the role of “rationalistic” ideas about the body (which he himself does little to specify) in giving shape to psychic agency, only the historical priority he wishes to give to Socrates.

centered on practices of care, to which it gives rise. However wary scholars have become about using labels like “secular” and “rational” to describe Greek medicine in the fifth and fourth centuries, a shift from personal, daemonic explanations to naturalizing explanations remains basic to our understanding of learned medicine in this period and the medical tradition that unfolds from it. It is precisely because this shift remains so basic and, hence, unquestioned that I take the time to explore how daemonic explanations of the symptom work and the model of the person they assume. In so doing, I emphasize how important felt experience is to constituting the boundaries of a person in early Greek poetry. I am interested here in laying the groundwork for my argument that it is by acquiring an “objective” plane below the threshold of sensing that the physical body assumes much of the daemonic force behind the symptom. In the first chapter, I also focus on how the practice of referring symptoms to a divine-daemonic plane embeds them in a world populated by social agents and, thus, a web of emotions, moral expectations, and desires. I do not wish to set up an opposition between the whims of “personal” gods and naturalizing explanation. Rather, in following the emergence of the physical body, I want to think not only about what is gained for concepts of harm, healing, and the self but also about what gets lost—namely, an intuitively intelligible social framework for understanding suffering.<sup>130</sup> By taking seriously the social context of the symptom within a magico-religious model, we can better perceive that the physical body does not exist in isolation as an object of medical knowledge but demands to be reconciled with the socioethical domain.

In the following three chapters, I track the gradual emergence of the physical body by examining fragments from those working in the inquiry into nature and particularly the medical writings that we have from the classical period. Chapter 2 begins with a look at the broad shift from personal agents to impersonal causes within the inquiry into nature. I then consider how speculation about the physical world generates the idea of a community of composite objects joined together by the interchange of physical forces and stuffs, rather than by bonds of social or emotional reciprocity. One way—perhaps the dominant one—of conceptualizing these composite objects, I suggest, was as *sōmata*. The key term here is “conceptualize” because, as I have stressed, most of what happens to these bodies cannot be seen directly but only inferred on the basis of phenomenal evidence. By referring phenomena to the hidden depths of the *sōma*, these thinkers help establish it as the primary locus of our participation in the larger physical world.

In chapter 3, I explore in greater detail how ideas about the *sōma* take shape in medical writing around the figure of a concealed and dynamic cavity. I focus on the role played by symptoms in representing what happens in this space in the medical writers’ field of vision and, thus, in enabling the physician to

<sup>130</sup>I do not mean to imply that suffering in the ancient world always made sense, only that the predominant cultural practices of interpretation referred it to agents with intentions and emotions.

exercise control over it. But I also consider the ways in which the hidden body acquires the characteristics that assimilate it to the daemonic realm: its opacity, its instability, the latent hostility of the humors, its impersonal automatism.

In chapter 4, I address the question of how this daemonic object is taken up as a part of the person. I begin by arguing that one way the medical writers make this connection is through the idea of an innate, vital force inside the *sōma*. This force not only stands behind the body's own efforts to fight disease but also turns out to guarantee the full range of phenomena and functions integral to both biological life and social and ethical life. At the same time, because this vital force, equated by some authors with the body's *phusis*, cannot secure human flourishing, there is a need for *tekhnē*. In the latter part of the chapter, I argue that the very untrustworthiness of the physical body requires the person *qua* technical agent to take responsibility for its flourishing, showing how it is precisely by taking or not taking care of the body (and, hence, exercising mastery over it) that free men are coming to be defined as ethical subjects at the end of the fifth century.

The final two chapters engage the problem of taking care not only of the body but also of a self more broadly understood. Chapter 5 looks at early versions of the medical analogy. The crux of my argument is that this analogy, centered on the idea of psychic disease, grows out of a desire to draw a line between the body and the person, understood as mind or soul, but ends up fostering a sense of urgency regarding the permeability of that line. In chapter 6, I argue that concerns about the fragility of the person understood in physical terms are, by the last quarter of the fifth century, coming to color tragic representations of disease, particularly in Euripides. I do not argue that these concerns displace the gods. Rather, I approach symptoms as spurs to test out different frameworks for interpreting daemonic interruptions in the self. Taking three of Euripides' tragedies—*Heracles*, *Orestes*, and *Hippolytus*—I show how the polysemy of the symptom works in practice. At the same time, I explore the tragic implications of approaching the symptom through the prism of contemporary medical and ethical ideas.<sup>131</sup>

<sup>131</sup> I see these studies taking up Padel's provocative claim that the conditions for the sporadic efflorescence of tragedy across two and a half millennia of Western history are found in cultures "poised on some momentary cusp between theological, or daemonic, and innovative scientific explanations for human pain. . . . Maybe," she goes on, "a medical and theological tug-of-war between religious and scientific explanation encourages an attention to madness as illustration of human suffering that is best expressed in tragedy" (1995.247). Padel thus treats the suffering subject in Attic tragedy as a historically contingent figure—a symptom of the friction in this period between religion and science, medicine and theology. Yet, in her own studies of tragic interiority, she tends to collapse distinctions. As Christopher Gill observes in a review, "One difficulty with this suggestion,"—that is, the importance of a "tug-of-war" between religious and scientific explanation—"as a way of summarizing her own approach, is that she tends . . . to present the fifth-century medical, religious, and tragic perspectives as (similar) aspects of a single thought-world, so that she provides little basis for seeing in Greek thought a transition from religious to scientific perspectives" (1996b.264).

I close with tragedy because its conceptual and imaginative space allows us to gauge the social and ethical complexity of what it means for human nature to be embodied and ensouled at the end of the fifth century. For the story of the physical body's emergence, haunted by fears of a daemonic space within the self, has a tragic streak: it is a story about pain more than about pleasure; and, insofar as it is about pleasure, it represents pleasure as a driving, disruptive force akin to the Furies that hound Orestes or Heracles. It is, of course, no secret that the physical body has had a bad reputation in the West since the Greeks. Part of the reason for its denigration may lie in the fact that it takes shape in large part as an object of medical knowledge and control, an object, that is, that is helpless but also dangerous when left on its own. It is perhaps the body's nimbus of vulnerability, together with its embeddedness in physical flux, that provokes so much hostility in Plato, the most influential early exponent of Western dualism. If we are to reverse some of this hostility, what we need is not a return to physicalism—though this has dominated the repudiation of Platonism and Cartesianism in recent years—but, rather, a rethinking of what it means to live in and through a body. One aspect of such a rethinking should be an investigation of the historical emergence of a body caught between technical mastery and daemonic unruliness.

From this brief survey, it is clear that this study treads a familiar path through archaic and classical Greek textual sources, one closely associated with the miracles and grand narratives that have been so important to claims of Greek innovation and exceptionalism.<sup>132</sup> But if a book about the symptom cannot escape ideas of rupture and historical difference, it is also the nature of the symptom to foster interpretive complexity: symptoms remind us that there is always something subjective about what counts as a rupture and how to make sense of it. Throughout this book, I have tried to incorporate this interpretive complexity into my story while keeping its central claims as lucid as possible. By enacting the emergence of the physical body in Greece as something real and imaginative, historical and timely, I hope to challenge the givenness of that body both in the Greek world and in our own. Although the terrain of the fabled Greek miracle is treacherous, the risks of revisiting it may be worth taking if we can make it unexpectedly generative within the present.

<sup>132</sup> For new perspectives on the "Greek miracle," see Goldhill and Osborne 2006; Osborne 2007. See also Laks 2006.107–22, on the figure of rupture in the history of early Greek philosophy. The concept of revolution has been problematized more generally in the history of modern science: see Osler 2000, who still stresses that in contextualizing the canon we need not deny historical change (8).