The beginning of the satirical press in Romania

Andreea Maria UNGURIAN
University of Suceava
andreea.ungurian@yahoo.com

Résumé: L'apparition de la presse satirique en Roumanie a représenté une nécessité pour l'information, l'éducation, la sensibilisation et la conscience des éléments politico-sociales des XIX-XXe siècles. Les événements cruciaux historiques de Transylvanie ont alimenté la naissance d'un élément complexe qui reflète précisément la réalité politique de cette époque à travers l'injustice, la perfidie et les vices.

Mots-clé: presse satirique, discours satirique, contexte socio-politique, réalité discursive.

1. Introduction

The style of the satirical press has an elitist character, the irony being built in a very subtle, sometimes bookish way. Its purpose is to implement subtlety in an veiled writing, accessible to almost all social categories.

We can associate the appearance of the satirical press with the need to express historical events in writing, this kind of pu-

BDD-A17715 © 2013 Editura Universităţii din Suceava
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 00:56:03 UTC)

blication being also a true observer of the political, economic and social life.

The introduction to the satirical media sphere is represented here by the presentation of the first publication of such kind. As in any research topic, we will begin with an identification of satirical press foundation, introduction necessary for understanding this concept.

2. The Satirical Press in Romania

In Romania, the satirical press begins somewhere in february 1859. *Ţînţarul* (this is how the first satirical Romanian publication was called) hosted Rosetti's writings, who urged landowners that had always criticized the European Convention to have the Convention papers read on their dying bed**.** Rosetti wrote the following quatrain, which remained in collective consciousness as an epigraph**:** "Saltă, saltă Romînie / Ai scăpat de Anarhie / Zaci acum în amorţire / Vecinica ta pomenire!". The incisive pamphlet continues with the development of its "companion" *Spiriduşul*, that will survive only a month, agreeing with the reforms that Alexandru Ioan Cuza commanded, but also ridiculizing the efforts to prevent those reforms. We distinguish a sharp criticism of Kretzulescu government, fact that contributes to the suspension of *Spiriduşul*. Under Orăşanu's mark, on July 27, 1859, *Nichipercea* appears, a publication that will later be called *Gura Satului,* and which will be a sequel of *Spiriduşul.* In the same note, *Nichipercea* is a tough judge of the aristocrats, idealizing the democracy system and ideology, making a priority from the accession to a democratic system: "Ciocoiul face astăzi patriotism şi libertate, face ca măgarul îmbrăcat în piele de leu, dar care, crăpându-i pelea şi ieşindu-i o ureche afară, a ajuns de râsul copiilor". The diachronic approach of the satirical press includes the entry of *Sîrsîilă*, in 1866, under the leadership of Ion Geanoglu. This publication will mean a strong vote against Alexandru Ioan Cuza, sometimes the criticism gliding to a level of personal attack: "Acum 5 ani, după ce toţi în toate părţile alergară să găsească un cap pentru noi romînii, de chin de vai aleserăm pînă

BDD-A17715 © 2013 Editura Universităţii din Suceava
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 00:56:03 UTC)

culeserăm pe ăst Vodă de azi, dar care nu mai ştim cîţi ani împlineşte ori cîţi mai are de împlinit pînă i-o ieşi măseaua de minte".

Sîrsîilă's successor is *Ghimpele*, one of the longest satirical publication from the XIXth century. Initially, *Ghimpele*, started in 1866, acts as a true advocate for "Amor patriae nostra lux", declaring war to Al. I. Cuza. Later, things will change radically, everything culminating with an eulogy written in the moment of Cuza's death. *Ghimpele* is not unprecedented, mocking the so-called "patriots" by convicting the demagogy. *Ghimpele* takes his role of a judge very seriously, using a real linguistic arsenal: "Noapte! Tăcere!... şi gârbaci!... Ai să rîdem! Ţeara a reintrat pe calea legale!".

This paper will be continued by *Moftul romîn*, under Caragiale's signature. This last publication will function on recurrence and will characterize the whole attitude of those times. *Moftul romîn* appears in January 1893, suggestively subtitled "Revistă spiritistă naţională, organ pentru răspîndirea ştiinţelor oculte din Dacia Traiană". *Moftul romîn* had a major contribution in the satirical press area. This satirical magazine represents the peak of Caragiale's journalism, along with the independence and humorous free spirit. Caragiale "felt huge and saw monstrously", as himself admits in *Grand Hôtel "Victoria Românã"*. This will cause a great passion for humour and irony, all these facts standing as a principle for his publication.

Constanţa Trifu (1974:7) believes that "în presa umoristică nimic nu este ireversibil. Prieteniile se fac şi se desfac după necesităţile momentului politic. Instabilitatea acţionează doar în interiorul taberei".

Therefore, can we associate the satirical press with a way that can be excused by the mean? A political history tool compelled to be constantly in a attack position?

Mircea Iorgulescu said that one of the common occupation in Romania when the satirical press appeared was the talking. As simple as that. Therefore, it's inevitable the question: Caragiale, Orăşanu, Geanoglu etc. were talking with their readers through satirical texts?

BDD-A17715 © 2013 Editura Universităţii din Suceava
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 00:56:03 UTC)

3. Conclusions

In the articles of these publications, we often identify figures of morality, ideology and culture, also the efforts of Transylvanian people to preserve their existence as a social entity in those dualist times of political regime, 1867-1918, when the satirical press became a way of keeping people informed about reality. Analyzing some of the above-mentioned publications, we identified a social political trend that either appreciated or depreciated aspects of political life, convicting or supporting certain public figures of that time.

Bibliography

BREAZU, Ioan, *Literatura Transilvaniei: studii, articole, conferinţe*, Editura Casa Şcoalelor, Bucureşti, 1944.
CARAGIALE, Ion Luca, *Grand Hôtel „Victoria Română" – Nuvele*, Editura Herra, Bucureşti, 1998.
SILVESTRU, Valentin, *Umorul în literatură şi artă*, Meridiane, Bucureşti, 1988.
TRIFU, Constanţa, *Presa umoristică de altă dată*, Minerva, Bucureşti, 1974.

Magazines:
Ghimpele, no. 3, 1869.
Nichipercea, no 3, 1859.
Sîrsîilă, no 2, 1867.
Ţînţarul, no 3, 1859.

BDD-A17715 © 2013 Editura Universităţii din Suceava
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 00:56:03 UTC)