



Anatomy and Humanitie(s): A Clinical Correlate



Johanna Shapiro, Ph.D.

Professor, Department of Family Medicine
Director, Program in Medical Humanities & Arts,
UCI-SOM



Initiation into Life and Death

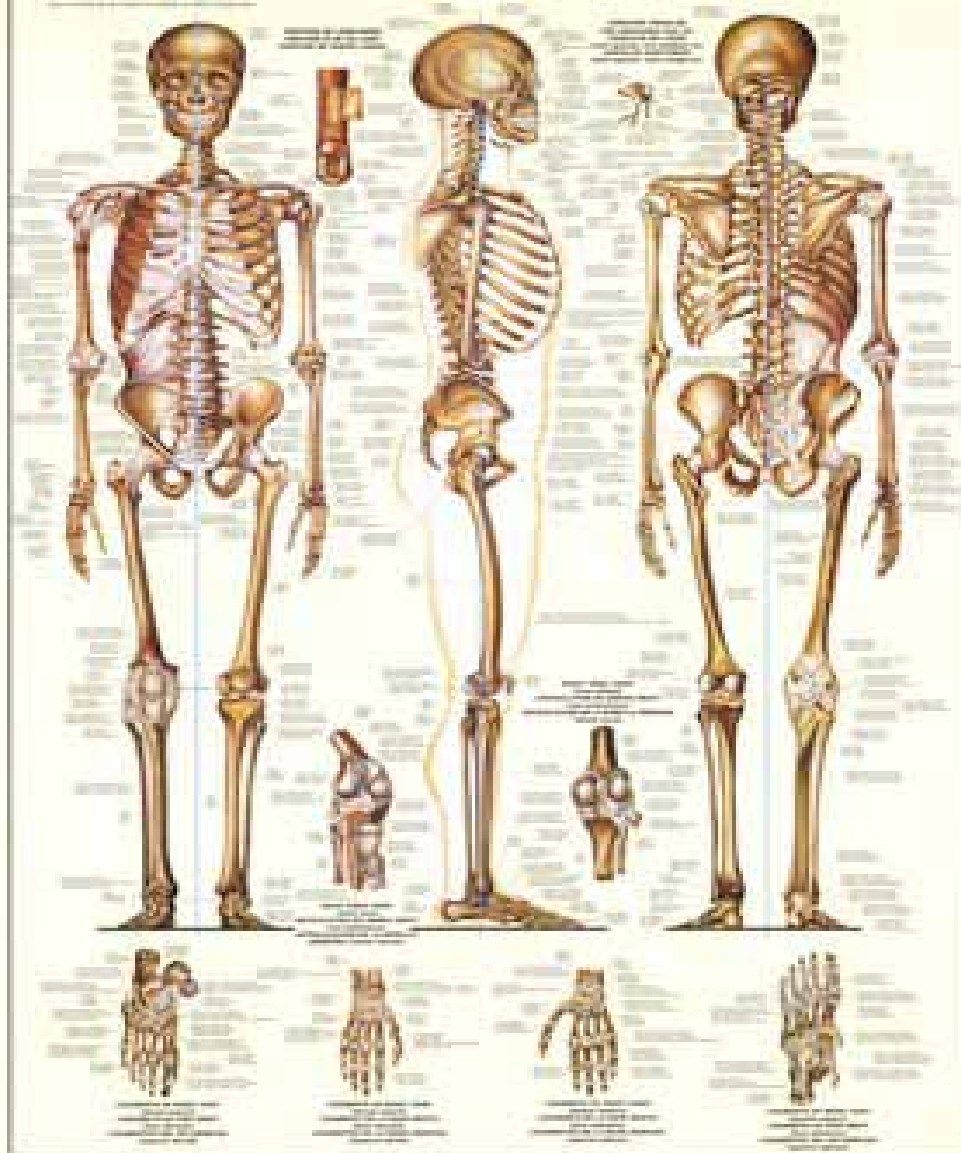
- “I have a sense that I am being initiated into a priesthood. This is something that “normal people” never do. There is a body on this table which was once alive and is now dead, and I am going to take it apart, and somehow I am going to come away understanding much more about both life and death.”
 - Perri Klass, M.D., pediatrician
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What – or Who – is the Cadaver?

- Is the cadaver a tool for learning?
 - Is the cadaver a (former) human being?
 - Is the cadaver both/neither/something in between?
 - What are the implications for you as future physicians?
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THE SKELETAL SYSTEM
LE SQUELETTE
EL SISTEMA ESQUELETICO





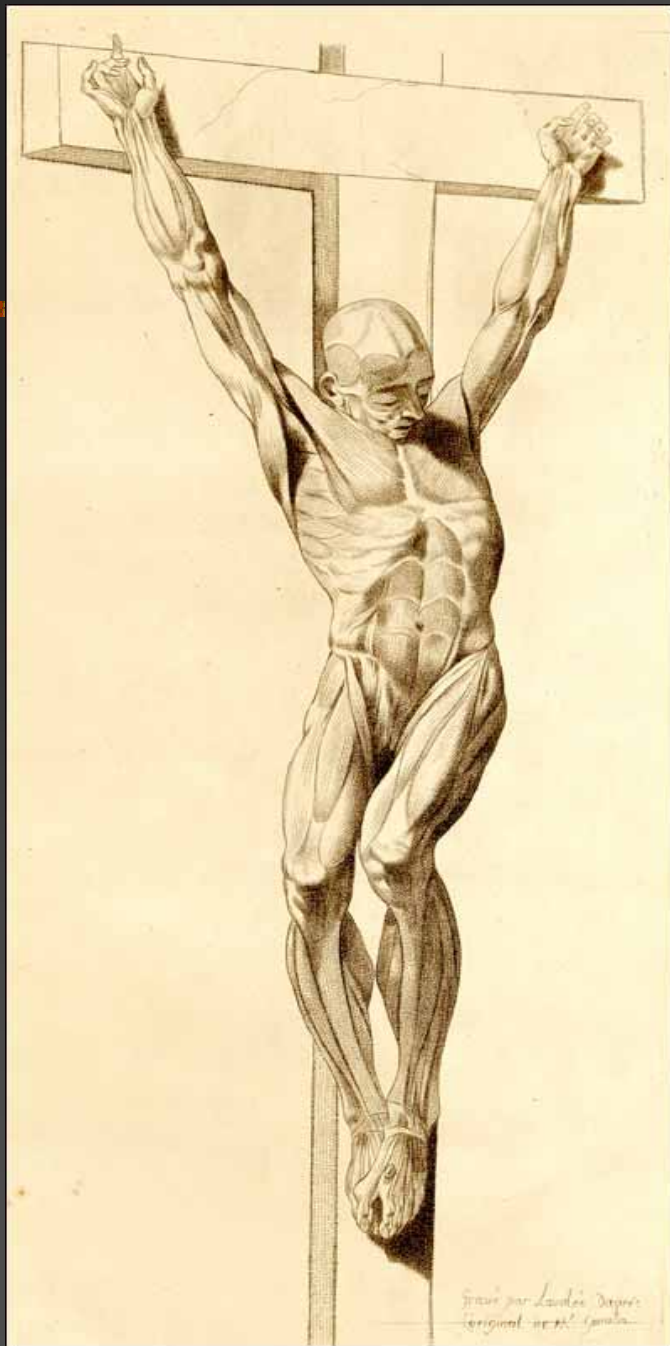
Dual Nature of Cadavers: Simultaneous Juxtaposition of Life and Death

- Anatomy cadavers: “ambiguous men (or women)” – Frederick Hafferty, sociologist
 - Part biological specimen
 - Part human being
- Challenge for medical students is to work with this ambiguity, integrating both biological and human aspects of cadavers

Where Does the Soul Reside?

- “In our study of Anatomy, there is a mass of mysterious Philosophy; yet among all those rare discoveries and curious pieces I find in the Fabrick of Man, I do not so much content myself as that I find not, there is no Organ or Instrument for the rational Soul.”

- Thomas Brown, *Religio Medici*, 1643



Faisé par Louis de Meunier
Original de M. Spallanzani

Implications of Cadaver's Dual Nature

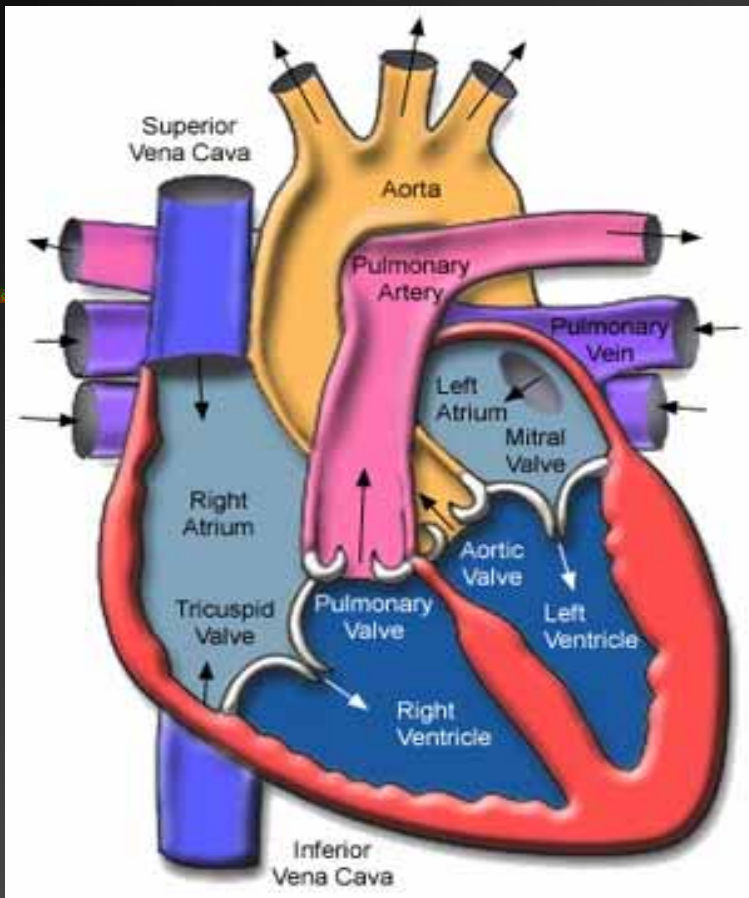
- View of dissection
 - Mechanistic
 - Humanistic



Juxtaposition of Life and Death Within the Cadaver

from Anatomy Diary, Sophie Harrison, 1st yr medical student, 2002

“And now we can see the heart as well, snug in its leathery sack, with the enormous aorta plugged into the top. Or that’s what you can see in the other cadavers. In Frank (her cadaver) everything is squashed and unclear and covered in a kind of black felt that comes out in pieces bearing the impression of the pericardium. It turns out to be blood. At his death, something, in the heart or in one of the heart’s great vessels, must have burst: the chest cavity is full of clots. ‘Oh God, I feel so sorry for him now,’ someone says. “No, it’s all right, that’s not a bad way to go,” Professor Watts (the anatomy professor) says. ‘It would’ve been fast, and it wouldn’t have hurt.’ ‘But wait a minute: that means *he died of a broken heart!*’ ‘Don’t be silly,’ says Professor Watts.”

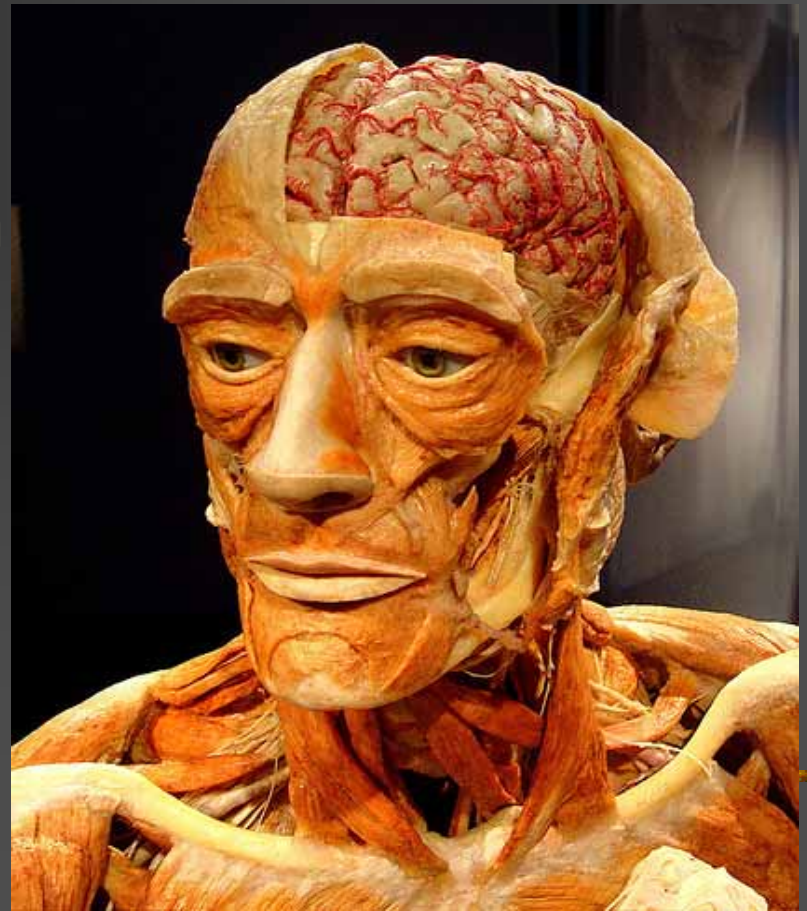


Juxtaposition of Life and Death: Student and Cadaver Relationship

- Anatomical dissection gives the human mind the opportunity to compare the dead with the living, things severed with things intact, things destroyed with things evolving, and opens us up to the profoundness of nature more than any other endeavor or consideration.
 - Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe, German poet (1749-1832)
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Implications of Cadaver's Dual Nature

- Relationship with cadaver
 - Subject/object relation
 - I/It
 - Subject/subject relation
 - I/Thou
 - Teacher/guide/friend
 - First patient
 - In intimate, parallel relation with each other



Picture this – Katherine Miller, MS I

picture this:

Two a.m., Thursday night. I'm trying to find myself amidst a brachial plexus of fibers; my nerves shredded from picking at a torn-up stylopharyngeus, muscles aching from overarching my secondary curvature, back stiff as the epiglottis pierced with my blunt scalpel.

Yet I keep standing, searching, for that one structure that will make this body complete, that will make my self feel found in this body that I now feel is my own as complex and torn up.

Implications of Cadaver's Dual Nature

- Interaction with/behavior toward cadaver
 - Subject/object
 - Subject/subject
 - Respect and dignity
 - Caring for others



Interaction with the Cadaver

“The Power of Hands” - Chrissy Janowiak, class of '07

Dr. Cochard held your hand –
Now my hand holds the knife.
With your cold fingers laced warmly in
his
He introduced you to us, to me
As if you were both an esteemed
professor
With much to teach
And also his dear, old friend
When he talked about respect
Your hand shook his in agreement
I didn't need to be told twice
I couldn't stop the images from
coming
Your hand...
Wearing a wedding band
Typing on a computer
Playing the piano

Holding the hand of a lover, a friend,
a child

Now in my own hand

The scalpel seems awkward and
unfamiliar

And dangerous, like a violent animal
I need to rein in

But my hands are being summoned
to action by the group

“Cut from C to E” the roadmap says

Interaction with the Cadaver

Were these directions on your life's
map:

Pass career and marriage, take a left
after
the grandkids to cholangiocarcinoma,
then cut from C to E?

I wonder, as my hands invade your
world

Eager and timidly at the same time

Questioning each motion

Can Camper's and Scarpa's fascia
handle
the power in these hands?

Or are Netter's-Atlas-Watercolor-Perfect
Organs at stake with this very cut?

As weeks go by

My hands grow confident

Suboccipital triangle, inguinal canal

Do your worst

My fingers will flesh out those nerves

No need for the professional distance

Afforded by the scalpel

We are past those formalities

My hands dig deep into every crevice

Separating, palpating, isolating

The knowledge that you have to offer

And when your face accidentally peeks

Out from its plastic covering

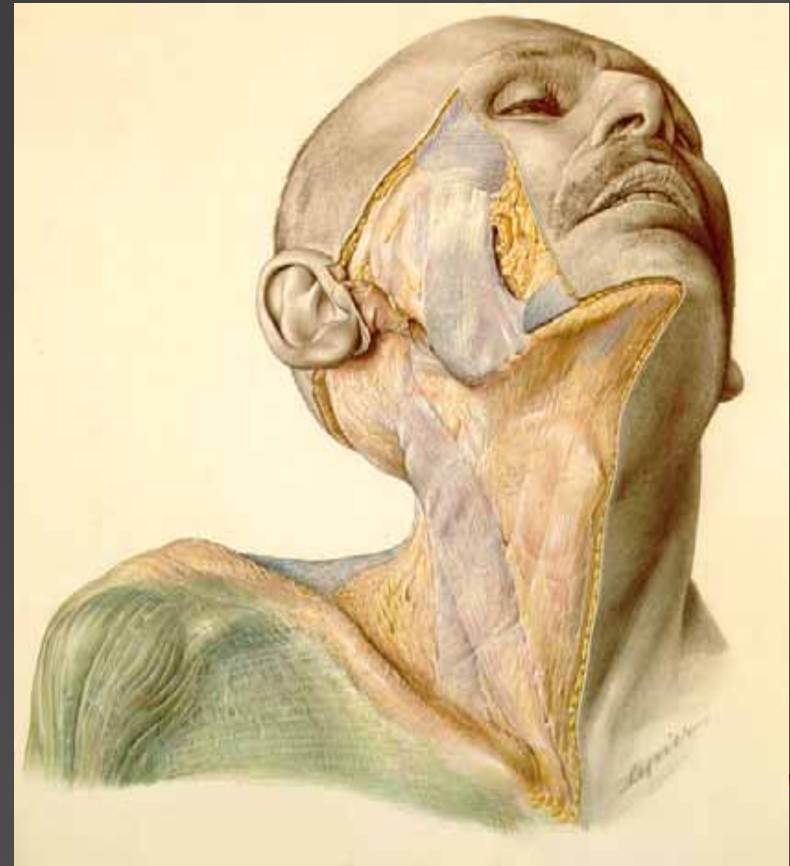
I don't even blink.

But I keep your hands in the bag.



Implications of Cadaver's Dual Nature

- Affect and emotions toward cadaver
 - Feelings toward objects
 - Detachment
 - Non-emotion
 - Feelings toward subjects
 - Guilt, shame
 - Awe, wonder
 - Gratitude, appreciation



Forgive Me – Daniel Chun, MSI

Death surrounds me,
Sixteen entities within a room,
Clothed in blue and white garments,
It is not heaven that they experience,
but instead the cold steel of the blade,
I feel guilt,
guilt having been lost over time.

A question arises, Will they forgive me?
Yes, I have experienced death.
Grandfather, great grandmother,
Fellow high school student,
Victims of something inescapable.

Lives lost to the wind,
Returning to the earth
To decay into nothingness.
Life is precious I know,
I claim to have experience

Yet these bodies fallen to blackness,
They lie before us still and mutilated.
Looking upon them, cold and pale,
We rank the bodies according to
their color and smell.

Forgive me – cont.

The ease of isolating and identifying
has become their worth.

How sad that I have forgotten
What these men and women have
endured.

I have lost sight of your real worth.
I ask for your forgiveness.

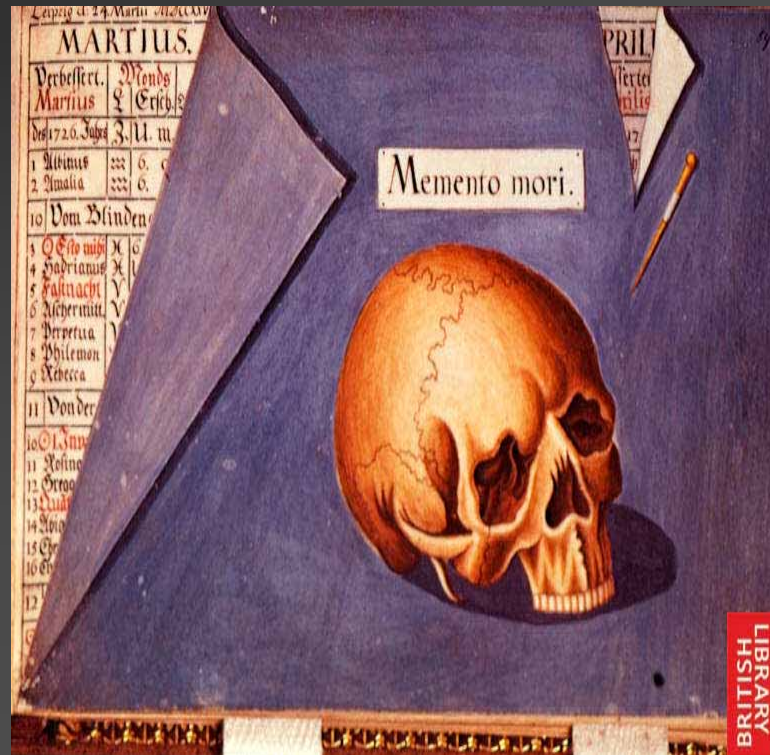
Perhaps it is a necessity that
We distance ourselves
from their plight

To fully learn the intricacies
Of their physical domain.
I am thankful for their sacrifice
To be torn apart and sliced to pieces
So that we could perhaps one day
Save someone from the darkness.

I will not again forget your value and
worth.
Forgive me.

Implications of Cadaver's Dual Nature

- Lessons about life, suffering, and death
- Memento mori



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Living and Dead in Relationship

- "Anatomy Lesson"- Robert S. Fawcett, M.D.

You think you have seen death
before,
how the dead look so dead when
they're dead,
but pulling back the stainless cover,
you are unready for that form as gray
and cold as a late November day,
wet, with limp brown stems of day-
lilies,
like lifeless hair hanging over
unhearing ears
into the silver trough

Perhaps it would be easy to begin to
view
yourself as a doctor here, in a
Rembrandt pose,
bending over unbeckoning fingers,
but the smell of formaldehyde
is overwhelming, and you feel
you are only pretending, violating
the only part of this person
still left on earth.

Anatomy Lesson

And where does all this fat come
from?

Globules stick to your instruments
and stain your atlas with greasy
smudges, so
although you take care to wear your
apron,
you find one of the yellow bastards
on your sock as you cross your legs
hours later, after lunch in the
cafeteria.

Is that your respect for the dead?

Or does it come years later, after you
have filled a couple of graveyards
With corpses in silent decomposure?
Their spirits visit you in quiet times,
as you sit alone in your car, waiting,
or awaken, sweating, just after three.
The hairs on your neck arise, tingling,
as the dead tell you things, and you
listen.

Concluding Thoughts:

- In medicine, life and death inextricably mingled
 - In the presence of life, death is often close at hand
 - In the presence of death, we must honor the life that has vanished
 - The attitudes you bring to the cadaver are easily extended to living patients
 - Patients can become means to ends
 - Knowing that death comes to us all should remind us to treat the living and the dying with respect, caring, and kindness
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