**HOW TO SLEEP FASTER #7: THE BODY IN PAIN**

For How To Sleep Faster we were looking for contributions that focused on The Body in Pain. The title is taken from the book by Elaine Scarry, which examines pain with regard to ‘making’ and ‘unmaking’ the world. Thinking about Guantanamo Bay as the emblem of the time we’ve come of age, thinking about the political use and the political meaning of pain inflicted: war, torture, natural disaster and disaster capitalism, shock therapy economics and shock therapy for uncooperative or dysfunctional subjects. Institutional violence and the violence of institutions

Pain is what we know and the limit of what we know: our own pain may ‘be thought of the most vibrant example of what it is to “have certainty”[[1]](#footnote-0)

Pain is what we don’t know: for the other person it is so elusive that “hearing about pain” may exist as the primary model of what it is “to have doubt”[[2]](#footnote-1)

Pain is the ultimate subjective experience, where one person ends and another person begins.

From the experience of witnessing, to empathy and politics (laid out by many theorists from Ranciere to Moten), we cannot equalise nor share, but recognise that one another has felt something that cannot be identical to one's own feeling.

I cannot feel the pain of the person next to me;

I cannot feel the pain that I inflict on another person;

[I would like to - how can I try?]

To honour the pain felt by other people may be the start of some form of common body It is always an option to deny that a person is in pain, to deny responsibility for that person’s pain

Pain might be the final proof that we are alone

We hope that contributions will not only outline what pain is and how the body carries it, how the body then functions within systems, as well as how these systems constitute the body in pain; but we also hope for contributions that think about the weaponisation of pain.

The Editors

1. Elaine Scarry, The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World, New York: Oxford University Press, 1985, Intro. 2 [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. Ibid.

3. Cf. ‘Where does one person end and another begin?’ Aria Dean, Poor Meme, Rich Meme, Real Life, 2016. http:// reallifemag.com/poor-meme-rich-meme/ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)