

ISTANBUL BILGI UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

FILM AND TELEVISION MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM

HUMOUR AS SOCIAL CRITIC IN ROMANIAN NEW WAVE: *THE DEATH
OF MR. LAZARESCU, 12:08 EAST OF BUCHAREST, THE HAPPIEST GIRL IN
THE WORLD*

Onur Sefer
117617004

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Ebru Çiğdem Thwaites Diken

İSTANBUL
2021

Tez Danışmanı :

(İmza)

..... Üniversitesi

Jüri Üyeleri

(İmza)

..... Üniversitesi

Juri Üyesi:

(İmza)

..... Üniversitesi

Tezin Onaylandığı Tarih :

Toplam Sayfa Sayısı:

Anahtar Kelimeler (Türkçe)

Anahtar Kelimeler (İngilizce)

1)

1)

2)

2)

3)

3)

4)

4)

5)

5)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	v
ÖZET.....	vi
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER ONE	
HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND	
1.1. After Socialism: Eastern and Romanian Cinema.....	12
1.2. Humour as Social Critique.....	20
CHAPTER TWO	
HUMOUR IN ROMANIAN NEW WAVE	
2.1. The Visual Aesthetic of Romanian New Wave.....	25
2.2. Narrative and Visual Style of New Wave Humour.....	31
2.3. Puiu, Porumboiu and Jude.....	34
CHAPTER THREE	
ANALYSES OF THREE FILMS OF THE ROMANIAN NEW WAVE	
3.1. The death of Mr. Lazarescu, 2005	38
3.2. 12:08 East of Bucharest, 2006.....	46
3.3. The Happiest Girl in the World, 2009.....	51
CONCLUSION.....	56
REFERENCES.....	60

FILMOGRAPHY..... 63

ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to analyse the humour that has a social critical function in the films *The Death of Mr. Lazarescu* (2005), *12:08 East of Bucharest* (2006) and *The Happiest Girl in the World* (2009). Various theories of humour and the historical and cultural background of Romanian New Wave cinema are analysed in the thesis. Finally, by analysing the sense of humour that emerged in the new wave cinema, explaining how humour functions as social criticism has been the focus of the thesis.

Keywords: Humour, Dark Humour, Romanian New Wave, Social Critic, Post-socialism.

ÖZET

Bu tezin amacı, *Bay Lazarescu'nun Ölümü* (2005), *Bükreş'in Doğusu* (2006) ve *Dünyanın En Mutlu Kızı* (2009) filmlerinde öne çıkan mizah anlayışının sosyal kritik işlevi gördüğünü incelemektir. Tezde çeşitli mizah teorileri ve Romanya Yeni Dalga sinemasının tarihsel ve kültürel arka planı incelenmiştir. Son olarak, yeni dalga sinemasında ortaya çıkan mizah anlayışı da analiz edilerek, mizahın nasıl sosyal kritik işlevi gördüğünü açıklamak tezin odak noktasını oluşturmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mizah, Kara Mizah, Romanya Yeni Dalga, Toplumsal Eleştiri, Post-sosyalizm.

INTRODUCTION

After the turn of the millennium, the films of Romanian directors have been screened more and more frequently, and they even began to receive awards at European festivals. Naturally, this situation attracted the attention of both film critics and cineastes. This attention reached its peak when Cristian Mungiu won the Palme d'Or at Cannes Film Festival with his film *4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days* (2007). Hence, the film critics began to speak of a Romanian New Wave. Although film critics name the Romanian New Wave, this definition is getting a debatable issue within some directors who are called part of this wave. Even though there is a discussion about the designation of the Romanian New Wave, this term continues to be used throughout the study.

“A small group of moviemakers, who seemed to be a part of something which was looking a cinema movement, were quickly identified within the tradition of the New Wave. The main argument here is that this cinematic movement must be labelled as the ‘Romanian New Wave’, and must be considered as the latest addition to all the previously announced ‘New Waves’ in the history of European filmmaking.” (Pop, 2014, p. 7).

Although the naming of the Romanian New Wave is a polemical issue, new Romanian cinema after 2000 has some common characteristics which make such a definition possible. These common characteristics are realism, which is on the level of documentary aesthetics, minimalism and absurdism, which is sometimes palpable. Considering that the relevant elements appear in similar way, the term the Romanian New Wave begins to gain a meaning. This study analyses three leading directors of the Romanian New Wave, Cristi Puiu, Corneliu Porumboiu and Radu Jude and their films. The focal point of the analysis is on humour as we often see humorous elements in the films that are considered as part of the Romanian New Wave. These humour elements we see show up in ironic, sarcastic and absurd situations.

My study will be based on question of how the Romanian New Wave deploy humour as social criticism. To find answers to this question, Puiu's film *The Death of Mr. Lazarescu*, Porumboiu's film *12:08 East of Bucharest* and Jude's film *The Happiest Girl in the World* will be analysed in this study.

There are not enough academic works on the Romanian New Wave cinema, which has attracted the attention of international audiences in recent years. The lack of sources in academic literature on the function of humour in Romanian New Wave cinema encouraged me to work in this field. I was impressed by the humour elements used in Romanian New Wave films and realized that the humour could have a socio-critical function in relation to the social traumas of Romanian society, which led me to focus more on this area. With my work, I hope that I can make a small contribution to the literature by examining the function of humour as a social criticism in New Romanian Cinema.

It can be called oppressive and totalitarian forms of government, where the society is controlled by political organs, such as the judiciary, the legislature and the executive, where the powers are united under a single hand. In such regimes, where activities such as art and media are controlled by the central government, it is often difficult to create ideas and works that contradict official opinion. As an example of such totalitarian regimes, which are often mentioned in this study, we can cite the socialist-ruled countries of the Eastern Bloc. Humour itself is a provocative element in the totalitarian forms of government mentioned above. Moreover, humour, or even more simply, laughter, is always a provocative element for the other party, the laugher. In societies that are already governed by force, not only humour but also many art forms become a problem for governments if they cannot be controlled. The act of laughing is an act that cannot be prevented by its very nature, and just like laughing, humour is a very difficult phenomenon to control.

In Romania, as the country at the focal point of this study, until 1989, when socialism collapsed with a democratic revolution, many art fields, especially cinema, were under intensive control. After the revolution, the birth of a new

Romanian cinema began with the removal of pressure and control mechanisms. However, looking at Romanian political and social life, the traumas of post-socialism have always influenced the debates about a stable and democratic political life in Romania. On the other hand, the ongoing economic crisis and the problem of bureaucracy (corruption, etc.) have left their mark on Romanian society. It is possible to see these effects (economic crisis, bureaucracy, socialism trauma) in the films I studied as well as in other films of the Romanian New Wave cinema. In addition, the humorous elements in the films I examined are designed around these social phenomena.

The most problematic relationship of Romania's socialist past to cinema and other art forms can be explained by socialist realism. Art intended for the centres of power in Romania had to be compatible with socialist realism. Rather than conveying the facts as they are, this realism was to tell the truth that the ruling communist party “wanted to see.”

The Soviet Union, with the help of various organisations, tried to establish socialist realism as the only perception among artists. In this way, the intention was to use art effectively to spread socialist consciousness in society. The understanding of socialist realism attempted to exert influence on the various branches of art through state institutions and commissions.

“The Russian Revolution of 1917 created a new situation that made it possible and indeed historically necessary to link words and deeds and to implement the ideals of Socialism and Communism, and to strengthen the people's faith in these ideals.” (Dmitriev, 1983, p: 97.).

I should emphasize the connection between humour and the Romanian New Wave in order to clarify my analysis. But, before answering this question, I will focus on a few points about humour concept. Ordinarily, humour and laughter have a threatening quality. This quality is that it concerns politics and government. In fact, it results from that laughter and humour, which creates comedy, has a destructive quality to authority. A good example of this can be seen in *The Name*

of *The Rose* written by Umberto Eco and then adapted into the screenplay by Jean-Jacques Annaud in 1986. The respectable and authoritarian blind priest Jorge de Burgos, who is the head of the library, keeps Aristo's book on "laughter" which is considered lost because, according to the priest, laughter is satanic and it damages authority. The Church, which is represented by the blind priest, can be seen as the governments and political authorities. Therefore, humour has been an unfavourable phenomenon for both Church and totalitarian regimes.

"Comedy poses a threat to sovereign power not only because of its anarchic bent, but because it makes light of such momentous matters as suffering and death, hence diminishing the force of some of the judicial sanctions that governing classes tend to keep up their sleeve." (Eagleton, 2019, p. 96).

As I mentioned in the historical background of the Romanian cinema, cultural life was under the pressure of an authoritarian centralist regime. In this study, I will analyse what function humour has in the representation of a past oppressive regime, rather than how humour is produced and plays a role in an oppressive regime. We can give examples of two classic films that criticize oppressive regimes by using comedy elements. First one, Charlie Chaplin. Although he did not have to produce films under an oppressive regime, he produced an important film criticizing the Nazi regime. In *The Great Dictator*, Chaplin criticised Nazism with the humorous elements he used in his silent films. Chaplin's character is replaced by a tough Dictator (Führer). Then, he spoils the dictator's serious image by his clumsiness. This is a well-known aspect of humour. It seems funny to the audience to see the difficult situations of a strong and tough figure. At the same time, the confrontation with the idealized strong character begins for the audience. For the humour threatens the seriousness. This is how Chaplin's humour works in general. He also criticises capitalism in another important film, *Modern Times*. At that time, the main character of the film works like a robot in the factory, shows the flaws of the factory production system with his various clumsiness.

Although Ernst Lubitsch does not criticize Nazism as Chaplin did, we can see a critique of Nazism through comedy elements in his film *To Be or Not to Be*

(1942). Since Lubitsch's humour style was ironic, he did not use humorous elements in a didactic way like Chaplin. For example, in one scene in the film, the main character, who has to fool a Nazi officer, praised the officer for his success in concentration camps. The Nazi officer suddenly starts bragging and laughing. It is against ethical values for a character to be seen as successful in his job because of the concentration camp, a place where people are killed. That's exactly why it gets ironic and this produces dark humour. Because this is precisely a representation of the Nazi regime through black humour.

After 2000, the Romanian New Wave provides good examples of dealing with the socialist background which is a historical trauma for Romanian society. As an example of this wave, *4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days* directed by Cristian Mungiu became one of the prominent films of the New Wave. Radu Muntean made *The Paper Will be Blue*, (2006) a year before Mungiu's film. The film was about the democratic revolution in 1989 which overthrew the socialist regime. Moreover, Muntean's film had humorous features as opposed to Mungiu's one which was a dramatic film with a realist perception. Radu Muntean's film contains examples of humorous elements that can be called dark humour. It is possible to see these examples in various ways in *12.08 East of Bucharest* which is an example of Romanian New Wave and will be analysed in this study. These three films I mentioned involve a kind of confrontation with the trauma of Romanian socialism. However, *12.08 East of Bucharest* has a distinctive characteristic from two other films that I mentioned as examples, in terms of its humorous elements. In this film, the director refers to humorous elements more frequently.

Based on this, can we say that humour in Romanian New Wave is an instrument of confrontation? For example, *Tales from the Golden Age* (2009), directed by six different directors confronts Romanian socialist background by using humorous elements.

According to theories of laughter and humour, one cannot say that there are strict decisions on humour and comedy. There are different approaches indicating that humour and comedy can be said to be an escapist genre in totalitarian regimes as well as an instrument for struggle and confrontation. "...this is a specific sense

of humour designed to bring politically relevant criticism to authoritarian societies, while gradually losing its political ground and becoming an escapist genre.” (Pop, 2014, p. 153).

In this study, I benefited from the works of Alenka Zupancic about humour theories and theoretical works and inferences of Terry Eagleton on humour. These works argue that humour has a social critical function. Zupancic underlines that the humour is an ideological tool by itself in her study *The Odd One In*. In that study which searches for “maelstrom” of the comedy, Zupancic reveals the provocative and protestant aspects of the humour. Zupancic argues that comedy and humour is a precondition of being ideological. Zupancic quotes from Mladen Dolar these words:

“Laughter is a condition of ideology. It provides us with the distance, the very space in which ideology can take its full swing. It is only with laughter that we become ideological subjects, withdrawn from the immediate pressure of ideological claims to a free enclave. It is only when we laugh and breathe freely that ideology truly has a hold on us—it is only here that it starts functioning fully as ideology, with the specifically ideological means, which are supposed to assure our free consent and the appearance of spontaneity, eliminating the need for the non-ideological means of outside constraint. (Dolar 1986, p.317).” (Zupancic, 2008, p. 4).

At this point, Zupancic draws our attention to a point about this topic. She states that our desire to distance ourselves from ideologies is the result of power and hegemonic ideological understanding. In this way, humour becomes an element of hegemonic ideology. More importantly, humour comes into sight as a phenomenon independent from ideology. Zupancic means this by the distance with ideology. This understanding isolates ideology from any ideological thought and passivizes it. Starting from this point of view, I will try to display the socio-critical role of humour in three films of the Romanian New Wave. In addition, in these films, humour is not only a “tool” to convey social messages or confrontations. Humour becomes a natural component of social criticism and social confrontation.

“It is very important to keep this point in mind, especially in times when freedom and free will, humour, a “positive attitude,” and a distance towards all ideologies have become the principal mode of the dominant ideology. The humanist-romantic presentation of comedy as intellectual resistance in the form of keeping a distance introduction to all that is going on around us is not at all what will interest us in comedy. If a truly subversive edge of comedy exists—as I believe it does—it is to be sought elsewhere.” (Eagleton, 2019).

In my study, I agree with the socio-critical function of humour and ideological aspect of it. Terry Eagleton identifies laughter as defeat of pressure. In the films I examined, we see the traces of a totalitarian and oppressive former socialist country. While I examine three examples from the cinema of a country which has social traumas in the past, I also have the opportunity to examine whether or not humour and comedy have a function in defeating oppression.

In this study, I will not deal with the multilateral discussible structure of humour. Considering this structure of the humour, a conceptual framework will be drawn about commonality of humour elements in Romanian New Wave films. Humour aims neither to escape nor to hypnotise people in Romanian New Wave. Humour elements in Romanian New Wave cannot be described as alienation factor. Humour functions for consolidation as an assisting element. In the films which are analysed in this study, humour does not reflect alienation, escaping, forgetting, or carefreeness for main characters. On the contrary, humour helps us to clearly see the incidents and conditions of the main characters in ironical ways. Humour is not prominent element in the films of the Romanian New Wave. It has a facilitative function in understanding prominent issues in the films.

In that point, we encounter the concept of dark humour when we examine humour elements in the Romanian New Wave.

“Since dark humour has to do with ‘dark side’ of the humanity, it exists in the very nature of our being. Following this line of explanations, we can

extract, from a psychological point of view, a fundamental characteristic of ‘dark humour’, which we sometimes describe as black humour, as the kind of comedy with ‘grotesque or macabre character’ (Martin 49), a form of laughter helping us to cope with realities sometimes impossible deal with.” (Pop, 2014, p. 155).

It is possible to define the elements of humour that we will see in both the films of Romanian New Wave and the films analysed here with the concept of dark humour. Dark humour is an important subgenre in humour studies, but I will not approach a detailed examination in this study. Although I think the concept of dark humour is an important for the Romanian New Wave, I preferred to handle the elements of comedy which I will examine throughout the study by the concept of ‘humour’. Thus, I investigate how humour works in these films.

On this basis, I will focus on three films each by a well-known director of the Romanian New Wave. This choice covers three films from three directors. Let me explain why I have chosen these three directors to examine the humour that creates a commonality among the films and is a remarkable characteristic of Romanian New Wave: first of all, these three directors began making films in the same period, after 2000. Furthermore, it is possible to find commonalities among these films in terms of their style and aesthetical aspects. I can show how humour functions in these films, in terms of these commonalities.

In this study, when I mention about commonalities of visual styles of three directors, I will rely on the concepts of ‘minimalism’ and ‘slow cinema’. I will take into consideration the conceptual discussion in the *Poetics of Slow Cinema* written by Emre Çağlayan when I use these concepts. “...slow cinema is characterized by its persistence in reducing the flow of temporality and pacing, hence the label ‘slow’.” (Çağlayan, 2018, p. 6).

The terms of minimalism and slow cinema are interchangeable. They have common characteristics. In this study, I will not explore all parts of the differences of these concepts. However, I will use these terms interchangeably to explain visual

styles of the films. Minimalism and slow cinema has common characteristics. Also minimalism and slow cinema are concepts that complete each other. They are about the approximation of the image and language of the film to the real time. The approximation of film time to real time allows us to see scenes from real life or stories from real time in the films. The conceptualization of images approximating real time by the concepts of minimalist and slow cinema is also important in terms of understanding the three films I have examined in this study. Film language and aesthetic styles of these three directors have similarities. In all three films I studied, we see a minimalist aesthetic in terms of the use of the camera and the timeline in the films. Although different camera movements were used in the films in terms of aesthetics, we can see the traces of slow cinema in all three films.

The concept of mock realism, which also occurs in the Romanian New Wave and discussed by Romanian academician Doru Pop, will help me when I explain common elements of the film grammar of three directors in their films. Additionally, Doru Pop uses the concept of mock realism as a key to explaining the film grammar and aesthetic of the Romanian New Wave. "...the recent Romanian cinema can be placed within the boundaries of the mock realism tropes of the European and Eastern-European cinema (Eidsvik 1991), with roots in Chekov's literature or Kafka's Works and functioning as a satirical tool to survive totalitarian states and absurd social conditions." (Pop, 2014, p. 153).

After this explanation, we can return to the question of how humour functions in Romanian New Wave and in the films analysed in this study. We can mention that humour has a critical function in dealing with historical traumas and discussions on post-socialism, based on "*12:08 East of Bucharest*".

"Other directors, like Corneliu Porumboiu, are practicing forms of re-writing their traumatic experiences using the same funny treatment as the typical jokes. In the already discussed *12:08 East of Bucharest*, he is constantly placing laughable twists inside the most tragical situations- such as during the televised discussion about the bloody Romanian Revolution,

which is repeatedly thrown into derision by contemptuous outside interventions.” (Pop, 2014, p. 161).

I have already mentioned that humour in Romania serves as a means of confronting social traumas. Furthermore, in two films, I will argue that humour has a different function to criticise today’s Romanian society. “Laughing at the defects of personality traits, the description of absurd human behaviour and the deteriorated social relations were mocked in a derisive way by the films made before the apparition of the Romanian New Wave.” (Pop, 2014, p. 162).

In Cristi Puiu’s film, the main character, who has a risk of death, was transferred from one hospital to another by ambulance. By this way, the health system and non-functional bureaucratic structure in today’s Romania become clear. A similar situation occurs in Radu Jude’s film. In the film, a poor young girl won a car by lottery and her family wants to sell this car because of their poor financial conditions. By taking into consideration the problems she had with her family, we can see the projection of a poor family portrait from today’s Romania. By referring these films, I argue that humour has a significant function in reflecting current social problems.

There were some important points in the selection of these films. *12:08 East of Bucharest* is Porumboiu’s first feature length film. The story of the film is about a discussion of Romanian Revolution that took place in in 1989. An important part of the film takes places in a TV studio. In the film, three men in a studio discuss in a sarcastic way what they were doing during the revolution. I chose this film to display the aspect of humour that has a function of confrontation in post-socialist era. *The Death of Mr Lazerescu*, directed by Puiu, is useful for me in terms of showing the main character's experience of the Romanian bureaucracy in today’s Romania. This is an opportunity to show how humour has a critical function during the capitalisation process of Romania because humour is not merely an instrument for a historical confrontation in the Romanian New Wave. *The Happiest Girl in the World* which is the first feature-length film of Radu Jude focuses on a young girl and her family. In this film, I will show humour’s function on social criticism.

In the relevant film of Radu Jude, we see a young girl and her conflicted relation with her family. By contrast with Puiu's film, humour springs from inner tensions of a girl with her family rather than conflicts of the character with the state. Thus, the film underlines a social conflict and a crisis by using humorous instruments.

By taking into consideration the similarities and differences of these three films, I can say that social conflicts and crises are shown with different incidents. When it is considered that Romania had been ruled by a totalitarian regime for a long time and critical thoughts has been oppressed by the central government, Romanian New Wave has emerged as a cinema concept which highlights social conflicts and crises by humorous elements. In that point, I will argue that humour has become the determinative element of the film grammars of Romanian New Wave.

CHAPTER 1: HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1. After Socialism: Eastern and Romanian Cinema

The last decade of the 20th century saw tremendous political change all over the world. After the Second World War, the Cold War began and the world divided politically into two camps: the capitalist and the socialist. In the 1990s, the socialist bloc - or Eastern bloc - collapsed. This collapse meant not only a historical and political change, but also a cultural and social change. Especially, the societies in the former socialist states were affected by this change.

1989 was a significant year for the societies ruled under totalitarian regimes in Eastern Europe. Berlin Wall, which divided Berlin into two for many years, was collapsed in this year. A democratic revolution took place in Romania, which heralded a huge transformation in Balkans. This chain of events which later led to dissolution of socialist Eastern Bloc was announcing a new “nonpolar” and post-socialist period. This radical political transformation has entirely changed social and cultural life. Naturally, cinema industry and film making processes were a part of this transformation.

“Such a situation had long term effects on the future history of Romanian cinema. These effects were felt in the early documentaries, domestic and foreign docu-fictions, shorts and feature-length films of the early 1990s and followed their trajectory through the first decade of the twenty-first century, the decade which witnessed the emergence of the Romanian New Wave.” (Nasta, 2013, p. 73).

The collapse of totalitarian regimes in Eastern Bloc was an important turning point for filmmakers and directors who suffered from government pressure and censorship. By the collapse, filmmakers eluded an authoritarian control mechanism which sponsored the films and interfered in their contents. However, a new problem for filmmakers of the former socialist countries who had to struggle with pains of transformation to free market and economic problems came to light.

Cinema industries of the former socialist countries started to face difficulties to finance films of directors. This condition paved the way for co-productions which we can also see in the films of Romanian New Wave. Consequently, the films that are produced in this region have chance to be released to foreign cinema market notably the European one.

“The cinemas of all the post-Communist countries have come to depend increasingly on co-production for their survival. Co-production with both east and west was not uncommon in the past, but it always left space for a core of production which was national at heart. Now it has become a necessity and, as such, a mixed blessing. While providing a lifeline for struggling industries, it brings with it the risk of standardization and homogenization of film production, and a consequent threat both to individual creativity and to national specificity.” (Hendrykowski, 1996, p. 640).

We can argue that this situation led to the clearing the way for the integration and interaction of Eastern Bloc which had been closed societies for a long time with “external world”. For the Western world, mysterious stories belonged to the former socialist societies started to arouse curiosity. However, it is necessary to take into consideration that filmmakers who have economic problems, although they have been free of pressure mechanisms, tried to cooperate with Western film industry as a kind of obligation. As a result, contrary to the pressure of the socialist regimes, although they had the freedom to make films they wanted, they did not have enough funding to do this.

“The transition between different forms of filmmaking had been eased, though, by the fact that upon occasions in the late 1980s the economic problems of the Eastern bloc system had generated a move that could be seen as a concession, or an insertion of the thin end of the wedge of subversion (the authorities were content if it simply remained thin): an eventual willingness to contemplate co-productions with Western countries

(in addition to the ones with other members of the Warsaw pact that had prevailed earlier.)” (Coates, 2004, p. 267).

A co-production strategy was developed by the filmmakers of the former socialist countries which was found to be a solution to produce films. Thanks to this strategy, filmmakers who had difficulties to make films they wanted achieved their goals to a certain extent. They also had a chance to display Western audience the longstanding problems that they face.

By this way, Western world started to get to know the filmmakers from Eastern Europe. For example, Emir Kusturica, an important filmmaker from Balkans, attracted the attention of Western audiences. Kusturica came from Yugoslavia, which has more complex social conflicts and tensions than Romania. This condition was a distinctive factor of the attention of Western audiences. A story from Yugoslavia, where cultural diversity and social paranoia were intertwined, was presented to the Western audiences with the help of Kusturica. Paul Coates emphasizes the importance of Kusturica’s cinema with these words:

“The plaudits earned by Emir Kusturica’s works may simply reflect an international audience’s affection for their sometimes overblown bravura, their Felliniesque, carnivalesque relish of the tang and ‘colour’ of gypsy communities; but their particular ongoing relevance lies in the status of former Yugoslavia-Kusturica’s homeland- as the possible nightmare terminus of Western multiculturalism should it too fail to integrate its ethnic minorities, casting them (out) instead as images of the paranoid Other.” (Coates, 2004, p. 276).

After the collapse of socialist regimes in Eastern Europe, Romanian cinema went through a similarly difficult phase as other socialist countries. There is no doubt that a radical political moment such as regime change was very effective there. Romanian cinema industry had suffered from financial problems in the filmmaking processes similar to those other former socialist countries had. Collapse of the centralist state apparatus which finances culture industry made it difficult to

get financial support of government in order to make their films in the earlier period. This quotation may clarify the difficult conditions of filmmakers of the new regime:

“The first years after the political changes from December 1989, Romania had passed through a period of chaotic transition. The governmental instability from the middle of the nineties led to legislative unsteadiness, which caused a lot of abuses in all domains of public life. A tacit struggle had started, a struggle in which the ideological support was often used as a pretext for gaining a powerful position. The official cultural structures were one of the areas of this battle.” (Dulgheru, 2013, p. 94).

In this difficult and chaotic atmosphere, Romanian filmmakers tried to build their distribution network. During this transitional period, Romanian directors produced a large number of independent films. It is helpful to remember that filmmakers who had been under pressure in terms of both cultural and financial areas for many years because of a totalitarian regime became independent literally. However, this positive development has another negative feature: financial difficulties.

“Many of the recognized filmmakers created their own production and even distribution companies. But the main sponsor still remained the state, that is the Ministry of Culture and the old National Office for Cinematography (ONC). By gaining these outposts, which were politically dependent, some of “the old guard” of filmmakers from the seventies and the eighties (many of them, talented and innovatory at their time) practically controlled the whole cinema production in Romania. This state of affairs was very destructive and led to an unprecedented catastrophe.” (ibid, p. 94)

Directors such as Nae Caranfil and Lucian Pintilie have become prominent ones in this process. These directors who had tried to produce films in the former regime, continued their efforts to make films in the new democratic regime. Lucian Pintilie is a filmmaker who serves as a bridge in both former and new regimes by making films.

“Pintilie miraculously managed to bridge the gap between the short lived Thaw and the post-revolutionary period, re-integrating into the domestic film industry after a forced artistic exile of almost twenty years.” (Nasta, 2013, p. 85).

As mentioned above that because of the financial problems in Eastern Europe after the collapse of socialist regimes, filmmakers of these countries approached to make films by co-productions. For example, some films directed by Pintilie were co-produced with France.

As another example for this transition period, Nae Caranfil has become a prominent filmmaker. After Pintilie attracted the attention of European audiences, Caranfil has followed his path. Caranfil’s Romanian irony and absurdist psyche which have similarities with Pintilie’s style was one of the most influential factors for the European audiences.

It is possible to say that this influence and the continuity which started with Pintilie and Caranfil’s films led to begin to develop the Romanian New Wave after 2000. Dominique Nasta describes that:

“However, the ongoing aesthetic ‘parti-pris’ that has helped directors such as Cristi Puiu and Corneliu Porumboiu reach international recognition effectively emerged at the beginning of the new century, after what we may call a transitional phase, which has as its flag-bearers directors from the late 1990s such as Nae Caranfil.” (ibid, p. 121).

After 1989, the regime change and social transformation in Romania were important factors which determined the key features of the Romanian New Wave. New Romanian Cinema consists of a generation that has witnessed the last period of socialist Romania and its collapse. The fact that a number of directors are members of this generation influenced the style of the new era of Romanian Cinema. Traumas created by socialism, economic problems, bureaucratic troubles formed the common themes of the Romanian New Wave.

The lack of opportunities for opposition and free expression in socialist Romania was a common problem not only for the directors but also for many sections of the society. After the collapse of socialism in Romania, filmmakers had the environment in which they can confront the regime that they could not face before. In the decade after socialism, which ended with the democratic revolution in 1989, films that settle accounts with the old regime are not often found in Romanian cinema. For the Romanian society, which was in the throes of transition between the old regime and the new regime, it was undoubtedly necessary to complete the transition period before confrontation. After 2000, as a result of the complete capitalist integration of Romania, confronting the old regime came to the fore.

Cristi Puiu and Cristian Mungiu, who were trained alongside the older generation of filmmakers, became the pioneers of the new Romanian cinema after 2000. In this period, the theme of post-socialism became prominent and socialism has been turned into a subject of criticism. The post-socialism theme began to be treated from different aspects. Sometimes a woman's problem due to the abortion ban became an issue. Sometimes the events of the democratic revolution of 1989 were also questioned. In addition to the discussion of socialism, social issues also gained considerable interest. The possibilities for criticism were limited in socialist Romania and the mass media were under the strict control of the government. This prevented artists not only from criticising the regime, but also from speaking about the problems of society. In the new regime, the artists had the opportunity to tell the troubles of the society.

In the new Romanian cinema, many problems in the society began to be told. Topics such as bureaucratic crises, bribery, cover-ups and poverty began to come to the fore in the new Romanian cinema. In socialist Romania, as in many eastern European countries, the doctrine of socialist realism prevailed. Socialist realism had to describe a society the regime wanted to see. Socialist realism was more about the idealism that the regime wanted to see rather than what the artists wanted to show or express. In the new Romanian cinema, on the other hand, the cameras conspicuously show what is perceptually happening. The new generation

of filmmakers has created a social realist film language, even if it does not express itself in ideological terms like the old regime.

Similar liberation experiences took place in the Balkan region after the socialist regimes. However, the art and cinema world of each country was affected differently from this transition. Romanian cinema has created its own cinematic language with a distinctive sense of realism compared to other Balkan countries. It was the realism that made Romanian cinema special and distinctive. The new wave cinema, which reveals stories that touch on social issues from many aspects, has succeeded in conveying the characteristics of Romanian society after 2000 to the audience. This fact is related to the liberation of Romania in the field of art production.

These oppressive mechanisms over Romanian society led to confront socialism in Romania after the collapse of the regime. The criticism of socialism in Romanian New Wave is an objection to the oppression mechanism which Romanian society suffered for many years. For example, the mentions of Catalin Mitulescu, who is one of the prominent directors of Romanian New Wave, about his film *How I Spent the End of the World* (2006) clearly explain what confronting socialism means for directors of Romanian New Wave:

“I wanted very much to see a film about the Ceausescu era. I really wanted to see this film, to see the era, because we’re different, we lived in those times and have those memories. At one point the revolution came over us, everything was very agitated and we got lost. All going backs now are followed by hatred, by things unresolved, by conflicts unresolved. I wanted a film that would tell the story of my childhood, my adolescence, that would tell of those times and the happiness and sadness that came with them.” (Pusca, 2011, p. 9).

We can see confronting the trauma of socialism in *12:08 East of Bucharest* which will be examined in this study. With the difference of others, this film focuses the narration of 1989 Revolution. Porumboiu who is the director of the film gave an interview to the *Altyazi Cinema Magazine* (Turkey) and said that they could just watch propagandistic films on TV when they were young. He underlines that the

films of the New Wave are reaction to the propaganda made during socialist period of Romania. (Saydam & Porumboiu, 2012, p. 45)

Through the Revolution in 1989, a total change has been started in Romania. Especially, the political power which was under control of a central government started to change rapidly. Naturally, this condition created many problems in state and society. The change processes such as reorganization of the bureaucracy and reorganization of the state according to the division of powers had many effects on Romanian society. Many problems such as corruption which has been commonly seen in the former regime continued to be in the new regime and after the transformation, Romanian society started to suffer from more intricate problems. (Stoica, 2012).

We can examine the film *The Death of Mr. Lazarescu* which I will analyse later to understand the effects of this transformation. In this film, we can see the effects of the transformation in the health sector. In the film, we have the opportunity to witness the reflections of the structural crises brought by the post-socialism period in Romania through the healthcare bureaucracy. In addition to this, I can exemplify *Graduation* (2016) directed by Cristian Mungiu which mentions Romanian institutions' structural crises which occurred with regime change and has continued until today. In the film, a doctor who is the main character of the film tries to pull some strings with a bureaucrat for his daughter, who is preparing for the university entrance exam, to pass the exam after she has an accident a few days before taking the exam. A similar situation takes places in *Child Pose* (2013) directed by Calin Peter Netzer who is another director from the New Wave. In this film, the story is about a woman who used her power and relations to prevent her son, who caused the death of a child in a traffic accident, from going to jail. In these films, we have chance to see the problems such as deficiencies of the bureaucracy, corruption and bribery.

In addition to this, transition from state monopoly to the free-market economy is another important crisis of the period. Romania had a weaker economy than other socialist states during socialist period and had many economic problems.

However, the problems that were created by free market economy were added to the ongoing economic crises in Romania. It is possible to see the effects of the economic problems over the society in *The Happiest Girl in the World*. In this film, we see the tension between the young girl who won a car from lottery and her family who wants to sell the car because of their economic difficulties. It is possible to observe the economic issues of the era, which stand out in this film, also in other films of the New Wave.

2. Humour as Social Critique

Laughter is an action that has different social consequences. Laughing can be a source of joy and pleasure for people and society, but it can also be disturbing. There is no doubt that the emotional nature of laughter has confused many philosophers throughout the ages. For example, Aristotle focused on the most threatening aspect of laughter. According to him, laughter spoils the seriousness of the thought. He even argues that laughing disturbs the balances in society and shakes the power. Therefore, it emphasizes the threatening side of laughter. Moreover, Socrates, who lived long before Aristotle, mocking the gods in a comedy would be the most important evidence against him in his case. Since the early ages, this negative side of laughter is emphasized. For example, Bergson points out the negative side of laughter while thinking about laughter. What I call negatively here is that laughter is thought to be an act that comes out of only a deficiency, a mistake. In other words, it is mentioned by many thinkers that laughter has a disruptive and defective aspect rather than an element of pleasure. This is exactly why Bergson emphasizes the social side of humour Bakhtin theorizes laughter elsewhere. He emphasizes that laughter creates pleasure and joy. Therefore, unlike other thinkers, it explains laughter in a positive way. The folk humour culture that he developed based on the carnival culture of the Middle Ages is precisely a way for the people to reach pleasure and joy against the oppressors.

John Morreal summarizes those who theorize about humour and comedy studies under three theories. According to the theory represented by Plato, Aristotle and one of the later thinkers Hobbes, the superiority we feel over others makes us laugh. According to this understanding, we laugh at the weaknesses and shortcomings of others. Another understanding describes comedy as a relief. In this theory, Freud's work takes the lead. The third and last theory is stressing disagreement. According to this theory, humour is a perception of incongruity, that is, contradictions in the situation make us laugh. Joke, mockery, irony; are based on contradiction, incompatibility. In particular, the social critical aspect of humour is addressed through two theories. Relaxation theory and conflict theory.

Humour can be a threatening element in an oppressive political regime. Laughter spoils seriousness and undermines authority. Laughing in such a period creates a social relief. Thus, the critical aspect of humour is also a way of social relaxation to political problems.

“In the comic, too, one experiences pleasure by imparting it to another person; but this is not imperative; one can enjoy the comic alone when one happens on it. Wit, on the other hand, must be imparted. Apparently the process of wit-formation does not end with the conception of wit. There remains something which strives to complete the mysterious process of wit-formation by imparting it.” (Freud, 2010).

Humour, by serving as a social critical function, creates a laugh out of the contradictions and disagreements in daily life or any social event. Then, what does humour mean in a society like Romania where society is controlled with pressure? While answering this question, we must consider a few points. Every society's sense of humour is based on its ethnic and previous oral and written traditions. In Romania, we must add the previously influential Soviet culture to them. As a result, with the proclamation of socialism, the Bolshevik culture, which was in power in Russia, also affected the Romanian rulers. So how was the Bolsheviks' relationship with humour?

The article “*Bolsheviks Do Laugh*”, written by the Soviet filmmaker Eisenstein (1935), is very important in terms of this issue. He wrote the article based on the question he was asked during a trip abroad. For that time, the Bolsheviks reflected an ideological image that was cold and not laughing. Based on this, he describes the relationship of the Soviets with comedy. Of course, he again emphasizes that humour should also serve the struggle for socialism. In fact, this is a very important point of departure, because the importance of each means of expression in terms of the class struggle is beginning to affect the form of the means of expression. Humour is described only as a tool that should aid the proletariat in the class war against bourgeoisie. A similar understanding can be mentioned for many socialist countries, especially the Soviets.

Naturally, this situation restricts humour that is impossible to limit and control. If humour is controlled by power because laughter is threatening, can it make you laugh anymore? If we talk about the social critical aspect of humour, it is precisely that humour reveals the inaccessible places in society. As Eisenstein puts it, a sense of humour that serves the class struggle is used for an idealist society, just like the socialist realism. That is, it produces a reality that is reasonable for power, not facts. Could there be reasonable humour? How does humour show its social critical aspect when made reasonable by power?

If we go back to Eisenstein's article, he says that the Soviet comedy is based on earlier Russian literature. Chekov and Gogol are the leading ones. Then he talks about the sense of humour to which he thinks it is close to black humour. Black humour is sharing similar elements to conflict theories, if we act according to Morreal's classification. Conflict theories emphasize the social critical aspect of humour. Conflicts and incongruent moments in society are portrayed with irony and sarcasm. If we come back to Romania from here, we can talk about the decisive writers and folk traditions in Romanian society. The texts of the Romanian thinker Cioran are the culmination of ridicule and irony. In his style that synthesizes irony and absurd, he always handles the contradictions he sees in life. His philosophical references are about to show the contradictions.

In addition, the Jewish joke tradition, which is based on black humour, is also important for the Romanian sense of humour. We can see a reflection of this in Radu Mihailenau's cinema. Also, as a small note, we can say that Cristian Mungiu, one of the important names of the new wave, was his second assistant. We can see examples of Jewish humour in one of Mihailenau's important films, such as *Train of Life* and *The Concert*. In these films, we see social problems through the Jewish identity.

“With Radu Mihaileanu’s cinema these elements are integrated in a unified comic approach, which is representative as a way of understanding and expressing humanism and human relationship, beyond the limitations of ethnicity or identity.” (Pop, 2014, p. 158).

For humour to function as a social critic without being restricted, we will have to look to post-socialist Romania. With the loss of control of the regime, humour began to use its critical side again. Because social problems could not be hidden by any power locus only by using force. Therefore, the difficulties of the Romanian society began to be expressed. Our seeing the social critical side of humour in the Romanian New Wave consists of these elements. The humorous tradition that has developed with thinkers and playwrights like Cioran and Iuoneco, with the synthesis of Yeddish stories, presents an example of black humour that may be encountered in the Balkans. While we see examples of this in the new wave cinema, we also clearly see the social critical function of humour.

We can explain the humour that emerged in New Wave Cinema as a synthesis of the two understandings I mentioned earlier, the theories of conflict and relaxation. The most common element of humour in New Wave films is the aspect of conflict that is often seen in films. Most of the time, attention is drawn to the incompatibility of the characters in situations. For example, *Golden Ages*, which consists of short films shot by a few directors who criticize socialism, is one of the best examples of this. In one story of the film, a communist party official brought a pig to his home and wanted to slaughter the animal and feed it to his family

without being noticed to his neighbours. However, they could not kill the pig.

When they decided to kill the animal with the gas from the last furnace, they accidentally blew up their house. This scene is typical of New Wave black humour. If we talk a little more on this scene, we can observe many functions of humour as a social critic. Because the criticized socialist tells us the distortions about Romanian society. A party official secretly bringing a pig to his house. That's why this is not a job that everyone can achieve. The official took it as a bribe. This scene also gives an idea about the socio-economic structure of the society. On the one hand, the party official is not well off, and neither is the situation of his neighbours. And they must slaughter and eat a live pig that is brought home, without being noticeable to anyone. Of course, it's dark humour when their house blows up at the end of such a scene. In this scene, our laughter does not constitute a catharsis in us either. We laugh at the situation, but we also have an idea about the social structure of the period. It is precisely for this reason that humour functions as a social criticism.

CHAPTER 2: HUMOUR IN ROMANIAN NEW WAVE

2.1. Narrative and Visual Style of New Wave Humour

We can name the humour seen in the New Wave as dark humour, dry humour, sarcasm or irony. To understand the humour which characterises the films of the New Wave, we should analyse its background and examine the intellectual and cultural elements which has influenced the humour of the New Wave.

First of all, I will mention about the films which have dark humorous elements in European cinema. *The Golden Age* (1930) directed by Bunuel and Dali is a good example for this. This film is an example of dark humour through a surrealist approach. *Rules of the Game* (1939) directed by Jean Renoir presents absurd nature of the political authority to us with an ironic jargon. As a more recent example, *Man Bites Dog* (1992) which was a mockumentary showed annoying violence to the audience with a sarcastic jargon. *Burnt by the Sun* (1994) directed by Nikita Mikhalkov represents a Russian style ironic manner. (Pop, 2014). In addition, it is possible to consider *Underground* (1995) directed by Emir Kusturica as an example of *carnavalesque* humour.

Herein, I should refer to the carnivalesque humour which was conceptualised by Mihail Bahtin. According to Bahtin, this understanding is one which refuses and caricatures the authority, and reveals the freedom of the masses against hegemonic ideas of the rulers. (Bahtin, 2005). Bahtin developed this theory based on celebrations and entertainments that had ongoing pagan effects despite the oppressive authority of the church in the medieval age. (Bahtin, 2016).

This humour element which draws the attention in the films of Kusturica can be also seen as a part of Balkan humour. We can see a similar example in the New Wave: *Silent Wedding* (2008) directed by Horatiu Malaele. The film is also an interesting example from the point of telling the stories of Romanian society in the countryside before destalinization period. The film tells the story of an engaged

couple who cannot marry because their wedding date is the day of Stalin's death and villagers want to hold their wedding at all costs.

To understand the humour in Romanian New Wave, we should consult Kafka's works. The approach named as *Kafkaesk* which makes social criticism in ironic ways makes itself apparent in the films of the New Wave. Andre Bazin says that the myths created by Kafka have a fault given by God. (Bazin, 2005, p. 193). The important protagonist of Kafka, Josef K. appears as a defective character. (Kafka, 2008). Despite the divine fault of Josef K., the absence of God creates the paradox and drama. We can argue that this drama and irony raise the sarcasm.

Bergson mentions in his important work *On Laughter* that humour element indicates individual and collective mistakes which should immediately be rectified. Moreover, he considers laughing as a correction. (Bergson, Brereton & Rothwell 1911, p. 28).

It is a matter of debate that laughing and humour can be seen as tools for social upheaval or not. Before stating laughing as a tool for regulation of the society, Bergson says about the one funny as follows: "The comic is that side of a person which reveals his likeness to a thing, that aspect of human events which, through its peculiar inelasticity, conveys the impression of pure mechanism, of automatism, of movement without life." (ibid, p. 28).

After this explanation, Bergson argues that funny thing reflects an individual or collective defect that should be rectified. (Pop, 2014, p. 63) The defect springs from the contrast between living creatures and non-living things. Mechanical action of human being creates the comedy. He states that this individual and collective defect should be rectified by society. Thus, Bergson again says as follows: "This corrective is laughter, a social gesture that singles out and represses a special kind of absentmindedness in men and in events." (Bergson, 1911, p. 57).

We can consider the humour as a corrective instrument for social criticism. Bergson underlines that laughing emerges because of a defect. Herein, humour starts to play a social role for attracting the attention to this defect or rectifying it. This is social critical aspect of the humour. It is necessary to state that Bergson mentions a duality when he explains that humour is derived from the defect. This

duality is between the one which is strict and stable and the one which is fluid and unstable. The clash of this duality creates the comedy. The comedy elements created by *The Tramp* who is a character in the silent films of Charlie Chaplin properly exemplifies Bergson's definition.

The critical aspect of the humour can also be seen in the Romanian New Wave. It can be argued that this role of the humour is a tool for Romanian cinema to survive in totalitarian regimes and absurd social life conditions. However, I can conclude this part with the quotation which summarizes intellectual and cultural elements of the Romanian New Wave:

“Viewed from this perspective, the recent Romanian cinema can be placed within the boundaries of the mock-realism tropes of the European and Eastern-European cinema (Eidsvik 1991), with roots in Chekov's literature or Kafka's Works and functioning as a satirical tool to serve totalitarian states and absurd social conditions.” (Pop, 2014, p. 153).

Romanian philosopher E. M. Cioran can be indicated as another intellectual resource that Romanian New Wave benefits from. It is possible to see a sense of humour in the works of Cioran who had lived in Romania and published some works until World War 2. (Cioran, 2013). The effects of the intellectual works of Cioran can be seen in the films of Lucian Pintilie who is an important filmmaker for the Romanian cinema. The irony and satire which were used in the films of Pintilie during socialist regime can be considered as a kind of consequences of the effects of Cioran's intellectual works.

“Pintilie has depicted Romanian realities using irony, satire and embedded narratives, thus following the lineage of a heritage which has always been extremely familiar to him: the work of playwrights such as Caragiale and Ionesco, known for their taste for black humour, cynicism and the grotesque, alongside philosopher E. M. Cioran's consistent pessimism.” (Nasta, 2013, p. 86).

If we consider that Pintilie is a role model for filmmakers in both socialist and post-socialist periods, it can be said that sense of black humour of Cioran has reached to the New Wave by Pintilie's work.

Another prominent person was Ion Luca Caragiale who was a playwright and had an important place as much as Cioran in Romanian literature. Theatre plays written by him were adapted into the screenplay soon after socialist regime was built in Romania by Jean Georgescu who was one of the prominent directors of that period. (Pop, 2014, p. 161). The importance of Caragiale in Romanian cinema and literature is derived from that he successfully used ridicule in his works. His plays were adapted into the cinema on the purpose of socialist propaganda for criticising capitalist regimes. (ibid, p. 162). Caragiale's sense of humour which was shaped by the concepts of dark humour and ridicule started to gain an important place in Romanian cinema before the Romanian New Wave emerged.

Dark humour concept which spreads to the New Wave should be clarified. Primarily, to understand dark humour, we can view the sentence of Harold Bloom who is the writer of the book *Dark Humour*: "Defining dark humour is virtually impossible because its manifestation in great literature necessarily involves irony, the trope in which you say one thing and mean another, sometimes the opposite of what is said." (Bloom, 2010, p. 15).

The fact that Bloom talked about the impossibility of defining the concept of dark humour is due to the fact that there are many different opinions on the concept. Thus, we can understand that it is difficult to draw sharp limits to explain the concept such as dark humour.

However, the words of Doru Pop give a general opinion about the humour: "This is borderline concept, since there are numerous manifestations of the dark humour, including the morbid, the absurd, the impossible, the disgusting, and the ugly." (Pop, 2014, p. 154).

We can examine the controversial definitions of dark humour by the help of previous examples. The effect of dark humour on the New Wave can be mentioned

based on the authors and artists who produced this kind of works which include humorous element. To show Shakespeare's plays as example will not be wrong in this issue because, in his plays, the elements of humour which can be named as dark humour can clearly be seen. Moreover, I can cite Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet* as an example in this context. (Shakespeare, 2003). Doru Pop specifies a speech of Mercutio in the play as very explanatory about dark humour: "Dark humour is a paradoxical notion. One of the best definitions we have of this kind of laughter is provided by one of Shakespeare's many characters built upon dark humour (in this case Mercutio), describing it is 'grave', 'yet is also "serious, but not merry."' (Pop, 2014, p. 154).

I can mention Andre Breton, who is called as "the father of the Surrealism", who not only refers to dark humour but also reinterpret the concept of dark humour at 20th century in Europe. By benefiting from some writers such as Edgar Allen Poe and Jonathan Swift, Breton developed the conceptual framework for the concept of dark humour. According to Andre Breton, dark humour is 'enemy of sentimentality'. (Breton, 1997).

If we accept the definition of dark humour made by Andre Breton, we can consider it as an offensive element or one that eliminates the emotionality. Offensive aspect of the humour is a discussible issue. Eagleton argues that the word sarcasm is originated from an Ancient Greek term meaning *tear the flesh* (Eagleton, 2019, p. 46). Sarcasm is a much-related concept with dark humour and –in the most general sense- humour. Based on this, Eagleton says that humour can be a matter of solidarity and criticism as well as defence and acquiescence. (ibid, p. 46).

By taking into consideration all the intellectual basis of dark humour, it can be said that dark humour and humour is sometimes a means of dealing with the reality and sometimes with authorities.

"Since dark humour has to do with 'dark side' of the humanity, it exists in the very nature of our being. Following this line of explanations, we can extract, from psychological point of view, a fundamental characteristic of

‘dark humour,’ which we sometimes describe as black humour, as the kind of comedy with ‘grotesque or macabre character’ (Martin 49), a form of laughter helping us to cope with realities sometimes impossible to deal with” (Pop, 2014 p. 155).

The humour has a criticism function in Romanian cinema. It is a tool for dealing with or understanding the social problems that comes from the past and still continues. However, the humour and laughing elements in the New Wave has different characteristics from the films of comedy genre. The films which will be analysed in this study and other films of Romanian New Wave are not the ones which we can consider as comedy genre. But we can see humour elements in the stories which tell a tragedy, a drama or an important social issue.

The distinctive aspect of the humour of New Wave is that the humour gets involved in the story as a facilitator instrument. However, this instrument never puts the main story in the shade. In the film *Police, Adjective* (2009) directed by Corneliu Porumboiu, we can see how the humour gets involved in the story as a facilitator instrument. In the film, a narcotic police who is responsible for following a young man on suspicion of carrying drug had some problems with accusing him. Because this issue becomes an ethical problem for him, he wants to discuss with his superiors. However, when he discusses the issue with his chief, the chief remarks the grammar of his speaking. In a scene that the character has a serious depression, instead of his ethical dilemmas, grammar structure of a word that is used in the conversation becomes the topic of discussion. Herein, the humour gets involved in the story as an assistant instrument.

It is important to mention that although Bergson considers the comedy as a tool for rectifying social problems, in Romanian New Wave, humour does not have a function to rectify the social problems. Comedy has a social critical function, but this comes from the power of the stories that the films tell. In a word, the humour in the New Wave exceeds Bergson’s definition, it does not merely function as a tool for rectifying.

“There are, strictly speaking, no past causes and future effects for comedy. Comedy practically never tries to explain why something happened, but it is extremely adept at showing how something functions—that is to say, it is adept at showing the mechanisms, in the present, that allow its functioning and perpetuation.” (Zupancic, 2008, p. 178).

This definition of Zupancic about comedy can help to understand the humour in the Romanian New Wave. In the New Wave cinema, the humour does not concern about the reasons of the story. The prominence of the humour in explaining the ongoing mechanisms of the social conditions exactly compromises with comedy definition of Zupancic. In this context, her words are very important:

“Comic elements always react (to others) in the present, and although they usually give the impression that they necessarily and unavoidably react as they do, they also—since this always happens right before our eyes—display a radical contingency involved in this very necessity.” (ibid, p. 178).

To sum up, in the light of all these, the humour of the Romanian New Wave was affected by both the authors in Romanian literature such as Cioran and Caragiale and various people from European cinema and literature such as Kafka.

2.2. The Visual Aesthetic of Romanian New Wave

One of the most important aspects of the New Wave is its realism. Doru Pop defines this realist approach as mock-realism by referring to the mockumentary which is the name given to the fake documentaries. (Pop, 2014, p. 153). Realism perspective in today’s Romanian cinema has some distinctive aspects from mainstream opinions about realism in the cinema history. Andre Bazin explains the realism in cinema by examining Italian Neorealism. He mentions this realism as follows:

“It can magnify or neutralize the effectiveness of the elements of reality that the camera captures. One might group, if not classify in order of importance,

the various styles of cinematography in terms of the added measure of reality. We would define as "realist," then, a narrative means tending to bring an added measure of reality to the screen." (Bazin, 2005, p. 27).

To explain this realism, Bazin prefers Hollywood cinema, and Italian Neorealism which rose as an alternative to the studio films in Italy. By comparison with the realism in the New Wave, other realism approaches have an artificial aesthetics.

Emre Çağlayan discusses Bazinian realism in his work about slow cinema aesthetics: "Bazinian realism is invested in the objective and unfiltered representation of reality in cinema, while slow cinema recasts this mode of realism as a different, exaggerated, mannerist and quite often distorted subjective perception of reality." (Çağlayan, 2018, p. 12).

The realism of the New Wave is similar to the realism which is shaped by slow cinema. However, have not Bazin's realism perspective effected the New Wave in terms of visual style? Çağlayan describes the visual styles of the filmmakers who are influenced by Bazin's perspective as follows:

"On the hand, American directors such as Orson Welles and William Wyler challenged continuity editing system by staging mis-en-scene through deep-focus long takes and thus freeing the spectators from the imposition of montage. On the other hand, Italian Neorealist directors such as Roberto Rossellini and Vittorio de Sica gave 'back to cinema a sense of the ambiguity of reality' by abandoning 'the effects of montage' and thus achieving the 'stripping away of all expressionism' of the 'plastics' of the visual image (2005a,37). In both cases, however, the long take functions as a trademark stylistic feature inherently associated with an aesthetic of reality." (ibid, p. 51).

This aesthetics which is based on long takes started to show its effects even in the mainstream films. In some films of the New Wave, it is possible to see a realism effect through long takes. For example, in the film *4 Months, 3 Weeks and*

2 Days directed by Cristian Mungiu, the long take scene of two women in a hotel room with a doctor to have an illegal abortion. In *12.08 East of Bucharest*, the scene in a TV studio was based on a long take. Another example is *Tuesday, After Christmas* (2010) directed by Radu Muntean. In the film, the confrontation of a man who confessed to his wife that he cheated her was based on a long take which is more than six minutes.

The aesthetics of the New Wave can be defined with the concepts of slow cinema perception of Emre Çağlayan and minimalism. The plans based on as few cuts as possible, and the tendencies such as focusing on the moments of the characters are main features that reflect the minimalist cinema aesthetics. Çağlayan draws an analogy between slow cinema and slow food. He describes the slow cinema understanding as follows:

“Slow food resonates with slow cinema on a number of levels. Just as chefs place an emphasis on local and seasonal ingredients, take extra care in preparation and encourage communal participation, slow films likewise utilize old-fashioned methods in the production of their work, including nurturing celluloid as opposed to digital; low budgets, not only out of necessity but as means to underpin a wholesale aesthetic of minimalism; and on-location shooting with small crews working in a communal spirit.” (ibid, p. 8, 9).

The New Wave brought stories from the life into the audience with slow cinema and minimalism aesthetics. The New Wave that issues the existential or ethical problems experienced by ordinary people tells the minimal stories of ordinary characters with its minimalism aesthetics. The realism of the New Wave consolidates with the ordinariness of the heroes created by the directors. For example, in the films directed by Cristi Puiu, the stories of ordinary and unimportant characters are pictured.

“Using common life as the background of his cinematic storytelling (as the everyday life in the block of flats from *Stuff and Dough*), dealing with

meager existence of the elderly (like the old man in *The Death of Mr. Lazarescu*), or just watching an unimportant man's strife in life (the banality of the killer from *Aurora*), Puiu is paying constant homage to the inheritance of the French realists, to their interest in 'life as it is'." (Pop, 2014, p. 49).

2.3. Puiu, Porumboiu and Jude

Cristi Puiu, Corneliu Porumboiu and Radu Jude are the prominent filmmakers of the New Wave who precisely reflect the aesthetics of the New Wave that I mentioned. These directors are those who have been on the rise and have become popular, especially after 2000, in Romanian cinema. They have both differences and similarities. Despite the differences of these filmmakers, their sense of aesthetics is similar.

Among these directors, Puiu can be mentioned as a leading figure in the New Wave. Romanian filmmaker Alex Leo Șerban who is an inspirer for Puiu and has remarkably affected him (Bailey, 2011) draws a metaphorical analogy for Puiu and says as follows: "Puiu planted the seed." (Pop, 2014, p. 42). This analogy is meaningful because Puiu has established important connections between the national cinema and European cinema with his films.

"With only a couple of films made in decade, Puiu synchronized the national cinema with European cinema, and while importing styles and techniques that were assumed conscientiously by other moviemakers, was not a mere Pioneer, but a true Master, a leader of his generation. Prolific director, writer and producer, even an actor his own movies, Puiu's leadership in the contemporary Romanian cinema is unmistakable." (ibid, p. 43).

Before the releasing of *4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days* directed by Mungiu which is a symbol of the New Wave in the eye of Western audiences, Puiu's cinema began to become popular in European festivals. Puiu's minimalist cinema had an effect on the filmmakers of the New Wave who would later make many films. In

fact, the reason of the similarities of three directors that will be analysed in this study is that Puiu has influenced contemporary filmmakers.

Additionally, Puiu was an innovator director by using many different camera techniques. Therefore, we cannot explain his minimalist cinema with a single technique. In *Stuff and Dough* (2001), he used camera-direct style. His short film *Cigarettes and Coffee* (2005) was made with tripod-based. There is an observational camera style in *The Death of Mr. Lazarescu* which is a documentary-style film. Language of the camera that Puiu used in *The Death of Mr. Lazarescu* shows itself in the films of other directors of the New Wave. Doru Pop mentions the effect of the cinema style and camera language of Puiu on other filmmakers of the New Wave as follows:

“The shooting style used in *The Death of Mr. Lazarescu* is omnipresent in the storytelling of films like *4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days* (Mungiu 2007) or *Police, Adjective* (Porumboiu 2009); the storytelling of his films imitated, from the sequences of Gruzniczki’s *The Other Irina* (Cealalta Irina, 2009) to the recent film made by Adrian Sitaru, *Best Intentions* (Din dragoste cu cele mai bune intentii, 2011); his themes are repeated and re-contextualized explicitly; his ‘pure cinema’, with simple settings and minimalist mise-en-scene are copied by younger directors like Marian Crişan (Morgen, 2010) or older ones, like Tudor Giurgiu (Superman, Spiderman or Batman, 2011).” (ibid, p. 43).

It is possible to see the typical feature of realism and minimalism, which identify with the New Wave, in Puiu’s cinema. However, at the same time, Puiu’s realism is a confronting socialist realism which was imposed by former socialist regime for a long time. Socialist realism imposes the artists how the life should be. (Taylor, 1979). Puiu’s cinema exactly reflects the facts and incidents as in real life, and there are no deep ideological observations and ideological heroes who fight against capitalism and fascism. In his film, there are stories of the ordinary and unimportant struggles of ordinary people. This perspective determines and explains Puiu’s seeking of truth.

“Sots art was based on a manipulative principle, the reflection of reality must generate a certain reality (Grois 1992) having nothing to do with ‘truth’ that Cristi Puiu was searching for; this type of cinema was considered conceptually toxic. In order to understand the opposition between Puiu’s notion of true heroes and narratives social-realist perspective, we must return to the ideas that influenced the early experiments in socialist-realism filmmaking.” (Pop, 2014, p. 46).

We can consider Porumboiu’s cinema as a follower of visual style perspective of Puiu. Porumboiu had made films using observational camera style which reflects minimalist and documentary aesthetics until the film *The Whistlers* (2019). In *The Whistlers*, he tried to make a film which is more dynamical and approaches Hollywood film-noir aesthetics. The films *12:08 East of Bucharest* and *Police, Adjective* show a similarity to cinema language created by Puiu. Therefore, when we mention about the aesthetics of the New Wave, viewing these two filmmakers together will be appropriate.

On the other hand, the documentary film *Infinite Football* (2018) directed by Porumboiu is very interesting. This film tells a story of an official who devotes himself to change the rules of the football because he gets injured when he plays football with his friends. This style of storytelling which is intertwined with the documentary aesthetics is a reflection of realism perspective of the New Wave which has become evident with Puiu’s films.

In addition, in Porumbouï’s films, we can see the “trivial” stories of “trivial” people which are one of the main characteristics of Puiu’s cinema. For example, the main character of the *Infinite Football*, Laurentiu Ginghina who wants to change the rules of football is a lowly enlisted and ordinary official who lives in a small county in Romania. The humour in Porumbouï’s cinema is derived from the importance given by these ordinary characters to their ordinary stories. The contrast creates the humour.

Radu Jude's cinema has a similar style. However, Jude makes his films in different genres and determines different issues. *The Happiest Girl in the World* has an observational camera style and a realism that approaches documentary one. But, Jude tried to make films in different genres as distinct from Puiu and Porumboiu. For example, *Aferim!* (2015) directed by Jude is a costume drama which takes place in Romania at 19th century. Another example is *Scarred Hearts* (2016) also directed by Jude, it is an adaptation of the autobiography of Romanian author M. Blecher. Although these historical dramas have similarities with the realism aesthetics of the New Wave, in terms of its storytelling style, there are distinctive aspects. Because these two films show similarities to historical dramas in Hollywood cinema. It is possible to say that the director synthesizes the realism perspective of the New Wave and visual styles of Western costume dramas.

CHAPTER 3: ANALYSES OF THREE FILMS OF THE ROMANIAN NEW WAVE

3.1. The Death of Mr. Lazarescu

In this chapter, I will be focus on *The Death of Mr. Lazarescu* by Cristi Puiu. In this film, it will be seen that the social critical aspect of humour takes today's Romania at the center of its focus. As mentioned in the previous sections, the transformation process that Romania went through after socialism left the Romanian society in problems in economic and social terms. Puiu's film focuses on one of these problems, the health system. Of course, when we studied the film, we can see that not only the health problems, but also the bureaucratic system in the new Romania is under scrutinization. In Puiu's cinema, none of these are seen in a didactic way and also we can see these mentioned problems in his naturalness in the story he tells. It is possible to see similar situations in Puiu's previous films. For example, his first film, *Stuff and Dough*, Puiu was telling about an illegal delivery of two young characters, while also giving an idea about the unemployed Romanian youth in early 2000.

We can consider the humour elements in Puiu's films as situation comedy. The distinctive aspect of humour, which can be explained as situation comedy, is the intermixing of dramatic action processes and the emergence of comedy from the chain linking of surprise causations. Puiu's film *Stuff and Dough*, was also not designed to create a comedy at all. The comedy element in the film is the situations that the two male characters in the lead role fall into. Their misfortunes and their reactions to unfortunate situations constitute the humour element. Puiu's cinema does not point to comedy, the story is more important, and we laugh at the setbacks of situations just as in life. This is the point where slow cinema aesthetics and Puiu films meet. Slow cinema uses dead times to create a film aesthetic that fits life into reality. The humour in the Puiu films is born precisely from dead times. In other words, with the help of long and fixed sequences, "unimportant" moments that pass in real life make us live again. We can quickly forget details that we find

unimportant in daily life because they are not interesting. However, Puiu's camera and his narrative language show us trivial details. Humour is in the details. If we make a reference to Bergson again, whatever his humour comes out of a glitch or a disorder in daily life, Puiu's camera shows us these problems.

Then from what everyday crises does humour emerge? The two main characters in this film are unemployed and want to earn money. Therefore, they want to carry out an illegal delivery. They are two very important characters in terms of telling the future anxiety of young people in Romanian society after socialism. They set out to make an illegal delivery to earn their money. Actually, we watch a kind of road films. And as seen in many road films, various mishaps happen to our heroes. The creation of a comedy based on absurd accidents that happened to heroes in road films is seen in many famous films of the moment.

Puiu had shot a short film before *The Death of Mr. Lazarescu*. In the film titled *Cigarettes and Coffee*, we watch two men chatting at a cafe table. There is a casual conversation between them. The conversation gave us the feeling that there was a business relationship between the two. It was as if the old man wanted a favour from the other side, and the younger one wanted to throw him away. At the end of a long plan sequence, we realized that the two men were actually the father and the son. The situation we watched changed surprisingly as of the finale of the film and managed to mislead us. In addition, Puiu framing and positioning his camera gave us the feeling that we were sitting at the table next to them and overhearing the conversation of the two men. The fact that Puiu always keeps his camera in an observing position keeps the audience at a distance from the characters. Thus, the audience begins to share the director's observation. Humour doesn't appear in the film like an instrument, it appears in an unexpected place in the story. We can see Puiu's style in the film *Sierra Nevada*, he made in 2017. In this film, we see a family coming together to commemorate their dead father. And we watch the family's long conversations about conspiracy theories at the dinner table. However, their father has just died, the reason they are in that house is to mourn. But they talk about everyday politics. And that creates a comedy element.

The Death of Mr. Lazarescu tells a story about an old man who is under pain of death and is brought from one hospital to another by a health team in a night. Lazarescu is an old man who takes his medicine with alcohol. Thus, his neighbours firstly think he has problems because of alcohol. When he calls the emergency service, even an ambulance is not sent at first. However, when he gets worse, a health team comes thanks to his neighbours call. But, the ambulance team who comes to his assistance is not new and sufficient, because the condition of the old man is not taken seriously. Thus, we started to watch a nurse and the old man who move from one hospital to another all night long.

In this film, the realism perspective of the New Wave which was frequently mentioned can be seen. With this realism perspective, there is a naturalist style which shows itself in Puiu's film. This naturalist style is a concept intertwined with New Wave realism. There is not strict difference between them. Emile Zola who is one of the most important representatives of the naturalism in the literature states that all narratives are victims of the conventions. (Pop, 2014, p. 59). It means that all the dramas which are well-designed and based on a *magic wand* remove the naturalism. Puiu's cinema refuses formulas and well-designed dramas; on the contrary, he makes his films benefiting from the moments which belong to the real life. "Puiu brought into the Romanian contemporary cinema a fundamental principle of naturalism: the 'slice of life' rule." (ibid, p. 59).

In *Stuff and Dough* which was the first feature film of Puiu, he adopts the rule of 'slice of life'. By this way, Puiu aims to create a natural atmosphere and to display humanistic aspects of the characters. He follows a similar path in *The Death of Mr. Lazarescu* as well:

"As was the case with its literary counterpart, the purpose of naturalism in cinema started from representing a human environment, surprised in its natural state. Later, he did the same thing in *The Death of Mr. Lazarescu*, where a brief period of time in the life of an apparently unimportant being is turned into an accurate and intimate representation a way of existence, surprised in its natural environment." (ibid, p. 59).

The humour elements of the film are derived from this naturalist approach. In the scenes that are produced just like a part of the real life, situations which can create humour in daily life are displayed for the audiences. We can analyse this condition via three scenes of the film.

When Lazarescu feels bad, he calls his neighbours. The neighbours pay no attention at first and think that he probably drank to excess. Then, when he gets worse, he calls them again; and they are convinced and come. The opposite neighbour and his wife come to the old man's flat and start to think what they can do. At that time, the old man lies on the couch complainingly and wants them to call an ambulance. Another apartment resident comes next to the couple who stands by the old man. Their attention to the old man begins to decrease. One of the neighbours wants the other man to his toolkit which was borrowed. He is so insistent on this that the other man brings the toolkit. All this happens in front of the old man who writhingly waits for an ambulance. This situation becomes so absurd that the wife of the neighbour leaves the flat for making cake. When the old man is in a serious health hazard, what the characters around him are concerned with unimportant little things creates the humour elements.

This scene is constituted with a long shot. This choice of the director enhances the sense of reality. Jeanine Theodorescu and Anca Munteanu interpret this scene, by discussing neighbourhood relations, as follows:



Figure 1 Scene from *The Death of Mr. Lazarescu*. (Puiu, 2005)

“The very logic of this directive suggests that the love we should have for our neighbors is identical to the love God has for us complete and perfect. Love for God equals love for humankind. But the ethos of neighbourly love is certainly intricate and difficult in the story. This meticulous problematization is one of the virtues of Puiu's film and, as this essay argues, its force comes primarily from the exceptional mastery of the film's mise-en-scène.” (Teodorescu & Munteanu, 2010).

In another scene, Lazarescu is brought a public hospital by a health team. The supporting character of the film Miova Avram who is middle aged nurse is sure that Lazarescu has an illness. In the public hospital, doctors do not pay attention to the old man. There are a large number of patients in the hospital. Doctors cannot deal with all patients and they consistently tell this situation. This scene is important in terms of that it displays the condition of the hospitals in today's Romania. The question asked by two doctors why was not he brought to the Funteni Hospital creates a humour element. In addition, these two doctors emphasize that the old man drinks too much.

“Now, if we apply here, in a second step, a mechanical, textual repetition, we will repeat only the disguise, not the place it occupies. In other words,

repetition will fail to repeat the singularity of what it is repeating, it will repeat only the empty gestures.” (Zupancic, 2008, p. 176).



Figure 2 Scene from *The Death of Mr. Lazarescu*. (Puiu, 2005)

From the very beginning of the film, we hear the sentences from the neighbours and the doctors that the old man drinks too much. As it can be seen in other scenes of the film, in all the hospitals where the old man is taken, the first question of doctors and nurses is: “Did you take him to another hospital?” Here, the repetition transforms into a meaningless gesture, and it starts to create the humour. What creates the humour is that all hospital staffs ask the same questions without examining his condition. On the other hand, to contrast the situation, there are meaningless dialogues around the old man who suffers from pain.

“Comedy knows very well, and puts into practice, the following crucial point: we really encounter nonsense only when and where a sense surprises us. What comedy repeats (repeats, not reveals, since revelation is not the business of comedy) in a thousand more or less ingenious ways is the very

operation in which sense is produced in a genuinely erratic manner. (ibid, p. 181).

The seriousness of the health condition of Lazarescu and, on the contrary, careless actions of the doctors creates a confusing effect on the audience. This confusing condition is derived from the contrast between the mean and the meaninglessness. On the other hand, if we return to the scene where doctors examine the old man, we see another interesting point. The diagnosis identified by a nurse annoys the doctor because diagnosis is the job of the doctor and a nurse's diagnosis disturbs him. Then, the doctor reprimands the nurse. Meantime, Mr. Lazarescu continues to writhe in pain.

In another scene, in another hospital, a nurse and a young medical assistant have a talk when Lazarescu is having an X-ray. It is a personal conversation about sex and marriage. During their conversation, the old man lies on a stretcher at their elbow. This scene can be seen in daily life. However, talking about daily issues next to Lazarescu who continuously complains creates a humorous element.

It should be noted that the title of the film is "the death of Mr. Lazarescu". So, as we watch Lazarescu wander between various hospitals all night, we also see a process that leads to its tragic end, step by step. So, do we follow him? In fact, Puiu's camera shows us Lazarescu's desperation as well as those around him. We see Miora, the nurse who has been wandering around with Lazarescu all night long. The overworked and soulless paramedics we come across in every hospital, or the indifferent neighbours we see at the very beginning of the film. From the beginning of the film, everyone we see around Lazarescu symbolically represents Romanian society. The faltering health bureaucracy, the tired doctors who have to take care of so many patients, and the next-door neighbours whose lives are already hard enough so they don't want to deal with a drunk. This is why the world the director wants to show us, while emphasizing the socially critical aspect of humour, becomes important. However, Puiu does not point out the funny moments to the audience. His cinema focuses on the moments thanks to his long shot plans. Although he uses an actual camera language in this film, we still seem to see long

shots. The most important reason for this is that Puiu's camera language carries a kind of documentary camera aesthetics. Thus, we think that we are witnessing real moments thanks to the camera. The humour elements that are seen during the film never put the shocking aspect of the film into the shade. In the film, we see a man who struggles to stay alive and is brought from one hospital to another all night. The humour elements help us to understand the shocking conditions of him. Additionally, in the film, we see the malfunctions of health bureaucracy in Romania. The humour functions as a social critical role. Thus, we can better understand the desperation of the old man. Lastly, it is important to state that the source of inspiration of the film bases on a true story.

“On being interviewed, Puiu explained the starting point was a real case he read of in the newspaper: around the year 2000 the ambulance brought an old sick man to six overcrowded hospitals that turned him down. As there was nobody at his place, he was literally left on the street with a drip administered by a nurse. (Nasta, 2013, p. 157).

As a result, the film chronicles the last hours of a dying old man. Nobody focuses on the man's problem. A single nurse makes a partnership with him, but his main concern is to find a privilege for his son. Although Romanian society awaited great hopes for the days following the collapse of socialism, many phenomena continued to deteriorate in their lives. Health system, bureaucracy and indifference, indifference and lack of solidarity among people. A society where everyone is much more selfish and self-centered. And among them Lazarescu is trying to survive. It is very difficult for him to tell his troubles because no one listens to him or really cares about him. Much of the criticism has not changed in socialist Romania. In other words, the dissolution of socialism did not create a more just and freer Romania. Puiu's film shows us these in a clear cinematic language. The most important reason for the clear language of this film lies in the director's avoidance of didacticism and message anxiety. As I mentioned before, the camera follows Lazarescu just like a documentary camera. We laugh at a tragic event in life. In fact, Puiu presents us with details that we wouldn't normally laugh at while living in

them, and we realize that they can be ridiculous. In fact, while doing this, it offers us moments in life that we do not see and do not realize.

3.2. 12:08 East of Bucharest

After making six short films, Corneliu Porumboiu shot his first feature, *12:08 East of Bucharest*, and has gained an important place in the new wave cinema. With his first feature film he describes the dissolution of socialism, which is historically very important to Romanian society. However, Porumboiu's film tells the story through the discourse crisis over a historical event. His cinema is stubbornly shaped not on events, but on phenomena that frame events, not events or consequences. Moreover, Porumboiu's cinema is based on dilemmas created by situations. To explain this better, we can look at Porumboiu's top three feature films. In the film *12:08 East of Bucharest*, we were watching three people arguing on the TV show after a historical event. This film will be discussed in more detail in this part.

In *Police Adjective*, Porumboiu's second feature, we were witnessing the conscientious dilemma of a police officer. In *When Evening Falls on Bucharest or Metabolism*, we were watching the discussion between the actress and her male director who wanted to add a nude scene to his film during the filming of the film. We were seeing discussions on situations through dialogues and discourses, prominent in all three films. Thus, the films do not show the events, but the discussions of the characters over situations. The humour of Porumboiu, which we can define as sarcastic, shows itself in these discussions. Just like Puiu, Porumboiu keeps his camera at a distance from the main characters, and every time the viewer keeps distance from the character. It can be mentioned that Porumboiu is similar to Puiu in using the camera and film language. This similarity stems from the fact that the camera remains at a distance and observing position. We can only note that Porumboiu's characters are chattier. The director's sense of humour emerges precisely from the characters' serious discussions of small and unimportant details. Long and uninterrupted shots contribute to the audience's focus on details. The

element that creates humour in Porumbouiu cannot be separated from its minimal cinema aesthetics. On the other hand, in all three films I mentioned, the director creates a conflict over certain moral and political dilemmas. The starting point of the film directed by Porumboiu is the Democratic Revolution in Romania in 1989. Collapse of the socialist regime in Romania by a popular uprising is a historical turning point for Romanian society.

In the film, we see three men who gather to discuss this historical event on a local TV channel. One of them is an anchorman and the others are witnesses of the revolution. The witnesses narrate what they see and live during the revolution on the TV program which takes place with the occasion of anniversary of the revolution. The important discussion of the film starts here: “*Where were you during the revolution?*” Both participants tell the day revolution occurred according to them. One of them is an alcoholic high school teacher, and the other is a retired man who masquerades as Santa Claus. Naturally, their jobs affect their witnessing. For example, an audience who calls the program argues that the teacher is an alcoholic and he did nothing during the revolution. On the other hand, the teacher attempts to prove that he attended the clashes during the revolution.

To be a part of the revolution which overthrew an oppressive regime is very important to gain social reputation. Instead of sitting at home during the revolution, being in the streets and fighting for democracy brings a person a social status. We can evaluate this in terms of the confronting socialism in Romanian society because social status starts with the collapse of the former regime in the eye of society. In addition, being a part of a historical event, which concerns all the society also means being a part of the society. After collapse of the former socialist regime, confronting socialism means being a part of the society. Therefore, the teacher insistently tries to explain that he was in the streets during the revolution because his effort to explain the situation is a part of being a ‘citizen’.

Porumboiu mentions his motivation to write the script of this film as follows:

“It occurred to me because I became angry watching some television programs and, after that, I stopped watching television. The idea was that, in order to survive, people have to rewrite history. Romanians had gone through a period where everything changed and I wanted to make a movie about people who distorted history in order to survive. It's human.” (Porton & Porumboiu, 2010).

The starting point of Porumboiu is related to *rewriting* the history. In the anniversary of a historical event, talking about this event means rewriting the history. This point constitutes the strong aspects of the film and highlights its humorous elements. Humour elements of the film are constituted through TV studio scenes which are based on a long shot. In this long scene which occurs on a TV studio, we can see strong dialogues and visions based on theatrical tradition. These also strengthen the humour elements of the film.

“In spite of deceptively simple narrative line inspired by a real talk Show director watched in the late 1990s on local Vaslui channel, the complexity of 12:08 East of Bucharest has its roots in a very well-crafted screenplay, with dialogue obviously influenced by Romania’s long-standing theatrical tradition and its consistent penchant for a corrosive, sarcastic humour.” (Nasta, 2013, p. 166).



Figure 3 Scene from *12:08 East of Bucharest*. (Porumboiu, 2006)

We can define the humour perspective of the film as sarcastic. The discussion made by absurd characters about an important historical event in a serious spirit on a local TV program reflects the humour perspective of the film.

Porumboiu's style is based on an absurd humour. Porumboiu states that he is affected by the famous Romanian playwright Eugene Ionesco. However, Kafka has an important place among people who have influence over his perspective on humour.

“Yes, I love Ionesco's work. Chekhov is another writer who comes to mind; he also deals with the absurdity of daily life. It's true that a lot of what I'm doing in the film can be traced back to literary origins. You could also cite Gogol, whose *Dead Souls* is perhaps one of the first "absurdist" novels. And I also love Kafka's novels. When you're making a movie you don't usually conceptualize it in this way. But I suppose if you've read novels you've loved, and they've become ingrained in you, there are influences that you don't necessarily think about. I think both the Eastern Europeans and the

Irish - writers like Beckett and Joyce - have this kind of sense of humor.”
Porton & Porumboiu, 2010).

We can try to describe Porumboiu's humour as Kafkaesque. In Kafka's novels and stories, we again focus on situations. The causality of the events is not important. The important thing is not why the character is in that situation, but the human reflexes he shows against the situation. This reflex creates elements of humour. Of course, we should also mention that, for example, in Kafka's famous novel *The Case*, Joseph K.'s feelings and absurd events are witnessed during a trial we do not know why. Similarly, in this film, we watch characters coming side by side on a local TV channel. Of course, the reason that brought them together is obvious, but now it starts to be unimportant for the audience at some point in the story. Therefore, the protagonists, who seriously discuss their whereabouts on the day of the revolution, create absurd and comedy. However, in a sense, it gives us impressions of the historical traumas of Romanian society. After a long period of socialist oppression, every character wants to prove that he is a part of the revolution that lowers the oppression. Also, being a part of the new Romanian society is in a way about where you are on the day of the revolution and what role you play.

The humour elements which reflect the humour perspective of the film are shaped on the basis of the dialogues on the TV studio. In particular, the contrast which creates the humour is the seriousness of the characters about the program and discussion. It is laughable because the relevant TV program is featured on an unimportant local TV channel. The program takes place in a small and unprofessional studio.

The participants of the program are an alcoholic teacher and an old man dressed as Santa Claus. Here, there is an imitation of the seriousness of the mainstream discussion programs on TVs. All the characters try to prove themselves. After a point, their attempts invoke humour. For the anchorman, the seriousness is very important. For the participants, to display their roles in the revolution is crucial. At the end of this long scene, we can see the effects of socialism trauma on ordinary people. The matter is not only to criticize the

socialism. Telling what you were doing during the revolution is as important as criticizing the former regime in the new society. All of these explain the new structure of Romanian society. The humour is not only a facilitator instrument for criticizing the former regime, but also becomes a critical instrument which satirizes the socialism obsession of Romanian society.

3.3. The Happiest Girl in The World

Radu Jude is one of the directors with a unique style among the new wave filmmakers. We can always consider humour as an important element in Jude's cinema. The similarities of his cinematic style with the minimal aesthetics of Puiu and Porumboiu are visible even at first sight. However, Jude, unlike them, is a director who plays and experiments with film grammar. We can see this especially in his later films. With this definition, we cannot definitively say that Radu Jude's film language stands apart from the new wave. Because his style also contains many features that we can see in the new wave style. Long shots, use of dead time and slow rhythm of the story. Of course, Jude's film that bears the most traces of the aesthetics of the new wave is the happiest girl in the world, which we will examine briefly. Jude's other films differ. However, despite all the differences, humour is always strong in Jude's film narrative.

For example, with the film *I Do Not Care If We Go Down in History as Barbarians*, Radu Jude plays with reality because the main character of the film speaks to the camera from the very beginning. The main character says that it is a film, we will watch. Historical films are also included in Jude's filmography. Jude has tried making films in a variety of genres, and we can find humorous, sarcastic language in all of them. In addition, Jude has been concerned about social issues. He uses his humour for a social criticism in exactly these matters. One of these issues is anti-Semitism. In several of Jude's films he focuses on anti-Semitism as a crisis of Romanian society. Jude touched upon the problem of anti-Semitism with the film *Scarred Hearts*, adapted from Max Blecher's novel. Because the main character of the film is a Jew and the Second World War is about to start. Of course,

anti-Semitism is not the focus in this film, but the director sometimes addresses this issue through his character's identity. A similar situation exists in the film *Aferim!*. Radu Jude uses humour as a critical tool to describe social issues. Similar to other directors, he has a style that is close to a situation comedy. Especially in his later films, Jude has made effort to use humour with absurd elements as much as he played with film grammar.

The Happiest Girl in the World (2009) is the first full length film directed by Radu Jude. This film tells the story of a Delia who goes to Bucharest with her family to take the car which she won by a lottery. However, she has to perform in a commercial film before she takes the car because she wins the car by a lottery drawn by a beverage company and the company want to make a commercial film with one who wins the lottery. There is only one catchword in the commercial film that the girl will play. She will look at the camera and say that 'I am the happiest girl in the world'. These words which name the film become the irony of the film. Jude has an extremely simple story if we compare it with his recent films. And it does not deal with more complex social problems like in the director's recent films. It reflects an important social issue for Romanian society. The film deals more with class conflicts than Jude's later films. Of course, the focus on class contradictions is not unique to Jude. However, Jude builds the story of his film out of a very simple human contradiction. A country early girl wins a car through a raffle. Owning a car is an important status indicator. Especially if this car is owned by a country girl, it gives her a status. Moreover, Delia will have her own property for the first time. It is something that changes all social balances when a young girl belonging to a family with insufficient financial situation suddenly owns a car. On the other hand, this situation brings Delia the chance to be an individual and be free for the first time. Right here, the line she has to say in the advertisement that she should play for the car she won becomes even more meaningful.

Is the young girl really happy because she won the car? She has a poor family. Her family is happy because she won a car and, therefore, they can sell the car to adjust their financial condition. However, the fact that the family is happier than Delia creates a contradiction. However, they cannot achieve the happiness they

want in the family. Because in order for them to be happy, Delia has to give the car to her family. However, she does not want to sell the car she won and starts to clash with her family during the film. His family tries to persuade him in many ways. They make themselves miserable or talk about their very difficult economic situation. After a while, the family gets angry when they can't get their daughters to do what they want. Especially the mother begins to be harsh with Delia. Delia struggles for what is hers. We can see this as Delia's struggle to become the happiest girl in the world. So where does her happiness begin?

Most of the film takes place on the commercial set. When advertisements are broadcast on television, the images they convey to the audience become stronger. Because it is believable and real. It has a kind of mystical side. Delia, on the other hand, is on the set where the images are created. There are no images in the ad set. Set workers and an ad director who constantly manages them. Delia's happiness and her car have no reality on that set. Because everything is created on that set. And she needs to show that she's the happiest girl in the world that day.



Figure 4 Scene from *The Happiest Girl of in the World*. (Jude, 2009)

This is a very tragic story in itself. On the other hand, acting in a commercial film is not as easy as it seems. While the young girl struggles with her family, she tries to cope with the film shooting in a film set. Because the film set is a chaotic place. The young girl is not happy, but she continuously repeats the catchword which says she is the happiest girl in the world. The director of the commercial film does not approve her speech or a misfortune occurs in all takes.

“As the day moves on, Delia's spirits steadily sink while her determination to keep her prize grows. Every few minutes another take is demanded by the sponsors, the director or the cameraman, and Delia's recurrent line in the commercial – a cheerful "I'm the happiest girl in the world" followed by a swig of the sickly drink – becomes increasingly desperate. This is a modest, well observed picture, a debut of considerable promise with three convincing central performances.” (French, 2010).

The clashes occurred between the girl, and her family and people in the film set displays her effort to exist as an individual. During the film, we see a girl who is not happy and attempts to be an individual.



Figure 5 Scene from *The Happiest Girl of in the World*. (Jude, 2009)

Delia's struggle to be an individual is an important issue of the film. Radu Jude makes a realistic narrative about Romanian society and the expectations of the younger generation through Delia's struggle. The film also gives an idea about the new Romanian youth. There is a country where there is individual freedom, but it is not economically sufficient.

Is individual freedom closely bound up with economic conditions? Radu Jude's film does not deal directly with this question, and the film mostly focuses on a young woman who is alone in society. A car that won by the lottery does not bring Delia happiness but an insolvable tension. Precisely for this reason, the name of the film and Delia's feelings contrast. Or, on the contrary, Delia, who is asked to be happy on the set, finds herself in a greater tension. Delia is forced to be happy? But how is happiness felt through hard. This is how Jude's sarcasm comes into play.

The unsuccessful attempts to acting her role, after a point, reveal the humour elements. The humour elements of this film have similarities to the elements of the film *The Death of Mr. Lazarescu*.

In his film, Jude uses an observational camera style. This makes the humour of the film appear as a situation comedy. On the basis of a poor young girl, Jude's film emphasizes the bad economic conditions of Romanian society that has been experiencing free market economy after the collapse of the socialist regime. As we can see in other films of the New Wave, humour functions as a critical and facilitator instrument.

“Radu Jude's film drolly charts the efforts of a country to shrug off the drab duds of communism, only to find that the bright colours of capitalism are really no deliverance.” (Quinn, 2011).

CONCLUSION

Humour, by its very nature, has an uncontrollable and unstoppable structure. Laughter threatens seriousness. Oppressive regimes find humour threatening since their power apparatuses rely on seriousness. Romanian society, which was ruled under a single party socialist regime over four decades, has suffered from seriousness of large bureaucracy. On top of that, most parts of the arts industry were regulated by the government. This was the reason that humour could not fulfill its social critical function during the long years of Romania under the totalitarian power.

After the democratic revolution, Romanian cinema was reborn as the oppressive obstacles were removed. Even though the financial issues remained for a while, the nature of new Romanian films has become significantly more critical. In this era, certain features have become prominent among Romanian directors such as a conception of slow cinema and a focus on every-day stories. As Romanian cinema became known to world audiences after 2000s, these features have become more institutionalized and created what we call Romanian New Wave. One of the most important elements of Romanian New Wave is humour. Comedy elements such as black humour and absurdity are a feature seen in new wave films. Humour carries a social critique function in social issues covered in new wave films. Because in the post-socialist era, humour has now become an element of criticism.

Puiu, Porumboiu and Jude, as I examined in my thesis, shoot films on different themes. The themes of the three films I have examined in my work are quite different. I wanted to show the similarities of the three directors I reviewed. All three directors have a cinematic style that we can describe in terms of slow cinema or minimalist. I used the concept of slow cinema with reference to Emre Çağlayan's work. Slow Cinema, the slow flow of time, dead times and minimal stories, which are often seen in films, are the main elements that describe this style. The most important of these elements is the understanding of time in these films. As in real life, these films, which have more details and a more stable understanding. This forms the basis of the concept of slow cinema. The analysis shows that, this concept is common in films Puiu, Porumboiu and Jude. Therefore,

it can be argued that the concept of slow cinema is the most significant element Romanian New Wave.

In addition, the humour of these directors, which I call dark humour or absurd, is also compatible with the aesthetics of slow cinema. The sense of humour seen in New Wave films comes from the disruptions in daily life. Just like in real life, these setbacks, which may not seem ridiculous at first, engenders an irony about life. Humour takes place as an auxiliary element in stories. The aesthetic and narrative styles of the three directors approach each other, as well as the way they use humour and also there is no direct comedy in the humour style of them.

On the other hand, there are various differences in the styles of the three directors. First of all, the three directors deal with quite different themes throughout their filmography. Headlines such as bureaucracy, corruption, poverty and criticism of socialism are common themes in New Wave films. In addition to this, their films vary in terms of cinematic aesthetics. Porumboiu's cinema gives more place to stable frame and uses longer dead times unlike other directors. Jude's cinematic language is closer to the classical narrative. Jude does not include dead times as much as Puiu and Porumboiu in his film *The Happiest Girl in the World*, which I examined in this work. Puiu, on the other hand, shows a narrative style closer to that of documentary by adopting actual camera movements.

Humour performs a social critical function for the issues that the New Wave directors deal with. In order to explain this, three sample films were examined. Puiu's *The Death of Mr. Lazarescu* is a film that deals with the problem of bureaucracy and health system in contemporary Romania. In this film, we watch the protagonist search for a hospital to treat him with health workers for one night. During this trip we learn something about Romania's healthcare system. And throughout the film, humour stands out as an auxiliary element and the social critic aspect of humour is visible. Porumboiu's film *12:08 East of Bucharest* focuses on the issue of post-socialism. In this film, the humour element is used in a similar way to Puiu. However, it is more prominent in Porumboiu's film in which a local television program discusses the Romanian Democratic revolution in 1989. Guests try to explain where they were on the day of the revolution and how they contributed

to the revolution. Thus, the irony and absurd elements are created which refers to the confrontation of Romanian society with socialism. Jude's *The Happiest Girl in the World* deals with the themes of livelihood and poverty. In Jude's film, there is the story of a teenage woman who won a car in a lottery. She wants to own the car, but his family sells the car to improve their financial situation.

In my thesis, I argued why humour played an important role in the New Romanian Wave. We see films that include social issues in the films of the New Romanian Wave. Naturally, we can see social criticism in these films. As emphasized many times in my thesis, it was not possible to criticize freely in Romania before the democratic revolution. However, with the freedom of expression after the disintegration of socialism, films with a critical aspect emerged. However, this did not happen suddenly. Especially after the collapse of socialism in Romania, almost a decade ago, films with a critical aspect came to the fore with the new wave of Romania. Even if some films do not belong to the comedy genre, humorous elements can be found in the New Wave cinema. This is exactly why I wanted to show that humour is somehow included in the new wave cinema. The phenomena that I define as dark humour or absurd elements are terms describing the humour in the new wave cinema. For this reason, in my work, I tried to associate the humour elements we see in New Wave cinema with dark humour.

In the second part of my study, I examined the theories of humour in the literature. I determined a broad definition of dark humour by looking at it from a wide perspective, from the humour elements in Franz Kafka's works to the humour elements in Cioran's philosophical texts. In terms of this perspective, I tried to show that these terms are terms used to describe the humour in the new wave cinema by using the terms dark humour and absurd. Also, in this section, I have examined the debates in humour literature. I made a general assessment of the theories of humour through the works of authors such as Sigmund Freud, Henri Bergson, Andre Breton, Terry Eagleton, Alenka Zupancic. I benefited from the evaluations of Eagleton and Zupancic's position of humour in the face of power and the political side of humour. Then I read it along with David Bloom's definition of black humour. At the end of all this, I theoretically examined the phenomenon of humour as a social critic in

New Wave cinema. The three films that I have chosen for review deal with different themes and with different styles. What is common in all three films was the way humour is used. By studying the common sense of humour in new wave films, I argue that humour has a social critical function in these films.

REFERENCES

- Adorno, T. W., & MacKay, J. (1996). Chaplin times two. *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, 9(1), 57-61.
- Bahtin, M. (2005). Rabelais ve Dünyası, çev. Çiçek Öztekin, *Ayrıntı Yayınları*.
- Bahtin, M. (2016). François Rabelais ve Ortaçağ-Rönesans Halk Kültürü. S. Gürses (Çev.). *İstanbul: Alfa*.
- Bailey, P. (2011, June 6). Alex Leo Serban, *Guardian*, Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2011/jun/06/alex-leo-serban>
- Bazin, A. (2005). What is cinema? (Vol. II). *Trans. Hugh Gray. Berkeley and Los Angeles*.
- Bergson, H., Brereton, C. S. H., & Rothwell, F. (1911). *Laughter: An essay on the meaning of the comic*. Macmillan.
- Bloom, H., & Hobby, B. (Eds.). (2010). *Dark Humor*. InfoBase publishing.
- Breton, A. (1997). *Anthology of black humor*. City Lights Books.
- Cioran, E. M. (2013). Burukluk, çev. Haldun Bayrı, *İstanbul, Metis Yayınları*.
- Coates, P. (2004). East-Central European Cinema: Beyond the Iron Curtain. In *In: European Cinema (ed. Ezra, E.)*, Oxford University Press, Oxford (pp. 265-282).
- Çağlayan, E. (2018). Slow Cinema in Context. In *Poetics of Slow Cinema* (pp. 1-38). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.
- Dmitriev, V. (1983). Socialist Realism Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow. *The Crane Bag*, 7(1), 96-100. Retrieved December 14, 2020, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable9/30060554>.
- Dulgheru, E. (2013). The New Romanian New Cinema (Romanian Cinema After 1990 And Its “New wave”).

Eagleton, T. (2019). *Humour*. Yale University Press.

French, P. (2010, May 30). The Happiest Girl in the World, *Guardian*, Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2010/may/30/philip-french-review-happiest-girl-in-the-world>

Freud, S (2010). Wit and Its Relation to the Unconscious; Trans. by A. A. Brill. New York: Moffat, Yard & Co., 1916; Bartleby.com, 2010. www.bartleby.com/279/. [Date of Printout].

Gorky, M. (1934). Soviet Literature in *Gorky, Radek, Bukharin, Zhdanov and others "Soviet Writers 'Congress 1934," page 25-69, Lawrence & Wishart, 1977. First published in 1935; Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/gorky-maxim/1934/soviet-literature.htm*

Hendrykowski, M. (1996). Changing States in East Central Europe. *The Oxford Dictionary of World Cinema*, (edited by Geoffrey Nowell-Smith) *Oxford: Oxford University Press*, 632.

Kafka, F. (2008). Dava (çev. K. Şipal). *İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi*.

Lenin, V.I. (1918). The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government. in *Pravda No. 83 and Izvestia VTsIK No.85; Published according to the text of the pamphlet: N. Lenin, The Immediate Task of the Soviet Government 2nd ed., Moscow, 1918, collated with the manuscript. Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1918/mar/x03.htm#fw1*

Mao, T. (1966). Directives Regarding Cultural Revolution, Available at https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-9/mswv9_84.htm

Marx, K., Engels, F., & Erdost, M. (2008). *Komünist manifesto ve komünizmin ilkeleri*. Sol Yayınları.

Nasta, D. (2013). *Contemporary Romanian cinema: The history of an unexpected miracle*. Columbia University Press.

- Pop, D. (2014). *Romanian new wave cinema: an introduction*. McFarland.
- Porton, R., & Porumboiu, C. (2010). Language and power: An interview with Corneliu Porumboiu. *Cineaste*, 35(2), 26-29.
- Pusca, A. (2011). Restaging the 1989 revolution: The Romanian new wave. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 24(4), 573-592.
- Quinn, A. (2011, October 23). The Happiest Girl in the World (15), *Independent*, Available at <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/reviews/the-happiest-girl-in-the-world-15-1984781.html>
- Saydam, B. & Porumboiu, C. (2012). Romanya Değişirken Corneliu Porumboiu. *Altyazı Dergisi* (117), 44-46.
- Shakespeare, W. (2003). *Romeo and Juliet*. Cambridge University Press.
- Stalin, J. (1954). Works (Vol. 12), Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, pp. 179-183. Available at: <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1930/01/17.htm>
- Stoica, C. (2012). "Our Martyrs of 1989 Did Not Die for This!": Political Capitalism in Post-Communist Romania. *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung*, 37(2 (140)), 26-52. Retrieved May 14, 2020, from www.jstor.org/stable/41636575
- Taylor, R. (1979). *The Politics of the Soviet Cinema 1917-1929*. CUP Archive.
- Teodorescu, J., & Munteanu, A. (2010). " Lăzărescu, come forth!": Cristi Puiu and the Miracle of Romanian Cinema. *Film Criticism*, 34(2/3), 51-66.
- Zupancic, A. (2008). *The Odd one in: on Comedy*, MIT Press.

FILMOGRAPHY

- Annaud J. (1986). "The Name of The Rose".
- Belvaux, R., Bonzel, A. & Poelvoorde, B. (1992). "Man Bites Dog".
- Bunuel, L. (1930). "The Golden Age".
- Calinescu, P. (1949). "The Valley Resounds".
- Höfer, H., Marculescu, R., Mungiu, C., Popescu, C. & Uricaru, I. (2009). "Tales from the Golden Age".
- Jude, R. (2015). "Aferim!".
- Jude, R. (2016). "Scarred Hearts".
- Jude, R. (2009). "The Happiest Girl in the World".
- Kusturica, E. (1995). "Underground".
- Malaele, H. (2008). "Silent Wedding".
- Mikhalkov, N. (1994). "Burnt by the Sun".
- Mitulescu, C. (2006). "How I Spent the End of the World".
- Mungiu, C. (2007). "4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days".
- Mungiu, C. (2016). "Graduation".
- Muntean, R. (2006). "The Paper Will be Blue".
- Muntean, R. (2010). "Tuesday, After Christmas".
- Netzer, C. P. (2013). "Child Pose".
- Porumboiu, C. (2006). "12:08 East of Bucharest".
- Porumboiu, C. (2009). "Police, Adjective".
- Porumboiu, C. (2018). "Infinite Football".
- Porumboiu, C. (2019). "The Whistlers".

Puiu, C. (2001). "Stuff and Dough".

Puiu, C. (2005). "Cigarettes and Coffee".

Puiu, C. (2005). "The Death of Mr. Lazarescu".

Renoir, J. (1939). "Rules of the Game".