

Revolutions in Film in the Postmodern Narrative: A Matter of Illusion and Memory

Iuliana BORBELY

Department of Languages and Literatures, Partium Christian, Oradea, Romania

juliannaborbely@gmail.com

Orcid: 0000-0002-7753-1374

Abstract

In hindsight, all revolutions are narratives. They are stories of emancipation, liberation, and development and connote with the change of the social system or the government. Ideological development, socio-economic needs, and tension between old and new trigger revolutions that usually have central figures. In the postmodern age, however, man does not believe in grand narratives. Furthermore, great heroes and goals have disappeared (Lyotard, 1984: xxiv).

We propose to investigate how this incredulity surfaces in the depiction of revolution in a film that presents fictional events and in one that deals with a real revolution. *Snowpiercer* (2013) attempts to present revolution as a narrative with all its requisites: great hero, goal, and journey. Yet, with a twist, in the end, it suggests that the concept of revolution as a grand narrative is an illusion. Journeys are petty, heroes are not allowed to be great, and they misread dangers: blind to the great ones, they consider the little ones great. The other production takes a different stand and relegates revolution to memory. *12:08* (2006) is set in a small town sixteen years after the Romanian Revolution of 1989. The depiction of revolution avoids all requisites of grand narratives, by asking petty questions, discrediting its characters, and making dangers trivial. In the end, what matters is memory, how characters remember revolution.

Keywords: revolution, film, fiction, Postmodernism