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EDUCATION AND PROPAGANDA IN ROMANIAN COMEDY SKETCHES. A CASE STUDY: TOMA CARAGIU

Abstract

The media fulfil several functions in every political regime: information, education and the shaping of attitudes and perceptions. Television was perceived by the Romanian political regime as a means of educating the masses in the socialist spirit, as a form of socialization. In other words, the main objectives of the Romanian television concerned mainly the educational domain and not necessarily economic gains.

Having this as a starting point, the article offers several keys for understanding TV humour in the communist period by analysing Toma Caragiu's TV comedy sketches. We aim to identify examples of desirable and undesirable behaviour set from the top by the party ideologists. Portrayals of social and economic problems in this humorous form generated two phenomena: a feeling of social cohesion and a collective stress relief. Among the main sources for this study are documents from the Archive of the Romanian Television and the National Central Historical Archives.

Key words: *TV comedy sketches, Romanian Television, communism, Toma Caragiu, socialization.*

Taking into account that the media fulfil multiple functions in a political regime (information, education, shaping perceptions and attitudes), I highlight the fact that, depending on the regime, some functions dominate the others. Humour and satire were accepted by the communist regime as a form of political education.

Moreover, if we consider the background of totalitarian regimes, satire gained popularity in the Soviet Union of the 1920s, being adopted as a journalistic style by the Soviet propaganda and seen as a means of ridiculing political or social opponents. In 1988 Véronique Jobert pointed out in her doctoral thesis the importance of satire as a source of identifying the problems of the Soviet society, its first function being to point out, criticise and denounce problems (Jobert, 1988: 892). Therefore, from Jobert's perspective, satire had above all a function of information.

In this article I will focus on the role of satire in television. Television represents a part of media culture, of popular culture, that has a specific discourse¹. But in a communist state was the media culture autonomous or was it appropriated by the rhetoric of the political power? Even in the everyday language, as well as in social sciences, the terms “conviction”, “propaganda” and “rhetoric” are interconnected. Television as a means of communication has the role of influencing and shaping opinions. Beyond the existence of a certain linguistic structure, it uses body language, images, symbols, hints and suggestions in order to manipulate messages and to arouse emotions. All these aspects are traits of

¹ For a methodological analysis of television in the socialist states, see Sabina Mihelj *Understanding Socialist Television. Concepts, objects, methods*, in „VIEW”, volume 3, no. 5/2014; Dana Mustata, „Television in the Age of (Post)Communism” in Imre A., Havens T., Lustyik K. (eds) „Popular Television in Central and Eastern Europe: Entertaining a New Europe”, Routledge, 2012.

media culture, regardless of the political regime they develop in.

My intention is to create an institutional framework for the tools developed and used by the Romanian Television in order to communicate with a diverse viewership. Considering that, this article offers several keys of understanding Romanian TV humour in the communist era. I propose a cultural perspective and this methodological approach is part of the study of representations, useful especially for understanding the relationship between power and various structures of the society. I believe that an analysis of humour, presented in various television concepts, has fulfilled several social functions, which we will analyse below, and can complement the image of the relationship between the state and the society of that period. In order to exemplify the socialization function of Romanian comedy, we will present, in a second part of the article a case study of Toma Caragiu's² TV comedy sketches.

Christine Evans mentioned in her article, "*The Soviet Way of Life*" as a *Way of Feeling*, the role that the Soviet Television had in the 1970s: to awaken emotions, to persuade the viewership of the superiority of

² Toma Caragiu was born on August 21 1925 in a family of Aromanians living in Greece. In 1928, his family moved to Romania, to a village in Dobrudja. His teachers noticed his talent in acting. Toma graduated high-school in Silistra; in 1940 his family moved to Ploiesti. In 1945 his career path started at the Bucharest Academy of Music and Drama. Petre Bokor described him as being "totally absorbed during the show by his role, by the character he played", and "every distraction, every element beyond the world he lived in caused him to become disconnected and lose his temper" (Bokor: 1996, 67).

the Soviet lifestyle. In her view, television combined central control with a domestic setting, which offered an ideal pattern for connecting the power with the individual, developing private emotions related to the public message and bringing the public message into the personal space. This symbiosis is reflected by letters sent by TV viewers (Evans: 2015, 545). Evans' article mentions two other works – by Heather Gumbert and Paulina Bren – that conclude that the “socialist way of life” offered the socialist countries a way of redefining competition with the Western states. From this point of view, encouraging the development of the “socialist way of life” demonstrated the recognition of the fact that it takes an emotional power as strong as religion to replace the latter, suggesting that the Soviet culture of the Cold War shared many traits with the reactions of Western Europe concerning capitalist modernity and the “americanization” of western culture (Evans: 2015, 548).

That was an interesting analysis of the manner in which the socialist television aimed to create an alternative to what the western television could offer, with a higher degree of autonomy and decision-making transparency. Upon closer inspection, an analysis of Romanian TV programmes points out certain nuances of the television's purpose at that particular moment. We may talk about the promotion of a socialist lifestyle, which was nevertheless close to the capitalist one. In the case

of entertainment programmes, they had a rather educational role, in an attempt to correct certain social and economic "deficiencies". One idea was to embrace the forms of western modernity and to get rid of certain forms of traditional practices (that could have hindered the development of socialism).

We must mention that in the case of the Romanian communist regime, especially after 1965, when the political leadership developed similarly to a paternalistic model³, television was perceived by the political power as a means of education in the socialist spirit. Television was not seen from the perspective of cultural marketing and economic gain, although its launch on the international market attracted a series of elements specific to the capitalist economy. However, its main duties concerned the area of education⁴. In his book pub-

³ For the 1960s-1970s in Romania it is difficult to give a simple definition, due to the fact that the official rhetoric, as well as its political and social practices, were changing. Numerous factors contributed to this change: the intention of the political regime to distance itself from Moscow, aiming to obtain economic independence; the need to reconcile with the civil society in order to attract its support; and the cultural and economic opening towards the West. Regarding the cultural area, the recognition of national heroes, the importance of national history and traditional practices had a positive response among the population. Even though the discourse was packaged in a Marxist vocabulary, the society responded in a favourable manner to a type of speech to which people were accustomed since the interwar period. The image of the so-called "kind and wise ruler" was specific to Nicolae Ceaușescu in that same period.

⁴ During a meeting of the members of the Union of Writers with Nicolae Ceaușescu, on August 4, 1971, the communist leader stated in an ironic tone: "Some had the idea of importing the worst American movies for our market, along with other things. Because it costs less and we make more money. Basically turning the activity of socialist education into commerce. And then, since we bring in bad American [cultural products], then why shouldn't we make our own, even worse than theirs?" (Central National Historical Archive file no. 14/1971, l. 13).

lished in 1964, Pavel Câmpeanu stated the following: “by helping people to understand their times and get to know themselves more profoundly, art offers, along with the appreciation of practical phenomena, certain psychological or moral and behaviour patterns as well. Its cognitive function is linked to the educational one” (Câmpeanu, 1964: 210). In a poll made in 1969 by the Bureau of Radiotelevision Audience Survey, it was mentioned that the “tendency of excessive TV viewing is inversely proportional with the number of years of TV subscription” (Audience Survey in the Archive of the Romanian Television, 1969, file no. 2, from catalogue no. 339, box no. 1173, 2, non-inventory) and that “excessive TV viewing is practiced especially by intellectuals” (*Ibidem*).

The Bureau of Audience Surveys was established in order to study the impact of television on the population. Pavel Câmpeanu, head of this Bureau, published some results in *Revista de Filozofie* (*Philosophy Journal*). In a study published in 1969, he noted: “modern communicational technologies create a new functional division: a minority of specialised transmitters for a majority of receivers. This one-sidedness could be a great opportunity for developing a psychology of passivity, a problem that represents a cause for concern and a subject of study for many specialists” (Câmpeanu: 1969, 718). As a result, the educational dimension of television and art in general was important for the po-

litical leadership. In this regard, the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the Romanian Radiotelevision and the Institute of Pedagogical and Psychological Research, published information materials dedicated to education institutions in order to facilitate the use of films in schools. Such materials included lists of films of 10 to 30 minutes in length, on various subjects that were broadcast by the Romanian Television, mentioning the date and hour when they would be broadcast, a synopsis of each film and explanations regarding their importance as a complement to the learning process⁵.

Consumerism was practiced in the socialist society as well, becoming one of the factors in the modernization of society⁶. Comfort and modernity were assimilated by society especially as a result of the opening toward the West. The ideological elements were linked to those of modernization even in public spaces⁷. The TV

⁵ For example, the high-school curriculum for the year 1975-1976 included titles of programmes and historical films like „Strămoșii noștri” [Our forefathers], „Formarea poporului român” [The Genesis of the Romanian People], „Războiul de independență” [The War of Independence], „Insurecția națională antifascistă armată din August 1944” [National Antifascist Military Insurrection of August 1944] (***) 1975, 3). Music classes had similar curricula: „Despre dansurile preclasice” [About pre-classical dance], „Montaj selectiv din creația lui Haydn” [A selection of Haydn's works] ; „Balada” [Ballade] ; „Instrumente populare românești” [Romanian folk instruments] ; „Montaj selectiv din creația lui Brahms” [A selection of Brahms' works]; „Muzica electronică” [Electronic Music] (***) 1975, 3).

⁶ Susan Reid defined this phenomenon at the end of the '50s as “Khrushchev Modern” – the beginning of a period when consumerism was encouraged, along with a diversification of goods and modernization of private spaces (Reid: 2006, 232).

⁷ After a visit made by the lecturers of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party to France in 1967, some improvements of the activity of city halls (municipal cultural centres) were proposed: setting up bars that would serve coffee, refreshments, sweets, with spaces in which to read journals, newspapers, magazines and discuss them (Preutu: 2017, 97).

set became one of the objects that reflected this modernization. In 1965 there were 500 862 TV subscriptions, with a proportion of 86.2% in the urban environment (the rest being in the rural environment), while in 1970 the number of TV subscriptions grew to 1 483 832, and the gap between cities and villages diminished (74.7% in the cities and the rest in the villages) (Archive of the Romanian Television 1971, file no. 3, catalogue no. 339, box no. 1173, non-inventory).

The cultural opening of Romania starting with the 1960s and the development of television resulted in the development of an “empathy” and the development of “Western” artistic forms. Therefore, modernism and postmodernism influenced the development of cultural forms in socialist Romania. Boris Groys mentioned the postmodern aesthetic sensibility as rejecting uniformity, minimalism or monotony, in an attempt to bring artistic variations that would create artistic diversity (Groys: 2008, 150). Although we cannot label the art of the communist era as modern or postmodern, we may nevertheless say that an influence was felt since the reconnection with the Western culture. These influences developed into natural and consistent forms of art in Romania.

Considering these directions and nuances of the development of culture in socialist Romania, we anticipate the complex role that TV humour played within it. In 1970, the sociologist Melvin DeFleur formulated the

theory of cultural norms, explaining that the media created the impression that common cultural norms were structured and defined in specific ways. Thus, mass media influence behaviour, given that cultural norms are general rules understood and followed by all the members of a group, present in a vast number of daily activities and rituals. DeFleur promote the idea that the media is a source for projecting social models by promoting certain norms, roles, hierarchies and sanctions that belong to every type of group known in social life (DeFleur: 1999, 225). People may learn their desirable behavioural roles from these sources, depending on the social domain (teaching, social services etc.), by observing patterns of social honour and dishonour. This is television's function of socialization in a broad sense.

In order to exemplify this socialization function of Romanian comedy, we present a short case study of Toma Caragiu's⁸ TV comedy sketches. We chose eight sketches from his vast filmography: *Șopârlița liberă/ The Free Lizard [Radio Free Europe] (1969)*⁹, *N-am găsit altă rimă/ I Couldn't Find Another Rhyme*

⁸ Toma Caragiu was born on August 21 1925, in a family of Aromanians living in Greece. In 1928, his family moved to Romania, to a village in Dobruđja. He teachers noticed his talent in acting. Toma graduated high-school in Siliștra; in 1940 his family moved to Ploiești. In 1945 his career path started at the Bucharest Academy of Music and Drama. Petre Bokor described him as being "totally absorbed during the show by his role, by the character he played", and "every distraction, every element beyond the world he lived in caused him to become disconnected and lose his temper" (Bokor: 1996, 67).

⁹ TVR Archive published on Feb. 28, 2013 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8y-7w8SHoc4>).

(1973)¹⁰, *Snobul/ The Snob* (1969)¹¹, *Icoane pe sticlă/ Icons on Glass* (1975)¹², *Moș Gerilă, Moș Gerilă/ Dear Santa* (1972)¹³, *Filmul publicitar/ Advertising Film* (1973)¹⁴, *O, brad frumos/ Oh, Christmas Tree*¹⁵, *Petre-cerea continuă/ The Party Goes On* (1976)¹⁶.

We aim to identify a number of behaviours the regime encouraged or tried to combat. The portrayal of certain of social and economic problems in this humorous form generated two phenomena: a feeling of social cohesion and a feeling of collective stress relief.

A classic sketch that showed the role of satire is *N-am găsit altă rimă/ I Couldn't Find Another Rhyme* (1973), which focuses on a satire published by a young worker ("Mateiaș", played by Mircea Diaconu), which is in fact a denouncement of the abuse of power perpetrated by the manager of the factory (Toma Caragiui): "Satire is a weapon! And you shoot with it!" It is suggestive that such sketches were broadcast on New Year's Eve and only a few of them were re-broadcast during other

¹⁰ TVR Archive published on Aug. 10, 2013 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TYQMN0aHwgs>).

¹¹ TVR Archive published on Jan. 2, 2014 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cksa-KPMDmEE>).

¹² TVR Archive published on Jan. 2, 2014 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y-Yz-jz9Nc>).

¹³ TVR Archive published on Feb. 25, 2015 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6B-CA7Vh-Glo>).

¹⁴ TVR Archive published on Jun. 19, 2014 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sx-SasW2FWiI>).

¹⁵ TVR Archive published on Dec. 19, 2013 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7M-1rXOefGQ>).

¹⁶ TVR Archive published on Jan. 1, 2016 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GcbY-cL5w_oE).

times of the year. Dan Mihăescu noted in his memoirs that around New Year's Eve, about the time when the Central Committee secretary of propaganda was due to visit in order to sign off on the broadcast, "the head of our institution would hesitate between running away and having himself admitted into a hospital" (Mihăescu: 2003, 12). It is obviously an exaggerated remark, but it defines the state of confusion at the level of the management of the television station, which, although aligned with the cultural opening direction that the regime was promoting at that time, was still cautious, because the regime's direction could change unexpectedly.

The clandestine reception of Western radio, especially radio *Free Europe*, was a topic approached in the sketch *The Free Lizard* (1969)¹⁷. The text suggested that the regime knew that this radio station was listened to at home, in private, and represented both a source of information and misinformation. It was mentioned the fact that Romanian goods were not as great when compared to Western ones. It is interesting to notice the classification to such leaks of information: from the bottom up (from the society to the political power, which go unobserved, representing no danger for

¹⁷ Dan Mihăescu noted in his memoirs that shooting that sketch was done at night, with few crew members. Sion Bujor agreed to have the sketch broadcast on New Year's Eve in 1975 (after censoring two lines despite having laughed when he heard them), the topic being the practice of denouncing neighbours to the authorities in relation to any suspicious activity (Constantinescu: 2012, 132).

the regime) and from the top down (which are not described any further, as Caragiù pauses and ends the sketch, suggesting that controlled leaks of information from above induced certain states of mind in society). His last line may be considered an urge to express personal opinions if not a challenge: “If you have something to say in life, say it openly, with courage!”

In a linguistic analysis of TV sketches, Mihaela-Viorica Constantinescu examined the dual language which characterized them. Apart from the textually predetermined humour, the author supports the idea of a superposition of register, such as the informal register of season's greetings and the scientific one, with hints at contemporary aspects and suggesting the slang meaning of some of the terms (Constantinescu: 2012, 154).

The irony of wooden language is evident in the sketch *The Party Goes On* in which Caragiù describes the stages of a party in the shape of a report. This seeming assumption of an official narration has the role of revealing the negative facets of this type of discourse: its impersonality and neutrality sparks laughter when used to describe a party. This bureaucratized language was also used when someone wished to set a barrier between themselves and others in order to protect his private life. Such a disparagement of the wooden language is a micro-strategy used in parody (Constantinescu: 2012, 155).

The tone is yet another element that unmasks the

appearance of assumption. This duality – the subject and the means of expression (as tone and vocabulary) stirred laughter and constituted the centre of the transmitted message. In a similar key we may interpret the monologue *The Snob*, in which the character misuses a number of elevated words. It is not a case of wooden language, but instead a criticism regarding the inadequate use of language, without knowing the correct meaning of terms and linguistic contexts. It is also a criticism concerning one's superior attitude and ignorance. These may be considered forms of educating the masses, drawing attention to certain undesirable behaviours in the civic sphere.

The activity of the Securitate (the secret police) is alluded in the sketch *Icons on Glass* (with Octavian Cotescu), in which the entire action is built around the idea of using a coded language so that whoever might overhear the conversation could not understand what was being discussed. The entire discussion takes place over the phone, therefore the very idea of secrecy seems futile, as the Securitate was listening to virtually everything. The coded language was necessary in the sketch in order to discuss a taboo topic in society – the Church. The relationship of the regime with the Church was interesting; there was scientific-atheist propaganda transmitted through a discourse of promoting technical knowledge rather than through an anti-religious discourse. After 1965 the Church stopped being perceived

as an enemy, as the regime was not pursuing the creation of an atheist man; moreover, Nicolae Ceaușescu stated that he preferred a man who attended church and caused no trouble in society over a man who did not go to church but produced problems in society (Central National Historical Archive 1970, file no 16/1970, 59). Nevertheless, the abovementioned sketch deliberately avoids words like *church* and *priest*, and lay definitions are given for terms such as *icon* ("framed pictures that are hung on the eastern wall" as per the Eastern Christian custom of displaying religious icons in the home). The sketch has an open ending: the perpetrator asks the Securitate agent to forgive his subversive intention, but it does not show the agent's reaction. The technique of Securitate stakeouts is also alluded here. Toma Caragiu's character says: "Listen to my every word, I'm running out of money", Octavian Cotescu replies, "Why should I? Only the police do that".

Phone surveillance is also alluded to in the sketch *I Couldn't Find Another Rhyme*, when a factory manager searches for anything out of the ordinary around his phone before reading in the fable written by "Mateiaș" that the production output data had been inflated in official documents. This would become a general practice in the 1980s in many companies. The managers would exaggerate the results in order to avoid sanctions for not making the quota or in order to hide company problems. In the 1980s, this was a common practice

which generated and developed a phenomenon of lies and falsehoods circulating also from the bottom up, ultimately weakening the regime.

Another classic method used by Securitate agents unveiled in the sketches was the provocation of taboo discussions in order to find people with negative attitudes towards the regime. Body language plays a great role in these sketches, as it underlines the thought, the emotion that cannot be expressed in words. Thus, in the *The Party Goes On*, Caragiu states: "during the 480 minutes of the party, jokes may be told (pause); jokes may be told by a group of employees carefully selected for this purpose". Dan Mihăescu talked about Toma Caragiu in his memoirs: "He would arrive on set with the text in his exceptionally intelligent mind, as if placed on shelves, nuanced with misleading comas, insinuating pauses, surprising pauses, subtle nuances not known even to authors, highlighted dramatically with a movement of eyebrows, with an eloquent look, with the amazing dosage of words. And then he required complete silence, professionalism, respect for the work of an actor" (Mihăescu: 1998, 72).

The problems of daily life were mentioned in many sketches as well: the lack of Christmas trees in the markets, poor quality goods, the lack of meat in shops, and other similar issues. A very short story told by the character "Mos Gerila" (the ideologically-approved version of Santa Claus) said the following: "there was once a

pig who also had the flesh on its bones”. The monologue *Telecinemateca* ["Telecinemateca" was the name of a weekly programme that included high-quality feature films, usually preceded by a commentary delivered by a film critic], broadcast in 1973, is famous in its denunciation of the lack of whipped cream, necessary on the set in order to illustrate an incursion into the world of silent-era movies featuring plenty of scenes with cream pie fights. Whipped cream was however impossible to find in communist Romania on New Year's Eve.

The importance of special "connections" is pointed out in another sketch, *The Match of the Century*, in which the referee, despite declaring his impartiality, is helping his niece get a higher score. In the end, both characters deliver the mandatory self-critical speech. The sketch *Moş Gerilă* also makes references to this practice. The actor who has obtained the role of Santa says that his choice was made "based on bottom-up proposals that came from top down". The issue underlined here was the importance of the hierarchy of power.

It is interesting to see the impact of all the messages broadcast on Romania Television. One of the main concerns of those who studied television and its impact on society was that television became a mediator that needed adequate forms of expression. Such studies were also made in Western states at that time. Empirical and professional studies carried out in France in the 1970s concluded, however, that the pedagogical role

of television was a failure, due to the diverse cultural background of the viewers and the need to vulgarize the message to make it accessible to a wider audience (Veyrat-Masson: 2000, 338). In a study regarding television and sociology, Pavel Câmpeanu stressed that “in front of the microphone and camera political men can’t ignore the fact that the contact with the citizen is made in the latter’s home, within his daily life” and therefore “it is necessary to establish a distinction between the microphone and tribune: the public message is the object of an intimate communication”. Câmpeanu pleaded for finding “suitable formulas, alterations in political rhetoric”, mentioning the tendency of replacing the solemn discourse with friendly dialogues (Câmpeanu: 1967, 362).

Taking into account the reception of TV humour, we mention a letter written in 1971 by workers from Câmpina, who considered that the “Sunday TV programming should be entertaining. Humour, music and amusing films should have priority, along with sports. The more serious broadcasts and sad movies, undoubtedly necessary, should be scheduled during week days” (Archive TVR, file no. 1 III 44, box no. 1176, vol. 1, non-inventory). In a synthesis of the letters for the period 16–31 March 1974 we find a frequent complaint that some broadcasts lacked humour (Archive TVR, file no. 12, box no. 1176, non-inventory). Entertainment was among the favourite categories, as surveys reveal –

on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th places after feature films, folk or contemporary music. The same surveys point out that people who had a TV set for less than a year considered the main function of television to be entertainment and relaxation. One of the motivations for buying a TV set was to spend leisure time in a pleasurable manner (TVR Archive, III 50 no. 4, non-inventory).

At a meeting of the Ideological Commission in 1969, Ion Popescu-Gopo [acclaimed film-maker and cartoonist] discussed the issue of the commercial film that became appreciated by the public; in that context, he wondered about the necessity to produce profitable Romanian movies. Ion Gheorghe Maurer [then Prime-Minister of Romania] answered that “movies are made to bring money and they must be profitable even if they have an educational role” (Popescu: 2011, 117–120).

The impossibility of controlling individual reactions and of influencing the selection of TV broadcastings was noticed by the bureau of surveys. In August 1971 there was a survey with directors of county cabinets of the party in order to establish whether television may be seen as a means of propaganda. Concerning the limits of television from this point of view, it was mentioned that the audience was too diverse, a fact that complicated the search for a proper language: “it [the audience] cannot be activated and its reaction remains uncontrollable, which does not allow the adaptation on

the go of the presentation to the pulse of the audience, increasing the danger of artificiality” (TVR Archive, file no. 3, box no. 1173, non-inventory). However, the process of socialization of television led to its development as an entertainment technology and as a means of socialist education.

In this respect, it can be said that TV humour played an important role in the education and socialization of the individual. Romania's cultural opening towards Western countries and the mutual exchange of cultural products, as well as the concepts and perspectives on the social functions of some programs, was reflected in the TV programs broadcast in Romania, but also in the way of thinking about the functions of the television and the role that it should have had in society. The sociological studies that Pavel Câmpeanu made at the time, and the establishment of the Bureau of Audience Surveys of the Romanian Radiotelevision point out this concern of the management of the institution, but also of the political leadership, to improve the quality of the programs, to develop the commercial dimension of the television, but and to have some control over its impact on people's lives. Here we notice the oscillation between the consumerist dimension and the educational function of television. In the case of TV humour, the situation became more complex, as it was a form of information that was more difficult to control. Beyond the information expressed verbally, we still have the

symbolic power of gestures, facial expressions, and in the case of Toma Caragiu's sketches, the talent of the actor has made a decisive contribution to the way the information was transmitted. From a cultural perspective, we can analyse the positive and negative social patterns presented in these sketches, but we could also observe a number of social and economic aspects of the society of those times that were revealed in a humorous note, made thus more palatable for the regime and the society.

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