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Editor's Note

Dana Duma
National University of Theatre and Film "I.L. Caragiale"

Anca Ioniță
National University of Theatre and Film "I.L. Caragiale"

Romanian documentary has recently achieved international recognition, with *collective* by Alexander Nanau being twice nominated at the Oscars and *Home/ Acasă* by Radu Ciorniciuc being awarded at numerous international festivals, included Sundance. This is why we decided to dedicate this issue of "Close up" to documentary and its contribution in film and media field. The approaches are very different, reflecting relevant evolutions and

Lucian Țion's article explores Corneliu Porumboiu's documentary work, namely his two nonfiction films, *The Second Game* (*Al doilea joc*, 2014) and *Infinite Football* (*Fotbal infinit*, 2018), which investigate the relationship between past and present as experienced by the post-socialist generation, which is less intent on condemning the past than attempting to understand it.

Dedicated to animated documentary, the essay signed by Dana Duma analyzes the proliferation of this hybrid form of digital cinema in the new millenium not only as a result of new sophisticated techniques, but mostly from a functional perspective, trying to identify the reasons and the contexts that motivated the choice of this form, whose characteristics may be related to the depiction of personal and collective traumas.

Călin Boto evaluates the role of the nonfiction feature *Black Buffalo Water* (1970) in re-shaping the canon of Romanian documentary. Mihaela Grancea and Mihai Fulger discuss four nonfiction films released by Romanian filmmakers in the 21st century that represent valuable contributions to the rich and varied international filmography of the Holocaust, while Marian Țuțui's study is dedicated to the Jewish filmmakers coming from Romania and who have become notable figures of the international cinema industry with remarkable film contributions in Turkey, Germany, France and the USA.

A contribution about the loss of many of the films produced from the inception of cinema and new technologies that can help the industry going further is signed by Andrei Iancu. The content of this issue is completed by three book reviews elaborated by authors from Romania and from abroad. We thank all the contributors for their collaboration.

Sports, Politics, and the Treatment of the Past in Porumboiu's Documentaries *The Second Game* and *Infinite Football*

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Abstract
This article explores Corneliu Porumboiu's documentary work, namely his two nonfiction films, *The Second Game* (*Al doilea joc*, 2014) and *Infinite Football* (*Fotbal infinit*, 2018), which it contrasts with themes present in the director's more famous *12:08 East of Bucharest* (*A fost sau n-a fost?*, 2006) and *Police, Adjective* (*Poliţist, adjectiv*, 2009), but also his lesser-known short *A Trip to the City* (*Călătorie la oraş*, 2003). Drawing on interpretations of Porumboiu's documentaries developed by film theorist Patricia Pfeifer, in this article, I argue that, more than being about the convoluted postsocialist socio-affective environment, Porumboiu's works investigate the relationship between past and present, as experienced from the standpoint of a postsocialist generation which is less intent on condemning the past than attempting to understand it.

Keywords
Corneliu Porumboiu, postsocialism, documentary, Romanian New Wave.

Corneliu Porumboiu, one of the figureheads of New Romanian Cinema, acquired his reputation mostly through psychological dramas tinged with absurdism like *12:08 East of Bucharest* (*A fost sau n-a fost?*, 2006) and *Police, Adjective* (*Poliţist, adjectiv*, 2009). Although his fiction work won deserved accolades and helped create the celebrated minimalist style that became associated with the Romanian New Wave, Porumboiu ventured into the documentary territory with two somewhat less accessible productions: *The Second Game* (*Al doilea joc*, 2014) and *Infinite Football* (*Fotbal infinit*, 2018).

Lucian Ţion holds a PhD in Theatre Studies from the National University of Singapore and an MA from the University of Amsterdam. His research experience covers Eastern European cinema, Chinese cinema, and postcolonial/nationalism studies. Sample publications include "From 'Father of the Nation' to the Nation without a Father" in Studies in Eastern European Cinema, "Socialist Sink: The Eastern Roots of the Romanian New Wave" in Quarterly Review of Film and Video, and the chapter "The Westernization of Stalin: Late Hollywood Readings of Real-Existing Socialism" in the edited collection Cold War II: Hollywood's Renewed Obsession with Russia (University Press of Mississippi, 2020).

Unlike his afore-mentioned fiction features, which broached the frequently ludicrous universe of postsocialist Romanian politics, his documentaries look like meditative studies of people "who think beyond the norm," (Allen) "epistemological speculations," (Kenny) or explorations of a hitherto unknown space that spans the divide between art and politics, but also between the past and the present (Pfeifer). In addition to these rather general considerations, what both documentaries have in common is a certain thematic concern, namely their passion for sports, which, coming from a director so daft at ridiculing the farcical conditions of the postsocialist world, may seem, at first hand, a surprising auctorial choice.

In this article, I will be arguing that, as is the case with Porumboiu's fiction filmmaking, the two documentaries discussed here conceal more than meets the eye, and that, even though they both deal in football, a sport close to the director's heart, they are in fact about interpersonal relationships. More specifically, they are about relationships affected not so much by a society recovering from the stigma of Communist ideology (Robé), but about the generation gap spanning the rupture between the socialist and the postsocialist eras.

Apparently, there is little going on in both these documentaries. *The Second Game* unfolds as a monotonous replay of a pre-recorded football derby from 1988 between Steaua and Dinamo Bucharest, the two traditional Romanian football league leaders. After removing the original commentary, Porumboiu discussed the game in front of the TV screen together with his father, Adrian Porumboiu, the original referee of the match at the time. Placing this talk onto the film's soundtrack, some may argue that Porumboiu did nothing more than create a spectating experience resembling watching a DVD with the filmmakers' commentary turned on.

The second film, *Infinite Football*, appears as an equally bizarre experience: the director (this time appearing in person throughout the film) visits the brother of a childhood friend, who still lives in Porumboiu's hometown of Vaslui. In characteristic slow-paced, minimalist style, Porumboiu's camera apparently does nothing more than follow Laurențiu Ginghină, an occasional football player who suffered a sports accident in his youth, as the latter enthusiastically discusses ways to rewrite the rules of football, going to some lengths to show his interlocutor the plans that would make this a better sport in the future.

Despite these rather laconic, and undoubtedly patchy, descriptions of the two films, what is interesting in Porumboiu's documentaries is that, like his fiction works, they are not devoid of dramatic conflict. Only in the documentaries this conflict does not take place onscreen. As opposed to the director's realist dramas, where Virgil Jderescu, a TV talk show host, engages in contradictory interpretations of the Romanian revolution with his guests (*12:08 East of Bucharest*), or a police captain openly challenges the convictions of a younger officer on the force (*Police, Adjective*), the conflict in the documentaries is situated somewhere outside the films' mise-en-scene proper, and in-between cinematic reality and the spectator. Patricia Pfeifer aptly appreciates that in *The Second Game,* Porumboiu "deliberately create[s] a form of inbetweenness in order to regard [his] subject, namely the historical past, from a new perspective." (232) Furthermore, supporting Pfeifer's view, Ágnes Pethő posits that "Porumboiu constructs the cinematic tableau as a container for the interaction between frame and out-of-frame, cultivating in it a tension between the

'commonplace' and the conceptual…" (76)

What both theorists rightly observe is a tendency in Porumboiu's documentaries to stage the dramatic conflict between the screen and the spectator, or, as Pfeifer speculatively puts it, "in the interval." Inasmuch as the relationship between past and present is concerned, this is important because it reflects on the director's auctorial style in that, rather than critiquing or outright condemning the historical past, as other Romanian directors have done in postsocialism, Porumboiu forces the spectator to face his or her own sententiousness vis-à-vis the socialist period. Asked what the reasons for making *The Second Game* were, Porumboiu intimated that "[o]ur society still has a black-and-white relationship with the past, a certain type of simplistic vision of history. I think this is one of the reasons I'm in cinema: to question this mentality." (Filippi and Rus quoted in Pfeifer, 238)

To understand the director's questioning of the Romanian "mentality," it is necessary to take a brief look at Porumboiu's fiction films. If his inquisitive take on the Romanian revolution, identifiable in *12:08 East of Bucharest*, is probably his *porte-parole* vis-à-vis recent history, the film echoes Porumboiu's earlier discontent with the current treatment of the Romanian past as identifiable in his short *A Trip to the City* (*Călătorie la oraș*, 2003). Focusing on a young village teacher accompanying an older colleague to the neighboring town to procure a computer, the unpretentious story is secondary in its absurdism only to the contrasting surroundings that frame the two characters. As the young teacher gets robbed of the money meant for the computer, and the teacher's project gets bogged down in endless confusion and bureaucracy, the two men stumble upon a symposium commemorating "854 years of history and civilization" since the founding of the city.

In other words, in Porumboiu style, the misfortunes of the two men are compensated by the grandiosity of the celebrations made evident through the presence of a hand-drawn poster wishing the city inhabitants "Happy Birthday" as the benevolent, if suggestively coupled pictures of Decebalus and Trajan scrutinize each other not without certain tenderness.

The symposium hall in *A Trip to the City*.

The celebration scene in *A Trip to the City*.

Ridiculing the ludicrousness of the symposium by contrasting its monumentality to the pettiness of his characters, the director makes his sarcasm all the more evident when he parallels his heroes' failed mission to the birthing saga of the Romanian 'race.' This receives the finishing touch when the two men, instead of dwelling on their failure, decide to celebrate at a restaurant named "Trajan," in which even the chairs the characters sit on bear the inscription of the Roman emperor. Porumboiu's visual sarcasm acts as a counterpoint to the paltriness of the narrative in the same way in which the importance of the Romanian revolution is upstaged by the laconic background of the TV studio in *12:08*. (Șerban, 107)

In line with Șerban's argument, Porumboiu's intentions for making *12:08* come from a "desire to demythify, stemming from a discourse close to a photographic one, to capture the moment that breaks apart from the plethora of clichés which I grew up with." (Rus and Filippi) Both in *12:08* and *A Trip to the City*, Porumboiu ironizes the notions purporting to describe Romanianess, which the nationalist discourse inherited from pre-Communist times and carried forward into the present. Therefore, through these fiction films, Porumboiu doesn't only ask "Who are we, Romanians, as a nation?" but also "Why do we believe the clichés that – as he puts it – we grew up with?" In other words, Porumboiu's attitude is not critical of the socialist regime *per se*, nor of the economic downturn that impoverished the country in the last decades of Communism. Nor is Porumboiu interested whether the revolution did or did not take place (despite the film's Romanian title); or whether it was a coup or a democratic replacement of one form of government by another. Porumboiu simply asks: "What is our relationship as a nation to our recent and distant past, and what are the tropes used to describe Romanianism?"

Porumboiu's fiction work provides only ambiguous, tongue-in-cheek answers to these questions. As Alice Bardan puts it in her analysis of Porumboiu's debut feature, "at the heart of *12:08* is […] a question of […] characters being trapped by language structures and often relying on cliché-ridden vocabulary to find their way out of an impasse." (128)

According to Bardan, "Porumboiu is a filmmaker obsessed with definitions and signs. Both *12:08* and his second film, *Police, Adjective* (2009), he tells us, stem from his own obsession with words and their interpretation from different points of view." (127) More often than not, Porumboiu seems to say, language, semantic structures impede rather than ease our access to truth, to a clear understanding of the past and of national identity. The oft-quoted kitchen scene in *Police, Adjective*, in which the main character inquires as to the logic of a song's lyrics, which repeatedly plays in the background, attests to this obsession. Furthermore, as made clear by the presence of Decebalus and Trajan in *A Trip to the City*, as well as by the discussion surrounding the precise time when demonstrators showed up in the city square during the revolution in *12:08*, the director wants to break taboos surrounding events that entered uncritically into national consciousness. Questions such as "Why are the Dacians and the Romans considered the ancestors of the Romanians?" and "Is civic disobedience on a large scale necessary for a country to be deemed revolutionary?" are essential for Porumboiu in establishing the nature that hides behind the façade of the event. This leads the director to probe the definitions of national identity (*12:08 East of Bucharest*), language, linguistic structure, and the law (*Police, Adjective*), but also the attitude of the postsocialist generation toward the past, as we see in his documentaries.

Marian Țuțui points out that most Romanian New Wave films take a non-combative attitude toward the past, and it is this attitude that saves these works from demagogy, from becoming agents of moralization and criticism. (Țuțui, 235) As the theorist shows, Radu Muntean's *The Paper Will Be Blue* (which similarly treats the topic of the revolution from objective positions) or Cătălin Mitulescu's *How I Spent the End of the World* (which revisits socialist childhood from a nostalgic rather than accusatory position), along with *12:08*, are films made by a generation of directors which was coming of age during the last decade of socialism and, therefore, was more interested in understanding than accusing the world in which they grew up.

Porumboiu fully adheres to this stance vis-à-vis the recent past by not only *not* criticizing or demonizing the socialist period but seeing it as a time replete with the joys and wonders of childhood and adolescence. The revolution and the incessant probing into its nature ("Was it a coup? Who fired on the demonstrators?") naturally becomes, for the director who witnessed it as a child, a source of fantastic spectacle rather than a gruesome event complete with incinerated corpses (such as Sergiu Nicolaescu's *15*). Following his interest in the events surrounding the 1989 revolution, it is only natural for the director to probe the depths of his childhood, therefore to tackle the last decade of socialism more directly. I say more directly, but what emerges in his documentary works, as the director focuses on the time of his childhood and adolescence, is a veiled approach that seems to be more personal and emotional than the one Porumboiu employs in his fiction films.

If in *12:08* Porumboiu returns to the past with detached humor, in *The Second Game*, we see a director who is, more often than not, *fascinated* rather than annoyed with a past he doesn't appear to fully understand, less so criticize. Pfeifer points out that, in conversation with his father, Porumboiu continuously tries to draw his interlocutor's attention to the poetic atmosphere of the game taking place in the snow ("I like the snow, it has a

Adrian Porumboiu, the director's father, in *The Second Game*.

certain poetry…"). (239) Despite the father's curt rebuttal of the son's claims to poetry ("There's no poetry here. What poetry is there in a football pitch like a farmer's field?"), the director is incessantly drawn to the background of a past world he remembers through the mediated image of the game, pointing out the unusual circumstances of a match that had to be played in adverse weather conditions.

The reason Porumboiu-the-son draws his father's attention to the fascinating context in which the game was played is to shake up Porumboiu-the-father's lethargy vis-à-vis the forgotten past. In their conversation, the referee-cum-father figure personifies the apathy that started to describe Romanian society after 1989 in relation to its recent history. As Patricia Beatt notices elsewhere,[1] it seems that time has become frozen for the postsocialist generation and that people who experienced socialism before the revolution can only look back with difficulty at that period in contemporaneity. As Porumboiu makes evident in *12:08*, the same apathy appears to take hold of the postsocialist generation. Despite Jderescu's efforts to shake up the standard version of history narrated by his interlocutors, neither the professor nor the pensioner invited to the talk show seem at all eager to discuss the revolution from revisionist positions.

In *The Second Game*, something similar happens. Despite his son's efforts prompting him to see the beauty of the game, the referee and the director's father fails to abandon the stereotypes that seem to command his thinking. Thus, the former referee continuously discusses the rules of the game, the yellow cards he gave to certain players for various reasons, and the condition of the footballers, but seems adamant to engage in a discussion in which the son wants to draw him: "What is the significance of the game twenty-five years after the event?" In other words, the son and the father have different ways of relating to the past. It is here where the schism between generations occurs. Where the son has intriguing memories about an event that he regards with both fascination and nostalgia, the father only sees a banal event lacking significance beyond the strict rules of the game.

A title card that Porumboiu inserted at the beginning of the film reads: "I was 7 or 8 years old. The phone rang. A man told me to convince my father to give up refereeing. Otherwise, one day, he'd come home in a coffin. I told my father what the stranger said. He continued to referee." Pfeifer blows this statement out of proportion a little, reading it as the predominant key in which the referee's son and future film director would watch all of his father's future matches. Even though, by placing the title card at the beginning, the director is intent on imbuing the documentary with a sense of foreboding, and even though, as Pfeifer rightly asserts, the derby carried deep political undertones as "Steaua and Dinamo were not just athletic but also political adversaries: the club of the army vs. the club of the secret police, popularly known as the Securitate," (236) the father actually dismisses the fact that he was both threatened and bribed by both sides before the game started. Although he admits to having been under pressure, in the same way he waves off his son's observations about the poetry of the game, his dismissal of threats received back in 1988 points to the father's possibly unbending, semi-rigid personality.

This leads us to interpret the political subtext surrounding the match as being the false focus of the film. The father's attitude leads us to see the film less as a comment on Communist politics and more as an attempt to clarify the relationship between father and son, as the father's personality shaped this during the son's formative years. More specifically, reviewing the match in 2014 offers the father and the son the possibility of a Freudian closure for a relationship that could have been vitiated by forces outside both the father's and the son's control. Pfeifer is right to mention the son's fear as generative for the rupture between present and past. Still, she fails to see how this fear might have been shaped not so much by the threat the son received on the phone but by his father's status as one of the most important personages of the socialist world of sports before the fall of the Communist regime. The son's growing up in the father's domineering shade points to a father-son relationship reminiscent of authors like Kafka, whose works became influenced by the weight that the father's personality brings to the parent-child relationship.

If this type of relationship ties in with politics, as Pfeifer suggests, in the sense that Ceaușescu's patriarchal figure dominated the world of the last Communist generation during its formative period, this bears even more significance on Porumboiu's relationship with his father. David Kideckel argues that Romanian politics was not haunted by the figure of an overbearing dictator who came out of nowhere, but that Ceaușescu's paternalist appeal to Romanians was successful because the dictator made good use of the patriarchal, family-dominated cultural background that long predated Ceaușescu's accession to power. (Kidecklel)

I am not suggesting that Porumboiu's father represents an alter-ego for the Romanian dictator. Still, that paternal figures in the murky past of the director's formative years played an important role in his development, especially as the cultural environment endowed the father figure with significant importance. That is why Porumboiu feels the urge to return, in Freudian fashion, to the place in which the authority of the patriarchal figure dominated his surroundings, the town of Vaslui, as he does in *12:08 East of Bucharest*; *Police, Adjective*; *The Second Game*, and finally, the last documentary to be discussed here, *Infinite Football*.

Porumboiu and Ginghină in the latter's office in *Infinite Football*.

If *The Second Game* is not about politics, but about relationships, *Infinite Football* is about the way in which the past shapes both relationships and destinies. Laurențiu Ginghină, an administrative clerk from Vaslui, whose office job contrasts sharply with his passion, seems to live for revolutionizing the rules of football. The victim of a sports accident that took place during his youth in an improvised game, Ginghină is a Porumboiu hero *par excellence*, not for the way in which he conceals his ideals behind the dull façade of his desk-job persona, but for personifying the condition of a man whose inner life surpasses in intensity both his achievements to date and his abilities to put his dreams into practice. A down-to-earth alter ego for Jderescu from *12:08,* a TV moderator who discusses Plato and Artistotle to comment on postsocialist lethargy, as well as for the backwoods teacher from *A Trip to the City* who fantasizes about a virtual model of the village to be built in cyberspace just before he gets robbed, Ginghină is dreaming of turning his misfortune into opportunity. By instating new rules that would structure the game differently, Ginghină hopes to avoid the kinds of melees that once led to his unfortunate accident. Ultimately, his vision would lead to a football game that would "free the ball" on the pitch and protect the players from the kind of violent contact that would make the game dangerous.

Accompanying Ginghină to the pitch on which he had been hurt some 30 years earlier and to a factory where the former collapsed from the injury at a later date, Porumboiu listens patiently to his interviewee's explanations, yet, shows himself skeptical that Ginghină's vision of turning football into a different sport ("Football 2.0," as Ginghină ironically calls it) would ever become effective in reality. Indeed, the game envisioned by the clerk seems not only improbable but one that would drastically deter from the pleasure of both playing and spectating a sport in which human contact would be drastically reduced.

As is the case with *The Second Game*, the premise of the film – Ginghină's penchant for revolutionizing sports – is not the main focus of this otherwise baffling documentary. While trying to understand what the 2018 film is really about, Nick Allen comments that

"*Infinite Football* is made with more curiosity than outright intention." This is a statement that, along with the director's fascination for the Steaua-Dinamo derby as relived some twenty-five years after the fact, shines a light on the possible origin of the film. That Porumboiu is an open if skeptical listener who entertains Ginghină's otherwise unrealistic plans with broadmindedness is evident as the film unrolls. However, the question we begin to ask as spectators is: "Why did Porumboiu decide to make a film about Ginghină?"

Let us recall that Porumboiu is shooting the documentary in his home town of Vaslui and that, although this is only tangentially conveyed, Laurențiu Ginghină is the brother of a classmate of Porumboiu, Florin, who never appears in the film. It is as if the director, driven by an obscure nostalgic urge, decided to visit his hometown and casually look up an old school friend, only to find out more about this friend's brother, who suddenly took center stage in Porumboiu's documentary. The scene in which the two men enter Florin's room is revelatory to this effect. After listening once more to Laurențiu's plans for revolutionizing the game of football, Porumboiu, as if worn-out from the conversation, gets up to take a look at the family library. Suddenly, he seems very interested in finding a book he remembers borrowing once from Ginghină's brother, Florin, but, ironically, he can't remember the title. Only moments later, Porumboiu starts recalling what appears to be an intimate story (possibly about him and Florin), but he is cut off by Ginghină, who, pointing out the title of the book Porumboiu is holding in his hands at the moment, exclaims in surprise: "What is this? Oh, *Ethics and Psychoanalysis*. Oh…!"

As we will see shortly, this apparently innocuous scene may point to Porumboiu's reasons to make the film. This becomes more obvious in the next scene when, as the two men stand near the apartment's hallway, probably on their way out, Porumboiu meets Ginghină's father. Even though Ginghină referred to the father in the previous conversation (*Ethics and Psychoanalysis* seems to come from the father's personal collection), he only shows up in this tangential, end-of-the-film shot to make Porumboiu a gift. As if to confirm Flaherty's experience that random, unstaged events are more revelatory in documentaries than the ones for which directors carefully plan in advance,[2] the picture that the father gives Porumboiu as a present is a photograph of the director himself taken probably at Ginghină's wedding by Florin. The reason this is important is that the view of Porumboiu in this photograph (whose face is obstructed by a wedding bouquet) is mediated not only by the father's vision ("I am not interested in the person, but the phenomenon") but also by Florin, the friend whose absence Porumboiu indirectly laments. The photograph becomes an intermedial object in the relationship between present and past, a sort of affective warm hole that points to the director himself as the real protagonist of the film, appearing to say that the documentary is, after all, nothing but a self-portrait.

This scene makes it obvious that not only is there a personal connection to Porumboiu-the-director throughout the film, but that the documentary's entire structure dwells on the absence of Porumboiu's classmate from the plot. It is this absence that points to the director's half-acknowledged failure to find that moment in the past (the friendship with Florin) that seems to hold the key to understanding the present. By having Florin's brother become the protagonist of the documentary, Porumboiu validates the replacement of a

Porumboiu in the picture taken during the wedding in *Infinite Football*.

no-more-accessible figure from adolescence with another, which offers a surprising solution to the director's quest.

This overlooked aspect of the documentary brings to mind Pfeifer's comment on Porumboiu's previous documentary film, *The Second Game*. What is crucial in the spectating experience of this film, Pfeifer states, is what happens not onscreen, but rather between the two men commenting on the course of the game; therefore, what happens in the interval between the two men and the TV screen, which becomes a relic from a no-more-accessible past. Ginghină's presence in *Infinite Football* similarly becomes a relic from the past, which the director is eager to explore because Ginghină may be the key which might resolve the mystery to the director's incomplete self-portrait. Just as the photograph of Porumboiu in the hands of Ginghină's father becomes a clue for self-discovery, Ginghină himself is an intermedial object situated between past and present, a potential road to understanding the past.

Sensing the attraction of this past – and implicitly the attraction of the adolescence he is called to re-explore – Porumboiu stumbles upon what may turn out to be precisely what he is looking for: an unfulfilled, unrealizable dream struggling to become reality. Ginghină's elaborate yet unrealistic scheme for revolutionizing football, stemming from a childhood accident, becomes a place holder for Porumboiu's attempt to make sense out of the past. In other words, Ginghină's attempt to rationalize the accident that changed his life parallels Porumboiu's own attempt to rationalize the choices he made in *his* life, including that of becoming a filmmaker. (In *The Second Game*, he ironically refers to the football match he watches with his father as being similar to one of his films: it has long takes, and nothing happens). What is interesting is that the director intimates several answers to the questions he poses about his destiny. As Pfeifer suggests of Porumboiu's *The Second Game*, the meeting space between past and present (but also between father and son) can only exist in the imaginary space provided by the interstice between spectator and

image. Similarly, Ginghină's dream in *Infinite Football* can only come true at the midpoint between the object of our desires (in this case, understanding the past) and the emotional drive that draws us to (re)encounter that object (the accident).

As in the case of his relationship with his referee-father, we would be mistaken to interpret Porumboiu's past as trauma. Both in *The Second Game* and again in *Infinite Football*, Porumboiu shows himself positively fascinated by the past, whether this is a forgotten football game viewed again in the cinematic present or an incident that shaped the life of a man who tries to influence his own destiny forever. Even though he may appear at times as a tragic victim of his own life's drama, unlike a Sophoclean character, Ginghină is the eternal optimist who has, in fact, already discovered what he is looking for: the road to unattainable happiness. Porumboiu comes close to intimating this when, in the last shot of the film, he focuses on a road at dusk, on which the camera tracks at a very slow speed. Shot in dark-blue colors, the road becomes a visual clue to the protagonist's thoughts as his discourse turns quasi-metaphysical. Discussing the hypothetical mistake for which a potential divinity might have punished him as a means to understanding his unfulfilled present, Ginghină's questions remained unanswered except through a perplexing visual cue provided by the director.

Instead of ending Ginghină's soliloquy on the character's half-pessimistic note, in an unexpected move worthy of his style, Porumboiu chooses to insert in conclusion to Ginghină's thoughts a strip of film from a Soviet-made cartoon. Awash in vibrant colors that contrast with the gray palette of the rest of the film, the animation relies on jungle animals drawn exclusively from imagination. Whether this cartoon is a personal memory from the director's youth or an ulterior archival addition, signifying the era in which the protagonist sustained his injury and the friendship between his brother and Porumboiu must have taken place, is unimportant. Rather than being a visual comment on Ginghină's dreams, moreover, what becomes increasingly powerful as the credits subside, is that the cartoon creates a particular effect in the viewer: the possibility that this strip of (hand-) colored film is the actual interval, as Pfeifer would put it, in which the unseen becomes visible, in which the better world of sports dreamed of by Ginghină becomes reality. Furthermore, it is in this interval – in the space made possible by investigating the past, which suddenly becomes as colorful as a strip of hand-colored film – that destinies were not only at one point in time pre-determined, but they are allowed to forever be made and remade.

If it is true that, as another critic put it, "this relatively short film contains worlds," (Kenny) this short strip of film seems not only to validate the polyvalence of Porumboiu's language but to shine a light on the director's surprisingly effective way of probing that space of the human mind in which a character in the (postsocialist) present might actually come face to face with his (socialist-era) self without effecting any judgment on either himself or that period.

The surprisingly colorful ending of *Infinite Football* points to a possible act of learning about the self, a condition which, to paraphrase Ginghină's meditation on different translations of "paideia" from the Greek Bible, recalls a Socratic act. The word's contradictory translations through the ages also recall the arbitrariness of linguistic rules made famous

in *Police, Adjective*. Thus, laying out Ginghină's alternatives (as if to point out different roads that his destiny could have taken) suggests that interrogating the past may become the actual interval that would cure the postsocialist subject of his or her dissatisfaction with the present.

Whether it's the national psyche of the Romanians as reflected in the postsocialist era or personal relationships that molded his own life experience, Porumboiu proves that he is an astute observer of a human condition, which, postsocialist or not, seems increasingly governed by the interplay between the present's relationship with the past. What the documentary work of Porumboiu suggests, both in *Infinite Football* and *The Second Game*, is that the filmmaker remains true to his mission of investigating the postsocialist condition made famous by his fiction work from positions that are both challenging and thought-provoking. Moreover, especially in *Infinite Football*, he shows that he remains open – while employing his familiar yet oblique style – to finding pathways to explore the human condition, as this is reflected in relationships marred by the passage of time. It is in these relationships, Porumboiu seems to say, that we will find the clue to help us make sense of our present. In other words, it is by exploring precisely that Communist past, which anti-communist ideology demonized during the transitional period, that we would understand ourselves. Moreover, exploring the family relationships, friendships, and affective affinities that populated our past seems the only road – to use Porumboiu's iconic image from the end of *Infinite Football* – toward the reinterpretation of the linguistic, normative, and social codes that still puzzle us as we try to make sense of our baffling condition.

ENDNOTES

1, 2. *Nanook of the North* (1922), Robert Flaherty's iconic documentary meant to be a laborious portrait of an Inuit family, was made up of scenes that were both staged and unstaged. Flaherty was later criticized for staging some of the scenes, which took away from the authenticity of the film.

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The Animated Documentary as Narrative on Traumas

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Abstract
More frequently included in international festival line-ups, animated documentary films are sometimes presented as a result of the multiplication of hybrid forms of digital cinema in the new millenium. Their recent proliferation is hard to ignore, but they exist from the very beginnings of animation, in less sophisticated forms than nowadays, displaying very early the modern tendency of the medium to mix different techniques and to include self-reflexive devices.This article tries to identify the reasons and the contexts that motivated the choice of this hybrid form and to identify its constant characteristics, mostly related to the depiction of personal and collective traumas. It looks at relevant theoretical and practical aprroaches of this phenomenon.

Keywords
animated documentary, history of animation, educational film, propaganda film,war film, Ari Folman, Anca Damian

A CENTENNIAL HISTORY

When comitted to describe and to theorize the animated deocumentary phenomenon, we are probably trying hard to avoid the usual „rhetoric of frivolity"adopted in writing on animation, generally considered a child oriented entertainment. Only specialized historians in animation cinema are aware of the adult target-public orientation of the first animated shorts, realised in the three decades before the arrival of sound. For instance Annabelle Honess Roe reminds us "the long history of the hybridization of animation and documentary, one that stretches back to the earliest days of the moving image (Honness Roe 2009:1).

Dramatic contexts, such World War 1, generated animated films that approached the war theme. One of the most famous title about the tragic consequences of the war is *The Sinking of the Lusitania* (1918) by Winsor McCay, an animated documentary inspired by

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the cynical bombing of a civil transatlantic ship by a German submarine, which provoked the death of more than 1000 passengers, 128 of them Americans.The graphic style of the event reconstruction is realistic, inspired by the photos of the huge liner and of the numerous people that started from New York, with the destination London. The phases of the sinking are cronologically reproduced, insisting on the moment when the german submarine fires a torpedo at the Lusitania and on the desperate movements of the passengers running to catch the lifeboats. We watch then the ship tilting from one side to another and people falling into the ocean. One of the last shot, showing a mother struggling to keep her baby above the waves is an emotional conclusion, in contrast with the intertitle which ironically comments:"The man who fired the shot was decorated by the Kaiser." This early film is sometimes commented as a case of propaganda film, because it presents the event in a way that generates the public's indignation and repulsion in front of the war atrocities. It evokes an unforgettable collective trauma.

This approach can clarify the very essence of the intersection of animation and documentary, as Annabelle Honess Roe emphasizes:

> While animation might at first seem to threaten the documentary project by destabilizing its claims to represent reality, I suggest that the opposite is the case. Animation, in part through its material differences from live-action film, seem shift and broadens the limits of what and how we can show about reality by offering new or alternative ways of seeing the world (…) It also has the potential to convey visually the "world in here" of subjective, conscious experience. (Honness Roe 2009:2)

The "subjective experience" refers to the intense emotion that an animated documentary, similar to *The Sinking of the Lusitania* might provoke. Paul Wells notices this early film "made in a newsreel way…filled viewers with anxiety through psychological projection and concludes it marks "a seminal moment in the development of the animation film, for its combination of documentary styles with propaganda elements" and considered it a prove that "animation is a form of Modernism".(Wells 2002: 30)

Even Walt Disney combined animation and documentary in his feature *Victory through Air Power* (1944), as well bearing accents of propaganda film. He strongly believed in cinema duty to participate in the war efforts. Convinced by the decisive role played by the Air Force during World War 2, he produced this animation documentary to support Major Alexander de Seversky's desire to build more bombs. Although not being an animation documentary, the series *Why We Fight?* directed by Frank Capra and aimed to convince young Americans to enroll in the Army during WW2, includes some animated scenes.

The hybrid form of animation documentary will proliferate more since the 1990s and especially after the presentation of the feature *Waltz with Bashir* (2008) by Ari Folman, in the opening Gala of the Cannes Film Festival.

WALTZ WITH BASHIR AND TRAUMA REPRESENTATION

The Israelian film that won, in 2009, the Golden Globe for the best non-American production, is based on a very personal and traumatic experience of the author. Ari Folman (born 1962) was specialized in documentary and fiction films and decided to use animation language in order to express his confession as a participant in the Lebanon War and the September 1982 mass murders at Sabra and Shatila in *Waltz with Bashir Bashir* / *Vals im Bashir*. The presentation at Cannes generated great acclaims but also vivid controversy.

Ari Folman had already proved his interest in the representation of war with his graduation film at the Tel Aviv Film university *Comfortably Numb* (1991) about the first gulf War and the Israelites' fear of chemical warfare. He followed this by directing several pieces on life in the occupied territories for the Israeli television, mainly during the second Intifada. In 1996 he made his first longform film, *Saint Clara*, an adaptation of Czechoslovakian author Pavel Kohout' s novel. His second feature film, *Made in Israel,* is a futuristic tale about the hunt for the last living Nazi, „a very stylish black and white film that came up short" by the author's own statement. Folman only discovered animation in 2004 while making a series of television documentaries about love that contained several animated segments.

In an interview for the French magazine „Cahiers du cinéma" he confessed: "I was fascinated by the freeing power of animation (…) The neverending hunt for the sensational had wore me out. I wanted to look at documentary film as animation, a subjective creation; this fresh perspective freed me from the traditional constraints of the genre" (Renzi, Schweitzer, 2008:29-30).

Through this hybridization of seemingly incompatible medias *Waltz with Bashir* was born.

The director admits that the film is deeply rooted in his personal experience and views. The picture retells the experience of a 17 year-old Ari Folman (having become a character) as he takes part in the occupation of West Beyrouth during the first Lebanese War. The author strives to trigger long-buried memories with the help of former war buddies.

Waltz with Bashir, by Ari Folman

The film stylizes these ex-comrades-in-arms now at adulthood in animation based on filmed interviews. This process relied on the help of a team of animators that did not rely on motion capture technology in order to translate into animation archival footage and photographs. Rather, the team transposed these into poetic, dreamlike and surrealist moments that attempt to dilate time and distort the perception of peril. Structured as an investigation, the film tries to establish the events of the night of 16-17 of december when the Israeli army that was guarding the camps of the Palestinian refugees allowed the Palestinian Christian phalanx to enter the camp and massacre the civillians. Albeit the initial state of confusion, an international inquiry comission found the Israeli army guilty for the devastation of West Beirut, an operation during which thousands of civilians were killed. *Waltz with Bashir* becomes a trek through memory that challenges the beliefs of former comrade-in-arms now at maturity. The son of Nazi laborcamps survivors, Ari Folman proved great courage by pursuing this highly controversial topic and by speaking about the guilt that his generation harbours. He frankly admits that his film is fully autobiographical. His starting point is very precise: at 40 years old he decided to reform so as to not serve in the army. He went to the army psychologist to talk about his military past. Firstly he talked about the Lebanese war and realized that he had completely repressed that memory and had not talked abut it since he was 22. He then decided to track down his former comrades-in-arms and in talking to them sees the same phenomenon. He comments: „It wasn't really amnesia, more like a subject far removed from our daily lives, probably in order to allow us to return to that life after that trauma. This defensive phenomenon is part of the collective Israeli history: many years after Shoah we avoided talking about the concentration camps like it were tabu." (Renzi, Schweitzer, 2008:29-30)

Surprisingly opting for the freeing power of animation, the author manages to speak reserver yet movingly about the tragedy of war. The director's option for animation in this incursion in memory is based on the medium's ability to visualize the dilation of time. Without the power of animation the film could never so expressively communicate fears, nightmares and the guilt of the young men called to arms at an age where they did not fully understand what enemy they were fighting.

Waltz with Bashir is a hybrid film that invites us to verify how appropriate is another definition of animated documentary proposed by Annabelle Honnes Roe:

> I would suggest that an audiovisual work (produced digitally, filmed or scratched on celluloid) could be considered an animated documentary if it: (i) has been recorded or created frame-by-frame; (ii) is about the world rather than a world wholly imagined by its creator;and (iii) has been presented as a documentary by its producers and/ or received as a documentary by audiences, festivals, critics. (Honnes Roe 2009:3)

This definition enlarges the number of films we could include in this category and this diversification was confirmed by the features selected in the 2020 edition of the Animest Film Festival of Bucharest for a sidebar dedicated to animated documentary.

A is for Autism by Tim Webb

Most of the films included in this programme refer to dramatic moments of the recent events in the recent history. They all speak about traumatic experiences, just like the mass massacre of the students and and professors from the Austin University, Texas, in 1966 (*The Tower* by Keith Mainland). Like other animation documentaries the film includes *live action* scenes, maybe meant to intensify the authenticity of the testimony. This practice is used by another film included in the mentioned selection, a hybrid feature about the treatment of an autism case with a methodic screening of Walt Disney's films (*Life, animated* by Ross Williams). This film is to remind another animation documentary, *A is for Autism* (1987) by Tim Webb which explores the condition of autism through the medium of animation. As the theorist Paul Wells notices, „Animation is a particularly appropriate medium with which to reveal the condition of autism because it can represent in itself the introspective results of self-absorbed imaginative activity which is part of the distanced psychology of the autistic thinking."(Wells, 1998: 124)

Probably one of the films that most efficiently employed this method is *Zero Impunity* by Nicholas Blies and Stephane Huebert Blies, an extraordinary indictment of „rape as a weapon of war". Several torture methods are mentioned, which include sexual humiliation, documented with archival footage of recent history abuses such as in Guantanamo

Zero impunity by Nicholas Blies and Stephan Huebert Blies

or during the Syrian war or in Russian-Ukranian confrontations. The traumas caused by violence against women are often invoked, such as in Sheila Sofiani's *Survivors* (1997), that makes use of real interviews with victims of domestic violence. According to film critic Giannalberto Bendazzi the characteristics of this film can be described in the following:

> The film is graphically illustrated with minimal line animation, evoking experiences that are harrowing(…)It includes voices of clinical therapists, acting as a mental health public service, yet also resists the level of art." (Bendazzi, 2017: 36)

Although Sheila Sofiani's film is made before *Waltz with Bashir*, the presence of the therapist places it in the same category of animated documentary which try to heal collective traumas.

ROMANIAN APPROACHES

The Anim'est Festival contributed vigorously to reviving the forces of Romanian animation in the new millennium, new authors presented their first works there. But the major recognition of the new Romania talents came from the most important festival on global animation map: the Crystal Prize for Best Feature Film at the Annecy International Animation Film Festival (Cannes Film Festival of animation) won in 2012 by Anca Damian with *Crulic – the Path to Beyond/ Crulic – drumul spre dincolo/Crulic*. Later awarded at other important competitions, in Locarno, Istanbul, Seoul, Cottbus, Anca Damian's film (a co-production with Poland) is important not only for the aforementioned recognitions, but also because it represents one of the major animation trends of the new millennium: the hybridization of animation with documentary. Based on a real case, the film tells the story of Claudiu Crulic, a Romanian convicted of a robbery he did not commit and imprisoned, without hope, in Poland. After his efforts to clarify his situation fail, Crulic goes on hunger strike only to be ignored by both Romanian and Polish authorities and dies in prison. The narration of events never slips into melodrama, with humour always on its side, highlighted superbly by actor Vlad Ivanov's voiceover.

The originality of the feature film put together by Anca Damian together with the young animators on the team is also noted by French critic Stéphane Dreyfus:

> An implacable indictment against a Kafkaesque judicial system, *Crulic* was initially intended as a documentary. But the Romanian director preferred the language of animation that «gave her the freedom to tell this story in the most personal and expressive way possible». (…) Told through first person singular narration, the story lets Claudiu Crulic's memories unfold, each fragment corresponding to a different animation technique (cut out paper, painted photographs, comic strip, etc). Little by little, the silhouette grows faint until the outlines disappear completely. (Dreyfus 2012)

Magic mountain by Anca Damian

The formula of the animated documentary seems to have agreed with the director Anca Damian, who had a solid background in the field of documentary. The second animated docu-drama she made, *The Magic Mountain/ Muntele magic* (2016, a Romania-France-Poland co-production, distinguished with over twenty international and national awards) is also based on a real biography, that of Polish Adam Jacek Winkler, a political refugee in the 1960s in Paris, known as a photographer and mountaineer artist who became a hero in the 1980s when fighting in Afghanistan with the mujahideen against the Soviets, under captain's Massoud orders. The script, co-signed by Anca Damian and Anna Winkler, the main character's daughter, steers clear from portraying Winkler as a noble knight, drawing attention to the contradictions of his existence. There are moments of humorous counterpoint in this film as well, which show how the man who climbed Mont-Blanc – the heroic fighter in Afghanistan, who lived with the idea of saving the world – perishes in a solitary ascent on the Mont Maudit mountain.

In the feature-lenght film *Magic Mountain* the director enriches her tools, mixing different animation techniques: cel animation, cut-outs, claymation, animated photos, including footage shots discovered in amateur films or newreels. Based on a extent documentation, the film traces Winkler's path, by referring all the time to relevant political and historical contexts. It includes newsreels fragments about the Vietnam War, the invasion of Czechoslovakia or the movements for civil rights of young people in Europa of the year 1968.

The narrative includes self-reflective moments such the allusions to classic films, from Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkine*, to the death of the hero in the Polish drama *Ashes and Diamonds/ Popiol i diament* by Andrzej Wajda. Based on the cooperation of animators from Romania and Poland, *Magic Mountain* builds his visual story on authentic items: drawings, paintings and photos created by the Polish fighter included in a very attractive collage. These are piece of the „real life"of the hero, that deliver the expected „truth" about Adam Jacek Winkler.

The animated documentary format became seductive and familiar for other Romanian directors, more and more interested to mix authentic events with their subjective reception mediated through animation. After Damian's breakthrough in the Annecy festival, another important distinction went to a young man who also worked on *The Magic Mountain* team: Sergiu Negulici. He won here, in 2017, the Debut Film Award for the short film *Splendida moarte accident/The Blissful Accidental Death.* Negulici skilfully combined 2D and 3D animation techniques, to evoque an unknown episode of the personal life of Romanian Dada artists starting from the discovery, in recent times, of a love letter hidden behind an old lithograph in an antique shop. Narrated in a suspense tradition, the film describes the author's investigations to discover who was the writer of the hidden letter and their real protagonists. He discovers a 105-year-old woman who is still alive (Medi Dinu), and learns from her details about the Dada artists she had frequented in the 1920s. The authentic voice of the woman intensifies the documentary side of the film, which manages to interweaves autobiographical elements with symbolic representations of the universe of the evoked artists.

Another young artist, Cecilia Felmeri, approaches, in *Matyas, Matyas* (2012) the mixture of authentic interviews with animation representations of the interviwees using the theme of a radio programme that unifies the characters' statements, starting from the same questions: who was Matei Corvin, the prince whose statue is set in a central square of the city Cluj-Napoca. And the interest in animated documentaries continues, with new approaches, as we notice in the claymation short *Sasha and Petre* (2020) by Luca Istodor, inspired by the biography of the film director (specialized in documentary) Petre Sirin.

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On people and waters and canons

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Abstract
The text salutes the restored version of *Black Buffalo Water*(1970) as a much-awaited first step in oficially consolidating a canon of non-fictional Romanian films made before the 2010s.

Keywords
Black Buffalo Water, "Alexandru Sahia" Studio, Romanian documentary, canon, non-fiction, Stere Gulea, EUROPALIA, Iosif Demian, Lucia Olteanu

About this time last year, I was writing on "the fictitious non-fictional canon" of Romanian cinema. While going round and round the exhibition *History in Fragments*, curated by Raluca Velisar and Andrei Rus for EUROPALIA's Romanian edition (Oct 2, 2019 – Dec 2, 2020), an iconoclastic display of documentaries from all times, something suddenly struck me– there is no such thing as a non-fictional canon of pre-2010s Romanian documentary. However vague my previous arguments might seem[1], their main idea looks as legitimate as ever. I'll extract just a few lines which present two illustrative episodes from the 2000s:

> Immediately after the Revolution, but also during the '90s, the situation would become more and more precarious. Then came the 2004 edition of the International Documentary Filmfestival in Amsterdam, where four Romanian directors participated (Alexandru Solomon, Ileana Stănculescu, Florin Iepan, and Dumitru Brudrală) and, on this occasion, released an open letter[2] that highlighted the deplorable state of the documentary film's financing system. In 2008 the *Cele mai bune 10 filme românești / Best 10 Romanian films of all times* collective volume is launched under the coordination of Cristina Corciovescu and Magda Mihăilescu. This is, above all, an honest and almost ridiculously predictable ranking; no one would be surprised by the 10 fiction movies titles listed (all of them by male directors), from Puiu to Daneliuc. In the end there was no trace of documentaries from the 2000s in this ranking.

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Black Buffalo Water, by Andrei Cătălin Băleanu, Petre Bokor, Dan Pița, Mircea Veroiu, Youssouff Aidabi, Roxana Pană, Stere Gulea, Iosif Demian, Nicolae Mărgineanu, Dinu Tănase

Not that one cannot trace a few iconic documentaries which are kept close to a generation's heart or had their 15 minutes of fame from a festival to another – *University Square: Romania* (1990) by Stere Gulea, Vivi Drăgan Vasile and Sorin Ilieșiu or Adina Pintilie's *Don't Get Me Wrong…* (2007). The question should sound different – did any documentary enjoy the very same means of validation that are used to perpetuate the canon of fictional films (lengthy studies, cinematheque screenings, auteurist retrospective, restorations, DVD & VoD releases)?

And when I say national canon, such a firm yet ambiguous term when singularized, I'm not being reductive. If when it comes to Romanian fiction film we need to make a distinction between a "popular" canon and an "art canon"[3], for this specific case, the distinction doesn't hold. Not yet.

To be clear, none of this has to do whatsoever with the quality of Romanian non-fictional cinema, be it produced before, during, or right after communism. Or at least I don't fancy this kind of judgments for now. It has to do rather with a precarious history of the practice, with its "smell" of ideology[4],its restrictions regarding running time (Sahia usually imposed a 10-minute limit), and eventually its lack of validation coming from decisional forums such as those cited above.

The 2010s paved a way to a sense of coherence in non-fictional production. Not only that a handful of features (Andrei Ujică' *The Autobiography of Nicolae Ceaușescu*, Corneliu Porumboiu's *Infinite Football*, Anca Damian's *Crulic*) became festival darlings and critics' fetishes, but the second film of 2018 in terms of audience was the Ro-UK co-production *Untamed Romania* (d. Tom Barton-Humphreys), with 81.426 spectators. The decade's coronation happened last year, 2020, which was unprecedentedly dominated by two documentaries – *Acasă, My Home* (d. Radu Ciorniciuc), and *collective* (d. Alexander Nanau). However, there's one revanchist effort which kept my attention, precisely due to its relative obscurity (the pandemic had a great role in this, no doubt) – the very limited release of a restored version of *Black Buffalo Water* (1970), premiered at Transilvania International Film Festival, screened at the White Night of Romanian Films and eventually presented again by TIFF, this time on their VoD.

For *Black Buffalo Water*holds strong – it has a legend, strong signatures, and a brief episode of conflict with the communist officials. Subtitled "on people and waters – May

1970", the film was baptized by film critics as the manifesto of the 70s generation. In the light of the sorrowful floodings from 1970, a group of young graduates felt the need to respond with their cameras. Andrei Cătălin Băleanu, Petre Bokor, Dan Piţa, Mircea Veroiu, Youssouff Aidabi, Roxana Pană, Stere Gulea, Iosif Demian, Ion Marinescu, Nicolae Mărgineanu, Felicia Pătraşcu, Dinu Tănase, Dan Naum, Bogdan Cavadia, Theodor Mitache, most of these names were about to become of great importance for Romanian cinema, yet it would be a mistake to look for individual contributions in their collective debut. For now, they are just ambitious debutants cruising for opportunities. And making their debut as a collective is a beautiful, if not wholeheartedly respectful way of mirroring the kind of collective tragedy those people experienced. One would (and should) link their decision with a call repeated three times in the last ten minutes, asking all the citizens from Satu Mare to join forces and build new dams.

It all happened in Bucharest Cinema Studios-Buftea, where they were doing small jobs, waiting for something to come. The idea to do the film for the Bucharest Studio and not Sahia was not a mere coincidence – all of them were reticent about the kind of documentaries produced at the time. "Let's make a film about the floods. Sahia will make one for sure, and they will drown it in propaganda. It will turn out how good it is to have floods because they give birth to citizen solidarity!"[5]. The executives – Lucia Olteanu, Ion Brad, and Florian Potra – agreed. One bus, a handful of cameras, no scenario to be approved, and the willingness to listen to people were enough for the film to be born, yet not to be distributed in theatres, which eventually happened next year, in 1971, after Stere Gulea's intervention[6].

What made the film different in the eyes of its makers was the absence of a *voice-over*, which indeed was a tradition at Sahia – either a jolly know-it-all narrator or a literary voice-over. Hearing people speak their minds was by no means a given. Especially in such contexts, when an omniscient voice presenting how the authorities solved the problem would've been expected. There's a sense of continuous discovery in every poetic glimpse put together by the makers. The pictorial takes and alert camera movements, let alone a breathtaking moment when some soldiers discover a body underwater, are here to stay. But styles come and go, obsolescence is always just around the corner. What's truly imperishable is how the filmmakers captured the people's tumult – their gestures, reactions, stories, popular wisdom. If anything, it might be the closest film to the spirit of the direct/vérité tradition. Not to its practice, but to its philosophy. But imperishable ideas are not enough either. An unseen film is a dead film. Consolidating a canon of pre-2010s documentaries might be a losing game in many ways (depends on how we see canons), but before anything else, it would mean bringing back to life a handful of films. And, with the right infrastructure, others could and would follow.

ENDNOTES

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2. Dumitru Budrală, Alexandru Solomon, Florin Iepan, Ileana Stănculescu, "Scrisoare dupa IDFA", *Observatorul cultural*, https://www.observatorcultural.ro/articol/scrisoare-dupa-idfa-2/, published on March 10 2020, last accesed on 20 February 2021.
3. As Mihai Fulger does in his essay "De la curatoriat la canon" / "From curating to canonizing" in Gabriela Filippi /Andrei Gorzo (eds.*), Filmul tranziției: Contribuții la interpretarea cinemaului românesc „nouăzecist"/ The Transition Film: Contributions towards a critique of Romanian 1990s cinema*, Cluj-Napoca: Tact Press, 2017, p. 223.
4. Meaning communist, for only in 1950 – the birth of the studio "Alexandru Sahia" – did an ample production of documentary filmmaking began. But it's also available for films made under fascism (1940-1944), which became untouchable after 1945 – *Our Holy War* (d. Ion Filotti Cantacuzino, 1942).
5. Andrei Rus, Gabriela Filippi, "Stere Gulea: pasiunea pentru formele clasice", *Film Menu*, https://filmmenu.wordpress.com/2014/11/30/interviu-stere-gulea-pasiunea-pentru-formele-clasice/, published on 30 November 2014, last accesed on 22 February 2021.
6. *Ibidem*.

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Four Romanian Nonfiction Contributions to the Filmography of the Holocaust

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Abstract
In this article, we discuss four nonfiction films released by Romanian filmmakers in the 21st century that represent valuable contributions to the rich and varied international filmography of the Holocaust. *Struma* (2001) by Radu Gabrea, *Odessa* (2013) by Florin Iepan, *The Dead Nation* (2017) by Radu Jude, and *The Exit of the Trains* (2020) by Radu Jude and Adrian Cioflâncă, ranging from standard television documentary to innovative cinematic essay, bravely approach dark episodes, largely unknown or ignored, in Romania's recent history.

Keywords
Radu Gabrea, Florin Iepan, Radu Jude, Adrian Cioflâncă, nonfiction film, Holocaust in Romania, Struma disaster, Odessa massacre, Iași pogrom, photography

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Starting with the Soviet newsreel film on the liberation of Rostov (*Soiuzkinozhurnal* no. 114), shot in November 1941, released in the following month, and presenting for the first time on screen the Nazi atrocities against the occupied population, including the murder of Jews (Hicks 2012: 47), the international filmography of the Holocaust has extended to several hundreds, if not thousands of titles across the globe over the last eight decades. Until the beginning of the 21st century, Romanian filmmakers almost never tackled such still sensitive subjects. Their silence corresponded to the general silence from the Romanian public sphere:

> The main obstacle to recognizing the Holocaust in Romania has been an "asymmetric" mode of tackling memory about the Holocaust: in Romania, political factors have been the driving force pushing the acceptance of responsibility for past crimes, while intellectual elites and the general public have mostly oscillated between indifference and varying degrees of reluctance, if not hostility. (Dumitru 2020: 412)

Fortunately, especially in the last years, the Holocaust in Romania was approached in notable nonfiction films, some of them very original.

Struma (2001) is a Romanian nonfiction film produced mainly for television and directed by Radu Gabrea (a filmmaker specializing in Jewish topics) after a screenplay by Stelian Tănase. The director made two versions of the film. The Romanian version, broadcasted in two parts on Antena 1, the TV network that produced *Struma*, has 82 minutes. The English version, aimed at the international market, is 56-minute long. Unfortunately for Gabrea, in the same year, Simcha Jacobovici, an Israeli-Canadian filmmaker whose parents were Holocaust survivors from Iași, made a documentary feature in English on the same topic. Jacobovici's Canadian production, *The Struma*, was better received than the Romanian one, earning selections and awards in major international film festivals (Toronto, Istanbul, Portland, etc.).

Gabrea's nonfiction film is a well-documented reconstruction of an atrocious tragedy: the "Struma disaster", considered by historians the largest exclusively civilian naval disaster of World War II in the Black Sea. The "Struma" ship sailed from Constanța on 12 December 1941, carrying almost 800 Romanian Jews in terrible conditions (witnesses would speak of "Struma" as a "floating coffin"). The destination was Mandatory Palestine, where, through the Balfour Declaration of 1917, "a national home for the Jewish people" had been established. However, after reaching Istanbul, the ship was anchored in quarantine from 15 December 1941 to 23 February 1942. During this time, Great Britain, mandated to control Palestine after World War I, urged the Turkish government to prevent "Struma" from continuing her voyage (as Romania was a member of the Axis, Britain saw the passengers on "Struma" as citizens of an adverse country), while Turkey, then a neutral country, refused to allow the ship's passengers to disembark and travel overland. Finally, the local authorities towed "Struma", with her main engine inoperable, through the Bosphorus strait. Within hours, in the morning of 24 February, following an explosion whose cause

Still from *Struma* by Radu Gabrea

would be revealed a few decades later ("Struma" was torpedoed by a Soviet submarine), the ship sank, killing almost all of the people on board.

The film functions adequately as microhistory supported by official documents, letters, images from the era, and oral history interviews. Gabrea effectively mixes four essential documentary techniques: voice-over narration and commentary, interviews (both "talking heads" and off-screen testimonies), archival footage, and dramatic re-enactments with actors. The authentic documents concerning the history of the Jews on the ship "Struma" transform the nonfiction film into a source of historical investigation. Besides interviewing experts and persons somehow connected to the disaster, the director uses a crucial video document obtained from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum: the testimony of businessman David Stoliar, the then-18-year-old only survivor from "Struma". In the film, this testimony is fundamental to understanding the human side of tragedy.

Gabrea's *Struma* integrates the story of the Jews refugees eager to reach Palestine in the macabre historical context of the era dominated by the "Final Solution to the Jewish Question" ("Endlösung der Judenfrage"), implemented as a project to exterminate European Jews at the Wannsee Conference on 20 January 1942. The Romanian version of the "Final Solution" was referred to by marshal Ion Antonescu, the country's wartime dictator, as "land clearing". This abominable project began with the Bucharest pogrom (21-23 January 1941) and Iași pogrom (29 June – 6 July 1941), and was continued by killing Jews in Moldavia, Northern Bukovina, Bessarabia, Odessa, and Transnistria. It is worth mentioning that Gabrea quotes passages from Emil Dorian's *Diary* and inserts photographic evidence of

the Iași pogrom. Radu Jude would later use the same sources in *The Dead Nation* (2017) and *The Exit of the Trains* (co-directed by Adrian Cioflâncă, 2020), both discussed below.

Reviewing Gabrea's nonfiction film, Eugenia Vodă asserts: "If the filmmakers do not excel in originality, they excel in tenacity and willingness. The willingness to attack such a topic, with a nebulous and fragile documentary support. The tenacity to research (…) and to try to reconstruct the whole starting from a few bones." (Vodă 2001)

Odessa (2013), a Romanian-German-Ukrainian co-production written and directed by Florin Iepan, is a nonfiction film with a long gestation period. The filmmaker had started his campaign "to bring to surface maybe the most tragic event in our recent history" (as he asserts on screen) in 2009, with the targeted effect to generate the first public debate on Romania's fascist past. In 2011, when he presented a short teaser of his work-in-progress in the framework of the One World Romania documentary film festival in Bucharest, Iepan declared he had some 60 hours of raw footage for the *Odessa* project. In 2013, the final 55-minute version of the film, including a sequence shot during the staged debate held two years ago, had its first official screening at the same festival.

Odessa is a challenging documentary, atypical in Romanian cinema. According to Dana Dumitru, among the recent Romanian films which, "while documenting the Holocaust, depict in parallel the attitudes of contemporary Romanians toward this problematic past", *Odessa* "is perhaps the most daring Romanian documentary of this era". (Dumitru 2020: 414) Iepan seems to have learned a lot from the way Michael Moore provokes his subjects/victims, as well as his audience. Following the American documentary filmmaker's example, *Odessa*'s director appears in front of the camera and assumes the first-person subjective voice in a discourse of both accusation and sought-for repentance in the name of the Romanian state.

The film's narrative trigger, simultaneously an epitome of the country's fascist and antisemitic past, is the Odessa massacre of 22-25 October 1941. On the first day, the Romanian military commander's office was blown up by a mine that Red Army sappers had planted in the building, killing around 100 officers and soldiers, among whom the Romanian commander of the city. The local Jews and Communists became instant scapegoats. In retaliation for the bomb attack, during the next days, over 22,000 Jews, including entire families, were shot, hanged, or burned alive by the Romanian troops, following the direct order of marshal Antonescu, in Odessa and the surrounding towns in the Transnistria Governorate. Then, between November 1941 and March 1942, the Jews held captive in the concentration camps in Transnistria were subjected to a regime of mass extermination. Historians estimate that, during the five months, around 35,000 persons died in these "sites of death", of which the most sinister was the Bogdanovka extermination camp.

As Gabrea, Iepan appeals to the testimony of a survivor. Mikhail Zaslavsky, the last survivor of the Odessa massacre (when he was 16-year-old), was brought to Bucharest in 2011, seventy years after the atrocities. However, at that time, Romanian journalists were more interested in the 90th anniversary of King Michael, who, as Iepan suggests via archival footage, was Antonescu's not-so-innocent accomplice. The marshal himself is subject to controversy: many Romanians still perceive this historical figure as a great

Director Florin Iepan and Sergiu Nicolaescu in *Odessa*

patriot and a national hero, not as a monstrous mass murderer. Antonescu was, in fact, the main reason why Iepan had decided to make a film on the Odessa massacre. In 2006, Romanian Television (TVR) had conducted a public poll to find out who are the "100 Greatest Romanians" of all time (a local version of the British TV show "100 Greatest Britons"). Iepan had participated as a director to the resulting series, "Great Romanians" ("Mari Români"), by making a film portrait of marshal Antonescu. Although Iepan, supported by the historian Adrian Cioroianu, addressed the anti-Semitic and criminal nature of Antonescu's regime, the controversial marshal finished the poll on the sixth position among the "Great Romanians". The voting results prompted the filmmaker to go even further in revealing Antonescu's wartime crimes, thus approaching the Odessa massacre.

With or without Zaslavsky, Iepan, always in hand with the "Final Report of the International Commission of the Holocaust in Romania" (presided by Elie Wiesel), obtains face-to-face meetings or abruptly accosts various politicians, including the former president Emil Constantinescu, and decision-makers, insistently asking them to take a stand on the Odessa massacre. The filmmaker gets invited to TV and radio shows, and he organizes an unattended press conference with the survivor. Among others, Iepan meets Sergiu Nicolaescu, the filmmaker-turned-politician who manipulated the production of historical films in socialist Romania through the so-called "Grand National Epic" and who directed *The Mirror – The Beginning of Truth* (*Oglinda – Începutul adevărului*, 1994), a film extremely apologetic of Antonescu, without mentioning the marshal's involvement in the Holocaust. The octogenarian Nicolaescu listens carefully to Iepan, examines closely the figures in the "Wiesel Report", and admits he may have been wrong about Antonescu. Moreover, as Iepan claims, Nicolaescu (who would die in 2013, before *Odessa*'s premiere) started collaborating with him on the screenplay of a fiction film tackling the same topic.

Still from *The Dead Nation* by Radu Jude

The Dead Nation (*Țara moartă*, 2017) is Radu Jude's first nonfiction film and, at the same time, one of the most original Romanian documentaries. The 83-minute film, internationally premiered in the "Signs of Life" section of Locarno Film Festival, "shows a filmmaker who has discovered a special way of looking at and behind images". (Holzapfel 2017)

In his "documentary-essay", subtitled "Fragments of parallel lives", Jude puts to excellent use over 500 photos on glass plates from the 1930s and 1940s, selected from the fabulous collection of the small-town photographic studio owner Costică Acsinte. These still images are articulated in an apparent chronological succession.

The soundtrack used by the director to accompany the scanned photographs is meant to reveal what is hidden "behind images". First, there are fragments, read by Jude himself in a blank voice, from the *Diary* kept by the Jewish doctor and writer Emil Dorian in Bucharest. For the period 1937-1946, the diaristic document recounts what Acsinte's photos could not fully capture: mainly the rising of antisemitism, the anti-Soviet war, and the atrocities of the Holocaust, followed by the end of World War II and the beginning of the instauration of Soviet-imposed communism in Romania. Second, there are extracts from sound newsreels and other nationalistic propaganda films produced during the same period by the National Cinematographic Office (ONC), as well as relevant radio recordings and songs. The excerpts from the political speeches of Antonescu and Horia Sima, leader of the fascist paramilitary movement "Iron Guard", the old patriotic songs, but also the legionary ones, are popular discourse structures that introduce the viewers/listeners in the ultranationalist, triumphalist atmosphere dominant during the Carlist, national-legionary and Antonescian dictatorships.

So, on the one hand, the written testimony of an individual belonging to an oppressed ethnic group and trying to make sense of what is happening around him and survive. On the other hand, with Antonescu as a key figure again, the official political discourse aimed at legitimizing antisemitism and violence against Jews.

Irina Trocan summarizes the film's concept:

> *The Dead Nation* can theoretically be framed in the essay film, which works through the reapproaching of elements (a photographic archive, a text written for another purpose than that in which it is quoted) to make critically scrutinized the cultural objects or evidence which we have before our eyes. (Trocan 2017: 75)

Through his "special way of looking at (…) images", Jude presents the parallel universe, often exotic, of conformist Romanians, indifferent to the social-political turmoil. However, some of the photos shot by Acsinte in his studio and on location summarily but suggestively show the subjects' obedient attitude towards the state authorities.

How can be called a population that is indifferent to the tragedy of the Jews deprived by the Romanian state, by racial laws, of everything they had – citizenship, properties, social decency –, persecuted, and even massacred? Hence, the film's title. Moreover, the juxtaposition between image and text ends up explaining the perception of the Romanian society – a "dead nation" from an emotional perspective.

Jude has managed to choose the most expressive narratives and the most impressive photographs to contribute to a new culture of memory in Romania. The filmmaker's artistic accomplishments have been remarked by foreign critics as well:

> *The Dead Nation* is a disarmingly simple idea, executed with a bold artistic flair that straddles experimental and more traditional documentary techniques; Jude has pulled off that rare feat of crafting a highly accessible but complex, ambiguous and significant work of cinematic art. (Young 2017)

The Exit of the Trains (*Ieșirea trenurilor din gară*, 2020), written and directed by Jude and historian Adrian Cioflâncă, is the latest Romanian remarkable contribution to the filmography of the Holocaust. The 175-minute nonfiction film had its world premiere in the "Forum" section of the Berlinale. Its title makes obvious reference to Lumière Brothers' *The Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat Station* (*L'Arrivée d'un train en gare de La Ciotat*, 1895), one of the films that imposed the then-new artistic representation of the human reality through cinema. The film by Jude and Cioflâncă talks not about an arrival but about a harrowing, tragic Exitus. By touching on the history of cinema from its beginnings, the title also suggests the necessity for filmmakers to find new ways of cinematically representing the atrocities of recent history (what Jude attempted in *The Dead Nation*, too).

Another innovative Romanian cinematographic work, *The Exit of the Trains* represents an audiovisual memorial of the victims of the Iași pogrom. On 29 June 1941, the Jewish

Still from *The Exist of the Trains* by Radu Jude and Adrian Cioflâncă

residents of the city in Moldavia were rounded up and beaten, while their shops and homes were plundered. Thousands of Jews, particularly men, were shot or crowded onto "death trains" and deported to Podu Iloaiei, Călărași, and Târgu Frumos; most of them died of asphyxiation in the wagons. The total number of victims is estimated at 13,000. Some Germans took part in the pogrom, but most of the perpetrators were Romanian policemen, military officers, soldiers, and civilians. One of the survivors of the pogrom states: "I think almost the entire Iași population took part in the pogrom in some way. It felt almost like a feast day for the civilians".

The first part, "Statements and Testimonies", works as an outstandingly documented "Room of Names" or "exhibition of the dead" (Taylor 2021) and occupies around 90% of the film's duration. The names of the pogrom's victims are listed alphabetically, while their photographs from passports and family albums are shown on screen. At the same time, various sober off-screen voices (of both professional and non-professional actors) tell their stories through fragments extracted from the declarations of relatives, eyewitnesses to the murders, and even a few survivors of the pogrom. Through repetition and accumulation, juxtaposed with the faces of the persons referred to, the scale of the pogrom and the number of victims stop being abstractions, they gain concrete form.

The film's second part, "Images", provides, at an appropriate pace, photographs of Jews (including whole families) rounded up, arrested, guarded, robbed, maltreated, humiliated, shot, piled up, and left in the street to die, all against a background of grave silence. What else could be said?

The filmmakers' use of still photos brings to mind Jude's *The Dead Nation*.

> However, here the filmmaker opts for the next degree of purification, which regards the soundtrack: instead of several sources that come from

> different discursive contexts and create a complex fabric, the texts from *The Exit of the Trains* succeed each other in a disciplined manner, they are clearly connected to the image and subject to the precise rules of enunciation specific to the type of official communication to which they belong. Moreover, with a few notable exceptions, these testimonies seem to spring from a common wound, from the very being of a paradigmatic figure (a woman, as women were generally the ones who survived the pogrom) who embodies not only the totality of the victims of the massacres against the Jews, but any civilian population hit by the disaster, in any place and at any time. (Chapelan 2000: 24)

As Meredith Taylor notices, the film transcends the limitations of the documentary:

> *The Exit of the Trains* is far more than a mere documentary: it is a witness report of how humans suddenly lose their humanity and descend into depravity. What sort of people put petrol into water bottles, then charge inflated prices to revel in the pain and slow death of their captives. (Taylor 2021)

Across the world and in Romania as well, "the continual arrival of new films on certain subjects which refuse to go away, like the Holocaust" (Chanan 2007: 270) testifies that we still have a lot to learn from the past. The dark episodes, largely unknown or ignored, related to Romania's participation to World Ward II on the side of the Axis and to the ethnic cleansing in the country or outside its borders (the Bucharest and Iași pogroms, the Odessa massacre, etc.), cannot be hidden under the carpet anymore. As the filmmakers discussed above prove it, such horrendous events can be approached bravely and innovatively, with emphasize on the human dimension of the tragedy, and the resulted nonfiction films can serve as effective educational tools for the young generations.

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Romanian Jews and their International Recognition in the Cinema World

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Abstract
This study is dedicated to those Jews from Romania who established themselves as international filmmakers or important figures of the international cinema industry with remarkable film contributions in Turkey, Germany, France, and the USA, where they won four Oscars and eight nominations. Therefore, we can talk about Romanian Jews as personalities who left a mark on the cinema field and whose work entered world film culture. The article will document how, until WWII, Jews were a large minority in Romania, able to create a distinct culture with by establishing the world's first Yiddish language theatre, while also having an important contribution to Klezmer music. The article also looks at documentaries mirroring the emigration of Romanian Jews to Israel.

Keywords
Film history, Romanian Jews, Sephardi, Ashkenazi, Yiddish, antisemitism, pogrom, emigration, Klezmer, Yiddish-language theatre, minority culture

A COMPREHENSIVE EXPRESSION: "ROMANIAN JEWS"

Terms such as German (Strauss, 1971), Austrian (Hope, 2015) or Hungarian Jews (Portuges, 2012: 4) have been often used in a cultural context. Considering the relevance of the cinematic activity of several Jews originating from Romania, from here on I will use the phrase "Romanian Jews".

How can we explain the fact that a series of famous Jewish filmmakers such as Lupu Pick, Otto Preminger, Lewis Milestone, Samuel Bronston, Bernard Natan Tanenzeff, Edward G. Robinson and others originate from Romania?

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A second, more important question that arises is whether these people are mereley linked by their origin or they do have the consciousness of a common culture or at least the memory of some Romanian influences. A third problem is how we approach these issues which are extremely sensitive for both Jews and Romanians.

THE HISTORY OF HEBREWS IN ROMANIA

First of all we must consider the large number of Hebrews who lived in Romania in the first half of the 20th century. The first Jews in Romania were Romaniotes, initially speaking Yevanic and later on modern Greek. They were followed by Ladino[1] speaking Sephardi Jews who were expelled from Spain and Portugal, in 1492. Soon after that, in the 16th century, the first wave of Ashkenazi Jews (Iancu, 1978: 14) followed. They were Yiddish[2]speakers who took refuge in Moldavia due to the persecutions they had faced in Poland.

After the 1774 Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, in the Romanian principalities Wallachia and Moldavia, many Ashkenazi Jews alongside other foreigners but also some Romanians placed themselves under the protection of foreign states (usually the Habsburg Monarchy, Imperial Russia, and France) in exchange for particular services or payment. They were called "sudiți"[3]. After the Treaty of Adrianople in 1829 which allowed Wallachia and Moldavia to engage in foreign trade, many *sudiți* became wholesale businessmen who formed guilds (Giurescu 1966: 114, 115, 288). The young Romanian state, originally still a vassal of the Ottoman Empire (1859 — 1878), did not grant citizenship to Jews on the grounds that it was defined as an Orthodox state, and Catholics, Protestants, Muslims and Jews were not considered Romanian citizens, but Austrian, German or Ottoman subjects[4].

From the second half of the 18th century and especially in the first part of the 19th century, due to the worsening situation of the Jews in Galicia (after 1772 part of the Austrian Empire) a new wave of Jews took refuge in Moldavia and Transylvania, where the authorities were more tolerant (Eskenasy, 1986: 141-144).

The Jews first came to this area as merchants, credit suppliers and physicians (Gyemant, 2002: 86). However, the Jews in Habsburg Transylvania and Romanian Principalities were seldom treated with real tolerance. According to the 1783 Edict of tolerance for Hungary, issued by Emperor Joseph II, the Jews were asked to integrate into the general educational system, to introduce Latin, German or Hungarian languages in their official or business records and to adopt German names. The Civil Code issued in 1864 by Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza, the first ruler of the newly united Romanian State, permitted the Jews to obtain individual naturalization after a ten-year residence (Gyemant, 2002: 90-91; Berindei, 1993> 133-149). But its provisions lasted until the 1866 Constitution.

The number of Hebrews grew considerably especially after 1878, when — according to the Berlin Treaty — the great powers imposed the amendment of Article 7 of the 1866 Constitution, granting Romanian citizenship to the Jews, including those newly established in the country[5]. Therefore, by the end of the century, according to the 1899 census, the number of the Jews in Romania doubled, reaching 269,015, and representing 4.5% of the total population (Gyemant, 2002: 90). The same census shows that the Israelites made

up 19% of Romania's urban population. According to the 1930 census, from a total of 18 million inhabitants of Romania, the 728.000 Hebrews represented 4% of the entire population and were the third minority, after Hungarians and Germans (Anuarul statistic, 1940: 62-63). Moreover, if we analyze the urban population, we find that in several small towns in northeastern Romania, such as Fălticeni and Dorohoi (Adăscăliței, 2010), the majority of the population was Jewish, while in Bucharest almost 11%, in Cluj 13% (Gidó, 2015: 46) and in Iași (Jassy) almost 34% were Jews.

In 1945, approximately 350,000 Jews still lived in Romania. By 1952, about 100,000 Jews had migrated to Israel. Between 1958 and 1965, another 107,540 Jews left Romania (Both, 2015). According to the 2011 census, there are still 3,271 Jews in Romania (Recensământul populației, 2011).

ANTISEMITISM AND POGROMS IN ROMANIA

Antisemitism was officially enforced under the premierships of Ion Brătianu. During his first years in office (1875), Brătianu reinforced and applied old discrimination laws, insisting that Jews were not allowed to settle in the countryside (and relocating those that had done so), while declaring many Jewish urban inhabitants to be vagrants and expelling them from the country[6]. Beginning with 1875, several voices expressed their concern about the decrease of the Romanians' share to the detriment of the Jews in urban population. Thus, the Primary Doctor of Iaşi, G. Flaişen, claimed in 1875: "In 50 years there will be no more Christians in the city of Iaşi and the whole population will be made up only of Israelites". In 1880, Doctor C.I. Istrati lamented: "A few years ago it was said that Iași would become a Jewish city. The fact is fulfilled. The same can now be said of Bucharest, which is tinged with all sorts of foreigners, but especially with Jews (…).The head and heart of the country being alienated, the body will naturally follow this trend. Half of this body is rotted by Jewish gangrene. The rest is littered with Bulgarians and Greeks" (Florescu, 2015). Of course, such considerations reflect both ultra-nationalism and anti-Semitism that will come to the surface especially around WWII[7].

In 1938, under the government of Octavian Goga, Decree no. 169 was issued, revising the citizenship of 617,396 Jews. Only 392,172 (63.50%) retained their Romanian citizenship, the rest becoming "foreigners without a passport" and receiving identity certificates valid for one year, with the possibility of extension.

In 1940, at the proposal of the first minister Ion Gigurtu, King Carol II signed the Decree on the legal status of Jews in Romania, according to which: those born of mixed marriages were also defined as Jews; military duty was replaced by fiscal obligation; Jews were forbidden to own rural properties and to bear Romanian names; Jewish officials were removed and segregation in all levels of education was established. A second decree in the same year forbade marriages between Jews and Romanians (Iancu, 2000: 263). Basically, these laws copied the Nuremberg laws.

During WWII, three pogroms took place in Romania. In the pogrom in Dorohoi (1940), 53 Jews were killed, in the pogrom in Iași (1941) 13,266 Jews perished, while in

the pogrom in Bucharest (1941), 120 Jews were killed. In Dorohoi and Iași Romanian army soldiers were involved, while in Bucharest policemen and other members of the paramilitary organization "Iron Guard" acted in response to the removal of the legionary government from power by General Ion Antonescu. The bloodiest action of the Romanian army took place during the occupation of Odessa in 1941. Following an explosion of a bomb installed by members of the resistance, 62 Romanian soldiers and officers were killed, including General Ion Glogojanu, the city's military commander, along with four German officers. The Romanian military authorities launched reprisals that consisted of the indiscriminate killing of 5,000 civilians, most of them Jews (Ioanid, 2019: 502).

THE JEWISH CULTURE IN ROMANIA AND ITS EARLIEST INSTITUTIONS IN THE WORLD

In addition to the significant number of Jewish population, it should be noted that until WWII, Romania was a country in which the Hebrews managed to integrate and lay the foundations of their own culture (Gansberg, 2004:2)[8]. In 1876, Abraham Goldfaden (1840-1908) founded in Iași what is generally credited as the world's first professional Yiddish-language theatre troupe[9]. On the other hand, Rosh Pinah, the first Jewish settlement in the Palestine, was founded by the Romanian Jew Moshe David Shub (1854 — 1938) in 1882 after the Zionist Congress of Focșani. There "Hatikva" was sung for the first time. Today it is the national anthem of the State of Israel, based on a Romanian folk song. The author of the music is the Romanian Jew Samuel Cohen (1870 — 1940), who remembered that he adapted a traditional song he had heard in Romania, "The Ox-Driven Cart". Moreover, the lyrics of "Hatikva" were written in 1878 by Naftali Herz Imber (1856 — 1909) while he was visiting Romania (HaCohen)[10]. However, at the beginning of the 20th century, most Jews from Romania, approximately 70,000, migrated to USA (Gansberg, 2004: 3).

Klezmer is a musical tradition of the Ashkenazi Jews of Eastern Europe, which originally consisted mainly of dance tunes and instrumental display pieces for weddings and other celebrations. In the United States, the genre evolved considerably as Yiddish-speaking Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, who arrived between 1880 and 1924, came into contact with American jazz. It is thought to have originated largely in 19th century Bessarabia[11], where the bulk of today's traditional repertoire was written and one can feel a strong influence of the Gypsy musicians ("lăutari")[12].

After 1940, even in the harsh conditions of a pro-fascist government and the beginning of systematic persecution, the Jews in Romania managed to defend their institutions to a certain extent. Wilhelm Filderman (1882 — 1963), leader of the Jewish communities, successfully used the fact that he had been a high school classmate of the country's leader, Marshal Ion Antonescu[13]and exercised his legal skills with talent, obtaining some concessions, for example the fact that Jews from the old territories of Romania were not sent to concentration camps and were not obliged to wear the Star of David on their clothes (Final Report, 2014: 242). On the other hand, in 1941, as a result of a policy of isolation, they

Aliyah Da Da, directed by Oana Giurgiu

founded the Jewish high school[14] and the Barașeum Theatre (Final Report, 2014: 243) in Bucharest. Later, the communist government of Romania took pride in these institutions which were among the first of their kind in the world (!). The Jewish Theatre still stands and has a regular repertoire.

Beginning with 1940, the Romanian authorities allowed the Hebrews to leave for Palestine (Florian, 2012). However, "a statistic of the captaincy of the port of Constanța regarding the transport of emigrants, in the period 1940 — 1941, shows that only 23% were Jews from Romania" (Florian, 2012: 1). Moreover, the Romanian Jews had to face a tragedyin 1941. The ship "Struma" was torpedoed by a Soviet submarine near Istanbul and it is estimated that 768 Jews who were allowed to leave for Mandatory Palestine drowned and only one survived (Uzunoglu, 2018).

In the documentary *Aliyah Da Da* (2015, Romania, Oana Giurgiu) a Hebrew originating from Romania summarizes the drama of Jewish emigrants by recalling "mixed feelings of love and hatred for Romania". A relevant example of that is Edward J. Robinson's autobiography (Robinson, Spigelglass, 1973). Edward G. Robinson (Emanuel Goldenberg) was born in Bucharest. In his autobiography, after explaining the appearance of anti-Semitic laws in Eastern Europe (Robinson, Spigelglass, 1973: 6) and recounting how his brother Jack was severely injured after being hit in the head with a stone, he statesthat papa Morris did not want to emigrate because he considered Bucharest his home (Robinson, Spigelglass, 1973: 9). Although he arrived in New York at the age of ten, old Edward G. Robinson recounts from his memories of Bucharest the first film and theatre performance he watched, the cafés (Robinson, Spigelglass, 1973: 8) and especially the gourmet food which he considered much better than the one in Hollywood until the end of WWI: "Bucharest was famous for its gourmet food because it combined the cuisine of both East and West […] You know, there wasn`t decent delicatessen in Hollywood until the end of World War II" (Robinson, Spigelglass, 1973: 8 and 120). Of course, his mother Sarah, a good cook, managed to strengthen his memories with the help of home cooked dishes.

The song "Rumenye, Rumenye" ("Romania, Romania"), quite well known in the USA in the 40's, is a magnificent mirror of the Jews' longing for the lands where they were born

and contains an enumeration of the pleasures, especially culinary, offered by Romania which they remember in a pure hedonistic way:

> "Ah, Romania, Romania, Romania!
> The old-time Romania,
> The pre-war Romania,
> Just imagine such a Romania!
> What a wonderful, beautiful country!
>
> Ah, Romania, Romania, Romania!
> The Romania where my grandfather was born,
> The Romania where he spent his childhood,
> We heard so many stories about that Romania!
> Where else can one find such a wonderful, beautiful country?
>
> To live there is a pleasure!
> Whatever your heart desires, you can get it!"[15]

The following verses until close to the end list Romania's delights: "mamaligele" ("mămăligă", polenta in Romanian), "pastramele" ("pastramele", pastramy in Romanian), "karnatsele" ("cârnați", sausages in Romanian), "kashkaval" ("cașcaval", cheddar cheese in Romanian), "kastravet" ("castravete", cucumber in Romanian), "patlozhele" ("pătlăgele", tomatoes in Romanian), "barbulyes" ("barabule", potatoes in Romanian), as well as Romanian wine and women.

The author of the song was Aaron Lebedeff (1875-1960). He was a Jewish artist originally from Belarus and wrote the song in 1941, in New York. In 1923 he played in an Yiddish satirical play — "The Romanian Wedding" ("Di rumenishekhasene"), by Moshe Schorr. 18 years later, under the influence of the sweet recollections of the Jews originating from Romania, he composed "Rumenye, Rumenye", a song that had huge success in America (Dragomir, 2019).

We have to add two of the most famous Jews from Romania: painter Marcel Janco/ Iancu (1895 — 1984) and writer Tristan Tzara (1896 — 1963), who were among the founders of Dadaism and the first artistic avant-garde.

Obviously, the Ashkenazi Jews in Romania and the territories inhabited by Romanians before they were annexed by Romania (Bukovina, Bessarabia and Transylvania) and the ones from Poland and Ukraine (Galicia) were a community of several million people based, for a while, on the common language — Yiddish. Only Jews who had left Galicia and did not obtain Romanian citizenship did not feel themselves connected with our country. Instead, those who emigrated from Romania to Israel in the last few decades still speak Romanian more than Yiddish or Hebrew, and even many in the second generation born in Israel still consider themselves Romanian Jews.

CONNECTIONS AND MUTUAL HELP BETWEEN FILMMAKERS WITH ROMANIAN ORIGIN

An important detail has yet to be noticed. In France, between 1931 — 1941, no less than six filmswith two Romanian names in the opening credits (usually actors and producers) were made[16]. Moreover, *Tricoche et Cacolet* (1938, Pierre Colombier) and *La tragédie impériale* (1938, Marcel L'Herbier) have five or four names in their opening credits: actors Elvire Popesco and Alexandre Mihalesco, alongside Bernard Natan, Emile Natan and Joseph Spigler as producers, respectively actors Harry Baur, Janny Holt, Alexandre Mihalesco and Jean Yonnel.In *Un grand amour de Beethoven* (1936, Abel Gance) starred three actors of Romanian origin: Janny Holt, Samson Fainsilber and Lucas Gridoux.

Obviously, the credits of some French films before WWII including several Romanian names prove that there was a large number of French filmmakers of Romanian origin. On the other hand, these names indicate a collaboration and mutual help between Romanians and Romanian Jews who had emmigrated to France. Some of these people were perhaps friends, some had knownone another before, but at the same time they all competed for roles. However, the Romanian language and memories of the country could bring them closer. It is clear that we are dealing with a subject that deserves to be studied more closely.

Despite his typical Romanian first name, his several visits to Romania and the fact that he produced four films by Lucian Pintilie, French producer Marin Karmitz confessed in an interview: "Until 1992, when I discovered Lucian Pintilie, I had no connection with Romania. There were not many opportunities for me to be interested in the films from Ceaușescu's time. The first Romanian film I watched was *The Oak* by Lucian Pintilie. From that moment I began to work with Lucian Pintilie and we made four films together." (Tupa, 2018). Although, like Edward J. Robinson, he left Romania early, at the age of 9, andcherishes his memories from his childhood in Bucharest: "Despite the war and anti-Jewish measures, fear, and permanent violence, I had a happy childhood. Jews were not allowed to go to school, so I did not go to school until after I arrived in France. I kept many images from those moments, images related to violence, but also happy sequences." (Tupa, 2018).

ROMANIAN TOPICS IN THE FILMS OF SOME FILMMAKERS ORIGINATING FROM ROMANIA

We can find three German films and two American ones (*Trouble in Paradise*, 1932, Ernst Lubitsch, respectively *Hold Back the Dawn*, 1941, Mitchell Leisen) inspired by the adventures of the real con artist of Romanian origin George Manolescu (1871 — 1911), an intelligent criminal who claimed to be an aristocrat (under the false name "Prince Lahovari") and blended in the most exclusive circles for a long time without being suspected of burglary (Căplescu, 2016). The directors, especially the screenwriters, sometimes seem to be Jewish, aware of Romanian realities[17].

In the comedy *Irma la Douce* (1963, USA, Billy Wilder) we meet a dubious character of Romanian origin, settled in the Paris brothel district, bistro owner Constantinescu, better known as "Moustache", played by Lou Jacobi, an actor specialized in ethnic roles. The

character is a crook who claims to have had a lot of interesting jobs before; the references to these episodes in his biography always end with the same line: "But that's another story." The action of the film is intimately related to Moustache, who ultimately proves his multiple talents. He helps the former police officer in love to disguise himself as an English lord, lends him money to become Irma's only client (Shirley MacLaine), becomes his lawyer and accomplice in the escape, and even acts as an obstetrician helping Irma to give birth. The creation of such a character, a prototype of the clever and boastful Romanian, is due to the co-writer of Jewish Romanian origin I.A.L. Diamond[18].

IMPORTANT FILMMAKERS OF ROMANIAN JEWISH DESCENT BORN IN ROMANIA

Sigmund Weinberg (1867 or 1868 — probably 1936)[20] was a Romanian citizen who opened the first cinema theatre in Istanbul (1908) and shot the first films made in Turkey. Turkish historians consider *The Demolition of the Yesilkoy Victory Monument at St.Stephen / Ayastefanos'taki Rusabides ininyikilisi*(1914) by Sigmund Weinberg or Fuat Uzkinay as the first Turkish documentary film. In 1914 he was appointed manager and main cameraman of the Turkish Army Film Studio (MOSD). With the help of Fuat Uzkinay and of some Austrian and German technicians he shot the first films dedicated to the Turkish army and the operations on the front of WWI. It is Weinberg again together with Uzkinay who, in 1916, started filming the first Turkish feature film *Leblebici Horhor Aga*, an adaptation of the comedy with the same title by Dikran Cuhacyan and Tekfor Nalyan.However, they were not able to finish it because of the death of one of the leading actors. Later he tried an adaptation of another comedy, *The Marriage of Himmet Aga/ Himmet aganinizdivaci*, a local version of Molière's "The Forced Marriage" but he had to stop again when some of his actors were recruited. What is more, he himself had to return to Romaniain 1916, when the hostilities between Turkey and Romania started. There is evidence that cameran Uzkinay finished the film after the war with the help of Reshad Ridvan Bey as director, and they showed their work to the public. Unfortunately both films are lost (Evren, 1995).

Jenö Janovics (1872 — 1945) was a great Hungarian filmmaker of Jewish origin. After 1918, as administrator of the National Theatre in Cluj[21], as well as theater director, Janovics staged Romanian playwrights. In 1919 he founded Transylvania Studio in Cluj. He produced 38 films and directed 33, of which *The Nightmare/ A világrém /Din groazele lumii*(1920), received a grant from the Romanian Ministry of Health because it depicted the ravages of syphilis and was made with the help of Romanian biologist Constantin Levaditti (1874 — 1953).

German film director Lupu Pick (1886 — 1931) was born in Iași from a Jewish Austrian father and a Romanian mother (Morgenstern, 2011: 637). In Germany he asserted himself as a filmmaker in the era of silent film and a promoter of Kammerspiel.

Bernard Natan (NatanTannenzaft, 1886 — 1942) was the owner of Pathé-Cinema from 1928 to 1935, and the producer of 43 fiction films. His brother Emile Natan (1906 — 1962) produced 35 films in France. Both brothers were born in Iași. Bernard died in

Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp, while his brother survived the war.

Lewis Milestone (Lev Milstein, 1895 — 1980) was born in Kishinev but raised in Odessa and educated in Belgium and Berlin. He emigrated in 1917 in order to avoid being drafted into the Russian army during WWI. His parents and brother remained in Kishinev until WWII, when his brother was killed (Robinson, 2019:12). Although "Kishinev was closely related to Romania, its neighbour to the west, and many of the city's inhabitants spoke Romanian, Milestone's family, however, was Russian-speaking, and Russian was his native tongue, as Russian was the language of education, culture, and administration throughout the Russian empire. He also knew some Yiddish, spoken among the Jewish population." (Robinson, 2019:12-13).

Lewis Milestone won two Oscars as best director for *Two Arabian Knights* (1927) and *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930), as well as a nomination at the same category for *The Front Page* (1931).

I.A.L.Diamond (1920 — 1988) born in Ungheni[22], was a trusted collaborator and friend of Billy Wilder. He won an Oscar and two nominations with Wilder for their screenplays of *The Apartment* (1961), respectively *Some Like It Hot* (1959) and *The Fortune Cookie* (1966), as well as a Golden Globe nomination for the screenplay of *Avanti!* (1973).

Samuel Bronston (Samuil Bronschtein, 1908 — 1994) received a Golden Globe as producer of *El Cid* (1961). In USA he tried to hide the details of his earlier life in Europe, such as his birth place(Ungheni), his short-term imprisonment in France and, most of all, the fact that he was a cousin of Lev Trotsky (Zegarac, 2008).

Director Otto Preminger (1905 — 1986) was born in Vyzhnytsia[23], while producer Ingo Preminger (1911 — 2006), his brother, was born in Czernowitz (Cernăuți)[24]. Otto was twice nominated at the Academy Awards for the best director for *The Cardinal* (1963) and *Laura* (1944) and once for the best film, *Anatomy of a Murder* (1959). Ingo received a nomination for the best picture, *MASH* (1970).

Edward G. Robinson aka Emanuel Goldenberg (1893 — 1973) was born in Bucharest. In 1973 he received an honorary Oscar, accepted by his widow Jane Robinson on his behalf.

The French producer Marin Karmitz was born in 1938 in Bucharest. He was nominated for Oscar in 1967 together with Vladimir Forgency for *Adolescence* at the category best documentary, short subjects.

If we count all the awards of the American Film Academy and the nominations obtained by Jewish filmmakers from Romania, we will reach four Oscars and eight nominations.

AMERICAN FILMMAKERS OF ROMANIAN JEWISH DESCENT

It would be interesting to further study the families of some American filmmakers who have Jewish parents or grandparents from Romania. Actor and producer Stan Lee (1922 — 2018) was the son of Romanian Jewish immigrants; actress Lauren Bacall (1924 — 2014) was the daughter of a Romanian Jewish immigrant and her father descended from Polish Jews; actor Harvey Keitel is the son of a Romanian Jewish mother and a Polish

Jewish father; actress Fran Drescher comes from an Ashkenazi Jewish family (from Ukraine, Russia, and Romania), and so does actor Dustin Hoffman, while actress Natalie Portman was born in Jerusalem to parents who are both of Ashkenazi Jewish descent, while her great-grandmother from her father's side was born in Romania.

Stan Lee confessed that "My father was from Romania, but he never told me about it and I never had the chance to go there. He never spoke to us in Romanian …" (Dobrescu, 2011). Conversely, Natalie Portman values her Jewish roots and especially her great-grandmother in Romania: "<She spied for the British, travelling through Europe,> Portman says. <She was blonde, so she could totally pass as a non-Jew. But men would always try to pick her up because she was a gorgeous young woman… I'll show you.> Portman pulls out a wallet, and from inside that an old photograph of two women: <This is a picture of her taken in Romania with her best friend. A couple of years younger than me…>" Her grandfather came to Israel, expecting to bring his family later. There was no later; history swept it away. His parents were taken to Auschwitz. This is the environment within which Portman grew up." (Heath, 2011). After such an emotional revelation, it is hard to say whether it is a trifle or a significant detail that Lauren Bacall used to offer her guests stuffed cabbage[25]cooked by her Romanian Jewish grandmother (Bacall, 2005: 57)[26].

CONCLUSIONS

It is quite natural for Romanian Jews to have forged a distinct minority culture, just as the ones created by Hungarians and Germans, the other two important minorities in Romania. Hungarians in Romania are proud of the painter and photographer Carol Popp de Szathmári, of the composer Tiberiu Olah, known especially for his film music scores, but especially of the actors beginning with Béla Lugosi and up to György Kovács and Anna Széles. In turn, the Germans in Romania are represented by the vanguardist sculptor Ingo Glass, the writer Herta Müller (the winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2009), Johnny Weissmuller (Tarzan's best-known performer[27]), as well as the director Robert Dornhelm, whose documentary film *The Children of Theatre Street* was nominated for an Oscar in 1977.

Probably most Romanians and Romanian Jews today feel a satisfaction because some of the matters discussed in this paper, which are no longer ignored or distorted, have become well-known internationally. The general public is now familiar with them due to their use as sources of ispiration for movies.

The first films about Jews in Romania *Manasse* (1925, Jean Mihail) and *Leiba Zibal* (1930, Ion Niculescu-Brună and Alexandru Ștefănescu) are adapted from the play of the same name (1900) by Ronetti Roman (Aron Blumenfeld), respectively the short story "An Easter Torch" (1890) by Ion Luca Caragiale. They both date from the silent period and had several local Jewish actors in the cast. In the case of the former one, the play was successful, but was labeled by some as "assimilationist" (Wratislavius, 1931) when it premiered in 1901. In 1906 it was banned (Molea, 2010). The film *Leiba Zibal* contains a love rivalry between a Jew and his Romanian servant and only keeps the names and characters

Struma, by Radu Gabrea

from the short story, losing Caragiale's atmosphere and charm. The film was criticized for "distorting" the content (Vițeanu, 1930) and this contributed to it being ignored so that it ended up being distributed only in the province (Cantacuzino, 1998: 23).

For a long time, practically the only film depicting the fate of Romanian Jews during WWII was *The 25th Hour/ La vingt-cinquième heure*(1967,France-Italy-Yugoslavia, Henri Verneuil), an adaptation of the novel of the same name (1949) by the Romanian exiled writer Constantin Virgil Gheorghiu. Although the National Film Archives had a copy, the film could be watched by the general Romanian public only on TV, during the first days of the 1989 Revolution.

Recently, the emigration of Romanian Jews to Israel became the subject of the documentary *Alyiah Da Da* (2015, Romania, Oana Giurgiu), while the situation of Jews around WWII, respectively during the conflagration, are mirrored in the fiction films *Scarred Hearts* (2016, Romania, Radu Jude) and *Train of Life* (1998, France-Belgium-Netherlands-Israel-Romania, Radu Mihăileanu). Romanian director Radu Gabrea made several documentaries about the disaster of the ship Struma in 1942, about the first Yiddish theatre founded by Abraham Goldfaden, and about Klezmer music (*Struma*, 2001; *Goldfaden's Legacy;* 2004; *Romania! Romania!*, 2006; *Romania! Romania! II: In Search of Schwartz*, 2008; *Two Worlds in Music*, 2011), as well as *Gruber's Journey* (2008), a fictional film based on the memories of Curzio Malaparte on the Eastern Front, where he was almost miraculously healed by a Romanian Jewish physician.

In *Closer to the Moon* (2014, Romania-USA-Italy-Poland-France), Nae Caranfil depicts an episode in the life of Romanian Jews during the communist period, namely the purges, when many Jews were removed from high positions. Although he was inspired by the 1959 communist educational documentary *Reconstruction* (*Reconstituirea*, Virgil Calotescu)[28], in which the perpetrators were forced to reenact the heist, the director preserves the veracity of the story but first and foremost formulates a personal hypothesis about the reasons for

the robbery at the National Bank in 1959, namely that the former illegal Jewish activists were attempting one last caper. Caranfil seems to be right: what could they do with a few million lei, not foreign currency, in 1959 Romania?

In 2019, a documentary was dedicated to French producer Bernard Natan of Jewish Romanian origin, *Bernard Natan, the Ghost of rue Francoeur*/ *Bernard Natan, le fantôme de la rue Francoeur* (Francis Gendron). The documentary *A Sigmund Weinberg Docu-commentary*/ *Bir Sigmund Weinberg belge-meseli*(Tüfekçi, 2020) by Turkish film historian Savaș Arslan capitalizes on his own latest research on Sigmund Weinberg, as well as on his collaboration with the author of this article.

In 2020 the documentary *A Sigmund Weinberg Docu-commentary* (*Bir Sigmund Weinberg belge-meseli*) (Tüfekçi, 2020) by Turkish film historian Savaș Arslan capitalizes on his own latest research on Sigmund Weinberg, as well as on his collaboration with the author of this article.

ENDNOTES

1. Yevanic is a Greek dialect that contained Hebrew along with some Aramaic and Turkish words.
2. Ladino is an idiom based on old Spanish.
3. Yiddish is a Germanic language with elements of Hebrew, Aramaic and Slavic languages.
4. In Romanian, from Italian "suddito", meaning "subject" or "citizen".
5. https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Istoria_evreilor_din_Rom%C3%A2nia.
6. Article XLIII. "But above all Romanians resented the 'liberty of conscience' article imposed on them in Berlin. In the single humanitarian gesture included in the Treaty, Romania, Montenegro and Serbia were to insert a clause in their constitutions guaranteeing freedom of religion. In Serbia and Montenegro, this served primarily to protect Muslims. In Romania, it was to protect Jews."
7. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_Romania.
8. Radu Jude's documentary *The Dead Nation* (2017, *Țara moartă*) as well as his fiction film *Scarred Hearts* (2016) refer to anti-Semitism in Romania around WWII and the latter is inspired by a novel by Max Blecher.
9. "The Jewish community was well rounded as well. Yiddish theater had its origins in Romania, thanks to the establishment of a troupe in Jassy by Abraham Goldfaden in 1876. The Jews had their own subculture, with foods featuring olive oil and black olives."
10. He was also responsible for the first Hebrew-language play performed in the United States. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham_Goldfaden.
11. See also https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hatikva.
12. Bessarabia (nowadays approximatively Republic of Moldova) was a province of medieval Moldova (united with Wallachia in 1959 in order to form Romania) until 1812 when was annexed by Russia. Its southern part was returned to Moldova and Romania between 1856 — 1878. Between 1918 — 1940 and 1941 — 1944 Bessarabia was part of Romania. In 1940 and after 1944 it was occupied by USSR and turned into the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic (Moldavian SSR). Since 1991 it has been an independent republic.
13. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Klezmer.

14. Ion Antonescu became Marshall on August 22, 1941.

15. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexandru_Graur.

16. In original Yiddish: "Ekh, Rumeynye, Rumeynye, Rumeynye! / Di amulike Rumeynye / Di farmilkhumdike Rumeynye / Multsaykhoysaza Rumeynye! / Oy, izdus a land a fayne, a sheyne. / Ekh, Rumeynye, Rumeynye, Rumeynye! / Di "vi maynzeyde is geborngevorn" Rumeyne, / In "vi er hot farbrakhtzayne kinder-yorn" Rumeynye, / Mir hobngehertazoyfilzikhroynelekhvegn der Rumeynye! / Vi nemt men nokh a land azafayne un sheyne? / Dort tsevoyneniz a fargenign! / Vusdus harts glistdir, dusknestikrign!" Musical arrangement, with additional and revised lyrics and melody: Binyumen Schaechter, in the interpretation of the Jewish People's Philharmonic Chorus. See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XoRKjL98qYY.

17. Among them are *Golgotha* (1935, Julien Duvivier) starring Lucas Gridoux and Marcel Lupovici, *Éducation de prince* (1938, Alexander Esway) and *Le valet maître* (1941, Paul Mesnier starring ElvirePopesco and Alexandre Mihalesco, as well as *Katia* (1938, Maurice Tourneur), after a novel by Princesse Marthe Bibesco and produced by Bernard Natan.

18. See more in Marian Ţuţui, "Aristocraţi şi escroci balcanici în filmul occidental", "Studii şi cercetări de istoria artei", no.11-12 (54-55), 2016-2017, p. 131–142.

19. Pseudonym of Itek (Iţic) Domnici.

20. During my research I found a person named Simund Weinberg buried on the 16th of March 1936 at Giurgiului Jewish Cemetery. Although Weinberg is a quite frequent name with the Jews I could not find another deceased with this name at both Jewish cemeteries in Bucharest.

21. Since 1974 Cluj-Napoca.In Hungarian Kolozsvár and in German Klausenburg.

22. A town in Bessarabia.

23. Wischnitz in German, Vijniţa in Romanian.

24. Both towns are in Bukovina, until 1918 part of Austria-Hungary.

25. "Sarmale" in Romanian which are well-known in other Balkan countries as "sarmi" in Serbian and Bulgarian, "yapraksarması" in Turkish or "dolmadhes" in Greek.

26. "Kirk came to my house, an apartment on 84th St off Broadway, where my grandmother would cook for him. I was her pet grandchild, and she made the most delicious cookies I've ever tasted, and stuffed cabbage and kreplach, which is dough filled with cheese."

27. Romanian director Florin Iepan made two documentaries about two famous actors born in his native province, Banat: Johnny Weissmuler and Béla Lugosi. It is about *The One, the Only, the Real Tarzan* / *Unicul, adevăratul Tarzan* (2004, Germany) and *The Fallen Vampire* / *Le vampire déchu* (2007, France-Romania-Austria-Germany-Netherlands). Both films follow the evolution of the two actors from birth, until they became stars in Hollywood and even until the end of their adventurous lives.

28. The events in 1959 and especially the "educational" documentary were subject also of two documentaries: *Reconstruction* (2002, UK-USA-Romania, Irene Lusztig), whose director is the granddaughter of Monica Sevianu, one of the authors of the heist, and *Great Communist Bank Robbery* (2004, *Marele jaf comunist*, Romania, Alexandru Solomon).

How long does a film "live"?

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Abstract
In this essay we consider how many of the films produced from the inception of cinema have been lost and what that means for the industry going further. There has been a long debate whether film is an ephemeral art form or if it is suited to be a long term achievable medium. The structure of analogue film as well as the digital formats it currently uses, both have well established problems concerning their viability for a long period of time. The transition to the digital realm which is nowadays almost complete, poses some additional issues due to the fact that an extra layer of decoding is required in order to make the audio-visual content accessible. Another pit fall for the medium is the fact that many films have been, in key historical moments, destroyed deliberately, either for ideological or financial gains. It is nonetheless the intention of the author to argue that despite the numerous problems inherently present in the field of film archiving, it is necessary to further research potential solutions, as the intrinsic value of film, as a cross section of human evolution is both an artistic and historical imperative.

Keywords
film restoration, film archiving, film preservation

Rather than being a metaphor, the "aliveness" of a film, or of any art form for that matter, is to be considered, seeing that us, as spectators, observers, and thinkers imbue such mediums with human-like characteristics. A picture can be funny, a painting can be provocative, a film can be described as being dangerous, all quintessential human attributes that we apply to many emotion stirring art forms.

If a film "lives", it implies a film must "die" before it ceases to exist. But when does that happen? Is it when the physical medium on which it was created does no longer exist? If that is the case, almost all the films made in the golden age of cinema have already perished. Film stock is rarely used nowadays for production and almost never when it comes to postproduction. Furthermore the original, the camera negative has been changed beyond recognition until the spectator absorbs it, most of the time through a digital interface.

Is it when the interest for the film "dies"? When it no longer has a viewership? In that case we have extremely old films that do pass the scrutiny of time, as well as lots of "younger" films that unfortunately do not, either because of the lack of artistic qualities

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Dan Nuțu and Ion Dichiseanu in *100 lei* by Mircea Săucan

of the film, or because there are so many movies made worldwide that some get lost in the mix. Furthermore, some forgotten films do reignite the interest of audiences decades after it s creators no longer can appreciate it s new found glory. Regardless, the question remains.

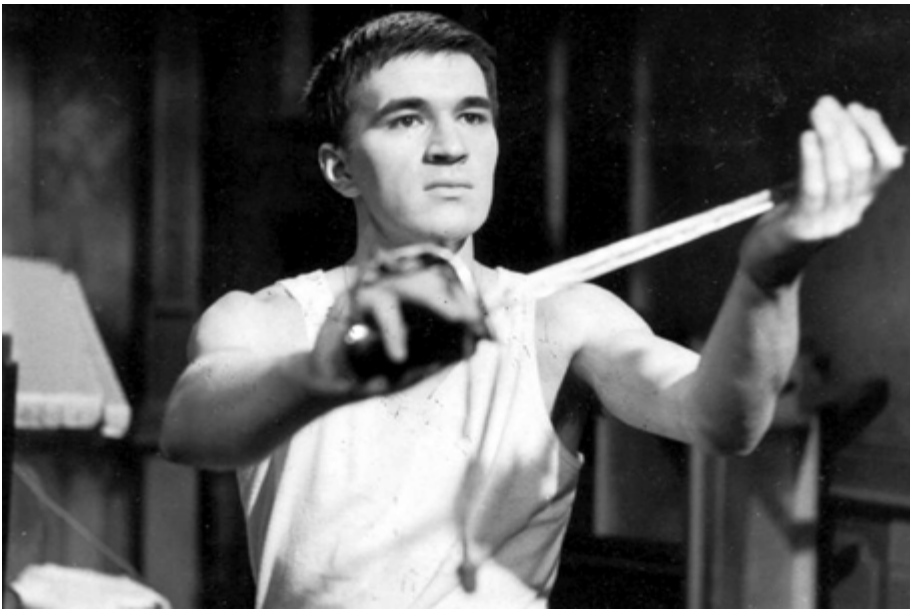
> "We all have a responsibility to preserve the past for the future. The intentional burning of books and paintings is regarded as a cultural crime. How will future generations learn about the 20th century if, through our neglect, its greatest art form is lost?"(Scorsese 2002: lX)

Films in their inception were not considered a long-lasting medium. It was more of ephemeral pass-time or a short lasting propaganda distribution system. It is only recently that our perception of the 12, 15, or 24 frames per second, alternate reality, changed.

It is the fact that some of the films have such a strong impact, such opinion-changing, society-changing, even life-changing characteristics that make it such a perfect archiving medium. It is not a fair representation of the society in which it was made, but it does concisely represent it even if in a non-universal way.

Until not so long ago the film studios used to burn the film stock in order to recover its small silver content. Burning film for its content, wasn't just the modus operandi of capitalist entities in order to maximise profits, it was also the way to go of the communist party and other authoritarian regimes. The content they were after was not chemical, but rather ideological.

In the case of the Romanian communist regime, the censorship consisted either in the elimination of some sequences deemed "inappropriate" or that represented a contravention



Dan Nuțu in *Meandre* by Mircea Săucan

with the laws at that time, or the prohibition of broadcasting of the entire work in question for a certain period of time (or permanently), in extreme cases going so far as forbidding the filmmaker to work again.

1953 was the year of the disappearance of a huge volume of cinematographic documents. Same year, in May, a large number of films were destroyed without anyone cataloguing their content. After the inventory of the banned films on 35 mm format, it was found that out of the total of 465,915 kg, only 17,200 kg were kept as documentation. The remaining 448.715 kg, considered worthless, were melted down.

There are several cinematographic landmarks in the Romanian film history with a special *destiny*, the case of Mircea Săucan's two films – *Meandre* and *100 lei* being somewhat unknown. The censorship went so far that the negative of the film *100 lei* was destroyed and only the courage of the laboratory engineer George Palivăț, who secretly made an inter-negative copy, changed the fate of the film. Thus, there are two copies based on that inter-negative, one at the Film Archive cinema in Jerusalem and one at *the National Film Archive*[1] and therefore in at least some sense the film is still "alive". We are aware of less lucky victims of Romanian cinema realised before 1990 among documentary films, such as *Cota zero/Zero Level*[2] by Laurențiu Damian(1988) which was re-edited and mutilated by the censorship several times and survives in several copies. The original one exists only in a VHS version, only "the official" one has a 35mm copy.

Nitrocellulose film, which was widely used in the early days of cinema, decomposes sometimes with catastrophic and fire provoking results. For example, the 1937 fire in one of FOX Pictures' buildings destroyed almost all of the company's original film negatives cast before 1935. Although company representatives readily stated that *"only old movies*

were lost[3]*",* in the years that followed, many historians rated the disaster as a significant loss of American cultural heritage. Film historian Anthony Slide called the fire at Fox's warehouse the "most tragic" destroying almost 75 percent of 20th Century Fox's films made before the 1930s and many other materials that had to be sent to the Fox studios for safekeeping. Which would you rather have been saved though?

While the films in the western world were indiscriminately destroyed either for economical gain or negligence in some cases, in the eastern world they were selected. The films that went against the government narrative, which embodied dangerous ideas, or inconvenient truths were targeted. Those films "died" out of very different circumstances. Which of them would you rather have been saved? The fact is we don't know. They may have been masterpieces or not. Who gets to decide? Is it the government or the individual people helping to keep the medium alive?

> "Experience teaches us that loss of memory is as inevitable as anxiety for the future. In the hope of avoiding both, the maker of moving images fabricates memories or visions of what is to come in the cherished belief that they will exist forever in an eternal present of the spectator's will."(Usai, 2001:35)

A film might be actually an ephemeral art, that unlike a theatre play, it can have impact on more people for a longer period of time, that it can be watched and absorbed by humanity across time zones, continents and creed. It is therefore if not strenuously taken care of fated to die.

Film stock can be destroyed by wear and physical damage such as scratching, or biological damage. The emulsion contains a protein that is a good source of nutrients for various biological vectors such as mould, bacteria and insects, which can cause deformations to the image contained. The prevention of damage is achieved by carefully handling, by ensuring that the mechanical equipment is adjusted and used correctly and by observing the temperature and humidity norms.

The nitrate film is highly chemically unstable and over time can disintegrate into a sticky mass or gunpowder-like substance, which can self ignite and which during fire continues to burn even underwater. That is why the nitrate film vaults present in the British film archive are set below containers with tons of water in order, not to put out the blazes but rather contain them to only one of the many rooms in which moving picture history is kept.

However, the decomposition process is unpredictable, one 1890 film may still be in good condition today while another may be unrecoverable after only 20 years since its production.

Under ideal conditions of low temperature and humidity, as well as adequate ventilation, such film might be stored for centuries, but in practice, the storage of these materials was far from compliant with relevant standards for many decades.

With the innovations of "safety film", put in practice since the 1950s, Kodak has created a new type of structure based on polyester, a material that is much more chemically stable, easier to maintain and more resistant to mechanical actuation, and therefore less

susceptible to damage due to handling. Under similar storage conditions this type of film remains stable and lasts much longer than nitrocellulose. Some of the films that use this kind of medium might be safe for a long time even though they do deteriorate as well. If not in pristine condition, we might still call them alive.

Digital film, which with a few exceptions is the way movies are produced and distributed, has even more issues when it comes to long term archiving and safekeeping. Though much less prone to spontaneous combustion, the medium on which it is kept has a much shorter life span.

Hard disks (HDDs), the equivalent of film negatives have had an impressive increase in storage capacity over the last 20 years and are the first choice for storing materials where quick access to information is needed (online speed)[4]. The oldest units available for personal computers stored 5 megabytes (almost half the size of a single digital frame today) while today there are HDDs with a capacity of 4 TB (4,000,000 megabytes) are in consumer use and even 10 TB for enterprise use with the annual increase in information density growing at about 30%/year.

The large storage capacity on the HDD is favourable from the point of view of digital data producers for the use of environment applications with a large volume of information. However, HDDs are dynamic equipment with moving parts and are therefore designed to be constantly powered and they cannot be stored for a long time without being put into operation. The internal lubrication units must be functional to avoid mechanical locking problems. New energy-saving strategies such as the *Massive Array of Idle Disks* (MAID) are trying to address this issue, but the lifespan of the individual drive is limited.

A solution was developed, though long-term magnetic disk storage capacity and price trends are both favourable for high-volume digital data producers. Conventionally the cost per bit of magnetic storage is decreasing by 40% per year or more. This is a long-term trend (40 years – plus) *trend that is expected to continue at least until 2025 or 2030.* It is unrealistic to make predictions beyond this period given that this technology faces fundamental technical barriers.

There are however three data formats for medium-term digital archiving: *Advanced Intelligent Tape* (AIT), *Digital Linear Tape* (DLT) and *Linear Tape-Open* (LTO) all competing to be the next medium for both film and other achievable information. Of the three, LTO, an open-format storage technology developed by Hewlett-Packard (HP), International Business Machines (IBM), and Seagate is the dominant format used in the film industry.

The high-capacity implementation of LTO technology is known as the LTO Ultrium format. LTO Ultrium technology has evolved over several generations. The current LTO6 has a native capacity of 2.6 terabytes per cartridge (4 terabytes using built-in data compression) and a maximum transfer rate of 400 MB per second. The latest LTO5 and LTO6 technologies have managed to successively double the LTO4 storage capacity and data transfer rate. LTO3 and its predecessor LTO2, each with lower capacities and transfer rates, are in widespread use throughout the film industry. Technically, LTO provides faster access than DLT. In addition, the LTO has higher cartridge capacity, higher transfer rate and interoperability[5].

Some industry executives interviewed for the AMPAS report expressed concern that the collapse of the consumer market for the VHS tape will weaken research and development of investment in magnetic tape in general.

Apart from the physical condition of digital storage elements, whether HDD or LTO or optical discs software capable of decoding, data evolves rapidly and compatibility with old files is not always guaranteed.

That means that you might have a perfectly stored and functional HDD or LTO tape, with all of the image and sound information present, without any way of decoding, and therefore understanding the data contains within. The film would be therefore both 'alive', from a technical standpoint and "dead" form an accurate standpoint.

A film without people to view and interpret it, to be moved or be changed by it, is not actually alive. Film in the digital age is, in a very peculiar way, not as palpable and readily accessible to the public as it used to be. It used to be that just by putting a strip of film over a light would immediately produce an image, and if moved at 12, 24 or 30 frames per second against the light it would produce moving images. Not anymore. Algorithms and decoding software are required in order for the viewer to receive the information that the filmmaker intended to be shown.

That extra layer of technology requires the extra effort of the archivist not only to keep the actual film "alive" but also the means on which it can be displayed alive as well. Measures in order to revive films have been taken, restoration being a main component of this endeavour.

The film restoration field though is not as regulated as one would assume. Ted Turner's attempt to colour the *Citizen Kane* film in the mid-80s and *Metropolis (*Giorgio Moroder) should be a reminder of such pitfalls. Even George Lucas' attempt to improve through more advanced digital techniques than those available at the time of the production of the movie *Star Wars* could not be considered restoration.

However, the number of people who saw the "restored" version of the *Star Wars* is higher than those who saw the original. Within the film archiving profession, there have been significant debates about what constitutes or not an ethically acceptable practice in film preservation and restoration. Both major professional bodies, FIAF and AMIA, have codes of ethics that their members must adhere to. Although there has been a substantial debate on nuances and details, two fundamental principles tend to be deeply articulated and incorporated into professional practice, neither of which has been subject to significant systematic scrutiny.

The first is that the technical integrity of the physical environment used to create the moving image must be respected ("new presentation copies must be an exact replica of the source material"), and the second focuses on the role of the filmmaker (usually the director) in determining the content which must be kept restored: in the AMIA code, for example, members are required to "make decisions in accordance with the intentions of the creators", even if this implicitly produces a restoration that is not in line with what audiences actually saw then when a film was originally distributed or that ignores a form in which a film circulated to an audience.

As a result, George Lucas' approach is justifiable and even ethical. Given that in the case of film in general and digital film in particular there is no so-called unaltered original, the question arises "What is the film to be preserved?"

These imperatives regarding archiving are extended in the only monographic paper published at the time of writing, which is dedicated to the ethics of archiving moving images, which emphasizes the importance of maintaining obnoxious physical media and technologies necessary for its reproduction and work "as a production unit independent of culture, essentially isolated from its context of reception or changing over time. The importance given to them is a reflection, in turn, of the two formative influences that have largely shaped the profession of film archivist.

The film industry's struggle is therefore not only a artistic endeavour but a technology one as well. Film is an artform though, and the people that create them are artists, not concerned by encoding and decoding bits, reformatting and migrating codecs, and any other means through witch their story will be kept "alive".

Unfortunately, though that is required in order for the legacy of film makers, to be kept alive, in order for their stories to be viewed and absorbed by future generations. Even though the task at hand is not a simple one, filmmakers, producers, archivists, need to work together so that at least some of them be kept "alive" for the future generations so they can be opinion-changing, society-changing, even life-changing and as such a perfect archiving medium of our cultural heritage.

> "If the colours in Rembrandt's *Night watch* or the *Mona Lisa* of Da Vinci faded as quickly as those in nitrate and acetate film, neither national governments nor audiences would doubt the need to restore them, no matter what the costs." (Jeanson 2002:43)

ENDNOTES

1. The copies are 70% faithful to the original
2. *Cota zero/Zero Level* (1988) by Laurențiu Damian is a film about people who worked in hard conditions at a hydro-electric power station and met, after work, to watch films made in western countries and music clips on a video-recorder brought by their boss from abroad. Being considered dangerous, for promoting "capitalist values", the documentary was re-edited and mutilated several times by the communist censorship.
3. Fox N. J. (1937) film storage plant "swept by flames" described in *The Film Daily* 72 (8): July 10, 1937. Accessed on October, 9, 2016. Retrieved July 16, 2016
4. It refers to the possibility of instant access to data without the need, for example, to unroll the magnetic tape in the case of LTO cassettes
5. LTO1 2000 tapes are still read on LTO3 units introduced in 2004, but not on newer LTO4 devices

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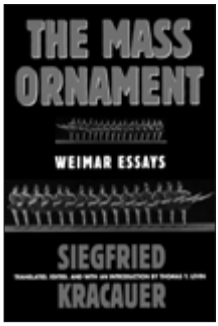
BOOK REVIEW

The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays by Siegfried Kracauer; Translated, Edited, and with an Introduction by Thomas Y. Levin



Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995.
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403 pp.

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The Mass Ornament contains highly productive articles on a wide variety of cultural topics, from travel to the nature of best-seller books, from the scientific method to architectural organization. Any researcher who wants to get an idea of the material organization of daily life on the basis of production relations can refer to this resource where Kracauer's articles are gathered. Since the book is a relatively old one, it is possible to find various reviews on it. However, as scholars of the cinema and television discipline, we would like to draw brief attention to the unique relationship Kracauer observes between photography, cinema, the audience, and the material life conditions of the audience. There are propositions in his observations that will inspire researchers in the field.

Kracauer examines the development of photography technology with a historical materialist approach and maintains his objective stance while dealing with image production technologies. He suggests that the invention of photography corresponds to a certain stage of the capitalist mode of production. This approach is a materialist one since it keeps its

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distance from the subjectivity of the idealist view, which sees the invention of photography as the most advanced result of the pursuit of *immortality*. Humanity's pursuit of immortality may have influenced the development of photography, and this may have inspired technicians and artists. On the other hand, Kracauer reminds us that the photographed moment-present does not attain immortality, but "succumbs" to death (p. 59). Those who monopolize image production technologies put various images into circulation through the media. These images say little about the material essence of social relations. The audience consumes too many images of everyday life, but these processes do not result in obtaining objective information about it. Even documentary images and news footage that claim to present reality do not dwell on important observations about human life; they present so many superfluous images of trivial social events that decisive realities cannot remain alive among redundant details. Perception of the modern individual is dragged into a passive position by the industrial image bombardment. Kracauer talks about the employment of photography and cinema as a tool of manipulation and social control and conformism. In this respect, it is possible to find parallels with the Frankfurt School's concept of the Culture Industry, which analyzes the production of culture as a commodity in the context of capitalist mass production. In a sense, the scholars of media and/or cultural studies are familiar with these propositions for a long time.

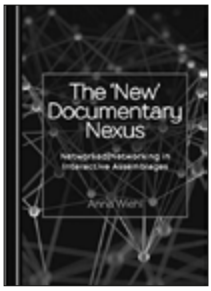
On the other hand, Kracauer does not limit the debate on cinema as a tool of social control to only criticism of the industrial practice, since the attitude of the audience as a public subject constitutes a complementary unity with it. The cinematic image depicts the contradictions of social laws as destiny and fortune. The poor in the films do not rebel; they are submissive. In films we often see the socioeconomic promotion of the marginalised across society, while the contradictions at the heart of said society are not broached. The radicals in films only revolt against the rulers of the past and challenge the authority of those who have long been erased from the historical scene. Contemporary social contradictions disappear from view through historic images of radical social action. All these phenomena presented by Kracauer emphasize the social control function of the cinematic institution. However, Kracauer states that the cinema audience felt a particular willingness to consume these superficial images on the screen. Lacking awareness of the material determinants of his personal tragedy, the cinema-goer consumes superficial images that do not unearth the determinants of his social catastrophe. At this point, Kracauer differs from one-sided theoretical approaches that direct the arrows of criticism entirely to the industry or place all its focus on the cinema audience who demands to consume the dominant images. This adds a unique twist to his cinema discussion.

According to Kracauer, boredom is a privilege in capitalist society. The modern individual of capitalist society cannot find time to be bored because of their professional workload; the modern individual "becomes a playground for worldwide noises" that "do not even grant one's modest right to personal boredom" (p. 333)."Palaces of distraction" (p. 323) in which various films are shown (Kracauer believes it might be "disrespectful" to call these huge complexes movie theatres), shops, and cafe-bars… Kracauer carefully observes the bourgeois organizational structure of all these *playgrounds*. Nevertheless, he condemns

the reproach that criticizes workers who spend time in these areas for being "addicted to entertainment" as a "petit-bourgeois" one (p. 325). For Kracauer this criticism ignores the "tension" workers feel on their shoulders throughout the work process (p. 325). What is overlooked is that "the form of free-time busy-ness necessarily corresponds to the form of business" (p. 325). For this reason, every approach that criticizes the modern individual, who sees cinema as a means of escape, has to take into account the overwhelming modern working and living conditions that lead them to seek escape. Kracauer, who examines the nature of the cultural commodity through the daily life practices of the modern individual, reveals the search for "entertainment" and "escape" in the audience's relationship with the cultural product, with an objective and multi-layered perspective. In this context, *the Mass Ornament* is a highly engaging classical work for any scientific study that determines the image, the cultural areas of image consumption, and the audience as research objects.We do not doubt that media and cinema students and scholars will gain new horizons through their contact with this unique work.

BOOK REVIEW

The 'New' Documentary Nexus. Networked|Networking in Interactive Assemblages by Anna Wiehl



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Interactive documentary practices have without doubt elicited scholarly interest over the last decade, but there are actually only a few comprehensive books on this topic, such as *The Living Documentary* (Gaudenzi, 2013), *New Documentary Ecologies* (edited by Hight, Summerhayes, Nash, 2014) or *i-docs – The Evolving Practices of Interactive Documentary* (edited by Aston, Gaudenzi, Rose, 2017). Though Anna Wiehl draws inspiration from some of these publications as well as from the writings of the late scholar Adrian Miles, her own work, *The 'New' Documentary Nexus*, will definitely become a fundamental reading for anyone interested in gaining insight into the potential of interactive documentary practices, as it is the most encompassing, rigorous and nuanced academic book on this topic to date. Wiehl has worked as a Lecturer and Research Assistant at the University of Bayreuth, as a Research Fellow with i-docs at the Digital Cultures Research Centre at the University of the West of England and is currently leading a research project on interactive documentary titled *New Documentary Networks and Worknets: Emerging Practices of Participation and Co-Creation in Interactive Documentary Ecologies*.

The central question examined in her book concerns the impact digital interactive media have in reconfiguring and redefining documentary practices from an epistemological and ontological perspective. Accordingly, the following subordinate research objectives are

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formulated: a) to define the interactors and the emerging media practices whilst at the same time problematize their 'newness', b) to analyze their meaning-making affordances and interpret their status and c) to provide a viable methodological framework from which to grasp the physiology of a constantly dynamic nexus.

One of the main hypotheses of the book is that we are witnessing an important shift in the field of documentary practices from a representational to a performative and experiential paradigm. Although Wiehl still sees some value in using Bill Nichols' classical modes of representation, she argues that they need to be reviewed, expanded and seen in conjunction with modes of interaction (conversational, hypertext, participatory and experiential[1]), since 'Reality' / 'the Real' is not so much represented, as it is mediated. Therefore, she suggests not only that conceiving the documentary as a construct revolving around an argument making a certain 'truth claim' is incompatible with regard to interactive documentary assemblages, but that we should also stop talking merely about texts, audience and authors ('the documentary triangle') and instead think about them in terms of convergence and rhizomatic networks. Equally, she stresses that theorizing documentary should also imply taking into account the matters of agency and intersubjectivity and thinking about these complex configurations as ecologies, which could be addressed by analyzing the performative medialities they facilitate. Another point of departure for the present endeavor is Roger Odin's concept of '*espaces de communication*'[2] as *lieux* of dynamic acts of interpretation and his view of the '*lecteur-actant*' as essential in all semiotic processes involved in the conventions of 'reading' a documentary text. However, the case of interactive documentary configurations reveals that Odin's idea that there exists a 'documentary text' awaiting an investment of meaning on the part of the '*lecteur-actant*'[3] is no longer tenable in this paradigm, since "there is no such 'thing' as *one* pre-scripted text awaiting to be watched by its user"[4], in which case meaning-making becomes in fact intrinsically conditioned by processes of *inter*action, where "all *inter*actants are interconnected and therefore *inter*dependent".[5]

In line with Bolter and Grusin's view, who famously state that "all mediation is remediation"[6], Wiehl, too, adheres to analyzing new media as embedded in older media practices through the prism of a 'genealogy of affiliations', in order to understand their procedural nature, taking documentary film as a point of reference when framing her case studies. For instance, Manovich's reference to Dziga Vertov's *Man with the Movie Camera* is quoted as an early representative of database logic and the essay film's capacity to allow both authors and audiences to 'think through' mediated representations of the world are put in connection to reflexivity in Korsakow configurations. The spotlight of this media archaeological approach, however, is on 'prominent' specific affordances of new media, key of which is their potential for interactivity/interaction, as has already been widely theorized by new media scholars such as Lev Manovich, Marie-Laure Ryan or Jane H. Murray.

The book follows the structure of a habilitation thesis, each section and chapter being clearly delineated. In the first section, the author lays out the theoretical groundings of her work, revising, expanding and putting forth a series of key concepts.

First of all, it should be noted that in Wiehl's model, 'the Documentary' is a relational nexus – "a network of dynamic socio-technological configurations or assemblages resulting

from and resulting *in* cultural techniques which manifest themselves in audio-visual, textual and at the same time experiential 'interactive factuals'"[7]. She underlines that these medial 'artefacts' – which were commonly referred to as 'interactive documentaries' in the past and as 'interactive factuals' more recently (cf. Gaudenzi) – are to be regarded only as 'sedimentations' of certain practices which she further attempts to map out.

The second main concept employed here is that of 'the Interactive'. Generally, 'interaction' is seen as designating interpersonal exchange, whereas the term 'interactivity' is preferred for framing relations between users and systems based on feedback loops. Wiehl, however, argues that interaction and interactivity can be regarded as two modalities of 'the Interactive', a category which "goes beyond 'employing' interactivity afforded by 'new' media as 'tools' or 'delivery mechanisms'", and is posited instead as an "innate trait of emerging documentary assemblages"[8]. Given that 'the Interactive' affects all the agents involved in a configuration, it also encompasses participation and co-creation. The term participation, as used here, refers to creative 'participation *in* media networks | worknets', be it content-related (e.g., as a result of crowd-sourcing or peer-sourcing) or of a structural nature, implying alterations of the database architecture. In other words, it designates a creative engagement in the processes of documentary-making. 'Participation *through* media networks | worknets', on the other hand, is associated with co-creation, harboring socio-political and cultural valences. Co-creative practices go beyond participation, seeking to "create spaces in which new knowledge and cultural value can emerge and in which (social) change can take place"[9] through collaboration, by working *with* subjects, instead of creating works *about* them. As such, they emphasize processes rather than 'artefacts' – in this case, the 'act of documenting'. Considering the transformative potential of co-creation, as well as the quality and scale of engagement it involves, Wiehl sees it as the most extended modality of the Interactive. In this framework, interactivity is correlated to networkedness, while interaction, participation and co-creation are seen as sub-types of networking. Another relevant distinction to bear in mind is that networkedness and networking are conceptualized as interdependent *practices*, while documentary networks and worknets are seen as "densely interconnected *configurations* in which documentary authors and user-interactors are closely entangled"[10].

Hence, by 'networked | networking documentaries', Wiehl understands "configurations which intend to render 'the Real' in its dynamic networkedness experiential through mediation and which rely on networking for doing so". The proposed terminology put forth here is meant to foreground that it is their mediated interrelatedness which differentiate these configurations from documentary film practices, thus eschewing technological determinism or framing them merely as a continuation or a modulation of documentary film.

Approaching interactive documentaries as relational medial ecologies foregrounds a decisive momentum in the choreography of networked | networking assemblages, namely their potential to become transformative 'open spaces'. In this respect, Wiehl builds on Gaudenzi's definition of 'transformation' as "the power of the interactive documentary to change itself, but also to change what is part of its ecosystem: the user, the author and the interface being just some of the components of such a system"[11]and on Zimmerman

and DeMichiel concept of 'open space', i.e. "that juncture where complexity and ambiguity meet participatory media through dialog and community in a provisional space'.[12] Given that transformation can occur within the database, but also on a intrapersonal or interpersonal level (in which case "it goes hand in hand with the experience of social and/or political agency"[13], as Wiehl remarks), it is not difficult to see why the horizon of this particular and complex 'transformative momentum' has animated scholarly interest in recent years, generating research inquiries, for example, into autopoiesis in i-docs (e.g. Gaudenzi's concept of 'living documentary', the writings of Adrian Miles) or into i-docs as potential models for digital media citizenship (e.g. Kate Nash).

The second part of Wiehl's book consists of three in-depth case studies, which also constitute the chore of the work. Using a mixed-method, combining semio-pragmatics, critical discourse analysis and elements of Actor-Network Theory, she analyzes participatory database documentaries as models of hybrid practices of networking via *Public Secrets* (Daniel et. al, 2008), opaque networkedness, algorithmic editing and affective interval in the Korsakow documentary *Racing Home* (Hoffman & McMahon, 2014) and how different strategies of 'the Interactive' such as co-creation have shaped the *Highrise* series/nexus (Cizek et al., 2010-2015) into an 'open space' for networking. The strategy adopted here consists in formulating rigorous close readings in conjunction with situating each assemblage within the larger documentary nexus via a comparative approach. This systematic mapping is performed with a three-lensed 'methodological sextant', designed to simultaneously take into account documentary theory, new media studies and performative medialities & dynamic media ecologies.

The first case study is dedicated to *Public Secrets*, a project situated at the junction of art, research and activism, featuring a multimedia archive, the focus of which is constituted by an audio archive of over five-hundred statements related to crime and punishment. The overarching goal of the configuration is that of challenging the assumptions about the US penitentiary system as a solution to social problems. Broadly speaking, Sharon Daniel, the 'producer', attempts to conceptualize the 'public secrets' of this system as 'aporias', so as to mark contradictions between the ethical and the juridical, between 'power and knowledge', 'information and denial', 'the masks of politics and the goals of an open society'[14].

As Wiehl rigorously points out, these disjunctures inform both the minimalist interface and the interaction design. One example of this is that the dynamic structuring of different graphical elements alludes to false demarcations between life inside and outside the prison. Another strategy pinpointed by Wiehl's analysis concerns what Daniel terms 'staging equality'. The web-based platform uses a tree-map algorithm which allows not just for visualizations tailored to each user interaction, but also for an egalitarian treatment of the material, as, for instance, personal reflections of detained women are situated on the same level with quotes from Fredric Jameson or Walter Benjamin. The overall analysis of the interaction design reveals that the user engagement as a procedural exploration through the polyphonic web of micro-stories can be seen as a restaging of the 'author's' (context-provider) encounter with the subjects ('primary participants').

The examination of the assemblage and that of Daniel's theoretical writings shows

it can lead to a 'transformative experience' for the user-interactor, guided toward active engagement (both cognitively and emotionally), but that it would be a "more convincing experience for the critical user-interactor if considerably more contentious voices had been included"[15]. Plurivocality, according to Wiehl, is not fully embraced, at least not in the sense of contradictions leading to 'different explanatory models'[16]or 'relational antagonism'[17].

An equally nuanced conclusion is reached also in what concerns the second objective of the project, namely that of facilitating access to a 'virtual agora' and the possibility of self-representation through creative participation by way of different empowerment strategies such as plurivocality and 'amplification effects'. The testimonies of the detained women were not collected by means of classical interviews; instead, they were given the recording equipment and they themselves decided what they wanted to share, this type of self-representation underlining the value of subjectivation as a form of agency and even of political empowerment. Nonetheless, Wiehl identifies several other contradictions between Daniel's theoretical radical aspirations and her practice regarding who has 'control over the processes of the database', such as the fact that the 'primary participants' are co-authors only in terms of providing content and that there is no option of networking through the platform. On the other hand, she shows that the limiting of agency needs to be seen in balance with the risk of the material becoming an 'arbitrary collection of lost voices', had it not been focalized and curated by an authoring instance.

Thirdly, Wiehl points out that Daniel's model of distributed authorship is not just miles away from an expository mode of representation, but also that it encourages conceiving documentary-making as a hybrid practice.

Racing Home, the second configuration explored, was born out of a pragmatic constraint. It was supposed to be a linear documentary about identity and belonging done by Marion McMahon, but the filmmaker died before the project was finished. Her partner, Phil Hoffman, tried to edit her 8 – and 16-mm footage and to make sense of an archive of making-of related vernacular objects, but he reached the conclusion that a linear form would not suffice in order to finish the editing as it was intended, nor to account for McMahon's relation to her work, or his own relationship with her, for that matter. Aside from the footage shot by McMahon and her archive (newsreels and home movies), he also wanted to include his own first-person footage shot after her death, adding to the initial scope questions related to loss and reflexive considerations regarding the act of documenting. He, thus, arrived at the solution of a Korsakow configuration since it freed him from the pressure of conceiving a narrative and since it allowed him to intertwine more organically subjective and objective perspectives. Wiehl's 'close reading' of the interface and of the interaction design suggests that Korsakow is not just a non-linear interactive storytelling *tool*, but that it presents a media ecology which affords certain *methods*.

To this end, Wiehl lays out several design principles which guide the interaction and at the same time illustrate fundamental features of 'new' media, such as granularity/modularity, remixability or spatial montage. First of all, Korsakow documentaries consist of SNUs (smallest narrative units), designating short undividable linearly edited video clips. Each SNU has two points of contact (keywords) which allow for it to be retrieved

from the database. It is these points of contact which determine the potential connections between clips. Wiehl stresses that as opposed to other usual keyword allocations, here, the in – and out – points of contact can be one and the same and that they can be displayed in a limited number of times. Thus, given these asymmetrical structural correlations, Wiehl shows that these particular assemblages rely on "loose and ephemeral probabilities of how material can be linked"[18], purposefully obstructing a "linear sequencing of clips"[19]. In turn, this combinatorial logic differentiates Korsakow configurations from educational or didactic database documentaries, built on efficiency principles, while raising questions about performative possibilities in what can be seen as a post-DaDa or post-Fluxus tradition. Additionally, certain SNUs act as 'pinch points', meaning that there are certain clips which the user-interactor has to watch before advancing through the database. This type of editing is framed as a sample of 'algorithmic editing'. A second type of editing which differentiates the database logic from the narrative logic of linear filmmaking is the performative or procedural editing of the user-interactor, i.e. "the realization of one of many virtually possible versions of an ephemeral, dynamic 'documentary text'"[20]. Here, the user-interactor can only click on thumbnail representations of potentially ensuing clicks. This moment of decision-making on the part of the user-interactor is posited as a complex site for subjective temporality and uncertainty, which requires an increased attention to detail, potentially restaging the process the 'primary authors' undergo. Building on Adrian Miles' idea that interactive documentaries at large are 'affective assemblages'[21] (at its turn derived from Bergson's concept of an 'interval' as a 'center of indetermination' and, subsequently, Deleuze's concept of 'affect image'), Wiehl considers that affective intervals are expanded and can become transformative spaces.

In the case of Korsakow configurations, we see at work a tripartite model of authorship. The author partly cedes control to a computational system and to user-interactors. By designing only 'probable paths', this allows the author himself/herself to discover new meanings, and, hence to 'think through' the material. While the user-interactors explore an opaquely linked database, still driven by a 'primary author', they are encouraged to exert performative and algorithmic editing and, to a certain extent, even undergo chance-based experiences. Her minute analysis also underscores a self-reflexive dimension of the configuration, framing the emergence of estrangement effects as a consequence of foregrounding the heterogeneous materiality of the remediated footage (e.g. revealing the imperfections in both celluloid and digital). At the same time, affective intervals favor an active reflection concerning the user-interactors' roles within digital media. If we were to correlate the two, then it becomes clear that traditional authorship and agency are expanded, seeing how in this case they imply working with uncertainty and contingency.

As for the process of meaning-making in Korsakow configurations, their affordance to help the 'author think through the material' in conjunction with the implications of 'affective intervals' is probably of utmost significance. More precisely, Wiehl argues that this interplay between multiple simultaneous narratives and the "volatility of combinatory and associative thinking"[22] suggests an emulation of how the human mind works. The underlying radical rejection of causal narrative logic behind Korsakow projects or their

structural strategies for 'non-narrative un-closure', as Wiehl puts it, supports one of the book's overarching conclusions regarding the paradigm shifts in the documentary field at large, namely that "interactive assemblages potentially expand the documentary impetus from *representing* complexity to *staging* and *experiencing* complexity"[23].

The final case study focuses on the *Highrise* series/nexus, which comprises six interactive web-based sub-projects examining life in high-rise buildings across the world and challenging the perception of suburban living by means of social interaction, participation and/or co-creation.

Wiehl's analysis relies on interviews with the initiator of the series, documentary filmmaker Katerina Cizek, as well as on several paratexts (e.g. production notes, trailers and promotional materials, social media presence), and it provides detailed descriptions of the production processes in order to highlight the intricacies of the worknets|networks these projects have generated across the years, stressing collaborative and transformative strategies.

The driving force behind the projects from this series was that of avoiding a top-bottom authorial stance, while at the same time trying to keep in balance curation. For instance, in regards to *The Thousandth Tower* and *One Millionth Tower*, Wiehl notes that Cizek's strategy was orientated towards 'an exchange on a par' with all participants. In the case of the former project, six residents of a high-rise building in Toronto were provided with equipment and know-how by Cizek's team in order to document their living situation and were later involved in the editing and design of the interface. The sourced footage consisted in audio recordings and still images, thus counteracting the possibility of technical issues related to filming, while the briefings from the experts led, according to Wiehl, to qualitative and unitary results, despite the fact that the subject-participants were amateurs. Most of the *Highrise* projects were born out of the collaboration of transprofessional and transdisciplinary teams and/or institutions (*A Short History of the Highrise*), reuniting researchers, urban planners, architects, journalists, media designers and archivists, while at the same time advocating for shared authorship, be it peer-sourced (*Out My Window*), or crowd-sourced (*Out My Window Participate*).

In the case of *Universe Within*, the user experience is based on watching documentary clips, having 'conversations' with pixelated video avatars which act as navigation guides and feeding personal data into the system. Like all of the projects from the series/nexus, the content revolves around concepts related to one's living situation (e.g., the idea of 'home', community, migration). Aside from adopting a conversational mode of interaction (according to Gaudenzi's classification), the project stands out in the series on account of using data personalization mechanisms. After the users provide their own information, their data is visualized and shown by comparison to others, the aim of the project being that of combining a critical self-questioning of one's own digital practices with a feeling of belonging, thus paradoxically experiencing both estrangement and intimacy.

This potential of self-examination targets, yet again, a type of transformation, as does *Out My Window Participate*, a project which permits the growth, change and remixing of the content, conceptually based on the aesthesteticisation of how the user-interactors experience their real-life living environments. It can be seen as an expansion of *Out My*

Window, a 360-degree web-documentary about the lives of families in thirteen cities around the world collated by means of the visual metaphor of a fictional digital highrise. Intimate micro-narratives were meant to counter how mainstream media stereotypically depict life in certain countries and the interaction was modelled to mimic the situation of paying someone a visit. The participants who submitted their footage in this case were media professionals. *Out My Window Participate,* on the other hand, targets 'vernacular creativity' as it is open for anyone to contribute with images 'out of their window', producing a 'temporary public domain'[24].

By combining 'close readings' of the textual sedimentations of these assemblages, undertaken from a praxeological perspective, together with an in-depth analysis of their production contexts, as well as an attentive delineation of the virtual and actual dimension of these 'evasive' assemblages, Wiehl manages to paint an extensive spectrum of potential aims which the agents of these networks | worknets are encouraged to pursue, ranging from 'communication to community-building; from the dissemination and sharing of experience to the production of new original research and insight; and from the artistic goals to advocacy and activism'[25], while simultaneously stressing that curation and attention towards generating an 'aesthetically challenging momentum'[26] – especially in the case of co-creative configurations – prevents them from being equated to awareness campaigns.

Most importantly, these three case studies speak about present tendencies within the field of documentary towards distributed aesthetics and self-reflexivity and reveal a shift from an epistemology based on objects and observing subjects towards understanding medial experiences as processes. It is Wiehl's reasoning that since networked | networking assemblages afford the emergence of plurivocality (which can lead to nuanced positions and arguments), they have the potential to become 'virtual agoras' in which, consequently, meaning becomes dynamic, "contingent and provisional, speculative, fathoming and probing, rather than conclusive"[27]. Hence, as Wiehl demonstrates, documenting through the Interactive, by means of interactivity, interaction, creative participation and/or co-creation, implies not just a reconfiguration of authorship and of agency, but also of how 'truth claims' are being negotiated and, ultimately, how we 'make sense of the world'[28].

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BOOK REVIEW

Cineaşti în era digitală/ Filmmakers in the Digital Era by Dana Duma

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220 pp.

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Thirty years ago, European film critic and historian Antonin Liehm (author of *Les Cinéma de l' Est*—1989) said that "the 21st century will be audiovisual and alphanumeric". Avalidation / invalidation of this challenging viewpoint can be found in Dana Duma'sinterview book, *Cineaşti în era digitală / Filmmakers in the Digital Era*, which approaches the subject from a general perspective on art and film industry, through the original vision of various Romanian and world cinema authors, as well as of an important range of critics and actors. Their opinions are rooted in their creative contribution to the birth of the filmic *oeuvre,* in the professional approach to an art whose dynamics reflect both the developing technology and the audience's preferences and high standards.

Dana Duma's interviews have been taken over thirty years of outstanding journalistic and academic career. With her competence in the field, she has daringly approached

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PHD Professor Titus Vîjeu taught at the National University of Theatre and "I. L. Caragiale" whose alumni he is. He is now an independent researcher and publishes books and articles in specialized media, such as "Film" journal. He authored books on foreign filmmakers (*Andrzej Wajda – "omul de celuloid"* – first edition, 2005, second in 2020) and Romanian (*Dan Piţa – arta privirii,* 2012, *Cinema, cinema, cinema,* 2013, *Mircea Daneliuc – Monsieur l'auteur sau lupul singurtic al filmului românesc,* 2015; *Elisabeta Bostan – Imaginarium sau filmul în perimetrul candorii,* 2016; *Nicolae Mărgineanu – invizibilul vizibil*, 2017; *Florin Mihăilescu – imaginea imaginii de film,* 2017; *F. de la Film – Dumitru Radu Popescu – scenaristul unor* îngeri *veseli, scenaristul unor* îngeri *trişti,* 2019). Member of the Union of Filmakers and of the Union of Romanian Writers. He also published, in Romania and abroad, poems and essays books.

important issues of the second century of cinema in the company of theorists and film critics such as Klaus Eder, Jean-Philippe Tessé, Joachim Lepastier, Michal Olesczyk, Wang Yao. Some of them are highly competent in Romanian cinema in general, and the New Romanian Cinema in particular.

However, one of the most precise analyses in the book on the fracture between analogue and digital filmmaking comes from the well-respected Romanian DOP Vivi Drăgan-Vasile: "*People have lost their ability to see the wonderful world of the film-stock, its depth, its beauty when it is projected on screen. The cinema viewer has got used to the aggressiveness of digital image. Therefore, everything has to be extremely colorful and shining, the way one can see in commercials.*" (Duma 2020:82)

Polish film director Krzysztof Zanussi and American filmmaker Paul Schrader feel the same about the aesthetic fracture highlighted by Drăgan-Vasile, while Romanian-born Iosif Demian, author of *O lacrimă de fată / A Girl's Tear,* Iosif Demian, confesses Australian cinema (which he has been an active part of over the past thirty years) has also "braced" for the impact of digital technology on film production.

In fact, the possibilities and facilities brought in by the ever-new technologies are now consolidating a project which seemed rather utopian when it was formulated, in 1948: the famous *caméra-stylo* or *camera-pen*, a concept audaciously introduced by Alexandre Astruc: "*The film-maker/author writes with his camera as a writer writes with his pen*[1]*".* The French director and theorist claimed that "*cinema will have a future as long as the camera manages to replace the pen: that is why I say that its language is* neither the language of the fiction, nor of the documentary report, but of the essay. *I would go even further: cinema will free itself from the constraints of photography and of an accurate reflection of reality. It will become, at long last, a realm for abstract expression…*[2]"

Obviously, "the time when camera was placed at a street corner to merely record chance pictures is now gone". DzigaVertov's cameraman from *Man with a Movie Camera* or the one who appears in the opening scenes of Angelopoulos' *Ulysses' Gaze*won't be seen in modern films anymore.

The cameraman of today wears a dragonfly-size camera. If we compare masterworks shot on photographic film to the best productions on digital medium, we may well tend to value the former ones. That is why the Romanian filmmakers interviewed by Dana Duma, who started their career in the early 70's (Dan Piţa, Mircea Veroiu, Nicolae Mărgineanu, Stere Gulea), seem rather reserved about such issues. They know too well that their movies, shot on film, are not part of the treasure of Romanian Cinema.

The filmmakers of post-2000 New Romanian Cinema have been influenced in different ways by the new technologies. What becomes important, for Cristi Puiu, whose ideas about cinema have become a true *ars poetica,* as well as for Adina Pintilie, who — in *Touch Me Not* — used the camera as a witness „like a medium between the viewer and the world explored in the film", is the work of art as a whole. Romanian filmmakers use extensively the postmodern language of visual arts. A special case is Anca Damian, who keeps reinventing herself by ingeniously mixing animation with the movie played by actors when it comes to create the *mise-en-scène*.

The actors interviewed provide interesting points of view, too. International star Marcel Iureș thinks that "any digital experience is welcomed", such as the one he has experienced in Ovidiu Georgescu's movie *Trei păzește* (2000), in which he plays the villain (Duma 2020:187). For actor Doru Ana TV series is the medium "where one is able to live a biography which is unfolding over a long period of time".

Almost all the film scholars and critics interviewed by Dana Duma agree we are now experiencing a new age of technical possibilities due to digitalization, as well as a reconsideration of values. Sometimes, these values have been arbitrarily imposed by efficient marketing. As Cristi Puiu repeatedly said," *Lăzărescu* would have been unnoticed had it not been awarded at Cannes". Theawardwas not only the director's world recognition, but also the building block (beside *Suff and Dough* / *Marfa și banii*) of New Romanian Cinema. Its movies have been shot on film and their directors have not yielded to digital. In this respect, Dana Duma's book defends the cause of a major contemporary artis a cultural testimony based on a series of confessions given by respected filmmakers, which have long been expected by cinema lovers.

The author of these interviews talked to world famous filmmakers, such as the great screenwriter Jean-Claude Carrière, a close collaborator of Luis Buñuel, Forman, Brook, Schlöndorff and many other world-known directors. The conversations start from their work and gradually move towards the very theme of the book. The author's well-known qualification in the field allowed her to exchange ideas with filmmakers of different generations and film movements. They have all resulted in anexciting and useful book which helps us discover new aesthetic dimensions of the cinema.

ENDNOTES

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