

# **TEXT AND CONTEXT. CULTURE AND IDENTITY IN THE LITERARY WORKS OF ROMANIAN WRITERS OF FRENCH EXPRESSION**

**CONF. UNIV. DR. SPERANȚA SOFIA MILANCOVICI  
“VASILE GOLDIȘ” WESTERN UNIVERSITY OF ARAD, ROMANIA**

## **I. Scientific, professional and academic achievements**

### **1. Academic directions before obtaining the title of Doctor at the Romanian Academy, Institute of History and Literary Theory "G. Călinescu"**

Looking back, towards the years of my training at the "Moise Nicoară" National College Arad, at that time, the "Ioan Slavici" High School, philology class, later at West University of Timișoara, Faculty of Letters, History and Theology, I consider that I can be counted among those privileged ones of destiny, in whose case the profession overlaps with an old and constant passion: literature.

The inclination towards this, since the high school period, materialized in the results at the professional Olympiads, continued organically through university studies in the field of philology, and the discovery, during the high school period, through the mediation of my mother, a teacher in her turn, of Benjamin Fundoianu's work / Fondane, will turn, over time, into a doctoral thesis and studies hosted by specialized publications.

In June 2003, I graduated from West University of Timișoara, Faculty of Letters, History and Theology, majoring in Romanian Language and Literature - French Language and Literature, after which I continued my studies, within the same university, obtaining a master's degree in Literature and Mentalities (2003 -2005).

Simultaneously, I attended the courses of "Vasile Goldiș" Western University of Arad, Faculty of Humanistic - Christian Sciences, specializing in Journalism - English language and literature, between the years 1999-2004.

Once I finished my bachelor's degree at West University of Timișoara, in the fall of 2003, by passing a selection exam, I occupied the position of assistant lecturer at the Faculty of Humanistic-Christian Sciences of the University of the West "Vasile Goldiș" in Arad.

Between 2003-2007, I also taught at Private High School No. 1 "Vasile Goldiș " Arad, where I taught Romanian language and literature and French language and literature.

The year 2004 brought the challenge and the success of obtaining a doctoral position at the Romanian Academy, the Institute of History and Literary Theory G. Călinescu, under the coordination of Prof. Univ. Dr. Crișu Dascălu and with the decisive support of Mr. Academician Eugen Simion, Mr. Prof. Univ. Dr. Lucian Chișu, prof. Dr. Dumitru Mecu and the late Prof. Univ. Dr. Dan Manucă.

In the same year 2004, I became, through a competition, a university assistant at the department of modern languages of the Faculty of Humanities, Political and Administrative Sciences of the "Vasile Goldiș " Western University of Arad.

After the meetings I had with the coordinator of my thesis, respectively with the previously mentioned professors, we decided for Benjamin Fundoianu / Fondane's work in Romanian and in French, evolutionarily, but also comparatively, as the subject of my doctoral studies.

The public defense of my doctoral thesis took place on 07/08/2008. The president of the doctorate committee was the President of the Romanian Academy, prof. Eugen Simion, PhD., and the analysis committee had as members Prof. Lucian Chișu, PhD., prof. Dan Mănuică, PhD. and Prof. Nicolae Mecu, PhD.

The title of the paper was *From Benjamin Fundoianu to Benjamin Fondane*, and following the committee's deliberation, I received the qualification *Very good* and the Distinction *Magna cum laude*. The certification was by order of the Minister of Education, Research and Youth no. 3030 of 13.01.2009.

## **2. Doctoral thesis, bridge to further research**

In order to provide an overview of the doctoral thesis and, implicitly, to argue the subsequent concerns for certain aspects related to the subject addressed, I considered it appropriate to offer, in a few pages, a summary of its content .

At the time of writing the thesis, I found that in the landscape of Benjamin Fundoianu / Benjamin Fondane 's writings, there were enough unexplored areas, shadow cones, little-

known aspects or statements that needed to be corrected, completed or more carefully researched.

Due to the complexity of the cultural activity of the writer in question, the material that was dedicated to him is quite brief. The multitude of directions in which Fundoianu / Fondane launched from an intellectual point of view makes the synthesis extremely difficult, a way, I think, productive of research in this sense being the one structured on delimited areas.

For the structure of the thesis to respect the intellectual path of the author, I opted for a chronological approach to his contribution, both in the Romanian and French cultural space. Therefore, the sequence of the work's chapters does not highlight an axiological option, but strictly follows the evolution of the creative personality of the one in question.

### **3. The Thesis after obtaining the PhD title**

In 2011, I published my doctoral thesis at "Vasile Goldiș" University Press (*From Benjamin Fundoianu to Benjamin Fondane*, ISBN 978-973-664-500-6, 335 p.), a publishing house accredited by the National Council of Scientific Research (CNCS), category B for cultural studies.

The fundamental goal was to make known, through the book, the major coordinates of the work of Benjamin Fundoianu / Fondane, especially in Romania, but also in the francophone area.

The book represents a synthesis of my concerns up to that date, but also a landmark, I hope, in the bibliography dedicated to the writer.

In general, Fundoianu and Fondane were seen as two distinguished authors from the perspective of exegetes, and what I tried to achieve was precisely a comprehensive perspective. Both components of the work, the Romanian and the French, are subjected to detailed analysis, to then propose a parallel between them, with the conclusion that between the existential stages and artistic continuities can be observed and discontinuities, which belong not only to the change of the linguistic register, but also to the modification of philosophical and literary ideologies.

### **4. References about the doctoral thesis, in Romania and abroad**

After publication, the work was cited in the pages of specialized magazines, in collective volumes, but also in new doctoral theses.

Unfortunately, the exhaustive identification of these citations is an almost impossible task, but I reproduced, in the habilitation thesis, some of them, in order to highlight the importance of the monograph dedicated to Benjamin Fundoianu / Fondane, in the specialty landscape.

The publication of some research papers in collective volumes, made them accessible for consultation by specialists in the field, both in the country and abroad, thanks to the inclusion in databases that increase the visibility of the research activity.

In the spirit of the idea that the sharing of knowledge is essential, I tried to identify some echoes that the articles signed by me had among the academic and research community.

## **5. Romanian databases**

Presence in national and international databases is essential for researchers' quick access to relevant information.

The study we proposed can be consulted, in Romania, in various libraries, among which we mention:

- Charles I Central University Library, University of Bucharest (2 entries)
- Central University Library "Eugen Todoran", Timisoara
- "Lucian Blaga" Central University Library, Cluj-Napoca (12 entries)
- The Library of "Vasile Goldiș" Western University of Arad
- Romanian Academy Library (11 entries)

## **6. Doctoral thesis in foreign databases**

Added to these are the international databases, which allow foreign researchers to identify the bibliography dedicated to a certain subject and possibly consult these references, if the language barrier can be overcome.

A search on the Internet allows the finding that the thesis in question is present in numerous libraries, among which we mention: Szeged University Library , Bayerische Staatsbibliothek , BNUS - Bibliotheque Nation Universitaire de Strasbourg, National Library of Israel, Harvard University Library , Yale University Library , University of Iowa Libraries etc.

There are 4 indexed entries in the CEEOL database – 40 entries, in JSTOR – 2 entries. The work is also present in the catalogs KVK with 51 entries, lib.washington.edu, with 18 entries, and [www.worldcat.org](http://www.worldcat.org), with 52 entries. (data processed at the end of 2023)

## **7. Further studies. Expanding the area of investigation. Areas of interest**

After the defense of the doctoral thesis, in 2008, I continued the research on the work in Romanian and in French by Benjamin Fundoianu / Fondane, keeping for many years, a regular cadence of meetings with the members of the Société d'Etudes Benjamin Fondane, mainly at Peyresq / Annot, France, where the society's regular meetings took place.

In the years that followed, I published more than 30 studies and reviews in which I approached the work of the person in question, highlighting the studies of other specialists and proposing new avenues of analysis.

Predictably, going through the bibliography necessary for writing the doctoral thesis, determined the identification of new research directions and elements of interest that have been less exploited (such as identity-otherness relations, exile, etc.). The concerns for the investigation of these areas of interest can also be found in the title of this qualification thesis.

## **8. Author volumes and coordinated volumes**

In this chapter, I pointed out the volumes that I have published, but also the translations and the editions that I have coordinated. I tried, for each of the titles, to capture the essence of the content in a short description of the framework and of the important ideas.

I presented, in sections **9 (Articles / studies in extenso, published in journals from the main international scientific flow)**, **10 (Articles / contributions in collective volumes)** and **11 (Publications in extenso, in proceedings of the main international specialized conferences)** of the work, articles and published studies, trying to capture the research approach and conclusions of each one.

## **12. Projects and funding won through competition**

I have listed, in this chapter, the research projects that I coordinated as director or in whose team I was a member, specifying the references of each one and the targeted issue.

## **13. Participation in national and international scientific events**

Both during my studies at the Doctoral School and after the public defense of my thesis in 2008, I constantly participated in scientific events in the field of humanities and social sciences, having at least two essential objectives: promoting knowledge and sharing

specialized information with other researchers, but also trying to broaden my horizon of interest and contacts in the national and international academic space.

On the other hand, participating in these types of scientific meetings has, every time, increased my professional satisfaction and reconfirmed my correct placement, from a professional point of view, in the realm of the humanities.

A few of the high-impact events I've attended, remarkable either for scale, consistency, or ultra-specialization (see the meetings of Société d'Etudes Benjamin Fondane), are found in the list below and / or were presented in previous chapters of this thesis, where I tried to capture the essence of each material published in the works of these scientific manifestations.

## **14. Teaching and administrative activity**

### **Basic norm**

In the fall of 2003, by passing an on-the-job exam, I occupied the position of university lecturer at the Faculty of Humanistic-Christian Sciences of the "Vasile Goldiș" Western University of Arad, successively evolving to the rank of assistant, then university lecturer and associate professor, in -a natural cadence.

Since 2013, I have been a university lecturer, holder of the disciplines of Romanian literature, children's literature, Romanian language, didactics of the Romanian language and literature, a position in which I am currently employed.

Activities took place within the bachelor's level courses, specializing in *Pedagogy of primary and preschool education*. In addition, I have taught and teach courses in other specializations, such as *Modern Applied Languages, Security Studies* (Communication Theory, French Culture and Civilization) and master's degree - *Educational Management, Managerial Communication and Human Resources* specializations.

The preparation of the courses led me to look for documentation options and access to the new theories and trends in the field, which I wanted to make known to the students, through the courses.

Also, the constant participation in specialized scientific events allowed me to familiarize myself with the modern approaches to various topics in my area of expertise, which I approached and discussed especially in the courses I gave during my master's degree.

In addition to the courses provided in the current study programs at the bachelor's level and master's degree, we proposed offering, for foreign students within the university, an intensive Romanian language course, which will operate from 2022, and the results are,

overall, positive for student activity at the faculties of medicine, where these students are with especially registered.

The necessity of proposing such a course was due to the fact that the influx of foreign students is increasing, they have to acquire the Romanian language correctly, at the latest until the 3rd year of study, when the clinical activity, in hospitals in Romania, forces them to a coherent interaction with the patient.

At the same time, I want to emphasize the fact that I coordinated and was a scientific referent for various courses developed by teachers from pre-university and university education. I have also coordinated and co-authored test volumes for the undergraduate exam. (*Tests for the license exam*, Daya Publishing House, Satu-Mare, 2012; *Tests for the license exam*, "Vasile Goldiș" University Press Publishing House, Arad, 2014; Coordinator of *Tests for the license exam for the specialization Pedagogy of Primary and Preschool Education*, Publishing House "Vasile Goldiș" University Press, Arad, 2023; Editor, *Collection of texts - preparation for the license exam, Specialization in modern applied languages*, vol. III, Publishing House "Vasile Goldiș" University Press, Arad, 2023).

### **Teaching and research activities, outside the basic norm**

Apart from the didactic activities at "Vasile Goldiș" Western University of Arad, over the years, I have carried out didactic activities both in the pre-university environment, considering the fact that I want to understand the principles of its operation, with a view to an organic continuation of the educational approach, as well as at "Mihai Viteazul" National Intelligence Academy in Bucharest, where I hold the title of associate professor.

I have also taught in post-graduate programs or intensive Romanian language courses for foreign students.

Every year, since 2007, I have guided bachelor, graduation, master theses, works for obtaining the didactic degree I in Romanian language and literature, respectively in French language and literature.

I have tried, from this point of view, to propose to students or coordinated teachers, current and interesting topics, synchronized with the current requirements in scientific research, while imposing rigor and respect for academic ethics.

I was president and/or member of different commissions for bachelor's and master's degree thesis, as well as in the commissions for obtaining the II and I teaching degree, in the last 15 years.

Also, I have been part, as president or member, in the commissions established at the university level where I am the holder, but also at other institutions, in order to conduct exams for teaching and research positions.

At the same time, in the period 2008-2010, I carried out research activities within the "Titu Maiorescu" Institute of Banat Studies, Timiș section of the Romanian Academy.

Simultaneously with the activities carried out in Arad, respectively Timișoara, I did not stop maintaining professional contact with those who, within the Romanian Academy, guided me during my training at the Doctoral School. I mention the constant relationship with Prof. Univ. Dr. Lucian Chișu, thanks to whom I had access to essential scientific information and who opened the way to honorable collaborations.

### **Administrative and academic management activities**

Throughout the years spent at the department, I had simultaneous administrative and didactic concerns, trying to contribute to the quality and constructive competitiveness of the young higher education in Arada.

The administrative involvement, although chronophagic par excellence, helped me to understand the internal departments that govern higher education, the mechanisms of its operation and to foresee possible remedial actions.

When I applied for the position of dean, having many years of experience in leading positions of various academic structures, the managerial plan that I proposed was a working tool for the assumed mandate and provided for the didactic, scientific, human resources, the material base, attracting financial resources and increasing the national and international prestige of the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences and Physical Education and Sports. Among the fundamental objectives that I set out to achieve, I would mention the preservation of a structure of academic programs that is consistent with the requirements of the labor market, the development of the educational offer of the faculty and the periodic evaluation of study programs, and where their restructuring is required.

At the same time, I considered ensuring the number of qualified professors, necessary for an optimal professor/student ratio, according to the normative requirements established by law and ARACIS standards, the continuation of collaboration with prestigious teachers from the country and abroad and the promotion of an organizational culture based on performance.

Giving priority to scientific research, we optimized the flows of accurate and timely information of all faculty members about the launch and key dates of national and



international scientific research programs and tried to establish concrete tasks on collectives/individuals regarding a minimum number limit of articles published in ISI/BDI journals, the number of communications given at national and international conferences/congresses, but also the organization of scientific events with local, national and international participation (round tables, workshops, conferences, congresses).

I have established or directly contributed to the establishment, over the years, of various new specializations: Chinese Language and Literature – English Language and Literature, Human Resources, Romanian preparatory year for foreign students, Security Studies.

### **15. Continuous education at the university**

Always urging my students towards continuous improvement, I, for my part, participated in post-graduate training courses aimed at developing and expanding the knowledge base of teaching staff. I will point out some of these, which I consider relevant and especially applicable in professional activity in higher education and research.

*Trainer* Course (129 credits), attended in 2018, in the organization of CRFPA Mehedinti, Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Protection and the Elderly, Ministry of National Education, aimed at acquiring the following skills : self-evaluation by reference to the skills profile of the trainer, lifelong learning, development of transversal skills; application of special training methods and techniques; preparation of training activities; designing training programs based on existing occupational / professional training standards; motivating trainees, facilitating learning, supporting the transfer of learning in the work environment; managing a training program; evaluation of the learning of trainees and evaluation of the quality of the training program as a whole; quality assurance , optimization and revision of a training program; identifying the training demand existing on the market workforce ; promoting a training program to beneficiaries.

Another course, followed within FEDE - the European Federation for Education, graduated on October 30, 2011, contributed to the development of the competences of culture and European citizenship, community law, history and geography of the European Union, but also to obtaining a European diploma in communication and of a French language proficiency certificate.

In 2023, I chose to participate in a course that particularly attracted my professional attention, dedicated to the education of people with special educational requirements, organized by the Ministry of Education and the Romanian Academy.

An overview of the evolution of the issue regarding the social, professional and educational integration of people with disabilities allows the finding that in our country, after the moment of 1989, important and decisive steps were taken in terms of equal opportunities and the integration into society of this categories.

However, it must be noted that we are still far from considering that we have taken the necessary steps for their optimized integration. There is a need, I believe, for the synchronized application of correct and, above all, realistic measures, truly tailored to the needs of people with disabilities. This requires joint effort and the constant and effective involvement of the determining factors: social assistance networks, the church, NGOs, the political class, representatives of the educational field, etc.)

Prior to enrolling in the presented course, I also followed a *Postgraduate Program for training and continuous professional development - Special School Psychopedagogy*, within the Department for Teaching Staff Training. (2017-2018).

I also graduated from a training program for ID activities - Quality assessment in higher education / ID education management, Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education / Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, in December 2013. Later , also in the organization of ARACIS, I followed the training program - Quality assessment in higher education, at the Lucian Blaga University in Sibiu, in March 2017.

Moreover, since 2012, I am an ARACIS expert evaluator, in which capacity I participated in numerous evaluations of study programs in the field of humanities, at universities in Craiova, Bucharest, Sibiu, Braşov, Oradea, etc. Naturally, the evaluation activity allowed me to diversify and strengthen relationships with colleagues from university centers in the country, giving me, at the same time, the opportunity to be able to design strategies to optimize the structure and operation of the educational programs at the institution where I have the norm Basic.

In 2019, I acquired the quality of quality evaluator for French school textbook projects (MEN order 3103/2019).

To these, two other trainings must be added, namely: *Methods and techniques of teaching legal education in schools and high schools, November 25, 2018*, VeDem Just Association and Aradul Civic and that of *Anti-discrimination Mediator* (professional training course, National Council for Combating Discrimination, 2007).

In 2023, following the completion and submission of the documentation related to the application for obtaining financing through the National Rehabilitation and Resilience Fund - PNRR -, we obtained the equipment of the latest generation technology and software, of two laboratories intended, mainly, for students within the specializations pedagogy of primary and preschool education and psychology. At the same time, within this project, I benefited from training for new technologies, carried out by a team of experts in the field and completed by a graduation exam.

In addition to this effort, I followed the course and took the exam - passed in January 2024 - to obtain the ECDL - European Computer Driving certificate Licenses .

## **16. Involvement in academic life. Recognition of activity results**

Together with other colleagues, we have been involved in the organization of various congresses, conferences, workshops, symposiums and colloquiums, some with international participation.

Also, in recent years, I have been responsible for Erasmus for the Faculty of Socio - Human Sciences and Physical Education and Sports, with the objective of receiving and guiding students and teaching staff from abroad, who come on mobility. In this capacity, I initiated and developed collaborations with higher education institutions from Europe, but also from countries admitted for financing by the program, despite the fact that they are not part of the European Union. I would point to the already traditional collaboration with the University of Rome Tor Vergata, through Prof. Louis Begioni, PhD., especially in the field of psychomechanics of language and Romance linguistics. Moreover, based on solid and lasting collaboration, we benefited, between the years 2021-2024, from *Cultore della materia* of the Department of Literary, Philosophical and Art History Studies at the University of Rome Tor Vergata, a position that honored me and allowed me an invaluable intellectual experience.

I participated and continue to participate, annually, in exchanges of experience with the University of Lille – France, as well as with the Catholic University of the same city, the University of Brest – France, the University of Szeged – Hungary etc.

Outside the EU space, the relationships that I am responsible for and that I have valued in recent years are, in particular, those with universities in Serbia – respectively Kragujevac and Novi Sad, as well as with higher education institutions in Nepal and Haiti.

Regarding this last collaboration with the educational institution called Collège Universitaire de Roumanie – Port au Prince , Haiti, in recognition of the contribution I had, together with my colleague, Ștefan\_Iaroslav Daniel, in 2015, when this higher education structure was created, I am among the members of the board of directors of CUROM, and the development of the college and the diversification of relations with Romanian universities is a real fulfillment and realization of the teaching vocation, for which I trained and to whom I wish to remain faithful until the end of my career.

I also consider it essential that the trainings I attended during the Erasmus Staff Week organized by the University of Kragujevac - Serbia, but also by the Catholic University of Lille - France, contributed decisively to the development of my experience in the field of intercultural communication and -they allowed the formation of long-term academic relationships.

In the period 2014-2015, I coordinated, as Director, the ID Department - distance education, in this sense following the necessary trainings, mentioned in the previous chapter.

Assuming the principle of leading the institution where I am a tenured teaching staff, namely that of offering the university a community dimension, I broadened the scope of the institutions with which I facilitated the conclusion of partnerships, personally dealing with the signing of protocols with the Arad County Police Inspectorate, Arad Local Police, Timișoara National Agency against Trafficking in Persons, etc.

All these institutions respond to documentation and information needs of students and master's students within the faculty that I lead, as dean, since 2017.

Certain diplomas and distinctions, which have been granted to me during my years of activity, by various public, cultural or educational organizations and institutions, represent forms of recognition of the contribution I have tried to make to the promotion of cultural values and to knowledge sharing.

## **17. Evolution plans and professional development**

First of all, I propose the continuation of research activities in the previously presented directions, but also in other current ones, and the publication of a significant number of studies in relevant publications (ISI, ERIH, BDI) at the national level and international .

I am also considering publishing a book focused on the issue of the sense of existence, from the perspective of Benjamin Fondane's philosophy and in correlation with Viktor Frankl's logotherapy principles .

That's why I made approaches to the responsible persons from the university where I work, for the establishment of a new research and training center in logotherapy, in partnership with specialists from France, Italy and Luxembourg.

For a more efficient transfer of knowledge in the field, I will continue to participate in training courses for teaching staff who teach in the university environment, because I believe that a university staff must be open to innovations and eager to prepare throughout his life , to synchronize with the new trends in his field of expertise.

Internally, I have been involved over the years in generating and actively maintaining key collaborations for knowledge sharing. In this sense, considering the professional relations, over the years, both with the "G. Călinescu" Institute of History and Literary Theory of the Romanian Academy, and with the Timiș Branch of the Romanian Academy, I intend, as editor-in-chief of to a magazine with good positioning in the national and international hierarchies ("Science and Culture Studies") to propose the production of some thematic issues, in partnership.

I also propose the continuation of an approach successfully initiated in the past years, at the faculty level where I hold the title, namely the refreshing of the curricula , at the bachelor's and master's level, by introducing new courses such as existentialism and logotherapy .

I am also thinking of proposing to the institutional management that after the successful introduction of the communication course in Romanian, for foreign students (starting in 2022), we launch Romanian culture and civilization - open to all students, both Romanian and foreigners. I believe that they would respond to an increasingly obvious need to improve the skills of expression, critical thinking and correct reporting on national values.

On the research level, the major objectives that I undertake are: capitalizing on research results by publishing scientific works , increasing the reputation scientific of the department, faculty and implicitly of the university , participation in projects and grant competitions , publication of articles in ISI rated magazines, circulation magazines indexed in international databases , in proceedings (volumes of conferences international), in national magazines recognized and accredited by CNCS, publishing a book at national publishing houses accredited by CNCS and producing works that meet the rigors of publishing on a national and international level . I also consider organizing and participating in scientific

events students with the aim of involvement in the research activity of students (scientific circles students, Erasmus, Grundvig projects) and participation in scientific events, in the commissions of various local and national scientific forums and events and international.

As favorite research topics, I have proposed, at the moment, the following directions, in which to capitalize on some of the ideas circulated in the pages of my previous studies. Specifically, we thought about the following projects:

**- Text and Context: Assuming/Denying/Disguising Identity and the Relation of Creative Individuality to the Culture of the Majority in the Case of Jewish Intellectuals in Romania, Between Wars**

**- Romanian Literature for Youngsters During the Communist Era**

**- The Role of the Formative Space and That of the Adoptive One in the Configuration of a Romanian - French Cultural Destiny**

**- Identification, Inventory and Analysis of the Manuscripts of Benjamin Fundoianu / Fondane (Bibliothèque Doucet – Sorbonne Paris, Library of the Romanian Academy, The National Museum of Romanian Literature And The National Library of Romania, Yale University Funds, Private Archives)**

**III. Bibliographical references (selection)** - finally, I offered a selection of the titles that formed the basis of my research, in the years since the writing of the doctoral thesis until today.