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**“OF ALL, I MOST HATE BULGARIANS”: SITUATING *OPLAKVANE* IN BULGARIAN
DISCOURSE AS A CULTURAL TERM FOR COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICE**

A Dissertation Presented

by

NADEZHDA M. SOTIROVA

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2015

Department of Communication

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A Dissertation Presented

by

NADEZHDA M. SOTIROVA

Approved as to style and content by:

Donal Carbaugh, Chair

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DEDICATION

To my lovely mother, Neli: I love you more than you can imagine, you are my best friend, my pride, and my strongest pillar!

To my darling stepdad, Kiro: I am so happy you are part of our family! I could not have asked for a better father, friend, and guardian!

To my dear dad, Mihail: I will always love you, tati!

And, finally, to papi, my darling cuddly pup.

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ABSTRACT

“OF ALL, I MOST HATE BULGARIANS”: SITUATING *OPLAKVANE* IN BULGARIAN

DISCOURSE AS A CULTURAL TERM FOR COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICE

MAY 2015

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The following dissertation raises these questions: how do people talk about their communication, and what role does this play in constructing a widely used cultural resource? The specific data concerns *oplakvane*, referring both to a key cultural term and a range of communication practices in Bulgaria. This term, and these practices are explored through the theoretical and methodological frame of cultural communication (Philipsen, 1981-87), ethnography of communication (Hymes, 1962), and cultural discourse analysis (Carbaugh, 1992, 2007a, 2010). The analyses demonstrate how *oplakvane*, which can loosely be translated as “complaining” and “mourning”, functions as a deeply shared cultural resource for communication (Carbaugh, 1989a) and as a system of deeply rooted communication practices. These practices often occur in a cyclical form and in a ritualized manner (Philipsen, 1987), that, when enacted, pay homage in re-constructing a sacred object, a particular Bulgarian identity. Through and within *oplakvane* practices, a specific cultural “reality” connected to the larger narrative of the Bulgarian “situation” is reconstituted, with radiants of meaning being activated for identity, elaborated

through its deep sense of dwelling, related emotions, and habits of routine action. The findings, therefore, offer an understanding of *oplakvane* as a Bulgarian way in which communication constitutes culture, and works as a discursive resource for the management and recreation of the Bulgarian cultural landscape. Discussion of the findings demonstrates how the study enriches the ethnography of the communication field substantively, theoretically and methodologically.

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CHAPTER 1

“NICE WORK, BUT BULGARIAN”

Introduction

Since coming to the United States in 2003 I have experienced constant cultural shock at any attempts to explain to an American or non-Bulgarian how things are in Bulgaria. It is not just that “they” never “get me” or completely understand how “bad” things are in Bulgaria but that I feel alone with that misery and experience a panicky feeling of immobility. If only I could find the right words, people could understand the situation in my country and see how important it is to do something about it. If I could describe it in the right way, they would know me. It always comes down to this: if people do not understand the situation in my country, they know nothing about me

In the beautiful New England fall of 2009 things had not changed. I was out on a hike with my friend and our conversation left me dissatisfied once more with my failure to explain and with my anger at my country and its people’s inability to do something about the situation. That anger and frustration fueled me but I could not find the proper way to describe the issues in Bulgaria or what I could do about them. I caught myself repeatedly insisting, “No, it goes deep. You don’t understand. Things are messed up fundamentally!”

My hiking companion’s response felt like a slap in the face: “Okay, well, where can you start? If you could point to one thing that can change and start things up, where would you start?” Not only was this an incredibly difficult question but

somehow, it also felt very wrong. (Sure, I forgot I am talking to an American. Of course they'll assume things are fixable). This interchange left a very emotional impression on me but it was not until months later that I arrived at an understanding of why it had felt so wrong and what I could "do" about it.

It was when I discovered the ethnography of communication and cultural discourse that this conversation made sense. Present in it were two different codes of communication informed and situated within our two different cultural worlds, each made up of our identity, social relations, emotions and dwelling. We were enacting distinctive communicative modes with unlike goals, ends, and purposes. We were both using different cultural resources for our interaction, accomplishing very different tasks, thus pooling from very distinct cultural ways (language and interaction) of symbolizing who we were, and how we related to the world. The cultural currency we were employing in terms of idioms, notions of communication, people, and the larger cultural surrounding were very distinct and echoed completely different historical voices.

It was at this point that I realized one way for me to start was with communication, since there is "something" discursively going on in Bulgaria, something interesting about the way we talk, that constitutes, illustrates, and reinforces a particular way of being. Within that small interaction in the woods of New England, there already were visible some of the differences in the communicative modes we were employing, the cultural understandings and premises of value and belief as well as a glimpse into the different realities we made

relevant. Any time I tried to explain Bulgaria's troubles to outsiders something seemed to go communicatively amiss.

It was not just my experience as a Bulgarian in the United States that drew my attention to the difference in my way of speaking. This sense of linguistic othering started occurring in Bulgaria, too. Whenever I went back to visit I seemed to lack the "proper" everyday examples and the emotions connected to them. It nagged on me—I had examples to share, right? Especially examples from a different place! It did not happen with my close family because they wanted to hear anything about my life in the United States. But people I was not close to treated me as an alien, an odd creature with whom they did not know how to interact—they only stared when "it" spoke, and then went back to their examples as though I had not spoken. What was it about the way I was interacting that was different? And why did my examples not count?

One of my professors drew my attention to an online article (Trud, 2013) describing the connection between wealth and perceived happiness, showing Bulgaria among the "unhappiest" places despite indications that poverty was on the decline. I knew the situation (socio-political and economic) in Bulgaria had changed during the years I was gone as my family kept me updated on how "bad" things were.

"Social pessimism" as an occurrence in Bulgaria has been studied before (Krastev et al, 2004). This study indicates that despite the increase in GDP in Bulgaria in the period 1998-2003, Bulgarians still were at the bottom of the Life Satisfaction table, with only 31% perceiving themselves as content. The study

attempts to explain this paradox from a variety of angles offering some very startling and interesting statistics. For example, there are “imaginary majorities.” 44% of respondents say they manage to cope with the various problems and difficulties, while only 17% say this is true for people around them. In other words, people are coping but they do not perceive others to be doing so.

Forming such an imagined idea of the behaviors and opinions of others starts to affect the individual’s outlook, to a point where “[p]essimistic talk turns into a socially prestigious position, being a way for those who benefit from the changes to reintegrate into a society which considers itself a loser as a result of those changes” (Krastev et al., 2004, p. 20). The authors link this “loser mentality” to the attempts of Bulgaria to “catch up” with modernity where, throughout history, the collective memory focuses on all the previous unsuccessful or short-lived upswings to legitimize and reinforce its “loser” status (p. 21).

The research of Krastev et al. (2004) comes from a sociological and anthropological perspective. Examining this social pessimism in Bulgaria as an enactment of a specific socioculturally situated identity within the particular historical context (reaffirmed within moments of interaction) would shed more light as to why and how such outlook has persisted for so long. Investigating the specific discursive forms within a community can be used to understand situated communal practices that an individual has access to and uses to situate him/herself within that community (Philipsen, 2002). The immediate effects of such pessimistic or negative focus are often connected to emigration, and are frequently brought up in everyday interactions between Bulgarians, where the question of “why NOT to emigrate” is

more frequent than the more positively framed “why TO emigrate” prevalent in other countries: “The truth is in emigration and leaving this tribe here to die off (A mother, Blog).”

The National Statistics Institute in Bulgaria (2014) states that there were 19, 678 Bulgarians living abroad. Also, according to a EU online census (EurActive, 2011), the population of Bulgaria is shrinking at shocking rates, losing 582,000 people over the past decade, or a loss of 1.5 million of the population since 1985—a record in depopulation “by global standards.” Bulgaria, which had a population of almost nine million in 1985, now has almost the same number of inhabitants as in 1945 after World War II, the Bulgarian media write.

So what is happening in Bulgaria? Why are people fleeing the country in such large numbers? If so many people seem to be leaving is the so frequently mentioned “horrible situation” in Bulgaria real? Here, I will not examine the reasons for emigration in Bulgaria, but focus on the discourse of the Bulgarian “situation” as made relevant within daily interactions, and examine the discourses available and the context that has made them possible from the vantage point of cultural communication. In other words, what symbolic worlds and cultural understandings of a social “reality” infuse, allow, and inform this discourse. And what does this discourse have to do with “Bulgarian-ness”?

The theme of “Bulgarian-ness” is repeated in various ways in everyday conversations and interactions, media and news programming, as well as online sources—the bleak Bulgarian “situation” that only “Bulgarians” could understand. One online post concludes that: “[s]urely you’ll say again, that we only *se oplakvame*

(complain, mourn) and we don't suggest anything, but when we do it, does anyone hear us, huh (data)". I suggest approaching the abovementioned "problems" (whether they be discourses of emigration, "pessimism", etc.) as situated within a particular discursive terrain, where examining them through the methodological and theoretical lens of Ethnography of Communication (EC), terms for talk, as well as Cultural Discourse Analysis (CuDA), will provide insights into the deeper historically bound cultural understandings, norms, and premises that guide talk as understood within a particular communicative practice. Can this discourse be understood by focusing on a specific communicative practice and its enactments, where through its performance something cultural is getting done?

If we are to step back from focusing on the sociological or political aspects of these "issues" within Bulgaria, and focus solely on communication—can we understand this discourse as bound within the specific cultural landscape? Various data I have collected draws the attention to a specific communicative term—*oplakvane* (Appendix A). Can we, then, by way of a specific cultural logic, understand the communicative term *oplakvane* and its enactments as a culturally specific phenomenon within this communicative terrain? When utilized in talk and interaction, this term plays on and makes explicit/implicit statements about understandings of how people are situated and make sense of their position in the world in terms of conceptualizations of personhood, dwelling, action, communication, and emotion (Carbaugh, 2007a). Therefore, when properly enacted, this practice serves a particular cultural function—or the affirmation and negotiation of a common identity (Philipsen, 1987).

Understanding *oplakvane* in Bulgarian discourse as such a communicative term and the enactments it refers to, with specific structure and functions, provides insights into aspects of Bulgarian-ness, and its position within a larger cultural environment. The many years of slavery to the Turkish and to communism have bloomed into a way of speaking that creates and maintains Bulgarian dwelling within a dark place, a place “with no exit” (data). By understanding *oplakvane* and the practice it refers to, we can gain insight into what and how a common fate of Bulgarians as doomed to remain within a vicious socio-historical cycle is reaffirmed and celebrated, where *oplakvane* is a cry and an outcry for a time before the Turkish slavery, a time of richness, and “non-slave mentality” a time Bulgarians feel they may have lost forever.

By considering *oplakvane* as a particular distinctive communicative practice within Bulgarian talk, I hope to offer a deeper understanding of the Bulgarian “situation” as a concept, larger myth, and distinct cultural “reality”, rooted within the specific historical context. As a Bulgarian, myself, I hope to create a new way of looking at this Bulgarian way of speaking, with distinctive structural and emotional qualities, in order to not just acknowledge and depict otherness, but also provide a glimpse into the commonalities it shares with other ways of speaking, thus offering a deeper understanding of *oplakvane* for unfamiliar as well as painfully familiar audiences. And hopefully, understanding our role in recreating the Bulgarian “situation”, whether solely via *oplakvane* or otherwise, provides a necessary entrance into easing the difficult transition the country has experienced for too long.

Would you still live in a lie?
There ain't such a country.

Would you still put up with this and until when?
There ain't such a country.
There's no point in this and the last illusion is dead
in this country of power and madness.
Two-three students tiredly protest,
there is no chance for them here,
it's better for them to emigrate.

How many times do we repeat the same old history?
We throw out ones, we hug the next.
Does some one know how a policeman
suddenly wakes up as a millionaire?

(“There ain't such a country”, popular song)

Research Questions

My first question addresses the cultural term for communication, *oplakvane*, and its uses within the Bulgarian discourse:

1. How is the cultural term for talk, *oplakvane*, used?

Within this question, a subset develops as to the term's social context and the specific meanings attached to it as a cultural term for communicative conduct. This would provide insight into the potency of the term.

1a. How is the communicative practice of *oplakvane* identified in the data as significant to the participants? What is the social use of the term *oplakvane*?

Then I examine what specific communication behaviors *oplakvane* refers to—or what the participants recognize as *oplakvane*:

1b. What and how does *oplakvane* identify acts, events, and styles of communication?

The next question focuses on the specific messages and meanings within *oplakvane* for pragmatic action such as the literal messages about the

communication practice itself, as well as the metaphorical messages about sociality, and about personhood. Here the root of the verb *to se oplakva—plach*—or “to cry” becomes particularly relevant (as will be illustrated later).

1c. What literal and metaphorical messages and meanings are active in this practice—about the practice itself, about sociality, and about personhood?

In this way, Chapter 4 tackles the general question as to the evidence that shows *oplakvane* to be a significant term within the Bulgarian discourse that identifies a specific way of speaking, bound by a particular cultural logic, and renders certain actions and their performance meaningful. In doing so, we will understand what the participants identify in their attempts to establish their own clear understanding of what “counts” as *oplakvane* and its implications as to cultural premises about action within the practice. For instance, in the newspaper article (Appendix B), the term *pomrunkvam* (whine) is used by the author in an attempt to distance himself from the act of *oplakvane* he is performing, even though the enactment of it does fall under *oplakvane*. However, since to perform *oplakvane* is perceived from the participants’ point of view as “useless” and “not productive or leading to solutions”, calling the enactment *pomrunkvane* resolves the tension communicatively.

The framework that informs question one comes from Carbaugh’s terms for talk findings (1989a) that were built on various EC studies of cases. The comparative work on these cases was an endeavor to create a comprehensive framework that provides a base for studying significant terms for the participants. Such terms, as communicative resources, provide insight into the symbolic worlds

and cultural landscape that are creatively evoked and managed through their use in context. Here, the goal is to approach *oplakvane* as a way of speaking by first approaching it as a significant term and what glimpse it provides into the participants' cultural world.

1d. What is a Bulgarian way of speaking and what evidence is there that *oplakvane* identifies one such way?

This first question, with its subsets, is addressed in Chapter 5, and parts of Chapter 6, where *oplakvane* and its cyclical form are distinguished from other communicative forms employed within Bulgarian discourse.

My second question addresses the enactments *oplakvane* refers to, where the descriptive analysis weaves together with the interpretive, guiding through norms and premises of value and belief that are intertwined within the practice—through means of asking questions about the SPEAKING components of *oplakvane* (Hymes, 1962) and CuDA (Carbaugh 2007a, 2010):

2. What enactments does *oplakvane* refer to?

2a. What is the setting/scene of *oplakvane*?

2b. Who are the participants?

2c. What are the ends of *oplakvane*?

2d. What is the act sequence?

2e. What is keyed through *oplakvane*?

2f. What are the instruments through which it is performed?

2g. What are the norms guiding it?

2h. What premises of belief and value are woven into it in terms of personhood (identity), dwelling, emotion, action, and communication?

This subset to the question of enacting *oplakvane* is examined in detail in Chapter 6.

As a third step, in chapter 7, the enactments of *oplakvane* are studied as a ritualized communicative form that celebrates a common fate or a specific identity:

3. Does *oplakvane* occur in a ritualized form?

3a. What is the structure of such a ritual?

3b. What is getting done through the performance of *oplakvane* as a ritual that is significant to the participants (the function it serves)?

Chapter 8 addresses the “Bulgarian situation” as a mythical communicative form, as it is constituted through *oplakvane*:

4. What symbolic narrative is constituted through *oplakvane* about the “Bulgarian situation” that links the past and the present, the individual and the community?

After examining the grand narrative, I expand on the particulars of the Bulgarian national identity as a conceptualization of personhood present within the enactment of *oplakvane* in Chapter 9:

5. What specific messages and meanings of and about personhood are constituted within enactments of *oplakvane*?

In Chapter 10 the term and the communicative practice it refers to are examined within the larger world of communication, where *oplakvane* is cross-culturally compared to the Israeli “gripping” delineated by Katriel (1985):

6. What are similarities and differences between *oplakvane* and Israeli “griping” as cultural terms for communication and ritualized forms of communication?

In Chapter 11 I offer a critical stance on *oplakvane* per Carbaugh’s call for (1989/1990) critical voice in the forms of natural criticism (where the natives evaluate their own system), academic criticism (where the object of criticism is the communication theories and methods), and cultural criticism (where the ethnographer, directly or indirectly, renders some judgment about the native cultural practices in his/her report):

7. How is *oplakvane* viewed and/or judged by the natives?

7a. How adequate are the present transcription and translation methods when studying *oplakvane*?

7b. What can be problematic for the particular speech community when employing and enacting *oplakvane*?

Theoretical orientation

The following study examines instances of discourse illustrated (but not restricted to) the examples above as a way of speaking in Bulgaria that can be described with the term *oplakvane* (complaining, mourning). Here, “way of speaking” is used per Hymes’ (1972) broad definition and allows for approaching the practice as a cultural term, the enactments it refers to, and as a ritualized form of communication. Thus, the study focuses on *oplakvane* as:

1. A Bulgarian term for a cultural practice of communication significant to the participants (Carbaugh, 1989a)

2. The enactments this cultural term refers to, or as a culturally identified practice itself—its structure and functions within Bulgarian discourse (acts and events in various speech situations)

3. How *oplakvane* (or an event of it) could be understood in the form of a communicative ritual (Philipsen, 1987).

Examining this way of speaking ethnographically through the “terms for talk” framework (Carbaugh, 1989a), Cultural Discourse Analysis (Carbaugh, 2007a, 2010), and according to Philipsen’s (1987) definition of a ritual (a structured sequence of symbolic acts, the correct performance of which constitutes and pays homage to a sacred object) offers a way of understanding communication as constituting and performing people’s sense of the world. This approach implements two basic principles formulated by Philipsen (2002); 1) any conversation within a community has specific culturally distinct means as well as meanings for communication; and 2) communication is understood as a heuristic for performing cultural functions. Therefore, investigating the specific discursive forms utilized within a community can be used to shed light onto situated communal practices that an individual has access to and uses to situate him/herself within that community (Philipsen, 2002). An illustration of this framework is Katriel’s (1986) analysis of “dugri” speech as well as “gripping” (1985) as a ritualized form, through which personal identities, intimacy, and solidarity are created within a common, sub-optimal fate.

A variety of disciplines have recognized the role of language (Silverstein, 1979; Ochs, 1992; Irvine & Gal, 2000; Mendoza-Denton, 2002; etc.), discourse

(Sherzer, 1987; Fairclough, 1992; Urban, 2000; Carbaugh, 2007a; etc.) and interaction (Goffman, 1955; etc.) in the construction and maintenance of our realities, where communication is in part constitutive of meanings about reality, or the expressions of and about that reality—our common meanings of things (Carbaugh, 1995). Examining and comprehending *oplakvane* as such a deeply cultural way of speaking that has a particular communicative form would enrich the ethnographic field theoretically, methodologically, and practically as an example of how larger issues, messages, and meanings come to life within smaller communicative practices, and how history and context awaken in our everyday speech.

Before I proceed with the history of Ethnography of Communication (EC), Cultural Communication Theory (CCT), and Cultural Discourse Theory (CDT), some basic assumptions need to be noted: EC (with its development into CCT) as an approach is a way of analyzing communication as a cultural resource. It involves a philosophical commitment to investigating communication as radically cultural, and focusing on the “patterning of practices among particular people in a particular place” (Carbaugh, 1995, p. 269). The focus is on basic philosophy and theory and can be characterized as investigative mode of inquiry that has philosophical commitments about communication. In other words, EC is what practices locally “suggest generally” about human communication (Carbaugh, 1995, p. 271). Very important here is Philipsen’s axiom of particularity that recommends focusing on the local and the particular, while doing this in ways that facilitate the building of general knowledge about and of communication. In this way the basic philosophy,

or assumptions about communication include: everywhere there is communication, a system is at work; everywhere that there is a communication system, there is cultural meaning and social organization. Therefore, communication systems are at least partly constitutive of socio-cultural life (Carbaugh, 1995).

More specifically:

1) Communication generally involves systemic organization (with those patterns exhibiting order as part of social life) as to how verbal means carry meanings; how different communication means have different meanings; how the play between means and meanings organizes an encounter between participants in particular ways; and how the preference to use some means over others carries significant cultural and social weight.

2) Communication can be understood as a socio-cultural performance, where to speak is to “speak culturally”:

if communication has something to do with meaning-making, and if meanings have something to do with participants’ points-of-view, and if the participants’ points-of-view have something to do with their cultural orientation, then communication creatively evokes cultural meaning systems. In this way society grounds *cultural meaning systems*.

(Carbaugh, 1995, p. 274)

3) Communication is constituent of part of socio-cultural life: to some extent, communication can be understood as structuring particular ways of living.

Ethnography of Communication

Ethnography of Communication is a distinctive theoretical framework, methodology, as well as a philosophical orientation that allows for the understanding of communicative practices, such as *oplakvane*, and their role in

maintaining realities. It presumes and investigates communication as the entrance point to, and a metaphor of, social life (Hymes, 1962). EC developed as a response to the need to understand speech and its social life. It provided a theoretical ground for the comparison between the diverse and distinctive functions and ways communities use speaking (and not just language) in the performance of daily life. In this way, EC allows for the investigation and understanding of speaking as implicating the cultural economy of a community. According to this perspective, each community uses distinctive means and meanings of communication (even within the same community). Through focusing on speech (acts, events, styles, situations, ways of speaking, etc.) as the entrance point, with a speech community (a group of people who share at least one common speech practice) in the center, Hymes (1962, 1972) developed a set of questions that guide and provide a systematic framework for investigating the components of speech (Setting/scene, Participants, Ends, Act sequence, Key, Instruments, Norms, and Genre) and its function.

This framework attempts to understand speech practices from the natives' point of view. A few assumptions surface: that people do achieve moments of shared meaning; that such moments are achieved through coordinated action in interaction and in particular context; and that there are particular symbols and meanings used within a community that presume and constitute their reality. Or, communication is understood as a "situated accomplishment" (Stewart and Philipsen, 1984). It is about the distinctive communicative practices of particular speech communities, as they are creatively shaped within interaction, *in situ*, and as

shaped in particular socio-historic contexts or what is significant to the participants, to the particular speech community, within an ongoing, historically situated and transmitted communal and cultural communication as an on-going process. In other words:

- EC provides a basic philosophy and theory of communication, and not just a method;

- The theory generates particular claims about cultural practices of communication as well as general principles about communication as a whole;

- The claims are generated through a perspective that focuses analysis upon particular social units (analyzing those units through particular components);

- Studies of communication are designed with this conceptual framework in mind.

The period between 1962 and 1972 became the initial exploratory phase of this newfound way to address the niche that Anthropology and Linguistics had left out at the time—a need to explore the nexus of communication and culture. Many scholars were soon to follow and continue this line of work: Hymes and Gumperz (with elaborations and bibliographies), Bauman and Sherzer, Philipsen and Katriel, Philips, etc. (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1990). Since its first appearance, EC has engendered a plethora of theoretical and philosophical extensions, such as Cultural Communication Theory, Speech Codes Theory, (Philipsen, 1987, 1992) as well as Cultural Discourse Theory and Analysis (Carbaugh, Milburn, & Gibson, 1997).

One study under the general umbrella of EC is Katriel's work in the 80's, in which she examined several significant communicative styles of speaking such as

gripping practices (1985) and *dugri*, or “straight talk” (1986). Katriel examines these in her work through participant observations, structured and informal interviews, induced discussions, as well as illustrations from anecdotal evidence, and public events. She illustrates gripping through the description and referral to participant-identified “gripping parties” (Katriel, 1985, p. 367), where the Israeli get together to engage in what can be understood as a ritual (Philipsen, 1987) intended to blow off steam; while reaffirming common shared identity and fate. Through native observations and experience, recorded data, and field notes Katriel provides analysis that includes a descriptive aspect, in the form of Hymes’ components and then interprets the practice through Philipsen’s definition of a ritual, while providing general understanding as to the function of this talk.

Other examples of EC include Carbaugh’s (1999) “just listening” article that examines a way of being with nature, or “listening” as an enactment and a cultural term; Carbaugh, Berry, and Nurmikari-Berry’s (2006) study on codes, and the particular code of silence as a Finnish way of being, and its ramifications for identity; Weider and Pratt’s (1990) “on being a recognizable Indian”; Basso’s (1996) incredible style of writing that, similarly to Carbaugh, weaves silence and history with geography; Abu-Lughod’s (1997) application of ethnography to the study of television and its production as well as reception in various homes within the community, suggesting a different understanding of culture(s); Covarrubias’ (2005) understanding of pronominal use in the construction of self and relationships and their management in cooperation (including some historical aspects relevant to the particular understanding of how this is done); and Potter’s (1988) understanding of

the construction and interpretation of emotion in rural China as separate or not relevant to the construction and realization of social structures, as opposed to a more western, and specifically US conception of it.

Cultural Communication and Cultural Discourse Theory

Within the EC tradition, Philipsen's work (1975 onwards) further develops Cultural Communication Theory and Speech Codes Theory, where culture is conceptualized as a socially constructed, historically transmitted system of symbols and meanings, premises and rules. He understands cultural communication as distinctive (wherever there is a speech community, there will be at least one distinctive communication system), and communal (the role of cultural communication to play out and relieve the individual-community dichotomy by the use of various communication forms, thus, creating, maintaining, and reaffirming a shared identity). He suggests three cultural forms of communication (ritual, social drama, and myth) as well as a development of the concept of speech codes.

According to Philipsen (1987), ritual (in which the codes are celebrated and affirmed) is defined as "a structured sequence of symbolic acts, the correct performance of which constitutes a homage to a sacred object" (p. 250), its purpose—to maintain consensus and affirm the past, and myth (in which the codes are used to make sense of the communal conversation, as it articulates and applies these codes) is defined as "a great symbolic narrative which holds together the imagination of people and provides bases of harmonious thought and action" (p. 251), its purpose—to creatively bridge past and present, the individual and the community.

Philipsen (1987) examines myth as a “symbolic narrative”, that provides the link between past and present, between the individual and the community. Such cultural forms show the ways in which individuals are grounded socially within the larger symbolic community and history they relate to, and pool cultural meanings from. As Geertz (1973) and Carbaugh (1991) argue, such meanings are situated historically and in social occasions, widely accessible, and individually employed. The cultural myth as a form is understood as a story in which some type of person is confronted with a problem, and finds a solution. The telling of such a cultural myth is meant to uncover deeper and significant features within the larger culture (Philipsen, 1992). The story is popular and culturally plausible, appealing to the particular audience because it is grounded and supported by the symbolic myths and rudimentary values within the specific society. Thus, how a particular cultural myth is told reveals features of the said culture.

As Hymes (1962), Philipsen (1987), and Carbaugh (1991) emphasize, a myth is the larger symbolic story that represents who people are and who they should be. Thus, myths provide the cultural communal resources for how one should act, feel, and be, of how one is to make sense of their own as well as others’ lives. In this way, myths weave the grand story by utilizing the rhetorical and interpretative resources, symbols and meanings, as well as the “rich” points within a particular culture.

According to Philipsen (1992), the historically transmitted and situated conversation within any community would be implicating a particular code(s) of communication that thematize(s) spoken discourse and involve(s) particular

symbols, symbolic acts, forms, means, meanings, rules and premises that perform the cultural function. In this way cultural communication is the process of enactment, realization, and transformation of these forms, of the communicative resources available that implicate culture. As a student of Philipsen's, Carbaugh continues research within such cultural symbols and ways of communicating in *The Phil Donahue Show*, beginning with his dissertation in 1984, ideas from which were to be further developed through various later publications culminating in his Cultural Discourse Theory (CDT) and Cultural Discourse Analysis (CuDA) (2005, 2007a, 2010). Notable in these early publications is the connection between models of personhood (who and what the model person is conceived to be) and communication (Scollo, 2011). Here Carbaugh establishes the groundwork for CDT by not only examining the connection between communication and personhood but also that it varies cross-culturally. Among some of the intellectual influences that he acknowledged in his early work were: Hymes, Geertz, Schneider, Turner, and Cushman (Carbaugh, 1987). It is important to note that Carbaugh does not argue that all cultural systems of communication will have the notion of "the person" as a central dominant discourse but just that frequently conceptions of personhood are focal in cultural systems and as such, profoundly influence the way people communicate.

Some of the elements in a communication theory of culture (Carbaugh, 1991; Philipsen, 1992) and society are how communication helps constitute culture and society. According to this theory symbols and their meanings are not just suspended out there but are "culturally accessible, historically grounded, socially

occasioned, and individually applied” (Carbaugh, 1995, p. 284). Concepts of symbols, symbolic forms, social uses, meanings, and culture are viewed as a historically grounded, socially negotiated system of meaningful expressions. Carbaugh discusses the way these symbols, forms, and meanings function (or “justifiable” to the participants) through a normative rule system that establishes certain positions and relations for the participants that are “robust” and “stable” (Carbaugh, 1995, p. 285).

Three cultural structures become prominent in the way communication is conducted and interpreted: models of personhood, models of society, and models of strategic action. In a culture, these three structures are important in communication and provide “material vehicles” (Carbaugh, 1995, p. 287) as well as general principles for the carrying out and interpretation of communication. These structures are the symbols, symbolic forms, and meanings that identify ways of being a person, being organized socially, and conducting action. Before I proceed further into Cultural Discourse Analysis the framework “terms for talk” developed by Carbaugh (1989a) needs a bit more attention.

Terms for Talk

As mentioned earlier, a way of approaching the two central phenomena of cultural terms for communication and the communication practices they make relevant is through the “terms for talk” framework suggested by Carbaugh (1989a) and further used and revised by various ethnographic scholars (Baxter & Goldsmith, 1990; Baxter, 1993; Garrett, 1993; Hall & Valde, 1995; Fitch, 1998; Carbaugh, 1999;

Katriel, 2004; Boromisza-Habashi, 2007; etc.). The purpose of the “terms for talk” framework is to analyze and compare the occurrence of cultural terms for talk as they are situated in their respective communicative systems and to map out the cultural landscape they are bound to in terms of their levels of enactment and the symbolic worlds of meaning they employ (Carbaugh, 1989a). This theoretical framework addresses how and what linguistic terms are utilized to create and express social systems of identity, emotion, dwelling and communication, (Carbaugh, 2007a), focusing on a “term” but also upon its uses, the sphere of enactments it references, and related forms.

The “terms for talk” framework has its roots in Ethnography of Communication (EC) and its development in Cultural Discourse Analysis (CuDA) that is designed to examine how communication is shaped as a cultural practice and the symbolic meanings imminent in such practices (Carbaugh, 2007a). Both EC and CuDA are based on the initial conceptual framework created by Hymes (1962) and examine communication as a “situated accomplishment” that makes visible specific local symbols, forms, and meanings as used by the particular community (Carbaugh & Hastings, 1992). From this perspective, communication is considered as the focal point of research, allowing for the revealing of symbolic worlds, where communicative practices are examined from the participants’ point of view, within their specific context (Carbaugh, 2010).

But how are native views of communication discovered, described, interpreted and compared? Hymes (1962) identifies two central phenomena: cultural terms for communication and the communication practices they make

relevant. A way of approaching these phenomena and any questions about them is through the “terms for talk” framework. Investigating cultural “terms for talk” provides insight into deep, historically and contextually bound moral systems that guide “talk” within a community and unveils the bigger cultural scenery that appropriates such “talk”.

Understanding such terms and the cultural modes that make them intelligible and fitting allows for the deeper understanding of various cultural symbolic worlds and how such worlds are navigated. The “terms for talk” framework, thus, is a very useful tool for understanding these cultural worlds by providing an entry point into the structure—through the components suggested by Hymes (1962)—as well as the function of such terms and the specific historical symbolic meanings that inform such communicative practices. Identifying Bulgarian *oplakvane* as such a rich cultural term and the enactments it refers to provides one more example of communication as an entry point into cultural conceptions of identity, emotion, relationships, and dwelling.

Cultural Discourse Analysis

Cultural Discourse Analysis (CuDA), as Carbaugh (2011) describes it, stands at the juncture of cultural communication theory and speech codes theory and is about studying communication ethnographically. It takes cultural communication and speech codes further under the umbrella of “discourse,” where discourse is understood as the nexus and mediation of language and culture. Here, culture is understood as “part and parcel of communication” (Carbaugh, 2011, p. 3), an ever-present aspect and dimension of communication practices and the conjoining of

culturally shaped communicative practices, competence, and the interactional dynamics present within any interaction. It is about understanding the cultural aspects (Carbaugh, 1989a) of communication practices that can be described and understood from a particular theoretical perspective and in a particular context as deeply felt, commonly intelligible, and widely accessible—the taken for granted knowledge a community has accumulated over the historical context.

Cultural discourse implicates distinctive codes as cultural scripts, and as the constant metacommunicative commentary about the way people view themselves within their cultural landscape where cultural discourse presumes and constitutes reality. Thus, wherever there are communicative practices and their enactments, cultural discourse as an expressive system will be imminent in them, implicating symbols, symbolic acts, premises, and rules about communication, sociality, personhood, dwelling, action, feeling, the taken for granted premises and beliefs within a society. To render the abovementioned meaningful, Cultural Discourse Analysis (CuDA) appears in order for a particular cultural code to be formulated.

Within the CuDA theory, particularly relevant is the role of “hubs” and “radiants”. The cultural meanings that the participants employ during interaction, (about personhood, social relations, dwelling, emotion, and action) are understood as “radiants of cultural meaning” or “hubs of cultural meaning.” The role of the interpretive analysis, then, is to explain these radiants (semantic hubs) as the “ongoing meta-cultural commentary” (Carbaugh, 2007a, p. 174). Each hub implicates the others, even though they may not be all activated within an interaction, and include: meanings about being, personhood and identity (who I am

and who we are), meanings about relating and relationships (how we are connected), meanings about acting, action and practice (what people consider themselves to be doing), meanings about feeling and affect (what affect is appropriate, to what degree, on what occasions), and meanings about dwelling and place (what their sense of their place is).

Through the lens of EC and CuDA, communication is all we have, all that we work with, through which we constantly position ourselves, and use in order to organize our social actions. The assumptions we have about the world, the criteria by which we judge ourselves and others, and through which we legitimize our own and others' behaviors, are all within our communicative norms, forms, and practices. We realize ourselves, become who we are, act, and view each other in and through communication. Consequently, socially constructed symbols and meanings as historically and contextually bound (combining social construction and determinism to some extent), as well as individuality and choice are accounted for.

CuDA offers the tools for understanding how a communicative practice can be approached not only in order to be described in detail but also to offer insight and be interpreted for its norms and premises, significant terms and vocabulary, radiants of meanings about personhood, identity, and sociality, social relations, emotion and affect, dwelling, environment, and action that are presumed in it. CuDA gives the researcher tools and components to examine and be able to compare it to similar practices elsewhere, thus, enriching the understanding of how people "do" reality in and through communication, how they gossip and how they understand emotion (Potter, 1988), social action, silence (Basso, 1996; Carbaugh, 2007a),

themselves and their relations to everything else, even what “everything else” is for them.

Then, if necessary, the practice could be critically examined, whether from the native’s point of view, from a social action and awareness standpoint, or from the point of view of the theoretical framework, orientation, or aspects of it that may be potentially revisited, improved, discarded, or built upon.

This is how I approach *oplakvane*—by providing the thick description of it (Geertz, 1973), by going back and forth between the etic, theoretical, the concepts, and the emic, the practices and instances of it—wherever the data leads and wherever the light is brighter—first providing a descriptive account, then analysis, then comparison with griping, and finally critically assessing it from an insider’s point of view. And similar the way Katriel provided a comprehensive view of the quests for authenticity through the search for dialogicity in soul talks, dugri speech, and talk radios (2004) or examined *dugri* speech with its semantic dimensions, uses in context, as a ritual and within two social dramas (1986), I examine what *oplakvane* does in its various aspects as a culturally significant term, its uses as an enactment within a ritualized form, and its appeals to the myth of the Bulgarian “mentality” in the Bulgarian speech community in this transitional, yet-to-be-European, period. Within the theoretical mode of CuDA I explore *oplakvane* as a cultural term and practice of communication, with special attention to the Bulgarian acts and events of communication it makes relevant. Note, that since this framework makes identity a central hub and dimension of meaning, as does the cultural preoccupation with *oplakvane*, the framework and cultural preoccupation

work together, by focusing on Bulgarian cultural discourse about communication (and identity) itself.

CuDA allows for the interplay between etic and emic, where the researcher attempts to bring to the field some theoretical orientation that determines the questions of interest toward the communication practices and their functions in the community but also allows for this framework to be modified and improved on, revised based on the data. The goal is to understand communication practices from the native's point of view as significant to the participants exactly because of the symbolic worlds they bring to life and employ.

Other relevant concepts

Additional terms that surface throughout the chapters include Carbaugh's (1996) vacillating form when discussing identity, Philipsen's (1987) mythic form, Labov's (1967) narrative as well as Goffman's (1955) facework. When discussing myth, I use the basic definition of narrative as the choice of particular linguistic techniques by the participants to report past events with a beginning, middle, and end, where there is a temporally sequential way of recapitulating past experiences in a sequence of clauses.

When I discuss the communication of the Bulgarian identity, I utilize Carbaugh's (1996) vacillating form (127) that refers to a sequence where several contrastive sets of symbols and their meaning related to identity are employed against each other. I use basic terminology from Goffman (1955) to compare acts of *oplakvane* to other communicative practice such as the facework associated with maintaining a host-guest relationship.

“Face”, according to Goffman (1955), is a conduct, demeanor, the positively evaluation a person claims that is credible according to the community’s standards within a particular context. It is a self-ascribed image a person attempts to present during an interaction that is created and maintained within this interaction. Therefore, a “line” is the pattern (whether deliberate or not) of faces presented and it could be verbal or nonverbal, express a view or understanding of the context, and include the other’s perception of that/these face(s). Thus, “facework” would be the managing of faces presented, or the line consistency according to the context and situation. Brown and Levinson (1987) further offer the terms “positive face needs” and “negative face needs”. “Positive face needs” are the needs to be positively valued, respected, and appreciated, whereas the “negative face needs” concern the needs to be free from imposition and hindrance from others, to be free to act. A failure to acknowledge and comply with these is a face threatening act, or an FTA.

Literature on Bulgarian identity and culture

Research within the areas of culture, language, national identity, history, and society in Bulgaria has been done from a variety of perspectives and within a very particular historical context. Focal terms and fields from the areas of anthropology, culture, national identity, and communication are highlighted. In addition to these, I include descriptions of various local settings, relevant historical factors, as well as research within the areas of socialism and history to illustrate relevant cultural landscapes.

In Bulgaria, there is no field of “communication”, at least not as the field is known in the United States. The term “communication”, or *komunikacij*, is used to

refer to the general means of communication in Bulgaria, predominantly within technology, or telephones, radio, television, etc. It is never talked about as a compilation of practices. The field of communication is mainly represented by Sofia University and focuses on journalism, mass media, publishing, and public relations. Recently, some studies on Bulgarian identity have appeared within the field but their focus, even though produced from within the Department of Communication, still do not make the explicit connection between identity and communication.

Culture has predominantly (and not until 2000) been understood solely as the material heritage of the country; historical, sociological, anthropological, and folklore studies have been marked by the country's historical context and search for a national identity; and the whole cannot be understood outside of the historical context that has shaped and structured the growth and development of these interconnected fields.

The mere typing of both “Bulgarian communication” and/or “culture” (in any combination of these terms) in any academic search engine, yields a majority of results in the shape of published literature that come with some reference to history and the “transition” period in Bulgaria. The term “transition” has been used to define broadly the period since 1889 when Bulgarians were liberated from the Ottoman empire until today, and more narrowly—from the “liberation” of the country from communism (1989) until present day. In other words, Bulgarians have been in a transitional period for a long time and the constant expectations of change, marked by significant alterations in policies, politics, governments, alliances, and institutions, have only left the population with a bitter taste and no

observable (by the individuals) changes in the status quo. This is illustrated in the predominant focus on historical studies that examine and record these processes as they have arguably affected each other, where Bulgarians continuously attempt to define themselves as or against something else in the hope of eventually being able to stand on a firm ground and start building something socio-politically and economically stable.

For example Creed's (1995) anthropological overview of how the particular agricultural situation in Bulgaria and communism provided a very successful marriage of ideologies that allowed for people to do agriculture and not "be agriculturalists." This marriage not only resulted in a very unique "rural" vs. "urban" identity dichotomy but also allowed for the communist party to be reelected in 1992, again, after Bulgaria had just broken ties with communism a few years earlier!

Trencsenyi (2007) argues that such national philosophy and quest for identity, marked by quick transitions from Ottoman slaves to free people, from agricultural and strictly rural to modern and industrial, from communist to democratic, and now, from democratic to something else have to be taken into consideration when examining any aspect of Bulgarian social life in the present (even research and academic areas). Especially now, as a new European Union member, Bulgaria constantly feels the pressure to catch up not only with history and itself but also with Europe (Giatzidis, 2004; Smith, 2011)—something frequently heard in everyday conversations as "Europe and us", "they, the white people", etc.

Elchinova (2002) provides a very fascinating overview of the development of the field of anthropology exactly due to these same historical processes and our

quest to identify and define ourselves. I find her piece extremely useful because it shows this ideological “mish mash” that has and still does affect the understanding and conceptualization of culture, communication, and identity in the Bulgarian academic ground: she explains that until the fall of Communism in the late 80s, studies of the Bulgarian society have been marked and focused based on their ideological value. This allowed for a particular nationalistic orientation as an undercurrent tolerating only certain fields to flourish as opposed to others: folklore studies, cultural studies (in the sense of heritage), ethnology, history, philology (languages—focus on the Cyrillic as invented by the Bulgarians), national psychology (Panov, in Trencsenyi), Marxism and Marxist thought, etc. Only research consistent with the national and communist ideology was allowed.

As this intellectual and ideological restriction fell with communism, the need for Bulgaria to once more catch up with Europe and the West led to the implanting of Anthropology as a field in the late 90s (implanting, since the academic history and growth was lacking) with its own search for identity. The result was a fractured academic ground with a more historical and descriptive and less comparative orientation of the research, a Euro-centrism of field sites, and a focus on authors and not schools of thought.

As with many other academic fields, even the later anthropological research (after 2000) depended on the political and economical winds and has been shifting ever since with the changing flow of money for grants and fellowships. As Elchinova (2002) argues, some developing fields such as ethnography never really reached Bulgaria. This brings us to the understanding of culture and identity in the present

research in Bulgaria. Culture has been, up until the past decade, understood as the material heritage of the country. Only recently has it been more re-conceptualized as the social and historical processes, dependent on the society's context (Elchinova, 2002; Petkova and Lehtonen, 2005). Even in these studies, however, the focus remains on identity and not so much on culture or communication (despite the fact that the studies come from within the Communication Department of Sofia University where Petkova currently works). Interestingly, even though Petkova's own work in 2005, as well as her cooperation with Lehtonen in the same year, involved and focused on identity, the concept itself and its relationship to communication were never clearly established. Petkova's work combines postmodern theories, understanding of identity as "play" and Homo Ludens (in the internet space), and as a combination between individual and communal identities or the combined perceptions of self one has. In her work with Lehtonen, she compares exactly such perceptions of 200 Finnish and 200 Bulgarian students via a questionnaire.

As Bulgaria was moving through the accession process of the EU in the period 2004-2007 other studies on identity focused on the "branding" of identity, or how a particular national identity has been branded to audiences outside of the country. Examples include Kaneva (2007) and Kaneva and Popescu (2011), where the national efforts for creating a particular appealing image of the country as attempting to forgo its ex-communist habits produced several television advertisements of Bulgaria. Through a historically situated critical interpretation and close reading of the commercials as well as the historical context of their

production (Fairclough's discourse analysis), as well as their comparison to similar processes of branding in Rumania, Kaneva argues that the resulting effect is one of national identity lite or just another articulation of neoliberal ideology, a mild reiteration of present political ideologies that do not take into consideration specific cultural aspects or uniqueness of the Bulgarian identity.

The articulation of a "national psychology" or *narodopsihologia*, (mentioned above in the Trencsenyi article as first suggested by Panov), is a concept frequently referred to and illustrated in folklore and literary writings as a given and taken for granted knowledge. Even in everyday conversations one can glimpse it as a rich cultural term that implicates premises and understandings of personhood and sociality, with implications for social (in)action, where Bulgarians, as a people, have a distinct but psychological (cognitive) difference as opposed to other people—or in other words, we are different and "that way" because we are Bulgarians!

Within literary criticism, another focal cultural term becomes prominent: the character of Bai Ganio (also spelled Bay Ganyo), an iconic identity that appears throughout Bulgarian folk discourse and is the most typical Bulgarian identity. Bai Ganio is a fictional character created by the Bulgarian satirical feuilleton writer Aleko Konstantinov in the 1890s (1889). It is really impossible for a person to visit Bulgaria and not hear or even experience Bai Ganio. Indeed, Bai Ganio is the epitome of everything one should be ashamed of within Bulgarianness. He is a very unpleasant character, described as vulgar, impudent, opportunistic, "uncivilized", an unscrupulous profiteer, a skirt-chaser of the worst kind and a crook, even though he can be a very skillful tradesman, also ingenious, energetic and pragmatic. He is

rude, intrudes on other people's conversations, takes advantage of any situation, has no manners whatsoever, and has absolute disregard for any cultural practices different than his own. He has no manners or personal hygiene.

Konstantinov frequently describes how Bai Ganio often belches, smells of sweat, pinches women's bottoms, all the while treating foreigners as idiots who all want to cheat him (but whom he will end up "outsmarting" instead, according to his own view). When he travels, his main goal is to sell the goods he carries (usually rose oil and other) and, when back in Bulgaria, to boast about all his "European" travels, which has made him a global citizen in his perceptions. He only chooses jobs that will provide him an easy lifestyle, without much effort on his part. His main income is tricking others with cheap goods, contraband, and trinkets, always looking for a "good deal", *dalavera*, (Konstantinov, 1895).

The mere fact that this literary character, created as a mockery of the "soon-to-be-modern/European" rural "left over", has been studied and re-examined over and over since its creation in the end of the 19th century shows its significance for the understanding of Bulgarians of the modern day. Many satirical short stories and feuilletons have been written about this "Balkan hero," many movies, television series, and plays have been created since his first appearance. Aleko Konstantinov's writing that first appeared after Bulgaria's liberation from the Turkish is studied all through middle and high school for its uncanny and realistic representation of all that is too familiar and unpleasant about the Bulgarian identity. Bai Ganio's name is not just a character that has entertained Bulgaria for over a century but is also the all too familiar Bulgarian national identity that still lives. Despised, mocked, and

denigrated, his name is now part of the Bulgarian language, describing a version of Bulgarian identity we have come to take pride in—the trickster who is very proud of his ignorance and who survives anything, using all possible and impossible ways, despite any real or perceived danger from others,.

In every day situations, Bulgarians often jokingly call others or ourselves his name, without realizing what that means, and how it often serves only to reinforce certain aspects of our national identity. This character, even though so despised and mocked, has not only remained as a crucial part of knowing and understanding Bulgarian-ness but has also entered the everyday speech as a marker of identity, as a cultural term evoking and managing the very specific Bulgarian cultural terrain. Indeed, when defining Bulgarian-ness, one cannot avoid Bai Ganio. And how can one avoid the single literary creation that has arguably killed its own author! Konstantinov created it as a travesty to be aware of and avoided—not to be liked! Yet, in discourse, Bai Ganio has become a synonym of pride in the Bulgarian inability to change while continuously reproducing the historically situated behaviors that keep us in a particular sociopolitical and economical situation. And here is where the gap in communication and culture research becomes startling.

Very little research examines communication and it mainly focuses on communication as mass media, or the “high vs. low brow” dichotomy, and the historical processes that affected its development in Bulgaria. Here the center of attention is the sociopolitical ideology surrounding it, or the influx of new and “modern” Western influences after the fall of communism—with changes of pop culture in the publishing of pornography, harlequins, pulp fiction; television and

radio (Deltcheva, 1996). This research very much represents crucial aspects of Bulgarian-ness, or the specific national identity that is very prominent in everyday discourse. For even the literature available, its variegated-ness and the historical context that has created it, represents and illustrates the deeper understandings of how we, Bulgarians, view ourselves, and how we understand our position in the world: as multifaceted and historically bound as it is; as constantly trying to define itself as one thing and not another; always in transition. And since we have been in a transition for what seems like an eternity without any positive consequences, we have come to assume that historical evolution does not lead anywhere, and change never happens no matter what we do (Creed, 1996)—something that becomes clear in our talk. This is how the concept of national psychology, or *narodopsihologia*, arises, because then, “it is not what we do—we are just Bulgarians!” (data).

CHAPTER 2

SIX MONTHS AND A LIFE IN BULGARIA

Methodology

I was born in Sofia, Bulgaria, lived and received my formal education there until I left to pursue my undergraduate degree in the United States in 2003. Since then I have been to Bulgaria to visit my family each year and spent additional 6 months for fieldwork in 2012. I developed specific interest in *oplakvane*, or mainly the cultural aspects of communication, during the second year of my doctoral program when I first encountered ethnography of communication and CuDA. At the time I was still focused on a Bulgarian television channel owned by News Corp and was leaning towards studying the media as used for impeding political action and the general lack of political involvement. Listening to the general political discussions in Bulgaria, however, it dawned on me that there might be something particular about the way we, Bulgarians, talk about our own political status quo that might be crucial to understanding the (in)famous Bulgarian “situation”.

My personal experience as a native, as well as numerous articles on cultural communication and discourse, steered me in the direction of talk as a source of insight into the deeply felt symbols and their meanings that ground the country and its members within a specific socio-economic situation. The more time I spent away from my home country, the more my family and friends started calling me “the American”, interrupting me with impatient “you don’t understand any more, you aren’t here”, claiming that I am no longer a Bulgarian. There was something I was not doing or saying that was making them place me in this different category. I

needed to figure out, ethnographically, what type of talk I was suddenly missing. By the end of my second doctoral year, I had experienced enough language and social interaction theory to realize that there is a particular ritualistic practice occurring during these abovementioned settings in Bulgaria, but it was a newspaper article that drew my attention to the particular cultural term of *oplakvane* as fitting for the conflicted practice and the emotional tonality of its enactments.

Data Collection

This project is based on my personal experience as a native *oplakvach* as well as observations of naturally occurring talk during various social events and discussions with around fifty participants (spontaneously expressed attitudes, descriptions of the “situation in Bulgaria”, and elicited responses to prompts/question about the situation, and (in)appropriate uses of *oplakvane*, both term and enactments). The collected set (gathered during my six months of field work as well as annual visits to Bulgaria 2010-2013) provide the data base for the analysis of *oplakvane* as a distinct communicative term, communicative practice, and its cyclical enacting, and includes over ninety-four hours of naturally occurring talk comprised of:

- Events (at an individual’s household): Approximately sixty-eight hours, where the participants present are connected in various ways—friends, relatives, acquaintances, and co-workers who gather for traditional meals at someone’s house (for coffee or even a meal).
 - o The length and structure of such dinner/lunch events I describe in detail in Ch. 3. Depending on the comfort of the participants as well as the

amount of conversation available, I have recorded a range from three minutes to seven hours, with three to five hours being the average for such events, and five+ hours only for particular weekend gatherings. Recordings shorter than an hour indicate either lack of conversation (during meals where a focal televised event is present—sports championship, soccer match, etc.—or friends are so close that extended silence is the norm).

- Meal (dinner) events, where the central news broadcast is audible in the background: Approximately three hours. During the week, when shorter dinner events in close circle were more the norm, a television set on the evening news (7:30-8:30, depending on the channel) was focal, and most talk during such meals was centered on either the daily activities or prompted by topics mentioned on the news.
- Events (at a public setting): Approximately thirty-one hours. Similar meal events were also occurring at a public setting and were shorter in duration. Variations include:
 - Celebration events (official ask for becoming a best man and maid of honor, Easter, *pogacha*—a child’s first steps): Approximately thirteen hours. During my stay, several formal events occurred that I managed to record. Easter provided a wide variety as groups had different events planned with different clusters of people—close family, different sets of extended family, as well as friends “just stopping by” after their own family gatherings.

- Office conversations with snacks (meetings, and “getting coffee” in the office with relatives, guests, friends, and employees): Approximately seven hours. Within a public setting such as an office I also recorded various interactions including people who knew each other in different contexts—employer-employees, acquaintances visiting for business/work-related tasks, business partners, etc. These interactions were shorter, approximately 10-15 minutes in-between work tasks.
- Meal events/social gatherings outside of Sofia (Kalotina, Butan): Approximately eight hours. Similar socializing centered around a meal occurred when visiting friends, acquaintances, and relatives outside of the capital in several areas close to two of the Bulgarian borders: Butan, a village near the Danube and Kalotina, a village right on the border with Serbia.
- Other: Conversations during driving (trips) and miscellaneous service encounters: Approximately three hours. This includes trips taken both for pleasure (with friends and/or family) and business (co-workers, acquaintances) and included an array of talk.

In addition to the recordings, I have collected media print, online, and video data including:

- Newspaper articles addressing *oplakvane* or variations of the “Bulgarian mentality” and the “way Bulgarians are” (Twenty three articles).
- bTV rubric “The Reporters” (two parts, both televised and available on the television’s website archives).

- Online content and other: Blog posts and their comments, online political articles, facebook political groups and organizations' posts and caricatures (altered photographs), text messages, popular song (fifty three+ items).

Bellow is a table of the audio recorded data and the average number of occurrences and duration of *oplakvane*: the first column includes the type of interaction (face-to-face), the second column is the average length of the interaction per type, the third column is the number of times (on average) *oplakvane* occurred (amount of initiations, and not cycles), and the final column contains the average time *oplakvane* occurred for (amount in minutes, and not cycles).

Type of Interaction	Length of Interaction (Average)	<i>Oplakvane</i> # of Occurrences (Average)	<i>Oplakvane</i> Duration Total (Average)
Work related (restaurants)	2 hrs	5	7 min
Work related (office)	10 min	7	5 min
Celebrations (in a household)	3.5 hrs	13	47 min
Meals (in a household)	4 hrs	15	82 min
Meals (in a restaurant)	2 hrs	7	34 min
Meals (outside of Sofia)	3.5 hrs	10	32 min
Meals (with news)	30 min	5	5 min
Other	1 hr	10	6 min

Table 1. Spread of face-to-face interactions and amount of *oplakvane* occurring during them.

I chose food/coffee related events because most socializing in Bulgaria revolves around such events. Even at work-related gatherings and meetings, unless it is a quick sale interaction that barely lasts a few minutes, an offer for “getting coffee” typically occurs. It is not uncommon for even technicians who come to visit a household for purely work related repair to be offered drink/coffee/food. It is a particular cultural ritual with specific meaning; suffice to say that it serves interactionally as bonding and politeness, a cross over between what is deemed

formal and informal, work and pleasure, private and public. Very frequently, even between people who are not very close, a coffee may transform into a meal, and the lack of offering such (coffee/drink/meal) may be deemed extremely rude and disrespectful, threatening the face of the “host”. For example, it is not uncommon for business partners or acquaintances to meet and have the work related event transform into an offer for coffee, then dinner and drinks. The blending of the formal and informal can potentially be traced back to the time of communism, the lineage of which I will examine in more detail in the next chapter.

The data was generated via recording spontaneous discourse in informal and formal settings that was then examined for instances of *oplakvane* and analyzed through cultural discourse analysis in Bulgarian. Informal settings consist of conversations “at dinner tables” or weekend lunches and include friends and colleagues at dinner/lunch/coffee, where people sit around a table, eat several courses accompanied with drinks, or sip coffee.

Some instances of informal talk occur at public settings such as a business office (appliance repair shop in a central location) in Sofia. It is a service locale and not a store, where there is a constant influx of customers who come to leave or pick up their small appliances, and where people can call in to schedule appointments. The firm, called “Sotirov-N,” has contracts for the servicing of home appliances with brands such as Coca-Cola, Bosch, Whirlpool, etc. and thus, provides servicing of a plethora of appliances. The firm employs fifteen technicians, three secretaries, one accountant, one assistant, and two supervisors who travel and perform work all over the capital and around the country. Informal talk occurs at this public setting

in the form of client/customer-employee interactions, employee coffee breaks, as well as visits from friends and relatives during the office hours (a common practice in Bulgaria, where people “drop by” to say “hi” with the idea of becoming a customer/client and getting a discount as a favor).

The firm provides access to incredibly diverse segments of the Bulgarian society in the sense of primary data (customers who come straight to the office on a daily basis, calls in to the firm’s secretaries, as well as the employees’ conversations among themselves) and secondary data in the forms of reports of the phenomenon of *oplakvane* they (customers, employees, and business partners/affiliated offices) have experienced. Also, each day, for about an hour or so at the beginning and end of work, while the employees are waiting for the supervisor to open/close the firm’s office, the employees gather outside of the firm’s building to chat, drink coffee, and smoke a cigarette.

All social interaction at such gatherings was audio recorded. I distributed descriptions of my field work and received consent for recording when I first arrived, and proceeded to record as unobtrusively as possible for two reasons: a) I was attempting to keep the talk as naturally occurring as possible, and b) recording has received a negative connotation during communism where spying on each other in order to compile a dossier and gain points from the Party were common occurrences.

I analyzed twenty-three newspaper articles in detail for the occurrence of *oplakvane*, and then selected a rich example, which embodies the cultural wealth of *oplakvane* as different from its linguistic relatives *mrankane* and *pomrankvane*. I

selected the article from the Bulgarian newspaper “Sedem”, August 2010, which is called “Za mojta Bulgaria. I optimisma... [About my Bulgaria. And optimism...] as it summarizes and highlights not only the nuances of the term *oplakvane*, the enactment’s structure, but also the difficulty of participants themselves “dealing” and appeasing the symbolic realities managed by the different communicative terms available (Appendix C). The article was translated into English where all terms for communication were translated according to their main dictionary meaning and their Bulgarian equivalents were included in [brackets].

Towards the end of my stay, after feeling comfortable enough within my cultural footing regarding *oplakvane*, I examined discourse in the media for instances of *oplakvane* such as the television programming called “rubric” on bTV (Traikova, 2012). One such media segment was broadcasted on March 17, 2012. According to bTV’s website, “bTV The Reporters” is a “special rubric for in-depth investigations and reports by the journalist of bTV” (2012) and has been part of the central Weekend bTV News broadcasting since September 2008 (Appendix I). Here and throughout the chapter the broadcast program “bTV The Reporters” is referred to as a “rubric” in order to maintain the original name used for this style of writing in Bulgarian journalism. The title of this particular fifteen-minute episode is “My home, my castle?” bTV, or Balkan Television, is the first privately owned national television channel in Bulgaria (first broadcasted in 2000) and is operated by bTV Media Group (part of Central European Media Enterprises). It is considered the Bulgarian television channel with the largest viewing. The channel was previously owned by Balkan News Corporation (part of News Corporation) but was sold to

Central European Media Enterprises in 2010. Most of bTV's original content is available on its Internet site.

Despite its separation from News Corp a few years back, the channel has maintained a predominantly US focus on reality shows and television series format that includes: Idol (as Music Idol), Survivor, Got Talent, Dancing with the Stars, The Voice of, Are you Smarter than a 5th grader, The Dating Game, The Stars must be crazy (The Price is Right), and popular American series such as Monk, The O. C., Desperate Housewives, Ghost Whisperer, Grey's Anatomy, Battlestar Galactica, Alf, Friends, The Middle, Nikita, Pretty Little Liars, The Vampire Diaries, Two and a Half Men, etc. Among the channel's program are also Turkish and Korean series, and many Bulgarian productions such as The Slavi's Show, Let's talk with Rosen Petrov (a Sunday talk-show), Before Lunch (an everyday talk-show), The Comedians (a comedy show), Zvezdev's Kitchen (a culinary show), The Spirit of Health as well as a "documentary reality," This is the Life. bTV The News is among the most watched newscast in Bulgaria, rivaling the first national channel BNT. The channel also broadcasts morning information blocks such as This Morning, This Saturday, and This Sunday, while bTV The Reporters and bTV The Documents are special shows for in-depth investigation (Interview with a bTV archivist).

Online data come from blog posts and their comments available on blog.bg as well as a posting that has appeared on several various websites (blog.bg, frognews.bg, and svejo.bg among others). Other media materials were treated the same way, with analyses performed on the original version in Bulgarian, and then translated in three layers for the purpose of reporting the findings. The data

analyses were performed in Bulgarian and details as to the process of transcription and translation are available in the later section. Examples of data are available in Appendices A-I.

Data Analysis

After collecting numerous instances of spontaneously occurring *oplakvane* (recordings as well as field notes) I supplemented the data with more structured and controlled procedures that include interview questions based on the data (as well as the theoretical framework) and observations I have as a native participant. These include questions such as what is considered to qualify as *oplakvane*, instances that the interviewees supply themselves, expressed attitudes towards *oplakvane*, descriptions of instances that could be labeled as *oplakvane*, and elicited responses to (in)appropriate uses of the term *se oplakva* as well as its enactments. A sample of the interview questions is available in Appendix B. Additional resources necessitated by the initial findings include historical documents or instances (upon availability) as to the origins of the term, folk stories, proverbs and native adages, literary fiction (Bai Ganio), and poetry for further nuancing of the cultural meaning.

In the same way, after analyzing the data, a myth of the Bulgarian “situation” was constructed, which was then given to Bulgarian participants who were asked to modify any parts they felt would not have been written by someone from the Bulgarian culture until a consensus was reached. Bulgarian was a tool for analyses, where I did the data collection, recording, and analyses in the Bulgarian language, then translated into English afterwards as needed for the dissertation. In order to report on the phenomenon here, transcriptions were created of the interactions that

were then translated in English. All online and media materials were transferred into a word format document and translated into English where the punctuation and formatting was retained.

All data was analyzed ethnographically and through the cultural discourse analysis guidelines creating the following layers:

1) A description through Hymes' (1962) SPEAKING components (the descriptive mode of analysis), then, within the interpretive/descriptive mode (data collected was described for its settings, participants, ends, act sequence, key, instrument, norms, and genre; participants were then asked about these descriptive nuances, and later I tested their rationale).

2) An interpretation of *oplakvane* as a "term for talk" based on Carbaugh's (1989) framework—social use in context, enactments, messages and meanings about the practice itself, metaphorical messages and meanings about sociality and personhood (here I moved between historical context of the term and the local meanings through interview questions, and follow up when the term was used).

3) A next layer of extrapolating particular norms that were active for the participants (after observing and formulating norms exhibited, I returned and tested them by adhering or contradicting them in everyday interactions).

4) Formulating premises of value and belief about communication, relations, personhood, dwelling, feeling, and action based on the enactment of *oplakvane* (Carbaugh, 2007b, 2011) that I extrapolated from the data, clarified through interviews, and examined through the existing theoretical framework.

5) An examination of the practice through Philipsen's (1987) definition of a ritual (a four step process that includes: a. structured sequence of acts, b. symbolic acts, c. correct performance, d. homage to a sacred object) for what function the practice may have and what context specific historical symbolic meanings are evoked and used to make sense of the world.

The insights offered here as to the cultural significance of *oplakvane* as a term for communication and the enactments it refers to, as structured within a cyclical form of a communicative ritual, arise from the large corpus of variegated data described above. For the purpose of brevity and clarity, I have chosen to illustrate my findings with one particular dinner event since it demonstrates my conclusions in a condensed format within one event. Due to the particular length of each act within the practice, as well as the multiplicity of cycles it involves, I feel this single event offers a particularly in-depth illustration as to the structure, recurrence of utterances and phrases, as well as purposeful use of the practice, instances and shortened versions that can be observed throughout the body of my data.

Thus, the data was first analyzed in detail, then on the basis of these analyses instances were selected to illustrate the results of my analyses and findings. In this way, the first phase of the analysis led to more focused interviewing and analyses of preliminary findings, which led to an even more focused phase of testing the norms created based on these findings, and so on, thus employing an ethnographic cycle as an analytic process and movement between the data and conceptualization, the emic (the local) and the etic (the larger theoretical understanding), ensuring

specificity in understanding the larger discursive system, and connections to the historical and political discourses and context (Carbaugh & Hastings, 1992).

Based on my analysis, about 10-15% of the naturally occurring talk in the above-mentioned settings constitutes *oplakvane* (whether recognized explicitly by the participants or not). However, what is more interesting is how *oplakvane* is distributed, as seen in Figure 1.

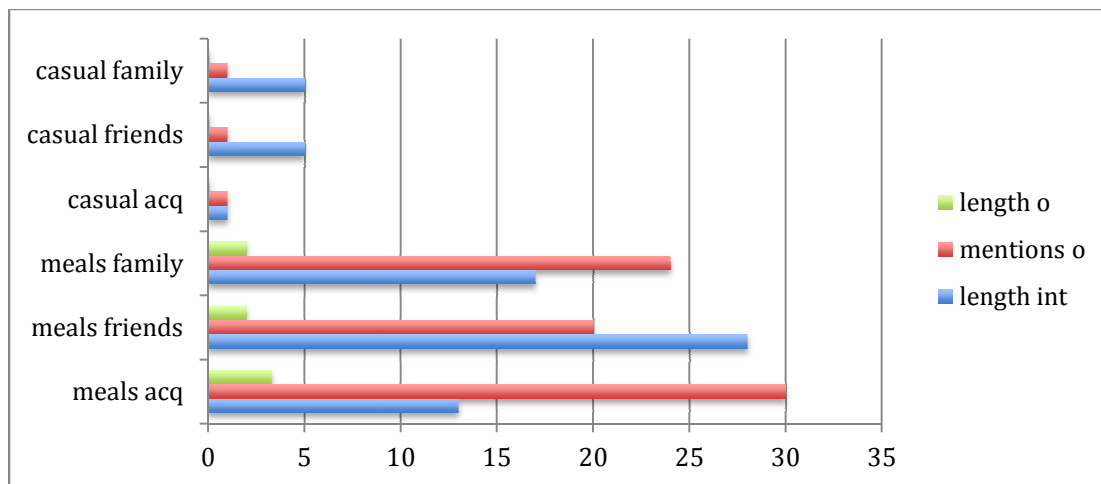


Figure 1: Distribution of *oplakvane*

In Fig. 1 I illustrate the regularity with which *oplakvane* occurs across relationships, and contexts. The distribution of *oplakvane* is counted through the number of times the practice is initiated (labeled as “mentions o”) and the length of the practice, or how long, in minutes, the practice’s enactment lasts (labeled as “length o”). The type of relationships across which *oplakvane* is observed is on a spectrum from “acquaintances” (least familiar), “friends” (more familiar), and “family” (most familiar). The contexts are two—“casual” (brief encounters for coffee, short visits) and “meals” (lengthier occasions, over one to two hours and involving a meal).

Thus, as the figure illustrates, the data reflect that *oplakvane* occurs about the same number of times (as number of initiations of the enactment) when the interaction is brief, as opposed to longer. In “casual” (brief) encounters, whether the participants are close (“family”) or “acquaintances”, *oplakvane* is initiated with the same frequency (number of initiations as indicated by “mentions”): Zero to five. Also, in such “casual” interactions, *oplakvane*, when initiated, lasts barely more than the initiation (amount of time of the enactment): less than one minute. Or, when the encounter is brief, regardless of how close the participants are, *oplakvane* (initiations) does occur, even though in small numbers, and is rarely picked up for enactment (duration).

On the other hand, when the interactions were longer (“meals”, three+ times longer than “casual” encounters), there are more initiations (“mentions o”): twenty to thirty instances on average. When breaking this down to how close the participants are, the figure indicates that most initiations of *oplakvane* occur among interactions/meals with “acquaintances” (thirty), less—with “family” (twenty-four), and least—with “friends” (twenty). These occurrences are detailed in the later chapters. For these “meals”, when *oplakvane* is initiated, the practice is picked up by the other participants, resulting in enactments more than during “casual” encounters, regardless of the closeness of the relationship. In other words, during “meals” (longer interactions) *oplakvane* was not only initiated more, but also an actual enactment takes place (uptake and response from the rest of the participants), where the longest enactments of the practice occur among

“acquaintances”, less—among “friends” and “family”. Reasons for this distribution, structure of said enactments, and their functions are discussed in the next chapters.

Data Transcription

From all the data recorded, I transcribed numerous instances of *oplakvane*, however, since I worked in the original language I translated only pieces used for illustration within the dissertation. Other data recorded was transcribed generally for the purposes of analysis. Analysis was performed on all the data in Bulgarian, and the translations were created solely for the audience’s understanding so the nuanced meaning was not lost. For the purpose of the dissertation, the translation was created by remaining as close as possible to the original literal sentence structure where possible, with English phrasing used only if it conveyed the interactional meaning better. The first layer of transcription was the original spoken Bulgarian, the second an English interpretation of Bulgarian words but with Bulgarian syntax, thus improper English syntax, and the third the English meaning equivalent (with same word choices but syntax within the English standard). Here is a simple example:

L1 (Bulgarian transcription): Zdravei, kak si dnes? ... ne, ne te chuvam dobre.

L2 (Literal translation in English): To health, how you today? ... no, not you hear well.

L3 (English final): Hello, how are you? ... no, I don’t hear you well.

For the sake of brevity, only layers 1 and 3 are included, omitting 2, which is available upon request.

Punctuation was used to indicate intonation at the end of the utterances (in a loose CA style). Intonation within utterances was not indicated on the transcript itself since it was in English and would be confusing but is discussed within the analysis where relevant. I have used the following symbols

: (elongation)

//overlap//

. downward intonation

? upward intonation

, enumeration

=latching

*Bulgarian term kept

'someone else's words within an utterance or dialogue inserted into utterance'

(.) brief pauses

... very brief pauses < 1sec

I employed this very loose CA style because it serves the main interest of examining *oplakvane* as enactments, without burdening the layered transcript with too much information.

CHAPTER 3

THE BULGARIAN CONTEXT: CHARTING THE BULGARIAN DISCOURSE

BROADLY THROUGH ITS OWN TERMS AND EVENTS

History and politics

I now review contextual elements of the Bulgarian history that become relevant within *oplakvane*, without which, an audience, not familiar with the Bulgarian history, would not be able to make sense of the enactments of the communicative practice. Analyzing the corpus of naturally occurring talk, I found these historical elements to, not only be reflected in the communicative practice of *oplakvane*, but also activated, reinforced, and reaffirmed within *oplakvane*. Through evoking and reaffirming this history, a grand historical mythology of “being a Bulgarian” is recreated and managed—one that comes with a very particular understanding of acting as a Bulgarian. In this way, the historical legacy for a way of being and acting (as developed during years of being under the Ottoman empire and then communism) lives in communication, and the process of this reaffirmation can be explained and observed through the communicative practice of *oplakvane*. By examining *oplakvane* and understanding the local history and politics, we can see how the two cannot be viewed as separate. Thus, a specific socio-political status quo is maintained through and within communication (in this case a particular understanding of inaction as a default and aspect of the Bulgarian character).

I will now offer a review of history and politics from the Liberation of Bulgaria from the Ottoman Empire in the late 1800s, the years of communism, its fall and return, and the decades of political instability that followed. This review

looks at the history as it relates to the development of social and communal habits and cultural understandings that inform and shape the discourse under study, the connections that will be demonstrated in the ensuing analyses. In the subsequent chapters and the analyses there, I will allude to this history/politics as the meanings taken-for-granted and formative of the meanings of the talk, the identity, and forms of sociation in *oplakvane*.

The Turkish Influence

When discussing the problematic aspects of Bulgarian-ness, the participants often mention how we are still *robi*, “slaves”, with *robski mantalitet*, with “slave mentality”. Throughout, I use the term “mentality” to point to a discursive configuration, cultural discourse endemic to the Bulgarian scene today that the participants claim is in the Bulgarian mind. What they consider the source of the mentality is a meaningful mode of comportment (behaviors and ways of behaving).

The explanation the participants provide includes the five hundred years Bulgaria was under the Ottoman Empire—years from 1300s to the late 1800s—and how this killed any renaissance and “strive towards civilization,” stumping the Bulgarian growth. When they discuss the Turkish impact on the Bulgarian culture, the participants refer to the ways of thinking and behaving in terms of work ethic, every day politeness, gender issues, and the underlying Turkish political influence that has “overtaken” the government, “pulling the country away from Europe.” These particular topics do not appear in interactions I have observed. On the contrary, the Turkish influence is only mentioned as the reason for the development of Bai Ganio character (“typical for all Bulgarians”) and is not mentioned when the

participants come from the two sides—locals of the capital of Bulgaria, Sofia, and locals of the Turkish villages in Southern Bulgaria. I will discuss these areas as they are the home for some of the participants I observed, focusing both on their background and the larger implications of the Turkish influence.

One such area is Duspat, which is in the southern region of Bulgaria at the border with Greece. The towns of Duspat and Sarnitca connect around the Duspat Lake and its dam. This lake-dam is the second biggest and highest artificial lake in Bulgaria and is located in the broadest mountain range in the country, the Rhodope Mountains. It is a beautiful area of the country, with its deep forests, gorges, caves, and scenic highland villages. Besides the beautiful countryside, the southern areas of Bulgaria are particularly interesting to visit for another reason—the Turkish cultural influence has branded these areas as “barely Bulgarian.” Bulgaria was one of the last countries that connected the Ottoman Empire to the West and thus, the last one they were willing to give up. Over five centuries, the Ottoman Empire employed some direct and indirect methods of population control and border maintenance. Aside from the cultural blending that occurs “naturally” due to the movements of people across the empire’s territory, the Ottomans implemented some stronger measures for acculturation, exactly because Bulgaria was the crucial territory, and final stronghold, keeping them from the West.

One such measure was the Еничари (Janissaries) system that some historians credit to Sultan Murad I in the mid to late 1300s. Every five years the Ottoman administrators would go to the empire’s Christian provinces and recruit (or take) the strongest sons (ages 10-12) from their parents and take them back for

Janissary training that included learning the Turkish language and customs, with subsequent conversion to Islam. The training was supervised 24 hours a day and included strict discipline: the Janissaries were only soldiers, not allowed to work anything but war, and could not marry. For many Christian families, however, giving their child to the Ottoman empire was a guaranteed career move because it offered the possibility of social advancement, where sons could one day reach the status of Janissary colonel, a statesman (and even return to their home area in the position of a Turkish representative), a governor, and even a Grand Vizier.

The initial Janissaries were prisoners and slaves (part of the one fifth share of the plunder the sultan required) and later as part of the *decemtek* (the “tenth”), the tax collected from the provinces. The Janissary system was a tightly knit military culture: they were paid regular salaries, lived in barracks, were as close a unit as a family, and served as policemen, palace guards, or even firefighters in times of peace. The practice of taking young boys (seven to ten years old and even younger) from Christian families was also called *devshirme*, and was mostly detested by the subjects (despite the potential benefits) to the point of them resorting to physical disfiguring of the children.

This practice of taking children away, in combination with mass conversions near the present day border with Turkey, occurred throughout the five centuries, from planned violent conversions of whole villages and areas (where the option was to change your religion or die) to practical, career oriented conversions. Many areas in southern Bulgaria still are famous for the caves where people would go hide and even die during such brutal periods, caves and gorges where people would choose

to throw themselves before they renounced their religion and core beliefs. Much folklore and literature remains of those days, to remind and commemorate.

Whether through forceful measures or mere proximity to Istanbul and the key position of Bulgaria, many “Turk” cultural aspects became a central part of the cultural identity of many inhabitants of the Southern areas of Bulgaria. This conflicted population grew through turbulent times, forcefully or over time:

Bulgarian, but not “Bulgarian”, speaking the language but with a marked dialect; not “Turkish” but Muslim; part of the Bulgarian country, but not at all.

A consequence of the Ottoman “slavery” has been the creation of areas of Southern Bulgaria that have still maintained their “Turkish” cultural status within the country. This consequence is rarely discussed or even remembered in the bigger cities because it mainly concerns more rural areas near the border between Bulgarian, Turkey and Greece. Unless one has a relative/friend from there, visits on the way somewhere else, or is to sit down at a table with a person from there, the differences (and only specific ones) would not be visible. When driving through these areas, the differences are not as stark, not any more than between villages in any other rural area where the younger people have left for the cities in search of jobs and only the older people are left caring of what little remains from their houses and gardens. The buildings are starting to fall apart or are ransacked to bits by the growing unsteady “gypsy” population in the abandoned areas. All this leaves a ghostly veil over the villages that once thrived during the agricultural period, and later during communism. And at this stage, the younger population is rarely coming back to work or even supporting the old people who are left.

Some of the “Turkish” villages are very similar to the “Bulgarian” villages and one might not be able to tell them apart if it were not for the Mosque towers or the open-faced headdress of the women (slightly different from the scarves “Bulgarian” women of a certain age wear). Some small villages are, also similarly, starting to decrease in population and vigor. The larger villages or small towns still maintain a community where the younger generation finds employment either within the regional agriculture or via commuting to nearby cities. In comparison to the capital, however, all of these areas are still considered to be “rural” settings because of their access to employment, education, and primarily agricultural focus.

It might seem as though there is a clear line between the “Turk” population in these parts of the country and the “rest” of Bulgarians, and some long term political strategies have certainly attempted to make this distinction even stronger. One example is the assimilation program forced on the Muslim population in Bulgaria during the Zhivkov period (particularly around 1984). The communist regime during Zhivkov considered Muslim beliefs and practices to be opposed to the secular communist (Marxist-Leninist) party ideology and attempted a religious as well as cultural restrictions (change of names, customs, etc.) to many communities. As a result of this assimilation campaign, many Turks left Bulgaria until the fall of communism some years later when some religious freedoms were restored. One explanation for the assimilation campaign is population control at the time.

According to a report as of 2009, about 920, 000, or 12% of the Bulgarian population, are Muslim (Sofia Echo). Within these numbers, religiosity varies and has culturally blended with some Bulgarian customs. So, what are some differences

between “Bulgarians” and “Turks?” General opinion tends to focus on the racial, religious, and gender aspects such as “Turks are darker than us,” “they go to mosques and follow different prayers,” and “women work, while the men are *derebey*” (feudal lordship position within the central government in the Ottoman empire during the 18th century; often used in present day Bulgaria to represent a wealthy Turk who doesn’t work but leaves all tasks to the females in the family).

As a result of five hundred years of cohabitation with Bulgarians, the Turkish are not a strictly distinct group of people within Bulgaria at the present time. What I mean by this is that the “Muslim” or the “Turks” are not as separate to the rest of the population as public discourse suggests. Their religion is quite different from the majority in Bulgaria (Greek Orthodox). Even the “differences,” however, are not as significant exactly because of the five centuries: many habits and customs, whether strictly religious or not, language and dialect, cuisine and folklore have blended over the years (whether in opposition to the “predominant” empyreal ideology or as a result of it) and some of these “differences” are actually not ones at all. Consider, for example, the rigid gender roles that many traditional Bulgarians share, as well as the racial phenotype that is more “imagined,” and socially constructed and reinforced since there is no clear phenotypical distinction between “Bulgarians” and “Turks.” As for religion, due to communist opposition, at least a generation of “Bulgarians” has grown up without being a practicing Greek Orthodox, or practices a blend that is more culturally close to Islam. An example of this is the practice of *Kurban* (religious sacrifice for health) still popular in many areas.

In other words, the differences between “Bulgarians” and “Turks” are not as clear and are often constructed and made salient only during specific times of political instability for political purposes. Those differences are highlighted in interactions of political significance, in moments when Bulgarian attempt to distance themselves from their turbulent past and the particular “slave” identity the Turks are associated with. In moments of interaction, however, where the political stance of East vs. West is not present, other identity is evoked, one that unites “Bulgarians” as a “post-slave” country struggling with their past. How this is accomplished in everyday talk and interaction through the enactment of *oplakvane*, and how it transcends regional difference is illustrated in chapter 8.

Socialism/communism and identity

Within *oplakvane*, participants frequently mentioned these behaviors and ways of thinking that originated during the years under the Ottoman Empire and how they were only exacerbated during the communist period, blaming them as the main root of the problems, or the Bulgarian situation. The influence communism (socialism) had on a variety of behaviors, habits, and the larger Bulgarian identity has been examined from both cultural, political, and agricultural lenses ethnographically. Here, I aggregate several analyses that examine the development of a specific “peasant” identity connected to agriculture (and the rural-urban dichotomy) during communism, and the effects of socialism on its conceptualization. This identity, and the behaviors attached to it, developed during the Ottoman years and solidified during communism, evoked not only within *oplakvane* but, as my analyses later illustrates, are also managed through it.

Creed (1995) examines the struggle of the Bulgarian people to break away from communism during the period following 1989. A question that circulated widely within Europe immediately after the fall of communism in Bulgaria was: why did Bulgarians elect the socialist party (BSP) in their first post-communist elections in 1990, especially after all the protests to rid themselves of it? Creed (1995) suggested that such “balkanist” (Todorova, 2002) behavior can actually be explained through the study of the historical context, the role of agriculture under socialism, and the threat posed by the transition on the “rural” identities. This threat was constructed within a system that allowed for the “continuation” of the socialist sentiment as opposed to a revival of it following the trends at the time since Bulgarians voted before the trend became wide spread.

Creed (1995) proposed that agriculture was extremely significant to the Bulgarian infrastructure and helped maintain the cultural association between agriculture and the village, even after they diversified economically, thus helping the villagers to develop new identities not linked only to farming. In other words, the importance of agriculture, in addition to the symbolic association between communism and collectivism, resulted in the agricultural system being targeted during the transitional period (i. e., the de-communization). This threatened not only the villagers’ economic arrangements but also the “peasant” identity they had achieved at the time. It became about urban-identified/anti-socialism identity vs. the “peasants” that led even the no-supporters to gravitate toward the socialist party.

The cultural link between the village and agriculture, where workers were doubly bound to agriculture through substance production (materially) and through village residence (culturally), only strengthened this specific village identity without the negative connotation of agriculture as “low class” or “just farming.” The “socialists” aligned themselves with this valued agriculture-kinship (industrial fused with the land) peasant identity, leaving out the democratic party as the “intellectual urbanites” (who lacked and did not align with the identity of the proud peasant). This allowed for a new “peasant” vs. “urbane” distinction to be created that led to the “socialist” party regaining power. This “peasant” identity has since been re-defined as connected directly to the negative problematic behaviors of the present day Bulgarian socioeconomic “situation” but here the link between agriculture and communism and the conceptualizations of self and sociality start to become more visible. The “problematic” behaviors include specific notions of work ethic and the roots of corruption, as developed during centuries as part of the empire and communism, only to be later reconfigured as a national trait, passed and managed through *oplakvane*. I address this phenomenon as it becomes particularly relevant in chapter 8 where I discuss the larger narrative surrounding the Bulgarian “situation” and in chapter 9 when I examine the construction of the national identity.

The “Transition”

I will now offer an interpretation of how the period after the fall of communism came to be referred to as the “Transition” in public discourse and some explanations as to the political instability within Bulgaria characterizing this period. Giatzidis (2004) describes the historic circumstances and the politico-economical

situation in Bulgaria after 1989 as “the time lost.” Despite the introduction of democratic institutions and civil liberties, the Bulgarian political elite had failed to establish and maintain a stable political structure and an efficient governance system that allowed for an economic stability, “[d]elaying hard decisions and shrinking responsibility emerged as a style of state administration” (Giatzidis, 2004, p. 436).

Giatzidis (2004) also suggests that, as a result of this political legacy, the failure of the following economic reforms can be ascribed to four major factors: 1) the initial conditions in Bulgaria were less favorable than in other countries; 2) macroeconomic stabilization policies were inconsistent and reformation programs were unevenly implemented; 3) various policies (structural reform, trade privatization, institutional and enterprise reform, financial sector, etc.) did not make much progress; and 4) the Bosnian war and the trade sanctions in former Yugoslavia “disrupted normal economic activities” (p. 436). All this led to the economic crisis of the 90’s: collapse of living standards, reduction in wages, unemployment, and inadequate welfare and health care system. This delay in radical economic measures, low level of law enforcement together with the unclear rules of the political and economic game created conditions for the “expansion and empowerment” of the criminal underground (p. 437).

Giatzidis (2004) suggests that the 1997 elections marked the “new beginning” for the country with the election of the democratic party (UDF) that allowed for a temporary stabilization and improvement within the politico-economic situation in Bulgaria. However, the lack of consistent governmental social

protection policies and the pressure from the macroeconomic conditions attached to aid from international financial institutions together with the structural reforms led, again, to unemployment, poverty, and “additional economic adversity” (Giatzidis, 2004, p. 438-9). The UDF, unable to deal with the extent of the reform agenda, and suffering from the social tension, feared the political cost and started to crumble and fragment.

The constant shift and continued “inability” on the side of the elected officials to deliver, the continued social and economical hardship, and “persistent perception of improper privatization and distribution of budgetary funds” led to a shift in the political attitudes of the people, placing individuals in a “situation of extreme volatility” and apathy that led to the break in the bi-polar political situation in 2001, with the election of Simeon II and the National movement of Simeon II (p. 439). Despite its ambitious promises, the new party failed the people’s expectations and did not manage to improve the living situation and the standard of living. Here, part of the “reality” concerning the Bulgarian “situation” becomes visible, where the existing socio-economic problems within Bulgaria are later carried over, being reconstituted and perpetuated (at least the cultural understanding of their ubiquity In Bulgaria) through communication and namely *oplakvane*.

All this has led to the creation and continued maintenance of the statesman in a very negative light, associated solely with “their wealth, good public speaking skills, corruption and the predominance of their private interests over the public interest” (Giatzidis, 2004, p. 441). This, together with the ambiguous perception of the Bulgarian people towards the country’s accretion to the EU due to the

complexities of the process and the different expectations and perceived reasons for the EU imposed requirements and objectives had only aggravated the Bulgarian “situation.” Giatzidis (2004, p. 447) proposes that:

As the communist system was characterized by the subordination of the state to the party, the dismantling of the communist regime was perceived as equivalent to the dismantling of the state. The state cut back its role not only in those areas that were the distinctive characteristics of planned economics but also in what are the broadly accepted areas of government and state obligation in advance market economy.

This has led to even worse problems with corruption and a failure to address and handle the corruption by the law enforcement. These problems then led to the clash between the initial high expectations and enthusiasm of the EU accretion as the almighty panacea for all Bulgarian problems and the actualities of the process that required radical political, institutional, economic, and socio-cultural changes within the country. And this is the backdrop for the present Bulgarian “situation,” marked by transitioning between slavery to a free country, from a predominantly agricultural to an industrial country, and from communism to democracy. People thus keep it alive and thriving in the way they speak, not only echoing the past but also continuing it.

The “Behaviors”

Throughout, I have frequently referred to the Bulgarian “situation” but what does this entail? The participants use it to refer to an array of social problematic issues ranging from economic infrastructure, political and governance instability, and everyday negative instances. All of these everyday problems in the country are

explained by the Bulgarian unfavorable behaviors and habits developed during the Ottoman occupation and further solidified during communism. Behaviors such as taking bribes or favors for services, amassing materials and resources, as well as taking advantage of others (all mentioned within enactments of *oplakvane* and considered to be very “Bulgarian”) can be traced back to social behaviors and tendencies that were created and perpetuated during socialist times, famous for its shortages, unavailability of goods for general consumption, as well as hoarding of produce (whether at work or personal), and the demands of the production cycle at the workplace. Verdery (1996) describes this process when discussing how the “fragility” of the socialist system originated with the notion of “centralized planning,” which was only on paper, and the “center” of the system did not plan or control effectively. While the central planners of any institution connected to production and manufacturing did create a list and outline of the exact necessities and resources (targets) that they would increase annually, they would, however, not take into account what can actually be acquired or even attained. As a result, the next level, the managers, quickly learned that the only way to reach these constantly increasing targets with the instability of resources, and started increasing the amounts they required in preparation for the next target. This “padding” of materials was soon to become a widely known and common practice (p. 21).

Apart from these manufactured “padding,” actual shortages were indeed present as in situations where sufficient materials and labor for the required level of output did exist in reality but not when and where they were needed. In addition to “padding,” lower in the production line the workers also started to hoard items any

time they were available, exactly because they were trying to keep up with the “padding” above. Verdery (1996) explains their behavior using the economists’ term “soft budget restraints” (p. 21), or if a firm is losing money the center would bail it out. Within the USA economy this often means that budget constraints are hard. If you cannot make ends meet, you go under. In a socialist economy, however, none of that mattered. If firms asked for extra investment or hoarded raw materials, there was no penalty for it. And so, it becomes clear why shortages were occurring considering all this “padding” and hoarding of materials and resources, thus creating a problem for many firms of how and whether they could find the necessary supplies as opposed to merely meeting the yearly quota and demand.

This is how the notion of “befriending”, doing “favors”, and corruption began: as Verdery (1996) argues, the “locus of competition” (p. 22) in socialism was somewhere different than that of most other economies. In the US, for example, the understanding is that one needs to woo customers, be nice and provide anything for them to stay on top. In the socialist system, however, the competitors were other procurers of materials and resources and to outcompete them “you needed to befriend those higher up,” the suppliers (p. 22). As a result, many procurers and customers tried to ingratiate themselves with smiles, bribes, and favors. These practices soon grew into wide networks of “friendly” relations among managers and bureaucrats, clerks and customers, etc. The implications for present day corruption in Bulgaria are obvious. The behaviors labeled as “corruption” are froth with cultural meaning, connected to the national identity and intricately connected to the historical context and the underlying cultural logic as implemented and perpetuated

within communication. How this differentiation between being “friendly” and doing “favors” and “corruption” is strongly connected to identifying against the national mentality via *oplakvane* I examine in chapter 9.

Other implications of such scarcities include the relationship between managers and workers since labor was in short supply. Labor was similar to other scarce materials and resources for the same reasons. It was never known when or even if labor would be available and whether this would coincide with the materials being present in order for anything to be accomplished. Frequently, instead of having few productive workers at the same time as the resources were available, many workers would stand idle for a large part of the month, ending up working in the last few days in an attempt to finish the target. This incongruity and waste of labor led to the managers not having much authority or leverage over their employees (Verdery, 1996). Not only did the managers not have leverage; they also had to turn some of the control of the work process over to the workers exactly because of this uncertainty in the availability of resources.

Verdery (1996) argues that as a result, “workers under socialism had a somewhat more powerful position relative to management than do workers in capitalism” (p. 23). Thus, a reversal of roles was created, where, in such a socialist system, the managers ended up negotiating and “trading favors” with bureaucrats (getting chummy with them, developing and using relationships with those above, having connections with higher authorities, etc.), while the workers had more say and affected the work process without control from above, both undercutting central authority and power. This reversal of power has multiple implications as my

analyses shows, some of which I highlight with examples from the dinner event and the particular enactments of *oplakvane*. Forging close relationships, connections, and “friendships” in order to have access to resources has become a multifaceted cultural norm, with consequence not only for everyday interactions but also political mobility across the system.

Even though it may give more power to those who are closer to the labor and the “actual” circumstances of a firm, workers’ control over resources and the production process can also have ramifications for the way authority and relegation of power is performed. Instead of this power division being empowering and resulting in higher productivity, however, workers would often abuse their power and hoard resources for individual use—behaviors that reach all the way to the government and maintain a culture of distrust and everyone-for-themselves orientation. These practices, created and maintained throughout the years of socialism continue to permeate the cultural understanding of social relations and identity, and not only surface within *oplakvane* as part of the cultural landscape that Bulgarians inhabit but also reinforce mistrust as part of the national identity.

Another layer to this mistrust toward those above in the hierarchy as a result of this distribution of power was the relationship between the people and the political system and a festering opposition to the Party (Verdery, 1996). Since the Party controlled the trade union as the fusion between party and management functions, the Party’s influence was constantly felt within the production process, and as such was considered as meddling (unnecessary, disruptive, and unproductive) by the workers. This resulted in managers and union officials who

took credit for work they were not performing and got in the way, without contributing.

Verdery (1996) references a study by Michael Burawoy of Hungarian factories, where most, if not all, production rituals (“voluntary workdays,” production campaign, and competitions) organized by the Party were strongly resented by the workers because they were perceived as just the “coerced expressions of their supposed commitment” to the ideology that they were (p. 23). This resistance turned into internal sabotage and reduced productivity that only exacerbated the schism between workers and the authorities above them (managers, party representatives, any one associated with the party-related imposition) and worsened the already existing problems of the socialist economies to the point of crisis. Verdery (1996) argues that the exact workplace rules and strategies meant to politicize and strengthen the positive image of the Party and the ideology acted as the opposite, and thus socialism managed to create a rift between “us” and “them,” between the workers and the Party leaders and representatives, because it highlighted the notion that “they” exploit “us” (p. 23). My analyses show how the reverberations from this way of identifying can not only be seen directly within enactments of *oplakvane* but is also managed through the practice that serves as a cursor to differentiate between “us” and “them.”

As a result, the ruling Party cultivated ways to manage and hide this opposition in attempts to prevent the discontent from turning into open rebellion via a mechanism of “surveillance and redistribution of the social product” (Verdery, 1996, p. 24), making version of the KGB and the Secret Police crucial. The way this

apparatus worked was through the creation of a complicated paper system running along the system of producing goods that entailed collecting and fabricating histories/backgrounds (dossiers, files) of the people whom the party ruled. Such dossiers were ultimately meant to manage the subjects and their attitude towards the regime, and as a system were almost as important (if not even more) than the system for production of goods, where the people involved were paid more than those producing goods, even further disrupting the balance (with people's dossiers being more important than their actual actions).

Not surprisingly, these dossiers, their manufacturing, and the effort which went into their creation led to a very distrustful and suspicious atmosphere, where people were not only turned into merely "political subjects" but also against each other (Verdery, 1996, p. 24). Not only could people not trust each other, but they never knew who was reporting their every action to the Party (whether that be their attitude towards work exercises, who they invited to dinner, and what they said). One can see how the "padding" of production numbers was also a common practice for the police as well, resulting in the production of dossiers and files regardless of their truthfulness (Verdery, 1996, p. 24):

The existence of this shadowy system of production could have grave effects on the people "processed" through it, and the assumption that it was omnipresent contributed much to its success, in some countries, in suppressing unwanted opposition.

I later show how this mistrust, cultivated suspiciousness towards one another, and particularly being constantly under scrutiny from the party and neighbors

prompted a communicative practice such as *oplakvane* to appear in order to manage the frustration as well as help identify who one can trust.

Another implication of this political and social configuration of power and uncertainty shaped during socialism prompted a cultural notion of inaction on the side of the individual who felt constricted within the larger net of favor-based governance, relations, and social paternalism, something highlighted and exacerbated by *oplakvane* that perpetuates the cultural notion of behaviors (accumulated during socialism) as becoming a biological factor. The Party was justifying their rule through a claim on the access of goods and resources, representing themselves as the only one to take care of their subjects' needs, where they collected and kept everything (the total product) themselves, only to make it then available to the people (whether that be food, jobs, medical care, etc.). In doing so, they claimed not only the resources but also the right to distribute them and evaluate who and how much is deserved (Verdery, 1996). Since their needs were met, the people learned that they did not need to take any initiative, as their very "benevolent father", the Party, was teaching them (p. 25).

Not only people's attitudes and disposition towards action were affected, but also the whole system of production and consumption since the Party had to control and amass a large amount of production and resources to actually disperse with it at any time, and therefore needed to accrue materials and not just profits. This is another way socialism was different from capitalism, as it was focused on creating and maintaining a dependency entirely on inside resources, and not just decrease the dependency on the outside ones. Making profit was irrelevant, since what was

important was the relationship between the Party over its subjects and mainly, the Party's "superiority", its ability to decide (p. 25).

Thus, the bureaucratic system was also focused on accumulating resources that procure additional resources themselves that in its turn affected the quality of the products (making them often uncompetitive on the world market) since the goods were being made to be accumulated centrally, or given away at lower prices (Verdery, 1996). As Verdery (1996) argues, unlike in capitalism, in socialism "efficiency" meant "the full use of existing resources" and "the maximization of given capacities" as opposed to maximizing results (p. 26). In this way (Verdery, 1996), two economies were created during socialism, where the "first" or "official" one was the formally organized one (the central resource base) and the "second" or "informal" one (the side ways and strategies people utilized to acquire what they could not via regular, official channels) that "spanned wide range from the quasi-legal to the definitely illegal" (p. 27).

Another part of the second economy was the so called "private plots" from collective farms that people in the villages held legally and grew produce for their own homes or sold at the local markets. Despite owning it legally, however, the produce obtained from the plots was "padded" by the villagers stealing, or "appropriating" materials and tools (fertilizer, fodder, machinery) from the collective farm (p. 27). And so the second economy proved parasitic to the state economy, shaped by the consumer needs, indispensable from the "formal" one, and developed exactly because the consumption was ignored (Verdery, 1996).

Understanding this intricate connection is crucial on several levels, one of which is

that individual entrepreneurship could not be boosted simply by undoing the state sector, as democratic symbols and ideas attempted to do during the transition since the fall of socialism in 1989. Even worse, parts of the second economy weakened and perished without the support of the state, a factor also rekindled and managed through *oplavane* and the “peasant” identity.

Such intricate relationship between the economies also affected the definition of “needs” that people often took as a matter of resistance and dispute, further driving a wedge between those siding with the system and those not (thus calling, as my analyses show, for a communicative practice that negotiates and helps identify those favoring the governing/party system). Verdery (1996) explained this by showing its contrast with the definition in the U.S., where needs are not given but created, developed, and expanded (the role of advertising). In contrast, within socialism (which claimed to satisfy people’s basic needs and not encourage them to want more), “needs” meant the bare minimum. Even though the Party did not encourage consumption by restricting availability, however, it kept insisting that the situation and the standard of living would continue to improve, in an attempt to promote more effort from the people. This led to the consumer desire, frustrated by the system’s organization, becoming central to resistance, where socialism aroused consumer desire but kept it alive by deprivation. As a result, people became estranged from the socialist ideology and became more and more critical of the system. This led to not only the thriving of the second economy but also public protest (Verdery, 1996, p. 29):

The black markets in western goods that sprang up everywhere enabled alienated consumers to express their contempt for their

governments though the kinds of things they chose to buy. You could spend an entire month's salary on a pair of blue jeans but it was worth it: wearing them signified that you could get something the system said you didn't need and shouldn't have.

Not surprisingly, this led to a variety of internal problems, where bureaucrats created their own companies within the state bureaucracy that soon led to a factional split between those who connected the socialist system to the outside world (foreign policy, counterintelligence, and foreign trade) and those who managed it within (the party's middle level executive apparatus and the KGB), what Verdery (1996) describes as the dual economy existing symbiotically, a form of “political capitalism” (p. 33). In this “political capitalism” the managers were exploiting the already existing shortages for their own gain, thus pushing them into a crisis proportion by flooding the market with the goods they have been hoarding. Since the superiors were unable to supply their subordinates, this flooding of hoarded goods led to a loss of control among the higher levels of managers, where the crisis was even further exacerbated by a wide-spread bureaucratic anarchy, and a general lack of a systemic strive toward innovation.

The system of maintained shortages heightened bribery and personal ties - behaviors now blamed for the present day “situation”, the topic of *oplakvane*, and confirming a cultural notion of inaction (as how things would change politically if corruption came into being in order to manage inequality during socialism). Verdery (1996) showed that the more highly centralized the system was, the more severe the shortage was, and this led to the utilization of any side strategies and modes of obtaining what was needed through personal ties and bribery. As another

aspect of this, the Party was trying to make everyone equally dependent on the state and focused on morality, as opposed to politics, the heart of the political community. And so within the socialist system, people were divided between “us” and “our enemies,” where communist parties created and shaped their identity against an enemy, whether they be class enemies, the bourgeois west, or within, the dissidents. The world socialism inhabited was a dualistic world of Good and Bad, Communism and Capitalism, party members and those against. People’s alienation from the Party rule resulted in deepening the already existing rift between “us” and “them”, where (Verdery, 1996, p. 94):

“they” were always doing something nasty to “us”; “we” suffered hardship while “they” wallowed in privileges and luxury goods and built fancy houses. Even changing from one situation to another, this elasticity does not weaken the basic split—“us” and “them”.

This split (Verdery, 1996) was omnipresent (public vs. private, official vs. unofficial, “first” vs. “second” economy, etc.) and defined people’s identities. The present problems in post-socialist countries were maintained and shaped by communist party’s manner, where its mode of operation much affected the countries’ socio-political and economic outcomes as people were fed very specific anti-imperial and anti-capitalist sentiments, politically crafted and altered national identities, fostered resistance to party rule, and eliminated organizational forms other than the party (Verdery, 1996). Later, I show through my analyses how this particular split of “us” vs. “them,” mistrust, and the omnipresence of bribery and corruption as a cultural notion of degrees are managed through *oplakvane*.

The villages

So far we have viewed the village-city division in connection to the historical, agricultural, and socialist context. But what is the difference between a city and a village? I will provide a brief description of villages in Bulgaria since there is no equivalent in the United States. What is called a “village” is a small settlement with a population of approximately three to five hundred people. Most have a few central shops that happen to sell everything: from cigarettes and toilet paper to grains for the fields and cat food, from Snickers candy bars to Bulgarian beer and *rakij* (traditional plum brandy), from mops to the old-fashioned hemp brooms, from home grown produce to salami imported from Greece. Usually, the goods are dexterously piled in neat stacks from the floor to the roof in small rented store spaces on the plaza (*ploshtada*), the downtown area of the village. This downtown area often consists of a larger cobbled stone plaza, where all the central buildings and the main bus stop connecting the tiny village to the rest of the country are: municipality buildings, post office, small hospital, a few coffee/liquor shops, the club of retirees (a coffee shop/restaurant-like area), and maybe an abandoned CUS building (Central Universal Store—very popular during communism but abandoned and mostly dilapidated now), where the crowds convene to see each other and be seen. Frequently, all necessities cannot be found in these local stores that begs for a bus trip to the closest bigger town (which hopefully has a wider selection).

My grandparents live in one such village, Butan, in the region just south of the Danube (also famous as the Wheat Barn of Bulgaria), with fertile land stretching all the way to the Balkan mountains that dissects Bulgaria almost in two. The

houses in the villages come together with about 1000 to 4000 square meters of land. It is from this land that the village people are able to live, making use of every square centimeter, growing their own vegetables, fruit, walnut trees, grapes, as well as keeping chickens, some pigs, sheep, goats, cattle, rabbits, and turkeys. Some of the people may have a job (e.g. as shepherds, well diggers, government run local position, owning a store, or at milk farms) but the wages are generally too low and the work irregular. The roads in the villages (other than the main road connecting nearby towns or a highway) are often little more than dirt tracks, and are rarely serviced or maintained (even in larger villages) except around elections for local government (sometimes the money reaches and ends only in those officials' pockets).

Since the villagers' main subsistence comes from farming, many (if not most) young people have left for the cities and bigger towns for education and work. As a result, many houses are left with just old people occupying them, or are completely abandoned. This creates a contrast, where people from my parents' generation, who grew up in these villages while they were the heart of the communist industry and were vibrant with work (in the factories and on the fields), now see them deserted. Most village houses have no direct water supply, although they do have water wells on the land. For this reason, often there is no inside toilet or bathing facilities, and the outside facilities are just a room in an outbuilding with a hole in the ground. Since farming is the main source of income and sustenance, the work for villagers is very physically demanding—reaping the grape harvest, ploughing the fields, etc.

where people work well into their 100s—the frequent sight being an old woman in her 80's and even 90's planting a field.

Because of the specific historical context and the rapid changes that occurred over a short period of time, the “class” system that developed in Bulgaria is often based on the areas one comes from—rural (villages, and even small towns) and urban (the capital). It is a very rigid divide, where even larger towns are frequently not perceived as “urban.” Since the majority of jobs and education opportunities (what are considered to be the most elite high schools and universities) are concentrated in the capital, people perceive urban centers as the only “places” to strive towards if they are not originally from them, thus flocking to these centers. The city infrastructure cannot support it, while the smaller towns and villages remain undeveloped, which only exacerbates the divide between the life in the capital and outside.

This specific urban-rural, Sofia-everywhere else dichotomy is in the core of the present day “class system” in Bulgaria—one based on zip code, money, connections, and type of education. The lines between these are contextualized: there isn't an “obvious” high or low class in Bulgaria, not according to Western, and specifically, American criteria. One can have money and wealth (displayed through material possessions such as cars and clothes) and have a college/university diploma but because of the music they listen to (*chalga*, cheap pop-folk), and how they made their money (by being police, or connected to the party/ruling government), or where they are from (outside of Sofia), they would still be perceived by others as “lower.” Similarly, even if one were born in downtown Sofia

(as well as their parents) and do not have connections to corrupted government officials, they may still be perceived as “lower” status because of their work ethic.

Again, due to the specific historical context in Bulgaria, where the country transitioned from an agricultural slave province to a 20th century constitutional democracy, classes, as they are understood in other countries, did not have time to develop and establish themselves. The class system that did develop is based on connections (the only way up in the Ottoman province as well as the socialist system), quick money (due to connections), and the area one comes from (closer to Europe—Sofia, or closer to the East—the villages and everything outside of Sofia). It is a fluid and ever-changing class system that reflects the context of transition, the strains of entering modernity too quickly.

Thus, the only constant that remains is the Bulgarian “mentality,” where people are ranked “higher” or “lower” depending on the behaviors and ways of “thinking” they exhibit (accumulated over the times of Ottoman occupation, communism, and post-communism). One’s Bulgarian-ness is defined in relation to this “mentality.” This is crucial when examining instances of *oplakvane* where the conversants realize and reinforce the historical narrative and their own understanding of the processes shaping their identities and relations to one another through the discourse. They are aware of their different socio-economic backgrounds and attempt to bridge them through the communicative practice by aligning on one side in relation to the problematic behaviors. Interesting here is how Bulgarians establish a connection via a common way of speaking, or *oplakvane*, exactly because this is a widely known and easily accessible way of speaking, that

not only has a ritualistic form that pays homage to the sacred object (their national identity), but is a specific style of speaking that permeates throughout the speech community, a style that shapes and envelopes other available styles.

An event

Here I offer the details of a particular event I refer to as an illustration multiple times throughout the dissertation when elucidating my analyses and findings on *oplakvane*. This event proves useful when illustrating how participants who come from very different backgrounds—some from the capital of Bulgaria, Sofia, some from a small village in Southern Bulgaria (with a predominantly, if not solely, Turk population)—can bridge over their numerous differences in experience and background through the use of *oplakvane* as a widely accessible and intelligible communication practice. As I showed in the previous chapter, *oplakvane* is frequently utilized in settings where the participants are acquaintances, not too close, and have the potential to run out of things in common to talk about at a longer event. My data show that participants utilize *oplakvane* to bridge such interactions, and fill in lags and gaps at a setting where they are supposed to be together longer than 2 hours—particularly at meal events, where politeness dictates they interact but are not familiar enough with each other to have numerous topics to converse on.

In such situations, the participants resort to *oplakvane*, which, as my data show, is a widely intelligible communicative resource to be employed in moments of interaction such as this one. The enactment of *oplakvane* in such interactions appears more frequently (than ones involving closer friends and/or family) and tends to involve more cycles of enactment. Through the enactment of *oplakvane* in

such moments of interaction, the participants pool from the available cultural communicative resources to involve a common national identity and contextual ground with respect to the Bulgarian “situation.” My data illustrate how *oplakvane* is one such communicative resource that employs the shared communal cultural meanings of the larger context mentioned above, and allows participants from very diverse backgrounds within Bulgaria to come together.

The specific dinner event I use to illustrate my findings occurred in Sofia, Bulgaria, in February 2012. This event is very specific due to the participants’ background, yet general in the sense that its norms and use of *oplakvane* can be observed in a wide variety of settings. This event illustrates how people from very different surroundings within the same country come together and bond through the enactment of a very specific communicative ritual and way of speaking. Despite their numerous cultural differences, these so different participants can still draw from their common cultural landscape (in this case, the Bulgarian “situation”) and not only re-create the specific common national identity, but also enact a specific cultural dance of establishing and maintaining social bonds and relations, emotions, and rules for proper action. Here, I delineate the Hymsean aspects of the event: setting/scene, participants, ends, act sequence, key, instruments, and norms guiding it.

Setting

The setting of the event is a dinner at a host’s house. A typical Bulgarian dinner includes usually two stages: 1) salad and appetizers, and 2) main dish. The salad and appetizers are eaten slowly with an aperitif (usually the brandy-like

traditional drink *rakij*, vodka or Uzo) that is sipped slowly. This takes about one to two hours. Once the aperitifs are almost finished, the main dishes are served with a change of drinks (beer or wine). The salad and aperitifs usually remain on the table and some people continue munching on them throughout, which extends the duration of the meal. This stage can last about two to three hours and even more, if the event is a larger celebration. Closer is achieved by finishing the drinks, where the refusal has to be repeated a couple of times, similarly to the leave taking in Columbia (Fitch, 1990-91). At this point, the guests leave or if they are staying over, the host provides a polite way out by suggesting the guest must be tired, and that a bed has been prepared for them. This part of the sequence is illustrated in the data by the extended pauses that precede the offer, where no one initiates a new act of *oplakvane*.

Almost all Bulgarian dinners have this duration and structure, unless it is a very quick bite—if the person is eating alone, is in a hurry, or at work and does not have enough time. By varying the elements of this event (aperitif's duration, change of drinks, etc.), the dinner could last from two hours to twenty-four hours, during large celebrations. Extremely prolonged meals such as the latter are rare. The more typical ones, such as dinners with guests or late weekend lunches, last three to five hours.

Participants

The visitor (G.) is a 60-year-old male from Sarnica, a village in Southern Bulgaria. He has lived there all his life, working various jobs in the area. His son lives nearby with his family. The host (N.) is a 50-year-old woman, living in Sofia,

the capital of Bulgaria, with her husband (K.). N. is originally from a village (Butan) in Northern Bulgaria, who left in her early twenties and has lived in Sofia since. K. is forty years old. He was born and has always resided in Sofia. N2 is me, the researcher. In this way, different regions of the country are represented: G./V.—the Muslim population from the specific historically charged Southern area (also, an area that is predominantly agricultural and rural, removed from most larger cities, in the deep mountains, where employment have fluctuated for decades now), N.—the first generation at the end of communism that moved from the rural areas to Sofia, and K.—representative of the urban population. Since the 1980s all economically based movement within the country has been towards the capital, and N. and K's generation experienced the transition of communism most directly: their parents were part of the party, they grew up as *чавдарче* or *пионерче*—"pioneers" or young party followers—yet were some of the most vocal at the protests against communism, and were in their early-to-mid twenties when communism fell. Thus, a variety of areas in the country is represented as well as a variety of ages who experienced the transition in unlike ways.

Ends

What are the ends of this event and how do they illustrate my findings for similar events employing *oplakvane*? On one side, there is the business end of this event: the guest (G./V.) has come to the house to deliver a load of potatoes from his area to the host family (N. and K.), who would sell them to their relatives and friends and split the profit accordingly. They have been doing this potato sale for a few years now. On the other hand, this is also a social dinner—as proper hosts, N. and K.

cannot just have G. deliver the potatoes to their home and leave after driving for hours on bad roads (about a five hour drive to his village, and the road had been partially destroyed by flooding). Even if they are just casual acquaintances and sporadic business partners, the Bulgarian custom still dictates that you invite people to stay for at least coffee, which some times could translate into lunch/dinner. G. knows K.'s father—they spent some time together when K. and his family would vacation at the dam, and have kept in touch since. In this way, G. is invited to stay over the night, which means a long dinner with drinks. Thus, not only is the business transaction completed but also the corresponding host-guest roles are fulfilled, as well as catching up on each other's life. This is similar for the rest of the meal events I observed, where the focus is to bond and celebrate each other's company and togetherness regardless if the participants involved are just acquaintances or close friends and family.

Act sequence

I examine the *oplakvane* act sequence in detail in the next chapter.

Key

The key centers on the host-guest interaction and the business is only a part of the event's complexity. It is interesting to note here that in Bulgaria there is no such thing as "strictly business." No transaction (even a purely monetary one) is completed without some form of recognition of one another and the relationship shared. For example, even among co-workers and employees/ers there is an acknowledgement of the relationship on a personal level—respect (or lack there of)

is paid in some form at times through a convoluted ritual of bargaining over things that signify the sacred object of the relationship. The acknowledgement of the other is of great significance—whether by “arguing” over who is to pay a bill in a restaurant (friends, business partners), or “arguing” about who is more grateful for getting the favor, or preparing food and accepting it, etc. In this way, a transaction or interaction of any kind is not considered completed until the proper formalities (through the appropriate ritual) are completed as well. Here, a meal event—sitting down to food that the host has prepared and drinking for their health, as well as staying over for the night—is the key aspect. It shows respect for each other, with a correct sequence of symbolic acts.

Instrument

The instrument is oral: this interaction, as well as most meal events when *oplakvane* occurs are face to face. The norms guiding it will be illustrated in more detail in the next chapter and include the opening and closing of acts within the event (and specifically, acts of *oplakvane*), pacing of the drinking, as well as the structure of the event itself. The event begins with the seating of the guest at the table—one of the hosts (K.), sits with the guest (G.) and offers drinks, while N. and N2 prepare the rest of the meal and bring it to the table. Once everyone is seated and drinks are distributed, the meal commences.

Genre

We can understand the dinner conversation per Hymes’ (1972) terminology for studying speech, where he employed previously suggested assumptions for a

working framework (1962): a. the speech of a group constitutes a system; b. speech and language vary cross-culturally in their function; c. the primary object of attention is the speech activity of a community. Hymes (1972) also emphasizes that the focus is at the level of individual communities and groups, where the contact of language and social life are understood as human action, based on a knowledge (whether conscious or unconscious) that enables people to use language, and speech events. The larger systems' properties cannot be reduced to speaking competence only. Accordingly, the following terminology can be used when examining speech: speech community, language/speech field, speech situation, speech event, speech act, and speech style.

He defines a speech community as any community sharing BOTH rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech of at least one linguistic variety. A language/speech field is the total range of communities within which a person can move comfortably by possessing the knowledge of any speaking rules available within them. According to Hymes (1962, 1972), then, a speech situation is present within any community and is also marked by specific rules of speech or lack thereof and their context are "naturally" (by the community) described as ceremonies, fights, hunts, meals, etc. The speech event is different from a situation and is restricted to specific activities, or their aspects, directly governed by rules or norms for the use of speech. An event may consist of a single speech act or comprised of more.

The speech act is the smallest unit of all of the above, a minimal term representing a level that is different from sentence, grammar, or segments and may

depend on conventions or social relationships. The speech act plays a role that is between the levels of grammar and the speech situation or event and implicates both the linguistic and the social form. According to Hymes (1972), discourse in itself can be viewed as acts—as a “sequence of speech acts” as well as “classes of speech acts among which choice has to be made” (p. 26). On the other end of the spectrum is speech style, defined by Hymes (1972) as overarching themes that depend on “abilities and judgments of appropriateness” (p. 26).

Based on the abovementioned definitions, the dinner conversations within the corpus on my data can be understood as communicative events, where I examine them for particular acts of *oplakvane* within. These multiple acts make up the communicative ritual of *oplakvane*, multiple cycles of which can be observed during each event. This dinner event is thus representative of the rest of my findings, where through the enactment of *oplakvane*, the conversants can bond, despite the difference in their backgrounds and experiences. In such moments of interaction, when the talk is not with a specific purpose or goal, the participants pull from their common cultural communicative practices to breach the gaps between each other and interact through a common way of speaking. In a situation where the speakers do not have much in common and have completed the main goal of their talk (potato business in this case), they access a common communicative tool from their cultural resources—one that is “deeply felt,” speaks to the whole group, has profound significance to the community, and is “commonly intelligible” (Carbaugh, 1997).

Chapter Summary

So far, I have highlighted an array of historical contexts that are not only reflected within the present day discourse in Bulgaria, but are also activated and reaffirmed in interaction. These contexts, briefly, include the Ottoman occupation from the 1300s to the late 1800s, the socialism/communism that followed, and the resulting continuous period of “Transition” (since the 90s). Within these contexts, a particular set of behaviors and way of thinking have developed, and have been ascribed biological properties within the popular discourse, where the endemic term “mentality” has become the go-to label and explanation for any perceived lack of socio-political and economic change within the country.

Thus, behaviors and ways of thinking that can be traced back to specific historical periods within Bulgaria have come to be associated with the native construct, the “mentality,” a construct that combines national characteristics with biological and cognitive processes, in order to explain the present status quo in Bulgaria. In addition to this historical context informing and being reaffirmed within the practice of *oplakvane*, I also detail geographical and social life elements such as the Turkish influence, the agricultural influences on a common national identity, behaviors that are ascribed to the “mentality”, and particulars as to an event illustration of my findings.

CHAPTER 4

A CRY AND AN OUTCRY: *OPLAKVANE* AS A TERM FOR COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICE

Cultural terms for communicative practice

This chapter explores *oplakvane* ethnographically as understood in Bulgarian discourse—both as a term for talk as used in context and as the name for a communicative practice. Here, I address my first question with its relevant subset:

1. How is the cultural term for talk, *oplakvane*, used?

1a. How is the communicative practice of *oplakvane* identified in the data as significant to the participants? What is the social use of the term *oplakvane*?

1b. What and how does *oplakvane* identify acts, events, and styles of communication?

1c. What literal and metaphorical messages and meanings are active in this practice—about the practice itself, about sociality, and about personhood?

1d. What is a Bulgarian way of speaking, and what evidence is there that *oplakvane* identifies one such way?

In other words: what is *oplakvane*? What symbolic worlds does it make relevant and intelligible? What hubs of meaning about identity, action, emotion, dwelling, with their respective radiants of meaning, does it make relevant? What taken-for-granted understandings about personhood, relationships, actions, emotions, and the nature of things is created and presumed through *oplakvane* in Bulgarian discourse? What does utilizing this particular term say generally about communication in Bulgaria?

I utilize cultural discourse analysis and the terms for talk frameworks in order to address how and what linguistic terms are utilized to create and express social systems of identity, emotion, dwelling and communication (Carbaugh, 1989a, 2007a). I offer examples from a newspaper article and a blog post to illustrate my findings as to the social use of the term, since they summarize and highlight both how the term is used by the participants and the practice it refers to. Investigating cultural terms for talk and their uses provide insight into deep, historically and contextually bound moral systems that guide “talk” within a community and unveil the bigger cultural scenery that appropriates such “talk.” Understanding such terms, their use, and the cultural modes that make them intelligible and fitting allows also for the deeper understanding of various cultural symbolic worlds and how such worlds are navigated.

Identifying Bulgarian *oplakvane* as such a rich cultural term through this framework and the symbolic meanings it makes relevant provides one more example of communication as an entrance point into cultural conceptions of identity, emotion, relationships, and dwelling since to “speak... is to speak *culturally*” (Philipsen, 1992, Carbaugh, 1995, p. 274). As I show, *oplakvane* differs from other terms that address problems and “complaining” (such as *mrankane* and *pomrankvane*) in the sense that it presupposes “real” problems from the Bulgarian “situation”, referring to an enactment with specific act sequence without requiring a solution to a problem in response. Even though the participants realize the term describes a communicative practice different from the mere solving of everyday issues, they are wary of labeling it as such. Calling it *oplakvane* explicitly only

highlights the practice's ritualistic form, where the "reality" of the Bulgarian situation is not dealt with but solely reiterated and reaffirmed. I examine the term *oplakvane* as it stands within Bulgarian discourse as a distinct term and its uses in interaction that offer insights as to how communication, social relations, emotion, action, as well as personhood are conceived and realized in the particular community or examining the term *oplakvane* as significant to the participants.

Description

First, a few notes as to the literal meaning of the term: *oplakva*—to lament some one or something, to mourn with a wail. Colloquial: To mourn a dead person. For example, "alive to *oplachesh me*" means "I am in such misfortune that you could mourn me even while still alive;" I am in a very wretched state. It means to mourn someone loudly, to pity, to mourn, to cry, to bereave, for instance, "I *oplakvam si* my days". [I] *oplakvam se/Oplacha se*—1. To voice my suffering as in "I am *oplakvam se* from a headache," and "What do you *oplakvate se* from?" 2. To express displeasure, disagreement as in "I *se oplakah* to my boss from my colleague." Colloquial: I am complaining about the misfortunes that have come over me. A crucial part of the definition of *oplakvane* is the root of the word—*plach*—that means "to cry." *Oplakvam* is often translated as "lament," "bemoan," "weep," "complain," "account," "bewail," "wait," "grumble," and "grievance."

A few notes on the grammatical form of some of the terms made relevant: the term *oplakvane* is the subject form of the reflexive verb *se oplakva*. Variety of conjugated forms of this verb can be noticed in the article such as *se oplakva* (singular) and *se oplakvam* (singular, I), *se oplakvame* (plural, we) or *se oplakvat*

(plural, they). A similar term used frequently in conjunction to *oplakvane* is *mrunkane* - "to whine" (subj.): *mrunka* (verb), *mrunkam* (I), *mrunkat* (they). The focus here is mainly on *oplakvane*.

As I proceeded through my fieldwork, it took quite some time to pinpoint a particular cultural term in order to refer to the particular practice I had observed: the term I, as an outsider and a researcher, could attach to the practice—*oplakvane*—did not seem to be as utilized among the locals as I had imagined and the “insider” part of me also felt uneasy with it. It was not until I returned to my field later that I realized why calling the practice *oplakvane* was causing such cultural discomfort. It was comparatively early in my ethnographic career to be completely at ease juggling the terminology, so I kept calling “it” a “way of speaking” per Hymes’ (1962) definition. However, I needed more—“it” needed a name, and even more so after I read Carbaugh’s (1989a) “terms for talk” framework as well as Katriel’s (1985) griping practices. Based on my initial observations, it seemed as though in some settings the participants were describing their communication as *oplakvane*, “complaining and mourning,” and in even others—*mrunkane* “whining”. But every time I attempted to explain this practice using the English terms, I found myself getting stuck within the discursive webs of meanings these terms evoked. My academic background in “English” as well as my insider’s blindness seemed to be joining forces against me.

Then I came across several newspaper articles that mentioned Bulgarians and their tendency to *se oplakvat*. There was the simple, but so culturally complicated, term that established my cultural footing. A culturally rich point, with

implications for what communicative practice it refers to, and the symbolic meanings it provides in order for Bulgarians to create and make sense of their world. One of the main difficulties when studying *oplakvane* is that there is rarely a direct or explicit connection made by the participants between the practice I identify as *oplakvane* and the term itself. The reason for this is what constitutes *oplakvane* for the participants, what its perceived purpose is, and the literal meaning of the term. However, before I show this connection, I will first examine these separately.

Recently, I came across a colloquial phrase that I had not heard since being in the U.S.: *Oplachi se na Armeiskijt pop*, or “Go *se oplachesh* to the Armenian priest.” And since I never knew why “we *se oplakvame* to the Armenian priest,” I continued to read the blog post that claimed to provide an explanation:

Everyone knows this phrase. It has become the go-to phrase and it is used to mean, that if you have nothing to do, go *se oplakvash*, but do not expect a result. But why to the Armenian priest?

Armenians are Christians, they first took up Christianity outside of Judea. So the priest is real, exists, is not mythology. There is an Armenian church, there is no reason for laughter. In this case, in the role of the Armenian priest can be placed all other nationalities, then why is the Armenian treated this way?

There is the immediate association [stereotype] that Armenians lie a lot. ... But why the Armenian, wasn't there a Bulgarian priest? Apparently there wasn't.

The story goes that it started far away in Diarbekir (prison in the Diarbekir Ottoman area), during the Ottoman domination, or occupation as some say. Usually the caught *komiti* (Bulgarian liberation revolutionaries) with long sentences were sent there, at the furthest place from our lands in Mala Asia. Otherwise the Turkish, for the most part, respected other religions as well as the Christian one. Whenever there was a problem they would send the cast away to the priest. In that region there were many Armenians, and they had one

of their priests in the prison. For numerous reasons they did not have one for the Bulgarians. And whenever there was *oplakvane*, they would send them to the Armenian priest. He, busy with his own people, did not take the Bulgarian stuff to heart and did not do anything. So this once, twice, among the cast aways the belief became a certainty, that it is futile to *se oplakvash* to the Armenian priest, he doesn't do anything about it. So this is where it comes from—*Oplachi se* to the Armenian priest, if you have nothing else to do!

(leonleonov, 2013)

So, once again, there is a very explicit point made as to the futility of *oplakvane* where one can engage in it, if they “have nothing better to do,” but one should really not expect results. I will come back to the significance of this later in the chapter.

The invitation to *oplakvane*

First, let's examine the concept of *oplakvane* as it is used in context by the participants: or what is its potency, prominence, depth of feeling, and accessibility? I will start with how the term *oplakvane* is defined by the participants. Many explain it as the “sharing of problems and what bothers you,” where “problems” are delineated as specific instances, with a very specific topic. To *se oplakva* has a negative connotation and is considered as something futile, to be avoided. A common statement is that “it is not good to *se oplakva*” and that the participants themselves “do not do it often” or try to turn it into a joke, frequently in an attempt to “avoid it” since it “burdens” them. The only case when it is appropriate for one to *se oplakva* is if there is a “good reason” for it and means to *se oplakva* about “substantial” and “real problems,” and “expresses an opinion... when they are not satisfied with something,” which makes it different from just *mrunkane*, or “whining,” where people do it without a reason, just for its own sake.

One can argue that *oplakvane* has a very strong potency for the participants. It is a strong term that means not only “to complain” but has elements of an “outcry” and “mourning” to it—it taps into a very strong emotion—one of pain and anguish. This is where the complexity of the term and the practice attached to it lies—based on what the participants describe as consisting *oplakvane* they are certainly performing the practice, however, the term has such depth of emotion that the participants are wary of labeling it such, even though they themselves do connect it to such strong emotions via the purpose it fulfills. I will explain this conundrum in more detail once the purpose of the term is delineated.

The term is used widely across the country, and with the similar primary meaning of “complaining,” where the participants use it as “let me *se oplacha* to you,” meaning “hear me out, I have some problems to tell you.”. It is frequently used as a segue into a conversation after the initial introductory or greeting adjacency pair is played out. In some cases, the participants would be talking to friends or relatives and when asked how they have been, they would provide the “let me *se oplacha* to you” and provide an example of problems from their everyday life. The focal part is that, to the familiar ear, this segue is not heard as “I have a formal complaint” (as a grievance, where a formal statement describing an unsatisfactory situation is placed as to demand a change or remedy), or “I have things to whine about” (as a complaining cry or monotonous continued vocal expression of dissatisfaction or displeasure) but is heard as a lead into a particular instance, in which certain elements and topics are included. In some ways, the phrase is used as

“let me tell you,” where the *oplakvane* marks a particular practice that assumes an unpleasant topic but does not expect a solution or change on the side of the listener.

Thus, there are deep Bulgarian meanings through the invitation to *oplakvane*, where “let me *se oplacha* to you...” (as an act) is different from or “let us *se oplachem*” (as an event). As an act, the term implies providing specific instances of problems, whereas the event highlights the common function of blowing off steam and letting frustration out. This difference stresses the phatic function of the practice when observed as an event and illustrates the rift between the dual purposes of the practices—when it is viewed as an act the purpose is to “complain” and get support from those listening, whereas, when it is an event, the binding commiseration is in the focus.

The term, then, as well as the practice to which it refers to, are widely accessible within the country, as participants from the capital and outside it have indicated. It is recognized and treated as a transition into the abovementioned conversation. This is not to say that the term is not also used to describe a grievance, a formal complaint, or whining. However, here the attention is on it as preceding and alluding to a specific practice, with particular topic, structure, and function.

Enactments

So what enactments does *oplakvane* refer to? When the term is used, it is frequently at the beginning of an interaction, after an initial greeting, and precedes instances of problems. More often though, due to its negative connotation, *oplakvane* is not used when describing one’s own actions (unless in the

abovementioned phrase) and is saved for explicit complaints. In other words, the participants use it to signal a particular communicative act—either the sharing of a problem, dissatisfaction, or describe a formal grievance that is meant to prompt an action—both to identify and render a kind of actions (the sharing of problems) or to account for action and disclaim/call for change.

For example: “Let me *se oplacha* to you... always problems. I just got my car and someone already scratched it in front of the apartment. See, what people are!” renders a particular action, a communicative act. Part of the ritualized practice of *oplakvane* described in the next section, or the sharing of specific instance whose purpose is to play a communal function is rendered meaningful and signaled. Here, the term *oplakvane* is used to mark the action as indicating what is to follow and what the culturally adequate response is. On the other hand, saying “and all the *oplakvanij* are on him” is an instance of the term being used to account for an action and disclaim intent—to file a grievance, or in this case, all grievances have been filed to one person. In this chapter I focus on the term as rendering a particular act meaningful: a specific act as part of the ritualized sequence of *oplakvane*. The term does refer to a combination of communicative acts that comprise a communicative practice that can be performed by an individual as part of social interaction.

Though its users never directly acknowledge the structure of *oplakvane*, inferences can be made based on some of the participants’ statements. For instance, some participants say: “Yesterday I *se oplakah* to my friend, about something my husband did that made me angry. She told me not to get angry and herself *se oplaka* from her husband” or “My friend, has the same problems with her mother in law, so

in response to my *oplakvane, se oplaka* herself from her mother in law”. This and other data lead to a conclusion that *oplakvane* incorporates examples of problems.

Another participant mentions that when *oplakvane* is performed, the “conclusion is always one—this is how it is in Bulgaria”, which alludes to the evaluative conclusion statement *oplakvane* incorporates. This is an explicit acknowledgement of the last act in the ritualized act sequence of *oplakvane* as I have described later in this chapter. Here, I will just mention the structure, as I have observed in numerous enactments of *oplakvane*: 1) Initialization: negative evaluation, criticism, 2) Acknowledgement: a. instances of problems connected to the situation in the country, b. examples comparing the situation in Bulgaria with other countries and specifically Europe, 3) Shared fate: negative evaluation (criticism) conclusion.

Frequently the participants say that they do not *se oplakvat* but immediately afterwards “do” so, utilizing the act sequence for what *oplakvane* constitutes, which I describe in the next chapter. A participant, for instance, responded: “No. Sometimes I comment in public on the disorder in the country and the lack of a state society.” Therefore, she was enacting *oplakvane*, but since the practice has negative connotation, it is frequently not labeled as such even though it has the same structure and function.

One participant mentioned that to *se oplakva* is when a person “expresses displeasure on any topic that is brought up”—here, a glimpse of the umbrella topics covered by *oplakvane* are acknowledged but when the participant was asked as to whether all topics lead to the expression of displeasure, the participant retracted

with a claim that, no, not all. This suggests that the participants do recognize a particular practice as *oplakvane* but are hesitant to label it explicitly. Furthermore, the participant claimed that such *oplakvane* is more of an “indignation that the administration in Bulgaria is ineffective”, thus reframing the practice while still refusing to call it by the term.

Another participant shared her observation that Bulgarians “cry” very much—where she used the root of the term *oplakvane* to allude to the emotional aspect of the practice—and observed that Bulgarians do it frequently:

We cry a lot, really a lot. It’s always somebody else’s fault, there is always something wrong... Why – maybe it is a leftover from the old system, in which people did not work qualitatively, everyone was stealing anything they could and had no responsibility for anything. And now when you have to study and work hard to achieve anything – it is very hard.

A preferred audience and participants for *oplakvane* include friends, colleagues, and even strangers if met at a place that has potential for discontent and facing the “situation” and “reality” of Bulgaria: administrative buildings and even hospitals. *Oplakvane* can even be done on public transportation, with people one does not know: since the topics are commonly intelligible and widely accessible, one can easily connect to others via them. One participant states, that in Bulgaria, *oplakvane* is a “mass sport, a national sport.” Thus, the settings for it, apart from in private, include the office, restaurants and coffee shops, while waiting in lines, or any public. The instrument is predominantly oral, where people enact *oplakvane* directly but can also be observed in written form as online blogs, newspaper editorials, and articles.

The topics of *oplakvane* are connected to its perceived purpose. The participants acknowledge that there have to be reasons for *oplakvane* and these reasons are connected and illustrative of the Bulgarian “reality” and “situation.” However, participants do acknowledge that there are no topics on which we, Bulgarians, will not *se oplachem*. The topics range from the “situation” generally to any smaller aspect of the “situation” such as “not having any money, that everything is very expensive but the resorts, bars, and stores are always full.” How broad and wide-ranging the topics of *oplakvane* are is explained by a participant with a reference to a Bulgarian nursery rhyme (referring to the rhyme “Grumpy,” describing a child who is never satisfied with anything) in the last lines:

[Bulgarians *se oplakvat*] from everything – bad life, from the weather, from the boss, from the wife/husband, from too much work, from lack of work, well from everything. When it is your nature to be a *oplakvach* [who *se oplakva*], you always find something for *oplakvane* – “both his milk is too hot, or something else.”

More specifically the “situation” and the reasons evoked in conjunction with it are delineated later as part of the larger cultural mythology in chapter 8.

Norms

A notable norm for enacting *oplakvane* is that the proper response to *oplakvane* is “expressing condolence,” which a participant explained to be sharing more instances in order to show solidarity. The participants claim that one should offer solutions when enacting *oplakvane* but no one does so and if one is to provide a solution, the behavior is sanctioned by a stare, pause of the conversation, and resuming without acknowledging the solution. I have to note that in the instances of

oplakvane I observed, there have never been solutions offered unless specifically requested. I performed violations of the norm, as a researcher, testing the norm. The responses included: a stare, or an explicit dismissal of “you have been gone too long, you don’t know how things are.” Most frequently I was just excluded from further conversation, with eye contact directed only to the rest of the people present.

Another clear norm for enacting *oplakvane* is that it should be done only if there are “real problems” and “real reasons” for it. Many participants explicitly state that one should *se oplakva* only when there are reasons for it and in this way *oplakvane* is differentiated from *mrunkane*, which implies that it is performed for its own sake, similarly to the term “whining” in English. These reasons are exclusively about the “reality” and “situation” in Bulgaria. In other words:

- 1) One should not *se oplakva* in general, about anything.

By this definition, the person is just looking for an “excuse” not to “do something” about their problems, and is considered to be a “flaw of the character.” One participant said it means “burdening others with your problems,” and it should be a conversation only with your closest people. There are people who just like doing it to get pity or “are just that way” and they are looked down upon.

- 2) One should *se oplakva* only when there is a reason for it.

According to the participants, one can complain from unhappiness, illness, and problems when there are such.

- 3) One should share examples of problems with the people close to them, when bad things happen during the day and if they have a problem.

Here is where we can observe the cultural tension of the discrepancy between “we do not *se oplakva*” and “we do share instances of problems.” The practice that constitutes *oplakvane* as described (context, content, and structure) by the participants themselves is enacted frequently but it is not called *oplakvane* and rarely is acknowledged as such because the term does have a negative connotation. Where this tension comes from and how it is resolved culturally through the enactment of the practice will be discussed in detail later in the chapter.

4) One should *se oplakva* (or share problems) only to people close to them (family, friends).

5) One should *se oplache* (or share problems) to people they do not know only at an appropriate setting (waiting in line when dealing with a problematic situation in public).

6) A proper response to *oplakvane* is to provide a similar example of a problem.

Purpose

So what do the participants see as the end purpose to enacting *oplakvane*? Most participants explain that *oplakvane* is done to “share problems” with others, and “unburden themselves.” One participant recognized that there is an additional purpose other than just sharing the “problems” and claims that the “impossible socio-economic situation,” the “reality,” has created *oplakvane* as a strategy, where people who feel helpless have only talk as means of agency. This is echoed by many participants: the fact that Bulgarians do “talk” much but do not “do” anything about it. One *se oplakva* when they are dissatisfied or unhappy, when encountering pain

or unfairness. Some participants express that they do it because they are “frequently displeased with the chaos and the no-way-out scenario in the country.”

The main “reason” for *oplakvane* asserted by all participants is the “reality” and “situation” in Bulgaria. It is a “reality” of socio-political and economic dysfunction in the country and a general consensus among the population that “nothing will change” that is “agreed upon by everyone.” Specifics (part of the “reality”) mentioned by the participants include “everyday struggles,” the “non-working laws in Bulgaria, and the fact that they are created from and for certain people” implying a corrupt judicial system that serves only some. Additional reasons mentioned include “the abdication of the state from the everyday problems of people—health, employment, security,” the young generation being badly behaved, the corrupt politicians, the streets and public transportation being dirty, etc. The “situation” in Bulgaria is also defined as:

a street with no exit. There is no force, which can make those in power chosen by us, think more about what they would give, rather than what they can take from the state and the people. The big stupidity of the Bulgarian. But this also has no cure.

Other ways the participants describe the “situation” include: “chaos and no-way-out scenario;” a state of non-functioning state institutions; people who are all burdened by “material and spiritual” misery; chaos in the “governing, existence, and the life of the Bulgarian nation;” the lack of a civil society in Bulgaria and the ideology that supports it; the “surrounding stupidity” of all people—implicit reference to the “mentality” (ways of thinking and behaving); life is rotten and the people are very stupid (simplistic); sorrowful/mournful, tragic, with no perspective

of improvement, where the solution is an “atomic bomb,” hopeless, or a “crisis of the morale, a crisis of the spirit” as one participant specifically put it:

The thinking of people needs to change ... We have to stop waiting for someone else to give us something and to fix our situation. Every one has to pull themselves together, to work, to help themselves, and like this little by little the country will fix itself, too. We are those who help ourselves, to change our thinking ... When lying, stealing, swindling are a way of life – all this is temporary. An organism consists of cells and if most are healthy, a sick cell tries to get better, and then the whole organism will get better. Unfortunately, however, as Bai Ganio said, “Mostly I hate to think” – and if the Bulgarian changes that – there will be success.

Two major points here are of particular interest. First, the connection between “way of thinking” and the national identity: the participant mentions the “way of thinking” in reference to the “mentality” (endemic term) of Bulgarians, or the compilation of behaviors and ways of thinking developed over a specific historical context: the Ottoman occupation, later communism, and the following years of transition. These behaviors (such as “lying, stealing, swindling”) are illustrated with the literary character Bai Ganio, the emblem of all that is considered “base” and “backward” about the Bulgarian national character and identity. The specific connection between national character and identity will be examined in more detail in chapter 9.

Secondly, the connection between the national identity and biology: the change of thinking is compared to the recovery of a sick cell in an organism—it is reflective of the notion that there is something cognitive, or physiological to the national identity—or that the negative behaviors and ways of thinking accumulated during the historical context have become “nature,” a biological feature that is hard

to change and is separate from agency and individual actions. The fusion between national characteristic and biology has been a long tradition in literature, as well as studies of the Bulgarian ethnos in the shape of a tradition famous as *narodopsihologia*, or “psychology of the people,” or “psychology of the nation.” This tradition constitutes and reinforces a very specific worldview, one which does not allow much space for agency and the individual’s choice since it claims that behaviors people have learned have become a “nature” to them. Thus, we see first hand how a communicative term provides insights into the larger conceptualizations of the person and action within the particular cultural community.

Messages and meanings for pragmatic action

What are some general types of messages that get codified as the participants label their own acts or, in other words, what premises of belief and value are woven into *oplakvane*? What are some of the messages and meanings about the practice itself and, more precisely, what are literal messages about communication? The mode of action or the prevalent manner for the enactment is direct in some cases, viewed by the participants as a rule by which one is supposed to *se oplakva* and to share examples of problems to people close to them. However, as an outsider, one notices exactly the opposite: the participants enact the structure of *oplakvane* without labeling it as such, without recognizing it, and in those cases, the norm is not to give advice and, in fact, providing such would disrupt the enactment. These examples, described earlier in the chapter, can also be observed in other data, where

each one is presented and framed by the participants as “against *oplakvane*” but enacts the very same communicative practice.

I provide as an example of my findings one such newspaper article “Za mojta Bulgaria. I optimisma... [About my Bulgaria. And optimism...] that the author presents as addressing the fact that “Bulgarians do tend to *se oplakvat* too much,” while enacting the practice himself (Appendix C). The article is set up as an observation-response, in which the author (a Bulgarian) describes a conversation between him and an English tourist about Bulgarians’ tendency to *se oplakvat*. Even though the article is positioned as a conversation, it is very much the author’s report of an event and will be considered as such throughout. Thus, the participant is mainly the author of the article.

2 ‘Why is every one here such pessimist?’

3 I do not understand his question and I admit it.

4 ‘Well since I’ve landed, all Bulgarians who I meet only *se*

5 *oplakvat*. From the roads, from the holes, from the police, from everything.’

6 I don’t know why this is so. But I *pomrankvam* too. So that I am not left

7 behind, not that I have what to *se oplakvam* about. For the sport, to be

8 part of the *dialogue*. But the Englishman at the table starts laughing. He was two

9 days without electricity at Sunny Beach and drifted up, towards Varna. To walk

10 around and to have a bath. I explain that this is different, and if I were a tourist at

11 Sunny Beach, I would *mrnkam*, too. He agrees but to a point.

12 ‘Most of my acquaintances who have been to Thailand, want to go live there

13 forever. There’s no electricity, no roads, no running water. But the Thai succeed

14 advertising the best and no one cares about the rest. Here people only

15 *se oplakvat*, and Bulgaria is one of the most beautiful countries in

16 Europe. What do you lack? You have everything that people could dream of, and

17 it’s still not enough. Your country lacks only optimism.’

18 I try to *parry him with stories* [*kontriram s istoriiki*]. Here for example, our

19 prime minister decided to raise the salaries of the police. And what does he do,

20 he raises fines... Now instead of a fine of 30 lv., which we save by bribing the

21 hook [cop] with a 10, we have to pay 150 thus the “member”[cop] takes 50. The

22 problem is solved, and us, the small people, give the blowjob. He roars with

23 laughter.

24 ‘Who are you the “small people?” Why do you want to pass as “big?” Why in

25 England, when there’s a speed limit of 40, you drive with 40? Why do you not get

26 fined in Germany? And here, you drive like crazy. I got a rental car, but I returned
27 it, now I ride the bus. I want to live. It's not the police's or the prime minister's
28 fault, that you are sick of living. You all want to be big, but you don't have time
29 (or desire) to grow up. You all want to be bosses, every business card says
30 "manager," but no one wants to do the dirty job. And it is from that you have to
31 start. The nice stuff doesn't fall from the sky. The Europeans are not going to
32 come and raise your standard in two months to compare to the German. And you
33 behave as though that's what they promised you last Wednesday and they lied.
34 You throw your trash out the window! And you *blame* [*opravdava*] the local
35 municipality for not leaving a dumpster nearby? This is not the way.
36 No one wants to start. And without that it's not going to happen.'
37 Here I have nothing to say. And he is just one tourist, who wants to spend every
38 year as long as possible in Bulgaria because "few are these days the places that
39 are so beautiful." But he has decided to stay away from people. They burden him.
40 It is inconceivable to him how they burden themselves, too, "as if they have no
41 other worries."
42 He comes and enjoys the beautiful in the city... in the park... at the beach... But
43 he thinks that he's the only one to see it... The rest are so obsessed in finding
44 problems, that somehow don't notice it.

In the very first lines (2-5) the Englishman asks why Bulgarians are "such pessimists" and expresses an opinion that, since he has arrived, he has heard them *se oplakvat* about almost everything: "[f]rom the roads, from the holes, from the police." In response, the author expresses his confusion (lines 3, 6-8), stating that he does not "understand" and that maybe he is doing it (using the term *pomrankvane* or "*whining*") just so that he is "not left behind" and "to be part of the dialogue," without really having anything to *se oplakva* about. This point about "having things to *se oplakva* about," the author makes explicit by comparing himself to the tourist who does not *se oplakva* even though he has not had electricity at the summer resort he went to (lines 8-11).

In comparison, the tourist agrees to a point with the statement that one *se oplakva* when there is a reason and gives an example of other English people he knows who have been to Thailand (where there is no "electricity, no roads, no

running water”) but the “Thai know how to advertise” what they have and do not *se oplakva* as opposed to Bulgarians, who live in a beautiful country but *se oplakvat* constantly (lines 12-17). Here, the author makes explicit his next communicative act as “parry with stories [*kontriram s istoriiki*]” and offers a story about a corrupt prime minister and cops as an example of why Bulgarians should *se oplakvat* (lines 18-22).

The tourist responds with laughter and offers a long statement on how Bulgarians want to pass as “big” people who every one else owes something to, and how they could do just fine following rules in other countries but not in their own (lines 24-36). The words of the tourist reflect a frequent communicative move (which can be seen frequently within *oplakvane*) employed by Bulgarians of comparing how bad the situation in Bulgaria or Bulgarian behaviors are as compared to other countries.’ At this point the author is left with “nothing to say” even though he provides a final evaluation of what he has “heard” (lines 37-44): how the tourist can appreciate the beauty of Bulgaria but we, Bulgarians, cannot, and just “burden” ourselves and others with worries and “finding problems.”

A few aspects need special attention here: not only is the article itself an illustration of an act of *oplakvane*, but it is never itself labeled or recognized as such by the author. The only communicative acts explicitly referred to as *oplakvane* (subj.) in lines 4, 7, and 15: *se oplakva/m,me,t* (conj.), and implicitly, as “parry with stories” [*da go kontriram s istoriiki*] on line 18, and *mrunkane* (subj.) in lines 6 and 11—(*po*)*mrunkva/m,ne,t* (conj.) referred to examples within the article itself. The author refers to the same communicative act as *pomrunkvane* (line 7) and *mrunkane*

(line 12) almost as if in an attempt to distance himself from *oplakvane* where he uses it only in line 8 to explicitly say that he does not have “what to *se oplakva* about.” The author of the article refers to the activity of *oplakvane* implicitly in lines 18 and 43-44 by referring to the exchange of “problems” and “finding problems,” which, again, is a direct acknowledgement of the act sequence.

Such explicit referral to the term *oplakvane* is facilitated by the presence of an outsider (the English tourist who is presented as having initiated the conversation) who directly asks about why Bulgarians are “such pessimists” (line 2). As mentioned earlier, the term is not directly used to refer to the practice in many interactions between Bulgarians—this is evident in the response of the author, who mentions *oplakvane* and *mrunkane* only in the beginning (lines 6, 7, 11). Only later in the response he attempts to explain why Bulgarians ought to *se oplakvat* by mentioning an example of a problem, thus, legitimizing such behavior as appropriate—one should *se oplakva* only when there is something to *se oplakva* about. For him, there are “things” to *se oplakva* about by telling a case of the Bulgarian prime minister and the raising of fines (lines 18-22), the police (lines 18-22), trash (line 34), the government (lines 18-22), etc., where to do so is considered to be part of the Bulgarian “dialogue,” or what every one is doing (lines 6-8)—or as “a national sport” mentioned earlier.

The structure of *oplakvane* has two layers. When it comes to a range of topics, the scope is restricted and fixed as including or allowing only for certain topics from within the “Bulgarian situation” to be incorporated (trash, traffic, noise, and the Bulgarian “mentality”) as well as certain introductory or closing evaluation

utterances (“It’s scary,” etc.). However, the number of acts (instances of problems) of *oplakvane* is unlimited or flexible and depends on the setting and participants. During a dinner event, the enactment of *oplakvane* can be cycled up to twenty-five and more times and, as I examine in the next chapter, the connection between the instances and the Bulgarian “situation” can be enacted very elaborately by the participants in order for a generalized image of the “other” (all at fault, or to blame for the “situation”) to appear within the interaction itself.

The tone of the practice, as the term itself suggests, is “mournful” and alludes to something beyond displeasure, or pain. Apart from referring to a formal grievance and complaining, the term *oplakvane* itself is used also for “mourning” and “mourners,” bringing to mind wailing, pulling of hair, and tears. This is also one of the reasons the term has such a negative connotation—since it is used for occasions where there is no escape, no way out, no hope. That being said, the practice itself varies in tone and emotional pitch throughout its enactment. Some examples of this variety can be clearly observed throughout the dinner event I use as illustration:

- Indignation: in one instance, N. describes a car accident, where the driver was drunk. At one point, K. tells the drunk driver that he could have killed them, to which the drunk driver responds with “Big deal!” Here, to emphasize the point and express her disbelief and indignation, N. repeats the whole segment, with a higher pitch, as well as incorporating a dialectical part *be*, which is used for emphasis:

[B]ut he but he’s drunk be*, he’s drunk and and K. tells him “you could have killed us!” he says “well big deal” big deal I say!

- Frustration: as a participant initiates an *oplakvane* act of sharing a problematic instance, an insider can “hear” the frustration in two ways in the following utterance:

[B]ut it doesn’t matter, doesn’t matter, he doesn’t care! And [he] says, “big deal. This is a street. I will park wherever I want.”

The first way the participant expresses frustration is through intonation, where the first part (own words) is in a higher pitch indicating distress. Then, by using words already heard earlier in the evening as the utterance of a drunk driver (above), the participant displays her frustration by repetition. This is done via her use of an utterance already ascribed to a negative character in a previous instance—how such a “Big deal,” “I don’t care” reaction is one found in many problematic people within the “Bulgarian situation.” Thus, the participant’s repetition of the utterance not only binds all of “these people” together under the commonality of the “mentality” but also shows the repetitive, everyday, frustration connected to interacting with the “situation.”

- Anger: during an evaluation conclusion to an enactment of *oplakvane*, the anger can be felt in the following lines (1368-1372):

N: there isn’t, I have to tell you that this ah young people should should leave this country.

G: ah (agreeing)

N: they shouldn’t [stay] here

G: but absolutely be*, but there is nothing to stay [here] for be*!

Here, N. expresses the opinion that the only solution left for young people in the country is to emigrate. And G. not only agrees but does so in an outburst, where

his voice rises, almost as though he is yelling at her, but also with the use of the *be** (the dialectical particle) that stresses his point twice.

- Despair: in conversations, one rarely uses the other's name directly because that signals intense emotion and is usually associated either with anger, or a reminder to focus. The name of the other person present can also be used in a mournful way, almost as a mixture between a wail and a sigh. For example, one could say "eh, Maria, Maria!" and that could be understood as either a sigh or a joking use of the sigh to express an intense emotion, similarly to the US "Oh my, oh my!" In the similar manner despair and hopelessness can be heard in the following segment, where K. is enacting the closing evaluation of *oplakvane* in one of its cycles:

[Y]es, madness. Ah *be** horror. It's hell. Here is hell, Gictore!

In this instance, both the *be** is used for emphasis, as well G.'s name at the end with a downward intonation to stress the emotion.

- Humor: tragedy turns into comedy during one enactment of *oplakvane* during the dinner event, when G. offers a joke. At this point, I, the researcher, had told a story about the United States and how there are small farm stands throughout the area that just sell produce they have without having an actual seller there, just leaving the produce and a box for the money, and how there sometimes is either a small cooler with eggs or lights for decoration—this was my attempt at participating in *oplakvane*—I had offered an instance-comparison. At this

moment of the interaction, N. repeated part of my story and G. reciprocated with his joke (1274-1280):

N: eggs, everything you produce you can take it outside [of your house]!

G: ts ts ts (clicking noise with the tongue) here they will take and your cooler and=

N: =and the whole stand!

G: hahahaha and the stand they will steal from you!

K & N2 (together): hahahahaha

G: hahaha

K: for firewood! hahaha

Here, as N. describes “how things work in other countries,” G. offers the “Bulgarian reality” and what is humorous to them—the absurdity of the situation. G. describes what the outcome of such a set up will be in Bulgaria: if one is to leave produce unattended in Bulgaria, everything will be stolen and even the stand will not be left, but used for firewood within minutes! And this is what all the participants find funny—the impossibility of such a scenario in the “reality” they know—within their cultural realm such a situation is impossible and does not exist. It clashes with any cultural meanings for personhood (guards and thieves), emotion (trust), action (stealing), and relations (distrust and suspicion) towards their fellow Bulgarians. The use of the *ts ts ts* sound (clicking with the tongue) is also indicative of disbelief, where G. is sharing his incredulity of such a thing happening in Bulgaria even before he speaks. Using the humor as a response when enacting *oplakvane* needs more examination, since it diverges from the more frequent tone and may serve a different purpose.

So is *oplakvane* effective? From the point of view of the participants, there are two things to be considered: a. *oplakvane* as *mrankane*, or in its negative

connotation is not a good thing to do, it is pointless, and futile if done by talking about “not real” problems; and b. when one *se oplakva* to share “real” problems then it is effective and one is supposed to get advice and solutions. For the participants, *oplakvane* is only efficient if employed for the handling of “real” problems. And here is where a dilemma arises from the clash of cultural norms for the enactment of *oplakvane*:

1. One should *se oplakva* only about “real” problems in need of solutions.
2. Problems are “real” only when they are a part of the “situation.”
3. When there are “real” problems, they should be shared with friends, family, and even strangers on the street, in public transportation, or at local government establishments.
4. When told an instance of a “problem,” one should offer another in reciprocity.
5. The problems that arise from the “situation” cannot be solved because they stem from the “mentality.”
6. One should not offer solutions to the said “problems,” since there is no real solution.

How do people *se oplakvat* about things that cannot be solved and legitimize it as different from *mrunkane*, if solutions are impossible to give? Through my analyses, I show that the participants realize that the purpose of *oplakvane* is not just to share problems that need solution, but also has some other, deeper cultural function. The participants, however, rarely acknowledge this function unless directly asked about it. In this way, the term *oplakvane* does refer to a specific

communicative practice that serves a cultural communal function and celebrates a particular identity. The practice is effective for the reaffirmation of managing the individual-community relationship. If the practice, however, is to be judged based on the participants' definition as "sharing problems and receiving advice on solutions from others", then, no, it is not successful since it only incorporates problems, and offering a solution disrupts the enactment.

Messages and meanings for sociality

What metaphorical messages and meanings does *oplakvane* bring forth in terms of sociality, then? What does such a culturally important term tell about Bulgarian social roles and identities, about social relations (intimacy and solidarity, power), and about social institutions? Briefly, I have already mentioned the cultural rationale that legitimizes *oplakvane* in the shape of "reasons" for it, and specifically, the Bulgarian "situation," and its connection to the Bulgarian "national mentality." Not surprisingly, the Bulgarian "situation," "mentality," and the cultural notion for social institutions that stem from the former are intricately connected, and depending on which one is made focal, there will be implications and radiants of meaning for the rest as well.

Another cultural notion we must keep in mind is the role of communication that is implicit, or "attracting the evil eye" and envy. In Bulgaria, rarely are happy events and reasons for joy expressed overtly because of the country's specific historical context. A famous saying that has developed in the past few decades is: *Ne e vagno az das am dobre, samo Vute da e zle* [It's not important I to be well, only my neighbor to be unwell]. This comes in two norms: 1) one should not share good

news with people unless they are very close (family), and even then some restrictions apply; 2) it is easier to share the negative (or *se oplakva*), so that one does not catch the evil eye (if one boasts too much, evil, envious people would harm that person). This is related to life during slavery (Ottoman empire) as well as communism, where the easiest way to become “equal” was through making every one “unwell” as opposed to working hard towards making every one better. An explicit reference to the saying and its connection to the “mentality” are examined again in the next chapters.

The cultural term *oplakvane* tells an even more poignant story not only about the cultural messages and meanings literally, based on how the term is used, its potency, and reference to particular communicative acts, but even more so, metaphorically, about Bulgarian understandings of sociality, personhood, and the social relations reflected and embodied in social institutions. On one level, the root of the term, *plach*, or “cry,” already calls attention to the deeper understanding of this act of “talking”—as a lament, a wail, and an outcry. This can be formulated in simple statements or premises of belief, value, and cultural understanding that Bulgarians have available to make sense of their interconnectedness in the larger cultural environment. I provide the explicit statements of value and belief in chapter 9 when discussing the construction of a common identity and examine the understanding of personhood implicated within it, so here, I just briefly mention the statements as:

- Bulgarians are connected in a state of socio-political and economical “crisis;”

- the “self” is understood as part of the national community, sharing a common “mentality;”
- this “situation” is not changing because it is connected to the “mentality;”
- the Bulgarian “mentality” is a compilation of behaviors and ways of thinking developed during the years of Ottoman occupation, communism, and the following transition;
- these behaviors and ways of thinking involve stealing, cheating, and “screwing” or “swindling,” and have been reinforced for so long that have become a biological national trait;
- thus, Bulgarians are forever doomed in a state of “crisis,” “chaos” and a “situation with no exit;”
- feelings of anger, frustration, and inability to act as well as pride (from being able to survive anything) results from this continuous “crisis;”
- and only a “real” Bulgarian understands this vicious cycle and the reasons for it.

Through the enactment of *oplakvane*, however, this common, doomed, fate of Bulgarians is reaffirmed and celebrated. Celebrated, because this “doom” understanding of the dwelling has a positive aspect: the Bulgarians’ ability to survive anything and adapt, continuing to exist despite any circumstances. This “Bai Ganio” identity, adaptive even though despised, is a source of conflicted pride. *Oplakvane* laments a lost time before the Turkish slavery, time of richness, and “non-slave mentality” that Bulgarians have lost and may never get back. A lament, but also a “pat” on the back, in a way, for how Bulgarians have managed to survive all

these problems so far, unlike any other people in the world—like cockroaches, who survive despite still living in the filth.

The cultural notion of sociality and how Bulgarians are all connected via the “mentality” is constantly recreated, binding Bulgarians through the past and into the future, or lack thereof. The pride of being bound in a common misfortune reinforces the pride of such circumstances through the constant positioning and repositioning in opposition to the “mentality” as represented by not only individuals, but also by social institutions and the government. Very often, the participants tell instances, or acts of *oplakvane*, in which they would narrate an example of how a bureaucrat attempted to ask for a bribe or was generally not performing their task, and the narrator’s response would be, “I showed them by swindling them back”—thus legitimizing once more the same behaviors part of the “mentality” that is blamed for the crisis. Being subjugated within a dysfunction is “bad” and “the Bulgarian way,” but the only response that Bulgarians know is to cheat and swindle back. Thus, as it becomes something to be proud of, how do we stop it? If every one is “the problem” (as possessing the “mentality”), and we “out-trick” them, how do we leave this “way of doing things” behind? If all we know is dysfunction, how do we do anything else?

Messages and meanings about personhood

Metaphorical messages about personhood are made indirectly, via the positioning in relation to the “mentality” and how the enactment of *oplakvane* is done (via a problem or an introductory/concluding evaluation) and the view is socio-centric: placing the Bulgarian-ness as an aspect of the “mentality,” as a common biologically-behavioral hybrid. The loci of motives is relational and a

product of a historical context, in which the Bulgarian identity is constantly positioned as a cause and inevitable outcome among forces outside the individual—where the national character is part of a herd, always controlled, and always affected.

The historical roots of such sociation seem to be organic: a compound historical evolution, where Bulgarian-ness is the mutation that has perpetuated its survival adaptation skills but these skills are not serving Bulgarians anymore, and they are in threat of devouring themselves. Frequently, the participants mention such biological aspects as a factor in the development of a national character. They even joke by employing concluding evaluation acts within *oplakvane* where they jest that an atomic bomb is the only solution to the “situation” but if some one is to drop it, who knows, Bulgarians are so resilient that they may evolve into something even scarier. I have heard at least fifteen mentions (from different participants) of this particular joke, as though, the specific context, coupled with an incredibly resilient gene of survival have mutated to create and perpetuate a specific national identity—an organic discourse that prevents and discourages any potential acts contradicting this cultural mythology.

The cultural term *oplakvane* and the communicative practice it refers to do not have implications just for identity or personhood, relations and sociality, but also about a specific dwelling, emotion, and action. I will develop these hubs of meaning more in the next chapters, here just outlining briefly the immediately relevant samples:

- Identity and personhood – the cultural notion of Bulgarian-ness as defined by and through a specific Bulgarian “mentality” (a way of thinking and behaving shaped by particular historical context) and within a particular historical and geographic context. And, whether one “counts” as having the mentality or not is very much determined via *oplakvane*, where only through offering examples of problems can one identify as not the one causing them, rendering the practice a tool for identification. The way this identity construction and alignment are created within the enactment of *oplakvane* is examined in chapter 9.

- Action and agency – no action will “save” Bulgarians because of the intricate symbiotic connection between the Bulgarian “mentality” and the “situation.” Therefore, only through *oplakvane* can the anger and frustration be released. One can only *se oplakva* until waiting for the “situation” to change on its one, almost as though waiting for another “biological” change or mutation. In this way, by enacting *oplakvane*, this “no need for action on my part” is once more reaffirmed.

- Emotion – anger, frustration, and resignation, as well as pride (of the survival skills) are fostered through the constant re-playing of the Bulgarian “situation” within *oplakvane* and are the only “proper” way of feeling during the enactment of *oplakvane*. It is about lamenting a common fate, or being “stuck,” as Bulgarians, within a vicious cycle, where our “mentality” is shaped and created due to particular socio-historical context that itself perpetuates a particular “mentality,” and so on.

- Dwelling – the world of Bulgarians is a world of chaos and hopelessness, where nothing works despite its beautiful landscape. Lost are the times of the old

kings and our unrealized potential of the past. The larger mythological landscape Bulgarians inhabit is examined in chapter 8.

Chapter Summary

These premises reveal a picture of the practice and the symbolic world evoked through it. When Bulgarians speak, or *se oplakvat* in particular, they do so from a particular cultural and communal situated-ness, and identify both their individual stances and their position within the Bulgarian situation. With *oplakvane*, one can “see” what Carbaugh (1989a, p. 103) described as cultural terms for talk as a way to speak directly and “literally” about words and as a way to talk more “metaphorically” about interpersonal relations, social institutions, and models of being a person.

So far I have addressed *oplakvane* as a cultural term for communication in Bulgarian discourse (its lexical meaning, uses in context potency, prominence, depth of feeling, and accessibility), the communicative acts it refers to (with particular structure and function), and described its literal and metaphorical meanings about communication, sociality, and personhood, where a specific national identity, as personified in the literary character Bai Ganio, is celebrated as well as condemned through the communicative practice of *oplakvane*. It is celebrated as an example of Bulgarians’ ability to adapt and survive, and condemned because of detaining the country in the past. This understanding of social roles and identity is particularly visible within a term that encapsulates bemoaning, complaining, grieving, and mourning. It also speaks to a particular solidarity among Bulgarians anywhere who know hardships, and are trapped between “those” with the “mentality” and “those”

who consider themselves “almost European” but realize they do not have the cultural understanding, discourse, and way of being to change.

CHAPTER 5

“LOADS OF POTATOES”: ALIGNMENT IN *OPLAKVANE*

Introduction

In this chapter I address the main question concerning *oplakvane*, asking what a Bulgarian way of speaking is, and what evidence there is that *oplakvane* identifies one such way? So far I have examined *oplakvane* as a term for communicative practice, its uses in interaction, and have already alluded to the structure such an enactment has. Here I will illustrate the specific differences between *oplakvane* and other ways of speaking in Bulgarian discourse (Appendix D). Using the same methods described earlier, I illustrate how alignment in *oplakvane* is achieved within interaction. I use examples from the event described in chapter 3 to illustrate the analysis of all my data and findings concerning *oplakvane*. As I show, *oplakvane* has a particular structure of initiation, acknowledgement, and shared fate concluding negative evaluation, and is characterized with a certain emotional performativity.

Soon after deciding to focus on *oplakvane* and the discursive mysteries it holds, I started getting the inevitable question: “so is *oplakvane* all Bulgarians do? Is there any other talk they do?” The question made me realize that the best way to start the conversation about this practice is to show where it starts and where it ends. At this point of my research, I had explored enough of the ebbs and flow of *oplakvane*, had even delineated for myself most of its defining characteristics and major questions (Carbaugh & Hastings, 1992), functional accomplishments, its structure and how the practice was generally put together, its main ingredients and

features (terms and phrases), as well as the cultural sequencing and form. As an insider, I had more of a “feel” as to where the line lies between what constitutes *oplakvane* and what does not and had not really focused on a piece that illustrated it well. What follows is analysis of a piece that “spoke” as a particularly rich illustration of the multifaceted negotiation between *oplakvane* and other speech modes.

Social situations call for the managing of diverse linguistic resources, understanding the context, mastering of uses and meanings, and the sequential forms of expression in order for an individual to fully participate within the communal world, and its social life (Carbaugh, 2007a). Despite all the cultural knowledge participants may possess, however, the process of navigating the communicative terrain is never smooth and may require multiple attempts when switching between modes and practices. I will now compare two ways of interacting in order to illustrate more vividly the presence of the communicative practice of *oplakvane* as a way of speaking.

Recognizing *oplakvane*

Description of the segment

An hour and sixteen minutes into the dinner event, K. steers the conversation towards “sweet potatoes” (Appendix D, line 1). He initiates by using G.’s name to attract his attention, stating “Gictore, we will go plant some sweet potatoes.” This utterance is meant more to continue the conversation and is not intended to be informative—first, K. uses G.’s name as an exclamation to signal that he is

exaggerating the statement that follows it. The statement that comes after the name is one meant as a joke and refers back to previous discussion of sweet potatoes, where N. and K. introduced yams to G. Since both N. and K. live in the capital and do not grow vegetables, G. is meant to understand this “we will go plant” as amusing, and he responds respectively: “Yes, yes, you’ll see we’ll plant and [they] will grow.” G. acknowledges that it will not be literally N. and K. planting but instead he and his family. K. expands on the joke by stating how “extra” or “great” they all will be as a result of such planting, having work (6), while G. joins in on the laugh (5) and highlights, partially joking, their mutual benefit and relationship with “I will be the producer, you’ll be the merchant” (7), with both co-constructing the relationship in lines 8-10. After a very brief pause, indicating the completion of their relationship interaction, this time G. initiates an instance of conversation by using K.’s name, a sigh, and laughter (11) indicating pleasure and appreciation of the company.

Here the conversation lags, with three pauses of two to three seconds, and the participants only use fillers such as “but” (12-13), “heh” (9, 11), and “so” (8) until K. brings up a recent experience with “just as long as we don’t sell them like the first ones” (14). With this statement K. attempts to make another joke alluding to the weight of the potatoes being off since they were selling mostly to friends and colleagues, and some might have gotten more without paying, or paying less than intended. Thus, K. suggests that they are not being very professional and should be stricter when distributing the potatoes so that G. gets the full money he deserved. This statement is also not just about the potatoes—K. presents himself as responsible for G.’s potatoes’ well-being, or as the person, who (as social norm

dictates) in order to be “a good partner” and “host,” has to take better care of the goods, and ensure G.’s profit of the interaction (16-18). Here, G. understands this utterance as it is meant to be, focused on their interaction and not the potatoes and after an initial query (“why?” in line 15), dismisses K.’s concern stating that everything is “exact” (17). In this way G. provides the “proper” response to this host-guest ritualized form, where each has expressed a concern about what could damage the relationship, and has reaffirmed its status as focal. G. not only reassures K. that everything (meaning the money and the weight) are “exact” (19) but also that even G.’s wife had insisted on them (K. and N.) first taking care of themselves and only then of others (19-26) when selling the potatoes.

Again, the locus of the interaction, and what it accomplishes is reenacting and affirming their friendship. The potatoes and their weight are not important. What is, though, is their connection as enacted through ensuring favors for each other that in this case happens to be the potatoes. It is because they are friends that they began this interaction in the first place: G. was producing potatoes before that but had never sold them in Sofia. Their friendship continues to be negotiated via discussing the weight over several lines (20-33). If there was a real question as to the weight of the potatoes, it could easily be established and solved. However, in fact both of them continue on, seemingly arguing but not really, focusing on G.’s insistence of K. having enough potatoes for themselves (22, 24, 26, 28, 30). By this perseverance on both sides, both collaboratively show mutual respect for the relationship and each other. If one is to just stop after the first “round” and agree, it would be considered rude and offensive. It is through this back and forth that both

show reverence to each other as friends and partners, where K. cares about the effort G. and his family have put into the interaction so they get the corresponding reward, and G. and his wife ensure K. and N. get taken care of first, and only then, the benefit of others. The relationship talk's concluding stage can be clearly observed in lines 29-33, where the utterances become more vague and general with K.'s "ah I prefer to sell everything and you to bring more." "well yes," and final "whether there'll be some left for us is easy" (where his intonation is downward, indicating an end to the conversation), and G.'s "oh, if only you can" and laughter. A shared understanding of the interaction reaching an end point is clear—at least an end point to this relationship interchange. A four-second pause physically concludes the segment.

After the pause, G. initiates again with "so this year so" (34) that does not provide any information but is meant to resume the interaction by prompting talk without actually stating anything. K. responds by restating what G. had mentioned before about the potatoes this year—they are both plenty and at a low price (35). Since they are acquaintances but not too close, they often fall back on the subject they have in common—the potatoes and G.'s position as a farmer. G. takes the prompt and elaborates with the information that "scarily many" potatoes grew in comparison to other years when no matter what he and his wife did, they just did not grow in the same way, and either frost, rime, or something else got them. But this year it is loads of potatoes (36-38). Here K. attempts to participate in this potato talk despite not knowing much about the topic: he suggests that it is because

it was very hot that year (39) but G. quickly dismisses that with “it doesn’t matter, I don’t know what not but it was full of potatoes” (39).

The interaction dies down again—indicated by a short pause (.2) and a shift in topic towards the dog playing nearby—whether to give him food and who should feed him. Through this talk directed to the dog, the awkwardness of not having too much to talk about is resolved. By directing talk to the dog and about it, the participants find something in common to bridge the lack of topics to (41-43, 44-52, 53-57, 58-59, and pauses). After a last pause of five seconds K. attempts another initiation by repeating the previous statement about potatoes “and what do you say many potatoes this year, low price” (60). Even though the topic is the same, I show how this is K.’s attempt to initiate not just a specific conversation about the potatoes (since it is clear from the previous segment that he does not know much about the topic) but a ritual with a specific function. K. attempts to initiate *oplakvane* here as a conversation “filler” since it is a way of speaking widely accessible and recognizable. As such, they would all be able to participate and enact *oplakvane* even if they do not have other things in common to talk about.

In response, G. repeats the main facts of “there was plenty of potatoes,” “the price is low,” and “last year was scary” (61). Since K. asks about this year’s produce and its bounty, G. could have easily responded about it specifically. However, talking about this year and the large amount of potatoes produced would mean focusing on positive aspects of the Bulgarian scene. Instead, G. returns to talking about last year’s quantities and how they compare to the present ones (after a brief pause in line 61). K. follows up immediately with a question about whether there

were less potatoes then (62). G. explains that there were less, and, after a brief pause again, further elaborates that they “planted less, too” since “they didn’t know,” and so “when they saw that the price started rising, they thought” that “that’s how it’s gonna be” (63-64). It is not very clear who “they” are in this case—it may be other people nearby planting potatoes, or just farmers in general who took subsidies for growing potatoes. G. does not explain and K. does not ask, thus rendering it insignificant to the conversation while further indicating that the interaction has other meanings different from being informative.

K. provides the appropriate response of “but no” (65) in response to G.’s implicit suggestion that despite what “they” were thinking, things turned up different—another thing he does not explain. Here G. mentions M. by saying that he, G., hopes M. lowers the price. Once more, he does not elaborate on who specifically M. is but the participants are to assume he is either a local government official or even higher within the government. N.’s response of “yes” (67) is either in recognition of the name or as an encouragement for G. to continue whereas K. shows his lack of knowledge of M. by asking for a clarification “of the potatoes?” (68). After G.’s “well yes” (69) and a two second pause, K. prompts again by another unclear utterance (70): “Well I don’t know but they import a lot and I don’t know. They import them from abroad and are.”

K.’s statement illustrates how irrelevant the topic is to the interaction—despite his not knowing anything about it, despite his lack of clear opinion, despite the vagueness of his utterance where he is not really making a declaration of any kind, he is still participating. Not only that, he is also prompting the interaction to

continue, where even a vague statement is enough to instigate a response (71) of “many.” K. continues with an even more illustrative statement (72) where he argues that “40 stotinki imported ones. How is this connected? It is not really clear to me.” Once again, his question is not clear unless one is aware of the situation in Bulgaria where imported potatoes are very cheap (40 stotinki) not allowing Bulgarian farmers to enter the market and get paid for their expenses. And yet, the question remains: what is he asking? The economic side? What he is alluding to is that there is “someone” causing this, “someone” who benefits from it, and can be blamed. In other words, something is “fishy” and corrupt. The reason for this situation is somewhere to be found behind the scenes, within the Bulgarian system—a direct reference to the Bulgarian “situation” and a move towards *oplakvane*.

It becomes clear that this is not mere talk about potatoes but a specific ritualistic form of communication, that, when enacted, serves a function for the participants. Despite the lack of specifics within the topic, lack of knowledge on the side of some of the participants, the interaction is indeed handled and synchronized. G.’s answer comes shaped as a direct response to the unclear question, where G. directly states that he will “tell” him how things are connected. He further elaborates with a compilation of utterances such as “the agricultural producers, the subsidies they give to” (73), where the “potatoes are paid for” (75), “they just watch where to clear them, to get rid of them cause there they are,” “100/200/300/500 tons of potatoes,” “the money he has long taken, and has to get rid of them,” and “to pass them. Otherwise he has to look for some dump to throw them out” in that sequence. The responses throughout G.’s segmented explanation include N.’s “yes,”

and K.'s several "mha," indicating they both understand. Both K. and N. do not ask clarifying questions about his explanation, which indicates they are both satisfied and make sense of it enough to continue the conversation.

In addition to not asking questions, K. offers an evaluation of G.'s statement in the form of "horror" (83) and "how awful" (85), whereas N. makes a comparison between what happens in G.'s area and the capital's where "the subsidies get stolen" (86-88). Despite G.'s dismissal, "oh there are no subsidies here" (89), N. insists that the European Union provides some (90) but they are frequently stolen by the corrupt Bulgarian government officials (92), something G. corroborates (93-95). Once more, the details of the instance provided as an example of how subsidies disappear in Bulgaria are less than clear: G.'s example, which does not even provide a clear protagonist, a plot line, or an argument other than "something is happening and some one is doing something," while N's instance just alludes to a general "they" who "steal."

Since all participants seem to understand each other, however, G. furthers his argument by the next illustration that delivers the following statement (97-100):

[They] even fired that one ... what was her name exactly cause she's in his way, right, if there is something, right, for her she'll fix him some subsidies

N. responds with both "yes" (101) and "horror" (103) that is not merely an indication for G. to proceed but also provides a reaction to his statement implying at least some form of comprehension and agreement. At this point the conversation takes a brief pause (.2) that is enough to indicate to the participants to proceed to the next interactional stage: or the evaluative part of *oplakvane*. G. initiates the

stage, after it becomes clear (N.'s "horror") that the other participants are not going to provide another instance, with "here [is] a rotten country, here is a mobster country, and corrupted to the teeth" (104, 106) that N. and K. echo with "exactly, mobster" (105). Another short pause follows before G. continues the evaluation by adding his view on the people of Bulgaria: "there is no starting to see here" that is trailed by N.'s "and we won't get better." Her phrasing is resonated by G. who repeats her words (110), and elevated by K. who states that "it is getting worse and worse" (111) and one "can imagine what it'll be after twenty years" (113).

Wine interruption

Within this stage of evaluation, a short break occurs, a break that only reinforces the function of the ritual. As the participants are engaging in this spiraling communicative practice, in which the doomed faith of Bulgarians is co-created and constituted, a side conversation about pouring wine sneaks in without breaking or changing the enactment of the evaluative stage of *oplakvane*. While the participants are fully immersed in conversation and do not break the *oplakvane* sequence at its evaluative stage, the wine remarks can be heard almost as a background noise: N.'s "nothing [will be left in the country]" (114) to K.'s "I imagine what it'll be in 20 years" (113) immediately followed by a "will you pour some wine?" (N. on the same line 114, directed to K.). The wine negotiation of "[pour some wine] to me too a little" (N2 in 116), "how much, tell me" (K. in 117), and "this much, thanks" (N2 in 118), does not interfere with the *oplakvane* cycle despite the pause of three seconds after the wine is poured—G. stays on the subject with a "whatever comes" in response to the K.'s 113 line and N.'s 114. He shifts the keyed

emotion, however, from one of desperation and frustration to a joking one, with his laugh that ends the utterance (119). It is this laugh that confuses K. who provides a questioning “mmm?” (120) but remembers what stage of *oplakvane* is being enacted and delivers the appropriate general response of “whatever comes, yes” (120).

Shift in keyed emotion

The above scenario gestures towards the performativity of the ritualistic form of *oplakvane*: within this specific segment the insignificance of the utterances’ literal meaning is visible, where the focal element is the shared cultural meaning and not the specific literal value of the utterance. Thus, the participants can pool from the general cultural environment in order to make sense of the situation without focusing or even paying attention to the direct gist of what is being said. Note the importance of the keyed emotion or tonality of the interaction. The lines preceding the wine segment do not contain humorous elements: no one laughs, the focus is on the negative, there is an alliterative repetition of “and we won’t get better,” culminating in the “things will get even worse” with a downward intonation and tone of resignation. Once the wine is poured, however, G. continues the evaluation providing this same repetition “whatever comes,” which is an echo of the utterance N. started before asking for wine (114) but adding a laugh at the end.

This laugh is a break in the emotional key within the interaction and draws the attention to the larger task that is being accomplished (building a sense of togetherness), highlighting the phatic aspect of the interaction, as opposed to an informational one. Through this break, the function of this interaction as a ritualized practice is bared because the interaction is not about solving the future of

Bulgaria, or the well being of potatoes and their price. The interaction is about sharing and reaffirming a common identity as well as replaying the common national fate and situation in Bulgaria. By employing and performing *oplakvane*, the participants can draw from the common cultural ground and connect, establish a relationship, and interaction despite any other differences they may have in background, experience, or personalities. This is indicated by the return to *oplakvane* after pauses, and lack of common topics outside of the potatoes.

At this point, the emotion keyed has been briefly changed by G., and N. attempts to provide another instance as an example (121) with the “well” and “it is not easy cause” (124). She decides, however, to abandon the utterance and pauses. K. has already engaged in the evaluative stage of *oplakvane* and despite the short confusion due to G.’s laugh continues with a “we’ll think about it then” (123) that seems more neutral in tone, in an attempt to connect to G.’s keyed tone, but switches to “nothing works, that’s why” (125) in response to N.’s initiation. Here, G. just agrees with a “mha no” (126) and “oh” (129), while K. and N. collaborate on the interaction with several utterances which complete each other: 1) “well, see that” (K. in 127) with “everything is on our backs” (N. in 128); 2) “after all [what a] fucking country it [is]” (K. in 131) with “skins several” (N. in 132), back to K. (133) with “it doesn’t work it doesn’t work”, and N.’s (134) “ten skins, and for what”. A pause of five seconds allows for a change in the cycle of *oplakvane*, yet the participants remain on the evaluative stage and continue as though the pause has not happened where K. says “everyone already” (135), N. adds “at some point you wonder what do you work for” (136) and “you kill yourself with work and nothing”

(138), while G. agrees (137) with an “only tries to take your money, that’s it” (139), pointing in the direction of the generalized “other.” The following chart (Table 2) offers some insight into the different modes employed throughout this segment. The segment has been divided into two cycles of *oplakvane* (cycle 6 and cycle 7 respectively) based on the particular structure of the practice constructed based on the rest of the data. I will present a detailed description of said structure later in this chapter.

Lines	Cycle 6	Cycle 7	Oplakvane	-?-	Relationship Ritual	Tone
1-11 (Instance I)	Potatoes— joke, pause, name				Host/guest	Positive —“will work”, laugh
12-14 *15-17 (Instance II)	K. the weight of the potatoes		K. attempts (“something didn’t work”) but *G. responds with information			No laugh, confusi on (G.)?
18-33 (*19-24)	K. joke about weight				K. changes it into joke, *G. responds with “for you”	Dismiss ive/ Humilit y Laugh
PAUSE	PAUSE (.4)					
34-40 *39 (Instance III)	G. potatoes this year vs. last year		Could be initial opl. but doesn’t get picked up, still negotiation— “good” lots of produce but “bad” adjectives— frashkano, mani, etc.	This year “good” but focus on last year “bad” *K. engages with “bad heat” this year		Dissatis fied, focus on the negativ e,
PAUSE (41-59)	PAUSE dog talk PAUSE			Info? Reduce uncertainty?		
60-102 (Instance IV)		K. asks about the potatoes follow up	K. prompts an instance, asks about price (general complaint) G. responds with same words; unclear about the potatoes, unclear “they”			Neutral but focus on low price, compari son “horror ” (K. 83) “gadnot o” (K. 85)
103-114		N. “horror”	N. does not offer an instance so G. provides an eval			Frustrat ion with the country, lack of hope; “oh” (G. 112) as a sigh
114-118				Wine pouring		
119-140		Pause and again	Eval opl			Frustrat ion, pointles s work

Table 2.: Recognizing *oplakvane*

Again, let us have a more detailed look at the difference in the two cycles and how the participants attempt (whether successfully or not) to negotiate the interaction. To briefly summarize the chart: cycle six can be viewed as a friendship (host-guest) relationship maintenance ritual (lines 1-11), during which an attempt at *oplakvane* is made (lines 12-14), however, since the other participant does not provide an appropriate *oplakvane* response (15-17), the interaction returns to the already utilized friendship (host-guest) ritual (18-33). At this point, after a brief pause, another attempt at *oplakvane* is made (34-40), and since it also does not get response from the rest of the participants, the interactional tension (due to lack of alignment) is managed by directing communication to the dog present (41-59). Here, alignment is finally achieved within *oplakvane* (initiation and response, recognition of emotional register), and the ritual is finally picked up by all participants in lines 60 through 102, culminating in *oplakvane*'s final evaluative stage, briefly pausing for drinks (114-118), in lines 103-140.

How is one to know which one is *oplakvane* and which is not if even the participants display hesitancy and "misstep" in their enactment of it? How is such a negotiation enacted. What specific communicative performances do they themselves recognize as *oplakvane*, and thus align to? As I showed in the previous chapter, *oplakvane* is not recognized as a separate communicative practice, even though they are aware that they perform a type of talk that can be loosely described as "whining" and "complaining." Due to the potency of the term *oplakvane*, participants acknowledge that they do tend to "complain" often but are hesitant to

call their interactional pattern with the term because it reframes their reality differently.

This segment illustrates how *oplakvane* is employed despite not being recognized as a ritual with functions beyond its mere surface intent of sharing problems. The participants' negotiation and alignment to a common practice that is not self realized is quite a sight—they coordinate and match their performances and interaction in several distinct ways visible in this piece. As mentioned in chapter 3, the three participants do not have much in common (age, experience, social status, education, common interests and activities) beside a personal friend (K.'s father) and the common goal of selling the potatoes (that is partially done as a friendly gesture on K.'s part). When G. visits, the hosts and guest do not have much else to talk about but their common past (summer vacations of K. and his father), potatoes, and general, widely accessible topics. In this way, *oplakvane* is a commonly intelligible and deeply felt practice that resonates across experience, age, geographical, and social background in Bulgaria. It is in this segment of the dinner event that the lack of other common topics becomes apparent, and thus, *oplakvane* becomes crucial.

Identifying *oplakvane*

Now I delineate the subtle ways in which the abovementioned *oplakvane* alignment is achieved. This attempt at *oplakvane* comes at a particular point in the dinner event (about an hour and twenty minutes): once the participants have exhausted other topics (potatoes, family updates, dinner details). It is still early in the evening for them to retire comfortably (it would be considered rude to complete

a dinner event with a guest before midnight). Even though K.'s introduction of a new cycle is not typical for *oplakvane* and more of a joke—their intent to go grow potatoes together with G.—which G. also takes as a joke and continues with it (elaborating on how the potatoes will grow, G. will be the producer and K. the trader), K. still steers the conversation towards *oplakvane* in subtle ways. First, he suggests that growing of potatoes will lead to “having work/job” (6) and then, after another pause and break in the flow of the interaction, warns that they should sell some but only as long as they “don’t sell them like the last time” (14).

These are indirect ways in which he steers the interaction towards *oplakvane*, since both participants allude to something going “astray.” Despite the light manner in which K. opens up the interactional floor, allowing for multiple ways in which the rest of the participants can proceed communicatively, line 6 of the interaction points to a specific direction. Immediately after suggesting they go and plant potatoes at G.'s yard, K. elaborates that once they do that, they “will be great” and “we’ll have a job.” His mentioning of having “job/work” and their well-being once they have it suggests that this is not merely a joke or a relationship ritual between a host and guest exactly because it infuses a more serious topic (work and employment) within the interaction. Since G. has already laughed, however, and responded with “I will be the producer, you will be the trader” (7), the interactions seem to come to a stop, where both G. and K. agree with each other and arrive at a standstill (K.'s “ah so” and “and there you go”, and G.'s laugh in lines 8-10). This break in the interaction, where both K. and G. agree with each other and end at silence, and G.'s ultimate use of K.'s name and a sigh, make perfect cultural sense if

understood as an attempted *oplakvane* that is not realized and fails to occur due to the failure of both participants to align to the same ritualistic communicative form.

Later in the chapter I explore some of the topics of *oplakvane*. K.'s utterance can be understood as providing just such an opportunity for *oplakvane* to be utilized at a moment when the participants are reaching a conversational halt. I show that within this particular segment K. makes several attempts at steering the interaction towards *oplakvane*, and it is not until the fourth instance that the rest of the participants respond in a culturally appropriate way for the *oplakvane* ritual to be completed.

The phrases K. uses that could be flagged as *oplakvane*-encouraging include: "we'll be great, we'll have a job" (lines 4 and 6, as mentioned), "[but be careful] not to sell them like the first ones!" (*da ne gi prodademe kat parvite* line 14), "both many and both at a low cost" (35), "and what [did] you say, many potatoes this year, low cost" (60).

The third attempt at *oplakvane* is made by K. in response to G., who suggests that "again this year so" (34). Here, let's look the specific lines once again (34-40):

G: this year again so
K: both many, and at a low cost
G: but scary many potatoes grew. Other years like what not we did and nothing and nothing! They decided no and. Either rime, either frost burns it, either this or that. This year well they were a lot
K: leave it, much heat it was this year, probably that's why
G: it doesn't matter, I don't know what not but it was crazy full of potatoes.

Even though I have described these specific lines earlier, I would like to focus on them once more, paying specific attention to whether and, if so, how *oplakvane* is

introduced, the response it receives, and whether alignment within the same communicative form is achieved. It is unclear whether G. intends to initiate *oplakvane*: he brings up the subject of how things were “this year,” and continues describing how many potatoes grew as opposed to other years when, despite G. and his family’s efforts, not much would have grown. It seems that G. attempts to maintain interaction discussing topics he is familiar with, such as the potatoes, farming, and land, whereas K. attempts to respond with *oplakvane* (35, 39). However, since G. is familiar with the topic of growing potatoes, he continues that particular conversational line and does not respond with an *oplakvane*-appropriate utterance.

K.’s utterances of “both many and at a low cost” (35), and “leave it, much heat it was this year, probably because of that” (39) can be understood as a prompt to G. to continue, since they provide just enough information to sustain the flow of conversation and do not attempt to introduce a strong potato-related opinion. They are meant as a segue, a topic-specific conversational “mhh,” meant to signal that the individual is listening and wants to hear more. K. provides these utterances meant to continue the flow of the conversation—utterances that show his lack of knowledge on the subject—his first statement about the cost is vague and the second charges heat as the main detriment to potato growth. G. overlooks the first utterance and the second he dismisses straightforwardly with a “it does not matter.” Thus, as G. is latching onto potato talk, while K. has no experience with it, the interaction falls into another silent pause before it officially strays—with a talk about the dog (41-59). Here, an important point can be made as participants enact

the ritual form of *oplakvane*, but do not freely label it as such. One reason for this may be that by doing so, they reserve the more positive meanings of the ritual (phatic contact, sociability, building togetherness) over its content (bad scenes in Bulgaria and negative examples of the “situation”).

The roughness of this segment becomes even more highlighted. K. offers several initiations of what, based on my analyses of other data, falls within the realm of *oplakvane*, but since all utterances are connected to and utilize the topic of “potatoes” G. does not recognize it as such, and proceeds focusing on the topic of potatoes. Yet, since the intended interaction is not meant to be focused on this topic, the two participants fail to connect and align that results in falling back on friendship talk, guest-host ritual, failed potato-related segments, and a general halt of the interaction signaled by the pauses and the turn of the conversation towards the dog.

Failure to align when enacting *oplakvane* (no uptake)

It is not difficult to see the moments where K.’s utterances on the topic of potatoes fail to meet G.’s expectation, thus leading the interaction to flop. In these instances, G. either disregards K.’s statement or directly refutes it. What is more complicated is to pinpoint the exact reasons as to why K.’s utterances qualify as *oplakvane*—something easily “felt” as an insider. I remember when I was first listening to this event, in an attempt to transcribe the whole three hours of it I skipped over this cycle. I just labeled it as cycle six and left it for later. Even then, I knew it had something significant in it but since it did not “sound” like *oplakvane*, it was left for later examination. Here, I will list once more, the utterances I have

found (based on the analysis of numerous data) to be introducing *oplakvane* and the cultural meanings attached to them, rendering them cultural triggers for the performance of *oplakvane*.

Instance I:

- 1 K: Giktore, we'll go plant sweet potatoes=
2 G: =yes, yes you'll see that we'll plant and will //work//
3 K: //a:nd// and that's
4 it, we'll we'll be great, you know
5 G: mha hahahaha hahahaha
6 K: and we'll have work=
7 G: =I'll be the producer, yo:u'll be the trader, will sell them

In the first instance, K. suggests to G. that both should just go and start planting sweet potatoes so that they “have work” (1, 6). Even though the first line by K. could be interpreted in many different ways, it should be considered a subtle initiation of *oplakvane* because it does not just make light of their relationship as “business partners” but it implicates its potential for future employment. If we are to assume that this is just a joke about how well both of them have done with this batch of potatoes and how they could continue to succeed in the future, there would be no need for K. to mention that this is a potential livelihood, a job, work. The fact that K. is making producing and selling potatoes a potential employment venue makes the issue of work or lack thereof salient. It is a frequent occurrence for many Bulgarians who live in the villages to sell some of their own produce for extra income besides their regular salaries or pensions. Many scholars have examined the agricultural practices of socialist countries, showing such “side” projects were the norm during socialism, where people were often encouraged to use party tools for their own projects (Verdery, 1996).

This is also the case with G., who is not a professional farmer in the Duspat area but, as many people from the villages commonly do, supplements his funds with selling produce. For G., this production and trade with potatoes is nothing out of the ordinary—people from his area and around the country have been doing it for generations. Whether trading with neighbors, taking the produce to the local open markets, opening one’s own produce stand/small store close by, or using connections and relatives to sell in the larger cities, vending is the employment of choice for a large section of the Bulgarian population, and particularly in the rural areas where produce is the only thing available to sell. Yet, the one to mention the monetary or business aspect of selling the potatoes is K., the one who lives in the capital, where the opportunities for employment and development are perceived to be ultimate. If G. was to bring the point up, the issues may be perceived as an actual “complaint” since the participants agree on the fact that employment and business opportunities are scarce in the rural areas. However, when someone from the capital mentions it, then the focus becomes not the actual “reality” but the cultural one.

K. is not in the same position as G. He is younger, lives in the capital, has access to more employment resources, has never had to supplement his main job with growing produce to sustain himself comfortably. In this way, when he brings up the notion of growing sweet potatoes with G. as a means for employment, a “work” or “job” that would support them, he does not do so to mock or jape with G. The utterance functions, on one level, to bring them together by focusing on how productive their enterprise has been and reinstate the intent to repeat it in the

future, and on another level, to connect them within the general narrative of Bulgarian suffering, where all are connected through their common cultural fate.

The mention of “work” and “job” they all strive towards evokes a very particular Bulgarian cultural narrative and mythology. As I will show later in this chapter, part of the specific Bulgarian national identity is being connected to a “doomed,” suffering “tribe,” one that is constantly trying to rise but is constantly being held down by its own old habits and “mentality.” By K. placing himself at the same plain as G., as just another Bulgarian trying to make a living in this gloomy, future-less country, K. aligns himself to G., and performs the switch from a talk about practical everyday happenings to the realm of the grand Bulgarian cultural mythology—where it is not about potatoes but about all of “us,” Bulgarians, struggling to make a living. Only through and within *oplakvane* can an individual who has a job and is not distressed financially align him/herself with another as someone who “needs a job/work,” because only under the cultural umbrella of the specific impoverished national identity can all Bulgarians relate.

The second instance highlights another side of the same cultural myth and the Bai Ganio aspect of the national identity, where despite all efforts, very often, anything done by Bulgarians is not done well. “Good job but a Bulgarian one” is a saying frequently used in Bulgaria to emphasize that we always do things not completely in the best and most effective way, that things are accomplished but in the most incompetent way. One can see the roots of such a cultural value within communism and the common practice of working “against” the system even while working “for it,” where to cheat, steal, and only protect one’s own interests was

valued as a rebellion against the party-instilled restrictions and red tape impositions (Verdery, 1996).

Here, K. attempts to initiate another cycle of *oplakvane* by evoking “how” they sold them: without ending with the proper weight at the end (14, 16). This confuses at first even G. What K. is alluding to is that they had less money at the end than the amount of potatoes sold. The reason for this is that K. did not sell them at a market but by word of mouth, telling friends and colleagues, who then come over and pick up some. Due to this unofficial manner, often giving to friends and relatives for cheaper or even for no money, the numbers end up being off. However, that this would happen is assumed due to the informal/non-business relationship between K. and G. The transaction is also considered to be between friends and allows for such losses, focusing on the good natured-ness and respect, and not the monetary aspect of the transaction. Thus, the weight being off is insignificant. What is important is that G. has been able to provide the potatoes for K. as a good friend, and K. has been able to move them in a quick and efficient manner. The money is almost considered an added bonus, and K. is supposed to have taken potatoes for himself and his family first. This is why, later, G. even mentions his wife, who has said that K. should first grab potatoes for himself and his family, and only then sell whatever is left. The potato transaction is only a small part of their larger ongoing relationship, full of gestures and acts of mutual respect, so the potato money is going to be (if it hasn’t already been) balanced in other ways.

In this way, one could take the utterances up as *oplakvane* by pursuing the downside of things, but one might also not do so. And due to this inherent

ambiguity of the utterances, *oplakvane* does not take place—because G. focuses only on the aspects of the utterance that are symbolic to their relationship. Thus, when K. mentions that something “wrong” has been done during their first sell, G. is only too quick to negate that and reassure K. as to the value of their potato interaction. This explains why instance II transforms into a relationship/respect ritual between host and guest friends as opposed to an *oplakvane* one. Since K.’s utterance is not recognized as *oplakvane* but as a self-criticism (K. took too many potatoes and this will potentially threaten his face), the only response G. can provide is to refute it (not refuting it would threaten his face as a good friend), hence initiating or transforming what was introduced as *oplakvane* into a friendship/paying of respect/relationship ritual. This relationship/friendship/paying of respect deserves its own study, but suffice to say it includes praising each other as more worthy of a favor. So once G. moves to arguing about the weight of the potatoes (hence arguing about their relationship and paying respect to one another), K. cannot refuse to participate and the interaction shifts away from *oplakvane*. The key phrase of shift is G.’s dismissive sigh and his insistence that “everything turns out right” (17), where “everything” applies to their relationship and not just the weight of potatoes.

Instance III is important because it offers an example of an utterance, which in itself is not necessarily an act of *oplakvane* but it is open enough to interpretation and is meant by K. as such. I use “meant” because he uses it twice (in this and the next instance) in order to shift the interaction onto “comfortable” ground, or *oplakvane*, but due to the simplicity of the phrase he uses, his first attempt proves fruitless. This instance is initiated, after a four-second pause, by G. who brings up

this year again. To this, K. responds with the *oplakvane* initiation of “both a lot and at a low cost” (35) referring to the potatoes. Here, G. offers a topic that is unclear since his utterance is partial: “this year again so” (34) and so K.’s response is also vague (includes the bare minimum of information he has about the state of potatoes) and allows for the initiation of *oplakvane* (allows G. to offer his opinion on the general state of potatoes or an instance of how “bad” things with potatoes are). I judge K. to be opening for *oplakvane* because he mentions the there are “a lot of potatoes” that are at a “low cost.” Here, his keyed emotion is crucial and alters the tonality of the interaction—his tone slopes downward, indicating a statement and not a question. This downward intonation is also frequently used to indicate displeasure or lack of enthusiasm. In this way, his simple statement is transformed into a gloomier remark on the state of potatoes—a state that does not convey excitement or prospects (common for *oplakvane*).

G., however, proceeds as though K. has not said anything and continues his line of how this year there have been plenty potatoes. Even translated in English, his two utterances (34 and 36) may seem separated by a “but.” They actually are recognizable in Bulgarian as a coherent sentence in which the “but” plays a role of indicating more the surprise of how many potatoes there were as opposed to a negation of what came before it. Here, the “but” expresses the astonishment and emphasizes the statement. It is interesting to note that despite that there are plenty of potatoes, G. does not seem to express satisfaction with the amount of produce in the utterance that follows: instead, he focuses on the fact that in other years there has not been as much (36), and on the fact that there has always been an outside

force (rime, frost in 38) that destroyed the produce (37). Once more, there is a focus on the negative—G. does not praise the plentiful harvest of the year but spends more time explaining how much the crops have not “wanted to” (37) grow previously.

This could be understood as an attempted response to the initiated *oplakvane*, as offering an instance of a problematic situation as it occurs in everyday life (the potatoes not growing). We can see this as an instance of attempted *oplakvane* because of its position within the realm of the Bulgarian scene: since Duspat is famous for its potatoes and previous years have not been as low on produce as G. makes it sound. K. responds about the weather as a possible cause for the abundance of potatoes (39). His response can also be understood as an appropriate response within *oplakvane* due to several markers: the “leave it” that launches his utterance, the way he phrases his statement about the heat, and the downward intonation.

Bulgarians frequently use the phrase *mani*, here translated literally as “leave it” (39), to convey a dismissal very similarly to the way the utterance of “whatever” is used in the United States. *Mani* can be used as a filler, where a negative connotation is implied. For example, when some one has a problem and is telling another about it, they may say “*Mani*, it’s no good, just leave it!” or “*Mani*, I tell him and he doesn’t listen!” or “*Mani*, why am I telling you!” The term is a shortened, dialectical version of the word *mahni* that means “to take away.” Some participants explain it as *kauza perduta* or “lost cause,” *zabravi* (forget it), *zaregi, ostavi* (leave it), but more meaning *ne si struva* (it’s not worth it), jokingly comparing it to what in

English movies is referred to as “f*ck it,” but emphasizing that “usually it is a phrase used at the beginning or end of a sentences, which describe un-pleasantries that happened to the speaker, and express his/her conviction in the bad or unhappy ending of the mentioned endeavor.” Again, what is highlighted is the fruitlessness of a situation, its doom from the beginning. Thus, by using it to introduce his statement, K. already shades it as a dismissal, infusing it with a negative connotation. He states that “a lot of heat it was this year,” which places the focus on the heat (he uses *gega*, which implies “scorching”). This, coupled with the downward intonation, keys the interaction within the *oplakvane* gamut, focusing on the general dissatisfaction and displeasure, almost irrelevant to the topic at hand.

However, whether or not this was to be an instance of *oplakvane* becomes irrelevant, since K.’s response taps into G.’s experience and distracts him from the ritual: the mention of the heat as a cause for the copiousness of the potatoes provokes the farmer side of G., who cannot resist and tackles this literal side of the utterance as opposed to its ritualistic purpose. His response is that it does not matter for the potatoes, and heat is not the problem. And even though he returns to his initial utterance about the bounty of potatoes, the “damage” is done and the participants miss the ritual—they fail to align accordingly, the topic relevant to some distracts, and even the congruence of keyed emotion of discontent is not enough to maintain the interaction within the ritual of *oplakvane*. Hence, the interaction halts once more (indicated by a pause), only to diverge into a short segment about the dog.

Success in alignment when enacting *oplakvane*

After even the dog-related talk is exhausted, K. initiates once more the topic of potatoes with a familiar phrase—“and what you say, many potatoes this year, low cost” (60)—almost a direct repeat of his earlier “both a lot, and at a low cost” (35). G. responds to him by agreeing that potatoes are just “pouring” (61) this year and after a brief pause mentions how “scary” it was last year. Here, finally, we see the participants aligning with one another, with K. asking about the potatoes again and, since it has already become obvious from the previous segments that he is not familiar with the topic and cannot provide much from his experience, he must be attempting to achieve a different purpose by asking about them again. G. responds to the direct topic but quickly realizes that something more is needed (the pause) and provides something additional: the last year’s “scary” experience. Why would he supply this information, when he knows that K. is not too familiar with potatoes and would probably not be able to participate? He realizes that something “more” is needed at this point in the interaction and offers his best guess. This best guess seems to be sufficient and K. latches onto it with a probing question as to whether less potatoes grew then (62). Significant here is the response G. gives to this question:

they were less (.1) well we planted less right, they didn't know right. (.1) so when they saw right that the price started going up and they thought that (.1) that's how it's gonna be but

Several aspects of G.’s response should be noted. There are three brief pauses in his response; he focuses not on the potatoes as growing produce but on the people planting it; he is unclear as to whom he is referring to; and the price/cost

of the potatoes is mentioned as “going up” (63-64). As a whole, his response does not seem to be coherent since there is a discrepancy as to the actor, action, as well as what he means by price/cost. He mentions “we” as “planting,” the potatoes as “less” but then includes a “they” who “didn’t know” but “thought that’s how it’s going to be” when “they saw the price/cost.” As an observer, not familiar with the case or the farming of potatoes, I, the researcher present at this interaction, still do not know whom he was referring to in this statement. However, the rest of the participants seem to treat it without question (N.), and K. even supplies a “but no” (65) that is not meant to question or negate but encourage to continue. This “but no” is meant to play off of G.’s “but” and signal that the utterance has been heard as agreement.

At this point, in a response to the encouragement, G. provides another puzzling statement with “M. maybe hopefully lowers the price” ending it with a laugh (66). He does not elaborate on who M. is and how this is funny, and since N. responds with a “yes” (67) and K. only inquires as to the potatoes in connection to the mentioned lower price (68), it is safe to assume that M. is most likely known to all as a politician with influence on the prices in a legal or illegal way (suggested by the laugh). Interestingly, after this segment and another brief (.2) pause, K. seems to continue the interaction with a mention of imported potatoes, introduced with two “buts” and a qualifier of “I don’t know.” He seems to suggest that there is a significant amount of imported potatoes that cost forty stotinkas (equivalent of twenty-five to thirty cents), and expresses that there is something unclear (fishy) about it (70, 72). He alludes to this by asking the question, “How does this work?”

[*Kak stave taj rabota*], that is a common Bulgarian phrase used to suggest that something “fishy” or “illegal” is occurring, indicating corruption. Once again, his claim is unclear: the opinion is expressed vaguely, without a clear accusation or blame, actor or action being performed.

Based upon analyses of my corpus of data, I have found that this is a perfect example of an instance of *oplakvane*, where the literal topic and specific details are not important, but the general relation to the broader myth of the Bulgarian situation (that I will explore in more detail later), and the keyed emotions of frustration, suspicion, and dissatisfaction are significant and necessary for the enactment of *oplakvane*. Not surprisingly, G. responds in the appropriate way—providing an “explanation” that is just as unclear, vague, and points a blaming finger to the generalized “other”—“well, I’ll tell you how. (.1) These. The agricultural producers, these subsidies, right, give them to” (73). Here, G. continues to elaborate in a vague manner about the agricultural producers and subsidies, without making a clear claim as to how this is connected to the prices and the presence of imported potatoes. And, once more, as I have already shown above, both K. and N. “agree” with his statements to the extent that they insert their own instances, do not question his train of thought, and are keyed in to the same emotional tonality of frustration, dissatisfaction, and anger. Thus, the topic, details, and even logic are not necessary as long as all participants have aligned themselves through the general synchronized structure, and keyed emotion.

Summary: Initiating *oplakvane*

A pattern of alignment emerges by the fourth instance. For each instance previously discussed, I offered a particular reason as to why it does not lead to the successful enactment of *oplakvane*. Due to the specific topic that is very close to one of the participants, G., the initiation of *oplakvane* encounters some difficulty. In the first instance (1-7), K. makes an initiation attempt by evoking a very specific aspect of the myth of the Bulgarian situation in connection to having a job to support oneself:

Instance I

- 1 K: Giktore, we'll go pla:nt sweet pottaos=
2 G: =yes, you'll see we'll plant some and they'll //grow//
3 K: //a:nd // and this
4 is, we'll we'll be great, you know
5 G: mha hahahaha hahahaha
6 K: and we'll have work=
7 G: =I'll be the producer, you wi:ll be the trader, will sell them

There was no need for him to add this part for practical conversational reasons since all present participants have jobs and are not searching for one. Thus, this reference connects to the general Bulgarian myth, in which, due to the unstable economic situation, employment is never secure and one needs to have as many side venues as possible. This also alludes to the agricultural background of most Bulgarians, where relying on their village relatives or lands for resources is a common occurrence: the assumption is that whatever happens in the cities, one can always revert back to farming. As we see, G. does not recognize the utterance as such and replies to the one preceding it, focusing on the delight of them being partners. The tone here is joking, elated, light, and thus does not prepare for the

jump into *oplkavane* that has a very specific sense of frustration, urgency, and despair.

Since the first instance has not produced the expected response, two pauses occur, once more revealing the lack of variety in the topics and experiences the participants share. Apart from potatoes, common past, and *oplakvane*, the participants are far from each other conversationally. Therefore, “feeling” the gap, K. makes another attempt (second instance, 12-17) at the potatoes topic—a cautioning as to how they have managed the last batch—another allusion to the general Bulgarian “mentality,” where work is never done correctly or “properly,” and is often referred to with the phrase “Good job but Bulgarian” [*Hubava rabota, ama Bulgarska*]:

Instance II

(.3)

12 K: but

13 G: but (.2)

14 K: [only as long as] we don't sell them like the first ones!

15 G: why?

16 K: not to have the weight right.

17 G: ahh (dismissive), everything comes out right, be*! She says to

However, the utterance is not recognized as *oplakvane* because it refers to a specific interaction between the two participants, and if it is recognized as “faulty” or “improper”, this would taint their relationship too. K. can chastise himself about not making more money for the potatoes, but G., as his friend, would seem rude to agree.

As a result, G. negates the suggestion strongly, reinforcing the idea that even the transaction itself is more an attestation of good will, friendship, and their

relationship, and not just a business interaction, and insists that K. should first ensure his family has enough potatoes, and only then sell the remainder. For both of them, the potato sale is considered more a symbolic action than just merely a practical business one. In this way, G. becomes trapped within an enactment of facework (expressing how much he values his relationship with K.) and cannot make the move to *oplakvane*, without violating that specific cultural norm. Consequently, this second attempt at *oplakvane* is unsuccessful, and quickly transforms into another ritual, and the tone shifts towards a reassuring, praising, and respectful one as the repetition of encouragement is performed.

Another longer pause signals the exhaustion of this different ritual of respect, and this time in the third instance (34-42), G., noticing that something is amiss and needed, opens the conversation with another reference to the potatoes of recent, initializing the third attempt at *oplakvane*:

Instance III

(.4)

34 G: well this year so:

35 K: both a lot, and at a low cost

36 G: well scary a lot potatoes grew. Other years like what not we've tried

37 and it doesn't want to and it doesn't want to! They burn right.

And

38 the rime, and frost burns this and that. This

39 year so were plentiful

40 K: leave it, it was scorching this year, probably that's why

41 G: it doesn't matter, I don't know what but it was full with

42 potatoes.

(.2)

He mentions that there are much more potatoes this year briefly and focuses on their lack previous years. His phrasing focuses on how previous years potatoes

“did not want to grow,” regardless of all his family’s efforts, with different weather conditions being against them. This shift towards the more negative aspects of the potato situation (and choosing not to focus on their present day abundance) is another marker of *oplakvane* for several reasons: despite mentioning how good of a year it has been for potatoes, G. decides to focus on the previous years and extrapolates action to the outside factors with “it not wanting” to grow (unclear whether he is referring to the general force of nature or the crop itself), and utilizes a mournful, frustrated tone that emphasizes the futility of effort in the face of outside forces.

Despite the *oplakvane*-appropriate topic and tone, however, K.’s response diverts G.’s attention. K. mentions the heat as a “reason” for the abundance of potatoes and even though he employs the same mournful tone as well as the phrase *mani* [leave it, forget it], his utterance strikes within a familiar ground for G.—his experience with potatoes does not allow him to proceed only with *oplakvane* but requires him to “correct” K.’s claim, thus misaligning once again. Hence, the ritual fails to initiate again, due to the conversational topic being too close to personal experience only one of the participants has. Since the conversation has been rendered to a halt again, we see a shift towards talking to the animal present, the dog nearby that serves as a channel for the anxiety produced by not sharing enough topics in common. By “talking to” and bringing the dog into the conversation, an appropriate, convenient topic is quickly established to bridge the interactional gap.

However, the dog-related talk cannot be sustained for too long, leaving the conversation to another spotty area filled with pauses. This time, K., realizing his

part as a host, and culturally sensing more conversation is desired, makes one more attempt to initiate conversation—using almost the same phrase as before—“and what you say, lots of potatoes this year, low price” (fourth instance, 60-76). What is significant here is that this is not only the same phrase, referring to the same topic, but also is stated as a fact and not a question, despite the fact that the topic has been exhausted previously. This indicates that this utterance is meant to perform a different task and not merely to ask about the potatoes:

Instance IV

(.3)

60 K: And what do you say, a lot of potatoes this year, low price

61 G: it was plentiful. Low price. (.1) last year was scary

62 K: but few potatoes grew then?

63 G: they were less (.1) we also planted less right, they didn't know, right. (.1)

64 so when they saw, right, that the price was going up and they thought

65 that (.1) this is how it's gonna be but

66 K: but no

67 G: M. maybe hopefully lowers the price haha

68 N: yes

69 K: of the potatoes?

70 G: well yes.

(.2)

71 K: but I don't know but they import a lot and I don't know. They

72 //import from // abroad and are

73 G: //a lot//

74 K: 40 stotinki the import. How is this connected?! It's not clear to me.

75 G: well I'll tell you how. (.1) These. The agricultural producers,

76 these subsidies, right, give them to

G. responds by repeating the same phrases, too, in succinct bursts, broken by a brief pause: “plentiful. Low price. Last year was scary.” He realizes something is culturally “needed” from him, that it is his “turn” within the interaction but is still

restricted by the focus on potatoes, where his experience gets in the way of the general performance. Here, the beautiful step-by-step alignment can be observed as the participants slowly orient themselves towards what the “correct” enactment is: by trying different responses to a very specific topic, emotional performance, and connections to the larger myth. This time K.’s probe into the topic of last year’s potatoes is accepted by G. as calling for a very specific response. G. initially reacts by elaborating as to the potatoes but he realizes that this is not sufficient, considering the topic has been exhausted and the rest do not have much experience with agriculture. This realization can be seen in the pauses that follow his utterances, where no one interrupts him to follow up or interject, thus, leaving G. to hold the conversational ground and piece together what he deems productive to the conversational flow (63-64):

They were less (.1) well and we planted less, right, they didn’t know, right. (.1) so when they saw, right, that the price started raising and they thought that (.1) that’s how it’s gonna be but

Realizing that a shift around the topic of potatoes is necessary, G. does exactly that, by still remaining within its vicinity but broadening it to connect to larger cultural issues relevant to the rest of the participants. He mentions a “they” who “saw the price raising” and assumed that this is how “it’s gonna be,” referring to an unidentified general “other.” At first glance it may seem surprising that K. and N. do not ask G. to elaborate on who “they” are or even assume that K. and N. know who that is (other farmers? Local agricultural bureaucrats?). K.’s response of “but no” is meant to encourage G. by latching and continuing G.’s “but” from the line before. At this point, G. brings up a third party (M.) joking that he hopes this third

party would lower the price of potatoes. From K.'s response ("of the potatoes?") it can be surmised that who and what specifically G. is discussing is not clear but K. does not have enough information to participate and delve further.

Once the topic shifts to government representatives and local management administration, it has officially reached *oplakvane* as it encroaches the realm of the generalized myth of the "Bulgarian situation." By bringing up "them" (those who "saw the prices go up" and "thought that's how it's gonna be") as well as referring to a specific political figure as affecting prices, G. officially offers an act of *oplakvane* by not only bringing up one of the aspects of the "situation" (where corruption and political figures determine people's life via the control of their resources and livelihood) but also by focusing on the causes for fluctuations within the market.

Since neither K. nor N. are familiar with the abovementioned M., potato prices, and farming in the Duspat area, after a two second pause following G.'s statement, K. focuses on the part he can connect to—problematizing the general situation in Bulgaria, where something is "shifty", "off", and not "properly done" (71-74):

But I don't know but they import a lot and I don't know. They import them from abroad but are at ... at 40 stotinki import [too cheap]. How is this connected/makes sense?! It is not clear to me.

Despite saying twice that he "does not know", K. is expressing a certainty as to the situation. In everyday conversations, the phrase "I don't know" is frequently used as a substitute for "in my opinion" and does not designate lack of knowledge but the opposite: a firm certainty that distances the speaker from a behavior deemed inappropriate. By stating it twice, K. stresses the fact that something

“more” is happening that people may not be aware of, “something” hidden. At the end of his utterance he also mentions that “it is not clear to me,” which is one more way of underlining that “something” is happening, yet this “something” is beyond his comprehension, thus distancing himself from those performing it, and expressing a moral stance against such behaviors.

The phrase he uses “*Kak stave taj rabota?*” (literally “How does this job happen?” that I have translated with its closest in meaning American phrase of “How is this connected”) implies that there is “some one” “doing” some “job” that operates behind what is visible. He suggests that imported potatoes are very cheap, an impossibility, since the price should include transportation on top of production expenses that cannot possibly be covered in such small numbers. The implication here, again, is that there is an unidentified “other” pulling invisible strings in order for such “machinations” and “schemes” to occur. Such an insinuation directly links the potatoes to the larger problematic Bulgarian situation by alluding to corruption, and the “others,” who labor and produce outside the “appropriate” channels. Hence, K.’s statement is not only an opinion on potatoes but also a direct remark and link to the broader socioeconomic and political situation in the country. In other words, he provides an evaluative (though implicit) declaration as to the situation in Bulgaria, where such behind-the-scenes dealings are the norm: a direct act of *oplakvane*.

Next, G. chimes in and responds with the appropriate next act of *oplakvane*—providing a specific instance as to how farmers take advantage of government provided subsidies. G. offers the example to support the common agreement shared by the participants at the table: the understanding as to how “we” and “them” are a

part of the general Bulgarian mentality. And G.'s stance is firm: he will "tell" K. how things are, going at length to provide an also very unclear opinion, illustrating once more that where *oplakvane* is involved, the importance of alignment falls within tone and general cultural knowledge and not specific topical details. And so, another cycle of *oplakvane* is successfully launched after the participants have finally aligned to each other both in topic and tone.

This specific attempt at *oplakvane* illustrates the culturally intuitive work that gets performed in interaction and how any gaps in conversation among individuals who do not have much in common are filled, by utilizing communal communicative practices such as *oplakvane* that are commonly understood, widely accessible, and deeply felt. The topic is a very near and dear one—the Bulgarian-ness that binds us together—where all are affected by the common mentality developed over time and as a result of a particular historical milieu. In instance I it is a reference to the common impoverished fate (where many, young and old, people find themselves without employment and are left to return to the land in search of sustenance); in instance II it is the shared "Bulgarian job," or way of doing things that is never well done; in instance III it is focusing on everything negative (outside forces beyond us, always hindering); and in instance IV—focusing on the negative again (lack of potatoes) and the generalized "other" in the face of other farmers abusing government subsidies as well as the corrupt government officials that pull the strings that allow and inform such status quo.

The pauses are particularly indicative as the conversation focused specifically on potatoes as a practical matter is concluded. In some cases, the pauses

appear after the completion of the enactment of a ritual as it is between lines 10-13, 33-34, 40-44, 52-59, and 69-70, while other show the speaker's hesitancy (whether while attempting to maintain a line or topic) as lines 44, 61-64, 73, 99, etc. This indicates that *oplakvane* is frequently used to “fill in” as a “fall back” way of speaking that is commonly recognizable and available to a broad communicative audience, a resource that is accessible across experience, generation, class, and education.

I have tested this reading of the data numerous times where I would offer types of acts that vary either in how negative or positive the topic is and whether it includes instances from everyday life in Bulgaria or the US (since I have lived in the US). My acts of *oplakvane*, which offered instances of everyday situations, were acknowledged and led to uptake and continuation of the enactment only when I offered: a) a “negative” instance from the Bulgarian “situation” and b) a “positive one from the US world (as a comparison). Anytime I offered an act including: a) a “positive” instance from the Bulgarian everyday life, and/or a “negative” instance from the US everyday life, my acts were disregarded and ignored, and the conversant would simply move to another participant. One example is when the conversation during a different event had focused on education and how bad it was in Bulgaria (unruliness of the students, bribes interfering in the classroom, *mutri* attaching teachers, etc.). At that moment I offered an example of the tendency in the US higher education towards viewing education as a purchased product (as a negative example)—my act was ignored and the participant moved towards the negative in Bulgaria, which he said was “worse than anything happening in America”.

Norms for enactment

So what are some specific norms for the “correct” performance of *oplakvane* that are visible from this particular negotiation and are highlighted by the numerous re-starts? What rules for the successful alignment within *oplakvane* can be generalized based on this very noteworthy segment? I suggest that what initiates a successful (when participants align) cycle of the *oplakvane* are, among other things, a shared understanding of a specific topic, key terms that connect to the Bulgarian myth, focus on the “negative,” the intonation (keyed emotion), and alignment to a specific identity. Here, I provide just a few guiding norms before I proceed into explaining exactly what *oplakvane* is.

As we see in instance I, K. uses a term that could be related to the Bulgarian situation myth (work/job) but since G. does not recognize it as such and talks over him, focusing on the interaction and the relationship between them, the two participants fail to align within *oplakvane*. Instead they proceed into a joking way of speaking that does not have the elements of *oplakvane*. Thus, the first two necessary norms for the enactment of *oplakvane* to be initiated successfully is:

1. When initiating *oplakvane*, one must introduce a topic that is treatable as suboptimal according to the Bulgarian scene (mythic narrative, explored in detail in chapter 8): e.g., the way “Bulgarians do business” (lines 12-17), general prices in Bulgaria as “padded” by the “others” (lines 60-102), etc.

2. One should use the specific Bulgarian vocabulary (e.g., “scary stuff,” “how does this work,” “you know how it is,” “horror,” *mani mani*, etc.) as related to

said myth, and then leads to next move concerning Bulgaria as a sub-optimal or troubled scene.

Additional examples of such topics include: job and employment-related, prices of produce or gas, socio-economic services-related, political and government officials-related, etc., to name a few. A more detailed list can be found in chapter 8.

Another significant norm for the enactment of *oplakvane* is the focus on the “negative” aspects of the particular topic within the Bulgarian mythic narrative. Any topic or key concept is introduced by zooming on its unpleasant, dissatisfactory, or horrid aspects. Or:

3. One should offer an instance of the negative side of previously initiated topics (e.g., present amount of potatoes better but focus on last year’s lack, some one padding the prices for ones own profit, import of produce despite agriculture in Bulgaria, etc.)

4. One ought to respond (continue the enactment) by also focusing on the negative aspects of said topic or instance (e.g., how driving in other areas is also problematic, aggressive drivers, corruption instances, problems with co-workers, etc.)

5. One should not offer solution to said negative instance (e.g., what to do about potatoes, how to solve price padding, how to not pay a policeman asking for a “tip” when being pulled over, etc. Offering a solution would reframe the practice into “complaining” and not *oplakvane*).

As we can see in instance II, even when discussing a very profitable and successful transaction, K. still focuses on the potential negative—he cautions as to

the discrepancy in weight they had experienced previously. And even though this cautioning is not “realistic” in the sense that the weight discrepancy was a result of presenting a “host” face, offering more to friends and family as a good gesture, and considered as part of the “favor” between friends, and G. and his family are well aware of such discrepancy, K. still decides to focus on this specific aspect of the interaction. Here, such a highlight of the discrepancy is not necessary since both parties are mindful of it as part of the way such an interaction is conducted.

The participants understand that there is never a transaction that is purely business, and particularly among friends, certainly element of “good favor” is always expected and accounted for. Thus, when G. brings the potatoes for K. to sell, the expectation is that K. first and foremost will keep as much as he wants for himself without paying for it (K.’s effort to find customers and store the potatoes is a favor already to G., a favor that can barely be compensated by just potatoes). Specific faces are maintained and negotiated—a topic in itself worthy of a dissertation—and both participants know that such a weight incongruity is a result of a very specific cultural negotiation. Therefore, K. does not need to acknowledge the weight in this very instance since it is to be culturally expected and a matter of displaying respect to one another. His remark, then, can only be understood as an attempted initiation of *oplakvane* as it focuses on something negative, and alludes to a very specific cultural understanding of “the Bulgarian job.” However, since K.’s comment is so close to the different face-related meaning, G. is almost culturally urged to respond in a way different from *oplakvane*, slipping into the enactment of a different ritual.

Chapter summary

In this chapter I have illustrated how *oplakvane* is initiated and what several possible interactional moves are available to the participants with different degrees of uptake for the practice. In the first three instances, various other modes of speaking (such as politeness and face saving, understanding the talk to be information-based instead of phatic) get in the way, and prevent alignment between the participants, while in the fourth one, the participants finally align within the enactment of *oplakvane*, as both provide an interactional response along particular local norms. As such, I have identified five norms for the enactment of *oplakvane*: only topics related to the Bulgarian “situation” as a sub-optimal scene are to be addressed, specific vocabulary is to be used to address these topics, the negative aspects of these topics ought to be highlighted, the response should also focus on the negative, and no solutions to said instance from within the larger Bulgarian mythic narrative are to be offered.

By illustrating a particular instance, where alignment in the enactment of *oplakvane* is negotiated and finally achieved, I not only respond ethnographically to my initial question as to what communicative mode of speaking is identified as *oplakvane* and how it differs from other ways of speaking, but also delineate the normative rules as to the enactment of the practice as they are negotiated by the participants within the interaction. The participants employ said rules in order to shift the interaction from a more information-based one (talk about potatoes and harvest) towards an enactment of *oplakvane* as a shared cultural communicative

tool available for points of the interaction where other common topics have been exhausted and togetherness needs to be reaffirmed.

CHAPTER 6

“LEAVE IT”: *OPLAKVANE* AS A CYCLICAL FORM

Introduction and cycles of enactment

In the previous chapter I demonstrated how to recognize *oplakvane* and its rules of interaction. Now that I have illustrated what mode of speaking *oplakvane* refers to, I will begin to answer the questions as to whether *oplakvane* occurs in a ritualized form. Based on the analyses of my data, I have discovered that *oplakvane* has a particular structure that occurs in the shape of cycles repeated within an interaction (some already mentioned and continued in this chapter). This, as well as the phatic aspects of the interaction (illustrated in the previous chapter), indicates that *oplakvane* refers to a communicative practice in the form of a ritual per Philipsen's (1992) definition of the form. This chapter focuses on the structure and cyclical nature of *oplakvane* and provides examples from the dinner event for illustration.

Utilizing Hymes' (1972) definition of “act” as a minimal unit of speech that is positioned between grammar and the social form, here I finally provide the acts that comprise *oplakvane*, to which I have only alluded previously. An act of *oplakvane* is an utterance that may be larger than a sentence and is governed by the social form appropriate within *oplakvane*. Based on my data, three major acts within a cycle of *oplakvane* can be identified:

1. Initialization: includes an introductory statement that contains some evaluation of “things” in general (in the country of Bulgaria) and opens the interchange.

2. Acknowledgement: shows willingness to partake in the ritual by offering an example or instance illustrating how “bad things” are:
 - a. One type of instance is an example from the Bulgarian situation.
 - b. Another alternative is a possible comparison with other countries (general) or areas within the country (specific).
3. Shared fate: the enactment of the ritual is concluded with a summarizing statement (negative), referring to the “country” as a whole and how bleak its future and people are.

Once the enactment is acknowledged and there is uptake, participants may take turns offering different examples (a. or b.) to “prove” how “bad” the situation is: sometimes up to twenty or more instances during a single cycle. If no particular examples come to mind, a participant may initiate a conclusion by offering closing evaluations, where the rest of the participants join with common phrases and utterances, also providing evaluation of the conditions in the country. Often, after a brief pause, another cycle is initiated after the closing, often with a shorter initiation or even just another instance but of a different topic (still within the umbrella of the situation).

My findings show that enactments of *oplakvane* take a cyclical form, and as such, the dinner event, as one example of this, can be viewed as a communicative event that is comprised of twenty-five such cycles of *oplakvane*, where each contains the structured acts delineated above. I use a larger segment (Appendix E) to illustrate how it represents a cycle of *oplakvane*: with beginning (initialization: negative evaluation), middle (acknowledgement: instances of problems), and end

(shared fate: general negative evaluation), and gets replayed numerous times throughout the event.

Evaluation: Initiating *oplakvane* by discussing the “children”

In lines 116-127, G. initiates *oplakvane* with words about his children in general (an evaluation): they are “carefree” (116), he has to do everything for them and if he dies he has no idea what they will do by themselves (119-122, 125-126). When the hosts deflect his mention of death (122, 124) by asking him not to “say such things,” he insists that “this is no joke” (123, 125) and provides an example to illustrate his “problem” (129-132?).

Act: Providing an instance of troubles (dealing with a drunk-driving *mutra*)

He explains how his son (referred to as “ours” or *nashij*) caused some trouble that “they” (the sons) cannot fix. They have been to attorneys, to judges, to lawyers and G. still needs to “fix” it for them, despite them being “grown men” (131). When the hosts ask for the details as to the “troubles” the son has caused (132-138) and show frustration with the carelessness of the “man” that should “know better” (135), G. elaborates:

- 132 K: //but why do they cause trouble?//
133 N: //but why? but how so//
134 G: well anything happens
135 K: eh it happens. no, they need to pull themselves together be*
136 they are not //little//
137 G: //ah: well they: they://
138 N: //well they are not little//
139 G: eh: Valio was driving his car, was driving his car and behind
140 one drunk there at the restaurant (inaudible) that restaurant
141 K: mha
142 G: caught up with him that one drunk and got on a jeep and
143 caught up with him and exactly at the school

His son Valio was driving his car and then a drunk driver hit him near a restaurant (139-140). Not only that, but the drunk man got angry and followed Valio all the way to a school (nearby their house) in his “jeep” (142-143). Here the mentioning of the “jeep” signals to the listeners the status of the driver. This, in combination with the fact that this person was driving drunk and followed Valio despite being guilty, is supposed to flag a very specific archetype within Bulgaria—known to the audience as a *mutra*.

The detailed description, social implications, and connections to the Bulgarian “situation,” *oplakvane*, and the Bulgarian national identity of the term *mutra* will be explained in more detail in the next chapter. For the purposes of understanding this segment, it is enough to say that the literal meaning of the word stands for “mug” or “face,” with the connotation of a scary, deprived aspect to it. In present day Bulgarian, the term is used to describe a layer of society that has become somewhat emblematic of the transition and the quick amassing of money by illegal means. The term is an aggregate for both a physical image and a professional occupation. During the Transition in Bulgaria, some of the money funneled by the communists and the state service (*dargavna sigurnost*) that changed hands and padded their future ended up in their progeny, which was frequently perceived as uneducated, spoiled, and arrogant. Due to their lack of education and sheltered rich upbringing, this offspring developed a large “muscle” security—frequently even less educated ex-military personnel that flocked around them for the cash dusting around the heirs.

That “muscle” was visually impressive and became the image associated with cheap, fast money in post-Soviet countries: large, often steroid-abusing weightlifters, with thick or barely-there necks, shaved heads, layers of gold chains, dark glasses, all dressed in black or the occasional expensive, “formal” track suit. Silent and menacing, they surrounded the communist money and picked up some of the scraps, only to become a culture and a desired image for a whole generation of young and impressionable Bulgarians. The behaviors and cultural values associated with them became quite popular during the 1990s. A participant, when prompted to define the term, responded: “*bijch, muskulest tapanar*” or “a beater, muscled idiot.” Bulgarians refer to them as *mutri* and the image is easily available when G. mentions the car. The behaviors (drinking and driving) also allude to ascertain the image since many of the *mutri* come from a police background and often use their connections to pay off and escape any legal and police sanctions merely by waving a wad of cash (instances of which have been widely documented and observed in the media). The term has expanded to encompass also any newcomer within the parliament and the government who bares the traces of this long-term nepotism, thick neck, lack of formal education necessary for the position, and a vote to be cast in whichever political direction the money winds are blowing at the time. Participants are quick to divulge plentiful names of specific politicians that fit this description. What car they drive (jeeps), the thick necks, plenty of gold, military background or relations, black clothing and dark glasses, and often the coded plate numbers (received via special connections at the Bulgarian equivalent of the

Registry of Motor Vehicles) are just a few cultural markers by which they are recognized.

In this way, the hosts are let in on the important aspect of this story: the reason why Valio, G.'s son, is having troubles is because he has encountered a *mutra*, an impenetrable cultural and socio-economic wall of corruption and nepotism. The driver who hits Valio drinks and drives because he knows that his behavior will not be punished. He can just pay the police if they pull him over and he also chooses to take matters in his own hands. In this way, by using the proper cultural markers such as behavior (drunk driving and aggression despite being guilty) and car make ("jeep"), G. evokes a specific identity that is familiar to Bulgarians—rich, ex-communist, above the law, aggressors that have ruled the country since communism. They are supercilious and belligerent, untouchable by the legal system, and prey on the rest. To the Bulgarian familiar with this image, just the car model is sufficient to make sense of the situation in which a drunk driver not only hits another car and does not stop or call the police but also chases after and attacks the other driver—marked by the concise "yes" by K. in line 141.

G. continues: there were speed bumps at the school and Valio slowed down to go through them, at which point the "jeep" caught up with him and hit him from behind, causing much damage to Valio's car. Here G. describes Valio's reaction to the second hit: Valio gets out of the car and starts beating up the drunk "jeep" driver. Continuing on the joke, the hosts provide the "proper" Bulgarian response—they cheer Valio on! K. applauds with a "that's right" (153), while N. is more subdued with a mere exclamation of "heh" and "well, you" in an attempt to excuse Valio's

behavior (154). G. provides more details with a “[he] almost crashed him” (155) but realizes the implications of such retribution and handling of the situation and backpedals by admitting that Valio didn’t really have the “right” to beat him (157):

156 N: he [Valio] can
157 G: he doesn’t have the right to beat him, right
158 K: eh
159 N: oh no
160 G: well isn’t this (inaudible)
161 N: legally he doesn’t, doesn’t have the right
162 G: he doesn’t. however the other one couldn’t help it and he
163 came out like
164 K: well right
165 G: he got him out the door he broke the windshield, the other
166 one got a hold of the door
167 K: mha
168 G: and the other one with the door itself hahaha
169 K: hahaha

N. voices her support more openly (156), and her admittance of the absurdity of the case, saying that “according to the law, he [the drunk driver] doesn’t have the right” (161). It is essential here to focus on how this consensus on the general situation is co-created as part of the cultural milieu. G. has just told a story that introduces some intensely conflicted beliefs as to how the world works and should work. There are several layers to this story:

1. G. is complaining of his children who cannot take care of themselves without him—in this way this is an instance of a problem, an act of *oplakvane*.
2. G. finds the story problematic because of the way G.’s son has handled it.
3. A behavior of an individual is described in the story that is problematic (drinking, driving, following the victim, and being aggressive)—this is a general problem in Bulgaria that the hosts are familiar with due to their knowledge of *mutri*.

4. Valio's response to the aggression is to beat the drunk driver—this is not found problematic even though it goes against the “law.”

How does this make sense within the interaction and how is this agreement negotiated among the participants? Even though it may not be clear within the interaction at this moment whether the hosts completely agree with the story of the drunk *mutra*, it could be inferred that they have at least heard of such cases because they do not show any surprise at the story. What they do instead is listen through the part describing Valio reciprocating with force and agree with his response. At this point, in line 157, G. senses that Valio's actions may be clashing with a larger moral code or system and states that discrepancy by alluding to the “law” and what a person is supposed to do in a case like this—not “beat” the other. His utterance indicates that there is a conflict of cultural codes or systems operating at this moment—one of the “law” and the “should,” and one of the “reality in Bulgaria.” More on these two systems and how this is culturally legitimized later in chapter 11.

At this point, N. agrees with G., that “according to the law, he doesn't” have the right to beat the drunk person: her utterance expresses literal agreement, but in the recording, she uses an intonation that expresses a “but” element (161), thus aligning herself with the conflicted position of G., where there is a discrepancy of beliefs, yet this discrepancy makes sense to a “Bulgarian.” And, G., sensing the support of the listeners, continues with the initial line of thought—the one in support of the “non-law” cultural system: “he doesn't [have the right]. But he couldn't help it and he came out [of the car]” to beat the *mutra*. At this stage, K. expresses his agreement with a “well, that's right” (164) and G. continues by

providing a visual image of the fight, in which V. grabbed the drunk person through the window breaking it, while the other was holding onto the door (165-166).

As G. is describing this, he starts laughing that K. joins in on (168-169). Again, to anyone lacking the cultural knowledge of “handling” situations with *mutri*, this may be far from funny. However, within a Bulgarian context occupied by such unsavory individuals and lacking a functioning police system that people can rely on for protection from *mutri*, this makes complete sense—here the joke is about how routine such occurrences are and how this is the only “appropriate” way to handle such a blatant disregard of laws and those privileged by corruption. The only way to handle the frequency of such occurrences is to laugh about them, as illustrated by N.’s response. In this instance, highlighted are not only particular cultural symbols (*mutra*) but also larger cultural understandings of who people are (*mutri* and non-*mutri*), how they are related (privileged by the law, served by corruption and not), how to feel about their social world (angry at the occurrences but amused by the absurdity of them becoming habitual), what world they share (one ruled by corruption, *mutri*, and unfairness), and how they are supposed to respond to it (with “appropriate and deserved” aggression). I elaborate on these larger cultural premises of value and belief in chapter 8.

As his laughter subsides, G. ends with the “real cause” for why this instance is considered “problematic”—not because the *mutra* behaved in such way, not because G.’ son responded with aggression, but because once Valio got arrested for this beating (which itself is a another example of how “dysfunctional” the Bulgarian legal

system), it was G. who had to go through all the trouble of finding legal help and back up his son in lines 170-172.

Act: Responding by discussing another drunk driver

Here, barely allowing G. to finish and overlapping with K., N. attempts to respond to the problem by providing another instance (173) herself (thus providing the next act of *oplakvane*):

173 N: well that's Valio, and us, they hit us //downtown Sofia//
174 K: //why would they put him in jail//
175 G: a:h why?
176 K: assholes

The overlap, however, works in favor of K. who asks the main question as to why had the police arrested Valio if the other person was at fault (174) and G.'s response is an emphatic "ah why" with a downward intonation, expressing that G. is asking himself the same thing, and this seems to be sufficient for K., who reacts with an indignant "assholes" (176)—this seems to be "saying it all" for the two—it is another example of a familiar status quo, where all do not seem to be equal before the law. This may not be as evident in these particular few lines but the next instance offers more insight.

Immediately after the interchange between G. and K., N. returns to her example of discontent (177-178) where she describes how her and K. were in a chain accident from a drunk individual hitting their car at high speed (182). In the mean time, G. offers understanding and condolences via a specific clicking noise transcribed as "ts ts ts", used to show disapproval (185). N. provides the focal "way to handle" things, similar to Valio's behavior from the previous example as she

describes with pride how she and her maid of honor got out of the car and started kicking the drunk driver. At this point, G. resonates with a “just so, just so” and laughter (191).

The way this unusual situation receives even more legitimization is by N. sharing the police’s reaction to the beating. She describes how the police were just standing on the side and not preventing them from beating the guilty party (192):

- 192 N: and they [the police] just watching there
193 G: well to you they won’t do much more hahaha
194 N: hey well such kicking it was in one moment one of the ah ah
195 taxi cab drivers probably recognized me because he turned up
196 to be an acquaintance and calls out my name but I was kicking
197 G: (throughout) hahaha

The “normality” and default status of such a happenstance is further legitimized by G.’s reaction and his laughter, where he agrees that the police will not do anything to you because even they recognize that you are in the “right”—meaning in this case, that the law as it stands, benefits some and not others, it does not protect the victims but often punishes them.

N. and K. tell this as an example of how the police have “rightfully” sided with them and allowed them to take their frustration out (by beating) the guilty party, since even they recognized how “unfair” this is. All present have experienced such conflicts. Then, N. provides more description of how forceful her kicks were—so vigorous that even the taxi drivers waiting around came to watch (194-196). Throughout this G.’s laughter is heard, indicating approval at the details. In such situations, Bulgarians, placed within a confrontation with corruption and a flawed

legal system that does not protect them, feel justified to take matters into their own hands, thus legitimizing the violence against perpetrators of crimes.

N. explicitly states that she understands and exonerates V. in the first story; she would have done the same, and she did (190):

198 N: I won't tell you how! so I understand/acquit Valio. I would
do the 199 sa=
200 G: =yes he couldn't put up with it, when he goes out and
201 N: well it's normal, yes

It is agreed that this is the only way to handle such cases as the years of lacking proper legal system and corruption have created such responses. At this point they proceed to the aspects of the police's reaction and the aftermath of the beatings in both cases: in Valio's case the police arrived, but couldn't really do anything to the *mutra* and arrested Valio instead, whereas N. and K. were made to wait for five hours at the site for things to be worked out even though it was obviously not their fault for the accident (204). The conclusion is emotional—"jurks" (*mrasnici*), line 205, because the police "fixed" things by apprehending Valio, who is not guilty, since they could not "afford" to detain the *mutra* (one of their "own"). Here, G. returns to some of the concrete parts of the story in response to questions by K. (207-216). Valio spent 24 hours in the arrest, which brings the "proper" response from K., who offers sarcasm by adding that Valio should have beaten the *mutra* more (219).

Act: Continuous engagement by discussing parking problems

N. provides a different “proper” response within this cycle of *oplakvane* by describing a problem from her office: she saw a person hit her car as it was parked in front of her office:

220 N: I I saw in front of the office I saw through the window one
221 how he parked in front of me. and I say, he'll hit me. and in the
222 next moment I see how he backs up, he hits my car and the car
223 jumps backwards. and I run out of the office, go to this guy, and
224 I open his door and I grab him like this by the neck, so imagine
225 how crazy I've gone, and I pull him out, and I start yelling and
226 cursing and shouting. and he right in the first moment
227 dumbfounded, and then comes out and sees that my car has no
228 scratch. true, it's tall, he hits and he and he got his plates
229 smashed. my car is untouched, but I am crazy with rage

As the individual was parking, his car scraped hers. This anecdote is less about the accident (220-223) and more about her reaction, or her using violence to respond to the accident (223-229). One more time, the scenario dramatizes the expected way to handle problems in Bulgaria: despite being a woman and smaller than the offender, she stormed out of her office, approached his car, opened his door, pulled him out and started yelling and cursing him out (223-225). She used the term “grabbed him by the neck” (*hvashtam za vrata*) that is used to describe an action usually performed by mothers to children. It describes a physical act meant to reprimand a younger (or of lower status) person and is used metaphorically to describe chastising or scolding. And even though it may refer to her literally performing the action, it is meant also to show her in a higher or more “righteous” position. Here, N. highlights her anger that is considered to be well deserved

because this happens frequently and people never leave notes or apologize when damage is done.

G. sides with her and shows understanding of the anger (230). Once the helplessness is expressed and confirmed, the humorous element is introduced: N. was not a “woman alone” but three men from the office silently came out during her yelling and stood behind her. G.’s laughter echoes the consequences in a phrase that is multilayered—*e sega k’vo shte pravime* (221). The phrase literally means “now what we are going to do” but there are several aspects to it. On one hand, G. is using it to mockingly represent the voice of the man in N.’s situation, displaying his surprise at her “guards.” Driving violence in Bulgaria, and specifically the capital, has increased with the influx of people over the past few decades, and frequently, perpetrators disregard gender or age, often leading to physical assaults on cars and women. And, seeing that this is possible, it was lucky that N. actually had men from her work to back her up, even just by their presence. In this way, G. is enjoying the man’s lost opportunity to become aggressive.

On a second level, corrupt policemen frequently use the phrase *e sega k’vo shte pravime* (221) when they pull over a driver, who has not committed a violation, in order to subtly demand bribes. What occurs repeatedly is policemen would pull over a car, rationalize it with some imaginary violation (such as when a participant was pulled over because they crossed an intersection on an “ending green”), ask the driver to come to their car and then spring the phrase “now what we are going to do,” opening for the driver to offer them money. And if the driver “misunderstands” them and does not suggest “another way” to handle the case, they would themselves

imply it with the same words. Often, drivers would even demand a ticket because they do not want to pay the corrupt policeman and encourage his/her behavior but even then the policemen may insist for payment. Thus, by using this specific phrase to represent the words of the guilty man in N.'s story, G. is aligning that person to the image of corrupt policemen, alluding to both their role in the corruption and in legal problems in the country. N. does not offer more information as to how the interaction between her and the man ends but focuses instead on the anger the whole situation has produced, as though this is one more thing that is a "problem" within the daily lives of people in the capital. She herself questions this anger and the reasons for such "amok" but G. is quick to supply how impossible it is to remain in a state of calm at moments like this (241-245).

Act: Cultivating anger with an example of a "girlie"

There seem to be "plenty of" reasons to keep one stressed as N. quickly plunges into yet another instance of negative experiences, and thus an act of *oplakvane*: just the previous day, one of the office cars has gotten hit during work hours (246-250). N. describes the office employee driving the car as a very responsible and conscientious individual who got hit while going through an intersection, by a "girlie" who was talking on her phone and crossing on a red light. She uses the term *momichence*, or diminutive of *momiche* (girl) to suggest lack of "conscientiousness" and immaturity. G. expresses his disapproval once more with the clucking sound of "ts ts" and listens as N. describes the whole front side of the car being smashed because of the woman (252-256). N. elaborates that it is not about the physical damage and expenses because that would be fixed by the

insurance company, rather, it is about not having the car for two weeks while it is in the shop, which means revenue loss for the office (255-256). G. can relate, he knows what it is to go through all the car fixing trouble, calling it a “walk of sorrows” (*hodene po makite*) (258). The expected “solution” to the problem is brought up again: “I, if I was, I would have beaten her up” (268). N.’s following words express how fed up one can be with the frequency of such occurrences: “I’ll start and I won’t be able to stop” (272).

At this point, N. brings up the positive side of the experience and the well-being of the employee driving the car who would not resort to such measures, and just grabbed hold of his steering wheel in shock. For the audience, his calm response is as comical as the accident is run-of-the-mill. The topic of driving in the capital starts to domineer the conversation despite K.’s side note to the dog nearby (282), where N. makes a non-committal observation of how “I don’t know. This is it. And especially here in Sofia if you drive” (283) that only prompts G. into sharing his frustration. He drives in the capital at least twice a month with a trailer, which, as he finds it amusing, is such a big car that even if they hit him, it would be worse for them (284-287). However, he does not live with this traffic, similarly to N.’s father, who is in a similar situation and gave up driving in the capital ten years ago (288, 290, 292). G. can relate to such fear despite both of them having professional driver training. Driving in present day is horrible for another reason as well—the purchasing of driving licenses without passing the road or the paper test (305). The reminder of how many people purchase their licenses and drive after few days without knowing the rules or regulations pushes the conversation into a

culmination of frustration, where even the corrupt policemen are again mentioned, clumped together with the “illegal” drivers (296-307), with G.’s exclamation of defeat “to die, their mother” (the Bulgarian equivalent of “damn them”) in line 310-311:

304 G: I have been 5 months in driving school, he became a driver
305 in 5 days and he even bought the license, doesn’t know either
306 the rules, or anything else=
307 N: =he bought it, and some heavy one gets on it=
308 G: and tomorrow the cops, the corrupted cops will come
309 N: yes!
310 G: and they’ll defend him. go and deal with it. to die their
311 mother

We see here the aggression mentioned already in three cases. It is the roots of anger, defeat, and resentment that frequently find an outlet in yelling and cursing at others on the streets as well as beating people. It is not that the people present at this event are aggressive or have anger management issues more so than any other average Bulgarian. A discourse and culture of anger is created and maintained as a response to the many cases of police and legal injustice, where criminals and perpetrators of even small illicit acts are let to walk free. And cases of such lawlessness are reiterated to legitimize and confirm the anger and frustration. Here, once more, the anger keyed through *oplakvane* becomes obvious—as communally managed and played out.

Act: Cultivating more anger at the “others”

Physical violence seems to be the only way to get justice, and to a “normal” (term used frequently by the participants) person outside the corrupt network, it is the only means to punish the guilty. Despite their different backgrounds and

occupations, lifestyles and history, all participants agree that this is part of the shared “Bulgarian” experience. When K. confronts the drunk driver by saying that he could have killed them, the man responds with “well, big deal” (324-326). The situation is similar in G.’s example of his son, where G. fixed everything despite the *mutra*’s inside connection (339-351). The keyed emotion becomes jocular, with G. explaining the technicalities of the car repair, while N. mentions the frequency of such occurrences, sometimes two times a month (377).

Act: Adding onto the anger with more instances of the “others”

After N.’s details on the damaged cars, the interaction takes a turn towards the generalized “other”: a compilation of everything problematic, those who behave in ways deemed inappropriate—the one who hits your car and does not care/help/stop (384), who pretends not to see when they are doing something wrong (382), who is generally “dumb” (388), and who is everywhere and you cannot avoid and protect yourself from (391-392). This generalized “other” appears throughout my data and is a compilation of all that is considered “wrong” and “problematic” with Bulgarians. It is the generalized *mutra* and bad drivers. I provide a detailed overview with respect to who counts as the “other” in the next chapter.

At this point, N. provides another driving adventure on her way to work, where something always happens. She describes a situation, in which people who have had to pull over on the side of the road did not properly place their emergency signaling and endangered everyone passing them (396-405). In this instance, the generalized “other” includes both people who were not “smart” enough to follow the

emergency rules but also those who speed by this section of the road, not paying attention to what might be happening on the road.

Act: Perpetuating the “situation”

G. chimes in and provides another group to be added to the generalized “other”: those “causing” accidents due to their inability to drive (purchased driving licenses), or refusal to follow the road rules and “everybody drives like crazy” (421-422).

Act: The constant problems

The examples continue with an accident of a car and a tram that caused a traffic jam just this same morning, and “this happens every day” (407-414). The only way to “handle” it is to keep yourself out of other people’s way (417).

Evaluation: The culmination of the anger

The crucial conclusion here, brought by G. (421-422), is that “you can’t be all important and showing yourself off” because these “bastards go crazy” and you don’t know what they will do. The “bastards” who go crazy in this example get “drunk, take drugs” (424), as G. mentions twice. Not only that, they bring weapons to the clubs and discos, according to K. and G. (425, 430), without knowing what they are doing (427). These criminals are also part of the generalized “other.”

G. calls it an “incompetent country,” where there “is no control” (431-432). To which K. adds “there is no country” (434-435). G. echoes the key phrase of there being “no country” (437) and elaborates that the “young” have not learned and it has become a scary anarchy out there (437-439). It is essential to notice the

phrases and terms they use to “conclude” on the “problems” and how exactly the generalized “other” is constructed here—an amorphous compilation of behaviors that by themselves would not be considered as challenging but somehow, together, due to the historical context that engenders them and continues to “teach” them, translates for the participants as leading to “anarchy.” It is a specific situation, a Bulgarian one, in which there is “killing at every step” (442), “killing each other like flies” (443), where people think they are allowed anything (446), and it is so dreadful that no other words can describe it but the simple exclamation “leave it, horror, I don’t know”(444):

- 431 G: well be* incompetent country, fucking hell. this that is
432 happening doesn’t look like anything absolutely, there is no
433 control. //it’s complete//
434 K: //there is no country//
435 G: //there is no country//, there he hasn’t learnt this
436 youngster, he came out like this, they started buying their
437 driving licenses, they started to well be* it became something
438 scary anarchy
439 K: mha
440 G: money everything has with money money and because of
441 this killing is at every step
442 K: they kill each other like flies
443 G: well they are killing each other alright
444 K: leave it (mani), horror. I don’t know
445 N: every one thinks they are allowed to do absolutely anything
446 G: yes

Act: The examples continue

At this point in the evening, G. dives into another example of “horrors” in Bulgaria: or people being hit on pedestrian crossings and the low fines for destroying a human life (448). This utterance follows the similar structure and includes illustrations of the generalized “other” where “laws [are] being made” but

“people [are] killed” on the streets all the time, and offers a similar message of a struggling country that has lost its values, a country people are losing faith in.

In this way, similarly (same structure of evaluation and instances of problems delineated in the beginning of this chapter) yet differently (with different number of acts and length of evaluation) *oplakvane* appears in my data. Next, I focus on the common elements that comprise the cycles of *oplakvane* and illustrate them with examples from the dinner event. What are some similarities and differences? How are they understood as different cycles of *oplakvane*? And, most importantly, what are the implications of such patterning of communication?

Oplakvane and its cycles

The examples mentioned above illustrate the evaluation and instances of problems within the Bulgarian situation as separate acts that comprise *oplakvane*. Within my data there is variation within the number of acts that make a cycle, as well as cycles that occur within in interaction—sometimes making up the majority of the interaction (as it is the case with this dinner event) and sometimes appearing as a single initiation—as illustrated in chapter 2. Within the dinner event itself, there are 25 cycles. I will now go through the remainder of the event, utilizing this cycle-act classification in order to illustrate how this is representative of the rest of my data.

In the first cycle, lines 68-91, the line between evaluation and instances is not explicit: there seems to be an evaluative statement in the utterance of “when there’s nowhere else to go” by N. (92), as well as G.’s (93) “every one is running away from here” alluding to all emigrating in search of jobs or better living conditions.

However, the evaluation is minimal and quickly goes back to the more practical matters of the potatoes (it is early in the evening and the talk returns to informative matters).

After 23 minutes of such talk, the cycle examined above is introduced (119). The way the topic is introduced proves significant—G. mentions that his children are carefree and would not be able to do anything about their own problems themselves if it is not for him. This illustrates an instance of a problem within a cycle of *oplakvane* due to the topic introduced—his taking care of his children—where the goal is sharing a story about a drunk driver and how to handle him.

The following *oplakvane* elements can be identified in the body of the data:

1. Initiation:

Here illustrated by the mention of G.'s carefree children who need their father to “fix” things for them, where the evaluation is implicit because it plays on the cultural knowledge available. According to Bulgarian traditional understandings—that could be traced back to the Ottoman times and before—the father is the one to take care of the family and the male children continue living in the same house even after marriage. The Duspat area still maintains these customs and G.'s mention of the “children” (when referring to adults in their late twenties and early thirties) alludes to that knowledge.

2. Instances:

There are 11 examples, including: car accidents where some one else is to “blame”, class and *mutri* (139), how to “handle” injustices in Bulgaria (147-155, 184, 219, 256, 295, 305, 354-366, 372-379, 388, 392), bought diplomas (156, 289-293), jokes

about the absurdity of the situations (189, 224, 305, 339, 354-366, 390), “others” represented by the law system, those with “connections,” drunkards and junkies who carry knives (196, 247 289-293, 318, 322, 339, 354-366, 392, 397), and traffic (270);

3. Closing evaluation:

There are 13 lines (4-445), signaled by the remark about Bulgaria being an “incompetent country” (4..).

In a similar fashion as showed in the previous section, cycle 3 begins with another reference to the “others”—a repetition of “those” who take drugs and drink that fluidly transitions from the “drug-takers” to those who drive fast and hit people on pedestrian crossings (Appendix D) that initiates another round of examples (2.).

There is a comparison in favor of Switzerland and Europe and their law system (465, 471, 486-490), the “others” here expands in order to include pedestrians and more specifically older people (507). This cycle includes three instances, and the evaluation’s closing is 22 lines, in which the situation in Bulgaria is defined as “hell” (532) and is initiated by the remark “it’s scary!” that is repeated throughout the event (523-547):

N: It’s scary. There are no rules

K: I wonder what

N: //there is no one to control them//

N2: //something the glass// something has ### this week and something is not gonna be, and this has no meaning

G: //no, it doesn’t//

N: which?

K: yes, it’s madness. Well horror. It’s hell. Here is hell, Giktore .

G: ah

N: here in Sofia it is not for living. (.2)

G: I know.

(.5)

K: we'll buy one thicker tent and we are coming to Dusp(at)
 G: here your eyes have to be [watching] all 4 [directions] you have to
 in order to protect yourself
 K: from what not
 G: aha
 N: mha
 G: and if you think that something is according to a law, right that
 you'll follow it and the law will protect you //you are lying to
 yourself//
 N: no: //it doesn't work //
 K: //here is no law//
 G: no! here you have to be: (.2)
 K: here it is fucking horror

This evaluation of the “situation” in Bulgaria is broad, with the participants using phrases like “[t]here are no rules,” “there is no one to control them” (meaning the “others”), “it’s madness,” “horror,” “[i]t’s hell” repeated twice, “here in Sofia it is not for living” and despite the attempt of a joke (537) about moving to Dusp(at), it is concluded that one is delusional if they “think that something is according to a law [in Bulgaria]” and that if one “follow[s] it, the law will protect [them]”—“you are lying to yourself” because in Bulgaria things “don’t work,” “[t]here is no law” and “it is fucking horror.” Thus, the whole event as a cyclical enactment is highlighted. In the next section I focus in more detail as to how the event looks structurally when examined for this *oplakvane* structure.

Following the enumerated, culturally available acts of *oplakvane*, 25 cycles of *oplakvane* can be identified within the dinner event. All of them have the listed acts and vary only in the length of an introductory evaluation, number of examples, length of closing evaluations, and the presence of attempted closing acts. Some examples include: the closing evaluation of cycle 4 (592-601), where N. initiates with the comment “it’s scary stuff really” and both K. and G. agree with remarks on

how the people (of the country) as a whole have become “very bad” (595), using the term *oskotj* (often used for animals becoming wild) when describing that people have become so hungry that would trample anyone to save themselves, turning on each other, forgetting “humanity.” Additional terms used for the people in the same segment are “went crazy” (599) and “idiot-ized itself,” and “really scary stuff” (601).

The phrase “it’s scary” and “scary stuff really” when referring to the situation is used in ten of the 25 cycles during the particular event with variations, such as “hard stuff” (14) and “stuff of nightmares” (19), and numerous times in other interactions. Evaluative utterances throughout the data include: “it’s a screwed/confused country” and “there is no country” (meaning civil state), where the people are also called “sheep” and “follow[ing] and obey[ing]” like sheep; “it is not for living” with specific references to the life in the country being similar to living “in a concentration camp” and using curse words as “here it is fucked” and “it has its mother fucked” when referring to the country; “it is a mafia owned country” and “the mafia has its country”; where no “normal people can live and survive”; where “only cockroaches remain” and need “an atomic bomb” to cleanse the country; a country in which the future does not look well and things “are only going to get worse”, and “we will never catch up with the USA”; or “normal countries”; where the only alternatives left are to get rid of all that are causing the problems now and “shoot them” and the young and “smart,” who have not become the “others” yet, should all “save themselves” and leave the country.

Additional common phrase that appear within various interactions (service encounter at a restaurant, standing in line at the municipality building, and office

encounters with clients) include: *Prosto ne znam* (“I just don’t know” used as a sigh to indicate a particular sense of resignation and futility), *tuka shte e sashtoto* (“here it will be the same” referring to a positive future example as illustrated to be happening in other countries) *njkoga* (“sometime” again, refocusing on the negative), *ama ne sega* (“but not now” sarcastically); *kakvo e tova sega, oligofrenij* (“what is this now, idiotism” used as a rhetorical question); *nashata dargava e takava, nevazpitanie* (“our country is such, uneducated”); *t’va e, e taka si glasuvat horata)*”this is it, this is how people vote”); *tj cjлата dargava e takava* (“the whole country is such” in reference to some one describing a beach area being “the lowest dirt on the planet” (*nai-niskoto saslovie na planetata*), *vsichkite sa takiva, cjлата dargava stana takava* (“all places are like that, the whole country has become such”); *neshto stave s toj narod* (“nothing will come out from this people”); and *naroda e absolutno prost* (“the people is so stupid” referring to all people in the country).

The number of examples, attempted closings, and length of closing evaluation lines per each cycle can be found in table 3 below:

Cycle	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
Examples	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	2	7	6	8	3	1	2	2	1	9	6	1	4	1	2	1	1	3	2
Attempted closings	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	4	3	5	2	6	1	0	3	0	0	1
Concl. eval. Lines	2	1	2	1	1	2	4	5	3	4	2	1	2	4	4	4	1	2	3	1	1	6	5	2	2	3

Table 3: Cycles of *oplakvane* within an event (instances, attempted closings, and length of concluding evaluations)

To summarize, the cycles contain between 1 and 29 examples of acts of *oplakvane* each, and the evaluation conclusion lines range from 2 to 47 lines, peaking at cycle 14. The cyclical structure of the event is highlighted at times when one of the participants attempts a closing evaluation but is superseded and interrupted by another participant with an example or comparison-example, bringing the flow back to the second act instead of closing. Such instances seem to be increasing in cycles 16 to 22, with a peak of 10 attempted closings in cycle 21. One reason for this is that it is getting late in the evening and the participants attempt to close the event. Only when an instance is not offered and the rest of the participants respond with evaluation acts or agreement the cycle is considered closed.

Notes on the cycles

It is worth noting the emotional tonality of the evaluation acts, as well as the general reaffirmed hopelessness of the Bulgarian situation (examples from the event and other interactions):

- In cycle 12 the first instance by G. is an example of corruption within local government (G.'s interaction with a woman asking for a bribe). Such people in Bulgaria are deemed to be part of the problem, as "vile, vile people," who deserve our scorn, who directly ask for bribes, and not only take the bribe but also do not deliver what they have been paid for. The participants are in agreement about the process: "the idea is not to do her job but to take the money." Earlier in the instance, G. explains that this is a woman who works within the water and sewage department of his area

and asks for additional money to get his land water supply faster than the procedure demands. In other words, she is asking him for money to complete a task that is part of her official job. Here, she is a citizen in the country of the “others”—people who are used to operating within the corrupt system, in which asking for additional money to complete what is their occupation is considered the standard.

- We find an example of the “others”, and specifically the evaluation introduction in a different interaction. The participant discusses how the situation in the country is bad because even if you work hard, there is still no “getting better”—unless you are a *haiduk* who steals. The term *haiduk* (also *hajduk*, *ajduk*, *haydut*, or *haiduk*,) refers to outlaws and rebels in the Balkans (Central and Eastern Europe), people who stole and hid from the law during the later years of the Ottoman occupation. Sometimes they were looked up to as rebels fighting the Ottomans—robbing them and helping their country-men, hiding and attacking the oppressors. However, soon they started attacking rich Bulgarians as well and became famous not only as guerilla fighters but also as common bandits that targeted fellow citizen merchants and tradesmen and as such gave the term its negative connotation. Thus, using this term alludes to the conflict within this identity—the “others” who are to blame for the problems in Bulgaria. The participants emphasize that one does not “become” a *haiduk* but is “born such.” This illustrates the conflict perfectly since on one side there is the Bulgarian notion that it is history

that made such people. On the other side, however, after so many decades, Bulgarians have not abandoned these behaviors despite the changing times. The way the participants manage this incongruity culturally is to blame it on genes AND history, or the genes were created during the particular historical time but “natural” all the same. This allows the participants to distance themselves from the “others”—if it is “genetic” then “we” do not have to do anything to change the situation, “we” are not the problem.

- Some cycles offer the two common conclusions for the situation within the evaluation acts: to “kill” those problematic or emigrate. A participant states “we are a screwed up people if you ask me,” another responds with “this, some one has to annihilate us and put some normal people [in our place],” “soon things will not get better/fix themselves” and “probably never will,” then “they won’t, I have to tell you that this, young people have to leave this country.”
- Hopelessness saturates cycle 19 of the event, and its evaluation conclusion. At first the focus is on the “government” as a whole unit that does not take care of its people but instead “experiments” on them. This frustration culminates in K’s “we are like cockroaches, see how many years they can’t kill us” and transitions into a joke, which all join in on with laughter and elaboration of “they say, look at these, so many years we [the government] couldn’t destroy them!” despite “attempting everything.” According to N. “no weapon” can finish us and “this is not

normal!” whereas K. attempts to laugh it off with “[they] should throw a[n atomic] bomb and that’ll be it ... but let’s sell the potatoes first!”

However, N. is not ready to let go of the evaluation and provides another concluding act: “in any normal country they will rise and destroy them like, see, the Greece!” In this way, a comparison is weaved into the evaluation pattern to show one more example of how “we” are different from any one else.

The introduction and conclusion evaluations are evocative, rife with pathos. The examples that follow are no different in their intensity and come from the whole corpus of data. Some topics and instances mentioned include: driving (drunk drivers, people not paying attention, road problems, car insurance scams, government theft of road money, pedestrians crossing improperly, parking problems in the capital), the little pay and salaries, increasing prices (food, gas), small businesses and their struggles, life in the villages (reduced population, older people and their pensions, theft of property, gypsies taking over), laws (the discrepancy between written laws and their enforcement), taxes (bribes and corruption), the upcoming (2012) elections, the relationship between the people and the government (salaries, unexplainable fees, pensions, the corrupt police, the minister—a butt of many jokes), comparison with other countries (Switzerland and their civil consciousness, US and their lack of crime, Greece, Europe as a whole), and general “absurdities” (dealings with gypsies and how they “would steal anything that is not nailed,” the government taking advantage of people, people taking advantage of each other, hospitals and the price of medication as inflated by the

government, work ethic and purchasing of diplomas and driving licenses, bureaucracy despite paying bribes, and the general “other,” who is everyone “who tries to screw you over”).

From all twenty-five cycles, which contain about 155 examples, only one has a positive tone—in episode 23 a woman battling cancer is mentioned and the participants express their admiration for her. The highest number of instances within a cycle is 29, in cycle 21. It seems that later in the event, cycles 16 to 22, can be considered the peak of *oplakvane* for this event judging by the peak of instances, 19, 6, 13, 4, 14, 29, 15 respectively. Intriguingly, during the same cycles the number of attempted closings also increases. One explanation may be that it is getting later in the evening, the participants are tired and attempt to close the ritual in order to complete the event and go to bed but another participant introduces additional instances that do not allow for such closure.

Chapter summary

In this chapter I offered an illustration of the general structure of *oplakvane* as a cyclical form comprised of initiation (general negative evaluation), uptake/acknowledgement (instances of the Bulgarian problematic situation or instances comparison between Bulgarian problems and other countries/areas), and shred fate/conclusion (evaluative negative comments) and highlighted this structure through examples from the dinner event. Then, I examined the whole event for these elements in order to illustrate my findings on *oplakvane's* structure as a whole, and emphasized features of the practice such as the negative topics, the construction of a generalized “other,” the heavy emotional tonality reinforced within

the practice, and the general hopelessness for the future of the country and its people as reenacted and reaffirmed through *oplakvane*.

CHAPTER 7

“OLELE”: *OPLAKVANE* AS A RITUALIZED FORM OF COMMUNICATION

Introduction

In this chapter I focus on the communicative practice *oplakvane* and its structure and examine whether it can be understood as a ritualistic form of communication per Philipsen (1987) definition, thus addressing my third question and its subset: Does *oplakvane* occur in a ritualized form? What is the structure of such a ritual and what functions does it serve? What is getting done through the performance of *oplakvane* as a ritual that is significant to the participants? The cyclical enactment I described in the previous chapter is now examined for its function. Thus, I revisit my corpus of data and analyze it for the elements described by Philipsen (1987): structured sequence of symbolic acts, norms for enactment, and a function of paying homage to a sacred object (p. 250). I have alluded to these aspects of the practice in the previous chapters and here will just detail them through my analyses. I will begin by pointing out a few characteristics of the practice that highlight the function of *oplakvane* as not merely informative, and drew my attention to its ritualistic form.

Key phrases

The frequent use of phrases such as “scary stuff,” “we are not normal people,” “this is no country,” “it’s a mafia country,” “here it’s fucked,” “there is no country,” “it’s not for living,” and “it’ll only get worse,” as well as the staggering amount of negative examples of what is considered to be problematic in the country

draws the attention to the practice's function being different from mere information sharing, where almost identical phrases are uttered by various participants and diverse settings. Coupled with the strong negative emotion keyed throughout such interactions, the experience of the enactment seems (to an outsider) dark and unpleasant. However, when asked about the "spirit" of the interactions, the participants did not consider them gloomy or "bad," but expressed instead that it was a "regular" interaction, where they laughed, joked, and "had a good time." From the perspective of the participants, such gatherings are successful and typical for the genre as they include jokes, sharing, and create a connection among them. So the only way to make sense of this discrepancy is to understand the practices as performing a different function from the literal sharing of information about the situation in Bulgaria—something else must be happening. How can such lengthy interactions full of examples of "bad" happenstances and frequent outbursts of negative evaluations of the country and its people as a whole be "successful" and "fun?"

As Carbaugh (1995) shows, basic assumptions about communication include that everywhere there is communication, a system is at work, and wherever there is a communication system, there is cultural meaning and social organization. In this way, communications systems can be understood as at least partially being "constitutive of socio-cultural life" (p. 277). Communication involves patterns that show the ordering of this social life, where verbal means and modes carry various meanings, and interactions involve and are structured by the work between such means and meanings and their weight within the social order (Carbaugh, 1995).

Applying this to the phenomenon of *oplakvane*, it is clear that something larger is happening through the enactment of the practice, where not only is the practice itself imbued with the social life of a community but also it reaffirms and reconstitutes a particular social relationship and place of the individuals involved.

These communicative events are examples of exactly such cultural structuring and, particularly, the use of a communicative ritual as bonding between the individuals. This is not to say that all communication the participants, or Bulgarians, utilize is *oplakvane*, but only that it is a well known, widely accessible, and deeply meaningful interactional ritual, with a particular structure and function, glimpses of which have been offered in the previous chapters. *Oplakvane* as an interactional ritual is frequently employed by the participants to “fill in” gaps in communication, or to connect to others in a particularly cultural way. Earlier, in chapter 4, I showed how a type of talk, which can be identified with the term *oplakvane*, is visible within interactions, where one can talk about “potatoes”, without “talking about potatoes”—a switch of meanings that give a completely different light to the interaction. Then, in chapters 6 and 7 I offered examples of the cyclical nature of the practice. Here, finally, I will show analyses and data that illustrate how and why *oplakvane* can be understood as a ritual (Philipsen, 1992) with a particular function.

Ritual as a communicative form

According to Philipsen (2002) cultural communication is based on two major principles. The first one states that every conversation within the community shows “traces of culturally distinctive means and meanings” of communication and

this conversation is historically situated in the sense that it consists of the specificities as to how people are to position themselves within the symbolic world their community has built over time (2002, p. 55). The terms of social life and cultural environment are expressed, constructed, and negotiated through the continuous communicative process within the community. By learning the means of communication (language, dialect, style, organizational and interpretive conventions, ways of speaking, and genres), as well as utilizing the heuristic function of communication as a performative resource, people can learn how to participate within social life.

Through such participation, communication serves to bond and hold the community together, succeeding in its cultural function of establishing, sustaining, and negotiating a sense of the same conversation's principles and standards for conduct. In other words, through communication as a performative resource, the cultural work of communities gets done (Philipsen, 1987). These aspects of cultural communication are crucial when entering any communal conversation and provide the researcher with a specific frame of mind when approaching a piece of data and attempting to make sense of it. So, how can we make sense of the interactions I have observed through this culturally communicative lens and what rules of conduct and existence within the particular speech community become visible? I will once more illustrate my findings with examples from the dinner event. Can *oplakvane* be viewed as such a ritualized communication practice that performs such a communal function as embedded within a larger system of situated sources and used to (re)constitute and manage the relations among people and their world? My

conclusion: *oplakvane* can be understood as not only a term of communication conduct (as examined in the second section of this chapter) but also a ritual (Philipsen, 1987).

***Oplakvane* as a ritual: structure**

When it comes to the structured sequence of *oplakvane*, I have already described its cyclical form in chapter 6, where each cycle contain the same communicative acts:

- Initiation: Brief introductory negative evaluation of the “situation.”
- Acknowledgement (Uptake /response): instances of the “situation” in every day life (or comparisons with other countries).
- Shared fate (Closing): evaluation of the “situation” and how “bad” it is.

The acts are symbolic, where the instances and evaluations have a cultural meaning and are not about just sharing of the information contained in them. There is also correct performance and a particular order to the enactment. For instance, one cannot jump to an instance without an introduction first, the event is not considered closed before a concluding evaluation, and one cannot offer a solution to any of the problems shared. The sacred object in this case is to affirm and reconstitute a particular national identity, a conceptualization of “mentality” as historically conceptualized and related to biology: when enacting *oplakvane*, one purpose is to maintain consensus and affirm the past through the reassertion of the common identity, fractured and at a crossroad, trapped between its past and the demand of the present.

Within the dinner event described earlier, these structural elements are explicitly visible: during the initial few minutes, the conversation remains about the practical issues of the visit—the potatoes that G. has brought to sell, how they were grown without pesticides, and the food set at the table (explaining what everything is, urging him to eat)—lines 4-7. This conversation continues for an hour with more details on potato growing and the soil in southern Bulgaria, as well as other concretes around them—the television that is left on, the food at the table, discussing their parents, N.'s father visiting Duspat, the land in Duspat, grass mowing, sweet potatoes and potato seeds, gardening and soil (00:39:30), parsnips (00:40:45), health of sweet potatoes and possible profits from selling them, joking about American potatoes from the neighborhood, the neighborhood (00:42:50), sweet potato recipes, a 40 second pause, the dog present and its travels (00:50:50). At this point G. prompts another round of cheers that includes saying *nazdrave* [to health], raising glasses (00:52:23), and initiates a conversation with an instance of his son getting drunk, and how his family could not handle things without him (116-127)—an instance I have already described in detail—and followed by another one soon thereafter.

I will now focus on the similarities between the two segments in order to demonstrate how typical they are for the enactment of *oplakvane*, where both contain examples of “problems” within everyday life in Bulgaria and/or a comparison between each speaker’s home area and the others’, as well as what is the “usual” way of dealing with such occasions and/or perceived culprits: “those” who drive the prices of potatoes, relatives who need help (Valio), people’s drunk

driving and the police not getting involved (N.). All contain at least one example about what the participants perceive as problematic in Bulgaria—socio-economic and political aspects, that are specific to the country, yet general for any area within it. These aspects have a wide range—from “things” (potato prices, car damage), through people (drunk drivers, *mutri*, the police), to behaviors (driving, purchasing driving licenses and selling them).

***Oplakvane* as a ritual: function**

The definition of ritual used here is the one formulated by Philipsen (1987) when he proposes the field and term “cultural communication.” According to him, communication offers the balance between the individual and the community, and its primary function is to maintain that balance, by reaffirming as well as enacting a shared identity. Philipsen (1987) describes cultural communication, then, as the process through which a code (a system of beliefs, values, and images of the “ideal” or a world view) is “realized and negotiated” within the communal conversation (p. 251). This process, for him, includes not only the enactment of cultural forms, but also their playing out, affirming, creation, adaptation, and transformation as they interact with daily life. One such cultural form is the ritual, in which the codes are celebrated and affirmed, and is defined as “a structured sequence of symbolic acts, the correct performance of which constitutes homage to a sacred object” (p. 250), its purpose—to maintain consensus and affirm the past.

Through the performance and enactment of the *oplakvane* ritual the particular codes of personhood, relations, place, action, and feeling are celebrated and affirmed. *Oplakvane* becomes about more than just sharing examples of

negative everyday experiences and frustrations but about participating and recreating the essential Bulgarian experience, about reaffirming what it means to be a Bulgarian, living in a Bulgarian realm of shared contextual and historic misery. It is a way of negotiating a specific account of how and why Bulgarians are in the specific “situation”—how through history we have developed a particular way of being that prevents us from moving forward. *Oplakvane* plays out and reconstitutes this account by celebrating the particular national identity that we despise but also take pride in.

Only if we understand the event as a ritual enactment of *oplakvane* can we make sense of the topics and evaluation statements made by the participants, where they are reaffirming and co-creating a very specific “reality” with very specific identity attached to it, and are not merely violent people who get together to brag about “beating up” others! Through the enactment of the ritual, the conflicted national identity and the world surrounding and allowing it are negotiated and celebrated. Or, according to Philipsen (2002), through communication, and specifically the enactment of a ritual via specific communication acts, individuals are linked into communities of shared identity where a shared identity is created, reaffirmed, and negotiated. This is not to say that all Bulgarians enact *oplakvane*, but that it is an available communicative practice with a specific form, the performance of which taps into and performs a cultural function.

***Oplakvane* as a ritual: cultural premises**

In the previous chapters I illustrated both the structure and norms for enacting *oplakvane*. Here I will summarize some cultural premises that are

observed within the practice, as deeply felt, widely accessible, and commonly intelligible, and constitute the cultural environment the participants inhabit as they become crucial when understanding the function of the practice in its ritualistic form. In other words, what does one need to know to make sense and participate in this event and what is the cultural aspect of communication? As Carbaugh (1990) describes them, what models of personhood, communication, emotion, action, and relations are unveiled as well as evoked in the context and their meaning to the participants?

By enacting *oplakvane*, one can see how the particular cultural landscape is a part and product of the discursive system, is composed of specific symbols, symbolic forms, norms, and their meanings (Carbaugh, 1997), accomplishes something meaningful to the participants, and has a specific structure. Throughout this cultural scene, larger messages appear—meanings about personhood and identity (who Bulgarians understand themselves to be), meanings about relating and relationships (how Bulgarians view themselves to be connected), meanings about dwelling and place (the Bulgarian situation), meanings about acting and action (how a “proper” Bulgarian behaves), meanings about feeling and emotion (how should or does a Bulgarian feel), what conceptual framework and terms for communication are used and how they reflect the participants’ view of communication, what some prominent symbols are, and thus, what cultural propositions, norms and premises of existence and value are taken for granted (Carbaugh and Hastings, 1992).

The general topic of *oplakvane* is about the Bulgarian “situation.” The practice is, thus, legitimized through this “Bulgarian situation” that is “calling for” it:

if conditions in Bulgaria were good, no one would need to *se oplakva*. It is important to emphasize that a Bulgarian should know what aspects of the Bulgarian “situation” are also appropriate for *oplakvane*, or namely problems of everyday dealings (be they with the government or with each other) that exist due to particular Bulgarian traits and behaviors, the “mentality.”

Oplakvane identifies and renders particular actions meaningful—such as “complaining” and “the sharing of examples.” Through the performance of *oplakvane* the “Bulgarian situation,” or the affirmation and maintenance of the belief that particular Bulgarian traits and behaviors will never be overcome, is being shared and reinforced. The practice of *oplakvane* accounts for particular (in)action, and accounts for why things are not changing through the maintenance of that same reality. This implicitly refers back to Bulgarian historical factors that have shaped and affected Bulgarians, such as the Ottoman slavery, communism, the “transition” period, etc. *Oplakvane* refers to enactments such as communicative acts, or the sharing of examples and evaluations about Bulgarian problems because of the “mentality,” instances attempting to allocate blame, find fault elsewhere, thus, acquitting the individual—*oplakvane*, *mrunkane*, *opravdavane*. Also, a particular identity is being confirmed through the enactment of the practice, an identity that will be examined in chapter 9.

Cultural discourse analysis helps unravel the tangled web of cultural meanings evoked and managed in the enactment by describing each one as a separate hub of meaning that is active at any point in communication but always contains radiants for one of the others (personhood, emotion, dwelling, action, and

relations). The “mentality” cannot be viewed without its connection to understanding action as “being okay to beat others;” one cannot understand how “everyone beats others up” as a proper action without grasping the implications for who counts as a *mutra* and who does not; one could not understand why having parking issues due to snow is “typically Bulgarian” without understanding corruption and the “mentality.” Here, and in the next two chapters, I focus on each hub of meaning at a time, the hub of personhood (with radiants for place and action) is examined in chapter 9, social relations (with implications for identity and place)—is mentioned throughout but particularly in chapter 8; proper feeling and keyed emotion (with radiants of meaning for place, action, and relations) have been addressed in chapters 5 and 6, dwelling (with radiants for action, personhood, and emotion) is attended to when examining the larger cultural myth of the Bulgarian situation in the next chapter.

Now I would like to summarize how these are bound within specific premises or statements about the world Bulgarians view themselves to occupy in general—how the communicative practice of *oplakvane* organizes this specific national identity and its place in the world it creates and reinforces, how it organizes and ties together these concepts in full statements, some specific statements about the world and Bulgarians’ place in it that the participants employ, presume, and take for granted. What is the nexus between the verbal means of expression the participants pull from and the system of symbols and meanings that illuminate the social world they operate in?

As Philipsen (2002), as well as Carbaugh (1992), argue, cultural premises and rules about speaking are intricately tied with the participants' cultural conceptions of personhood, agency, and social relations. The rules and beliefs about speaking articulate a larger cultural code. Some premises, based on the event as well as interviews with the participants, can be formulated that are active and make the practice intelligible to the participants.

1. There is a specific Bulgarian “situation”—economic, political, and socio-cultural—one only Bulgarians can understand and see because it is different than any other country (social relations, dwelling).
2. This Bulgarian “situation” is bad and will not get better (social relations, dwelling).
3. “Mentality” is a combination of ways of behaving and ways of thinking that Bulgarians have developed over history, and specifically during the Ottoman Occupation and the following decades of communism. The mentality is learned but has become cognitive, “biologically” fused with Bulgarian-ness. It is historically crafted in response to a context but is passed on genetically in the present (identity/personhood, action/agency).
4. The “situation” is a result of this Bulgarian “mentality” that has been cultivated (identity/personhood, dwelling, social relations).
5. The “mentality” refers to negatively evaluated behaviors of survival during the Ottoman occupation and later: stealing, cheating, taking advantage of others, etc. (identity/personhood, social relations).

6. The Bulgarian country as a geographical place is not “bad” but as a nation of people is doomed because of the “mentality” (identity/personhood, dwelling).
7. The Bulgarian “self” is understood as part of the community, where all Bulgarians share some historically bound “slave mentality” (social relations, identity/personhood).
8. The “self”, through the Bulgarian “mentality”, is trapped within the Bulgarian “situation”, and is thus perpetuated and kept alive (identity/personhood, dwelling).
9. Even though this “mentality” has become biological, however, there are still Bulgarians who do not display it (they are considered to still be “normal”) (identity/personhood, social relations).
10. There are only two “solutions” to this cycle of “mentality” or “situation” from the perspective of proper action Bulgarians can undertake (action/agency):
 - a. Leave the country and emigrate (those that are still “normal”).
 - b. Get rid of the Bulgarians (all sharing the “mentality”) by either killing them all or letting them self-destroy.

Later, I will examine the messages and meanings clustered specifically around the hubs of identity and dwelling in the next chapters, whereas here I will confine my discussion to the hubs of emotion and action. Several understandings about the Bulgarian “situation” from within the data become particularly highlighted when enacting *oplakvane*:

- A proper feeling regarding the “normal” people left is anger, engendered by the unfairness, corruption, and general aggression and apathy. This anger is

not only expressed in the data explicitly but can also be heard in the voices of the participants—their pitch rises and their utterances are interspersed with exclamations and even curse words or commonly used phrases filled with pathos and accompanied by a sigh such as *kakvo ochakva6—koi da gi vazpita* (“what do you expect—who would educate them”); *otchaivam se, mislish che poveche ot tova ne moge, no ima go* (“I’m getting desperate, you think it can’t be worse, but there is”); *naroda e totalno izterjsal* (“the people has gone mad”), as well as examples in Appendix E (lines 400-405), Appendix G (lines 24-27), also chapter 5, section on shift in tonality.

- This constant anger and frustration with the “others” and the system can result in physical ailments, where the body cannot handle the daily stress and irritation (several participants mention relatives or friends who “ended up in a hospital because of all the stress” from dealing with the situation every day).
- The situation in Bulgaria, created by the aforementioned mentality, can and will drive a person insane (there are multiple mentions of people getting physically ill as a result of dealing with “clients”, representatives of the mentality).
- Happiness is never expressed, and especially during enacting *oplakvane* (often indicated by dismissal with *mani mani*, “leave it, leave it”, and frequent use of the utterance “horror” instead of “yeah/I see”). There are many cultural reasons as to why this is the case and some of them can be traced back to communism. A possible explanation participants bring up during

interviews, however, is that if one considers themselves happy and openly expresses it, than chances are that they are the “others,” they are part of the problem since they “reap benefits” of the mentality.

The premises are meanings largely radiating from every enactment of *oplakvane*, its acts and form. Within the Bulgarian discourse these meanings are presumed and recreated through the term *oplakvane*, its acts, and ritualized form.

The ramifications for social relations, then, become painfully evident: because of the mentality created over the long years of the Ottoman occupation and communism, Bulgarians are suspicious, and often envious, of each other. They have an ability to survive anything via such “disreputable” means, but this has only led to a communal distancing as corruption, distrust, and social “hyenism” have risen. Bulgarians detest the *mutri* with “peasant ways” of doing things (since they remind them of their own past) but have grown to fear them as the *mutra* has gained a higher political status and has become the predominant politico-economical image. Bulgarians claim they want to be appreciated for their own merit but still cut corners and try to cheat the system in an attempt to shine in the pool of purchased diplomas and positions, since experience has taught them that this is the only way to get ahead in Bulgaria.

Chapter summary

In this chapter I highlighted how the communicative practice of *oplakvane* can be understood as a ritualistic form, with a particular structure of symbolic acts that when performed correctly pay homage to the construct of a conflicted national identity developed over time in Bulgaria (through the Ottoman occupation,

communism, and the following transition) and celebrates and reaffirms the shared communal fate of Bulgarian “doom.” In this way, when enacting *oplakvane*, the participants tap into the available cultural communicative resources and make sense of their present day socio-economic and political situation by managing both the particular conceptualization of identity as “us” vs. “them” (shaped during their communism experience), and the conflicted emotions surrounding such identification.

CHAPTER 8

THE BULGARIAN SITUATION: *OPLAKVANE* AS A MYTHIC FORM

Introduction

This chapter delineates the conceptualization behind the Bulgarian “situation” as a mythical form and explores how a particular symbolic narrative is constituted through *oplakvane* about the “Bulgarian situation” that links the past and the present, the individual and the community. Utilizing Philipsen’s definition of a mythic form (1987) as well as the concept of narrative as developed by Labov (1967), I extrapolate the grand narrative of the Bulgarian “situation” as it is constructed and evoked by the participants when enacting *oplakvane*. My analyses and findings are based on my observations and recorded data, where the myth constructed based on this research was then endorsed by the participants. This grand narrative is the backdrop for the communicative practice of *oplakvane* and provides the story of how the Bulgarian national “mentality” was developed over the years of Ottoman occupation and communism—a fusion between learned behaviors and biology—making way for a whole field of study by the name of *narodopsihologia*. The myth below is constructed based on the extensive reading of Bulgarian history, and listening to Bulgarians talk about the past and present of their country.

As I showed in the previous chapter, *oplakvane* can be understood as a ritualized communicative practice that serves a particular function. This practice evokes and manages a larger cultural knowledge of the Bulgarian “situation,” where one cannot position, comprehend, or even participate as a proper “Bulgarian”

without understanding the narrative of “how things in Bulgaria are.” I utilize Philipsen’s (1987) definition of myth, in which cultural codes are used to make sense of the communal conversation. It refers to the larger symbolic narrative that provides the basis for “harmonious thought and action” (p. 251), or the larger cultural backdrop for the members’ fit between their past and present.

In the first article to propose the term "cultural communication." Philipsen (1987) suggests a heuristic framework and the groundwork for a theory of ethnographic description and comparative analysis of cultural communication, where communication is understood as the balance between the tensions between the individual and the community, and functions as the balance between creating and affirming a shared communal identity. According to Philipsen, the myth uses speech codes to make sense of the communal conversation and thus articulates and applies the larger cultural landscape. As such, I utilize this definition of myth to examine the general narrative of the Bulgarian situation as it becomes visible within the data, and how it provides cohesion for the participants’ actions and meaning, within the grand cultural context and history.

Narrative

Among the scholars to further develop Philipsen’s idea of cultural myths is Berry (1995) who suggests that studying the role of cultural myths, and particularly where story lines (public and personal) meet in various cultures, is of crucial importance for enriching intercultural communication. He further focused on the function of narratives as present in the forms of myths, fables, comedy, etc. that offer positive and negative models, thus organizing and providing consistency to larger

cultural values and understandings across time and place. And since such narratives are expressive and evoke the values of the particular place and time, by utilizing Philipsen's cultural communication approach and Carbaugh's cultural discourse analysis, one could "hear" the culture of a particular place and time within exactly such myths and the discursive resources they provide in making sense of the world. Berry (1995) argued that if a personal story is "heard," "understood," or "converges" with a common myth, then a common cultural code is discovered, and vice versa, whereas if a personal story is not understood or heard as resonant to a larger cultural myth, then this signifies the lack of a common code or common culture. Then I examine the public myth of the Bulgarian "situation" for a code of personhood (or what constitutes "Bulgarian-ness") that enables Bulgarians to "hear" and enact *oplakvane* appropriately.

Additional terms utilized in this chapter are Labov and Waletzky's (1967, 1997) five structural features of narrative: orientation, complication, evaluation, resolution, and coda. The orientation sets the scene. The complication is the main body of the narrative describing the action or events that occurred. As the narrative approaches its climax, an evaluation section is inserted and reveals the attitude of the narrator (Labov & Waletzky, 1967). The evaluation is followed by the climax of the narrative, the resolution or outcome.

The Bulgarian "situation"

You know how things are in Bulgaria. It's bad, you know. Actually, how would you know, you have been away long now. You don't know, the situation is getting worse, people have become beasts [*oskotjli*]... Run, run away, and don't come back. Watch your life. Your parents will be fine. You go to a normal country—and don't look back.

(A participant, 64)

I hear the above sentiment every time I go to Bulgaria, whether spoken by my own parents, high school friends, people meeting me for the first time (not having anything else to say to me), long-forgotten relatives, and even at the doctor's office ("Oh, yeah, well, you are ok in the U.S., unlike here..."). Apart from understanding these snippets as acts of *oplakvane* (evaluation negative closing), they also contain very rich points as to the larger narrative about being a Bulgarian in Bulgaria, and "seeing" as well as "understanding" how things are there. Here, I use utterances directly from my data to compile the myth of the "Bulgarian situation."

Orientation: the participants describe themselves as living in a "non-country," a statement in which the word *dargava* (state) is used to emphasize the political aspects of the term. Thus, a connection to the alleged "democratic" state is made as non-existent. For them, the country is not "democratic" as the term is used in other countries because the values and beliefs associated to the term are not present in Bulgaria, or are distorted. The statement "this country can be only if they took all people out of it and inserted a new people" is used to culturally manage this discrepancy between what "democracy" seems to them and "what the situation is" in Bulgaria. The country is often described as "not for living" but for "survival," which implies that there is no enjoyment and satisfaction, just bare needs being met. Physically, it is a country where the roads are barely usable, and it is dirty. The traffic is horrible because of bad roads but also because of people not obeying the rules and driving aggressively. It is a country with horrible parking problems

because instead of coming up with long-term solutions, the corrupt officials steal money and do not complete any construction projects and only increase fees and taxes for their own gain. The participants refer to Bulgaria as an “incompetent country,” a “scary” place, where everything is “madness,” a “rotten country,” a “not normal country,” or an “anti-country,” a “no-country,” an “idiotic country,” “unlike any other European country,” a “concentration camp,” a country in which “good people are few and far between,” and a country with “bad” future.

Often when utilizing the term *dargava* (country), the participants are implicitly referring to the people residing in the country and not the geographical entity. Under this umbrella term *dargava* (country), however, they include only specific “ways” of acting, behaving, and thinking that result in the particular Bulgarian “situation.” Thus, the participants use the term, Bulgarian “situation,” to allude to the way Bulgaria is socially, economically, and politically as a result of the people inhabiting the country. The negative tone of this understanding of the situation is explicit when participants say: “this f*cked country,” “this rotten country,” and “this screwed up country,” once more, meaning not the geographical aspect of the country but mainly the nation’s population. And so, in order for the Bulgarian “situation” to be fully understood, one has to examine what grand narrative ties the participants within the cultural web of meaning enveloping being a Bulgarian, or the major myth of the *Bulgarshtina*, *Bai Ganiovshtina*, and the national mentality. I will show that to understand the public and personal stories of the Bulgarian situation, as managed through *oplakvane*, is to understand what it

means to be a Bulgarian, and the notion of *narodopsihologia* (national psychology) as focal in managing cultural tensions of the past and present.

Apart from using the term *dargava* (country, state) to allude to the complicated cultural relationship Bulgarians have with democracy and political systems in general, the participants use the term to focus on the people, therefore shifting the focus of what is deemed problematic from solely the political system to the people specifically. The response participants give when asked what the problem in Bulgaria is frequently includes *Bulgarshtina* (Bulgarianness) and *Bulgarska rabota* (the Bulgarian way). Thus, any socio-economic and political problems are often related to the way Bulgarians behave and do things. When asked to elaborate, the participants say that Bulgarians do not follow rules, particularly laws and regulations, even ones protecting their “well-being.” For instance, participants frequently mention pedestrians who do not cross at designated areas, drivers in general who do not follow signs, use signals, take care of their vehicle, etc. A participant mentioned how this is different from the case in other countries—how people there want their common areas and parks clean, throw their trash at designated areas, and keep their roads in good conditions, unlike in Bulgaria—where “we” do not do these things “just because” and because we feel we are above the law. Giatzidis (2004), described this as a common practice for post-communist countries, where destroying public (thus party) property and disobeying laws is a way for people to regain autonomy from the government. Since it has not served them and has used them for so many years, they perceive any rules and laws as connected to a grand scheme or plot by the government and are thus

perceived as not in their interest, where not complying is a form of rebelling. Instead of understanding this tendency as a cultural phenomenon or as response to a particular historical political context, however, it is assigned to “being Bulgarian.”

Narodopsihologij (“National psychology”)

Climax: the narrative within *oplakvane* shifts from the political aspects of a country in transition to the larger aspects and “traits” of Bulgarians that have allowed for any political transitions and changes to mutate and not be successful. And so, narrative of the birth and rise of a Bulgarian national “mentality,” or *narodopsihologia* (national psychology), *Bai Ganiovshatina* (the Bai Ganio way) are highlighted as the root cause for all problems and the Bulgarian “situation.”

One instance from the data as to what falls under these umbrella terms is the tendency to take advantage of others, where everyone is trying to “screw the other one over.” When the participants are prompted to explain what specifically they mean by this, a very popular joke is mentioned:

In hell each country has its own boiling cauldron where all sinners are stewing together. Each cauldron has devils guarding it with pitchforks making sure no one escapes. However, they do not have anyone standing guard at the Bulgarian cauldron. Why is that? Because any time one of the sinners attempts to climb out, the rest make sure to pull him/her back down.

This joke is so well known that is often mentioned partially since most people recognize it and thus there is no need to retell it every time: “you know how it is in hell, right?”

There is a Bulgarian proverb with similar meaning: *Ne e vagno az da sam dobre, a e vagno Vute da e zle*. The direct translation is “it is not important that I am

well, as long as Vute [generic name for a neighbor] is not well.” These two instances of common cultural knowledge provide insight into the “Bulgarian national psychology” as it is often referred to in published works within ethnology, sociology, and history. In many cycles of *oplakvane* the reference to this common mentality is subtler and appears when the participants are discussing how things are not likely to change, how one works very hard often dealing with “crazy” (demanding, and capricious) clients who cannot be appeased. Participants frequently mention that, in “normal” countries “this [generic problem] would not be happening” and “there, people know, there are rules”. In this way, the trait (people behaving problematically) is attached to all other Bulgarians—in this case the government and clients—and the cultural notion is once more created and reinforced in the interaction. Data from the office setting includes participants that describe instances (acts of *oplakvane*) in which clients yell or curse *zaradi takiva kato vas njmam pari* (“because of people like you I have no money”) and calling them (the technician, secretaries, and even the managers) *chorbadjii* (term from Turkish used to emphasize power and money acquired by connections to those in power, mentioned in detail in Ch. 9), thus, any examples of problematic people and particularly clients are all attributed to the “mentality”.

In another cycle, the sentiment as to how Bulgarians deal with each other is made explicit again (Appendix E): “all are hyenas. And everyone wants to screw you over!” (3042), to which G. echoes in agreement, using the same phrase as her “and you have to be a bigger hyena than them” (3047) since “you don’t have a choice” (3049), and “every one is trying to screw you over” (3057). These behaviors,

according to the participants, are learnt: in a very different interaction, a participant mentions thieves in churches who are disrespectful and then elaborates how v *Bulgaria se nasagda negativno vsi4ko* (“everything is instilled in Bulgaria negative”), especially lawlessness (*bezzakonieto*).

Evaluation and climax: what is even more fascinating is how other countries have started learning these “Bulgarian ways” of doing business. A participant mentions that “foreign companies with which you have a contract also take advantage of you because they say ‘ah you have cheap labor, and you can work for no pay’” where “they [non-Bulgarian businessmen] also learn that this is how it works” and they “will not try this elsewhere” in other countries because they know they can get away with it only in Bulgaria—an example of which was also highlighted during a business meeting by Romanian staff members (office data).

The concept of the national “mentality”

Complication: Through this larger cultural narrative about the way Bulgarians are, and thus the Bulgarian “situation,” a particular cultural code of a national identity, a code of *nacionalen mantalitet*, or national mentality (the behaviors and ways of thinking that have been created over time) is visible. In many instances, the participants explicitly place the spotlight on this national mentality by claiming it to be the “reason” for the Bulgarian “situation,” or implicitly, by placing themselves in opposition to specific behaviors that fall under it, thus claiming distance from it. The focal aspect to the myth of the national mentality, or national psychology, as ways of behaving and thinking, however, is that not only has it developed over time (Ottoman occupation, socialism) but that it also has a

cognitive, biological aspect to it—one that is “genetic,” ingrained, and not easily modified. And this is the significant part of the cultural narrative, one that is implicit and molds the interaction as always leading to a dark future for Bulgaria.

Frequently, these biological aspects to the national mentality appear in comparisons of Bulgarians to animals, having animalistic traits, and needs: they are like cockroaches and can survive anything, but are also perceived as skulking in the dark, being dirty, and somewhat primal in their stage of development. Bulgarians are also like sheep that blindly follow anyone in front of them, and have short memory span and easily forget bad previous (political) leaders. Bulgarians are often said to have a “herd mentality,” a “herd” way of thinking.

The participants use the word *oskotj* (become animalistic) to refer to the present day population of the country, alluding to people becoming so focused on survival that they start fighting teeth and nails for the resources available. Often this attitude is connected to the transition from communism (when there was nothing in stores and people had to have either connections or starve), as well as to a consumerist present, in which anything can be purchased. In this way, the many years of not-having has made Bulgarians into everyone-for-themselves, animals, focused on hoarding material possessions. In the words of a participant, Bulgaria is a country where “while some are [living] in the trash, others are shopping.”

According to this grand narrative, the national mentality developed during the Ottoman occupation and further solidified during the decades of communism and the transition, and is responsible for the present day “situation.” The mentality is the combination of all “bad” behaviors Bulgarians have accumulated such as:

stealing, being corrupt, not following rules, being aggressive towards one other, screwing each other over. The mentality also can be viewed as a specific “Bulgarian” work ethic where people tend to make money without working, through connections in the government (mainly developed during communism), and quick, presumed “shady” deals (companies such as Lukoil); the mentality affects the way laws are created, which do not serve people but political interests and has resulted in a corrupt justice system that protects criminals and hides behind a distorted “democratic” discourse.

All of these behaviors can be traced to specific survival tendencies that developed, and were even encouraged, during socialism. During the time, party representatives would come to each household and inspect it, giving a stamp of approval—a plate sign with the words “Exemplary Home” that people had to put on their front door. However, what this encouraged in a time of poverty (people were not allowed to leave the country or import foreign “capitalist” goods) was a tendency not to strive for “more” but to bring others down—so every one is equal (equally at the bottom). The participants argue that this encouraged petty work thefts, the hiding of goods from friends and neighbors, not bragging or even sharing about what one had, and envy. This has continued to the present day and can be observed in random acts of vandalism even within small communities and particularly to one’s neighbors that are perceived to have “more”: ”: frequent example throughout my data is the mentioning of common thefts of trash cans/dumpsters and even the street signs for the location of a trash can/dumpster,

followed by the participants' evaluation of *zashto taka be sme tolkova zagubeni* ("why are we so lost").

Another result of having one of those "Exemplary Home" plates was the creation of suspicion toward each other as to how success was achieved, since such success was only possible by having close connection to the party. Thus, even now, when abroad, Bulgarians still are not quick to trust each other—one never knows who they are connected to in order to be able to go abroad, and how the "mentality" would rise its ugly head, pulling down anyone nearby in its orbit. This is one way the myth can be seen to shade perceptions and judgments of others' identity and social relations even abroad.

Additionally, aspects of the national mentality, participants claim, can also be observed as resulting in Bulgarians being often swindlers: politicians, purchasing votes only to steal as much money as possible before their mandate runs out. However, what constitutes "theft" and "cheating" is also very cultural, as I mentioned earlier, as a practice of "cheating the system" also developed during communism but was considered a form of rebellion against the system and thus was encouraged and highly valued. An example is that it is considered a "theft" if someone steals from your house, but is not if you cheat on your water/electric bill (since you are only taking back what the system has cheated you out of). And so, *oplakvane* is often used to manage this cultural tension and differentiate between who has the mentality and is doing the "wrong" cheating/thieving and who is not. I provide more details as to how this is managed interactionally in the next chapter.

Resolution: the mentality is considered to be omnipresent and affect everyone, since even those who might not have it themselves are still subjected to other's negative influence; where even if they work honestly, they are bound to lose because the mentality in others is against them. In this way, when so many Bulgarians afflicted with the mentality take advantage of others, whether by being in administrative or governmental positions, or just by merely throwing trash on the streets, only one way of relating to each other is left—with suspicion, mistrust, and negativity. Thus, this cultural line of suspicion weaves itself into the grand narrative and cultural understanding of the country as a whole. The place Bulgarians inhabit is a dark place, roamed by creatures: cockroaches, sheep, swindlers and cheats, trying to pull each other back in the cauldron of hellfire. And as the evaluation act of *oplakvane* picks up in pathos, so does the description of the country, culminating in the participants describing Bulgaria as a “mafia country,” and even that it is not that “the country has its mafia, but the mafia has its country.”

So what is one to do? How is one to act in this situation based on an animalistic, horrific mentality? How is one to deal with all who have the mentality? Particular cultural meanings about action can be extrapolated from the data, and once again, there is little hope for the future. Bulgarians are known to “blindly follow like sheep”—listen and obey despite reason, put up with any government regardless of how dysfunctional it is, as illustrated in another frequently mentioned by the participants proverb—*Slonena glavica, sabj ne j seche* (A head bowed low, a sword cannot reach it), which alludes to a shared belief that it is better not to stand out, not to disagree even if your are in the right. This inactivity is reflected

elsewhere where the participants agree that Bulgarians should be left on their own since they would only succeed in destroying each other, achieving complete self destruction, and only then would the country (as a geographic place) have a chance.

Another option is to reciprocate, be a *govedo* (animal, beast) in response, which the participants perceive to be partially due to a) the mentality's genetic, biological aspect (we all are afflicted), and also b) the understanding that only a *govedo* can understand another *govedo* (since those with the mentality cannot be made to behave properly with niceness, then, one has to act like them). This mentality is illustrated in the numerous drunk driving instances that the participants provide within *oplakvane*, in which they pride themselves in giving the "correct" response in the specific situation, or namely beating the perpetrator, and taking "justice" in their own hands, where even "the police cheered" their actions. They consider this their righteous option because it is the only way they feel they could react when the larger judicial and political system is useless (in the instances, both drunk drivers had their licenses revoked but had continued to drive).

For those who are "normal" and do not have the mentality, the only official and final solution expressed in most evaluation closing acts of *oplakvane* is to "save" themselves and leave the country (emigrate). Many young people do so. Many middle aged people as well, in search of jobs. However, when this solution is offered within enactments of *oplakvane*, even though the participants are explicit in their opinion that all "normal" people left "should" emigrate, and even go as far as to provide specifics as to how something like this could be done (sell everything, buy tickets, get a job in another country), the sentiment is never truthful in the sense of

information sharing. Despite using specifics, the purpose of such utterances as part of the enactment is to express the frustration of the socio-political and economic situation. In this way, by stating how they could sell everything they own and go to any other European country, they are expressing the bitterness and how fed up they are with things not working in Bulgaria. It is meant and understood to serve that cultural function of affirming their shared fate. The exaggeration of such utterances can also be observed in its equivalent but darker counterpart, in which, instead of packing and emigrating, the participants suggest, jokingly, to get rid of every one in the country—shoot everyone or drop an atomic bomb so that the country (as a geographic place) can finally prosper without “this rotten tribe”, Bulgarians, who keep destroying it.

The myth of the Bulgarian “situation”

Through these segments and utterances, a grand narrative of the Bulgarian “situation,” as caused by a national mentality (biological), is reconstituted within enactments of *oplakvane*. The mentality is mentioned in fleeting shorthand with references to the *Bai Ganiova rabota* (Bai Ganio kind of work), *slomena glavica* (lowered head proverb), and *Bulgarska mu rabota* (Bulgarian job), all “known” to a Bulgarian. And so, this resonance between the personal instances mentioned in *oplakvane* and the public common history and instances reveal evidence of cultural codings of the presence of a particular Bulgarian myth of national mentality.

Through and within *oplakvane* in particular, the participants’ speech reveals assumptions of the presence of a historically crafted way of being and thinking, a negative mentality that is shaped and reinforced within the particular context of the

Ottoman occupation and socialist influence. This is not unlike how any national identity is fashioned, but in this case, the particular creation myth supports and emphasizes inactivity within the political sphere because it connects social, economical, and political aspects to biological and deeply-rooted “mental” characteristics. This national mentality is coded as unchangeable, a constant that is historically and contextually prevaricated but burnt into the genes of Bulgarians. It is coded as something that arose within a particular setting but fused with the cells and the neurons of a particular nationality, and thus, cannot be altered by mere action.

This way of coding, understanding, and reconstituting a national identity that perpetuates a specific socio-economic and political status quo has deep implications for understanding the self, the place this self inhabits, and how this self ought to act within its surrounding. The point is not to simply understand the way Bulgarians act, and see themselves and their country, but also how it implicates the way they perceive national boundaries and the individual’s place within it. And so, this myth is not only about Bulgarians and their motherland but also about how the world functions as a whole, and the connection between biology and nationhood.

This way of understanding and looking at the individual, as shaped by the historically crafted way of thinking and behaving, this coding of national mentality is linked not only to concepts of personhood and self but also of the place and its questions of geographic, social, and cultural borders, as well as the proper way of acting within and outside these limits. Thus, the myth tells a story of the significance of history and biology to the present and future of a country, where

Bulgaria, situated at the focal place of expansion was able to once hold borders at “three seas” (the period of 1100s, famous as the “Golden Age”, where the Bulgarian territory encompassed significant territories) only to succumb (due to inside political rift between the royal heirs) to the Ottoman Empire.

Once the royal heirs of Second Bulgarian Empire (14th century) started to squabble and turn against each other, the invasion of the Ottoman Empire was left without a cohesive stronghold and soon submitted to the invaders. The Ottoman occupation are frequently blamed, within this same myth, on the particular “herd” or “sheep” mentality, on some “intrinsic” Bulgarian inability to return to the values and strength of character that Bulgarians of old times had. In the myth, the mentality is blamed on something that has gone “genetically” wrong with the nation to allow the present socio-political and economic decay. Thus, most Bulgarians grow up with a narrative of glory of our Bulgarian history and roots that was wasted, corrupted, and lost during the Ottoman occupation, and in addition was affected by the fear and violence in such ways as to “mutate” into a national mentality, instances of which can be seen now everywhere (as we constantly remind ourselves within *oplakvane*).

This Bulgarian concept of mutation, and the reinforcement of negative behaviors by outside forces (Ottoman, socialist, Russia, etc.) foregrounds and shades the speech acts of *oplakvane*. The question of who Bulgarians are, where they come from and the country they presently inhabit, and how they should act accordingly is symbolized by this code of national mentality, with all the particulars (“sheep”, “herd”, “mafia country”, etc.), and is mutually intelligible, deeply felt, and widely

accessible—something that *oplakvane* makes particularly visible as it bridges individuals beyond experience, generation, and roots. And so, this coding of national mentality does serve to highlight the link between myth, social identity, and perceptions of a “learned” biology, when positioning oneself and negotiating the boundaries of a contested national identity within moments of social interaction.

Chapter summary

In this chapter I illustrated how the Bulgarian “situation” can be understood as a grand narrative, a communicative mythic form constructed and employed within enactments of *oplakvane*. My analyses provide the larger cultural discourse in which such communication acts and events occur, which enriches the reader’s sense of its meaningfulness beyond those of the casual participant in them. In this way one may partake in *oplakvane* by knowing the larger story of the Bulgarian situation as related to the *narodopsihologij* (national psychology), national mentality, *Bulgarshchina* (Bulgarian-ness), and *Bai Ganiovshchina* (Bai Ganio-ness) as a conceptualization delineating the fusion between national traits and behaviors and cognitive structures and processes. Understanding the notion of the Bulgarian situation as a larger narrative, a mythic construction played out within enactments of *oplakvane*, allows for the fuller comprehension of codes of personhood, social relations, dwelling, and action as not only infusing communication but also being reinforced through interaction. By evoking and managing the conception of the Bulgarian situation, particular understandings of proper action (in this case inaction) within the political and social domain and being are not only highlighted but also fortified. Examining such a conceptualization of a political and socio-

economic situation and identity as national biology as recreated through talk offers insights as to the significance of communicative practices to not only reflect but also shape worldviews and social life as I illustrate through my analyses of the grand narrative active within moments of *oplakvane*.

CHAPTER 9

“OF ALL THINGS, I MOSTLY HATE BULGARIANS”. THE COMMUNICATION OF BULGARIAN IDENTITY

Introduction

In this chapter I delve into how ways of identification (as a situated symbolic activity) are achieved through enacting *oplakvane*, and what specific messages and meanings of and about personhood are constituted through the practice, its terminology, cyclical, ritualized, and narrative forms. Once more, I illustrate my findings from analyses of numerous instances of *oplakvane* and offer several examples from the dinner event that depict the “us” vs. the “others” (those with the mentality) form of identification, where, within enactments of *oplakvane* the participants identify the “others” as really “Bulgarian” as they possess the mentality. I focus on the understanding of identity that becomes relevant in the data in connections to the mentality and the way it is navigated culturally through *oplakvane*, as communication highlights and reinforces the diverse modes of social stratification. I use Carbaugh’s (1996) vacillating form to describe how specific symbols and their meaning for personhood are played out in order to activate multiple levels of identification within the same scene through *oplakvane*. Through examples, I illustrate my analyses as to how the participants themselves utilize the symbols of those with the mentality vs. “normal” people in order to identify those “most Bulgarian” when enacting *oplakvane*. This is different from the sense of Bulgarian-ness as a shared common identity created and reinforced within enactments of *oplakvane* as a ritualized form of communication.

There are two parts to this identification: 1) when Bulgarian identity is the topic of discussion (within *oplakvane*), it is the discreditable “others” around here (not us) who are discussed as really Bulgarian (those who have connections, take bribes, are aggressive, do not have a good work ethic, etc.); and 2) when we do *oplakvane* together, we are enacting our Bulgarian identity through our cultural discourse, with this enactment including discussion of these discreditable “others” as examples of true Bulgarians. Bulgarians talk about corrupt others as truly “Bulgarian” and despise them but when Bulgarians enact such plaintive talk (*oplakvane*), they perform Bulgarianness. The former is in their discursive sense or meanings of what Bulgaria is; the latter is in the Bulgarian form, the meanings of which (i.e., this form enacts who you are) are hidden from them.

That is not to say that all people in Bulgaria embrace these symbols and forms, but all are aware of them, and produce them on occasion as culturally distinct situated discursive practices. I see *oplakvane* (its terminology, cyclical, ritualized, and narrative form) as a communicative practice that is a site and cultural scene for the negotiation of social identities. This chapter focuses on *oplakvane* as a discursive phenomenon, through which the participants make explicit statements about who they are/are not as Bulgarians, and their semantic dimensions. I provide some insight as to this generalized other, the “Bulgarian with the mentality” when constructing the myth earlier: people who swindle and cheat each other, government officials, people who act like hyenas, and people who do not follow the law. I construct a more complete picture of the identity as a vacillating form recreated by the participants within the interaction. This is not to say that all

Bulgarians act this way, or that this is a generalized image of Bulgarians as a whole, but that this is an identity that the participants construct and make relevant within moments of interaction in order to explain and relate to a world around them. I explore how the participants construct the notion of Bulgarian-ness within *oplkvane* and the semantic dimensions along which the “others” are as defined by the participants.

The Bulgarian “mentality”

Within many enactments of *oplakvane* the participants use symbols of identification as rhetorical resources that do not comprise a coherent utterance, have a clear protagonist (when in narrative form), or are similar topically, yet are still perceived as coherent by the participants since they all have the concept of the mentality as a common thread. As I illustrated in the previous chapter, the mythic form of the Bulgarian situation fills in the blanks and adds the necessary information for the participants to understand each other. In some examples, the only transition between acts of *oplakvane* is the commonly accessible knowledge of the mentality as precursor and general cultural template. For instance, one cycle (Appendix G) I observed ends with evaluative statements on how money is made in Bulgaria (some people earn it with labor and others through corruption) indicated by a generalized remark of “this is the problem” (used frequently):

- 1 K: that is the problem.
2 G: that like this if to that one they came only with ###=
3 N: =yes. But she gave them to herself. So she decided she deserves
4 them!
5 K: ten //ten###//
6 N: //if she takes//
7 G: //43,000//

8 N: I also think I deserve

Immediately after these generalized statements, the next cycle begins with the utterance of “that like this if to that one, they came only with.” This would be a cryptic utterance even to Bulgarians if it were not for two reasons: a) the “that one” has been mentioned previously in the evening and the participants immediately recognize the reference, and b) she is an example of people taking bribes and being smug about it, thus fulfilling the criteria for cultural continuity, where the participants make sense of the utterance within the interaction and the specific enactment of *oplakvane*. The utterance is not complete and may seem unclear, however, the other participant’s response indicates that it has indeed been understood, and not only that, but he also provides further agreement, elaborating that “she gave them to herself,” expressing the belief that “she” decided she deserved them.

Earlier in the evening the particular “she” is mentioned in reference to a news report on a government official taking “bonuses” to her salary (amounts of money well beyond her pay check) that she herself approved. The news report is an example of one more instance of government officials helping themselves to government money which is meant to be distributed among appropriate local services, but instead, ends up in someone’s pocket. The news report was broadcasted just a few days earlier and was thus still salient in the participants’ minds. Earlier in the evening, as part of another cycle of *oplakvane*, they had mentioned such “helping oneself to government money” and the particular official who was shown during the broadcast as an example of such blatant disregard for

the legal system and the low moral. Even when faced by the media, she had refused to acknowledge the inappropriateness of her behavior, and had stated that she “deserved” the bonus because of her “hard work.” This is the meaning G. and N. bring to the interaction—the specific “exhibit” of bribery and corruption, as not only clearly “proven” to exist in the media but also as another example of the smugness, boldness, and impudence of the government official—one more sign that such behaviors have become so common that even being called out on them is not considered a sufficient moral sanction.

K. echoes with a repetition of “ten” that describes the amount in thousands that the government official took in the form of a bonus. While the final part of K.’s utterance is unclear, both N.’s “she, if she takes” and G.’s mention of the sum 43, 000 are clearly audible—all mentions of the same government official and different bonuses she acquired through these “unapproved” means. At this point N. mocks the government official’s sense that she is “deserving” of the bonus by stating that she (N.) thinks she also deserves more money, to which G., also mockingly emphasizes the exact amount mentioned in the report that the official “decided she deserves”:

- 9 G: 43, 000 she decided she deserves and
- 10 N: yes
- 11 G: and she gave them to herself. //and 25, 000//
- 12 N: //and gets angry//
- 13 K: //and why not be*//
- 14 G: gave them herself
- 15 N: yes //vice president//
- 16 G: she //vice president// had
- 17 N: yes
- 18 G: minister of justice=
- 19 N: =and she thinks that this is normal
- 20 G: yes

21 N: but wait now you create the laws,
22 G: ah (agreeing)

After N. agrees, G. repeats again the fact that the government official gave the money to herself, “signed them off” to herself, completely disregarding what the money is supposed to be for. Simultaneously, N. and K. emphasize how extreme and absurd the situation of such explicit corruption is by their corresponding utterances: N. focuses on the government official’s reaction to being exposed in the media—her getting angry at being questioned about the money, whereas K. asks “and why not” in an attempt to mock the officials’ reaction, toying with the literal meaning of her statement. G.’s following utterance once again expresses his disbelief of the situation by repeating the phrase “gave them herself,” emphasizing again the active role the government official had in receiving and accepting the bribe. At this point, both N. and G. utter the title of the government official—a vice president—and in doing so highlight how high the corruption runs, attempting another mockery of her position by stipulating what it would be if she was the “minister of justice” that she could be since they are considered by the participants to be just as corrupt, which becomes clear in their later utterances. In the following lines, N. makes it explicit how such people would “think” such behaviors to be “normal.” It is exactly because they are the ones who create such laws that benefit them, and how such a behavior as taking bribes and helping yourself to government money in the form of “bonuses” would be “legal” when it is they, themselves, that create such laws.

The lines of dialogue that ensue are offered in the shape of directly addressing the government official, where G. asks straightforwardly “what is this law?” adding the *be** particle for emphasis, and N. latches onto his question with the candid offense of “you made it yourself!”:

- 23 N: so it was legal, but what is the law, who decided it!
24 G: what is this law!? *Be**=
25 N: =you made it yourself!

At this point, after creating a shared enactment of *oplakvane* (illustrating the “situation”) and constructing the image of the “other” within the same interaction as all that is deemed “bad,” in the next lines the participants offer the *oplakvane*’s culminating act of evaluation—anger at the absurdity of such impudence illustrated in the behavior of the vice president:

- 26 G: fuck its mother, in this!
27 N: yes! Yes
28 G: in this pauper country! Ah
29 N: but for how. So one structure=
30 G: =as if we are in a crisis=
31 N: =one structure
32 K: yes exactly
33 N: which doesn’t work
34 K: that we are in a crisis
35 N: by the trade register like the health bank
36 G: ah (agreeing)
37 N: so this for me are absolutely ah such structures
38 G: but of course!
39 N: which vegetate and and suck from the people
40 G: yes!
41 N: and steal money! So these structures don’t work!
42 G: well they don’t work!
43 N: and they! Take bonuses! For this
44 G: *bre** mother!

G. is not able to contain himself and lets out the curse “fuck its mother,” to which N. agrees with a repeated “yes,” only to have G. make his indignation even more explicit with his next “in this pauper country!” When describing the country as poor, G. uses the adjective *siromashka* from the term *siromah* (an old Bulgarian term for a “pauper”). This term calls to mind a poor, wretched person from the smaller villages, often poor due to circumstances beyond his/her control, who has been neglected by fate and luck, one who is to be pitied because his/her suffering is despite their efforts. The term also evokes images of people from the poor villages during the Ottoman Empire, when people were barely trying to survive despite the outside difficulties. The term calls for endearment and desire to help. To emphasize the point, G. ends his utterance with a sigh in which the pity felt for the country can be heard—the fate of a whole country determined by “some one else’s” actions.

N. aligns the vice president and her corrupt tendencies with the government as a whole by calling it “one structure” that “doesn’t work,” while G. is still focused on the fact that the country is undergoing a(n economic) crisis that he brings up to accentuate the contrast between those who take money from the government while others are suffering as “paupers.” In the next line N. elaborates on the exact structure she is discussing—the health bank, which is a structure in addition to health care plans where the patients still have to pay fees when they visit the doctor and is separate from insurance. The health bank is exactly one of those “additional laws” government officials created only for the purpose of taking additional money from the people—similarly to the “bonuses” others assign to themselves.

N. elaborates on how such “programs” are created only for the purpose of taking money from the people, and says that these all are “exactly such structures” that are only “vegetating” and “suck [more resources] from the people,” “steal money,” and do not work. N.’s indignation climaxes in line 43 where she exclaims “and they take bonuses,” which alludes to the fact that these government officials do not do the jobs they are given, and not only get paid but take additional pay on top of what they already have not deserved. They steal continuously without providing anything in return. This sentiment is expressed also in the last two lines by N., where she directly states that if these government officials had really worked that well, the country would not have been in this plight. Here, G.’s frustration prompts another swear—*brei* mamata* (43)—or a term (*brei*), which is an exclamation equivalent to “gosh” in English, and “the mother” (*mamata*), referring to “fuck its mother” previously (a common curse in Bulgarian).

“Us” vs. “them” as Bulgarians

Within my data, the participants highlight social positions that fall between either “us” (“normal” people, lacking the mentality, not really Bulgarian) and “them” (the “others,” who have the mentality, the “real” Bulgarians). The symbolic play between these levels of identification occurs within the vacillating cultural form described by Carbaugh (1996). This co-creation of who the “others” encompass is visible in the data above and is common for enactments of *oplakvane*, where instances of behaviors, people, and institutions are offered as acts illustrating the situation in the country. Behaviors, people, and institutions within this segment include: taking bribes, not working for money, creating laws that benefit the

creators, creating unnecessary bureaucracy that causes problems, mobsters, as well as the health bank—all clumped together as representatives having the mentality. The participants do not even need to finish utterances and clarify who they are talking about. The mentality is visible and explains all; it is the link. By offering examples through *oplakvane* of who counts and who has the mentality, the participants distance themselves, making *oplakvane* serve as an indicator of them not being “those with mentality.” Within and through *oplakvane* the interactional process moves in a spiraling sequence, passing and implicating between the identities of “us” and the “others,” with each identity needing and motivating the talk about the other as the participants use it actively to distance themselves from the problematic “Bulgarian” mentality.

Verdery (1996) argues that such a moral basis (opposing the regime and anything associated with it) for community remained a division between black and white, “good” and “bad,” and was translated into “against” and “for” the Party, where the political opposition understood itself as representing the collective objective of the whole society that was betrayed by its Party. Such a “social schizophrenia” and split of persona into a “public” and “private” one is common for many Eastern European countries, where people would perform the mandatory Party-related activities at work and in the community but would “switch off” and reveal their “true” self, a self that was constantly critical of the Party and its representatives (Verdery, 1996).

Not unlike the dual economies, this “true” self could only be understood and realized in relation, as “parasitic” to the public/official one, where people’s sense of

personhood was not only dependent but required an “enemy” and “them” to be against. As a result, once the party rule was over, this notion and understanding of the self was put into question, and produced a crisis of personhood, where the “them” was gone. The almighty communists, blamed for everything for decades, were gone and people did not know what to do with their “selves,” and a new “enemy” was needed. This is where Verdery (1996) argues that among these “new others” were other nationalists but I show that in the case of Bulgarian *oplakvane*, the notion of the “others” was constructed and maintained within the enactment of *oplakvane* in the shape of all these Bulgarians, who share the dreaded “mentality”. Here, I utilize the focus of Verdery’s (1996) argument that such hatred of “otherness” and intergroup antagonism (as against Jews or gypsies) that developed in many Eastern European countries (despite them not even having large populations of said groups), is related to this separation of personal identity and the way such identity is still being redefined in relation to “appropriate” or convenient “others.”

Another cultural side effect of this dichotomy and need for opposition was the way similar behavior would be labeled as loaded with different cultural meanings based on whether they were targeting a person (subject) or a party representative. In this way, stealing from the party was “good,” not culturally reprimanded and sanctioned, if done by the people and was hurting the party, but “bad” when the party was stealing. Similarly, lying by subjects to the party and its representatives is deemed not only not problematic but often necessary and the proper response to all the bad things the Party had done to its people—which could

clearly be seen in my data—where such behaviors are culturally legitimized. I discuss the roots of such discrepancy between “legal” and “our legal” in chapter 11.

An example of NOT being a *mutra*

An example that illustrates this phenomenon within *oplakvane* is when K., N. and G. work together to create and constitute a very specific identity for K. in relation to the “mentality” (Appendix H). This occurs later in the evening and is initiated by K. who is describing how he found a roofer to help him with his house. K. provides numerous details as to how he found the particular person through a friend of a friend who recommended him, ending the narrative with: “and I work with the two of them till this day, meaning we respect each other because both of them are very punctual.”

- 1 N: it wasn't until the 3rd roof, on the 3rd recently when they were
2 and Asen told him that he though him to be a *mutra* hahaha
3 hahahaha
4 G: hehehehe
5 N: but we laughed so much! 'I' says 'I thought you were a *mutra*!'
6 G: ehehehe
7 N: hahahaha

Here, N. inserts a comment that directs the attention to a specific part of the segment with her “it wasn't until the 3rd roof, on the 3rd recently when they were, and Asen [the roofer] told him that he thought him [K.] to be a *mutra*. Hahaha K.! hahahaha.” Even though all join N.'s laughter, she still emphasizes the ridiculousness of the notion of K. being a *mutra* with “we laughed so much! 'I,' he says, 'thought you were a *mutra*!'” as they continue to laugh. I have described the concept of the *mutra* as a cultural marker for a particular identity in chapter 4, and

here I will just remind that the *mutra* is a wealthy but uneducated ex-police/secret service/muscle who has accumulated his wealth by connections and in service to mobsters or mobster-politicians. One can identify the *mutri* by their clothes (track suits, leather jackets, gold chains, weapons, sunglasses), general appearance (skinheads, thick necks, very large), and possessions (numerous gold chains, brand name clothing and accessories, jeeps, and bats), as well as their general aggression and lack of work ethics (their main position and profession is “muscle”). At this point K. remarks as to his reaction to A.’s words: “my stomach was hurting from laughing, I say, ‘be* A., where have you seen a *mutra* to dig holes with you?!’”:

- 8 K: but cause he I when he remembered, I my stomach was hurting
9 from laughing, I say, be* Asene, where have you seen a mutra to dig
10 holes with you?! Hahaha
11 N: but no he was interesting the first the first right, his first job was here.
12 And the second third fifth day right I come home and meet him right
13 the craftsman here
14 G: yes
15 N: I say, hello, where is Kircho? ‘how where? On the roof!’ I say, well
16 alright. And at the end already of of of the repair he says ‘hey, for the
17 first time I see’ says ‘chorbadgij who works more than us.’ Cause he
18 is up there before them, and controls everything, watches, and helps.
19 G: yes
20 N: says ‘for the first time I see’ says ‘chorbadgij who works more than
21 me!’ hehe

This point of K. working together with the roofers is highlighted immediately one more time by N.: “and the second, third, fifth day [of the job], right, I come home and meet him right the craftsman [A.], and say, ‘Hello, where is K.’ ‘how where? On the roof!’ ... and at the end already of of of the repair he says ‘hey, for the first time I see,’ he says,’ a *chorbadgij* [Turkish word] who works more than us.’ Cause he’s up there [on the roof] before them [the workers], and controls everything, watches, and

helps.... He says, 'for the first time I see, he says, 'a *chorbadgij* who works more than me!'"

It is important to know the background of the cultural term *chorbadgij* (Чорбаджия), a term appropriated from Turkish during the Ottoman occupation, that is *çorbacı* in Turkish, and has several meanings: in the Ottoman Empire it was an official rank in the enichar corpus (described in chapter 3) that was a commanding military division and approximately corresponds to the rank of a colonel. In the areas with a predominant Christian population, as was the Bulgarian area, *chorbadgii* were the members of the village elite (rich traders, money lenders, and large landowners). They were frequently placed by the Ottoman Empire as representatives in various administrative positions (taxation or the judicial system). Thus, the term became closely related to such administrative occupations and was dependent entirely on the local Ottoman authorities (where not all rich and influential representatives of the subjugated population were *chorbadgii*, nor were all *chorbadgii* the riches and most influential).

After the Liberation from Ottoman occupation and with the change of the political system, the frequency and use of the term has decreased, but it has also changed to accommodate for this change. These days, the term *chorbadgij* is used to describe well-known, rich people who have influence in a particular area; business owners, directors. However, it does have the connotation of being connected with those in power (via personal relations), and it does evoke the behaviors that were developed during the Ottoman presence (having connection with the occupant power in order to get ahead, distrust, etc.). Thus, by utilizing this particular term, A.

is alluding to not just a rich, influential person but one who has achieved this influence in a particular way, through personal connections and maintaining “good” connections to those in power.

And so, a very specific identity for K. is constructed and managed within this instance. Interactionally, K. aligns himself with the people he “respects” because they are always “punctual” (the term is used to signify not only people being on time but also following up on what they have promised), and distances himself from the image of a *mutra*. One has to be “aware” of what *mutra* and *chorbadgij* are. I have already explained in detail the cultural and contextual meaning of these terms. Suffice it to say that both are very much associated with the concept of “mentality” and all that is blamed for the Bulgarian situation.

Another aspect of the Bulgarian national identity that K. is identified against is the questionable work ethic. A. has never seen a *chorbadgij* or *mutra* to work so much (equally with the workers) and K. and the workers “respect each other” very much because of their “punctuality”—the main thing that differentiates K. from the *mutri* and *chorbadgii* even though he does exhibit some of the other main indexes, namely the “jeep/expensive car”, and lives in a large house. In an earlier cycle of the *oplakvane*, people are mentioned to have thought of K. as a *mutra* because of his car and how incredible this is has been emphasized several times—the differences between him and such representatives of the mentality have been highlighted via laughter. Work ethic is a big indicator against the mentality. This instance serves to show and “prove” how different he is from such “others” as even a “craftsman” would judge him as a very hard worker, thus granting K. the ultimate cultural

approval and recognition. By utilizing these particular terms, K. is distancing himself from all connected to the mentality.

Semantic dimensions: The “others”

Several semantic dimensions, or value sets of cultural meaning, can be derived from the participants’ speech, that define the ways in which the “others” are delineated: having/not having connections to power, corrupt/not corrupt, lazy/hard working, and illegal/legal. I examine the conceptualization of the mentality within *oplakvane*, and who “counts” as the “other” along these dimensions. The participants offer numerous instances of problematic situations and people when enacting *oplakvane*, where even who counts as “they” becomes unclear, vague, and generalized since it is the behavior and the thought behind it (the mentality) that becomes focal. I call this “the generalized other,” or just “the other,” to emphasize the fluidity of people who fit the cultural symbol and are used as examples by the participants.

The “others” embody the abovementioned negative characteristics. In other words, the concept of the “others” is where the personal story and the public one meet. It is where the grand code of national mentality is illustrated by each participant’s examples of the Bulgarian “situation,” where people, Bulgarians other than the narrator-participant, are described as having this mentality, and are blamed as the problem. Thus, *oplakvane* becomes the tool of “proving” one is NOT part of the mass, part of Bulgarians with the mentality, and therefore the problem. As I have illustrated in chapter 7, this seems to be one of the functions of *oplakvane*—not only to celebrate a particular common identity but also to

discriminate between those who are the cause for the problems in the country and those who are aware of the mentality and are not the cause of the situation.

Having/not having connections

The participants provide multiple instances defining whom the “others” are, and some of them overlap with categories and expletives mentioned previously. Some of the instances are general: the “others” are clients who come to an office with the sole purpose of starting a quarrel; the local government officials who take bribes openly, do not perform their job, and manipulate elections; gypsies who are protected by the law, take advantage of the system, and steal anything that is not nailed to the ground; bankers who are scamming innocent people; and mobsters who have overrun the country, “oligarchs.” But mostly, it includes those who are somehow connected to those in power (frequently linked to socialist/communist relations) and benefit from these connections: being supportive of the *mutri*—either being them, or trying to be like them, admiring a layer of society famous for its stupidity, aggression, and the illegal ways they make their money.

Often the reference to the *mutri* is made by alluding to one’s music choices (specific pop-folk style with illicit and offensive lyrics), style of dressing (gold chains, track suits as formal wear, black sunglasses), cars (jeeps and SUVs), job occupation (security, general muscle, police), connections to the government, evasion of the law and imprisonment, and general demeanor (threatening, ready to start a fight, carrying bats), an example of which I just offered in the previous section. The *mutri* are either ex-police (and placed as such because of their connections to government official during socialism/communism as part of the

secret service), ex-customs officials, security of government officials, or have received their position through their connections to politicians. The label of *mutra* is associated with any position that results from connections and does not require qualifications or education.

Similarly, within instances of *oplakvne*, other representatives of “the others” as connected to those in power include any inefficient government officials. Their inefficiency is connected to their landing of said position (one that does not require credentials and experience) by having connections to the politicians of the hour. In general, anyone who may, in any shape or form, indicate lack of experience but holds a high ranked position is viewed as connected. This has an interesting implication for Bulgarians abroad: since Bulgarians were not allowed to travel outside of the country during socialism/communism (considering the country was not fully democratic until the 90s), present day Bulgarians abroad are wary of meeting each other outside of the country as the assumption is still that only those “connected” can afford to be outside of the country. And if they are connected, that makes them threatening and untrustworthy as one does not know whom they are connected to. Such guardedness persists even to this day despite many Bulgarians traveling outside of the country by other means than connections.

Corrupt/not corrupt

Those with the mentality allow and thrive off of corruption. Whether it is doctors who want “additional” fees and payments or policemen who pull you over just to ask for money with the standard “What are we going to do now?” A

participant provided an example of such corruption describing how highways “are built” in Bulgaria:

this the Skull [nickname for a mobster] now made a firm, a fake one, and hires people to work and gives them very little money... for example ... you have worked 5000, he gives you 1000... and so.

No further statement is made to elaborate exactly what the Skull is doing but the participants seem to understand each other, and the participant finishes his act of *oplakvane* merely by “do you understand,” to which his conversant answers with a simple “I do,” both concluding the instance as part of the enactment with emphatic “and so” repetition. But what is the meaning of this instance? The participants navigate this interaction and provide instances that, on the surface, do not seem congruent and are partial. However, these instances do have a clear protagonist—the “other,” Bulgarians with a specific mentality—the common thread that connects these instances and provides the backdrop, the cultural milieu, and framework against which the participants view, understand, and construct themselves. In this case the “Skull” is hiring subcontractors for much less money than he received to complete the highway, and pockets the difference.

The participants count as the “other” anyone who takes money on the side, or asks explicitly for it in order to provide a “favor.” This serves as an illustration during enactments of *oplakvane*, whether it is in the shape of “bonuses” as mentioned in previous analyses, as additional laws created for the sole purpose of collecting more money for the people in the shape of “fees,” policemen who take direct “tips” in order not to give tickets when pulling over people for “imaginary” driving violations, politicians who take money from EU funding for the maintenance

and development of the country's infrastructure, and then do not perform any changes, etc.

Lazy/hard working

Those with the Bulgarian mentality are known to have questionable work ethics, are lazy, want to get paid without doing the job, and generally look for jobs through connections and relatives, asking for an office/desk job, describing the position as “something, like, hanging in an office, being a manager or whatever” (data). I was even scolded by participants when saying I have trouble not having a job in addition to doing research during my longer stay there: *Kakav chovek si ti be*, da iskash da rabotish? Bulgarite 90% ne iskat da rabotjt, iskat v cafeneta da stojt cij den* (“What kind of person are you, be* that you want to work? Bulgarians, 90% don't want to work, want to sit in cafes all day”) was the participants' response.

However, what counts as good ethics/working hard is situated within the particular historical context, where tricking others and tricking the system are not considered the same, as illustrated in the participants' speech. An example of behaviors representing this duality of meaning comes from an interaction within the service office I observed. The office had not received a payment from another contractor for performed services—something this contractor had been doing regularly. The manager explained that “it's not just those who do not have the ability to pay but also those who can and say ‘wait, all others don't pay ... why don't we do the same’,” thus describing what she perceived to be a general tendency of people with professional, business relationships to not pay each other for services, regardless of whether they have the money available or not.

This is a common occurrence even when the relationship is based on a contract, where people would still play with the deadline, claim they are waiting for the money from somewhere else, the end result being a vicious cycle, where every one pays it forward, and “you cannot blame others for not being able to pay if they themselves are waiting on money.” The “padding” and creation of economic shortages because someone on the line is not “ready” or because the materials are not available, etc., developed during socialism. It created and encouraged a situation in which managers are entirely dependent on the lower ranks and their “ability” to perform or provide, resulting in the frequency of such situations. And even though what the perpetrators are doing is not correct, all you can do is wait it out since you know the same is happening to you. Thus, “flexible” work ethics based on such cultural understandings of proper action and social relations is created and one fits the dimension depending on the position they claim for themselves within enactments of *oplakvane*.

Illegal/legal

The behaviors mentioned are problematic because they play the line of legality. In some instances, however, similar behaviors do not count as representative for the mentality and present the speaker as exempt from it. How is this discrepancy culturally managed becomes significant as to understanding the role of *oplakvane*. For example, in one of the cycles of *oplakvane* within the dinner event, N. describes an instance where the accountant in her office has submitted all necessary paperwork but since the bureaucratic system is full of mistakes, the firm

receives a note for delayed payment. The boss is threatened with a ban on leaving the country until all paperwork is in order.

Such an occurrence, where people have submitted all requirements and the mistake comes from the system itself, are frequent in Bulgaria, and one of the many topics for *oplakvane*. The participants, being used to such occurrences, respond “appropriately:” N., laughingly, describes how the accountant in her office called the bureaucrats and asked for an explanation by exaggerating the situation and pretending that her boss is at the airport unable to leave for a very important business trip because of this mistake on the system’s side. All was settled after the phone call even though the bureaucrat still insisted (in a very typically Bulgarian way, as N. highlights) that it is not her problem. We can see the participants showing support and approval of the accountant lying in order to get things checked out when it is not her fault.

The fact that the system would immediately send a threatening letter before checking if everything has been successful on their end is also very commonplace. Lying to get out of such a situation is considered the only proper way in this case: G., even though not familiar with the firm or the paperwork, is able to relate exactly due to the common cultural experience and the widely available understanding of how bureaucracy and “others” who are in charge of it work in Bulgaria. G. responds appropriately by relating to how stressful this must have been for the accountant (“how would not your blood pressure raise oh my... because the woman knows she has done everything she had to”) while N. focuses on the way “the others” treat people by describing that they “mock and torture” people.

The participants' frustration is understandable because just a phone call is never sufficient to deal with such mistakes. Once the letter has been sent, the boss of the firm has to personally go to the appropriate municipal building, spend a day traveling from one bureaucratic location to another, until finally a few days pass and the appropriate officials acknowledge the receipt of the money and pass it along the necessary bureaucratic line until the note "do not let out of the country" is erased (since it should not have been there to begin with). Knowing all the red tape that has to be dealt with, however, people come up with creative ways to deal with such situations—informed and created within a system of mistrust, lying, and out-cheating one another. In this way, by lying as to the emergency of the situation, the accountant is employing several culturally informed ways of dealing with this situation (all learned during a particular context):

- She is attempting to speed through the administrative process (by putting the responsible parties directly in the spotlight).
- She is talking directly to the administration that may allow her to either offer "other services" or encouragement for the administration's representative (Bribe? No, in this case, it will be filed culturally under "favor").
- By mentioning that her boss is at the airport "demanding" things to be fixed, she is letting the administration representatives imagine various things about who the boss may be (it is possible he/she is a *mutra*, or knows someone in a higher position) and may cause problems if he/she has enough power and connections.

The accountant in this story is utilizing all behaviors that may usually be associated with the “others” and the mentality, but here, since they are used against the “others” and the government representatives, they are not labeled as the “mentality”, and are considered to be an appropriate response to an overbearing and problematic system. I discuss this spectrum of what constitutes illegal/legal and its development within the historical context in chapter 11. Here the focus is on how participants label behaviors to culturally manage their identities within enactments of *oplakvane* within this spectrum.

Coding personhood

Each cultural act of complaining contains portals into distinctive cultural worlds, each needing to be understood on its own terms. Moreover, by comparing the acts, we can find similarities across them, thus enriching our sense of what is accomplished communicatively in such acts. It is toward the objectives of finding distinctive and common features that the following analyses move. Thus, scenes where *oplakvane* occur implicate an interactionally based and historically grounded system (Carbaugh, 1996) and the culturescape (of mentality as developed during the Ottoman times and socialism) attached to it. *Oplakvane*, then, as a way of speaking about identities as connected to the mentality, and particularly the vacillating form employed within it, reveals a way of speaking about identities, social relations, and institutions in general, and a play between situated codes about what a person ought to be, how social relations are to be conducted, and the structure of the institutions they make up.

A very particular model of personhood is rendered appropriate within the enactments of *oplakvane*. On one level there are the behaviors for enacting the practice itself that can be extrapolated from the interaction. On another level one gets glimpses of what constitutes being a Bulgarian for the participants. And this second understanding of personhood is also multilayered, since within the enactment of *oplakvane* the participants offer instances of all that is negative and all that is related to the mentality on one side. In doing so they also implicitly offer insight as to what the speakers consider to be “normalcy” or “ought to be” for those who are not afflicted with the mentality. The audience can see both what is deemed problematic within the present day situation in the country under the label of the mentality and provided by the participants; they also distance themselves from such behaviors and thus offer insight into their own perceptions of what things “should” be.

The identity is constituted and managed within moments of interaction and particularly through enactments of *oplakvane* through which a vacillating form of identification as “we”, the “normal people left within Bulgaria” vs. the “others”, those with the mentality developed over a long period as the general common identity of Bulgarian-ness, and the Bai Ganio way, is achieved. Through *oplakvane*, this duality is managed since if one can partake in the practice and provide instances of who is “problematic” and responsible for the Bulgarian situation, then they, themselves, cannot be it. By enacting *oplakvane*, they make a clear distinction between “us” and “them,” between the people subjugated and affected by the Bulgarian mentality and those reinforcing and recreating it. Only by offering an evaluation of how bad things

in the country are and offering instances of how “others” remain within the claws of this mentality, do “we,” the “normal” people distance ourselves and identify as “not that which is causing the problems.”

Cultural features of *oplakvane*

Here I summarize the cultural features of *oplakvane* that have been mentioned briefly throughout the chapters. By delineating these features, my analyses leads to the formulation of cultural premises of value and belief that I would repeat here, now that each has been illustrated separately in different chapters.

As I illustrated in chapter 4, *oplakvane* is a potent cultural term for talk (Carbaugh, 1989a) that is used in particular ways in context in order to evoke and manage a culturescape within Bulgarian discourse and that implicates specific cultural notions of personhood, action, emotion, and social relations. In chapters 5-7, I showed how the term *oplakvane* refers to a cyclical communicative practice, with delineated structure and act sequence that includes a. initiation (evaluative statements about the general situation in Bulgaria, b. uptake/response (instances that evidence the negative aspects of the Bulgarian situation, and/or provide comparative instances with different areas within or outside of the country), and c. closing (evaluative statements about the future of the country), where the cycles can be enacted numerous times within a setting and as a whole take the form of a communicative ritual (Philipsen, 1992).

This ritualistic form of the practice reaffirms and celebrates the shared communal fate of Bulgaria, and plays out a particular vacillating form of

identification, where the participants talk of themselves as divided between “us” (normal, not having the mentality) and “others” (those having the Bulgarian mentality). The mentality is another endemic discursive term that the participants use to refer to a compilation of behaviors and ways of thinking, acquired during the Ottoman and socialist times of the country. The mentality is also a discursive mode that links culturally participants’ notions of cognitive processes, biological features, and national history and identity.

Later, in chapter 8, I examine the cultural construct of the Bulgarian “situation” as a mythic form, a grand narrative as to the socio-political and economic environment in the country and the historical context that has shaped it and allows for the development of the notion of *narodopsihologia* (national psychology)—its links to the discursive mode of the mentality—a mythic narrative, that is not only evoked within enactments of *oplakvane*, but also reaffirmed. In this chapter I explore the connections and implications between the enactment of *oplakvane* and the larger narrative of the Bulgarian situation it evokes and reinforces, and the form of identification it germinates. This highlights a specific vacillating form of identity, and its semantic dimensions that, within the participants’ talk and enactments of *oplakvane*, run along aspects such as having/not having connections, corrupt/not corrupt, lazy/hard working, and illegal/legal. These analyses have led me to the formulation of general premises of value and belief that are actuated within the enactment of *oplakvane* that have been explored in the different chapters. In brackets, after each, I indicate the radiants of meaning they activate:

1. Bulgarians are connected in a state of socio-political and economical “crisis,” “chaos,” and a “situation with no exit” (sociality—dwelling, identity).
2. The Bulgarian “self” is understood as part of the national community, where all Bulgarians share a common “mentality” (identity, sociality).
3. This “situation” is never going to change because it is dependent and caused by the specific Bulgarian “mentality” (identity).
4. The Bulgarian “mentality” is a compilation of behaviors and ways of thinking forged during the many years of Ottoman occupation, communism, and the transition that ensued (identity).
5. The behaviors and ways of thinking developed and reinforced during the specific historical context are short-term oriented, and involve stealing, cheating, and “screwing” or “swindling” our fellows for personal gain (identity).
6. These behaviors and ways of thinking have been fostered and reinforced for so long that have become a biological national trait (identity, action).
7. Such a “mentality,” or compilation of “bad” behaviors, only allows for a status quo of politico-economic and social crisis (identity, action).
8. If such a “mentality” is biological, nothing can be done to thrust the country out of the “crisis” status quo (action).
9. Thus, Bulgarians are forever doomed in a state of “crisis,” “chaos” and a “situation with no exit” (dwelling, emotion, action).
10. This “situation” and the inability to change the mentality make Bulgarians angry, frustrated, and resigned, as they cannot do anything about the biological aspects of the problem (emotion).

11. There is an element of pride connected to having the mentality, however, as only a really “tough” creature can survive such conditions and situation for so long, and even laugh at the circumstances at times (emotion, identity).
12. Only a “real” Bulgarian understands this vicious cycle and the reasons for it (identity).

The cultural term *oplakvane* and the communicative practice it refers to have implications not just for identity or personhood, relations and sociality, but also about a specific dwelling, emotion, and action, where, when each hub of meaning is placed on identity/personhood, action/agency, emotion, or dwelling, the radiants of meaning connect and implicate the rest:

- Identity and personhood – the cultural notion of Bulgarian-ness as defined by and through a specific Bulgarian “mentality” and within a particular historical and geographic context.
- Action and agency – no action will “save” Bulgarians because of the intricate symbiotic connection between the Bulgarian “mentality” and the “situation.”
- Emotion – anger, frustration, and resignation, as well as pride (of our survival skills) are fostered through the constant re-playing of the Bulgarian “situation” within *oplakvane* and are the only “proper” way of feeling during the enactment of *oplakvane*.
- Dwelling – the world of Bulgarians is a world of chaos and hopelessness, where nothing works despite its beautiful landscape.

Chapter summary

In this chapter I addressed the question of what specific messages and meanings of and about personhood are constituted within enactments of *oplakvane*, or how and what particular common identity of Bulgarian-ness is constructed within enactments of the practice and describe the general cultural features of the practice. This common identity is constituted within and through *oplakvane* in the form of a vacillating form of identification as described by Carbaugh (1996).

Oplakvane, then, allows for identification (through a vacillating form) along several dimensions, or namely, having/not having connections, being corrupt/not corrupt, being lazy/hard working, and illegal/legal, and thus reaffirms a notion of the generalized “other,” all those having the “mentality” (having connections, being corrupt, lazy, and acting illegally) as the most “Bulgarian,” exhibiting *Bulgarishtina* (Bulgarian-ness) and *Bai Ganiovshina* (the Bai Ganio way). My findings based on analyses of various data indicate a vacillating form of identification that occurs within *oplakvane*, where the participants align themselves with either “us” (those without the mentality) or the “others” (all exhibiting behaviors congruent with the mentality) as the larger common identity of *Bulgarishtina* and the Bai Ganio way. By examining these forms of identification, larger conclusions as to the particular culturally distinctive ways of understanding personhood can be drawn.

Oplakvane, and the identification achieved through its enactment, are also telling something more about how personhood is understood within the particular community. This conflicted identity, that includes both the mentality as well as the push away from it, is rooted deeply within Bulgaria’s historical context and

geographic location, as between the west and the east, between its still comparatively recent agricultural status and its quick transition into modernity, where the common identity is fractured into two camps: those exhibiting the “mentality” and those subjected by it. And this is where the crucial role of enacting *oplakvane* lies—not only the common identity is celebrated but it also allows for explaining the lack of political and socio-economic change.

CHAPTER 10

“WE ALL COMPLAIN”: *OPLAKVANE* IN A CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

In this chapter, I provide a cross-cultural comparison between *oplakvane*, and Israeli griping as described by Katriel (1985), exploring their similarities and differences as cultural terms for and ritualized forms of communication within their structures and functions. There are striking similarities between the terms, the practices they refer to, and their functions. Yet there is a focal difference in that unlike with griping that is recognized as a separate communicative practice, *oplakvane* is not. Since the participants do not perceive *oplakvane* as a separate self-contained communicative practice, it tends to appear at various discursive times, and affects the conceptualization of agency and inactivity available for the participants. Griping is recognized as a communicative practice whose purposes are to let out steam and frustration and build togetherness (Katriel, 1985) and is at times perceived as futile and self-serving by the participants, since it does not provide solutions. *Oplakvane*, on the other hand, has similar purpose of letting out anger and frustration but, as it builds a sense of togetherness, it is perceived as inevitable, a result of the larger situation, a domain of those lacking the “mentality”.

Often, when I mention that I study a communicative practice similar to what can be translated as “complaining,” many people express understanding and quickly provide examples from within their own speech communities. Complaining, in one shape or another seems to be a widely recognizable and utilized communicative practice. I remember even my own attention to it was piqued by reading Katriel’s

(1985) study on Israeli “griping”. However, each instance of complaining has its own particulars within the specific community that are different and unlike any other exactly because they are constitutive of the specific cultural community. Thus, each type and style of complaining exhibits and perpetuates different parts, symbols, and meanings of its respective culture. Focusing and understanding the nuances of similarities as well as differences of each allows for a deeper understanding of not only the larger taxonomy of speech forms, styles, and actions but also of the many variegated ways in which we all do and recreate culture as deeply seated within a specific historical environment and context.

Here I offer a brief overview of Katriel’s (1985) examination of the speech mode (translated as) griping and delineate first the similarities, and then the differences between griping and *oplakvane*. Even though the two communicative terms and the practices they refer to have multiple aspects in common in terms of features of the terms, structure (topics, participants, setting, purpose, instrument, key, and act sequence), and function, the two also differ in significant ways in said features, structure (topic, participants, purpose, key), and function. Since there is overlap between the similarities and differences, I will elaborate on each set first and offer a chart to highlight the distinctions (Table 3).

Katriel (1985) identifies griping as a speech activity with a “well-bound” and recognizable speech event, known as “griping party”, even though not restricted to this context (368). She delineates the structure and functions of this activity within the Israeli discourse and argues that the practice has developed as a particular interactional routine in the Israeli social life and can be understood as a verbal

ritual, per Philipsen's (2002) definition and functioning to reaffirm a shared identity.

Similarities between *oplakvane* and griping

***Oplakvane* and griping: the terms**

Both terms have an aspect of affect to them that links them to an expression of anguish connected to a problematic local situation. Bulgarian dictionaries offer the following: *oplakvash* (past unfinished tense)—to lament for someone or something, to mourn with a wail. Colloquial: To mourn a dead person. Alive to *oplachesh me*—I am in such misfortune that you could mourn me even while still alive. I am in a very wretched state. To mourn loudly someone who is in a very bad state, to pity mournfully, to mourn, to cry, to bereave. It is important to notice here the aspect of affect that is intrinsic and very powerful within the meaning of the term. Even though it is frequently used to express a “complaint” (in an official documentation sense as well as an everyday sense) the term still has the very strong sense of “bereavement” and vocalizing of pain that is associated with a cry over something lost, and thus renders the one doing *oplakvane* in a situation of immobility and inability for action.

In her 1985 article, Katriel offers a glimpse into what Israelis recognize as “griping,” or “a colloquial form with native roots rather than a foreign-sounding borrowing,” where the term Israelis use, *lekater* is distinct from “to complain” and cannot be used interchangeably even though they both convey plaintive speech acts (369). This, Katriel (1985) argues, suggests an ideological crisis, where Israelis’

social togetherness is based on a common fate as opposed to common faith, and it is this ideological crisis of a common identification and the connection to a common fate that has caused the rise in the griping mode and its ritual (370). The origins of the term that translates as “griping” can be traced back to the sound a cat makes, a steam engine, and even back to a particular national character (369), whereas *oplakvane* primarily connects to what can be translated as “mourning” and heavily emphasizes the aspect of lamenting over something lost that cannot be retrieved.

Topic

One of the major similarities between the two modes of communication is the topics participants choose. Within griping, the topic is focused on a problem within the public domain and social life (things people feel they should have been able to deal with through some “collective social effort”) but beyond their powers (372). This is very much reflected in the Israeli attitude towards the mode itself, that is fueled by this sense of frustration caused by the perceived inability for social action and involvement in the communal life, fueled by a concern with the public domain and a perceived lack of outlets and means to satisfy this need for participation.

This, in turn, transforms the mode, according to Katriel (1985), in a self-addressed mode, in which the consumers of griping are grippers themselves. In this way, there is focus on personal problems only insofar as their discussion is connected to aspects of the current larger Israeli Situation, and thus, only certain people can afford to partake (as Katriel illustrates, a jobless person would not be said to “gripe,” only a well-off one). Personal problems can be mentioned only “in

disguise,” “presented and dressed” as public ones, related to the Situation (as the shared fate that shapes the Israeli communal life and their sense of solidarity). It is important to note here, though, that it involves only aspects and problems of the Situation (and the fabric of Israeli social life) that someone can actually do something about, and not problems that transcend fate (372).

Similarly, in *oplakvane*, as I have illustrated in chapters 8 (the myth of the Bulgarian situation) and 9 (common identity), topics within *oplakvane* connect to the larger narrative of the situation in the country, and the enactments utilize instances from everyday life only inasmuch as they connect and illustrate the Bulgarian situation and the underlying “mentality” that has caused them. In this way, one can *se oplakva* about anything that can be linked to the way “things are in Bulgaria,” referring to the socio-economic and political situation resulting from the “mentality” developed over time, where topics include interactions with “others,” dealing with corrupt government officials, aggressive people, people with connections, etc.

Participants

The participants for griping as well as *oplakvane* can be a wide range of people, friends, acquaintances, with the exception of outsiders (who do not understand the Israeli/Bulgarian situation respectively) and children, or anyone who can solve it (those possessing the mentality in Bulgaria). Even strangers are included (where a less specific topic about the general status quo can be employed) and both griping and *oplakvane* can be utilized as an opening and invitation to a conversation. Both griping and *oplakvane* similarly reconstruct and shape the

Situation (the socio-economic and political status quo within the country) through discourse. it becomes an entity in its own right, more and more lamentable (literally in the case of *oplakvane*).

Setting

The setting for griping is frequently, but not restricted to, Friday night gatherings (griping parties) where talk is central and outsiders are not present. *Oplakvane* also is at its peak during similar events (whether dinners or long lunches), and it is not restricted to only such settings, where even at public places (office, queues, bus stops, hairdressers, etc.) people may briefly have an interchange that consists of acts of *oplakvane*. The difference within enactments of *oplakvane* in more intimate settings (meals between close friends and family) and more public ones is in how many cycles, how specific the topics, and how close the participants are. Similar to griping, in *oplakvane*, the closer the participants are, the more specific the topic choices.

Purpose

As illustrated in chapter 3, the cultural term *oplakvane* in Bulgarian discourse refers to a specific communicative practice, the enactment of which in the form of a ritual (chapter 7) and serves two major purposes—letting out frustration and confirming a shared communal fate. Phrased in these terms, the practice bares striking similarities with the speech mode of ‘griping’ described by Katriel (1985) that also takes the form of a communication ritual and implicates the Israeli Situation (378).

In the case of griping, Katriel (1985) describes the following main purposes:

a. to relieve tension and frustration (thus, frequently seen as the anti-solution and problematic by critics) and b. “togetherness” (integrative function) and a reaffirmation of a common fate (that includes joke telling), where both disappear at times of war (373-374). Within *oplakvane*, the practice serves to a) let out frustration and tension from everyday problems and b) identify who one can trust as being one of “us” and not part of “the others” (possessing and exhibiting the mentality). Like griping, if one is to downplay the difficulties or sufferings of the fellow member who *se oplakva* by disagreeing or stating that the issue is “not really a problem” this would be interpreted as a rejection of the ritual and the sense of togetherness.

Channel/Instrument

An appropriate channel for griping, Katriel describes (1985), is face to face but allows for both phone as well as letters. As of now, my data indicates a similar channel, with preference to face to face and phone.

Key

In the case of griping, Katriel (1985) describes two key elements: 1) a sense of entrapment within the enactment of the event, as well as plaintiveness and frustration, and even surprise at their participation (since they recognize it as not being effective); and 2) a sense of togetherness, where the bond is the common fate bounding Israelis in the Situation (377). Similarly for *oplakvane*, these two keyed elements are present: 1) a sense of frustration and anger at the situation and the

“wretched” Bulgarian “mentality;” and 2) a sense of shared doomed fate, togetherness within hopelessness as well as dread for the country’s future as a whole.

Act sequence

The act sequence of griping follows a spiral pattern, with rounds proceeding from one to another producing the sense of solidarity centered around a common theme, with each act in some providing examples of “more of the same” (similar to joking). As Katriel (1985) described it, a “centripetal” form (moving from the general to the local) is used when strangers are present, and “centrifugal” form (moving from the local to the general) is used among well-acquainted people (377). In this way, if someone is to join later, it would be easy to pick up on the theme and contribute with another expression of their common ground. Katriel (1985) delineates the phases of griping as;

- 1) Initialization: opens the interaction with a comment on some news item illustrating the Situation in Israel;
- 2) Acknowledgement: offers comments that expand on the opener or a similar item, and shows willingness to enact the ritual;
- 3) Chain effect: more of the same, progressing from one sub-theme to another, into a round;
- 4) Shared fate: terminates the ritual by dramatizing, often with a specific expression, such as “That’s life,” “It’s no joke,” “Things are getting worse every time,” “The Situation is real lousy,” or through a loss of emotive synchronization (378).

The structure of *oplakvane* constitutes a series of enactments that take a cyclical form (described in detail in chapter 6). Such cyclical form has been previously analyzed as a form of solidarity in Carbaugh (1989). The cyclical form of *oplakvane* consists, similarly to griping, of:

1. Initialization: an introductory statement that contains negative evaluation (criticism) of “things” in general in Bulgaria or a specific area of the country, and opens the interchange.
2. Acknowledgement: shows willingness to partake in the ritual by
 - a. offering an example or instance illustrating how “bad things” are
 - b. offering an alternative to the abovementioned instances of things in the country as a possible comparison with other countries (general) or areas within the country (specific).
3. Shared fate: the ritual is concluded with a summarizing statement (again negative, criticism), referring to the “country” as a whole and how bleak it is or its people’s future is, and how they do not deserve any better.

Once the a cycle of *oplakvane* is initiated, and the practice has been acknowledged by the participants present, the initial evaluation can be reduced to few common phrases, such as “It’s horror,” “You know,” “It’s scary,” and “Scary stuff,” as people have already shown their willingness to partake.

Katriel (1985) argues that griping has given rise to two additional verbal modes: 1) meta-griping (instances of griping that address the low “morale” among Israelis that produced griping to begin with), whose purpose is to make grippers aware of the practice and remove themselves from the mode, and 2) anti-griping

(still focusing on the practice) that is more optimistic in tone and focuses on the “doing something” part (378-379). Both illustrate how verbal rituals shape and constitute the social experiences of the cultural community’s members as they enact them.

Function

According to Katriel (1985) the griping ritual provides context for the members of the community to give form and experience to the central problem of identification in their culture, as they reaffirm the status of a “public interest” and “community” (370-371). Both griping and *oplakvane* as communicative rituals provide such a context for the members of their cultures to experience and express areas deemed to be focally problematic in their respective cultures, and reaffirm a common identity within a particular contextualized fate.

We can see griping evolving as a particular communication event and mode that constitutes a readily available pattern for the structuring of plaintive talk. Within the context of situated talk griping is viewed as a dispreferred social strategy or the “antithesis to social action.” *Oplakvane* exists in a analogous domain. “The hen that clucks the most, provides the least eggs” and “whoever is silent, a prettier word says” are famous adages, and allude to the value of action over talk. So to use Katriel’s words, there is no surprise that if talk is not preferred as a social strategy, and gets in the way of social action, then acknowledging that the *oplakvane* mode is just that (a practice letting out steam and creating togetherness by identifying “us” vs. “them”) would reduce their “reality” to mere “useless” talk.

In this way, both practices share a tendency of the participants to dramatize major cultural problems within their social environment, and provides a social context and setting for the dealing with feelings of frustration, as well as fostering a sense of identity. Understanding how such informal verbal rituals shape the social experience of the individuals participating in them provides further clues as to the formation of the cultural reality of social worlds and communal lives.

Distinctions between *oplakvane* and *griping*

***Oplakvane* and *griping*: the terms**

The main difference that surfaces throughout both the terms' features, their respective practices' structures, and their functions concerns the recognition of each term as referring to a communicative practice. While *griping* is well recognized to identify a particular communicative mode and is even used to delineate an event in connection to the speech mode (*griping parties*), the Bulgarian communicative practice is rarely identified directly by the participants with the term *oplakvane*, and reluctantly at that, exactly due to the lexical meaning of the term and the connotations it brings: "lamenting" and "mourning" as intricately linked to "complaining" infuse the term with not only strong emotions but an underlying meaning of inaction and lack of agency.

When one "laments," *oplakva* something, this person is crying over a deed/behavior/situation that cannot be changed. Thus acknowledging the type of talk as such only serves to highlight the futility of enacting it—labeling it "just words

and no action”—something deemed unworthy as illustrated by the adages mentioned in the previous section.

Topics

Event though the topics of *oplakvane* are very similar, how they connect to the Bulgarian situation and the participants’ agency in particular differs from those in griping. As mentioned in the earlier section, the topics within griping revolve around problematic aspects within the public domain and the situation but are perceived by the participants to be fixable through collective effort even though they are beyond the participants’ powers. Unlike griping, within *oplakvane* the source for these problems is the common “mentality,” the way of being and thinking that has been learned during a long historical period. Thus, through *oplakvane*, the common shared fate is celebrated and affirmed but as social fate of “us” (without the mentality) and “them” (those with it). This sense of solidarity is created and reaffirmed via the enactment of *oplakvane*, where by sharing instances of problems in daily life, the participants identify who they can relate to and trust, the “us”—because if instances of the problem with the present day socio-political and economic situation are not happening to you, then you must be one of those causing it. Unlike griping, within *oplakvane* only aspects and problems of the situation are mentioned that someone can actually do something about—but those some are “the others” causing it.

In this way, similar to griping, *oplakvachi* are the consumers of their own talk and the focus on personal problems is only inasmuch as it connects to the mentality. The participants are not as restricted and can enact *oplakvane* as long as they can

connect their instance to this dichotomy of “us” vs. “them” and as long as the mentality and “Bulgarian-ness” can be blamed. The only ones who could do anything about this situation, however, are those with the mentality, “the others,” those responsible and perpetuating the problems.

The instances mentioned within and during *oplakvane* serve as “evidence” for the Bulgarian situation and how problematic the mentality is (and the national identity it entails). It is the “internal” factor for all the problems in Bulgaria. In this way, the topic of *oplakvane* is similarly restricted as the one of griping: to personal problems illustrating larger social currents and contexts. It is related to the situation (and the mentality causing it) or the shared social behaviors shaped and perpetuated over time, around which the Bulgarian communal life is predicated. Only aspects of the Bulgarian cultural social life, which those with the mentality can change, are addressed. Another point of divergence between the two practices is that there are no “too serious, sacred, or delicate” topics to include in *oplakvane*. Within griping such topics are not seen, while in *oplakvane* almost anything becomes sacred since the mentality affects and destroys all that is dear.

Participants

Unlike griping, *oplakvane* can be evoked and enacted with outsiders and tourists being present, where the ritual is framed as “letting them know how things in the country are.” The ritual has a particular act that allows for this—the comparison to other countries, where an outsider can be “told” how things in his/her country are much better than in Bulgaria since there are “normal people” there. In these instances, the outsider transforms into merely a spectator, an

audience for the Bulgarians enacting the ritual and one more piece of evidence as to “how unlike everyone else” Bulgarians are.

This is the major difference between griping and *oplakvane*. Griping is ceased when outsiders (children, tourists, newcomers) are present since in front of them it turns into slander that produces embarrassment. The outsider would take the talk as informative while the insiders are well-aware of its opposite, phatic function. In such instances *oplakvane* is even presented as “informing” the outsiders of the situation within Bulgaria, since the participants perceive the talk to be revealing and educational. Thus, *oplakvane*, in its ritual form, is legitimized culturally, since one needs to tell others about the situation and identify compatriots who understand and can align with those against the mentality, yet not as a term since it alludes to the futility and reveals it as a ritual, serving only a phatic function and not revealing a “truth” about the country. Consequently, calling it by its name, as a culturally discursive Rumpelstiltskin, seems to acknowledge and disrupt the practice’s purpose.

Purpose

With both practices there is a discrepancy between the state of the country, the “reality,” and the talk about this state encapsulated within. In the case of griping, this leads to the mode being viewed as problematic in the collective perception as it seems to only aggravate the situation (where people are seen as only “sitting around and griping, not doing anything about it”). In the case of *oplakvane*, as the practice is not understood as separate from other forms of talk, the mode is considered inevitable, the only solution, since it is those who are not at

fault, those without the mentality, that are performing and enacting it and they cannot “do anything about it” but *se oplakvat*. Therefore, the talk about the situation, *oplakvane*, is perceived to be only present as it reaffirms and expresses the situation and the “reality” viewed as inevitable. In this way, the immediate “solution” proposed by anti-grippers, or the change in perceptual emphasis, pointing out the positive about the country and situation, as opposed to focusing on the negative, is not available when it comes to *oplakvane*. Its mere existence serves to legitimize the “bad” situation and state of the country, and thus, no analysis or question is focused on the practice itself as it serves to engender this notion.

Unlike griping, *oplakvane* is not perceived as anti-solution, precisely because the problem is not perceived to be the “doing something about the problems” by just anyone but specifically by those causing it, those with “mentality.” As such, *oplakvane* can be viewed as a preferred strategy since it shows “evidence” for who is who. This is one large difference with griping, where the mode is perceived as futile and self-serving exactly since it does not lead to solutions. It is formulated as a discursive tactic where, because grippers cannot do anything about the problem but cannot rid themselves of their overall concern with problems of this type, they opt for this channel of talk, even though useless.

Key

While griping as a speech mode falls within a more casual emotive domain, *oplakvane* has a distinct more serious, mournful, and deeply infused with anger feel to it. Within griping, Kariel (1985) points out the role of “slouching” as a marker, where the act of slouching paired with plaintive speech is more likely to be

recognized and interpreted as griping than complaining (377). For both practices, emotive display synchronization is necessary for the enactment of the ritual. Unlike the sense of trivialness and casualty connected to griping, the emotional performativity of *oplakvane* engenders and requires much stronger sentiments. Voices are raised, people curse, sputter, and interrupt each other. This is because *oplakvane* is not being recognized as a separate practice. Within and through the enactment the participants are expressing their genuine frustration and anger of the everyday instances representative of the mentality and the resulting situation in the country. People use the talk to share and connect via their frustrations and anger.

Functions

As mentioned in the previous sections, both practices, as communicative rituals, provide context for addressing and dealing with problematic areas within the respective situation in the country. Here, I focus on differences within griping and *oplakvane* as they relate to the construction of the “reality.” *Oplakvane* finds expression in and during dinner events but also in other non-structured situations and even small talk, exactly because it is not recognized as a separate practice, and seeps into other modes as well as an overarching style. This leads to different implications: in the case of griping, any attempt at discussing the situation and problems pertaining to it may be labeled as griping and dismissed, whereas with *oplakvane*, even though the talk cannot be easily dismissed, it is easy to reframe the “reality” of the social situation as being exaggerated as part of the enactment and not being the “real reality” in the country.

This discrepancy between how “bad” things are in Bulgaria as presented within a communicative practice, whose one goal is to let steam out, and the actual socio-political climate in the country presents practical problems for the studying of *oplakvane* as a communicative ritual. The mere acknowledging and repositioning it as such questions the participants’ version of the reality that surrounds them.

	Term	Structure							Function
		Topic	Participants	Setting	Purpose	Instrument	Key	Act Sequence	
Oplakvane	Cry, mourn, complain <i>Does not identify a comm mode</i>	Within domain of public social life <i>"Fixable" by the "others"</i>	Any one who understands the Bulgarian situation But <i>Outsiders can be included when it slips into other modes</i>	Any	-Let out frustration - Build a sense of togetherness - <i>Inevitable outcome</i>	Predominantly oral	- Frustration and anger <i>Strong emotions throughout</i>	Cyclical form	-As comm ritual, it provides context for expressing problematic areas <i>-reaffirm a "reality"</i> <i>- identify the "others"</i>
Griping	Cat, steam engine, national character <i>Does identify a comm mode</i>	Within domain of public social life <i>Should be "fixable" through collective effort but beyond powers</i>	No outsiders and children	Could be any/griping parties	-Let out frustration and tension -Build a sense of togetherness <i>-Futile, self-servant</i>	Predominantly oral	-Sense of entrapment within the enactment -Sense of togetherness <i>Trivialness, "slouching"</i>	Spiral form	-As comm ritual, it provides a context for expressing problematic areas <i>Identified as practice</i>

Table 4: Similarities and differences between Israeli griping (Katriel, 1985) and oplakvane

Chapter summary

There are significant similarities as well as a number of differences between *oplakvane* and Israeli griping as described by Katriel (1985) and highlighted in table 4. Both terms are rooted in colorful, vivid images and lexical meanings. Yet, griping identifies a recognized communicative practice, while *oplakvane* does not. Both terms refer to practices, where the topics (as connected to the larger country's situation), participants (aware of the situation), setting, instrument, key (emotions of anger and frustration, yet togetherness), act sequences (spiral and cyclical), purpose (let out the frustration, establish togetherness), and even their functions (providing context for addressing problematic areas) are very alike.

The differences between the two practices can be tracked back to the lack of recognition of *oplakvane* as a separate communicative practice, with phatic function. The term *oplakvane* is hesitantly used by the participants since it puts into question their agency and social "reality." The topics included within enactments of *oplakvane* are considered "fixable" by those with the mentality, unlike within griping, where they are beyond the participants' powers (even though achievable through collective effort). Even though there is overlap in the participants involved in both practices, with *oplakvane*, as a style, it seems to include tourists and outsiders. While griping is frequently perceived as futile and self-serving, *oplakvane* is considered inevitable.

And as different as they are, both practices and their terms highlight particular cultural notions, symbols, forms, and their meaning and tell a larger story of the localized understandings of personhood, emotions, dwelling, and action. Both

illustrate not only the functions of communication within the constitution of social life, but also their significance in shaping reality.

CHAPTER 11

“WE’LL NEVER GET BETTER”: *OPLAKVANE* AND THE CRITICAL VOICE

Introduction

In this chapter I provide a critical reflection on *oplakvane* and answer my final questions: How is *oplakvane* viewed and/or judged by the natives? What can be problematic for the particular speech community when employing and enacting *oplakvane*? For that purpose, I offer as illustration a television segment, called a rubric, for the presence of *oplakvane*, and the implications for such an occurrence, in order to voice a critical evaluation of the practice and its role in Bulgarian discursive life according to Carbaugh’s (1989/90) dimensions (object of criticism, locus of criticism, and mode of criticism), and the type of critical voice (natural, academic, and cultural). The chapter includes the description of the television segment (as a communicative event), analyses as to how *oplakvane* is employed in it, historical context that situates and informs the discourse, and my findings as to the nature of the critical voice that arise from the data itself.

The way *oplakvane* is organized as a cultural form of communication suggests more general principles of and about communication and its role in performing daily lives. Once the cultural term and the practice it refers to have been described, analyzed, and compared to other communicative modes, a particular look from a more critical stance arises from the data itself, as the participants themselves comment on the usefulness and problematicity of *oplakvane*. I briefly mention the first type of critical focus (natural) as is has already been partially addressed in the section dedicated to the term *oplakvane*, and will then highlight the second and third

(academic, and cultural), where a media piece is examined for the presence and use of *oplkavane*, and potential repercussions of such an occurrence.

One Sunday, as my family and I were leisurely lounging, a program appeared on television that caught my attention. We were all in the living room, each doing something different (reading or browsing online) with only one of us actively watching as it was right after the evening news at seven o'clock. I was not paying much attention, until an interesting segment came on—it seemed like the news (similar style, and reporters) but after the usual broadcast time and focusing on one topic. So I jumped and recorded the segment for later inspection. As I suspected, there were elements of *oplakvane* in it. First, I describe the segment, and then discuss what the relationship between this media segment and *oplakvane* is and provide insight as to the types of criticism that arise from it.

The event

This rubric (Traikova, 2012), available in Appendix I, can be understood as a communicative event that is infused with acts of *oplakvane*, where many examples of how things work in Bulgaria (in comparison with abroad) are offered, and a judgment of the Bulgarian future is implied (gloom and fatalism if things don't change). *Oplakvane* gets interwoven and utilized within the media. Even media episodes become events of *oplakvane*, because the practice explains the individual, private cases, and connects them to the general grand narrative of the Bulgarian situation and the mentality, the only reason as to why even such simple, seemingly straightforward examples (from within the legal system) are not functional in Bulgaria. Thus, I conceptualize *oplakvane* (the practice) as at times an act, at times

an event (ritualized, cyclical), at times a style (people cannot leave behind), and as such a deeply pervasive cultural practice.

Setting

Social conversations on gun control and crime, and the public discourse surrounding them, are a frequent occurrence in any public discourse: in newspaper articles, published research, news programming, editorials, everyday conversations, etc. Whatever shape they take though, these discourses are frequently parasitic and reflective as well as constitutive of the ongoing cultural understandings and terminology. These ongoing conversations employ and reflect the cultural landscape and views not only on what “crime” and “gun control” mean for the people within the specific speech community (and the rules they use to construct and interpret them) but also how the people themselves perceive their position in this world, how they are connected to others, what “proper” actions should be taken, what is “appropriate” to feel about these issues, and the vocabulary that makes them intelligible. Conversations about gun control or crime are intricate and inseparable from the cultural notions of and about the individual, the community, and the world they inhabit, as they are negotiated and contested within their cultural world. In this way, one cannot make sense of a piece of media without being aware of the cultural markers that allow and inform them. We can expect that one could get a glimpse of it as it informs and reaffirms aspects of “Bulgarian” identity within a moment of media broadcast if *oplakvane* is indeed prevalent, widely accessible, deeply felt, and commonly intelligible.

The focus here is on one episode of an “in-depth investigation” show, labeled as a “rubric” that refers to a recurring segment (or episode) produced by journalists that investigate diverse topics from everyday life, and presumes something “problematic” or in need of “criticism” on the side of the audience’s point of view. A fellow journalist defined the genre of a “rubric” in the Bulgarian television as: “a periodical (over time) part/episode of a television programming, dedicated to specific, previously known problems with a limited theme; synonymous to “short news,” “paragraph,” “sub-category,” “title,” and a “part.” The key aspect, here, is that they are aired over time and focus on “problems.”

Participants

The participants within the specific episode of “bTV The Reporters” are: the Bulgarian reporter presenting the whole segment (R); an American narrator (US1); an ABC’s reporter (US2); a young American woman, Sarah McKinley, who shot the intruder; a Bulgarian figure of authority—a law consultant (A) brought in to offer legal definitions and clarify terms for the broad audience; the Bulgarian Prime Minister Boiko Borisov, whose voice is included as a quote; the Bulgarian Director of the Commission on Internal Security and Public Order (DCISPO); Mestlan, a man introduced as an attack victim (M); and an old lady (grandma N.), who is the second introduced attack victim.

This episode shows some of the visual setting for the “investigation” that is characteristic for the rubric: the different participants are recorded in their “home;” the victims in their village, in front of their houses; the consultant and Director are at their offices, sitting behind desks; while the Bulgarian reporter is shown standing

with a microphone, directly talking to the camera. When discussing the American incident, direct footage of the United States television broadcast is shown, and the English can be clearly heard in the background. The rubric (as dictated by its genre) is set up as a dialogue, with the reporter and his “interviewees” constantly taking turns in sharing personal instances (as illustrations) or expressing an opinion on a question asked by the reporter.

Instrument

The communication instrument, or medium of communication is oral and constructed through editing, which fits with the genre of investigative “rubric,” where a focal point is the idea of “problems”—what the specific problems in Bulgaria are in terms of social, political, and economical issues—as well as the disconnect between the people (audience) and the government officials. The rubric attempts to bridge the gap by offering the two sides of the perceived dialogue through instances from the government officials and the people, while providing their own point of view by editing and cinematography as well as direct commentary included as the reporter’s direct remarks to the camera.

Ends

Several ends to this rubric can be observed: a) the media has offered a commentary on a problematic issue in Bulgaria that the audience finds of importance; b) the media has attempted to offer all sides’ “examples” to the public but has still managed to “side” with the audience by their editing and thus distancing themselves from the government; and most importantly c) the media has

utilized a very specific way of speaking, or *oplakvane*, that serves a particular function and is widely understood within the Bulgarian speech community.

Norms

The norms governing the behaviors illustrated in the rubric can be divided within the following categories: perceived Bulgarian version of US/European/Western understandings of rights, property, self-defense, and punishment vs. the Bulgarian “reality.” Throughout the rubric the two sides, or the perceived US/European/Western set of rules and definitions for “rights,” “property,” “self-defense,” and “punishment” are juxtaposed to the situation in Bulgaria, where almost identical cases are not interpreted by the judicial system in the same way, thus rendering very different results. The rubric’s structure itself focuses on the reasons for the difference of interpretation as well as context behind similar legal matters. This tension and incongruity between the two sides are negotiated within the segment and culturally resolved by underlying the “absurdity” of the Bulgarian reality that allows and perpetuates such discrepancies, and related to the Bulgarian national identity and its underlying “mentality.”

For example, the comparison between the United States self defense instance and the Bulgarian versions (Mestlan and the “grandmas”) shows something more than just issues of legislation—it illustrates norms for “proper action.” The norm is how a “proper” person “should” behave are presented as the “American” way: celebrate the defense of an innocent life (in this case, lines 1-28, the lives of both McKenley and her son) and clearly see the “right” from the “wrong.” The norms presented within the United States segment include not only the reaction of the

court and police, who say that her actions were “warranted” (24), but also of her neighbors who are celebrating her “motherly” courage by showing her their approval, and sending her gifts (24-27)— showing her that, as she says herself, “you have acted right” (27):

The police says that what she did is warranted, and people in the neighborhood completely agree: the mother is constantly getting gifts, children’s clothes, and sympathies from the people in the town. ‘For me their support means a lot because in such a difficult moment it is very important to hear from people that you have acted right.’ This dramatic story, with a happyend a la [in the manner of] America, happened during January this year [2012].

This “fairness” in the US and other countries (German, Dutch, and Belgian villages in line 172) is contrasted to the situation in Bulgaria where all but one do not get any protection, or a “right of defending their property” and even get arrested themselves (32-43, 181-193):

Despite the not few legal cases of acquitted Bulgarians who shot and even killed attackers in their own home the defense of private property with force is practically forbidden/illegal at home [Bulgaria]. If you shoot at a thief without him having attacked you, if you shoot in the back of a person who is stealing in your home or is stealing your car you will be charged and found guilty [osudeni] for premeditated murder. If some one is breaking into your summer house* [vilata] and you catch him in your own property you have the right to shoot only if he attacks you with a weapon.

R: Is it normal in a country where the robberies in village houses are an everyday occurrence and in some village regions are a real calamity the citizens to be put before the choice of robbed or found guilty?

In other words, in the United States, if someone attacks you in your own house (breaks and enters), you have the right to defend yourself (shoot and even kill the intruder), and when your deed is considered “warranted” (in this case, someone attacks you—you respond), others would show their approval and support.

In Bulgaria, on the other hand, if someone attacks you in your own house (breaks, enters, physically attacks, and threatens you), you have the right to defend yourself only with force equal in magnitude (lines 74-81), and rarely would your deed be considered “warranted”:

R: According to the law, while he is being attacked in his house, M. should have looked for a knife like the one of his attackers. Article 12 of the punishment codex is the one, which defines the so called “inevitable self-defense”. This law is created to give right to the citizens [gragdanite] to apply force and protect themselves, when their life is in danger. But the law states that the force, which we can use, has to be, I quote, “in the necessary bounds”. The absolute subjectivity of the definition of “necessary” allows judges and prosecutors to read the law as they wish.

And even though Bulgarians would mostly agree with the United States version as the highly esteemed “proper” behavior, to “Bulgarians” the cultural knowledge clearly makes sense as to why this would never happen in Bulgaria. Only someone who knows and understands the Bulgarian “situation” can fully comprehend and fathom why what is occurring in the country is not guided by the same beliefs and rules as those other countries and fully realize the impossibility for future change—as firmly rooted and shaped within the mentality.

Act sequence

At first sight, the rubric’s structure seems to be determined by its genre—a dialogue, where the sides alternate speaking. However, when taking into consideration *oplakvane* as a communication practice, the episode’s act sequence becomes more easily recognizable:

1. Comparison between the US and Bulgaria (1-29):

US: “And now, new details about the young mom who shot and killed a thief in her home while talking on the phone and was given advice on the emergency 911 line. The authorities said that the lady will not be charged for the murder. Ryan Owen of ABC will tell us the details: This really is an incredible law precedent when you think about it. The young woman, who pulled the trigger is clear in front of the law, while the young man, who didn’t even have a gun is now accused of murder. ‘What is your emergency call (911 call)? There is some one at my door, I am alone at home with my little baby. This person doesn’t mean us well. Can I speak to a policeman immediately?’ This is the young mother, who shot the deadly bullet. ‘I took the shotgun, then I went to the bedroom, there I have a gun, I gave the little one the pacifier and called 911. The 18 years old Sarah McKinley was alone at home, taking care of her 3 months old son. ‘Is the door locked? Yes, I have a shotgun and a gun in my hands. Is it Ok to shoot him if he comes through this door? You have to do everything possible to protect yourself. I cannot tell you to do that. Do what you have to... [unclear & overlap] McKinley shot and killed one of the two men who broke through the door of her home. And this is the person now who is accused of premeditated murder. Sounds strange, but the prosecutor says that (unclear) [one of the thieves] is responsible for the death of his friend. When some one’s death occurs during the performance of a premeditated crime, the accomplice and his/her assistant have a responsibility for that death. And this is what we did – we brought charges against him. The police think that Justine and Martine were high and broke down McKinley’s door to look for more adventures. And were greeted by a young woman with a killer mother instinct. ‘There is nothing more dangerous than mother with a child.’ The police says that what she did is warranted, and people in the neighborhood completely agree: the mother is constantly getting gifts, children’s clothes, and sympathies from the people in the town. ‘For me their support means a lot because in such a difficult moment it is very important to hear from people that you have acted right.’ This dramatic story, with a happyend a la [in the manner of] America, happened during January this year [2012].

2. Acknowledgement as to how the “situation” is in Bulgaria is (31-32):

Reporter: What would happened in Bulgaria if some one killed an intruder who entered their home in the same circumstances?

3. Instance example of the “situation” in Mestlan’s story (32-65):

The 70 years old Mestlan from the village of Svirec was attacked in an identical manner in his home 4 years ago (dramatic music playing in the background). M. is the only inhabitant in the mountain

neighborhood [mahala]. Similarly to the American Sarah, he succeeds to call the police while the intruders are breaking down the door of his home.

Mestlan: 'I say open ... (mumbled, heavy dialect) open tonight will come to kill* you [trepem] give the money. take out the money. I say* him [vikam] where money here here I don't have.'

Reporter: M. had a legal hunting rifle and he shot at his attackers before the police arrived. Here end the similarities to the American story. According to the Bulgarian law, M. is a criminal despite the fact that he was defending his own life and home.

Authority/Consultant: 'He had 2 choices: to be killed or robbed, or to be found guilty.

Reporter: Is there a third choice? To him, I mean, according to you, is there a third choice?

Authority/Consultant: No, in the concrete case there wasn't.'

Reporter: After they scared M. to death, the attackers broke down the door and entered the room of the 70 years old man. They shine a bright light in his eyes, threaten to burn light him up with gasoline, and order him to give them all his money.

M: 'cause already back back go . slightly I got* [vzemah] the riffle here he didn't see here the rifle . eh like this I open* [otvurgam] the door shot outside . to open up mo'e so . here much only'

Reporter: M. shot one of the attackers (gun shot sound) in the leg with his rifle – the 42 years old Ialmaz. The life of the thief was out of danger.

M: 'well he ran here only the one was left . here in the dark he ran still still was 59 there'

R: Then the police come. Instead of getting help, M. is arrested. He remains 2 days behind bars and then is found guilty of inflicting bodily harm to his attacker. His sentence is probation after a deal with the prosecution/DA. To the one, who broke into his home and attacked him in his own house, there are not even brought charges because he didn't steal anything and because he supplied a medical statement to the court that he has a mental.

4. Instance connecting back to the "situation" as it relates to the police and law in Bulgaria (74-97):

R: According to the law, while he is being attacked in his house, M. should have looked for a knife like the one of his attackers. Article 12 of the punishment codex is the one, which defines the so called "inevitable self-defense". This law is created to give right to the citizens to apply force and protect themselves, when their life is in danger. But the law states that the force, which we can use, has to be, I quote, "in the necessary bounds". The absolute subjectivity of the

definition of “necessary” allows judges and prosecutors to read the law as they wish.

Authority/Consultant: (sigh) on the surface is medium bodily harm . if he had killed him__

R: __well isn't it still a robbery__

Authority/Consultant: __otherwise ... whether is .. would have been there (abandons) some kind of attempt .. but whether is ..

R: they start with his room

A/C: Yes . right it is still breaking of more of a door

R: But isn't this a reason for bringing charges? ...

A/C: ... the reason for bringing charges is a bodily harm caused to the person [lizeto]. if you want to defend your life and health and your property you don't have the right to do it with a fire arm

R: nothing now, as a human I ask you is there any fairness in this thing, in this law?

A/C: Well there is fairness. I'll* [sh'e] tell you why there is fairness because in the end um if he didn't have a firearm, how would M. react?

R: he would have been robbed and killed ...

R: According to the law, while he is being attacked in his house, M. should have looked for a knife like the one of his attackers. Article 12 of the punishment codex is the one, which defines the so called “inevitable self-defense”. This law is created to give right to the citizens to apply force and protect themselves, when their life is in danger. But the law states that the force, which we can use, has to be, I quote, “in the necessary bounds”. The absolute subjectivity of the definition of “necessary” allows judges and prosecutors to read the law as they wish.

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A/C: ... the reason for bringing charges is a bodily harm caused to the person [lizeto]. if you want to defend your life and health and your property you don't have the right to do it with a fire arm

R: nothing now, as a human I ask you is there any fairness in this thing, in this law?

A/C: Well there is fairness. I'll* [sh'e] tell you why there is fairness because in the end um if he didn't have a firearm, how would M. react?

R: he would have been robbed and killed ...

5. Instance with the grandmother's story (98-102):

R: The reality in the Bulgarian villages every day provides answer to the question what would happen if M. did not have a rifle. Only during the last week a 89 years old man from the Plovdiv area was (dogs barking can be heard) strangled by 2 unemployed young men for a scrap of metal. And 2 grandmas were beaten by thieves in their own homes.

6. An evaluation and comparison of the “situation” in Bulgaria to other places (171-202):

A/C: When this discussion for the right of defending yourself in your home going on it is also result of a different type of legislation from a different environment which is there in Western Europe .. now and here the changes are starting. It is one thing to have a small German inhabited area, Dutch, Belgian, and so on. It is different one Bulgarian right deserted. And at the same time around it right one ah aggressive marginalized population which turns people there in literally victims.

R: Do you see ah a need for a more clear definition of “my home is my castle”? You enter my home I have the right to__

DCISPO: __I think as of this moment and after the decision by the constitutional court in 1997 it was clearly shown in what limits should the “inevitable self-defense” remain legally and the potential increase of things

R: My home is my castle appears not to be applicable Bulgaria.

Consultant: Yes, it is not applicable. Completely honestly I can tell you that it does not matter.

R (dramatic music): Despite the not few legal cases of acquitted Bulgarians who shot and even killed attackers in their own home the defense of private property with force is practically forbidden/illegal at home [Bulgaria]. If you shoot at a thief without him having attacked you, if you shoot in the back of a person who is stealing in your home or is stealing your car you will be charged and found guilty [osudeni] for premeditated murder. If some one is breaking into your summer house* [vilata] and you catch him in your own property you have the right to shoot only if he attacks you with a weapon.

R: Is it normal in a country where the robberies in village houses are an everyday occurrence and in some village regions are a real calamity the citizens to be put before the choice of robbed or found guilty?

A/C: There is a unique paradox which we see with people who have been charged [obvineni] with committing a heavy crime when they have been defending not even their home but their life ah: so ah: according to me we should have to: give up partially this model which in the moment we have of over-defense of the criminal.

R[dramatic music]: In whole regions of Bulgaria the right to private property in practice has become nonsensical because people's property [imotite] get to be without electricity, cables, and even window frames if the home is left unattended even for a few days. The places where at one point there were vegetables, grapes, and animals now is a desert.

7. The grandmother's story (204-207):

Woman 1 (dialect, older woman from a village): Inside came* one and I see through the door what* they are doing. I have been awake* [nashtrek] all night I have not slept (sobbing). And they still continue and still come and still me* steal.

8. The grandfather Nicolo's story (208-212):

R: Tomorrow in BTV The Reporters we will tell you why grandpa Nikolo from the Vidin village of General Marinovo was found guilty after he shot a thief who tried to kill him and rob him in his own house.

Grandpa N. (older man, dialect): when he broke this door I* [j] raised the gun* [pistolet] from there and yell I'll shoot!

9. An evaluation and instance of how there is no one to protect people (213-218):

R: What is the other major difference between Bulgaria and these countries where the rule "My home, my castle applies".

A/C: In most countries it is like in the States private/personal property is sacrosanct.

Ah: you can easily purchase a weapon with which to defend your home and your family of course right you can't carry it around on the streets, but your home is your castle.

In other words, there are two evaluations of the "situation" in Bulgaria (after the United States instance, the end of grandfather N.'s words, and the reporter's comment framed as a question), five instances of "problems" or law discrepancies in Bulgaria, and one comparison to other countries (the United States). The segment has another similarity to the practice of *oplakvane*, apart from the presence of

evaluation introductions/conclusions and examples; it also presents “problems” as perceived from the Bulgarian audience and does not offer any solutions to them—something crucial for the performance of *oplakvane* as illustrated in chapters 6-7.

The rubric attempts to provide balance by alternating the sides, where the reporter and victims (as edited to be on the same side) converse with the government (as represented by the legal consultant and the minister). The editing provides the frame of the episode with segments of the United States example, and a segue into the next episode (part 2) with a final instance of another victim. In other words, it is a constructed dialogue that includes illustration (examples of the situation in Bulgaria and the United States). First is a statement of how bad the situation in Bulgaria is (unlike the United States, where there is “a happy ending”) and concludes with a restatement of the situation in Bulgaria and prediction for the future, implied, and nuanced through the continuation of victims’ narratives, how the examples now are much more violent (191-198) and there is no one to protect the people wronged, but defends the criminals:

R: Is it normal in a country where the robberies in village houses are an everyday occurrence and in some village regions are a real calamity the citizens to be put before the choice of robbed or found guilty?

A/C: There is a unique paradox which we see with people who have been charged [obvineni] with committing a heavy crime when they have been defending not even their home but their life ah: so ah: according to me we should have to: give up partially this model which in the moment we have of over-defense of the criminal.

Again, the conclusion of the event is not as clear because there is part 2 of the rubric (expected to air the following week). However, because this episode and the rubric itself are situated within the broader cultural discourse, they are informed by

the same readily available cultural premises. In this way, a “Bulgarian” can recognize the ends of this event. The radiants of meaning, active in such discourse, allow Bulgarians to see and hear the rest of the rubric’s instances along these lines: dwelling consists of the Bulgarian situation (as different from the one in the United States); actions of inability to do anything but *oplakvane* (as it is the mentality’s fault; reaffirmation that “things are wrong with Bulgarians” and “what are we to do,” without an actual outcome of political/social change), and emotions of frustration and futility. Employing cultural discourse analysis would even allow for predictability, where the analyses even offer a way of foreseeing the range of meanings when such a practice is active (Carbaugh, 2007a). Even though the media outlet attempts to be the voice of the people and offer their side and interpretation as well as offer a bridge between the government and people and allow the people to reach out to those in power in search of help and change, in the end it is all futile, only to end in a bleak prediction for the future (as another enactment of *oplakvane*). In this way, the potential, desired, end goal of social change fades, allowing for the end goal of the ritual to be only met—the reaffirmation of a common identity that keeps us, Bulgarians, in the same position.

When examining this rubric’s episode, in many ways it is similar to other editorials due to its investigative journalistic style. It addresses a “hot topic,” presents everyday drama from the lives of other people, and ties it to the audience. It is supposed to shock, yet offers a glimpse of a “painful” reality, and mainly, it is the representation of a certain constructed cultural reality. One should not forget, however, the intricate connection between media texts and cultural discourses

present within any society. They come from within that society and play within a very specific cultural landscape. They exist within a precise cultural world, informing as well as constructing the existing cultural authenticity.

Historical context

Thus, the historical context of Bulgaria becomes crucial here because only through knowing this context can one make sense of this conflict. The constitution the rubric refers to is the official 1991 constitution and very few changes have been made to it since then. This constitution is considered to be a product of many fundamental laws in the new emerging democracies, and is reactive to the totalitarian past of the country (during the period of 1947-1989 several Bulgarian presidents attempted creating their versions of the constitution based on Russian ideological “isms”). The 1991 constitution was supposed to be a new start to the building of democracy. This specific constitution, however, is a product of a cultural and political context. After Bulgaria was liberated from the five century Ottoman dependence in the Russian - Turkish war:

the independence of the whole national territory of Bulgaria was restored but fearing the emergence of a strong state under the Russian influence the Great Powers at the Berlin Conference in 1879 divided the territory into three parts and restored the Ottoman rule over Macedonia ... the draft introduced by the Russian emperor's representative ... was influenced by the 1831 constitution of the Kingdom of Belgium, which by the standards at that time was one of the best pieces of classical liberal constitution making.

(Tanchev, 2012)

This is significant here inasmuch as it shows that the constitution referred to in the data is a product of liberal progressive democratic ideologies within the Western European tradition, but a product that was created, packaged, and

transported to Bulgaria without there being any ideological support for it. In this, a democratic product and tool was given to Bulgaria, without the cultural instructions and ideology to maintain its use. This explains to some extent the transformation of the original 1879 constitution into the “Dimitrov” and “Gelev” constitutions (named after the socialist presidents and illustrations of another “transported” ideology’s interpretations), only to result in the 1991 one that is a response to the communist ideological past of the 60’s, 70’s, and 80’s. Considering that the initial 1879 Turnovo constitution was a progressive democratic document, it is no surprise that, even to this day, Bulgarians who lack the historical and cultural context that prompted and informed the Enlightenment in Western Europe and the ensuing democratic discourse and ideology struggle with the definitions and cultural nuances it embodies in its most current version of 1991. The National Round table new elections for Grand National assembly prompted a drafting of a new constitution in 1990 and despite the multiple drafts suggested, all had one thing in common: having a republic with a parliamentary system of government focus, and created a constitution with a new democratic fundamental law (Tanchev, 2012).

Most of what constitutes “democratic” discourse in Bulgaria, related to “constitutional rights,” “self defense,” and “property” is based on ideas and cultural premises of Western Europe, and is foreign to the political and cultural ideologies and zeitgeist of Bulgaria (as influenced by its location on the Balkans, between the “West” and the “East,” the five centuries of Ottoman domination, and Russian socialist influences). In order for such terms to be not only understood but also appropriated, a certain cultural knowledge and well developed stable context that

informs this cultural knowledge needs to be present. Bulgaria has not had the time to “catch up” and develop its own appropriation of such cultural terms as “rights,” “property,” and “citizenship.” And since the context and cultural understanding and groundwork for the incorporation and successful use of such terms and ideology is lacking, the socio-economic and political structure of the country has suffered. And what is left for the people but to attempt to pinpoint what the problem is—*oplakvane*. It comes as a communicative tool of explicating, allocating blame, and leaving the speaker outside of what is to blame.

Bulgarians have a rich past (Crampton, 1997): the country was established in 681 and was a prosperous kingdom for many centuries until its fall to the Ottoman Empire in the late 14th century. The following five centuries the country spent under the economic, political, and cultural veil of Turkish slavery—all years of philosophical and political development—that Bulgarians were not a part of and did not have access to. Then, in 1908, after years of informal rebellion and the final Russian-Turkish war, Bulgaria declared independence only to be “shoved” into Europe, given a constitution, and expected to be culturally renewed. This relates to Bulgaria’s trajectory into several socialist and communist experiments that still have very strong socio-economical and cultural ramifications in present day. For about a hundred years (1900-2012) Bulgaria has had to move from a very agrarian, pre-industrial, “dark ages” status to a modern democratic nation and the country’s struggles with finding its identity in this transitional century become apparent in the rubric and the discourses visible in it.

Oplakvane and the rubric

What is so “Bulgarian” about this rubric is the enactment of *oplakvane* within it, the presence of the well known myth of the situation, and a particular understanding of what it means to be a Bulgarian, how to relate to each other (with mistrust, and aggression), what the position of this “reality” is, and what the proper actions are: to know “how bad things in Bulgaria are,” and what the contrast with their United States counterparts is. There is an understanding that something is “off” if Bulgarians have the same terms and legal definitions but they do not seem to be applied in the same way. And most importantly, there is an understanding that a “proper” Bulgarian is stuck within these conflicting norms, able to talk and express frustration with them, but not “do” anything to change them.

In the episode of the rubric, the conflict is clear: between the “legal” definitions that ought to be regulated, and straightforward—the same definitions and rules other countries have—and the folk “reality” of the law, where the rules are applied but the outcomes are very different. Here, however, it gets complicated because at first sight it seems as though the conflict is between the highly jargoned legal discourse (66-73, 82-97, 154-166, 176-180) and the folk examples (Mestla and the “grandma” victim) that illustrate the application of such laws and the struggles with their interpretation, whether intentionally or not:

Authority/Consultant (rustling of papers, hard to hear): The person* [Liceto], right who is allegedly hurt in this case is without argument not established* [nevazstanoveno] and this is why he takes badly this tactical situation that he as a consequence of his mental conditions has gone breaking into and not as a result of this to steal and do some other crime. In the case, for to look at him as a victim, and like this his reaction with which he has caused in the concrete case medium bodily harm is adequate .. because there isn't .. evidence that the person*

[liceto] was with assistance* [pridrugiteli] or with accomplices (66-73).

Authority/Consultant: (sigh) on the surface is medium bodily harm . if he had killed him__

R: __well isn't it still a robbery__

Authority/Consultant: __otherwise ... whether is .. would have been there (abandons) some kind of attempt .. but whether is ..

R: they start with his room

A/C: Yes . right it is still breaking of more of a door

R: But isn't this a reason for bringing charges? ...

A/C: ... the reason for bringing charges is a bodily harm caused to the person [lizeto]. if you want to defend your life and health and your property you don't have the right to do it with a fire arm

R: nothing now, as a human I ask you is there any fairness in this thing, in this law?

A/C: Well there is fairness. I'll* [sh'e] tell you why there is fairness because in the end um if he didn't have a firearm, how would M. react?

R: he would have been robbed and killed (82-97).

DCISPO: Maybe the court there pointed to going over the limit

R: Do you think that it should be regulated more clear in the law when some one breaks forcefully, with .. there is a broken door entering your home you just have the right to defend yourself and__

DCISPO: __every Bulgarian citizen [gragdanin] when they are attacked in some way and as it is said in the text of the law itself have the right to defend themselves to protect themselves. Even in the text itself, paragraph 3 literally says that there is no going over the limits of inevitable self-defense in cases when the attack is together with violence and with force and there is entering of the house. It is literally there in the text

R: Despite all these texts, M. is found guilty, and the right to shoot some one only because they have entered forcefully in your house is not given to the Bulgarian citizens (154-166).

R: Do you see ah a need for a more clear definition of "my home is my castle"? You enter my home I have the right to__

DCISPO: __I think as of this moment and after the decision by the constitutional court in 1997 it was clearly shown in what limits should the "inevitable self-defense" remain legally and the potential increase of things (176-180).

Another aspect of this conflict becomes particularly significant through the direct reference they make to the constitution, articles and codices in it. As I just

mentioned, the reason being that the present Bulgarian constitution was brought into the country from outside and was not created to follow a developing democratic tradition within the Bulgarian country itself.

Since the focus here is examining the ramifications of *oplakavane* when used in the media, I do not focus in detail on the different political discourses present but only mention aspects that are significant for the analyses. The legal, “democratic” discourse the consultant and the DCISPO and even the reporter at times use as part of this larger, transported democratic discourse of Western Europe meets with the folk examples of their Eastern European interpretation. Or, the future of Bulgaria—the modern, democratic nation of citizens—the legal “ought to be” discursive system meets the Bulgarian past—the agrarian, Turkish province—the folk “mahala” (“neighborhood” from Turkish that the reporter uses to describe Mestlan’s area in line 35) and “what actually is”—the village relations and reality.

Such a divide in Bulgaria between legality and legitimacy, where the new legal framework is constantly circumvented via social practices that people “deem more appropriate to their circumstances” has been discussed before and illustrates how legal norms and institutions coexist with other norms and social conduct “locally” considered legitimate despite being “extralegal or even illegal” (Giordano & Kostova, 2002). This discrepancy gives rise to misinterpretations and tension between the state and the citizens, and results in the “social production of mistrust” both in Bulgaria and in other post-socialist countries (Giordano & Kostova, 2002). In the Bulgarian case, this production of mistrust was exacerbated throughout the centuries of Ottoman domination, with the situation not changing

substantially in the period from the liberation until 1944 with the country being ruled by elites pursuing their own interests (Bell, 1977). In addition to that the following socialist years, as the informal economy, black market and interpersonal networking developed, this discrepancy only more firmly took root.

“Mentality,” the “others,” and the “situation”

Once more, instances of the “others” and the mentality behind them are visible. The legal and government representatives (in the faces of the consultant and the DCISPO) are meant to represent how the legal “democratic discourse” is used to benefit certain segments of the Bulgarian society more so than others. For example, Mestlan’s attacker is left unpunished not only because he has a disability (alluded to as “fabricated” later in the investigation—a common and widely known occurrence of purchasing false documentation of ailments) but also because he is related to someone in the parliament (111-117):

R: The chief of the regional police station told us that it is one and he doesn’t know about this law. M. has an explanation for the favorable treatment of the attackers by the powers

M: (unclear) well asen, asen tells* me [mi vika] right that in the parliament they his first cousin

R: The one that attacked you is a first cousin of some parliament figure, correct?

M: yes

Also, the DCISPO’s mention of the “woman he knew” who was acquitted is meant to be interpreted by the audience as evidence of nepotism and the reporter makes sure to emphasize it by pointing out that the judges interpret things any way they want (143-153):

DCISPO: Concretely straight I can put the question like this. About around ten years ago in the apartment building in which I was living

maybe it's longer than this. Analogical case, the friend [boyfriend] of a woman who split up tried to enter her apartment. Follows a refusal on her part. He goes downstairs, takes from his car the two rods. In the moment when he has almost broken down the door, she, a hunter, a legal hunter, goes gets her rifle loads and in the moment that he enters the corridor of her apartment she shot him deadly. There was a legal case made, it was processed through the Jambol regional court and she was acquitted because she has been exactly within the limits of inevitable norm.

R: In Bulgaria very often maybe not only in Bulgaria it happens that identical at first sight cases are resolved in a very very different ways in court.

An allusion to the mentality is also implicit when the reporter uses the same discourse to argue that this is how the situation “ought to be,” yet for some “unknown” reason, it does not happen in Bulgaria: “My home is my castle appears not to be applicable in Bulgaria” (181), “the right to private property in practice has become nonsensical” (199), and “as a human I ask you is there any fairness to this thing this law?” (99). And concepts such as “right,” “fairness,” “private property,” and “sacrosanct” “do[es] not matter” (183). In other words, a cultural discursive pattern of legal terms and concepts, is highlighted, in which “fairness,” “rights,” “human,” “citizen,” and “private property” exist and are well defined and regulated. However, this system seems to be sitting on top (very uncomfortably!) of a very different cultural, discursive system (discussed later in this chapter)—a Bulgarian one that is situated within a very historically awkward crossroad—too close, yet too far from Europe, and is firmly grounded around a code of “mentality.”

In the rubric, a familiar picture is again constructed as to the Bulgarian “situation” and “reality,” one that has already been discussed. The reporter mentions it first as the “reality” of the Bulgarian villages in lines 98-102, a “reality” in which older people are getting strangled, beaten, robbed, and even killed for

nothing (a “scrap of metal,” alluding to gypsies overtaking and grabbing anything they can in villages):

R: The reality in the Bulgarian villages every day provides answer to the question what would happen if M. did not have a rifle. Only during the last week a 89 years old man from the Plovdiv area was (dogs barking can be heard) strangled by 2 unemployed young men for a scrap of metal. And 2 grandmas were beaten by thieves in their own homes.

The consultant also makes a reference to how different villages in Bulgaria are from similar settlements in other countries (170-175) and the conflicts between minorities (in this case gypsies, as well as the older people, left in the villages) but does not explain how Bulgarian villages are different. Finally, the reporter makes one last reference to the situation by stating how Bulgaria is a country where such things are “everyday” occurrences (188-193).

If some one is breaking into your summer house* [vilata] and you catch him in your own property you have the right to shoot only if he attacks you with a weapon.

R: Is it normal in a country where the robberies in village houses are an everyday occurrence and in some village regions are a real calamity the citizens to be put before the choice of robbed or found guilty?

The rest is, again, made coherent by the myth of the situation as including the mentality, and the audience is supposed to make that connection culturally.

Another aspect of this reality is seen in the corrupt policemen and government officials who let the criminals walk. This includes also the judges who interpret the laws as they please (152-166), and criminals who are over-protected (194-198):

R: In Bulgaria very often maybe not only in Bulgaria it happens that identical at first sight cases are resolved in a very very different ways in court.

DCISPO: Maybe the court there pointed to going over the limit

R: Do you think that it should be regulated more clear in the law when some one breaks forcefully, with .. there is a broken door entering your home you just have the right to defend yourself and__

DCISPO: __every Bulgarian citizen [gragdanin] when they are attacked in some way and as it is said in the text of the law itself have the right to defend themselves to protect themselves. Even in the text itself, paragraph 3 literally says that there is no going over the limits of inevitable self-defense in cases when the attack is together with violence and with force and there is entering of the house. It is literally there in the text

R: Despite all these texts, M. is found guilty, and the right to shoot some one only because they have entered forcefully in your house is not given to the Bulgarian citizens (152-166).

A/C: There is a unique paradox which we see with people who have been charged [obvineni] with committing a heavy crime when they have been defending not even their home but their life ah: so ah: according to me we should have to: give up partially this model which in the moment we have of over-defense of the criminal (194-198).

The rubric's episode employs a cultural discourse system that informs and allows for the existence of a particular national identity—the Bai Ganio identity—an identity that is both painful and convenient for Bulgarians. It is an identity that Bulgarians detest because it allowed a very “herd” (subjugated, surreptitious, and ugly, opportunistic) way of operating to persevere and lead the country into modernity. And this is how a very strange to outsiders Bulgarian behavior can be made sense of. Bai Ganio is a grotesque character all Bulgarians despise and are ashamed of—he is rude, outdated, closed minded, egoistical, cheap, uneducated, and takes advantage of every one just because he can—but somehow he is also a character we have come to be proud of. In my data people often *se oplakvat* how no one in Bulgaria follows the rules and thus, we will not be able to improve the social situation, yet they themselves proudly profess their own disregard for similar rules, and the way they tricked or outsmarted a government official (illustrated in chapter

9). Again, Bulgarians are said to hate Bai Ganio, yet be proud of his survival skills. This paradox, makes sense through an ethnographic perspective, when the context is taken into consideration—the created dichotomy in the way identity is constructed and understood as well as the biological roots of the mentality.

Political discourse

Bulgarians were given “citizenship” but do not consider themselves citizens yet. Besides, why would people accommodate to the “West” and change their Bai Ganio ways only to submit to another influence that feels foreign? Being a part of a democratic society provides benefits but also comes with responsibilities and giving up some rights. Not following the rules of such a democracy is also beneficial for some—corruption, money laundering, trafficking, and stealing subsidies from the European Union funds. So why would they suddenly stop being and doing what they know best? And the rest... The rest have two options: 1) emigrate or 2) *se oplakvat*. Thus, the communicative practice of *oplakvane* has evolved to manage the tensions created by the disillusionment with a socio-political and economic status, and the ongoing transitions that never lead anywhere. However, because *oplakvane* is not recognized as a separate communicative practice with particular goals and ends, it becomes the most accessible and easily understandable way of speaking that many Bulgarians use in various situations. Furthermore, *oplakvane* evokes and reaffirms a particular cultural reality of the mentality that allows for political inactivity that only exacerbates the situation. If the practice is recognized as a ritualistic form of communication that serves some purposes but is not an all-encompassing way of speaking, it would put into question the reality it manages. It

is in instances of recognition of the practice by the participants, moments when they do admit, “yeah, I guess we do *se oplakvame* a lot,” that they catch a glimpse of the “reality of the mentality” as only a construction, and provide an opening, however brief, for natural criticism. This view of cultural discursive systems as inherently double-binding was also noted by Carbaugh (1989b), a dynamic active in other known cultural discourses.

I use the example of the rubric to show the possible dangers of a talk that is not realized as such, where the ritualistic function it plays affects the social realities it evokes. In this way, unlike Israeli grippers who can stop griping and proceed with their day, some Bulgarians rarely step out of the *oplakvane*. Not only that but the practice enters and overtakes other genres such as the rubric that is supposed to inform and dialogize socio-political issues. How is the issue of “rights,” “fairness,” and “individual property” to be discussed if it only slides into *oplakvane*, where the goal and conclusions are clear. It seems as though when confronted by everyday problems, as a defense mechanism, Bulgarians seem to fall back on what is familiar and has worked before, a way of speaking that only reaffirms the Bai Ganyo way. Until enough time has past for a new identity to develop, he will stay very much a part of the Bulgarian national identity. And the more modernity and the EU push for changes, the more stubbornly would Bai Ganio drive his heels in the ground.

Dimensions and types of critical voice

Earlier I mentioned the different dimensions of the critical voice in ethnography and the types of criticism they delineate, as discussed by Carbaugh (1989/90). I provided a critical evaluation of the *oplakvane* practice, as it is heard

within the participants' own talk, what it consists of, and along what dimensions it varies. Carbaugh (1989/90) describes the object of criticism as what is being evaluated (in this case the function of *oplakvane* as a communicative practice available in the general Bulgarian discourse), the locus of criticism—as the evaluator's standpoint (whether it be the participants', the theoretical standpoint, or the researcher's), and the mode of criticism that addresses whether the criticism is implied in the text or not (direct/indirect).

I have already addressed how the participants view the efficacy of *oplakvane* in chapter 4, where:

- a. when they do not acknowledge the practice as a separate communicative form, they perceive it as including actual every day problems that “inform” others of what the reality, situation, in the country is, thus efficient, as it identifies the problematic ones who have the mentality.
- b. when acknowledging it as a cyclical practice, that serves to reaffirm a common fate and let out frustration, they perceive it as inefficient, as it does not involve action and change.

This offers insight as to the insider's critical evaluation of the practice, or the natural type of critical voice, where the participants themselves recognize that the type of talk they are employing as a communicative resource is not serving a function other than a communal bonding, thus not allowing for action outside of *oplakvane*.

Here, the natural criticism is directed so the circumstances of living in Bulgaria itself are the object of criticism, with the voice being directly about that (the participants' interpretation of these circumstances), and the ethic of “good

living” being considered nearly impossible because of it. This evaluation is situated in the participants’ discourse as the standard of judgment (being non-corrupt, doing things in a legal way, not using connections and nepotism to get ahead, working hard for profit, etc.) and is used in the criticism as valued, but not practically possible according to this discursive form of *oplakvane*. What participants view as “normal” life, achieved by only “normal” people (as not affected and affecting others via the mentality, where “legality” is similar to that of other countries and things are not done in the Bai Ganio way) is impossible, as we all, as Bulgarians, are viewed to have the mentality. The problematicity of the difference between behaviors enacted by those with it and what should be valued in general (ascribed to the “normal” people) is brought up and managed within *oplakvane*. As such, *oplakvane* itself offers the participants’ critical evaluation of the situation in Bulgaria and both illustrate how things “ought to be” (as shown in examples from foreign countries), and deem the outcome of change and achieving such standard as impossible due to the biological aspects of the mentality.

The academic evaluation is also available, through which the object of evaluation is the practice or theory itself in the sense of methodological and theoretical standpoint, and addresses the use of the particular theoretical and methodological stance when studying the practice. Here, my question and evaluation of the practice tackles how adequate the present transcription and translation methods are when studying *oplakvane*. I will not delve too much within this evaluation, since I have found ethnography of communication and cultural discourse analysis to be very useful in examining *oplakvane*. In future projects, I

would like to explore more different methods of transcription that account for the emotional expressiveness within the enactments of *oplakvane*—something I did struggle a bit with at this stage, as the practice involves elements of emotive performativity in the shape of inflection, grunts, gesture, and even facial expressions, and translating this not only onto a written format but also in another language has been a portion of *oplakvane* I choose to focus on at a different time.

Finally, there is cultural criticism, where the ethnographer renders evaluation and judgment of the practice itself as I ask what can be problematic for the particular speech community when employing and enacting *oplakvane*? This problematic aspect of the practice—as not being perceived as separate and distinctive communication mode connected and reaffirming a particular common Bulgarian situation, fate, mentality, and the identity connected to it—as I just showed with the example of the rubric, implicates not only how and what “reality” is constructed and maintained within the general Bulgarian discourse, but also how other discursive practices are affected by the ramifications and implementation of *oplakvane* as it seeps into other communal conversations.

The participants have a complicated relationship with *oplakvane*, where the talk itself is not seen as efficacious but the themes within it, the “reality,” narrated in that talk, are taken in a deeply serious way, that I, as the ethnographer, as well as a native, see to be most problematic. One cannot simply stop *se oplakva* because one is believed to be somehow trapped in that discursively shaped reality. In this way, my study makes a kind of prevalent communication practice “scrutable” for people so they no longer have to (or even can) just blindly go about doing it, once it is

introduced to them. It frees the practice for thought and inspection. Such seeping of *oplakvane*, as a communicative practice that evokes and solidifies a cultural understanding of national identity as biological, “learned” but fused with cognitive processes, and the resulting socio-political and economic situation resulting from it, not simply affects but stifles other possible discursive tools that might otherwise constitute a different notion of agency and political action.

Chapter summary

In this chapter I illustrated how *oplakvane*, since the participants do not understand it as a separate communicative practice, seems to appear in other types of talk, skewing various political discussions (and particularly discussion on civil and property rights) in the media. I use an example of the journalistic “rubric” bTV The Reporters (investigative short piece) broadcasted on bTV after the evening news to highlight the ways *oplakvane* interferes and overtakes other discursive forms. This leads into my discussion of critical voice in regard to the practice of *oplakvane* from the participants’ point of view, an academic one, and a cultural one (my researcher’s position), examining the object, mode, and form of criticism available.

CHAPTER 12

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary

Thus far, I have provided a glimpse into *oplakvane* and the cultural reality it binds as a term for communicative practice and illustrated my analyses with data collected not just during a several year period, but over a lifetime as a native *oplakvach*. Chapters 1, 2, and 3 ground my research topic by pulling from various areas, theoretical and methodological, and introduce my own ethnographic footwork as I explored the cultural phenomenon. Chapter 1 supplies the numerous cultural factors that drew my attention to *oplakvane* and highlighted that something cultural was occurring within the Bulgarian discourse, both connected to the historical context and constitutive of it. Chapter 2 illustrates my personal journey through the fields of ethnography of communication: cultural communication, cultural discourse theory, cultural discourse analysis, terms for talk, and other theoretical concepts that gave me the language to discuss *oplakvane* academically. Chapter 3 is the contextual glue that surfaces and is reconstituted through moments of interaction, both explaining, elaborating, and being perpetuated within and through talk.

In chapter 4, then, I explore the term *oplakvane* as a cultural term for communication (Carbaugh, 1989a) as it is used within discourse in Bulgaria to refer to what can be loosely translated to “complaining” and “mourning”—lexical meanings shaped culturally to evoke and manage a very particular socio-economic and political reality in Bulgaria. As a consequence of the link between the lexical

meanings of *oplakvane* and the cultural reality it makes relevant and reaffirms, the term is used cautiously and with reservations in general discourse, and is rarely utilized to label the communicative practice it stands for. Examining it as a culturally infused discursive term, however, provides insight into both the communicative acts it names, and into larger messages and meanings, literally, about communication, and metaphorically, about personhood, social relations, and institutions. By examining the term's context, potency, use, messages and meanings, and enactments, a larger cultural landscape is made available.

After examining *oplakvane* as a discursive term in chapter 5, I illustrate how *oplakvane* does refer to particular communicative acts, and provide a detailed overview as to how the practices' enactments differ from other, more informative modes of speaking, or other ritualized practice such as face saving and politeness. I highlight four different instances where an enactment of *oplakvane* is initiated, with varying degree of uptake from the other participants. Uptake is shown to vary based on the topics and mode of utterances, where only topics within the realm of the general "situation" in Bulgaria, with negative tone, led to uptake of the enactment.

In chapters 6 and 7 I described the cyclical form of *oplakvane* as it entails a particular act sequence:

1. Initiation: evaluation of the general situation in Bulgaria.
2. Uptake/Acknowledgement: instances of the problems in the Bulgarian situation;
 - a. Instances from everyday occurrences within the country.

- b. Instances of comparison between Bulgaria's situation and other countries (all more positive than the ones in Bulgaria).
3. Conclusion: evaluation of the country's situation and negative prediction as to its future.

The sequence is illustrated with data from a dinner event, where first a description is offered as to the event (setting, participants, end, key, instrument, norms), and then analyses is given of the occurrences. *Oplakvane* is then examined as a communicative practice in the form of a ritual (Philipsen, 2002) where it has a particular structure of symbolic acts and, when performed correctly, pays homage to the sacred object of the Bulgarian doomed fate, as defined to remain within the Bulgarian situation due to mentality (endemic discursive term that connects learned behaviors and ways of thinking to biological cognitive processes developed during the historical context).

Chapter 8, then, focuses on the Bulgarian situation as constructed in the form of a myth, or a grand narrative about the historical context in Bulgaria (or five centuries of Ottoman occupation, and then decades of socialism/communism) that shaped a particular mentality, a "national" trait that is discursively constructed as biological and thus, unalterable. This grand narrative provides the backdrop and connects culturally the discursive acts of *oplakvane* that are evoked and reaffirmed within the practice of *oplakvane*. This narrative uses the myth to explain why things in the country are not changing, thus activating the radiants of meaning for dwelling and identity, and perpetuating both the construct of the mentality as situated and

the political and economic status quo that activates the radiants of meaning for personhood and sociality.

In chapter 9, I further develop the cultural understanding of personhood and its connection to the mentality (and the literary character of Bai Ganio) as focal within enactments of *oplakvane* through a vacillating form of identification. This vacillating form of identification is along the lines of “us” (“normal” people who do not have the mentality), the “others” (all who have the mentality), and the larger communal identity of Bulgarian-ness, as the Bai Ganio way. Thus, I show how *oplakvane* can be used to identify and differentiate between “us” and “them”, while still celebrating the common Bai Ganio identity in moments of interaction.

In chapter 10, I provide a cross-cultural perspective and compare *oplakvane* (the term, the structure of its communicative enactment, and its function) to Israeli griping as described by Katriel (1985). Despite the many similarities the two modes have, their main difference is that *oplakvane*, unlike griping, is not recognized as a separate ritualized form of communication. This illustrates the different “realities” the two practices evoke and manage—where, if Bulgarians were to acknowledge explicitly that enacting *oplakvane* serves only particular communal functions of celebrating a common identity and letting out steam, that would construe the Bulgarian situation as non-existent.

Finally, chapter 11 shows how, exactly due to lack of recognition of *oplakvane* as a separate communicative practice and discursive tool, the enactments of the practice seep into other communicative resources. Thus, I illustrate how *oplakvane* can be understood as a cultural term for a discursive practice and acts of the said

practice, and can occur also as an event (with a cyclical form) and style of speech. I examine a media segment, called “rubric,” a piece of investigative journalism that incorporates acts of *oplakvane*, and then voice a critical stance from the perspective of the natives (natural), theoretical and methodological (academic), and my ethnographic one (cultural).

Discussion and Implications

Understanding how the presence of such a communicative practice in Bulgaria allows and maintains a cultural understanding of reality based on problematic behaviors, determined and fused with organic matter within a cultural understanding of a national psychology, allows for not only gaining crucial insight into the way communication and culture shape social interaction but also a way to disrupt the learned understandings of sociality and personhood that prevent us from enhancing our daily lives. According to common wisdom, the reasons for complaining is that people do it to vent negative emotions, and thus would have a cathartic function, or lead to improving dissatisfying conditions (an instrumental function), something seen in reasons stated for complaining by participants both in the US and Poland (Alicke et al. 1992, Wojciszke and Baryla, 2002). A study by Wojciszke (2004-2005) shows how this is simply implausible and leads to several false predictions: complaining leading to increases in positive affect and chronic complainers being in a better mood than those who do not. The author argues that complaining is actually detrimental to human functioning and a society with higher and more prevalent norms for complaining fall into a “negativity trap”, where because of psychological processes people are not able to perceive positive changes

in their situation. In this way, complaining may actually lead to lowered affective states in both the complainer and the listener. Wojciszke (2004-2005) argues there are several processes contributing to this effect:

- 1) “saying is believing effect” where expressing dissatisfaction leads to decrease in satisfaction experienced;
- 2) expressing dissatisfaction primes negative and/or inhibits positive affects (speaker and listener);
- 3) expressing dissatisfaction focuses attention on negative emotions, which leads to increases in their intensity.

Here, we see a clear example of discourse as the starting point of understanding identity and social realities. We evoke and creatively manage this discourse as a resource to perform the cultural and communal function, as it is imbued with and shaped by the voices of our past. If the participants view *oplakvane* as a “useless” communicative practice, then, this would put into question the reality the practice reaffirms and reconstitutes. Recognizing a communicative practice as such a ritualized form would draw attention away from the reality it employs, and shift focus to the participants as somewhat active members in the construction and maintenance of this reality.

The discourse that positions and repositions us in a particular place allows and restricts particular actions. It utilizes and reaffirms the culture-scape we navigate in order to make not only our actions but also the actions of others coherent and legitimate. And maybe, if we could enter ethnographically this cultural terrain through communication and discourse, we could see how a particular myth

of the specific “Bulgarian situation” (the historical processes and factors that have led to our present socioeconomic and political ineffectiveness) is played out and reaffirmed in our individual lives, thus, rendering it true. This approach of merging and understanding communication culturally allows for not only the comprehending of the “problem” in Bulgaria but also for an intervention and the disruption of such a myth that keeps us within a cultural reality of inaction and socio-political stagnation.

Keeping *oplakvane*’s structure and function in mind (as an unrealized communicative practice), its effects become visible in even the small interaction on the New England hike I began to describe in my introduction. There I was (unwittingly) enacting the practice that had become an easy, all-too accessible communicative tool for bonding and filling in gaps within an interaction, where the practice, as it is widely known and thus intelligible in various areas of the country, and easily accessible, allows participants from different experiences and backgrounds to interact by evoking and recreating a particular social Bulgarian reality. Not only that, but my way of speaking was calling and reconstituting very specific cultural understandings of Bulgarian-ness, relating to one another, Bulgarian existence, and proper action. And the American response was cutting right through all of these, unleashing the emotion connected to the lack of common culture within the interaction on that hike.

I have become much more aware of when I enact *oplakvane*, whether in the United States or in Bulgaria. And this is my hope, that one practical implication of my dissertation is to initiate some awareness of the practice as a discursive tool that

performs a function, thus allowing us to recognize its efficiency as such, and utilize it in its function of bonding and letting out frustration. But I also hope that realizing and recognizing the discursive aspects of it, we also start questioning the “reality” that is activated within it, the notions of personhood and social relations it highlights, and particularly the notion of the mentality as something where nationality can be found “in one’s head.” My sincere hope is that recognizing the structured practice would allow for initiating awareness of the cultural aspects of communication as not only reflecting our local meanings but also as being constitutive of them.

Some theoretical implications include understanding *oplakvane* as a communicative practice that presents a challenge to the study of communicative practices, the naming of which shifts the focus between the participants’ cultural “realities.” The enactment of the *oplakvane* ritual contains instances of how bad the socio-political situation in Bulgaria is, but referring to the enactment by the term renders the talk “only” a ritual, in which the constructed within the interaction reality is reduced and reframed as non-existent. Thus, engagement and enactment of *oplakvane* is possible only when the interaction is not called by the term, which in itself fulfills the literal meaning of the terms as a “complaint” and an “outcry.”

Examining *oplakvane* through cultural discourse analysis and ethnography of communication provides one more example of the significance of common culture, and furthermore, a deeper understanding of the locally existing social relations, the cultural landscape, and the various ways the individual is imagined. My findings provide insight into the complexities of utilizing the term *oplakvane* as conflicted

and contextually bound within the particular historical context. Examining the term for what literal and metaphorical meanings it has, as well as what communicative acts and events it refers to (Carbaugh, 1989a), provides the path to further grasp the intricacies with which a term (and the understanding of communication it encompasses) is constrained within a particular historical context. Placing *oplakvane* on the discursive map that focuses on the nexus between culture and communication through a shared investigative framework allows for not only the development of the ethnography of communication approach within Bulgaria but also provides additional illustration as to the role of communication, and its relation to sociality and personhood.

Using cultural discourse analysis (Carbaugh, 1997), we can examine culture, and the events, acts, and styles that comprise it, as an expressive system of communicative practices that is historically situated and conveyed thus providing a glimpse into the moral order maintained within the specific culture. Through examining the communicative practices within the Bulgarian speech community for their taken for granted knowledge and their symbolic forms and meanings, we gain profound understanding of belief and existence, about the communities understanding of themselves and the world around them, their relations to each other, and the proper way to feel, reside, and act (Carbaugh, 1997). Here, I argue that *oplakvane* is one such practice that not only shows a communicative tool for participating but also offers insights into the national spirit of Bulgaria.

When deliberating on the cultural approach to communication, Carey (1989) cites a "wise man" that defined the purpose of art as "making the phenomenon

strange" and further elaborates that when aspects of our surrounding become too familiar "we no longer perceive them at all" (p. 24). Ethnography of communication, cultural communication, and cultural discourse analysis shift the focus on the communication phenomena surrounding us and allow for the re-seeing of the way interaction is shaped and contours the world we inhabit.

Through ethnographic examination of the discourses available as cultural resources within the larger Bulgarian interactional terrain, I offer a way of re-seeing a previously unidentified way of speaking, *oplakvane*, that is not given the necessary thought as presently situated within the communicative shadows. By re-seeing the practice as it relates to membering within the cultural community in Bulgaria, I offer an example of understanding the role of cultural terms for communication as they provide insight into the deeper inner workings of cultural communication and the use and significance of speech codes as carrying the meaning for and of personhood, social relations, action, and dwelling. I also highlight the importance and nuanced ethnographic work within communication that needs to be done within Eastern European countries. The field of ethnography of communication (as related to cultural communication and the development of cultural discourse analysis) is still largely unexplored when understanding issues of identification, national "characters," and the role of socialism/communism as shaped and played out within moments of interaction in Eastern European areas.

Ethnography of communication will help unravel both culturally and communicatively the construction and re-play of the "Balkan mentality," its

“fatalistic orthodox soul,” and the way they are frequently evoked in order to explain why policies that succeed in some contexts fail entirely when transplanted to others:

[t]his black box, mystical approach to culture was fostered in many parts of the world in the twentieth century by the modern anthropologists’ tendency to focus on particular units and neglect similarities at higher regional and even continental levels.

(Hann, Humphrey, & Verdery, 2002, p. 8)

The tendency in the social scientific literature on socialism to construct an “other” corresponds to the savage “other” of colonial anthropology, and illustrates the need of much ethnographic exploration that examines the phenomenon as constructed and managed exactly in such moments of interaction locally.

And this is what EC, cultural communication, and cultural discourse analysis offer: a point of wonder within a daily interaction, a commonplace activity, an area where our experience ends and things become problematic (Carey, 1989), thus creating a perfect opportunity for research. *Oplakvane* provides such an opportunity for growth, a junction where there is a sense of “something” happening. The theoretical framework of cultural communication offers exactly the tools for understanding a communicative practice, that, when utilized in the form of a ritual, provides a communal context for membering and building a sense of togetherness, while allowing for frustration to be let out. In this way, focal becomes not only the understanding of how *oplakvane* serves as a discursive tool and resource for shared meaning and identification, but also becomes the larger development of the role of communication and interaction as bound in and through communication.

Within EC there are various recent developments as highlighted by Carbaugh (2007b): numerous studies examine mass media texts, political processes

(grassroots and national), interpersonal communication, organizational communication (medicine to education), intercultural communication, processes of power, advantaged and disadvantaged practices, etc. within several languages, including Chinese, Danish, English, Finnish, German, Hungarian, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish, among many others. I now join this array of native ethnographers in the endeavor to understand and generate understanding of communication in these speech communities, taking advantage of the theoretical trajectories that have grown out of this plethora of work. Such theoretical developments are cultural communication and codes (Philipsen 1997, 2002) and developments in intercultural interactions (Carbaugh, 2005) that I have found extremely useful in grounding my cultural footing and understanding *oplakvane* as both a culturally distinct communicative practice and a communicative resource that also reveals larger features and properties of communication. The study of *oplakvane* enriches the field of communication and culture as it is explored as a locally patterned fragment of social life, constitutive of social communities.

I present this way of examining and understanding *oplakvane* as one such discursive tool, both a term for talk that highlights and utilizes particular speech codes and conceptualizations (cultural symbols, forms, and meanings) and a communicative practice with specific cyclical form. I hope to move towards the expansion of the field of ethnography of communication, and mainly the study of communication and moments of interaction as tied and inseparable from culture within Bulgaria. Such an academic move towards the focus on interaction and particularly communication as central for the understanding of culture would allow

for a move towards a deeper understanding of issues of nationalism, emigration, and other socio-economic and political areas as linked to larger notions and conceptualizations of self, social life, habitat, and social relations.

A moment of interest is the juxtaposition of ethnographic findings and the development of post-socialist studies, as *oplakvane* manages and helps identify Bulgarians within the “us” vs. “them” dichotomy previously identified by Verdery (1996), and offers a deeper understanding of the tendency towards finding outside fault for any difficulties and mishaps in the country itself. Verdery (1996) argued that this can be observed in the way some national selves have been constructed within historiography in Romani and other Eastern European countries, where the nation has been represented as an innocent victim, subjugated and oppressed by other nations and not its own members. In Bulgaria this outside oppressor was the Turkish Empire. In other Eastern European countries it was the soviet socialist system and the communist regime, all doing everything possible to ruin the nation’s economy and culture. Thus the party oppression was just another in the long series. This would offer deeper insight as to how the self, created during socialism, is characterized by “an internalized opposition” to outside “others” (p. 96) and how socialism produced particular conditions that allowed the rising of scapegoating as a political tactic for the explaining of social problems (Verdery, 1996).

I would like to highlight that studying *oplakvane* ethnographically, with particular focus on cultural communication, also expands on a theoretical niche described by Verdery (1996): one that explores the processes of the socialism and postsocialism periods as parallel to postcolonial studies. Such a comparison is not

surprising, argued Verdery (1996) when discussing Eastern Europe and other countries who were under the Soviet domination. Similar conquest, infiltration and annexation was utilized by the colonial power, with the only difference being that Moscow employed a process of accumulating “allocative power” through accumulating means of production (Verdery, 1991). Thus, Verdery (1996) calls for exploring not only the economic and political relations developed during this period but also the mechanisms of domination as “rebounded against the Imperial center” (p. 37) and the way this was accomplished through the party's use of national identities. Another similarity between postcolonialism and postsocialism studies is their emphasis on the role of representation, where such a dichotomy of West and the rest had its equivalent in West and the East, capitalism and communism. Verdery (1996) encourages for the combination of postcolonialism and postsocialism in order to provide a new way of organizing knowledge and revise the present “understanding of 20th-century capitalism, to which the socialist system posed a fundamental challenge” (p. 97), examining it historically and ethnographically. Examining *oplakvane* through ethnography of communication and cultural discourse analysis provides such an entrance point and illuminates not only the transition, interactionally, of a country out of a socialist state but also the transfer and management of Western institutions (markets, democracy, right, legal system, etc.) to non-Western settings.

Another unexpected outcome of studying *oplakvane* was the participants' wariness towards being recorded. I found ways around this by using my phone, which other participants also had present, in order to minimize the discomfort.

Sometimes, when the participants were of a particular generation—a generation that experienced communism for a larger part of their life—they would get uncomfortable with being recorded, and would explain their unease with the suspicion developed during that period. Often, the party would be listening to them even via their neighbors, thus any record of their words is perceived as problematic, possibly having negative repercussions for them. It would be interesting to explore the effects of this suspicion historically and contextually as it affects ethnographic endeavor both in Bulgaria and other post-socialist countries.

Methodologically, there are several more implications of studying *oplakvane*. As previously mentioned, I would like to explore additional transcription and recording methods in order to capture some of the performative emotive aspects of the practice, where gestures, facial expressions, and intonation played a part in enacting *oplakvane*. Working with the original data in the Bulgarian language makes for easier analysis but I would like to explore a transcription method that includes Bulgarian and English, includes the intonation, and is not too cluttered to read.

Final thoughts

“Ok, well, where can you start from? If you could point to one thing that can change in Bulgaria to start things up, where would you start?” That’s the question my friend asked on that hike, the question that kept nagging me throughout that first semester of grad school, and that I chose to begin my dissertation with. Looking back on that interaction now, everything seems much clearer. It is a feeling any ethnographer has that has deconstructed an unfamiliar practice, examined it

piece by piece using the methodological and theoretical tools of understanding they have chosen, and put it back together with a fuller understanding of why and how it comes to live within the social world of a particular community. Now I look at that interaction and see how I was myself enacting *oplakvane* within that instance, attempting to convince and provide instances of how bad things are in Bulgaria, and being frazzled by the response of “solution” (or question as to a solution) offered by my friend.

I felt the pain of not being “understood” as we both failed to align culturally to the communicative practice at hand. This is not to say that the political and socio-economical situation in Bulgaria is not problematic, or that all Bulgarians do is *oplakvane*. On the contrary, this illustrates the power of culture and communication as constitutive of social life. A communicative practice such as *oplakvane* has deep roots within an uneven historical transition between the political and economic systems in Bulgaria that manage the demands this transition has had on the cultural construction of a national identity and the attempts to explain such fluctuation and unevenness via biology. All this amounts to conceptualizations of stagnation and hereditary inability to change. So, hopefully, “we,” Bulgarians, do not “of all most hate [other] Bulgarians” any more. And we do not follow up on the suggestion expressed by Stefan Canev (a popular Bulgarian writer and essayist) available below that went viral and appeared in various social networks: “If you see a good person in Bulgaria – shoot them so they don’t suffer!”

“АКО СРЕЩНЕТЕ ДОБЪР ЧОВЕК В БЪЛГАРИЯ -
ЗАСТРЕЛЯЙТЕ ГО, ЗА ДА НЕ СЕ МЪЧИ!”
СТЕФАН ЦАНЕВ

APPENDIX A

BLOG EXAMPLE IN ENGLISH

1 03.03 02:49 - Bulgaria: not to be between 18 and 35 years of age... Author: hikari
2 Category: Politics The sad Bulgarian reality
3 **23 percent of young Bulgarians are unemployed. In the cities every third**
4 **person between 18 and 35 years old doesn't work. In the villages it's about**
5 **58%. Every 20th youth is not looking for a job at all, because they've lost any**
6 **hope.** In Greece, Spain and Ireland in the moment there is higher unemployment
7 rates than those in Bulgaria. But nowhere in Europe is there such a drastic
8 difference between the youth and the average for the country unemployment rate.
9 In Bulgaria the youth unemployment rate is e twice as much as the average – just
10 because there's no policy of fighting it.
11 Wanted... a person without a diploma
12 34% of the youth with high school education are “unemployed”. Every 4th with
13 finished high school is thrown out of the labor market. Even 17% of people with
14 higher education have no bread. Such is the structure of business at 18 to 35-
15 year olds according to the education census. And the conclusion is, that the
16 diploma in Bulgaria is devaluated. Even sometimes is better to be entirely
17 without a diploma. Devaluation of the “hats” for jurists and economists.
18 Even more often education in the university ends due to financial reasons.
19 Credits/Loans for education are taken harder and harder, and with inconvenient
20 conditions. And how many of the working young Bulgarians work on their
21 specialty? 62% are in a position, that responds to their qualifications. But the
22 share of unemployed by their specialty remains still too high. Every 5th is
23 working at positions, different from their received qualification, and 17% work
24 on their extra/additional specialty. Jurists/Law people and economists – as
25 much as you want! The Bulgarian universities are spitting jurists and
26 economists. With an “overproduction” of one kind of specialists and deficit of
27 others is logical to have a difference between the demand of the business and the
28 supply. As a result of this disproportion even the 18-th percent unemployed, who
29 have not lost hope and are looking for a job, find something, but only temporary.
30 Being at the bors/market, the young specialist most often makes compromises
31 and in most cases accepts whatever. After some time, however, he/she leaves the
32 job, because he/she doesn't feel like it's their place. And the cycle of temporary
33 employment starts all over again. Pushed into the darkest corner
34 **Abroad welcomes more and more Bulgarian emigrants**
35 The fact is quite banal, that exactly people between 18 and 35 years old bring the
36 energy, the new knowledge, the ambition and enthusiasm, needed for the
37 beginning of a new cycle of the economic life. Unfortunately, however, exactly
38 that group suffers most of the unemployment in Bulgaria. Not a small part of the
39 young – with or without qualifications – continue looking for their luck beyond
40 the borders. Even today, more than 20 years after the beginning of the changes.
41 The unfair inequality of the young in Bulgaria “punishes” the country in the
42 darkest European corner, summarizes the sociologist Jurii Aslanov. **Until the**

44 country keeps its distance from the young Bulgarians, regardless whether in the
45 country or abroad, Bulgaria won't catch up in its delay from Europe. Author:
46 Antoaneta Nenкова/Антоанета Ненкова,
47 1. hikari - Преброително хайку 03.03 02:53 The consequences from the rabies
48 politics became clear.
49 BG – country of the mutrobaroque [мутробарока].
50 2. hikari – About the asleep “Bulgarian lion” 03.03 03:12 In Germany today the
51 situation is such that, most people leave the country, than come to live in it. And
52 Bulgaria is a country of leaving people, but the parallel with Germany is
53 inappropriate. Why? A response is searched for by Emilian Lilov/ Емилиян
54 Лиллов: „[Gudbai, Deutschland]” is the name of a tv show, which has been on for
55 years now on the German television channel. Its each broadcast shows usually 3
56 to 4 German families, who pack their bags and leave the country forever. Every
57 day the words „Goodbuy, Deutschland” say 424 German citizens! Sounds
58 alarming. For the reasons we have to ask those leaving. For example the doctor
59 with a private practice, who because of the unsuccessful health reform decides to
60 close his office and reopen it in Switzerland; or the science worker, who has
61 started screaming out loud because of the bureaucratic traps at home and finds
62 salvation over all the way in the US... The list can be continued with other
63 professions as well, ones requiring an academic level. And exactly in this is the
64 main difference with Bulgaria. The Bulgarian army of gurbetchii*** [гурбетчии].
65 While their backs on Germany turn usually people with high qualifications, who
66 are looking outside for better conditions for a professional realization, Bulgaria
67 leave people, who represent cheap labor – construction workers, babysitters and
68 nurses, housekeepers and other servicing personnel. I'm not saying, that abroad
69 don't live any Bulgarian artists, actors, writers, engineers and scientists. But they
70 are only the first rank in the army of gurbetchii [гурбетчии], coming out of
71 Bulgaria. About this speaks also the fact that, the money, which the emigrants
72 send annually to relatives and close people in Bulgaria, surpasses in times the
73 ones gotten from various eurofunds! It is said that, the country are leaving manly
74 the young and educated Bulgarians. But as a whole they continue to be an
75 insignificant part of the bigger category of weak/low or medium-educated
76 leaving ones. After the non-occurred (in the midst of the crisis) returning of
77 Bulgarians from Spain, Italy or UK, now the Bulgraian government
78 officials/rulers are trying to convince us how less and less Bulgarians are at this
79 point leaving the country. 3. hikari - ... 03.03 03:14 Paralel with this traditionally
80 high remains the number of Bulgarian students in Western Europe and the USA. I
81 have had the opportunity to talk to many young Bulgarians in Germany, and I can
82 assure You that, in general come back those of them, who after their graduation
83 do not find quickly and easily enough attractive work in Germany. On the other
84 hand they all share that, they don't want in Bulgaria to be valued/appreciated
85 based on whom they know instead of what they can and do. On the tracks of the
86 “Celtic tiger”
87 To where? To where?
88 If Bulgaria wants to regain the army of people leaving the country, it shouldn't
89 write boring administrative programs for their attracting back or once in a year

90 to pass with initiatives like “The Bulgarian Easter”. But should learn from the
91 experience of Ireland, which during the 90s of the past century created
92 conditions for a successful return – a stable investment environment, low
93 corporative taxation, good achievements in the infrastructure and education,
91 discounts for business. The rest we know – the Irish boom turned into a synonym
92 for the return to the country, which you **belong to by passport, language and**
93 **roots**. I wonder, is it possible for the “Celtic tiger” to awaken the
94 mind/consciousness of the sleeping “Bulgarian lion”? It’s a happy thing that,
95 under the present government there are first beginning of such development, as
96 was for example the introduction of the flat rate/tax. As a whole though, the
97 changes are timid, and lack a range. To come back the Bulgarians.

98 Not only on Easter. Author: Emilian Lilov/Емилиян Лилев

99 4. hikari - Bulgaria: the elite stays beyond the border 03.03 03:20 The hopes, the
100 crisis will make a large part of the educated emigrants return back to Bulgaria,
101 turned to be empty/in vain. The reversed brain drain did not happen after all:
102 return mostly the Bulgarians, who didn’t succeed to realize themselves abroad.
103 The big scissors between the average income in the developed countries and in
104 Bulgaria is the most categoric explanation for the broken hopes that, the
105 educated Bulgarians will return to their homeland. So thinks [ст. н. с.] Dr.
106 Rosica Rangelova/Росица Рангелова from the Economic Institute of BAN. The
107 main motive/reason for the Bulgarian labor migration is to get good
108 retirement/social security. That’s why those who left the country prefer to
109 live through the crisis abroad. According to the economist Rosica
110 Rangelova/Росица Рангелова the global crisis gathers under the home roof
111 only part of its illegal migrants, as well as the people, who remained without
112 realization abroad. Dr. Rosica Rangelova/Росица Рангелова expects the pick
113 of the unemployment in Bulgaria to be after the middle of this year[?]. The first
114 big migrant wave goes towards the USA. Where and why did Bulgarians leave
115 A survey on the topic “Migration and internal stability” from 2004 by the Center
116 for survey of the democracy [?] with an author Denislava
117 Simeonova/Денислава Симеонова shows that after 1989 65% of the
118 Bulgarians, graduated from a university, left the country. Together with the
119 unemployment and the low living standard, there is one new motive for
120 emigration – the higher crime rates. The first migrant wave from Bulgaria goes
121 towards the USA and Canada. The USA still to this days remains the preferred
122 destination for a highly qualified specialists and young Bulgarian families. The
123 easy integration, opportunities for realization and the high payment ARE the
124 main advantages of the USA. The Western European societies turn out to be not
125 so welcoming. But Western Europe attracts with the easily accessible education,
126 with better incomes in comparison to the Bulgarian ones, as well as with the
127 geographical closeness to Bulgaria. The results of all surveys of the migratory
128 processes from the past years show that 1/3 of those desiring ot leave Bulgaria
129 are between 20 and 29 years of age.

130 5. hikari - ... 03.03 03:23 Looking for a job dominates as a motive for emigration,
131 a difference from the beginning of the Transition, when the leading one was the
132 romantic motive. The inklings of the young Bulgarians already are too

133 economized – money is the universal expression of success. Germany – most
134 preferred for living and work. The biggest part of Bulgarians, who have chosen
135 a place for living a country from the EU, goes towards Germany - around 23%.
136 According to the study by the Master of International Relations Denislava
137 Simeonova/Денислава Симеонова, young Bulgarians choose Germany and
138 Austria because of the comparatively cheaper higher education and the
139 opportunity to work while studying. Half of the Bulgarian students there want
140 to stay live and work in Germany. This week from the German Statistics
141 Services was announced, that the immigrants from Bulgaria are fifth in
142 numbers, after the Polish, Rumanians, Americans and Turkish. In 2006 in
143 Germany settled 7 500 people from Bulgaria. For 2009 the number of “new”
144 Bulgarians is 29 000. How does Europe look today on Bulgarians? Germany,
145 Austria, Italy and Greece have as a whole flexible politics in the attraction of
146 economical immigrants and in the legalizing of illegal visitors. Unlike Belgium
147 and Holland, who maintain their negative social relation towards Bulgarians.
148 Between 2001 and 2002 the two countries even threatened Bulgaria with
149 return of the visa restrictions. But contrary to the expectations that the Eastern
150 europeans will “flood” Western Europe, 2/3 of the immigrants in the EU today
151 are Muslim. Author: Antoaneta Nenкова/Антоанета Ненкова,
152 6. hikari – The Bulgarian hyena-ism 03.03 03:32 After the recuperation of the
153 Bulgarian country-ness in 1878 most young Bulgarians who studied abroad
154 returned home. Today tens of thousands of young Bulgarians around the world
155 also want to come back home but don’t do it. Why? The reasons are searched
156 for by Georgi Papakochev/Георги Папакочев: Parallel with the
157 announcements that the Minister of education Sergei Ignatov/Сергей Игнатов
158 has given a dozen local universities to the public prosecutor, mainly because of
159 corruption practices, it became clear that one of the most favorite and
160 profitable questionable/abovementioned “practices” of the abovementioned
161 higher education institutions was the so called “sponsorship”. In order to
162 continue the started abroad education in their homeland, the Bulgarian
163 students, who studied for a while, for example, in Germany or France, had to
164 make “contributions” up to 3,000 euros, as is the case with the Bulgarian
165 student who studied psychology in Germany. The reason? These young people
166 already counted as “international students”. Give, uncle, give bre uncle... Apart
167 from a flagrant stealing (the legal fee for such a transfer is up to 150
168 euros!), **in this wayis demonstrated something unique in the thinking of a**
169 **society which, apart from an economic and character one, also is going**
170 **through the toughest demographic crisis in the world with unexpected**
171 **consequences for the future of the small Balkan nation.** To behave as a step-
172 country towards your own young children only because they had the courage to
173 abandon the local educational system in favor of the foreign one, because they
174 had the “audacity” to graduate and get a diploma in Europe, the USA or
175 somewhere else in the world, because they had the “insolence” to look for even
176 the smallest opportunity for work in their country and thus “eat the bread” of
177 the local high educated ones/висшисти with their different in type preparation,
178 with their foreign languages and the acquired already different civilized-

179 ness, all this speaks of the beginning of the phenomenon “national hyena-ism” (
180 from the blood-thirsty and predatory hyena). The new “antiBulgarians”
181 **Sooner or later Bulgarians will have to face the hard admittance that they**
182 **internally despise their fellow countrymen abroad.** For the native
183 population the close to 2 million Bulgarians who left the country.
184 <http://hikari.blog.bg/politika/2011/03/03/bylgariia-da-ne-si-mejdu-18-i-35->
185 [godini.697659](http://hikari.blog.bg/politika/2011/03/03/bylgariia-da-ne-si-mejdu-18-i-35-godini.697659)

Blog example in Bulgarian

1 03.03 02:49 - България: да не си между 18 и 35 години... Автор: hikari
2 Категория: Политика Последна промяна: 03.03 02:50
3 Тъжната българска реалност
4 23 процента от младите българи са безработни. В градовете всеки
5 трети между 18 и 35 години не работи. В селата делът им е цели 58%.
6 Всеки 20-ти младеж изобщо не търси назначение, защото е изгубил
7 всякаква надежда.
8 В Гърция, Испания и Ирландия в момента има по-висока безработица от
9 тази в България. Но никъде в Европа няма такава драстична разлика между
10 младежката и средната за страната безработица. В България младежката
11 безработица е два пъти по-висока от средната - просто защото няма
12 политика за борба срещу нея.
13 Търси се... човек без диплома
14 34% от младежите с основно образование са с професия "безработен".
15 Всеки четвърти със завършено средно образование е изхвърлен от пазара
16 на труда. Дори 17% от висшестите нямат хляб. Такава е структурата на
17 заетостта при 18 до 35-годишните според образователния ценз. А изводът
18 е, че дипломата в България девалвира. Даже понякога е по-добре да си
19 изцяло без диплома.
20 Деervalвацияна "шапките" за юристи и икономисти
21 Все по-често обучението в университета приключва по финансови
22 причини. Кредити за образование се взимат все по-трудно, и то при
23 неизгодни условия. А колко от работещите млади българи са заети по
24 своята специалност? 62% са на длъжност, която отговаря
25 на квалификацията им. Но и делът на незаетите по специалността си
26 остава прекалено висок. Всеки пети се занимава с дейности, различни от
27 придобития квалификационен ценз, а 17% работят по допълнителната си
28 специалност.
29 Юристи и икономисти – колкото щеш!
30 Българските университети бълват юристи и икономисти. При
31 „сврѣхпроизводство” на едни специалисти и дефицит на други е логично да
32 има разминаване между потребностите на бизнеса и предлагането. В
33 резултат от тази диспропорция дори и 18-те процента безработни, които
34 не са се обезсърчили и търсят работа, намират поприще, ала само
35 временно. Попаднал на борсата, младият специалист най-често прави
36 компромис и в повечето случаи приема каквото и да е. След известно време
37 обаче зарязва занятието, защото не се чувства на мястото си. И цикълът на
38 временната заетост се завърта отначало.
39 Избутани в най-тъмното къоше
40 В чужбина посрещат все повече български мигранти
41 Банален факт е, че тъкмо хората между 18 и 35 години носят енергията,
42 новите знания, амбицията и ентузиазма, нужни за започването на нов
43 цикъл от стопанския живот. За съжаление обаче точно тази група страда
44 най-остро от безработицата в България. Немалка част от младите - със или

45 без квалификация - продължават да търсят късмета си зад граница. Дори и
46 днес, повече от 20 години след началото на промените.
47 Несправедливото неравенство на младите в България "наказва" страната в
48 най-тъмното европейско къше, обобщава социологът Юрий Асланов.
49 Докато държавата се държи на дистанция от младите българи, независимо
50 дали в страната или в чужбина, България няма да навакса изоставането си
51 от Европа.
52 Автор: Антоанета Ненкова,
53 1. hikari - Преброително хайку 03.03 02:53 Лъснаха последствията
54 от бесовската политика.
55 БГ - страна на мутробарока.
56 2. hikari - За заспалия "Български лъв" 03.03 03:12 В Германия днес
57 ситуацията е такава, че повече хора напускат страната, отколкото се
58 заселват в нея. И България е страна на заминаващи хора, но паралелът с
59 Германия е неуместен. Защо? Отговор търси Емилиян Лилов:
60 „Гудбай, Дойчланд” се нарича едно предаване, което от години върви по
61 германски телевизионен канал. Всяко негово издание показва по 3 до 4
62 германски семейства, които стягат куфарите и напускат страната завинаги.
63 Всеки ден думите „Гудбай, Дойчланд” произнасят 424-ма германски
64 граждани! Звучи стряскащо.
65 За причините трябва да попитаме самите заминаващи. Например лекарят
66 на частна практика, който заради неудачната здравна реформа решава да
67 затвори кабинета си и да го отвори отново в Швейцария; или пък научният
68 работник, който е пропищял от бюрократичните капани у дома и намира
69 спасение чак в Америка... Списъкът може да бъде продължен и с други
70 професии, изискващи академична образователна степен. И точно в това се
71 състои основната разлика с България. Българската армия от гурбетчии
72 Докато гръб на Германия обръщат основно хора с висока квалификация,
73 които търсят навън по-добри условия за професионална реализация, то
74 България напускат хора, които представляват евтина работна ръка –
75 строители, детегледачки и болногледачки, камериерки и друг обслужващ
76 персонал. Не казвам, че в странство не живеят български артисти,
77 художници, писатели, инженери и учени. Но те са само преден пост в
78 армията от гурбетчии, излизаци от България. За това говори и фактът, че
79 парите, които емигрантите изпращат годишно на роднини и близки в
80 България, надвишават в пъти усвоените по различните еврофондове!
81 Твърди си, че страната напускат предимно младите и образованите
82 българи. Но като цяло те продължават да са незначителна част от по-
83 голямата категория на слабо или среднообразованите напускащи. След
84 несъстоялото се (в разгара на кризата) завръщане на българите от
85 Испания, Италия или Великобритания, сега българските управници се
86 опитват да ни убедят как все по-малко българи вече напускали страната.
87 3. hikari - ... 03.03 03:14 Паралелно с това традиционно висок остава броят
88 на българските студенти в Западна Европа и САЩ. Имал съм възможност да
89 разговарям с много млади българи в Германия, и ви уверявам, че в основни
90 линии се връщат онези от тях, които след дипломирането си не намират

91 бързо и лесно достатъчно атрактивна работа в Германия. Затова пък
92 всички споделят, че не желаят в България да бъдат оценявани по това, кого
93 познават, а не какво умеят или могат. По следите на "Келтския тигър"
94 Накъде? Накъде?
95 Ако България желае да си върне армията напуснали страната, не трябва да
96 пише скучни административни програми за обратното им привличане или
97 веднъж в годината да се отчита с инициативи като "Българският
98 Великден". А да се поучи от опита на Ирландия, която през 90-те години на
99 миналия век създаде условията за успешно завръщане - устойчива
100 инвестиционна среда, ниско корпоративно данъчно облагане, добри
101 постижения в инфраструктурата и образованието, отстъпки за бизнеса.
102 Останалото го знаем - ирландският бум се превърна в синоним за
103 завръщането към страната, към която принадлежиш по паспорт, език и
104 корени. Питам се, възможно ли е "Келтският тигър" да пробуди
105 съзнанието на заспалия "Български лъв"? Радостно е, че при сегашното
106 управление има първи наченки на такова развитие, каквото напр. беше
107 въвеждането на плоския данък. Като цяло обаче промените са плахи,
108 липсва размах.
109 За да се завърнат българите.
110 Не само на Великден.
111 Автор: Емилиян Лилов
112 4. hikari - България: елитът остава зад граница 03.03 03:20 Надейте, че
113 кризата ще върне в България голяма част от образованите емигранти, се
114 оказаха напразни. Обратният brain drain така и не се състоя: завръщат се
115 най-вече българите, неуспели да се реализират в чужбина.
116 Голямата ножица между средните доходи в развитите страни и в
117 България е най-категоричното обяснение за прекършените надежди, че
118 образованите българи ще се завърнат в родината си. Така смята ст. н. с. д-
119 р Росица Рангелова от Икономическия институт на БАН. Основният мотив
120 на българската трудова миграция е да изкара добра пенсия. Затова и
121 напусналите страната предпочитат да преживеят кризата зад граница.
122 Според икономистката Росица Рангелова глобалната криза прибира под
123 родната стряха само част от нелегалните мигранти, както и хората,
124 останали без реализация в чужбина. Д-р Росица Рангелова очаква пик на
125 безработицата в България след средата на тази година.
126 Първата голяма мигрантска вълна се насочва към САЩ Първата голяма
127 мигрантска вълна се насочва към САЩ
128 Къде и защо заминаха българите
129 Проучване на тема "Миграция и вътрешна сигурност" от 2004 г. на
130 Центъра за изследване на демокрацията с автор Денислава Симеонова
131 сочи, че след 1989 г. 65% от българите, завършили университет, напускат
132 страната. Наред с безработицата и ниския жизнен стандарт се очертава и
133 един нов мотив за емиграция - повишената престъпност.
134 Първата голяма мигрантска вълна от България се насочва към САЩ и
135 Канада. САЩ остават и до днес предпочитана дестинация за
136 висококвалифицирани специалисти и млади български семейства.

137 Лесната интеграция, възможностите за реализация и високото заплащане
138 СА основните предимства на САЩ. Западноевропейските общества се
139 оказват не така гостоприемни. Но Западна Европа привлича с лесно
140 достъпното образование, с по-добрите доходи в сравнение с българските,
141 както и с географската близост до България.
142 Резултатите от всички проучвания на миграционните процеси от
143 последните години сочат, че 1/3 от желаещите да напуснат България са
144 на възраст между 20 и 29 години.
145 5. hikari - ... 03.03 03:23 Търсенето на работа доминира като мотив за
146 емиграция, за разлика от началото на прехода, когато водещ е бил
147 романтичният мотив. Нагласите на младите българи вече са твърде
148 икономизирани - парите са универсалният израз на успех.
149 Германия - най-предпочитана за живот и работа
150 Най-голяма част от българите, избрали за място за живеене страна от ЕС,
151 се насочва към Германия - около 23%. Според изследването на магистъра
152 по международни отношения Денислава Симеонова, младите българи
153 избират Германия и Австрия заради сравнително евтиното висше
154 образование и възможността успоредно с ученето да работят. Половината
155 от българските студенти там желаят да останат да живеят и работят в
156 Германия.
157 Тази седмица от германската Статистическа служба съобщи, че
158 имигрантите от България са пети по численост, след поляците,
159 румънците, американците и турците. През 2006 г. в Германия са се
160 установили 7 500 души от България. За 2009 г. броят на „новите“ българи
161 е 29 000. Как Европа гледа днес на българите?
162 Германия, Австрия, Италия и Гърция имат като цяло гъвкава политика за
163 привличане на икономически имигранти и за легализиране на незаконно
164 пребиваващите. За разлика от Белгия и Холандия, които запазват
165 негативното обществено отношение спрямо българите. Между 2001 и
166 2002 г. двете страни дори заплашваха България с връщане на визовите
167 ограничения. Но противно на очакванията, че източноевропейците ще
168 "залеят" Западна Европа, 2/3 от имигрантите в ЕС днес са мюсюлмани.
169 Автор: Антоанета Ненкова,
170 6. hikari - Българският хиенизъм 03.03 03:32 След възстановяването на
171 българската държавност през 1878 повечето млади българи, учили в
172 чужбина, се връщат в родината. Днес десетки хиляди млади българи по
173 света също искат да се върнат у дома, но не го правят. Защо?
174 Причините търси Георги Папакочев: Успоредно със съобщенията, че
175 образователният министър Сергей Игнатов е дал дузина местни
176 университети на прокурора, главно заради корупционни практики, стана
177 ясно, че една от най-любимите и доходни въпросни „практики“ на
178 въпросните висши училища било т. нар. "спонсорство". За да продължат
179 започнатото в чужбина образование в родината си, български студенти,
180 учили известно време, да речем, в Германия или Франция, е трябвало да
181 правят „дарения“ до 3.000 евро, какъвто е случаят с български студент,

182 учил в Германия психология. Причината? Тези млади хора вече попадали
183 в категорията „чуждестранни студенти“.Давай чичо, давай бре
184 чичо...Освен флагрантно обирджийство /законната такса за подобно
185 прехвърляне е до 150 евро!/, по този начин се демонстрира нещо
186 уникално в мисленето на едно общество, което освен икономическа и
187 нравствена преживява най-тежката демографска криза в света с
188 непредсказуеми последствия за бъдещето на малката балканска нация.Да
189 се държиш като страна-мащеха към собствените си млади хора, само
190 защото те са имали смелостта да пренебрегнат местната образователна
191 система в полза на чуждестранната, защото са имали „наглостта“ да се
192 дипломират в Европа, САЩ или другаде по света, защото имат
193 „нахалството“ да търсят и най-малката възможност за работа в родината
194 си и така да „изядат хляба“ на местните висшисти с различната си по ниво
195 подготовка, с чужди езици и придобитата вече различна цивилизованост,
196 всичко това говори за наченки на явлениято „национален хиенизъм“ /от
197 кръвожадната и хищна хиена/.Новите "антибългари"
198 Рано или късно българите ще бъдат изправени пред тежкото признание,
199 че вътрешно ненавиждат своите сънародници в чужбина. За местното
200 население близо двата милиона българи, напуснали страната
201 [http://hikari.blog.bg/politika/2011/03/03/bylgariia-da-ne-si-mejdu-18-i-35-](http://hikari.blog.bg/politika/2011/03/03/bylgariia-da-ne-si-mejdu-18-i-35-202-godini.697659)
202 [godini.697659](http://hikari.blog.bg/politika/2011/03/03/bylgariia-da-ne-si-mejdu-18-i-35-202-godini.697659)

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

These represent the array of questions asked during various interviews, and not a particular order of asking—I followed up on a respondent's statements for elaborations and/or followed the naturally occurring talk.

Questions about the term *oplakvane* (use in context: sequence, uses and functions, norms) and in general:

1. What does it mean for some one to *se oplakva*? How can you tell that some one *se oplakva*? Is there a particular way of doing *oplakvane*?
2. When some one comes to you and says "I need to *se oplacha* to you" what do you expect to hear?
3. How do you respond to *oplakvane*?
4. Would you say that you *se oplakvate*?
5. What do you do when you want to *se oplachete*?
6. What happens when you *se oplachete* to someone? What happens when someone else *se oplache* to you? What are the purposes?
7. How frequently do you say you *se oplakvate*?
8. When was the last time when you *se oplakahte* to someone?
9. What was the topic?
10. How did they respond?
11. What do you usually *se oplakvate* about?
12. Do you think there is a difference between *oplakvane* and *mrankane*? If so, what do you think it is?
13. Who do you *se oplakvate* to?
14. Have you ever *se oplachete* to a person you don't know?
15. What did you tell them? Why?
16. Has a person you don't know *se oplakval* to you?
17. What did they say? On what topic? Why?
18. Do you think that we, Bulgarians, *se oplakvame* more than other countries? Why?
19. On what topics, generally, do you think we Bulgarians *se oplakvame*?
20. What is the situation in Bulgaria? How would you describe it?

Questions about the term *oplakvane* in terms of the enactments (communication conduct) it refers to as well as some descriptive (Hymes' SPEAKING) questions:

1. How would you describe *oplakvane*? Is it something a person does with/to some one else?
2. What is the setting or scene for *oplakvane*?
3. Who else is usually there?
4. What exactly do you do when you *se oplakvate*? Describe.
5. What do you feel when you *se oplakvate*? What do you feel when someone else *se oplache* to you?
6. Why do you think you are doing it? Or they are doing it?
7. How does it happen – when with people face-to-face?

8. What do you respond to a person who *se oplakva*?
9. What do you expect to hear when you *se oplakvate*?
10. How do you know when to stop *se oplakvate* or when the other person is done doing *oplakvane*?

Questions about the term *oplakvane* in terms of messages and meanings in cultural terms for pragmatic action (premises of belief and value, aesthetics of performance)

- Literal messages about communication practice itself:

1. Can you recognize that some one *se oplakva* without them using the term? How so?
2. How useful do you think it is to *se oplakvate*?
3. What is achieved by doing it?
4. Do you think people should do it more or less?
5. How do you think it is perceived by other people?
6. How do you feel when doing it? How do you know – describe?
7. How do you feel afterwards?
8. What will happen if we were to stop *se oplakvame*?
9. Do you think things will be different if we did not *se oplakvame*?

- Metaphorical messages about sociality:

1. How do you feel in relation to other people when you *se oplakvate*?
2. What does it say about you when you *se oplakvate*?
3. What does it say about others when they do it?
4. Do you feel connected to others when *se oplakvate*? If so, how? And to whom?
5. Do you feel connected to others who *se oplakvat*? How?
6. Do you think others (outside of Bulgaria) *se oplakvat*?
7. About what? Why? To whom?
8. What do you think happens when others (outside of Bulgaria) *se oplakvat*? Why?
9. Who do you think *se oplakva* the most? Why?
10. Who do you think has the most reasons to *se oplakva*? Why?

- Metaphorical messages about personhood:

1. Why do you think you *se oplakvate*?
2. Why do you think others *se oplakvat*?
3. What is the context of *oplakvane*?
4. Where do you think *oplakvane* started?
5. What do you think are the origins of *oplakvane*?
6. What do you think the cause for it is?

APPENDIX C

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE IN ENGLISH

2 'Why is every one here such pessimist?'
3 I do not understand his question and I admit it.
4 'Well since I've landed, all Bulgarians who I meet only **se**
5 **oplakvat**. From the roads, from the holes, from the police, from everything.'
6 I don't know why this is so. But I **pomrankvam** too. So that I am not left
7 behind, not that I have what to **se oplakvam** about. For the sport, to be
8 part of the **dialogue**. But the Englishman at the table starts laughing. He was two
9 days without electricity at Sunny Beach and drifted up, towards Varna. To walk
10 around and to have a bath. I explain that this is different, and if I were a tourist at
11 Sunny Beach, I would **mrankam**, too. He agrees but to a point.
12 'Most of my acquaintances who have been to Thailand, want to go live there
13 forever. There's no electricity, no roads, no running water. But the Thai succeed
14 in advertising the best and no one cares about the rest. Here people only
15 **se oplakvat**, and Bulgaria is one of the most beautiful countries in
16 Europe. What do you lack? You have everything that people could dream of, and
17 it's still not enough. Your country lacks only optimism.'
18 I try to **parry him with stories[kontriram s istoriiki]**. Here for example, our
19 prime minister decided to raise the salaries of the police. And what does he do,
20 he raises fines... Now instead of a fine of 30 lv., which we save by bribing the
21 hook [cop] with a 10, we have to pay 150 thus the "member"[cop] takes 50. The
22 problem is solved, and us, the small people, give the blowjob. He roars with
23 laughter.
24 'Who are you the "small people"? Why do you want to pass as "big"? Why in
25 England, when there's a speed limit of 40, you drive with 40? Why do you not get
26 fined in Germany? And here, you drive like crazy. I got a rental car, but I returned
27 it, now I ride the bus. I want to live. It's not the police's or the prime minister's
28 fault, that you are sick of living. You all want to be big, but you don't have time
29 (or desire) to grow up. You all want to be bosses, every business card says
30 "manager", but no one wants to do the dirty job. And it is from that you have to
31 start. The nice stuff doesn't fall from the sky. The Europeans are not going to
32 come and raise your standard in two months to compare to the German. And you
33 behave as though that's what they promised you last Wednesday and they lied.
34 You throw your trash out the window! And you **blame [opravdava]** the local
35 municipality for not leaving a dumpster nearby? This is not the way.
36 No one wants to start. And without that it's not going to happen.'
37 Here I have nothing to say. And he is just one tourist, who wants to spend every
38 year as long as possible in Bulgaria because "few are these days the places that
39 are so beautiful". But he has decided to stay away from people. They burden him.
40 It is inconceivable to him how they burden themselves, too, "as if they have no
41 other worries".
42 He comes and enjoys the beautiful in the city... in the park... at the beach... But he
43 thinks that he's the only one to see it... The rest are so obsessed in finding

44 problems, that somehow don't notice it.

Newspaper article in Bulgarian

2 'Zashto vsichki tuk sa takiva pesimisti?'
3 Ne razbiram vaprosa mu I si go priznavam.
4 'Ami otkakto sam kacnal, vsichki bulgari, s koito se sreshtam, samo se **oplakvat**.
5 Ot patishtata, ot dupkite, ot policaite, ot vsichko.'
6 Ne znam zashto e taka. No I az **pomrankvam**. Prosto da ne ostana nazad, ne che
7 imam ot kakvo da se oplakvam. Za sporta, das am v krak s **dialoga**. No
8 anglichaninat na masata se smee. Bil e dva dni bez tok na Slanchev Brjg I drapnal
9 malko nagore, kam Varna. Da se razhodi I da se poizkape. Objsnjvam, che spored
10 men tova e druga bira I az, ako bjh turist v Slanchev Brjg, I az shtih da **mrunkam**.
11 Saglasjva se, samo donjkade. 'Povecheto mi poznati, koito sa hodili vednag v
12 Tailand, iskat da otidat da givejt tam zavinagi. Tam njma tok, njma patishta, njma
13 techashta voda. No tailandcite uspjvat da reklamirat hubavoto I na nikogo ne mu
14 puka za ostanaloto. Tuk horata samo se oplakvat, a Bulgaria e edna ot nai-
15 krasivite strain v Evropa. Kakvo vi lipsva? Imate si vsichko, za koeto edin narod
16 bi mogal da mechtae, no ne vi stiga. Vav vashata strana lipsva samo optimisam.'
17 Opitvam se da **go kontriram s istoriiki**. Eto naprimer nashijt premier reshava
18 da vdigne zaplatite na policaite. I kakvo pravi, vdiga globate... Seg a vmesto globa
19 30 lv., kojto si pestim s 10 kinta na kukata, trjbva da platim 150 I taka "organat"
20 ni vzema 50. Problemat e reshen, a nie, malkite, go duhame. Smee se do otkat.
21 'Koi ste vie "malkite"? Zashto se pravite na golemi? Zashto v Anglij, kato ima
22 tabela 40, karate s 40? Zashto v Germanij ne vi globjvat? A tuk karate kato ludi.
23 Bjh vzal kola pod name, no j varnah, sega se vozj s avtobus. Givee mi se. Ne sa
24 vinovni policaite I premierat, che vi e pisnal givota. Vsichki iskate da ste golemi,
25 no njmate vreme (ili gelanie) da izrasnete. Vsichki iskate da ste direktori, na
26 vsjka vizitna kartichka pishe "menidgur", no na nikogo ne mu se raboti mrusnata
27 rabota. A ot nej trjbva da se zapochne. Hubavoto ne vali ot nebeto. Njma da
28 doidat evropeicite I za dva meseca da vi vdignat standarta do nemskij. A se
29 dargite taka, sjkash sa vi obeshtali tova da se sluchi minalata srjda I sa vi izlagali.
30 Hvarljte si bokluka prez prozoreca! I se opravdavate, che obshtinata ne e slogila
31 nablizo konteiner? Tova ne e nachinat. Nikoi ne iska da zapochne. A bez tova
32 njma kak da stane.' Tuk njmam kakvo da mu kaga. A e prosto edin turist, gelaesht
33 da prekarva vsjka godina kolkoto moge po-dalgo v Bulgaria, zashtoto "veche sa
34 malko tolkova krasivite mesta". No e reshil da se dargi daleko ot horata. Tovarjt
35 go. Nerazbiraemo za nego tovarjt I sebe si, "sjkash njmat dostatachno grigi".
36 Idva I se naslagdava na hubavoto b grada... v parka... na plaga... No misli, che
37 samo toi go vigda... Ostanalite sa tolkova obsebeni ot tarseneto na problemi, che
38 njkak ne go zabeljzvat.

APPENDIX D

CYCLES 6-7 IN ENGLISH

- 1 K: G., we'll go to plant some sweet potatoes=
2 G: =yes, yes, you'll see that they'll grow and will //work//
3 K: //a:nd// and that's it, we'll
4 we'll be great, you know
5 G: mha hahahaha hahahaha
6 K: and we'll have work=
7 G: =I'll be the producer, you'll be the trader, will sell them
8 K: a:h so
9 G: haha
10 K: A:nd ready.
(.2)
11 G: hehe eh, K.! hahaha
(.3)
12 K: but
13 G: but (.2)
14 K: Just not sell them like the first ones!
15 G: Why?
16 K: Our wight didn't match.
17 G: ahh (dismissive), everything was exact, be*! She said to
18 K: Ah? Exact, it wasn't exact.
19 G: was exact, she said 'you'll tell him, first for the:m to leave some potatoes as=
20 K: =not for us, be*! //they are all at our place!// haha
21 G: //wait// yeah, but as much as
22 it's necessary! She asked, 'don't let him=
23 K: =ah=
24 G: =sell them all', she said K.'=
25 K: =god give us sell them all, and for you to bring more! hehe
26 N: Not to be enough.
27 K: Yes! Isn't this why you brought them!
28 G: Ah be*, you leave some for yourself, right to have some, and the rest, sell it.
29 K: and I prefer to sell everything and you to bring more=
30 G: =oh! Well only if we could hehe
31 K: Well, yes.
32 G: hahaha
33 K: Whether there'll be some left for us it's easy.
(.4)
34 G: well, again, this year so:
35 K: both a lot, and at a low cost
36 G: well scary many potatoes grew. Other years we've done what not and it's not
37 working, and it's not! They burn and right. Whether bad weather, or frost, or
38 another. This year they were pouring
39 K: yeah, it was very hot this year, probably because of that

40 G: No matter, I don't know what but it was crazy full of potatoes.
(.2)
41 N: I, no, for you to give him (talking about the dog)
42 N2: no, at the table, no
43 N: no, be*, no, no, I only say that I'm not giving him
(.3)
44 N: Sorry (English), don't lick your lips (.3) how he has furrowed his brow and
45 K: hehehe
46 N: Go there to your owner!
47 G: he goes and goes there now to look for you. hahaha
48 K: who would scold him now
49 N2: (mumbled)
50 G: give him an appetizer now hahaha
51 N2: (mumbled)
52 K: The desert!
(.1)
53 G: he knows then that you forgot desert! haha
54 N: give him from the slami exactly
55 G: hahaha
56 N2: mha
57 G: hahaha
(.3)
58 G: oh
59 N: he's getting spoilt now and (.5)
60 K: and what do you say a lot of potatoes this year, low cost
61 G: pouring. Low cost. (.1) last year was scary
62 K: But less potatoes grew then?
63 G: it was less (.1) and we planted less right, they didn't know right. (.1) so when
64 they saw right that the prices were rising and they thought that (.1) this is
65 K: but no
66 G: M. hopefully lowers the price haha
67 N: yes
68 K: Of potatoes?
69 G: Well yes.
(.2)
70 K: but I don't know but many are importing and I don't know. They //import
them// from abroad and are
71 G: //many//
72 K: At 40 stotonki the imported. How does that work? It's not clear.
73 G: well, I'll tell you how. (.1) they. The producers, the sunsidies right they give
them to
74 N: yes in=
75 G: =potatoes, they are paid for
76 N: mha
77 G: they only want to clean them up somehow, to get rid of them because there
78 are. Not 100, it could be 200, could be 300, could be 500 tons of potatoes to

79 K: mha
80 G: he took the subsidies money, and has to get rid of them somehow
81 K: to move them
82 G: ah yes, to move them. Otherwise has to look for a dump to throw them out
83 K: horror
84 G: ah so
85 K: //so shitty//
86 N: //and here://
87 G: //and yes//
88 N: the subsidies they steal them still
89 G: oh there are no subsidies! This is ah (dismissive)
90 N: there are, there are from the European Union
91 G: well there is
92 N: but they //take them//
93 G: //there is but they// right see where where they go there
94 N: yes
95 G: did you hear on tv how they take it
96 N: mha
97 G: they even fire that one
98 N: yes
99 G: the substitute ah: what was her name (.1) exactly for that (.1) both is in the
100 way right if there is right something for her will fix subsidies
101 N: yes
102 G: if there isn't
103 N: horror
(.2)
104 G: here rotten country be*, here is a mafia country and=
105 N: =exactly mafia=
106 G: =and corrupted to the teeth
107 K: mha
(.1)
108 G: there is no opening of the eyes easy here
109 N: and we'll never get better
110 G: we won't get better
111 K: it gets worse and worse
112 G: oh (agreeing)
113 K: I imagine what it'll be in 20 years. (.2) only
114 N: It won't. will you get some wine?
115 K: yes (.2)
116 N2: and me too, a little bit more
117 K: How little, say?
118 N2: mha (.3) this much enough merci
(.3)
119 G: and whatever comes haha
120 K: mmm? Whatever comes yes
121 N: well*

122 G: whatever comes haha
123 K: we'll think about it then
124 N: it's not easy cause (.3)
125 K: nothing works that's why
126 G: mha m no
127 K: well see that
128 N: everything is on our back
129 G: oh (agreeing)
130 N: mha
131 K: well fucking country she=
132 N: =taking the skin off=
133 K: =it doesn't work, doesn't work=
134 N: taking 10 skins off your back, and for what? (.5)
135 K: everyone already
136 N: at one point you start wondering what are you working for
137 G: yes be*
138 N: you kill yourself with work and nothing
139 G: it only tries to get your money and this is it
140 N: yes yes so

Cycles 6-7 in Bulgarian

- 1 K: G., she hodime da sadime: sladki kartofi=
2 G: =da, da she vish che she pusadim I she //stanat//
3 K: //i: // I t'va e, she she sme si
4 extra, da znaesh
5 G: mha hahahaha hahahaha
6 K: I sh'si imame rabota=
7 G: =az she sam proizvoditelj, ti sh'si: targoveca, she gi prodava
8 K: a: taka
9 G: haha
10 K: i: gotova.
(.2)
11 G: hehe eh, K-le! Hahaha
(.3)
12 K: ama
13 G: ama (.2)
14 K: da ne gi prodademe kat parvite!
15 G: oti?
16 K: da ne ni izlezat tonaga.
17 G: ahh (dismissive), izliza vsichko tochno, be! Tj, kazva da,
18 K: ah? Tochno, ne e tochno.
19 G: tochno e, kaza, vika, 'she mu kagesh, nai- napred za tj:h da si ostavjt kartofi
kolkoto=
20 K: =njma za nas, be! //Vsichkite sa v nas!// haha
21 G: //chakai// da, de, ama kolkoto sa
22 neobhodimi! Pita, 'da ne vzema da gi=
23 K: =ah=
24 G: =prodade vsichkite', vika 'K.'=
25 K: =dai boge da gi prodam vsichkite, da dokarash oshte! Hehe
26 N: da ne stignat.
27 K: da! Nail zatova si gi dokaral!
28 G: abe, ti si ostavi za tebe, nail da si imash, pa drugoto, prodavai go, tova e lesna
rabota.
29 K: a I az predpochitam da prodam vsichko I da dokarash oshte=
30 G: =oh! To stiga da mogeshe hehe
31 K: emi da.
32 G: hahaha
33 K: dali shte ostane za nas lesna rabotata.
(.4)
34 G: tj pak taj godina znachi:
35 K: hem mnogo, hem na niska cena
36 G: ma strashno mnogo kartofi sa rodia. Drugi godini kato kakvo li ne s me
37 pravili I ne shte I ne shte! Zapeknat se I nail. J maanat, j slanata gi popari, j
38 t'va onova. Taj godina nachi beha izsipali
39 K: mani, mnogo gega beshe taj godina, sigurno za tova

40 G: njma znachenie, ne znam kakvo shto obache beshe frashkano s kartofi.
(.2)

41 N: az, ne, da mu dadesh (about the dog)

42 N2: ne, na masata, ne

43 N: ne be, ne ne, az samo kazvam che ne davam
(.3)

44 N: sori (to the dog), ne se oblizvai (.3) kak si e sbarchil cheloto I veche
preglashta!

45 K: hehehe

46 N: otivai tam pri stopankata ti!

47 G: otiva I otiva tam se'a tebe da te tarsi. Hahaha

48 K: koi sega she mu se skara

49 N2: (mumbled)

50 G: davai mu mezeta sega hahaha

51 N2: (mumbled)

52 K: deserta!
(.1)

53 G: znae znachi deserta si zabravila! Haha

54 N: dai mu ot lukaknata tochno

55 G: hahaha

56 N2: mha

57 G: hahaha
(.3)

58 G: oh

59 N: toi se glezi veche I (.5)

60 K: I k'vo vikash mnogo kartofi taj godina, niska cena

61 G: beha izsipali. Niska cena. (.1) lani beshe strahotno

62 K: ama malko kartofi se rodiha togava?

63 G: po-malko beha (.1) to I po-malko sadeame nail, te ne znaeha nail. (.1) znachi
kat

64 videa nail che zea se kachva cenata I te si misleli che (.1) taka she bade ama

65 K: ama ne

66 G: M. mai dano svali cenata haha

67 N: da

68 K: na kartofite?

69 G: ami da.
(.2)

70 K: ma az ne znam ma mnogo vnasat I ne znam. Te gi //vnasjt ot // chugbina a
sa

71 G: //mnogo//

72 K: na 40 stotinki vnosa. Kak se vrazva taj rabota?! Ne mi e jsno.

73 G: mi shti kaga kak. (.1) tij. Zemedelskite proizvoditeli, tej subsidii nail gi davit
na

74 N: da v=

75 G: =kartofite, te mu sa platen na tjh

76 N: mha

77 G: samo gledat njkade da gi izchistjt, da gi maanat zashtoto tam sa. Ne 100,
 moge I 200,
 78 moge I 300, moge I 500 tona kartofi da
 79 K: mha
 80 G: toi subsidiite parite si gi e pribral, trjbva da gi mahne njkade da gi:
 81 K: da gi plasira
 82 G: ah da gi plasira. inache trjbva da tarsi njkade nali njk'vo smetishte da gi
 izfarli
 83 K: ugas
 84 G: a: taka
 85 K: //egati gadnoto//
 86 N: //a tuka: //
 87 G: //I: da//
 88 N: subsidiite gi kradat oshte
 89 G: o: subsidii njma tuka! t'va ah (dismissive)
 90 N: ima ima ot Evropeiskij sauz
 91 G: to ima
 92 N: ama te //gi pribirat//
 93 G: //ima ama te gi// nali vidjt kade kade e varvjt tam
 94 N: da
 95 G: ti slushate po televizijta kade gi pribirat
 96 N: mha
 97 G: dage uvolni'a onaj
 98 N: da
 99 G: zamestnik ah: kak se kazvashe onaj (.1) tochno zat'va che (.1) em mu prechi
 nali ako
 100 ima nali nshto za nej she mu uredi subsidii
 101 N: da
 102 G: ako njma
 103 N: ugas
 (.2)
 104 G: tuka skapana dargava be, tuka e mafiotska dargava i=
 105 N: =tochno mafiotska=
 106 G: =I korumpirana: do zabi
 107 K: mha
 (.1)
 108 G: njma proglegdane lesno njma tuka
 109 N: I njma da se opravime
 110 G: njma se opravime
 111 K: to stava vse po-losho I po-losho
 112 G: oh (agreeing)
 113 K: predstavjm si k'vo shte stane sled 20 godini. (.2) samo
 114 N: njma (.1) shte sipesh li vince?
 115 K: da (.2)
 116 N2: I na men oshte savsem malko
 117 K: kolko malko kagi?

118 N2: mha (.3) tolko stiga mersi
(.3)
119 G: I kakvot mu doide haha
120 K: mmm? k'vot doide da
121 N: abe*
122 G: k'vot doide haha
123 K: posle shte go mislime
124 N: ne e lesno shtoto (.3)
125 K: nishto ne stava zat'va
126 G: mha mne
127 K: to vig che
128 N: vsichko e na nash grab
129 G: oh (agreeing)
130 N: mha
131 K: vaobshte eba ti dargavat tj=
132 N: =sadirat po=
133 K: =ne raboti ne raboti=
134 N: po 10 kogi, I za kakvo? (.5)
135 K: vsichkite veche
136 N: v edin moment se chudish veche za kakvo rabotish
137 G: da be
138 N: skasvash se ot rabota I nishto
139 G: samo gleda kak da ti pribere parite t'va e
140 N: da da taka

APPENDIX E

OPLAKVANE SAMPLE IN ENGLISH

116 K: they carefree.
117 G: aaa:h
118 K: and you worry about them
119 G: leave it everywhere I go everything I fix for him if I die I don't know what
120 they'll do
121 N: haha
123 G: they without me
124 N: not like that not like that
125 G: no joke be*
126 N: don't you dare don't you dare haha
127 G: ah leave it that time will come too be*. This wherever whatever comes up I
128 have to go and get it done for him. That's
129 K: haha (.1) you are for
130 G: no and ours did some trouble and this and they can't fix it. They go and to
131 solicitors, to judges, to lawyers. And I fix them. And see what men they are
132 K: //but why do they make trouble?//
133 N: //but why? But how so//
134 G: well anything happens
135 K: eh it happens. It's not so, they'll pull themselves together be* fuck it they are
136 not //young//
137 G: //ah: well they the:y//
138 N: //well they are not young//
139 G: e:h Valio drove his car drove his car he and from the back some drunk there
140 at the restaurant (inaudible) that restaurant
141 K: mha
142 G: catches up with him from bellow that drunk with gets on a jeep and catches
143 up with him and exactly around the school, you know there
144 K: yes
145 G: there's a speed bump. Ours slowed down at the bump and the other one
146 catches up and a little above and he hit the car in the back hahaha he had
147 smashed the trunk had almost curved it like this turned it
148 K: //hahaha//
149 N: //horror//
150 G: and the other one when he gets out, like he starts him=
151 K: =well of course
152 N: eh! Well you get it
153 G: he really beat him
154 N: how can
155 G: he doesn't have the right to beat him right
156 K: eh
157 N: eh no
158 G: right this is (inaudible)

159 N: by law he doesn't doesn't have a right
160 G: doesn't. but the other one could not help it and when he came out like
161 K: well of course
162 G: took him out of the car with the door he broke the window too, the other one
163 grabbed hold of the door
164 K: mha
165 G: and the other one with the whole door hahaha
166 K: hahaha
167 G: with everything haha Vanka had haha beaten him up and put him in the
168 arrest so again go to find people to
169 N: but this is Valio, and us we get hit //downtown Sofia//
170 K: //why would they put him in the arrest//
171 G: a:h why!
172 K: jerks
173 N: we were with two cars, our best man in the front, we in the back. And behind
174 some drunk hits us wasted
175 G: eh, no scary stuff
176 N: scary stuff
177 G: exactly like this it was
178 N: we hit the best man in the front
179 G: well this guy in the back pushed you forward=
180 N: =the same. But we our car was a
181 G: ts ts ts
182 N: like this (shows) totaled
183 G: well!
184 N: and in the front and in the back. And we get out of the cars and we both
185 women grab this guy you know what ki what kicks and what beating it was
186 K: just like that just like that haha
187 N: and these [the police] just watching
188 G: but you more- they won't won't do anything to you hahaha 56:03
189 N: hey well such beating it was in one moment one of the ah ah the taxi drivers
190 apparently recognized me cause it turned out to be an acquaintance and called
191 me and I kick and kick
192 G: (throughout above) hahaha
193 N: I won't tell you how! So I acquit Valio. I would do the=
194 G: =yes he couldn't put up with it, and he gets out
195 N: well it's normal, yes
196 G: that from Velingrad the police came, it got about 1 o'clock and there was
197 nothing for them to say right. There and others got in
198 N: and we stayed up then until 5 o'clock
199 G: jerks. r:ght and they got it and they take him down and arrested him.
200 K: they where, did they take him to Velingrad?
201 G: to Velingrad. And I the next day I went and (.1) 24 hours he spent in the
202 arrest
203 K: 24 hours?
204 G: give a connection yada yada you know

206 K: yes they keep them that much 24 hours they keep them
 207 G: that much, they even and 72 hours have the right
 208 G: a:h they do
 209 K: agains it's still still 24 hours
 210 G: yeah it's not, you say, 72 hours ohhh says
 211 N: no, be* it's normal, you fall into such a
 212 G: aha
 (.1)
 213 K: he beat him too little
 214 N: I I saw in front of work I see through the window one how parked in front of
 215 me. And I say he'll hit me. And in the next moment I see how he backs up, hits
 216 my suv and the car jumps backwards. And I shot out of work, go to him, and
 217 open his door and I grab him like this by the neck, so imagine how crazy I'd
 218 gotten, and pull him out, and I start yelling and cursing and yelling. And he right
 219 in the first moment freaked out, after that comes out and sees that my car is not
 220 scratched. True, it's a tall car, he hit it and he and he meshed his plate. Mine
 221 wasn't hurt, but I'm furious
 222 G: yes, you just, ah so, it's from from just watching right
 223 N: and this he's first worried, then sees right that I'm alone woman and starts to
 224 get cocky. Yeah but in this moment from work come out three people and stand
 225 beside me
 226 G: hahaha (and throughout) and now what are we gonna do
 227 N: what are we gonna do now!
 228 G: haha
 229 N: and I get even cockier!
 230 G: ohohoho 58:10
 231 N: lelei* so horror, later I get angry with myself and I say, ok, why do I why do I
 232 go into such a frenzy
 233 G: it can't no, just when you see this occurrence
 234 N: yes
 235 G: and you can't bear it
 236 N: so
 237 G: your nervous system cannot bear it
 238 N: eh, yesterday yesterday one of the cars, we have about ten cars at work, one
 239 of the cars is brand new, you know how it is that it doesn't even have a year one
 240 it, and the guy driving it is very conscientious and he says 'I it turns green and I
 241 go at the light and a car hits me with a girl in it who was talking on the phone'
 242 G: ts ts
 243 N: she didn't even look and passed on a red light, but the car's whole front is
 244 gone cause she was driving fast, the antifreeze leaked
 245 G: oh
 246 N: and I say, well ok? Leave the rest, [the car] is insured, they'll fix it, nothing.
 247 But I am left two weeks without a car=
 248 G: =you know what a thing ah so when they hit you
 249 N: and now what do I do right, how to do my job like=
 250 G: =what thing what pain it is to go to e technicians, and knocking and work*=

251 N: =no no, so they took it, it's insured, took it and will
252 G: so so
253 N: they will return it fixed. I am still paying=
254 G: =they'll return it, but during that time
255 N: =but during that time! These weeks what am I gonna do
256 G: well here this this is my thought
257 N: I have to make money with it
258 G: just so just so!
259 N: and I say, if it was me, that [girl] I would have beaten her up.
260 G: ye:s
261 N: so I see red (2)
262 G: just so
263 N: and will start and won't stop.
264 G: well of course
265 N: but better that my technician is calm and nothing right
266 G: haha
267 N: I say, 'are you whole?' he says 'well I grabbed hold of the steering wheel and=
268 G: =haha
269 N: she turned me like this at the stop light. but, says, nothing is wrong with me'
270 G: ts ts ts
271 K: haha what boy?=(talking to the dog)
272 N: =I don't know. This is. And here in Sofia if you drive
273 G: I know what it is be*! I* have here with the trailer through lion bridge. There
274 I do most often in the month once or twice I make drives. But my car is big and
275 even if someone hits me (laughing) somewhere=
276 N: =well they should beware of you. My dad too still
277 G: oh they beware yes yes (no) .
278 N: even ten years ago he says 'I
279 G: yes
280 N: I won't come to Sofia. I won't come to Sofia anymore, come=
281 G: =well he won't. he's afraid the man=
282 N: =he's afraid. say 'here. And he was even an instructor
283 G: he was an instructor but when he sees now these sons of bitches all drugged
284 up, with alcohol
285 K: yes yes
286 N: yes yes you know what wonder it is, yes
287 G: with everything. And first of all, I also drove 5 months school, he probably 10,
288 he could even 2 years probably drove the man
289 N: yes
290 G: I 5 drove in the school, he became a driver for 5 days and even bought the
291 license, doesn't know either the rules or anything=
292 N: bought it, and gets on it someone heftier= 1:01:01
293 G: and tomorrow the police, the corrupted police will go
294 N: yes!
295 G: and will defend him. Go and try fixing it. To die their mother
296 N: it is so it is so

297 G: and here this this provokes you to go and beat beat him up haha
 298 N: no, be*, no it drives me so mad you have no idea now=
 299 G: =you are right, you are completely right.
 300 N: then when they hit us (.1) even Kireto got up
 301 G: yes
 302 N: right and he but we both women how we kicked this guy
 303 G: hehehe
 304 N: you have no idea
 305 G: but what when you are women, be* //well see what women there are be*
 306 hehe//
 307 N: //but he but he drunk be*, he's drunk
 308 and // and Kireto tells him 'be* you could have killed us!' he says 'we:ll big deal'
 309 big deal, huh!
 310 G: haha
 311 N: lelei (threat)! Horror!
 312 G: lele big deal. So this drunk one
 313 K: that drunk one was he from Sarnica?
 314 G: from Sarnica is be*, there next to the school lives be*.
 315 K: you know him
 316 G: oh but he is an old alcoholic, he is always drunk and and they took his license
 317 a couple of times and. but
 318 K: ts ts //and Valio now//
 319 N: yes
 320 G: //the court hearing passed// but I I fixed him oh
 321 K: you fixed him?
 322 G: oh (yes)
 323 K: well of course
 324 G: he doesn't know he thinks that
 325 K: with who he's dealing
 326 G: with connections
 327 K: hahaha
 328 G: haha he thinks with connections. With his connections like this this and will
 329 win
 330 K: haha
 331 G: but he doesn't know
 332 K: with whom he's dealing
 333 G: wherefrom (?) will come out the crazy
 334 K: hahahaha well so right
 335 G: I fixed him* [nahendrih] that now he went all the way to Greece haha
 336 K: really?
 337 G: haha oh
 338 K: and did Valio fix the car?
 339 G: ah his car we fixed well I fixed it
 340 K: yes be* yes
 341 G: I hammered it out
 342 N: well isn't it insured?

343 G: well it was insured but it is a big commotion, they have to take it, take it to a
 344 service place will probably wait some 10 15 20 days. And I picked up the
 345 hammer haha still from the shkoda hahahaha
 346 K: hahaha
 347 G: picked up the hammers. With some beating hahaha
 348 K: hahah (throughout) and you
 349 G: whether it's true or not. And got it fixed by noon was it, and say 'come on,
 350 turn it on and go' hahaha oh (inaudible) Kiro
 351 K: hahaha so you hammer out cars too even
 352 G: well how not! haha
 353 K: hahaha
 354 G: the jacks, straightened the trunk everything, they'll be taking it ah haha
 355 K: hahahaha
 356 G: to let it haha
 357 K: haha
 358 N: no, be* we every month, even sometimes twice 2 at work we have some
 359 happening like this
 360 G: well see what madhouse is here it has
 361 N: last week he:re the one pegeaut the fender only
 362 G: aha
 363 N: to the way the fender is and the 2 things on the side
 364 G: aha
 365 N: one of them turned inside right. And he says 'well some guy couldn't stop in
 366 me'
 367 G: ah! Well see how it is
 368 N: whatever you say!
 369 G: whether you can, or know //the other one is an idiot//
 370 K: //Viktore , take some // of this, sorry, to try.
 371 G: you don't know from where something will jump out and what will happen
 372 N: yes
 373 G: (sigh)
 (.1)
 374 K: take some of this to try.
 375 N: no be* it happens to me that I just drive from here to the office, it's 2
 376 kilometers and
 377 G: yes yes
 378 N: and something, 3. And back. Well something like it 3, no more than 3. Right
 379 now here I was coming back from exactly at the nadleza there were 2 cars hit it
 380 was starting to get dark, they put 1 triangle
 381 G: mha
 382 N: no one can see them, I say 'lele how these some one will squish them.'
 383 They're sitting and waiting for KAT
 384 K: here everyone drives //like crazy
 385 N: //This morning when we were going one had
 386 smashed himself into the tram (downward intonation, indicating joke
 387 enumeration), in the right lane, I was wondering, I say 'after the nadleza

388 already'. Sorry mommy (to the side). I think to myself, I say 'be* what are these
389 traffic jams, what's happening' and already after we passed and we saw that all
390 are showing right uh: left blinker. On the right side the tram was waiting, and
391 some guy hit him. And this every day. Vsevery day something. It's good there
392 aren't
393 K: such things happen
394 N: any victims, the metal is metal, whatever you do. But I=
395 G: =and I try to run away to to the side
396 N: mha
397 G: to be able to to hahaha save myself hahaha
398 K: hahaha
399 G: you can't be cocky and all important like once upon a time. These sons of
400 bitches go crazy and //hit and fuck it exactly so//
401 N: //well be* you don't know you don't know what//
402 G: drunk, drugged pumped
403 K: yes yes drugged fuck its mother. See how in discos they go with knives. They
404 are=
405 G: =it looks at you sees something else, fuck its mother you you don't know
406 N: mha
407 K: leave it leave it they drink drink, take drugs. guns, weapons
408 G: well be* incompetent country, fuck its mother. This what it is doesn't look
409 like anything, there's no control. //there's full//
410 K: //there is no country//
411 G: //there is no country, it didn't learn this youth, it
412 came out such, started buying their licenses, started well be* it got to be scary
413 anarchy
414 K: mha
415 G: full of money money and this is why killing is at every step
416 K: kill each other like flies
417 G: well they kill each other
418 K: leave it horror (down intonation end?) I don't know
419 N: every one thinks they are allowed anything
420 G: yes
421 N: and that they can
422 K: others drink, smoke //drugs//
423 G: fuckin //something happens// like this started to accept
424 something yes. You see tomorrow so, there smashes, hit someone on a
425 pedestrian crossing, it's 20 leva fine!
426 N: and on probation if there are more than 3 deaths
427 G: ah so but with hitting you may hit some one on purpose, or the other is
428 walking on the road and hit him and 20 leva they'll fine you
429 N: mha
430 G: they'll fine you that you hit him, well you can go hit them on purpose
431 K: mha //for 20 leva//
432 G: //these are some ridiculous mocking us // laws//

433 N: //I don't know// I saw, in front of me
434 there was a hit on a pedestrian crossing
435 G: ah
436 N: and it was a Saturday, there wasn't any traffic
437 G: ah so
438 N: and you see a wide lane right, 2 lanes on one side, 2 on the other, tram in the
439 middle, there's a pedestrian crossing and I see that the people are stopping, I
440 am the 3rd car and I stop too, and I'm in the left lane, to the right there are also
441 people. And and I see the woman how she's going. And to the left on the tram
442 line one driving insanely fast, so he scooped her up in the air and threw her at
443 least 4, 5 meters. She fell like a bag of potatoes
444 G: ts ts ts
445 N: and I lost my mind and my words and I say 'that's it. She won't move.' And in
446 the next moment I see her pick herself up and fell again but she straightened up
447 and continued. And this guy stopped like like 200 meters away at the light and
448 came back (downward intonation, mocking). Still good he came back (mocking).
449 G: uuu (disapproval)
450 N: this woman I think was right this I saw her like this how she flew up my
451 heart stopped
452 G: //yes she she is in the momenta cannot feel it she's already
453 afterwards she afterwards //already that's it when the pain starts//
454 N: yes //afterwards there will be// I really lost it I now when I see a
455 pedestrian crossing and look around everywhere
456 G: hehe (bitter). Well now it really got fucked [jko zatakova]//that's it already
457 said already the fees will fall now//
458 N: //leave it it's already
459 scary stuff//
460 G: they'll be changing the laws what not
461 K: well today I read that 8 years prison is bellow (inaudible)
462 G: well only like this great
463 N: well but ok so on the pedestrian crossing people should stop
464 G: well exactly for that they've made them so the pedestrians can pass
465 N: yes
466 G: style zebra right the rule everything
467 N: so
468 G: they've made created. You have to follow the rules //so you can// a person
469 can pass otherwise you go and run them over
470 N: //you know we// when
471 we were in Switzerland, there the streets are very narrow, 2 lanes, and they
472 cross. There's a light and this light is for pedestrians. So we are standing, there's
473 no car in sight, and you feel bad to cross on red but you go to the light
474 G: ah!
475 N: and you wait!
476 G: you wait for the green
477 N: to turn green cause
478 G: ahh! So you are sure that

479 N: ah a:nd we crossed twice and I say 'come on
 480 G: yes
 481 N: we won't stop it for the people' and the others started looking at us like that
 482 G: and laugh at you
 483 N: yes
 484 G: and laugh right, say 'look what crazies'
 485 N: yes!
 486 G: //haha well so well hahaha//
 487 N: //lele yes what idiots//
 488 K: //yes haha//
 489 N: and we at one moment on on the second time again right and we stop and
 490 press the button at the light and cross cause. And there is no one there there's
 491 no one (.2)
 492 K: well the way there isn't and some one will come out of nowhere and will fine
 493 you quickly and there you go
 494 N: yes. so
 495 K: and the fines are serious not like here 10 leva
 496 N: mha
 497 K: 5 leva.
 498 G: well and here they'll make them. slowly they when they see already ri:ght=
 499 N: but
 500 K: =here they only fines make=
 501 N: =but there has to be some one to control
 502 G: there has to be, but of course!
 503 N: cause apart from right they have to fine those who don't stop at the
 504 pedestrian crossing=
 505 N2: =the pedestrians who=
 506 N: =they have to fine also those who cross wherever they feel like it,
 507 G: e:h no (mumbled). Like this on inertia //they go and and cross like this//
 508 N: //so we we// we go there on a:h
 509 Maria Luiza, reaching (.1) where the bath is, there are no trams, no nothing, but
 510 they saw that from Lavov Bridge the tram is coming, and we pass with Kiro it
 511 was, with one of the pegauts (car), and some pensioner slams on the car with
 512 his cane. Cause he sees that down 200 meters away the tram is!
 513 G: ts ts ts ts ts
 514 N: and he's already going! Well wait a second now there is time!
 515 G: hehe (judging)
 516 N: when the tram stops then you cross, right, there
 517 G: ah
 518 N: is space there, there the cars stop and you pass. But he's in a hurry to go
 519 there before it came
 520 G: hehe
 521 N: and gets angry that we are going
 522 G: e:h (agreeing, laughing)
 523 N: we are on the lane, we are not on the sidewalk
 524 G: but how, of course! Don't you see that here

525 N: well these too have to be fined.
 526 G: the minute is important here, you have to use that the light right is
 527 N: yes
 528 G: turning green red
 529 K: (inaudible)
 530 N: it's scary. There are no rules
 531 K: I wonder what
 532 N: //there is no one to control them//
 533 N2: //something the glass// something has (mumbled) this week and
 534 something it won't be on the show this week
 535 G: //there isn't//
 536 N: who? (mumbled)
 537 K: yes, madhouse. ah be* horror. It's hell. Here is hell, Viktore (G) .
 538 G: ah
 539 N: here in Sofia it's not for living. (.2)
 540 G: I know I be*.
 (.5)
 541 K: will but one thicker tent and we'll come to Dusp(at)
 542 G: here your eyes you need 4 to be able to protect yourself
 543 K: from what not
 544 G: aha
 545 N: mha
 546 G: and if you think that something with rules, right, you'll follow the rules and
 547 it'll protect you //you're really lying to yourself//
 548 N: no: //it won't happen//
 549 K: //there are no rules here//
 550 G: no! here you have to be: (.2)
 551 K: here it's fuck its mother
 552 N: no be* we, just now when the big snow was, so at work are 20 men. (.1) in
 553 the morning jit jit they cleaned everywhere. So we can park. And the next
 554 evening you see all neighbors parked there and we have nowhere to stop!
 555 G: ah!
 556 N: well it is about 200 meters down but there it's not clean and. But what do I
 557 care?! Go and clean it yourself!
 558 G: but say 'I have paid //here to clean the people'//
 559 N: //but he gets angry!// that I tell him off you see!
 560 G: ah! Gets angry! Well you say 'where would my workers park!'
 561 N: well he doesn't care!
 562 G: ah you don't care! but
 563 N: I have decided yours what
 564 G: but you haven't cleaned here be*
 565 N: but it doesn't matter, he doesn't care! And says 'big deal. Here this is a street.
 566 I'll park wherever I want'
 567 G: well this is exactly whet he says but his consciousness=
 568 N: and you feel like scratching his eyes out!
 569 G: ah! (agreeing) this isn't

570 N: and this is where this aggression comes from and

571 G: yes. (.2) you go clean for him

572 N: yes

573 G: so he can park there, he'll go and park

574 N: yes, this is exactly what they do.

575 K: it's like parking, to clean a:h in front of your house and I to park there

Oplakvane sample in Bulgarian

- 116 K: te bezgrigni .
117 G: aaa:
118 K: a ti gi mislish
119 G: mani ti navsjkade j varvj 'sichko j mu opravjm j umra li ne znam kakvo shte
120 pravjt
121 N: haha
122 G: te bez mene
123 N: ne taka ne taka
124 G: nema maitap be
125 N: ne smei ne smei haha
126 G: ah maha toi shte diode it tova vreme be . taj kakvo kade kakvo da izlezne
127 trjbva da ida da mu go svarsha . t'va e
128 K: haha (.1) ti si za
129 G: ne e I nashij nekvi beli napravil I t'va I ne mogat da se opravjt . idat pa po
130 prokurori , po sadii , po advokati . pa gi opravjm . a gledai kakvi mage sa
131 K: //ma zashto pravjt beli ?//
132 N: //ma zashto ? ma kak taka//
133 G: mi vsichko se sluchva
134 K: eh sluchva se . nema , shte se stegat be ebati ne sa //malki//
135 G: //ah: mi te te://
136 N: //mi ne sa malki//
137 G: ee: karal si beshe kolata Valio si beshe karal kolata I otzad edna pianka tam
138 pri restoranta (inaudible) toj restorant
139 K: mha
140 G: nastiga go ot dolu onj pijn sas kachva se na edin dgip I go nastiga I točno pri
141 uchilishteto , to ti znaesh tam
142 K: da
143 G: ima legnal policai . nashij namalj na policaj I onj go nastiga I malko po-otgore
144 I kato go bapvanal otzad v kolata hahaha bagagnika mu go beshe oshte malko
145 previl eta taka mu go vkaral
146 K: //hahaha//
147 N: //ugas//
148 G: I onj kat sliza , kat go podpukva=
149 K: =mi pravilno
150 N: eh ! e ma to ti
151 G: napravo go popiljva
152 N: kak moge
153 G: toi njma pravo da go bie nali
154 K: eh
155 N: e ne
156 G: nali t'va e (inaudible)
157 N: po zakon njma njma pravo
158 G: njma . obache onj ne mogal da se strae kato izleznal kato
159 K: mi pravilno

160 G: go izmaknal ot vratata beshe go stroshil I stakloto , onj se fanal za vratata
 161 K: mha
 162 G: I onj sas 'se vratata hahaha
 163 K: hahaha
 164 G: sas vsichko haha vanka beshe haha go pritrepal ot boi I go vkaral v aresta ta
 165 pa (agaian) otidat pa fashtai 'ora ta
 166 N: ama t'va e Valio , a nas ni udrjt na //v centara na Sofia//
 167 K: //zashto shte go vkarvat v aresta
 168 G: aa: zashto ?
 169 K: neshtastnici
 170 N: nie sme s dve koli , nashte komuve otpred , nie otzad . I otzad ni udrj edin pijn
 171 ama zaljn
 172 G: e , me sashtata rabota
 173 N: sashtata rabota
 174 G: tochno taka beshe
 175 N: nie udrjme otpred komuvete
 176 G: ami toj otzad v'a e podpukal a=
 177 N: =sashtata . ma nie nashta kola beshe na e
 178 G: ts ts ts
 179 N: e taka (shows) smachkana
 180 G: ei ma !
 181 N: I otpred I otzad . I slizame ot kolite I nie dvete geni go hvashtame toj ma
 182 znaesh k'av ritni k'vi ritnici I k'av boi beshe
 183 K: samo taka samo taka haha
 184 N: a tij (the police) gledat otstrani
 185 G: ma vas po- njma da da vi napravjt nishto hahaha
 186 N: ei znachi takova ritane beshe v edin moment edin ot ah ah taksimetrovite
 187 shofiori jvno me pozna shtoto se okaza poznat I me vika po ime a az ritam ama
 188 ritam
 189 G: (throughout above) hahaha
 190 N: njma da ti kaga kak ! taka che az go opravdavam Valio . az sashtoto bih na=
 191 G: =da toi ne mogal da izdargi , kato izleze i
 192 N: mi normalno e , da
 193 G: che ot Velin Grad diode policiata stana kam 1 chasa I veche njmashe kakvo
 194 da kagat tej nali . tam I drugi se namesi'a
 195 N: I nie sedehme togava do 5 chasa
 196 G: mrasnici . nali: I go nagodia I go iskarvat dolu I go zadargat .
 197 K: te kade , vav Velingrad li go zakaraha ?
 198 G: vav velingrad . mi az na drugij den pa otidoh I (.1) 24 chasa izkara v aresta
 199 K: 24 chasa ?
 200 G: do ne daite vraska ala bala nali znaesh
 201 K: da dargat gi tolkova 24 chasa gi dargat
 202 G: tolko , te dage I po 72 chasa imat pravo
 203 G: a: ima
 204 K: pak dobre da da 24 chasa
 205 G: to ne e , vikash , 72 chasa ohhh vika

206 N: ne be normalno e , ti ispadash v takava
 207 G: aha
 (.1)
 208 K: malko go e bil
 209 N: az az gledam pred serviza gledam prez prozoreca edin kak parkira pred
 210 mene . I vikam toj sh'e me udari . I v sledvashtij moment vigdam kak dava na
 211 zaden , udry mi dgipa I dgipa podskacha nazad . I az izhvrakvam ot serviza ,
 212 otivam pri toj , I mu otvarjm vratata I go hvashtam ei taka za vrata , znachi
 213 predstavi si kolko sam obezumjla , I go izvagdam , I pochvam da kreshta I da
 214 psuвам I da vikam . I toi nali v parvij moment oshashaven , sled tova izliza I
 215 vigda che na mojta kola nishto I njma . verno , tj e visoka , toi se e udaril I toi I
 216 toi si smachka nomera . men ne me e zasegnal , ama az sam bjsna
 217 G: da ti prosto , a taka , to ot soc taka kato gledash nali
 218 N: I tova toi parvo e pritesnen , posle nali vigda che sam sama gena I pochva da
 219 mi se repchi . da de ama v toj moment ot serviza izlizat trima dushi I zastavat do
 220 mene
 221 G: hahaha (and throughout) e sega k'vo shte pravime
 222 N: k'vo she pravime s'a !
 223 G: haha
 224 N: I az oshte po-erbab !
 225 G: ohohoho
 226 N: lelei nachi ugas posle se jdosvam na sebe si I si vikam dobre , shto se shto
 227 izpadam v takova sastojni
 228 G: ne moge ne prosto gledkata kato gledash
 229 N: da
 230 G: I ne mogesh da izdargish
 231 N: znachi
 232 G: nervnata sistema ne moge da izdargi
 233 N: e , vchera vchera ednata kola , nie imame desetina koli v serviza , ednata kola
 234 e chisto nova , znaesh kakvo e che njma oshte edna godina njma oshte , a I
 235 momcheto koeto j kara mnogo savestno I toi kazva 'az svetka zeleno I az
 236 tragvam I na svetofara me udry edna kola s edno momichence koeto si govori po
 237 telefona
 238 G: ts ts
 239 N: tj izobshto ne e vidjla I e minala na cherveno , ama na kolata cjлата prednica I
 240 j njma shtoto tj si e karala jko , antifriza I iztekal
 241 G: oh
 242 N: I vikam e dobre ? ostavi drugoto , tj e zastrahovana (the car) , she j opravjt ,
 243 njma nishto . ma az ostavam dvete sedmici bez kolata=
 244 G: =znaesh kakvo neshto a taka znachi kato te udriat a
 245 N: I sega k'vo da pravj nali , kak da si varsha rabotata kato =
 246 G: = kakvo neshto odene po makite e te-tenekidgii , I te izchukvanici tj
 247 pataklamata=
 248 N: =ne ne znachi te j vzeha v , tj e zastrahovana , zeha j I she
 249 G: ta takatuk
 250 N: trebva da mi j varnat upravena . az oshte plashtam=

251 G: =te she ti j varnat , ama prez tova vreme
 252 N: =ama prez tova vreme ! tij sedmici az kakvo she prava
 253 G: e mi e t'va t'va mi e misalta
 254 N: az trebva da izkarvam pari s nej
 255 G: a taka a taka !
 256 N: I vikam az ako bjh taj shtjh da j prebij .
 257 G: da:
 258 N: znachi na mene mi se kachva perdeto (2...)
 259 G: a taka
 260 N: I she pochna I njma da spra .
 261 G: ama razbira se znachi
 262 N: no po-dobre che toj moi tehnik e bil krotak I nishto nali
 263 G: haha
 264 N: vikam ti zdrav li si ? vika 'mi az se hvanah za volana i=
 265 G: =haha
 266 N: tj me obarna e taka na krastovishteto . ama , vika , nishto mi njma'
 267 G: ts ts ts
 268 K: haha kakve be momche=? (talking to the dog)
 269 N: =ne znam . t'va e . a tuka v Sofia pak ako karash
 270 G: znam kakvo e be ! j tuka sam sas remarketo prez lavov most . tam prazkat
 271 nai-redovno v meseca po dva tri kursa sam pravil . ama tj moita goljma kola I da
 272 me udari njkoi(laughing) njkade=
 273 N: =ma da se pazat ot tebe . toi I bashta mi osh
 274 G: a tij se pazat dad a (no) .
 275 N: oshte predi deset godini toi vika az
 276 G: da
 277 N: njma da idvam v Sofia . az poveche njma da idvam v Sofia , idvam=
 278 G: =emi nema . toi go e strah choveka=
 279 N: =strah go e . vika tuka de . a toi e bil I isntruktor ka ka
 280 G: instructor e bil ama kato gleda sega tej kopeleta napompani sas narkotici , sas
 281 alcohol
 282 K: da da
 283 N: da da ti znaesh kakvo chudo e , da
 284 G: s vsichko . I parvo na parvo , I az sam karal 5 meseca shkolata , toi sigurno
 285 deset , moge I 2 godini da e karal choveka
 286 N: da
 287 G: j 5 meseca sam karal shkolata , toi za 5 dena e stanal shofior I e kupil dage I
 288 knigkata , ne znae ni pravilnik , ni nishto=
 289 N: si e kupil , I se kachi njkoi po-jka=
 290 G: I utre policaite , korumpiranata policij shte ide
 291 N: da !
 292 G: I nego shte zashtiti . varvi se opravji . da umresh mama im
 293 N: taka e taka e
 294 G: I e t'va t'va te predizvika da idesh da go stupash stupash haha
 295 N: ne be ne az adski pobesnjvam ti si njmash na predstaa znachi=
 296 G: =prava si , ma napalno si prava .

297 N: togava kogato ni udariha (.1) toi I Kireto stana
 298 G: da
 299 N: nali I se ama nie dvete geni kak go ritahme toj
 300 G: hehehe
 301 N: prosto idea si njmash
 302 G: ma kakvo kat' ste geni be //ma vig kakvi geni ima be hehe//
 303 N: //ma toi ma toi pijn be , toi pijn I // I Kireto mu
 304 vika 'abe ti mogeshe da ni utrepesh !' toi vika 'e: golema rabota' golema rabota
 305 li!
 306 G: haha
 307 N: lelei (threat) ! Ugas !
 308 G: lele goljma rabota . znachi onj pijnij
 309 K: onj pijnij ot Sarnica li beshe ?
 310 G: ot Sarnica si be , te tam do do uchilishteto givee be .
 311 K: poznavate go
 312 G: oh ma toi e star alkoholik , toi e vечно pijn I I knjigkata dva tri pati mu j
 313 zimat I tai I . ama
 314 K: ts ts //a Valio s'a//
 315 N: da
 316 G: //I delo mina// ma ja ja go podredih oh
 317 K: podredi li go ?
 318 G: oh (yes)
 319 K: mi pravilno
 320 G: toi ne znae toi misli che
 321 K: s koi si ima rabota
 322 G: s vrazki
 323 K: hahaha
 324 G: haha toi misli sas vrazki . s negovi vrazki taka taka I she pobedi
 325 K: haha
 326 G: onache ne znae
 327 K: s koi si ima rabota
 328 G: ot koj ponj(?) she izkochi ludij
 329 K: hahahaha ama taka de
 330 G: taka go nahendrih che se'a chak v Garcij se zasmuka(?) haha
 331 K: verno li ?
 332 G: haha oh
 333 K: a Valio opravi li kolata ?
 334 G: ah kolata mu j opravime to j mu j opra'i
 335 K: da be da
 336 G: j mu j izchukah
 337 N: e ne e li zastrahovana ili ?
 338 G: a zastrahovana beshe ama to e 'znai shto razpravii , trjbva da j vzemat , da
 339 otkarat v nekakav serviz she chaka sigurno eno 10 15 20 denj . I az zimah
 340 chukoleto haha ot shkodata oshte hahahaha
 341 K: hahaha
 342 G: vzemah chukovete . to s edno biene hahaha

343 K: hahah (throughout) I ti j
 344 G: dali e vjrno dali ne e . I go napravih do objd li beshe , I vikam 'aide pali j I
 345 zaminavai' hahaha oh (inaudible) Kiro
 346 K: hahaha I izchukvash I koli dage
 347 G: mi kak ! haha
 348 K: hahaha
 349 G: krikovete , izpanah mu bagagnika vsichko , to she mu go muknat a haha
 350 K: hahahaha
 351 G: da go dam haha
 352 K: haha
 353 N: ne be nie vseki mesec , dage njkoi pat I po 2 pati v serviza imame njkakvo
 354 izpalnenie takova
 355 G: a mi vig kakva ludnica e tuka to se
 356 N: minalata sedmica e :dnoto pego e: bronjta samo
 357 G: aha
 358 N: to kakto e bronjta I dvata roga odstrani
 359 G: aha
 360 N: edin navrjn navatre nali . I toi vika 'mi edin ne moga da spre v mene'
 361 G: ah ! ma to I ti da vigdash
 362 N: k'voto I da kagesh !
 363 G: I da mogesh , I da znaesh //onj e tapak//
 364 K: //Viktore , vze mi si // tova , izvinjvai , da probvash .
 365 G: ti ne znaesh ot kade shte ti izkochi I kakvo shte stane
 366 N: da
 367 G: sigh
 (.1)
 368 K: vzemi tova da go probvash .
 369 N: ne be to na men mi se sluchva to deto az hoda ot tuk do serviza , te sa 2
 370 kilometra i
 371 G: da da
 372 N: I neshto , 3 . I obratno . emi tam njkade 3 , ne poveche ot 3 . te sa e sega se
 373 pribiram I ot na tochno na nadleza imashe 2 koli udareni I to veche se
 374 smrachava , te slogili po 1 triagalnik
 375 G: mha
 376 N: nikoi ne gi vigda , vikam 'lele tej kak she gi razmage njkoi' . te sedat I chakat
 377 KAT
 378 K: tuka vsichki karat //kato ludi
 379 N: //Sutrinta kato otivame edin se beshe razmazal v trolej
 380 (downward intonation, indicating joke enumeration) , v djsnoto platno , az se
 381 chuda , vikam 'sled nadleza veche' . izvinhvai mamche (to the side) . chuda se ,
 382 vikam 'be k'vi sa tej zadrastvanij , k'vo stava' I veche kato minahme I vidjhme
 383 che vsichki davat desen uh: lev migach . ot djsnata strana trolej chakal , v nego
 384 se frasnal njk'kav . I t'va vseki den . vseki den neshto . dobre che njma
 385 K: sluchvat se takiva neshta
 386 N: gertvi to lamarinite sa lamarini sa , k'voto I da pravish . ama az=
 387 G: =I j go gledam da begam vav vav strani

388 N: mha
 389 G: da moga da sa da sa hahaha spasa hahaha
 390 K: hahaha
 391 G: ne moge da se egish da se taralegish kato idno vreme . taj kopeleta otkachat I
 392 //udrjt I ebi mu maikata točno taka//
 393 N: //a be ne znaesh ne znaesh kakvo//
 394 G: pijni , narkotici nababkani
 395 K: da da nadrusani sa maikata si traka . mi gledai gi che po diskotekite s nogove
 396 hodjt . te sa=
 397 G: =to tebe gleda se'a tebe gleda drug vigda , ebi mu maikata to to ne znaish
 398 N: mha
 399 K: mani mani pijt pijt , drusat se . pistoleti , uragij
 400 G: a be nekompetentna dargava , ebi mu maikata . t'va koet stana absolutno na
 401 nishto go ne mjza , to njma kontrol . //to ima palno//
 402 K: //to njma dargava //
 403 G: //to njma dargava , to ne gi e nauchilo toj mladeg ,
 404 toi izlezna e takav , pochnat knigkite da si kupuvat , pocha'a da abe stana
 405 neshto strashna anarhij
 406 K: mha
 407 G: pari frashkano sichko s pari pari I e za t'va trepaneto e na vsjka krachka
 408 K: trepat se kato muhi
 409 G: mi trepat se to
 410 K: mani ugas (down intonation end?) ne znam
 411 N: sichki mislat che im e pozvoleno absolutno vsichko
 412 G: da
 413 N: I che mogat da
 414 K: drugi pijt , pushat //narkotici//
 415 G: demgi //neshto stane // taka ze'a da priemmat taka neshto da . ti ne
 416 vig utrepe taka , e tam smachka , blasne njkoi na peshehodna pateka da go
 417 blasnesh , 20 leva be globata !
 418 N: I uslovna prisada ako ima poveche ot 3 smartni sluchaj
 419 G: a taka obache pri blaskane ti moge narochno da se blasnesh v njkoi , ili po
 420 patj varvi onj I da go blasnesh 20 leva she te nakagat
 421 N: mha
 422 G: globa she ti slogi che si go blasnal e , moge za narochno da otidesh da go
 423 blasnesh
 424 K: mha //za 20 leva//
 425 G: //e t'va sa nekvi smeshni podigravatelni // zakoni//
 426 N: //ne znam// az gledah , pred ochite
 427 mi stana edna katastrofa na peshehodna pateka
 428 G: aa
 429 N: I to beshe sabota , njmashe nik'vo dvigenie
 430 G: aa taka
 431 N: I vigdash to shiroko platno nali , 2 platna ottuka , 2 ottuka , po sredata

432 tramvai , ima peshehodna pateka I az vigdam che horata spirat , az sam 3ta kola
 433 I spiram I az , I sam v levoto platno , v desno ima oshte hora . I I j vigdam genata
 434 kak tragva I si minava . I ot ljvo na tramvainata linij edin sas bjsna skorost ,
 435 znachi kato j podhvarli I j hvarli pone na 4 , 5 metra . padna kato chuval s kartofi
 436 G: ts ts ts
 437 N: a az izgubih I uma I duma I vikam 'krai . taj njma da mradne . ' I v sledvashtij
 438 moment j vigdam kak se vdiga I pak pada obeche se izpravi I prodalgi . a toj sprj
 439 chak na na 200 metra na svetofara I se varna (downward intonation, mocking) .
 440 dobre che se varna (mocking?) .
 441 G: uuu
 442 N: taj gena spored mene beshe nali t'va da j vigdam e taka kak hvarchi nagore
 443 na mene mi spre sarceto
 444 G: //da tj tj e v momenta ne moge
 445 da se useti tj e veche posle tj sled tova //veche kraii kak pochva veche bolkata//
 446 N: da //posle shte ima veche na pravo // na pravo
 447 izumjh az veche kato vida peshehodna pateka I se oglagdam ot vsjkade
 448 G: hehe (bitter) . e sega veche jko zatakova //kraii veche kaza veche she padne
 449 globate tam//
 450 N: //mani veche strashna rabota//
 451 G: she promenat zakonite ala bala
 452 K: mi dneska pisheshe che 8 godini zatvor e pod(inaudible)
 453 G: mi samo taka extra
 454 N: emi ma dobre de znachi peshehodna pateka trjbva da se spira
 455 G: emit e zat'va sa napravili za da mogat da preminat peshehodcite
 456 N: da
 457 G: tip zebra nali pravilnika vsichko
 458 N: znachi
 459 G: sa izkovali napravili . trjbva da spazvash pravilata //za da mogesh da//
 460 premine chovek inache varvi otivash I go smachkvash
 461 N: //znaesh li nie// v
 462 Shveicarij kato bjhme , tam sa mnogo tesni ulichkite , 2 platna ot ljvo , ot djsno I
 463 si presichat . Imash svetofar I tij toj svetofar ti e peshehoden . znachi nie sedime
 464 , njma gram edna kola njma , I na tebe ti e neudobno da presichash na cherveno
 465 mi si natiskash svetofara
 466 G: ah !
 467 N: I chakash !
 468 G: chakash da ti svetne zeleno
 469 N: da ti svetne zeleno shtoto
 470 G: ahh ! da si siguren che
 471 N: ah a: nie minahme vednag 2 pati vikam 'aide
 472 G: da
 473 N: njma d aim spirame na horata' I drugite ni gledat e taka i
 474 G: I vi se smejt
 475 N: da
 476 G: I se smejt nali vikat 'gledai kakvi otkachalki'
 477 N: da !

478 G: //haha ma taka ami hahaha//
 479 N: //lele da mi idioti//
 480 K: //da haha//
 481 N: I nie v edin moment na na vtorij pat nali I nie spirame I natiskame si
 482 svetofara I si minavame shtoto . a to njma giv chovek tam njma nikoi (.2)
 483 K: ama kak njmat taka shte izticha njkoi I shte te globi nabarzo I gotovo
 484 N: da . taka che i
 485 K: I te globite sa soleni ne sa kat tuka 10 leva
 486 N: mha
 487 K: 5 leva .
 488 G: to I tuk she gi napravat . leka poleka te kato vidjt veche nali:=
 489 N: ama
 490 K: =tuka samo globi pravjt=
 491 N: =ama trjbva da ima I njkoi koito da kontrolira
 492 G: trjbva , ma razbira se mi !
 493 N: shtoto osven che nali trjbva da globjvat tij koito ne spirat na peshehodna
 494 pateka=
 495 N2: =peshehodcite koito sa=
 496 N: =trjbva da globi I tezi koito presichat na , kadeto im doide
 497 G: e: ne s###at taka . taka po inercij //si tragva I I otiva si presicha taka//
 498 N: //znachi nie nie// nie minavame tam
 499 po a: Maria Luiza , veche stigame do (.1) do banjta deto e , njma tramvai , njma
 500 nishto , obache vidjli che e ot Lavov Most idva tramvaj , I nie minavame sas Kiro
 501 beshe , sas edno ot pegata (car) , I edin pensioner udry po kolata sas bastuna .
 502 shtoto vigda che nadolu na 400 metra njkade e tramvaj !
 503 G: ts ts ts ts ts
 504 N: I toi e tragnal veche ! ma chakai sega znachi mi ima vreme !
 505 G: hehe (judging)
 506 N: kato spre tramvaj ti presechi nali tam
 507 G: ah
 508 N: e svobodno , tam spirat kolite I ti minavash . a toi barza da otide tam predi da
 509 e doshal
 510 G: hehe
 511 N: I se sardi che nie minavame
 512 G: eh: (agreeing, laughing)
 513 N: nie sme na platnoto , ne sme na trotoara
 514 G: mi kak , razbira se ! ti ne vigdash che tuka
 515 N: e I tij trjbva da gi globjvat .
 516 G: minutata cenna tuka , trjbva da izpolzvash nali e svetofara karai
 517 N: da
 518 G: si svetne zelen cherven
 519 K: (inaudible)
 520 N: strashno e . njma nik'vi pravila
 521 K: az se chuda k'vo
 522 N: //njma koi da gi kontrolira//

523 N2: //neshto chashata// neshto se e ###lo taj sedmica I neshto njma da go ima
 524 I toj seriala njma smisal
 525 G: //njma//
 526 N: koi ?
 527 mumbled
 528 K: da , ludnica . a be ugas . ad e . tuka e ad , Viktore (G) .
 529 G: ah
 530 N: tuka v Sofia ne e za giveene . (.2)
 531 G: znam az be .
 (.5)
 532 K: sh'si kupime edna po-debela Palatka I si idvame na Dusp(at)
 533 G: tuka otchite na 4 ti tjbvat da mogesh da se pazish
 534 K: ot k'vo li ne
 535 G: aha
 536 N: mha
 537 G: a ako mislish che neshto s pravilnik , nali shte spazvash pravilnik I
 538 pravilnikat shte te opa:zi //gestoko se lagesh//
 539 N: ne: //njma da stane //
 540 K: //tuka pravilnik njma//
 541 G: ne ! tuka trebva da si: (.2)
 542 K: tuka e maikata si traka
 543 N: ne be nie , e sega kato beshe golemij snjg , znachi v rabotata sa 20 mage . (.1)
 544 sutrinta pras pras pras izchistiha ot vsjkade . za da si parkirame . I na
 545 sledvashtata vecher gledash vsichkite komshii parkirali tam I nie njma kade da
 546 spreme !
 547 G: ah !
 548 N: ama to e na na 200 metra po-nadolu ma tam ne e izchisteno . ma k'vo mi
 549 dreme na mene ?! hodi si izchisti !
 550 G: ma rechi 'j sam platila //tuka da izchistjt hora'//
 551 N: //ama toi se sardi ! // che az mu prava zabelegka
 552 razbirash li !
 553 G: ah ! sardi se ! mi rechi 'kade she pla she parkirat moite rabotnici' !
 554 N: ma ne go interesuva !
 555 G: ah ne te interesuva ! ma
 556 N: az sam reshil vashta k'va
 557 G: ma ti ne si chistil tuka be
 558 N: ma nema znachenie , toi ne mu dreme ! I vika 'golema rabota . tuka tova e
 559 ulica . az she parkiram kadeto si iskam'
 560 G: emi to tochno t'va veche kazva obache savesta mu=
 561 N: I veche ti ide da mu izderesh ochite !
 562 G: ah ! (agreeing) t'va ne e
 563 N: I ot t'va idva taj agresivnost i
 564 G: da . (.2) ti she idesh da mu pochistish
 565 N: da
 566 G: da si parkira toi vatre , toi she ide is she parkira
 567 N: da , ma tochno taka pravjt .

568 K: to se edno da si parkirash , da si izchistish ti za a: pred vas I az da sperm tam

APPENDIX F

OPLAKVANE SAMPLE IN ENGLISH

- 3042 N: something scary. And and the worst is for example that in our sphere right,
3043 every, these firms, such like ours, all are men. And all are ah hyenas. And
3044 everyone is watching how to screw you over!
3045 G: ih: leave it
3046 N: and you have to be ..
3047 G: you have to be
3048 N: a bigger hyena than him!
3049 G: ah ah! It is exactly so
3050 N: and you have no choice!
3051 G: there isn't
3052 N: you have no choice. this
3053 G: from a lion above ehehehehe
3054 N: no no, scary stuff
3055 G: I know
3056 N: here i:s .. everyone tries to
3057 G: ts ts ts
3058 N: to screw you over, to take your work
3059 G: ah
3060 N: and if possible you to do the job, he to get the earnings
3061 G: ah!
3062 N: best hehehe
3063 G: ah ah! That's it.
3064 N: no, scary, it's scary, but this I can't explain to my mother and my father!
3065 G: oh! Cause they
3066 N: they
3067 G: they won't understand you at all be*!

Oplakvane sample in Bulgarian

- 3042 N: neshto strashno . I I nai gadnoto e primerno che vav nashta sfera nali ,
3043 sichki , tij firmi , takiva kato nashta , sichkite sa mage . I sichkite sa ah hieni . I
3044 seki gleda d ate precaka !
3045 G: ih: mani
3046 N: I trebva da si ..
3047 G: trjbva da si
3048 N: po hiena ot nego !
3049 G: ah ah ! tochno taka e
3050 N: I nemash izbor !
3051 G: njma
3052 N: nemash izbor . t'va
3053 G: ot lav nagore ehehehehe
3054 N: ne ne , strashna rabota
3055 G: znam
3056 N: tuka e: .. vseki gleda da
3057 G: ts ts ts
3058 N: d ate precaka , da ti vzeme rabotata
3059 G: ah
3060 N: I ako moge ti da svarshish rabotata , toi da vzeme pechalbata
3061 G: ah !
3062 N: nai dobre hehehe
3063 G: ah ah ! e t'va e .
3064 N: ne , strashno , strashno e , no tova njma kak da go obsna na maika mi I
3065 bashta mi !
3066 G: oh ! sho te
3067 N: te
3068 G: te njma d ate razberat vaobshte be !

APPENDIX G

CYCLE 21-22 IN ENGLISH

- 1 K: that is the problem.
2 G: that like this if to that one they came only with ###=
3 N: =yes. But she gave them to herself. So she decided she deserves
4 them!
5 K: ten //ten###//
6 N: //if she takes//
7 G: //43 000//
8 N: I also think I deserve
9 G: 43 000 she decided she deserves and
10 N: yes
11 G: and she gave them to herself. //and 25 000//
12 N: //and gets angry//
13 K: //and why not be*//
14 G: gave them herself
15 N: yes //vice president//
16 G: she //vice president// had
17 N: yes
18 G: minister of justice=
19 N: =and she thinks that this is normal
20 G: yes
21 N: but wait now you create the laws,
22 G: ah (agreeing)
23 N: so it was legal, but what is the law, who decided it!
24 G: what is this law!? *Be**=
25 N: =you made it yourself!
26 G: fuck its mother, in this!
27 N: yes! yes
28 G: in this pauper country! ah
29 N: but for how. So one structure=
30 G: =as if we are in a crisis=
31 N: =one structure
32 K: yes exactly
33 N: which doesn't work
34 K: that we are in a crisis
35 N: by the trade register like the health bank
36 G: ah (agreeing)
37 N: so this for me are absolutely ah such structures
38 G: but of course!
39 N: which vegetate and and suck from the people
40 G: yes!
41 N: and steal money! So these structures don't work!
42 G: well they don't work!

43 N: and they! Take bonuses! For this
44 G: *bre** mother!

Cycle 21-22 in Bulgarian

1 K: to t'va e problema .
2 G: che e taka ako na onaa kakto I sa doshli samo s ###=
3 N: =da . ma tj si gi e razpisala . znachi tj e reshila che zaslugava !
4 K: deset //deset ###//
5 N: //tj ako vzeme//
6 G: //43 000//
7 N: az sashto mislj che zaslugavam
8 G: 43 000 e reshila che zaslugava i
9 N: da
10 G: I si gi e razpisala . //I 25 000//
11 N: //I se I sardi//
12 K: //I shto ne be//
13 G: gi e razpisala
14 N: da //vice presidentkata//
15 G: tj //vice presidentkata// de beshe
16 N: da
17 G: minister na pravosadieto=
18 N: =I tj smjta che t'va e bilo normalno
19 G: da
20 N: ma chakai sega vie si sazdavate zakonite ,
21 G: ah
22 N: znachi to bilo zakonno , ama zakona kav e , koi go e reshil !
23 G: kakav e toj zakon !? be=
24 N: =vie ste si go napravili !
25 G: maikata mu deeba , v taj !
26 N: da ! da
27 G: v taj siromashka dargava ! ah
28 N: ma za kak . znachi edna struktura=
29 G: =vav kriza sme ugkim=
30 N: =edna struktura
31 K: da tochno
32 N: kojto ne raboti
33 K: che sme v kriza
34 N: po targovskij registar kato zdravnata kasa
35 G: ah
36 N: znachi t'va za men sa absolutno ah takiva strukturi
37 G: ma razbira se !
38 N: koito vegetirat I I smuchat ot naroda
39 G: da !
40 N: I kradat pari ! znachi tej strukturi ne rabotat !
41 G: mi ne rabotjt !
42 N: I te ! si zimat bonusi ! za tova
43 G: bre mamata !

APPENDIX H

OPLAKVANE SAMPLE IN ENGLISH

- 4013 N: it wasn't until the 3rd roof, on the 3rd recently when they were and
4014 Asen told him that he thought him to be a mutra hahaha Kiro!
4015 hahahaha
3016 G: hehehehe
4017 N: but we laughed so much! 'I' says 'I thought you were a mutra!'
4018 G: ehehehe
4019 N: hahahaha
4020 K: but cause he I when he remembered, I my stomach was hurting from
4021 laughing, I say, be* Asene, where have you seen mutra to dig holes
4022 with you?! hahaha
4023 N: but no he was interesting the first the first right, his first job was here.
4024 And the second third fifth day right I come home and meet him right
4025 the craftsman here
4026 G: yes
4027 N: I say, hello, where is Kircho? 'how where? On the roof!' I say, well
4028 alright. And at the end already of of of the repair he says 'hey for the
4029 first time I see' says 'chorbadgij who works more than us.' Cause he is
4030 up there before them, and everything controls, watches, and helps.
4031 G: yes
4032 N: says 'for the first time I see' says 'chorbadgij who works more than
4033 me!' hehe

Oplakvane sample in Bulgarian

- 4013 N: chak na 3tij pokriv , na 3tij sega skoro kato bjha I Asen mu kazal che go e
4014 mislel za mutra hahaha Kiro ! hahahaha
4015 G: hehehehe
4016 N: ma taka se smjhme ! 'az' vika 'te misleh za mutra tebe !'
4017 G: ehehehe
4018 N: hahahaha
4019 K: ma shtoto toi az az kato se sedi , az mene kato me zaboie korema ot smjh ,
4020 vikam , be Asene , ti kade si vigdal mutra da kopae dupki s tebe ?! hahaha
4021 N: ma ne toi beshe interesen parvata parvata nali , parvata mu rabota beshe
4022 tuka . I vtoria tretij petij den nali az se pribiram I go sreshtam nali maistora
4023 tuka
4024 G: da
4025 N: vikam , zdravei , kade e Kircho ? 'kak kade ? na pokriva !' vikam , mi dobre . I
4026 chak nakraj veche na na na remonta toi vika 'ei za prav pat vigdam' vika
4027 'chorbadgij koito da raboti poveche ot nas .' shtoto to predi tih e gore , I sichko
4028 za kontrolira , gleda , I pomaga .
4029 G: da
4030 N: vika 'za prav pat vigdam' vika 'chorbadgij deto da raboti poveche ot mene !'
4031 hehe

APPENDIX I

BTV THE REPORTERS IN ENGLISH

1 US: "And now, new details about the young mom who shot and killed a thief in her
2 home while talking on the phone and was given advice on the emergency 911 line.
3 The authorities said that the lady will not be charged for the murder. Ryan Owen
4 of ABC will tell us the details: This really is an incredible law precedent when you
5 think about it. The young woman, who pulled the trigger is clear in front of the
6 law, while the young man, who didn't even have a gun is now accused of murder.
7 'What is your emergency call (911 call)? There is some one at my door, I am alone
8 at home with my little baby. This person doesn't mean us well. Can I speak to a
9 policeman immediately?' This is the young mother, who shot the deadly bullet. 'I
10 took the shotgun, then I went to the bedroom, there I have a gun, I gave the little
11 one the pacifier and called 911. The 18 years old Sarah McKinley was alone at
12 home, taking care of her 3 months old son. 'Is the door locked? Yes, I have a
13 shotgun and a gun in my hands. Is it Ok to shoot him if he comes through this
14 door? You have to do everything possible to protect yourself. I cannot tell you to
15 do that. Do what you have to... [unclear & overlap] McKinley shot and killed one
16 of the two men who broke through the door of her home. And this is the person
17 now who is accused of premeditated murder. Sounds strange, but the prosecutor
18 says that (unclear) [one of the thieves] is responsible for the death of his friend.
18 When some one's death occurs during the performance of a premeditated crime,
19 the accomplice and his/her assistant have a responsibility for that death. And
20 this is what we did - we brought charges against him. The police thinks that
21 Justine and Martine were high and broke down McKinley's door to look for more
22 adventures. And were greeted by a young woman with a killer mother instinct.
23 'There is nothing more dangerous than mother with a child.' The police says that
24 what she did is warranted, and people in the neighborhood completely agree: the
25 mother is constantly getting gifts, children's clothes, and sympathies from the
26 people in the town. 'For me their support means a lot because in such a difficult
27 moment it is very important to hear from people that you have acted right.' This
28 dramatic story, with a happyend a la [in the manner of] Amerika, happened
29 during January this year [2012]. [the whole time English can be heard at the
30 background].

31 Reporter: What would happened in Bulgaria if some one killed an intruder who
32 entered their home in the same circumstances? The 70 years old Mestan from the
33 village of Svirec was attacked in an identical manner in his home 4 years a
34 (dramatic music playing in the background). M. is the only inhabitant in the
35 mountain neighborhood [mahala]. Similarly to the American Sarah, he succeeds
36 to call the police while the intruders are breaking down the door of his home.
37 Mestlan: 'I say open ... (mumbled, heavy dialect) open tonight will come to kill*
38 you [trepem] give the money. take out the money. I say* him [vikam] where
39 money here here I don't have.'

40 Reporter: M. had a legal hunting rifle and he shot at his attackers before the

41 police arrived. Here end the similarities to the American story. According to the
42 Bulgarian law, M. is a criminal despite the fact that he was defending his own life
43 and home.

44 Authority/Consultant: 'He had 2 choices: to be killed or robbed, or to be found
45 guilty.

46 Reporter: Is there a third choice? To him, I mean, according to you, is there a
47 third choice?

48 Authority/Consultant: No, in the concrete case there wasn't.'

49 Reporter: After they scared M. to death, the attackers broke down the door and
50 entered the room of the 70 years old man. They shine a bright light in his eyes,
51 threaten to burn light him up with gasoline, and order him to give them all his
52 money.

53 M: 'cause already back back go . slightly I got* [vzemah] the riffle here he didn't
54 see here the rifle . eh like this I open* [otvurgam] the door shot outside . to open
55 up mo'e so . here much only'

56 Reporter: M. shot one of the attackers (gun shot sound) in the leg with his rifle –
57 the 42 years old Ialmaz. The life of the thief was out of danger.

58 M: 'well he ran here only the one was left . here in the dark he ran still still was
59 there'

60 R: Then the police come. Instead of getting help, M. is arrested. He remains 2 days
61 behind bars and then is found guilty of inflicting bodily harm to his attacker. His
62 sentence is probation after a deal with the prosecution/DA. To the one, who
63 broke into his home and attacked him in his own house, there are not even
64 brought charges because he didn't steal anything and because he supplied a
65 medical statement to the court that he has a mental.

66 Authority/Consultant (rustling of papers, hard to hear): The person* [Liceto],
67 right who is allegedly hurt in this case is without argument not established*
68 [nevazstanoveno] and this is why he takes badly this tactical situation that he as
69 a consequence of his mental conditions has gone breaking into and not as a result
70 of this to steal and do some other crime. In the case, for to look at him as a victim,
71 and like this his reaction with which he has caused in the concrete case medium
72 bodily harm is adequate .. because there isn't .. evidence that the person* [liceto]
73 was with assistance* [pridrugiteli] or with accomplices.

74 R: According to the law, while he is being attacked in his house, M. should have
75 looked for a knife like the one of his attackers. Article 12 of the punishment codex
76 is the one, which defines the so called "inevitable self-defense". This law is
77 created to give right to the citizens [gragdanite] to apply force and protect
78 themselves, when their life is in danger. But the law states that the force, which
79 we can use, has to be, I quote, "in the necessary bounds". The absolute
80 subjectivity of the definition of "necessary" allows judges and prosecutors to
81 read the law as they wish.

82 Authority/Consultant: (sigh) on the surface is e medium bodily harm . if he had
83 killed him__

84 R: __well isn't it still a robbery__

85 Authority/Consultant: __otherwise ... whether is .. would have been there
86 (abandons) some kind of attempt .. but whether is ..

87 R: they start with his room
88 A/C: Yes . right it is still breaking of more of a door
89 R: But isn't this a reason for bringing charges? ...
90 A/C: ... the reason for bringing charges is a bodily harm caused to the person
91 [lizeto]. if you want to defend your life and health and your property you don't
92 have the right to do it with a fire arm
93 R: nothing now, as a human I ask you is there any fairness in this thing, in this
94 law?
95 A/C: Well there is fairness. I'll* [sh'e] tell you why there is fairness because in
96 the end um if he didn't have a firearm, how would M. react?
97 R: he would have been robbed and killed ...
98 R: The reality in the Bulgarian villages every day provides answer to the question
99 what would happen if M. did not have a rifle. Only during the last week a 89 years
100 old man from the Plovdiv area was (dogs barking can be heard) strangled by 2
101 unemployed young men for a scrap of metal. And 2 grandmas were beaten by
102 thieves in their own homes.
103 R: This is his house. Isn't this some advantage?
104 A/C: it is not any advantage. honestly told.
105 R: Private property in Bulgaria is it sacrosanct as it is written in the
106 constitution? According to you?
107 A/C: this well formally it is supposed to be sacrosanct but informally ..
108 R: No
109 A/C: when it is about the limitations of "inevitable self-defense" it appears that
110 you cannot defend it with firearms
111 R: The chief of the regional police station told us that it is one and he doesn't
112 know about this law. M. has an explanation for the favorable treatment of the
113 attackers by the powers
114 M: (unclear) well asen, asen tells* me [mi vika] right that in the parliament they
115 his first cousin
116 R: The one that attacked you is a first cousin of some parliament figure, correct?
117 M: yes
118 (Dramatic music playing in the background) M.'s weapon is already taken away
119 because according to the police he is a criminal with a record. The bandits in the
120 area continue to act without being disturbed by anyone.
121 R: have they been back to steal after ...
122 M: yes. three times like this. they robbed. what is there. three times
123 R: again they
124 M: robbed everything one from everything here
125 R: Back to the American story and its similarities and differences with the
126 Bulgarian one. Against the American who killed an unarmed bandit only
127 because he broke through the door and entered her home there in not even a
128 charge being brought up. The charge is against the surviving bandit. In Bulgaria
129 M. only shoots the bandit in the leg, do not kill him, but against the thief there
130 are no charges. The charges are against the person attacked in his own home.
131 R: Can you tell something to Boiko Borisov now. To change something. Tell him
132 what to change?

133 M: To change this for me .. it's not a law like this that me they are torturing
134 [machat] like this without like this how I have no fault . I absolutely have no
135 fault . And I want these things like this to go on like they are not good things
136 [nerednosti] here always the police (mumbled) not to make me the one faulty
137 Boiko Borisov: It won't sound more European. He will be accused. Otherwise, I
138 am completely on the side of sacrosanct [neprikosnovenata] private property.
139 R: We show the American and Bulgarian cases to the Director of the
140 Commission on Internal Security and Public Order [DCISPO] in the parliament.
141 We ask him are the Bulgarian or American law criteria for good and bad are
142 more just.
143 DCISPO: Concretely straight I can put the question like this. About around ten
144 years ago in the apartment building in which I was living maybe it's longer than
145 this. Analogical case, the friend [boyfriend] of a woman who split up tried to
146 enter her apartment. Follows a refusal on her part. He goes downstairs, takes
147 from his car the two rods. In the moment when he has almost broken down the
148 door, she, a hunter, a legal hunter, goes gets her rifle loads and in the moment
149 that he enters the corridor of her apartment she shot him deadly. There was a
150 legal case made, it was processed through the Jambol regional court and she
151 was acquitted because she has been exactly within the limits of inevitable norm.
152 R: In Bulgaria very often maybe not only in Bulgaria it happens that identical at
153 first sight cases are resolved in a very very different ways in court.
154 DCISPO: Maybe the court there pointed to going over the limit
155 R: Do you think that it should be regulated more clear in the law when some
156 one breaks forcefully, with .. there is a broken door entering your home you
157 just have the right to defend yourself and__
158 DCISPO: __every Bulgarian citizen [gragdanin] when they are attacked in some
159 way and as it is said in the text of the law itself have the right to defend
160 themselves to protect themselves. Even in the text itself, paragraph 3 literally
161 says that there is no going over the limits of inevitable self-defense in cases
162 when the attack is together with violence and with force and there is entering
163 of the house. It is literally there in the text
164 R: Despite all these texts, M. is found guilty, and the right to shoot some one
165 only because they have entered forcefully in your house is not given to the
166 Bulgarian citizens [gragdani]. You can shoot if you are proven-ly attacked.
167 DCISPO: well now you doubtfully would have for a sack of onions from the
168 fields should have shot someone
169 A/C: When this discussion for the right of defending yourself in your home
170 going on it is also result of a different type of legislation from a different
171 environment which is there in Western Europe .. now and here the changes are
172 starting. It is one thing to have a small German inhabited area, Dutch, Belgian,
173 and so on. It is different one Bulgarian right deserted. And at the same time
174 around it right one ah aggressive marginalized population which turns people
175 there in literally victims.
176 R: Do you see ah a need for a more clear definition of "my home is my castle"?
177 You enter my home I have the right to__
178 DCISPO: __I think as of this moment and after the decision by the

179 constitutional court in 97 it was clearly shown in what limits should the
180 “inevitable self-defense” remain legally and the potential increase of things
181 R: My home is my castle appears not to be applicable Bulgaria.
182 Consultant: Yes, it is not applicable. Completely honestly I can tell you that it
183 does not matter.

181 R (dramatic music): Despite the not few legal cases of acquitted Bulgarians who
184 shot and even killed attackers in their own home the defense of private
185 property with force is practically forbidden/illegal at home [Bulgaria]. If you
186 shoot at a thief without him having attacked you, if you shoot in the back of a
187 person who is stealing in your home or is stealing your car you will be charged
188 and found guilty [osudeni] for premeditated murder. If some one is breaking
189 into your summer house* [vilata] and you catch him in your own property you
190 have the right to shoot only if he attacks you with a weapon.

191 R: Is it normal in a country where the robberies in village houses are an
192 everyday occurrence and in some village regions are a real calamity the citizens
193 [gragdani] to be put before the choice of robbed or found guilty?

194 A/C: There is a unique paradox which we see with people who have been
195 charged [obvineni] with committing a heavy crime when they have been
196 defending not even their home but their life ah: so ah: according to me we
197 should have to: give up partially this model which in the moment we have of
198 over-defense of the criminal.

199 R[dramatic music]: In whole regions of Bulgaria the right to private property in
200 practice has become nonsensical because people’s property [imotite] get to be
201 without electricity, cables, and even window frames if the home is left
202 unattended even for a few days. The places where at one point there were
203 vegetables, grapes, and animals now is a desert.

204 Woman 1 (dialect, older woman from a village): Inside came* one and I see
205 through the door what* they are doing. I have been awake* [nashtrek] all night I
206 have not slept (sobbing). And they still continue and still come and still me*
207 steal.

208 R: Tomorrow in BTV The Reporters we will tell you why grandpa Nikolo from
209 The Vidin village of General Marinovo was found guilty after he shot a thief who
210 tried to kill him and rob him in his own house.

211 Grandpa N. (older man, dialect): when he broke this door I* [j] raised the gun*
212 [pistolet] from there and yell I’ll shoot!

213 R: What is the other major difference between Bulgaria and these countries
214 where the rule “My home, my castle applies”.

215 A/C: In most countries it is like in the States private/personal property is
216 sacrosanct.

217 Ah: you can easily purchase a weapon with which to defend your home and
218 your family of course right you can’t carry it around on the streets, but your
219 home is your castle.

219 Grandpa N.: The chief of police I asked of him, I say give me a gun. You have no
220 right. Well* how don’t I have a right?! Well* [be] I do!

221 R: What does the country [dargavata] think about the right of the citizens
222 [gragdanite] to defend their property with weapons when the country itself

223 cannot handle it?

224 A/C: The regime is really not very liberal, but I think this is better. Better

225 (unclear)

226 R: In the Constitution it is written that private property in Bulgaria is

227 sacrosanct.

228 R: In your village is it sacrosanct?

229 Grandpa N.: It is not true* [verno]. This is not truth! And there isn't* [nema]

230 anyone to protect us.

bTV The Reporters in Bulgarian

1 US: "I sega novi podrobnosti za mladata maika kojta strelj I ubi kravec v doma si
2 dokato govorete po telefona I poluchava6e saveti t nomera za speshni sluchai
3 911. Vlastite kazaha che sreshtu damata njma da badat povdignati obvinenij za
4 ubiistvo. Ryan Owen ot ABC shte ni razkage podrobnostite: Tova naistina e edin
5 neverojten praven kazus kato se zamislite. Mladata gena, kojto drapna spusaka e
6 chista pred zakona, dokato mladij mag, koito dori njmal ognestrelno oragie sega e
7 obvinen za ubiistvo. 'Kakav e va6ijst spe6en sluchai [911 call]? Ima chovek na
8 vratat mi, a az sam sama vkashti s moeto malko bebe. Tozi chovek ne idva s dobro.
9 Moga li da govorj s deguren vednaga?' Tova e mladata maika, kojto izstrelj
10 smartonosnijt korshum. 'Vzeh pushkata, sled tova otidoh v spalnjta, tam imam
11 pistolet, slogih biberona v ustata na malkij I se obadih na 911. 18et godishnata
12 Sarah McKenley bila sama vkashti, grigela se sa 3mesechnijt si sin. 'Zakluchena li
13 e vratata? Da, imam pushka I pistolet v racete si. Ok li e da go zastreljm ako
14 vleze prez тази vrata? Trjbva da napravite vsichko vazmogno za da zashtitite sebe
15 si. Ne moga da vi kaga da napravite tova. Napravete tova koeto trjbva... (unclear
16 & overlap) McKenley streljla I ubila edin ot dvamata mage koito razbili vratata na
17 doma i. I tova e chovekat sega koito e obvinen za predumishleno ubiistvo. Zvuchi
18 stranno, no prokurorat/prosecutor kazva, che [unclear] e otgovoren za smartta
19 na svoj prijtel. Kogato smartta na njkogo nastapi po vreme na izvarshvane na
20 umishleno prestaplenie pomoshtnikau I pridrugiteljt mu nosi otgovornost za тази
21 smart. Tova I napravihme – obvinihme go. Policijta predpolaga che Justine I
22 Martine sa bili nadrusani I sa razbili vratata na McKenley za da tarsjt oshte
23 pregivjvanij. I bili posreshtnati ot mlada gena s ubiistven maichinski instinct.
24 'Njma nishto po-opasno ot maika s dete.' Policijta kazva, che tova, koeto tj e
25 napravila e opravdano, a horata v kvartala sa napalno saglasni: maikata ne spira
26 da poluchava podaraca, detski drehi, I simpatii ot horata v grada. 'Za men
27 podkrepa oznachava mnogo zashtoto v takav truden moment e mnogo vagno
28 da chue6 ot horata che si postapil pravilno.' Tozi dramatichen suget, s **happyend**
29 **po Amerikanski**, se razigrava prez jnuari тази godina [2012]. [the whole time
30 English can be heard at the background].
31 Reporter: Kakvo bi se sluchilo v Bulgaria ako njkoi ubie napadatel proniknal v
31 doma mu pri podobni obstojtelstva? 70et godishnijt Mestan ot selo Svirec e bil
32 napadnat po identichen nachin v doma si predi 4 godini [dramatic music]. M e
33 edinstvenijt gitel na planinskata mahala. Podobno na Amerikanskata Sarah, uspjva
34 da se obadi na policijta dokato napadatelite razbivat vratata na doma mu.
35 Mestlan: 'Vikam otvori ... [mumbled] otvori dovechera shte doiden da te trepem
36 dai parite. izkarai parite. vikam mu kade pari tuka nemam.' [strong dialect,
37 approximations].
38 M. imal zakonna lovna pushka I toi strelj po napadateljt si predi da diode policijta.
39 Tuk svarshvat prilikite s Amerikanskata istorij. Spored Bulgarskoto
40 zakonodatelstvo, M e prestapnik vapreki che e zashtitil givota I doma si.
41 Authority/Consultant: 'Toi e imal 2 izbora: da bade ubit ili ograben ili da bade
42 osaden.
43 Reporter: Treti izbor ima li? Pred nego, govorj, spored vas ima li e treti izbor?

44 Authority/Consultant: Ne, v konkretnij sluchai ne e imalo.’
45 Sled kato plashat M do smart, napadatelite razbivat vratata I vlizat v stajta na 70
46 godishnijt mag. Osvetjvat go s progektor v ochite, zaplashvat da go zapaljt s
47 benzin, I mu zapovjdvat da im dade vsichkite si pari.
48 M: ‘shtoto veche nazad nazad varvj . lekichko vzemah pukata tuka toi ne vigda
49 tuka pushkata . e taka otvurgam vratata gramnah vanka . da osvobodime na
50 po’che taka . e tolko samo’
51 M prostreljl edin ot napadatelite [gun shot sound] v kraka s lovnata si pushka –
52 42 goshinijt lalmaz. Givotat na kradeca ostanal van ot opastnost.
53 M: ‘e izbjga tuka ot edin j ostana . tuka v tamnoto izbjga oshte oshte tova ma
54 imashe’
55 R: Togava idva policijta. Vmesto da poluchi pomosht, M e arestuvan. Ostava 2 dni
56 zad reshetkite I sled tova e osaden za nansjne na telesna povreda na napadatelj
57 si. Prisadata mu e probacij sled sporazumenie s prokuraturata. Na tozi, koito
58 razbiva doma mu I go napada v sobstvenata mu kashta dori ne e povdignato
59 obvinenie zashtoto ne e otkradnal nishto I zashtoto predustavil medicinsko v
60 sada, che ima psihichno zaboljvane.
61 Authority/Consultant [rustling of papers, hard to hear]: ‘Liceto, nali koeto se vodi
62 postradaloto po tova delo e bezsporno nevazstanoveno I zatova zle priema tazi
63 takticheska obstanovka che to v sledstvie na psihichnoto si satsojnie e tragnalo
64 da razbiva a ne v sledstvie na tova da krade I da varshi njkakvo drugo
65 prestaplenie. V sluchaj, za da go razglegdame kato gertva , I kato tova che
66 negovata reakcij s kojto toi e prichinil v konkretnij sluchai srdna telesna povreda
67 e adekvatna .. tui kato njma .. dokazatelstva che liceto e bilo s pridrugiteli ili sa
68 sauchastnici ‘
69 R: Spored zakona, dokato go napadat v ka6tata mu, M e trjbvalo da potarsi nog
70 kato na napadatelite si. Chlen 12 ot nakazatelnij kodeks e tozi koito definira taka
71 narechenata neizbegna samootbrana. Tozi zakon e sazraden za da dade pravo na
72 gragdanite da opragnjt sila I da se zashtitjt, kogato givotat im e zastrashen. No
73 zakonat kazva che silata kojto mogem da izpolzvame trjbva da e, citiram, “v
74 neobhodimite predeli” . Absolutnata subektivnost na opredelenieto “neobhodim”
75 pozvoljva na sadii I prokurori da talkuvat zakona kakto si pogelajt.
76 Authority/Consultant: [sigh] na lize e sredna telesna povreda . ako beshe go
77 ubil...
78 Reporter: nali ze e obir s vzlom...
79 Authority/Consultant: inache ... dali e .. shteshe da bade na li [abandons] opit
80 njkakav .. no dali e ..
81 Reporter: pochvat sas stajta mu
82 A/C: da. na li ze e razbivane po skoro nali na vrata
83 Reporter: no tova ne e povod za povdigane na obvinenie? ...
84 A/C: ... povoda za povdigane na obvinenie e telesnata povreda prichinena na
85 lizeto . ako iskash da zashtitish givota I zdraveto si I sobstvenosta si **ti** njmash
86 pravo da go napravish s ognestrelno oragie
87 R: nishto sega, kato chovek da vi popitam: ima li njkakva sparvedlivost v tova
88 neshto, v toj kazus?

89 A/C: Znachi ima spravedlivost . sh'e vi kaga zashto ima spravedlivost zashtoto v
90 kraj na kraishtata um ako njmash ognestrelno oragie kak bi reagiral M.?
91 R: toi shteshe da bade ograben I ubit ...
92 R: Deistvitelnostta v Balgarskite sela vseki den dva otgovor na vaprosa kakvo bi
93 se sluchilo ako M njmashe pushka. Samo prez izminalata sedmica 89 godishen
94 mag ot Plovdivsko beshe [dogs barking] udoshen ot dvama bezrabortni mladege
95 za parche metal. A dve babi bjha prebiti ot kradci v domovete im.
96 R: tova e negovijt dom. tova ne e li njkakvo predimstvo?
97 A/C: ne e nikakvo predimstvo ne e . chestno kazano.
98 R: chastnata sobstvenost v Bulgaria neprikosnovena li e kakto pishe v
99 konstitucijta? Spored vas.
100 A/C: tova ami formalno se vodi che e neprikosnovena no neformalno ..
101 R: ne
102 A/C: kogato kasae za predelite na naizbegnata otbrana se okazva che ne moge
103 da j zashtitish s ognestrelno oragie
104 Shefat na raionnoto ni kaza che e edno I ne znae za kazusa . M ima obsjnenie za
105 blagosklonnoto otnoshenie na vlastta kam napadatelj:
106 M: [unclear] ta asen, asen mi vika nali deto u parlamenta nego negov parvi
107 bratovched
108 R: tozi deto te e napadnal e parvi bratovched na njkakav deputat taka li?
109 M: da
110 [dramatic music] Oragieto na M. veche e otneto zashtoto spored policijta toi e
111 kriminalno projven . Banditite v raiona prodalgavat da deistvat
112 neobezpokojevani ot nikogo.
113 R: idvali li sa pak d ate kradat sled kato...
114 M: da . tri patio t takovata . obraha . to kakvo da ima. tri pati
115 R: pak sa
116 M: obrali vsichko edno ot vsi4ko tuka
117 R: Obratno kam Amerikanskata istorij I neinite priliki I razliki s Bulgarskata.
118 Sreshtu Amerikanskata obila nevaoragen bandit samo zashtoto e razbil vratata I
119 I proniknal v doma I njma dori povdignato obvinenie. Obvinenie ima sreshtu
120 ocelelijt bandit. V Bulgaria M. samo prostrelva v kraka bandita, ne go obiva, no
121 sreshtu kradeca njma dori obvinenie. Obvinenie ima sreshtu choveka napadnat
122 v sobstvenijt mu dom.
123 R: Moge da kagesh neshto na Boiko Borisov sega . Da promeni neshto. Kagi mu
124 kakvo da promeni?
125 M: Da promeni tova za mene .. ne e ne e zakon taka mene da machat taka bez da
126 ima taka da njmam vina . Absolutno njmam vina. Iskam tij neshta taka da varvjt
127 kakto stavat nerednosti tuka 'se policijta razva6le ne da me izkarvat mene
128 imam vina
129 BB?: njma da zvuchi po-Evropsko. shte bade obvinen. Inache iz cjlo sam na
130 stranata na neprikosnovenata chastna sobstvenost .
131 R: Pokazvame Amerikanskijt I Bulgarskijt kazus na precedateljt na komisijta po
132 vatre6na sigurnost I obshtestven red v parlamenta. Pitame go Bulgarskite ili
133 Amerikanskite sadebni kriterii za dobro I losho sap o-spravedlivi.
134 PKVSOR: Konkretno napravo moga da postavj taka vaprosa. Predi okolu

135 desetina godini v gilishtnij blok v koito giveeh moge bi malko poveche da e .
 136 Analogichen sluchai , prijteljt na edna gena koito se razdelili se opitva da vleze v
 137 gilishteto . sledva otkaz ot neina strana . Toi otiva dolu , vzima ot avtomobila si
 138 dvete shtangi . V momenta v koito toi pochti razbil vratata tj lovec , zakonen
 139 lovec , otiva vzima si pushkata zaregda I v momenta v koito toi vliza v koridora
 140 na apartamanta beshe go prostreljla smartonosno . Imashe obrazuvano delo ,
 141 razgleda se ot Jmbolskijt okragen sad I tj beshe opravdana zashtoto točno e
 142 vlizala v predelite na neizbegnata norma .
 143 R: V Bulgarij mnogo chesto moge bi ne samo v Bulgaria se poluchava take che
 144 identichni na prav pogled kazusi se reshavat po mnogo mnogo razlichen nachin
 145 ot sada
 146 P...: moge bi sadat tam e posochil kato previshavane na predelite
 147 R: mislite li che trjbva da bade po-reglamentirano jsno v zakona kogato njkoi s
 148 vzlom , s .. ima razbita vrata vleze v doma vi vie prosto imate pravo da se
 149 otbranjvate I
 150 P...: vseki Bulgarski gragdanin kogato bade napadnat po njkakav nachin I kaktto
 151 e posocheno v samijt text ot zakona ima pravo da se otbranjva da se
 152 samootbranjva da se zashtitava . dage v samijt text alinej treat izrichno e
 153 posocheno che njma previshavane na predelite na neizbegnata samootbrana
 154 togava kogato napadenieto e s nasilie I chrez zlom I pronikva v gilishteto.
 155 Izrichno go ima kato text
 156 R: Vapreki vsi4ki tezi textove M e osaden , a pravoto da zastreljsh njkoi samo
 157 zashtoto e vljzal s vzlom v gilishteto ti ne e dadeno na Bulgarskite gragdani.
 158 Mogesh da streljsh ako si dokazano napadnat .
 159 P? : znachi sega edvali bihte za edin chival luk ot nivata trjbva da zastreljte
 160 njkoi
 161 A/C?: Kogato varvi тази diskusij za pravoto da se zashtitish v doma si e e rezultat
 162 ot edin drug tip zakonodatelstvo ot edna druga sreda kojto j ima v zapadna
 163 Evropa .. sega I tuka pochvat promenite . edno e da imate Germansko malko
 164 naseleno mjsto , Holandsko , Belgiisko , I taka natatuk . Edno e Balgarsko nali
 165 obezludeno . a I sashtevremenno okolo nego nail edno ah agresivno
 166 marginalizirano naselenie koeto prevrashta horata tam v bukvalno v gertvi
 167 R: Vigdate li ah nugda da bade po-jsno definirano “mojt dom e mojta krepost”?
 168 Vlizash v moj dom az imam pravo da
 169 P/A/C?: Mislj che kam tozi moment I sled reshenieto na konstitucionnijt sad
 170 prez 97 ma godina jsno beshe pokazano v kakvi ramki trjbva da ostane
 171 zakonodatelno “neizbegnata samootbrana” I eventualno povishavane na
 172 neshtata
 173 R: Mojt dome e mojta krepost se okazva v Bulgaria ne vagi .
 174 ? : Ne vagi , da . Savsem otkroveno moga da vi kaga che ne vagi .
 175 R [dramatic music]: Vapreki ne malkoto sadebni sluchai na opravdani Bulgari
 176 streljli I dori ubili napadatelji v sobstvenijt si dom zashtitata na chastnata
 177 sobstvenost sas sila e prakticheski zabranena u nas. Ako streljte po kradeč bez
 178 toi da vi e napadnal , ako streljte v garba na chovek koito krade v doma vi ili
 179 otmakva avtomobila vi shte badete osadeni za predumishleno ubiistvo. Ako

180 njkoi razbiva vilata vi I go hvanete v sobstvenijt si imot imate pravo da streljte
181 samo ako vi napadne s oragie.
182 Normalno li e v dargava v kojto kragbite v selskite kashti sa egednevie a v njkoi
183 selski regioni sa istinsko bedstvie gragdanite da badat postaveni pred izbora:
184 ograbeni ili osadeni.
185 ?: Ima unikalni paradoksi koito vigdame s hora koito bivati obvineni che sa
186 izvarshili tegko prestaplenie pri pologenie che te sa zashtitavali dage ne doma si
187 a givota si ah: taka che ah: spored mene bi trjbvalo da: se otkageme chastichno
188 ot tozi model koito v momenta go imame na svrah zashtita na prestapnika .
189 R[dramatic music]: V celi regioni na Bulgaria pravoto na chastna sobstvenost
190 napraktika se e obezsmislilo zashtoto imotite na horata ostavat bez tok, kabeli, I
191 dori ramki na prozorcite ako domat bade ostaven dori za njkolko dni. Tam
192 kadeto njkoga e imalo zelenchuci, grozde, I givotni sega e pustosht.
193 Gena 1: Vlezna edin vatre I gledam prez dgama k'o pravat . Nashtrek sam bila
194 cela nosht ne sam spala . [crying] I vse prodalgavat I se idat I se ma kradat .
195 R: Utre v BTV Reporterite shte vi razkagem zashto djdo Nikolo ot Vidinskoto
196 selo General Marinovo beshe osaden sled kato prostrelj kradec opital da go ubie
197 I ograbi v sobstvenata mu kashta.
198 Djdo N: kato schupi tej vrata j digna pistoletu ot tam I vikam shte streljm !
199 R: Kakva e drugata osnovna razlika megdu Balgaria I tezi strain kadeto vagi
200 praviloto "Mojt dom, mojta krepost" .
201 ?: V povecheto strani e kakto e v Shtatite lichnata sobstvenost e
202 neprikosnovenna. Ah: vie savsem spokojno mogete da zakupite oragie s koeto
203 da branite doma si I semeistvoto si estestveno nali ne mogete da go raznasjte po
204 ulicite, no vashijt dom e vashata krepost.
205 Djdo N: Direktor na policijta sam mu iskal , vikam daite mi pistoliet . Nemash
206 pravo . Mi kade kak da njmam pravo ?! be imam !
207 R: Kakvo misli dargavata za pravoto na gragdanite da branjt imushtestvoto si s
208 oragie shtom samata dargava ne se spravj .
209 ?P?: Regimat naistina ne e mnogo liberalen , no mislj che taka e po-dobre . Po-
210 dobre [unclear]
211 R: V konstitucijta pishe che chastnata sobstvenost v Bulgaria e neprikosnovena.
212 R: Vav vashto selo neprikosnovena li e ?
213 Djdo N: Ne e verno . Tova ne e istina ! A I nema koi da ni zashtiti .

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