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With the Avant-garde to the Cinema

ABSTRACT

The paper presents the international cinema of the 1920s reflected in the articles of the Romanian avant-garde reviews *Contimporanul*, *75 HP*, *Integral* and *unu*. These articles survey experimental cinema and commercial movies, through which actors like Charlie Chaplin or Douglas Fairbanks became international stars. Despite the popularity and the mass success of the new art, not only did the authors of the articles appreciate the artistic qualities of the cinema productions, but they also criticized the tendencies to excessive commercialization or hermeticism.

KEYWORDS

Avant-garde; Cinema; Romanian Avant-garde Reviews.

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Coagulated around reviews such as *Punct*, *Contimporanul*, *75 HP*, *Integral* and *unu*, the historical avant-garde of Romania started manifesting itself in the 1920s, in a period in which even though the cinema had not yet moved past the stage of silent films, it had nonetheless become the most popular form of mass entertainment and one of the most prosperous forms of business. At the global level, the film industry was dominated by French and American productions, Hollywood becoming, in 1914, the most important place for the production of films worldwide. In the 1920s, around 800 films were produced in Hollywood annually, while of the 58,000 cinema theaters that existed across the world, more than 21,000 were located in the United States. It was also here that 226,000 people were employed in the film industry, which had reached a turnover of 27 billion dollars, providing its employees with the highest wages in the USA. During this period, several major American production houses, which are also in existence today, were founded: Columbia and United Artists in 1919, Warner Bros in 1923 and the Metro Goldwyn Mayer film studios in 1924. Originally founded solely as a distribution company, Paramount started producing films in 1925.

During these years, Metro Goldwyn Mayer launched the star system, a form of



aggressive advertising that revolved around movie stars and was promoted in the press and on the radio, exacerbating or simply making up aspects pertaining to the personal life of movie stars in order to draw higher attention to them and, implicitly, to the films in which they played the leading roles.¹

Charles Chaplin was at the peak of his career after the success of the films *The Kid* (1921), *The Pilgrim* (1923) and *Gold Rush* (1925). Dubbed the “King of Hollywood,” Douglas Fairbanks became the first “star” of the world cinema after the success of a series of films whose protagonist he was, the most well-known being *The Thief of Bagdad*, directed by Raoul Walsh in 1924.

During the same years, aside from productions of a more commercial nature, some filmmakers expressed an interest in probing the expressive capacity of the new art, by producing films with an experimental aesthetic outlook. In the history of the cinema, this represented an avant-garde period, with three forms of expression: the first, which Henri Langlois called French Impressionism, manifested itself in France and focused on aspects that belonged to the universe of Impressionist painting, such as *plein-air* painting, divisionism, the play of light and shades and image dissolution. Its representatives included Abel Gance, Marcel L’Herbier, Louis Delluc, Germaine Dulac, Jean Epstein and René Claire. They aimed to forge a new cinematic language, of universal scope, accessible to the broad masses. René Clair even came up with a “recipe” designed to fulfill this aspiration by using themes of sheer visuality in a scenario that complied with the desires of the public. Notwithstanding all this, these filmmakers were chastised for their alleged contempt for the subject and for the public, excessive literaturization, ignorance of the social realities and bourgeois conformism. The second

and the third “avant-gardes” had an international character and concentrated on experimental productions, unrelated to the trends of commercial cinema, attempting to translate into cinematic language the visual breakthroughs of Cubism, Futurism and Abstractionism. The years 1921-1926 witnessed the *ciné-peinture* experiments of artists like Viking Eggeling, Hans Richter, Walter Ruttmann and Oskar Fischinger in Germany and Fernand Léger, Man Ray, Jean Grémillon, while during the period 1924-1930, expressions of Dadaism and surrealism appeared in the cinema, at a time when the former was experiencing decline and the latter was on the rise. The spirit of challenging the bourgeoisie, the denial of well-entrenched values, eroticism and the exploration of the unconscious are present in the films of Luis Buñuel, René Clair, Marcel Duchamp, Hans Richter, Moholy-Nagy, Adrian Brunel, etc. The third avant-garde manifested itself in 1927-1930, it had a documentary character and brought to the fore the image of great cities, in a poetic vision with political overtones, influenced by the rationalism of the Bauhaus School and by one of the first proponents of *cinéma vérité*, Dziga Vertov.²

In this context, in the avant-garde circles, film was received, on the one hand, through the lens of its newness as a means of expression that answered the need for a renewal of art and exerted a major impact on the public, and on the other hand, in light of a deliberate option for artistic quality and for the avant-garde filmmakers’ quest for new means of expression, in opposition to the mediocrity of most commercial film productions. These aspects were discussed in various articles published mainly in avant-garde reviews, like *Integral* (1925-1928), founded by the visual artist Hans Herman Maxy, but also *Contimporanul* (1922-1932), founded by Ion Vinea and Marcel Iancu, or the magazine *unu* (1928-

1930), founded and led by Sașa Pană. In the review *75 HP* (1924), the cinema is presented alongside other expressions of the dynamism evinced by the new times, in “Aviograma,” the manifesto text of this review, edited by Ilarie Voronca.

Two articles were dedicated to the cinema in the very first issued of the review *Integral*, which appeared on 1 March 1925, outlining the programmatic directions of this publication that can be succinctly expressed using the formula launched on that occasion: “the order of synthesis, an order that is essentially constructive, classical, integral.”³

In keeping with the characteristic enthusiasm of the avant-garde environments for the new technologies, which were invested with the hope of changing the world and opening new avenues of knowledge for man, the renewing capacity of the cinema was praised in an article entitled “Cinema,” signed by Perez (Ion). First of all, with reference to the devices for recording and rendering moving images, the invention of the cinema is associated here with the innovative drive that is inherent in modern man: “We no longer discover – we invent. We have conquered nature – now we are doubling it, enhancing it, to make it worthier of our potential. We have created ourselves from the brains of our own will, engaging in manly sensuous couplings with the machines.”⁴ The cinema is regarded as a “lucid fantasy, a cerebral extravaganza, a mobile space, an infinite incentive for shapes, while shapes are opportunities for light and color, dynamic painting.”⁵ What is emphasized, including at a typographical level, by underlining the words, is the “feast of ideas,” the pre-eminence of concept in the new art, which is freed from the constraints of motionlessness and fosters the assertion of artists who are “servants, devoid of pride and intelligence, of exhausted art formulas.”⁶

Another article, “Cinematograful” (“The Cinema”) signed by Barbu Florian, was published in issue no. 3 of the review *Integral*, drawing attention to the excessively commercial nature of cinematographic productions and the relinquishment of specific cinematic means – capturing movement and scenic dynamism – in favor of a static theatrical representation, in which the center stage is occupied by the movie “star.” Perhaps under the influence of watching the films *L’inhumaine* by Marcel L’Herbier or *Entr’Acte* by René Clair, featuring modernist settings or expressions of avant-garde cinema, the article emphasizes that “the script changes and becomes a pretext. The value of rhythm is highlighted. Dance is dynamically exploited. Trick shots take their pre-ordained place.”⁷ In relation to all of the above, the author considers that it is necessary to undertake a modernist reform of the cinema: “contemporary art demands the reform of the naturalist setting, which it turns into architecture, and landscapes with new structures: Expressionist, Cubist or Constructivist settings.”⁸ By virtue of a Constructivist conception that privileged collective and anonymous creations dedicated to the community, the idea put forth is that of a need to return to the original meaning of this art by eliminating elements that run against its grain: “when the last Romantic vestiges have disappeared (the name of the author, the stars and the director), film will rehabilitate the great tradition as it laid down its principles in the beginning.”⁹

In issue no. 13-14 of the review *Integral*, published in July 1927, the same author contributed with an article entitled “Lanterna magică” (“The Magical Lantern”), about the possibilities and potential of the new art. This article continued or resumed some of the ideas developed in the article above, its very title having been





seemingly extracted from its last sentence: “The moving lantern is starting to become magical.”¹⁰ Like in the previous article, Barbu Florian notes that the language of the new art can reach international audiences, as it is exempt from the linguistic impediment (this was still the era of silent film) and deploys a new, visual alphabet, used by authors like Griffith, Chaplin, Gance, L’Herbier, Murnau, Eisenstein, Lange, Dupont, Ince, Lubitsch and Niblo. He considers that this language causes “one and the same smile [...] as the same emotions are echoed in the viewers, wherever they may be located: at the pole or at the tropics.”¹¹ Florian notes that the expressive generosity of the new art lends itself to the most diverse of approaches, including those defining the newly emerged Surrealist current: “Super-realism? Automatic psychism? Freudianism? All thinkers find grounds of legitimation there.”¹² The article, written in a note of great optimism, ends with a definition of the cinema that is in line with the aspirations of synthesis and integralism of those who founded the review: “Cinema. A synthesis of shadow and light.”¹³

In an article entitled “Filmul” (“Film”), published in issue no. 55-56 of the review *Contimporanul*, from March 1925, Marcel Iancu eulogizes the new art: “Film is one the most important and characteristic means of artistic expression in our times. Its inventiveness surpasses by far the significance that journalism ascribes it. We see in it (not necessarily as it is produced today), an unfathomable artistic potential, predicated on means of mechanization, standardization, celerity, ubiquity.”¹⁴ The author realizes that the early stage of the new art is characterized by the chaotic nature of “all beginnings” but, at the same time, he believes that the new modern conceptions have had merit of fuelling the crystallization of the specificity of every art, because “up until

very recently, literature was produced in the theater, theater in the cinema, painting in sculpture, watercolor in architecture, and theater in literature.”¹⁵ Upholding inventiveness and the refusal to imitate nature, out of a characteristic propensity of the avant-gardes, he acknowledges the merit of the cinema as the “first art which, by its nature, disavows imitation and creates the fantastic.”¹⁶ In support of this idea, he quotes from Leon Chenoy: “L’art veut d’avantage. Il commence ou s’arrete le naturel pur et simple, il le corrige, le rend plus expresif. [...] De moins en moins comme la musique, comme la peinture le septième art admettra de reproduire.”¹⁷ Coming directly from the field of the visual arts, as a practitioner and theorist thereof, manifesting an interest in experimentation, having brought a prestigious contribution to the launching of Dada in Zurich and being captivated by Constructivism at the time of writing this article, Marcel Iancu, unlike Barbu Florian, appreciates Viking Eggeling’s experiment in the area of abstract film, emphasizing his merits: “Researching the elements of abstract painting, the Swede Viking Eggeling found the elementary principles of ‘construction’ in the synthesis of forms and in the rapport between contrasts and analogies.”¹⁸ In this article, the author also refers to the abstract experiments of Hans Richter, his colleague in the Dadaist movement, quoting here from the latter’s theoretical writings: “We do not want the respite conferred by the scenery depicted in postcards or love scenes of well-deserved renown, or exciting arrangements of little feet or salons built at the royal courts. All we want is movement, organized movement. These films do not provide references to which we may return through souvenirs.”¹⁹

Assertion by opposition, which is specific to avant-garde discourse, is achieved, in the case of the cinema, by means of comparison with the theater. In the article

“Teatru și Cinematograf” (“Theater and Cinema”), from issue no. 2 of the review *Integral* (May 1925), the new aesthetics that the cinema brings into the sphere of the arts is presented in contrast with aspects related to the aesthetics of the theater. The reproaches brought against the theater concern an excess of romance and “the desire to distort life.”²⁰ Barbu Florian, the author of the article, notes that the cinema “is the art that enhances values. It is the very opposite of the theater.”²¹ The attempts made by Stanislavski, Reinhardt, Copeau and Tairoff to reform the theater are deemed to be irrelevant for a significant change: “The same vegetative theater will be dragged into a new setting. What the theater needs in order to become, with the help of the other modern elements, an expression of the times is a modern text.”²² Although this was two years before the invention of the technology that led to the development of sound film, the author anticipated the possibilities of reforming dramatic art by means of the cinema. “We are ready to believe that [...] silent art, whose possibilities are more in tune with the times, will prepare this text, which the theater will also appropriate.”²³ Considered to possess richer means of expression, “the cinema has imposed upon the theater a discursive discipline that the former exerts organically. The art of performance has undergone a significant change, also under the influence of the screen: it has been deprived of the charm of exaggeration.”²⁴ This is obviously a reference to declamatory, pathetic theatrical acting, still in use in the theater at that time. In line with the integralist program of the review, silent art is considered to be more appropriate for a “reintegration in representation,” through the contribution of the fine arts, architecture and integralist music, enhanced by the cinema’s power of visuality. In an article entitled “Drama-Pantomima” (“Drama-Pantomime”), from the same issue

of the review, using the same antithetic terms that opposed the cinema to the theater, Ion Călugăru considered that the latter was about to succumb because of its ill-adjustment to an era undergoing a full transformation. This inadequacy was explained through the excessive melodrama that the theater abusively made recourse to and, in relation to this, through the status of the dramatic text, which had become “a mouse trap,” for it was solely designed to capture the interest of the public by cheap means and garish puns. However, pantomime, which was specific to the silent cinema of those years, had the merits of preserving the purity of dramatic expression. Conveying a conception rooted in Constructivism, which was, in fact, characteristic of the review *Integral*, and aspired to disseminate art to the masses and not just to an elite, Ion Călugăru considered that the theater and the cinema had a class-specific character: “The theater has always been the preserve of the economic and political exponents [...] of the bourgeoisie, whose members have expressed their lack of taste in ideological, sentimental, funny vulgarisms,”²⁵ while the “proletariat has enthusiastically supported the cinema,”²⁶ thus demonstrating its progressive nature, as an advocate of modernity and of the new means of expression.

Being in touch with the evolution of the international avant-garde, more specifically, with the emergence of surrealism via the publication, in 1924, of the Surrealist Manifesto by André Breton, Barbu Florian contributed to issue no. 4/1925 of the review *Integral* with an article entitled “Suprarealismul în cinematograf” (“Surrealism in the Cinema”). The novelty of this new avant-garde direction and the author’s attention being primarily focused on the oneiric dimension of Surrealism led to his enthusiastic embrace of the possibility (deemed to





be a necessity) that dreams should find an expression in the cinema. On the one hand, the author realizes the wealth of cinematic means deployed towards the composition of works that are in line with the Surrealist universe, which are more attuned to expressing this universe than literary means; on the other hand, he believes that the position of the spectator in the cinema hall is similar with the oneiric condition, in terms of the state of abandonment and quasi-unconsciousness experienced by the viewer: "Inside the dark hall [...] how many times have we experienced a state of abandonment and unconsciousness characteristic of dreams? [...] The dynamism of the screen truly creates the illusion that we are living in a dream."²⁷ In support of the notion that the cinema can become a medium of Surrealist expression, B. Florian detects the existence of surreal elements that appeared prior to this current in highly popular productions of the time, like those featuring Douglas Fairbanks, Buster Keaton and Charles Chaplin as their protagonists. Examples taken from the latter's films, like the scene of the angels from *The Kid*, Charlot's climbing the ladder with the alpenstock or the pantomime-sermon in *The Pilgrim* are considered expressions of psychic automatism. Imagism, a characteristic of Surrealism, is detected as a strong form of expression in Buster Keaton's films, in which the hero's desires are released in a dream, or in the famous film, *The Thief of Baghdad*, which is a blend of real and unreal images.

Several years later, Geo Bogza wrote about *Un chien Andalou*, one of the masterpieces of Surrealism, in issue no. 30 of the review *unu* from 1930. His text is not a description of the film as such, but rather a plea for exposing the clichés and histrionics that characterized the films of the time. Bogza noted that these films were made against the grain of the avant-garde

aesthetics, which demanded that art should be removed from reality. Thus, these films were considered to be revolutionary: "their revolutionary nature is purely technical, as they resort to procedures that enable a well-nigh perfect closeness to reality, when an escape from reality should have been at stake."²⁸ Disappointed that the spirit of innovation in the cinema was altered by factors that led to frivolousness, he found in *Un chien Andalou* an occasion for acclamatory disquisitions about its artistic means, especially as regards the composition of the erotic scenes. He noted that, in general, these scenes were vulgarized and reduced to clichés, "devoid of any substrate of essences" and he compared cheap movies with "novels that are sold in installments."²⁹ In the same context, he considered that while there were plenty of good books that appeared in literature, "the cinema – which requires great expenses that can only be covered by the great capitalists, who generally pursue their own interests and are impervious to the visions of pure art – is invaded by a mediocre global production that gluts the retina."³⁰

In the first issue of the magazine *Integral*, Benjamin Fondane, who had settled in Paris in 1923, wrote a review of the film *Entracte*, a momentous production of avant-garde cinema, directed by René Clair in 1924 and screened, on 4 December of the same year, during the performance of the *Relâche Ballet* at the Theatre de Champs-Élysées. Achieved with Dadaist means of expression and having background music composed by Eric Satie, the film, with a screenplay by Francis Picabia, starred famous figures of the avant-garde, such as Man Ray, Marcel Duchamp, Francis Picabia and Eric Satie. The article, entitled *Entracte ou le cinema autonome*, written in French, occasions the voicing of acid remarks about the context in which the film was screened, between the acts of the *Relâche Ballet*, whose authors were the Swedish choreographer Jean



Börlin and the Dadaist artist Francis Picabia. Thus, Fondane believes that the film was a “slice of art between stale slices of a sandwich” in the “tasteless farcical”³¹ show where the dancers bungled the dance they were to perform, the music, the stage-lighting, vexed the public, etc. Beyond the description of the plot, which could be considered the poetic expression of his impressions, Fondane’s observations refer to the experimentalist substance of the film, which brought a series of montage innovations, and to various effects such as slow-motion, magical disappearances, the preference for diverse angular shots over horizontal images, image overlays, and the association of objects that was reminiscent of Surrealist aesthetics. Containing an assessment of the strictly cinematic means that were used in this film towards the production of an autonomous artistic language, the final section of the article expresses a series of warnings that Fondane rhetorically imparts to the authors of the film and that refer to the perils inherent in hermetic language, which posed the risk of driving the public away from the cinemas.

In the article entitled “Perspectiva filmului nou” (“The Perspective of the New Film”), published in issue 6-7/1925 of the review *Integral*, Barbu Florian makes several critical, negative statements, referring to experimental films or films of a modernist nature, which appeared in the early 1920s: *L’inhumaine* by Marcel L’Herbier, *Entr’acte* by René Clair, *Moving Images* by Fernand Léger and Dudley Murphy, and *Diagonal-Symphonie* by Viking Eggeling.

About *L’inhumaine*, a film in which some of the settings were built by Fernand Léger, Barbu Florian writes that it did not have the expected amount of success in Romania. The reproaches include the fact that “lacking the support that the experts were able to add in France, namely Darius Milhaud’s specially adapted music, the film

lost some of its intensity when it was screened in Romania,” being “set against an unsuitable music.”³² The protagonist of the film, Georgette Leblanc, is harshly disparaged, her face being compared with the mask of the explorer Amundsen and her performance being considered obsolete and theatrical, reminiscent of Sarah Bernard’s, in stark dissonance with the modernist setting of the film. Although *Moving Images* (*Ballet mécanique*, in the original) is considered a masterpiece of early experimental film in the international filmography, Barbu Florian states, in the same article, that “the attempt has apparently failed. The continuous repetition of the objects is tedious. The authors have mistaken rhythm for movement. Incoherent and lacking discipline, film spurred no interest.”³³ In fact, the film was, as it is written in the credit titles, “composed” by the painter Fernand Léger in 1924, as the first film without a script. As we also find from the credit titles, Eisenstein said that this film was one of the few cinematic masterpieces. Preceding the manifestation of the Surrealist aesthetics, the film appears to be the reverie of a female character, lying in a garden swing, who, contrary to what might be inferred about her, is dreaming/imagining a sequence of inanimate elements, such as hats, gear, bottles, geometrical shapes, etc. These are entwined in a dance consisting of overlapping images, which give the impression of access to a hidden world, governed by its own laws, similar to the one proposed by Cubist painting. Unlike Leger’s film, René Clair’s *Entr’acte* is considered “a very good comic strip.”³⁴ The conclusion reached by the author of the article is trenchant: “By and large, what these two films amount to, aside from a few interesting novelties, is an effort of lesser import.”³⁵ Dating from the same year, 1924, Viking Eggeling’s abstract experimental film *Diagonal-Symphonie* is



associated by Barbu Florian with a piece of music thanks to the rhythmic elements it is composed of. Conceived as the animation of geometric shapes entangled in a dialogue that is grounded in successions of rhythm and place in space, the film, as Florian states, “does not exclude the uniformity and coldness that are somewhat characteristic of German attempts.” In the conclusion from the end of the presentation of these films, it is indicated that “they do not represent novelty in itself”³⁶ for they are expressions of the primary cinema, dominated by the two basic elements, rhythm and photography. The author regards the exclusive tendency towards abstract film, towards the isolation of art from life, as an error, because man is by nature an abstract element. In opposition to this, Florian offers the counterexample of the films made by Chaplin, whose art “appears as ideal and most suitable to the period in which it is set,”³⁷ and Douglas Fairbanks, who is an “ideal actor in Mayerhold’s view.”³⁸

In fact, many of the articles published in the avant-garde reviews are dedicated to these two actors, who were extremely popular at that time. In “Însemnări despre arta mută” (“Notes on Silent Art”), which appeared in issue 5 of the review *Integral*, one of the most beloved actors of the moment, Douglas Fairbanks, is regarded as the first “star” actor of world cinematography, who imparts, through his characters, a touch of poetry to materialistic life in America. Although his characters are romantic, as in the case of *Robin Hood* (1922) and *The Thief of Baghdad* (1924), they “bear the brunt of the coercions of a life carried out in a mechanical age.”³⁹ The qualities of modern man are projected in Douglas Fairbanks: activism and optimism. According to the motto that appears at the beginning of the film *The Thief of Baghdad*, “Happiness must be earned,” it “all comes down to a struggle:

but a struggle with modern means: heroic, virile.”⁴⁰ It is estimated that the merit of Douglas Fairbanks’s films is to convey to the audience the notion that their goals are fulfilled with contemporary means. This, indeed, sounds like a truly remarkable observation.

In a less enthusiastic article regarding the same film, which appeared under the title “Filme” (“Movies”) in issue 8/1925 of *Integral*, the same author returns with a critical stance on his previous statements: the production “does not surpass the common standards of American films, except by a few dollars, at the most.”⁴¹ The film is indicted for its lack of naturalness: “everything is fake [...] so much so that Douglas becomes, at the right time, a mere pretext.”⁴² We learn from the article that the fantastic story of the vagabond from the city of Baghdad, which lends itself to a cinematic transposition because it is spectacular, miraculous by nature, is weighed down by the very celebrity of the actor-hero and by his spontaneous and activist performance. B. Florian notes that “the simplicity of the Douglasian performance [...] should not be wrapped up in the heavy cloak of anecdote, tricks and fantasy.”⁴³ The conclusion of the article is that “the entire technique [...] the magnificent, but insufficiently ample production, the intense movement that could hardly be mistaken for rhythm, all these could not undo the disillusionment we have experienced.”⁴⁴

Chaplin’s films received the most eulogistic praise in the avant-garde magazines, either in the articles that were dedicated to them, or in more general articles, which highlighted the meritorious aspects of these films. For instance, the one-page article “Chaplin” was published in the December 1926 issue of the review *Integral*. Examining the character Charlot, who is compared to another famous vagabond, Francois Villon, and using examples from films such as *The Gold Rush*, *The Pilgrim*



and *Charlot at War*, the article attempts to identify the reasons behind his universal success. For example, the author states, using a language that abounds in poetic expressions, that “Chaplin lives on the marriage between the psyche and consciousness,”⁴⁵ being “a source of gestures, an artesian well of surprises that disarm by their sheer simplicity.”⁴⁶ He claims that Chaplin’s characters and gags have a perennial character, surprise representing one of the key elements, and that each of his films contains an anthological, memorable scene. One example comes from the scene in *The Gold Rush*, in which, in the middle of the summer, Charlot removes the down stuffing from the pillows to create the impression of snow, as his girlfriend promised him she would be back for Christmas, or the surreal scene of the winged policemen from *The Kid*. In “Însemnări despre arta mută” (“Notes on Silent Art”), published in issue no. 5 of *Integral*, the same author believes that the profiles of the characters performed by Chaplin converge towards what might be called Chaplianism, a human profile that corrects life and acts towards changing the state of things “in which the policemen, the stupid supremacy of women and money appear in the foreground.”⁴⁷

In conclusion, it may be stated that the articles devoted to the cinema in the avant-garde reviews from Romania adopted a tempered, critical voice about the films from the glory years of silent cinematography, making constant references to their abandonment of artistic principles in favor of commercial interests. The comments bear the imprint of avant-garde points of view, which critiqued mimetic art and applauded the effort for a renewal of artistic means, but even here positive assessments were kept in check where aesthetic sterility and the aspects that could drive the public or the producers away from the cinema came into discussion. There were, of course, also

laudatory comments regarding the stars of the time, Douglas Fairbanks and Charles Chaplin, in keeping with their global popularity, but they were often, at least in the case of Fairbanks, peppered with critical remarks, against the general current of opinion. What was less emphasized was the manner in which the public reacted to these films, or the scale of the cinematic phenomenon in Romania, in terms of number of theaters and of the productions that were distributed in Romania. A significant, albeit insufficiently researched aspect concerns the fact that most of the film titles to which reference was made, including those of American productions, were presented in their French version: *Le voleur de Bagdad*, *La ruée vers l’or*, *Charlot à minuit*. Nevertheless, these articles attested the interest and the support that the avant-garde in Romania showed for one the most spectacular phenomena of the time, promptly saluting the outstanding productions that used new, modernist means of expression.

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¹ Massimo Moscati, *Breve storia del cinema*, Milano: Bompiani, 2006, 92-108.

² Jean-Loup Passek (dir.) *Dictionnaire du cinéma*, Paris: Larousse, 2001.

³ *Integral*, no. 1/1925, p. 1.

⁴ Ion Perez, "Cinema," *Integral*, no. 1/1925, p. 10.

⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁷ Barbu Florian, "Cinematograful," *Integral*, no. 3/1925, p. 13.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰ Barbu Florian, "Lanterna magică," *Integral*, no. 13-14, 1927, p. 24.

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

¹² *Ibidem*.

¹³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴ Marcel Iancu, "Filmul," *Contimporanul*, no. 55-56, 1925, p. 6.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹⁹ Barbu Florian, "Teatru și Cinematograf," *Integral*, no. 2/1925, p. 7.

²⁰ Barbu Florian, "Teatru și Cinematograf," *Integral*, no. 2/1925, p. 13.

²¹ *Ibidem*.

²² *Ibidem*.

²³ *Ibidem*.

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

²⁵ Ion Călugăru, "Drama-Pantomimă," *Integral*, no. 2/1925, p. 2.

²⁶ *Ibidem*.

²⁷ Barbu Florian, "Suprerealismul în cinematograful," *Integral*, no. 4/1925, p. 12.

²⁸ Geo Bogza, "Sărutul," *unu*, no. 30, 1930, p. 3.

²⁹ *Ibidem*.

³⁰ *Ibidem*.

³¹ Benjamin Fondane, "Extraites ou le cinema autonome," in *Integral*, no. 1/1925, p. 10-11.

³² Barbu Florian, "Perspectiva filmului nou," *Integral*, no. 6-7/1925, p. 21

³³ *Ibidem*.

³⁴ *Ibidem*.

³⁵ *Ibidem*.

³⁶ *Ibidem*.

³⁷ *Ibidem*.

³⁸ *Ibidem*.

³⁹ Barbu Florian, "Însemnări despre arta mută," *Integral*, no. 5/1925, p. 21.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁴¹ Barbu Florian, "Filme," *Integral*, no. 8/1925, p. 13.

⁴² *Ibidem*.

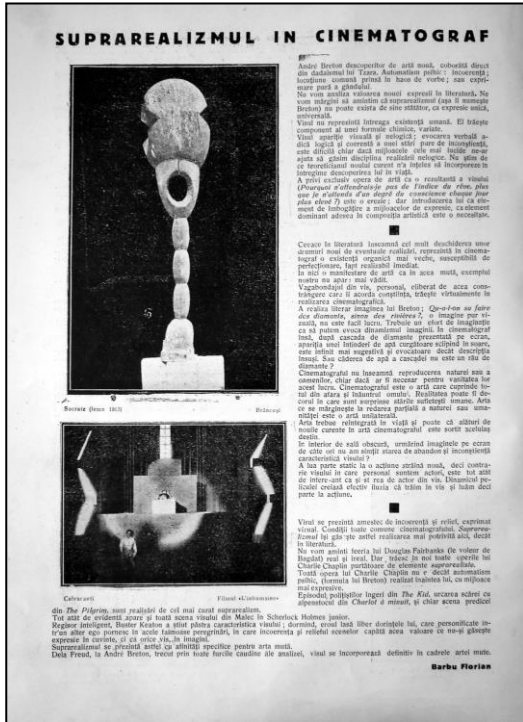
⁴³ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁵ Barbu Florian, "Chaplin," *Integral*, no. 9/1926, p. 12.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁷ Barbu Florian, "Însemnări despre arta mută," *Integral*, no. 5/1925, p. 11.



The cover of *Contemporanul* review no. 55-56/1925 (left)
Page no. 12 from *Integral* review no. 4/1925 (right)