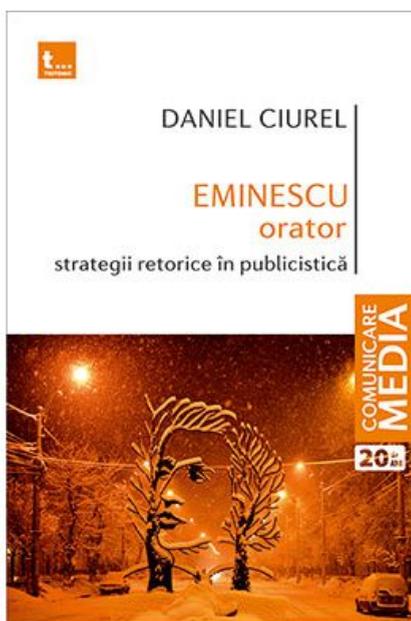


BOOK REVIEW:

**Daniel Ciurel, *Eminescu orator. Strategii retorice în publicistică*
[Eminescu the orator. Rhetorical strategies in journalistic articles],
Tritonic Publishing House, 2019, 308 p.**

Mihai Eminescu, the Romanian national poet, an emblematic figure for Romanian culture, was also a prolific publicist and newspaper editor. The reception and critical interpretation of his journalistic work was delayed largely because a full collection of his articles appeared in volumes only in 1989, at the centennial of his death. Eminescu is presented as one of the godfathers of the modern Romanian language, his exquisite style and the mastering of rhetorical devices consecrating him as a leading cultural figure in the 19th century.

Most analyses are tribute to literary history, limited to thematic descriptivism, or repertoires of the economic, legal, political, or sociological ideas tackled by Eminescu in his articles. As a journalist, he was passionate and polemical, rooted in the specific socio-historical context of his time, features that hindered the critical reception of his journalistic activity during the troubled 20th century, marked by a succession of imposed ideological filters for the discussion of all issues concerning political, social, economic, or cultural topics not only in Romania, but throughout Eastern and Central Europe. Until recently, appreciations on Eminescu's journalistic work was either limited to the literary criticism or used selectively to appeal to his prestige in new political debates and polemical arguments, often omitting that the second half of the 19th century was not only the period for the consolidation of Romanian modern language, but also for the professionalization of journalism as an activity. After all, it was only in that period that the Romanian media outlets flourished and grew into being part of the public sphere builders. Unlike the



Anglo-Saxon press, which consecrated in the classic theoretic system of journalism the separation of two different families of genres: news and opinion genres, in the Romanic world journalism is passionate and opinion is present even in news pieces. The news journalism ideally focuses on the facts of reality, uses referential language (in contrast with the emotional idioms and expressions of opinion genres) and requires much information, while opinion genres mostly focus on the journalist's individual thoughts about a certain topic. Romanian media, in the tradition of French and Italian journalism, includes subjective lenses and opinions on the covered topics, even polemical attitudes in the news articles.

As a journalist, Mihai Eminescu started his journalistic life with "Albina" (The Bee, published in Pest), continued at "Curierul de Iași" (The Courier of Iași), and "Convorbiri Literare" (Literary conversations). In 1877 Eminescu moved to Bucharest, where until 1883 he was first journalist, then (1880) editor-in-chief of the newspaper "Timpul" (The Time). "Timpul" (founded in 1866), the official newspaper of the Conservative Party benefitted from the experience of Titu Maiorescu (a renown Romanian literary critic, founder of the "Junimea" society, but also a political figure - foreign minister, prime minister, representative of Romania at the Peace Conference in Bucharest that ended the Second Balkan War), who, as a director, secured the collaboration of caliber editors among which three most prominent Romanian writers of the time: Mihai Eminescu, I.L. Caragiale (mostly known as a playwright) and Ioan Slavici (a famous novelist). Eminescu proved to be a highly trained, cultivated, acerbic polemicist, fierce critic of the realities, not shy in attacking even the Conservative politicians, when he felt they compromised their positions, and skilled master of very rare argumentative techniques.

Daniel Ciurel in his **Eminescu the orator...** proposes a fresh view. Instead of letting himself wrapped in the net of historical facts or literary arguments, Ciurel opens the door for an in-depth view at the rhetorical strategies present in the journalistic text, thus bringing forth the features that make journalism a powerful tool in shaping and orienting public opinion. Appealing to the modern rhetoric scientific paradigm, having deep and extensive readings in the field of argumentation, and demonstrating an exemplary knowledge of the journalistic persuasive techniques, Daniel Ciurel identifies Eminescu's rhetorical strategies in a vast corpus of articles.

The persuasive force of Eminescu's writing, demonstrates the author of this book, comes from the credibility and authority of the speech (ethos), from the appeals to the audience's passions (pathos) and from the logical configuration of the arguments (logos). All the components can be found in

each text, the common denominator being that ethos, pathos and logos aim the same, to shape and orient the public opinion.

The *ethos* is manifested by rhetorical strategies such as taking on different *persona*, authority arguments, quote strategies and prevention strategies. Ciurel leads the reader of his book into the versatile poses Eminescu adopts to make his point, from the scientific, positive, scholarly position, with reference to logos, to the visionary, prophetic stand, tributary of the pathos and up to the satirical or didactic attitude, aiming at the ethos (resulting trustfulness).

The *pathos* is manifested by processes such as *sermo* (orality), dialogic and interrogative strategies, communion strategies, rhetorical amplification and reproach and threat strategies (resulting eloquence).

Rhetorical argumentation (*logos*) appeals to true reasoning through inference, induction, and analogy (resulting persuasiveness).

The three large doctrine articles (*Influența austriacă asupra românilor din Principate* / The Austrian influence on Romanians in the Principality, *Icoane vechi și icoane nouă* / Old Icons and New Icons and *Studii asupra situației* / Studies on the Situation) correspond, in a large sense, to the three stages of Eminescu's publishing activity. They embody the essence of his social and political thinking, but also illustrate the main rhetorical structures specific to Eminescu's journalistic work. Daniel Ciurel keenly goes through all issues pertaining to a rhetorical analysis, offering a guide to reading such texts through the lenses of solid critical grounding.

The demonstration of the usefulness of rhetoric as an analytical paradigm culminates with the analysis of satirical, polemical and pamphlet strategies, the most vivid part of Eminescu's non-fictional work. From the point of view of persuasive appeals, the satire focuses on *ethos*, the polemical articles are centered on *logos*, while the pamphlet mainly resorts to *pathos*.

Daniel Ciurel's book presents Eminescu the publicist as a militant, inconvenient and lucid figure, an example of what it means to be a journalist in troubled, uncompromising times, intolerant of imposture. Also, the reader finds a generous, provocative, fresh interpretation grid that opens new horizons of interpretation for the journalistic text and invites to innovation in communication sciences.

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