

BABEŞ-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY
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THE SYNTHETIC BODY
A META-PHYSICAL ÉCORCHÉ

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THE SYNTHETIC BODY. A META-PHYSICAL ÉCORCHÉ

Key-words: The Synthetic Body, Trauma-space, écorché, artist, performance, transfiguration, identity, Shadow, liberty, deconstruction/reconstruction

The Synthetic Body – A Metaphysical Écorché investigates the presence of such a cultural, extra-ordinary body, in Art and Life. In Art, *The Synthetic Body* is to be found in painting, photography, sculpture, drama, cinematography, literature, while in the medical and social-political domains, it expresses the same phenomenal, remarkable nature, due to its peculiar structure, leverage and objective-function, as well as in the spiritual, mystical dimension. In what concerns the ultimate, fundamental reason of this concept, it relies on performance understood as genuine characteristic of sport activities.

Because it is transmutation, conversion and transformation of improved, spiritually upgraded aspects of Life, Art feeds on the latest's continuous dynamic morphology. Thus, it declines the creator's and the creation's *Synthetic Body* as *body of transfiguration*. And so, Art radically changes the social-geo-political, individual identity into an artistic identity, which transcends man and makes out of him a creator, an artist. If genuine and profoundly linked to the ontic needs of self upgrading existence, the artistic endeavour may become unique and the artist, authentic. The results of such complex and rare phenomenon is the re-construction of the Self and the temporary apparition of a new, superior (assumed as - highly qualified -) man-of-art.

The Synthetic Body defines itself as *exception to the rule*, in all assumed domains of existence: Society, Politics, Philosophy, Science, Art, Culture. *The Synthetic Body* refers to every aspect that is morphologically, spiritually, ideologically, creatively and artistically different, peripheral, unique, bizzare.

We, the author, associate *The Synthetic Body* to the principles of: performance (exquisite results obtained in no matter what domain of human activities), irregularity, asymmetry (or opposition of harmony) as well as the principle of the re-construction of one's self. This equally regards the psycho-physical morphology, the individual psychological flow, the spiritual, ideological, political or artistic identity of the person or of the cultural community where *The Synthetic Body* manifests itself, while It marks cracks and a qualitative, evolving leap related to every system's philosophy and composition.

Due to the author's profession and native artistic vocation, both based on continuous human nature interrogation and research – acting – , the study of *The Synthetic Body* consists in and emphasizes the dialogic foundations of the artistic identity, the so-called self-interrogation whose main theme is the becoming of the human creative being, the artist.

In today Romania, I do not consider that the purpose of the artist should be the wishy-washy, insipidous, vapid and subservient activism, nor the second-hand, false political ideals, but it should focus on self-knowledge, creative, inspirative dramatic inner tension, characterising the supreme act of creation in Arts. Thus, a reconfiguration of the artist and his work of art might be possible. To bound oneself upon the inner dynamo of creation and upon the spiritual spring, just as the gardner bounds himself upon the precious flower he carries about and for whose beauty he becomes deeply responsible, well, this is a personal, subjective, ultimate challenge of the genuine, pure Artist.

The research has, here and there, a strong subjective, personal dimension, because it is legitimately and profoundly tight with and dedicated to the comprehension of existence through Arts.

In this interdisciplinarity study, the author reveals the exceptional dimension of human existence, in arts, science and daily life. The new concept of *Syntetic Body* represents the New Identity Body, obviously diametrically opposed to the former, morphological, standard, politically correct and formal, quotidian natural body. The innovative concept, especially related to arts (Drama and movie acting, literature, painting, etc.), politics and science, points out *performance* understood as empowerment of the creative resources, defiance of mediocrity or platitudinous. *The Syntethic Body* thus becomes the sign of Genius, even if the latest is sometimes, torn apart by the shadow of "monstrosity".

The Synthetic Body transcends the linearity of the human condition, no matter the areas of research, and it draws the spiritual axis.

This research begins with the analysis of the imitative arts (painting and sculpture) associated with the spiritual paradigm, it goes through theatre drama, cinematography and philosophy, it touches aspects of pathology and cybernetics and, in the end, it focuses upon acting.

The Synthetic Body is closely related to the concept of Identity. In mysticism and in Fine Arts, I do associate the *Synthetic Body* to the absolute metamorphosis, the transfiguration. Its twin, dramatic concept is represented by *The Trauma-Space*. This is the space of absolute creation.

The Trauma-Space owns a concrete, practical, material dimension as well as a psychic, emotional, immaterial one. It is both the space of artistic and spiritual cognition and an artificial, non-natural dimension comprehended as the architecture of Life's *otherness* synthesis. In a romantic, ancient, traditional sense of converting the meaning to matter, we could nominate the exterior, visible, *Trauma-Space* as any theatre building and institution or disaffected, disabled urban structures, segregation spaces: the prison, the mental house, the asylum, the orphanage, the psychiatric hospital, the workhouses, the old-age homes, the war camps. Definely, *The Trauma-Space* belongs to segregation, reclusion and self-mirroring. In theatrical terms, there is a paradox

”sweetening” the rough nature of this concept: this specific, dramatic kind of space allows, inspires and it is open to the playful, festive and merry communication.

Artistically speaking, *The Trauma-Space* belongs to transition, while metamorphosis, the ever lasting game of *persona* and the de-construction and the re-construction of the Self take place between its borders. There is a minor difference between the artistic or theatrical *Trauma-Space* and the punitive social-ideological one, as referred to concentration camps or asylas. In the first type, everything that take place is about the joy, the cultural pleasure, the spiritual fulfillment and *catharsis* of the audience, as results of the festive, artistic events which develop there, while the other type destroys, programmatically annihilates identity and the human being.

The research is dedicated to the analysis of the foundations, the circumstances and the nature of *The Synthetic Body* expressed by the fine arts, especially Drama, underlining two possible ways of reaching such an up-graded artistic and spiritual state of acting. The study spotlights good examples of great drama and movie actors, who created extraordinary theatre and movie title roles, great, extremely difficult, complex characters. Associated with *performance*, approached as empowerment of the creative resources in order to achieve the best results during acting, one may appeal to and experience also the OODA Loop military strategy, to enforce his artistic and creative surviving skills. The second way to reach another state of artistic consciousness is appealing to and tempting *enantiodromia*.

The study embodies four parts. The first part discusses the definition and the status of the two innovative concepts, related one to the other, *The Synthetic Body* and *The Trauma-Space*, as well as it includes assertion upon the two basic Aesthetics’ concepts of Ugliness and Beauty, related to the new anatomy of *The Synthetic Body*. The second part refers to the military OODA Loop complex of strategies applied in drama acting and performance. This part also includes an original study (*The Virgin M.* project) I have performed using this strategy, some years ago, during an acting workshop I have sustained and coordinated. The third part consists in the advocacy of *The Synthetic Body* as The Absolute Player Paradox. This paradox reveals the absolute stage of existence of *The Synthetic Body*, in acting. Once the part is exquisitely accomplished and performed by the actor, the best part of him will continue to endlessly perform, long after the theatrical representation has finished. And also, maybe, long after his earthly death. If accomplished, *The Synthetic Body* - the best incarnation of the best essence of the Absolute Player, a supreme challenge, as a matter of fact, - will no longer exist but in a multi-world dimension. This part of the study also contains the idea of the artistic act’s *cathartic* value, its spiritual origin and goal. The last part emphasizes on the materialization of *The Synthetic Body* in the Performing Arts, and on the precise study of great theatrical and cinematographic performances, due to some Romanian and foreign elite actors. The chapter values great, unique interviews sustained by actors who, in the author’s opinion, have accomplished the *Synthetic Body* stage, in drama performance, through time. Their unique, extremely valuable creation supports the *Synthetic Body* philosophy. The last chapter also offers a psychological, analytical approach to the concept.

The existence of *The Synthetic Body* is absolutely restricted to the human psychophysiology and creativity. The limit of *The Synthetic Body* is the humanoid robot Sophia, similar to the Galatea model or archetype (if we consider the apparent purpose for which it has been designed: evolution of the human race prototype), but being essentially a Golem-like cybernetic monster, designed for eventual anarchy, destruction and dissolution of the human race, in spite of its "cunning", elusive, ideologic and propagandistic speech.

In what concerns the Performing Arts, pathology puts a limit on *The Synthetic Body*. If accomplished and sustained for a very long period of time and out of the performance's duration, this absolute transfiguration of the actor might lead to insanity. If not restricted to the configured time, temporary genius traits or absolute performance in acting might become sign of pathology. In philosophy and science, we have great archetypes of this kind of transgression of the mental boundaries when fiction, creativity and trauma take control upon the mental state and the entire existence of the artist. This is the case of great Nietzsche and the complete fusion between his life, his psychological determinations and his creation.

The study closes focusing again on the *Androgynus* theme considered the artistic sex, by excellence. *The Synthetic Body* represents the artistic experience and performance subordinated to the superior creative consciousness, which is responsible for the spiritual dimension of the work of art.

The exceptional actor, the complete artist does not own only a individual self, but, also, a transpersonal one, a transcendental self. The fusion between the artist and his work of art resembles a divine, ultimate embrace, as in *The Kiss* sculpture belonging to the great Constantin Brâncuși.

The Synthetic Body is transfiguration, a radical manifestation of *ideokinesis*, that kynetics of poetical Ideas embraced with Philosophy and spiritual evolution in Life, by courtesy of Art.

Thus, the concept of *ideokinesis* authorises the presence of *The Synthetic Body* in Art, pathology (*pathos logos* meaning – the knowledge about the suffering), psychology (the re-constructed self), ab-normal or extra-regular morphology of the body, considered abnormality or monstrosity, if linked and opposed to the traditional aesthetic exigence of Beauty and Ugliness. This last aspect leads to the discussion on malformation or anomalous traits.

Refining the ludic and creative center of the artist, re-conciling oneself in Unity and personal Harmony are possible only through an "écorché". And there lies the title and the core of this research.

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1. Ann M. Fox – *Fabulous Invalids together. Why Disability in Mainstream Theatre Matters?* (Davidson College, North Carolina, USA)
2. Hannah Donaldson (University of Exeter, UK) & Karen Wood (Coventry University, UK) – *InVisible Difference: How the Academy can Support the Disabled Dancer*
3. Ria Cheyne (Liverpool Hope University, UK), *Fearful Bodies, Fearful Minds: Disability and Horror*