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TRANSYLVANIAN BAROQUE:
LIBERALISM AND ITS OTHERS IN RURAL ROMANIA

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This dissertation is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

July 2018

THESIS TITLE: Transylvanian Baroque: Liberalism and Its Others in Rural Romania

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an exploration of liberalism in Romania and in anthropology. Liberalism is frequently represented in contemporary anthropology as a hegemonic technocratic practice, rationalist ideology and hypocritically exclusionary politics. I challenge this representation through an ethnography of a British-Romanian rural revitalisation and conservation programme in the Saxon villages region of southern Transylvania, Romania, and the vernacular liberalism of the cosmopolitan youth who have taken this project up. Douglas Holmes has asserted that in the European Union (EU) in the twenty-first century, communities and people are experimenting with new identity projects that fuse the liberal and illiberal in innovative ways. I trace how the rural revitalisation programme brought together romantic, "integralist" visions of the Saxon villages with the EU's liberal technologies of governance to create a set of projects the value of which could be translated between diverse sets of actors, from British tourists through European bureaucrats and Transylvanian farmers. This provided local youth with the possibility of making a life in their home region in a context of significant economic decline and massive emigration. The seemingly disparate liberal and romantic elements, initially brought together in a transnational context, were "domesticated" by Transylvanian liberals as complementary resources that could be mobilised to combat entrenched problems of Romanian society and modernity, as liberals saw it, notably the failure of the state to provide key services and the stagnation of the public sphere. The state's failures had led liberals to abandon it is a source of hope, turning instead to voluntary action, which made the dilemmas of how to mobilise engaged publics all the more crucial. Village liberals' attempts to foster such publics frequently ended up reproducing their own marginality, however. Against conventional representations of liberalism, I argue that its technocratic pretensions can be an object of hope in a milieu where expertise is perceived to be absent as much as an institutional hegemony. I further conclude that the multiple ways in which the liberal and the romantic are combined challenges dominant images of liberal ideology and practice as purely abstract and formal.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the preface and specified in the text. This dissertation is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my dissertation has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

This dissertation does not exceed the word limit prescribed by the Degree Committee of the Department of Social Anthropology.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In writing this thesis, I greatly appreciated the companionship of Joe Ellis, Jamie Wintrup, Corinna Howland, Jasper Montana, Ed Pulford, Michael Vine, Beth Turk, Natalie Morningstar, Norma Deseke, Amy Binning, Rosie Jones McVey, Jonathan Woolley, Teo Benussi, Anthony Howarth, Johannes Lenhard, Nurul Huda Mohd Razif, Victoria Muinde, Leonie Schiffauer and Shuai Li. Farhan Samanani and Taras Fedirko get a special mention for our extended and continuing discussions on liberalism and a whole host of other topics. Sadly, many conversations on multispecies matters with Rosie, Tom White and Alexandra Onofrei did not get more than a passing glance in the final thesis. Eve Bontoft read the final draft and offered useful commentary, as well as companionship since our time at Durham. Extra thanks go to Farhan, and latterly Amy and Corinna, for many hours spent on the bouldering wall at Kelsey Kerridge. King's College Mixed Lacrosse Team have been a consistent and much appreciated distraction from everything else in my life. Florence Hazrat was an ever-stimulating housemate. Outside Cambridge, I deeply appreciate the cynical perspectives of Josh Taylor and Alessandro Randall. Ioana Zirra and family made me feel welcome in Bucharest when I was very much out of my depth.

I am exceptionally grateful to my supervisor, Matei Candea, for his patience and tolerance of difficult circumstances and my own foibles as much as for his fine-grained commentary on drafts and supply of Romanian anecdotes. James Laidlaw and David Sneath provided useful comments on several draft chapters delivered to the Writing Up seminar, as did my fellow participants in the seminar over several years beyond those who I have already thanked above. Maria Grecu's comments on an earlier version of chapter four presented at EHESS in Paris were very helpful. Joel Robbins and Rupert Stasch gave me very useful pointers on linguistic anthropology and the anthropology of tourism, respectively. Two very stimulating conversations with James Faubion were, indirectly, crucial in getting the thesis on track. Tom Yarrow advised me on architecture and character, and let me read a draft of one of his own papers on the topic. I thank him for this, and for his encouragement when I was an undergraduate at Durham—the same goes to Gavin Weston. In Romania, a brief meeting with Bogdan Iancu on my first visit gave me much to think about. Responsibility for the content of the thesis is, of course, mine alone.

I am grateful to the Newton Trust and the Pigott Trust, both administered by the Cambridge Home and European Scholarship Scheme (CHESS), for the scholarships that allowed me to undertake the MRes and PhD, respectively. For additional financial support towards my initial research trips to Romania, I would also like to think King's College, Cambridge and the Durham University Vice Chancellor's Scholarship. Fundația ADEPT and Operation Wallacea provided invaluable practical assistance and hospitality in the early stages of my fieldwork.

My parents have always been completely supportive of my academic pursuits, even when the content and purpose must have been quite obscure. I also thank them and my grandfather, Michael Alder, for the additional financial support they have given me at various points along the way.

Last but by no means least, I thank everyone in Transylvania who so graciously welcomed and hosted me for a year, despite my cautiousness and confusions. In order to protect the anonymity of the place and people I shan't name any names, but I believe those who I owe the most to know who they are. The people I have called Ana, Liviu and Dora deserve special thanks, but I reaffirm my gratitude here to all my friends, whether they appear in the text or not.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is an exploration of liberalism in Romania and in anthropology. Against common depictions of this political stance as an all-powerful technocratic practice and rationalist ideology, I turn an ethnographic gaze on a more marginal liberalism in the Transylvanian countryside to show how it can be a situated response to political, social and economic conditions, a response that is as much if not more about hopes for rationality in rationality's absence than it is about hegemony, and that is deeply entangled with various forms of non-liberal ethos.

FIRE AND A GLIMMER OF HOPE

On October 30th, 2015, a stray pyrotechnic set alight the ceiling of the Colectiv nightclub in Bucharest. The blaze that followed devastated the building, trapping many of the Halloween revellers inside. The final death toll stood at 64, with around 150 people seriously injured, mostly teenagers and young people in their twenties. The political fallout from this tragic event was immediate. Citizens and the media blamed the culture of corruption and corner-cutting in Romania that had allowed the nightclub to obtain all the necessary permits from the city authorities, despite not conforming to fire safety regulations. Over the following weeks, tens of thousands of people joined protests in the major cities under the slogan *CORUPȚIA UCIDE!*, "Corruption Kills!", demanding the resignation of the government and other key political figures. Pressure had been growing on the Social Democrat Prime Minister Victor Ponta for some months previously due to a separate corruption trial, and the public outcry made his position untenable. On November 4th he and his government resigned, along with the mayor of Bucharest's Sector 4, where Colectiv was located.

Despite the Social Democrat Party (*Partidul Social Democrat*, PSD) holding a parliamentary majority, after several rounds of political consultations President Klaus Iohannis (a National Liberal, although formally neutral in the position of president) chose to reject the PSD's replacement candidate for the position of prime minister. Instead, and with the backing of the opposition parties, he made the unprecedented decision to appoint a politically unaffiliated, technocratic cabinet, with a mandate of one year, under the ex-EU

Commissioner for Agriculture Dacian Cioloș. Announcing the appointment, Iohannis declared:

> In my opinion, in order to resolve the problems of governance and in order to guarantee that we will have a net turnover of the political class there is a need for an independent, technocratic prime minister, as I have said many times. A clean person, who has not been implicated in scandals, a person with integrity, a person who has proven that they know how to manage complicated systems and situations. (Quoted in Mihalache and Zachmann 2015)

The themes of transparency and expertise were taken up in the new cabinet's programme for government, which focused on reforming the convoluted and inefficient state bureaucracy. Aware of the possibilities of failure, the cabinet set itself a well-defined scope of action. "[T]his government cannot and will not attempt to engage itself on all fronts of reform in Romanian society, rather it will assume a set of concrete measures, limited in number but with impact and systemic relevance" (Romanian Government, quoted in Rosca 2015).

I followed these events from 150 miles away, watching the news, reading journalistic accounts and, most importantly, talking with a close-knit group of friends in the small Transylvanian village that I call Săsești. Like many young Romanians, the nightclub fire had angered and upset them, bringing to a head deep frustrations and hopes about the state of contemporary Romania and the possibilities for change. We had attended a small protest against local and national corruption in the nearby town of Sighișoara in the days immediately after the fire, but this had struck them as overly parochial, and we ended up retreating to a local bar after an hour or so. The upheaval in the halls of government, however, had gripped our attention.

This attention was shaped and reshaped in discussions around a trestle table in the rustic kitchen that belonged to Ana and George, a couple in their early 30s, and was the group's main site of socialising. The room was kept light and airy by several large windows that looked out over the village's terracotta rooftops as they cascaded down into the valley below, eventually little more than a distant blur from the midst of which rose the thick stone tower of the Lutheran evangelical church. One afternoon I sat with Ana, a native of the village, talking leisurely while rolling news coverage flickered on the TV in the corner. She drew on her cigarette with a measured and somewhat nervous excitement. "I had dreamed of

a Iohannis-Cioloș team before, but I never expected it to actually happen…" Both figures represented something different in the Romanian political landscape. Before Cioloș's nomination, Ana had expressed concern that the protests should not simply result in early elections. This would have negated their reformist potential by redirecting energy and attention back into the endless cycles of electioneering that maintained the status quo through the "circus" (as many people—and not just its ardent critics—referred to it) of patronage and populism. "There needs to be a change of mentality," she declared, referring to the habits of both politicians and voters. The Iohannis-Cioloș "team" represented precisely such an opportunity.

Iohannis had unexpectedly won the previous year's presidential elections, defeating Ponta in the run-offs, largely with the support of the several million-strong diaspora vote. His election produced some discontent, for Iohannis was not an ethnic Romanian but a Transylvanian Saxon, one of Romania's German minorities. For those inclined to paranoid nationalism, this was evidence of a foreign takeover. But for Ana and her friends, Iohannis was an exemplar of better, more moral politics, for a number of reasons. Firstly, he was a "true Transylvanian" (*ardelean adevărat*), of more measured and considered character than the people of the *Regat* (Old Kingdom), the historical Romanian provinces to the south and east of the Carpathians and in which the capital city, Bucharest, is located. Compared to *regățeni* (people from the *Regat*), Transylvanians (whether ethnic Hungarians, Romanians or Germans) considered themselves more civilised, appealing to their region's Hapsburg imperial history in contrast to the Old Kingdom's history of Ottoman suzerainty. Secondly, as a Saxon, Iohannis not only manifested stereotypes of German efficiency but also earned a particular respect among many of the residents of Săsești, which was itself a historically Saxon village. While the majority of the village's Saxon population had emigrated to Germany in the years immediately following the 1989 revolution, locals nostalgically recalled their moral uprightness, work ethic and community values. Thirdly, Iohannis had revitalised the southern Transylvanian city of Sibiu during his tenure as mayor, from 2000 until his election as president in 2014. This included improving the city's infrastructure and administration, renovating the old town as a popular European tourist destination and even winning the 2007 "European Capital of Culture" designation in a joint bid with Luxembourg (Stroe 2011). And finally, he was a Liberal, a political position with which Ana and the other members of the group identified themselves, albeit with a small-l rather than as National Liberal Party members or activists.

Cioloș, for his part, also represented meritocratic success on a European scale. Having trained as an agronomist in the 1990s in Romania and France, he worked in the field of agricultural development, including the implementation of the European Union's SAPARD[1] programme for post-socialist states, before a brief term as Romanian Minister for Agriculture (during which time he was "one of the few ministers who enjoyed technical expertise in the policy area he was in charge of," carrying out rapid reforms that narrowly averted Romania being subject to EU sanctions; Gallagher 2009: 244-5). Then, from 2010 to 2014, he served as European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development. As well as having an exemplary technocratic career, Cioloș was renowned as an ally of the rural conservation and revitalisation projects that had gradually been developing throughout the 2000s in a pan-European network that included Săsești and the surrounding area of southern Transylvania, and through which Ana and her friends made a living.

The Iohannis-Cioloș alliance therefore brought together a wide range of hopes and possibilities, concerning the place of expertise in Romanian politics; European standards of economy and culture; a particular vision of rural development in Săsești and the surrounding countryside; and regional and cultural identities and their respective moral characters.

TECHNOCRACY, LIBERALISM, EXPERIMENTAL IDENTITIES

Annelise Riles (2004) has observed that technocracy, the practice of governance on the basis of scientific expertise, is characterised, for both critics and proponents, as much by its failures as by its successes. It is a "knowledge practice that inherently faces its own limits," the limits of abstract modelling and bureaucratic planning to accurately map, and therefore respond to, the complexities of the real world (2004: 393). For technocrats themselves, these failures "become the engine of more technocracy," "further targets for intervention" (2004: 393). Others look on them less favourably. A veritable academic industry has emerged since the mid-twentieth century in the name of critiquing technocratic power and its negative effects on human life, from Hannah Arendt and Friedrich Hayek through Michel Foucault and James Scott. These critiques are echoed in diverse popular reactions against the technocratic extensions of the modern state and globalisation, from nationalist populisms (Holmes 2000) and anticapitalist protests (Juris 2008) to millenialist and vitalist rejections of modernity itself (Faubion 2014). In the twenty-first century, therefore, to observe that rationality and

[1] Special Accession Programme for Agricultural and Rural Development

proceduralism are dehumanising and engines of (structural) violence is little more than a platitude.

Against this background, a hope for technocracy seems at the very least anachronistic. But of course, the broad-brush image of what Scott (1998) terms "authoritarian high modernism," the technocratic attempt to rationalise and transform all spheres of life, is an exceptionally negative one, and fails to capture how citizens may desire and actively elicit various social and material goods and transformations from the state (Jansen 2014). Anthropologists of post-socialist Eastern Europe, for example, have documented the ubiquity of desires for "normality" in conditions of social and economic dislocation that are seen as profoundly abnormal (Greenberg 2011; Fehérváry 2013; Dzenovska 2014). Normality is a term with very malleable referents but which takes its moral force primarily from its allusions to Western liberal democracy (Galbraith 2003). The quality of normality frequently refers to standards of consumption, but it is also mobilised relative to the state, in the desire for "normal" procedures and provisions, things that would improve one's life conditions (Jansen 2014: 256). Such discourses are prevalent in Romania too. Seen from this perspective, the hope for technocracy is indeed about failure—but the failure of a properly functioning system to have been implemented in the first place, not of its fundamental principles.

The desire for an effective, beneficent state in its absence was a significant factor in the stance of Săsești's pro-technocrat youth. The youth I refer to are Romanian citizens, for the most part in their late twenties or early thirties, mostly but not exclusively married or unmarried couples, who were in the process of setting up independent households and securing a livelihood for themselves. This is not a whole generational cohort, but a close friendship group from one village, complemented and extended by a diffuse network of siblings, friends, colleagues and acquaintances from the village and beyond. What unites this constituency of young Săseștians, beyond their ties of friendship, was their commitment to a particular vision of rural revitalisation that was specific to their home region of southern Transylvania but echoed values held by wider cosmopolitan and liberal classes in contemporary Romania. Their hope for technocracy was not just a response to its absence, but was equally premised on the substantive nature of this alternative vision, which rested upon but was not wholly defined by expertise-driven governance. The vision was articulated through an interlinked set of development projects that brought together technocratic, liberal and romantic registers in what I conceptualise, after Douglas Holmes (2009), as a post-Maastricht Treaty European identity project. This thesis is a study of this identity project. It is

not quite an ethnography of cosmopolitan youth, nor of "development" per se. Rather, it traces the intellectual and social roots of the vision of revitalisation, and how these are translated into attempts to make the countryside more rational, and specifically more *liberal*.

By framing identity as post-Maastricht, Holmes is referring to the way in which the European Union's (EU) programmes of integration (ratified in the 1992 Maastricht Treaty), have reshaped the field in which identity is negotiated. Integration is premised on two liberal projects: Monetary union, the creation of a borderless and financially deregulated market, and cultural pluralism, a decentralised regionalism and "flowering of cultures" that would undercut the organisational legitimacy of the nation-state, forming instead a "Europe of regions" (cf. Shore 1993). In this institutional and political context, society "as a moral framework, analytical construct, and empirical fact" is shifting (Holmes 2009: 53) and the EU's technologies of reform are altering the fabric of daily life, creating a space in which "the EU imparts to its citizens the distinctive challenge and the ambiguous burden to negotiate continually the cognitive meanings and political exigencies of a pluralist Europe" (2009: 52-3). Here,

> what we awkwardly and imprecisely term "identity" has acquired a twofold character. On the one hand, it is not merely or solely contingent on convention, tradition, and the past, but has assumed a future-oriented purview and experimental dynamic. On the other, citizens of the EU as they pursue these experiments are continually parsing the nature of cultural affinity and difference as they participate in the creation of a vast, multiracial and multicultural Europe. (2009: 52)

Yet, against the EU's politically and economically liberal position, the identities being negotiated in this decentralised milieu are frequently non-liberal or even actively illiberal, ranging from Catholic voluntarism to neo-nationalism. Or, more significantly, they fuse both "liberal and illiberal registers of consciousness" in innovative ways, "and these shifting configurations typically do not succumb to a single, stable, and unambiguous expression" (2009: 52).

This conjunction between the liberal and non-liberal is a major theme of the thesis. The rural revitalisation project being enacted in the Saxon villages around Săsești were predicated on a romantic, somewhat integralist conception of place and identity, explicitly opposed to the conditions of industrial modernity. "Integralism" is a kind of politics

characterised by a commitment to "traditional cultural forms" (Holmes 2000: 3), as against the cultural estrangement that has been produced (integralists assert) by modern ideologies of progress founded on scientific knowledge and technological advances (2000: 66). They are a contemporary expression of the intellectual movement that Isaiah Berlin (1979) has called the Counter-Enlightenment. As the Saxon revitalisation projects were institutionalised, however, such romantic commitments became intertwined with the EU's economically liberal technologies of social reform, notably the policies of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). While this was a relatively pragmatic choice on the part of the British actors involved, a means to an end, for young Romanians like Ana technocracy held a symbolic as well as practical importance. An ethnography of the latter and how they have taken up the revitalisation projects therefore offers a distinctive opportunity to take the study of European identities into new ground. Identity has become an unfashionable topic in the twenty-first century, following the intransigent debates about multiculturalism and the conflict between essentialism and constructivism in the 1990s (Brubaker and Cooper 2000; Grillo 2003; cf. Green 2005; Candea 2010). While it may be theoretically passé, the issue of identity has if anything become even more fraught since then, particularly in regard to political identities, as globalisation and new media facilitate ever more vocal conflicts between transnational cosmopolitanisms and illiberalisms.

Despite Holmes's observation that the liberal and the non-liberal are being combined in new ways, most studies have focused on cases that tend towards the non-liberal side, such as religious activism (e.g. Muehlebach 2012) or neo-nationalism (e.g. Holmes 2000; Gingrich and Banks 2006; Kalb 2009). Furthermore, it is frequently argued that the emergence of illiberal movements is a direct reaction against and rejection of technocratic politics and "socio-technical" conceptualisations of society, associated with liberal states and the EU. What is "liberal" in ethnographies of new European identities tends accordingly to be located in the political and economic liberalism of the EU or other institutions. But this has led to a dearth of exploration of how European citizens are experimenting with identities characterised in the first instance as liberal, while also being at some distance from, or adjacent to, institutional sites of power (cf. Marcus 2000).

This situation is part of a wider misrecognition of liberalism within anthropology and related disciplines, in the sense that 1) it has almost always been treated negatively, as an object of critique rather than ethnographic investigation, a situation that is rooted in the fact that 2) liberalism has become almost inextricably associated with certain forms of

government and their hegemonic power structures, rather than being a potentially autonomous political identity. In this introduction, I set out an alternative to these representations that allows us to approach liberalism anthropologically in such a way that "syncretic" identities bringing together more recognisable liberal principles with romantic or other social visions are not written out of the story. What this offers is a better understanding of the scope of contemporary European political identities and their social and genealogical groundings.

The introduction is ordered as follows: I begin with a brief sketch of the ethos of rural revitalisation in Saxon Transylvania. This introduces the major frame for the ethnography, explored more comprehensively in chapter one, and presents a comparison point for the extended discussion that follows of Holmes's arguments about the genesis of illiberalisms in contemporary Europe. This argument is dependent on a particular narrative of social modernity and its relation to technocracy and globalisation that, while it may fit several Western European countries, should be treated a little more sceptically in other contexts. I present an alternative history of modern and socialist Romania, which allows me to situate liberalism as a political identity in socialist and post-socialist Romania. This is followed by an overview of anthropological approaches to liberalism, in which I set out an alternative ground to the negative critiques that have dominated the discipline. I then describe the fieldsite and research methods of this study, before providing an overview of the chapters. This introduction focuses in particular on the place of narratives about social modernity and technocracy in analytical approaches to liberalism. In the conclusion to the thesis, I make some more substantive suggestions about how we might anthropologically approach liberalism in Europe as a political stance closely intertwined with romanticism.

FLUID ASPIC

That the projects of rural revitalisation examined in this thesis encode a distinctly "European" identity is unquestionable. The vision of the rural on which they rest emerged from the encounter of a number of British actors with Saxon Transylvania, from which emerged a strong will for architectural and natural conservation. Revitalisation, as articulated by these actors, takes as its starting point that the traditional form of life manifested in the villages and countryside inhabited by the Transylvanian Saxons is of great value and should be preserved in its living, breathing form for the sake of those who dwell there and for those who might have the chance to appreciate it. "Life" is here meant in a broad sense—some of the projects'

architects would say holistic—spanning a wide spectrum of social, cultural and natural forms, from egalitarian culture through the "harmonious" patterns of village architecture to a uniquely vibrant biodiversity of sprawling forests, wildflower meadows and roadside verges.[2] In the heroic narrative of its protagonists, this value was discovered in the mid-1990s by a handful of British aristocrats, artists and writers who had taken advantage of the raising of the Iron Curtain to explore the forgotten corners of Eastern Europe. This discovery was fortunate, for the vitality of the place was at that moment threatened with abandonment; the Saxon population of Transylvania who had cultivated the marvellous "balance" between nature and humans had emigrated *en masse* to Germany following the 1989 revolution and the opening of Romania's previously closed borders, in search of a better life after the twentieth-century upheavals of war and socialism.

Into this gap (again, in their own narrative) stepped the British actors, to restore a guiding hand. This guidance was both moral and technical, the provision of exemplars and expertise to the remaining and new population of the villages, primarily ethnic Romanians and Roma who had historically lived on the margins of Saxon settlements; had migrated to or been resettled in the area during socialism; or had moved into the empty houses left behind by the Saxons in the 1990s. The guidance was not, however, disinterested. For the British, the Transylvanian countryside manifested a past that had been lost in Britain with the enclosures of the eighteenth century and agricultural intensification in the twentieth. As ever, this nostalgia was as much about the future as it was about the past. The Saxon form of life provided an alternative to the alienation of industrial modernity; a form of life in which humans' relation to nature (understood as both the non-human world and also a particular kind of harmonious order) was immediate, not distanced by the mediation of inauthentic (mass-produced) technologies. The *telos* of British involvement in Transylvania was therefore conservation of the Saxon form of life as a model for others. Yet this was not, the proponents asserted, preservation "in aspic" (to use the words of one notable enthusiast for the region, Charles, the Prince of Wales). Rather, the aim was to maintain the specific vitality of the place in light of changing economic and social conditions, balancing the traditional and the modern in such a way that the most important elements of rural life could be maintained

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[2] It is in this regard also that I refer to the "form" of life rather than the more common "way" of life. While the latter phrase is more common in conservationists' discourse, in practice questions of form are explicit and dominant.

while improving the quality of life and fulfilling some (qualifier necessary) of the modernist desires of local residents.

We can pause here to look in a little more detail at "estrangement" in contemporary Europe and its relation to what Holmes identifies as the shifting nature of society. Integralism and its analogues, Holmes (2000) argues, are objections above all to ideologies of social modernism. Paul Rabinow notes that "in the course of the nineteenth century, society slowly came to be seen as an object sui generis, with its own laws, its own science, and eventually its own arts of government" (1989: 11). This was a response to various crises and ongoing problematics (including epidemics and the governance of colonial territory) that required new kinds of knowledge, especially statistical and sociological epistemologies, which in turn shaped perceptions of what society was and created new conceptual spaces for rational planning (cf. Poovey 1995). In order to mitigate emerging inequalities that threatened social conflict, the French architects of this technocratic practice developed new idioms of solidarity that were rooted in the new, socio-technical understanding of "society" as a set of juridical interdependencies, "divorced from ethnic, religious or national idioms" and mediated by the welfare state (Holmes 2000: 92).[3] Yet this tied the popular legitimacy of solidarity to the actual provision of material progress (Donzelot 1988: 395).

In the late twentieth century, globalisation and associated imperatives of financial deregulation and privatisation contributed to the erosion of the welfare state, creating resurgences of inequality. In a well-established account—what James Ferguson (2015: 63-87, after Rose 1996) has referred to as the "death of the social" narrative—in this milieu, the representation of society as composed of recognisably differentiated perspectives, such as those of class, was collapsed in political discourse, replaced with the idea of society as a collection of perspectivally equivalent choice-making individuals (Strathern 1992). This left little room for recognising stable inequalities, producing widespread and varied "estrangements" from state-mediated solidarities. Politics rooted in ethnic, religious and national collectivities began to flourish in this space, capitalising on the perceived failure of abstract (legalistic, sociological) social modernism (Holmes 2000).

This is only one narrative of course, and indeed one that Ferguson has described as "hopelessly Eurocentric" (2015: 68; but see Geschiere 2009). Saxon conservationism can certainly be read as informed by a cultural condition of estrangement. It is worth pointing out,

[3] Durkheim's articulation of the distinction between mechanical and organic solidarities is one example of this project (Holmes 2000: 15).

however, that the texture of conservationism tends more towards the romantic legacy of the Counter-Enlightenment than the neo-nationalist extremes of integralist politics that Holmes discusses. The latter are characterised by an indeterminacy of political position, drawing at times on both right wing (even fascist) and socialist principles in their appeals to those dissatisfied with modernity. The romantic politics of conservation, in comparison, stand at quite a distance from socialism. While this can be traced to the predominance of a conservative position among the British actors involved, an equally significant factor is the post-socialist Romanian political context and especially the perceptions of a failure to realise a modern, technocratic state, a failure that is closely associated with the legacy of socialism. I discuss this in the next section.

It is also worth noting that while the conservation projects are frequently articulated in terms of ethnic collectivity, they are predominantly expressed in terms of estrangement from nature rather than culture. This reflects the particular intellectual genealogy of their British proponents, drawing on classical philosophies (especially of architecture) fused with quasi-vitalist twentieth century ecologies, in combination with the emphases and opportunities of the EU's own rural development programmes. A significant effect of this discursive shift from cultural to natural estrangement is that it created a space in which more cosmopolitan identities could be shaped than would be possible in a programme grounded primarily in cultural pluralism. This is important relative to the participation of local young people in the projects, for whom the concern for estrangement from nature is more ambivalent. While a sense of industrial alienation is no less present in post-socialist Eastern Europe than it is in Western Europe (Fehérváry 2013), for most of the local participants the area was their home, a deeply familiar space, not the enchanting fulfilment of a mystical-historical imaginary. What, then, was the appeal of conservationism? This question is significant because it points us towards a different set of dynamics to those set up by Holmes in his historical narrative. It is difficult to argue with his diagnosis that the contemporary shape of the EU is producing experiments with identity, facilitated by new political-economic technologies and the decentralisation of cultural policy. What these identities are a reaction against (and reaction they are) requires a more localised exploration, however. Certainly, to attribute estrangement to the decay of the welfare state can be questioned for post-socialist Eastern Europe, which has a very different history of state building, solidarities and social modernism than the liberal democracies of Western Europe. Estrangement and indeed liberalism itself have a different position within this milieu.

ANTI-COMMUNIST EMIGRÉ

At a basic level, the conservation projects instituted a set of concrete possibilities for rural revitalisation that promised "prosperity" for local communities through a "holistic" and "sustainable" development. These were not simply utopian visions of a future, but were grounded in plans, legal and economic techniques for enacting social change, and the financial opportunities (subsidies, grants, and so on) afforded by various EU structures (cf. Abram 2014; Guyer 2007). These concrete forms invested the projects with a more palpable source of hope for Romanian youth, many of whom perceived a severe dearth of economic and political opportunities in the country. This was amplified in the countryside, where the privatisation of the socialist-era collective and state farms had in most cases produced only the collapse of the rural economy (Verdery 2003), with little to replace the collectives than uncontrolled and frequently illegal logging (Dorondel 2016). In this context, as in other post-socialist rural settings (Dzenovska 2013), for young people emigration was widely perceived to be the only viable option for achieving a dignified and fulfilling life (Trandafoiu 2013: 25). This was not always directly articulated, but hung in the background of many discussions concerning life and livelihood among Romanian youth.[4] In fact, the spectre of emigration was arguably inescapable, manifest not just as a possible life choice but as a material non-presence, an absence of all the people (friends, relatives, neighbours) who had already left (cf. Dzenovska 2018a).[5]

The "motor" for emigration was not simply economic. As anthropologists have documented throughout post-socialist Europe, the "transition" from socialism to capitalism disenfranchised many citizens and produced a pervasive sense of *ennui*: the demoralisation of having no real economic options (Rajković 2018; O'Neill 2017); the alienation of once-lauded working classes pushed to the sidelines (Kideckel 2008); and the disappointment of democratic revolutions that produced distinctly less democracy than had been expected (Greenberg 2014). What kinds of estrangement does this produce? A common academic narrative adopts a Manichaean register, pitting an emergent illiberal nationalism against a

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[4] And not only youth. The recent film *Graduation* (Romanian: *Bacalaureat*, 2016, dir. Cristian Mungiu) explores the regrets, dismays and moral dilemmas of middle-aged Romanians who chose not to emigrate in the 1990s.

[5] In 2007, the first year in which Romania was a full member of the EU (and various European travel restrictions had therefore been lifted), around 550,000 Romanians emigrated. In 2016, the number stood at 210,000, of whom a third were between the ages of 20 and 30 (Mihai 2017). Between 2007 and 2017, an estimated 3.4 million Romanians emigrated, a rate second only to Syria's, globally (Alexe 2018). The Romanian population as a whole declined from circa 22,386,000 in 1992 to 19,925,000 in 2011 (Institutul Național de Statistică N.D.).

crisis-ridden yet still powerful liberalism. This narrative can take a pro-liberal form (e.g. Tismăneanu 2014), but is just as frequently mobilised in a class-based critique of the dispossessions wrought on the working classes by "an abstract liberal agenda" that is "firmly wedded to the globalizing agenda of the capitalist competition state" (Kalb 2009: 208). In the latter view, "native" liberals in the post-socialist world are often treated as little more than *compradors*, self-interested agents of Western capitalism (e.g. Sampson 2002), a representation I challenge in the thesis by situating their interests and concerns in a local and national context.

To say that rooted, integralist identities are reactions against the abstract, juridical relations of liberalism assumes that the latter are a dominant social concept. Yet this is far from true across Europe, as a brief overview of social discourse in modern Romanian history demonstrates. As elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe, the emerging human sciences in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Romania (sociology, medicine, demographics and so on) were put in the service not of "society," understood in terms of legalistic interdependences, but of the nation (Cotoi 2016; Bucur 2002; Mihăilescu 2004). This was suppressed following the imposition of the socialist regime after World War II. Yet the Soviet model of social modernism also drew its legitimacy from metaphors of kinship. Katherine Verdery (1996: 64) calls the socialist state a "*zadruga*" (kin-household) state from the way it modelled familial, patriarchal authority, while Stephen Collier (2011: 81) observes that the Soviet term for the economy, *khoziaistvo*, was an appropriation of both the term for and the literal functions of the domestic economy by the state, an active rejection of the bourgeois concept of *ekonomika* (Rogers 2006: 921). Verdery (1991) has also demonstrated how discourses of the nation subtly crept back into late-socialist Romanian intellectual spheres, eventually coming to structure the whole discursive field. This was only amplified in the 1990s. The dominant political actors after the 1989 revolution were primarily mid-level members of the Communist nomenklatura, "reform" communists, organised in the revolutionary National Salvation Front (NSF) that subsequently incorporated as a political party and (to simplify a complicated series of fissions and realignments) became the Social Democrat Party in 1993. These actors could not self-present as Communist due to having already capitalised on narratives of their own marginalisation at the hands of the Ceaușescu regime (Verdery 1996: 110-2). While "European" liberal democratic values were the object of popular idealism, the liberal intelligentsia (who acted as a non-parliamentary opposition, having abandoned the NSF when it became clear it had been captured by the reform

communists) had already appropriated "civil society," and the reform communists' remaining option was an alliance with the nationalist fringe. The reinvention of nationalism proved successful in corralling and constraining the discourse of civil society in turn, as the intellectual opposition couldn't risk alienating more nationalist segments of the population (1996: 117-8).

The point of this brief overview is that collectivist idioms rooted in family and nation have continuously structured the field of modern Romanian politics, in comparison to the juridical idiom of society through which Western liberal democracies understood themselves, and therefore the "death of the social" narrative holds less explanatory power. Many nascent Eastern European liberalisms in the nineteenth century took for granted a deeply nationalist conception of the state (Daskalov and Mishkova 2014). That is not to say that people always recognised themselves in these idioms. Like Thatcherite individualism, Nicolae Ceaușescu's pursuit of the "homogenisation" (*omogenizare*) of the population in the image of the "new socialist person" served too to alienate citizens through its denial of the real inequalities that Romanian socialism produced (Kligman 1998). Furthermore, Ceaușescu's decision to completely pay off the country's sovereign debt (and thus retain complete policy autonomy from international financial institutions) led to the imposition of deep austerity (Ban 2012), creating an imbalance between nationalist commitments on the one hand and socialist welfare commitments on the other. By its own terms, Romanian nationalist socialism could not escape appearing deeply contradictory in this context.

Beyond greater appeals to "rooted" forms of collectivism, Soviet-style socialism also produced a very different dynamic of estrangement to the liberal welfare state. Alexei Yurchak (2005) has described how political discourse and ritual in late-socialist Russia became "hypernormalised," tightly controlled for ideological reasons yet increasingly formulaic, until they lost their referential value and became purely performative (cf. Kligman 1998: 35-7). In this milieu, most socialist citizens simply absented themselves from political commitment, either pro- or anti-Communist. Yurchak refers to this as a "deterritorialization" of Soviet political discourse and ideology, the formalistic reproduction of which made space for radically divergent and usually non-political meanings (2005: 114-6). The complicity of standing apart in these spaces created a "deterritorialised public," a solidary "us" (2005: 102-4, 116-8). One result of this, in Romania at least, was to produce an oppositional dynamic between "us" and "them," where "we" are the innocent victims just trying to get by and "they" are the political elite, interested only in self-aggrandising and exploiting the rest

of the population (Verdery 1996: 93-7; Kligman 1998: 4).[6] After the collapse of socialism, us/them distinctions continued to be mobilised by post-socialist citizens struggling to make sense of changing conditions. Steven Sampson (1994) has shown how the binary opposition took on a more fluid character, as "they" shifted to include the emerging nouveaux riches as well as the changing political class.

The metamorphoses of this framework of solidarity and opposition were multiple. Verdery (1996: 97) suggests that the sentiment of victimisation was frequently understood in terms of the nation as much as of individuals, drawing upon historical associations of Romanian national identity with victimisation at the hands of imperial powers and political elites (cf. Bucur 2009), and that this left many Romanians well-disposed towards nationalist "demagogy." On the other hand, the presence of ex-nomenklatura in post-1989 governments fuelled narratives of a persistent Communist "them" who continue to exploit the population for their own interests. Indeed, to many Romanian citizens, the Social Democrat Party appears a quarter of a century after the revolution as still little more than a conduit for the corrupt interests of a once-Communist elite, now reproducing itself in a second generation of children, godchildren and clients. A key slogan of mass protests against the PSD in 2017 and 2018 was "down with communism!" (*Jos comunismul!*). Beyond *ennui*, this is a major factor in many Romanians' decision to leave the country (cf. Trandafoiu 2013: 24).

While political liberalism provided Romanian citizens with an intellectual framework for a critique of such issues as corruption, dishonesty and so on, liberalism also provided a compelling oppositional identity slot for historical reasons. Alina Sajed has observed that the anti-liberal and anti-capitalist ethos of socialism ironically resulted in liberal democracy becoming "the ultimate horizon of… political practice," the Other against which socialist life had to be defined (2011: 553, quoting Žižek 1992: 31). As a result, a significant aspect of Yurchak's deterritorialisation involved citizens immersing themselves in this very "elsewhere," an intangible yet desirable "outside" to the world of socialism, through various forms of consumption and media (Yurchak 2005; Sajed 2011). In the austerity of late Romanian socialism, this included aspirations for the freedoms of liberal democracy as they were presented by Radio Free Europe and other illicit broadcasters. Such attachments informed strong political commitments after the revolution. Sajed notes of her father that,

[6] Yurchak (2005: 103) asserts that us/them oppositions are a fiction invented by analysts rather than an ethnographic reality. He may be correct for Russia; I cannot agree for Romania, however, where us/them idioms are frequently mobilised.

after 1989, he "voted repeatedly for the liberals in spite of the Liberal Party's involvement in huge corruption scandals and in spite of the fact that the Romanian Liberal Party does not have much in common with Western liberal parties. But my father never voted for a person or for a party, he voted for an *idea* of liberalism, which he identifies with democracy, prosperity and freedom" (Sajed 2011: 566). In fact, one could argue that anti-communism is a defining characteristic of post-socialist Romanian liberalism (Heemeryck 2013; cf. Tamás 2014). The country's revolution of 1989 was a uniquely violent rejection of communism among the Eastern Bloc countries (compare Creed 1995), as indeed Romania's late socialist regime had been uniquely repressive (Deletant 1995). In this context, together with the powerful ex-nomenklatura foregrounding their own marginality to the fallen regime, left-wing ideas and critiques became discredited in the public sphere and centre-right liberalism provided the most unequivocal position from which to oppose the political elite insofar as they were still identified with communism (cf. Ban 2015; Abăseacă 2018).

To conclude these last two sections, liberalism in Săsești articulates the vision and development epistemologies of the rural revitalisation projects with a given field of political identities and their interrelations in post-socialist Romania. This is a substantially different dynamic to the "death of the social" narrative regarding the genesis of new liberalisms and illiberalisms, which should be subject to ethnographic tests rather than uncritically assumed. In the next section, I provide a theoretical overview of liberalism in anthropology to further disentangle the topic from conventional tropes and analytical narratives.

LIBERALISM AS ETHNOGRAPHIC OBJECT

Anthropological studies of political liberalism have tended to focus on the limits of ethical principles such as human rights or tolerance, and the hidden exclusions that these discourses (and the institutions that promote them) in fact produce and/or justify (e.g. Englund 2006; Goodale 2008 on human rights; Povinelli 2002; Comaroff and Comaroff 2004; Rabinowitz 1997; Weiss 2012; Dzenovska 2018b on tolerance; cf. Mehta 1997; Brown 2006). This work is of great value for understanding the position of those who are excluded, and their attempts to contend with this exclusion or challenge its very grounds through a "refusal" to be the compliant subjects of multicultural recognition (e.g. Simpson 2014), or attempts to find a place within liberal institutions (e.g. Mahmud 2014). Nevertheless, this tends to leave liberalism itself untouched as an object of ethnographic inquiry, focusing instead on articulating a critique of liberal principles and institutions. This is in line with a common

association, in contemporary academia and politics of the far left and right, of liberalism with a 'thinness' of thought, a claim to universal applicability (of rights, rationality, proceduralism, and so on) that is only possible by having renounced any socio-cultural depth or particularity in the name of abstraction, and by having obscured the way in which its fundamental ideals are modelled on an inescapably European, masculine, bourgeois figure.

A growing body of studies has attempted to go beyond these critiques. Work in history and literary criticism, predominantly focused on the Victorian era in Britain, has challenged some of the depictions of liberalism as purely rational and procedural, arguing that affect and embodiment are part and parcel of "living" liberalism (e.g. Hadley 2010; Goodlad 2003; Anderson 2016), and attempting to recover the ethical complexity of commitments to principles like detachment (Anderson 2001) and moderation (Craiuțu 2016). Anthropologists, for their part, have largely approached liberalism as it is articulated in new and unexpected sites, focusing less on what has been ignored than on how classic ideas are reformulated in different settings. Gabriella Coleman and Alex Golub (2008), for example, have discussed computer hacking as a site in which ideas of liberty and property are being re-articulated in a new key. Liberalism is here theorised "not as it is traditionally framed – as a coherent body of philosophical, economic and legal thought or a set of normative precepts and doctrines – but as a cultural sensibility… that in practice is under constant negotiation and reformulation and replete with points of contention" (Coleman and Golub 2008: 256). The authors

> "take liberalism to embrace several, sometimes conflicting, historical and present day moral and political sensibilities concerned with a cluster of commitments: protecting property and civil liberties, promoting individual autonomy and tolerance, securing a free press, ruling through limited government and universal law, and preserving a commitment to equal opportunity and meritocracy… Because liberal ideals always take root in a variety of cultural and institutional contexts and through the action and reactions of social groups, liberal commitments and critiques of liberalism are not only made tangibly manifest in these various contexts but are the very sites for liberalism's heterogeneous articulation and historical transformation" (2008: 257).

This is in line with the work of several other scholars who have focused on the "frictions" produced as liberalism's universals circulate through "zones of awkward engagement" (Tsing

2005: xi); in other words, how the universal is accommodated in and with the local (Englund 2006; Riles 2000; Boyer and Howe 2016; cf. Biehl and McKay 2012).

Some of the best work in this vein comes from studies of language ideology, the expectations and assumptions of what language is, how it works and what it should be (Schieffelin et al. 1998; Kroskrity 2000). As Michael Lempert puts it, “the liberal subject lives vicariously through discursive practices, if it lives at all” (2012: 166). Linguistic anthropologists have documented the importance of language ideologies to liberalism, and the constitutive place within these of principles such as sincerity (Keane 2002), non-violence (Lempert 2012), public/private distinctions (Gal 2005), dialogue (Englund 2018), cultural and political integration (Bjornson 2007), reconciliation (Slotta 2015), critical thinking (Larson 2013) and freedom of expression (Keane 2009), as well as negative stances towards rhetoric (Bauman and Briggs 2003) and customary speech forms (Ansell 2015). These linguistic ideals, as they circulate, frequently become entangled in unpredictable ways with decidedly non-liberal forms of relating such as clientelism (Ansell 2017) or monasticism (Lempert 2012).

Throughout the thesis, I trace how aspects of these principles are mobilised in a village milieu, including public and private attitudes, personal responsibility and sincerity, and language ideologies of public “dialogue.” These are the substantive elements of liberal identity. Yet there is clearly something important about the relational character of liberalism, at least as I have sketched it so far in Romania; about the relationship of liberal identities to the wider political field. In order to understand this, we need to look more closely at the association between liberalism and forms of governance.

For many contemporary academic critics, liberalism is associated with a rational system of governance that, especially in light of Foucault’s earlier work on the development of disciplinary power in eighteenth and nineteenth century European states (e.g. 1977), is seen as totalising and oppressive due to its subtle and pervasive modification of citizens’ comportment and subjectivities, despite ideological claims to the self-limitation of state power. Liberalism is obviously not the only political system associated with rational governance. To look only at the field of urban planning, technocratic rationalities have been employed in the service of British liberalism (Joyce 2003), French republicanism and colonialism (Rabinow 1989), Swedish social democracy (Murphy 2015), Soviet socialism (Collier 2011), Pakistani Islamic republicanism (Hull 2012), and of course many other cases (e.g. Holston 1989). Indeed, liberal democracy would appear to a common-sense

understanding to be far less totalising than some of its counterparts, notably the Soviet system. Why, then, has it come to bear the brunt of critical attention? We can identify two significant reasons for this. The first is that Foucault identified the social and economic modernity that underpins technocratic governance—the assumption that society and political economy exist as independent domains with their own inherent laws that can be modelled and therefore form the basis of intervention and planning—as originating in "the naturalistic conceptions that were characteristic of early liberal thought," notably the French physiocrats and British liberals (Collier 2011: 16; Foucault 2007, 2008). Liberalism, in this account, bears the original sin of rational planning. The second reason is that, if one sees in modern liberal democracies the pervasive functioning of power "at a distance" through the shaping of a "regulated autonomy" (Miller and Rose 1992: 173), what Foucault termed "governmentality" (see Burchell et al. 1991), invocations of individual freedom and the self-limitation of government appear as false ideology, a matter of bad faith or simple hypocrisy (cf. Anderson 2016: 4-6).

A number of challenges can be made to this. The first is historical. A number of writers have pointed out that the emergence of technocracy and social modernism in France and Britain was in fact opposed by contemporary liberals, who articulated their opposition through a discourse of moral character (Goodlad 2003; Rabinow 1989: 11; Hadley 2016). While a technical-statistical perspective on society can certainly be seen as characteristic of contemporary liberal democracies, this has always existed in tension with other, moral, discourses. Personal character is one of these—and indeed, one that is also frequently critiqued for its individualism and inattention to larger structural processes (Anderson 2016: 50-1). Amanda Anderson (2016) argues, however, that this is a reductive account. In an analysis of realist novels, she observes that liberal writers such as Dickens and Trollope "acknowledge the significance of individual moral exemplarity while insisting on the importance of perspectives and practices—sociological, impersonal, and political—that exceed the domain of the individual" (2016: 78), a "double vision" particular to liberalism (2016: 3).

Secondly, the argument that liberal governance penetrates all areas of social life through an indirect functioning of power has certainly produced great analytical insights, notably the observation that even failed state or development projects tend to leave behind a space that has been restructured to facilitate flows of governmental power (Ferguson 1994; Roitman 2005). Yet there is a risk here of flattening the social field. Liberalism (or whichever

form of governance) appears as totalising only by dint of the analyst having reduced all relations to a fairly homogeneous, oppressive politics (Candea 2011). An example from the EU illustrates this well, and presages my own ethnography. Cristina Grasseni (2007) describes how the introduction of CAP agricultural subsidies into the Italian alps created “havoc” with the traditional organisation of pasturing, encouraging new farmers to join and sanctioning long-established practices. Commenting on this case, Holmes observes that “this chaotic condition is, in fact, instrumental [to EU regulation] insofar as it establishes the terms by which people themselves mediate this process of [European] identity formation” (2009: 65). “[T]he micro-level disruptions introduced by the EU regulatory regime become the means by which these varied groups of people negotiate over time the common sentiments and expectations that constitute a very broadly based European identity” (2009: 67). In other words, this forms part of the EU’s project of decentralising pluralism. If, as Yurchak has demonstrated, the hypernormal politics of the Soviet Union could be deterritorialised into quite autonomous spheres of meaning, we might fairly ask whether decentralisation does not also leave space for underdetermined actions and meanings. This is not a denial that power is at work, but an invitation to attend to the range of meanings that can fill the most formal of schemes.

Furthermore, in regard to formal schemes, Anderson (2016: 38-45) has pointed out that to call the kind of “regulated autonomy” of subjects that forms the target of most critiques “liberalism” is somewhat of a red herring. In fact, most critiques refer to neo-liberalism (e.g. Rose 1999: 139-40, who also uses “advanced” liberalism). While this term has often been used as a description of governmental regimes that is so broad as to leave it meaningless, we can follow Stephen Collier’s (2011) genealogy of neoliberal economic thinkers to identify a core concern with refiguring economic relations in a formal, calculative mode amenable to rational budgeting.[7] To see this post-World War II economic doctrine as of a piece with or even as a direct continuation of older political liberalism, Anderson asserts, is to obscure the extent to which the two are not just “distinct” but even “incompatible” (2016: 39) in the former’s “disavowal of… psychological, sociological, and political forces” (2016: 45).

[7] This calculative formality comes at the expense of other sorts of relation such as barter or favours, that are aimed at the provision of substantive economic needs rather than the coordination of numbers (cf. Guyer 2004).

What this all points to is the possibility of reading liberalism apart from formulaic models of governance and power. How are we then to identify it? One could refer to the presence of such substantive principles as those described by Coleman and Golub. But this creates the potential for ethnographic misrecognition. This point has been made by Andrew Kipnis (2008) in regard to practices of audit, a key site of power in the literature on governmentality (e.g. Rose 1999). Kipnis starts from an ethnography of education audits in contemporary China, and observes that many anthropologists would read this as a case of neo-liberal governmentality. Yet many local teachers saw the audits, which were highly performative, "as part of a Confucian culture enforced by a Communist Party-led government, whereas Chinese academics often described such audit cultures as an outmoded socialist legacy" (Kipnis 2008: 276). Kipnis urges anthropologists to focus on their informants' categorisations; rather than take a diagnostic stance towards political form, anthropologists would do better to look at how perceptions and categories are historically and socially situated. This is especially important given that historical transitions from one political form to another rarely erase earlier practices completely, as can be seen in the legacies of liberal medicine and economics in socialist governance (Beer 2008; Lampland 2016), or socialist economics in neoliberal governance (Collier 2011), complicating the idea that an unequivocal classification could be made at all.

Kipnis provides a fundamentally relational account of political identity that helps illuminate the anti-communist nature of Romanian liberalism. He nevertheless has his own biases, specifically his characterisation of audit and rationalisation as mere "scientism," a rhetorical "abuse of scientific reasoning" for political purposes (2008: 286). The term is borrowed from Hayek, and while Kipnis notes it is one used in "essays by Chinese critics of academic audit culture," he accepts it a little too uncritically (2008: 277). To dismiss rationalisation and technocracy more generally as "scientism" misses not only how these can take solid, material forms (Hull 2012), but also how they may be an object of hope, as we saw in our opening vignette. A useful reflection for thinking through the relationship between technologies of governance, political stance and the investment of hope or other affects beyond accusations of utopianism can be found in the work of Foucault himself, whose own stance towards liberalism appeared to shift significantly over the course of his later career (Zamora and Behrent 2015):

> So, we cannot say that liberalism is an always unrealized utopia—unless one takes the kernel of liberalism to be the projections it has been led to formulate by its analyses and criticisms. It is not a dream that comes up against a reality and fails to insert itself within it. It constitutes—and this is the reason for both its polymorphism and its recurrences—a tool for the criticism of reality: criticism of a previous governmentality from which one is trying to get free; of a present governmentality that one is trying to reform and rationalize by scaling it down; or of a governmentality to which one is opposed and whose abuses one wants to limit. So, in different but simultaneous forms, it will be possible to find liberalism both as a regulative schema of governmental practice and as a sometimes radical oppositional theme. (Foucault 2008: 319-20)

This brings together the otherwise disparate formulations of liberalism as substantive politics and as situated critique. Similarly, Anderson asserts that "liberalism's own character can be discerned, I will suggest, only if one sees liberalism not just as a philosophy aiming to set out first principles but also, and almost from the start, as a situated response to historical challenges" (2016: 21). Anderson takes this reflection in a different direction, allowing us to expand Foucault's broad characterisation of liberalism. She argues that, contrary to critical depictions that associate liberalism with either highly technocratic governance on the one hand or an overbearing moral individualism on the other, a fundamental feature of political liberalism is the attempt to bridge "the structuring gap between sociological and moral perspectives" (2016: 56). "It is precisely the interplay between first-person and third-person perspectives, between embodied presence and impersonal critique, between ethics and politics, that characterizes the liberal project" (2016: 78). Her language echoes Webb Keane's (2016) recent reflections on how political movements are constituted by shifts between first- and third-person perspectives, and of course an awareness of the tension between these is part of living many different political identities. Nevertheless, she compellingly argues that there is something specific and defining about how this tension is constantly kept in play and is generative of distinctly liberal ethics and aesthetics.

Taken together, these reflections on liberalism—Coleman and Golub's "cultural sensibility" and "cluster of commitments," Foucault's situated critique and Anderson's bridging of the sociological and moral—provide the groundwork for a more substantial anthropology of liberalism, taking characterisations of liberalism as a political identity beyond the critiques that have dominated academic discussion. By conceptualising liberalism

as fundamentally relational in a political field and as bridging different registers of vernacular social theory and morality, we are also able to grasp more comprehensively how liberalism can sit with seemingly non- or il-liberal idioms of collectivity and subjectivity. I explore this in the conclusion in relation to romanticism.

SOCIOLOGY AND METHODOLOGY

The primary ethnographic subjects of this thesis are a friendship group comprised of young residents of the village of Săsești, self-identifying liberals, who have already been introduced in the person of Ana. Before describing them in more detail, it is necessary to give some context about the village itself, where I conducted fieldwork for thirteen months beginning in late 2014 and continuing throughout 2015. Săsești is located in the area of southern Transylvania historically settled by the German-speaking Saxons and specifically in the region around the town of Sighișoara that has at various points in recent history been known as Târnava Mare. This region, currently active as a territory of rural development, conservation and regional branding, comprises seven communes (the smallest administrative territory in Romania, which includes a primary village that serves as the seat of administration and usually two to four other villages) across three counties: Brașov, Sibiu and Mureș. "Săsești" is a pseudonym comprised of the Romanian word for Saxon, *sas* (as in the villages of Saschiz and Noul Săsesc), and the common place-name suffix *-ești* (as in București, Pitești, etc.).

While I refrain from describing Săsești in too precise identifying detail, in order to protect the anonymity of my informants and in line with anthropological convention, it can be said that the village is the seat of its commune and relatively accessible from the major highway that runs through the area. It has a population of somewhat more than a thousand people, and it is highly stratified, both socio-economically and spatially. The village, which dates to the fourteenth century in its current form, with a monumental centre organised relative to the imposing fortified Christian church (first Catholic and subsequently Lutheran) and administrative buildings surrounded by several residential streets, was constructed by a Saxon population who continued to predominate until the late twentieth century. From the eighteenth century, small numbers of Romanians and Roma settled on the peripheries of the village, having been freed from nearby feudal estates, gaining employment as pastoralists for the property-holding Saxons.

This spatial and ethnic division remained relatively consistent until the mid-twentieth century, when social and property relations were violently reorganised under the newly established Communist regime, which had been parachuted to power by the occupying Soviets at the end of the Second World War. The wealthy Saxons were expropriated of much of their property (land, tools and even homes), while significant numbers of Romanians and Roma, from "healthy class backgrounds" (i.e. poor), were resettled in the village from elsewhere as a form of disruptive governance by the Communists, substantially equalising the ethnic demography. This ruptured the Saxons' spatial monopoly of the village centre, with prominent houses being redistributed to the newcomers. Many of the latter were also elevated to positions of political and administrative power, while Saxons were blocked from higher positions. Although the village saw little industrial development under socialism, it was incorporated into a network of successful state farms, in which many villagers found a measure of prosperity as skilled labourers, including many disenfranchised Saxons.

After the revolution of 1989 and the overthrow of the Communist regime, Romania's previously closed borders were opened. In the immediately succeeding years, the majority of the village's Saxons emigrated to Germany in search of a better life. This left a significant number of houses empty, setting the stage for a major spatial reorganisation of the village. The state, acting as caretaker, rented out these empty properties very cheaply, most of which were taken up by Roma families from Săsești or nearby villages. This scheme led to a gradual division of village space by ethnicity, as the incoming Roma families mostly settled in the eastern half of the village, near to the traditionally Roma neighbourhood. In response, and stimulated by widespread anti-Roma attitudes, Romanians and the handful of remaining Saxon families clustered in the western half, towards the traditionally Romanian neighbourhood. This spatial division was marked by visible economic disparities, with wealth concentrated in the latter zone, in turn leading many Romanians and Saxons to further decry the run-down quality of the eastern half of the village as a reflection of "gypsy" moral character and avoid the area altogether.

Post-socialist economic transformations did not serve the village well. The state farms were privatised at the turn of the century and because their success had depended on heavy subsidisation they were broken up and sold off in fragments (Verdery 2003). No new major site of employment arrived to fill this gap. Many villagers fell back onto subsistence gardening, with produce occasionally sold to neighbours, supplemented by casual wage work in the logging industry or trades for men, or in local shops, the town hall or occasional

hospitality work for women. Wealth was concentrated among those with senior positions in the state bureaucracy, both elected and administrative, who had privileged access to resources and networks of power, and those who held the contracts for exploitation of the extensive state-owned pastures and forests. The latter became the major employers, although on a predominantly informal basis. The majority of younger people, particularly those with further or higher education, emigrated to the cities or abroad in search of stable and comfortable jobs, taking advantage of Romania's entry into the EU and the corresponding removal of travel restrictions. Of those who remained, some commuted to Sighișoara for office or retail work (but this necessitated one's own car, in the absence of public transport—a significant expense relative to average wages). Many other villagers took on seasonal labour migration to Italy, Spain or Germany (Hartman 2008).

While social welfare schemes were available, these were very negatively morally marked for Romanians and Saxons due to their association with, firstly, dependency and, secondly, the Communist regime (Thelen et al. 2011). That Roma were the main recipients further stimulated negative judgements. In order to qualify for welfare payments, recipients were required to undertake set hours of labour for the town hall, mostly directed towards the maintenance of public spaces. Such maintenance had previously been undertaken by neighbourhood associations (German: *Nachbarschaften*, Romanian: *vecinătăți*) on an organised, voluntary basis, but these associations had collapsed following the post-1989 demographic upheaval and waves of emigration. This organisation of welfare further entrenched ethnic divisions, with Roma effectively obliged to labour in the service of Saxon-cum-Romanian visions of village space.

Within this village context, the "young liberals," my primary ethnographic subjects, hold a particular position. As a group in Săsești, they are both small and marginal. But when considered from a wider perspective, beyond the bounds of a single village, they are, I argue, representative of a distinctive subject position that is in the process of consolidation throughout the Transylvanian countryside. One might, following Bourdieu (e.g. 1985), be tempted to call them a "class," although I leave this conceptually fraught term aside. In comparison to the emerging field of studies of the global middle classes in anthropology (e.g. Gewertz and Errington 1999; Heiman et al. 2012; Fehérváry 2013), what I want to stress here is not consumption (the main marker through which "middle class" identity has been explored) but a particular ethical and political orientation that is of course linked to issues of status differentiation but is not reducible to this, and in some dimensions aspired to erase such

difference relative to a vision of the common good. Regardless of how one categorises the group, the social and generational dynamics I describe here are found more widely throughout the Târnava Mare region, and across Romania more generally, although the extent to which such a subject position is a permanent fixture in the rural environment depends substantially on the presence of rural development and similar schemes.

The immediate circle of friends in Săsești around Ana, whom we met earlier, comprised three couples (one of whom was a native of or had family connections to the village in each case), along with several of their single siblings and school-friends. The group ranged in age from late twenties to mid-thirties, and all were in the process of setting up independent households. As I have noted, what united them, beyond personal friendships, was their commitment to a vision of rural revitalisation stitched through with liberal values. This set of commitments and values emerged from engagement with two primary sites: The Anglo-Romanian rural development programmes that I describe in chapter one, and the post-socialist Romanian liberal intelligentsia. This engagement, while shaped by a degree of contingency, owed in significant part to the group's family backgrounds and upbringings, which—while having their own individual idiosyncrasies—were nevertheless marked by a common pattern. I will address this first before returning to the development programmes and the intelligentsia.

Common to all of the group (or at least those from Săsești, although incoming spouses shared similar ancestry) was a background in families who had held a particularly "respectable" status within village hierarchies of value in the pre-communist period. Respect, in the dominant reckoning of the time, was accorded to labour above all, and especially the material demonstration of its success in property, from well-tended land and bountiful harvests through fertile flocks and large houses (Verdery 2003; Kligman and Verdery 2011). This value was shared by both Saxons and Romanians (although Romanian transhumant pastoralists and Roma were more ambivalent to these effectively "peasant" values of labour; see Engebrigtsen 2007; Stewart and Stan 2009). To take one example, the great-grandparents of Liviu, a young man whom we shall meet in chapter three, were prosperous farmers, and the first and only Romanian family to own a house in a Saxon neighbourhood prior to the Communists' enforced in-migration. With the coming of the Communist party, however, they were branded as *chiaburi*, rich peasants and therefore class enemies (the Russian *kulak*), and the majority of their property was seized. This bred particularly strong resentments against the Communist system and Party, which were passed on to Ana and Liviu's generation. The

latter only experienced communism as young children before its collapse, and their attitudes were strongly shaped by those of their parents and other relatives, whose vehemence was given full expression in the wake of the 1989 revolution and the anti-communist discursive shift that this stimulated.

Beyond anti-communism, the young liberal generation were also shaped by their families' values and socio-economic position in other ways. Notable was the uniform emphasis placed on higher education as a means to a better life. Ana, Liviu and their peers were sent to the best schools in Sighișoara (and in one case to a private school in a nearby city), and then to university to study a range of topics, from foreign languages and journalism through engineering. This was made possible financially by two factors: The restitution of expropriated land to its pre-communist owners from the early-1990s onwards, favouring those who had historically had wealth (Verdery 2003), and the moderate professional success that the same families had managed to achieve during communism. This success was largely predicated on professional skill and labour, in trades such as agronomy or electrical engineering, rather than the acquisition of power and networks in Communist Party hierarchies, from which such people of "unhealthy" class backgrounds were excluded or they themselves actively boycotted. Nevertheless, this success continued to accrue respect in village circles, such that the father of one of Ana and Liviu's close friends was elected mayor for a period in the 1990s.

Higher education, and a familiarity with foreign languages (English, German, French) through either schooling, the consumption of foreign cultural media such as MTV, and/or interaction with German-speaking Saxons in childhood, gave the young liberal generation greater opportunities for work abroad than their unskilled peers, for whom agricultural labour (usually informal) was the primary opportunity. The majority of the former had spent some time in Western Europe, including Italy, Germany, France and the United Kingdom, working jobs that nevertheless could not be called highly skilled, for example in restaurant kitchens. While they had appreciated the experience of living and working in industrialised liberal democracies, those who found themselves in Săsești in 2015, during my fieldwork, had chosen to return for a range of reasons, from attachment to their natal home to the cheaper cost of living in Romania compared to Western Europe.

This decision was strongly marked in comparison to the majority of their peers who chose to emigrate permanently—albeit with deeply ambivalent feelings in many cases (cf. Trandafoiu 2013). It was also a decision made possible due to the presence in the Târnava

Mare region of the conservation and rural development projects that I will be describing in some detail, which had need of educated and multilingual locals to facilitate their work, especially in the earlier stages (from the late 1990s to the late 2000s) when the management was predominantly British. At one point or another, all of the young liberal generation in Săsești had worked for the NGOs implementing these schemes, whether as occasional translators and guides or salaried project workers. Initially, these were convenient high-skilled economic opportunities in a rural area with few such chances, undertaken by Ana, Liviu and others while living at home with relatives, before they had committed to buying their own properties and setting up permanent households in the area. But the engagement with development work was decisive in their decisions to stay. The core of this work was organised around an optimistic vision of a "prosperous" and "sustainable" future for the countryside: The kind of optimistic future-oriented vision that had gradually been evacuated from local social imaginaries, as deindustrialisation progressed with no alternative form of modernisation in sight (cf. Dzenovska 2018a). Moreover, in working with the (mostly British) development experts who were articulating and planning this future, the young Romanians were exposed to the epistemologies and forms of data through which such planning was drawn into meaningful relation with the specificity of the place: Its character, demographics and affordances. This exposure was key to making a long-term livelihood in Săsești seem feasible, if the envisioned future could be realised.

The exposure was also key to inculcating the young Romanians with a set of liberal values, particularly economically liberal values. As I discuss at greater length in chapter one, the Anglo-Romanian rural development and conservation programmes brought together integralist principles of holism with liberal and neoliberal economic ideas. The latter included a faith in small private enterprise as the route to "sustainable" (both economic and ecological) prosperity; a positive attitude towards privatisation of infrastructure insofar as this produced better services, in the absence of the state upholding its responsibility to maintain and improve infrastructures; and a willingness to commodify social relations (introducing payment for services) insofar as this facilitated the flow of money throughout the village. Associated political views included a commitment to the rule of law that would stabilise civic responsibilities and the economic environment.

This set of values, taken from the field of development, formed one half of the young Romanians' liberal inheritance. Their second major influence was the post-socialist Romanian liberal intelligentsia. This group of public intellectuals primarily comprised those

who had come closest to dissident status in the 1980s, such as the poet Mircea Dinescu and the "Păltiniș school" of philosophers, and who had secured significant status in the post-socialist era, in terms of intellectual authority, public recognition and in some cases material power, such as the directorship of the (ex-)state publishing house. As I noted earlier, these intellectuals organised themselves around liberal values of civil society, more or less strongly infused with nationalist emphases, whether out of choice or shrewdness (Verdery 1991, 1996; Haddock and Caraiani 1999). Political-economically, most were oriented to the centre-right, favouring privatisation of state industries or, at the extremes, libertarianism. Their significance to the higher-educated youth of Săsești, however, was moral. While development programmes could provide the technologies for economic revitalisation, their moral affordances were limited. Moreover, they provided few resources for guiding national regeneration. Neither Ana, Liviu nor their close friends were overly nationalist, tending towards cosmopolitan in both social position and identity. Yet concerns for the state of the nation were hard to avoid relative to the ongoing problematic of emigration, the majority of their peers having, from one perspective (but a widely recognised one), given up on Romania due to what they perceived as intractable problems of the culture and the political elites (Trandafoiu 2013).

What the liberal intelligentsia offered in response to such problems, and implicitly or explicitly marked against the impersonal political-economic and sociological imperatives of communism, was a committed humanism: Respect for individual lives and achievements; toleration and an interest in difference; and an emphasis on "dialogue" as balm for deep social divisions. This humanism was consumed by the young liberals of Săsești through books, television and the internet, often as a group, after dinner or an afternoon of work, in sometimes heated discussions around Ana and her husband George's kitchen table. The humanist outlook also fed into their engagements with tourism. Ana would often comment to me on the interest and inspiration she took from hearing the life stories of foreign and Romanian visitors to the village, understanding their struggles and successes. Telling her own story in return, about the difficulties of trying to create a life in the contemporary Romanian countryside, served to deepen the connection.

In summary, the identity of those who I intermittently refer to as the "young liberals" of the village emerged from the intersection of "respectable" family histories, by pre-communist village standards; higher education; liberal-humanist intellectual values; and rural development epistemologies. A recurrent theme that I explore throughout the thesis is their

marginality within the village. Nonetheless, the particular subject position they inhabit is of wider sociological occurrence, identifiable in other such groups on the margins of other villages. Indeed, much of their work in tourism and development fields was undertaken within trans-local networks of such people, intermittently coming together at conferences, festivals or artisanal markets, among other events. I explore some of these connections in the thesis.

This sociological situation has methodological implications for how I conducted fieldwork and how the thesis is organised. While topics of liberal politics, development and transnational connection (notably the Anglo-Romanian link) seem to call for a multi-sited ethnography (Marcus 1995; cf. Boyer and Howe 2016), I instead chose to follow Matei Candea's (2007, 2010) call to attend to "arbitrarily" bounded sites such as villages. The advantage of such a stance is to see how diverse ethnographic objects (be they people, concepts, material objects, etc.) are held together smoothly or fractiously in one place, rather than selecting one or two such objects and tracing their extension through global networks. This is a particularly astute stance for analysing forms of modernity as they coexist with other forms, or non- and anti-modernities (cf. Piot 1999).

Such an orientation seemed and seems important relative to the anthropology of Romania, which is a small field. The most comprehensive ethnographic studies of the Romanian countryside (in which forty-four percent of the population resides; Mihai 2015) do not go beyond the 1990s (Kideckel 1993; Kligman 1988; Verdery 2003), and therefore do not account for the recent changes wrought by globalisation and Romania's accession to the EU. Two valuable monographs dealing with the changes brought about by EU accession have been written by Stefan Dorondel (2016) and Katy Fox (2011), but the former is an ethnographically-grounded study in political ecology and the latter is limited by the power/resistance framework that many anthropologists would now agree is more constraining than enlightening (e.g. Laidlaw 2014).[8] This thesis is therefore partly an exercise in understanding the contemporary junctures of modernity in a particular Transylvanian setting and in a Romanian and European context.

I have also drawn on genealogical methods to situate the "experimental" identities (as Holmes terms them) being formulated in the Saxon villages in their intellectual milieu (cf. Collier 2011; Faubion 2014; Holmes 2000; Foucault 1984). This appears most substantially

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[8] For significant articles that complement Fox's monograph, see Roger (2014) and Iancu and Stroe (2016).

in chapters one and two, in relation to conservationist holisms and to tropes of Romanian modernity and its discontents. It is echoed in the later chapters through my references to Romanian intellectuals' writings. As I have observed, this intellectual discourse was present within my village fieldsite, consumed and debated by the young liberals. It strikes me as uncontroversial, therefore, that intellectual texts should be incorporated into my ethnographic analysis, treated (in a cautious way) as a kind of ethnographic informant in their own right that help to illuminate the dynamics of relationships in the Transylvanian countryside (cf. Larson 2013: 18-21).

Finally, I should comment on two significant absences in the thesis: Roma and Saxons. The ethnographic object of the thesis, as I have laid it out in this introduction, is liberalism in a European rural milieu. Certainly, the two aforementioned parties are far from irrelevant to this. The Saxons are the idealised yet absent subject of conservation, while Roma are, throughout Europe, a marginalised Other who challenge liberal discourses of toleration. The reasons for not pursuing an ethnography of these parties here are partly pragmatic and partly theoretical. As indicated above, Saxons formed a minimal presence in the village during my fieldwork. I attempted to interview several of the older generation who remained, but with a couple of exceptions my request was avoided, and of those who did speak to me one was almost completely unforthcoming. The group of young liberals did, however, include several people with direct or indirect Saxon ancestry, and questions of Saxon identity appeared in conversation relatively often. Those discussions certainly inform my thinking, but I have chosen here to focus less on ethnic/national identities than on cosmopolitan identity and the various tensions with which it is faced in the village environment.

Regarding Roma, as I describe above, the village was significantly divided along spatial lines. Apart from a handful of households that were generally recognised as Romanian,[9] the eastern half of the village was a largely separate social sphere: Poorer, more materially degraded, and with its own social rhythms. That is not to say there were no relations between residents of the two halves. Spaces of interaction included the small Pentecostal church in a renovated house, the town hall and post office where social welfare payments and corresponding work obligations were administered, and informal work

[9] The ethnic designation "Roma" or "gypsy" is ambiguous, because many "gypsies" (*ţigani*), as described by others, self-identify as Romanian for all bureaucratic or public purposes. Regardless of terminology, however, the socio-spatial division of the village was highly marked.

relations between Saxon and Romanian household farmers and labourers. Other ethnographers have documented these elsewhere in Transylvania better than I could.[10] The ethnography I present here is intended to complement these ethnographies of Roma life and village interrelations by attending in more detail to liberal subjects within a village environment, a neglected constituency. For the most part, the interrelations I focus on are particular flash-points that appeared during my fieldwork. Chapter three in particular looks at a conflict between liberals and shepherds, which also draws on questions of tolerance. This has analogies with and divergences from liberal-Roma relationships. I discuss this briefly at the start of the chapter in relation to moral panics of "gypsy theft."

OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

The argument of this thesis is twofold. Firstly, I suggest that common identifications of liberalism with an overbearing technocracy that completely subordinates society to its power dynamic, whether directly or indirectly, through the "colonisation of consciousness," are unhelpful. Instead, I show how a commitment to technocratic ideals can be a significant part of liberal identity, but one that is closely connected to liberals' appreciations of their own political and social milieu; technocracy's constituent place in liberalism can be as an object of hope in its absence. Secondly, I argue after Anderson (2016) that stereotypes of liberalism as a purely rational, abstracted mode of thought and politics obscures the ways in which liberalism can be and has been closely entwined with romantic, integralist and aesthetic considerations. This entanglement of principles is one dimension of my titular reference to liberalism and its "others."

Chapter one analyses historically how a specific assemblage of liberal and non-liberal principles came to organise conservation and rural development in the Saxon villages. The chapter traces how a British organisation supporting dissident intellectuals and intellectual liberty in socialist Romania, the Mihai Eminescu Trust (MET), was transformed into a vehicle for the conservation of Saxon architectural heritage. The architectural conservationist programme was predicated on a conceptualisation of the Saxon villages as expressive of a natural harmony—what I term, after historian of science Chunglin Kwa, a "romantic holism"—that formed the basis of an integralist and anti-modernist conservation ethos, motivated by a desire for proximity to nature. Conservation was to be achieved through a

[10] On Pentecostalism, see Fosztó (2010), on social welfare see Thelen et al. (2011) and Dorondel and Popa (2014), and on informal work relations see Engebrigtsen (2007; cf. Stewart 1997).

politically and economically liberal programme of rural development, in which state regulation took a back foot to the growth of small private enterprise that capitalised on the inherent value (primarily but not exclusively touristic value) of the traditional Saxon built environment. The chapter then turns to how another Anglo-Romanian organisation, Fundația ADEPT, took up the Trust's romantic premises of conservation, but with a focus on a different object: The highly biodiverse local ecology, rather than architecture. Like the architectural conservationists, ADEPT's ecological epistemology was holistic, but a "baroque" holism that attended to the gaps and limits of ecology and human maps of this, rather than a neat and complete romantic whole. To meet the challenges of conserving this baroque whole, ADEPT mobilised a more complex programme of conservation and development, incorporating a wider set of liberal and neoliberal technologies of governance that acknowledged the need to shape local actors' behaviours (for example, through monetary incentives) in order to conserve the anthropogenic ecology. The various principles and governmental forms—integralist, liberal and neoliberal—articulated by the Anglo-Romanian organisations, while having their own internal tensions, provided a unique set of affordances for the political and ethical projects of actors in the Transylvanian countryside, seized upon by the young liberals. Despite the innovative nature of these projects, recognised at a national and European level, their success was not wholly due to their content. In the final part of the chapter, I look at a set of debates over the proposed creation of a Dracula theme park near Sighișoara. This provides an opportunity to explore the national political discourses that have framed tourism and conservation, notably discourses of "cultural intimacy," but also to see how the influence of British actors has in some dimensions been a matter of geopolitical power rather than simply the professional success of their programmes.

Chapter one also introduces the terminology that gives the thesis its title. While I use the concepts of "romantic" and "baroque" holisms to describe the MET's and ADEPT's epistemologies and objects of conservation (village built form and ecology) respectively, I also borrow the metaphor of baroque holism to characterise the lived form of liberalism that is documented ethnographically in this thesis. This is a move against the analytical reductions of liberalism to a unitary governmental form—a creeping, holistic form of influence that encompasses and reconfigures everything it touches in its own image. An attention to the "baroque" qualities of actually-existing liberalism is an attention to how liberalism exists as both governmental programmes and personal ethics; to how both of these come up against knotty points of social and material resistance, preventing their smooth unfolding; to how

surprise and bafflement—moments of inscrutability—are as characteristic of lived liberalism as epistemological self-confidence.

The second chapter looks at such moments of resistance and inscrutability in the young liberals' attempts to realise their vision of rural revitalisation. This long chapter is divided into two parts. The first begins from the state's failure to realise a modern yet locally-sensitive infrastructure in the rural environment, and explores liberal attempts to organise civil alternatives by means of public dialogue that would facilitate democratic and expertise-based solutions to local problems. The ethnography in this part further illustrates desires for technocracy in its absence, while also providing a lens onto the intellectual roots of liberal practices. I analyse "dialogue" as a liberal language ideology, and explore its connection with a set of historical discourses that posit Romanian modernity as a "form without substance," persistently unrealised. While dialogue was perceived as a response to the disjointed absurdities of state-led modernisation, the attempt to realise dialogue was equally plagued by frustrating and absurd dynamics of public discourse, from the liberals' perspective. In fact, the rhetorics of debate often served simply to marginalise and isolate the liberals within the village. I return to this marginality and how it is (re)produced throughout the thesis. This social differentiation is the second element of my titular reference to liberalism and otherness.

The second part of chapter two further explores social divisions through an analysis of liberal responses to poor participation in new economic activities such as tourism. After an initial burst of optimism, by the mid-2010s most villagers had withdrawn from participation, leaving the notionally community-led development at an impasse. Liberals saw this as indicative of a closed "mentality" and a characteristic lack of creative and entrepreneurial initiative—liberal subjectivity—in the Romanian public sphere, which was dominated by negativism and conformity, legacies of the country's "traditional" and "communist" history. Given the persistence of such "mentalities" despite appeals to reason (as in dialogue) or economic interest, liberals invested faith in the revelatory power of Romania's natural and cultural beauty to cut through veils of negativism and release the creative and optimistic subjects beneath. This is not specific to Romania. While liberalism has commonly been thought of as an ideology of rationalism, appeals to the romantic have figured prominently in core liberal debates for several centuries, as I discuss. Nevertheless, the channeling of this through discourses of cultural intimacy produces a different texture than is found in the reflections of classical liberal intellectual figures such as J.S. Mill.

In the third chapter, a dispute over the presence of aggressive sheepdogs on the landscape provides a lens onto the political economic changes wrought by conservationism and Romania's accession to the EU, as well as further dynamics of public debate and liberals' marginalisation. I begin with a brief ethnography of liberals' relationship to their own domestic dogs, marked by care and affection. I argue that this differed more in degree than in kind from their co-villagers, but one of the major differences was a sceptical and tolerant rejection of moral panics about "gypsy theft" on which others' more utilitarian stance towards dogs as guards rested. I then trace how the introduction of neoliberal subsidisation schemes into the agricultural economy created a problematic boom in sheep farming (a "chaos," to echo Grasseni and Holmes), leading to fraught debates about the moral character and individual responsibility of shepherds. Attempts to allocate responsibility with clarity and sincerity stumbled once again against rhetorical practices mobilised by shepherds to protect their interests and challenge what they saw as unjust distributions of power. While these rhetorics challenged the place of liberals and their tourist clients on the landscape, they were themselves responses to shepherds' own marginalisation at the hands of the state in regard to issues of cultural intimacy. Liberal reactions to shepherds' rhetorics also displayed some of the limits of tolerance.

In chapter four, I return to questions of technocracy and anti-communism through an ethnography of accounting practices in a small business in the village. In late 2014 and early 2015, the National Agency for Fiscal Administration began a programme of legal reforms and an "assault" of investigations and sanctions against small and medium businesses that sought to improve their tax compliance. I look at how a programme that was ostensibly declared to improve efficiency and proceduralism in fact created an unmanageable situation of over-formalisation for businesses, contributing to perceptions of Romanian modernity as "form without substance." This was in large part an effect of temporalities of national governance that favoured the passage of "emergency" legislation for political ends, enacted with little consultation. The legal mess that resulted was a particularly significant instance of the absence of expertise that made technocracy so symbolically desirable to liberal citizens. Both the form of politics and the attack on private enterprise led these citizens to characterise contemporary national governance as "communist," and position their own identity as anti-communist.

To conclude, I draw out some of the themes that bear further exploration for a distinctive anthropology of liberalism. I suggest that the anthropology of Christianity may

provide a good model for this endeavour, but attend most closely to the importance of the overlap between romanticism and liberalism for this project, against conventional assessments of liberalism as marked purely by rationality and formality.

CHAPTER ONE

THE ROMANTIC AND THE BAROQUE: SAXON VILLAGE CHARACTER

INTRODUCTION

In the introductory chapter, I followed Douglas Holmes in asserting that identity projects in contemporary Europe are fusing liberal and non-liberal, technical and integralist, registers in new ways. This chapter analyses how a particular composite of liberal and non-liberal principles came to organise conservation and rural development in the Saxon villages, at the intersection of European institutions, transnational comparisons, material cultures and local ecologies. This composite, incorporating liberal, integralist and neoliberal principles and forms, served as a primary resource for liberal identities.

The first two parts of the chapter trace the history and intellectual genealogy of two Anglo-Romanian organisations, the Mihai Eminescu Trust and the ADEPT Foundation. In the first part, I show how the Trust's initial purpose as an organisation supporting intellectual freedom under socialism became repurposed under an architectural conservationist agenda in the 1990s. This agenda, based on a romantic imaginary of the Saxon villages as integrated wholes, incorporated a classic cultural pluralism, but avoided the strong exclusionary potentials of this by appealing to values grounded in nature rather than culture. Yet such an appeal to nature ironically limited the Trust's ability to recruit parties with different values to their programme. In the second part, I trace how ADEPT reconceptualised the Saxon village landscape in terms of a more "translatable" holism. Ecologists and lobbyists mobilised national comparisons and transnational scientific standards in order to shift the frame of value through which the Transylvanian countryside was understood, making this recognisable within wider European frameworks. By bringing the landscape into conversation with emerging concepts of "High Nature Value" agriculture and drawing on a neoliberal, economistic language of "socio-ecological services," value was made to speak to a wider range of publics, from farmers to policymakers.

This fusion of political and economic liberalism, integralism and neoliberalism was the product of a post-Maastricht Treaty milieu and a space of transnational Anglo-Romanian relations. In the third and final part of the chapter, I look at how Saxon conservationism intersected with post-socialist Romanian politics in the case of a proposed Dracula theme

park. This incident introduces some dimensions of Romanian national political debate that have structured the form and dilemmas of liberal identity and practice in Romania, including cultural intimacy and some antagonistic qualities of the public sphere. It also introduces an alternative dimension of British involvement in the Saxon region, demonstrating how the conservationist agenda was successfully established not just through the efficacy and propinquity of the schemes proposed, but also through leveraging geopolitical influence.

I.

FROM SOCIALIST PLANNING TO EUROPEAN PATRIMONY

In the 1990s, while most representations of Romania on the world stage were concerned with orphanages and stray dogs, the Anglo-Romanian Mihai Eminescu Trust (MET) departed from the common humanitarian discourse to publicise a different cause: *The Plight of the Saxons of Transylvania and their Fortified Churches*, as a small booklet published by the Trust was titled (Blacker 1997). This cause, predominantly concerned with the architectural heritage of a small German diaspora, was rather distant from the circumstances in which the Trust had been founded. The MET had been established in the late 1980s by the artist and writer Jessica Douglas-Home as a British-based organisation to support intellectual dissidence against the communist regime in Romania.

The model for the Trust was the Jan Hus Educational Foundation, an organisation founded at Balliol College, Oxford whose aim was to assist in the organisation of open intellectual discussion in Czechoslovakia. This liberal mission had been initiated at the invitation of Czechoslovak scholars who felt the gains of the Prague Spring were being lost again (Day 1999).[1] The Foundation was run by academics of various political persuasions: "[I]n the West, from French ex-communists through British Labour to traditional

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[1] Following a clampdown on intellectual activity by the Czechoslovakian Communist regime in 1970, a group of marginalised Czechoslovak intellectuals began to hold "home seminars" in which non-approved philosophical topics could be discussed freely. Over time, these seminars expanded and became a key site in the development of the civil rights movement that culminated with the Charter 77 petition. Aware of their limited resources relative to growing interest, in the late seventies the organisers extended invitations to a number of German, British and American universities, of whom only scholars from Oxford replied. The Jan Hus Foundation was the result, the aims of which were to organise intellectual exchanges with the home seminars, provide material support for intellectual activities (inaccessible books, writing and publishing supplies) and, more illicitly, smuggle *samizdat* publications out of the country (Day 1999). For critical anthropological discussions of the way that dissidents represented freedom and unfreedom in Soviet life, and some of the limits of this relative to "normal" citizens' conceptions of their own lives, see Yurchak (2005) and Oushakine (2001).

conservatives; in Czechoslovakia, from those who later joined the Czech Social Democratic Party through to those who were to play a future role in right wing Czech and Slovak political movements… What they shared was a belief in education: in learning how to act as a free individual in accordance with one's conscience" (Day 1999: 1). This ethos was shaped as much if not more by the Czechoslovakian dissidents' conceptualisation of and desire for a "parallel" or "independent" society vis-a-vis the Communist state (Benda et al. 1988) as it was by British liberal values. The Foundation was an unaffiliated entity, relying on donations to support its activity, independent from Oxford and from the British state; indeed, the Foreign Office considered their support for dissidents a potential nuisance (Douglas-Home 2000: 40-1).

Douglas-Home joined the Foundation in the early 1980s, taking on the organisation of artistic matters (Douglas-Home 2000). Her interest in Czechoslovakia stemmed from 1968, when her husband, the journalist Charles Douglas-Home (editor of *The Times* newspaper from 1981 until his death in 1985), was arrested while on a visit and thrown out of the country. Throughout the 1980s she participated in extending similar schemes to Poland and Hungary, and in 1987 decided to attempt a further scheme in Romania; what became known as the Mihai Eminescu Trust, named after the Romanian national poet. For a number of reasons, the MET's activity was severely curbed in comparison to its older siblings. For one thing, external support was less forthcoming. Romania held a relatively higher degree of respect among Western countries due to its independence from Moscow, leading many politicians and academics to turn a blind eye to the obvious internal difficulties in the country. On the other hand, those who did know the country were more pessimistic about the chances of such an organisation to create anything other than trouble. Not only was there no organised dissidence to speak of (Deletant 1995), but the ferocity of the *securitate*, the secret police, made the chance of organising seminars null (Douglas-Home 2000: 133). *Samizdat* was inexistent (Pleșu 1995: 68-9), a fact not unrelated to the legal requirement to register every typewriter with the *securitate*. Furthermore, the whole field of intellectual debate was coopted by the resurgence of nationalist concerns (Verdery 1991).

In this environment, there was little that the MET could do. As a result, a large part of their work simply involved demonstrating that certain semi-dissident figures were subjects of Western attention, in order to protect them from excessive repression by the secret police. Nevertheless, Douglas-Home played a significant part in one major political intervention.

THE RATIONAL AND THE INTEGRAL

Per Ronnas has divided postwar development in socialist Romania into two stages. The first, from the late 1940s until the mid-sixties, was focused on the creation of an "industrial and agricultural base on which to build an advanced socialist society," while the second, from the 1960s onwards, attempted a more balanced regional and sectoral development, in the name of a "multi-laterally developed socialist society" (Ronnas 1982: 146). Beginning in the early seventies, the Romanian Communist Party government had developed plans for the rationalisation of Romanian urban geography, in which "socioeconomic differences between the rural and the urban" would be diminished (Ronnas 1982: 149). This was to be achieved through a scheme of socialist planning known as *sistematizare* (systematisation), in which "irrational" settlements would be "phased out." These settlements were largely rural villages, the residents of which were to be relocated to existing and new urban centres, designed to maximise industrial production and increase the efficiency of the agricultural sector (Sampson 1984; Turnock 1991). For the first decade and a half, the euphemistic 'phasing out' was mostly deferred, at worst resulting in restrictions on new construction and the withdrawal of services from the least favoured villages. Then, in 1988, Ceaușescu unexpectedly announced a revised schedule in which up to 8,000 villages would be phased out by the year 2000 (Ronnas 1989). The aim was to "ensure a harmonious development of the entire country" and achieve "a powerful homogenisation of our socialist society" in the image of the "new socialist man," modelled on the urban working class (Ceaușescu 1988, quoted in Ronnas 1989: 550; cf. Kligman 1998: 32-5).[2]

As news of these plans filtered into Western Europe, a number of actors mobilised with great urgency to campaign against the *sistematizare*. Their concerns were that "phasing out" meant, in effect, that those 8,000 settlements were at immediate risk of being "bulldozed," as campaigners frequently presented the matter. Moreover, it was believed that the increasingly nationalist government was unduly targeting the villages of ethnic minorities, especially Germans and Hungarians in Transylvania (although see Ronnas 1989: 548-9). This fear was stoked by the recent and ongoing demolition of large portions of Bucharest's old town in order to make way for a new civic centre, including the immense "House of the

[2] *Sistematizare* had in fact been an organising concept for urban planning and architecture in interwar Romania too, influenced by French modernists such as Tony Garnier (Machedon and Scoffham 1999: 78; see Rabinow 1989 on Garnier and his compatriots). This was oriented towards the production of garden cities however, rather than socialist urban society. On the earlier stages of urban planning in socialist Romania, see Miruna Stroe (2015).

People," an event that had already generated great discontent within and outside Romania (Giurescu 1990; Light and Young 2013). In Belgium, a campaign was created under the name *Opération Villages Roumains*, through which was organised a scheme for Western European towns and villages to "adopt" a threatened village, as a means to publicise the *sistematizare* and elicit international condemnation (Deletant 1995: 313-16). The Mihai Eminescu Trust assisted in extending this scheme to the United Kingdom (Douglas-Home 2000: 184).

Against this backdrop, Charles, the Prince of Wales, made a speech in 1989 that contained an unprecedented criticism of a Communist government by a member of a Royal Family. Prince Charles had become concerned about the scale of oppression under the Ceaușescu regime after reading the dissident secret police General Ion Pacepa's 1987 book *Red Horizons*. The writer Laurens van der Post had given the Prince an article on totalitarianism by Douglas-Home, and she was recruited to assist in drafting a speech that addressed developments in Romania (Douglas-Home 2000: 194-6, 199). Douglas-Home notes in her memoir that, "Anything overtly political was, for a member of the Royal family, out of bounds. On the other hand, anything connected to architecture would be acceptable" (2000: 196). While the cultural pretensions of architecture served to depoliticise an avowedly political intent, the architectural discourse deployed was no mere smokescreen. Rather, it manifested an anti-technical register of integralism, a set of "postulates about the essence of human nature and the character of cultural affinity and difference that can potentially imbue fervent political yearnings and foreshadow a distinctive political economy" (Holmes 2000: 7).

Holmes traces a genealogy of European integralism that begins with Counter-Enlightenment figures such as Johann Gottfried Herder and "assumed its most sophisticated manifestation within the artistic triumphs of romanticism and most malevolent expression in the politics of fascism" (2000: 8). Borrowing from Isaiah Berlin (1976), Holmes identifies three core principles to integralism: Populism, "the belief in the value of belonging to a group or a culture" (Berlin 1976: 153); expressionism, the idea that people's activity is an expression of their individual or group's personality or character; and pluralism, the belief in the incommensurability yet equal value of different cultures and societies (Holmes 2000: 6-7). To these, Holmes adds a principle of alienation, which integralists diagnose as a matter of "cultural rather than socioeconomic forms of estrangement" (2000: 5). For this, they blame the "modernist science of solidarity" and "the dogmas of leftist intellectualism… that

scientific knowledge and technological advances would bring happiness," the failures of which have "imperil[ed] their sense of social order and cultural coherence" (2000: 69).

Variations on these themes were identifiable in the Prince's speech, delivered to an "unsuspecting audience" at the opening of the Civic Trust's Build a Better Britain exhibition in Islington on April 27th (Douglas-Home 2000: 199). After an innocuous introduction, the Prince shifted tack to directly condemn the plans for systematisation in Romania. While the topic seemed a wide digression from the context of the event, it fitted neatly within a critique of urban planning and architectural modernism in Britain that the Prince had been developing for some time (e.g. HRH The Prince of Wales 1989b). He described systematisation as "a repetition of failed 1960s social engineering, mixed with the atmosphere of George Orwell's '1984'," adding that "we in this country are painfully aware of the trauma caused by uprooting traditional communities at the behest of 'benevolent,' know-all planners" (HRH The Prince of Wales 1989a). Instead, he argued, it was necessary to build in ways that would create "a true sense of community and, above all, of belonging," something that could not be achieved with generic styles and materials but was, conversely, inherent in local, rooted traditions such as those found in Romania. The Prince stressed that

> the extraordinary cultural diversity of Romania is not only part of her natural wealth but a possession of inestimable value to all of humanity. It is difficult, I find, to remain silent as the peasant traditions and ancient buildings of a fellow European society are bulldozed to make way for a uniform and deathly mock-modernity. (1989a)

The highlighting of "peasant tradition" was not arbitrary, for this stood as the pure antithesis of modern alienation. The Prince concluded by quoting from an open letter by Romanian architect and dissident Doina Cornea:

> We call on you to stop the demolition of the country's villages. Driving people from their ancestral settlements where they have a purpose, where they have houses built to meet the needs of life and labour, is a sacrilege. The peasant house is identified with the soul of its builder. By striking at the peasant house, by replacing it with a poky flat in a tower-block, you strike not only at the soul of the people but also at the patrimony which belongs to all mankind. (Cornea, quoted in HRH The Prince of Wales 1989a)

The Romanian village was here identified with the provision of substantive human needs. While this was opposed to the limited capacity of modernist dwellings, it is interesting to note that this quality of the village was already being promoted by Marxist sociologists and in Bucharest's Village Museum in the 1950s, in a way that echoed ideological shifts in socialist architectural planning from the scale of individual dwellings to integrated neighbourhoods (*microraion*) that were similarly organised around the provision of substantive needs (Maxim 2017). By the 1980s, socialist urban construction was notorious for its flaws however, the most notable being apartment blocks built without any plumbing, forcing residents to trek down many flights of stairs and then haul buckets of water back up to their homes. Yet Cornea also enacts a symbolic break from socialist appropriations of the village in her insistence on soul and ancestry as inalienably connecting particular people to particular places. The Prince too hinted at such values of rootedness, observing that his own interest was more than passing, for his Hungarian great, great, great grandmother's tomb rests in the Transylvanian village of Sângeorgiu de Pădure, one of the settlements scheduled for "bulldozing."

The integralism described here was not necessarily typical of all the opponents of systematisation, but it proved significant in the post-socialist transformations of the MET, to which we now turn.

A MODEL FOR ANTI-MODERNISM

After the revolution of 1989, support for dissidence was no longer necessary and the MET's primary purpose became redundant. With restrictions on foreigners' movements raised, Douglas-Home travelled extensively through the Saxon region of Transylvania for the first time in the early nineties. In the village of Viscri, she connected with Caroline Fernolend, a Saxon and a proactive representative of the village on the commune's local council. Fernolend alerted her to the mass abandonment of villages as Saxons emigrated to Germany, a cause which spoke to Douglas-Home so deeply that she repurposed the MET as a trust for the conservation of Saxon heritage (Douglas-Home 2008). She described this cause in a 1999 article for *The Times*:

> Over the centuries, [the Saxons] built an extraordinary culture, expressed partly through architecture and later through a Lutheran work ethic. Their 500 or so villages are unspoilt examples of medieval structure and design, with beautiful artisans' cottages

> and richly stuccoed merchants' houses. Almost every village has its fortified church, many of whose interiors contain works of art which can be set beside anything of the Italian Renaissance. The Saxon schools and farming practices became the most respected in Romania. Today these villages have fallen into penury. The buildings lie empty. The churches are without vergers. Gypsies have moved in. Of the 500,000 Saxons at the turn of the century, only 15,000 remain. (Douglas-Home 1999)

The emphasis placed on culture and cultural expressionism echoes the values of both the intellectual dissidence networks and the Prince's integralism. The collapse of socialism facilitated a number of shifts in emphasis, however. First among these is the transformation of threat. While saved from the totalitarian threat of "bulldozing," the Saxon villages were now at risk not simply from abandonment but from a more intimate problem of moral character among the remaining and new residents. The second shift was from a negative to a positive register of anti-modernism. Earlier assertions of the value of rural life had been articulated against the spectre of totalitarian modernism. But with the latter gone, the new space of liberty in Romania allowed Douglas-Home and others to explore in more detail the character and history of village life. What they discovered in the Saxon villages was a model that could provide an escape from the problems of modernity. I explore this in detail here, returning to moral character later on, for the conceptualisation of Saxon village character in terms of a "romantic holism" has significant implications for the way that social life has been figured in the post-socialist Saxon villages.

The foundational exposition of the villages as an object of conservation value appears in a report commissioned by the MET and the Prince of Wales (the latter of whom had visited Romania for the first time in 1998) and conducted by the British landscape architecture firm Kim Wilkie Associates, entitled *The Saxon Villages of Southern Transylvania, Romania: A Future for the Medieval Landscape* (Wilkie 2001). This document set out the "special character and value" of the landscape (2001: 3).

> Each village has its own distinctive character, but there is a certain unity that defines the 'Saxon-ness' of the villages: the fortified churches, the *tanzplätze* or dancing circles, the houses and barns, the streetscape, the exemplary harmony between man and landscape and the centuries-old agricultural methods that survive to this day. (Wilkie 2001: 12)

The notion of character in architecture has taken a wide range of meanings, from its origins in the eighteenth century (Forty 2000: 120-31) to contemporary heritage conservation (Yarrow forthcoming). Perhaps due to an ambiguity of definition, the concept has slipped in and out of favour, but was revitalised in the mid-twentieth century "with the wave of interest in traditional towns and reactions against Modernist planning" (Kropf 1996: 247-8; e.g. Cullen 1961). Its use by anti-modernist champions of the Saxon villages draws relatively directly from the two dominant conceptions that emerged in 18th century architectural discourse. The first is that of German Romanticism, namely Goethe's extension into the realm of architecture of Herder's theory that language expresses national or collective being, an idea subsequently developed in the anglophone world by John Ruskin (Forty 2000: 75-7, 128-9). The second belongs to the classicism against which romanticism was a reaction, specifically discussions about whether "the themes expressed by architecture might… be drawn from the experience of nature" (2000: 123). For various writers, architectural form should reflect nature, for the forms given in nature "excite particular ideas and sensations" without the need for skills of discernment (Whately 1770: 160, cited in Forty 2000: 124). Thus, "architecture might achieve a direct appeal to the spirit without mental reflection" (2000: 124). In this context, character provided a way of typologising form.

This grounding of character in nature can be seen in the discourse of "harmony," a quality which transcends Saxon culture, being an objective consequence of form and, especially, pattern. In his report, Wilkie stressed the "rare equanimity and balance between settlement, cultivation and nature" that the Saxons had created (2001: 1). Partly this was an effect of geography. "The steeply rolling topography has defined the pattern of development in each village, from the linear street pattern in Viscri to the trifurcate pattern in Roadeş" (Wilkie 2001: 11). But the harmony of form reached its zenith in the organisation of householding, integrating diverse cultivations in long, narrow strips that reached out into the countryside from the closely-packed village street.

> The houses also follow a clear pattern: they sit end-on to the street, painted in a rich variety of ochres, greens and blues, with distinctive hipped roofs. A stream typically runs down the street and pear trees are planted on either side. The houses themselves are built to a format, with their cobbled courtyards, winter and summer kitchens, vegetable patches and colossal timber frame barns enclosing the end of the courtyard.

> Behind the barns lie a further vegetable plot and an orchard, usually with a row of walnuts at the far end to act as a fire break and provide insect-free shelter from the sun. Arable and pasture land extends from the back of the villages up to woodland, which in most cases crowns the high ground. As in much of medieval Europe, the egalitarian Saxon communities divided their arable land into strips. A family might own a number of separate strips, some distance apart from each other, on which different crops could be grown, depending on the lie of the land and the soil quality. (2001: 11)

The values of community, kinship and subsistence that Prince Charles had attributed to Romania in 1989 were here given more specific definition.

> The crisis in European agriculture and the plight of rural settlement makes the harmonious balance of the Transylvanian countryside seem like a forgotten Arcadia. The way of life has a natural rhythm and relation to the land that has been lost in fully industrialised countries. There is a hope that Transylvania could hold the key to a more sustainable and integrated agricultural and social economy by leap-frogging the mistakes of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and showing the way to a saner twenty-first century. (2001: 15)

The reference to “full” industrialisation points in two directions. On the one hand, to the idea of an inescapability of industrial modernity and its trappings, which can therefore only be escaped by looking elsewhere, and on the other hand an implicit social evolutionism, evident also in the idea of an alternative historical path. This rested on a conception of Transylvania as existing not just in the past but in a space and time apart from the rest of Europe. This is detailed in the next section, before returning to our analysis of the MET’s conceptualisation of the social and material form of the villages. My aim in these sections is to demonstrate a fundamental political shift in the MET’s concerns. Where the aims of the Trust during the Cold War, like the Jan Hus Foundation, were concerned with liberal values of intellectual freedom, the post-socialist Trust was characterised by romantic, integralist values with a distinctly illiberal texture.

CARPATHIAN BLISS

Mathilde Verschaeve and Hannah Wadle (2014) describe how, since 1989, Western Europeans have come to see large swathes of Eastern Europe as places that can stand in for their own (lost) rural past. The dynamics of this vary by region. The representation of the Saxon villages has its own set of literary tropes that can be traced especially to William Blacker, the author of the MET's first pamphlet about the Saxon villages, and the ecologist John Akeroyd, author of the first English-language guidebook to the area (Akeroyd 2006), whom we shall hear more of later. These tropes have been expanded and reinforced, in a "hall of mirrors" effect (Stasch 2011: 9), by anglophone travel journalists who have visited the area throughout the 2000s and 2010s. The result is a relatively coherent "chronotope of desire," as Rupert Stasch (2011) has termed the narrative orderings of space and time in tourism texts. This merits a brief summary, for it encapsulates nicely the desire for nature that underpins the value placed on the Saxon countryside. I draw liberally from a survey of books and journalism written since the late 1990s to produce a synthetic picture.[3]

For anglophone writers, Transylvania is a region outside normal time and space. It is a place unchanged for centuries, untouched by history, where the same daily routines of village life and farming have been repeated day in, day out. In regard to the Saxon villages, this is structured in terms of an originary myth: The Saxons arrived in the 12th century, emigrants from medieval Western Europe, and for eight centuries they continued to reproduce their culture broadly as it was when they arrived. Life and landscape are "unspoiled" by modernity. Accentuating the impression of a place outside normal time and space are the wide range of descriptors for the region drawn from spiritual language ("a dream," "ethereal," "magical," "fairytale"), religious language ("heaven," "paradise") and the language of romantic movements ("Arcadia," "bucolic," "idyll"). It is nevertheless seen as a fragile existence, vulnerable to the ravages of modernity.[4]

Despite its quality of apart-ness, the region is frequently compared to historical England, indexing a nostalgia for a lost English countryside on the part of the writers.[5] The

[3] This survey was limited to British journalism, primarily newspaper travel writing, about Transylvania. Most articles concerned the Saxon villages, but some referred to other areas such as Maramureș. I include them because as ecotourism has developed throughout Transylvania the larger regional entity has come to absorb tropes that originated in regard to more specific sub-regions. A list of the sources is given in the Appendix.

[4] Fabian (1983) provides the classic anthropological critique of such "denials of coevalness."

[5] This comparison emerged more strongly from the work of the nature conservationists discussed in the second half of this chapter.

particular time period in English history varies, although it is most frequently cited as the 18th century; what is most important is that it is pre-enclosure and pre-industrial. Both of these features are closely tied to what appears to be the paramount value structuring tourist expectations: The desire for an unmediated experience of nature. This can be clearly seen in four recurrent motifs. Two of these are everyday practices that hold a particular fascination for travellers and are invariably commented upon. The first is that hosts grow and raise their food by hand, with the writer often observing that they had seen their dinner alive earlier that same day. The second is the use of manual tools for work, particularly scythes. In both cases, the presumption is that market exchange, supply chains and industrial tools mediate one's experience of and therefore distance one from nature. A third motif is the constant co-presence of humans and domestic animals in the home and the village. One particular animal stands out here, namely the cow. In traditional Saxon villages, it is reported, each household owns one or two cows who are taken out in a common herd during the daytime. The cows recognise their own household, and when they return from the fields in the evening will walk themselves to their respective gates where they are met by their owners. This spectacle—which continues in a limited form in the present—entrances visitors, arguably because it displays an unexpected intelligence and autonomy within even the most domesticated of animals. This subverts the trope that domestication dulls nature, at least in this place apart where humans and animals live in balance with one another. The final motif involves the traveller sitting or laying in a meadow, taking in the vibrant sights, sounds and smells of life until they feel that they have melted into nature itself. Thought is cleared to make way for direct sensory experience. This is also reflected in spiritual language that describes the landscape as producing a state of "meditative serenity" and "bliss."

Nostalgia also takes on a literary quality. Frequent comparisons are made between Transylvania and the rural world of Thomas Hardy's novels. Tolstoy is another point of comparison. This literary quality takes on further significance through the retrospective construction of a canon of Transylvanian literature in English, the authors of which are taken as examplars of how to experience the region. Patrick Leigh Fermor's (2004 [1986]) memoir of journeying on foot through the area in the 1930s, *Between the Woods and the Water*, stands as the archetype of romantic travel. Alongside this is the rediscovery and translation into English of the Transylvanian Hungarian count and statesman Miklos Bánffy's epic novel trilogy of aristocratic life before World War I, beginning with *They Were Counted* (1999 [1934]). The association of Transylvania with aristocracy is present too in Fermor, who spent

much time with the local nobility. This public association has been consolidated in the present by Prince Charles's enthusiasm for the area, but also through William Blacker's 2009 memoir *Along the Enchanted Way*. The memoir is a classic story of romantic travel and adventure, but reviewers also never fail to mention that Blacker is an 'old Etonian,' and the fact that he lived with peasants and gypsies for several years produces a particular fascination. More recently, Jaap Scholten (2016) published a well-received history-cum-biography of the old Transylvanian aristocracy, primarily focused on the Communist Party's expropriation of their property but also exploring in detail the memory and history of pre-socialist aristocratic life.[6]

In sum, the chronotope of Saxon Transylvania, as produced by English travel writers, indexes a desire to escape the alienating forces of modernity. This has long been recognised as a motivating force behind tourism (Frow 1991). Recent anthropological work has explored the dynamics of "primitivist" tourism, the desire to visit people perceived to be untouched by civilisation and globalisation (Stasch 2014, 2015), but the example at hand is a slightly different case. John Frow observes that modernity constructs as its other a mythology not only of "the primitive, the folk, the peasant, and the working class," "but also of the feudal and the postfeudal aristocracy and its high culture" (1991: 129). The feudal inflections of the Saxon chronotope point towards a desire not so much to encounter a Manichaean Other (Stasch 2014), utterly different, as to remove a particular historical baggage from the European self, the apparatus of modernity that mediates and distances one from nature. The Saxon villages provide an unalienated, integral domestic economy and an unmediated experience of nature.

A ROMANTIC WHOLE

While this travel literature highlights the close proximity to nature that can be found in the Saxon villages, "nature" is largely understood in terms of living or artefactual things, the non-human milieu. What is specific to the Wilkie report and the other architects of the MET's conservation programme is the assertion that the Saxon village's character itself provides a uniquely proximate access to nature, and that this is fundamentally a matter of form. The kinds of pattern that are found in the villages are not only secondary effects of geography, mere epiphenomena, but are an expression of Saxon culture that nevertheless transcend the "cultural" sphere of values through their harmonisation with the order of nature itself. This

[6] Scholten is the nephew of the Dutch ambassador to Romania from 1988 to 1993, Coen Stork, an active supporter of the same intellectual dissidents with whom the MET had engaged (see Strat 2013).

view is predicated on the conceptualisation of nature in terms of a "romantic holism." I borrow the term from historian of science Chunglin Kwa (2002), in his analysis of twentieth-century sciences of complexity. "Romantic," in Kwa's account, refers not to an aesthetic stance but to the unity and interconnectedness of all things. In short, romantic holism "is the idea that there are hierarchically different levels of organization in the natural world, each of which unites heterogeneous items of a lower level of integration into a functional whole" (2002: 24). The result is a system of neatly encompassing wholes, each with its own emergent properties.

Holism appears repeatedly in anglophone writings on the Saxon villages. Indeed, the MET's local development programme was named the "Whole Village Project." Partly, this was a more conventional allusion to community participation. But it is also the case that the value of the Saxon villages is predicated on their embodiment of a romantic holism. As Wilkie put it, "there is a certain unity that defines the 'Saxon-ness' of the villages" (2001: 12). And nor is it just the unity of the built environment, but the nesting of this unity in larger, natural unities such as the landscape. "In the end it is the typical as much as the unique that is significant in Transylvania. It is the consistent pattern of settlements in their landscape that is special, rather than individual flourishes" (Wilkie 2001: 1). The natural "balance" and "harmony" of the Saxon villages is more than just the proximity of human and non-human, it is an emergent quality of their form, which itself fits harmoniously into the encompassing order of the countryside.

Kwa notes that romantic holism (which of course has a several millenia-long history, dating in particular to Classical Greek philosophy) was reinvigorated among early twentieth-century theorists of complexity, especially in the biological sciences, who "reinvigorated romantic conceptions of nature through the notion of the complex unity of systems" (2002: 24). This view was given its clearest expression in studies of organisms and ecology. But it was also applied to a mystical level by the South African statesman and ecologist Jan Smuts, who argued that evolutionary processes resulted in successive degrees of unity, moving from cells and organisms up to personality and on to higher spiritual levels (Smuts 1927; cf. Anker 2001). The Prince of Wales's ideas on spirituality and the harmony between people and nature, as articulated in his book *Harmony: A New Way of Looking at Our World*, for example (H.R.H. The Prince of Wales et al. 2010), can be traced to Smuts via the mediating influence of Laurens van der Post—also the mediator between Douglas-Home and the Prince, one should remember—amidst a wealth of other New Age, ecological and philosophical

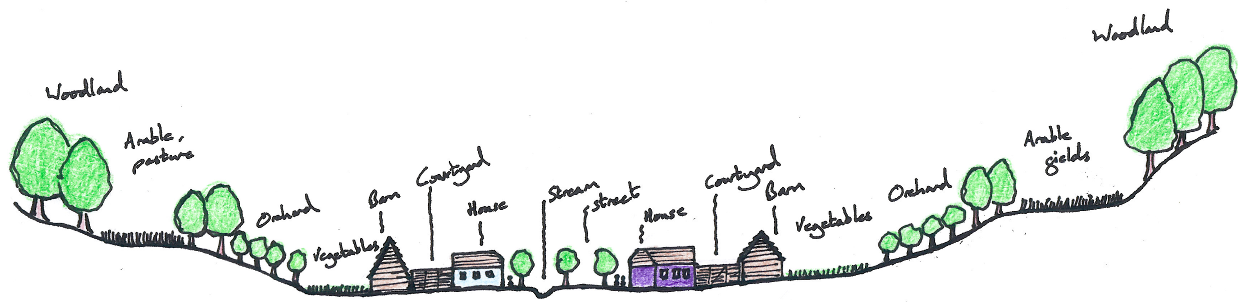

Figure 1. Cross-section of a typical Saxon village. Drawing by the author, after Wilkie (2001: 10).

influences (see Mayer 2015). These include the classical architectural theories of nature discussed above, the idea that beauty is an objective quality of natural order and patterning rather than a matter of subjective perception (cf. Forty 2000: 220-39). This, in conjunction with a romantic holism, shifts the value of the Saxon villages from an order of culture to an order of nature—the "harmony" they embody becomes a universally accessible quality. In the remainder of this section I look at the effects of romantic holism on representations of the social in the villages. This is followed in the next section by an exploration of the resulting exclusions.

Beyond spiritual ideas, depictions of the pattern of landholding are woven through with a matrix of social and moral ideas, as can be seen in Wilkie's long, evocative description, quoted above. These ideas are especially evident in an alternative representation of the landscape: as it is visually represented in the diagrammatic genre of the cross-section (fig.1). This diagram, versions of which appear in a number of specialist reports by architects and ecologists (e.g. Wilkie 2001: 10; Loos et al. 2016: 20), slices across a valley, showing two identical households standing opposite one another across the central stream and street of a village. As a cross-section, the diagram suggests multiple planes extending in parallel along the valley, repeating the same pattern of household units. This repetition of identical property holdings both demonstrates and realises graphically the moral principle of egalitarianism that is attributed to the Saxons. The more identical holdings, the stronger the moral principle, one assumes. Yet the extent of repetition is indeterminate, greater than the two households of the cross-section but certainly not boundless. Such indeterminacy obscures the presence of social heterogeneity, such as actual differences in wealth. But it is not entirely absent in Wilkie's report. A key question is thus how it is brought into and taken out of the field of vision.

The cross-section implies a single, indefinite space of repetition. Yet we might profitably speak of a double-vision, for its upper limits can be traced by either of two encompassing categories, long appreciated in anthropology for their boundary-marking function: the community and the village (Cohen 1985; Candea 2010). These concepts sit in an ambiguous relationship to one another. Gerald Creed (2006a: 4) notes that community has "at least three component meanings: a group of people, a quality of relationship (usually with a positive normative value), and a place/location." Certainly this field of meanings overlaps with that of village, but the two terms are not quite synonymous. Village evokes a material place while community evokes an ensemble of social relationships (although the village is rarely asocial and the community is not immaterial). These divergent intimations have corresponding implications for the way in which social form is figured.

Anthropologists expect community to be a site of moral contestation and negotiation (Waldren 1996; Stasch 2009; Creed 2006a). As it appears in the report, it is an inconstant entity, caught between the Saxon past and the post-Saxon present. In the former, social uniformity is assumed from shared ethnicity. The latter is more problematic. Wilkie (2001: 18-9) devotes a section to contemporary community, organised under the categories "Ethnic mix," "Age mix," "Political structure," "Healthcare" and "Education." Stratification is acknowledged in terms of ethnicity, namely the reduced access to education among Roma, and generation. "Increased awareness of the world outside inevitably creates expectations in the young: they want running water, comfortable heated homes with flush toilets, access to the internet and entertainment" (2001: 18). Despite this ("inevitable") divergence in expectations, moral dynamics are given slight attention. The section on ethnicity concludes, "In spite of the ethnic mix and some hostility towards the Roma, there is good co-operation within the villages and the ethnic diversity is not seen as an impediment to further co-operation and progress" (Wilkie 2001: 18).

It is notable that the space of cooperation is given as the village rather than the community. What the post-Saxon 'community' is remains unclear. It is presented not as a single object, but as a collection of weakly-detailed demographic categories, institutions and services. In other words, it is represented through a sociological vocabulary that is, ironically, a hallmark of the social modernism against which integralists have been reacting. As Nikolas Rose observes, community "becomes governmental when it is made technical," through the "penetration of a kind of ethnographic sociology into the vocabularies and classifications of authorities" (1999: 175). The mobilisation of this sociology made sense insofar as the Wilkie

report was intended to guide the Whole Village development project. Yet it clearly stands in tension with the classic romantic vision of community as a solidary whole (Creed 2006b). Indeed, this vision is hinted at in the final affirmation of cooperative relations.

Rather than resolving the tension between sociological and romantic vision, tying such an affirmation to the village rather than the community allows the problem to be elided. Community is a fragmented object. On the one hand, it is divided by ethnicity and generation. On the other hand, it is unified in its historical form and through contemporary cooperation. Because it cannot convincingly be presented as a whole in light of this, claims to social unity are referred to the space of the village, which has already been presented as a coherent holistic entity, while heterogeneity is bracketed off under the assertion that it does not make a difference ("in spite of the ethnic mix and some hostility…"). This also serves to reproduce and reinforce the image of romantic holism by embedding social form within built form, itself embedded within landscape, and so on. Each assertion of unity necessarily makes the others and the overall nested form more plausible, in another "hall of mirrors" effect (cf. Stasch 2011: 16-7).

CULTURE AND COSMOPOLITANISM

What, then, of exclusion? In her *Times* article, Douglas-Home observed that "The buildings lie empty… gypsies have moved in" (1999). Much like Matei Candea has noted of Franco-Maghrebian immigrants in Corsica, "gypsies" here figure as an absent presence, inhabitants of buildings that nevertheless remain "empty." They are "not counted among the proper elements of the holistic entity that [the Saxon village] was/should be" (Candea 2010: 32). This was closely tied to the identification of integralism with built form, and the consequent figuring of belonging in terms of one's stance towards this. An attitude of indifference to traditional architectural style was, from this perspective, deeply problematic.

> Buildings are being torn down or patched up roughly by their new Romanian and Gypsy owners or squatters. Returning Saxons, enriched and changed by their brief sojourn in Germany, have lost sight of the harmony of the ancient villages and are rebuilding in ways which destroy the integrity of the whole. (Douglas-Home 1999)

Academic commentators have criticised the MET for imposing a "hierarchy of cultures" that places the Saxons above Romanians and Roma (e.g. Hughes et al. 2010). Douglas-Home

rejects this accusation, but concludes her response to one such critique, by two architects and a historian, thus:

> [I]t is only in the last few decades that owners with less, or no, consciousness of Saxon legacy have used entirely different building materials which can obscure entirely the harmony of a village and the historic details of a house. Buildings are now often adorned with neon blue tiles, bright reds, greens and yellows of acid plastic paint - not so much a change of fashion as the creation of a new type of village from a rootless culture. (Douglas-Home 2010)

The invocation of rootlessness helps to clarify what would otherwise appear as an anomaly, the chastisement of returning Saxons. Holmes has observed that integralist pluralism can provoke a "fierce intolerance," aimed not (just) at cultural difference so much as it is targeted at "a "cosmopolitan" agenda based on universal values and "rootless" styles of life" (2000: 7). Materiality is key to the diagnosis of the cosmopolitan and the rootless. "Acid plastic paint" and "neon blue" are industrial materials and colours that, like concrete, disrupt "a bourgeois aesthetic of discrimination through an appeal to mass production and standard form" (Harvey 2010: 29). This was of course their attraction for mid-twentieth century proponents in the socialist East and capitalist West, who envisioned the materialisation of a more egalitarian, modernist world (Murphy 2015; Fehérváry 2013). Such a materiality had already aggravated the MET and others in Ceaușescu's plans for systematisation, but the culpable party was now the post-socialist populace. The reference to "bourgeois aesthetics" in the quote above indexes Pierre Bourdieu's (2010) analysis of taste and aesthetic distinction as a function of social status. But this analytical frame leaves little space for understanding commitments to distinctions that are about something other than status.

What Douglas-Home opposes is cosmopolitanism/rootlessness on the one hand and cultural expressionism on the other. To call this a "hierarchy of cultures" is to misrecognise the conceptual grounds of distinction, which is between authentic and inauthentic culture. In her account, "rootless" culture, while perhaps having its own consistencies of style, is not an expression of anything, neither the cultural being of a group nor of nature. This is a clearly integralist view, but it is worth stopping here to reflect on the difference in emphasis that distinguishes such romantic integralism and from the neonationalist integralisms described by Holmes (2000). While the latter foreground cultural difference, the Saxon conservationists

tend to elide this scale and its implied antagonisms. This is evident not only in the focus on authentic and inauthentic culture, but also in the shifting of value away from Saxon "culture" and onto built form and the order of nature, a scale that transcends human differences. That is not to say that the effects are innocuous. As Berlin notes, rootlessness can be a "sinister and ominous" attribution (1976: 185). Insofar as Romanians and Roma purvey culture that is deemed inauthentic in comparison to the material monuments of Saxon culture, they pose a problem. Nevertheless, the MET's framing of the problem and its solution took an idiom of moral character that, like the villages' value, cut across cultural difference. Wilkie recommended that an "immediate priority should be to ensure that the existing inhabitants, whatever their ethnicity, are recognised as custodians of the Saxon heritage" (2001: 19). This was both a rejection of socio-technical intervention, and an acknowledgement that anybody, Saxons included, could lose their roots to cosmopolitanism and modern estrangement, while anybody who appreciated the natural value of the place could become a custodian.

In 1999, the Trust launched its flagship Whole Village Project in the communes of Bunești and Laslea. The aims of this project were "to preserve the villages' fabric, remedy their loss of income and revive their sense of community" (MET 2004: 9). The project was conceived of as participatory: The MET would consult with village representatives and, having gained their support, 'adopt' the village into its programme (MET 2004: 9). This programme was a multifaceted vision centred on the possibilities for "cultural and eco-tourism and organic agriculture" that the region's built and natural heritage were seen to afford (MET 2004: 2), economic activities that were increasingly promoted within the EU's regionalist agenda, discussed below. The programme took a classic liberal form, attending to private enterprise, minimal state intervention and a register of moral character.

At this time, rural development projects in Romania were sporadic and underfunded. The restitution of land collectivised during socialism to private owners and the privatisation of the collective and state farms badly damaged the rural economy. Many of the farms were not profitable without the subsidisation they had received under the socialist command economy, many were stripped of assets, and newly landed householders struggled to market their produce. Rural citizens were pushed back into semi-subsistence agriculture and migrant work in order to get by (Verdery 2003; Fox 2011). Some infrastructure projects were supported by grants from foreign aid or development programmes, and from 1998 the EU made pre-accession funds available via its PHARE scheme (later supplemented by SAPARD and others). One Săsesti resident observed to me that the man who was mayor throughout

much of the nineties had not done very much to develop the village, but "it wasn't his fault, there simply weren't funds available." Even where they were available, Vintilă Mihăilescu (2000: 12) notes that grants were not infrequently cancelled because the recipient communities could not agree on who should administer them. The Saxon region received a privileged attention from German NGOs compared to other areas, but this was largely directed to urban locations such as Sighișoara (see Câmpeanu 2008).

For the Mihai Eminescu Trust, "the initial priority" of the Whole Village Project was "the rescue of the ancient facades and roofs, which give harmony to medieval streets and alleys and are a source of pride to the residents" (MET 2004: 9). The conservation of built heritage was an absolute prerequisite for the Trust's vision, for this was the villages' unique attraction. In 1993, the Saxon fortified church in the village of Biertan had been inscribed as a UNESCO world heritage site. The site was extended to include six other villages (including Viscri) under the designation 'Villages with Fortified Churches in Transylvania' in 1999,[7] with the "historic centre" of Sighișoara designated a world heritage site in the same year. Both the initial inscription and its extension were recommended by ICOMOS, the International Council on Monuments and Sites, to whom Douglas-Home had acted as a consultant (Iorio and Corsale 2014: 244).[8] One consequence of world heritage status was the designation of the villages as conservation areas, with legal restrictions on the way in which buildings could be modified. This applied not just to the fortified churches and other major monuments but also to domestic buildings. Nevertheless, Wilkie concluded that, "Rather than rely on state regulation for conservation, it would be more effective for the local community to take pride in the appearance and identity of their villages and appreciate the long-term economic benefit of conservation in terms of property values and tourism" (2001: 16).

The Whole Village Project was grounded in a social epistemology of moral character. Responsibility was placed on local citizens to adjust their values to correspond with the Trust's assessment of value, not just in terms of economic interest but at a more fundamental level of personal dispositions. A tacit implication is that the cultivation of dispositions such as pride should override any antagonistic or ambivalent feelings that people may have towards Saxon identity. The Trust's approach to economic development was similarly structured

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[7] The seven villages are Biertan, Viscri, Saschiz, Valea Viilor, Câlnic, Prejmer and Dârjiu. The latter is a Szekler (Hungarian) village; the other six are Saxon.

[8] The two ICOMOS reports and the UNESCO decision are available at: http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/596/documents/ (Accessed: 10/7/17).

around processes of exemplarity and mimesis that would facilitate self-cultivation (cf. Humphrey 1997; Watanabe 2017). Local enterprises were to be fostered through "small model examples showing how sympathetic development of buildings, farming and local industries can stimulate a more organic evolution of the area, one where the local people have more control" (Wilkie 2001: 16). The MET bought a ruined house in each commune for conversion into a model guesthouse, and registered a limited liability company "to show, by example, the possibilities of profitable organic agriculture" (MET 2004: 9-10). The former method was modelled on the Landmark Trust in the UK, who raise funds to renovate minor historic buildings and convert them into guesthouses; the buildings are then maintained using the income from guests (MET 2004: 9; see Stanford 2003). This was part of a wider mimetic economy of British institutional forms in the Romanian conservation field. The Pro Patrimonio Foundation for example, a frequent collaborator of the MET, self-describe as "Romania's National Trust," and maintain strong links with the UK. The MET also offered "advice, grants and loans to enable farmers, craftsmen and others to start or expand small ventures" (MET 2004: 9). These were bracketed by a strong economic liberalism, however. The Trust's ultimate aim was "to make itself redundant in the villages that it works [sic] at the same time as making the villages self-sufficient from aid or state dependency" (2004: 10).

To conclude these sections, throughout the late 1990s and early 2000s the MET and associated figures such as the Prince of Wales produced an innovative portrait of the Saxon villages. This spoke to integralist concerns about belonging and modern alienation, while also side-stepping thornier issues of cultural difference by appealing to values and material forms grounded in nature rather than culture. These were brought together with an economically liberal model of development. In the second half of the chapter, I look at how nature conservationists took up the representations and values that the MET had first articulated and adapted them to the EU's institutions of rural development and agricultural policy, embracing technocratic means to achieve the goal of preserving the Saxon villages' form of life. This was similarly rooted in a holistic conception of nature, but one that was "baroque" rather than romantic. The fusing of this with an economic register of value gave the positive character of the villages a greater "translatability" between scales of personal experience and modern governance. It also facilitated claims to a more liberal stance among nature conservationists in comparison to the architectural conservationists.

II.

OLD LANDSCAPES, NEW VALUES

In 2000 and 2001, the MET commissioned a set of reports on the ecology and prospects for nature conservation in several communes in which they had been working. These were conducted by the British botanist John Akeroyd, together with others from Britain and Romania, producing studies of the range and diversity of habitats in the area. Akeroyd has described his first experience of walking through the meadows above one village as a moment of revelation, stunned into a religious obeisance by the wealth of wildflowers he discovered. "I got down on my knees and prayed!"[9] As extensive ecological surveying has since attested, this natural wealth includes a very high density and diversity of wildflowers, grasses, butterflies, moths and amphibians, distributed across a "mosaic" of meadows, pastures, arable fields, waysides, orchards and forests (see Akeroyd 2006). It also includes a number of "charismatic species" (Lorimer 2007) of bird, such as corncrakes and eagles, and large carnivores, such as bears, wolves and lynx.

Mountford and Akeroyd (2005: 34-5) have reflected on the epistemological significance of their initial reports to the MET. Transylvanian vegetation had been documented in great detail by Romanian researchers within an older tradition of descriptive phytosociology. Yet, as the British authors assert, "such fine scale of detail has sometimes proven unwieldy for describing habitats on an international basis" (2005: 34)—a polite way of describing the empiricism of Romanian science as marginal in comparison to cosmopolitan scientific concerns. In response to this problem, they conducted an analysis of habitat types based on the European Environmental Agency's habitat classification system, EUNIS (European Nature Information System), among other databases that covered not only Europe but also northern Eurasia and North Africa. Their research was self-consciously innovative in bringing the analysis of Transylvanian ecology within an internationally comparative frame. Moreover, it opened possibilities for institutionalisation. By using the EUNIS system, the ecological data became recognisable within the EU's Natura 2000 framework for conservation (2005: 34). Given Romania's imminent entry into the EU, this improved the possibilities for designating the area as a natural park of some kind, an explicit aim given the degree of biodiversity that had been discovered (cf. Akeroyd and Page 2006).

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[9] Talk given at the Fundația ADEPT tenth anniversary celebration, May 2014, London.

The proposal for a conservation initiative required not only a shift in epistemological framework, but also challenging certain hierarchies of value. Mountford and Akeroyd (2005) open their paper by drawing a contrast between nature protection traditions in Western and Eastern Europe. The history of extensive land management in northwestern Europe meant that protected areas, like the British National Parks, "tended to be semi-natural in character, preserving wildlife values and the artefacts (landscape and cultural) of centuries of human impact" (2005: 32; cf. Sheail et al. 1997). These areas require human management to maintain their particular natural form, because the landscapes are already anthropogenic. Conversely, Romanian nature protection has traditionally focused above all on the protection of wilderness, given that "there remained extensive areas in a (nearly) natural state that had neither been permanently occupied by humans nor subjected to intensive use" (Mountford and Akeroyd 2005: 33). Because landscapes like those of the Saxon villages were agricultural, they did not fit this category of wilderness and were thus largely ignored in national conservation circles, presumed to be of lesser value.

Akeroyd and Page (2006) similarly note that a key criterion for nature protection in Romania, as in many places, has been rarity of species. Agricultural landscapes were not registered as significant in this regard, for "within Romania, many of the plants, animals and habitats of the Saxon villages region are not regarded as particularly rare or threatened" (2006: 207). "However," the authors continue, "from a western European perspective the survival of grassland communities in such substantial numbers and extent considerably makes up for their loss elsewhere" (2006: 207). The affective force that the landscape produced on Akeroyd was an effect of comparison with Western Europe, where agricultural intensification had eradicated a similar degree of biodiversity within recent history. "Confronted with Romanian anthropogenic grasslands (especially old hay-meadows), foreign botanists have been filled with wonder that such remarkable, floristically rich vegetation survives and stimulated to publicise these treasures widely" (Mountford and Akeroyd 2009: 523).

Beyond wonder, the comparison had implications for conservation priorities. "The assemblage is more important than any individual component plant species, as such species-rich, dry meadow-steppe grassland has disappeared over most of Europe" (Akeroyd and Page 2006: 205). Conservation should target the landscape as a whole, because this "buffers the best 'hot-spots'" of biodiversity (Akeroyd and Page 2006: 202). Legislating to protect single species or habitats would not prove sufficient in the long run. "Rarity on its own may not

always be the best criterion for assessing conservation needs and a more holistic approach is required to protect such a sensitive and fragile ecosystem" (Akeroyd and Page 2006: 207). Put more bluntly, "overly prescriptive micro-management for species [is] a sign that the ecological system has failed and is in collapse" (Jones 2009: 61). Conservation was in fact only possible if the agriculture which maintained the ecological condition remained viable. "Visitors who wish to conserve the area must take into account that the landscape has been created and conserved through hard labour and that the rich biodiversity is actually a by-product of this. So preservation of this landscape and its biodiversity can only be achieved if it brings long-term economic benefits to the community" (Cowell 2007: 211).

Against the background of Romanian ecology and conservation, Akeroyd and colleagues enacted a number of scale-shifts, from species to landscape and wilderness to semi-natural as objects of value, and from Romania to Europe as the space of comparison. The European space is a complex territory maintained by a range of technical, social and political systems that must constantly be coordinated with one another (Barry 2001). Databases such as EUNIS, or the related CORINE, aspire to a universality in their classifications, collating and centralising knowledge of habitats across EU member states and redeploying this knowledge in pan-European conservation policies such as the Habitats Directive (Waterton 2002: 180-2).

> What once seemed stable, hard-won, locally-validated and well-recognized classes derived from painstaking field observation and correlation with countless other observations [seem] less firm in the European policy context, as classes need to be aligned and to correlate with new European classes. (2002: 190)

But equally, in the process of translating European classes back into specific projects and specific ecological sites, those abstract classifications become entangled in localised debates about what counts as native, what is deserving of conservation, and so on (2002: 192). Rather than either side dominating, the result is "a dynamic and unpredictable picture of new, emerging European scientific and political configurations" (2002: 190). As I show in the next section, the British ecologists' scaling up to European standards in order to overcome the over-empiricism of Romanian science was followed by an inverse move, in which universal standards were reframed as limited relative to the irreducible richness of of the Transylvanian landscape. The resulting "dynamic configuration" was (like policies such as the Habitats

Directive) a grounded response to contemporary problems of governance in the EU, and specifically the Common Agricultural Policy, as I describe below. The ecologists' thick enmeshing of localism and abstraction also marked them out in contrast to the romantic holism of the MET, which oscillated between deep cultural specificity and abstract natural universalism, with little concession to forging a middle ground.

BAROQUE BIODIVERSITY

In 2004, the Agricultural Development and Environmental Protection Transylvania (ADEPT) Foundation was established. The Anglo-Romanian NGO emerged from initial attempts by the MET, the British-owned commercial enterprise Transylvanian Natural Products and other actors to obtain Global Environment Facility funds to promote sustainable agriculture (MET 2004: 13; Wilkie 2001: 22). This did not materialise, but funding was subsequently obtained from the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs's Darwin Initiative and the telecommunications company Orange's corporate social responsibility programme. The mature iteration of ADEPT stood independent from the MET, albeit with some porosity of collaborators and staff.

Following on from the work of Akeroyd and Mountford, ADEPT identified two major risks to the landscape. These were anthropogenic threats. On the one hand, the unprofitability of agriculture in Romania's globalised market could lead to the abandonment of fields by local farmers, resulting in land becoming overgrown with scrub that would choke biodiversity. On the other hand, the mosaic of habitats was equally threatened by agricultural intensification. Entry to the European Union in 2007 would pave the way for large agribusinesses to purchase and consolidate the more accessible land into gigantic fields, ploughing across boundaries to produce homogeneous cultivations and applying chemical fertilisers that would encourage "coarse or vigorous grasses and weeds to invade," again damaging the grassland ecology (Akeroyd and Page 2011: 63-4; Jones 2007). Abandonment and intensification were understood as outcomes of a socio-technical milieu that affected the viability of agriculture. Such a socio-technical problem demanded an equivalent solution.

In a special issue of the *Transylvanian Review of Systematical and Ecological Research* collecting further studies on the ecology of the Saxon villages region (Curtean-Bănăduc et al. 2007), Andrew Jones (2007) proposed categorising the valuable Transylvanian grasslands as "High Nature Value" (HNV) farmland. The concept of HNV had emerged from discussions among ecologists and European policy-makers in the 1990s, formalised in the

European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism (EFNCP), as it became increasingly clear that the CAP's support for industrial, intensive agriculture was having major detrimental effects on the environment. Environmental protection measures were gradually introduced into the CAP, including agri-environment subsidies in the 1992 reform and the "decoupling" of subsidy payment values from level of production in 2003. But ecologists working in traditionally farmed (predominantly pastoral) landscapes were concerned that the new environmentalism did not take into account the role of low-intensity agriculture in generating and maintaining European biodiversity (e.g. Beaufoy et al. 1994; Bignal and McCracken 1996, 2000). The HNV label provided a unifying category for low-intensity, high-biodiversity farmed landscapes that a range of organisations could promote as the necessary object of conservation efforts, CAP reform and economic support.

By adopting the HNV designation, the Saxon landscape could be brought within a pan-European system of recognition, while also being refigured as a site from which the CAP and other institutions facilitating agricultural intensification could be critiqued. This was predicated on the scientific conceptualisation of HNV landscapes in terms of what, returning to Kwa, one might term a "baroque" holism. Baroque holism, like its romantic counterpart, is a twentieth-century paradigm for understanding the complexity of nature. While both presume the systematic interconnection of all things, baroque holisms reject the idea of neat order and unity. "The problem of baroque complexity is conceptual. There may be a higher-order level above the level of swarming individuals, but what is it? In general, it is easier to say what it is *not*. It is not stable patterns of communication—the very concept of pattern is highly ambiguous. If patterns exist at all, they are short-lived. Individuals take part in several wholes rather than one. The way wholes are delineated depends on situational rather than on abstract criteria" (Kwa 2002: 46). This baroque holism was filtered through a discourse of "farming systems," of which HNV landscapes were conceptualised as complex adaptive systems. In other words, especially well integrated ecological systems that are the result of natural adaptation over time, not design. This opposition between natural process and design formed the grounds for a critique of institutions of management. "Baroque complexity is close to *natura naturans*… When we cannot predict the future course of a complex system, it is not because we don't know enough. The world is uncertain. Uncertainty in the baroque case is ontological rather than epistemological" (Kwa 2002: 47). The complexity of baroque systems fundamentally undermined expectations of total planning.

A brief dash through the ecology of the Saxon villages will illustrate this in more detail. The concept of HNV was only loosely defined, with three general types rather than a strict specification: “Farmland with a high proportion of semi-natural vegetation”; “Farmland dominated by low intensity agriculture or a mosaic of semi-natural and cultivated land”; “Farmland supporting rare species or a high proportion of European or world populations” (European Environment Agency 2004: 19). The Saxon landscape fitted the second category. Its mosaic layout comprised forests, grasslands, arable fields and wet and dry lands in close proximity. This layout was dynamic, with land use constantly shifting through the controlled rotation of pastures and crops. Human agricultural disturbances blocked the ecological succession that would result in the grasslands developing into forests (Schneider-Binder 2012: 108). But these disturbances were comparatively minimal. Through the use of manual technology like scythes and the Saxons’ preference for cows over sheep, the destructive impacts of mowing and grazing were reduced. “Apart from cleaning the meadows [of] thistles and other tall herbaceous weeds, special meadow culture like in Western Europe with harrow works and irrigation practices was not usual” (Schneider-Binder 2010: 80). This allowed plant species to proliferate over the centuries of Saxon inhabitation in the region, seeding and re-growing (colonising) in many different assemblages across the mosaic.[10] This *longue durée* imaginary matched the historical chronotope of romantic holism, while grounding it in ecological process.

This raises the question of how the landscape survived the collectivisation and intensification of agriculture during Romanian socialism. How can ecologists assert that, “This part of south-east Transylvania represents a still functioning historic landscape, with the fauna, flora and complement of soil microorganisms of an intact ancient ecosystem, in which extensive wildflower meadows still retain their role in agriculture” (Page et al. 2011)? One answer is that intensification remained below a threshold that would have permanently impacted on the species composition, with pockets of biodiversity being maintained in marginal spaces. The landscape was then recolonised after 1989 as the intensity of agriculture dropped sharply and residents reverted to subsistence practices (Jones 2007: 74; Culbert et al. 2017: 440).

Whereas the MET’s romantic holism focused on totality, centrality and nestedness, this baroque holism found value in the exceptional and marginal, foregrounding marginal

[10] For detailed studies of HNV grassland ecology based on studies in the Scottish Hebrides, see Bignal and McCracken (1996) and McCracken and Bignal (1998).

spaces and forms that challenge the logic of standardised classification. Akeroyd describes the richness of "ruderal" plants, those that grow in "church enclosures, yards, streets and road-verges" (2007: 66). These spaces are untended, often ignored by humans, but frequently (and productively) disturbed by a range of wild and domestic animals. What appear to be clumps of weeds actually contain traditional forage foods and relatives of domesticated crop species, "ancient" or "relict" plants. Similar relicts are found on the "slumping hills," small protrusions rising out of the grassland which, because of their shape, are left largely undisturbed.

> Rather than clearly defined species associations determined by mapping of recognized habitats (e.g. under EUNIS habitat classification system), these hillocks can support random assemblages of plants that may represent relicts of a range of climatic conditions through past millenia, stranded on these ecological islands in a matrix of unsuitable, more mesic, level agricultural land which has been ploughed or grazed more intensely. (Jones 2009: 64)

Species associations vary markedly between individual slumping hills and there is even stark variation between the shady north and arid south faces of single hills. The hills are highly unique, earning them praise as the "jewel in the crown" of the region's biodiversity (Akeroyd and Page 2011: 62) and a "botanical wonder of Europe" (Jones 2009: 64). Their ambiguity vis-a-vis standardised classifications, far from being a problem, stands precisely as a sign of their value.

This has implications beyond the inadequacy of classification systems. Viewing the landscape as a complex adaptive system, a baroque whole, has significant implications for conservation practice. From this perspective, because the landscape and local agricultural practices have adapted over such a long period of time, their ecological complexity cannot be fully understood. By extension, no management scheme can effectively replicate the dynamics of the system as it already exists (Bignal 1998: 952). Conservation must then be predicated on finding ways to support existing low-intensity agricultural practices, rather than replacing them with overbearing management or regulation.

> It is often forgotten that dynamic change is a basic quality of all living systems. Stochasticity plays an important role within these dynamic processes. We merely ignore

> these facts if we deterministically plan the future development of the landscapes by fixing the destination of any single plot… if we do not pursue the aims of nature conservation in a concept which gives way to dynamic change and stochasticity, the results will be obscure. (Plachter 1996, quoted in Bignal 1998: 951-2)

How, then, to pursue nature conservation? What is required in these circumstances is a continuity of practice. In a key position paper published by ADEPT, Nat Page and colleagues argue:

> Under these circumstances, the community must rediscover commercial and moral incentives to continue to manage the area traditionally. The role of scientists and conservation NGOs is, in this case, to help local people to understand the importance of the landscape in which they live, and to encourage them to take an interest in why it works as an ecosystem, and to help give *them* the capacity, and long-term economic incentives, to continue to conserve it themselves. (Page et al. 2011)

This appears ostensibly similar to the discourse of moral character deployed by the MET, in the delegation of responsibility for conservation to local residents. But the reference to economic incentives marks a crucial difference. Rather than simply encouraging local citizens to "*appreciate* the long-term economic benefit," as the Trust had put it (my italics), ADEPT sought to arrange concrete, monetary incentives that would encourage immediate participation in conservation through a logic of (relatively) direct exchange. The CAP's subsidisation programme provided a convenient framework for this. Nevertheless, ADEPT's architects shared the MET's reservations about state or other dependencies. Subsidies were clearly "not a long-term solution" to restoring a sustainable agricultural economy. That said, pragmatically, "they do give time and financial opportunity to establish… essential long-term commercial incentives" (Page et al. 2011). Where the Trust's romantic holism rested on an implicit but unintegrated economic liberalism, the baroque holism of the MET attempted to integrate economic relationships within the holistic model itself through conceptual innovations that I describe in the next section.

PROSPEROUS PUBLICS

Despite the divergences in practice from architectural conservationism, nature conservationists drew heavily on the portrait of Saxon village character that the MET had authored. One key innovation that the conservationists based at ADEPT added to this portrait was the concept of "prosperity." The term appears frequently in Akeroyd's (2006) small guidebook to the region as a descriptor of traditional Saxon society, but also as a potential still inherent to the landscape which can be harnessed through careful conservation: "The Saxon Villages were once prosperous, and the rich biodiversity that was a source of their prosperity remains a natural resource of considerable economic potential that will survive only alongside sensitive agriculture" (Akeroyd 2006: 15, 2016). Equating Saxons and prosperity inevitably evokes the Weberian image of a Lutheran work ethic and entrepreneurial capitalism. Yet it also invoked a different field of contemporary usages in environmentalist and sustainability movements that attempted to bring nature into the realm of economic reasoning.

In her introduction to the proceedings of a conference entitled *Mountain hay meadows - hotspots of biodiversity and traditional culture* organised jointly by ADEPT and the Pogány-Havas Microregional Association in 2010,[11] the biologist Barbara Knowles quotes an influential report by the Sustainable Development Commission (SDC), an advisory body to Britain's New Labour government: "Prosperity consists in our ability to flourish as human beings – within the ecological limits of a finite planet" (Jackson 2009, quoted in Knowles 2011). This report drew on an earlier position paper by the SDC that argued for "redefining prosperity" (SDC 2003). Prosperity, the paper argues, has been narrowly defined in terms of economic growth, but there is no automatic correlation between growth and human wellbeing. In fact, unbridled growth has come at the cost of "environmental, social and psychological externalities," and measures of prosperity should be expanded to include these and the costs of consuming "natural services" supplied by eco-systems (2003: 8).

The report conceptualised nature in terms of economic value in order to contest conventional assumptions that economic growth is inherently positive. This translation of value into a quantitative register, while a neoliberal technique increasing calculability (see Collier 2011), was nevertheless in opposition to earlier conceptions of "sustainable

[11] Alongside ADEPT, the Pogány-Havas Association were innovators of HNV theory and practice in Romania. The Association is also an Anglo-Romanian operation, working in the Hungarian Székely region of Transylvania.

development" that sought to bring ecology into the service of growth (Escobar 1996). Similar strategies were adopted by ADEPT and Knowles to make a case for HNV in terms that would speak to both policy-making and local audiences. Knowles argued that, "We need to re-examine what we mean by efficiency in agriculture, and include environmental and social costs and benefits on the balance sheet alongside the economic ones" (2011). Her contribution to the conference was targeted in particular at the structure of the CAP, criticising its continued support for large-scale agriculture:

> Smallholders who farm in a way that protects the environment are at a significant financial disadvantage compared to intensive farming businesses that do not pay the full costs for environmental damage and pollution caused by their activities, yet who receive enormous public subsidy through the Common Agricultural Policy. […] Public subsidies should not be paid for environmentally damaging practices without understanding their full ecological, social and economic cost. (Knowles 2011)

Distinct from concerns about modern alienation, the major problematic with which Knowles and collaborators tussled was the material effects of globalised capital and the distribution of public funds.

The appeal to an idiom of publics was developed in the ADEPT position paper quoted above, which sought to articulate a more thorough rationale for the benefits of HNV landscapes than had previously been given. "When valuing HNVF [Farming] landscapes, it is useful to estimate their value in a broad sense, using the concept of ecosystem services. Such areas are to be valued as much for the public goods they produce, as for their economic agricultural productivity" (Page et al. 2011). The concept of ecosystem services was developed to provide a framework for conceptualising the value of nature in political decision making (Daily 1997), rapidly taking a prominent place in the twenty-first century biopolitics of human wellbeing (e.g. Millenium Ecosystem Assessment 2005; cf. Rose 2006). Within this framework, HNV landscapes provided "provisioning services" (food, material resources, genetic resources), "regulating services" (biodiversity conservation, carbon sequestration, clean air and water) and "cultural services" ("aesthetic/spiritual values" and touristic and recreational opportunities) (Page et al. 2011). Which public these services are provided to is left unstated. This is partly an effect of generality (providing a rationale for the value of HNV landscapes in the abstract), but also the inclusion of touristic services that would extend a

localised public to any potential visitors. What is more significant is that the language of public interests brings the value of HNV areas, and the Saxon villages in particular, into policy-makers' sphere of consideration as a calculable object. It allows nature to move between different spheres of value. This, in effect, made the exemplary character of the Saxon villages "translatable" (Star and Griesemer 1989), from an experience of wonder or of unmediated nature to a European technocrat's balance book. This contrasts sharply with the architectural conservationists' assertion that natural order has objective aesthetic and spiritual value, which left little chance of recruiting those who simply disagree.

Another effect of the discourse of the public was the implicit contrast that it set up with the private realm. At a talk given in London about the Saxon villages, a British nature conservationist commented on the proliferation of poor-quality renovations to traditional buildings, but he immediately followed this up by asserting, "But we aren't interested in telling people what to do with their houses." This clearly alluded to the MET's moral exhortations about architectural style. The speaker was able to position the nature conservationists' programme as more liberal. This was predicated on their promotion of economic incentives, which do not intrude on questions of domestic and aesthetic preference that are (for the purposes of rhetoric, at the very least) recognised as "private." The abstraction of money allowed them to speak to local people's interests while leaving the substantive content of those interests untouched; the private world of choice was protected.[12]

OVERLAPPING TERRITORIES

From 2002, rural development funds were made available to Romania through the EU's SAPARD[13] programme. This initiative was targeted to rapidly develop Romanian agriculture to a level corresponding with European norms, a condition of accession to the Union. Among various arrangements, the programme contained provisions for a pilot scheme of agri-environment subsidies. These subsidies, part of the CAP's rural development section (Pillar II), allowed farmers to receive additional payments on top of the basic payment for which all enterprises were eligible (Pillar I). These were granted in exchange for voluntary compliance with regulations designed to limit the negative effects of agriculture on the environment. The

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[12] One might note with some irony that the MET's appeals to moral exemplarity and mimesis of model enterprises bore more than a passing resemblance to the use of such appeals in the socialist economy (Kligman and Verdery 2011, *passim*). On the idea of choice as a fundamentally private matter and the emergence of this in the late twentieth century, see Strathern (1992) and Mol (2008).

[13] Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development

pilot scheme was initially targeted on a wilderness area in the Carpathians by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, but ADEPT successfully lobbied to have the location changed to six communes in the Saxon villages surrounding Sighișoara. The pilot took place in 2006, and the Foundation undertook extensive outreach work in order to engage local farmers. The results were then used to guide the drafting of the Ministry's first National Programme for Rural Development (2007-2013), which extended the subsidy schemes to the whole country following Romania's full accession to the EU in 2007. Alongside the set of disputes surrounding the proposed Dracula Park that I discuss in the third part of this chapter, this intervention in the Romanian implementation of the CAP was arguably the most wide-ranging effect of Anglo-Romanian conservationism (both natural and architectural) since Prince Charles's speech in 1989.

Modifications to the Programme proposed by ADEPT included simplification of the overly bureaucratic application process and broader land eligibility conditions (Page et al. 2011; Sutcliffe et al. 2015). The greatest achievement was convincing the Romanian Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to introduce a separate "package" of agri-environment subsidies for HNV-designated regions. This was especially significant given that there was no formal framework in the CAP for recognising HNV grasslands. The decision was left to individual EU member states on how to go about this—if indeed they did so at all. A working definition was produced in which communes with more than 50% permanent grassland received HNV designation, while areas that did not fulfil this criterion but were identified as HNV using landcover databases were incorporated through "imaginative cooperation between NGOs and [the] Ministry."[14]

ADEPT's work was not limited to agricultural policy, but embraced Knowles' (2011) observation that, "A more holistic approach to environment, agriculture, food, rural development, social, taxation and trade policies is needed if Romania and Europe wish to maintain their living rural communities and the rich natural environment which small-scale farmers sustain." The Foundation's wider conservation programme brought together "multiple overlapping instruments counteracting both symptoms and problems of HNV farmland loss" (Sutcliffe et al. 2015: 56). These sought to foster a sustainable rural economy in the new European Union milieu. Space was key to this project. But rather than focus on the village as the privileged site, ADEPT focused on the production of new administrative

[14] Fundația ADEPT PowerPoint presentation, 'Agri-environment schemes in Romania: a success story." Available at: http://www.fundatia-adept.org/bin/file/BirdLifeBrussels.pdf (Accessed: 11/1/17)

territories. The consolidation of these territories facilitated an effective and innovative engagement with the EU's post-Maastricht agenda of regionalism.

In 2008, ADEPT succeeded in gaining approval for the designation of a Natura 2000 Site of Community Importance, the Sighișoara-Târnava Mare SCI, an 85,000 hectare zone encompassing eight communes. The name Târnava Mare came from the river that flows along its northern edge and into which most of the valleys drain. It was also the name of an older administrative territory, an interwar county that had disappeared in successive re-drawings of the political map (Helin 1967). The SCI was among the first Natura 2000 sites in Romania that targeted semi-natural agricultural landscapes rather than wilderness. Natura 2000 is a network of protected areas in Europe that have been recognised under either the Birds Directive or the Habitats Directive, the two legislations that comprise the EU's nature conservation policy. The Sighișoara-Târnava Mare SCI (registered under the Habitats Directive) also overlapped with a much larger Special Protected Area (Birds Directive) covering Southern Transylvania. These designations brought planning and land use restrictions, and the potential for additional agri-environment subsidies if the SCI followed a transition plan to become a Special Area of Conservation (Sutcliffe et al. 2015: 58).

The designation was part of a wider strategy on the part of ADEPT to create a distinct regional identity and coherent administrative space that facilitated both conservation and rural development (Page et al. 2011). The National Rural Development Plan stipulated the creation of Local Action Groups (LAGs) under the EU's LEADER[15] programme. LAGs are allocated a block of funds for rural development, and it is their job to design and administer programmes suited to the needs of their territory. In 2007, a LAG was created on ADEPT's initiative under the name *Dealurile Târnavelor* (Târnava Hills), with a territory corresponding to the SCI and an office in the village of Saschiz (which also hosted the ADEPT offices). Territorial identity was further consolidated through the creation of a Târnava Mare regional brand for local produce. The brand was accompanied by a distinctive logo displaying a blue thistle (*târnava* being the Romanian name for thistle), which was also taken as the LAG's logo. Romania's first Slow Food convivium was also created in the area, under the name Slow Food Târnava Mare.

The tight knitting of diverse territorial forms was distinctive and, in combination with the innovations in agricultural policy, earned ADEPT major plaudits at a national and

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[15] *Liaisons Entre Actions de Développement de l'Economie Rurale*.

European level, gleaning EU awards and establishing ADEPT as an exemplar in the HNV network. Such recognition indexed not only innovation but also a close engagement with the EU's regionalist agenda. As Ray (2000) notes, LEADER was an expression of wider shifts in post-Maastricht EU ideology towards "endogenous" or "bottom-up" development. This coincided with a "change in support policies from a sectoral approach (agriculture) to one that is more territorial (rural)," the intention of which was to foster a more sustainable development of rural areas (Shortall and Shucksmith 1998: 74).[16] A significant plank of the EU's regionalist strategy was the revaluing of place through cultural identity, in order to localise economic control (Ray 1998). Movements like Slow Food partake of this, through their valorisation of local knowledge and traditions while incorporating these into global commodity networks (Leitch 2003; Cavanaugh 2007; Meneley 2004). ADEPT followed this trend by promoting small-scale, artisanal food production and ecotourism. Courses were held and guides published to help food producers understand the confusing new sanitary regulations that became law upon accession to the EU (cf. Fox 2011). Local produce markets were organised to facilitate independent producers' access to markets, and culinary tourism was promoted. Courses were also provided to introduce rural householders to the basic principles of operating a guesthouse. Recreational uses of the landscape were developed, such as hiking routes and the construction of an extensive network of mountain bike trails.

To conclude the first two parts of the chapter, through the 1990s and 2000s Anglo-Romanian conservationists developed a set of holistic conceptualisations of and development programmes for the Saxon villages region of Transylvania. The Mihai Eminescu Trust innovated a romantic, integralist picture of Saxon village character that appealed to Western European anti-modernist and anti-industrialist sentiments, and which formed the basis for a potential future prosperity through ecotourism. Yet the means for transforming this illiberal imaginary into rural revitalisation was a classical economic liberalism that relied on the moral exhortation of local citizens to act as custodians, and the expectation that a process of mimesis would be sufficient. The ADEPT Foundation, originating as an offshoot of the Trust, shifted the focus from architecture to ecology and successfully mobilised new conceptual resources, notably neoliberal registers of quantification and calculation, to translate the romantic value of the villages—which the Foundation also affirmed—into more formal and standardised registers. This allowed the nature conservationists to embed new programmes

[16] This went hand in hand with privatisations, outsourcing and the shifting downwards of responsibility for welfare.

for rural development within institutional structures like the CAP and within the EU's regionalist agenda, and in turn to use the neoliberal economic technologies available from these, such as subsidies and other financial incentives, to attract the participation of local citizens in the work of conservation and revitalisation. Moreover, insofar as this was technocratic, it was predicated on the fundamental inability of planning and management to fully comprehend and reproduce a complex natural environment, demanding a correspondingly liberal approach to conservation.

This work of translation gained ADEPT plaudits not only at the EU level but also in Romanian national circles. Technical success was not, however, the only story. In the final part of the chapter, I look at how the MET's romantic imaginary of Saxon identity had intersected earlier with Romanian national politics, in a dispute that left the Trust with a relatively hegemonic position to set the rural development agenda in the region. This was less due to forging broad alliances through translations of value than through a transnational political intervention that challenged the then-government's geopolitical priorities. The dispute also illustrates how national responses to conservation were laced with concerns for cultural intimacy, and entangled in antagonistic dynamics of the public sphere.

III.

THE USES OF GERMAN-NESS

The mobilisation of German history and identity to legitimate tourism development projects in the Saxon region was not restricted to either conservationist or foreign parties. Yet where such mobilisations occurred in Romanian national or local politics, they were deeply entangled with questions and frustrations surrounding belonging within Europe. The topic of how people and states deal with positions of ambiguous belonging within Europe has received substantial treatment in anthropology (Herzfeld 1987; Verdery 1996; Navaro-Yashin 2002; Green 2005). In southeastern Europe, the literature on "Balkanism" has documented how dominant conceptions of European civilisation leave inhabitants in a paradoxical position, figured as more oriental (savage, chaotic, and so on) than Western Europe but more occidental than the "true" orient further east. They are both self and other to Europe (Bakić-Hayden 1995; Todorova 2009). This is no less true of Romania (Călinescu 1983). As Michael Herzfeld (1987, 2016) argues, the people of marginal places are forced to inhabit a "disemic" space of opposed "high" and "low" registers of language, conduct, aesthetics and so on, as

they attempt to live up to a Western-oriented European identity while also, in more intimate settings, embracing the vicissitudes of "local custom." Negotiating the border between these intimate and public settings frequently involves the deployment of complex rhetorics and self-presentations in a dynamic of what Herzfeld (2016) calls "cultural intimacy" (cf. Shryock 2004).

The perception of the Saxons as an exemplar of civilisation and prosperity has a long history in Romania. From the *boier*[17] and first Romanian travel writer Dinicu Golescu in the 1820s (Cercel 2015: 814) through the statesman and historian Nicolae Iorga, who wrote a pamphlet introducing the Saxons to the Romanian public after the incorporation of Transylvania into Greater Romania in 1918 (Iorga 2014 [1919]), elite Romanian commentators have praised the Saxons for their agricultural and industrial skills, their organisational discipline and their sincerity. As colonisers from Western Europe, with which they maintained strong ties (evident in their rapid conversion to Lutheranism after the Reformation), the Saxons were viewed as a civilising force for good in the Romanian space, agents of modernity and the Enlightenment. This perception was shared among the Saxons themselves (Cercel 2012).

From the Romanian perspective, this respect was part of a wider complex of ethnic relationships and hierarchies. Katherine Verdery (1985: 66) notes that assertions of Transylvanian German[18] civility by Romanians were often followed by disparaging comments about other ethnic groups. The Saxons were treated as an exemplary national minority, respectful towards their co-residents and the Romanian state, in comparison to the perceived anarchism of the Roma and irredentist antagonism of the Transylvanian Hungarians (Kürti 2001; Brubaker et al. 2006). Cristian Cercel (2015) interprets this as a self-orientalism, the perception among Romanians that their culture and society is insufficiently civilised. As various anthropologists have pointed out, occidental/oriental binaries are fractal, liable to be reproduced at ever-smaller scales (Bakić-Hayden 1995; Irvine and Gal 2000; Green 2005). Thus, Romanian inferiority to the Saxons can be redirected as a superiority

[17] Usually written in English as 'boyer,' a high rank of the feudal aristocracy that was common throughout Slavic Eastern Europe, from the Muscovite and Kievan Rus' in the north to the Bulgarian Empire in the south, including the Romanian principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia (but not Hapsburg-ruled Transylvania), and that was recognised under Ottoman imperial rule of the Romanian principalities.

[18] The Transylvanian German population includes not only Saxons but also Swabians in the Banat region. The Swabians emigrated from Western Europe much later than the Saxons, in the eighteenth century.

relative to the Roma, an even more oriental Other (Engebrigtsen 2007). Expressions of deference legitimate the hierarchy of relative civility that is deployed against others.

Professions of respect certainly belied the more troubled aspects of Romanian-Saxon relations after the Second World War. The Communist Party government brought to power with Soviet backing after 1945 attempted to emulate the Soviet Union's policy of integrating national minorities (cf. Hirsch 2002). As the losing nationality in the War and presumed Nazi collaborators, however, German subjects were excluded from this (Bottoni 2010: 60). Large numbers were deported to the Soviet Union as war reparations labour, where many lost their lives (Massino 2008), while German property was targeted for expropriation (Jerca 2012). After the 1956 uprising in Hungary, the policy of integration was abandoned out of suspicions that Transylvanian Hungarian irredentism was ultimately implacable (Granville 2010). Ironically, the resurgence of Romanian-Hungarian antagonisms led to an easing of pressure upon the Saxons (Bottoni 2010: 61). Programmes of property redistribution had successfully smashed their economic advantage, and social reforms undermined the collective organisation that had formed the basis of Saxon community and identity (Verdery 1985). These factors calmed older resentments against Saxons concerning their greater wealth and protectionism, making them a more palatable figure to Romanian publics (1985: 65-6, 69). Rather than contesting their change of status, the most common response among Saxons themselves was simply to emigrate. The Ceaușescu government was only too happy to grant permission for this in light of a deal that had secretly been struck with the German Federal Republic in 1968 (modelled on an earlier agreement with Israel vis-a-vis Romania's Jewish population), in which the West German government paid several thousand marks for every German national repatriated to the homeland.[19] Late socialist Romanian-Saxon political relations were thus marked mostly by an indifference founded on neutralisation and commodification. Despite, or more likely because of, the Saxons' dwindling presence, respect has flourished in the post-socialist era, connected to the diverse symbolic possibilities that German-ness affords (Cercel 2015; Grama 2010: 247-336; Stroe 2008, 2011). Accusations of historical and contemporary Nazism were still occasionally thrown at the German minority during the period of my research, however (e.g. Scurtu 2017).

[19] See the documentary *Pașaport de Germania/Trading Germans* (2014, dir. Răzvan Georgescu). On German homeland nationalism, see Brubaker (1996: 107-47).

CULTURAL POLITICS IN EUROPEAN TRANSYLVANIA

Throughout 2001 and 2002, Sighișoara, a small municipality of 30,000 inhabitants and the nearest town to Săsești, was caught up in a maelstrom of debate and intrigue stimulated by the proposal to build a large Dracula theme park on a hill just outside the town. Over the two years, a wide range of actors from local, national and ultimately international spheres were mobilised in support of or opposition to the project. This was especially true of the opposing camp, who came together in a diverse coalition under the sign of "sustainability." Ultimately, this camp won out, and the project was shelved. Their success came primarily from the deployment of a conservationist discourse that held significant political capital for an international audience. This framed the cultural inappropriateness and physical risk of constructing a mass-tourism site in such close proximity to the UNESCO-recognised medieval citadel of the town: Austere Saxon heritage was protected from Dracula kitsch. Yet, as Claudia Câmpeanu (2008: 64-6) notes, the theme park plans had equally traded off the cultural capital of the town's Saxon history, at least initially.[20]

The idea for a Dracula theme park was an initiative of the Social Democrat government of the day, and an open competition was announced in which local administrations could bid to host the site. Nevertheless, there were suspicions in Sighișoara that the selection had always been a done deal, the result of shady business connections between local politicians and the Ministry of Tourism (Câmpeanu 2008: 46-7). At the formal announcement of the winner in July 2001, Tourism Minister Dan Matei Agathon lauded "the political potential of the 'Germanic' space" in Transylvania (quoted in Câmpeanu 2008: 65). This was partly a goodwill gesture to the Saxon community in the town and in diaspora. "But what this German innuendo was mainly doing," Câmpeanu asserts, "was sketching and accessing an imaginary—let's call it modern or developmental—where Romanian hopes for a Western future and a Western prosperity have been settling for decades" (2008: 65). Germanness stood for a "work ethic, seriousness and success" (2008: 65).

The Dracula Park affair is a good example of how such symbolic affordance becomes tangled in national, European and global cultural politics. In Agathon's account, Saxon specificity was assimilated into the broader category of German. The plans for the park itself envisioned a sort of Disneyland, organised around the aesthetic of a generalised medieval.

[20] The description of these events that follows is drawn from Câmpeanu's exhaustive ethnography of Sighișoara and the Dracula Park project (2008: 45-97). See also Parau (2009) on the geopolitics of the affair.

Ignoring the particularities of Saxon history and style, it mobilised popular Western European fantasies of "knights, castles, jousting, princesses, craftsmanship, leather, and metal." Câmpeanu concludes,

> Dracula Park was a doubling of utopia: not only the utopia of a western service center (whose physical realization by western standards was utopic in itself), but also the Disneyesque utopia of the West's historical imagination. The park was making visible the desire of the locals to be the West's object of desire. (2008: 71)

Not only would the park realise a Western European standard and form in Romania, it would be recognised as such by a Western audience and clientele, conclusively marking Romania's belonging in Europe. Based as it was on modern capitalist development and a foreign chronotope of desire, the particulars of local German-ness were irrelevant to this dynamic. The park's image of prosperity diverged markedly from that embedded in the conservationist vision of Saxon village character.

The appeal to local historical continuity gave an air of democratic legitimacy to the project, but it also left the promoters dependent on local affirmation, which was not forthcoming. The initial objection came from Sighișoara's Lutheran Evangelical clergy, who stressed the insult of overwriting Saxon heritage with Dracula aesthetics (2008: 49, 51). As this line of argument was likely to alienate the wider Romanian public, however, it was quickly replaced with a focus on the deleterious material effects that building the park would have on the historical monuments in the town citadel (2008: 82-5). This rebuff to Agathon's claims to be working in their interest forced him to drop the German association. In response, he doubled down on the possibilities that Dracula afforded, declaring the character to be a "pretext to put the foreign tourists in contact with Romania, the real Romania, the profound Romania, the Romania of faith, the Romania of history, and the Romania of tradition" (quoted in Câmpeanu 2008: 75; cf. Iordanova 2007). The Lutherans' objections were represented as a paranoid, backward fear of Dracula imagery as satanic. Aesthetics were bracketed off as a means to an end.

A different line of opposition came from a handful of Sighișoarans who objected on environmentalist grounds. The main site of the park was to be located on the Breite plateau, an oak pasture surrounded by woodland. Câmpeanu writes that "part of the plateau had been declared a protected area a few years [before], but this was not public knowledge at the

time” (2008: 47).[21] What the park’s planners saw as a wasteland, the environmental activists argued was an invaluable site of biodiversity. The activists eventually united with the Lutherans and heritage conservationists under the epithet “Sustainable Sighișoara” (*Sighișoara Durabilă*). The concept of sustainability did not have local currency at the time, but had been suggested by a visiting German friend of one member as an umbrella term that did not privilege any one of the multiple agendas (2008: 92-3). Perhaps more significantly, it allowed the group to align themselves with international organisations for whom the “sustainability” held significant currency. This in turn gave foreign critiques of the park more weight, as the critics could point to a local interest group whom they were supporting (2008: 61-2).

Among these supporting organisations, the Mihai Eminescu Trust were crucial in bridging the gap between local and international actors. Jessica Douglas-Home wrote several articles for the British press criticising the Dracula Park plans (Parau 2009: 126-7). The Trust also alerted UNESCO’s World Heritage Committee that a world heritage site was under threat. ICOMOS, an advisory body to UNESCO, subsequently recommended that the Romanian government move the project elsewhere (Câmpeanu 2008: 61). Douglas-Home and other representatives of international organisations made a similar demand in an open letter to the Romanian President Ion Iliescu, asserting that the park would “transform the history of Romania in [sic] a caricature. Far from being a reason for pride, it will bring Romania nothing but ridicule. It is just as if the French accepted building a Disneyland inside Versailles, or the Italians—in Venice” (quoted in Câmpeanu 2008: 86). The rhetoric of embarrassment and pride mobilised by the conservationists played directly on culturally intimate fears about European belonging.

Agathon continued to brazenly assert that the park had international support, even while clouds gathered. After a badly-received press conference in London, he returned to Romania declaring that several large companies were interested in investing and that UNESCO were complimentary about the plans. These claims were exposed as lies in the Romanian press (2008: 60). Indeed, in the absence of international backers (Iordanova 2007: 51), a public sale of shares had been organised to fund the project. This was especially targeted at local residents, and the promise of great future returns was therefore crucial if the

[21] It is unclear to me on whose initiative this protection was introduced, and Câmpeanu does not say. It is possible that the MET was already involved, having started ecological surveying at least in 2000, before the Dracula Park project was announced (Mountford and Akeroyd 2005: 35).

project was to get off the ground. Glossy plans presented the amphitheater, jousting ground, artificial lake, rides and an "International Institute of Vampirology," alongside shops, restaurants, hotels and a purpose-built train station, all in a detail that made the attractions—and the profitability—tangible (Câmpeanu 2008: 68). Anna Tsing (2005: 55-77) has noted how, under global capitalist conditions, dramatic performance and economic performance overlap. In a process of "spectacular accumulation," the possibilities of a place, idea or company must be staged vividly in order to attract investment (2005: 57). Indeed, the park promotion met general enthusiasm among the local audience, but a lack of cash and the expectation that economic benefits would be indirect (through local economic growth) resulted in only 60% of the shares being sold (Câmpeanu 2008: 57, 62).

The auction of shares attracted attention at a national level. The Social Democrat Prime Minister Adrian Năstase had "personally invested the equivalent of 4500 USD in order to show his confidence in the success of the project" (2008: 57). Journalists, civil society organisations and opposition politicians leaped on this to declare the project another case of party-political scheming and accuse the park's supporters, the majority of whom came from the PSD, of developing corrupt public-private initiatives. In response, the Social Democrats asserted that National Liberal parliamentarians wanted to move the project into territories that they controlled and, adopting a populist tack, accused local protestors (who did, after all, form a minority) of blocking job creation. The populist credentials of the project had been established not only through claims of economic growth but also through the appeal to mass tourism. The heritage conservationists had rubbished this as kitsch, but it did in fact have wide appeal in Romania. More darkly, Ministry of Tourism officials publicly threatened National Liberal politicians with the exposure of compromising personal information from the files of the secret service (2008: 57-9).

What finally brought the project down, according to Cristina Parau (2009), was the ability of the international heritage organisations to leverage a threat against Romania's accession to the European Union, a matter that the Social Democrat government cared deeply about. Encouraged by the World Heritage Committee and Greenpeace,[22] the European Parliament's Culture Committee wrote to Bucharest, suggesting that the project could jeopardise the timetable for Romania's accession (2009: 127-8). This schedule had already

[22] In order to neuter the environmental protests, park proponents created a front organisation under the name "Greenpeace Romania," which issued statements in support of the project. This had forced the real Greenpeace to enter the fray and demand that they desist (Câmpeanu 2008: 94-5).

been agreed, but only on the condition that Romania upheld all international conventions to which it was a signatory. As one Romanian NGO put it, polemically,

> The Government is forever declaring that its first priority is integration into Europe; if so, it should refrain from any act that might taint the European cultural heritage . . . [It] should be in the vanguard of any campaign aimed at protecting this… the cultural heritage in Transylvania is our evidence that we belong to the European cultural space. (Pro-Europe League 2001, quoted in Parau 2009: 126)

By linking the heritage-based register of cultural belonging in Europe with the matter of institutional belonging to the EU, two scales that are ostensibly similar but have significantly different political and economic ramifications, the opponents of Dracula Park succeeded in attacking the government where it hurt.

The final nail in the coffin came when Prince Charles visited Sighișoara at the height of the affair, on the MET's invitation. During the visit, the Prince telephoned President Iliescu to present the case for sustainable development. From the very next day, government officials started presenting a far more ambivalent stance towards the project (Parau 2009: 128). As Parau (2009: 128-9) notes, since his 1998 visit the Prince had become one of Romania's staunchest external supporters, and Britain had been a key patron in Romania's nomination for EU accession (cf. Gallagher 2009: 29). The government was unwilling to jeopardise either their political relations with Britain or the friendship of the Prince, which had become a matter of national pride and mutual respect.

Not long after, the Social Democrats commissioned a feasibility study of the theme park plans by international accountancy firm PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC). Unsurprisingly, the resulting report observed that the site did not have the necessary infrastructure for such a park and that demand in the European market had been greatly overstated. PwC recommended moving the project to Snagov, outside Bucharest (Parau 2009: 128-9; Câmpeanu 2008: 63; Iordanova 2007: 52-3). The government immediately announced that they would do so—and the project was never heard of again. Spectacular performances were tamed by the authoritative rationality of the audit. But neither was this entirely free of performance. "PwC was commissioned with the 'anticipated result' that Sighișoara would be rated sub-optimal - a face-saving strategy the cabinet used to 'extricate' itself from the project, once it became clear that going ahead would be too damaging" (Parau 2009: 129).

This had been suggested to Agathon by none other than one of the opposing NGOs, the Pro Patrimonio Foundation, and sealed a relatively gracious defeat to the dispute. It also left the MET as the dominant voice setting the agenda for local development.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has documented how a British organisation supporting intellectual freedom under socialism in Romania was transformed into a multi-stranded conservationist and rural revitalisation programme focused on Transylvania. This case illustrates Douglas Holmes's (2009) observation that liberal and illiberal principles are being fused in experimental ways in the post-Maastricht Treaty EU. The fusion documented here—between integralist conceptions of place and built form, liberal economics, and neoliberal technologies of calculation and incentivisation—was particularly unique, emerging from a distinctive site of Anglo-Romanian transnational connection and, especially, comparison. It included both technocratic and romantic imperatives, held in an unresolved tension that nevertheless created a wide space of social, political and affective affordances. As I noted in the introduction, this composite of principles formed a significant resource for the young Săseștians to draw on in their own liberal identity-construction and political projects, resources that included new imaginaries and valuations of local place (a place which many of their peers had abandoned) and practical resources for socio-economic change. The account I have given here is genealogical. In the next chapter, I explore how some of these principles and resources were mobilised by the young liberals, and how they reached certain social limits in the space of the village. Failures of modernisation and participation stimulated further reflections and responses from liberal actors that allow us to explore the second major strand of their genealogy, national intellectual discourse.

CHAPTER TWO

ROMANCING THE ROMANIAN PUBLIC: A DIALOGUE

INTRODUCTION

The clear blue sky of spring stretches over the bustling courtyard, as people meander back and forth between stalls of cakes and jams, home-made ice cream, and a hunter's-style cauldron of meat stew bubbling over an open fire. Local families mingle with lycra-clad cyclists and chic urbanites, enjoying the festivities of Săsești's strawberry festival. I settle down at a table with István and Aurelia, a couple from a very isolated village towards Agnita, as their two young sons play nearby. We had met two years previously at a local produce market held over two days in the spectacular village of Biertan, where they had a stall selling their homemade brandies in ornamental bottles. Here, they had just returned from a tour of the festival by a very proud Ana, the young woman who I introduced at the beginning of the thesis, who had been at Biertan too. As well as the stalls and the prettiest monuments of the village, Ana had taken them around her workshop, a smaller kitchen than the rustic one in which we had discussed the hopes for a technocratic future. The gleaming silver and white room, authorised by the state sanitation authority to produce food for market sale, formed the home base from which she served meals to visiting groups of national and international tourists and cooked up sweet and savoury preserves to sell to visitors passing through. The money from this, together with her husband George's income from specialist construction work, provided the couple with a modest but comfortable living. This had taken time and effort to establish however, and before they had developed a regular clientele and stable relationships with tourism firms the two had passed through some hard times, living in an unrenovated house owned by Ana's sister, scraping money together and relying on her parents' assistance for many of their domestic needs.

This was in the past, however. On the day of the festival, Aurelia and István were clearly enamoured with the projects and community engagement that had been achieved in the village, and Aurelia talked of their hopes to get funding from their Local Action Group to open a guesthouse. She looked around at the bustle of people, then continued, "We weren't going to come today, it's such a long drive, but then we decided 'okay, let's go and see what's

there.' And I'm so glad we did! It's such a breath of fresh air to meet with so many people who think like you, who you can get along with."

The verb for 'get along,' *a înțelege*, has layered meanings, and literally translates as 'to understand.' It is used in many contexts, and for many different kinds of relationships in which people come to 'an understanding' with one another. The congruence between the colloquial, relational meaning and a more formal concept of understanding in terms of reason and rationality was not accidental. For Aurelia and István, rare was the opportunity in which one could meet with other like-minded people. Not that they didn't have relations with their neighbours and fellow villagers, but there was a different quality to the manners and mindset of the young, vibrant people who had collected at the festival. "We have a good team coming together," Ana commented, referring to a nucleus of friends in Săsești and a wider network of friends, collaborators and acquaintances that stretched across the region and further afield.

This figure of good relations was marked against a more ambivalent ground, however: The Romanian public sphere. At the end of the last chapter, we saw how the public debate over Dracula Park took an antagonistic turn in which threats and condescension were mobilised by the various sides. Rather than being distinctive, this was seen by most Romanians as an everyday condition of public interaction. Not only did this make stepping into the public sphere a fraught activity, but it also potentially jeopardised the practical work of development. In this chapter, I look at how village liberals attempted to negotiate a public sphere dominated by, as they saw it, negativist attitudes and manners (including conformism, bad faith and offhanded criticism) in order to realise the vision of rural revitalisation described in the previous chapter. In doing so, we can also explore why exactly that vision appealed to them, given its external origins and romantic excesses.

I noted that the Anglo-Romanian vision brought together liberal and illiberal elements in an idiosyncratic fusion. This fusion is explored further in this chapter, moving beyond the transnational milieu to focus on how conservationism intersects with post-communist liberal intellectual genealogies and historical narratives of Romanian modernity. In order to negotiate public negativism, liberals mobilised two communicative ideals. The first, rational dialogue, was an attempt to form a common frame of discussion with others in order to work deliberatively towards solving the everyday problems of development in a way that respected the desires of the community while also taking into account scientific expertise. The second, a poetic romanticism, was mobilised instrumentally to break through the sedimented habits of public debate, inspiring people to move beyond commonsensical negativism and to engage in

individual, creative action. These had different sources, but complemented one another in Romanian liberals' quest to restructure the public sphere. Like the Dracula Park debate, they were also shot through with concerns for cultural intimacy, although the extent to which this was the case varied between public intellectuals on the national stage and rural liberals in the Saxon villages for whom Europe, rather than the nation, stood as the major horizon of community and development.

The chapter is divided into two parts. The first looks at some problems of infrastructural development and disputes over conservationist principles in Săsești. It follows Ana's attempt to initiate and maintain a public dialogue on how these problems could be managed, demonstrating some of the tensions in relations that Aurelia was glad to find an alternative to. The second part of the chapter turns to the differing views on participation in the tourism industry. It outlines why some people had withdrawn from participating, and the rhetorical resources used to negotiate this withdrawal. From this reflection on rhetoric, I turn to look at the pragmatic value of romanticism as a means of changing the public sphere. In both parts I draw on liberal intellectual texts as well as ethnography. The two sets of disputes, over infrastructure and tourism, tended to reproduce a sense among liberals of the warping of the public sphere as an effect of historical legacies, both Romania's lingering "traditionalism" and the malign effects of "communism." Intellectuals provide particularly clear accounts of this, although their position differs from that of village liberals, as I discuss at the end of the chapter. I return in the conclusion to the implications of this orientation to historical legacies for seeing liberalism, with Foucault, as an oppositional and critical tool, for we must pay close attention to how the object of liberal criticism, whether governance or the public sphere or some other object, is understood by liberals themselves.

Before turning to part one, some brief theoretical reflections on dialogue are necessary.

DIALOGUE AND TRUTH

Language ideologies are "ideas about language and about how communication works as a social process" that "enact ties of language to identity, to aesthetics, to morality, and to epistemology" (Woolard 1998: 3; cf. Schieffelin et al. 1998; Kroskrity 2000). Richard Bauman and Charles Briggs (2003) have documented the emergence of ideologies of reasoned language in the Enlightenment, while a small but growing literature has analysed the entrance of liberal language ideologies into non-liberal settings in the twentieth and

twenty-first centuries (e.g. Lempert 2012; Ansell 2009, 2015, 2017; Cohen 2015). In a recent article, Harri Englund (2018) has brought to the fore the importance of dialogue as a liberal value, against common anthropological depictions of liberals as autonomous rights-bearing subjects with a singular voice, detached from social relations in order to speak truth to power. Englund points to the importance of both speaking and listening as a liberal practice, against the analytical privileging of *parrhesia*, fearless speech (e.g. Boyer 2013; cf. Foucault 2001, 2011).

Englund (2018) draws attention to the origins of liberal principles of dialogue in the work of J.S. Mill, notably the idea of truth as a matter of "reconciling and combining oppositions" (Mill 1998: 54, quoted in Englund 2018: 106). The dimension to which I attend, while having a specific history in post-socialist Romania, as I will discuss, has its intellectual roots in the mid to late twentieth century as part of what Gary Remer (2008) calls the "conversational model" of political deliberation (as opposed to the oratorical).[1] This is exemplified by the work of Jurgen Habermas (1984) on communicative rationality and Paul Grice (1989) on conversational cooperation, as well as conversation analysis theories that "underscor[e] the interactional nature of conversation as a socially coordinated achievement in which the utterances of one actor influence those of others" (Graham 1993: 719). Grice argues that,

> Our talk exchanges do not normally consist of a succession of disconnected remarks, and would not be rational if they did. They are characteristically, to some degree at least, cooperative efforts; and each participant recognises in them, to some extent, a common purpose or set of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction. (1989: 26)

As Jonathan Larson notes, such a language ideology "depends on an idealization of sincerity and civility as well as a model of imagined community consisting of individual speech acts evaluated in terms of their content" (2013: 66). The universality of Grice's model has been rigorously critiqued by linguistic anthropologists (e.g. Keenan 1976; Haviland 1988, 1997; Danziger 2010; Pagliai 2010; Carey 2017), yet little attention has been paid to expectations of conversational cooperation as an ethnographic object. One of the major elements of this ideal,

[1] For the deeper historical roots of dialogue, see Peters (1999).

as Grice makes clear, is the relevance of speech acts to one another in the progression of conversational exchange. Larson (2013: 96-102) has noted how the issue of relevance was an explicit concern in post-socialist Slovakian public debate. He observes that disputes over what was relevant or not were frequently used to police the expression of emotion. Emotive interventions were framed as a risk to discussion, because, according to cosmopolitan intellectuals, “the opinions of Slovak masses were particularly subject to manipulation by irrational emotions” (2013: 99). As in Romania, this was widely understood to be a problem of historical legacies of society, culture and politics, and of communism in particular. In contrast to Larson, I focus on the effect that breakdowns of relevance have for the liberal speaker. This frequently produced a sense of the absurdity of the whole endeavour, in line with wider discourses on the absurdity of Romanian modernity that I discuss in the first part of the chapter.

This has implications for how we understand the relation between *parrhesia* and dialogue. In his ethnography of a Finnish *vox populi* radio show, Englund (2018) presents the commitment to one or the other principle as divided between participants: The audience members who call in to speak truth to power about current events, and the show’s producers, who must edit the programme in such a way that it preserves callers’ right to free speech against a balance of viewpoints. Englund argues that this practice of attempting to balance without censoring voices, the production of “multivocality,” is characteristic of liberal principles of dialogue, in contrast to clichéd representations of liberalism as concerned only with individual speaking subjects. The situation he describes is “hierarchical”—the radio producers have full control over the reproduction of voices. In situations where control over voice is less unitary, however, the relationship between *parrhesia* and dialogue is likely to be more varied. Parrhesiastic acts can be necessary to initiate dialogue. In such situations, the liberal dilemma then becomes how to maintain a progressive dialogue in a context where others may choose to respond with disruptive truths of their own. While this may generate classical liberal stereotypy of rational and irrational speakers, subtle questions of intention, relevance and, indeed, multivocality act also, and sometimes more significantly, to throw the principle of dialogue—and the liberal dialogist—into confusion and doubt. This is the case where dialogue is equated with cooperation. Such an equation is far from a simple ideological matter however, for it is closely connected to aspirations for a particularly efficient sort of problem solving and the expectation that such problem solving is always possible (cf. Ries 1997: 36; Dundes 1971: 100).

I.

THE GREAT CEMENTING

The credits roll on 'Tomorrowland,' an exuberant George Clooney sci-fi movie. Dogs and people stir on the couch and somebody flicks on the lights, the sudden fluorescence swamping the blue glow of the computer screen and projector. We blink, stretch and move slowly from the living room-cum-office back into the homely, flagstone-and-wood kitchen where most of the group's socialising happens. Ana pulls a couple more beers from the fridge and places one in front of me. She pours herself a glass of wine, lights a cigarette and opens her laptop to Facebook. "*Uite*, look at this Hugh." She pulls up a Facebook post by an acquaintance from Viscri, published yesterday, and turns the laptop towards me. The post is a polemic, illustrated with photographs, in which the author describes at length a sequence of events in that village beginning with the local council's decision to fell half of a small pine copse that had become infected with an arboreal disease. When the loggers arrived, in scenes seemingly out of a surrealist sketch they proceeded to cut down the healthy half of the copse in order to reach the blighted trees. And as if this senseless destruction wasn't enough, they then dragged the logs out through the centre of the village, making a muddy, mangled mess of the roads and a long segment of Fundația ADEPT's mountain bike trail, which had been constructed by a team of volunteers. The author concluded bitterly, "For some time we've been saying that we no longer want the state's 'assistance'—that much we already knew. But at the very least they could leave us in peace and not wreck what others have worked hard to create."

Her gaze drifting into the middle distance, recalling other incidents and times, Ana described how such problems were typical of the area and of Romanian in general. Her anger and astonishment were matched by a bitter recognition. As the author of the post implied, many liberal Romanian citizens had simply given up on expecting the state to do anything productive for the country and the populace. The country's post-socialist governments had largely failed to realise the gains that the exit from communism had promised. As I shall discuss, this assessment was not unique to the post-socialist moment, but formed part of a critical discourse with a much longer history. In the absence of an effective state, liberals placed their hopes in civil society to take the country forward, whether this was done by individual citizens engaging in voluntary action or by NGOs such as ADEPT and the Mihai Eminescu Trust. The incident in Viscri unfortunately pointed to the inability even of

voluntary activity to escape the state's deconstructive tendencies. In the hope of combatting such deconstruction, liberal critics turned to the public sphere, to mobilise alternative forms of deliberation and consensus among local communities that could challenge the disinterested logics and irresponsibilities of the state.

Ana had shared the post on her own Facebook wall, adding a few comments about the rampant use of concrete in the villages being a similar case of the state making things worse: In this case, through the imposition of "STAS" (*Standarde de Stat*, state standards) that demanded, in her parody of stilted socialist ideological language, the "great cementing" (*marea cimentare*) of the villages and undermined local character (*specific*). The comment alluded to ongoing public works in Săsești that had caused a degree of controversy. Traditionally, drainage ditches had been dug alongside the village roads. As these, like the roads themselves, were simply made of earth, they had to be regularly maintained and cleaned by village residents. This had been organised communally, through the neighbourhood associations (German *Nachbarschaft*, Romanian *vecinatate*), but such volunteer effort was mostly abandoned during the demographic upheavals of the 1990s.[2] Then, in autumn 2015, somewhat unexpectedly to those not privy to local council meetings, the town hall had dug up a stretch of ditch on one street and placed an angular, prefab concrete trench; a strip of gleaming pearly grey alongside the dull black of the road. The road had been tarmacked for the very first time earlier in the year, but was already well muddied by the daily passage of cows, horse carts, tractors and sleek 4x4s. Many villagers had welcomed the new trench, admiring the concrete as "clean" (*curat*) and modern in comparison to a tract of open earth. Ana and George, in contrast, were quite alarmed.

Their objections had multiple grounds. On the one hand, tarmac roads and concrete ditches reduced the distinctiveness of the village, replacing the traditional Saxon form with an unexceptional style of cheap materials and mass-produced forms that could be found in any urban space across Romania, Eastern Europe, or indeed the globe. As well as being aesthetically unappealing this jeopardised the tourism industry, for the more indistinctive the village became the less appealing it would be to visitors. On the other hand, Ana was also concerned for public health and safety. The concrete stops water from draining away into the

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[2] The neighbourhood associations, which previously existed for every street and were divided (like the streets) by ethnicity, were reduced to two for the Romanian-Saxon community by 2015. These were not divided by ethnicity but, according to members of the lower status one, by relative wealth and influence. Their responsibilities were limited to grave-digging and the disposal of some common property (crockery and similar items used for communal events).

earth, she told me, and rather than being clean the new channels leave waste visible along the side of the street for all to see and smell, whether tourist or local. "And don't think that people don't flush their toilets into those drains!" She gestured towards the front of the house. "It's like the steps outside. Dobrogeanu [their neighbour] flushes his washing machine down there." A bare bank of grass leading from their house down to a lower street had been dug up and remodelled the previous year by the town hall, this work too making liberal use of concrete. There were two purposes to this. The first was to install a set of steps. The bank was steep, and in the winter it was especially hazardous for the older women who traversed it each evening, wheeling heavy pails of fresh milk behind them on their way to the centralised milk collection point. The second purpose was to reconstruct a public well at the foot of the bank that had been polluted by the same Dobrogeanu, a wealthy sheep farmer and frequent *bête noir* of the village's liberals, who had painted his house a garish green and then washed the excess paint down the slope and straight into the water supply. The town hall's contractors had constructed wide steps with a drainage channel running alongside, both made of concrete and sparsely studded with cobbles.[3] A line of green sludge had accumulated in the channel, and it was to this that Ana was gesturing. I wondered later whether this was not preferable to further pollution of groundwater—but the well was no longer usable anyhow. This had inconvenienced a number of households in the vicinity who did not have a private well in their own yard. The village's piped water supply was not potable, and they were forced to rely on neighbours' goodwill to let them collect clean water each morning.

"This is the stupidity of giving people water [on tap] before giving them a sewage system," Ana said, shaking her head in disbelief. The expansion of village infrastructure was an ongoing project during my fieldwork, facilitated by yet also at the whim of spasmodic EU funding opportunities. A water purification station had been built at the most reliable spring just outside the village in the early 2010s, and most of the houses in Săsești had been connected to the pipe network. But, as reliable as the spring was, the small reserve lakes were regularly exhausted in the summer, and purification was often more ideal than actual if the town hall ran out of the necessary chemicals. A project to lay a network of sewage pipes and build a treatment station was begun around the same time, but the initial funding was not sufficient to complete this. Half the network was laid but then lay dormant, unconnected to

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[3] The remainder of the slope was grassed with a border of cypress shrubs which also annoyed Ana, for it reproduced the "Hungarian" (rather than Saxon) style of the contractors, who came from the nearby Szekler region.

anything. More funding was obtained in 2015 and the network was extended, but once again it was not sufficient to complete the system.

Ana's assertion highlighted two things: The disjointed temporality of development and the irresponsibility of local residents in regard to the little infrastructure that they had (cf. Harvey 2010: 35-6). As I discuss in the next section, this echoed a discourse about the nature of Romanian modernity and its discontents that dated back to the nineteenth century. In this, both issues—temporal disconnect and problematic mindsets—were traced to a problem of the public sphere.

WONDERS OF EUROPE

Ana's comment on the backwards temporality of development poetically paralleled a famous fragment from the influential article *Against the contemporary direction in Romanian culture* by nineteenth-century literary critic and politician Titu Maiorescu:

> Before having a political party which felt the need for a newspaper of its own and before having a public interested in learning and thus needing to read, we founded political organs and literary reviews and falsified and disdained journalism. Before having village teachers, we established schools in the villages, and before having an extensive cultural life outside the schools, we created atheneums and cultural associations and thus we cheapened the spirit of literary societies. Before having even the shadow of original scientific activity, we founded the Rumanian academy… and we falsified the idea of an academy. Before having the necessary musicians, we created a music conservatory; before having a single painter of any value, we founded an École des Beaux Arts; before having a single play of any merit, we built a national theatre, and in the process we cheapened and falsified all these forms of culture. (Maiorescu 1868, quoted in Hitchins 1994: 62)

Maiorescu was a founder of the *Junimea* (Youth) movement, a community of intellectuals who were dissatisfied with the direction that Romania had been taken by the dominant intellectual class, the liberal "forty-eighters" (*pașoptiști*), named for their adherence to the principles of the revolutions that swept across Europe in 1848. Both sides, liberal and *Junimist*, were comprised of intellectuals educated in Western universities, and both held

firmly to the values of civilisation that had emerged in occidental Europe, but they disagreed on how these values should be institutionalised in the new Romanian nation-state.

Inspired by the French revolution, the forty-eighters had imported wholesale the political organisation, industrial aspirations and cultural forms of French republicanism into Romania, including a liberal constitution and a reorientation towards French literary norms (Hitchins 1994: 55). The *Junimists*, by contrast, were largely educated in Germanic philosophical traditions, including social evolutionism and Herderian nationalism, and were critical of this zeal. From their perspective, the importation of Western institutions and culture was inappropriate to the social and cultural conditions of 19th-century Romania (Hitchins 1994: 56-65). It produced, in a phrase of Maiorescu's (1998 [1868]) that has stimulated incessant discussion up to the present day, "forms without substance" (*formele fără fond*). The forty-eighters had imported all the outer forms of civilisation—newspapers, a constitution, an Academy, etc.—before the cultural activity which these institutions facilitated existed in any substantial measure within Romanian society. Maiorescu believed that this was not only inapt, because culture and institutions must develop gradually, but actively detrimental to the development of that cultural activity, for it birthed aberrations.[4]

For the *Junimists*, this was the case above all else in language, which formed the target of sharp satires. Maiorescu wrote of a 'verbal drunkenness' (*beția de cuvinte*) among his literary peers, calling out abuses of grammar and neologisms as indicative of excessive pretensions and a lack of intellectual care. This criticism reached its apogee in the works of playwright I.L. Caragiale, a satirist who influenced the Romanian founders of the surrealist Dada movement (Sandqvist 2006) and the post-WWII theatre of the absurd in France, via playwright Eugène Ionesco (Beiu 2014; cf. Esslin 1968). Caragiale's scenarios parodied the manners and aspirations of the '*bonjouriste*' (Francophile) intellectual and political class, and especially their "bizarre eloquence consisting of expressions as high-sounding as they are miraculously inept, gathered from an inexhaustible storehouse of the most arrant nonsense" (Ionesco, quoted in Beiu 2014: 970). As Adela Beiu (2014) argues, the *Junimea* group firmly established the association of Romanian modernity with the absurd.

The *Junimea* critique had primarily focused on the conditions of the bourgeois public sphere. After the Second World War and the arrival in power of the Romanian Communist Party, the subject of absurdist humour shifted significantly towards the material world. The

[4] This problem of the imitation of Western institutional and political forms, particularly liberal forms, recurred throughout the Balkans (Daskalov and Mishkova 2014).

incongruity of Bucharest's built environment had been well noted in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, its fragmented modernisation leading to startling juxtapositions of ornate boulevards and "stinking ditch[es]" (Sandqvist 2006: 110). But it was not until the Communist Party began to extend a national infrastructure in earnest throughout the country that the vagaries of material progress became a ubiquitous cultural touchstone.

As in other Soviet-style socialist countries, the strict control of ideology produced a surrealism that permeated everyday life, as public language, which was subject to tight censorship (Vianu 1998) became cursed to circulate in clichés and ossified constructions that were ever-more detached from reality (Yurchak 2005). The humour of this frequently emerged from the discontinuity between ideological discourse and actual material conditions. This was amplified in the Romania of the 1980s, when Ceaușescu's drive to pay off the national debt produced grave shortages throughout the country (Ban 2012). Despite the censorship, subtle subversive jokes could still slip through unnoticed. Maria Ionița presents the example of Ioan Groșan's science fiction novels, in which "future technology is retrofitted over inefficient agricultural practices and used in pursuit of paltry goals like growing turnips and raising pigs in outer space" and the interplanetary space stations stock only cans of stewed vegetables and jars of pickles (Ionița 2011: 712). Space travel, the pinnacle of technological development, bestows upon humanity nothing more nor less than some "great pork rinds" (Groșan, quoted in Ionița 2011: 713).

Catherine Alexander notes that the Soviet joke genre of the *anekdot* can be located in "a tradition of pitch black humor addressing an absurd world, certainly a world where excessive bureaucratic rationality produced unreason and where the overt aim of the collective good wreaked hardship on individuals and families" (2009: 49; cf. Yurchak 2005; Ries 1997). Moreover, "the post-Soviet situation seemed nothing but a reprise of this theme with a different ideological framing," namely privatisation (2009: 49). In some cases, privatisation involved the piecemeal or wholesale deconstruction of perfectly functional infrastructures as properties were sold off in a thousand different pieces, as Katherine Verdery notes for irrigation pipes on a Romanian state farm (2003: 293). Where they weren't literally deconstructed, the multiplication of agents responsible for managing newly disaggregated properties produced bafflement (cf. Alexander 2009: 55-6).

Contemporary examples of the absurd were close at hand in Săsești. In 2015, the second phase of sewage pipe-laying took place concurrently with the tarmacking of the roads, conducted by two separate firms. The pipes were laid first and, after preparing the ground, the

tarmac was poured on one stretch of village road. A few days later, after it had set, the sewage contractors returned to place several manholes in the new surface. No sooner had these been dug than the road contractors returned and laid the second layer of tarmac over the top, completely covering the manholes, which had to be dug up and laid again. Further afield, the poor state of national infrastructure provided a source of regular commentary and debate in the Romanian media. The apparent inability of the state to extend the motorway network beyond that built decades earlier, during socialism, has become an especially powerful symbol in this regard. It is a persistent trope in political critique, the responsibility for which is bounced back and forth between government and opposition parties. An article in the *Adevărul* (The Truth) newspaper declared:

> After the prizes for the most expensive motorways (the "Bechtel" and Comarnic-Brașov routes) and the longest construction period (Bucharest-Constanța), Romania presents a new wonder of traffic infrastructure: We have the first length of motorway in Europe which was so badly designed and constructed that it has to be demolished and rebuilt. (Străuț 2015)

Romanian infrastructure was located within European space yet outside European norms: Too expensive, too delayed. This exceptionality was laced with irony through the rhetoric of prize-winning and the tongue-in-cheek suggestion that being "first" for such a dubious achievement was somehow laudable. When the award was for "the most polluted town in Europe," as various European news outlets have labelled the town of Copșa Mica, the black humour trod a very fine line between comedy and tragedy (Berge 2012).

There are many reasons why infrastructural construction failed or broke down. These included the unequal distribution of expertise, weak chains of communication and the fragmentation of responsibilities and contracts among a multitude of public and private organisations (cf. Appel 2012). As I show in the last chapter, temporalities of national politics also contributed to environments of legal, financial and material mess in which mediating between conflicting imperatives and needs was very difficult. In an echo of Maiorescu's critique, problems of empty formalism were a significant element of these issues.

Despite such structural issues, the expertise of individuals was a recurrent concern among the young liberals, and stories of startling ignorance featured heavily in the corpus of absurdist tales. George had been working on the construction of an acquaintance's new

guesthouse when the project's architect had passed through. A discussion ensued about a stretch of electrical wiring and George cited the current in kilowatts, to which the architect replied in irritation and confusion, "What are these 'kilowatts'? Just give me the number in watts." In another incident, an inspector from the sanitation directorate had come to inspect the registered kitchen of one of the group's friends from a nearby village. Upon hearing that the owner produced jams, the inspector replied, "Oh, I make jams at home too. But it's not necessary to hot-fill them! You can just pop an aspirin on top and it keeps them preserved for a very long time."[5] Both stories produced incredulity when satirically reenacted over beers in Ana and George's kitchen (cf. Manning 2008). "Can you imagine!" An architect who had somehow become qualified without understanding the meaning of a basic term such as kilo and a sanitation inspector who thought adding an aspirin tablet to food was a sufficient sterilisation measure. In both cases, professional roles and formal qualifications belied a lack of the most basic expertise, exposed by the professionals' own failure to perform the expertise that their roles claimed (Carr 2010).

This attention to human failings over and above structural causes is common throughout post-socialist Central and Eastern Europe (cf. Larson 2013: 46, 53-5; Ries 1997). In part, it is due to the etiological privilege given to historically situated collective identities—character—in accounting for backwardness and social failings (cf. Herzfeld 1993; Larson 2013: 54). The orientation to people and their character over structure arguably also reflected the abandonment of the state noted earlier, and the corresponding turn—among liberals at least—to voluntary action among citizens as a medium for change. The failures of one's fellow citizens therefore held higher stakes. There were two key responses to these issues. I address the first, dialogue, here, before turning to romanticism in the second part.

A SHORT HISTORY OF DIALOGUE IN ROMANIA

Ideologies of *dialog* are of relatively recent provenance in Romania, appearing in public discourse in the wake of the December 1989 revolution. Dialogue as a political principle was rapidly adopted by the transitional government of the National Salvation Front (NSF), largely composed of reform communists. As a "critical reasoning public sphere," this would serve as a "a halfway house on the road to full pluralism," in which the regime and the public would

[5] Hot-fill methods involve sterilising the jars and lids with heat and filling them while the jam remains above a certain temperature, then sealing them immediately. The idea that aspirin worked as a preservative circulated widely in Romania.

better respond to one another, but it still privileged an expert sphere (Siani-Davis 2005: 212). Dialogue was simultaneously taken up within liberal intellectual spheres, especially by those who had been marginalised by the Ceaușescu regime or held quasi-dissident status.[6] One of the first proponents was the philosopher and, briefly, minister of education Mihai Șora, whose 1990 book *I & You & Him & Her… Or the generalised dialogue* "offered an original defence of key liberal principles and values such as the primacy of civil society, political pluralism, and social dialogue" (Crăiuțu 2010: 265). The place of dialogue was institutionalised through the founding in 1990 of the Group for Social Dialogue (GSD), incorporating dissident intellectuals of various stripes, and their journal, *Revista 22*. The group had as its scope the creation of an active civil society, and the journal provided a forum for open and independent debate (Mungiu 1996). *22*, along with similar journals such as *Dilema Veche*, continued to be prominent sites of liberal intellectual and political commentary on contemporary Romanian affairs during my fieldwork. Such commentary was primarily consumed by the young liberals in Săsești via the internet, where such journals had a strong presence, rather than in print, complemented by television and books. Figures such as Șora were also greatly admired.

"Dialogue," the Romanian philosopher Alexandru Dragomir says,

> is a type of public discourse, the final aim of which is to arrive at an understanding [*înțelegere*] between participants. Dialogue is tied to logic and rationality. The presupposition is that rationality is equally divided between people. If it was not, then the proposal to engage in dialogue would be absurd: why try to engage in dialogue if rationality, the fundamental instrument of dialogue, is not equally shared between people? (Dragomir, quoted in Patapievici 2014: 215)

His reference to *înțelegere* is intertextual with Aurelia's usage of the term in relation to getting along, albeit in a much more codified form. Dragomir asserts that dialogue properly achieved "functions as an ascesis, as a source of intellectual harmony" that excludes the "vices" of conversation, "bad-faith [*reaua-credință*], callousness [*nesimțirea*], ideologism

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[6] A number of these intellectuals had at least initially collaborated with the NSF, but subsequently withdrew when it became clear they were just being used to provide a veneer of legitimacy (Siani-Davis 2005). Siani-Davis notes that several reform communist members of the NSF were aware of Habermas (2005: 212). Liberal intellectuals had more direct engagements with Western European and North American philosophers writing on dialogue and political communication, for example Andrei Pleșu's (1995: 49) account of a fellowship held with Bruce Ackerman (among the latter's relevant work, see e.g. 1989)—not to mention the Mihai Eminescu Trust's deliveries of academic texts in the late 1980s.

[*ideologizarea*], misconstrual [*răstălmăcirea*], etc." (quoted in Patapievici 2014: 219). While this statement is framed as a general observation, the focus on "vices" points to an implicit conception of the nature of the Romanian public sphere as dominated by negative manners. We can see this in more detail by focusing briefly on a single text by a liberal intellectual, which attempts to put this in a historical and sociological perspective. The interest of this account is less its accuracy than the way it brings together common tropes and other intellectual frameworks.

In 2007, Horia-Roman Patapievici published a short book entitled *On Ideas and Blockages*, reissued in 2014 under the title *Why We Do Not Have a Market of Ideas* (Patapievici 2014). Inspired by Șora's call for a "generalised dialogue of ideas," the book starts from the observation that, in Romanian culture, values and ideas do not circulate, and attempts to explain why this is so. By circulate, Patapievici means "the complex mechanism of recognition, evaluation, criticism and integration of ideas with respect to certain criteria and standards which are actively and continually negotiated between all participants in the exchange" (2014: 11-2). Drawing on Maiorescu, he asserts that this mechanism is the "substance" that is missing from Romania's purely formal modernity, and the means by which "truth" is produced (à la J.S. Mill).[7] This absence of dialogue is the effect of several historical conditions of the public sphere. Firstly, Patapievici argues, the archetype of intellectual exchange introduced in nineteenth century Romania was that of the "humanist intellectual," defined not by specialist expertise but by general knowledge (*cultură generală*). The value of this was performative, a form of cultural capital in the bourgeois social field, rather than for the production of intellectual truths (2014: 65-83). This situation continued to define intellectual exchange into the twentieth century, until the imposition of communism substantially altered the shape of the public sphere. Those fields of specialist expertise that did exist were greatly truncated, the public sphere was highly supervised by the Party (and dominated by *cultură generală*), and "true" dialogue was reduced to the most private spaces (2014: 80).

Such representations of critical thought and discussion as being absent during the socialist era were common throughout Central and Eastern Europe after 1989 (Larson 2013). The GSD's declaration of principles, for example, foregrounded the negative effects of communism on Romanian subjectivity. "In the first editorial of the journal *22*, communism

[7] For a critical account of Patapievici's use of Maiorescu in regards to "truth," see Rizescu (2012: 92-7).

was presented as having eroded the positive values of dignity, honor, truth, freedom, and even beauty, leaving only a false life, suffocated by fear, terror, and vulgarity" (Siani-Davis 2005). Patapievici reflects on the afterlife of the communist structuring of public sphere, observing that

> the inexistence of a true community of communication resulted in an unconnected plurality of incommensurable "realities." This was the inheritance of the communist regime and we awoke, stupefied, with it in December 1989, when the regime collapsed. We did not find ourselves, having just become free *individuals*, as members of a *collective* free community, but in the form of an incoherent plurality of non-communicating freedoms, which did not succeed in arriving at the unity of a common good. (2014: 90-91)

The opening of the public sphere after the revolution did not in itself produce social reconciliation, because that requires people to "express themselves to and recognise one another through the terms [*formularea*] of a common reality" (2014: 15). Such common discursive ground is a predicate for dialogue. Yet in post-communist Romania it was not just that a shared reality was absent, but that "we live in worlds which are not brought into communication other than through violence—and not always symbolic" (2014: 19). Unlike other Eastern European countries such as Czechoslovakia, whose peaceful ("Velvet") revolutions were matched by expectations of a smooth social transition out of communism—even if unity eroded quickly (Larson 2013: 67)—the physical violence and ambiguities surrounding key players in Romania's revolution framed the country's post-communist experience as ambivalent and antagonistic from its earliest moments (Siani-Davis 2005).

Patapievici's diagnosis is reminiscent of Classical critiques of *parrhesia*, for example Plato's characterisation of "the bad democratic city, which is all motley, fragmented, and dispersed between different interests, passions, and individuals who do not agree with each other. This bad democratic city practices *parrhesia*: anyone can say anything" (Foucault 2011: 10). Romanian society is similarly depicted by liberal intellectuals as a cacophony of voices, each speaking their own truth but neither in dialogue nor even in aesthetic concordance (compare Graham 1993). This situation challenged liberal expectations of a cooperative, progressive dialogue, but also village liberals' very status within the local community.

PARRHESIASTIC CONTRARINESS

Ana's Facebook post about the events in Viscri was an attempt to initiate a dialogue on the problems of concrete in the village, but it had not been well-received by some of her fellow residents. Among the first comments were several by Ionel, a middle-aged builder from the village who could often be seen labouring in front of one or another house. He frequently responded to such Facebook posts by Ana and others, usually critically. Ionel's affinity for concrete was well known, visible not only on the grey and slightly crumbling facade of his own house but also in the what could generously be called "unconventional" protrusions he had added to several other people's homes, often to the owners' surprise. "He's more of a *cârpaci* [repairman, but also bungler] than a builder," one younger woman commented, not un-amicably, after he finished a job at her sister's house. In his own words, "I have no interest in old things. Throw them on the fire." Accordingly, he took a belligerent stance towards conservationism. His comments took on a parrhesiastic tone of speaking truth to power about regimes of historical conservationism. This was accentuated by the fact that Viscri, where the tree-felling incident had occurred, had become the model village for conservationism, known nationally and internationally. Ionel's intervention struck Ana as somewhat beside her initial point about the state destroying things, but she attempted to engage him in discussion anyhow.

Ionel

nobody thinks about the fact that people over there are condemned to abject poverty and living like it was 1907, with the exception of 2 or 3 who fill their bank accounts

Ana

There are no unemployed in Viscri. I think that counts as an example.

Ionel

there aren't any unemployed in sasesti either

Ana

The idea was that everybody has something to do over there because there were people who built the bike trail, guesthouses, museums, restaurants, etc. Why should we destroy something that works? They have no road because it pertains to the county council…

Ionel

there will always be two sides, those who have new and want old and those who have had enough of old and want new[8]

The road in question was that connecting Viscri to the major Sighișoara-Brașov highway, renowned for its axle-breaking potholes and impassibility in winter. This state of decay was often blamed on the conservationist lobby, who were said to have blocked its modernisation in order to maintain the traditional aesthetic of the landscape, but Ana located the responsibility as lying with the state.

Ionel's lack of cooperation in producing a meaningful dialogue frustrated Ana greatly. While she understood the critical implications of his intervention, sitting in the kitchen she expressed bemusement and bafflement at the particulars of the exchange. "I've no idea why he chose 1907." The date seemed bizarre in its arbitrary specificity. Only later did I realise that it may have been an allusion to the Great Peasant Revolt of that year in the Romanian principalities[9] against entrenched poverty and landlordism (Eidelberg 1974), but this was unclear and Ana did not pick up on that meaning. Instead, for her, it contributed to an overall ambiguousness regarding Ionel's commitment to the interaction, which seemed unnecessarily —and irrelevantly—bullish.

Foucault notes that one of the conditions of *parrhesia* is sincerity. "Not only must this truth really be the personal opinion of the person who is speaking, but he must say it as being

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[8] I am taking the Facebook post to be a relatively egalitarian space of interaction, in comparison to Englund's radio editing suite, although it can be otherwise given the possibility of post authors to delete comments. Neither Ana nor her interlocutors complained of unequal voice. Rather, her explicit concern was with how to shape frames of meaning through speech and in the role of an interlocutor. On the communicational affordances of digital social media, see Gershon (2010).

[9] The historical regions of Moldavia and Wallachia, to the south and east of the Carpathian mountains. Transylvania was not incorporated into Romania until 1918.

what he thinks, [and not] reluctantly" (2011: 10-1). Given the ambiguities of Ionel's intervention, I asked Ana whether she thought he sincerely believed in what he was saying. She hesitated then replied "yes," but I sensed that the question did not quite fit. Her reply struck me more as an attempt to bracket off a cynical reading than a truly optimistic assessment of his intentions. This became clearer later in the Facebook conversation. After a number of failures to get the discussion back on track, Ana declared, "I think that I haven't made myself understood properly, or whoever doesn't understand doesn't want to understand." Despite her tentative affirmation of sincerity, she nevertheless acknowledged the possibility of bad faith. Ionel's interventions had the appearance of what I term a parrhesiastic contrariness, for while his criticism was understandable in itself, it appeared to Ana and me as a significant break from the context of discussion.

Without further explanation from Ionel himself, we were left only to speculate on what he was trying to do in the conversation. Perhaps it *was* all bad faith, and the aim was simply to be disruptive. Much like *cultură generală*, *parrhesia* has a performative element, the cultural capital afforded by presenting a contrary truth, especially within a context of masculine social competition and self-regard (cf. Herzfeld 1985). But if it was the clarity of the initial Facebook post at issue, then Ana herself was to blame. Indeed, she had constant doubts about her own skills of expression, and would occasionally ask me for feedback in this regard. A third interpretation arose in moments of irritation: Perhaps it was simply stupidity that Ionel and others couldn't follow the line of reasoning. So long as one's interlocutors declined to account for their motives, the interactional construction of meaning meant that it was very difficult to adjudicate between these interpretations; that each intervention was a response to what came before always left the potential that miscommunication was the fault of any or all participants. The philosopher Dragomir, quoted above, asserted that if all participants in a dialogue were not rational, the exercise would be fundamentally absurd. And indeed, this sense of absurdity haunted Ana's attempt to engage with Ionel. Yet the question of individual irrationality, of autonomous agents who do not live up to liberal ideals of the rational speaking subject (Englund 2018; Slotta 2017), was secondary to the more basic absurdity that was produced by ambiguities of relevance in an ostensibly dialogic interaction.

My analysis is in some ways similar to Penny Harvey and Hannah Knox's (2015: 163-85) discussion of Peruvian villagers' "refusal" to engage in the terms of debate proposed by state and corporate infrastructure project community relations teams, producing a similar sense of irrationality and absurdism for the latter (2015: 174). Harvey and Knox describe this

refusal as the mark of an "impossible" public, rather than a mainstream one (cooperative with the community relations discourse) or a counter-public (with clear oppositional aims); it was simply unclear what the intransigent actors wanted. In contrast, I attend to a case where the issue is not the refusal to engage, for the parrhesiastic register Ionel spoke in was a recognisable form of public speech, but the difficulty in telling where he sat on the boundary between cooperative and counter-public, and whether he was attempting to engage in dialogue or not. Parrhesiastic contrariness is in many ways the cousin of *stiob*, the genre of imitative satire described by Alexei Yurchak (2005) in which it is impossible to tell whether a performance is serious or ironic. Yet while *stiob*-like performance has been mobilised by leftist-liberal comedians in recent years (Boyer and Yurchak 2010; Boyer 2013), parrhesiastic contrariness is a far more antagonistic counterpart to liberal dialogue.

Ana's problem was less about policing rationality than trying to negotiate a milieu in which meaning and senselessness were hard to disentangle. Ideologies of dialogue provided few resources with which to combat problems of frame-breaking. In the remainder of the Facebook conversation, Ana's comments were littered with explicit contextualisation cues (Gumperz 1982) and meta-commentary on her own intentions. "I said clearly that…"; "The idea which I started from is that…"; "See, now we're getting too far and deviating"; "Better we return to the initial woe—something beautiful, functional, beneficial and on the road to destruction." There was a strong sense that these were little more than shouting into the wind, however. After I brought up Patapievici in one conversation, Ana noted that "not even he has succeeded particularly well!" in creating dialogue. (In fact, he is a deeply polemical figure, disliked by nationalists for an alleged anti-Romanianism and by competing circles of intellectuals for his ubiquity in the media. His book got a second edition because it had been ignored the first time—and because he is a close friend of the publishing house's director.) The overall effect was a feeling of frustration and impotence.

While the stakes of dialogue were the continued material decay of the village environment, the risk to liberals of initiating it, in their own acts of *parrhesia*, was a challenge to their status within that very environment. This is described in the next section, and will be further illustrated in chapter three.

FRIENDS AND ENEMIES

Ana was very aware that an insidious rhetoric lurked behind Ionel's provocation. This had motivated her attempt not only to counter his claims of abject poverty in Viscri but also to

pre-empt other well-worn conspiracy theories, such as the question of responsibility for the road. In the kitchen, Ana spoke to me about this dynamic further.

> There are plenty of people who agree with us [regarding conservation], they're just unwilling to say anything in public. You know, one of Ionel's brothers, he lives in Bucharest, he even sent me a private message to say that he agreed with me! Some people say we and others who speak out are 'great enemies' [*mari dușmani*] of the community. But we're not! We're critical not because we're enemies but because we want things to be done well for the community.

Such accusations contributed to a feeling of marginalisation among liberals that was reproduced in a number of contexts, as we shall also see in the next chapter. But Ana saw them as typical of responses to critical speech in general, which were met with aggressive counter-rhetoric. Further into the Facebook conversation, she felt compelled to clarify that "it's normal for us not to agree on everything but it's important to remember that that doesn't make you somebody's enemy, in fact if you draw attention to a risk it even makes you a friend!" Appeals to dialogic principles were an explicit attempt to stabilise the risk to relationships that speaking the truth entailed (Foucault 2011), in a context where the ripping of ties was perceived (not without some justification) as the norm.

Given these stakes, it was hardly surprising that many potential allies stayed quiet. On another occasion, after I had lamented being of a quieter disposition, Ana told me she had always felt compelled to speak out when she disagreed with something, but this was a blessing and a curse. "I wish I was quieter! I don't want to annoy people…" Critical public speech also sat uncomfortably with gendered expectations of conduct, and she recounted how her mother would encourage her not to speak out, as it would only make her life more difficult (cf. Larson 2013: 100-1; Gal 1991). It was not unusual for wives to chastise their husbands for making overly blunt remarks about some villager or other, especially figures with power and influence. On several counts, therefore, Ana felt that her propensity to speak up had bestowed her with a rather unfavourable reputation. If it wasn't for the support of her husband, scattered friends and some well-placed allies in Western European countries and the EU, she said, she wouldn't have been able to maintain the confidence to continue doing so.

Neither were more intimate relationships and alliances free from the strains produced by a commitment to critical dialogue. Ana observed that they were lucky to have a mayor

who was keen to do things for the village, in contrast to many other elected officials who were only interested in their own power and influence. Nevertheless, he and others with the power to make decisions and mobilise resources were often *too* quick to put things in action, seizing upon the first means possible as soon as funding was secured. The result was standardised, inferior solutions like the concrete drain. “This is our problem, people don’t consider how to do things best, they just want to get them done!” Ana and George, on the other hand, would lobby the Mayor and others to consider a range of options when they heard such decisions were up in the air.

Such lobbying often received a push-back, and not only from more distant acquaintances. Ana described a recent quarrel with one of their close friends, Samuel, one of the few young Saxons left in the village and otherwise of a similar mind to them on most issues. He had relayed the news that the committee who manage the Lutheran Evangelical church were applying for funding to renovate the building, and were confident they could secure it. With many examples of botched, unsympathetic renovations of historic monuments flitting through their minds, Ana and George expressed caution about how such work would be undertaken and suggested waiting a little while in order to come up with the best possible plans. Samuel had responded, more stressed than angry, “What are we supposed to do, nothing? Should we let the tower fall down?!” George had tried to placate him, pointing out that the tower had stood for hundreds of years and wasn’t likely to collapse in the immediate future, but with only moderate success. Ana observed to me that this response was unfortunately characteristic of the Mayor, too. When challenged about how he was going to do a project, he would throw the question back in their faces. “Should I do nothing, then?” Such rhetoric reframed what was an attempt to engage in a dialogue on the methods and aims of public projects as an attempt to obstruct action. This reframed the speaker as somebody simply attempting to “get things done” (*fac ceva*), a trope which had much public currency in light of the persistent infrastructural breakdown and delay.

Despite the fact that these reframings—misconstruals—of what liberal critics had said contributed to their representation as “enemies” of the community, Ana was nevertheless sympathetic to her friend’s and the Mayor’s predicaments. They were caught in untenable positions. In Samuel’s case, while they had reassured him that the church would continue to stand, the tower was not in a particularly good condition after decades of near-abandonment, enforced first by the secular Communist authorities and then by the absence of a Saxon community for a quarter of a century. Several months after my main period of fieldwork had

ended, two Evangelical church towers collapsed in the space of a week.[10] If the evident structural weaknesses of the building weren't enough, the remaining Saxon community was also under pressure from the Saxon diaspora in Germany to conserve their common heritage. A young Saxon woman who acted as a tour guide at the very popular church at Biertan observed to me that émigré Saxon visitors tended to be the most difficult tourists to deal with, for they felt entitled to complain about the choices made by the remaining Saxon community regarding conservation and commodification. Her sentiment was that it was very easy for them to criticise, but they had chosen to move away for an easier life and didn't have to deal with the responsibility for everyday management.

Similarly, the mayor had demands for action and criticism for tardiness coming at him from all sides, and was constantly stressed. In both cases, it was understandable that the burden of responsibility pushed them to deflect further criticism, but unfortunate that it took the rhetorical form that it did. Those committed to constructive criticism had to battle to clarify that their intentions were not to obstruct any action or project, but to defer implementation in order to have reasoned, open debate about *how* projects should be implemented (cf. Anderson 2001). This was not predicated on their having the specific expertise, but on a public-spirited willingness to engage with those who did and, if necessary, to research possible solutions themselves (usually via the internet).

The breakdown of dialogue was also not the sum total of Ana's relationship with Ionel. At the festival with which I opened the chapter, she observed that all the salad being served to the guests had been purchased from Ionel, "with whom I argue a lot on Facebook, but we get along [*ne înțelegem*] very well in this regard." He was renowned in the village for the attention he gave to his greenhouses—perhaps more so than for his dubious construction skills. His meticulous care for his plants was highly respected, and other villagers would often buy seeds, seedlings or produce from him. Ana was no exception, but she also wanted to bring this informal economic relationship into the sphere of new economic opportunities provided by the tourism industry, for his benefit as much as those who would eat his good food. While this was successful on an ad hoc basis, it had not added up to a full commitment to the tourism economy. And this was in fact typical of village residents, as I explore in the second part of the chapter.

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[10] In the villages of Rotbav and Roadeș, February 2016. There are 128 fortified Lutheran Evangelical churches in Transylvania, in varying states of conservation and decay.

II.

ROAD TO NOWHERE

Whenever the topic of tourism came up in casual conversation in and around Săsești, a frequently heard phrase was the dismissive "Oh, it's all just *publicitate*." Like its English equivalent, publicity, the term implied a hollowness to romantic representations of the area, but also to the promises of development that the tourism industry would bring. This skepticism had its own history. By 2015, the more accessible villages in the Târnava Mare territory had been saturated with the promises of tourism development. A decade after the conservationist NGOs' projects had begun in earnest, the majority of villagers had withdrawn from any serious engagement with tourism, leaving only a handful of committed participants. These were divided between the owners of the few successful guesthouses and the small group of young liberals—Ana's "good team"—who hoped to spearhead the plans that had been initiated earlier but remained unrealised.

Under the holistic vision described in the previous chapter, all members of a village community would have the opportunity to participate to a greater or lesser extent in the tourism economy. Any local household would have the opportunity to register as a guesthouse (*pensiune agroturistică*), legally allowing them to host tourists and serve them home-grown meals (Rădan-Gorska 2013: 201). Other households could host large-group dinners. Individuals could also act as guides, or make and sell crafts. Those who didn't wish to engage directly with tourists could supply hosting households with produce. Through these networks, tourism money would penetrate the whole village economy.

Beginning in the mid-2000s, the NGOs and town halls organised workshops to train local citizens in the practical and administrative tasks required to host visitors. EU funding was also available for building new, freestanding guesthouses. But a decade later, common opinion asserted that most of these were shams. They never took a single guest and after five years the owners could file for bankruptcy, leaving them with a large, modern house that they hadn't had to pay a penny for.[11] This played into a wider cynicism towards EU-funded *proiecte*, projects, which were seen as sources of easy money with little material impact—at least not in terms of development. The first road to be tarmacked in Săsești started at the edge of the village and proceeded up a hillside of fields to the forest edge, dubbed "the road to

[11] Sarah Green (2005: 243) describes similar practices in Greece.

nowhere" by one wit. A battered blue sign declaring it to be an EU-funded public work monumentalised the informal relationship between logging money and the state bureaucracy. Residents had to wait several years before receiving proper roads within the village itself—and even these were plagued with difficulties and absurdities, as we saw.

The result of all this was that the anticipated development was caught in an impasse. The vision of a prosperous rural economy based on ecotourism could not materialise without the collaboration of the wider community in assembling an infrastructure of food production, hosting, transportation, varied attractions, and so on. But community participation was unforthcoming so long as tourism remained undeveloped. This situation appeared to all intents and purposes as a standoff between optimists and pessimists. Debates over development and *proiecte*—a category which lumped together both state-initiated works and NGO-initiated projects such as those described in the previous chapter, unified by their reliance on EU funding—were fractured by multiple lines of social distinction, from purported differences in mindset through those of economic strategy. These shaped people's practical and poetic engagement with the work of tourism and development.

Walking through Săsești one evening with my host Dora, a cheerful woman in her 40s from a respectable peasant family, trained as an agronomist during socialism and now employed by the town hall to manage their land and other property, we couldn't help but acknowledge the golden evening light that bathed the houses and hills. Smiling wryly, Dora said, "We don't know what we have here." Her comment poked fun at an implicit stereotype of the rural mindset, narrowly concerned with the domestic work of subsistence and the gossip and politics of social relations, never pausing to look up and be humbled by the beauty in front of one's nose. Yet it also pointed towards an alternative set of values that underpinned such work. A clear depiction of this is provided by anthropologist Deema Kaneff, who describes accompanying British property-hunters searching for a holiday home in the Bulgarian countryside. What the British saw as a balcony under the eaves of a roof,

> where, no doubt, they pictured themselves sitting in the summer evening twilight sipping cool drinks, was a space that for locals had a practical function. It was the place where crops were laid out, protected from the rain, where chillis strung into a necklace were hung under the eaves, and walnuts were spread out to dry in their shells on a newspaper on the floor. As for the so-called 'view,' the landscape of ploughed vineyards and a small forest (which provided the source of winter firewood for village

households) may have been a potential place of leisure for the Britons, but from the villagers' perspective, it was a site of agricultural labour. (Kaneff 2013: 33-4)

Kaneff speaks not just for the villagers but from her own deep familiarity with such places. The worldview she and they share is understood as an effect of the practices and routines of labour that are not just conducted in but constitutive of place—practices which are of a different order to those of the foreign visitors. In the process, Kaneff indexes an opposition between modern, romantic subjects of leisure and traditional peasants. This opposition is a widely circulating one in the modern world. As we shall see later, it has also structured intellectual debates about modernity in Romania, and articulates with the idea of communist legacies that we saw in Patapievici's writing.

The contrast between these two perspectives in Transylvania sometimes seemed stark. Many residents of Săsești professed a fervent bafflement at the idea of romanticising the countryside. Dora's husband Vlad would often interrogate me, as a British visitor, on the touristic value of the village and its surrounds. "But what is there to *see* here?!" He expressed perplexity at why foreigners wished to visit such a nondescript agricultural locale, comparing it unfavourably to the classic sites of tourism in Romania: the Black Sea coast, the mountains, the thermal spas. All had long histories as resorts in modern Romania, and had been developed for mass tourism during socialism, when workers were given generous holiday leave (Light 2013; cf. Ghodsee 2005; Giustino et al. 2013). The postsocialist era brought further investment, promotion and commodification. The distinctive touristic merits of each location were also clear: rocky peaks, ski slopes, sandy beaches, healing waters. In contrast, it was far from obvious what recreational interest an agricultural landscape held when these could be found all over the country and were many people's site of daily toil. Miruna Rădan-Gorska notes that "during the socialist period, there was no state-organised tourism to rural areas" (2013: 200). Indeed, the predominantly agrarian condition of the country was perceived as an embarrassment, a sign of underdevelopment. This disinterest was echoed in the struggles described in the previous chapter of British ecologists to gain recognition for the nature conservation value of "semi-natural" agricultural landscapes. Labour was also portrayed, *contra* travel writers, as actively disenchanting. Mention of Prince Charles's frequent visits to the area usually led Vlad to declare, "I'd like to see him come and spend a year working here, not just visit for two weeks. Then we'll see how much he likes it!" The need to undertake back-breaking work day in and day out for the purpose of subsistence

fostered a more ambivalent stance in comparison to the occasional novelty of scything a wildflower meadow.

Contrary to rural development visions, Dora sketched out for me a strategy for getting by in the village. In late 2014, one of her cousin's sons, Liviu, had bought a house in Săsești and moved back from England, where he had been working for several years in the catering industry. His intention (after renovating the Saxon house) was to open a café for tourists, coordinating his business with Ana and George's. This proved to be a site of recurrent tension between him and Dora, his closest relative and main source of assistance in the village. Her main concern was that Liviu's expectations of the profitability of tourism were misplaced. The numbers of visitors was never going to increase enough to create an industry from which one could survive, she asserted. Furthermore, the income from tourism was highly sporadic, leaving one's financial situation uncertain from one day to the next. Instead, she advised him benevolently but firmly, he should get a job at the town hall. Positions became available relatively regularly as part of state or EU-funded development projects. These didn't require one to be particularly invested in the work. "You come in at 8am, make a coffee, chat to your colleagues, file a few papers, drink another coffee, then go home at 12pm." After this, one had the whole afternoon to work in the garden. Such a strategy would provide economic security. The wages wouldn't be large, but they would be consistent and required little effort to obtain. These would allow one to focus on subsistence gardening to provide the core of one's needs.

This sketch was as much a satire of state bureaucrats as it was a model of economic strategy, but the basic principles Dora outlined were sincere. She prioritised the reliability of wage labour and subsistence work over the unpredictability of the tourism industry. From the perspective of young, liberal entrepreneurs, this conservatism among their compatriots (for Dora's stance was common, if not always expressed so pithily) was a matter of personal weakness, and of two traits in particular: A deep anxiety about economic unpredictability, and a lack of initiative. Tourism proponents and development experts regularly lamented that locals were not taking advantage of straightforward economic opportunities. Greg, a British business consultant who had been coming to the area since the early 2000s and was always keen to talk about the possibilities and blockages of development, cited tourists' fascination with watching the cows walking home as one example of this. "Somebody should set up with a crate of beers on the corner where the herd comes into the village. They could sell them to tourists who want to sit and enjoy the evening, it would be easy money. But nobody does it."

Another of his complaints was the lack of interest that villagers had shown in trying to see things from a tourist's point of view, in order to understand what services they might want. He had tried to get several of the householders who had shown an interest in hosting tourists to visit a sheepfold as though it were a novel attraction. But, as he put it, "They said, 'we know what a sheepfold looks like.' They just didn't see the point." Ana asserted more categorically that, "Some people are just not made for this kind of work." Participation in the tourism industry required a set of dispositions that included the flexibility to manage an unpredictable pace of work, the self-control that was necessary for service encounters, and an attentiveness to others' needs and desires. These traits were not evenly distributed.

THE DEVIL'S EYE

Those like Dora who rejected the tourism industry did so not just on the grounds of disbelief in *publicitate* and predictions of growth, but couched their decisions in a moral idiom. Following one discussion on economic strategy, I asked Dora and Vlad whether it pleased them to live as they did. "We're happy to have our health. All we wish for is health," Dora replied. Vlad went further, expressing the pointlessness of extra wealth relative to their lifestyle. "What would we do with a car? I go to the shop down the street to buy bread in the mornings, to town maybe once a month. Or even with a bicycle? To go to the shop?" Dora concluded, "Money is the eye of the devil" (*banul e ochiul dracului*). Nevertheless, when another neighbour of their generation started running occasional day trips to Transylvanian beauty spots they joined with pleasure. Both had experienced greater leisure opportunities under socialism. Narrating their current situation in terms of limited wants and moderation as a virtue allowed them to bracket off the loss of such opportunities.

Moral discourses were also mobilised to condemn the economic choices of others, an alternative means of legitimating one's own. An irate observation frequently heard throughout Săsești in 2015, coming especially from older Romanian and Saxon householders like Dora, was that "They don't want to work!" The deictic "they" had shifting referents, changing with the speaker and context (Silverstein 1976), and sometimes seeming like it encompassed the whole population of the village. "They" were, by turns, young men who no longer wished to travel abroad for seasonal work and thus wiled away their time socialising diffidently in gateways; crowds of Roma waiting outside the post office to collect welfare payments; shepherds who were unwilling to work at a sheepfold for more than a month unless they were

supplied with beer and cigarettes on top of payment—but also educated young people who chose to leave stable jobs working for NGOs.

By the householders' account, the constant lauding of wealth in the media and the direct experience of working abroad, in Western Europe, had warped the expectations of the young and of disenfranchised groups like Roma. Having seen the quality of life and the average salary elsewhere, they were now allegedly unwilling to work for less than that. This capriciousness was completely at odds with the current state of the economy in rural Romania, in which one shouldn't expect to earn much more than "ten million" lei per month as a basic salary. The "ten million" figure referred to the old denomination of lei, phased out in 2005, and was equivalent to 1,000 new lei/RON, roughly £200 in 2015.[12] The use of old denominational values indicated the status of this number as a well-worn trope that could be mobilised for rhetorical effect.

At the core of this criticism was the observation that, despite the abysmal state of the economy, work was in fact available but people were choosing not to participate. A large multinational firm specialising in the manufacture of textiles for vehicles had opened a new factory in Sighișoara in 2014. Posters advertising several hundred job opportunities were plastered throughout the surrounding villages, noting the necessary conditions (a minimum level of schooling, if no professional qualification) and offering a number of benefits that included free transportation and meal tickets. Despite these, the company was struggling to recruit a sufficient workforce, and had resorted to calling up local NGOs to see if they could help find willing individuals. This example was frequently held up as evidence of a major problem of mindset in the labour market.

Criticisms of educated youth were especially pointed, often focusing not just on a desire not to work but specifically on an impatience and an aspiration to "rise up the ranks" too quickly. The picture painted by householders of youth was one of self-interest and petulance. This rhetoric was quite self-serving, as I discuss below, but the core observation was not entirely wrong. Liviu himself declared, "I don't want to work…" This was quickly followed up by a qualification, however: "I mean, for other people." It was an inarguable fact that there was a high turnover in employment, both locally and among those working abroad. Many of the younger proponents of tourism and conservationism, including Ana, George and Liviu, had at one time or another worked for local NGOs, before leaving to set up

[12] On the change in denomination and some meanings of money, see Grossman (2014).

independent businesses. While desires for greater wealth played a part in this, a major and mostly unvoiced value was that of personal autonomy, and more specifically control over one's own labour, a value of "mastery" (*stăpânire* or *domnie*) that is common throughout Romania (Verdery 2003: 172-8; Kideckel 1993: 182-91; Kligman and Verdery 2011: 90-101).[13]

What householders' criticisms glossed over was that this was widely shared across the social spectrum. Tensions often flared in work environments over perceived micromanagement of activity, frequently resulting in employees quitting. This was true not only in NGOs and other hierarchical workplaces, but also in service and hospitality work. "Do you know what it means to be a guesthouse, Hugh? To be a servant [*slugă*]!" So declared Dora's bombastic brother Relu as we sat in her courtyard one afternoon. Relu was a robust, unshaven man rarely seen without a cloth cap, who worked for most of the year on road maintenance in the mountains but returned for holidays and family occasions in his battered red Dacia (socialist Romania's ubiquitous brand of simple-but-reliable car). He clearly thought very little of servility. Not that he experienced much of it as he laboured between the heavy machinery, craggy landscape and (for much of the year) heavy snowfalls. Yet Ana herself stressed that "tourists aren't our masters [*stăpânii noștri*]!" The work she accepted and the services she was willing to provide were on her terms, not a subservient deferral to the demands of the customer. Unexpected visitors who didn't show deference to the time constraints that running a household and a business in the countryside placed upon one were politely but firmly shown the door.

Ana prided herself on being able to tread the fine line between autonomy and providing good service, in contrast to those who found hospitality work too aggravating. That said, aggravations were not always unjustified. Several householders who had withdrawn from hosting guests had substantive complaints about tourists' unfamiliarity with the constraints of rural life. This could lead to misplaced expectations of guesthouse facilities, creating frictions between villagers and what they saw as pretentious and rude urbanites (visitors from Bucharest being exemplary in this regard), but effects were occasionally more material and lasting. In one case, a household dog had died from choking on a fishbone in some food given to it by a tourist. In another, a group of visitors had accidentally polluted a

[13] See also Lampland (1995: 40-5) on Hungary, and Paxson (2005: 73-6) and Rogers (2006) on Russia. This differs from liberal values of individual freedom insofar as the autonomy of labour is balanced by a desire for "wealth in people," i.e. being relationally embedded (Kligman and Verdery 2011; Verdery 2003).

well with detergent while cleaning camping equipment. The householders had subsequently refused to host any more tourists.

To portray others' conflicts over autonomy as "not wanting to work" was a rhetorical strategy that favoured householders, who could appeal to the moral legitimacy of subsistence labour, its value simple and recognisable, in contrast to the purported subservience and hollow performance that characterised the new economy. Similarly, assertions that the future of the economy lay with tourism were frequently met by the riposte that "what's necessary is *work*!" The work (*muncă*) implied here was wage labour of the kind that had been provided under socialism, mass employment in large agricultural or industrial firms that paid sufficient wages to live off, but which had not been available in the immediate vicinity of the village since the privatisation of the state farms at the turn of the century (Verdery 2003). This framing of morally legitimate work versus non-work effectively bracketed off from discussion the entrepreneurial ethic promoted by the young liberals. Yet such a rhetorical move also fed back into liberal perceptions of a lack of initiative among the rural populace, the tendency to fall back on "traditional" or "communist" economic strategies that privileged the security of subsistence farming or wage labour, and of a cynicism that was more performative than sincere.

This performativity didn't go unrecognised by those who enacted it. Vlad, contrary to his interrogations, would frequently agree that Sășești was a beautiful place. On one occasion, he related the following observation.

> Old people walking through the village with their scythes will stop visitors with a smile and ask 'Where are you off to?' When the visitors say they're going to visit the ruins [the remains of a fortification at the edge of the forest], the old people nod and say, 'Oh yes, it's beautiful up there, you must go.' But they've never even been themselves! They've lived here ninety years and never gone!

Like Dora's comment that "we don't know what we have," this satirised a rural habitus, the idea that one could keep to the same routines of labour for the better part of a century such that one has never visited a location that stands no more than a few hundred metres outside of the village. But even more so, it satirised the discontinuity between performance and practice, the unwillingness of people, himself included, to change these routines even while acknowledging and paying lip service to the kinds of romantic vision promoted by

conservationists. This was very much a self-satire, for the commitment to security was understood as much by those who undertook it as by their critics to be a choice rather than a necessity, given that subsistence (for many Romanian and Saxon householders, at least) afforded not just security but autonomy (compare Rajković 2018). The performative acknowledgement of beauty was a very different matter to the experience of the sublime however, as we shall see below.

BEIGE TROUSERS AND AN OBSESSION WITH SCYTHING

That said, local proponents of the rural development agenda were not unequivocally committed to all of the ideals entangled in tourism and conservation. A joke I was told during the first month of my fieldwork expressed this well. I had arrived at Ana and George's house in the mid-afternoon to find Ana with Tudor, a tourist guide from a neighbouring village with boundless energy and a biting sense of humour. The two were not just friends but frequent collaborators. Ana regularly provided his tour groups with home-cooked meals, frequently-refilled glasses of the fiery spirit *rachiu* and a wealth of good stories. This afternoon, Tudor thought it particularly appropriate that I was present to hear a newly acquired joke:

> An Englishman is visiting Târnava Mare. He goes out walking in the fields and sees a man scything a meadow. The Englishman takes out his Romanian dictionary, flicks through it for a minute, and then calls out to the man in stilted Romanian:
> "*Bade* [old man], do you mow the hay?"
> The man doesn't reply, he just continues swinging his scythe. The Englishman frowns, thinking the man must not have heard him. He tries again.
> "*Bade*, do you mow the hay?"
> Still no reply. The Englishman is irritated now, but he tries one last time.
> "*Bade*, do you mow the hay?"
> Finally, the man turns to him and says, in perfect English,
> "Buddy, I think you've got an obsession."

Ana descended into a fit of giggles each time she repeated the punchline, which played off the phonetic similarity between *bade* (pronounced bah-day) and the English 'buddy'. The joke poked fun at the wilder shores of tourists' interests, especially the fascination with hay meadows and manual agriculture that, through ADEPT and Prince Charles—and along with a

propensity for beige trousers—had become marked as peculiarly English. The final code switch from Romanian to English inverted assumptions about the relative cosmopolitanism of the characters, framing the tourist's concerns as deeply parochial while the peasant figure demonstrates a worldly, understated sophistication.

For Tudor and Ana, the joke marked their ironic distance from certain excesses of touristic romanticism. But this was not a wholesale rejection of romanticism per se. On the other hand, neither was their engagement with it a disingenuous, economically-motivated performance laid on top of a basically cynical outlook—although the work of tourism required a degree of performative circumspection.[14] Rather, romanticism held a second-order value for what it afforded as a subjective and social orientation, in contrast to the dominant pessimism and criticism that characterised the Romanian public sphere.

This assessment of value was not specific to Săsești but drew on themes articulated by the liberal intelligentsia. It is well illustrated in a recently published volume entitled *More Romanian than Romanians? Why foreigners fall in love with Romania* (Pralong 2013). The book presents a collection of interviews with expats from across the world who had chosen to settle in Romania. The editor, Sandra Pralong, director of the liberal Open Society Foundation in Bucharest between 1990 and 1993, begins her introduction thus:

> I propose a book about Romania written by foreigners because I desire a different perspective. A country lives through its people and becomes that which they think and say about it—"the country" results from the sum of all individual actions. Do you like how the country of our thoughts and words appears, what our gestures say about it? I don't. (2013: 11)

The appearance to which she refers is that of a "pariah of Europe" (2013: 11), marked by a deeply negative assessment, not least among its own citizens. The sum of individual actions is a picture of stagnation, or even decay when measured against the heights of socialist development or interwar modernism. Through the text, Pralong returns repeatedly to the idea that the negative appearance of contemporary Romania is a function of the deafening, one-sided repetition of this very assessment. Negative reflexes prevent people from engaging in

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[14] See the recent literature on "tourism imaginaries" and the different ways that subjects and organisers of tourism relate to them (Salazar and Graburn 2014).

constructive activity, while also pulling down other people's attempts through the destructive criticism that one foreign commentator calls "tall poppy syndrome" (Stowe 2008: 64).

Against this wave of negativity, Pralong asserts that Romania has much of value that is being overlooked, and mobilises as evidence the praise-filled testament of her interviewees. This leads her to ask, "why do foreigners fall in love with Romania when Romanians don't?" (2013: 11). She concludes:

> [The interviewees'] responses are perhaps most surprising in their relative similarity: in short, the principal reason why the majority of these people live among us is that they see BEAUTY. While we see instead what is ugly and bad, they see all that we disregard: the beauty of our Romanian souls, but also the splendour of our world, still unaltered. It is a "beauty" which we cannot perceive, because the constant clamour and hysteria of the public sphere hide it from us. (2013: 11-12)

Among the splendours of Romania that Pralong singles out for special attention are "friendship, generosity, spiritual warmth, hospitality, the rural world, popular traditions, the simplicity of authentic life, even haystacks or the existence of four distinct seasons," things that "we often disregard or take as a matter of course" (2013: 12). These rather stereotyped images of tradition and rurality echo the anti-modernist chronotope of desire described in the previous chapter, and indeed several of her interviewees make their living through rural tourism projects that overlap considerably with the work of the MET and ADEPT (2013: 13).

The perception that beauty had been veiled, that there is something "in front of which we are blind but others perceive and appreciate" (2013: 11), was neither metaphorical nor unique to Pralong, being attested to in the experience of other cosmopolitan Romanians. A historian from the northern region of Maramureș, working on a project for the Săsești town hall, joined a gathering of friends one evening at Ana and George's house. Over dinner, he narrated to us an incident from his youth, a decade or so earlier, when he had encountered some Dutch tourists visiting his home region. The tourists had stopped by the roadside in order to admire the grandeur of the mountains, and the historian was baffled at first by their attention. "They're just mountains, so what?" But the visitors' captivation was disconcerting. Looking again at the mountains, it suddenly hit him that the landscape might be worthy of wonder. The encounter was a moment of revelation not just because he discovered a new way of looking but because it caused him to reconsider his previous self as having failed to see,

and to take a more critical look at the attitudes he had been brought up with. Such experiences contributed to a feeling among cosmopolitans of estrangement from their national fellows.

The ultimate motivation of Pralong's argument is not the existence of beauty, but the possibilities for creative action that are afforded by recognising it. In her description, the foreigners' enchanted vision of Romania is inextricable from the actions it motivates in them, feats of charity and enterprise that are compiled in the book. This is the pragmatic value of romanticism, as a generator of inspiration that can be translated into positive action and change. Moreover, her book itself recursively embodies this. The stories will "move," "enthuse," "encourage" and "delight" the reader, while he or she will also "receive tens of ideas about what we would do well to change in order to keep step with the civilised world" (2013: 14).

What this amounts to, Pralong argues, is the possibility of a wholesale rethinking of "what it means to be Romanian" (2013: 14). The foregrounding of enchantment and creative action in Pralong's account is framed against a picture of their absence in Romanian society.

> "Romanians" are those who love this country and its people! Those who know to embody their love through facts and not through words — those who construct, not those who destroy, those who gather, not those who divide, those who take pleasure, not those who complain, those who make their own decisions, not those who go with the flock, those who have courage, not those who are ashamed, those who speak publicly, not those who hide in gossip, those who give, not those who grab, in short, those who caress not those who hit! (2013: 14)

The opposition of creativity not only to cynicism and violence but also to conformity engages a longstanding line of debate concerning what it means to be a Romanian in the modern world (Călinescu 1983). The Heideggerian philosopher Constantin Noica (2014a [1943]), for example, asserted that traditional Romanian life is collective and anonymous, "eternal" and unchanging. With the arrival of modernity, Romanians must come to terms with the "descent" from eternity into history, and the need to embrace personal creation rather than deferral to tradition and collectivity. The idea of problematic social legacies that must be overcome was, as we have already seen, given a second life in the post-socialist era. Political scientist Alina Mungiu-Pippidi sees Romanian society as "largely defined by pessimism and social envy,"

which are the consequences of "being a traditional society" and of "communism," with its perennial shortages, respectively (Trandafoiu 2013: 50).[15] This was frequently discussed in terms of trenchant "mentalities." "It will take two generations to shift the communist mentality!" Dora would frequently declare.

As Michael Warner notes, "dissent from the pressure of unexamined common sense is a cardinal principle of the Enlightenment" (2002: 133). The idea of personal creativity and expression being a constitutive element of the self originated in various waves of post-Enlightenment Romanticism, becoming a central trope in Euro-American modernity (Taylor 1989: 368-90; Williams 1976). Pralong's account of the pragmatic value of romanticism for overturning cultural habits is reminiscent of American Transcendentalism, as Warner describes it. He writes that Henry David Thoreau's "call for defamiliarizing [in opposition to commonsensical] language contains both a classic Enlightenment wish (since "men asleep" need to be awakened from the sleep of common sense) and a more Romantic conviction that the result could never look like simple clear reasoning, which would address the rational faculties only" (Warner 2002: 134). He "thought that true perceptions must be poetic, transformative, even transgressive; any true thought must wake you out of common sense" (2002: 133). Rather than opposing the rational and the poetic as Thoreau did, the Romanian public sphere demanded both, for it was marked, in the eyes of liberals, by a dual character of conformity (to negativistic habits) and fragmentation (of realities, of truths). Poetics afforded the possibility of lifting the veil on commonsensical negativism, while reasoned dialogue was necessary not only to produce a "common reality," as Patapievici put it, but also for the practical coordination of civil and voluntary action. The continued relevance of the romantic as "a free or liberated imagination… an extended sense of liberation from rules and conventional forms" (Williams 1976: 231) in Romania reflects the perceived persistence of pre-modern social habits such as conformity into the twenty-first century.

This stance has some echoes in earlier liberal thought that are worth noting here. Alan Ryan points out that J.S. Mill was deeply concerned with unreflective common sense and the "tyranny of the majority" (Ryan 2012: 306), a concern that he borrowed from Tocqueville's

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[15] The connection between envy and traditional peasant culture was influentially articulated in anthropology by Foster (1965), in his theory that peasants' cognitive orientation rests upon an "image of the limited good" in which interpersonal competition is a necessary state of the world. Representing Romanian socialism in terms of its undeniable conditions of scarcity thus facilitates the extension of this cognitive model to "communist" society too.

Democracy in America. Mill too felt that romantic and poetic thought and writing was necessary to respond to such social problems, the more abstract theories of his mentor Jeremy Bentham having no purchase on "how a society held together" (Ryan 2012: 87). This is what Amanda Anderson refers to when she speaks of a "split within liberal thinking—its inclusion of both a moral and sociological perspective" (2016: 3).

KEEPING STEP

In rethinking what it means to be Romanian, Pralong attempts to actively redefine national identity itself, bracketing off the restrictive "legal" criteria of parental origins and birthplace in favour of a cosmopolitan nationalism that is volitional rather than endowed. Like Noica, she considers nationality a "spiritual" matter, but the authors otherwise diverge quite substantially. These divergences bear exploring, for they point towards some wider distinctions of political ideology and social epistemology in modern Romanian history and the Romanian intellectual field. These bring the liberal position—and how it is interwoven with illiberal perspectives—into clearer focus.

Pralong's horizon of value is to "keep step with the civilised world" (2013: 14). The principle that Romania should transform itself to achieve a "synchrony" with Western Europe has been a fundamental tenet of Romanian liberalism since 1848, expounded most strongly by successive generations of students trained at Western European universities and, latterly, in North America (Mishkova and Daskalov 2014). Alongside this, since the late nineteenth century, Romanian conservatives like the Junimists have criticised liberal desires for synchrony with Western Europe, pointing towards the different, effectively feudal, social conditions in Romania that obstructed any simple transition to liberal, republican forms of politics, culture and economy (Hitchins 1994). Much of this conservative stance, especially from the interwar period onwards, was predicated on coming to terms with Romania's condition as a "minor" nation, too small and too belated in its modernisation to compete with the "major" nations of the occident in terms of world-historical influence or cultural production (Cotter 2014).

These political differences are reflected in differences of social epistemology. Noica held an essentialist view of national identity, arguing that Romanians must balance any shift to modern, personal creativity with retaining the most valuable elements of their traditional identity, a resource that (he believed) had been effaced by the civilising process among Western European nations. His own works of ethno-philosophy (part of a wider tradition of

such work, the other major figure of which is poet Lucian Blaga; Karnoouh 2011) attempted to systematise these elements from the Romanian cultural experience, arguing that certain Romanian linguistic forms have such a depth and uniqueness of meaning that they are almost untranslatable and that sharing these meanings could therefore comprise Romania's unique contribution to European culture (Noica 1996: 10). This philosophical stance codified a hard cultural pluralism in which the idea of strangers to a culture ever managing to penetrate its depths of meaning and experience, the essence of cultural identity, became unthinkable. Such a pluralism was shared among many of Noica's peers.

Hopes for synchrony, in contrast, assume a fundamental malleability of society and subjectivity. Liberal Romanian intellectuals have tended not to reject ideas of national essence, which have frequently been the predicate of liberal political programmes in fact, but to see these as changeable. Interwar literary critic Eugen Lovinescu, for example, the author of a highly influential counter-critique of the conservative position, "had no doubt about the existence of a "national soul"; however, he saw it in a relativistic manner, as subject to change. He advocated the borrowing of Western forms, believing that they would unlock latent creative potential in local social and cultural life" (Mishkova and Daskalov 2014: 45). Pralong's account is complementary to this, albeit updated in a late twentieth century register.

It is of no small significance in this regard that some of the most influential liberal intellectuals after 1989 including key members of the GSD had been students of Noica, part of the "Păltiniș Group" (Mungiu 1996: 531; Verdery 1991: 256-301; Liiceanu 2013). While most broke to some degree with his teachings, this demonstrates how the focus on personal creativity and the problems of modern identity as a distinctive problem were shared almost universally within (and were perhaps definitive of) the Romanian intellectual sphere, even if this was divided between essentialists and liberal historicists or constructivists. From another perspective, one could see this concern as marking the difference between intellectually-inclined and non-intellectual strata of Romanian society.

That village liberals drew eclectically on elements of liberal and non-liberal thinking should therefore be less than surprising. This was characteristic of the post-socialist sphere of intellectual debate (cf. Haddock and Caraiani 1999) as well as the dual holisms of Anglo-Romanian conservationism in the Saxon villages, which brought together idioms of romantic experience with socio-technical development programmes. Where Anglophone conservation discourses framed the value of the Saxon villages against the alienations of modernity, conservationism provided local liberals with a set of resources to combat the material and

economic decline of the post-socialist countryside (through substantive economic schemes and voluntary actions) and the fundamentally negativist nature of the Romanian public sphere (through romantic poetics), which obstructed the wider implication of citizens in the work of revitalisation. As in the Dracula Park debates, this was shot through with concerns for cultural intimacy. Liberals' social position in the rural environment and working within a distinctly European project dislodged the nationalist frame of collectivity that is the classic frame for cultural intimacy however, as I discuss in the final section.

AMBIVALENCES OF INTIMACY

Săsești's young liberals shared Pralong's stance on the value of positive manners and creative action. This was manifested in a vocal respect for the leading, mostly British, figures in conservation. Prince Charles's regular visits to Transylvania and his expressions of enthusiasm for its nature and people to an international audience were in fact widely appreciated throughout Romania. Ana's sister Catarina, a woman employed by an NGO in Sighișoara that was closely involved with local rural development and who was a proud proponent of the revitalisation of Romanian folk culture, described him as "the best ambassador we could have for the region." Beyond his political influence, this was linked to positive stereotypes of English aristocratic manners and politeness. One of the English managers of ADEPT was similarly respected for his social delicacy and frequent words of encouragement—for being what one older woman in the village described as "refined, gentlemanly" (*mai fin, mai domn*). Insofar as this respect exceeded liberal or conservationist circles (the Prince's visits being intimately reported in all sections of the media) it was closely tied to the dynamics of cultural intimacy that also underpinned respect for the Saxons. Unequivocal praise for Romania, its culture and its people from such an esteemed foreign figure as the Prince was valued for its challenge to orientalist depictions, both internal and external, of Romanian deficiency.

Despite the value liberals placed on romanticism, their discourses were not uniformly positive. Pralong cautions: "Do not misunderstand me, not everything about Romania or Romanians pleases the guests [*oaspeții*] in this book—you will find several very sharp criticisms in the pages that follow." She cites "our sickly suspicions and lack of trust… the fact that people don't smile… our lack of inclination for *win-win* solutions" and "corruption and bureaucracy without end" (2013: 12). It is implied that such flaws are already recognisable, rather than novel. Pralong suggests that readers will "smile perhaps bitterly" at

the descriptions of organisational failing, while "you will be ashamed, perhaps, seeing the delicacy with which we are reproached for our comportment in public places…" (Pralong 2013: 14). In an expression of cultural intimacy from the perspective of a Westernised elite, Romanians are positioned as subjects rightly ashamed of their flaws as revealed in the eyes of foreigners (Herzfeld 2016). In line with this perspective, Pralong excludes herself from the blind "us" even as she speaks in the first-person plural. "For 23 years," she writes, referring to her return from political exile in the USA after the 1989 revolution, "I have tried to embody my love for my country through all I do, but the result remains less than I would have hoped." In the wake of this disappointment, she asks "What mirror can I place in front of us for all to see what I see?" (2013: 11). That said, her appeal to the authority of foreigners was couched in a degree of irony. "Given our obsession that everything which comes from abroad [*afara*] is, by definition, "better," I deduced that we will be convinced much faster by the arguments of some foreigners than by our own" (2013: 11).

Seen from Săsești, the categorical opposition of foreign and Romanian appeared more ambivalent. Local NGOs frequently held conferences and workshops on rural development themes. These provided a space for collaboration between different institutions and interested locals. During the coffee break at one such event, I sat in on a conversation between several employees from the Târnava Hills Local Action Group and a young English couple based in Cluj, the Transylvanian capital. The conversation concerned ways to increase the economic viability of a local boom in sheep numbers (the topic of the next chapter), potentially via exporting wool to Britain, but the relevant action occurred after the couple had left. The husband's primary occupation was as a journalist, and he had been telling us about his current investigation into municipal misdeeds in Cluj. Once they were out of earshot, however, one of the women from the LAG sighed. "Great, yet another corruption exposé…" The issue was not that corruption was being exposed—none of the people present were happy about the persistent corruption in Romania. The point was that exposing corruption had become an entirely mundane activity that did little to change the conditions of everyday life. Neither offhand cynicism nor critical anti-corruption investigation achieved very much in themselves, and moreover they left little space for alternative discourses (cf. Ries 1997: 173-4). It was not insignificant that the cynical agents here were English; as the persistent concerns with cultural intimacy indexed, many Romanians were well aware that orientalist attitudes were at least if not more likely to come from Western Europeans as they were from co-nationals. Liberal public intellectuals such as Pralong and Patapievici were frequently condemned by

nationalists precisely for portraying Romanian character as overly negative—they themselves were, ironically, agents of negativism, and of foreign hegemony to boot.

On the other side of the coin, negativism wasn't entirely rejected when kept in its right place. Among the liberal friendship group were several enthusiastic fans of illiberal intellectuals such as the pessimist philosopher Emil Cioran, whose *A Short History of Decay* (2010 [1949]) they gifted to me as a birthday present. Asking the ironic question "How can one be a Romanian?", Cioran asserts his mortification at belonging to a nation of "timeless peasants enamored of their own torpor" (1968: 70). Yet he ultimately overturns this humiliation and actively embraces pessimism, an outlook which provides a means to inhabit with good humour "the discontents, frustrations, and "epiphanies" of failure produced by the process of modernization or Westernization in a small country of one corner of Europe" (Călinescu 1983: 31; Zarifopol-Johnston 2009). Pessimism, in Cioran's account, is a logical and potentially cathartic subjective response to the overwhelming material, historical and geographical factors that perpetuate the condition of marginality and backwardness, as well as a means of forging solidarity within this (cf. Yurchak 2005; Ries 1997).

This view was shared in Sășești, where black humour and mockery were a highly valued part of the group's intimate relations. Yet this was balanced against a close attention to the effects of words and manners in the public sphere. The effect was a distinction between—to poach Richard Rorty (1989)—private irony and a public syncretism of the romantic and the rational. Context mattered greatly in this regard. While public intellectuals addressed themselves to a national public, for village liberals the most significant public beyond the local community (whether addressed directly or virtually, as in Ana's dialogue) was that of tourists. The presentation of self and other to a touristic public bore directly on the reputation of the Târnava Mare region and, by extension, the future of tourism there. This was reflected in one conversation at which I happened to be present between Ana, Daniel and two Romanian tourists, an urbanite father and his young daughter. Daniel, an educated but not overly cosmopolitan man of Ana and her friends' age who was not particularly close to their group, was employed by the town hall for a variety of jobs that included tourism promotion. Ana and I had bumped into him and the tourists in the centre of the village. At a given moment, the father inquired about the mountain bike trails that ADEPT were constructing in the area and which had been widely promoted, to which Ana replied that some segments were complete and usable but others were still under construction. At this, Daniel turned to the man and joked about the ludicrousness of advertising an unfinished attraction. Ana held her

tongue, simply pointing out that the work relied on a team of volunteers labouring in their free time, but exploded with anger after the others had left. While such mocking humour might be appropriate between friends, it was deeply inappropriate in a context where one was supposed to be advertising the merits of the region and, as a representative of the area, should conduct oneself with better manners.[16]

This public/private opposition was not just a nuancing of the foreign/national frame mobilised by intellectuals, but marked a divergence from this. Pralong's cultural intimacy took for granted that solidarity and self-improvement were to be fostered at the level of national collectivity. In Târnava Mare, however, rural revitalisation was intimately linked to European regionalist ideals and a transnational community. The attempt to achieve it also put liberal conservationists at odds with their co-nationals, whether in attempts to foster dialogue, as we have seen, or situated disputes such as those with shepherds described in the next chapter. In these debates, liberals frequently found themselves positioned by interlocutors as outside the community, or even its "enemies." This was particularly aggrieving, for it itched at an already-existent weakening of local social ties that was the result of the massive emigration of youth from the country to the city and from Romania as a whole to Western Europe (cf. Dzenovska 2013, 2018a). The anxieties these produced elicited an adamant commitment to place and belonging in response, but this was far from a straightforward nationalism.

At another conference, in Sighișoara, I joined Ana and Ernst, a young Saxon from another neighbouring village, at the buffet. The discussion turned to what it meant for a young person to remain in the Romanian countryside. "I will die here!" declared Ana, "And I will be buried in that cemetery on the hillside!" Ernst affirmed this sentiment. The post-socialist deindustrialisation of the country and the economic uncertainty that it produced had fostered an exponential increase in emigration, facilitated by the gradual lifting of restrictions on immigration into Western European countries as Romania aligned with and then joined the EU (Horváth and Anghel 2009; Anghel 2013). Much of this movement was temporary work migration (legal or illegal), with remittances being reinvested at home (Hartman 2007, 2008), but from the early 2000s increasing numbers of Romanian citizens chose to settle abroad permanently, contributing to a major 'brain drain' (Horváth and Anghel 2009: 397-8). For the young people who were left behind, this emigration was deeply traumatic. The Saxon villages

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[16] This view also codified the well-known distinction between frontstage and backstage domains in tourism (Goffman 1956; MacCannell 1999).

had been depopulated especially abruptly and earlier than elsewhere, with the sudden and almost total departure of ethnic Germans in the early 1990s. Ana described the jarring loss as a young girl of having one's neighbours and playmates simply disappear overnight, an experience that was even more pronounced for the small number of Saxon children whose families chose to stay. The friends who Ana had subsequently grown up with had mostly moved to Bucharest or abroad to find jobs that satisfied their university-level education. Ana and Ernst were unusual in having chosen to return after finishing university.

Ana's assertion that she would be buried in her natal Sășești was therefore a strong claim to belonging against the threat of emigration and the attacks on liberal values. Her reference to the cemetery in making this claim was not arbitrary. Belonging is given concrete form in cemeteries, where ancestors' memorials and remains objectify the continuity of kin, community and even nation in a given place (O'Rourke 2007; Verdery 1999). The appeal to a legitimate place in the cemetery was therefore the strongest possible riposte to challenges to belonging. Yet the rhetorical finality of the claim arguably marked how tenuous her continued presence in the village in fact was. On other occasions she acknowledged that "we don't exclude the possibility of emigration, if it comes to that…" This was asserted in reference to a worsening of the political and economic situation in the country, a decay in democracy and a subordination of the national economy to vested interests that has been increasingly pursued by national political elites since 2016, when the technocratic government was replaced at election by the Social Democrats once again. While intellectual illiberalisms (romanticism, Cioranian pessimism) were appreciated in their place, political-economic illiberalism of the kind that has been rising in Europe since the 1990s and accelerated in the 2010s (Holmes 2016) was seen as a distinct threat.

The threat of emigration was held in abeyance for as long as the rural development initiatives were concrete enough to merit real hope for the future. Yet engaging the wider community in this work was difficult, as we have seen. Liberal conservationists frequently found it easier to forge an "understanding" with their urban and foreign visitors, to whom the forms of planning and the aims of development were recognisable and uncontroversial, than with their fellow neighbours and villagers (cf. Leite 2017). This pragmatic cosmopolitanism, together with the distinctly Europeanist aspirations that the conservation projects were imbued with, provided rural liberals with an alternative horizon of identity to the nation and the nation-state. This reorientation in turn provided a different ground for relating to self-presentation and conduct. The "disemic" (Herzfeld 1987) tension between their public

romanticism and intimate negativity was not aligned with a scale of locale or nation against external publics, but rather with a liberal cosmopolitan distinction between public spheres and private persons, rather than collective subjects (cf. Warner 2002).

CONCLUSION: BAROQUE VISION, BAROQUE REALITY

To conclude, let me bring the discussion back to our major themes and my alternative characterisation of liberalism. This chapter has demonstrated how desires for technocracy were especially stimulated by the absurdities of state provision of infrastructures. Exasperation with the state was not new, but followed a much longer trajectory—dating from the late nineteenth century—of complaints that Romanian modernity was "form without substance." In response to such failures of the state, the young liberals of Săsești (like liberals throughout socialist and post-socialist Eastern Europe; see Judt and Snyder 2013) turned to civil society as an alternative organising site for material and social change, drawing in particular on principles of "dialogue" that have been central to Romanian intellectual discourse since the 1989 revolution. This was not just a poor cousin to full technocratic governance, the self-confident and forceful implementation of expertise, but manifested a democratic sensibility towards modernisation. Indeed, the young liberals' personal vision of development was, like ADEPT's programme, "baroque" in its aspiration to recognise and respect—conserve—pockets of local specificity, as seen in Ana's frustration with standardised concrete forms being placed all over the village.

Unfortunately, reality too proved baroque—resistant to comprehension and active shaping. Liberal appeals to dialogic reason and economic interests in the pursuit of community participation were met with awkward responses and cynicism, often appearing to all intents and purposes senseless; "impossible publics," in the words of Penny Harvey and Hannah Knox (2015). In turn, liberals were forced to confront the limits of rationality, and appeal instead to the experiential and revelatory power of romanticism—a more common occurrence in the history of liberalism than has often been recognised. Thankfully, romantic idioms for conceptualising place and culture were in no short supply, having been an integral part of the earlier Anglo-Romanian architectural conservation discourse about the Saxon villages. What such appeals to romanticism failed to account for, however, was a local performative logic of cynicism that was not predicated on an inability to see, but a negotiation of cultural intimacy and unequal power dynamics.

CHAPTER THREE
MIORITIC NO MORE: PARADOXES OF PASTORALISM

INTRODUCTION

The "transition" from socialism to market capitalism and the entry into the EU wrought great changes on the Romanian countryside. Some of these changes, such as the privatisation of the extensive state farming system (Verdery 2003), have garnered great attention. Others less so. In this chapter, I look at how a set of debates over the changing place of and responsibility for sheepdogs can be unpacked to reveal some of the fundamental issues that troubled liberal identity in Romania, issues that we began to see in the previous chapter. Shepherding as a practice and an artefact of popular culture is closely tied to representations of traditional Romanian identity, and changes to it are therefore highly relevant to contemporary attempts by liberals and others to negotiate the public sphere and its historical legacies. As disputes over sheepdog aggression unfolded, liberal concerns became focused on the use of obscurantist forms of discourse that obstructed a sincere and dialogic response to the allocation of responsibility for dogs, as well as on the use of rhetorics that challenged the legitimacy of cosmopolitan uses of the landscape and, through this, further contributed to the marginality of liberal actors.

This chapter also looks more closely at the effects of agricultural subsidisation schemes, of which a boom in sheep and sheepdogs was one element. We have seen in previous chapters two general aims of agri-environment subsidisation programmes. On the one hand, conservation NGOs wished to maintain the Saxon villages way of life and biodiversity. On the other hand, briefly discussed in the introduction, subsidisation schemes had an instrumental role within EU integration, creating a degree of upheaval in local relations that would force communities to reformulate their identities within a European framework (Holmes 2009: 64-7). Both of these aims seemed to be put in question by the actual effects of subsidisation. This situation elicited varied responses. Liberals and others focused on farmers' lack of personal responsibility and willingness to exploit the economic opportunities that subsidies brought, in contrast to the entrepreneurial ethic that would (they thought) ultimately benefit everyone in the local economy. Shepherds, in contrast, focused on the deficiencies and corruptions of state administration that made their lives harder,

particularly the disjointed temporalities of administration. This disjunction was resented by liberals too in other domains, as I show in the next chapter. Yet the way that the dispute over sheepdogs unfolded, and the responses of each party, obscured such shared discontents.

I begin by introducing what exactly was so problematic about these sheepdogs. After a brief comparison to the place of domestic dogs in the village environment and liberal ethics of care for animals, I look more intently at post-socialist changes to the agricultural political economy, and popular representations of pastoralism. The second half of the chapter then looks at how the dispute between shepherds, liberals and others played out in the media and ethnographically, in Săsești.

A TRAGIC ENCOUNTER

Late May, 2015. I drop by Liviu's house, more of a construction site than a home at this moment, to see if he has finished enough work for the day to come for a walk with his dog. He is in the courtyard with Ionel, the builder whom we met in the previous chapter, and a jocular, moustachioed labourer whose name I do not catch. They are surrounded by buckets of plaster and piles of bricks, in the process of restoring a *cuptor*, a large wood-fired bread oven, in the summer kitchen behind the house. After several minutes of casual conversation, Liviu informs the men that we're going out walking for a while. Both immediately offer warnings to take care, that it's dangerous out on the fields. He brushes them off, nodding solemnly. "We know the risks, sheepfolds with five big dogs…"

"Five? More like twenty-five!" Ionel exclaims. He continues, "When I was younger, we used to go out picking *lăcrămioară* [lily-of-the-valley] on the hillsides-"

"-For teas," Liviu interrupts.

"Uh, no, just for fun really. But I won't go anymore. I'm too scared of the dogs."

The dogs in question were not sheepdogs of the Border Collie variety, highly trained animals used for herding, but what are known in agricultural science literatures as livestock guarding dogs. These are very large, usually shaggy-furred, mastiff-type dogs who accompany flocks of sheep, goats or other animals as they graze on pastures in areas with significant numbers of large carnivores such as wolves and bears. They have long been used by shepherds across Eurasia, with many regions having their own distinct breeds (Rigg 2001). The dogs act as lookouts for shepherds, deterrents against carnivore attacks and, if need be, fighters who will tackle the wild beasts directly. They are not trained, but are

imprinted on livestock from a very young age such that they will follow herds around and are highly protective of them. Unfortunately for humans, this instinct to defend is indiscriminate.

Outside the village, Liviu and I zig-zagged across the rolling pasture, dotted with big old oak trees and cropped very short by repeated grazing. Our photography and idle chat were balanced against trying to avoid a number of flocks of sheep who couldn't always be seen across the irregular topography. We had made it past one sheepfold without incident and onto an agricultural road when two dogs accompanying a flock several hundred meters to our left spotted us, and with a chorus of howls charged in our direction. Upon reaching the road I had picked up a couple of stones to throw in case of such an occurrence, and Liviu now followed suit. Thankfully, we did not need to dissuade the dogs from coming too close. Still barking, they slowed to a trot and began to follow about ten meters behind us. We had not broken our pace or direction, which took us away from the flock, and after a few uncomfortable minutes (in which we nervously pretended everything was fine) the dogs stopped following and watched us until we disappeared around a corner. While this instance of chaperoning was firm but peaceable, other hikers reported having to flee through undergrowth and down cliffs to escape less courteous canines.

Ionel's comments expressed a concern that had been growing for some years: The closure of the landscape to recreational activities. On our walk, Liviu and I had been taking many photographs, for there was much to see. Hairy brown caterpillars, crocuses, edible mushrooms, crooked oaks; even the tips of the Făgăraș mountains far to the south, just visible through the deep blue haze and off which boomed the sound of artillery practice from a distant military base. Before our canine encounter, the conversation had turned to the aesthetics of the landscape. Looking around, Liviu observed that it would be a good location in which to put up a few tents and have some sort of festival, or even just a barbecue or picnic in summer. His inspiration was the English fête. He had spent a number of years working in the UK and told me that he missed the urban parks you find in English cities, big green open spaces not dissimilar to that in front of us but which were rare in Romanian cities. Yet such events were not feasible here, with sheep and dogs constantly passing back and forth.

This situation not only frustrated desires for recreation, but jeopardised the livelihood of those who wished to make a living from the tourism and leisure industries. Ana frequently hosted groups of cyclists, providing them with food or renting them bikes directly, but she worried each time she waved them off that there would be an incident with the dogs, who were notorious for chasing anything with wheels. Madalina, a guide for a cycling tour

company who were frequent clients of Ana's, observed to us, "I always have problems over near Acriș [a neighbouring village]. There's a corner just off the main road where three or four dogs appear and chase the bikes, every single time. If you get past them okay, there's another sheepfold immediately after… It's worse in the mountains though, the shepherds just sit and watch. They don't even try to call the dogs off."

While dogs were the agents of closure, responsibility was placed on shepherds for not doing more to control the animals in their care. Many people shared Madalina's impression that the fundamental attitude of most shepherds to this issue was one of indifference. The offended public in this case was wider than just cosmopolitans working in the tourism industry. Many villagers felt pushed aside, as in the case of Ionel, who had given up on collecting flowers and was resigned to picking mushrooms (a skill for which he was renowned) in the damp forest corners fringing the village. Hunters too were frustrated by the proliferation of sheepdogs, who attacked their hunting hounds and killed young fauna, decimating the hunting stock in the forests. While the majority of villagers sighed and got on with life, the latter had a more significant role. Hunting was and remains the leisure activity of choice among the (male) political class, both local and national (although its demographic is wider than just politicians). Hunters' presence shaped the dynamics of the dispute from a local to a national-political matter, for not only do they have a privileged legal status, allowing them to shoot errant dogs, but they also acted as conduits of national power dynamics surrounding cultural intimacy.

The stakes of the dispute were amplified too by the kinds of risk involved. Some months after returning from fieldwork, in early 2016, a disturbing story caught my eye while browsing the Romanian news. A boy of nine years had been mauled to death by four sheepdogs in a village several valleys over from Săsești. He had been playing with a friend several hundred metres out of the village when the dogs had descended on them from a nearby sheepfold. The friend had managed to escape and get help, but not in time to save the boy (Pop 2016a, 2016b). As the shockwaves emanated outwards beyond the immediate community, many commentaries appeared on social networks and blogs expressing grief at the event, but also a frustration at what had come to seem inevitable. As one local man, quoted in a news report, put it:

> That's what happens if the dogs are left free to roam, they eat the life from us, these dogs as big as bears. If they get onto your chest there's nothing you can do. They've

> attacked me too but I chucked stones at them, but a small child like that hasn't got a chance. (ProTV News 2016)

The horror of an innocent child losing their life elicited strong moral condemnation towards shepherds (cf. Malkki 2015: 77-104). It also amplified the sense of urgency surrounding the issue, on top of a perception that warnings had been given and ignored, if not outright rejected, as I discuss later. The sense of inevitability related to the steady growth in numbers of dogs. This in turn was an effect of changes to the agricultural economy in post-socialist Romania.

I turn to this shortly, but first it is worth briefly reflecting on the man's analogy between dogs and bears, for this sharply articulates the extent to which the risk dogs pose is a matter of position (Gillespie et al. 1996). The analogy invoked a savageness, classifying the dogs with the other wild predators that stalked the forests and hills. But this threat was precisely what motivated the shepherds too, for whom the dogs were what stood between them and wild animal attacks. The use of dogs as guards marked a second point of difference, this time not between shepherds and other users of the landscape but between liberals and their co-villagers. The association of pet-keeping with bourgeois liberal identity has been well established in historical and animal studies literatures (e.g. Ritvo 1989; Howell 2015). This held true in Săsești as elsewhere. Rather than being exclusively bourgeois and liberal, however, the ethic of animal companionship was intertwined with Romanian cultural values and idioms, as I describe in the next section; differences were more of degree than of kind. This section forms a counterpoint to later discussions of disputes over sheepdogs.

COMPANIONS, GUARDS AND GYPSIES

Dogs are ubiquitous in Romania's villages, running free on the streets or poking their noses out under gates when one walks past. There are few courtyards that one can enter without being met by a similar chorus of barks to those of sheepdogs on the pasture. Visitors are not uncommonly forced to retreat behind the sturdy wooden gates that are typical of Saxon-style houses, waiting until the homeowner comes and quiets their animal before being able to enter. Typically, this is the major role of the domestic dog: Guarding property. The animals are chained or left loose in the vicinity of homes and yards to dissuade would-be thieves from attempting to enter. In this role, they are frequently an object of indifference, fed scraps from the kitchen bulked out with soup-soaked bread and paid little attention other than when their

barking becomes too persistent to bear (cf. Jordan 1975). Moreover, the idea of a dog entering the house is for many people "uncivilised" and "shameful."

In contrast, one of the key dimensions through which a shared identity was produced and affirmed among the friendship group of young liberals was in their stance of affection and care towards animals, and particularly dogs. This was juxtaposed to the violence of others. Walking through the village with Ana one day, we passed a tiny house on the other side of the little river, little more than a shack, that reminded her of an incident from several weeks earlier. She had been passing the same spot and heard a loud argument coming from within the building. A man stormed outside, clearly angry, and began to kick a dog tied up to a post. Ana had yelled across telling him to leave the dog alone. Immediately, the man's wife came outside and began yelling at Ana in return, telling her to mind her own business and that she would come and find her in the village and beat her. Ana grinned over her cigarette as she related this story. "I've no idea who she was, but she can come and find me if she wants. So long as the dog doesn't get beaten!"

As well as beatings, abandonment was an issue around which the group frequently mobilised. When a domestic dog or cat has a litter of puppies or kittens that are not wanted by the owner, new owners are usually found by word of mouth. It is rarely too hard to find a friend of a friend who has the need or space for an extra guard or ratter. Still, it is far from unknown for litters to be put in a plastic bag and dumped by the roadside if they are lucky, and in a river if they are not. This would happen several times a year in Săsești—urban Sighișoarans were often blamed for using the village as a dumping ground. Each time such a bag was discovered, the group (led by Ana) would do their best to save the animals. In the autumn of 2015, Ana's sister Catarina discovered eight tiny puppies abandoned among a stand of pine trees in the village, so young that their eyes hadn't even opened. Catarina dithered over whether to tell Ana, knowing that her sister would expend all her time and energy attempting to save them, but felt too much pity not to try. Six died overnight, and the remaining boy and girl were housed in a cardboard box under a heat lamp that George bought specially. Ana and George fed them by hand for several weeks, taking it in turns to wake every three hours each night. The female pup sickened with diarrhoea and died shortly after, but they succeeded in weaning the male onto dry food and he joined their already quite crowded household as a pet.

While rescued animals were for the most part found owners elsewhere, the young liberals still had a greater number of animals than most. Ana and George had, at one point,

seven dogs and four cats, while their Saxon friend Samuel and his Romanian wife Lena had eight cats and two dogs. While the largest dogs were kept outside (in hand-built pens rather than chained, a practice which the liberals considered to be cruel), most of the animals were given free reign of the house as well as courtyard and garden. A distinctive part of the liberals' ethic of care related to food. Ana and George's most companionable dog Sofia and an ancient dog of Ana's parents' (who had been moved to their house in his "retirement") both received high-quality dog food bought from the local supermarket, mixed with a little cheaper food to bulk it out. Sofia would eat the best food first, only returning to the cheaper food slowly when she got hungry. Ana commented to me that the dogs ate better than she did, and the cost deprived her of personal luxuries. "They are selfish, because they know this but still demand the best food!" This was all said with a tone of indulgence however, and she prided herself on being able to supply for the animals' needs and desires—a value of hospitality that overlapped with the work of tourism. Conversely, Ana refused to speak to her father (an adamantly traditionalist man, and an ex-mayor of the village) for several days after discovering that one of his dogs had a skin disease from malnutrition after being fed only *ciorbă* (soup), which he had completely ignored out of disinterest.

Differences in the treatment of dogs were also the indirect result of liberal ethics. Much as in neighbouring Hungary, in post-socialist Romania it is a common perception that there is an "epidemic" of "gypsy criminality" (Stewart 1997: 18). "Gypsies" (*ţigani*) are often characterised by others in terms of a propensity for theft. As a Romanian proverb puts it, "their heart is not warm unless they steal" (Engebrigtsen 2007: 178). For many Transylvanians, *ţigan* "means thief or criminal" by definition (2007: 178). This "epidemic" was frequently given as the reason for keeping a dog. When Liviu first moved into his house, his relative Dora asserted to me several times that, "There should be a dog over there! His garden butts right up against the riverbank, and there are always gypsies passing along it." Yet this concern for "gypsy theft" was seen as little more than a moral panic by Liviu. He described an incident where his elderly grandmother had arrived at his house in a great fluster, declaring that gypsies had broken into her barn and stolen her stores of garlic and onions. On investigation, it turned out that the missing items were simply in a different shed. "She just forgot where she put them…" he explained. Liviu was cynical about the use of "gypsy" stereotypes to explain all alleged thefts, and appealed to a common humanity to challenge this, declaring (in English), "They're just guys." Against the paranoiac fear exemplified by Liviu's grandmother, liberal youth tended towards a stance of tolerance, albeit

without dispensing entirely with the reality of theft.[1] Ana explained that, "It's not all gypsies [who steal], there are just one or two bad families." Neither were those families irredeemable, "they just need to be educated!" She spoke fondly of several Roma childhood friends, classmates from the village primary school, to whom she and George would occasionally give garden or construction work. Such relations of work and dependency are common between Romanian and Roma villagers (Engebrigtsen 2007), although usually marked by a greater degree of suspicion. In the absence of a moral panic about theft, the compulsion to keep a dog for guarding purposes was greatly reduced. This was an indirect contribution of liberals' politics to the privileging of a companionate over an instrumental relationship with dogs.

Despite these divergences in attitude, liberals' relationship to dogs in some ways differed from their co-villagers more in degree than in kind. As various ethnographers have documented, human-canine relations are often characterised by an inconsistent mix of indifference and intimacy (Ellen 1999; Shir-Vertesh 2012; Terbish 2015). Those Săseștians who were adamant that property required guard dogs, to which they showed only the slightest interest, could be quite affectionate to other canines who were for one or another reason treated as having greater personhood. In rural and urban Romanian culture, domestic animals are often represented as children. This can be through explicit analogy, as in a farmer's loving observation that the calves playing in his barn were "like children" or the joke to a friend of a man walking his pet dog in the city of Brașov that "I'm taking the kid out!," or how village men would often refer to themselves as *tată* (daddy) while talking to their pigs. In their study of agricultural collectivisation after the Second World War, Gail Kligman and Katherine

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[1] Liviu also pointed out that plenty of Romanians had the potential for thievery. While Michael Stewart (1997) has argued that stereotypes of gypsy theft are frequently embraced by Roma themselves, as a defiant expression of their autonomy from and superiority to non-Roma, Ada Engebrigtsen describes how Romanian villagers elsewhere in Transylvania would joke too that, "You don't sleep well if you [haven't stolen something], isn't that so?" (2007: 178). Walking to the Orthodox cemetery one day with Dora and Vlad, on the way to clean their family's graves, we passed along the top of several of their neighbours' gardens. At one, an older man was constructing a chicken wire fence between his land and the public path. Friendly words were exchanged, and the man declared that he was "too old" not to have a fence; in other words, to always be monitoring his land for interlopers. My companions joked that he wasn't being a "true Romanian"—the fence should have been placed a meter up the hill, "elastically" appropriating a little more land and a couple of walnut trees, in Katherine Verdery's (1994) compelling phrasing. Theft was considered a part of "true" Romanian identity too. Engebrigtsen argues that theft of state property was seen as perfectly justified by her informants, for the state was believed to have appropriated that property from citizens in the first place (cf. Verdery 2003: 65-9), although theft from private property was widely condemned. Nevertheless, many Romanians are highly sensitive to foreign representations of their identity in these terms, as Verdery (1999) discovered when she reproduced several jokes about this in the epigraph to her first book.

Verdery note that draft animals were “considered almost like family members,” and quote a peasant couple who described their horse as “like our son, we had him from when he was a colt!” (2011: 97). Personhood does not always imply affection, however. One of my neighbours, an older woman, described a particularly lawless neighbourhood dog as “a trickster [*şmecher*], just like everybody else is a trickster!” On a different occasion, she addressed him in a more gendered idiom. “Vagabond! Like men. Like boys!”

One of the ways that dogs moved from a position of indifference to one of personhood was through sentiments of *milă* (pity, compassion) that elicited greater care towards particular animal individuals. In Romanian culture, *milă* is especially associated with a sympathy towards those who have no relations, reflecting the importance placed on relatedness and “wealth in people” for rural and socialist personhood (Verdery 2003; Kligman and Verdery 2011; Ledeneva 1998). This sentiment can cross-cut categories of familiarity and strangerhood, as well as humanity and animality. As Dora noted one day in early spring, upon hearing the first cuckoo call of the year, “the cuckoo is a poor thing [*sărac*], for he sings alone.” Dumitru and Elena, a middle-aged couple who got by on subsistence gardening and Dumitru’s seasonal migration to Germany for agricultural work, kept two dogs. Bobo, a shaggy black terrier, lived chained up in their chicken pen, while Violeta, a sleek but plump ginger terrier, was treated as a surrogate child and lived in the house with them. This discrepancy was explained by the latter's biography. Her mother had also belonged to Dumitru and Elena, but had died shortly after all of her litter-mates had been given away, leaving Violeta alone as a tiny pup. “She didn’t have anybody” (*n-a avut pe nimeni*), Dumitru sheepishly explained to me. Out of *milă*, they took her into their home as a companion animal, where she had lived ever since.

Such cases were not the norm, however—as Dumitru’s sheepishness indicated. And while there was a degree of indulgence to such relationships (not unrelated to stereotypes of Romanian indulgence towards children), this was not of quite the same order as liberal indulgence. Despite her own reflections on the matter, Ana asserted that “Romanians are too indulgent with their dogs,” specifically for not getting them neutered. This was indulgent insofar as it did not blight their identity as properly gendered beings; the wholeness of the gendered body is a matter of great concern for Orthodox Christian Romanians, and is largely uncontested as a value in the rural milieu. Yet from Ana’s perspective this created problems of unwanted and uncared for animals. Indulgence for her meant not just affection but also a medicalised idiom of care that incorporated responsible decisions such as neutering and

purchasing high-quality, nutritional pet foods rather than simply feeding dogs scraps and leftovers in a household subsistence economy where, as Elena put it, “everything is reused!” Such values of responsibility appeared also in the debates over sheepdogs. Having briefly surveyed the place of household dogs in the village, let us return to the political economy of shepherding.

MILLENIAL C.A.P.-ITALISM

The sheepfold (Romanian: *stână*) is a ubiquitous element of the landscape throughout Romania. As elsewhere in Europe (e.g. McKechnie 1993), it holds a central place in cultural imaginaries of Romanian national identity, and of the economic highs and lows that have accompanied historical change throughout the twentieth and into the twenty-first century. The changes wrought by the transition from socialism to European market capitalism were especially marked, affecting not just the scale of farming but also perceptions of shepherding identities.

Across Romania, sheep numbers declined from 16.5 million in 1989 to 7 million in 2005, in the absence of socialist markets for wool and with the closure of large state farms (Huband 2007: 88; Huband et al. 2010: 60; cf. Stewart 1998). Annette Mertens and Helga Schneider describe

> the increasing poverty of small livestock breeders due to poor competitiveness of this sector on the international market. Cheese, the main product of traditional livestock breeding, cannot be exported to EU member states at present unless substantial investments in infrastructure are made to meet the rigorous EU hygiene, welfare, and quality requirements. On the other hand, the competition of foreign imported products is decreasing the market for local cheese on the national level. (2005: 13)

Entry into the EU in 2007 accentuated these problems, as hygiene, welfare and quality regulations were applied to production for the internal as well as external market. These included restrictions on the movement of flocks, contributing to the steep decline of long-distance transhumance (Juler 2014), as well as imposing sanitary restrictions on cheese-making at the sheepfolds and sale at markets (Fox 2011; cf. Mihăilescu 2010). Economically, wool has little value and most of the value of sheep farming comes from the sale of cheese and the live export of animals for slaughter (Juler 2014: 2).

I spoke about these changes one afternoon with *Domnul* (Mr.) Vâlceanu, a moustachioed sheep farmer, as we sat on his terrace and sipped apple juice pressed from his own trees. He bitterly lamented the state of the industry, noting that there was no market for the goods he and other small farmers produced. He evocatively described how one can see heaps of wool abandoned on pastures in the mountains, worthless. This was not only the case in the mountains. Walking through the hilltop pastures outside Săsești, I occasionally passed such piles of discarded fleece, dirtied by the elements. *Domnul* Vâlceanu placed the blame on the EU for restricting prices. "You can no longer sell milk or meat for a decent price. Milk sells at 50 *bani* [pence] a litre, and petrol is five lei per litre. You would have to sell ten litres of milk to buy a litre of petrol!" This imbalance was absurd, he implied. His focus on the political restriction of prices, rather than of production methods and the logics of sanitation that underpinned these, alluded to a suspicion of protectionism, of the dominant Western European players in the Union manipulating markets in favour of their own states' goods. It was not just the EU that was to blame, however. He raised a finger and leaned in conspiratorially. "And anyway, this is a country of thieves! The market is sewn up by ten or so of the largest [farmers'] associations in the country, who collude to set prices that nobody else can compete with." Behind this political critique we could also read a nostalgia for the socialist command economy with its guaranteed markets, a nostalgia that was made explicit in other shepherds' commentaries, as I discuss below.

Despite all of this, it was a commonly heard observation in Săsești that there were more sheep—and sheepdogs—than ever ranging over the landscape. And indeed, by 2016 Romania's sheep population had risen again to between 11 and 14 million (Ash 2016). Ana asserted that "shepherding is the only occupation in the village being passed down between generations any longer!" This was not necessarily a good thing. Driving home from an event in a nearby commune one afternoon, she gestured out at the sheep-dotted hills that we were passing, covered in short-cropped grass rather than the ecologically valuable tall pasture. "People have been getting rich on subsidies, but they need to learn that this money will only keep coming if they actually maintain the land as it is."

To briefly recap from chapter one, Romania's accession to the EU in 2007 brought with it entry to the Common Agricultural Policy and access to the monetary subsidy programmes within this. Many sheep farming enterprises would not be economically viable without these payments (Sutcliffe et al. 2013: 67). Farmer enrolment in CAP subsidy schemes —not only basic payments but also the two agri-environment packages—was especially high

in the Târnava Mare region, largely due to the work of ADEPT. Through the pre-accession pilot of agri-environment subsidies in 2006, and extensive promotion since then, 70% of eligible holdings in the Târnava Mare zone were enrolled, seven times more than in neighbouring areas (Sutcliffe et al. 2015: 56-7). Farmers claiming both available packages of agri-environment subsidies on top of the basic payments could receive up to €280 per hectare per year, equivalent to an average Romanian monthly salary (Sutcliffe et al. 2015: 57). In other words, substantial monies.

Subsidisation also had spatial effects. Laura Sutcliffe and colleagues (2013) studied the changes to publicly-owned common grazing land in Târnava Mare (which comprises the majority of permanent pasture) that have accompanied the introduction of CAP measures. They describe a process of "quasi-privatisation." Initially, town halls were applying for agri-environment subsidies and retaining the money, passing benefits on to actual land users indirectly by releasing them from taxes and obligatory pasture maintenance work. Because this did not benefit the ecological health of the pasture, town halls were restricted from applying. This lead to an increase in the renting of common land by individuals and associations. The latter were especially promoted by state and EU bodies, for better economies of scale. In many cases, however, rather than true collective organisations the associations were simply "shells" through which subsidies were claimed and then redistributed to individual members, farming separately, as supplementary income (2013: 66). A not insignificant number of associations were also defrauded of their subsidies by secretaries who fled with the money. This produced widespread mutual distrust between farmers and towards collective organisation. Without proactive associations, wealthier individuals could take out long-term rents of the land, subletting to others or simply excluding them. The sum of this social fragmentation was a physical multiplication. Unlike the consolidation of flocks in pre-socialist communal and socialist collectivised herding, there were more sheepfolds—private ones—dotted across the landscape than there previously had been. Anyone traversing the land thus had a greater chance of crossing paths with livestock, dogs and shepherds than in recent memory.

Sheepdogs were also perceived to be, if not a different kind of animal, then at least managed differently than they were in the past. In an article provocatively titled "What is wrong with Romanian livestock guarding dogs?", Mertens and Schneider (2005) note that Ceaușescu's systematisation plans during late socialism led to the abandonment of many rural households along with their dogs, who became strays. These strays interbred with purebred

guarding dogs, reducing their size and breed-specific behaviours, and therefore their efficacy (2005: 12). Moreover, the poverty of shepherds in the post-socialist era (subsidies aside, the value of which did not always trickle down from landowners to the actual shepherds working out on the pastures) meant that dogs were frequently just fed *mămăligă*, the staple cornmeal porridge of Romanian peasant life, and leftover whey, with little meat. Underfed dogs had a tendency to wander off in search of food, often becoming scared and aggressive (2005: 13; cf. Rigg 2001: 89). Dora, my landlady, spent a large amount of time out on the state's land and was on good terms with most farmers and shepherds in the area, but like Ana she remained unimpressed by the management of many of the new sheepfolds that had appeared since EU accession, most of which were a means to make a quick buck. She observed that "The vets at the state farm would never have allowed shepherds to keep so many dogs wandering free [during socialism]." Such nostalgia for hierarchy was a common element of laments over a post-socialist breakdown of authority, even among those such as Dora who did not otherwise identify with the political project of socialism (cf. Kideckel 2004).

Despite Ana's warning, many farmers continued to receive agri-environment payments regardless of whether they had fulfilled the conditions of land maintenance, due to sporadic and inconsistent monitoring of land use by APIA (the government agency implementing and regulating subsidies).[2] Laura Sutcliffe and colleagues conclude that,

> Whereas previously ecological sustainability was key to producing the fodder that farmers depended on, in many areas today the primary product of the pasture is the cash that they receive for just ensuring the pasture meets the minimum standards prescribed by the payments agency. (2013: 67)

This de-linking of agricultural income from production was far from the conservationists' vision of a sustainable and "prosperous" agricultural economy based on family farming and ecotourism. Subsidisation had never been an end state of the conservation projects, but was rather a stopgap measure to prevent the equally destructive outcomes of land abandonment or intensification. Yet (so long as it was poorly monitored) it was having significant unintended effects—the kind of "chaos" that Douglas Holmes (2009) and Cristina Grasseni (2007)

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[2] On land-use inspections in EU subsidy regimes, see Iancu and Stroe (2016) for Romania and Kovács (2015) for Hungary. These authors stress the way that inspections and regulations coercively reshape practices of land use. This is very true, but it is also true that governmental practices can be highly fragmented and uncoordinated. See also chapter four on tax inspection.

describe in the Italian alps. Holmes stresses that producing disruption a was semi-intentional plan on the part of EU policy elites, forcing local communities to refigure themselves in terms of new European-oriented identities. He also observes that Grasseni's alpine herders quickly adapted to the changed political economy (2009: 65), reconfiguring rather than destroying the local "community of practice" (2009: 67). Nevertheless, it would be misguided to assume that all chaos is instrumental, especially in a situation where key elements of the EU's reform programmes such as the payment of subsidies were equally disrupted—something which led to major protests at a national level, as I discuss below. Furthermore, with the collapse of the socialist collective farms, it was not at all clear that there existed uniform desires to participate in a "community" of practice. The process of restituting private land in the 1990s had produced widespread acrimony, even within families, and people's willingness and ability to cooperate varied greatly between groups and places (Verdery 2003).

The uncoupling of agricultural income from production echoed the global "eclipse" of production by consumption and unrestricted flows of wealth that Jean and John Comaroff term "millenial capitalism," a condition that they argue is especially characteristic of post-revolutionary societies such as the ex-Soviet bloc states (2000: 295). The agricultural economy was arguably "occult" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999), not so much in its penetration by witchcraft or demonic forces as in its resistance to transparency, conducted as it was through the obscure circulation of documents and personal relationships rather than the visible labour of farming. This produced conspiratorial interpretations like *Domnul* Vâlceanu's, while conservationists and NGO staff complained that farmers didn't understand the subsidy regime, or even what they were receiving money for.

Moral and economic ambiguities surrounding shepherding have a long history in Romania. Representations of pastoralism also play a crucial part in debates over Romanian tradition and modernity. The next section provides a brief overview of this, before looking at how such representations were responded to by liberals and others in the post-socialist political milieu.

PARADOXES OF PASTORALISM

Paradoxically, shepherding in Romania can stand for both great wealth and great poverty. The mountainous regions of Vrancea and Sibiu are especially renowned for the sheer scale of their shepherding operations, as well as for the quality of their products, highly sought after in markets across the country. "*Vai*, over there it's the *mamă oilor*!" my landlady told me; the

"mother of sheep." One common tale declared that the richest shepherds in the mountains administered their flocks by helicopter. Michael Stewart and Răzvan Stan have discussed the genealogy of this and similar narratives:

> In the 1980s, amusing stories circulated about [shepherds from Poiana Sibiului] who wanted to install lifts in their homes, or who had converted their stables into diesel stores at a time when the rest of the country could barely find enough gasoline to drive around their neighbourhood. One concerned a shepherd who had asked the permission of the authorities to purchase a helicopter for a better surveillance of his flocks (the pretext was that he had the collective farm flocks in his care). The story goes that when the regional authorities in Sibiu turned down the request, the shepherds submitted it to President Ceaușescu. These stories were being spread at a time when Romanians, especially those in urban areas, were living at the edge of subsistence. Asking for a private helicopter in a country where even buying a new car was a near impossibility (and where the authorities were obsessed with controlling all the means likely to facilitate escape over the border) was a complete absurdity. (Stewart and Stan 2009: 251)

Stories of shepherd extravagance were not limited to the mountains. A contemporary rumour described a sheepfold owned by infamous celebrity and sometime-populist politician Gigi Becali. Located somewhere near the provincial town of Rupea, to the south-east of Târnava Mare, the sheepfold had been equipped with dormitories, showers and wide-screen televisions by the wily shepherds—all at Becali's unwitting expense. Both stories depict the shepherd as trickster figure, able to "get one up" on bureaucrats and the rich, a common theme throughout Europe (cf. Herzfeld 1985: 25). Gail Kligman notes that shepherding has been valued for the contrast that it poses to sedentary agriculture, especially in Romania's feudal history (which extended into the nineteenth century). Long-distance transhumance "created a certain "margin of liberty" denied to those engaged in agricultural labor" (Kligman 1988: 243). This liberty resonates with a wider set of values in Romanian culture regarding self-mastery and autonomy over labour, as described in the previous chapter, but its excesses can pit shepherds against their own communities and leave them quasi-strangers.

Despite the potential for wealth, it is regularly acknowledged that the life of most shepherds is not to be envied. It is *sărăcie*, poverty, a life spent outdoors for the majority of

the year and requiring hard physical labour. Becali aside, most sheepfolds have few to no facilities: no running water or electricity, and shepherds regularly sleep in "boxes made of wood or corrugated iron which are just large enough to contain a man lying at full length," wrapped in sheepskin cloaks for warmth (Juler 2014: 11). There is also the very real risk of attacks on the flock by bears and wolves, and many shepherds have stories of personal injury from these incursions—and the scars to prove it.

Very different representations of shepherding appear in Romanian folk mythology and ethno-philosophy. The folk ballad *Miorița* (The Little Lamb), existing in many forms throughout Romania, is the most famous cultural artefact. In brief, it is a story of a shepherd who is warned by one of his sheep that he will be betrayed and murdered by his two fellows. Yet rather than fight this fate he chooses to accept it. The shepherd asks to be buried near the sheepfold, his pipes placed at the head of the grave so that the wind will continue to play them, and requests that his mother be told only that he married a beautiful princess. The ballad has diverse and hotly contested symbolic meanings, from Christian ethics of martyrdom (Juler 2014: 3) to marriage to the earth (Kligman 1988: 242-5). It also connects a "romantic idealisation of pastoralism" to Romanian national identity (1988: 242), fostering "a cultural esteem for pastoral life and the humanitarian qualities associated with shepherds" (1988: 243). From the poet Vasile Alecsandri onwards, this romanticism flourished among nineteenth century intellectuals (Babuts 2000; Karnoouh 2011: 208). In the twentieth century, it was taken up by several philosophers who made it central to influential treatises on the Romanian national essence. To return to two influential intellectuals mentioned in the previous chapter, Lucian Blaga (2011 [1936]) wrote in the interwar period of a "mioritic space" of Romanian community and destiny. Similarly, Constantin Noica, responding to the puzzle that Romanian folk culture is dominated by pastoral themes despite being *de facto* agrarian, argues that Romanians are, by origin and spirit, a pastoral people. Yet this spirit is vulnerable. Noica writes poetically of

> two Romanian souls: the pastoral soul and the agrarian. All that is nostalgic and thirsty for new sights comes from the soul of the pastoralist. But the sedentary soul of the ploughman has passed over him, and has devastated him; it must devastate him. We are the land of Cain in which Abel has not yet died. (Noica 2014b [1944]: 40)

This pastoral quality is one of the elements of tradition that Noica asserted Romanians should strive to retain as they forged modern identities, as discussed in the previous chapter. Contemporary interest in these philosophies can be seen in the new editions of Blaga, Noica and others that are regularly released by the major Romanian publishing houses (one of which is run by a student of Noica's) and sold even in the smallest of bookshops.

More ambivalently, the fatalism expressed by the shepherd in *Miorița* is often raised to the level of an essential Romanian character trait. In both Romania and the Republic of Moldova, the tale is frequently invoked in everyday conversation and national political discourse to explain passivity in the face of inequality and domination. Some vehemently decry this trait as something to be discarded or transcended, while others use it to justify or at least mitigate inaction (Babuts 2000; Humă 2015). This folkloric "theodicy" is a popular counterpart to the intellectuals' constructivist theory of negativism (cf. Herzfeld 1993). "Mioritic" fatalism arguably also exists in a reciprocal relationship with the self-consciously modern pessimism that intellectuals such as E.M. Cioran articulated as a response to geographical and historical marginality.

Pastoralism, in sum, is a central part of imaginaries of Romanian traditional identities, including tropes of Romanian character such as fatalism that are both objects of critique and intimate values. As we saw in the previous chapter, such elements of character were frequently seen as obstructions to the development of a liberal public sphere. Indeed, in the next section we shall see how this formed the target of a particularly vociferous critique by liberals and the civic-minded in the wake of an unprecedented public mobilisation of shepherds in defence of their dog-keeping practices. While ideologies of dialogue provided a positive model of conduct to be emulated, liberal responses to the shepherds' demonstration, in contrast, attempted to exclude cultural symbolism and stereotypy from the discussion and thus leave behind, as though it were more natural, a space of sincerity and personal responsibility.

"SHEPHERDS HAVE APPROPRIATED THE MOUNTAINS"

In early December 2015, several thousand shepherds marched on Bucharest to protest against the modification of a law passed through the Romanian parliament, arriving as far as the courtyard of the parliament building itself. The law in question, Law 149/2015, modifying Law 407/2006, articulated the rights and obligations of hunters and landowners to one another and to the environment. The new modification became the focus of strong opposition

under the claim that it restricted the number of dogs that shepherds were legally allowed to keep at their sheepfold: One dog per flock on the plains, two dogs for flocks in hilly regions, and three for those in mountainous regions. Such a proposition was intolerable to many shepherds, for whom the dogs were a necessary defence against wild animals and economic ruin. As one protester put it in justification of the five dogs he kept, "[A] wolf is stronger than 10 dogs. And a pack can have many wolves, and in the morning you wake with only half your flock." Another man pointed indignantly to the hypocrisy of the politicians who had promulgated the law. "These [people] aren't in a state to round up the stray dogs in the city and they want to kill our dogs, which protect us from wolves, from bears" (quoted in Veress 2015).

The protest was the first mass-mobilisation of shepherds in recent Romanian history, and it elicited much commentary in the media and online. This included some sharp retorts from those quarters where anger at contemporary pastoral practices had been bubbling for some time. Here I focus on one response in particular, a blog post published on the Romanian cycling website Freerider.ro, entitled "Shepherds' dogs, from behind the handlebars" (Campian 2015). The author, Horațiu Campian, a mountain biker, expressed in an extreme form certain sentiments that were shared widely by those who wished to see the whole Romanian countryside opened up to recreational use. His account mobilised personal experience, stereotypes and myth to characterise and compose a liberal critique of contemporary shepherds, one that nevertheless verged on illiberalism at times.

After stating his expectations for a "normal" interaction with sheepdogs, in which the attentive shepherd promptly calls them off and the two parties exchange some polite words, Campian narrates a more unpleasant encounter:

> [My wife and I] had decided to do a classic tour of the Iezer mountains, climbing from the dam at Crucea Ateneului with bicycles and descending on foot via the tourist trail to the Voina cabin. The pasturing season was in full swing and I can say that we met several flocks of sheep. Shepherds as dirty and stinking as those I had never seen in my life. Even from a distance, they began to shout to their dogs to jump on us: "get them boy [*mă*], bite them". Luckily the quadruped is more intelligent than the biped.

Alongside this savagery—of the people more than the animals—Campian hints at the theme of incongruous wealth. In yet another encounter, he describes meeting "a serious pack of

bloodthirsty dogs" despite "not a trace of sheep, only several 4x4s and an ATV." Besides the incongruously expensive vehicles, the fact that dogs are present when sheep are not suggests their numbers at the sheepfold are in excess of those strictly necessary. He continues,

> Shepherds are no longer the same archaic persons from *Miorița*, but are for the most part ex-criminals and convicts released from prison and unable to find other work. Their level of responsibility continues to drop.

While Campian concedes that, "yes, transhumance and pastoralism are beautiful traditions that characterise us as a people, as a culture, and if these die so does a part of us," he counters, "but neither can this mockery of the rest of the population who wish to enjoy the mountains continue." He reaches his crescendo:

> Shepherds have appropriated [*și-au însușit*] the mountains! And unfortunately they have done so with great callousness [*nesimțire*] and without a single civic sentiment. They construct sheepfolds in the middle of roads, they have made a game of inciting their dogs upon tourists. Evidently, it's as stupid to say that every shepherd is a felon as it is to consider every emigrant from the Middle East a terrorist. But like terrorists, aggressive shepherds and their exaggerated numbers of dogs exist and cannot be ignored! (2015)

This analogy to Islamic terrorism—wildly excessive from one perspective, despite the qualifications (there have never been any Islamic terrorist attacks in Romania)—points towards a conceptualisation of shepherd aggression as an attack on, firstly, the integrity of personal bodies and the body politic and, secondly, fundamental liberal principles. The "appropriation" of the mountains is a seizure of sovereignty that challenges the civic rights of access that Campian appeal to in order to secure the democratic, recreational use of the land.

Running rather contrary to these liberal principles is the representation of shepherds as basically sub-human; "dirty and stinking" (*jegoși și împuțiți*) and less intelligent than their own dogs, who are (in line with liberal ethics of care for animals) treated as blameless. This is not unrelated to the invocation of folkloric character. The references to sub-humanity and criminality are purely negative characterisations, resulting from the absence of personal responsibility. This is in part based on actual instances of aggression and illegal activity, but

also on a particular way of assessing conduct in general. Folkloric and other stereotypes of group or personal character provide a framework for explaining and tolerating a range of behaviours (cf. Herzfeld 1993). The assertion that folkloric depictions no longer apply to contemporary shepherds is thus not just a claim about the changing demographics of shepherding, but also an attempt to exclude such exonerating discourses, leaving only a framework of individual choice and responsibility. Stereotype and the rhetorics of excuse it entails were not the only rhetoric to which Campian and other recreational users of the landscape objected, however.

Campian refers in passing to "shepherds (or some who pretend to be shepherds) coming out to protest." This parenthetical suggestion of a false identity is not explained, but suspicion of duplicity was not entirely unjustified. An alternative motive for the protest, beyond the restrictions on dogs, was sketched out during a BBC Radio 4 documentary on the event, broadcast several months later (Ash 2016). The president of the General Association of Hunters and Sport Fishermen of Romania, Neculai Șelaru, traced the origins of discontent to the late payment of subsidies for 2015, which had left the shepherds out of pocket and unable to buy feed for their animals. The new modification of the law had granted local hunting associations the authority to enforce laws and fine those who break them, in the absence of any effective state enforcement agents. In conjunction with a ban on winter grazing for ecological reasons, this left (some) shepherds without options to feed their flocks and antagonistic towards hunters. Cristiana Pașca Palmer, Minister for the Environment, noted that the protest caught her by surprise, for the limits on the numbers of dogs had in fact been in place since the original law, promulgated in 2006, while the modification itself had been passed in June of 2015, half a year before the protest. Lucy Ash, the British journalist presenting the radio programme, suggests that the protestors may have been taking political advantage of a transitional moment. The Social Democrat government had unexpectedly resigned several weeks earlier, after nationwide anti-corruption protests, following which President Klaus Iohannis had installed the cabinet of technocrats whom we met at the start of this thesis. Indeed, the primary result of the protest was the suspension the following day of the articles from the hunter's law that prohibited winter grazing and limited the number of dogs (Draghici and Popescu 2015).

In order to consider this on comparative grounds against the liberals' position, we can profitably borrow from a set of recent works on "social time." Modernity, Laura Bear and others have argued (Bear 2014a; Ssorin-Chaikov 2006, 2017), is marked by the intersection

of multiple different social times: Abstract time-reckonings, the rhythms of social practices, non-human rhythms, and so on. These include the regimented routine (or long delays) of bureaucracy, the immediate urgency of unpredictable risk, and the long-term of conservation politics. In an ethnography of the attempts to elicit a governmental response to the presence of a man-eating leopard in the Indian Himalayas, Nayanika Mathur (2014) points to the importance of intersecting temporalities in structuring different kinds of accountability. She draws attention to how the unpredictability and imminence of feral animality produces an urgency that grates against the protracted, formalised procedures by which the state authorises the hunting of an otherwise protected animal. Her article provides a paradigm for thinking through disputes grounded in conservation and predatory animality.

In the shepherds' protest, participants and their representatives enacted a blurring of legal chronology in order to capture public support at a particularly crucial moment, stimulated by the intersection of several different orders of temporality: The turning of the pastoral seasons, the calendar of grazing restrictions translated into law from European conservation politics, and the perennial delay of the subsidy-granting bureaucracy. This delay elicited a nostalgia for socialism among some participants. "Back then we had to make contracts for lamb, wool and milk, and they paid us an advance so that we could see to our work. Now they don't even give us subsidies on time" (Veress 2015).

Unfortunately, the blurred chronology that was presented to the public clashed with a number of commitments held by liberal and other critics of pastoralism. For them, urgency was the order of the day. Regarding nature conservation, the fragility of the local ecology meant that any abandonment of grazing restrictions was highly problematic, risking the loss of Transylvania's unique biodiversity. Similarly, for those personally or economically invested in recreational uses of the landscape, the unpredictable ferality of the sheepdogs brought an immediate quality to the risk that reached its apogee in the death of the young boy. Urgency on both counts demanded an immediate moral response from the most proximate actors, farmers and shepherds, separate from and perhaps even before any systemic change to the agricultural economy of the kind demanded by farmers and indeed recognised by most conservationists (cf. Mathur 2014: 151). But this was not forthcoming. As I demonstrate in the next section, shepherds had their own rhetorical tactics for managing allocations of responsibility and protecting their interests.

"AS IF HUNTERS DON'T HAVE DOGS…"

In early 2015, I joined the staff of the regional Local Action Group (LAG) at a number of meetings held across their territory. The meetings' purpose was to bring together sheep farmers to discuss the possibility of starting a wool producers' cooperative. This was part of a wider project to improve the profitability of sheep farming in response to the booming ovine population. The LAG hoped to obtain EU funding for a small processing facility that could increase the value of the wool. This was easier said than done, however. The LAG had struggled to find potential buyers who would commit to purchasing the product, and this lack of a guaranteed market, in combination with the widespread mistrust, made farmers wary of joining. The meetings were an opportunity to open a dialogue that would, the LAG staff hoped, persuade them.

The meeting held in Săsești town hall had a constant audience of around fifteen people, with some coming and going. Rarely do so many land and animal owners come together in one place, usually being too busy with the physical routines of farming to attend meetings that don't have a direct payoff. An annual gala run by ADEPT in Sighișoara for Târnava Mare farmers included a tombola with big prizes of agricultural equipment and a free meal in the town's largest hotel in order to encourage participation. Here, the town hall staff took full advantage of this to attend to outstanding bureaucratic business, bringing documents and registers to be completed. After an oral presentation and a short film presenting a successful growers' cooperative from the county of Cluj, the floor was opened to questions. The Mayor, a supporter of the scheme, had been sitting quietly at a desk in the corner throughout, but gradually began to take over the response to attendees' questions, mobilising his close knowledge of local specifics and the greater political influence he held compared to the all-female team from the LAG. Around half an hour into the discussion, he shifted the topic abruptly to the control of sheepdogs:

"A different topic. Look, you have many sheep, and animals, and dogs, and *it is a dis-as-ter*! Not a single tourist can go walking any more, nobody nowhere. They no longer have a place owing to your dogs." A man's voice rises from the back, "As if hunters don't have dogs…" The Mayor continues without responding. "Dogs are going after people like they would go after—" Two more voices interrupt him, almost in unison.

"Two dogs shot now!" calls Gabi, a woman renowned for her horticultural skill and brash humour. She is echoed by another man across the room, only a beat behind.

"Two dogs they've shot this year, poor things. Not that you would know."

"I don't know…" starts the Mayor.

"*Ba da*, they did!"

"…specific cases, who shot and the one they shot," he finishes.

"With a *jujeu* [mark identifying that a dog is owned and not wild] at the neck," the man adds.

The Mayor tries to rein in this shift in direction. "From my own hunting with [inaudible] I don't know anyone who would—" but once again Gabi cuts him off.

"Just recently they caught a dog. None of you have lost a dog? They haven't. They'll shoot it, yeah. Now that they shoot, what can we do?"

"I'm not discussing this for the hunters," the Mayor asserts. "I'm discussing this in the first instance because of what tourism means here, because nobody can go out on the land. We had, from APIA, there was a land inspection, a dog knocked him down. Uh, and again, an English woman went out walking, not here [*la noi*], it was over at [a neighbouring village]. Same thing." He pauses, then adds more softly, "This isn't acceptable."

Nonplussed, Gabi continues. "But mister Mayor, to be sincere! Can you stay in the middle of the forest *without dogs*?!"

"I'm not saying you can, but…"

"Or with them chained up?"

The chatter starts again and the Mayor is drowned out by the ringing of Gabi's mobile phone. She leaves the room to take the call.

When I later related to Liviu that the attendees had invoked hunters as the real threat on the landscape, he replied sardonically, "Of course they did…" As far as he was concerned, this was nothing more than misdirection to avoid allocations of responsibility. Like Ionel's parrhesiastic contrariness in the previous chapter, it obstructed dialogue. But in this case, for Liviu, the rhetoric was unambiguously manipulative and spoken in bad faith.

The shepherds' choice of hunters as the object of their blame was not arbitrary, however. Even before the modifications to the law that allowed hunting associations to fine shepherds, hunters were legally allowed to shoot any feral dogs discovered in the forests or other areas classified as hunting zones in order to protect the game stock. Yet many shepherds believed this authority was exploited. It is a legal requirement that sheepdogs must wear a *jujeu*, a stick tied around the neck that dangles down in front of the legs and serves to mark a dog as a working animal rather than a stray. The suggestion that a hunter would shoot a dog despite it wearing a *jujeu* represents an abuse of the legal mandate and symbolises a direct aggression towards shepherds as a class. Moreover, because hunting is to no insignificant

degree a leisure activity of the political class, the granting of additional powers to hunters was interpreted as little more than naked self-interest, a means of gradually pushing herders off the landscape altogether.

That said, Liviu was not entirely wrong; there were strong pragmatic reasons for invoking hunters as a constituency more worthy of blame. This quite strategically placed the Mayor on the back foot, for his own participation in hunting was well-known. In an attempt to counter the accusations and regain control of the narrative, he shifted the frame away from group interests and towards considerations of personal responsibility.

> Now, so you understand me properly, I'm not discussing this on the part of the hunters, but I haven't heard of one dog being shot yet. Whoever shoots; his responsibility, his business [*responsabilitatea lui, treaba lui*]. If I was going to shoot, I would say why. I would go and shoot the dog next to the sheepfold and say why. Because I saw it kill a fawn, or whatever. And they can say what they want. *If* it was the case, which it isn't and hasn't yet been.

The Mayor presented himself as an exemplar of reasoned action and personal accountability, manifesting a liberal ethic of sincerity in regard to questions of accountability (one also evident in Liviu's unimpressed dismissal of misdirection; cf. Keane 2002). Yet his appeal to a particular kind of self could not easily escape his audience's re-framing of the identities at play. The insertion of hunters into the debate troubled his appeal to moral exemplarity, forcing him to explicitly bracket off the positionality of the hunter that framed the image of a responsible subject. The result was simply to highlight all the particular privileges of power that underpinned this position, from guns through legal authority.

The Mayor's emphasis on personal accountability was not dogmatic however, and to some degree it was an (unsuccessful) response to being backed into a corner.[3] Shortly after, he switched to an idiom of collective interests. Ecotourism development, he suggested, presented an opportunity for additional income.

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[3] Whether or not the Mayor held to this principle outside contexts of official political speech was somewhat ambiguous. The young liberals' commitment was more tenacious, relative to the problem of negativism (see also chapter five on language ideologies of dialogue).

> Look at Dan, how many tourists have been over to visit his sheepfold, you've probably been too, and they really like it. Just like that, rustic.[4] They appreciate it. They don't have this kind of thing at home [*la ei*] any more, they lost it I-don't-know how long ago. But how can you receive guests when you can't even approach the sheepfold?

The Mayor related this to a particularly sensitive problem of the moment, the tightening of laws around small businesses' tax registration. As I discuss in the next chapter, this jeopardised individual enterprise. In the face of increased costs, the Mayor tried to recruit the farmers to engage with the new, entrepreneurial economy as a source of wealth that could mitigate the economic damage of the state's extortive strategies, rather than relying on subsidies.

> You should think about it in this way, because otherwise it's very difficult, the situation being how it is. And it will get more difficult from now on, because this new fiscal registration isn't a random thing. Its purpose, in the first instance, is taxation. Look, you've registered as a firm, you've entered your subsidies through the firm, and the whole thing is considered income. It gets taxed. And at 16%! You know this. And for that reason, you need to think about anything that you can get a little extra money from.

Gabi, who had returned by this point, lamented the stress of it all. "We're losing our hair over this!" As I show in chapter four, the unpredictable pace of governance and new technologies of fiscal surveillance created such a confusion of order that it seemed impossible to follow the letter of the law, bringing the risk of fines or even the closure of business.

As this section shows, obfuscatory rhetorics could be quite effective in deflecting responsibility. A number of anthropologists have discussed the prevalence of such discursive tactics in the Mediterranean, the Balkans and Romania, what J.G. Peristiany refers to as "the defensive use of deception" (1976: 23; cf. du Boulay 1976; Theodossopoulos 2013, 2014; Fox 2011: 236). This was not entirely detached from legitimate resentments on the part of the farmers and shepherds. Nevertheless, the art of obfuscation alienated those such as Liviu who were already suspicious of shepherds' moral character and economic intentions, in light of the

[4] Ironically, the term *rustic* commonly referred to a style that tourists and conservationists considered a kitsch imitation of authentic tradition, marked by wagon wheels on the walls, cowboy memorabilia and crazy paving.

changing agricultural economy (cf. Fox 2011: 259). The disagreements and differences between the shepherds and rural liberals were amplified by a further form of rhetoric that, like the accusations of being community "enemies," aggressively targeted a position with which the latter and (for those working in tourism) their clients were associated.

EXCLUSIONARY BELONGING

Following the incident of the child's death, a number of local commentators had pointed out not only the inevitability of the event, but the fact that multiple warnings had been given and actively ignored. A recurrent concern in these discourses was the use by shepherds of a particular set of rhetorics that not only deflected responsibility but actively inverted it onto the victims. In a post on Facebook, a political activist and social critic blogging under the name *Sighișoara Altfel* ("A Different Sighișoara") noted the negative response they had received after previously speaking out about the lack of control of dogs at sheepfolds.

> When we commented that there exist absolutely no controls over sheepdogs we attracted numerous negative comments, although we clearly mentioned that we don't have anything against the dogs but rather against the way in which they are supervised and their inadmissibly large number. Now, the guilt will probably be placed on the dead child, saying for example that he had no business going near the sheepfold. And you know what the shepherd will say?! That the dogs weren't his but had just taken shelter nearby and he couldn't stop them.

Visiting Săsești later in the year, I spoke to Liviu about the incident. Offhandedly I quoted the news report that the boys had been only a few hundred meters from the village, but he immediately cut me off. Like the activist, he saw behind such a seemingly innocuous observation more unpleasant arguments lurking, concerning blame and sympathy: That it would be more tragic if the death occurred close to the village, or the boys would be more culpable for going near the sheepfold. "A child was killed, you can't excuse that. The dogs shouldn't be allowed to do that." Leaving his usual irony aside in favour of an uncharacteristic bluntness, Liviu rejected outright any moral reasoning that would inhibit the clear allocation of responsibility to the owner of the dogs.

Beyond the principle of personal responsibility, what concerned Liviu and the *Sighișoara Altfel* activist, as in the disputes over public speech in the previous chapter, was

the mobilisation of exclusionary idioms of belonging. The hypothetical statement attributed to the shepherd by *Sighișoara Altfel*, "he had no business going near the sheepfold" (*nu avea ce să caute în apropierea stânii*) reproduced a common trope. "To have no business" (*a nu avea ce căuta*), literally "to have nothing to be searching for," is a phrase encountered frequently in the interrogative form *ce cauți?* (what are you looking for?). This can be asked in a challenging or outright aggressive manner to contest the legitimacy of someone's presence in a space, with the insinuation that they are poking around where they do not belong or that they are a suspicious character.

The use of this trope in regard to sheepfolds rests on a conception of the landscape as fundamentally a place of work, from which children can therefore be excluded. But anxieties around the idiom arguably went beyond the case of the child's death, extending to the changing uses of the landscape. At a dinner hosted by some British expats working in the tourism industry, a middle-aged Romanian friend of theirs, Marian, exploded angrily: "I've had enough of these dogs! They are causing problems for everyone. It doesn't matter whether it's a tourist or a local!" This clarification was unprovoked by the conversation, but targeted a sentiment that Marian perceived as prominent enough to warrant rebuffing, namely the idea that the problems of tourists or other *străini* (strangers/foreigners) could be a matter of indifference, and care limited to an intimate sphere of "locals" (*localnici*).[5] For those who hoped to make a living from tourism, exclusionary definitions of belonging were deeply problematic insofar as they legitimated the threat of violent dog attacks on one's clients. But more than this, rural liberals were very aware that they too might find the local/stranger boundary wielded against them. Despite their claims to rootedness, their associations with foreigners and their often stark differences of opinion with other residents marked them out as different. Ana observed, "We're not very well liked in the village…"

One of Ana and George's direct neighbours, the aforementioned Dobrogeanu (known to most by his surname), was the wealthiest sheep farmer in the commune. This wealth was largely accrued from subsidies—"millions" of lei some villagers declared, hyperbolically. Dobrogeanu owned a Rottweiler that was allowed to wander freely out of his yard and into the road, something Ana and George were unhappy about because it stressed their own, much smaller, pet dog. After one occasion when the Rottweiler had entered their courtyard, George

[5] Theodossopoulos notes that blame-avoiding discourses in Greece, like Peristiany's defensive deception, could easily be channelled into "nationalism, ethnocentric interpretations of history, political-party rhetoric and electioneering campaigns" (2014: 489).

printed out the law that stated that dangerous dogs (as Rottweilers are classed in Romania) should be kept under control at all times, and presented it to his neighbour. Dobrogeanu took the paper, screwed it into a ball, and threw it back in George's face, declaring "We're not in France." (George had spent several seasons working in that country.) The incident had infuriated Ana. "They don't respect the law!" Like Campian, she saw this a wider problem among farmers, shepherds and the wealthy. But Dobrogeanu's rejection of authority in this particular interaction rested on his ability to associate Ana and George's ethics with foreignness, which in turn allowed him to reframe these as naive and/or unwelcome in rural Romania.

In this case, Dobrogeanu's wealth and influence undoubtedly motivated his audacity.[6] But a sense of indignation also lay behind shepherds' attitudes towards foreigners more generally. This was less about foreigners themselves than the repressive dynamics of cultural intimacy. In an interview with Achim Irimescu, the technocratic Minister of Agriculture, for the BBC Radio 4 documentary on the protest, presenter Lucy Ash asserted that landowners and bureaucrats registering as much land as possible as pasture in order to obtain subsidy money "is a, kind of, a really big problem of corruption, isn't it?" Elaborating, she pinned the transgression to "making out that you've got sheep that you don't have." Irimescu refused to be drawn and, laughing, proposed that it was better thought of as "bad management of the pastures" (Ash 2016). Despite his own discontent with contemporary sheep farming and the subsidy system, Irimescu refused to legitimate the narrative of corruption imposed by a foreign journalist. Cultural intimacy was enforced not through hiding or denying an issue to the outside world, but by refusing certain kinds of definition that were often wielded as much against Romania as a whole as against any particular party.

While this amounted to a defence of shepherds' practices, such defences were often context-bound. I attended another meeting of shepherds and farmers at the town hall that same spring as the LAG meeting, this time presided over by the Mayor and agricultural secretary, flanked by two policemen. Amidst the hubbub of electing a shepherd for the communal herd that grazed the state-owned pastures, the Mayor firmly instructed the attendees to keep control of their dogs. In doing so he appealed to the law, but also to the risk

[6] Sitting in the village bar with a friend one evening early in my fieldwork, Dobrogeanu stumbled drunkenly up to the counter and asked who I was. Perhaps sensing an opportunity, my friend explained that I was a researcher interested in sheep farming. "Oh, is that right? He can come and see my sheep if he wants." He grinned and rubbed his fingers together in the universal symbol for money, adding a not-so-subtle condition to his 'generous' offer. I didn't pursue it, and he proceeded to ignore me for the remainder of my stay.

to foreign tourists. “If a dog bites somebody and word gets back to their embassy in Bucharest, it will be very bad for us here.” This menacing comment alluded to the political repercussions of breaching cultural intimacy. Any negative incident involving foreign citizens had the potential to embarrass the Romanian government, and aggrieved politicians in the capital were likely to come down harshly on local state authorities in Săsești for subjecting them to a loss of face. The insinuation was that this anger could be passed on to the farmers in turn, a threat given material form by the police escort. Unimpressed, a grizzled shepherd sitting behind me muttered, “he cares more about tourists than about us.” Such resentment motivated further appeals to exclusionary idioms.

CONCLUSION

Threaded throughout this chapter are several entangled themes that continue and add to the analysis of liberals and their position within Săsești that I have detailed in previous chapters. The chapter juxtaposes the young liberals’ relations to domestic dogs and to aggressive sheepdogs to demonstrate some of the forms and limits to liberal tolerance, which was extended to Roma in the face of common stereotypes about “gypsy” theft, but withheld from shepherds relative to issues of personal responsibility (or the lack thereof) and purported callousness in a context of major changes to the political economy of agricultural. Such liberal intolerance, which anthropologists and others have forcefully argued is an inherent condition of liberalism (e.g. Povinelli 2002), also involved the bracketing off of romantic assessments of problematic subjects, such as contemporary shepherds—in marked contrast to the pro-romantic attitudes I described in chapter two.

The second major theme in this chapter concerns marginality. In the previous chapter, I described how attempts to realise public dialogue often resulted in highly rhetorical debates that contributed to the framing and self-conception of liberals as marginal within the village community. This dynamic is further demonstrated in this chapter. Yet by taking a symmetrical approach to liberal and shepherd language practices, we can see that the exclusionary rhetorics mobilised by shepherds were also responses to their own marginalisation. This marginalisation rested less on discursive framings of belonging, and more on the leverage of political and economic power against them. Because such power was mobilised along lines of cultural intimacy (concerning the potential shames and anxieties of the relationship between national insiders and outsiders), cosmopolitan and foreign subjects—with whom the liberals were identified—became particular targets of contempt. This was not without some irony, for

many of the shepherds' issues (as they themselves pointed out) were functions of the disjointed temporalities of state administration, a major matter of concern for liberals too, as we saw in the previous chapter and will see again in the next. Such shared concern did not form a site of solidarity, however, and this points to a second irony: Despite desires for technocratic governance, the turn to civil society and its associated practices of language and conduct frequently ended up shifting the frame of problematisation away from structural factors and onto personal ones. That is not to say that attention to the former was lacking among the young liberals, but that it was frequently submerged in public debates.

To return to the titular allusion to liberalism and Otherness, the ethnography in this and the previous chapter has documented how both marginalisation and reciprocal forms of "othering" were constitutive of liberal identity in the village social milieu. While critical analyses of liberalism often focus on the hypocrisies of intolerance, my aim in particular has been to show how certain key elements of othering and distance were functions of specific circumstances of linguistic interaction: Embedded in liberal intellectual language ideologies such as "dialogue," and emerging within a particular context of political-economic transformation, marked by the introduction of tourism and the restructuring of agriculture, and its attendant social dynamics.

CHAPTER FOUR
UNDER *CONTROL*: ON SOME TAXING MATTERS

INTRODUCTION

State and bureaucratic dysfunction, as we saw in the second chapter, were a major bugbear for youth, liberals and conservationists who wished to see a developed and revitalised Romania. Educated liberals invested their efforts in fostering a better public sphere in order to counter this dysfunction, the public sphere being both a site of alternative organisation and a site through which habits of thought and interaction that led to dysfunction were being reproduced. The previous chapter continued the ethnographic focus on the dynamics of the public sphere. In this chapter, I return to state dysfunction in order to explore in more detail the failures that motivated a desire for technocratic governance among Săsești's liberals. This was closely linked to questions of form. Maiorescu's nineteenth century characterisation of Romanian modernity as a "form without substance" continued to be a compelling trope in the twenty-first. Through an ethnography of tax reform and inspection, I document in this chapter how an excess of formalisation demanded an unwieldy labour of reconciling documentary and material artefacts, and left economic operators in a situation of legal and, by extension, economic risk. This account serves both to demonstrate why Maiorescu's phrase remains compelling as a trope for national politics and to nuance its generalised and characterological tones by focusing on particular kinds of formality.[1]

Formality is not a thing in itself, but a quality of objects, processes and semiotic media (cf. Irvine 1979; Keane 1997). As such, to say it has "no substance" will mean very different things in different contexts. The extent to which the dilemmas that emerge from formalising practices (as Martha Lampland [2010] terms the range of social practices that includes quantification, standardisation and rationalisation, among others) are taken to exemplify general tropes depends significantly on the specific affordances of those practices and forms. Tax administration, for example, is marked by an emphasis on numerical and legal form. As referential signs, numerical forms are entangled with material objects and

[1] On tropes as a means of conceptualising national politics and culture, see Boyer (2005a). Variations on "form without substance" can be found among many national intellectual communities across the world as they reflect on the success and failures of the mimesis of liberal democratic or other modern political forms that originated in post-Enlightenment Western Europe (cf. Ferguson 2006).

interactions, such as money and economic transactions, while legal forms connect to a wider set of norms, for example due process, and structures of power and authority that include the ability to lay sanctions. Further, the norms of taxation implicate significant political questions about the relation between citizens and the state relative to the provision of social welfare and other services. Tax administration, in other words, is a domain that affords great potential for the play of more general tropes concerning politics, state and nation.

My specific argument is that a set of changes to the tax legislation, brought in by the national government via "emergency" procedures that allow parliamentary consultation and debate to be bypassed, produced a situation in which legal accounting requirements clashed repeatedly with the material realities of small business in the rural environment. At the same time, a heightening of inspections on businesses' fiscal practices effectively dispensed with due process in fraud investigation, instead sanctioning discrepancies in the work of "circulating reference" (Latour 1999) that more conventionally informs juridical and technical conclusions, and is usually "black-boxed." This heavily disrupted the kind of entrepreneurial activity desired by the young liberals in Săsești, and left economic operators fearful of losing their livelihoods.

This case also provides a lens onto the anti-communism that to a certain degree defined liberal identity in Romania. State dysfunction and disruption in the domain of tax administration were frequently criticised in historical terms, as being in continuity with socialist (mal)practices of governance. This referred in particular to forms of inspection and to the provision of welfare and other services, the latter of which were practically and ideologically central to the socialist regime and its legitimacy, even if taxation wasn't (because the state owned almost all property already).

The ethnography in this chapter allows me to address some recent discussions on the persistence of vehement anti-communism a quarter of a century after the collapse of Eastern European socialisms. Liviu Chelcea and Oana Druță (2016) describe socialism as a "zombie," persisting in public discourse as a target and term of abuse, despite having disappeared in any substantive sense in the 1990s. Their explanation for this is that invocations of socialism are a political rhetoric, a means of "buttress[ing] neoliberal politics and new configurations of inequalities" by dismissing claims for greater welfare support as hangovers of a communist mindset and especially unjustified feelings of entitlement (2016: 522). While this may be true of certain elites, it fails to address the existence of anti-communist attitudes among anyone else other than as false ideology. The anti-neoliberal focus of their analysis is not so

surprising given that the major attempts to explain Romanian anti-communism have come from a nascent and still very small critical Left movement (including several anthropologists). One of their major tasks has been to introduce considerations of political-economic structure into Romanian intellectual and political debate, which has been dominated by moral and cultural themes, but this has been stymied by the deep-rooted anti-communism in intellectual circles (see Ban 2015; Abăseacă 2018; Tamás 2014).

The critique of neoliberalism comes across as somewhat incongruous when brought into ethnographic perspective, however. Chelcea and Druță observe that such neoliberal inclinations and anti-communist rhetoric were expressed by the Social Democrat politician Victor Ponta, who held the position of prime minister for the majority of my fieldwork. But young liberals in Săsești were, at the very same time, accusing him of "communist" policies and intentions. My concern is not with whose attribution is correct. But it is important to see that anti-communist stances and discourses circulated in a complex ecology of representations and interpretations that were far more than just a cover for neoliberalism, and were closely connected to contemporary problems of everyday practice.[2]

A second set of debates I engage are those in the anthropology of social time, briefly introduced in the previous chapter. These inform my analysis of state dysfunction, but I also challenge some of their more general claims. Laura Bear has observed that to negotiate modern bureaucracy requires people "to mediate diverse temporal rhythms, representations, and technologies" that frequently stand in contradiction and obstruct work processes, in order to achieve "temporary reconciliation[s]" that will allow work to continue. Yet "this is not always possible" and indeed "it is becoming less achievable in contemporary global capitalism" (2014b: 73). This is rooted, she asserts, in the intensification of financialisation processes, which increase pressures to repay public deficits, encourage a focus on extraction over investment resulting in infrastructural decay, facilitate public cuts, and so on. The diversity of temporalities in this milieu (of credit and debt, work routines, bureaucratic process and technological and non-human rhythms, among others) become exceptionally hard to mediate, at best affording small "fixes" that allow people to adapt their work and routines to the contradictoriness of systems but do little to combat contradictoriness and incommensurability themselves.

[2] We can see elements of this complexity in the previous chapter, where the dispute between shepherds and other users of the landscape took on the appearance of an antagonism between socialist nostalgics and liberals—but this was an emergent quality of the different, difficult positions in which each party was caught, rather than an outright clash of political identities per se.

This describes well the situation produced for small businesses by the Romanian tax inspection apparatus. At the same time, I argue that this case should nuance the overarching framework in which contradictions in modern social time are attributed to a set of changes in global financial markets, for two reasons. Firstly, following Andrew Kipnis (2008), to frame all ethnographic situations in terms of global capitalist forms of governance tends to obscure how people themselves define the political-economic systems in which they live, definitions which may have significantly different political and historical reference points. The major effect of global financialisation noted by Bear (2015, 2017) is the worldwide growth in austerity policies. Romania is no exception, but the country also has a unique historical relation to austerity. In the 1980s, President Nicolae Ceaușescu decided to pay off the country's entire external debt in order to retain sovereignty from international financial institutions, in the process subjecting the country to extreme austerity and riding roughshod over socialist welfare ideology. The memory of this period continues to frame the field of political debate. Secondly, Bear (2015, 2017) argues that political logics (such as commitments to social welfare) have been usurped by financial-technical ones in contemporary economic governance. While not denying the prominence of the latter, I foreground the fact that the formal trappings of both political ideology and technical abstraction can be mobilised for a range of pragmatic ends, as she herself recognises (Bear 2015: 17-19). This possibility should make us cautious of narratives of a homogeneous global shift in governmental logics and practices, for similarities of form can obscure substantial differences in practice (cf. Yurchak 2005). I reflect on this further in the conclusion. But first, let us return to Săsești, and a sketch of the village that presents some alternative faces to the homogeneity of the diagrammatic cross-section with which we began in chapter one.

BUSINESS AS USUAL

Driving into Săsești, the main street, *Strada Principală*, curves between neighbourhoods of closely-packed houses. Some are well kept, with a border of flowers along the front wall. One or two are empty shells, the bare brick walls collapsing inwards. After several hundred metres the road widens, the buildings become larger, as one enters the central stretch of the village. Here, the village is dominated by the imposing Saxon church, encircled by a thick stone wall, with tall glass windows rising to a vertiginously steep tiled roof. If one wished to visit the church, one could turn off the road and find a space to park between the neat strips of grass and rose beds maintained by the town hall. Leaving the car, one might wander further along

to a little tourist gift shop, selling artisanal foods, crafts, books and maps. On hot days, a wooden bench is placed in the shade by the doorway, for tourists, or for the shopkeeper to sit and talk with the church caretaker or other passing acquaintances if it is a slow day. Inside, the goods are displayed with ample space, arranged on wooden shelves hung with embroidered cloths and warmly illuminated by incandescent spotlights that spill light onto the terracotta flagstones.

Alternatively, if one needs a more mundane class of purchases, one would look not to the pretty village green but to the shopfronts dotted intermittently along Main Street. Some are empty, dusty glass windows looking into bare rooms. Signs still mounted above the door indicate what had been there. A butcher's, a bakery… specialist shops. Apart from the pharmacy and bar, the village retail establishments are all variations on *MAGAZIN ALIMENTAR* or *MAGAZIN UNIVERSAL*, food stores and general stores. Ignoring the church, one pulls up instead on the gravelled lay-by in front of one's chosen store, bumping over the concrete drain. Most stores sell the same goods, from basic foodstuffs to beer and detergents, and customer loyalty is often an expression of one's relationship to the proprietor. Nevertheless, the search for a particular brand of salami or confectionary can bring shoppers to venture over the threshold of another business. During opening hours the rusted metal grille is swung back from the doorway, empty plastic beer crates left alongside for male patrons to sit, talk and drink. Inside, fluorescent strip lighting picks out in stark white detail the abundant stock, shelves closely packed with plastic packets and boxes of fruit and vegetables; fridges with meat, dairy products and drinks; more crates spilling out, encroaching on the white tiled floor.

A different route again, perhaps seen from the vantage of a minibus, takes one away from Main Street, over the small bridge that crosses the stream and up a steeper road between more uniform houses, with fresher paintwork and flower borders, before pulling up at a plain wooden gate. Disembarking from the bus and passing through the gate, one would be met by Ana, George and several enthusiastic dogs, ready to welcome the party to a meal laid out on long trestle tables in the shady courtyard and to begin again the well-worn stories about local life that rarely failed to enchant tour groups.

Having noted in chapter one the importance of small, entrepreneurial business to the vision of rural development, in this chapter I turn to an ethnography of economic practices. This provides a valuable lens onto the issues of anti-communism and the desire for technocracy in its absence that were of great significance for liberal identity. My ethnography

focuses on the tourist gift shop, where I conducted participant observation several days a week for four months. The shop is tucked in a small side-building just off Main Street, with thick stone walls that kept it pleasantly cool in summer and unpleasantly chill for the remainder of the year. Beyond the shelves of goods, the room is divided by a counter, behind which is a computer and printer, cupboards containing additional stock, and a wood-fired stove that often leaked as much smoke as warmth. While it was owned and managed by a man from a neighbouring village, Paul, he was rarely present and the day-to-day running was left to two women, a young salesgirl, Lumina, and a middle-aged accountant, Gabriela. Both were residents of the village, the latter working from home and only visiting to collect takings and check the account books. In the spring and autumn, the shop opened five days a week, while in the summer it was open every day; it remained closed in winter.

One afternoon, Lumina and I had served a very large group of tourists in what had been a frantic melee of checking price stickers, bagging items, trying to find appropriate change, and recording transactions in the shop's sales notebook and on the cash register. In the midst of the rush, we had dispensed with inputting sales on the cash register, intending to do it afterwards from the written notes. This we did, and then set to the end-of-day routine of closing down the cash register and printing its automated daily report of transactions. Yet to our horror, we discovered that some of the transactions must have been inputted twice: The total value of sales on the report was more than the amount of cash we had in hand. This sudden realisation panicked Lumina, who frantically repeated to herself as much as to me, "It's okay, it's okay, it's okay… I hope." Her fear corresponded to a set of changes to the Romanian tax legislation that had tightened the sanctions on even the slightest discrepancy in accounting. The first half of the chapter outlines these changes and the response they drew. In the second half of the chapter, I return to the routines and disruptions of economic activity in the shop to show how state regulation, when enacted in a rural material milieu, produced a pervasive fear and a practical dysfunction.

FISCAL INCIVILITY

In January 2015, Gelu Ștefan Diaconu, the president of the Romanian National Agency for Fiscal Administration (*Agenția Națională de Administrare Fiscală,* ANAF), declared in an interview with the financial website Capital.ro that an "absolute priority" for the agency in 2015 was to undertake an "assault" (*desant*) of financial investigations over small and medium enterprises and the self employed (Zaharia 2015a). A 2014 report from the

government's Fiscal Council had estimated that around 100 billion lei (circa £20billion) was being lost to the state budget through financial evasion, and while Diaconu disputed their figures, he agreed that evasion posed a significant problem. To that end, he had declared an open season on inspections.

The idea that Romania has a problem with tax evasion is well-established in official and journalistic discourses. One English-language news article begins thus:

> BUCHAREST (Reuters) - Every morning, hundreds of traders pour into a cheap wholesale market in a northern suburb of Bucharest. But if the tax inspector calls, the bustle stops, shutters are quickly pulled down and the place falls silent.
>
> Tax dodging remains rife in Romania, despite demands for improvement from the European Union, which it joined in 2007, and the International Monetary Fund, which provided aid after the financial crisis. Untaxed, undeclared activity amounts to more than 28 percent of national output, putting Romania second only to Bulgaria in the EU for the size of the black economy as a proportion of GDP, a study by consultancy AT Kearney found. (Ilie 2014)

The non-payment of taxes was frequently represented in terms of a "fiscal incivility," a failure of civic duty by citizens (Roitman 2005, 2007; Abelin 2012). Tax payment was rhetorically wedded to citizens' interests via idioms of social welfare and the other services that the state provides.

> "Tax evasion is on the rise in Romania and it poses a threat to its national security," economist Ionut Dumitru, head of the country's fiscal council, told AFP. The revenue shortfall translates into dilapidated hospitals, patients unable to get treatment or schools lacking basic facilities. "With revenues accounting for less than 33 percent of GDP, compared to an EU average of 45 percent, Romania will never have an education system as good as Germany's for instance," Dumitru said. "And sacrificing a nation's education and health means sacrificing its future." (Rodina 2014)

Such claims foreground the biopolitical benefits that taxation provides for the population, giving greater moral force to assertions of public obligation. They also, as Janet Roitman

(2005) has demonstrated, provide the state with a powerful rhetoric for deflecting political questions concerning the management and legitimacy of taxation.

The deficiencies of tax collection were not just lamented, but had been met with active projects of reform. In 2013 the ANAF had been restructured, the most acclaimed achievement of which was the creation of a new sub-organisation dedicated to the investigation of tax evasion, the General Directorate of Fiscal Antifraud (*Direcția Generală de Antifraudă Fiscală*), replacing the older and largely ineffective Financial Guard (*Garda Financiară*). This was part of a World Bank-funded programme of reforms, the RAMP (Revenue Administration Modernisation Programme), which would modernise the fiscal administration, increasing efficiency and tax compliance while reducing corruption (World Bank 2013). The new antifraud Directorate would "ensure a high degree of autonomy and independence in decision-making, because it is subordinate to the central apparatus and not to… local fiscal administrations" (Zaharia 2014).

The dissolution of the Financial Guard produced a ripple of discontent. This was not because the Guard was particularly valued or respected, but because the reforms were announced with little warning or apparent preparation. Employees of the old structures would have to apply for new jobs in the Directorate, "in conformity with principles of open competition, professionalism, transparency, as well as equal opportunities and free access for every person who fulfils the legal conditions" (ANAF, quoted in Ghica 2014). Some suspected that these liberal principles were little more than a pretext to remove disfavoured employees from the institution (Ghica 2014). Whether or not this was true, there were marked slippages between the formal aims of the RAMP and the projects that the ANAF under Diaconu put into practice (cf. Anders 2015). One of the RAMP's stated goals was to "reduce the administrative burden on taxpayers to comply with their responsibilities under the tax laws," for "Romania has a large number of small taxpayers facing a complex tax regime - both taxpayers and [the ANAF] must use resources to manage their responsibilities disproportionate to the revenue contribution made by this sector of the economy" (World Bank 2013). Yet Diaconu's declaration of "assault" on small enterprises completely spurned this suggestion that part of the problem might lie with the social and technical organisation of the system itself, doubling down on the criminality of citizens (cf. Woodruff 1999: 187-90). Citizens, in turn, had little respect for the ANAF and its practices.

BLOOD AND ANALOGY

Romanian businesses are constantly subjected to inspections (Romanian: *control*) by a range of government bodies. Miruna Rădan-Gorska (2013: 201-2) observes that a guesthouse, for example, must obtain authorisations from the Tourism Authority, the Regional Public Health Department, the National Sanitary, Veterinary and Food-Safety Authority, the Fire Safety Inspectorate, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Labour Protectorate. Each of these institutions can undertake inspections to check compliance with certification. This bureaucratic oversight verged on the absurd at times, as when one local couple were required to get approval from the Sanitary, Veterinary and Food-Safety Authority in order to proceed with an application for EU funding to purchase several mountain bikes for rental.

Among all of the institutions of *control*, the ANAF had earned a reputation as the archetype of aggressive inspection and sanctions in the popular imagination. Ana commented, "Without doubt, the ANAF are the worst." A metaphor frequently used in media headlines described the application *la sânge*, "to blood," of tax laws. The sanguinary phrase evoked a violence and a persistence, the idea of inspections cutting deeper and deeper into a business's financial affairs until something inevitably gives, the slightest error of accounting becoming a sanctionable crime. It was a common conviction among economic operators in Romania that ANAF inspectors began from the presumption of guilt, evidenced in the blunt and even antagonistic manner in which agents demanded to see documents and took any chance to lecture proprietors and employees on their failings. Much like tax evasion itself, this was often conceptualised as a mark of distinction between Romania and occidental states.[3] Greg, a British business consultant working in the Saxon villages, noted that in the UK you declare your income and the authorities only investigate if they have suspicions, whereas in Romania businesses are constantly treated as suspicious and subject to regular inspections. "That's how it is in Romania," a local client of his commented with a fatalistic air. A lawyer appearing on a television talk show observed that the presumption of innocence in financial regulation was characteristic of "civilised countries," in contrast to Romania. Suspiciousness was widely understood not as the result of institutional logics but as a matter of national character.

[3] As a 1956 report on Israeli tax administration put it: "[The Israeli population] had, and has, everything from the German-Jew or English-Jew, who came to Israel as a disciplined taxpayer, through the Romanian-Jew, who had only known an ineffective and corrupt tax system, to the Oriental-Jew, who had never been exposed to income taxation at all" (Anderson 1956: 2-3, quoted in Likhovski 2007: 686). Such orientalist framings lurked in the background of contemporary discussions of tax evasion.

More subtly, the ANAF often served as a foil or analogy for criticism of other state bodies in everyday conversation. Mr. Vâlceanu, the farmer we met in the previous chapter, bitterly contrasted the injustice of the recurrent delays in the payment of subsidies to farmers by APIA while the ANAF chased him to declare every penny of his income and seized any tax owed with ruthless efficiency. Another villager complained that the local police had overly close relations with residents, inhibiting their ability to enforce the law. She compared this to the local office of the ANAF, the employees of which (she said) "all come from the same school" in a nearby town, similarly leading to conflicting loyalties in the pursuit of regulatory duty.

The ANAF's upper echelons made a virtue of such ruthlessness. As a number of media outlets noted, Diaconu had stated that he envisaged the Directorate becoming the "DNA of fiscal administration" (Zaharia 2014). The reference was not to genetic material, but to the National Anticorruption Directorate (*Direcția Națională Anticorupție*, DNA), an independent body of the judiciary that had earned a fearsome reputation since its creation in 2006 for the bloody-minded pursuit of prosecutions in cases of suspected corruption. This had resulted in many high-profile politicians, media moguls and businesspeople being handed down jail sentences. Yet for many in Săsești and elsewhere, "ordinary citizens," such an analogy was deeply troubling. The work of the DNA was widely considered a necessary and long overdue crackdown on a political class who had hollowed out state coffers to fill their own wallets, leaving the rest of the population deeply impoverished as a result. In this line of thought, the DNA were finally balancing the scales of justice and bringing satisfaction to popular resentments. To compare the DNA and the ANAF in the context of Diaconu's declaration of assault upon the smallest businesses thus appeared macabre, a double insult against the ordinary man and woman who not only were made to bend at the knee by the fiscal authorities, but had to do so under an icon of popular justice.

In the background of debates about aggressive inspection also lurked the spectre of the *securitate*, the socialist-era secret police. Occasionally this broke through to the surface. The DNA, for example, was frequently compared to the *securitate* by high-level politicians in and outside the government, who declared that its methods of investigation infringed liberties and abused due process. The people promoting this line most strongly were, for the most part, either convicted or under investigation for corruption charges, and therefore had a direct

interest in delegitimising anti-corruption efforts.[4] The analogy nevertheless had affective force, for the *securitate* were feared and hated in equal measure, symbolising the absolute nadir of totalitarianism in Romania—not just repressive, but locked into an institutional logic that was incapable of viewing citizens with anything other than extreme suspicion (Glaeser 2011). In no small part, Romanian anti-communism was a reaction against citizens' experiences with the secret police during socialism and the revolution, in which the organisation had been deeply implicated as a violent, conservative force (cf. Verdery 2014; Siani-Davis 2005). Comparisons to the *securitate* therefore had the quality of a moral trump card for asserting one's victimhood.

In sum, state agencies were near-universally represented as highly aggressive and suspicious, with the ANAF as archetype. Whether this was a good or bad thing depended on one's position, one's idea of justice and the targets of investigation. Moreover, moral representations were constantly on the move in a complex ecology of comparison and analogy, adapted and re-adapted for pragmatic and rhetorical ends. These analogies were not just between contemporary institutions, but stretched back to the socialist period. Further continuities with socialism were drawn relative to the provision of welfare—or rather, its absence—as I show in the next section.

COMMUNISM IN THE PRESENT TENSE

In early 2015, amidst Diaconu's assault, I had a long conversation with Ana about bureaucracy and finances. She lamented the amount of paperwork that small businesses were being forced to do by the ANAF, which was simply overwhelming. But this was not an isolated problem. Whether an intentional strategy or not on the part of the Social Democrat government, it was one of a swathe of policies that were making life difficult for small producers. Ana gave as an example the recent proposal by Prime Minister Victor Ponta to reduce the VAT on all foodstuffs from 24% to 9%. "Reducing the VAT will just allow supermarkets to drop their prices to a level we simply can't compete with. Ponta is also

[4] For a deeply problematic example of this genre, see the report by the British-based, neoconservative Henry Jackson Society (Clark 2016). It is unclear who commissioned and paid for this report.

threatening to levy a 6,000 lei tax per year on small producers. I can't afford that. It will put me out of business, finished!"[5]

Ana's anger was directed not only at Ponta but also at the people who kept voting for him and the PSD, the "old people" who would vote for policies (like VAT reductions) that translated into cheaper basic goods. "The problem is that they watch [pro-PSD TV news channel] Antena 3 and believe all its propaganda!" By positioning PSD voters as "old people," Ana implicitly situated their political views as of an earlier era; as "communist," in other words (cf. Chelcea and Druță 2016: 530). While she acknowledged that many were voting for fundamental economic assistance in a time of great uncertainty, there remained an undertone of condemnation surrounding the expectation of handouts. Primarily, however, her critique was that their votes were unproductive for themselves and others because the PSD's claims were cynical propaganda exactly designed to attract those votes—the voters were dupes.

From Ana's point of view, the question of supporting or opposing a welfare regime was irrelevant, for no mainstream political party was credibly promoting this. "Don't be mistaken—the left in Romania has no resemblance to the left in England or France," she advised me. By "the left," she was referring to the Social Democrats, who have been the main party of government since 1989 and were regarded by liberals as "the sole heir to the Communist Party" (Heemeryck 2013: 130). As far as Ana was concerned, the party was social democrat in name only. In practice, their platform was little more than populist electioneering (of an economic rather than nationalist bent) to facilitate networks of clientelism and cronyism.[6] This was not perceived as a break from their Communist predecessors, but was in fact a continuity. While citizens of many East European socialist states saw their political elites as morally bankrupt, the Romanian experience was distinctive in regard to the provision of welfare.

Until the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Eastern European and Soviet socialist states had been organised around welfare systems that prioritised provisioning the substantive needs

[5] The VAT rate had in fact been raised to 24% in 2010 as a condition of the International Monetary Fund loan granted to Romania in the wake of the financial crisis (O'Neill 2017: 9), putting it among the highest in the EU (Apostol and Pop in press). This and other austerity measures led to the deep unpopularity and eventual collapse of the Democratic Liberal Party government of the period, in 2012 (Deletant 2015: 225).

[6] Not that this didn't occur in other parties. Indeed, many people complained that political ideology meant little given the willingness of most elected representatives to shift their allegiance given a half decent offer. But the PSD had the most tenacious hold on power and the popular imagination, from local and county-level politics up to the national parliament.

of the population over formal economic calculation. After the collapse of socialism, the international financial community promoted reforms that pared down and restructured (if not quite deconstructing) the various welfare states relative to global financial logics (Collier 2011; Collier and Way 2004). Romania stands as a significant exception, not in regard to the post-socialist reforms but because by the 1980s the ideological and material bases of Romanian socialism differed starkly from those of its neighbours.

Romania under first Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and then Nicolae Ceaușescu has been characterised as a "national-Stalinism," combining a focus on industrial development and socialist welfare with an intense nationalism (Tismăneanu 2003). Cornel Ban (2012) has eloquently described how these values came into conflict in the 1980s, when international financial crises (and especially oil shocks) saddled Romania with high external debts. Rather than accept assistance from international financial institutions, Ceaușescu decided to pay off the country's entire foreign debt as fast as possible in order to preserve national autonomy and policy sovereignty. This was undertaken (and successfully completed in 1989) through a massive push for industrial expansion and directing almost all production to export, but it came at the cost of imposing severe austerity on the population, well beyond the shortages that were conventional to Soviet-style command economies. The result was to "revers[e] two decades of progress in living standards. The provision of adequate food, housing, and health was no longer taken for granted" (2012: 764). Basic infrastructures such as heating, electricity and lighting were often lacking (Chelcea and Pulay 2015). Ban stresses that there were no external structural pressures for the government to follow this path; it was a matter of political choice on the part of the Ceaușescu government. This made them deeply unpopular among the populace and ultimately contributed to the (uniquely) violent revolution of 1989.

A longer-term effect is that socialism has had a somewhat paradoxical afterlife (cf. Abelin 2012 on liberalism in Argentina). In the context of the collapse of the command economy and its replacement with an unfettered capitalism that many Romanians have come to experience as economic disenfranchisement (O'Neill 2017), there is a marked trend of nostalgia for the socialist system (Kideckel 2004). Ban notes that this "owes a great deal to those decades [the 1960s and 1970s] of full employment, extensive social welfare, increasing purchase power, and for a limited period even a proto-consumer society in large swaths of the urban population" (2012: 767). Such nostalgia was obviously only possible by ignoring the reversals of the 1980s. For many other Romanians, especially younger generations who had not experienced those more prosperous earlier decades and did not buy into the nationalism

that justified the quest for policy sovereignty, welfare norms under socialism were perceived as little more than hollow ideology, propaganda that supported the cronyism and hubris of the nomenklatura. Romanian socialism therefore has a dual and paradoxical symbolic quality, standing for either welfare and prosperity or severe austerity.

Contemporary failures by the government to deliver on social welfare and other services were thus seen as being of a piece with the actions of socialist-era political elites (not to mention the continuity of social networks between the two groups). For liberals, and especially those who identified as small entrepreneurs, the "transition" was understood as a continuity between crony communism and crony capitalism. Attributions and accusations of "communism" referred to what we might call "biopoliticking," political rhetorics of welfare provision, in the absence of substantive biopolitical schemes. The legitimacy of taxation was judged accordingly. Against the idea that the major cause of state dysfunction was fiscal evasion among small and medium operators, most Săseștians (including a retired Financial Guard inspector) stressed that the real problem was high-level fraud among state officials, in which vast quantities of money were siphoned off from the state budget into unknown quarters, and the mismanagement of funds. And, as Nancy Ries (1999) has noted in Russia, this did justify for some citizens the non-disclosure of their true finances.

This poses a challenge to anthropological theorisations of systemic contradiction in the present. Bear has argued that situations of temporal contradiction have become more widespread globally since the 1980s, as a direct result of austerity and financialisation policies, which themselves are national responses to the imperatives of global financial institutions (2015, 2017; Bear and Mathur 2015; cf. Han 2012). She is certainly right to insist on the role of global financial change in producing austerity regimes—after the financial crash of 2008, Romania was subject to international pressure to implement austerity policies, while even Ceaușescu's debt repayment programme was a direct reaction against earlier such pressures. But we should not overlook the fact that austerity can be implemented for diverse reasons and is not necessarily a direct translation of international financial logics into a local sphere. A significant part of the austerity narrative is the claim that political logics (such as commitments to substantive welfare provision) have been usurped by financial-technical logics (Bear 2015; cf. Collier 2011). While post-socialist Romania has been subject to such logics (Gabor 2011; Ban 2016), this was simply not true in late socialist Romania, where the responsibility lay with the national elite and their politics. As Daniel Knight and Charles Stewart (2016) argue, experiences of austerity (including the contradictions of temporality

that Bear has closely detailed) tend to be strongly mediated by historicity. We can see this in the persistence of anti-communism in Romania. But this political critique is more than simply a hangover obscuring the "real" structure of financial logics. Rather, it is a response to a particular pragmatics of formality.

The assertion that global financial structures have shaped national austerity policies that in turn created local situations of contradiction is predicated on the idea of a direct translation of financial logics downwards. What this misses is the extent to which form (financial, technical, ideological, or otherwise) can be appropriated for other pragmatic, political and social ends (cf. Yurchak 2005; Riles 2000). It assumes a certain kind of economic integration in which form provides fixity (of number, time, etc.) and coherence (Guyer 2004), part and parcel of the stability that Euro-American bureaucracies are assumed to have through their norms and documentary practices (Hull 2012). Certainly, tightly integrated formal structures exist in Romania as anywhere else in the modern world, but we should also attend to pragmatic uses of formality, in which fixity and coordination are not necessarily the aims or result, or, alternatively, coordination exists in a self-referential sphere that becomes detached from material grounds (what Alexei Yurchak [2005] terms "hypernormalisation").

The remainder of the chapter analyses this in relation to tax legislation and inspection. We have already seen how Diaconu and the ANAF selectively appropriated World Bank policy. Before moving to an ethnographic analysis of how temporalities were mediated in the tourist shop, it is necessary to situate that legislation relative to a certain practice and temporality of national politics, namely the overwhelming use of governmental emergency ordinances (*ordonanța de urgență a guvernului*, OUG). This form of legislation allows governments to promulgate a law without parliamentary scrutiny. The new law comes into effect immediately and is only debated in parliament several months later, when it can be amended or rejected. Dan Pavel (2009) notes that the ordinances were vital in breaking stand-offs between the government and parliament in the mid-1990s. Yet despite increasing political stability and reforms to the parliamentary system, their use only increased throughout the 2000s and after EU accession, against repeated warnings from the European Commission (Gallagher 2009: 99-100). The ordinances provided a convenient way for the ruling party to pass legislation in the service of clientelism and electioneering, such as increasing pensions. The result is a mass of laws that are poorly coordinated, due to the lack of any consultation, and make little contribution to long-term political plans; what Alina

Mungiu-Pippidi (2010) has described as “Romania’s policy-making mayhem.”[7] The maintenance of a regime of contradictory law can of course have great political and economic advantages for those who wish to exploit it, for example through tying up justice in interminable court cases (Holston 1991). But budgeting also becomes near-impossible to manage in such conditions, creating recurrent financial issues for the government. These were often thrust onto civil service wage cuts, or indeed tax collection drives, rather than the elimination of superfluous spending.

Beyond the shifting of financial obligations onto lower actors by the government, the major effect of this “mayhem” was that economic actors were never entirely sure of the legal environment in which they were working. Ordinances and other laws were often poorly publicised beyond their obligatory appearance in the state’s *Official Monitor* (cf. Rădan-Gorska 2013: 205, 208). Even before Diaconu’s “assault,” this fostered widespread uncertainty among economic operators.[8] In the next section, I discuss the changes to legislation that accompanied the ANAF reforms and which had direct effects on economic practice in the village.

NEW REGULATIONS, NEW ARTEFACTS

The first significant move in Diaconu’s new campaign was an OUG, 91/2014, which updated and restated the law on the obligatory use of cash registers. The immediate aim of the ordinance was to increase the number of economic transactions recorded on the registers that all legally registered businesses must use, thereby making exchanges visible to the tax authorities. In order to achieve this, the ANAF had turned their attention not to the register but to its material output, the receipt (cf. Herzfeld 1991: 149, 2009: 115-6). The obligation to present the customer with a receipt for any transaction was already provided for in the 1999 law that the new ordinance updated. As in the case of the sheepdog restrictions that had so angered shepherds, the new legislations sought to bring older laws, which had been left to

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[7] Such legal contradiction was evident too in the first years after the revolution, when many new laws were emitted without their socialist predecessors having been annulled, producing duplication and inconsistency (Deletant 2015: 221).

[8] It also put inspectors themselves in difficult positions. Herzfeld has noted how, in the Greek Tax Office, “a multiplicity of laws defies the ability of most bureaucrats to discover a consistent and manageable scheme. The state’s apparent inability to give the employees clear guidelines left them with few forms of self-defense: abruptness, buck-passing, stony silence. Bureaucratic efficiency is constantly circumscribed from above as well as below” (1991: 195-6). Popular sympathy for bureaucrats and inspectors was rather truncated by the experiences and outcomes of dealing with them, however.

languish by both state and citizens, into enforcement. A number of initiatives sought to compel and persuade citizens to act as tax-inspectors-by-proxy and demand a receipt if one was not forthcoming. From March 1st 2015, businesses were required to prominently display a poster informing customers of their rights and duties:

GOVERNMENT OF ROMANIA
MINISTRY OF PUBLIC FINANCE

If you do not receive a receipt, you are obligated to solicit it

In the case of a refusal, you have the right to receive the goods purchased or the service provided free of charge

Solicit and retain receipts in order to participate in monthly and occasional receipt lotteries

It is forbidden to present the client with any document attesting to payment for goods or services provided other than the fiscal receipt

To report the nonobservance of legal obligations by economic operators, call the Ministry of Public Finance's free, non-stop TelVerde line on __________[9]

Cooperation with the work of surveillance and with normalising formal transactions was encouraged through the use of incentives. The "receipt lottery" offered cash prizes to anyone holding receipts of a certain monetary value, printed on a certain date, with the values and dates chosen randomly at each drawing. This gave citizens reason to demand and hold on to their receipts. Further, those subject to breaches of the law were encouraged to inform on the guilty parties, again incentivised by the possibility of receiving one's money back. Such practices fostered mistrust between salespeople and customers, but not exclusively so. There

[9] Both the exhortatory poster and the tight legislation surrounding cash registers were evocative of socialist practices, the latter in particular echoing the famous requirement in Romania that all typewriters had to be registered with the police (see e.g. Bugan 2013).

were good reasons for complicity. As Michael Herzfeld notes in regard to the crafts economy in Italy, “customers often do not ask for receipts, knowing that in exchange the artisan will not pass on to them the state and other taxes such as *Iva*, or value-added tax” (2009: 130). Less instrumentally, complicity was often based on a shared irritation with and desire to undermine “them,” the state authorities, as well as forging intimacy between interlocutors (cf. Steinmüller 2010).

Beyond incentives, further laws introduced additional artefacts of surveillance. One of these made it a requirement for all businesses to keep a Register of Personal Money (*Registru de Bani Personali*) at each point of sale. This small book was to be filled in by every employee at the opening of business each day. Employees had to write the date, their name, their role, the amount of personal money they had with them upon arrival at work, the time, and then sign off the entry. The purpose of this document was to allow employers and ANAF agents to check whether employees had more money on their person than when they had arrived, in which case it was to be presumed that they had been pocketing money that should have been going into the cash register. The utility of such a measure was repeatedly called into question, however. One Săsești storekeeper observed that the registers themselves (which had to be bought from an authorised seller) were not cheap, adding additional financial pressures. More scathingly, journalists pointed out that neither employers nor ANAF agents had the legal right to search employees, and if the latter were unwilling to empty their pockets for inspection the whole exercise became pointless (Zaharia 2015b). Despite this, Paul the tourist shop owner told me in apparent seriousness that if agents suspected an employee of withholding money then they could haul that person over to the police station and request the police conduct a search there and then. Whether this was true or not (he could have been pulling my leg given that I was also a potential target of such searches in the shop) matters less than the fact it existed as an ambiguity, adding to the feeling of permanent risk and exposure.

Other commentators questioned the very grounds of the measure and the ANAF’s intentions in introducing it. A union representative from the tourism industry, which had been especially hard hit by the wave of new investigations, declared in an interview:

> We did not request this. In fact, we are against these regulations. We have never verified money or personal goods of employees and have never heard of this until now. In fact, the Register of Personal Money is simply another justification for handing out

> fines. For us it means an extra register, more bureaucracy, which is very onerous, especially for small businesses, family-owned ones for example. (Sebeșanu, quoted in Zaharia 2015b)

Following an on-the-spot inspection of financial records and practices, ANAF agents could levy fines of ten to fifteen thousand lei for various infractions, including not recording transactions on a cash register; not producing a receipt, or producing a receipt to a value smaller than the real value of the transaction; and the inability to produce authorised documents justifying the sum of money contained in the drawer of the cash register. Moreover, agents could also suspend all economic activity at a location for periods from one to three months. Speaking for herself as much as for others with small businesses, Ana declared that "People are scared."

The suggestion that the additional regulations were an excuse for giving out fines was frequently heard. Jane Guyer has observed more generally that "cracks in the edifice or spaces in the coral reef of formalities" are easily manipulated for financial gain (2004: 163). Cracks are not always necessary, however: OUG 91/2014 was composed so that "sums confiscated in line with the provisions of the present emergency ordinance become income for the state budget" (Art.11[4]). Other commentators suggested that the focus on small enterprises hid "an incapacity to fight the biggest evasions, which are controlled and protected by politicians" (Biriș, quoted in Zaharia 2015b). Whether or not these hidden motives ascribed to the ANAF were true, they reflected the perception that the agency was acting outside of its remit, "continually making regulations for micromanagement rather than verifying the tax base" (Sebeșanu, quoted in Zaharia 2015b). As Sebeșanu described it elsewhere,

> The measures taken are disproportionate relative to the facts. There is no cash desk in which you won't find a penny in excess of the values recorded, and this means that anyone in retail could be shut down for a month or three months, with tangible and intangible effects that are hard to measure. Goods are perishable, employees are left out in the cold, businesses risk being mothballed. (Quoted in Zaharia 2015c)

The observation that a surplus of pennies was a ubiquitous phenomenon was certainly borne out in Săsești. Furthermore, it points us towards the importance of material agency as a

complicating factor in the everyday work of mediating heterogeneous temporalities of exchange, formalisation and regulation.

ACCOUNTING IN ACTION

When I began participant observation in the tourist shop in late May of 2015, the new financial regulations had just come into force, changing the legal and material environment in which business was conducted. Material technologies were central to the rhythms and problems of economic activity. They are best introduced by diving into the description of an average day.

Upon arriving in the shop at 9am and throwing the shutters open to banish the gloom, Lumina would bring out the hand-written notebook in which sales were recorded for the business's own records, a soft-bound A4 *caiet* with a colourful cover, opening it to a new page and writing the date at the top. Turning to the cash register, she inputted the succession of codes that began the program for daily sales. In this process a receipt heading was printed onto the paper till roll, including the business's name, its fiscal identification code and the date. This imprint marked the legal opening of business. Lumina then filled in the Register of Personal Money.

The pace of business was never regular. Some days, nobody would arrive for several hours, other days one would notice tourists loitering nearby as one arrived to open shop. When a sale was made, Lumina wrote a brief description of the items, their price and the quantity in the notebook. She then inputted the sale into the cash register. Each entry was subtotalled, totalled, and two receipts were printed; one was emitted, torn off and given to the customer, while the other remained within the cash register. Once full, this second roll had to be stored for safekeeping and presented to ANAF inspectors upon request, a record of all transactions. The shop also contained a clunky black Chip and PIN machine for card payments, unusual for a village store yet highly advantageous for the tourist business. Sales paid for by card were not recorded on the cash register. The card machine too produced two receipts, one for the customer and one for the business. Any payments by card were noted as "card" in the notebook. Credit card receipts and hard cash from sales were placed in a cupboard drawer below the counter, in a small cardboard box. The model of cash register used in the shop did not include a cash drawer of its own, being purely a recording device. Even in this regard it was redundant, for sales were recorded in more useful detail in the notebook. Nevertheless, it was a legal requirement. When I suggested to Lumina that the cash

register's function appeared to be purely for ANAF surveillance, she agreed and added, "It's all about the VAT." As such, simple models with no cash drawer were common in village shops, for these were cheaper to buy. Given their lack of utility for businesses' own ends, there was little incentive to purchase a more complicated model.

This process of recording sales was repeated throughout the day. At closing time, Lumina tapped another code into the cash register to produce a *z*-report (the *z* standing for *zilnic*, daily), marking the official close of business. The report listed the number of transactions registered that day, and the total income. The cash register was then turned off. A similar daily report was printed from the Chip and PIN machine. With these digitally-produced reports in hand, Lumina turned to the handwritten sales book. Using a calculator, she added up all the sales and wrote down the total, as well as subtotals for cash and card transactions. A line was drawn underneath that day's entry, marking it as completed.

Having finished the summaries of transactions, Lumina removed the day's actual cash from the drawer. Also kept there was an ANAF-authorised notebook, the *monetar* (cash book), in which it was necessary to record the quantity of each denomination of note and coin held at the end of the day, and the total value. After counting these, Lumina signed and dated the book. Each page of the *monetar* was carbon copied, with the copy left in the book while the original was torn out and stapled together with the z-report and all Chip and PIN receipts. She then placed this stapled bundle in an envelope with that day's cash and returned it to the drawer, making sure to keep it separate from the cardboard box in which takings were kept over the course of the business day. These envelopes were periodically collected by Gabriela, in principle the next morning but often not until later, to keep with her main accounts. Finally, Lumina recorded the overall values of goods entering (via restocking) and exiting (via sales) the shop each day in a second handwritten notebook for the monthly accounts kept by Gabriela.

THE MUDDLE OF NUMBERS

The result of this routine should have been a coordinated set of accounts, registering values that corresponded across different media, between written and printed documents and material cash. What frequently resulted was mess. Almost every day, a range of problems made themselves apparent to Lumina and me, playing havoc with the coordination of accounts: Cash shortages; overwhelming numbers of visitors; capricious machines producing unexpected figures. Each time this happened, the temporary or lingering discrepancy in the

accounts left the shop vulnerable. "If an ANAF inspection would arrive now…" Lumina said during one particularly disordered moment, shaking her head.

This vulnerability was an effect of disruptive and incommensurable rhythms. The new legislation allowed ANAF inspectors to levy sanctions not just for "tax evasion," the juridical conclusion of an extended investigation into a business, but for the existence of discrepancies in accounts. While the law stated that on-the-spot inspections should be justified by reasonable suspicion of tax fraud or a complaint to the TelVerde line, every few months an ANAF Anti-Fraud car would pull up in Săsești and the agents would conduct a round of the village, making spot checks on every shop they could access. As such, when word of their arrival got out, proprietors would often (in line with popular stereotype) close their shops, remove any signs detailing opening hours and disappear for a few hours. These rounds were nevertheless unpredictable, and not always avoidable. Shopkeepers were left with a constant wariness, accentuated by the possibility of denunciation by aggrieved customers. Such inspections also added to the popular sense of regulatory irrationality, for businesses operating from unmarked properties or outside of the village centre were far less likely to be caught in the sweep. Spot checks were seen as basically arbitrary, indiscriminate yet far from exhaustive.

The imminence of inspection made any slippage in the coordination of formal accounts a potential risk. Yet such slippages were a necessary evil, a side-effect of the labour that kept economic activity running smoothly in the rural milieu. This substantive labour was not recognised within the new legislative regime, concerned as it was with formal correspondences. Discrepancies were assessed between the figures recorded in legally authorised documents, from the roll of receipts to the Register of Personal Money and the *monetar*, and actual cash found on the premises. The cash register's printed roll was the primary reference point for this. Because each receipt was a legal document and because they couldn't (easily) be altered, the facts they inscribed became a kind of official truth against which other documents and monetary values could be compared (cf. Gupta 2012: 171-2). Each printout from the cash register was thus an act of inscription, analogous to a performative speech act, where the legal truth of what they stated was realised by the very act of stating it (Constable 2014). Whether or not particular inspectors would exercise discretion or could be swayed towards leniency, this was the legal situation, the juridical chronotope (Valverde 2015).

Such formalism created problems for village businesses on a number of dimensions. Firstly, the contingencies of the rural cash economy required a greater flexibility of monetary flows than the fixed inscriptions of the cash register allowed for (cf. Guyer 2004). Secondly, any errors of recording on the cash register became legal truth, forcing other records to be adapted around these in order to avoid sanctions, for example through the insertion of false numbers (Lampland 2010). I address these problems in turn.

Shortages of small-denomination notes were a perennial problem in Romania, creating particular difficulties for giving change in shops (Grossman 2014). Paul observed that local banks were reluctant to issue small-denomination notes to businesses, jealously holding onto what was a valuable commodity. This situation required a number of "fixes" (Bear 2014b). In the village's general stores, small values of change were often paid with small biscuits or sweets in lieu of coins. In some shops, insignificant values were simply not paid at all. Cashiers at the newer, large supermarkets in towns and cities, in contrast, were meticulous about counting out very small values of change in pennies, yet these coins were often worth so little that well-off customers simply didn't want the weight. In the tourist shop, Lumina always tried to pay customers the exact change. Gabriela rarely left a "float" of cash at the start of the day, however, so change had to be found elsewhere. One source was adjacent businesses, who might lend or break notes. Lumina engaged in reciprocal favours of this kind with the attendants of the Saxon church (to which entrance cost several lei), a Saxon woman and her daughter, with whom she also wiled away the intervals between tourist groups, gossiping by the shop's stove in spring and autumn or sitting outside in the sun in summer.

Another source was the envelope of the previous day's takings, if this had not yet been collected by Gabriela, which could be raided for appropriate notes. A further source was Lumina's or indeed my own wallet—the method recommended by Gabriela on the agreement that any personal money would be compensated later. The idea of an employee "paying from his/her own wallet" has the quality of a moral plea in Romanian stores and restaurants, often used to mollify irritated or angry customers. If there is a problem with a bill or payment, employees may entreat the customer to take financial responsibility rather than complain to the manager, because the cost will not be borne by the business but will be taken out of the employee's paycheque. That was not the case here, but the idea that personal money could informally be substituted into business transactions was a well-established one. These latter two methods both created clear discrepancies in the accounts, as the cash box then contained

large-denomination notes in excess of that day's official takings. What was in fact credit owed to employees or neighbours, which couldn't be paid back until the notes were broken, would appear to any inspectors as undeclared and thus illegal income. There was little that could be done about this.

In other cases, the transactions recorded on the cash register were simply incorrect. This resulted from both human and non-human error. Human errors were amplified by the rhythms of clientele. Many visitors to the shop came alone or in small groups, taking their time to look around, but a significant number arrived with coach tours. The latter were of diverse origins, ranging from Western and Eastern Europe to East Asia. Each was accompanied by a Romanian guide. Unlike the leisurely pace of independent holidaymakers, coach tours travelled on a tight schedule. Each coach would stop in the village for perhaps half an hour, enough time for the group to visit the Saxon church and the shop, before hitting the road again, onwards to the next destination. Upon entering the shop, this time limit was loudly and urgently declared by the guide, and repeated at frequent intervals. The effect was less stressful for the tourists than it was for Lumina, who had to record each transaction twice (sometimes for every member of a group of 30-odd people), by hand and on the till. On occasion, to hurry the process along, the guide would come behind the counter uninvited and help wrap and bag the purchases.

With this pressure from the guide and the sheer numbers of people, Lumina was sometimes forced to dispense with one of the recording methods to increase speed—usually the cash register. This was done with the intention of putting the transactions through afterwards, using the handwritten records as a guide. Yet confusion could quickly arise if she hadn't clearly marked the point at which she had stopped recording sales on the register. This raised the risk of either duplicating transactions or leaving some unrecorded. While an "interim report" could be produced from the cash register, which listed the total recorded income and number of transactions up to that point, it often remained unclear what combination of sales had produced that total value, and which therefore remained to be inputted. This had to be guessed with reference to the notebook and any receipts left behind by customers. Whether our estimates were correct only became visible when the *z*-report was printed at the end of the day and compared to the book.

The end-of-day calculations frequently produced surprises. These might be inexplicable excesses of several lei in the cash drawer. Perhaps a customer hadn't taken their change, or some money had slipped out of an envelope, or Lumina forgot that she needed

compensating. Alternatively, the *z*-report produced on occasion unexpected figures that could not be matched to the transactions that we remembered or had recorded in other media. Surpluses of cash were rarely resolved, and were left for Gabriela to account for (or not) in her monthly records. *Z*-report errors required more work to mediate.

Managing the bundle of daily accounts relative to the *z*-report was fairly easy. What was important was formal consistency in the legal documents. Whatever total value had appeared on the *z*-report was also put on the *monetar*, with the denominations of notes and coins filled in arbitrarily to add up to this number. Whether this matched the actual cash was of less significance by this point, for the business day had ended and the money and records were en route in their envelope to Gabriela's main accounts. Incorrect *z*-reports were significant in the longer term, however. Ultimately, Gabriela wanted to submit an accurate tax declaration to the ANAF. This meant that all the *z*-reports for any given month did need to more or less equal actual income. The task of resolving under- and over-recording of takings rolled over to the next business day. In the case of under-reporting, the missing value was entered onto the cash register as a new transaction at the opening of business. In order to correct an over-recording, Gabriela and Lumina agreed to not record actual sales to the value of the excess. This meant that some transactions would be left off the cash register, the customer not therefore receiving a receipt. Presumably mindful of denunciations, Gabriela observed to me that one had to judge who one could do this with. Foreign tourists usually declined to take a receipt and were less likely to know or care about fiscal legislation, making this task easier. Lumina exercised more caution with Romanian customers, being especially wary of the more reticent and "weird" (as she put it). It was much easier to judge the likelihood of complicity among talkative visitors. While these fixes solved the long-term discrepancies, they nevertheless reproduced the mismatch between cash and recorded transactions into the next day, thereby reproducing the vulnerability to inspection.

CONCLUSION

Two months after being introduced, the Register of Personal Money and several other new laws were withdrawn, victims of poor planning and public ridicule. This did little to alleviate the problems described in this chapter. It was, however, indicative of the unstable temporality of post-socialist governance in Romania, a temporality that was closely linked to populist and electioneering political imperatives. To conclude, let me draw out a more general picture of technocratic function and its failure. The changes to the law had made particular

discrepancies of practice sanctionable. In effect, this undercut principles of due process in tax inspection. Karen Boll (2011, 2015) has described ethnographically the various dilemmas faced by Danish tax inspectors as they attempted to judge whether particular economic operators had intentionally evaded their tax payments. The Danish inspection system was predicated on a benefit of the doubt, and a levying of sanctions only following the conclusion of an extended investigation. This contrasted to the ANAF's logic of immediate fines for unruly numbers. And while those subject to such sanctions described the suspicion of inspectors as characteristically Romanian, we can alternatively see how such suspicion need not be a matter of national character, for it was internal to the logic of the fiscal system itself. In Boll's account, the concluding judgements of an investigation resulted from an extended process of translating and coordinating (or not) documents, observations and other data, by economic operators and by inspectors, and mobilising these in interactions and formal settings—a process of what Bruno Latour (1999) calls "circulating reference." This contingent process is usually "black-boxed," filed away from view when a conclusion is made. Yet, in Romania, the ANAF's new laws directly targeted and sanctioned that work of translation and coordination, penalising the informal "fixes," in Bear's terms, that were necessary for negotiating the rural economic milieu. This obstructed the work, also demanded by the ANAF, that Gabriela and others were trying to undertake to comply with the voluntary tax declaration system.

This was a problem of legislating formalising practices—such as inscribing transactions on the cash register and receipts—without taking into account the work of coordination and translation that embedded these in wider processes. While this was perfectly pragmatic towards the governments' ends of increased revenue gathering (from taxes, or from fines and confiscations of unaccounted-for money), from the perspective of liberals who desired a functioning national economy and due process in legal investigations—desires epitomised in their hope for technocracy—this was a marked failure of governance.[10] Their judgements of this failure assimilated it to a historical legacy of "communism."

As we saw in previous chapters, notably chapter two, "communist" was a particularly significant symbol for conceptualising what liberals saw as aberrant "mentalities." This concept of communism-as-mentality is also central to the form of anti-communism critiqued by the emerging Romanian critical Left, who portray it as a disingenuous political rhetoric for

[10] On some alternative pragmatics of documents to bureaucratic rationality, see Riles (2006). On the conceptualisation of and hopes invested in the idea of a national economy, see Appel (2017).

justifying neoliberal reforms and as opposed to analyses based political economic structures and their effects. The ethnography in this chapter, in comparison, suggests that the form and meaning of anti-communism is perhaps more plural. “Communism,” in the young liberals’ critique of tax administration, provided a metaphor for certain persistent structural issues marked by a dynamic of legal processes and the provision of services being subordinated to political and private (i.e. corrupt) ends. Liberals saw this dynamic as analogous to that of late-socialist governance, notably Ceaușescu’s imposition of crippling austerity on the populace.

This returns us to Foucault’s insight, discussed in the introduction, that liberalism “constitutes—and this is the reason for both its polymorphism and its recurrences—a tool for the criticism of reality: criticism of a previous governmentality from which one is trying to get free; of a present governmentality that one is trying to reform and rationalize by scaling it down; or of a governmentality to which one is opposed and whose abuses one wants to limit” (2008: 320). This reading of liberalism’s oppositional nature provides a further angle on the importance of Otherness to liberalism: Otherness not just of those who do not fit liberal standards of tolerance (as in the previous chapter), but also of governmental forms. As I have demonstrated throughout the thesis, communism forms a particularly trenchant other to post-socialist liberalism. This is not only a matter of history and memory, the emergence of contemporary Romanian liberal identity within and against the communist “system,” but also due to the continued salience of “communism” as a metaphor for post-socialist political structures and sociocultural trends within liberal discourse. It is of course necessary to attend to the rhetorical uses of such metaphors, but it is also necessary to attend to the complexities of the phenomena that they are mobilised to designate. Liberal metaphors of “communism” were mobilised within a wider set of relations towards materialities and social forms, such as the financial and institutional practices documented in this chapter, being more than just a disingenuous cover for these. Rather, for liberals, these metaphors captured something meaningful about those materialities and social forms, caught within a moment of historical transformation.

CONCLUSION

At the end of the technocratic government's one-year mandate, in January 2017, an election swept the Social Democrats (PSD) and their minor coalition partner ALDE (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats) back into power, under the new party leadership of Liviu Dragnea. Dragnea himself was legally prohibited from holding office due to a conviction for vote rigging (Ilie 2015), and the role of prime minister in the year and a half from then until the present time of writing, in mid 2018, was given to a succession of deputies, only one of whom has lasted more than a few months, the others each resigning after apparently coming into conflict with Dragnea. The new government met with intense opposition almost immediately, including the largest public protests seen in Romania since the revolution.[11] Protestors, largely comprised of the cosmopolitan middle class, accused the government of attempting to push through legislation via emergency ordinance that would decriminalise various forms of corruption and also curtail the power of the DNA, the Anti-Corruption Directorate. At the peak of the protests, news agencies reported numbers of up to 300,000 people on the streets of Bucharest and tens of thousands in other cities. Protestors mobilised in person and online around a number of slogans, including *#REZIST* (which echoed the anti-Donald Trump slogan #Resist that was popular at the time in the United States) and the anachronistic "*Jos comunismul!*" — "Down with communism!" "Communism" here referred not to any political ideology but to a system of corruption and personalistic politics. In response, the PSD accused protestors of being part of an international conspiracy to undermine democracy and sell the country out to global capitalist networks. The protestors, the PSD said, were in the pay of George Soros, the Hungarian-American billionaire investor and philanthropist, founder of the international network of liberal Open Society Foundations, and the favourite scapegoat of contemporary right-wing political actors across Europe and North America. Indeed, this narrative was borrowed wholesale from the self-proclaimed

[11] These had been presaged by protests in 2012, a multifaceted response to general economic discontent and a political dispute over the emergency rescue service SMURD (Stoica and Mihăilescu 2012), and a snowballing protest movement against a proposed open-cast gold mine at Roșia Montană in western Transylvania that had been developing since the early 2000s (with the participation of several actors from the Dracula Park protests) and reached a head in the early 2010s (Goțiu 2013).

“illiberal” and anti-globalist politics of Viktor Orbán in neighbouring Hungary, although the PSD have not followed him so far into ultranationalist politics.

These protests, while quite distant from village life, contributed further to the formulation of liberal identity in Romania as anti-communist, networked and cosmopolitan. They also reinforced the distance of liberals from the state, ramping up the rhetoric of antagonistic political identities, to add to the mundane experiences of state dysfunction. In Săsești, the young liberals were if anything less marginal than they had been at the time of my fieldwork. Local participation in the tourism industry was hardly booming, but the number of committed actors had increased. Whether this was a success of dialogue, I cannot say exactly. The changing field of EU funding certainly contributed, with new opportunities for businesses available via the Local Action Group that were both more focused in scope and more restricted in availability than previously, contributing to a greater specialisation. A string of successful events and festivities in the village that were explicitly aimed at bringing together both tourists and the local community by dampening the commercial aspects—and thereby avoiding excluding those with little money and angering those who felt they were not benefitting from it—also appeared to have contributed to a greater positivity, or at least a lesser cynicism, about tourism development.

I began the thesis by noting, after Douglas Holmes, that identity in post-Maastricht Treaty Europe has taken on an experimental quality, fusing liberal and illiberal elements in new ways. In chapter one, I traced a history of one such experimental project, Anglo-Romanian conservationism in the Saxon villages of Transylvania, documenting how it brought together “romantic” and “baroque” holistic conceptions of the villages and the landscape that appealed to existential concerns about modernity, as well as economic and ecological concerns in a language of public goods. As conservationism entered national political fields, it became closely entangled with concerns for cultural intimacy. In the second chapter, I turned to the young liberals who had taken up the conservationist programme and vision. I looked at how they saw this programme as being obstructed by problems of the Romanian public sphere, and the forms of reasoned dialogue and romantic inspiration they appealed to in order to overcome this. In the third chapter, I continued this analysis by looking at a dispute over the presence of aggressive sheepdogs on the landscape. Through this lens, we saw further how dialogue came into conflict with local genres of rhetoric. It also provided a closer appreciation of the political economic changes that conservationism and EU entry have effected on the rural milieu. In the fourth and final chapter, I took the politics and

pragmatics of tax administration as a space to explore the persistence of anti-communism in post-socialist Romania, and also the continued efficacy of tropes of Romanian modernity as a "form without substance." Together, these chapters demonstrate the limits of seeing liberalism as a purely technocratic exercise of power or as a purely rationalist ideology.

In concluding the thesis, I offer here some reflections on liberalism as an anthropological object, informed by the preceding ethnography. These are as much lines for future research in a distinctive anthropology of liberalism as they are summations of my arguments. A number of themes have been recurrent throughout this work. One is the nature of Romanian liberalism as anti-communism. This observation supports Andrew Kipnis's (2008) argument that we should not assume we know what a political system is, but should attend to how the people participating in it experience and conceptualise it, with a particular focus on their historical sensibilities. It also supports Foucault's (2008) observation that liberalism can be as much an oppositional stance as a substantive programme of governance; to extend the point, we should therefore be cautious of subsuming liberal identities under purported hegemonies of power. While this anti-communism is specific to Romanian history and post-socialist dynamics, it is worth pointing out that liberalism elsewhere, especially after the Second World War, has also been marked by strong anti-communist inflections (e.g. Kimmage 2009). The meaning of "communism" in, say, American liberalism, is likely to differ in significant ways from its meaning in post-socialist liberalisms however, and these would bear exploring.

I will venture here in the final pages a more interpretive leap regarding Romanian anti-communism. Many Romanians see their contemporary social and political milieu as marked by the legacies of traditionalism and communism. This character of the present is evidenced in various ways, from communicative practices to political priorities, but few people would claim that the political system of EU-member Romania is "Communism" in any formal sense. What people are attending to when they speak of communism after its collapse is a continuity of certain mindsets ("mentalities") and systemic patterns. Yet we can equally flip this round and see angry denunciations of communism in the present as expressing a frustration over the lack of a desired historical break. What might this break be? The answers are multiple, but inextricably linked to visions of an alternative future. In the first instance are the broken promises and collapsed hopes of the 1989 revolution (Siani-Davis 2005). Some people, like Alina Sajed's father who "voted repeatedly for the liberals" despite their failings, nevertheless maintained a commitment to "an *idea* of liberalism,"

identified with “democracy, prosperity and freedom” in the abstract (2011: 566). Beyond such impressive abstract commitment, in the post-socialist milieu other visions began to emerge—experimental visions—with a more substantive grounding in social and economic theories and institutional structures, as well as affective and symbolic resonances; as, for example, in the Anglo-Romanian conservation programmes. The nexus of liberalism and anti-communism in this regard marked a critique of a present beholden to the past in the face of a near-tangible “prosperous” future (to borrow Akeroyd’s term) that would break with that past along certain key dimensions.

I suggest this reading because it opens up the possibility of a heuristic comparison between the anthropology of liberalism and the now well-established anthropology of Christianity, the latter of which could well serve as a model for the former.[12] Ethnographers have documented the importance of radical temporal breaks and an orientation towards the future in Christian communities, especially Pentecostal and millenarian ones (e.g. Robbins 2004). Jane Guyer (2007) has already pursued such a comparison in terms of (neo)liberal economic theory, although with less focus on breaks per se. What such a focus provides, however, is an attention to liberalism as an ethical project of transformation that is effected on given objects and subjects. The nature of these objects also provides a point of comparison. While some are unlikely to be shared between liberalism and Christianity—think, for example, of the “national economy” (Appel 2017), although I don’t exclude a distinctly Christian attention to this—a consistent focus of both the political tradition and the religious one is discursive practices, a second major theme in this thesis. Extending the language ideology paradigm has been one of the major achievements of the anthropology of Christianity (Bialecki and Hoenes del Pinal 2011). It has also not gone unnoticed that there is significant historical and contemporary overlap between Christian and liberal language ideologies, for example in values of sincerity (Keane 2002; cf. Trilling 1972). It seems, therefore, not without merit to take the anthropology of Christianity as a model for an anthropology of liberalism. I leave this is an open suggestion rather than an exploration, however; in this thesis, I have focused more on laying out how liberalism is situated in the post-socialist Transylvanian milieu, at the intersection of political histories, transnational connections, local and national discursive fields and material realities. What I will spend a little more time on here is a third theme from the thesis, the intersection of liberalism and

[12] This comparison owes much to my discussions with Taras Fedirko and Farhan Samanani.

romanticism, two movements that have been closely connected in the history of the Enlightenment.

LIBERALISM AND ROMANTICISM

Historians, literary critics and some ethnographers have documented how liberalism has always been more than abstract rationalism and universalism, despite the ways it has been represented as such by influential critics and proponents alike (Anderson 2016: 11). From liberalism's earliest days, its proponents have struggled with dilemmas such as how to balance formalism and the irreducible richness of embodiment (Hadley 2010), and how to trace a path between sociological, structural depictions of society and concerns for individual moral character (Goodlad 2003; Anderson 2016). These tensions, as Amanda Anderson (2016) makes clear, are central to liberal identity and politics—the unresolved objects that liberal thought and practice attempts to trace a path between and beyond, not hidden contradictions of an otherwise watertight and resolved outlook, as liberalism is often portrayed to be.

Taking an alternative tack, ethnographers working in non-European settings have documented how liberal principles are taken up by local actors and, in the process, become entangled with decidedly non-liberal practices and relational forms. Aaron Ansell (2017), for example, notes how familistic genres of communication in Brazil such as blessings become, counterintuitively, a means by which clientelism is replaced with more democratic relations, the blessings being repurposed to the ends of "an egalitarian public civility, modelled, paradoxically, on family hierarchy" (2017: 29). Similarly, Michael Lempert (2012) has described the struggles of Buddhists who wish to "recast Buddhism as a religion of reason" comparable to scientific, Enlightenment and liberal-democratic ideals (2012: 3), a project that requires finding a balance between traditionally antagonistic practices of debating and new speech styles of clarity and sincerity. These cases reflect similar processes to the conversions documented in the anthropology of Christianity, where universalistic Christian practices and ideologies are integrated with greater or lesser tension alongside "traditional" practices and ideologies (e.g. Keane 2007; Robbins 2004).

In this thesis, I have attempted to give particular attention to the intersection of liberal and romantic principles in Romania. These have a number of historical and intellectual dimensions. Liberalism in Romania, as elsewhere in Eastern Europe and the Balkans, was from its nineteenth century origins predicated on a romantic nationalist horizon of politics

that gained much of its force from the imperial context of the time. For the "forty-eighters," the architects of the independent Romanian state in the mid-1800s, "liberal ideas were attractive to them as advocates of individual freedom and constitutional government precisely because these principles called into question the legitimacy of the surrounding conservative empires, which they perceived as the prime obstacles to national self-determination" (Hitchins 2014: 93; cf. Daskalov and Mishkova 2014). A century and a half later in Transylvania, as I have documented here, romanticism and its poetics, affects and manners complemented (or perhaps compensated for) liberal principles of dialogue and reason as a way of more effectively shifting some of the entrenched habits of negativism that liberals saw to be dominating the post-socialist public sphere and thereby obstructing material improvements and social betterment. The emphasis here was far less on freedom and the nation than the shape of material and social relations in a cosmopolitan, transnational context.

These intersections appear to be quite particular: The first to the imperial fringes of Europe, the second to a highly contingent history of British-Romanian relations and conservation projects. Yet the intertwining of liberalism and romanticism is arguably central to the ethics, politics and philosophies of both movements, even if this can be starkly antagonistic at times. On the liberal side, John Stuart Mill is paradigmatic in this regard, as a thinker who attempted to bring together the rational utilitarianism of Jeremy Bentham with the romanticism of poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, each acting to balance the other:

> It was true, said Mill, that Coleridge's views on economics were those of an "arrant driveller," but Coleridge's understandings of how a society held together, what its people needed to know, and where it might draw its spiritual sustenance was infinitely superior to Bentham's—indeed, Coleridge understood the subject, and to Bentham it was a blank. (Ryan 2012: 87)

Conversely, Timothy Michael (2016) has argued that much of the impetus of the romantic movement was not an outright rejection of rationalism but was an attempt to move beyond its flaws in the name of similar Enlightenment aims of freedom and justice. Indeed, he asserts that "the conflict between the imagination and reason is in many ways a post-Romantic construction" (Michael 2016: 2). This observation chimes with Anderson's (2016) point that the distinction between liberal abstraction and rationality on the one hand and a concern for the affective and the aesthetic on the other is more an ideology promoted by certain key

voices than an actuality, overlooking the long history of thought and writing on the dilemmas of how to bridge abstraction and the rich aesthetics of life.

What does this mean for an anthropology of liberalism? Firstly, it takes us beyond the qualifications to conventional representations of liberalism that have already been made. To say that "living liberalism" is an embodied and affective experience is useful to counter misplaced representations, but it is a rather banal point from the perspective of contemporary ethnography (e.g. Boyer 2005b). Exploring the connections between liberalism and romanticism allows us to widen our perception of what liberalism itself is at an ideological level, which has significant implications for understanding how and why liberal stances are mobilised in a particular social and political milieu. Secondly, it specifies our understanding of liberalism as a regional phenomenon. The nexus of liberalism and romanticism is far from exclusively a European phenomenon, but I argue that it has a particular salience there given the entangled histories of both movements in European nation-building, and in the Enlightenment more generally. This entanglement has come to the fore again in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries with the resurgence of integralist movements in the context of the European Union. One might contrast this entanglement with the global circulation of liberalism, in which it is primarily the formal and universalistic elements that have travelled and been inserted into radically different contexts, whether this is human rights or some other element (cf. Riles 2000). As in the Buddhist case, global liberalisms are frequently marked by such universal principles rubbing up against very different religious and/or social traditions (although liberalism in Europe has always had its internal Others, of course; cf. Bauman and Briggs 2003). My point is that if we are starting from the principle that liberalism is more than just a set of abstractions and universals, then we should attend to the way that its affective and aesthetic sides overlap in more than an arbitrary way with romanticism.

We can, I think, specify this beyond a simple regionalist framing, which would unduly bound this conception of romantic liberalism to Europe, by looking at particular practices and sites where the overlap becomes important. Intellectual production is one candidate, a site where aesthetics and literary art frequently come into contact with politics and law. A less obvious but no less significant site is travel. As we have seen for Saxon Transylvania, contemporary ecotourism development in the EU (but surely not only there) brings together highly romantic desires and representations with liberal aspirations for open economies, new forms of public spheres and social relations, and technocratic governance. Romantic values of

personal creativity and self-cultivation, I have shown, while diverging from universalistic liberal principles, are in fact of a piece with liberal attempts to transcend social conformity, as we saw in the second chapter. In this sense, both are part of a more general Enlightenment project of liberating the self (cf. Taylor 1989). A number of anthropologists and others have drawn attention to the centrality of romantic self-cultivation to modern practices of leisure travel (Adler 1989; Harrison 2003; Stasch 2014; but compare Satsuka 2015). While tourists and the people they visit frequently do not share the same perception of what their interactions and transactions mean (Stasch 2016), it is also the case that tourism development frequently contributes to the creation of local cosmopolitan classes. Where this is tied into more general state or transnationally-promoted programmes of development, programmes predicated on liberal visions of economy and society, we are likely to see new experiments with the liberal and the romantic as resources for identity and for social reform. Further exploration of this theme would benefit the anthropologies of both liberalism and of tourism.

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APPENDIX

A list of sources consulted in a survey of English-language travel journalism about Transylvania. Sources were accessed in online databases through the University Library. The preponderance of broadsheet newspapers reflects the greater frequency of articles that have appeared in these media than in tabloid newspapers.

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