

Orientations And The Phenomenology Of “Home”

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Introduction

According to several authors on the notion of integrity, integrity is not attainable in an absolute sense as it is a myth which causes an undesired effect which makes one make the moral assertion that another's bodily integrity should be respected even though he or she can't view it as such. However, this claim fails to recognize that the failure of one to perceive another's integrity as such is a structural effect of the integrity myth or a strengthening device. Also, these authors failed to understand the “import of disintegration as the condition of becoming”. Therefore, Sullivan elaborated on this claim by focusing on the “phenomenological understanding of the orientations”. (Sullivan, 2014)

He was more concerned with the fact that the argument that integrity is a myth does not change those who have blocked orientation towards certain abjected morphologies and those experiencing alienation and suffering in life. Also, he was concerned about the dominant responses to Chatelier and Hallam and to those people with the desire for amputation, longer legs, bigger breasts, deafness, longer legs and thinness. These responses are not about integrity but the status and position of the objects or the morphologies with which such desires are oriented and, eventually, the status and positions of the orientations and the subjects oriented. Moreover, he questions the invisible centre from which morphologies and desires are concluded to be “others”. (Sullivan, 2014)

Orientations

An individual's orientation is when his/her interaction with others is engraved or naturalized in them through repetition, and their histories are forgotten because of the new interactions. The case of Clint Hallam gives an illustration of how the soma technologies are oriented by certain ideas concerning bodily practices, for instance, how the soma technologies play an important role in Hallam's decision to amputate his grafted hand. Hallam's hand transplant was the first of its kind to correct anatomical incompleteness. The grafting was a big breakthrough for the able-bodied futurist, who later became taken aback by the amputation of Hallam's hand. (Sullivan, 2014)

Hallam was known to many as a mercurial character, a trickster, a liar and a person who couldn't be pinned down and refused to stay in his place. He was begged to take care of his hand, and he said he was in charge of his arm. This was not the ideal choice for a patient. The members of the surgical team had invested in fixing, performing stasis, and clear-cutting the hand, but they perceived Hallam

as not being a good example. They had shown him futurity and a path to follow so that those having such an operation in the future could follow. Hence, selecting Hallam as the first candidate for the hand transplant and offering him the world in the form of a hand which could not fit amounted to an “act of recruitment”. (Sullivan, 2014)

Causes and Contributing Factors

The first few months after his operation, Hallam behaved like a normal patient or a good boy, but he suddenly formed the habit of disappearing. In other words, he became a walkabout a term used by indigenous Australians to describe a nomadic practice or a set of practices practiced by some indigenous communities in Australia. An Indigenous person with walkabout behaviour is placed in the “nonwhite” position, and he is held there by fixing what makes him different from the white and shaping what he can do and what he cannot do to be perceived as white. (Sullivan, 2014)

When that person gets comfortable and things are right, it is known as a dwelling. This does not follow the privilege lines caused by sedimented histories. Dwelling can be perceived as normal because one is able to see queerly and straight, but it is it was a temporary thing. Seeing queerly has disorienting effects on an individual. For instance, “when the ‘here’ of whiteness is faced with a vision of the nonwhite body as beautiful, as inhabitable, as the site of an ‘I’-are overcome through the realignment of matter out of space”. This is known as realignment with the lines of privilege or keeping things in line through straightening devices. (Sullivan, 2014)

The queer vision of the morphological other can be overcome by straightening out or realignment of the subjects’ domain and putting the subject back in its place, and holding the lines of difference through the repetition of the lines of privilege. For instance, the Indigenous child will perceive himself as white again and align himself with the naturalized and dominant ideas of whiteness (here), which he can’t ever live. This will allow the formation of new enquiries that suggest that non-white morphologies have the possibility of habitation and are desirable. (Sullivan, 2014)

The current case of the hands that do not fit can be aligned to Australia’s Indigenous child. Therefore, the coming together of the hand and the body produces queer effects which act by “disorienting the lines of privilege that constitute particular morphological futures as necessarily excluded and to make visible lines that disappear from view at the point at which the subject emerges and from which that subject apprehends a world”. Thus, orientation is more about how a subject finds its way and finally feels at home through straightening devices such as pathologization. (Sullivan, 2014)

Suffering is engendered as an outcome of the life which is lived out of place or away from “home” which give a subject an opportunity to move into phenomenal space to shape their space. Thus, subjects should integrate lines of privilege by moving away from the moral imperative significance and seek to understand and respect other subjects’ desires and their morphological difference and seek to articulate the dwelling ethics. (Sullivan, 2014)

References

Sullivan, N. (2014). 'BIID':Queer (Dis) Orientations and the Phenomenology of "home". In K. Zeiler, & L. F. Käll, *feminist phenomenology and medicine* (pp. 7-139). New York: Sunny Press.