

## Part Five: Conclusions

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This thesis has analysed the main patterns of dissemination in the Romanian tradition of staging Henrik Ibsen's plays between 1879 and 1947, using the IbsenStage database as its starting point. For this purpose, I combined Digital Humanities tools, theatre historiography, science of acting and cultural history. More specifically, the notions of national state, national theatre and *histoire croisée* were overarching. These methodological tools helped to delimit the most important features of the national Ibsen tradition prior to 1947 within the Romanian cultural space at the crossroads of Europe, which favoured territorial fluidity and an influx of foreign influences.

Romania's unique geographical and political position was evident at the time that Henrik Ibsen emerged on the national stage, as I have shown in Part Two. The free circulation of different European traditions of staging Ibsen led to the presence of French, Italian, German, Hungarian and Yiddish tours in Romania and to a landscape marked by diversity in terms of theatrical practices. The Romanian theatre world encouraged their intercrossing, as well as favoured the dissemination of contrasting and conflicting influences across a territorially changing frame, to eventually incorporate them into the local theatre practice. However, the spatial and temporal intercrossing of divergent traditions in the landscape of the foreign Ibsen performances taking place in Romania was far from homogenous. This heterogeneity led to constructive tensions between the major French, Italian and German models, and the minor Hungarian and Yiddish models, in the early Romanian Ibsen reception.

The performances in French, Italian, German and Yiddish had the most powerful impact, although their number was significantly lower compared to the Hungarian ones. Yet, the Hungarian performances were only staged in Transylvania, hence their weak impact upon the Romanian theatre. In addition, the French, Italian, German and Yiddish performances took all place in Bucharest, and occasionally visited other major cities like Craiova or Iași too, hence their stronger influence on the Romanian theatre in contrast to the performances in Hungarian. The German productions were more numerous than the French or Italian, but like the Yiddish and Hungarian productions, their spatial distribution followed ethnic demographic patterns and had more impact upon a minority group than upon Romanian locals.

This rich landscape of foreign productions encompassed numerous acting approaches, such as French naturalism and symbolism; German romanticism, naturalism, realism and Expressionism; Italian *verismo* and realism; and Yiddish eclecticism. In addition, tensions between the star-system and ensemble-system became also visible, as French, Italian and Hungarian performances privileged the star-actors, whereas German and Yiddish performances gravitated around the ensembles. However, as the Romanian Ibsen tradition demonstrates, the star-based tradition was the stronger of the two system among the local theatre practitioners.

The fluid interweaving of these approaches attests to the condition of the Romanian theatre situated at the theatrical crossroads of Europe. The central question here has to do with the assimilation of the foreign elements into the production of Ibsen within a newly emerging local theatre culture. A comparison between the Yiddish and Romanian Ibsen production indicates how different these recipes are. While the Yiddish tradition was a “melting pot” marked by hybridisation where eclecticism is a consistent feature because of the ensemble-based practice, the Romanian tradition is characterised by the complex coexistence of different, even conflicting traditions. The Romanian star-actors ensured that the foreign elements could still be identified even when they were integrated into new interpretations. Moreover, the mix of influences present in the Yiddish performances was a consequence of the absence of national boundaries to encompass the Yiddish theatre culture, which enabled it to absorb foreign elements in its constant movement across the borders of other countries. As far as the Romanian theatre tradition is concerned, the foreign elements were used by practitioners to cultivate unique, individual approaches, while they also supported the development of the national theatre. Thus, the Yiddish theatre tradition was marked by hybridisation, whereas the Romanian tradition suspended this process, which made that the foreign elements were still detectable in the interpretative choices of the local Ibsen contributors. The arbitrariness hidden in the diversity of the Romanian Ibsen tradition led to unpredictable patterns, and revealed less consistency and unity. The decentralised, fluid and unstable national environment, and its constant fragmentation, resulted in a complex coexistence of multiple recipes of staging and performing Ibsen.

In order to explain the coexistence and the assimilation of the elements that the foreign Ibsen performances introduced into the Romanian theatre culture, I analysed the national institutional context in Part Three. The functioning of the financial, administrative and legislative structures established commercialism, nationalism and aesthetics as the main forces of constraint shaping Romanian Ibsen production. These factors modelled not only the number of performances and the programming of the plays, but in some circumstances also impacted the staging approaches. The repertory statistics, which demonstrated the major competition between French and Romanian plays, also revealed that while the numbers of Ibsen productions were never high, they were comparatively consistent. This paradoxical situation was rooted in the unstable, fragmented and decentralised frameworks relating to finance, management and legislation. The low subsidy, the frequent changes of ministries administrating the National Theatre, as well as the five laws issued between 1877 and 1937, created a fluctuating context that worked both in Ibsen's favour and against him. They allowed contradictory commercial, protectionist and aesthetic interests to shape Ibsen's presence in the national repertory. The

attitude that theatres should generate revenue both in the state and in the private environment was at odds with the wish to develop a national dramaturgy that included European cultural masterpieces. This contrast is evident in the implicit competition for power to control the choice of repertory between State representatives, men of letters, and actors. Finally, the reasons employed to include or exclude Ibsen constantly changed due to the unstable institutional framework. Despite this uncertainty, Ibsen maintained an incredibly stable peripheral position in the repertory, largely due to the aesthetic value of his plays.

In Part Four, I investigated the actual patterns of dissemination in the Romanian tradition by looking at the most important Ibsen contributors. The aim of this section was to find out how foreign influences mixed with the local to create a Romanian Ibsen. I employed Digital Humanities tools such as networks, graphs and maps to identify the main patterns in the Romanian Ibsen production by interrogating points of intensity in the dataset. As the background conditions necessary to analyse these patterns, I considered the fluidity, fragmentation and the fluctuation of the institutional frameworks, as well as the diversity of acting practices entering Romania through foreign performances. The patterns highlighted the activities of star actors who were key Romanian Ibsenites prior to 1947; they also showed that directors played only a subsidiary role. The star actors made use of the institutional instability of the theatre culture to secure the freedom to experiment with multiple performance techniques in their interpretations of Ibsen's characters. The aesthetic diversity arising from this unstable context produced three threads that could be said to have matured into a dominant pattern in the Romanian Ibsen production. They revolved around psychological realism, stylised realism/Expressionism, and comedy, and were associated with three key locations: the National Theatre of Iași, the private theatre companies, and the National Theatre of Bucharest. The activities of the artists in these institutions did not ultimately evolve into a single dominant tradition. They were mostly arbitrary, eclectic mixes of practices produced by an actor-based system, which privileged the development of unique, yet unrepeatable styles only weakly transmitted from one generation to the next. Although I discussed them separately, the three threads were inherently intertwined; they did not grow in isolation, as many of the Ibsen key contributors participated in more than one production hub; but neither did they mature, as the emerging combinations of acting and staging disintegrated very quickly. They represented only potential traditions, like satellites freely roaming in the fluid space of the Romanian theatre.

Chronologically, the first production hub encompassed State Dragomir and Aglae Pruteanu's transition towards psychological realism supported by the interpretation of Ibsen on the stage of the National Theatre of Iași. The contact with and the use of concepts of experimental psychology in their acting, the intercrossing of romantic and realist techniques, and the incorporation of Ibsen plays in the curriculum at the Dramatic Arts Conservatoire already at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century made them pioneers in the development of a new performance technique. This use of Ibsen's dramas points to his position as an innovator in the national repertoire. Dragomir and Aglae's contribution was short-lived and had a low impact due to institutional isolation within a restricted geographical area; this limited the dissemination of their Ibsen performances. Their con-

nection to other networks was weak; despite the uniqueness of their contribution, it did not stand the test of time.

The second production hub addressed the contribution of the key artists at the private theatre companies, with Ion Manolescu in *Ghosts* and Mărioara Voiculescu in *Peer Gynt* as the most powerful examples. Their cases contrasted to those of Aglae Pruteanu and State Dragomir, for whom Ibsen was an innovator. Instead, for Ion Manolescu and Mărioara Voiculescu Ibsen was already an acknowledged classical, canonical playwright. Their activity in the private theatre environment confirmed this transition, which is also reflected in their acting and staging approach. Mărioara Voiculescu's *Peer Gynt* reveals that Ibsen's status as canonical playwright encouraged aesthetic experimentation. Her *en travesti* performance, accompanied by a rich stage design, music and a temperamental acting style, highlighted an expressionist dimension inspired by Max Reinhardt. Ion Manolescu's *Osvald* pointed to the role of the private Bulandra Company and the influence of Alexandru Davila's realist acting and ensemble-based approach. Although the contribution of actors attached to the Romanian private companies appears less statistically significant in IbsenStage, the existence of underinvestigated data suggests that their impact was as powerful as that of their counterparts working at the National Theatres.

The third production hub focused on the contributors of the National Theatre of Bucharest. This hub revolved around four actors – Agepsina Macri-Eftimiu, George Ciprian, Aurel Athanasescu and Nicolae Soreanu – and brought to light the contribution of Paul Gusty, the only director who is statistically relevant in the dataset. Intercrossings of acting approaches and network density are most evident in this hub, given its central institutional role in the Romanian theatre, its location for the country's most important theatre practitioners and, implicitly, Ibsen contributors. The mix of star approach and ensemble-approach at the industrial level, the blend of romantic and realist acting genres, and, finally, the combining of drama and comedy actors, characterised the Ibsen productions staged at this theatre. The most particular elements, though, were the slow emergence of an ensemble system in drama productions, and the highlighting of comedy in Ibsen's plays by placing the comedy actors as much in the foreground as the drama actors. The supervision of Paul Gusty was crucial to these changes, reflecting his growing importance as his role transformed from stage manager to stage director. Gusty applied his experience with ensemble-based comedy productions to drama productions; he acknowledged the primacy of the actor and focused on improving the actors' interpretations and understanding of the plays, rather than imposing his own conceptualisations. The Ibsen productions at the National Theatre of Bucharest changed slowly as the actors shifted from a traditional, conservatively star-based, romantic approach; these changes were not due to radical staging and acting reforms. Finally, two of the theatre's productions – *A Doll's House* (1921) and *The Wild Duck* (1920) – were popular with audiences and achieved financial success. They were re-staged again in subsequent seasons and ensured Ibsen's establishment in the permanent repertoire of the institution.

Since my analysis of the three production hubs did not produce evidence of a single interpretative approach to staging Ibsen on the Romanian stage, I continued the investigation by looking at actors' interpretations of specific Ibsen characters to examine whether there were traces of a dominant tradition. In this respect, the character site was

based on the statistics of the most performed Ibsen plays on the Romanian stage until 1947, namely *Ghosts*, *A Doll's House* and *An Enemy of the People*. The actors most relevant statistically in the performance of these plays took the roles of Oswald, Mrs Alving, Nora and Dr. Stockmann. The three threads I followed revealed Petre Sturdza's "ownership" of Dr. Stockmann; it considered the Osvalds of Aristide Demetriade and Ion Manolescu, and their connection with Constantin Nottara; and dealt with the relationship between the Mrs Alvings of Agatha Bârsescu and Mărioara Voiculescu. These actors employed unique combinations of performance techniques to represent Ibsen's character, yet there was some aesthetic transmission between their representations, especially in the case of *Ghosts*.

The thread between the Oswald interpreters is characterised by a vertical, generational transmission, whereas the thread between the Mrs Alving interpreters is distinguished by a horizontal, prestige transmission. Neither generational nor prestige transmission limited diversity, even when the Ibsen performances by older and more prestigious actors were seen as seminal on the national stage. The freedom to arrive at an individualised character interpretation included the right to contradict powerful predecessors. This is the case of the Oswald interpreters. Although Aristide Demetriade and Ion Manolescu had a romantic background and were trained under Nottara's supervision, they did not consider it necessary to adapt their interpretation of Oswald to Nottara's perspective. Demetriade preferred a naturalist interpretation to Nottara's *verismo*. The differences were even more visible in the approach of Ion Manolescu, who resisted the in-between romanticism and *verismo* of Nottara, and even Demetriade's naturalism, to develop his realist interpretation. However, a strong spatial interconnection did link these actors as they all performed in Bucharest, and Aristide Demetriade and Ion Manolescu's productions partially overlapped temporally.

In the case of the Mrs Alving interpreters, the timespan between their performances was too distant to support any strong transmission, and there was no direct contact between them spatially or temporally. Although the elements Agatha Bârsescu and Mărioara Voiculescu employed in their interpretations were similar, these actresses' backgrounds differed so greatly that their use of these elements was totally different. The connection between them was weaker than that of the Oswald actors, and the degree of freedom to arrive at individualised performance solutions was higher.

The gradual change in Ibsen's status within the Romanian repertoire is particularly evident within the character sites. His position in the repertoire of Constantin Nottara, Aristide Demetriade, Agatha Bârsescu and Petre Sturdza was justified through dramaturgical innovation, whereas for Ion Manolescu and Mărioara Voiculescu, Ibsen was already consecrated as canonical and thus suitable for interpretative genre experimentation.

The connections between the key contributors through the production hubs and the character sites provided numerous examples of intercrossings. As these hubs were significant in the Ibsen-related activities of the contributors, they shaped the structure of my analysis. Ion Manolescu and Mărioara Voiculescu were active in the private theatre hub and the National Theatre of Bucharest. Petre Sturdza, whose Ibsen career was tied to Dr. Stockmann, participated in theatre productions at the National Theatre of Iași and of Bucharest, as well as the Bulandra Company. Agatha Bârsescu is similar to Sturdza;

she was most renowned Mrs Alving in the Romanian Ibsen world while associated with both the National Theatre of Iași and Bucharest. Aristide Demetriade belongs to the Osvald character site, while his strongest institutional ties were with the National Theatre of Bucharest.

In the analysis of both the production hubs and the character sites, the mix of genres was examined to highlight the unique interpretative strategies used in the performance of Ibsen's characters. Instead of following an interpretative discipline tied to a single genre, the actors juxtaposed influences and emphasised different aspects of the acting genres, thus creating different performance recipes even when they grounded their interpretation in the same genres. The actors' freedom to select and combine performance techniques was not limited by either horizontal or vertical transmission, nor was it curtailed by an ensemble-approach in which unity and genre consistency were applied by means of a director's authority. Even when a generational transmission thread was at stake, the actors did not recycle the genre approaches of the older actors. Instead, they crafted their own interpretations in order to differentiate themselves in a competitive landscape of stars. The side effect of this creative freedom was that the unique acting recipes that emerged in the production hubs and character sites quickly disintegrated. The broken, fluctuating frameworks of finance, administration and legislation and the weak generational and prestige ties were partly responsible, but the overall fluidity and the lack of coagulation were also a product of the dominance of the actor in the Romanian Ibsen production.

It is arguable that Romanian actors were probably more eclectic in their mixing of genres to interpret Ibsen than other European key contributors. Antoine, Lugné-Poë, Ermete Zacconi or Lindemann advocated particular approaches to performing Ibsen that emerged out of their strong French, Italian and German theatre cultures. By contrast, the Romanian actors played with a mix of foreign and local genres in different combinations without advocating a single approach. The only significant local Romanian elements in these approaches were the psychological realism school of Aglae Pruteanu and State Dragomir, and the mix of drama and comedy enhanced through the work of Paul Gusti.

When it came to the literal embodiment of Ibsen characters, the Romanian actors intertwined two layers of physical expression. The dominant layer focused on emotion, passion, temperament, and corporeal expressivity to move the audience; it is often defined as a Latin characteristic of the interrelationship between audience and performer. This Latin dimension was perceived as an intrinsic aspect of the Romanian theatre and not as a foreign influence; it functioned as a bridge that facilitated the assimilation of elements of heightened expressivity that existed within the French and Italian genres – especially *verismo*. The Ibsen key contributors for whom this layer was most evident were Petre Sturdza, Aglae Pruteanu, Mărioara Voiculescu, Agatha Bârsescu, Aristide Demetriade, Constantin Nottara and Agepsina Macri. The notion of “expressivity” appears as a keyword defining the Romanian actor's approach, Agatha Bârsescu is a prime example: “a cărei excepțională expresivitate scenică a dus în lume, departe, renumele actorului român” (her exceptional stage expressiveness consecrated the Romanian actor abroad; my translation) (Vasiliu 1995: 172). A second, subsidiary layer is characterised by simplicity, sobriety and pragmatism, most often seen as Germanic characteristics, and associ-

ated with naturalism and realism genres. The key contributors most associated with this layer were State Dragomir, Ion Manolescu and Paul Gusty, although the latter was the only direct and open promoter of the German model. With regard to German Expressionism as utilised by Mărioara Voiculescu, Agatha Bârsescu, Aristide Demetriade and Ion Manolescu, this genre was adapted to express the strong passions and emotions associated with the Latin temperament.

What do these patterns of dissemination in the Romanian Ibsen production tell us about his impact upon the national theatre? In other words, how did the foreign Ibsen performances, the institutional framework, and the Romanian key contributors' efforts to promote his works affect the development of the local theatre life? Firstly, the foreign Ibsen productions had a moderate impact overall on the multilingual Romanian audience; yet the actors were more influenced by French and Italian performances than German, Hungarian or Yiddish. Secondly, the tensions at the level of the financial, administrative and legislative frameworks between commercialist, protectionist and aesthetic aims were instrumental in securing Ibsen's minor, yet stable position in the repertory. Thirdly, the efforts of the actors to promote Ibsen reveal his influence upon their acting and staging perspectives.

The actors whose theatrical practice was most influenced by Ibsen were those for whom he was a unique, innovative presence in the repertory. In the case of State Dragomir and Aglae Pruteanu, Ibsen supported the transition from romanticism towards psychological realism and an acting practice that drew on experimental psychology, philosophy and natural sciences. Petre Sturdza's case illustrates Ibsen's influence on a transition from romanticism to Italian *verismo*, which was based on techniques similar to Pruteanu and Dragomir's, yet less conceptualised. Dragomir, Pruteanu and Sturdza's initiatives to stage Ibsen were all attempts to modernise the repertory and use his plays as a mechanism to renew Romanian theatre life at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the case of Aristide Demetriade, Ibsen's unique position in the repertory supported the transition from romantic to naturalist acting, as an intermediary phase between Nottara's approach located between romanticism and *verismo* and Manolescu's stylised realism. Ibsen's impact on Demetriade was probably moderate in comparison to his impact on Dragomir, Pruteanu and Sturdza. In the repertory of Agatha Bârsescu, Ibsen's special position marked a change of acting approach from romanticism to Expressionism; but given the actress's strong attachment to romanticism and her appropriation of Expressionism, Ibsen's impact on her must have been low or moderate. Ibsen shaped her acting on the surface rather than at a deeper level, and her contribution represented a return to an older tradition rather than a modernisation of the Romanian stage.

The acting of younger artists such as Ion Manolescu and Mărioara Voiculescu was less influenced by Ibsen. Ion Manolescu's repertoire included not only Ibsen, but also other modern playwrights. He excelled in the interpretation of modern drama; his first acknowledgeable success was in Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson's *The Bankrupt*, although Osvald was one of his major roles. Ibsen's plays certainly helped him refine his realist acting techniques, even if it did not shape them. Mărioara Voiculescu used Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* to create an expressionist theatre, while her production of *Ghosts* still employed her renowned temperamental approach, even if it was somewhat moderated.



Paul Gusty, the only director in the list, used Ibsen to support his already established perspectives on staging and directing. The plays offered him solid ground to slowly but surely build a realist, ensemble-based theatre and encourage realist acting in his drama productions. Gusty's major contribution to Ibsen's consecration on the Romanian stage was to further the reforms of I. L. Caragiale and Al. Davila from a position as practitioner rather than as manager.

The Romanian Ibsen production prior to 1947 enriched the European Ibsen tradition with a high degree of diversity expressed through theatre practitioners' freedom to create unique aesthetic interpretations. The numerous influences coming into the country enhanced rather than limited the creativity of the Romanian actors and transformed the Romanian theatre field into crossroads where the greatest European theatre cultures could interact. Hubs coagulated around new approaches to acting and staging, emerging quickly and just as quickly disappearing again. The psychological realism school, the expressionist experiments, and the mix of drama and comedy were all powerful threads and make it impossible to talk about a single trend in the Romanian Ibsen tradition. A stronger constraining force over the whole field of the Romanian Ibsen production would have been necessary to privilege one specific thread since creative diversity depends on how powerfully the forces of constraint confine artistic experimentation: "We look for the forces that have constrained the diversity of world theatre through the successful promotion of the play; we look for similarities between adaptations because they point to constraining forces that in some way influence the creative process" (Holledge et al. 2016: 20). However, in the fluid institutional context of the newly emerging national theatre, marked by the instability of the financial, administrative and legislative structures and by a constant shift in focus from commercialism to protectionism and aestheticism, a strong overarching force of constraint did not exist. Therefore, we must not judge the ephemeral and fragmentary existence of the main production hubs as a disadvantage; rather, we should view it as the preconditions for the expression of artistic richness in an inherently open and fluid cultural landscape, marked by intercrossings and tensions between local and foreign elements.

This is especially relevant since the Romanian Ibsen production under communism did involve creative restrictions tied to an apparent institutional stability. The extraordinary playfulness in Ibsen production, which lasted for more than 50 years, ended once a strong force of constraint was imposed when the communist regime took hold of the national theatre field and dissolved its eclectic diversity. Once the liberty to experiment on the national stage was diminished, artists could no longer utilise the actor-based system to display the uniqueness of their own interpretations. The contrast before and after 1947 highlights the importance of the diversity of the star actors' recipes for the Romanian Ibsen production, how it was supported by the fragmented, decentralised institutional system, and why no dominant tradition coagulated.

What is truly unique about Romanian Ibsen prior to 1947 is its history as a European, cosmopolitan meeting point in which processes of coagulation and hybridisation were suspended. It was as kaleidoscopic and polyphonic as the Romanian theatre culture itself; it refused to close its geographical and aesthetic borders, and suspended the process of merging influences into a single form out of autochthonous and allochthonous elements. It was not a "melting pot", but maintained the discrete character of each of these



elements precisely because of the national theatre's decentralised, unstable and fluid nature. This playful diversity, based on fluidity, openness and a rejection of closing made it impossible for a hybrid Romanian Ibsen to emerge on the national stage; it also hindered the emergence of a local Ibsen cleansed of foreign influence. Whereas diversity, hybridisation, and the intercrossings of foreign with local theatrical forms are typical of many theatre cultures, it is common that either diachronic or synchronic processes of cultural transmission arrive at a point at which dominant traits are decisively defined. By contrast, there is no final moment or point of arrival in the Romanian Ibsen production prior to 1947, as none of the threads I have identified assumed a dominant position.

The desire to assert an aesthetically unique quality to the early Romanian Ibsen tradition and thus to validate the national theatre culture might encourage us to isolate and elevate a specific interpretative approach, but this investigation has shown the impossibility of pointing to one hub or site and declaring that "this is *the* Romanian Ibsen". If anything, the Romanian Ibsen production is, ironically, an example of a culture's ability to suspend essentialism and re-invent itself continuously. The Romanian Ibsen reveals that defining a "national essence" is not possible in a cultural space that rejects essentialisation in spite of the very desire to define itself through one specifically national element. Thus, I agree with the authors of *A Global Doll's House*, who stated that the "attempts to identify unique properties [...] are doomed to fail, not only because of the diversity of cultural, geographical, and temporal locations of production, but also because of the transformative processes inherent in theatrical adaptation" (ibid: 12). Their analysis applies to much broader geographical and temporal frameworks, yet this statement equally applies to the Romanian Ibsen production, at the crossroads of Europe, marked by fluid spatial and temporal frames, and by the constant shift in any force that might have constrained diversity. The Romanian Ibsen production prior to 1947 was a space that welcomed diversity rather than national xenophobia, despite inevitable tensions; it was an egalitarian society that empowered theatre as a negotiation tool between cultures as early as the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Finally, this research opens up avenues for new inquiries into Henrik Ibsen's presence in the Romanian cultural space. The focus on the national practice of acting until 1947 provides the premises for a further study of Romanian Ibsen production during the communist era. The emergence of constraint over the national theatre culture that accompanied the new political regime contrasts with the earlier institutional instability, which had allowed an extremely diverse and free landscape. The dissolution of the private theatre companies was replaced by the absolute dominance of the institution of the National Theatre, although decentralisation did not entirely disappear. In addition, the geographical landscape also remained stable, in contrast to the period prior to 1947, when the fluid territorial shape favoured the immersion of numerous foreign influences. At the level of staging, the reign of the actors, which had characterised the national theatre life before communism, ended once the ensemble-based approach was institutionalised and directors gained industrial power. At the level of acting, the richness of acting genres and the unique mixes in the acting styles of the star actors shifted into the richness of the directorial approaches in ensemble-based productions. Finally, even the focus on specific Ibsen plays and characters changed, so that *Ghosts* and *An Enemy of the People* were no longer the most frequently performed plays.

A second area of further study that builds upon the research in this thesis is tied to the theatre reviews, memoirs and biographies that I have employed to identify the diversity of aesthetic interpretation in the Romanian Ibsen productions through the practice of acting. This data is a rich resource to further explore the audience reception to early Romanian Ibsen performances. A future research path would involve analysing the impact of these diverse acting approaches on the meanings extracted by audiences from the narrative within Ibsen's plays. For instance, at the industrial level it is possible that an ensemble approach highlights the social dynamics in a drama for the spectator by focusing on the multiple interrelationships of the characters, thus revealing social structures. By contrast, the star actor approach can encourage spectators to concentrate on an individual's experience and view the social structure of the play through her/his eyes.

At the acting level, the various genres employed by actors highlight different meanings in Ibsen's plays. For instance, a naturalist production encourages the spectator to perceive the mimetically represented environment as causal in the construction of characters on stage. By contrast, *verismo*, emphasising physiological pathology, prevents the spectator from identifying himself/herself with the character due to its extreme renditions and in spite of the passionate and emotional approaches. Finally, Expressionism encouraged the spectator to focus on the theatrical nature of the performance and acknowledge the archetypal human traits in the characters.

All the meanings concerning Ibsen's plays highlighted in the Romanian productions and based on the aforementioned genres were integrated in the critical reception of the performances. Therefore, a reception study on Ibsen in the Romanian theatre will involve interrogating the traces left from performances in reviews, memoirs, and articles in order to establish these meanings and connect them with the findings of this thesis. Moreover, the diversity of meanings would be interrogated with relation to the diversity of literary viewpoints applied to Ibsen's dramaturgy. Since most theatre reviews were written by Romanian men of letters, the critical reception to Ibsen's dramaturgy represents a field where literature and theatre meet, pointing at the complex encounter of meanings drawn from the practice of acting and from literary analysis. Finally, I argue that the real literary breakthrough of Ibsen in Romania took place in the interwar period, when most translations of his plays were published, after his breakthrough on the Romanian stage. Therefore, the present research is a fundamental step in understanding how the contribution of the theatre practitioners' and the diversity they promoted through their unique styles paved the way for Ibsen's assimilation into Romanian culture and even impacted the playwright's literary reception. The actors not only prepared the way for his establishment in the Romanian literary landscape, they also furthered the translations of his plays in their performances. This study of Ibsen's reception in Romania offers a particularly rich direction for further research because it can connect the theatrical and literary Romanian theatre fields, and point to intersections and tensions between them. It could provide us with an interdisciplinary analysis of the meanings discovered within Ibsen's texts by the men of letters and theatre practitioners alike, enhancing once again the interpretative diversity of the Romanian cultural space that has been demonstrated by the findings of this thesis.