POLITICAL ORATORY AND LITERATURE. A CASE OF CROSSBREEDING AND CONTAMINATION IN 19TH CENTURY ROMANIA

Roxana PATRAŞ, Scientific Researcher III, PhD, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iaşi

Abstract: At one with institutional up-to-date and state modernisation in the 19th century, Romanian political speech got through a process of formulation, settlement and clarification. After the ex-pulpiters had turned into laic orators, political speaking actually developed hand in hand with a growing class-awareness, which implied the following strategies: 1. the choice of the most persuasive approaches (visionary, commonsensical, technical, cultivated speech, and so on); 2. the creation of a masters' gallery (public personalities who, in a relatively short time, took the lead in the ranks of eloquence); 3. the establishment of a tradition (corresponding to an increasing interest in the publication of political speeches, either fresh or cannonical).

The present paper inquires into the relationship between political speech and literary references, by 'references' understanding not only virtual allusions to literature, but also the political orators' condition of former literati. On the one hand, the massive use of literary figures, as well as the appeal to quotation (one of the favoured speech techniques), points up an intrinsic 'crossbreeding' of political speech and literature. On the other hand, if we take into consideration the basic formation of personalities such as Mihail Kogalniceanu, I. C. Bratianu, C. A. Rossetti, B. P. Hasdeu, Titu Maiorescu, Petre Gradisteanu, Take Ionescu, Barbu St. Delavrancea, we discover an extrinsic contamination of political speech and literature, as all the names just mentioned were involved in literary business, whether as journalists or as aspiring writers.

Our presumption is that the stylistic mutations, the ideological sideslips and the generic mobility of modern political eloquence owe much to the specific production conditions within the context of 19th century Romania. First of all, the construction of Romanian political idiolect relates to the process of elites constitution and self-assertion; second, lacking the conditions of free speech, forum debate and democratic fairness, the political oratory is not cut according to a rationale of oral communication, but according to the rules of written discourse. After all, the texts issued by the great masters of Romanian eloquence illustrate an interesting crossbreeding and contamination between the strategies of oral and written communication.

Keywords: Political oratory; Literary references, Literate orator, Eloquence, Written discourse

Introduction

Closely related to the European nationalist turmoil and to its phraseology, the political speech from 19th century Romania underwent a series of thematic, structural and aesthetical changes. Whereas the 48' Revolution had encouraged inflamed gambols, the next four stages – that is, the 1859 Union of the Romanian Principalities, the accession of Charles of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen to the throne of the United Romanian Principalities in 1866, the Independence War of 1877, and the proclamation of the Romanian kingdom in 1881 – went through a gradual discharge of emotional appeals and visionary standstills. However, in the broad context of political discourse intellectualisation and technicality, the relationship

BDD-V479 © 2013 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-23 06:04:10 UTC)

between political oratory and literature did not cease; not only virtual allusions to literature, but also the political orators' condition of former literati kept them together. On the one hand, the massive use of literary figures, as well as the appeal to quotation (one of the favoured speech techniques), points up an intrinsic 'crossbreeding' of political speech and literature. On the other hand, if we take into consideration the basic formation of personalities such as Ion Heliade Radulescu, Vasile Alecsandri, Mihail Kogalniceanu, I. C. Bratianu, C. A. Rossetti, B. P. Hasdeu, Titu Maiorescu, Petre Gradisteanu, Take Ionescu, Barbu St. Delavrancea and so on, we discover an extrinsic contamination of political speech and literature, as all the names just mentioned were involved in literary business, whether as journalists or as aspiring writers.

Our presumption is that the establishment of 19 the century political discourse, corresponding to an enthusiastic publication of political speeches, is figured by the debris and leftovers that literature had discarded within the political debate. Anyhow, this is not a case of 'political unconscious'[1] which weighs down the aesthetic fling; on the contrary, this is perhaps a case of 'aesthetic' or 'literary unconscious', which anarchically scrambles the main goals of political discourse. It follows naturally that the specific cultural conditions of 19th century Europe – the tremendous influence of Romanticism and its enduring agony during Decadence – are also responsible for the stylistic mutations, ideological sideslips and an overall generic mobility of modern political eloquence. The young intelligentsia had been educated in Western universities and, consequently, brought about them a Romantic air of modernity and a will for democratisation. Henri Wald, a Romanian philosopher and logician, assumes that the birth of ancient Greek oratory redoubles the ascension of *demos*: "rhetoric was born in a politest agora, fell into disuse within a monotheist church, revived during the centuries of humanism, and decayed again during scientism so as to get into the public's eye again once with the globalisation of democracy"[2]. Thus, the Romanian political argument relied on two main European models: first, the French oratory styled during the reign of Napoleon III, and second, the English political speech enforced by the habits of Westminster parliamentary life[3]. Let us notice that the two discursive directions did not develop synchronically; when the French model had been burned and surpassed, some members of the cultural society 'Junimea' activated English resources such as Lord Macaulay's specimens of oratorical art, Palmerston's, Disraeli's and Gladstone's contributions in the Parliament. Therefore, the construction of Romanian political idiolect relates to the process of elites constitution and self-assertion.

Beyond models and ready-made patters of speech (that are also recipes for success), the Romanian oratory of the 19th century was shaped by local circumstances and agents; lacking the conditions of free speech, forum debate and democratic fairness, barely could it have been cut according to a rationale of oral communication. Actually, in spite of its oral regime, it

[1] Frederic Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*, Routledge, 2002.
[2] Henri Wald, apud Vistian Goia, Introduction, in *Oratori şi elocinţă românească* (Romanian Orators and Eloquence), edited, prefaced, notes and glossary by Vistian Goia, 'Dacia' Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 1985, p. 7.
[3] Without a clear indication of models and sources, Vistian Goia also delineates two courses in the history of the Romanian political eloquence which are drawn from Blaise Pascal's antinomy between '*l'esprit geometrique*' and '*l'esprit de finesse*': 1. the orator's tendency to conquer and seduce (by making appeal to figurative garments); 2. the orator's tendency to convince and activate his public (by making appeal to realism and moralism). Refer to Vistian Goia, op. cit., p. 9.

BDD-V479 © 2013 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-23 06:04:10 UTC)

observed the rules of written discourse. After all, the texts produced by the great 'masters' of Romanian eloquence illustrate an interesting crossbreeding and contamination between the strategies of oral and written communication. Listing a few instances will be illustrative for our motion here.

Persuasive Approaches and 'Personal' Styles in Romanian Political Speech. A Visit Tour though the Masters' Gallery

One of the forefathers of Romanian political pulpit was Ion Heliade Radulescu, a prodigious writer, a prominent figure of the national-democratic movement from 1848 and a great public speaker, trained through a sustained activity as member or co-founder of various societies. As he counted himself among the supporters of a School for Vocal Music, Declamation, and Literature, his main interest hinted at the postural quality of political speech (*actio oratoria*). Complementary to Radulescu's gesticulatory discourse, Vasile Alecsandri, the celebrated poet and playwright, upheld a line of disengaged speech, which allowed him to slip some stylistic effects, and maybe to use a set of 'distancing' techniques (digression, acted cynicism, ignorance and un-worldliness). A third type of approach can be identified in Mikhail Kogalniceanu, I. C. Bratianu, Barbu Katargiu and Vasile Boerescu who play the part of 'realpolitik', adding to their political argument a good portion of 'realism' and 'moralism'. The masters' party comprises nevertheless a cluster of oratorical styles, tainted with 'personal' effects: whereas I. C. Bratianu stands for 'realism and logic', Kogalniceanu exemplifies 'the grandeur and harmony of sentence' and Barbu Katargiu, 'the swiftness of inspiration and the power of improvisation'[4].

Before the 48' Revolution took fire, the Romanian students quartered in Paris had formed a private Society in charged with the dissemination of national-democratic creeds. Under Lamartine's cultural patronage and guiding example, the members of The Romanian Students' Society had been already initiated in the ruses of public speech by reading Eugène Paignon's *Éloquence et improvisation: art de la parole oratoire*, a seminal book which, around 1850, had scored its third edition. Paignon's survey on the history of eloquence enlists the types of public speech ('judiciary', 'parliamentary' and 'religious') and insists on the qualitative difference between the craft and the art of speaking; it follows naturally that 'improvisation' and the skilful improvisators (those that create after the writers' fashion) take the front line[5].

After having assumed the French rhetorician's ideas, in 1866, the historian V. A Urechia delivers a public lecture that evinces the propelling power of inspired oratory; nevertheless, he departs from Paignon's perspective because the orator should not be only the writer's kinsman (a 'sorcerer' or a 'gambit'), but he should be also a sort of moralist. Urechia's examples are the hour's most proficient orators, that is, Anastasie Panu, Barbu Katargiu, Mikhail Kogalniceanu and I. C. Bratianu – all of them sssembling a logic of sensible poetry, philosophical idea, psychological insight and physical resilience. Provocative for the nowadays reader, the metaphors that provide a global image for each one's speaking skills are chosen among the field of weather phenomena: the 'mild breeze' (the zephyr), the 'storm',

[4] Vistian Goia, op. cit., p. 13.
[5] Eugène Paignon, *Éloquence et improvisation: art de la parole oratoire*, Auguste Durand, Paris, 1854.

BDD-V479 © 2013 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-23 06:04:10 UTC)

'the sea', and the 'avalanche' ('the snowball effect'). The first among the quads of aces, A. Panu (1810-1867) illustrates a kind of artistic, 'poetical', and 'mild breeze' eloquence because, putting aside brainwork, he used to judge things with his heart. Described in identical 'weather' phrases, Barbu Katargiu (1807-1862) could stand for those 'stormy' ideas that shatter the old foundations. The broad audience's memories treasure the ex-PM of the United Romanian Principalities under a prevailing visual regime; the historian calls forth Katargiu's high and shining forehead, his fiery eyes and his bony, philosophical cheeks. The third in line, Kogalniceanu's eloquence resembles to a toreador's volts (he is named the 'Espada' of Romanian oratory) or, better, to a boat's vacillating movement on a troubled sea. His talent is neither poetical (aesthetical), nor philosophical; Urechia believes that Kogalniceanu won general admiration by having a profound knowledge of human soul. I. C. Bratianu (1821-1891) comes as the fourth master of Romanian eloquence. Usually trimmed for his digressive way of putting things, the leader of the Liberal Party seems, anyway, an 'avalanche' that is both a crushing and an encompassing force[6].

Among the four aces, only three lasted as longstanding standards in the Romanian masters' gallery: Katargiu, Bratianu and Kogalniceanu. For instance, Barbu Katargiu's editor, Anghel Demetrescu, recalls the orator's knowledge and talent as one of 'humanist' completeness (intertwining literature, law, history, economics and political economy), a feature which makes the difference between the encyclopaedic orator and specialised tribune stand-ups. The harsh conservative is an aristocrat, a passionate of eloquence games, whereas his adversaries are nothing but a bunch of hard-boiled bourgeois[7]. Kogalniceanu, in his turn, forged this encyclopaedic disposition of speech (squeezing in various historical and cultural hints) in several parliamentary interventions around 1859 such as Discourse on Granting Political Rights for all the Country's Inhabitants[8], Discourse on the Union of Romanian Principalities[9], Discourse on Behalf of the Moldavian Representatives in Bucharest Commons[10] or Discourse on the Election of Alexander Moruzi as Deputy for Vaslui County[11]. After a while, he dropped off this old-fashioned speech style and adopted a 'moralist' morgue.

---

[6] V. A. Urechia, DESPRE ELOCINTA ROMÂNA. ORATORIA FORENSE, AMVONUL, HARANGA. ORATORII MODERNI. PANU, BARBU CATARGIU, COGALNICEANU, BRATIANU &. &. LECTURA PUBLICĂ ŢINUTA IN 12/24 DECEMBRIE 1866 (*On Romanian Eloquence*...), Bucharest, The Royal Printing House – Carol Göbl, 1878, pp. 127-158: "Oratorele, frate al poetului, nu este decât acela care ca om onest, luptă, deprins la vorbire, pentru triumful adevăruluï, al binelui, şi în câtva şi al frumosului, fiind frumosul legătura comună dintre poesie şi elocinţă ... Sburători ai cuvântului!... Eacă ne facem sănta cruce!... Fugiţi!... Se nu răsune alt cuvânt între Tisa şi Marea negră, decât cuvântul de iubire al familiei, cuvântul dulce al frăţiei şi amiciei, cuvântul sânt al legei, mai ales cuvântul mântuitor al Românismului", etc.

[7] Barbu Katargiu, *Discursurile lui Barbu Katargiu (1859-1862 iunie 8)*, edited and introduced by a biographical note on Katargiu Family and by the orator's biography, Bucharest, 'Eduard Wiegand' Printing House, 1886, pp. I-XC.

[8] Mikhail Kogalniceanu, Discurs cu privire la acordarea de drepturi politice pentru toţi locuitării ţării (Discourse on Granting Political Rights for all the Country's Inhabitants), in Mikhail Kogalniceanu, Discursuri parlamentare din epoca unirii. 22 septembrie 1857-14 decembrie 1861 (Parliamentary Speeches from the Union Epoch. 22nd September 1857 – 14th of December 1861), introductory study by V. Raţă, 'Editura Stiinţifică' Printing House, Bucharest, 1959, pp. 28-44.

[9] Idem, *Discurs cu privire la unirea Principatelor* (*Discourse on the Union of Romanian Principalities*), in op. cit., pp. 16-19.

[10] Idem, *Discurs ţinut din partea deputaţilor Moldovei în Adunarea de la Bucureşti* (*Discourse on Behalf of the Moldavian Representatives in Bucharest Commons*), pp. 19-28.

[11] Idem, *Discurs cu privire la alegerea lui Al. Moruzi ca deputat de Vaslui* (*Discourse on the Election of Alexander Moruzi as Deputy for Vaslui County*), in op. cit., pp. 315-333.

BDD-V479 © 2013 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-23 06:04:10 UTC)

With the passing of time, both the inspired and the encyclopaedic orator were being gradually replaced by a type of practical speaker who took a stand only when a matter of his 'competence' was in question. Therefore, P. P. Carp got fame with his financial 'qualified-ness', Titu Maiorescu, with his reformative 'thing' on education, Vasile Boerescu, with his legal 'touches', Take Ionescu, with his ideological 'twists'. So, onlookers of the Romanian political life appended a list of alternative models, who individualize themselves according to their 'know-how': Vasile Boerescu, C. C. Arion, P. P Carp, Nicolae Ionescu, Al. Lahovary, Titu Maiorescu, Al. Marghiloman, V. Pogor, Take Ionescu. At the end of the 19th century, George Panu – himself a politician and a journalist for 'Lupta' – publishes a series of parliamentary 'portraits' and 'types', which introduces, beyond its maliciousness, a new angle to look on the art of politic eloquence.

Now, when everybody is carried away by the Decadent whiz about 'art for art's sake', not even the 'realist', 'commonsensical' speaker would do. This is why the 'brutal' conservative Alexander Lahovary and the 'grim' and 'soiled' socialist Ion Nădejde do not win the portraitist's admiration[12]; similarly, while lacking great cultural sources (Spencer, Hartman, Buckle, and Schopenhauer, among mandatory ones), the young Alexander Marghiloman is dismissed as being too 'politically correct'[13]. On the contrary, the renowned 'anarchist' from inside 'Junimea' circle, pushes to the foreground a typology of 'finesse', 'unworldly' and 'unbiased' oratory, represented by C. C. Arion, D. Apostoleanu, N. Bibescu, Nicolae Ionescu and Take Ionescu. Actually, this seems to be a matter of 'neo-humanist' restoration, yet under a decadent shade; G. Panu prefers 'educated' speakers, who are able to observe to a rule of public conduct and to check their behaviour[14], to prevail in politics as 'epicureans' and 'Nirvana seekers'[15], to remain completely dispassionate, skeptical, 'lethargic' and even 'lazy', to manoeuvre with dexterity the 'commonplace' and the cliché[16], to use 'jewels' of language and literature and to introduce adequate neologisms[17] and, last but not least, to speak as if they were writing[18].

At the end of the 19th century and at the dawn of a new era, the Romanian political eloquence illustrated a case of crossbreeding and contamination between the strategies of oral and written communication, between two VIP postures, that is, the writer and the parliamentary. Most of all, the commentators of 19th century political oratory re-enact a myth of 'fluency', that virtually sends back to Paignon's theory on the orator's 'inspiration' and inborn 'genius', even to his latent 'literate' condition. At the conservatives' congress in 1902, Titu Maiorescu, who gives scores for the troop of incoming orators (Simion Mehedinţi, Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, P. P. Negulescu, Al. S. Florescu), is inclined towards

[12] George Panu, *Portrete şi tipuri parlamentare* (*Parliamentary Potraits and Types*), 'Lupta Typography, Bucharest, 1893, p. 77.
[13] Ibidem, p. 94.
[14] Ibidem, pp. 5-7.
[15] Ibidem, pp. 8-10.
[16] Ibidem, pp. 25-27.
[17] Ibidem, pp. 65-67.
[18] Ibidem, p. 69-71.

BDD-V479 © 2013 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-23 06:04:10 UTC)

Mehedinţi's oratorical style because, while lecturing, he seems to put culture and ideas in motion[19].

Reaching up to 1935, Panu's considerations on the likeness between the gifted speaker and a grand opera 'tenor' prompt Ion Petrovici to draw the essential lines of the 'oratorical talent'; these are, believes Petrovici, 'the spontaneity of phrase pacing' ('spontaneitatea frazării') and 'the easiness of improvisation' ('uşurinta imporvizaţiei'). Leaving other imperative characteristics (e.g., the reactivity to the public's signals or the adjustment of tone to atmosphere[20]) aside, one can discern that the 20th century is still perpetrating the myths of written fluency and that of orator-poet kinship.

Political Oratory and the Press. A Contamination of Specific Strategies

Serving as a sort of training base for future politicians and agile public speakers, the unionist journal 'Pruncul Român' was nurtured and supported by The Romanian Students' Society. A living chronicle of the national-democratic movement from 1848[21], its columns hosted names such as Dimitrie Bratianu, I. C. Bratianu, C. A. Rosetti, Vasile Boerescu, Vasile Alecsandri, and so forth; names which would put their unmistakeable mark on the whole course of Romanian modern history. Once taken the journalist habits, these personalities go on spinning around press communities, even though their new positions in the administration of the United Principalities enforce on them an objective, disengaged line of conduct. It is in 1857 that Mikhail Kogalniceanu underlines the importance of the press for nationalist and unionist ideals: "[they were left without] any *political education*! *By default of press we see ourselves closed into a fatal circle*; *the lights* are choked, *the sane ideas* cannot go through, *the calumny* and *the false news* alone have free access; and the reform must be done at once, like the Minerva's appearance from Joe's head [*emphasis added*]"[22]. Indeed, for modern Romania's forefathers, the freedom of the press stood right into the middle of parliamentary debates. A series of four speeches delivered by Barbu Katargiu may prove it undeniably[23]. Consequently, the political leaders enhanced the newspapers' columns with both a didactical function and a dialogic, involving feature, which pertain to the tradition of parliamentarianism and, generally, to political oratory.

In the trail of 'Pruncul Român', I. C. Bratianu and C. A. Rosetti are the co-founders of a nationalist newspaper which, under the alluring name 'Românul', soon turned into a Liberal Party's official mouthpiece. As columnist, Bratianu's first articles extend and echo the experimented speaker's effects: the 1st person, the interrogatives and expletives, the

[19] I. E Torouţiu& Gh. Cardaş, *Studii şi documente* (*Studies and Documents*), vol I. Junimea, 'Bucovina' Graphic House, 1931, pp. 31-33.

[20] Ion Petrovici, *Talentul oratoric* (*Oratorical Talent*), *Conferinte la radio (1932-1943) – Radio Conferences (1932-1943)*, edition cured by Marian Diaconu, 'Casa Radio' Publishing House, Bucharest, 2002, pp. 88-93.

[21] Refer also to Adrian Niculescu, *Aux racines de la démocratie roumaine – Pruncul Român, premier journal libre roumain, chonique de la Révolution valaque de 1848*, 'Clusium' Publishing House, 2008.

22 Mikhail Kogalniceanu, Discurs cu privire la acordarea de drepturi politice pentru toţi locuitării ţării (Discourse on Granting Political Rights for all the Country's Inhabitants), op. cit.: "fără nici o educaţie politică! Prin lipsa presii ne vedem închişi într-un cerc cu totul fatal; luminele sînt înăduşite, ideile sănătoase nu pot străbate, calomniile şi falsele noutăţi singure îşi au liber gioc şi reforma trebuie să iasă gata şi deodată, ca Minerva din capul lui Joe!"

23 Barbu Katargiu, *Discursuri parlamentare. 1859-1862* (*Parliamentary Speeches*), with a preface and a study on Barbu Katargiu by Anghel Demetrescu; re-issued with a preface, an index of persons and names by Petre V. Haneş, Bucharest, 'Minerva' Publishing House, 1914, pp. 304-309.

BDD-V479 © 2013 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-23 06:04:10 UTC)

cumulative effect of repetitions, the appeal to God's assistance, the latter-day journalist's ex-status as public speaker, the trope of the writing's ordeals, the prophet's portent[24]. One of C. A. Rosetti's speeches (delivered in 1881, when the daily had turned 25 years) leaks the information that, due to a permanent excitation and to a spirit intended for action, Bratianu's articles had always ended abruptly with the monotonous phrase 'to be continued'. And never to be continued again, because the journalist had returned to its former function of public trumpeter! For liberal heads, there is a symbolical continuity of various 'eloquence' hypostases, linking the prophet, the psalmist, the priest, the journalist, and the parliamentary[25].

Free from the requirements and responsibilities of public speaking, the press ensured a good-enough speakers' corner; thus, by sponsoring or settling various gazettes, other political leaders applied the same recipe of success. For instance, Vasile Boerescu (1830-1883) – a 'shark-like' diplomat, as he used to style himself – launched, already in 1857, a newspaper called 'Naţionalul', a stand for the moderate wing of the liberals and a cosy cultural environment for political inklings. From the same long-distance politician would depart another circumstantial mass-media project; during the Independence War of 1977, the newspaper 'Pressa' circulated the inspired formula 'Romania-the Belgium of the Orient' on the presupposition that, had it kept its neutrality within the context of Balkan conflicts, Romania would have won more. At any rate, the newspaper activity reflects Boerescu's 'composed temper' and his innate 'lucidity', also occurring while acting as a parliamentary[26].

The relationship between the art of eloquence and the development of print journalism does not always resume to contamination and crossbreeding. It has already been noticed that, when the three crucial moments struck (1859, 1877, 1918), there was ripe-time for the Romanian political oratory as well. Nevertheless, the finest pieces of public speaking challenged 'the finest journalism of the time'[27]. Titu Maiorescu himself is prone to cast great

---

24 I. C. Bratianu, *România* (1851) and *Nationalitatea* (1853), in *Acte şi cuvântări* (*Acts and Speeches*), edited by G. marinescu & C. Grecescu, Vol. I, Part I, 'Cartea Românească' Publishing House, Bucharest, 1938, pp. 15-27, pp. 32-36: "De aceea eu, pe care natura şi îndeletnicirile precedente *mă osândesc a nu lua condeiul în mână*, mă socotesc silit, dator astăzi a jertfi orice iubire de sineşi şi a expune în puţine cuvinte, care este după credinţa mea, caracterul general al revoluţiunii începute în 48 şi în parte şi mai pe larg ce este România şi care este misiunea ei în faza cea nouă în care intră omenirea prin această revoluţiune europeană" [emphasis added]; "O naţia mea, cât eşti de sublimă ! O singură a ta faptă mă sfinţeşte, mă face să crez în Dumnezeu, în bunătatea naturei omeneşti şi să plâng de fericire, căci sunt din ai tăi!"; "Ce! astăzi când Europa întreagă este în frământare şi gata de a-şi lua o organizaţiune naturală, astfel încât fiece naţiune fiind un singur trup, funcţionând în toată libertatea şi deplină armonie cu celelalte naţiuni, să poată să-şi împlinească misiunea după vrednicia şi osârdia sa [...] Ce! o naţiune de 10 milioane, eşită din „gintea aceea ce nu mai piere" cum o strigă Mazzini, nu vi se înfăţişează vouă ce vă ziceţi Români, decât ca o adunătură de oameni, ca trup fără suflet ce-l puteţi sdruncina şi închiria o parte Turciei, alta Rusiei şi alta Austriei! Ce! o lucrare atât de uriaşă, un rezultat atât de sublim, glasul cel tânăr al României ce răsună până la ceruri, virtutea ei ce apleacă frunţile cele mai trufaşe, inima, soarele cel strălucit al României, carele a încălzit neîncetat Europa orientală, carele a început acum a o lumina şi ale căreia raze străbătură chiar ceaţa Engliterii şi deşteptară comitetul european din Londra, până a ne zice că Românii nu mai pot pune arcurile cele nouă ale podului lui Traian, voi ce vă ziceţi Români, nu simţiraţi nimic, nu văzuraţi nimic, n'auziraţi nimic şi nici o singură rază de soare nu atinse sloiul de ghiaţă de pe inimile voastre !... Blestem !", etc.

25 C. A. Rosetti, Lui C. A. Rosetti. La o suta de ani de la naşterea sa *(To C. A. Rosetti. A Hundred years from His Birth)*, a commemorative volume supported by „Democraţia", the journal of liberal studies of National Liberal Party, 1916. pp. 344-351.

26 *Vasile Boerescu, Notiţă biografică* (*Biographical Note*), in *Discursuri politice (1859-1883) – Political Speeches*, vol I (1859-1873), 'Socec' Printing House, Bucharest, 1910, pp. 3-7.

27 Vistian Goia, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

BDD-V479 © 2013 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-23 06:04:10 UTC)

orators into greater cultural roles because, he avowed in *Oratori, retori, limbuţi* (*Orators, Rhetoricians, Gabblers*), the press had turned into a corrupt political tool[28].

A Rationale of Written Discourse. Literary Leftovers

Perhaps one of the most 'visual' and 'representative' among all the public hypostases in the 19th century, the orator's image comes closely to theatre and opera. In 1857, when he delivered his speech on equal civil rights for all the inhabitants of Romanian Principalities, Kogalniceanu admitted that there is no other pleasure for a MP than receiving tumultuous applauses[29], perhaps as a lead actor, as a diva or as a tenor on the stage. G. Panu pursued this simile later on. No wonder that the eye-witnesses record chiefly the voice shifts and pitches, maybe the gestures, and lesser these orator's trendsetting ideas. Anghel Demetriescu, the editor of Barbu Katargiu's speeches, recalls the old politician in a grand tragedian's pose, especially, the diction and the low bass tone with 'thunder effects', the 'demonic figure', the way the speaker used to furrow his hair and to handle his quizzing glasses. Nicolae Ionescu's voice – in G. Panu's account – had something mellifluous, like an actor's. P. P. Carp caught the public's ear by having learnt the art of declamation, a declamation that 'broke glasses'. Apparently, Delavrancea used to have a throaty, harsh pronunciation, like the sound of fanfares. Take Ionescu earned public esteem being the equal of a „pianist".

At the kick-off of his career, the same Take Ionescu hides his identity under the pen-name Demetriu G. Ionnescu. The politician-to-be is publishing now various short prose fragments such as *Ută pagină din viaţa unui visător* (*A Page from a Dreamer's Life*), *Ută lacrimă* (*A Tear*) or *Spiritele anului 3000* (*The Spirits of Year 3000*)[30]. Ionescu's turns of phrase and his 'literary unconscious' are absolutely transparent in parliamentary interventions ('little Take, golden mouth', the friends and adversaries surnamed him): the use of anecdotes, overt ratiocination, forceful closures[31], and so forth.

A similar case of hybridisation between literary and political interests can be illustrated in Titu Maiorescu, Gh. Panu, and Barbu Ştefanescu Delavrancea, all of them trained within 'Junimea' circle, which is, according to Tudor Vianu, a 'nursery' of oratorical talents[32]. Such being the question, it is not however the only bond between literature and political oratory that Vianu stresses upon; by 'rhetorical writers' he understands those writers that import oral features, as some of the orators could import figurative language[33]. Whereas Ion Petrovici thought that speeches should contain a 'minimum of literature', Vistian Goia underlines the actual co-extension of the two arts in terms of mutual maintenance[34].

More than a common set of techniques (narrative structures, forms of logical disposition, literary figures, cultural references and intertextuality), literature and political oratory share –

[28] Titu Maiorescu, *Oratori, retori, limbuţi*, in *Critice*, vol. III, 'Minerva' Publishing House, 1908.
[29] Mikhail Kogalniceanu, op. cit.
[30] Refer to Perpecissius' notes to Eminescu's *Scrisoarea II* (*Satire II*), in *Complete Works*, vol. II, Fundaţia Regală pentru Literatură şi Artă, Bucharest, pp. 222-223
[31] Consult Take Ionescu's speeches from 1890 to 1899, in Take Ionescu, *Discursuri politice* (*Political Speeches*), volumes I- IV, edited and cured by Cristu S. Negoescu, 'G. A. Lăzăreanu' Printing House, Bucharest, 1904.
[32] Tudor Vianu, *Istoria literaturii române moderne*, edited by Şerban Cioculescu, Vladimir Streinu and Tudor Vianu, EDP, Bucharest, 1971, p. 145.
[33] Tudor Vianu, *Arta prozatorilor români*, apud Vistian Goia, op. cit., p. 21.
[34] Ibidem, p. 26.

BDD-V479 © 2013 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-23 06:04:10 UTC)

in the vein of Carlyle's famous book[35] – the same hero-worshiping, the same myth on a sort of 'fluency' that remakes and voices out, on God's dictation, God's own word. If not a feigned Poet or Man of Letters, the typical orator of 19th century Romania is, after an intricate cross-breeding line, their legitimate inheritor.

References

Boerescu, Vasile, *Discursuri politice (1859-1883) – Political Speeches*, vol I (1859-1873), 'Socec' Printing House, Bucharest, 1910.
Bratianu, I. C., *Acte şi cuvântări (Acts and Speeches)*, edited by G. marinescu & C. Grecescu, Vol. I, Part I, 'Cartea Românească' Publishing House, Bucharest, 1938
Carlyle, Thomas, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*, www. archive. org.
Eminescu, Mihai, *Complete Works*, vol. II, Fundaţia Regală pentru Literatură şi Artă, Bucharest, 1943.
Goia, Vistian, *Oratori şi elocinţă românească (Romanian Orators and Eloquence)*, edited, prefaced, notes and glossary by Vistian Goia, 'Dacia' Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 1985
Ionescu, Take, *Discursuri politice (Political Speeches)*, volumes I- IV, edited and cured by Cristu S. Negoescu, 'G. A. Lăzăreanu' Printing House, Bucharest, 1904.
Jameson, Frederic, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*, Routledge, 2002.
Katargiu, Barbu, *Discursuri parlamentare. 1859-1862 (Parliamentary Speeches)*, with a preface and a study on Barbu Katargiu by Anghel Demetrescu; re-issued with a preface, an index of persons and names by Petre V. Haneş, Bucharest, 'Minerva' Publishing House, 1914.
Katargiu, Barbu, *Discursurile lui Barbu Katargiu (1859-1862 iunie 8)*, edited and introduced by a biographical note on Katargiu Family and by the orator's biography, Bucharest, 'Eduard Wiegand' Printing House, 1886.
Kogalniceanu, Mikhail, *Discursuri parlamentare din epoca unirii. 22 septembrie 1857-14 decembrie 1861 (Parliamentary Speeches from the Union Epoch. 22nd September 1857 – 14th of December 1861)*, introductory study by V. Raţă, 'Editura Stiinţifică' Printing House, Bucharest, 1959.
Maiorescu, Titu, *Critice*, vol. III, Minerva Publishing House, 1908
Niculescu, Adrian, *Aux racines de la démocratie roumaine – Pruncul Român, premier journal libre roumain, chonique de la Révolution valaque de 1848*, 'Clusium' Publishing House, 2008.
Paignon, Eugène, *Éloquence et improvisation: art de la parole oratoire*, Auguste Durand, Paris, 1854.
Panu, George, *Portrete şi tipuri parlamentare (Parliamentary Potraits and Types)*, 'Lupta Typography, Bucharest, 1893, p. 77.

[35] Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*, www. archive. org, accesed in 14th November 2013.

BDD-V479 © 2013 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-23 06:04:10 UTC)

Petrovici, Ion, *Talentul oratoric (Oratorical Talent), Conferinte la radio (1932-1943) – Radio Conferences (1932-1943)*, edition cured by Marian Diaconu, 'Casa Radio' Publishing House, Bucharest, 2002.
Rosetti, C. A., *Lui C. A. Rosetti. La o suta de ani de la naşterea sa (To C. A. Rosetti. A Hundred years from His Birth)*, a commemorative volume supported by „Democraţia", the journal of liberal studies of National Liberal Party, 1916.
Torouţiu, I. E & Cardaş, Gh., *Studii şi documente (Studies and Documents)*, vol I. Junimea, 'Bucovina' Graphic House, 1931.
Urechia, V. A., *Despre elocinta romana (On Romanian Eloquence...)*, Bucharest, The Royal Printing House – Carol Göbl, 1878.
Vianu, Tudor, *Istoria literaturii române moderne*, edited by Şerban Cioculescu, Vladimir Streinu and Tudor Vianu, EDP, Bucharest, 1971.

BDD-V479 © 2013 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-23 06:04:10 UTC)