

The Disappearing Body in Anorexia Nervosa: Observation, Dissension, and Jouissance

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Abstract

Background: Anorexia nervosa is a prevalent psychopathological illness characterized by anorexia nervosa, where individuals reject the affective-pulsional aspect of the body and focus on its physiological aspects, denying the body's dimension, similar to Ponty's distinction between corpse propre and corps objective. The anorexic subject's body as a dead, desireless entity, rejecting food and language, creating a spiral of pure jouissance, isolating them from the outside world.

Aim: The study aims to explore the mind-body connection and the potential for deterioration into psychopathological relationships between the subject and their body.

Conclusion: The study explores the opposition between the physical body and the lived body in anorexia, focusing on the weave of past, present, and future, which is rejected by the anorexic subject, leading to death.

Keywords: corps objectif; corpse propre; anorexic; corporeity; image; embodiment; jouissance

Introduction

Anorexia nervosa is often seen as a body image issue, with those suffering conforming to a dominant slenderness model. However, the true struggle in anorexia is the alienation of the self from the body, forming a basic embodiment contradiction. The anorexia clinic emphasizes the mind-body connection and serves as a model for developing theoretical tools to understand the relationship between the subject and their body and how it may deteriorate into a psychopathological sense. Phenomenology focuses on the physical symptoms of mental illnesses, with authors like Biswanger and Fuchs analyzing the body in Time and Space. Both theories emphasize the connection between the body and the world, with psychoanalysis and phenomenology highlighting how this relationship is disrupted in various forms. Anorexia and eating disorders illustrate how the body-world relationship can deteriorate, leading to individuals fighting against death. Notion of Proper Body or Phenomenal Body: The French author distinguishes between the lived body, which corresponds to the will and intentionality, and the object subject to nature's laws. The German philosopher argues that the first experience a subject has is of their own body, which transcends its role as a physiological assemblage. This experience demonstrates the intentionality of the body as a living entity, transcending itself and embracing the world. Mind/body dualism is a metaphysics rooted in various fields, including medicine, law, literature, and popular

culture. It emphasizes the lived body as the individual's unique identity, encompassing personal history, past, present, and future. Merleau-Ponty's perception studies emphasize the body's dual nature, moving beyond Cartesian dualism.

The French philosopher Lacan distinguishes between having a body and being a body, stating that it expresses one's way of being in the world, rather than ownership. Everybody possesses ambiguity, as it is both a physiological, biochemical, and anatomical body and a vector of intentionality and emotions. Lacan's concept of *lalangue*, which involves repetition and the object *petit a*, is explored in connection to Freud's theories. The body's dual position in Lacanian discourse is evident, as both subject to physiological and anatomical natural sciences and source of desire and affectivity. Subject Body and Object Body: The body is a complex concept in phenomenology, characterized by its experience and lived state, subject body (*Leib*), and object body (*Körper*). It transmits a vague background sense, such as wellbeing or discomfort, and serves as the foundation for conscious self-awareness. The lived body transforms into a physical object body when disturbed, with a dual experience status. Helmuth Plessner coined the term "excentric position" to describe the ambivalent human experience, where one is both inside and outside their body, causing potential conflicts. Inter-subjectivity is linked to the external perspective of the body, highlighting the

ambiguity of understanding one's body as an object seen from outside but still being oneself.

Habit and Embodiment

Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* explores habit as a philosophical and phenomenological topic. He explains the pre-reflexive nature of our first connection to the outside world and the development of our bodies' understanding of it. Gallagher and Zahavi's *Phenomenological Mind* supports the idea of an embodied mind, which is closely related to human existence. Merleau-Ponty emphasizes the co-penetration between subject and environment in a first-person perspective. He uses terms like the lived body and lived space to describe our physical subjectivity, which is permeable to the outside world and transforms into intention and desire. This duality allows the subject to open to the outside world through their body, and the outside world opens to the subject in a reciprocal impact. By becoming conscious of this duality, individuals can better understand their relationship with the world. The subject constantly exposes his body to the outside world; he sees it and is seen by it simultaneously; in fact, he desires to be seen since he can only understand himself via the gaze of others. The object of the Other's attention is the topic before the Other sees it since the universe is continually made up of a variety of gazes. Gazes also have an impact on corporeality. The body is exposed to the world by transcending itself and opening up to what the world has to offer, which is why it can be said that the body is primarily a possibility, a possibility that the subject must make its own through an act of responsibility, becoming conscious of its own desiring body.

Space, language, and death are about seeing through gaze: The anatomo-clinical method a framework that articulates space, language, and death constitutes the historical context of a drug that is administered and seen as beneficial. Positive should be interpreted broadly in this context. The metaphysic of evil, to which disease had long been connected, is broken, and it discovers in the visibility of death the full form in which its content manifests itself in favorable terms. Death could separate from counter-nature and take up residence in people's live bodies only once it became the concrete a priori of medical experience. That which phenomenology was to so vehemently oppose it, in particular, was already present in its underlying structures: the original powers of the perceived and its correlation with language in the original forms of experience, the organization of objectivity on the basis of sign values, the secretly linguistic structure of the datum, the constitutive nature of corporal spatiality, the

significance of finitude in man's relationship with truth, and in the foundational principles of the theory of knowledge.

Rejection of the Lived Body

Physicians often struggle to relate to anorexic patients' bodies, focusing on their physiological experience and ignoring their emotional and lived aspects. The patient's preoccupation with weight and calories transforms the session into a clinic of numbers, ensuring their body remains within the prescribed parameters (Stanghellini et al., 2012; 2014; Cascino et al., 2019). Anorexia is a phenomenological concept characterized by a refusal, particularly in denial of the lived body. This rejection connects various negative behaviors, such as denial of food, feminine bodies, sexuality, and social ties Cosenza (2008). The doctor in anorexia clinic must acknowledge the force of rejection, which is focused on its relationship to the Other. By rejecting the experienced body, the anorexic subject demonstrates perfect independence from the Other and rejects belonging to the Other. Anorexia engraves itself within a logic characterized by a jouissance towards the One by annulling the Other.

The nameless body of anorexia refers to nothingness as the object of jouissance. The body represents the subject's isolation from the outside world, centered on the jouissance of nothingness. This isolation testifies to the absence of love and emptiness, a lack that does not refer to the Other but rather to emptiness. The body degenerates into a number, whose existence is based on strict dietary regimens supporting the physiological substratum Cosenza (2008). This lifeless, soulless, dead body is a result of the jouissance of the One.

Gaze Perception

The fear of being the center of attention and its associated unpleasantness and discomfort in socially anxious persons may be rooted in a biased self-referential perception of gaze directions. Worry defines our presence in the world since it pervades every part of our lives. Being forced into the world implies that one is continually confronted with an unsettling otherness that creates anxiety and is, in the first place, controlled by the mother, the enormous Other we encounter in our lives. Our body turns becomes a vehicle for internal tensions as a result of subject-world interaction and the Other's constant disruptive activities. The body is continually the focus of other people's attention as a component of the world as has been highlighted. Despite the differences between the three, according to Merleau-Ponty (2013) and Lacan

(2007), we are constantly confronted by the gaze of the Other, which the environment reflects back to us from different angles. The gaze in eating disorder clinics often assumes a hypercritical and judgmental position, often voluntarily resulting from the world's reflections. Anorexic individuals rarely have a history of their parents condemning their appearance.

Anorexic individuals often seek to vanish and become invisible in the eyes of others, seeking solace in their corpse-like bodies. The anorexia clinic serves as a place of rejection and eye contact, allowing the anorexic subject to isolate themselves from the world through their anorexic symptoms. However, hiding from the gaze of the Other and becoming invisible through a body-skeleton also means isolating oneself from the social Other, as the world is constantly characterized by gaze. In anorexia, the body takes the place of the dying body, turning it into a manipulable object. This potentially fatal illness is evident in severe forms, particularly those with a melancholic background. Weight gain also poses a risk, awakening the living, pulsating, and desiring body in the anorexic subject. The body becomes the "stage" of the struggle between life and death, which is considered the founding element of anorexia.

Eternal Body

Biswanger emphasized the importance of space and time in analyzing existence. In anorexia, anorexia involves a body without space and time, located in a space of nothingness. This black hole is not in the gravitational region where matter exists, making it a clinic of emptiness. The term emptiness has slightly different connotations in this context, as the Italian psychoanalyst's usage has different meanings Recalcati (2004). Anorexia is a body without space, a past, uncertain future, and intentionality, allowing the subject to project their projectuality into the world. Recalcati suggests this communication communicates a holophrase logic, as the body constantly looks to the future while beginning in the past.

Conclusion

It is concluded that the contrast between the physical body and the lived body in anorexia, focusing on the weave of past, present, and future. It explores the anorexic subject's rejection of this corpe propre, leading to a timeless jouissance that condemns their body to death. Contribution of the Author: The Author had full access to all of the information in this research study,

which has been studied and approved the final manuscript. The author is sole responsible for the conceptualization, design of the study, review of related literature and discussion.

Declarations

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