

The Art of Living series

Series Editor: Mark Vernon

We live in a world where people are searching for new insights and sources of meaning.

Religion often seems questionable; work and the consumer treadmill unbalanced; and self-help perhaps worthy but simplistic.

Philosophy is the great untapped resource of our generation. From Plato to Russell

philosophers have engaged wide audiences on matters of life and death. *The Art of Living*

series aims to reinvigorate philosophy and open up the subject's riches to a wider

public once again. Taking its lead from the concerns of the ancient Greek philosophers,

the series asks the question "how should we live?" Authors draw on their own personal

reflections to write philosophy that seeks to enrich, stimulate and challenge the reader's

thoughts about their own life.

Sport

Colin McGinn

NEW

Sports are an indissoluble interweaving of mind and body. They express our constitution as intelligent bodily beings. Anyone who has ever hit a decent serve in tennis knows that mind and body are unified in that (sublime) moment. Sport expresses our nature, it bears upon our self-realization. If a happy life consists in one that expresses fully our natural faculties, then sports must play an essential role in the happy life. This book is about the human love of sport. Written in the form of a memoir, Colin McGinn discusses all the main sports he has engaged in: everything from pole-vaulting and gymnastics, to windsurfing and tennis. He describes the athletic experience from the inside, articulating what is uniquely valuable about sport as an activity. Mind-body unity, practical knowledge, peak experiences, success and failure, the ethics of competition, fitness and death – all these are woven into the story of an athletic life. It is also sport seen from the perspective of a philosopher. McGinn is able to put our passion for sport into the right conceptual perspective, bringing intellect and body inextricably together.

Colin McGinn is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Miami.

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Wellbeing

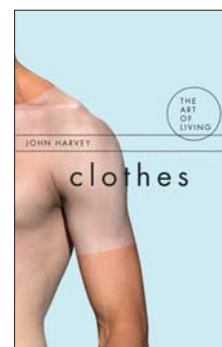
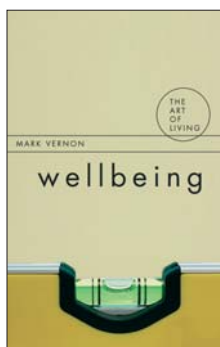
Mark Vernon

NEW

The politics of wellbeing and the new science of happiness have shot up the agenda since Martin Seligman coined the phrase "positive psychology". After all, who does not want to live the good life? So ten years on, why is it that much of this otherwise welcome debate sounds like as much apple-pie – "work less", "earn enough", "keep fit", "find meaning", "enjoy freedoms"? The reason is not, ultimately, cynicism. Rather, it is because a central, tricky question is being glossed over: just what is wellbeing? Mark Vernon argues that positive psychology has overlooked and sidelined the ancient wisdom on wellbeing, notably from the Greek philosophers. Now is the time to pay it proper attention. Vernon shows, surprisingly, that wellbeing is not found in a focus on pleasure, or even the pursuit of happiness itself. Rather, it is a question of meaning and responding to the great challenge of our day: the search for transcendence. For at root, the life that is going well cultivates a way of life based upon love: it is that which draws you out of yourself – in friends, hopes and ultimately the contemplation of mystery – and orientates a life towards that which is good.

Mark Vernon is a freelance writer and journalist. He is an Honorary Research Fellow of Birkbeck College, London.

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"Because life is not a problem to be solved, but a puzzle to be lived"

Illness

Havi Carel

NEW

What is illness? Is it a physiological malfunction or a social label? Is illness simply the absence of health? How do the physical, social and emotional worlds of a person change when they become ill? Can there be wellbeing within illness? Havi Carel addresses these questions by weaving together two perspectives on illness: her personal account of her own terminal illness, and the abstract, philosophical account. Carel shows how we can view illness not simply as a localised biological dysfunction, but as a transformation of one's body, one's social, psychological and physical worlds, and one's temporal existence. By focusing on the experience of illness as lived from within illness is reformulated as a life-changing event rather than a limited physiological problem. The body is no longer a lifeless container for the self, but the core of human subjectivity and embodied existence.

Havi Carel is Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of the West of England, Bristol.

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Pets

Erica Fudge

NEW

Why do we live with pets? What are these beings who are kin but not kind? How do we live with them? In *Pets* Erica Fudge traces many of the answers modern thinkers have offered in response. Moving from an analysis of the philosophical importance of the Lassie myth to philosophers' surprisingly common musings about their cats, this book challenges many of the easy assumptions we might have about who, what and why pets are. Indeed, meditating on our obsession with domestic animals reveals many of the paradoxes, contradictions and ambiguities of life. The book also argues that pets are a vital resource for contemporary philosophy. True border-creatures – the anthropologist Edmund Leach called them man-animals – pets both exemplify and challenge the construction of self and other that is so important in modern thought. We might think of pets as simply happy, loved additions to human homes, but *Pets* argues that perhaps it is the pets that make the home; that perhaps without pets we might not be the humans we think we are.

Erica Fudge is Reader in Literary and Cultural Studies at Middlesex University.

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Clothes

John Harvey

NEW

When we choose our own clothes, we know the choice is a sensitive matter and far from being merely superficial. *Clothes* considers the overlapping values that clothes have for us. Clothes both cover and advertise the bodies within them. They help make us the men and women we are, and help us to attract each other. They enroll us in groups, from our own circle to our generation worldwide; and they show just how, as individuals, we want to be noticed. Clothes, like their wearers, may compete in claiming power. They may also, on and off the catwalk, compete to claim the spotlight. In sum they show how we think we matter – and they can matter themselves in ways that may be intimate and even crucial to us. At all times clothes have demanded attention, even when they have been castigated for their vanity, and contemporary opinion is still divided. Are clothes the most frivolous of consumer disposables – or are they, however extravagant, art? Though we wear and see them every day, the value that they have for us is multiple and fugitive and hard to catch exactly. *Clothes* attempts to sort the many-coloured wardrobe which marks off mankind from other creatures.

John Harvey is Reader in Literature and Visual Culture at the University of Cambridge.

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Sex

Seiriol Morgan

NEW

Sex can be a source of intense life-affirming pleasure when it is present and going well, frustration or misery when it is absent or unsatisfying. It is one of the central mechanisms through which individuals can bring happiness or hurt to the lives of others, as well as their own. It also has a peculiar power to tempt us to act against our own best interests and judgements. Seiriol Morgan explores the philosophy of sex, offering an accessible analysis of the place of sex in human life, and a discussion of the kinds of sexual lives that might be compatible with living well. The book opens with a discussion of the nature of sexual desire, which uses examples from anecdote and literature to bring out its complexities, focusing particularly on the ways in which its bodily and psychological elements interact to construct the many and various sexual desires and quirks we experience. Special attention is paid to the darker peccadilloes that human beings are prone to eroticise, and the dangers this can pose. Later chapters discuss such issues as fidelity, promiscuity and seduction, as well as more broadly social concerns such as pornography and the importance of the family.

Seiriol Morgan is Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Bristol.

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Work

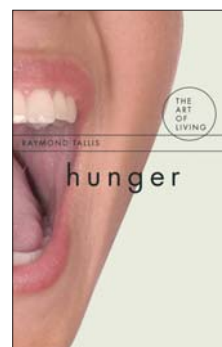
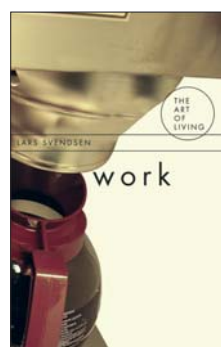
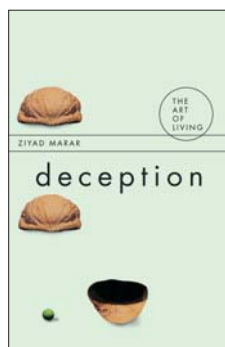
Lars Svendsen

NEW

Work is one of the most universal features of human life; virtually everybody spends some part of their life at work. It is often associated with tedium and boredom; in conflict with the things we would otherwise love to do. Thinking of work primarily as a burden – an activity we would rather be without – is a thought that was shared by the philosophers in ancient Greece, who generally regarded work as a terrible curse. And yet, research shows that it prolongs life and is generally good for people's physical and mental health. This is perhaps why work is increasingly recognized as a crucial source of meaning and social identity. And our attitudes to work have been changing significantly in the last decades, with an increased demand for meaning and self-realization in the workplace. In this book, Lars Svendsen argues that we need to complete this reorientation of our feelings about work and collapse the differences between leisure and work. Work, like the poor, is always with us. But to overcome the sense of being burnt out, we must think of work as not only productive but recreative – in other words, a lot more like leisure.

Lars Svendsen is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of Bergen, Norway.

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**Deception**

Ziyad Marar

NEW

Most of us think we are about 15 per cent cleverer, nicer, more attractive and better drivers than others think we are. It seems deception begins at home. After all the most convincing liars convince themselves first. Sellers and buyers, parents and children, friends and lovers must conceal from each other the unutterable truth that they don't believe or want the same things. In this book, Ziyad Marar throws a revealing light on the many ways deception is woven into the texture of human life: our wiring leaves us easily suckered by persuasive illusions, while our contradictory desires (for sex and honesty, money and kindness, for cake and losing weight) force us to cook up self-serving stories. We manage flattering impressions with effortless skill, while pretending our sins and self-indulgences are beyond our control. Drawing on insights from philosophy, psychology and literature Marar explores the implications for living well in the shadow of Kant's humbling thought that "out of the crooked timber of humanity, no straight thing was ever made".

Ziyad Marar is deputy managing director and publishing director at Sage Publications.

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Fame

Mark Rowlands

NEW

One of the most distinctive cultural phenomena of recent years has been the rise and rise of fame. In this book, Mark Rowlands argues that our obsession with fame has transformed it. Fame was once associated with excellence or achievement in some or other field of endeavour. But today we are obsessed with something that is, in effect, quite different: fame unconnected with any discernible distinction, fame that allows a person to be famous simply for being famous. This book shows why this new fame is simultaneously fascinating and worthless. To understand this new form of fame, Rowlands maintains, we have to engage in an extensive philosophical excavation that takes us back to a dispute that began in ancient Greece between Plato and Protagoras, and was carried on in a remarkable philosophical experiment that began in eighteenth-century France. Somewhat like contestants on a reality TV show, today we find ourselves, unwittingly, playing out the consequences of this experiment.

Mark Rowlands is Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy at the University of Hertfordshire.

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Hunger

Raymond Tallis

NEW

Understanding hunger is the key to understanding ourselves. While they seem the most obvious things about us, our hungers are also deeply mysterious, arising out of, and casting light on, the unique character of human consciousness. In humans, physiological need is transformed into a multitude of needs that are remote from organic necessity. Even first-level biological hunger is experienced differently in humans; and little in human feeding behaviour has any parallel in the animal kingdom. In this book, Ray Tallis takes us through the different levels of our hunger. Out of our primary appetites arise a myriad of pleasures and tastes that are elaborated in second-level hedonistic hungers creating new values. The evolution of appetite into desire opens the way to social hungers such as the hunger for acknowledgement. Awareness of death awakens a further level of hunger for something that lies beyond the pell-mell of successive experiences leading towards extinction. The art of living is the art of managing our hungers.

Raymond Tallis was Professor of Geriatric Medicine at the University of Manchester until he left to become a full-time writer in 2006.

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