

ABSTRACT OF THE HABILITATION THESIS

From totalitarianism to post-humanism -relationships between literature, language, history and doctrines -

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I. Scientific and professional achievements

1. Professional development and teaching career

The first section of this habilitation thesis synthetically presents my professional career since 2001, the year of my entry into the higher education system, where I have developed a didactic career and taken on many administrative responsibilities. My entire teaching career as a title holder has spanned over more than a decade, beginning in 2001 in the Department of Modern Languages and Business Communication at the University of Economic Studies in Bucharest. Although permanent reference is made to my PhD thesis in philology titled *Cioran and the 'Young Generation'* (Order of the Minister of Education, Research and Innovation, no. 4698 of 14.08.2009) and defended at the University of Bucharest, I must also mention that I also hold the title of Doctor in the field of economy (Order of the Minister of Education and Research, no. 1418 from 29.06.2007), with an associated thesis named *The Significance of Adam Smith's Work: Current Interpretations*.

Throughout my teaching career, I have benefited from research internships at universities abroad. I delivered lectures at the Université Paris-Dauphine under the Erasmus Programme (May 2012), and between 2008 and 2009 I was Associate Researcher for the research team EA 2577 (*Litteratures Françaises du XXème Siècle*) at the Université Paris-Sorbonne. Since 2008 I have been Associate Researcher for the Thalim Research Center (*Théorie et histoire des arts et des littératures de la modernité XIXe – XXe siècles*) at the Université Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris 3.

I was also an invited lecturer on the topic of engaged literature in the 20th century at the following universities: Holy Spirit University, Kaslik, Lebanon (June 2009); Universidade Federal do Paraná, Curitiba & Federal University of Sao Paulo, Brazil (June 2010); Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland (October 2012); Izmir University, Turkey (June 2012); and Université Laval, Québec (May 2013).

I have been a member of seven professional associations outside of Romania, including a member of the editorial board for two US scientific journals, Associate Editor for several numbers of US scientific journals, and a Scientific Referee for US scientific journals in my research domain. In 2011, I was awarded (as a director) the research contract *Cioran from East to West* (no. PN-II-RU-PD-2011-3-0012) that was financed by CNCS and granted to me at a competition organized by Minister Funeriu.

During the 15 years of my university career, I was given financial responsibilities as a short- and long-term expert and project assistant, and have been a member of 11 national and international research contracts financed by AUF, EU, and CNCS. My didactic and scientific competencies allowed me to be accepted as an ARACIS evaluator in the Language and Literature Section, as an evaluator and rapporteur for UEFISCDI, and finally as a coordinator of the Philology Collection at Universitara Publishing House (publishing house classified as CNCS - B).

In conclusion, I would like to mention that my entire history of didactic and scientific activity led to the quantification of 422 databases from Romania and abroad where my work is referenced. I was also able to identify 50 citations or mentions of my published papers, as shown in my list of scientific papers, through a search on the Internet.

2. Relevant scientific contributions

In this section, my habilitation thesis presents the main stages, orientations, and results of my scientific research activity, especially from my defence of the PhD thesis in Philology on 24 April 2009 at the University of Bucharest titled *Cioran and the 'Young Generation'*. The thesis was published at *Contemporanul's* publishing houses, a literary review founded in 1881 and an entity I have been collaborating with since 2003 (*Cioran and the Utopia of the Young Generation*, first edition, The European Idea Publishing House, 360 pages, Bucharest, 2009). Since the editorial project was very successful, it was followed by a second edition financed by the National Cultural Fund Administration, namely *Cioran and the Utopia of the Young Generation* (Contemporary Publishing House, 350 pages, Bucharest, 2011).

In this part of my habilitation thesis, I attempted to organise **my scientific research into several main directions**, presenting at the beginning of each section the works in which I approached the respective topic, always insisting on the elements of originality. The most important works from my list of scientific papers are represented by the two books published in France, namely, *Cioran et le Rêve d'une Génération Perdue* [Cioran and the Dream of a Lost Generation] (l'Harmattan, Paris, collection Ouverture Philosophique, 2013) and *Un Cioran Inédit. Pourquoi Intrigue-t-il?* [Un unpublished Cioran. Why does he intrigue?] (Yves Michalon Éditeur, collection Fauves, groupe de presse l'Harmattan, 2016).

2.1. A first concern was to understand the motivation of a large number of early 20th century writers who supported fascism, communism, and legionarism, insisting on the philosophical aspects underpinning the three ideologies. I have also demonstrated that literature transforms itself under a totalitarian political regime for two purposes: to survive or to pact with it.

Fascism, communism, and legionarism all rely on the ideology of *the new man*, the robot man who lives in a world that seems fanciful but with limits imposed by a supreme leader. The idea was exploited by many fiction writers (George Orwell, Aldous Huxley, Thomas Pynchon, Lawrence Norfolk, Michel Houellebecq, etc.), the American cinema (see *Star Wars* series, *Terminator*), the TV series *Real Humans (100% Human)*, and it may even have its roots in the hideous character created by Mary Shelley—Frankenstein. The transition from totalitarianism to post-humanism (a world populated by robots) is thus ensured by the weak belief in the possibility of democracy to survive all the challenges that cultural diversity, to which the elimination of geographic frontiers contributes, brings with it.

I had identified and argued in *Cioran and the Utopia of the Young Generation* the existence of seven specific features of the Legionary Movement, as well as the correlation between the ideology of the Legionary Movement, the doctrine of Nae Ionescu, and the ideas taken over by the 'young generation'.

At the same time, I was interested in the transformations of France under Nazi occupation from the point of view of the literature produced, but also in the evolution of the doctrinal and ideological context shortly after Nazism, passing through the presence of communism, and somewhere beneath its 'death' in Central and Eastern Europe. I also briefly pointed out the game between totalitarianism, authoritarianism, and democracy in non-Russian European countries from East-Central Europe that had been subjected to the Soviet experience.

2.2. Another concern relates to an idea I have always advocated, namely, that socio-economic, political, and ideological contexts in fact determine the political choices of young writers (who are in training), while insisting in my scientific works on what ‘the young generation’ meant in interwar Romania *versus* ‘the generation formed of young people’ in France during Nazi occupation. The personality of Nae Ionescu was a catalyst for the ‘young generation’. His main ideas lie in three dimensions, that I have identified as political, religious, and philosophical.

Therefore, I described in this habilitation thesis the socio-economic, political, and ideological contexts of interwar Romania and France under Nazi occupation. I then highlighted the characteristics and philosophical sources of the ‘young generation’ as well as those of ‘the generation formed of young people’ in France during Nazi occupation. What happened in Romania in the 1930s began in France with the Nazi occupation, which divided writers into two camps: Nazi collaborators and supporters of the Resistance Movement. As a last under-point, I insisted on the similarities and differences between experientialism (philosophy of Nae Ionescu’s school) versus Sartrean existentialism.

2.3. I then chose concrete examples of writers who supported left-wing or right-wing extremism, pausing on the analysis of famous cases such as Emil Cioran, Mircea Eliade, Constantin Noica, Louis Ferdinand Céline, and Jean-Paul Sartre. Their publicised involvement in sustaining political extremism was analysed by reference to Emil Cioran.

2.4. Lastly, I have dealt with the literature of exile that may be within the country of origin - Steinhardt, Noica, etc. – because the literature produced in this case, although written in the mother language, suffers changes caused by the need to adapt to the totalitarian political regime. I also chose to analyse the literature of exile that may be outside the country of origin - Hoffman, Celan, Fondane, Cioran, etc. - moment when the writer will choose to express himself in a language different from his mother tongue, which inevitably leads to a change of style. After an analysis of the specificity of exile literature produced outside the country of origin (a new language creates a new personality and a new cultural identity), I have presented here the many differences between Cioran’s writings published in Romanian and those published in French, because, as Cioran argues, his writings are autobiographical.

II. Development and evolution of professional, scientific, and academic career

The last section of this habilitation thesis succinctly presents the development of a plan for my didactic career and the research directions in my field of specialty in direct relation to the research areas presented above.

1. Development of didactic career

1.1. While I have already been involved over the past several years in concluding partnerships between Romanian universities and foreign universities, I intend to continue the development of this cooperation process between Romanian universities and foreign universities with the objective to ensure the mobility of both students and teachers. In the very short term, I will accept the assignment of Visiting Professor at the University of Silesia in Katowice.

Working with students involves guiding them towards a scientific point of view, but also orienting them to the long process of entry into the labour market. I am therefore interested in involving undergraduate students in partnerships with the Romanian business environment, thus developing a system in which local or delocalised companies invest in

training students for subsequent employment. The Bucharest Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the French Embassy in Bucharest and French companies doing business in Romania, is considering the effective investment in the development of partnerships between universities and the Romanian business environment to the benefit of both parties.

Another direction regarding coordination and training activity, which is a basic component of a full professor, is represented in my case by the desire to develop the Philology Collection (Universitara Publishing House, publishing house classified as CNCS - B) which I serve as coordinator, in order to open it to foreign language publications written by foreign researchers. I then plan to continue my work as an evaluator within ARACIS and UEFISCDI—which involves a continuous training and evaluation process—and to continue in the roles of Scientific Referee, Associate Editor, and so on, for scientific journals from abroad that are specific to my field of activity.

At the same time, I intend to answer calls for post-doctoral appointments or a one-year visiting professor position launched by US universities without neglecting my work as an Associate Researcher at the Thalim Research Center (*Théorie et histoire des arts et des littératures de la modernité XIXe – XXIe siècles*, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris 3). This affiliation allows me to have access to international databases by connecting to remote electronic resources at the Université Paris-Sorbonne's libraries.

1.2. I wish to continue with my experience in Digital Humanities started in the Research Center OBVIL, Université Paris-Sorbonne (Paris 4) in 2013. This practice is advanced in the United States, intermediate in France, and quite at the beginning in Romania. Digital humanities combine literary skills with computer science (use of interpretation and manipulation software of digitised texts) and librarianship.

I intend to make use of these competences I have gained in the Research Center OBVIL in order to apply for a research project financed by UEFISCDI with a research team comprised of master's and doctoral students. This idea can also be materialised in the creation of a multidisciplinary master's programme involving several universities, as it requires a call for specialists from several fields. There can be organised summer schools in universities on this topic and also created double degree programs in Literature - Informatics.

1.3. In the conclusion of this section, and as a passage into the next one, I mention my intention to publish a book addressed to the general public that will discuss the role of popularising the scientific approach with a proposed title of *Tribulations of a Romanian Researcher*. The idea for such a book came to me after many years of confrontation with the French university environment in particular, which I inevitably compared with the Romanian environment. Such a book would target the general public in Romania, who perceives the education system through the eyes of a theatre or cinema spectator.

2. Research directions in my field of specialty

2.1. Regarding research activity, I propose to develop the themes presented in the first section of this habilitation thesis in important studies that will take the form of books. The first one may be published under the title *The New Man Fascinates: From Frankenstein to Totalitarianism and Post-humanism*.

I shall present in this study the golem legend, Western culture's attraction to it, its popularisation since the publication of Mary Shelley's book, and the forms that this legend has taken in literary fiction and cinema. I shall then be interested in what the concept of *the new man* means and how recent it is, and why it was used by totalitarian doctrines and not by

liberalism, for example. If totalitarianism represents the natural choice of the crowd, why does it need a mission, a hymn, and slogans to convince the crowd?

Nowadays, the Internet and technological progress lead to a radical and definitive change in the human species, transforming them into post-humanists. From prostheses that perfectly replace missing body parts (such as the case of the athlete Oscar Pistorius), cerebral implants for ameliorating diseases such as Parkinson, ingestion of molecules able to repair mental illness, to self-guided cars and 3-D printers that produce real objects in a few hours, not to mention the robots used in the car industry, aeronautics, medicine, and so on, we realise that people's lives are about to become more and more controlled. Robots have the same quality as *the new man*: they follow a programme preset by others until, like *the new man*, whose force is given by the crowd, they will tend to subdue the Creator.

2.2. At the same time, I intend to continue the publication of scientific books in France on the topic of the early 20th century engaged writer. The publication of two books at l'Harmattan and Yves Michalon Éditeur allowed me to become familiar with the French editorial environment. In this sense, a theme that interests me is the comparison between two writers, namely Emil Cioran and Louis Ferdinand Céline.

The idea of bringing together these two writers in one volume is original. No work has yet been published for the general public that places Cioran and Céline together—two writers with many elements in common. At the same time, following their evolution by appealing only to their publications without rendering the text difficult to read because of footnotes, it will turn this book into an easily read work for any lecturer interested in the work and life of these two writers.

The third part of this habilitation thesis is devoted to the **bibliographic references** associated with the contents of the first two sections.

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