

## **Teză de abilitare**

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## Habilitation Thesis

### *A Comparative Perspective on Theatrical Poetics. Categories of the Carnavalesque and the Theatrical Avant-gardes*

#### Summary

This Habilitation Thesis, entitled *Categories of the Carnavalesque and the Theatrical Avant-gardes. A Comparative Perspective on Theatrical Poetics*, aims to retrace my intellectual and academic trajectory, subsequent to the completion of my PhD Thesis, entitled *Le théâtre de Michel de Ghelderode*, which I defended at Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj in 1999.

In the *First Part* of the thesis, the presentation of my **scientific, academic and professional achievements** is conducted along four main axes, whose methodological foundation is *interdisciplinarity* (a literary exegetical approach from a hermeneutic perspective, on the one hand, and an approach from the vantage point of theatre studies and drama theory, on the other hand) and *comparative analysis*.

- 1) The first axis concerned the *development and analytical deepening of three chapters of my PhD Thesis*, each of which was expanded into a separate book. After publishing these three books, their analytical content was rearranged in a unitary volume, a revised edition of the previous three. This volume, entitled *Avangardă și carnavalesc în teatrul lui Michel de Ghelderode [Avant-garde and the Carnavalesque in Michel de Ghelderode's Plays]* (2012, 400 p.) is structured according to a logic designed to highlight my vision about Ghelderodian theatre, whose exegesis acquired an integrative dimension, by furthering my comparative perspective and placing the works of this playwright within the context of innovative stage performance practices and avant-garde theatrical poetics of the first half of the twentieth century. The carnivalization of dramatic subject matter in Ghelderode's plays, the intrinsic connection I have identified between the texts of the historical avant-gardes (Futurism, Dada, Surrealism) and the categories of the carnavalesque have enabled me to configure the original dramaturgic model to which Ghelderodian theatre is subsumed.
- 2) The second post-doctoral research axis, *the study of the living theatrical phenomenon in synchrony*, after 1990, was generated by winning a CNCSIS research grant on topic no. 1775: *The Impossible Theatre. The Centre for Research on the Romanian Theatre Phenomenon in Communism and Post-communism (2003-2005)*, coordinated by Prof. Dr. Liviu Malița. I contributed to this research, which lasted 3 years, as co-author and coordinator of the *Independent Theatre* section. As a result of this complex research, unique to this day, in Romanian theatre studies, there have been published two volumes of reference for Romanian research, under the titles *Viața teatrală în și după comunism [Theatrical Activity during and after Communism]* and *Cenzura în teatru. Documente (1948-1989) [Censorship in the Theatre. Documents (1948-*

1989)], Cluj, Foundation for European Studies (Ephesus) Press, 2006.

- 3) The third axis consists of *thematic strands of research*, which resulted in thorough studies and articles published in the country and abroad, in critical editions or journal issues I coordinated, as well in the organization of an international symposium (*The Bad Spectator/ Le mauvais spectateur*, 2012) or in launching and coordinating the theatre book collection of the Faculty of Theatre and Television. I have published studies dedicated to emblematic playwrights of the twentieth century, such as Samuel Beckett and Eugène Ionesco, to the Polish theatrical phenomenon or to George Banu's works.
- 4) The fourth axis of the first part of the thesis is dedicated to my didactic and professional activity, which applies, in the teaching process, the research I have conducted in the field of theatre studies and theories, concerning the directorial poetics of the great reformers of the stage and of the actor's art in the twentieth century. These have led me to develop a course on *Directorial Poetics*, whose first volume was published by Casa Cărții de Știință Press in 2015. Besides the diachronic component, represented by the history of modern directing and directorial poetics, my other courses focus on a synchronous analysis of the major mutations affecting the style and aesthetics of contemporary theatrical phenomena, seen in their entwinement with other arts toward which stage performance practices have opened (the course on *Contemporary Spectacology* and the MA course on *Theatrical and Cinematic Imagery*).

The second part of the thesis, concerning my **professional, scientific and academic career development plans**, should be seen in the context of the aspects outlined above, namely in light of the idea of the continuity and coherence of my research and scientific pursuits so far. In this sense, with hindsight, the main axes, deserving to be furthered and continued, are the following:

- the axis of diachronic exploration (continuing my research on the history of modern directing, of the various stage poetics and practices that have aimed, throughout the twentieth century and to this day, to revitalize the theatrical phenomenon, with a focus on the Romanian space and with a view to the publication of volume II of my course on *Directorial Poetics*)
- the axis of thematic research (*Shakespeare – the antimodel of the avant-gardes*), which aims to analyse the iconoclastic, parodic and deconstructed manner in which Shakespeare and his characters are featured in the texts of the historical avant-gardes. The model of carnival and of the carnivalesque categories proposed by Bakhtin remains a valuable tool for analysis. Here, I also propose a research whose outcome will be presented at the International Symposium *DADA and the Performing Arts*, to be organized by the Faculty of Theatre and Television in 2016.
- the axis of a synchronic approach, in the sense of finding the most appropriate hermeneutical methods in order to identify, along the lines of synthesis, rigour and coherence, the foundations and the characteristics on which the scenic and dramaturgical practices of modernity are grounded, especially those that draw their sap from the iconoclasm of the historical avant-gardes. Another point of

interest in contemporary spectacology consists, for me, in the encounter between theatre and the new media, between theatre and dance, as well as the ever greater distancing from the codes, rules and conventions of traditional theatre.

The main goal of this Habilitation Thesis is the presentation of my post-doctoral evolution in the sphere of theatre studies, coalesced around several lines of research and teaching, which represented, in the past, the main nuclei of my activity and which are predicated on the methodological foundations of *interdisciplinarity* (hermeneutics/literary exegesis, theatre studies and drama theory) and *comparative analysis*. I also hope that the projects related to my professional, scientific and academic career development plans, presented above, have outlined very clearly my future research and teaching directions and that they constitute valid arguments concerning the continuity, consistency and rigor that connects my past and my present activity, attesting my ability to supervise doctoral candidates.