

A film of Corneliu Porumboiu is known in the West under the title *12:08 East of Bucharest* (2006), which is not the translation of the original title *A fost sau n-a fost?* that alludes to an essentially different dimension of film's topic. The English title refers to the location in Romanian province and to the time, at which Nicolae Ceaușescu fled, when the revolution broke out: 12:08 on December 22, 1989. The original Romanian title translates to something in a sense "Was There or Wasn't There?" Namely, the central theme of the film is the question of whether the Romanian town of Vaslui participated in the 1989 revolution or not? A rather ironic answering, which is circling throughout a good part of the film around this question, depends on whether the city really had any protest before – and not just after – the moment of Ceaușescu's flight. The film obviously points to a very recognisable political signifier, but it has rather specific features, comparing it to many other films of the Balkans, which are marked by some political meaning, message or topic. In the film of Corneliu Porumboiu we can find an illustration of the spirit of the time, the contours of which are more and more clearly delineated after the transition of the Balkan former socialist countries to a different political and economic social (dis)order. The joining of some of these countries to the European Union allegedly completed this process. As far as the aesthetic side is concerned, the movie surprises us with images, the rhythm of the editing and general atmosphere which are very similar to what older spectators would recall from the waves of openly or metaphorically socially critical films in the age of socialism and late modernism. What we have in mind here, are films from the 1960s and 1970s from Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and former Yugoslavia. Apparently, imperfect film images were taken with an unstable camera. Quite dull, more black than white or dark-coloured films were finished in frequently not very precise film processing laboratories. The action was set in dilapidated, untidy, ruined environments with actors, who had appeared as quite authentic non-professionals; dialogues in a rather un-censored speech, and many other such features characterised these films. However, all this in combination with well-written scripts, often based on an inherent cynicism of dialogues and realistic images, emitted strong, reflexive and witty messages.

What have these indexes of former socialist times to do in the film shot seventeen years after the end of socialism? The film gives an answer by actually depicting the dubiousness of success of the uprising against social-