Nineteenth-century Romanian cartoons on freedom of expression

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ABSTRACT

The study examines Romanian cartoons from the mid-nineteenth century that illustrate the satirical journals' reaction against conservative press legislation affecting freedom of expression. The cartoons are excerpted from satirical publications issued by a famous journalist, Nicolae Orășanu, who was imprisoned several times for press delicts. In some cartoons, the artists refer to or allude to censorship or other political actions against the press and comment on the risk of imprisonment while doing one's profession. The approach draws from discourse analysis supplemented by rhetorical and cognitive metaphor-driven theoretical suggestions. The results indicate that cartoons are primarily multimodal, with a marked preference for metonymy and synecdoche as semiotic resources. The journalist profession is represented metonymically via a writing instrument (a quill), while censors' professional tools are represented as padlocks, handcuffs, scissors, chains, or muzzles. Recurring images are the single character to stand for a group (*pars pro toto*) and metonymic or synecdoche chains (*instrument for action and action for agent*). The exaggerated size of objects is meant to trigger emotional effects: empathy towards the press and discontent or indignation against political power. The article also examines cartoons' potential contribution to creating a myth or romanticized perception of the journalist and/or cartoonist as an altruistic martyr or a hero, a social representation that emerged in the nineteenth century.

1. Preliminary remarks

Cartoons are more than playful depictions of daily events; they represent a prominent part of social discourse (Bouko, Calabrese and De Clercq 2017). Discussed and debated for (un)limited freedom of expression, rights and restrains, or (in)tolerance, cartoons are at "the intersection between journalism and art", revealing moral and ideological stances, critiques, alarm triggers, etc. (Pedrazzini and Royaards 2022:361 – 362). See also the definition "political cartoons act as 'visual news discourse'" (Greenberg 2002:181 apud Bouko, Calabrese and De Clercq 2017:25). Given that cartoonists have been regarded as "influential and highly respected political commentators" (Pedrazzini and Scheuer 2018:102, see also Harvey 2009), this article aims to tackle the topic of freedom of expression in cartoons.

Our study focuses on mid-nineteenth-century Romanian cartoons illustrating the reaction of the satirical press against conservative legislation affecting the freedom of expression for the press. The cartoons are excerpted from satirical publications. In some cases, the cartoonists refer or allude to the political actions against (satirical) publications – like censorship – and reflect on the risk entailed by the profession (i.e., imprisonment). Our analysis also examines how the cartoons have potentially contributed to the creation of a myth or romanticized view of the journalist and/or cartoonist as a martyr or a hero with an altruistic role, a social representation that emerged in the nineteenth century (Bouko, Calabrese and De Clercq 2017:29 – 30).

Guided by the paradigms of rhetorics, discourse analysis, and cognitive metaphor theory applied to multimodal items (El Refaie 2003; Forceville 1994; 2008; 2020), the article highlights the semiotic resources used by Romanian cartoonists. Some preferred mechanisms are metonymy, synecdoche, metaphors, playing with the transition from a connotative to a denotative interpretation, etc. The interplay between text and image (Hempelmann and Samson 2008; Tsakona 2009) is vital for constructing social representations through cartoons.

This paper has the following structure: Section 2 discusses the relationship between cartoons and (political) censorship, while Section 3 begins with an overview of the study of cartoons as multimodal puzzles and focuses on rhetorical and cognitive perspectives. Section 4 is dedicated to the case study based on Romanian cartoons. The conclusions are presented in Section 5.

2. Cartoons and (political) censorship

As an "integral part of the social discourse" (Bouko, Calabrese, and De Clercq 2017:24), cartoons are more than a playful or satirical re-presentation of events or characters. Cartoons appeal to the collective memory (Bouko, Calabrese and De Clercq 2017:25)

and can also become part of this memory. Western European cartoons originate from an Italian source that favored exaggerated portraits, with their roots in the iconography of Egyptian, Roman, and Greek Antiquity (Hempelmann and Samson 2008:613), as well as from the German and Dutch sources, focusing on scenes with symbolic buildups influenced by the Reformation context (EU 2002:995). These traditions of Western European cartoons merged in the works of British and French artists from the eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries, such as Hogarth, Gilray, Cruikshank, Philipon, and Daumier, who influenced the graphic artists throughout the nineteenth century and beyond.

Goldstein's (1989) synthesis on the French satirical press in the nineteenth century convincingly shows the importance attributed to cartoons by both politicians and journalists: cartoons can be "read" by the illiterate, they cross language barriers, and they are harder to counter than satirical texts (see also Pedrazzini and Scheuer 2018:102). Due to their (potential) influence, cartoons have been subject to censorship, mainly in the nineteenth century, but also in the twentieth century (during the World Wars, in communist countries, etc.). Censorship can be broadly defined as an intervention in the "voluntary exchange of information and ideas" (George 2024:608). This intervention can be made by state institutions, considering various national or international interests or sensibilities, or it can be demanded by professional, religious, ethnic, etc. groups, and enforced by state institutions, a situation characteristic mostly of present-day cartoons. It is considered that publicly pointing out the interference of censorship generates considerably more interest in the forbidden image or text than in the pre-censorship situation (George 2024:608). In some cases, what is censored ("the content") is considerably less prominent than the context in which censorship is enforced or demanded: "who engages in these episodes of contention, as well as when, where and with what intensity" (George 2024:608). This is one of the reasons satirical publications have mentioned the intervention of censorship regarding their cartoons or have published cartoons missing some parts of the drawing, parts considered inappropriate by censors (Goldstein 1989; 2018[2012]).

Nineteenth-century cartoons were censored when they targeted royalty, important politicians or public figures, or if they were perceived as licentious, thus outraging society's morals.[1] Media engages in a "struggle for symbolic power" (Thompson 2000:9 apud Nieuwenhuis 2024:103): the rise of the media as a symbolic power is a feature of the nineteenth century. The media challenged state institutions and gradually became an important component of modern societies.

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[1] See also the present-day legal cases against cartoons or stand-up jokes within forensic humor studies (Godioli 2020; Godioli, Young and Fiori 2022; Pedrazzini and Royaards 2022).

3. Cartoons through the lens of various theoretical models

Cartoons are multimodal puzzles, characterized by "high semiotic density" (Pedrazzini 2024:121), which "stand out as a particularly compact and semantically dense form of communication" (Godioli 2020:6). Semiotic condensation (Morris 1993 apud El Refaie 2003:88; Pedrazzini 2024:120 – 121) is one of the main characteristics of cartoons. The complexity of pictorial humor has been highlighted in various studies that mention the challenge of 'translating' visual meaning into verbal meaning (El Refaie 2003; Lessard 1991; Tsakona 2009). Decoding pictorial humor entails visual literacy (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996) and social, cultural, and political encyclopedic knowledge.

Various authors (Gervereau 2000; Nikolajeva and Scott 2000; Samson and Huber 2007; Tsakona 2009) have distinguished between three main types of cartoons: a type in which the visual component illustrates the verbal one (like a joke accompanied by illustration); a type in which the interplay between the two semiotic modes is essential (equal importance for the visual and verbal components); and a type in which the verbal component (if any) is an appendix for the visual one. Cartoons have been analyzed from various perspectives: some studies are informed by the General Theory of Verbal Humor (Hempelmann and Samson 2008; Tsakona 2009; Genova 2018), others by cognitive theory (Brône and Feyaerts 2003; Marín Arrese 2008; Yus 2016), conceptual metaphors included (Bergen 2003; Bounegru and Forceville 2011; El Refaie 2003; Rohrer 2004), to mention only these important strands.

Our approach is informed by discourse analysis and rhetorical and cognitive metaphor-driven theories. One crucial thread starts from the work of Forceville (1994; 2008; 2020). Having as a starting point Barthes's (1964) suggestions, Forceville (1994) distinguishes between three types of messages: the linguistic message (belonging to the verbal component), and the denoted and the connoted messages, which are attributes of the visual element. The verbal message, included in the image or placed above it, can be complementary to the image, having a relaying function, or it can guide the visual decoding, thus providing an anchoring function. The denoted and the connoted messages can be related to what Pedrazzini and Scheuer (2018:103) label the referenced situation ("the topic of the cartoon") and the fictional situation. These two situations are recognised due to the relationship between the thematic and rhetorical levels of the cartoon. The denoted message comes from the fictional situation depicted in the cartoon, while the connoted message draws from the referenced situation.

According to the conceptual metaphor theory (drawing from the classical work of Lakoff and Johnson 1980), metaphors are based on the mappings or correspondences between two domains: a source (usually concrete, familiar) and a target domain (usually abstract, less familiar), connected in a relationship of

equivalence *A is B*. Metonymies[2] rely on the (cor)relations within a domain: for example, a person stands for a professional *category/group*, an *object* stands for a *profession* or for an *institutional action*, etc. A subtype of metonymy is synecdoche: a *part* stands for the *entire entity*, "pars pro toto."

Forceville (1994; 2008) proposes the concepts of *pictorial* and *multimodal metaphor*. Pictorial metaphors are visual, nonverbal metaphors (Forceville 2008:463, 464): "their target and source are entirely rendered in visual terms" (Forceville 2008:464). The *multimodal metaphor* consists of "target, source, and/or mappable features […] represented or suggested by at least two different sign systems (one of which may be language) or modes of perception" (Forceville 2008:463). Forceville considers that three criteria should be met for a combination of semiotic modes to be regarded as a multimodal metaphor (although only the last criterion is typical of multimodality): (1) the two modes ("phenomena") have to be part of distinct categories; (2) they "can be slotted as target and source, respectively, and captured in an *A is B* format that forces or invites an addressee to map one or more features, connotations, or affordances […] from source to target"; and (3) they "are cued" in more than one semiotic system (Forceville 2008:469). Forceville (2008:463) enumerates several differences between pictorial and multimodal metaphors and their linguistic/verbal correspondents concerning their "construal and impact": "perceptual immediacy," specific modalities of cueing, greater cross-cultural accessibility, and a potentially "stronger emotional appeal" (see also El Refaie 2003:89) characterize pictorial and multimodal targets and sources. Multimodal metaphors are also important for metarepresentation: implicatures and explicatures are involved both for the artist creating the cartoon and for the addressee (Forceville 2020:183).

El Refaie (2003:75) considers visual metaphors[3] "the pictorial expression of a metaphorical way of thinking." Metaphors usually surface from the combination of various "verbal and visual signs, which, through their particular relation to one another, together produce the idea," the "thought," or concept (El Refaie 2003:80). Meaning is the result of a negotiation between producers/creators and viewers (El Refaie 2003:81).

We focus on metonymies and metaphors in cartoons, and we combine attention to the conceptual component with highlighting "the potential significance of the 'grammar' of visual metaphor" explored in a particular sociopolitical context (El Refaie 2003:76 – 77). The importance of both the viewers' expectations and the influence exerted by the social and political context on the cartoons' creation cannot be ignored (El Refaie 2003:77). From the three types of metaphorical meaning delineated

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[2] Metonymies as cognitive mechanisms are instrumental for the analysis of cartoons (El Refaie 2003).

[3] Although most of the studies mention only metaphor as a concept, the observations are valid also for metonymy. In section 4 we will draw attention, when necessary, to the distinctions between the two cognitive mechanisms. "Visual metaphor" and "pictorial metaphor" are synonyms.

by Kövecses (2020:157) – *meaningfulness, decontextualized meaning,* and *contextualized meaning,* the latter is more significant for our approach. While meaningfulness and decontextualized meaning are drawn from more abstract levels (the image schema and domain and frame levels), contextualized (contextual) meaning corresponds to instantiation (Kövecses 2020:157). According to Kövecses (2020:158), "a particular contextual meaning is introduced in order to enable a variety of social, pragmatic, emotive, rhetorical, etc. functions and effects," which equals what Forceville (1994, following Barthes 1964) labels the *connoted meaning* (see above).

4. The Romanian case study

This section focuses on cartoons published by satirical publications in Romania in the second half of the nineteenth century (1859–1864). The nineteenth-century cartoons target official state censorship and the lack of freedom of expression for the press due to the absence of modern legislation. The cartoons are extracted from satirical publications directed by, or having as main contributor, Nicolae Orășanu, a journalist imprisoned several times for his articles. Our examples are selected from *Nichipercea, Coarnele lui Nichipercea* 'The Horns of Nichipercea', *Calendarul lui Nichipercea* 'Nichipercea's Calendar.'

The collection[4] of the Central University Library in Bucharest contains around 100 issues from these publications (1859–1864), and we have identified 10 cartoons on censorship. Their frequency is relatively low, especially if compared with other topics. In general, each issue has two cartoons (or two pages with illustrations), which leads to roughly 200 cartoons in the collection. The cartoons targeting the "political menagerie" are far more frequent than those on censorship. These cartoons usually appear in connection with specific official interventions against the (satirical) press.

4.1. Political and cultural context

Before 1828, in the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia (which united in 1859 and later became known as Romania), censorship targeted printed works with religious content. There were very few printers, usually managed by the Church. The Russian occupation of the Principalities (due to the Russian-Ottoman war of 1828 – 1829) imposed censorship on local publications and imported books or journals. The official role of censor was also established (Petcu 2005:19 – 23). The newly 'born' press in the Romanian language (the first journals appeared in 1829) could publish news only after receiving approval from the censors (i.e., prior censorship). Between 1829 and 1856, the Russian protectorate doubled the Ottoman suzerainty over the

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4 The material is copyright free and publicly accessible.

Principalities. Both imperial powers were very cautious regarding freedom of the press. In 1856, Prince Ghica attempted to abolish prior censorship, but the initiative was suspended after three months due to objections from the Ottoman suzerain (Petcu 2005:34 – 35). In 1859, shortly after the Union of the Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, satirical journals began to appear.[5] The Prince of the United Principalities Alexandru Ioan Cuza (1859 – 1866) was tolerant towards the press. However, without press legislation designed on democratic principles, the Minister of Internal Affairs had the authority to suspend publications, imprison journalists, or censor cartoons.

The (still) conservative press legislation between 1859 and 1866 thus affected the freedom of expression (Petcu 2005; Șerbănescu 2013; Trifu 1974). For example, some caricatures were censored after Cuza's *coup d'état* in 1864. For instance, in *Nichipercea* (issue 20 / 10.05.1864, page 160, figure 1), the publisher printed a last page titled *Goana din rai* ('The Expulsion from the Garden of Eden'), without the caricature, but with a footnote: *Foaia aceasta ese fără caricature din causă că d. Ministru din întru a găsit de cuviință a le opri* ('This journal is printed without caricatures because the Minister of Internal Affairs thought it better to stop them').
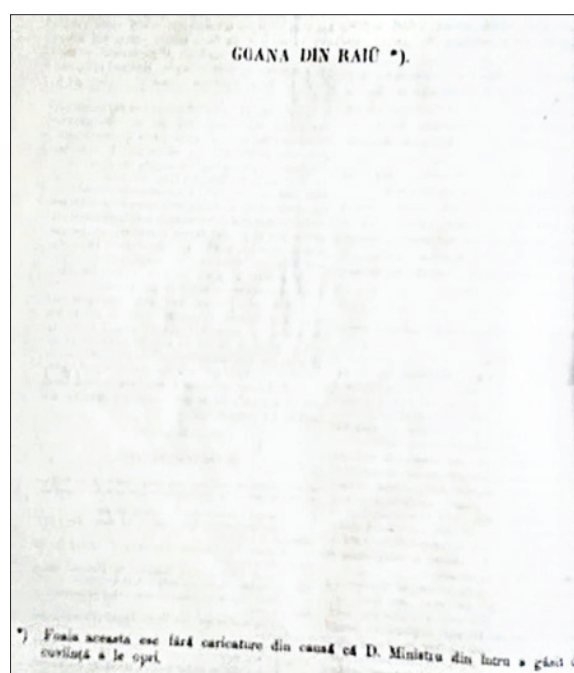

Figure 1. Collection of the Central University Library, Bucharest

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[5] One example is *Țânțarul* 'The Mosquito', the first issue in February 1859.

In his detailed presentation of nineteenth-century censorship of political caricatures in France, Goldstein (1989:54) mentions that "the publication of caricatures that had obviously been mutilated by the censors" represents a strategy to protest against censorship. Other strategies are to publish caricatures "with obviously missing or obscured parts" or with the portions censored "replaced by the notice 'forbidden by the censor'" (Goldstein 1989:54).

4.2. **Analysis of the cartoons**

In Romanian journals, the first cartoons were (lithograph) copies of works by mainly French artists like Honoré Daumier, from *Le Charivari* (Oprescu 1945; Șerbănescu 2013:9). There were very few artists willing to illustrate satirical periodicals at the early stages of the satirical press in Romania, as cartoons were viewed as a minor art (Șerbănescu 2013). Furthermore, in the first years of their existence, the artists usually did not sign the illustrations from satirical journals. Most of the mid-nineteenth-century satirical press cartoons are multimodal metonymies blended with metaphors.

The cartoon on the next page (Figure 2, *Nichipercea*, no 10/17.12.1859, p. 16), published in 1859, was signed by Henri Trenk.[6] The paratext contextualizes the visual part of the cartoon. Under the title *Ziaristica română* ('Romanian press/journalism'), the artist represents three versions of the press (with temporal cues): an ideal one, the character on the left, under the caption *Cum ar trebui să fie*[7] ('How it should be'), and two situations influenced by the political setting[8] – the contemporary situation, after the Paris Convention of 1858, the character in the middle – *Cum e după Convenție* ('How it is after the Convention'), and the previous one, after the Organic Regulation, the character on the right – *Cum era sub Regulament* ('How it was under the Regulation').

In all three depictions, the male figures – the fictional situation, conveying the denoted message – metonymically represent the Romanian press – the referenced situation, conveying the connoted message. It is a PERSON STANDS FOR A CATEGORY/ GROUP visual metonymy: "The conceptual relationship between journalist and press is that of contiguity because the journalist is part of the press institution and, hence, serves as a metonym standing for the press" (Toumi 2022:14). The cartoon itself can be construed as a multimodal metonymy.

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[6] One of the most important illustrators of the satirical publications in the first years of their existence was Henri Trenk (1818–1892), a Swiss born painter. He illustrated some of the publications issued by Orășanu.

[7] The captions written in the transitional alphabet are transliterated here in the Latin alphabet. In mid-nineteenth-century, Romanian printers in the Principalities started to use the Latin alphabet, but some letters from the Cyrillic alphabet were still in use.

[8] The Organic Regulation, adopted in 1831 in Wallachia and in 1832 in Moldavia, acted as a first Constitution for the Principalities. It was followed by the Paris Convention of 1858. The first Constitution created by the Romanian Parliament was adopted in 1866.

Figure 2. Collection of the Central University Library, Bucharest.

At the same time, the contrasting attitudes of the characters lead to different visual implicatures. Considering the character on the left, the position of his legs suggests ample movements similar to those in sports or dancing. The overall image conveys the idea of free movement, which metaphorically maps to the concept of freedom of expression for the press. The journals the first character holds above his head and under his arm can be considered a visual synecdoche with multiple layers: the part, i.e., some journals, stands for the whole entity, i.e., the press, *pars pro toto*. The journal under the arm of the first character has the title Charivari on the frontispiece, which is the title of a famous French satirical publication. The reference to this publication can be seen as a reference to the satirical press in general, a subordinate pars pro toto synecdoche: since a satirical publication is part of the satirical press, which is part of the press in general, the synecdochical chain can be *pars pro pars pro toto*. The character also holds a toy and a small devil with a paper (or a journal?) in its hand. The small devil can be a metonymical or synecdochical representation of the Romanian satirical publication *Nichipercea*. The journal's title is a folk playful name of the devil, and it had a visual representation of a small devil on its frontispiece (see Constantinescu 2020). Thus, the representation in the cartoon can be seen as a symbol for the journal. At the same time, the cartoon is printed on the pages of the journal (a metonymic relation of inclusion).

The second character (in the middle) contrasts sharply with the first. His body position suggests immobility; his head is down, and he is handcuffed. An oversized padlock covers his mouth. The position of the third character's hands and legs suggests an attempt to run away from oversized scissors cutting his body in half (the character on the right). A quill, a metonymical representation of the profession, is also cut: the quill is a writing tool indicating the figure's status as a journalist. The second and third characters are victims of a force (i.e., human agents manipulating objects) that is metonymically and metaphorically represented through the padlock, handcuffs, and scissors. The handcuffs are objects unambiguously related to the police, a state institution that can restrain citizens' freedom of movement. The lack of mobility and the oversized padlock and scissors map onto the lack of freedom of expression.

Focusing on the padlock and the scissors, each has its own referential and connotative sphere. Padlocks are objects meant to prevent something from being opened, protect valuable items, or prevent someone from entering or leaving a place. The scissors indicate the cutting action: the verb is polysemous, and the meaning associated with suppression of words or texts is the prominent one in the context of the press. In this context, the objects affecting the journalists are instruments of official institutions hindering freedom of expression. The use of padlocks and scissors entails purposeful action by state institutions: "censorship is an intended practice to prevent journalistic work being carried out properly at different stages" (Toumi 2022:158); in the case of the cartoons we are examining, the stage seems to be the writing of articles. The oversized padlock and scissors are immediately perceptible; they trigger an emotional reaction of empathy with the victim and fear or indignation concerning the agent using these tools.

The padlock is a recurring metonymical and metaphorical representation of censorship. Both fictional and referenced situations are recurring. Other cartoons from *Nichipercea's Calendar for 1860*, published at the end of 1859, titled *Libertatea presei* ('Freedom of the press'), and from *Nichipercea* (46/1.04.1862, p. 368) depict similar images. The victims are either the journalists (Figure 3) or the entire public opinion (Figure 4, Nichipercea, no. 46/1.04.1862, p. 368). The text again serves a contextualizing function, attributing a referent to the characters depicted. The title in Figure 3 or the caption *Opiniunea publică, restaurată prin noua metodă a domnului Manolache Kostache* ('The public opinion, restored by the new method of mister Manolache Kostache'), in Figure 4, is ironic compared to the drawing. In Figure 3, the male character has his hands tied behind his back, his legs also tied, while his mouth is pierced by a giant padlock. He is in front of a door with a sign above it that reads Redaktia ('Editorial office'). The title and the sign help reconstruct the metonymy: the character is a journalist, and thus, he stands for the press.

Figure 3. *Calendarul lui Nichipercea pe anul 1860 [Nichipercea's Calendar for 1860]*, 1859, p. 11 (from Oprescu 1945: LXVIII).

Figure 4. Collection of the Central University Library, Bucharest.

The same mechanism is found in Figure 4. The four male characters, each with a giant padlock on their mouth, are a synecdoche for public opinion. The same text, *lege de presă* ('press law'), is written on the padlock. Writing the words on the objects indicates a metaphor: the press law, at that moment, equals a padlock. The cartoons from both Figure 3 and 4 can be construed as multimodal metonymy.

In the Romanian cartoons, the padlock impedes speaking (the denoted message). Journalists and artists convey their messages (i.e., 'speak') through articles and caricatures. The impediment to communication relates to a metaphorical representation of press censorship (Toumi 2022:154). Thus, the connoted message is that PRESS CENSORSHIP IMPEDES COMMUNICATION. As Toumi (2022:155) notices for the Algerian caricatures published during the Civil War in Algeria (1992–2002), "[t]he oversized padlocks invoke the conceptual metaphoric mapping linking significance to physical size" (Grady 1997). Oversized objects, with their "perceptual immediacy" (Forceville 2008), imply a major intervention against the freedom of expression of journalists and artists (see also El Refaie 2003:85). The depiction of oversized instruments directly correlates with the extent of the state intervention against the press. The visual representation is probably intended for emotional appeal. It aims to trigger a complex affective reaction from the cartoon viewers, as mentioned above: indignation against state officials vs. empathy for the journalists. The emotional appeal is included in the connoted (according to Forceville 1994) or contextual(ized) meaning (as mentioned by Kövecses 2020).

In Figure 2, the scissors stand for the intervention in the text (SCISSORS STAND FOR TEXT SUPPRESSION) of an agent, a censor. Intervening in the text is typical of a censor, thus TEXT SUPPRESSION STANDS FOR CENSOR. The metonymical chain within the connoted meaning involves the INSTRUMENT FOR ACTION and ACTION FOR THE AGENT. The handcuffs stand for arrest (INSTRUMENT FOR ACTION), a penalty imposed by the authorities on journalists or caricaturists: for example, the journalist Orășanu was imprisoned 5 times for press offences, for short periods, in the first years of his career (1859–1864). The action of arrest also involves an agent with institutional authority: an ACTION FOR THE AGENT. The agent represents the state authority (*pars pro toto*) for all three objects. Only in Figure 3 is a depiction of state authority through the officer showing the arrested journalist an official document. In this figure, the officer's presence explicitly comments on the fact that the agent enforcing censorship represents the state (the explicature). The way of cueing state intervention makes the idea of censorship more visible to the journal's readers.

The scissors are a famous metonymy for censorship[9] in the French satirical press in the second half of the nineteenth century, starting with the drawings of André Gill or Alfred Le Petit in *L'Eclipse*[10] and *Le Grelot*.[11] Le Grelot's frontispiece depicted an open padlock under the title.

Both the scissors and the quill are metonymical representations: while the scissors are the instrument used by censors (INSTRUMENT FOR ACTION and ACTION FOR THE AGENT), the quill is historically the symbol for journalists (Bouko, Calabrese and De Clercq 2017; Goldstein 1989, 2018[2012]; Toumi 2022), thus INSTRUMENT FOR ACTION and ACTION FOR THE AGENT as well. The confrontation between "a sword and a pen/pencil/quill" represents "a legacy from Islamic literature, which found continuity in Hebrew literature" (Bouko, Calabrese, and De Clercq 2017:28; Cf. *the pen is mightier than the sword*[12]). It is plausible to consider that the repeated visual metonymic or metaphorical representation leads to conventionalization and its addition to the interdiscourse: "the constant repetition of particular metaphors will encourage the unconscious or at least semi-conscious acceptance of a particular metaphorical concept as the normal, natural way of seeing a particular area of experience" (El Refaie 2003: 83–84). In other words, a recurrent fictional situation can become conventionalized, and the implicatures associated with that fictional situation can become shared knowledge.

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[9] In France, censorship for the satirical texts stopped in 1822, but for cartoons it continued until 1881 (briefly abolished in 1830, 1848, 1870), for more details regarding French satirical publications and their caricatures see Goldstein (1989, 2018 [2012]).

[10] For example, Gill's famous *Madame Anastasie* from *L'Eclipse*, July 19, 1874.

[11] For example, the first page of *Le Grelot* from July 20, 1873, or December 28, 1873.

[12] I would like to thank the editors for this suggestion.

There are also cases where the cartoon is based on a visual metaphor supported by the abovementioned metonymies. This is the case with the multimodal representation in Figure 5 (*Nichipercea*, no 10 / 10.02.1863, page 76), which also draws on the analogy with a folk saying alluded to in the caption: *Când mâța e legată, muselată și potcovită cu coji de nuci, șoarecii mănâncă nesupărați bostanul. Adevărul spus cu alte cuvinte se trimite la pușcărie.* 'When the cat is tied to a post, wearing a muzzle and walnut shells on its paws, the mice eat the pumpkin undisturbed. The truth told in other words is sent to prison.'

The visual cues are not only prominent (i.e., immediately perceptible) but also able to provoke an emotional reaction of disapproval regarding the status of the press, prevented from acting, and indignation regarding politicians.
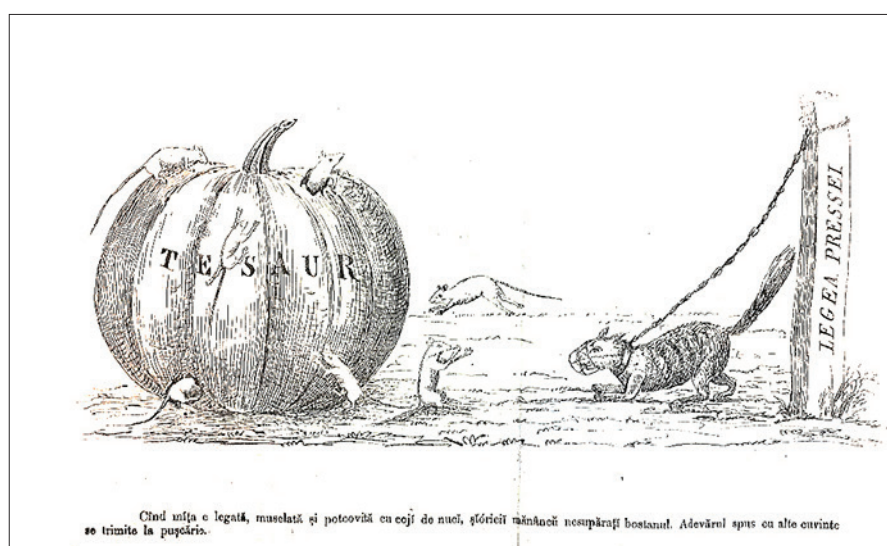

Figure 5. Collection of the Central University Library, Bucharest

In the fictional situation, the censored press is mapped onto the image of the cat wearing a muzzle (which is the equivalent of the padlock from the previous cartoons), walnut shells (which impede walking), and being tied to a post on which it is written *legea presei* 'law of the press.' The fictional situation of the cat (the denoted message) maps onto the restrictions imposed on the press (the connoted message). The pumpkin has the word *tezaur* ('treasure' or 'treasury') superimposed, so the implicature is that politicians (i.e., mice) are taking advantage of the state's wealth, enjoying the press's lack of freedom. The explicature in the caption is that daring to tell the truth is punished with prison time. Censorship is visually alluded to through 'instruments': the chain, the muzzle, the shells, and the pillar are metonymies for the actions exerted on the press.

4.3. **Linguistic considerations**

Next, we want to address the connection between the multimodal metonymy and metaphor and their verbal counterparts. We explore if the expressions *a pune lacăt la gură* (lit. 'to put a padlock at someone's mouth') and the connotation of the verb *a tăia* ('to cut') were prominent in Romanian at the time of the drawings. *A pune lacăt la gură* (meaning 'to be discreet, not to talk too much'; see DA *s.v. lacăt*) is positively appraised in Romanian folk wisdom,[13] maybe as a reflection of the religious value of *humilitas.* Thus, the everyday use of the expression would not favor the expression to be a source for the visual representation. Instead, it seems that the visual representation feeds a negative connotation of the expression, which developed (much) later in Romanian. The visual representation may be influenced by a French expression[14] (considering the overall influence of French in Romania) or by visual representations in foreign press. In any case, the presence of the same tools for framing a specific action (censorship) in various cultural spaces attests to their cross-cultural accessibility (Forceville 2008).

A tăia ('to cut') is attested with the meaning 'to suppress (a text or parts of a text by crossing lines)' in the last quarter of the nineteenth century (see DLR *s.v.*). Even though the dictionary does not record an earlier use, the meaning could have appeared in informal, oral contexts. Considering the linguistic and cultural French influence in Romania in the mid-nineteenth century, we should also explore the situation in French. The meaning 'suppress' for the verb *couper* ('to cut') is old, attested in the fifteenth century (see TLFi, *s.v. couper*). The censors' scissors are mentioned in the early nineteenth century in Chateaubriand's *La Liberté de la Presse*, 1822–28, p. 101: "Le Moniteur porte ensuite un défi à l'opposition: il l'appelle en champ clos, bien entendu qu'il combattra cuirassé de la censure, et que l'opposition toute nue sera menacée *des ciseaux des censeurs*"[15] (apud TLFi, *s.v. ciseau*, emphasis added). Thus, in French, the verbal metaphor–metonymy can be placed at the foundation of the visual representation. The "censor's scissors" metaphor appears, for example, in the memoirs of two Romanian writers when referring to censorship either before 1848 (the revolutionary year) or in the 1850s: commenting on the short life of a journal, Ghica says "the censor's scissors came and cut its thread of life," while Aricescu revives his protest for "two articles mutilated by the censorship's scissors" (cited in Petcu 2005:27, 35, our translation). The appearance of the scissors in Romanian cartoons to signal censorship (before the famous drawings by Gill and Le Petit) may indicate the same verbal origin for the graphic representation. El Refaie (2003:83) mentions, for example, the situation in

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[13] See the recommendations from Anton Pann's translation of a conduct book in early nineteenth century.

[14] In French there is an expression *attacher des cadenas aux lèvres* (de qqn), lit. 'putting a padlock at someone's lips', meaning 'to make someone shut up', first attested at Diderot (1779) (apud TLFi, *s.v. cadenas*).

[15] In Engl. 'The *Moniteur* defies the opposition: it calls the opposition in an enclosed space, of course it will fight against the opposition armored by censorship. The naked opposition will be threatened by the censors' scissors.'

which "highly conventional verbal expressions […] were also often reinforced through visual depictions." A creative metaphor/metonymy can become conventional and be reinforced by how it is visually presented (El Refaie 2003:84).

In the case of the last example, the caption and the image allude to and transform a folk saying: *Când pisica nu-i acasă, șoarecii joacă pe masă* 'when the cat's away, the mice will play'. In the saying, the cat maps the person with authority, able to sanction misbehavior. In the cartoon, it seems that the cartoonist assigns the press the social function of gatekeeper (the present-day *watchdog*), while the politicians in power avoid public sanction by limiting the freedom of the press. Another textual and visual allusion is to the punishment involving walnut shells, which was both humiliating and painful (usually inflicted on children in the past).

Journalists or cartoonists as heroes or martyrs are representations created in the nineteenth century; they are added to the existing social representations and, in time, become pervasive symbols. These representations are influenced by the constantly growing literacy and political awareness rates.

5. Conclusion

Romanian cartoons referencing different types of censorship reveal several traits. Nineteenth-century cartoons are mostly multimodal. The semiotic resources noticed in the cartoons indicate a preference for metonymy and synecdoche and the construction of a pervasive social representation. In relation to the profession, the use of metonymy, where an instrument represents the protagonists (a quill for a journalist), is a constant, as is the use of instruments for the antagonists-censors (i.e., padlocks, handcuffs, scissors, chains, or muzzles for state censors). Another constant is the use of a single character to stand for a group (*pars pro toto*) and the existence of metonymic or synecdoche chains (*instrument for action for agent, pars pro pars pro toto*).

The oversized objects are cues for implicatures pointing to the exaggerated actions of state officials. They are meant to trigger emotional effects: to yield empathy towards the press and to enhance discontent, displeasure, or indignation against the politicians in power. An emotional appeal can spark not only emotional reactions but also actions of protest against those depicted as enemies of the press and, by extension, of the citizens.

The recurrence of the fictional situation (the denoted message) with minimal changes or creativity in its presentation reinforces a particular social representation. The image of the hero or martyr (the connoted message) became part of the interdiscourse both verbally and visually.

We consider the analytical tools provided by rhetorical and cognitive metaphor and metonymy-driven theories useful for exploring the semiotic puzzle of cartoons.

The preferred mechanisms artists exploit can be highlighted, even though it is not always a straightforward endeavor.

The study is limited regarding the number of cartoons that fit the topic of freedom of expression in the nineteenth-century Romanian press. A supplementary limitation is that these cartoons are excerpted from publications issued under the management of a single journalist with a rebellious ethos. At this stage of the research, we cannot venture to say what the impact of the cartoons at the time was: whether several other publications recreated the same imagery in the cartoons published or if other imagery was preferred. Many aspects remain to be explored: the semiotic practices concerning the freedom of speech in a broader range of publications, the potential influence from foreign sources (French, British, German, Austrian, etc.), and the way foreign models were adapted to the Romanian context, etc.

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