

LAUDATIO

in honour

of Academician and Professor Mircea DUMITRU, PhD

on the occasion of being awarded the title of

Doctor Honoris Causa

of Alexandru Ioan Cuza University Iași

Esteemed Academician Mircea Dumitru,

Esteemed Rector,

Esteemed President of the Senate,

Esteemed colleagues,

Dear guests,

I find myself, *hic et nunc*, in the honouring and unrepeatable position of delivering a *Laudatio*. It is honouring for all and unrepeatable for each. Honouring, because ceremonies of this kind will continue to take place; unrepeatable, because no one may receive this distinction twice from the same institution. And all this because, in the words of a physicist who coined and defined the term “black hole”, time is the means by which nature ensured that not everything happens at once. This is the abstract reason why Academician Mircea Dumitru is present among us at this very moment.

The concrete reason is a proposal which, once accepted, made today’s gathering possible: thus, at the initiative of the Department of Philosophy within the Faculty of Philosophy and Social-Political Sciences, and with the constant support from the Rector, Professor Liviu-George Maha, all conditions have been met for Academician Professor Mircea Dumitru to be awarded the *Doctor Honoris Causa* title of Alexandru Ioan Cuza University Iași, as an unequivocal recognition of his academic and civic merits, poignantly demonstrated over time.

Academician Mircea Dumitru is one of the most brilliant philosophers in Romania, enjoying an undisputed international reputation in the fields of Analytic Philosophy and Logic. A contemporary Romanian philosopher, Academician Ilie Pârvu, expresses his appreciation unreservedly. I quote: “Professor Mircea Dumitru is an eminent logician and a highly competent

analytic philosopher, thereby contributing to the recognition within the international philosophical community of Romania's theoretical philosophy—a branch of philosophy that is universally appreciated for its valences of rigour and depth”.

Taking into account this aspect, and almost as a form of overcompensation, it should also be noted that “he has perhaps done more than anyone to further the cause of analytic philosophy in Romania”, as stated by Kit Fine, one of the most prominent figures in contemporary analytic philosophy, whose primary successor is considered to be none other than Mircea Dumitru himself. Professor Dumitru is, *de facto*, a leading member of the contemporary analytic philosophy community, notably through his undertaking of extending Kit Fine's semantic relationalism to metaphysics, the philosophy of language, the philosophy of mind, and moral philosophy.

Who, what and how is Mircea Dumitru?

He was born in Bucharest on July 14, 1960. He pursued his early education at the Music and Fine Arts Secondary High School in Craiova (1967–1972) and later at the Music High School No. 1 in Bucharest (1972–1979). Between 1980 and 1985, he attended undergraduate studies at the Faculty of History and Philosophy, specialising in Philosophy at the University of Bucharest. He holds a PhD in Philosophy from Tulane University, New Orleans (May 1998), with a doctoral thesis on modal logic and the Philosophy of Mathematics. He also has a PhD in Philosophy from the University of Bucharest (July 1998), with a thesis on the philosophy of language.

In a letter of recommendation (which Mircea Dumitru generously shared with me, granting permission to use it), Kit Fine states: “He began life as a music student and was well on his way to pursuing a career as a violinist. But he decided for better and worse—the better for philosophy and the worse for music—to pursue a career in philosophy”. Andrei Pleșu adds, in a *Foreword* to Mircea Dumitru's book *Lumi ale gândirii. Zece eseuri logico-metafizice* [*Worlds of Thought. Ten Logical and Metaphysical Essays*], Polirom Publishing House, Iași 2019, p. 11: “It is no coincidence that the first steps in Mircea Dumitru's education are tied to the universe of music. Like architecture, music is more mysteriously connected to mathematics, to structures of exactness”. I would add to the Pythagorean music of the spheres, which we do not perceive distinctly, precisely because we live within it and express it through the theory of numerical harmony. Mircea Dumitru concludes: “Music is, alongside the life of those I love, the best and most beautiful part of my existence. It is the form of life without a counterpart in any other experience, not even in the strictly professional one, which I have pursued constantly, without any

interruption, for forty years: philosophy and logic. It is highly likely that my early musical propensities, correlated with a great passion for mathematics during my formative years, ultimately led me to philosophy and, especially, to logic—that is, to a field whose rigour, symmetry, clarity, and aspiration towards coordination, the purity of form and order, are matched only by the entirely similar stylistic traits of music [...]. I have had the privilege of carrying out personal conversations with the philosopher Kit Fine (a metaphysician and a logician; probably the most relevant and influential thinker of the moment, a genius in our field), who is also a fully accomplished pianist and composer (‘amateur’). From our discussions on logic and music, I will convey two essential distinguishing features shared by the ‘stylistics’ of both logic and music. Fine tells us that the most important logical operation is that of coordination: of the expressions of language with one another, of thoughts with each other, but also of linguistic expressions with the thoughts those expressions constitute and convey. Coordination is also related to the intrinsic nature of music. Then, in the opposite direction, from music to philosophy, logic, and argumentation/reasoning, Fine considers that the accumulation of a tonal tension, ultimately resolved in a cadence naturally leading to the conclusion of the musical piece, is the essence of a musical work; it belongs to the intrinsic nature of music”. (*Ut musica philosophia et logica or Why Musical Education?*, in *Dilema Veche*, no. 862, 15–21 October 2020). I was especially eager to recount these older, yet ever fresh, reflections of today’s honouree!

I have frequently mentioned the name of Kit Fine. It is worth pausing to reflect upon the connection between the two, for it renders the intellectual and human profile of Mircea Dumitru significantly more accessible. The letter of recommendation is both flattering and conscientious, yet accurate. The weight of this letter lies in the stature of the one who authored it, and who has described his own general approach to philosophy as follows: “I’m firmly of the opinion that real progress in philosophy can only come from taking common sense seriously. A deviation from common sense is usually an indication that a mistake has been made” (Interview granted by Fine to Richard Marshall under the title “Metaphysical Kit”, published in the literary magazine *3:AM Magazine* on March 23rd, 2012, and republished on March 8th, 2022.) As if further developing this line of thought, Mircea Dumitru states in his most recent work, published by Polirom Publishing House, Iași, 2025, entitled *Filosofia și limitele gândirii. Zece eseuri de Filosofie teoretică [Philosophy and the Limits of Thought. Ten Essays in Theoretical Philosophy]*: “It is counterproductive to venture into the realm of illusory answers or solutions when what we truly

ought to do is learn how to ask the right questions. If we choose to ignore this warning, the risk is clearly increased confusion. Furthermore, if our task is to determine which interrogations are fertile within the context of searching within our consciousness, then the philosophy of mind—and good philosophising in general—is by no means a luxury. It may, in fact, be the key to deciphering the enigma and the mystery of consciousness”.

Adrian Miroiu writes about this book in the *Preface*: “Mircea Dumitru is one of the few Romanian philosophers who have taken seriously the requirement that philosophy address highly precise topics using the tools of contemporary logic. The book remarkably exemplifies the author’s status as a professional philosopher, demonstrating competence and a thorough connection to cutting-edge international research. At the same time, the book shows how an analytical mind can make abstract and complex statements intelligible even to a reader who may not be well-acquainted with the topics discussed”.

The signature of Professor of Metaphysics, Logic, Philosophy of Language, and Mathematics at New York University, Kit Fine—former editor of the *Journal of Symbolic Logic*—is followed by a sequence of three titles: FBA (*Fellow of the British Academy*), AAAS (*The American Academy of Arts and Sciences*), and *Silver Professor of Philosophy and Mathematics*. The title of “Silver Professor” is awarded in recognition of numerous outstanding accomplishments and exemplary commitment to higher education, and it is an academic distinction granted exclusively by New York University.

Here is what Mircea Dumitru says about Kit Fine in a particular *Introduction*: “This book is the first edited volume on the philosophy of one of the most seminal and profound contemporary philosophers. Over the last forty-odd years, Kit Fine has been one of the most influential and original analytic philosophers. He has made provocative and innovative contributions to several areas of systematic philosophy, including philosophy of language, metaphysics, and the philosophy of mathematics, as well as a number of topics in philosophical logic, such as modal logic, relevance logic, the logic of essence, and the logic of vagueness. These contributions have helped reshape the agendas of those fields and have given fresh impetus to a number of perennial debates. [...]. Fine’s work is greatly appreciated by analytic philosophers, undoubtedly due to both its technical sophistication and its impressive philosophical breadth. According to British philosopher Timothy Williamson, Fine’s groundbreaking arguments are often advanced "with characteristic brilliance and rigor. [...]. Fine’s impulse towards stepping outside the narrow

confines of contemporary analytic philosophy and towards grappling with a multitude of complicated questions have arguably contributed to the philosopher's far-reaching appeal and recognition. [...]. This volume is intended for both professional philosophers and graduate and undergraduate students interested in metaphysics, language, and philosophical logic. It is our hope that readers will benefit from the general level of scholarship in the book and from the more particular debates over Kit Fine's novel theories on meaning and representation, arbitrary objects, essence, ontological realism, metaphysics of modality, and constitution of things. More generally, it is my hope that a thorough discussion of the work of a very innovative and profound author such as Kit Fine can contribute to the better understanding of what is at stake within contemporary analytic philosophy" (Mircea Dumitru, "Introduction: Kit Fine - A Philosopher's Philosopher", introduction to *Metaphysics, Meaning, and Modality. Themes from Kit Fine*, edited by Mircea Dumitru, Oxford University Press, 2020, pp. 1, 2, 9).

What does Kit Fine add regarding Mircea Dumitru? According to him, "Professor Mircea Dumitru has had an extraordinarily distinguished academic career and one that has been quite remarkable in its combination of pure academic research with a range of other activities". For instance, Fine continues, "his Ph.D of 1998, written under the supervision of the distinguished philosopher, Graeme Forbes, was on the foundations of modal logic. This work spelled out the connections between the 'incompleteness phenomenon' in modal logic and the expressive power of second order logic; and it combined, to a great degree, the technical mastery of a difficult area of modal logic with acute sensitivity to its philosophical implications. This work was later published in Romanian as *Incompleteness and Modality: Modal Logic as Higher-Order Logic* (foreword by Profesor Graeme Forbes and afterword by Profesor Melvin Fitting) by Paideia Publishing House, Bucharest, 2001, and received the prize 'Mircea Florian' of the Romanian Academy; and a revamped version of this work, *Modal Incompleteness and Higher-Order Logic*, is now scheduled for publication with Springer". In the *Foreword* to the same volume, p. 10, Professor Forbes writes: "The reader will find in Mircea Dumitru a reliable and competent guide through this rugged and difficult terrain", while Melvin Fitting states in the *Afterword*, p. 232: "This is a book that non-specialists can also read. Investigations of this kind are important not because they prove new theorems, but because they offer new perspectives on known results, which helps refine our ability to discern their true nature".

In Mircea Dumitru's own clarifying terms, on pp. 11–12, we read: “I aim to provide a formally adequate and philosophically clarifying explanation for modal incompleteness, based on the concept that modal logic is essentially second-order in nature. The incompleteness of second-order logic can explain the existence of incomplete modal systems”.

Thus, on one hand, the limits of modal logic systems become clear, as do the ways in which the modal concepts of necessity and possibility can be rigorously interpreted in metaphysical terms using the semantics of possible worlds. On the other hand, the relationship between the modal validity of statements and truth within higher-order logic is also elucidated. The underlying idea is the connection between incompleteness in modal logic and the expressive power of higher-order logic, which begins precisely with the fact that modal logic is a fragment of classical second-order logic. Briefly, the doctoral thesis develops an explanation based on second-order logic for the phenomenon of incompleteness in modal logic.

Following his work on the foundations of modal logic, Professor Dumitru expanded his field of research into many other areas of philosophy. This research can be divided into four main directions, which I will succinctly outline below:

1. Contributions to philosophical logic and the philosophy of language, which include studies on fiction and empty terms, necessity and logical form, belief attribution, relational approaches to semantics, and the normativity of logic. As a proponent of exceptionalism regarding the epistemological and methodological status of logic as a science, Mircea Dumitru concludes: “Logic enjoys a kind of exceptional position that grants it a distinctive and unique character and renders it singular within the broader family of rational inquiries into the world”. (This paper is part of the collective volume *Acta Philosophica Fennica*, Hansaprint, Helsinki, 2020, p. 63—the outcome of an annual meeting of the International Institute of Philosophy co-hosted by the University of Helsinki and the Philosophical Society in Finland.) A few clarifications: the phrases *empty terms* and *belief attribution* may seem rather pretentious, but in fact, they are fundamental tools in philosophical logic and the philosophy of language. Empty terms are messages that appear to lack meaning. Belief attribution refers to uses of propositions in the form “N believes that *p*”, where *N* is a noun phrase and *p* a proposition. Their semantic and logical properties have been debated under the hypothesis that the analysis of beliefs can be extended to other propositional attitudes,

such as desire, knowledge, or fear. Most of the debate focuses on two issues: whether *belief* implies a relationship, on one hand, and how *de re* and *de dicto* attributions differ from one another, on the other hand—frequent topics in Mircea Dumitru’s writings. Frege and Russell have inspired most discussions concerning the ascription of beliefs and belief attributions, providing a central point for debates among Russellians, Fregeans, and others. In the philosophy of language, Mircea Dumitru examines how natural language conveys modal truths, the relationship between linguistic expressions and metaphysical structures, the functions of referential and modal expressions within statements, and how statements can reflect the fundamental truths of reality. The overarching topic is the fragmentation of meaning, and the thesis lies at the intersection between the philosophy of language and the philosophy of mind.

2. The second category encompasses works related to other areas of theoretical philosophy. They include texts on Wittgenstein concerning the concept of necessity and overcoming it, the abolition of logic, and the philosophy of mathematics. In addition, Gödel’s contribution to the development of modal logic and the implications of the incompleteness theorem for the algorithmic conception of mind. The role of experiments in philosophy is likewise examined—or philosophy between conceptual analysis and experiment, between the *a priori* and the empirical—as well as the explanation for phenomenal consciousness, discussions of realism and anti-realism, not to mention studies within philosophy history regarding self-predication and the unity of virtues in Plato’s *Protagoras* dialogue, or the topic of substance and *philia* in Aristotle. Mircea Dumitru, for instance, shows how *philia* is related to the notion of individual substance in his study published in the collective volume published by the prestigious Lexington Books in 2021, entitled *Love as Common Ground*, edited by Paul Stuart Fiddes, Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Oxford and former Chair of the Faculty of Theology at Oxford (himself an FBA—*Fellow of the British Academy*). Also worth recalling here is the volume *Metaphysics, Meaning, and Modality. Themes from Kit Fine*, edited by Mircea Dumitru (who also wrote the introduction), published by Oxford University Press in 2020, noteworthy as the first collective volume to put together original studies on the thought of one of the most

renowned contemporary philosophers, each contributor's study benefitting, in the second part, from a detailed commentary penned by Kit Fine himself.

3. Thirdly, there are works relating to the humanities in a broad sense. They include studies on the role of the humanities in higher education, notably the essay „Sfârșitul umanioarelor? De ce mai avem încă nevoie de educație umanistă în universități?” [“The End of the Humanities? Why We Still Need Humanities in Universities?”], published in the volume *Philosophy in the Contemporary University*, West University Press, Timișoara, 2017. I quote: “Without realising it, we are experiencing a ‘silent crisis’, as Nussbaum warns us” (Martha Nussbaum, *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities?*, Princeton University Press, 2010, p. 14; Nussbaum teaches Ethics and Law at the University of Chicago. A specialist in ancient Greek and Roman philosophy, political philosophy, and ethics, and herself both an FBA – *Fellow of the British Academy* – and an alumnus of the AAAS – *The American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, she is today recognised as one of the most prolific and influential public intellectuals worldwide), “in which governments and policymakers, motivated by a misguided social and cultural pedagogy, equate economic growth with the development of human personality”. Other studies in this field concern the nature of democracy and the tense relationship between democracy, science, and truth, given that we witness an epistemophobic assault on the notions of “objective truth” and “evidence-based knowledge”. Mircea Dumitru starts from the premise that natural sciences do not oppose the humanities—that this is not a matter of opposition but of alliance, a “new alliance”, a “metamorphosis of science”, to borrow the title of the famous book by Ilya Prigogine (Radu Bălescu, a Belgian physicist of Romanian origin, honorary member of the Romanian Academy since 1990, earned his doctorate in physics under Prigogine; Bălescu died in Drobeta Turnu Severin in 2006, not before making significant contributions to thermodynamics, static mechanics, irreversible processes, plasma theory, and kinetic equations) and Isabelle Stengers. Sorin Vieru wrote in the *Afterword* to the book entitled *Explorări logico-filosofice* [*Logical-Philosophical Explorations*], Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 2004, regarding this perspective: “The book *Logical-Philosophical Explorations* is relevant and representative in two respects.

First, because it provides, through eight wide-ranging scientific studies, an image of the great thematic potential that ‘philosophical logic’ holds today—a pursuit that can be equally characterised as having a logical source and a philosophical scope, and a philosophical source and logical scope; in other words, it is philosophy converted into logic and logic converted into philosophy. Secondly, the book is representative of the remarkable work authored by a Romanian philosopher specialised in logic. Professor Mircea Dumitru is an active participant at the heart of our intellectual life and is among those attesting to the connection between philosophy, science, and life—a connection requiring constant revalidation with each advance in knowledge”.

4. Finally, among Mircea Dumitru’s works, there are some with a more pronounced pedagogical emphasis. They include seventeen Romanian translations of essential texts from analytic philosophy, a *Logic and Argumentation* textbook for high school students (which he co-authored), as well as the editing and supervision of several collective volumes.

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Considering all aspects above, there is no doubt that Professor Mircea Dumitru is the most renowned and highly regarded contemporary Romanian philosopher in the international philosophical community, not only within the analytic tradition. He is the author of ten books, with additional volumes already submitted for publication or currently in preparation, over fifty studies published in collective volumes, more than one hundred studies and papers—many in English and featured in prestigious international journals—numerous introductory studies, and over twenty translations of works and volumes by prominent figures in metaphysics, philosophical logic, and the philosophy of language (to mention only a few: Chisholm, Nozick, Wittgenstein, Newton-Smith, Kripke, Quine, Nagel). He has also authored dozens of studies, reviews, and notes in specialised Romanian journals and has attended over two hundred congresses, academic conferences, summer schools, and seminars. In the *Foreword* mentioned earlier, Andrei Pleșu also wrote: “Mircea Dumitru represents, in Romania, a segment of contemporary thought that is less frequented by the general public, even among those interested in ‘metaphysics’. It is what I would dub the ‘geometric’ side of the spirit: logic, analytic philosophy, semantics—in other words, everything pertaining to the *underlying* metabolism of philosophical searches, the procedural

foundation of elaborating and formulating ideas. A reader should not be intimidated by what may initially seem like technical jargon. If they accept the challenge, they will discover new philosophical pleasures born of a taste for rigour, for logical construction, for a kind of inquiry into meaning that differs in tone from that of traditional speculative thought”.

What is truly remarkable is that alongside this extraordinarily prolific academic career, Professor Dumitru has also pursued an exceptional administrative path. He served as Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy (2000–2008), Vice-Rector (2008–2011), and Rector of the University of Bucharest from 2011 to 2019, as well as Minister of Education. During his tenure, he implemented much-needed reforms and stood firmly against all forms of political interference and pressure. Academician Ilie Pârvu was right to note: “In a more rational Romanian society, the impact of his programs and projects would have brought about a different level of scientific and cultural performances in research and education”. He has also held numerous important institutional positions worldwide. They include the presidency of the “European Society for Analytic Philosophy” from 2011 to 2014, the presidency of the “International Institute of Philosophy” from 2017 to 2021, and, most recently, the executive directorship of the “Fulbright Commission for Romania”. He has also served as a *Visiting Professor* at many prestigious universities in European countries (Finland, France), in the United States (at CUNY and New York University), and in China (Beijing Normal University and Shaanxi Normal University, Xi’an). He is a Professor at the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Bucharest, a Corresponding Member (since 2014) and a Full Member of the Romanian Academy (since 2021), and, as of May 2022, Vice President of the Romanian Academy. Since 2021, he has served as President of the Section of Philosophy, Theology, Psychology, and Pedagogy of the Romanian Academy, as well as Director of the “Constantin Rădulescu-Motru” Institute of Philosophy and Psychology of the Romanian Academy. Additionally, since 2024, he has been the President of CNATDCU.

For his wide-ranging academic, scientific, and civic work, Professor Mircea Dumitru has received coveted national and international honours: he holds the title of *Doctor Honoris Causa* granted by several universities in Romania and abroad and has been the recipient of numerous prizes, distinctions, and state orders, among which the “Bernardo O’Higgins” Order (the rank of Grand Officer), awarded by the President of the Republic of Chile (in 2005), the Romanian National Order “Faithful Service” (the rank of Knight, in 2019), and the *Ordre du Mérite*, awarded by the President of France (in 2021).

Over the years, Professor Mircea Dumitru has collaborated extensively in the fields of education and research through institutional partnerships, participation in doctoral thesis defence committees, academic competitions, conferences, scientific debates, and other activities. He still collaborates, and I am confident he will continue to do so, with the Faculty of Philosophy and Social-Political Sciences and with Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, today's ceremony being a testimony to this ongoing relationship.

Philosopher Kit Fine concludes his letter to Mircea Dumitru with the following words: “One might well wonder if Professor Dumitru, for all his modesty, is not one person but three people going under a single name”.

Academician Mircea Dumitru,

The title of *Doctor Honoris Causa*, which greatly honours us—and, we hope, also honours Your Excellency, since you have accepted our proposal—is grounded in a multifaceted recognition:

- of the high quality and distinction of your scientific research;
- of your outstanding achievements in the fields of your interest (formal logic, philosophical logic, philosophy of language, philosophy of mind, and their correlation to metaphysics and ontology);
- of your original interpretative capacity in a domain where originality is not always welcomed—and even when welcomed, it remains a rarity;
- of your remarkably refined analytical and critical spirit;
- of your argumentative rigour within your areas of expertise;
- of your internationally recognised methodological innovation;
- of your exceptional contributions to philosophy, education, and academic management;
- of your commitment to strengthening academic solidarity in promoting and defending the principles of academic integrity and in providing unwavering support for humanistic education.

With the deepest gratitude for all of the above—and for all that I have not had the time to mention but equally believe in and deeply value—on behalf of the academic community of Alexandru Ioan Cuza University in Iași, and upon conferring the title of *Doctor Honoris Causa*, I extend the following wish: *Vitam longam vivas, crescas, floreas, excellentissime et reverendissime Professor Mircea Dumitru.*

The *Laudatio* Commission

President:

Professor **Liviu-George MAHA**, PhD
Rector of Alexandru Ioan Cuza in Iași

Members:

Professor **Ovidiu-Gabriel IANCU**, PhD
President of Senate of Alexandru Ioan Cuza in Iași

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Faculty of Philosophy and Social-Political Sciences

Professor **Ioan-Alexandru TOFAN**, PhD
Faculty of Philosophy and Social-Political Sciences

Iași, 1st of July 2025