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Cover: Dragoș Bucur, Dorian Boguţă & Alexandru Papadopol in *Două lozuri* (director: Paul Negoescu).
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The DOGMA Manifesto (1995)
and The CONCESSION Manifesto (2001)
Editorial

Associate Prof. OVIDIU GEORGESCU[1],
National University of Drama and Film "I.L. Caragiale" (UNATC), Bucharest

Abstract: In 1995 we stand witness to the release of the DOGMA 95 Manifesto and the THE VOW OF CHASTITY. This is represented by ten rules that shook the film world. The method and spirit of DOGMA are achieved when the director subjects himself to these rules. DOGMA made its mark on the Danish cinema and the international film world as well, by prompting the directors to be spontaneous.

In July 2001, I have written the *CONCESSION Manifesto*. The 13 rules of the this *manifesto* have resulted from obstacles that I have assumed and not from their enforcement. The

CONCESSION Manifesto is not an unworthy copy of THE VOW OF CHASTITY but the result of a Romanian experience in the making of my first long feature film, WATCH IT! (3 PĂZEŞTE), a totally independent project.

Key words: *Dogma 95, Concession Manifesto*, Lars von Trier, *3 păzeşte*

Motto:
First of all, a film is made through human relations, not with money. Start from the idea that nobody will give you any money to make the film. This way, you won't be disappointed or surprised
First rule from The CONCESSION Manifesto (Bucharest, July 2001)

100 years of cinema were celebrated in 1995. A century after the Lumière Brothers produced the first public screening, Paris saw the taking place of an anniversary event. Lars von Trier, the Danish film director, famous for his controversial and challenging films, climbed on

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[1]Born in Bucharest, Romania1994, graduated The Polytechnical University, Bucharest1998, graduated The National University of Theatre and Film (U.N.A.T.C.) "I.L.Caragiale", Bucharest; Film Faculty; Film and TV Directing Department Now, Senior Lecturer and Dean of Film Faculty at U.N.A.T.C. "I.L.Caragiale" Bucharest
2003, screenwriter, director, producer and initiator of the first Romanian independent feature film, **Watch it**! and the *CONCESIA Manifesto*
2007, Ph.D. at U.N.A.T.C. "I.L.Caragiale" Bucharest, with Thesis *Myth and tradition in the contemporary Northern Cinema*
2009, publish the book The *Concession*, UNATC Press
2014, screenwriter, director, producer and initiator of the first Romanian independent feature film in *magic realism*, **The Last Incubus** and the *PROMISSUM Cultural Manifesto*
2015, publish the book *The First Journey through my Scripts*, UNATC Press
1999 – 2017, screenwriter, director and producer for several films, music videos and commercials

the stage and released a totally new film concept. On the stage of the Odeon Theatre in Paris, von Trier read his text and released dozens of red leaflets towards the enthusiastic audience. It was the *DOGMA 95 Manifesto* and, along with it, the so-called THE VOW OF CHASTITY, ten rules that shook the film world.

DOGMA 95 presented itself as a „salvation action" to counteract the predictable scripts, the superficial action and the technological cosmetic which was so important for a film world dominated by Hollywood. DOGMA 95 proposed a new approach in film directing, an ascetic style of abstinence, comprised in the so-called *the vow of chastity*.

European cinema has always felt the pressure of the world dominance put up by America and has tried various strategies to keep up with it: basically, variations of the moto – „if

from extravagance, excess and superficiality, all of them typical to Hollywood. DOGMA points out new ways of approach and even more, ways to return to the beginning of cinema, giving up on external glow in favor of simple virtues – modest equipment, intense acting, spontaneous narrative. DOGMA can also be seen as an alternative aesthetic method, therapy for the artists who feel choked by the values of the mainstream and the perfection of technology. DOGMA stimulates the director to opt for artistic originality instead of fade convention. It suggests that it is freeing to subject yourself to constraint. The same method is inherent in the declared anti-individualism of the DOGMA group. Many dislike the European art film, which by tradition operates like a cult of the artist. Since the director focuses on giving the impression of an individual genius, an author,

3 Păzește (frame)

you can't beat them, join them!". There was a possibility for the European directors to go to Hollywood and with a variable success to apply there the features of the European art of film. Another way was to bring Hollywood into the European films, meaning to imitate the American films with their abundant special effects. The problem was that by definition it is impossible to beat the Hollywood films by their own means.

DOGMA offered a third way, by making from necessity a virtue and by restraining itself

the DOGMA artist must humbly obey the rules of anonymity and brotherhood. The director must not have his name on the film credits. On the other hand, this rule was probably broken the most. Nobody ever forgot, not even for one second, that the director was Thomas Vinterberg, Lars von Trier or Lone Scherfig.

The DOGMA method and spirit are achieved when the director follows the ten rules. Just like the ten commandments, they mainly tell what is not to be done. Most of the rules have negative sentences and interdictions that, once combined,

oblige the director to perform radical innovations.

DOGMA has made its impact on the Danish and international cinema by making the directors distance themselves from the sophisticated technology and leading them towards spontaneity, towards the here and now. Also, and perhaps this is the most significant thing, it set the actors free. The conventional style of filming obliged the actors to deliver their acting in minuscule fragments, while DOGMA allowed the actor to act thoroughly, sometimes without being interrupted for ten or twenty minutes. Hence, DOGMA combines the actor's force within the cinema – the ability to use and keep the best takes – with the force of theatre acting – the possibility for the actor to actually get into character and offer a long show with uninterrupted scenes.

All currents and movements have their day. In the future, filmmakers will be able to place the sigil of DOGMA on their films by receiving an online certificate. The filmmaker will decide, as they please and as their conscience dictates, whether they have followed the Chastity Vow or not.

Looking back, I can say that when I wrote the CONCESSION Manifesto in July 2001, I didn't want to copy the THE VOW OF CHASTITY, neither to fight it. The CONCESSION Manifesto came out of a necessity that we felt and faced, once we started the *Watch It*! (*3 Păzește*)[2] – my first long feature film.

Here are the thirteen principles that I have established along with other fellow filmmakers. We have called this our artistic „creed" and it represents the way that we wanted „to make film" (Bucharest, July 16th, 2001).

The CONCESSION Manifesto

1. First of all, a film is made through human relations, not with money. Start from the idea that nobody will give you any money to make the film. This way, you won't be disappointed or surprised.

2. Find some enthusiasts to become part of your working team. The exceptions that will keep you out of trouble are: the electrician, the bookkeeper and the lawyer.

3. Don't forget: the movie is for the audience. Its purpose is to be seen by as many people as possible.

4. The video support of the film doesn't matter. Your concern is to tell a story.

5. Cues are not important. If you have no choice, keep on shooting, without costumes, make-up, settings or even cast cues.

6. The script must be based on a real or veridical fact and it must be contemporary.

7. The dialogues are essential. If they do not sound like "spoken language", throw them to the bin.

8. The parts will be acted by actors, professionals or not, as the case dictates. For free extras use your crew members, friends, neighbors and family.

9. The camera: a fixed or handy camera; the point is to be careful not to damage the public's eye. The image must be as real as possible and it must be fully understood. This requires a quality: common sense.

10. Shoot only in adequate locations; never in a studio.

11. Use direct sound. Post-synchronous sound is

acceptable only in extreme cases.

12. Aesthetics exist for people who really look for it intently. If you don't yet have you own, try the above principles and see what comes out. In real life only the result matters.

13. Last rule: "Keep on shootin', folks! Just keep shootin'!"

Ovidiu N. Georgescu –   Film Director, Screenwriter and Producer
Ovidiu Gyarmath – Director of photography
Viorel Florean – Screenwriter
Theodora Herghelegiu – Director
Cosmina Valeanu – Executive Producer

There are certainly obvious influences of THE VOW OF CHASTITY in some of the points from the CONCESSION Manifesto, such as: handheld camera, the video support, contemporary subjects inspired by real facts. But at the same time there are differences (even in the few points mentioned above). The major difference is that the rules of the CONCESSION Manifesto result from the assumption of some „obstacles" and not from their enforcement. The thirteen points of the CONCESSION Manifesto do not want to be an unworthy copy of THE VOW OF CHASTITY, but the result of a Romanian experience in the production of the

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[2] Producer: Fundaţia Culturală Quantum şi Visual Art Center, 2003
http://www.cinemagia.ro/filme/3-pazeste-5240/

first long feature film with „zero budget" from Romania.

Watch It! (*3 Păzeşte*) length: 107 minutes, digital image, original soundtrack with friends singing; genre: black comedy & drama, life-like.

WATCH IT! proposes a simple story; Gelu, 40, is a crook who has made several obscure deals in Romania and abroad. Coming back from a „business trip" in Germany, he lands on the Iaşi airport, instead of Bucharest, because of the bad weather, and meets Mira on the train trip to Bucharest. The young girl (17 years old) left her small town in the Republic of Moldova and intends to go to Bucharest to make a living. Gelu promises to help her settle in the city and invites her to live at his place for a while, even though his spot is not a "five-star hotel". Mira accepts, believing she had struck gold.

The flat resembles a cavern; it is located in an unfinished block and is kept by a grotesque keeper - Dănuţ, Gelu's left hand man. Gelu's right hand man makes his appearance soon - Raul - a small time criminal who's always broke. Their mission is to watch the girl, who doesn't have a clue as to Gelu's true plan.

The adventure of the young Moldavian girl Mira in Bucharest begins.

(…) When the title of the film was decided, we did not believe it would turn out to be such a good summary of the long way from a film idea to the full fillment of the same.proposes a simple story

1998.News clip: a 2-day old child vanishes from a Bucharest maternity. The article's author only provides a few details: the child's mother, an underage Moldavian, "rather dubious", has been recently living on the outskirts of the city. The child was never found. Case closed…

1999. We found the child, but only in a fiction screenplay. That's how the story of WATCH IT! (3 PĂZEŞTE) started. The screenplay reconstitutes the possible adventure of a young Moldavian girl named Mira in today's Bucharest.

2000 - 2001. After one year of experience and long hours spent caring for this wonder child of Romanian filmmaking - WATCH IT! (3 PĂZEŞTE) - I know from my first hand, insider experience what happens and especially what doesn't happen when a handful of initially enthusiastic young people attempt to make a film (how naive!) in a country that generates lots of hot air about supporting culture and appreciating art. Never mind! Well, the following would be the advice I'd give myself,

like an old wise man, if I were to go through it over again:

1. Build a team of enthusiasts around yourself; they will have the energy required to carry on and to step forward in the adverse environment of today's Romanian independent filmmaking. Let whoever wants to help in (never refuse anyone), let those who endure stay. Organize a casting for actors in any place possible. Tell them from the very beginning That they will work only for the sake of their art. As famous and respected Romanian Director Liviu Ciulei put it: if we work for free anyway, then let's try our best! Try to get 1-2 notorious names in your project. How? Approach famous actors, those you like, those that played in your favorite movies or plays. Don't be discouraged by the fact that you know you can't offer them anything in exchange. Don't forget: they are professional people, and many of them believe it is worth sacrificing some of their time to help a younger generation of colleagues. Maybe they too received such help when they were just beginners. Give them the script and let them read it. If they like it, they'll help you. When they say "yes" you will be transported! If they turn you down, don't judge them; some of them simply don't have time to do it.

2. Don't trust the CNC (National Center of Cinematography): unless you're a close relative of the chairman of this venerable institution, or kin of a friend of the same, you can kiss any so-called public subsidy goodbye. I know that you'll tell me they're supposed to hold a contest, with a jury, and that things cannot be THAT bad... Forget it! You're naive, my friend! The result of the contest will be known at least one month or two before the contest itself. The jury is composed of people, who do have, like all people, their own sympathies and interests. Do you really believe anyone is going to consider your project, when you're nothing but an outsider who's after some money? What, you think they worked so hard to make it to the jury to give the money to you, just like that? No way. We (for instance...) didn't receive any money, not even for a roll of Kodak film (the 36-photos). Well, it may be a good thing from another standpoint: this means we Romanians are people who really care about their relatives and friends and help them, unlike people of other European nations (no names) for which public money is public money and who turn a

During shooting. (*3 Păzeşte*)

blind eye on their relatives and friends if they make it to a top-level position.

3. Trust your family and friends. What was criticized in the above point is praised here: only family and friends know the troubles you go through, your precarious financial situation, how hard it is for you to combine your unpaid work for the film (which in fact makes you spend money) with your paid and ordinary day-job. Even if they look at you in a condescending manner, as if you were the village fool ("but we love him anyway!") don't lose heart! They don't really understand why one would work for free, and even spend money, while you're at it. Hey, don't the others fool you, trying to get all the goodies and letting you alone deal with all the expenses? Don't they laugh at you, behind your back, thinking that you're stupid enough to work for nothing? Well, shut up and let them speak, there's no point in arguing with them. You know these are just words and that if you ever need something, then you just go and ask them. And they will give you what you need, even if they mumble about it and ask you to at least eat at *3*

Păzeşte (frame)

regular hours, wear some warm clothes, and not waste your nights anymore. It's useless to argue that night shootings take place at night anyway.

4. Trust business persons, firms, and even a few public institutions (only those that have no direct link with film making or culture). There are people everywhere who believe that life doesn't only mean eating and sleeping. Find them and talk to them sincerely, don't beat about the bush. No one likes to be lied to, even if it's for a "noble" cause. Tell them you're not expecting loans, but actual support, in kind. Don't ask for money, unless there is no one who can offer you a specific type of product or service that is absolutely needed. And even then, you'll find out money is the most difficult thing

to get. WATCH IT! didn't even receive 1 cent from anybody - that's why it is truly a zero-budget film – but what it did receive is an extraordinary amount of energy, effort and support from many people, without whom the film would NOT have existed. I hope we managed to mention all these folks on the film's web site, they fully deserve it. That being said, with this type of in-kind sponsorship I believe we boldly accomplished something which hasn't been accomplished before, at least in Romania, showing that there is a thorny but usable trail out there, open to all those who feel confident enough to try it. All you need is to be adventurous and totally serene in the face of rejection. I strongly believe that a direct relationship with private businesses will representing the basis for relaunching this country's film industry.

2003. If all goes well, that is without major disasters, on March 21st, you will be able to see the outcome of this underground filmmaking effort on a screen (small or big? we don't know yet). At that day and hour, we will be prepared to get from you the following, in any order: tomatoes, boos, applause, kisses, raised shoulders, sarcastic smiles, verbal abuse, hugs, slaps, flowers, prizes or even a new film project, but with a stable budget this time. It's your call.

(Files from the diary of the Film Director Ovidiu Nicolae GEORGESCU during the making of WATCH IT! (*3 Păzeşte*)

No matter how much I was and still am attracted to the Nordic culture, civilization and cinema, no matter how close I felt to Lars von Trier with his DOGMA 95, the cultural touch of the place where I was born, the genetic matter of the local space meets the Scandinavian one in influencing - and not copying - my own style.

Film tourism in Romania.
Case study: The documentary "Seasons of Change", part four of the "Wild Carpathia" series

Monica ILIE-PRICA, Ph.Dc.[*],

National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Bucharest

Abstract: This article presents the new concept of film tourism applied on the final documentary of the "Wild Carpathia" television series - "Seasons of Change" - which was broadcast on TVR 1 channel in October and December 2016. The content analysis of the film reveals interesting and important aspects related to destination branding, proposing a modern view on tourism in Romania and adapted to the current trends of the destination marketing. Moreover, it shows the results of the data analysis of the most relevant visual elements in the travel documentary that were taken into consideration for this study, using Romania's tourism brand manual recommendations of the former Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism, published in 2011.

Key words: travel documentary, film tourism, destination branding, destination marketing

Introduction

Film tourism or film-induced tourism is the collective term used for the study of tourist visits to a destination or attraction as a result of the destination being featured on television, video, DVD or the cinema screen (Hudson & Ritchie 2006: p. 256). It is also a very useful tool for destination marketing, as there were many countries that benefited from famous films shown on the big screen, such as New Zealand with "Lord of the Rings", Austria with "The Sound of Music", India with "A Passage to India", Scotland with "Braveheart"

and Australia with "Australia". According to Basáñez & Ingram (2013: p. 40), the films that can affect tourism can be classified into four types: 1. animated films; 2. documentaries; 3. motion-pictures made after original stories; 4. films that are based on novels, people or historical events.

There are many similarities between film and tourism, such as: they are being shared with others, they are experiential, powerful and long-lasting, they are desirable and dream-like, they create the necessary atmosphere to enjoy adventure and freedom

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[*] Monica Ilie-Prica is a Ph.D. candidate in Communication Sciences at the National University of Political Studies and Public Administration. She teaches seminars on the subjects of Audiovisual Communication and Advertising in the Audiovisual Media. Miss Ilie-Prica earned a Master's Degree in Audiovisual Communication with 10, at the same University. Interested in television, film, public relations, diplomacy, history. Her current academic interest is related to Romania's country brand, which is the subject of her PhD thesis. As a film collector, she coordinates a YouTube channel, https://www.youtube.com/user/MonikIlie, with over 2,100 subscribers and 3,300,000 views, and several websites dedicated to film actors. Member of the Editorial Board at "Cinematographic Art & Documentation Journal". E-mail: monica.ilie-prica@comunicare.ro.

from the daily routine, and they are able to create non-verbal images (Basáñez & Ingram 2013: p. 45).

Film tourism is also important when it comes to economy. As Hudson noted, "if leveraged well, film tourism can have large economic gains for countries and regions" (2011: p. 165). On the tourism market of said countries it could bring a plethora of opportunities and more. In the UK, for example, about one in ten foreign visitors come explore as a result of seeing the country depicted in film, and their spending in 2006 amounted to 1.8 billion pounds sterling. As a result of these travel expenses, around 20,000 jobs were supported in the UK, contributing an additional 900 million pounds to GDP (Oxford Economics, 2007 cited by Hudson 2011: p. 165).

Another topic that can also be discussed here is the tourist celebrity involvement, which can have an important impact on the image of the destination (Yen & Croy 2016). Worshipping celebrities plays a significant role in making film-induced tourism attractive to the public. For instance, if we think about a famous actor or actress who is a beloved celebrity and appears in a certain film, he or she will have a positive impact on the film as such and on the location where the filming takes place. That was the case for "Australia", with Nicole Kidman, a blockbuster that turned Australia into a very popular and successful travel destination. With television documentaries, the interviewees and the host of the films can become destination brand ambassadors, people who can influence the potential tourists to visit a certain country or region. For instance, in "Wild Carpathia", the host of the documentaries, Charlie Ottley, is considered a brand ambassador of Romania, while the Prince of Wales also contributed to the improvement of the image of Romania, particularly of the region of Transylvania, as more and more tourists from abroad come to visit the villages and some even decide to settle here after watching the series on TV or on the Internet.

Methodology

The purpose of the study was to reflect aspects of the destination brand of Romania as seen in the travel documentary "Seasons of Change", which can be considered a tool to promote film tourism and destination marketing.

The case study was based on three research questions:

1. What are the main characteristics of the documentary "Seasons of Change"?

2. What are the shortcomings of the documentary "Seasons of Change"?

3. What are the recommendations for improving tourism in Romania, as seen in the documentary "Seasons of Change"?

The chosen method of research was content analysis. There were a total of 779 elements analysed, both human and non-human.

The criteria used for the analysis included aspects related to destination branding and more. There were references to the main components of branding (key values, elements of differentiation, brand personality, attributes, and benefits) and also to cultural branding and nation branding (The Nation Brands Index by Simon Anholt). The brand manual of Romania[3] was the basic tool used in this research.

Findings

The documentary "Seasons of Change", similarly to the other three films of the "Wild Carpathia" series, consisted mostly of non-human elements (forests, mountains, houses, hills, brown bears) – basically items of wildlife and Transylvanian villages (see Table 1).

Types of elements	Values (%)
Non-human	76,89
Human	23,11

Table 1. Categories of elements

Human elements were mostly shown individually, while the most visible was the host of the documentary, Charlie Ottley, followed by the inhabitants of the villages and towns, who were also greatly discernible within the group, and the environmental activists. The tourists and the entrepreneurs were quite visible throughout the documentary as well(see Tables 2, 3, 4).

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[3] http://turism.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/brosura_manual_brand.pdf, accessed on February 28, 2017.

Presentation of the human elements	Values (%)
Individually	61,11
In group	38,89

Table 2. Categories of human elements by their presentation

Individual human elements	Values (%)
The host of the documentary	42,73
Inhabitant	26,36
Environmental activist	11,82
Entrepreneur	7,27
Tourist guide	7,27
Artist	2,73
Others	1,82

Table 3. Categories of individual human elements

Human elements in group	Values (%)
Inhabitants	64,28
Tourists	17,27
Artists	5,71
Others	2,86

Table 4. Categories of human elements in group

The content analysis of the documentary also included references to certain dimensions of the destination brand. When it comes to frequency, the main dimension is "landscape", followed by "population" and "national heritage" (see Table 5). The data reveal a certain emphasis on the components of the natural and rural landscapes that were previously mentioned in the article. The national heritage had little visibility, because

the documentary didn't focus too much on the cultural aspect of Romania. As for the types of landscapes, the ones that had the highest visibility were the "wild" ones, followed by "rural" and "urban" landscapes (see Table 6). In fact, there were few cities and towns that were shown in the documentary, because the "Wild Carpathia" series especially promotes rural tourism and ecotourism.

Dimensions	Values (%)
Landscape	73,85
Population	20,03
National heritage	6,12

Table 5. Dimensions of the destination brand

Types of landscapes	Values (%)
Wild	51,86
Rural	42,21
Urban	5,93

Table 6. Types of landscapes

The brand personality is a very important concept related not only to the basic concept of brand, but also to the destination brand. It is "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand" (Aaker 1997: p. 347). The content analysis included the brand personality of Romania, as reflected in the travel documentary "Seasons of Change". "Authenticity" and "simplicity" were the most prominent traits of brand personality, while "rural" and "green" reached an equal value (see Table 7). It emphasizes the idea of perfect communion between the people in the villages and nature, which does not require any unnecessary sophistication and imitation. The documentary tries to focus on the experiences in the Carpathian Mountains and within the communities from Transylvania that are authentic, memorable and enjoyable.

Brand personality traits	Values (%)
Authenticity	54,04

Simplicity	45,31
Rural	38,64
Green	38,64
White	14,25
Hospitality	11,81
Innocence	1,03

Table 7. Brand personality traits

As for the categories of differentiation, the destination brand of Romania is marked by "intact nature", with the highest visibility, "authentic lifestyle in rural areas" and "unique cultural heritage" (see Table 8). As the documentary presented aspects related to flora and fauna, it was obvious that nature would be the main topic. The host Charlie Ottley talked about the illegal logging and the necessity to protect the remaining virgin forests of Romania, so rare in other parts of the world. Unfortunately, the cultural side of our national brand was almost overlooked, even if there were brief presentations of traditions and native customs from Transylvania, especially during the Christmas holiday.

Categories of differentiation	Values (%)
Intact nature	54,81
Authentic lifestyle in rural areas	39,41
Unique cultural heritage	9,50

Table 8. Categories of differentiation

The destination brand of Romania also has some key values, as mentioned in the brand manual. The most visible of them was "exploration" (see Table 9). The documentary focused on places to explore and on the tourist explorer type. This is part of the national strategy to promote tourism in Romania and the slogan itself is "Explore the Carpathian Garden", which means that explorer tourism was the right choice in making Romania a special holiday destination for international travellers. Another important key value was

the "good, simple life", typical to the villages, while "spirituality" was presented even less than culture! It is regrettable that not just the religious dimension of the Romanian people was almost unnoticeable in the final "Wild Carpathia" documentary, but also the artistic, historical, and cultural accomplishments of Romanians.

Key values	Values (%)
Exploration	75,22
Good, simple life	44,67
Spirituality	2,82

Table 9. Key values of the destination brand

The brand, including the destination brand, is also a mix of attributes and benefits. In the content analysis of "Seasons of Change" it can be observed that the main tangible attributes were "intact nature and wild landscapes" and "the Carpathian Mountains", while the main intangible attributes were "authenticity/ originality" and "purity" (see Table 10). Unfortunately, the attribute "mystery/ spirituality" was almost imperceptible, while "history and culture" also had a low visibility. The data analysis showed once again the preference of the people who worked at "Wild Carpathia" for anything related to the natural treasures of Romania, the pristine forests, the wildlife and the medieval lifestyle in the villages. These characteristics reveal an appealing side of Romania for those interested to live either for a determined period of time or maybe even permanently in an area providing some unforgettable experiences at the countryside, in the middle of nature, while leading a simpler and quieter life. The documentary also promotes the idea of preserving the green areas of Romania and it invites everyone to fight against illegal logging and expropriations.

Tangible attributes	Values (%)	Intangible attributes	Values (%)
Intact nature and wild landscapes	53,53	Authenticity/ Originality	76,25

The Carpathian Mountains	30,04	Purity	55,97
Traditions	21,82	Mystery/ Spirituality	2,82
History and culture	10,14		

Table 10. Destination brand attributes

As for the benefits, the main emotional advantages of Romania as a destination brand were "positive surprises", "nature connectedness", and "sense of courage/ adventure", while the main rational benefits were "discovery/relaxation", "sense of courage/adventure" and „escape and slowdown" (see Table 11). The documentary "Seasons of Change" invites the public and the potential tourists to visit Romania, a land filled with wonderful landscapes, an oasis of flora and fauna, consisting of rare species of wild animals, some of them greatly endangered. Romania, especially the countryside, is the ideal place to escape from the urban humdrum and from the tiring daily routine. It is also presented like a place of fairytales – very peaceful, somehow isolated from the rest of the world.

Emotional benefits	Values (%)	Rational benefits	Values (%)
Positive surprises	91,91	Discovery/ Relaxation	88,45
Nature connectedness	73,94	Escape and slowdown	81,39
Sense of courage/ adventure	51,22	Contact with intact nature	58,02
Contact with people	41,33	Safety	46,21

Health and relaxation	23,75	Good, simple life	42,23
		Experiencing living culture	3,47

Table 11. Destination brand benefits

The content analysis of the documentary also included references to aspect of cultural branding. The highest visibility belonged to the "tourist destinations" element, because "Seasons of Change" is a travel documentary, filmed particularly for tourism-related reasons. The detailed presentation of cultural branding components can be found in Table 12.

Cultural branding components	Values (%)
Tourist destinations	63,41
Leisure	10,27
VIPs and characters	10,14
Entertainment	9,37
Food	5,90
Cities	5,65
Interior design	4,11
Clothing	2,05
Automobiles	2,05
NGOs	1,93
Beverage	1,80

Table 12. Cultural branding components

The content analysis also referred to the Nation Brands Index, created by Simon Anholt. The most visible component was "tourism", because "Seasons of Change" is a travel documentary, dedicated to the tourist

attractions in Romania. The "people" and the "investments" were other two quite important elements of the Index, as local businesses and practices have also been presented. (see Table 13).

Nation Brands Index	Values (%)
Tourism	60,85
People	19,77
Investment	11,04
Culture and heritage	10,91
Governance	2,70

Table 13. Nation Brands Index

Finally, another aspect related to destination branding is represented by the "attractions". Natural attractions had the highest visibility (see Table 14). As stated before, this documentary focused on the natural landscapes, the wildlife and the human activities in the forests, mountains, and hills. There were also certain social attractions, related to autumn and Christmas celebrations, but the cultural ones had very low visibility. Among the remarkable constructions typical to ecotourism we chanced upon the Hotel of Ice in Bâlea Lac and the small houses in the trees, in Predeal.

Types of attractions	Values (%)
Natural	54,17
Social	13,09
Constructed (other than cultural heritage)	7.06
Cultural	6,03

Table 14. Types of attractions

In order to answer the research questions, we should return to the results of the content analysis. The answer to the first question, *What are the main characteristics of the documentary "Seasons of Change"?*, is that the film referred to two main topics, the preservation of wild nature and the lifestyle in the rural areas. It also focused on the metamorphosis of nature throughout the seasons, and the Christmas traditions and customs in the villages and medieval towns were also mentioned.

The answer to the second question, *What are the shortcomings of the documentary "Seasons of Change"?*, is that the film focused too much on aspects related to the intact nature and authentic lifestyle in the villages and less on culture, religion and urban landscapes, as only a few cities have been briefly presented, such as Sibiu and Braşov. The documentary should have depicted more moments related to the cultural and artistic events and it should have covered a more complex and in-depth perspective on other important moments celebrated by the Romanian people over the seasons, such as Mărţişor and Easter on springtime.

Finally, the answer to the third question, *What are the recommendations for improving tourism in Romania, as seen in the documentary "Seasons of Change"?*, is that the Romanians should promote more rural tourism and ecotourism, but also the local food and beverages. Furthermore, they should protect the valuable natural resources of the country, including the pristine forests and the endangered animals. They should preserve the national parks that are unique in Europe and among the most impressive in the world and, of course, they should keep the old traditions alive for the next generations. The people who live or work in Romania are also encouraged to develop their local businesses with lodges and manor houses in order to accommodate tourists who might want to spend their holidays in a Romanian village at the foothills of the Carpathian Mountains, enjoying stunning landscapes and take the opportunity to experience unusual and exciting adventures.

Conclusion

The documentary "Seasons of Change", the fourth and final part of the "Wild Carpathia" television series, is an example of film tourism and a tool for destination marketing. It is an admirable effort of the British to promote Romania as a travel destination, considering that they also presented aspects related to the lifestyle in the medieval towns and villages of Transylvania. This particular documentary emphasized the importance of rural tourism and ecotourism in reinvigorating Romania's destination brand,

placing this country among the best in Europe when it comes to natural landscapes and authentic experiences. Moreover, "Seasons of Change" addressed the problem of illegal logging and highlighted the importance of reducing deforestation and preserving the pristine forests, but also the natural habitats where brown bears and wisents live peacefully. It is also important to maintain the perfect communion between man and nature, and also the traditions passed on from generation to generation. Furthermore, it is necessary to use the local practices and businesses for the improvement of standards of living and, most of all, to shape Romania's positive image in the world with the help of its neglected treasures: the wild nature and the cultural heritage.

Shortcomings and recommendations

One of the shortcomings of the research is that the content analysis was based only on the visual elements seen in the documentary and that they were selected according to certain criteria. The subject of destination branding is new in the Romanian academic research and it should be a topic for future studies based on the Romanian tourism and country brand. Additionally, film tourism is becoming more and more interesting, a concept studied at international level. Therefore, in this case, "Wild Carpathia" and other documentaries related to Romania (even not as prominent as the British television series) can help the people around the world understand this country's attractions and particularities. In the future, Romania should improve its tourist offers, taking into consideration the international trends when it comes to destination marketing and tourism, such as rural tourism, ecotourism, food tourism, and, of course, film tourism, because these represent the prospects for the future strategies in destination branding.

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Values of *Y'know* as a Discourse Marker of Meta-knowledge in 'Hannah and her Sisters' Screenplay by Woody Allen

Diana Ligia TUDOR[4], PhD
Dimitrie Cantemir Christian University
and Carol Davila University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Bucharest

Abstract: This paper aims to illustrate that *'y' know'* as a discourse marker displays the speaker as one whose role as information provider is directly contingent upon hearer reception. Furthermore, the fact that speakers may require different types of hearer reception - attention, confirmation, agreement, relinquishment of the floor, is illustrative of the interactional and pragmatic function of "y' know" in the domain of discourse analysis. In order to analyse this concept, we have chosen Woody Allen's film script 'Hannah and her Sisters'.

Key-words: linguistics, discourse markers, meta-knowledge, hearer reception, screenplay

Pragmatic theory is the study of mental structure underlying the ability to interpret utterances in context, in use, and it is concerned with information not about sentences, but about utterances of sentences, about the particular use of a sentence, by a particular speaker, on a particular occasion. One cannot understand this concept unless one figures out the psychological account of the role of the context in utterance interpretation and such an account is possible on the distinction between linguistic and non-

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linguistic knowledge, between truth-conditional and non-truth conditional meaning.

Within this framework, enunciations are not simply abstract entities with logical properties, but they are representations which undergo mental processes. Therefore, pragmatic interpretation does not just involve the recovery of propositional content; the hearer is also expected to assess the impact of an enunciation on his representation of the world.

The very literal meaning of "y' know" [5] is relevant for the fact this is both an interactional marker: the second person pronoun - which also implies a first person presence, therefore a direct interaction, and the cognitive verb "know" which refers to the cognitive state in which one has to have information about something connected to the speaker's prior or further words. Schiffrin[6] finds that "y' know" is basically an information state marker: it marks transitions in meta-knowledge about shared information which have interactional consequences: it involves an asymmetric distribution of knowledge and allows a progression away from this distribution, which also produces a shift in the interactional alignment.

"Y' know" has a major role in information state, which progresses as participants' knowledge and meta-knowledge about the world is distributed through talk, and as knowledge about information becomes more or less certain. But these transitions in information state are negotiated and displayed through verbal interaction through its pragmatic relevance: we will suggest that speakers use "y' know" to enlist hearer agreement, confirmation, affirmation of the receipt of information up to relinquishment of the floor. Firstly, we will focus on the role of "y' know" in information states as a marker of meta-knowledge about what the speaker and the hearer share, and secondly as a marker of meta-knowledge about what is generally known. Next, we will approach its role in the pragmatic relevance within the participation framework: we will focus on arguments which appeal to shared knowledge as a way of converting an opponent to one's own side in a dispute. Finally, we will illustrate different pragmatic effects of "y' know" in interaction: from focusing attention on the speaker as an information provider to that of shift-framing, as a speaker's effort of turning the discourse topic to their own favour.

As already suggested, "y' know" is a marker of meta-knowledge about what the speaker and the hearer share and a marker of meta-knowledge about what is generally known, thus it accomplishes two slightly different information state transitions. "Y' know" is used to create a situation in which a speaker knows that a hearer shares knowledge about a particular piece of information, thus it displays a speaker as an information provider who depends upon hearer reception of information.

Schiffrin[7] illustrates a matrix of knowledge situations which comprises different combinations of what the speaker knows about hearer knowledge and what the hearer actually knows, i.e. each combination represents a different type of meta-knowledge: in (a) the hearer knows the background information and the speaker knows that; (b) the hearer knows the background information and the speaker does not know that; (c) the hearer does not know the background information and the speaker knows that; (d) the hearer does not know the background information and the speaker does not know that. Thus (a) and (c) are the speaker's accurate assessment of the hearer's knowledge (even though the speaker's assessment concerns the hearer's lack of knowledge), while (b) and (d) are inaccurate assessments which may require remedial work from the speaker or from the hearer. Another way of saying this is that "y' know" is used to reach a situation (a) in the meta-knowledge in which the speaker knows about knowledge which is shared with the hearer and which assures the speaker that the message has reached its goal.

In what follows "y' know" displays the incompleteness of the speaker's description and the dependency of its completion on the hearer's acknowledgement of the items referred to, so "if you know what I mean" is a clear request for recipient knowledge:

David:" That's unpolished red granite, the design is deliberately non-contextual. I meant it to be wholly interdependent of… you know

[5] Harvey Sacks (1973) refers to it as a "try marker" soliciting hearer's recognition of a particular item and Blakemore (2012) suggests the "you-know" displays the incompleteness of a speaker's description and the dependency of its completion on the hearer's acknowledgement of the item referred to.

[6] Deborah Schiffrin, *Discourse Markers*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988, p. 294

[7] *Ibidem*, p. 155

what I mean."

Holly (nodding):" Uh-huh."

David (gesturing):"The important thing is that it-it breathes, it keeps the atmosphere of the street, but people never take the time to appreciate them…"

David initiates a rather pompous professional explanation about his own architectural designs. The use of "you know" shows that his intuition has worked out, because Holly is completely confused ('Uh-huh'), and his explanation comes to modify Hannah's information state; she can now take her own position toward it. This was the transition type (d) in which the speaker does not know that the hearer does not share the information.

The following example illustrates a speaker's request for recipient acknowledgement of a new information that is a transition from situation (c) in which the speaker knows that the hearer does not have a particular information, to that in which both interlocutors share the particular piece of information; Lee and Hannah comment upon the fact that Frederick (Lee's lover) has grown rather distant, severe, which is highly unnatural:

Hannah: "He says everything's fine, but automatically I leap to the worst conclusions."

Lee: "He's really distant and difficult. But he's ill."

Hannah: "Oh!"

Lee: "Y' know, lymphoma? You don't."

Hannah (disconcerted): "No. I don't."

Lee: "It attacks blood cells and causes impotency. You know…"

Hannah: "Oh!"

Hannah indirectly solicits explanation from Lee on Fredericks` new attitude; Lee opens a transition in information state by offering a piece of information which she knows that the other does not share and that will enlighten her about the topic discussed; it is interesting that the information whose reception is sought needs to be reformulated before the hearer achieves recognition. These examples are illustrative of the fact that the completion of the information presented would depend not so much on the speaker himself retrieving the needed information as on the hearer displaying knowledge of that information.

The latter example also shows that the hearer may indicate his reception of information following a speaker's use of "you know" even when "you know" is presented with neither a rising tone, nor reference to a particular information (the second "you know" in (2). This takes us away from the strictly informational role of "you know"; it is not merely a cognitive marker, but an interactional marker[8] which invites the hearer to interpret, to make a connection between the two pieces of information: so what "you know" does this time is checking whether Hannah has grasped the new information as sufficiently relevant for Frederick's state; and the speaker determines her interlocutor to act as an information receiver, so that the speaker should know that a hearer shares increasing knowledge (introduced by an invitation to interpretation).

Therefore "you know" is meant to create a situation in which a speaker knows that a hearer shows knowledge about a particular piece of information; as it may induce a hearer to attest to that knowledge, "you know" also displays the speaker as an information provider who depends upon hearer reception of information.

In arguments, which are instances of disputable roles between interlocutors, the interactional value of this particular marker becomes obvious. "You know" becomes part of the whole strategy of converting an opponent to one's side in a dispute; it helps the hearer focus on that particular argument, whether it is generally shared knowledge, consensual truth, common sense, logical evidence etc.

Goffman suggests that almost anything that one person says can be treated as a request for appreciation: "the response we often seek is not an answer to a question or a compliance with a request, but an appreciation of a show put on"[9]; arguments are such an example: they are responses to disagreements, denials or insufficient answers which fail to show appreciation. So "you know" occurs in arguments which request this appreciation.

The following fragment will suggest this very strategy; at a moment of crisis in their relationships, Frederick is annoying Lee with obvious superiority about a TV show on Aushwitz and provides a tiring analysis of the contemporary society; Lee makes use of this pretext to show him that they are no longer as

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[8] Deborah Tannen (2003) - Framing in Discourse, Cambridge University Press, p 103

[9] Erving Goffman, *Interaction Ritual: Essays on face-to-face behavior*, New York, NY, Doubleday Anchor, 2004, p. 546

close as they used to be:

(46) Frederick: a." You know, you've been very nervous lately."

Lee b. (Sighing):"I can't take this anymore."

Frederick: c. "I'm just trying to complete an education.

d. I started on you five years ago."

Lee e. I'm not your pupil, you know. I was

f. but I'm not […] Frederick, we're going to

g. have some changes."

The asymmetric alignment is obvious both from display of superiority and from her imploring him to end up the speech plea. Seeing no such intention from Frederick, she attempts to take a position which should neutralize the distance of status between them; in so doing, she compares his attitude towards her to that of a school master, which he is obviously not; her argument then is that she is socially and culturally equal to him now and she prefaces it with "you know" which is drawing his attention that her alignment in the participation frame has changed. "You know" not only terminates Frederick's piece of support, but also emphasizes on her new attitude as a transition in the interactional statuses of the interlocutors.

The following excerpt illustrates "you know" also as an ideational transition in which the speaker states the relevance of the upcoming support for his general position; the support is provided by generally shared knowledge: good manners. Dusty has been arguing with Fred (a partner) about the fact that buying a picture is not a spontaneous matter, but a calculated, deliberate one, which must take into account the interior of the house:

Frederick: "Please, forget it! I don't have any interest in selling anything."

Dusty: "I ask you if you have something with little price in it, you gotta fly off the handle!"."…Well, I can't commit to anything without consulting her first. That's why having her for, okay?"

Fredrick: (Carrying the drawing off) "You know what? This is degrading! You don't buy paintings to blend in with the sofa."

Frederick is disqualifying Dusty's opinion, plan on buying a piece of art and provides a support of common sense, of general truth about the fact that art cannot serve practical reasons. "You know what" in (f) does not have as much an informational value as an interactional one: it allows, it prompts Dusty to acknowledge the new relationships as asymmetric, thus to convert him to the side of Frederick and relinquish the floor.

However, it is not necessarily successful because of the interlocutors' mismatched schemas, because of their different expectations of the world: despite Frederick's argument, the hearer maintains his initial position:" It's not a sofa, it's an ottoman!" Therefore, arguments involve an asymmetric distribution of knowledge. "Y' know" allows a speaker to check on how the discourse is progressing away from that initial distribution: a speaker can solicit affirmation of information reception as well as evidence of shifts in the interactional alignment.

In conclusion, this paper has illustrated "y` know" as an information state marker emphasizing the transitions to meta-knowledge about shared knowledge. Nevertheless, this kind of transition has interactional consequences: it opens an interactional negotiation over the informational status of a generalization, enlisting hearer agreement whenever it is not likely to be displayed.

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Prevalent Themes in Romanian New Wave Short Films

Alexandra NICU*[10] Ph.D.,

National University of Political Studies and Public Administration (SNSPA), Bucharest

Abstract: The Romanian *new wave* has cemented a new film aesthetic nation-wide, while also managing to garner attention and prizes at some of the most prolific international film festivals. The purpose of this study is to identify some of the key themes ingrained in the *new wave* productions by analyzing three of the short films released at its incipient stage, which have received international acclaim, "Traffic", "Un cartuş de Kent şi un pachet de cafea", and "Megatron". This paper aims to assess and highlight the intrinsic thematic similarities of these films, which have aided in establishing narrative conventions the Romanian film industry relies on to this day.

Keywords: *Romanian new wave, short film, East European cinema, filmmaking, cinematic theme*

Introduction

Though spanning less than two decades, the Romanian *new wave* (or the New Romanian Cinema) has obtained significant recognition on an international level (Pop 2010: p. 19). Though its incipient stage is still widely debated, as is the name itself (Pop 2010: p.20; Popa 2011: p. 116), especially in the ranks of the filmmakers consigned to this particular film movement, the label is still widely spread. Furthermore, it can offer specificity to what can otherwise become a relatively disjointed attempt of solidifying a united trend. Indeed, the argument can be made that by ascribing several prominent directors to the same "*new wave*", critics and film-goers alike can hamper the evolution of *auteur* films. But if we draw a parallel to *La Nouvelle Vague*, the French *new wave*

crystallized almost half a century ago, the production and perpetuation of *auteur* films was in no way hindered. Though some comparisons can be drawn between the overall aesthetic and themes explored in these films, there's undoubtedly a clear differentiation between each director's stylistic propensities. When discussing the Romanian *new wave*, several directors are frequently quoted as being the purveyors of acclaimed film: Cristian Mungiu, Cristi Puiu, Cătălin Mitulescu, Radu Muntean, and Corneliu Porumboiu (Pop 2010: p. 24).

For the purpose of this paper, we will be focusing on three short films: "Traffic" (2004), by Cătălin Mitulescu, "Un cartuş de Kent şi un pachet de cafea" (2004, Engl: *A carton of Kent and a coffee pack* or *Cigarettes and Coffee*), by Cristi Puiu, and "Megatron" (2008), by

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[10] Alexandra Nicu has a Master's Degree in Communication and Advertising at the National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, in Bucharest, Romania, and is currently a Ph.D student at the same University. Her interest in cinema was sparked by participating in the multicultural Comenius Project – "Images des jeunes / Jeunes dans les images", organized by Gheorghe Lazar National College, Bucharest, and continues with her PhD thesis, focused on Romanian cinematography. E-mail: nicu.alexandra1@gmail.com.

Marian Crişan, for reasons which I will detail in the following pages. The aim is to ascertain if there are indeed thematic similarities between the productions, and if so, what some of the most prominent ones are.

Following the year 2000, when no new domestic films were released in Romania (Uricaru 2012: p. 427), the next years marked a decidedly spectacular shift, characterized by numerous awards at festivals such as the Berlin International Film Festival (Berlinale) and Festival de Cannes, a development which continues to this day. The international recognition is that much more poignant when considering the fact that the Romanian domestic film market, marred by a disinterested major audience and a penchant for mall cinemas (Andrei 2014: p. 43), still exudes a creative freedom some might find surprising given several domestic financing issues observed in the previous decade (Uricaru 2012: p. 433-435). The financial parameters in which a lot of filmmakers operate, which usually entail a small budget, also influence the film's aesthetic, with various similarities drawn between Romanian *new wave* productions.

An important facet of the Romanian *new wave*, which carves its place in the continuously evolving European film landscape, is its penchant for creating and exploring "austere, micro-realistic universes" (Pieldner 2016: p. 87). This minimalist realism rendering of visual story-telling further differentiates the domestic cinema from its other European counterparts. This propensity, it can be argued, also limits the range of genres explored (a vast majority of films are dramas, shot using a documentary-style technique).

Though outliers can be identified, the majority of *new wave* films also take place in an urban setting, where the exploration of a slice-of-life type of narrative lends itself to a more in-depth approach. Given Eastern European cinema's propensity for incorporating a note of scepticism concerning globalization (Pieldner 2016: p. 89), there's no better setting to highlight the pitfalls and inadequacies an accelerated lifestyle can impose on the "everyman", the type of character most prevalent in the *new wave* productions. Ironic, considering the fact that, as the directors themselves declare, their films aren't made for the general public and mass consumption, but meant for the festival circuit (Pop 2010: p. 29). By automatically ascribing themselves to the art film category, the directors delineate their aesthetic quite clearly from the start. Not that this distinction needs to be spelled out by the filmmakers; even a superficial glance can pin-point that the majority of *new wave* films are not intended for a more generalized consumption.

The dual nature of these productions speaks volumes about its intended audience. Some of the basic elements indigenous to the *new wave* are handheld shots, one of the most challenging camera movements in film (Thompson, Bowen 2009: p. 116), a propensity for long shots, which enables the directors to "represent continuous actions in a continuous space" (Pop 2010: p. 32), and scarce use of music, with a preference for background noise dominating the scene. Along with a penchant for exploring the everyday lives of the protagonists, these elements incite a sort of inviting, almost voyeuristic urge in the audience to be swept along by the story, to delve deeper and deeper into the slice of life they are presented with, while also making the journey an uncomfortable one. From the subject matter, to the well-thought-out camera movements that aren't necessarily pleasing from a viewing standpoint, a cynic might argue that one needs to really want to experience the culmination of the film for them to undergo it in its entirety. But the genius of these films lies in this exact dual nature. Exploring the undertones, the chaotic silence in the characters' lives, their quiet despair in the face of change or facing another mundane existential circle, and managing to elevate it to art represents a skill not many filmmakers possess, and at which the *new wave* directors excel.

Analysis: The Short Films That Crystallized a Creative Shift

Given the Romanian *new wave*'s success abroad, pin-pointing the movement's representative films is no easy task. In the interest of this paper, the three short films selected had to adhere to strict criteria. First of all, each of them had to have received an important international prize, thus solidifying the *new wave*'s image on a European level. Secondly, they had to be produced in the incipient stage of the *new wave*, the first few critical years when a cinematic movement crystallizes its parameters, thus paving the way for new productions. Lastly, the films needed to have a similar running time, in this case between 10 and 15 minutes.

By focusing the analysis on three productions, identifying recurrent thematic

elements is not a task which highlights a single film, but isolated among a larger spectrum, thus being able to emphasize repeated similarities. Furthermore, as any movement, the *new wave* is itself evolving, and while the majority of the films pertaining to it do share basic themes, they are reinterpreted with each production. Therefore, it is critical to analyse the films which solidified those themes in the minds of filmmakers and audience alike, in order to grasp a deeper understanding of what the Romanian *new wave* entails. In this sense, the short films will be analysed in order to determine which—if any—themes are identified on a recurring basis and the manner in which they are integrated into each film.

Traffic (2004), directed by Cătălin Mitulescu

The 15-minute film won the Short Film Palme d'Or at the 2004 edition of Festival de Cannes, the first Romanian *new wave* production to garner international attention at this scale. The film revolves around a snippet from the life of Tudor (played by Bogdan Dumitrache), a middle-aged man caught up in the hectic banality of his existence, from familial duties to his professional ones. By focusing on a few hours of the main character's life, the film represents a vivid reminder of the frenzied urban life so many *new wave* directors incorporate into their productions. By adding the extra layer of being stuck in traffic—hence one of the interpretations of the title—Tudor's responsibilities are that much more emphasized and his quest for a reprieve, however brief, is not only highlighted, but expected. After dealing with a family emergency — his young daughter might have swallowed a hairclip and be in need of medical attention — and being yelled at by one of his colleagues, Tudor takes a brief coffee break with a young woman who just so happens to sell refreshments in traffic, while the main character is stuck in his car. Though the reprieve is short-lived, and Tudor stalls for time as he's leaving the café (he takes a few seconds to sit down and watch a dog race), he inevitably returns to his car, thus back to his mundane existence.

Un cartuş de Kent şi un pachet de cafea (2004), directed by Cristi Puiu

This short film revolves around a short conversation between an aging father (played by Victor Rebengiuc, one of the great Romanian actors) and his aloof son (played by Mimi Brănescu). The film won the Golden Bear award for Best Short Film at the Berlin International Film Festival. Though the discussion between the protagonists might seem commonplace if extrapolated — the father had lost his job and enlists the help of his son to find a new one— the minutia of the dialogue reveal a much deeper meaning. Though the generation gap is expertly exploited, from the son's distant, sometimes cold attitude, to the father's seemingly more involved demeanor, it hints at a much larger conflict: the differences between communism and a consumerist society. The meeting takes place in a new café, in which the son seems at ease, cognizant of the rules that govern this new consumerist world, while the father seems overwhelmed during his interaction with the waiter, in no small measure due to the plethora of menu options with which he is faced. The disparity is that much more pronounced when the son criticizes the "gift" procured by the father to soften the person in charge that might be able to find him a new job: a carton of Kent cigarettes and a coffee pack; the coffee is seemingly too plebeian to pass as an adequate offering. Even so, both characters comment on how things haven't really changed all that much since the communist period — a bribe is still a bribe, and coffee and cigarettes are still seen as the go-to items to achieve that. The father's position in this new society is a recurrent theme, from his wardrobe, to his manner of speaking, to his employment possibilities (he's been a driver all his life, but now has to settle for being a night guard). This outsider status is further highlighted by the son's aloofness to his father's plight. Even though he agrees to help him, the manner in which he speaks and constantly criticizes his father's actions and expectations mirror the ruthlessness of a fast-paced, consumerist society.

Megatron (2008), directed by Marian Crişan

The film won the Palme d'Or prize for Best Short Film at the 2008 edition of Festival de Cannes. The story revolves around a few hours in the life of a young divorced mother (played by Gabriela Crisu) and her son. It's the child's birthday and he insists on going to

McDonald's to buy a Happy Meal which comes with a Megatron toy. In order to achieve his birthday wish, mother and son have to leave their secluded lives in rural Romania and travel to the city. A significant attitude shift occurs once the pair reaches the outskirts of the city, with the mother becoming increasingly agitated and abrupt in dealing with her petulant child, who keeps asking her to call his father. The film culminates with the son stealing his mother's wallet and them not being able to pay for their order at McDonald's. Forced by circumstances, the mother reluctantly agrees to grant the son's wish, the same thing he's been asking for all day, in exchange for the wallet: he finally gets to call his estranged father, who promises to join them later on. The film ends with the pair still waiting for him at an empty McDonald's table. Although only half the film takes place in an urban setting, the transition into the city is expertly marked by the way the mother's reluctance to start this short journey quickly morphs into frustration and outright screaming at her son's constant badgering about calling the father. Not to be outdone, the child has an equally shocking outburst.

Though each of the three films exhibits a different plot, with a wide range of actors and performances, narratives and stylistic diversity, the minimalist realism overtone is obvious in all of them. From the austerity of the narrative, to the unity of space and time, and the abrupt manner in which the issues are faced, the central motifs of the productions share remarkable thematic resemblances once deconstructed and laid bare in an analysis, as follows.

Determining Thematic Parallels

An undeniable facet of the Romanian *new wave* films is that each is unique. This article's aim is not clumping them all together or ignoring exactly those characteristics which differentiate one production from the next. Rather, its purpose is to ascertain specific themes which the *new wave* directors elevate to an art form, in accordance with their personal cinematic style. However, thematically speaking, there are several similarities between the three short films reviewed in this article.

1. The urban landscape—more than a setting

Each of these three films deals with an urban setting, to various degrees and interpretations, though they all share a common thread—the city is overpowering. Although none of the directors explore a large part of the city jungle, its chaos is highlighted throughout the films, reaching various crescendos in its alienating qualities. The city's portrayal is marred by direct or indirect references to the negative effects of industrialization and globalization, whether they are internalized by the characters or not. The city is presented as the fertile land in which consumerism not only thrives, but turns into such a force that it isolates the main characters, forever altering their lives, even in the snippets to which the viewers are privy. The urban noises are highlighted, intensified to a debilitating musical landscape which further pressures the protagonists.

The city is not only a living, breathing entity, it's one moment away from swallowing the characters whole. It forces them to abide by rules they are either not familiar with (as in "Un cartuş de Kent şi un pachet de cafea"), strict parameters they rebel against, however briefly (as in "Traffic"), or which incite such a strong reluctance that the characters enter a state of panic as well as the city (like the mother in "Megatron"). Despite the fact that the first two films take place solely in an urban setting, "Megatron" spends half its running time on its character's arduous journey from the tranquillity of the countryside to the chaotic city. The soothing peacefulness of the rural setting is expertly contrasted with the frantic urban dimension, not only through sound and *mise-en-scene*, but also through the mother's overall demeanor, which changes from reluctance to more violent tones.

The characters are trapped in an alien world of which they are part, albeit reluctantly, but where they can't navigate – literally, like in "Traffic", where Tudor is stuck in a sea of unmoving cars, or more subtly, like in "Un cartuş de Kent şi un pachet de cafea", where the father has trouble with processing the multitude of public transport options and their routes.

But this representation of the urban landscape also serves another purpose, aside from the obvious one of criticizing modern life and consumerism. It can be argued that it is, in fact, an outward representation of the characters' internal tumult, of their overall sense of being lost in the plethora of options, of feeling trapped. Each character relates to the metropolitan entity within different emotional parameters, but they still feel

overwhelmed, irrespective of whether they accept it, acknowledge it, or fear it.

2. The overwhelmed outsider

Regarding the previous theme, some of the characters' defining trait is that of an outsider, forced into this position by circumstance. In "Traffic", Tudor is a solitary entity in his own car, trying to manage his personal and professional affairs from a distance by means of a cell phone. In "Un cartuş de Kent şi un pachet de cafea", the father is portrayed as lost in the middle of the most basic interactions within a consumerist world, which we all take for granted. In "Megatron", the mother is not only emotionally distanced from the city; her outsider status, which she imposes on her son, is also physical, both of them living in a rural setting. This remoteness is indeed treated differently — Tudor takes a reprieve, the father wants to somehow integrate himself in this hectic world he doesn't understand, the mother tries to shun the urban life and everything it entails — but it remains a thematic element obvious in all three films.

Another facet of this theme is the manner in which the consumerist society engulfs the characters with their never-ending options. Be it a dozen beverage choices, or a McDonald's order, the films highlight this aspect of the consumerist society, which further alienates the protagonists, isolating them one choice at a time.

By virtue of its subject matter, *new wave* films shine a light on the "everyman", on a small moment which somehow summarizes their existence in the micro-universes created by the short films. Every man has felt lost and overwhelmed at some point. These three films emphasize that trait, not only by the way in which the characters relate to the world, but also the manner in which the world pushes back, from inanimate objects, to the people surrounding them. The characters are repeatedly rejected by family members. In "Megatron", this rejection takes the form of the son yelling at his mother, forcing her to confront realities with which she's not comfortable, and exhibiting violent reactions to her reluctance. In "Traffic", this rejection is an undertone exemplified by the child's reluctance to speak to her father, no matter how many times he tries to connect with her. But the most obvious instance is that of the son's constant criticism of his father in "Un cartuş de Kent şi un pachet de cafea". Starting with the abrupt tone, most of the interaction is marred by the son's cold demeanour. The

father is stuck in a vicious circle of trying to appease his son, only to be rebuffed at every line. To conclude, not only do these characters find themselves rejected by the world they're inhabiting and its new rules, but also by the people around them, making their outsider status that much more visceral.

3. Antagonistic family dynamics

As stated above, family dynamics are an intrinsic aspect of all three films. An antagonistic relationship, however mild or violent, is present in all three productions, mainly taking the form of the children somehow rejecting the parents, and, in doing so, revolting against their way of life. This takes the form of a gentle rebuff, done with a dimpled smile in the case of "Traffic", to violent outbursts in "Megatron", to the tour de force coldness exhibited in "Un cartuş de Kent şi un pachet de cafea", which instantly endears the father in the eyes of the audience.

The parental figures not only struggle to gain the acceptance of their children, but also have to work hard for every small moment of bonding. The relationships are fraught with an underlying current of hostility, outwardly expressed or not. Finding the common ground is presented as practically impossible in its incipient stages, though some moments in the films prove that not all is lost, relationship wise. Even the son in "Un cartuş de Kent şi un pachet de cafea", whose demeanour makes the viewer sympathetic towards the father, viscerally so, drops his aloofness to bond with his father over a type of massaging device. But the moment is short lived, the brusqueness returning to his attitude with a vengeance.

One can argue that the parental figures represent an outdated way of life, rejected by the novelty and innovation embodied by the children. But are the characters mere vessels, a by-gone era or does their meaning extend deeper? In the case of "Un cartuş de Kent şi un pachet de cafea", the disparity between the two protagonists is an obvious method to present and exacerbate the differences between communism and the consumerist society, by exploring the generation gap and the expectations pertaining to each age group. By enhancing the parental figures' responsibilities, the films further extend the characters' emotional range and offer a fuller picture of their mundane lives. The parents try to appease their children, through various methods, only to hit impenetrable emotional walls.

These tense interpersonal relationships enhance the scope of the films, providing a cultural richness which the *new wave* directors explore to maximum capacity. This theme is recurrent and emphasized throughout the films, thus providing another layer of meaning to its narrative.

C o n c l u s i o n s :   D i s c u s s i o n   a n d Implications

The aim of this paper was to identify similar themes in the three short films selected for analysis. In doing so, the priority was to establish which thematic elements are recurrent throughout the three productions, in order to delineate some of the basic elements ingrained in the Romanian *new wave*. By shinning a light on the similarities, three main themes were extrapolated: the impact of an urban setting, the overwhelming status of the outsider, and frayed relationships between parents and their children. All three themes are locked in a symbiotic relationship, drawing elements from each other in order to create a more complex audio-visual canvas. Indeed, each of them can be explored in different ways —and have been subjected to various visual and narrative treatments in other *new wave* productions — but they remain cornerstones of the cinematic movement. Of course, further research can enhance our understanding of how trivial moments are presented by the Romanian cinema and what are the elements that attract film festival juries to them.

In their effort to insert that local flavour into their films, the film directors manage to instil many details into their short productions, offering a veritable slice-of-life perspective for the viewer, each one delivered in a different style. The three films have all garnered international acclaim, thus proving that European festivals are eager to remotely experience the lives of the Romanian "everyman", as rendered through various directors' lenses. One important factor to note is that the themes are not explored in isolation and directly concern the protagonists, shaping their cinematic journey in one way or another. Although repetitive, each theme is treated within different parameters, in accordance with the related film's overall arch. They might be recurring, but they are in no way identical, as highlighted throughout this article.

Of course, more similarities can be drawn between the three films, ranging from dialogue to camera angles, but that endeavour did not represent the focus of this study. By emphasizing the themes present in these short films which mark the start of the Romanian *new wave*, the article paves the way for future research to investigate the way in which these themes have evolved in more recent films.

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The Realism of Emotions Perceived when Watching a Film
(Alternative title: The Realism of Spectator's Emotions at Movies)

Ronella Sezonov[11], Ph.D, National University of Drama and Film "I.L. Caragiale" (UNATC), Bucharest

Abstract: Art has always desired to create emotion, to go beyond mechanical perception of Abstract: Art has always desired to create emotion, to go beyond mechanical perception of visual, acoustic, tactile or olfactory receptors. By observing the film art of our days, we can see how it manages to attract viewers of any age, culture or education, at the cinema or at home, in groups of friends or just in the solitary company of the screen. The affective reactions triggered in these perpetual, complex and diverse audiences are a reliable source of information worthy to be analyzed in depth. This article starts with an initial issue: are the emotions of the viewers real or not?

Keywords: *film realism, emotion elicitation, cognitive film theory, spectatorship, film psychology*

Introduction

Image representation, in any form we encounter today, has become a common element, an attachment of the daily modern world, exploited in almost any type of artefact and spread to almost all parts of the world. Film was one of the first forms of motion picture, occupying the first place in popular art and entertainment. It has adapted and built for itself an industry, reaching a wide range of types, styles and trends. The power of the motion picture and its applicability has been proven by its role in conveying information, amplified by the development of digital technologies. Thus, its presence, whether as a form of entertainment or communication, has found a major role in society. The present-day pursuits in the field are focused on the transition to the three-dimensional and immersive, on one hand, and to the human receptor, in the sense of interaction. The last years have shown an increased interest for relevance in relation to the person. Both in the field of communication and entertainment, the researches had in view the profile of the receptor, the consumer, respectively the viewer. In relation to the film studies, the direction is the same, heading towards interdisciplinary cooperation in view of this desideratum. The cognitive approaches of the film theorists envision an expansion of the classical discussion on the film structure,

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[11] Ronella Sezonov has a PhD in Cinematography and Media, completed within the Bucharest UNATC. She is an assistant lecturer at the Cinematography class at the same university and coordinates a video production agency dedicated to online channels. She is passionate about the interdisciplinary potential of audio-visual productions, their influence in perfecting the research of affective answers in viewers and the role they might have in the field of artificial emotion modeling.
ronellasezonov@gmail.com

seeking answers and ties referring to the mental processes of the spectator, and especially his emotions.

Throughout its history, film has been studied, discussed and applauded from the perspective of its most conspicuous feature: the power of visually presenting the surrounding reality. In this article, we aim to look beyond this remarkable characteristic, to a perceptive medium which is not reduced just to the visual, even though this has been an extraordinary discovery and discussed for over 100 years. Film represents a perceptive medium from an affective perspective as well. The presence in the movie of human characters, or with traits resembling those of people (animated fictional characters) and their placement in the context of a narrative where there are emotional traits present, helps the viewer not only recognize images, but also emotions. He perceives not only visually, but also emotionally.

In order to study in depth the theme of the realism of emotions perceived when watching a movie, we will begin by defining a supra-category of the movie: the narrative perceptive medium.

The Narrative Perceptive Medium

A narrative perceptive medium can suggest the existence of a motion picture, but it doesn't stop to the visual perception. It can be bi-dimensional or three-dimensional, representational or immersive, taken from reality or created from scratch.

What does a perceptive medium entail? Its definition doesn't only refer to the fact that this medium can be perceived; it also contains the capacity to expose perceptive representations as they are discerned by the human sensors. Perception is a mental process which represents the foundation of the relationship between a human being and a certain environment, be it real or fabricated. Human perception, with the help of different receivers, builds mental representations of reality. The essence of a perceptive medium refers to the capacity of encoding information with a key that the human receiver can decipher naturally. A perceptive medium will form similar representations with those at the mental level. First of all, the film is an audio-visual perceptive medium, in the sense that it shows images and sounds as they would be perceived by a spectator in the respective environment.

Although in a broad sense, perception refers to the recording and interpreting sensorial stimuli, in psychology, the term infers a series of mental processes through which a person perceives, organizes and interprets not just sensorial information, but also intellectual and emotional data. The film, as a perceptive medium, is written both at image level and at the level of psychological representation in a way that can be deciphered naturally by the viewer. Any child could understand that the character is sad or angry, excited or bored, through the simple *perception* of the story on screen. This is the reason why I qualified the perceptive medium as "narrative". A random representation of images can produce different cognitive processes that will randomly select from the presented information and create preferential psychological perceptions. The story, irrespective of the conveying method, arranges the cognitive processes and becomes a suitable context for the emergence of orderly affective answers.

As we analyse the definition of the narrative perceptive medium, we choose a representative for our study: fiction movies, as they have a global impact and already represent a widely watched and common form within the socio-cultural category. I have selected 'film' because it is a perceptive medium limited by certain norms, and 'fiction' because it is narrative and can have structures with real or entirely simulated references. The affective answers occur as a response to a psychological perception developed by the movie narration. Film theories have debated the uncertain position of the realism behind such emotions, due to their manifestation in fictional situations, naming the phenomenon a paradox of fiction. Kendall Walton supports the hypothesis according to which some emotions are caused by imagination, calling them quasi-emotions (Walton: 1978). Noel Carroll (Carroll: 1996, p. 78-117) and Gregory Currie (Currie: 1996, p. 325-344) have also defended the version of realism of these reactions. Offering a definition for the term "realism", both in relation to the visual representations and the psychological ones, we proceed to suggest a solution for this paradox of emotions in the presence of fiction. The conflict connected to the authenticity of the emotional responses could be resolved by considering the realism of affective answers from the point of view of valence, not intensity.

The Issue of Film Realism

In film theories, realism has been regarded from different perspectives. Each one refers to an aspect of perception, acknowledging or denying the possibility of a fictional image being realistic. Based on the reference system for the term *reality* and the definition adopted for the term *realism*, the opinions in film critique vary extensively.

For Arnheim, the movie records an exact copy of reality, where the real image can overlap with the one on the screen (Arnheim: 2004, cap III-XIX). Realism can arise from the simple fact that images have a real reference, irrespective of the way in which they are built on screen. Moreover, their interpretation resembles the perceptive processes in the real world. For Bazin, this aspect is not sufficient and it must be supported by a presentation that will sustain realism through other perceptive methods (Bazin: 2005, p9-41). Long close-ups, concise editing, field depth and involvement of unprofessional actors mark the boundaries of realism in the movie. Kracauer continues Bazin's approach related to the uniqueness of realism in movies and develops a comparison between memory, as mental representation and picture, as physical representation (Kracauer: 1995, p. 50-62). His analogy finds a series of differences, among which we can mention the fact that the photographic image reproduces reality in more detail than a memory. However, as opposed to the picture, the memory can include affective significance and context information.

After the '70s, some philosophers and film critics moved from the photographic analysis of realism to a phenomenon called "reality of impression." Christian Metz (Metz: 1974, p. 3-15), Jean-Louis Baudry (Baudry: 1986, p. 299-318) and other representatives of the psychoanalytic theory automatically implicates the viewer by the mere use of this phrase. The impression of reality experienced by the audience while watching the movie will gradually take the form of ideological manipulation applied by the cinema. The realism of psychoanalytical theory will move towards the idea of illusion, where the audience experiences the images on screen without thinking too much about them.

By contrast, the cognitive theory and contemporary writers speak about a perceptive realism, which is based on the interpretation of reality at a psychological level. Gregory Currie (Currie: 1996, p. 325-344) and Noel Carroll (Carroll: 1996, p. 78-117) argue in favour of realism in the sense that a viewer uses the same recognition patterns of the environment both for the movie and in reality, without additional learning skills being necessary in recognizing the images on screen.

The film as representative of the supra-category defined as perceptive medium finds its place among the cognitive theories related to realism, but confirms at the same time the importance of referring to a real object.

Visual Perceptive Realism

Greek etymology reveals that the term *'eikon'* means an exact representation of reality. The image realized this way has the attributes of the physical object and refers to it, being called referential. The projection of such an image on a certain support creates a representation.

The studies in neuroscience show that human perception is intermediated and processed, conveyed by the brain in a series of pieces of information, which are then structured and identified as reality. The access of a person to the surrounding reality takes place by visual perception, which turns into mental representations. The adaptability to the environment through these stable visual receptors leads to the referential images, obtained by visual perception, being considered real. Distinguishing the realism of perceived images can be realised through a series of cognitive processes which differentiate the surrounding reality, automatically associated with the idea of reality, from other perceived images, which the cognitive processes include in reproductions of reality. The things which we perceive visually, managed by a good functioning of our cognitive processes, transform into the concept of reality. We know the environment due to these cognitive processes which interpret the visual perceptions and create mental representations. Therefore, we will approach the term "realistic" only by comparison to a correct cognitive interpretation of a mental representation.

The images that *reproduce reality* are referential images, which we perceive through the angle of the same cognitive processes. The images perceived in the film are recordings of

reality which guide us towards the physical materiality. The mechanisms of film recording have been built in such a way that they present a similar image to the one we know through visual perception. A copy of reality can be considered an X-ray or an infrared image, but it doesn't resemble what we perceive visually. The film has the advantage of reproducing some images from reality in a way that resembles visual perception. A sequence of images that only capture infrared radiations or electromagnetic radiations is not less realistic. However, their interpretation is not a usual function of the cognitive processes and may require a bigger effort or a learning process. The pleasure and easiness with which we recognize on screen some images that are similar to the reality which is perceived visually represents one of the main attractions that make movies so popular.

The degree of reality of film images is given by the resemblance with the mental images created through the visual perception of the environment. Taking into account the fact that we cannot only consider the perceptive reality, the reference points which help us evaluate realism are related to our own mental images. If the visual receivers perceived the environment through another spectrum, creating a different type of mental representations, the film, as we know it now, would no longer be realistic. Of course, we're discussing a subjective, preferential realism, aligned to visual perception of humanity. The images obtained by using a microscope are also realistic, but deciphering them is difficult, both as images and meaning. Therefore, for the purpose of this article we will use the term 'reality' in the sense of a mental representation created through the visual perception of the environment.

A question remains: what happens in the case of fantastic movies, SF or cartoons? From experience, we can state that they produce affective reactions for the viewer. But to what degree are they authentic, considering that the viewed representations are entirely fictional and without equivalent in the real world? The film is interpreted by the viewer as being realist through the angle of accuracy with which it can show on screen a mental representation. The supernatural heroes, talking objects, animals with human characteristics, imaginary places created by the ingenious minds of some authors, are all new mental images, unknown to the viewer's experience. Even so, the audience is enthusiastic, if we were to only take into account the growing number of productions that involve stories or imaginary constructions.

The lack of accuracy of these representations on screen is actually quite flexible, seeing as the viewer can abstract and interpret successfully images which differ from its notion of reality. The process of visual perception recodes the images and helps the viewer interpret to some degree the reproductions on screen that don't have an equivalent in its reality reference system. Cartoons can be considered this type of instances, where perception and the interpretation of some images without real reference are natural, even for small children. The existence of affective references familiar to the perception of the viewer helps them interpret the images without known visual references. For example, a monster that shows certain feelings through its facial features, sounds or gestures, becomes a character. It is no longer a representation with no real reference – by transferring affective valence to said monster, a bridge is created between the representation and the reality known by the viewer.

If we define the realism of some images according to the mental representations with a degree of correspondence of 100%, then any image that doesn't have a structure perfectly consistent with that of its mental representation taken from reality is unrealistic. Instead, if by 'realistic' we mean a characteristic that can define an image to a smaller percentage of correspondence with the real mental image, as long as it can be understood and associated with other known forms, then we can regard animations as realistic productions. We notice that the realism of some perceived images can entail a margin of flexibility, seeing as that particular image can still be understood.

Affective Perceptive Realism

One of the reasons for a facile interpretation of representations without real references is the affective perception. Film is a perceptive medium in the sense that it can reproduce mental representations. As mentioned before, the nature of a perceptive medium refers to the ability of said medium to code information with a key which can be naturally deciphered by the human receptor. Realism in such a medium is not owed

exclusively to the presence of a certain type of image and sound, but to an order that produces psychological representations. The authenticity of some images in the film can expand to psychological structures, which later will generate a series of emotions for the viewer.

Watching a film is most of the times the way in which a viewer gets in contact with new experiences, a different life, a world which is more or less similar to the one it knows. The fictional narrative film has proven throughout the years that it has the power to attract people to the cinema halls and not only; numerous enthusiastic viewers, willing to watch stories and most of all experience sensations that go beyond the realm of everyday life. The force with which the images and sounds manage to involve the viewer in a fictional world is special, different from that of the stories in literature or theatre. This is due to an indisputable advantage: perception. Because of it, the audience doesn't just understand and listen to a story; it manages to get actively involved in an immersive experience. The crowded cinema halls and the generous consumption of mass productions through various other channels are empirical proofs of the attraction conveyed by film.

Various film theories have come together to explain this phenomenon. One of the debates broaches the paradox of fiction. Nothing of what a viewer perceives on the screen is real, in the sense that the story is fictional, the same as characters in a movie, but often the strong feelings and sensations experienced in the presence of these stories seem very real to the audience. The pithiness and authenticity of some emotions such as suspense, melancholy, enthusiasm, fear, accompanied by natural reactions like laughter, tears, thrills, lead to a strangeness due to their manifestation in front of fictional images. In a mysterious way, the viewer takes part in the action on screen despite the lack of real events and being aware of this aspect. The theoretical solutions for this paradox have considered the aspects which make this situation contradictory, denying the realism of affective experiences of the viewer. Kendall Walton laid the groundwork of the imagination theory in perceiving some representations, supporting the idea of some quasi-emotions caused by imaginary realities (Walton: 1978, Wlaton: 1990). These are real affective answers that occur due to a game played by our imagination. Their interpretation in the context of a simulated reality makes the viewer perceive them as real.

Noel Carroll is the main challenger of the idea, stating the fact that emotions can be real although the audience experiences fictional events (Carroll: 1990, cap 1,2, 5, 7). The feeling of fear in watching a horror movie cannot be controlled by will, and subsequently it is real. The refusal or desire of a viewer to feel emotions during a film is not a valid choice that could pertain to his will, therefore the affective answers, in Carroll's opinion, are real and function according to reality. The cognitive theory considers emotions as a real answer to mental constructions. Mental convictions related to characters or actions admittedly fictional, generate authentic responses. Another partisan of the hypothesis according to which the affective answer is sincere is Gregory Currie. He offers a perspective entailing that some affective answers caused by thoughts about real people and situations, turn these cognitive reflections into an emotion-causing object (Currie: 1990, p. 182-215).

A third approach is presented by the followers of the psychoanalytical theory and supports the theory of the illusion experienced by viewer while watching a movie. Based on the thesis formulated by the philosopher Coleridge about "the suspension of disbelief", this theory states that the viewer could take into consideration the realism of perceived images, like in the case of an illusion. Erasing the border between referential image and its reference, this approach has been entirely rejected by other film theorists.

The Realism of Emotions in the Film

Adopting the idea of the movie as a narrative perceptive medium, which is able not only to accurately transpose images like those perceived visually, but also similar psychological representations as those perceived naturally, we can consider the realism of emotions. They occur as an answer to the psychological perception created by film narration. The realism of psychological representations is important, because it will determine the emotions and their nature. The film characteristic as a perceptive realist medium, so much argued throughout history at the level of visual image, can be extrapolated towards psychological representation. I have observed its effects along the evolution of

cinematography through numerous empirical pieces of evidence of emotions experienced during films. If the perception creates the mental representations, in this case it can create also psychological representations, which will be expressed through different affective responses.

We will not refer to emotional answers caused by characters and actions as such, but in the same way as Currie, we will consider the mental objects of emotions, i.e. psychological representations. He states that the thoughts connected to what we see on screen cause emotion, but we want to define more accurately what these thoughts represent, what causes them and how they are created. Emotion occurs due to an affective perception which has a psychological representation as an object. Cognitive processes, or thoughts, are an important factor in interpretation, as they intertwine with affective responses.

Carroll is right to support the realism of emotions triggered when watching a film in the sense that the perception of their valence is real and automatic, unable to be stopped by the will of the viewer. At the same time, Walton's intuition about quasi-emotions can find an answer in the sense that expressed affective responses, even though real as valence, don't have an intensity equivalent to their being experienced in reality.

Thus, we return to the concept of reality. The manifestation of an emotion identical to the real one would entail triggering factors and creating processes perfectly connected to the actual ones. The same way as the visual image, certain properties of the film manage to transpose with some accuracy a psychological representation, as it is perceived in reality. The film contains psychological representations created by narration, which in turn are built through realist perceptive images. Even though psychological representations will not involve all the senses at the foundation of perception in order to generate an emotion identical in manifestation to the one in reality, they will be perceptively realistic enough to generate actual emotions. These will be similar in valence with the ones expressed in reality, but more modest in amplitude. The valence of an emotion represents the type, defining character, the 'pigment' of an emotion, being most of the time divided into two categories: positive and negative.

In reality, our perception is consistent and continual. It creates real psychological representations through the fact that we are completely immersed into this medium. The emotions that occur following the view of these extremely authentic representations are real and of great intensity. We witness a car accident: all our senses are involved, including audio-visual and psychological perception. The image of the broken car will be real because not only do we perceive it with part of the senses (immersion), but because we associate it with an indexed image as reference reality (it is not fictional). In the same way, the psychological representation (with all the complexity of affective and cognitive processes) of the accident will be real because it is associated with a real event, and will generate highly intense emotions. Even in reality, the difference in intensity of the emotions depends on the personal implication in the event. Emotions are different depending on the personal connotations of the accident i.e. it happened in front of us or a loved one was hurt. The valence can be to some degree similar, but the amplitudes will differ. The same as with visual perception, immersion in a medium can deceive the sensorial receivers which create the psychological representation. The more immersive the experience, the more credible the visual and psychological representations. If their content is similar to the one we currently perceive and call reality, then the deep immersion generates a similar experience by entirely involving the perception. This case will create psychological representations similar to the real ones.

During a complete immersion in an environment identical to the surrounding one (if it were possible to build it) we can as well believe that the psychological experience is reality, taking into account the fact that we establish the reference just by comparison to a set of perceptions provided by our environment. In conclusion, the more immersive the medium in the sense that it involves more perceptive senses, the closer the emotion to reality as amplitude. In a virtual reality emotions are stronger in amplitude, but can have the same valence as in the case of watching a film. If the standard of real emotions is the way in which they are created and expressed in reality, then the exact replica of the process of triggering the emotion according to this standard will create real feelings.

Conclusions

We have analysed a perspective according to which a medium that we so often and naturally consume, in the form of movies, TV series, YouTube videos, narrative video games, etc. can create authentic perceptions – not just visual, but also emotional. As this amplitude of presence and immersion of narrative perceptive mediums grows, new questions arise related to the role these will play in the future. In light of these theories, we can conclude that the influence of the motion picture, in a suitable form, can expand into the direction of taking a different role, that of researching the human psychology.

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Postmodernist Musical Film:
The Blues Brothers (1980), Evita (1996), Moulin Rouge (2001), Sweeney Todd (2007) and La La Land (2016)

Sedat YILDIRIM[12], Ph. D c.
Tallinn University, Estonian Institute of Humanities

Abstract: Postmodernism started to appear as a broad movement in the literary world after the 1980s. It has been applied to various fields, as well as cinema studies. The rise of postmodernist cinema brought many examples of cinematic productions to the contemporary literature. However, the idea to apply postmodernist film theories to musical film genre is not thoroughly pursued. Musical film genre, like many other literary and cinematic genres went through changes and reforms throughout time. This type of path breaking genre alterations lead to different genre aspects in many musical film productions in contrast to the traditional Hollywood musical film genre. The present study deals with the different generic conventions in five musical films- *'The Blues Brothers (1980)', 'Evita (1996)', 'Moulin Rouge (2001)' 'Sweeney Todd (2007)' and 'La La Land (2016)'* - by applying postmodernist film theories to the generic conventions of selected musical films.

Keywords: Musical genre, postmodernism, deconstruction, grand-narratives, postmodernist film

Introduction

The present paper reviews the postmodernist film theory based on the chosen musical films listed below, in order to bring out a new perspective and outline a new subgenre within the postmodernist film theory. By examining certain examples from several popular musical films, I will argue why they can be considered postmodernist. I will further support my analysis with the discussion of the basic aspects of postmodernism and postmodernist cinema and investigate musical genre problems in the following musical films: *The Blues Brothers (1980), Evita (1996), Moulin Rouge (2001), Sweeney Todd (2007) and La La Land (2016)*. Lastly, I will explain why the following musicals can be regarded as postmodern films of the genre.

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[12]Sedat Yildirim is a 4th year PhD candidate at Tallinn University. His research areas are Film Semiotics, Musical Film Genre, Deconstruction of Musical Film Genre, Kurdish Cinema, Cinema City and Modernity, Culture Studies and Theory of Culture. Sedat Yildirim has participated to many conferences in the Baltic states, such as the Annual Lotman Conference held at Tallinn University and The International Congress of Humanities at Kaunas Technology University. He also published a paper "Identifying Kurds in Bahman Ghobadi's Films' for Kalbo Studijas" in *Kaunas*/Lithuania. As well as carrying out his research, Sedat Yildirim is also taking part in teaching activities as a guest lecturer both at Tallinn University and the University of Latvia. He is expected to defend his PhD thesis "Deconstructing the Musical Film Genre: A Film Semiotics Approach" in September, 2017.
sedat@tlu.ee

Postmodernism is a broad movement that manifests itself in various art fields by using elements from the classified areas such as 'low art' and 'high art' forms. On the other hand, the research area of postmodernist film theory is rather restrained and there are limited credible publications in the field. However, it has lately managed to establish itself as an area within film theory. Someone can argue that it often shows its aspects through some of the films of Quentin Tarantino, David Lynch, Paul Thomas Anderson, Jim Jarmusch, Alan Parker and Tim Burton and it still claims to do so in the near future. Before delving into some introductory definitions related to what postmodernism is and what it can represent, a table presenting the basic differences between modernism and postmodernism as defined by Ihab Hassan might prove practical.

In his *The Dismemberment of Orpheus (1982),* Ihab Hassan conveyed a list which compares the differences between modernism and postmodernism. The similarities and differences Hassan highlights are briefly reflected in the table below.

Modernism	Postmodernism
Distance	Participation
Creation/ Totalization	Decre / Deconstruction
Synthesis	Antithesis
Presence	Absence
Centring	Dispersal
Genre/Boundary	Text/Intertext
Paradigm	Syntagm
Hypotaxis	Parataxis
Metaphor	Metonymy
Selection	Combination
Root/Depth	Rhizome/Surface
Interpretation/ Reading	Against Interpretation/ Misread

Signified	Signifier
Legible (readably)	Scriptable (Writerly)
Narrative/Grand Histoire	Anti-narrative/ Petit Histoire
Metaphysics	Irony
Determinacy	Indeterminacy
Transcendence	Immanence

According to Hassan's study, postmodernist tendencies are deconstructive and rather than precision and determinacy, they lead to a complex state of ambiguity and contrast which often creates suspense in the narration. This table will be a useful guide while examining the main themes and narrative strategies in the chosen musical films, by comparison to the traditional Hollywood musical film genre conventions. Not all these similarities and differences will be present in the mentioned musical films. However, there is a certain gap in the narrative strategies and the cultural metaphors communicated through these musicals in contrast to the traditional Hollywood musical film genre conventions. In order to deal with such genre issues, it is crucial to fill this gap and approach these musical films from a postmodernist perspective to present the unpresented and gain a clearer understanding of social and cultural aspects revealed in these productions.

A very brief definition of Postmodernism might prove useful in gaining a better understanding of the general idea of this study. The definition of postmodernism in the Oxford Dictionary is as follows:

"A Late 20th century style and concept in the arts, architecture, and criticism that represents a departure from modernism and has at its heart a general distrust of grand theories and ideologies as well as a problematical relationship with any notion of art. Typical features include a deliberate mixing of different artistic styles and media, the self-conscious use of earlier styles and conventions, and often the incorporation of images relating to the consumerism and mass

communication of late 20th century post-industrial society." *(Oxford, online)* According to this definition, the general distrust of the grand theories creates the foundation of Postmodernism. The postmodern movement not only reflects a mixture of arts, but also brings forth a certain criticism of the universal theories of today's works of art by combining the current images of consumerism and the mass communication of the post-capitalist society.

Stuart Sim's article also provides basic insights on Post-modernism through the works of Foucault, Lyotard and Derrida. Stuart Sim introduces post-modernism as follows:

Lyotard's plea that we should reject the "grand narratives' (that is, universal theories) of Western culture because they now have lost all their credibility, sums up the ethos of postmodernism, with its disdain for authority in all its many guises. There is no longer any point in engaging with, for example, Marxism, the argument goes; rather, we should ignore it and treat it as irrelevant to our lives. Postmodern philosophy provides us with the means to make value judgments in the absence of such overall authorities."*(Sım, 1998, p. 3)* According to Sim, the universal theories are no longer accepted in Lyotard's and Derrida's terms. This leads to a new philosophy - 'postmodernism', which helps us set our judgements in the absence of such grand narratives or universal theories. Within this research, for instance, this applies to *Moulin Rouge (2001)* and partly to several other musical films, which I will analyse extensively in the empirical part of this study, where the grand narratives or universal theories of the musical film genre are not entirely present anymore.

Nevertheless, rather than thoroughly examining postmodernism, I will adhere to the basic definitions given in this chapter, while in the following chapters I will focus on the methodology of this research paper, postmodernist film theory and analysis of the abovementioned musical films through a postmodernist approach.

The criteria for choosing the following musicals are not based on any quantitative reasons. The films are selected according to the dates when they have been filmed, gross rankings and popularity gained upon their release. The main criteria are that these musical films were shot after the 1980s, as postmodernism had started to make its presence felt in the literary world only subsequently to this period. The second criterion is the popularity of these musical films, established by means of their gross rankings and box office success. The postmodernist film themes such as the 'suffering hero' and 'devaluation of dominant ideologies' were considered when selecting the musical films for analysis in this study. *The Blues Brothers (1980), Evita (1996), Moulin Rouge (2001), Sweeney Todd (2007),* and *La La Land (2016)* are in the top 25 musical films of all times in terms of gross rankings adjusted to the inflation rate. (Box Office Mojo, Online). The musical films in this paper are analysed from the point of view of their correspondence to postmodernist film theory, musical film genre conventions and the culture that is communicated through these films by contrast to mainstream Hollywood musical films.

Postmodernist Film

The Postmodernist film represents a small division of the cinematic works reflecting the ideas and themes of postmodernism through film. It obviously does not have a very old theoretical literary background. However, some films which are released in the early 1930s can also be classified as postmodern films as per today's conceptualization of the genre. Susan Hopkins argues, *"Postmodernist film attempts to subvert the mainstream conventions of narrative structure and characterization, and tests the audience's suspension of disbelief."* (Hopkins, 1995). It is quite challenging to identify which ones are the mainstream conventions of narrative structure. However, one can claim that these mainstream conventions are the traditional narratives which usually depict the storyline in the traditional order leading to a happy ending. The main idea with postmodernist film is to include the notion of suspense, by making the audience curious and think of the surprising outcome of the plot achieved by changing the traditional narrative style. Such conflicting situations usually happen within the realm of the most controversial topics of society. Therefore, postmodernist film not only changes the way narration is usually conveyed, but does it through an exceptional story, whether underground, anarchist or rebellious etc.

The notions of high and low art forms play a crucial role here, as postmodernist films are claimed to be part of the high art form.

Broadly speaking, today's understanding of higher art forms is that they are simply works that negotiate certain controversial issues of a particular society and bring them into view through a rather non-traditional narration and generic conventions. These notions can involve gender, race, sexuality, class differences, human rights, hunger, economic problems, etc. This type of classification guarantees that any literary or cinematic production can be considered art, whereas some refuse to classify a simple cartoon or animated film as such.

There are certainly arguments against postmodernism and postmodernist film theory. Notwithstanding the fact that we cannot prove to a great degree whether postmodernism is a credible movement or not, we cannot deny it either. Moreover, it is perfectly applicable to different film genres as well. Musical film genre, similarly to other film and literature genres, has undergone various historical and cultural changes, so nowadays some musical films do not really comply with the traditional conventions of Hollywood musical film genre. The genre is deconstructed in some contemporary musical films, and there is a lack of conceptualization when it comes to their categorization. Thus, the focus of this paper is the review of these genre issues in the abovementioned musical films and arguing whether they can be considered postmodern or not.

In his works on postmodernism and cinema, Vall Hill discusses intertextuality and nostalgia for past forms in postmodern cinema. "Postmodern cinema has been conventionally described in terms of its bright surfaces, intertextuality, knowingness, referentiality, and nostalgia for past forms, genres and styles. All of this is true, and those markers have crystallized into unstoppable, or rather unendable, commodities." (HILL, 1998, p.93). The author claims that in the ending scene of Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction* (1996), Jules is forced to open the case, nobody knowing its contents, which involves several references to past films such as *Repo Man* (1984)' and *Raiders of the Lost Ark (*1981).

According to Frank Burke, one of the characteristics of the postmodern cinema is that it is structured as a deconstructive enterprise. Frank Burke, in his article 'Aesthetics and Postmodernism' states that *"The struggle of film 'against itself" makes for an interesting postmodern issue, particularly as movies begin to assert themselves as a vital part of the contemporary*

deconstructive enterprise.*" (Burke, 1988).* Burke also emphasizes the unpresentable notions within the presentable ones. *"'It should be emphasized that Lyotard is not advocating a return to presence or substantiality. The postmodern searches for new presentations, not in order to enjoy them but in order to impart a stronger sense of the unpresentable." (Burke, 1988, P74)* He continues: *"Postmodern cinema, even with the 'nostalgia mode' which attempts to evoke longing for the innocence of the recent past, contains a contradictory view of the individual which ultimately cannot offer the solace of dominant ideology" (Burke, 1988, p77).* In his article, Burke concludes his argument by using Jameson's generic theories on Postmodernism. "The death of the hero and the coming apart of the actantial model in bourgeois narrative art must suggest to us the bankruptcy of patriarchy and its ability to transmit symbolic values." (Burke, 1998, p101). The author emphasizes the notion of nostalgia in the context of postmodern cinema. However, the most assertive idea followed by the innocent past nostalgia mode is that of the 'suffering hero' who may die at the end of the film or realise they cannot handle any longer the dominant ideology.

A recent study of the Postmodern Cinema is carried out by Ayse Akalin in her review for Boggs and Pollard's book *'A World in Chaos: Social Crisis and the Rise of Postmodern Cinema'*. She explores the relationship between the rise of postmodern cinema and the social and political changes that took place over the last two decades. Akalin describes it as follows; "Boggs and Pollard look at the unique role of film in 'shaping history, politics, and culture within an unfolding melange of forces that both illuminates and helps mold popular consciousness, stretching from 1970s to the new millennium" (Akalin, 2005).

She further states that "The authors argue that postmodern cinema should not be seen as a total rupture from modernist cinema but rather as a continuation of it, even though the former has a significantly different outlook on the social world. Modernist cinema, however, sees the world in the glow of Enlightenment principles, characterized by optimism, confidence in progress, as well as the power of the individual." (Akalin, p2). As for the authors, "The move to postmodernist cinema starts gradually with genres like film noir, which highlights alienation and powerlessness in the modern society. (Akalin, p2)

She continues her argumentation by stating "Boggs and Pollard's argument; however, is that the move to postmodernist film is not only a narrative turn, but rather a reflection of the changes occurring in the social and political world outside, as well as developments in the film industry and in technology." (Akalin, p2)

She concludes her review by emphasizing the importance of the cultural and political aspects of society while analysing the narrative structures of the postmodern films. *"Film studies should not merely be about readings of texts but should contextualize films within the social and political conditions of the periods in which they are made. And by looking at the interaction between the film and its broader environment, the authors show that film narratives are social texts that reflect and are shaped by the period in which they are made."* (Akalin, p2)

Apart from the abovementioned theory, I consider it beneficial to expand the discussion related to the understanding of the Postmodernist film to the writings of Carl Boggs and Tom Pollard. According to the authors, "Postmodern cinema has emerged in the 1980s and 1990s as a powerfully creative force in Hollywood filmmaking, reflecting and helping to shape the historic convergence of media, culture, technology, and consumerism. It corresponds to the post-Fordist, globalized phase of capitalist development typified by increasing class polarization, social atomization, urban chaos and violence, ecological crisis, and mass depoliticization." (Boggs, Pollard, p1) The authors further claim that postmodern film makes a real effort in order to present a social reality through certain montage and shooting techniques of earlier periods' film making. *"Postmodern film builds upon the loose associational principles taken from Griffith and Soviet directors of the early period, using the montage approach to assemble a barrage of shots, images, and scenes that are meant to convey a jumble of social reality that is not always readily discernible, as in Tarantino's Pulp Fiction or Stone's JFK. (Boggs, Pollard, P8)

According to Boggs and Pollard, there is a certain ambiguity to postmodernism and its insistence within the narration is present in contemporary cinema. "The pervasive sense of ambiguity surrounding postmodern culture enters into most contemporary filmmaking, regardless of style or 'genre'." (*Boggs*, Pollard, P9) In the end, the authors summarize

their work by referring to the universal discourses and their devaluation, as well as the deterioration of the dynamics in the public life. "At its deepest level, postmodern cinema, in particular, and postmodern culture, in general, so devalues universal discourses—and with it coherent social and political narratives—that the dynamics of public life are quickly diminished if not forgotten." (*Boggs*, Pollard, p23) To conclude, the general approach to postmodern cinema is that it usually devalues certain prominent ideologies thorough the death of the hero, or an upsetting conclusion. This is accomplished by an ambiguous plotline injecting the notion of suspense into the narration, together with nostalgic motifs and intertextuality. The audience is excited throughout the film, the narration is entertaining, but the confusion it creates for the spectators through certain shots and montage makes the postmodern films difficult to comprehend and at the same time, according to many scholars, more valuable.

The Blues Brothers (1980)

The Blues Brothers (1980), was severely criticized upon its release for using a huge budget amounting to approximately 30 million dollars. Regardless of the amount spent on knocking a mall down and destroying many cars in the chase scenes, the film attempts to become the voice of the proletariat through many metaphoric scenes that offer quite the challenge in understanding the way the culture of a specific group of people is communicated throughout the film. Moreover, the musical film offers various controversial topics for the understanding of musical film genre. Rick Altman classified *The Blues Brothers* as a folk musical. Looking back to the genre of musical film, Altman mentions 5 major elements of the American musical film: plot, setting, music, dance and the personal style of the character, while also analysing the semantic and syntactical corpus of the Hollywood musical film. However, I argue that all major elements described by Altman are either ambiguous or not at all present in *The Blues Brothers.*

From a postmodernist perspective, and by taking into account Rick Altman's semantic aspects of the musical film genre, *The Blues Brothers'* format is narrative, length is feature length (146 mins), and the characters are not a romantic couple in society. The male-female duality is not present. The woman in red dress chases Jake Elwood to kill him. The acting is

rhythmic and real, excluding the chase scenes and those where the cars fly around. When it comes to Syntax, in *The Blues Brothers* the male-female coupling through the syntactical corpus of the movie does not aim to employ any traditional American film musical corpus features. It includes alternation, confrontation and parallelisms, but not between male – female characters that come from different cultural backgrounds. Music in *The Blues Brothers* is most likely the most proper genre that fits the syntactical American film musical corpus. The movie lacks dancing; however, the music aims to create general joy and reflects the limitations of national identities. The continuity between rhythm, dialog and diegetic music, which leads to a mystic marriage, is not part of the syntactical structure of the *Blues Brothers* either.

The Blues Brothers also seems to be positioning itself as a people's musical. According to Julien Mailend, *"Blue Brothers Nazi scene should be used by comparative jurists teaching the meaning of the First Amendment to foreign audiences, as an aid to shine a light on the cultural, social, and political principles that ground the constitutional protection of hate speech in the United States."* (Julien Mailend, p2) *The Blues Brothers* reveals significant aspects of the 1980s American society, such as the protection of the hate speech, the place of the Church and different missions of the Blue Brothers and the Church. This musical film deconstructs certain aspects of the genre. It has a happy ending; however, the main characters end up in jail, which represents a usual finale of the postmodernist film hero. In addition to the emphasis on the common goods and ethics, there are also certain ways in which the Church is represented. The film changes the traditional way people see the Church. It presents it as an institution which should serve the needs of the people instead of adhering blindly to its general dogma.

Evita (1996)

Evita is one of the musical films directed by Alan Parker which retells the story of Eva Peron's and her becoming an Argentinian heroine. Alan Parker was offered insistently to shoot this musical, which pretty much suited his style of filmmaking. Parker genuinely prefers to involve in his films the working class, and the problems it goes through, and there could not be a more appropriate story

than this one to suit those preferences. He eventually agrees to shoot 'Evita (1996)' and the audience is finally acquainted with this exceptional musical film, which according to some critics symbolizes the rebirth of the genre in the contemporary era.

By using the perspective of his storyteller, Che (Antonio Banderas), Parker takes us on a very intense journey of the Argentinian heroine's childhood. In the opening scene, her funeral is screened as an introduction, making the audience expect a joyful historical musical. At the end of that scene, everyone burst into tears. The film musical was severely criticized by many Argentinians who were not content with Madonna's image representing their national heroine. From a sociological point of view, the film barely changed anything about the disputed Peronism of the country. Elizabeth Jelin claims, "As Evita transcends the parochial Argentinian ground of political passions, traveling the world in the global image of Madonna and Bloomingdale's fashions, back home the dispute about Peronism is still open, continually regenerated." (Jelin, Elizabeth, 1997)

Parker also shoots the working-class reaction against Peron's regime and Eva Peron through many scenes which do not feature generic conventions of Hollywood musical films. Considering the five major elements of the genre, the only present convention is perhaps the personal styles of the characters as the head roles in the musical are Antonio Banderas and Madonna, two of the most acclaimed stars at the time when the film was shot. Antonio Banderas (Che) is the narrator, as according to Muir *"A number of modern musicals use a character that perform musical numbers throughout the story, offering their unique perspective on the unfolding narrative, sometimes even filling the role of narrator. "* (Muir, 2005)

According to the author, this convention is less common in films other than this musical. Besides this, there are various other factors differentiating the musicals studied in this paper, genre wise, from earlier popular musical films. These factors can vary, starting with the style of the director and his making of the film, and reaching post-modern norms that the audience is accustomed to see in the film musicals of the 1990s. These conventions used in traditional musicals tend to be the male-female duality and a happy ending marked by a mystic marriage. Notwithstanding the fact that there is no happy ending in Evita 1996, we cannot consider it unhappy either. The

story begins with the funeral and reflects the upcoming historical success achieved by Eva Peron in her political career and social life, be it for herself or for the nation of Argentina. Nevertheless, we realise, as it is sung by Che, that nothing had actually changed. Moreover, the audience becomes aware, with the help of the part played by her, that she had indeed done everything for her reputation. She needed to be loved and she could not risk losing the people who loved and admired her, even though she reveals through the song 'Eva Beware of the City' that she cannot stand the middle class. 'Screw the middle class! I will never accept them'.

To illustrate another simple point; "Goodnight and thank you" deconstructs the traditional notion of male-female duality in musical film genre conveyed by Rick Altman. The song reflects notions of betrayal and the fact that there is no true love present, not even in the case of Eva Peron; she was not in love with Peron, but with the fame she gained. Therefore, whereas the musical 'Evita (1996)' successfully represents the notions of nationalism of Argentinians it also stands out as a postmodern musical film through its content and images Parker creates, which unveil the proletary spirit of the working-class Argentinians bound to the myth of Eva Peron.

Moulin Rouge (2001)

Moulin Rouge (2001), directed by Baz Luhrman, stands out to be one of the greatest examples of the postmodern musical. The film starts in the year 1900 with the shot of Christian (Ewan McGregor) sitting and writing at his typewriter. He wishes to become a writer and settles in Montmartre, Paris, where he falls in love with Satine (Nicole Kidman), the enchanting girl every man desires. Satine suffers from tuberculosis. She falls in love with Christian as well, but Zidler would not let their story progress as he had already offered Satine to the Duke of Monroth. However, the power of love cannot prevent the couple from getting together. Even though Satine lies to Christian about not loving him, he does not believe her and seeks to obtain a confidential answer from her by challenging the duke and his guard on the night of the premiere of a play that Satine had been dreaming of performing for a very long time. The visual of the closing scene in *Moulin Rouge* brings the two lovers together, which excites the spectators for a happy union of the main characters. However, the death of Satine in the end, a fact already known by the audience, leads to an ambiguous narrative conclusion.

Kelly Kessler in his work "Destabilizing the Hollywood Musical", quoting from David Danby's article published in The New Yorker magazine, argues that the conventions of dancing and music played throughout the musical deconstructs the usual perceptions of the genre.

"Moulin Rouge!, the Baz Luhrmann musical starring Nicole Kidman and Ewan McGregor, is the absolute paradigm of our current restlessness. In this frantically ambitious pop pastiche-postmodernism in a nutshell-no single song is performed from beginning to end, no dance number is staged without the dancers; movements being kaleidoscope into a dozen angles." (Kessler, p. 183)

Kessler further asserts that Moulin Rouge is not a usual musical film. Through the stylistics of the contemporary music video making and quick cutting of montage, it reflects innovative genre conventions. "The film could have easily been plugged as Luhrmann's Romeo + Juliet had been four years earlier. To paraphrase, Moulin Rouge! Was 'not your father's musical!' Chicago and Dreamgirls, like Moulin Rouge! And Evita before them, also reflect the stylings of music video, with a heavy reliance on quick cutting and montage sequences to break up the presence of performance." (Kessler, p.183)

The music directly changes the discourse of the film and brings new perspectives to one of the main Hollywood musical film genre conventions, which is spontaneous and continuous singing and dancing.

"Luhrmann's compilation score for Moulin Rouge may not have been designed to popularize the songs represented within it, but its content certainly suggests the kind of marketing more common to Bollywood, Broadway, or even soundtrack film than to the Hollywood musical." (van der Merwe, p3).

M. Keith Booker also emphasizes the video aspect of the film and classifies the musical film as postmodern.

"An exemplary case is Baz Luhrman's Moulin Rouge (2001) in which fragmented and frenetic MTV-style editing contributes to the production of a self-consciously dazzling postmodern spectacle (the exclamation point in the title is definitely appropriate) that looks like a cross between a music video and a video game, injected with a healthy dose of opera and adrenalin."(Booker, p7)

The musical video performances within the musical film are innovative. Unlike the traditional Hollywood musical film, the singing and the dancing are represented by use of the most contemporary tools of cutting and montage, which, according to Booker, create a postmodern spectacle. The musical film also features postmodernist aspects through the way the genre is constructed. Throughout the narration, the notion of suspense and the fact that the viewer does not know what to expect create ambiguity. From the very beginning, we know that Satine is dead. Christian is presenting the exceptional love story of the two main characters. Falling in love with a courtesan here does not really comply with the traditional Hollywood musical film conventions. The music played throughout the film supports these notions as well. The presence of consumerist society as well as the contradictions between the bohemian and the traditional lifestyles are reflected through some songs such as 'Diamonds Are a Girl's Best friends' 'Can Can', 'Like a Virgin'. In the end, starring as a show musical, *Moulin Rouge (2001)* enforces the rebirth of musical film in the contemporary era by an exceptional show, attracting millions of spectators worldwide with box office revenues of 179.2 million USD.

Sweeney Todd (2007)

Another great example of a Postmodernist musical film is no doubt *Sweeney Todd* (2007), directed by Tim Burton: the story of a historical barber who sliced up his victims, baked their bodies, and fed them to unsuspecting passers-by. He is mistakenly sent to exile by the judge and returns home after 15 years to take revenge in 19th century England. The story is inspired by the play *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, written by Christopher Bond in 1973. The musical film does not fit into any categories of the musical film previously defined. It is a horror musical film to which nobody is used. The setting is dark, misty 19th century London, and the main characters act as if they were cannibals. Moreover, it is hard to conclude who managed to satisfy their desires in the end of the musical film. A, O. Scott describes it as follows: "Cannibalism and mass murder as the basis for a hit show — what a perverse and delicious joke." (Scott, p2).

Tim Burton makes fantasy films, Stephen Sondheim writes musicals. It would be quite hard to think of these two working together and producing a film until the release of Sweeney Todd (2007). "*Sweeney* is as much a horror film as a musical: it is cruel in its effects and radical in its misanthropy, expressing a breathtakingly, rigorously pessimistic view of human nature. It is also something close to a masterpiece, a work of extreme- I am tempted to say evil-genius." (Scott, p1)

From the very beginning of the musical film – the opening scene – we are introduced with an exceptional narration and generic conventions, with images of bloody gears accompanied by mysterious and fearful music. Tim Burton is known for devaluing the grand narratives and genres and bringing a completely different perspective to the generic conventions of the films he makes. In this musical film, we see represented these unusual conventions when depicting the story of a barber thirsty for revenge through a metaphorical narration featuring many themes, such as homicide, revenge and injustice. There's no hero in the end, and even if there was, he dies. The images of the murders and the blood are recklessly displayed throughout the musical. In an interview with Hill Logan, Burton replies to the question related to the 'ratcheting up the blood' as follows: "I felt like we were just being true to the show. I've seen other kinds of productions where they've tried to be a little more politically correct, but the first production I saw, blood was flying all over the stage. People are saying it is too bloody to win Best Picture. Come on, it is a Christmas movie!" (Logan, p1)

Through a Postmodernist perspective, the musical film deconstructs the traditional genre conventions of the Hollywood musical film. The story is set to make the audience believe in Benjamin's innocence and right to revenge. However, carrying it out in a cannibalistic manner brings the diffusion of the genre, which often aims to entertain through inclusion. The music and plot are integrated in a way which suggests certain connotations and metaphors throughout the musical film but the setting, plot and main characters use this integration for their own acts of horror and cannibalism. There is no happy ending, male-female duality is present, but Benjamin kills Mrs. Lovett. The only scene where the couple dances and sings is probably the most dreadful, as Benjamin burns Mrs. Lovett alive and is later killed by her son. The thirst for

revenge enters a vicious circle and we are eventually left with no heroes. On the other hand, the ambiguous ending can also be interpreted as beneficial to a society where the Demon Barber dies and people finally find relief. Thus, the pessimistic view of human nature and the corruption of the 19th century London lead Sweeney to exact his revenge through dreadful actions, helped by the musical narrative, which make the film stand out as an exceptional masterpiece with path breaking nonconformist genre conventions.

La La Land (2016)

La La Land (2016) is a musical film written and directed by Damien Chazelle, which received 14 nominations at the 89th Academy Awards ceremony. The film won awards for Best Director, Best Actress (Emma Stone), Best Cinematography, Best Original Score, Best Original Song ('City of the Stars') and Best Production Design. It had an outstanding positive effect on the audience and undoubtedly excited the musical film critics. The story takes us through the busy city life of LA with the aid of contemporary motifs related to the daily life integrated into an ironic fairy tale musical. In the opening scene, the musical film constructs its fairy tale narrative structure by making the main characters accidentally meet during a traffic jam in LA. The scene is depicted in a very traditional way, similarly to traditional Hollywood musical films, where suddenly people leave their cars and start singing and dancing. Raisa Bruner reviews this scene as follows: "It's just another day of sun in L.A., not a particularly romantic setting for a musical about dreamers. But then a car door opens and a woman steps out and bursts into a song. As dozens join her, the scene becomes an unapologetic celebration of the all-American thirst for greatness and hope" (Bruner, p1) Perhaps there could not be a better opening scene for the first time the two lovers meet. However, the scene ends as if nothing had happened: no dancing, no music, people miserably and anxiously waiting to get home. I believe this makes La La Land unique in its own way, reflecting the reality of contemporary city life from the very first scene where people are struggling to get to some place or another as soon as possible. However, there is always a fairy tale that someone wants to believe in and there's always a love story present, regardless of its

being successful in the end or not. Eliza Williams in her review states that *"La La Land* pulls off an impressive balancing act. It is both a nostalgic homage to movie musicals of the past while remaining a sharply contemporary love story, complete with a rather bittersweet ending. (Williams, p1)

According to Johnson Brian D.*, "La La Land* is a showbiz fable about two performers who fall in love while struggling to make art in a culture ruled by commercial formula" *(*Brian, p2) The musical can fit into both fairy tale and show musical categories. It might seem difficult to track the fairy tale characteristics of this musical film, but metaphorically, the whole idea of love and that of promising to do anything for someone lose the fight against the dreams of the main characters. As the seasons pass, their relationship also changes. In summer, Sebastian and Mia are experiencing the best times of their relationship and it makes the audience feel like they represent symbols of a lifelong romance. Perhaps in *Singing in the Rain (1952)* things would turn out to be just like that. However, Damien Chazelle's musical *La La Land* only give us that impression before the season changes to Fall, which we realise is also the fall of their relationship. Johnson describes it as follows: "Rejuvenating two tired genres, the romcom and the musical, La La Land amounts to an extravagant and improbable act of resistance against Hollywood convention" *(Brian*, p2). Before the ending scene, when Sebastian is playing the piano for the last time after Mia's arrival from Paris with her husband, we see a series of shots of Mia envisioning how would her life had been if she had a family with Sebastian. This alternative ending animates the audience. In the cinemas people burst into tears, wishing for it to be real. However, Mia is now a famous actress, living her dream, while finding out that Sebastian had also fulfilled his - he opened his own place and fights for bringing jazz back to basics. This takes us back to the decline of their relationship when Sebastian did not show up for the play Mia had written and played. The reason for their separation was not Sebastian's lack of effort to make it to Mia's play, but the failure of the play.

Johnson ends his review of the musical film as follow: "In the end, *La La Land*'s glamorous bubble of romance is bittersweet. But now the American Dream is on life support – and the world's most famous audition contestant holds court in a gilded

penthouse – vulnerability may be the ultimate luxury." (Brian, p3). Nevertheless, the ending is bittersweet. The main characters follow their own paths and careers. For a traditional musical, this ending would be innovative. *La La Land* eliminates the traditional Hollywood musical genre conventions for the most part. It stops the audience from falling for the fairy tale of Sebastian and Mia by realistically constructing a contemporary love story. This love story may not turn out to be successful, but it leads to a grand success for the careers of the characters, which today represents a priority in the consumerist society: craving for success and creating dreams to reach within the cultural constructions we live in. As a tribute to this aspect, Emma Stone sings a song in the movie, called 'Audition'. Stone brings forth these fragile sentiments: "here is to the ones who dream/foolish as they may seem/here is to the hearts that ache/here's to the mess we make." *(La La Land, 2016)*

What *La La Land* achieves is bringing the musical genre back to life in contemporary times by a successful integration of music and montage and even through some live-recorded performances. In the scene where Ryan Gosling is worried about jazz, John Legend states that jazz needs improvement, a little touch of contemporary music to stay alive. Alike, the same can be said about musical film, as the director insistently mentions. It needs innovation; it needs to involve contemporary postmodern themes and techniques if it wants to survive. Consequently, *La La Land* outstandingly achieves this kind of breakthrough, proof of which is the positive feedback from critics, as well as the box office gains and the five Academy Awards it obtained.

Conclusions

This paper aimed to reflect the dynamic notions of the postmodernist film theory through prominent musical films – *'The Blues Brothers (1980)', 'Evita (1996)', 'Moulin Rouge (2001)' 'Sweeney Todd (2007)' and 'La La Land (2016)'*. There have been certain conventions which defined the Hollywood musical film genre after 1980s. These conventions have reached the point of and mainly generalized the theories of how the genre is usually constructed. However, there are certain musical films which do not include the characteristics of the traditional Hollywood musical film genre. The abovementioned musical films deconstruct this type of genre conventions and involve postmodernist characteristics through their narrative structures and generic conventions.

Postmodernism devalues these widespread narratives and theories and brings a new perspective to the understanding of certain contemporary genres. Similarly, postmodernist film takes the essence of Lyotard's postmodernism and uses it in many contemporary cinematic works. On the one hand, it is quite challenging to define a film as postmodernist, precisely because this is not done according to any mathematical or quantitative analysis. On the other hand, there are clear examples of cinematic productions which are filmed by using different techniques and genre approaches. It is broadly acknowledged that certain productions can be unequivocally considered postmodernist films such as Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction (1996)* or David Lynch's *Mulholland Drive (2001).*

To examine it even further based on the postmodernist film theory, I tried to explore postmodernism with musical films, in order to bring a clearer understanding of the genre and the culture expressed through these musical productions as tools of entertainment. In the present paper, I argue that there is a certain need for further genre classifications of musical films in order to study the culture more efficiently by these means.

Over time, the genres also slightly switch directions from traditionalist approaches to innovative techniques and methods. Thus, in the current paper, I firstly analysed the basic definitions of postmodernism, secondly provided a theoretical background for a generic understanding of the postmodernist film theory, and lastly, I analysed the genre and narrative structures of the following musical films – *The Blues Brothers (1980), Evita (1996), Moulin Rouge (2001)' Sweeney Todd (2007) and La La Land (2016)* – as postmodern musical productions.

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The "oldest" person caught on film was born in the 18th century: Despa of Avdela.

Cătălin D. CONSTANTIN[13], Ph.D
Bucharest University

Abstract: This article presents a few known hypotheses on the earliest birthdate of a person whose face has been kept in the memory of the motion-picture until present days. The names usually connected to this subject matter are briefly listed. The history of the first film is then presented, from its beginnings in 1906, owing its existence to the Manakia brothers, who became the pioneers of Balkan cinematography from their very home village, Avdela (currently in Greece, at that time still part of the Ottoman Empire). The film features the face of the grandmother of the two brothers, Despa, who, according to the testimonies in Milton Manakia's memoirs, was 114 years old at that time, having been born at the end of the 18th century.

Key words: Manakia, Balkan cinematography, Pind, Macedo-Romanians, folk costumes

Introduction

1895. The Lumière brothers invented cinematography, the earliest motion picture of humankind only featuring 46 seconds. Some historians push the birth of the motion picture a few years earlier, 1890 being the year when Edison had already invented the Kinetoscope. All these facts are already well known and presented on numerous occasions through both books and documentaries. Our era favours the new techniques, science, and the future and looks forward with determination. However, it does not overlook the old times, the past, the traditions. It feels like they are disappearing, film imperceptibly and quite quickly becoming an instrument for preserving memories. This represents the birth of the "ethnology of salvation", as it would later be called. The story I will tell you below takes place in the Balkans, in an isolated mountain village and it has indirect ties to Romania. Seeing as it mixes the

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[13] Cătălin D Constantin is a book publisher and Lecturer at the University of Bucharest, Faculty of Letters, where he teaches ethnology and visual anthropology in the Department of Cultural Studies. He has coordinated several collections of fiction and has edited many books of photography dedicated to the Romanian cultural heritage. His most recent volume is called *Ferestre din Bucureşti şi poveştile lor*. His PhD thesis, presented at the Faculty of Letters and published in 2013, dealt with the everyday life in Romanian towns at the beginning of the 20th century, starting from unpublished diaries of that time, belonging to ordinary people and collected by him. Combining his passion for photography with the pleasure of writing and traveling, Cătălin D. Constantin presented, in 2014, a second PhD thesis, at the University of Architecture and Urbanism "Ion Mincu", a cultural and anthropological interpretation of urban public squares in Europe. He was editor of the anthropology pages of *Cultura* magazine, with constant collaborations in the cultural press. Email: de.constantin@yahoo.com

remotest past with the technique recently invented at the end of the 19th century, it bears extraordinary symbolism and to some extent even surprises the audience through its historical contradictions, rarely encountered otherwise.

First people caught on a film

Whatever the birthdate of the motion picture, an interesting question which might arise would be related to the earliest date a person was caught on film, historically speaking. In other words, who is the "oldest" person in the world preserved in the cinematographic memory.

Encyclopaedias have quoted and further quote the name of Pope Leo XIII. Born Vincenzo Gioacchino Raffaele Luigi Pecci, Pope Leo XIII was filmed in 1898, age 88 years old, by William Kennedy Dickson, an employee of Edison's. Four months of prior negotiations had been necessary before the pope accepted to be caught on film. However, he does not seem shy at all in front of the camera, and the twelve frames show him in Vatican, either walking or in his carriage, surrounded by prelates or alone.

The newly invented technique is expensive and the first people appearing on film are not ordinary people, but kings, popes, the worthy of that time. The camera is blessed by the pope, the first pope in history whose image is kept in motion. At any rate, Leo XIII holds some interesting records. He is the first pope born in the 19th century (March 2nd, 1810) and the first pope deceased in the 20th century (20 July 1903). In terms of personal merits, he organized the first ecumenical council in Vatican.

In 1912, when she was filmed with a Kinora camera (the commercial version of the camera invented by Lumière brothers), Rebeca Klarke became known in Great Britain because of her longevity. She was born 1804, six years before the pope, and died in 1914. The images show her peacefully playing with her cat. *Rebeca Klarke and kitten* is the name of the motion picture. Most of the experts ignore this film, however, because it appears that there are serious arguments supported by the archives of the 19th century censuses in the United Kingdom which prove that Rebeca Klarke was not actually as old as she claimed.

Maia Despa of Avdela

At any rate, in this debate I haven't heard mentioned grandmother Despa of Avdela, caught on film in 1907 by Milton and Ianaki, the Manakia brothers. She is the "oldest" person

caught on a camera, and of that I am sure.

Considered pioneers in the Balkan cinematography, the Manakia brothers, whose fabulous history is insufficiently known in Romania, are Macedo-Romanians who were born in Pind, Avdela – an isolated village, situated at an altitude of over 1,200 meters, where we arrived for the first time in February 2014, and came back two years later, but in the summertime, August, a festive season for the village. Avdela is currently in Greece, but at that time, it was still part of the Ottoman Empire. The Manakia brothers opened a photography workshop in Bitolia/Monastir and, at a time when national conflicts were at their peak, they made extraordinary portraits of Macedo-Romanians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Turks, Macedonian Slavs etc.

In 1906, they travelled to Bucharest, were awarded the title of photographers of the Romanian Royal Court and here, for the first time, they saw a motion-picture. Immediately after, also in 1906, Ianaki went to London and bought the 300th Bioscope camera in the world. At a time when new technologies, skyscapes and transoceanic ships were the trend, the two brothers returned to their mountain village and, in 1907, they filmed an ethnographic documentary. The first one in the Balkans and among the first ones in the world. The subject? Wool spinning. Groups of women in folk costumes. Among them, in the centre, a close-up lasting for a few seconds of Maia Despa, the grandmother of the brothers who, according to Milton's testimony, was 114 years old. However old this age may seem, it was not unusual among the Macedo-Romanians in Pind. In Romania, the oldest inhabitant was, until recently, Tănase, a Macedo-Romanian settled in Dobrogea, who reached precisely 114 years of age, and he was still giving quite coherent interviews at the time.

In other words, grandmother Despa was born in 1793, at the end of the 18th century. This is an incredibly old date for a person that we can see today in motion, in a movie!

Avdela

How this mountain village looked like at the beginning of the 20th century may be seen in a photograph in the Manakia archive kept at Muzeul Țăranului Român [The Romanian Peasant Museum]. A village with houses made of stone, suggesting rather a Western medieval burg than a settlement of shepherds.

Avdela is not only the village of the Manakia brothers, but also the village of the family of philologists Papahagi, a name still present nowadays on our territory. The village is located at an altitude of over 1,300 m, in an area with deep forests. Because of the transhumance lifestyle, the Macedo-Romanian settlements in Pind Mountains continue to present a particularity which may seem odd for the contemporary man: they have always been inhabited for only half a year. The winters are very rough, with a lot of snow. Therefore, from October to May, the villages in Pind are dwelt by only a few inhabitants who remain there in order to take care of the village. The rest of them take their herds and climb down to the settlements in the valley. If in winter the population is of 5-6 inhabitants, in summer it reaches a few hundreds. The world of the Vlachs is not the same as the Greek one in the valley, as the Greeks spend their lives in the same place, unlike the Vlachs, whose home constantly changes location. A permanent swing at a pace which was not the man's will, but nature's motion. "At home" has a different value and another meaning when half the year is spent someplace different. Coming and going and then coming back again create a mental geography different from the one entailed by a stable life.

We have reached Avdela in the evening, in February 2014. It was raining and snowing at the same time, and the only photographs of the square were taken during the night and are a little blurred. The square is very close to the entrance in the village, with its houses spread on the flank. On a side of the square, the only place lit in the village was a coffee shop, whose clients at that hour were three locals and some Greek students who came from the neighbouring ski resort, Vasilisa, with a former teacher of theirs at the University of Athens, born in this village. The village's guard was also present. His name was Papahagi and nobody there knew that some of his relatives were important people in Romanian philology. The rest of the village was deserted, but nothing left the impression of desolation.

The square is large; it has several coffee shops, some houses on one side, the busts of the Manakia brothers, a church, a stone well, two trees, a mature one and a younger one. The Athenian teacher is glad to tell us that one of them was planted by her father. As it happened with every other place we visited, our presence (a Romanian and an American anthropologist) causes amazement. One of the locals insists to call his sister, a university professor in Kozani. As the rules of field research advise never to say no, we obeyed, although this meant waiting for two hours, during the night, and facing a long trip ahead to the hotel in Metsovo. We were rewarded for our waiting with a pleasant encounter and accurate data on the history of the village, so accurate that we even found out the date when the trees were planted in the square, 1906 and 1945. The village was set on fire in 1905 by Greek terrorists because of a strong pro-Romanian feeling, and then by Germans in 1944. Earlier, at around 1800, the village was situated at higher altitudes, but the community decided to move it lower, at its current location, because of the strong winds.

60 seconds and three records

The motion-picture is, of course, very short. 60 seconds. Women, in folk costumes, composed, spinning wool. 18 seconds, the face of Despa is in close-out, and Despa makes history as the person with the earliest birthdate preserved in the memory of the cinematographic film. This sequence opens the motion picture made by Theo Angelopoulos, *Ulysses' Gaze* (1995), a symbolic travel of a Greek cineaste, who returned home from the United States, in search of his identity, in time, trying to find any film reels lost by the Manakia brothers, crossing the modern Balkans, now divided by conflicts and borders.

These 60 seconds also represent the first motion picture in the history of the Ottoman Empire. It is at the same time the first ethnographic documentary filmed in the Balkan Peninsula. Three records in only 60 seconds.

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II. Cultural Studies
Film & Literature

Humour and society in *Două loturi* (1952) and *Două lozuri* (2016)

Eugen ISTODOR[14], PhD, Bucharest University

Abstract: Between the years 1957 and 2016, Romanian cinematography transposed into film I.L. Caragiale's short story: "Două loturi" (1898) ["Two Lottery Tickets"]. Over a period of almost 60 years, the films *Două loturi* (1957)[15] and *Două lozuri* (2016)[16] reproduced the same topos of Caragiale' story *Două loturi (*1901): the lottery, one of the simplest methods of testing chance and risk (Reith, 1999:7).

The statistics of the American cinematographic industry reveal that the above mentioned period witnessed the production of entire series of films about casino games and even one about a general knowledge competition such as *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008), which won the Oscar for Best Motion Picture of the year, the Golden Globe for Best Motion Picture Drama and the BAFTA award for Best Film. In this manner, other superior types of testing chance are tackled and, in addition, the theme of social reward for experience and competence is publically imposed.

Not only does the time period between *Două loturi* and *Două lozuri* provide us with the image of an elementary formula for gain, but also the heroes of Romanian films, Lefter Popescu and Pompiliu, reproduce the

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[14] Eugen Istodor, Ph.D in Sociology, is senior editor at "Cațavencii" (weekly satire newspaper) and editor en chief of the department *Haute Culture*, Hotnews (hotnews.ro). He teaches courses on the Communication Department of Bucharest University.
Books: "101 cărți românești de citit într-o viață" "101 Romanian books to read in one's lifetime" (history of Romanian Literature - a modern approach), Polirom Publishing House, 2012; "The Sociology of Romanian Humor", University of Bucharest Publishing House, 2016.
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eistodor@yahoo.com
istodor.ro
[15] Screenwriters: Jean Georgescu, Aurel Miheles, Gheorghe Naghi, director Aurel Miheles, Gheorghe Naghi, 1957
[16] Screenwriter and Director: Paul Negoescu, 2016

same cultural stereotypes, ignoring the political and cultural changes that separate them in the approximately 60-year gap, including the processes of modernization (Giddens, 2006:45) and hyperconsumption (Lipovetsky, 2007:67). The present theoretical attempt unfolds as a sociological theory of humour, starting from the characterization of the public sphere and audience of cultural products. We consider that the direction society is heading towards could be an explanation with respect to thematic stagnation, but also a measure for the way humour functions as a factor of social influence. But, in fact, who responded with laughter and how did they do it in different eras, when faced with an identically perpetuated story?

To this end, we will develop theories of chance and risk (Reith, 1999, Cosgrave, Giddens, Beck,2006), while economically and socio-politically reconstructing the Romanian public space in three different historical moments (the end of the nineteenth century, the beginning of communism and the globalized period of the 2000s) in order to highlight the manner in which humour has operated as a symbolic form of social interventionism (Kierkegaard, 2006, Carroll, 2014).

Keywords: risk, chance, fate, edgework, *Două loturi*, communism, consumption, globalization.

"The Edgework"

Theoreticians (Giddens, 2006, Reith, 1999) considered that the industrialization of gambling belonged to modernity. Up until that point, from Antiquity to the Enlightenment, societies either allowed for certain types of gambling or forbade them, the authorities oscillating between acknowledging the lottery as a general form of social solidarity and imposing taxes on it or distributing it in socially scarce areas.

As a generally regulated institution, gambling can be traced back to modernity and its development to consumerism. The general preoccupation with this topic (whether belonging to the modern state in general or to various domains of activity such as mathematics and psychoanalysis) shifted from the stage of temporal monopoly or control of a social area to the stage of "guilty pleasure", reaching the status of industry and exclusive occupation of certain communities that test their limits in the century of a global "edgework". Following in the footsteps of I. Kant, J. Habermas, and Max Weber, Sorin Antohi (1994:23) mentions the social processes created by modernism:

"the rationality of the means through which certain aims can be reached", "entzauberung, the disenchantment of the world, not only in a religious sense, but also in terms of poetics and sensitivity", "the authority of legal institutions", "the legitimacy of the state as the only source of legal violence, the responsibility with respect to ultimate aims", "the decisive role of an efficient bureaucracy, acting at the level of the state, above social classes".

Despite these tendencies of modernism, critics such as Baudrillard (2008:90) and Lipovetsky (2007:67) consider that Western society underwent forms of consumption that seemed to bring about social satisfaction, but which practically composed and created or recreated new forms of dissatisfaction. The meritocracy specific to modernism competed with changes of social status that were increasingly efficient and profitable and did not entail the legitimacy of educational or cultural adequacy. The gambling industry accompanied both the process of consumption and that of status changes and reached fruition particularly under the conditions of globalization.

A new linguistic order

The modern period is thus characterized by the dismemberment of the irrationality of gambling into logical operations and exact terms, into the development of social institutions that would create an environment of safety and/or of "curing" addiction.

From a terminological point of view, "fate" has officially made room for the more rational concept, "chance", and with the help of mathematics, by means of "the law of large numbers", pertinent explanations have been shaped with respect to loss and gain. At the same time, the massive advent of social insurance has added to "chance" the term "risk", which, in time, has both ensured and included the gambling industry. The religious, indeterminate concept "fate" was terminologically opposed to "chance" and "risk".

The terms are rational and they are functionally covered by social institutions, including therapeutic ones (Beckert, 2012:52).

A new socially-consumerist order

The motivation and finality behind gambling, namely changing social status, has, on the long term and through the ever-wider access to a certain social standard, turned gambling into a global game. Despite the labels "The Age of Gambling/ The Gambling

Society", the rationalization of "the change in social status", a main spring of gambling games, entails the attainment of some general educational social standards as well as general moral ones.

The convulsions of modernity (world wars, migration, failed educational and cultural policies, social inequalities, the incapacity to find solutions to the job crisis, weakening the role of politics as a form of regulating inequalities within communities etc.) have had a regressive cultural effect at the communitarian level, the options aiming towards finding much more efficient formulas of modifying the social status.

Oftentimes, in the history of gambling, the other motivations behind it, mentioned by Beckert (2012), as being in the area of social equilibrium (catharsis, relieving daily tensions, man's general need to play and the tendency to escape from an unpredictable mechanism of daily routine) have been dominated, out of social-economic reasons, by the sole individual purpose of ascending towards a society of superior services, for which a more efficient method exists, which does not require special educational skills. Consumer society has even imposed a formula according to which the more respected, regulated and socially satisfied material needs are, the more the individual ascends towards a culture illustrated by superior services. In addition, this tendency increasingly more often entails the surpassing and negation of one's own status by means of the accelerated multiplication of income, excluding the merits acquired in society over a certain period (social position or education).

A new cultural order

In terms of an „entzauberung", society has created hybrid forms of personal security and ideological support. For example, surveys indicate that, in the case of Protestantism, there is a favourable anti-gambling proneness, whereas in the rest of the cases, there is a strengthening of the judgments/ stereotypes with respect to the results of gambling, endowing the state with the role of conspiracy.

Modernism and its manner of general civilizing and globalization have only partially solved the ideological relationships of the gambler with fate or chance, at a linguistic level. Giddens (2006) highlights the fact that contemporary theories on gambling retain a belief about the subversive implication of fate and the invisible forces, this belief being equally strong to that regarding the mathematical computation of chance.

Situated on a path of descent in terms of influence, the educational system has favoured a quasi-general regress and a return to terms such as "unfavourable fate" and the "conspiracy" of the state against the player.

It is again statistics that highlight a massive short-circuit in the cultural universe of the gambler. The gambler's exchange of experience becomes reduced in the context of the community at large. Being trapped in the universals of the game leads one towards dreaming about game modalities and future rewards. Also, imaginary worlds dependent on the individual experience of the game are constructed. The games of experience exchanges with the non-gambling exterior are ever more diminished and prudence, rationality, thriftiness, individual discipline – the communitarian minima moralia – are replaced with profitability, the testing of limits, efficiency, which, culturally speaking, proliferate behavioural constructs and preconceptions far more accessible compared to the critical spirit claimed by modernism.

The Romanian cultural-linguistic order
I propose you two texts:

1. "You're out of luck, you are!"
"Hahaha! Mr. Turtureanu, we'll find them right on the day after the deadline… I know my luck!... Hahaha!

Negligence, indifference, imprudence! When someone has papers of such great value, they don't let drag them all over the place… There must be someone too dry! This is what you deserve when you do business of one hundred thousand francs with a nitwit.

"By all the gods! They have all died! They are all dying! Only luck lives and will live alongside the Times, immortal as they are!...I am here!...tickets here!...the shining sun, sought for blindly in the dark for so long, was here.

(*Două loturi*, 1898, 1957)

2. "Sile: Nothing came in, man, nothing!"
"I had bad luck today"
Pompiliu: We must take fate into our own hands!" (*Doua lozuri*, 2016)

Neither Lefter Popescu nor Sile or Pompiliu share the positivism of modernism. And, of course, the first question we ask

ourselves in this endeavour is related to the patterns of the era. If Western modernist spirit entails the confrontation of ideas from different areas of concern, the psychology, mathematics and sociology of the Romanian public space are not present in the debate areas of the literary or cinematographic characters' luck.

Caragiale's era

Democracy, trust in institutions, civic participation in the life of the citadel, societal models of Western modernism acquire a different meaning in Romanian Countries, in the century of Caragiale[17]. M. Lazăr (2002:198) asserts that in the nineteenth century, including during the times of prince-king Carol I, "the battle was fought between the incipient modern state and squires and other times between the squires and the lord or, in this case as well, the modern state was not identified with an impersonal institution that required a project, constancy and efficiency measures, but with a relationship of equality between the lord (the state) and the rest of the members of the political stage (party members, journalists, civil servants). The relationship itself represents the political elite's social and institutional perspective. Only in this context can we grasp the post 1859 founding democratic acts which were impulsive, binary (action-reaction) gestures. Any deed on the part of the lord is contested by the government, any reaction of the lord becomes undemocratic for the government and goes so far as to force newspapers to go out of print, to cancel political meetings and arrest the opposition". Albeit justified by the model of the 1789 French revolution or by the evocation of international treaties, radical and violent changes have always legitimized a certain political group and have been made possible due to the absence of a true, numerically significant civic involvement.

On January 1871, Carol I himself published a letter entitled "Whose fault is it?" in a German magazine ("Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung"). A. Pleșu (2012) discusses this letter and synthesizes the causes of societal failure mentioned by Carol I:

1) A psychological feature: Romanians do not acknowledge the hierarchies of modernism: they are a people "who does not wish to be ruled and yet is not capable of ruling itself".

2) A historical and social feature: there is an incurable fracture between the elites and the masses. The elites are emancipated, "detached", and ready to take on the new fashionable utopia, while the masses are characterized by backward conservatism. In other words, the elites experience inadequacy, they do not take into consideration the spirit of the place and the masses behave with reluctance, resentment, impulsion. The result is that the ruling elites force the country "to suddenly and directly shift from a despotic regime to the most liberal Constitution, employed by no other people in Europe". Yet the masses "cannot boast with possessing the citizen virtues required for a quasi-republican state formula".

Două lozuri, 1957

3) A political feature: the inflation of "party scheming". "No comment".

Lefter Popescu and his thought process document this immaturity of the state. Meritocracy, hierarchy, chance and risk are foreign in the context in which the socio-political models of the social servant are placed under the sign of instability and chronic personalization of the institutions of modernity. This is the manner in which we interpret Caragiale's words:

"Let me come to the station too, Mr. Turtureanu, to see the thief again! Mr. Turtureanu agrees only after his friend solemnly swears that he will not be violent again, he will not do anything to the arrested women. On their way, Mr. Popescu promises

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[17]Ion Luca Caragiale (1852-1912) was a Romanian playwright, short story writer, political commentator and journalist.

his friend that he will increase his part of the winning prize, from five to ten per cent if they find the tickets.

"I swear on my future and my honor! Mr. Turtureanu!"

Civil servant Popescu, police officer Turtureanu and captain Palade are representatives of the hierarchy of modernization in Romania. The trinity of authority is personalized here. Lefter will try to solve the problem of losing the lottery tickets by relying on his friendship with the representatives of the modern state.

The construction of these characters by Caragiale and, later on, by the producers of the film, illustrates Junimea group's theory of a form without substance. K. Hitchins (1998: 74) maintains:

"The main idea, founded on H. Spencer's evolutionary theory, was that the Romanian Principalities had entered too quickly and too blindly in the game of modernity, which gave rise to a fundamental disagreement between 'institutions and the social structure of contemporary Romania'". The proposed solution was the evolution of Romania through moral and cultural means, "while keeping the socio-economic structures untouched". Civil servant Lefter Popescu and his belief in the power of destiny indicate the fact that Popescu and Junimea – a possible cultural model that would have changed his way of thinking, although they go through the era together – did not have time for critical dialogue. Moreover, considering the destiny of Caragiale's work (Zarifopol, 1930, Cioculescu, 1940, Manolescu, 2002), it was proven that this type of humour that targets the forms without substance of the respective era has brought about conflicts and led to the author's fall into disgrace during his lifetime.

The 1950s

The 1950s are dominated by the implementation of the communist utopia, following the Soviet model. Romanian society is subordinated to the unique decision of the communist party. During this period, a twofold political "command" functioned: the subordination of financial, material, ideological and human means to this scope and the interpretation and subsequent deviations of the political leaders of the system (Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej). The only official document on the communist period,

"The Presidential Report" (2007) characterizes the respective period by means of this political terror and "total" and "permanent" control over both public and private life. Arendt, quoted in the Report, highlighted "the role of political police in the implementation of political repression and of concentration camps, which lead to the destruction of classes and middle class social categories as well as any other form of social solidarity, the atomization of society and the transformation of classes into 'masses'". A Romanian analysis, quoted in the same report (Ş. Rădulescu Zoner, 1995) basically reiterates the same main characteristics. The dictatorship of PMR, then of PCR (after 1965) was constructed after the Soviet model and was enshrined in all Constitutions between 1948 and 1989. Historical political parties were banned and outlawed, as well as all organizations which kept alive the possibility of opposition with respect to communist despotism. Automatically, the destruction of civil society occurs and so does the forced homogenization of the population through atomization and the disappearance of any constitutional guarantees of individual freedom by means of generalized repression and the central role of the secret police (the Securitate). Under these conditions any cultural product becomes an instrument of propaganda and undergoes control by means of censorship (The General Direction of the Press and of Printed Works on ways of informing).

The film *Doua loturi* depicts economic and social situations that are contrary to the communist order: the market economy and the middle-class milieu. The 1950s imposed a rigid and authoritarian model, one that was ultra-centralized by the planned economy. Also, middle class elites constituted a negative model.

Caragiale's "Doua loturi" functioned in a time dominated by censorship and manipulation. Literature and film researches of the time (Sava, 1999, and especially Mitchievici, 2014 and 2016) highlighted the fact that Caragiale's oeuvre was ideologically instrumentalized. The reasons for this resided not only in its notoriety, but mainly in the fact that the ideological institutions of the period needed support in order to depict the life of the middle class in a bad light. The first operation was to remove the Ion Luca Caragiale critical editions by Zarifopol and Cioculescu from libraries, second-hand bookshops and bookstores and then to edit the more popular, massively cosmeticized

editions. Thus censored, Caragiale became a platform for reinterpreting the relevance of great classics and realism in the literature of the new regime. Mitchievici reminds the readers that the adequate formula that turned Caragiale's works into anti-middle class propaganda was that of "critical realism". In this age, Caragiale became "a brother in arms" on the author's 1952 centenary (Purcăruş, 2013). In Soviet Russia, Tolstoy, Gogol, Turgenev (except Dostoyevsky) went through a similar process, and have all resonated with it as their works were reinterpreted by the censorship apparatus. Thus, Maxim Gorki took centre stage and became the officially accepted literary model. Caragiale, Eminescu, Creangă underwent the same process and they became the realist-critic cornerstone for the development of socialist-realist literature. They were reworked, reinterpreted and the humanist and even socialist dimensions of their work were discovered. In 1957, Caragiale was screened due to the fact that all that was humour and irony directed at the middle class, at the forms without substance, served the communist party, becoming a form of anti-bourgeois satire. The belief in fate and alienation at the end of Lefter Popescu's film became, in 1957, the negative form labelled as unworthy of being observed in communist society.

The socio-consumerist order

The dialogue between the characters of *Două lozuri* is not far from the one of "Două loturi". Civil servants Lefter Popescu and Pompiliu have the same conspiracy theories. The cultural involution/stagnation is obvious. In this context, stereotypical representations are much more present in 2017 than at the end of the nineteenth century and this detail is once again placed in opposition to the official position of the characters who are agents of modernity, socio-cultural models of a shift in mentality. The 2017 film dialogues are illustrative in this respect:

"Pompiliu: What do you mean put the money in the bank? And let the Jews take it? The betting mob! Do you know what is the first rigged game in history? The one with Jesus! The Romans and the Jews, when they sold him!"

"Pompilu: Watch out, man, the lottery can rip you off! Do you think they don't know what numbers will be drawn? How do you explain the fact that those who win, win only on Easter or Christmas?"

"He was Romanian and his name was Nicu Teslea! And he was confiscated by the Americans, like any other intelligent South-Eastern European man".

"This can't be a coincidence. So two fellows visited the guy who won the lottery…!! In a white car, pay attention, a white car with a Bucharest licence place. The secret services are involved!"

Consider the communism-capitalism transition, the development of the business milieu, the financial and European openness of Romania, the informational openness via the internet, consumerism and its crisis. These are only a few of the economic-financial trends of post 1989 Romania that do not seem to have had an effect on Pompiliu. There is no difference between Lefter and Pompiliu:

"This is a gimmick, you know! I'll teach you to resort to infamy ever again and to mock people because this is exploitation and you cannot get enough of it. Every honest man wastes his sweat believing blindly in your whims and Jewish dishonesty with the stock exchange. We are the ones who are stupid because we don't learn once and for all, you know, we don't rebel…yes! Let's rebel! Just so you know: stupid! Stupid! Stupid!"

In fact, what is the socio-financial history lived through and inherited by Pompiliu to make him reach the stereotypes he mentions? If the institutionalized personalization of the nineteenth century seemed to be incipient, the researchers of Romania's post 1989 socio-economic development show that the phenomenon was generalized precisely at the moment of a new societal start.

S. Brucan (1996:79) paints the picture of post-revolutionary "wild capitalism": "entrepreneurs, merchants, patrons, commercial agents, businessmen, gold diggers pulled forth with forceps. The middle class is not born with legal papers. Oftentimes, they resort to gimmicks, illegal actions, falsehood and bribery". (1996:85)

In 1995, the majority of those who surpassed the level of a decent living (300 dollars) belonged to the group of state dignitaries – the president, the prime minister, senators, deputies, generals, magistrates, leaders of the autonomous administration and

directors of great enterprises, patrons, shareholders, bank managers, committee members of adm, aga, fps, fpp. The black economy represented more than 38% of the GDP (1996:87). The political field, with access to information and resources, had become part of a process that created, in a five year period, the billionaires of Romania. S. Brucan creates the recipe for success and brings forth nominalizations:

"The class of capitalists was formed at the expense of the state, the privatization of equipment and of production nipped at state property". In between these frames, S. Brucan identifies various operating forms. On the "corridor of directocracy there was a political symbiosis between state and party in Ceaușescu's time and it was replaced by an economic symbiosis between state and the private sector". "The Cepex Corridor" was filled with relatives of those in CEPEX (for example, Ion Dincă imposed his own relatives as primary figures in Badea-Computerland, Gabriel Popoviciu-electric machines). "The export-import corridor" enters the world market in 1980 (1996:108).

"With commission as only source of income and with long time connections in the area of foreign capital as advantages, this corridor establishes trading firms by profiting by the gaps in the system and promoting his own products."

"The diaspora corridor" finds a representative in Ion Țiriac. He returns to the country and puts the basis of a financial empire in the true sense of the word (bank, automobile agency, press agency, TV, etc.). "The Selfmademan corridor" has the following representatives: Gelu Tofan, who rose from being a simple worker at Danubiana factory to private distributor of its products. "The financial corridor" belongs to the ones who held positions in the communist financial and banking sector and become the directors of a few private banks. In this case, S. Brucan points to the recapitalization system of a bank. Basically, these representatives did not have a capital; instead, they co-opted state companies in a shareholding regime, thus creating a false transactional capital. The 1995-1996 bankruptcy is due to the irresponsible manipulation of money and giving away too many credits.

S. Brucan highlights the fact that "the symbiosis between political power and financial capital is one of the main features of the transition period. (…) The strength with which this symbiosis defends itself is evinced by the legislative attempts of separation that were debated and rejected in Parliament. The deputies and the senators wish to maintain positions in AGA, while businessmen belong to the president's or the prime minister's circles." (1996:124-128).

In a recent analysis, Bogdan Murgescu (2010:465) paints an ampler picture of the economic circuits: "The communist heritage created a situation in which the overwhelming majority of economic establishments were incapable of keeping pace with the international competition and were oftentimes inefficient even in the strict context of Romanian economy. To this were added the absence of institutions and legislation, "the economic de-alphabetization" of society (knowing the instruments and being conscious about the economic correlations of micro and macroeconomy. One should also not neglect the great expectations with which the victory of the Revolution was invested."

If, at the outset, the political leaders of 1989 did not understand the inflationary and destabilizing potential of socialist businesses, subsequently there followed a series of slow reformist decisions abiding by the technocracy of businesses. B. Murgescu borrows a concept from V. Pasti, "prey economy", in order to describe the phenomena of primitive capital accumulation as well as that of forming new economic and political elites, with roots among the old party and state activists, and members of Ceaușescu's Securitate (2010:467). All these facts led to a series of years marked by severe economic recession, an economic fallout greater than in the rest of ex-communist countries. Disorder, as well as the lack of reforms in the institutional systems, have led to strong rejections of foreign capital. It is only after 1996 that a slow implementation of reforms is achieved under the supervision of the Monetary Council. The collapse of the banking system, fraud scandals, social revolts, the delays in implementing property laws functioned in the context of the lack of experience coupled with the tendency of local authorities to profit from their position of power (B. Murgescu, 2010:470). Only as late as 1999 does an economic relaunch take place, when the E.U. decides to accept Romania within its ranks.

Practically, Romania has reformed itself late and by external impulse, having to meet adherence imperatives, especially through foreign investors who preferred strategic areas of the economy (fuel, steel, banks etc.). Social

reality, under these conditions, indicated a massive migration of the work force (prior to 2002 there were 2 million Romanians living in foreign countries). The year 2008 brings about economic crisis and unpopular political measures (B. Murgescu, 2010:478), based on inefficient state institutions.

All these cleavages and delays in reforms were determined, in S. Brucan, V. Pasti and B. Murgescu's opinions, by the political class. In "The Mobility of Elites in Twentieth Century Romania", the first aspect discussed by the authors is "the persistence of the nomenclature during the December Revolution" (2008:310) and, with the exception of 1996-2000, of the various forms of continuity of these conservative political elites.

Pompiliu, who lacks these explanations, prefers the conclusions offered by trials. Pompiliu summarizes the whole financial-political adventure of the post-Revolution years using false syllogisms and stereotypes. He is a twentieth century version of Lefter Popescu. They are both false prophets of their own social condition.

Vice-versa

The formula for playing the lottery and changing one's fate is reiterated in different epochs under the process of "vice-versa":

"It's a simple thing. The tickets were bought with money that was borrowed, out of superstition, from captain Pandele because a lot of people had told him to play with borrowed money when he kept complaining that he was out of luck… and he agreed and gave his word in front of others, that if he happened to win, he would give ten per cent to the captain." (Două loturi, 1890, 1952)

"Sile: You pick the numbers and I pay! If you guess correctly, we'll split the prize fifty-fifty!

Dinel: But you buy the ticket!

Sile: For the ticket, Ion! Chip in 2 lei!

Pompiliu: Do what? Didn't I give you money last week too? Have you forgotten? I haven't!

Sile: You told me to bet 80 lei on PSG and I lost!

Pompiliu: What do you want me to do?

Sile: Who paid for the all the beers last night at the non-stop tavern?

Pompiliu: All right, I'll give you the money! I'll make a note of it next time!

Sile: Damn cheapskate!

Pompiliu: Damn thief!" (*Două lozuri*, 2016)

Beyond its value of humour generating mechanism, "vice-versa" represents, from the perspective of the participants, a "mathematical process" of cheating fate and the Gods, as well as an evasion from the given social milieu.

From a modern point of view, "vice-versa" represents "splitting the prize", as well as "social solidarity". In Western societies, risk and "social solidarity" are positivist formulas by which insurance societies create another mental state for the player and "social solidarity" itself creates a moral formula for the game of chance. Disadvantaged social categories benefit from this social virus. In the Popescu-Dinel case, which is built on the formula of vice-versa, we are dealing with a major shift in emphasis. For the heroes of the storyline perpetuated from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century, "vice-versa" means the formula for changing the status by means of which risk and "social solidarity" are consummated within the gambling trio. Hence, from I.L. Caragiale to Paul Negoescu, Western institutions were pestered, personalized and satirized. The sharing of the risk and the "social solidarity" are present within the gambling trios (Popescu-Palade-Turtureanu and Sinel-Pompiliu-Sile) both initially (vice-versa Popescu-Pompiliu know that they have bad luck and therefore their friends pay for them) and at the end (the percental sharing of the prize). The trios share the risk and the rewards, ignoring both experience and an entire societal history .

Conclusions

1. Two films produced in periods so distant from each other reproduce a socio-political system that is lodged in the same project and satirize the forms without substance that are prisoners of modernity. Bergson (1900) considered that this inflexibility contained an essential mechanism for generating humour:

"Beyond actions and attitudes that are automatically punished by their natural consequences, there remains a certain inflexibility of the body, of the mind and of the character that society would like to eliminate to obtain a greater elasticity and a better sociability of its members. This inflexibility is the comic, laughter is the punishment."

2. Perceived as a conflictual element and interpreted from a communist perspective,

Caragiale's humour finds a certain type of temperance in the 2016 interpretation, in Paul Negoescu's plot. The ambiguous ending of the short story (1890) and film (1952) interprets gambling as a form of individual and social alienation. Fate has stricken:

"If I were one of those authors of good self-esteem and that are very well respected by others, I would end my story in this manner…

...Many years passed.

Eventually, those who visited Ţigăneşti monastery could see a small old lady there who was dark-skinned, tall and dry like a saint, with a big hairy moll above her left eyebrow and ecstatic look on her face. One sole gesture somehow hinted at the fact that underneath her clear forehead, a displaced mind was glistening: all day long, madam Elefteria would pick up pieces of glass, God knows from where.

At the same time, there, in the distance, in the bustling chaos of Bucharest, passers-by could see an old man walking calmly, with the same serenity that the sea when it is eventually appeased and wishes to rest after the whirl of a furious hurricane. The old man routinely took walks around the firefighter Observatory from the Pache Boulevard bifurcation, always whispering, in a mild voice, the same word: "vice-versa!...

But…because I am not one of those authors, I prefer to tell it to you straight: after the scandal with the banker, I don't know what happened to my heroes."

The ending of Paul Negoescu's film represents a way of perpetually restarting the game ad infinitum. The drama of gambling bad luck unravels within the Sile-Pompiliu-Dinel trio. After he loses the ticket for the first time, Dinel sticks it on the refrigerator for the second. The individual has the chance to escape his own social condition (he wins the lottery ticket), but is the prisoner of his own human condition (at the symbolic urge of Pompiliu, Dinel sticks the lottery ticket on the fridge, making it difficult for it to be presented as evidence to the representatives of the law). In this manner, by means of vice-versa, humour becomes a form of equilibrium for the audience of the film. N. Carroll (2014:50) defines humour as "a state of mind in which we perceive unsuitability in a manner which does not induce anxiety". The 1952 film aimed at giving the audience of the time anxiety when faced with the moment of the middle-class' loss. Humour does not solve our problems; instead, it places them in a state of hovering, of "dialogical" equilibrium. The ending of the 2016 film in which Pompiliu and Dinel, as well as the latter's wife, try to unstick the lottery ticket from the refrigerator provides such a dialogue. The lottery ticket is still surrounded by the conspiracy theories and the stereotypes of a society that is distant from modernity, but humour reaches its purpose. The characters are engaged in a conversation with their own condition.

Louă lozuri, 2016

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Antonioni and Conrad

Michel AROUIMI[18], Ph.D
Université du Littoral Côte d'Opale –. ULCO. France

Abstract: Michelangelo Antonioni wrote some short stories, published in a booklet, vainly waiting for the opportunity to make films after them. In one of these texts, around 1969, Antonioni speaks of his "passion for Conrad". Was he conscious of the influence of Conrad in some other film projects? The enigmas of *Heart of Darkness* seem to relive in one of these short stories. Not less obviously, the terrible drama of *The Secret Agent* seems to be "interpreted" in one or two other stories. If these novels of Conrad are enigmatic, the film projects of Conrad seem to enlighten these enigmas.

Keywords: *Michelangelo Antonioni, Joseph Conrad, terrorism*

Michelangelo Antonioni is well-known for his films. Some of them were never shot, for unspecified reasons. Antonioni just wrote some short stories, vainly waiting for the opportunity to make films. In one of these texts marvellously written, Antonioni speaks of his passion for Conrad. The film-maker seems to be aware of the influence of Conrad

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(*Heart of Darkness*, *The secret agent*) in his other film projects.

Antonioni clearly evokes his "passion for Conrad" around 1969 in "Four Men at Sea", a film project inspired by a piece of news involving three men drifting on a boat without anything to eat or drink while a fourth, the boat owner, has mysteriously disappeared. To the probable death of this man labouring under threat of murder, the film-maker prefers the idea that he hid on his own boat and then preferred not to reveal his existence when the boat had been found. Antonioni declared that "this Conradian impression of an open sea" appealed to him – and it gave him the idea of an "homage to Conrad"[19]. We'll see that other film projects were more sophisticated homages to Conrad, but in this text already the film-maker shares his viewpoint: "Conrad was right – one is a sailor or one is not. But he was right seventy years ago. Today things are no longer as clear as they were."

The name of one of the characters in this fiction, Towers ("James Towers"), is an obvious reminiscence of "Tower", the name of the former owner of the mysterious volume of nautical lore discovered by Marlow right in the middle of *Heart of Darkness* (Conrad writes these words: "a man Tower, Towson—such a name"…) The boat involved, "The Irene", this "corpse floating on a lurid sea as worn out as itself", evokes the boats in other narratives by Conrad.

The three fellows from the news item are called "stupid and cowardly" in the film project. Those are the terms used by Conrad when he comments on humankind, so violence-prone that it deserves "general extermination."[20] However, in Antonioni's scenario, this feeling gives way to a spiritual elevation in the victim when he comes across his tormentors again and feels no hate towards

them, or desire to revenge, content as he is with observing them from afar.

Antonioni, still in "Four Men at Sea," goes as far as mentioning Dr. Samuel Smiles, a writer "whom Conrad had read and reread in the course of his long voyages."[21] Antonioni himself has "read and reread" Conrad and, although his state of general unease (as dramatized in "Beyond the Clouds") is still relevant today, "things are no longer as clear as they were"…

The name of "James Tower", in "Beyond the clouds", echoes to "Tower", the owner of the mysterious book found by Marlow in *Heart of Darkness*: "a man Tower, Towson—some such name"[22]. The forename "James" in these lines of Antonioni seems to echo the words of Conrad: "a man […] such a name"… But the reading of other film projects of Antonioni can make us think of *The secret agent*. The influence of *The Secret Agent* in contemporary culture is vividly illustrated by its film adaptations, so frequently commented on by Conrad specialists. It seems nonetheless that Conrad's symbolism, notably in *The Secret Agent*, a symbolism built up by all the details that suggest the mythical dimension of the reported drama, is not actually recreated in the films,[23] stuck as they are to the events narrated in the novel. The symbolic patterns are much better infused with new life in the abortive scenarios of Michelangelo Antonioni, whose poetic talent as a writer is indeed on a par with his better-known genius as a film-maker.

The first scenario written in *Quel bowling sul Tevere*, "Beyond the Clouds," can indeed be read as a transposition of *The Secret Agent*, with a focalization on the enigmatic violence of Stevie's sacrifice. But it is in one of the following scenarios, "Two Telegrams," that the nervous fit of a feminine character

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[19] Michelangelo Antonioni, *Un bowling sur le Tibre* [*Quel Bowling sul Tevere*], Paris : Images Modernes, 2004 [1976, 1985], p. 39. (My own translation of the French edition: I do not read italian, and appreciate the moderate translation of Sibylle Zavriew: *Quatre hommes en mer*, p.38-45)

[20] In a letter written to his friend R.B. Cunningham Graham (the 8th feb. 1899), Conrad writes *in French*: «L'homme est un animal méchant. Sa méchanceté doit être organisée. La société est essentiellement criminelle —ou elle n'existerait pas. C'est l'égoïsme qui sauve tout—tout ce que nous abhorrons et tout ce que nous aimons […]. Voilà pourquoi je respecte les extrêmes anarchistes. Je souhaite l'extermination générale. —Très bien. […] Moi je regarde l'avenir du fond d'un passé très noir et je ne trouve rien qui m'est permis hormis la fidélité à […] une idée sans avenir. […] Cette lettre est incohérente comme mon existence mais la logique suprême y est pourtant— la logique qui mène à la folie.» (Joseph Conrad, *Collected Letters*, ed. L. Davies, Cambridge University Press, 2015, p. 114.) These French sentences suggest a problematic analogy between the mind of Conrad and the ideas of the anarchist characters in *The secret agent*…

[21] Antonioni, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

[22] Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, Penguin Books, 1995, p. 65.

[23] The version of Alfred Hitchcock (1936), or, more recently, the adaptation of Christopher Hampton (1997).

suddenly tempted to murder her fellow humans seems to replay Winnie's drama, when the latter murders her husband for having provoked the death of her brother. In "Beyond the Clouds", the evocation of the crash of a plane whose seven passengers were torn to bits in the explosion contains details that invoke poor Stevie's remains. In "Two Telegrams", the heroine is staged in the upper stories of a skyscraper swaying in the wind, which makes her feel slightly dizzy." From one story to the next (or from one scenario to the next), Antonioni could be seen as working at an interpretation of the murderous vertigo of Winnie in *The Secret Agent.* And if the film-maker follows in the steps of his literary master, that is probably because of the premonitory character of *The Secret Agent* with respect to present-day terrorism; Antonioni felt the premonition as well, if we are to believe other texts by him. Did he not declare, in an interview published in 1967: "I make films instinctively, with my guts more than with my brain."?[24]

Broaching the theme of "the death of God" in his "Writings*"* (*Fare un film è per me vivere*), Antonioni brushes by Hemingway before declaring in 1961: "When I behold nature, when I observe the sky . . . the colours of insects . . . the stars, I don't feel a need for God. Perhaps when I am no longer able to observe and marvel, I'll no longer believe in anything – and then perhaps I'll be able to feel the need for something else. But I don't know what."[25]

Yet one wonders what Antonioni believes in while making this confession, which goes on as follows: "All I know is that we are being crushed by meaningless, worn-out junk – habits, customs . . . now dead, outdated." That contempt for social uses is not irreconcilable, just as Conrad's, involving a consciousness of the mystery that irradiates the forms of creation – a mystery that is betrayed more than reflected in religious dogmas. In 1961, the film-maker was still claiming: "We live with old moral codes, superannuated myths, worn-out conventions. And we know they are old and outdated, and yet we respect them." These myths find a graphic expression in the "circles" drawn by Stevie in *The Secret Agent*. As to the implied author's irony towards them, it finds its limits in the more or less circular pattern *drawn* by their repeated occurrence…

And yet, not Conrad, but Borges is evoked by Antonioni at the outset of another film project entitled "The Scuffle": "Reading Borges, I come across a journalistic anecdote, some quarrel between Muslims and Hindus... That reminds me of a news item... something that happened in Rome. Some hundred-people had a fight and no one ever knew why. Since they were not religious fanatics, the spark that lit the powder keg must have been of a different order... I can see them, those fanatics. They exchange blows... not knowing why, just being moved by a secret violence that needs no justification."[26]

That "secret violence" could be a key to the "horror" that overshadows the enigmas of *Heart of Darkness*. The recourse to Borges (who in my eyes is reduced by his opportunistic practices to the status of a puppeteer) is not as relevant as the homage to Conrad, which is not confined to the maritime setting of "Four Men at Sea." In "Beyond the Clouds", the first narrative of the volume, the Conrad hallmark can be traced back to *The Secret Agent.*

In "Beyond the Clouds," Antonioni starts with the evocation of a discarded film project whose setting was Central Asia and which gave him the idea of another possible film, whose six characters he portrays. One is a woman who has a passion for Russian-bred horses, one is a national deputy in his forties who took part in the trial of the man who assassinated his lover – neither has much to do with *The Secret Agent*, even though the Russian theme and the deputy's drama do ring a bell. (The deputy's embarrassment evokes a similar one in Verloc, who was the cause of his wife's brother's death.) But another character in the scenario, the mistress of a writer, had a diary book that, when found among the debris of the plane, evokes the

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[24] Michelangelo Antonioni, *Ecrits*, Paris : Images Modernes, 2003, p. 86. (French translation of *Fare un film è per me vivere*, 1991&1992.)

[25] *Ibid.*, p.79.

[26] Antonioni, *Ce bowling sur le Tibre*, p. 29.

remains of Stevie's exploded body: "It was found intact in a clump of clover with that useless address . . . written in block letters."[27] One is reminded of the address of the Verlocs on the tag of Stevie's coat, a shred of which was found among the greenery. Antonioni writes: "unrecognizable remains, scattered in the grass... shreds, mashed-up flesh, nothing one could salvage." The horrible detail of the "two fingers [a man's] hanging from part of a hand and clutching a small coffee spoon in white plastic" seems to bring together the death of Stevie and that of Verloc's, a man who was fond of meat.

No less evocative is the ambiguous reaction of the spectators towards the disaster: a *carabiniere* and a priest, relayed by a layman. Their successive evocations are the pretext for an endlessly varied poetic play on opposites, in their most basic forms: left/right, rich/poor, etc. And even, quote, "a fragment of a bag found at the edge of the wood – crocodile lined with boar skin."[28] Boar and crocodile! a monstrous pairing whose self-critical value applies both to Antonioni's and to Conrad's art. Not to mention Rimbaud's. (I have shown[29] elsewhere what the author of *Heart of Darkness* owes to Rimbaud's poetic experience, an object of fascination for Conrad in 1899.) However that may be, the gaze that this *carabiniere* "directs towards the forest" can evoke Marlow's in the vegetal setting of *Heart of Darkness*: a "high plateau . . . surrounded by woods, very green," among "the black shadows", facing "the open vista to the sea"…

The ambiguity of the "circles" drawn by Stevie in *The Secret Agent* – metaphysical ambiguity or/and catharsis of some mental disorder sharpened by the violence of the outer world – such an ambiguity finds a second life in "Beyond the Clouds." The evocations of "science" in relation with certain air passengers, together with the numerical accounts linked to their material preoccupations or to the very circumstances of the crash, tend to obliterate the metaphysical aspirations foreshadowed in the apparition and

disappearance of the priest. The *carabiniere* is then left "alone", soon to be paired up with a civilian, in an ephemeral union: "When looking at death, all men are one man." Now it is that the metaphysical horizon of this text takes shape. "A diminutive lump of earth" in which "shreds [of] flesh" are scattered." These details are the poetic expression of the multiple being resolved into the One. Indeed, this clod is seen as a "lump of earth without a name and in which goes on the endless game whose understanding is forbidden to men."

A bit earlier on, the implicit identification of the young *carabiniere* with storms announces that poetic opening which gloriously ignore the difference between space and time: "He is a young man coming from the North, like the storms of this day." In the last pages of this narrative, Antonioni's pen, usually so terse and precise, is infiltrated by a sort of vertigo finding its source in the "unknown quantity" that haunts palpable reality. Could the phrase, under Antonioni's pen, be a reminiscence of Rimbaud's "quantity of unknown that is awakening... in the universal soul" – a sentence to be found in his second letter "from the seer", dated May 15th, 1871? Antonioni is still more at one with Conrad in that imaginable fascination for Rimbaud. One can wonder whether the physical tortures demanded by Rimbaud to attain that goal might find off-key expression in the plane crash.

Though the evocation of "the astronomers", among other representatives of the science of the heavens, is a little far from the Greenwich observatory in *The Secret Agent*, Antonioni does revisit the mystery of Stevie's circles, in this passage, when he evokes the "fragments of primordial matter caught up in an energy circle," a circle identified with "the horizon of events," "a line cutting off our world from the gravitational range of the black hole", one among all the "black holes" detected by science and associated by the civilian, in his dialogue with the narrator, to the "cosmic rays . . .

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[27] *Ibid.*, p. 12 (whole story: p. 9-15). We can think of the first evocations of Stevie's death in *The secret agent*: "a dreadful black hole belching horrible fumes choked with ghastly rubbish of smashed brickwork and mutilated corpses. […] Enormous hole in the ground under a tree filled with smashed roots and broken branches. All around fragments of a man's body blown to pieces. That's all." (Joseph Conrad, *The secret agent*, London: Wordsworth Classics, 1993, p. 57, 59.)

[28] Antonioni, *Ce bowling sur le Tibre*, p. 13.

[29] Michel Arouimi, "Rimbaud : une hantise de Conrad", *Cahiers de l'Herne* [Conrad], Paris : Editions de l'Herne, 2014, p. 187-189. (See also M. Arouimi, "Rimbaud au cœur des Ténèbres", *L'Époque Conradienne,* 28, 2002, p. 61-77.

interstellar molecules . . . invisible objects that curb space and fold time"[30]…

Are the shredded chunks of flesh scattered "within a sixty-meter radius" akin to those molecules involved in the mysterious law that seems to have played a part in the crash? Antonioni's vision, like Conrad's before, maps out the oscillating line separating a hypothetical determination at work in the heavens from the absurdity of life, an absurdity expressed or concealed by these "black holes", if "there is... nothing."

When contemplating the possible madness of the pilot, whose psychological make-up is as tormented as that of the passengers, Antonioni seems to sense the forms that terrorism (more clearly dealt with in *The Secret Agent*) has taken on nowadays. That impression is corroborated by the contents of the next scenario, "Two Telegrams," only separated from the first one by a very short, three-sentence text entitled "Antarctic" and whose ecological concern offers another kind of premonition.

A woman, married, but free, too much so, just like Winnie in *The Secret Agent*, is torn apart by her hatred of humankind. Wishing to get better, she finds a job in an office, and there receives a telegram from her husband. A divorce petition, which stuns her. One glance through the windows of the skyscraper she is in makes her discover, in the neighbouring building, a man who is a stranger to her, but with whom she succeeds in establishing contact by sending him a telegram dictated on the spot: "one sentence, with the word *immediately*."[31] Soon after, the man, with his eyes fixed on her, drops the telegram he has just read into the emptiness between their buildings. That gesture, which crystalizes the meaninglessness of her life, prompts her to seize the scissors that had earlier been put near the first telegram. Now hearing footsteps behind the door, she is ready to strike – "no matter whom."[32]

To repeat. The evocation of Borges in "Two Telegrams", in the context of that woman's schizophrenia, seems to conceal an "homage" towards the author of *The Secret Agent*. Before taking that office job, the flighty wife had fallen in love with a thirteen-year old boy, the son of one of her lady friends, and she had initiated him to sexual life before offering herself to his father. That situation appears to be a psychanalytical interpretation of that of Winnie who, passionately attached to her younger brother, has married a man who could protect this child from the vicissitudes of life. Indeed, Winnie's husband inspires pity more than condemnation. As to the husband of the heroine in "Two Telegrams", he has no active role in the scenario and is still less blameable; he had probably put up with his wife's wild escapades for a long time before compelling her to a divorce. This scenario seems to confuse the respective roles of Winnie and Verloc in a memorial *sfumato* that could be an interpretation of the mirror effects suggested by Conrad between the two, notably before the murder of Verloc by his wife.

Winnie's thoughts, when she looks back on the years lost in the company of that husband, find a kind of synthesis in those of this woman dwelling "on the long provocation that her life has been, that the others have been, those jealous keepers of absolute indifference." The plural in "others" announces the plurality of people she is ready to strike, "Several," by the end of the text. In her eyes, those strangers are as many representatives (though innocent) of the matrimonial disengagement of her husband (himself being possibly aware of her past misconduct).

However, the first telegram, opened "with a pair of scissors," laid – unread – on the table by this woman, and towards which a sunbeam is now crawling, is akin to the newspaper that revealed Stevie's death – while the scissors equate Winnie's fatal knife, especially when "one sees the woman mechanically grasp the pair of scissors,"[33] in order to strike anybody with it, in the "icy calm" that has characterized her since the beginning of the scene. We are reminded of the sepulchral aspect of Winnie, just as icy, marble-like. "Grabbing hold of the scissors with both hands, the woman raises her arms, ready to strike." (One could even add that the short scene in which, after having read the telegram, the woman "goes downstairs for petrol" works as a substitute for the domestic preoccupations that seem to keep Winnie busy.)

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[30] Antonioni, *Ce bowling sur le Tibre*, p. 14.

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 20 (*Deux télégrammes*, p. 17-21).

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

[33]*Ibid.*, p. 18.

On the other hand, this woman's job, which tallies with her B.A. in chemistry, is an echo from the "Professor" in *The Secret Agent*, that inventor of explosives who himself owes his nickname to his former job in a chemistry lab. And one may also be reminded of Mr. Ossipon, a deceptive sheet anchor for Winnie, when the woman in "Two Telegrams" catches sight of "the shadow of a man... within the rectangle of a window in the neighbouring skyscraper." This rectangle, like the "sharp, angular city-scape"[34] visible from her window, is in the image of her husband's "hard" forehead[35], a feature she is fond of and which, by a strange paradox, recurs in the descriptive evocation of the scissors. This is a renewed version of a head-to-tail figure that shapes many key motifs in Conrad's narrative.

Antonioni's art culminates in a fantasized explosion of the whole setting orchestrated from the switches of a "violent" lamp and of the ceiling lights. "They are lights that circumscribe precise zones. When one is turned on, the corresponding sector is projected on the window pane and beyond, outside. It is as if the woman was throwing out, bit by bit, the office and its window. Herself included."[36] Following that sequence, the "thirteen bell strokes" of the phone call that did not reach the stranger evoke the bomb or bombs that are supposed to home in on him. But the whole skyscraper, together with the "cone of violent light" that rends "the black surface of the table," are images of that self-triggered explosion which, with its prophetic traits, can be read as a concentrate of the aesthetics of *Heart of Darkness*.

Whatever may be the (improbable) relation between the "bits" of the office and those of Stevie's body, these bits evoke those of the victims of the plane crash in "Beyond the Clouds." We are thus led to understand why Antonioni renounced the shooting of "Two Telegrams," "for political reasons too," because the main character was "unacceptable"[37], though aesthetically valid… Antonioni does not out-Conrad Conrad, who was inclined, in his more sombre moods, to "wish for general extermination."[38] In the

heart of that woman, "all hate for her husband dissolves while, in its stead... slowly rises... a new feeling, a new hate, a kind of generalized hate that pleases her more."

In that scenario, the reference to "an Andersen tale,"[39] in connection with "the shadow of a man that passes to and fro within the rectangle of a window in the neighbouring skyscraper," suggests the haunting power of cultural models. But the textual quality of that sentence mainly resides in the movement "to and fro", which embodies a contradiction materialized as well by the "rectangle" of the window, to mention only two of the details working to the same end. Ever since her prime as a rich young woman brought up in the country, the "same reasons" have made this woman "happy and unhappy." Once married, she "contradicts" by her poses sentiments that she is not aware she feels. Such psychological involutions are the subject of a famous allegory in the descriptive evocation of the cliff in *Heart of Darkness*.

In this light can be interpreted the allusions to the life and the death of anyone but oneself that are to be found at the two extremities of this scenario – from the idea of having sexual relations with the first person that comes along, to the project of murdering "[N]o matter whom. Just one of them."

The broad, firm forehead of her husband, which has exerted a long-standing appeal on this woman, can be seen as an image of the hyper-angular civilization that reaches in him a mute culmination. But the feelings that this woman "hides… disguises and, in the very process... contradicts," are not less eloquent. As an illustration of that, we can develop the metaphorical value of the telegram, a written speech-act, solar and blunt, and whose trajectory suggests both transcendence and its opposite: "The telegram manages to escape from the whirlwind… into a corner, between one building and another; from there, it is sucked upwards, and then again downwards: splashed with neon light [the light that relays the sunbeams on the table where the telegram was first laid down], it flies away with a

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[34] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

[38] See note 2.

[39] Antonioni, *Ce bowling sur le Tibre, op. cit.*, p. 20.

rustle. All the physical laws of the outside world seem to concentrate their fury on it."[40] As to the *inside* space, it is far from bringing any reassurance; the office in the skyscraper is depicted as a time bomb.

As it happens, this passage in "Two Telegrams" ends on the following sentence (I quote): "She wants to hear the imperceptible noise of the telegram touching ground and that of the garbage truck that immediately carries it away." This auditory rendering of the relation between the Soft and the Blunt is nonetheless the counterfeit version of the metaphysical principle whose tragical blurring in today's culture is pointed out by Antonioni in this text — as it would have been in the film. (The relation between the Soft end the Blunt (or other names) is supposed to define the divine knowledge, in some religious tradition(s);

Antonioni does not refer to them, despite the unconscious memory of some biblical myths in his films[41]. This metaphysical intuition (and its failure) is reflected by the female character as well: she "opens her handbag, closes it again, opens it again," a little before the vision of the "thousands of windows that never open." Of course, those details, typical of the aesthetics developed by Antonioni in his films, owe nothing, probably, to this or that novel by Conrad, in spite of equivalent details to be found in the novels. (Many details of the setting in *L'eclisse* could be compared to visual details of *Heart of darkness*.) But these underlined details help us feel the artistic affinity between the film-maker and the novel-writer, the former paying discreet "homages" to the latter.

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[40] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

[41] Abraham for exemple, in *L'Eclisse* (1962), as I have tried to show in a short study, in my book: *La métaphysique au cinéma*, Paris: Orizons (2016), in the first chapter "Antonioni: LaBourse en guise de temple", p. 13-34.

Negoescu's Characters

Professor Doina RUŞTI[42]

National University of Drama and Film

"I.L. Caragiale" (UNATC), Bucharest

Abstract: *Două lozuri* (*Two lottery tickets)* by Paul Negoescu was considered a most successful Romanian film.

The main quality of the film revolves around the characters. Negoescu dares to return to the poignant character, by using the same dramaturgical, Molieresque technique, but employing state-of-the-art tools. Pompiliu, (the intellectual) is an elaborate character, a neoChekovian construction.

Key words: *Două lozuri*, Paul Negoescu, IL. Caragiale, comedy, character film

Introduction

Paul Negoescu[43] can be considered the leader of a generation of film-makers completely freed from any complexes. If this "new wave" (Mungiu, Puiu, Mitulescu etc.) managed to pave the way to Europe by enforcing a certain type of realism, the current generation, much calmer, with European cultural knowledge, denies being identified as a tight group. Negoescu initiates the author film,

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[42]Professor Doina Ruşti (National University of Theatre and Film, 'I.L. Caragiale' Bucuresti) is a specialist in Symbology, having the domain of research universal history of culture and civilization. doina@doinarusti.com
Books/articles (selectively):
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[43] Paul Neogescu (b.1984) is a Romanian Film Director, PhD.c & Asist. Professor at the National University of Theater and Film, "IL Caragiale", Bucharest
Movies: *Two Lottery Tickets, A Month In Thailand, Derby, Renovation, Scurtă plimbare cu maşina, Examen, Târziu, Horizon*.
Awards: Best Film, Monte-Carlo Comedy Film Festival, 2017; Best Comedy Feature - Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival, US, 2016; Special Mention of the Jury at the Zurich Film Festival, 2016. FIPRESCI Prize, Sofia International Film Festival, 2013, TIFF Awards: Romanian Days Award For Best Debut, 2013.
Nominations: European Film Award for Best Short Film, Gopo for Best Short Film, Gopo for Best Screenplay, Gopo for Best Debut etc.

distinctly established and originally envisioned. Basically, a new generation is created.

His most recent film, *Două lozuri (Two lottery tickets)*,[44] completes the comedic genre, joining other worthy movies, such as *Filantropica* (2002, Nae Caranfil), *Despre oameni şi melci* (2012, Tudor Giurgiu) and *Afacerea Est* (2016, Igor Cobileanski). I don't like classifications and I don't believe in them. Whenever I hear someone saying that a work of art is better than another, in a world full of different, subjective people, all I can do is smile. Surely, awards are unfair, as they are granted by the same persons whose tastes are shaped by the billion internet websites already created.

Unanimously considered "the most successful Romanian film of recent years"[45], as during the first week alone it made RON 424,926,[46] Negoescu's movie, created without financial support, with the sole help of passion and a meagre amount of money (EUR 30,000)[47], is a convincing comedy, cleansed of the usual discords of Romanian humour. The topic is simple: three friends win the lottery, but lose the ticket, so they go find it.

The characters

Two lottery tickets uses as preamble the homonym novella written by Caragiale (1901). Consequently, we start from the premise that the film is an exercise of rewriting the classics. It even keeps the technique of its original version in building the plot structure, which ensures a compositional balance in that elaborate manner created by the classical comedy. As a matter of fact, almost all reviews point out that the success of the film is provided by the compliance with the "unity of action rule". In that sense, someone observed that the film has *no downtimes, nor padding scenes[48]*. However, I chose to discuss the characters to the detriment of plot. The epical construction, again a priority

for the film-makers of late, often focuses on the details which cement a certain subject, rather than the typologies which generate those details. Alternatively, the main quality of the film *Two lottery tickets* revolves around the characters. That does not mean that the rest of the construction is inessential. The classicist character, Molieresque, fixes upon the preponderant elements of a flaw until reaching the perfect parodic formulae, which introduced to aesthetics the undervalued phrase: *typical characters under typical circumstances.* Modernity impetuously rejected strict typologization, while among the many movements of the past decade, minimalism simplified the character to such an extent that at the end of the film there's nothing else left in the mind of the spectator than the vague memory of a trait. A simple adjective. Negoescu dares to return to the poignant character, representative for a human category, by using the same dramaturgical, Molieresque technique, but employing state-of-the-art tools. The three characters in the film are so different that a person less knowledgeable would find it quite difficult to bring them all together. In my opinion, there are three people around which the plot is cantered, all main characters, even if only one of them has the advantage of being described through a few biographical details. However, even this particular point complies with the classicism's recipe, as the comedy hero of the disciplined 17th century has no personal life. He is an actant, a sort of plot "pusher". In the classical comedy, we don't waste time on biographical details. The character serves exclusively the plot and audience. The same happens here. Dinel Petre (played by Dorian Boguţă), Sile Grămadă (Dragoş Bucur) and Pompiliu Borş (Alexandru Papadopol) are three heroes built with propriety and a steady hand, without any of them becoming a caricature,

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[44] Independent Film (Director& Writer Paul Negoescu, Producers: 2016, ActorieDeFilm, Kirkland, Papillon Film, Studio Indie Productions), 2016. Comedy.
[45] Alexandra Constanda, *Adevărul*, October 11th, 2016
[46] ibidem
[47] ibidem
[48] Alexandru Avramescu - https://www.starfilme.com/doua-lozuri-jucati-la-loto-649/

Caragiale style. All three actors play their part without hitches and without betraying their characters for a single moment. The most important thing, however, is that there is an osmosis between the vision of the actors and that of the director, which so rarely happens in films.

Două lozuri (frame)

Pompiliu

The most elaborate structure is by far that of Pompiliu, the intellectual of the group. He is a clerk with the City Hall, a social category so superannuated in the classical comedy that there's hardly anything to add to the profile of this type of hero. Besides this (as I dare call it) typological disability, there's also the epical charge of the character as such, built according to a series of generic and cliché traits, as Pompiliu is at the same time a Dacian supporter, patriot, distrustful in the State structures and bucolically cautious. But these flaws as such are the ones which turn recognizable some of the individualities nowadays. Despite this encumbrance of the common flaws, the character not only refuses to remain stuck in the area of the penny dreadful melodrama, but he also magisterially lifts himself to the profile of a neoChekovian construction, of overwhelming complexity and sensible veracity. How is this

achieved? Through an acting so refined, that it only exposes the simplest lines of structure of the character, revealing no glimpse of the huge effort this typology entails. These are a few aspects which do not come easy to the common director, or to the common actor.

First of all, we can take into account that purity of character which preserves specific details without having the personality of the actor alter it to the smallest extent. Any part played by Rebenciuc, for example, or De Niro, bears the unmistakable stamp of the mentioned actors, which in fact represents the very charm of their characters. As technique, such a personal acting has nowadays become obsolete. As has the one of the actor who leaves no trace behind, because that means the person had assumed the part of a "man without traits" and feels that it's their duty to play blankly – ostentatiously lacking any type of nuance. Things are different with Papadopol. He highlights an amount of traits representative of a character obsessed with the general conspiracy theory, flawlessly avoiding the previous templates (the paranoiac, the exhilarated, the resigned etc). Pompiliu is a pure man, who is aware of the dangers as aberrant as widely spread of the ordinary environment, but he defends his ideas without intemperance or exaggeration. He is simply an ingenuous man,

knowledgeable about some secrets. He does not plan on persuading anybody and does not set himself up as a guardian of justice. This representation of a frequent human type becomes difficult, as precisely the renowned techniques (exaggerating flaws, demagogy, exaltation) ease the work of the actor and usually lead to the success of the typology. However, Negoescu renounces that simple part, those successful comedy techniques, which in itself can be considered an indisputable triumph, since it is a well-known fact that all these elements have already been degraded by cheap performances, such as TV shows. He took the path of most resistance, with the typical character displaying dominant traits, credible to normality only through its manifestations. And Papadopol did not only understand this, but he also knew how to channel his talent into the same direction, creating a character cleansed of all previous clichés. He does not resemble anyone else. He's a character saddled with all the obsessions of the mediocre man, but without turning this burden into a caricature. Papadopol does not poke fun at his character, he actually loves it, an element which rarely reaches this level of perfection in performing as Papadopol as reached. That aspect bears the mark of Negoescu, but one that Papadopol accepted from conviction, driven maybe by a common perspective regarding the character. Pompiliu takes pride in the history of the Dacians, he disavows the films of the miserabilism brought by the year 2000, loathes superstitions and the lack of respect on the part of the passenger, who, from his point of view, had lied to him. He remains convinced that the game organized by the National Lottery is corrupted. But all these are expressed in the reasonable manner of an ingenuous person, who is well-meaning not by circumstance or for the sake of film's aesthetics, but because the actor plays his part impeccably.

Another area of interest related to this character is the reasonable way in which he understands the world. Pompiliu is a sensible person, despite being tainted by the sensationalist "literature". He openly doubts the efficiency of the clairvoyant, he disputes

unjustified expenses, and at the level of the trio, he obviously plays the part of the brains in the group. However, he does not throw fits when facing stupidity and does not manifest his indignation when the lottery ticket gets lost. He is only the ascertaining mind, a reasonable one, sometimes even lacking the drive for action, although he initiates most of their endeavours: the trip to Bucharest, the investigation at the hotel. A single moment implies taking decisive measures and that is the interrogation of the child living in the building of Dinel, but even then his initiative is sensibly reined in, when the father of the girl takes off his belt to punish his daughter. He corrects Dinel's statement with the police, provides solutions, knows how to approach people and can be persuasive. However, all these qualities are used solely for their common purpose.

Pompiliu's temperance, well played, highlighted, turns him into the main element of the group, a sort of guiding voice, but seemingly lacking a force of action, as if the connection between the two friends was decisive in him carrying on with his life.

Pompiliu is entirely integrated into the group. He plays along with the craziest ideas of the others, although he does not agree with his friends, as it happens in the scene with the clairvoyant, where he participates with money to a performance that he considers ridiculous and which he bluntly calls a fraud. His need for the group is critical. Moreover, there's a certain devotion of the character to the cause which places him above any other comedy character. Despite his obvious contempt for gambling, he contributes to buying the common lottery ticket. He's ready to participate in the aberrant ideas of the group because he's connected to it not by epical details or some psychological complex, but by the simplest method, through comedy laws, which do not allow for questions related to motivation. Pompiliu is the mind, forever connected to feeling (Dinel) and instinct (Sile). He genuinely experiences his participation to this ensemble.

The sympathy for the character is first of all induced by his honesty. The things he says,

although not always the product of a sensible or cultivated mind, belong to that common area of seductive ideas. They broach nationalist, identity, conspiratorial subjects. The choice for this thematic scope connects the movie to Caragiale. The obsessions, the fixed and persistent ideas (like the suggestion that Tesla is Romanian, that Dacia has timeless items because they're French) complete the typology, adding a drop of classical humour and creating a connection between the character and the receiver, based on a common background of ideas.

Besides all of the above, there is a certain humanity to the character that makes the viewer empathise: the financial caution or Pompiliu's blight when he realizes that the passenger had lied to him, convey a humanity not only persuasive, but moving.

Pompiliu is an elaborate character, the director paying close attention to all the details of the man contrived. The way in which the character speaks is in perfect harmony with his clothing and general attitude. A detail such as the sandals worn over the socks where he keeps his savings reveals more than a dramatic biography. Alexandru Papdopol even states in an interview that changing his appearance was one of the ingredients sought by the director: "…looking at myself in the mirror, dressed like that, my hair smoothed with walnut oil…. They've laughed for a quarter of an hour when I got on stage."[49]

All these details highlight the balance between the written character and the one actually played.

Sile (Dragos Bucur) is a sort of Don Juan, not extremely voluble, but enough to complete the trio. Played accurately, the character comes into prominence through his distinctive touch and capacity to support the group. Talented, also stepping outside the usual typological scope of his performances, Dragos Bucur delightedly takes on the embarrassing part of his character.

The third, refined through a personal story as well, could be considered the main character. However, his value is provided by the group. Excessively emotional, easily intimidated and deceived, Dinel (alias D. Boguta) is the type of victim incapable to throw fits about his fate, while the discrepancy between failure and serenity produces the very comedic tones. The character's innocence, easily exaggerated, remains at a general level of understanding. Gradually, he turns not into Lefter Popescu, the character of Caragiale's short story, but into that type of character who does not matter, from the Tipatescu series, for example, or other main characters from Caragiale's comedies, insignificant without the other typologies, which grant magnitude to their own stories.

This technique of not granting the main character a decisive part in delivering the message of the work is also taken from Caragiale's book and, by extension, from the classical comedy. Out of all the comedic categories, the character comedy is the one best illustrated here, which leads to the dissatisfaction of some people related to the fact that there are only a few memorable scenes included. However, at the same time, most reviewers noticed the originality of the film, considering it as lacking any "conceptual platitudes"[50] and among "the few Romanian comedies which do not use garish jokes, 'Americanisms' poached from the run-of-the-mill films (…) or popular tricks employed by PROTV." These observations that I consider fair are derived from the permanent watchfulness of the author not to arrive in the stereotypical area of the genre. And that represents one of the great merits of the film. The character comedy manifests itself throughout the entire story, which basically only exists in relation to its characters, almost all built around Pompiliu's discourse. The favourite technique of Negoescu is the parody. Very naturally, *Two lottery tickets* is comprised of a wide range of characters which illustrate with ironical intentions not just

[49] interview in *Şapte seri*, http://sapteseri.ro/entertainment/film/filmul-doua-lozuri-anatomia-unei-comedii

[50] Victor Morozov, *Two lottery tickets*, Film Reporter: http://www.filmreporter.ro/14-10-2016-cronica-doua-lozuri/

the imperfections, but also the contemporaneous typology. It does not refer to real characters directly, but to typologies now part of the collective memory. For example, the police woman who registers Dinel's complaint awakes the firm decisions and theatrical intelligence of a feminine typology which dominated the history of the last decade in our country, but also in other parts of the world. The type of absurd in the scene with the black car, which is seen as white by the three of them, reminds us of Porumboiu's film[51], but more like a literary analepsis. The diverse references to the Romanian film, singers of former times etc. – as a stamp of the "elegiacs" – define another side of the contemporaneous typology. Even the cars with PH number bear a parodic note, referring straight to the Caragialesque space, the Ploiesti of revolutions.

Conclusions

The same intention to create a universe of typologies builds the characters of the bloc of flats, essentially part of society. The plot does not progress to the rhythm of the classical comedy, but to that of the characters, who are normal people placed in normal circumstances. By this comedy, Negoescu shows that there's no need for the characters to run around, yelling in despair. As long as they're alive, the comedy reaches its purpose. And the heroes in *Two lottery tickets* are veridical and exciting. What Negoescu succeeds at is one of those difficult things to accomplish to which any artist aspires: creating connections between the character and the audience. In that sense, we can name here a memorable scene, the one after the visit to the apartment with the girl. After the three heroes started the conflict in the respective home, they get out in a hurry. However, on the stairs, after having secured the way, the three of them, as by spontaneous consensus, stop to listen for a while to the scandal ensued behind the door – also initiated by them. It's a classical comedy gesturing translated into a contemporaneous register. And this type of scenes is frequent in the film. The coup de theatre in the end, for

example, when the heroes find out that the ticket they had been searching for wasn't even the winning one is delivered by the bartender who knew their entire story, but without the demonstrative satisfaction of the classical theatre. The bartender shows them the newspaper, because he had lost himself any interest in the yapping of the three. With an almost humanitarian gesture, he reveals to them a secret which for him meant nothing. The audience does not expect such an easy unveil, as it does not expect any of the chapters of the film. For the knowledgeable spectator, there is almost no film whose plot is not foreseeable immediately after the intrigue. For whoever knows all the formulae, the scene of finding the two thieves should have ended with fighting and shouting. But this is not that kind of comedy. As one of the characters states, *the thieves are humans too, they'll understand!* And that's exactly what happens. Even the traffic policeman gives in. Negoescu's humour relies precisely on this game, where the expectations of the connoisseurs are crushed. Even in the common life of the mediocre there's adventure, and the humour of ordinary deeds is elevated to art when there are heroes to perform them. And here, the entire social world is alive for the three characters, unostentatious, without the artifice of metaphor, without fictionalizing it to the point of drama. Negoescu's plot is a story which makes one follow it all the way through. Within this classical, I'd say, simplicity, lies the art of the film.

Two lottery tickets is a fresh comedy, an intelligent film, where the social irony is edulcorated through a mature directional vision and through an acting performance of exceptional quality.

trans. Bianca ZBARCEA

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[51] *Polițist, adjectiv* (Police, adjective)