BEYOND MYTHOLOGY AND TRADITION OF AN EDUCATIONAL REFORM OR ABOUT THE REALISM OF SPIRU HARET'S EDUCATIONAL REFORM (1851-1912)

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Abstract: The paper approaches the problem of educational reform carried out by Spiru Haret as well as its implications from a social, economic, cultural and not lastly pedagogical point of view. Understanding the structure of this approach is not possible except in relation to the problem posed by the current educational reforms, not only in terms of the structures of state organization that they involve, but also of the scientific background and of relevance for the past, present and future generations. The paper is the English language version by the author of the paper: "*Dincolo de mitologia si tradiţia unei reforme educaţionale sau despre realismul reformei educaţionale a lui Spiru Haret (1851-1912)*" presented for the training course "*Viitorul Invăţământului (Solutii, Strategii, Legiferare),* during 22-27 July 2019 held at "Constantin Brâncuşi" University of Târgu-Jiu, and published in the volume entitled "*Viitorul Invăţământului (Solutii, Strategii, Legiferare)*", Editura Academica Brâncuşi, Târgu – Jiu,2019, page : 440-453 .

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About the few changes in society and education one speaks with as much reverence and respect as is the case when referring to the educational reform that was initiated and took place under the aegis, ideas and guidance of Spiru Haret. But leaving aside a certain sentimentality that surrounds and accompanies discussions about the past and in which people generally appreciate, they remember and bring to the center of attention when referring to those moments only pleasant and beautiful aspects with few scientific and pedagogical character with reference to the situation in other fields such as social, economic and cultural, they come to present the relevance of this approach not only educational but also social and historical for the citizen, educator, student and student of the 21st century. This is because the reform we refer to has exceeded by importance and results the initial conceptual and social historical framework in which it has been carried out. Its efficiency has become part of the general consciousness of the people and a

historical fact that is a landmark and a measure after which other such measures are evaluated, appreciated and judged. However, despite these pleasing appraisals and reminiscences, the background and essence that constituted the generating element of this so relevant reform are rarely discussed and analyzed in depth with reference and reference to present situations or situations specific to our historical, social and economic context but also compared to other countries and not just from a European perspective.

The historical, social, economic and cultural context in the second half of the nineteenth century is the factor and found that the problem of education in Romania at that time must be understood. In the second edition of the work of the Balkans 1804-2012, Nationalism, War and the Great Powers (The Balkans 1804-2012, Nationalism, War and the Great Powers) the author Mischa Glenny affirms on the development of the Danubian Principalities in the period 1820-1866 and more specifically regarding the agrarian reform of 1864 the following: "*The most honest attempt to remove the causes of social tension in the nineteenth century from rural Romania almost planted the seeds for future dissensions*" (Glenny, 2012, p. 66). We find this problem addressed in a comprehensive way in the scientific monograph of Emil Băldescu and the vision of Haret synthesized thus: "*he was following solutions that would lead to the economic and cultural lifting of the peasant, without taking too much from the estates. It is still a negative side of Haret's agrarian conception*" (Bâldescu, 1972, p. 161).

Photo 1: Students of the "Constantin Brâncuşi" University of Târgu - Jiu from different specializations, including the Pedagogy of Primary and Preschool Education in a study visit at the Vâlcean Village Museum in Râmnicu-Vâlcea - visiting a primary school from the Haretian period, organized within the framework a project coordinated by prof. univ. dr. Cîrţăă Liviu Marius, co-editors, prof. dr. Cîrţăă Daniela, lecturer univ. dr. Vîrtop Sorin Avram, 29.04. 2015.

In this case, Florin Diac notes: "*The principle of realistic and practical education has always guided Spiru Haret. Through school realism, Haret understood an adaptation as appropriate to the social realities and needs of the country*" (Diac, 2004, vol. 1, p. 129). Even if the social and economic situation appears as a major factor that determined the acceptance of the necessity of the educational reform, despite other differences of opinion regarding the political, social, economic and cultural issues, the practical solution regarding the implementation of the reform has been scientifically based on the application of mathematical models: mechanical, sociology and other sciences from which we will not again omit the constituted science of psychology. This is what Spiru Haret asserted from this perspective: *"... I will admit for the moment that the economic status of the individual is independent of the intellectual state, obviously making a mistake, but this error is a reserve to take into account in the second approach. For the moment, I study the so called state of the individual, reasoning as if his intellectual state was independent of the moral and economic one; and after I will roughly determine his social status by reasoning in this way, I will resume the problem taking into account the influence that the intellectual element has on the economic one, which I did not take into account in the first approximation, and then I will find a new one more accurate result than the first one* "(Haret, 1911, p. 5/385). This reasoning starts from the admission of the three non-dependent variables that Haret considers to be the condition of an individual, namely: "*the elements of an intellectual nature, those of an economic nature and those of a moral nature*" (Haret, 1911, p. 5/385), a classification in which it seems to show that there is no connection between these elements but the links exist, Haret asserts, and using the mathematical model represents the path to the solution they are looking for. What is developed by applying and interacting between the different theories and scientific models goes beyond a simple mathematics as happened in the natural sciences for example. In this sense, Mircea Maliţa and Cornel Zidăroiu state when dealing with the interaction between the mathematical models of the educational system: "*It is really futile to discuss the best method of assimilating knowledge as long as the company has not concentrated its forces in fixing some precise objectives, in relation to which he can then define as appropriate as possible the nature, meaning and quantity of knowledge capable of forming the people he needs to develop at the pace allowed by the revolution of science and technology*

"(Maliţa, Zidăroiu, 1972 , p.5). The position of Mircea Maliţa is defining, and we can see that it establishes a direct link with regard to mathematical modeling in pedagogy and with later application to the educational system in Romania. In this regard, we appreciate that the views expressed towards the state of contemporary culture by the attitude towards learning, work in the context of contemporary culture bring into question a relational attitude towards how our society responds to the challenges of the post-modern era. In other words we are not in a situation other than that of the time of Spiru Haret but characterized: by other technical means and another technological level, by the state of coping with the needs of life and society but with other means and with changes that take place in - a much faster pace than the time of Haret's period. The cultural aspects and the cultural models are not first treated, but they also return with greater amplitude. Mircea Maliţa emphasizes a phenomenon and a course of things that, even if ignored, takes place anyway and the consequences cannot be avoided: "*If the cultural identity kept in people's minds is the expression of the self-preservation instinct, then the culture measures the forces put in the service of survival, from which is the quietest, the most powerful of the mind. The decaying cultures in their phase of grief, fatigue and resignation, gave the signal of serious injury to this instinct, quenching the end and / or suicide. The other attribute of decadent culture is un-sustainability*" (Maliţa, Georgescu. Coordin. 2010: p. 34). If, for centuries and even decades, a solution to the different social, economic, educational and other problems was represented by measures and actions that are considered and considered to bring or represent a solution and with them the problem was considered concluded, as the period after -modern and the situation of globalization in the form we know together with computerization and digitization come to contradict this way of looking at things. Thus a solution once in a while, a model valid many decades or centuries ago, even if it seems very remote to the human mind, for history it may be little, now calls for an uninterrupted reform. The law of perishable valid in the physics of radioactive substances is also applicable to knowledge and the model of the depositary intellect of knowledge associated empirically and with encyclopedic models and pseudo-models and chosen by many empirically as a mode and ideal must also be reconfigured. Mircea Maliţa states: "*Instead of the metaphor of the mind as a funnel in which the knowledge of those authorized to pass on is poured, the mind appears as an individual workshop. She is considered by theorists, who apply her craft label, improvisation, DIY, dilettantism. And yet it works, defining them to the*

highest degree. So, not a plot of global corporatism makes us discover and introduce in education the applicative part and the practical experience, but the internal pressure of the favoring factors identified by the contemporary thought and the social and human sciences "(Maliţa, 2010, p. 281-282). If the social, economic, political and legislative aspects seem to attract attention when we observe, study and analyze Spiru Haret's work, we will find, however, that the pedagogical and didactic aspect is the least in-depth by the ordinary man, by educators and even researchers. Emil Bâldescu realizes a chronology of the pedagogical conceptions that were the basis of the reforming conception of Haret and gives us a synthetic and composite image that hardly can lead to the classification of Haret in a pedagogical current of thought, something that some specialists would have wanted to can restore him in particular. The most justified appreciation belongs to G. G. Antonescu in which he considers Haret a reformer-pedagogue (Bâldescu, 1972, p. 210). On the other hand, Haret's activity cannot be analyzed without taking into account the existing educational and didactic context and co-existing with the educational reform at that time. The context refers not only to philosophy, pedagogy, German, French psychology, and from other countries to the work of Pestalozzi, Fröbel, et al., To the currents manifested in the form of social pedagogy, individual pedagogy and active school, but also to pedagogues. Romanians of the respective period and who applied the scientific theories of psychology and pedagogy within the educational system as it was at the time. Particular attention is drawn to the activity of Ioan Popescu (1832-1892) and of Stefan Velovan (1852-1932).

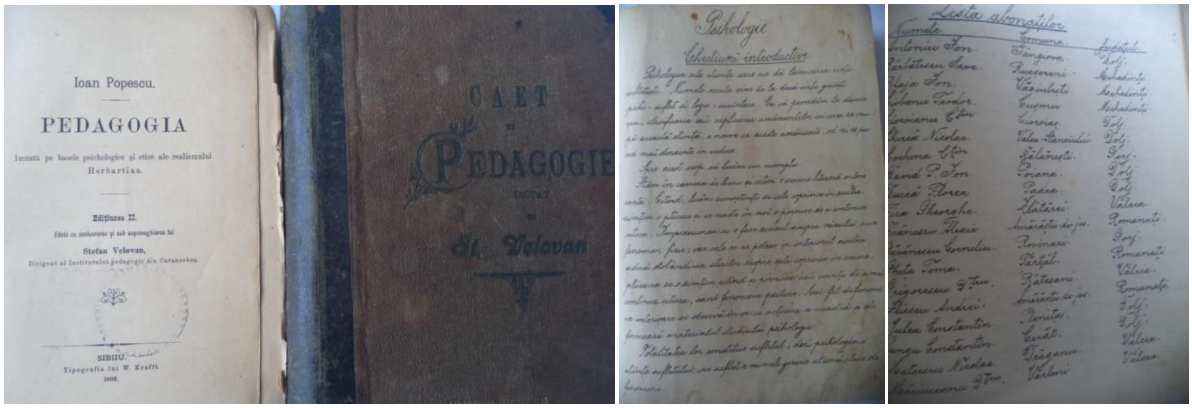

Photo 2 : Ioan Popescu: Pedagogy worked on the psychological and ethical basis of Herbartian realism "" Age with the cooperation and under the supervision of Stefan Velovan Director of the Pedagogical Institute in Caransebeş "(Sibiu, 1892) next to Velovan: Caet de Pedagogy and first page with Issues comprising Introduction to Psychology from a copy multiplied and distributed to the subscribers next to the first page of the list of subscribers at the end of the booklet used by Stefan Velovan in his courses. (Works & materials from the author's collection).

We shall notice a close connection between Ioan Popescu's "Pedagogy" "worked on the psychological and ethical basis of Herbartian realism" "Age with the collaboration and under the supervision of Stefan Velovan Director of the Pedagogical Institute in Caransebeş" (Popescu, 1892) as well as his works Velovan: "The Circle of Appearance - Psychological Monograph on Formal Teaching Steps" (Velovan, 1895) and "Preparatory Knowledge and Psychological Mechanics - Original Study" (Velovan, 1926).

These works show us on the one hand the scientific pedagogical unity between on the one hand the formula regarding the structural reform and the formula regarding the conceptual and didactic reform and it is not an exaggeration to say that it is about the unity between the form and the background.

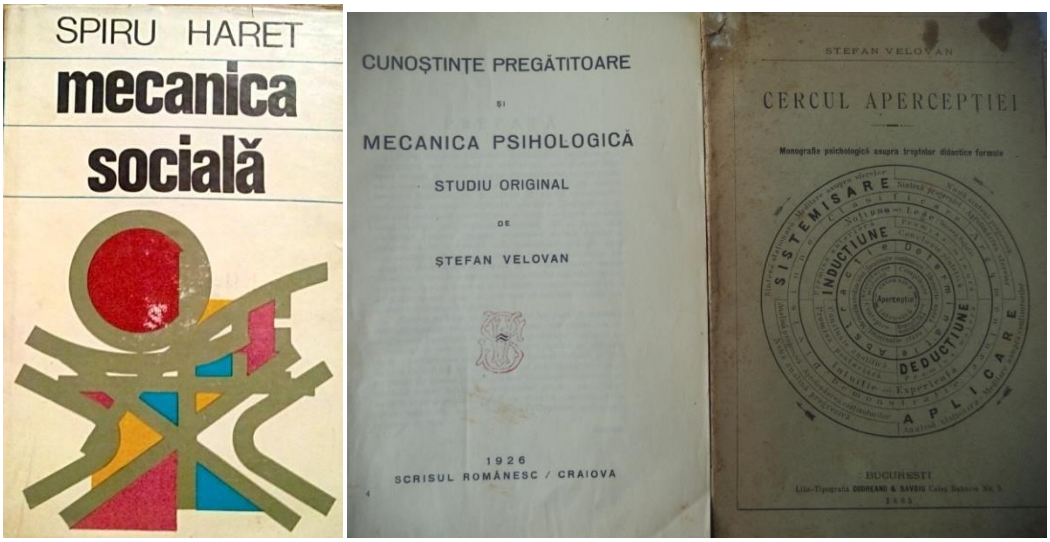

Photo 3: New edition: Spiru Haret: *Social mechanics*, Scientific Publishing House Bucharest, 1969, along with StefanVelovan's works: "*Preparatory knowledge and Psychological Mechanics - Original study*", Romanian Writing Publishing House, Craiova, 1926 and "*Apperception Circle - Monograph" formal teaching steps*", Bucharest, 1895.

We also find these premises in the subsequent reforms carried out at intervals of decades and last but not least, they ensure scientific continuity with the pedagogical, psychological, sociological, economic, cultural models and the competences paradigm that constitute the current challenge of the education system. Critics of Spiru Haret's reform have not been lacking, nor has the post-

1989 reform been lacking in criticism and stance that, even if they may confuse those less familiar with the universe of social change and of any kind, have a constructive role. From positions characterized not only by realism but also by dramatic and it is not exaggerated to affirm from a great love the views expressed by educators such as Ion Negreţ - Dobridor (1995), Tudor Opriş (2004), and Mihai Maci (2016) it reflects not only the dialectic of the process of change, cloud, but also a dynamic not without the discomfort of the effort, the cost of losing and gaining the meaning and happiness that the accomplishment of the good thing implies. Perhaps the attention to the current situation has generated a deeper analysis and a synthesis on the current situation when we were in front of the centenary anniversary of the situation analyzed by Academician Alexandru Surdu in the volume dedicated to the problem of Romanian identity: "*The analysts' opinions are divided. Some believe that everything happened according to a diabolical plan of Romania's foreign bankruptcy forces, while others believe that we and our leaders are incapable of leading us. Psychologists have also queued up, that we would be a people of kleptomaniacs, suicide bombers, devoid of self-criticism, lazy, etc. Although the approximately five million Romanians who emigrated to the West, they work there "on ruptures", as they worked, and during the communists' time, when they had where*" (Surdu, in Aura Christi. Ed., 2017 p. 110). Even though salvation seems to be covered by black thoughts and not only by climate change, but also by pedagogy, the hope as presented by Gabriel Albu in our recent work is, moreover, a scientific treatise entitled Introduction to a pedagogy of courage: "(...) *it is fundamental that the young generations understand that we are infallible, imperfect beings, at any moment exposed to error, that life does not spare us, however much we wish it. [...] Having the ability to make decisions in uncertain, complex circumstances, young people will tend to no longer inhibit themselves in the face of alternatives, variants; they can create and propose themselves alternatives and variants for debate and evaluation in relation to the given and proposed objectives. They will be prepared to know how to restructure, reorganize, optimize life, (working) methods, projects (or components thereof) in the process of their development; they will be prepared to announce in due time and in elegant terms the new data of the problem and the new conclusions reached. Young people will have a tendency to behave responsibly, because courage does not mean to sneak through life, but instead to act with dignity, firmly, with a high forehead*" (Albu, 2017, p. 360-361).

Spiru Haret has demonstrated this with pride and the way in which he has marked and remained in the public consciousness and of the nation reminds us of the ideas specific to the ancient Greek philosophy according to which such people pass among the gods.

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