

Claudiu Turcuş

Restructuring a Cinema That Didn't Exist

The Romanian Film Industry of the 1990s

In the 1990s, Romanian cinema was structurally, legislatively and financially adrift: it was experiencing a sort of clinical death. To start with, there were no Romanian film premieres in 1990 and 2000. Various social transformations, the lack of management expertise, as well as the political and legislative (dis)order after 1989 rapidly created a new and staggering context. The society was confused about power relations and access to resources, compared with the *status quo* of the socialist years (which applied at every stage of the dictatorship: from the Stalinism of the 1950s, to the liberalization of the 1960s, to the national-socialism of the 1970s and 1980s). While there have been no consistent research and documentation endeavours dedicated to explaining the state of affairs from the first decade after 1989, many debates were staged in the Romanian press at that time (for instance in *Noul Cinema* magazine), albeit to little avail. Significantly, an article published in 1993 by Alex Leo Şerban, probably the most influential Romanian film critic of the 1990s, was titled 'On a Cinema That Doesn't Exist'.¹⁾ What Şerban drew attention to was the poor functioning of the film industry, which had just abandoned the state-socialist mode of production. Most worrisome, however, was the questionable aesthetic quality of Romanian films.

Over the past twenty-five years, the situation has changed from an 'inexistent' Romanian cinema to a new, intensively praised generation of film directors (such as Cristi Puiu, Cristian Mungiu, Radu Muntean, Corneliu Porumboiu, or Radu Jude) who have reinvented the Neorealist²⁾ aesthetic style and re-written the cinematic language. New Romanian Cinema has been described as 'an unexpected miracle' by Dominique Nasta³⁾ or as a late

1) Alex. Leo Şerban, 'Despre un cinematograf care nu există, în 4 decenii, 3 ani si 2 luni cu filmul românesc (Iaşi: Polirom, 2009), pp. 16–21.

2) Andrei Gorzo, *Lucruri care nu pot fi spuse altfel. Un mod de a gândi cinemaul de la André Bazin la Cristi Puiu* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2012).

3) Dominique Nasta, *Contemporary Romanian Cinema: The History of an Unexpected Miracle* (London: Wallflower, 2013).

manifestation of the most recent European cinema waves⁴⁾ (similar to the French, Polish, Hungarian, Czech, or Yugoslavian waves) which could not have arisen in Romania before 1989 since the country had the most repressive political apparatus in the entire socialist bloc. Despite its development in the post-communist era, it appears that New Romanian Cinema emerged somehow against the grain of the restructurings that affected the Romanian film industry after 1989: great films were made and relevant authors acquired recognition, yet one could not speak of a 'thriving' Romanian film industry in that period.

In the first part of this article I will focus on the socialist restructuring of the Romanian film industry in the 1970s because it represents the essential frame of reference for the transitions that occurred in the 1990s. Without understanding the earlier restructuring, it would be difficult to fully ascertain what occurred in the first post-socialist decade.

Whimsical Bureaucrats

Șerban's radical title referenced earlier represents a sort of sad echo of another verdict trenchantly expressed by Lucian Pintilie fifty years ago. In an interview Pintilie gave to Max Bănuș in the late 1960s (as yet unprinted),⁵⁾ for the Radio Free Europe station, shortly after the premiere of his second movie, *Reconstruction* (1968), the Romanian director spoke critically of Romanian cinema. This interview was an important document of that time, as it captured the way in which an outstanding creator and intellectual perceived the process of socialist cultural liberalization right in its midst. Asked about the situation of contemporary Romanian films, Pintilie curtly replied:

My position is fiercely adamant. [...] Romanian cinema *does not exist* [emphasis mine] in either ideational or aesthetic terms. Its representative works were produced under the sign of either utter fortuity or singular outbursts of talent. [...] It is well known that East European cinema — Hungarian, Czechoslovak, Polish, Yugoslav and even Bulgarian — has been successful. I consider that it has lagged most unfortunately behind because many countries around us and even farther afield, in Latin America, are energetically dashing from the starting line. But we are stuck, paralysed, dumbfounded by our inability. This is all the more serious as the prestige of a country's culture is determined in the fastest, most dynamic, most modern way in a consumerist society, based on cinema — this *fantastic means of propaganda* [emphasis mine].

Pintilie's radical criticism concerns the epoch when only a few films achieved international success from the circa twenty Romanian films that were produced annually. However, in the context of the short history of the Romanian film industry, the situation was somehow explicable. In 1948, when the process of socialist nationalization (Decree 303)

4) Doru Pop, *Romanian New Wave Cinema: An Introduction* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2014).

5) The transcript of the document is preserved in the (non-digitalized) archive of Radio Free Europe, at the Open Society Archives in Budapest.

started, the nation's cinema production infrastructure consisted solely of a 200 sq. m studio and a film processing laboratory at Mogoșoaia. In 1949, the Ministry of the Arts projected and started to build a new Cinema Production Center, located 20 km from Bucharest, on the shore of Lake Buftea, which opened eight years later (1957). The technical conditions offered by Buftea Studios attracted several co-productions.⁶⁾

Pintilie claimed that, in 1968, when the idea of a cultural revolution had not yet dawned on Ceaușescu, the major obstacle in the development of Romanian cinema (compared to the other arts, for which he had nothing but words of praise) was not the ideology of the Communist Party, but the professional and political incompetence of the state apparatus. Pintilie believed that despite cultural liberalization, cinema had not evolved because the bureaucracy and its agents promoted a frivolous, outmoded stance by reducing film solely to the level of entertainment, by blocking or restricting important projects, or by endorsing mediocre productions. In his opinion, the bureaucrats' bourgeois taste was to blame as it had the most harmful effect for the art of filmmaking. Pintilie explained thus why political films were absent from Romanian cinema, even though one might have expected that they would be encouraged given the socialist ideological climate:

[In Romania], the party has repeatedly criticized the apolitical nature of films, their escapist vision, and their crippling inability to problematize issues. There are many bureaucrats who, under various pretexts, or even by invoking the party's deceitful, distorted insights, defend a certain *mythological image of socialism* [emphasis mine], committing an anti-social act, in my opinion.

Indeed, from a cultural point of view, the second half of the 60s constituted the most apolitical period of Romanian socialism. Pleas for 'the autonomy of art' were frequent in that decade, occasioning some important debates, especially in the field of literature. The principle of separating *aesthetics* from *politics* was the most solid argument, which aided the development of a cultural thaw in the 1960s. This liberalization meant, specifically, the abandonment of the fierce censorship⁷⁾ of the 1950s. However, even if the Romanian Communist Party tolerated to a certain extent the apolitical principles laid down by the artistic environment, this gesture was just another important sequence in the scenario of simulating the normality of cultural production. In this context, the system did not seem to censor films or books, but worked as an adviser of the artist. What the passage cited above reveals is the very mechanism by which films were produced in that period. Towards the end of the interview, Pintilie returned to the case of *Reconstruction*. He tells the story of film

6) For instance: *The Thistles of the Bărăgan* (Louis Daquin and Gheorghe Vitanidis, 1957); *Codin* (1963) and *The Star without a Name* (1966), both directed by Henri Colpi, *The Lace Wars* (René Clair, 1965), *The Dacians* (Sergiu Nicolaescu, 1967), and *Columna* (Mircea Dragan, 1968).

7) Later, in the second half of the 70s, the disappearance of official censorship bodies and the establishment of an obscure and unofficial system of censorship resulted in the exasperation of the cultural environment, because no clear rules were set anymore. The motivation for this transition from institutionalized censorship to implicit censorship rested, on the one hand, with Nicolae Ceaușescu's cynically naive conviction that the nation's cultural production is mature enough and had learned socialist consciousness, therefore, it no longer needs to be censored. On the other hand, the bizarre measure could be interpreted as a strategy on the part of the state to confuse or disorient its opponent, namely the artist.

screenings at various levels of the party's political hierarchy, making reference to Ceaușescu's own viewings. The anomaly made possible by the system of socialist bureaucratic filters was that the decision to sponsor worthless films could occur when they were still in the screenplay phase. At the same time, a self-censorship framework was provided for the directors, who, wishing to get into production as quickly as possible, altered their scripts in keeping with the suggestions of the bureaucratic authorities.

From the perspective of a director of Pintilie's standing and discernment, this film production crisis had been caused not only by the incompetence of the bureaucrats, who had been blocking certain valuable projects, but also by the directors' inability to propose political films that would offer a fresh take on the obsolete image of socialism. What the Romanian director omitted in his critical analysis, however, was a key aspect: the centralized control of film production. The responsibility for the state of Romanian cinema in the early 1970s could not be attributed solely to incompetent bureaucrats or untalented writers and directors, but to an entire legislative and administrative apparatus and to a rigid political agenda. An overview of various legislative reforms undertaken in the early 1970s can be found in an article published by Florian Potra in 1971 (who was at that time senior inspector at the National Centre of Cinematography). This profuse text has an ostensibly Proustian title — 'Cinematografia română în căutarea propriului său chip' ('Romanian Cinema in Pursuit of Its Own Identity') — but its message is essentially in tune with Ceaușescu's ideology. In fact, this article's ideological purpose was to popularize the general line of socialist thinking and its political agenda with regard to cultural policies and to financial sources in the field of cinema. In its preamble, Potra argues that much like the domains of heavy industry, literature, or philosophy, the field of cinema is founded on economic development. He also claims that the Party's 'efforts of guidance and supervision' from the period of socialist realism were essential for the development of the domestic film industry. The author draws attention to the fact that before the early 1970s Romania did not have a genuinely developed cinematography because it lacked proper 'models' (literature would be a counter-example), but admits that with the new administrative, cultural, and economic paradigm, the expansion of cinema will prove unstoppable. In his logistics plan, Potra considers that this process should be administered and supervised by the *institution of the producer*, who 'is bound to exert an overwhelming influence on the current and future evolution of Romanian cinema.'⁸⁾ The producer will have, as Potra suggests, the fundamental task of steering creative output in this field, much like the role of the literary critic in the realm of literature during the 1950s. At the beginning of 1980s, the *sui generis* death of the author was proclaimed for Romanian cinema. Unlike the way in which this phenomenon was regarded in the studies of Roland Barthes,⁹⁾ this was not at all a speculative or metaphorical ruse:

The regulations in force entitle the National Centre of Cinematography [CNC] to play the role and assume the responsibilities of a producer, who may be held directly accountable for the smooth progress of film production. In this capacity as a pro-

8) Florian Potra, 'Cinematografia română în căutarea propriului său chip', *Lupta de clasă*, no. 9 (1970), p. 33.

9) Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', *Aspen*, no. 5–6 (1967).

ducer, the CNC (whose subordinate production unit is Bucharest Studio) is required to exert a key role — with all its prerogatives — in the heart of production, that is, in the studio.¹⁰⁾

Potra concludes his article euphemistically and triumphantly at the same time, pointing out that the ‘artistic order’ is subordinated in socialism to the ‘moral and intellectual order,’ which guarantees an organic historical evolution. What his elusive text does not to say, however — echoing the remark of a Romanian sociologist that ‘silence is the real price of words’¹¹⁾ — is that the socialist political-ideological order supersedes any cultural, cinematic, or economic order. Basically, Potra’s ideological report is political, regardless of its scholarly claims: in its capacity as a film *producer*, the Communist Party is very much intent on taking control over film production. The new law on cinema from the early 1970s stipulated the possibility of firmer, more efficient, and better supervised restrictions or constraints.

The Socialist State as the ‘Sole Producer’ of Films

The new legislative framework of the early 1970s was developed and disseminated in Ceaușescu’s meetings with filmmakers. Elected as the General Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party in 1965 after the death of his predecessor, Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej, the new leader¹²⁾ liked to consider himself a cinephile. His first direct encounter with the representatives of the Romanian film industry took place on 23 May 1968 (at a session of the Ideological Commission of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party), a mere few months before Ceaușescu gave his famous speech in Bucharest criticizing the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia. In a report that provided an overview of the state of Romanian Cinema at that time, which also served as a basis for the discussions of the Ideological Commission of the Romanian Communist Party, it was emphasized that ‘the socialist state is the sole producer of Romanian films.’¹³⁾ From the institutional, hierarchical, and logistical points of view, the Romanian National Centre of Cinematography (CNC) had been established in 1962 as a ‘body that will provide ideological and artistic orientation, as well as guidance and coordination for film production and dissemination.’ It was subordinated to the State Committee for Culture and the Arts (CNCA).

At the meeting in May, 1968,¹⁴⁾ the emphasis was on the need for the Party to control the film industry because films had to be converted into ‘instruments of social criticism’ (Petre Sălcudeanu, President of CNC). The party was to become a ‘guiding beacon of light’

10) Florian Potra, ‘Cinematografia română’, p. 34.

11) Mihai Dinu Gheorghiu, ‘Romanul realității — Autenticitate și valoare’, *Amfiteatru*, no. 2 (1980), p. 5.

12) Ceaușescu did not become the President of the Republic until March 1974, when this state function was first created.

13) ‘Probleme actuale ale filmului și ale difuzării filmului de lung metraj’. Romanian National Archives, Fond CC al PCR, Cancelarie, File 88 (1968), pp. 129–218.

14) ‘Stenograma ședinței comisiei ideologice a CC al PCR din ziua de 23 mai 1968’. Romanian National Archives, Fond CC al PCR, Cancelarie, File 80 (1968), pp. 2–212.

(Dumitru Popescu, member of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party)¹⁵⁾ in charting the strategic themes of cinema. This restrictive attitude of the Romanian Communist Party after the relative liberalization of the 1960s came, in a way, as a response to a proposal made by Sergiu Nicolaescu (probably the most important propagandistic film director of the communist period), who was attempting to find a solution that would make Romanian cinema profitable. Nicolaescu advocated a recipe for commercial success that had proven to be very lucrative not only in the 'rotten', imperialist West, but even in Romania's Eastern European comrade countries, such as Poland or Czechoslovakia. According to him, these countries produced 'films in which sexuality is presented in a very open way; through this method they were able to sell films and capture the attention of the world press.'¹⁶⁾

This 'reform', which displayed a burgeoning capitalist spirit, even though the profits would ultimately belong to the state, was not accepted by the leadership of the Communist Party in 1968. The fact that President Nicolae Ceaușescu did not even see cinema as an economic domain,¹⁷⁾ not to mention as an aesthetic one, but merely as an ideological-political realm is attested by the reply he gave Sergiu Nicolaescu: 'ultimately we cannot treat this as a tradable commodity, comrades, for when it comes to the creation of man's socialist consciousness, we most certainly cannot trade it off'.¹⁸⁾ This reaction clearly shows that the Romanian Communist Party itself was understood as the only producer of films, both in theory and in practice. The institutional filters that selected, budgeted, financed, produced and distributed films were meant to enforce and safeguard this principle.

Ceaușescu's next two meetings with Romanian film makers (in 1971 and 1974) brought about a so-called 'cultural revolution', as well as a centralized, inflexible socialist restructuring of the Romanian film industry. Ceaușescu's meeting with film industry representatives in 1971 came amidst a conflict between the latter and the CNC leadership. The discussion about the economic potential of Romanian films was resumed. The CNC Director emphasized that only sixteen of the fifty-two films produced from 1965 to 1969 had brought financial profit. To minimize this economic deficit, he proposed three remedial measures:¹⁹⁾

- The establishment of creative groups (which could facilitate better collective screen-plays);

15) In 1971, Dumitru Popescu became chairman of the Council of Socialist Culture and Education, an organization that replaced the former State Committee for Culture and Art, in other words the Ministry of Culture. He was Nicolae Ceaușescu's henchman, which explains his nickname: 'God.'

16) 'Stenograma ședinței comisiei ideologice a CC al PCR din ziua de 23 mai 1968', p. 68.

17) However, the economic stakes of Romanian socialist films should not be ignored. The attraction to co-productions and the financial allocation policies for large productions and distribution strategies, prove that, for Ceaușescu, the economic aspect was a priority. For example, *Mihai Viteazul* (1970), directed by Sergiu Nicolaescu, was distributed internationally by Columbia Pictures under the title *The Last Crusade*. Considered by IMDB as the third highest-rated historical film ever, *Mihai Viteazul* was produced with a record budget of 500,000 dollars.

18) 'Stenograma ședinței comisiei ideologice a CC al PCR din ziua de 23 mai 1968', p. 69.

19) In this article, I am using data taken from the PhD Thesis (unpublished thus far) of the historian Bogdan-Alexandru Jitea, *Ceaușescu Regime* (Faculty of History, Bucharest University, 2012), pp. 40–53. The researcher has documented the manner in which Romanian cinema was organized during forty years of socialism.

- The organization of competitions for the selection of screenplays (mention was made that only eleven of seven hundred screenplays had been retained);
- The development of thematic plans regarding feature films in keeping with the conceptual framework, which comprised two major genres: *national epics* (Ceașescu's nationalist mythology was still in its infancy) and *topical films* (aimed at building a mythology of socialist everyday life).

This reorganization, which began to function effectively in 1972, contains, in fact, 'a paradox of the new mode of production: on the one hand, there has been a relative *decentralization* (reference is made to the establishment of film studios, with creative autonomy and economic self-management rights) and competition has been encouraged [...], on the other hand, there has been a diffusion of *responsibility* for the quality of the resulting films.'²⁰ The practical effects derived from this mode of production led to a growth of the hierarchical bureaucracy involved in production and did not safeguarded the autonomy of the *film units*. Five film studios were set up (see below), each with a relatively clear mission, different budgets, and their own leadership.

Although Petr Szczepanik admits that there was a certain diversity in the organization of the state-socialist mode of production in East-Central Europe, the characteristics he has identified are also relevant, in principle, for the Romanian context: clear hierarchical structures (centralized decision-making); efficient management and logistics (multi-annual plans, implicit censorship, a correlation between the topics of the films and the socialist political agenda; multiple control filters); collaborative cultural, ideological and professional environments (the relations between directors, writers and technicians)²¹. The Czech researcher argues there was one key person in this organizational framework of the film-units, who served as a kind of interface that linked the various levels and tiers of responsibility, creation, or decision making. That person was the *dramaturg*: his role was that of a facilitator in the East-European film industries — the relative equivalent of a producer in the western world. However, the specific difference of the Romanian context must be pointed out in this case. In Bucharest, the decision maker within a network that made possible the production of a film was the director of the film studio. In terms of profession, this person was either an important writer or someone with a background in broadcasting or in the print media. The ultimate link in the chain was the film director himself, although decision regarding the financing of a production did not belong to him at all. As Radu Toderici writes,

20) Radu Toderici 'Deceniul autorilor: ce s-a întâmplat cu filmul românesc în anii '90?', in Andrei Gorzo & Gabriela Filippi (eds.), *Filmul tranziției. Contribuții la interpretarea cinemaului nouăzecist* (Cluj-Napoca: Tact, 2017), p. 193. In his well-documented research, published in Romanian and dedicated to the complex relationship between the restructurings of the Romanian film industry in the 1980s and 1990s, Radu Toderici sums up Constantin Pivniceru's report on the reorganization from 1972 (*Cinema*, no. 4 /1972/, pp. 48–49). Toderici believes that this seemingly decentralized 'capitalist' strategy had not so much an economic purpose as an interest in increasing production efficiency (as many films as possible) and aesthetic quality (better films).

21) Toderici synthesizes these characteristics based on the article of Petr Szczepanik, 'The State-Socialist Mode of Production and the Political History of Production Culture', in P. Szczepanik and P. Vonderau (eds.), *Behind the Screen: Inside European Production Cultures* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 122–124.

Film studios regularly contracted the scripts first, looking then for the directors who could mount them; in many cases, even when a director proposed his own screenplay to the film studio, the recommendation was that he should make a film based on an already existing script. The origins of this situation lay in a phenomenon that was specific to Romanian cinema under communism: the writers' astounding power of influence and the close ties they maintained with people who had decision-making power in the world of films, including with executives of the film studios.²²⁾

The fact is that, after the reorganization of 1972, the network was missing an essential element: the *producer*. Although this point received an unsystematic, but trenchant response in 1968 — 'the socialist state is the sole producer of Romanian films,' and in spite of the fact that each film had a *delegated producer*, under the new legislative regulations, his function was simply a technical one, of monitoring or reporting on the production process. A *delegated producer* was not someone who truly managed the whole process and was committed to the implementation of a project. Moreover, the producer's function of political counsellor, invoked in Florian Potra's article, was taken over by the managers of the film studios (who had the final say in approving a screenplay), on the one hand, and by the politically influential cultural facilitators (writers, theatre directors, journalists), on the other hand.

The Collective Producer: State Production Companies

Although they had a fairly rudimentary understanding of the concept of *film producer*, the representatives of the CNC and the filmmakers knew that this was a key political and economic position. Thus, while in 1968 the polemic had been *economic vs. ideological* and the Party's status as a producer had not come under dispute, in 1971 the clash was between those who were mandated to provide logistical and political control (CNC) and the filmmakers. The latter complained about the excessive regulation of the CNC and proposed the creation of a Filmmakers' Union that was to take over the film producer's role. This proposal for innovation came from the same director Sergiu Nicolaescu mentioned earlier, but it was not a truly reformative suggestion. In his view, the Union was to ensure the link between the Party and the creators. Basically, Nicolaescu suggested that the Party should communicate directly with the filmmakers, without additional institutional filters, but also that these substantial privileges (in terms of priorities, budgets, selection, control) should, of course, be granted to those who led the Union.

Obviously displeased with the state of Romanian cinema, Nicolae Ceaușescu called for the establishment of 'a body of ideological and political guidance for all those working in the film industry'.²³⁾ This body was to take over the function of *collective producer* and its leader was to be delegated by the Party. 1971 was the year of the 'July theses' that brought

22) Radu Toderici, 'Deceniul autorilor', p. 195.

23) Nicolae Ceaușescu, 'Cuvântarea tovarășului Nicolae Ceaușescu la întâlnirea cu creatorii din domeniul cinematografiei', in *Scântea*, no. 8718 (March 1971), p. 3.

about, in Romanian politics, a total abandonment of the reformist tendencies that had characterized the first part of Ceaușescu's mandate. In 1974, during the third encounter between the representatives of the film industry and Ceaușescu, debates were held on a project for the reorganization of the field. A hierarchical mechanism of filters was set up for controlling the production of films more efficiently (in an economic sense) in a sort of laboratory of socialist propaganda, which was to influence the entire process of film creation, from thematic conception to finished product.

The institutional hierarchy derived from this model posited, at the top of the pyramid, the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party and, directly subordinated to it, The Council of Socialist Culture and Education. The Directorate for Arts and Entertainment Institutions was an institution directly responsible for implementing the party's cultural policies and ideology, while the Romanian Film Central Office, created through a merger between the Directorate for the Filmmaking and Film Distribution Network and the CNC, was in charge of documenting, budgeting, and producing films. The Central Office had the role of providing centralized management of the five production companies and of ensuring the film distribution process. Out of the five production companies, only four were in actual operation, with the following production lines:²⁴⁾

- Production Company 1, led by the writer Alexandru Ivăsiuc, was open to cinematic experiments and was specialized in the production of small-budget, topical films.
- Production Company 3, led by Eugen Mandric, produced historical films, featuring primarily the underground fight of the communists.
- Production Company 4, led by Cornel Leu, produced film adaptations of Romanian literary works and topical films with content that highlighted the socialist agenda.
- Production Company 5, led by Dumitru Fernoagă, produced historical films from the nationalist-communist agenda dedicated to the 'national epic', but also co-productions (in particular with Italy and Germany).

After production, a film was viewed by a commission of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. At this stage, recommendations were made for changes in the screenplay or montage, in line with the Party's policy. During the last, unofficial stage, Nicolae Ceaușescu, the Secretary General of the Party, watched the films. This organizational frame was maintained from the early 1970s until 1989. During these two decades, Romanian Cinema underwent a period of decline, marked by increasing political control, the suppression of thematic agendas by socialist ideology, the censoring projection sessions of the Party, the centralized production model, and the strategy of providing ideologically uncomfortable films with poor distribution channels.²⁵⁾ At the same time, from an economic point of view, as a member of C.A.E.R.,²⁶⁾ Romania was given the task of develop-

24) Bogdan-Alexandru Jitea, *Rezistență și conformism*, pp. 58–59.

25) There is an important nuance that greatly differentiates the way in which the Romanian film industry functioned under socialism from the Polish case. In the latter situation, '[e]ven though it controlled film financing and production, the State still underwrote the critical filmmaking that made popular heroes out of oppositional filmmakers' (Marcin Adamczak, 'Polish Cinema after 1989. A Quest for Visibility and a Voice in the Market', *Iluminace*, vol. 24, no. 4 /2012/, p. 47).

26) The Council of Mutual Economic Assistance, an organization of the Eastern European socialist states, including the USSR.

ing the material and technical basis for film processing between 1979 and 1989. The Film Processing Factory in Buftea was set up in this period to ensure the processing needs of all C.A.E.R. member states in Eastern Europe:

The first plant of photosensitive material in Romania, after a Japanese patent (Sakura), is being carried out at Târgu Mureș to cover the film needs for both domestic and CAER member countries, alongside the two similar plants in the USSR (from Kazan and Shotska) and ORWO in East Germany.²⁷⁾

Despite this regional cultural-economic opportunity, despite the rising level of production and the major investments made in the film industry, and despite the notable socialist co-productions or the relatively open, albeit hypocritical relations with Western Europe,²⁸⁾ the cinema (and television) were perhaps the main domains in which Ceaușescu's cultural revolution was 'successful' in the last two decades of socialism.

— — —

The Romanian film industry of the 1990s cannot be addressed outside this political, structural, and economic background. As stated above, the clinical death of post-communist Romanian Cinema can be proved in quantitative terms: less than sixty films²⁹⁾ were made from 1990 to 1998. Basically, the film industry reflects the economic patterns of the transition period: the financial collapse of state-owned institutions, bankruptcy, and inefficient privatization. Although there are very few scholarly contributions³⁰⁾ that address the phenomenon of Romanian film production in post-communism, there is consensus

27) Valentin Cojanu, 'Avantajele competitive în producția globală de film. Cazul României', *CCREI Working Papers Series*, no. 5 (October 2014), p. 21.

28) Still, in its attempts to preserve the appearances of a popular democracy, the socialist government in Bucharest did not regard the field of cinema as a priority. One argument could be the lack of prestige of the Romanian directors at film festivals (incomparable with the notoriety of the Czechs or the Poles). Another argument is that Ceaușescu was trying to consolidate his image in the West by means of foreign policy strategies rather than through the creative industries or through culture. The hypocritical management of relations with the West through films was, as stated earlier, different in Poland, a country that consistently financed its subversive directors: 'There is no easy answer to the question of why the Polish State backed the production of films that were critical of its social, economic, and political systems. To some extent, this practice was likely driven by the prestige attached to supporting films whose artistic merits were signalled by the awards they won at international film festivals. This situation allowed a socialist state to position itself as a patron of the arts and to present itself to Westerners as a progressive and open institution'. (Marcin Adamczak, 'Polish Cinema After 1989', p. 47).

29) Using the references of Krzysztof Kucharski (*Kino Plus. Film i dystrybucja kinowa w Polsce 1990–2000* /Toruń: Oficyna Wydawnicza Kucharski, 2002/) and data from the Polish Film Institute, Marcin Adamczak shows that in the 1990s, 186 feature films were produced in Poland. 38 of these were made before 1989 and were launched in 1990 (Adamczak, 'Polish Cinema After 1989', p. 53).

30) Ioana Uricaru's article — 'Follow the Money. Financing Contemporary Cinema in Romania', in Anikó Imre (ed.), *A Companion to Eastern European Cinemas* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), pp. 427–452 — sums up the main legislative changes concerning film financing in the 1990s and their consequences on the production companies that the New Romanian Cinema directors developed after 2000. Resorting to the methodological framework imposed by Mette Hjort and her concept of *small cinema*, Andrea Virginás ('Hungarian and Romanian film production in transnational frameworks: small domestic taste', in Jana Dudková and

regarding the fact that from a structural point of view, the Romanian film industry was faced with two major crises in the first decade after 1989: an *institutional crisis* and a *crisis of legitimacy*.

The Institutional Crisis of the 1990s

Prior to 1989, a coherent managerial vision was not necessary. Everything revolved around the obsession to save money,³¹⁾ as is clearly evident in the production reports of the 1970s-80s. After 1989, the perpetuation of this economic and logistical behaviour, predicated on the inefficient circulation of money between the state institutions — one paying the other's costs — could no longer be sustained. This led to bankruptcy and disadvantageous privatizations. The film domain could not relaunch, regardless of how much funding the state would provide. The legislative changes governing the financing of the Romanian film industry reflected this situation. Even if Ioana Uricaru focuses on explaining the functioning of private film studios in Romania after 2000, her article in *A Companion to Eastern European Cinema*³²⁾ contains a useful synthesis of the laws regarding the financing of film production in the 1990s. Decree-Law no. 80 of 8 February 1990 stipulated that films were to be made by 'creation units' (which would belong to professional associations like the Filmmakers' Union (UCIN) and state funding should be supplied only for projects of national interest ('the encouragement and protection of the national film production, stimulating the making of films of high artistic value'); for the remaining films, bank loans should be secured or funding should be secured from distribution pre-sales.³³⁾ This financing mechanism, marred by an astonishing naivety in the context of a volatile cultural, financial, and economic market, was to quickly reveal how ineffective it was. It is important to note that still in 1990 *only the state* could act as a producer and provide economic and financial support through the National Centre of Cinematography (CNC).

Katarína Mišíková /eds./, *Transformation Processes in Post-Socialist Screen Media* /Bratislava: Academy of Performing Arts, Institute of Theatre and Film Research-The Slovak Academy of Sciences, 2016/, pp. 77–96) compares post-communist Hungarian and Romanian film production, providing a sociological explanation for the absence of popular cinema in Romania. Radu Toderici's research ('Deceniul autorilor', 2017) explains that the Romanian film industry functions in post-communism based on the same political and financial mechanisms as before 1989. Bogdan Jitea ('Avatarurile cinematografiei de tranziție. Studiu de caz R.A. CINEROM', in Andrei Gorzo & Gabriela Filippi /eds./, *Filmul tranziției. Contribuții la interpretarea cinemaului nouăzecist* /Cluj-Napoca: Tact, 2017/, pp. 241–264) has conducted a case study on the administrative, legislative and economic transition of national film production from Centrala RomâniaFilm to Regia Autonomă Cinerom (set up in 1991 and dismantled in 1996).

- 31) The obsession for 'staying within the limits of the expenditure estimate' appears in most of the production reports from the 1980s. For instance, the report on the funding contract of the Romanian-Polish co-production *The Golden Train* (Bohdan Poręba, 1986) contained a budget resizing proposal: 'As regards the expenditure estimate, the level of expenses proposed shall not be endorsed and it is recommended that the cost estimate should be reconsidered after the completion of the filming stage in Romania' ('Proces verbal privind încheierea lucrărilor de pregătire. Producția filmului *Trenul de aur*'. Romanian Historical National Archives, RoFilm Fund, Inventory no. 3197 /1985/, p. 19.).

32) Ioana Uricaru, 'Follow the Money', pp. 427–452.

33) See footnote 29.

Government Decision no. 530 of 2 September 1991 'regulated the partial privatization of the film industry by creating two autonomous self-administrating units, which functioned as economic enterprises with capital that was fully owned by the state — one for film production (Regia autonomă CINEROM/ CINEROM Public Company, which became [after 1996] ROFILM) and one for distribution and exhibition (Regia autonomă România Film / Romania Film Public Company — RADEF).³⁴⁾ Under the new regulations, the CNC became the ministry to regulate filmmaking activity. Five creation studios were (re)established and placed under the control of CINEROM Bucharest. Moreover, it was decided that CINEROM should make film production proposals to the CNC for the approval of any state subsidies needed for supplementing the financial resources.

Actually, the confusion was not merely legislative, but also administrative. The four functional production companies set up in 1972 were dismantled in 1990, but were simultaneously re-established, being placed under the control of UCIN, based, of course, on the same socialist infrastructure. Technically, this was a strictly legal transition. No actual restructuring occurred at this time. In 1991, the film studios, called The CINEROM Creation Studios,³⁵⁾ were ceded by UCIN to the CNC. This resulted in a very bizarre situation, since the executives of the production companies — who were, without exception, well-known directors of the 1970s generation — also held leading positions in the CNC. Therefore, in the context of legislative confusion and economic instability, with a rudimentary understanding of the concept of *producer* — a deficiency inherited from the socialist period — those who decided the public funding of film productions were, in principle, the very same who decided what films were to be made.

As historian Bogdan Jitea states, in 1994

what entered into force was the regulation governing film financing from the centralized fund of the CNC [consisting] of funds granted from the State Budget, from broadcasting funds, derived from screening films in the cinemas on the national ter-

34) Ioana Uricaru, 'Follow the Money', p. 432.

35) The five production houses subordinated to the CNC are the following: ALPHA FILM, which produced, in general, the films of its own director, Mircea Daneliuc, such as *The Eleventh Commandment* (1991); *The Toothless War* (1992) or *The Conjugal Bed* (1993); GAMA FILM, led by Constantin Văeni, which focused on debut and commercial films, but distributed them only on the national market; PRO-FILM, led by Dinu Tănase, which produced a few debut feature films like *Leisure* (Valeriu Drăgușanu, 1993) and anti-communist films like *Divorce... Out of Love* (Andrei Blaier, 1992) and Nicolae Mărgineanu (*Look Ahead with Anger*, 1993); SOLARIS, led by Dan Pița, produced films dedicated to the recent past or to everyday life during the period of post-communist transition: e.g., *Somewhere in the East* (Nicolae Mărgineanu, 1991), *Luxury Hotel*, *Pepe & Fifi* (Dan Pița, 1992; coprod. Cinerom), *The Sleep of the Island* (Mircea Veroiu, 1994; coprod. Star Film 22); STAR FILM, led by Sergiu Nicolaescu, produced mainly his own historical and commercial films: e.g., *The Mirror* (1994) and *Point Zero* (1995; coprod. Kiper Lascu, USA). The director Lucian Pintilie represented a special case in that period. Having returned to Bucharest from France, he took over leadership of The Studio of Cinematographic Creation of The Romanian Ministry of Culture, which was financed directly from governmental funds. He produced his own films in this studio (most of them co-productions): *Too Late* (1996; coprod. MK2, Canal + & Filmex), *An Unforgettable Summer* (1995; coprod. MK2 & Filmex), and *Terminus paradisi* (1998; coprod. MK2 & Filmex). The film *Fox — Hunter* (Stere Gulea, 1993; coprod. Filmex & Ecco Films /Germany/) was produced in the same studio. In addition to these publicly funded creation studios, there was also a Studio of Romanian Television, led by Dan Necșulea.

ritory (RADEF or the private sector) and from other funds. CINEROM continued to hold a monopoly on the distribution of funds for film production.³⁶⁾

This funding could benefit the creation studios of CINEROM and the Commercial Film Company ANIMAFILM (founded in 1991 and specializing in animation productions). In addition to this, the independent studios³⁷⁾ were eligible to receive 50% of the production estimate on the condition that the film was co-produced by the CINEROM studios.³⁸⁾

The effects of the legislative framework imposed in 1991 became evident in the mid-1990s. Only 18 movies were produced until 1995. The causes for this were structural: uncorrelated legislation, insufficient public and private funds, and administrative incapacity. On top of everything, there was an atmosphere of bitter conflict between the directors who were running the production companies and the CNC. It was a fierce battle over resources, without the protagonists having the relevant know-how. While before 1989 state subsidies moved from one state institution to another and filmmakers and actors were paid substantial amounts of money, this mechanism collapsed in the 1990s, because it could not be adapted to the new social, cultural, and economic realities. It came as no surprise that filmmakers accused each other of misappropriating funds. Film companies went bankrupt and the Romanian film industry was heading towards a collapse. CINEROM disappeared as a legal entity in 1996, when a different organizational structure took its place: ROFILM S.A. The five studios that had perpetuated the socialist model, somehow in opposition to those who held political power in that period, proved to be a failed experiment of the directors belonging to the 1970s generation: 'this institutional hybrid [...] could not make the transition from the commission-based economy of communism to the economy of the transition period, as the increasingly frantic incentives of the market economy destabilized any long-term strategy.'³⁹⁾ Beyond the unrealistic legislation, the disastrous management, the public rudimentary policies, the volatile financial situation, and economic instability, probably that biggest insurmountable problem was the absence of the *producer* as a profession.⁴⁰⁾ The problem addressed at the meetings between Ceaușescu and film industry employees in the 1970s had received an authoritarian or collectivist response at that time, but the film industry could not find a favourable answer in the 1990s.

36) Bogdan-Alexandru Jitea, 'Avatarurile cinematografiei de tranziție', p. 251.

37) Several independent production companies received subsidies from the Romanian State. For instance, FILMEX produced the debut film of Bogdan Dumitrescu-Dreyer, *Where It Is Cold in the Sun* (1991); *The Oak* (Lucian Pintilie, 1992); Nae Caranfil's first film, *Sundays on Leave* (1993) and *Asphalt Tango* (Nae Caranfil, 1997; coprod. Les Films du Rivage & France 3 Cinéma); and *Betrayal* (Radu Mihăileanu, 1994; coprod. Parnasse Productions & Scarabée Films). CASTEL FILM, led by Vlad Păunescu, produced *Train of Life* (Radu Mihăileanu, 1998; coprod. France, Belgium, Netherlands, Israel, Romania) and became an important and influential company in the context of the East-European film industry after 2000.

38) 'Regulament privind finanțarea filmelor din fondul centralizat al Centrului Național al Cinematografiei', Romanian Historical National Archives, Fond S.C. Rofilm S.A, file 40, vol. I, no. 17 (1994), pp. 1–2.

39) Bogdan-Alexandru Jitea, 'Avatarurile cinematografiei de tranziție', p. 263.

40) In a recent interview, recalling the 1970s, the director Mircea Daneliuc denounced this very aspect: the producers' lack of professionalism: 'I cannot call them producers, and not even today's producers deserve that name' (p. 34).

A Legitimacy Crisis

If we consider who was in charge of the Romanian film production companies in the 1990s, it becomes clear that the national cinema industry mirrored the cultural and political power relations. Some of the studios financed by the CNC were headed by subversive film directors of the 1970s and 1980s (such as Mircea Daneliuc or Dan Pița), while other funding opportunities were available to a group of filmmakers led by Sergiu Nicolaescu (whose name was, prior to 1989, associated with historical films that promoted Ceaușescu's nationalism). The Ministry of Culture directly financed the production company led by Lucian Pintilie, a legendary film director who had returned from his exile in France at the beginning of the 1990s.

In effect, the challenge facing the film industry and film directors in this attempt to acquire new legitimacy was how to maintain their artistic relevance after communism.⁴¹⁾ However, the cultural and managerial policies of these authors — perhaps with the notable exception of Pintilie, who had collaborated with some of the younger film directors of that decade — were more focused on financing their own projects than on forging a unitary national development strategy. There was no institutional reform and no plan had been created for restructuring public policies or issuing adequate legislation for streamlining film production and distribution. A possible explanation of the partially justified institutional and administrative crisis would be that there was no expertise regarding the necessary adjustment to the new socio-economic conditions. In a documentary by Alexandru Solomon, *Kapitalism. Our Improved Formula* (2010), the controversial businessman Dinu Patriciu stated that in the 1990s 'it would have been impossible for the state to have more competent human resources'. For the filmmakers belonging to the 1970s and the 1980s generations, the primary stakes were authorial and moral. They did not deliberately attempt to restructure the film industry in spite of the fact that they held administrative positions. To a considerable extent, their films made in the 1990s reflect a conspicuous anti-communist discourse, delivered as traumatic testimonial, as anti-totalitarian parable, as heroic rebellion or as bitter indictment. From this point of view, they could be described as films that rehashed a dissident strain that was left unexpressed during the socialist period.

In the 1990s, the legitimacy crisis of cinema both as a specific medium and as a creative industry was addressed in debates that were of little intellectual consequence, but very relevant as a social symptom. The pressing topic was that of *auteurism*. From 1947 to 1989, authorship was defined in multiple registers in the Romanian film industry. In each case, these definitions reflected the transformations undergone by the socio-cultural policies of socialism: through the paradoxical filter of socialist realistic elitism, with obvious Soviet reminiscences; through a redefinition of the concept of *auteurism*, by integrating the director into the collective creative process; through the director's potential for subversiveness against state censorship;⁴²⁾ through the cooperation of the director and the screen-

41) See Andrew Baruch Wachtel, *Remaining Relevant after Communism: The Role of the Writer in Eastern Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

42) The periods identified by Constantin Parvulescu ('Opening Titles and Authorship in Romanian Socialist Film', *Illuminace*, vol. 26, no. 3 /2014/) are important in this regard. In early socialism (1947–1957) the

writer, who had the noble mission to create a 'national school of film'; through the distinction between two conceptions of the director — as artist vs. a technician; through the designation of the director as 'total author'; or through the argument that the author creates a 'national style'.⁴³⁾ Even if *auteurism* was not theorized or re-conceptualized in Romania during the 1990s, the general idea was that a national cinema can only be developed through *auteur* films. *Auteurism* has become synonymous with a form of civic, generally anti-communist mission, which aimed to annihilate not only the older politicized order of the socialist period, but also the flimsy aesthetic conventions of the films produced in that time. Having achieved national visibility and assumed an institutional role in the restructuring of the national film industry, these *auteurs* also enjoyed the prestige of former 'disidents' under socialism and of the prizes they won in international festivals: for instance, Dan Pița got the Silver Lion in Venice for *Luxury Hotel* (1992), while *The Conjugal Bed* (Mircea Daneliuc, 1993) was included in the Berlin competition. All in all, after 1989, the filmmakers of the 1970s and 80s generation were expected by film critics to be the saviours of cinema as art. This explains, on the one hand, the lack of public and financial support for those films. It is well known that there has been no popular cinema in post-communist Romania, not even one promoted exclusively at the national level. On the other hand, it justifies the fantasy of a New Romanian Wave, launched in 1993.⁴⁴⁾ The fact that Lucian Pintilie worked with Cristi Puiu at the end of the 1990s, thereby supporting the new generation of filmmakers, reveals a unified — it would be tempting to call it *modernist* — conception of *auteurism*. Unfortunately, the legislative, political, social, and institutional attempts to legitimize the Romanian film industry in the 1990s resulted in a general failure that was camouflaged by modest production, by anti-communist rhetoric, and by huge *auteur* egos. This failure was nonetheless exposed by the economic bankruptcy that this inefficient restructuring brought about.

'Romanian cultural elites replicated this paradoxical mixture of elitism and proletarianism, laying the groundwork for the notion of the film director as the sole source of artistic input [but] the emphasis placed on the writer is not only a symptom of socialist cinema's relationships to theatre and high culture, but also a demonstration that the order of billing during early socialism mirrored the temporality of the film production process' (28). During mid-socialism (1957–1977) 'the director was but one member of a team whose multidirectional cooperation suggested greater levels of collective authorship' (30). Still, even though the concept of director-centred authorship already existed in the 1970s, in late socialism (1977–1989) it acquired national-regional relevance, largely based on the participation of some films in Western festivals: 'Eastern European film industries were content to be seen as staunch supporters of a cultural pan-Europeanism undergirded by the European-born concept of the Auteur' (32). The director Mircea Daneliuc explained this openness from the latter half of the 1970s by stating that, as a rule, the Communist Party was not very interested in film festivals: '[nevertheless] film exchanges were made between the COMECON countries anyway, so these films reached a series of countries and other films came from there. However, when it came to such films getting to Western countries, things became more complicated, but not impossible' (p. 32).

43) Summing up several positions expressed in the Romanian magazine *Cinema* (1965–1971), Radu Toderici ('Deceniul autorilor', 2017, p. 196) finds that the defence of the 'total author' appeared in the press even before the directors of the 1970s' generation made their debuts. The key terms (imposed through political directives) through which *auteurism* was conceptualized prior to 1989 were: 'topical film', 'national specificity', 'political film', and 'national film epic'.

44) This phrase was coined by the film critic Adina Darian in a debate organized by the magazine *Noul Cinema*, no. 3 (1993), pp. 4–5.

Conclusion

The two attempts at restructuring the Romanian film industry — that from the beginning of the 1970s and that from the 1990s — must be understood in a process of continuity. The revolution of December 1989 separates the two socio-political eras only symbolically. The winds of cultural liberalization, which swept across Eastern Europe in the 1970s, were not felt in Romania. Centralized control entailed not just a whimsical bureaucratization, as Lucian Pintilie believed, but also a rather aggressive attempt to recreate the context and re-enforce the conditions of the 1950s within the cultural sphere.

The endeavours to create the 'institution' of the professional producer failed. Because of an obsession with control, the socialist state itself was projected as the ultimate film producer, but this had three harmful effects: the absence of an economically proficient vision, the impossibility of even a partial decentralization of the film units corresponding to the four production companies, and the increasingly ambivalent responsibility for film productions. The centralization of decision-making, the multi-annual plans, the correlation between the topics of the films and the socialist political agenda, the collectivization of production, and even the substantial investments made in film productions failed to facilitate the quantitative and qualitative development of the Romanian film industry. The only thing they succeeded in creating was an ambiguous mechanism of negotiation between directors, writers, screenwriters, film industry workers, and the Communist Party. The Romanian film industry of the last two socialist decades was a world of intermediaries and facilitators, which dominated the networks of cultural and political influence.

In the 1990s, the two crises identified above — the institutional crisis and the crisis of legitimacy — demonstrated that any organizational system, any social, cultural, political, or ideological infrastructure or platform would be continually recycled until they permanently collapsed. The legislative and administrative mayhem, the numerous political conflicts, and the lack of expertise and economic resources produced a world of belated dissidents, of moral *auteurs* whose films could not be produced in a professional fashion, for there was no one to do so.

As Petr Szczepanik has noted, using Fernand Braudel's concept of *longue durée*, 'the collective mentalities of film workers develop at a significantly slower rate than the rapidly changing "history of events" that affect cinema as it intersects over time with the political.'⁴⁵⁾ From this point of view, the 1990s are somehow part of the long 1980s. This situation vividly illustrates what the Romanian literary critic and theorist Mircea Martin has called the complex of an 'eternal beginning'.⁴⁶⁾

Claudiu Turcuș is Assistant Professor of Literary and Film studies at Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj, Romania. He obtained his PhD in Humanities (2011, BBU) after a fellowship research at Bard College, New York. His research interests are focused on East-Central European Literature, Cinema, and Criticism. He has published widely on topics such as the cultural memory of Socialism, the rep-

45) Petr Szczepanik, 'The State-Socialist Mode of Production,' p. 125.

46) Mircea Martin, *G. Călinescu și complexe literaturii române* (Pitești: Paralela 45, 2002).

resentation of Post-communist transition, intellectual history, and the ideology of New Romanian Cinema. His book, *Norman Manea. Aesthetics as East Ethics* (Frankfurt-New York: Peter Lang, 2016) is the very first monograph about the life and oeuvre of this important Romanian-American writer, who was proposed twice for the Nobel Prize.

Films cited:

Asphalt Tango (Asfalt tango; Nae Caranfil, 1997), *Betrayal* (Trahir; Radu Mihăileanu, 1994), *Codin* (Henri Colpi, 1963), *Columna* (Mircea Dragan, 1968), *The Conjugal Bed* (Patul conjugal; Mircea Daneliuc, 1993), *The Dacians* (Dacii; Sergiu Nicolaescu, 1967), *Divorce... Out of Love* (Divorț... din dragoste; Andrei Blaier, 1992), *The Eleventh Commandment* (A unsprezecea poruncă; Mircea Daneliuc, 1991), *The Golden Train* (Trenul de aur; Bohdan Poręba, 1986), *Kapitalism. Our Improved Formula* (Kapitalism. Rețeta noastră secretă; Alexandru Solomon, 2010), *The Lace Wars* (Les fêtes galantes; René Clair, 1965), *The Last Crusade* (Mihai Viteazul; Sergiu Nicolaescu, 1970), *Leisure* (Timpul liber; Valeriu Drăgușanu, 1993), *Look Ahead with Anger* (Privește înainte cu mânie; Nicolae Mărgineanu, 1993), *Luxury Hotel* (Hotel de lux; Dan Pița, 1992), *The Mirror* (Oglinda; Sergiu Nicolaescu, 1994), *The Oak* (Balanța; Lucian Pintilie, 1992), *Pepe & Fifi* (Pepe și Fifi; Dan Pița, 1992), *Point Zero* (Punctul zero; Sergiu Nicolaescu, 1995), *Reconstruction* (Reconstituirea; Lucian Pintilie, 1968), *Somewhere in the East* (Undeva în est; Nicolae Mărgineanu, 1991), *The Sleep of the Island* (Somnul insulei; Mircea Veroiu, 1994), *The Star without a Name* (Steaua fără nume; Henri Colpi, 1966), *Sundays on Leave* (E pericoloso sporgersi; Nae Caranfil, 1993), *Terminus paradisi* (Lucian Pintilie, 1998), *The Thistles of the Bărăgan* (Louis Daquin and Gheorghe Vitanidis, 1957), *The Toothless War* (Tusea și junghiul; Mircea Daneliuc, 1992), *Too Late* (Prea târziu; Lucian Pintilie, 1996), *Train of Life* (Trenul vieții; Radu Mihăileanu, 1998), *An Unforgettable Summer* (O vară de neuitat; Lucian Pintilie, 1995), *Vulpe vânător* (Fox — Hunter; Stere Gulea, 1993), *Where It is Cold in the Sun* (Unde la soare e frig; Bogdan Dumitrescu-Dreyer, 1991).

SUMMARY

Restructuring a Cinema That Didn't Exist.
*The Romanian Film Industry of the 1990s***Claudiu Turcuș**

This article documents and describes the ways in which the Romanian film industry was restructured in the 1990s. It also explores the structural, legislative, financial and ideological continuities of this period with the manner in which this field of cultural production was organized in the 1970s and the 1980s. Using a contextual analysis of several documents from the National Archives of Romania (RoFilm Fund, 1986–1989), interviews with the most influential film directors of that period as primary research data, and scholarly sources (both in Romanian and English), I argue that the collapse of the state-socialist mode of film production, financing, and distribution produced adverse structural effects in the 1990s, undermining the desired relaunch of the Romanian film industry as a national cinema and postponing the integration of Romanian cinema within a transnational network.