



The Odyssey of Professional Identity: Scientific, Interdisciplinary and Bioethical Reflections on Art and Arts Therapies Research

Odiseja profesionalnog identiteta: Znanstvena, interdisciplinarna i bioetička promišljanja o istraživanju umjetnosti i umjetničkih terapija

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Some personal experiences acquired during several years of scientific and clinical research on the complementary application of art (visual, musical, dramatic, dance-ballet, poetry...) for educational, prophylactic, diagnostic, and/or therapeutic purposes are presented in this poster presentation.

In the context of psychoanalytic object relations theory and related disciplines (art, archetypology, biomythology, neuroscience, aesthetics...), the conference theme - conceived according to the Greek myth of Odysseus' journeys and return to Ithaca - was used as an intermediary object, that is, as an extended metaphor of a dual meaning:

- a) superficial or literal meaning and
- b) deep meaning – cultural, aesthetic, bioethical, and deontological.

For this purpose, and with a look at interpretations of the importance of transcultural archetypal symbols in the analytical study of anthropological features of consciousness, imagination, physical, and spiritual needs, a complementary intermediary object was also applied: the artwork of the French painter Francois Boucher *The Marriage of Cupid and Psyche* and the artwork *Eros and Psyche* by William Etty.

Odysseus' experiences—full of obstacles, temptations, and transformations—can be interpreted as reflecting humanity's enduring planetary, biological, psychosomatic, and spiritual needs for self-actualization and the preservation of existence, even in the third millennium. Based on these insights, and by drawing upon the philosophy of science and the



classical, bioethical, and deontological reflections of Immanuel Kant—specifically his questions: "What can I know?", "What should I do?" and "What can I hope for?"—the text stimulates reflection on various features of professional identity. It particularly focuses on the crucial link between art, arts therapies research, bioethics, and interdisciplinarity.

For this purpose, an integrated and holistic approach is applied by exploring these complementary contents:

1. Basic outline of research protocols
2. Theoretical Framework: rhetoric of the discipline: the artistic description of the main features of a work and the interpretation of symbols from the aspect of psychoanalysis and related disciplines
3. Personal experiences from various researches about art in complementary therapies conducted in Croatia and in collaboration with other university and clinical institutions in France, Greece, USA, India, Brazil, Nigeria, etc. (various interpretations published in scientific and other publications, cited (indexed) in Current Contents, Anthropological Literature, Index Medicus, and others)
4. Body cathexis, ego-ideal, aesthetic pleasure, joy of living and creativity, status anxiety, mental hygiene
5. Bioethics, interdisciplinarity, and deontology.

These experiences are interpreted in connection with contemporary reflections in the humanities, biomedical, social, technical and other sciences. The final considerations are conceived with a look at the concept of applied cognitive sciences, and the mission of the European consortium ECArTE.

Biography

Miroslav Prstačić, Prof. Dr. Sc., University Professor Emeritus, Master of Medical Sciences, Doctor of Humanities: Held various positions at one time: Associate of the Croatian Board of the European Association Medicine of Arts (*Association Européenne de Médecine des Arts*), Dean of the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences at the University of Zagreb, Founder and Head of the Department for the Study of Motor (*Psychosomatic / Somatopsychic*) Disorders, Chronic Diseases and Art Therapies at the University of Zagreb, Full Professor of the course Creative Therapy (*Arts in Psychotherapy*) at the Academy of



Fine Arts at the University of Split in Croatia, Founder and President of the Croatian Association of Psychosocial Oncology, Sophrology and Art-Therapies, President of the Croatian Association of Music Therapists - under the auspices of the University Clinic for Neurology, Psychiatry and Addictions.

Author of the first French-Croatian clinical research in complementary therapies, in the field of psychosocial oncology, sophrology and creative art therapy, carried out at the Cancer Research and Treatment Institute "Claudius Regaud" in France; Vice-President of the World Congress "Art, Science, and Communication", held at the University of Oxford; recipient of various awards, among which the 'Leonardo da Vinci' (*in recognition of an outstanding contribution to research in Arts, Science, Creativity and Life Potentials*) from the International Biographical Center Cambridge, England, stands out; published a significant number (*more than 150*) scientific and professional papers; author of books in bilingual or trilingual editions (*Croatian, English, French, Greek language...*); initiated the first membership of the parent Faculty and the University of Zagreb in the European Consortium of Universities - ECArTE; Global Representative of ECArTE.

Recent Publications

Prstačić, M. (2022). **Museum of Charms and Fetish Objects in Nigeria: Contemplations about Imagination, Culture and Related Areas** , Collegium Anthropologicum, Vol, 46. 2: 159 - 172. (ISSN 0350-6134. UDC 572)

Prstačić, M. (2025): **Sophrology, Psychosomatics, Deontology and Creativity**, Research in Education and Rehabilitation, Vol. 8.1., 1 - 23. (DOI: 10.51558/ 2744-1555.2025.7.1.1)