

**Babeş-Bolyai University
Faculty of Theatre and Film
Theatre and Film Doctoral School**

Habilitation Theses

The Dramaturg as a Synthesis of Theater Theory and Theater Practice



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SUMMARY

This Habilitation Theses, entitled *The Dramaturg as a Synthesis of Theater Theory and Theater Practice*, aims to analyze the tradition of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's *Hamburg Dramaturgy* (1767 – 1768) as it is understood and practiced in the late modern context of the contemporary theater. In Lessing's discourse on dramaturgy are conceived those paradims of modernity which, later on, has become models for both theater institutions, and the theoretical-reflective discourse about the theater phenomena. Since we summarize our activity both as theorist and dramaturg practitioner our theses could have a special relevancy for the contemporary Romanian theater, as far as the position of the dramaturg hasn't been yet accepted institutionally on one hand, and, on the other hand, there is a palpably increasing demand in Romania for dramaturgy programs on the university level (BA and MA), and in theater practice as well.

There are theater traditions that don't make any difference in between the dramaturg and the playwright (the Romanian "dramaturg" means simply playwright), as opposed to the German and Nordic tradition (dramaturg vs. dramatiker). On the basis of our own vast scientific and

artistic experience – according to the legal requirements of such theses – we will focus on the role of the dramaturg in the contemporary theater and rehearsal process, developing in many aspects the ideas proposed in my inaugural speech held at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences – Academy of Letters and Arts on March 2, 2016.¹ In the postdramatic era of the contemporary theater the role of the dramaturg is more and more important, if not crucial, especially if we speak about performances created by different versions of collaborative theaters or widely accepted and practiced “devised” playwriting methods.

The first chapter of our theses re-evaluates the position of theater critique going back to H.-G. Gadamer’s notion on theory (*theoros* in Greek language), stating that a performance doesn’t have a separate existence from its audience, which means that the “theoretical view” can’t be realized from a neutral and distant position, as far as the critique himself or herself is an essential part of the performance’s present time. In other words in the theater space we don’t get an aesthetic object separately from the viewer: that distinct participatory relationship with the performance would transform the critique in a witness, in the most traditional Greek sense of the word (*martyros*).

The key term of the second chapter is adaptation. From our point of view, measuring the vast experience in making various types of dramaturgies, the history of the universal theatre can be definitely written as a process of adaptation for stage, from the Greek myths through Shakespeare’s dramatic oeuvre to the contemporary ones. The dramaturgy itself would mean a process of adaptation of a play to a specific cultural setting were the theater (company of theater makers) is located. Beginning with translations to the immense variety of cultural transitions in space and time, adaptation is the main craft of the contemporary dramaturg worldwide.

The third chapter of our theses proposes three different ways to continue our researches by designing the structure, chapter by chapter, of three books. Two of them are very close to be realized, the one called *A Handbook for Dramaturgs* will come out in the near future in Hungarian language, and will contain descriptions of my work and professional dialogue with few key contemporary stage directors and authors, such as Silviu Purcărete, Robert Woodruff, Matthias Langhoff, Roger Planchon, Mihai Măniuțiu, Yuri Kordonsky, Gábor Tompa, Jolande Snaith, Charles Mee, György Dragomán etc. The most important research from our point of view

¹ The speech is accesable online on the Academy’s website, and on a DVD-version at the library of the Theater and Film Faculty of Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj.

is the elaboration of the term created by us, namely „barrack dramaturgy”.² The term has become over the years a part of the international discourse, and it describes the therapeutic approach of the historical traumas of different communities.

It’s important to mention that our theses aim also to highlight the pedagogical potentials of our researches: the Addenda offer few exercises and handouts useful for the teaching practices of dramaturgy on different level of study.

² See Jozefina Komporalý editor: *András Visky’s Barrack Dramaturgy. Memories of the Body*. Intellect Publishers, Bristol-Chicago, 2017.