ION HELIADE RĂDULESCU'S JOURNALISTIC ACTIVITY: A CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROMANIAN LITERARY LANGUAGE

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Abstract*: Ion Heliade Rădulescu was one of the most important figures of the Romanian culture in the 19th century. His cultural personality was developed in various directions, being at the same time a poet, an essayist, a philologist, a newspaper editor and also a politician. During his linguistic activity, he was concerned in the process of reinforcing the canons of the Romanian literary language; moreover, he was preoccupied with some concrete aspects about the evolution and development of the language in that historical period. Regarding press, he was the creator of the first Romanian newspapers, which made him the founder of the Romanian journalism. He managed to fulfill his goal towards the standardization of the Romanian literary language by using the newspapers as an educational and informative tool for the cultural expansion of the society at that time. In addition, Heliade defined the language cultivation as a personal mission he had and, therefore, he tried to succeed in this using as many resources as he could, with the press being one of them.*

Key words*: journalism, standardization, grammar.*

Ion Heliade Rădulescu (1802-1872) represents, without any doubt, an important personality of the Romanian culture in the 19th century. His involvement in different domains, his leading spirit and his ambition were only some of the aspects that made him being assert as a literate.

The 19th century was known in history as a century of novelty and revolution, a period of discovery. Moreover, there were some cultural innovations that took place, with the purpose of reshaping the Romanian culture, by democratization: "democratizarea culturii în mai toate sensurile: al apropierii de fond, de spiritul național, al difuzării ei în mediile mai populare, al înțelegerii de către intelectuali a unor resopnsabilități noi și însemnate în raport cu masa oprimată" (Țugui, 1984: 74).

These changes came as a result of the transit through various political systems, being known the fact that the 19th century was a conglomeration of different historic moments: beginning with the Fanariot reign and proceeding with the 1848 Revolution, the United Principalities and the reigns of Alexandru Ioan Cuza and Carol I. All these stages and Heliade's interest in developing the Romanian culture were the essential conditions for foreshadowing the writer as a leader in establishing the orientation of the cultural society in the Modern Age, in order to evolve.

Heliade's cultural personality was a complex one: he was a writer, a publicist, a grammarian, a teacher and also an interpreter. He had connections with poetry, prose, philology, history, politics, economy, religion and journalism.

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Regarding journalism, the desire of having a modern system for informing the audience was an ancient concern of the scholars, but Ion Heliade Rădulescu managed to transform the possibility into a real fact. He is known as the founder of the first Romanian publications. In addition to this, his name was in a strong relation with the history of the Romanian press activity, alongside Grigore Asachi in Moldavia and George Barițiu in Transylvania. The ambition of being present in the cultural life and after many unsuccessful trials of typing newspapers in the Romanian language, Heliade succeeds in setting-up the first newspaper in Wallachia, in 8th April 1829 – *Curierul Românesc*.

Heliade thought that the cultural institutions – especially the press, the school and the theatre – were a tool for educating the people in order to have a vivid spiritual life and a patriotic consciousness. The ideas that come from the Enlightenment period and the experience of the people who were around him transform Heliade into a person who was eager to ensure a rapid progress of the Romanian society at that time. Moreover, Heliade was the successor of Gh. Lazăr in the new Romanian tuition, an enlightener of the Transylvanian scholars and a creator of an innovative grammar. According to Heliade, the newspaper ("foaia" – he used this word to talk about newspapers) had multiple qualities, being administrative, commercial and political: "El înțelegea ca ea să fie administrativă, comerțială și politică, pe când, de fapt, era să fie administrativă, de sigur, foarte puțin comercială și încă mai puțin politică, dar pe ici și colo și culturală, cum era editorul însuși" (Iorga, 1922: 39).

The arrival of the first number of the newspaper *Curierul Românesc* acted in a positive way on the all estates: "Acuma poate cineva vedea pe simțitorul Rumân curgându-i lacrimi de bucurie, văzând în toate casele bătrâni, tineri, bărbați, femei, învățați și mai de rând, îndeletnicindu-se și petrecând cu Gazeta în mână și unde, având cunoștință și știind un șir de întâmplările lumii, va putea cineva vedea încă și pruncii cei mici lăsându-și jocurile lor cele nevinovate și adunându-se împregiurul mumelor și taților lor ca să cetească ei singuri sau să asculte gazeta" (*Ibidem*: 41).

The sources of information that were used at the beginning were various and came from all the parts of the world: from the Austrian Observatory and the Frankfurt Journal to the Ottoman Monitor and St. Petersburg Journal. Firstly, *Curierul Românesc* was a weekly publication, then a bi-monthly one, afterwards being published three or four times a week; the publication itself was an informative one. Along the way, its pages consist of interesting subjects at that time: articles about schools, language, literature, cultural problems on a wide scale; the articles were signed by important personalities such as Grigore Alexandrescu, Vasile Cârlova, Dimitrie Bolintineanu, Costache Negruzzi, Ienăchiță Văcărescu.

For Ion Heliade Rădulescu, the press was defined as an informative and educative tool for the readers. Therefore, the Enlightenment concept can be derived from this approach. In order to form a modern society, there was a need of educating its members. And the education could be done in three ways: using the school, the theatre and the press. Heliade said that the newspapers are essential for everybody, and that everybody can read them with pleasure: "Folosul gazetei este de obște și deopotrivă pentru toată treapta de oameni: într-însa politicul își pironește ascuțitele și prevăzătoarele sale căutări; aci liniștitul literat și filosof adună și pune în cumpănă faptele și întâmplările lumii...până când, în sfârșit, și asudătorul plugar, și el poate afla aceea ce înlesnește ostenelile sale și face să umple

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câmpurile de îmbelșugătoarele sale roduri. Nu este nici o treabă, nu este nici o vârstă care să nu afle plăcere și folos într-această aflare vrednică și cuviincioasă cuvântării omului, adică în gazetă" (Heliade Rădulescu, 1969: 12).

The activity of *Curierul Românesc* was supported by Heliade for more than twenty years; the newspaper was suspended because of the events that took place in 1848, the last number being published in 19th April.

Besides, Heliade was in charge of publishing other newspapers that had the role to enhance the process of educating the people: *Muzeul Național* (1836), *Adaosul literar* (1830), *Gazeta Teatrului Național* (1835-1836), and *Curierul de ambe sexe* (1837-1847); the last three newspapers covered especially literature subjects, in order to increase the readers'interest, while *Muzeul Național* talked over history, science, technics and practical, educational directions for being a moral citizen.

Talking about Heliade's contribution to the development of the literary language through his journalistic activity, we can refer here to the correspondence between him and other scholars from different regions of the country, such as Costache Negruzzi in Moldavia and Gh. Barițiu in Transylvania. This specific epistolary dialogue on themes about the development of the Romanian language was sprung along with the correspondence published in several newspapers. Heliade decided to publish his ideas and to make them popular beyond the borders of Wallachia because he thought in the *esprit de corps* between the spokesmen of the same generation in order to achieve the same goal.

This concept of epistolary grammar arose simultaneously in the first half of the 19th century with the apparition of the correspondence between Ion Heliade Rădulescu and Costache Negruzzi. The two writers talked about grammatical problems, in a public way; they talked about the unification of the literary language and about the fact that the embracement of some unitary canons was compulsory. The correspondence was about the modernization of the language and consisted of four letters published in different newspapers. The first letter appeared in 1838 in *Muzeul Național*, where Negruzzi expresses his admiration for Heliade's linguistic activity. In response to that, Heliade offers details about his personal formation and about the standardization of the Romanian language: "Sistema mea a fost ca să poată cineva aduce limba în stare, pe cât se poate, a esprima tot ce se gândește, fie în materie fizică, fie morală, politică sau religioasă. Pe drumul acesta am vrut să am de povață, de se va putea, Dreptul cuvânt, Armonia și Energia" (Heliade Rădulescu, 1973: 85). The first criterion belongs to the rationalism, while the other two belong to the aesthetic; by using the combination between rationalism and aesthetic, Heliade tries to create a correct and perfect language. Moreover, the published letter talks about the problem of the neologisms, articles and spelling, ending with the idea that a dictionary should be created to help the modernization of the language.

The second and the third letters were published in 1838 and 1839 in *Curierul Românesc*, while the fourth one appeared in *Convorbiri literare* in 1840. The letters treat various grammar aspects, such as verbs, auxiliaries, spelling, idioms and the progressive replacement of the Cyrilic alphabet with the Latin one, concluding with the idea and the advice of writing with letters in the Romanian language: "Domnul meu, de voiești a primi de baz a scrie cu litere limba română, iar nu muntenească sau moldovenească [...] atunci

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trebuie a ne aduce aminte că nu suntem numai noi rumâni și trebuie a lepăda egoismul" (*ibidem*: 131).

Heliade's talent transforms him into a complex journalist. He had a crucial role in the unification and the modernization of the Romanian literary language and through the epistolary dialogue with the other scholars he displays a series of ideas that had a huge contribution to the development of the language. Furthermore, the letters are a generous hand of information.

The process of reinforcing the modern literary language started due to an imperative need of expression in a new language which will become a communication tool in various domains, with Ion Heliade Rădulescu as a pioneer on this line. He proposed different solutions, and his purpose was that the Wallachians, the Moldavians and the Transylvanians could get together upon having a unique language. This was, in fact, the apotheosis of the language unification.

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