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The Documentaries of the Romanian “Transition” between *Telling* and *Showing*

Abstract: The article discusses how the documentary films from and about Romania picture the Romanian society in the aftermath of the 1989 revolution. It highlights several types of approach and cinematic discourse used by authors specialized in documentary film-making. The analysis reveals the process of professionalization within this field in Romania and the progressive maturation of artistic expression, in parallel with the shift from a type of documentary focused on “telling” (the voice-over technique) to documentary focused on observation (a documentary which “shows”). Short reviews for several relevant films are presented.

Keywords: Romania; Anticommunist Revolution; Transition; Cinema; Documentary Movies; Shorts.

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Consider this: the 1989 revolution and its consequences; political confrontations and street movements that followed it; ethnic conflicts; privatization; deindustrialization; environmental degradation; wild capitalism and social contrasts; the nouveau riche and the newly (or eternally) impoverished; social conflicts and “miners’ invasions”; discrimination; downgrading; deviants and marginals touched by genius; social exclusion; depopulation and migration; refuge in faith; abandonment; the banality of everyday life; boredom... It’s just a list of topics that could resume, sociologically and in the most concisely manner, the way postsocialist transition has been seen through the documentary films about Romania in the last (about) two decays or more. This inventory is however able to suggest a rather bleak reality, dominant also in recent documentaries – a sequence of images, stories or situations deemed relevant to the essence of what we go through.

In the same way, however, they “convey” a reality. These films adopt a form of self-referentiality created by a certain perspective, generated by distinct types of



subjectified reactivity, socially and culturally conditioned. They reveal that the gaze is sometimes stunned, sometimes compassionate, when not directly annoyed or outraged, in spite of the cold eye of the camera that registers the events. Such films expose Romanian society as an unnoticed constellation of separate worlds, individualized and not so visible, omitted or forgotten by the deluge of images daily cast on television – or as an exotic realm, whose striking particularism attracts or repels. Thus, the reality is defined either as a supplement to its dominant but superficially summarized version created by media, or by proposing an alternative, contrasting, version of the social world. This last version manages in fact to reveal the repressed side of society, those things which, being often uncomfortable to accept, are uncomfortable to watch.

This is what happened in the first years that followed the 1989 political change, with the images revealing the cruel legacy of Nicolae Ceausescu: the fate of the children in orphanages, abandoned in the streets; the political mass violence in the first months after 1989; the desolate appearance of de-industrialized townscapes; the destroyed or heavily polluted natural environment. All these topics were often used to denounce a situation or to create a certain kind of exoticism, serving to stereotype the realities of post-socialism, creating an atmosphere of spectacular exceptionalism and shocking by references to archaism, anomie or sub-humanity. True, the progress of the movie images capturing the “transition” goes gradually from denouncing the past and restoring their repressed truths towards an increasingly analytical meditation and critical touch. But

in this respect, the differences between the various directorial ideas are so huge that it is difficult to map them entirely.

The documentary is essentially a non-fictional genre. Often motivated by the need to reveal a hidden side of things or to provide a “different” way of looking, alternatively, the documentary participates with its specific means in a process of constructing reality through image, having as a main stake the confrontation with what is already settled and acknowledged. The documentary commits itself implicitly to a symbolic confrontation aiming to redefine situations of collective relevance and impose legitimate versions of the “state of things” to which it refers.¹ It involves the ability of “the man with a movie camera” to name, describe or reveal what is kept hidden or made invisible, by banalization and stereotyping – hence, to depict “reality” and “truth,” just beyond what was predetermined.

The documentary film consequently starts from trying to put into practice the double meaning of the term “document”: 1) to *gather information* about a topic or problem cut out from reality and 2) to *prove*, that is, to release evidence from the scene and present them to an audience. The documentary’s presumption of truth refuses, theoretically, both the fiction and the use of realistic illusion techniques. But this does not mean that the documentary is a simple window into reality, through which things are to be discovered by default in their own “truth.” On the contrary, there is always an interdependent relationship between subject and object, a *way of looking* that creates *a way for things to reveal themselves*, with the viewer’s assistance. “What is to be seen” from reality is precisely what the documentary-maker is construing in



order to be seen by the viewer. Furthermore, the author’s intervention upon the visual product depends not only on his personal artistic intentionality and vision, but also on the canons that structure multiple professional fields, which interfere with the documentary as a cinematic genre.²

Thus, the form of documentary film rests equally upon the inventiveness and ingenuity of its director and the objective conditions under which it is directed. It rests, for instance, upon the sophistication of the cinematic language developed by the communities of filmmakers, which build a highly mobile professional field, increasingly open to new ideas and experiment. Then, it depends on the specific audience profiles targeted by the documentary, including their sensitivity, curiosity, emotions and perplexities. So, the documentaries of the “transition” period talk about a reality of Romania after 1989, and at the same time about the eye selecting these realities. They portray a subjectivity in objectivity.

I. “Emic” and “Etic”

When speaking about the documentary film, one should consider it, first, as a genre caught in a field of artistic expression and reception which is internationalized. Filmmakers all over the world monitor, influence or criticize each other. They meet national audiences of a disconcerting diversity. But an increasing part of these audiences, actually, becomes transnational, a feature that mutually adjusts both the expectation of the public towards the intentionality of the producers and the creative strategies and the content of the documentary film towards a generalized profile of this kind of film consumers.

Notably, the core of this transnational audience, which finally defines the ‘informed’ segment of the public, is following dedicated international festivals, in which the competition and celebration of films reproduces and year after year enlarges an exploding film industry. In the mind of competitors on the “restricted” market (as Bourdieu put it)³ of the documentary, those events are prioritized as means for being validated as professionals. Festivals are not just occasions for projecting and seeing carefully selected quality films, but also a space for changing experience, critical reflection and – notably – artistic hierarchy production, which characterize the “restricted artistic field” (Bourdieu, *idem*).⁴ They create the highly reflective ethos and professional identity of the documentary maker, who thereby is obliged to take distance from the “enlarged field of production,” more dependent on the local-national reception patterns (socially and culturally stratified, also) and media networks and mass media consumption markets, which value popularity and commercial success.

Thus, when speaking of documentaries about Romania, we can refer to films produced by documentarists validated by the internationalized field of production, the one that “sets the tone” in the construction of professional canons – and filmmakers who belong to a local (Romanian) field of production in a true process of growth and empowerment. In this respect, it is useful to remember that, until recently, it often happened that members of ASTRA FILM FEST juries – the most outstanding Romanian international documentary film festival – have deplored the quality of documentaries produced in Romania, making it difficult to crown their laurels.⁵



This is not necessarily addressing a dichotomy between the “foreign” and the “domestic” documentary but aims to reveal primarily a division in the professional training field of Romanian documentarists: different from their colleagues in journalism or TV shows, those using wisely the stages of professionalization conducted in various specialized centers in Europe manage to reach higher levels of achievement, being recognized internationally (we should mention here, for example, the films produced by Thomas Ciulei, Dumitru Budrala, Réka Kincses, Liviu Tipuriță, Klara Trencseny, Andrei Ujică, to name just a few of them).

On the other hand, the way the author is relating to the world he depicts is essentially influenced by the relationships he maintains with this world: this may be one to which he is completely alien or a world to which he belongs. The filmmaker’s eye is conditioned by his previous experience; what he sees is what attracts and makes him curious, something already distinct from what everybody already knows. Thus, discriminating between “local” and “alien” deals merely with the perception of the “insider” or the “outsider” of the depicted reality and with the difference between “emic” and “etic”; it discerns between a documentarian who is living in Romania and the documentarian who looks from outside, targeting mainly an external audience, a trait which strongly affects the Romanian audience. The “alien’s” films are generally those offering a general perspective and making the taken-for-granted Romanian context more explicit than a Romanian audience needs to acknowledge. But this does not mean that the non-indigenous documentary becomes monotonous,

on the contrary: it creates in the spectator a satisfaction for self-recognition and self-validation, on the one hand, – and, to the extent that it creates a distance from the familiar context, it invites the “indigenous,” on the other, it impels the audience to observe their everyday life reflexively. So these films deploy an interesting interplay between recognition and the fascination it produces observing the specific gaze of the other, that of a “foreigner” who wields a camera: clippings which they find relevant, the scenes, the faces, their own surprise, so often flattering. Even if it talks about Romania and Romanians, the film of the “alien” makes the insider’s reality unprecedented, producing an effect of distancing. It de-familiarize and refresh the environment.

Angus McQueen’s trilogy (2003) about peasant migrants of Maramures (*The Last Peasants*) may serve as an example for the above observations. On the one hand, the author manages to document a situation known to locals, but not enough observed. The few peasant families in Budești, whose (often illegal) migration route in Europe is tracked over several years, are followed in their home village and, on their way, in situations of alienation, by a camera concerned to return the inner beauty of the characters and also the tension removal of traditional lifestyle. Landscapes, rustic scenes or revealing types of migrants appear as very ordinary, and yet the focus on the reconstruction of character biographies for a relatively wide period of time gives to this peasant story a recognizable patina of “family saga” (a settled BBC brand series) – “the last ones” as the title points out – exposing the extinction of classes and a reality endangered world from one corner



of Europe. Suddenly, therefore, the viewpoint widens and the focus shifts from a local exotified perspective towards a global one – and from observation to meditation.

Common ground (2012) by Anne Schiltz and Charlotte Grégoire⁶ is a film developed in a completely different note. It sets under a magnifying glass the micro-universe of the tenants of a residential building in Bucharest, with their habits and petty everyday concerns, with their reticent characters, caught in situations of ordinary life. By setting apart the usual narrator voice that interferes between the viewer and what is depicted on screen, the film simply “observes”: it brings the few glimpses of reality that otherwise, routinely, remain ignored, and recomposes a meditative atmosphere made of careful selected visual details and descriptions. The outcome is closer to an observational ethnographic documentary description than to a narrative TV style coverage.

II. Frames of Receptivity

Something we should consider and understand in a broader context is the responsiveness of the audience. The way young Romanian democracy begins in the early 90s, marked by puzzling political conflicts, street movements, ethnic violence (the Romanian-Hungarian conflict in Targu Mures) and social clashes (the Jiu Valley miners’ violent raids in Bucharest), events doubled by TV manipulations and attempts (of some) to mask a past “quisling,” or to manufacture a fake oppositionist past (by others) – and then the turn to consumerism and entertainment, masks the perception of a more serious essence of the new realities. All this social noise structures effectively and directs

the audience’s receptivity to documentaries and their patterns of understanding.

The axes which orient the visual perception of Romanians are largely influenced by the new television and its visual language. One of these axes is marked by *distrust*: the public misbeliefs condition the understanding of TV images, making the disclosure of the truth often be expressed as a voiced telling that corrects or doubles the visuals. This happens because, immediately after the “televised revolution,” the ongoing participation in political events imposed the requirement to access the rough image of the reality as authentically as possible. TV publishers are by default suspected of “manipulation”; studio editing techniques are suspicioned of truncating the “reality” dishonestly. (And, let’s face it, mercenarily cosmeticized events or even falsified or censored information were reported quite often throughout this period on the TV screens.) The TV report, to become credible, had to be very close to a pipeline with direct access to reality and, if possible, to the viewer’s beliefs; the spectator expects to see what he wants to see – and wishes to interpret the sequences he has just watched so as to fit what he already understands. The absence of the public’s visual literacy leads to understanding language television as a “reality” and not as a medium that creates its own content. This also contributed to a naïve-realistic attitude towards the feature report as a genre.

The other axis deals with cinematographic Hollywood type clichés that impress the viewer’s mind. Commercial television is one of the most active agents of unification for cinema culture as consumer culture. As a consequence, the canonical documentary imposed by television to the



public is selected from among different educational or popular science types of products, infotainment or reality shows.

“If you ask a Romanian spectator what is that: a good documentary – someone observes, he sends you to Discovery Channel or National Geographic, and he does not tell in any case the name of a Romanian documentary he could see on TV. For him, that is not even a documentary, he does not know how to define it”⁷.

In this type of image culture, film documents either serve as encyclopedia illustrations and become an annex to the explanatory text, or make up a “genuine reality,” built to be devoured voyeuristically: this scenario swaps authenticity and obscenity, making the “slice of life” an excuse for a gossip show. These manage to impose the dominant genres and the “popular” canon for the documentary, making also the alternative, niche, products quasi-invisible or, when discovered, rapidly sacrificed on the shrine of commercial success. The short TV career of channel Arte shows among Romanian networks, with their analytical slow documentaries, carried out over large spaces – or the quasi-absence of the programs of stations like BBC, ZDF, PBS, Canal + – is a phenomenon that indicates the narrowing horizon of the visual experience of Romanian spectators, being as full of clichés as the mass cinema.

III. “Transition” Discourses

However, returning to the documentary produced in Romania, it is noticeable that its evolution after 1989 is not alien to the Romanian society’s transformations and the types of discourse to which the film relates implicitly. An entire history of the field within which the documentary

film gains autonomy and gets empowered as a genre overlaps with the history of the transformations of the social world, as experienced by various authors. Thus, the documentary film is not above all these transformations, but often embedded in it. It may be sometimes a participant observer of the history and political unrest of the early 1990s, as is the case of the memorable *University Square* (1991),⁸ or of the exploiting production of said cyanide at Rosia Montana.⁹ All these films have had their share in the process of redefining the political and civic sphere of the Romanians after 1989, in parallel with a progressive autonomization of artistic vision and an improvement of technical expression.

From the propaganda documentary of the socialist period to its “anticommunist” replica of the 1990s, built as a rhetorical upside down propaganda and using about the same obsolete artistic means (*The Pain Memorial* of Julia Hossu Longin¹⁰ is a good example of such discursive conversion), the documentary goes slowly towards an increasingly realistic, more impersonal and objective depiction of life situations in Romania. There is a marked tendency for providing, as neutrally as possible, a more accurate understanding of social reality through revealing details rather than through conformist prefabricated political labels. Thus, what one can see is a rapid erosion of explicitly propagandistic discourse – the trepid voice following the ideological connotation or the narrative structure of the film.

When referring to the intention to give an image of the Romanian “transition,” then a discursive mark will be felt as the message sent is more ideological and contains a predefined direction.



I talk not coincidentally of the “transition” in quotation marks: like other descriptive concepts – such as “post-communism” or “post-socialism” – it covers insufficiently the reality it seeks to define and characterizes its object as an absence or an interim estate. Being forced to choose between a *post*-something and a *pre*-anything-else, and obliged to “understand” tacitly what these terms refer to, the main sense of the expression remains somehow suspended in the hyphen. We reproduce and amplify such a conceptualized vacuum of understanding, institutionally set to produce sophisticated academic literature and scholarly legitimacy, but at the risk of collapsing, at any time, like a house of cards. Still, it is not my intention here to develop a critique of “transitology,” but just to signal the descriptive deficit behind such ambiguous conceptualizations and their precarious simplification.

Coined in the 1980s by political scientists in order to characterize the passage from authoritarian autocratic regimes to democratic ones, and, later, extended to changes that occurred in Eastern Europe after 1989, the “transition” asserted an immanent teleology of the historical processes, directed to an end that was taken for granted, after the Berlin wall had fallen.

It also includes a normative tacit prescription: that of the existence of a “correct” and “desirable,” politically and economically justified, advancing process towards a “new democracy” which combines an emerging market economy with the regulations of “experienced democracies.” Caught up in these transformations, social actors were labeled as “good” or “bad,” – “progressives” (as the members of the new entrepreneurial class, for example),

or “reactionaries” (i.e. neo- or crypto-“communists,” in disguise), together with whole social assemblies, denounced as resisting change or condemned to assume the much needed “transition costs.”

Some sort of stereotype generator rules this meaning of the “transition” and those stereotypes apply often to the documentaries revealing the post 1989 reality. For example, this is how a successful author describes his mission: “Defining present-day Romania means defining the past. Contemporary Romania is living in a state of inertia, of persisting sequelae of its communist past, sometimes amplified, sometimes diminished by the transition; tired and exasperated, we limit ourselves sometimes only to finding that that was all it was meant to be. It is a transition which seems to be a continuously past-present trail, without future. A transition within which we can define Romania only if we can define its paths. (...) The filmmaker today is very likely to be as Romanian society: he does not see the forest after the transition, because of the trees, as they are in transition, too. Everything is in transition and the steady landmarks, especially moral based, are missing.”¹¹

I could invoke here two relevant examples:

The first example is the 2002 film of Alina Mungiu Pippidi (*Two villages: the modernization and de-modernization of the Romanian village*),¹² which illustrates the content of an academic research describing the rural change models, seen from the political socialization perspective and initially published as a book.¹³ The study aims to explain the political “reactionarism” or the



submissive accommodation towards the “noncommunist” elites of post 1989 era by using two ideal-type villages.

The first one is the mountain village Nucșoara (the headquarters of stubborn resistance against communist collectivization, with many locals persecuted by the authorities); this village produced an iconic character in the mythology of Romanian anticommunism, impersonated by Elizabeth Rizea. The other village, located in the Danube Plain, is Scornicești, the native place of Nicolae Ceausescu. The settlement was favored during the communist regime for this reason and experienced massive social engineering (collectivization, town-planning, accelerated by merging municipalities etc.) which changed it substantially. Scornicești became a town after 1988. Both towns have suffered some form of violence on the behalf of the communist authorities: Nucșoara suffered mostly from political persecutions, while Scornicești experienced heavy administrative violence, predominantly. After 1989, however, both communities decayed, in parallel with the destruction of collective property and the re-privatization of land (mainly in Scornicești), demographic decline, economic recession, increased social inequalities and the local elites’ conversion to the “new democracy.” But the film stresses mainly the “mentality divide,” explaining the vote for or against the “noncommunists” by the persistence of the way of thinking of the communist regime, on the one hand, and by the winner or loser position of the social actors, on the other. With a topic that starts as problematizing a contemporary phenomenon, and built on a series of portraits and interviews, beaded closely by abundant of

explanation, Alina Mungiu-Pippidi's film, is actually the visual appendix to an indictment speech against the past.

The second relevant film for this section is *Kapitalism, our secret formula*¹⁴ (Alexandru Solomon, 2010). Here, the narrator is not a scholarly narrator aiming to instruct on serious topics, but a playfully ironic storyteller commenting with false and provoking naiveté on the way a few members of the new ultra-rich entrepreneurial class confess their economic success. One by one, the viewer is witnessing the way Dan Voiculescu, Ion Niculae, George Copos, Dinu Patriciu, Dan Diaconescu and George Pădure attempted to exculpate themselves. Surprisingly, some of them let us know that their fortunes were made by transforming the state assets into private capital investments by diverting revenues expected by the Romanian state in their personal accounts, in the days of the revolution of 1989. Almost all mention, as a personal trump card, their own formative experience in the “West,” either as trade representatives or as contract workers outside the country, and refer to a previous “capitalist experience” acquired before the fall of the Ceausescu regime. As former representatives of the political or administrative apparatus – Securitate officers (Niculae), Securitate collaborators (Dan Voiculescu), party activists (Copos) – they feel uncomfortable when asked about their lives before 1989 and find it difficult to negotiate their personal image of “civilized heroes” with their public one, exploited in the media, as “former profiteers of communism” converted to capitalism. (Dan Diaconescu appears as the only exception in this series, with his “by



himself” model of success.) But exactly these self-portraits, undertaken in the domestic environment of their own luxurious homes or in the proximity of the conspicuous symbols of their own conquests, make up the center of interest of the film. Playful animation inserts (showing *lego* people building capitalism) and, again, the narrator’s mimicked perplexities try to suggest, albeit not convincingly, that Romania has to do with a failure of capitalism due primarily to a residual communism, grafted with a “Balkan cocktail, without moral and without principles” – are but drops in journalistic satire. For instance, TV inserts in which George Becali is the interviewee are doubled with the *Ode to Joy* sound, a supplementary pamphlet note that alludes to the contrast between his actual MEP’s status and his original condition as a shepherd and sheep trader. Someone can find these artefacts funny, but they lack direct relief of the character’s presence. There is an uneven mix of reading codes and an uninspired mix of registers; such failures certify the author’s inability to choose between the documentary that investigates a topic and the entertaining documentary.

IV. “Telling” and “Showing”

Here we should pause and meditate: the virtues and weaknesses revealed in these few examples are not random: they belong to the Romanian documentary and the way it seeks forms of expression capable of reaching the public. Also, they are affected by a need to “say,” to explain or to position oneself, coming from an author whose presence is asserted by the film either as a personal testimony, or as critical reflection, or as an amendment to other

speeches, statements or realities. These are the marks of a historical subjectivity reactive to – but also dependent on – an immediate context.

Inevitably, we are required to distinguish between two types of documentaries, depending on the dominant structure of the medium used: the documentary that *tells* (the discursive-documentary, centered on “voice”) and the documentary that *shows* – (the ostensive documentary, centered on image). The typology is just provisional, ideal-typical and approximate, because, in reality, intermediate shades describing technically the documentary are quasi-infinite; they are part of a continuous axis where the discursive and the ostensive are opposite extremes.

The *telling documentary* is focused fundamentally on speech, on verbal or written discourse, in which the visual interferes as an adjuvant. Like the films on Discovery Channel or National Geographic, it only illustrates a speech by images which have to fit to a prearranged scripting structure. The key item here for the message is the text. The image fulfills only an exemplifying function, almost identical to that of the book illustration, which strengthens or completes a text prepared in advance. The text can be, moreover, displayed directly in succinct slides aiming to verbally “make explicit” visual details or, as it usually happens, read from *off*. The voice explains what we see in what is visualized and what one should finally understand.

The reading voice is an important signifier, the bearer of a message by itself: sometimes it is an announcer’s voice – especially in the propaganda documentary, where the triumphant utterance does not communicate, but trumpets. It thus



transmits certainties, not a content for reflection and dilemmas. It aims to contaminate the spectator with pre-established beliefs. The communication code presupposes a tacit communion between the emotional vibration of the communicator and that of the recipient, to obtain endorsement. This type of documentary is predicated upon the assumption that for both the film recipient and the propagandist reality has the same definition and that certain values and worldviews are shared by both. As a branch of the journal news of former times, this type of vocalization is transferred to the war documentary, in which the voice of triumph accompanies the glorious soldier's march – or to the pamphlet-documentary, of pre-1989 Eugen Mandric kind of violent unmasking speech, which viewers of a certain age will surely remember.

But the voice may be that of a didactic lecturer, whose well-suited inflections cut a better path for perceiving the image. Or it may be the impersonated voice of the journalist-narrator (in the manner of Michael Moore) or of the visual ethnographer who documents his own experience in uncharted territory. Not infrequently, it is the voice of the narrator hero or the anthropologist's subject, as a relevant Indigenous speech.¹⁵

The “talkative” documentary belongs to an age of film and to a communication paradigm both centered on issuer, where the desired effect is unequivocal and fits the intentionality of the message. The correct decoding is meant to be the one disclosing the communication intention. Thus, the emphasis falls on how the message is built and on the codification process, and less on the recipient, which is usually seen as a relatively homogeneous mass of individuals, reacting rather uniformly to the

same “stimulus.” This was the age of unidirectional message and the age of discursive logocentrism, of symbolic domination of the public through discourse, by an elite monopolizing media and the cultural codes of message understanding.¹⁶

The “showing” documentary is instead centered on the recipient. It withdraws “telling,” blurring as much as possible the voice in “off.” The message carrier, now, is the filmed scene. The visual replaces the conceptual, or, more precisely, it leaves the understanding and content conceptualization to the viewer. The documentary becomes more cinematic in a proper sense. The spectator is no longer the person targeted by a general unique message, external to the world of enunciation, but mere a witness and an indirect participant to the featured action. The action fulfills itself through the mind of spectator. And, instead of subjecting the viewer to a reality whose significance is predetermined, the documentary “shows” the reality to the viewer, letting him define and decide on the meaning. It is a visual paradigm that democratizes and individualizes reception.

The focus of contemporary Romanian documentary on “telling” to the detriment of the specific ostensive component of visual language, especially in the early years after 1989, should be well understood. It may belong to the need for building a reactive counter-discourse, a corrective against the dominant discourse, usually conveyed through television. Or it may belong, also, to the documentarian striving to impose his own discourse and his own definition of reality upon which he wants to draw attention.

In time, however, there emerges a progressive awareness of the autonomous



value of the visual in relation to verbal comment. There exists an "involuntary expression" of the documentary that makes it valuable through what it *reveals* without wanting to *show*. Beyond the intent, beyond the auctorial engagement, and beyond the "message," the filmic image can gain an independent ethnographic value, through the ability to capture always facts beyond the conceptually expressed frame.

This was already acknowledged by filmmakers of the "Alexandru Sahia" studios even before 1989, as a representative of the institution's brand, Copel Moscu, remembers: "There is no such a thing as a failed documentary, there is only a failed interpretation of reality, because the visual staff can be reused."¹⁷ The divorce between text and image, in the documentarian practice, could still acquire grotesque accents sometimes. For example, Moscu Copel reports a significant episode involving an employee at "Sahia" immediately after the 1989 revolution: "Everyone in the studio was scared. Then a director, whose purpose in 'Sahia' was to make propaganda films only, and had just finished one, came to me. He was afraid he would be fired. I never wanted to do a personnel restructuring, but a restructuring of the consciousness. He came to me with the film, a reverential production for Ceausescu and the achievements of socialism, and he said: *The film is very good. If you do not kick me out, I can change the comment and smash Ceausescu, because the pictures are good.*"¹⁸

V. The Documentary Field of Production and its Neighborhood

Like everywhere else, in Romania documentary films develop in an area marked by the intersection of four fields of communication, each with distinct principles of autonomy (journalism, television show, cinematographic art and ethnography). For each of these fields, the documentary presents itself as a ground for experimenting with its limits and force the boundaries of their own domain. Thus, the documentary is always somewhere halfway between art cinema (but you don't have to be a great filmmaker to be a good documentarist), investigative journalism, scientific observation, academic lecture and entertainment. For instance, for the filmmaker, the documentary provides an opportunity for exploring an alternative cinematic language. Even though, technically, it cannot arrive to the perfection of the classic cinema, which usually is produced in the studio, with directors, scripts and actors distributed in roles that reproduce in various degrees a recognizable reality, the documentary is an area able to infuse authenticity and suggest alternative conventions against the routinized cinema plateau. It's an experimental space which supplies a large part of today's independent cinema.¹⁹

For Romanian documentarians coming from cinema, this temptation is more recent and linked to the experiments several directors of "new wave" are testing by which they try to expand a field of artistic expression and investigate new methods of authenticating cinematographic discourse. Cristi Puiu's films²⁰ already brought very close observational excision and fictional film. This is no longer just about the way



cinema is mimicking reality by adopting conventions of the documentary film, but it is merely a serendipity effect contained in contacting an “unprocessed” reality; it induces new forms of expression, hardly deliberate, coming in contact with the unexpected event of the world as such. Filmmakers²¹ tackle documentaries only to return to fictional cinema.

A relevant case here is *Monday* (2007), by Marian Crișan. The film traces the ethnography of a day in the life of Tudor Țișu, a member of the band La Familia, previously convicted for possession and consumption of drugs. Țișu is included in a program of supervision implying his compulsory presence at a police station every Monday of the week. The camera is following Țișu all over the place: at the police, at his music recording studio, in his interactions with friends or former friends, now bypassing him, at late meetings in an apartment where he and other young men consume alcohol and drugs, while time seems suspended. It is a vivid documentation that heralds the twilight world of drug users, suspended on the edge of failure. “A black and white film that does not judge, but shows,” the synopsis says, but many questions regarding aesthetic truth and ethics in film documenting may be raised.

At another pole, in *Weddings, Music and Videotapes* (2008), Tudor Giurgiu, the author of fictional films and notorious patron of the TIFF festival in Cluj (Transylvania Film Festival), laughs in a tender-ironic manner on behalf of his amateur “competitors” on the visual market – photographs and cameramen, wedding film makers. Giurgiu creates real sociology kitsch and cheap scenery, illustrating the civilization of visual mass consumption.

The filmmaker reveals, with an accomplice’s eye, the stories of these artisans, together with their stereotyped techniques of the illusion of happiness, making that shape their public taste. The film builds a contrast between professional movie techniques, employed by the director (background music, narrative cutout, careful visual effects – but without studio shooting and actors) and the inserts of plentiful electronic effects, clangorous and abundant repetitive symbolism produced by his amateur subjects in studio). All these contrasts are used to obtain a secondary message, which draws a contrastive parallel between the two visual languages. Here, the documentary filmmaker uses the documentary for producing a realistic counterpoint to the wedding memorial dream factory – a documentary reasserting the supremacy of professional cinematography to which the author belongs.

Many of the successful documentarians of the last two decades come from TV channels. The television documentary is a default derivative of journalism (Liviu Tipuriță, Cornel Mihalache, Mirel Bran, Dan Cureau, Dite Dinesz, Gheorghe Sfăiter, Cătălin Ștefănescu, Marius Tabacu). For a journalist, the documentary feature report is an extension, by adding new dimensions to fieldnotes. It is nourished by the respite of the news tumult, whose meaning needs to be often emphasized by thorough analysis and reflection. The journalistic documentary is such a reflective insert, but subordinated to a logic of fast information, usually at an extensive level of interest, which is aimed at a wider audience – a logic specific to the field of journalism as a whole. The tension affecting the documentary of this kind rises through a double



constraint: on the one hand, the documentary tends to fulfill the obligation of deepening an event or a circumstance as much and as exactly as possible, often requiring specialized information, which takes time and additional costs. On the other hand, the journalistic documentary is under the pressure of topicality, which has to be incorporated into an informative framework of general relevance and constrained by the limits prescribed by the need to keep up the audience's interest in information.

A sensational event is often just a starting point and the film is oriented towards both illuminating a problem and winning over a broad audience. The director's views can be extremely diverse. For example, *Tanacu Case* (2007), by Tatiana Niculescu Bran and Mirel Bran, is a documentary whose main interest is to clarify the facts of an event widely publicized and heavily deformed by media sensationalism (the death of a young woman from a monastery in Moldova during an exorcism ritual). The film wants here to “fix” a distorted picture and eliminate the public stigma suffered by the monk who performed that exorcism.

Journalism seeks sensational “stories” and appeals to (often reinforcing) stereotypes depicting “exotic” Eastern Europe. This is illustrated by Liviu Tipuriță, the author of BBC documentaries on spectacular topics such as “The Mudava Phenomenon” (in *Mudava Arrives in Town*, 1988, an expression of a sui generis form of Eastern European and Romanian new-ageism), the world of street children and deviant pedophiles (*Sex Trade with Children*, 2003), or the world of infant Romanian Roma doing crimes in Western countries (*Gypsy Child Thieves*, 2009). By applying the BBC

investigative journalism model faithfully, Tipuriță shocks through underground social images brought up as an extension of themes already addressed by other Western journalists. His insider status, faced with the community he explores, offers him an advantage. At the same time, this success does nothing but draw the author closer to the center of the machine of stereotyping production on which the commodification of the stigma by televisual shows is based.

Specialized film makers coming from documentary film schools of some reputation in the West impose a new standard, coming up with impressive creations. Thomas Ciulei, Réka Kincses or Klára Trencsényi & Vlad Naumescu are just a few names of several young documentarians, the list becoming more and more interesting, reflecting some remarkable achievements.

A film with anthropological relevance, depicting the collective mental mechanisms that legitimize social exclusion in traditional society, and an almost classic cut is *Grațian* (1992), by Thomas Ciulei.²² (1992) The film is playing a bit ambiguously with the credulity of a spectator expecting to see exciting vampire stories, but instead picturing a character who is almost visionary. It offers, at the same time, sufficient reading keys for understanding the trivial motivation for the deviance of a special downgraded character with a charismatic “aura.” Grațian, the werewolf man (*pricoliciul*) of the village, is a marginal whose fame arouses fear and compassion alike. Banished by the family for rather pragmatic and egoistic reasons (he is excluded from inheriting his share of the parental fortune), he is subject to public gossip and legends as a man who could



switch into a wolf at night, scaring animals and humans alike. But to the disappointment of fans of *horror* and *fantasy*, the film presents only the habits of a lonely and marginalized man in a community that excommunicates and makes him feed intentionally the copious superstitious anxiety of the villagers. In fact, being a “werewolf,” as the others perceive him, excludes as much as protects him. And begging in the village, as Grațian is doing, becomes a form of amicable resolution of exclusion, a kind of “social contract”: villagers are afraid to reject him, when Gratian passes through to ask for anything useful for him (this is what he does for living, actually), believing that “the werewolf” can retaliate if it turns into a wolf. Gratian exploits his own social etiquette to neutralize the consequences of the exclusion, taking revenge on his own terms against those who have ostracized him. The bizarre philosophy he develops – the philosophy of a reflective solitary is an attempt to explain his own condition by building a cosmology and theology for personal use, very much similar to the heretical medieval miller described by Carlo Ginzburg in *The Cheese and the Worms*²³ and marks a way of handling the cognitive existential dissonance which his own destiny has thrown at him. He imagines an entire theory of his personal superiority against God; he thinks he would reach this superiority, gradually, by mastering the science of big numbers and infinity. “Then I’ll be someone,” he says, taking a martial position. Because – he explains – infinity makes people equal with God and can make them morally superior by their rationality. And God, who mixed good and evil “was not rational,” says Grațian. His theology is therefore a form of compensation

by meditation of his genuine social inferiority; it also betrays an effort to see its own decline as a form of moral superiority.

The *Balkan Champion*²⁴ of Réka Kincses (2006) reveal how ethnic tensions in Transylvania can pervade the daily life of a family of Hungarian intellectuals – not any family, however, but that of an important politician of DAHR (Kincses Előd), former Balkan champion in swimming, lawyer, member of the first NSF in Targu Mures, when the city was affected by ethnic violence in March 1990. At the time, Kincses was also one of the participants in the events and witnesses, the author of a book describing the conflict in Targu Mures as orchestrated by former members of the Securitate, in complicity with the former leadership of the country. Kincses Előd becomes soon an ostracized politician, fleeing to Budapest for a few years and then returned to the country, after calming atmosphere, in order to resume his career as a lawyer and the politician, in a climate that brings him again in conflict not only with Romanian politicians but often with those of the same ethnicity. An intractable character, intransigent and self-centered, he becomes the subject of the documentary film made by his own daughter, herself a character in the film. Reka Kincses’s documentary risks almost recklessly and violates – happily, I would say – any convention of impersonality and neutrality pertaining to documentaries. The film is a chronicle of a witnessing subjectivity in the act and, at the same time, the chronicle of a daughter-father confrontation whose object lies, beyond generational differences, in the daughter’s attempt to break the cycle of animosity and permanent ethnic self-victimizing clichés, continuously reproduced within her family



atmosphere. Frank to the point of cruelty, the film gradually increases the pressure, supplied by an intrusive manner of filming in the narrow space of home decor, with close-ups and close frames on the disputes fiercely rising to unbearable tension. The situation explodes in an irreconcilable conflict, which brings a cathartic release of the daughter by the father figure and, especially, by the whole set of ethnocentric prejudices of the Transylvanian social environment. Following this trajectory, the film operates a transfer of the gravity center: if its main hero is declared a “Balkan champion “ (the title is highly ambivalent, making reference to the past athlete Kincses, but also to the Balkan political background, where he is struggling to become a “champion” too) – gradually, the real hero of the film becomes the author herself. The entire experience of confrontation with those in the house is turned into a narrative of their own liberation and maturation and into a reflection on the limits to which an individual can accept pressure from the community to which he or she belongs, without being entirely swallowed or choked.

VI. Observation, Realistic Illusion, Truth

Let me return to the idea of the professionalization of documentary films, which goes hand in hand with the abandonment of logocentric discursivism for the sake of the visual. As the narrative becomes more autonomous visually (i.e. cinematically), it becomes increasingly expressive. It is always the same art of making things visible, returning them to their essence, beyond any cultural jamming. This means bringing the being to the surface

out by the filmed narrative, as a philosopher would say pompously. But the question is: how can the camera narrate?

I prefer to go beyond the difference between a narration based on post-production editing and “direct” cinema. *Women on Canvas*²⁵ (2009) by Otilia Babara is a short film where at stake is the contrast between the visual element and the innocuous characters (women curators at the Brukenthal Museum in Sibiu) who seem like disappearing and becoming invisible to the visitors. The film captures only frames and rims: a window that opens slowly, against a soundless background, like a painting that comes to life as soon as a woman appears in the scenery (a supervisor), with some flowers in hand, which she distributes in two vases. Then, the camera catches other supervisors playing with the depth of field and perspective created by superposing the frames of the door and the frames of the pictures on the walls, while the women of the museum cleaning staff are caught just passing by. They may be seen repressing their boredom by exchanging kitchen recipes. (One of them is heard saying she feels in this frozen selfless space as in a prison: the museum space, with all those chefs d’oeuvres, does not tell them anything)

There is a polysemic subtle play in all these sequences: the frames pursued by the camera may suggest a way of framing a living reality, encapsulated in a dead structure (the museum), or may indicate the manner the moving portraits of the supervisors elevate their quasi-invisible presences to the dignity of the art exhibited on canvas (hence, the title). The film becomes self-referential because it manages to make the invisible – visible, investing it with a mysterious significance and thus changing its ontological status.



The quasi-absence of “action” and the ability of the film to express the atmosphere of routine boredom makes you wonder: and yet, how is it possible to actually tell the everyday banal existence? What does it mean, in fact, in terms of filmic narrative, to render “daily routine”? Because, at first glance, trivial everyday life is by nature non-narrative: the regular, normal and implacable course of things, the dull ceremony of the hours and days in succession is as boring as a scientific treatise. Or, the daily life being invaded by routine, whereas telling implies undermining the very routine of the “natural attitude” (as Alfred Schütz put it) and transforming it into a state of exceptionality, lived in the imagination. Because we always tell things that are glaring and we signal them through expressions like “look what happened!” We tell, in fact, what usually gets out of the routine, the exception.

A first response would be close to the idea of the relativization of banality: this one is almost never complete and is in fact produced by a contrast with something considered important, meaningful, attractive, solemn, etc. That is exactly what is worth being reported and narrated. But this contrast refers also to the ability of the teller to pay attention to detail, to be focused – in a striking contrast to what is spectacular and draws attention effortlessly, and so makes reflexivity fall asleep. That characteristic of an object or event that draws attention and arouses interest is related to one’s aptitude to find meanings in the observed object. Banality becomes interesting for the vigilant viewer, always ready to discover meanings by himself in what is offered to him and not to consume them ready made (i.e. already explained). Banality is not in the things themselves,

but is in us, in how we notice and reflect them.

The observational film develops a narrative capability to the extent that it succeeds in de-banalizing and defamiliarizing till “strangeness,” by regarding everyday monotony (as Victor says Şklovski, cited by Andrei Gorzo).²⁶ A first way for arriving to that outcome is cinematic framing: observational film gets to this effect by separating a banal fact from the context in the same way the frame of a painting detaches the pictured subject. The frame is a signifier in itself. It draws attention to the significance of the message. It is like saying: “look, this must be seen!” and bears a metanarrative function aiming to signal that the narrator is going to tell something (“look what has happened!”). At the same time, by presenting itself as a documentary, the film is also saying: “what you see is interesting because it is real; it has to be regarded as a fact of life, not as a form of entertainment or escape.”

Secondly, the use of long shots amplifies the observation and decomposes object into a kind of perceptual analysis that restores freshness. Freshness is obtained also by changing the angle of view, which calls for an alternative way of seeing. A look from the Other’s perspective, a look from the outside, at something familiar, or a look that amplifies the details – these are ways of defamiliarizing that oblige the spectator to self-reflection. The viewer is notified about what usually is revealed as a form of “forgotten” observation, stored in a forgotten state of consciousness, an operation that becomes somewhat analogous to accessing the realm of the unconscious.

The camera – the narrator of “direct cinema” offers to the viewer a point of view



so that the action and characters are built by the beholder. Realistic illusion comes from an imperceptible substitution of the eye with the camera: that is a delegated look, established on behalf of the viewer and it marks altogether the point that coagulates the scenes into a single narration. The eye itself is the narrator, as a matter of fact. Eye movements overlap with the running time of action and the investment of the events presented with a meaning – i.e. it connects the watched sequences to the entire experience of the spectator, together with the values, emotions, or unexpressed thoughts, leading to a nonverbalized dialogue of the spectator with the moving image he confronts.

On the other hand, by offering closeness to the characters they present, the camera favors empathy, regardless how, morally, “good” or “bad” they are, triggering a seductive effect in the reality depicted and in their heroes. The camera deconstructs the perceptive stereotype, drawing the viewer in the process of deconstruction and reconstruction of the character traits as a part of the understanding process. It familiarizes otherness exactly as, vice versa, the “strangeness” is altering familiarity. Otherness is “story-tellable” by its nature, is given by something observable, which can be told. Still, in passing through a process of familiarization, otherness is no longer a distant reality, but is integrated as another kind *your-own-otherness*, unnoticed.

The effect works very well when we are dealing with close-ups of anonymous or marginal people. We have already seen how the “werewolf” Grațian was depicted by Ciulei. Something similar happens with Roma “băieși” in *The Curse of the Hedgehog*²⁷ by Dumitru Budrala, followed step by step

in their winter journey through the villages of central Transylvania in their attempt to sell their handmade brooms and other handicrafts made of wood and twigs.

The close-up and the tightened detailed trailing of their daily activities made the whole rural way of life of “Băieși” group comprehensible and fit for an imaginative transposition of the spectator into “the skin of the other.” To put it differently, these techniques transformed the exotic faraway otherness into an intimate otherness, especially since the heroes help themselves to the construction of the characters they embody. They play conscientiously and histrionically their own role, through exaggerate posing, with some naivety, in front of the camera, disclosing those sides that they consider defining or desirable to be shown. They play this show with a mixture of shyness and obvious ludic joy, in a manner that flatters the spectator. It’s a performance that contrasts with the daily misery and harsh conditions in which they can earn food, constantly subjected to the hostility of the locals on whose doors they knock. At the same time, their open histrionics, always oriented to the interlocutor, reveal a cultural trait which shows them always reinventing themselves as characters in any situation, depending on each other’s expectations and social desirability. The absolute truth of these characters is the play and the mimicking game that represses the bitter truth of their daily challenges.

As a subtle form of manipulation – this closeness to characters may produce, equally, a form of distortion of reality. “Making things visible” and “telling the truth” do not mean the same thing. Even if it may start with fragments only of reality or fragments of truth, the documentary does not



necessarily restore the whole truth, always. Incidentally, in the great mass of films produced after 1989, certain themes and characters intersect. Mr. Kincses, for instance, the hero of a Balkan champion can be met – episodically, indeed, but in action – in another public TV documentary of 2010, in the three episodes of Sorin Mihalache and Edit Bereczki’s film about the March 1990 interethnic conflict in Targu Mures (*You have a headache?*²⁸).

Similarly, in *Noosphera*²⁹ (2012) we encounter, unexpectedly, another hero of the post-December 1989 transition – sociologist N.S. Dumitru, former president of the National Salvation Front (NSF), after the first appointment of Ion Iliescu as head of the state, and as a character actively involved in the parliamentary report on the ethnic clash of March 1990 in Târgu Mureș and the miner’s political violent interventions of 1990 and 1991 (apparently as organizer). He has been mentioned otherwise in some documents, of historical value today. But nothing is mentioned about those political past stories in the

2012 film. Instead, as a central character of the film, he is depicted almost ethnographically among his students at the Polytechnic, as a popularizer of para scientific and sectarian theories on a bizarre “noosphere,” while living an epic complication of family life and love. The film covers only his “post-political” evolution, confining itself to his intimate life, without trying to investigate more deeply the biography of the hero.

It is possible that the authors of the film (Khetagouri Artchil and Ileana Stanculescu, the latter being a previous acquaintance of Dumitru’s) were been informed or interested in a kind of past that, at the time, was highly controversial. An extension of the investigation to a broader biographical extent could have truly brought to the surface issues that could really have shed a more dramatic light on the character and built a story on multiple plans, much deeper and perhaps much darker than those caught in this documentary. That was not to happen, however – and, thus, life has once again beaten film.

NOTES

1. The role played, for instance, by documentaries like *Noul Eldorado* (The New Eldorado) and *Roșia Montană, un loc la marginea prăpastiei* (*Rosia Montana, A Town on the Brink*) in correcting public perception on the mining project in this small town from the Apuseni Mountains – a perception massively manipulated by the PR compartment of the mining company. This is just an example. The PR of the project offered a distorted image of the environmental, economic and social risks, and the deconstruction of the false messages of this advertising campaign impacted heavily the street manifestations and civic mobilization, which led to the project being banned.

2. “One of the extraordinary things about documentary is that you get to continually reinvent the form, reinvent what it means to make a documentary – and Oppenheimer did just that,” says Errol Morris in an online article (Errol Morris, “The Murders of Gonzago. How did we forget the mass killings in Indonesia? And what might they have taught us about Vietnam?,” Posted Wednesday, July 10, 2013, at 3:52 PM (http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/history/2013/07/the_act_of_killing_essay_how_indonesia_s_mass_killings_could_have_slowed.html).

3. Pierre Bourdieu, *Economia bunurilor simbolice*, București, Editura Meridiane, 1987.

4. *Ibidem*.



5. "I have seen and reviewed several hundred documentaries from dozens of countries, as a (co) coach for that section of the editions of 2004 and 2005 of the International Independent Film Festival 'Anonymous' from Sfântu Gheorghe-Deltă, and in 2006, as a guest of ASTRA Sibiu Film Fest' – film critic Valerian Sava said in an interview in 2006. 'The noticeable gap' could be measured, for example, by the incapacity to propose any Romanian title on this side of the river Prut (I chose one from Chişinău), among the 12 provided for the 2004 IIFF competition, or by the declared dissatisfaction of the whole international towards the Romanian offer at AFF 2006 in any competitive section of the festival." (Cătălin Sturza și Mihai Fulger, "Documentarul românesc: între Sahia și Discovery" [*The Romanian Documentary between Sahia and Discovery*], *Cultura*, Nr. 48 / 16 november 2006.

6. *Common Ground (Cheltuieli comune)*, (2012) by Anne Schiltz și Charlotte Grégoire; producer: Besson Marie/ Eklektik.

7. Florin Iepan, interviewed in *Cultura* (Cătălin Sturza and Mihai Fulger, "Documentarul românesc: între Sahia și Discovery" [*The Romanian Documentary between Sahia and Discovery*], *Cultura*, Nr. 48/ 16 november 2006.

8. *Piața Universității – România* (1991) [University square – Romania], by Sorin Ilieșiu, Vivi Drăgan Vasile and Stere Gulea; producer: Studioul de Creație Cinematografică al Ministerului Culturii.

9. See Fabian Daub, *Rosia Montana – Ein Dorf am Abgrund* [Rosia Montana, Town on the Brink] (2012)

10. *Memorialul durerii* (1991) [*The Pain Memorial*], by Lucia Hossu Longin; producer: Studioul de Film TV.

11. Sorin Ilieșiu, in Cătălin Sturza and Mihai Fulger, "Documentarul românesc: între Sahia și Discovery," *Cultura*, Nr. 48/ 16 november 2006.

12. *Două sate: modernizarea și demodernizarea satului românesc* [*Two villages: the modernization and de-modernization of the Romanian village*] (2002), de Alina Mungiu-Pippidi; producător: Institutul Român de Istorie.

13. Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, *Secera și buldozerul. Scornicești și Nucșoara. Mecanisme de aservire a țăranului român*, [The sickle and the bulldozer. Scornicești and Nucșoara. Romanian peasant servitude mechanisms] Polirom, 2004.

14. *Kapitalism, rețeta noastră secretă* [*Kapitalism, our secret formula*] (2010), by Alexandru Solomon; producer: HiFilm Productions.

15. In order to show how this passage from the studio speaker to indigenous voice before 1989 at "Alexandru Sahia" studios, Moscu Copel revisits in these terms the usual making of the documentaries in those times: "Generally, it worked like this: guys were filming all sorts of good things based on a well settled screenplay, processed through various commissions that then existed in film industry. Then the raw material went to the studio, where it was edited, adding also the words. In one cabin was an announcer. These were those metal voices, broken, solemn, if you remember them, commenting with much pomp and reverence the achievements of socialism... Very slowly my generation started to understand the value of the live recorded word... That changed the atmosphere and the production style of Sahia. By then, there were only those standard voices, which were faking reality sometimes, adding a conventional touch to those films." (Lucian Ionică, *Documentar și adevăr* [Documentary and truth] (Iași, Institutul european, 2013), interview with Moscu Copel, pp. 58-59).

16. Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and symbolic power*, Polity Press, 1991.

17. Lucian Ionică, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

18. *Idem*, pp. 58-59.

19. The experience in the documentary of some great filmmakers, such as Werner Herzog, for instance, must be seen and understood in the context of a professional meditation on cinema itself and as part of a career searching unexplored path in cinema. Somehow, what does a documentary filmmaker, it is similar to what a post-modern novelist does, when he is jamming established literary codes or makes "spoken" or non- or anti-literary inserts in the writing body – as Mircea Nedelciu did in his prose, for example, using techniques that refreshes direct access to the illusion of reality, just to denounce this type of artistic conventionality and to map new areas of „authenticity."



20. Andrei Gorzo, *Lucruri care nu pot fi spuse altfel. Un mod de a gândi cinemaul de la André Bazin la Cristi Puiu*, [Things that could not be told differently. A way of thinking cinema from Andre Bazin to Cristi Puiu], București, Humanitas, 2012.
21. Tudor Giurgiu, Radu Gabrea, Radu Muntean, Nicolae Mărgineanu, Ovidiu Bose Pastina, Corneliu Gheorghiuță, Anca Damian, Lakatos Robert, Adina Pintilie, Marian Crișan, Julio Soto & Ștefan Constantinescu are a few names of this series.
22. *Grațian* (1992), by Thomas Ciulei; producer: Ciulei Films.
23. Carlo Ginzburg, *Brânza și viermii. Universul unui morar din secolul al XVI-lea*, traducere de Claudia Dumitriu, București, Editura Nemira, 1997.
24. *Balkan Champion (Campion balcanic)*, 2006, by Réka Kincses; producător: Christine Hille.
25. *Femei pe pânză* (2009) by Otilia Babara; producer: Aristoteles Workshop.
26. Andrei Gorzo, *op. cit.*
27. *Blestemul ariciului*, (2004) by Dumitru Budrala; producer: Csilla Kato.
28. *Vă doare capul?! Faj a feje?* [*Do you have a headache?*] (2010), by Edit Bereczki and Cornel Mihalache; producer: TVR.
29. *Noosfera* (2011), by Artchil Khetagouri, Ileana Stănculescu; producer: Art Doc / Ileana Stănculescu.