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**Olga GOMILKO****'SAVING DEFICIENCY' AS ONTOLOGY OF THE HUMAN BODY**

*This paper is a contribution in discussions about the corporeal 'uncertainty' as a fundamental attribute of a human body, thanks to which a body transforms into the body. Defining this 'uncertainty' as 'saving deficiency' contests its conception as fallenness of the human body. However fallibility as a condition of 'saving deficiency' opens horizon for numerous cultural canons. An archaic body starts human's battle against fear of own body. The history of culture represents the stages of this battle. Ontology of 'saving deficiency' of the human body allows going beyond the limits of the constructivist position in interpreting the history.*

**Keywords:** *archaic body, chora, fallenness, fallibility, fallen body, ontology, ontological gap, organism, 'saving deficiency', the human body.*

**Homer's archaic body vs. Descartes' organism.** A key attribute of chaos is a lack of shape, but not that of structure. A shapeless body as chaos starts the history of the human body. This is *an archaic body*. It starts a drama of human's combat against own body. As a result of this battle, various forms of culture arise. They document the victory of a form (image) over the elements (chaos). The research into Homeric texts proves that the archaic body essentially differs from a modern concept of the human body as *an organism*.

The concept of the body as an organism results from the modern philosophy's depriving the body of any significance for personal identity *Ego*. It becomes something external. The body turns into an organism — one of the body types in nature. It is now not identical with *Ego*, but its a mere link to nature. In itself, the human body is no different from other sensual substances. R. Descartes believes a human organism is a human body machine.

While Homer's body is not an organism. Homer's *phrenes* (lungs, diaphragm), *thumos*, *prapides* (heart, diaphragm), *kradiê* (heart), *kêr* (heart), *hêpar* (liver) do not compose an organism. They could hardly be localized in the body. It is problematic to make strict division among the Homer's 'organs' both in physical terms, and in functional terms. Each organ behaves as a separate creature. Each 'organ' correlates with a certain affect. Ancient culture

grows out of hero's overcoming his heart. The archaic body is split into numerous aspirations, passions and forces. The Homer's body is '*organs without body*' [Gavrylenko 2007]. The Homer's body is a multiple body, a body as an amalgam of its parts<sup>1</sup>. The Homer's hero is a 'set' of conflicting forces and functions, a kind of force field. That is why Homer's characters are affected bodies. The affects act, and make a liquidity effect on them. The affects make extremities and organs extremely mobile and active, experiencing their impact; the body becomes moist, literally melts, and becomes liquid. An affect penetrates a body, changing it to the core — both 'outside' and 'inside'. The same processes that take place in internal organs take place on the surface — on the skin, body (*chrês*).

Homer's epos represents a body 'under skin', specifically, without skin from the very beginning, understanding it as a barrier between internal and external (this barrier exists, but it is borrowed from animals: *derma*, *rhinos*). If there is no this barrier in a man himself, then external and internal almost do not differ and a Homer's character should feel himself 'thrown into existence'. He is an intersection and gaming ground for various forces. The human body in Homer's epos has connotations of destruction, annihilation, absorption of a human being (his body) to *flesh* (as meat) as inhuman matter. There is a 'mode of bodily' absorption of human bodies. Human's fear to be flesh forces him to become a hero.

**Chora vs Eidos (Plato)** Philosophic intuition registering initial shapelessness of the human body is Plato's *chora* as the receptacle. In Plato's *Timaeus* *chora* as "the universal nature (physis) that receives (decbestbai) all bodies" (50 b). The main characteristic of *chora* is an ability to assume but not adopt any form. Always assuming a form, *chora* never and by no means adopt any form that would be similar to the form of those things it enters into. The reality in Plato's ontology is represented by *eidos*, which makes bodily certainty of all beings as a secondary feature.

The archaic body knows *eidos* as its visual image enabling likeness and similarity of the human body with divine matter. *Eidos* marks the zone where human and divine intersects. It represents 'inscribed' body with its fixity and stability. *Eidos* of the archaic body corresponds to an ideal correlating with a category of divine. Plato's teaching of *chora* and *eidos* resonates with the archaic concept of a body as a chaotic substance assuming human features through 'appearance' — *eidos*.

Further history of the human body is continuous battle of a man for integrity of the body. Archaic 'organs without body' require unity, coordination of actions, harmony. This is their integration that creates *the body*. Ontological 'imperfection' of human body reveals itself in its 'disintegration' rather than

<sup>1</sup> The epic body as a multiple body in the works of B. Shell, M. Austin, M. Clarke, J.-P. Vernant

in its uncontrollability. The same as Plato's *chora*, the body demonstrates the possibilities to transform existence. It has no form, because it has an *ontological gap*, which constantly shows the trend to drawing together. It could be compared with a bodily injury, which cures through pain. The history of culture allows revealing ontological capabilities of the body. Through creation of various canons of the body, the culture draws together this gap by various ways.

It is no coincidence that the epic experience embodied in Homer's lexicon was too difficult and hardly understandable as early as for Classic Greeks. The classic body emerges as a result of 'ideological' taming of the archaic body. Nudity as a principal feature of a classic body expresses a threshold of body's subjection to a reason. A classic bodily canon is a sample of social constructivism, when the body assumes the form needed for effective functioning of the culture. Repressiveness of social constructivism determines its deadlocks. The body subjected to repressions is not a happy body.

**Fallibility vs Fallenness (Christianity).** Christianity offers the other way of curing *ontological gap* related to the human body. Antiquity has revealed the failure to put the body under strict control of rational discipline. Antique constructivism of the human body further turned into antique 'corruption' of corporality: under the duress of repressions, the body again has slid into the elements. Christianity focuses on *transfiguration*, but not transformation of the body. Christian constructivism tries to influence the very nature of the human body — to change its ontology.

According to the Christian teaching, the key attribute of the human body is its *fallibili* [Welton 1998, p. 238]. The latter demonstrates the possibilities of the body not only to become a 'fallen body'. Fallibility conceptualizes *ontological gap* of the human body, and becomes the object of Christianity corporeal practices. Not a repression, but a cardinal modification in the nature of the body determines their content. For instance, baptism (new birth of a man) is followed by confession and is finished with resurrection (decorating a human in 'the robes of light'). A genuine path of a Christian runs from flesh to the body: from body affected with a sin to the body cleansed with blessing.

Body's fallibility goes its path to salvation. There is no resurrected soul without a 'fallen body'. While the classic antique body is nude, the Christian body is chaste. It is so not because of disrespect to it, but in result of attempt to change the flow of life: reverse direction to childbearing as the foundation of human society existence. The Christian attempt to change ontology of the body has turned into its *desomatization*. The latter means depriving the human body of the ontological meaning. The body becomes an organism. A modern conception of an organism as a machine does not satisfy the contemporary thinking.

**'Saving Deficiency' vs 'Evolutionary Weirdness' (Nietzsche).** The issue of materiality of the body, especially, in feminist studios comes back to understanding of a human body as Plato's *chora*. J. Butler says: "Matter as a site of inscription cannot be explicitly thematized. And this inscriptional site or space is, for Irigaray, *materiality* that is not the same as the category of "matter" whose articulation it conditions and enables" [Butler 1993, p.38]. For Butler, Plato's *chora* as "a topos of the metaphysical tradition, this inscriptional space, helps to understand how "a form can be said to generate its own sensible representation" [Butler 1993, p.39].

Uncertainty, formlessness, and chance determine the nature of the human body not as its pathology, but as its «saving deficiency». Imperfectness of the human body makes possible its infinite transformations in various canons of culture. Changes of various images (*eidos*) of the body are an essential precondition to survival. In contrast to animals, people are to change their bodies. Otherwise, they are destined to suffer and die like Homer's characters. 'Saving deficiency' determines ontology of the human body. Therefore, philosophic analysis should be focused not only on the structures of corporeal imperfectness as pathology (sinful, criminal, immoral, aggressive, hostile, etc. body), and also on its bodily structures of ontological 'imperfectness' as open opportunities for existence.

M. Feher stresses, that "we must first ask ourselves who or what we take the body to be when we perceive it as an immune system threatened on all sides, even by its own functions; when we seek to discover in ourselves the particular, saving deficiency that distinguishes us from machines without throwing us back to an animal state; or when the uterus no longer appears to be unequivocal, silent locus that perpetuates the species. At the intersection of the confusions of our lives and the uneasy peregrinations of our thoughts, these questions, among many others, outline a picture of a contemporary body" [Feher 1990, p.12]. The human body appears primarily a barrier of intersection and interrelation between the processes of life (within the meaning of vital) and cognition (within the meaning of reflexive). Following various life and thought strategies (or contrary to them) a human body builds the body. Therefore its historic variability is a sufficiently real fact. Feher concludes that, "the history of the human body is not so much the history of its representations as of its modes of construction" [Feher 1990, p.11].

The concept of 'saving deficiency' challenges the idea of human perfectness as a biological organism, implying that a man as a natural creature crowning the transformational growth does not differ from other creatures in principle. However, F. Nietzsche's conception of human's 'evolutionary weirdness' finds support here. P. Klossowski asserts, that Nietzsche did not speak on behalf of a 'hygiene' of the body, established by reason. He spoke on behalf of

corporeal *states* as the authentic data that consciousness must conjure away in order to be individual. This viewpoint far surpasses a purely 'physiological' conception of life. *The body is a product of chance*; it is nothing but the *locus* where a group of individuated impulses confront each other so as to produce this interval that constitutes *a human life*, impulses *whose sole ambition is to de-individuate themselves*" [Klossowski 1997].

In contrast to Nietzsche's idea of the body as a product of chance, definition of the body as 'saving deficiency' strengthens its ontological positions demonstrating 'intersection' and 'interrelation' of anthropologic and reflexive rather than one-sided dependence of the former on the latter.

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### Ольга Гомілко «Рятівна вада» як онтологія тілесності

Дана стаття є внеском у дискусію про тілесну «невизначеність» людини. Останню розглядають як фундаментальний атрибут людського тіла, завдяки котрому воно трансформується у людську тілесність. Визначення цієї «невизначеності» як «рятівної вади» оспорує уявлення про неї як гріховну ознаку людського тіла. Адже «вразливість» тіла, постаючи умовою його «рятівної вади», відкриває горизонт для виникнення численних культурних канонів. Архаїчне тіло розпочинає битву людини проти страху перед власним тілом. Історія культури презентує етапи цієї битви. Онтологія «рятівної вади» людського тіла уможлиблює вихід за межі конструктивістської інтерпретації історії.

**Ключові слова:** архаїчне тіло, вразливість, гріховність тіла, кора, онтологія, онтологічний розрив, організм, «рятівна вада», тілесність.

### Ольга Гомілко «Спасительный недостаток» как онтология телесности

Данная статья является вкладом в дискуссию о телесной «неопределенности», рассматриваемой в качестве фундаментального атрибута человеческого тела. Благодаря последнему тело обладает

способностью трансформироваться в человеческую телесность. Определение этой «неопределенности» как «спасительного недостатка» оспаривает представление о ней как греховной характеристике человеческого тела. Ведь «уязвимость» тела, являясь условием его «спасительного недостатка», открывает горизонт для возникновения многочисленных культурных канонов. Архаическое тело начинает битву человека против страха перед собственным телом. История культуры представляет этапы этой битвы. Онтология «спасительного недостатка» человеческого тела делает возможным выход за пределы конструктивистской интерпретации истории.

**Ключевые слова:** *архаичное тело, греховность тела, кора, уязвимость, организм, онтология, онтологический разрыв, «спасительный недостаток», телесность.*