

# Caphology by A Fo Ben



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## GOOD NEWS FOR EASTER EGG BINGERS

John Paul Leach of Glasgow challenges his students to name any condition that cannot be helped by exercise: athlete's foot, shin splints, tendonitis and paroxysmal exercise-induced dystonia are answers only provided by smart alecks. However, should dementia also be on this list? A study of almost two million adults aged 40 years or older showed that underweight people (body mass index <20 kg/m<sup>2</sup> is seriously skinny) had a 34% increase in dementia compared with those with a healthy weight. Curiously, the lowest dementia risk was in the heaviest, surviving correction for the increased mortality in those who are morbidly obese. Is the nation's love of gluttony and inactivity going to be a natural cure for the dementia boom? Sadly, A Fo Ben somewhat doubts this.

*Lancet Diabetes Endocrinol* [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S2213-8587\(15\)00033-9](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S2213-8587(15)00033-9)

## STYLE FROM SUBSTANCE

*Vogue*, Caphology is not. However, while A Fo Ben happily admits to being woefully unqualified to comment on fashion in general, the worlds of fashion and all things neurological collided twice in quick succession in recent months, feeling like a coincidence too unlikely to ignore. The first occasion leads us on to potentially difficult ground. For most recipients of a Nobel Prize, the question of what to wear would be easily answered with a dinner jacket and bow tie. A new one, perhaps, if he feels the importance of the occasion warrants it. However, if the Nobel Laureate is a woman, what is she to do? (Sadly a question that has had very few opportunities to be asked). While some might see this question as a somewhat silly and perhaps distracting side-line to the award, A Fo Ben would like to applaud May-Britt Moser for her

choice. She is a Nobel Laureate—and therefore, surely, whatever she wears cannot detract from the obvious excellence of her science—and she collected her prize in a couture gown, decorated with images of the hippocampal grid cells for which she won her award. Style and substance in one, as well as a very visible lesson to all aspiring female scientists that world-class science does not have to necessarily come at the expense of other interests, including fashion.

<http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/psi-vid/2014/12/10/glittering-nobel-gown-represents-scientists-work/>

## THE ISHIHARA FROCK?

For those readers who have things to do other than follow twitter trends, the recent global debate over the colour of a dress may have passed without comment. However, an innocent picture of a dress led to a global sensation as people were unable to agree on its colour, with people seeing it as either black and blue or white and gold. Neuroscience to the rescue. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, our brains are very used to subtracting the colour of the light illuminating the world (usually goldish from the sun) from the colour of the thing we are looking at. There are small individual differences in how we discount the chromatic bias of daylight and this picture has hues at just the point at which people differ in this process (figure 1). The remarkable thing, for anyone viewing it, is that others can see it as another colour-way (For those who are interested, apparently the dress is actually blue and black. A Fo Ben struggles to believe this).

<http://swiked.tumblr.com/post/112073818575/guys-please-help-me-is-this-dress-white-and>

## THE MAN WHO INSPIRED A GENERATION OF NEUROLOGISTS

Some years ago a copy of *Awakenings* was found by a teenager



**Figure 1** Is this dress black and blue or white and gold?

over a wet weekend and a life-long interest in all things neurological was born. A Fo Ben cannot be alone in attributing a subsequent career path to Dr Oliver Sacks, one of the few people who managed to combine a genuine and deep expertise in neurology with an ability to write fluently and expressively about it for the layperson. It is perhaps no surprise that Dr Sacks' recent Opinion Piece in the *New York Times* was written with his customary wit and eloquence. The topic, though, was one that will cause huge sadness among devotees everywhere, as the piece is a thoughtful and powerful reflection on life and how to live it, having recently received the news that the ocular melanoma he thought cured 9 years ago had metastasised to his liver. Hopefully not yet a farewell from this great inspiration, but at the least a *momento mori* for us all.

[www.nytimes.com/2015/02/19/opinion/oliver-sacks-on-learning-he-has-terminal-cancer.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/19/opinion/oliver-sacks-on-learning-he-has-terminal-cancer.html?_r=0)

