

**WHAT AND HOW DO WE RESEARCH IN
THE ARTISTIC FIELD?**

Contexts and methods

Proceedings of the International Conference of Doctoral Schools

"George Enescu" National University of Arts Iași, Romania

(November 2-3, 2023)

WHAT and HOW do we research in the artistic field?

CONTECTS AND METHODS

Proceedings of the International Conference of Doctoral Schools

"George Enescu" National University of Arts Iași, Romania

(November 2-3, 2023)

Editura Artes

Iași, 2024

Editors:

Professor Matei Bejenaru, PhD

Professor Laura Vasiliu, PhD

Professor Călin Ciobotari, PhD

Assoc. Prof. Diana-Beatrice Andron, PhD

Scientific board:

Professor Laura Vasiliu, PhD

Professor Carmen Chelaru, PhD

Professor Cristian Nae, PhD

Professor Anca Ciobotaru, PhD

Professor Călin Ciobotari, PhD

Professor Matei Bejenaru, PhD

English version: Cezara Popescu

Proofreading:

Renata Müller

Ligia Fărcășel

Maria-Isabela Nica

Descrierea CIP a Bibliotecii Naționale a României

What and how do we research in the artistic field : contexts and methods : the International Conference of Doctoral Schools "George Enescu" National University of Arts Iași, Romania (November 2-3, 2023). - Iași : Artes, 2024

Conține bibliografie

ISMN 979-0-707669-14-3

ISBN 978-606-547-538-0

78

ISSN 3061 – 693X ISSN-L 3061 – 693X

The International *Conference What and How do we research in the artistic field? Contexts and methods* was organized by the Doctoral Schools within “George Enescu” National University of Arts, Iași, Romania, from 2nd to 3rd November 2023, within the CNFIS-FDI-2023-F-0019 “DOCTART.NET – a network of artistic research laboratories of the doctoral schools within UNAGE Iași”.

©2024 Editura Artes

Str. Costache Negruzzi, nr. 7-9

Iași, România

Tel.: 075 510 1095

www.artesiasi.ro

editura.artes@unage.ro

CONTENT

What and how do we research in the artistic field?

Contents and methods. FOREWORD 9

MUSIC Section

Nationalistic tendencies and 20th century music – the German case 15

Valentina SANDU-DEDIU

National University of Music, Bucharest

Emilia Petrescu – The Outstanding Performer of the Baroque Cantata 25

Loredana IĂȚEȘEN

“George Enescu” National University of Arts, Iași

My musical affective interferences with Eminescu’s poem

***Se bate miezul nopții (Bell chimes midnight)* 35**

Ioan POP

“Gheorghe Dima” National Academy of Music, Cluj-Napoca

The World Music Phenomenon

Through the Perspective of Philip V. Bohlman 45

Maria-Isabela NICA

“George Enescu” National University of Arts, Iași

Myriam Marbé – Avant-garde and Ideological Neutrality 53

Oana Diana ZAMFIR

“George Enescu” National University of Arts, Iași

German Post-Wagnerian Opera. Richard Strauss 65

George Ștefan COMAN

“George Enescu” National University of Arts, Iași

The activity of the “Doina” choral chapel during 1963-1975

based on archive materials from the special depository

of the Republic of Moldova 73

Natalia BLÎNDU

Academy of Music, Theater and Fine Arts, Chișinău

Play elements in approaching music education	87
Georgiana CIOBAN (MARIA)	
The National University of Music, Bucharest	
Artificial intelligence in music education	95
Elena MARINOVA	
Doctoral School of Humanities and Arts, Oradea University	
A Pentadimensional Analysis of the Theme	
“The Man I Love” by George Gershwin	101
Andrei TASE	
West University of Timișoara	

THEATRE Section

The ethical vulnerabilities of doctoral studies	113
Marian POPESCU	
“I. L. Caragiale” National University of Drama and Film, Bucharest	
PhD Admission. Ethical ambiguities... ..	127
Călin CIOBOTARI	
“George Enescu” National University of Arts, Iași	
Without harming the other person	145
Octavian JIGHIRGIU	
“George Enescu” National University of Arts, Iași	
Thinking outside the box	153
Anca Doina CIOBOTARU	
“George Enescu” National University Arts, Iași	
Doctoral research in theatre and the requirement to have a PhD diploma for tenure in higher education: development or regression?	159
Maria Adriana HAUSVATER	
Western University of Timișoara	
Clowning ethics or about red-nosed morals	165
Andreea JIGHIRGIU	
“George Enescu” National University of Arts, Iași	
Ethical perspectives on the representation of sexuality through puppets in theatre performances	171
Vladimir Bogdan BOCA	
“George Enescu” National University Arts, Iași	

Automated dummies and supercomputers. The construction of an object, from an imitation of reality to the original work or acquired autonomy 179

Liviu Cristian IONIȚĂ DOBRE

“George Enescu” National University of Arts, Iași

Post-Pandemic Trauma and the Research as an Intrusion 185

Teodora MEDELEANU

“George Enescu” National University of Arts, Iași

Emotional aspects in the doctoral supervision relationship. Limitations and permissibility 193

Ileana OCNEANU

“George Enescu” National University of Arts, Iași

Ethical perspectives of choreographic discourse 203

Alexandru RADU

“George Enescu” National University of Arts, Iași

Theatre and radio - ethical dilemmas in the doctoral research of common history 209

Ioana SOREANU

“George Enescu” National University of Arts, Iași

Dance in the realm of ethics 217

Pamela TĂNASĂ-GACHE

“George Enescu” National University of Arts, Iași

Ethical dilemmas in the choreographic approach. Actors vs dancers 231

Alice VELICHE

“George Enescu” National University of Arts, Iași

VISUAL ARTS Section

The ontological value of the digital format: the role of video cameras for amateur video production 239

Andrei PETREA

“I. L. Caragiale” National University of Drama and Film, București

The timeless journey of the Möbius strip: circulation and transposition into different artistic mediums 247

Ioana ROȘU

“George Enescu” National University of Arts, Iași

Examining the materiality of the photographic medium 259

Matei BEJENARU

“George Enescu” National University of Arts, Iași

First-Person Filmmaking as Autoethnographic Exploration 269

Olga LUCOVNICOVA

Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgia

WHAT and HOW do we research in the artistic field?

Contents and methods

– Foreword –

The annual conference hosted by the doctoral schools of the “George Enescu” National University of Arts in Iași aims to provide participants with a platform for debate on the themes and methods of artistic research, as well as the possibility of a beneficial exchange of ideas for all those involved: doctoral students, PhD supervisors or professionals from the field. The general concept of the conference finds its expression in themes specific to the three fields, Music, Theatre and Performing Arts, Visual Arts, with presentations and debates taking place both in the plenary session and in the three sections.

Music Section

The actuality of music research - disciplinary connections

Connecting music research with the cultural directions affirmed in the humanities and information technology is a necessity of the moment. Never before has musicology, implicitly open to sister disciplines since its foundation, penetrated so deeply into the area of interdisciplinarity. Even super-specialized musicians, partially accessible in the cultural environment, take into account complementary thematic areas, with an inspiring, argumentative or applicative role. The democratization of access to information in the Internet age creates the new paradigm of knowledge and research, one of the benefits being the possibility of investigating various subjects, even from the perspective of a non-specialist in the respective fields. Interest in related disciplinary areas, such as history, politics, psychology, culture industry, sound technology, literature and art, amplifies the cultural access of established musical subjects: historiography, theory and analysis, stylistics of performance and composition, aesthetics and criticism, etc. Interdisciplinarity can be one of the ways to reintegrate music studies into the area of perception of the intellectual environment and a possible answer to the challenges of music pedagogy.

We are launching this research and debate topic within the **International Conference of Doctoral Schools** of the George Enescu National University of Arts, also proposing several subordinate topics: The tendency of the context vs the meaning of the work; Aesthetics vs the psychology of creation (composition /interpretation); Dramaturgy, metaphor and image in the musical act

(composition / interpretation/ criticism);The benefits and avatars of technology. Scientific documentation in the digital stage; Disciplinary connections in music pedagogy.

Theatre and Performing Arts Section

Research, coordination, evaluation in the doctoral field. Ethical perspectives

Within the field of Romanian artistic research, particularly in theatre research, the ethical filter is rarely theorized and assumed as a component of the very act of research. Do Romanian researchers in the field of theatre, whether they are doctoral students or PhD supervisors, possess an ethical consciousness of research that will constantly guide them in everything they undertake? How does this consciousness manifest itself and on what concrete levels of research does it act?

What type of ethical challenges are Doctoral Theatre Schools in Romania facing today? Is the issue of plagiarism the only really important issue in the spectrum of doctoral ethics, as, explicitly or implicitly, has been suggested in recent years, or is it just one of the multiple risks of “leaving the ethical field” that members of a Doctoral School face?

What are the current benchmarks of PhD supervisors in terms of coordinating and evaluating research in the field of theatre, whether theoretical or practical? What is the profile of the ideal supervisor and what are the ethical principles aimed at making coordination an academic activity of excellence? Does the concept of “mentoring” imply particular ethical issues? What are the expectations of doctoral students in relation to their supervising professors and what personal definitions do the doctoral students give to the act of coordination?

What are the ethical challenges involved in evaluating artistic research? Where do the boundaries of objectivity in evaluation end and subjective relativities begin? How do we balance the rigors of a scale with our own opinions, convictions, artistic creeds? How willing are we to self-evaluate, and what ethical principles should accompany the act of self-evaluation?

The conference ***Research, coordination, evaluation in the doctoral field. Ethical perspectives***, organized by the Doctoral School of Theatre within IOSUD-UNAGE Iași during November 2nd-3rd, 2023, aims to provide a framework for reflection on questions such as the above and emphasize the importance of the ethical background of research, coordination and evaluation at the doctoral level.

The presentations will be held in Romanian. The format of the conference will be hybrid (online and on-site). Following a peer review process, the conference texts written in English will be published in a volume indexed in international databases.

Visual Arts Section

Translation and transposition in artistic and curatorial research

Transposition, understood as a method of scaling an image and reproducing it in another place (usually parietal) represents a fundamental technique in mural art, being present in artistic practice since ancient times. Meanwhile, the mobility of the image has become a constant of modern art, facilitated by the exhibition complex of the 20th century, which allowed the presentation of art in increasingly distant cultural and political contexts and geographical spaces. It has also been used extensively by artists since the historical avant-gardes, becoming a fundamental working strategy that encouraged movement between artistic mediums (photography, painting, sculpture, drawing, video art) as well as popular culture (advertising, cinema, entertainment magazines, pop music, TV shows, video games and social media) and high-art. Often, this transfer took place in both directions, and the images intertwined and intersected more and more like a dense network, imperfectly rendered by the term “transmediality”.

Lately, the term “transposition” has gained more and more traction in the theory of contemporary artistic research, denoting the semantic effects of these transpositions and intermediate mobilizations of images, which rely on their recontextualization and association in new constellations of associations and meanings. On the other hand, crossing several cultural contexts assumed the increasingly pronounced involvement of translation theory in the analysis of cultural exchanges, being intensively used by postcolonial art theory and history.

Bringing these two terms together, with an undeniable influence in theorizing the contemporary artistic phenomenon, this year's doctoral school conference proposes a broad discussion on their use, effects, benefits and limits in doctoral artistic and curatorial research.

The Editors

MUSIC SECTION

The actuality of music research - disciplinary connections

Nationalistic tendencies and 20th century music – the German case –

Valentina SANDU-DEDIU

Professor PhD

National University of Music București
ROMANIA¹

Abstract: I belong to a generation of Romanian musicologists educated during the last years of the Communist period, and the idea of balancing historiography and structuralist analysis has been on my mind a lot. I inherited from Romanian historiography clichés such as “the tension between national and universal”, the “transfiguration” of the folkloric source (in avant-garde composition), the “Moldavian Orpheus” etc. Over time, I felt the need to reformulate, nuance, fight such clichés and other previously accepted ideas, and each time I encountered manifestations of nationalism in music. But these are not only characteristic of the Romanian environment, so I looked at other European cultures to learn from what was happening there: to the French with the Dreyfuss and Vincent d'Indy cases, to the Soviets with the compromises made by Dmitri Shostakovich and Sergei Prokofiev, but also with Igor Stravinsky's “export nationalism”. Other themes to explore are Béla Bartók and folklorism, Enescu and Communism.

In this article, I limit myself to the great German musical traditions and how they were handled by Nazi ideology. I will talk about the “trial of German musicology”, which started after 1990 and shed light on historical aspects during the Third Reich.

1. Introduction

For us, Romanian musicologists educated during the Communist period, used to not mixing musical analysis of a composition with its placement in a context, a change of perspective after 1990 was necessary, but difficult. If Romanian historiography, including the musical one, was deeply perverted during Communism by the nationalist ideology, among others, one could find an (illusory) refuge in structuralist analysis, in dissecting the mechanisms of contemporary Romanian scores. Even there, inevitably, one could discover deeply rooted clichés, such as the “tension between the national and the universal”, the “transfiguration” of the folkloric source in avant-garde

¹ dediusandu@gmail.com.

composition etc.². It was only the 1990s and the opening of borders to the rest of the world that provoked reflection on the need to rediscover and reformulate Romanian musical histories.

After 2010, along with a few colleagues, I set out to investigate the similarities and differences between music written under different dictatorships in various parts of Europe. The time between circa 1930 and 1950 can still be explored – for instance, its awkward position between the modernism that took off spectacularly in the first third of the 20th century and the formation of the musical avant-gardes after 1950. Do these years, marked by growing nationalism, fascist and Communist dictatorships, racism and war, have a well-defined musical profile? Or can we speak only of steps backwards from the innovations of the 1920s, of the instrumentalisation of music for politically propagandistic purposes, or of the retreat of prominent artists into isolated niches?³

What we can read today, in universal musicological writings, guides us towards reformulating, nuancing, and denying some previously accepted definitions of musical nationalism in European cultured music.

2. The extensions of romantic nationalistic attitudes in the 20th century

The totalitarian regimes that have shaped recent European history use music in similar ways, however different they are in terms of doctrine. Composers who have managed to avoid or escape them take on different voices, such as Igor Stravinsky's "export nationalism". This label, proposed by Richard Taruskin, explains the fact that, although Stravinsky and the other composers of his generation tried around 1900 to distance themselves from "national sentiment" in order to become "European", widespread success still came thanks to the Russian folklore-inspired ballets commissioned by Sergei Diaghilev for his Parisian company, *Les Ballets russes*. And thus "neo-nationalism was the catalyst for Stravinsky's international modernism."⁴ Sometime later, the same Diaghilev would ask Sergei Prokofiev (who was still living in Paris) for a ballet

² See Valentina Sandu-Dediu and Nicolae Gheorghîță (ed.) (2020), *Noi istorii ale muzicilor românești*, two volumes, Editura Muzicală, București.

³ See Valentina Sandu-Dediu (ed.) (2016) *Music in Dark Times. Europe East and West, 1930-1950*, Editura UNMB, București.

⁴ Richard Taruskin, *Nationalism*, in "Grove Online", published 2001, at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.50846>.

Taruskin defines the meaning of nationalism in general as the doctrine or theory according to which the determining factor in human character and destiny, as well as the fundamental object of social and political allegiance, is the nation to which an individual belongs. Nationalism has been a factor in the European cultural ideology since the late 18th century, recognised as such by historians and sociologists, and a dominant factor in geopolitics since the late 19th century.

reflecting Soviet realities, so another example of exotic nationalism was born with the *Steel Step*.

As for people's interest in folklore, continuing the romantic ideal launched by Herder, Belá Bartók remains both its most brilliant and its most controversial representative, because of the two equally intolerant ideologies, born of the East-West polarity, which claim him: radical non-nationalistic modernism on the one hand, and socialist folkloric realism on the other. Bartók finds himself tragically caught in this trap, as the Communist bloc appreciates those works in which folklorism seems to predominate (supposedly at the expense of modernism), while the Western avant-garde emphasises precisely the innovation in those pieces banned in the Soviet zone that seem to not have been (at least visibly) touched by the folk spirit.

Globalisation and postmodernism at the end of the 20th century will bring new, flexible, permissive perspectives, and will sometimes exaggerate diversity. In the case of folklore, its filtering into 'academic' or 'cultured' music will shift the focus from nation to ethnicity.

3. The handling of music in totalitarian regimes

Both Hitler and Stalin “believed in the power of music over personal and political life and considered themselves music lovers. They personally intervened in the efforts to use music to benefit the state in the sense that music could deepen enthusiasm for and loyalty to the regime.”⁵ Hitler made a point of recasting episodes of music history in terms of Nazi ideology, highlighting the great German classical tradition and declaring his preference for Richard Wagner (easily associated with racist theories) or Anton Bruckner (and his grandiose sound, real fodder for the dictator's megalomania). Music – whether sacred or not – becomes the direct competitor of religion, and must produce a spiritual experience in its reception. This is why the theatre and the concert hall must be shrouded in darkness, so that music can become a mystical collective experience, an Aryan liturgy. The success of Carl Orff's *Carmina burana* was also due to this “orgiastic expression of enthusiastic Aryan solidarity”.⁶ The Nazi regime is generally concerned with deploying the forces of professional music, with building the image of great conductors (a symbol of the spiritual dictator), but also with developing the local musical infrastructure through educational institutions or amateur ensembles: “music becomes privileged not only as a compensatory sphere of personal, individualistic expression, but also as a component of the racially and culturally homogeneous community.”⁷

⁵ Leon Botstein (2005), *Art and the State: The Case of Music*, in “The Musical Quarterly”, Vol. 88, No. 4, Winter Edition, pp. 491-492.

⁶ *Idem*, p. 492.

⁷ Leon Botstein, *op. cit.*, p. 493.

In turn, Stalin placed much more importance on new music, commissioned or conducted to reflect the new realities of Soviet Communism. Perhaps herein lies the essential difference between one totalitarian regime and the other, in terms of repertoire: the Germans have a vast and generous tradition of masterpieces at their disposal, which they manipulate for contemporary audiences; the Soviets aim to create a new body of masterpieces (and we are not talking about choruses, marches or odes dedicated to Stalin). This is why more 'Soviet' music survives the regime, if we are to think only of the scores of Sergei Prokofiev and Dmitri Shostakovich, compared to the Nazi 'legacy', left mainly by opponents of the regime (Karl Amadeus Hartmann), its victims (Viktor Ullmann and Erwin Schulhoff), exiles and émigrés.

4. The trial of German musicology

For any budding musicologist, German literature offers unavoidable landmarks. Moreover, it is in Germany that the features of this discipline, in its modern sense, have been formed and developed since the 18th century. The soundness of historical, aesthetic and analytical thinking in the writings of the 19th and especially the 20th centuries give German musicology a well-founded position, even if the political fog of National Socialism has had a decisive impact on it. Just like musical creation, performance and reception, the scientific discourse on music is also influenced by fashions, but it is easier to censor and to manipulate through ideological pressure, since it works with words about sounds rather than with sounds.

After 1990, the trial of German musicology during the Third Reich was initiated by some American scholars and continued by Germans, generating debates and criticism between generations, the more or less vehement demolition of iconic names, as well as the relativisation of the perspective on established values. Keeping proportions, we can then apply the same measure of evaluation to Romanian musicology, only to reformulate and to shed light on distorted aspects of the history of Romanian music.

The crisis of German musicology after the First World War starts, on the one hand, from the generally valid question about the relevance of the discipline: should it serve the general public, or remain in its ivory tower? Should it deal with the needs of practicing musicians, thus leaving the refuge of the past to discuss the hot topics of the present? Many musicologists are beginning to show their interest in public life (education, music policy, the youth movement – the famous *Jugendbewegung* – or the amateur movement – *Hausmusik*) in articles published in periodicals. The younger generation is more oriented towards radio, film, the recording industry, where doctoral studies are not required, so the need for the academic discipline of musicology can be questioned. On the other hand, nationalistic impulses are also driving musicological orientations. After the war,

research funding institutions encourage German scholars to investigate German music, resulting in a significant increase in the number of publications on German topics.⁸

The creation of the Ministry of Propaganda aims, among other things, to encourage young people by creating new jobs for cultural experts, opening up new prospects for those studying musicology – in theatres, concert agencies, the recording industry or instrument sales. The research itself moves intentionally towards the importance of racial studies, the definition of German nationality through music, the preservation of folk culture (as a symbol of national authenticity, folklore is manipulated in similar ways by all totalitarian regimes).

Between 1937 and 1945, research directions are shaped by various political interests: Heinrich Himmler aims at a comprehensive understanding of the German race in that scientific branch of his massive organisation, the *SS-Ahnenerbe*, and is particularly interested in Germanic influences on the Gregorian chant. In this example, as in many others, we recognise samples of the protochronism that characterises nationalistic tendencies everywhere. (I am inevitably reminded of the 'Daco-Roman music', a subject dear to the Romanian Communists.) Joseph Goebbels, who was responsible for propaganda, was particularly keen on creating collections of folk songs for the party and for schools. In the Ministry he heads, Alfred Rosenberg (an ideologist of National Socialism and Goebbels' rival) has his own music department, whose director, Alfred Gerigk, is the author of a *Lexicon of Jews in Music*, and ensured ideological correctness in musicology, involving it in the creation of policies in the territories under German occupation⁹. This is the only way musicologists prove useful: when they find cultural and historical arguments for the advantages of German expansion in certain geographical areas. They show, for example, how Austria (annexed in 1938) shares the same musical heritage, and how the classical style is characterised as a purely German phenomenon, with no trace of Bohemian influences (which goes hand in hand with the pressure on Czechoslovakia in 1938 to cede German-populated territories). Propaganda musicology literature also follows other events, reinforcing connections with the allies Japan and Italy:

In his book *Deutschland und Italien in ihren musikgeschichtlichen Beziehungen* [Germany and Italy in their historical and musical relations], Hans Engel tried to emphasize the notion of mutual respect (citing the Italians' attraction to the German "Northern depth" and Germany's attraction to Italian "euphony", and even claimed to demonstrate racial

⁸ Pamela M. Potter (1996), *Musicology under Hitler: New Sources in Context*, in "Journal of the American Musicological Society", Vol. 49, No. 1, Spring Edition, p. 75 of pp. 70-113.

⁹ *Idem*, p. 84.

affinities that could explain similarities in the musical styles of the inhabitants of Southern Germany and Northern Italy.¹⁰

The examples could continue with the criticism of Germany's enemies, England and the USA, the ambiguous attitude towards the USSR (conditioned by the fluctuations in political relations and the course of the war), or the emphasis on the various influences of German music on the musical culture of its neighbours. Demonstrating the superiority of German music is not a new idea – there are writings attesting to it as far back as the 19th century, and nationalism is evident in histories of music written after the First World War, including by Alfred Einstein (whose Jewish origins would otherwise lead him to emigrate to the USA). Those musicologists involved in propaganda demonstrations collaborated with the regime for a variety of reasons (career or financial), but also out of a typical researcher's desire to have access to rare, hard-to-access musicological archives and resources that the censors did not make available to everyone. The individual situations are complex and reveal, as expected, multiple faces of compromise and opportunism.

Germany's defeat in World War II prompted German scholars to distance themselves from declarative nationalism or any trace of racist sentiment; however, certain elements of Germanocentrism are ingrained and migrate to the U.S. with the victims of National Socialism (alongside Einstein, Karl Geiringer or Leo Schrade can be named here). As a result, post-war American musicology finds its resources in German concepts, especially in the fundamental, methodological ones, and in time takes the leading position within the discipline.

Hans-Joachim Moser and his complex relationship with the regime. We learn more about this from the musicologist Anselm Gerhard in his incisive writings, launched at a propitious moment for historical revelations from within Germany: in 2000, the *Gesellschaft für Musikforschung* proposed a broad conference theme on German musicology in the Third Reich, basically touching on that area carefully avoided after 1990. In Gerhard's description, Moser appears as the prolific musicologist disseminating fanatically nationalistic ideas. A party member since 1936, starting with 1940 he was General Secretary of the Reich's music department in Goebbels's Ministry of Propaganda, where he was responsible, for example, for the careful “cleansing” of the texts of Georg Friedrich Händel's *Oratorios* of Jewish traces of the *Old Testament*, as well as poetic expressions from Schumann's *Lieder* based on the Jew Heinrich Heine's poems. In the three volumes of *Geschichte der deutschen Musik*, published in 1920 and with numerous successive editions, Moser's views are decidedly nationalistic, more precisely *völkisch*.¹¹

¹⁰ Pamela M. Potter, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

¹¹ Anselm Gerhard (2001), *Musicology in the 'Third Reich': A Preliminary Report*, “The Journal of Musicology”, Vol. 18, No. 4, Fall Edition, p. 530 ff.

This difficult-to-translate term (obviously derived from the root *Volk* – people) expresses a specific type of nationalism, and appears more and more often in German literature after 1875, when it is used to replace the Latin-based term “national”.¹² Towards the end of the 19th century, and especially in the first decades of the 20th century, *völkisch* becomes so charged with racial and anti-Semitic meanings that the 1926 *Staatslexikon* describes it as incompatible with *Judentum*, and as an antonym for international (in the eternal opposition between national and universal). It becomes a racist political concept, far removed from its original, cultural meaning.

As far as music and abstract art are concerned, the concepts of race and *völkisch* could not be fully assimilated, given the difficulty of explaining the history of European music in accordance with the National Socialist studies of race.¹³

5. Is there such a thing as Nazi music?

Ultimately, we are marked by the times in which we live even when we look (allegedly with maximum objectivity) at the past. Today’s analyses of musical life during the Third Reich and of the attitudes of musicians (then and since) attempt to bring to public light facts and documents that are still unknown; their interpretation is inevitably marked by the subjectivity of the authors of the present, as well as by the trend to which they belong. Precisely because the “new musicology” (launched in the USA in the mid-1980s, and influenced by structural anthropology) began by criticising composer-centred methodology (and therefore the cult of the genius), it will also shape the configuration of the “Nazi music” concept through the sum of individual histories that can reveal flexible boundaries between the guilt and innocence of a particular musician.

A study by Pamela Potter illustrates this trend¹⁴, focusing on the various histories of reception, the de-nazification process, and reactions in the post-war era, reaching the inescapable conclusion that one cannot define a Nazi style in music. During the time of the National Socialist regime, there was no talk of “Nazi” music (or art in general), but of the “German” one. Subsequent analyses of musical works produced at that time have failed to find arguments and evidence for the existence of a coherent Nazi musical aesthetic. Defining it with the help of party songs is not enough, because the same attributes (melodic simplicity, marching rhythm, mobilising lyrics) characterise the militaristic-

¹² The proposal was made by the linguist Hermann von Pfister-Schwaighusen, a campaigner for the purification of German language and culture from foreign influences. See <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Völkisch>, accessed 07.08.2017.

¹³ Anselm Gerhard, *op. cit.*, p. 538.

¹⁴ See Pamela M. Potter (2005), *What Is “Nazi Music”?*, “The Musical Quarterly”, Vol. 88, No. 3, Fall Edition, pp. 428-455.

patriotic allure of all propaganda songs, regardless of regime (fascist or Communist). There is no corpus of works with explicitly Nazi symbolism or themes, and censorship did not work very effectively in terms of music. Musical life in the Third Reich still reveals many contradictions: despite pro-Wagner propaganda, the young composers of the 1920s and 1930s do not continue this style; despite the accusations against atonality and jazz, jazz is more popular than during the Weimar Republic; repertoire lists of concert institutions and radio show that those composers who were Jewish or whose music had been labelled degenerate (including Felix Mendelssohn, Alexander von Zemlinski, and Alban Berg) are still being played. Studies of the 1990s show that the regime did not actually have totalitarian control over musical life; music (to a greater extent than other arts) was too decentralised to be brought under party or state control; the few blacklists that did exist were not always enforced, and Hitler's interventions in music were greatly exaggerated.¹⁵ (It seems that the ideology of socialist realism, by contrast, had a much more controlled coherence, at least if we think of the Romanian case.)

Most research into the nature of Nazi music has started from its declared opposition to modernism. Consequently, in post-war West Germany, composers and music critics resolutely chose the path of an autonomous music, based as far as possible on scientific principles (mathematical, linguistic, electronic, astronomical etc.), avoiding any extra-musical meaning, and therefore impossible to subscribe to any political ideology, precisely in order to distance themselves from the idea of music becoming an instrument of propaganda under Nazism. The younger generations of German musicians take up the notion of *Stunde Null* – Zero Hour¹⁶ (which becomes highly controversial later on, however) to symbolise the total repudiation of the Nazi past and to justify new horizons, untouched by such a tradition. Precisely those composers who had been banned for their modernism now become models, and musical languages propose abstract, complicated, innovative, elitist models. This was the justification for the establishment in 1946 of the famous Darmstadt courses (*Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik*), a bastion of avant-garde music in the 1950s. Adorno's idea - modernists are (left-wing) progressives, and musical conservatism reflects (right-wing) political conservatism – rules the new music policies, which are in turn intolerant (but that's another story).

¹⁵ Pamela M. Potter, *What Is "Nazi Music"?*, pp. 438-440.

¹⁶ Ulrich Dibelius (1966, 1988, 1998), in one of the first histories of postwar modernism, *Moderne Musik nach 1945*, Piper Verlag, Munich, pp. 23-25, begins his presentation of the musical situation with a sub-chapter called *1945 – das Jahr Null der modernen Musik* [1945 – year zero of modern music]. For a more recent perspective on the “zero hour” in German musicology see Volker Scherliess (ed.), “Stunde Null” – *zur Musik um 1945* (Bärenreiter Verlag, Kassel, 2014), a volume resulting from a symposium of the Gesellschaft für Musikforschung at the Musikhochschule Lübeck, September 2003.

Is it enough for a musician to be a member of the party in order to qualify as a Nazi? How do you then deal with sympathisers who have not joined the party? The situations are confusing, created also by the volatile boundaries between ethical and aesthetic value in the case of a particular musician, and the de-nazification process has shown just such difficulties.

From the 1950s onwards, it was not difficult for stars such as Herbert von Karajan, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and Carl Orff to repudiate their Nazi affiliations, as people wanted to believe that musicians lived in the elevated space of art and would never descend into the underworld of politics.¹⁷

In the context of the new musicological directions of the 1980s, various projects were launched to research the music of exile, “degenerate” or “suppressed” music. The resulting publications, exhibitions and recordings have brought to light a wealth of documents that add to the picture of music during the Nazi era. Inevitably, some categorical, black-and-white commentaries emerged, for example, placing those who left Germany on the side of morality and classifying all those who remained as suspects. Other investigations delve into the complexities of shades of grey, the case of Paul Hindemith perhaps being one of the most notorious. A representative of modernist German music, married to a Jewish woman, friend and collaborator with left-wing artists, Hindemith's relationship with the Nazi regime is full of paradoxes and inconsistencies. He is admired by several prominent politicians (including Goebbels), then his music (more precisely, *Mathis der Maler*) is banned; he endures in these troubled times by means of an apolitical attitude and various compromises, finally deciding to emigrate when he is included on the list of “degenerate” music in 1938. After the war, Hindemith's music occupies an undisputed place among the rare examples untouched by Nazi influence.

6. Conclusions

Finally, the review of the history of music created during the Third Reich has not come to an end. The framework needs to be broadened with information from all over Europe, as the interwar period is marked by nationalism, racism, ethnic and class conflict not only in totalitarian regimes. As far as the composers of those times are concerned, their inclusion and exclusion from the canon will undergo further changes, due to their relations with the Nazi regime, but also to other factors in our contemporary world.

¹⁷ Pamela M. Potter, *What Is “Nazi Music”?*, p. 431.

Bibliography

- Botstein, Leon (2005). *Art and the State: The Case of Music*, “The Musical Quarterly”, Vol. 88, No. 4 (Winter, 2005), pp. 487-495
- Dibelius, Ulrich (1966, 1988, 1998). *Moderne Musik nach 1945*, Piper Verlag, Munich
- Gerhard, Anselm (2001). *Musicology in the “Third Reich”: A Preliminary Report*, “The Journal of Musicology”, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Fall 2001), pp. 517-543
- Potter, Pamela M. (2005). *What Is “Nazi Music”?*, “The Musical Quarterly”, Vol. 88, No. 3 (Autumn, 2005), pp. 428-455
- Potter, Pamela M. (1996). *Musicology under Hitler: New Sources in Context*, “Journal of the American Musicological Society”, Vol. 49, No. 1 (Spring, 1996), p. 75 of pp. 70-113
- Sandu-Dediu, Valentina, ed. (2016). *Music in Dark Times. Europe East and West, 1930-1950*, Editura UNMB, București
- Sandu-Dediu, Valentina and Nicolae Gheorghită, (ed.) (2020). *Noi istorii ale muzicilor românești* [New Histories of Romanian Music], two volumes, Editura Muzicală, București
- Scherliess, Volker, (ed.) (2014). *“Stunde Null” – zur Musik um 1945*, Bärenreiter Verlag, Kassel
- Taruskin, Richard. *Nationalism*, in “Grove Online” (2001), at:
<https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.50846>

Emilia Petrescu – The Outstanding Performer of the Baroque Cantata

Loredana IATEȘEN
Associate Professor PhD
“George Enescu” National University of Arts Iași
ROMANIA¹

Abstract: This year marks two decades since the passing away of the distinguished performer and singing teacher Emilia Petrescu, a symbol of the generation of singers from the second half of the 20th century, a refined artist who has always been remembered for her unique interpretive versions of various lied, oratorio and cantata opuses. Her fascinating and solid musical culture, her rigorous singing technique or her search for original vocal approaches to the scores that she performed are just some of the basic components of the purity of her interpretive style, which deserves to be commented on based on some famous performances. Being highly appreciated by critics and having built a remarkable career both in Romania and abroad, the soprano Emilia Petrescu is the role model of any vocation artist who dedicated herself to both performing and teaching. Starting from Grigore Constantinescu's monograph (*Emilia Petrescu-The Queen of Classical Singing in Concert*), as well as various articles on her artistic activity, we will focus on analysing certain excerpts from several cantatas with a view to highlighting the singer's unique manner of performing baroque works.

Keywords: soprano, lied, oratorio, cantata, singing technique, performing stylistics.

1. Introduction

The intention of drawing a musicological portrait, of evoking the personality of any artist, implies, in a first stage, that the author documents the reception of the musician; they find, not infrequently, a lack of information from relevant sources (monographs, studies, articles), memoir pages, chronicles, interviews, recordings, which would contribute to the faithful reconstruction of a destiny dedicated to sound art. The more challenged the signatory becomes, when she discovers that the topic proposed has previously benefited from an extensive research – which

¹ iatesenloredana@yahoo.com.

implies a revaluation, a rethinking of the portrait genre, in the sense of problematizing a facet of the scientific approach in order to achieve a concrete result, by which to demonstrate the functionality of the debated ideas. We hereby refer to the monograph *Emilia Petrescu – the queen of classical singing in concert* by Grigore Constantinescu, published by the Musical Publishing House 11 years after the performer's passing away, “a sober and restrained lady in her reactions... bringing together intelligence, talent and study under the arch of will, interest for knowledge, performance and discipline”.²

1. Emilia Petrescu. A portrait

Emilia Petrescu was born in Bucharest in 1925. After graduating from the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy, the Royal Academy of Music and Dramatic Art in the capital, she listened to the advice of prestigious musicians (composer Dumitru D. Botez, tenor Aurel Alexandrescu and conductor Constantin Silvestri), who persuaded her that her voice is better suited for chamber and vocal-symphonic repertoires. An essential decision, which determined her to specialize in the aforementioned directions, followed by an impressive career in Europe and the United States of America. She was an artist who stood out in the musical landscape of Bucharest in a double capacity: as a soloist at the Romanian Athenaeum, Philharmonic, Romanian Radio and as a teacher of lied and oratorio at the National University of Music. Perseverance in the study of vocal art, curiosity to discover new scores, collaboration with valuable performers (Dietrich Fischer Dieskau, Peter Schreier, Pierre Boulez, George Georgescu) paved the way to invitations to participate as a soloist in numerous tours organized by outstanding institutions or as a member of the jury in important competitions. She was admired for her exceptional qualities, sensitivity, nobility, rigor, but above all for her crystal-like and malleable voice which adapted to the vast repertoire of her performances, from old to contemporary Romanian music.

Delving into well-known but also unknown works in the baroque and classical styles, she offered unique performances of genres such as lied, oratorio, cantata, requiem, in which she was concerned with the accuracy of the vocal lines, relying on a solidly built singing technique. A nationally and internationally recognized artist, to whom, as a sign of appreciation, the University of Göttingen awarded the Golden Duchy (1969); the *Heinrich Schütz* Society (1970), *Lüdenscheid Early Music Festival* (1971) and

² Grigore Constantinescu (2014), *Emilia Petrescu – regina cântului vocal concertant* [Emilia Petrescu –The Queen of Classical Singing in Concert], Editura Muzicală, București, p. 11.

Baldwin Wallace University Cleveland, USA, (1974), awarded her the title of Honorary Member. In 2003, Emilia Petrescu died at Pasărea Monastery, near Bucharest.³

2. *Emilia Petrescu – queen of classical concert singing by Grigore Constantinescu. Fundamental monographic research*

In the following, we will mention some of the ideas discussed at length by the musicologist Grigore Constantinescu in the cited book, a monographic research of encyclopedic quality (434 pages) that includes 13 chapters, where the portrait of the artist is outlined from multiple perspectives: the performer's career perceived by soloists and critics from the national or international sphere, in different stages of supporting vocal-symphonic recitals or concerts (1945-1995) in chronological order; the reception of the musician from comments, publicity, press information, revealed in a stylistic ordering of the creators approached, with the related opposites; bringing to light some known ideas partly related to the assertion as a soloist in various opera performances, from *L'Orfeo, favola in musica* by Claudio Monteverdi, to *Tristan und Isolde* by Richard Wagner; the pedagogical contribution understood from the analysis of the performer's vocality, applied in the genres of lied or oratorio and highlighted by the musician's notes in the manuscript about the singing technique, the study of ornamentation and improvisation in baroque style; her experience as a demanding mentor, captured on the one hand, in the pages of an interview with soprano Bianca Manoleanu, a faithful disciple, and on the other hand, from the correspondence with performers, conductors, composers or family members during the year 1984-1985, when she acted as a guest professor providing master classes and vocal education at the Ankara Opera.

The profile of the musician deepens with what we learn from the texts published by critics in various cultural and musical magazines, conversations, radio shows about the repertoires addressed, the tours made (in Germany - Dresden, Leipzig, Zwickau, Berlin, Köln, Kassel), the emotional comments of the musician, which reflect her attachment to the Bach choir (Sibiu), to the pertinent opinions about the current opera theater, etc. Of a rare sensitivity are the pages entitled *Memories... Those around Emilia*, which reveal the feedback of the Romanian musicians with whom she collaborated: **performers** (bass Ionel Pantea; bass-baritone Gheorghe Crăsnaru; bass Pompei Hărășteanu, tenor Florin Diaconescu; sopranos Georgeta Popa Pinghireac; Sanda Șandru; tenor Ion Piso; pianist Valentin

³ As per <https://www.casedemuzicieni.ro/emilia-petrescu/>, viewed on 28.10.2023.

Gheorghiu; conductors Carol Litvin; Ludovic Bacs; Ilarion Ionescu-Galați) **composers** (Nicolae Coman, Pascal Bentoiu, Doru Popovici); **musicologists** (Ada Brumaru; Viorel Cosma; Dumitru Avakian; Olguța Grigorescu; Luminița Vartolomei; Elena Zottoviceanu). The content of the last chapter, *Testamentary legacies. Interpretive creation on record*, from Golden Audio Library of the Romanian Broadcasting Company is particularly important for its documentary value. From it, along with the cataloging of some records and tapes recorded in Romania, we also learn about the existence of audio documents at the Internationale Stiftung Mozarteum in Salzburg.

2.1. Emilia Petrescu – a culturally open performer

Starting from her serious training as a philosopher-musician, and, above all, from the ideas extracted from the content of manuscripts, most of them undated and published by Grigore Constantinescu in the monograph (chapter V, *Ideas and contributions in singing pedagogy*) about the deepening of the baroque style, by comparing some treatises from different schools (German, French, Italian), focused on specific problems related to ornaments, cadences, improvisations, we will try in the following examples to make analytical comments on the relationship between the theoretical knowledge assimilated, the different ways of applying it in the interpretive versions of some lesser-known works and the enthusiastic reception of specialised criticism.

3. Georg Friedrich Haendel. The Italian cantata *Lucrezia*

One of the musical genres in which the soprano excelled was the cantata, as evidenced by the numerous recordings of Baroque works, contributing through study and dedication to crafting her own performance style, admired among others by the German musicologist and conductor Konrad Ameln, president of the *Heinrich Schütz* Society, who invited the soprano to participate in the *Göttinger Handel Fest*, 1967. Let's not forget that only a year earlier (1966), Emilia Petrescu made her debut in Halle with a recital, as part of the *International Handel Festival*. In one of the interviews given to Despina Petecel Theodoru, the artist recounted "... I presented myself with the cantata *Lucrezia* by Handel, one of the most difficult vocal symphonic works over the centuries... it had never been sung in its entirety... because one of the arias is extremely difficult and has a *Furioso* almost impossible to achieve. It took me two years to perform that

half-page moment. It's a dizzying speed, executed with a breath as ample as possible"⁴

The Italian cantata *Lucrezia (O numi eterni)*, after the opening verse of the first recitative), 1706, for soprano and harpsichord (known in various arrangements and transcriptions), stands out from the approximately 100 works of the genre by its deep dramatic character, inferred from the tense content of the subject. Written by Cardinal Benedetto Pamphili, the libretto focuses on the inner turmoil faced by Rome's legendary heroine, Lucretia, after being humiliated by the son of an Etruscan king, an act that leads her to commit suicide. She implores the gods to unleash merciless vengeance on both the king and his son, whom she detests. The ending is revealed as a contemplation of her impending death. Beyond the content of the subject imbued with extreme violence, but whose consequences have historical significance, marking a change in the form of government, from monarchy to republic, the musical value of the score stands out, noted among others by the German composer and theorist Johann Mattheson. In the volume *Grosse Generalbaß-Schule*⁵ (1731), he appreciated the novelty of the modulations, the virtuosity, the elaborate contrapuntal writing and the contrast of the seven sections, which, although built in the traditional sequence (*recitative-aria-recitative-arioso-final scene*), are identified by – a particular sound ambience.

3.1. The climax *Furioso (Lucrezia)*

Returning to the musician's notes from the *Study of Ornamentation and Improvisation in the Baroque Style*, extracted from the speech given at the Kassel Symposium in October 1971, we find that Emilia Petrescu, relying on the ideas from the treatise of the pedagogue Ludovico Zacconi (1555-1627), *Prattica di Musica* (1592-1622), the chapter *Contrapunto alla mente*, focused on the organization of principles of improvisation and ornamentation, mentions, among other fragments of baroque opuses, the *Furioso* moment, in which, “in order to illustrate the drama, the voice is compelled to execute an extremely fast coloratura for medium voice, with leaps, in one breath”⁶.

⁴ Despina Petecel-Theodoru (1995), *Soprano Emilia Petrescu*, interview in vol. *Muzicienii noștri se destăinuie*, II [Our Musicians confess, Vol. II], Editura Muzicală, București, pp. 231-232.

⁵ Johann Mattheson (1731/2010), *Grosse General-Bass-Schule, oder, Der exemplarischen Organisten-Probe: bestehend in dreien Klassen, als: in einer gründlichen Vorbereitung, in 24 leichten Exempeln, in 24 schwerern Prob-Stücken*, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, electronic version, 23 June.

⁶ According to Grigore Constantinescu (2014). *op. cit.*, pp. 185-186.

Fig. 1 G. Fr. Haendel, *Cantata italiana Lucrezia*, Recitativo “Ah! che ancor”/ *Furioso*, ms. 1-27

The collaboration with the aforementioned performers in order to make the record at Electrecord in 1966 also prompted an invitation from *Barereiter Musicaphon*, who in the January 1969 *Fono forum* publication about the new recording, *Italiansche Kantaten*, commented: “the explosive cadence of the two furioso passages is almost surreal – evidence of physical strength and maximum concentration, as well as the alternation of emotional and alert passages respectively... Emilia Petrescu demonstrates that virtuosic technique can be a quality in the original sense of the word...”⁷.

4. Giovanni Battista Pergolesi. *Cantata Orfeo*

Another lesser-known work in the late Baroque cantata repertoire is Giovanni Battista Pergolesi's *Orfeo* (1736–1738), composed for soprano, flute, violin, viola and harpsichord. Although it has a structure common to the cantatas of this period – recitative-aria (Amoroso)-recitative-aria Presto, there is an obvious difference from the contemporary creator Alessandro Scarlatti, but a closeness in the construction of melodic progression to Antonio Vivaldi. Strongly influenced by the composition technique of the opera, where the *secco* recitative oscillates with the *accompagnato*, the instruments contribute to highlighting the details of the text, the phrases are amplified, the ornamentation is diversified, the accompaniment acquires a

⁷ Grigore Constantinescu (2014). *op. cit.*, p. 94.

novel, almost orchestral function. There are several features that bring the opus closer to the stage.

4.1. Aria *Euridice e dove sei (cantata Orfeo)*. Technical challenges

In the musician's systematized vision, which analyzed the contributions of pedagogues, theorists, performers, creators from different historical-stylistic stages (Hieronymus de Moravia, Konrad von Zabern, Pier Francesco Tosi, Johann Friederich Agricola), the more significant technical problems of the *Euridice e dove sei (Amoroso)* aria, include the intonation support in all registers with their natural equalization, the *non-vibrato* emission, maintained at the same intensity even in moments of dramatic character, the rendering of the vocalizations in a single breath, but especially the realization of the trill, which “must be equally measured”⁸, in order to create the possibility to hear “the distinct notes in that interval”⁹... One of the existing indications in the score is *facile e moderatamente veloce*, which “makes us think that it is performed less often compared to mordant. Obviously, for the inclusion of the trill in other forms of ornamentation, from which interval jumps are not missing, vocal agility becomes a primordial condition”¹⁰.



⁸ Grigore Constantinescu (2014). *op. cit.*, p. 177, *apud* Cristina Radu-Giurgiu, *An exceptional meeting at the Black Church: Emilia Petrescu and Hans Eckart Schlandt*, “Bulletin of the Transylvania University of Brasov”, Special Issue, Series VIII: Performing Arts – Vol.12 (61) nr. 2 – 2019, http://webbut.unitbv.ro/Bulletin/Series%20VIII/2020/17_RADU-cristina.pdf

⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰ Grigore Constantinescu, *op. cit.*, p. 177.



Fig.2 Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, cantata *Orfeo*,
fragment from *Euridice e dove sei (Amoroso)*, ms. 1-15

Listening to different recordings with score, of the previously mentioned musical fragments, the question comes up: how did Emilia Petrescu manage to integrate those principles extracted from the writings and treatises of the 13th-18th centuries in a balanced manner, finding the middle ground between the conceptions of theorists from various cultures and the different, dynamic perception on the rendering of the artistic act of the second half of the last century?

Following the review of Grigore Constantinescu's monograph, the interview from the volume *Our Musicians confess* and some recently posted articles, in parallel with the audition and commentary of works from the baroque repertoire in the cantata genre, I have synthesized several ideas.

5. Classification of research. Reflections on a personality

In the course of her extensive career dedicated to the stage and the teaching activity, the musician constantly showed an attitude of respect towards the masters who contributed to her artistic training, as evidenced by the evocation of the personalities who channeled her destiny. Although she was not endowed with an ample voice, the intense technical study, which did not lack the creativity of some exercises designed to amplify support and vocal capacity, equalizing the sonority of the registers, obtaining a typology of non-vibrato sound, creating vocalizations adapted to the style and to the opus approach – all these favored the longevity of her career, during which, along with her preference for the genres of lied

or vocal-symphonic, was also manifested in interpreting certain scores from the repertoire of lyrical theater.

The rigor demonstrated by the artistic activity had an impact on the teaching, as well. It is enough to recall the idea extracted from the chronicle signed by Carmen Stoianov ¹¹ about the recital given in April 1985 by performers Remus and Bianca Manoleanu, where the author mentioned the soprano's stage of specialization in the art of singing at the Conservatory with maestro Emilia Petrescu, who trained her for four years from a technical point of view, not being allowed to evolve on stage.

It is worth noting that the serious technical voice training was followed by the long study of scores in all aspects, often under the guidance of prestigious conductors, with focus on the messages extracted from the inspirational texts, on the multiple correspondences between the poetic and the musical phrases. The courage to perform works in the first audition, the music of which remained unknown due to technical difficulties, determined the circulation of challenging works signed by Heinrich Schütz, Dietrich Buxtehude, Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, Antonio Vivaldi, the artist contributing to the creation of an image real of the baroque style.

6. Conclusions

It is worth noting that the distinguished performances of the excerpts from cantatas *Lucrezia* (Georg Friedrich Haendel) and *Orfeo* (Giovanni Battista Pergolesi) are explained by the musician's inclination towards deepening the Baroque style from a scientific perspective, as evidenced by the manuscripts dealing with ornamentation or the peculiarities of vocal technique, texts that deserve to be read and understood by any soloist interested in offering a sound variant appropriate to this historical stage.

Therefore, in the present study I wanted to draw the attention of performers to the prominent musician Emilia Petrescu, who unraveled the mystery of the *graceful transfer of that museum of baroque knowledge*, in a polished sonority, with the wisdom and patience of an ascetic.

Bibliography

Constantinescu, Grigore (2014). *Emilia Petrescu—regina cântului vocal-concertant*, [Emilia Petrescu –The Queen of classical singing in concert], Editura Muzicală, București

¹¹ Carmen Stoianov, *Remus and Bianca-Luigia Manoleanu*, in *Muzica*, fourth edition (April), Editura Muzicală, București, 1985, pp. 32-33.

- Mattheson, Johann (1731/2010). *Grosse General-Bass-Schule, oder, Der exemplarischen Organisten-Probe: bestehend in dreien Klassen, als: in einer gründlichen Vorbereitung, in 24 leichten Exempeln, in 24 schwerern Prob-Stücken*, J.C. Kissner, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, electronic version, 23 June
- Petecel-Theodoru, Despina (1995). *Soprano Emilia Petrescu*, interview in *Muzicienii noștri se destăinuie* [Our Musicians confess, vol. II], Editura Muzicală, București, pp. 213-249
- Radu-Giurgiu, Cristina (2019). *An exceptional meeting at the Black Church: Emilia Petrescu and Hans Eckart Schlandt*, Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Brasov, Special Issue, Series VIII: Performing Arts – Vol. 12 (61) no. 2
http://webbut.unitbv.ro/Bulletin/Series%20VIII/2020/17_RADU-cristina.pdf
- Stoianov, Carmen (1985). *Remus and Bianca –Luigia Manoleanu*, in *Muzica* magazine, fourth edition (April), Editura Muzicală, București, pp. 32-33
<https://www.casedemuzicieni.ro/emilia-petrescu/>, viewed on 28.10.2023

My musical affective interferences with Eminescu's poem *Se bate miezul nopții (Bell chimes midnight)*

Ioan POP

Associated Professor PhD

“Gheorghe Dima” National Academy of Music, Cluj-Napoca
ROMANIA¹

Abstract: My work for piano *Bell chimes midnight...* is a sincere tribute to Mihai Eminescu and his poetic universe, with insertions and subtle echoes reminiscent of George Enescu's solo piano piece *Carillon nocturne*. The work, built on three interchangeable sections, chains traditional chords with clusters and symmetrical, geometric chords and harmonic constructions and combines the harmonic world with lyrical moments and movement passages. Based on resonance, the piece pays pious tribute to some professors I studied with, who recently passed away. Eminescu's poem, through its poetic images, represents the starting point as a poetic and musical universe, but it will be transcendentalized and complemented by modern compositional techniques. My analysis of this piece will include the relationship of music with the text, as well as some considerations on important details that can be revealed thanks to self-analysis and which can constitute nodal points regarding new compositional approaches.

Keywords: modes of analysis, self-analysis, resonance, structure, agreement, symmetry, the text – melody relationship, creation.

1. Introduction

*Se bate miezul nopții în clopotul de-aramă,/ Iar somnul, vameș vieții, nu
vrea să-mi ieie vama./ Pe căi bătute-adeșea vrea mintea să mă poarte,/ S-
asamăn între-olaltă viață și cu moarte;/ Ci cumpăna gândirii-mi și azi nu
se mai schimbă,/ Căci între amândouă stă neclintita limbă.//*

*The cooper bell chimes midnight and stirs my peaceful soul/ Yet sleep, the
life's old keeper, won't come to take its toll. / On beaten paths my mind
will take me without strife, / To make me understand that death resembles
life;/ And nowadays my thoughts in balance are already/ Because
between the two the pointer's always steady.//*

¹ popionica@yahoo.com

This is Eminescu's poem. The echoes of this poem haunted me for a long time. Communication (communion) with it, immersion in its meanings, led to the creation of a sound layer not intended to be an identical reproduction of the text artistically, but a subjective interpretation, a continuation, if you will, in one's own sensory–affective interiority of nocturnal (we remember Michelangelo's sonnets), existential, philosophical and linguistic meanings.

In this sense, it is useful to remember the artist who, painting a landscape, doesn't faithfully reproduce it like a photograph, but humanizes it, reinterprets it, ennobles it with his own feelings. I did the same, starting from the poem. This, for me, was a gateway to a world of essence, revealed by the sound of bells at midnight. The creation of this work took place over time, the sounds expressing the beats of my soul in my own search for identity and depth of the artistic self. Relative to the phenomenon of creation, the words of Liviu Rusu seem appropriate here:

Our essential conclusion is that the work of art results from an attitude through which the deep meaning of existence is revealed, in the form of a vision of the world. This meaning can have various aspects according to the appropriate types of vision of the artist. Due to the meaning contained in the work of art, the latter has a spiritual life, the discovery of which must be the main goal of studying artistic values.²

This sense of existence, both of the creator and of the work of art, has been constant among my concerns, both spiritually and creatively. The question remains: does the work of art have a life of its own after it has been created? This aspect will perhaps constitute the motive of a future research.

2. What and how we analyze in the artistic field. Modes of analysis. Self-analysis, an effective way of working?

Analysis within art can be done in several ways. Thus, we can make the difference between analyzing the process of creation having the artist as an object of study, with his/her inner mechanisms that trigger the creative act, or consider only the work of art, correlated more or less with the artist and his/her era.

In music, the most common method (of analysis) is the formal one, from the motive component to the large articulations of form. In this type of analysis, subsequently broken down on levels such as melody, rhythm, harmony, cadences, orchestration, an accurate radiography of all musical components is considered. Starting from this way of putting things under the microscope, the analytical field can be broadened to philosophy, psychology,

² Liviu Rusu (1989), *Eseu despre creația artistică* [Essay on artistic creation], Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, București, p. 317.

structuralism, a quantitative analysis of the number of notes used (statistics); there are connections with fields such as acoustics, mathematics, geometry, physics and more. We even mention areas far removed from the world of music, but related to it, such as the geological analysis done by Ryan Raul Pañagale in *Arranging Gerswin*, where he compared music to a crystal, or as a novelty, the Schenkerian analysis done by David Schiff in *Gershwin, Rhapsody in Blue*, both relative to *Rhapsody in blue*.

In terms of the musical analysis, strictly speaking, it is worth mentioning the opinion of musicologist and composer Valentin Timaru:

There are consequently several types of analysis: analysis of musical writing with all its connotations (structure, harmony, polyphony, orchestration or sound organization), interpretive analysis (detailing the elements of agogics and rhetorics that can be extracted from the writing), aesthetic analysis (with emphasis on the elements of expression discerned from the musical creation subject to observation). [...] In the analysis of musical structure (improperly called form) we distinguish two planes. The morphological plane in which the musical language structures its semantic units and the syntactic plane, where a certain pattern is articulated (generally in the same movement unit) or several formal patterns are brought together in the different movements of a genre.³

Another type of analysis is that of rhythm, which can be applied both to music (starting from the rhythmic formula of two or three values, to the totality of movement, the displacement of all musical parameters⁴), but also to other arts. We can speak of rhythm relative to a painting, a building, a performance or a film.

Depending on the type of creator, self-analysis can have a major weight in the development and refinement of the compositional process, especially if it is guided and viewed through a critical eye by other elite musicians. Through self-analysis, creators discover interesting areas of confluence of the self with the world, with themselves in terms of revealing inner areas of their own shadows and phantasms on which, with the help of investigation (we are moving towards psychoanalysis) light can be shed.

The road to betterness, efficiency and depth, can also be generated by ideological discussions; see the *golden school* in Bucharest, and here we will mention Ștefan Niculescu, Tiberiu Olah, Miriam Marbee, Anatol Vieru and Cornel Țăranu – who, in his youth, went to Bucharest almost monthly to see the aforementioned. In a private discussion, when I was writing the article

³ Valentin Timaru (2002), *Dicționar noțional și terminologic* [Notional and Terminological Dictionary], Editura Universității din Oradea, Oradea, p. 8.

⁴ Constantin Rîpă (2002), *Teoria Superioară a Muzicii* [The Higher Theory of Music], Vol. II, *Rhythm*, Editura MediaMusica, Cluj.

about his film music, Cornel Țăranu confessed that Tiberiu Olah (the author of the famous film score for the *Mihai Viteazu*), was one of those from whom he had a lot to learn about film music. This would not have been possible without communication.

Thus, we can look at the work of an artist in the context of his entire creation, as a stylistic paradigm of relations with other creators by belonging to a school or a generation, by connecting to a historical time.

So, we come to establish the rule that, in order to understand a work of art, an artist, a group of artists, we must accurately represent the general state of mind and customs of the time to which they belonged. Therein lies the ultimate explanation; the primordial cause that determines the rest, too. This truth, gentlemen, is confirmed by experience; and indeed, if one goes through the main epochs of the history of art, one sees that the arts appear, then disappear along with certain states of mind and morals to which they are attached.⁵

3. An homage to Eminescu, echoes of Enescu (*Carillon nocturne*), emotional interiority, the atmosphere of childhood, relationship with nature

The work *Bell chimes midnight...* for solo piano, composed in 2022, having its first audition at the *Musical Autumn festival* in Cluj the same year when I performed it, is intended to be a sincere tribute to Eminescu and his poetic universe. Eminescu was for me a cradle for the formation of my personality and spirituality, as a teenager who opened the vibrations of his mind and heart to the world, with amazement. In this sense, the universe where I grew up, in Sîngeorz Băi, including hills, mountains, forests, emerges from the sonorities of this work as a reminder of the *eternal* moments spent on the plains full of flowers, hay stacks, animals, corn and potatoes crops, harvest days, where I continued to go on holiday even eleven years after, (when I went to study in Cluj) to work the earth, in a beneficial symbiosis, unaware of at the time, with this universe. Returning to this wonderful space now, however, also includes the route traveled, which is revealed by the music and the inherent tensions that life offers you.

To complete the atmosphere, there are subtle sound echoes reminiscent of George Enescu's *Carillon nocturne*, one of my favorites piano pieces in Enescu's creation (see example 1, the beginning of *Carillon*, and my own echoes of Enescu).

Through these inserts, an emblematic fresco of suggestions is completed. In fact, there are other musical personalities I thought of while working on this

⁵ Hippolyte Taine (1973), *Filosofia artei* [The Philosophy of art], Editura Enciclopedică Română, București, pp. 8-9.

piece, (some being my teachers) such as Ede Terényi, Ștefan Angi, Dan Voiculescu, Francisc Laszlo, Ileana Szenik, Vasile Herman, Voicu Enăchescu. More recently, even if the work was written before, I added Cornel Țăranu and my colleague Bianca Temeș.

Thus, working on this piece can be compared to delving into the past, to reminiscing about childhood and adolescence, to regaining the scent of youth and the color of an Edenic time to which I feel I need to return more often, as an important moment of intense feeling. Thus, we have not only a self-analysis of form and work, but also of the emotional context in which this piece was created.

4. Resonance as a sound phenomenon (without reference to spectralism), cluster chords in grave – the sonority of bells

Based on the phenomenon of resonance (in the sense of letting sounds sound, without necessarily making references to spectralism), which makes us think of the sonority of bells (especially in the grave register, reminiscent of programmatic music), the piece exploits the grave sonorities of the piano. In this way, time recalibrates and creates the opportunity for long-gone moments to return to the mental screen in the listener's mind (see example 2, chords in the grave tone referring to the ringing of bells).

In a world of constant Brownian motion and often useless running, getting carried away by the wave, then breaking away from it, it is a pleasure to find time to listen to and enjoy the echo of sounds, strings of sounds and chords. To savor it by creating it, letting it resonate inside as well as in the ether of relived time. Recollections are beneficial for the soul, in a world where being anchored in a present without past is more and more extensive. All these things I had the chance to live thanks to Eminescu's poetry, in an ascending spiritual movement, which reminds me of Plotinus. “The man of a philosophical nature is ready to ascend, and, as it were, is winged; he does not need separation / from sensory things / like the others spoken of before; He has moved upwards, but, being in trouble, he *needs only a guide to guide him...*”⁶

With regard to the grave register of the piano, I am reminded of one of my favorite philosophers, Schopenhauer, who in *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (*The World as Will and Representation*), considers that grave tones express the tendency of non-organic nature or mass of the planet, from which the other tones are born, forming the harmony with them, in which lies the key to spiritualization through high sounds.⁷ It is desirable that, during the audition of my work, twelve bell tolls should be heard (cluster on the last three sounds

⁶ Plotinus (2002), *Complete Works I*, Humanitas, București, p. 438.

⁷ Arthur Schopenhauer (2020), *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. I, II, Humanitas, București.

in the grave), three at the beginning, three at the end, and two more groups of three, between sections one and two and two and three.

5. Three sections, which can be sung in the preferred order of the performer, with the first interchangeable structures that are the basis of the work

The work, built based on three sections (which can be interpreted in random order), whose first structures are interchangeable, chains traditional chords with clusters and symmetrical, geometric, chords (see system five of the score, beginning) and combines the harmonic world with lyrical moments and movement passages, all mixed in a retort of a cantabile that refers both to the atmosphere of Eminescu's text and to Enescu's melodica (see example 3, first structure). Along with the first structure, the others are easily visible due to the graphics of the score (see score).

The first structures within each section are complementary, one ascending, one descending and the other in a fan. The performer can choose the order, depending on how the moment and affectivity dictate. The order in the score follows the logical path but is not mandatory. Moreover, within the piece, there are many moments where the pianist can decide on the interpretive variants.

Improvisation is allowed, provided that in general the structures are respected. The last movement moment in S3 can be amplified, even doubled, at the repetition of each group of 12 sounds, by singing the sounds in the parentheses.

Depending on the interpreter's mood, the work can begin with the quotation from Enescu (*Carillon nocturnes*), (0) in the economy of the formal scheme or directly with the first part of chords, the Enescu quotation, which can be repeated by the interpreter in other places during the evolution, if they think fit.

6. The structure of each section: terraced chords, their transformation into melody, echoes of Enescu (Carillon echoes), spraying the chord-melody, bell chimes

Each section is subdivided into three structures: (a) terraced cluster chords (*do#-re-sol#-fa#-sol*) at the beginning, which will also become melodic support through horizontal transposition, (b, b1) would be the first, echoes of Enescu reminiscent of Carillon Nocturne, (c) followed by the spraying of the melodic element on the piano keyboard, (b2), the second, respectively motoric elements based on the toccata sound, which have us thinking about the *Todutian* universe but treated in a different way (d). The middle structure also contains a moment of melodic development, (e), welcome in the economy of

the affective means used. This melodic fragment can be repeated (transposed, modified, improvised) also at the end of the piece. For the finale it is desirable to use the four chords from the beginning of system two, perhaps an element, or more and the three bell clusters, as the finale.

A scheme would look like this:

Enescu quote(0) – optional Ac. Cluster (3x)

A a: 5 chords, b melodic: b, b1, c (interj. Enes) b2 fan, d (movement)

Ac. Cluster (3x)

I

II

III

A' a': 5 chords, b'melodic: b', b1', c' (2x) b2', e' d' f (arm.)

Ac. Cluster (3x)

I

II

III

A'' a'': 5 chords, b''melodic: b'', b1'', b2'', c'' (3x) d'' f''(arm.)

Finale, e (2-3x)

Ac. Cluster (3x)

Thirteen sections can be delimited in this way, approximately, with repetitions and underground communications, which give us a chain shape.

The length of each sound and chord within the first structure of each section remains at the discretion of the performer, the one expressed by the author being only indicative. The same with regard to tempo and agogics. The piece can unfold in a great rubato, which mostly characterizes Enescu's music, juxtaposed for contrast with giusto moments.

7. The relationship between poetry and current composition techniques. The diversity of writing, the chordal layering, the relationship between verticality-horizontality, spraying-spacing, post(neo)romantic chordality

Eminescu's poem, through its poetic images, represents the starting point as a poetic-musical universe, but it will be transcendentalized and complemented by modern compositional techniques, such as chordal layering, the transposition of chords in a horizontal plane, the arching of melodic slopes over a large stretch of piano registers, references to the atmosphere of post-romantic music, polystylism as well as the diversity of writing.

I felt the need to use several composition techniques, because the poetic images, of an emotional depth, are diverse. The ringing of the bell, the sleep that does not come, the thoughts, all gathered to glorify the permanence and importance of language, as an exceptional element that makes the spiritual connection between all things and thoughts.

Inserting the text into the score, almost randomly, is another modality specific to modern music, but without *being textmusik*.

8. The relationship between text and melody. Self-analysis as inner investigation and a starting point for the renewal of creative (compositional) work

About the relationship between music and the text, we only mention the fact that the text created a deep state of mind which, after a period of contemplation, of fermenting as is with good quality old wines, blossomed into musical ideas. The poetic idea of the night, together with the metaphor of the bells, combined with the memory of the carrillon seen at Esenach in Luxembourg, had a big impact on my emotionality.

I can say that every word of the poem carved in my poetic-artistic identity an affective state of transcendence, of elevation, of desire for communion with the forces beyond us. This poem, whose words transpose you into the metaphysical, reminded me of Blaga and the *Great Anonymous*, whose vigilance feels like an emanation in the vibrating air released by the bell.

Thanks to self-analysis, as a means of self-knowledge, nodal points can be seen in the inner landmarks; the investigation can include both the spiritual level, through psychological, emotional, sentimental and artistic introspection, as well as that of manifesting a craft (composition techniques, structures), thus opening new doors to future compositional endeavors.

9. Instead of conclusion

You are probably wondering why twelve bells? Because the numbers twelve, along with three and seven, are magical, influencing thinking and artistic expressions over time. It is easier to think of twelve months, or the twelve apostles. So, in summary, twelve is a “number of grace, perfection, measure and governance”. The sum-combination 6+6 also suggests the fact that this number is the representation of “cyclic perfection” and the “perfect balance of forces”, as well as the “manifestation number”, and that it “shows the liberating, saving process, not the creative one”. Thus it identifies with the final judgment itself, as well as with the “tree of reunion”, the cross, the sacrifice as redemption for sins, with the “crucifixion and communion, with Christ” – as “part of the earth”, which martyrdom elevates, “transports it and makes it merge with spirituality”⁸.

⁸ Paulo M. Virio (1971), *La sapienza arcana*, Sophia, Roma, „Dodici”, pp. 83-96, *apud* Solas Boncompagni (2003), *Lumea simbolurilor* [The World of symbols], Humanitas, București, p. 135.

Bibliography

- Bañagale, Ryan Raul (2014). *Arranging Gershwin – Rhapsody in Blue and the Creation of an American Icon*, Oxford University Press, New York, www.oup.com
- Boncompagni, Solas (2003). *Lumea simbolurilor* [The World of symbols], Humanitas, București
- Gilbert, Steven E (1995). *The Music of Gershwin*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London
- Rîpă, Constantin (2002). *Teoria Superioară a Muzicii* [The Higher Theory of Music], volume II, *Rhythm*, Editura MediaMusica, Cluj
- Rusu, Liviu (1989). *Eseu despre creația artistică* [Essay on artistic creation], Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, București
- Schiff, David (2009). *Gershwin – Rhapsody in Blue*, “Cambridge University Press”, New York, pages 3, 7-11, 33, 41-42, www.cambridge.org
- Schopenhauer, Arthur (2020). *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. I, II, Humanitas, București
- Taine, Hippolyte (1973). *Filosofia artei* [The Philosophy of art], Editura Enciclopedică Română, București
- Timaru, Valentin (2002). *Dicționar noțional și terminologic* [Notional and Terminological Dictionary], Editura Universității din Oradea, Oradea
- Virio, Paulo M. (1971). *La sapienza arcana*, Editura Sophia, Roma

EX 1 SE BATE MIEZUL NOPTII

EX 2

EX 3

FINAL

NU SE

PE CĂI BĂTUTE ALTEA VREA MINTEA LA MĂ MOARTE

SĂSAMÂN

INTRE OLALIA

CU MOARTE

NU SE

MAI SCHIMBĂ

SCAI

NECLINTATĂ

JIMBĂ

LEGENDA □ - FACULTATIV ; □ - POSIBIL REPETARE

Fig. 1 Ioan pop, *Se bate miezul nopții* (Bell chimes midnight)

The *World Music* Phenomenon Through the Perspective of Philip V. Bohlman

Maria-Isabela NICA

Phd Student

“George Enescu” National University of Arts Iași
ROMANIA¹

“World Music is both very old and very new; it chronicles the ancient and the modern; it lives in the past and in the present.”
(Philip V. Bohlman, *World Music: A Very Short Introduction*, p. 23)

Abstract: Renowned ethnomusicologist Philip V. Bohlman has made a remarkable contribution to the study of the *World Music* phenomenon and its impact on culture and society. An alumnus of Yale and Harvard, Bohlman has built a distinguished academic career across various countries, conducting extensive research in ethnomusicology. His work delves into the intricate relationships between music, cultural identity, nationalism, and migration, addressing themes such as music in the Holocaust, musical folklore, Jewish and Roma music. Overall, the volume *World Music: A Very Short Introduction* is one of the essential resources for a deep understanding of the complexity of the *World Music* phenomenon and highlights the importance of this cultural expression within globalization. The author draws on historical and musical resources gathered over decades of archival and field work. We learn key elements for understanding this living, current phenomenon: the historical, cultural and political contexts in which *World Music* developed, the stylistic and structural characteristics of this phenomenon and the relationship between music and identity, the impact of globalization on music and the emergence of new forms of phrase. Bohlman emphasizes the need to clear up the frequent confusions between *World Music*, traditional music, and commercial music with traditional influences – one of the major challenges in studying the *World Music* phenomenon. We will take a look at both traditional and modern forms of *World Music*, providing a comprehensive perspective on the various genres and styles of music, as well as the cultures they stem from.

Keywords: World Music, Philip V. Bohlman, globalization, cultural identity

¹ maria.isabela.nica98@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Ethnomusicologist Philip V. Bohlman is recognized for his outstanding academic contributions dedicated to the deep exploration of music as a cultural phenomenon, and its impact in diverse social and historical contexts. Among his most prominent research interests are the study of music and the Holocaust, musical folklore, Jewish music and Roma music, relative to which he has published numerous books and articles, contributing to the understanding of musical diversity worldwide.

By going deeper into the *World Music* phenomenon, we find in Bohlman several research directions, from a musicological perspective and not only. He touches on a wide range of concepts such as cultural and musical diversity, the interconnectedness of cultures and mutual influences, social and political implications, technology and innovation in music, and the impact on contemporary polystylism.

2. The author's approach

Bohlman draws on historical and musical resources gathered through decades of archival and field work, and emphasizes the need to clear up the frequent confusions between world music, traditional music and commercial music with traditional influences – one of the major challenges in studying the phenomenon.

In the volume's introduction, Philip V. Bohlman summarizes the meaning of the term *World Music*. Since we are talking about a phenomenon that is known as new, the author nevertheless demonstrates in the historical incursion he develops that the phenomenon is older than we can imagine, it is a binder between the old and the new.

2.1. First perspective: mythology

German A first direction Bohlman approaches is the connection between mythology and religion and their importance in what he considers the beginnings of the *World Music* phenomenon. The author tells us that the first musicians who existed inscribed music in the fundamental myths on which religions around the world are based. Why is this important? Musicians are often mentioned in both mythological and philosophical-religious writings about the origins of religion, history and music, from which the author deduces that they are an important factor in the foundations of the *World Music* phenomenon. These first musicians are recorded first as performers and second as artisans who make musical instruments, and they, Bohlman says, “appear at the mythological moments

when identity is most critically called into question, particularly the identities that distinguish sacred from secular realms, and the natural from the artificial”²

Identity thus becomes an essential element in associating music with a space, it will be the key element making the connection between sound and meaning – the brief definition of what *World Music* represents as a phenomenon.

The story the author selects as the beginning of *World Music* history refers to the visit of the Swiss Huguenot (French Calvinist) missionary Jean de Léry (1536-1613) to the Tupinamba population, today the Gulf of Rio de Janeiro. In 1557, during his missionary visit, Jean de Léry made a series of transcriptions of the melodies and texts used by the Tupinamba group for their rituals. Looking objectively, Bohlman likens the music collected by Léry to European church music. He mentions that Léry's writings on Tupinamba music and their reception may have been the moment that initiated a tradition of writing about *World Music*, “a tradition that would accelerate through the Age of Discovery and the Early Modern era, culminating in Herder’s late 18th-century collection of folk songs”³.

2.2. Perspective 2: Religion, Tradition and Aesthetics

In early 1914, “Music possesses the aesthetic power to transform the material world into human experience, and it does so sweepingly at moments of beginning, enunciated by the earliest sacred texts of world religion”⁴.

The second perspective presented by the author brings numerous examples from various cultures and religions in order to reinforce the fact that World Music is older than we can imagine. He mentions the ontological role of music in the Qur'an and other sacred texts, as well as the influence of religious practices in the 21st century on the phenomenon of *World music* globalization.

3. Defining the phenomenon

Concerning the term *World Music*, the author analyzes three directions: the historical evolution, different definitions and the challenges faced in the evolution of the phenomenon.

The author looks at the historical evolution of the term, tracing its meaning back to the beginning of the 21st century and researches how it has changed over

² “First musicians appear at the mythological moments when identity is most critically called into question, particularly the identities that distinguish sacred from secular realms, and the natural from the artificial.” Philip V. Bohlman (2020), *World Music: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 39.

³ “Léry’s writings on Tupinamba music and their reception set a tradition of writing about *World Music* in motion, a tradition that would accelerate through the Age of Discovery and the Early Modern era, culminating in Herder’s late 18th-century collection of folk songs.” *Idem*, p. 34.

⁴ *Idem*, p. 42.

time. The term was first used in the 1980s in the United States to describe and distinguish the music coming from the traditional, folk art of various countries and cultures from popular music⁵, broadcast on the radio and in various public spaces (such as pubs and restaurants).

Historically, the author tells us that there are certain times when recorded definitions explain the presence of music in the world in specific ways. Here he cites as an example Johann Gottfried von Herder who coined the term *Volkslied* or *folk song*, which he mentions in his writings “to account for a repertory he had gathered and published from global sources that together signalled a common humanity.”⁶

Bohlman points to the last relevant context in the evolution of the term, when the concept of *World Music* became an important tool, both in the context of entertainment and in that of social change. This dual function profoundly influenced the way people perceived and still perceive this term today.

The author illustrates his point with the example of a significant moment in the summer of 1987, when executives of British record labels gathered in a London pub to discuss how the different genres of music in their catalogue could be packaged and marketed under the umbrella of World Music. This event illustrated how the music industry began to recognize the commercial and cultural value of traditional music and non-Western genres, and the use of the term *World Music* became a tool to bring these varied sounds and influences from around the world to the attention of global audiences.

4. *World Music* and traditional folk music

The connection between *World Music* and traditional folk music begins, according to Bohlman, with Johann Gottfried Herder whose work *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern* (1778-1799) and the term *Volkslied* would lay the foundation for the phenomenon of *World Music*. Documenting this inference, Bohlman provides details of Herder's work.

The first traces of what would become a sustained interest in folk song are evident in his 1770 meeting and collaboration in Strasbourg with Goethe, who was at the time gathering Alsatian folk songs. Herder himself took a special interest in folk songs from the peripheries of Europe, and traditions from the Baltic lands – his first pastoral position was at the cathedral of Riga, Latvia – occupy a very visible position in his collections.⁷

⁵ In general, the term popular music does not refer to traditional/folk music, but to the popularity of music, to music that is then ‘trending’, the music listened to by the masses.

⁶ “There is no clearer example of such a moment than Herder’s coining of the term, *Volkslied*, or ‘folk song’, to account for a repertory he had gathered and published from global sources that together signalled a common humanity.” Philip V. Bohlman, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

⁷ *Idem*, p. 58.

The author assumes that the German writer knew about the history of cultured and traditional music, but in his time this was not part of the topics studied. If he were writing today, Bohlman continues, he might, like many others, have two opinions. The first concerns the common origin of music and speech valid for all popular songs of the world. The second opinion emphasizes the fact that each nation had its own folk music, closely related to its own history.

Therefore, Herder's two volumes from 1778 and 1779 (which he entitled *Volkslieder, Folk Songs*)⁸ suggested a new approach to understanding music, introducing the concept of oral tradition and he argued that "all men communicate through music as naturally as through speech."⁹ Thus, for about two centuries, it was believed that each of the world's societies has its own music.

For the early twentieth century, Bohlman spoke about musicologist Robert Lachmann (1892-1939), presenting his important role in the development of music anthologies and *World Music*, and his interest in Jewish music. As one of the collectors of music in German prisoner-of-war camps¹⁰, Lachmann was at the time head of the scientific commission at the Arab Music Congress in Cairo in 1932, and producer of the *Oriental Music* radio programs he broadcast in Jerusalem.

Certainly, Béla Bartók (1881-1945) and Zoltán Kodály are also mentioned, about whom the author says: "Bartók and Kodály were neither the first nor the last Hungarian composers to show an active interest in traditional music as well – argues Bohlman – but they raised issues of ethnic identity, racial purity and national integrity"¹¹.

This entire journey of anthologies has been closely cultivated by the Berlin Phonogram Archive, which in 2011 released a 5-CD set entitled *Music! The Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv 1900-2011 in 111 recordings*. The Berlin Archive was involved in the storage and management of Bohlman's aforementioned anthologies and records. Examples come from Asia, Australia, North and South America and Europe. Bohlman described this collection as "a recorded history of recordings, conscious attention focused on how scholarly concerns intersect through ethnography and performance"¹². This CD collection is the obvious

⁸ "When publishing his volumes of *Volkslieder*, or 'Folk Songs', he provided an attribution of nation and language to accompany the song's title: the first two songs in his seminal anthology were 'German' and 'English', the final song 'Peruvian'." Philip V. Bohlman, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

⁹ *Idem*, pp. 44-56.

¹⁰ "One of the founders of modern ethnomusicology and Jewish music research, as the head of the scientific commission at the 1932 Cairo Congress of Arabic Music." *Idem*, p. 63.

¹¹ "Folk music embodied and grew from a musical discourse of Hungarianness, and the stakes of that discourse were very high, for they raised questions not only of ethnic identity, but also of racial purity and of national integrity." *Idem*, p. 82.

¹² "It is clear already from the cover of the anthology that *Music!* represents a recorded history of recording, conscious attention focused on the ways scholarly concerns intersect through ethnography and performance." *Idem*, p. 64.

example of how ethnomusicologists and musicians coexist in the spaces that *World Music* creates.

5. Differences and similarities between traditional folk music and *World Music*

And yet, what was the author's conclusion? Traditional folk music and *World Music* are two musical genres closely related to each other, but with distinct developments. Traditional folk music is specific to a region or culture and is passed down through generations, through oral traditions. It has deep historical and cultural roots and reflects the values and traditions of the community of origin.

On the other hand, *World Music* is a form of music that combines elements from different cultures and musical traditions, thus creating a new artistic expression. *World Music* originates in traditional folk music, but can also be influenced by other musical genres such as jazz, rock or hip-hop. In many cases, *World Music* has been influenced by traditional folk music, and artists and composers have sought to incorporate specific elements of it into their creations.

There are many *World Music* performers who have collaborated with traditional artists from different parts of the world to create unique sounds and styles. A distinguished example is the album *Talking Timbuktu* by guitarist Ry Cooder and Ali Farka Touré, where traditional music from Mali was fused with *blues* and *rock* elements.

6. The global city

The global city is a concept invented by Bohlman, with which he concludes his “brief” introduction to *World Music*. It is an imaginary city, which was formed along with immigration, because the *World Music* phenomenon facilitated creating an immaterial space, where dozens of cultures, traits, trends, historical and current phenomena came together. Where different musical styles and genres meet and merge, and create new forms of musical expression that transcend geographical boundaries.¹³

Music recording was another essential factor in the formation of this global space. Given that *World Music: A Very Short Introduction* was originally published in 2002 and revised in 2020, we can understand why updating information on the evolution of technology and its influence on World Music was more than necessary. Recording technology allowed musicians to record their creations and distribute them widely.

These artists and musical genres that the author selects stand for the diversity and impact the diaspora has had in the development of music globally – he mentions here Bob Marley and the *reggae* genre, Celia Cruz and *salsa*, Paco

¹³ Philip V. Bohlman, *op. cit.*, pp. 110-114.

de Lucía and *flamenco*, as well and Ravi Shankar and Indian *raga* music, Amália Rodrigues and the Portuguese *fado* and Carlos Gardel and *tango*.

7. Conclusions

The emergence of this common culture opened the doors for mutual influences and the assimilation of musical elements from various traditions. In a globalized context, musicians have begun to explore and combine different musical traditions, resulting in a rich and diverse sound amalgam, but *World Music* is not only an expression of cultural plurality and intercultural dialogue, it is the basis of open-mindedness, it is a space where we manifest ourselves day by day and which voluntarily, or less voluntarily, influences today's creative minds¹⁴. As Bohlman concludes – close the door, but keep a window open – this was just the beginning of what surrounds us acoustically, nowadays. We just need to listen better.

Bibliography

- Aubert, Laurent (2007). *Muzica celuilalt* [Music of the other], trad. Emanuela Geamănu, versiune revizuită de Speranța Rădulescu, Editura Premier, Ploiești
- Bohlman, V. Philip (2020). *World Music: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, Oxford
- Bohlman, V. Philip (2013). *The Cambridge History of World Music*, Cambridge University Press
- Brown, S., Merker, B., Walllin, N.L. (2001). *An introduction to evolutionary musicology*, în Brown, S., Merker, B., Walllin, N. L., *The origin of music*, Cambridge MIT Press
- DeNora, Tia (2000). *Music in everyday life*, Cambridge University Press
- Dodds, Jack P. B. (1983). *Music as a multicultural education*, Music Educators Journal
- Firca, Ștefan (2020). *Curs Istoria muzicii pop* [Course of Pop Music History], Universitatea Națională de Muzică București
- Gheorghiță, Nicolae; Sandu-Dediu, Valentina (2020). *Noi istorii ale muzicii românești* [New Histories of Romanian Music], Editura Muzicală, București
- Moisil, Costin; Rădulescu, Speranța (2020). *Curs de muzici tradiționale* [Traditional Music Course], Universitatea Națională de Muzică București
- Rădulescu, Speranța (2002). *Peisaje muzicale în România secolului XX* [Musical Landscapes in 20th-Century Romania], Editura Muzicală, București

¹⁴ Philip V. Bohlman, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

Music section

Ritzer, George; Dean, Paul (2011). *Globalization: The Essentials*, Wiley-Blackwell

Ritzer, George (2007). *The Globalization of Nothing*, Sage Publications

Samson, Jim (2013). *Music in the Balkans*, Balkan Studies Library, Boston

Spitzer, Michael (2022). *Omul muzical – o istorie a vieții pe Pământ* [The Musical Man – a History of Life on Earth], Editura Nemira, București

Wilfred, Dolfma (1999). *The consumption of music and the expression of values - A social economic explanation for the advent of Pop music*, The American Journal of Economics and Sociology

Webography

Billboard, *Billboard – Music Charts, News, Photos & Videos*, retrieved from <https://www.billboard.com/charts/hot-100/2023-01-21/>

Britannica Dictionary, *World Music*, retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/dictionary/world-music>

Forss, Matthew J. (2013), *World Music*, Grove Music Online, retrived from <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.A2259436>

Hamm, Charles; Walser, Robert; Warwick, Jacqueline; Hiroshi Garrett, Charles, *Popular Music*, Grove Music Online, retrived from <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/display/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-1002259148?rskey=gSEZIO&result=2>

Myriam Marbé – Avant-garde and Ideological Neutrality

Oana Diana ZAMFIR

PhD Student

“George Enescu” National University of Arts Iași
ROMANIA¹

Abstract: Myriam Marbé (1931-1997) was part of the *Golden Generation* of Romanian composers, involved in developing the technique of composition following the model of the European avant-garde. This objective was at odds with the aesthetic of socialist realism officially promoted in the 1950s and 1960s. The composer managed to avoid political conformism due to her style, in which she combines innovative language with musical and spiritual sources of Romanian folklore. The artist's creative prestige reached a first climax with the famous work *Ritual for the thirst of the earth* (1968). The interest in capitalizing on ancient forms of expression can also be seen in the work for children's choir and orchestra, *Chiuituri* (1978). The *chiuituri* express irrepressible joy, jubilation, but also a type of folkloric manifestation that is specifically Romanian. Myriam Marbé creates an imaginary place of the joy of living. In the article dedicated to this work, Thomas Beimel depicts the Romanian political context of the late '70s in detail. “There are hardly any reasons for such jubilation as expressed in *Chiuituri*, during the Romanian dictatorship, beyond propaganda formats. The piece is very suitable to illustrate the aesthetic freedoms possible during this regime” Another work by the composer, *Des-Cântec* (1985), presents a study of melody and its possible functions. The creation refers to two different designs: a Delphic hymn and a quote from a work by Johann Sebastian Bach. *The Delphic hymn* is articulated in a contemporary manner, while *Bach's fragment* changes character and appears in the manner of a doina. Myriam Marbé was not concerned with quotes, but with working with songs of different registers and origins that are in a process of permanent metamorphosis.

Keywords: The Golden Generation, avant-garde, Myriam Marbé, wind quintet, Romanian folklore.

¹ [oanazamfir@gmail.com](mailto: oanazamfir@gmail.com)

1. Introduction: Historical background

By initiating approaches to relate Romanian musical life to that of the European countries, the young generation of composers established around 1960 has definitely stimulated the creative evolution, along with the fields of pedagogy, theory, ethnomusicology, music criticism and aesthetics. The originality of modern creation results from adapting new composition techniques promoted by the European avant-garde to the archaic background of Romanian traditions, the folkloric vein becoming a valid and valuable source of inspiration.

Myriam Marbé was a prominent figure of the first generation of modern composers. Her compositional style, which integrates old musical sources, including folklore, is expressed in a language highly evolved in terms of the general options of the Romanian composers' society at that time. Developing an interest in the new way of expression and writing offered by improvisational styles, in the controlled freedom practiced in the West, associated with Romanian subjects gave her an ideological neutrality.

The gap between the value of Myriam Marbé's compositional work and its relatively modest reflection in current musicological writings was the first impetus in initiating research on the author's works.

2. Brief portrait of composer Myriam Marbé

2.1. Formative years

An essential stage in the formation of Myriam Marbé was the period of her studies at the Conservatory of Music in Bucharest, where she had the privilege, between 1944 and 1954, to have the guidance of Mihail Jora (an outstanding Romanian musician who did not conform to the rigid patterns of the communist regime's ideology), Leon Klepper and Mihail Andricu. The latter is recognized for the decisive role he played in shaping an entire generation of composers known today as the "Golden Generation", Myriam Marbé being part of this elite group. About **Mihail Andricu**, the artist stated that "He actually facilitated our contact with modern music, but also with what created our openness to modern music. As is known, he had an impressive record collection and we could listen, for instance, to the complete works of Webern at his place"².

The gradual familiarity with **modern and avant-garde trends** was thus achieved "quasi-clandestinely" at Jora's place, at Aurel Stroe's, at Mihail Andricu's. The composer remembers that "we used to meet at Aurel

² Laura Manolache (2002), *Şase portrete de compozitori români* [Six portraits of Romanian composers], Editura Muzicală, Bucureşti, p. 98.

Stroe's and read Leibowitz's book about Schönberg's technique³ and others, in a closed circle. At master Andricu's we used to meet without hiding, but this became a head of accusation against him; he was - like other intellectuals – judged, mocked, isolated, he became *persona non grata*..."⁴.

Interest in **new music** also materialized in musicology studies, through the analysis of the *String Quartet no. 2* by George Enescu, work published in 1961, with linguistic and terminological precautions necessary to avoid censorship.

1988 marked a peak in the musical activity of composer Myriam Marbé, who was awarded a creative grant by the city of **Mannheim**. Among the many distinctions obtained by the composer over the years, we mention the Second Prize (1966), the First Prize (1976) in the International Composition Competition of the GEDOK-Mannheim Association, along with the U.C.M.R. award (won in 1971, 1974, 1980, 1982), the Bernier Prize of the Académie des Beaux-Arts in **Paris** (1972) and the prize of the Romanian Academy (1977)⁵.

Regarding her political orientations, the artist belongs to the category of composers who refused to join the Communist Party. Under these circumstances, although one of the most important composers of her time, Myriam Marbé's exposure to the musical landscape was obviously limited. Fortunately, however, between 1968 and 1972, the composer was allowed to attend the summer courses in **Darmstadt**⁶, an iconic place for the **avant-garde of European music** in the second half of the last century.

2.2. The evolution of Myriam Marbé's creation

The author's preference for the use of **voice** in composition reflects her sensitivity for **poetry** and the feeling that the expression of one's voice is something authentic (a very old way of rendering).

She also wrote a study about Arghezi poetry, confessing that the starting point in creating a lied inspired by Tudor Arghezi was the lied *Cântecul din fluier* by Jora. Evoking a particularly innovative work of the genre, *Vocabulary I* (1974), we note that the voice is joined by **prepared percussion instruments**, clarinet and piano⁷.

³ The composer refers to one of Leibowitz's reference books, *Schoenberg et son école: l'étape contemporaine du langage musical*, published in Paris, in 1947 or to *Introduction à la musique de douze sons. Les variations pour orchestre op. 31*, by Arnold Schoenberg, published in 1949, Paris.

⁴ Laura Manolache, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

⁵ Valentina Sandu-Dediu (2002), *Muzica românească între 1944-2000* [Romanian music between 1944 and 2000], Editura Muzicală, București, p. 244.

⁶ <https://continuo.wordpress.com/2008/10/20/myriam-marbe-serenataconcertotime-found-again/>, viewed on 2.01.2023.

⁷ Valentina Sandu-Dediu, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

By recalling the fact that in her youth she used compositional practices and techniques of serialism, in her interview with Laura Manolache, Myriam Marbé mentions the search for a compositional system that would give her the appropriate **rigor** and **framework** to express her musical intuition, recalling, in this regard, *Sonata for solo clarinet* from 1964 and *Sonata for two violas*, 1965. The author's opinion at the time of the interview is related to the limit of any system and the joy she feels when listening to the works of her youth, that seem to convey an emotion, an expression enchantment beyond everyday life. The author equally values what the performer can offer her in the execution of the work.

The requests from performers, the commissions received were considered **stimulating** because “they compel you to renew yourself conceptually and stylistically”⁸.

The use of the **words** and the **musicality** of the text in the *Ritual for the Thirst of the Earth* arose from laborious searches to accommodate the system with the desired expression. **Ritual elements** find their place in the creation of the composer, highlighting the evocation of **mourning**, in *Sonata per due*, alongside the rituals of pagan origin (or the songs to summon the rain), in *Ritual for the thirst of the earth*.

The musical configuration of the idea of hope, of optimism, atmosphere considered to be pervasive in a great part of the artist's works, represents an essential stylistic imprint of Myriam Marbé's creation. *Ritual for the Thirst of the Earth* (1985) begins, paradoxically, with an image of irreversible death.

In one of the composer's conversations with Laura Manolache, Myriam Marbé reveals to the audience an aspect relevant to the entire course of her creation, namely that her music “leads to a transcendence, to a plenary feeling, to an openness to the absolute”⁹. Thus, her ritual revolves around the presence of a superior creative principle and symbolic elements, the integration of suggestive passages being relevant in this respect: “clean rain, from the Lord given”, “cross-trinity”, “bread of the Sun, bread of Easter”.

In the choral piece *Ritual for the Thirst of the Earth*, a closeness to **archaic folk song** texts is adopted. However, the lyrics do not support an actual melody, but rather contribute to shaping a musical expression, complemented by the sonority of the words.

Ritual for the Thirst of the Earth has, following the author's descriptions of form, architecture and musical dramaturgy – a general pre-set arch form, slightly distorted, to reach the climax in the golden section.

⁸ Valentina Sandu-Dediu, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

⁹ Laura Manolache, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

Another peculiarity of the composer's own artistic conception is, in many cases, **discarding the final bar from the score**. The final double bar would mark, through a simple musical notation, an impediment to the human aspiration towards the absolute¹⁰, and thus Myriam Marbé prefers to abandon this graphic symbol in many of her works, leaving a whole field of meanings open to the audience and performer alike.

Since then, I have not been able to put a double bar at the end of my works. I have the feeling that – however modest it may be – my creation is but a small outcome of a higher Creative Principle. Each work would be but a first step from the human to that absolute which I pay homage to – and I dare not interrupt the string of future virtual steps through the barrier of a final double bar.¹¹

Remembering the time when she was concerned with organizing **the chromatic total** (the 60s), the composer noticed similar techniques in the works of Enescu and Webern. The **Enescian model**, including intonational structuring by dosing the chromatic total, meant a lot to the generation of which Myriam Marbé was a part.

Marbé offered an insight into her way of thinking. The *Sonata for Two Violas*, for example, is mainly concerned with *time* and the **overlapping of several temporal developments in a new type of polyphony**. Polyphony “represents the art of dynamic structuring according to the unequal interventions of voices. (...) The voices “enter a musical discourse as a theatre play with intentions, with claims to dominate, with interruptions, with claims, with disappearances, with attempts to collaborate”¹².

The desire of the artist was to create **free expression** through a rigorous technique, as happens in the second part of the *Sonata for two violas*, called *Song*, which is thought of as a **fugue**, but suggests a long, drawn-out song (**doina**).

2.3. Stylistic highlights of Myriam Marbé's works

The artist's works could be framed in the **lyrical-contemplative trend** of Romanian creation (according to Corneliu Dan Georgescu's classification), by integrating **metamusical** meanings. One of the distinguishing elements of her compositional style brings to attention the reflective tone, the sonic meditations on themes of great importance, such as life or death.

¹⁰ Laura Manolache, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

¹¹ *Idem*, p. 95.

¹² *Idem*, p. 109.

On the other hand, significant in terms of her creation is the fact that, despite the problems addressed, the atmosphere created by her works is a positive one, suggesting a state of serenity, of liberation. It can thus be considered that Myriam Marbé's music reveals an essential feature of the Christian spirit, namely hope.

As musicologist Irinel Anghel mentions in his book *Orientations, directions, trends of Romanian music in the second half of the twentieth century*, Myriam Marbé adopts the intertwining of archetypes of an ancient Byzantine language with that specific to the twentieth century. An idea in perfect harmony is formulated by Thomas Beimel, who defines the composer's creation as “a rich music, nourished by many traditions”.

3. Overview of several works

3.1. *Chiuituri* – for children's choir and orchestra (1978)

In 1978, composer Myriam Marbé wrote *Chiuituri*, a work for children's choir and orchestra. The **chiuituri** are the expression of irrepressible joy – shouting with joy, jubilating, cheering – but also a form of folkloric manifestation that is specifically Romanian. Myriam Marbé creates a free space where children and adults meet to be “crazy” for once: an imaginary place of the joy of living.

The composition *Chiuituri* by Myriam Marbé premiered on April 24th, 1978 at the opening concert of the 100th anniversary of the Braşov Philharmonic. For Marbé's piece, the orchestra was joined by the *Camerata infantis* children's choir from Braşov, conducted by Nicolae Bica.

In the article dedicated to the work, Thomas Beimel researches and presents details of the Romanian political context from the late 70s:

There are hardly any reasons for such jubilation expressed in *Chiuituri* during the Romanian communist regime. And there are certainly no public forums to express it, beyond propagandistic formats. The piece is unique within Marbé's oeuvre. And it is very suitable to illustrate the aesthetic freedoms that were possible under the Romanian dictatorship.

The genesis of the work can be found in a text from the program booklet of the Braşov Philharmonic.:




Some time ago, when I read Virgil Medan's book *O mie de chiuituri de pe râul Someş* [A Thousand *chiuituri* on the Someş River], it was still not clear to me how I could combine his obvious and flourishing plasticity with music. The time has come for such a transcription: on the occasion of the centenary celebration to which the *Camerata infantis* children's choir, conducted by Nicolae Bica, was

invited. I chose those *chiuituri* that fit well with children's diction and song. Others I chose because of the sonority of words like “nu te lele bozomi la curaua cu bumbii” and which, in the musical context of the cantata, take on the appearance of children's play without losing their original satirical character. But the joke and the play are framed by lyrics whose subtler meaning resulted in a poetic musical rendering.

Chiuituri, verses addressed in an ingenious language, are chanted rhythmically. Sometimes the performers are given specific instructions about the movements they must make. But for Myriam Marbé they mean even more: she is concerned with an aesthetic game that, as in most of her works, captures the composition in the form of a process of abstraction. That's why she also proposes a German title: *Skandierte Rufe* [**Chanted shouts**] to highlight the transcendence of the original context of traditional music.

Among the instruments observed in the orchestral composition, there are the following: flute, clarinet in Sib, horn, trumpet, harp, vibraphone, whip, cymbals, bells, tam-tam, timpani, woodblock, violin, viola, cello, double bass.

An extremely rich work in terms of **sound effects**, it stands out for its use both in vocal moments and instrumental sections, integrating: claps, kicks, finger pops, improvisation, glissando, approximate heights. Along with the mentioned elements, authentic sonorities produced by whips, bells (which recreate, audibly, the sound made by church bells) are highlighted, but also original ways of approaching wind instruments, through the author's instructions to “unfold the flute” and “remount the flute”. The following examples illustrate the concentration of several sound effects and particular notation marks.

	hand clap
	foot tap
	finger snap



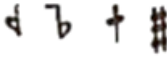
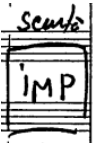

	approximate heights
	irregular succession of very high-pitched sounds
	untempered signs
	short improvisation
	breath

Chart 1 Notation marks used by Myriam Marbé in the score

3.2. *Des-cântec* – for wind quintet (1985)

In her article, *George Enesco, notre contemporain*, Myriam Marbé talks about the possibility of different musical languages coexisting, the result of her reflections on the work of the great maestro.

Explicitly, *Des-Cântec [Dis-enchantment]* is a study of melody and its possible functions. The work refers to two different models, while also providing some clues as to their origin: a Delphic hymn and a quote from a work by Johann Sebastian Bach. However, the sources are not mentioned. Instead, the composer states that, to begin with, she does not use the melodies in their original form: according to her, the Delphic hymn is articulated in a contemporary manner, while the Bach fragment changes character and appears in a *doina*¹³. This clearly shows that Myriam Marbé

¹³ Thomas Beimel (2015), *Die Geburt eines neuen Melos* [The birth of a new Melos] in “Musicology Today”, no. 21, p. 6.

is not concerned with quotations, but with working with songs of different accounts and origins that are in a process of permanent metamorphosis. In the first section after the introduction, fast moving melodic textures predominate.

The initial instrumental composition is represented by the five wind instruments of the quintet, as follows: flute, oboe, clarinet in Bb, bassoon and horn. Along the way, each category uses several types of the same instrument, such as the *hecklephone* – an instrument similar to the bass oboe (the oboe being replaced by this instrument over a significant stretch of time), piccolo clarinet in Eb, clarinet in A, bass clarinet in Bb, contrabassoon, piccolo flute, alto flute.

The introductory fragment outlines **2 well-distinguished motifs**: a diatonic motif (on **the oboe**), and a chromatic motif, with oscillations of seconds in the low register (on **the bassoon**), presented as starting points for the subsequent rhythmic-melodic material.

The composer's notes indicate, in a first stage, certain moments of synchronization to which are added - in the score - mentions such as: “slightly moving, but always mobile”.

Another melodic line is sung – in the low register, in the form of a pedal – which receives a response from the flute. This melodic line is based on thirds and fourths, gradually making a transition to polyphonic writing, which has complementarity as an essential element (up to mark 9). Thus, the horn, the flute and the clarinet in Bb intervene in turn. The **contrasting moment** is highlighted not only by sound effects, but also by **strong dynamic differences**. We notice the notation of the rhythm in measure at this stage, the author mentioning: *Mettre en évidence la symétrie rythmique!* Quasi-recitative formulas are added (to **the horn** – mark 7) in gradual densification, later, with gradual thinning of the emission speed.

Starting with mark 9, **the improvisational part** makes its presence felt, noting the *dispersal* of the bar, later the improvisational fragments being alternated with the measured ones.

The author's notes on this fragment indicate “rigorous, not relaxed”:

At this stage, the score is an outline for the concert improvisation, with only the basic points of intonation highlighted. These “garlands”, as Myriam Marbé calls them, form a chromatic amalgam, but retain in their microstructure interval movements typical of **ancient Greek hymns**. However, it is not known whether the long, sustained notes in the background represent a possible derivation from Bach's music.

It is not possible to determine, in this situation, what is original and what is adaptation. Moreover, one can note an inner dynamic characteristic of Myriam Marbé's music: the **fugue textures**, however discrete and accidental they may seem, always have great potential in terms of their

theatrical function. Because each element can suddenly come to the fore and become perceptible as a melody, Myriam Marbé works deliberately with abstraction¹⁴.

The melodic fragments projected against the background of a moving sound surface, like a screen, often have an undefined outline. Microtonal inflections ensure a smooth transition from the **sound texture to the melodic fragment**. The processes of filtering the original material also led to a purification of the melodic gestures that sometimes appear without intonation: like a rhythmic gesture that only suggests a melodic structure. In search of an appropriate expression, any instrumental act could provide an impetus for the beginning of a song.

However, Myriam Marbé is not only looking for the possible **manifestations of the melody**, but also its potential **function**. It is important that towards the end of a section, the various instruments try a constant interplay to give continuity to the beginnings of the melody.

This long final section looks for strategies to unite the various instrumental voices in **unison**. In particular, after a choral passage that Myriam Marbé deliberately calls “cloches” (bells) and which, in her music, is always an indicator of the opening of the musical discourse in the direction of transcendence.

The fact that the author uses *alto flute* in her work is a rarer choice. Most of the work opts for a **free rhythmic writing** out of measure, with a lot of sound effects, improvisation, and with inserts of calculated/metrically notated moments. The interpretation of her creation is, moreover, supported by the “Concordia” Brass Quintet, made up, at that time, of Ioan Cațianis, Vasile Niculae, Florian Popa, Ion Rațiu and Miltiade Nenoiu.

4. Conclusions

Myriam Marbé (1931-1997) was part of the Golden Generation of Romanian composers, involved in the development of compositional technique along the lines of the European avant-garde. This objective – in contradiction to the aesthetics of socialist realism officially promoted in the 1950s and 1960s. The composer managed to avoid political conformism because of to her unique style, in which she combines an innovative language with musical and spiritual sources of Romanian folklore. She remained constant in her detachment from the world of politics, refusing to become a member of the Romanian Communist Party, unlike most of her colleagues.

¹⁴ Thomas Beimel, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

Bibliography

- Anghel, Irinel (1997). *Orientări, direcții, curente ale muzicii românești din a doua jumătate a secolului XX* [Orientations, directions, trends in Romanian music in the second half of the 20th century], Editura Muzicală a U.C.M.R., București
- Beimel, Thomas (1993). *Miriam Marbé: Concerto for Daniel Kientzy and Saxophones and Orchestra*, Revista “Muzica”, nr. 4
- Brăiloiu, Constantin (1948). *Le giusto syllabique bichrone. Un système rythmique propre à la musique populaire roumaine* [Bichrone Syllabic Giusto. A Rhythmic System Specific to Romanian Folk Music], Polyphonie, book II
- Brânduș, Nicolae (2014). *Avangarda muzicală românească* [Romanian Musical Avant-Garde], Revista “Muzica”, nr. 3
- Cosma, Octavian Lazăr (1986). *Hronicul muzicii românești* [The Chronicle of Romanian Music], volumul 7, Editura Muzicală, București
- Cosma, Viorel (2002). *Muzicieni din România, Lexicon Bibliografic* [Musicians from Romania, Bibliographical Lexicon], volumul 5, Editura Muzicală, București
- Dediu, Dan (2020). *Contribuții componistice românești după 1960* [Romanian Compositional Contributions After 1960], *Noi istorii ale muzicilor românești*, vol. II, Editura Muzicală, București
- Duțică, Luminița (2015). *Obsession of Time and the New Musical Ontologies: The Concert for Saxophone, Daniel Kientzy and Orchestra by Myriam Marbé*, World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology, vol. IX, nr.7
- Gojowy, Detlef (2007). *Myriam Marbé, Neue Musik aus Rumänien* [Myriam Marbé, New Music from Romania], Editura Europäische Komponistinnen, Böhlau
- Herman, Vasile (1991). *Procedee ale dezvoltării structurale în muzica românească contemporană* [Procedures of Structural Development in Contemporary Romanian Music], *Lucrări de muzicologie*, vol. 21, Cluj-Napoca
- Jora, Mihai (1968). *Momente muzicale* [Musical moments], Editura Muzicală a Uniunii Compozitorilor, București
- Manolache, Laura (2002). *Șase portrete de compozitori români* [Six portraits of Romanian composers], Editura Muzicală, București
- Petecel Theodoru, Despina (2003). *De la mimesis la arhetip* [From mimesis to archetype], Editura Muzicală, București
- Sandu-Dediu, Valentina (2002). *Muzica românească între 1944-2000* [Romanian music between 1944-2000], Editura Muzicală, București
- Țiplea Temeș, Bianca (2017). *Sunet de clopote pentru Myriam Marbé* [Ringing bells for Myriam Marbé], Revista “Muzica”, nr. 8

Music section

Țiplea Temeș, Bianca (2013). *Violeta Dinescu și cheia viselor; Portret aniversar*, [Violeta Dinescu and the Key of Dreams, Anniversary portrait], Revista “Muzica”, nr. 4

Ursache, Petru (1998). *Etnoestetica* [Ethno-aesthetics], Editura Eikon, Iași

German Post-Wagnerian Opera. Richard Strauss

George Ștefan COMAN

PhD Student

“George Enescu” National University of Arts Iași
ROMANIA¹

Abstract: Richard Wagner’s scenic creations are considered the pinnacle of the genre in the 19th century for their technical-vocal difficulty, coupled with the need for endurance acquired over time through proper study, as well as a turning point in the entire history of music, for their innovative visions and impact on subsequent composers. Convinced of Wagner’s influence on the European cultural music scene, the second stage of the research focused on the composers who appeared in the German-Austrian area, particularly in the first decades of the 20th century, and who produced countless masterpieces, expressions of visions based on the various forms of reference to tradition and the obsessive tendency towards innovation, such as the treatment and deepening of psychological dramas, of ancient myths seen as symbols in which the great mysteries of the soul, human complexes and human powerlessness in the face of the all-powerful forces of destiny, of divinity, are found: Eugen d’Albert’s opera *Tiefland*, Hans Pfitzner’s musical legend *Palestrina*, Alexander von Zemlinsky’s *Der Zwerg*, Erich Korngold’s *Die tote Stadt* and Alban Berg’s expressionist opera *Wozzeck*. The “core” of the research concerns two of the most important operatic works given to posterity by the composer Richard Strauss in partnership with the famous librettist Hugo von Hofmannsthal: *Die Frau ohne Schatten* [The Woman without Shadow] and *Die ägyptische Helena* [The Egyptian Helen], which stand out for their original, syncretic vision, fuelled by a compositional talent of unfailing inspiration that the composer would consciously explore and exploit, completing the creation of post-Wagner German opera.

Keywords: Wagner, drama, Strauss, opera, myth, syncretism.

1. Introduction: Richard Wagner – The peak of German opera in the 19th century

The musical space of the 19th century was deeply influenced by Wagnerian creation, which managed to encompass all aspects of Romanticism, thus contributing to the emancipation of dramatic and symphonic forms. Richard

¹ jorje_ro95@icloud.com

Wagner (1813-1883) constitutes the peak and at the same time the moment of crisis of the tonal language, the one whose supremacy was manifested for two centuries, until the experiments of the atonalists in the first decades of the 20th century.² Poet, musician, composer, conductor and aesthetician, Wagner established himself as one of the most complex and influential figures in European musical culture. His works, especially those of the last period, are notable for their complex textures, rich harmonies and orchestrations, and for their elaborate use of leitmotifs – musical phrases associated with individual characters, places, ideas, or plot elements. His advances in musical language, such as abundant chromaticism and continuous shifting of tonal centers, set the course for the development of cult music in the century that followed.

The close connection between text and music is what drives the development of the harmonic process, still within the limits of the tonal language. It is worth mentioning the uninterrupted presence of orchestral comments, the musical themes being ingeniously symphonized by means of a varied timbral colour – resulting from the composer's call to a wide range of instruments, with the addition of some specially designed by him, in the form of a numerically amplified orchestral apparatus – dependent on the intrinsic course of each character, gaining a maximum expressive force in the moments of accumulation of dramatic tension. Wagnerian melodies thus become the expression of ideas, and their return suggests an intention to give them full meaning.³

During his compositional maturity, Wagner pays special attention to the evolution of unity in terms of the development of thematic material in his works; from one creation to another, he aims to overcome the differences between recitative and aria, in favor of an ample declamatory “arioso” that will lead to the concept of “infinite melody”.

The Wagnerian chant has been an intensely debated topic over time. Since the passing of the Bayreuth titan up until today, both singers and specialists in vocal art have tried to define aspects of this type of singing, in order to understand and render Wagnerian works in relation to the composer's primary intentions. The differences between the chant known today and that of Wagner's time are significant. In his day, the best known and by far the best manner was the “right” singing of sounds. The continuous vibrato, a specific element in today's operatic singing (designed to project and color the voice) was originally foreign to the composer. Once settled in Bayreuth, Wagner began writing a long essay entitled “On Actors and Singers”, in which he elaborated on his ideas on

² G. Pascu, M. Boțocan (2003), *Carte de istorie a muzicii* [Music history book], Vol. II, Editura Vasiliana'98, Iași, p. 367.

³ Ioana Ștefănescu (2002), *O istorie a muzicii universale* [A history of universal music], Vol. IV, Romantic Opera from Rossini to Wagner, Editura Fundației Culturale Române, București, p. 362.

the importance of gestures, mimicry and improvisation. In terms of technical aspects of singing, Wagner carefully prepared his performers in declamation, intonation, phrasing and dynamics by demanding clarity in the type of emotions expressed through the vocal melody.⁴

Compared to the previous works, *Tristan and Isolde* (1859) imposes itself through the colossal contribution of using leitmotifs, Wagnerian melody becoming an authentic art of interpenetrations and transformations that their symbolism undergoes. In the process of the new melodic pattern based exclusively on the leitmotif principle and on the exploitation of nuances that emphasize dramatic expressiveness, Wagnerian harmonic thinking acquires overwhelming values. Transcending the laws of classical harmony in the vocal-symphonic development of his music, Wagner proved to be the initiator of endless harmonic chains that rarely find a solution, being postponed in accordance with an ascending course of emotional tension that does not, in the last resort, leave the basic tonality. A novelty is the support of the modulating process on clear bridges between the change of tonalities, thus providing a tonal perspective to the entire harmonic course whose agitated character, due to continuous chromatic modulations, is in an interdependent relationship with the intrinsic feelings and situations experienced by the protagonists.⁵

Convinced of the value and impact of his works that had not yet been fully understood, Wagner embarked on a plan of vast proportions that, at first, seemed impossible to realize; the tetralogy *The Ring of the Nibelung* was inspired by the German cultural heritage, which included the old German epics as well as the works of writers who capitalized on Norse stories, on the famous collection *Edda* and some Scandinavian stories.

Unlike his previous works, in this epic operatic tetralogy Wagner adopts a much more complex use of leitmotifs, referred to in his philosophical work *Opera and drama* as “guides to feeling”, describing how they can be used to inform the listener about a musical or dramatic subtext of the action on stage, manner used by the choir in ancient Greek theatre. Moreover, significant innovations undertaken in orchestration are also noted. Composed for a large orchestra using the full range of instruments, both individually and in various combinations, the composer commissioned the production of new instruments, including the Wagnerian tuba, designed to cover the space between horn and trombone registers, as well as variations of existing instruments such as the bass trumpet and double-flap double bass trombone. In much of the tetralogy, especially since Act III of *Siegfried*, one can no longer speak of the use of

⁴ P. Bassettm, *Richard Wagner on the Practice and Teaching of Singing*, retrieved from: https://www.richard-wagner.org/userdata/filegallery/original/308_richard_wagner_on_the_practice_and_teaching_of_singing_1.pdf

⁵ *Idem*, p. 361.

traditional, clearly defined tonality for long periods of time, but rather of using the term “tonal regions”, each following the other in a continuous flow. The fluidity of these continuous changes required avoiding structural organization at clearly defined times, facilitating Wagner’s easy access to the construction of more complex structures⁶.

2. Post-Wagnerian German opera. Evolutionary path, features, outstanding representatives

In the late 19th century after the death of the titan from Bayreuth, as well as in the first decades of the 20th century, German opera was still marked by Wagnerian drama: leaning towards large librettos, loaded with philosophical and metaphysical meanings, the treatment of the leitmotif with symbolic and symphonic meaning, abundant chromaticism from a melodic and harmonic point of view, dense orchestrations with an illustrative, evocative role, the treatment of the voice in an instrumental manner and the presence of large declamatory scenes (arioso). All these are elements that we will find treated in personal ways, in terms of theme, aesthetics and language, in the creations of German and Austrian composers. As an extension, these features will merge with the new trends that have appeared in the European space, with the new theatrical typologies, with the increasing affirmation of entertainment genres in the cult area and especially with each composer’s own artistic, sonorous and scenic visions, the result of coming from a certain school of composition as well as leaning towards avant-garde or experimental orientations, abundantly manifested at the beginning of the century.

3. Richard Strauss

German composer and conductor, Richard Strauss (1864-1949) emerged immediately after the death of Wagner and Brahms, being considered one of the most gifted musicians of the time. During an artistic career that spanned eight decades, he composed in almost all musical genres, becoming best known for his symphonic opuses (composed in the late 19th century, in the early part of his career) and the scenic creations (from the early 20th century). Coming of age as a composer at a time when relations between the bourgeois class and artists had become increasingly problematic, Strauss managed to address the world of art and society through ingenious combinations of candor and irony.⁷ An admirer of Richard Wagner’s works and his ideas regarding *Gesamtkunstwerk* (“Total

⁶ The Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, *Richard Wagner, Der Ring des Nibelungen*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Der_Ring_des_Nibelungen, viewed on 10.08. 2023.

⁷ B. Gilliam, C. Youmans (2001), *Richard Strauss*, in “Grove Music Online”, retrieved from, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.40117>

Work of Art”), the composer turned to this concept of creating a “total” work of art that perfectly combines poetry, drama and music. While detaching himself from the Wagnerian metaphysics and philosophical visions abundantly manifested in the symphonic creation, Strauss also exploited the paradoxes, inconsistencies and potential depths that can be found in the everyday life of modern man.⁸

In the field of **opera creation**, Richard Strauss gave the public no less than 16 operas, each of which was the result of the composer’s predilection for contrasting subjects and styles. Thus, following the first two attempts *Guntram* (1893) and *Feuersnot* (1901), a tribute to Wagnerian principles (which to a certain extent anticipates the unique style that will characterize him later), the composer gives birth to the one-act operas *Salome* and *Elektra*, within which he resorts to an increased level of dissonance and chromaticism, pushing the size and color capabilities of the orchestra to new extremes, together with a tense melody. Breaking away from the expressionist manner, Strauss asserts the new possibilities he imagined by composing a series of stage works whose subjects are inspired by mythology, legends or fairy tales, with female protagonists, in which the juxtaposition of contemporary elements with anachronistic ones creates a stylistic pluralism that overshadows the later experiments of the late 20th century.

4. *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (*The Woman without a Shadow*)

In early 1914, Hofmannsthal returned to his “metaphysical” fairy tale, and Strauss began composing the opera later that year. *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, with its rich orchestration, dense polyphony and deep symbolism, is Strauss’s most complex stage work, but in many ways it is also his most personal. Although the subject concerns the Shadowless Empress’s intrinsic search for humanity, the secondary subject of the dyer, his wife, and their tumultuous relationship characterized Strauss more deeply than any other aspect of the plot through the lens of his own troubled marriage.⁹

Die Frau ohne Schatten, whose premiere took place in 1919 on the stage of the Vienna State Opera, stands out for its narrative structure revolving around two different marriages unfolding in three distinct worlds: the invisible, spiritual realm of Keikobad, the shining “semi-mortal” kingdom of the emperor, and the noisy, prosaic world of humanity (Barak and his loved ones). The empress “stands between two worlds”, according to Hofmannsthal, “not released from

⁸ Richard Strauss (1903), *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, Vol. 44, no. 719, Musical Times Publications Ltd.

⁹ B. Gilliam, *The Strauss-Hofmannsthal operas*, retrieved from <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/abs/cambridge-companion-to-richard-strauss/strauss-hofmannsthal-operas/E3F41B262027D09C17E5C7C75C1E8793>; p. 126.

one, not accepted by the other”. The daughter of the omniscient Keikobad, the empress was captured by the emperor first while appearing as a gazelle, and then frozen in human form after losing her magical talisman. She has no human relationship with her husband and is treated like a trophy (“the prey of all prey”), a sexual object, as the Nurse stated: “At the dawn of the first ray of light, he leaves her side, when stars appear, he is there again. His nights are her day, his days are her night.”¹⁰

Hofmannsthal undoubtedly provided Strauss with a number of challenges through the most complex, expansive and symbolic libretto he ever wrote. Transposing himself into the text of the action, the composer acquired the necessary understanding of the unfortunate situation of the empress which, intertwined with the metaphysical principle of love put forward by Hofmannsthal, made it possible to transpose the story into a palpable, authentic human conflict. Strauss benefited from a complex libretto, the profusion of which he managed to portray on the stage of the opera house, while also exploiting a wide range of timbres, techniques, styles and musical forms: extended orchestral interludes, hymns, instrumental solo moments, leitmotifs endowed with dramaturgical role, arias based on the Wagnerian continuous melody, large vocal ensembles etc.¹¹

5. *Die ägyptische Helena (Egyptian Helena)*

Die ägyptische Helena (1923-1927), an opera structured in two acts, completes Strauss’ trilogy of “marriage” operas (along with *Die Frau ohne Schatten* and *Intermezzo*), and for the purpose of this theme it returns to the elevated world of Greek myth. Here, several important themes are explored, which later became the focus of action in works such as *Ariadne auf Naxos* or *Die Frau ohne Schatten*: memory, marital fidelity and the restoration of trust.¹²

Hofmannsthal considered the text conceived for this work to be his best libretto, and despite being ridiculed by many commentators, it still remains underrated. However, as in all great works of art, the universal covers the particular. In an imaginary conversation with Strauss, which appeared in the opera’s original program booklet, Hofmannsthal implored the composer to imagine the plot of the opera’s Trojan War action “as if it had happened two or three years ago, somewhere between Moscow and New York” (that is, in central

¹⁰ T. A. Kovach (1984), *Die Frau ohne Schatten: Hofmannsthal’s Response to the Symbolist Dilemma*, The German Quarterly, Vol. 57, No. 3, Wiley on behalf of the American Association of Teachers of German, p. 380.

¹¹ B. Gilliam, *The Strauss-Hofmannsthal operas*, retrieved from <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/abs/cambridge-companion-to-richard-strauss/strauss-hofmannsthal-operas/E3F41B262027D09C17E5C7C75C1E8793>; p. 127.

¹² *Ibidem*.

Europe and more precisely in Austria and Germany). Hofmannsthal thus highlighted the correlation between the Trojan War and the First World War – and their aftermath – felt by contemporary audiences and posterity alike.¹³

Linking a mythological past with a mythicized present, *Die ägyptische Helena*, which premiered in 1928 at the *Semperoper* in Dresden, explored the post-war dialectic between the mythical and the modern. In the view of Hofmannsthal and Strauss, modernity was fundamentally founded on myth: the present represented both the reflection and the continuation of an existence that transcended history. As in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, Strauss turns to a complex subject that evokes a higher human level. Strauss's musical pages for this subject are generous and inventive. The thematic transformations are endless, the orchestral tableaux broad, and the rhythm is continuously subject to the variational principle¹⁴.

6. Conclusions

The personality and music of Richard Wagner had an overwhelming impact on generations of composers in 20th century Germany. The post-Wagnerian opera creation has Richard Strauss as its main exponent, who in operas *Die Frau ohne Schatten* and *Die ägyptische Helena*, managed to combine in an ingenious way the tradition with the new stylistic and musical trends of the time, carefully exploring mythological themes, human conflicts and the complexity of symbolism.

Bibliography

- Bassett, Peter (2013). *Richard Wagner on the Practice and Teaching of Singing*, retrieved from https://www.richardwagner.org/userdata/filegallery/original/308_richard_wagner_on_the_practice_and_teaching_of_singing_1.pdf
- Gilliam, Bryan, Youmans, Charles (2001). *Richard Strauss*, in “Grove Music Online”, retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.40117>
- Graydon, Philip (2010). *Between Moscow and New York: Richard Strauss's Die ägyptische Helena in Cultural Historical Context*, Journal of the Royal Musical Association, Vol. 135, No. 2, Taylor & Francis, Ltd. on behalf of the Royal Musical Association

¹³ P. Graydon (2010), *Between Moscow and New York: Richard Strauss's Die ägyptische Helena in Cultural Historical Context*, Journal of the Royal Musical Association, Vol. 135, No. 2, Taylor & Francis, Ltd. on behalf of the Royal Musical Association.

¹⁴ D. Murray (2002), *Die Ägyptische Helena*, in “Grove Music Online”, retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.O007407>, viewed on 20.07.2023.

- Iașteșen, Loredana Viorica (2008). Teză de doctorat, *Opera expresionistă* [Phd Thesis, The Expressionist Opera], Iași
- Kovach, A., Thomas (1984). *Die Frau ohne Schatten: Hofmannsthal's Response to the Symbolist Dilemma*, The German Quarterly, Vol. 57, No. 3, Wiley on behalf of the American Association of Teachers of German
- Murray, D. (2002). *Die Ägyptische Helena*, in "Grove Music Online", retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.O007407>
- Pascu, George, Boțocan, Melania (2003). *Carte de istorie a muzicii* [History Music Anthology], Vol. II, Editura Vasiliana'98, Iași
- Ștefănescu, Ioana (2002). *O istorie a muzicii universale, Opera Romantică de la Rossini la Wagner* [General Overview on the Music History, Romantic Opera from Rossini till Wagner], Editura Fundației Culturale Române, București
- Richard Strauss* (1903). The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular, Vol. 44, Nr. 719, Musical Times Publications Ltd., United Kingdom, pp. 9-15
- The Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, *Richard Wagner, Der Ring des Nibelungen*, retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Der_Ring_des_Nibelungen

The activity of the “Doina” choral chapel during 1963-1975 based on archive materials from the special depository of the Republic of Moldova

NATALIA BLÎNDU

PhD Student

Academy of Music, Theater and Fine Arts, Chişinău

REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA¹

Abstract: The “Doina” Academic Choral Chapel is considered the most renowned and long-lived choral ensemble in the Republic of Moldova. The history of this collective as part of the National Philharmonic has gone through different stages, each stage being characterized by the key aspects of its activity. The present article analyzes the period between 1963 and 1975 – the first twelve years of management of the chapel by Veronica Garştea until the team became part of the General Directorate of the State Philharmonic of Moldova and of the October Palace. For the purpose of research, the qualitative and quantitative composition of the team and the geography of concert tours are investigated, the selection, complexity and variety of repertoire are analyzed, as well as the interaction of the administration with the leaders of other cultural organizations. Special attention is paid to the personality of the artistic director and issues related to the mission of the Choral Chapel “Doina” in the cultural space of the Republic of Moldova. For this purpose we used all available materials from the archives of the Republic of Moldova: the National Archive of the Republic of Moldova, the archives of the Moldova-Concert Directorate and the National Library of the Republic of Moldova. The present article considers a vast number of heterogeneous documents that are used in order to recreate an objective panorama of the ensemble in the determined period. In conclusion, it is mentioned that the artistic activity of the most famous choral collective is an integral part of the cultural life of the country and, together with other artistic groups of the National Philharmonic, it contributes significantly to the promotion of national cultural policy.

Keywords: “Doina” Choral Chapel, concert ensemble/ collective, choral music, political repertoire, culture, concert.

¹ <https://amtap.md, revista.amtap@gmail.com>

The activity of the “Doina” Academic Choir Chapel is of great scientific interest for the cultural space of Moldova. Given the team’s age of almost a century, the research proved that the most truthful source for creating an objective image of a professional artistic ensemble with national value is the multitude of materials and documents in the special depository of the National Archive of the Republic of Moldova. Prior monitoring of archival resources of the Republic of Moldova makes it possible to identify the main sources containing documents of interest for research. These are:

1. The Funds of the General Directorate of the National Archive and of the Directorate for the Archive of Socio-Political Organizations, which gather documentary materials of the Department of Arts subordinated to the Soviet of Ministers of the Moldavian SSR. Here you can find important sources for describing the concert and development activity of “Doina” Choral Chapel as an artistic collective: posters and programs of the State Philharmonic of Moldova, business correspondence about the creative activity of the Philharmonic (telegrams, contracts with composers), materials on repertoire and activities during tours and concerts of the Philharmonic staff.

2. Moldova-Concert Directorate Archive, where materials covering 1943-1990 are available. Of particular interest are the order collections for “Doina” Choral Chapel, which regulate the inventory of property, organizational and administrative aspects, account of persons in military service, organization of tours, approval of timetables, establishment of categories for choristers, staff payroll, appointments and dismissals, leaves and business trips, administrative warnings, reprimands for violations of labor discipline, personal files of dismissed staff, lists of employees, their profiles, autobiographies and statements.

3. The National Library of the Republic of Moldova, where the files of the Soviet metropolitan and republican press are stored, which extensively highlight the concerts performed by the “Doina” Choral Chapel: reviews, feature articles, interviews, music criticism (for example: the newspaper “Soviet Moldova”, “Chişinăul de seară/Evening Chişinău”, “Culture of Moldova”, “Sovereign Moldova, Literature and Art” etc.).

The discovery of a complex of archival documents related to the artistic and cultural activity of the “Doina” Choral Chapel throughout the 20th century led to the development of well-defined principles of classification/cataloguing. Starting from the structure of an artistic ensemble that carries out its activity in a certain time and in a determined social and cultural context, as well as according to the research objectives, we propose the following conceptual system for classifying archival documents, regardless of the place where they are archived:

1. Vertical regulatory documents – reflect the strict hierarchical structure for the operation of the artistic collective within the state system and administrative subordination at all levels (orders, decisions, dispositions).

2. Sectoral (cultural) interaction documents – reflect the networks of horizontal connections on different levels of decision and professional, administrative and economic interactions that directly ensure the performing activity of the chapel. (letters, agreements, contracts, posters, programs, minutes of artistic committee meetings, etc.).

3. Current documents for internal circulation – reflect all kinds of everyday practices in their empirical specificity (annual reports, lists of artists, statistics, internal orders, etc.) reflecting the daily life of each individual artist and the whole ensemble, which would constitute the micro-level of research. It involves the daily routine and work schedule, social roles of employees and cultural interactions with colleagues and other public organizations, interactions with the state institutions, realities of the historical situation, aspects relative to human and financial resources, the system of sanctions and administrative incentives of the choristers. In other words, all that would characterize the daily life of any professional social group, team or organization, taking into account the specifics of its artistic activity.

By classifying the materials according to the conceptual system proposed, an “identity archive” is created, organized around the history of a certain artistic ensemble (“Doina” Choral Chapel).

In order to implement the principle of historical integrity and restore objectivity, the connection between these components is identified, the dynamics of creative results are established, the historical stages and the chronological framework of the chapel’s development as a collective are determined, obviously taking into account the personality of the artistic leaders. The artistic leader of any artistic collective is the employee responsible for implementing the cultural policy of the state. They make administrative, financial and personnel decisions, being guided by the directive documents received, addressed as a basis for decisions and direct orders at their level of competence.

At this level, the chronological stages in the history of the collective were identified, namely:

The initial stage – 1928-1942 – from the establishment of the collective as the Musical Chapel of Moldova, reorganized in 1930 into the Choral Studio of the city of Tiraspol and renamed in 1935 the “Doina” State Choral Chapel of Moldova. Initially, the collective was formed by young workers and amateurs of the kolkhoz who sang folk songs. Constantin Pigrov² participated in the training

² Constantin Pigrov (1876-1962) – choir conductor, professor, founder of the choral conducting department at the Odessa Conservatory.

of the interpretive and artistic skills of the young choir. During the 1930s and 40s he lived in Moldova, and was the artistic director of the chapel until 1940.

After the reunion of Bessarabia with the Soviet Union in 1940, the “Doina” Choral Chapel together with the symphony orchestra formed the National State Philharmonic in Chisinau. To this day, these two formations are the basis of Serghei Lunchevici's National Philharmonic.

During the Second World War the Philharmonic was disbanded, most of the artists were called to arms, and only a few artists (singers, instrumentalists, dancers and soloists) were united in the “Doina” Song and Dance Ensemble. Choir artists constituted the basic contingent of this collective, led by the composer David Gherșfeld³. The ensemble was later evacuated and traveled through Central Asia and other regions of the USSR including the front, acting as a concert unit.

After the return of the ensemble to Chisinau (1944), the State Philharmonic resumed its activity and since 1945 the “Doina” Choral Chapel has continued its activity under the baton of conductors Moisei Cononenco⁴ and Mihail Brezdeniuc⁵ (the 50s). During this time, the collective is going through an artistic and performance-related crisis, due to the lack of well-trained personnel in the field of choral singing and of a competent conductor.

Years 1958-1963. In order to come out of the crisis and maintain the ensemble, but also to obtain a professional level of interpretation and expand the repertoire, Vladimir Minin⁶ (born in 1929), a graduate of the Moscow State Conservatory, conductor of the Moscow State Academic Choir was invited as the artistic director. V. Minin made an effort in the development of the collective in academic choral music, introduced classical choral works into the repertoire, reworked folk music material and adapted it for the interpretation of choral artists, introduced solfege and singing lessons for choristers and filled the vacant positions with young talents from the republic, whom he also trained. One of the conductor's merits was the preparation and subsequent evolution of the chapel under his baton during the Decade of Art and Literature of the SSR in Moscow in 1960. The “Doina” Choral Chapel had a successful performance and became recognized throughout the Soviet Union. Following this success, the chapel obtained the title of the collective Emeritus of the Republic.

³ David Gherșfeld (1911-2000) – composer, conductor, pedagogue, folklorist, founder of the National Opera of the Republic of Moldova.

⁴ Moisei Cononenco (1891-?) – artistic director of the *Doina* Choral Chapel in the 1950s.

⁵ Mihail Brezdeniuc - (1895-?) – choirmaster of the *Doina* Choral Chapel, between April 1957 and March 1958 – artistic director and conductor.

⁶ Vladimir Minin (b. 1929) - choir conductor, professor; laureate of the State Prize of the USSR (1982), People's Artist of the USSR (1988), Person of Honor of the Republic of Moldova (2004), artistic director of the State Academic Chamber Choir in Moscow. From 1958 to 1963 he was artistic director and conductor of the “Doina” Choral Chapel.

The next stage of the group's evolution is related to the activity of the famous Veronica Garștea⁷ (1927-2012), conductor, pedagogue, People's Artist of the USSR, laureate of the State Prize of the SSR, Knight of the Order of the Republic. In 1957 she became choir master in the “Doina” Choral Chapel, and in April 1963 she was officially appointed first conductor and artistic director of Doina. In this capacity, Veronica Garștea worked until her very last day.

Her professional training began in 1948 at the Chișinău School of Music, after which she studied at the Chișinău State Conservatory (1952-1957), specializing in choral conducting in the class of E. Bogdanovsky. As a student at the conservatory, V. Garștea started teaching at the College of Music, which demonstrates the recognition of her interpretative and organizational qualities.

After successfully graduating from the conservatory and qualifying as a choir conductor and teacher, the young graduate was directed to the State Philharmonic. On May 23rd, 1957, the Directorate of the State Philharmonic submitted to the Ministry of Culture of the MSSR a request for the approval of an additional unit of conductor (choir master) within the “Doina” Choral Chapel, a fact that was not previously foreseen, in order to “prepare and train a master of choir for the collective of the State Philharmonic”. Thus, the future career of the young conductor was determined by the administrative decision of the government for the training of national professionals in the field of culture.

The first stage of her activity as a conductor takes place from 1963 until the collective transitioned to the United Directorate of the State Philharmonic of Moldova and the October Palace in 1975.

According to the archival materials of all three types, the activity of the chapel was carried out in strict compliance with the regulations and decisions of the state in the department of culture.

Of great scientific interest are the internal orders, which arguably reflect the repertory policy of all concert collectives, including the “Doina” Choral Chapel. These normative acts, such as the *Order of the Director of the Philharmonic regarding the activities to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the October Revolution* (1966) and the *Order of the Director of the Philharmonic regarding the activities to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the city of Chisinau* (1966) have a well-defined structure aimed at the following topics: repertoire and concert activity.

For instance, within the *jubilee year events* (50 years since the October Revolution) the emeritus collective of the republic of the “Doina” Choral Chapel is requested to present a new anniversary program to the artistic council of the Philharmonic within the set deadline (April 15, 1957). The new programs must

⁷ Veronica Garștea (1927-2012) – conductor and pedagogue from the Republic of Moldova, People's Artist of the USSR (1987), artistic director and first conductor of the *Doina* Choral Chapel during 1963-2012.

be drawn up taking into account the conditions of *the Regulation on the evaluation of professional artistic ensembles within the Soviet Union*.⁸. The correlation between the creations of Soviet and Moldovan composers, of Russian and universal classical works in the repertoire of the Doina Choral Chapel (1961):

1. Creations of Soviet Moldavian composers – 43%
2. Creations of composers from other republics of the USSR – 32%
3. Arrangements of Moldovan folk music – 18%
4. Russian composer classics – 3%
5. Universal classic composers – 2%

2% of the library fund of the collective is made by collections of solfeggio, crestomatia, *Muzica* magazine (editions no. 3, 4, 5, 10), as well as the texts (lyrics) of popular creations.

The essential aspect in the repertory policy of the choral collective is the language in which this repertoire is performed. In this context, the distribution of the linguistic affiliation of the creations is presented as a percentage:

Russian language – 67%

Romanian (Moldovan) language – 30 %

Other languages – 3%.

Although the largest share of the chapel's repertoire belongs to the creation of Soviet Moldavian composers, almost half of its pieces are written on verses composed in Russian. This fact fully supports the conceptual ideas and fundamental principles of the cultural policy of the CPSU and demonstrates the implementation of this policy by the Ministry of Culture, namely the underappreciation of the native people's culture and the glorification of “the most advanced culture in the world – Russian culture”⁹. At the beginning of the 50s, Russian creations gradually began to eliminate Moldovan songs from Doina's repertoire.

The creation of the composers from the MSSR present in the repertoire of the “Doina” Choral Chapel is divided into two compositional areas: the choral processing of folk music (choral miniatures, suites) and the works with a deep propaganda tone: *a cappella* choirs and vocal-symphonic creations.

Moldovan folk music in the repertoire of the “Doina” Choral Chapel towards the 1960s is presented in the creations of composers L. Gurov, D. Gherșfeld, N. Ponomarenco, P. Șerban, N. Vilinschii, G. Borș, V. Zlatov, N. Chiosa, etc. The theme of these creations is reflected in its titles, such as: *Hill*

⁸ ANRM, F. 3241, inv.1, d. 407, p. 106.

⁹ Valentina Ursu (2013), *Politica culturală în RSS Moldovenească 1944-1956* [Cultural policy in the Moldavian SSR 1944-1956], Editura Pontos, Chișinău, p. 288.

with flowers of St. Neaga, *The tractor driver's song* by D. Gherșfeld on lyrics by I. Corneanu, *Longing for the village* and *On the valley* by L. Gurov, miniatures by P. Șerban on popular lyrics: *Fa, Marie Mărioară, Little Shepard*, etc.¹⁰ This repertoire also includes the *Lyrics* section containing the lyrics of Moldovan folk songs, such as *Green leaf, beautiful apple; Dniester on your banks; Mîndra mea; Doruleț dorul; Dragă ni-i lelița-nantă; Frunză verde de bujor, Hai la vie în colhoz*, etc. In order to improve the quality of literary texts, namely in the choral arrangement of musical folklore, the composers of the MSSR collaborated with Moldovan poets and writers, especially in the second half of the 1950s: E. Bucov, A. Busuioc, L. Deleanu, L. Corneanu, An. Gujcl and others. This repertory segment reflects the folklore of the new Soviet Moldovan people.

For this reason, the folk songs arrangements by composer G. Muzicescu are highlighted: *Răsari luna, Dor dorule, Stîncuța, Zis-ai bade*, etc. G. Muzicescu's creations largely reflected the rich folk musical traditions in those difficult times for national art.

Given the use of mechanisms for promoting politics such as party diktat, ideological monopoly, authoritarian decision-making process, composers of the MSSR, as well as all Soviet composers had to recount successes in various branches of Soviet activity: the heroic work of Soviet citizens¹¹, multilateral activity of the CP, the great October socialist revolution¹², glorifying the personality of party leaders¹³. These topics are reflected in the most ample section of "Doina"'s repertoire. We highlight the following creations: *Jubilee Cantata* (1949) by Șt. Neaga, lyrics by A. Lupan and P. Crucienuț, and the oratorio *The Song of Renaissance* (1951); cantata *Our Dawn* (1954) by S. Lobel, lyrics Em. Bucov; cantata *Under the Banner of Victories* (1952) by V. Zagorschi, lyrics by A. Aleabov; *Soviet Moldova, Song about Chisinau, The Homeland* by D. Gherșfeld, lyrics by L. Corneanu; *Long Live Stalin* by N. Ponomarenko; various oratorios and jubilee cantatas. The repertoire of the chapel includes the creations of the composer A. Stârcea: *Ballad of the violin, My Moldova, Ode lui Lenin, The Warsawian, Song of joy*, etc.

In "Doina"'s library of scores there are also creations on lyrics written by Romanian poets, for example the piece *Ce te legeni, codrule*, signed by P. Mezeti on the lyrics of Mihai Eminescu, the four madrigals of P. Constantinescu.

From the creations of composers from all over the USSR included in the repertoire of the chapel, we mention the works of famous Soviet musicians such as D. Shostakovich, S. Prokofiev, A. Hacıaturian, T. Hrennicov, V. Muradeli, I.

¹⁰ The folk music arrangements present the basic layer of the repertoire of the "Doina" Choral Chapel.

¹¹ AOSPRM, F. 51, inv. 5, d. 23, p. 458.

¹² AOSPRM, F. 51, inv. 3, d. 23, pp. 264-279.

¹³ КПСС о культуре, просвещении и науке. Москва: Политиздат, 1963, 551 с.

Dunaevski, as well as V. Šebalin, V. Poleakov, R. Glier, S. Tulikov, etc. Their work includes choral scores such as *Winter Road* by V. Šebalin, *The Miller, the Boy and the Donkey* by D. Kabalevsky, *The White Dove* by S. Prokofiev; creations with a propagandistic agenda, such as the *Oath of the People's Commissar* and *Our Song* by D. Shostakovich, *Song about Stalin* by A. Hacıaturian. Doina's repertoire also includes creations of a high degree of complexity, such as *10 poems for mixed choir*, *To those executed* signed by D. Shostakovich, cantata *Alexandr Nevski* by S. Prokofiev. Folk music arrangements of the Soviet peoples are also present, such as the *Ukrainian Songs* arranged by N. Lîsenko, the choral arrangements of A. Sveshnikov, and others.

An extremely small percentage of the library depository of the "Doina" Choir Chapel belongs to works from the heritage of Russian and universal classical choral music. Since 1946-1949, the "Doina" Choral Chapel has included vocal-symphonic works in its repertoire: the Persian Choir from the opera *Ruslan and Ludmila* to the lyrics of A. Pushkin, as well as the Slavsea Choir and the Polish Choir from the opera *Ivan Susanin* by M. Glinka, *The Tatar Captivity* by N. Rimsky-Korsakov, the end of first act of the opera *Prince Igor* and choruses by A. Borodin; the choruses from the opera *Rusalka* by A. Dargomijski; *Chorus of girls* by P. Tchaikovsky. The following choral miniatures were included in the library fund: *Ah, ti, bereoza*, *Under an apple tree* by P. Cesnokov; *7 songs* by A. Grecianinov including *The Prisoner* and the folk song *Poidu li ia, vîdu li ia*; *Sunrise, Morning, Nature and love*; *Ne kukuška vo sîrom boru* by P. Ceaikovski; *On the old mound* signed by V. Kalinikov, *Barcarola* by Ț. Kiui; *Anchar* by A. Arenski; chosen choirs: *Evening song*, *Good road*, *The Evening* by S. Taneev. In 1957, the *Ioan Damaschin* cantata signed by this composer can also be found in the repertoire of "Doina" Choral Chapel.

The examples of universal classical music in "Doina"'s records are of scientific interest. In the library inventory we also identified the following creations: *Echo* and *Spring Song* by O. Lasso; *Sanctus* of Palestrina; *Crucifixus* by A. Lotti; *Glorious Work* by G.F. Handel¹⁴; *Credo* and *Fugue* by I.S. Bach; *Requiem* and *Ave verum corpus* by W.A. Mozart; The finale of *Symphony No. 9* and *Spring Sonata* by Beethoven; *The Nightingale* by F. Mendelsohn; *Hiking* by F. Schubert; *Dreams* and *Gypsy Life* by R. Schumann; *Lullaby* by J. Brahms, *The Nightingale* by E. Grieg¹⁵.

¹⁴ The name of the work is in Romanian, without the indication of the author of the lyrics and the original source of the musical material.

¹⁵ The choral miniatures of the composers L. Beethoven, F. Mendelssohn, F. Schubert, R. Schumann, J. Brahms and E. Grieg are presented in the repertoire with their titles in Russian; accordingly, these creations were performed on verses written by Russian poets, and not in the original language.

The repertoire of the “Doina” Choral Chapel in the 1960s and 1970s also includes the collections of songs of various peoples, including nations that were friends with the Soviet Union: Korean, Spanish, Latvian choirs, Swedish, Polish, Ukrainian songs (including the anthem of the USSR), Africans songs, Italian choirs, reworks of Russian and Bulgarian folk songs, songs from Albania, Armenia, Estonia.

The repertoire list containing all the scores that are available for the artistic collective and can at any time be studied and performed by this collective presents the potential repertoire of the collective. From this repertoire, we highlight the number of creations already studied by the collective, the creations that are in progress, in the process of deciphering or rehearsal, as well as the creations that are performed within the concerts during the determined period - they make up the current repertoire of the collective.

The current repertoire of the chapel for the first twelve years under the direction of Veronica Garștea (1963-1975) is directly reflected by the concerts in which “Doina” participated or performed: local concerts within the State Philharmonic, performances in the regions and towns of the republic (on the field), *a cappella* choral concerts, concerts within the country and the entire Soviet Union, performances during tours abroad, tours through Soviet cities, planned concerts, concerts with program, performances during state holidays and socio-political events, participation in cultural weeks of MSSR, recordings, concerts of philharmonic artists.

According to the archive documents and the annual activity reports of the philharmonic collectives, the “Doina” Choral Chapel annually studied and prepared new programs for the most important events of the year, to serve the demands of the party. For example, in 1965, “Doina” learned a new program that was presented during the concert tour through the cities of Siberia and during the culture week of the SSR in Azerbaijan, which contained the following titles: *Still the heart beats* by V. Salmanov, *Lullaby* by W.A. Mozart, *Cântecul de roadă* by P. Șerban, *Fluieraș (The Flute)* by E. Coca and the Moldavian folk song *Good is cheese*.

The typical program for the concerts of the “Doina” Choral Chapel during the Cultural Weeks of the MSSR during the time interval studied is the following: a section of the so-called classical choral repertoire, composed of existing and newly learned creations, is performed: *Choral Concert No. 1* (lyrics by A. Busuioc) or *Choral Concert No. 2* (lyrics by A. Gujel) by G. Muzicescu were a must, two or three works of European composers, pieces signed by Soviet composers. Section two contained arrangements of Moldovan and Russian folk music and a folk music creation of the host nation.

For example, between May 14-22, 1966, together with the concert ensembles of the republic, “Doina” Choral Chapel participated in the concerts of the MSSR Culture Week in Riga, Latvia, where it also presented its own choral

concert. During this concert they performed *Lenin – peace, life and sun* by S. Lungu, *Choral Concert no. 1* by G. Muzicescu, both works composed to the lyrics of A. Busuioc¹⁶, *Night* by C. Gounod, *Melodie lină (Slow Melody)* by S. Rahmaninov, *Slomannâe sosnî* by E. Darzini, *Arde pământul (Burning earth)* by V. Zagorschi, on lyrics by V. Tulinic, W.A. Mozart – *Lullaby*, lyrics by A. Mașistov, *In the blue evening* by G. Sviridov to the lyrics of S. Yesenin S. Esenin and *Alleluia* from the oratorio *Messiah* by G.F.Haendel. In the second section of the concert, the reworks of Moldovan folk music were heard (*Hai, Ioane, Ioane* by M. Ursul, *Brâul amestecat* by N. Vlaiculescu, *Dor, dorule* and *Stăncuța* by G. Muzicescu, *Cucușorul meu* by S. Lungul, *Tudoraș* by V. Vilinciuc, *Iac-așa* by I. Niculescu, etc.), reworks of Russian folk songs and a Latvian folk song *Dance*¹⁷.

The concert tour in Riga was widely mentioned in the Soviet press. In particular, the stage performances of the “Doina” Choral Chapel were described.

Likewise, we find the description of the concert activity in the country, in the press of the time. For example, the newspaper *Soviet Moldova* from April 15th, 1966 mentions: “Stormy applause from the audience was provoked by the popular song *Lelișoare* from *Mîndrești*, the Ukrainian song *Susidko* and the *Anthem of the great city* by R. Glier under the baton of conductor Veronica Garștea. But the chapel would have been even more successful if it had interpreted works of classical choral music”.¹⁸

During the concerts with the participation of all the republican artistic ensembles, the “Doina” Choral Chapel would perform several vocal-symphonic creations (in collaboration with the symphony orchestras) or a short entertainment program, depending on the theme of the event and the number of spectators. For example, during the concert of art masters dedicated to the First Congress of Culture Workers from Moldova (February 20th, 1966), “Doina” performed *Zdravița*, a poem for choir and orchestra signed by S. Prokofiev, together with the choral ensemble of the State Moldavian Theater of Opera and Ballet¹⁹ and the Symphony Orchestra of the State Philharmonic.²⁰ At the end of the concert, A. Mulear's *Song About Moldova* was performed²¹. This piece can be found in the opening concert of the Culture and Art Days of the MSSR in

¹⁶ *Choral concert no. 1* is a religious work written on the words of the prophet David from Psalms 23, 150 and 142. The text of A. Busuioc is written for the adapted version of the Concert. In the potential repertoire of the chapel (1960) only p. 1 is mentioned - *Cine, cine. (Who, who)*.

¹⁷ ANRM, F. 3241, inv.1, d. 407, pp. 88-89.

¹⁸ ANRM, F. 3241, inv.1, d. 409, p. 38.

¹⁹ Choir master – Gheorghe Strezev (1924-1994).

²⁰ The poem for choir and orchestra *Zdravița* by S. Prokofiev – the only large-scale vocal-symphonic creation, introduced in the current repertoire of the chapel in 1966 (Ф. 3241, оп.1, д. 411, с. 34).

²¹ ANRM, F. 3241, inv.1, d. 407, pp. 113-114.

Moscow, on September 5th, 1967, as well as in other concerts of the Philharmonic groups for the entire period under study²². During the Concert dedicated to the 500th anniversary of the city of Chişinău (October 8th, 1966), Doina performed the *Ode to Chişinău* by the composer V. Rotaru, on lyrics by E. Crimerman²³. But in the concert dedicated to the meeting of farmers on December 28th, 1965, the chapel performed a small entertainment program from popular creations: *Ioane, Ioane*, the Ukrainian folk song *Susidko* and again *Brâul amestecat* by N. Vlaiculescu²⁴.

“Doina” Choral Chapel actively participated in cultural events dedicated to Moldovan folklore. For example, in the concert dedicated to Moldovan folk music on November 4th, 1966, “Doina” presented itself with the following creations from the current repertoire: *The song about the party* by G. Borş, on lyrics by E. Bucov, *Ce te legeni, codrule*, signed by P. Mezei, soloist – D. Boikis, *The Flute* by E. Coca, soloist – V. Mihnevici, Moldovan folk song *Plopilor îndepărtaţi* reworked by M. Copâtman, soloist – S. Tăbăcaru, *My wife is Moldovan* and *Iac-aşa* I. Niculescu²⁵.

It is worth noting that the number of creations performed by “Doina” choral chapel, as well as their content, was related not only to the theme and conditions of the events, but also to the performance possibilities of the collective and to the variety of creations included in the current repertoire by the artistic director, Veronica Garştea.

The capacity to complete the current repertoire of “Doina” during 1963-1975 is about 9-10 works per year, the large-scale musical creations being only 1 or 2 annually. For example, the cantata *Ioan Damaschin* by S. Taneev, which appeared in “Doina”’s repertoire in 1957, was prepared for the concert version only in 1968²⁶.

The most often performed by the ensemble and probably loved by the Moldovan audience are the following: *Choral concert no. 1* by G. Muzicescu; *The prisoner* and *Poidu li ia, vîidu li ia* by A. Grecianinov, *The earth is burning* by V. Zagorski, *Iac-aşa* by I. Niculescu. These choirs are present in every second stage performance of the chapel.

One of the collective's main activities during the period studied were a cappella concerts in the towns of the republic. To provide these internal tours and maintain the interest of the public, the chapel annually planned and prepared a new program, primarily consisting of popular creations in the arrangement of

²² ANRM, F. 3241, inv.1, d. 415, p. 18.

²³ ANRM, F. 3241, inv.1, d. 407, p. 188.

²⁴ *Idem*, p. 190.

²⁵ *Idem*, p.194.

²⁶ ANRM, F. 3241, inv.1, d. 437, p. 36.

composers S. Lobel, V. Zagorschi, Z. Tcaci, T. Zgureanu, E. Doga²⁷. For example, the register of concert activities for 1969 shows that concerts were planned for each month by localities and districts of the republic: January – 10 performances, including the cities Cimișlia, Comrat, Cotovsk, Orhei; February – Leova, Cotovsk (4 villages), Bălți; March – 6 towns from Drochia and Rîșcani; April – Drochia; May – Edineț, Dondușeni, Orhei, etc²⁸. The year 1970 was marked by the group's concert tours through the villages of the following districts Briceni, Dubăsari, Criuleni, Călărași, Orhei, Telenești, Cimișlia.²⁹

These data can be compared with the registers of concert activity of the philharmonic ensembles for each of the twenty-two regions of the republic.

The preliminary analysis of the current repertoire of the “Doina” Choral Chapel in the first twelve years of management by Veronica Garștea highlights gaps in the preparation and training of choir artists.

The staff statistics for the years 1963-1964 indicate the following ratio of choristers, relative to academic studies: out of the total number of 56 artists, only 10 graduated from higher education, 43 choristers with secondary education and 2 – primary education. Between 1963 and 1975, the number of artists with specialized studies gradually increased. In 1969, the total number of artists increased to 79 artists, out of which 15 – higher education, 59 – secondary education. The insufficient level of preparation and artistic performance of the chapel was an impediment in the process of interpreting classical choral and vocal-symphonic music according to professional interpretative requirements. This fact was mentioned by the director of the Philharmonic, A. Fedcu, who sent a message to the Ministry of Culture in 1970: “The ‘Doina’ Choral Chapel at the moment is a large and rather inflexible collective. In order to decipher and prepare the symphonic vocal repertoire, professionals with a high level of artistic qualification are needed”³⁰. Unrelated to this, in 1972 the chapel was requested to add the title “academic” to its name.

Conclusions

In conclusion, it is emphasized that during 1963-1975 the activity of the “Doina” Choral Chapel continued the process of supporting the ideas of Soviet culture promoted in the MSSR. The current repertoire performed on the stages of the republic and outside was based on two fundamental areas: popular creation and the work of Soviet composers. Classical compositional work, as well as vocal-symphonic and large-scale creations are not characteristic of the ensemble

²⁷ ANRM, F. 3241, inv.1, d. 437, p. 36.

²⁸ ANRM, F. 3241, inv.1, d. 446, pp. 8-13.

²⁹ ANRM, F. 3241, inv.1, d. 459, pp. 1-35.

³⁰ ANRM, F. 3241, inv.1, d. 453, pp. 10-11.

in the researched period. In this sense, the “Doina” Choral Chapel is assigned the mission of serving the ideological orientations in the cultural policy of the republic. The subsequent researches of the special depository demonstrate that after the restructuring of the philharmonic, starting from 1975, the way of documenting all the organizational processes regarding the activity of the concert ensembles also changed.

The contemporary period of activity of the “Doina” Academic Choir takes place in a democratic Republic of Moldova, under a pro-European orientation of political trends in the field of culture, as well as with new performance possibilities in the public space and the media. The implementation of modern interpretive practices is reflected in the activity of the current artistic director of the chapel and first conductor – Ilona Stepan, People's Artist.³¹ Under the direction of Ilona Stepan the choir is regularly supplemented with new members, especially with the students and graduates of the Choral Conducting department of AMTAP³²; an indispensable condition for admission to the ranks of choir artists is an academic degree in the field of musical art. The repertoire of the chapel is characterized by complex works that require high professional training, virtuoso mastery not only of the vocal apparatus, but also of the concepts of musical form, harmony, the implementation of an artistic image and, in general, culture in the broadest sense of the word. Today, the choral creation in “Doina”'s interpretation can be characterized as “intellectual interpretation”.

Bibliography

Кнсс о культуре, просвещении и науке (1963). Москва: Политиздат, 551 с.

Blîndu, Natalia (2022). *Classification problems of archival materials about the “Doina” choral chapel*. In: *Volume of the symposium culture, tradition, art in the intercultural space of Romanians from the diaspora*, no. 2.

Blîndu, Natalia (2023). *The decade of MSSR art and literature in Moscow in 1960: the success of the “Doina” Choral Chapel*. In: *Culture and art: research, valorization, promotion: Materials of the national scientific conference of doctoral students and supervisors*, December 9, 2022, Chişinău: AMTAP

Blîndu, Natalia (2022). *The activity of the “Doina” Song and Dance Ensemble in the years 1942-1944*. In: *The study of arts and culturology: history, theory, practice* no. 2 (43)

³¹ Ilona Stepan (n. 1964) – conductor, professor, Head of the “Conducting” department, AMTAP. Artistic director and principal conductor of the *Doina* Academic Choir Chapel since 2013. Conductor of the National Chamber Choir. Conductor of the AMTAP Student Choir. People's Artist (2020).

³² Academy of Music, Theater and Fine Arts from Chişinău.

Music Section

Ursu, Valentina (2013). *Politica culturală în RSS Moldovenească 1944-1956*
[*Cultural policy in the Moldavian SSR 1944-1956*], Chișinău, Pontos.

ANRM, F. 3241, inv. 1, d. 348, 378, 407, 415, 437

AOSPRM, F. 51, inv. 3, d. 23, inv. 5, d. 23

Play elements in approaching music education

Georgiana CIOBAN (MARIA)

PhD Student

The National University of Music Bucharest
ROMANIA¹

Abstract: Play, through all its forms and manifestations, triggers and stimulates a series of determining factors for the mental and spiritual health of a human being. Through the complexity and diversity of its actions, the game stimulates creativity, spontaneity, originality, freedom of expression. Through play, man, from the earliest age, develops attention, will and determination. Without any exaggeration, we can say that playing is the most effective way through which the human being enters a relationship with the surrounding world and explores the physical and emotional environment.

The choice of methods of play as a support in the teaching-learning-evaluation activity in music education classes favors communication between teacher and student, at the same time becoming a bridge to the perception of indirect beneficiaries: family and society.

Music is one of the most abstract fields of knowledge. It can either irresistibly attract or, on the contrary, alienate the listener. The music teacher will guide the student by challenging them to think, feel, filter the information, combine it with his own vision and transform it - all in a pleasant, approachable and age- and understanding-appropriate setting. All it takes is a little imagination and lots and lots of patience.

Keywords: game, education, music, good practice

1. Introduction

Contemporary society is currently facing problems related to a lack of cultural openness, on all levels, to the aesthetic and formative values of art. The newer generations no longer have the patience and interest to gain valuable knowledge and experiences, they no longer have a horizon towards which they aim, but want to obtain everything instantly, even if satisfactions are short-lived. This phenomenon is increasingly stimulated by the digital society we live in. Therefore, let's use the positive elements of this

¹ www.unmb.ro

transformation of mentality and approach the students with another type of learning, an alternative method to the classic, rigid type of education.

Childhood is a stage of life that we remember with great fondness and nostalgia. Most of the time memories are incomplete, unclear, but what remains is a state of well-being which later accompanies us throughout life. We long for it, and maybe that's why we're happy when we can relive it, even if just through the eyes of our children and grandchildren. We can explain this attraction starting from the physical and material elements, to the state of mental comfort, a consequence of the naivety and joy specific to children, the lack of worries and responsibilities. Even if not all children have a happy childhood, due to various problems, they all have something in common: they PLAY. From the earliest stages of life, with the help of play, children will accumulate information, knowledge, skills – so they will evolve – without being constrained by any educational system.

2. But what is PLAY? We are dealing here with three dimensions:

➤ PLAY is an activity specific to children, without a defined educational goal, and it is spontaneous, without constraints. Being present at most times in early childhood, it provides the young child with the means to discover the surrounding world and is extremely valuable for the child's development.

➤ The GAME is an organized activity, with rules. Unlike play, the game is specific to all ages, from preschool to old age. Games develop the spirit of competition and fair play, precisely because many times they can also fulfill an educational role, having a well-defined purpose and objectives.

➤ ROLE PLAYING offers participants the opportunity to get into the skin of a character, whether real or imaginary, allows analyzing a situation from different perspectives and blurs the boundaries between possible and impossible, due to the fact that we can recreate almost any space, situation or emotion.

Any of the three types above creates a state of well-being and promotes interaction, having a meaningful social role. Both play and games, through all their forms and manifestations, trigger and stimulate a series of determining factors for the mental and spiritual health of the human being. Through the complexity and diversity of its actions, playing stimulates creativity, spontaneity, originality, freedom of expression, attention, willpower and determination. Without any exaggeration, we can say that play is the most effective way through which the human being enters into a relationship with the surrounding world, exploring the physical and emotional environment.

The choice of play methods, as a support in the teaching-learning-evaluation activity within music education classes, favors communication between teacher and student, becoming at the same time a bridge to the perception of indirect beneficiaries: family and society.

In mainstream education, music education is one of the “page two of the catalogue” type subjects. Maybe that's why it is regarded as a class of “relaxation”, it is “unessential”. If this irritates us, it is sometimes understandable. But it also gives us the reason to look for methods and means to offer children as much as possible in a pleasant way, so that learning takes place with minimum effort, but at the same time it is thorough. By resorting to play methods in traditional education, we will certainly attract children to the side of music, and the knowledge and skills acquired will be much more valuable in the long run.

In the following pages, I will present a few proposals for playful activities that I have experienced in various learning situations.

3. I would like to be...

The students sit in a circle. They will assign themselves a character by saying its name accompanied by an adjective and a suggestive movement: “I would like to be... because I am...”. The student on the right will repeat the name, adjective and movement of the one before him, adding their own character, accompanied by the adjective and movement: “You are ... because you are ..., and I would like to be ... because I am...”.

The game continues clockwise, with students repeating everything they have heard so far. The game ends with the first student, who will have to repeat all the statements.

If we are working with few elements (such as the 7 musical notes, for example), they can be repeated but the adjectives and movements that accompany them must differ. It is preferable that the motivation “because” is intrinsically linked to the musical notion in question.

Examples:

First student: “I'd like to be note mi grade because I'm small (squats)”

The second student: “You're note mi because you're small, (squats down) and I'm note ti because I'm self-confident (beats their fists against their chest)” etc.

or:

“I'd like to be the note mi because I'm on the first line of the staff”/“because I'm the third step in the C major scale”/“because I'm part of the C-E-G arpeggio” (in this case the movement can be replaced by exemplification – intonation of the note/ scale/ arpeggio)

It is an excellent attention and memory game involving both the auditory and visual memory. Even though the students will be scared at first thinking they will not be able to remember so many names, adjectives and movements, they will be surprised to see how well they will do by watching the game unfold. They will notice that, by associating the statements with the movements and expression of the one who appropriated the character/item, they will be able to reproduce them all fairly easily. It can be very helpful if the adjective used starts with the same letter or syllable as the chosen term (as in the example above).

We can use this game both in moments of knowledge fixation, as well as in evaluation. Children will be careful to accurately reproduce the statements and gestures of their colleagues, thus avoiding the nervousness of being evaluated and graded, and repetition and associations support the memory exercise. At the same time, they have to be creative, so that their performance is unique.

4. Symphony of emotion

Originally, this game encourages the externalization of a state or an emotion: fatigue, joy, fear, etc. A group of 5 students line up in front of the others and mimic that state/emotion according to the teacher's instructions: minimum, moderate, maximum. Another option is for the participants to express this emotion gradually, from minimum to maximum, each of them miming a little extra, so that we get the whole palette of intensities. We can increase the number of participants up to 10, thereby forcing participants to achieve finer “tuning” in the dosage of expressing emotion.

Both as protagonists and as audience, students will apply what they have learned “on paper”, visualize and interpret the concepts taught.

It is an excellent game to teach specific elements of music education:

- the height of the sounds;
- durations or breaks;
- musical nuances;
- tempo;
- periods of music history, etc.

Both as performers or part of the audience, students will apply what they have learned

“pen on paper”, they will visualize and interpret the concepts taught.

5. Are you an artist?

This is a board game, which I created together with a class of 6th graders. The game board has boxes where you have to move forward until you reach the finish line. In class, students will be divided into 3 or 4 teams, each with a leader - the conductor. In addition to the game board, we will

use flashcards on which various musical tasks are described. In turn, each conductor rolls the dice, draws a card, and in order to advance as many squares on the game board as the dice show, the team will have to solve the task on the card.

Examples of tasks:

- musical notes on the staff: the team must recognize and interpret that sound;
- names of musical notes: one or more team members must position themselves correctly on a staff drawn with chalk on the floor;
- musical durations or breaks: at the conductor's instructions, the team will position themselves in such a way as to achieve the respective form;
- nuances or tempo elements: the team will perform a simple song, according to indications.

We can form the flashcard deck however we want, with elements from just one learning unit or as a general review. However, the route is sprinkled with a few bonuses or traps:

- the major scale helps you climb the board faster;
- the flat takes you down... one space;
- if you get to the Philharmonic, you will attend a concert – sit for two turns;
- you get lost in the Forest of Dissonances – go back 3 spaces etc.





The teacher can use one game board for all classes, but different flashcards for each level, or challenge the students to make several flashcards (each class can have its own game), with new designs and challenges, thus stimulating the spirit of competition between classes.

6. Wanna play against the girls?

The teacher prepares a PowerPoint material on a certain topic, which will include questions structured into four categories plus a “surprise” category. Each question will be hidden behind a score, from 100 to 500 points depending on the difficulty. The participants will answer alternately, one girl and one boy, only once for each student, until the questions are exhausted. If there are more questions than participants, those from the beginning will be able to answer once more. Participants can choose the category of the question, but in the order of their scores. Those who gain most points win. We can give teams the opportunity to choose any question, regardless of score.

This game involves teamwork, choosing a strategy, using knowledge - for the teacher it is an excellent way to check to what extent the class has assimilated what was he/she has taught. Students will be encouraged to cooperate to achieve the best result. Even the less prepared, rather shy students will be driven to participate to help their team win.

Muzica religioasă	Muzica laică (I)	Muzica laică (II)	Renașterea	?
<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>
<u>200</u>	<u>200</u>	<u>200</u>	<u>200</u>	<u>200</u>
<u>300</u>	<u>300</u>	<u>300</u>	<u>300</u>	<u>300</u>
<u>400</u>	<u>400</u>	<u>400</u>	<u>400</u>	<u>400</u>
<u>500</u>	<u>500</u>	<u>500</u>	<u>500</u>	<u>500</u>

These are just a few examples of fun activities that we can use in class work. The advantages are numerous, because students will be eager to play instead of learning (because that's how they will perceive them), and we will be able to pursue our goal: to teach, consolidate or evaluate.

Of course, there are also drawbacks to this type of approach. Activities based on playful methods are chronophagous, often consuming more time than anticipated. At the same time, the evaluation based on this type of activities, even if it is very attractive for students, is not objective, and the results are difficult to quantify by assigning marks or qualifications.

7. Conclusions

Music is one of the most abstract fields of knowledge. It can irresistibly attract or, on the contrary, alienate the listener. With the help of play elements, the music teacher will guide the students, challenging them to think, feel, filter the information, combine it with their own vision and transform it - all in a pleasant setting, close and appropriate to the age and understanding level. All it takes is a little imagination and lots and lots of patience.

Bibliography

****Ghid de bune practici – Jocuri și activități extracurriculare pentru ciclul preșcolar, ciclul primar și gimnazial* (2021) [Guide of Best practices – Games and extracurricular activities for preschool, primary and secondary school], Editura Școala Vremii, Arad

Music Section

- Balaș, Evelina/ Roman, Alina/ Rad, Dana (eds.) (2023). *Students' well-being and teaching-learning efficiency during and post-pandemic period*, Peter Lang Group AG, Lausanne
- Burns, George W (2011). *101 povești vindecătoare pentru copii și adolescenți* [101 healing stories for children and adolescents], Editura Trei, București
- Circa-Chirilă, Camelia/ Brânzeu, Nicolae Mihai/ Lovas, Zoltan (coord.) (2016). *Strategii ludice și dramatice în procesul instructiv-educativ* [Ludic and dramatic strategies in the instructive-educational process], Editura Școala Vremii, Arad
- Vasile, Vasile (2004). *Metodica educației muzicale* [Methodology of musical education], Editura Muzicală, București

Artificial intelligence in music education

Elena MARINOVA

PhD Student

Doctoral School of Humanities and Arts, Oradea University
ROMANIA¹

Abstract: In recent years, the fast-paced progress of new technologies on a global scale demonstrates a strong impact with significant results in many fields, from education, medicine, entrepreneurship, psychology and arts to the daily organization of social interactions. Overall, artificial intelligence refers to systems that exhibit intelligent behaviors by analyzing their environment and take action - with a certain degree of autonomy - to achieve specific goals. Today, artificial intelligence presents opportunities to complement and supplement human intelligence. The field is interdisciplinary, involving substantial contributions from other related sciences: music education, cognitive psychology, theatre and performing arts, anthropology, philosophy, linguistics, mathematics, computer science. Creativity is essentially a complex process, a complex mental activity that ends in creating a certain good, it is that mental capacity to obtain the new in different forms: theoretical, scientific, technical, social; to develop original ways and solutions to solve problems and to express them in original personal forms. Modern teaching strategies increasingly encourage the formation and development of innovative intellectual skills and attitudes of students. Thus, the use of artificial intelligence applications in music education classes becomes a necessity for expressing artistic ideas, appreciating musical works and operating with elements of musical language. Under the influence of new perspectives in the teaching-learning-evaluation process, teaching staff are encouraged to use intelligent virtual platforms and multimedia systems. In this sense, the artificial intelligence applications used provide an attractive and flexible framework suitable for the transition into the digital age.

1. Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a fundamental element of making digital education work at scale. The idea that we live in a world of technology has already become normality. The school space, however, is sometimes reluctant to take on the changes in technology. The rapid evolution of new technologies generates significant changes at all levels of today's society, implicitly determining the education system to integrate these technologies as efficiently as possible in the teaching-learning-evaluation process. Based on this premise, the development of new learning theories must reflect

¹ marinova_elena88@yahoo.com, <https://www.uoradea.ro/Universitatea+din+Oradea>.

the needs found at the level of society, in the time frame in which they are formulated. In the same sense, at the level of educational practice, along with the adaptation of classical theories of learning, teachers will have the responsibility of exploring contemporary concepts and strategic models, formulated in accordance with the educational requirements of the 21st century and the profile of the current student.²

The computer is nowadays an instrument that offers endless possibilities for exploring the art of sound. Thus, it must become a basic component in the musical education of children in general and vocational education units. The capitalization of new technologies is a desideratum of a competitive music education. However, the poor endowment of schools with devices that students use in their daily lives leads to a threat to their interest in music education classes. Lately, educational theories revolve around the educated more than around the educational process. The main function that education fulfills is contextually detected, combining all the functions listed and treated by pedagogy and aims at two basic coordinates, absolutely necessary for the current context: ensuring a repository of information to use in everyday life and achieving a state of balance with the self and with the objective world. The complexity of education has generated a series of approaches to it in relation to other sciences studying education, especially sociology and psychology.³

2. Artificial intelligence and modern challenges in education

The term “artificial intelligence” is used to describe devices that mimic the cognitive functions that people associate with the human mind, such as learning and problem solving. Capabilities of modern applications generally classified as AI include successful understanding of human speech, competition in strategic game systems such as chess, autonomously operating machines, intelligent routing in content delivery networks, and military simulations. Artificial intelligence can be classified into three different types of systems⁴:

- analytical artificial intelligence;
- human-inspired artificial intelligence;
- humanized artificial intelligence.

Analytical AI has only features compatible with cognitive intelligence: generating a cognitive representation of the world and using learning based on past experience to reason about future decisions. Artificial intelligence inspired by human capabilities and skills has elements of cognitive and emotional intelligence: in addition to cognitive elements, it understands people's emotions and takes them into account in

² Ciprian Ceobanu, Constantin Cucoș, Olimpius Istrate, Ion-Ovidiu Pânișoară (2022), *Educația Digitală* [Digital Education], Polirom, Iași, p. 188.

³ Loredana Muntean (2013), *Noi tehnologii în educația muzicală* [New technologies in music education], Editura Media Musica, Cluj-Napoca.

⁴ Ala Gasnaș, Angela Globa (2023), *Rolul inteligenței artificiale în educație* [Sciences of Education] 32.2, pp. 46-57.

making subsequent decisions. Humanized artificial intelligence shows the characteristics of all kinds of competencies: cognitive, emotional and social intelligence, it is capable of self-awareness, and is self-aware in interactions with others.

Today's teachers face an ever-changing horizon of expectations. To maintain a high standard of teaching, they need a complex set of professional skills, including the ability to adapt to various learning environments, including online learning. The teaching process is no longer limited to what happens in the classroom, through the classic relationship between teacher and student. Increasingly, this connection is mediated by the new information and communication technologies, which have an enormous potential, still insufficiently explored, to improve education. Information and communication technology offers a wide range of opportunities for both teachers and students to enrich their teaching and learning experiences, through virtual environments that support not only the delivery, but also the exploitation and application of knowledge.⁵

Artificial intelligence – the ability of intelligent systems to perform creative functions that were traditionally performed by humans. The notion of artificial intelligence is an interdisciplinary notion and therefore has several meanings. It is particularly highlighted by computer scientists, but it is also emphasized by its contribution to automation and robotization in various human activities, including educational activity⁶.

3. Music education and the use of new computer applications

The presence of technology in music education activities is not a recent phenomenon. Inevitably, this has been part of music education since the first possibilities of recording and playing music used on a large scale and in professional and semi-professional musical environments, starting with the gramophone and reaching the computer. The computer is revolutionizing not only music in general, but also music education. Musical software found in the professional environment can be imported and adapted to the level of music education activities, by using their simplified versions. Thus, students have access to creation on the computer even if their level of musical writing-reading, instrumental interpretation or musical theory is sometimes low.

The issue of teaching means for the field of music education must be analyzed from at least two different points of view: of all the materials, devices and apparatus with the help of which the transmission and assimilation of didactic information, the

⁵ Ion Albușescu, Horațiu Catalano (2021), *e-Didactica. Procesul de instruire în mediul online* [The training process in the online environment], Editura Didactica, București, pp. 43-44.

⁶ Căslav Ciobanu, Valeriu Capsăzu (2020), *Inteligența artificială – o nouă etapă în dezvoltare*, în „Problemele socioeconomice ale Republicii Moldova: reflecții, sugestii” [*Artificial intelligence – a new stage in development*, in “Socioeconomic problems of the Republic of Moldova: reflections, suggestions”], Vol. 5, pp. 37-47.

recording and evaluation of the results obtained, as well as the specific methods of music education are carried out. The novelty element is the use of ICT with all the multimedia advantages offered. A systematization, a short synthesis of these aspects is necessary. The multimedia system represents the ability of a system to communicate information through several presentation media simultaneously, such as: text, graphics, photos, animation, sound, video clips. Also, multimedia implies the notion of interactivity: the user not being a simple spectator but an active participant with the possibility to modify the course of the application according to desire and possibilities. However, there are didactic processes within music education classes that cannot use the respective applications (playing an instrument or vocal singing), but there is a software for smart devices called Real Piano, which will make students understand the piano technique, followed by individual practice on the classical instrument.

Multimedia, AI-based applications recommended for music education

1. Educational sites: websites, weblogs, portals, forums.

Examples

- <http://www.emusictheory.com/>
 - <https://musiclab.chromeexperiments.com/Experiments>
 - <https://insidetheorchestra.org/musical-games/>
 - <https://chat.openai.com/>
2. Aiva. <https://www.aiva.ai/>

Aiva is an artificial intelligence system that enables music composition. It can be used to create backing tracks or even generate compositions based on certain criteria. Aiva can be integrated into music creation activities within music education classes.

3. Amper music <https://aigems.net/site/amper>

Amper Music uses AI to create music based on the user's preferences and needs. This app can be used in an educational context to explore different musical styles and compositional techniques.

These sites and platforms provide information, notions and concepts from the perspective of music education, the possibility of learning to play an instrument such as a piano, composing songs, rhythmic exercises, recognizing musical instruments.

Today, music technologies provide teachers with extremely useful tools in carrying out educational processes and in keeping music on the list of subjects of interest to students. Music education is rooted in hands-on activities, and digital technology provides tools for delivering experiential education centered on student development and training in the classroom. The understanding of music and the formation of musical skills depend in part on the communication and appropriation of musical contents, without excluding the transmission of information regarding the context that generated the studied creations. Music plays an important role in: training and employment, supporting volunteers and participants in personal development;

improving the image of an area; social cohesion and active citizenship; awareness of the cultural identity by the locals; improving the quality of people's lives through individual and collective creativity.

Regarding the aspect of using digital applications as a means of learning music, it is necessary that within musical activities, teachers make efforts to achieve a harmonious balance between musical activities, theoretical and technological concepts, through the appropriate and correct application of components, with the aim of stimulating the process of musical creation.

The use of new technologies in music education and the arts offers us many benefits, but there are also threats or challenges associated with this development. In this regard, we have developed a Swot Analysis to more clearly highlight the benefits and threats regarding the frequent use of digital media.

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Creative, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary learning; ➤ Ensuring continuous and effective feedback; ➤ Developing an independent team-work style; ➤ Developing one's imagination; ➤ Integration of students with deficiencies in the educational process; 	<p>Shortcomings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of up-to-date coordination of music education school textbooks with the contemporary possibilities offered; ➤ Technical support sometimes creates problems.
<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The excessive use of multimedia applications may harm one's health; ➤ Inequality in access to technology ➤ The occurrence of additional costs that cannot be borne. ➤ Cyber security. ➤ Financial resources needed for the purchase of licenses. ➤ Excessive dependence on technology. 	<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Diversification and completion of educational software education in music education; ➤ Upgrading teaching support for music education; ➤ Continuous training of music education teachers. ➤ Teachers have a wide range of digital tools at their disposal to explore new ways of creative artistic expression.

Table 1 The use of AI applications within music education classes – SWOT analysis

4. Conclusions

Applications based on artificial intelligence have become an integral part of our lives, proving that technology is establishing itself as an essential element in the pre-university education system. Due to advances in artificial intelligence, there are now a growing number of educational applications based on artificial intelligence. A well-prepared teacher for the present and future should demonstrate competences both in the scientific field of music education and in the psycho-pedagogical fields, to which transversal competences are added, in order to implement a possible performance measurement within the education system. Music education is a field organically interconnected with the different types of intelligence, musical intelligence being highlighted, with innovative learning, due to the development of creative capacities developed through music, and, last but not least, it favors cross-curricular links with several school subjects⁷. The use of new applications based on artificial intelligence in music education increases the efficiency of learning and contributes to the formation of a new vision and artistic expression.

Bibliography

- Albulescu, Ion, Horațiu Catalano (2021). *e-Didactica. Procesul de instruire în mediul online*, [The training process in the online environment], Editura Didactica, București
- Ceobanu, Ciprian, Constantin Cucoș (2022). *Olimpius Istrate, Ion-Ovidiu Pânișoară, Educația Digitală* [Digital education], Polirom, Iași
- Ciobanu, Ceslav, Valeriu Capsîzu (2020). *Inteligența artificială–o nouă etapă în dezvoltare*, în „Problemele socioeconomice ale Republicii Moldova: reflecții, sugestii” [Artificial intelligence – a new stage in development, in “Socioeconomic problems of the Republic of Moldova: reflections, suggestions”], Vol. 5
- Gasnaș Ala, Angela Globa (2023). *Rolul inteligenței artificiale în educație*, Acta et commentationes [The role of artificial intelligence in education, Acta et commentationes] Education Sciences, 32.2
- Muntean, Loredana (2013). *Noi tehnologii în educația muzicală* [New technologies in music education], Editura Media Musica , Cluj-Napoca
- Pașca, Eugenia Maria (2014). *Creație și creativitate muzicală mediată de IT*, Tehnologii Informatice și de Comunicație în Domeniul Muzical [Musical creation and creativity mediated by IT, Information and Communication Technologies in Music] 5.2
- Pop Sarb, Diana (2017). *Music and technology- functional dualism for musical education*, Enchanted learning- Musical instruments, Information and communication technologies in the musical field, 8.2

⁷ Diana Pop Sarb (2017), *Music and technology- functional dualism for musical education*, Enchanted learning- Musical instruments, Information and communication technologies in the musical field, 8.2, pp. 29-42.

A Pentadimensional Analysis of the Theme “The Man I Love” by George Gershwin

Andrei TASE

PhD Student

Western University, Timișoara

ROMANIA¹

Abstract: *Objective.* Considered by American musicologist David Schiff as “seminal” to Rhapsody in Blue, the song The Man I Love is emblematic of George Gershwin's creation. The Man I Love has benefited from exceptional performances, such as Ella Fitzgerald's, accompanied by the symphony orchestra, or the composer's rubato piano version. Although the work has been carefully analyzed² so far, the aim of our research is to explore new dimensions through musicological analysis. This article is part of our doctoral approach.

Method. The analysis of this work with the structure of AABA includes five working methods. The first two methods are instrumental reductions, the third correlates the trison with the triangle formed on the guitar fretboard by joining the finger contact points, the next correlates the trison with the triangle in the Paleoriemanian tonal network, and the last is based on the Neo-Riemannian method with third-party progressions, alternating a major triad with a minor one on the pattern of the London double-decker bus.

The *results* of our research are shown in the attached figures 1-7.

Conclusion. The Neo-Riemannian transformational theory is, to our best knowledge, still unused in our country, so it may be of particular interest as the first translation into Romanian. We hope that our work can provide a positive impact on contemporary analytical discourse on Gershwinian work.

Keywords: reductions, triangles, tonal grid, tonal bus.

1. Introduction

In recent decades, Neo-Riemannian theory has become very popular in U.S. music academies, especially within PhD studies. Like formal music theory, it helps the performer assimilate sound material faster and deeper. These reasons led me to use modern theoretical concepts in my modest doctoral project.

¹ andrei.tase96@e-uvt.ro, <https://www.uvt.ro/>

² David Schiff (2009), *Gershwin – Rhapsody in Blue*, Cambridge University Press, New York, retrieved from www.cambridge.org.

A brief insight into Gershwin's work reveals that the composer's work has been extensively researched, particularly by musicologists David Schiff, Steven E. Gilbert, and Ryan Raul Bañagale. Deepening this research, I am trying to apply and even adapt the concepts presented there.

2. Formal analysis

The structure of *The Man I Love* is that of a **tetrapartite lied** with repetition due to *voltas* one and two, as follows:

A
A1
B
A

(a 4 m.) (a1 4m.)
(av 4 m.) (a1v 4 m.)
(b 4 m.) (b1 4 m.)
(a 4 m.) (a cad. 4 m.)

Fig. 1 Structure of the work

to which is added an introduction of four measures with a harmonic character that has the role of creating the atmosphere and preparing, starting from the sixth step, C-Eb-Gol, which reminds of the minor dominant, the chord of the first step, Eb.

In the introduction, along with the chords in values of fourths, the values of octaves with dots followed by sixteenths are foreshadowed, which will constitute, by replacing the first octave with a dot, with a pause (thus foreshadowing an anacrustic character) the metro-rhythmic cell of a measure in dialogue with itself but in a dynamic version (second measure), which will be the basis of the entire melodic discourse - the rhythm of the discant. We notice that, in the second measure, the rhythmic formula is varied by omission, the fourth being replaced by two, for reasons of motivic construction that require a quasi-conclusive character at the level of a two-measure micro-phrase, which constitutes a rhythmic-melodic cell that will repeat itself continuously, based on the second and third oscillation.³



³ George Gershwin (1982), *The Man I Love*, Warner-Bros. Music Corp Edizioni Musicali Radio Record, Milano, Italy, pp. 29-30.



Fig. 2 G. Gershwin, *The Man I Love*, part A, reduction for the piano, mm. 1-8.

In figure 2, which illustrates our piano reduction, we can also note that in the third measure the dynamism is done by adding a group of sixteenths to the alto voice, on beat four.

3. Pentadimensional analysis

The first analytical dimension of the song *The Man I Love* is the piano reduction of the original score⁴, presented in figure 2. The piano reduction is a technically, rhythmically and harmonically simplified study version, which has the advantage of being able to be performed even by amateur musicians, in music therapy programs, for example.

To achieve the reduction of the score, ciphers for the harmonies are needed. The notation % means the repetition of the previous chord in the same measure, ø means half-diminished chord, and the Δ sign means major chord with a major seventh. In figure 3, the reduction with ciphers for harmonies is done for the piano score in figure 2.

Mib % / Mibm % / Sibm/Reb % / Do⁷ %

Fa^ø % / Sib % / Mib Lab^Δ / Solm Sib^{7,9}

Fig. 3 G. Gershwin, *The Man I Love*, part A1, harmonic cipher.

If for the piano reduction we chose the first A of the piece, for the guitar reduction we decided to analyze the third A, in order to highlight a technical artifice specific to the instrument, and create a dynamic scordatura by lowering the sixth string by a semitone in the ninth measure. Here is what the harmonic guitar cipher looks like:

**Mib % / Mibm % / Sibm/Reb % / Do⁷ % Fa^ø % / Sib % / Mib^ΔLab^Δ /
Solm Sib^{7,9}/Mib Sib⁷/Fa / M̃i Mib**

Fig. 4 G. Gershwin, *The Man I Love*, part A3, harmonic cipher.

⁴ George Gershwin, *The Man I Love*, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-30.

So, the second dimension is the reduction for the guitar, a more difficult approach than for the piano because, in a maximum number of six simultaneously intoned sounds, relevant parts of the melodic and bass lines, respectively, must be integrated with the harmonic texture.



Fig. 5 G. Gershwin, *The Man I Love*, part A3, version for guitar, mm. 1-9

The third dimension follows, which consists in applying the Pythagorean principle of transforming the intoned trisons on the guitar into triangles formed on the guitar fretboard by joining the points of contact of the fingers with the instrument. Thus, points C and C' represent the note C; E and E' correspond to the note Mi; and G and G' to Sol (Fig. 6)⁵.

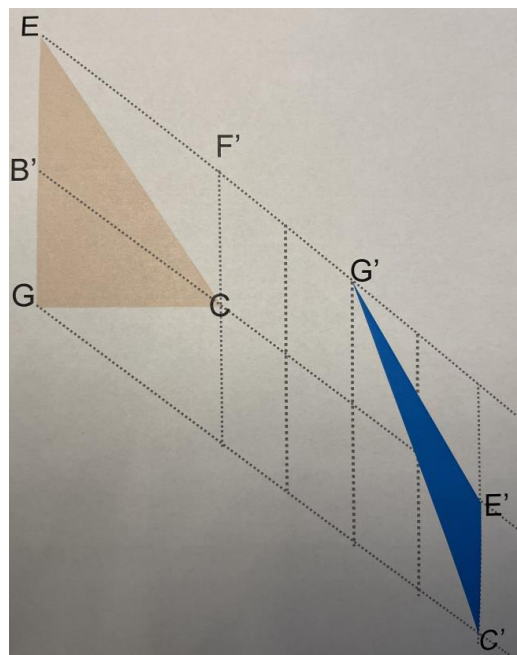


Fig. 6 Construction principle of the triangles corresponding to triads on the guitar fingerboard

⁵ The complete correspondence is: C = Do, D = Re, E = Mi, F = Fa; G = Sol; A = La; B = Si.

Applying this concept to the theme of *The Man I Love* is illustrated in figure 7. It is worth mentioning that we used guitar reduction as a benchmark, because it has only one fret.

We notice that in the first measure we have the triad E-flat major to which corresponds, on the guitar fingerboard, the triangle formed by Sol on the first string, E-flat on the second string and B-flat on the third string. In the second measure, Sol is replaced by G flat and the triad becomes E-flat minor, etc.

The figure illustrates the construction of triangles on the guitar fingerboard corresponding to the trisons for part A of the theme *The Man I Love*. It consists of two main sections, each showing musical notation and corresponding guitar fingerboard diagrams.

Top Section:

- Measure 1:** Musical notation shows a triad of Sol (1st string), E-flat (2nd string), and B-flat (3rd string). The guitar fingerboard diagram shows a triangle with vertices at 1st string (Sol), 2nd string (E-flat), and 3rd string (B-flat).
- Measure 2:** Musical notation shows a triad of Solb (1st string), E-flat (2nd string), and Sib (3rd string). The guitar fingerboard diagram shows a triangle with vertices at 1st string (Solb), 2nd string (E-flat), and 3rd string (Sib).
- Measure 3:** Musical notation shows a triad of Fa (1st string), E-flat (2nd string), and Reb (3rd string). The guitar fingerboard diagram shows a triangle with vertices at 1st string (Fa), 2nd string (E-flat), and 3rd string (Reb).
- Measure 4:** Musical notation shows a triad of Sib (1st string), E-flat (2nd string), and Sib (3rd string). The guitar fingerboard diagram shows a triangle with vertices at 1st string (Sib), 2nd string (E-flat), and 3rd string (Sib).
- Measure 5:** Musical notation shows a triad of Mi (1st string), Do (2nd string), and Sib (3rd string). The guitar fingerboard diagram shows a triangle with vertices at 1st string (Mi), 2nd string (Do), and 3rd string (Sib).

Bottom Section:

- Measure 6:** Musical notation shows a triad of Fa (1st string), Re (2nd string), and Lab (3rd string). The guitar fingerboard diagram shows a triangle with vertices at 1st string (Fa), 2nd string (Re), and 3rd string (Lab).
- Measure 7:** Musical notation shows a triad of Sol (1st string), Mib (2nd string), and Sib (3rd string). The guitar fingerboard diagram shows a triangle with vertices at 1st string (Sol), 2nd string (Mib), and 3rd string (Sib).
- Measure 8:** Musical notation shows a triad of Lab (1st string), Mib (2nd string), and Do (3rd string). The guitar fingerboard diagram shows a triangle with vertices at 1st string (Lab), 2nd string (Mib), and 3rd string (Do).
- Measure 9:** Musical notation shows a triad of Sol (1st string), Re (2nd string), and Sib (3rd string). The guitar fingerboard diagram shows a triangle with vertices at 1st string (Sol), 2nd string (Re), and 3rd string (Sib).
- Measure 10:** Musical notation shows a triad of Fa (1st string), Re (2nd string), and Sol (3rd string). The guitar fingerboard diagram shows a triangle with vertices at 1st string (Fa), 2nd string (Re), and 3rd string (Sol).

Fig. 7 Construction of the triangles corresponding to the trisons for part A of the theme *The Man I Love* on the guitar fingerboard

The fourth dimension consists of constructing tonal vectors on the texture of triangles in the Riemannian tonal lattice.⁶ For *The Man I Love*, we build the triangle Mib – Sol – Sib which we indicate with 1, then the triangle Mib – Solb – Sib which we indicate with 2 and so on. Then we draw the tonal vector from triangle 1 to triangle 2 and so on. We note that measures 7 and 8 each have two triads, so we used the notations 7a, 7b and 8a and 8b respectively.

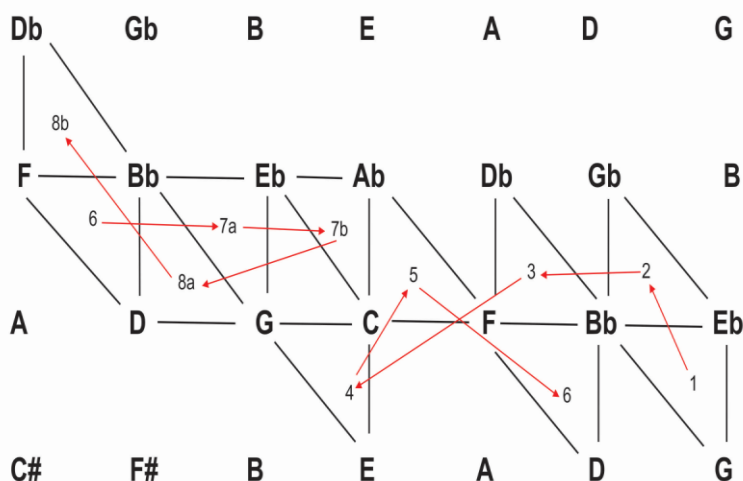


Fig. 8 Grid drawn tonal vectors for the track *The Man I Love*⁷

The last dimension is Nicholas Meeùs' *Omnibus* analysis which consists of constructing vectors on a graph with overlapping horizontal lines representing alternate major and minor chords at third intervals. Just as the Riemann tonal lattice can be transposed from the plane onto the sphere or the torus, the Meeùs omnibus can also be transposed onto a cylinder.

Figure 9 shows the tonal vectors and the relationships between the points: P means the parallel triad, R means the relative triad, and L the leading tone triad⁸. For the second measure of *The Man I Love* theme, I initially chose the enharmonic triad of E flat minor, namely D sharp minor, as it is closer to the origin of the chart, 11 positions from C major.

In the next step, we built a number of positions in the lower part and removed unnecessary positions in the upper part. We thus arrived at the construction in figure 10, which has two advantages: it is more compact and does not use enharmonicity.

⁶ *Tonnetz* in German, in the original.

⁷ Complete correspondence is: C = Do, D = Re, E = Mi, F = Fa; G = Sol; A = La; B = Si.

⁸ *Leading tone* in the original.

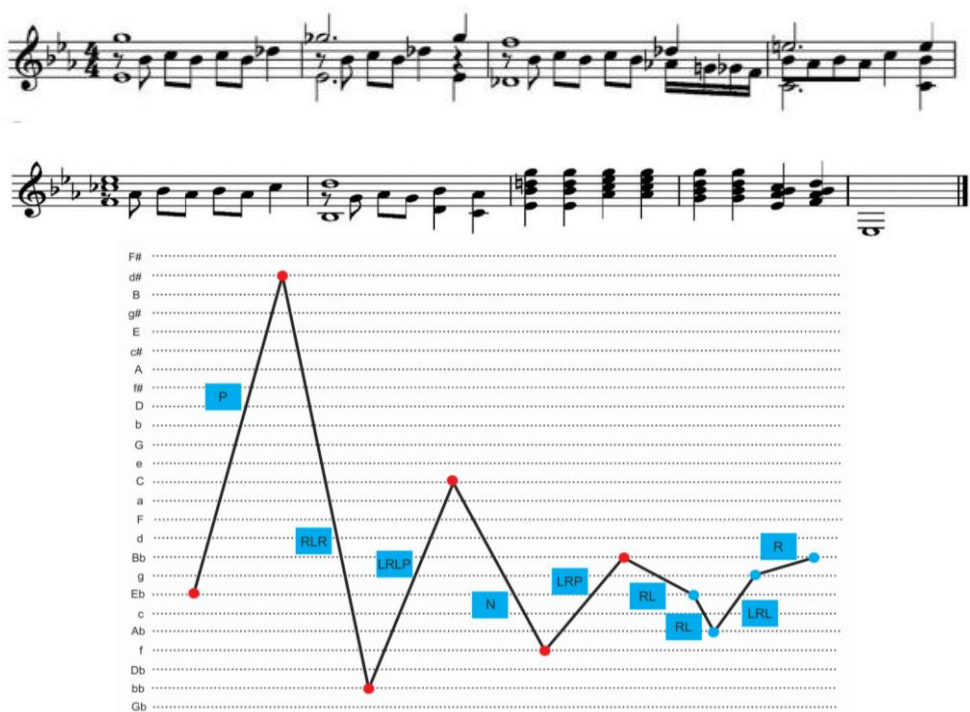


Fig. 9 Omnibus analysis of *The Man I Love*, version 1

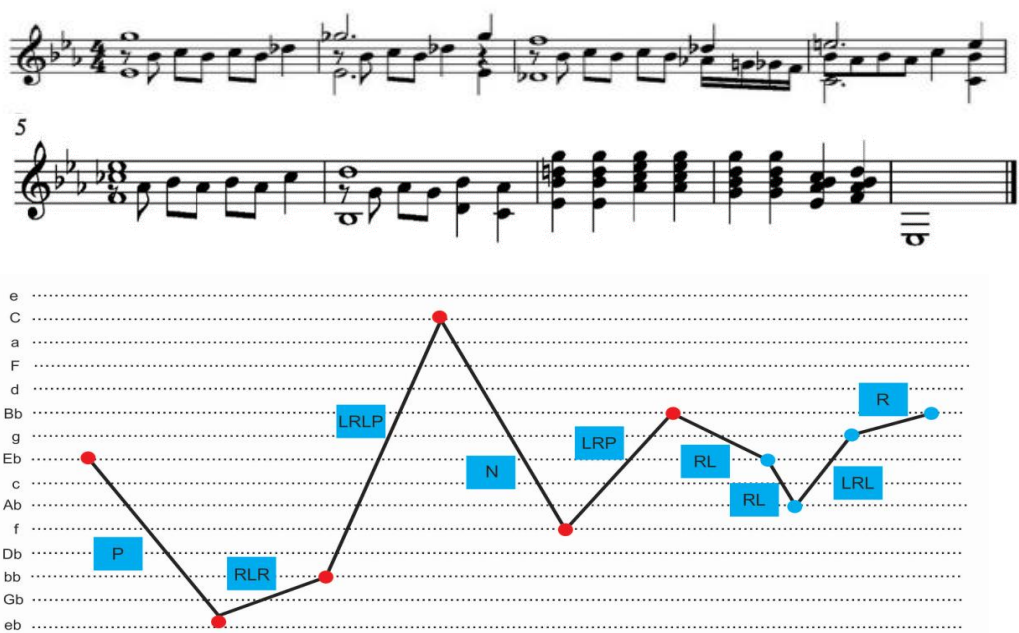


Fig. 10 Omnibus analysis of *The Man I Love*, version 2

This work intends to be a tribute, as well, anticipating the centenary of *Rhapsody in Blue*, George Gershwin's masterpiece, for which *The Man I Love* is a musical precursor. Figure 11 compares the 1924 *Aeolian Concert Hall* poster with the promotional material for the tricolor rhapsody composed by Peter Boyer and performed by Jeffrey Biegel on the piano.



Fig. 11 with the 1924⁹ poster and the upcoming poster for 2024¹⁰

4. Conclusions and future directions

This transformational perspective offers particular value, both through novelty and through integrating the musical score with the graphics.

We hope that our paper will encourage the contemporary analytical discourse devoted to the music of George Gershwin.

As a future direction, we are in the process of applying the Meèus paradigm to two themes by Freddie Mercury. A comparison between the current research and the next one will be part of the multidimensional analysis from the third doctoral report.

Taking into account the fact that any interval can be covered by a sequence of RLP relations, we believe that this method can be widely used in modern musicology.

⁹ The Syncopated Times, Feb. 12, 2019, p. 1.

¹⁰ <https://propulsivemusic.com>, accessed on 10.12.2023, 10:12.

Bibliography

- Bañagale, Ryan Raul (2014). *Arranging Gershwin – Rhapsody in Blue and the Creation of an American Icon*, Oxford University Press New York, retrieved from www.oup.com
- Gilbert, Steven E (1995). *The Music of Gershwin*, Yale University Press New Haven & London
- Gollin, Edward; Rehding, Alexander (2014). *The Oxford Handbook of Neo-Riemannian Music Theories*
- Meèus, Nicholas (June 2005). *Tonal and “Modal” Harmony: A Transformational Perspective*. Dublin International Conference on Music Analysis
- Rădulescu, Antigona (2003). *Perspective semiotice în muzică* [Semiotic perspectives in music], Universitatea Națională de Muzică, București
- Schiff, David (2009). *Gershwin – Rhapsody in Blue*, Cambridge University Press, New York, retrieved from www.cambridge.org

THEATRE SECTION

Research, coordination, evaluation in the doctoral field.
Ethical perspectives

The ethical vulnerabilities of doctoral studies

Marian POPESCU

Professor PhD

Bucharest University, “Babeş-Bolyai” University Cluj-Napoca
ROMANIA¹

Abstract: The organization of doctoral studies is one of the significant hallmarks of knowledge production, the formation of scientific discourse and the advancement of the creative process. This lecture is about the ethical vulnerabilities of the configuration of these studies from the perspective of the institution, the supervisor and the PhD student. I will consider the ethics of research, the supervisor-student relation and the philosophy evaluating scientific work. The situation of doctoral studies in the field of Performing Arts-Theatre differs from one institution to another, but what should not differ is the conceptual clarity through which the student is encouraged, guided, evaluated so that the final result is meaningful, produces an advance of knowledge and, why not, proposes something applicable in the practical sphere. In this lecture I will examine the ethical vulnerabilities that arise from the effects of legislation or from the imperfect, incorrect way in which doctoral studies are conducted.

Keywords: vulnerabilities; ethics; research; evaluation; supervision.

1. Introduction

This conference, which is important because it addresses an issue that continues to pose challenges in academic communities, comes at a strange time: the Higher Education Act has only just been issued and our universities are in the process of updating their fundamental documents: the University Charter and the Code of Ethics. The law provides for documents to be completed without a deadline having been given. Among them there is one that is also relevant for our Conference: “Framework regulation on doctoral studies”. Another concerns the Framework Code of University Ethics and Deontology approved by government decision. Both do not yet exist.

This setback, the start of the new academic year and the legal requirement to bring university documents up to date following the appearance of the two governmental decisions, as well as holding the university elections now, has and will of course have consequences. The ethical construction of the university system in our country needs legislative clarity, the opportunity for change and

¹ marian.popescu@unibuc.ro

structured thinking in order to limit the existing vulnerabilities, as well as those that may be caused by new technologies, in the production and transmission of knowledge and the way in which students assess the reception of what is transmitted to them.

The theme of the conference brings three key words to the fore: research, supervision and evaluation from an ethical perspective of Doctoral Studies. Each keyword is, in international academic practice, well anchored in an organizational ethical culture, but also in programs that foster ethical behavior of doctoral students. On the other hand, let me say from the start, these concern equally the colleagues who have taken on the task of scientific supervision of the doctoral program. From the point of view of this ethical culture, the vocational field in general, and the Performing Arts-Theatre in particular, present vulnerabilities that the legal framework can restrict, but not eliminate. We shall see further why. We shall further see why it is not enough.

I will proceed by taking each key word – research, scientific supervision, evaluation – as a “key” to decipher what can make us vulnerable in doctoral supervision. I will also try to pass each key word through the grid: institution, scientific supervisor, doctoral student.

Let us keep in mind that many people are indifferent to morality, in the sense given by the Stoic philosophers to the concept of *adiaphoron*², or – as today's philosophers claim – morally blind, in the sense discussed by Zygmunt Bauman and Leonidas Donskis³ or morally disengaged, in the sense given by Albert Bandura⁴. In the same way, let us try to see why a real culture of academic integrity is more and more necessary in the Romanian academia in general.

Sometimes, we do not actively have the meaning of words. Or their etymology. Let us take the word **research**. It comes from the Latin *circare* meaning “to circle, to circle around something or someone”. Old French used it first, through *recerche*, and from there it entered English to give the recognized term *research*., as early as the 16th century. Its use in early European modernity means “to examine carefully”, with a wide application of this meaning also entering legal practice, in criminal investigation, for example. Another meaning has given *circle* and other derivatives. Let us keep in mind that *research* activity is the basis of the evolution of knowledge, its transmission and reception in

² “*Adiaphoron*” is thus defined in Merriam-Webster:

„1: Stoic philosophy: a matter having no moral merit or demerit; 2: a religious ceremonial or ritual observance that is held to be an affair of the individual conscience because it is neither forbidden nor enjoined by the scriptures.” (consulted on 27.09.2023).

³ Z. Bauman, L. Donskis (2013), *Moral Blindness*, Polity Press, Cambridge.

⁴ A. Bandura (2015), *Moral Disengagement: How People Do Harm and Live with Themselves*, Worth Publishers, England.

scholarly circles. Without research you cannot interact with reality in order to develop knowledge. On the other hand, this activity has for centuries included a moral component which, time and again, creates unresolvable dilemmas. For example, scientific research leading to a product whose use, such as the fission of the atom and the use of this discovery in the manufacture of bombs, indicates a vulnerability to which science cannot offer a single moral argument. Or laboratory research leading to the launch of a drug which is later discovered to have dangerous effects.

2. The Institution is the first grid through which we want to check for sources of ethical vulnerability in terms of the three keywords: Research, Scientific Supervision and Evaluation. Institutionally, the university is required to submit to the central authority a *Research Plan*, based on the research plans of its substructures: departments or, possibly, faculties. Here we have four situations: first, Theatre is an academic domain at specific faculty level, see UNATC Bucharest, UNAGE Iași and UAT Tîrgu Mureș. Secondly, Theatre is an institutional field at the level of a non-exclusively theatrical faculty, see the Faculty of Music and Theater at the UVT Timișoara, the Faculty of Theatre and Film at the UBB Cluj-Napoca, the Faculty of Arts at “Ovidius” in Constanța. Third, Theatre is an institutional field at the level of an exclusively theatrical department, see the Department of Theatrical Arts at ULB Sibiu, the Department of Acting, in Romanian and German, at UV Timișoara, the Department of Acting at Hyperion. Fourth-Theatre, in fact Acting, is a study program within a department, see “Dunărea de Jos” University of Galati.

On the other hand, also institutionally, Research is administered by specific structures, most commonly at the level of doctoral schools or institutes. These structures operate and impose mandatory rules on Research that are also derived from higher normative acts.

Thirdly, an important clue is the managerial program with which a candidate wins the office of rector. Put aside the words and try to see if the facts presented are really achievable facts in a coherent program.

A vulnerability with ethical consequences concerns, especially where there are no exclusive theatre faculties, precisely this *specificity*: often, department or degree program directors navigate with difficulty to be in tune with the structure immediately above them: the non-exclusively theatre department or the non-exclusively theatre faculty. Institutionally, Research, especially in the case of non-exclusively theatrical organizational structures, presents an uneven picture of scholarly publications. The performing arts have fewer venues, journals, and publishers than the socio-humanities field. And when Research is allowed, at doctoral level, for example, only in the form of a scientific PhD, things get complicated. Those in charge produce documents that have to be reported, then checked by ARACIS when the time comes for evaluation, and they will have to

align them with the institutional target. Not once, the reality is that of the document, of the scores and not of the stated goals.

Take the case of Poland, for example, where the ratio of scientific PhD/artistic PhD (or *professional* PhD as we call it) and the ratio of written publications/artistic creations was conceived and evolved from the perspective of integrating artistic creation into the university institutional frameworks of Research up to and including doctoral level. They even insisted that the percentage of published research and artistic research should not exceed 50%. After 2009, the academic theatre departments were “encouraged to make their artistic practices more scientifically frameable by producing written results published in scientific journals.”⁵ What has been observed, over the last three years, is that the number of books published has decreased while the number of scientific articles published has increased.

On the other hand, the ways of evaluating research activity in the vocational field are also aligned to criteria that are designed especially for the *other types of universities*, not for vocational ones. Thus, *the publication of scientific articles, book chapters or books* is scored much higher than the evaluation of the outcome of a *workshop*, for example. But are there criteria for evaluating such workshop-type research? In other fields, in political science and in the socio-humanities in general, where the foundation is the *text* and not the *living creation*, these criteria are institutionally much clearer.⁶ An institutional ethical vulnerability arises here with regard to the competition file for a teaching position, where the actual checking of items declared as artistic creation or articles declared as scientific is rarely done.

What modes of Inquiry are fostered by drama schools? What is actually to be researched in drama school? What is studied in the classroom? These are questions that point to different placements in context: if you have a Chekhovian character to study in class, does that imply some kind of research? But if you participate in a workshop where the theme is bodily expression, is it the same thing? Obviously not.

We know that there are two types of PhD programs here: scientific and professional. While the scientific one is somewhat better regulated in terms of standards, the latter is less so. The scientific doctorate in the field of Performing Arts-Theatre often follows the practice of generalist universities: it is research on a subject from the perspective of a bibliography. Very rarely scientific

⁵ K. Lewandowska, E. Kulczycki (2021), “Academic research evaluation in artistic disciplines: the case of Poland”, in *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, Routledge, retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2021.1893651> (consulted on 15.10.2023).

⁶ G. Vîiu, A. Miroiu (2013), *Evaluarea cercetării universitare din România. Abordări metodologice alternative* [Evaluation of University Research in Romania. Alternative Methodological Approaches in “Journal of Science Policy and Scientometrics”] - new series vol. 2, no. 2, June 2013, pp. 89-107.

doctoral theses in this field propose a... thesis, mention the research method and the corpus considered. In general, referring to my colleagues who come from Theatre studies, Directing, Choreography or Scenography, the evidence, but also my own experience shows that their training in research methods is often deficient. With the possible exception of some colleagues coming from Theatre studies, another problem that emerges is *academic writing*. Doctoral students have not been trained in this type of culture like students of the socio-humanities. Hence a vulnerability in the *quality* of these theses, which calls into question the quality of scientific supervision.

Another element, a source of ethical vulnerability in our case, is the *quality of the scientific supervision* from the perspective of the existing regulatory framework. In our country, the quality of scientific supervisor was granted, up to a certain point, by direct appointment by the ministry. Later came the habilitation examination, which means the completion of a written thesis and its oral presentation before a committee. *Rarely, the very ability to scientifically supervise a PhD is also examined*. The habilitation, as a title, is in fact awarded on the basis of professional activity, most often creative work.

Finally, the institutional *evaluation* of the doctoral program by the respective university structure must also be taken into account. In addition to the evaluation carried out by the advising committee, there are also the reports of the public defence committee. How professionally are these two activities carried out? PhD theses are often at least 200 pages long. Often they do not produce a thesis. Not once are they conscripted from other books and publications. Committees rarely assess what the law requires, which is *originality*. Of course, no law is perfect and our laws in Education even less so. How do you evaluate originality in scientific research in the field of Performing Arts-Theatre? How many of us have come across criteria that define it in scientific research in theatre? Ethical vulnerability arises in this case when, for various reasons such as likeability-unlikability, etc., the committees easily give the “very good” or “excellent” rating. I have rarely seen “good”. And even more rarely, “satisfactory”. In other areas you can find them, however. The consequence is that the abundance of high grades standardizes the value of theses like the applause at the end of any performance, regardless of its value. Precisely because value has not been assessed.

I said at one point that⁷

in some countries, such as Germany or the United Kingdom, an intermediate cycle is agreed between a master's degree and a PhD or between a bachelor's degree and a PhD. It's a year during which the person

⁷ Retrieved from <https://www.euronews.ro/articole/norme-de-etica-ale-doctoratelor-in-strainatate-universitatile-din-strainatate-s>.

who wants to become a doctoral student goes through an intensive program of work so that one can be sure that the person who enters the doctoral school is really capable of carrying out research.

We, unfortunately, only very rarely test this capability.

I would like to add another element concerning the curricular design of doctoral studies in similar institutions in the West. In Columbia, for example, not only is interdisciplinary research strongly encouraged, but joint work with doctoral students from other fields is also favored. Leaving aside the financial package that supports all this, which, unfortunately, is very meagre here. The disappearance of our universities as institutions from international rankings is also partly due to their chronic underfunding.

3. The Scientific Supervisor is the second grid through which we check how Research, Scientific Supervision and Evaluation are perceived from an ethical perspective. The obligations provided by the legislative framework in this respect are not many. The law says that the scientific supervisor is the author of the study program in consultation with the doctoral student. In practice it can happen - as I know from the cases, we examine at IRAFPA - that the professor wants to impose his or her own research interests by conditioning the doctoral student. Or blackmailing him/her. Cases of such misconduct are not rare. Laws 206/2004, Law 199/2023 or the Annex to the Code of Doctoral Studies are poor in terms of substance, as regards the quality of doctoral supervisors. This creates a *gray area* in the relationship between the supervisor and the PhD student.

A first essential aspect is accepting the candidate on the basis of the research project and the oral defense. In the field of Theatre, preliminary acceptance often takes less account of the value of the project than of the personality of the candidate and/or the curricular needs. We need X or Y because we are insufficiently covered in subject Z. Because many university structures in the field of theatre only accept scientific doctorates, research is often based on books and articles, less often on performance practice, and when this happens it is not very clear how the research method is used. How many of the PhD theses in Theatre and Performing Arts have produced research whose results are replicable, for example? Replicability is one of the essential conditions for integrity in scientific research.

An important vector of *academic integrity*, the scientific supervisor has not only contractual obligations towards the doctoral student, but also *moral obligations*. The French professor and researcher Pierre-Jean Benghozi lists the abuses that are/can be committed by the supervisor: lack of responsibility by leaving the doctoral candidate virtually alone, lack of guidance on managing the research project, lack of follow-up on the quality of the thesis and the research methods used, lack of support or advice in the different stages of completing the

thesis, from papers presented at conferences to recommendations on methodologies, readings, etc., forcing the doctoral student to carry out tasks that are not related to the thesis, discouraging attempts at innovation proposed by the doctoral student, harassment, including sexual harassment, appropriation, theft of the doctoral student's work⁸. The professor knows that “there is no formal criterion by which the quality and integrity of scientific research can be perfectly measured.” (*op. cit.* p. 89) and therefore personal responsibility becomes, and must be supported by specific university programs on integrity, the most visible part of academic autonomy and academic freedom.

Another aspect that may cause ethical irregularities in the working relationship is this: the supervisor's horizon of knowledge, extended over the years, has, however, its limitations. Especially if, as is often the case, the supervisor no longer studies new literature. The doctoral student can explore new territory, which clearly requires guidance from the supervisor through recurrent dialogue on methodology, the direction of the research, validation of the thesis, etc. I have often had to “train myself” together with the doctoral student on works that I did not know, but with the advantage of being able to conceptually frame them within a broader framework of knowledge (the advantage of age and continuous effort!). But I have seen colleagues who either leave PhD students to “fend for themselves”, or are rigid in the coordinating relationship, or, in critical cases, even envious, which leads to serious ethical lapses. Here too, it has rarely happened that the doctoral student asks for the supervisor to be changed, in which case the analysis of the incident is often superficial or, if it is serious, should be followed by action within the doctoral school. A regulation, a rule, a law are not immutable, they can be changed if reality requires it and if the institution is wise to adopt them.

The quality of the Research is, to a not inconsiderable extent, related to the quality of the Scientific Supervision. Here, the supervisor should make clear from the outset, and follow up, an important aspect of academic writing: *the accurate indication of sources*. Much has been written and published on this. This essential operation for academic deontology is also accompanied by the condition of choice or imposition. What is the mode, *style of referencing and citation* that you choose? Choice also indicates belonging to a type of academic culture, effective knowledge of the use of authors and their works published up to you. Once the choice has been made, in full awareness of the rules of the academic culture to which you belong, once practiced, it will become a reflex and will then save you unnecessary effort. It is also useful to be familiar with

⁸ J.-P. Benghozi, *Quels modèles d'intégrité pour les écoles doctorales?* [What models of integrity for doctoral schools?] in M. Bergadaà; P. Peixoto (2021) (coord.) *L'urgence de l'intégrité académique* [The urgent need for academic integrity], EMS, p. 92.

styles other than those of your own academic culture: there are publishers and journals that *require* a certain style of citation.

The term *Bibliography*, still used intensively in our country, does not clarify the distinction between Citation and Reference. Drawing up the List of References at the end of the paper is a complex operation that also denotes the way in which the Author constructed the plan of the paper, distinctly inscribed his objectives and credited the significant works for his theme. Footnotes, which are often bibliographic indications, are less often used by us for other clarifications than those of the sources. The correct indication of sources is a clue to the operational ethical standard of the Author. Of their way of reporting and valuing both their own academic and research environment, as well as their colleagues from other academic communities.

The best-known citation and referencing styles are APA and MLA. APA (American Psychological Association) style encompasses most of the standard situations in which the citation/referencing is done. Emphasis is on author's name, year of publication. Citation appears in the text in two forms: parenthetical: (Albu 2012: 23) or narrative: Albu (2012: 23) wrote about the philosophy of detachment. References build the bibliography and provide the list at the end of the paper with the full identification data of the cited work: Albu, I. (2012), *Despre detaşare*. Iaşi: Polirom.

The supervision activity also concerns how research is evaluated. It is a process that is actually carried out throughout the doctoral program. There are, however, two special moments: one concerns checking the thesis with the plagiarism check software when the supervisor receives the Similarity Report, the second concerns the actual paper to be presented at the public defence. Concerning the first moment: some supervisors are less or not at all familiar with this software, their performance depending on how much the university has financially allocated, with the characteristics of the similarity report. Because of this, they can make mistakes that put pressure on the PhD student. At some of our universities, there are special sessions to train colleagues in using this software. I have not heard of this happening systematically in the vocational field. On the other hand, and this relates to the wisdom of academic management, the use of tools to counter plagiarism should not create a psychosis. Yale's president, Peter Salovey, said in an interview in the Yale Daily News fifteen years ago, "If you create a culture that expects the worst from students and emphasize that attitude through a climate of vigilance, then they will act in ways that confirm those expectations by inventing clever ways to act dishonorably and avoid detection. This is not a race to the abyss that I wish to encourage."⁹ I have

⁹ Batane Tshepo (2010), *Turning to Turnitin to Fight Plagiarism among University Students*, in "Journal of Educational Technology & Society", 13(2), 1-12, retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/jeductechsoci.13.2.1> (consulted on 19.10.2023).

often argued, too, that it is better to build an academic culture based on integrity than to delegate plagiarism discovery to software. This requires the training of integrity “sages” as I called them in an article.¹⁰

The second moment of the evaluation is the supervisor's own report on the thesis and the doctoral program. I have heard very few such reports that actually refer to the doctoral program itself, to the way the supervision was conducted and how the doctoral student has been guided, how the doctoral student has developed his or her research. Of course, most supervisors give the highest marks at the end. As if a “good” grade were something to be ashamed of. In research, as we know, there are levels of performance. They must be properly assessed by the supervisor and the doctoral committee.

I will not elaborate on the topic of doctoral school evaluation. It is complicated, it was and still is the subject of steps forward and steps back. The insistence on “quality”, which has become an obsession through quality management, often produces saturation. What is quality? The philosophy of quality assessment, as advocated by ARACIS, rests on three pillars: Criterion, Standard, Performance Indicator. What do they mean, how do they act in the vocational field? Little has been achieved here and this brings back into question the specificity of the field and the academic frame.

4. The doctoral candidate

Before being a doctoral candidate, we talk about a candidate. Who is, from the outset, a subject of the legal framework. He/she concludes, that is, the doctoral study contract with the university/doctoral school. In general, we have two situations in the academic world: people who want to do research with a view to develop an academic career, and people who pursue doctoral studies to obtain a PhD after which their research future comes to an immediate halt. In the last category one recognizes, of course, mainly public figures of dignitaries. How does the doctoral school receive the latter? And why?

The candidate should be aware of the regulations of the doctoral school he or she is entering before submitting the application. Here, the regulations per vocational field may differ. The regulations of the FTT Cluj-Napoca, for example, contain several useful clarifications and emphasize the idea of the “authority” of the supervisor, of the school in relation to the doctoral candidate.¹¹ The UNATC's package of documents is more comprehensive as regards the doctoral level and the stipulation of the Arts Based Research principle is very visible even though the form of PhD degree admitted in the institution is the

¹⁰ M. Popescu (2021), *Former les sages de l'intégrité* [Training the sages of integrity] in Bergadaà, M.; Peixoto, P. *op. cit.*, pp. 379-392.

¹¹ V. <http://doctorat.ttv.ubbcluj.ro/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Regulamentul-Şcolii-Doctorale-de-Teatru-şi-Film.pdf> (consulted on 19.10.2023).

scientific PhD.¹² The legislative insufficiency makes the professional PhD not favored.

Of course, the relationship between the scientific supervisor and the doctoral student is a sensitive one. The supervisor is often inclined to impose their scholarly authority and less to encourage and support the doctoral student's adventure in supposedly original research. There are some aspects involved in this relationship that are or can be a source of ethical vulnerability, of lack of integrity.

The first is the mode of supervision and the doctoral student's acceptance of this mode. With the advance of the new AI technology, the already famous ChatGPT, suspicions concerning originality and authorship increase. In an important article, Michelle Bergadaà and Martine Peters insist on the idea that PhD students should not be considered potential “delinquents” of knowledge, but researchers confident of support from the scientific supervisor. The authors present the deficiencies arising in the making of the thesis that concern the two actors, the supervisor and the doctoral student, through six stages¹³: the first concerns strategic reflection and management in context (time, effort, state); the second phase: the strategy of avoidance - the PhD students look for existing models, identify key concepts, then look them up on the internet and even copy what they find, all because this gives them a sense of pride regarding their academic status, a matter of self-image, out of opportunism that gives the illusion of performance and self-sufficiency; the third phase consists of browsing the internet without realizing, even if they have great digital skills, that using the discovered texts as such takes them away from the purpose of the research; here it must be said that the help of university librarians is important; the fourth phase concerns the collection of the texts found without emphasizing the technique of argumentation regarding the sources used (I often ask the question: why did you use this author and not another? Or: did you read the entire work you extracted this quote from?); the fifth phase is the editing of the text, we don't call it the drafting where, often, the pressure of the thesis submission deadline wreaks havoc: the doctoral students, and even the supervisors, disregard the polishing of the text, i.e. elegant drafting in Romanian or a foreign language; the sixth phase is the delivery of the thesis to be subjected to the anti-plagiarism checker: here several events take place and I will detail them.

¹² Retrieved from https://unatc.ro/devunatc/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Raport_evaluate_teatru.pdf (consulted on 19.10.2023).

¹³ M. Bergadaà; M. Peters, *The Professor: A Conduit for Integrity in the Dissertation Process*. M. Bergadaà, P. Peixoto, (eds.). *Academic Integrity. A Call to Research and Action. Globethics Research Ethics 2.*, 2023, pp. 565-576 (free access on www.globethics.net/publications). The volume is the English version of the French original, see no. 8 (*L'urgence de l'intégrité académique*).

The first concerns the Similarity Report which often troubles supervisors who are not well trained in the use of these anti-plagiarism software. I explained in an extensive article from 2020 what such a report is and how it should be read and interpreted.¹⁴ TurnItIn also explains¹⁵, but so do some of our universities, such as UBB, for example. Or the website Sistemantiplagiat.ro.¹⁶ The need for specific training concerns, in fact, the entire academic community and institutions should permanently invest in such programs, a need augmented by the psychosis created by ChatGPT.

The second concerns the content. The PhD student is engaged in research whose content justifies the objectives of the project and which must be valued. He/she must be able to explain to the supervisor the choice of concepts, method, working hypothesis so that both are sure, especially when the moment of public defense comes, that the PhD student is not only the author of the research but also knowledgeable of its theoretical or/and practical horizon.

The third concerns the level and mode of communication between the two actors. As often a bad management of time and extra-academic obligations puts pressure on everyone, the advisor and the PhD student have to maintain a continuity of the research effort: if I notice that my PhD student “disappears” for a month, two or more, I reach out, I write him/her to see what happened. As you know, our dedication to research is challenged by jobs and other projects. It is rare for a PhD student in Theatre to do only research. Funding offered by the doctoral scholarship is simply not enough. What do you do with an actor, director, scenographer or choreographer who also wants to do their job while doing research? Constant communication can avoid slippages or even dead ends.

The fourth concerns the human side of the relationship: sometimes personal life events become too difficult, and this - as it happened to me - can make the PhD student let you know that they are no longer continuing. If you believe in the value of his research project, you must convince him/her that it is worth continuing. I did this and my PhD student managed a very good, even original, thesis.

The fifth refers to the seriousness, the responsibility of the doctoral school: the doctoral student must have the support of the members of the guidance committee materialized in receiving comments on the text. In practice, I know that this happens less often. But if the PhD student delays the delivery a lot, he/she will bear - some even find it convenient - the consequences of the lack of such support.

¹⁴ M. Popescu, *The similarity Report* I, II, 2020. See <https://carfia.unibuc.ro/raportul-de-similitudine-i/>, <https://carfia.unibuc.ro/raportul-de-similitudine-ii/>

¹⁵ <https://help.turnitin.com/ro/feedback-studio/studenti/vizualizarea-raportului-de-similitudine.htm> (consulted on 20.10.2023).

¹⁶ <https://itb.ro/wp-content/uploads/Documente/interpretare-raport-antiplagiat.pdf> (consulted on 20.10.2023).

The sixth and last concerns public defence. Not once does it proceed formally. The doctoral school does the minimum required by law to publicize this endorsement. The participation of others, though allowed, is not encouraged beyond the circle of colleagues or family. If I also add the fact that doctoral schools in this field seldom encourage co-tutorship, not to mention a joint PhD program with a university from another country, or the participation of external referees beyond those friendly relations established over time, we have the image of a lack of transparency and openness against the idea of confrontation of ideas. Another aspect of public support refers to the ability of the PhD student to make this support from the perspective of public speaking and the use of slides, for example. They are too little trained in public speaking or in making attractive slides and avoid loading them with text or images whose stylistics is deficient. More than once, fitting in the allotted time is difficult precisely because there is no prior preparation. I advise students from all study cycles to do one or two rehearsals when they have to present a written work in public (at the exam, at the defence). When I hear, even senior academics, at conferences, asking: “Do I still have time” or “I have no idea how much time I have left”, I realize something is wrong.

5. Conclusion

Now is the moment for me to observe the allotted time and get closer to the end. To recap: I tried to evaluate and present some ethical vulnerabilities or lack of integrity regarding the doctoral level of theatre studies by observing the concepts that support the theme of this Conference, that is: Research, Supervision, Evaluation from the perspective of three grids: the Institution, the Scientific Supervisor and the Doctoral Student. Based also on my own experience as professor in the field of Theatre Studies and Public Communication, scientific supervisor in Theatre, as a specialist in Ethics and Academic Integrity following the experience as president of the Ethics Commission of the University of Bucharest and founder of CARFIA, but also on cases of academic misconduct that I know of and where I intervened as a member of IRAFPA, I tried to cover a sensitive topic, often subject to legislation and regulations that were not and are not always clear, or forward-looking and had the gift of bureaucratizing suspicion rather than encouraging a real culture of academic ethics and integrity in Romania. But let's look at this challenging area from a broader perspective.

The Bologna decision of 1999, with its subsequent consequences, which affected, because it was quickly signed by Romania, artistic education forced to apply the 3-2-3 system, has developed comparative inconsistencies within the common European space of higher education. As the editors of an interesting

volume on this topic argue¹⁷: While Bologna explicitly put forward values such as collaboration, exchange, interconnection and mobility, the values that more countries adhered to were those of competition, excellence and “marketing.”

The arts higher education system in our country can, should bring up to date, especially in this tsunami/aftermath caused by AI, the operational strategies regarding the reconciliation of scientific caliber, artistic practice and didactic tools with the increasingly acute need to resize the experience regarding the relationship with society, with the audiences existing today. “Why study Theatre?” is the question that actually illuminates the paths of this experience. We can confidently answer this question if we stand on the simple values of Integrity: honesty, fairness, responsibility, trust and the courage to affirm these values. I think it's worth it.

Bibliography

- Bandura, A. (2015). *Moral Disengagement: How People Do Harm and Live with Themselves*, Worth Publishers, England
- Bauman, Z.; Donskis, L. (2013). *Moral Blindness*, Polity Press, Cambridge
- Broucker, B.; De Witt, K.; Verhoeven, J.C.; Leišytė, L. (2019). Understanding Higher Education System Reform: Practices, Patterns and Pathways. *Higher Education System Reform. An International Comparison after Twenty Years of Bologna*. Brill/Sens
- Bergadaà, M.; Peters, M. (2023). *The Professor: A Conduit for Integrity in the Dissertation Process*. Bergadaà, M.; Peixoto, P. (eds.). *Academic Integrity. A Call to Research and Action. Globethics Research Ethics 2*. 565-576 (free access on www.globethics.net/publications)
- Benghozi, J.-P. (2021). *Quels modèles d'intégrité pour les écoles doctorales?* [What models of integrity for doctoral schools?] in Bergadaà, M.; Peixoto, P. (coord.) *L'urgence de l'intégrité académique* [The urgent need for academic integrity], EMS, 92
- Lewandowska, K.; Kulczycki, E. (2021). Academic research evaluation in artistic disciplines: the case of Poland. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, Routledge
- Popescu, M. (2021). *Former les sages de l'intégrité* [Training the sages of integrity] in Bergadaà, M.; Peixoto, P. (coord.) *L'urgence de l'intégrité académique* [The urgent need for academic integrity], EMS, 379-392

¹⁷ B. Broucker; K. De Witt; J.C. Verhoeven; L. Leišytė (2019), *Understanding Higher Education System Reform: Practices, Patterns and Pathways*, in *Higher Education System Reform. An International Comparison after Twenty Years of Bologna*. Brill/Sens, p. 233.

Popescu, M. (2020). The similarity Report I, II. See <https://carfia.unibuc.ro/raportul-de-similitudine-i/>) <https://carfia.unibuc.ro/raportul-de-similitudine-ii/>

Batane, Tshepo (2010). Turning to Turnitin to Fight Plagiarism among University Students. *Journal of Educational Technology & Society*, 13(2) <http://www.jstor.org/stable/jeductechsoci.13.2.1>

Vîiu, G.-A.; Miroiu, A. (2013). *Evaluarea cercetării universitare din România. Abordări metodologice alternative (Evaluation of University Research in Romania. Alternative Methodological Approaches)* – *Journal of Science Policy and Scientometrics* - new series vol. 2, no. 2, June 2013

<https://itb.ro/wp-content/uploads/Documente/interpretare-raport-antiplagiat.pdf>

<http://doctorat.ttv.ubbcluj.ro/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Regulamentul-Şcolii-Doctorale-de-Teatru-şi-Film.pdf>

https://unatc.ro/devunatc/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Raport_evaluare_teatru.pdf

<https://www.euronews.ro/articole/norme-de-etica-ale-doctoratelor-in-strainatate-universitatile-din-strainatate-s>

PhD Admission. Ethical ambiguities...

Călin CIOBOTARI

Professor PhD

“George Enescu” National University of Arts Iași
ROMANIA¹

Abstract: This study aims to formulate and, to a certain extent, to provide possible answers to questions such as: Who is looking for whom to initiate the PhD student-supervisor relation? Can prior knowledge of the candidate by the supervisor generate ethical problems? Is it ethical to decide, as professors, who our PhD students will be based on “human chemistry”? How much relevant information does the candidate receive about their future academic path and how much predictability is there about how the PhD will actually develop their career? On which criteria do we decide which PhD students will receive a scholarship? Who chooses the research topic? What are the criteria we select our future doctoral students by? Is it ethical that the oral entrance exam cannot be contested? Is it ethical to produce, at all costs, a competitive environment in the PhD admissions phase? Does the distinction of *tuition* doctoral student vs. *budgeted* doctoral student produce effects in the ethical field?

Keywords: admission, PhD, ethics, theatre.

1. Introduction

Most of the time, in the Romanian academia, the association between ethics and the activity of a Doctoral School is limited to the issue of plagiarism. Ethics is thus, unfortunately, almost completely overlapped on a single dimension of the very wide spectrum of moral issues faced by a department of doctoral studies within an IOSUD². The overlap is almost official, since ARACIS³ itself recommends in the regular evaluations of the Doctoral Schools, that the structure of the Ethics and Academic Integrity Course, a mandatory course within the Preparation Program⁴ from the first semester of the first year

¹ calinciobotari@yahoo.com

² IOSUD – acronym for Institution organizing Doctoral Studies.

³ The only academic evaluation institution in Romania – the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

⁴ A paradoxical situation: a course is required to be compulsory within a Training Program which is, in its entirety, optional. This very situation gives rise to conflicts of an ethical nature. Based on the respective Training Program, professors who have courses at the Doctoral School are

of PhD studies, should not deal with other ethical aspects apart from plagiarism⁵. For anyone who has worked or is working within a Doctoral School, it is obvious that the issue of plagiarism is far from being the only *ethical* concern. Moreover, in a university that, in its entire history, has not had any case of plagiarism, this problem doesn't represent a concrete priority, but is only a matter of principle.

2. Vulnerabilities...

In what follows, I intend to limit the discussion to the ethical vulnerabilities that emerge as early as the pre-admission and Doctoral admission phase, following that, in other contexts, I also address other fragilities in the field of doctoral research, whether this field is considered from an institutional perspective, or customized to the individual research activity of the PhD student and the supervising professor.

● *A prior knowledge of the candidate.* Is it ethical to favor someone I know just because I am acquainted to them over someone I know less or not at all? I have frequently asked myself this question when I accepted or refused to take on the role of doctoral supervisor. I have to admit, observing my reactions and attitudes over time, that being acquainted mattered a lot in the specific decisions I made. An explanation of the term “acquainted” is required here. I have in mind, first of all, the close, deep knowledge of a professional path but also of some research skills, to which is added knowing the respective candidate from a moral perspective. Let's put two distinct situations in the mirror: a candidate who was my student during the undergraduate cycle, whose artistic creations or theoretical papers I watched, whose bachelor thesis, then master's dissertation, I eventually supervised, whose behavior I have observed over

normed. In the hypothetical situation in which no doctoral student would enroll in the respective Training Program, no professor could be tenured in a Doctoral School for the simple reason that they could no longer be normed; they would remain normed only for actual guidance (1.5 h/ doctoral student/ week), but you cannot constitute a full-time job without normed teaching activities. In this situation, some Doctoral Schools avoid telling the first-year PhD students that that Program is optional, giving them the idea that it is mandatory. The legislator's principle in this matter is related to the fact that the only purpose of a doctoral research is the final thesis, which can be completed even in the absence of a Training Program.

⁵ The author of this article, as the director of the Doctoral School of Theatre within the “George Enescu” National University of Arts Iași and holder of the Ethics and Academic Integrity Course, a common and mandatory course for doctoral students of the Doctoral School of Theater and the Doctoral School of Music, received this verbal recommendation, during the ARACIS evaluation of the Doctoral School of Theatre, in 2022. Colleagues from Doctoral Schools in other fields and from other Universities received similar recommendations.

several years⁶, in different academic or trans-academic settings; another candidate about whom everything I know comes from the excellent Curriculum vitae I have and the prodigious public activity I find archived in various forms (publications, websites, etc.). Let us suppose I have a choice between these two candidates and only one vacancy. Who will I choose, and especially to what extent will my choice be dictated by my knowledge of the candidates? The tendency is, of course, to privilege the first candidate, even if, say, the second's professional CV recommends him to a greater extent for access to doctoral studies. A “trust effect” comes into play here, trust not only in the one I know so well, but also in my abilities to supervise, to empathize, in the interests of the research itself. I think the ethical dilemma is obvious, especially since this *knowledge* often risks equating to a state of comfort that the supervising professor is not always willing to give up. Can we render meritocracy⁷ absolute when we take it upon ourselves to supervise a doctoral project or will we always be tributary in our decisions to collateral subjectivities?

● ***How well do I need to know my future PhD students?*** Intimately related to the previous point, extending *knowledge* to a human sphere, this question places us once again on a dilemmatic ethical ground, prior to the admission phase. Should I, the supervising professor, need to know details from the private life of my future PhD student? Do I really need to know that they have a criminal record, that they tried to kill themselves five years ago, that they habitually assault their partner, that they grew up in foster care, that in the past (but maybe also the present) they were addicted to drugs, that they are part of an extremist organization, that they were members of a political party many consider unpopular, that, in a certain period of their life, they were prostitutes, or that they are gay? And the list of possibilities could go on and on. Any University's code of ethics strongly insists, and rightly so, on a firm separation between private and professional life within that academic community. On the other hand, the question that is asked and which, moreover, opens the ethical debate, is the

⁶ Just as the student, in turn, had time to observe me and decide if I was a good professor. In parentheses, it would be interesting to understand what a “good professor” means in Romanian universities and, specifically, what a “good PhD supervisor” means. I believe that sooner or later a research project like *The Good Teacher*, carried out by the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, at the University of Birmingham, UK, will also be imposed in the Romanian academic space; the project aimed at obtaining from students and teachers the most accurate perspectives on this, ultimately so ambiguous, phrase. (See details on the project in Andrew Peterson, James Arthur, *Ethics and the Good Teacher. Character in the Professional Domain*, Routledge 2021).

⁷ The many ethical dilemmas posed by the principle of meritocracy are discussed at length in Adrian Wooldridge (2022), *The Aristocracy of Talent. How meritocracy created the modern world*, translated by Adina Avramescu, Polirom, Iași. Essentially, the ambiguities of merit are reviewed by Julian Baggini and Peter S.Fosl (2007) in *The Ethics Toolkit. A Compendium of Ethical Concepts and Methods*, Blackwell Publishing, pp. 33-36.

following: would the act of supervision have anything to gain if I knew details about my future PhD student that he/she will never include in the CV?⁸ Would the quality of our future collaboration, spread over many years⁹, benefit if this interpersonal exchange were informal? Supporters of utilitarianism will probably answer such questions in the affirmative, cutting off the ethical debate in favor of the ultimate goal of research: the quality of the final thesis and, adjacently, the quality of the process that makes this thesis possible. From other perspectives, however, nothing would ever justify indiscretions and incursions into someone's private life¹⁰. In practice, however, most PhD supervisors will make decisions (including rejecting certain applicants) based on this type of information as well¹¹.

⁸ In a way, it is also about the so-called “externalities” that Keota Fields talks about in her study “Academic Career Success”: “The academy's efforts to recruit and retain faculty, and to support academic careers, are challenged by what I shall call «externalities». These are events, activities, obligations, or restrictions that affect career success without being fully reflected or acknowledged in a candidate's dossier (e.g., they don't appear on a curriculum vitae). Externalities have often a negative impact on career success”, in Steven M. Cahn (editor) (2022), *Academic Ethics Today. Problems, Policies and Prospects for University Life*, Foreword by Rebecca Newberger Goldstein, Rowman & Littlefield, p. 43.

⁹ The new Education Law in Romania, which entered into force in autumn 2023, extends the duration of the doctoral study cycle from 3 to 4 years, with the possibility of extension by 1-2 years, therefore with a total possible period of 6 years (plus possible “freezing” periods caused by medical situations and prescribed by law).

¹⁰ Utilitarian philosophy becomes even more problematic in the field of research, as here we are not talking about major goals such as happiness, pleasure or well-being (John Stuart Mill, Jeremy Bentham), but about more concrete goals: the satisfaction of the final success, the added value brought by your research to the field in which you operate, the reopening of a scientific topic considered closed, and so on. The utilitarian stakes seem much lower, but they exist and continue to hold valid the ethical question of the end that justifies the means. Referring to utilitarianism from a research perspective, Rachel Brooks, Kitty te Riele and Meg Maguire, authors of *Ethics and Education Research*, touch on a series of particularities relevant for the field of doctoral research: „Utilitarianism hold a certain, common-sense appeal: if the consequences of an action are good, then surely that means the action is good? At a practical level, issues that need to be resolved include how to define and measure good (utility), which stakeholders to include, whether to adhere different weightings to different stakeholders (including the researcher her/ himself) or different potential outcomes, and our ability to foresee all the relevant consequences. At a more fundamental level, we may disagree with the approach that *the end justifies the means*. This is exactly the perspective of deontology” – Rachel Brooks, Kitty te Riele, Meg Maguire (2014), *Ethics and Education Research*, Sage Publications Ltd, London, pp. 22-23.

¹¹ Several years ago, I was part of a doctoral admission committee that admitted a candidate who I vaguely knew to have some mental disorders. The professor who became the supervisor of the thesis knowingly accepted the takeover of that doctoral student. In the following years, the health of our doctoral student worsened, and the relationship with the supervising professor deteriorated until the Doctoral School Council accepted her request to renounce this coordination and redirect the doctoral student to another professor. Probably, if she had had information about the real health of the doctoral student during the admission phase, the professor I mentioned wouldn't have accepted to coordinate him. Would she have acted

● *Who is the initiator in the PhD student-supervisor interaction?* Many years ago, I was very surprised when a professor from a Doctoral School with a humanistic profile, who had just become PhD supervisor, posted an ad on Facebook announcing he was looking for PhD students. Back then, just like now, I felt somewhat flabbergasted by such an explicit call, almost vulgar due to the gap between what was being sought and the place where it was being sought. The moment such a search becomes embeddable in something resembling a classified ad, it seems that we instantly leave a tradition of academic seriousness and place ourselves in total inadequacy. Beyond such extreme situations, however, I think this question remains important: who is looking for whom? Or rather, who should they be looking for? Does the question imply an ethical horizon or is it simply completely irrelevant who will initiate the PhD advisor-doctoral student duet? At a first glance, let's admit, the matter at hand seems ethically neutral. Everything gets complicated, however, when we double the question by another: who proposes the research topic to whom when one is looking for the other? There are situations where the future candidate is the one who takes the first step; they contact the professor and express their intention to pursue doctoral research. Two underlying possibilities arise: the prospective candidate comes with a proposed topic or, secondly, he has no clear research interest, no predetermined topic, but makes himself available to the professor. The ethical background appears at this point: is it ethical for the teacher to fill this “gap” of intention with a particular topic, or should professional ethics stop us from investing anything (including public research funds) in someone who has not even the slightest idea of what they would like to research? Personally, I am inclined to say no to that last question and refuse to randomly assign assignments just for the sake of having one more PhD student.

The opposite situation is equally not devoid of dilemmatic background, the one in which the professor has a kind of drawer with potential topics and is waiting for the appearance of the ideal candidate capable of putting them into the act of research. When it seems that such a candidate has appeared somewhere on the horizon, he contacts them and proposes that research topic. Research, in this case, does not start with the premises of an organic, real need that the researcher feels, but is limited to being a simple task based on a questionable intuition such as “I think this topic would suit you ...”. It is equally true that the professor has his arguments: experience may reveal that the professional profile of doctoral student X fits with a certain type of research; likewise, the professor has the right to a pragmatic type of thinking: the PhD student lives in another city and it will be difficult for him to spend months in the archive of this city to study a topic related to this city, so assigning him this topic would be a wasted

ethically? Hard to say... Would it have been ethical to try to find out about the real health of the candidate? Again, hard to say...

“bullet”. There are other arguments, related to the interest of the respective professor to cover a certain thematic horizon, part of a multi-generational research program that the respective one proposed. Not to mention, then, the specific directions of thematic interest of the Doctoral School to which that professor is affiliated. Paradoxically, the image of a professor who has a drawer with pre-determined topics implies, from an ethical point of view, endless discussions of pros and cons. All the ambiguities stem from another dilemma: whose interest is to be pursued when a topic is assigned? The academic interest of a professor who has the bigger picture or the interest of the doctoral student who wants to develop his knowledge in a certain corridor or niche of the field in which he applies? In addition, other interests intervene: the interest of the community¹², national interest in relation to a certain theme¹³, the interest in preserving the memory of a personality in the field¹⁴.

¹² We have been in a position to “hijack” the proposal of some candidates by sacrificing their interests for the sake of a broader interest of the community. Not long ago, a fellow professor asked me for my opinion on a topic suggested by a well-known journalist of the regional public radio, herself a Theatre graduate in the 90s. The journalist wanted a thesis relevant to cultural marketing, starting from the cultural programs of that radio and probing the profitability of some theatrical programs that the station had in the grid. The passion with which she talked about this project had almost convinced my colleague, her future supervisor. We decided to meet for coffee the three of us and, after an hour of dialogue, all three came to the conclusion, to varying degrees, that the stakes of such research would not have been very relevant to the community. Instead, the idea of revisiting the history of public radio from the perspective of relations between radio and theatre, this implying a valorization of both radio and theatre archives, seemed profitable to us. It was the kind of “hijacking” agreed upon by the PhD student, based on clear and convincing arguments. In other situations, however, research becomes a burden due to the fact that the direction drawn by the supervising professor is not assumed out of conviction by the doctoral student, but only accepted as a kind of fatality against which you cannot fight. Statistically speaking, in the Doctoral School where I work, the abandonment of doctoral studies is intimately linked to the researcher's lack of real attachment to the topic.

¹³ I considered it necessary to have a doctoral research on the work of the most important Romanian director of the last decades, Radu Afrim, and I had the chance to meet the ideal doctoral student for this topic: the actress Ada Lupu, who played in no less than ten performances signed by this director. The topic and assignment of the topic were so natural that today, after the defense of the thesis (evaluated as Excellent), neither I nor my former doctoral student can remember who looked for whom years ago, but, rather, we enter the depth of that Nicu Steinhardt saying, “I wouldn't have looked for you if I hadn't found you.”

¹⁴ A clear example of the initiating discussion done by the professor: a doctoral thesis dedicated to a great actor of Iasi, Petru Ciubotaru, shortly after he passed away. At that time, I considered there was only one possible author of that research: a young actress employed in the National Theatre to replace the great actor, daughter of a director who had cast him in dozens of performances, raised practically, literally and figuratively, in the immediate vicinity of the one who would become the subject of her research. I still wonder today if I did the right thing from a moral point of view: at that time, the actress did not want to pursue doctoral studies, she was too young to prove real qualities as a researcher, and my bet was based on an emotional area

So, who should be looking for whom? Who has the greatest and most beautiful need of the other... It's an answer that, through its stylistics, could satisfy ethical rigors for a while...

♦ *Why do you want to pursue a PhD?* This is the first question that most of the doctoral supervisors address to those who express such an intention. Even though, philosophically, “why?” is not an ethical question *par excellence*¹⁵, many of us consider it necessary in order to define our goals and understand our needs, from the start. Over time, I have encountered several types of response:

- ♦ Because I want to pursue an academic career.
- ♦ Because this theme has concerned me for a very long time and seems important to my development and my relationship to art.
- ♦ Because I want to evolve/grow.
- ♦ Because I am in that stage of my life when I feel the need to get involved in something consistent, long-term, something worth using my energy.
- ♦ Because I can't find my place and I need a refuge.
- ♦ Because my salary would increase¹⁶.
- ♦ Because X or Y has a PhD and I find it unacceptable that I don't.¹⁷
- ♦ Because confidence in my abilities and, generally speaking, my self-esteem would increase if I had such a title.
- ♦ Because I feel that I would die or go crazy if I did not research this topic in an institutional setting¹⁸.
- ♦ Because I'm very keen on working with you.
- ♦ Because that's what I feel I have to do at the moment.
- ♦ Because I really miss my student years and I feel that the PhD would make me relive some of the charm of those years.
- ♦ For the need to clarify who I am and what I want.

rather than a scientific one. We were somehow acting in the interest of Petru Ciubotaru or, better said, in the interest of his memory.

¹⁵ Nicholas Ridout, for one thing, argues that the fundamental question of ethics is “How should I act?”. He refers to this question through the character Neoptolemus, the son of Achilles, facing an ethical dilemma in the Sophocian *Philoctet* (see Nicholas Ridout, *Theater and Ethics*, Methuen Drama, 2021, ch. “How shall I act?”, pp. 1-6).

¹⁶ In Romania, employees who have a PhD degree in their field of institutional activity receive, according to the law, a monthly doctoral allowance of approximately 200 euros. Over time, in different periods of crisis, this increase was cut, then reallocated, questioned, reaffirmed, etc. Currently, the final word in its allocation or non-allocation rests with the manager of the institution who, together with the Board of Directors, decides whether that doctorate is relevant to the current activity of the respective employee in the institution in question.

¹⁷ Though it seems hard to believe, the power of example, to elegantly rename the statement “if he, then so do I”, works with quite motivating effects in the domestic academic space. Discussions on this topic with many other fellow PhD supervisors confirmed my own findings.

¹⁸ It's a rare response, just as acts of research “fanaticism,” in the sense of unconditional, constant and intense passion for research, are increasingly rare.

♦ Because financially I am in a difficult situation, and the doctoral scholarship would be of great use to me¹⁹.

♦ Forgive me, but I don't understand the question.

Some of these answers betray ambition, passion for the topic, while others reveal candor, ego, vested interest, or simply make doctoral research an acceptable option when ...one has nothing better to do. It is left to be decided, in each individual case, how much the answer itself matters for the formalization of the doctoral student-supervisor relationship, if we accept that a question like “Why do you want a PhD degree?” is acceptable from the ethical point of view, in order to open a possible future collaboration. Apparently, they don't harbor much suspicion. It is only natural to know how those with whom you are going to work for a significant number of years think, what goals they have, what personal definitions they assign to the “PhD”. On the other hand, however, the risks involved by asking such a question relate to a certain intrusion into very personal motivations, opening up the issue of the private-public distinction. Formulating such a question implicitly places the relationship in an area of confession, thus in an area marked by subjectivity, which, at least in this initial phase, may seem inadequate to some. From this perspective, rephrases such as “What are the professional reasons that made you pursue doctoral research?” or “What are your expectations from doctoral research?” seem more neutral. Of course, the tone with which we address the “why?” also matters. The tone can decide whether the question has the nuances of an interrogation, a conversation, or an honest desire to understand someone's underlying motivations in a matter that concerns you to an equal extent.

• ***Human chemistry and other doubts.*** Whether we like to admit it or not, liking and disliking play quite important roles in the decisions we make when we choose our collaborators or allow ourselves to be chosen by them. No matter how much objectivity we intend to have, the viruses of subjectivity intervene with or without our will. Among them, there is one of the most problematic and difficult to contest: *human chemistry*. The ethical question is simple but unsettling: to what extent is this *chemistry* allowed to decide the research partnership between the PhD student and the supervising professor? It's not just about chemistry in the sense of that professional compatibility that, say, players in a doubles tennis match need to have, or, more generally, people put in a position to harmonize their thinking and actions. The situation is much more complicated, as variables such as “first impression”, sympathy, even astral

¹⁹ Until 2023, the doctoral scholarship had the approximate value of the minimum salary (around 350 euros). Since the fall of 2023, it has increased to approximately 600 euros, which, compared to the revenues in Romania, makes it really attractive.

compatibility (“what zodiac sign are you?”) and so on come into play. All this subjective “scoring” in the pre-admission phase is much more intense in the Doctoral Schools of Universities with an artistic profile and quite inevitable when the PhD is not scientific, but professional.²⁰ The scenario in which the doctoral students would be distributed to us, instead of chosen, still seems meaningless to us, just as it seems meaningless to try to look at the supervision of doctorates without the human touch that covers it. As long as we translate the chemistry with the topic to the chemistry with the person proposing the topic, we won’t be able to talk about a perfectly ethically regulated relationship.

• **Promises, promises, promises.** How do we respond to pre-admission requests such as: “Please describe my career path during the PhD and post PhD?” Or: “Please tell me how this PhD degree will help me. What perspectives will it open for me, what opportunities will I have?” The code of ethics of most Romanian universities insists on transparency and consistency in the description of career paths for students from all study cycles²¹. This does not, of course, turn the professor into an academic Cassandra able to forecast what and how it will be, but it puts them in a position to speak, one way or another, about the future²². The supervisor cannot afford to shrug or say “I don’t know!” when his future PhD student asks for a concrete description of what is going to happen to him or her. The Code of Ethics starts from the questionable premise of a predictable future; in a balanced, steady world, safe from major accidents, we can formulate predictions, the effect of predictability being essential for most of the decisions we make in life. In academic practice, however, long-term certainties are almost out of the question. Ambiguities intervene, such as the long-term economic resources from a university’s budget, the dynamics of research grants, the qualitative evolution of the doctoral student’s research, the need or lack of need

²⁰ The distinction between a scientific PhD and a professional PhD, present in the Romanian academic environment, is incomprehensible to many professors and researchers from the Western world. It stems from a radical traditional separation between theory and practice, between *researching art* and *practicing art*.

²¹ See the chapter Personal autonomy of the Code of Ethics of the George Enescu National University of Arts Iasi, available here: <https://www.arteiasi.ro/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Carta-UNAGE.pdf>

²² It is what American literature calls “informed consent”. See Bryan Warnick’s article, “The Ethics of Doctoral Admission”, in *Academic Ethics Today*, quoted edition, pp. 213-215. The American professor even questions the fairness of admission to doctoral programs with a high risk of failure in relation to the labor market: „Under what circumstances it is justifiable students into PhD programs with risky future employment prospects? Of relevance here is the notion of informed consent: individuals must agree to interventions administered by professionals that affect their lives. Valued for several reasons, informed consent is important to protect the welfare of individuals, who are themselves the best judges of what constitutes and promotes their welfare”, p. 213.

for the University to integrate students into its ranks after completing the PhD, the attitude that society itself will have after five years in relation to the graduates of doctoral studies, blockages of all kinds, human and institutional, that could intervene and the list can go on. Even if, from an ethical point of view, “personal autonomy” is a sound concept, it can only be partially satisfied. No one can promise, for example, an academic career in this pre-admission phase. It would be unethical to fuel the hopes, ideals, expectations of a PhD student with such empty promises. What we could do would be that, when we talk about the future, we would actually talk about the past, indicating precise, statistical data about what has happened so far and leaving candidates to draw their own conclusions and establish their own kind of balance between *hope* and *actual possibility*.

The problem is not, however, entirely solved²³. Will we talk to our future doctoral students about the systemic difficulties, about the nervousness with which, year after year, we await the number of doctoral grants allotted by the Ministry of Education, about the topic of new Government Ordinances that discredit research by humiliating underfunding, about the possibility of new scandals with plagiarized PhD theses that would make society hostile in relation to the so-called “factories of doctors”? How much honesty and how much realism are we willing to put into this discussion? Or, we will take comfort in the fact that this happens to others, too,²⁴ we will minimize and dismiss the negative information and predictions, on the Wittgensteinian principle that “what cannot be talked about, must be kept silent”...

• ***The research project or about the impossibility of an ethical ideal of evaluation.*** In most Romanian Doctoral Schools, one of the (decisive!) admission tests is the presentation of the so-called “research project”, in fact a

²³ Sometimes one ethical problem opens up another, and so on, in a desolate and dilematic chain of uncertainties. In Paul Oliver's useful volume on research ethics, *The Student's Guide to Research Ethics*, Open University Press, 2010, the author notes the particular situation in education and social sciences: „Ethical issue in education and social sciences are so complex that once one starts to analyse the ethical issues inherent in a particular research project, one often feels that the debate could go on and on for ever. One could easily get into a position where one would never feel confident in starting the research” (p. 166).

²⁴ In the article already cited, Bryan Warnick describes in detail the major problems faced by universities that organize doctoral programs; in many cases the uselessness of doctoral studies for certain segments of the labor market is revealed. If we try, however, to look at the glass half full, we will come to the conclusion, according to the professor from Ohio State University, that a PhD is never “wasted time”: „An ethical graduate program will create alternate pathways that allow for a flexible future by providing a host of useful soft skills, such as writing, speaking, overall communication, teamwork, teaching, and conceptual and empirical analysis. While a doctoral program may not lead directly to a marketable credential, it may still impart proficiencies valuable across a range of occupations, so time spent in a PhD program is not simply time lost, economically speaking” (*Idem*, p. 216).

more or less detailed structure of the future work, a kind of tentative summary of the directions the research will take, the research methodology, the innovations that the research aims for and, of course, the initial bibliography. No one guarantees the admissions committee that this document will materialize one day, that those chapters and subchapters will gain content, that the stakes the research promises will be reached at a given moment. In this phase, the commission evaluates the charm of a promise and awards or fines a speech about the future. In the case of certain themes, especially those with a high degree of originality, it is difficult to anticipate how the research will develop, what new paths will intervene. In the case of other themes, things are so predictable that without much effort conclusions could be drafted from the very beginning. In both situations, the professors on the committee seek to understand what the concrete steps of the process will be, the angles from which some topics will be approached, the starting points and the final stations where the thesis will take us. Very often – although unofficially – in Romania, the realization of the structure falls under the responsibility of the supervising professor, the latter wanting to go for it with a successful admission and, on the other hand, rightly believing in the usefulness of a solid structure. In other cases, the structure presented for evaluation is the result of a co-production between the professor and future doctoral student. The ethical vulnerability of such a situation is obvious, the commission no longer evaluates the actual candidate, but a form of ambiguous co-authorship that makes the professor himself subject to evaluation, along with his future doctoral student. The ethical vulnerability is even greater when the professor himself is on the committee, becoming, of course, an advocate for the structure he himself created. The competition ceases to be (only) between PhD students; it moves to the teacher level. More than once, admission to the PhD has become an occasion for upsets, reproaches, tensions of all kinds between the professors as “authors of structures”. Needless to say: each of them thinks they have created the perfect structure!

Ideally, the committee should not know which supervising professors the PhD students have chosen, but in the case of small and medium-sized Doctoral Schools with a small number of specialists in niche subfields, this ethical rigor is, of course, utopian. This is how this oral presentation of the research project is encumbered from one end to the other by various subjectivities, from the fact that it only illustrates a few intentions, private research fantasies, to the fact that it indirectly already bears the “signature” of the collaboration in the pre-admission phase of the doctoral student-supervising professor couple. If we add the strange provision of some Universities, namely that oral tests cannot be challenged, we have the complete picture of relativism...

• ***The false competition in PhD admissions.*** There is seldom real competition for vacancies in a PhD admission. Somehow, things are decided in a previous phase, each professor knowing approximately how many vacant places they have and what percentage these places represent from the entire number of places allocated to the respective Doctoral School. Though questionable from an ethical point of view, a series of preliminary discussions take place between the professors who are going to take new PhD students, precisely to avoid tensions during the admission. An admission in which, as I said above, not only PhD students are competitors, but also their advisors. A non-competitive environment is an environment, if not dubious, then at least sterile. The possibility of optimal choices disappears, being replaced by predetermined scenarios in which (almost) every candidate has his/her seat already taken. Blatantly, such a situation is reprehensible, at least to the point where, on the basis of another ethical dilemma, we end up being much more tolerant about the lack of competition in doctoral admissions: is it ethical for a professor, aware that a candidate wouldn't have a chance to pass the admission exam, fuel their hopes by making them, just for the sake of the final competition, sit the exams? We have to keep in mind here that many candidates come from other parts of the country, if not other countries or continents. They will therefore spend significant amounts on transport, accommodation, admission fees (which are not recoverable in case of failure!). They will use up time, funds, energy unnecessarily, and I, the professor, am aware that they have no chance of admission because I have already discussed with my colleagues and allocated the available places. Do I still encourage them to apply or do I imply that their chances of success are minimal?

This is why the competition for doctoral admissions will rarely be real. That is with the exception of the competition for scholarships, which we will talk about a little later. Given that each candidate is running for their seat, unpleasant situations can occur, such as those in which the performance of the person under evaluation is very poor. If you don't declare he/she is accepted, the place remains vacant, the University loses the grant allocated to that place and, very importantly, next year the Ministry may assign fewer budgeted places on the idea that since you didn't take them, it means you don't need them.

• ***To whom and why do we offer scholarships?*** Part of the budgeted places that a Romanian Doctoral School receives annually are places with scholarships. The substantial increase of this scholarship, applied from the fall of 2023, will make the doctoral period cease to be a research process only, being understood, more recently, as full-time job. This is all the more so since the budgeted period also increased from 3 to 4 years. The contract that the doctoral scholarship student signs with the University now has the weight of a real employment contract. The financial focus on doctoral scholarships is able to make admissions

committees even more accountable, forcing them to ask themselves questions like “how and why are we awarding scholarships this year?” with the utmost seriousness. The evaluating professors must decide, in principle, from the beginning of the admission process whether they will follow an exclusively meritocratic approach or take into account other details that are not directly related to merit. Although handy, widely praised, the criterion of merit (“May the best win!”) is not always the best solution. The experience put us in front of some excellent PhD students, to whom the admission committee assigned a high degree of confidence and who, in a short time, became so-called *ghost PhD students*. Some of them settled in cities other than the one where the Doctoral School operates, gradually distanced themselves from it to the point that they ceased any relationship with and any participation in the life of the academic community. They respected, in most cases, their training program, they handed in their reports on time, but they did everything from a distance without really adding value to the Doctoral School where they worked. There are PhD students whose existence you almost forget, there is something ghostly about their periodic appearances. The physical and psychological distance that is created between them and the University prevents you from involving them in mobilities, in teaching activities, in organizing academic events, etc., even if, month after month, these doctoral students receive some funds for which they should do something. In extreme situations, we are dealing with *missing PhD students*; their consistency in relation to the School is even less than in the case of phantom PhD students. Immediately after the admission, which they passed successfully while benefiting from a scholarship (based on the most meritocratic criteria possible), these PhD students simply disappear. They do not complete their assignments and will never complete the thesis. The type of contract they sign, a very weak one for the University, doesn’t contain clauses that provide for a possible return of the funds in case of non-fulfillment of obligations. All they risk is expulsion, but the Doctoral School will be very cautious of expelling PhD students mid-PhD. Why? Simple, we’re talking about money again and losing an ongoing grant. The funding *per PhD student*, like the one *per student*, frequently shows its limits.

Therefore, to whom and why do we give scholarships? At this point, the objectivity of the assessment begins to crack once again. There are criteria absent from the grading scales, so subjective that even the professors on the committee don’t name them, but, rather, imply them and tacitly assume them. Thus, one of the great unofficial advantages arises when the city of residence of the future doctoral student coincides with the city where the Doctoral School operates. Doctoral students with a scholarship must be normed as university assistants, so they must teach, i.e. be physically present during the week. They will also attend the current research activities of the University, academic events, they will have to be more available than PhD students without a scholarship. Whenever one of

the fellows lives in the other end of the country, everything gets complicated for everyone: for the doctoral student, for the supervising professor, for the Doctoral School and for the University. Definitely, this is not ethical, but pragmatic thinking. Another debatable and cross-scale criterion is the social situation of the candidates. When he has to decide who will receive the scholarship (monthly, for four years), the professor develops a kind of social empathy. Between a PhD student who the committee knows does not have a job and one with a better admissions performance but who is known to have a stable job, in most cases the former will get a scholarship at the expense of the latter, which, from the perspective of merit, is profoundly unfair, but from the perspective of a hypothetical equality of chances (financially!) at this beginning of the doctoral journey, seems to be a legitimate decision. When qualitatively two candidates are very close, other unnamed criteria intervene: common sense, modesty, politeness, sympathy, the number of dependents the candidate has, whether he/she is family-oriented or not, etc. If a Doctoral School were to adopt something like this in its admissions methodology, it would be discredited in the long run. Peculiarities such as those listed above must remain the little secrets of each Doctoral School.

In contrast, very few Doctoral Schools in Romania check the ethical eligibility of candidates. They are not asked for recommendations from teachers or the authorities of the field in which they were trained or worked until the time of admission, and any professional slips they may have had in the past are impossible to sanction in admission for the simple reason of that the admissions methodologies do not refer to such a thing. In addition, in the interview with the candidate, questions of an ethical nature would seem to many to be ... out of place.

● ***The ideal PhD student – a profile sketch.*** The profile of the ideal PhD candidate, regardless of the field, is different from that of, say, a decade ago, and downright antinomian from that of two or more decades ago. And for the sake of this “profile”, admissions committees are often ready to make delicate moral compromises. According to the Bologna system, which links the three cycles of academic education (bachelor's, master's and doctorate), most doctoral students should be 23-24 years old upon admission. Most PhD supervisors will recognize that the difficulties of coordination are directly proportional to the youth and immaturity of PhD students, in which case the ideal age is pushed a bit further, but not very far: 30+. The reasons are multiple: the quality and intensity of the energies allocated to research, the availability for multi-tasking, belonging to a professional field that brings added value to the Doctoral School, civil stability, temperament adjustments, etc. Once the ideal age for doctoral research, 40+ or 50+ are no longer so tempting; the main reserve comes from the reduced mobility of these PhD students with family obligations, with full time jobs, but also with

a certain lack of enthusiasm to travel around the world. In the context where there is real pressure on the internationalization processes of Doctoral Schools, a PhD student who does not travel becomes, in the eyes of many, unfairly, a weak link. Other qualities such as consistency, seriousness, the quality of reports, articles and scientific communications are quickly forgotten or minimized, for the sake of this neo-PhD student whose main virtue is the speed with which they prepare the trolley for a new journey. They have to go, we want them gone as much and as often as possible, so that we can report with satisfaction, annually, an increasing number of days, months, years, spent in mobility. No one really cares what our PhD students do in these mobilities. They just check off what they have to check off and the rest is up to them. A new formalism, more subtle, but just as harmful, risks becoming chronic in Doctoral Schools in Romania, at least in the humanities field, where the quantification of results and actions undertaken is somewhat more relaxed.

More recently, in the admission phase, and even in the pre-admission phase, the professor's gaze has become accustomed to “scanning” and recognizing the doctoral student's potential to contribute to the internationalization of the School. The Director of the Doctoral School will periodically remind his colleagues of all the so-called “critical indicators”²⁵ that must be met, putting a certain pressure on them and causing them, over time, to prioritize something that in the opinion of many of them is not really a priority. The ethical crack is visible again in the doctoral crystal bowl that we flaunt with such academic pride...

- ***Ethics and Taxes.*** Another ethically relevant issue concerns the fee-based PhD places, places that most Universities put out for competition despite the unprofitability that the Finance Departments never cease of pointing out. The quotable arguments are, indeed, strong: currently, the annual grant allocated by the state to a PhD student is approximately 6,000 euros (this includes the teacher's salary, current expenses, funds allocated to research – travel, participation in conferences, etc.); logically, the fee for an unfunded place from the public budget should still be 6,000 euros, i.e. a monthly rate of 500 euros. It is hard to imagine in Romania candidates with such financial potential or willing to see this tax as an investment they will recover someday. Chances are they'll never get it back. Consequently, an ethical principle is employed²⁶: the tax must

²⁵ The list of critical indicators related to doctoral studies can be looked up here:: <https://www.aracis.ro/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/EN-Annex-4-List-of-indicators-and-critical-indicators-doctoral-study-domains.pdf>

²⁶ The relationship between economic and ethical thought is complex and... full of unpredictability. See *The Oxford Handbook of Ethics and Economics*, edited by Mark D. White, Oxford University Press, 2019, with an emphasis on Arjo Klamer's study, “Economy and Culture: The Importance of Sense Making”, pp. 275-295.

not be prohibitive! It is wrong to associate fee-paying places with PhD students whom we consider poorly prepared because they failed to get the funded places²⁷, just as it is completely unethical to treat them differently, during their doctoral research, by putting a kind of invisible label on them and excluding them from grants, side projects to their individual research and so on. There are quite a few examples in which a fee-paying doctoral student proves to be more successful than a doctoral student who obtained a scholarship. The simple fact that the former pays a regular sum of money makes him additionally responsible; what would be the point of taking on an expense that would lead nowhere?! Let's not forget the particular situation in which doctoral students with a level of excellence who are on their second PhD which, according to Romanian legislation, they have to pay for, end up on fee-paying places.

On the edge of ethics, there is also that more or less explicit convention that, in a phase prior to admission, the doctoral supervisor establishes with the one who is going to become his doctoral student, something along the lines "I'll be your supervisor, but only as a fee-paying student". The professor pre-judges the quality of the candidate, either because they knows him/her very well, or because the CV they received doesn't look reliable. There is, of course, also the situation that that professor no longer has vacancies and is only allowed to have fee-paying PhD students.²⁸ The PhD student is suggested to check the fee-paying option in the admissions documents. When taking the admission exam, those PhD students already know they will be assigned one of the fee-paying positions,

²⁷ Unfortunately, there is this trend of *low inclusion* of fee-paying PhD students in the life of a Doctoral School. Procedurally assimilated in a different way to "full-time" PhD students, they are placed in a very approximate "reduced frequency", the term "reduced" describing the type of relationship that the School maintains with them. Although it sounds harsh, not a few Doctoral Schools treat the fee as a "disability" of the respective PhD student. Discussing fee-paying doctoral students in Romania in 2023 almost pushes you towards the area of inclusive education, with all the nuances related to the complicated inclusive-exclusive relationship (see in this sense Franziska Felder (2022), *The ethics of Inclusive Education. Presenting a New Theoretical Framework*, Routledge: „Inclusion is a complex and multifaceted concept, and its implementation in practice involves many hurdles and trade-offs, not merely the reversal of exclusion. If we are to understand which forms of different treatment or even exclusion are legitimate and which are not, we need a nuanced understanding of the form and content of inclusion and inclusion education”, p. 17.

²⁸ In some Doctoral Schools, there was and still is a discussion about norming the fee-paying doctoral students on the payroll of the professors. The discussion is generated by the economic structures of the Universities that insist on profitability criteria, sending Doctoral Schools a message like: "We understand the ethical principle, but you must also understand the profitability principle. It would not be bad, then, to minimize the expenses regarding these PhD students; or the biggest expense comes from your salaries. Of course, such a message will never be sent officially, explicitly, to the supervising professors. A situation is "exposed" to them; once, twice, as many times as needed. Finally, the professor acquires a kind of "academic guilt" and will avoid taking on fee-paying PhD students.

their poor performance being indulgently accepted by the commission on the nefarious principle “if they are fee-paying students, what's the point of torturing them?”

Universities are therefore compelled to establish the amount of the fee, guided not only by profitability, but having at the back of their mind variables such as equal opportunities or the primacy of quality. Currently, the annual fees set for PhD programs in most Romanian Universities do not exceed 3,000 euros. In the Doctoral School to which I am affiliated, the fee was increased in 2021 from 1,200 euros to 1,600 euros. Each Doctoral School also decides the number of fee-paying places it is willing to put up for competition, depending, of course, on the number of budgeted places it receives. It would be absurd and indeed completely unproductive for the number of fee-paying places to be greater than the number of places funded from the budget.

3. Conclusions

It is difficult, if not impossible, to believe that an admissions methodology, even if backed up by a very carefully articulated code of ethics, could refer to situations such as those discussed above. In general, relative to the situations that arise concretely, our official benchmarks show their shortcomings²⁹. The multitude of perspectives from which you can look at a specific situation at the level of the supervising professor – candidate/doctoral student relationship discourages applied ethical reflection, in favor of conjunctural decisions, based at most on common sense, on personal values or on the approximate principle that “I've done this before in the past and there was no problem”.

Regardless of what kind of decision we will take, and how much this decision will reflect a prior conscience of an ethical nature, I think it is very important to openly discuss what seems to elude our needs for dialogue. It is a first and very important step towards a future stage in which the ethical reflex could become an integral part of everything we do, undertake, decide in the field of doctoral research. No one guarantees us that the research we coordinate will be better or more useful, however, Blaise Pascal's words in the discussion about the bet on the existence of God: we have nothing to lose if we bet on ethics!

²⁹ It is a conclusion frequently reached by researchers in the field of ethics. „...In research, those principles are put into action by individuals, pairs or small groups of people influenced by many interacting factors such as their research topic and their own worldviews. This means that guidelines, codes or principles, made up (as they must inevitably be) of broad concepts, require those concepts to be interpreted in their application to specific situation. Codes or guidelines, however detailed and helpful, cannot cover every possible eventuality and will never be the only influence on a researcher's ethical decisions. Also, guidelines and codes may lay out ethical considerations, but not rank them in order of priority”, Helen Kara (2018), *Research Ethics in the Real World*, Policy Press, University of Bristol, UK, p. 36.

Bibliography

- Baggini, Julian, S. Fosl, Peter (2007). *The Ethics Toolkit. A Compendium of Ethical Concepts and Methods*, Blackwell Publishing
- Brooks, Rachel, te Riele, Kitty, Maguire, Meg (2014). *Ethics and Education Research*, Sage Publications Ltd, London
- Cahn, Steven M. (editor) (2002). *Academic Ethics Today. Problems, Policies and Prospects for University Life*, Foreword by Rebecca Newberger Goldstein, Rowman & Littlefield
- Felder, Franziska (2022). *The ethics of Inclusive Education. Presenting a New Theoretical Framework*, Routledge
- Kara, Helen (2018). *Research Ethics in the Real World*, Policy Press, University of Bristol, UK
- Oliver, Paul (2010). *The Student's Guide to Research Ethics*, Open University Press
- Peterson, Andrew, Arthur, James (2021). *Ethics and the Good Teacher. Character in the Professional Domain*, Routledge, London
- Ridout, Nicholas (2021). *Theatre and Ethics*, Methuen Drama
- White, Mark D. (2019). *The Oxford Handbook of Ethics and Economics*, Oxford University Press
- Wooldridge, Adrian (2022) *Aristocrația talentului. Cum a creat meritocrația lumea modernă*, [The aristocracy of talent. How meritocracy made the modern world], translated by Adina Avramescu, Polirom, Iași
- <https://www.arteiasi.ro/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Carta-UNAGE.pdf>
- <https://www.aracis.ro/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/EN-Annex-4-List-of-indicators-and-critical-indicators-doctoral-study-domains.pdf>

Without harming the other person

Octavian JIGHIRGIU

Professor PhD

“George Enescu” National University of Arts Iași
ROMANIA¹

Abstract: The term “ethics” today has an unprecedented notoriety, being used in contexts and relating to the most varied, sometimes even contradictory, actions. Behavioral ethics refers both to the statements or actions of a public figure, and to alleged social justice, marginalization and “Cancel Culture” media lynching. The university environment is, par excellence, a generator and, at the same time, a defender of ethical principles, despite its versatility derived from the multitude and specificity of fields. The criminalization of plagiarism, combating discrimination or abuse are, one by one, topics of discussion in the ethics commissions of universities. At the level of doctoral education, especially in the field of applied research, moral norms become referential benchmarks. If art has its own moral code, why wouldn't we apply the same units of measurement to artistic research? How far can we safely “drill” without hurting the other person? When we research can we “shelter” behind the specific freedoms of creation? Who sets the limits and on what terms? We don't know if we can answer these queries, but we can try to theorize some of the ethical filters that govern the act of research, using concrete examples from here and there.

Keywords: ethics, doctoral, art, theatre.

1. Introduction

The term “ethics has an unprecedented notoriety nowadays, being used in a wide variety of contexts and relating to a wide variety of actions, sometimes even contradictory. Behavioral ethics refers to a person's statements or actions as well as to alleged social justice, marginalization and “Cancel Culture” social media lynchings. Ethics legislates the morality of existence, but can also don the garb of totalitarianism, censorship, communal or individual obstructionism. It is a ball thrown from one side to the other as a “ball of justice”, often with determinants and effects contrary to the moral principles on behalf of which it acts. The noblest arguments and motives can instantly turn us into (radicalized)

¹ jighirgiu@gmail.com

fighters affiliated to a cause. From politics, medicine and showbiz to entrepreneurship, sport and education, the rules of ethics manifest themselves as forces of law and order ready to intervene at the slightest law-breaking.

At the academic level, the standardization of ethics ensures a degree of resolution of specific problems. At the same time, the academia, which is by excellence a generator and defender of ethical principles, gives rise to a number of antagonisms arising from the versatility of the system, university autonomy and the multiplicity and specificity of fields. The incrimination of plagiarism, the fight against discrimination and abuse are becoming, one by one, topics of discussion in university ethics committees. In doctoral education, particularly in the field of applied research, moral standards are the benchmarks. The so-called “inflationist phenomenon” or “PhDs on a conveyor belt” creates the optimal framework for specific pitfalls and vulnerabilities. The PhD is, as we know, an endeavor aimed at confirming individual performance in a particular field, contributing in an original way to advanced research, involving creativity and knowledge, generating progress, developing ideas, innovating and promoting interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity.

Even if we, in the arts, do not do scientific research in the technical sense of the phrase (we do not test different treatments on living subjects in the laboratory), we invariably come under the scope of ethics, whether we operate with hermeneutic tools, associative/dissociative analysis, comparisons and abstractions, with documentation in dusty archives or with our own biological, emotional and cognitive arsenal. The appanage of political correctness plays a decisive role here. In his study of the decline of contemporary society, the philosopher Philip Atkinson considered that

by using the excuse of not upsetting anyone, the politically correct are demanding that people behave like the fool who would please everyone; that everyone must become such a fool! All must accept the notions of the Politically Correct as truth, or else! This is the same mentality that inspired the Inquisition and forced Galileo to recant; the same mentality that inspired the Nazis and obtained the Holocaust. Once expression gets placed in a straitjacket of official truth, then the madness that occurs in all totalitarian states is obtained. Life, in private and public, becomes a meaningless charade where delusion thrives and terror rules.²

² Philip Atkinson (2007), *A Study of Our Decline*, retrieved from Lulu.com, pp. 146-147.

So, when we choose to research, and I am not referring here to fundamental research, based on exegesis, but to the set of methodological techniques and tools that question the current reality, the cultural, social and political issues of the moment, we are faced with difficult choices. If the topic of study is aimed at a disadvantaged environment, such as, say, independent art, inevitably, the research will collide with the institutionalized system of art, with the “favorites of fate” who manage public money, not a few. The analysis of the independent artistic environment will also require a comparative perspective in which the image of the state system will certainly come out *wrinkled*. We all know the legislative and institutional dysfunctions that turn art and mass culture into bottomless budget pits. So far, ethics is only manifested at a generalizing level. When, however, we move on to particular examples, because the system means a tree structure in which each *leaf* has a National Identification Number, regardless of whether we are talking about the decision-makers at each level or the employees with a lifetime contract, the character of the investigation – basically, an objective research – takes on slightly blameworthy nuances through the viewpoint of ethics.

If, instead, the research takes the form of a laboratory of specific practice, we will immediately “face off” other kinds of moral filters, at least in the environment I know best, the theatre. A first filter is that of the ethics of interpersonal collaboration. Theatrical research involves, most of the time, dialogue between creators who probe the limits of corporeality or the human psyche. Establishing ethical collaborative relationships in such micro-communities, by respecting the rights of each participant, becomes, in itself, an arduous process. And I don't mean the extreme cases publicized in the public space – accusations of violence and sexual harassment, abuse of power or various forms of discrimination³ – but the usual behavior in which you test with “the other” person emotions, thoughts and extreme actions. Inevitably you probe through vulnerabilities and bring to the fore an intimate arsenal of the individual's resources. Is it ethical or not, for example, an anthropological research like the one carried out by Jerzy Grotowski with his actors in *Teatr Laboratorium* in Wrocław, or like the one undertaken by the founder of the New York company Performance Group (1967), Richard Schechner⁴, who in the show

³ Recent cases in social media have focused on artists such as Jan Fabre, Andriy Zholdak and Felix Alexa, but there are many more examples of ethical breaches in the theatrical world.

⁴ Cobina Gillitt (2013), *Richard Schechner*, Asian Theatre Journal, Vol. 30, No. 2 (FALL), pp. 276-294.

Dionysus after the *Bacchantes* by Euripides, staged in 1969, explored the human body “as a medium for staged, ritual and therapeutic techniques”⁵

Theatre and democracy often have parallel discourses, despite the fact that the stage is a safe space for everyone, regardless of ethnicity, religious beliefs, political beliefs or sexual orientation. However, limitations, obstructions or radical expositions are always present in the scene. If art has its own moral code, why can't we apply the same units of measurement to artistic research? You are probably wondering what relevance all these observations have in the field of doctoral research. The answer lies in the very opening that the field of theatre and performing arts is enjoying at the moment, by accessing the professional PhD. Thus, a series of applied study sites is launched in the most varied spheres. The contribution of each research is ensured, beyond interpretations, analogies or references, by the courage to “clear new paths”. Under these conditions, with what weapons should the researcher go on the road? With the daring dream and fertile curiosity or with the caution of the steps and the fear of possible failures in morality?

To put into practice research that radically changed the dynamics of contemporary performing arts, the rules of ethics were blatantly violated. The New York-based company The Living Theatre⁶, founded in the early 1950s by set designer Julian Beck and actress Judith Malina, was blasting the American way of life with shows like *Paradise Now* and catchphrases like “unconditional no to today's society!” Seen as escapist by critics, the company's productions proposed anarchic escapes from the system, instigating revolt.

Also, the radicalism of social criticism manifested in Japan in the late 1960s through the *angura* (underground) theatre movement in Japan targeted Japanese youth and was a form of instigating protest through manifesto texts and shocking performances. Terayama Shuji, one of the leading artists of the “underground theatre, had, working with the Tenjo Sajiki group, arrived at the radical concept that theatre is “the only place where lawlessness is tolerated”⁷.

Marina Abramovic and her partner Ulay blew up any form of social morality in their 1977 performance at the Gallery of Modern Art in

⁵ Manfred Brauneck, *Independent Theatre in Contemporary Europe: Structures – Aesthetics – Cultural Policy*, ITI Germany, 2017, p. 23: “Schechter's staging of *Dionysos* in '69, a free adaptation of Euripides' *Bacchae* (first performed in 1968), was a group performance which probably most consistently and exclusively relied on the human body as a medium for staged, ritual and therapeutic techniques.”

⁶ <https://www.livingtheatre.org/>

⁷ Manfred Brauneck, *op. cit.*, p. 28, “According to Terayama, theatre is the «only place where lawlessness is tolerated».”

Bologna. I quote from the project website: “In *Imponderabilia* two performers, both completely nude, stand in a doorway. The public must squeeze between them in order to pass, and in doing so choose which one of them to face.”⁸ Not to mention the famous 1974 performance *Rhythm 0*⁹ at the Studio Morra in Naples, in which Marina Abramovic offered her own body to the audience for unlimited exploration, to the point of flagellation and the threat of death.

What do we do, then, in the face of an increasingly harsh counter-offensive of the public good seasoned with militant formulas and social media lawsuits, when artistic research targets sensitive or downright *undermined* areas? How far can we safely drill without harming the other? Obviously, there are rules. They have more of a technical, transhuman nature. The confidentiality of personal data, the participants' consent, the use of the subjects' images under conditions of the utmost care, the blurring of identity traits, the ultra-controlled impact of the study results on society, the obligation to deal responsibly with sensitive subjects, the avoidance of perpetuating stereotypes or discrimination, etc.

And yet, the plague of political correctness which fuels the witch hunt in today's public space has a next level: abuses in the name of equality – “Let's abolish nations, because look how unequal they are. Or the feminine and masculine genders in grammar, because they discriminate. Or even grades in the register because they're not equal for everyone. Or, or, or...”¹⁰ Also, trumpeting multiculturalism at all costs – despite the fact that some cultures practice physical and mental abuse, in others there is a state policy for military and/or religious indoctrination, and yet in others there is a pro-discrimination legislation.

How do we go about when highlighting these specific features in artistic research? Because an analysis of substance cannot avoid dominant characteristics that define a way of being. Can we protect ourselves, when we research, behind the specific freedoms of creation? Who sets the limits and in what terms? In my capacity as Vice-Rector for Research and Artistic Creation (George Enescu National University of Arts, Iași), I have no official answer. And if I am given the choice, I will probably speculate, choosing to do everything in my power to achieve my goal, to demonstrate the premise from which I started my research. A politically correct representation of different cultures and communities, people and facts, an

⁸ <https://www.wikiart.org/en/marina-abramovic/imponderabilia>: “In *Imponderabilia* (1977, reenacted in 2010) two performers, both completely nude, stand in a doorway. The public must squeeze between them in order to pass, and in doing so choose which one of them to face.”

⁹ <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/abramovic-rhythm-0-t14875>.

¹⁰ Statements made in the public space in different contexts of political and/or social analysis.

analysis carried out with caution and respect, will invariably elide fundamental aspects, identity particularities of the subject of study.

When it comes to minorities or disadvantaged groups, the problem becomes even more acute, even more thorny. On this moving ground we have carried out several researches, artistic practice labs finalized by performances. One of them took place in the tram depot in Iasi, turned into a camp, a gas chamber, a classroom or a Parisian café for the production *Fondane's Last Cigarette*. Funded by a Norwegian grant, the show re-enacted a painful episode in recent human history, centering on the poet and essayist Benjamin Fondane, who met his end in the horrific Auschwitz extermination camp. Throughout my documentation in the archives, but also in the memorials of the concentration camps in Poland and France, I felt I had to “tiptoe” around the topic. I knew that I was approaching a hot topic, a culture whose representatives in Iași would judge me for any deviation, error or inadvertence. And so it was. The show, hailed by the Iași community and critics alike, was the subject of debate at an event related to the Iași pogrom, where members of the local Jewish community expressed their apprehension – the term can be seen as a euphemism – about “the way the show portrays their nature and lifestyle”. The show was a tribute, and yet it still hurt. About this balance between diametrically opposed realities and perspectives, about this ridiculous balance between principles and evidence is, in fact, my article. A naive, therefore deeply subjective confusion.

The same thing happened in the case of another research project carried out about and within a vulnerable community, a very special one: the blind. Seven years ago, more precisely in January 2017, we had the premiere of the show *Completely white*, an atypical approach for the local theatrical landscape, research funded by the Iasi City Hall and implemented by the ARTES Association in partnership with the Association of the Blind. The press release then announced a double premiere: “For the first time in our country, a show is being staged with a script adaptation from José Saramago. In addition, in order to make the fictional universe of the novel *An Essay on Blindness* reach the audience as well as possible, the artists of the *Completely White* project decided to make the performance a singular experience, based on sensoriality.”¹¹ At the end of the first performance, some members of the Association of the Blind, who had supported the actors in documenting for their roles in the

¹¹ Fragment from the press release retrieved from <https://www.agerpres.ro/comunicate/2017/01/31/comunicat-de-presa-asociatia-artes-iasi-12-06-06>

project, objected to the many aspects that put them in a bad light, distorting their reality and circumventing the purely fictional nature of our approach.

In this context, I drew the attention of a younger colleague who is carrying out niche research in the framework of his own professional doctorate to be mindful in his approach. After a workshop that focused on institutionalized elderly people in the context of body shaming, now the young PhD student Radu Alexandru, under the coordination of our colleague associate prof. dr. habil. Călin Ciobotari, launches his analysis on the vulnerable area targeted by the *Completely White* project, that of blind people. I sincerely hope that he will not stumble into any ethical pitfalls during his research

There are other aspects that make the subject of such an analysis, but I prefer to leave my practical research experiences for other moments of reflection and stocktaking. I have certainly not answered all the questions raised here. Nor have I set out to do so. I am merely meditating on some of the ethical filters that govern the act of artistic research in order to better understand the “rules of the game”. The ethical challenges facing artistic research can erode the integrity of this form of knowledge and innovation. At the same time, the value of such an endeavor can be enhanced by courage, perseverance, but also a certain form of “intellectual cheekiness.” I believe that this is the only way to add new and relevant knowledge and information to your field of interest and expertise, a rare skill considering that the system largely operates with existing knowledge, reapplying it all over again.

Bibliography

Atkinson, Philip (2007). *A Study of Our Decline*, Lulu.com.

Brauneck, Manfred (2017). *Independent Theatre in Contemporary Europe: Structures – Aesthetics – Cultural Policy*, ITI Germany

Gillitt, Cobina (2013). *Richard Schechner*, Asian Theatre Journal, Vol. 30, No. 2

Grotowski, Jerzy (1998). *Spre un teatru sărac* [Towards a poor theater], translation by George Banu and Mirella Nedelcu-Patureau, Unitext Publishing house – Magister series, București

<https://www.livingtheatre.org/>

<https://www.wikiart.org/en/marina-abramovic/imponderabilia>

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/abramovic-rhythm-0-t14875>

<https://www.agerpres.ro/comunicate/2017/01/31/comunicat-de-presa-asociatia-artes-iasi-12-06-06>

<https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2022/04/29/artist-jan-fabre-given-18-month-sentence-by-a-belgian-court>

<https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-cultura-26153953-scandalul-premiilor-uniter-uniunea-teatrata-explica-nominalizat-pentru-regizorul-andriy-zholdak-acuzat-palmuit-actrita.htm>

<https://www.libertatea.ro/stiri/zeci-de-profesori-din-unatc-au-semnat-o-scrisoare-deschisa-dupa-ce-regizorul-felix-alexa-a-fost-acuzat-de-hartuire-sexuala-de-mai-multe-studente-4373980>

Thinking outside the box

Anca Doina CIOBOTARU

Professor PhD

“George Enescu” National University of Arts Iași
ROMANIA¹

Abstract: Theoretically, the legislation provides clear directions, through which the relationship between the mentee and the mentor is defined, in the context of a doctoral research project. In practice, interpersonal relationships involve nuances, variables and peculiarities that are difficult to anticipate. In this context, the question arises: should the coordinator be a mentor or a coach? An (apparently) simple question that can help both to cover the route from admission to the defense of the thesis, and to clarify the place of each participant, because the team will include (at least) two plus three members; basically, the role of the “Guidance Committee” must be an active/proactive one. Even if the relationship is established on the basis of a contract, with legislative delimitations (in full change) that – both the PhD student and the coordinator – must respect, the assumption does not only involve a formal and mechanical application of some standards, but aims at two other components resulting from the definition, at an international level, of the concept of artistic research: creating a new product (for the benefit of humanity) and triggering one's own growth. Thus, it is necessary to look for alternative coordination techniques, which respect the spirit of the law, without getting stuck in the “letter”, but which require a creative approach not only to the content, but (especially) to the “journey”, the use of a system of support, necessary for the research process and building an ethical, dynamic and creative relationship.

Keywords: PhD, leadership, coordinator.

1. Introduction

In theory, the legislation provides clear directions for defining the relationship between the student and the supervisor, in the context of a doctoral research project; in practice, interpersonal relationships involve shades, variables and peculiarities that are difficult to anticipate. In this context, controversies are natural, inevitable; within them, the question creeps in: should the supervisor be a mentor or a coach? An (apparently) simple question that can help both cover the route from admission to the defense of the thesis, and to clarify the place of each participant, because the team will include (at least) two plus three members; basically, the role of the

¹ artcivica@gmail.com

“Guidance Committee” must be an active one (why not, proactive). Even if the relationship is established based on a contract, with legislative delimitations (in full change) that both the PhD student and the supervisor must observe, the assumption does not involve only a formal and mechanical application of some standards, but concerns two other resulting components from the definition, at an international level, of the concept of *artistic research*: creating a novelty product (for the benefit of humanity) and triggering one's own growth. Thus, it is necessary to look for alternative coordination techniques, which observe the spirit of the law, without getting stuck in the “letter”, but which require a creative approach not only to the content, but (especially) to the “journey”, the use of a system of support – necessary for the research process and building an ethical, dynamic and creative relationship.

2. Looking for alternative...

All this implies, however, thinking outside the box, looking for alternative, flexible solutions, adaptable to each specific situation. In this sense, we bring to attention the work strategy that includes elements of *coaching* and *scientific camp*, applied over time, but always changing.

In fact, the use of the phrase *scientific camp* implies the acceptance of the intersection of methods in the process of supervising a doctoral research, based on three distinct concepts:

- leadership,
- coaching,
- artistic research.

Leadership determines the replacement of the “positional rapport” with ... a formula based on trust and collaboration; In this sense, we can use three questions to check the type of relationship:

- Would you assist me?
- Can you assist me?
- Do you care about me and this research?

If there are signs of doubt over a single answer, then the supervisor must reassess his/her position. Theoretically, requesting and accepting to supervise is based on mutual trust, generated by the competence/knowledge of the advisor, their skills as a researcher, their ability to formulate research strategies, through which they will be able to “help” the PhD student. The involvement, however, is determined by the connection, by the way the two will be able to establish an interpersonal relationship, which will foster creativity.

The first stage of verification can take place in the preparation of the entrance exam and of the Project; the level of honesty and demand in evaluation/self-evaluation, of reflection on the fundamental principles specific to artistic research can create the premises of a healthy collaboration; each compromise will be paid for during the journey. Applying these principles, however, can trigger the risk of

abandonment, but identifying incompatibilities from the start is worth seeing as an invaluable gift that will help us “not send the ducks to the vultures’ school”.

The verb “to care” can materialize starting with the selection of the guidance team/committee; the selection criteria of the members can sometimes take the doctoral supervisor out of the comfort zone, if the priority is the competence of those targeted (in the field of research) and not the “peace” that could accompany the collaboration with them. Basically, this stage of organization represents a form of action; in leadership it can be identified by what is called “The Law of Navigation” – each member of the team will have a well-established role, will contribute to completing the doctoral path, especially in crisis situations. Obviously, the PhD student must take advantage of the chance to be placed in the position of “captain”; the generosity of the guidance team is one of the aspects in which ethics, competence and character constitute a blank check offered to the PhD student – the way of usage is a personal one, with direct influences on the results.

The presence of coaching techniques imposes its axiomatic status through *questioning*. Over the years, I have come to understand that (regardless of the level of study, but especially within the “doctorate”) the questions, not the answers, are essential; by asking them, the supervisor has the possibility to trigger access to the internal solutions, specific to the doctoral student. It is true, this method is time-consuming and energy consuming, it forces the tutor to understand and experience the differences between coaching, mentoring, pedagogical counseling and – above all – the integrity criteria specific to artistic research. In this context, the lessons accessed (within the JMT Romania platform) provided me with a useful definition for the coordination of a doctoral research: coaching helps a person advance from the point where they are to the point where they are heading (consciously and assumed) and then overcome the obstacles that may arise along the way; in other words, “coaching is the thought-provoking conversation that equips you with the answers you need to face challenges, maximize opportunities, and grow to become a better version of you”; a “creative process” through which the doctoral student can also be “pushed to action”². Accessing the necessary answers and growth become two essential pillars that will allow him to realize the meaning he can attach to his endeavor, beyond administrative implications or social recognition. “Developing to become a better version of yourself” and contributing to the development of knowledge is a form of application of the principles contained in the concept of *artistic research*.

During my own coaching training I understood the importance of “unchaining” creativity, of untapped sources of imagination; thus, the following questions emerged: how can I spark the interest of students/doctoral students? How can I unlock imagination/creativity in the doctoral research process? Asking inspiring and powerful questions will get them out of the “box”, to stand up and see

² <https://johnmaxwellgroup.ro/traininguri/coaching/training-coaching>

the bigger picture, to unlock themselves. The “scientific camp” formula was born, however, from the identification of the four factors necessary to take over coaching techniques:

- the doctoral student's desire to grow (in the mentioned senses),
- the student's mental health,
- flexibility and openness to change,
- (last but not least) the mentor's vision, their desire to trigger growth, beyond the official tasks specific to the contract and the grant.

Under these circumstances, the need to create a context of growth - which can allow the personality of the PhD student to grow (as well as the thesis) - led me to what I call the *scientific camp* – that is, to the identification of a suitable space and a time interval in which the team PhD student – supervisor prepares for the achievement/completion of a well-established goal. Therefore, the two (the participation of the entire coordination team is still an ideal) must “isolate” themselves, for a period of time, to work exclusively on the doctoral research project. Organizational aspects involve:

- the existence of a full consensus between the two, regarding the period, place and rules of conduct;
- establishing the objective and tasks for each;
- clarifying the dialogue topics specific to each day,
- accepting to use certain creative research techniques (adapted to the topic).

We insist on consensus and establishing rules – two defining conditions in ensuring the smooth running of the training program. Since the current legislative system does not provide for the budgeting of such activities, the supervisor must assume everything related to providing the infrastructure and “management and protocol” expenses (thus protecting himself/herself from any suspicions regarding undisclosed interests or the violation of ethical norms) or to identify an alternative financing solution (for example, through a sponsor, an NGO). The PhD advisor becomes the “host”/sponsor of the camp, a fact that determines conditioning the application of this working method on the existence of material resources, a space for study and experimentation where he can invite the doctoral student, on the possibility of providing a private area with a decent level of comfort. This aspect, correlated with the concrete possibility of extraction from the daily schedule, makes the duration of deployment 3 to 5 days (without excluding extension or replication). The determining element for the specifics of this type of activity is represented by the OBJECTIVE, to which concrete items will be associated (quantitative or qualitative – number of pages, development of analyses, new case studies etc.). “While vision tells people where to go, their purpose shows why they should go

there.”³ A clear understanding of these aspects will determine the materialization of results, through which skills and knowledge become concrete.

Sometimes family and/or professional/contractual issues can make this method inapplicable, but it can be approached in a virtual or sequential version, both based on establishing a time frame, a schedule of daily meetings in a virtual or physical format and clear work assignments. If the first form proposed is based on “total cutting”, the last two are based on cutting and rhythmicity (in these cases the duration will be extended, to be able to balance the action of distress factors, generated by the environment and technological aspects with the eustress ones (generated by the declared application of coaching techniques and results, the technique of questions unlocking the inner answers and determining the achievement of objectives, including through awareness of aspects related to time management). And in these variants, the initiative will belong to the supervisor, a fact that will turn the method into an effective working formula, which will allow overcoming a moment of crisis and/or completing the thesis. The scientific camp – 1:1 – also allows to avoid situations of deviation from the norms of research ethics; the supervisor has the possibility of emphasizing the verification of the documentation method and (why not) can identify the possible temptation of the doctoral student to take over contents, without specifying the information source – a temptation that manifests itself especially in crisis situations (exceeding the established deadlines, personal problems etc.); the connection also determines approaching the personal style, since during the meetings the doctoral student (according to the agreed rules) will receive work assignments. As the use of AI becomes an accepted working technique, the risk of not noticing all the “similarities” may increase, an aspect that does not diminish the advantages of accessing new databases.

Declaring the objectives, principles and work techniques (specific to the advisor and the PhD student) allows the identification of common points and the definition of the strategy, based on the set of rules resulting from the summation of the legal provisions, with the axes of personal non-negotiable values of those involved. Academic ethics is more than a set of rules contained in the declaration of an official entity; it must adapt to changes in the world of research; clarifications are not only welcome, but required: “Ensure that the content generated by ChatGPT is original and doesn’t violate any copyright laws, and be sure to cite each source mentioned.

Be transparent about your use of ChatGPT in your research paper. Recognize the limitations of the tool and the extent to which it was used in the writing process.”⁴ Transparency can only be experienced within a context based on trust.

³ John C. Maxwell (2009), *The 360° Leader* [Lider la 360°], translated by Ana Maria Stanca, AMALTEA București, p. 279.

⁴ <https://mindthegraph.com/blog/ro/chatgpt-research-paper/> accessed on 30. 10. 2023.

3. Conclusions

Regardless of the work type applied, it is important to use an algorithm like: action – analysis of results – reflection – resuming – completion. Thus, you can set an efficient way of working, customized and adapted to the theme. The internalization of research techniques and of the related discipline and assuming responsibility for one's results can be triggered and reinforced within some training periods, but are conditioned by the awareness of the opportunity offered. Thus, thinking outside the box of formalism will be a natural consequence of planting the seeds of success and creativity, of the desire to create something significant, useful, representative not only for oneself, but also for the academic community to which one belongs. Even if the author of the thesis will rarely mention, in the volume published on its basis, the contribution of those who accompanied them on the doctoral journey, the doctoral supervisor applies the model of the unconditional gift of light. Building relationships is based on trust, systematic engagement (resulting from motivation), competence and enjoyment. If these pillars are not in harmony, the construction cannot have balance, it cannot “stand”. In fact, most of the time, interpersonal relationships are decisive for the development and completion of a project (be it doctoral); the character profile also outlines the journey profile and results; doing what you say and saying what you do becomes an integral part of the research activity, an aspect also reflected by the funded Project, presented in the “entrance” exam.

The formalization of certain methods such as the *research camp*, their correlation with internship or ERASMUS programs, the provision of an infrastructure adapted to the real needs of the doctoral students and the doctoral supervisor, but also the re-evaluation of the norming/financing method could represent viable solutions, which would allow increasing the percentage of works completed – a sensitive topic at national level. The reformulation of the specific program of the Doctoral School (including the way of financing) could constitute a “re-start” point, through which research can gain the status of “part of a way of life”. Accountability, discipline and time management need rewarding, recognition, respect; until then, the vitality of a Doctoral School will be generated by the passion of those involved. “If passion is not part of the picture, then your vision is not transferable; it's just a cute snapshot.”⁵ Thinking outside the box can counterbalance the action of... inertia.

Bibliography

Maxwell John C. (2009). *The 360° Leader* [Lider la 360°], translation by Ana Maria Stanca, Editura Amaltea, București
<https://johnmaxwellgroup.ro/traininguri/coaching/training-coaching>
<https://mindthegraph.com/blog/ro/ai-in-academic-research/>

⁵ John, C Maxwell, *op. cit.*, p. 281.

Doctoral research in theatre and the requirement to have a PhD diploma for tenure in higher education: development or regression?

Maria Adriana HAUSVATER Associated
Professor PhD
Western University of Timișoara
ROMANIA ¹

Abstract: Tenure in higher education can only be done after acquiring the doctoral degree. I will analyze the suitability of this system to the theatrical vocational system, as well as academic ethics, a pivotal element at the intersection of the two areas – scientific and artistic – in this context, the benefits or damages brought to the specific professional system. I will analyze the risks, as well as the changes in professional ethics arising from this model.

Keywords: research, PhD, tenure, theatre.

1. Introduction

Tenure in higher education can only be granted after obtaining a doctoral degree. In the following I will analyze the appropriateness of this articulation to the theatrical vocational system, as well as academic ethics, a pivotal element at the intersection of the two areas - scientific and artistic. I will also analyze in this context the benefits or harms and limitations brought to the specific professional system by the particularities of vocational higher education in theatre. I will analyze the risks, as well as the changes in professional ethics resulting from this model.

2. The two types of PhD

To begin with, I will analyze the two types of PhD practiced in the Romanian academic system, namely the scientific PhD and the professional doctorate, evoking the definition given by the Education Law to each of them. Thus, Article 158, paragraph (6), point a) of Law 1/2011², as updated, stipulates

¹ ada.hausvater@gmail.com

² https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/legea-educatiei_actualizata%20august%202018.pdf

that the scientific doctorate *aims to produce original scientific knowledge, internationally relevant, based on scientific methods, organized only for full-time education. The scientific doctorate is a prerequisite for a professional career in higher education and research*, while the professional doctorate, applied to the fields of arts and sport, *aims at the production of original knowledge based on the application of the scientific method and systematic reflection on artistic creations or on high-level national and international sports performances, which may constitute a basis for a professional career in higher education and research in the fields of arts and sport*, as the definition in the same Law, Article 158, paragraph 6, point b), states. At the same time, Law 199/2023³, the Law on University Education, in Article 61(a) and (b), retains the concept of the two distinct categories of doctoral degree.

Therefore, as the law further defines in Article 159(1)(b), the doctoral study program involves an *individual program of scientific research or artistic creation*. In other words, the *sine qua non* condition for doctoral studies implies the existence of a valuable work, based on a creative path whose value is confirmed and validated by specialists in the field.

The university is a competitive system, with doctoral studies being a fundamental requirement. Law 1/2011 lists the conditions for holding university teaching positions, specifying that it is compulsory to hold a doctoral degree. Thus, Article 301(3)(a) of the Law on Education stipulates that a PhD degree is a minimum requirement for the teaching position of university lecturer; Article 301(4)(a) of the Law stipulates that a PhD diploma is a prerequisite for the position of associate professor, just as a PhD diploma is also required for the position of university professor, as stipulated in Article 301(5)(a).

Therefore, in order to be tenured, future university teaching staff must hold a doctoral degree. But, in vocational fields, holding a doctoral degree is not a *sine qua non* for a professional who achieves outstanding performance recognized by specialists; he or she does not qualify, by this argument alone⁴, for the title of doctor. Law 199 of July 4th, 2023, the new law on higher education, stipulates in Article 87 that *in arts and sports higher education, a scientific or professional doctorate is a condition for a teaching career*. In fact, the new law continues the concept proposed in the 2011 law and makes a university teaching career conditional on the prior acquisition of a scientific or professional doctorate.

Vocational university education in the arts, i.e. in Theatre, aims at increasing the student's ability to build his/her own artistic system expressed

³ <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliuDocumentAfis/271898>

⁴ Is this a strong condition to become a "good teacher", in the sense of the expression used by Andrew Peterson and James Arthur? (See Peterson, Andrew, Arthur, James (2021). *Ethics and the Good Teacher*, Routledge, London).

through the acquisition and development of stage technique, acquired during the academic studies and during practice, thus defining his/her own professional background.

Differently categorized in the nomenclature of teaching and research positions in higher education, teachers who train actors should include an important mentoring dimension in their teaching system⁵. The mentor – the master/maestro, as he or she was called in previous generations – is the role model who becomes a point of reference for the student through his or her own achievements in the field – theatre, stage art, the art of theatrical performance, the art of directing, the art of acting – and who also provides the student with his or her own reference system, from which the student will, in turn, build up an individual reference system throughout the course of university studies.

Therefore, by theoretically grounding the stage discoveries, the student's own experience represents a basis for research and development for both the student and the teacher, respectively mentor or master; it constitutes an array of operational tools, used individually, whose applicability is personalized during the scenic metamorphosis.

Consequently, we consider training for and in theatre as an initiatory journey, full of unknown paths⁶, heading towards inner and technical horizons, a journey full of its own meanings and individualities that only the one in action perceives, assimilates and can use creatively further on, towards new horizons; this is, in fact, an individual experience, the creative process stimulating and appreciating the individualities that personalize their stage technique until the definition of great creative personalities.

In this context, vocational training, in this case the process of educating students from theatre faculties, requires the presence of a professor who is a builder of new systems, a teacher who, having real and recognized artistic values in the art of theatre, in the professional performing arts, becomes a model of research, originality, individuality and applicability for the students. The teacher's guarantee of value, of his or her artistic qualities recognized by specialists in the field, is an imperative of vocational education. The professor is a model, a master, and the students are formed in the theatrical process and develop, taking it as a point of reference, understanding at a deep level the features that define it, relating to them and forming their own system of values, technical elements, creation. In this way, future professionals will learn the ability to build their own models of technique, approach and scenic construction,

⁵ See also Koki, Stan (1997), *The Role of Teacher Mentoring in Educational Reform*, available on <https://nmu.edu/Webb/ArchivedHTML/UPCED/mentoring/docs/Role-mentor.pdf>

⁶ Including here ethical paths (see Ridout, Nicholas (2021). *Theatre & Ethics*, Methuen Drama and Cahn, M. Steven (2022). *Academic Ethics Today. Poblems, Polcies and Prospects for University Life*, Rowman & Littlefield.

to use the information and techniques assimilated in the process of artistic education within their own system in a conscious and assumed way.

It is a fact that in the last thirteen years, fewer and fewer artistic personalities with renowned and award-winning careers have been teaching in universities and theatre faculties. The main reason is the absence of doctoral studies in their biographies. But the fact that these personalities have not pursued doctoral studies is clearly not due to their lack of professional worth, nor even to a lack of interest in doctoral studies.

Numerous professionals whose careers fully recommend them for higher education in theatre are acting, staging and building stage sets across Romania. They represent real centers of interest for the theatrical world, as confirmed by the specialized analysis, but, nevertheless, they do not hold the title of doctor of theatre. It is a fact that carrying out research and writing a thesis as part of doctoral studies, in accordance with the regulated academic framework, represents a massive investment of time and energy, which makes this a difficult option for an artist with a first-rate artistic agenda.

With certain notable exceptions, the holders of posts in theatre higher education are graduates of specialized studies, who, for one reason or another, have opted to embrace a strictly or predominantly teaching career, rather than a stage career, following all the steps of promotion in academic structures. Their doctoral research potentially enjoys the exclusive time and dedication of its authors and, although potentially theoretically well-documented and also potentially complying with academic rigor to the letter, their use carries a number of risks.

Specifically, the tenure of teachers who hold doctoral degrees as an end-goal but have no continuing experience in the field of theatre has real repercussions for the preparation of students in theatre education. When a university degree tutor – lecturer, associate professor or professor – is not familiar, accustomed and eager to practice the unforeseen in the field he or she teaches and researches alongside the tutee, when his or her own artistic journey is insufficient and halted at an earlier point in time, his or her professional discourse and behavior become incompatible with that of the mentee, the mentor is unable to develop an interesting didactic structure congruent with that of the mentee, to integrate specific terms and use them in the ownership of the meanings they contain, and, last but not least, being unable to evaluate and develop students' artistic development.

This lack of stability, stemming from the absence of stage practice in any specialty – acting, directing, stage design, etc. – disorients students, leads to disappointment and distrust, and, moreover, leads to the formation of a flawed professional value system with long-term impact on the professional community in the field. Thus set, they vitiate future stage practice, reducing the chances of

young actors – even those with great talent – to build a career on a sound, professionally successful foundation.

This imbalance between the general academic strictness and the particular openness of theatrical practice is becoming more and more pronounced in drama faculties and therefore creates the space for an in-depth analysis of the specific profile of drama education and a legislative reconfiguration, taking into account the specific dimension of the performing arts field. Thus, a study of this kind should question the creation of specific tenure formulas in theatre higher education, based on successful work in the theatre, prioritizing the value of the theatrical arts, the practical experience validated by specialists in the field, the ability to propose and support functional educational systems with valuable stage application.

In addition to the above, it is important to note that changes in professional ethics are quantified on both sides, students and academic staff.

Although the idea that a brilliant professional is not necessarily a brilliant teacher, as well, has traveled around the world too easily, time has proven that a very good actor, a very good director or a very good scenographer will discover his or her own way of communicating his or her way of working, as well as the path of his or her artistic development. The individual system of the recognized, appreciated, valuable theatre professional can be defined in front of any kind of audience, including the audience of students, and in relation to the active audience, they – that is the actor, the director or the set designer, without limiting myself to these stage professions – will find their communication paths with the new audience, that is the students, an audience that becomes more and more active in the course accumulating specific knowledge and professional technique. We thus discover that the theatre professional gradually builds his/her own method of working with students. As such, I believe that great theatre professionals should be encouraged to work in universities or vocational faculties, under rewarding conditions of professional and monetary recognition, including tenure track, similar to PhD holders. As we know, professionals in the field are currently collaborating with the university system exclusively as associate professors, without the academic recognition of tenured professors.

Of course, this intervention does not aim to question the need for theatre professionals to pursue doctoral studies. The systematization of information, the establishment of stage experience and techniques, a system of theatrical training are essential. But to the same extent, a law adapted to theatre education should enable the integration of these professionals into the educational system, recognize their position in both the cultural and educational spheres, as well as their value, and place them in academic structures as full professors.

For most of the teaching staff, those who have pursued doctoral studies, but have not received recognition of their artistic value in theatre, a discomfort in communicating and relating with students in the field of art is noticeable. This

is a situation that the law does not prevent, as our core profession is a vocational one, based on a courageous, positive type of communication, in which there is no room for frustrations, vanities. Frustration, ego, offenses are the prerogative of those who are unfulfilled in their stage career.

3. Conclusions

The change of professional ethics resides in the consequences of the above and refers to the modification of the professional system by changing its components. Studying, analyzing, researching, self-discovery through workshops, courses and seminars together with tutors, teachers, mentors who understand, who identify the necessary resources, who intervene towards the student's development, all these give important value to professional ethics. Professional ethics is imposed on professional value, and the direction of development will interweave the two components so that the future beneficiary of the academic system will be an exceptional result: professional and original.

Taking as a reference point the fact that the new law on higher education, Law 199/2023, retains the two doctoral formulas – scientific doctorate and professional doctorate – and, at the same time, considering the opportunity for correction that this separation allows from the perspective analyzed above, I consider that it is imperative to launch a process of legislative optimization based on a solid study of this subject. Theatrical education is based on value, having as a common denominator the professionalism acquired from the theatrical techniques learned in trainable, functional exercises, applicable to the variables of the artistic systems, in particular, the individual artistic systems of future actors, directors, set designers, light or sound designers who will further build the miraculous theatrical space of the next generation.

Bibliography

- Cahn, M. Steven (2022). *Academic Ethics Today. Problems, Policies and Prospects for University Life*, Rowman & Littlefield
- Koki, Stan (1997), *The Role of Teacher Mentoring in Educational Reform*, available on <https://nmu.edu/Webb/ArchivedHTML/UPCED/mentoring/docs/Role-mentor.pdf>
- Peterson, Andrew, Arthur, James (2021). *Ethics and the Good Teacher*, Routledge, London
- Ridout, Nicholas (2021). *Theatre & Ethics*, Methuen Drama
- https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/legea-educatiei_actualizata%20august%202018.pdf

Clowning ethics or about red-nosed morals

Andreea JIGHIRGIU

Assistant PhD

“George Enescu” National University of Arts Iași
ROMANIA¹

Abstract: We know throughout history several human categories or distinct groups that place themselves outside of ethics. People suffering from mental illnesses, children, fools/pranksters or acrobats, etc. This category could, of course, also include sex workers, stigmatized but accepted as part of the world in which we live. Beyond all these categories of individuals that transcend ethics and morality, there is another character, a cultural archetype born at the dawn of human civilization, having a winding, unpredictable and determining evolution at the level of the collective unconscious: the clown. The clown, a hypersensitive being who does not have a security of identity and who is characterized by confusion of consciousness, violates all the rules of ethics. In this sense, he uses the abnormal and the unusual as tools of manifestation. But can its expression be considered a breach of ethics, as long as it is born outside the norms, outside the generally accepted morality, its role being to highlight what lies beyond the limit? If we assert that this archetype is useful to ethics, what then are the attributes of this utility?

Keywords: clown, ethics.

1. Introduction

The most influential ancient philosophers, whom the history of Western ethics draws upon are Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. *Etikos*, in Greek, is rooted in *ethos* (about character or about habit). Virtue and happiness are the two common conceptions from which the philosophies of the above thinkers are born. These aspects later develop in a theological sense, leading to the emergence of the ontological argument and the demonstration of God's existence. The importance of ethics, but also its characteristics, differ and change in time and space. We can thus consider that ethics today is a set of rules accepted by most cultures. The motivation of contemporary ethics is to preserve order, peace and harmony among individuals, although we agree with those who believe that we are in the

¹ andreeajighirgiu@gmail.com.

midst of a post-ethical crisis, which paradoxically causes its self-annulment. There are, however, certain cultures, religions and geographical spaces in which common ethics are diluted, disappear or completely altered.

We have known throughout history several human categories or distinct groups that place themselves outside ethics. People suffering from mental illnesses, children, buffoons /pranksters or acrobats, etc. Beyond all these categories of individuals that transcend ethics and morality, there is another character, a cultural archetype born at the dawn of human civilization, having a winding, unpredictable and determining evolution at the level of the collective unconscious: the clown.

2. Clown's ethics

The clown, a hypersensitive being who doesn't have a secure identity and who is characterized by the confusion of consciousness, violates all the rules of ethics. In this sense, he uses the abnormal and the unusual as tools of manifestation. But can his expression be considered a violation of ethics, as long as it is born outside the norms, outside the generally accepted morality, his role being to highlight what lies beyond the limit? If we accept that this archetype is useful to ethics, what then are the attributes of this utility?

The clown and the trickster, which Jung defines as that psychological entity on which images of evil and perpetual farce have been built, yet being in the proximity of *the Savior*, as an antagonistic and chameleon character, are often characterized as mediators, beings who create and guard boundaries. We will describe the border as a dialectic. This, in turn, has two opposite poles, separate but equally linked. Thus, the border is and is not part of what lies between the two limits, although it is what unites them. For example, sacred clown figures attempt to avoid a natural or cultural law, often failing, and in their failure signal the consequences of breaking it. Because of their creativity and the way they seek to circumvent a boundary or obstacle, clowns have been associated with nonconforming, unethical, immoral thinking.

Clowns and tricksters are generally associated with transgression, sacredness, and blasphemy, and are often used in Easter rituals as aggressors. Don Handelman in *Models and Mirrors toward an Anthropology of Public Events* says that clowns erase the difference between sacred and profane². Paul Bouissac in *By Means of Performance*³ declares circus clowns desecrate the sacred by making semiotic substitutions. For Laura Makarius, the most important function for clowns is that of transgressors and, specifically, shatters

² Don Handelman (1990), *Models and Mirrors towards an Anthropology of Public Events*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 248.

³ Paul Bouissac, *Profanation of the Sacred* in: Willa Appel, Richard Scheshner (1990) (eds), *By Means of Performance*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

of the taboo of blood, as she says in *Diogenes*⁴. She argues that the use of blood or representations of blood by ritualistic clowns is common. Here we refer, of course, to the ceremonial association between clowns and Judas, but also to the violation of ethics by the vulgar exposition of the process of Christ's salvation. Makarius follows similar lines to other authors who speak of comic relief when he concludes that clowns "owe their existence only to the need to evoke something that at the same time must be suppressed".⁵ Evoking something that also needs to be suppressed could be articulated as the need for mediation.

Transgression is also a means of power. The unseemly is connected with transgression as the crossing of moral boundaries. "Dirt is displaced matter," implies two conditions: a set of ordered relations and a violation of that order.⁶ The affinity between inappropriateness, power and clowns was noted by Handelman⁷ and Makarius⁸ in connection with the blood ceremony, evoked earlier. Clowns and tricksters are "messy," as Barbara Babcock says. Their benefit comes from breaking taboos and rules. Because of his mistakes, the trickster pollutes and must remain marginal⁹. If the unseemly involves a set of ordered relations and a violation of that order, this is also an appropriate description of the clown, establishing the convention and an inventiveness that takes advantage of that convention. However, ordered relations are not indicators of a system that exists as a given and is revealed through acts of transgression, they are as much a product of symbolic action. The Yaqui ritual, for example, begins by establishing the convention that proposes an order to be broken, and involves, as stated above, two conditions: a set of ordered relationships and a violation of that order. If the clown embodies transition and borders in his figure, the clown does not so much move between different realities as mediate between them, and the same is true of borders. They are not dissolved; the boundary remains intact but is mediated. The movement between different realities is, in fact, a movement from one mode of symbolization to another, a reversal of the dialectic, as Mariana Keisalo-Galván states in *Cosmic Clown. Convention, Invention, and Inversion in the Yaqui Easter Ritual*¹⁰. The clowns' relationship with the context of their performance is altered by switching between modes. Convention sets the performance context: circus, ritual or whatever. When this

⁴ Laura Makarius (1970), Ritual clowns and symbol behavior, *Diogenes*, p. 46.

⁵ *Idem*, p. 70.

⁶ Mary Douglas (1994), *Purity and Danger*, Routledge, London, p. 50.

⁷ Mary Douglas, *op. cit.*, Don Handelman, *Models and Mirrors towards an Anthropology of Public Events*, p. 248.

⁸ Don Handelman, *op. cit.*, Laura Makarius, Ritual clowns and symbol behavior, *Diogenes*, p. 86.

⁹ Barbara Babcock (1975), *A Tolerated Margin of Mess: The Trickster and His Tales Reconsidered*, "Journal of the Folklore Institute", Vol.11, no. 3, Martie, p. 148.

¹⁰ Mariana Keisalo-Galván (2011), *Cosmic Clown. Convention, Invention, and Inversion in the Yaqui Easter Ritual*, Research Series in Anthropology, University of Helsinki, Finland.

is used as a basis for a differentiated symbolization, the boundary that has been created between the context of the performance and the rest of the world is mediated, and clowns can refer to things outside the context of the performance and involve the audience in interaction. This is how the special power of clowns is created. Boundaries open a dialectic between realms divided by a boundary, becoming that boundary and mediating it through cyclic inversions.

In this regard, Arden R. King in *Forms of Play of Native North Americans* separates the various aspects of the clown's role into humorous and non-humorous, alternating between them. King sees the non-humorous side of performance as effective, and the humor as providing protection from the consequences of his non-humorous actions. According to King, humor is not discussed much, because anyone can be humorous, but only the clown has "the potential to cause non-order – to create another way of being human"¹¹. "The clown has the potential to destroy and affirm or create structure. Humor, which insures the clown against the consequences of his own behavior, occurs when "the boundaries are secure and the structure is in no need or danger of replacement."¹².

Clowning reflects reality in a way that rational thought cannot, it reveals the arbitrary, constructed nature of the world. Through the use of opposites and reversals, for Barbara Babcock in *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle: Rehearsals: Toward a Theory of Cultural Performance*¹³, clowns are, par excellence, mediators who organize the world through their performance. We also know about the world that it is not based on moral constructs. Ethics appears strictly as a maneuver to organize it, and the clown reveals the world as it has been constructed by signaling what lies beyond the limit. At the same time, there is little discussion of what this means and how clowns organize the world. The clown, like the court jester, is relatively marginal; paradoxically, it is the lack of open recognition of their power that allows them to hold power. Thus, is the clown an instrument of ethics, or is ethics an integral part of the clown?

Clown and humor are inherently dialectical. Modern Western science and religion are more aligned with a unitary logic, which seeks to articulate a single principle to order things. The modern Western worldview, its conceptions of right and wrong, and its hierarchical evaluation of comedy and humor as unimportant have led to the clown being ignored, misunderstood, and

¹¹ Arden, R., King, North American Indian Clowns and Creativity. In Edward Norbeck and Claire R. Farrer (1977) (eds.), *Forms of Play of Native North Americans, 1977 Proceedings of the American Ethnological Society*, West Publishing, St. Paul, p.147.

¹² *Ibidem*.

¹³ Barbara Babcock, Arrage me into Disorder: Fragments and Reflections on Ritual Clowning. In John J. MacAloon (1984) (ed), *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle: Rehearsals: Toward a Theory of Cultural Performance*, Institute for Study of Human Issues, Philadelphia, pp. 102-128.

undervalued. In the Western worldview, rooted in a dichotomy between good and evil, clowns are also seen as firmly one or the other.

Mariana Keisalo-Galván talks in her work about indigenous Mexican systems, and how the logic of “fun as evil” is a way to create dialectics, using representations of relativization, to involve good with evil, to ultimately protect against relativization and preserve significant opposition. It is not enough to say that sacred clowns are beyond good and evil, or both at the same time. Evil itself is conceptualized differently, on the one hand as the absolute opposite of good to be destroyed, and on the other hand, as the dialectical opposite of good in a system, in which good and evil are mutually defined by each other. Both are necessary in the annual cycle of death and rebirth. More importantly, it is necessary to alternate opposing powers.

Humor can be used for specific purposes in specific situations. Humor can be sharp, hostile, liberating, healing, good or bad, depending on the point of view and situation relative to the reference points evoked. Humor, in turn, can be seen as unethical. What is remarkable about humor is the potential for dialectical mediation, which makes it possible to involve relativization, create representations of it, and also stop it through reversals. Clowning and jokes are means of creating dialectics, thus mediating boundaries, reversing the way of symbolization. As a figure that allows dialogue by making reversals and offering the opposite pole, the clown is not meant to be understood in itself, but as a kind of zero point. Although prototype clowns combining play, contradiction and paradox are the best examples, these figures are the essential form.

3. Conclusions

So, the ethics of the clown stands for what for us is defined as immoral. The ethics of the clown includes the breaking of the general ethics in order to strengthen it. Morality is opposed to the clown, this being defined by the denial of the other side, thus defining the clown, but also the relationship between them, establishing at the same time the order’s pillars of resistance.

Bibliography

- Babcock, Barbara (1975). *A Tolerated Margin of Mess: The Trickster and His Tales Reconsidered*, Journal of the Folklore Institute, Vol.11, no. 3
- Babcock, Barbara (1984). “Arrange me into Disorder: Fragments and Reflections on Ritual Clowning”. In John J. MacAloon (ed), *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle: Rehearsals: Toward a Theory of Cultural Performance*, Institute for Study of Human Issues, Philadelphia
- Bouissac, Paul (1990). “Profanation of the Sacred” in: Willa Appel, Richard Scheshner (eds), *By Means of Performance*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

Theatre Section

Douglas, Mary (1994). *Purity and Dange*, Routledge, London

Handelman, Don (1990). *Models and Mirrors towards an Anthropology of Public Events*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

Keisalo-Galván, Mariana (2011). *Cosmic Clown. Convention, Invention, and Inversion in the Yaqui Easter Ritual*, Research Series in Anthropology, University of Helsinki, Finland

King, Arden, R. (1977). "North American Indian Clowns and Creativity". In Edward Norbeck and Claire R. Farrer (eds.), *Forms of Play of Native North Americans*, 1977 Proceedings of the American Ethnological Society., West Publishing, St. Paul

Makarius, Laura (1970). *Ritual clowns and symbol behavior*, Diogenes

Ethical perspectives on the representation of sexuality through puppets in theatre performances

Vladimir Bogdan BOCA

PhD Student

“George Enescu” National University of Arts Iași
ROMANIA ¹

Abstract: In the next article we will try to answer the following questions: What boundaries exist outside the ethical norms of staging the obscene? To what extent can we consider the depiction of sexuality as artistic expression? Can a puppet diminish the vulgarity unwanted by the audience in a sexual scene? How much can be accepted in the representation of sexual intercourse on stage, even if it is to be performed with the help of puppets?

Keywords: puppet, ethical, sexuality, obscene.

1. Introduction

The scientific debate of recent years increasingly records the problem of contemporary man in confrontation with the ethical benchmarks present in society, with the imbalance caused by false opinions and the hijacking of social meaning, with the bringing to the fore of the erotic, the vulgar, the grotesque, the immoral and the unaesthetic, leading to the destabilisation of moral codes. The ethical problems involved in developing the theme of sexuality in a puppet theatre performance derive from the stereotyping of puppets as a clear appearance to a child audience.

Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles and relationships. While sexuality can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors.²

¹ vladimir.boca@yahoo.com

² <https://www.who.int/teams/sexual-and-reproductive-health-and-research/key-areas-of-work/sexual-health/defining-sexual-health>.

For some theatre productions, gender or sexuality are character footnotes, and for others, they are a central theme.

In the hands of visionary artists, the puppet or marionette becomes a metaphorical language that transcends spoken words, conveying complex narratives in a visually powerful manner. The interaction of naked bodies made of different materials on stage can symbolise vulnerability, unity or even disconnection between characters.

The question which images will be considered obscene and/or pornographic is always determined by the spatio-temporal context of their situation, which is evidence of the discursive character of both categories, also common in narratives on (non)art, but, while pornography is placed on the peripheries of the world of spectacle, broadly understood “art” – at least in its traditional, “high” form – occupies its center. The scene/stage and the obscene are woven together by the dream of transgression, understood as stepping beyond bodily-subjective as well as systemic boundaries.³

2. Representations of sexuality and ethical implications

Dealing with sexuality in puppet theatre is similarly a sensitive issue and one that needs to be carefully debated. The portrayal of this subject can serve various artistic and thematic purposes, but must be treated with maturity and respect for the target audience. Establishing a sexual theme in puppet theatre raises many ethical dilemmas and requires careful consideration of the impact on audiences and cultural values.

Because of their strong symbolic traits, the characters of the world's puppet theatres have always had the ability to embody the passions of the audience and, in some historical contexts, they could express support or hostility towards political or religious figures, risking to attract the anger of the authorities upon them. The puppeteer, always ready to pack up his show and to run away quickly, would often resort to bawdy references or allusions to the political situation of the day.⁴

Framing refers to how a character is positioned in relation to other elements in the scene so as to draw the viewer's eye and maintain aesthetic appeal. Good character construction should be visually appealing and engaging, while remaining true to the overall theme of the story.

³ Retrieved from <https://didaskalia.pl/en/article/between-stage-and-obscene-critical-potential-naked-body>

⁴ Retrieved from <https://wepa.unima.org/en/society-and-puppets-social-applications-of-puppetry/>

In theatre, sexuality transcends mere shock value and provocation to become a powerful and legitimate form of artistic expression. Embraced by playwrights, directors and daring actors alike, the deliberate use of eroticism on stage serves as a profound means of delving into the depths of human emotion, revealing complex narratives and challenging social norms. By depicting the obscene or vulgar, artists aim to communicate raw vulnerability, ignite introspection, and ultimately evoke a deeper connection with their audience.

There are not many examples of theatre performances that explicitly use puppets with an erotic character for artistic reasons. However, there are a few exceptions where sexuality has been explored in theatre using puppet forms or special techniques: *Hen*, *Avenue Q*, *Hand of God* and *Objectum Sexuality*. An analysis of these performances allows us to show the reciprocal influences of the stage and the vulgar, as well as artistic strategies for transforming the obscene into a domain of resistance, in which subordinates can speak, and thus negotiate with structures of symbolic violence.

Deniz Başar analyzes a puppet theatre piece as a productive space to address female sexuality within an oppressive culture. She documents aspects of the creative process alongside her production analysis to situate the work within the Turkish cultural and art scenes just prior to and during its making. In so doing, she lays bare the potential risks artists faced, that were mitigated by their use of puppets.⁵

The adaptation and reinterpretation of puppets or marionettes from a traditional context into a new and modern vision, the effects and impact of technological developments as well as artistic trends that have emerged in the last decades in the construction of characters in animated theatre can bring a fresh and exciting perspective on them and attract a new kind of audience. They can also help to keep animated theatre relevant and topical in a changing world.

In the climate of a culture deeply influenced by religion and conservatism with aggressive moral and sexual distorted expressions, in which the agony of ethical-aesthetic education outlines the weakening of human dignity, a human conduct in which the taboo is kept out of the discussion, a necessity is affirmed for the awakening and mobilization of the will of directors, actors and puppeteers in the introduction of truths towards society and our human nature.

“The mix of means of expression only favours the author. Thus, the co-existence on the stage of the elements actor and puppet creates the possibility

⁵ Alissa Mello, Claudia Orenstein, Astles Cariad (2019), *Women and Puppetry. Critical and Historical Investigations*, Routledge, London, p. 10.

of a new, metaphorical theatrical language”⁶. The boundaries of objectivity arise when the sensibilities and expectations of the audience are shattered by violating the values and cultural norms of the society in which the performance takes place. What is considered acceptable or unacceptable can vary significantly from culture to culture.

According to both von Stuelpnagel and Moore, getting this type of scene right requires a lot of time working with the actors and simulating various sex acts with puppets. “There was definitely a lot of me, calling out to the room, what does reverse cowgirl look like? No, that doesn't look as strong as doggy style. What does this position look like?” von Stuelpnagel says. Avenue Q's process involved a “long porn-inspired list of what are a bunch of positions and things that can happen in bed that look funny on the puppets,” Moore says.⁷

In these productions, where sex is an integral part of the plot, it becomes a vehicle for psychological exploration, revealing the depths of the human mind and the complexities of relationships. Through this symbolic language, the puppet becomes an indispensable element of storytelling, weaving a tapestry of emotions that remains in the audience's mind long after the curtain falls.

Clear communication between the audience and the performance, in the case of sexual performances with puppets, should already be expressed in the poster with clear warnings so that they can decide whether they want to participate. The development of eroticism in a puppet show could negatively affect or offend certain segments of the audience. Implementing age restrictions for performances with sexual scenes or humour can help ensure that only age-appropriate audiences attend such performances.

“In Avenue Q, themes of equality in relation to race and sexuality are told through a human– puppet social network that reveals prejudice to be equally problematic in both puppet and human communities.”⁸ The theme of sexuality has been addressed in puppet theatre to raise an alarm against gender inequality, race and social and political issues.

It is important to note that the use of puppets in theatre to explore mature themes can vary significantly depending on the content and the manner in which they are represented. In most cases, theatres that address such topics do so with care and sensitivity to the target audience, and do not use sex dolls in an explicitly pornographic sense. This can often lead to a perception of 'kitsch' depending on the perspective.

⁶ Henryk Jurkowsky, apud Cristian Pepino, *op. cit.*, p. 37, our translation.

⁷ Retrieved from <https://www.esquire.com/entertainment/a34897/puppet-sex/>

⁸ Janet Banfield (2022), *Spaces of Puppets in Popular Culture. Grotesque Geographies of the Borderscape*, Routledge, London, p. 113.

“Related to the significance of bodily capacities is the facilitation and enhancement of psychological or cognitive capacities, which finds expression in the form of human self-actualisation. Taking us beyond the role of the puppet in facilitating communication to enabling self-realisation or salvation, the human characters become – in some way – a ‘truer’ form of their former self.”⁹ The character's personality must be alive and proclaim its belonging to the actor, not to be restricted by any law of nature or physics, by any limitation of the playing space. The character's own stylistic identity has a major influence on his play.

Through the humorous nature of some puppets, it is allowed to address taboo questions or topics that are simply neglected in public debate, which it is then enjoyable to see come to life on stage. The recognition at the same time of the real awkwardness of people during sex can easily be rendered by the complete lack of self-awareness of the characters constructed in the physical form of puppets or marionettes.

Like any art form, puppet theatre can be seen as a manifestation, a sign and a reflection of the historical, cultural and political situation of a society at a given time. Beyond the culturally specific elements, there are many analogies highlighted by the comparison of different uses of puppetry in religious and social rites.

The 2019 performance *Hen*, directed by Johanny Bert, awarded at the Charleville-Mézières World Puppet Theatre Festival in September 2021, is the main example to support my debate. The theatrical production aimed to raise alarm bells on the issue of gender identity, sexuality and queer ways of living. Performances with such characters in puppet theatre are rare at a time when it is a practical medium for expressing gender fluidity.

Hen has the particularity of not embodying any gender. Its name comes from the Swedish “Hen” pronounced “Heune” which is the neutral pronoun of the language, often used in school textbooks. The challenge is to educate about the issue of gender from an early age. Johanny Bert's approach, which can sometimes seem confusing, is more or less the same, because his show aims to awaken minds on the question of gender identity, sexuality and ways of living “queer.”¹⁰

The essence of this visual appearance on stage can be summed up by the process of creating a concept that is meant to come to life, so that this modelled or sculpted body can interact with the audience.

The visual radicality of these performances forces the audience to give up the comfort of not seeing what the homogeneous system wants to hide,

⁹ Janet Banfield, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

¹⁰ Retrieved from <https://www.letotetabag.net/culture-arts/theatre/hen-dun-thea%CC%82tre-de-marionnette-erotique-et-comique-a-la-necessite-pedagogique/>.

and the exacerbation of the impact produced by shockingly obscene images proves to be a form of widening the boundaries of art with images that only seemingly deny typical practices.

Theatre is a reflection of the human experience, a mirror held up to the triumphs, struggles and complexities of society. Empowering the role of the puppet in theatre serves as a testament to the courage of artists to explore raw emotions and uncharted territories, pushing the boundaries of creativity and initiating discussions about the human condition. Introducing sexuality into puppet theatre is a complex conceptual choice that requires deep consideration and responsibility to the audience and to the art of theatre in order to fit within ethical parameters.

Hen offers us “reveal” moments which are characterized by almost instantaneous outfit changes directly shown on set, presenting the puppet in totally dazzling and unexpected styles. Also appearing on stage are oversized phallic shapes and breasts that begin to dance to the music. These body parts are sometimes found in place of Hen's head, provoking laughter from the audience and surprise where you least expect it. The spectator enjoys the raw eroticism of these surprises, becoming Hen's accomplice and waiting each time for a new “shocking phrase” or an acrobatics.¹¹

The impact of gender portrayal through puppetry on audiences transcends geographical boundaries, and cultural perspectives play a significant role in shaping audience reactions. What might be considered acceptable in one culture may be perceived differently in another. As theatre reaches global audiences through productions uploaded to digital platforms, sensitivity to diverse cultural norms becomes paramount to ensuring a positive and respectful audience experience.

The puppet was for a long time a “disassembling” tool to convey ideas that were too risky for an actor to assume at a given moment. The poet Paul Claudel then maintains that the puppet “is not an actor who speaks, it is a word which acts”. The words would ring out even louder than spoken directly by an actor. Considering the political usefulness of the puppet, speech becomes the artery of the game and speech takes flesh on the puppet stage. We would assume the following idea: the subject would last longer starting from these characters, characters certainly plastic but hypnotizing, with a presence larger than life.¹²

¹¹ Retrieved from <https://www.letotebag.net/culture-arts/theatre/hen-dun-thea%CC%82tre-de-marionnette-erotique-et-comique-a-la-necessite-pedagogique/>

¹² Retrieved from <https://www.letotebag.net/culture-arts/theatre/hen-dun-thea%CC%82tre-de-marionnette-erotique-et-comique-a-la-necessite-pedagogique/>

The aim of the provoked debate is to bring to attention an ethical norm, to argue the necessity of introducing sexual themes represented by puppets or marionettes in performances, a way of innovating adult animation theatre in the Romanian space. The active mission of actualizing and dynamizing the puppet's potential, in order to increase the expressiveness of a character and to diminish its restrictive ethical boundaries.

Bibliography

Banfield, Janet (2022). *Spaces of Puppets in Popular Culture Grotesque Geographies of the Borderscape*, Routledge, London

Baty, Gaston și Chavance, René (1959). *Histoire de la marionnettes*, Editura Bordas, Paris

Dobkowska, Sylwia (2022), *Performance of Absence in Theatre*, Performance and Visual Art

Pepino, Cristian (1998). *Automate, Idoli, Păpuși – magia unei lumi* [Automaton, Idols, Puppets – the Magic of a World] Editura Alma, Galați

Posner Dassia N.; Orenstein Claudia; Bell John (2015). *The Routledge companion to puppetry and material performance*, Taylor & Francis Group, Routledge

Tretinjak, Igor; Periš, Lucija; Žeravica, Katarina (2022). *Contemporary Puppetry and Criticism*, Osijek.

<https://www.who.int/teams/sexual-and-reproductive-health-and-research/key-areas-of-work/sexual-health/defining-sexual-health>

<https://theprovince.com/entertainment/theatre-review-funny-bawdy-brilliant-puppets-come-alive-in-ronnie-burketts-daisy-theatre/wcm/de3d6d60-7606-4619-8f46-02f251eb5e9b/amp/>

<https://www.straight.com/article-216148/erotic-anguish-don-juan-visually-spectacular>

<https://www.standard.co.uk/lifestyle/puppetry-is-now-popular-with-adults-6569331.html>

<https://hyperallergic.com/242170/the-magic-of-light-and-shadow-in-asian-puppet-theater/>

<https://wepa.unima.org/en/society-and-puppets-social-applications-of-puppetry/>

<https://www.journaldemontreal.com/2018/09/21/le-sexe-des-marionnettes>

<https://www.letelegramme.fr/morbihan/hennebont-56700/spanmarionnettesspan-objectum-sexuality-aujourd'hui-et-demain-2990865.php>

<https://www.fastcompany.com/1682917/lets-talk-about-sex-but-lets-have-puppets-do-the-talking>

Theatre Section

<https://thetyee.ca/ArtsAndCulture/2010/02/26/DonJuanSexPuppet/>

<https://puppetplace.wordpress.com/2016/11/29/sex-and-puppets-wondering-hands-an-interview-with-alicia-britt/>

<https://www.esquire.com/entertainment/a34897/puppet-sex/>

<https://www.leoweekly.com/2017/05/gender-sexuality-theater/>

Automated dummies and supercomputers. The construction of an object, from an imitation of reality to the original work or acquired autonomy

Liviu Cristian IONIȚĂ DOBRE

Phd Student

“George Enescu” National University of Arts Iași
ROMANIA¹

Abstract: What happens to certain objects, concepts, customs, research areas, sciences, etc. which evolve civilizationally, progressively, ascensionally, generationally, vectorially, on each of the levels of human development, where do they find appreciation and financial encouragement to be cultivated and privileged? The music field, the code of good manners, the food industry and its gastronomic complement, among them, and information technology (IT), with its cybernetic extension... What if one day, one of these “explodes” exponentially, epistemologically and ontologically, irremediably transforming culture and civilization in a way never before seen and impossible to intuit until then? You will tell me that it would no misfortune if Mozart will be more than his current, immense legacy, even if in that negative utopia not only the sweets will bear his name, but also the rest of the benches in the park, and the subway will it have a shape vaguely reminiscent of the shape of his powdered wigs?! Is it possible to outline such an imminent transubstantiation? What might happen if information technology reached its unexpected peak, not yet calculated by any existing supercomputer? The history of culture tells us that, traditionally, it would spread across the globe, after which its influence would diminish and adjust conveniently (I don't give the most convenient example, religion). What does IT lack, however, to become independent, because it possesses all the avatars of a state of the art (including the rechargeable battery for eternity), apart from a consciousness, individualization, uniqueness... Or are all these already at their place?

Keywords: supercomputers, technologies, imitation.

1. Introduction

An object is defined as such most of the time by its immediate utility. The utility of an artistic object, however, can also have another, additional dimension, that of contemplation, analysis, meditation, etc., something that

¹ liv.cristian@gmail.com.

also attributes to it an *aura* of originality, in the sense described by Walter Benjamin in *The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction*.² What we believe happened to the computer in our century was either a transfer of aura from the work of art to it, or the acquisition/acquiring of an autonomous individual consciousness, justified similar to the meaning attributed by Neolithic tribes to objects through animism. For a long time, the parallelepipedal shape of the computer did not herald a superpower, its proto versions such as Enigma had made it formidable, but its extraordinary properties were amplified especially when it could be put in relation to a bipedal, humanoid image, similar to ours, blinking, jumping or moving slightly unsteadily, and especially when, finally, it began to produce its own cultural or artistic products, poems, speeches, drawings, musical compositions. Then it began to seem that the fetus was developing every month more poignantly and independent of its mother, that the *machine* had become original, a work of art with its own identity, or at least a humanoid with proper birth certificates and a perfectible personal consciousness. The Faustian myth has given the robot power of self-identification and self-determination by the very anthropological fact that it appears in the midst of a human society and culture, and all the most precious concepts such as the uniqueness of birth, originally affected by mass production, now gain the freedom to seek a meaning in becoming, as is the right of every human being, and this is automatically assigned by the constitution and laws.

Making objects, flint and iron axes and much later, steel axes, etc., perfecting, constantly improving tools and their demand led to the emergence of guilds. The guilds generated considerable income and the middle layer of civil society was born; the emergence of the first banks following the model used by the Medici family or some monastic orders, which were said to finance monarchies, the strengthening of city-fortresses and remarkable development led to the formation of the first city-states, as well as the evolution of church and monastic study centers into independent universities dedicated to research of all kinds. After the Renaissance, the prefix, *auto* came into use in relation to objects that seem to be intended for children rather than adults. And yet, they belong exclusively to grown-ups, to the more than wealthy, and represent the crowning achievement of the most brilliant technologies of the time in the guilds of watchmakers and craftsmen of the great city-states; but these objects, although they possess an imprecise, diffuse aura specific to kitsch objects, fascinate like a work of art. The approximation of their ontological register, the intentional size

² Benjamin Walter (2015), *Opera de artă în epoca reproductibilității sale tehnice* [The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction], Editura Tact, Cluj-Napoca.

reduction, making miniatures by copying reality and a forced, cheap cuteness, we might say.

2. The construction of an object

Automated dummies, a kind of *much ado about nothing*, if they themselves were only a stage in the way of the further development, much later, of humanoid computers and androids. Some taxonomic intuition might suggest that, at the same time as the automatic dummies and fine mechanisms of analog watches, the story of evolution continues with the invention of gunpowder or the primitive types of steam engines, and so on, ad infinitum. If we hadn't kept the nostalgia for human emancipation and the liberation from the drudgery of work through the great French and Enlightenment revolutions all this time, from attempts at primitive automation by improving agricultural tools, to those of great refinement, the work of art, unsuccessfully imitating reality, as in amazing mechanical automatons. Semantically, the word comes from *automaton*, the first meaning given by the Oxford dictionary, *a person who behaves like a machine, without thinking or feeling anything*³, the second meaning, *a moving mechanical device in the shape of a person*⁴, from the Latin *automaton* used by Suetonius and from the Greek noun *automaton*, the neuter of *automatos*, which acts by itself, from *autos*, his, plus *matos*, which thinks with a will of its own, from the root *men*, to think; as Etymonline.com also says, the source of the supposed root is the Sanskrit *manas*⁵, mind, spirit, it seems that in Greek *auto* becomes a reinforcing pronoun, as in *Automelina*, meaning Melina herself does something. Probably the imitation made by automata was so good that *auto* acquired a meaning like that attributed to something natural and not made. The meaning of a person who behaves mechanically without thinking or feeling anything, also attributed especially to those with severe personality disorders or to criminals called psychopaths, is losing strength with the proportional increase in the data processing capacity of computers; now they possess an algorithm that can generate emotional poems, can easily imitate the solution of sentimental problems or compose a vibrant speech. Essentially speaking, what do they now do much better? Answer: they mimic the emotion or produce it with

³ Oxford Learners Dictionary, https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/american_english/automaton.

⁴ Oxford English Dictionary, <https://www.oed.com/search/advanced/Entries?textTermText0=automaton&textTermOpt0=Etymology&tl=true>.

⁵ Online Etymology Dictionary, www.etymonline.com/search?q=automaton.

more intensity, like a top-tier actor. Beyond their mathematical computation capabilities.

But who can distinguish the border between acquired and existing reality, by using imagination? More recent computers force the very discourse of reality by their mere presence in the virtual space of the community. Can it, the computer, add the missing content for the burning of the great Library of Alexandria, after having a fruitful dialogue respecting all the rules of an Oxford-like debate or after explaining the rational reason why Nostradamus was expelled from the University of Montpellier? And so on.

The connection between the art object and the one who makes it, its artist – in order to distinguish him from the craftsman who embodies the beginning of mass production – was for a long time achieved by applying the principle of mimesis used in theater, for example, or by making a copy after the natural reality, starting with the oldest form of drawing known, the drawings from the Lascaux caves in France or the imitation by using the *camera obscura* at some Renaissance painters. We may wonder where the original object is in the painting commissioned by the seniors of the noble classes for a considerable price or, later, in the same object resold hundreds of times through the auction houses of the great industrialists for their personal collections, after their considerable enrichment through the colonization put in practice by European empires through trading companies such as the East India Company. And where is the original, when Chat GPT creates an emotional poem, according to the same principle of imitation, having at its disposal the entire archive of poetry of humanity and the whole range of sensations?

Rossums Universal Robots, R.U.R. is a play by Karel Capek from 1920, in which the word *robot* is used for the first time, introduced into English in the Sci-Fi genre and derived from the Slavic term *robota*, work. In a factory of the future, that is, in the 2000s, robots, actually androids on an industrial scale, are being manufactured on an island. The owner of the factory, a former biologist, invented a type of inorganic tissue which imitates the principle of organic matter and created artificial life. Helena is the representative of the Humanity League and wants, after visiting the factory, to free the robots built there, to give them certain rights, for example, to be paid for their work, and finally, she claims that they have souls. At the end of Act II, the robots on the island have a rebellion. The human population was declining anyway as a result of the declining birthrate (Nota bene!). The robots kill everyone on the island except for one individual, Alquist, because he can “build houses with his own hands, work with his hands like a robot” (Nota bene for those theories that claim that humanity is actually regressing to the stage where, due to the infinite

diversification of technology and information, man in general can no longer explain simple principles, such as the basic operation of the telephone, television or electricity, a progress followed by a regression, a step forward, two back). Alquist made a pact to rebuild life on earth and do anything for it, even with their help, the robots. It seems, however, that biological life will disappear. Instead, for the first time, two robots develop feelings of love for each other, which it seems will save the new world through a novel Adam and a strange Eve, called Primus and Helena in the play. Author Capek adds in the play's prologue, "I wonder, is it not possible to see in the contemporary social conflicts taking place in the world an analogous struggle between 2, 3 or 5, equally serious and noble idealisms?" Yes, we would answer him today and asked him to look a few decades after the October Revolution, if he could, just like a supercomputer would do today, analyzing the data. Has the passion with which those ideals leveled millions of people weakened in intensity, I wonder, or has it altered and melted into a uniform magma? Until the return of the supercomputers, resuming the ancient cycle of mimesis until the irrevocable attainment of the machine-soul. We know this worked for the theater. Why wouldn't it work for higher gears as well? Unique and original is every human attempt to interpret the world, even if it involves the threat of its destruction. Could this also be the price paid by the car's miscalculation?

The solution to the problem of the autocephaly of machines can be closed by the cybernetic laws described by Isaac Asimov in his volume of sci-fi stories "I, Robot", starting in the 1940s.⁶ First Law: A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm. Second Law: A robot must obey the orders given by a human being except where such orders would conflict with the First Law. Law no. 3: A robot must protect its own existence, as long as such existence does not conflict with the First or Second Law. For now, robot brains are for a little while longer in the positronic stage, as Asimov wrote, meaning a CPU (central process unit) interface between the environment and us humans with a vague idea of consciousness and an enormous database. But who will allow themselves to censor a living work of art or a masterpiece that has arrogated by its own will the right to exist and that by itself wants to reinterpret the world in a unique and original way? The expression *state of the art* in English sums up exactly the impression rooted in the collective mind, the moment when the most advanced of technologies becomes aware that it is Art.

⁶ „Cele trei legi ale roboticii” [“The three laws of robotics”], retrieved from ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cele_trei_legi_ale_roboticii.

Bibliography

Walter, Benjamin (2015), *Opera de artă în epoca reproductibilității sale tehnice* [*The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*], Editura Tact, Cluj-Napoca

https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/american_english/automaton

<https://www.oed.com/search/advanced/Entries?textTermText0=automaton&textTermOpt0=Etymology>

<https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=automaton>

https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cele_trei_legi_ale_roboticii

Post-Pandemic Trauma and the Research as an Intrusion

Toedora MEDELEANU

Phd Student

“George Enescu” National University of Arts Iași
ROMANIA ¹

Abstract: The pandemic, especially the lockdown period, has strongly affected all the subdivisions of the performing arts’ sector, specifically the independent creators. In the context of a doctoral research focused on the impact the years 2020-2021 had on present day’s theatre praxes and aesthetics, ethical aspects are challenged by the need to gather information in order to outline the specificities of that time. Are endeavours such as searching-researching, documenting, and analysing useful or intrusive, professionally “traumatising” for the interviewed people, when performed only a couple of years after the actual event? How should these interviews be conducted? How can one know what the limits of ethics in this type of research are, if the only aspect required in order to determine this is the conversation, the possible ethics infringement itself? How ethical is it for the Act of Research if one avoids its completion for the sake of protecting the research object? Moreover, as the case study is a series of discussions whose analysis is included in a PhD thesis, one must raise the question of the supervisor’s role in this context - what should they do in this case, should they advise, help build the framework for this activity or should they keep their distance? The present paper aims to gather possible answers to these questions addressing the ethical issues of possibly intrusive research methods, as well as advance solutions for the issue represented by the purpose of doctoral advisory figures in relation to sensitive approaches in the development of an academic endeavour.

Keywords: ethics, interview, research, supervisor, lockdown.

1. Introduction

From the entirety of academic ethics concepts, one must highlight the idea of ethical research, intrusive behaviour occurring frequently during the information assembly phase. Due to this aspect, and in the light of recent pandemic-related events, this paper will be centred around the possible ethical “misbehaviours” and their respective solutions when interviewing people (practitioners and theoreticians alike) regarding

¹ maria_teodora410@yahoo.com

difficult recent events. Furthermore, the supervisor's involvement in such processes and research praxes will also be subject to analysis. One will use, as a case-study, an interview the author is conducting as part of her PhD research.

This previously-mentioned interview is structured on multiple categories – socio-professional and personal context, The Experiment, possible new aesthetics, and what can be retrieved from the media-theatrical experiments of the 2020 lockdown. One notices, thus, that the questions cover a broad range of topics, reason for which the subjects (the interviewees) might perceive this inquiry as being intrusive, forcing the borders of their personal and professional intimacy and challenging the limits of an ethical endeavour. Clearly, the possible ethical implications of this type of research method do not pass as a novelty in the academic spheres, and are, as a result, (at least) subconsciously taken into account, as Paul Oliver states and, later on, details, “We do not usually select our research participants in isolation from all our other thoughts about the research project.”² These categories are developed in order to allow not only employed creators, but also independent artists to enrich the information basis for the PhD research, as their work from the lockdown and post-lockdown pandemic period was rarely funded by any governmental institution and, moreover, most of the independent creators struggled with technical unemployment and the financial issues caused by it. By incorporating both perspectives, the research will display a broader image of the socio-artistic context of the years 2020 and 2021.

There is, consequently, a series of unavoidable questions regarding the proposed topic, but the most fervent one, serving as a basis for developing further answers, relates to the general ethical aspects of the intended approach. *Are endeavours such as searching-researching, documenting, and analysing useful or intrusive, professionally “traumatising” for the interviewed people, when performed only a couple of years after the actual event?* A short answer would be *both*. One cannot indulge in such research without taking the risk of (even just slight) intrusion, but no pandemic-related aspect can only be looked at from a singular perspective, and, thus, all endeavours of this kind have to be perceived in close relation to their context³ (i.e. the interviewed person's

² Paul Oliver (2010), *The Student's Guide to Research Ethics*, 2nd edition, McGraw-Hill/Open University Press, UK/New York, p. 26.

³ Julian Baggin, Peter S. Fosl (2007), *The Ethics Toolkit: A Compendium of Ethical Concepts and Methods*, Blackwell Publishing, p. 42. “Everything else is good or bad in relation to these [pleasure or happiness or pain and unhappiness].” As the research that serves as a case study is not related to any of the previously mentioned dichotomies, one can, therefore, accurately place it in the middle-ground and report its aspects based on the contextualised input and answers.

perception on the years 2020-2021). Regardless of the subject's perspective, however, one aspect is certain - endeavours of this kind are useful, offering a bird's-eye view of past challenging events and, this way, enabling communities within the world of art and from more distant professional spheres to understand the impact of the pandemic on the development of theatre. The substantial does not, however, lie in the first half of this question, but rather in the closing sentence – *when performed only a couple of years after the actual event*. The analysed phenomena are still to become history, and, even if this paper's author's PhD thesis is only in its incipient stages, the following years may still not contribute significantly to the improvement of objective approaches in this regard. Therefore, one returns to the significance of the context in such research activities – *who* is interviewed, but also *how*.

In comparison to other research methodologies, however, interviewing emphasises different basic questions as its cornerstone – there is, without a doubt, a *why*, a base-reason for which the researcher, the PhD student in this case, chose a specific topic and a specific subject, and this aspect is not known to the interviewee in the incipient stages⁴. This way, it is necessary to highlight the importance of the *how*, rather than the *why*, the manner of conducting the conversation having to encompass more than the channels for obtaining the information needed, but also the elements that balance the discrepancy between the two parties of the interview, and, implicitly, reduce any possible ethics infringements. This leads one to the following major question of this paper.

How should these interviews be conducted? seems to only accept one answer option, and that is *carefully*, balancing between elegantly and diplomatically demanding the answers to the questions and constantly adapting the process, so that the interviewed person never feels the need to disengage. One can place this approach method under the concept of “inclusion”, which, although not understood here in its broader sense, automatically implies a carefully designed path towards obtaining information. However, as Franziska Felder notes in *The Ethics of Inclusive Education: Presenting a New Theoretical Framework*, “Good intentions are a fine *medium* and *prerequisite* for implementing inclusion, but they do not automatically resolve the question of what, exactly, the *goal* of

⁴ “Moreover, there is generally an imbalance between those requesting information and those providing it. The former know what information they seek, how they intend to use it, and with whom they intend to share it. The latter often do not.”, Peter Markie (2022), *Confidentiality and Professional Practice*, in *Academic Ethics Today. Problems, Policies, and Prospects for University Life*, edited by Stephen M. Cahn, foreword by Rebecca Newberger Goldstein, Rowman & Littlefield, London, p. 53.

inclusion encompasses.”⁵. Therefore, as vital as overall care for the interviewees is in this context, the *justification*, as the Felder notes later on, is just as crucial for any ethical research endeavour in any given field of study or practice.

Inclusion becomes, now, synonymous with the totality of measures taken against any potential breach in the ethics code of the methodology chosen by the PhD student. This varies greatly, depending on each researcher’s individual conceptions on Ethics, and also on the outcome of each researcher-subject interaction. “Breaches of research integrity” and cases of “research misconduct”⁶ include cases of result/response alteration, in the name of preserving the initial outcome as desired, even in the detriment of its accuracy. Although certain answers or certain people’s answers can come from points of view antagonistic to the one initially issued by the interviewer or be opposite to the desired outcome of the eventual data analysis, they hold value in themselves, as tokens of the impact the analysed period of time had on the respondents. For this reason, in this given case-study, when the interview is taken less than five years after the beginning of the pandemic, and remembering difficult aspects might still prove itself to be challenging for many, the concept of *inclusion* can (and should) be formulated in action as displaying understanding for possible rejections, regardless of their reason, untruthful involvement promises or overly-succinct answers. These, too, are answers capable of retrieving the ethos of those times and of opening new paths for future research endeavours.

These being given, *how can one know what the limits of ethics in this type of research are, if the only aspect required in order to determine this is the conversation, the possible ethics infringement itself?* The risk taken here is more than visible, on both sides of the interview. On the one hand, the researcher needs to complete their work and provide an encompassing (hopefully, *all-encompassing*) result. They are, ergo, professionally obliged to further their endeavour, even if it leads to contexts where only the person-subject can have a definitive word in what concerns advancing with the interviewing process. On the other hand, the subject, having the “switch” in their hands, can draw the line at any given moment. The only issue here is, thus, related to the way in which the power is given to the subject, so that the researcher can be sure the process will not face an end due to minimal inconveniences on the side of the interviewee, but rather

⁵ Franziska Felder (2022), *The Ethics of Inclusive Education: Presenting a New Theoretical Framework*, Routledge, London, New York, p. 17.

⁶ Rachel Brooks, Kitty te Riele, Meg Maguire (2014), *Ethics and Education Research*, Sage, Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington DC, p. 120.

only in the case of major lines being crossed. Giving this power, however, can be an ambitious stake, the completion of the research depending on the quantity and quality of the answers received. One can create the context in which they ask for involvement from the subject in such a manner that the interviewee feels they have the situation under their control and also have the capacity to direct the conversation away from the sensitive topics - here, the researcher has to be able to filter the details in order to retrieve the necessary information. Additionally, as quality is derived from quantity, the interviewer can attempt to converse with multiple professional entities, in hopes that the number of people who accept to take part will be sufficient to provide a satisfactory sample for their given context.

Arboreally, from the idea detailed in the previous paragraph, one can develop the question of ethical aspects within the limits of the relation between the researcher and their work. *How ethical is it, then, for the Act of Research if one avoids its completion for the sake of protecting the research object?* Here one must highlight, once more, the quantity-related aspects, as the number of participants can actually impact, although the term used here seems drastic, the necessity (or lack thereof) of certain answers. In other words, if one subject refuses to answer, the research as a whole will only suffer minimally. If the group to which the subjects belong, however, is small (and this is the case of the performing arts sector, even if observed on a European, multi-national level), one must return to the question of ethical behaviour towards the Act of Research itself. What can one do, in this case, what options is a researcher presented with? Apart from giving up altogether, one can analyse the context and return to complete the process later on, or... they can infringe the ethics and proceed with the research at all costs. In these circumstances, it is only up to the researcher to act according to their personal values, according to what their main purpose is, at that moment. One must not disconsider the importance (and value, for that matter) of personal ethics, ethics about oneself and the activities one indulges in⁷.

⁷ Helen Kara (2018), *Research Ethics in the Real World*, Policy Press, Bristol, p. 77. "Think about the research you propose. Does it present physical risks to the researcher(s)? Or emotional, mental or spiritual risks? Are there relational risks, such as the potential for being discriminated against, bullied or harassed? If you can answer 'yes' to any of these questions, think first about whether you can redesign the research to avoid those risks without losing quality." This also applies to professional risks, which, one believes, arise when the researcher is faced with having to choose between two distinctive types of ethics (rooted however, in the same concept) – should they exhibit ethical behaviour towards the subject or towards themselves, given the case they can only choose one option?

On a different level of the research, one is faced with the issue of the supervisor, who, although directly involved in the process, cannot play the part of the researcher themselves, their roles being adjacent, tangent, with areas of concurrence, but never overlapping in a great proportion. *What should they do in this case, then? Should they advise, help build the framework for this activity or should they keep their distance?* This bifaceted aspect has to be analysed by addressing the need for balance, as key in the plenary development of the researcher-now-still-student. In their paper titled *The Role of the Supervisor on Developing PhD Students' Skills*, Amjad Almusaed and Asaad Almssad clearly present the role of the supervisor, placing it in the point of concurrency between distant and objective observation and involvement and even intervention⁸. This is, though translating, the manner in which the PhD student should approach their interview subjects: the same way a supervisor guides their student and imposes certain limits, “borders” of the research, but, at the same time, provides protection against these so-called *hazardous* situations, the student-researcher must give their subject the feeling they receive something in return for their answers. Paul Oliver argues, however, that this is not frequently the case, as “many people enjoy being interviewed” and, thus, their gain in this situation is minimised by the circumstantial preferences, the subjects seeing this “as an opportunity to gain an insight into themselves and their own value positions”⁹.

Furthermore, just as in the case of the supervisor-student relation, the researcher can display *product* or *process orientation*¹⁰, similitude that can lead to a specific approach of the interview. From this parallel, one can deduce that the dynamics between the professor and the PhD candidate can unconsciously influence the techniques and methodologies used by the latter, and, implicitly, the ethical aspects of the endeavour to obtain information for the thesis. One must, however, point out the fact that these “ways to follow”¹¹ should not be indiscriminately appropriated, directly translated from the academic team’s type of cooperation into the

⁸ “The supervisor's responsibility is to enforce safe study process practices and procedures; he must take immediate steps to correct a failure situation. Everything must be clear and systematic. If a hazard is identified, the supervisor must act.” – Amjad Almusaed, Asaad Almssad (2020), *The Role of the Supervisor on Developing PhD Students' Skills*, in Thrupp, Richard & Organization, Istes. (2022). Proceedings of International Conference on Humanities, Social and Education Sciences 2020, ISTES Organization, Washington, DC., p. 7.

⁹ Paul Oliver, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-57.

¹⁰ Ahmed A. Wadee, Moyra Keane, Ton Dietz, Driekie Hay (2010), *Effective PhD supervision mentorship and coaching*, Rozenberg Publishers, Amsterdam, p. 72.

¹¹ Oleg Bazaluk (2023), *Discursive Thinking Through of Education: Learning from Those Who Transform the Universe*, Routledge, London, New York, p. 12.

interviewer-interviewee interaction, but rather filtered through necessity, context, and the personality idiosyncrasies of both the researcher and the subject.

2. Conclusions

As conclusions to the present paper, one should highlight the multifaceted approach on both the side of the PhD student and on the side of the supervisor. Both entities of the doctoral research process go through several steps (the question series, respectively the analysis of the necessary approach to the student-supervisor relation) in order to establish or maintain the ethical background of the process of acquiring information for research. This intrinsic diversity of the steps towards the goal not only creates a solid framework for the further development of the research-“product”, but also configures a psychologically safe environment for the respondents, thus allowing for future professional collaborations, regardless of whether their purpose is research- or practice-related.

(traducere în limba engleză de Teodora Medeleanu)

Bibliography

- Almusaed, Amjad, Almssad, Asaad (2020). *The Role of the Supervisor on Developing PhD Students' Skills*, in Thripp, Richard & Organization, Istes. (2022). *Proceedings of International Conference on Humanities, Social and Education Sciences 2020*, ISTES Organization, Washington DC
- Baggini, Julian, Fosl, Peter S. (2007). *The Ethics Toolkit: A Compendium of Ethical Concepts and Methods*, Blackwell Publishing
- Bazaluk, Oleg (2023). *Discursive Thinking Through of Education: Learning from Those Who Transform the Universe*, Routledge, London, New York
- Brooks, Rachel, te Riele, Kitty, Maguire, Meg (2014). *Ethics and Education Research*, Sage, Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington DC
- Felder, Franziska (2022). *The Ethics of Inclusive Education: Presenting a New Theoretical Framework*, Routledge, London, New York
- Kara, Helen (2018). *Research Ethics in the Real World*, Policy Press, Bristol
- Markie, Peter (2022). *Confidentiality and Professional Practice, in Academic Ethics Today. Problems, Policies, and Prospects for University Life*, edited by Stephen M. Cahn, foreword by Rebecca Newberger Goldstein, Rowman & Littlefield, London

Theatre Section

Oliver, Paul (2010). *The Student's Guide to Research Ethics*, 2nd edition, McGraw-Hill/Open University Press, UK/New York

Wadee, Ahmed A., Keane, Moyra, Dietz, Ton, Hay, Driekie (2010). *Effective PhD supervision mentorship and coaching*, Rozenberg Publishers, Amsterdam

Emotional aspects in the doctoral supervision relationship. Limitations and permissibility

Ileana OCNEANU

Phd Student

“George Enescu” National University of Arts Iași
ROMANIA¹

Abstract: The supervisor-doctoral student interaction is no exception, in my opinion, in the foundations on which it is built, ultimately involving criteria similar to any type of relationship. It is obvious, however, that, settling between two personalities (supposedly) in a relationship of subordination at least from a professional point of view, but (possibly) also character-wise, there will be factors that determine and establish it different from the usual communication. The purpose of the lecture with the above title is to distinguish and establish, as far as possible, the “boundaries” that are imposed in this relationship, the emotional impact on the two partners during the doctoral course, the various situations in which it can be manifested, but also its possible excessive presence leading, perhaps, to the interruption of the collaboration between them. Taking into account the fact that I have not yet gone through the whole process, I will especially use the materials based on the study of the psychology of relationships registered in this category and on the examples provided by others in the field in which I am active (and not only), but also on my short experience on this fragile ground. I do not propose to approach this topic as an exhaustive one, considering this impossible to achieve taking into account the dynamics of this type of communication, but intending that at the end of the lecture I have managed to offer as comprehensive a perspective as possible on the rules that must be respected (by both partners), as well as on the level of tolerance that can be reached in specific situations.

Keywords: emotional, supervision, ethics.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, the plethora of information in any field, with diverse and often unverifiable sources, can in many situations be a real impediment in providing an accurate perspective on a given topic. I am convinced that, particularly in the case of a topic such as the one announced by the title above, the applicability of some of the theories put forward in the materials consulted may be questioned, contradicted

¹ ileana1tr@gmail.com.

or even rejected by those who will read them. The term *emotionalness* (a noun derived from the adjective *emotional*) has been used in this study to encompass the emotions and emotional reactions that can occur in any relationship, but with an emphasis on their effects in the development of a doctoral thesis. It is not easy to provide a clear definition of what *emotion* is, and out of the numerous attempts to define it, I finally chose the one from the DEX, namely: “An affective reaction of average intensity and relatively short duration, often accompanied by changes in the body's activities, reflecting the individual's attitude to reality”.

As for the types of basic emotions, they are classified in different hierarchies depending on the source used, into: *anger, surprise, disgust, joy, fear, sadness and contempt*. As an extension of this classification, I consider it appropriate to add a brief overview of the seven types of interpersonal relationships, including the ones in focus for the present study, namely: *the relationship with oneself, the relationship with one's partner, the relationship with family members, relationship with friends, the relationship with partners (business partners, associates or collaborators), the relationship with colleagues, the relationship with casual acquaintances*. Another defining aspect for the chosen theme, namely the behavioral attitude of the individual, also dictated by their belonging, I will also point out through the following quote: “Highly context-dependent cultures refer to networks of highly interconnected people who share a considerable biographical and social history. Many behavioral aspects are not explicit, as most members activate particular behaviors, depending on the nature of the situation and the symbolic capital of the role partner. The typological landmarks of such cultures are the Near East, the Balkans, Asia, Africa and South America, which produce more spontaneous, intuitive, contemplative, collectivist strategies of self-opening. (...) In contrast, cultures that are context-independent, such as North America or most Western European countries, produce logical, linear, predictable, individualistic and action-oriented individuals. In these cultural areas, rational gestures, actions, directness, frankness are more valued.”²

2. Emotional aspects in the doctoral supervision

As it is to be expected in the case of such a topic, I didn't intend an exhaustive approach to this relationship, considering this impossible to achieve, taking into account the dynamics of the type of communication, but I intend this study to prove useful to as many readers as possible interested in this important dimension of the process of developing a work of considerable complexity and scope.

The theme of this study was not randomly chosen, three factors determining the development of my interest in relationships of this kind: the position I have held

² Alin Gavreliuc (2011), *Psihologie interculturală* [Intercultural psychology], Editura Polirom, Iași, pp. 150-151.

for almost 20 years, that of actor in a theatre for children and youth, my experience in the English language department in high school and the academic environment for 7 years – which preceded the one mentioned above – and my role as a parent, a role in which you become, at least in the first years of your child's life, the coordinator of his or her actions. Without dwelling on this first statement, I will briefly summarize the three, shall we say, influences on my concern for human interactions of the coordination-subordination type, namely: as an actor-puppeteer there were not a few occasions when I went beyond my role as a character on stage and descended into the “crowd”, either to bring the young audience (and sometimes the grown-ups as well) closer to what they had only seen from a distance, or even to try to tame the sometimes too loud enthusiasm of the onlookers caught up in the story they were witnessing; as a teacher, it goes without saying that I found myself in the position of leading the various classroom activities, demonstrating, in turn, exigency, seriousness, but also understanding, kindness or compassion, and as a parent, my relationship with the children encompassed all the manifestations already listed, but expressed at the level of this unique interaction.

In order to succeed in giving coherence to the approach of a topic as offering as it is rich in nuances and subtleties (from the point of view of my profession), I have channeled my attention to six points that I considered of major interest for this study, namely: 1. the choice of the supervisor, someone previously known, recommended or imposed, 2. the need to establish rules of approach and conduct from the outset, 3. the contribution of the supervisor/doctoral candidate's contribution in the choice of documentation (supervisor's opinion/doctoral candidate's opinion: modifications or renunciations of personal ideas on the part of both partners), 4. support (encouragement)/criticism, 5. the emergence of conflicts/the resolution of conflicts/the abandonment of collaboration, 6. the age differences between the two.

During the three or, more recently, four years of doctoral studies, situations undoubtedly arise which neither of the two partners can foresee and which I cannot say I will be able to cover in this study, all the more so as my own perspective is permeated by the unassailable subjectivism of most of the actors who live from and through emotions. It is also worth mentioning that the different duration of information gathering and writing, as well as the presence of only two participants in the educational process, entail undeniable changes compared to the process carried out at pre-university or even academic level, corresponding to the years of study preceding the award of the bachelor's degree.

Structurally, this study is based both on personal opinions and on a series of classifications and clarifications offered by socio-psycho-pedagogy applied in human relations of coordination/subordination. I also made use of basic observations drawn from school pedagogy, extrapolating common principles, taken up and adapted to academic pedagogy. “Pedagogical knowledge is of a particular type, it is primarily aimed at action and not explanation (...) Pedagogical knowledge

is highly contextualized and instrumentalized (...) The teacher's activity is embedded in the contingent and therefore cannot be based entirely on highly formalized theoretical knowledge, but also on procedural, contextualized, situational knowledge (...) Teachers must combine a high-quality professional culture with sensitivity, imagination and improvisation.”³

I felt the need at this point in the study to clarify, as much as possible, a key element in establishing any type of relationship: *communication*. It is a term that has been given various definitions, none of which, as those concerned with clarifying it themselves admit, can be declared the most appropriate or the most comprehensive. I have focused my attention on two explanations which I considered conclusive: “Communication is a *social phenomenon* which supposes, in equal measure, an intention to send and an intention to receive a message. (...) Communication is not reducible to the action of an individual in emitting a complex of signs, even if we admit that it is not done gratuitously, but with a view to the consumption of the *symbolic content* by someone else.”⁴ I found the example of a letter that has been drafted, but which only becomes communication when it reaches the addressee, who also reads it, to be a striking illustration of this. Otherwise, one can only speak of the intention to communicate.

Collaborations between the supervisor and the doctoral student can be based on different types of relationships: *a strict*, teacher-student relationship in which the supervisor is all-knowing, inflexible and austere; *a cooperative relationship* with contributions and two-way exchange of ideas; or a relationship based on the elements of *a friendly relationship*, but not exceeding the norms required for such a relationship. In this respect, David Long, an assistant professor in a systems engineering department in the United States, gave the following answer on Quora to the question of the relationship between doctoral student and supervisor: *Your advisor advises you. /Your advisor is not your boss. /Your advisor is not your mother. /Your advisor is not your friend.*⁵ I also found Kenneth Johnson's categorization, on Quora, of the basic characteristics of good communication between the two partners equally useful: *mutual trust*, of the professor in the responsibility, involvement and ability to gather pertinent information of the student/doctoral candidate, and of the latter in the mentorship, unquestioning support and guidance offered by the former during the doctoral research years; *the dynamics of the supervisor-PhD student relationship* involving a high degree of mutual respect and trust; working together as a team with a common interest; *the independence* deriving from the student's

³ Emil Păun (2017), *Pedagogie. Provocări și dileme privind școala și profesia didactică* [Challenges and dilemmas regarding the school and the teaching profession], Editura Polirom, Iași, p. 55.

⁴ Gheorghe-Ilie Fârte (2004), *Comunicarea – O abordare praxiologică* [Communication, a praxiological approach], Editura Demiurg, Iași, p. 19.

⁵ Retrieved from <https://www.quora.com/What-is-the-relationship-between-a-professor-and-his-her-PhD-student-like-How-much-trust-is-there-between-them>.

ability to carry out research autonomously; *communication*, open and effective, materialized in regular meetings, constructive discussions and suggestions, doubts and expectations, while taking into account that there are obvious variabilities depending on the field of study, cultural norms and the background of the two.⁶

Also in this respect, I discovered in the *Annex on the Code of Doctoral Studies*/29.06.2011 and in the *Regulations of the Institute of Doctoral Studies of Law* of the Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj, 2018, some enlightening paragraphs for the topic at hand, which I reproduce below in case they are consulted by other interested doctoral students, who can, moreover, check in the above cited code, *Articles 71* and *72*, their rights and obligations, as well as those of the doctoral supervisor, namely: *Article 20*: (1) The doctoral school together with the doctoral supervisor have the obligation to inform the doctoral student about scientific, professional and academic ethics and to verify compliance with them, including: a) compliance with the deontological provisions during the doctoral research; b) compliance with the deontological provisions in the writing of the doctoral thesis. (2) The Doctoral School and the IOSUD shall take measures to prevent and sanction breaches of scientific, professional and academic ethics, in accordance with the institution's code of professional ethics and deontology. (3) In the case of possible academic fraud, violations of academic ethics or misconduct in scientific research, including plagiarism, the doctoral student and/or the supervisor shall be liable according to the law. The resolution of possible conflicts between the two parties is stipulated in *Art. 24*: (1) Conflicts between the doctoral student and the doctoral school are mediated by the CSUD, (2) Conflicts between the doctoral student and the doctoral supervisor are mediated by the doctoral school council, and if the conflict is not resolved at this level, it is mediated by the CSUD, and, regarding the doctoral supervisor, *Art. 29* of the mentioned annex states that: (1) Upon a reasoned request by the doctoral student, the doctoral school council may decide to change the doctoral supervisor if it is found that the supervisor has failed to fulfill the legal or contractual obligations assumed by the doctoral supervisor or for other reasons concerning the mentoring relationship between the doctoral supervisor and the doctoral student. In the above mentioned *Regulation*, *Art. 5*, in view of the fact that I had unknowingly taken into consideration the situation in which the doctoral supervisor and the doctoral student are related, it is stipulated as follows: (1) It shall be forbidden for a candidate for doctoral studies to be the spouse, in-law or relative up to and including the third degree of a member of the admissions committee with which he/she must sit the doctoral admission tests, (2) It shall be forbidden for a doctoral student to be the spouse, in-law, or relative up to and including the third degree, of a member of his/her supervisory committee or of the committee for the public defense of his/her

⁶ <https://www.quora.com/What-is-the-relationship-between-a-professor-and-his-her-PhD-student-like-How-much-trust-is-there-between-them>

doctoral thesis, (3) People who are spouses, in-laws and relatives up to and including the third degree may not be appointed to the same doctoral admissions committee, doctoral student supervision committee or doctoral committee.

Returning to one of the above statements, during the collection of documentation for this study, I used information from school pedagogy that I consider applicable at university level. I discovered the following statement: “The congruence of the two entities - the educator and the educated - is still too much spontaneous and therefore not sufficiently deliberately and systematically pursued, with the risk that they will follow parallel paths. Traditionally established places and roles divide the school community into two *sides*, not necessarily opposing, but somewhat distinct, as if they belonged to different worlds, with different concerns, actions and goals. (...) The flow of information and affective communication between teacher and pupils is often hindered, jammed, obstructed by certain blockages, even to the point of impermeability, which leads pupils to react with resistance, rejection or indifference to educational interventions.”⁷

How much of this would be true in the case of a relationship between two participants in the educational process, the educator and the educated, respectively, but at university level? How would this relationship change if there were only two participants in the educational process at academic level? Are these statements not also valid here, especially since in most cases doctoral students choose their supervisor on the basis of suggestions or having only one option for their chosen topic? Can we speak of similar reactions from the doctoral student? Does the sound judgement that the PhD candidate is supposed to show play a role in reducing them? Is initiating the action to participate in the doctoral process, which is supposed to be the sole responsibility of the person considering enrolment in a doctoral school, a guarantee that these blockers will be removed or alleviated? What capacity would the doctoral student have to influence this relationship for the better?

I see these questions as open-ended, with varied answers and interpretations, given the different situations encountered between the two participants involved in a different type of relationship than that between the student and his or her educator. It is not to be neglected that the doctoral students, at a greater or lesser distance from the completion of their undergraduate studies, position themselves differently to the doctoral supervisor, the knowledge acquired at university level placing them in a closer relationship with the professor responsible for the smooth running of the conception and defence of their thesis.

I also found three other definitions of *leadership* relevant: “Leadership is a way of optimizing human activity; leadership involves choosing actions, determining the organizational structures and responsibilities of the agents,

⁷ Elena Truță, Sorina Mardar (2007), *Relația profesor-elevi, blocaje și deblocaje* [The teacher-student relationship, blockers and enablers], Aramis Print s.r.l., Iași, p. 8.

formulating their tasks and duties, controlling the accomplishment of tasks, and evaluating the results.”⁸ The one on the teacher's influence on students:

Both the informational-cognitive and affective relationships are established with the aim of *influencing* students in multiple senses: to acquire knowledge, to determine affective states conducive to receiving the message delivered by the teacher, to bring about changes in behaviour or stabilize character traits, etc. (...) The effectiveness of the influencing action, the meaning and intensity of the influence that the teacher exerts on the students depend to a large extent on the emotional tone of his or her relations with the pupils. Through his or her affective behavior, the teacher imposes a certain individual and group behavior on part of the students⁹,

as well as that by which *cooperation* is considered to be “...the coordination of efforts to achieve common objectives which cannot be attained by individual effort, and, in view of the fact that the tasks to be solved in social life are increasingly complex and are solved by teamwork, the young person must be trained in the spirit of willingness and skill in cooperating with his fellows.”¹⁰

Translating these ideas into the present study, we can state that in the case of the PhD supervisor – PhD student relationship we can also talk about team work, even if it is made up of only two members who cooperate in order to achieve the goal that should be common – which is to finally obtain a thesis as complex as possible. One of them, i.e. the supervisor, influences the doctoral student intellectually and emotionally in order to optimize his work, controlling its development and evaluating the results obtained by him, having, in addition to the academic environment, the support of the other three members of the doctoral committee. The role played by the supervisor's character undoubtedly plays a substantial part in the development of a harmonious collaborative relationship with the doctoral student, through self-control and balanced behavior. At this point, I am convinced that the absence of unrealistic expectations on the part of each of the two from their work partner also makes an important contribution to the smooth running of a viable team, as the strengthening of cooperation between them is the result of a natural process of mutual knowledge and trust.

Taking into account the fact that the theme chosen focused on the role of emotion in the relationship between two partners involved in an educational process, the use of materials from human psychology is, as already noted, unavoidable, as they constitute the theoretical basis of personal observations. Psychologist Marius Milcu notes: “...in a long-term interaction, we can witness multiple and rapid successions of interpersonal relationships. Initially starting with a cooperative approach, a given task may turn, for example, into a competitive one, then into a

⁸ Elena Truță, Sorina Mardar, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

⁹ *Idem*, p. 23.

¹⁰ *Idem*, p. 84.

conflictual one, and finally return to the cooperative approach”, adding a few lines later a further comment that I found valid in the context of the present study, namely: “... social situations are frequently encountered where one of the participants in the interaction has a cooperative approach, while the other one reacts competitively or even conflictually within the task in question.” and “...the social environment subordinates cooperation, competition and conflict to a set of *rules and conventions*, institutionalizing to some extent these interpersonal relationships, regulating them, keeping them under control, thus sanctioning the undesirable ones and rewarding the accepted and desirable ones at a given moment in a social group or society.”¹¹

I found it interesting to discover that the materials consulted, while providing sound theoretical information, did not provide a list of rules, conventions and sanctions that could result from their violation. In other words, the pages did not show the sanctions that could be applied in the event of inappropriate behavior on the part of one of the participants in the relationship, which could, moreover, mirror the inappropriate behavior of the other or stem from a lack of constant self-control. A concrete example, which, unfortunately, I would venture to say is not an isolated situation in my homeland, is when one of the two partners shows up for counseling inebriated, be it the student or the supervisor. What sanctions apply to such a situation? How often should this situation have to repeat to result in termination? Is this provided for by law or, as we say, do the two “reach an agreement”, which can lead either to the perpetuation of this situation or to its “extinction” when dealing with a person who becomes aware of the damage to his or her credibility which can, in the case of the supervisor, remove him or her from the list of supervisors eligible for future doctoral students, who have been informed of this habit by their former colleagues.

However, conflicts can prove beneficial in many cases, both in the short term, in the collaboration in question, and in the future, with the possibility that, in case of realizing the mistake, the “guilty” party may try to redress or even give up the determined factor of the conflict. In the above-mentioned work by the psychologist Marius Milcu, we found a clarification of the changes for the better in conflict situations, which can lead to prioritizing the objectives and goals of the activity being carried out, relegating to the background those that had unjustifiably occupied a central place and bringing to the foreground those that are truly important. At the emotional level, conflict, once resolved, can revive the relationship between the participants; at the social level, it can transform hostility into cooperation or lead to the end of an unhealthy relationship, the value systems of the two parties can also be transformed, certain rules and norms can be replaced by others that are beneficial for the continuation of a solid collaboration, communication can become more fluid and the exchange of ideas and opinions can become more constructive. Let us take

¹¹ Marius Milcu (2008), *Psihologia relațiilor interpersonale – competiție și conflict* [Interpersonal Relations Psychology - Competition and Conflict], Editura Polirom, Iași, pp. 31-32.

an example that is within reach for all of us, whether we belong to the world of the arts or not, when a work, treatise or article proposed by a doctoral student does not prove at first to be to the liking of the supervisor; the latter initially rejects, whether with or without reasoning, the use of such material in the thesis, creating a conflict, no doubt, but at the student's insistence, after further analysis of the proposal, reconsiders and allows the former to use the material in his or her thesis. In this common case, I would say, the benefits of the conflict listed above are amply demonstrated. I would continue with the question, which is less easy to answer: what would happen when we have a situation in which a material proposed by the supervisor is not well received by the doctoral student or even rejected by the latter? Can we speak, in particular if the coordinator belongs to the strict category mentioned in the opening of the study, of the possibility of resolving the conflict? If so, how? By the PhD candidate accepting the proposal? Or by his lobbying the supervisor to withdraw the proposal, trying to make the best possible case?

To what extent could the doctoral student's argumentation be considered relevant, taking into account the (supposedly) richer experience of the supervisor? At this point, would the question raised by the assertion above, i.e. in the case of an insignificant age difference between the doctoral student and the supervisor, would the doctoral student be more likely to be approved not to include the recommended material in his/her thesis? Could this be seen as an act of weakness which could possibly be exploited later either by the same doctoral student or by other doctoral students who follow him or her and who have been informed by him or her of the supervisor's behavior? To what extent can this weakness become a "weapon" turned against the doctoral supervisor?

Could we consider writing the PhD thesis a guarantee that the relationship between the two is developing more harmoniously, given that the "visibility" of the doctoral student is automatically reflected in the "visibility" or increased credibility of the doctoral supervisor? Could each of the two participants let go of conflict more easily by helping each other grow? The many questions raised so far, I am convinced, cannot acquire a certain answer, once unforeseen situations are brought into the discussion, in which both partners may be taken by surprise by their own reactions, especially in an artistic environment. Also worth mentioning at this point is conducting a joint PhD thesis, a situation that can be made all the more complicated by the distance that restricts the face-to-face relationship between the two, which has undeniable benefits, too, especially in the situations outlined above.

3. Conclusions

As I stated at the beginning, this study is not meant to elucidate the mystery of the role that emotion plays in a partnership, be it at university level, where you obviously expect amicable solutions to conflicts or at least a greater openness in

terms of conflict resolution, given the academic framework in which this process takes place.

To conclude, I have chosen a number of four other open-ended questions, namely: 1. How do you manage a collaboration that goes beyond the inherent emotional manifestations and degenerates into a physical or even romantic relationship?

2. What about the emergence of a knowledge gap between the two partners, in the situation where the doctoral student turns out to have more information than the supervisor?

3. How might the image of the doctoral student be affected by a change of supervisor? What about that of the supervisor in the same situation? and

4. Would it be appropriate to continue the collaboration in the absence of a useful and harmonious relationship?

Bibliography

Fârte, Gheorghe Ilie (2004). *Comunicarea, o abordare praxiologică* [Communication, a praxiological approach], Editura Demiurg, Iași

Gavreliuc, Alin (2011). *Psihologie interculturală – Repere teoretice și diagnoze românești* [Intercultural Psychology – Theoretical landmarks and Romanian diagnoses], Iași

Milcu, Marius (2008). *Psihologia relațiilor interpersonale – Competiție și conflict* [Interpersonal Relations Psychology – Competition and Conflict], Editura Polirom, Iași

Păun, Emil (2017). *Pedagogie – Provocări și dileme privind școala și profesia didactică* [Challenges and dilemmas regarding the school and the teaching profession], Editura Polirom, Iași

Truță, Elena, Mardar, Sorina (2007). *Relația profesor-elevi: blocaje și deblocaje* [The teacher-student relationship: blockers and enablers], Aramis Print s.r.l, Iași

<https://www.quora.com/What-is-the-relationship-between-a-professor-and-his-her-PhD-student-like-How-much-trust-is-there-between-them>

<https://www.quora.com/What-is-the-relationship-between-a-professor-and-his-her-PhD-student-like-How-much-trust-is-there-between-them>

Ethical perspectives of choreographic discourse

Alexandru RADU

Phd Student

“George Enescu” National University of Arts Iași
ROMANIA ¹

Abstract: It is a well-known fact that choreography is part of the area of performing arts that requires a certain rigor of the body and precision in movement. However, over time, the art of choreography has evolved, transforming into a form of expression that is no longer necessarily conditioned by impressive technical skills. Although my training in the choreographic field is structured according to classical norms, the subject of my doctoral research is directed towards an area where movement is not the main point of interest, but rather is used as a therapeutic tool. Therefore, as expected, the way I normally look at movement, in the construction of a show for example, has undergone drastic changes. I believe that this is also the moment when the issue of ethics intervened during my research, with which I already made contact in the construction of the first practical laboratory, where I interacted from a choreographic point of view with approximately seventeen seniors between the ages of 65 and 93, creating a 30-minute performance-experiment. This lab put me in the position to restructure the discourse that I would normally have when constructing a choreographic performance, which I had to adapt according to the different ages and bodies I worked with. So, many times I found myself in the position where I was reflecting on the indications I give, so that they are as correct as possible from an ethical point of view, contributing to a healthy relationship between me and the seniors, but to also regulate certain clear, scenic situations that could not be left to chance.

Keywords: choreography, ethical, dance.

1. Introduction

It is a well-known fact that choreography is part of the performing arts that require a certain rigor of the body and precision in movement. However, over time, choreographic art has evolved, turning into a form of expression that is no longer necessarily conditioned by impressive technical skills. Although my training in the choreographic field is structured according to classical norms, the topic of my doctoral research is directed towards an area where movement is not

¹ r.alexandru.bogdan@gmail.com.

the main point of interest, but rather is used as a therapeutic tool. So, naturally, the way I normally look at movement, when constructing a show for example, has undergone radical changes.

2. Ethical perspectives

“A code of ethics articulates values and principles, and informs the understanding of the moral qualities necessary to work in the profession.”² Although I delved into the topic of ethics during my doctoral research, my first contact with it took place earlier, during the creation of my debut show, KARNAL, which premiered at the *Teatrul din Stejar*, Iași in 2021. Due to the concept chosen for the show, body shaming, I had to study before starting the creative process and the ways in which I have to relate, from an ethical point of view, to the performers chosen. Knowing that the cast included people who, over time, have experienced traumatic situations relative to their own bodies and that we will have to reveal them in the dramatics of the show, it was necessary, by documenting myself, to reshape the path of verbal expression and movement. So, I turned my attention rather to how I use movement to externalize negative experience, especially to start a therapeutic process of accepting corporeality, through exercises that combined the psychological with the physical. From an ethical point of view, being such a sensitive subject, I had to understand this phenomenon we call *body shaming* as well as possible, to be informed in such a way that I would not find myself in the position of being the triggering factor of traumas, in an unintentional way of course.

The discussion frames the possibilities of collaboration seen through an ethical lens in which the dialogic is seen as a system of our complex relations that facilitates opportunities to create responses to ideas and experience. (...) The crux is to consider what can be learned when we recognize ethics to be at the heart of how together we can investigate possible futures.³

Having worked over time with different types of corporeality, with different sensitivities and with psychological themes, I think I have developed a kind of necessary empathy, which could easily be placed in the area of ethics, if we think about the dictionary definition of the latter. In doing so, I have always tried to move away from the “classical” model of teaching movement, which often violates the rules of ethics, causing performers short-term discomfort and even long-term trauma.

² Colin Noyale, Catherine Seago, Kathryn Stamp (2024), *Ethical Agility in Dance. Rethinking Technique in British Contemporary Dance*, Routledge, London, p. 1.

³ Fiona Bannon (2018), *Considering Ethics in Dance, Theatre and Performance*, Palgrave Macmillan Publishing House, London, p. 11.

As noted in Chapter One, a phrase used to describe dance teacher behaviour “*teaching by terror*” (Geeves 1993, p. 8) captured my imagination, transporting me back to my own memories both of learning to dance and of learning to teach: and, in particular, the deep-seated fear of not getting it right in case I was accused of not trying. I still remember the deep feelings of injustice when I was accused of not trying – somehow not getting it right meant I was not trying. No doubt there were times I did not try as hard as I could but generally, I did try, I tried very hard. And all too often, it just wasn’t enough. (...) I also realize looking back that at least some of the accusations of not trying were not really levelled at my level of effort but rather they were criticisms of my anatomical shortfalls such as a neck that was too short (and not surprisingly, still is) and, toes that were too long with feet that did not possess the naturally high, overly flexible arches that were so often prized for classical ballet.⁴

Given the fact that I have also lived such unpleasant experiences, I realized that I should not apply the same working method, especially in projects that do not aim at technical perfection. Thus, I suggest an exercise of imagination to prove the above. Let’s say that in the work process I ask a performer to perform a particular movement, which we will very simply call movement 0. After the performer memorizes and performs movement 0, I realize that the shape of his body does not create the connection that I previously visualized for movement 0 and moreover puts him at a scenic disadvantage. So, I decide that I must replace movement 0 with movement 1. Of course, the rule of professional ethics already dictates me a verbal expression that does not cause a conflict between me and the interpreter, but in order to reach the desired effect, I must assume his corporeality and approach his way of moving. At no point do I need to give the impression that the performer’s body shape or type of movement is the cause of creative difficulties, but on the contrary, I need to make the right decisions in such a way that the performer feels comfortable, as an active participant in the creative act. Empathy develops over time and I consider it an extension of the use of ethics in the performing arts.

In this case, however, a dilemma arises for the creator of the show, which raises a set of questions about the decisions to be made during the construction. Such questions I have often faced myself when it was necessary to make the crucial decisions for the shows I worked on. Is it ethical to force the performer to assimilate and reproduce a certain movement perfectly, just because it adds value to the performance? Does the ethical dimension of the process extend to the viewers, too, as I am morally directly responsible for what I offer the audience? Is it ethical to sacrifice the final product in favor of the work process, or vice versa? Of course, as I gain experience, I formulate answers to all these

⁴ Botham Sho (2012), *Ethical Issues in the Training and Development of Dance Teachers in the Private Sector*, University of Brighton, p. 67.

questions. So they are changeable, unexpected and sometimes very hard to find. I am concerned about this area of creation and motivated to research further. “In the relationship between ethics and aesthetics, a major question arises: to what extent can the artistic fact, the creation or, later, the reception of the work be considered moral? It is usually considered that reading a novel and, likewise, watching a theatre performance or listening to a symphonic concert are not considered to be ethical actions. However, the act of reception, by adapting to the reality of the scene, is one that involves – looking at things in extremis – either “the illusion of reality” or “distancing”, in other words a reaction that, following the stages of the descriptive, norms attitudes and institutes a process of valorization. If what is transmitted to us through the stage act is accompanied by a direct or implicit evaluation, the reception of the message (of some messages, to be more precise, since there are also statements with neutral value) will involve a translation of it through the grids of values and norms that the universe of morality has in mind.”⁵

During my doctoral research, I came across ethical perspectives, more precisely in the construction of the first practical laboratory, where I interacted from a choreographic point of view with approximately seventeen seniors aged 65 to 93 years old, making a performance-experiment of 30 minutes. This laboratory put me in the position to restructure the speech that I would normally give when constructing a choreographic show, which I had to adapt according to the different ages I work with. My speech took on the most ethically correct nuances, thus contributing to a healthy relationship between me and the seniors, but which also regulated certain clear, staged situations that could not be left to chance. At the end of this project there was another question that stuck in my mind: is it ethical to feel compassion for the performers of a show just because they are elderly people? Does this not interfere in our perception, as a spectator, and modify the vision we have of the performance we have watched, not being able to follow perhaps other artistic directions that are dealt with within the project?

In conclusion, we could reinforce here the idea that, in dance, the passage of an ontological dimension of the gesture to an ethic of form does not mean a reduction or a substitution. The displacement from an ontological discussion to an ethical discussion of dance is only a circulation between body-in-movement and gesture and it is in this circulation that the dancing body is becoming. The two axes of discussion have in common the notion of mediality as a fundamental presupposition. The importance of thinking the mediality not only as a support, but as a movement of inclusion and

⁵ Tiberius Vasiniuc (2020), *Principii de etică și integritate în arta spectacolului și în cercetarea artistică* [Principles of Ethics and Integrity in Performing Arts and Artistic Research], UArtPress, p. 56.

devolution requires: 1) to keep open any discursive plan and to include the Other; 2) disregard the tendencies of imprisonment of the work in categories; 3) to measure knowledge by identifying the construction strategies or the meta-discourses involved.⁶

This specific demographic implies a heightened sensitivity to the physical, emotional and social aspects of the participants. By adopting clear and inclusive ethical norms, an environment of trust and mutual respect is created between the choreographer and the performers, contributing to the general well-being and commitment to the artistic process. It is essential to take into account individual limits, promote open communication and adapt dance practices according to the needs and abilities of each participant. By applying these ethical norms, an artistic harmony is built in which the experience of dance becomes an inclusive and fulfilling way for everyone involved.

3. Conclusions

The conclusion we can reach is that the ethical side has major implications in the performing arts, because the process is done by people, together with other people. I have noticed that although choreography has traditionally been associated with rigorous demand on the body and technical precision, the evolution of the art of choreography has brought with it a transformation in the perspective on movement. In the case of my doctoral research and practical projects, I chose to focus on the use of movement as a therapeutic tool, and this approach required an adaptation of the way I looked at the construction of performances.

A crucial aspect in this approach played the implementation of a code of ethics, which articulates the values and principles necessary to work with sensitivity and respect for the individual experiences of dancers of all ages. In the construction of the performances, I was careful to keep being open to discussion, to respect individual boundaries and to promote open and empathetic communication. I have also been careful to avoid the “classical” model of teaching movement techniques, replacing it with an approach that takes into account the body diversity and specific sensitivities of the participants.

The whole experience highlighted the importance of an ethical approach in the artistic field and shed light on essential questions regarding ethical decisions in the creative process. It is essential to ask to what extent the artistic fact and the reception of the work can be considered moral and how this impacts the relationship with the spectators.

⁶ Barros Né (2017), *Dance and mediality: for an ontological and ethical discussion of the performative body*, Comunicação e Sociedade, vol. 31, pp. 77-78.

Finally, a special attention paid to ethics in the choreographic process not only contributes to the quality of the artistic experience, but also to the development of a healthy relationship between the creator and the performers, valuing the diversity and individuality of each participant. Thus, I consider it essential that a creator (director or choreographer) be involved in studying the issue of ethics in order to develop their skill for a harmonious coordination of the entire artistic process.

Bibliography

- Bannon, Fiona (2018). *Considering Ethics in Dance, Theatre and Performance*, Palgrave Macmillan Publishing House, London
- Botham, Sho (2012). *Ethical Issues in the Training and Development of Dance Teachers in the Private Sector*, University of Brighton
- Né, Barros (2017). *Dance and mediality: for an ontological and ethical discussion of the performative body*, Comunicação e Sociedade, vol. 31
- Noyale, Colin, Seago, Catherine, Stamp, Kathryn (2024). *Ethical Agility in Dance. Rethinking Technique in British Contemporary Dance*, Routledge, London
- Vasiniuc, Tiberius (2020). *Principii de etică și integritate în arta spectacolului și în cercetarea artistică* [Principles of Ethics and Integrity in Performing Arts and Artistic Research], UArtPress

Theatre and radio – ethical dilemmas in the doctoral research of common history

Ioana SOREANU

Phd Student

“George Enescu” National University of Arts Iași
ROMANIA

Abstract: Theatre and the radio have systematically intersected since the beginning of the existence of this means of mass communication. It is known that the radio included in its modes of expression those of the theatre. Entertainment shows, radio theatre, children's stories, poetry recitals are just a few examples of elements that have become inseparable in radio programmes. Moreover, the role of the theatre professional on the radio has also evolved over time, and the main influences relate to the historical, political and cultural changes in Romania. The study anticipates a number of ethical dilemmas, such as copyright issues, the potential for misinterpretation of cultural nuances, and the fine line between academic research and personal privacy. From this point of view, the rules imposed by deontology in journalism guarantee the equidistance and impartiality of the research. On the other hand, the stylistics of writing such a doctorate, placed between the rigours of an academic research and the criteria of a journalistic investigation, represents a challenge. Another ethical problem concerns the use of radio theatre as a tool to propagate a political or social attitude through the messages conveyed by playwrights and directors who work on the radio “stage”.

Keywords: radio, theatre, ethical, dilemmas.

1. Introduction

The theatre and the radio have systematically crossed paths since the beginning of existence of this means of mass communication. It is known that the radio has included among its modes of expression those specific to theatre. Entertainment shows, radio theatre, including that for children, children's stories, poetry recitals are just a few examples of elements that have become essential in radio programs.

In fact, the role of theatre people in radio has evolved over time, and the main influences are related to the historical, political and cultural changes in Romania. Understanding these metamorphoses requires both a deep knowledge of various contexts and an expanded ability to interpret how these changes influenced the development of radio theatre.

In this research, I chose to study the valuable relationship between theatre and radio, especially in terms of theatre and radio in Iasi, in order to structure a serious argument regarding the cultural potential of the city.

Using an interdisciplinary outlook, the doctoral research plan is based on specialized literature in both art and media communication, in order to establish the optimal methodology for analyzing the phonotheque of Romanian radio theatre. The study circumscribes the fundamental role of sound as a landmark in the construction of narrative and characters, as well as the challenges associated with the scientific endeavor when integrating research into sound archives. The richness of radio experience and socio-cultural contexts can only be captured by a constant appeal to mixed methods, both qualitative and quantitative.

2. Ethical dilemmas

The study anticipates a range of ethical dilemmas, such as copyright issues, the potential for misinterpretation of cultural nuances, and the fine line between academic research and respecting personal boundaries. From this point of view, the rules imposed by deontology in journalism guarantee the non-bias and impartiality of research. On the other hand, the stylistics of writing such a scientific endeavor, placed between the rigors of academic research and the criteria of a journalistic investigation, represent a challenge.

Another ethical issue concerns the use of radio theatre as a tool to propagate a political or social attitude through the messages conveyed by playwrights and directors working on the radio “stage”.

Right from the beginning, I pointed out that theatre and radio have had many points of intersection ever since the advent of this media. Theatre people, actors, screenwriters and directors have always been part of the production teams of radio plays, cultural and entertainment shows. As far as Iasi is concerned, the situation involves certain peculiarities and is especially related to the need to communicate with the population across the Prut River. More precisely, on October 8th, 1939, Radio Bessarabia was inaugurated, established as a necessity to combat Russian propaganda and the anti-Romanian campaign carried out by the Soviets through the Tiraspol radio station. In 1940, the Soviets took over Bessarabia and, of course, the radio station. The building was destroyed, equipment confiscated or destroyed, and personnel found in the institution executed. The same fate befell Radio Odessa. As a consequence, on November 2nd, 1941, Radio Moldova is inaugurated in Iasi, the station being established from the same reasons as radio Bessarabia. Its main role was to convey information and programs in the Romanian language beyond the Prut River. Radio

Moldova's activity was interrupted in 1944 with the entry of Soviet troops into Iasi.¹ It was opened again on May 1st, 1956, under the name of Radio Iasi, as a local station of the Romanian Radio Broadcasting Company². Another interruption in the activity of the current Radio Romania Iasi took place between 1985 and 1989. Those were the years when the straps of the communist dictatorship strangled any manifestation of freedom, especially the freedom of expression³. The moment of the 1989 Revolution is an important chapter. The former employees returned immediately, in the very days of the Revolution, to the headquarters in Lascar Catargi 44 street. Actors from the National Theatre of Iasi joined them. They were part of the radio's team and experienced together with the employees the emotion of reopening Radio Iasi.

Conveying information to Romanians living across the Prut River was not the only objective of setting up a public radio station in Iasi, but also the preservation of the Romanian language, literature and values in general. Therefore, cultural broadcasts, radio plays, either from Romanian literature, but not only (interpreted in Romanian language) have served this purpose for many years. At the same time, other Romanians, far away from the country, listened to the voices of famous actors on Radio Iasi, interpreting well-known texts from literature, childhood stories and thus felt closer to their loved ones, to their native places. This was possible due to the high transmission power of the transmitter from Uricani. Therefore, Radio Iasi has been was and still is, thanks to its cultural programs, a space for Romanians to meet, wherever they are, with everything that is familiar to them.

And since I mentioned Romanian language as a valuable tool in triggering this sense of belonging, it is important to emphasize that the actors of the National Theatre in Iași, who became anchors/presenters of Radio Iasi - with an impeccable, elegant speech, with the right phrasing - were the ones who used this instrument with great art. Moreover, when the roles in different plays required the Moldovan accent, the actors interpreted

¹ Vali Brad, *DOCUMENTARY: Radio Bessarabia – broadcasting station intended to combat Soviet propaganda, Radio Chisinau – bridge of Romanianism across the Prut*, RADOR Agency, 8 October 2018, retrieved from <https://www.rador.ro/2018/10/08/documentar-radio-basarabia-postul-radiodifuziunii-menit-sa-combata-propaganda-sovietica-radio-chisinau-punte-a-romanismului-peste-prut-2/> [viewed on 30th September 2023]

² Cătălin Belu, *DOCUMENTARY: Radio Iași, mirror of the deeper life of Moldova, celebrates 80 years of existence*, RADOR Agency, 2 November 2021, retrieved from <https://www.rador.ro/2019/05/24/de-astazi-nu-mai-emiteti-radio-iasi-in-zilele-revolutiei-din-decembrie-1989/> [viewed on 30th September 2023]

³ Călin Ciobotari (2014), *Emil Coșeru, actorul nostru* [Emil Coșeru, our actor], Editura Opera Magna, Iași.

with great charm and authenticity. This is another aspect that brought those far away closer to home.

Critics, placed between stage and audience, have always had their significant “role” in radio programs. Some of them turned into screenwriters; those who did not, have set interpretation landmarks for several plays presented, either on the radio or on the classical theatre stage. Such shows mold the audience for theatre.

This old and deep connection must be brought to light and highlighted because it is part of the cultural heritage of the city, and this is an ethical duty (not a dilemma) for theatre and radio people. Important actors, screenwriters, directors and theoreticians created a generous common space between theatre and radio, which they used to promote Romanian language and literature or, before 1989, convey subversive messages. Such messages were masterfully hidden in the humorous sketches of Saturday and Sunday broadcasts or in the texts of radio plays. In the notes sent to the *Securitate* by informants from institutions, these were identified as “provocative ideas”⁴ or “distortions of the messages of the play”⁵.

On the other hand, a question emerges about the justness of using radio, especially public radio, for the purpose of transmitting messages, political or social opinions, by playwrights and directors. In my opinion, freedom can have no limits other than the risk of violating the freedom of others. Freedom of expression is also a sacred right if it does not incite to hatred or murder. It is precisely undemocratic regimes that violate this right, instead overusing the media and any other communication vehicle to convey their own principles. That is why I believe that the introduction of political or social points of view in radio texts is allowed and justified, just as it is allowed and entitled on the stage of any national theatre (also a public institution) to which the public has access. Such texts are, at the same time, perspectives of sociological research, and later will become documentary material for historians.

In conclusion, if theatre and radio have a role in educating and training the public, then refining ways of thinking and elaborating reasoning can also be achieved by exposure to various political or social attitudes.

Another aspect I want to bring into discussion, related to research ethics, is the attachment to the topic (“the research fuel”, as professor Octavian Jighirgiu, PhD calls it). It is positive, because it keeps a maximum

⁴ Cristina Modreanu (2022), *Teatrul ca rezistență. Oameni de teatru în arhivele securității* [Theater as resistance. Theater people in the archives of the Securitate], Editura Polirom, București, chapter 2 The confrontation “*I want to be the director of my own life!*” the Emil Reus case, p. 75.

⁵ *Ibidem*.

interest during the four years, especially in conditions of sustained effort, as is the case of a doctoral thesis. On the other hand, one can fall into the trap of subjectivism, the research being thus altered, as pointed out by the director of the Doctoral School of Theatre, assoc. prof. Călin Ciobotari, PhD.

Going through part of the bibliography, I received confirmation that the topic has a deeply personal connotation for me. Authors of books, interviewees (theatre and radio people) are all part of an intimate universe, they had a special role in my development as a human being and as a professional, and reading is accompanied by a lot of emotion. Theatre and radio have been part of my life since childhood. The memories of the plays I watched, with lots of admiration for the actors of Iasi National Theatre, alternating with my fascination for listening to the radio, trying to imagine the universe hiding in the magic box, were quite overwhelming. It is precisely this emotional connection that guarantees responsibility for the academic endeavor and the desire for the initial goals to be achieved. I am talking about exploiting this cultural potential, this precious relationship between theatre and radio.

I also identified solutions that remove the danger of a subjective approach: establishing the historical and current context around the theme very clearly, becoming aware of its importance, determining research objectives. At the same time, the journalist is always subject to the temptation to personally treat some topics, influenced by his experiences or feelings. Professional experience has taught me that respecting deontology, measuring the quantity and quality of arguments and drawing an imaginary red thread throughout the story, report, interview or debate are rules that protect the journalist from the sin of being biased.

But in my journalistic experience originates, however, another caveat, namely the stylistics of writing do not fully comply with academic rigors. Radio speech allows for some freedoms that does not fit into the rules of expression of a doctoral thesis. Journalistic communication requires expressiveness, a personal touch, a language accessible to a heterogeneous audience in terms of education. The distance between the orality of radio speech and academic discourse is significant. Therefore, it is necessary to adapt the stylistics of writing to academic requirements.

A final aspect identified as ethical that I want to develop has its origin in the area of legality. Reporting to the law, although an unattractive approach, is necessary because this way we can know the limits within which the activity in radio and theatre can operate, and in which the present research can be probed. And the boundaries imposed by law also delimit some of the principles of ethics. More specifically, those that relate to property right.

Both theatre and radio are under the influence of Law 8/1996, revised in 2023, on copyright. The normative act stipulates that “the use of a work gives rise to patrimonial rights, distinct and exclusive, of the author to authorize or prohibit”,⁶ including the reproduction, broadcasting or realization of derivative works.

The law protects the author, but also the heirs, so as not to be deprived of their rights over an asset with artistic and intellectual value.

The patrimonial rights provided for in Articles 13 and 24 shall last throughout the life of the author, and after their death shall be transmitted by inheritance, according to civil law, for a period of 70 years, irrespective of the date on which the work was lawfully made known to the public. If there are no heirs, the exercise of these rights shall lie with the collective management organisation mandated during the lifetime of the author or, in the absence of a mandate, with the collective management organisation with the largest number of members in the respective creative field.⁷

This is, in my view, the ethical dilemma. High-value recordings, literary texts, extraordinary performances are kept away from the public due to lack of agreement among the heirs. This is precisely contrary to the original interest of those who recorded the production. Certainly, the goal was for the radio play, the poetry recital or the show to reach a large audience. We cannot imagine that the participants set out to carry out a secret radio act, with an internal circuit. In other words, this intervention of the law makes the original goal unattainable.

Two companies hold the copyright for the productions that are in the Radio Romania sound archive: Copyro and Opera Scrisă. Since 2019, the two companies have been closely monitoring what is being broadcast, whether radio plays or shows (“The Merry Hour”, that later became “The Merry Wave”). More specifically, in order for such a production to be broadcast, its author, translator and adapter must be listed in the database of those companies. Without this criterion, the production cannot be transmitted in radio programs. This is another obstacle placed by the law between radio cultural production and the public.

The copyright issue is not new, before 1989 it was invoked by the *Securitate* or censorship commissions in order to ban plays that were considered defamatory for the regime at the time. This happened at the National Theatre in Timisoara, for example, with a play by Brecht, staged by Emil Reus. “Despite a very good critical acclaim, the show was played

⁶ Law no. 69/2022 for the amendment and completion of Law no. 8/1996 regarding copyright and related rights; Chapter IV, Article 13, *Content of copyright*.

⁷ *Idem*, Chap. V, Article 28, *Duration of copyright protection*.

only 18 times. As the reaction of the audience showed it immediately recognized the beloved leader, it was impossible for the production to stay in the repertoire, so a reason often used in similar cases of unwanted performances was invoked, namely the issue of copyright.”⁸.

3. Conclusion

These are just some of the anticipated ethical dilemmas related to doctoral research into the common past of theatre and radio. Some answers are found in the law, others come from deontology, from the experience of those to be interviewed, from the interpretation of the readings in the bibliography and from academic guidance.

It is precisely the complex history that makes this relationship even more enthralling. In Iasi, the close connection to the sensitive political situation in this geographical space, an eternal border between East and West, gives even greater importance to the relationship between theatre and radio. Theatre people, along with media people, theatre people becoming themselves media people, creators and bearers of messages adapted to social needs. Losing this huge cultural heritage by ignoring it, amputates a part of the cultural history, including that of the city.

The answers to the ethical dilemmas raised will certainly be used further in addressing and capitalizing on this theatre-radio relationship.

Bibliography

- Câmpeanu, Gabriela (2001), *Aici Radio Moldova! Aici Radio Iași! 60 de ani de radiofonie în Moldova* [This is Radio Moldova! This is Radio Iași! 60 years of radio broadcasting in Moldova], Institutul European, Iași
- Ciobotari, Călin (2014), *Emil Coșeru, actorul nostru* [Emil Coșeru, our actor], Editura Opera Magna, Iași
- Ciobotari, Călin (2010), *Cornelia Gheorghiu între „Ciocârlia” și „Sarah Bernhardt”* [Cornelia Gheorghiu between Ciocârlia and Sarah Bernhardt], Editura Junimea, Iași
- Petcu, Marian (2007), *Istoria Jurnalismului și a publicității în România (The History of Journalism and Advertising in Romania)*, Editura Polirom, Iași
- Modreanu, Cristina (2022), *Teatrul ca rezistență. Oameni de teatru în arhivele securității*, [Theater as resistance. Theater people in the archives of the Securitate], Editura Polirom, București
- Traciuc, Vasile (1996), *Introducere în presa radiofonică* [Introduction to radio press], Tritonic, București

⁸ Cristina Modreanu, *op. cit.*, chap. 1983. *Ascensiunea lui Arturo Ui sau demontarea mecanismelor terorii* [The rise of Arturo Ui or dismantling the mechanisms of terror], p. 71.

Traciuc, Vasile (2003), *Jurnalism Radio* [Radio Journalism], Tritonic, București

<https://www.rador.ro/2019/10/08/documentar-radio-basarabia-postul-radiodifuziunii-meniit-sa-combata-propaganda-sovietica-radio-chisinau-punte-a-romanismului-pest-prut-3/>

<https://www.rador.ro/2019/05/24/de-astazi-nu-mai-emiteti-radio-iasi-in-zilele-revolutiei-din-decembrie-1989/>

<https://www.rador.ro/2021/11/02/documentar-radio-iasi-oglanda-vietii-profunde-a-moldovei-implineste-80-de-ani-de-existenta/>

Dance in the realm of ethics

Pamela TĂNASĂ-GACHE

Phd Student

“George Enescu” National University of Arts Iași
ROMANIA ¹

Abstract: They say wisdom “comes” with age... that's because life experience teaches us everything, we need to know to make the right decisions and achieve professional, emotional, mental and physical fulfillment alike. And I think that with age we develop a kind of respect for ourselves, for the work done up until then, but also for all those dear to us in our personal lives, and professionally, for those who were and are our teachers, mentors, guides, coaches, superiors or even disciples. I believe that this respect grows as we discover more details, hit more obstacles and store more “life lessons”, which delivers a moral conscience that will be a kind of constant guide in everything we do, undertake in all fields of activity. Applied in our doctoral research, I feel the ethical conscience both towards the supervisor, towards my mentor and towards the evaluation committee of the final doctoral thesis, as well as towards the topic of the paper that I have chosen and towards its consistency, but with security and towards the obligation and responsibility that I think I have in the field in which I work, towards all those involved in the field, actively or passively alike; this is due to the fact that our doctoral thesis entitled “Key Points Of Rhythmic Gymnastics And Ballet In The Effective Training And Improvement Of The Professional Dancer”, in addition to the ongoing rigorous research, aims to extract all the concrete, truthful and indisputable details that form the content of the thesis, from all sources of information, but especially from experience as a practitioner in several sections of this field of activity, dance.

Keywords: ethics, dance, gymnastic, training.

1. Introduction

They say wisdom “comes” with age... that's because life experience teaches us everything, we need to know to make the right decisions and achieve professional, emotional, mental and physical fulfillment alike. And I believe that along with age we develop a kind of respect for ourselves, for the work done up until then, but also for all those dear to us in our personal life, and professionally, for those who were and are our teachers, mentors, guides, coaches, superiors or even disciples. I believe that this respect grows

¹ pammela13@yahoo.com.

as we discover more details, hit more obstacles and store more “life lessons”, which gives birth to a moral conscience that will be a kind of constant guide in all that we undertake, in all fields of activity. Once kindled, this consciousness makes no more distinctions; it becomes part of us and impacts everything we do: at home, at work, with family, friends or colleagues, but especially in the academic environment, where discipline and rigor have prevailed since primary school.

Applied in our doctoral research, I feel ethical conscience both towards the coordinating professor, towards my mentor and towards the committee for evaluation of the final doctoral thesis, as well as towards the topic of the paper that I have chosen and towards its consistency; but certainly also towards the obligation and responsibility that I think I have in the field in which I work, towards all those involved in the field, actively or passively alike; this is due to the fact that our doctoral thesis entitled “Key points of rhythmic gymnastics and ballet in the effective training and improvement of the professional dancer”, in addition to the rigorous research that is already underway and will continue, aims to extract all the concrete, genuine and indisputable details that form the content of the work, from all sources of information, but especially from the experience as a practitioner in several sections of this field of activity, dance.

2. Towards an ethical consciousness

Without being in competition with anyone else but myself, the one from yesterday, ten years ago and ever since I have known myself, that ethical conscience dictates the path of my research, without having unrealistic or exaggerated expectations from the supervising professor. And a strict self-evaluation, in my case, reduces the fear of failure, dictated precisely by a moral conscience that may be excessive, but so necessary and beneficial.

In this presentation, I have chosen to lay down some ideas that merge aspects related to doctoral research and my profession, both theoretically and practically, referring to the second chapter of our doctoral thesis, where the ratio and meaning of body movement in rhythmic gymnastics and ballet are exposed and analyzed from the perspective of performance sport compared to art, with the main aim of identifying and outlining the most effective training methods, while also highlighting the barriers, blockages or deficiencies in the strategy meant to improve the skills of the versatile dancer.

On a perfectionist note, a dancer who shapes their character and builds their personality along with the discipline applied at a practical level over years of study in a strategically structured training that also develops a

strong and balanced ethical conduct, aims, in an ideal vision, at all the aspects that complete a thorough artist on stage – the technique and the specific elements of difficulty, the body plasticity and aesthetics, the theatricality of their movements, the interpretation of the role and the materialization of the thought behind the movement, and, why not, the conveying of a message, the revelation of an ideology or the discreet planting of a small thought, seemingly irrelevant, but which can lead to a revelation.

The didactic strategies that sum up the totality of rules, methods and types of exercises in training within gymnastics and classical dance are extremely different, both in terms of method, purpose and motivation, so that bodies subject to changes resulting from years of continuous body shaping also change structure and appearance at the anatomical level, and most of the time, the effect is irreversible. That is why I consider it extremely important, vital in a dancer's career, to discover and realize from the beginning what does them more harm than good, so that they can then understand and choose what truly helps them.

Both in gymnastics as in ballet, the intention to execute the specific technical elements correctly is unmistakably there. Both aim for a clean and precise evolution, as well as a perfect body plasticity, but the difference between them is the goal: gymnastics aims to win a reward (the medal) and a status (a position in the hierarchy of competitors), while classical dance aims for the perfection of movement per se and towards the theatricalization of bodily movement. Thus, in gymnastics body alignment and the perfectionist vision of the body's aesthetic line and the correct positioning of some segments are sometimes overlooked, in favor of obtaining a high degree of technical difficulty, which will place the athlete ahead of the other competitors in the ranking. This aspect represents a danger for the body of the performer, because the incorrect execution of the specific elements from the anatomical point of view can change the body's conformation in a wrong way, which will endanger not only the aesthetics, but also the health.

From an ethical perspective, concretely, in classical dance moral conscience plays an important role; it dictates the correct execution of the technical and connecting elements, although, ironically, its specificity is the turn “en dehors” and the immaculate body alignment, which makes it all the more difficult to execute correctly, and requires a deeper body control, and by comparison, gymnastics in some circumstances ignores the correctness of the execution of the movement in favor of increased technical performance (for example, using the specific terminology, for connoisseurs, the gymnast can achieve five *pirouettes*, instead of three, but with the toe of the active foot in the *passé* lower and with a fallen *relevé*). However, ethical sense in gymnastics is not entirely lacking; instead, it dictates a different

kind of moral consciousness, which amplifies the motivation and ambition of the athlete to persist in the training, enduring pain and any other physical, mental or emotional discomfort, in terms of the type of preparatory exercises and the number of repetitions, in order to develop strength, endurance, skill, speed and suppleness, basic motor qualities, as well as specific ones, such as coordination, musicality, precision of movement or masking its difficulty, skills that need to be owned at a much higher level in order to achieve the main purpose, namely, performance.

The aesthetic side, on the other hand, is a very subjective aspect and is found in gymnastics and ballet alike; the aesthetic image, although not concretely defined, materializes in everyone's vision according to preferences, tastes and personality, but it falls within the area of general and universally valid aesthetic concepts, because we all recognize “beauty” when we see it. As “tea, ennobled, turns into the art of tea, the religion of aesthetics, the adoration of everyday beauty [...] and constitutes essentially a religion of imperfectness, because it tries to transpose the impossible of everyday life into a possible form”², similarly, the body of a dancer becomes a white canvas in the eyes of art-thirsty spectators, who admire their bodily plasticity on stage and look for, driven by the need for an inner “moral geometry”, the striking, fluttering, exaggerated, harmonious, perfectly defined or almost imperceptible aesthetic lines, according to everyone's artistic sense.

The artistic side represents the crossroads of the two fields of activity, where the difference in terms of intention of the performer during the performance becomes noticeable. While gymnastics is recognized for its rather “mechanical” movements, focused towards a clear end goal, targeting the performance of the choreographic routine, classical dance gives rise to a deep theatricality that places this style of movement on a much higher artistic level. And this happens because the ballerina's mind and body has been taught for years to externalize her inner feelings and emotions, studying ever new ways of materializing the thought behind movement. Conveying a message, a revealing idea or a strong emotion, mentally transposing into the skin of the character, whether it is a specific role or not, becomes a priority for the dancer on stage, and is what transforms a simple dance routine in a performance. The gymnasts, in the competition, have a present and shared gaze, while the dancers, whether they are playing a character or are being themselves, completely transpose themselves during the performance, and their gaze is lost as if in another parallel universe – the stage universe.

² Okakura Kakuzo (2010), *Cartea ceaiului* [The book of tea], translated from English by Irina Holega, Editura Nemira, Iași, p. 7.

Another essential difference in the approach to the physical and mental training of gymnasts and ballerinas consists in the fact that in dance there is an academic system that sums up valuable information about the pioneers of this trade, about their work and achievements, about their beliefs and discoveries, about style, methods and techniques of movement, providing precise examples of body movement throughout the history of dance, which in itself has a greater freedom of expression than the principles and rules by which gymnastics builds its routine for competition. Dance has always been and always will be an inexhaustible and highly promising field, forever in a continuous evolution, which makes it possible to invent an infinity of movement variants, performed by thousands and thousands of different bodies, creating perfection through their imperfection in the eyes of the beholder, as dance allows any type of body build to express itself, thus giving rise to countless body lines and visual images, compared to gymnastics, whose strict rule is a svelte and tall physique, which pragmatically reduces the chances of movement aficionados to express themselves.

And speaking of pioneers, I think the great dancers and choreographers of the world found their motivation in different spectrums, but they all felt the need, as Kurt Jooss testifies, in his international journal “The Dance Theatre of Kurt Jooss“, to “reach the hearts of others, to touch what is outside the self, to convince oneself and others of their convictions, and to make themselves understood through one's art – through choreography”. Always passionate about human beings, “his artistic spirit guided him to develop a new concept of dance, with a new attitude, a new aesthetic of movement and a new technique”, but “two fundamental principles remained basic: Laban's *Coreutics* (the law of space) and *Eukinetics* (the law of dynamics)”³. Fascinated by dancers with imagination and purpose, Jooss listened to his ethical conscience and began to build his own school, as all dance pioneers did. And after a rigorous research, coordination and evaluation of the data obtained from the choreographic experiments in the workshop, their interests, goals, ways of working, their curiosity, daring, perseverance and madness led to the formation of their own, original techniques and concepts of movement, which later helped define many of the dance styles and movement techniques existing today.

Just like Jooss, the choreographic vision of free dancers and choreographers has always tended to extend its wings outside the comfort zone, towards theater and acting, giving birth to the theatricality and interpretation of dance movements. That is why today dance is much more

³ Suzanne K. Walther (1993), *Choreography and Dance. An International Journal. The Dance Theatre of Kurt Jooss*, Vol. 3, Part 2, Harwood Academic Publishers, p. 45.

than movement; barriers merge, and theatricality in dance and dance in theater have innovated a long-awaited and long-dreamed-of dance-theatre in all academic institutions and in all major companies, manifesting itself on all stages of the world, in countless artistic forms.

Spirituality, the imaginary and reason – a ternary dialectic used by Gheorghe M. Ștefan in his work *Ethos, pathos, logos* as a methodology of human life in relation to existence and integration into the world, is the trilogy that attracts, in my opinion, a mental and bodily awareness in artists; a trilogy that awakens the ethical consciousness of man who is capable of more; of more than mere survival: of creation, research, profession and formation of disciples. And the man with an ethical spirit is a trainer not only of professionals in the field, but also of strong characters, authentic personalities and values.

At the same time, complementary to the concrete information and the artistic perspective, in this second chapter of our doctoral thesis I place great value on the serious consequences of the lack of information and the incorrect application of methods, exercises and training plan, especially during the initial training stages of the dancer, because of the fragility of the human body that transforms during the years of study due to the inappropriate ways of working following the insistence of the coaches. Consequences are irreversible and can cause serious health problems, they even damage the career itself.

But dancing is not just a career; dance means rigor and discipline, but also madness and freedom, it means sacrifice but equally fulfilment, pain but also pleasure, it means doubt but also opportunity, it means guidance but also ethical conscience... towards the profession, but especially towards the self.

Until recently, dancing for me never required words, for when I closed my mouth and opened my mind's eyes, and began to move in silence, my body created a story whose words were not spoken, but pictured, because to a greater extent than physical fitness exercises, it is the mind that shapes the body and empowers me to defy the laws of the Universe according to which we move...for a few moments, when I dance...

When I dance, it's like I'm taking off the body I was born in and put on another body, when I get into the skin of a character on stage, but that's because I have pushed it beyond the limits of normality and I touched the unreal, as it were, when I began to change my body, from the superficial level to the anatomical level, during all the years of consistent study. And so, dance came to represent an escape for me... a doorway to the outside, a window in a doorless room, a breath of air that saved me when I felt like I was suffocating; and because of this, when I dance, I feel obliged to give the impression that the impossible is achieved without the slightest effort.

But over time, along with the development and refinement towards performance in the field of practice, concurrently with the deepening of theoretical information in the academic setting, words gradually acquired meaning, value and power...

In this discussion on the ethics of dance, I touched upon the three milestones mentioned in the title of Gheorghe M. Ștefan's work, precisely because I felt over the years that dance incorporates them all, and I find myself in dance: *Ethos* – because through dance, I got involved in a rigorous research in order to analyze, structure and further apply my own system of values and moral principles, a part of the training methodology, whose motivation is the passion and total dedication for this job – *Pathos*; and because I have always been guided by the voice of inner reason, a necessary order both in my thoughts and in the ranks of our doctoral research, but especially in motion, referring to the practical aspect, a kind of “organized chaos” in an infinity of spectacular possibilities that can alienate a dancer in this profession – *Logos*.

Dance and ethics have often been put in balance by many, as Naomi M. Jackson has done in her work entitled *Dance and Ethics*, being one of those who appreciates human values in our society. While today “dance encompasses a vast field that provides meaning on multiple fronts” – entertainment and performance, exercise and health, personal expression, cultural connection, multiple perspectives, consolation and spiritual fulfillment, among many other benefits – it wasn't always considered ethical; but dance defeated the narrow mentality and valorized its features, so that in these times, the job of dancer is a dignified one, like any other profession; moreover, it is an occupation framed in the field of art, belonging to the philosophical and ethical register, and implicitly, therefore, more appreciated.

At the same time, being an “artistic” craft, Naomi Jackson wonders if it is ethical for dance to leave its non-profit status and go commercial? Certainly “the line between *non-profit* and *profit-oriented* dance is difficult to draw” (in this case, commercial dance referring to the *for-profit* dance indulged in Broadway shows, Hollywood movies, music videos of various artists from the market, music concerts, commercials and TV or Internet shows, compared to *non-profit* dance that is studied and perfected in academic spaces, studios and dance companies, although this type of dance is also paid). But while ethics, in the general sense of the word, analyzes behaviors and catalogs them as moral or immoral, in this work the focus on ethics in dance radiates in three directions, outlining three categories, equally important in value: “*ethics relative to virtue* – which focuses more on the character of the person, *deontological ethics* – focused on rules, laws and rights, and *consequentialist ethics* – focused on the results and

consequences of human behavior”. The complexity of our field means that the notion of ethics is found both in general matters and in their sublayers of a diverse nature, “including everything from a choreographer who drags a dancer's hair across the floor in rehearsal, to a dancer who offends and verbally attacks a member of the audience, a critic who asks favors of the choreographer whose work is to be analyzed and for whom they will write a review, a manager who comes on behalf of acquaintances to ensure that the company's performances are converted into stage festivals or the one that creates an atmosphere of general fear in the entire dance company”, these being just some of the examples that can fall into the categories: disrespect, abuse of power, humiliation, degradation, betrayal, exploitation, manipulation, discrimination , negligence, aggression. But ethics in dance is not only about what is right and what is wrong, from a moral point of view, but supports the ideology that claims that dance is based on the “consequentialist paradigm”, where the value is predominantly placed on results, because when you “experience impeccable work in dance, it offers deep spirituality.” But what are the ethical boundaries in dance? Is it moral and permissive for an oppressive and abusive choreographer to practice, if he produces works of art? Do his creations weigh more than the dancers' feelings or the physical and mental damage they are subjected to? Does the end justify the means? Does justification erase consequences? Does genius status give you more rights?⁴

Of yet another ethical nature, a dilemma that often troubles a creator is represented by classical utilitarianism; do we create from the original inner impulse or out of the needs dictated by the audience and the standards set by the audience, by their expectations? A piece of advice for all young creators around the world that resonates with an excellent ethical conduct was published in 2018 by author Katherine Beard in *Dance Spirit* magazine: “Don't create what you think someone else wants to see. Be authentic with your vision. Be bold in your choices.”⁵

Generally, ethics and integrity encompass a universal set of values, beyond religion, political beliefs, social status, marital status, emotional baggage or future aspirations, and it takes extreme strength of character to overcome obstacles, temptations or shortcuts to success, which could jeopardize professional integrity and ethics.⁶

But how do we resist the temptation to reduce the workload or the time to achieve results, how do we approach the moral dilemmas by navigating

⁴ Naomi M. Jackson (2022), *Dance and Ethics. Moving Towards a More Humane Dance Culture*, Published by Intellect Ltd, Bistol, UK/ Chicago, USA, pp. 11-23.

⁵ *Idem*, p. 19.

⁶ *Idem*, pp. 279-281.

between strength and weakness? How to avoid failure and cultivate our values, strengthen our virtues and define our principles? “Addressing questions of a moral nature through a kinesthetic intelligence and empathy accessible through the lens of dance,” experiencing movement by “touching the sensitive strings of the body,” until “we find the answers that feel right.” In this regard, dancer S. Ama Wray developed an approach she called *Embodiology*, “an improvisational approach that invites participants to decipher body-mind sensations, which asserts that intelligence is achieved by stimulating the inner bodily senses. This approach uses principles drawn from indigenous core methodology, particularly the cultural traditions and customs existing in West African dance rituals, to innovate and amplify well-being, vitality and empathy.” When Ama Wray applies this method in improvisation and communicates with the dancers, she says, “You will be a fire and light up the space you are in, as much as you will be lit by others in the space; [...] it is a form of *multi-poly-cross-integration* of the multitude of forms of human existence”⁷.

Analyzing things in depth when we talk about dance and ethics, I inevitably find of major importance the connection between the two, their binder and foundation, namely: philosophy. The existential problem and the interest in the human dimension make philosophy (explained from the word’s etymology, (“philos” – “love of” and “sophia” – “wisdom”)⁸ indicate that “the philosopher is the one who tends towards wisdom, the one who seeks to live rightly and especially the one who seeks happiness. Philosophy, understood as a way of life, emphasizes the application in one’s own life of the results of philosophical reflection,” while also guiding and helping others “to lead their lives appropriately. The philosophy of personal ethics could become a collective project”, and “a real community of life could be formed around a philosopher”. This explains, at least partially, the birth of philosophical schools in Antiquity, and among those who embraced the concept of philosophy as a way of life are the Stoics Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, Descartes, Spinoza, Sartre, Russell and many others. Of course, some have also chosen to view philosophy as an intellectual concept and not as a way of life; but beyond philosophizing, Nietzsche “defines his philosophy as the science of *Gaia*”, a concept that refers to philosophy viewed as a science of the earth, he being more interested in “this earthly world, not the other world, metaphysics, invented by philosophers compromised with transcendence”. And even if philosophy includes a boundless amalgam of ideas, concepts, visions and beliefs, “the man who investigates man is what characterizes the philosophizing that has achieved

⁷ Naomi M. Jackson, *op. cit.*, pp. 390-391.

⁸ Retrieved from <https://www.fssp.uaic.ro/despre-facultate/istoric>.

concrete results in the course of its long history, rendering conscious in the human mind universal principles and values, previously unexpressed or just intuitions”⁹; principles and values that give meaning to life, balance it, improve its quality and free the soul from the prison of a narrow mind. These philosophical principles and values revolve around the same idea that underlies ethical principles and values, just as dance has at its center and at its root, the human and everything that revolves around it, both literally and figuratively.

Touching on the ethics-philosophy core, I must definitely mention Aristotle's *ethics* – the *Nicomachean Ethics* (after the name of both his son and his father – Nicomachus), the *Eudemic Ethics* (after the name of his student – Eudemos) and the *Great Ethics (Magna Moralia)*. In his works Aristotle speaks both about human freedom, not as we understand it nowadays, but referring to the term *eleutheros/ eleutheria*, “which in ancient Greek only implies the social condition of a free man in relation to a slave”, as well as about ethical issues, where “happiness is in accord with virtue” and the way to achieve human happiness is that of a virtuous life, being the direct result of “doing good”, an immediate consequence of a life in which reason dominates affect and primal desire. Aristotle asserts that repeated rational choices and the incorporation of virtues lead to mental health, a moral health that gives rise to pleasure and happiness, and speaks (especially in the *Nicomachean Ethics*) of moral categories such as the good (Book I), Moral Virtue (Books II, III, IV and V), intellectual virtue (Book VI), pleasure (Book VII), friendship (Book VIII and IX) and happiness (Book X).¹⁰ However, “postulating the existence of the supreme good as the ultimate goal of human life, Aristotle only evokes the well-known doctrine elaborated by Plato”, where “the teleological perspective will remain dominant in his conception, a support on which he builds his entire ethical system”.¹¹

Returning to dance, but maintaining the discussion around the concept of happiness, it represents happiness in itself for most performers; viewed from the Platonic and Aristotelian perspective; dance was created by God to serve man, to bring him happiness and pleasure, but also professional integrity.

⁹ Nicolae Sfetcu (2021), *Filosofii care au influențat dezvoltarea umanității (Philosophers who influenced the development of humanity)*, Editura MultiMedia, pp. 5-10.

¹⁰ Valentin Mureșan (2007), *Comentariu la Etica Nicomahică* [Comment on the Nicomachean Ethics], second revised edition, Humanitas, București, pp. 17-25.

¹¹ Aristotle (1998), *Etica Nicomahică* [The Nicomachean Ethics], introduction, translation, comments and index by Stella Petecel, second ed, Editura IRI, București, p. 233.

And also in a philosophical vein, “from Socratic science to Aristotelian pleasure” (where “science” also has the meaning of “art”), Tiberius Vasiniuc is of the opinion that “the problems of ethics and integrity are closely related to the practical aspects of the creators’ life and those of the scientific evaluation of artistic works. In fact, it is an aspiration for excellence that, at individual level, but also at institutional level, we should set ourselves as a goal”. At the same time, he asks himself “why?... “why get involved in a research, why produce (value) an artistic act?” and he provides the answer himself: “a first answer is related to the need (unconscious or not) to get closer to the truth”. Balance and modesty are two virtues that facilitate the establishment of “ethics in academic and artistic life” alike. Why research? Another possible reason was revealed by Socrates, who was convinced that “all the evil around us has its root in ignorance”; education is therefore the only truly powerful weapon that can combat lies, falsehood, delusion and human ignorance in favor of morality, authenticity and happiness. Later, Aristotle will reformulate many Socratic ideas, considering that man, in order to develop ethics and integrity on any level, must have good health, satisfactory living conditions, must follow reason, act with good intentions, but also have the power to obtain pleasure and remove pain, but without falling into “animality”. Diderot, on the other hand, was of the opinion that “art has no reason to submit to social morality, and even that “there is a morality specific to artists or art and this morality can be contrary to ordinary morality” and that between creation and moral rules, a huge chasm is born, because the artist, each with their own personality, tends to function according to their own rules, in order to fulfill the aesthetic function. Only Kant outlines the concept according to which “beauty can be appreciated as a symbol of ethics”, opening the gates “from a beauty of ethics to an ethics of beauty, to the *free* act, whose splendor is manifested through the artistic quintessence of the data of existence” and which holds the potential to achieve “that state of well-being”.¹²

Philosophy and art have always merged their foundations and resonance, because in essence they both explore human nature and follow its evolution, stimulate the intellect and cultivate it, having as object of study the human being itself. And besides the intellect, dance invests all resources in the physical, in corporeality, where the movement of living bodies, as opposed to inanimate bodies, but which have theatrical potential and with which they come into contact, represents art itself.

¹² Tiberius Vasiniuc (2000), *Principii de etică și integritate în arta spectacolului și în cercetarea artistică* [Principles of ethics and integrity in performing arts and artistic research], Editura UartPress, Târgu Mureș, pp. 15-24.

Dance is an art that incorporates and intertwines countless concepts and spheres of activity, and teachers are meant to “cultivate in children beauty, education, an ethical and aesthetic spirit”¹³ That is why I think it is extremely important to merge, in our academic research on dance, in addition to philosophy and pedagogy, elements from the field of psychology. The time interval for education and assimilation of theoretical information, of experimenting the practical methodology specific to dance and arts, of developing innate skills and acquired psycho-motor skills, of professional improvement and instillation of human virtues, principles and moral values is childhood, which coincides with the challenges of universal human nature, specific in each age stage, but which interferes with many other factors “that influence the child’s development, his growth in a favorable or less favorable environment, the sociocultural and educational level that plays a fundamental role in structuring the psychic typology and behavioral style”, which will have a major impact on the development of individual character and personality. The human development path must be followed closely, step by step, step by stage, in order to analyze and regulate the “relationship between genetic and acquired”, because any exaggeration or shortcoming in one direction or another can produce an imbalance difficult to rehabilitate in the sensitive development of the child, an already extremely complex and laborious process, which can affect both his level of intellectual development, as well as success, but especially ethics, integrity, values and moral principles that will guide the whole life. An in-depth study on child psychology therefore comes to the aid of the dancers' trainers, so that they can form a training methodology and a systematic and logical organization plan based on “a series of rigorous genetic and environmental criteria, of which chronological age is a strong binder in relation to the age of psychic development”, physical and emotional characteristics of the professional dancer¹⁴.

3. Conclusions

During the years of professional study, concurrently with the child's biological growth, the trainer must favor “the functionality of the relationship between communication, personality and behavior in the child’s adaptation to the environment”, taking into account at the same time the child’s emotional baggage, as well as the balance between the

¹³ Rodica Pănășescu, Choreographer and Director of the “Nicolae Botgros” Palace of Culture in Cahul, holder of the honorary title “Master of Art” – Interview in *Ziua de azi*, retrieved from <https://ziuadeazi.md/prin-dans-educam-altfel-copiii-31-12-2019-1222-cultural/>.

¹⁴ Emil Verza, Florin Emil Verza (2017), *Psihologia copilului* [Child psychology], collection coord. by Simona Reghintovschi, EdituraTreii, București, pp. 4-5.

“informational-cognitive and rational-affective content”, guiding him or her towards an emotional intelligence and a functional social adaptation, towards maturity and independence. The dancers' training aims at the development of basic cognitive-sensory processes – language and communication, thinking, imagination, memory, attention – simultaneously with “creative, artistic inclinations and skills”, i.e. the specific ones – musicality, theatricality of movements, body plasticity and aesthetics, physical, mental and emotional flexibility and adaptability (in conditions of major stress, physical pain or deprivation of basic needs – hunger, thirst, cold or heat), receptivity and understanding of the material covered and choreographic scores, ease of movement and virtuosity, innovation and originality (imprinting their personality in the dance style approached by the choreographer and in improvisation), but to the same extent, lays the foundation for the professional ethics and integrity of the dancer, through discipline and severity.¹⁵

So this is why the notion of ethics is so important; art and space, the dancer and the stage are always interconnected, but in order to work together, beyond the quality of the performance which depends on the talent and training of the performers, the smooth running of a performance in its totality depends on the ethics and moral integrity of all entities in collective, which shows respect, appreciation and devotion in equal measure to the whole mechanism and the whole team, both from an artistic and human point of view.

Bibliography

- Aristotle (1998). *Etica Nicomahică* [The Nicomachean Ethics], introduction, translation, comments and index by Stella Petecel, second ed, Editura IRI, București
- Jackson, Naomi M. (2022). *Dance and Ethics. Moving Towards a More Humane Dance Culture*, Published by Intellect Ltd, Bistol, UK/ Chicago, USA
- Kakuzo, Okakura (2010). *Cartea ceaiului* [The book of tea], translated from English by Irina Holega, Editura Nemira, București
- Mureșan, Valentin (2007). *Comentariu la Etica Nicomahică* [Comment on the Nicomachean Ethics], second revised edition, Humanitas, București
- Sfetcu, Nicolae (2021). *Filosofii care au influențat dezvoltarea umanității* [Philosophers who influenced the development of humanity], Editura MultiMedia, București
- Vasiniuc, Tiberius (2000). *Principii de etică și integritate în arta spectacolului și în cercetarea artistică* [Principles of ethics and integrity in performing arts and artistic research], Editura UartPress, Târgu Mureș

¹⁵Emil Verza, Florin Emil Verza, *op. cit.*, pp. 229-250.

Theatre Section

Verza, Emil (2017). *Psihologia copilului* [Child psychology], collection coord. by Simona Reghintovschi, Editura Trei, București

Walther, Suzanne K. (1993). *Choreography and Dance. An International Journal. The Dance Theatre of Kurt Jooss*, Vol. 3, Part 2, Harwood Academic Publishers

Ethical dilemmas in the choreographic approach. Actors vs dancers

Alice VELICHE

PhD Student

“George Enescu” National University Arts Iași
ROMANIA¹

Abstract: The beginning of my career as a young choreographer often finds me working with both dancers and actors. This duality implies approaching different ways of working, a different structuring of the creative stages, but also an adaptation at a conversational, explanatory, bodily level. All these factors give rise to a series of hypotheses that I intend to address from an ethical perspective. Between the two forms of work there are observable differences that arise from the bodily capacities of the actors, a fact, moreover, absolutely natural. But a flawed approach that I have observed both in my interaction with the two stage formulas and in external projects is closely related to the underestimation of performers, a kind of identical label applied to a variety of products. Is it morally right to make an early work plan and anticipate how we will work with a team of actors? Or should we prepare a module only after observing the capabilities of the team, the ones that might exceed our expectations? Is it ethically normal to construct a large amount of choreographic material just to replace the presence of unspoken words on stage? All of these represent ethical dilemmas, although they appear to be components of ordinary behavior. I will look at both personal mistakes in working with actors vs. dancers, as well as those observed from the outside, trying to find out why underestimation occurs so often in the choreographic world.

Keywords: actors, dancers, ethical, dilemmas.

1. Introduction

The beginning of my career as a young choreographer often finds me working with both dancers and actors. This duality implies different ways of working, a different structuring of the creative stages, but also a conversational, explanatory and corporal adaptation. All these factors give rise to a series of hypotheses that I intend to address from an ethical perspective.

There are observable differences between the two forms of work, which stem from the bodily skills of the actors, a fact which is, by the way, absolutely

¹ velichealice@yahoo.com.

natural. But one flawed approach that I have observed both in my interaction with the two stage formulas and in other projects is closely related to the undervaluing of the performers, a kind of identical label applied to a variety of products. Initially I thought that this phenomenon occurred only in the case of actors, those whom we choreographers sometimes tend to protect by giving them elements of moderate complexity or by obsessively repeating a bodily discourse that we want to make as well understood as possible. The exact same situation, but in a different approach, happens with dancers. The inability to express themselves verbally on stage, the facial expressiveness which is often lacking, conveying a concept through purely choreographic variations, all of these, as in the previous case, are actions that are poorly directed. I will highlight some of the personal concerns I have encountered in previous projects, but also others that I have discovered at a generic level, in an attempt to clarify these ethical dilemmas.

2. Ethical perspectives in choreographical work

I will start with a question that comes up frequently in my field of interest. Is it morally right to make an early work plan and anticipate how we will work with a team of actors? Or should we prepare a pattern only after observing the capabilities of the team, which may exceed our expectations? I can refer to a collaboration I had at the beginning of this year, in January, at the *Matei Vişniec* Municipal Theatre in Suceava. For the creation of the choreographic show “Asylum” I only had two weeks to organize the entire process. In other words, the time was far too short compared to the large volume of information that came with the territory. Thus, the choreography was simplified due to the uncertainty that a troupe of actors, whose bodies were completely unknown to me, would cope with a complex choreography. The wonder arose at the moment they proved the opposite. I discovered several harmonious, energetic bodies capable of complex movement phrases, but the short time and strict planning did not allow me to modify everything I had already built. I took this loss in stride and realized for the first time that underestimating can mean self-sabotage. This underestimation occurs when a previous failed experience is used as a general benchmark.

Is it ethically normal to design a vast amount of choreographic material just to make up for unspoken words on stage? Another example of mine is closely related to the choreographic show “FeMale”, a show of about 45 minutes, the cast of which consisted of five professional dancers and one actress. The choreographic material is constantly present as far as the five dancers are concerned, without alternating body movement with the utterance of words that could have emphasized their inner state. Although the use of the motion-speech relationship crossed my mind, I quickly dismissed the idea for exactly the same

reason mentioned in the previous example: underestimation. The movement is almost insignificant in the case of the actress, who has an explosion of words at the end of the performance. She is present in space, watching and performing a series of moves that I could now describe as amateurish. For her character, I initially chose somebody else from the dancing milieu, but I was attracted by comfort and safety, knowing that the text cannot fail, if spoken by a person with experience in the field.

We look for actors only for their pleasant voices and use dancers only for their harmonious bodies. “I don't use actors in a choreography show because they don't move as well” or “I don't make the dancers speak because it sounds awkward” are just some of the phrases I've heard from project coordinators. Contemporary dance does not tell us about the beauty of movement, but about its meaning, just as an actor will not seek to gracefully execute a movement, but to contain it. This is the key trait that dancers need. Gigi Căciuleanu confessed: “If in dance-theatre the dancers are treated as actors, and the choreography as a *mise-en-scène*, I do the opposite: I treat the actors as dancers and the show as a choreography. (...) The dancers, if they are professionals, I turn them into actors and after that I turn them back into dancers. I am only trying, I'm not saying I succeed.”² This was probably the main reason why the cast of the choreographic show “The Little Prince” consisted of three dancers and eight actors, whose choreographic scores had the same level of difficulty as the dancers. The voices of all actors were exploited, the text being equally divided among them. I tried to rebalance the balance that I myself tipped at a certain point.

Another important aspect that goes hand in hand with the above, and which I would like to bring to your attention, is pleasure. That inner pleasure that is triggered when we take part in the conception of an artistic product. A state that should normally be felt by the entire team, not just the creator of the performance. What happens when one person's pleasure builds on the discomfort of others? Various creators, whether choreographers or directors, choose to access a certain state by pressurizing and intimidating performers. Working under pressure creates frustration, tension and even direct conflict, but it can also tap into unexplored depths. This method of working, which is increasingly present in the 21st century, can result in remarkable performances. Is this a sacrifice to make in favor of a successful artistic act? Is it or is it not ethical to behave in such a way that in the end, nevertheless, creates pleasure, whether on the part of the audience or the team. “Therefore, obtaining a momentary pleasure must be weighed against subsequent losses and a balance tipping in our favor. However, as the advocate of the ethical doctrine of utilitarianism warns us, one's

² <https://www.agerpres.ro/cultura/2015/02/13/interviu-gigi-caciuleanu-dansul-e-simplitatea-dusa-la-maximul-complexitatii-11-19-49>

own happiness must not conflict with the interests of society, with its norms, which links it directly to the prescriptions of morality.”³

Since we have also touched on the subject of behavior in the creative process, and since the creator-performer relationship is very important, we will also talk a bit about communication and how it is achieved in a working environment. Choreographic performances use actors and dancers with different backgrounds and movement vocabularies, which implies the use of a variety of language, of terms that can be easily understood by all performers. In most cases, however, the choreographic explanations given to the actors require a longer time, which increases the waiting time for the rehearsal team. What do we do in this situation? Will I feed this discomfort of the crew or will I neglect the additional needs of the actors and continue the explanations at a pace that is too fast for them? Is it ethical or unethical to express yourself differently according to the abilities of the performers? It's hard to strike a balance in this situation, with the perception of the person directly involved to blame. Whether we are talking about a relaxed, colloquial communication or language that includes specialized terms. This can be unsatisfactory in both forms.

In this part we can also discuss about toxic communication, abuse and the trauma of overwork. The dancer's body is perceived as a machine that can move in a constant rhythm without feeling the need to rest. Instead, a healthy approach would be to homogenize the two extremes. “As dancers, we are trained to be adaptable, dynamic, and to always say yes. As students, we never rest; instead, we keep pushing when our teachers say, ‘One more time’ for the third or fourth time. We are often taught that putting our physical or emotional needs first is somehow disrespectful to our teachers and choreographers. Even when the person in the front of the room asks us how we are doing, we bite our tongues and often refrain from telling the truth, in fear that we could disappoint them. There’s no doubt dancers being some of the hardest working people, but why do we lack the ability to advocate for ourselves when we are being pushed too far?”⁴

³ Tiberius Vasiniuc (2020), *Principii de etică și integritate în arta spectacolului și în cercetarea artistică* [Principles of ethics and integrity in performing arts and artistic research], Editura UartPess, Târgu Mureș, pp. 34-35.

⁴ Sophia Vangelatos (2021), *Should We Have a Code of Ethics as Dance Makers and Teachers?* p. 1, retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1xz8g19w>.

„As dancers, we are trained to be adaptable, dynamic, and to always say yes. As students, we never rest; instead, we keep pushing when our teachers say, “One more time” for the third or fourth time. We are often taught that putting our physical or emotional needs first is somehow disrespectful to our teachers and choreographers. Even when the person in the front of the room asks us how we are doing, we bite our tongues and often refrain from telling the truth, in fear that we could disappoint them. There’s no doubt dancers being some of the hardest working people, but why do we lack the ability to advocate for ourselves when we are being pushed too far?”

While she may not have explicitly articulated her thoughts on 'dance ethics', Pina Bausch's artistic practices, for example, reflected values that align with ethical considerations in the dance world. She emphasized respect for the individuality of the dancer, the importance of creating a safe and nurturing environment for artistic exploration, and the ethical responsibility to describe emotions and stories with integrity and authenticity.

3. Conclusion

Failure to meet ethical standards can have several consequences that affect both individuals and the dance community as a whole. Some of these consequences can be: damaged relationships, loss of trust and good reputation, legal problems, stifled creativity and innovation, fragmentation of the community, and even mental health problems. "Findings show that dance students, dancers and dance teachers are at high risk of experiencing mental health challenges. A range between 30-50% of the dance population (relative to different studies and measures) seem to suffer from at least one mental health issue during a year, while one third has reported a mental health issue as their most severe health problem of which perfectionism, general anxiety, stress due to external factors, eating disorder, and constant tiredness were among the most reported challenges."⁵

In the rhythmic poetry of movement, in which bodies converge to tell unspoken stories, lies an unspoken code - a moral compass that guides the steps of choreographic artists, educators and creators. The dance ethic, a tapestry woven of respect, responsibility and reverence, transcends mere choreography of movement. It embodies the values and principles that shape the soul of this expressive art form. All these briefly presented information represent ethical dilemmas, although they seem to be components of a common behavior. The purpose of this article is to raise awareness, analyze and remedy these problems that seem to be increasingly present in our professional lives.

⁵ Heidi Marian Haraldsen, Michelle Schachtler Dwarika, Einar Thor Jonson (2021), *Resilience and Ethics in Dance Education*, p. 59, retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/88579223/Resilience_and_Ethics_in_Dance_Education_Scoping_Review : „Findings show that dance students, dancers and dance teachers are at high risk of experiencing mental health challenges. A range between 30-50% of the dance population (relative to different studies and measures) seem to suffer from at least one mental health issue during a year, while one third has reported a mental health issue as their most severe health problem of which perfectionism, general anxiety, stress due to external factors, eating disorder, and constant tiredness were among the most reported challenges.”

Bibliography

- Haraldsen, Heidi Marian, Schachtler Dwarika, Michelle, Jonson, Einar Thor (2021)., *Resilience and Ethics in Dance Education*, retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/88579223/Resilience_and_Ethics_in_Dance_Education_Scoping_Review
- Vangelatos, Sophia (2021). *Should We Have a Code of Ethics as Dance Makers and Teachers?*, retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1xz8g19w>
- Vasiniuc, Tiberius (2020). *Principii de etică și integritate în arta spectacolului și în cercetarea artistică* [Principles of ethics and integrity in performing arts and artistic research], Editura UartPess, Târgu Mureș
- <https://www.agerpres.ro/cultura/2015/02/13/interviu-gigi-caciuleanu-dansul-e-simplitatea-dusa-la-maximul-complexitatii-11-19-49>

VISUAL ARTS SECTION

Translation and transposition in artistic and curatorial research

The ontological value of the digital format: the role of video cameras for amateur video production

Andrei PETREA

PhD Student

“I. L. Caragiale” National University of Drama and Film, București
ROMANIA¹

Abstract: In his book, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, Marshall McLuhan quotes part of David Sarnoff's speech at the University of Notre Dame: “The products of modern science are not in themselves good or bad; it is the way they are used that determines their value”². This quote can be extended to discuss the influence of the medium in visual arts, especially cinema and its related products. The rapid technological pace of cinema only confirms the ideal pursued by image creators since the early 20th century, that of faithfully reproducing reality. Digital (ultra) High-Definition cinema achieves this ideal, but brings along an almost aseptic type of the image. The ontological signs of the medium have completely disappeared along with the use of digital sensors. In the case of analogue film, these signs could be materialized in stylistic intentions (e.g., the granularity of the negative, the stop-camera motion effect, the asynchronous shutter). The financial aspect and the unavailability of laboratories for processing photosensitive material make the adoption of the analogue medium in modern productions increasingly difficult. The solution proposed brings to attention the standard-definition video format (e.g. DV/miniDV, digital camcorder). Both the limitations of the CCD sensor and the constructive features of these cameras intended for amateurs can be turned into visual effects. The poor resolution, chromatic aberrations or imprecision of the automatic focusing system (i.e. uto-focus hunting) have even given rise to specific cinematic movements such as the *found-footage* genre. In recent years, these cameras have become popular once again among the younger Y/Z generations. Thus, media products such as music videos, advertisements or video essays nowadays contain material recorded with such devices, considered by most to be obsolete. This seemingly amateurish effect appears more and more often in media products shared online and triggers melancholy among the aforementioned demographic.

¹ Andrei Petrea is a Romanian director of photography based in Bucharest. He has a Bachelor's and a Master's degree from the Film Image Department of UNATC „I. L. Caragiale” in Bucharest. He is currently a PhD student in cinematography and media, and his thesis follows the transfers and visual influences between cinema and video games, andrei.petrea@unatc.ro.

² Marshall McLuhan (1994), *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, p. 11.

1. Introduction

As a director of photography, I believe that staying up to date with the technical aspects of this craft, especially with the aesthetic trends that have emerged over time in cinema or other related audio-visual products is part of being a filmmaker. Lately, we encounter a recurring tendency in certain commercial projects: directors or producers suggest using old video cameras intended for amateur audiences (i.e. the camcorder) to be integrated as a counterpoint to the material filmed using modern digital cameras. We also learn from professionals in film post-production that it has become an increasingly common practice to simulate the aesthetics of such cameras in the process of colorization of various audio-visual products (i.e., music videos, commercials).

The influence of the medium on visual products is a subject treated by a considerable number of theorists in the field of film studies. For more than twenty years, cinematographers have been debating the comparison between the digital image and the film negative. Although the dispute is slowly starting to die out, these days we are witnessing a phenomenon that counterpoints several digital formats. Certainly, the film negative and the whole analogue working process is more valuable from an ontological point of view, keeping a tangible connection with the environment. In this case, the transfer takes place through a mechanical device that captures light on a photosensitive surface, then the magic of the chemical process reveals the final image. This process depends on a significant number of variables that can be stylistically exploited to emphasize the presence of the medium in a film: the granularity of the negative and how it reacts differently in various lighting conditions, the way the negative veil is used as a form of expression or the asynchronous shutter. All these technical aspects can be considered flaws, but some directors and cinematographers had the courage to use them in favor of their concept. Such examples can be found even in Romanian cinema – *O lacrimă de fată* (*A girl's tear*, 1980, dir. Iosif Demian, DoP Iosif Demian & Constantin Chelba).

The digital image emerged as a culmination of the desire to obtain as faithful a rendition of reality as possible. Being a process dependent on the capabilities of modern expertise, digital image technology advanced year by year and finally reached the perfection of the (Ultra) High Definition standards. But does this perfection preserve the expressiveness of the medium?

Precisely to answer this question, we suggest to bring back to light the Standard-Definition format produced by camcorders intended for amateur video production. The purpose of this article is not to assert the superiority of this format in relation to new recording technologies, but rather to offer an ontologically valuable alternative for certain directorial concepts. The proposal becomes all the more topical in the context of an increased popularity of such formats among the younger generations (i.e. the digicam aesthetic trend). Thus,

following an analysis of how this medium has been and is being used in the recent history of audio-visual products, we decided to divide the discussion into three parts: Simulacrum, Figurative and Nostalgic. For each part we will refer to a relevant film or media product.

2. Simulacrum

In 2001, Lev Manovich discussed the use of cameras intended for amateur users in his work *From DV Realism to a Universal Recording Machine*³. In this article, he states that although the realism generated by the video format can be considered a successor to the *cinéma vérité* movement, filmmakers who use such capture media do not stop at simply recording reality. Some of these films follow a complex narrative style and use professional actors who follow concrete directorial guidance. However, we consider it necessary to focus our attention also on how the medium itself manages to induce the illusion of reality among the audience. A pertinent example is the film *The Blairwitch Project* (1999, dir. Daniel Myrick & Eduardo Sánchez, DoP Neal Fredericks). The premise of the film is to show real events that took place in 1994. Even though it is known by most as a film belonging to the *horror* genre, its documentary value is supported by the two perspectives developed in parallel: the objective perspective stylistically outlined by the 16mm black and white analogue format and the subjective perspective of the making-of camera, in the Hi-8 video format. The film's opening-credits explain this premise: "in October of 1994, three student filmmakers disappeared in the woods near Burkittsville, Maryland, while shooting a documentary. A year later their footage was found"⁴.

In his book *Simulacra and Simulation*, Jean Baudrillard defines four successive phases of the image: it is the reflection of a deep reality; it masks and distorts a deep reality; it masks the absence of a deep reality; it has no relation to any kind of reality; it is its own pure simulacrum.⁵ In *The Blairwitch Project*, the use of the video camera places the film on the border between simulacrum and dissimulation.

The *ciné vérité* feeling Manovich mentioned comes from the closeness of the camera to the subject, from the relationship built between the operator and the actor. The making-of camera closely accompanies the three students, sometimes giving the impression that a fourth character is present. But even the

³ Lev Manovich (2001), *From DV Realism to a Universal Recording Machine*, http://manovich.net/content/04-projects/031-reality-media/28_article_2001.pdf, viewed on 9.11.2023.

⁴ Opening credits of *The Blairwitch Project* :
In October of 1994, three student filmmakers disappeared in the woods near Burkittsville, Maryland, while shooting a documentary. A year later their footage was found.

⁵ Jean Baudrillard (2008), *Simulacre și Simulare* [Simulacra and Simulation], Idea Design & Print, Cluj-Napoca, p. 9.

content evoked by the video format supports the intimate nature of the images produced by it. In the opening sequences of the film, we see how the Hi-8 camera is used to describe preparations prior to the trip of the three; personal footage of each character is shown. Due to this association of content with form, in the unfolding of the film the viewer regards the material filmed by video camera as a personal intervention, especially sincere regarding the events described.

Stylistically, the making-of camera operator does not follow any compositional norms: the handheld shots are chaotic and most frames place the subject in the center. Returning to the discussion of form, technical flaws in the video format are consciously used to outline a powerful counterpoint to the objective images produced using the 16mm format. This counterpoint is actually a simulacrum of an immediate, but above all unrepeatable reality, established by a convention suggested at the beginning of the film. Beyond the amateurish way in which the operator relates to the camera in terms of composition and camera movements, the poor resolution and chromatic aberrations of the video format are traits of the medium that build the veracity of an immediate reality. Clarity is perhaps one of the most eloquent technical features supporting the simulacrum value of the video format in *The Blairwitch Project*. In professional fiction film, any error in the process of developing clarity makes the filmed material to be considered technical waste. In the case of the film discussed, there are numerous errors in sharpening. They come either from the imprecision of the autofocus system (i.e., auto-focus hunting) or due to the optical limitations of the camera lens used (e.g., close-up or detail-plan shots obtained by approaching the camera past the clearance limit). Both situations occur accidentally due to the limitations of the camera system, but in this case, they serve the concept. The fact that such technically flawed sequences were included in the final montage only demonstrates the desire to suggest to the audience that the material viewed represents an unrepeatable reality.

The response of the audience was as expected. *The Blairwitch Project* had one of the most developed marketing campaigns in recent film history. The film was promoted mainly by using a launch website featuring fake police reports revealing the three missing students. During screenings, producers handed out flyers with messages meant to treat the disappearance of the characters in the film as real, and the film's IMDb page presented the protagonists as dead or missing.

Given the arguments made, we consider *The Blairwitch Project* a persuasive example showing how the medium itself can tell a story, stylistically capitalizing on its ontological signs.

3. Figurative

The poor resolution of the Standard-Definition system can sometimes be used to support an abstract stylistic approach. In this regard, we consider Iranian director Abbas Kiarostami's recent observational films to be relevant.

Five Dedicated to Ozu (2003, dir. Abbas Kiarostami, DoP. Abbas Kiarostami) is an observational film of the Iranian director, consisting of five distinct frame sequences. The compositional language of the film can be described by the immobility of the camera, without any corrections of the composition. We consider *Five* a film that is either appreciated for its invitation to introspection or blamed for the boredom it provokes. The discussion we initiate addresses none of these views, but rather wishes to consider the figurative use of the Standard-Definition format.

The poor resolution and chromatic aberrations of the DV format lead to an abstraction of lines and shapes in the frame. I chose precisely this film directed by Kiarostami, because of the Iranian director's experience with fine arts and graphic design. As a graduate of the University of Arts in Tehran, his first forays into the art world took place as a graphic designer in advertising. *Five* had a screening at the National Museum of Asian Art in Washington, USA. This manner of screening a film inside a museum supports the *tableau vivant* value of this observational film.

The deliberate abstraction and stylization achieved by poor definition in an era where the high-resolution digital image doesn't miss even the finest details is reminiscent of how the impressionist movement responded to the perfection brought by photography. The high-definition digital format is aseptic: it offers little to interpret. Both the way lines and shapes are defined and the generous latitude of modern digital sensors make the digital image a rather unmysterious representation. In this sense, Abbas Kiarostami's vivid paintings also gain figurative value by choosing the Standard Definition video format, thus adding another layer to the already ambiguous narrative.

4. Nostalgic

More than twenty years ago, when the Hollywood industry was experimenting with equipment intended for amateurs to satisfy certain aesthetic reasons, the youth of today were filmed by their families with the same equipment, with the intent of creating a personal archive. Most of today's youth (i.e. people in their 20s and 30s) associate the aesthetic features of these Standard-Definition cameras with childhood images. For this age group, such images characterized by the aforementioned technical deficiencies, whether we are

talking about photos or video, induce nostalgia. A study⁶ conducted by the University of Southampton is relevant to our topic. It reveals details about the triggering mechanism of nostalgia.

The most frequent subjects of nostalgia turned out to be people we feel close to (family, friends, colleagues), special events (birthdays, graduations) and animals. The main trigger of this feeling is negative affect, along with various sensory impulses. Although most of these impulses were described as belonging to the olfactory, auditory and gustatory senses, sight is also very present in our lives and deserves a separate discussion.

Most of our childhood memories go back to when we were about three years old, at the earliest. Certain medical scholars claim that the human brain does not retain detailed memories until the age of 7. This is why most adults rely on different media devices to record different moments from the past. These media items range from analogue photos and VHS tapes to digital photos and videos. Today's youth are part of the generation whose visual memories are mostly digital images (i.e., captured using the first-generation digital cameras and video cameras). Their idea of the childhood self is a not-so-well-defined portrait, sometimes even blurry, with various strange colour effects, on an image with the date printed in the corner. This type of media product has its own stamp and depicts personal moments with a certain degree of intimacy involving interactions with family, friends and other loved ones.

Today's music industry has been heavily influenced by the pop music of the late '80s and early '90s, and its visual identity is properly characterized. But the trend of music videos incorporating footage shot using amateur cameras began long before the 2020s. Perhaps one of the most relevant examples of childhood nostalgia is the video for Ed Sheeran's song *Photograph*. It consists of family video diaries of the British artist, describing moments that start from a playful childhood to becoming one of the most appreciated musicians in the world. While the early part of his life is represented by actual family footage recorded by Ed's father, the period depicting his rise to worldwide popularity (e.g., shows or rehearsals) continues to be recorded with similar equipment. This was decided so as to maintain the sense of intimacy of the overall message, despite the technological advancement that has come with the passage of time. The music video is a pure example of how today's young adults are used to visualizing their childhood memories through the lens of the video camera.

Another example is Bruno Mars' song *Treasure*. The song's video is the result of working with a director this time, and its visual style started a general

⁶ Clay Routledge *et. al.* (2006), *Nostalgia: Content, Triggers, Functions*, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 91, no. 5, 975-993, DOI: 10.1037/0022-3514.91.5.975.

trend in the music industry (see today's visual identity of artists like Dua Lipa or The Weeknd). Although we don't exactly know if the overall look is achieved by the video camera format or by a post-production process, the image format along with the poor resolution and even the way the highlights are rendered throughout the video are only a few examples that show the decision to emulate the Pop-Funk culture of the early '80s.

But both music videos were released in the early 2010s. Why has this visual style exploded just now among the young population? Returning to the trigger mechanism of nostalgia, negative affect seems to be one of its most common causes. Nostalgia can become a defense mechanism to deal with stressful times in our lives. The last three years have been marked by a global pandemic that has kept the entire world indoors or on lockdown. This was a crucial time for nostalgia to set in, as most people were separated from their loved ones. So, they finally found time to search through their photo/video archives and look back in time. The famous online platform TikTok also gained popularity around that time and definitely left its mark on the retro digital camera trend. The TikTok algorithm began to increase the popularity of videos that recreated the digital aesthetic of the 2000s. Now, a few years after the COVID pandemic, teenagers create their regular content on social media using this type of device; they even started filming more of their daily life using these dedicated cameras instead of their mobile phone. People have now discovered that these types of dedicated devices are easier to use, more convenient (ie, thanks to the generous zoom lens, battery life and pocket size), and most importantly, they have a voice of their own. Their resolution is far from perfect, but it is different from the common, objective point of view of any high-resolution camera.

To conclude, this article can be treated rather as an invitation for professionals in the audio-visual field but also for young amateur enthusiasts not to forget a format that may be technically outdated, but with its own ontological imprint. We find it relevant to conclude with General Sarnoff's words quoted by Marshall McLuhan in *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*: "the products of modern science are not in themselves good or bad; it is the way they are used that determines their value"⁷.

Bibliography

- Baudrillard, Jean (2008). *Simulacra and Simulation*, Idea Design & Print, Cluj-Napoca
- Carroll, Noel (2003). *Engaging the Moving Image*, Yale University Press, New York & London
- Lister, Martin (2013). *The Photographic Image in Digital Culture*, Routledge, London

⁷ Marshall McLuhan(1994), *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, p. 11.

- McLuhan, Marshall (1994). *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, The MIT Press, Cambridge
- Rossaak, Eivind (2011). *Algorithmic Culture: Between Stillness and Motion*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam

Articles and online resources

- Arndt, Jamie; Routledge, Clay; Sedikides, Constantine; Wildschut, Tim (2006). "Nostalgia: Content, Triggers, Functions", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 91, no. 5, 975-993, DOI: 10.1037/0022-3514.91.5.975
- Bartholeyns, Gil (2014). "The Instant Past: Nostalgia and Digital Retro Photography", in *Media and Nostalgia, Palgrave Macmillan Memory Studies*, ed. Niemeyer Katharina, Palgrave Macmillan, London, pp. 51-69, DOI:10.1057/9781137375889_4
- Lam, Celia (2014). "Emotional Realism and Actuality: The Function of Prosumer Aesthetics in Film", *IAFOR Journal of Media, Communication and Film* 1, no. 2, pp. 87-101
- Legg, Stephen (2004). "Memory and Nostalgia", *Cultural Geographies* 11, pp. 99-107, DOI: 10.1191/1474474004eu296ed
- Manovich, Lev (2001). *From DV Realism to a Universal Recording Machine*, http://manovich.net/content/04-projects/031-reality-media/28_article_2001.pdf (vi 9.11.2023)
- Sterian, Alexandru (2020). "The Blair Witch Project and the Mockumentary Approach", in *Magie și Vrăjitorie: perspective istorice, antropologice și artistice* [Magic and Witchcraft: Historical, Anthropological, and Artistic Perspectives], ed.
- Cosma Valer Simion, Pop-Cureșu Ioan (2020). Editura Mega, Cluj-Napoca, pp. 259-275

The timeless journey of the Möbius strip: circulation and transposition into different artistic mediums

Ioana ROȘU

PhD Student

“George Enescu” National University of Arts Iași
ROMANIA¹

Abstract: From the twentieth century up to the present, the Möbius strip has been translated from mathematics into other fields, such as visual arts, design and architecture. Due to the versatility of allegorical and spiritual meanings it can mediate, this surface describing an abstract topological space has been assimilated in various artistic fields and materialities, especially in contemporary art. Thus, the Möbius strip stands out as a binder-motif that becomes a transposable concept with the potential to create new constellations of association and meaning, making connections between various disciplines, such as visual arts, architecture, design, literature, mathematics or psychology.

Keywords: Möbius strip, transposable concept, visual arts, architecture.

The Möbius strip or Möbius band is a looped surface with only one side and only one edge. A pattern of this band can be easily made by taking a rectangular strip of paper, twisting it 180 degrees, and gluing its two ends. One of its properties is that if one traces its entire surface starting from a certain point, it will reach back to the original point. The Möbius band was discovered and described in 1858 by two German mathematicians, August Ferdinand Möbius and Johann Benedict Listing, who worked independently of each other². Various graphic representations of the Möbius band (Fig. 1) made by the former can be found in the second volume of *Gesammelte Werke*³, published posthumously in

¹ Ioana.Rosu@student.unage.ro

² Jolly Thulaseedas and Robert J. Krawczyk (2003), *Möbius Concepts in Architecture*, in “Meeting Alhambra, ISAMA-BRIDGES Conference Proceedings”, ed. Javier Barrallo *et al.*, University of Granada, Granada, p. 353, retrieved from <https://archive.bridgesmathart.org/2003/bridges2003-353.html#gsc.tab=0>

³ August F. Möbius (1885), *Gesammelte Werke: Zweiter Band*, ed. Felix Klein, S. Hirzel Verlag, Leipzig, p. 520.

1885. These designs vary according to the number of half-rotations to which the original band is subjected, around its central axis.

Starting from the 20th century to the present, the motif of the Möbius strip has circulated in various artistic fields such as visual arts, music, architecture and design, being reinterpreted and transposed in various mediums, in accordance with the intentions of those who approached it. Accordingly, over time, consistent with the artistic vision and materiality associated with it, this motif ends up being given multiple meanings, beyond or in line with the generally accepted metaphorical meanings that have been assigned to it. In the general sense, the Möbius strip is read to represent notions such as infinity, continuity, unity, as a metaphor for the universe or as a symbol of the derision and constraints associated with human existence.

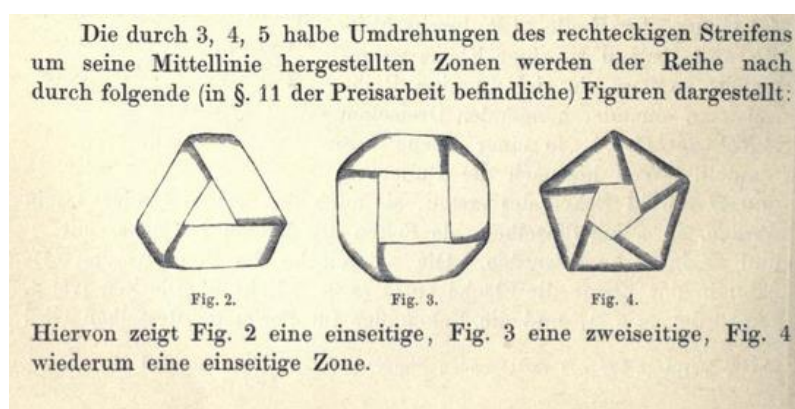


Fig. 1 August F. Möbius, illustrations of the Möbius strip.
Excerpt from *Gesammelte Werke: Zweiter Band*, 1885

Illustrating several instances of the path taken by the Möbius strip motif in and through different artistic fields, materialized through transposition and assimilation instead of mimetic representation, this motif can be read as a “transposable concept”. These concepts, which Rosi Braidotti described as “nomadic notions” weaving a network that connects philosophy to social realities, theoretical speculations to concrete plans, concepts to imaginative figurations”⁴, capture the malleability and adaptability of the Möbius strip, understood as a motif that has the potential to create links between different fields such as visual art and mathematics or literature, architecture and design.

Moreover, Michael Schwab states that “the fact that transpositions leap between diverse domains and therefore create connections between different domains suggests a generative capacity not on a line of simple repetition of form,

⁴ Rosi Braidotti (2006), *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics*, Polity Press, Cambridge, p. 7.

but on one of formal or informal (metaphorical) permutation.”⁵ Such permutations can be captured by visual art, design or architecture projects, which incorporate in the process of articulation and edification the *Möbius* strip, whose symbolic meanings support and enhance the creative approach.

In his work *Möbius Strip I* (Fig. 2) the Danish-born artist Maurits Cornelis Escher combines the physical properties of the strip with the Ouroboros (Fig. 3), a symbol of ancient mythology frequently found in Egyptian and Greek culture. This is a representation of the serpent or dragon swallowing its own tail, understood as metaphor for the cyclical regenerative transformations of the universe⁶, the eternal passage of time that periodically turns upon itself, and the cyclicity of human existence, framed by the natural succession of birth, death and rebirth. In Escher's interpretation, we can identify “three fish”⁷ that swallow one another’s tails, in turn, the theme of eternal continuity being supported, thus, by the synthetic association of the symbolism specific to the Ouroboros motif with that of the Möbius strip.

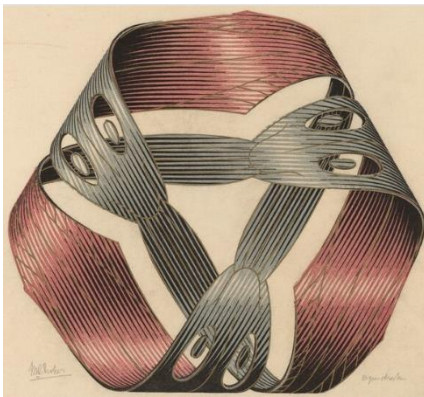


Fig. 2 M. C. Escher, *Möbius Strip I*, woodcut, 30.8 × 31.12 cm, 1961

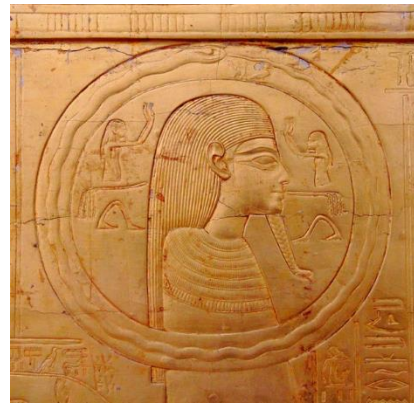


Fig. 3 Ouroboros, the tomb of Tutankhamon.

Two years later, Escher takes up the same motif in a new work, *Möbius Strip II* (Fig. 4), in which he represents a series of ants walking endlessly one after the other in a continuous loop. Referring to some of his works, including the two designs of the Möbius strip, Escher stated that “the ideas behind them often bear witness to my amazement and wonder at the laws of nature that operate in the world around me”⁸. This attitude led the artist to often refer to

⁵ Michael Schwab (2018), *Introduction*, in “Transpositions: Aesthetico-Epistemic Operators in Artistic Research”, Leuven University Press, Leuven, p. 15.

⁶ Alicia Maravelia (2018), *The Thrill of Time through the Ancient Egyptian Religion and Art: Ouroboros as an Archetype for the Meta-physics of Eternity*, in “The Oriental Studies”, 81, p. 5.

⁷ Maurits C. Escher (1975), *The Graphic Work of M.C. Escher*, Ballantine Books, New York, p. 11.

⁸ *Idem*, p. 6.

abstract notions from the field of mathematics in his practice, in an attempt to interrogate and analyze these natural rules of the universe. From this point of view, works like Möbius Strip I, II can be read as “visual demonstrations”⁹ of some abstract notional elements. Thus, in the previously mentioned works, the motif of the Möbius strip becomes a mediator between concept and visual representation, facilitating the transposition of a mathematical idea that refers to the concept of infinity in the artistic medium of woodcut.

In 2015, Canadian artist Andreas von Zadora-Gerlof took over and translated Escher's *Möbius Strip II* from woodcut to kinetic art (Fig. 5). He proposes a monumental sculpture three and a half meters high, using materials such as aluminum, copper and carbon fiber, along with a series of electrical and magnetic mechanisms¹⁰, to allow the nine ants originally imagined by Escher to move along the Möbius band. If in the two-dimensional paper of 1963 they appear to be opposite each other, ambiguously suggesting the existence of two distinct surfaces of the band, one outside and one inside, then in von Zadora-Gerlof's work it becomes obvious that the ants move on the same continuous surface.



Fig. 4 M. C. Escher, *Möbius Strip II*, woodcut, 58.42 × 31.43 cm, 1963



Fig. 5 Zadora's workshop, *Möbius Strip 2*, kinetic sculpture, aluminum, copper and carbon fiber, height: 350 cm, 2014-2015

⁹ Jean C. Rush (1979), *On the Appeal of M. C. Escher's Pictures*, in “Leonardo” 12, no. 1 (Winter), p. 49, retrieved from www.muse.jhu.edu/article/598892

¹⁰ Andreas von Zadora-Gerlof, *Möbius Strip II*, von Zadora, viewed on 18.01.2023, <http://vonzadora.com/portfolio/mobius-strip-2/>

At a first glance, *Möbius Strip 2* appears to be a mimetic reiteration of Escher's. However, in her PhD thesis entitled "Translation in the Language of Sculpture", published in 2022 at the University of Auckland, Natalie Fae Guy proposes that such a creative transfer, from a two-dimensional medium to a three-dimensional one, can be understood as an act of non-verbal translation between two different artistic areas, accepted as an original in its own right, which does not offer the possibility to faithfully reconstruct the original work based on it, even if it is thematically related to it¹¹. Thus, Natalie Fae Guy's research, which uses the categories of intersemiotic translation (between different channels) and intrasemiotic translation (between equivalent channels) structured by Henrik Gottlieb in *Semiotics and translation* (2017), allows the act of translating *Möbius Strip II* from woodcut to sculpture through *Möbius Strip 2* to be read not only as a stand-alone work, but also as an intersemiotic translation specific to artistic fields.

The motif of the Möbius strip has been taken up and translated into the medium of sculptural creation by other artists, such as John Ernest or Tim Hawkinson, each of them having distinct approaches, depending on the particularities of their artistic practices. The former, being passionate about mathematics, included elements specific to it in his works¹², so that part of them are visual representations of abstract mathematical models. His original interpretation of the Möbius strip appeals to the notion of negative space, so that this motif is reinterpreted within the free area of the parallelepipedal shape defining the constructivist *Moebius Strip* sculpture (Fig. 6). Thus, the artist brings to the fore the fact that a property of a mathematical surface can also be represented by means of solid volumetry¹³, synthetically associating the field of topology with sculpture.

Another way of transposing the Möbius strip motif in a sculptural context can be identified in the work *Möbius Ship* (Fig. 7) made by Tim Hawkinson in 2006. His artistic practice involves the reconfiguration of ordinary objects into sculptures or novel artistic installations, the artist often addressing themes such as time, repetition, claim, cause and effect¹⁴, and exploring the connections between nature, technology and human perception. Through the *Möbius Ship*

¹¹ Natalie Fae Guy (2022), *Translation in the Language of Sculpture*, PhD thesis, The University of Auckland, p. 54, retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/2292/59487>

¹² Paul Ernest (2009), *John Ernest, a Mathematical Artist*, in "Philosophy of Mathematics Education Journal" 24, (December) non-paged, retrieved from <https://education.exeter.ac.uk/research/centres/stem/publications/pmej/pome24/index.htm>

¹³ Alan Fowler (2009), *A Rational Aesthetic*, in "Philosophy of Mathematics Education Journal" 24, (December): non-paged, retrieved from <https://education.exeter.ac.uk/research/centres/stem/publications/pmej/pome24/index.htm>

¹⁴ Jeffrey Kastner (2016), *Tim Hawkinson*, in "Artforum", (May), retrieved from <https://www.artforum.com/events/tim-hawkinson-10-218593/>

sculpture, Hawkinson associates the symbolism of Möbius strip's infinite loop motif with Captain Ahab's obsession with the white whale, the eponymous character from Herman Melville's novel *Moby Dick*. The ship seems to be perpetually following itself, mirroring how Ahab obsessively pursued his own vision of the whale¹⁵. The complexity and ingenuity of the structure created by Hawkinson thus becomes a visual metaphor for the events conveyed in the epic work of the American author.



Fig. 6 John Ernest, *Möbius Strip*, sculpture, wood, metal, wood fiber plywood and alkyd paint, 244 × 214 x 58.5 cm, 1971-1972

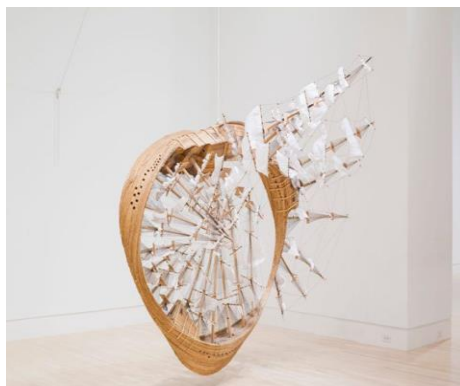


Fig. 7 Tim Hawkinson, *Möbius Ship*, sculpture, wood, plastic, plexiglas, rope, staples, string, thread, plastic necklaces, glue, 265 x 310 x 130 cm, 2006

Due to the complexity of the symbolic and philosophical meanings associated with it, the motif of the Möbius strip has been transposed and integrated into works of performance art. An eloquent example in this sense is represented by the experimental practices of the artist Lygia Clark, “generally understood as multisensory experiences, whose importance lies in understanding artistic research beyond the visual.”¹⁶ Together with Hélio Oiticica and Lygia Pape, she laid the foundations of the neo-concrete art trend in Brazil (1959-1961), which promoted the understanding of art as an experience lived in the everyday, the latter becoming a living canvas that facilitates awareness of the actions: to be, to do or to experiment¹⁷. Throughout the 1960s, beyond exploring the dichotomies of body-mind, subject-

¹⁵ Elizabeth Schultz (2019), *The New Art of Moby-Dick*, in “Leviathan” 21, no. 1 (May), p. 31, retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1353/lvn.2019.0001>

¹⁶ Suely Rolnik (2007), *The Body's Contagious Memory: Lygia Clark's Return to the Museum*, in “European Institute for Progressive Cultural Politics”, (January), retrieved from <https://transversal.at/transversal/0507/rolnik/en>

¹⁷ Jessica Gogan (2022), *Reading the World Before the Word: Post Neoconcrete Legacies and Decolonial Pedagogies*, in “LA ESCUELA”, 8 June, retrieved from <https://laescuela.art/en/campus/library/mappings/reading-the-world-before-the-word-post-neoconcrete-legacies-and-decolonial-pedagogies-jessica-gogan>

object and individual-collective, Clark focused on corporeality and human perception in her practice, proposing a series of actions and “relational objects” that could directly engage the audience¹⁸, in a way that synesthetically combines everyday life and artistic experience, the self and the collective. In *Caminhando* (1963) Clark explores these continuously developing relationships between exterior and interior through the Möbius strip. Initially, participants create their own Möbius strip out of paper and glue. They then pierce its surface with scissors, and continue to cut along the strip until its width becomes too thin to continue. Thus, the notion of “choice” is the conceptual basis of *Caminhando*¹⁹, and the artistic act itself is realized through the temporary relationship that is established between the participant and the object. In the work *Diálogo de mãos* (1966) Clark's and Oiticica's hands, engaged in a non-verbal dialogue, are connected to each other by an elastic strip in the shape of a Möbius strip. The bodily closeness and gesture involved in the work explore the paradox of physical proximity²⁰. The two human instances try to form connections at a cognitive level through physical touch on the skin, understood as a surface that delineates the self from the outside, through a sensory act that brings them extremely close but does not completely eliminate the psychological barriers specific to communication and perception. In both *Caminhando* and *Diálogo de mãos*, Clark resorts to the symbolic continuity of Möbius strip's surface, between its imagined outer and inner sides, in order to interrogate the potential of experimental art to make connections between self and others, between human and object, between body and mind, taking over elements from psychology and psychoanalysis in her artistic practice.



Fig. 8 Lygia Clark, *Caminhando*, action, paper, glue and scissors, 1963



Fig. 9 Lygia Clark and Hélio Oiticica, *Diálogo de mãos*, performance, elastic bandage, 1966

¹⁸ Christine Marcel (2017), Part 1: *Lygia Clark: At the Border of Art*, in “Post MoMA”, 20 June, retrieved from <https://post.moma.org/part-1-lygia-clark-at-the-border-of-art/>

¹⁹ Lygia Clark, *Caminhando*, in “Lygia Clark portal”, viewed on 14.10.2023, retrieved from <https://portal.lygiaclark.org.br/acervo/189/caminhando>

²⁰ Daniel Birmbaum (2014), *Lygia Clark*, in “Artforum”, October, retrieved from <https://www.artforum.com/events/lygia-clark-4-207128/>

The motif of the Möbius strip can also be found in the designing stage or even in the volumetric realizations of some architectural projects, both on a small scale - pavilions - and on a monumental scale, when it is taken up within several proposals for socio-cultural buildings. A conclusive example in this regard is the ContemPLAY pavilion, created in 2012 by a team of students from the DRS (Directed Research Studio) at the McGill School of Architecture in Montreal, together with FARMM (Facility for Architectural Research in Media and Mediation). Its constructive composition is based on a series of structural elements of glued laminated wood and steel tubes, which can be described as a whole as a curved space beam. This beam, rotated around its own axis, joins itself, describing a Möbius strip. Aiming to achieve a certain visual effect (a mill of patterns of parallel and rotated lines)²¹, the resistance structure of the pavilion is clad with several slats with winding paths, made of wood. Thus, through materiality and volumetric play, the pavilion delimits an ambiguous space, simultaneously perceived as both interior and exterior. This sensation is emphasized by the play of lights and shadows given by the interaction of the sun's rays with the wooden slats.



Fig. 10 The ContemPLAY pavilion, made by students under the guidance of the Directed Research Studio, McGill School of Architecture; Montreal, 880 cm x 670 x 370 cm, 2012

Resorting to the same type of volumetry, the Danish architecture office BIG won the international competition for project proposals for the New National Library in Astana, Kazakhstan, organized in 2009. The architectural project they proposed had to be able to describe a monument “both local and universal, contemporary and timeless, unique and archetypal”, as Bjarke Ingels put it²². Thus, it was decided to merge and redesign familiar geometric and spatial

²¹ Alison Furuto (2012), *The ContemPLAY Pavilion / DRS + FARMM*, in “Archdaily”, 03 August, retrieved from <https://www.archdaily.com/258929/the-contemplay-pavilion-drs-farrrm>

²² David Basulto (2009), *National Library in Astana, Kazakhstan/BIG*, in “Archdaily”, 26 August, retrieved from <https://www.archdaily.com/33238/national-library-in-astana-kazakhstan-big>

shapes, such as the circle, rotunda, arch and yurt, which are recomposed into a volumetric ensemble describing the Möbius band.

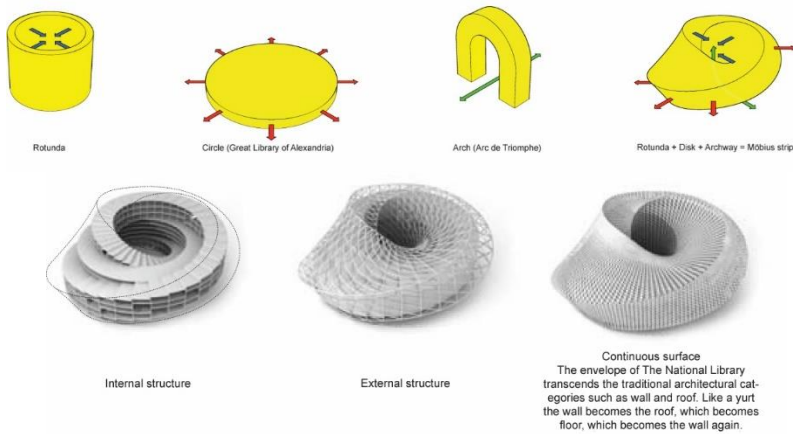


Fig. 11 Conceptual diagrams: National Library from Astana, Kazakhstan; Bjarke Ingels Group: BIG, 2009

In the field of fashion design, Korean-American architect and designer Meejin Yoon proposed in 2004 the *Möbius Dress*, a garment made of a single piece of fabric, designed in a way that no longer uses knots or overlapping stitches and there is no need to establish a certain hierarchy for arranging the material from which it is made. Möbius Dress interrogates the often assumed harsh demarcation between exterior and interior spaces and surfaces, proposing a gradual going through them²³. Its shape is supported by the human body and the dress relates to it, twisting and turning to form an ever-evolving and changing surface that translates the topological properties of Möbius' band into fashion design.



Fig. 12 Meejin Yoon, Möbius Dress, recycled industrial felt, adjustable sizes, 2004

²³ J. Meejin Yoon and Eric Höweler (2009), *Expanded Practice: Höweler + Yoon Architecture/My Studio*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York, p. 18.

Discovered by mathematician August F. Möbius and graphically illustrated by him in *Gesammelte Werke*, the Möbius strip was adopted as a transposable concept in the sense proposed by Braidotti, and circulated throughout the twentieth century until today as a motif-binder between various artistic fields, such as visual arts, architecture, design, literature, mathematics, psychology. The motif of the Möbius band is distinguished as having a generative capacity specific to transpositions, making formal and informal permutations in the sense described by Schwab. This process of translation and assimilation could materialize both due to the potential plasticity of philosophical concepts associated with it by those who chose to reinterpret and transpose it into their works, as well as the allegorical and spiritual valences that the Möbius band represents, from (a)temporal cyclicity to the cyclical regeneration of the universe and up to the precariousness of human existence.

Bibliography

- Basulto, David (2009). *National Library in Astana, Kazakhstan/BIG* in “Archdaily”, 26 August, retrieved from <https://www.archdaily.com/33238/national-library-in-astana-kazakhstan-big>
- Birmbaum, Daniel (2014). *Lygia Clark* in “Artforum”, October, retrieved from <https://www.artforum.com/events/lygia-clark-4-207128/>
- Braidotti, Rosi (2006). *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics*, Polity Press, Cambridge
- Clark, Lygia. *Caminhando* in “Lygia Clark portal”, viewed on 14.10.2023, retrieved from <https://portal.lygiaclark.org.br/acervo/189/caminhando>
- Ernest, Paul (2009). *John Ernest, a Mathematical Artist*, in “Philosophy of Mathematics Education Journal” 24, (December): non-paged, retrieved from <https://education.exeter.ac.uk/research/centres/stem/publications/pmej/pome24/index.htm>
- Escher, Maurits C (1975). *The Graphic Work of M.C. Escher*, Ballantine Books, New York
- Fowler, Alan (2009). *A Rational Aesthetic* in “Philosophy of Mathematics Education Journal” 24, (December): non-paged, retrieved from <https://education.exeter.ac.uk/research/centres/stem/publications/pmej/pome24/index.htm>
- Furuto, Alison (2012). *The ContemPLAY Pavilion / DRS + FARMM* in “Archdaily”, 03 August, retrieved from <https://www.archdaily.com/258929/the-contemplay-pavilion-drs-farrrm>
- Gogan, Jessica (2022). *Reading the World Before the Word: Post Neoconcrete Legacies and Decolonial Pedagogies* in “LA ESCUELA”, 8 June, retrieved from <https://laescuela.art/en/campus/library/mappings/reading-the-world-before-the-word-post-neoconcrete-legacies-and-decolonial-pedagogies-jessica-gogan>

- Guy, Natalie Fae (2022). *Translation in the Language of Sculpture*, PhD thesis, The University of Auckland, retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/2292/59487>
- Kastner, Jeffrey (2016). *Tim Hawkinson* in “Artforum”, May, retrieved from <https://www.artforum.com/events/tim-hawkinson-10-218593/>
- Maravelia, Alicia (2018). *The Thrill of Time through the Ancient Egyptian Religion and Art: Ouroboros as an Archetype for the Meta-physics of Eternity*, in *The Oriental Studies* 81, pp. 3-43
- Marcel, Christine (2017). *Part 1: Lygia Clark: At the Border of Art* in “Post MoMA”, 20 June, retrieved from <https://post.moma.org/part-1-lygia-clark-at-the-border-of-art/>
- Möbius, August F (1885). *Gesammelte Werke: Zweiter Band*, Ed. Felix Klein, S. Hirzel Verlag, Leipzig
- Rolnik, Suely (2007). *The Body's Contagious Memory: Lygia Clark's Return to the Museum*, in “European Institute for Progressive Cultural Politics”, Jan., retrieved from <https://transversal.at/transversal/0507/rolnik/en>
- Rush, Jean C (1979). *On the Appeal of M. C. Escher's Pictures*, in “Leonardo” 12, no. 1 (winter), retrieved from muse.jhu.edu/article/598892, pp. 48-50
- Schultz, Elizabeth (2019). *The New Art of Moby-Dick*, in “Leviathan” 21, no 1 (May): 7-96, retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1353/lvn.2019.0001>
- Schwab, Michael (2018). *Introduction*, in “Transpositions: Aesthetico-Epistemic Operators in Artistic Research”, 7-21, Leuven University Press, Leuven
- Thulaseedas, Jolly and Robert J. Krawczyk (2003). *Möbius Concepts in Architecture*, in “Meeting Alhambra, ISAMA-BRIDGES Conference Proceedings”, ed. Javier Barrallo, Nathaniel Friedman, Juan Antonio Maldonado, Jose Martfnez-Aroza, Reza Sarhangi and Carlo Sequin, University of Granada, Granada, pp. 353-360
<https://archive.bridgesmathart.org/2003/bridges2003-353.html#gsc.tab=0>
- von Zadora-Gerlof, Andreas. “Möbius Strip II”. VonZadora, viewed on 18.01.2023.
<http://vonzadora.com/portfolio/mobius-strip-2/>
- Yoon, J. Meejin and Eric Höweler (2009). *Expanded Practice: Höweler + Yoon Architecture/My Studio*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York

List of illustrations

Fig. 1 August F. Möbius, illustrations of the Möbius strip.

Excerpt from *Gesammelte Werke: Zweiter Band*, 1885 Source: August F. Möbius. *Gesammelte Werke: Zweiter Band*, Ed. Felix Klein, Leipzig, S. Hirzel, 1885, 520

Fig. 2 M. C. Escher, *Möbius Strip I*, woodcut, 30.8 × 31.12 cm, 1961

Source: <https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.61283.html>

Fig. 3 Ouroboros, the tomb of Tutankhamon.. Source:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ouroboros#/media/File:%C3%84gyptisches_Museum_Kairo_2016-03-29_Tutanchamun_Grabschatz_09.jpg

Fig. 4 M. C. Escher, *Möbius Strip II*, woodcut, 58.42 × 31.43 cm, 1963. Source:

<https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.61286.html>

Fig. 5 Zadora's workshop, *Möbius Strip 2*, kinetic sculpture, aluminum, copper and carbon fiber, height: 350 cm, 2014-2015 Source:

<http://vonzadora.com/portfolio/mobius-strip-2/>

Fig. 6 John Ernest, *Moebius Strip*, sculpture, wood, metal, wood fiber plywood and alkyd paint, 244 × 214 x 58.5 cm, 1971-1972 Source:

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/ernest-moebius-strip-t11762>

Fig. 7 Tim Hawkinson, *Möbius Ship*, sculpture, wood, plastic, plexiglas, rope, staples, string, thread, plastic necklaces, glue, 265 x 310 x 130 cm, 2006 Source:

<https://collections.discovernewfields.org/artwork/75563>

Fig. 8 Lygia Clark, *Caminhando*, action, paper, glue and scissors, 1963 Source:

<https://www.bauhaus-imaginista.org/articles/3822/walking-on-a-mobius-strip>

Fig. 9 Lygia Clark and Hélio Oiticica, *Diálogo de mãos*, performance, elastic bandage, 1996 Source: <https://www.bauhaus-imaginista.org/articles/3822/walking-on-a-mobius-strip>

Fig. 10 The ContemPLAY pavilion, made by students under the guidance of the Directed Research Studio, McGill School of Architecture; Montreal, 880 cm x 670 x 370 cm, 2012

Source: <https://www.archdaily.com/258929/the-contemplay-pavilion-drs-farrrm>

Fig. 11 Conceptual diagrams: National Library from Astana, Kazakhstan;

Bjarke Ingels Group: BIG, 2009 Source: <https://www.archdaily.com/33238/national-library-in-astana-kazakhstan-big>

Fig. 12 Meejin Yoon, *Möbius Dress*, recycled industrial felt, adjustable sizes, 2004

Source: <http://www.designersparty.com/entry/Mobius-Dress-Meejin-Yoon>

Examining the materiality of the photographic medium

Matei BEJENARU

Professor PhD

“George Enescu” National University of Arts Iași
ROMANIA¹

Abstract: This article analyzes a series of artistic projects whose focus is the study of the materiality of the photographic medium within contemporary visual arts. More than two decades after the digital “revolution”, the relevance of this type of artistic research lies in the analysis of analogue photographic language and medium as part of a post-conceptual approach. The artistic projects have examined the nature of photographic print, slide and visual projection. The photographic images used are pretexts for medial analysis, they should not be interpreted in isolation, but in the context in which they are presented. In this sense, artistic interest was guided towards the subject of representation, at the expense of the representation of the subject. For projects analyzing the nature of the photographic slide, multi-channel slide projections were used to amplify the visual perception. In the case of the photographic print, its objective dimension was emphasized by resorting to installation-type exhibition solutions. In the study of the projection process, a photographic object was designed and made with the function of obscuring a part of the light flow and creating the illusion of three-dimensionality by superimposing two projections.

Keywords: materiality of photography, projection, slide, print, medial archaeology.

1. Introduction

This article presents my own artistic research begun in 2018, concerned with the materiality of the photographic medium as a result of a long-term, consistent interest in medial linguistic analysis through the development of contemporary concepts and work methods using analogue photographic technologies. The research materialized in several personal exhibitions: *Diapozitiv* (Slide; Switchlab Space, Bucharest, 2020), *Print* (Artep Gallery, Iași, 2021), *Proiecție* (Projection; apARTE Gallery Iași) and *Diapozitiv_02*

¹ mateibejenaru@yahoo.com

(Slide_02; Borderline Art Space Iași, 2023). The exhibitions were curated by the critic and art historian Cristian Nae.

2. About the photographic object

The most significant change in the production, circulation and consumption of photographic images was the digital revolution, which began in the '80s and continues to this day². One of the consequences of this transition was the dematerialization of the digital image, that simply becomes information taking visual form as soon as it is accessed online or offline. This fundamental paradigm shift has been heavily analyzed and theorized, and many of the lingering questions regarding the status of photography today concern the status of the photographic object. A photograph must be viewed not only as a two-dimensional image but as a three-dimensional object as well, or, to put it another way, we can have an interest for the representation of a subject, the photograph as an image, respectively for the subject of the representation, the photograph as an object.

Re-analyzing the status of the photographic object is a consequence of the current photographic condition, when “the photographic medium is subject to the pressures of its disappearance and transformation into a photographic condition, event or idea”³. The return to the materiality of the medium and the appearance of object-based photographic practices should not be understood only as a reaction to the crisis caused by the “death” of the analogue image, but also as interest in the linguistic analysis of the medium (vocabulary, grammar, morphology, syntax) as part from a conceptual discourse. Thus, starting from the '80s, during the breakthrough of postmodernism in the visual arts, more and more contemporary artistic practices investigate artistic media, both from the point of view of identity and of their fusion. A relevant example is the artistic practice of British artist Tacita Dean who studies the medium of analogue cinematographic film, in a time when cinematographic film is on its way to extinction. Her monumental anamorphic projection on 35mm film entitled *Film*, displayed at London's Tate Modern in 2011, is an investigation into the production of film image through chemical and mechanical methods, while its rhythm achieved thanks to montage generates a visual poem.

From the perspective of reading images and constructing meanings, not just the photograph as an image holds meaning, but also its materiality, as well

² Steve Anchell, Bill Troop (1998), *The Film Developing Cookbook*, Focal Press.

In the book's introduction, Bill Troop states that beginning in 1982, major companies producing photo materials, such as Kodak, began hiring electronic and IT engineers to research and implement the digital platform.

³ Sandra Plummer, Harriet Riches and Duncan Wooldridge (2011), *Photography's New Materiality*, in “Photoworks” Magazine, Great Britain, no.18.

as the forms of presentation and uses of the photography. In this sense, Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart state that “there is a need to conceptually break the dominance of image content and look at the physical attributes of photography that influence content through the arrangement and design of the visual information”⁴. These attributes are also related to the function of photography as social object.

The term *the photographic*, *le photographique*, was introduced by Rosalind Krauss through a series of texts⁵ published in the early '80s containing critical analyses of the photographic medium, its historical relations with other visual media in the modern period, as well as the discursive spaces of photography. According to Rosalind Krauss, the photographic is defined as a set of attributes of the analyzed medium that creates the basis of a critical space, by means of which the photographic process is creatively redefined.



Fig. 1 Tacita Dean, *Film*, anamorphic projection on 35mm film, approximate size 7x13m, Tate Modern London, 2011

Personal artistic projects have in view a multiple analysis of the photographic medium from a historical perspective, from that of the functions of representation, respectively materiality. The archaeological dimension of bringing to the fore technological platforms from the past, such as the

⁴ Elizabeth Edwards, Janice Hart (2004), *Photographs, Objects, Histories. On the Materiality of Images*, Routledge, London, p. 2.

⁵ Rosalind Krauss (2013), *Le photographique. Pour une theorie des ecarts*, Editions Macula, Paris, p. 51.

photographic slide, consists in attempting to give photographic language a contemporary reinterpretation. The limits of photographic representation are conditioned by the technology used and the thinking space in which we associate ideas with images. As I stated before, the photographic object is researched in terms of materiality, of its intrinsic properties that can, in turn, generate artistic meaning.

The interest in the technical photographic platforms of the past should not be explained by nostalgia, but by the exploration of photographic media with contemporary analytical means, in view of building a discourse open to new territories of the visual imaginary. The techniques used are not means of production and dissemination of images, but a cultural attitude⁶. According to art historian Michel Poivert, “the abandonment of historical continuities and the reactivation of past technologies are ways to give new life to photography within a new regime, where the image is on a par with the medium”⁷. The latter is an organic part of the photography, representing the rediscovered body of the new image, different from the digital, nomadic and dematerialized one.

3. The projects *Slide* (2020), *Slide_02* (2023) and *Print* (2021)

The central element of the two projects is the photographic slide understood as a sculptural object. By the chemical treatment of light-sensitive film, we finally obtain a positive image, whether black and white or in color, consisting of several layers of coating with metallic silver impregnated - in the case of color images - with red, green and blue pigments. All these layers are applied on a transparent base, usually cellulose triacetate.

Before conceptually analyzing the projects, I will make some clarifications regarding the photographic process of making the slides. Unlike color or black and white negative films, slides have higher color saturation and higher contrast, so a lower dynamic range. This is why, in order to have details in the light and dark areas, the subjects photographed must have low contrast and the light exposure must be extremely accurate. The development of color slides is done according to the E6 method patented by Kodak, which involves a first development that is important for obtaining the final image, a chemical inversion followed by a color development, then bleaching, fixation, washing and stabilization⁸. Some of the reactions mentioned above require to strictly maintain a working temperature of 38 degrees Celsius, with a maximum deviation of 0.2 degrees Celsius, in order to avoid chromatic deviations in the image.

⁶ Michel Poivert (2022), *Contre-culture dans la photographie contemporaine*, Les Editions Textuel, Paris, p. 92.

⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁸ Retrieved from <https://imaging.kodakalaris.com/sites/default/files/files/resources/j83.pdf>

All the images in the project were made in my personal laboratory as part of the artistic practice. The process of making slides is complex, it requires knowledge of photographic chemistry and, last but not least, is laborious and slow. Acknowledging this fact was part of the project's approach based on a significant artistic commitment. This fact distinguishes analogue photography practice from digital photography, where the selection process of a number of images taken more quickly and viewed almost in real time takes precedence.

Both projects analyzed involved multi-channel looping slide projections. In the *Slide* project, publicly exhibited at the Switchlab space in Bucharest in 2020, we had a synchronous projection of medium format 6x6cm slides on two channels, respectively a loop projection of a 16mm cinematographic film. The exhibition was conceived as an installation at the center of which was the photographic device composed of projection equipment and screen. The large size of the projections, approximately 2.7x5.4 m, highlighted the quality and visual expressiveness of the images and made a connection between the spectators' body and the artistic work, similar to the connection one has while contemplating large historical paintings. An important part in the installation was played by the sound of the slide projectors, conceived as a stand-alone experimental sound piece that amplifies, through rhythm and repetitiveness, a certain ecstatic-emotional tension when viewing the photographic images. In the case of *Slide_02*, exhibited at the Borderline Art Space gallery in Iasi in 2023, we opted for a looping slide projection on three channels using medium format 6x7cm projectors with high illumination power (6000 lumens), the size of the three projections summed up being 2x7 m.

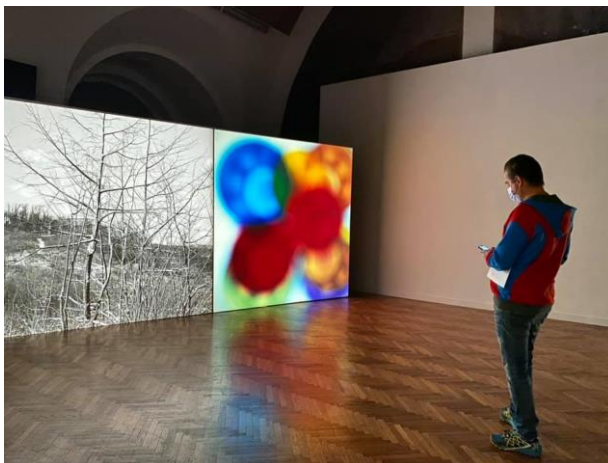


Fig. 2 Matei Bejenaru, *Slide*, looping slide projection on 2 channels, 2,7x5,4 m, Switchlab Bucharest, 2020, curator: Cristian Nae

The multi-channel slide projection solution was chosen to enhance the viewer's visual experience by invading space with the images projected. Historical references can be found at the conceptual artists of the '60s who, through experimental films, emancipated themselves from the classical cinematic code and the conventions of painting that implied the existence of a two-dimensional, unique image – window which projected the viewer into the visual universe proposed by the artist. Referring to video art, artist and media theorist Peter Weibel stated that “video artists of the '90s pursued the deconstruction of the cinematic code in a controlled and less subjective manner, applying strategies that in turn are methodical and closer to social themes than those of the '60s”⁹. Not accidentally, the project's artistic references are from the '60s and '90s, when the photographic slide was widely used by visual artists.

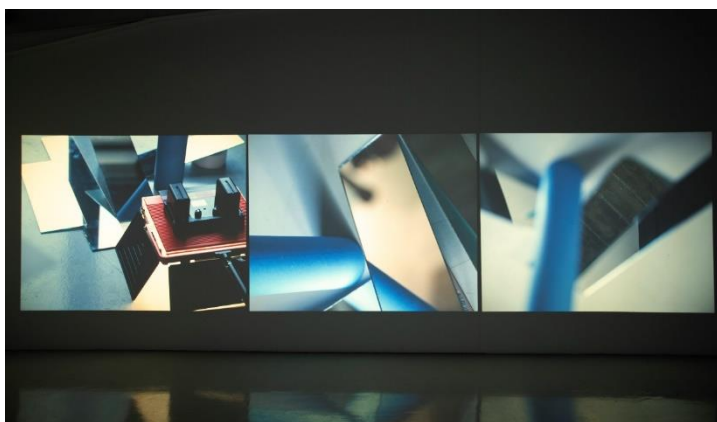


Fig. 3 Matei Bejenaru, *Slide_02*, looping slide projection on 3 channels, 2x7m
Borderline Art Space Gallery, Iași, 2023, curator: Cristian Nae

The narratives in the slide projections are fragmented, there is no logical thread of action converging towards a climax and a *denouement*. The visual diptychs and, respectively, triptychs were grouped into thematic modules that are presented in a series. Because the displaying time of the images is equal, a visual rhythm is created that substitutes classical montage, being supported by the sound environment of the slide projectors. If in the project *Slide* the images show the photographic technique, the photographic process, the emotional experience of working in nature understood as the reality to be represented, in *Slide_02* the photographic leitmotif in the triptychs is the relativization of the station point and testing the limits of recording chromatic information on film,

⁹ Ursula Frohne (ed.) (1999), *Video Cult/ures: Multimediale Installationen der 90er Jahre*, DuMont Buchverlag, Köln, the article of Peter Weibel, *Narrated Projection and New Forms of Narration in the Video Art of the Nineties*, p. 26.

from maximum saturation to infinitesimal chromatic transients. The last module of both projects is similar and displays abstract images whose function is to visually render the ability of photographic emulsions to record color information. The subjects in the images are mere pretexts for the aforementioned artistic intentions, but some of them, judged separately from the context of the projection, are visual quotations from the history of the photographic image, the feeling of the sublime in landscape photography or the compositional rigor in formalist interwar photography. Through their size, expressiveness and chromatics, the images projected were designed to create an immersive, intensely emotional experience for the viewer, which cannot be found in digital projections.



Fig. 4 Matei Bejenaru, *Slide_02*, looping slide projection on 3 channels, 2x7m, Borderline Art Space Gallery, Iași, 2023, curator: Cristian Nae

The analogue photographic print has been the subject of artistic research since 2021. As in the case of the slide, the photographic print is understood in its double condition: an image that stands for a certain reality and a conceptual sculptural object, which is the end product of a rather complex chemical processing procedure of a paper base on which a light-sensitive layer has been applied. In the case of the Argentine print, fiber based photographic paper with a barium sulphate coating (fiber based Baryta paper) was used, which was developed and toned in selenium in my laboratory. The technique of the Argentine print has established itself since the late nineteenth century as the longest-lived and most used technique for producing analogue images. In the twentieth century, generations of photographers, from documentary filmmakers, photojournalists and commercial photographers to artists have created a

significant culture of the Argentine print made in the darkroom. Photography artists such as Edward Weston, Ansel Adams or photojournalists like Eugene Smith had a decisive role in the development of the artistic print culture, the *fine art print*, as a museum-worthy work of art.

Another technique experimented with in the project *Print* was *platinum palladium*, based on the platinum printing technique first patented by the Brit William Willis in 1873. In addition to the aesthetic quality of the image due to the rich range of grays and good tonal separation in light and dark areas, *platinum palladium* prints have a very good archival stability. The making process is slow and laborious and is based on a lot of manuality, because the emulsion is prepared and stretched with a brush on paper – and this highlights a procedural and performative dimension of artistic practice. In order to give a more transparent reading key to the viewer, we chose an installation-type exhibition in order to raise awareness on the object dimension of the print.

Similar to the projects involving slides, images are a pretext for analyzing the elements of photographic language associated with print: tonal separation, dynamic range, general contrast and micro-contrast, chromatics. Most of the photographs were taken at a cast iron foundry, precisely in order to emphasize materiality; the metal structures photographed took shape on the print paper by using coatings with metallic silver, platinum or palladium. During the exhibition, the installation formula was part of the artistic concept of the project, focusing on the objectuality of the prints and the spatial relations between them.



Fig. 5 Matei Bejenaru, *Print*, detail from the installation, Artep Iași Gallery, 2021, curator: Cristian Nae

4. The *Projection* exhibition (2022)

Projection consists in reproducing a slide on a screen with the help of a light beam. Since the projection itself is immaterial, an accumulation of shadows and lights visible on the screen, I focused my research on the material devices that make it possible to visualize the image, the slide projector and the screen. Analyzing the photographic device, I creatively introduced a new element called a photographic instrument that had the function of shutting out a portion of the projection in order to project a new image in that area. Studying the evolution of science and technology in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, prior to the appearance of photography, I noticed the development of technical objects built on the basis of knowledge of the laws of mechanics. The historian of science Domenico Bertoloni Meli identified two types of instruments that emerged in the seventeenth century: philosophical objects, such as the microscope, the telescope, the barometer, thermometer and mathematical objects, especially measuring instruments¹⁰.

Studying the geometry of the image projections, I identified the possibility of building a “mathematical instrument” that acts as a shutter, according to the same principle as cameras. The photographic device for projection involves geometric calculations that result in the shape and spatial positioning of this device. By superimposing two slide projections, I found a spatial perception of the composite image due to the shadow cast by the shutter. As in the other projects studied, the images in the photographs are pretexts for studying the visual vocabulary, with a special interest in the chromatic fidelity of the subject's reproduction. The images in the small projection representing a hand and an object of study refer to the idea of rational investigation of a subject.

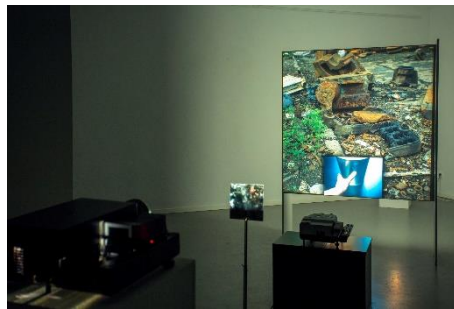


Image on the left-hand side: the photographic device is turned off at the APARTE gallery in Iași during the exhibition *Projection* in 2022. The “mathematical instrument” created acts as a shutter screen that facilitates the overlapping of multiple slide projections.

Image on the right-hand side: The photographic device is in function.

¹⁰ Domenico Bertoloni Meli (2006), *Thinking with Objects. The transformation of Mechanics in the Seventeenth Century*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, p. 3.

5. Conclusions

The artistic research focusing on the materiality of the photographic medium was achieved by creating artistic projects dedicated to certain photographic elements or processes such as slide, print or projection. The interest in such a subject is justified by the attempt to reanalyze the identity of the photographic media through specific technological platforms. Studies on the materiality of photography increased along with the beginning of photographic archives digitization in the '90s, when museographers and curators attempted to give an answer to the revalorization of photo artifacts post scanning, be they negatives or prints. Once the “digital shock” was overcome in the late 2000s, interest in reevaluating photo image production methods and platforms emerged in an artistic context. Last but not least, I was guided by the desire to apply contemporary concepts such as medial archaeology and linguistic analysis of the medium through work methods specific to analogue photography. A constant challenge in developing the projects I presented was to define artistry and creativity without falling into didacticism or hermeticism. I found the answer gradually, as I progressed with my work and defined more clearly the theoretical research framework in the linguistic and medial area. This led me to a major paradigm shift, that is shifting interest from the representation of a subject to the subject of representation. In this manner, the images became pretexts for the aforementioned analyses. Taken out of context, some of them can be assigned new meaning and be interpreted through the lens of the history of photography, which, I consider, makes the project not too dry or unseductive for the viewer. But those images brought back into context return to the original function for which they were made, which is to orient the viewer to have a closer look at the potential and limits of photography in representing reality and visual communication.

Bibliography

- Anchell, Steve, Troop, Bill (1998). *The Film Developing Cookbook*, Focal Press
- Edwards, Elizabeth, Hart, Janice (2004). *Photographs, Objects, Histories. On the Materiality of Images*, Routledge, London
- Frohne, Ursula (ed.) (1999). *Video Cult/ures: Multimediale Installationen der 90er Jahre*, DuMont Buchverlag, Köln
- Krauss, Rosalind (2013). *Le photographique. Pour une théorie des écarts*, Editions Macula, Paris
- Meli, Bertoloni Domenico. *Thinking with Objects. The transformation of Mechanics in the Seventeenth Century*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2006
- Poivert, Michel (2022). *Contre-culture dans la photographie contemporaine*, Les Editions Textuel, Paris

First-Person Filmmaking as Autoethnographic Exploration

Olga LUCOVNICOVA

PhD Student

Katholieke Universiteit Leuven

BELGIUM¹

Abstract: In the domain of artistic scholarship, the application of first-person filmmaking in autoethnographic studies provides a distinctive avenue for merging individual narratives with broader societal contexts. This approach offers a nuanced bridge between personal experiences and expansive historical milieus. Grounded in this methodology, my research examines the lasting impacts of the Soviet era on the post-Soviet landscape. Growing up in post-collapse Moldova, a former Soviet Republic, within a mixed-cultural family, I was immersed in a tapestry of conflicting narratives. While Soviet cinema often romanticized its era, personal letters from my Russian grandmother, who died by suicide in 1989, presented a divergent historical insight.

In 2021, I decided to undertake a research expedition to my grandmother's homeland in the Urals to explore my unknown family history and unravel the secrecy surrounding her suicide. I carried a camera with me, intending to document my interactions with relatives and employ this tool to facilitate interviews and foster discussions. The camera played a dual role in my research. On one hand, it served as a communication conduit, functioning as an interviewing mechanism that allowed me to capture the stories and insights of my family members. On the other hand, holding the camera enabled me to distance myself from my familial role, assuming the position of a film director and researcher. This shift in perspective allowed me to transition from an active participant in family dynamics to an objective observer, offering a unique vantage point for my research. The resulting audiovisual material not only provided the basis for a compelling documentary film but also emerged as a crucial resource for my autoethnographic exploration of the Soviet legacy. This innovative approach challenges established cinematic norms and narratives, thereby expanding the horizons of documentary filmmaking within the realm of academic artistic exploration.\

Keywords: first person, documentary, art-based, autoethnography, Soviet Union, Russia.

¹ looktvc@gmail.com

1. Introduction

My research began in 2020 when, in the archive of my father, I discovered old letters from his mother, my grandmother. She spent her entire life in the hinterlands of Russia in the Urals, never venturing beyond the Soviet border, and tragically died by suicide in 1989 during the collapse of the Soviet Union. I was born two years later and 2500 km away, in the newly independent Republic of Moldova, a former Soviet republic. After my grandmother's funeral, my father decided never to return to Russia, and his connection to his family there gradually faded away. Thus, I have never met my Russian grandmother, family, or visited Russia.

However, the testimonies of my grandmother, as conveyed in her letters, provided a new perspective on Soviet history and the lives of ordinary Russian people from the hinterlands – a perspective I had never encountered in my history classes, cinema, or within my family from Moldova. This discovery prompted me to embark on a journey with my camera, accompanying my father to Russia for the first time, with the aim of meeting my unknown Russian family, exploring its history, and gaining a deeper understanding of who I am.

What started as a very personal journey quickly transformed into a comprehensive autoethnographic research project and filming process, delving into Soviet history and its impact on contemporary post-Soviet society, with my camera assuming a pivotal role as a research tool.

2. Theoretical perspective on autoethnography in first person documentary

Autoethnography is a qualitative research and writing style that blends personal experiences with ethnographic research methods. Carolyn Ellis and Jones Holman define autoethnography as “an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno)”². This research method draws inspiration from autobiography, sharing a foundation rooted in personal experiences and narratives. Autoethnography, however, sets itself apart by embedding these personal experiences within specific cultural or social contexts. Unlike autobiography, which centers on the author's personal experiences, autoethnography explores how these experiences intersect with broader sociocultural contexts.

This approach gained prominence in the postmodern era, especially after the 1980s when scholars acknowledged the profound influence of language and

² Ellis Carolyn, Tony E. Adams, Arthur P. Bochner (2011), *Autoethnography: An Overview*, Forum, qualitative social research 12, no. 1.

paradigms on our perceptions of “facts” and “truths”.³ As a result, many authors shifted away from traditional research practices, leaning towards methods with a more literary or narrative nature, underscoring the significance of individual experiences in research across various fields, from anthropology to medicine.

However, as Patricia Leavy warns, placing oneself at the center of the research process comes with its own considerations and burdens.⁴ Autoethnography necessitates the researcher to embrace vulnerability, and this process can be challenging. The emotions experienced throughout this journey are unpredictable. Moreover, by exposing their personal life to the public, researchers relinquish certain privacies and invite potential criticism.

Conversely, Custer Dwayne argues that autoethnography is inherently therapeutic, and the act of writing about oneself in connection to a theory, experience, or belief is transformative.⁵ The vulnerability an individual embraces to revisit and share traumatic events from their private life, coupled with engaging in a dialogue about these writings with others, can foster additional growth and healing. It emanates from a heart that is open to exposition and vulnerability, reopening old wounds yet also generating the energy necessary for complete healing.

In documentary cinema, autoethnography is closely tied to the practice of first-person filmmaking—an approach where directors actively immerse themselves in the narrative, often becoming central participants in the story.

This cinematographic form traces its origins to avant-garde cinema, exemplified by films such as *Man with a Movie Camera* (*Человек с киноаппаратом*, dir. Dziga Vertov, 1929). However, it gained popularity in the last few decades alongside technological progress, leading to the accessibility of filming equipment and the widespread development of independent film productions. More and more film festivals are giving preferences to autoethnographic narratives in documentaries, selecting and awarding films such as *Radiograph of a Family* (dir. Firouzeh Khosrovani, 2020), which claimed the main prize at the 2020 International Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA), one of the most prestigious festivals globally. In this work, Khosrovani intricately explores her personal family history against the backdrop of the Islamic Revolution. Another notable instance is the 2022 Acid Cannes selection, *How to Save a Dead Friend* (dir. Marusya Syroechkovskaya, 2022) which skillfully weaves together an array of the director’s personal home

³ Ellis Carolyn, Tony E. Adams, Arthur P. Bochner, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2.

⁴ Patricia Leavy (2020), *Method Meets Art: Arts-Based Research Practice*, third edition, The Guilford Press, p. 57.

⁵ Dwayne Custer (2014), *Autoethnography as a Transformative Research Method*, Qualitative report, p. 9.

movies to depict the younger generation in Putin's Russia. Similarly, the 2023 Oscar-nominated *How Do You Measure a Year?* (dir. Jay Rosenblatt, 2022) explores a father-daughter relationship through the personal camera of the director who records his own daughter for 16 years on her birthday. A more recent example is the opening film of IDFA 2023, *A Picture to Remember* (*Фото на память*, dir. Olga Chernykh, 2023) which takes an essay-style approach to narrate the war in Ukraine from the perspective of the director and her family. Despite differences in form, theme, and approach, all these films begin with seemingly small family stories but skillfully navigate through broader and highly significant political, social, and cultural concepts in a profound and honest manner.

Numerous scholars have researched and contributed to the ongoing debates surrounding the diverse array of techniques, practices, and approaches of first person film. Some, like Jim Lane and Rachel Gabara, emphasize the autobiographical nature inherent in these films.⁶ Lane examines documentaries produced between 1971 and 1993 in the USA, delving into the intersection between autobiography and history and exploring the concepts of "public" and "private" within autobiographical documentaries⁷. He argues that in these films the directors become "agents of history" as their personal and public stories intertwine, creating an "unofficial" history.⁸ Moreover, Lane observes that protagonists in autobiographical documentaries are often unfamiliar to a broader audience. This lack of public recognition influences the documentary's structure, portraying stories not as comprehensive life syntheses but as isolated moments, reminiscent of fragments from a personal journal. Additionally, Lane highlights the complexity of these films in challenging conventional boundaries concerning presentation, representation, and referencing the real world in documentary filmmaking. He contends that autobiographical documentaries seamlessly incorporate subjective elements into the ostensibly objective realm of traditional observational or expository documentary filmmaking, presenting a unique approach.

Other authors, such as David MacDougall and Michael Renov, focus on the subjectivity of first-person films.⁹ MacDougall argues that the final subject presented in an ethnographic film combines the original subject with the filmmaker's subjective perspective¹⁰. In turn, Renov explores the evolution of subjectivity in the practice and theory of documentary film, from early

⁶ Alisa Lebow (ed.) (2012), *The Cinema of Me: The Self and Subjectivity in First Person Documentary*, Wallflower, New York, p. 2.

⁷ Jim Lane (2002), *The Autobiographical Documentary in America*, 1st ed, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 2002.

⁸ *Idem*, pp. 4-5.

⁹ Alisa Lebow, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

¹⁰ David MacDougall (1999), *Transcultural cinema*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.

modernist avant-garde to personal digital video clips placed online, emphasizing the importance of subjectivity and interpretative creativity in documentary filmmaking over time.¹¹

Some researchers explore particular forms and approaches within first person narration film. Laura Rascaroli, for instance, directs her focus towards “essay films”¹². Within this domain, she delves into the notions of “*subjective*” and “*personal*”, expanding her discourse beyond the confines of documentary films to encompass a wide array of cinematic expressions. In her exploration, she scrutinizes not only anticipated filmmakers within the realm of documentary films like Jean-Luc Godard and Harun Farocki but also less conventional figures, such as Michelangelo Antonioni, aiming to contextualize the “personal camera” within a broader historical framework and identify its distinctive expressions.

Other authors extend their research beyond filmmaking practice. For instance, John Dovey delves into the evolution of narrative modes within mass media, noting a rising trend in employing personal and confessional narrative styles from a first-person perspective in mass media content.¹³ Dovey contends that this transformation aims to create a sense of vitality and authenticity. Simultaneously, this shift in the approach to what is considered ‘personal’ in media culture has led to a reduction in the space accorded to the idea of the ‘public’. On the other side, Karen Ishizuka and Patricia Zimmerman focus their studies on family and amateur films, highlighting their potential to become authentic audio-visual arts that offer profound statements about various aspects of life, from concentration camps to human rights, history, work, leisure, war, and culture¹⁴.

Although many authors have explored first-person narrative documentaries, Alisa Lebow is one of the first to attempt to systematize and offer a detailed overview of this cinematic form. In the introduction to *The Cinema of Me: The Self and Subjectivity in First Person Documentary* dedicated to the first-person film, Lebow analyzes various terms used by different authors to define this form, such as reflexive or self-reflexive films, auto- or domestic-ethnography, and performative or participatory films.¹⁵ However, Lebow argues that uniquely, the term ‘first person’

¹¹ Michael Renov (2004), *The Subject of Documentary*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.

¹² Laura Rascaroli (2009), *The Personal Camera: Subjective Cinema and the Essay Film*, Wallflower Press, London.

¹³ John Dovey (2000), *Freakshow: First Person Media and Factual Television*, Pluto Press, London.

¹⁴ Karen L. Ishizuka, Patricia R. Zimmermann (2007), *Mining the Home Movie: Excavations in Histories and Memories*, 1st ed., University of California Press, Berkeley.

¹⁵ Alisa Lebow, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-15.

encompasses the whole range of these related yet distinct practices and documentary forms.¹⁶ Lebow asserts that these films can embody various qualities, ranging from being poetic, political, prophetic, to absurd. They might be entirely autobiographical or only implicitly so, presenting either a self-portrait or the portrayal of someone else. These films often transcend a mere focus on the filmmaker and instead can center around someone close, dear, beloved, or intriguing. They may even extend beyond personal narratives to explore neighborhoods, communities, phenomena, or events. However, what unites all these forms and approaches is the mode of address in first person films. Lebow emphasizes that “these films ‘speak’ from the articulated point of view of the filmmaker who readily acknowledges her subjective position, whether this is done in the first person singular or in the first person plural”¹⁷.

Despite the growing body of research on first-person documentary filmmaking, the predominant focus within existing studies lies in retrospective analyses of completed films. This approach tends to offer a constrained perspective on the actual creative processes, neglecting the inherent challenges and opportunities intrinsic to this cinematic form.

In this scholarly context, this article seeks to address a significant research gap by integrating extant literature with a nuanced analysis of personal experiences in crafting a documentary film centered on familial narratives. Employing this methodological framework, the study aspires to yield a more comprehensive understanding of first-person documentary filmmaking. The overarching objective is to establish a robust practice-based framework applicable to contemporary filmmakers. It aims to furnish guidance for those in pursuit of innovative approaches to documentary filmmaking or endeavoring to explore personal histories through the nuanced lens of first-person documentary narratives.

To attain this objective, the study is guided by the following research question: What specific challenges, advantages, and opportunities confront filmmakers in the creative process of approaching a personal subject and capturing close individuals, particularly family members, within the context of a first-person narrative documentary?

3. Methodology implemented in first person film production

The initial phase of the research and film pre-production lasted from 2020 to 2021 and involved a meticulous examination of both family archives and academic literature. First, I examined the letters of my grandmother and her photographs, sorting them by dates and attempting to juxtapose letters with

¹⁶ Alisa Lebow, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 1-2.

visual materials. Through a detailed process of transcription and analysis, I systematically decoded the narratives embedded in her words, aiming to understand her perspective on the Soviet era and the various family members mentioned in her letters.

During this phase, I contextualized my family history by conducting a comprehensive review of existing academic literature on Soviet history. Utilizing the works of scholars from diverse geographical origins and academic disciplines, I sought to comprehend various perspectives on the Soviet Union. This included insights from scholars outside the Soviet bloc and those from within the former Soviet territories.

I examined the viewpoints of American historian Martin Malia, who characterizes the Soviet Union as a tragic experiment incompatible with human nature.¹⁸ Additionally, I delved into the perspectives of Polish Jewish historian Moshe Lewin, who sees the Soviet socialist experiment as ambitious and visionary but acknowledges its failures, including repression, lack of political freedoms, and economic inefficiencies.¹⁹ Furthermore, I explored the insights of British historian Orlando Figes, who explores the deep impact of the Stalinist era on intimate aspects of people's lives, fostering a culture of fear and suspicion.²⁰

I also considered the works of Belarusian investigative journalist Svetlana Alexievich, who, traveling across former Soviet territories just after the collapse of the Soviet Union, collected testimonies revealing a surprising phenomenon.²¹ Despite the hopes for change in the late 1980s, her subjects still yearned for the lost Soviet empire. Over time, she observed a curious resurgence of Soviet elements across former territories, as if the regime's collapse had merely paused the era's influence.

This interdisciplinary approach enriched the first-person film pre-production by grounding it in a nuanced understanding of the historical forces that shaped individual and collective experiences. Additionally, this step helped prepare potential topics and questions for discussion with family members, as well as visualize the preliminary shooting plan. It allowed me to approach the filming process in Russia with a well-prepared framework, taking the position of the observer and director rather than an active participant in family dynamics.

¹⁸ Martin Malia (1994), *The Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia 1917-1991*, Free Press, New York.

¹⁹ Moshe Lewin (2008), *Советский век*, Translated by V. Novikov and N. Kopelyanskaya, Издательство «Европа», Moscow, p. 680. (СССР).

²⁰ Orlando Figes (2007), *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia*, Holt, New York.

²¹ Svetlana Aleksievich (2013), *Время секонд хэнд*, Время, Moscow.

The next phase involved my first trip to Russia with my father in the summer of 2021, where I explored the homeland of my grandmother and met my Russian family members for the first time. Given the unfamiliar setting and new acquaintances, I chose to film these encounters personally, without involving a film crew. This initial journey served dual purposes – it was both research on-the-field for my filmmaking practice and an exploration of my unknown family history.

Then, I analyzed the captured material, revisited theoretical knowledge from family archives and academic literature, and reflected on the filming process. Using these insights, I developed a plan to enhance subsequent filming sessions, identifying missing aspects and contexts from the initial footage.

The following filming took place in January 2022, six months after the first trip. During this visit, I refined the filmmaking process based on observations from the initial journey. I brought in an additional person to assist with filming and experimented with alternating between solo sessions and those involving an extra cameraperson. When selecting an additional cameraperson, my priority was to ensure that my family felt comfortable during the filming process. So, a crucial criterion was finding someone local who understood the Russian realm and could seamlessly integrate into their social circle. Another requirement was previous experience in first-person documentary filmmaking and an understanding of its specific working processes. The gradual inclusion of external team members aimed to familiarize my family with the filming process and address challenges observed in the initial sessions. Bringing in another person also enabled a faster and more diverse shooting approach, allowing us to simultaneously capture different scenes in two locations with distinct protagonists.

In subsequent filming sessions of the summer of 2022 and early winter 2023, I experimented with various filming techniques. This involved having the cameraperson film family members alone in my absence, introducing a more distant approach to capture a broader perspective.

4. Expectations

During the pre-production stage and before commencing the production of the first-person film, I held certain expectations. Firstly, I anticipated that having access to protagonists, particularly since they are my family members, would streamline the working process by allowing easier entry into their intimate spaces compared to working with strangers.

Secondly, I held the belief that a first-person film would afford greater narrative freedom. Being a part of the film meant I could film and refilm my surroundings at any time to address dramaturgical gaps. Additionally, I could write text and use my own voice in voice-over narration to guide the storyline.

Thirdly, I expected an abundance of visual material in the film from my access to the family archive, which had been analyzed in the initial research step. Fourthly, I assumed that crafting a storyline and building the dramaturgical arc would be straightforward since I already possessed knowledge about my family and its history. Moreover, I believed that the filming process could facilitate family dialogue, serving as a pretext for discussing the past, addressing difficult moments, and providing a pleasant way to spend more time with my father.

I envisioned that the project would function as a therapeutic aid for both my father and me, helping us cope with challenging memories, such as my grandmother's suicide, by engaging in discussions about difficult topics and using the filming process as a form of therapy. Finally, my hope was to achieve a positive resolution both in the film and in real life by reuniting the family and breaking the silence.

5. Challenges inherent in the production process

Between 2021 and 2023, I conducted seven filming sessions for my project. These sessions included three journeys from Moldova to the Ural region in Russia, each lasting 2 to 3 weeks, and four remotely directed shootings with a cameraperson in Russia. The initial session was undertaken independently, without a crew, to familiarize my family with the process and create an intimate setting for personal interviews. However, this approach presented both technical and dramaturgical challenges.

First, filming a documentary about my family meant taking on three simultaneous roles: director, cameraperson, and family member. Unlike autoethnographers who can separate field research and writing, filmmaking requires concurrent research and autoethnographic video recordings, making it challenging to distinguish between the roles of the researcher and participant in first-person narratives. I couldn't simply step back as a director while actively participating in family dynamics during the filming process. This challenge blurred the lines between my personal involvement, directorial perspective, and the unfolding story, challenging the conventional idea of directorial distance, as seen in observational or "fly-on-the-wall" documentary-making where the camera crew works as unobtrusively as possible.

Second, navigating the dual role of director and daughter, particularly when filming my father, posed significant challenges. In societies like Moldova or Russia, where patriarchal norms often designate the father as the primary authoritative figure, navigating the shift from traditional father-daughter dynamics to the unconventional roles of protagonist-director in filmmaking practice becomes complex. Balancing my role as a director with my father's established paternal authority tested the boundaries of our relationship. This

challenge required a careful renegotiation of our roles, not only within the documentary framework but also in our personal dynamics. Additionally, sharing the same apartment and space with my father during the filming process made it particularly challenging to distinguish moments for filming from private moments in life. Therefore, most of the filming took place outside our residence, leveraging the physical transition from a private space to an external environment to facilitate the shift from private life into the filming process.

The most significant challenge emerged in 2022 when Russia initiated the war in Ukraine. This presented both production and dramaturgical challenges, along with the psychological difficulties of continuing work on the film. Sanctions against Russia rendered it impossible to utilize any production funds for filming in the country. Additionally, new laws enacted by the State Duma in Russia, escalating repression and further eroding the rights of individuals, made it perilous to travel and film there. Furthermore, the outbreak of the war necessitated a reevaluation and reconceptualization of the entire film idea and project, prompting a complete rewrite of the script.

Simultaneously, the war brought historical traumas within our family to the forefront, causing family members to become more and more silent and distant. These challenges became potential hindrances to both the film's financing and production, as well as the continuation of the research. At the same time, these changes in the geopolitical landscape underscored the importance of this research and film.

Besides, the war brought historical traumas within our family to the forefront, making my family members more and more silent and distant. Our newly rediscovered and reestablished family bonds faced a new threat. At the same time, this tragic change in the geopolitical landscape, deeply affecting the personal lives of numerous families in the post-Soviet space, highlighted the importance of this research and film.

6. The potential of first person filmmaking practice

During the filming process, I discovered several opportunities and advantages inherent in first-person filmmaking that extend beyond the purely creative realm. Firstly, it served as a valuable tool for exploring family history, naturally fostering dialogue through interviews and reintroducing significant aspects into discussion. Secondly, the filming process became an indispensable research tool, capturing both audio and video elements during family member interviews and documenting their interactions. Unlike other methods, it surpassed mere textual information collection by highlighting subtleties such as body language, reactions, and even silence—elements that cannot be captured in the same nuanced way by alternative approaches.

Despite the technical challenges, filming alone without the participation of a film crew and physically holding the camera enabled me to distance myself from family dynamics, assuming the roles of an external observer, director, and researcher, thus effectively directing the film process. Directly monitoring reality through the camera's viewfinder provided flexibility and the ability to instantly observe and record interesting moments. Besides, the incorporation of a subjective point of view brought a distinctive visual dimension to the film, completely immersing the viewer in the narrative. This approach also provided a sense of flexibility and creative freedom during the filming process, allowing for deviations from conventional rules of composition and camera movement justified by the aesthetic of the subjective camera.

However, involving an external cameraperson also brought certain advantages to the filming process, enabling me to concentrate on dramaturgy rather than technical aspects. Additionally, this approach enhanced flexibility in organizing the shooting process, allowing remote direction without the necessity of frequent travel to Russia. Furthermore, it introduced diversity in image quality and composition, offering a fresh perspective from the camera person's point of view. Moreover, my absence during the filming process allowed my family members to open up in new ways.

The first-person filmmaking approach has demonstrated remarkable adaptability to changes in both social dynamics and geopolitical landscapes, allowing for the real-time documentation of shifting reality. This approach provides a unique inside-out perspective, unfolding individual and collective experiences, as well as the dynamics between the disappearing past and the present that carries memories and scars.

Beyond its documentary function, the filmmaking process has also had a therapeutic impact. It facilitated a profound exploration of my previously unknown family history, offering insights into my legacy. The methodical analysis through various aspects allowed for the mediation of dialogue among family members, fostering the reconstruction of the past and the restoration of strained family ties. Importantly, this approach encouraged open communication on difficult yet crucial topics, contributing positively to familial understanding and connection. It has also played a role in facilitating the potential intergenerational healing process.

7. Conclusions

Engaging in first-person film practice is a multifaceted pursuit, brimming with vast creative potential. Beyond serving as a creative exercise, it acts as a therapeutic outlet and a robust research tool, offering a unique lens to challenge

storytelling norms and historical narratives. This cinematographic form facilitates an intimate exploration of the past, seamlessly weaving together micro and macro aspects of individual experiences with broader social, geopolitical, and historical dynamics, opening novel pathways for understanding collective narratives.

While emotionally demanding and requiring directors to delve into personal and sensitive memories, both their own and those of close family members, this process involves a complex psychological and creative journey. However, when driven by profound motivation and decisiveness, first-person film practice not only serves as a powerful tool for researching the past and representing reality but also facilitates dialogue that is often unattainable through conventional means. This approach can encourage participants to engage in introspection, offering a means to reimagine both historical and personal experiences.

Given the ever-evolving geopolitical and social landscape, first-person film production, like any documentary, demands problem-solving skills, adaptability, and creativity. However, encountering obstacles in the production process should be seen as a potential storytelling opportunity. Moreover, an in-depth analysis of the production process, creating intervals between filming sessions, studying other first person films, learning from fellow filmmakers' experiences, and adopting directing techniques contribute to navigating the production process and infusing storytelling with innovative solutions.

Bibliography

- Aleksievich, Svetlana (2013). *Время секунд хэнд*, Время, Moscow
- Custer, Dwayne (2014). *Autoethnography as a Transformative Research Method*, Qualitative report
- Dovey, John (2000). *Freakshow: First Person Media and Factual Television*, Pluto Press, London
- Ellis, Carolyn, Tony E. Adams, and Arthur P Bochner (2011). *Autoethnography: An Overview*, Forum, qualitative social research 12, no. 1
- Figes, Orlando (2007). *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia*, Holt, New York
- Ishizuka, Karen L., Patricia R. Zimmermann (2007). *Mining the Home Movie: Excavations in Histories and Memories*, 1st ed., University of California Press, Berkeley
- Lane, Jim (2002). *The Autobiographical Documentary in America*, 1st ed., University of Wisconsin Press, Madison

- Leavy, Patricia (2020). *Method Meets Art: Arts-Based Research Practice*, third edition, The Guilford Press, New York
- Lebow, Alisa (ed) (2012.). *The Cinema of Me: The Self and Subjectivity in First Person Documentary*, Wallflower, New York
- Lewin, Moshe (2008). *Советский век*, translated by V. Novikov and N. Korpelyanskaya, Издательство «Европа», Moscow
- MacDougall, David (1999). *Transcultural cinema*, Princeton University Press, Princeton
- Malia, Martin (1994). *The Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia 1917-1991*, Free Press, New York
- Rascaroli, Laura (2009). *The Personal Camera: Subjective Cinema and the Essay Film*, Wallflower Press, London
- Renov, Michael (2004). *The Subject of Documentary*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis

Filmography

- Man with a Movie Camera (Человек с киноаппаратом, dir. Dziga Vertov, 1929)
- Radiograph of a Family (dir. Firouzeh Khosrovani, 2020)
- How Do You Measure a Year? (dir. Jay Rosenblatt, 2022)
- How to Save a Dead Friend (dir. Marusya Syroeckovskaya, 2022)
- A Picture to Remember (Фото на память, dir. Olga Chernykh, 2023)