The Polemics Ralea – Ibraileanu – Zarifopol. A Zero-Sum Game

This paper presents the debate between two Romanian critics, G. Ibrăileanu and Paul Zarifopol in 1927-1928. The aim of this debate is to assert the relative value of a predominantly aesthetic criticism (Zarifopol) vs. a so called „complete” criticism (Ibrăileanu), that is actually a cultural criticism. In the course of the debate the two critics manage to express and modulate their conceptions of literature, emphasizing the differences between what are actually two very similar positions. This is why the polemics may be summarized as a zero-sum game: positions don’t change, while the strategy is to minimize one’s losses and to secure minimal gains.