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**MIHAI EMINESCU'S JOURNALISM AS AN
ILLUSTRATION OF THE ANCIENT ART OF
ELOQUENCE**

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Abstract

Key words: *Mihai Eminescu, Cicero, eloquence, rhetoric, journalism*

Man has been divinely endowed with the creative power of the word – the capacity to shape and become the demiurge of his own history, culture, and art. Through this gift, humanity transcends the limits of time and attains a form of immortality. Since the dawn of civilization, city dwellers have expressed a deep interest in social interaction, gradually transforming primitive speech into a sophisticated mode of communication that ultimately evolved into an art form: oratory. This form of expression has also been regarded as a science due to the complex strategies it employs to persuade audiences, transforming speech into an embodiment of eloquence. Rooted in both art and science, this discipline reached its classical perfection in antiquity through the contributions of Greek and Roman orators, whose rhetorical traditions remain foundational to the fields of political and juridical discourse. At the core of these traditions lies the aim of persuasion, achieved through a combination of emotional appeal, rational argumentation, and linguistic refinement. The passion for the spoken is what fundamentally unites Eminescu's creative genius with the ancient art of eloquence and the values of Romanian national culture.

The doctoral thesis entitled *Mihai Eminescu's Journalism as an Illustration of the Ancient Art of Eloquence* examines to explore the discursive Techniques employed by Eminescu as a journalist and investigates the rhetorical mechanisms that underlie his persuasive communication style in the press persuasive style of public communication. While Eminescu's poetry has been extensively analyzed and firmly integrated into the national literary canon, his journalistic work has not received the same degree of scholarly attention or critical depth. This research approaches eloquence as both an art and a science of the creative word, with particular emphasis on Eminescu's journalism a rich and complex field for identifying classical rhetorical strategies, while simultaneously showcasing how the Romanian poet-journalist adapted Roman antiquity's Textual legacy to articulate cultural, ethical, and political values—many of which anticipated Romania's eventual integration into the broader European cultural and political sphere.

The premise of this analysis is that Eminescu's journalistic articles contain elements of Roman rhetorical theory, revealing the presence of discursive techniques characteristic of Latin

oratory. The study seeks to identify those techniques, mechanisms and rhetorical similarities in Eminescu's journalism that can be traced to the great texts of Roman antiquity. This affinity can be naturally explained by the historical context in which Eminescu wrote, a period when classical Roman works were being widely edited and circulated. Eminescu's access to and reading of these texts provided models for his own public discourses, significantly enhancing its rhetorical strength and persuasive appeal—qualities that both informed and deeply resonated with his readership.

Themes such as valorization of national history, faith in the Romanian people and in God, the right to national unity, the fight against corruption, and the tolerance extended by Romanians to those who choose Romanian land as their homeland, represent some of the central motifs underlying Eminescu's political thought. These ideas are articulated through a journalistic rhetoric that not only aligns with but also reinterprets the classical ideals of eloquence. Eloquence, understood a discipline grounded in complex theoretical principles, nonetheless like literature, upon the word as its primary material. Eminescu mastered this science; his extraordinary poetic talent was complemented by a keen sensitivity to the political landscape of his time.

Eminescu's journalistic writings thus reveal a lesser-known yet deeply compelling dimension of his genius—a dual anchoring: in the legacy of Latin antiquity, through his profound grasp of rhetorical science, and in the immediacy of his contemporary political and public realities. His articles may be situated with the epideictic genre, as they engage with the present, uphold enduring values, address a broad audience, and rely primarily on rhetorical amplification.

Beyond the goal of informing the public and articulating his opinions on key political issues of his time, Eminescu constructed within his journalistic Texts true artistic forms of public discourse. From his dual identity as poet and journalist, this study privileges the latter, highlighting the prophetic role that Eminescu assumed within Romanian culture, national history, and journalism—a role that, by extension, encompasses political discourse. Through his journalism, Eminescu remains our contemporary.

By analyzing the rhetorical techniques employed in Eminescu's journalism, this research seeks to demonstrate his role as a civic journalist who, intentionally crafting his articles and messages in the service of the public good. One of the central hypotheses of this study is that Eminescu's rhetoric is pragmatically oriented and grounded in the *ethos* of communication, consistent with a model of civic, responsible journalism practiced in the public interest. Another hypothesis maintains that his journalistic discourse not only presents arguments on issues of public

concern but also exposes the lack of engagement by authorities and denounces national oppression and demagogic practices in political life.

While Eminescu's poetry reveals his Romantic spirit and his mastery of the literary techniques of his time, his journalism brings to light his engagement with society and politics—his role as orator. In this way, his publicistic output offers a portrait of the poet's intellect. Eminescu was not a news reporter in the conventional sense; rather, he wrote with the purpose of persuasion. He stands among the first truly professional journalists in Romania, practicing journalism with both passion and responsibility. Even without formal training in Roman rhetoric, he would likely have achieved his journalistic goals of informing, persuading, and delighting. For Eminescu, the first two aims were paramount, while the third—delight—was accessible only to those with a high level of cultural literacy, who could appreciate the aesthetic dimension of his stylistic architecture and derive joy from reading.

Eminescu's journalistic discourse consciously embraces its cultural inheritance. In nineteenth-century European culture, a journalist aiming to make an impact could do so only by drawing on the performative tools of Roman oratorical art. The journalistic objectives that Eminescu pursued therefore required necessitated a deep understanding of this rhetorical paradigm.

Eminescu's exceptional creative capacity manifested across five major domains of cultural reflection: poetry, literary prose, drama, philosophy, and Journalism. This research project focuses specifically on his journalistic work, a in which he emerges as both a politically engaged figure and a persuasive orator. From the editorial platform of the newspaper *Timpul*, Eminescu descended from the ivory tower of Romantic writing to speak directly to the hearts of all patriots. His distinctiveness among journalists lies in his meticulous documentation, his use of discursive techniques that remains relevant to journalism, and his adherence to principles now taught in Journalism manuals.

His nuanced perspectives on a wide range of topics—foreign and domestic policy, multiethnicity (notably in articles about Dobrogea), national history, economics, education policy, and the defense of the national language—construct the image of a journalist who, even in his own time, viewed the press as an institution for objective information and critical reflection.

Reading Mihai Eminescu's journalism today, one cannot fail to notice the enduring relevance of his journalistic discourse—not only in relation to of current geopolitical events and

socio-economic tensions, but particularly in terms of the methods he used to construct persuasive public communication. The accessibility of his language reveals his deep desire to awaken in his readers a shared national consciousness, as well as a modern, European outlook essential the cultural maturation of Romanian society.

Although some critics have questioned the value of Eminescu's journalism, while others have sought to restore it to its rightful place, it is only recently that studies have begun to explore the full thematic richness of this legacy he bequeathed to the Romanian people.

The present research employs qualitative methods, including content analysis, discourse analysis, ethnography of communication, interpretative approaches (case study, life history, hermeneutics), comparative study, and investigative analysis. This study relies exclusively on qualitative methodology, with the primary goal of demonstrating how Mihai Eminescu's journalistic texts internalize the ancient art of eloquence.

The first chapter, entitled *Critical Reception and the Specificity of Mihai Eminescu's Journalism and Journalistic Persona*, I will begin with a brief biographical overview of Mihai Eminescu, followed by a case study focused on the diachronic critical perspectives regarding his journalistic activity. The scholarly exegesis will be structured into four distinct sections: *The Vision of His Contemporaries and Pre-War Continuities*, *The Reception of Eminescu's Journalism during the Interwar Period*, *Post-War ReContextualizations*, and *Eminescu's Journalism Today*. The primary method employed in this chapter will be comparative analysis, which will enable the identification of both convergent and divergent trends across various critical approaches. This method serve to delineate the conceptual "border zone" that this research seeks to reveal—a space in which the hypotheses of the study may emerge, develop, and find substantiated. By applying this method, I will engage with the set of critical studies devoted to Eminescu's Journalism, offering an extensive comparative framework that highlights the continuities and innovations in the critical discourse to date. Moreover, the comparative method will allow for the refinement the enhancement of previous analyses, demonstrating that certain existing studies offer a promising foundation for the further development of this field. The innovative contributions I aim to bring forth regarding the cultural value of Eminescu's journalistic oeuvre will likewise be articulated through this same methodological lens.

In the second chapter, entitled *The Art of Oratory – Theoretical Perspectives on the Formation of Discourse*, I aim to highlight the principal components involved in the construction

of discourse in antiquity. To this end, I will examine a synthesized overview of the concepts of *rhetoric*, *eloquence*, and *discourse*. Furthermore, I will identify how the rhetorical appeals—*ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*—are reflected in Eminescu’s journalistic Texts, applying an analytical framework inspired by the three major orators of antiquity: Plato, Aristotle, and Marcus Tullius Cicero, each of whom conceptualizes this triad in distinct terms. For Plato, *ethos* represents the speaker’s intention, *pathos* is the discourse’s manipulative capacity, and *logos* is characterized by sophistic ambiguity. In Aristotle’s formulation, *ethos* denotes expertise and credibility, *pathos* corresponds to emotional engagement, and *logos* signifies logical reasoning. In Cicero’s view, *ethos* embodies rationality, *pathos* reflects the discourse’s persuasive potential, and *logos* encompasses eloquence and the use of rhetorical figures. Additionally, I will present and illustrate, both theoretically and through selected Eminescian Texts, the four main constitutive parts of classical discourse: the *exordium* (introduction), the *narratio* (narration), the *argumentatio*—with its two forms, *confirmatio* (confirmation) and *refutatio* (refutation)—and the *peroratio* (conclusion). The analysis undertaken in this chapter is grounded in the theoretical frameworks on discourse structure developed by classical masters of the rhetorical tradition, such as Marcus Tullius Cicero and Marcus Fabius Quintilian, as well as by modern and contemporary scholars including Ioan Piuariu-Molnar, Dimitrie Gusti, Pierre Guiraud, Vasile Florescu, Petre Gheorghe Bârlea, Vistian Goia, M. Meyer, and Alexandru Țiclea.

In the third chapter, entitled *Eminescu’s Vision of a Modern Romanian Press*, I aim to examine Mihai Eminescu’s understanding perception of Journalism and objective reporting, his views on the importance of proper use of the Romanian language—particularly in the public sphere and within the press—and the oratorical style to which the poet-journalist may be classified. Furthermore, I will conduct to carry out a case study focused on investigating the presence of discourse construction techniques in Eminescu’s journalistic writing. This analysis will involve identifying interpreting the use of rhetorical strategies such as the enthymeme, epicheirema, exact citation, argumentative citation, figures of division, *pysma*, *ratiocinatio*, subjection (*subjectio*), rhetorical question (*erotema*), paremiological resources, satire, and irony within the rhetorical structure of Eminescu’s journalistic discourse. The articles selected for this analysis are drawn from Eminescu’s journalistic activity during the period 1870–1883, when he collaborated with various publications including *Albina*, *Familia*, *Federațiunea*, *Convorbiri literare*, *Curierul de Iași*, and *Timpul*. The articles examined in this section will be organized into five chronological

periods. From the timeframe 1870–1877, the following articles will be analyzed: *O scriere critică, Domnului Dumitru Brătianu, Francia* [„Între păreri...”], *Austro-Ungaria* [„În 26 iunie (8 iulie) a avut loc...”], *Turcia* [În 3/15 iulie s-au ținut...], *De pe câmpul de război* [Până în momentul de față ...], *Turcia* [Diplomația cu mersul de culbec...], *Universitatea din Cernăuți* [Primim din partea...], *Periodul al doilea...*, *Arma la picior, Netăgăduit că istoria...*, *Se vorbește că în consiliul...*, *O telegramă a agenției Havas...*, *Repertoriul nostru teatral, Apărătorul legii și Tipografia națională, Războiul oriental* [„Știrile aduse...”], *Influența austriacă asupra românilor din Principate, A începe cu stereotipul, Să facem un congres...*, *Poarta au comunicat...*, *Ecuilibrul, Revista Teatrală* [Joi în 25 noiembrie...]. From the period 1877–1880, I will focus my attention on the following articles: *Franța* [„Ca și confracții lor...”], *Astronomia corpurilor cerești, Situația din Franța, De câte ori s-a făcut în parlamentul nostru...*, *Basarabia, Ziar nou* [„Vineri 14(26) aprilie au apărut...”], „Românul” în numărul de vineri..., „Românul” combate ideile emise de noi..., *Originea românilor, Contestarea alegerii d-lui Maiorescu, „Presa” reproduce...* În numărul nostru de vineri... *Ca la noi la nimenea, „Românul” află că...*, *Arboroasa* [„În «Neue Freie Presse» ne-a întâmpinat...”], *Icoane vechi și icoane nouă, În sfârșit vedem limpede...*, *Dorobanții, Nou A-B-C-DAR românesc de Vasile Petri*. From the period February 17 to December 31, 1880, I will select the following articles: *Ziarul „Românul” se ocupă...*, *N-ar fi greu de polemizat...*, *Un poco più di luce...*, *Cu greu se va găsi...*, „Le Nord”, *ziar de încredere...* și *O literatură întreagă, Ziarul „Românul”, cu o solitudine paternă...* și *Unul din argumentele cele mai obicinuite...* N-ar fi greu de polemizat..., „Românul” de la 25 februarie, *Abdicarea d-lui C. A. Rosetti, Studii asupra situației Aparține tradițiunilor Există o seamă de spirite, Austro-Ungaria și naționalitățile, Una din nenorocirile acestei țări...*, *Ne pare bine...*, *Există o seamă de spirite...*, *În urma încărcării programelor...* From the period January 1 to December 31, 1881, I will study the rhetorical Techniques in the articles: *Între variile acuzări...*, *Erodot al „Românului” continuă...* *Bizantinii de la „Românul”...*, *D. Vernescu a interelat...*, *Într-un articol cu mult prea lung...*, *Are haz „Românul” cu lecțiile ... Adevărul că în decursul...*, *Teoria noastră...*, *Se zice ...nu afirmăm...*, *Între acuzările...* From the period 1882–1883, I intend to analyze the presence of elements of Eminescian rhetoric used in the articles: *Un D. Kogălniceanu publică...* *Un cabinet nou „Națiunea” constată...*, „Românul” promițându-ne programul nou.

In the fourth chapter, *Marcus Tullius Cicero – A Rhetorical Model for Eminescu’s Journalism*, I will employ qualitative research methods such as the case study and comparative

analysis, applying an analytical framework focused on the structural elements of the discourses produced by both writers: Marcus Tullius Cicero and Mihai Eminescu. The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that Marcus Tullius Cicero represented a significant point of reference for Mihai Eminescu in terms of rhetorical theory. To this end, I will, on the one hand, conduct a case study examining the direct evocation of the ancient orator in the journalist's writings and notes. On the other hand, I will analyze Cicero's judicial orations alongside Eminescu's journalistic articles, highlighting the shared Techniques of discourse composition employed by both figures to persuade their respective audiences. The central objective of this chapter is to argue that both the orator Marcus Tullius Cicero and the journalist Mihai Eminescu utilize similar rhetorical devices, such as rhetorical questions, interrogative sentences to create dialogism, and exclamatory phrases. The case study will examine a selection of Eminescu's articles as juridical-style pleadings, in which I emphasize the idea that the rhetorical strategies employed by Eminescu closely resemble those of his classical model in the art of eloquence, Marcus Tullius Cicero—particularly considering that some of Eminescu's journalistic Texts were presented as lectures before the *Junimea* literary society. Accordingly, the Ciceronian Texts upon which this analysis will be based are: : *În apărarea lui Roscius din Ameria*, *Verine – Despre statui și Despre torturi – și Pentru Archias*. With regard to Mihai Eminescu's press articles, the analysis will include the following Texts: *O scriere critică*, *Să facem un congres*, *Ecuilibrul*, *Francia*, *Flori stilistice din ziarele românești*, *Influența austriacă asupra românilor din principate*, *De-o seamă de vreme...*, *Anexarea Dobrogei*, *Proiectul domnului Conta asupra instrucțiunii [1]*, *Venim încă o dată asupra scrisorii*, *Studii exegetice asupra unei parabole care lipsește în Sfânta-Scriptură și Deziluzii și dezamăgiri*.

The final part of this thesis presents the conclusions drawn from the systematic analysis conducted on the critical studies devoted to Eminescu's journalism and the corpus of his own press articles. This analysis demonstrates that his journalistic work significantly contributes to the valorization and continued use of ancient Techniques of eloquence within a new era of Romanian cultural development.