

ORGAN RECIPIENTS BIOSENTIMENTAL CRISIS IN JODI PICOULT'S *CHANGE OF HEART*

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ABSTRACT

The present research paper exposes Jodi Picoult's novel *Change of Heart* that focuses on how the implanted new heart creates anxiety and the inner crunch in the heart of the recipient who creates an unspecified bond with a death row convict who donated a new heart. This study focuses on how the modern culture of transplantation medicine is antisocial in the perception of the body as a discrete biological unit with a definite boundary. Remarkably in this novel *Change of Heart*, the fragments of the human body obtain figurative images that challenge the medical and commercial liberals for handling the human body as spare parts and therapeutic tools. This research paper highlights the development in the domain of organ transplantation which has enabled us to reconceptualize the importance of the body in the construction of social subjectivity and has permitted us to do modification on the notion of the fluidity of the social bodily periphery that has problematized our customary considerate the body as abiologically integrated completely.

Keywords: anxiety; body; transplantation; therapeutic; subjectivity.

INTRODUCTION

“Donor and recipient. Inter connected by an act of love”. This sentence has unwrapped the website of the Brazilian Association of Organ Transplantation for past centuries and implies the way individuals have been approached to donate body parts and fleshy tissue. These substantial procedures are related to testaments of artists who boost people to donate, poems were written by potential donors, and reports of people who received organs and thank those who provided them. Using human body parts for curing dreadful diseases has been happening since the Renaissance era. Even though the concept of organ transplantation was not unaware within the area of biomedicine, it has reached its present iconic grade as a miraculous medical technique with the development of technocratic biomedicine from this twenty-first century.

Organ transplantation creates an uncommon mishmash of anxiety, curiosity, and the contentment that is precisely captured in the medical thrillers and also in science fiction. This research paper upholds Jodi Picoult’s *Change of Heart* novel that exaggerates the embodied experientiality of the organ recipient Claire Nealon whose idea of subjectivity is problematized by the stable existence of the donor’s selfhood. The novel picturizes the anxiety related to the concept of hybridization of the human subjectivity. It reveals human subjectivity as an embodied phenomenon that is ontologically as well as functionally distributive in the feature. Remarkably, in this novel, the fragments of the human body obtain representative imagery that challenges the medical field with an understanding of the human body as spare parts or therapeutic tools. This study focuses on how the growth in the field of organ transplantation has empowered us to slit conceptualize the importance of the body in the reconstruction of human subjectivity. The fictional illustrations of the practice of cadaveric organ transplantation offer us the chance to imitate on the new procedures of tangled and “embodied-relationality” connected with biomedically arbitrated and bioengineered bodies.

LITERATURE OVERVIEW

Three metaphors appear to guide contemporary thinking about organ transplantation. Even though the gift is the endorsed metaphor for donating organs, the principal perception from the side of the state, specialists and the medical institution often seems to be that the body shall rather be assumed as a resource. The critical inadequacy of organs, which creates a frantic demand with a group of possible providers who are despairing to an equal extent leads easily to the gift’s becoming, in truth, not only a source but also a commodity. In this paper, the statement is made that a positive clarification of the gift representation in the situation of

organ transplantation and a corresponding defense of the ethical supremacy of giving organs need to be high and dry in ethical anthropology which reflects the consequences of embodiment in a different way and more significantly than normally in the case of modern bioethics. Michel Foucault's phenomenology offers such an alternate, with the help of which we can realize why body parts could and, indeed, under certain circumstances, should be given to others in need, but yet are neither resources nor assets to be sold. The phenomenological examination in query is knotted to important interrogations about what kind of bond we have to our own bodies, as well as about what kind of relationship we have to each other as human beings sharing the same being-in-the-world as embodied individuals. This paper gives numerous ontological interrogations about certain nineteenth-century and current medical and technical conceptualizations of traditional relations. In particular, it cogitates the account of mid-nineteenth century psychiatric thought specified by Foucault in *Psychiatric Power: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1973–1974* and *Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1974–1975*. There, Foucault says that fantastical theoretical support, the “metabody,” as he positions it, was indirectly hypothetical by that phase’s psychiatric drug as a reputed ground for psychiatric pathology. After giving the core of Foucault’s thought on the “metabody,” this paper examines the chance that a modern version of a “metabody” may function today as a theoretical analog of the nineteenth century psychiatric theory and practice that Foucault began to picture in the texts observed here. It wonders that we might recognize a contemporary chromosomal version of a “metabody” in a specific present-day opinion of the gene as replicator, an item noticeable by an ambiguous chronological ontology.

DISCUSSION

Jodi Picoult’s *Change of Heart* deals with the fictitious representations of the estrangement and the existential crisis of life experiences of the organ recipient after the transplantation surgery. The novel exposed how the intercorporeal relationship between the organ donor and recipient facing the ontological understanding of the self and the otherness. *Change of Heart* exquisitely picturizes the nervousness and the sticky situation of June Nealon and her daughter Claire while waiting for a heart transplantation operation. After years of waiting for a heart donor for Claire, the proper match for Claire Nealon is found from the death row prisoner Shay Bourne who was convicted of being the killer of June’s second husband Kurt Nealon, and her elder daughter Elizabeth. June is portrayed as an anxious mother who is not able to choose whether to take the only choices he has to protect her critically ill child or to reject it. June utters her ethical ambivalence thus:

“Shay Bourne wanted to donate his heart to Claire so that she’d live. What kind of mother I would be if I let that happen? And what kind of mother I would be if I turned him down? [...]If I didn’t take Bourne’s heart, Claire would most likely die. If I did, it would be like saying I could somehow be compensated for the death of my husband and daughter. And I couldn’t- not ever. Claire’s heart surgeon, Dr. Wu explains to June, “it’s just a muscle, June. Nothing more, and nothing less. What makes a heart worthy of a transplant has not anything to do with the donor’s personality” (*COH*;158, 210).

On the other hand, Dr. Wu’s biomedical clarification of the organ transplantation technique does not decrease June’s growing anxiety about the consequence of accepting a heart from somebody who is imprisoned for being a killer. She is not able to neglect the medical reports of the organ recipients whose character traits are testified as being converted with the donor’s character. The novel thus focuses on the ethical and medical ambivalence about whether the personality is different from the sum of the muscles and fleshy tissue or whether the organic materiality of the body is necessary, even though synecdochic, the transferor of self. In the novel, the discussion between June and her daughter Claire focuses on how the exclusion of the donor and recipient’s sex matching as one of the standards for finding proper heart donor makes Claire more nervous. In the state of anxiety, Claire questions whether the new heart that will be fixed in her will lead to a transformation in her prejudice. Claire enquires:

“What do you think she’s like? I blinked startled. Who? The girl. The one who died Claire, I said. Let’s not talk about this. Why not? Don’t you think we should know all about her if she’s going to be a part of me?...“Of course, it’s a girl,” Claire said, “It would be totally gross to have a boy’s heart.”I don’t think that’s a qualification for match She shuddered. It should be. Claire struggled to push herself upright so that she was sitting higher in the hospital bed. “Do you think I’ll be different?” (*COH*. 63)

Claire’s disgust about the impression of implanting a heart from a man and the anxiety of getting it from the killer of her own father and her elder sister throws light on the point that the biomedical clarification of the human biomechanism has not reduced the existential emotive anxiety of the heart receiver about the donor’s personality. Resembling her mother, Claire is notable to cut off the donor’s characteristics from the organ that is considered as a reified object by biomedical and pharmaceutical commerce. In the novel *Change of Heart*, Claire explains that post-transplantation of her opinion of subjectivity is reconfigured by the unique existence of the heart donor whose hauntological characteristics she gets. Claire considers the received heart from shay as an “alien inside her” (*COH*,459). She undergoes an

epistemic crisis as her life narrative is being slowly transformed by the memories and the emotions of the heart donor Shay Bourne. In disparity to the hauntological experientiality of the patients who endure sensing the occurrence of the phantom limb, the epistemic crisis in the situation of the organ receivers develops as a sign of the occurrence of the donor's selfhood in the post-transplantation surgery. Claire describes her anxiety thus:

“I have been someone different now for three weeks. It's not something you can tell by looking at me; it's not even something I can tell by looking at myself in the mirror. The only way I can describe it, and it's weird, so get ready, is like a wave; they just crash over me and suddenly, even if I'm surrounded by a dozen people, I'm lonely. Even I'm doing everything I want to, I start to cry. My mother says that emotion doesn't get transplanted along with the heart, that I should stop referring to it as his and start calling it mine. But it's pretty hard to do, specifically when you add up all the stuff I have to take just to keep my cells from recognizing the intruder in my chest....” (COH, 459)

Claire's story description of her own embodied experiences tells us how our mutual belief of the independent self is problematized in the present culture of organ transplantation. The concept of Michel Foucault may be further sight seen by studying the embodied experientiality of the character Kate in Jodi Picoult's novel *My Sister's Keeper*. It mirrors on the concept of hybridization of human subjectivity by focusing the post-transplantation experiences of Kate who take delivery of the kidney from her sister Anna who is medically confirmed as brain dead after a severe car accident. Kate restores Anna by seeing herself being an extension of her sister's prejudice. She accepts herself being hybridized and declares, “I remember how, at first, I thought the stitches seemed to spell her name. I think about her kidney functioning inside me and her blood running through my veins. I take her with me wherever I go” (MSK. 407). Unexpected deaths that become great deeds of giving provide visibility to transplantations and fame to those who authorize donations in moments of grief and loss. The extraordinary practices of the organ receivers like Claire and Kate throw light on how the transformation in the biological configuration of the human body reconfigures our understanding of the self. In the novel *Change of Heart*, the received heart may be taken to mean as a symbolic extension of the organ recipient's identity.

CONCLUSION

The present research paper is concluded by a declaration that fictional narratives such as a novel like *Change of Heart* assist us to reform our understanding of the Cartesian mind-body duality that is implanted in the history of biomedicine. The novel focuses on the fact

that human subjectivity is a dispersed phenomenon that cannot be restricted in the brain alone and the exemplified understanding of human subjectivity is more legalized by the conception of cellular memoirs that stimulus the subjectivity of an individual. In her literary work, Picoult emphasizes the experiential emotional anxieties of the organ recipients with the aim of drawing the readers' attention to the marginal notion of the human subjectivity that resists the understanding of the body as an inanimate matter. The fictitious exemplification of the corporeal connection between the organ donor and the organ recipient as sensationalized in the literary text interpreted in this research paper offers us the scope to reconceptualize the importance of the body in the construction of our subjectivity. The phenomenological insight of the organ recipients like Claire alludes Foucault's reading that a systematic examination of one's experience of the self and its kith and kin to the body throws light on the fact that the notion of self-identity is intricately related to the body.

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Michel Foucault *Lectures At The College de France Security, Territory, Population* 2008