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Man of Nature and Me: Research on the Boundary between Anthropology and Art

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Abstract

This paper deals mainly with questions of methodology by presenting a creative approach to fieldwork. It presents the fieldwork as relative to art practice, and the film as relative to art work.

The paper also presents the data obtained by this method: my informant, Bogdan's vision on nature and society. His relationship to nature and Romania is one of respect and love, and as such it comes close to animism. However, he believes that the general trend is that both nature and society are exploited, approached with predatory naturalism. Bogdan is in the friction zone of these two attitudes. His reflections on this friction point beyond the individual and reveal some of the social problems of the current Romanian society.

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1. Introduction

The reader is kindly requested to watch the film first and read the thesis afterwards.

1.1. Research question

One of the central goals of the research is examining what are the methodological implications of conducting a creative research; a fieldwork relative to art practice. Further it examines the different relationships between humans and nature. Through understanding these different relationships, as well as the informant-researcher relationship, the thesis seeks to examine what are the different layers of ‘truth’ one can obtain in a research; and how this can reveal social problems. It further seeks to understand how the researcher and the research process can have a significant impact on the outcome of the research.

I decided to conduct a creative fieldwork as I am by nature creative and interested in art practices. I chose to conduct research out in nature and about the human-nature relationship as I am interested both in humans and nature. I wished to extend this interest to an anthropological level: that of the theories and concepts concerning nature and society. I also find it useful to share the gained knowledge with my informant and by this hopefully to contribute to his wellbeing and a fuller understanding of his relationship with the surrounding nature and society.¹

1.2. Context

1.2.1. Bogdan²

My informant, Bogdan, is a 54-year-old Romanian man. He was born and raised in the village, which he left as a teenager to pursue vocational studies in the nearby city, where he worked as a mechanic and driver. After getting married, he returned to the village in the 1990s to support his old parents. While living in the village, five children were born to him and his wife. The children are now between 14 and 20 years old. Bogdan and his family often face financial constraints and are officially unemployed. In such a situation, Bogdan turned to the ‘second’ or ‘informal’ economy, a widely known phenomenon in post-socialist Romania (Verdery 1996, 27). In his case the informal economy means working in nature. He

¹ The original research question was related to globalisation in an economic sense – namely how my informant deals with money and the values of the globalizing world. However, it has been dropped, as the major questions in my informant’s life proved not to be centred on globalisation or economic concerns.

² The name of the informant presented here is not his real name, and the exact location of the research will not be revealed.

collects mushrooms, blueberries, raspberries, cranberries, pine-shoots, herbs, fire- and building wood, Christmas trees, and he fishes, and by selling these he earns enough to sustain his family. He mostly sells to a middleman, who ships the goods abroad. Earning a living is not the only reason for Bogdan to work in nature. He loves spending time out and about, and he would not change this job 'for absolutely anything, even if he had a pension of millions', as he says. Another reason why he enjoys being out in nature is exiting the dysfunctional marriage and hectic, noisy family life he lives in, and finding peace and silence in the forest and hills.

1.2.2. The student-researcher

I am 28 years old and share Bogdan's interest in nature. I was born and raised in Romania, but I am ethnic Hungarian (Szekler).

Whenever in Romania, I live in the surroundings where Bogdan works and often meet him. When he comes to work we usually have a coffee and chat. He shows me and my husband how to fish, or brings fish, he shows where to find edible mushrooms, which herbs to use, and where to find berries.

Both being from Romania, we have to a certain extent a shared understanding of how it is to live there, despite the age gap. Bogdan is the same age as my father, and when he talks about the past, I can relate to it. He seems to have faced the same struggles I experienced in my family and my village (I was born in communist Romania, grew up in post-communist Romania). I hear similar stories related to communism, and I have also experienced the 1990s and the 2000s. We both seem to have a strong bond with Romania, and both see the difficulties one must face living there: we both seem to have an ambiguous relationship to our country.

During fieldwork we became close friends. In the field I was more an apprentice of Bogdan. He enjoyed the presence of a person who has interest in what he loves doing and he tried to teach me some of his skills. This friendship enabled him to open up and share his thoughts and feelings with me.

1.2.3. The time of the research

The research took place between March and August 2012, the main season in Bogdan's activities. He goes fishing for the first time as soon as the snow melts, usually in March. In 2012, April and May were the months when the most fishing happened, interrupted by gathering the freshly grown pine shoots, used for household production of medical syrup. Bogdan follows the weather-forecast with close attention, as this is essential in his work. He

knew there would be a drought in Romania in 2012, and that the mushrooms would grow *before* the drought. This meant for him an early mushroom harvest.³ In the middle of July 2012, when there was a break in the growth of mushrooms, we went and collected blueberries. I joined him on all these occasions, while also visiting him at home couple of times. This would almost cease to happen quite early in the fieldwork, as I felt that for his wife my visits meant discomfort, since she had felt she had to be hospitable and make dinners. Such hospitality, which it would be an offense to refuse, is an integral part of Romanian identity (Verdery 1996, 52-55). Being trapped in between either offending her or causing her trouble I decided to restrict myself to nature, to the forest and hills where Bogdan works and mainly is. After November Bogdan is more or less confined to his house. In December he goes back to the forest to prepare Christmas trees for sale, and at times he also collects fire wood.

1.2.4. The location of the research

My research was conducted in a spread-out mountain community in the Western Carpathians, in Transylvania, Romania. The community has approximately 1,400 inhabitants, mainly Romanians (Romanian Census 2011). Job opportunities are scarce and most people make a living by farming, selling potatoes, milk and other farm products. Another source of income is logging. During wintertime men who own horses/tractors take trees from the surrounding forest for fire-wood and construction material. Others, such as Bogdan, rely on other resources of nature, gathering mushrooms, blueberries, etc.⁴

The actual fieldwork site is not the community as such but the surrounding forest and hills seen as a context of human-nature relationships. The forest, consisting mainly of beech, pine and birch trees, is situated on the surrounding hills and in a valley, alongside a river, where Bogdan's fishing activity, mainly for trout, takes place; and where I live.

1.2.4.1. Bogdan's (and my) Romania

I wish to give briefly some background information on certain historical issues regarding Romania which played a role in Bogdan's life, from the 1960s onwards (Bogdan was born in 1959): 1) communism⁵, 2) the transition period of post-communism (the 1990s

³ Mainly *Boletus Edulis* or penny bun, but also *Cantharellus Cibarius* or chanterelle.

⁴ Bogdan, however, is different in that he pursues this activity with a higher degree of involvement, knowledge about nature, and thoroughness.

⁵ I prefer the word 'communism' to that of 'socialism' as Bogdan used the former one; I use 'socialism' when I quote from the work of scholars who prefer this term; I use the two interchangeably.

and 2000s); 3) and the EU accession era, after 2007. I refrain from entering critical analysis or debates regarding these times, since this is not the aim of the thesis. I do not claim completeness, though I recognize that a brief summary does not do justice to the lived experience of 50 years of those who underwent these times.

Communism

General remarks on the paternalistic redistribution characteristic of communism

At the end of the 1940s the collectivization started. Personal property (lands, forests, animals) was taken from people, and was made part of the cooperatives. People were required to work in these cooperatives and the produced goods would be centralized and subsequently redistributed. The centre of the Party's official ideology was socialist paternalism, which justified Party rule with the claim that the Party would take care of everyone's needs by collecting the total social product and making available whatever people needed: food, jobs, medical care, affordable housing, education, and so on. The Party acted like a father who gives handouts to the children as he sees fit. It educated people to express needs it would then fill, and discouraged them from taking the initiative that would enable them to fill these needs on their own (Verdery 1996, 24-25).

1960s and 1970s

This era – marked by paternalistic redistribution and relative welfare – is called by Bogdan the time when 'he was young'. He experiences these times as the golden age. He sees this era as one when 'life in Romania was very good', as he says. He describes Romania of these years as a 'young person' who he is in love with, and whose beauty decays in subsequent years, but he will not stop loving her even after 'everything becomes uglier'. After 1965, Nicolae Ceaușescu, General Secretary of the Communist Party and leader of the country, declared Romania a Socialist Republic. He opened towards the West, and distanced the Romanian communism from that of the Soviet Union, consolidating his and the Communist Party's position in Romania (Turnock 2007, 32-33). Compared to the previous years there were more consumption goods on the market, living standards were rising, and thousands of political prisoners were released. Even the 1970s - when things started changing - Bogdan experienced as positive, as he had a job and he was able to live a 'complete life', i.e. working, having friends, taking regular holidays in the summers.

Things started changing after 1971, when Ceaușescu and his wife, Elena, visited China and North Korea. This visit exposed them to the Mao/Kim Il Sung model of cultural control. As a result, Ceaușescu attacked western style liberalism and pluralism as alien to Romanian

indigenous traditions (Turnock 2007, 33). Coercion combined with attempts at ideological persuasion was the basis of rule in Ceaușescu's Romania. Next to this personal cult and coercion, increasing austerity measures were introduced in the 1980s (Verdery 1996, 41).

1980s

The outstanding aberration in this era was the obsessive prioritisation of paying off all foreign debts (Turnock 2007, 33). In order to achieve this, Ceaușescu introduced austerity measures: heat was cut back in apartments, electricity was curtailed, no one was allowed to drive private cars, and all the energy savings from these measures were exported to Italy and West Germany for hard currency. Export was increased while import was decreased. There was a shortage in food, hence the long queues in front of the shops; these policies made life in Romania 'fairly nasty' (Verdery 1996, 236). What is worse, no one knew whom to trust, as anyone could be an undercover agent of the secret police, the *Securitate*. In this deep economic crisis and social alienation, the propaganda was emphasizing that Romania went through a 'flourishing era', thanks to Nicolae Ceaușescu, 'The Oak of the Carpathians', 'The Danube of Thinking'. While the propaganda lionized Ceaușescu, Romanians experienced this period as that of the three f's: *frică, foame, frig* (fear, hunger, cold). It was a time of fear because of the omnipresent *Securitate*, hunger because of the shortage, and cold because of lack of heating (Bos 2007, 65).

To give a more nuanced account, I refer to the findings of Alyssa Grossman in her thorough work regarding everyday objects, sites and practices of memory in the context of Romanian communism and post-communism. Grossman points out that the various memories regarding communism are inevitably different, and while some remember it as a time of horror and hunger, others underline the fact that though there was shortage in Romania, there was also always enough to sustain oneself (cf. 2010). People reacted in their own ways to the shortage. Since the centre, which was supposed to redistribute the collected goods, would no longer supply what people needed, they struggled to do so themselves, developing in the process a huge repertoire of strategies for obtaining consumer goods and services. These strategies, called the 'second' or 'informal' economy, spanned a wide range from the quasi-legal to the definitely illegal,' e.g. stealing fertilizers, herbicides, fodder for own pigs, selling at high price what they grew on their private plot, etc. (Verdery 1996, 27)⁶.

⁶ I add that 'stealing' is a relative term: I often heard stories about communism, and in these accounts 'taking' from the state was not perceived as stealing, as many would think that they 'just take from their own'.

Bogdan's activity in nature is rooted in this 'second' economy, being a creative reply to necessity.

Post-communism

After the 1989 revolution

In December 1989 a revolution occurred and within hours communism collapsed.⁷ After the revolution, and the public execution of the Ceaușescu, many expected a better future to come. I remember, as a five-year-old child, watching all this at my grandparents' together with all the neighbours, who gathered in the large kitchen, and the happy cheering following the actual execution. Nevertheless, life for Romanians in general did not seem to change much for the better. After Albania, Romania was the poorest country in Europe (Bos 2007, 88), and the new governments were frequently identified as neo-communist, since former communist politicians would remain in high functions (Turnock 2007, 63). Mohamed Kenawi's film, *Romania: The Spectre of Tyranny* (2012), reflects on the time of communism and its aftermath. It gives an account of the results of it on the level of the human soul: individualism, alienation, mistrust, mentality (e.g. that 'bribe' is needed to be successful), emigration. The film also underlines the fact that the death of the Ceaușescu did not end the difficulties, which mark also the post-communist and EU member Romania. After decades of communism, Romanians were faced with capitalism knocking on the door. In her analysis of post-communist nostalgia, Oana Popescu-Sandu points out that, '...the self actually desires to wake up in a ready-made future, the Golden Age of capitalism that bears some similarities with the Golden Age of communism. This attitude of awaiting a bright future is not new and has been prepared by the decades-long practice of communism. Somehow, out of the inertia and grayness of the Communist everyday, a new era was supposed to arise that would make all sacrifice worth it. [...] However, few post-Communist citizens had the knowledge, the energy, and the courage to adapt to capitalism and succeed' (Popescu-Sandu 2010, 115).

Not only was adapting to capitalism a hard task, it was also not always desirable. Verdery claims that exposure to the rigors of primitive capitalism has made a number of people in former communist countries think twice about their rejection of socialism and their embrace of 'the market' (1996, 10). She points out that "nationalist objections to the plundering of these countries' wealth are reactions to visible processes of impoverishment;

⁷ I refrain from entering a critical analysis whether it was a genuine revolution, or a complot organized on political level against the Ceaușescu

so too are populist revelations of ‘corruption’” (1996, 10-11). She puts forward the possibility that as ‘Romanians, Russians, Poles, Latvians, and others live through the effort to create liberal democracies and market economies, they will criticize these forms even more articulate than before, and perhaps they will be driven to new imaginings of a more viable socialism’ (1996, 11).

Parts of Alyssa Grossman’s film, *In the light of memory* (2010), resonate with Verdery’s observations. We see Uncle Costica and two other men sitting in the park and having a debate on whether communism or capitalism is better. This scene is all too familiar for me, as I have witnessed it often in Romania: many people still try to make sense out of the times they have lived, and they are still comparing two ‘regimes’, criticizing and appreciating both. Bogdan also expressed criticism towards communism, but he also judges many shortcomings of capitalism.

In alignment with this line of thought is Diana Georgescu’s account on the potentials of ironic recycling of the symbols of communism (e.g. the figure of Ceaușescu) to exert criticism on the present with its *capitalist-style consumerism, environmental indifference*, and continuity in the behaviour of political elites (2010, 165, italics mine). Through the analysis of the song of the Romanian singer, Ada Milea, ‘*Ceaușescu Hasn’t Died*’ (Appendix 3), Georgescu explains that incorporating ‘communism’, reinterpreting the figure of Ceaușescu in performances is not a survival of communism, but a strategic response to present-day challenges; it functions as social and political critique of the post-1989 context (2010, 157). Later we will see that when reflecting on the difficulties experienced in Romania, Bogdan points to the poor economic situation of the country, the exploitation of the environment, and the (sometimes related) problems of foreign investment.

The 2004 presidential elections were won by Traian Băsescu. Emphasis was laid on fighting corruption, condemning communism, and prioritizing the EU accession. His election to the Presidency was viewed as a symbolic break from the legacy of communism (Grossman 2010, 40). In April 2005, in Luxembourg the accession treaty was signed, and the accession was scheduled for 1st of January 2007 (Bulei 2005, 180).

EU-accession era

After 2007

Let us cast an eye once again backwards: in post-communism the topos of the Golden Age, the upcoming bright future was superimposed with an even older, yet unfulfilled expectation: the arrival of the Americans in the late 1940s, who were supposed to save Romania already then from communism. This myth is being resurrected in the time of the EU accession, casting the Americans and other equally capable nations in the role of carrying out the economic reforms and all required societal changes, as if by magic, smoothly and swiftly (Popescu-Sandu 2010, 116). I remember that the EU accession was presented on Romanian TV channels as a huge step towards a happy future, and so was it expected to be: being member of the EU means that the hardships people face will be solved.

Romania did receive considerable funding from the EU for economic modernisation, agricultural support and domestic policy (Turnock 2007, 65): SAPARD, Phare, Matra funds (Bos 2007, 94-102). The role of the EU as political orientation has an important bearing on the economy, both directly, in shaping the ideological approach to a market economy dominated by private enterprise, and indirectly through perceptions of Romania's stability and reliability – crucial for foreign investment – arising from its international relations and membership in global organisations (Turnock 2007, 63). As far as EU membership is concerned, Bogdan believes that being an EU member is a big potential for tourism, as foreign investors might become aware how precious and beautiful Romania is and this gives hope for a better future. There is a tendency of presenting Romania – somewhat simplistically – as a 'paradise on Earth', in order to break up with the traditional image of backward and poor country: the emphasis is on the traditions, the pure and vast nature of Romania, where one finds the 'world's only surviving medieval landscape', Transylvania, 'a place of myth and legend, a land, where the distant howl of the wolves still chills the night air, where bears sharpen their claws on towering pines' (Ottley, 2011). But he also sees the negative sides of the current situation. He believes the 'ones above' (politicians) get more chance to steal, as there are European funds to 'steal from' and treat the resources of Romania improperly. Interestingly, Romanians 'learned' in communism that success in society must be paired with bribery: one cannot succeed only based on one's qualities, one must bribe others to get things moving; this mentality persist nowadays as well (Kenawi, 2012).⁸

⁸ Bogdan gave the highly controversial case of Roşia Montană as one example. The state-owned gold mine represents a major asset in Romanian economy, being Europe's largest unexploited gold and silver resource, containing 300 tonnes of gold and 1600 tonnes of silver (Selyem 2013). It is under debate whether Gabriel

Currently the minimum wage in Romania is 179 EUR (Eurostat 2013), which seems rather low in a country where prices are increasing. To give a comparison: the monthly rent of a studio apartment in the major cities of Romania varies between 100 and 200 Euros and the retail price of one litre of Diesel is 1.335 Euro (Europe's Energy Portal). The minimum wage and housing and fuel costs are something mundane readers might find the easiest to use as perspective in order to see that wages and prices are not in balance.

Resources, the Canadian investor, will be allowed to exploit it. The potential exploitation of the gold led to (worldwide) protests in the fall of 2013, both on environmental and political level, this latter being for the reason that politicians involved in the case are accused of bribery (Transindex news). The enabling of the gold excavation not only means the privatisation/selling out of Romanian resources (from which Romania would get only a small percentage), but it would also have a major impact on the environment (the destruction of several mountain tops, Roman times mine chambers, and severe pollution). Another example Bogdan gives is the case of the DACIA car factory: RENAULT bought DACIA and they produce it in Morocco (Dacia News 2011). This means decrease in employment in Romania and creates competition for Romanian workers, as it prioritizes other countries to produce in (Evenimentul Zilei, 2012).

2. Methodology

2.1. Why minimalism?

In previous ethnographic research I always felt unable to focus properly on the informants, never coming close enough to their world in order to be able to understand them, let alone ‘translate’ their worldview to others. Looking back, I see that ‘the ethos of fieldwork and the modes of inculcating it in professional culture do not meet the realities of enacting it in present circumstances of inquiry’ (Marcus 2010, 86). By this I mean the fact that I was trained to be objective, work with a number of informants in order to have a representative group, selected based on gender, age, education, etc., and to obtain objective, reliable and systematic data. This was an unobtainable ideal in a world around me which was in constant change, partly because of my influence on it. I have never experienced having completed any of those demands properly, and I always have written texts which pretended to be all what they were not: objective and representative, presented from the perspective of the objective and detached researcher-me. What I have been trying to do was a ‘rationalistic and reductionist quest for order’ but which refused in its arrogance to listen to the cacophony of life, and the co-existence of diverse meanings and interpretations (Kincheloe 2004, 5).

With these experiences in mind, I concentrated on one person hoping that this would enable me to dig deep where I am, to use Robert Bresson’s words, and to give ‘double, triple bottom to things’ (1975, 20). I believe that by focusing on one person and giving all my attention to him, I managed to enter his life to an extent that I could understand him. I also let him enter my life and look into the filming process by inviting him into a sort of ‘meta-reflexive’ dialogue. We would often talk about the filming process and eventually our solid relationship and this meta-reflexive communication ensured that the research would get the ‘double bottom’ I was striving for. This practice comes close to what George Marcus calls ‘complicity with the subjects’, when the traditional fieldwork relationship is challenged (2010, 89). During the fieldwork, Bogdan and I not only worked together, but entered a relationship of friendship. Gísli Pálsson’s ideas regarding research sums up the way Bogdan and I related to each other. Pálsson believes that ‘[r]ecognising the importance of trust and communalism, anthropologists engage themselves in a serious ethnographic dialogue with the people they visit, forming an intimate rapport or communion. The communalism of fieldwork may be characterised as a project in which anthropologists and their hosts engage in meaningful, reciprocal enterprises, as the inhabitants of a single world’ (1996, 73 quoting

Pálsson 1993, 1995). The common enterprise with Bogdan meant researching his relationship with nature, and making a film. For him it meant communication, being together with someone he considers similar to himself, sharing his way of spending his days, and finding a friend in me.

This relationship indeed created a ‘world’ (that of the fieldwork) where I not only was allowed to ask questions about him and nature, but I also experienced sensually his everyday life. I got up before daybreak – just as he usually does - to be early in the forest, I walked with him in the forest, in the valley and on the hills on many occasions. I sat next to him on the riverside waiting and fixing my gaze on the fishing line, experiencing the excitement of fishing. I accepted his fishing lesson and I started fishing myself. I ate with him on the scented grass while cows were sniffing around us. I made myself just as ‘dirty’ and wet as he could get out in nature. I returned with him to his dysfunctional family and I felt the stress present there. I joined him when he was selling the mushroom and experienced him being ‘treated down’ by the middleman who bought the goods. I experienced the wonderfully overwhelming feeling of being out in nature, as an empire of air, sounds, plants, animals, insects, lightning, thunder, rain, heat, light, wind and scents. I believe I felt what Bogdan meant when he said ‘his heart grows when he enters the forest’, meaning that he is indeed very happy.

Development in the 1990s in theory of practice resonates with certain points of the paradigm of communalism, put forward by Gísli Pálsson. He uses this term also in relation to the way fieldwork is conducted. The way I was working with Bogdan seems to come close to some of the points made by Pálsson (1996, 72-73):

- Dismissing the dualism of experts and laypersons: Bogdan and I joined each other in the enterprise of making a film, and I never experienced something as ‘expert’ and ‘layman’. I didn’t have the pretention that I know everything better, just because I am an anthropology student. I was more or less skilled in working with the camera, have read some theories, and was curious about the thoughts of Bogdan. He brought all the knowledge it took to go in the forest, find its resources and come out of it. We both had something which could enhance the making of the film and the research, and we both gave it unconditionally to the research. Almost as a symbolic example of this cooperation and equality, I recall Bogdan saying: ‘You have the camera in your hand, I have the fishing rod, so we both hold something in our hands and we are walking, sitting and talking.’

- Attention to whole persons: my whole person and personality was launched in this research and Bogdan's whole person was addressed. In the field I did not ponder on my 'researcher-self'⁹, I behaved as I felt it is correct to behave in a given situation, even when it was an impatient or worried reply I gave to Bogdan. What I said to him was generated in my personality framed by our relationship. I said things I would have said off-camera, or without having the fieldwork as context. Next to this, I addressed Bogdan's total person. Although at the beginning I was more into the issues related to the initial research question which focused on the 'homo economicus' in Bogdan, I soon realized that the emerging issues and focusing on his whole personality might be more valuable than my preconceived ideas. From then on I was open to his 'whole being', talking to him as I would without a camera or a fieldwork to conduct.
- Master-apprentice relations: during the fieldwork I felt being Bogdan's apprentice. We not only would talk about his relationship to and philosophy on nature and the filming process, but he would tell about his practical knowledge: how to put a hook on a line; which bait to use, and where to find them; where the mushrooms grow; how to pick blueberries. He tried teaching me fishing, and reading signs of the environment: recognizing the habitat of mushrooms by surrounding plants; how to pick mushrooms without breaking them; how to behave when I meet a viper or a bear; the use of plants; how close I can come to the river without scaring the trout away. He would instruct me what colours I was allowed to wear during fishing. Sometimes he would express his satisfaction that I kept up walking with him and that I could catch fish. Other times, when I scared the fish away, he would express his dissatisfaction and reminded me that there is room for improvement.

The research focused thus on the individual, but not on 'the autonomous individual separated from the social world by the surface of the body, but rather the whole person in action, acting within the contexts of that activity' (Pálsson 1996, 72-73). The focus was Bogdan in the following two contexts: that of nature, and of the fieldwork. The focus on the previous meant discovering his relationship with the surrounding environment; the latter meant discovering the gradual opening up of Bogdan in the context of our unfolding relationship as the fieldwork progressed.

⁹ As I did in the past, always trying to figure out how a researcher should or shouldn't be, and what kinds of questions a researcher should ask.

2.2. Research as a creative process

'Be as ignorant of what you are going to catch as a fisherman of what is at the end of his fishing rod' (Buddhist saying).

In order to find new fruitful grounds of knowledge production, there are attempts to explore the possibilities of bringing together the methods of art and that of anthropology (cf. Schneider and Wright 2010). In this attempt, '[o]ne area, where artistic process provides an interesting way to rethink established working patterns, is with reference to fieldwork' (Schneider and Wright 2010, 12). George Marcus describes critical reflexivity as the method which has become a tool to 'unmask and transgress the hegemonic regime of naturalistic modes of narration and representation, and then to encourage different kinds of relationships and normative communities of knowledge production in the act of research or art-making itself' (2010, 84). However, he himself points out that 'this reflexivity failed to generate new strategies, forms and norms of practice to encounter the more complex, parallel and fragmented worlds that many fieldwork projects must now negotiate [...] Critical reflexivity could not breach the historically embedded purpose in ethnography of documentation and realist or naturalist interpretation arising from it [...] the genre form remains resolutely associated with the documentary function' (ibid.). In what follows I try to describe shortly that the way I did my fieldwork can be compared to the way I work with one art form: designing and making clothes and objects, though I don't consider myself a 'proper artist'. By this analogy, I will describe how I tried to go beyond the documentary function of research and film, in favour of the creating and discovering function.¹⁰ The questions which are relevant were formulated by Grimshaw, Owen and Ravetz: 'What sort of materials do artists and anthropologists work with? How do they go about fashioning these into meaningful objects?' (2010, 152).

2.2.1. The way I did the fieldwork

Searching for a term which would give the method I applied a name, I came across *bricolage*.

After my initial research question relating to globalization was proven if not invalid then at least peripheral, to Bogdan's life, I was open to new questions and issues emerging from the research. I had the opportunity to open up and start from scratch. *Bricolage* views research methods actively rather than passively, meaning that we actively construct our research method from the tools at hand rather than passively receiving the 'correct', universally

¹⁰ If I did document something, then it was this creation/discovery.

applicable methodologies (Kincheloe 2004, 2). I had certain ‘components’ at hand: a video camera, some training in doing research with it, the setting, Bogdan’s occupation, his and my personality, our unfolding relationship, and an open-minded and supportive supervisor. With these given, I started my fieldwork, and I was open to anything relevant coming up.

Now I feel that flexibility was an inherent value of the fieldwork, and I believe that what Bogdan and I have been doing was employing ‘the resources of cinematography and use the camera to *create*’ (Bresson 1975, 5). We created a relationship which gave a fertile ground for researching the emerging issues and which led to the findings on knowledge production, as *bricoleurs* create rather than find meaning in enacted reality (Kincheloe 2004, 5).

Bricoleurs understand that researchers’ interactions with the objects of their inquiries are always complicated, mercurial, unpredictable and complex. Such conditions negate the practice of planning research strategies in advance. *Bricoleurs* enter into the research act as methodological negotiators, always respecting the demands of the task at hand (Kincheloe 2004, 3). The flexibility and openness enabled me to start an *improvisatory practice* (Grimshaw, Owen and Ravetz 2010, 149), in which I let myself become led by Bogdan: literally, into the forest where I could enter through him; but also on another level. I was open to be led into his thoughts, our unfolding relationship, his perception on his work and Romania, reflections on the filmmaking process. Our conversations tended to be unpredictable, ‘fluid’, metaphorical; one question would generate another; one topic would give rise to another. I was not having interviews, I was conversing with him, and this approach is strengthened by a further point of Pálsson: fieldwork ‘is a long conversation; anthropologists produce their ethnography *with* a responding people’ (1996, 73 quoting Gudeman and Rivera 1990). I used this method as an experiment, and I was curious to see how it would turn out. Later I understood that this experimentation was a ‘knowledge-generating procedure’ (Schneider and Wright 2010, 11 quoting MacDonald and Basu 2008, 2), as it brought to the surface unexpected issues. This was a good way of talking to Bogdan as he could express himself well in such a manner, being an associative person with metaphorical thinking. I was not forcing Bogdan into pre-set ideas and questions; he was given the space to express himself. My task was exploring it, and I was interested in the emerging issues. When I look back, I see that I was not so much trying to find knowledge, not having an idea as to what exactly I was looking for, I was more trying to let it ‘emerge’ (Schneider and Wright 2010, 11 quoting Sutherland and Krzys Acord 2007 126, 130).

The first six weeks of work with this method went well, and I felt that I managed to enter Bogdan’s world. From the initial idea to the emerging issues I experienced the project as a

linear development. Nevertheless after a time I realized that in the long run this method might undermine the project, as I felt that the work started stagnating. For a time I was ‘moving in a circle’, returning to certain over-discussed topics: his relation to nature and his love for Romania. I decided to dwell more on the issues about Romania. I felt that these were unclear to me: Bogdan seemed double on questions related to Romania, though he mostly talked about loving the country.

In the research process I tried to be attentive to him, to be fast in taking the turns which might occur (both in walking and conversations), to take turns myself if they were appropriate, and to find the right ‘interplay of meaning and being’ (MacDougall 2006, 4). I tried to make sure that the ‘meanings take into account the autonomy of being. Meaning can easily overpower being’ (ibid.), and this is what I wanted to avoid when following him and finding out where he was leading me. This required my trust that I knew he is an intelligent and responsible man, who would not just fool me, and that he would not lead me into the deep forest and into the ‘deep forest’ of his thoughts and relationship with nature just to let me lose my way. Bogdan took my questions seriously, even when they seemed ‘unanthropological, chatty or silly’: How would it be to be invisible? What would you change if you could start your life over again? What would you do if you had a million? How do you think the film will be? How do you feel when you catch a fish? He never seemed puzzled by these ‘banal’ questions, on the contrary, he seemed to be rather responsive to them. The questions I asked were more related to the realm of ‘being’ than that of ‘meaning’. Obviously, already in the field I was trying to make meaning out of it, and this quest for meaning influenced the way I asked further, in the sense that once I identified an issue, I asked more about it. I wish to point out that as a research approach *bricolage* does not always follow the tradition of using just what is ‘already in existence [...] reconstructing such material’, but also include that collected for the purpose of the study (Wibberley 2012, 6 quoting Lévi-Strauss 1972, 35). One should definitely not think that I just put together whatever I found useful without any coherence. I used both what I found but also what I considered the general framework of the research: Bogdan’s activities out in nature.

Against my expectations the final stage of the research offered a significant change. Bogdan suddenly admitted that he had been presenting things differently than he really thinks they are. He told me he was too attached to me, and didn’t want to make mistakes or give a bad impression of himself. He also said I intimidated him, leading him to present things in a way he thought I might like to hear. I asked if he had not been saying the (or his) truth. He

replied that he said the truth, but he ‘wrapped it up in an acceptable aura’. I asked him to exemplify and as a result he told about the other side of Romania: the problems and injustice.

I left the fieldwork site having this as the last filming session: throughout the research time I had been exploring Bogdan’s world, only to find out at the end that he had been telling a covered up truth for me, in order not to disappoint me or make a bad impression of himself. What is more, I caused him doing this, without knowing it. Not only this, I also intimidated him, and this inhibited him from talking the way he wanted to. Admittedly, for Bogdan it was important that a woman was making a film about him, and I believe that at the same time me being a woman intimidated him. He feels that he could not have talked with a man: he admitted that he would have refused a request from Ralph (my husband and fellow student) for making a film with him. In this sense, the *bricolage* constructs a far more active role for people both in shaping reality and in creating the research processes and narratives that represent it (Kincheloe 2004, 2). As such, I can see that the fieldwork has become what Alyssa Grossman calls a ‘dynamic and relational process that profoundly influences and shapes - rather than merely aids or facilitates the research’ (Grossman 2014, 5).

2.2.2. The way I design and create things

The way I design and create things is similar to the way I conducted the fieldwork. I do not follow patterns (preconceived ideas) as to how the upcoming item should be. I imagine the outcome, and that usually happens in the following way: I see a colour, a shape, a texture, which triggers my fantasy. Then I look at the components I have and what can come out of it: the yarn, the needles I want to use, whether I want to knit or crochet. When I have all the components together, I match them, see how they fit best. The designing and the making happen at the same time, under the umbrella of experimentation and improvisation. I start making the item and while making it the design (the idea) emerges, changes, based on the principle of harmony.¹¹ When I see it as disharmonious, I change directions and try it differently: I use a different method, colour, shape or material. When I make irrevocable mistakes, I try to incorporate them in the design: to use them in a creative and constructive way. Often what I had seen as a mistake, when incorporated properly, became a prominent part of the design, offering possibilities that I could not have thought of without making the mistake. This experience in design is for me strikingly similar to the ‘mistakes’ I made in my fieldwork; when I inhibited and intimidated Bogdan and caused him to manipulate the research.

¹¹ Even though this is a vague and individually interpreted concept.

Now I see this more a value than a mistake, as it led me to discover more layers of the research.

My general experience is that the items I imagine to make end up being quite different, so the final outcome is rather unpredictable, a surprise to me as well. How the material will form in my hands cannot be known beforehand, as it is a process of unfolding of ideas and forms: “artists have stressed many times over the inherently open and processual character of the artwork, in fact its ‘essential’ incompleteness, thus emphasizing its transient character” (Schneider and Wright 2010, 20). At the beginning there are many possibilities as to how the result could be, but my experience is that it is wiser to be flexible and relinquish ideas when others seem more promising. In the case of the fieldwork I chose dropping the idea of globalisation, as it did not fit the ‘harmony’ of the work: it was ‘mismatching’ one of the main ‘components’ given, most notably Bogdan’s personality.

Schneider and Wright see the incompleteness of artwork as a potential to fieldwork. They believe that the whole structure and process of fieldwork and interaction with research subjects in anthropology needs rethinking, and this is where a lot can be learned from more open-ended, ‘incomplete’ procedures in the arts (2010, 19). Conversely, George Marcus proposes ‘incompleteness as a norm’ for anthropological research (Schneider and Wright 2010, 20 quoting Marcus 2009, 24). Similarly to this, *bricoleurs* focus their attention on addressing the complexity of the lived world, in the process understanding that the knowledge they produce should not be viewed as a trans-historical body of truth, but it is provisional and ‘in process’ (Kincheloe 2004, 32-33).

I do not claim that in the field I have been using these (for me) novel theories on doing fieldwork. These insights arise due to my ulterior readings, and these parallels I recognize only now. I believe the decision to use this improvisatory and experimental method was more an intuitive decision than careful weighing of possibilities. Having had experience in doing fieldwork I knew what kind of fieldwork *does not* work with me, and this helped taking the decision for an open-ended, creative and flexible research.

The idea of relying on my designing and creating process was triggered by a fieldwork techniques course of Anna Grimshaw: ‘students were encouraged to build something from what was available and to attend carefully to the distinctive qualities of materials collected - that is, how the things looked, felt to the touch, smelled, moved, etc. Having selected certain materials, the next step required the students to work together to fashion a representational object – one that was intended to communicate a particular interpretation of the world. How might the process of making yield new insights about how knowledge is generated and given

expression? The purpose was to introduce students to the sensory, material and performative dimensions of fieldwork and to try to persuade them of the intellectual challenge – and creative possibilities – that might follow from a commitment to a perspective that might be called ‘being in the world’ (Grimshaw, Owen and Ravetz 2010, 152-153).

2.2.3. The way I made the film - through *bricolage* to a poetical film

2.2.3.1. *Editing with bricolage - an example*

With hindsight I can see that I applied the same method in the filmmaking process as I did in the fieldwork and in design, namely *bricolage*. The most important to point out once more here is that *bricolage* is not about employing an inflexible protocol, template or framework which then shapes or even determines a specific outcome, but about engaging in a process, out of which numerous outcomes can potentially emerge (Wibberley 2012, 7). I would like to emphasize again the processual character, open-endedness, flexibility of the fieldwork and the way I design and create things, as described in the previous subchapters. In the following I will reflect on the filmmaking.

I see now that the filmmaking *process* has been just as creative as my practice of design and way of conducting the fieldwork. Next to its anthropological value - presenting certain aspects of life in Romania and human-nature relationship - the film owns certain artistic sides regarding how it makes this point: in a metaphorical, poetical way. In the following I will try to give an account of this artistic side. I will focus on the editing process, since this gave me the most creative possibilities.¹² I will mainly rely on the work of Andrey Tarkovsky: in my experience his films are like poems; and poetry is the art form my film comes the closest to.

I organized the material in a different way than was advised to us during film supervision. I avoided using the suggested method, i.e. breaking down the material into individual sequences, which then would be put together to make up a coherent story. My material required a more flexible and ‘organic’ approach: to start at a point and let the film emerge, grow in this process, involving elements subsequently, in the spirit of the *bricolage*. I did not know on beforehand how the film would be and what elements would be involved, I had no plan or outline. I worked intuitively, often not being able to argue rationally why certain elements were important, but I felt that they must be in the film. This is how I included

¹² During shooting there was often no time for paying extensive attention to the expressivity, composition, etc. of the image, I was happy if I could capture life happening in front of the lens. Note the exception of the haptic images, on which I reflect later in the thesis.

elements which previously seemed insignificant and devoid of informational value in the perspective of an anthropological research. The example I would like to give here is the sound of the cuckoo, which I mainly used intra-diagetically, i.e. elsewhere on the soundtrack, independently of the visible action to what it relates (Henley 2010, 143).¹³

By attending more carefully to the sound, the quality of the film can be improved in three related ways: 1) by ‘thickening’ the ethnographic description on which the film is based; 2) by enhancing the spectators’ understanding and vicarious experience of the subject matter presented in the film; 3) and by enhancing the modes through which the filmmaker can propose an interpretation of the significance of that subject matter (Henley 2010, 131-132). In what follows I will try to show that by employing the sound of the cuckoo, intuitively I was trying to obtain these three outcomes.

From being ‘just a sound’, the cuckoo has evolved into a leitmotif in the film. The way I use this sound comes close to Andrey Tarkovsky’s vision on employing music in film, i.e. using it as a refrain (1986, 158). Quoting Edgar Morin, Peter I. Crawford points out that ‘the fluidity that differentiates the cinema from the language of words brings it close to music, since both can do without words to discourse and since their effects remain ‘ineffable’. Everything that makes the cinema closer to archaic language than ordinary language is basically what renders archaic language close to music: rhythm, leitmotifs, repetitions’ (2010, 30, quoting Morin 2005, 187-188). Music in film - and the cuckoo sound in my case - helps the viewer return again and again to the emotions the film has given, with the experience deepened each time with new impressions (Tarkovsky 1986, 158), though the feelings and emotions evoked upon hearing this sound again and again in the film remain indeed ineffable. The first time we hear the cuckoo is in the introductory sequence, where I use it juxtaposed with Bogdan referring to Romania as the prodigal son, or as a courtesan who loves us truly, but who is robbed and mocked. This establishes the cuckoo sound as something melancholic in a natural and discrete way, as here the viewer may still think that the sound is just the normal environmental sound of the forest. In this sense, the cuckoo sound here serves to 1) ‘thicken’ the ethnographic description and 2) enhance the spectators’ understanding and vicarious experience of the subject matter presented in the film (Henley 2010, 131-132): the viewer is introduced to the soundscape of the place where the filming happens. Soundscapes in which human beings live are varied and these soundscapes are often culturally marked in

¹³ Though sometimes this sound appears naturally as environmental sound.

specific ways, one of the reasons of this being that certain of their features have particular cultural significance to the subjects. This insight can be used by ethnographic filmmakers to evoke not just a generic sense of space, ‘but a sense of *place*, i.e. a sense of space that is culturally specific to the particular location in which the film has been shot’ (Henley 2010, 138). In the case of my film, I did feel that the cuckoo sound strongly relates to the place presented but I did not realize why until I had finished the film. I travelled back to Romania to present the film to Bogdan. When I woke up in the morning, what struck me the most was this sound, coming in through the open window. After having been distanced from it for so many months I went through a process of alienation and this made it possible that – once back in Romania - I would recognize this sound as ‘Romanian’, and this is why it has become such a central element of the film.

This sequence not only introduces the viewer to the soundscape of the place, but also the melancholic tone becomes attached to the cuckoo sound. Each time the sound returns, the accompanying melancholy also returns as a means of heightening the emotional resonance of what is being said. As such, 3) it creates the possibility for me as the filmmaker to propose an interpretation of the significance of the subject matter (Henley 2010, 131-132), in the sense that by using the cuckoo sound I guide the emotional attention of the viewer to what is juxtaposed with this sound. By this I give certain meaning to a particular scene and/or the film provokes a particular range of sentiments in the spectator (Henley 2010, 137). The various screenings of my film proved to me that the sensitive viewers picked up on an emotional level on what has been screened, and the importance of the cuckoo sound in it. The one example I give here is from a personal email received from Alyssa Grossman, who has spent much time researching and living in Romania:

Orsi,
I just watched the trailer and it gave me goosebumps... [...] I don't remember hearing the cuckoo in the earlier version you sent me -- but it is so quintessentially a Romanian sound that I associate with my time in villages there, and it is such an ingrained belief about having money in your pocket when you hear it, I remember that so well. (Email from Alyssa Grossman, 2013 April).

The second time the cuckoo sound returns is in juxtaposition with Bogdan’s casual-melancholic reflection on the Romanian saying: if one has money in one’s pocket upon hearing the cuckoo for the first time, one will have it all year. This sequence is central as it evokes poetically the personality of Bogdan, a sensitive, intelligent man, with his calm and reflective voice. It also establishes the relationship between him and me: in-depth talk

characteristic for our friendship; and the overall tone of the film is established. It also foreshadows the fact that Bogdan feels unhappy about certain things in his life, which will be revealed subsequently.

In this sequence I use not only the cuckoo sound, but also Bogdan's voice non-diegetically, i.e. the source of the sound is neither visible on the screen nor has been implied to be present in the action (we see nature images juxtaposed with the sound, Bogdan does not appear). This sequence contains the part when I ask Bogdan: '*Are you happy?*'; and Bogdan's answer: first a surprised laughter; then telling me that he is happy out in nature, that the stress and money he has to deal with is too much. The images do not strictly relate to what is being said; and the sequence seeks to reach out to the viewer on an emotional rather than intellectual level. In this way the film is relative to poems, as it builds on metaphors and it creates the space – and perhaps joy (or in some cases perhaps tiresome irritation) – for the viewer of using their imagination in understanding what the film conveys to them. The metaphoric use of sound is one of the most fruitful, flexible, and inexpensive means of this: by choosing carefully what to eliminate, and then re-associating different sounds that seem at first hearing to be somewhat at odds with the accompanying image, the filmmaker can open up a perceptual vacuum into which the mind of the audience must inevitably rush (Crawford 2010, 28 quoting Murch 1994, pp. ix-xx). Therefore using the cuckoo sound and Bogdan's voice in such a manner enhances the modes through which I as the filmmaker can propose an interpretation of the significance of the subject matter (Henley 2010, 131-132).

One could argue that the belief related to the cuckoo sound has no informational value as 'data' when it comes to anthropological enquiry. However, I felt that the gradual unfolding of the film demanded the inclusion of this belief and the accompanying cuckoo sound. I am aware that it is my subjective vision that I find it relevant, and this points to a more accentuated authorship. However, drawing on Tarkovsky, there should be an organic link between the subjective impression of the author and his/her objective representations of reality, without this the work lacks credibility, authenticity and inner truth (1986, 21). I am also aware that this is Tarkovsky's view on art and the artist, not the anthropologist. The artist breaks down reality in the prism of his perception and uses a foreshortening technique of his own to show different sides of reality (Tarkovsky 1986, 26-27). I am aware that in this thesis I am supposed to reflect on anthropological inquiry and not art. But in the case of ethnographic filmmaking we inevitably use an art form, i.e. film. We use an audio-visual *language* to communicate about certain social phenomena, and I find it relevant that a responsible

filmmaker at least tries to familiarize oneself with this language, not only with anthropological theory. This realization made me turn to film theory and to the work of an artist-filmmaker, Tarkovsky, whose films give me a very special poetical experience. In my film I am not intending to make a factual argument, I intend to convey the ‘feeling of Bogdan’s situation’, poetically. The belief on the cuckoo sound shows the melancholic situation of a man who puts cotton wool in his ears to avoid hearing the cuckoo before he has money. This, by means of metaphor, points to the life situation of this man, and of many other Romanians. In this sense the film is also intrinsically anthropological. It refers to the context of the research and it casts light on the social problems relevant in Romania, in a poetical and therefore more memorable manner. By using this metaphor in the film I avoid giving clear, factual explanation and emphasis on the socio-economic situation of Bogdan in the larger context of Romania, although I do this in the written thesis, as undue emphasis on ideas can restrict the imagination of the spectator (Tarkovsky 1986, 25). Cinema often struggles to go beyond the vococentric and logocentric universe of academia and exposition, which is where sound and other senses play a pivotal role (Crawford 2010, 40). Sound plays a particularly important role in the endeavour of reaching out to the viewer on an emotional level, as it provokes a sentimental reaction in the spectator that engenders a more profound form of experience than the cognitive operation involved in the visual perception of a film (Henley 2010, 129). The metaphor of putting cotton wool in one’s ear upon hearing the cuckoo hints to a social reality and the viewer’s imagination and empathy is called upon to understand this social reality. In this sense the film shares yet another similarity with poetry. Those who have always money in their pockets will not bother putting cotton wool in their ears to avoid hearing the cuckoo.

The cuckoo sound appears for the last time in the closing sequence where we see the landscape Bogdan inhabits and loves, and we hear his melancholic poem on Romania. The sound appears unexpectedly, way after the poem had started. I use it with the same intention: once more call for the attention and empathy of the viewer, to once more underline the emotional and melancholic voice of the man of nature. Throughout the film this sound goes through a ‘metamorphosis’: at the beginning it serves only as an environmental sound, but it evolves into becoming a metaphor of the individual’s melancholic reflection on his social reality.

As Henley points out, the manipulation of sound becomes more debatable but also more interesting when it offers some sort of comment on the action of the film by giving certain

meaning to a particular scene and/or by provoking a particular range of sentiments in the spectator (2010, 137). When referring to certain problems of sound in ethnographic film, Crawford sees the ‘often awkward’ perception of using sound in ways where there is not a directly established link between what is seen in the images and what is heard on the soundtrack as one side of the problem (2010, 32). I am also aware that the film presents my and Bogdan’s Romania-image. I present this country through my eyes, how I experienced it throughout my life, and how I have seen it during shooting: Romania’s beauty and richness, which goes along with the numerous social problems. In addition, the way I edited perhaps places the film on the border between anthropology and art and pushes the limits of objectivity, data, knowledge, and how this can be obtained and conveyed. Nevertheless, I cannot present any other Romania image than my own and Bogdan’s, and all I can try is to convey this sense of Romania to the audience. I am the filter through which the audience can experience this country and in this sense, I assume an artist’s authorship over the art work. I do admit my subjectivity, as any false claim of objectivity – as pointed it out at the beginning of the methodological chapter – is undermining the credibility of the work. *Bricoleurs* understand that the research process is subjective and that instead of repressing this subjectivity they attempt to understand its role in shaping inquiry (Kincheloe 2004, 6). Furthermore, if an author is moved by the landscape chosen, if it brings back memories to him and suggest associations, even subjective ones, as it certainly does in my case, then this will in turn affect the audience with particular excitement (Tarkovsky 1986, 28), and that is what I am hoping for: to reach out to the audience on a different level than that of mere intellect. After several public screenings of my film I could see that it moved the audience: the film was followed by a deep silence and a number of people came to me to say that they were touched.

2.2.3.2. *Poetry*

My editing brings the film into the territory of poetry, as I have exemplified it with the case of the metaphor built up by using the cuckoo sound. In the following I would like to dwell more on the idea of film as poetry. In his essay on the language of cinema André Bazin states that the filmmaker is equal of the novelist (2004, 147). I propose, following Tarkovsky, that the filmmaker can be equal to the poet. The idea of building my film up like a poem came from the material itself, in the spirit of the *bricolage*.

Narrative structure

What did it mean for me to create a film as a poem? Firstly, the narrative is not primarily ‘traditional’ with a ‘story’ that starts at A and ends in B, and what is in between is a logical

development of events causally succeeding each other. The film subverts this kind of narrative, and plays with different narrative devices. Here I find it useful to refer to the concepts of 'syuzhet' (plot) and 'fabula' (story), borrowed from formalists (Etherington Wright and Doughty 2011, 48-49). Reading some film theory helped me find these concepts, which may be useful when trying to describe the idiosyncratic, contradictory film narrative. This narrative is meant to serve the purpose of reconstructing the impression both Bogdan and I have of Romania: a conflict-ridden connection to this country, which is often referred to as the country of contradictions, where one finds rich and poor, traditional and modern, rural and urban, etc.

My contribution in creating this contradiction was relevant when it came to the *syuzhet*, or the plot of the film. The plot is the organization of material presented on the screen, the sequences or frames chosen by the director (Etherington Wright and Doughty 2011, 48-49). The way I constructed the first part of the film creates the expectation in the audience that this will be a charming film, presenting a beautiful and charming Romania image, with Romanians making a living from nature, loving the country and nature and living a happy life.¹⁴ As opposed to the concept of *syuzhet*, the *fabula* or story is audience-led. Here the audience plays an active role in the sense that it must make assumptions based on the information given (Etherington Wright and Doughty 2011, 48). I expect that the audience will infer from the material presented that they will see a nice Romania image, which at the end will turn out to be different. In this manner they will have the chance to experience the contradiction Bogdan and I experience, and in this sense the film in itself is a metaphor for the contradictory character of Romania. From several screenings I received positive feedback on this, people were able to appreciate that the film takes such a turn and presents a complex image of the country. On the other hand, there were people who reported to me that they did not understand why the film ended the way it did, although it began so positively.

I had no sense of this when I started editing the film. I just worked in the spirit of the *bricolage* and allowed the different shots to make up a whole. I experienced what Tarkovsky describes, when writing about the making of *Mirror*: the parts came together because of a propensity inherent in the material, which must have originated during filming (1986, 117). I am inclined to agree to Tarkovsky's vision, that '[e]diting a picture correctly, competently,

¹⁴ Nevertheless, the attentive viewer may have picked up on the contradiction already enclosed in the opening sequence: Romania as a courtesan, or prodigal son.

means allowing the separate scenes and shots to come together spontaneously, for in a sense they edit themselves; they join up according to their own intrinsic pattern. It is simply a question of recognising and following this pattern while joining and cutting' (1986, 116).

Moods and metaphors

Employing the difference between the *syuzhet* and *fabula* helped me organize the material in a poetic way also on another level than that of the narrative. By employing these narrative devices, I also intend to present the shifting moods and states of mind of the protagonist. In this endeavour, Tarkovsky is advocating the use of poetic logic as a visual representation strategy, and perhaps it is also partly due to this reason that many of his films are considered chaotic and hard to understand (1986, 7-13). Nevertheless, Tarkovsky advocates replacing narrative causality with poetic articulations (1986, 30). In creating these poetic articulations my usage of montage plays a major role.

A number of metaphors can be used to describe the process of producing the *bricolage*: weaving; sewing; quilting; *montage* and collage (emphasis mine) (Wibberley 2012, 6). Note that among these metaphors we find the ones referring to handicraft - weaving, sewing, quilting; this underlines once more the similarity between bricolage and the way I design and create things (as described in the previous subchapter). However, here I would like to draw attention to another metaphor of *bricolage*, namely *montage*, which was a strong instrument in my hand when editing the film in a poetic way. I am aware of the limitations and manipulative character of this cinematic device (cf. Eisenstein 2004, 99-111), and I recognize the fact that montage must be used conscientiously (Balázs 1930 quoted by Metz 2004, 159). I do not claim that I consider form being more important than content at the expense of the subject matter, but I do think that in the case of my film the form is not accidental and it contributes to the content. Borrowing Bazin's terminology, I can see that on one hand my film is 'analytic', i.e. content-driven; on the other hand it is 'expressionist', i.e. based on the plastics of the image and the artifices of the montage; the image and the way of editing contribute to the meaning, or at least enhance it (2004, 142). I tried to exemplify this thoroughly with the case of the sequence featuring the cuckoo sound and Bogdan's melancholic reflection, where both content and form contribute to the 'message' of the film. Here I reflect on montage as the building blocks of metaphors which serve the purpose of making the film poetical.

In Bazin's definition montage is the creation of a sense or a meaning not proper to the images themselves, but derived exclusively from their juxtaposition (2004, 138). The way I

use the concept of montage is slightly different though: I juxtapose images with sound in a way that it creates a metaphor (Bazin 2004, 147). Above I reflected on the importance of sound. In metaphors built up with sound and image I enclose my particular understanding of what it wants to express - as a poet would do and as I had done when I used to publish poetry. Whether the viewer will 'decode' these metaphors in the same way as I 'encode' them, is always to be seen. But by using montage to create metaphors, I am trying to provoke associations in order to only hint at things, not to explain. This evocation and usage of poetic language brings the film close to art. Sergei Eisenstein sees evocation as a stronger cinematographic device than showing everything straightforward (2004, 99-111). My experience after having screened my film is that these 'montage-sequences' in my film did contribute to the overall tone of the film and served the purpose of touching the audience, by underlining Bogdan's character as a philosophical and reflective person with a melancholic tone.

Below I would like to give some examples to enable the reader to understand what I mean by poetic logic through montage. Note that the examples I give emerged from an intuitive, feeling-based editing, and the 'intellectual' insights are a consequence of this approach (meaning that I was not thinking day and night about how to represent something visually, they just happened in the edit suite).

- The words *masculine* and *prodigal son* are juxtaposed with metallic, greyish image of a foggy lake. I felt that this word suggesting strength and virility must go along with images which suggest the same idea. As opposed to this the word *feminine* is juxtaposed with soft focus golden-green of the sun shimmering through the forest, as both the word and the accompanying images suggest kindness and beauty, concepts most commonly associated with femininity.
- The word *courtesan* is juxtaposed with the image of the forest's beauty, this being meant to evoke the duality of Romania, the contradictions which will follow in the film.
- The word *love* is juxtaposed with the image of the wheat, which is a rather overused cliché featuring in the coat of arms of communist Romania, which is the point behind using it: evoking the past which marks Bogdan's life.
- The image with horse and cart and the car, juxtaposed with the question '*So how do we live in this country?*' This juxtaposition is meant to give an impression of current Romania, the divisions between rural-urban, rich-poor, 'the way we live in Romania'.

- Drawing on Tarkovsky, film can be used to portray the hero's individual personality and to reveal his interior world. 'Somewhere here there is an echo of the image of the lyrical hero incarnate in literature, and of course in poetry; he is absent from view, but what he thinks, how he thinks, and what he thinks about build up a graphic and clearly-defined picture of him' (1986, 29). In the case of my film, the sequence when Bogdan talks about the cuckoo sound is meant to express the depth of his thoughts and his personality as a sensitive philosopher who thinks about the broader issues of life, and thus places the film on an existential level. The haptic images of light coming through the green leaves; the gossamer and the light playing on it; the spider web spanned out in the air when I ask what he likes in life, and holding the image juxtaposed with the silence of Bogdan taking his time to think of an answer; and then saying *air* while in that millisecond the image changes to a long shot of the mountain ridge - these are meant to give the viewer an impression of Bogdan's inner character.
- In this particular sequence I was also trying to edit in a way which serves to lay open the logic of a person's thoughts (Tarkovsky 1986, 20). An example of this is the image of the turbulent water juxtaposed with Bogdan expressing his concerns relating to stress and money; the whirling of the foam on the brownish water serves like a visualization of his confusion and feeling of distress.
- On the end of the film we hear Bogdan's poem, *Ode to the Shadow*: I let his metaphors speak for themselves, and I give a calm background to them (first I tried to create myself visual metaphors to accompany his verbal metaphors, but it was too hectic). Tarkovsky uses poetry to express the thoughts and inner state of the heroine (cf. Tarkovsky, *Mirror*), I use Bogdan's poem to sum up on the end his feelings and thoughts on Romania.

I am aware, that by using montage for creating metaphors I express a subjective vision regarding both the content and the form (cf. artist and artistic self-expression, subjective reality), which brings the film close to art. The film reaches out to and touches people, as poetry and art touches one, however at the same time it speaks about reality. The film is not bringing forth arguments on the socio-political situation of Romania and socio-economic facts (poverty and corruption), but it wants to evoke the situation of Bogdan and many other Romanians. And in this montage helps as it evokes what the director wanted to say rather than describes it (Bazin 2004, 147). In this way, the film creates the bridge between humans on a deeper level than that of facts, and it was reinforcing to experience that after screenings of my

film people from different cultures came up to me saying that they were touched by it and understood the situation of Bogdan and of Romanians.

Rhythm

Rhythm was also relevant when it came to creating the shifting of the different moods expressed by the film. The rhythm of the first part of the film turned out to be faster and more dynamic than that of the second part. The dividing point between the first and second part of the film is when I ask: ‘*What do you think the film will be like?*’ In the first part we meet Bogdan and his social world; then we see him depart from the family, go into nature with me, gather all what nature gives him and converse in a light manner. This is the part where the man of nature tells about his love for nature and Romania, and the focus is more on a positive outlook towards nature and society.

The second part of the film has a slower rhythm. Here the other side of the truth is revealed: not just the love for his country, but also the social problems Bogdan experiences there. The conversation in this part step by step builds up a tension, as if all of a sudden something important would be happening, and time would be stopped at the blueberry picking. According to Tarkovsky “[t]he distinctive time running through the shots makes the rhythm of the picture; and rhythm is determined not by the length of the edited pieces, but by the pressure of the time that runs through them [...] Time, imprinted in the frame, dictates the particular editing principle; and the pieces that ‘won’t edit’ - that can’t be properly joined - are those which record a radical different kind of time. [...] The consistency of the time that runs through the shot, its intensity or ‘sloppiness’, could be called time-pressure: then editing can be seen as the assembly of the pieces on the basis of the time-pressure within them” (1986, 117). According to Tarkovsky time becomes tangible in a shot when one senses something significant going on beyond the events on the screen; when one realises, that what one sees in the frame is not limited to its visual depiction, but is ‘a pointer to something stretching out beyond the frame and to infinity, a pointer to life’ (1986, 117). In the second part of the film the man of nature is not ‘lugging’ the student from place to place anymore, to show all what he is doing in nature. Time stops, as though it freezes, and it lasts until Bogdan tells everything what is on his heart. Then suddenly this arrested time of intense conversation, marked by painful facial expressions of Bogdan and nervous, silly and perhaps desperate questions of the student, is broken by the voice of the neighbour, who shouts a greeting to Bogdan from outside of the frame. All of a sudden time becomes relaxed and flowing again,

just how it was before the conversation. The man of nature, while telling his poem summing up his view on society, looks already back to nature, and the film ends.

During rough cut screenings I often got criticism that the ‘blueberry’ conversation is too long, too boring, too slow and I should break it up by cutting in ‘some family’, as a sort of break to give the viewer a time out. This to me seemed an inappropriate idea, as it would break the intensity and integrity of the arrested time in the conversation, and indeed would mix it up with the ‘sloppiness’ and casualty of how the time flows in the sequences where we can see Bogdan’s family. When I edited the film I didn’t have these thoughts, these occur to me only after having seen Tarkovsky’s films and having read some of his ideas. Now I can put my finger on why it seemed unacceptable to edit together the ‘blueberry’ conversation and scenes from Bogdan’s family life: not only because it shows an entirely different side of Bogdan’s life and Bogdan but also because the time-pressure, the ‘pointer to life’ is of different nature and intensity.

2.3. Senses (both in Bogdan’s and my experience)

The recent emphasis on the senses in anthropology cuts across both art and anthropology (Schneider and Wright 2010, 5). Here I would like to reflect on the various senses which contributed both to the fieldwork (most prominently sound, touch, intuition¹⁵) and to the editing of the film (haptic vision, sound).

It is almost a truism to say that we perceive not with the eyes, the ears or the surface of the skin, but with the whole body (Ingold 2011, 45). Nevertheless, I still find it worthwhile to mention that the fact that it was carried out in nature rendered the research a multisensory one, by exposing my body to whatever Bogdan was exposed to, be it heat, rain, water or tiredness. Especially when working out in nature, I find it important to reflect on the different senses (though I will not reflect on all of them), as there are many simultaneous stimuli which address a number of them. Imagine filming, while you are walking, your feet need to be conscious about the surface of the ground you are stepping on, while you are looking through the viewfinder keeping an eye on the ‘target’ of your vision, but also the surrounding as much as you can see by a vision confined in the viewfinder, and another eye closed. In the meantime you are attending to the sounds which might be relevant in recognizing where you step or where you direct your camera; bugs are walking on your neck, branches are scratching

¹⁵ Though this last one is strictly speaking not a sense, but it has been central in the fieldwork, so I reflect on it here.

your face, you feel very warm in the heat, but welcome a cooling breeze, which at times turns into wind disturbing the sound, so you need to attend to this as well. And in the meantime, you are attending to the conversation you are having with your informant. This all happens at the same time and fast. The bottom line is that the environment we experience, know and move around in is not sliced up along the lines of the sensory pathways by which we enter to it. The world we perceive is the *same* world, whatever path we take, and in perceiving it, each of us acts as an undivided centre of movement and awareness (Ingold 2011, 136). In this multisensory attempt the vehicle of perception was my body, which is a *residue* in the work (MacDougall 2006, 26), not only by being there and filming, but also in the sense that I am the filter, whatever I present are my sensorial experiences (with the help of the camera obviously).

2.3.1. Touch

2.3.1.1. *Man touching nature*

The senses of vision and hearing were consistently ranked over the contact sense of touch (Ingold 2011, 45), but not this is the reason why I start with touch. I start with the tactile sense as a tribute to Bogdan, as to me it seems that for him this was a core sense.

When it comes to the haptic perception of the hands, it might seem obvious that Bogdan is engaged with the physical world to a high degree: collecting the resources of nature happens by hand. This teaches him dexterity, as well as tactile knowledge: for example the texture of a young, middle ripe and an overripe mushroom (these categories are valued differently); or the dexterity he needs when fixing even the tiniest hook on the line. In Bogdan's cosmology there was one thing related to tactility (and vision as well) I found curious: he believes that if he touches (ex. by accident with his foot) or sees a mushroom, he must pick it (he cannot wait until later in the day when it would be bigger), as the seeing or touching causes the mushroom wither. Once I found a small mushroom, I picked it for him, demonstrating that I am a good apprentice, but he was disappointed that I did not let it grow. But then he said that I anyway saw it and this would have caused the mushroom wither, no matter how young it is.

On two occasions I joined Bogdan to the middleman who bought the mushrooms for export. Both occasions bore in themselves a sense of stress and negativity. My general personal experience from Romania is that physical work - working with the hands - is less appreciated than mental work, and people doing physical work tend to be less respected. There is a separation between the activities of the mind at rest and the body in transit, between

cognition and locomotion, and between the space of social and cultural life and the ground upon which that life is materially enacted (Ingold 2011, 37). This separation is expressed in the fact that Bogdan's work is treated less respectfully than what one might suppose based on the hardships he faces. This was expressed by the fact that the middleman, younger than Bogdan, was theeing him, which would not suit an older person, unless there is a strong familiarity between the two, which I didn't detect in this case.¹⁶

Tim Ingold defines this separation as the elevation of the head over heels as the locus of creative intelligence (2011, 44). Another middleman we visited was surprised that a student – who normally should do intellectual work - indeed joined Bogdan in the forest and mingled herself in the sensory world. They only buy the resources of the nature, but do not physically engage with the world where it comes from. While Bogdan was selling the mushrooms, I was filming and they kept encouraging me to talk to the son of the middleman (who was an anthropologist), instead of focusing on Bogdan. This was separating Bogdan and me based on what the middleman assumed about us: that I belong to the world of the anthropologist son, thus those who do mental work, and Bogdan belongs to those who perform physical work, and in their eyes I should be more interested in the anthropologist than in Bogdan.

Constance Classen points out that sensory relations are also moral relations (2005, 162), making a statement about different statuses and roles. When the middleman refuses to engage with the sensory world of Bogdan he simultaneously makes a statement about the social category he believes Bogdan is part of: that of those who do physical work, sensuously in the sensory world as against them who don't work with their hands, who do the paperwork for shipping the mushrooms abroad. 'Handwork' has low status, 'headwork' has high status; as if it was a statement that the ones doing handwork should be submissive, the ones doing headwork should have a feeling of superiority.¹⁷

By imbuing sensory values with social values, cultures attempt to ensure that their members will perceive the world aright (Classen 2005, 162). The social value of gathering the resources of the forest is low compared to 'intellectual' work. Bogdan learns this 'social rule'

¹⁶ He was not addressing Bogdan by the polite formula, but by the familiar one (in Norwegian the polite formula would be 'De' while the familiar one 'du').

¹⁷ One can feel this for example in public offices or shops in Romania, where clerks and shop assistants tend to play out their imagined authority over the people needing their services. Alyssa Grossman has an interesting account on how this behaviour of shop assistants may stem from the time of communism (cf. Grossman 2013, 26-27).

through his body: he feels that his hard labour, having to earn his living with ‘sweat and toil’ - as he says it - results in exploitation and little respect. At the same time, the case of Bogdan offers an interesting veto to this way of thinking: one might be surprised about the fact that he is a philosopher, a poet, an intellectual in the forest.

As a further refining of the category of touch Ingold draws attention to the feet as a mediator of tactility. He proposes that a ‘more literally *grounded* approach to perception should help to restore touch to its proper place in the balance of the senses. For it is through our feet, in contact with the ground (albeit mediated by footwear) that we are most fundamentally and continually ‘in touch’ with our surroundings’ (Ingold 2011, 45). According to him, studies of haptic perception have focused almost exclusively on manual touch, and he believes that the challenge is to discover the special properties of pedestrian touch that might distinguish it from the manual modality (ibid.).

I was surprised that Bogdan walks up to 60 km a day, several days in a row. This surprise lasted until I walked with him 40 km. When I told him that I never expected this from myself, he pointed it out that walking in grass and moss is different than on the asphalt of an urban area. Walking in nature is a haptic contact of the feet and the environment which offers a great pleasure. This means not only bodily pleasure, but also mental. The images one sees in nature are not ‘aggressively’ entering the mind trying to convey a message (like roadside billboards, which make my trips to the city very tiring), but as if they were soothing background images, giving the room for meditation and contemplation.

2.3.1.2. *Nature touching man*

One of the ways how nature touches man is the weather, what Ingold calls the fluxes of the medium (2011, 138 quoting Ingold 2005a). “So long as we are - as we say - ‘out in the open’, the weather is no mere phantasm, the stuff of dreams. It is, to the contrary, fundamental to perception. We do not perceive it, we perceive *in it*” (ibid.). Both Bogdan’s inner and outer character is shaped by his connection with nature and influences of weather. His appearance bears clear signs of being the man of nature: brown skin; fit body; hands stained by soil, blood, blueberries; hardened skin; thick nails. My own experience is similar as far as the touch of nature is concerned: heat, rain, wind, branches, thorns, bugs, water. These experiences make one intensely aware of one’s own being and make one more resistant and feeling strong and healthy, which in its turn might lead to more positive outlook on the world.

As to the inner characteristics: when one is faced with the overwhelming powers of

nature, one's value system might get reorganized. Such a moment in Bogdan's life was when the suddenly flooding river washed him away, leaving almost no escape for him. The river where he is fishing is located below a man-made dam, from which time to time they release water. It happened that once, without warning, they released too much water and the river flushed Bogdan away. He described the near-death experience he had in this situation; and this story is of great importance in his life. Nature made him face death and by this psychologically strengthened him: he is not afraid of death anymore, and by this he experiences a greater degree of freedom in his life.

Ingold advocates thinking of the sky and earth as manifolds of movements implicated in one another. The fluxes of the medium mix with the substance and the land responds to fluxes of the medium (in obvious ways, like becoming muddy, but also in finer ways like the pearls of dew in the tendrils of plants and spiders' webs, cf. haptic images below) (2011, 119). For Bogdan this mingling manifests itself in creating life and a living for him by the resources he collects. This growing and changing is something he himself can see and experience. Especially in the case of the mushrooms, which grow and mature in the course of a day, depending on the humidity and warmth of the weather and the fertility of the soil.

2.3.2. Haptic vision

Vision was the sense which conveyed the least of the reality around me whenever I was out to film the activities of Bogdan. My vision was rather confined and restricted; while shooting I could see only a small part of reality: the image in the viewfinder. As such vision served mainly the purpose of seeing the upcoming film and not the on-going reality. On the other hand, sound and touch conveyed a lot of information about the reality around me, and helped me navigate through this reality.

Nevertheless, vision played a major role when I was taking my nature images, the so called B-rolls. On these occasions, I placed the camera on the tripod, and I was standing behind it. Not being in motion enabled me to focus almost entirely on the images; I did not need to rely on the surrounding sounds, nor on what my feet touched, or how my intuition would direct my movements with the camera. I was most interested in taking the so called 'haptic images'. Haptic perception is usually defined as the combination of tactile, kinaesthetic, and proprioceptive functions, the way we experience touch both on the surface of and inside our bodies. In haptic visuality, the eyes themselves function like organs of touch. Because haptic visuality draws on other senses, the viewer's body is more obviously involved in the process of seeing than is the case with optical visuality (Marks 2002, 2-3).

Having the chance to take my time in looking through the camera, I could see nature differently than it may come across at first sight. I often took extreme close ups to the extent that what I saw in the image became almost unrecognizable; I had to let myself be drawn into the haptic qualities of the image (but of course, for an image to be haptic it is not compulsory to be an extreme close up). Rather than making the object fully available to view, haptic cinema puts the object into question, calling on the viewer to engage in its imaginative construction (Marks 2002, 16). My idea behind taking these haptic images was to give the viewer a chance of seeing nature in the tiniest detail, and/or going into the very materiality of it and giving an impression of how these elements of nature may feel. When I observe nature in tiny details, it gives me a different experience than viewing it holistically: for example seeing the materiality and the beauty of the tiny building blocks of nature (dew-drops on a leaf reflecting the light; the design of snowflakes and ice formations; the structure of tree barks and leaves; the colour composition of flowers and insects, etc.). When I look at nature in such a way, I am amazed in the face of the complexity of the design of the surrounding world; the infinite variety of mixing colours, materials, shapes and textures, and how these details make up the whole. It is perhaps not surprising that these details and how they may feel to the touch inspire me in my design work. And vice-versa, in working with fabrics I am continuously exposed to the haptic qualities of surfaces and so I have a tendency to experience other media, like images too, haptic.

An example of the many haptic images is the water striders floating on the water surface:



This image is not from my footage but I filmed exactly these floating on the water¹⁸. Source: <http://environment.nationalgeographic.com/environment/photos/freshwater-insects/> - accessed 19-10-2013

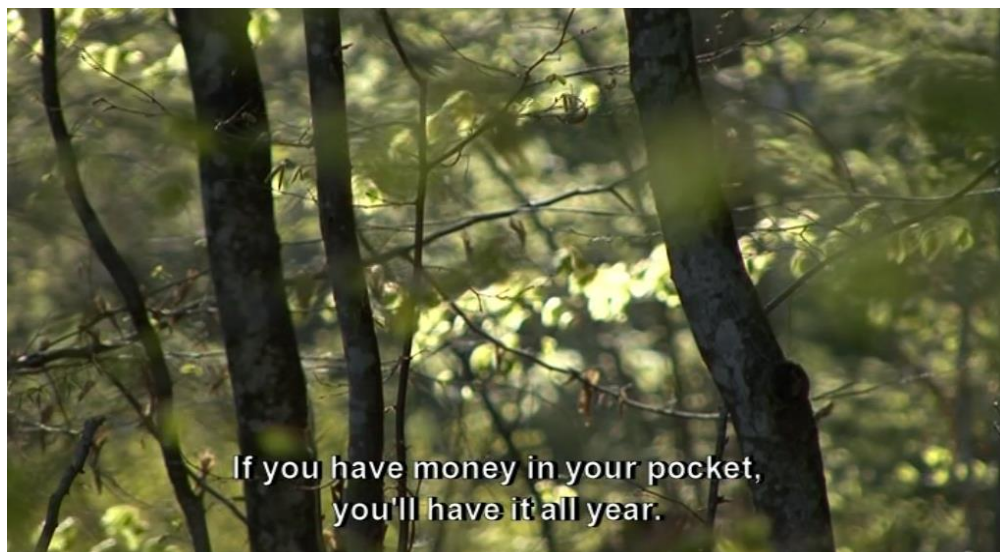
¹⁸ At the time of writing the thesis I could not access this part of the footage any longer.

The material significance of this image outweighs its representational power (Marks 2002, 7). The focus and attention is on the materiality of the image, how the surface of the water might feel, and in this sense it conveys a more synaesthetic experience than only vision. What strikes us most in this image is the materiality of the water surface and how that appears in a different way than we usually see water. In this way, the usual concept of water as ‘object’ is called into question and a different side of it is conveyed: how it feels when touched by the legs of a water strider. Below I present some of the haptic images I use in the film; not all of them need to be close ups to evoke the tactile qualities of what is being shown.

The foggy lake evoking the chilliness and moisture of the air.



The beauty of light falling through the green leaves and creating a moving, constantly changing surface of golden green.



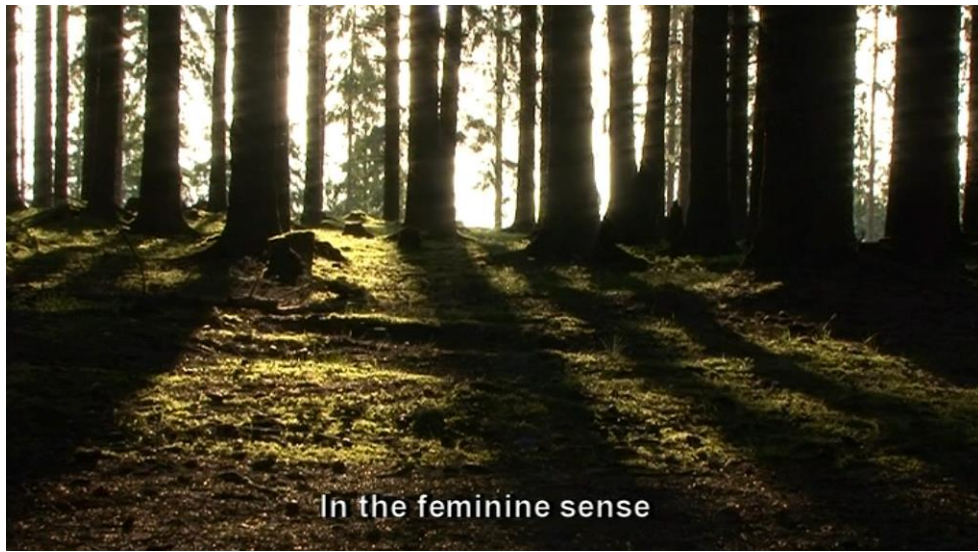
The light playing on the gossamer, evoking the materiality, thinness and elasticity of the threads in a spider web.



The whirling of the turbulent water.



The evening light falling through the trees, creating depth and highlighting the surface of the moss on the ground.



The wavering grain fields.



The tree bark and the surface of the moss on the rock.



These haptic images evoke a sort of meditative state. Through its meditative character, the haptic image forces the viewer to contemplate on the image itself instead of being pulled into narrative (Marks 2000, 163). For this reason, these images lend themselves easily to the purpose of building up metaphors, and this is how I use them in the film, as mentioned above. Their representational aspect is downplayed, while their materiality is foregrounded, therefore meaning – expressed by the rich voice of Bogdan and different than what is in the image - can be attached to them, their primary function not being conveying meaning themselves.

2.3.3. Hearing

Sound was one of the core experiences in this research. Above I reflected on issues related to the cuckoo sound and the benefits of an ‘aural ethnography’ when it comes to evoke a certain place and certain sentiments by the use of sound in a non-diegetic way. Here I would like to reflect on my experience on the environmental sound in nature. The most prominent sounds of nature were: birds, crickets, the river sound, the sound of removing a mushroom from the ground (a sound I have never heard before) and Bogdan’s voice.

During fieldwork I started to develop an auditory consciousness. I learnt the sounds matching the different parts of the day, or to realize if birds issued an alarm. While editing the different images together, I could hear the discontinuity in sounds. As Ingold points out, sound is not what we hear, it is not the object but the medium of our perception (2011, 137-138). When I listen to the sound recordings taken, I have the impression that I know by hearing when the recording was made. *In* the different sounds I can hear the different circumstance the sounds refer to. While living in the forest, the sound of the forest became

internalized and after a time, everything sticking out or changing was picked up by my ear. For example, the sounds in the shots taken in the day don't match the ones taken in the evening; the ones from the spring mismatch those from the summer. Before and after rain the forest is more silent; in the summer the sound of the forest is different when there are more leaves on the trees; in the evening and morning the birds sing more intensively; the crickets are more active in high grass; and in the deep forest there is a magnificent silence. The placing of sound is at once a sounding of place. One knows the time of the day, season of year, and placement in physical space through the sensual wraparound of sound in the forest. This way of hearing and sensing the world is internalized as bodily knowledge (Feld 2005, 188).

2.3.4. Intuition

The way I use the term 'intuition' is rather accurately described by Kathryn Linn Geurts in her account of the concept of *seselelame* of the Anlo-Ewe people (2005, 166-169). *Seselelame* is a generalized feeling in the body that includes both internal senses (such as balance and proprioception) and external senses, as well as other perceptual, emotional, and intuitive dimensions of experience (ibid). It can be used to describe something akin to intuition (when there is uncertainty as to the source of a given feeling) (ibid). It is an external message one has to analyse properly (ibid). *Seselelame* serves as a descriptor for sentience in general. It could be a generalized feeling throughout the body (ibid).

In my understanding intuition is also paired with a sense of correctness: what one feels 'right to do', the gut feeling, without being able to give a rational account of it. It takes a high degree of sensitivity and connection with the person/thing/etc. the intuition refers to. It is related to the emotional, perceptual and intuitive dimensions of experience (cf. ibid.). To say in bluntly, it is like picking up a 'message' which appears in one's body in the guise of restlessness and a feeling that 'something is going on'. Both within and without the context of the fieldwork I rely on this intuition as to how to act in certain situations, by weighing whether it feels correct or not. (The concept of intuition the way I use it might be challenging to grasp when one is trying to understand it only in terms of rationalizing, or when one has never experienced it).

In the case of the fieldwork it meant tuning into the 'wavelength' of Bogdan and employing this in the research. For example: the research focus shifted from globalization to his experience in nature when during a conversation on globalization-related issues I all of a sudden had a question in my mind, back then seeming weird and unrelated to anything we

were discussing: *'Are you happy?'*. It was just a silly, but a genuine question; I was simply curious if he was happy, as one human can be curious if another one is happy. He immediately took this sudden turn, and from then on, the research-focus changed, based on an intuitive beginning and took me to the double, triple bottom of things I mentioned at the beginning.

Through the senses I did experience physically the world of Bogdan, nevertheless I find it relevant what Paul Stoller points out: 'embodiment is more than the realization that our bodily experience gives rise to metaphors that deepen the meaning of our experience; it is rather the realization that we too are consumed by the sensual world. Such is the scope of an embodied rationality. [...] To accept such an embodied rationality is, like the Hauka spirit medium or diviner, to lend your body to the world and accept its complexities, tastes, structures, and smells. Such is the path toward seeing, hearing and feeling the world - with humility' (2009, 33-34). Already before the fieldwork I have been 'consumed' by nature, the sensual world of Bogdan, I 'have lent my body to it', as in Romania I live out in nature and spend most of my time there. The choice of the subject matter for the research/film was also determined by this pre-existing connection between nature and me. Nevertheless I feel that the fieldwork deepened this experience as I never went this far into the forest before, and this far into connection with nature (I would not walk 40 km's without having the fieldwork as context and I would not risk going to the places where the bear time to time kills a cow or two). Before working with Bogdan I saw myself as someone who is relatively at home in nature, however next to him, I still felt a clumsy, helpless beginner. Having seen the high level of connectedness between Bogdan and nature, I feel that I need much more practice and participation to be able to approach his level.

3. Reflections on the ‘data’ and reconsidering the human-nature dichotomy

I am aware that the nature-society dichotomy is to be reconsidered, and as I will try to show, the case of Bogdan supersedes this dichotomy. However, I experienced that Bogdan’s intimate relationship with nature is the exception rather than the rule, though I have no extensive research on how the rest of Romanians relates to nature. I base this claim on my personal observation of the deforestation happening in the surroundings of our house, the case of Roşia Montană, the intrusive and disrespectful behaviour of tourists visiting nature in the area where I live and Bogdan’s concluding remark, when he points out that nature is treated in a negative way. Bogdan is emplaced in nature by integrating his mind, body and environment in the work he does (Howes 2005, 7). As opposed to this, displacement is a feeling of homelessness, disconnectedness from one’s own environment (ibid.). In society Bogdan is displaced, and in the lack of emplacement there, he finds it in nature.

I am indebted to Milan Kundera for inspiring my research from the early beginnings. Before starting the fieldwork, I have been reading *Immortality*, one of his philosophical novels (Kundera 1996). The book deals with questions of life, ontological experiences related to the human body, to nature and alienation from humans. Agnes, the protagonist, loves nature in Switzerland and cannot identify with Paris and humans; she is emplaced in nature, in the world of the path, alone. She is displaced in Paris, in society, in the world of roads, among humans. In the novel there is a differentiation made between road and path, the road being a way to a destination, the path being the destination. My informant, Bogdan is the wanderer of the path, which for him is the destination, not the way to the destination. He works in nature for being in nature, not only for obtaining money through being in nature. My fascination with Kundera’s book inspired me as it gave me a certain way of looking at things, more from the existential point of view. It was an inspiration in methodology: the fact that I have re-read it just before the fieldwork influenced its course as I was more ‘tuned in’ to inquiry about existential issues (e.g. happiness). It also inspires the reflections on the data: the path is Bogdan’s world, and the road is the world of others, experts, politicians.

3.1. Human-nature relationship

There are analytical efforts to dismiss the nature-society dualism, as a predominantly Western idea and as such, irrelevant in researching societies which have different concepts on what nature and society mean (cf. Descola 1996, 82). There are also efforts to suggest an alternative way of viewing the relationship between nature and society (Descola 1996, 82-103 and Pálsson 1996, 63-81). Throughout the thesis I use these two terms as follows: ‘nature’ means the totality of non-human living beings (animals, plants, etc.) and non-living, not manufactured things (rocks, water, light, wind, etc.), while ‘society’ means the human beings (regardless to what degree they are organized: be it individual, family, village, city, state, etc.). Though I do not claim that during the fieldwork and in this analysis I consciously dismissed the dualism between nature and society, I do believe that both in the fieldwork experience with Bogdan and in the afterthoughts there were/are possibilities to leave this dichotomy behind and look at the relationship between nature and society from a different point of view.

3.1.1. ‘The invisible man’ in nature – The idealistic outlook

As an alternative way of approaching the relationship between nature and society, Pálsson puts forward the concepts of orientalism, paternalism and communalism. The former two refer to a clear distinction between nature and society, and suggest that humans are the ‘rulers’ over nature. The difference is that while orientalism refers to the exploitation of nature, paternalism suggests a protective attitude (Pálsson 1996, 67-72). The third concept, communalism is the one which comes closest to my perception of the way Bogdan is relating to nature. In the first part of the fieldwork communalism was the most prominent concept communicated, while orientalism was downplayed. The second part of the fieldwork puts orientalism in the foreground.

According to Pálsson many hunting and gathering societies represent the principles of communalism (Pálsson 1996, 73). The words Pálsson chooses to describe the relationship between human and environment in the case of these hunters and gatherers are strikingly similar to the words Bogdan used when talking about nature. ‘Just as a child may expect the care of its parents, the environment provides its *unconditional* support’ (cf. Nayaka of South India say: ‘forest is as parent’) (1996, 74). Bogdan used similar words to describe his relationship with nature. He feels that he loves nature unconditionally and nature loves him unconditionally; he compares nature to his parents who he used to love and who did much for him in order to give him a good life. He believes that he can thank his life to nature: after a

renal failure some years ago he continued working in nature, and the fresh air and physical exercise of walking healed and strengthened him.

Communalism, the way Pálsson formulates it, rejects the separation of nature and society and emphasizes contingency and dialogue. It suggests a generalised reciprocity, an exchange often metaphorically represented in terms of intimate, personal relationships (1996, 72).

Bogdan, even though a human being, is an integral part of nature. He can approach our house – located in the woods – without us noticing him; I do not hear birds issuing an alarm upon his arrival and our dogs never noticed him coming. When he is fishing, he hides himself on the shore of the river, to an extent that at times I cannot decide if he is sitting under the pine tree, or is it just a rock I see. The skill of hunting (and in Bogdan's case fishing) requires an intense awareness of self so that the presence of the hunter or fisherman is not registered by others (Marvin 2010, 153). On our common trips into nature Bogdan taught me being 'invisible' in nature, in terms of colours I was wearing, but also in terms of being aware of myself in relation to the natural surroundings.

I perceive Bogdan's approach to nature as one of humbleness and respect; he not only takes from nature but, as he says, he tries to be grateful by the small attentions he can give to nature: not harming the mycelium, collecting blueberries without harming the roots and leaves, leaving a higher trunk when cutting trees so that the roots won't dry out, returning small fish in the river. He is different from other fishermen, who fish in the same river and dress up fashionably, have all the fancy equipment for fishing. Their eye-catching outfit, the proud, manly, conquering manner of obvious standing on the shore scares trout away. Looking from the perspective of the different sorts of hunting types, this latter type of fishermen could be considered *dominionistic* or *sport hunters* (Marvin 2010, 147-148 quoting Kellert 1978). For them the animal holds value for the opportunities it provides in engaging in a sporting activity involving mastery, competition, shooting or fishing skills, and expression of prowess. The hunted animal is not an item of food, but trophy meant to be displayed to fellow hunters/fishers. There is an emphasis on prowess, masculinity, as a way of expressing strength, aggressiveness and physical endurance (ibid.). In my view, there is a parallel between this attitude and the concept of environmental orientalism, as Gísli Pálsson defines it: it refers to domestication, frontiers, and expansion for the diverse purposes of production, consumption, sport, and display, and a radical distinction between laypersons and experts, the latter presenting themselves as 'analysts of the material world' (Pálsson 1996, 68). If we look at it from the point of view of these fisherman, who have all the modern equipment for fishing

and an official yearly fishing licence (issued by the Forestry Office for payment), Bogdan qualifies only as layman, with his modest equipment and outfit, and at times missing fishing licence. He wears old, broken camouflage clothes, lets his beard grow to camouflage his face, has precise knowledge of the colour of the hook, line, fishing rod he must use, he literally lowers himself in face of nature by sitting or lying under a bush, or behind a rock, and he becomes integral part of the landscape. I found an interesting parallel in the description of Anlo people by Kathryn Linn Geurts. She claims that there is a connection between bodily habits and the person one is: one's character, one's moral compass is embodied in the way one moves, and the way one moves embodies an essence of one's nature (2005, 173). My observation was that Bogdan's gestures towards nature speak of humbleness and respect, the characteristics I found in him as well.

Too great a reliance on technology, or too great an ease of access creates too great an advance for the hunters (Marvin 2010, 152). Other fishermen, who come to the river I live next to, do not always hesitate in relying on technology. At times they fish with electricity, nets and poison, or I see them throw food to attract fish in the pond the night before they would fish. As opposed to this, Bogdan's way of fishing comes close to what *nature hunters* are. The most significant aspect of this approach is the desire for an active, participatory role in nature. The goal is the intense involvement with animals in their natural habitat, and the primary focus is on wildlife, first hand contact with wild animals in their natural setting. The prey animals are perceived as objects of strong affection and respect, not just trophy or meat (Marvin 2010, 147-148 quoting Kellert 1978). Going hunting for the nature hunters like Bogdan is a mode of being in the natural world. It is the intensity of this being that seems to be the core experience sought by nature hunters. They emphasize the sense of connectivity, of being part of nature when they are hunting and that hunting itself is a natural process (Marvin 2010, 153).

I also find it useful to refer to the terms *project* and *process* put forward by Allen Jones (1997 quoted by Marvin 2010, 149). Project is the intention of a hunter of finding, pursuing or waiting for, and killing a wild animal. The process is how the hunter accomplishes this project. If one lets the project take precedence over the process then the animal is reduced to an object (Jones 1997). For nature hunters, like Bogdan, the hunting/fishing is mainly about the process and not about the outcome, and in this process the hunter should hunt with his 'boots, brains and heart' (David Pettersen 2000 quoted by Marvin 2010, 152). Bogdan walks many a kilometres and many hours on seemingly un-walkable paths to get to the ponds where trout is in abundance. In fishing he uses his brains as it takes concentration, attention and

cunningness to catch a fish. Catching them is reassuring his intellectual abilities, as it proves his knowledge about the fish as well as their habitat. Bogdan holds that if the fish is smarter than he is, they will escape. As such, for nature hunters a respectful relationship between the hunter and the hunted should also include the possibility of the animal becoming alert to the human and outsmarting him (ibid.). Once he told me that a fish tricked him several times by eating his bait: he did not mind since these moments prevent him becoming conceited, thinking that he is a too good of a fisherman. Bogdan believes that nature is grateful for these gestures, and enables him to catch more than others do.¹⁹ As an example of this, I recall a story of Bogdan: he told me about a fishing contest organized in the valley some years ago. At that time he didn't owe a fishing licence so he couldn't take part in the contest. The winner 'expert' fishermen caught three fish, and Bogdan was amused to hear it as he, the 'layman' caught three kilos, but he was not allowed to compete as he lacked a licence.

Descola proposes a transformational model to account for the underlying patterns which organize the relations between humans, as well as between humans and non-humans. Through these patterns each society objectifies specific types of relations with its environment. Each local variation results from a particular combination of three basic dimensions of social life, which are the following:

1. Modes of identification, or the process by which ontological boundaries are created and objectified in cosmological systems such as animism, totemism or naturalism;
2. Modes of interaction which organise the relations between and within the spheres of humans and non-humans according to such principles as reciprocity, predation or protection;
3. Modes of classification (the metaphoric scheme and the metonymic scheme) through which the elementary components of the world are represented as socially recognised categories (Descola and Pálsson 1996, 17).

These modes are employed like a matrix in which the different elements can be combined in certain ways to produce variations of how a given society is relating to its environment. In the framework of my research I find it relevant to use the first two modes as analytical tools in looking into the relationship between Bogdan and nature, as the different combinations enable

¹⁹ Fishermen stop at our house and they tend to have a chat with me, this is how I know how their fishing goes. I also observe how intrusive and noisy they tend to be.

me to explain how things turned out in the second part of the fieldwork (what I present in the next chapter).

If I consider the three modes of identification and the three modes of interaction, I recur to the initial ambiguity: at the beginning I mentioned, that neither in the fieldwork nor in the thesis can I claim that I consciously transgressed the duality of nature and society, but my fieldwork experience was that in the case of Bogdan there are nonetheless certain things which seem to go beyond this dualism. Above I have written about communalism in order to give some examples of this. Here I would like to reflect more on animism, combined with reciprocity, in order to further deepen the idea that there are points where the dualism between nature and human was transcended. The way Bogdan talks about his relationship with nature, and the way he initiated me in his world through the fieldwork evokes the concept of *animism combined with reciprocity*. This seems to be Bogdan's idealistic outlook, his philosophy on nature. The relationship between Bogdan and nature can be described as one of love and caring; he sees nature as a friend, a caretaker; not as enemy, who needs to be tamed and overcome: it is not a danger for the human. Bogdan acknowledges how cunning trout are; he feels that fishing is a competition, in which the smarter wins: for him the trout is an equal partner. He does not see himself as the 'ruler human' who has the unconditional right to use the resources of nature. He sees the fish as an equal agent in the act of fishing, in which the fish has the capacity and chance of escaping his hook, if he is smarter. Bogdan claims that the trout in the valley river are more cunning and careful than in other rivers as they know him and his fishing habits and tricks (cf. this view with animism and equality). In alignment with this, when referring to literature on societies in which hunting forms an important part of food procurement, Marvin claims that the acquisition of meat is both an intention and end of hunting but the hunted animal is far from being a utilitarian object for the hunters (2010, 146). Hunting is underpinned by complex beliefs concerning the appropriate, proper and necessary relationships between hunters and potential prey. Although such hunting requires acts of violence against animals as they must be killed, the beliefs about the nature of that violence do not seem to be related to notions of aggression or domination (ibid.).

Animism can also be considered as a sort of social objectification of nature. It endows natural beings with human dispositions, granting them the status of persons with human emotions and often the ability to talk, and also with social attributes - a hierarchy of positions, behaviours based on kinship, respect for certain norms of conduct. Plants and animals are not mere signs or privileged operators of taxonomic thought; they are considered proper persons,

irreducible categories (Descola 1992, 114). In Bogdan's perspective, nature is endowed with agency and he expresses this idea by examples as the following ones:

- Nature loves him and proved this many times;
- Nature gave him a lot;
- Nature is female;
- Bears left him alone, as they sense/know the intention of humans and they do not harm those who have good intentions towards them;
- Pines didn't throw him off when he climbed in them to collect Christmas trees;
- Fish is an equal partner in the act of fishing;
- Fish have a social hierarchy: *elite* who eat first, the *guard* who is watching.

Pálsson mentions that in the Renaissance nature began to be referred to by the third person singular pronoun, *it* instead of *she* (1996, 66 quoting Bordo 1987, 108), and by this nature was 'othered' and rendered possible to know objectively. As opposed to this objectification, and in the spirit of animism, Bogdan perceives nature as a living being, a woman, who cares for him; he tends to use the feminine personal pronoun when referring to nature: she.

Though Bogdan feels connected with nature, he would wish for more connection between nature and society: he claims that if people were just as simple and honest as nature is, we would live in an ideal world. The idea of him being invisible was generated by this connection with nature. In my eyes, he was so one with nature, that he merged into the background and I needed to search for him in the viewfinder in order to be able to film. I shared this observation with him, and he agreed that this is how it should be when one wishes to catch fish. As Ingold points out, we should not think of ourselves only as observers, but we must imagine ourselves as participants immersed 'with the whole of our being in the currents of a world-in-formation: in the sunlight we see in, the rain we hear in and the wind we feel in. Participation is not opposed to observation but is a condition for it, just as light is a condition for seeing things, sound for hearing them, and feeling for touching them' (2011, 129). Both literally, through his appearance, and in figurative sense, through his love for and knowledge of nature, Bogdan is merged into nature; he has become 'invisible'. He is at home in nature, he is happy and he feels that he is a different person when he can be among the woods. He knows its rules and he obeys them: as he puts it, after a time one learns not to yell at the bear as it can yell louder. He developed a detailed knowledge on the different facets of his work: he knows which bait he must use depending on the weather conditions, temperature, part of the day. He knows the

hierarchy and ‘social organization’ of the fish²⁰, he knows precisely at which exact locations mushrooms grow, how to best pick blueberry, etc.

For Bogdan working in nature is neither just a necessity nor an escape. It is not only a creative reply to unemployment, but a pleasure, something in his blood, though he himself cannot define it clearly what he actually feels when he can be in nature: ‘his heart is growing’, when he enters the forest, meaning that he is truly happy. It is an elusive feeling, and it is difficult to ‘pin it down within established categories and conventions of thought’ (Ingold 2011, 115). While filming him in nature I was also performing my task out in the free and large space, without being confined or other humans judging me, and this gave me an enormous feeling of freedom. I knew that Bogdan is not judging the way I am and the mistakes I make when speaking his language or scaring the fish away.

If we look at the economical side of it, Bogdan does realize the fact that he is exploited. He sells the collected goods to a middleman who ships them abroad, by which he earns ‘ten times as much’, as Bogdan used to say. From an economical point of view Bogdan might seem to have an irrational economic behaviour. But we must take into account not only economic factors when we try to understand him. He feels that working in nature is the most attractive from all the options he has. When I asked him what he likes in life, he gave an answer which one might not hear often: air. As Zygmunt Bauman also points out, air has become so everyday-like and ever present that one never thinks of it as the most basic condition for life (cf. 2010, 169). I believe that Bogdan’s work in nature made him be aware of the importance of the fresh and abundant air, as he would refer to it as a central asset in his work. The connection with nature and being among the elements made him more aware of the importance of the primordial needs: air, water, freedom. Generally, nature and working in nature has formed Bogdan in many ways, made him an aware person, and through this transformation, for him nature also took on the meanings I described above. Before starting to work in nature, he preferred values of the urban society, but thanks to his natural adaptability, Bogdan’s identity was reshaped. The most important constituents of this identity are: connectedness with and confidence in nature, embodied knowledge, need for freedom, physical strength, fitness, health, richness and a positive attitude. Conversely, nature took up the meaning of a female provider who loves him truly. As Ingold points out, people and

²⁰ He observed that the biggest fish eats as first in the rapids after rain when the water brings worms and bugs; that there is always a guard on the side of the river, and if that one is caught, he is free to catch other fish; if the guard sees him, he warns the other fish and he won’t be able to catch at that part of the river.

landscape are mutually constituted; landscapes take on meanings and appearances in relation to people and people develop skills, knowledge and identities in relation to the landscapes in which they find themselves (2011, 129). The way Bogdan described the beginnings of working in nature, underscores the idea of Ingold: he just went out in nature and he started observing, looking, learning. He claims that he was not taught by others, all his knowledge comes from nature.

Descola points out that there is a homology between the way in which people deal with nature, and the way in which they treat each other (1992, 112). This view helped me recognize that Bogdan's idealism and the idea of animism refers not only to nature, but it is also transferred to society, Romania. When we were talking about his presence in nature and connectedness with Romania, he tended to describe nature and Romania in similar, animistic terms. In both cases Bogdan used 'the elementary categories structuring social life to organize, in conceptual terms, the relation between human beings and natural species' (Descola 1992, 114): nature is attributed the title *parent*, while Romania is seen as *son, a woman he loves from her youth, (step)mother, family*.

The terms he uses:

- Nature: home, caring for him, love, keeps him healthy, rich and strong, parent, gives freedom, his heart grows in nature;
- Romania: home, care, love for a lifetime, help in keeping up himself, keeps him healthy, gives more than any other country, rich in resources, Romania as a happy family; though hinting at the 'wasting father', the politicians who on the long run will cause the 'family house' to collapse, Romania as a humpback, they are not replanting the forests.

3.2. Informant-researcher relationship

3.2.1. Impact on knowledge production – The realistic outlook

After having completed it, the fieldwork seems a coherent process, which received its dramaturgy from the development of the relationship between Bogdan and me, and the fact that the research was kept improvisatory and flexible. The reason why I bring up this relationship here is that the research finding/film is contingent on this unique relationship. The gained knowledge was ‘generated not through process of distance and objectification but through proximity and contact’ (Grimshaw, Owen and Ravetz 2010, 154 referring to Taussig 1994, 26).

As referred to above, Bogdan and I developed a close relationship during the fieldwork. One part of the footage visualizes the relationship between him and me: during blueberry picking he asked my hand to tell my fortune (he used to be skilled in this). Other parts of the footage also give an impression of our relationship, since I am inevitably there, the ‘body of the filmmaker’ is present (MacDougall 2006, 26), my voice can be heard, the way of filming is a testimony of me. But in this fragment I enter the image: while holding the camera I engage in physical, tactile interaction with Bogdan, and become part of the filmed reality. Sensory relations are also social relations (Classen 2005, 162), and for this reason I find it eloquent the way Bogdan held my hand. It gives a visual impression of our relationship: his hand is holding my hand caringly; the way he treated me in the forest, always paying attention if I am still coping. His rough, worn out, big hands, carrying signs of physical engagement with the world (cracked, hard skin, thick nails, stained from blood, soil, blueberries) hold my white hands, wearing a silver bracelet, silver ring, and the blue support wrap on my wrist. Our hands give an indication of who we are, and how we relate to each other: the man who is closely engaged with nature and the young student woman.

So the dramaturgy of the fieldwork is the following: Bogdan first presented the positive side of issues we discussed (relationship with nature and Romania; communalism, animism and reciprocity); then a period of stagnation; and finally Bogdan showed the other side of things: both on Romania, working in nature and on the filming process itself (see below).

Initially Bogdan and I were pleased to work together. I discovered issues he felt happy to share: his love for nature. As he was getting attached to me, he found it important that I remain interested in the issues discussed. For this reason he presented the ‘nicer Romania image’ described above in terms of communalism, animism, reciprocity in order to keep me

interested in what he was saying. However, when I intuitively asked him how the film will be in his opinion, he opened up and I got to understand how our relationship influenced the outcome of the research. I call this moment ‘turning point’, in order to be able to refer to it easier. At that turning point the following things have been said: he thought that the film could have been better than it will be. He was too attached to me, he did not want to make mistakes, and I intimidated him by my presence. This caused him to manipulate the research: he wrapped things up in an ‘acceptable aura’ and he presented them differently. At the beginning he presented only the nice sides, but at the turning point he was open on what he *also* thinks of Romania: its dysfunctional sides (unemployment, exploitation of Romania’s resources and nature, unsatisfying political, economic management). While at the beginning he gave an idealistic image of the relationship with nature and Romania, at this point Bogdan presented a whole different set of ideas, the more realistic outlook.

I find it useful to recall once more Descola’s point here on homology between how we address nature and others (1992, 111). Both before and after the turning point there was a parallel between approaching nature and society, the difference being that in the first part Bogdan describes how *he* sees and relates to nature and Romania; and in the second part he describes how *others* (politicians, people in general) relate to nature and Romania.

Bogdan uses almost the same words as Descola does: *nature is also treated the way people are*, Bogdan says. His terms regarding how others relate to nature and Romania are the following:

- Nature: exploitation of resources, deforestation, collecting blueberries on mass scale, preparing for selling the gold of Roşia Montană;
- Romania: prodigal son, courtesan who is cheated and stepped on her feet, selling of the DACIA factory, unemployment.

The discrepancy is that he, as a ‘layman’, to again use Pálsson’s term (1996, 72-73), has one type of relationship with nature and Romania, what Pálsson calls *communalism*. On the other hand he experiences that the ‘experts’ have another type of relationship with nature and Romania, which would be *orientalism* (Pálsson 1996, 67-72).

To use Descola’s terminology, Bogdan’s relationship with nature and with Romania may be described as *animism imbued with reciprocity* (1996, 94). As Descola himself points out, in our western world it is a dream of superseding the dualism between nature and society: ‘the dream of positing a relation of reciprocity between humankind and nature, conceived as

partners or entities of equal status, an aim impossible to achieve [...] the dialectics of reciprocity amount to no more than a metaphor in which to couch an impossible aspiration to supersede dualism' (1996, 97). At the same time, Descola suggests naturalism as a typical western way of relating to nature. It is simply the belief that nature does exist, that certain things owe their existence and development to a principle extraneous both to chance and to the effects of human will (1996, 88 quoting Rosset 1973). This naturalism often goes together with predation. This *predatory naturalism* is the realistic situation (Descola 1996, 97), what Bogdan is talking about in the second part of the fieldwork, and which roots in the dualism between humans and nature: man has the right to exploit nature. Bogdan experiences this and makes him sad as his idealistic ideas clash with these realistic facts both regarding nature and Romania.

As an illustration of his view regarding the treatment of Romania, I include in the appendix two of his poems. The first poem Bogdan recited to describe 'what is happening now' - in his words - in society, though it was written in the time of communism. This fact points to the above mentioned criticism of both 'communism' and 'capitalism', as both are having vices of which the 'poor' are the victims.

4. Conclusion

David MacDougall suggests that when we are making films, we are constantly advancing on our own ideas about a world whose existence owes nothing to us. Filmmakers use ‘found’ materials from this world, and they fashion them into webs of significance, within which are caught glimpses of being more unexpected and powerful than anything we could create. These may be qualities filmmakers discover in human beings or in the plenitude of the inanimate world (2006, 4-5). The method I used and reflected on above, and which could be summed up by the synthetic term *bricolage* lends itself to such an approach.

Above I presented how the research brought to the surface the different layers of ‘truth’ and how this points to social problems in Romania. MacDougall suggests that a wise filmmaker creates structures in which being is allowed to live, not only in isolated glimpses but in moments of revelation throughout the whole work. These moments form their own connections above and beyond the intentions of filmmakers. This is why knowing when to desist in our interpretations is so important, to allow these moments to connect and resonate (2006, 4-5). The moments of presenting Bogdan’s different accounts on the relationships to nature and Romania were such moments: these moments connected to each other and to the explored reality more than I could have imagined had I not worked with a flexible approach. When I was faced with the second moment - namely when he admitted that he wrapped things in an acceptable aura - I was confused. But when I looked at it in relation with the information obtained before, it seemed that these two moments related to each other and formed a coherent whole, presented the two sides of the coin, ‘the double bottom of things’. Apart from presenting valuable insights on how a researcher influences an informant to manipulate the research, it also sheds light on the two approaches towards nature and society. On the one hand, communalism and animism, on the other hand exploitation and naturalism, and how the individual is trapped between the friction zone of the two. Also, human meanings and interpretations are perhaps the most diverse in their linkage to the natural world, based on dependence and daily interactions, values, knowledge, perceptions and belief systems, and how strongly these centre upon nature (Pilgrim and Pretty 2010, 3). The difference between the two ways of relating to nature and Romania stems perhaps from the fact that Bogdan is depending on nature in a more immediate way than others do. This immediate reliance enables him to have a more immediate and affectionate relationship with nature.

The film turned out to be artistic and the various public screenings proved that it was received as such, in the sense that it reached out to the audience on an emotional level. The question may naturally arise: what is the use of film as poetry, where the images and the film language are not subordinated to an anthropological argumentation, but they themselves have constitutive power, they create resonance with certain emotions, that it resembles the 'kinds of things that happen around art, as agents capable of creating affects' (Schneider and Wright, 2010, 8). For me, film as poetry creates a different, perhaps more emotional, affectionate experience than just illustration or yet another record of information. For this reason I find that it serves the purpose of reaching out to other human beings and to contribute to (cross-cultural) communication and understanding on a more immediate, human level than that of facts and information.

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6. Appendix

1. DREAM OR REALITY (by I.G. / translated by me)

<p>Through the fog of withered eras, Past happenings and people are woven; Oblique images which make me forget The present, weary of monstrosities and welshers.</p> <p>There are huge villas, glamorous, With tens of colourful rooms, Pools, fenced parks, In the magnificence of tropical trees.</p> <p>The masters of these villas have fantastic amenities, What the mass of 'humble creatures' cannot even dream, Stooped as they carry these celebrities on their shoulders.</p> <p>At the gate limousines are waiting for them. Hurried and skilful chauffeurs, Wearing glamorous clothing On such rotten 'supports'.</p> <p>They want everything and buy everything. Mines, factories, villas and cars. Judges, ministers, presidents are conspirators, All the same wicked, having one god, money.</p> <p>And God have mercy on those who won't listen To the so called 'voice of money'. It is ordered in eternity that they'd remain A thread in the dust, in the dust of the road.</p> <p>There are many 'threads of dust' Who won't sell their conscience for money. They have enchanted sheds, Dirty and full with mud.</p>	<p>A sad and small room, Built of sand and stones. The one who is laying on his side Is the poor treasure of society.</p> <p>The primitives used to build better, Because they didn't have a past full with vices Of our cremating society Of monsters, welshers and marionettes.</p> <p>They used to have land and stones, Didn't need to buy the mortar. They didn't need money The way the peasant nowadays in the 'Romanian States' does.</p> <p>They didn't need to sell Their children for money, The way the poor does it nowadays, Wrecks, in a society of the rich.</p> <p>But...who could describe the misery Which rules, mistress of immortality Of the great number of vermin Without goal and without name.</p> <p>Glamour, richness of the few ungrateful, Of those who believe themselves blue blooded, Of those who out of money create for themselves plenty. Who could describe that.</p> <p>But everything passes in this world, Other generations will come after us. In their agony, hoping that they could say Everything what was, was just a dream.</p> <p>© I. G. / Orsolya Veraart</p>
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2. ODE TO THE SHADDOW (by I. G. / translated by me)

A substance without shape
A shadow telling her tale
Her voice as deep as grave.
Reaching the deaf ears of those living in
The mute innocence of an equestrian state.
Her voice caught me over many a year
Impressing on me the image
of a twisted mind playing theatre
Inhabiting a delirious past and present
Or the sacred future of an eternal state.
She needed a doctor, I had no doubt.
But through magic premonition
turned into essence, emerging from shadow
the form and sense of her life of slavery,
into a world of nonsense.
She took me by the arm
And we wandered the world.
Her cursed notion now fully dawning on me.
She showed me
tramps on the street
with faces shining of despair
and beggars with extended hands
supporting on their shoulders
the world of the modern boyars.
She showed me the tower of Babel:
a paradise with a reptile as king
the lion being overly loyal.
The monkey remained queen in the dark.
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3. CEAUȘESCU N-A MURIT (Ada Milea)

Source: Essay of Diana Georgescu (Georgescu 2010, 174):

Ceaușescu n-a murit Ne veghează îndârjit Ceaușescu e o școală Ceaușescu e o boală	Ceaușescu Hasn't Died He watches over us relentlessly Ceaușescu is a school Ceaușescu is a disease
E în mine, e în tine E în blocuri și uzine Azi îl poartă fiecare Ceaușescu-n veci nu moare	He is in me, he is in you He is in apartment buildings and in factories Each of us carries him within today Ceaușescu will never die
Ceaușescu n-a murit Istoria ne-a păcălit Limba lui de lemn se plimbă încet Prin vechea noastră limbă	Ceaușescu Hasn't Died History has lied to us His wooden tongue Haunts our ancient tongue
Ceaușescu n-a murit Istoria ne-a păcălit Noi suntem vii și morții Ceaușești suntem cu toții	Ceaușescu Hasn't Died History has lied to us We are those alive and dead We are all Ceaușescus