

“BABEȘ-BOLYAI” UNIVERSITY, CLUJ-NAPOCA

FACULTY OF THEATRE AND FILM

DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF THEATRE AND FILM

The status of Romanian dramatic text after 1989

(thesis summary)

SCIENTIFIC COORDINATOR:

Prof. Daniela Gologan (Miruna Runcan), PhD.

DOCTORAL CANDIDATE: Cristina-Maria Iancu

Cluj-Napoca, 2019

Keywords:

political approach, ideology, public discourse, dominant narratives, polarization, power dynamics, captive audience, Centre vs the periphery, high culture vs low culture, symbolic capital, identity, the Other, theatre tradition, the theatrical field of production, the theatre director's symbolic power, deconstruction, dramaturgy, civic function, emancipation, social effect, transformative potential.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Argument. Premises

Research perspectives. Methodology

Chapter 1: The ideological level. Protagonists, antagonists, secondary and episodic 'characters' in the public discourse after 1989. "Repertoires" and "captive audiences"

1.1. The press boom and the roles of mass-media

1.2. Few myths of the Post-communist public discourse

1.3. "The Golden Age". The Interwar period as a source for legitimization of the Post-communist Anti-communism ideology

1.4. De-ideologization and the resemiotization of the signifier "politics"

1.5. Public intellectuals. High culture vs low culture

1.6. Modernity and modernisation paradigm

1.7. Captive audiences and nominal existences

1.8. Social categories removed from public sphere

1.9. Nationalism and paramodernity

1.10. The minimal state and the Anti-corruption discourse. Social inequality

Chapter 2. The institutional level. The conditions of the theatrical field of production

2.1. Theatre censorship before 1989. *Re-theatralization* as a compensatory process

2.2. Brief analysis of theatre institution

2.3. The overbid of the theatre crisis in the first years after the Revolution

2.4. Opium for the crisis. Looking for validation on western scenes. Theatre director as the "Saviour" and the foundation narrative

2.5. The absence of a foundation narrative for playwriting/dramaturgy. The playwright in between rethinking their means of expression and the integration in the theatrical institution

2.6. Brief overview of the trials towards playwrighting development in the '90s

2.6.1. A change of paradigm: Dramafest

2.7. The playwrighting of the '90s in between a director's theatre and the "succes culture"

2.8. Alternative approaches in the 2000s

2.8.1. The DramAcum group and the inclusion of the dramaturg in the creative process. A change of power dynamics

2.8.2. The Caraman proposal: inertia and revisited narratives

Chapter 3: Playwrighting of the '90 and the identity discourse

3.1. The partiality of history: *The Evangelists*, Alina Mungiu

3.2. The cultural recognition of the slum. Valentin Nicolau's outcasts

3.3. Deconstructing the recent past. The feminine perspectives: *Nascendo*, Alina Nelega

3.4. The explicit social aim: *If I want to whistle, I whistle*, Andreea Vălean

Chapter 4: Social effect and audience emancipation in the dramaturgy after 2000

4.1. A generation's revolt: *Stop the Tempo*, Gianina Cărbunariu

4.2. Emigration and the "Western dream": *Mady-baby.edu*, Gianina Cărbunariu

4.3. Facilitating the interethnic dialog using personal stories: *20/20*, Gianina Cărbunariu

4.4. The ready-made script. Revisiting the past and the theatricality of the Communist Department of State Security's archives: *X mm from Y km*, Gianina Cărbunariu

4.5. Questioning the history of privatizations from the '90 and its long term social impact. Perspectives from the margins: *UnderGround: The Jiu Valley after 1989*

4.6. Expressions of educational exclusivism: *Antisocial*, Bogdan Georgescu

4.7. The millennial generation's crisis: avatars, self-exploitation and social isolation: *Via negativa*, Petro Ionescu and Raul Coldea

Conclusions

Bibliography

Summary

The thesis proposes an examination of Romanian dramaturgy after 1989 from a political perspective, outlining its potential towards development, emancipation and social reinsertion of the audiences. It can essentially be read as a map of systemic tensions that have competed for three decades for carving the theatrical institution, but also to shape projections related to it and its societal role among the public. As a cultural method, dramaturgy incorporates these tensions and contributes to their reconciliation/redimensioning, even though, from a perspective that is sensitive

to power relations among the production field, the position it stands on could be described as rather marginal. Furthermore, the revolution seen as the end of history determines a denial of its whole existence as institution from sociological angle. In the 90s and the first years of 2000 the emphasis stands on its development, and the dialogue is being held in this modernist framework, an episteme about to be deconstructed after the first half of the 2000s in the independent space. This happens as the dramatist/dramaturg obtains a spot among in the theatrical team, combined with the exploration of alternative collaboration types that undermine both hierarchies and traditional subdivisions attached to production field.

The thesis encompasses four chapters, each build on distinct research and analysis methods, coinciding to the purpose tailor for each one of them. It is structured starting from a general, socio-historical frame, towards theatrical field of production, whose peculiarities will be outlined in relation to the first. The paper thus encompasses a perspective described simultaneously as theoretical and applicative, with focus on the conditioning of dramatic texts. The first chapter aims to summarize the leading ideas among Romanian public sphere during the past three decades, along with deconstructing its powerfully hierarchized configuration, starting with the hypothesis of some deep preexistent connections between the necessities and social ideals promoted by the hegemonic identitary discourse and those belonging to the repertoire theatre. The author intended to observe and trace the ways in which the communist process, a major theme of the 90s, served as a alibi for different elite groups in order reach self-legitimacy and to obtain (or retain) symbolic capital, while a series of deviating distinct voices not matched to their representation, were completely eliminated from the public agenda. A large amount of investigation addressed the dominant narratives of the period, among which ethnical minorities, mine workers, fabric workers, and the underprivileged in general, have been turned into episodic characters by the modernization oriented discourses, these last having been used to justify at a macro level social and economical policies that have generated nevertheless social disasters exactly among these impoverished social categories. In the same time, we have witnessed the switch towards nationalism by different

positionings, and that despite their confrontational positions, they have contributed to its reinstatement. A major attention was given to the identitary discourse, identified as resentment generating, self-colonizing, with roots that extend towards the simplistic anticommunism, advocated from elitist positions which pretends synchronizing with western modernism (metonymically associated with capitalism), but also descending from premodern patterns, enhanced by the neurotic complexes of a marginal culture (observable even in the synchronicity discourses from the modern state establishment). What brought it all into our attention was the manner in which the anticommunist discourse offers a unifying interpretation of the prior regime, by highlighting sacrifice, resistance, suffering, but only in respect with certain social categories. On the other side, this homogenized and insensitive to recent's past dissemination version of history, which emerges similar to a huge imprisonment setting, where innocent citizens lacking will and power were incarcerated without any involvement in supporting the regime, led to a complete disposal of individual and collective responsibility. These are also stemming from local political traditions (paternalism and personalization of politics). We have noticed that the 90's are characterized by the illusion of de-ideologization. Through the process of semantic contamination of the signified 'ideology', associated with totalitarianism, resides that among a society that was freed by its tentacles life would regain its objective and transparent course. This illusion has proved to be an unhealthy one, for it has reproduced and sustained a manicheistic debate framework (nevertheless, a former political deficiency), with the moral individuals, fully "detached" by ideology stigmatizing any critical positioning, suspected to be ideologically contaminating. The public space becomes polarized and the anti-communist discourse hegemony, both euro-centrist and capitalist-centrist will outline the power partitions at a societal level, generating opposite pairs with direct impact on (de)legitimizing standpoints for establishing the social consensus (intellectuals versus mine workers or workers in general, nostalgics or retrogrades versus progressists etc.). However, under the impact of multiple political and economical factors, we have traced the process through which, gradually, the citizen is being disqualified from the stand position of a real actual partner in building the public

agenda, with his self-representational possibilities being blocked, an aspect that has determined the installation of political apathy, manifested mainly through lack of civic and political participation. The plays from the third chapter, as well as the performance texts from the last chapter, were analysed in parallel with the observations described here, enhancing the periphery-center dynamics and strategies that were meant to boost participation. The texts proposed as case studies were chosen in relation to the thematic strategies they are using, but also for their innovative positions regarding addressability and the manner in which they treat reality, elements with resorts in the dominant themes and symbolic positionings from the public space identified by the author of this paper. The effort towards the examination of a variety of approaches by the current selection is significant for the objectives of this research for both ethical and political endeavors, but also for their translation into an esthetical plan, through the theatrical communication strategies that are being proposed.

The second chapter examines the institutional level by first taking a temporal leap in search of understanding how theatrical institution had been configured and identifying its constitutive values, while paying attention to the role played by dramaturgy in this whole picture. For about a century and a half the state has almost indivisibly directed culture, aspect that contributed on one hand to its homogeneity/uniformity, and to the reproduction and cementing of hierarchies on the other. We have approached the “culture of success” as deriving from the institutional level as well as from the societal one. Their junction was where the cultural mainstream paradigm emerged, supported from different areas by cultural practices and institutions, by a troop of encyclopedic intellectuals or their white collared epigones, each disposing of their own advantage or moment status, but all of them sharing a vertical pattern of relay. We have noticed that, starting with 1989, the repertoire theatre is mainly preoccupied with flatly displaying some self-legitimizing images of the products seen as part of “a culture of success”, both at local/national level and – or especially targeting – the international level, attitude with profound roots in the resentment identity discourse. The esthetical conquer belonging to director (as fundamental power pole among

theatrical field) are being overestimated by the internalization of civilizing discourse of the Cold War's because of their marginal culture complexes, these latter being redimensioned through civilizing discourse internalization brought to scene by Cold War's winners. In this equation the dramaturg is deprived by the resources necessary to manufacture a legitimizing narrative. In the same time, theatre's social function is among last on the priorities list of the reportorial scene, and the explanation for the post '89 period derives from the repertoire institution apathy when it comes to social and political themes, because it is subsuming these to propagandistic discourse that characterized the former regime. Censorship and propagandistic discourse are causes to the blowback development of the theatre's recourse to aesthetics; we have meanwhile traced the emphasis on its metaphorizing dimension, which constituted itself into a tradition starting with the 60s, a tradition about to be perpetuated even after the 90s, especially in the context of the battles for discourse, where any trace of samizdat was a source of symbolic legitimation. This chapter also tried to follow the efforts and initiatives towards the integration of the dramaturg into the theatrical crew, along with creating some context of writing professionalization. Generous space was given to Dramafest activity, for it is a moment in recent theatre history that can be seen as an alternative to the "unique model" (apud Miruna Runcan), not only through its event management, but also through its vision on the dramatic writing role as part of a creative group. Starting with 2000, we have analyzed the dramAcum activity as a paradigm switch among multiple plans, in contrast with the "Caraman initiative", which places itself in continuing the modernist logic of dramaturgic institution, while claiming cultural protectionism with its nationalist tone, as reaction to the profound lack of interest of repertoire scene when it comes to the new text.

Finally, it is to be considered that one of the major contribution that this paper has brought is represented by contextualizing in a detailed manner the conditions under which the dramatic text develops, which brings to a refining of judgement values regarding the status that dramaturgy has in the larger frame of theatrical field, but even more than that, regarding the understanding of dramatic product from the perspective of its social effect. It is way easier to understand the thematic,

representation or addressability strategies proposed by a theatrical project as long as there are minimal analysis tools to which it corresponds. The most essential, though, is that this toolbox helps diminishing some idiosyncrasies with impact on the critical act, and its constituting itself as an impulse towards honest distinction (and integration of the distinction) between our own necessities and expectancies when it comes to a theatrical act. Furthermore, it allows us to focus on the social effect in respect with the needs of the community where the text is born, where it lives and “breathes”.

Selective bibliography:

Ban, Cornel. *Dependență și dezvoltare. Economia politică a capitalismului românesc*. Cluj-Napoca:

Tact, 2014.

Barbu, Daniel. *Republica absentă. Politică și societate în România postcomunistă*. București:

Nemira, 1999.

Barthes, Roland. *Mitologii*. Iași: Institutul European, 1997.

Baudrillard, Jean. *Strategiile fatale*. Iași: Polirom, 1996.

Bishop, Claire (ed.) *Participation. Documents of Contemporary Art*. Londra: Whitechapel și MIT

Press, 2006.

Bishop, Claire. *Artificial Hells. Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*. Londra și New

York: Verso, 2012.

Boal, Augusto. *Theatre of the Oppressed*. Londra: Pluto Press, 2008.

Bourdieu, Pierre. *Economia bunurilor simbolice*. București: Meridiane, 1986.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 'Structures, habitus, practices', in *The Logic of Practice*. Stanford: Stanford

University Press, 1992, 52-65.

- Brecht, Bertold. *Scieri despre teatru*. București: Univers, 1976.
- Castle, Gregory (ed.) *Postcolonial Discourses. An Anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001.
- Cărbunariu, Gianina. *Mady-baby.edu*. București: Cartea Românească, 2007.
- Cărbunariu, Gianina. *Stop the Tempo*. Liternet, 2004, litternet.ro. Document PDF.
- Cărbunariu, Gianina. *20/20*. e-mail, Document word, nepublicat:2009.
- Cărbunariu, Gianina. *Autorul de spectacol. Regizorul-dramaturg*. București: Universitatea de Artă Teatrală și Cinematografică „I.L. Caragiale”, 2011. Teză doctorală nepublicată.
- Cesereanu, Ruxandra (coord.). *T(z)ara noastră. Stereotipii și prejudecăți*. București: Institutul Cultural Român, 2006.
- Connor, Steven. *Cultura postmodernă. O introducere în teoriile contemporane*. București: Meridiane, 1999.
- Czeslaw, Milosz. *Gândirea captivă*, ediția a II-a. București: Humanitas, 2008.
- Dâncu, Sebastian Vasile. *Comunicarea simbolică*. Cluj-Napoca: Eikon, 2009.
- Eco, Umberto. *O teorie a semioticii*. București: Trei, 2008.
- Elam, Keir. *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*. London and New York: Taylor and Francis e-Library, 2005. PDF file.
- Ernu, Vasile, Rogozanu, Costi, Șiulea, Ciprian, Țichindeleanu Ovidiu (coord.) *Iluzia anticomunismului: Lecturi critice ale raportului Tismăneanu*. Chișinău: Cartier, 2008
- Fischer-Lichte, Erika, Wihstutz, Benjamin (eds.). *Performance and the Politics of Space. Theater and Topology*. New York: Routledge. 2013. Epub.
- Fischer-Lichte, Erika. *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*. Londra și New York: 2008.
- Fischer-Lichte, Erika. “Reversing the hierarchy between text and performance”, *European Review*: Vol. 9, No. 3, 2001. 277–291.

- Freire, Paolo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York și Londra: Continuum, 2005.
- Forsyth, Alison, Megson, Chris (eds.) *Get Real: Documentary Theatre Past and Present*.
Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- Gheorghiu, Mihai-Dinu, Lupu Mihăiță (eds.) *Mobilitatea elitelor în România secolului XX*. Pitești:
Paralela 45, 2008.
- Gheorghiu, Mihai-Dinu. *Intelectuali în câmpul puterii. Morfologii și traiectorii sociale*. Iași:
Polirom, 2007.
- Harvey, David. *A brief History of Neoliberalism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Kershaw, Baz. *The Politics of Performance. Radical Theatre as Cultural Intervention*. Londra și
New York: Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2002. PDF File.
- Kideckel, David A. *România postsocialistă. Munca, timpul și cultura clasei muncitoare*. Iași:
Polirom, 2010.
- Kunst, Bojana. *Artist at Work, Proximity of Art and Capitalism*. Alresford, Hants : Zero Books,
2015.
- Lazăr, Marius. *Paradoxuri ale modernizării. Elemente pentru o sociologie a elitelor culturale
românești*. Cluj-Napoca: Limes, 2002. Print.
- Lehmann, Hans-Thies. *Teatrul postdramatic*. București: Unitext, 2009.
- Macrinici, Radu. *T/Țara mea*, București: Unitext, 1998.
- Macrinici, Radu. *A!Frica!*, București: All, 1998.
- Malița, Liviu. *Teatrul românesc sub cenzura comunistă*. Cluj-Napoca: Casa Cărții de Știință, 2009.
- Malița, Liviu (coord.). *Viața teatrală în și după comunism*. Cluj-Napoca: Efes, 2006.
- Martin, Carol (ed.) *Dramaturgy of the Real on the World Stage*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan,
2012.
- Matei, Sorin Adam, Momescu Mona (coord). *Idolii forului. De ce o clasă de mijloc a spiritului e*

de preferat „elitei” intelectualilor publici. Bucuresti: Corint, 2010.

Matei, Sorin Adam. *Idei de schimb.* Iași: Institutului European, 2011.

Matei, Sorin Adam, *Boierii minții. Intelectualii români între grupurile de prestigiu și piața liberă a ideilor,* București: Compania, 2004.

Michailov, Mihaela. „Teatrul intervenției în cotidian”, *Aurora-magazin.ro*, 1 Dec. 2008 Web. 20 Apr. 2018.

Michailov, Mihaela. „Teatrul spectatorului indecent”. *Gazeta de Artă Politică*, nr. 4. artapolitică.ro. Web. 7 Ian. 2018.

Michailov, Mihaela, Schwartz, David (coord.). *Teatru politic (2009-2017).*

Moles, A. Abraham. *Sociodinamica culturii.* București: Științifică, 1974.

Mungiu, Alina. *De ce nu iau românii premiul Nobel?.* București: Polirom, 2012. Mungiu, Alina.

Românii după '89. Istoria unei neînțelegeri. București: Humanitas, 1995. Mungiu-Pippidi, Alina. *Evangheliștii,* Cartea Românească:București, 2006.

Nelega, Alina. *Nascendo în After censorship: new Romanian plays of the '90s.* Unitext: București, 2000.

Nelega, Alina. *Structuri și formule de compoziție ale textului dramatic.* Cluj-Napoca: Eikon, 2010.

Nelega, Alina. „Întoarcerea dramaturgului: resuscitarea tragicului și deteatralizarea teatrului”.

Observator Cultural, nr.296/2005.

Nelega, Alina. „Piesa românească astăzi”, în volumul www.nonstop.ro. București: Unitext, 2000.

Nicolau, Valentin. *Fantoma de la clasa întâi (Dacă aș fi un înger).* valentinnicolau.ro

Document PDF.

Nicolau, Valentin. *Lume, lume, soro, lume...* valentinnicolau.ro. Document PDF.

Petrescu, Cristina. “Cum ne-am recuperat trecutul recent: Interpretarea comunismului în sfera

publică postcomunistă” în Mihai Dinu Gheorghiu and Mihăiță Lupu (eds.) *Mobilitatea elitelor în România secolului al XX-lea* Bucharest: Paralela 45, 2008, 339-372.

Piscator, Erwin. *Teatru politic*, București: Editura Politică, 1966.

Poenaru, Florin. *Locuri comune. Clasă, anticomunism, stânga*. Cluj-Napoca: Tact, 2017.

Poenaru, Florin/ Rogozanu, Costi (coord.) *Epoca Traian Băsescu. România în 2004-2014*. Cluj-Napoca, 2014.

Popescu, Marian, *Teatrul și comunicarea. Elemente ale paradigmei teatrale*. București: Unitext, 2011.

Popescu, Marian. *Scenele teatrului românesc 1945-2004*. București: Unitext, 2004.

Popescu, Marian. *Oglinda spartă. Teatrul românesc după 1989*. București: Unitext, 1997.

Popescu, Marian, Popescu, Elena. *After censorship: new Romanian plays of the '90s*. Unitext: București, 2000.

Popescu, Theodor-Cristian. *Surplus de oameni sau surplus de idei. Pionierii mișcării independente în teatrul românesc post 1989*. Cluj-Napoca: Eikon, 2012.

Popovici, Iulia. *Un teatru la marginea drumului*. București: Cartea Românească, 2008.

Popovici, Iulia (ed.), Mălău, Ioana (coord.). *Noi practici în artele spectacolului în Europa/New Performing Arts Practices în Europe*. Chișinău: Cartier, 2014.

Popovici, Iulia (ed.) *Sfârșitul regiei, începutul creației colective în teatrul european*. Cluj-Napoca: Tact, 2015.

Popovici, Iulia. *Elefantul din cameră. Ghid despre teatrul independent din România*, Cluj-Napoca: Idea Print&Design, 2017.

Rancièrè, Jacques. *The Emancipated Spectator*. Londra și New York: Verso, 2009

Runcan, Miruna, Buricea-Mlinarcic, C.C, *Cinci divane ad-hoc*. Liternet, 2007. Document PDF.

Runcan, Miruna, *Modelul teatral românesc*. București: Unitext, 2000.

Runcan, Miruna, *Teatralizarea și reteatralizarea în România (1920-1960)*, ed.a II-a. Liternet, 2014.

Document PDF.

Runcan, Miruna. *Pentru o semiotică a spectacolului teatral*. Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 2005.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. Londra : Penguin Books, 2001.

Sandu, Dumitru. *Spațiul social al tranziției*. Polirom: Iași, 1999.

Țichindeleanu, Ovidiu. „Modernitatea poscomunismului”. *Idea. Artă +Societate* nr.24/2006.

Idea.ro. Web. 2 Decembrie 2015.

Ubersfeld, Anne. *Termenii cheie ai analizei teatrului*. Iași: Institutul European, 1999.

Vincze, Eniko. „Glocalizarea neoliberalismului în România prin reforma statului și dezvoltarea

antreprenorială” în Poenaru, Florin/ Rogozanu, Costi (coord.) *Epoca Traian Bănescu*.

România în 2004-2014. Cluj-Napoca, 2014.

Wallerstein, Immanuel. “The End of What Modernity?”, *Theory and Society*, Vol. 24, No. 4. Aug,

1995, 471-488.

Wallerstein, Immanuel. “The World-System after the Cold War”, *Journal of Peace Research*,

Vol.30, No.1, Feb. 1993, 1-6.