

Ministry of National Education  
University of Arts Tirgu-Mures  
Doctoral School

## **Theater in Education in Transilvania**

Summary

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The topic of this doctoral thesis is the educational potential of applied theatrical activities. Relying on the definition of Christopher B. Balme<sup>1</sup>, I consider the applied theatrical activity to be a comprehensive theatrical activity with the goal of social intervention: problem handling, self-empowerment of a community. Theater in Education, which is discussed throughout the doctoral thesis, can also be included here.

The doctoral thesis is a summary of a four-year research effort that explored emerging initiatives in the field of Theater in Education in Romania. I was looking for answers to what kind of applied theater initiatives have been made in Romania so far, by setting up theatrical plays specifically for students in public education and having them as a target audience.

The research began in 2015 with a practical approach to Theater in Education. My action research consisted of three phases. First, I gathered Theater in Education experience and research knowledge. I attended educational trainings of the Roundtable, the Three Layers of Applied Theater - Telling the Stories of the Palace of Culture Summer University (2017), and the 90-hour drama teacher training organized by KÁVA, under the direction of Gábor Takács. All this, in order to gain practical knowledge of the field I am exploring, and to approach the subject through the eyes of the initiated teacher. In addition, before viewing major works, I became acquainted with the work of several Hungarian Theater in Education companies.

The second phase of the research involved the examination of theatrical education performances in high school classes. I opened the field for Hungarian speaking theater companies in Romania: I invited them to Târgu Mureș, to various secondary schools, which are a medium I am familiar with and where, as a teacher, I knew the audience from a completely different perspective.

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher B. Balme, *The Cambridge Introduction to Theater Studies*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008. 179-194.

„According to Balme's description, applied theater is a collective term that refers to all theater-related activities having the aim not only to entertain through theater performances, because the focus of the process is not on the audience, but on the individual and the group playing on the stage. In most cases, it refers to a theatrical activity whose purpose is not only to entertain through theater performances, since the focus is not on the audience, but on the individual and the group playing on the stage. Mostly it denotes a theatrical activity that aims to promote and bring about a change in society.” In: Katona László, *Az alkalmazott színházi tevékenység szerepe a modern nyelvtanárképzésben (The Role of Applied Theater Activity in Modern Language Teacher Trainings)*, Doctoral Doctoral thesis, Veszprém, Pannon University, 2010. 61.

The performances discussed in the doctoral thesis were analyzed as a result of multiple views, and to some extent I approached the productions from the view of multiple participants (from different learning communities). (For example, in Târgu Mureș it was performed for the first time a play called *The Society of Unknown Friends*, where we witnessed a special performance with a mixed audience of Romanian and Hungarian students.)

In the third phase of the research I analyzed the performances through personal interviews and evaluation sheets.

The doctoral thesis is divided into five sections, each of them having a clearly identifiable role. All the five sections are interacting with one another. The first chapter of the doctoral thesis, the Introduction, deals with the aims of the research, the structure of the doctoral thesis and the justification of the topic. The second part (Conceptualization) attempts to delimit the knowledge background of the research by juxtaposing theater and education. While summarizing the concept of "art in education" and outlining the place of "applied theater", Theatre in Education is placed in the center.

The third major chapter (Operationalization), after clarifying the concepts of Theatre in Education and theater pedagogy, introduces the three decisive models. In the fourth part (Implementation I) I explore Theater in Education initiatives in the Romanian language, the work of companies for which I have hardly found any specialist literature, therefore my research is based on personal inquiry. In Part Five (Implementation II), I deal with Theatre in Education initiatives in the Hungarian language in Romania. In the first section, reviewing the aspirations of the diaspora, I offer an overview of all Hungarian-speaking theatrical performances in Romania that were made for school students. Next, I undertake the presentation of major companies and the detailed analysis of the Theater in Education performances, using action research, individual surveys and personal data collection. These partial studies provide a comprehensive view of the Theater in Education initiatives of the Osonó Theater Workshop, the Waiting Room (Váróterem) Project and the University of Arts Târgu Mureș. Finally, my doctoral thesis ends with a conclusion chapter.

The first motivation for my choice of the topic comes from the subjectivity of my interest in theater. As a high school teacher, I considered visiting theater an essential extracurricular part of literature classes. At that time, even if only indirectly, but I suspected that the series of

questions that followed the theatrical performance reflected the curiosity and interest of students.

Another reason why I chose this topic is the field of my everyday life: my interest in the teaching profession and the educational process besides the theater. That's why I was eagerly looking for opportunities to attract my students towards similar performances. While teaching in high school, I created several occasions to include Theatre in Education projects (The Waiting Room (*Váróterem*) *Bánk bán? Present!*, Osonó *How the Water Reflects the Face* and *The Society of Unknown Friends*, The Ariel Theater *Tell Zsófia*). My surveys have confirmed that crossing the boundaries between school and theater should be a mandatory project for every educational institution, and there is a great truth in the well-known metaphor: art is education and education is nothing but art.

The growing number of Theatre in Education Societies, the reflections about them, and the positive perception of renowned professionals also support the validity of my topic. The need for these activities is shown by the active involvement of my students, who are mostly silent in class.

## **2. THEATER AND EDUCATION, OR THEATER (PEDAGOGY) AT THE BORDER**

Education is the central concept of the science of pedagogy and its etymology (educate-raise<sup>2</sup>) is metaphorical. Pedagogy has created a more sophisticated and scientific conceptual construct and is constantly shaping its theories, adapting them to the changes in life, culture and age. Since the 1990s, education experts have been paying more and more attention to researching and processing art education. They are looking for alternative tools. The involving of the visual arts, acting and music is more frequent. For example, James McLeod's study *The Arts and Education* rejects that there are only two ways (qualitative and quantitative) of producing meaning. Instead of that, he mentions five basic forms that are distinguished in the field of education: linguistic subjects are about the word, mathematics is about numbers, visual

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<sup>2</sup> Gombocz János – Trencsényi László, *Változatok a pedagógiára (Variations on Pedagogy)*, Budapest, Okker Publishing, 2007. 17.



subjects are about the image, physical education is about movement, and the subject of music is sound. Drama includes all five.

### ***Art in Education***

The concepts of art in education and education through art come from Herbert Read, who, in his world-renowned book, *Education through Art*, published in 1943, expresses his views reaching back to Plato<sup>3</sup>. The goal, according to Read, is the enrichment of the forms of human thinking by teaching the use of imagination and visual language, the expansion of the tools of interpersonal relationships by developing the language of emotions, and the criticism of the moral education. Today, we refer to art in education as something that uses art as a tool for shaping the personality. This may also include artistic education in non-artistic fields, for example the drama pedagogy's so called "teaching drama" model. The model of education through art can be applied well in the "helping" kind of educational activities: in the work with problematic, disadvantaged children and in the activities of social institutions.

### ***Applied theater***

Nowadays, applied theater has become a very fast evolving "trend" that depicts the specific social needs of different social groups through the use of theater activities. "Applied theater incorporates a variety of activities having different purposes and methodologies that work with a community by using theatrical elements."<sup>4</sup> This broad concept can even be a collective name, because it involves methods that operate on extremely different theoretical backgrounds and work with very different audiences. The only connecting element among them is the application of the theater itself.

The applied theater is thus a receptive, an inclusive category: its practices can be summed up in the "trinity of special intention, participation and abandonment of traditional theater

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<sup>3</sup> Bodóczy István, „A vizuális nevelés megújítása, új paradigmája” In: *Új Pedagógiai Szemle (New Pedagogical View)*, 7–8. sz. 2003. 35–43.

<sup>4</sup> Bethlenfalvy Ádám, Alkalmazott színház. A drámapedagógia és színházi nevelés különböző formáinak bemutatása (Applied theater. Introduction to Drama Pedagogy and Theater in Education), In: Bodnár Gábor és Szentgyörgyi Rudolf (szerk.), *Szakpedagógiai körkép. Művészetpedagógiai tanulmányok (Outline of Pedagogy. Art education Studies)*, Budapest, ELTE, 2015. (79–95.) 80.

spaces”<sup>5</sup>. Instead of conventional theatrical conditions, the artworks / events are created in a variety of public spaces, such as streets, prisons, shelters, residential institutions, rehabilitation and health centers, unused factories, homes or even villages. These situations create opportunities for meetings, interactivity and transformation. The members of the audience can be transformed into participants – according to Boal's wordplay: from "spectator" to "spectator" – and, by having the right to be involved, they get a role in the play. “Whoever gets involved gets involved. Whoever participates creates meaning.”<sup>6</sup> The applied theater focuses on actors from social groups who are given the opportunity to speak their voices, represent their interests, communicate their values or create equity, opportunity and companionship for them. In other words, applied theater is an opportunity to examine the lives of individuals or groups in difficult situations within the theatrical framework. In conclusion, the 20th-century applied theater evolves from the critical theatrical forms in Brecht and builds on the pedagogical, critical works of Paulo Freire, that are based on the English TIE methodology and the aspects of Augusto Boal's *Theater of the Oppressed*. The aim is to formulate socio-community or art therapy goals.<sup>7</sup>

### 3. THEATER IN EDUCATION

Theatre in Education (abbrev.TIE) educates through theater to understand the world. Its purpose is to bring about a change in understanding, so it is the element of applied theater that was developed by the connection of theater and education. Due to the continuous reinterpretation and expansion of the concept of Theatre in Education, all activities involving educational awareness and the use of theatrical tools are included.

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<sup>5</sup> Golden Dániel, A színház, mint eszköz a dramatikus nevelésben (Theater as a Tool in Dramatic Education). In: Görcsi Péter, P. Müller Péter, Pandur Petra, Rosner Krisztina (szerk.): *A színpadon túl. Az alkalmazott színház és környéke (Beyond the stage. Applied theater and its surroundings)*, Pécs, Kronosz, 2016. 58.

<sup>6</sup> Hajós Zsuzsa, „Dilemmák és alapfogalmak a színházi nevelésben” Kézirat ((Dilemmas and Basic Concepts in Theater in Education - Manuscript), Pécs, PTE, 2012. 29. See URL: [https://www.academia.edu/21254742/Dilemm%C3%A1k\\_%C3%A9s\\_alapfogalmak\\_a\\_sz%C3%ADnh%C3%A1zi\\_nevel%C3%A9sben](https://www.academia.edu/21254742/Dilemm%C3%A1k_%C3%A9s_alapfogalmak_a_sz%C3%ADnh%C3%A1zi_nevel%C3%A9sben), downloaded at: 2017.11.21.

<sup>7</sup> Cziboly Ádám – Bethlenfalvy Ádám, *Színházi nevelési programok kézikönyve (Handbook of Theater in Education Programs)*, i.m. 80.

The genre relies on participation, whereby young people's involvement is understood as their willingness to make meaning, whether expressed (using the linguistic means they own) or not. At TIE, there is a real stake in involving children, because they experience the state of being unexpectedly asked about something and not be ready to answer, and they can also see that their actions have an impact on their environment. In practice, such a performance is divided into two parts: theater and processing. Theater companies usually go to schools and work with unknown students. The project starts with a Theater in Education performance, which is discussed with the help of a drama teacher. According to John O'Toole's characterization of almost half a century, the following elements must be present in TIE:<sup>8</sup>

#### I. Primary elements:

- Dramatic content that can be separated from the frame;
- The progress of the drama, that is, the plot itself;
- The structure of the drama, the series of events;
- Expressing the essence of the conflict at any given moment with the help of these two mediums and with the help of characterization;
- Active participation;

#### II. Secondary elements:

- The background and location of the action;
- The songs;
- The dances;
- The style;
- The visual and acoustic elements;
- The passive participation.

The broad concept of Theater in Education includes a wide variety of theatrical activities. Cziboly and Bethlenfalvy mention the following 16 genres, most of which fit also in the

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<sup>8</sup> John O'Toole, Színházi és drámai dimenziók (Theatrical and Dramatic Dimensions). In: Kaposi László (edit.): *Színház és dráma a tanításban TIE – Theatre in education*, Budapest, Joint publication of the Roundtable Theater Education Center, the Hungarian Drama Educational Society and the Marczibányi Square Cultural Center, 1995. (30–43) 38

applied theatrical forms of the above cited Géza Novák. However, there is a grouping based on goal orientation, and here on the genre designation of the activity:

Social theater	Psychodrama
Sociodrama	Psychodrama for children
Playback theater	Bibliodrama
Theaterterapy	Theatrical training
Drama training	Improvisational theater
Public theater	Theater of the oppressed
Debate theater	Interactive theater for adults
Documentary theater performance	Meeting the public

Cziboly and Bethlenfalvy categorized these frontier genres according to five criteria. It is important to note - with reference to the authors' intention - that “these five are the criteria for the “Theater in Education program”. The applied theatrical forms have been analyzed according to these five points in order to clearly identify the programs of the Theater in Education. This proves that all five definition points of a given Theater in Education program are not simultaneously applicable to any other theatrical form used:

- The program is designed primary for those involved in public education.
- There is a theater-, puppet theater- or dance theater performance or a series of scenes in the program.
- The creators of the program have a pedagogical purpose.
- Participants have the opportunity to interact in a meaningful way throughout the program.
- Programs played several times as a repertoire, each time for different groups. Each program is a one-time event, with pre- and post- event follow-up. “<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Cziboly Ádám – Bethlenfalvy Ádám, *Színházi nevelési programok kézikönyve (Handbook of Theater in Education Programs)*, Budapest, L’Harmattan, 2013. 377

From a pedagogical point of view, each Theater in Education program is complexly motivated, yet a central purpose can be recognized in them, according to which they can be classified into the following five categories:

- “*Human /Social Issues*: programs that explore moral, human, social, philosophical issues. These programs often investigate a central issue, a central statement, or a central problem. (...)
- *Initiator*: programs that help to understand the language of the theater, the interpretation of the play, the language of the text, the intention of the director and the operation of the theater.
- *Knowledge transmitter*: programs for passing on the NAT related knowledge (e.g. literature) or other types of knowledge. In our opinion, an unconventional literature lesson can be interpreted as a pedagogical goal: these programs are related to the educational material of literature.
- *Preventive*: programs specialized in the prevention of addictions and substance use, in the treatment of psychological or psychiatric problems, or in the prevention of accidents and crimes.
- *Skill developer*: programs to develop different competences, skills (e.g. communication, foreign language, creativity, movement, non-verbalism, dexterity, etc.).”<sup>10</sup>

The relationship between theater and education was explored by the DICE ("Drama Improves Lisbon Key Competences in Education / The impact of drama pedagogy on the Lisbon key competences"), an international research project supported by the European Union that carried out intercultural research<sup>11</sup> over two years. Besides other educational objectives, it

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<sup>10</sup> Op. cit. 366.

<sup>11</sup> Twelve countries participated in the research (leader: Hungary, partners: Czech Republic, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Poland, Norway, Palestine, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, Serbia and Slovenia). Each of the partners has a high level of professional recognition both in their own country and internationally, and the experts involved in the project represent a wide range of formal and non-formal education. (...) Experts in the field of theater in education and drama have long believed in the effectiveness of their work, but so far very rarely have they been measured by scientific methods. In the DICE project, dozens of experts from 12 countries with a wide range of theoretical and practical backgrounds in theater in education and drama have teamed up with scholars (psychologists and sociologists) to assess the impact of theater in education and drama.

Cziboly Adám: Vezetői összefoglaló, In: *DICE – A kocka el van vetve. Kutatási eredmények és ajánlások a tanítási színház és dráma alkalmazásával kapcsolatban (The Die is Cast. Research Results and Recommendations on the Use of Theater in Education and Drama)*, Belgrád etc., DICE Konzorcium, 2010. 5. See URL: [http://www.dramanetwork.eu/file/DICE\\_kutatasi\\_eredmenyek.pdf](http://www.dramanetwork.eu/file/DICE_kutatasi_eredmenyek.pdf), downloaded at: 2018.02.01.

studied the impact of the teaching theater and drama on five of the eight key competences<sup>12</sup> in Lisbon. That is why they have investigated the following five areas:

- Communication in the mother tongue;
- Learning to learn;
- Interpersonal, intercultural and social competences, civic competences;
- Entrepreneurial competence;
- Cultural expression;

The research was carried out because the experts in the field of teaching theater and drama have long believed in the effectiveness of their work, but so far it has rarely been measured by scientific methods.

#### **4. THEATER IN EDUCATION IN ROMANIA**

The problem of pedagogy in Romania can be traced back to the curricular reforms, in which, in many aspects, they tried (and still do) to push the limits of the Comenius-Herbart system, but no fundamental breakthrough was made because the basic objectives of the educational work remained unchanged. “The greatest conceptual pedagogical problem and challenge of our time” is that public education, as the largest public service provider in society, finally focuses its personal and material energies on the personality, with emphasis on each individual and the development of their abilities.<sup>13</sup> In the 21st century, social expectations for different levels of education have evolved by assuming increasingly differentiated and precisely defined competences as a criterion for transition and entry into new levels of education. These competences are also seen as a condition for integration into social practice. The basic problem of the traditional model, but also its simplicity, is the teleologization of the pedagogical design: the purpose of pedagogical work is to produce a type of personality.

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<sup>12</sup> The 8 Lisbon Key Competences: Communication in the Native Language; Learning to learn; Interpersonal, Intercultural and Social Competences; Citizenship Competence; Entrepreneurial Competence; Cultural Expression; Competencies in Mathematics, Science and Technology; Foreign Language Communication; Digital Competence.

<sup>13</sup> Gajdics Sándor, „A személyiség szocializációja és az értékelés összefüggései” (Relationships Between Personality Socialization and Evaluation) In: *Új Pedagógiai Szemle (New Pedagogical View)*, 13. évf. 2-3. sz. 2003. (41–47) 41.

Pedagogical surveys in Romania regularly report a decline, a decline in the quality of teaching, a lack of interest and fatigue among young people. According to a 2017 study made by the European Commission, Romania is the European champion of the least amount of money given for education. The curriculum of Romanian schools mentions theater-related activities only in the curriculum and in the organization of extra-curricular activities. In 2011 the *Școala altfel* (*School otherwise*) program was introduced as part of the National Educational Curriculum. Thanks to the decision of the Ministry of National Education, the one-week program offers more cultural activities and the draft bill specifically mentions the importance of visiting the theater.<sup>14</sup> This week was introduced with the intention that its activities contribute to the development of pupils' learning ability and socio-emotional competence.

In 2014, the “I. L. Caragiale” University of Film and Theater (UNATC) and the Ministry of National Education has organized a three-day conference in Bucharest called *Theater in the Education*. The organizers' desire was to make the conference a pioneer in the promotion of the nationally deficient high school theater education and to recruit interested people to reduce the shortage of drama teachers. An evaluation was also carried out of the first three conferences (2014/2015/2016), which showed that, thanks to theater education projects, 243 teachers from all participants started using Sylvia Rotter's techniques<sup>15</sup> in the classroom or in extra-curricular activities. Summarizing and evaluating the questionnaires proved the effectiveness of the method: the involvement of the theater can contribute to a clear improvement of the basic psychological functions necessary for learning.

Two other Theater in Education conferences were held in Oradea and Bacau in 2017 with the support of the Vienna Children's Theater Association (Asociația Teatrul Vienez de Copii), the Ministry of National Education, the BCR and the Austrian Ministry of Education. In 2018 the conference took place in Constanta. The fact that these conferences have taken place, and more and more such events are being organized in Romania, raises new horizons, new aspects of research that present theater as a useful, effective method of teaching. Although there is a very long tradition of student- and child acting in Romanian- and even in foreign language, the

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<sup>14</sup> Ovidiu Mântăluță – Simona Velea (edit.), „Școala altfel: să știi mai multe să fii mai bun! Evaluarea programului național de activități extracurriculare și extrașcolare 2012-2013” (“School Otherwise: Knowing more being better! Evaluation of The National Program of Extracurricular and Activities 2012-2013) 2013, see URL: [http://www.ise.ro/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Evaluare\\_Scoala\\_Altfel.pdf](http://www.ise.ro/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Evaluare_Scoala_Altfel.pdf), downloaded at: 2019. 03. 05.

<sup>15</sup> I am writing more about Sylvia Rotter's methods by means of the Viena Childrens' Theater (Das Wiener Kindertheater)

forms of Theater in Education are hardly present in the educational or theater life. According to my sources, there is not even a terminology in Romania, and loan translations of the English terms are usually used by people working in this field. Here are a few companies from Romania that are categorized as theater educators. In researching the Theater in Education and theater pedagogy, I followed the representatives of different countries at the IDEA congress<sup>16</sup>. In Romania, the Sigma Art Cultural Foundation for Young People (Fundatia Culturală Sigma Art) deals with Theater in Education programs, which are also members of the DICE<sup>17</sup> project. They represented Romania at the 2013 IDEA meeting. One of their works is the performance of *Eleven Vests* by Edward Bond, premiered in September 1997 in Bucharest, in the presence of the Minister of Education. The complex educational and social impact play sheds light on young people's critical situation and hopeless future. Their other outstanding work is also featured on the DICE page. *Teacher* (Prof) is clearly listed as a Theater in Education play. In September 2016 a 20-month project called *Are you in? Theater in Education Applications for Awareness on Bullying* has been launched. The Replica Center in Bucharest specifically puts Theater in Education at the center of its work and offers many forms of participation in theater. The Replica Educational Theater Center was officially opened on February 13, 2015 in Bucharest's Youth District. Although its name evokes the restrictions and limitations of public schools, its program assures the audience of the contrary. Before its formation, it was an independent artistic community that sought to answer questions tabled by society by organizing cultural programs and raising the issues of young people. The other Romanian company, called Transcena, was established in 1995. Among its founding members, RADO (Romanian Human Rights Protection Team / Grupul Român pentru Apărarea Drepturilor Omului) played a prominent role. With the involvement of art and education, their main objectives have been to respect and raise awareness of human rights, to help victims of aggression, and to support marginalized groups. Special attention is paid to the victims of domestic violence and the situation of women and children.

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<sup>16</sup> The International Drama / Theater Education Association (IDEA), founded in 1992 by fifty theaters and pedagogical organizations, under the auspices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), seeks to balance the developed ideas, principles and education. Participants will discuss the role that each country attaches to arts in education and, in particular, to theater in education.

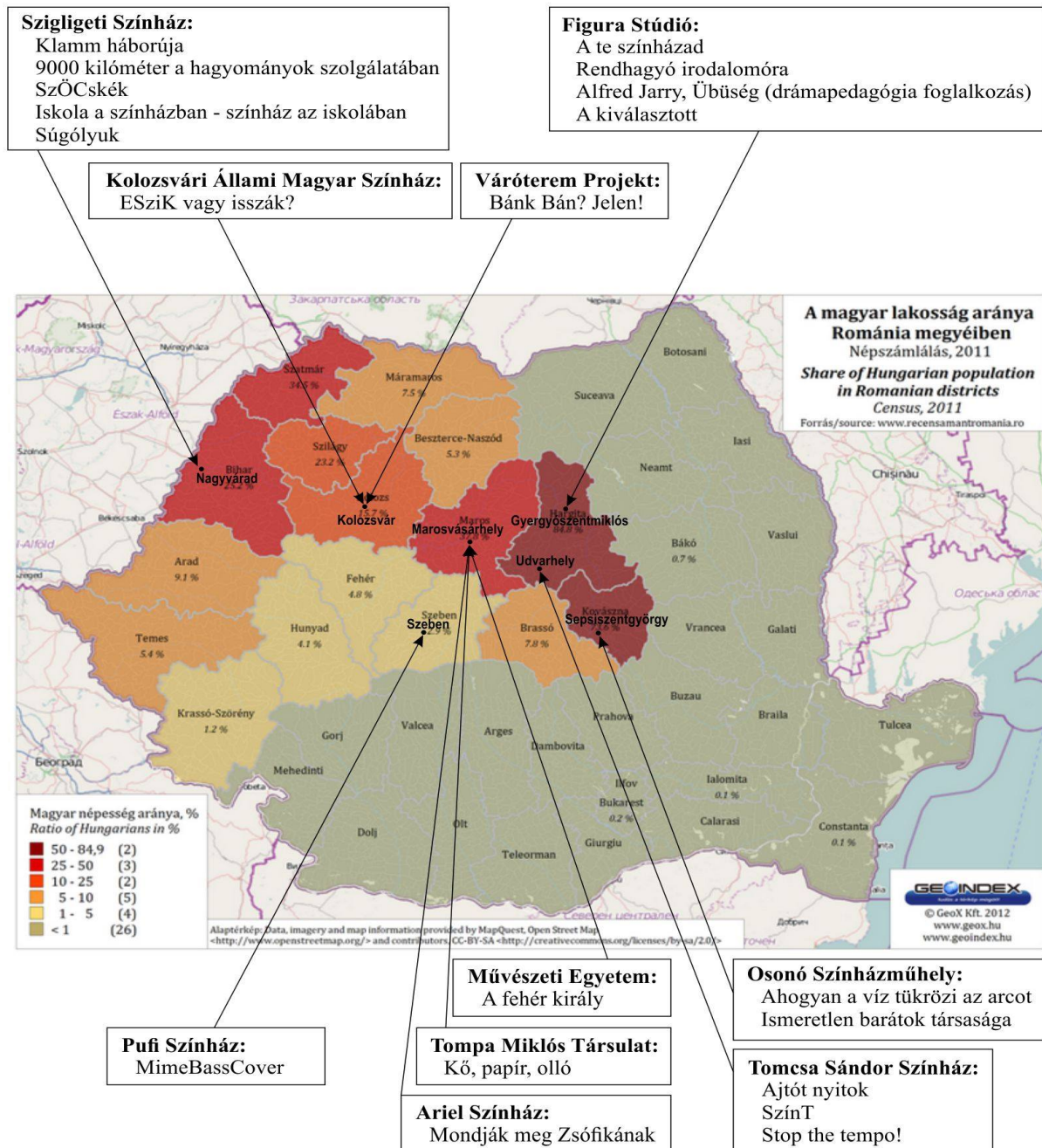
<sup>17</sup> About DICE see footnote no. 11



The Vienna Children's Theater (Teatrul Vienez de Copii), which has 13 years of experience in Romania, has been operating as a non-profit company since 2006. The theater model to which it is linked has a 25-year history in Austria (Wiener Kindertheater, 1994). Behind the initiative stands the actor and director Sylvia Rotter. Working together with dr.Brigitte Sindelar and dr.Max H. Friedrich, she tried to improve the skills of children and young people through theater education. Since 2006, the company has organized several conferences in Romania, introducing hundreds of teachers to the idea to introduce the theater in secondary schools and high schools.

## 5. HUNGARIAN INITIATIVES IN ROMANIA

Theater in Education programs can be found in following spaces:



Map of the Hungarian Theater in Education Performances in Romania and the Proportion of Hungarians in Romania

In 2009, as part of the **Theater outside the Theater** program in Oradea, directed by Viola Török, Hunor Pál, a member of the Szigliget Troupe, performed Kai Hensel's *Klamms' War*, a basic work of the classroom theater.

The Szigliget Theater (Oradea), with the support of the Communitas Foundation, also organized a series of theatrical performances (according to the categorization of Cziboly and Bethlenfalvy), entitled **9000 Kilometers in the Service of Tradition**. However I could not find in it any examples of the 4<sup>th</sup> criteria of the Theater in Education categorization, according to which “it offers participants an opportunity for interaction that significantly influences the course of the program”<sup>18</sup>. This play was mainly taken to those sporadic settlements where Hungarians were living in increasingly poor conditions and tried to approach the growing generation in a different way. As a result of their attempts, the folk culture knowledge has been delivered in an enjoyable way to children / young people who, for simple geographical or infrastructural reasons, may not have been able to attend such shows.

The educational program aimed to approach Hungarian folk culture, folk dances and folk music in three performances: *Dancing Geography Lesson*, *Dancing History Lesson* and *Advent Games*.

Among the Szigliget Theater’s educational programs we can find the **SzÖCskék** (Grashoppers), which debuted in the autumn of 2011 with only six members, but now being in a constant growth. By the nature of their work, the volunteers provide the very first interface between viewers and the institution. Because of their constant presence, spectators are quickly connected with the experience of going to the theater while being educated through and by the theater.

Another great initiative of the Oradea Theater is *The School in Theater - Theater in the School* that has spectacularly mobilized students and made theater-loving youngsters. The School in Theater - Theater in the School program has taken on the task of educating through theater in a niche way. Its aim is to bring young people closer to the theater and to the major works of the Hungarian drama literature, and to promote the skills of interpreting literary texts, to have an insight into the theatrical process and self-expression through theatrical means.

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<sup>18</sup> Cziboly Ádám – Bethlenfalvy Ádám, Színházi nevelési programok kézikönyve (Handbook to Theater in Education Programmes), op.cit. 26.

Launched in 2015 by the Szigliget Theater, the *Súgólyuk* Project initiated a Theater in Education roundtable in which the aspiring high school students discussed the socio-cultural issues raised by certain theater performances. These roundtable discussions were based on drama pedagogy methods.

In Gheorgheni, the Figura Studio Theater defines itself as an institution of experimental endeavors. Its purpose is to reach out to a new audience, including the young. That is why they launched in 2008 a completely new theater program in Transylvania with the title *Your Theater*. Alongside the theatrical repertoire, the Figura Studio Theater has an *Extraordinary Literature Lesson* program, during which they talk to students about their performances and work with them after the show in order to help them understand what they experienced. The Figura Theater artists also perform various drama pedagogy activities that are in a strong connection with their performances. The first occasion for this was given by the play *Ubu Roi (Übüség)* (premiere October 5, 2014) based on Alfred Jarry's works. A classroom performance was first performed in 2017 by the Figura Studio Theater with the title *The Chose One*. The play was directed by Péter Dávid, who said that the surprising results of the survey and the conversations following the performances clearly indicate that young people are not familiar with the backgrounds or the downsides of the mentioned performances (talent shows). The *SzínT (Level)*, launched in 2017, is a renewed Theater in Education program of the Tomcsa Sándor Theater, which does not only aim to teach high school students how to understand the theater, but also to turn into discussions such topics (even taboos) that are unlikely to be discussed in other public forums. Theater hereby is used as a tool.

Special classes were held on the topic of Gianina Cărbunarius' work *Stop the Tempo!* by Tünde Kocsis, a specialist at the Hungarian Theater of Cluj, followed by a successful session with Andrea P. Fincziszki and Zenkő Bekő-Fóri Zenkő at the Gergely Kis Reformed College in Baczkamadaras.

The Pufi Theater, established in Sibiu (2015), addresses its audience through pantomime performances, various theater projects, and Theater in Education programs. Their 2017 premiere, having the unusual title *MimeBassCover* had a great echo. The performance drew attention on the importance of taking attitude against violence.

In September 2015 the Cluj State Theater launched a new project called *Eat or drink?*

The aim of this educational theater lesson was to turn viewers (from pre-school to college students) into theater lovers and theater connoisseurs.

The Ariel Youth and Children's Theater in Târgu Mureș tried to create a Theater in Education performance based on the novel *Tell Zsófi* (Kosztolányi Dezső).

Beginning with the 2018-2019 seasons, the National Theater of Târgu Mureș has started a classroom-theater workshop with the title of *Stone, Paper, Scissors*. The play of Pass Andrea's drama having the same title and the related drama session was premiered on October 19, 2018.

### *Osonó Theater Workshop*

The following section explores how the history, career, worldview and play practices of the International Nagy Károly Prize<sup>19</sup> winner in Romania, the Osonó Theater Workshop, facilitate the dialogue between young people from different backgrounds, cultures, and ethnicities. According to its self-definition, "The Osonó Theater Workshop is an independent theatrical initiative, which aims to provide a space for young people's contemporary theatrical experimentation." The Osonó, led by Fazakas Misi, thinks about society projects and, in addition to his performances, it organizes more and more activities, both home and abroad, that engage the audience in a kind of common thinking. Their workshops are so unique and based on such principles that they organize theater not only in the cultural centers of big cities, but also in schools and even residential areas. A good example of this is the project in Thailand, which is based as well on the meeting of two very different cultures as on the most common social issues in these countries. Planning a co-production, Árpád Schilling contacted Osonó in 2011. A total of 50 students took part at the camp that was working specifically with theater pedagogical tools. Fazakas Misi has since used theater pedagogical tools. He believes these tools will further enhance audience engagement. Osonó's performances, whose hybrid existence between theater and education results in a constant search for place and identity,

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<sup>19</sup> The European Parliament and the Aachen International Nagy Károly Prize Foundation announce each year a competition for young people about EU development, integration and European identity. The Nagy Károly European Youth Prize is awarded to projects that: promote European and international understanding; promote a common sense of European identity and integration; they serve as a model for young people in Europe and provide a practical example of how Europeans live together as a community. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/charlemagneyouthprize/hu/rules.html>, downloaded at: 2019.07.04.

does not meet the classical rules of theater in many ways, because their pedagogical goals often overwrite theatrical aspects. All of them target a kind of border crossing by the attempt to extend the scope of the genre and to redefine its aesthetics. Opening towards an intercultural, interdisciplinary direction is also an exciting experiment and raises unavoidable questions about TIE's conventions and goals from the standpoint of genre, pedagogy, theater aesthetics, and especially dramaturgy.

### ***How Water Reflects the Face (2011)***

*How Water Reflects the Face* is the most played pieces of Osonó, and it has been staged more than 550 times. The documentary theater performance, directed by Fazakas Misi, was performed in 160 cities of 21 countries on three continents. It has represented Eastern Europe at 9 international festivals and has received numerous awards. In fact, Osonó transformed high school students' views on family, school, society, and world into a theatrical event, bravely pushing for (taboo) topics such as abortion at minor ages, divorce, parents forced to work abroad and disintegrating families. But there were also discussions about the educational systems' inability to reach out to young people, the huge gap between the generations and what is to be done with young people in this chaotic state. The performance moved students' emotions and thoughts and helped them in their search for reference points. The conversations also revealed that teenagers never really got deep into these issues, although these have a great impact on them, because adults always advised that they have enough time to deal with such things later. This also proves how little we do to help teenagers become independent-minded individuals, and we do not undertake the development of their ability to reflect, even if ninth-graders are already engaged to "real" life.

## *Minority Issues in the Osonó Theater Project*

I discuss such parts of the theater culture as the subject of minority issues and the Transylvanian psyche from the Theater in Education activities' point of view. In Romania, a public discussion on the Romanian-Hungarian issue within the official framework of Transylvanian schools is still a novelty. Osonó's performance played on June 5, 2015 in Sfântu Gheorghe, called *The Society of Unknown Friends or Picnic on a Japanese Rug* (*Cercul prietenilor neștiuți. Picnic pe un covor japonez*) is so extraordinary, because it is dealing specifically with current socio-political subjects by raising the issue of Romanian-Hungarian coexistence. The play is presenting the frictions of ethnic coexistence on both sides. The story takes place in a school where Romanian and Hungarian students study in different classrooms, separated from each other. For some, the knowledge of the Romanian language represents a barrier to integration into another circle of friends, just as in the case of the birthday guests from the play. Romanian and Hungarian high school students deal with the Romanian-Hungarian subject from their own point of view, one group does not like the other group, the answers to the question "Why?" are childish, but we know that there are serious ethnic tensions in the background. The two groups fear each other: Hungarians are reluctant to talk to Romanian guests and Romanians refer to their different musical tastes. A boy from a mixed marriage is twice as afraid: he is involved in conflict anyway. The main cause of the fear is the rigid category of national identity, which can be found in the play just as nationalism and racism. The performance is trying to change prejudice, by presenting a complex, multilateral, nuanced picture to the participants. Misi Fazakas makes his actors to speak in their mother tongue, but he also creates situations where they have to speak a foreign language: Hungarians also speak Romanian, which is inevitable at the meeting. With an accent, full of mistakes and with the inaccuracy of bilingualism, the familiar language medium is formed for the public. The director, Nina Țânțar, did not work with a finished, pre-written dramatic text, but she improvised reaching to the experience of Romanian and Hungarian youngsters, that illustrate how today's teenagers remember the past, what is the meaning of democracy for one who did not know about Ceaușescu's communist system, what it means to be Hungarian and Romanian in Transylvania 30 years after the change of regime.

## ***Waiting Room (Váróterem) Project Independent Theater Society***

This chapter deals with a troupe performing classroom drama and its educational methods. My approach is somewhat biased towards the problems of teaching Hungarian literature in Transylvania, and refers to the value-mediating role of the classroom drama and to the manner it reached my students.

However, in the heart of Transylvania, in Cluj-Napoca, the activity of the Waiting Room Project Association is gaining increasing attention. The Association has been engaged in theater pedagogy since 2009 and its main task is to create a theater language based on the elimination of the boundary between the player and the host. In the following, I analyze the theatrical endeavors of the Waiting Room, based on personal reports, library and electronic data collection and the evaluation of a questionnaire survey among the participants (about 400 students).

*Bánk Bán? Present!*, directed by Andrej Visky has been performed by the Waiting Room Project throughout Transylvania since 2012, approaching the 200th performance. The show was an important milestone in the life of the company and proved to be very successful. Their plans include classroom adaptations of several literary works, including the two dramas in their former application. Among the students of Târgu Mureș, the effect of the performance was almost maximum: almost 100% of the students were positive about what they saw and heard.

## ***The White King***

In 2017, a six months project was implemented in Târgu Mureș, where one can find a Hungarian-speaking independent institution of higher education for actors in Romania. The project was carried out with the support of the National Cooperation Fund, the Studium Foundation and the Bethlen Gábor Fund. The Roundtable Theater Education Center, together with the sophomore students in the fields of directing and theater at the University of Arts, organized a complex Theater in Education presentation, preceded by a training course in Drama Teaching. This was the first such initiative in the history of the institution, and it was in fact the final exam task.



György Dragomán's bestseller, *The White King* (2005), was processed by the Roundtable together with the students of the University of Arts in Târgu Mureş. During the show, the youngsters were not just spectators but also creative participants in the theater event. My analysis is about a specific performance that took place in Târgu Mureş in February 2017 in a classroom of the University of Arts.

Within the context of communism, within the story of the suffering of parents and grandparents, it explores the issue of adulthood, which is always relevant to students. What makes an adult an adult? What to give up and what to keep?

## CONCLUSION

My doctoral thesis is both preparation and situation report. It does not pursue either his aims or his statements, because it cannot strive for completeness; instead, it takes into account the significant achievements of the Romanian Theater in Education pioneers. It is a basic research and has a summarizing task in the field of theater science. In five chapters, the relationship between theater and education is discussed from the point of view of theater theory and performance analysis. My primary goal was to discern through this relationship the impact of Theater in Education on both areas and to show the relationship between theater and pedagogy. Starting from Herbert Read's concept of education through art and going in the direction of art pedagogy, I outlined various art pedagogical reform efforts, such as the New School, the Waldorf, the Maria Montessori- or the Ovide Decroly reform pedagogy. Based on Géza Novák's classification, I dealt with the applied theater and outlined the artistic activities as the most effective method of self-knowledge and self-formation of the child.

Next, I focus my attention on Theater in Education among the applied theatrical forms. I began my research by diving into the diversity of the topic and the mystery of its potential. After presenting the origins, development and various models (English, French, and German) of TIE, I summarize the topics, methods and results of the research on key competences. Although the differences are small, their combined effect can bring about a lasting change in young people's attitudes and behaviors, providing a more successful path in a competency-based society.

The situation of the Theater in Education in Romania is peripheral, and this is also characterized by the belated character of the Hungarian cultural public conditions in Romania. In the fourth chapter of my doctoral thesis, I trace the problems of Romanian pedagogy back to the curricular reforms, referring to the constraints of the Comenius-Herbert system and the fact that no major breakthrough has been made, as the goal of the educational work has remained unchanged. This delay is common to many countries in Europe. However, the Lisbon European Council (23-24 March 2000) stressed the importance of "human capital" and that a European framework should define new key skills for lifelong learning. These are key measures in the view of globalization and the shift towards a knowledge-based economy. This thought accompanied my analysis, and I support this by the summary of the DICE study of 2010 on the Impact of Drama Pedagogy on Lisbon Key Competences. The results of the research show significant differences in all the fields of different skills and competences examined between the youngsters who have experienced the teaching theater and drama. Mapping the relationship between public education and theater in Romania gave me many questions. I mentioned the School Otherwise week, the CDȘ program built in the framework curriculum, which could serve as a tool to fill in the gap among the skills. Then, beyond the boundaries of the school, I searched for the work of Romanian Theater in Education companies. These are hardly mentioned by the press, so my work was mostly based on personal inquiries and views. I sought to delineate the work of the Replica Educational Theater Center, the Sigma Art Cultural Foundation for Young People, the Transcena and the Viena Children's Theater.

The fifth part, the essence of my doctoral thesis, follows the Hungarian initiatives in Romania. As for classification and categorization, at first I became more and more uncertain. However as I dived more into the theme, I began to think about the immaturity, division, sometimes the biases of real experts, and the dynamism with which I was able to motivate many class communities. I started from afar, and even after a long study I had questions and doubts. I felt all this was so rudimentary in Transylvania, that there was nothing to write about and no place to look for. Then I began to remember a couple of sporadic aspirations, pointing the direction. After my revelation, I took a look at the Hungarian theaters in Romania, examined their activities, and summed up the work that was neglected but could still be classified here. I mapped out a total of 15 scattering aspirations, in addition to which I examined four complex

Theater in Education classes. I called the companies to Târgu Mureș and persuaded the school's management to give students the opportunity to attend a theater performance during classes. My deeper analysis is based on these lectures. After the national drama was taught, the Waiting Room Project had a great success among students with its performance, *Bánk Bá? Present!*. The success is also confirmed by the results of a survey completed by 400 students. Next, the Osonó Theater Workshop from Sepsiszentgyörgy had the opportunity to perform their play *How Water Reflects the Face*. There was so much interest in the play that even the largest classroom turned out to be small. Seeing my bias and the students' interest, the headmaster of the school agreed to rent the auditorium of the Mures Artists' Association (in the immediate vicinity of our school). Several Romanian classes came unexpectedly to the show, so thanks to the technical equipment of Osonó, we had Romanian subtitles.

*The Society of Unknown Friends* has taken place in the classroom, with the participation of one Romanian and one Hungarian class, discussing the problem of mixed language at school. I watched the show *Tell Zsófi* at the Ariel Theater together with a class, before doing a short analysis. *The White King* voiced the memories of communism in Târgu Mureș, and I analyzed this in a separate section. My description is also supplementary, because unfortunately the show has been played only a few times, so the professional press hardly dealt with it.

As I deepened my analysis, I became increasingly convinced that Theater in Education was not only a tool, but also an opportunity to create a new common language between educator and student, human and human. This is why I consider it essential to make professionals and workers of public education aware of Theater in Education, teaching theater and drama. Let each of them discover, through their own experiences, the inner language that can lead to special moments and insights. My research has confirmed that Theater in Education has the potential to redefine and revitalize the frameworks of teaching activities, and to provide a more constructive, cooperative approach for both teachers and students, contributing to the success of competence-based learning and education.

In conclusion, my research has mapped the Theater in Education initiatives and related activities in Romania, and my doctoral thesis considers the basic Transylvanian models of the theoretical background of action research and summarizes the concepts and literature that provide the background for the research and the conceptual basis of the research. In this way, I

offer a summary of the conduct, examination and processes of the Transylvanian Theater in Education initiatives in 2014-2018.

This doctoral thesis is a comprehensive article exploring Theater in Education, through which I would like to inspire further research for myself and for anyone who wants to explore the subject in more depth.

As Mnouchkine said, theater communicates not only with the audience – in this case the students – but also instead of them, because “they, as they often say, are alone, do not have the means to express themselves [...] We have the means of expression - the theater.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ariane Mnouchine, *A jelen művészete. Beszélgetések Fabienne Pascaudval (The Art of the Present. Interviews with Fabienne Pascaud)*, translated by Fehér Anita, Budapest, Krétakör Alapítvány – Prae.hu, 2010. 79.

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