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The belief that the mind and the body are separate and that the mind is the source of all meaning has been a part of Western culture for centuries. Both philosophers and scientists have questioned this dualism, but their efforts have rarely converged. Many philosophers continue to rely on disembodied models of human thought, while scientists tend to reduce the complex process of thinking to a merely physical phenomenon.

In *The Meaning of the Body*, Mark Johnson continues his pioneering work on the exciting connections between cognitive science, language, and meaning first begun in the classic *Metaphors We Live By*. Johnson uses recent research into infant psychology to show how the body generates meaning even before self-consciousness has fully developed. From there he turns to cognitive neuroscience to further explore the bodily origins of meaning, thought, and language and examines the many dimensions of meaning—including images, qualities, emotions, and metaphors—that are all rooted in the body's physical encounters with the world. Drawing on the psychology of art and pragmatist philosophy, Johnson argues that all of these aspects of meaning-making are fundamentally aesthetic. Thus the arts are the culmination of human attempts to find meaning and studying the aesthetic dimensions of our experience is crucial to unlocking the bodily sources of meaning.