

ABSTRACT

Interdisciplinary Perspectives in Cultural History. Practices and Representations

A habilitation thesis in the field of *Cultural Studies*
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The first part of the habilitation thesis *Interdisciplinary Perspectives in Cultural History. Practices and Representations* is a synthetic presentation of my major research, teaching and other contributions to the field, in the last three decades - books, studies, articles, conferences and completed research projects –within the conceptual and theoretical frame of national and international Cultural History studies. The second part presents my plans for further research and education, by tracing the research directions that I want to deepen.

The decade between the graduation with a B.A. in history (1988) and the defense of my doctoral thesis (1998) has an important role in my professional and scientific training, so I thought it necessary to start with a short chapter titled *Scientific and Professional Training Before Obtaining the Ph D title*, in which I briefly present the genesis of my current scientific areas of interest. I have developed a lifelong interest in academic research and started my research activity as an undergraduate student, being catalyzed by the contact with outstanding mentors such as professors Alexandru Duțu and Mihai Pop, who guided my steps in the fields of history of mentalities, cultural history, ethnology and cultural anthropology. In those years, the main topics of interest in research, that I would follow consistently throughout my scientific and professional life were already structured. For example, my BA thesis *Written Culture - Oral Culture in Western Europe (14th-18th centuries). The Writing, the Book and the Popular Culture* (1988) found its natural continuation in my doctoral thesis, *The Writing and the Book in the Romanian Traditional Culture* (1998), coordinated by Alexandru Duțu. Between 1990 - 1998 I carried out research, first at the bibliographic sector of „George Barițiu” Library in Brașov, then as a museographer at the Bucharest Municipality Museum and at the Village Museum, where I participated in various projects and I have published articles in scientific journals. After obtaining my Ph.D in History of Mentalities, I became a scientific researcher at the "Constantin Brăiloiu" Institute of Ethnography and Folklore of the Romanian Academy and an Associate lecturer at the Faculty of Letters, University of

Bucharest, then, from October 2000, a Senior lecturer at the Department of Communication Sciences, and Associate professor since 2008.

In chapter II - *Professional Training: The Doctoral Thesis* - I presented my doctoral program, the contents and results of my research that reflect in my doctoral dissertation: *The Writing and the Book in the Romanian Traditional Culture* (1998). I highlighted my conceptual contributions (the concept of "heteropraxies of writing and of the book") that frame new perspectives that I have opened in the study of the uses of the book and writing in oral popular milieu, for a better understanding of the relationships between written and oral cultures. The doctoral thesis was published under the title *The Key and The Psalter. The Representations of the Book in Traditional Romanian Culture* (2001). This book was very well-received, being considered a major contribution to the field by historians, ethnologists, folklorists and specialists in the History of Old Romanian Literature, alike.

In chapter III - *The Main Scientific, Academic and Professional Achievements after Obtaining the Doctor's Degree* - I focused on the new elements brought by my research, describing my original contribution to the theoretical and methodological framework of such studies; the results of these researches were published in collective volumes, as articles in periodicals and in various conference proceedings; their relevance for and impact on the Romanian and international field of Cultural Studies is also documented. So far, I have published four books: *The Key and The Psalter. The Representations of the Book in Traditional Romanian Culture* (Paralela 45, 2001), *Old Streets from Today's Bucharest* (Humanitas, 2007, with successive, revised editions), *The Discreet Charm of Patina and Other Small Cultural Histories* (Humanitas, 2019) and *How the Old Streets got their names. A Cultural History of Bucharest* (L'Harmattan – EME, 2022). I was the editor of a critical edition and I am the co-author of a textbook on *Ancient and Medieval History* (2001), and the co-editor (in collaboration) of a collective volume, resulting from an international conference: *For a Cultural History of the Book and of Reading Practices* (Editura Universității din București, 2015). I published a number of 31 studies in academic journals which are included in recognized databases, or published in collective volumes classified CNCSIS in category B. From 1996 until now, I have carried a constant activity as a cultural journalist, writing extensively on cultural history themes in top cultural publications, such as "Dilema Veche" and "Dilemateca".

My research interests, all interdisciplinary, are presented in several sub-chapters, as follows: 1) Cultural History of Reading Practices; 2) History of Scriptural Practices in

Popular Culture; 3) Cultural History of Cities; 4) Other cultural history themes (material culture, cultural history of emotion, body and sensoriality).

Chapter IV is dedicated to the presentation of my project management accomplishments. I was the recipient and director of a national grant funded project: *Social Imaginary, Literary Imaginary. Theory as a Narrative* (2000-2002); I participated as a member in 5 other research projects and conducted an individual research project, with funding obtained through international competition: *Identification des stratégies actuelles pour l'encouragement de la lecture en France. La mise en oeuvre des projets similaires en Roumanie* (2012).

In chapter V - *Teaching Activity: Evolution and Achievements* - I presented all the courses that I taught, or teach currently, at the Department of Communication Science, and at other departments of the Faculty of Letters (Dept. of Cultural Studies; Dept. of Literary Studies, Dept. of Universal and Comparative Literature, etc.). I emphasized my involvement and constant preoccupation with institutional and academic development, as I proposed, developed new courses, or reframed the theoretical and methodological approach of already existing ones. Thus, I introduced new disciplines to the curricula: Introduction to Cultural Anthropology; The History of the Imaginary; Imagology; Anthropology of Communication; Introduction to Cultural History; Reading Practices – History and Context; Body, Culture and Communication, etc. All these courses gave me the opportunity to disseminate and verify the results of my scientific research among and with students and master's students, and to coordinate numerous BA and MA dissertation theses.

I served as a member of the advisory committees of Ph.D. students at the Doctoral School of the Faculty of Letters, University of Bucharest and at the Doctoral School of Communication Science of the Faculty of Journalism and Communication Science, University of Bucharest. I also served as a member of the defense committee for the numerous doctoral theses, not only at the University of Bucharest, but also at other universities and institutes. I also presented the scientific advice I offered as the tutor of a postdoctoral thesis, conducted by Dr. Florina Pîrjol, titled "*Gastroliterature*" as an identity discourse of modernity. *Food practices*, within the program POSDRU/89/1.5/S/62259, between the years 2007-2012. This thesis was written from an interdisciplinary perspective, at the confluence of literary history and cultural history.

I presented aspects of my recognition and documented the visibility of my scientific, didactic, academic and professional activity, as follows: a) reviews and chronicles, b) the presence of my volumes in prestigious libraries; c) my affiliation to national (6) and

international (2) scientific and professional associations; d) invited keynote speaker at universities from abroad (6) and visiting scholar status (1); e) professional expertise: scientific referent in the field of Cultural Studies at national publishing houses, category B (2); f) the presence of my profile in the *Dictionary of Romanian Ethnologists* (2006) and in the *Encyclopedia of Representatives of Romanian Historical Writing* (2022); g) numerous national and international citations; h) my academic profile as reflected by *Google Scholar*.

The second part of the habilitation thesis - *Scientific, Professional and Academic Development Plan* – contains a presentation of my future projects, grouped in several areas of career development. Regarding the research activity, I have shown that I plan to continue and deepen the previous thematic directions. The multitude of data and information collected over time have contributed to shaping new perspectives, which I want to address in a book already in progress (*Book, Reading and Writing. Representations and Practices in the Premodern Romanian Culture*). The most important work in progress that I plan to complete soon is a book that began as a two-semester course that I taught at the Master's programme *Theory and Practice of Editing* at the Faculty of Letters. The title of the book will be *The Cultural History of Reading*. I also consider to carry on my work on complementary research topics such as: *The Cultural History of Scriptural Practices in Traditional Communities*. The development of my academic career implies continuing, furthering and consolidating my methodological and didactic vision already confirmed by the results obtained over almost three decades of experience. I will continue to include the results of my own scientific research in the topics and methods of the courses that I teach, or plan to introduce in the future; all these will be aligned with knowledge and critical approach of new scientific trends in the field of socio-human disciplines, both in my current didactic activity and in my activity as a mentor/advisor of student research, at all levels. In addition to the mentoring activity, I intend to coordinate new research projects involving students, MA and Ph.D. students.

The thesis also lists the thematic areas that I propose for doctoral guidance, which emerge from my lifelong research interests and scientific accomplishments: Cultural History, History of the Book and of Reading, Urban History, Cultural Anthropology, History of the Imaginary, Imagology, Romanian Cultural Studies.

The last section - *Bibliography* - includes bibliographical references.