

Summery of the Habilitation Thesis

The habilitation thesis *Shape and Idea Via Corporis. Fundamental Vectors in the Actor's Laboratory* reiterates my professional, academic and artistic course, following the PhD. thesis entitled *Bovarism. The Games of the Bovaric Fiction in Literature and Theatre*, presented in 2010 at University of Arts of Târgu-Mureş in partnership with Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca.

The first part of the thesis displays academic and artistic creation achievements and it is structured in three great research axes. The topics comprised in my research have themselves claimed an interdisciplinary approach as well as the comparative perspective. Thus, my scientific enterprise has been sustained and has been founded on works in the domains of philosophy, psychoanalysis, philology, sociology, anthropology, as well as history, aesthetics, poetics and theatre anthropology. The first part has three axes:

1. The first axis refers to the evolution and the development of the topic approached in the

PhD. thesis, consisting of two books, the first one being *Daguerreotype with Emma in the Window. Bovarism. Games of Bovaric Fiction* and the second one *The Backstage Effect. The Theatricality of Ambiguity and the Ambiguity of Theatricality*. This part contains the hermeneutics of bovarism from the perspective of the specular relationship between the image of the bovaric and the one of the comedian, theatricality and mechanisms of the bovaric phenomenon, the image as a propeller of bovaric fiction, identity utopias of the individual. Originating in Jules de Gaultier's philosophy of bovarism, the comparative study reveals the relation identity-alterity, essence-appearance, authentic-inauthentic, real- unreal. The analysis was focused on the very ambiguity resulting from the tension existing between these polarities, on an area of interstitial, border, strip which favours glidings, wanderings, confusion or the games of the two antinomic plans. The main themes subjected to research have been: the ambiguity of these beings, the magic of the mask, proteic nature and the metamorphosis of these beings, the way they are related to the principle of mimesis, the power of imagination, the specific type of conscientiousness peculiar to every individual.

2. The second research axis contains the philosophy of the ludic act and corporality presented in the lecture of non-verbal theatrical language “*The Actor’s Body – image, metaphore sign. Body hieroglyphs.*” The body and its expressive potential have always been in the centre of my artistic and didactic concerns. The theoretical part of the lecture spotlights the communicational and semiotic potential of the human body and of the body of the actor from an interdisciplinary perspective, which includes sciences of communication, semiotics, anthropology and sociology, as well as some theatrical poetics. The socio-cultural relations of non-verbal language have been recorded, as they are expressed in the theories of kinesics, proxemics, haptics, the connection between theatre and communication techniques, theories of communication, contributions of certain schools, especially the Palo Alto school and its relational paradigm, as well as of theatrical semiotics. The body has become, in the last decades, the protagonist of the intellectual discourse, the hermeneutics of corporality has emerged into rich and diversified studies since postmodernism. The thrilled interest for body awareness points to the joy of rediscovering the body as something long ignored, forgotten and neglected. The eulogy of the body nowadays is nothing but the claim of a once rejected status. Through a diachronic investigation I have closely followed how a unitary vision upon the human being has developed, as well as the body-mind concept, as long as the dualist model has been mainly peculiar to western thinking. The body-mind disjunction, that marked the European thinking and culture, has provided the body with the status of “ostracized”, consequently a fast incursion to the origins of dualist conception, with stopovers in orphism, Pitagora, Platon, Plotin, Ficino and Descartes was a must. I recorded the change of paradigm through the work of Friedrich Nietzsche and Sigmund Freud, continued by the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl, but above all that of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. I have marked the contribution of gestaltism, of the Gestalt therapy (Fritz Perls), as well as that of the philosophy of the mind (Gilbert Ryle, John R. Searle, Daniel Dennett, George Lakoff, Mark Johnson, Francesco Varela, Shaun Gallagher, Yasuo Yuasa, Drew Leder, Thomas Metzinger) and of neurosciences (Antonio Damasio, David Eagleman, Giacomo Rizzolatti, Vittorio Gallese) to the shaping of the embodied mind. I have studied the “geography” of the archetypal body, the man as microcosmos, its energies and characteristics, the energetic working core of the actor – hara, the significances of mandala as *imago mundi and imago mentalis*. I have revealed the significance of framings of the stage setting which cuts out the real from the unreal,

but at the same time constitutes the frame of reference of the body image of the actor and imposes the adoption and adaptation of the laws of perspective. I have been concerned in emphasizing the symbolic values of spatial relationships, derived from the vertical position and the bilateral symmetry of the human body. My research underlines the utmost importance of the anti-naturalist resurrection in theatre which led to a new “reading” of the body. I have analysed the body of the actor in its relation with the space-time binomial and movement under its expressive aspects. Proceeding from the interrogation on how the actor manages to shape an idea, the subchapter *Shape and Idea via corporis* of the present habilitation thesis makes efficient use of the concepts of *body sign*, *body lived* (Merleau-Ponty), *embodied mind/body-mind* (neurosciences), reuniting them with the comprehension power of the body – *cogito corporeal* (Mikel Duffrene). Their synthesis allows noticing the immanent connection between idea and shape in the art of the actor. Through *cogito corporeal* the idea transcends from the virtual stage in the act, finding its fulfilment in perceptible form. Being an expressive idea means setting into shape. The way of the idea towards the shape is a labour of *bodily thinking*. In the virtual stage, the idea is nothing else but “the bodyless beauty”. The idea transcends from a virtual and abstract existence to a sensitive and embodied existence due to *bodily thinking*. In a concise formula, my thesis is: The actor is animated and expressive idea owing to *cogito corporeal* who, through acquiring certain techniques, masters the theatrical language.

3. The third axis mirrors the common body of research and creation grounded on the conviction that *praxis* and *theoria* make up the circular experience of the teacher artist. I have rendered here the professional activity (parts, creativeness workshops, colloquiums, theatre festivals as an actress) the didactic activity (the pedagogy of the actor’s art, conferences, colloquiums, performances, creativeness workshops, student’s theatre festivals) and other academic activities (editorial activity: coordination of the “Studia Dramatica” issue, doctoral boards). I have concisely presented some of the 18 parts interpreted after 2010, among which Winnie from “Happy Days” by S. Beckett, Hilda in “Pandora’s Box” by Katalin Thuroczy, Solange in “The Maids” by Jean Genet.

I have revealed how my own Beckettian experience has helped me to conceive the study lecture of the Beckettian character for master’s degrees, actually applying the experience accumulated through a set of exercises which hinted at techniques from Jacques Lecoq, Rudolf Laban, David Esrig, Richard Schechner. Strategies of the

pedagogy of the actor's art are reflected, which bring forth the paradigm of the creator-actor, open pedagogy and pedagogy as an event, formation of the actor, the roots-wings dialectis, the relationship and the state of creativity. The first part of the thesis ends with bits of *ars poetica* in *A Portrait of the Actor*.

The Second part of the habilitation thesis consists in the presentation of the perspective research which will naturally follow the course undertaken so far. I have in view several directions of research which are part of exploring the philosophy of the ludic act, poetics and the actor's poetics. The projects foresee the continuation of theoretical and practical investigation on the main themes of corporality and the imaginary, of the relation actor-mask, role, character (and imaginary identities) or those of interpretative stylistics. My concerns are also directed towards the sphere of techniques and procedures used in the building of visual and rhythmical dynamics. The projects that have already been somehow more firmly outlined are as it follows:

1. Reunited under the title *Garrick's Door* this axis of prospective projects aims at exploring some topics of personal interest: the theory of circularity, *the double bind* theory (Gregory Bateson), the fragility of the borders interior-exterior, myself-another, identification-distancing, visible-invisible, surface-profoundness. Starting from the postulate that in theatre everything is double, the actor turns up as a *coincidentia oppositorum* in action, consequently a broadened research of the comedian's paradoxes is being imposed.
2. The second axis includes the systematisation and finalization of certain lectures: *The Masque* and *Commedia dell'Arte*. The forever lasting lesson of *Commedia dell'Arte*. Secondly, following the line of histrionic ludicity, I foresee the development of certain drafts of lectures referring to the image of the trickser and the jester.
3. A third axis refers to pedagogy as an event, to the organization of creativity workshops centered on the analysis of movement in Rudolf Laban and its application in the art of the actor, as well as on the Butoh dance. Through these workshops, I am pursuing the creation of a relation of specularity between western thinking and eastern thinking, between rational and irrational, with the aim of stimulating the *bodily thinking* and diversifying of techniques and theatrical language.