



# Disability, Feminism and the Will: Rethinking the Role of the Body

by Dr. Nancy Hirschmann

*Uppgivenhetssyndrom*, or resignation syndrome, is an illness that is said to exist only in Sweden, and only among **refugee children** whose families have been given orders of **deportation**. Yet often, if the children's families were granted permanent residency based on the children's medical condition, the children recovered.

Taking off from this story, Dr. Hirschmann suggests that these children **didn't lose their will**; rather, their **bodies expressed their will**. In the history of western philosophy, we have always maintained that the will is a product of the **rational mind**; however, drawing on feminist and disability theory, Hirschmann argues that the will is also located in the body, and political theory and philosophy need to include such considerations in our understanding of the will. Doing this can help us reorient our **understanding of freedom**, including what counts as a barrier, what it means to make a "**choice**," and how we can know what it is that we want.



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