“YOU CAN TASTE IT IN THE WINE”:

A VISCERAL POLITICAL ECOLOGY OF POSTSOCIALIST *TERROIR*

by

A. JUNE BRAWNER

(Under the Direction of Virginia Nazarea)

ABSTRACT

Terroir, or the taste of place, is the unique assemblage of geology, climate, and cultural practices of a region, essentialized in endemic food products and their tastes. The linkage of taste experience with a specific geography often results in place-brand toponyms (e.g. Champagne, Vidalia onions). Today, *terroir* may be protected as intellectual property through a series of legal instruments, or Geographical Indications (GIs) (e.g. Josling 2006, Gangjee 2012).

This dissertation examines *terroir* as a window onto broader questions of cultural, political, and ecological change in post-socialist Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). Broadly, it asks: How are “hegemonies of taste” (Yung 2014) reproduced or countered through CEE terroir wine discourse and practices? This question is answered through long-term (fourteen months) ethnography in the historic Tokaj region and Budapest, Hungary, using sensuous-ethnographic methods, policy (GI) analysis, and archival/media analysis.

I find that *terroir*-related policies shape material landscapes, becoming components of socioecological systems. This work thus reverses the *terroir* narrative that inert places cause specific taste experiences (from place to taste), arguing that acquired tastes are also political experiences with environmental outcomes (from taste to place). It describes how political/temporal boundaries (e.g. East/West, 1989) manifest as visceral experiences of everyday life in CEE. Through ‘blood and soil’

narratives, *terroir* naturalizes more-than-human communities of natives; wine in this context is thus a currency of growing ethno-nationalist sentiment in the region.

Further, this work explores *terroir* as more-than-human networks of labor in and outside of agricultural spaces of production, and how these non-human components are increasingly authenticated through new methodologies within a framework that prioritizes simplification, purity, and nativism. Through narratives of environmental exceptionalism, a 'counter-*terroir'* emerges, which is less about "anchoring" (Demossier 2018), but mobility in the global age.

This dissertation proposes a *visceral political ecology* approach to locate power in sense experiences. This approach evaluates how sense knowledge becomes action (Feld 2005), and how those actions materialize in socio-ecological systems. This position is an important new paradigm in political ecology, with implications for related fields, including sustainable food systems, biodiversity conservation, nationalism, and historical ecology.

INDEX WORDS: Political ecology, *terroir*, sensory anthropology, post-socialism, food studies.

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by

A. JUNE BRAWNER

BA, Kennesaw State University, 2009

BS, Kennesaw State University, 2010

MA, Central European University, Hungary, 2011

MS, University of Georgia, 2018

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A. JUNE BRAWNER

Major Professor:	Virginia Nazarea
Committee:	J. Peter Brosius
	Jennifer Jo Thompson
	Hilda Kurtz
	Guntra Aistara

Electronic Version Approved:

Suzanne Barbour
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
May 2019

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: THE PLACE OF TASTE

The forming of the five senses is the labor of the entire history of the world down to the present.

Karl Marx, 1844

I. TOKAJ, HUNGARY

a. Wine into water

Perhaps no food product is more culturally, politically, and ecologically entangled than wine. For centuries, wine (in some form) was a part of nearly every meal. For millennia, the addition of wine to drinking water acted as a sort of rudimentary filter tablet. Safer than ‘pure’ water, and with calories that would have been much-appreciated by the bodies of agricultural laborers, it has been to varying degrees medicine, food, and symbol.

Wine is essentially made from the berries of a promiscuous, weedy vine that climbs many stories high in its “wild” state. Originally, berries would have been foraged this way as the vines climbed into the canopy of forests; humans eventually brought them down to arm’s reach, trained the vines along stakes. This domestication of the hardy perennial grapevine required sedentary populations and provided safe, ‘filtered’ beverages. Like other domesticates, the grape has changed a great deal since its taming, both phenotypically and genotypically, alongside its domesticators.

Today, wines are increasingly subject to the rational ordering and bordering of protectionist policies known as Geographical Indications (GIs), which circumscribe and guard the origin of food

products. Through complex schema, GIs take various forms locally and internationally and range from the hyper-local to country names. With varying requirements regarding production, 'traditional' methods, and ecological practices, protected wines are archetypical GIs. They represent an enclosed site of monopoly production that derives its value from being in-location and the ostensibly irreproducible tastes of that location's products: it is the commodification of *terroir*, or the *taste of place*.

Anthropology in wine regions, as well as anthropology concerning questions of taste and sense experience, are relatively recent trends. Black and Ulin's (2013) call to view wine as a point of departure to contested traditions is "too often ignored or eclipsed by narratives devoted to the commodity itself" (7). Others see winemaking as not exotic or 'serious' enough, receiving cynical responses from other anthropologists (Demossier 2018). Taken as 'soft anthropology', wine-growing regions (and thus producers) remain an underexplored area of study. This is surprising, as wine is one of the most culturally entangled objects of consumption—while at the same time naturalized like no other.

Through a critical, politically and ecologically engaged analysis of *terroir* we gain insight into a connection between humans and nature—through a set of production and consumption practices that depend on "the site of production as an authentic, stable, trustworthy and reliable place" (Demossier 2018:3). In my experience, *terroir* is not a benign, inert narrative of locality in food production, but a politically charged, socially and historically couched, evocative connection between place and taste.

I argue the utility of approaching *terroir* with an ecological anthropologist's outlook; as Ulin (2013) convincingly explains, *terroir* must be denaturalized to be properly understood:

> Wine historians, geographers and contemporary wine writers have tended to employ the concept of *terroir* so as to unwittingly conceal and marginalize the historicity of social relations upon which the production and consumption of wine is based. Consequently, their wine narratives all too often contributed to naturalizing wine and its associated social relations (67).

Following this charge, I aim to make visible the historicity and social relations on which postsocialist wine and winemaking is based.

b. Contribution of this dissertation: Summary

This dissertation forges new anthropological territory through a novel, critical engagement with the *terroir* concept in an 'off-the-map' region. Through the lens of *terroir*-over-time, we see how policies shape landscapes, becoming components of socioecological systems, affecting materialities (e.g. grape genomes and biodiversity) and creating affective materials (e.g. shaping taste expectations). Because human life exists in *experiences*, the translation of sense experience and the *emplacement* of those experiences onto elevated spaces of production makes taste legible and geographically anchored; it also naturalizes distinctive sense experience in a circular argument of quality. *Terroir* is taken by producers, earth scientists, and wine experts as variably *innate* (a 'natural' feature of a terrain), *discovered* (by experts with access to taste knowledge), *c0onstructed* (socially, as a marketing tool, or materially, by producers who manage the land), or some combination.

Anthropological engagements with *terroir* emphasize the historicity of place-based arguments, situating them within a political economy where *terroir* is socio-economically produced: an outcome of multi-scalar labor. At the same time, anthropologists working within the everyday life experiences of those living in postsocialist states discuss the shifting foodways and the marginalized position of CEE producers, particularly in 'luxury' and exclusive goods (such as the contemporary wine market)

(e.g. Jung 2014). This dissertation adds to these emerging arguments and carries them forward using a political ecological approach. In this way, *terroir* is considered as the result of multi-species and more-than-human labor, where various ways of knowing (e.g. sense experience, techno-scientific authentication) merge in the creation of place-based arguments of quality. In the context of marginalized, postsocialist spaces, the political life of taste merges with geographies of quality. Wine in the political-ecological context of contemporary Hungary serves as both vessel and implication for growing ethno-nationalist sentiment in the region.

c. Location, location, location

Hungary is a key wine-producing country in the CEE region, often dubbed the 'New Old World'. The first written record of wine production in Hungary dates to the 5th century CE. Perhaps because it is located on migration routes (situated between the origin of winemaking in the Southern Caucasus and continental Europe), Hungarian is one of only three languages in Europe in which the word for wine (*bor*) is not rooted in Latin.

By the 17th century, winemakers in the Tokaj region of northeast Hungary determined that its best wines were derived somewhat consistently from a subset of special tracts; based on these patterns, they created the first vineyard classification system, put in writing by the 1730s. This involved dividing each vineyard tract (*dűlő*) into three quality classes based on several environmental and economic variables, helping to standardize the production of its primarily sweet wines. The region was then enclosed by royal decree in 1737, making Tokaj the second oldest proto-GI in the world (the protection of Chianti in Italy predated this decree by 41 years). During this time, wines from Tokaj received world acclaim as the region profited from international trade. Notably, France imported Tokaji wines, where King Louis XV called the Tokaji aszú (a honey-like, amber-colored sweet wine) the "Wine of Kings,

the King of Wines". Tokaj's international status all but vanished in the twentieth century following two world wars and four decades of communism (Liddell 2003).

Following the post-1989 transformational period, contemporary Tokaj region provides a timely and ideal site in which to examine *terroir* at the nexus of the socio-political and ecological. Today, the official Tokaj region, or *Tokaj-Hegyálja* (Tokaj Hillcountry) includes 27 towns and villages in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county and their surrounds (this includes a town also called Tokaj). Here, a new generation of winemakers seek to revive, or perhaps reinvent, the region in the context of a globalized food system unfamiliar with the once-popular "Wine of Kings".

II. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

a. Site, methodology, and analysis

I first moved to Hungary in 2010, completing an M.A. in Budapest at Central European University and working in both private and public bilingual education programs until returning to the US to pursue my doctoral studies in 2013. Inspired by this initial residency, I returned for predissertation fieldwork and language training in the summers of 2014 and 2015, the latter of which provided data for an MS thesis in the department of Crop and Soil Sciences (Brawner et al. forthcoming 2019). This project involved participatory soil sampling and walking interviews in vineyards, through which an investigation of the mobilization of soil science in the reification of *terroir* (and the creation of policy) was examined. I was given the opportunity to carry out extensive fieldwork during the 2016-2017 academic year with a study award from the Hungarian-American Fulbright Foundation in Budapest, which provided a home base and institutional support for this work, as well as allowing me to meet other visiting scholars and glimpse the world of US diplomacy in CEE states.

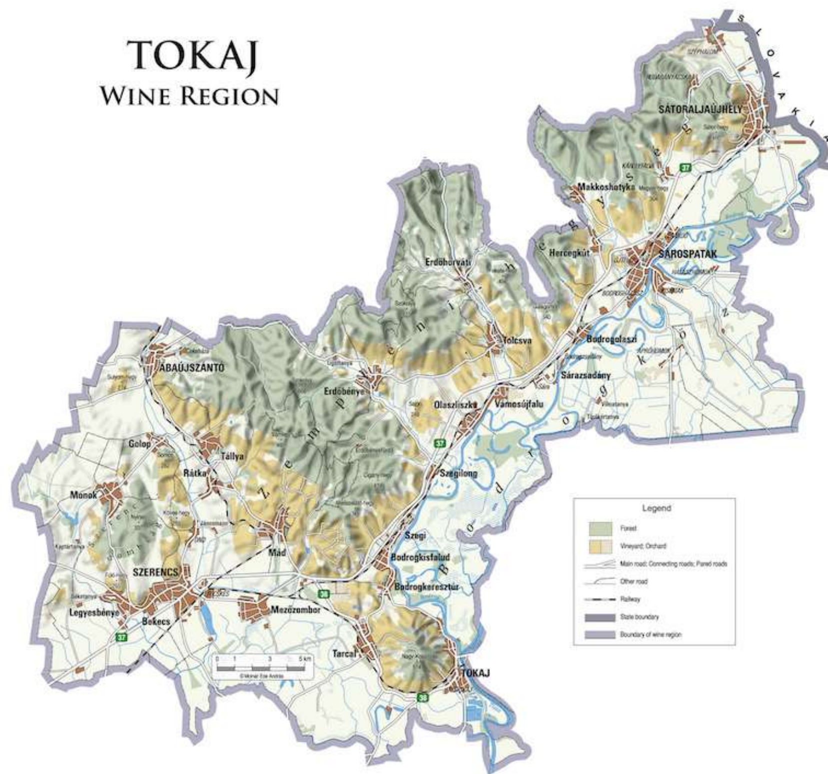

Figure 1: Map of the Tokaj wine region (modified from Tokaj Foundation n.d).

I divided my time between Budapest, where Fulbright is headquartered, and the Tokaj region in Northeast Hungary (Figure 1), which is easily reached via a train journey of about 2.5 hours. While in Budapest, I prioritized intensive language lessons during my first months, made contacts in Budapest, and got involved in the urban/peri-urban wine world: the site of 'translation' between producers and consumers, as well as the formalization and education of 'international' tastes. The disjunct between these types of events, their audiences, and their epistemes proved fertile ground as I was able to participate in everything from hands-on cellar and vineyard maintenance to elaborate, formal wine tastings with local and international experts of wine tasting and viticultural science. I conducted participant-observation at a series of tasting courses for both Hungarians and visitors, as well as formal interviews with Hungarian wine journalists, hospitality experts, and taste-lectures by

viticultural scientists. These proved a very rich source of information and a necessary perspective in accounting for the reproduction, or cultural transmission, of taste.

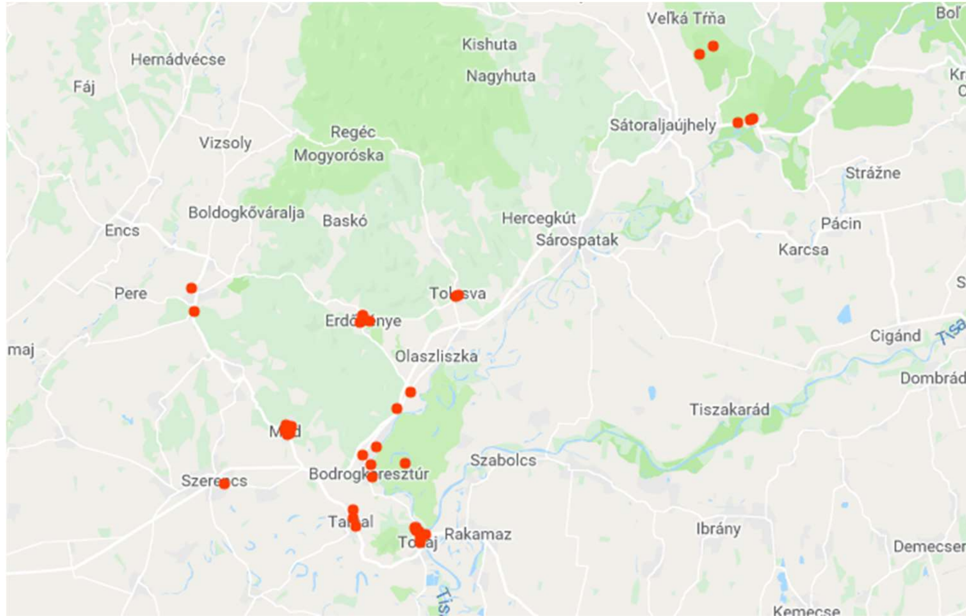

Figure 2: Map of sites visited within the Tokaj district of Hungary and Slovakia (northwestern most three locations). Created with Google Maps. 2018.

While in the Tokaj region, I visited or resided in 14 towns (out of 27 settlements) (Figure 2), completing 26 formal, semi-structured interviews with producers (participant-led tastings, cellar tours, vineyard tours), as well as 34 “taste events” (explained below), and countless informal conversations, walking chats, etc. with participants and their families or colleagues. These villages were chosen in several clusters based on accessibility, as the mountain range divides the western villages from the eastern towns along the river.

Preliminary research suggested great heterogeneity between villages in terms of production scale, number of wineries, modernization of wineries, tourism and traffic, geology, history (particularly concerning historic immigration and Jewish heritage), and population demographics. With this in mind, I referenced available materials on the villages of Tokaj to choose sites of priority and to select a representative sample, choosing not only the two most popular and international villages (Tokaj and Mád), but also peripheral villages with less investment, fewer winemakers, and smaller (frequently older) populations. My aim was to represent a cross-section of producers, from informal, home-based hobbyists to international firms. In each village, I located a winemaker with a guesthouse with whom I could stay (as a base within the village) as well as interview. This was typically done through internet research of the area and the use of local tourism sites and social media. Per IRB requirements, I first emailed the winemaker/guesthouse owner my project description and recruitment text.

Basing each village visit at a winemaker's on-site guesthouse allowed me to get a more in-depth vision of winemaking, touring cellars, vineyards, etc. and working directly with the winemaker and their family. While based at one of these guesthouses, I was able to contact (via email, telephone, or in person) other winemakers in the village who were recommended by the initial point of contact (guesthouse owner/winemaker) "snowball" style, or by referencing one of several Tokaj winemaker directories. On several occasions, a walk through a village led to spontaneous conversation with locals or stepping into an open winery/tasting room to meet a winemaker. On these occasions, I introduced myself and the project and was often granted an interview on the spot (typically alongside a tasting and/or cellar tour). Guesthouse owners were compensated at the going rate for their room and board, and producers were compensated for their wines as is customary at a given tasting (although several producers insisted on gifting these samples). Anonymity was guaranteed for all participants. Modes of transport included train, bus routes, hired bicycle, foot, and the occasional ride offered by a local.

Aside from interviews, I attended two national wine festivals and one harvest celebration week (Figure 3), assisted my Tokaji hosts in their family winery's tasks and spent a short stint working in the international Royal Tokaj winery following the 2017 harvest. One professional tasting, as well as one follow-up interview, took place in London as I was traveling through the city, where a Hungarian wine professional (and intellectual property law scholar) has relocated. Jottings were taken in the field, from which detailed field notes were developed for each interview or event. All formal interviews, and many informal interactions, were audio recorded. Sites were selected to be geographically representative of the wide range of Tokaj terrain and so included villages from all areas of the region (including the Slovakian portion of disputed Tokaj). All recruitment materials, interview protocols, compensations, and methodologies were cleared by the IRB at the University of Georgia prior to the research period.

Figure 3: Harvest festival just outside of Budapest, September 2016. Traditional folk costumes, dances, and music filled the streets in tractor-pulled trailers decorated with vines.

Due to the nature of the research question and the unbounded nature of taste, no two days of fieldwork were identical, and rarely in the exact same location. While this had the effect of giving me somewhat piecemeal experiences in many wineries, family productions, hobby producers, taste courses, and village daily life, it provided a wide-reaching understanding of the connections and relationships through which tastes are created and reproduced. These themes: taste-making, the social reproduction of visceral experiences, and the interface of sensuous knowledge with agro-ecologies have remained at the heart of the dissertation, while future projects may involve a deeper look at one facet of the project (a few examples include, but are not limited to, sensory epistemology in viticultural

labor, political ecology of postsocialist wine regions and their villages, or the commodification of "local" knowledge in heritage foods that are exported).

My ethnographic paradigm draws from emerging trends in sensuous, or visceral, anthropology. Highlighting the "taste of ethnographic things" (Stoller 1989), I take sense and sense memory in as an object of inquiry, bringing a conscious attentiveness to the sensory worlds of others and a bracketing (Husserl 1977) of my own. As Pink (2015) writes in her handbook *Doing Sensory Ethnography*, the object of sensuous ethnography is not to collect "sense data", but to implement ethnography with an explicit awareness of sensory knowledge, asking sensorially-loaded questions in a "participant-experience". This informed my participation and observation in Hungarian and Tokaji wine tastings, which ranged from personal encounters with family, hobby winemakers in their homes, cellars, and vineyards in Tokaj, to professional-led guided tastings in formalized, urban settings. In the latter, wines are typically poured alongside photos or other imagery (charts, illustrations) and detailed explanations of the wine grapes' origins, from land tenure history to soil pH.

Using detailed field notes, as well as audio recordings and photos as available, I consider these ethnographies of taste education as a "sensory apprentice" (Hsu 2008). This approach requires that anthropologists become invested in the sensory worlds of participants, pursuing long-term field work (Stoller 1989), and acute attention to the role of sensuous experience (others' and my own). Because I ask how sense knowledge becomes action (Feld 2005), and the ways in which the senses become vehicles of enculturation (see Classen 1997, also Stoller 2010), participant-experiencing alongside participants in such events as harvests, festivals, and especially tastings (where tastes are overtly and actively/consciously "educated") provided valuable insight. To this aim, I attended 34 formal taste events (lectures, formal/guided tastings, etc.) in Budapest and Tokaj, led by local producers/educators, scientists, or international "experts". These events were limited to accessibility (based on travel, cost,

and restricted attendance numbers), and were chosen to represent the range of taste education courses in Budapest. This included the three main venues for Hungarian wine tasting: one wine school, one wine shop with evening courses for amateurs, and one wine shop with evening tastings/dinners that cater to tourists interested in learning about Hungarian wines. Aside from these, I attended conference-style, large-scale events and galas in Budapest around Tokaj wines or Hungarian wines more broadly, participating in master classes and taste-lectures. I also participated in very informal and sometimes spontaneous tastings alongside small producers on-site. In all these events, I paid close attention to the stories and 'tasting notes' offered by the leader (often the producer), but also to other tasters' reactions and comments. The discussions that emerged in the context of the tasting courses, especially in those designed to educate foreigners, were especially enlightening.

While this project is primarily ethnographic, archival media materials and policy documents were gathered for content analysis and provide invaluable context as well as primary data in my aim to understand the role of policy in shaping the "place of taste". These come from a range of databases accessed through the University of Georgia Libraries, the Budapest Agricultural Museum collections, and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Because Tokaj was demarcated as a legal region of production in 1737 (with vineyard classifications published even earlier), I refer to the earliest available texts and rationales, as well as contemporary writings on the subject, including subsequent attempts to govern or materialize boundaries in the region to the present. This includes: Matyás Bél's vineyard classification schemes (1730s), publications after the Napoleonic Wars (1880s), the phylloxera epidemic (1890s), World Wars I and II, the Nazi period and expulsion of Tokaji Jews (1944), collectivization by the communist state (post-1946), shifts during communism (1950s-1980s), iterations of de-collectivization and privatization post-1989 (including a brief period of foreign-backed investment), heritage interventions (e.g., UNESCO 2010), and most recently, the European Union and

its legislation regarding place-based food and its aim to drain the "wine lake" by curbing wine production (a timeline is included in Appendix A).

Policy and media narratives that link 'good' tastes and qualities to particular geographies are also necessarily sensuous in their nature: they appropriate sensory language and make assumptions about shared experiences. Thus, historic, discursive data is not immune to my sensory approach. Policy narratives, for example, have been used to expose the logic inherent within supposedly neutral legal language (see Shanahan et al. 2011, Jones et al. 2014), and I find that narratives around Geographical Indications (GI) policy, place, and producers reveal much about the ways those categories are constructed and structurally enforced. Other archival discursive data referenced include a wealth of advertisements, reviews, ratings, and tasting notes of Tokaji wines since the 19th century. This available data is skewed dramatically toward present-day (with the advent of standardized tastings in the 1960s and subsequent online platforms for wine rankings). My aim with these was to understand how what counts as 'good' tastes has shifted across the decades (or centuries), as well as the ways in which pre-war, socialist-era, and postsocialist Tokaji wines are presented by outside consumers, professionals, and locals. Archival materials were accessed via UGA libraries and included World's Fair materials (via the University of Maryland), Google Books, International Wine and Spirits Competition (IWSC), and the Hathi Trust. Search terms included alternative spellings of Tokaj (e.g. Tokaji, Tocai) as well as aszú and the German *Ausbruch*. Materials collected were primarily in English with a small minority in Hungarian, Italian, French, or German. These were translated to English for analysis.

I spent a total of 14 months in the field for the dissertation and MS project, discounting preliminary fieldwork and residency periods. Interviews were transcribed verbatim by me or one hired native Hungarian speaker transcriptionist. These, along with archival materials collected, were translated to English (if originally in Hungarian) with the aid and cross-checking of two hired native

Hungarian speakers. All materials were scrubbed of identifiers (pseudonyms are used throughout for participants). Qualitative analysis was performed using the Atlas.ti suite in two rounds: initial In Vivo "values" coding (to account for perspectives, worldviews, and broad themes), followed by pattern coding (to categorize respondents' answers and find commonalities, discrepancies, etc.) (Saldana 2015:48). Because there was significant overlap with interviews conducted for the MS project in 2015, I included them in the dissertation portfolio as well. Because each of the following chapters draws more heavily from certain sources and thus methodologies and analytical frameworks, I will elaborate on these as they become pertinent.

The MS project was completed in 2018 as *The Co-Production of Terroir in a Hungarian Wine Region: A Science and Technology Studies (STS) Approach to the Minerality Concept in Viticulture*. Using mixed methods, it outlined the ways in which accounts of *terroir* are debated in environmental sciences (e.g. Gladstones 2011), yet the elusive *terroir* is given legal expression through policies such as Geographical Indications (GIs) (Josling 2006). I thus turned to the STS idiom of co-production (Jasanoff 2004) to account for the meeting of material landscapes and ideologies in the production of post-socialist *terroir* wines using a case study from Tokaj as one of the oldest GIs on earth.

The MS project differed from the PhD in geographic scope and in subject. Specifically, for the MS project, I followed a village-level initiative to (re)brand this once-renowned wine region, which hinges on distinction through soil minerality. I asked: how is soil science (and its methodologies) deployed in the reification of *terroir*? I argue that techno-scientific renderings of *terroir* inform ideologies of difference, drawing from while also shaping material features of landscapes. This research question was answered using a mixed methods approach in Tokaj, Hungary and employ the idiom of co-production (Jasanoff 2004) to contextualize soil science as a socio-political enterprise.

Working with an interdisciplinary advisory committee housed in Crop and Soil Sciences and representing expertise across environmental sciences, soil chemistry, and environmental anthropology,

I conducted participant-led soil surveys across eight vineyards in two villages (Tokaj and Hamvas[1]) with different *terroir* narratives. We found significant differences in soil type and quality (based on pH, plant-available nutrients, salinity) between the two villages, as well as high-resolution differences within individual plots, or *dűlő*-s. We found that Tokaj village, renowned for its silty, loess soils, was by all metrics substantially different from its neighboring village Hamvas, which is largely volcanic—yet perplexingly high in available nutrients. Due to the surprising levels of available nutrients in otherwise quartz-based, weathered soils suggests that these may actually be legacy nutrients from the over-fertilization of previous regimes. Ironically, the 'minerality' of these soils is, to at least some degree, the result of former practices and are thus anthropogenic.

III. TOKAJ: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

As explained below, Tokaji *dűlő*-s have weathered feudalism, fascism, collectivization, and privatization—including two World Wars and the Holocaust—in the last 175 years. The most recent 15 years have had their difficulties as well; in 2003, Hungary joined the EU and its market of highly subsidized food products. Land redistribution after World War II had created an agricultural system based on smallholders (Burger 2009), who owned generally less than two hectares, and so did not qualify for many EU agricultural subsidies for the first six years. The situation in Tokaj was similar, where vineyards had been fragmented into very small restitutions or large estates. This—coupled with a lack of support services for rural development and low land valuation—has driven disillusioned farmers to seek other work, often in cities or Western Europe. In Hungary, even casual discussions of contemporary problems like these often involve explanations that begin in earlier centuries—as I will explain in the following sections, Tokaj's case is no different.

[1] Hamvas is a pseudonym.

a. 1848-1989

The feudal system was not outlawed in Hungary until 1848 (1882 in southern regions), at which point serfs essentially became landless peasants obliged to pay high rents to landlords (Berend and Ránki 1974). In October 1918 the Austro-Hungarian dual monarchy was replaced by the Hungarian national republic, an independent state that lost two-thirds of its territory (including a portion of Tokaj) to surrounding states in World War I reparations (Treaty of Trianon). Miklós Horthy declared himself regent the same year, and in June 1941 announced allegiance to the Axis powers, fueled in part by nationalist sentiment and resentment over Trianon. Switching sides all too late, Budapest was under Soviet siege by Christmas 1944. 400,000 Hungarian Jews had already been sent to death camps, and by April 1945, German forces were driven out by Soviet 'liberators'. By 1948 communist rule was established.

In 1945-6, land belonging to kulaks (so-called 'wealthy peasants' who owned three or more hectares of vineyards [or fifteen hectares arable land]), the church, and noble estates were redistributed to the peasants who had worked on them. In 1946, two million hectares were then redistributed between 642,000 individuals, 'creating a new class of small farmers' (Liddell 2003:7). A tithing-type system began, and vouchers given for clothing and other necessities. Voluntary cooperatives formed as the inefficiency of fragmented farming became obvious, and by 1948 a policy of forced collectivization was enforced for the next three years. Notably, collectivization did not include a register of Jewish-owned properties (in Tokaj, especially, only a few had survived 1944); rather, these properties were inventoried by the so-called Commissioner of Abandoned Goods established in 1945 as 'abandoned'.

Agricultural land collectivization in Hungary after 1948 took two forms: the *szövetkezet* (cooperative, 400-600 hectares belonging legally to self-governed cooperative members) and the *állami gazdaság* (state farm, 500-10,000 hectares, belonging to the state). Every village had a

cooperative, typically comprised of peasant land (plots less than three hectares); state farms were comprised of estates deemed unfit for redistribution or the adjacent lands of uncooperative peasantry. Both systems were involved in wine production in Tokaj. Especially at first, wine production in cooperatives suffered from lack of winemaking knowledge, particularly as specialists were excluded for their affiliation with the previous regime (Liddell 2003).

Marketing from the 1940s became the purview of the nationalized *Magyar Állami Pincegazdaság* (Hungarian State Cellar Organization), and distribution was centralized through regional *Borkombinátok* (wine combines). A state monopoly on exported wine was held by the state's Monimpex, and by 1956, pre-1944 wine exports were exceeded. When the USSR restricted Comecon members to specialization in 1962, it was wine that became Hungary's 'currency' in a barter-like system, for which Hungary received commodities like oil and gas, prompting the extension of viticultural cooperatives. Native varietals were "reluctantly jettisoned…in favour of easily cultivated, large-yielding varieties" (Liddell 2003:12) and the 'quantity' paradigm began. In 1966, the Nádudvar Plan gave every cooperative member the opportunity to rent and work a .3-hectare household plot (known as a *háztáji*), allowing the use of cooperative equipment (for a small fee) to cultivate the plot. This important development led to an increase in hobby plots and a budding entrepreneurial winemaking culture, a space for "a sort of hidden continuation of old winemaking traditions" (Liddel, 2003:13). In Tokaj, the eventual consolidation of three state farms became the *Tokajhegyaljai Állami Gazdaság Borkombinát* (Tokaj-Hegyalja State Farm Wine Combine) in addition to the twenty-two cooperatives (later consolidated into six).

Hungary's New Economic Mechanism (1968) implemented schemes to supplement declining rural earnings and stimulate a stagnating economy. Under this plan, cooperatives were permitted the undertaking of off-season work, for which members could earn wages or dividends. In 1978, the

allowable size of hobby plots doubled to .6 hectares, with ownership possibilities for relatives of cooperatives. By 1982, cooperatives were a primary source of revenue to fund social security and other programs, and cooperative land was rented out to members for private production. By 1990, cooperative members were growing on areas as large as 5 hectares, and cooperative leaders reserved the best vineyards for exclusive wines, to be sold domestically (e.g., to restaurants or hotels in Budapest). Thus, when privatization began in the 1990s, "it was almost as much a regularization of what was already developing into a system of private production as it was an extension of it" (Liddell 2003:16).

By 1989, Gorbachev's successful anti-alcohol campaigns, coupled with the abrupt switch from barter system to hard currency, meant demand for Hungarian wine (which by then was exported primarily to the USSR) disappeared by 1991. Meanwhile, the domestic market had shifted: wine consumption in Hungary had dropped from forty to twenty-four liters per capita (Liddell 2003:17). Tokaj's Borkombinat (which had provided fortified sweet wines to the Soviet market) had once provided 20% of the country's export, while public services were funded by cooperative earnings. By the early 1990s, drastic restructuring was required.

b. 1990s: privatization

Hungary's Compensation Act of 1990 (effective 1991) and Cooperative Law of 1992 were initiated to return landed properties to the original (pre-1948) owners or their descendants (so-called 'insider members'). In Tokaj, cooperative laborers who had not contributed their own lands to cooperatives ('outsider members') were granted vouchers in proportion to time worked. These were exchangeable for land or machinery at auction, or to trade on the open market, amounting up to 62,000 USD. But insider members and original deeds were often difficult or impossible to identify, and the lack of organized/cooperative support (e.g. spray treatments, equipment), market for Tokaji wines, or

guarantee of land title led to extensive vineyard abandonment just as international firms arrived: "What developed was a raid on Hungarian land….and this included prime vineyard land" (Liddell 2003:23).

One German group reportedly offered to buy the entire Tokaj appellation, but András Bacsó, director of Tokaj's Borkombinát (what was left of the communist trading house), chose to allow for competition (Brazsil 2013). Thus, "In the early '90s," one English wine writer in Budapest explained, "all these foreign countries came in—top companies in the world—and bought their chunk of Tokaj". Veteran Tokaji producer Arpad lamented this; "…they broke it into pieces and everybody got a part". While cooperative members may have obtained vouchers worth a small portion (sometimes 8-10 rows within a 20-hectare plantation), many contiguous classified *dűlő*-s were 'reconstituted and sold as individual Chateaus, so imbuing the wine once more with individualism after 40 years in the Communist compressor' (Cohen 1992). English firm Ernst and Young was consulted in evaluating the 17 chosen estates of 40-200 hectares, each valued at 3 to 5 million USD; many sales, however, were delayed as older Hungarians (or, less frequently, their descendants) laid claim to family plots; "There are more grandfathers and great-grandmothers around than we thought" gritted one would-be investor to a New York Times journalist in 1992 (Cohen 1992).

Investment came swiftly with this first, rapid wave of privatization and the selling of the largest contiguous parcels in the region. An English-Dutch investor group, which included Lord Jacob de Rothschild, Hugh Johnson, and Peter Vinding-Diers, established the Royal Tokaji Wine Company in September 1990; sixty local growers contributed land to the venture, which failed and was relaunched in 1993. Royal Tokaji then rented these vineyards back to their original (1990) owners, who cultivated them and sold their aszú grapes back to the company. The Hétszőlő estate, owned for centuries by the Austrian court, was sold to Bordeaux-based French-Japanese Grand Millésimes de France for 4 million USD for 75.2% of the historic vineyards (the balance remained with the state). Axa Milléimes

purchased Disznókő (100 hectares). French investor Jean-Louis Laborde purchased Chateaux Pajzos and Megyer vineyards (150 hectares), while United States (US) businessman Anthony Hwang partnered with Hungarian winemaker István Szepsy to create Királyudvar (104 First Class hectares). David Alvarez (owner of Spanish wine company Vega Sicilia) established Tokaj-Oremus on eighty hectares of prime vineyards. An unusual case, the German aristocratic Degenfeld family—who was instrumental in Tokaj viticulture 1850s—1940s—returned to claim their original estate (these included exact same First-Class vineyards). With his father-in-law, Grof Degenfeld invested in modernizing wine production, introducing popular French varietals Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc (now outlawed in the region). The company included forty hectares; it rented an additional thirty-five from the state, which were sub-rented to laborers who sold grapes back to the company (Liddell 2003).

Alarmed by these and other foreign land purchases throughout the country, an embargo on the sale of agricultural lands to foreigners was in place by 1994. By then, contiguous prime *dűlő*-s—in the form of pre-communist, aristocratic estates—belonged to a handful of French, Dutch, English, German, Japanese, and Spanish investors, albeit many with local partners or operators. Meanwhile, by 1996 Hungarian compensation vouchers for former cooperative members had depreciated in value by 65%, even as property prices continued to rise. In a second wave of privatization (August-December 1992), nineteen cellar associations were (re)established, reminiscent of pre-1940s village organization. By the close of 1993, 925 million HUF (approximately 3.3 million USD) of foreign capital had been invested in wine modernization and renewal (Tompa 2016). In short, the disintegration of state production in Tokaj led to: 1) a successor state trading house (today Grand Tokaj); 2) cellar cooperatives of small growers; 3) foreign investors partnering with the Hungarian state (with the state holding a share ranging from 19-49%). There are also many dozens of hobbyists and garden plot winemakers who trade, sell, or share their wine informally.

Remaining local cooperatives languished. Where small-scale production continued, most remaining cooperatives lacked bottling equipment; producers (many of whom rented land from companies) were at the mercy of larger firms, who offered low prices for unprocessed grapes. While exact figures are difficult to pin-down thanks to misreporting and the prevalence of pocket deals (contracts not reported on land registers through which local residents serve as a fronts for effectively foreign ownership), reports suggest that by 2000 30% of Tokaji Aszú wine production was 'in foreign hands', including 50% of the highest-category aszú wines and 80% of Tokaji sales in the West (Friedrich 2000).

The injection of foreign capital stoked intense debates, the largest of which was initiated by a drastic shift in the aszú wine itself (Liddell 2003). Basically, while the 'old style' encouraged oxidation and resulting chocolate or coffee flavors, the new style imported by foreign firms emphasized minerality and fresh, fruity flavors using modern technology, in keeping with 'international' styles and 'contemporary tastes'. Scandalously, these new-style wines failed the Budapest-based quality control tasting panel (OBV) for several years for not delivering Tokaji Aszú character and quality (Friedrich 2000). One minister of state recalled in 2000: 'I envisaged the growth of small producers dedicated to quality, and I am dismayed that most of the investment (both foreign and national) has been directed at churning out wine of minimal quality for mass markets' (Liddell 2003:23). Meanwhile, newcomers were (and are) skeptical of locals' winemaking; as one US wine expert in Tokaj told me, 'this swill [still] exists. These people buy it and drink it because to *them* it's wine.'

c. Nationalism in contemporary Hungary

This dissertation arrives at a particular political moment in Hungary. As a postsocialist nation now within the European Union, Hungary and its neighboring former-bloc states are increasingly promoting nationalistic policies, autocratic governments, and the destabilization of democratic processes. This

trend might be viewed as symptomatic of broader disillusionments with the state of affairs: Pew Research polls suggest public approval of democracy fell from 74% following the collapse of the socialist state to just 56% by 2009 (Pew Research 2009). Shortly after the release of these figures, Victor Orbán's Fidesz party—a nationalist-conservative, populist party—won the 2010 elections with 53% of the vote, gaining a supermajority in the Hungarian parliament. In the same election, radical right-wing and partial opposition party Jobbik won 17%. Upon gaining these seats, Fidesz controversially introduced a new constitution with revised electoral policies and laws pertaining to the relationship between government and civil society (see Bozóki 2011, Korkut 2012).

As in other CEE states, "populism emerged as a form of authoritarian democracy for the post-war world; one that could adapt the totalitarian version of politics to the post-war hegemony of democratic representation" (Finchelstein 2014:467). In Hungary, the result is Orbán's so-called illiberal democracy: a government that does not answer to the rule of law. He cites Russia and Turkey as inspirational examples. As an increasingly populist party, Fidesz sympathizes with movements to reject migrants and refugees, as well as with issues related to 'crimes against ethnic Hungarians living abroad'. It emphasizes the interests of the 'pure people', who are portrayed as oppressed and blameless, positioned against foreign and corrupt foes (Ádám and Bozóki 2016).

Right-wing parties in CEE states differ from similar movements in their western counterparts; they are defined more by cultural rather than economic features, and typically include (ethnic) nationalism, social conservativism, and references to patriotism, rooted in the past (Kitschelt 1992). This preoccupation with nationalist rhetoric has enabled Orbán to side-step discussions of domestic problems or to reframe them as extrinsic, radicalizing moderate Fidesz supporters. As a more radical counterpart to his Fidesz party, Jobbik[2] was founded in 2007 and included a vigilante paramilitary

[2] Fully, *Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom*, or Movement for a Better Hungary.

called the Hungarian Guard, which was banned in 2009. Despite the ban there remain several similar movements, including New Hungarian Guard, Civil Guard Association for a Better Future, Hungarian National Front, and the Outlaw Army. These groups draw crowds of up to 2,000 at rallies outside of Budapest, and occasionally make headlines when minority homes and villages are targeted with physical aggression[3]. As of 2011, revisions to the 7th Amendment (with Hungary's Fundamental Law) detail that the protection of Hungary's self-identity, namely its Christian culture, is the duty of all state organizations (Ministry of Justice 2017 [2011]).

These tendencies solidified around the migrant crisis of 2015, which saw thousands of migrants, many Syrian refugees, at Budapest's Keleti (Eastern) railway station, drawing international attention. A controversial effort to 'defend' Hungary's southern boundaries included armed guards and, in August of 2015, the fencing-off of Hungary's southern border with Serbia. "We have built the fence, defended the southern border," noted Orbán in a speech to supporters outside of Budapest, "Migration is like rust that slowly but surely would consume Hungary" . Blaming globalization and universal human rights and ideologies, Orbán insisted of this wave of migrants: "In part because of the culture lent to them or forced upon them, these people are no longer bound to their land and their past as strongly as they once were" (Orbán 2015). In 2018, Orbán was re-elected with just over 49% of the vote (Jobbik receiving over 23%). According to analysts, "[t]he campaign was effective because Hungary has had a long history of foreign domination, and just a few decades of experience with democracy, capitalism, and a free press" (The Week Staff 2018). Orbán's regime also singles out domestic figureheads of globalization, including Jewish philanthropist George Soros and his NGOs (as well as the Central European University, which he founded). Speaking with what some criticized as antisemitic tones, Orbán commented on the matter, "We are fighting an enemy that is different from

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[3] A 2014 Harvard study outlines escalating events of violence against Roma (François-Xavier Bagnoud Center for Health and Human Rights, Harvard School of Public Health at Harvard University:2014).

us. Not open but hiding; not straightforward but crafty; not honest but base; not national but international; does not believe in working but speculates with money; does not have its own homeland but feels it owns the whole world" (in Walker 2018).

Described by Hungarian poet Endre Ady as the 'ferry country' between East and West (Chapter Three), Hungary is colloquially called a 'Magyar island in a Slavic sea'; its Finno-Ugric language and exceptional history of domination bind the nation, which today occupies just one-third of its pre-World War I territory. Founded by tribal nomads from the steppes of Asia over a millennium ago, today's Hungarian nation hinges on this dual identity; Nobel laureate Imre Kertész has even argued that Hungary's doomed history is the result of a failure to choose sides between Western Europe and Asia . Orbán's own rationalization of his authoritarian populism and 'sheer force' politics draws from this background: "With a half-Asian lot such as ours, there is no other way" (in Halmai 2018). His Fidesz party reinforces this duality in its use of symbols that mix Christianity with pre-Christian and pagan traditions. "This approach," note two local scholars, "refers to the idea of 'two Hungaries': the Western Christian, and the Eastern pagan, tribal one'" (Ádám and Bozóki 2016:108) .

Ironically, Orbán's backing of restrictive immigration policies is rooted not only in defending Hungary as the homeland, but in the Hungarian state as a bastion of European (i.e., Christian) culture: "We will of course be letting in genuine refugees," he explained in his 2017 state of the nation speech: "Germans, Dutch, French and Italians, terrified politicians and journalists, Christians who have been forced to leave their homes and who here in Hungary want to find the Europe they have lost in their homelands" (Orbán 2017a). In Orbán's rhetoric, these policies are justified by the 'America First' rhetoric of US President Donald Trump, noting: "we have been given permission, if you like, from the world's highest secular position, that we, too, can place our own interests first" (Orbán 2017b). The ironic, international appeal of Hungarian nationalism has attracted 'refugees' as described by Orbán

(above), for example, Budapest is now home to Arktos Media, which is now the world's largest distributor of far-right literature according to the New York Times (Williams 2017).

I include this background passage on Hungarian nationalism as a launchpad for broader discussions of the political implications of place-based tastes, the overt education of the senses, and everyday experiences of borders and political change. Attention to arguments of quality (or lack thereof) in winemaking offer insight into broader tensions between East and West, Hungary and the EU, local and international. Narratives of taste and *terroir*, as explored in the chapters ahead, parallel and reinforce topical political narratives of identity and belonging, modernity and backwardness, past and possibility. Through *terroir*, political claims-making is literally grounded into protected material ecologies. The tastes preferred in the past (or projected onto the future) reveal something about the way political change and otherness is experienced in the visceral world of everyday life.

IV. ORGANIZATION OF THE MANUSCRIPT

The central research question guiding this dissertation is: *how are hegemonies of taste* (Jung 2014) *reproduced?* Specifically, what are the ecological ramifications of food produced to convey specific, affective experiences of places? What are the implications of elevating protected sites of production as distinctive above others—and what modes of knowledge are used to evaluate these claims and demarcate these landscapes? To answer these questions, I investigate how multi-scalar characterizations of authenticity, superiority, and taste in food products appeal to social-ecological origins. With this dissertation, I show that landscapes (and their more-than-human occupants) do not only inspire ideologies or affect visceral experiences but are also actively shaped *by* them. In the case of agroecological landscapes, management practices alter the material terrain—but those practices are, of course, regulated through tools of governance, borne from particular political views (even if seemingly written by no one/coming from nowhere). Taking up this notion of *terroir*—a contemporary,

French shorthand for the taste of place phenomenon that appears across the globe—I turn to the original Tokaj region of Hungary. Here, centuries of successive and often contradictory political framings have written their legacies into the landscapes and the lived experiences of locals and outsiders in a sensuous way.

While additional literature, as well as methodological and background information, will be written into each section as needed, this dissertation is organized to make a cumulative argument, each chapter with a central thesis. The following chapter will outline the theoretical positioning and contribution of this research to three primary areas of literature: ethnographies of postsocialist transformations, political ecology of food and agriculture, and anthropology of the senses. The third chapter explores Tokaji narratives of taste quality as 'counter-*terroir'* explanations that mobilize old borders in the creation of new ones; *terroir* in this case is not about anchoring (Demossier 2018), but about *mobility*. Chapter Four provides a critical perspective on the geography of GIs and political devices of *terroir* in a politically dynamic region, presenting policy as an intrinsic (yet overlooked) component of *terroir*. The fifth and sixth chapters act as a couplet; Chapter Five brings a science and technology studies perspective to the concept of indigeneity as authenticity in this 'traditional' wine region, while Chapter Six offers a multi-species account of *terroir* and labor. The seventh chapter theorizes a "politics of acquired tastes" where taste offers a fascinating window onto broader social and political dynamics. Chapter Eight breaks down policy tools (such as the PDO) as constituents of agricultural ecosystems with political implications: specifically, I discuss this case (and discourses of taste, place, and land tenure) within the context of nationalism in post-socialist CEE. Finally, Chapter Nine synthesizes and discusses these concepts by considering the connections between the taste of place, policies as tools of governance, and material ecologies. It anticipates a new approach to political ecology that includes visceral experiences of affective landscapes, discussing the implications of this theoretical paradigm on European politics and foodways, with possibilities for future research. An

afterword provides space for ethnographic decompression and transparent reflection on the research period.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW: AUGMENTING POLITICAL ECOLOGY WITH A VISCERAL APPROACH

I. BLOOD AND SOIL: FROM TERROR TO *TERROIR*

a. Embodiment, place, and reverse colonization

> *Buda-Pesth seems a wonderful place, from the glimpse which I got of it from the train and the little I could walk through the streets.... The impression I had was that we were leaving the West and entering the East; the most western of splendid bridges over the Danube…took us among the traditions of Turkish rule.*

Thus journals protagonist Jonathan Harker on the opening page of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) as he crosses the Danube River, Europe fading behind him. He ventures by train, then by horse-drawn carriage, far beyond any recognizable sign of civilization as he enters the wilderness at the heart of Transylvania. Upon meeting Count Dracula, Harker is offered a meal, which the Count does not share with him, and a glass of wine from a formerly Transylvanian region: *Tokaj*. "There is hardly a foot of soil in all this region that has not been enriched by the blood of men, patriots or invaders," the Count recalls to Harker (33), "Is it a wonder that we are a conquering race?" (41).

It is easy to forget that Transylvania was not associated with horror until the publication of Dracula—even easier to overlook the wider social and political contexts within which Dracula operated as a stand-in for more tangible western terror. The threat of Dracula to Occidental Europe lies not in

his supernatural vampirism, but in his undermining of conventional western values, ways of being, and in the antagonism he signifies to high culture, geography, and history. In fact, it is Dracula's counter-history and immortal status that is perhaps most disquieting to his Western acquaintances; as Dracula pronounces, "Whilst they played wits against me—against me who commanded nations, and intrigued for them, and fought for them, hundreds of years before they were born—I was countermining them" (251-52).

The anxiety of English protagonist Harker, particularly regarding his transference of the Count to London is the "late-Victorian nightmare of reverse colonization…expressed succinctly" (Arata 1990:630). Transylvania's Dracula represents a reverse colonization anxiety that is not geographically bounded, but a colonization of both "bodies and land indiscriminately" (Arata 1990:630); in short, the horror of Dracula is in the potential transformation of western bodies and ways of being, tied invariably to unknown terrain. This is perhaps most essentially demonstrated in the sleeping habits of the Count, who, upon arriving in England, reposes and is thus reenergized only by sleeping in coffins filled with his native soil.

Tokaj, Hungary has long been the home of legends borne of inseparable land and lore at the crossroads of East and West. Italian writers in the 16th century documented that Tokaji[4] wines contained gold, while early 18th-century physicians in Europe believed that the soils of Tokaj themselves had healing properties, shipping Tokaji soils across Europe as panacea for a variety of illnesses, from tumors to plague (Germany, London, Austria). By the early 20th-century, London advertisements for Tokaji wine as medicine included customer praise for its restorative properties, such

[4] Tokaji is the adjectival form of Tokaj.

as one in 1933 that read, “Send immediately one case of the wine that removes the screws from the coffin lid” (Liddell 2001:272).

The vista of the Tokaj wine region, a UNESCO World Heritage Landscape as of 2000, is equally mythical in proportion. While most cellars in the Central and Eastern European (CEE) region are typically built into a hillside, Tokaji cellars are subterranean—the only suggestion of their presence an elaborate door marking the entrance. These gateways to the underground are “often dotted rather irregularly along pathways and have a sepulchral quality, like the entrances to so many mausoleums,” as one wine writer suggests; “On a misty morning it is all too easy to imagine Dracula emerging from one of them” (Liddell 2001:268-269). As locals are quick to explain, it is this mist on which their wines depend, as it is the harbinger and nurturer of a fungus with its own vampiric qualities: consuming berries through their flesh, *Botrytis cinerea*, or “Noble Rot”, leaves behind the shriveled, essential ingredient in a wine with purportedly immortal status: *Tokaji Aszú*.

Figure 4: Looking into the misty valley of Mád, September 2017. Photo by the author.

Figure 5: Cellar entrances present only hints of labyrinths below. Erdőbénye, March 2017. Photo by the author.

It is the Tokaji Aszú that—as in many religious rites—represents lifeblood, eternity, and which Dracula serves his English guest in the foreshadowing of later, more literal embodiments. Today, the materiality of Tokaj's mythologized landscape reflects centuries of successive political regimes. The most recent ruptures, the collapse of socialist rule and privatization of vineyards, are scars in the landscape and its vineyard ecologies. At the same time, the end of communism marked the vanishing of the "other" against which Europe had defined itself and which, I will argue, left an equally tangible impression. The Second World, no longer behind an Iron Curtain, was absorbed into a broader notion of "Europe"—an augmentation that was consummated with the accession of seven formerly Eastern Bloc states, including Hungary, into the European Union in 2004. The events of the last three decades are typically recounted as those of Western heroes and Eastern renewal; however, ethnographies of postsocialist transformations reveal the ambivalence with which former Eastern Bloc citizens view

their post-1989 lives (e.g. Ghodsee 2011, Todorova and Gille 2010, Velikonja 2009). Not unlike Dracula's disconcerting version of history, the story of Tokaji *terroir* is a window onto a trans-European past in which the Magyar nation, its soils, and its ingenuity predated Europe as a force to be reckoned with, while the products of its lands once colonized the sensorium of its Western consumers.

Today, new tensions between East and West play out in the borders within and without Tokaj. The Soviet Union's collapse and resulting de-collectivization of governance not only shifted modes of production in Tokaj but was also sparked concerns over a perceived decentralizing of collective identity. Crises across CEE in the decade that followed suggested ethnic conflicts were not the result of the 'lid' being taken off the 'pressure cooker', but rather represented novel responses to new hegemonic forces (e.g. Verdery 1998). This is no more evident than in the social politics of CEE foodways, particularly, in the uniquely 'rooted' space of wine production. The sensuous qualities of wines have, for millennia, been intrinsically linked with their places of origin, though never so overtly as in the 20th century. This link between place and taste, often termed *terroir*, is a narrative of anchorage (Demossier 2018) in time and space. It is also a port to other times, other spaces, and alternative histories and futures. Defining the taste of place is not only about forging or crossing borders, but also about translating locality—with the aid of more-than-human co-conspirators—into commodified, shared sensory experiences.

Tokaji wine has always been a shape-shifting vessel, symbol, and material transporter of local and global politics, history, and tastes. It has materialized historically as panacea, high luxury, or gross commodity. Today it takes on another role, as "[w]ine is a powerful symbol of western capitalism" (Demossier 2018:162), where production relies not only on the commodification of fermented grape juice, but also of origin and authenticity. What, then, of the "unknown *terroir*" of the CEE region (Jung 2014)?

In this dissertation, I utilize taste as an opportune lens through which to examine broader socio-ecological change. Tokaji wines—their origins and tastes—have been protected since the 1700s as 'local' products from authenticated *terra*. In a contemporary, globalized market that increasingly values locality and authenticity in food choices, this authenticity hinges on narratives that come dangerously close to what Brosius (1999) might call "blood and soil essentialisms". This dissertation complicates previous readings of place-based food policies and the "taste of place" in the marginalized space of the former Second World—policies often touted as beneficial for agrobiodiversity and sustainable foodways, as well as rural development.

b. Place: Political ecology in CEE

This research contributes to a surprising lack of political-ecological attention in the former Second World (some exceptions include Stahl 2012, Harper 2006, Aistara 2018, Brawner 2015). This may be in part due to what Baer (2015) sees as a continuing 'cold war' between western approaches in anthropology (such as political ecology) and 'native' anthropologists in CEE states (where folkways and material cultures dominated cultural and social studies in many communist states). Perhaps at risk of continuing the western hero narrative (Hann 2002) (that the east was saved by a western intervention), others propose a general academic reluctance in CEE states to be critical of the present (and thus viewed as accepting or having preference for the past) (Nadkarni and Shevchenko 2004). As others have noted, it may also stem from a general reluctance to utilize a framework so directly inspired by the work of Darwin and Marx in a region so recently devastated by a gross misinterpretation of both[5]. To this end, Ghodsee and Sehon (2018) have highlighted the usefulness of an *anti*-anti-communist stance, in which a critique of contemporary CEE politics should not be read as a sympathetic endorsement of earlier regimes.

[5] I owe this observation to Bram Tucker, personal communication 2016.

Because communism materialized in social and ecological worlds in a spatially-disparate way (e.g., Stewart 1998; Cellarius 1998; Berdahl 1999; Caldwell et al. 2009; Ries 2009; Stahl 2012), a unified political ecological account of CEE transitions is unlikely and would be unproductive. Indeed, anthropologists in the region have questioned whether the common histories of CEE countries are enough to constitute a geographic "postsocialist Europe" as a useful point of analysis (e.g. Hann 2002). However, as in the initial iterations of political ecology in the Third/First worlds, general dynamics of change—particularly as they relate to the common CEE phenomena of decollectivization—and the role of new, supranational regulatory regimes both within the EU (such as the Common Agricultural Policy) and beyond (such as TRIPS) suggest that what micro-level accounts exist of political-ecological transformations may soon be ripe for more broad-reaching theorizing of postsocialist political-ecology.

While the region is lacking in political ecological scholarship, there is a wealth of political economy accounting for the transitions of CEE states from command to market economies (e.g. Verdery 1996, 1998; Buchanan 1997). Implicit in many of these structural recollections of change are the eco-environmental—that is, *material*—ramifications that necessarily follow ideologies that lead to decollectivization. In rural parts of CEE throughout the mid-20th century and even today, it is not uncommon to see a horse-drawn wagon, the manual reaping of hay, or subsistence gardens, a mark that Verdery (1996) would cite as symptomatic of a return to feudalism—but which, I would add, resembles many progressive and back-to-the-land agricultural movements by North American standards (see also Smith and Jehlička 2007). Unlike most North Americans, however, CEE farmers are likened to peasants for their lack of agency (and apparent technological 'backwardness'); yet, such political economic theorizing does little to seriously contemplate individuals' decisions—not as a continuation of a past interrupted—but as innovative responses to novel pressures (Phillips 2005).

c. Producer/consumer: A false dichotomy?

In this section, I address a legitimate worry in contemporary food studies discussed by several colleagues that, taking the fetishization of food for granted, food scholars focus increasingly on consumption rather than the production and labor involved in food production (as had been more typical of peasant studies, for example). I will briefly outline here why I view this consumer/producer binary as a false divide (and thus why I did not commit to one for the purpose of this project) and contend that focusing strictly on either wine production *or* consumption would not begin to answer the questions addressed in this dissertation. Indeed, this is an orientation taken up by some other anthropologists working in wine-producing regions. As Demossier (2018) writes of Burgundy, it is naïve to assume that a group of wine-growers (or any group of producers) is limited to a bounded, clearly defined social group; French winemakers are responding as much to global markets as to climate change. Thus, I relate to Demossier when she explains, "it is by following both producers and products into their wider connections and circulations that I see them becoming ethnographically meaningful" (2018:9).

In historical terms, the distinction between producer and consumer is relatively new, resulting from capitalist modes of specialist production that allow most people to work outside of agriculture. Robbins (2012) urges political ecologists to practice a more inclusive and holistic study by focusing on "producers" more broadly, rather than "peasants", who are more overtly marginalized. *Producers* in this sense includes not only the literal handlers of soil and product, but those whose labor adds value to produce. In this dissertation, those people include viticulturalists, scientists, and "taste-makers" or teachers of many stations. My analysis of specialty wines incorporates what West (2012) calls "sign value"; in this view, production is pushed not toward efficiency or maximum outputs, but indexes the producers themselves—laborers who are often made more exotic through marketing or even "ethical

consumption" discourse. This has the effect of rendering their "fair trade" wares more appealing to those who wish to perform their solidarity with the *other*.

Today, it becomes impossible to discuss food, value, production, or even producers without reference to what is termed *market demand* but what is also the elusive factor of *taste.* Where even the most isolated pockets of producers exist and sustain themselves, they are also subject to property laws, coercive conservation measures (Peluso 1993), mapping and ordering (Scott 1998, Rocheleau 2005), and the displaced effects of climate change propelled by populations seemingly disconnected. Even within such subsistence agricultural production, where consumer and producer are inseparable because they are one in the same, demand exists without the mitigation of capital, per se. This demand may be in the most basic form of caloric need, but also where food is *affective*, leading to the production and perpetuation of certain varietals (Nazarea 1995, 1999) and foodways that define local identities and relationships to local ecologies. Sydney Mintz's work on sugar provides a fitting example of this global "feedback loop" and the impossibility of separating producer from consumer in his analysis. His focus on sugar illustrates the ways in which wars, colonial powers, even a child's sweet tooth can all be traced back to the production of sugar (1979). In short, no anthropological or ecological consideration of power can be complete without some attention to consumption (Wilk 2006).

Consumption entails taste, where taste is a "moment in the circulation of capital" (Michalski 2015). An explicit focus on consumption relegates the production side of food to agrarian studies and often assumes a disproportionate agency in the consumer (e.g. Guthman 2007, West 2012, Besky 2014). The transitional, postsocialist space of a historic wine region thrust into a global, competitive market, has posed unique challenges for CEE production, particularly in Hungary, where "wine production is the art of the economically possible" (Liddell 2001:26). In this light, a more structural approach to food politics, including the political economy of wine and taste, and attention to policy as

a field (Yanow 2000) may help to elucidate the "empirics that can't be participant-observed" (Feldman 2011).

In moving consumption beyond fetishization, Holtzman (2006, 2010) addresses the bourgeois fascination with food, which he considers symptomatic of a western, epicurean worldview where entire new journals are devoted to the "discovery" and relishing of sensuously pleasing foods. He cites Stoller's (1989) account of being served a disgusting stew as unusual in that it is about *bad* tastes, unfamiliar tastes, of disgust and sensuous *displeasure*. Holtzman thus advocates for a less romanticized study of food, one that challenges western notions of the edible or pleasurable. His recollection of a repulsive lutefisk meal is something of an antidote where he immortalizes a family Christmas dinner through an autobiographical recollection of bad cooking and unfamiliar tastes; to paraphrase his conclusion, "I don't know if the lutefisk was just bad or if I didn't have the taste for it". This dissertation research takes Holtzman's challenge seriously, looking not to romanticize or take the elevated status of wines for granted, but to ask *what counts as good tastes, and who decides*? As discussed below, the role of taste—as both experience and transportable discourse—can provide an important glimpse into the innerworkings of social and political relations, particularly as they are veiled in the cloak of objective, yet affective, traits.

All of this relates to a central aim in political ecology: the tracing of capitalist logic to environmental outcomes (Peet and Watts 1996). Food (and its associated taste) is inevitably caught up in both capitalist logic and environmental outcomes. Without consideration for the demand—the consumption side—for particular food crops, we cannot faithfully account for global inequality, political-environmental change, or truly understand producers' decisions.

d. Who owns the taste of place? The geography of Geographical Indications

The Tokaj wine region was first enclosed in 1737, making it one of the first modern GI predecessors. Today, GIs are any of a suite of policies and international treaties that protect origin food (and some non-food) items as intellectual property and are geographical by nature and name. The lack of critical engagement with the relative location of GIs has prompted some to ask, "What is the geography of geographical indications?" (Rippon 2014). The surface areas of GIs are highly variable in scale, ranging from nation-state (e.g. Italy, Papua New Guinea) to county or cluster of counties (e.g. Vidalia, Stilton), to even 'more arbitrary' border zones (wine regions, for example) (Rippon 2014; Demossier 2011; Black and Ulin 2013). What makes them politically powerful is that the 'work' of GI policies (Shore and Wright 2011) is to gloss over heterogeneity in favor of uniformity and homogeneity (Vitrolles 2011; Demossier 2011). This has the effect of spatially organizing subjects, rendering populations (including plants and their products) legible to statecraft (Scott 1998). It also has the effect of putting pressure on producers inside the borders to comply to newly codified (and arguably invented) traditions (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1992, Rippon 2014), while excluding those outside the borders from the benefits of the name, label, and reputation.

This leads to perhaps the most important, and yet understudied, facet of GIs and their geographies: the geography of Geographical Indications is a historically-situated, cultural one (e.g. Black and Ulin 2013, Demossier 2012). In the following chapters, I will explore this theme and add to it the argument that the cultural geographies of GIs are political-ecological. While a product's geography is leveraged in various ways in arguments of quality, GI policies necessarily defer to the cultural geographies that gave rise to their reputation. They hinge on narratives that index the physicality of those geographies, appealing to various forms of expertise in the reification of *terroir* and claims to territorial quality.

For this reason, GIs have been the subject of critique for their colonization of places and people (Besky 2014, Brabazon 2014). In one example, Brabazon (2014) explains how traditionally European white wine varietals received a GI in Australia; this inspires a critique of GIs for their whitewashing of cultural geographies, displacement of local and indigenous practices, and valorizing European standards of food and drink as "legitimate" and worthy of a GI label in colonial spaces. In this case, both anthropology and geography have an important role to play in the discussion of rights, access, and branding of "authenticity". For now, the geography of GIs is codified as a static, immutable one into policy through geographical narratives that link physical geographies to tastes (Gangjee 2012), even though anthropologists and cultural geographers have demonstrated the culturally and historically contingent nature of the relationship between relative location and quality.

II. VISCERALITIES

a. The affect of food with provenance

The third component of this work is an attention to sensuous experience as a way of knowing. From Sutton's (2001) description of madeleines and nostalgia to Seremetakis's (1996; see also 1993, 1994) experience of EU accession as one of disappearing tastes, memory is intrinsically sensuous, often linked to shared consumption experiences. Classen (1993, 1997) argues that memory *exists* in the senses; the taste of the past, then, is a sensory journey that synesthetically relates past experiences to the present. Food is not only nutrition for bodies, but fuel for place-making, where a sense of place is connected to phenomenological experiences *of* that place (Holtzman 2005); Casey (1996) suggests that those senses of place are in fact phenomenologically distinct, as "to live is to live locally and to know is first of all to know the places one is in" (Edward S. Casey in Escobar 2001:13). Memory in this sense might be viewed as the nexus of history and fantasy (Nazarea 2006); it is both individual and shared. Memory may be collective where it is mutual, as in groups with common experiences

(Halbwachs 1980), which can have strong implications for action in the preserving of cultural and biological diversity, particularly in contemporary contexts.

The story of *terroir* (or as it is sometimes called in Hungarian, *dűlőmitológia*—mythology of the parcel), is a narrative that links sensuous experiences to material agro-ecologies. As in French *terroir*, *dűlőmitológia* emerged from the technical contexts of early agricultural sciences, melded with metaphor; the sensory experience of the *taste of place* became its own rationale (Parker 2015). In Tokaj, common visceralities has the effect of creating distinct sensorial worlds where what tastes *good* has implications for identity and agricultural management decisions. Paxson (2010) writes that *terroir* "offers a theory of how people and place, cultural tradition and landscape ecology are mutually constituted over time" (444). These shared experiences are codified and regulated through *terroir* policies such as GIs, where *terroir* becomes a "local governance tool leading to homogeneity and rootedness, while supplying a means for individuals and localities to respond to globalization" (Demossier 2011 cited in Demossier 2018:137).

In the face of climate change, agrobiodiversity loss, and genetic erosion, affective links to foods are tied to their conservation (e.g. Nazarea 2005, Dove 1999). This sensuous approach to conservation invites scholarly discourse to address conservation and germplasm repatriation not in terms of loss and trauma, but as tastes, sensory experiences, that are repatriated to local producers. The present research adds to this literature, where taste preferences motivate environmental choices (management, varietals and breeding) and have implications for biodiversity. It also adds to this the role of nationalism and identity (e.g. planting monocultures of indigenous varietals in the name of authenticity).

b. The social life of the senses

The affective connection between foods and regulated ecologies presents a reading of sense experience as socio-political. Anthropologists have long considered the senses as ways of ordering the

world (Levi-Strauss 1966), as patterns to be deciphered and compared (Howes 1988), even as ethnographic methodology (Pink 2015); what remains to be "unpacked" in this literature—although assumed throughout—is exactly how the senses are utilized (purposefully or unconsciously) as "vehicles of cultural transmission" (Classen 1995). This research follows a non-western approach to senses that extends beyond the Kantian notion of five senses (e.g. Stoller 1997, Nakamura 2013), and considers a plurality of sensoria, including senses of place, security, justice, humor, aesthetics, among others.

The enumeration, and experience, of the senses are an inherent part of human variation that has inspired Paul Stoller's appeal for a sensuous ethnography (1989) that extends the question of representation into the sensory realm: how can we speak for the "other" if we cannot share their (phenomenological, sensory) experiences? In his view, the discipline of anthropology is embedded in Aristotelian legacies: vision is associated with rationality, with the knowable—and the knowable in nature is on the *outside*. The privileging of written texts over aural (and other) traditions has thus led to academic conventions that have prohibited the sensory world of our participants from "penetrating" the ethnographer. Sensory knowledge does not lend itself easily to these academic conventions (Howes 1988), nor is it "on the outside". This dissertation counters the "hegemony of the ocular" (Stoller 1989), foregrounding the unspoken experiences as situated knowledge (Haraway 1986) alongside *vision* and its corollary, reason (Laplantine 2015). Sensing *terroir*—location—in wines is neither an objective/measurable nor a mere illusion (Barrey and Teil 2011); it is co-constructed through various ways of knowing (Brawner et al. forthcoming 2018)

c. Shared senses of place

I extend this multi-modal sensorium to include a *sense of place*. Anthropologists frequently discuss the importance of a sense of place, particularly in the face of nameless, global, "hegemonic

space" (e.g., Escobar 2001). How, then, can we get from "space" to "place", and how does place move from the individual to the collective? Namely, how does "place" become home, city, nation (Casey 1996)? Trnka et al. (2013) address this concretely in their writing on senses and nation-level policies. They describe what might be called a *sense of citizenship*—namely, they explore the ways in which the senses are co-opted through governance in the crafting of nations. They make a powerful argument, drawing from Anderson's (1983) seminal work on nationalism as an "imagined community": what is an imagined community if not comprised of imagined (or actual) shared experiences? In one example, Farquahar (2002) writes about appetites in contemporary China, where the one-child policy had direct implications for the role of sex in the home, a political action with consequences that manifest in what Stewart (1996) would call the "micropoetics" of daily life. In this case, we might say that *offspring* are quantifiable, but the implications for relationships, women's bodies, and the fabric of family (growing geriatric populations, for example), go uncounted—and unaccounted for. In Hungary, the dissolution of public housing in the early 1990s reconfigured home life in novel ways; homelessness for the first time (in citizen's lived memories) became a visible problem. At the same time, private apartments were purchased and reconfigured, often with floor plans that mimicked magazine images of American style open floor plans (forbidden under communism because closed kitchens are better suited to contain the odors of cooking)—a way of living at home that was referred to (and justified) as "normal" [*normális*] (Fehervary 2002).

Because policy governs food it creates new sensory experiences. Guthman (2007) relates the advent of the Nutrition Label with a sense of "eating right". Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy (2013) discuss this as a political ecology of the body, in which so-called "healthy eating" emerges from a rhizome of underlying assumptions and political forces about what it means to eat "healthy". Teaching Italian children to taste (and prefer) small-batch jams over their supermarket counterparts is a Slow Food political project (Hayes-Conroy 2010). Tasting courses in Hungary specific to native wine grape

varietals and styles are similarly poised to recalibrate locals' and visitors' senses to appreciate place-based tastes; one respondent in a Tokaj village even prepares non-alcoholic indigenous grape must samples for visiting school children. Thus, the politics of eating (and producing) manifests as sensory intervention. In this way, policies and state-crafting are thus aligned with sense-crafting, a dynamic that leads to the embodiment (Csordas 1988) of political aims.

d. Sensing places and pasts: Postsocialist nostalgia

The cumulative effect of the dynamics described above is one of CEE ambivalence. As the popular joke goes: *A woman wakes up in the middle of the night. In a panic, she runs to the bathroom and opens the medicine cabinet. She rushes to the kitchen to open the refrigerator. She leaps to the window and leans her head out to look onto the streets. Relieved, she returns to bed. Her husband asks, "What's the matter?!" She replies, "I had a nightmare that there was medicine in the cabinets, food in the refrigerator, and that the streets were clean and safe." Her husband responds, "Why a nightmare, then?" She answers, "I thought the communists were back in power!"*

This anecdote illustrates the uncertainty and ambivalence of postsocialism. Nadkarni and Shevchenko (2004) characterize this phenomenon, which is often referred to as "postsocialist nostalgia" as more complex than nostalgia traditionally conceived, for it is nostalgia for both time and place. What's more, it is not a nostalgia or longing to return to communism, but rather a longing *for* longing: a longing to return to the dream and idealism that accompanied the promises of a market economy. Indeed, surveys around the turn of the millennium in CEE states reported high dissatisfaction among populations (Velikonja 2009:545), though this did not necessarily reflect a wish to return to socialism, rather, to security and certainty. Creed (1998) discusses this longing in terms of "domesticated socialism": communism was made livable through its everyday "domestication".

I suggest the shift in CEE from one of socialism to market economy, from command economy to liberalized markets, and, for some CEE states, from "East" to "West" (or vice-versa, e.g. Fehervary 2002) is ultimately a shift in mode of experience in the domestication of day-to-day life. Daily experiences include shifting foodways, particularly after EU accession—in safety concerns and authentic modes of production (Aistara 2015); or the sense of security tied to home-grown potato supplies (Ries 2009). Attention to lived multi-modal lived experiences in the Hungarian wine world elucidates the incongruence of daily experiences with what was "supposed" to have been (e.g. Caldwell et al. 2009) and for studying "through the local" to understand the ways in which policy regimes translate to experience on the ground (Wright 2011).

III. CONCLUSIONS: A MULTI-MODAL "TASTE" OF PLACE

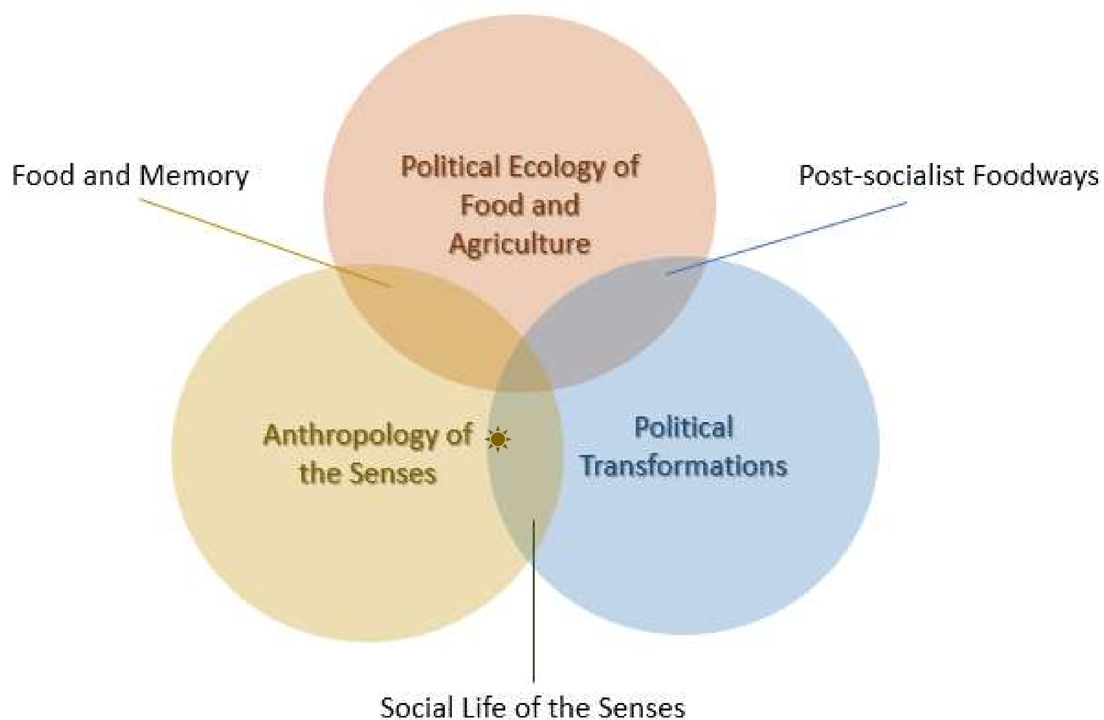

Figure 6: Illustration of theoretical frameworks with dissertation contribution at the center

As described above, this research engages three prominent strands of literature for perhaps the first time. A look at postsocialist wine production also builds on several primary threads, taking the nexus of power, sensory experience, and ecologies as a launching point in theorizing the role of both regulatory and everyday practices in the tension between the sensuous and the political. In this light, I do not see a disjunction between political ecological analysis and sensory memory-oriented study, but rather emphasize a multi-modal, or visceral approach to traditional political-ecological questions (recapitulated in Chapter Nine).

Terroir—something of a shape-shifting concept—invariably indexes a host of social and ecological agents and rhythms. As the emergent nexus of local ecologies and local knowledge, it interfaces with international markets and thus is subject to dynamics of power and political pressures. A political ecology of *terroir*, then, should consider the ways in which viticultural systems are shaped and discursively/materially constructed in response to political aims, power relations, and policies (the latter essentially as the manifestation of the former two). Policy is particularly important because I see it as a moment of translation (Wright 2011) between agricultural sciences, power, and historic preferences (taste, etc.) and the material biologies of viticultural systems. To speak to a political ecology of CEE, for example, agriculture under communism took a very high modernist (Scott 1998) approach to production. Wine, while not a staple/cereal crop still fell victim to this logic in many places, including Tokaj. The aim became efficiency of production rather than "quality" or even typicity/specificity. This literally rearranged vineyards, where traditional terraces were removed, and wide rows created to allow for mechanization (more on this in Chapter Eight).

The legacy of this industrialization of wine-making is not a point of pride among winemakers in the Tokaj region. Even where a rich history of wine making is present and available as a narrative of quality—even where it would speak to the romantic imaginaries essentially required of origin

labels—producers often side-step this history. Instead, some tell a very geological story that runs parallel to the discourse around *terroir* that Demossier notes (2011) was prevalent in France in the 1990s. In contemporary Tokaj, identity comes into play at various stages of wine production; producers may not capitalize on their own 'authenticity' as Hungarian. In the following chapters, I will return to the concept of gastronationalism (DeSoucey 2010), examining the role of indigeneity (in both humans and non-humans) in the promotion of authenticity. However, with generations of immigration and emigration, Tokaj has never quite been as 'Hungarian' as today.

While vintages remain unpredictable (due to interannual weather patterns), winemaking is a sensuous collaboration with nature-as-place: it is "therefore easy to understand why stories, rituals and beliefs matter when one is facing the uncertainty of the outcome" (Demossier 2018:118). In this context, *terroir* narrative is also the "productive outcome of market capitalism and trade regulation while simultaneously speaking to the intimate, sensory appreciation of, and semiotic significance given, to being-in-location" (Paxson 2010:445 summarizing Escobar 2001:152-153). Jung's political economy of taste in "unknown *terroirs*", while lacking in ecological orientation, extends Bourdieu's (1984) work on the reproduction of tastes in the CEE context through literal *tasting*. Moving this framework forward, I consider not only the farmer as producer of knowledge (Kloppenburg 1991, Rhoades 2005), but also the "experts" (of agricultural sciences, of policy, and of formalized *taste*) as situated sense-knowers, paying close attention to where power lies. In a political-ecological study of wine making, source material may include policy documents (drawing from Shore and Wright 2011, also Yanow 2001), institutional ethnography in policy-making worlds that will affect farmers on the ground, as well as ethnography at the "meso-level" (Jones and Macbeth 2010).

In my view, the liberating power of anthropology lies in its ability to reveal what has been seemingly *naturalized* (in this case, sense experience and branded ecologies) as historically and

culturally contingent. To this end, a sense-memory approach to wine making may be an extension of political ecology's charge to find a better, more just, more sustainable, more inclusive way forward (Robbins 2012), particularly in the era of "local" and alternative foodways. In winemaking specifically, *terroir* becomes a multi-modal rootedness, offering a "powerful trope of an alternative way of thinking about modernity and engaging with it" (Demossier 2018:9). The playing-out of *terroir* in postsocialist spaces thus affords us a sensible glimpse into engagements with modernity—and imaginings of the future—through connections with the social and ecological past.

CHAPTER 3

"THE IRON CURTAIN WAS NOTHING COMPARED TO THIS": VISCERAL BORDERS, GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS, AND COUNTER-*TERROIR*

Tokaji tastes like no other wine, which is both a blessing and a burden. It takes a recalibration of the palate to fully appreciate its slightly raisiny, heavily botrytized qualities.

Kramer 2004

I. THE POLITICAL LIFE OF TASTE IN POSTSOCIALIST EUROPE

a. The EU dual food quality scandal

It has long been the subject of conversation with both locals and immigrants living in Hungary: local supermarket foods seem to be a lower tier of quality than those in Western Europe. Artificial flavors and colors abound, questionable meats fill the counters, and even processed foods taste somehow *more* processed and laden with mystery fillers. Even in the countryside, these dualities appear on the plate: meals in are often made of extremely local, homemade foods, but are punctuated by heavily processed, commercial goods of questionable quality.

While staying at Anna's home and winery, where she and her mother operate a family guesthouse, her mother prepared a breakfast for me each morning (Figure 7): a mix of preserves made from her garden (often rhubarb with vanilla or green tomato), *ajvar* (a Balkan-style roasted pepper paste), local *kolbász* (sausage), fresh *paprika* (peppers), and crusty white bread from the village grocer, alongside industrially processed meats and a Túró Rudi candy bar (sweet cheese curds with a thin layer of chocolate, first popularized during the socialist period). As my western friends in Budapest were

organizing grocery shopping trips around travels to Vienna (where—they reported—you could purchase better groceries for less money) a transnational conversation was brewing.

Figure 7: Breakfast in the field as prepared by a guesthouse owner. Local pork, peppers, and preserves are dotted with modern staples, including Túró Rudi, the classic sweet cheese and chocolate treat popularized in the late 1960s (bottom right).

In June 2017 the Slovenian consumer association (ZPS), responding to widespread reports of "dual food quality" between Western Europe and states of the former Eastern Bloc, reviewed 32 products across the 'border' using available chemical and sensorial analyses. "We used a sensory board of six-to-eight trained experts, all of whom have a better palate than most people," explained ZPS food expert Nika Kremic to the media. In some cases, label comparison provided enough evidence: "The Milka [chocolate bars] look the same, but if you look at the ingredient list…there is an additive in the

Slovenian Milka not present in Austrian Milka". Slovenia's prime minister, Miro Cerar, also weighed in on the testing: "We also did a taste test, a qualitative descriptive analysis, and a deep sensory research—and again they found a difference. The difference was small but it was statistical—in sweetness, brightness, colour and creaminess, too. It's not just subjective."

The results were consequential. In arguments strikingly parallel to those around Tokaj wines, good tastes, and authentic recipes, the dual food quality scandal became politics-made-material through questions of taste. In ZPS's comparative study, Coca-Cola in Slovenia was found to contain more sugar and fructo-glucose syrup than its Austrian counterpart. Coca-Cola's response: it had simply "adapted its recipe to local tastes" (Boffey 2017). Spar, a large European grocery chain, had been selling its name brand strawberry yoghurt with 40% less strawberry in Slovenian stores compared to Austrian shops; Spar's response: they were "merely producing was Slovenians wanted", explaining that their "policy is to fulfil consumer wishes, so each Spar country has its own Spar products; the recipes are developed in the country." Birds Eye fish fingers (sold under the brand name Iglo in Europe) were found to contain 65% fish meat in Austria, but only 58% in Slovakian stores; a Birds Eye representative said it, too, had "adapted its products to local tastes" (Boffey 2017). The initiative of Slovenia's ZPS was quickly matched by others in postsocialist European Union Member States, who were dismayed but not surprised by the results.

In response to allegations of knowingly promoting dual food quality, Hungarian National Federation of Food Processors (EFOSZ) director Réka Szőllősi defended the multi-national manufacturers. She claimed that the quality factors considered in the studies described above were not comprehensive, because they do not take *locality* into consideration. Szőllősi explained: products are developed according to "a number of factors such as manufacturers promoting the use of local ingredients, or a change of recipe to suit consumer tastes in each country" (Sahuquillo 2018). "For

example," she said, "Hungarians have very conservative taste, so you don't get the exotically flavored yogurts that you might get in places such as Spain." This explanation did not sit well with Hungarian Food Chain Supervisor Róbert Zsigó, who bitingly rebutted: "We have found fish fingers with far less fish in them than in Austria or Germany. Are they saying that Hungarians prefer bread to fish, or palm oil to butter? Hungarian consumers are not stupid" (Sahuquillo:2018). Czech secretary of state for EU affairs Aleš Chmelař explained this as "food apartheid": "You see the quality and the choice is visibly better across the border, very often for a lower price too…. I don't think you can really argue about taste or preferences" (quoted in Boffey:2017).

In April 2018 European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker addressed the growing issue in his State of the Union address, in which he promised funding to support the testing of food and consumer products to end the dual food quality experienced by CEE Member States. This was followed by a statement from the EU Justice and Consumers Commissioner Věra Jourová, who insisted that the administration would "step up the fight against dual food quality" and amended the Unfair Commercial Practice Directive "to make it black and white that dual food quality is forbidden" (Jourová, quoted in Zachova 2018).

While still a relatively recent development, the response from manufacturers has been mixed. Some have addressed concerns through re-labeling; frozen pizza producer Dr. Oetcker, for example, is now selling its "Hawaii pizza"—when sold in CEE—as "Special Edition" (i.e., less pineapple, ham and mozzarella than in Austria). Others have pointed out that the disproportionately high tax rates in CEE states like Hungary (27%, compared to the US's <13%) have contributed to corner-cutting by manufacturers, who are simply trying to draw profits from an increasingly narrow margin.

The dual food quality scandal is only the most recent iteration of the entanglement of food and politics in postsocialist EU Member States. What is especially intriguing is the general response from

manufacturers: that objectively (by industry standards) lower-quality foods are designed to *satisfy* the local taste preferences of postsocialist consumers. Local palates (however understood), coupled with relatively high tax rates, have led to the creation of "Special Edition" pizza and the like. The comments sections of media outlets reporting the case reveal the awareness of locals who see the ill logic in manufacturer arguments, as user Krisk83 sarcastically observed: "It's the same old excuse.. it is what [the] client wants and of course [the] client knows what Coca Cola should taste like..".

Insights like these raise provocative questions about the nature of food production, policy, and the creation/consumption of taste, where any changes made on the policy level must both allow for variation in local tastes without prescribing them—as the commenter above notes, without assuming that the "client knows" what an imported drink "should" taste like. This highlights the question of taste education, and the role of food and taste as vehicles of political discontent. As an analyst for the German Council on Foreign Relations noted, "The Visegrad Group [Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, and the Czech Republic] is cemented by the resentment of their societies around complaints that western European countries treat them like second-class EU members…. All the governments need to channel these emotions somehow: *they chose food*"[6].

b. Choosing food: Foodways in CEE

This chapter makes an argument for the *visceral* legacies of political borders. In this case, an East-West divide is mirrored in discourses of taste and practices of wine production. I argue that wine, like foodways more broadly, is a particularly useful lens through which to understand the negotiation of change in everyday postsocialist life (e.g. Caldwell 2009). Through food consumption and production, we learn that the vacuum of regulation left in the wake of socialist state collapse has led to a lack of critical oversight, which Dunn (2008) attributes to the neoliberal rollback of regulation. Nancy

[6] Interview with Euronews, December 13, 2017 (emphasis added).

Ries's 'potato ontology' is illustrative of this "stark devolution of state-society relations and the ceaseless industry of the population" (2009), embodied in one example by a local woman's *metis*: peeling the thinnest possible skins from her dacha-grown[7] potatoes. What is important to reiterate is that, for many (or most) CEE countries, the transition of the early 1990s was not one of modernization but could in fact be described as *deindustrialization*. In Dunn's (2008) case, for example, the Republic of Georgia saw huge industrial growth under communism, where over 50 major canneries opened in the span of a few decades; the return to home canning has led to a surge in botulism: over 90 times that of the US. These and other food safety scares, resulting not from socialism, per se, but from changes in regulatory oversight resulting from the transition, perpetuate the sentiment held in Western Europe that Eastern European foods are low-quality, unsafe, or unhealthy (e.g. Caldwell 2010; Gille 2010, 2011).

Food regulations, including those that prioritize local products and traditional specialties—such as GIs—are not realized evenly across European geographies. Gille's exploration of the "toxic paprika" scare in articulates not only food safety fears, but questions of authenticity within the sale of one of Hungary's greatest exports (Gille 2009). In another example, Gille (2011) advances DeSoucey's (2010) concept of *gastronationalism* in Hungarian traditional specialty products. In her case, French *foie gras* producers evade the critiques of animal rights activists by appealing to the valorized heritage of the French goose liver pâté: they were awarded a GI. When, around 2008, Hungarian makers of *liba máj* (i.e. *foie gras*) were targeted by an Austrian animal rights group, claims to tradition, ethical practices, and even livelihoods were at stake; Hungary is the biggest exporter of *foie gras* (France consumes their own and then imports a great deal more of it from Hungary) (Gille 2011).

[7] A dacha is a cottage, common in the former USSR. Dachas are used as holiday homes and, often, subsistence gardening sites.

In what Gille describes as the meeting of local foods, intra-national markets, supra-national regulatory schemes, and universal moral claims, Hungarian producers found themselves portrayed as backwards and immoral. The animal rights group eventually shifted their tone to one of pity for the Hungarian producer, who had obviously 'missed out' on decades of animal welfare activism and general civilizing of diets. Similarly, producers of traditional products often find themselves returning to bartering or second economies, a moral decision that evades the arguably unrealistic expectations of EU health codes to sustain livelihoods and traditional techniques (Aistara 2015, see also Paxson 2011). Appeals to universal moral claims thus create new borders where once there were political curtains. In short, CEE producers within the EU find themselves working against boundaries created by policies of ostensible unification.

c. Choosing taste

Food and experiences *of* food are inseparable: coupled with the veneration of food as heritage is the socialization of taste. In this dissertation, the socialization of place-based tastes reproduces borders—whether political or environmental—in multimodal, sensuous ways. By revealing which borders are reproduced, which are muted, and which are officially protected, we witness the playing-out of power dynamics at the level of the political-visceral. Like the CEE complainants above, to illustrate broader power relations as they materialize in everyday life, I choose *food*. Beyond this, I choose taste in this research as the shapeshifting, culturally enmeshed veil that disguises social relations as natural, affective qualities. It is biocultural in the sense that it meets biological needs (and thus drives evolutionarily advantageous food choices through tastes) while consumption and production remain highly sociocultural acts (where *taste* carries social currency).

Taste is socially important because, like religion or value systems, they say something very basic about the way we experience the world; we assume that people like 'us' will share those

experiences and feel distanced when they do not (e.g. Bourdeiu 1984). We normalize affinities and disgust and anchor them to conflated geographies of product and producer. Such is the basis of western reality game shows like Fear Factor, in which contestants are challenged to eat the curious 'delicacies' of far-flung places: insects, offal, raw or fermented meats; disgust—while universal—is thus socialized alongside other tastes (Herz 2012, see also Trnka et al. 2013).

To-date, most ethnographic work pertaining to taste has revolved around 'good' tastes (Holtzman 2010). At the same time, the literature on *terroir* has focused on Western European wine regions, where price—not taste—was historically the determining factor (as in Burgundy, e.g. Colman 2008:11). This seems fitting for regions that have "traditionally conjured up images of gastronomic pleasure, great wines and stunning architecture while offering a long-lasting and monumental image of a *terroir* which has remained the same for centuries, promoting an international image of artisanal excellence and prestige" (Demossier 2018:77). More recently, scholars have followed the role of labor in the production of *terroir* in the global south or third world, especially as they commodify and exoticize (and naturalize) colonial traditions (e.g. Besky 2013, Brabazon 2014). However, perspectives from the former Second World are few and far between (see. Jung 2014, Ana forthcoming).

In a rare example, Yuson Jung describes the professional judging of Bulgarian wines as illustrative of 'hegemonic taste' regimes, as "[t]he legitimization of 'uniqueness' occurs through standardized hegemonic taste knowledge" (26). She suggests that it is not uniqueness in a product, but a "discernible difference" that forms the basis of power around place-based foods. She posits that "hegemonic taste knowledge [refers] to the cultural authority that certain concepts such as *terroir* came to dominate in validating the taste experience of premium quality commodities (such as elite wines)" (26). In her case study, Bulgarian wines are judged by an English sommelier as lacking the elusive 'minerality' that defines quality wines. She relates these imported evaluative standards to Herzfeld's

global hierarchy of value, a comprehensive "form of common sense [that] creates a sense of universal commonality" and which has been "promulgated worldwide by colonial powers of Europe—it is everywhere but nowhere definable explicitly" (Herzfeld 2004:3 in Jung 2014:27).

Taste is about training the body toward discernment and the *distinction* (Bourdieu 1984) associated with particular aesthetics. Bourdieu's discussion of taste and class differentiation, however, does not offer insight into the specificities of place-based foods and their qualities, nor how these properties of 'uniqueness' are the result of cultural processes (Jung 2014:29); such a paradigm is needed in place-based foods, as the cultivation of "sensory discernment has become important in articulating locality" (30). In the case of "unknown" *terroir*, such as that of CEE states, the articulation of locality vis-à-vis the *taste of place* offers a view into these social processes and their spatially oriented ramifications. Thus, following Jung's recent provocation, I ask, what of those *terroirs* which are "unknown"—*terroirs* which lack the imaginaries afforded to the likes of Burgundy (or Darjeeling, or Cheddar), however artificial? More specifically, what of those *terroirs* which conjure images of bloc buildings, concrete and iron, mechanization, and proletarian palates?

II. TOKAJ: A BORDER WINE, A WINE OF BORDERS

a. Outlining tastes, underscoring history

It surprises many west of the Danube to learn that Hungary is a winemaking country. Located on a major route between the Southern Caucasus—the origin of winemaking (McGovern 2006)—and continental Europe, Hungary's history of viticulture dates to (at least) Roman occupation. *Bor*, the Hungarian word for wine, is one of three in Europe without Latin roots—perhaps a nod to the eastern ancestries of original winemaking.

Of Hungary's 22 wine regions, none is as historic and emblematic of Hungarian winemaking as the Tokaj region in the Northeastern hill country. It is comprised of 28 villages across 11,149

hectares of classified vineyards (approximately 5,500 planted today). Its landscape contains rolling hills of alternating silty loess soils and red, volcanic rocky terrain, marked by the Rivers Tisza and Bodrog. Founded officially in 1737 as an enclosed wine region, its boundaries are a contested matter today. The Treaty of Trianon (1919) trimmed Hungarian territory by two-thirds in the name of World War I reparation, including a sliver of northern Tokaj that remains in present-day Slovakia.

If ever a wine region hung on borders, it is Tokaj. Tokaji winemakers' rational, soil- and climate-based approach to what we now call *terroir* dates to the 1600s and is key to contemporary *terroir* mythology in Tokaj, which is varied amongst producers but most frequently hinges on environmental exceptionalism (Chapter Four). This is often discussed by producers alongside tastings of their wines, described through analysis of soils, geology, and climate, but also the adaptivity of the Hungarian people to these parameters. Panni, who runs a family winery that her parents began after 1989, explained with pride how, in the 17th century, "winemakers actually sat down and decided on the best sites, and the winemaking practices and wine-growing practices, before Portugal, France, and even Italy. So *we* are the first to actually have a classification—in Tokaj—in the world. Which is a pretty big deal for such a little country!" The role of Tokaji resourcefulness in elevating wine from a haphazard production of alcohol to something crafted with intention is a reoccurring theme. As Panni's American husband Jim, a Master Sommelier, reiterated of the 17th-century Tokaji producers:

> They were brilliant. They were basically Renaissance people…. They were really into viticulture, and agriculture in general, managing everything with great sophistication. They studied it, and they wrote about it. A little bit like Leonardo Da Vinci—that kind of intelligence, I think, behind the farming.

Through conceptions like these, producers complicate the dominant narrative of postsocialist development as a teleological path by which they 'arrive' in Europe; rather, it suggests Tokaji

innovation pre-dated Europe altogether, disappearing regretfully behind an iron curtain, only to reemerge again to reclaim its rightful place. Protecting and promoting traditions like *dűlő* (vineyard parcel) classification is said to stem from a "natural movement among Hungarian people" who wish to "stress their Hungarian identity after [the] Soviet [era]"; according to Botos (2012), the "Hungarian traditional wines play an important role in this national movement" where wine producers are slowly finding "the right balance between the traditional and international wines in their production" (34). She goes so far as to say that, for Hungarians, "renaissance is also part [of] our traditions" (Botos 2012:35).

In the past 1000 years, the territory of today's Hungary has been at various points in time Austro-Hungarian, Transylvania, Ottoman, even Mongol. The Tokaj "place of taste" has, in some senses, never been geographically fixed. It is through mythological ties to place and time, saturated with folklore, that the historically famous Tokaji Aszú wine owes its origin story—although most producers are skeptical, and opt for environmental explanations over foundational myths. "So this is like the Hungarian Conquest," explained one veteran producer of the Tokaji Aszú wine origin story, "they needed a nice legend…so they came up with one."

Today, this mythology—and a narrative of environmental exceptionalism (Chapter Four)—is in service to the selling of irreproducible, place-based tastes that not only "anchor" tastes to locales (Demossier 2018) but allow for *mobility*. In what I call a 'counter-*terroir'*, Tokaji narratives of place-based quality offer historical context, and openly question the authority of outside taste-makers; they legitimize the uniqueness of their *terroir* boundaries through the resurrection of old borders.

b. CEE: The ferry

While in Budapest, I attended a wine tasting and presentation on the theme of CEE wines, which was led by a young Hungarian wine writer and sommelier named Zsombor. The tasting began with Zsombor asking the twenty or so attendees where Central Europe is located, producing several maps and dictionary definitions. After fifteen minutes of debate (and still no wine sampled), he summoned the famous Hungarian poet Andre Ady and his description of pre-Trianon Hungary:

> [Ady] said that, in that time, Hungary was the ferry between east and west. He said that Hungary—or the *ferry*—is never standing still, always moving between the two shores: sometimes in the east, sometimes in the west. It's just my opinion, but this [ferry] still exists.

So, what is central Europe? It's a ferry. It's the small countries between east and west. It's the border: the eastern border of the west, or the western border of the east.

Some of the winemakers and professionals I spoke with resent the perpetual 'ferry' status of Hungary and its implications for an industry that depends on continuous, romantic history for prestige and social capital. Having lost a guaranteed market in the east after 1989, Hungarian winemakers now work within the free market of the EU—and against many negative perceptions of their food exports. If he had the opportunity, hospitality professional Ákos told me, he would eliminate the UK from Hungarian wine trade "because they just don't appreciate Hungarian wines…. The Brits try to suggest that, if a wine doesn't make it in *London*, it doesn't make it *anywhere*. But it's not true…. The UK is not an ideal export country for Hungary," he concludes, "but there's *never* been a good export country for us."

The state of Hungarian winemaking and export relationship with Western Europe (or North America) is frequently described as environmental possibility limited by social impasses. Meanwhile,

historic alliances with Poland, Germany, and Russia have, according to Ákos, resulted in the continued treatment of Hungarian wines as "elevated" in society. The lack of warm English reception, he concludes, is the result of being too far away (and so lacking a historic trade alliance), and thus missing prestigious ties with Hungary. Put another way, Hungarian wine's struggle on the UK market is not due to a Hungarian lack of quality *terroir* (terrain), but the English lack of knowledge (a social barrier created by geographic distances and old borders). "They are happy with French wines," he notes, "about which they know quite a bit; they are *not* happy with Hungarian wines, about which they hardly know *anything*". In a story reminiscent of Jung's judgment of Bulgarian wines, Ákos offered an illustrative anecdote in the "Woodcutter's Wine".

c. The "Woodcutter's Wine"

In 1997, a Hungarian producer was elected winemaker of the year by an elite British wine magazine after his success at a prestigious international wine fair; in a blind tasting his wine had won first place out of 7,000 entries. "The name of the wine variety—the grape varietal," Ákos explained to me in fluent English, "is *cserszegi fűszeres*[8]. The world did not want to learn *that*, although *cserszegi fűszeres* does not consist of more words or syllables than *cabernet sauvignon* does, [but] *cabernet sauvignon* was adopted into the English vocabulary!" With an emphasis on each syllable, he continued, "*Cser-sze-gi fű-sze-res*, it also has two words, the same number of syllables, even the morphemes of the words are like British English morphemes." But it is due, he explained, to hundreds of years of history that *Cserszegi fűszeres* is the '*new'* wine. Bordeaux used to belong to the British crown, and in Ákos's view, Britain continues to foster a historic bias toward the taste of French wines. He goes on to tell the fate of the award-winning *cserszegi fűszeres* and his disappointment:

[8] *t͡ʃɛr*-sɛg-i *fu*:-sɛr-ɛʃ

> There are a few people, 'Masters of Wine', as they call themselves, who consider themselves the world's leading wine experts. There are about 400 of them, so they are, most of them, members of the British wine and spirit world. Their job would be to help the world *leave* the box—new wines, new tastes, new words, new names—through the articles they write. But if it's French, they make that effort. If it's *only* Hungarian, they don't.
>
> So instead of advocating for *Cserszegi fűszeres*, the wine and its name, they changed the name of the wine in an arbitrary fashion to *Woodcutter's Wine*. If I were the wine maker, I would sue them. But the winemaker didn't. He was happy with the award. And now, this wine is known—if at *all*—as the *Woodcutter's* Wine. *Who is interested in tasting a woodcutter's wine?!*

Indeed, the producer continues to list his Woodcutter's Wine on his website as a mark of approval and one of his most popular wines, with one merchant selling it in Western Europe under the label "*The Unpronounceable Wine*".

Ákos is not amused. He cites this moment of uninvited re-naming as the beginning of the most recent episode of decline in exports, noting that Hungary has 1% of the world's vineyards by surface area, but only .5% of UK shelf space—despite representing what he considers to be great value (and, objectively, centuries of winemaking history). Like Ákos, several Hungarian producers referenced UK markets (and London, specifically) as an important nexus for wine trade, both historically and today. Even if this is taken begrudgingly as fact, there remains a resistance to completely 'Anglicize' or 'Frenchify' Hungarian wines. Ákos has suggested to Hungarian producers that they should adopt fantasy names, perhaps rooted in Latin rather than the non-Indo-European language of Hungarian, while also not cow-towing to the hegemony of English- and French-dominated Western Europe. "If I

were the decision-maker of Hungarian wine exports," he clarifies, "I would simply eliminate the UK from the spirit and wine business. Because they just don't *appreciate* Hungarian wines".

If it weren't for the popularity of The Beatles, he half-jokingly concludes, Hungary would not be at such a disadvantage. He acknowledges that this is not a matter of hard borders or overt political exclusion, saying, "By all means, we can line up at *any* international competition—with such a handicap that we cannot win". As he protested to me about the problems of export and Tokaji place-branding over a Hungarian pastry and cappuccino, he summarized, "The Iron Curtain was nothing compared to this."

A few months after this conversation with Ákos, I received an email promotion from an English-language Hungarian wines website soliciting submissions for their new contest. They were crowd-sourcing suggestions for the renaming of three "unpronounceable" indigenous Hungarian varietals, including the humble *Cserszegi fűszeres* (HungarianWines.eu:2017).

d. Discourses of taste

Wine discourse—and its associated tastes—is hegemonic in its value assessments and sophisticated standardization of language. In this case, the use of Hungarian varietals leads to mispronunciation (at best) and complete renaming by others. More than this, when skimming through Tokaji cellar names we find several Anglicized versions or even "chateaus". Rather than use the obscure Hungarian language as added-value, and thus commodifying authentic Hungarian-ness, many producers appeal to Latin roots in a very literal *Roman*ticization of place-based-tastes. This is like Heller's (2014) observations of Quebecois cheesemaking, in which artisan cheeses "mobilize" Romantic nationalism by the indexing of their status as artisanal, complete with "symbolic added value" that might include pastoral/rural imagery, settlers, and French place/cheese names. She notes the "judicious" use of two languages on the packaging: "enough French to index authenticity, but not

so much as to bewilder the consumer" (139). Similarly, the use of Latin phonemes in Tokaji wine naming indexes a certain, if selective, historicity.

Tastes become symbolic and transmitted across distances discursively, wherein lies the importance of empathetic wordsmiths and the language of taste, particularly for *terroir* in the margins (e.g. Goldstein 2010, Meneley 2007): "Wine writers select adjectives to enhance the consumer's ability to talk about the wine. These wordsmiths are important to the wine business for they are responsible for a good part of the appellation's image." (Gade 2004: 855). While professionals like Ákos see the perpetual success of French wines as one of historic allegiances and national tastes, he also laments what he sees as the unwillingness of publications to provide a balanced playing field. This includes accepting advertising money from top French names and supporting them as the pinnacle of quality: a tautology of sorts. "Business is war," he muses, "…and this war is not a fair one. It isn't a fair war".

Now living in the UK, young Hungarian wine and legal expert Gabi agrees—Tokaj would be better off producing for other Hungarians, who are less critical, patriotic to their own brands, and where there is less competition—rather than trying to "make it" via international recognition. In her experience, Hungarian producers can only have a presence in places like London "at [their] own cost", because the English have always had wealth and no domestic wine of their own, and—thanks to their colonial history—has always been exposed to everything the world has to offer. Western European mainstays Bordeaux, Port, and Sherry—she insists—"wouldn't be what they are today" without this legitimation from the English market. Tokaji resources during communism were scarce, and there was little freedom in wine-making traditions—*or* innovation. Still, she wishes Tokaji winemakers would stop making wines that are "brash" and "loud" but instead strive for subtlety, like a person who is "not *beautiful*, but calmly confident"—so understatedly confident that you don't notice their flaws.

The discussion about 'good' quality and taste preferences is often enmeshed within discourses of fraud: because tastes are understood to be *subjective*, and thus impractical fodder for cross-cultural judgement, the more 'legible' (Scott 1998) ontology of the product itself—its authenticity—becomes the object of scrutiny, standardization, and regulation. Seen from one perspective, this is at the heart of the debate around Tokaji Aszú wine styles and the 'invented' tradition of oxidation (Chapter Seven). Underlining anxieties around fraudulent wines is a long history of perceived or real hoodwinking in the trade of wines with a written history in Hungary dating to 1723, where the royal decrees of 1715, 1723, 1729, and 1741 were equally unable to prevent the adulteration of wines (Bodnár 1990:23). These fears motivated legal enclosure of production areas as early as the 18th century and continue to inspire protectionist policies like GI labelling.

A reading of historic advertisements for Tokaj suggests food fraud and tastes have long been coupled in West-East connections. One advertisement for an English audience in the mid-19th century ensures the reader that Tokaj's quality standards "make them worthy of the patronage of the British people, who, though they have been long dosed with fraudulent compounds, are yet capable of distinguishing between honest efforts to rectify their judgment, and endeavours still farther to degrade the public taste" (Denman 1865:50). Another, from 1889, is addressed to an American audience:

> Until quite recently the consumption of Hungarian wines in the United States was comparatively small. This was due to the fact that astonishingly little was known about them by the general public, and unscrupulous dealers took advantage of this ignorance to first offer very inferior or highly adulterated Hungarian wines at prices at which the finest goods should have been obtainable. The result was that the American public grew to believe, first, that Hungarian wines were outrageously dear; second, that there was nothing

> much to Hungarian wine anyway, except an indigestible amount of weight, an alarming "headine," and a startling percentage of alcohol. "We don't care for them; we prefer French wine!" was the general verdict. (Alden 1889:361)

Such historic artifacts are uncannily similar to contemporary anecdotes from foreigners and newcomer producers who arrived during the 1990-1994 window. One French winemaker, for example, reported in the early 1990s that local farmers attempted to trick him by selling him impure grape juice containing mud and stones.

Fraud anxiety is strong even within the Tokaj region, which today lies partially in today's Slovakia, where the wine is called *Tokajský*. Producers on the Hungarian side told me the Slovakians are using cocoa to color their aszú wines or adding sugar to reach the highest level of sweetness, the "six puttonyos" category. In one guided tour of a cellar complex, I joined a group of Hungarian tourists; when one asked the guide, "How much would a *seven* puttonyos cost, if it there were such a thing?" There is no such category, though another group member quickly quipped, "oh, but you *can* find a seven puttonyos—in *Slovakia*!" to much laughter from the others. As recently as 2014, the communist holdover, the Hungarian state-owned Tokaj Trading House (*Tokaj Kereskedőház Zrt*.), fell under investigation when it was found that "improper wine-making and handing techniques were employed" in the making of wines prior to 2013, resulting in $13 million worth of un-sellable wines (Novak 2014).

Figure 8: A small but modernized family winery in Slovakian Tokaj. In addition to the classic aszú and contemporary dry styles, they also bottle popular red wines on the spot (locals arrive with empty bottles) or in glass bottles without the Tokaj label. September 2017. Photo by the author.

What is revealing in a longitudinal reading of ‘fraudulent food anxiety’ language is the tacit (or overt) apprehension that duplicitous products will not only damage economic reputations, but that these will be coupled with altered taste expectations. By this reasoning, the *taste* (and thus, demand) for *real* Tokaji wines may disappear if people grow used to (or worse, are repelled by) *fake* Tokaji wines. While ostensibly more concrete, the argument around ‘fake’ or ‘real’ Tokaji wines is as tenuous as the debate over tradition and authenticity. This plays out as producers take sides over ‘recipes’ and methods of production that lead to different tastes, colors, and textures. As later chapters will explore, for example, this materializes in production conditions: *oxidized* (oxygen contacts the surface of the wine) or *reductive* (wine is ‘topped off’ as it evaporates from the barrel to prevent oxidation).

András Bacsó, who began producing wines with outside investment, summarized this dilemma when he said in 1995:

> I'm sure if Europe had not been divided in 1947, the wines of Tokay [sic] would not have been this bad and oxidized. But as the years turned into decades, the region's output of woody, butter, oxidized and flat wines subtly and, it seems, perversely, changed Hungarian's expectations of what true Tokay [sic] meant (in Mansson 1995:40).

Another newcomer to Tokaj at the time recognized the challenge of reorienting taste expectations around their own, noting "[w]e want to change things, but we don't want to come across as foreign imperialists" (Mansson 1995:40).

While these 'interventionist' approaches to Tokaji taste in the 1990s demanded a top-down approach and political intercession, also implied is the importance of educating the tastes of consumers locally and abroad through guided exposure in social settings inspiring trust. Through spreading the taste for 'true' Tokaji wines (whatever they may be), producers ensure their own livelihoods. This requires a re-honing of the sense of place, which becomes the labor of countless intermediaries—from wine professionals to writers to the producers themselves (Chapters Seven, Eight). Not only is trust of primary concern, but *recognition*, as "[t]aste perceptions of a wine are influenced by its fame or lack of it" (Gade 2004:855). The importance of "improving the Tokaji image", as some Hungarian scholars put it (e.g. Sidlovits and Kator 2007:12), is equally one of expanding the sensory horizon of others—Tokaj's 'image' extending beyond the visual.

But changing tastes and adaptive production methods may happen at different rates. Celia, a young manager at an international Tokaji firm, explained to me:

> This profession is very slow to react to anything new. Everybody forgets that you do this once a year and as soon as you gain enough experience, you'll grow old…. you need a lifetime to make 40 wines, and by the time you repeat everything 40 times, you're old. And *that's* when you can say you got to know a wine region pretty well. During 40 years so many things change, you've seen the good and the bad. Then you can say you know it.

With such a slow response time, can a wine region survive as *reactive to*, rather than *prescriptive of,* tastes?

III. TERRITORIES OF TASTE

a. Counter-*terroir*: Rootedness as mobility

Terroir is embedded in broader notions of regional or national belonging, typically substantiated by environmental indications, to which 'distinct' tastes are anchored. The problem, of course, is in the uncritical convergence of these three strains of evidence. While dominant *terroir* narratives in Western Europe have emphasized the importance of standardized taste knowledge and judgement of distinction, counter-*terroir* in Tokaj offers an alternative, turning on the use of broader histories and techno-scientific instruments of quality (Brawner et al. forthcoming 2018). In fact, it is the tradition of bordering and ranking vineyard tracts, or *dűlő*-s, according to environmental parameters that legitimizes the rationality of Tokaji tastes, undermining the external judgement of 'experts' as subjective and historically contingent.

Counter-*terroir* is thus not always about *terroir*-as-anchor and means of rootedness (Demossier 2018), but about *mobility*. Through the counter-*terroir* stories outlined in the following chapters (e.g. indigenous germplasm, environmental exceptionalism), Tokaj spans East and West, tradition and innovation, past and future. Through counter-*terroir*, Tokaj is the ferry; it travels: it gets

closer to the great *terroirs* of Western Europe and nearer to the Occidental origins of the original, Caucasian winemaking, all the while gaining in proximity to both tradition and innovation.

This East/West European border remains real to Tokaji producers and wine professionals—and, if unknowingly, to the consumer. While producers suggest "the land is a capability" (Chapter Four), a residual 'iron curtain' (both imagined and made material through practice) prevents Tokaj from rising to the success of its past. Counter-*terroir* in this case is a story of natural potential with social hinderances—taste being one of them. It is a story of the tension between two borders: that of 'objective' natural quality and that of artificially divided tastes. Thus, counter-*terroir* is the overt questioning and undermining of hegemonic taste knowledge. For all the emphasis on historic *dűlő* borders, more recent political borders are often referenced in conversations with winemakers in a negative light. Considering rising nationalist movements across CEE states, attention to the visceral nature of politics and the everyday, multimodal affect of disenfranchisement is increasingly important.

b. "Territory is back"

Collectively, Tokaj's origin stories encapsulate the UNESCO Heritage Cultural Landscape creed: "There exist a great variety of Landscapes that are representative of the different regions of the world. Combined works of nature and humankind, they express a long and intimate relationship between peoples and their natural environment" (UNESCO World Heritage Cultural Landscapes n.d.). Pinning tastes to geographies of human-environment relationships requires a new reading of territory. "Territory is back," writes Latour, "…not the post-Renaissance idea of a territory, that is, a bounded piece of land viewed and ruled from a center, but very much a new definition of an unbounded network of attachments and connections" (Latour 2017:48). Counter-*terroir*, drawing upon networks of more-than-human connections, past and present, and visceral experiences cannot be underestimated as a political strategy with geographic consequences.

In his reading of border wines and *terroir* that spans contested territory, Monterescu (2017) considers the divergent nature of *terroir* (as a place-brand of geographical distinction) and *territory* (where the soil of a bounded area is laden with political meaning) in "border wines". He views "*terroir* as a story of border-crossing" (127): while *terroir* is a cultural concept (the "taste of place"), territory is a political strategy. He cites Tokaj as a powerful exemplar in the pitting of the "territory effect" (Mitchell 1991; Painter 2010 in Monterescu 2017) against what he calls the "*terroir* effect" (2017). Yet, "[s]emantically," writes Van Houtum and Naerssen (2002), "the word 'borders' unjustly assumes that spaces are fixed in space and time, and should rather be understood in terms of *bordering*, as an ongoing strategic effort to make difference in space among the movements of people, money and products" (126, emphasis added).

Following this, I suggest Tokaji wines are—through counter-*terroir* narratives—also *bordering* wines, through which strategic discourses of territory and *terroir* in fact converge in a political-environmental narrative of place-based quality, impeded by old borders. The result is a localism that is defined not by obscure traditions, nor the outcome of centuries of upheaval and change, but one which is very literally grounded in a political reading of the material landscape (Chapters Four, Eight). Coupling cultural histories with narratives of environmental possibilism (Sahlins 1964), policies, practitioners, and consumers legitimize political claims, merging territory and *terroir* in their vie to protect place of production. Using a "geographic trump card" of quality (Joslin 2006), the taste of *place* becomes synonymous with the place of *taste*.

As Monterescu points out, the historicity of the border not only creates connections and disconnections across space and time (see Green 2010), but it does so through dialectical and performative means. Governance plays a vital role in perpetuating this dialogue, where historic legal frameworks are resurrected in everyday conversations and manifested in practices. Tokaj has been

protected as an enclosed wine region since 1737, although exactly how this has manifested in terms of borders, production, and agroecology has changed dramatically in the last several centuries. The ideological legacies of contradictory modes of production (e.g. sweet aszú wines versus dry *terroir* wines, Chapter Eight) are not only inscribed into contemporary cultural notions of *terroir*, but evident in the physical terrain as well. In this way, the duality of *terroir* and terrain merge discursively and materially.

Comparisons to internationally-renown wines and their *terroirs* are common in discussions with Tokaji producers and in wine tastings. Soil composition, rainfall, climate, and sunlight hours are often compared with those of established regions of France or Italy. This indexing of established place-names is not always so much about positing others as *lesser,* but rather, enrolling Tokaji wines in the Old World assemblage of Western Europe—even if the "New Old World", as it is frequently described in international campaigns. *Terroir* and the locating of *dűlőmitológia* in this context is so significant because all other locations are debatable, including the location of Hungary itself. These arguments exist on a larger-than-human timescale that calls into question the temporality of anthropogenic borders. When one grape geneticist commented at his presentation on indigenous Hungarian types at a tasting-cum-lecture, he referred to the varietal as "Pannonian": a reference to the Roman colony that once comprised part of contemporary Hungary. "And I say Pannonia on purpose," he clarified, "because most of the varieties that we taste are older than the current borders that we take so much care of".

This reading of *terroir* is of one that outlives and overrides the immediacy of the human element. By letting the *terroir* 'speak', visceral experiences of borders are externalized; it is thus not only places, but their boundaries that become sensuous traits of Tokaji wines. These borders not only define the place of taste but domesticate the now international *terroir* concept and its policies,

providing a tangible means of engagement for producers looking to make a living in the new age of hyper-local, place-based foods. “To understand taste,” writes Besky of Darjeeling (also a GI), “we must think about tea as a kind of matter with which different kinds of bodies are engaged at different times and which is constituted through those engagements” (2017:15). Similarly, Tokaj wine must be understood as a kind of matter whose very essence informs sense experience and is, in turn, shaped by sensory ambitions: desirable flavors, colors, and textures.

c. Conclusions

Any producers whose livelihoods depend on the selling of agricultural goods respond to taste, the “rhythmic feedback of a multitude of preferences” (Michalski 2015). In CEE states, the command economy of socialism guaranteed markets prior to the 1990s; today, it is demand that must be supplied. This dissertation research adds to Jung’s (2014) *hegemonies of taste* a grounding in the political-ecology of *terroir*, particularly as producers respond to ‘international’ tastes and policies that locate them. In my theorizing a political ecology of the visceral (discussed in Chapter Nine), I take sensory knowledge as situated—and as *located*—knowledge (Haraway 1986)—connoisseurs and ‘peasant’ producers alike experience and create the world through socio-ecologically situated perceptions. How do various sensory logics become hegemonic or marginalized? How are these choices and sensory judgments leading to action (Feld 2005)?

Wine in Western Europe, having originated in *terroir* narratives related closely to patriotism and nationalism, is “unpopular to attack” (Demossier 2018:12); nevertheless, “the historical dominance of Western European wines is more a matter of political history than the blind luck of superior climate or soil mineral content” (Brawner et al. forthcoming 2018). We thus cannot account for the taste of marginalized places without a critical, multidimensional, visceral approach to borders. In this context, a sensuous ethnographic paradigm in place-based food studies complements political ecological

approaches. Like the obscure winemaker leading guests through a tasting, anthropologists often begin with an 'oddity', explain it, and render it understandable, intelligible, sensible, even necessary (e.g. Geertz 1960). Sensuous ethnographic work also "cultivates the reader" (Farquhar 2002) to step outside of their own life-worlds and into the sensorium of others, where tastes lie somewhere between the knowable and the writable (Crappanzano 2004). The remainder of this dissertation will walk through these steps, arriving at a visceral approach to political ecology that takes taste seriously.

CHAPTER 4

"THE LAND IS A CAPABILITY": THE ENVIRONMENTAL EXCEPTIONALISM OF TOKAJI *TERROIR*

[It is Tokaji] wine that [made] Tokaj world famous, and the one that drew the boundaries of the region in the most natural way possible.

Tokaj UNESCO World Heritage Landscape Application, 2000

I. IN VINO, VERITAS

a. Boundaries that draw themselves

The writers of the Tokaji UNESCO World Heritage Landscape nomination (above quote) claim that the boundaries of Tokaji wines are self-evident; this story of *terroir* as environmentally absolute is echoed by many who champion Tokaj wines. Hungarian wine and hospitality expert Ákos explained it to me this way:

> An interesting detail about wine geology…under the Carpathian Basin you find the thinnest lithosphere on earth, which means geothermal heat is stronger under our country than under any other country on the planet. So when all the [vines] grow their roots downwards, they penetrate warmer soil than other wine regions on earth do…. So that's one of the reasons why our grapes grow sweeter fruits.

Later, I asked his thoughts on *terroir*—or *dűlőmitológia*. "A very simple analogy," he explained, "helps everyone understand: move your favorite plant at home from one corner of the room only to the other corner of the same room—it starts behaving differently, doesn't it?" He continued the parallel:

> Now, imagine the same thing happens to the vine—that it's moved, sometimes, continents away, where nothing is the same: different soil, different geomorphology, different climate, possibly even a different hemisphere…it will never make the same wine as it did [before].
>
> You can take the vine, but you can't take the land. You can't take the climate. You can't take the *terroir*.

For those like Ákos who argue a very literal conception of *terroir*, the land remains a determining factor that seemingly exists outside of regulation or regional styles. It also conveniently elides a less-than-palatable history of broken land tenure, disputed tradition, and contested tastes and is by far the dominant explanation of quality in and around Tokaji wines. "When drinking a glass of wine," he muses, "geology comes, so much, into the glass."

As explored in earlier research in the region (Brawner et al. forthcoming), the immutability of prehistoric Tokaji geology frequently surfaces in conversations with the new generation of Tokaji winemakers, particularly those aiming to acquire the uniqueness needed to breakthrough into international markets. For them, distinction hinges on a geological 'trump card' of quality (Josling 2006): a preordained distribution of mineral deposits and soils that override fickle political boundaries. This chapter explores how political technologies merge with these environmental narratives of quality to naturalize *terroir* in the Tokaj region. I argue that this uniquely literal interpretation of *terroir* is in fact a constituent of counter-*terroir*: rather than anchoring Tokaj in-situ, these transcendental *terroir* narratives are about mobility in an age of contested borders and international tastes.

b. Origin stories: Fossils and fossilizations

The connection between place and taste in Tokaj predates the popularity of *terroir* as we know it today. Yet, since its inception, Tokaj's land tenure and winemaking policies have drastically and frequently changed, leading to a fragmentation of ideas and practices. From one perspective, policies and political devices (of bordering, of place protection) are an overlooked component of regional *terroir*. This is especially evident in the politically dynamic space of CEE. The revival of place-based qualities in postsocialist Hungary thus offers insight into processes of bordering and the geography of Geographical Indications and begins to build a (sorely missing) political economy of *terroir* (as noted by Demossier 2018). Elaborating on Demossier's work in Burgundy (2013, 2018), it is worth asking in this context: *why are the first-class vineyards located where they are, and what makes an adjoining plot lesser? Are these merely "fossilizations" of hegemonic systems?* Scaling out, we might also ask, *why are the first-class wine regions located where they are? Are these geographies "fossilizations" of global hegemonic systems?* These questions, which are essentially political-ecological in nature, become especially pertinent in a region grappling with the ramifications of collectivization, privatization, and a nearly overnight [re]globalization.

The predominant Tokaji *terroir* narrative spins on an origin story that predates its rivals and trumps tradition in the reification of political borders naturalized through material, ecological benchmarks of quality (Brawner et al. forthcoming 2018). In guided tours and tastings, this appears as rocks and minerals or fossils displayed alongside bottles of wine, or vases of stratified soils for perusing (Figure 9). This chapter argues that *terroir* in this context is a strategy (Demossier 2018) of ordering and defining quality—but deployed in novel ways in the postsocialist context. This fixed and absolute nature of *terroir*, observable via "natural" demarcations, identifies the otherwise "unknown *terroir*" of Eastern Europe (Jung 2014). This chapter provides a foundational overview of Tokaj's regulation of the taste of place. It analyses the history of place-based tastes as strategic, where borders are reified and deployed in specific ways. The implication of Tokaj *terroir* narrative is that policies of protection

are borne of a reading of place and quality as natural; as I will recap in the synthesizing Chapter Nine, it also demonstrates how political devices themselves become parts of social-ecological systems. If, as one participant emphasizes, “The land is a capability” (and thus its potential limited to geographic boundaries), this underscores the nature of *terroir* as undemocratic (Bourguinon in Patterson et al. 2017:84). This is especially true in the re-privatized, historic region of Tokaj, which has demarcated and ranked its vineyards for centuries.

Figure 9: Rock and mineral display at a winemaker’s cellar. In home cellars, guesthouses, wineries, and professional tastings, it is not uncommon to be presented with rocks and geological histories alongside wine samples. Mád, June 2015. Photo by the author.

For all their presentation as a unified region, Tokaji soils are in fact incredibly heterogenous (Brawner et al. forthcoming). While the Tokaj village and its surrounds are covered in a silt-like loess topsoil that is often several meters thick, the nearby village of Mád is characterized by red, rocky, volcanic soils (Figure 9). The differences are apparent in basic soil testing, where pH and plant-available nutrients differ significantly between villages, but also within vineyards (Brawner et al. forthcoming). While first class *dűlő*-s appear in both areas, recent trends toward dry white wines with 'minerality' have led producers to showcase single-*dűlő* wines from volcanic areas rich with andesite or rhyolite, thus hoping to showcase hyper-local *terroir*. Some winemakers are even spearheading their own labelling schemes in order to bypass 'generic' Tokaj labelling requirements and promote extremely high-resolution appellations, even at the level of hillside—one producer even demonstrated to me how he adds local minerals, gathered at a nearby mine, into the holes of new plantings. This remineralization of the soil is in an effort to help the drainage around the new vine's roots, but also to magnify the inherent *terroir* features of his first-class *dűlő*-s through the (ostensibly literal) mineral qualities of his wines.

II. "STUDYING THROUGH" *TERROIR* POLICY

To trace the complex social history of borders in Tokaj, I draw from ethnographic data in the region and in Budapest, as well as a "studying through" of regional policy, historic events, and political discourse. While discussed officially as *policies*, legal demarcations (such as PDOs) rarely have a "sovereign 'author'"—although often conceptualized as such within academic discussion—a nod to what Shore and Wright (2011) note is "Foucault's criticism of academic approaches to power and the state…we have not yet succeeded in 'cutting off the king's head' in political analysis" (11). An anthropology of policy must thus include a critical engagement with assumptions of power, place, and people by considering political situations by "studying through" space and time (Shore and Wright 2011).

According to Susan Wright and Sue Reinhold, "studying through" "does not simply invert anthropology's traditional stance of 'studying down'", nor does it merely reiterate Nader's (1969) "studying up", but rather suggests a policy ethnography that "involves a strategy of studying through a sequence of events across sites and through time, and through the reformulation of historical discourses, to reveal an unpredictable but understandable process of political and ideological transformation" (Wright and Reinhold 2011:102). In doing so, "studying through" "avoids presuming a hierarchical relation between policy makers determining policy and implementing it on the governed" (2011:101).

Following Shore and Wright's (2011) proposal that policy is a field ripe for anthropological inquiry, this approach does not take for granted the linear nature of a sequence of policy-related events (i.e., from problem to solution to implementation), but rather "follows a discussion or a conflict as it ranges back and forth and back again between protagonists, and up and down and up again between a range of local and national sites" in order to "follow a flow of events and their contingent effects"; in short, the object of inquiry is "a process of political transformation through space and time" (Wright and Reinhold 2011:101). According to Wright and Reinhold (2011), this type of analysis typically entails three foundational elements. First is a multi-sited ethnography that hinges on a broad conception of "the field"; second is a "history of the present" and accounting of the web of events and their unpredictable implications for the future; third, it involves political and epistemological reflexivity of the researcher, side-stepping the "Whig view of history" (that the present represents an inevitable outcome that is the status quo) and instead accounting for the present as one of many possible outcomes of erratic historic events (101-102).

Policies of place-protection, heritage designation, and place-branding come with their own rationale and explanatory narratives. On the ground, however, policies and political changes are

“domesticated” in everyday life, a common trope in postsocialist ethnographic literature (e.g., Alison et al 2010). In this chapter, I trace a “history of the present” through an account of change as led by political initiatives and legal decrees, following not only the text of the documents but the life of these decrees as they exist today in the minds and discourse of producers—in other words, as they are *domesticated*. Thus, in addition to political documents, I turn to ethnographic material collected in Budapest and the Tokaji wine region of north-western Hungary. Defining territory is ultimately an act in ordering and rendering the landscape legible (Scott 1998), a move that extends to localized, more-than-human populations (Chapters Four and Five).

III. UNEARTHING DISTINCTION

a. “The land is a capability”: The *dűlő*

According to Hungary’s contemporary Wine Act, a *dűlő* is defined as “a microbiologically uniform and clearly demarcated growth place, within a wine region’s town of village, whose peculiarities have a significant impact on the character of the wine” (Szomogyi 2012:13). Originating from the old Hungarian verb *dűl* (today, *dől*)—which means to slope or tilt—the term *dűlő* is used in Hungarian for tracts of grape-growing land with “natural boundaries”, whether on hillsides or in flat plains. It is usually translated by English speakers as *vineyard*, although Hungarians typically use terms like “growth, tract or even *terroir*” (Szomogyi 2012:13). The Hungarian word for vineyard (*szőlő*) refers instead to a broader category than the *dűlő* in a controlled system of rankings. Rather, the *dűlő* is more like the French *climat* (Lambert-Gócs 2010:132) which, like *dűlő*, hinges on environmental distinction: the *climat* or *dűlő* is thus “the spatial manifestation of *terroir*” (Brawner et al. forthcoming 2018:9). Producers take *dűlő* distinctions to heart. As Joseph, an English wine writer in Budapest puts it, “If you have ever taken a walk around vineyards in much of Tokaj, you’ll find the soil varies almost meter to meter”. As if an invitation to travel through sips, one Hungarian shop owner explained to me of Tokaj, “you can taste the soils in the wine”.

Out in Tokaji, I interviewed Kristof one afternoon as he showed me his wines in the quiet village of Erdőbénye. Kristof is a middle-aged father of three who lives and works full-time in Budapest. He purchased a small vineyard and one of the village's many empty homes with his wife, converting it into a family hobby production site and weekend getaway. When I ask what makes for a good wine, he answers that it depends on a lot of things, but "is defined by where it was grown". He explains that the Tokaji hills have great capacity in this regard, concluding that "it is easy here to make great wines…but people usually like to intervene".

This is echoed by a local from another village, Balázs, who says, "The land is a *capability*; the other question is what the person, the farmer, the wine-maker wants". Yet another winemaker tells me of her *dűlő*-s, "if you come back at harvest time, you can taste the berries, the grapes, from the different vineyards. And you can feel the different tastes in a grape." Convictions like these—literal places, taste-able in their products—are not only commonplace, but standard in my experience of Tokaji winemaking.

I met Petra a few months later in Budapest. A young wine educator, Petra led a *terroir* wines course for locals one weeknight in a sleek, white urban classroom:

> Very simple rules are made about what a wine-growing region's style is. In Hungary this is currently being transformed, this ability to recognize styles very clearly…. There were 40 years when it didn't matter, rather the *quantity*—and it significantly reduced our ability to define or think about fixed styles.

> Obviously, all of us have an imagining about how Villány, or Tokaj, or Eger is[9]…. It is still in the early stages here, but in the world these traditions are really important, especially in France—we find the most examples there. But in the case of *terroir* wine, [*terroir*] is very much decisive.

Petra's discussion of Hungarian *terroir* wines follows the contours of a geological map that dates to the ancient Pannonian seabed, where sediment—as she explains with maps and drawings—"has these volcanic areas" as well as "areas that are a little limestone, created by marine creatures". It is this "well-blended" soil structure, where the remains of prehistoric volcanoes and seabed meet—the fire and water of precivilization—that defines the uniqueness of Tokaji *terroir*. Petra and her contemporaries translate Tokaji *terroir* into the taste experiences of consumers, and in doing so, draw from a history of science and regulatory practices that present borders as embodied experiences.

b. Policy-as-*terroir*: Defining the place of taste

In 1641, representatives from the 13 primary villages of the Tokaj region joined together to agree on common standards for production and planting practices, which detailed the regulation of vineyard selection and maintenance procedures (including terrace-building, irrigation, etc.). It was not until the 1720s that Matyas Bél drafted the *Notitia Hungariae novae*, a comprehensive historic, ethnographic, and economic study of Hungary to the present. Written for royal approval, Matyas added a chapter describing the *dűlő*-s of Tokaj, their situation, soils, and the people around them. The *dűlő*-s were then described as First-, Second-, or Third-class according to these environmental factors and the prices they were able to fetch in foreign markets. First-class *dűlő*-s produced wines adored by international audiences, while third-class *dűlő*-s produced wines for domestic consumers.[10]

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[9] These are prominent Hungarian wine regions.

[10] About 70 years after Bel, Szirmay's Notitia historica, politica, oecononomica montium et locorum viniferorum comitatus Zenpléniensis (1798) included a similar classification scheme with some classification changes (up-

By the 19th century, the need for protecting locality grew in response to increase in mobility and trade—particularly, thanks to the steam engine and increased capacity of river transport along the region's Tisza and Bodrog rivers. The steam engine's ability to "[bring] distant nations into close propinquity to each other" prompted the authors of The Tokaj-Hegyalja Album (1868) to urge each nation to join in this age of "interchange" of "their peculiar products" (7). With new technologies, the authors' goal was "conveying the civilization of Europe to the far East … by [Hungary's] railways and by the steamers which glide down the mighty Danube" (7). The album followed Szirmay's classifications, this time describing *dűlő*-s with state-of-the-art scientific analyses of soils and wines and ethnographic studies of its towns; the effect was a picture of the region as unified, authentic, and distinct. This 19th-century drive to introduce the "noble birthplace" of Tokaji wines from a simultaneously rational and ethnographic point of view was something of a robust marketing campaign, rooted in the idea of the Hungarian nation and its regional products that is not unlike similar efforts in the region today.

While various iterations of *dűlő* classification, based variably on economic and environmental variables provided a framework for Tokaj plantations, these four foundational documents have in common one primary feature: *none contained a map*. The de-collectivization of Tokaji lands in the 1990s, followed by a more recent global trend toward valuing local, artisanal foods from distinct places, has propelled the 21st century revival of Tokaj toward an understandable preoccupation with *place*: in the search for *terroir* (sometimes called *dűlőmitológia*, or *dűlő* mythology, in Hungarian), the "taste of place" depends firstly on delineating the *place of taste*.

c. Contestations within: The "Commissioner of Abandoned Goods"

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or down-grading some *dűlő*-s). In 1822, Janos Kaszner wrote a similar work, drawing from both Bel and Szirmay to write the most comprehensive report to date.

Dűlő-s that were classified during the 18th century had already been established for generations, with long social histories and associated mythologies. The arrival of Greek, Italian, Jewish, German, and other minority groups throughout Tokaj's 18th-century heyday and into the 19th century led to the integration of these groups in the production of Tokaji wines and the establishment of international trade markets. It also led to the ownership, particularly by Jewish merchants, of winemaking facilities and many of the historic *dűlő*-s (including First Class sites). Land reform came late to Hungary; aristocratic estates or private family operations were collectivized in 1948 under State Farms and Cooperatives under the new communist government. At this point, *dűlő* boundaries and their classification fell in importance as large-batch wines combined grapes from many plantations in the creation of commodity Tokaji wine (Liddell 2003).

However, an intermediary era during World War II included a brief alliance of Hungary with Nazi Germany. During this period, Tokaji wine trade—which by then was dominated by Jewish producers and merchants—was decimated as Tokaj's Jewry were escorted to trains that would never return from Auschwitz and other labor and death camps in 1944. Throughout Hungary, about half a million Jews were expelled from their homes, many of them executed in the final months of the Second World War in Budapest along the banks of the Danube. This brief but extraordinarily violent fascist period ended with Russian 'liberation'.

When Tokaji lands were collectivized by the state in 1948, officials did not include a register of Jewish properties. This is because Jewish lands and properties in Tokaj, almost entirely unattended after 1944, were inventoried by the so-called "Commissioner of Abandoned Goods" established in 1945. Through post-war policies on "abandoned properties", the Jewish properties, homes, and *dűlő*-s of Tokaj were determined to be property of the state prior to collectivization, meaning no record of ownership accompanied those properties into the repatriation of the 1990s—only those which were

seized directly from occupiers (BFL V.675.C 757 4723/1945). In Tokaj today, contestations over *dűlő*-s remain tied to the trauma of these years, and many producers in the region (including some large multinationals) continue to operate without resolution as to the ownership or history of their *dűlő*-s. This interruption of land tenure continues to have an impact on viticultural ecologies but also on the social fabric of the region.

In Budapest, I sat down with Dora, the granddaughter of a Jewish Tokaji winemaker who survived by escaping to Budapest. She is now a Hungarian academic in Budapest and, although her grandfather is now deceased, he passed on a few memories of his Tokaji existence before 1944 to Dora and his other grandchildren. From his stories, Dora remembers that "the family had a vineyard, that's for sure. It was a relatively large vineyard". To my surprise, she has visited Tokaj only twice in her life; most recently she traveled there to search out her grandfather's property, only to discover that "the house they lived in—today it's a café". Dora follows the café on Facebook but says she would not dare to approach the owners in person.

On her first trip to Tokaj in the late 1990s, Dora says she felt "as if there were people watching us as soon as we arrived". Walking past an anonymous village home, she continues, "an old woman came out of the house and asked us if she has what we are looking for." The pensioner then began to explain—without prompt from Dora—how, "'The people who lived here never came back.' So, like, she was occupying a house that used to belong to Jewish people, but it wasn't our house…" After this strange introduction, Dora and the pensioner woman discovered that she had once worked in the cellar of Dora's grandfather's family. Judging from conversations with winemakers in Tokaj, encounters like these are rare but not unheard of.

The vanishing of pre-WWII producers and difficulties of post-1989 privatization of *dűlő* lands emerged in many of my interviews with new generation of producers in Tokaj, although the topic was

met with some evasiveness. My first encounter of this type was with a well-known winemaker who showed me his first-class *dűlő* as the “most expensive agricultural land in the country.” When I asked about its history, he explained that they had encountered problems with the property deeds. In another village, winemaker Gabor knew a bit of his cellar’s history—his father had purchased it from neighbors. But when I pressed him for details, he responded, “the story of the cellar or the house is only extra information; the past isn’t necessarily the most important—it’s the present”. He determines that they must make the most of their hand-dug cellar, “regardless of how nice a past we had, or if we couldn’t build a living on it to keep local people here who could’ve continued the traditions”.

Figure 10: Area above Gabor's cellar: a press sits outside one of several stone outbuildings, which Arpad (below) explains were once the property of local Jewish families. Erdőbénye, April 2017. Photo by the author.

Figure 11: Below ground, in Gabor's cellar. War-era graffiti (left, far wall) and the striations of pick marks (right) can still be seen. Gabor is making wine in the newer styles, so he uses the cellars for extra storage and only keeps a few wooden barrels inside "for decoration". Erdőbénye, April 2017.

Arpad is a middle-aged producer in the village of Erdőbénye, where he owns a self-named cellar and tasting room equipped for group visits and drop-in guests. When I asked who was in the building before he set up his business there, he answered directly for himself and several neighboring wineries:

> As in most of the villages of Hegyalja, these stone houses belonged mostly to Jewish families …these houses made of stone were the property of the Jews, Jewish merchants. Here specifically, there was a Jewish butcher, a meat store until 1944. And then across the street, that was a Jewish bakery. The people who were taken away from there never came back.

The minority that survived returned to a changed Tokaj. Dora adds, based on her family's knowledge, that "a lot of people came back from Auschwitz or other camps and found that their apartments were occupied by another family" (similar stories are recounted in descendants' memoirs, e.g. Martha Fuchs's *Legacy of Rescue*; Zahava Szasz Stessel's *Wine and Thorns in Tokay Valley*).

One such case made international news in 2015 when the US-born children of a Jewish Tokaji winemaking family, the Zimmermanns, recognized the home of their mother's old photos in pictures of the Royal Tokaj headquarters. Their Tokaji Aszú wines had won gold medals at competitions in Berlin (1892) and Paris (1896), and they had owned several first-class *dűlő*-s for decades. Royal Tokaj is a prestigious wine company in the village of Mád that was co-founded by English wine expert Hugh Johnson. According to several interviews with the media, the family noticed that the history section of Royal Tokaj's website included a strange break in the timeline between the 1700s and 1950s; the winery was opened in 1990.

In one interview, the director of Royal Tokaj said that this period in history had remained "a blank" for the company: "All that we knew was that the previous owner had bought everything from the Hungarian state. Things were confiscated by the Germans during the war" (Czuk 2016). After a long and "sensitive process" the firm agreed with the family to wording on a commemorative plaque that "reflected history accurately and also met with the family's approval" (Than 2016).

Over 250 Jews were deported from the village of Mád alone in 1944, escorted by Hungarian gendarmes to trains bound for Auschwitz. While about 30 of these people survived and returned to their homes in Mád, even these survivors had fled their village by the 1970s, having returned to occupied or looted homes, broken relationships with neighbors who had not tried or been able to help, and being unable to reestablish Jewish community functions. Today there are no Jewish families in Mád village, although a Rabbinical school is recently restored and there are many tours sprouting up

around Jewish heritage and tourism in the small village. Somewhat ironically, investments from the decedents of diasporic Hungarian Jews (many now living in the US or Western Europe) have promoted the revival of winemaking and tourism in Mád along the “Footsteps of the Wonder Rabbis”, where some of Europe’s most influential Jewish historians and leaders once lived. Thanks in part to investments and a steady stream of international Jewish heritage tourism, some of the region’s most cutting-edge wineries are also located—along with several operating restaurants and wine bars—in this village, while other Tokaji villages struggle to maintain a wine-based economy.

IV. COLLECTIVIZATION AND COOPERATION

a. Proletarian palates

As with other commodity goods exchanged throughout the Eastern Bloc, communist wines were something of a ‘caviar for the masses’, designed to be available for the average consumer. While Tokaji cooperatives were first established in 1903, it was with the advent of communist collectivization that *dűlő*-s were forcefully amalgamated in 1948. Large, centralized wine factories were built, and vineyards were configured in wide, vertical rows designed to accommodate the width of Russian tractors. Tokaji wines were then sent to Comecon countries, which producer Arpad explains was “like the EU” in that it held a commercial agreement with the other bloc states: the GDR manufactured ships, the USSR produced tractors, while Hungary and Bulgaria made wine for the whole bloc in a complex system of trade. It was during this time that Tokaji wines became standardized commodities—as Arpad puts it, “Unfortunately, they put a price tag on the Tokaji [wines] and the Tokaji Aszú—on a premium product. You don’t write the price on a Gucci bag.... A premium product doesn’t have the price on it, only a daily price”. This communist drive was to make luxury products accessible to all people, where “their expectation was that if a [factory worker] from Kiev, from Ukraine, goes to the store at the end of the day, he should be able to buy a Tokaji Aszú for his hourly wage or two”. Naturally, this egalitarian move devalued the wine of any luxury position; “…If anybody can get a premium product,”

Arpad clarifies, "it loses its premium status…. So they killed it like this. This is how we started in the beginning of the '90s".

The contemporary geography of *dűlő* systems reflects the pre-war era in that, during privatization, old aristocratic estates were re-conglomerated. However, today many of the first-class parcels are now in foreign hands, while mid- and small-size producers work on fragmented *dulő*-s (Brawner et al. forthcoming 2018). "Shortage of funds is their common enemy," explained wine writer Alex Liddell of Tokaj in 2001, "It prevents them from expanding their vineyards, from replanting their vines, from improving their vinification equipment and, worst of all, constrains customer choice to the extent that…there is no point in making better-quality wine that almost nobody can afford to buy" (31).

According to local writer Gergely Somogyi, "a modern system of appellation control developed based on *dűlő* classification by local wine people under a solely non-governmental initiative" would be "virtually impossible to be enacted and enforced". Instead, he suggests, "Imposition from above, in this case, in the form of a European regulation transposed into national law, helps accelerate the process substantially" (20). He goes on to propose to the reader of his English-language newsletter that any official, agreed-upon accounting of *dűlő* borders remains far-fetched (20): "Until then, find a blank *dűlő* map, taste Tokajis by different producers from the same *dűlő*-s to see for yourself whether those sites really deserve their historical rating—or just simply rank them to your liking and mark up your own map accordingly". This "map accordingly" method presents the disunity of Tokaj in spatial terms.

Unfortunately, much of the European market lacks the romantic, affective connections and imaginaries required for the PDO success of marginal *terroir* products. Back in the village of Erdőbénye, veteran family producer Arpad meets the resulting low prices with disdain and has attempted, in vain, to join producers together to demand higher prices for their products.

> Hungarians were angry that in Metro, Lidl or Aldi[11] you could buy aszú for a humiliating price, for 775 forint, or 1000-1500 forint[12].
>
> And I told them to be brave and I said, "There is no cheap aszú" and I increased the price of my 3 puttony aszú to 3000 Ft. This was 10 years ago now…
>
> [I told them] let's sit down together, make a cartel, and with the blink of an eye we'll say "there's no aszú like this. We'd rather not eat. Just burn down the tractor-trailer as the French did, and go out and have a riot on the streets. You may give [our wine] to Tesco but *we won't*."

He returns to the original regulations of Tokaj "…we've been respecting this for 400 years, so I wouldn't have changed it. It doesn't matter that the socialists came up with [other regulations]". Arpad's call to unify and "make a cartel" in order to stabilize aszú prices may have been unsuccessful, but other prevailing forces may soon shift aszú production irrevocably.

Another producer, a young winemaker in Erdőbénye, suggests the situation is similar today. Market demand for affordable, dry wines encourages producers to make dry or lower-quality sweet wines rather than the traditional, labor-intensive aszú wines. "There are wines of which there's only one barrel, so 260 bottles. Obviously, you can't find these in a Tesco." Those who do produce limited, luxury wines are then faced with the prospect of selling it as an entrepreneur. "Then there's the question of whether they can make it to smaller shops. So, [make it] into wine shops? Not really, because it's

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[11] These are discount European grocery chains.
[12] 1000 forint is approximately 4.50 USD.

not guaranteed that the owners will see potential in them, if they could position them properly—it's too low a quantity".

b. Post-collectivization: Everyone-for-themselves

Currently, the *dűlő* classifications of past centuries are not relevant to the Tokaj PDO labelling scheme, although groups of producers aim to revive this very land-based protocol. Most producers interviewed reporting selecting parcels, at least in part, with reference to its historic classified status (whether Hungarian or newcomer). For many producers in Tokaj, returning to the historic *dűlő* system and making 'quality' wines is a statement against communist mass production. The legacy of communist production, however, has pushed some producers to strike out on their own not only in production, but in geographic branding. As a key figure in a village-level initiative to use hyper-local place labels, Andras explained, "So the Hungarian—the government's own company—is not interested in the old classification, because they are working with cheap wine. It's pointless to use the classification. So that's why we cannot use the [original] classification on the label". Breaking from the Tokaj region and its historic protected status, Andras and his group are working to promote their village, individual *dűlő*-s, and hillsides: "we've really focused in the last few years on the dry wines, to make a parcel [*dűlő*] selection. This is the way to show wine, to get the higher brand…. we have only one possibility to be a brand in the future: to show the kind of soils in the wine".

This results in what local winemaker Celia considers an *everyone-for-themselves* approach. When I ask her about these village-level marketing initiatives, which aim to distinguish village producers from the rest of Tokaj, she replies, "of course many people say that the people from [our village] are evil, and [our village committee] says 'Well, why don't you do the same?' But not everybody can do this. You need luck as well." She concludes, "I think the local farmers' [cooperative]

brand was more famous, and also the Jewish communities that belonged to [this village], if we listen to local stories. Trading went better back then".

Family producer Zoltan has similar plans for his new, mid-size operation on the southern side of the loess-laden Tokaj Mountain. He is looking to the past to establish his future and, as with many other enterprising producers in Tokaj, this includes terraforming. "This slope," Zoltan explains as he points to a map of his *dűlő*, "is rather steep with an inclination of 12°, which led our ancestors to establish the terraced cultivation we are trying to re-introduce today". He goes on to explain:

> Later, we would like to create separate terraces for the different soils, creating distinct brands…. The usual pedological measurements show no surprises, pH levels, hummus lime level etc. This is not where we find the uniqueness of [our vineyard], but instead it is something you will *taste* in the wines, that you will *sense* in their aroma.

Showing the soils, branding the soils, and protecting the soils through erosion-preventing measures like traditional terracing, become ways of claiming spaces and tastes, presenting each Tokaji entrepreneur with a slice of geological monopoly. These are not measurable in what Zoltan calls the "usual pedological" sense, but rather emerge as a communicable, ecologically embedded taste, a sensation waiting to be translated and discovered. It is the variety of Tokaj *terroirs*—once lumped together en masse—and the promise of high-resolution, localized, irreproducible, privatized tastes that motivates winemakers like Zoltan to reinstate the historic terrace cultivation along new lines determined by observed soil structure.

It is now PDO law, along with the land on which it is pinned, that unifies the Tokaj region—even as most other elements of Tokaj winemaking (even the *dűlő* tenure of its prized plantations)

remain disputed. One of the primary complaints in my producer interviews was a lament that Tokaji winemakers will not work together; cooperation is low, and everyone wants to go in varying, "innovative" directions. Often, this refers to capitalizing on the current *terroir* wine trend, staking claim to a prized *dűlő*, and producing single-*dűlő* wines: every *dűlő* for itself. This geographic configuration further fragments efforts to brand Tokaji wines by the region, having turned individuals into entrepreneurs of the land. One village-level initiative based on unique village and even hillside *terroirs* has created a locally regulated labelling and quality control scheme based on the distinction of village soils by comparison to other Tokaji areas—one primary producer in this group has removed the name Tokaj from his wines altogether because of its association with communist mass production.

With the close of the Soviet Era, Tokaj lost its captive Russian market; trend-following now has its appeal, particularly in a region that held only very limited opportunities for entrepreneurship for four decades. Today, the landscape is punctuated by a handful of successful international, large producers (most of which bought up land during the free period of the early 1990s) with many more family businesses and hobby producers who consume at home or sell small quantities via informal markets. With competition high, Tokaji small producers like Balázs report, "[I'm] so busy with the vineyard works that I hardly get to go to any events or wine festivals" or to "read the specialized literature" and so feel out of touch with local regulatory changes (such as the revision of the sweetness-ranking *puttony* system). As a one-man-show, Balázs is unable to promote his wines outside of his village. "There are many great collaborations *within* the villages," explains Gabor, but they are unable to expand these to the 27 villages of the region "because there isn't a complete program package, a united front or wine selection that would define the Tokaj region". Zsófi, who runs a family winery and guesthouse in the village of Bodrogkisfalu, also recognizes the complexity of governing Tokaj as a single political unit: "…it's very, very difficult to make a good law that is good for everybody. It's not easy. We have 27 villages, and more than 100 wineries".

The present situation means privatized, individually ran vineyards must negotiate marketing and branding the region cooperatively (despite the vast array of quality and types of wines made) while existing as competitive, hyper-place-based entrepreneurs; Brulotte and Di Giovine argue, in fact, that "*terroir* designations have emerged precisely *because* of economic concerns" (2014:8, emphasis added). The drive to engage as entrepreneurs leads producers to identify the unique selling point of their plots, typically in terms of material *terroir* features. Because many producers make wine on small plots of a few hectares or less, this can mean a very high-resolution reading of the landscape. "27 villages and 15, 20, 30 *terroirs* per village—and these are only the basic ones," says Gabor, because there are many only known to locals by folk names. "Also the 8-9 *dűlő*-s of each village can have different microclimates, and within a single *dűlő* the lower, middle and higher areas can have different soil structures and this allows for an incredible diversity".

This diversity, without the cooperation of socialist management, has created an equally fragmented social world. When I ask veteran producer Janos what he thinks should change in the Tokaj region, his answer is one of joining together:

> Mainly, it is necessary to strengthen collaboration. To represent a business, we must develop the marketing as well. So, the good Hungarian habit—being miserly, speaking recklessly, not being unified—must be put to rest…. It is normal that there are debates amongst the wine makers, but the winemaking society should produce a strong collaboration and uniform front to the world. That is what we should change.

He adds with a bit of hopefulness that these efforts could be worldwide, even though Hungary's "smallness does not allow for the realization of big dreams".

Janos observes a need for producers to band together—a sentiment echoed by many of the producers I interviewed. Local American wine expert, Jim, considers local resistance to cooperation as symptomatic of misguided resistance to communism: today's producers shy away from anything resembling a cooperative or communal production. While this became a reoccurring theme during my fieldwork, there were also some indications that—whether for reasons of competition or just oversight—the local winemaking regulations (that underpin the PDO status) were often impossible to find in any central location.

I spent some time just after the 2017 harvest working at a major Tokaj producer in Mad village. There, I asked one of their managers, a young Hungarian woman named Celia, about the state of affairs in the region and efforts to revive old *dűlő* classifications or create new ones. "Everything has two sides," Celia began; the first is that the *Kereskedőház* [the state-run trading house that still exists in part] "made the grape-growers feel kind of cozy, comfortable…big vintage, lots of money. They didn't need to grow high quality grapes because the [trading house] bought it…". The trading house remains today but is much smaller. It is also in a far village to the north, so producers on the southern side of the mountain range "thought they'd rather handle everything there, which motivates people to increase the quality." She says that the "new direction" in the southern villages, for established family wineries, is a reduced dependence on the trading house. They do their own marketing, privately or by village, etc., "so there are many things that encouraged people to turn to quality on an '*everybody solves the situation themselves*' basis because this is how they could sell their wine."

A local producer and friend of mine, Anna, complained to Celia, "The wine regulations always change. Where can I download the latest?" "Actually," replied Celia, "this works almost like an 'underground' thing, because nothing's ever updated; the national committee of the *hegyközségek* [hill association] hardly ever updates its page". She added that it is on the Tokaj association page, along

with product specifications, but Anna insists that when she needs them she "can't find any laws!" "*The* wine law?" asked Celia, "well, they never really write it *all* down, and it's not published like, as a whole, ever…unfortunately…. I've never read the wine law as a whole, either."

In fact, the current regulations are difficult to find. Despite EU-level protection of the Tokaj region as a PDO, the specifics—regional-level rules and enforcement—are the subject of constant internal debate. Tokaj is registered under PDO-HU-A1254, which is protected by EU Article 107 of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013. It guarantees the naming rights of Tokaj/Tokaji wines exclusively to the area defined, which currently includes the portion in contemporary Slovakia (another point of contestation and motivation for some producers to break away from or disregard the PDO in their own winemaking). Specific rules are determined by the Tokaji Wine Region Council (*Tokaji Borvidék Hegyközségi Tanácsa*) around the production of eight wine styles (Tokaji Borvidék Hegyközségi Tanácsa 2017), including aszú and "white wine" (fehér bor). Other styles include sweet or dry szamorodni (like aszú, but in which berries are harvested indiscriminately and the botrytized grapes are mixed with uninfected berries), late harvest, eszencia (pure nectar of only botrytized berries), forditás (second pressing of wine with the same aszú berries), and máslás (a rarely produced version in which wine is poured over used aszú skins and pulp and allowed to soak without proper pressing).

The specifications also include the amount of aszú berries required per liter of base wine, and (in section apart from the "Tokaji wine specialities" listed above), the making of sparling wine (*pezsgőkészítés*). Harvest mode may be my hand or machine (Tokaji Borvidék Hegyközségi Tanácsa 2017:8), although currently aszú harvests cannot possibly be effectively mechanized. Minimum residual sugar requirements, and harvest dates are established by county council. Only two tons per hectare aszú berries may be harvested, while for all other categories grapes may be grown and harvested at rates of ten tons per hectare (with the exception of general white wine [up to fourteen tons

per hectare]) (10). The permitted grape varietals for all categories include only Furmint, Hárslevelű, Kabar, Kövérszőlő, Sárgamuskotály, and Zéta (11). They reference the UNESCO status of the region and outline the features of the terrain that constitutes demarcated Tokaji land; this includes (translated and summarized from page 12):

> - the climate, microclimate of the area, which is significantly shaped by the rivers (Bodrog, Tisza) that affect the region, and the wet, wetlands that result from them. This includes also the microclimate and the regular autumnal weather patterns, which are especially important.
>
> - the terrain of the wine region, which protects its climate by its being located on the southern/south-eastern edge of the Zemplén Mountain range
>
> - the composition of the areas under cultivation: a very colorful, highly volcanic rock and soil composition
>
> - the typical and regionally characteristic grape varieties produced here (Furmint, Hárslevelű, Yellow Yellow Muscat, and—to a much lesser extent—Zeta, Kövérszőlő, and Kabar)
>
> - a unique production practice in the world of winemaking, including storage and maturation technology (e.g. aszú, small wine barrels)
>
> - a diligent population that has been producing vines and wine production for centuries.

Specifics of latitude/longitude, average seasonal temperatures, humidity, sunlight hours, and harvest times can be found in a table on the same page, followed by a timeline spanning from the thirteenth

century to present day (13-15). Detailed in a section on the unique connection between place and production methods, the authors note that the "soil conditions have a direct effect on the quality of the wine by the mineral flavors in the wine[13]" (16).

For many producers (particularly those in the 'new generation'), these rules are too lenient and broad to demand consistent, specialty wine production under the Tokaj name. The popularity of high-quality, single-*dűlő terroir* wines has precipitated the need to define not only the borders of Tokaj, but those within; this had already been a project of several local winemakers and associations leading up to the new product specification rules. One such organization is the TWAS (Tokaji Bormívelők Társasága), which began in 2006 and included twenty-three wineries. This represented the first grassroots attempt to revive traditional classification systems, adding to them tiers of yield control and age of vines, noting the need to include new factors in the appellation of a dry wine region that had been originally classified for sweet wines. In 2007, the Mád Circle (based in Mád village) also reinterpreted the classifications, creating three tiers, each with strict production control requirements. Finally, in 2009 local wine expert and author László Alkonyi authored a publication, which—for the first time—included a 1:75000 scale map insert. With over 200 winemakers represented, he included *dűlő*-s mentioned in the historic classifications and added dozens more, re-ranking *dűlő*-s based on a reading of the past evaluations and informed by his own experience and expertise in the region. Naturally, he made a few enemies along the way and was reportedly banned from three wineries upon publishing his revised *dűlő* map.

Local journalist and wine writer Gergely Somogyi commented on the situation that the differences between historic classification attempts were "subtle, but what they apparently share is an overtly idealistic approach: expecting the rest of Tokaj winemakers to voluntarily follow suit in

[13] *A talajviszonyok számos tétel esetében közvetlen hatással is bírnak a borminőségre a borban megjelenő ásványos ízek által.*

rigorously cutting back yields and thereby, in the short run, their own incomes for the common cause of lifting up Tokaj to where it belongs" (18). In the span of 30 years, the Tokaj region had shifted from mass production of standardized wines for guaranteed markets to one of restricted production of unique, artisanal wines with no promise of an audience.

V. DISCUSSION: UNDEMOCRATIC *TERROIR*

The basis of contemporary GI laws emerged in 20th century France and hinged on the concept of *terroir*. While other places (like Hungary's Tokaj region) had been protected as enclosed production space for centuries, today it is the French-inspired model that underpins EU regulations. A GI includes the name of a place (region, locality, or country), or a toponym, used to describe "the quality or characteristics of which are essentially or exclusively due to a particular geographical environment with its inherent natural and human factors" (Pila and Torremans 2016:478). These marks of origin-branding are also protected internationally: the World Trade Organization Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) outlines GIs as "indications which identify a good as originating in the territory of a Member, or a region or locality in that territory, where a given quality, reputation, or other characteristic of the good is essentially attributable to its geographical origin" (Article 22, 1995). They are championed by some as means of localizing food production and fostering biodiversity in the face of globalization (e.g. Berard and Marchenay 2006, Barham 2003, Torre 2006). However, given the intangibility of *terroir*, and the absence of consensus around the relationship between place (natural and social factors) and resulting product qualities, GI laws—and their many international iterations—remain fiercely contested.

GI protection in wines is the mobilization of *terroir* in the defining of territory: a "race to place" (Overton and Murray 2015); while the labor (Besky 2014) and capital involved in crafting *terroir* are fluid, the duality of *terroir* as heritage and land means "you cannot roll it up and take it away" (Li

2014:589). *Terroir*-as-territory (i.e., as land area) poses interesting problems (or possibilities) for conceptualizing such value-added and value-giving spaces within human geography. Technologies like GIs are "conscious interventions of place" where spaces are socially produced to economic aims (Lefebvre 2008), to create "new possibilities of capital" and the accumulation of surplus (Overton and Murray 2016). *Terroir*, in this sense, could be a fictitious factor of production because it derives its qualities from specific historic contexts and cultural relations (Overton and Murray 2016). *Terroir* is thus simultaneously a "fossilization" of history (Demossier 2018) and a "free gift of nature" (Jessop 2007), where land becomes inextricably fused to its commodities through added value. This value is consolidated in monopoly spaces of production and captured through monopoly rent.

"Monopoly rent," writes David Harvey, "arises because social actors can realize an enhanced income stream over an extended time by virtue of their exclusive control over some directly or indirectly tradable item which is in some crucial respects unique and non-replicable" (2002:94)—indeed, Karl Marx posited the enclosed vineyard as the archetypal case of monopoly rent (1993:910). Because the consumption (and arguably, the production) wine is a cultural act and an affective experience, symbolically laden with cultural, religious, socio-economic meaning, it entails what Harvey (2002) describes as the wine industry's "perpetual search for monopoly rents," which "entails seeking out criteria of speciality, uniqueness, originality and authenticity" in all areas of culture.

Critiques of the European GI model argue that the use of place-brands through toponyms like Parmesan or Champagne are guilty of a new "reign of *terroir*" through their capture of monopoly rents, "unfairly usurping the value created in that name by generations of local producers" (Watson 2016). Place-based regulations are further said to discourage innovation and reward the status-quo for companies who maintain outmoded ways of production and take advantage of exclusive rights (to cheaper materials, for example) under the guise of 'tradition'. These economic advantages vis-à-vis

heritage claims are perhaps most obvious in viticultural landscapes, where the location of prime vineyards may represent a "fossilization" of historic power relations (Demossier 2018) and *terroir* discourse clothes social relations in a natural façade (Ulin 2013). While these recent analyses begin to offer a critical perspective on monopoly production under the guise of tradition, even these cases assume the continued consolidation of power by generations of original landowners—not the arrival of newcomers seeking to buy established *terroir*.

Recent scholarship in anthropology and human geography has detailed the ways in the "invented tradition" of winemaking in France (Ulin 1996) is bolstered by legal claims in the process of "patrimonialization" (Revel 2000): the "effort to trace, record and commemorate…all sorts of events, both majestic and mundane, related to French history" (Gangjee 2016:59 summarizing Revel 2000). This process of tradition-crafting and patrimonialization led to France's contemporary status as a key wine producer (e.g. Gade 2004, Demossier 2011, Ulin and Black 2016). The effect is an ahistorical setting in which products are produced for their authenticity. However, ethnographic accounts reveal that "establishment of product authenticity [is] a continuous process" (Gade 2004: 848), and *terroir* often relies on political territories, innovation (despite the limiting codifications and guidelines required of PDOs), discursive connections to pasts, social value that extends beyond agricultural productivity (Gade 2004). It also turns on a conscious, active construction of the past in both official/political discourses and everyday language that in turn shapes contemporary place-based identity (Barham 2003:132).

While in France *terroir* "has the effect of anchoring French consciousness to its rural roots" (Gade 2004: 849), in postsocialist Tokaj, its relevance is more ambiguous. Because of the post-holocaust, post-communist legacies of land seizure and mass production under cooperative control, as well as the drive during the booming period of 1950s-1970s toward urbanization and away from rural

livelihoods, *terroir* does not enjoy the same life in the memory of Hungarian producers and consumers. Hungarian wines effectively disappeared from the western market (and thus western palates and demand) at the exact moment the French AOC scheme and patrimonialization first gained traction, reappearing only as the 'patrimonial turn' took root in response to globalization and perceived inauthenticity.

Communist production took a *luxury for the masses* approach. Today's production is motivated by exclusivity and distinction through geologic *terroir*—but yet again, this is a viable option only for those with enough quantity for export. It has been said that "wine-makers have to accept the unfair fact that *terroir* is undemocratic and that not everyone is lucky enough to have it" (Bourguinon in Patterson et al. 2017:84). In fact, because of the way lands were farmed, confiscated or "abandoned", collected, redistributed, and auctioned in over the last 80 years, postsocialist *terroir* is especially inequitable.

A place-based *terroir* suggests the limits of producers' success without the right property or the right technologies to reveal the natural 'treasures' of their *dűlő*. A conception of Tokaji *terroir* that includes regulatory measures highlights the "messiness and ambiguities of the policy process" (Shore and Wright 2011:10) as well as the interconnectedness of human institutions and agroecological materialities. This is relevant to the policy and law literature on GIs, which offer fascinating insight into the difficulties of managing affective landscapes; while the patent system exists for mechanical or chemical inventions, and trademarks protect visual signs, words, or devices as intellectual property, "attempts to register scents, sounds, tastes, textures and movements as trademarks have given rise to both adjectival and substantive law concerns" (Gangjee 2012:78).

VI. CONCLUSIONS: NATURALIZING *TERROIR*

a. Protection of more-than-places

Environmentally-rooted *terroir* and policies that hinge on environmental exceptionalism are strategies of places with broken traditions: "Compared to tradition, territory is transparent" (Gade 2004:362). However, as this and the following chapters demonstrate, territory in Tokaji *terroir* is rarely straightforward. I consider the geography of GIs and *terroir* as a territory that is perennially protected through various legal mechanisms, justified through shifting, strategic narratives of distinction. It is a social landscape with "naturally" defined (and defining) borders. There remains, in all my conversations with producers on the topic of PDO policy, an unspoken paradox: if a landscape is naturally defined, and its products irreproducible, why does it need human protecting? In other words, why make a law against the ostensibly 'impossible'?

My ethnographic data show that, while the protection of place is the surface argument, it stands in for much more—including the protection of labor and the protection of taste itself. Regulations are needed for preventing "*pancs*"—a mixture of wine with disregard for quality—from selling as Tokaji wine. In a world unfamiliar with the taste of Tokaj, Gabor explains, "it's not enough that the winemaker is a decent person", or to rely on "customers with relevant Tokaji experience who can't be misled by a fake wine…because the fake wines…undermine the hardworking people's labor". Policies are thus thought to inform tastes, where protecting tastes is protecting *terroir* and its associated livelihoods.

Through *terroir*, and especially "when conceptualized as cultural heritage, food also has the tendency to adapt and 'naturalize' quite quickly" (Brulotte and Dr Giovine 2014:8). Winegrapes, including those that originated in the Tokaj region, now have progeny in the most established varietals of Western Europe (Chapter Five). They have become the "so-called 'indigenous' ingredient [that has] become more profitable, both economically and socio-culturally, in a new locale, among new groups

of people…to the economic detriment of its area of origin. *Terroir* designations emerged precisely with these social and economic components in mind, and exist first and foremost as a 'protected mark'" (Brulotte and Dr Giovine 2014:8).

It is because of the visible impact of sedentary human life on landscapes that there remains an assumed stability of land (Schmitt 2006): a timelessness, continuity, and sense of place that outlasts generations of humans. In Tokaj, there is a pervasive sense that it is not mankind that defines the territory, but rather, the territory takes on a self-defining life of its own, following environmental/geophysical borders, producing the fruits of its unique environmental conditions, and serving as a container for its 'natural' human inhabitants. This offers locals a material basis on which to legitimize their Europeanness and embody, through consumption and production choices, resistance or adherence to political regimes of the past and present.

The foregrounding of geology and the history of geographic *dűlő* bordering in Tokaj does not suggest that other PDO products have less of a material foundation, but the converse: the more social model of *terroir* popular today in Western Europe that foregrounds continuity, tradition, and romantic pastoralism cannot be as easily afforded in post-holocaust, postsocialist spaces. If *people* are often missing from the geological *terroir* narrative of Tokaj, it may be, in some cases, because they were erased. If political borders are ignored in favor of immobile, geological features, it may be because border change is a visceral experience for many, especially older Hungarians; some were born in one country, grew up in another, and died in a third—without leaving the same village. Like migrants of one place, this situation creates "radically new types of human being, people who root themselves in ideas rather than place, in memories as much as material things" (Rushdie 1991:124).

b. *Terroir* as territory and strategy

Where political borders represent an official record of the parsing up of territory (land as a political category), the contemporary EU political-geographic landscape calls into question the idea of territory as "generally assumed [to be] self-evident in meaning" (Elden 2013:3). Rather than examining borders as they define the boundaries of territories, I have followed recent initiatives by political ecologists and human geographers to understand territory beyond "bounded units that result from efforts by humans and their institutions to control space" (Peters et al. 2018:1). As Simmel (1997) succinctly puts it, the border "is not a spatial fact with sociological consequences, but a sociological fact that forms itself spatially" (142). Thus, following what Peters et al. (2018) call a political materialism approach, I consider *terroir* as inclusive of the "complex bundle of political, geographical, economic, strategic, legal, and technical relations that joins a particular perspective on land" (Peters et al. 2018:1).

The "complex bundle" of factors joining perspectives around Tokaji lands often foreground the myriad legal documents that have enforced policies of protection and enclosure since the 17th century. The Tokaji case demonstrates how political ideology around land, value, distinction, identity, place, and visceral experiences (such as taste) are the precursors to borders. In Tokaj, "official" territorial borders are the result of many political changes, while *terroir* becomes a strategy for redefining not only the borders within the region, but also for repositioning the Hungarian nation within the European imaginary. This exercise is not just about gazing downward and locating the *terroir* under one's feet, but also about using features of the land as a benchmark of quality to relocate Hungary as central—geographically, culturally, temporally, and in European significance.

Today, "the guarantee of place of origin of a food product evokes authenticity, which becomes a surrogate for quality" (Gade 2004: 848). The environmentally rooted narrative of *quality* does not

require historocity—it does not rely on tradition, nor expertise, nor does it require anyone in particular inhabit it. As we will see, however, Tokaji *terroir* narratives are not always so literal and do require a collaboration between humans and their surrounds. Because PDOs guarantee authenticity, regulation of *terroir* components becomes part of Tokaji *terroir* itself. Following this, I turn to the living constituents of *dűlőmitológia*: the more-than-human networks that ostensibly translate place into tastes. To insert the question of one legal scholar on GI policies: in the protection of *terroir* as intellectual property, *how much authorship is attributable to nature?* (Gangjee 2012). The following two chapters address this more-than-human aspect of *terroir* as intrinsic to the political ecology of place-based-tastes.

CHAPTER 5

"GRAPES ARE LIKE US": MOBILIZING NATIVE GERMPLASM

I. MULTISPECIES AUTHENTICITY

a. Gardening in ruins

"Tokaj is Eden abandoned," writes local winemaker and author László Alkonyi; "…Tokaj has been raised high a hundred times and hurled into profundity just as often. Its name has been glorified and abused" (2006:8). Often likened to gardens, today's Tokaji *dűlő*-s are fractal mosaics of care and neglect. Some are pristinely maintained and tended, while others remain fallow and abandoned, reclaimed by 'wild' grapes or overrun by fruit trees from generations past. They are spaces where "[v]ines tell stories about the belly of the earth" (Alkonyi 2006:14) and are living impressions of social pasts (Hayward 2010). These more-than-human stories take centers stage in this and the following chapter—first as authenticated plants locate territory, then as microscopic living networks define *terroir* through their unique tastes.

In this chapter I illustrate how, through technoscientific methods, authenticated 'indigenous' grape varietals are mobilized as territorial claims-makers, arguing that increasing pressure to produce authenticity has prompted new, more 'objective' methodologies of authentication for authenticity's sake. A growing scholarship in anthropology and human geography engages with posthumanism (e.g. Braun 2004, Bastian et al. 2016) and the consideration of more-than-human agency in political-ecological systems. Budding attention to plant agency (Latour 2005) is extended to nonhuman lives in ecosystems. This assertion runs parallel to recent publications by "ethnobotanists [who see] plants as social beings with agentive efficacy" (Kirksey and Helmreich 2010:554 with reference to Nazarea

2006 and Hayden 2003), engaging this work with the critical scholarship of political ecologists and anthropologists of science (e.g. Helreich 2009, Lowe 2006, West 2006). Borrowing—at least metaphorically—from anthropocentric tropes, recent scholarship considers how plants feel (Myers 2015) or forests think (Kohn 2013). In the geography of more-than-human lifeways, plants are said to exercise their position as material indicators of borders (Castree and Braun 2001) and may "take an active part in shaping and claiming space" (Besky and Padwe 2016).

More recently, scholars consider the ways "plants participate in more than human territorialities" (Besky and Padwe 2016): Scott's (2009) padi rice as state-signifying, Ogden (2011) on mangroves and human action shaping the Florida Everglades, hedges (Blomley 2007) and trees (Griffin 2008) as living borders in England, United States suburbia and planting of turf grass (Robbins 2007). Even foundational ecological anthropology work featured plants in territorial 'action', such as Rappaport's (1967) description of the rumbim-planting Maring practice, which he described as "sub-territorial" (19). Such place-making often renders plants meaning-laden, as with the planting of Palestinian olive trees (*Olea europaea L.*) and Israeli pine trees (*Pinus halepensis sp. Miller* and *Pinus brutia sp. Tenore*)—as "planted flags" (Braverman 2009).

These and other works highlight 'planty agency' through their distribution, migration, and communities; this is useful because "[plants] upset received notions of sociality" with "important implications for theories of territory" (Besky and Padwe 2016:11). In this chapter, I further these themes, considering plant pedigree (vis-à-vis high-modern, techno-scientific inquiry) as constituent of place-making. The authentication of 'native' Tokaj varietals is coded in genetics but has cultural and political implications. In short, the authentication of a varietal as 'native' is a key feature of more than human territoriality-making in Tokaj: it is not enough that furmint be symbolically Hungarian, but that it is authenticated and linked to a noble pedigree to elevate its homeland back to its former glory.

Demarcated territories (e.g. PDOs, nation-states, Historic Cultural Landscapes, *dűlő*-s) are the product of more-than-human boundary making; even anthropogenic boundaries are contingent upon "the territorial refrains of plants, soils, animals, and waters" (Besky and Padwe citing Raffles 2002). Besky and Padwe (2016:12) thus argue that the inclusion of more-than-human agency in boundary-making is thus not an invitation to a *new* politics, but rather provides a way of re-thinking a bundle of existing political-ecological concepts related to territory. These include legibility and surveillance, ordering and classification, and strategies of exclusion/inclusion. This multispecies approach to ethnography overlaps conveniently with human-plant geographies, which "contest a perceived empirical and theoretical neglect of plants' participation in the social" (Brice 2014:943). Considering plant agency in territory-making complements the recent rise in interest amongst the social sciences around nationalism, migration, globalization, and localization (Sheridan 2016).

b. The authentic turn: *You are where you eat*

In foodways, authenticity is a process. Validation arrives only through complex relationships between product, producer, and consumer (Gadamer 2007 [1960]); this is especially true of origin label products that rely on provenance. Lacost et al. (2014:2) consider this "authenticity construction" as occurring in three modes, each of which has relevance to the case at hand. The first is a canonical mode, which might be conceptualized as a top-down granting of authenticity to a product by some determining authority, as in the case of PDO foods or UNESCO HCLs. The second they deem the explanatory mode, in which authenticity is referenced as the subject of methodical investigation and evidence-gathering, allowing for the re-construction of authenticity (as is highlighted in the grape genetics case study below). Lastly, they suggest, is the performative mode, in which authenticity is created through "reality effects" that include staging of credibility (as in the story-telling and the language of wine tastings).

Nevertheless, the identification of heritage—through the authenticity of derivative products or the naturalization of landscapes—presents a dilemma for international instruments of conservation, as "heritage is less an identifiable thing than a constructed discourse strategically deployed for political, economic, or ideological goals" (Di Giovine and Brulotte 2014:2; see also Di Giovine 2009a, Handler 1988, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998). Not unlike heritage, *terroir* is less an identifiable thing than the confluence of many factors, discursively constructed and strategically deployed (e.g. Ulin 1996, Demossier 1999, 2018, Brawner et al. forthcoming 2018).

In foodways, there exists an especially strong link between authenticity and the notion of "place" (Lacoste et al. 2014: 9). Food products' status as embodiments of their immediate locality and local management practices situates them as uniquely mobile vessels of place:

> [T]here is an obsession with historicity and tracing an authentic foodstuff's "lineage"—or its "provenience," to use a museological term applied to the heritage industry….[J]ust as heritage is a discourse that links past, present and future, the same can be asserted for *terroir* designations.

The protection of lineage and provenance take center stage, often at the level of region or nation-state. Thus, it is not surprising that the "sense of place", codified and protected as heritage, can at times don nativist overtones in its defensive shade of localism.

Gade (2004, citing Callon et al. 2002) positions the French system of PDO (AOC) within the "economy of qualities": a "process of singularlization and attachment that establishes product individuality through an intimate connection between consumer expectation and the products offered". These qualities are not only observed or sensed by consumers, but are also "revealed through tests, trials, and codified measurements backed by recognized legal or social institutions" (849). In this

model, late capitalist conditions have thus "increased the terrain and the means for the commodification of authenticity" (Heller 2014: 153), setting the stage for novel, international, transferrable, and translatable modes of knowing that transcend subjective tastes, even as they codify them.

II. TERRITORY AS HERITAGE

a. Globalizing local heritage: The Historic Cultural Landscape

In Tokaji *terroir*, the authentication of plants (e.g., as native) coincides with the reification of landscape as site of eco-cultural heritage. Until recently, the conservation of heritage was almost synonymous with architectural preservation, with a wealth of state-level work on built heritage in its tangible form. This was often in response to urgency, precipitated by crisis; much of the 20th century's drive toward preservation was a move toward permanence in the wake of the two World Wars (Ruggles and Silverman 2009). In 1954, the Hague Convention outlined an aim to preserve cultural heritage using a very broad definition that included "movable or immovable property of great importance to the cultural heritage of every people" (UNESCO 1999:12).

By 1972, "world heritage" reached truly global status with the International Convention for the Protection of the World's Cultural and Natural Heritage (also known as the World Heritage Convention, or WHC) adopted by the United National Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The UNESCO WHC—as a binding, transnational instrument of law—solidified the power of previous treaties and pacts in the protection of two distinct assemblages: *cultural heritage* (monuments and sites of importance) and *natural heritage* (geophysical formations of scientific or aesthetic value). While lacking the human flair of the earlier Venice Charter (1964), it paved the way for new, multi-national projects of cultural heritage conservation, which eventually moved from a static definition of authenticity and heritage to a framework that incrementally acknowledged the intangible nature of cultural transmission (see Ruggles and Silverman 2009).

In 1992, based on the recommendations of a panel of experts at meetings in La Petite Pierre, France, the WHC took into its protection *cultural landscapes*. Through Historical Cultural Landscapes (HCLs), three categories of eligible landscapes were codified[14] in the merging of two previous categories. Previously, landscapes fell under "natural" heritage, while cultural heritage properties "were rarely conceived as broad spatial expanses" (Samuels 2017:118). The WHC "became the first international legal instrument to identify, protect, conserve, and transmit to future generations cultural landscapes of outstanding universal value" (Rössler 2000:28). Today, HCLs are dominated by European viticultural areas, which are conceptualized as rare 'relics' of agrarian pasts in the modern, western world (Aplin 2007:436). Vineyard landscapes remain "the best-represented agrarian landscapes on the World Heritage List…all of which are located in Europe" (Samuels 2017:118). European heritage is universal, the WHC seems to say, in its common importance to all mankind: "inscription of a property as a Cultural Landscape on the [World Heritage List] does send clear messages as to its perceived importance at the global level" (Aplin 2007:441).

The Tokaj wine region became a WHL in 2002 for its nearly 1000-year documented history of winemaking. This was based on several criteria, including (somewhat redundantly) having already been a historically enclosed region since 1737 (Paragraph 24, criterion b [ii]). Other heritage attributes outlined in the UNESCO nomination include evidence relating to tradition, cohesion, and uniqueness of place and product. Finally, the application offers evidence of human-environment interaction: the writers cite Tokaj as an "originally evolved landscape…. [exhibiting] significant material evidence of

[14] The three types include: 1) landscapes signed and created intentionally by humans (e.g. parklands, gardens, often associated with monuments); 2) organically evolved landscape (either a. relict/fossil landscapes in which "an evolutionary process came to an end at some time in the past" with features remaining visible and in material form or b. a continuing landscape that maintains an "active social role", is related closely to traditional lifeways, and "in which the evolutionary process is still in progress" while still exhibiting material evidence of previous evolutionary history); 3) associative cultural landscape which is significant by virtue of strong religious, artistic, or cultural associations of the natural element (material evidence of human activity or evolution may be lacking or altogether absent).

its evolution over time" (Paragraph 39, category ii). The range and reliability of botrytis provided a key original component of demarcating Tokaji regional boundaries, but today's dry wines elide botryfication, and 'quality' terrain and *terroir* rely on novel variables.

How, then, are plants enlisted in the territory-making of *terroir*? The following sections turn to Tokaj's famous, creeping inhabitants. Following Hartigan (2014),

> [w]ith "culture," I'm most interested in returning to "cultivation," the origin of the concept we use so restrictively on humans today. It's key to remember that the usage of "culture" on humans is metaphorical; the word's original, "concrete" meaning had to do with plants and soil.

Taking (agri)cultural heritage literally, the following sections explore the genetic making of the Tokaj region (up to 1880s), its unmaking (1880s), and its remaking (2010s).

b. Varietals: Collections and a history of diversity

The wild grapevine, *V. vinifera spp. sylvestris* was domesticated in the middle east between 6,000-8,000 years ago, with chemical residue evidence suggesting winemaking as early as 8,000 BP in today's Republic of Georgia (at Shulaveri-Gora) and 7,400 BP (Hajji Firuz Tepe) in modern Iran. Reaching the breadth of the Fertile Crescent by roughly 3,000 BCE, the domesticated grapevine, *V. vinifera spp.* followed tradesmen throughout the Mediterranean, and into Eastern Asia by the late second century BCE via the Silk Road.

New *V. vinifera* plants almost always come from *grafting*: a process that creates clones of old vines that are genetically identical reproductions of the "parent" plant. Planting grape seeds is risky because a seed will contain new genetic information from its two parents, creating an entirely new variety (the same is true even with crossings of hermaphroditic grape varietals, such as Chardonnay).

Rather, to maintain pedigree, breeders most typically clone vines. They may also use pollination between varietals to cross established, popular types of *V. Vinifera* (such as Cabernet Sauvignon, which is a cross of Cabernet Franc and Sauvignon blanc) or to merge two species through the pairing of *V. vinifera* and a wild type. The careful breeding practices of today were not so stringently followed before the 20th century; as archival evidence shows, the six legal varietals of today's Tokaj represent a phenotypic and genetic bottleneck.

In the small Tokaji village of Bodrogkisfalu I met Anna, a young woman in her mid-30s who runs a traditional guest house and small winery with her mother. As she toured me through their property, we stopped at a grassy expanse outlined by stakes, each with a small vine at their base. Anna explained with some pride that this was their budding grapevine collection, where they had amassed not only local Tokaji vines, but other old and international types. They had planted over 80 varietals. The goal, Anna explained, was not to make wine from them, but for people to be able to visit, wander, and taste the various types of grapes each autumn.

Anna's grape collection is a quaint (and not uncommon) reminder of the agro-biological diversity of the area. In Tarcal, the regional wine research center has also catalogued over 22 relatively unknown extant varietals indigenous to Tokaj. The 1880s phylloxera epidemic drastically reduced viticultural biodiversity. It is impossible to say exactly how many types were wiped out, but historic texts give some clues. In a 1590 Hungarian-Latin dictionary, about a dozen grape varietals are listed that can be connected to present-day types, including Sárga Muskotály (yellow muscat), Gohér, Fehérszőlő (literally, white grape), and Rózsás (literally, rosy). In 1724, Pál Kéler added five to these, including two types of Furmint (Kéler 1726). János Matolai also wrote in 1744 that a high number of varietals thrived in Tokaj but that Furmint ("Forment") and Fehérszőlő were at that time the most common. He also added another eight varietals to previous accounts (Matolai 1744). An 1803 report

by Pál Kitaibel includes a list of 38 varietals[15] in the Tokaji village of Tállya alone, among them such mainstays as Furmint, Fehérszőlő, and Hárslevelű. The account also includes varietals with such descriptive names as Fekete Góhér (Black Góhér) and Vörös Boros (Red Wine-ish).

In another example, the seven Tokaj-Hegyalji market towns[16] were surveyed in 1803-4 to determine which varietals were worth cultivation and which were problematic or disadvantageous (Szőlő Levél 2011). In the town of Mád, for example, over seventeen types (including white and red varieties) are listed as "representing the true and real hill country wine" with qualities that should be inherited by future grapevines. In the town of Tolcsva alone, 20 varietals were included as good for winemaking (including "all types of Furmint"); nearly as many "bad" types were also listed. Tolcsva's "good" list (like many other villages'), included black (*fekete*) mutations of popular white grapes (e.g. Fekete gohér, Fekete kecskecsecsű).

In 1807, a Parliamentary Assembly aiming to develop the hill country proposed sixteen varietals to be cultivated, along with the eradication of thirty others based on the 1804 surveys (Pap 1985); in this edict, the cultivations of "black grape varietals" was not only permitted but *recommended* (e.g. Varga et al. 2009:10). Support for the popularity of non-white grapes is confirmed in an 1833 list (Kassai 1883). The *Gazdasági Lapok* (a 19th-century weekly paper) between 1853 and 1855 reported accounts of local varietals according to their suitability for various purposes, such as "succulent Aszú

[15] Alak-Urmó (Alanttermő), Aronka (Aranka), Balafánt, Bátay, Budai Góhér, Czigány szőlő, Egri szőlő, Fejér Bogda, Fejér Boros, Fejér Ketske, Csöcsü, Fejér Szőlő, Fekete Góhér, Fekete Jenej (Kadarka), Formint, Gacsal, Gerzsely, Góhér, Gyöngy-Fejér, Hárs-levelő, Járdovány, Juhfark, Leány szőlő, Lelt szőlő, Muskata (valamely muskotály), Nagy Völgyü (Szemendiriai?), Petrezselyem szőlő (Chasselas ciotat), Polyhos, Purcsin, Rosa szőlő, Sárga Rumuny (Romonya), Szabó-samó or Török-hárslevelő, Tök szőlő, Török Góhér, Válas-Demény, Változó Góhér, Vöres Bogda, Vörös Boros (Kitaibel 1803).

[16] Olaszliszka, Mád, Sárosnagypatak, Tállya, Tarcal, Tokaj, Tolcsva

wines" (*zamatos aszúsak*) which contained such members as *Fekete Muskatal* (Black Muscat) and *Veres Hárslevelű* (Red Hárslevelű).[17]

While today only six legal varietals (all white, five 'native') are allowed in Tokaj wine production, this is in stark contrast to the varied and colorful grapes of Tokaj's past[18]. The heterogeneity described in these historic documents is today only hinted-at by the backyard collections of contemporary Tokaj residents like Anna, and many grape types seem to have disappeared entirely, although their extinct status can be difficult to verify. Because past varietals were defined primarily through classification by phenotypic and sensorial traits (i.e., the way they looked and developed, or the way they tasted), contemporary research of local varietals includes the teasing-out of names and overlapping categories using modern methodologies and definitions for varietals (Balling 2015:7). This led not only to multiple names for the same varietal (where visual traits distinguished particular vines from the others), but also in cases where grapes that looked and developed similarly (and thus considered as one varietal) were later discovered to be two varietals.

Not all historic accounts of Tokaj grapes are positive. In 1853, one writer suggests that the "multivarietal-ness" (*sokfajtájúság*) of the region would be acceptable if only the other decent varieties would merge with Furmint. In his view, the real problem was with lesser varieties (e.g. Gerzset, Polyhos, Cigányszili [Gypsy plum]) which were squeezing out the more *noble* breeds with their inferior quality (Havas 1853). Perhaps this wish was granted when, as one local writer notes (Szőlő Levél 2011), the greatest effect of the phylloxera epidemic was "*simplification*" of varietal selection,

[17] Other contemporary accounts include as many as 50 varietals in Tokaj and Tarcal village areas (Demeter 1829).
[18] Many producers make wines with unofficial varietals, but these are not permitted the use of the Tokaj label (they may use a regional name).

where, following the destruction of the vines, only the most promising local types remained as the backbone of wine production: Furmint, Hárslevelű, and Sárga Muskotály.

c. American roots in Tokaj: The "simplification" of a parasite

Tokaj's varied vines were decimated in the late 19th century by phylloxera—a vine-consuming louse of North American origin. Contemporary problems in Tokaj are often traced back to this moment, as when I spoke to Zsombor. As a young Hungarian wine writer and blogger with a background in geography and history, he described what he views as Tokaj's barriers to revival:

> The first problem is the phylloxera. Before the phylloxera, we had totally different types of grapes in Tokaj. We had the Furmint of course, but we had a lot of other grapes, not just the Furmint…. And the roots of the vines now are changed, you know that? So all of the roots are American!

Thanks to the clonability of wine grapes, salvageable local varietals across Europe were grafted onto American rootstock—resistant to Phylloxera because they had come from the same continent as the Phylloxera louse. Per the legislation of 1908, only three permitted varietals were listed as post-phylloxera approved: furmint, sárga muskotály, and hárslevelű (Lambert-Gócs 2010:231). These were grafted onto resistant rootstocks imported from the New World wine regions of North America.

Today, practically all rootstocks used in European wines are North American in origin. The effect of rootstock on the physiology and taste of affected wines is unclear (Gawel et al. 2000, Ewart et al. 1993). According to present laws, today only six approved varietals may be used in the production of Tokaji wines[19], all of which are white. Five have indigenous status; the sixth, sárga muskotály ('yellow muscat'), is an import of Greek origin that has comprised a small fraction of Tokaji plantings

[19] The six presently allowed are Furmint, Hárslevelű, Yellow Muscat, Zéta, Kövérszőlő, and Kabar.

for several centuries (3-5%). Because (according to gas chromatography) the muscat smell overlaps with the coriander seed, it is added in small amounts as an enhancer, almost like a spice (Lambert-Gocs 2010). The selection of these varietals, most recently affirmed in 2006, was not haphazard, but the result of consultation and historic, archival research of historic plantations (Szőlő Levél 2011).

Of the six legally permitted varietals, four are furmint and its immediate "kin". Furmint has always been among the most prevalent in the region, and its popularity is increasing. By the early nineteenth century, furmint's spread can be seen in the abnormalities and number of homonyms (e.g., the twelve names and four "versions" [*változatát*] of furmint mentioned by Görög [1829]). It is the indigenous status of the grape that lends one of its strongest narratives and its right to inhabit the region, an exercise that appeals to modern scientific methodologies for determining parentage and origin. As Ákos, a hospitality and wine expert explained to me in the lobby of an exclusive hotel in Budapest:

> Furmint is, again, a native varietal…It used to cover *vast* territories of Hungarian vineyards. I mean to use the word *vast*. …It really grows wonderful wines, everywhere in this part of the world. But then came the phylloxera, this insect which killed vineyards by 1900. But then, even in the reconstruction, Furmint was [Tokaj's] hero….

There are a lot of wines everyone likes: Chardonnay, Cabernet, Merlot. You know, Hungarians are different from the rest of Europe; when you keep growing your native varietals, you remain *unique*.

A problem, however, arises from the name itself. This means—for Hungarian wines with non-Latin names, "It's almost 'mission impossible' to earn international recognition with a wine if it's made of a native varietal". As Ákos—a fluent English-speaker—points out, this is especially true of a

varietal that sounds like the English words “fur” and “mint”: two characteristics he cannot associate with palatable wine. Another wine writer, an English immigrant to Hungary, suggested to tasting group the native Hárslevelű varietal is a *real* mouthful, but “Furmint? It’s a kind of easy one to say, isn’t it? Furmint. Sounds ok, doesn’t sound *too* bad.”

This was echoed by several producers in Tokaj, including Kristof, a middle-aged owner of a small, family production, who lamented that “you need to be creative; just writing ‘Tokaji Furmint’ on something will not be enough…. This is unintelligible for the customer.” Perhaps worse than being merely incomprehensible, he explains, “many people [still] associate Furmint with heavy, old, oxidized, not-so-nice, acidic wine”, referencing the traditional aszú wines of Tokaj’s past. Considering this negative (or non-existent) reputation, [re]claiming Tokaj as world heritage must take new aim. Enlisting its nonhuman inhabitants as authenticated natives provides an objective starting point in making the taste of place.

III. “GRAPES ARE LIKE US”: IDENDITY AND INDIGENEITY

a. A Taste of “Central Europe”

In the spring of 2017, the annual Taste of Central Europe[20] wine show was held in a glamorous Budapest hotel. The programming featured many dozens of wineries from the CEE region, along with masterclasses and invited guest speakers, workshops, and more casual tasting opportunities. One highlight of the event was a set of two tasting-presentations by Swiss ampelographer and renown wine expert Sandro Tourpinet, who—with two colleagues—literally wrote the book on grape DNA and parentage. In his presentation titled *Blood Brothers: Our Hungaricum[21] grape varietals’ long-lost*

[20] This event title is a pseudonym.
[21] Hungaricum, or Hungarikum, is “a collective term indicating a value worthy of distinction and highlighting within a unified system of qualification, classification, and registry and which represents the high performance of Hungarian people thanks to its typically Hungarian attribute, uniqueness, specialty and quality” (Hungarikum.hu). It is supported by Act XXX of 2012 to aid Hungarians in identifying their own values and “contribute to the promotion of collected values” (Hungarikum.hu).

twins (*Vérrokonok: Avagy Hungarikum szőlőfajtáink távolba szakadt ikertestvérei*), he led a guided wine-tasting-cum-lecture. An audience of over 100 attendees sat at long tables, each place set with several glasses, a tasting list, and an earpiece we could use to receive a live Hungarian translation of the mostly English-language presentation. At the front was a stage and a large screen, which displayed a PowerPoint presentation. The line-up included five pairs of wines to be tasted side-by-side: of each pairing, the first included a popular CEE varietal followed by its geographically distant "blood brother".

Sandro began his talk with an introduction to grape DNA and his working definition of *varietal*: the offspring of two parents that have crossed, often spontaneously, resulting in progeny with a unique DNA—and not clones or mutations occurring in clones. For example:

> In *pinot*, we have almost 1000 of these different clones…and all these clones together constitute a grape variety, a grape *cultivar*. And at the origin, you always have a grape seed, and for a grape seed you need to have sexuality; you need to have pollen fertilizing the pistil. So you need to have a father and a mother…. So, grapes are like us. They all have one father, one mother.
>
> So, you have pinot, pinot *noir*, pinot *gris*, pinot *blanc*—the same variety that had some accidents: color mutations. *Color* accidents…. But all of these come from one single grape, *pinot*. Only one single seed gave us the whole pinot branch. And this is not easy, especially for wine-makers, to accept: that pinot noir and pinot blanc are the same.

Thus, he lays the groundwork for a discussion of parentage analysis in grapes that relies not on visual or taste-able qualities (as in most 18th- and 19th-century cataloging of local varietals), but through

comparing grape genomes, eventually reaching the key topic of discussion: Hungarian varietals and their provenance.

Tokaji hero furmint is the first to be discussed-tasted. Sandro begins by asking who has heard of *Gouais blanc*—a very old variety from Northeastern France/Western Germany. When only a few people raise their hands, he goes on to explain that, while not common today, without *Gouais blanc* it would be impossible to drink many of today's favorites. Preparing us to sample this uncommon, but vital link in the chain of indigenous Hungarian types, he explains of *Gouais blanc*:

> This grape had a bad reputation…. because this variety has very big bunches, very big clusters, it produces a lot, it has a high acidity, low level of alcohol, and if you don't prune it—if you let it grow—it produces really, *really* a *lot*, so then the wine is quite tart, difficult to drink.

Gouais blanc grapes are so unappetizing, he explains, that they are used by an acquaintance as a sort of "gatekeeper" varietal to deter anyone who should stumble upon his vineyard, where "they used to plant this variety around the *good* vineyards to prevent the people from stealing the grapes!"

Along with its low status and generally underwhelming taste, Sandro explains that centuries ago it was mentioned in France as the varietal most resistant to frost—this having been written just before the "Little Ice Age" that occurred in Europe between 1650 and 1750, during which many vineyards (in southern England, for example) disappeared. Sandro explains the lucky hardiness of the otherwise underwhelming vine:

> That's, in my opinion, the reason why we still have [*Gouais blanc*] around…. so, I wanted to start with *Gouais blanc*, with this, because it is related to

> *Furmint*. Furmint, of course, is Hungarian—first mentioned in 1611, so a very old variety.

He supports the age of this variety with the number of names given to Furmint, as well as the number of clones, noting, "the more ancient variety it is, the higher the number of clones or variants."

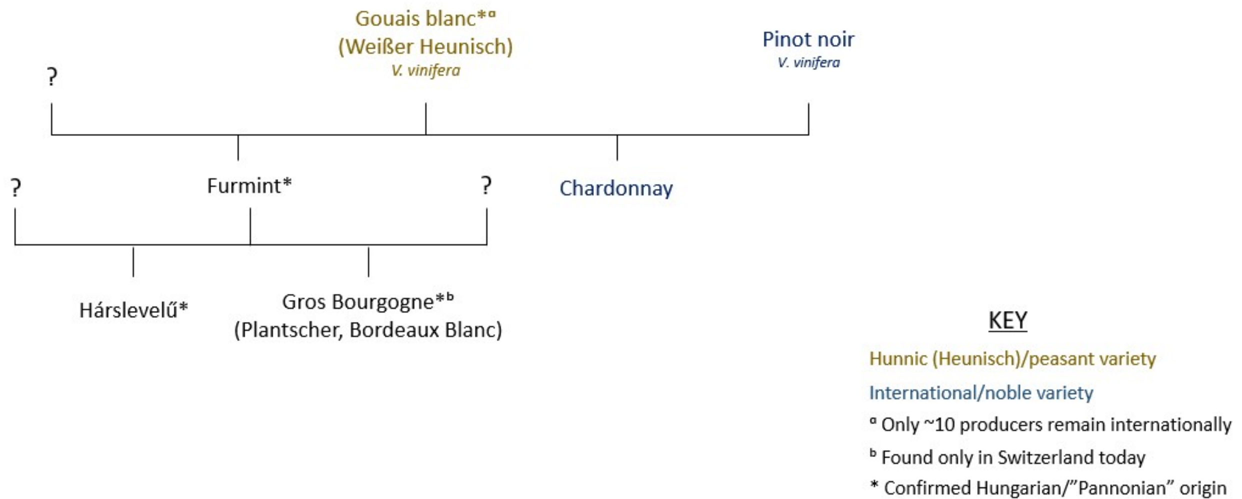

Figure 12: A phylogenetic tree of the primary varietals discussed

The importance of identifying varietals by sequencing DNA (typically at 60 DNA sites, according to Sandro's analyses) is relevant not only to determining the parentage of a varietal (Figure 12)—and thus its status as indigenous or introduced, old or new—but also to categorize it within a broader set of bio-geographically organized species and subspecies:

> The [grape] family is Vitaceae; it has 13 genera[22], one of them is *Vitis*. [Vitis] has 60 species, half in America, half in Eurasia, only one in Western Europe:

[22] Now 14 genera at time of writing (see Christenhusz and Byng 2016).

> *Vitis vinifera*. It's the only one with which you can make serious wines…. Then Vitis is subdivided into two subspecies: *sylvestris*, which is the wild grape, and *vinifera*[23], which is the cultivated grape. And this one we usually make into three groups: *occidentalis, pontica, orientalis*[24]. It's geographically separated, but also morphologically separated.

Broadly, these three categories represent 1) the oldest grapes, local to the origin of cultivation and its spread throughout the middle east (*occidentalis*); 2) newest grapes present in today's western Europe, adapted to cooler climates and representing the "highly celebrated varieties of Germany and France" (Hornsey 2015:2.1) (*orientalis*); and 3) possibly intermediary group of large-berried grapes that spread through southern Europe and into contemporary Hungary (*pontica*). These three groupings are supported by the genetic study of cultivated grape germplasm, which suggests a "single, complex gene pool" with three distinct subgroups (Aradhya et al. 2003).

In this way, the occidental/oriental divide at play in the 'ghost' borders of East/West Europe is reproduced among grape genetics and their taste characters. As Sandro presented during the lecture-tasting (Figure 13):

> You might have heard that historically we had two different categories of wine: the Frankish and the Hunnic. The Frankish were the wines for the Franks—the Frank people in the ancient empire. And the Huns—this is a map

[23] Ssp. *vinifera*, referred to as ssp. *sativa* in some classifications.
[24] The division of V. vinifera into three groups, or ecotypes (occidentalis, pontica, and orientalis), was originally the work of Russian botanist Negrul, who studied under Nikolay Ivanovich Vavilov (1887-1943), the man who theorized correlation between highest genetic diversity and centers of origin for a given species, and who thus assigned the South Caucasus as the center of origin for V. vinifera. Negrul's division of V. vinifera into three Proles (ecotypes), was based on geographic area, morphological traits, and physiological reactions, noting that higher numbers of recessive traits were present in the oldest cultivars (Hornsey 2015).

of the Huns' empire before they were defeated. So, on the eastern part you have the Huns, and on the western part you have the Franks.

So, in the Franks' wines you had *Pinot*—mostly the *noble* wines. So, the *noble* Franks, the noble emperors, were drinking *noble* wines. And the *barbarians*—the Huns—would drink low-quality wines.

The low-quality grape at hand, the Gouais blanc—also known as *Heunisch Weiss* (White Hunnic)—represents a classic peasant, *Hunnic* grape.

Figure 13: Mapping the Wine of the Franks and the Wine of the Huns. Budapest, March 2017. Photo by the author.

b. Frankish and Hunnic wines: Historic-geographic legacies

This division of cultivars along Frankish/Hunnic—a roughly West/East duality—extends well beyond Sandro's explanation of peasant and noble wines in organizing other aspects of Tokaji authenticity. The UNESCO Nomination of 2000 states that, in "Tokaj, grape growing and cellar construction date back to an eastern legacy, rather than to the Roman heritage" and attributes this to the influence of the Kabar tribe that settled in the Carpathian Basin alongside ancient Hungarians (13). Yet, just a few paragraphs later it suggests Hungarian viticulture results from a "twofold origin: It is partly nourished by western and Latin roots, and partly by eastern traditions" (13).

Indications of eastern influence comes from Hungarian winemaking vocabulary, evidence that ostensibly dates to a time when Hungarians lived "in the antechamber of the Caucasians, where they acquired their winemaking skills" (13). The name of Tokaj, for example, is said to be an Armenian loanword for "grape" that entered Hungarian speech around the 10th century (UNESCO Nomination 2000:24). Further, the authors explain:

> Tokaj is claimed by many with certitude to have been the centre of Attila's Hun empire. This claim may well be true. What is an undisputed fact, however, is that the region became all-important for the occupying Hungarian tribes, who cherished their kinship with the Huns (31).

Thus, the writers assume, early Hungarians probably recognized the potential of Tokaj's lands for growing grapes early on, where they would have "tried to transplant the knowledge they had accumulated in the Caucasians" (14). This pleasant, if assumptive, origin story presents an interesting balancing act in Western and Eastern heritage, linking contemporary Tokaj to the origin of winemaking in the Caucasus (McGovern 2006).

In winemaking, so-called "noble" grapes (what Sandro refers to above as *Frankish*) were, historically, predominantly French in origin and included Sauvignon blanc, Riesling, Chardonnay, Pinot noir, Cabernet sauvignon, and Merlot. These were traditionally associated with highest-quality wines, namely because they were thought to retain their own flavor character regardless of the geography in which they are planted. This predictable feature of "noble" vines led to name recognition and inspired trends that have prompted the planting of single-varietal vineyards around the world—a trend that has eroded viticultural biodiversity and leading some to critique "King Cab the colonizer, the conqueror" (Clarke and Rand 2007:47), or Chardonnay "the great Satan; the ruthless coloniser and destroyer of the world's vineyards and the world's palates" (191).

As it happens, it is not the predictable, dominating flavor of the grape that characterizes high-quality wines today (as with the historic 'noble' grapes) but rather the *taste of place* in the final product that makes it 'authentic'. According to a popular regional tourist brochure handed to me during my first visit to Tokaj, "of all Tokaj's varietals, the furmint is the best-suited to express the *terroir*". According to Petra, another young wine professional I spoke with in Budapest, furmint is "a quite neutral type of grape that fully shows the *terroir*". Furmint's ability to transmit the unique Tokaji "taste of place" is evidenced, according to producers, in the *minerality* expressed through the vine and into the glass: a social-scientific codification for place-based quality (Brawner et al. forthcoming 2018).

Narratives like these inspire indigenous grape enthusiasts and motivate lecture-tastings such as Sandro's, where he insisted, "if you like different, old, obscure grape varieties, you must drink them to save them!... if we all drink the same variety, all the other ones disappear." His introduction to *Gouais blanc*, with a name that reflected its long-considered association with "peasant wine" (*gou* being an Old French pejorative), spoke to this point. *Gouais blanc* has since become extinct in France

and was even banned from the country twice, with limited success[25]; it is found today only in marginal areas of wine production, including smallholdings in Central and Eastern Europe. Today, Sandro explains, DNA profiling has revealed not only the provenance of the peasant-grade *Gouais blanc* as hailing from CEE, but also its relevance as the matriarch in long line of international "noble" varietals as Zinfandel and Chardonnay (Bowers et al. 1999). Perhaps summarizing the reaction of wine professionals to this news, the famed wine critic Jancis Robinson remarked that "it unsettles all our preconceptions about vine breeding" (Wade 1999). As a result, the authentication of Gouais blanc has established a lineage for Furmint that secures a regional pedigree, bolstering claims of authenticity at the genetic level. Not only does this magnify the "local" status of Furmint, but suggests it is no less *noble* than its famous "French" half-siblings (who, by the same logic, might be more "Hungarian" than French!)

Throughout the remainder of Sandro's talk, we are led to compare Gouais blanc to its "Hungarian" offspring, Furmint. Sandro explains that very few people bother to make wine from *Gouais blanc*, and he gives the sense that *Gouais blanc* is produced more for the sake of curiosity, for posterity, perhaps, than for any commercial purpose (he knows of only eleven producers globally). As we sip the wine, Sandro explains, "…it's quite interesting, from an academic point of view, to taste this wine…. It's the mother of Chardonnay. And you can realize where Chardonnay also gets its acidity." We are thus led to consider the pedigree of *Gouais blanc* and its noble (or peasant) offspring through taste, an activity that is echoed in other wine tastings and presentations. In one presentation in Budapest, Kati—co-owner of a family winery in Tokaj—explained to her international audience, "Furmint is right up there with Chardonnay and Riesling and all the best grapes that you know. And

[25] In 1732, an act of the Parliament of Besancon tried to eliminate the grape, describing it as "rustic", "inferior" but also "high-yielding". The Parliament of Metz took similar steps the same year.

Hárslevelű is an offspring of Furmint, so Furmint is the daddy of Hárslevelű. And Hárslevelű was also born in Tokaj!"

Back out in Tokaj, origins are often brought up by producers. As Kende, a young winemaker with a background in philosophy shared with me just two weeks after Sandro's lecture,

> Researchers think that Furmint is a local type, and now they're running genetic tests to see what grape types its ancestors—let's say, its parents—could be….and legends can be made up any time. So yes, Furmint was born here in [the village of] Erdőbénye, of course, and it's a local type…it's an indigenous type…
>
> It's certain that, from the technological point of view, it is Hungarian. Well, its origins and its genetic code or map are certainly more complicated, based on what I've read about it, at least.
>
> Not many people will question it this way though, with regards to genetics and history. What's more important is, if you try to find the answer from the market's point of view, the great wine regions of the world become what they are because of their land, their climate, and their technologies that fortuitously meet with a type of grape.

Kende's take on the origin of Furmint is relatively dispassionate compared to others. Entire festivals are held for the grape each year, and a marketing initiative (Furmint USA) is dedicated to bringing furmint wines to North America. One furmint-specific Tokaj pamphlet states: "for a country being so peripheral and, in some sense, exotic on the wine world-map as Hungary, it is the Furmint that can secure a rise to greatness" (2015). While furmint has always been a mainstay in the region (about 66%

of planted vineyard surface area when this fieldwork began in 2015), a 2016 survey of large producers estimated 82% of new plantings were furmint vines (Tokaj Today 2016).

c. Traveling authenticity: Cloning and colonizing

It is thanks to the "cloneable" feature of grape vines (through propagation via cuttings) that *Gouais blanc* and Furmint DNA has been replicated in cuttings and introduced to various regions by traders, conquerors, or travelers (the Romans, Ottomans, Germans, Italians, even contemporary North Americans). Even the UNESCO nomination describes the reputation of indigenous vines and includes a few historic anecdotes, including a notable "cuttings transaction" in which Prince Stegan Cel Mare of Moldova imported rootstock from Tokaj that turned out to be the indigenous Kövérszőlő (the contemporary Cotnar wine region is thought to be named for the vine). Empress Catherine II, upon annexation of the Crimean Peninsula, imported and "attempted to naturalize Tokaj's viticulture in the Crimea" with 19,000 stocks of furmint and hárslevelű vines.

Furmint travels in recent history as well, as English wine writer Joseph explained to a group of Furmint tasters in Budapest: "There is a Hungarian who actually planted furmint in California, in Napa Valley. …and we had his wine recently, and it was—it was missing the acidity that you get *here*. It may be that it is too warm there, or it's the wrong *site*…." Hungarian wine writer Zsombor later explained to me "…you can find Furmint in Austria, too. They call it *Zapfner*, and you can find also some furmint in Croatia. They call it *Mosler*. And in the northern part of Slovenia…Furmint is the flagship variety. They call it *Sipon*"—*Sipon*, he says, legendarily comes from "*C'est bon!* (That's good!)", the phrase exclaimed by none other than Napoleon Bonaparte when he stopped for a drink mid-campaign. But *Sipon* is quickly losing its local name, he reports, because "the Hungarian government is making a big effort to market furmint—in the states with the *Furmint USA* project and *Blue Danube* wines, and so on. So that's why the Slovenians have started to call the *sipon* furmint".

Situating the grapes themselves as the objects of historic, international desire, further demonstration of this globalizing was discussed in the second pairing during Sandro's tasting: the Hungarian *hárslevelű* grape (a "child" of Furmint) paired with wine from the *Gros Bourgogne*, a very rare grape grown only in Switzerland. Through parentage analyses, Sandro and his colleagues have confirmed *Gros Bourgogne* to be another child of Furmint (and so the "half-sibling" of Hárslevelű), despite being found only in Switzerland. He explains this connection as an experiential part of consuming the *Gros Bourgogne* wine, which stands out from other "Swiss locals":

> If you ever go to Switzerland and you taste some Swiss wines, you can—ok, maybe I'm patriotic, but we have really interesting wines. Especially white wines. This one [*Gros Bourgogne*] has *nothing* to do with all the rest. It has always been something *extraterrestrial* compared to the other Swiss wines because it comes from Tokaj, so it has a completely different genetic—a different personality….It's a really interesting wine; it's a survivor of ancient Tokaji people coming to Switzerland.

Like Furmint and its parent, Gouais blanc, both Hárslevelű and Gros Bourgogne carry the flavor associated with its origins. Identity and authenticity—along with their tastes—are *located*—not in a landscape, but in a *genome*. This makes intangible heritage *tangible* and the taste of place active, as genes are mobile.

IV. BLOOD AND SOIL BROTHERS: NATURALIZING AUTHENTICITY

a. Nature/nation

Heller (2014) observes, "claims to authenticity are linked to Romantic views of the nation as natural, with a core, or essence, located outside of history" (146). She suggests this to be the foundation of Wolf's (1982) concept of indigeneity, which is mobilized at national and continental scales. This

was the case in October 1997, when the Council of Europe launched a one-year campaign in two Romanian cities called "*Europe, a common heritage*," which promoted the cultural and natural heritage shared by Europeans. In one promotional publication, it was supposed that "[h]eritage contributes to our own common identity, to our sense of being part of the same history, of the same land" (Ásgrímsson in EC Naturopa 1999:3) The message continues on a following page:

> Biodiversity conjures up one of the few new values to have developed during the 20th century, namely the right to be different. What goes for humans also goes for plants. Just as the human race displays a multiplicity of cultures, ethnic groups, and languages, so too the plant kingdom offers itself up in the great diversity of its species. (Pelt 1997 cited in Council of Europe Naturopa 1999:5)

The parallel between biodiversity and the "right to be different" in the common heritage that is the European landscape seems to imply that it is biodiversity across a shared landscape that legitimizes citizens' European identity.

The protection of landscapes inspires the mind of people who imagine themselves as parts of a *biome* (Kirksey 2014)—a collection of habitats comprised of a complex community of organisms formed in response to physical and climatic pressures (Shelford 1945). Conceptualizing territory as a multispecies web of actors, "[b]iomes are acquiring a public the way nation did about 200 years ago. That is, they are a basis for thinking politically about our relationship with flora and fauna, our relationship with terrains" (Hartigan 2014). In the Tokaj biome, efforts to authenticate 'Hungarian' types are key to creating an authentic *terroir*, although the enlistment of plants as *native* or *invasive* is not without consequences.

Territorial metaphors are readily extended to more-than-human worlds, where plants 'compete' for resources of soil nutrition, sunlight, water, and space, and natives battle outsiders in "invasion" ecology (Elton 2000). Extending the biome concept, popular scientific discourse thus "delivers powerful messages about the proper place of plants, rooting them to national and ethnic territories, reifying xenophobic ideologies and reinforcing received notions about territorialized forms of national and ethnic belonging" (Besky and Padwe 2016:20 citing Larson 2005).

The ratification of grapevines into geographically contingent categories of *noble* or *peasant* "is a representational act that has material consequences" (Besky and Padwe 2016:14). Once categorized, however, the materiality of vines (their DNA and thus ancestral tree) has representational and ideological consequences. Germplasm becomes socially valuable as plants become proxies: the corroboration of furmint as native; the restoring of its place as a noble 'blood brother'; revealing the permeable nature of the historic Frankish/Hunnic divide. In actions like these, "plants and animals wage territorial struggles metonymically, standing in for the ethnic and national groups whose names they often bear" (Elton 2000).

This question about the nature of varietals—where they belong, which are native, colonizers, weeds, or "invasive", recalls similar anthropocentric conceptualizations of categories of being. In her work on the commodification of authenticity, Heller (2014:139) suggests "the idea that products are uniquely characterized by the natural conditions of production [is] much the same [as] ideas we had about nation and race in the years before World War II". Unlike her Quebequois wine case, in which producers index the Romantic French rural ideals, Tokaji authenticity is produced through vines that showcase literal tastes of place.

Furmint is said to be Hungarian, a native of Tokaj, and thus an ideal transmitter of *terroir* in dry winemaking. "It is said in French" explains Barham (2003), "…that certain customs or idioms are

rooted in their *terroir*, or that a person strongly conveys a sense of the *terroir* of their birth and upbringing" (131). Similarly, the use of empirical markers of authenticity, such as DNA evidence, externalizes authenticity and locates a regional identity outside of people themselves. This situates plants—as indigenous, *hyper*-locals—as co-producers of authentic products and tastes. Authenticity is thus closely linked to a concept of citizenship (Heller 2014) that is more-than-human.

b. Boundary-making and 'planty' agency

Furmint and other indigenous varietals are not only boundary plants (Sheridan 2016) as "vegetative manifestations of social institutions" but are boundary-forging, territory-expanding plants. Through their continued presence—even on imported rootstock—a version of history is legitimized. They legitimize territory, ideology, and a version of history through their reproducible, material, constitutive parts. They are also *impressions* (Hayward 2010), carrying evidence (genetic, phenotypic, organoleptic) of a social, political past with taste preferences and political allegiances. Furmint genes thus act as evidence of a social history and as tool for crafting new political-ecological futures.

It is furmint's ability to be affected by multispecies others (e.g., humans, botrytis fungus) that defines its being and ultimately gives it agency. Understanding furmint's role as active participant thus requires a relational materialist perspective (Anderson and Harrison 2016); in this light, planty agency may be viewed as its influence over other bodies, resulting from material (taste, visceral) connections to them (Brice 2014). This agency becomes "most tangible when the material textures of plant bodies become embroiled in the conduct of more-than-human social life, and thus become capable of provoking humans to act differently" (Brice 2014:947 citing Hustak and Myers 2012). Adding to this, I suggest these affected human actions are symptomatic of affected human experience: the taste of furmint (or of the Tokaji *terroir* on which it thrives) is the mechanism of its "provocation".

c. Marshalling evidence of nobility

What makes a grape noble? Historically, sensory methods (visual assessment, flavor, aroma) were modes of defining quality: noble varietals were identified by their *consistency* in taste across terrains. This paved the way for the export of trending varietals across the globe, and the internationalization of a selection of (predominantly 'French') varietals. Whether this grew out of—or inspired—a tradition of Frankish/Hunnic grapes is impossible to say. Today, however, there is a trending interest for food and drink with unique, taste-able provenance. Thus, in today's "taste of place", it is not the prevailing grape characteristic that sells, but a grape's neutrality—its ability to transmit its unique *terroir*. Thus, rather than qualifying as *authentic* via tasting panels, production methods, or the chemical composition of its products, it is the furmint grape that legitimizes the cultural landscape—the *terroir*—as authentically Hungarian in its 'mineral', dry-style wines.

Yet what is rarely discussed, whether in academic circles or amongst producers or lawmakers, is the abstraction and frequent contradiction that emerges in discussions of concrete identifiers of authenticity in *terroir* or cultural landscapes. For example, in Cassis, France, quality *terroir* is identified as containing high pH soils and sun-drenched Mediterranean climes, while "people from elsewhere see these same factors as decidedly unsuitable for making good wine" (Gade 2004: 864). Indeed, many producers in Tokaj would argue the pitfalls of high pH as detrimental for producing unique wines with distinctive minerality (Brawner et al. forthcoming 2018). Given the paradoxical requirements of UNESCO HCL requirements (e.g. evidence of both continuity and evolution), the quest for authenticity enlists various forms of knowledge, historic legacies (and legends), and an array of instruments aimed at authenticating components of the landscape as both indigenous and, simultaneously, legitimate objects worthy of international concern.

As observed of protected landscapes,

> …it is not authenticity per se but the 'question of authenticity' that creates *terroir* and heritage designations, for through acts of identification, debate, contestation and negotiation, individuals and groups are bound together in a substantive and organized fashion, and the notion of *terroir* takes discursive form (Brulotte and Di Giovine 2014:8).

In HCLs, human-nature relations—imprinted the past— explain the present and predict the future. Thus, as French wine makers "reach into the past to validate the present" (Gade 2004: 862), Tokaji producers analyze the present to create a future in which Tokaji wines are international.

The focus on genetics and techno-scientific modes of locating authenticity in 'indigenous' varietals parallels tendencies in the modern Hungarian ethnic nationalist trend. Identifying 'locals' who 'belong' as rudimentary and inscribed in DNA also act, as diasporic natives, to colonize and claim spaces outside the contemporary, truncated state borders. It is also knowledge of an international sort; while tastes are shifty experiences beyond the limits of narrative, genetic composition is material, transportable, and translatable. It speaks to rationality and elevated ways of knowing rather than the base senses of taste and smell—although these experiences are associated with authenticated, native grapes.

This is not surprising, as the "sense of place" is never felt to be more urgently in need of protecting as during times of crises, when, "[b]eleaguered by loss and change, we keep our bearings only by clinging to remnants of stability" (Lowenthal 2011:6). The Tokaji landscape has no shortage of historical trauma and disjuncture; in the last century alone, it bore witness to the devastations of two world wars, genocide, several decades of communism and industrialization, the impoverished uncertainty of the 90s, and rising nationalism today—changes that have very literally shaped the landscape (Chapter Eight). At the same time, perennial furmint grapevines have outlasted their human

counterparts; their clones have outlived generations, wars, and empires—there are few more profound examples of the essentially momentary interaction humans have with plants in their lifecycle.

V. CONCLUSIONS: PURITY AND POST-SOCIALISM

Because the modern "authentic turn" in foods is tied to opposition to industrialization and globalization, wines of the communist era that aimed for *quantity* production—being neither particularly local nor emphasizing indigenous varieties—are not considered 'authentic' by most. Revolutionary changes have segmented people's interpretations of history in terms of which periods ''count'' as eras of authenticity (e.g. Aistara 2014:14). The reaction is a trend toward simplification and purification that, in Tokaj, begins with the "simplification" of the 19th-century arrival of phylloxera. As a result, the region today is strictly white, whereas before the invasion much (if not most) varietal diversity was in colored berry types (Balassa 1991, see also Varga et al. 2009).

As in Aistara's (2014) account of Latvian wines, which are made from hybrids of *V. vinifera* and locally adapted *V. amurensis* or *V. labrusca* types, there is a direct push for "purity" using international, noble types. In the Tokaji case, the drive for purity emphasizes the native furmint and its offspring *because* it has been genetically linked to the international noble types; it is made more credible by this link. Likening this tendency to Latour's (1993) modernity, "which aims for purification and the elimination of troublesome hybrids," Aistara sees Latvian wine choices as the playing-out of "a vision of European and historical purity to replace the hybrid lived realities of Soviet and post-Soviet life" (14).

Here, a critical consideration of local/localized foods is needed; as Vidal observes, "even the greatest enthusiasts of hybridity in all other domains of life seem slightly more reluctant to follow the same credo when it comes to what they eat" (Vidal 2005:47). Similarly, on the question of protecting intangible heritage, Ruggles and Silverman (2009:2) ask the provocative question: "could a

government take measures to perpetuate their culture by restricting their assimilation, keeping them ethnographically 'pure'?" I suggest we may also extend this to the question of perpetuating agriculture and purifying landscapes by restricting assimilation and preventing hybridization—including consequences for biodiversity.

The narrative of traveling Hungarian (or "*Pannonian*" or "*Austro-Hungarian*") germplasm is one that re-tells the history of European power relations and colonialization, shifting Hungary from the sidelines as a marginal player to the origin of the fame and fortune enjoyed by its western winemaking counterparts. In this framing, wine grapes not only represent edible identities (Di Giovine and Brulotte 2014) but are proxy ambassadors for their human counterparts: historically, "Tokaji Aszú made money as well as nurtured relations" (UNESCO Nomination 2000:34). Just as socialism in CEE states was "domesticated" through the practice of everyday life (as was revolution [Creed 1997] and neoliberalism [Stenning et al. 2010]), so, too, has *authenticity* become the subject of very literal domestication.

CHAPTER 6

SLOW WINE: THE NOBLE WORK OF ROT

Tokaji is a unique wine that has the power to make the rules rather than simply follow them.

László Alkonyi, 2004

I. INTRODUCTION

a. Tokaji Aszú: A 17th-century origin story

According to one version of the popular legend, in 1630 the evangelist Szepsi Laczkó Máté—who would otherwise have led the villagers of Erdőbénye to the wine harvests in early October, as usual—hesitated for many days for fear of an imminent Ottoman attack. By the time the villagers finally made their way into the vineyards (sometime in early November), they were dismayed to find the berries themselves had become the victims of an assault: shriveled into dark, nearly black clusters, the grapes were rotten—infected with a fungus that had consumed the grapes' flesh through their skins.

But! Being resilient and innovative Hungarian villagers, they decided to harvest the raisin-like berries, though they were too dry to press for juice. As winemaker Panni explained to me:

> …they couldn't press it, so they took the wine from the previous year and they poured it on the [rotten] berries and they soaked the berries in the wine for a day, for a night, for 24 hours—who knows how long. And then they pressed it, and they put [it] in the barrel, and when they tasted what they made, they were like, "*Wow*. This is *good*. Why don't we make it like this next year?"

Thus, wine was made from 'raisins': the first *Tokaji Aszú*. It is said the villagers presented the wine as an Easter gift for Zsuzsanna Lórántffy, a local woman engaged to Prince György Rákócszi I of the Principality of Transylvania (of which Tokaj was a part during this time). Indeed, the wine was unlike any other, for the fungus (*Botrytis cinerea; B. cinerea*) that had desiccated the berries altered their taste in such a desirable fashion that it became revered, sought-after, and the envy of monarchs and nobility for centuries. This "noble rot" had fashioned the first aszú wine vis-a-vis a serendipitous, "desirable meeting between a fruit and a fungus" (Magyar and Soos 2016:31)[26].

b. More-than-human tastes

The "meeting between a fruit and fungus" is at the heart of both ancient and contemporary origin stories around the famous Aszú wines that once gave the region—a UNESCO Historic Cultural Landscape (HCL) since 2002—its great esteem:

> Thanks to the unmatched natural endowments of the land, the growers of Tokaj hail and welcome *Botrytis cinerea*, a mold considered to be the arch enemy in most other wine regions in the world. This fungus attacks the vineyards of the Foothills each year, although not always to the same extent. Due to the favourable climatic conditions, the ensuing infection is not gray rot but a *noble* variety; the one responsible for botrytized, or *Aszú*, berries (2000:7-8, emphasis added).

The result "can be so perfect that it becomes feasible, indeed desirable, to pick the shriveled berries out of the bunch one by one" (8). This labor-intensive, grape-by-grape harvesting of only the berries affected by noble rot (and skipping those with other rots) results in the honey-colored Tokaji Aszú

[26] In fact, we know with some certainty that the use of botrytized berries in Tokaj was already widely practiced by the early 1600s and the Rákócszi family profited from its trade, funding Habsburg resistance and solidifying allegiance with Transylvania, much to the monarch's disdain.

wine of historic fame. Today, it is not uncommon to hear of locals taking a small glass of aszú with breakfast—as one older Hungarian man called it, "a glass of sunshine". In Budapest, one may encounter aszú gelato, or be recommended a dose of rich Aszú Esszencia to treat an ailment. Face cream with Tokaji Aszú wine extract is sold in drug stores for its restorative and moisturizing properties. The nectar of aszú berries is even mentioned in Hungary's national anthem.

In this chapter, I attend to the more-than-human winemakers of Tokaji Aszú wines through a multispecies ethnographic account, arguing that place-based tastes are the co-creation of more-than-human, socio-ecological networks. Highlighting the biological, political, and social lives of non-human beings represents "an anthropology that is not just confined to the human but is concerned with the effects of our entanglements with other kinds of living selves" (Kohn 2007:4 in Kirksey and Helmreich 2010:545). Anticipating the planty-agency of grapes as *blood brothers* (Chapter Five) this chapter investigates the active participation of a fungus in taste-of-place-making.

c. Dispatches from the fifth kingdom

As neither human nor animal, fungi represent the fifth kingdom of yeasts, molds, and mushrooms. Recently underscored as productive agents in spaces of precarity (Tsing 2015), fungal lifeways provide insight into "life's emergence within a shifting assemblage of agentive beings" (Ogden et al. 2013:6); we have a lot to learn from the interactions between these tiny, unpredictable organisms and their mutual shaping forces (Kirksey and Helmreich 2010:545). As Tsing describes of Matsutake mushrooms in "blasted landscapes", fungi offer the "possibility of life in capitalist ruins" (2015). In this chapter, however, we view fungi in the context of socialist ruins, or, in late capitalist beginnings.

Per Haraway's (2008) rejection of human exceptionalism, the emerging multi-species tradition in anthropology zooms in on the "contact zone" between beings, bringing the more-than-human lives

once relegated to the margins of anthropological inquiry into the foreground. In this view, plants, people, and fungi are co-conspirators, “messmates” (Haraway), or “mixmates” (Franklin 2008). As such, theirs are political lives (e.g. Agamben 1998, Paxson 2008), subject to/object of power relations (Kirksey and Helmreich 2010:545) but also affecting the course of their own history and the nature of their very existence. This take on ethnography is ultimately an “anthropology of life”, which is “not just confined to the human but is concerned with the effect of our entanglements with other kinds of living selves” (Kohn 2007:4).

Decentering the human from the focus of anthropological inquiry emphasizes the non-hierarchical nature of interspecies relationships, who “become” only by their relation to one another (Haraway 2008). Such a paradigm is not merely a celebration of the intermingling of human and non-human but suggests critical questions of who/what benefits, and for whom/what is justice (Starr 1991). In attending to multispecies beings, I sketch the relationships that define humanity. These assemblages of *H. sapiens* and other beings are thus not new, ‘exotic’ spaces through which we carry out fieldwork in order to flesh-out our human ‘otherness’; rather, they encourage us to move beyond a creative voicing of nonhuman agency toward a critical and radical rethinking of our analytical categories with reference to all lives (Kohn 2010 in Kirksey and Helmreich 2010:563).

Concurrent with the rise of multispecies approaches is the increasing attention to labor in food studies (Besky and Brown 2015, Besky and Blanchette 2018) and the reconceptualization of work as a more-than-human endeavor (e.g. Mitchell and Hamilton 2018, Besky and Blanchette 2018, Coulter 2016, Moore 2015, Battistoni 2017, Münster 2016). There is already much overlap in these literatures; even the pervasive “ecosystem services” language rings with labor metaphor, positioning nonhuman endeavors as market-valued and thus implicitly instilled with labor value and prompting political theorists to forward new conceptualizations of more-than-human work (e.g. Battistoni 2017).

Does Botrytis cinerea have the capacity to labor? Undoubtedly, plants (Chapter Five) and fungi (this chapter) have distinctive modes of affecting and tailoring the social worlds of humans through manipulation of humans and other beings: the role of domesticated animals in colonization (Anderson's 2004); Raffles's (2001, 2010) studies on insects, language, and race; Kohn's (2007) depiction of the communicative worlds shared between humans and dogs among the Amazonian Runa; Tsing's matsutake mushroom in 'blasted' spaces (Tsing 2017, Choy et al. 2009)—not to mention the emergence of terrestrial, aquatic, or food-borne microbes as social agents (Paxson 2008, Dunn 2007, Helmreich 2009, foreshadowed by Latour's [1993] work on Pasteur and France).

Rather than taking the grapes and fungi of Tokaj as part of the landscape, as symbolic, or as food/energy (following Kirksey and Helmreich 2010), I bring them into resolution as beings whose lifeways engender agentive potential, arguing that theirs are "legibly biographical and political lives" (Kirksey and Helmreich 2010: 545 with reference to Agamben 1998). Here, fungi are not only the livelihood of producers, but are in a literal sense, themselves the primary producers, shapers of the landscape. They not only constrain, but react to ecological and cultural conditions, actively creating and adding value.

II. GRAPES LIKE ASHES

a. *Botrytis*

First named in 1729 by Pier Antonio Micheli, *Botrytis* is a genus of about 30 species of necrotrophic pathogens. Its long-time status as a temperate-clime pathogen (Coley-Smith 1980) was probably due to the location of research on the fungus, which in large-part has been undertaken by viticultural scientists working in (temperate) wine regions. However, *Botrytis* is found anywhere there are hosts (Elad et al. 2007). With over 200 identified host species (including fruits, vegetables, legumes, flowering, and foliage plants) *Botrytis cinerea* is among the most commercially devastating

diseases in agriculture, responsible for $10-100 billion in losses annually (Boddy 2016). This is because Botrytis infection (described below) most often leads to a “sour” or “grey” rot, in which fruit turns essentially to vinegar. As the subject of intensive fungicide research, members of the Botrytis genus have developed resistance to fungicides since modern fungicides have existed (Elad et al. 2017). Cultural methods for discouraging *Botrytis cinerea*, as most wine regions are apt to do, include managing the plant canopy to allow for aeration and discourage damp conditions (Elad et al. 2017:1).

Botrytis cinerea of “Noble Rot” fame earns its name from the Latin for *grapes like ashes*. This descriptive designation does not refer to its most famous host (wine grapes), but to its spores, which themselves resemble bunches of gray, furry grapes (Figure 14). *B. cinerea* affects grapes in the spring through asexual spores produced on mycelium that winter-over or from sclerotia on host tissue and topsoil (Elmer and Michailides 2007:244 in Elad et al. 2007). Given very particular, ideal environmental conditions, “*B. cinerea* generates a special form of infection called noble rot, which highly improves the quality of the grape” (Magar and Soós 2016). *Noble* rotting requires a trifecta of ideal circumstances: climate/microclimatic conditions (humid evenings, foggy mornings, dry afternoons); susceptible grape varietal (thick skin to encourage a slow rot); and *timing*: the grape must be fully (or overly) ripe at the time of *Botrytis* affectation. This last point is essential because the infection cuts the vascular connection between the vine and the berry, meaning no further nutrients may reach the fruit at this point. Because of the specificity of environmental conditions required, there are unsurprisingly few places in the world where the noble rot appears with any regularity.

Figure 14: B. cinerea spores (conidia) resemble grapes ashen grapes as they enclose the berries in a grey, fuzzy mold. Photo from Magyar 2011.

Botrityzed wines are made in several places across the globe, but only Tokaj's botrytized wines are naturally sweet—that is, made without added sugar. Being 'fond' of grapes—as many molds are—for their high sugar and water content, *B. cinerea* is set apart from other strains in that it is not always deleterious, but "labors benignly in the vineyard" (Benson 1977:867).

b. 'Mushroom wine': A noble sort of rot

Noble rot resulting from *B. cinerea* affectation is essentially "an interaction and [balancing] between the enzymatic activity of *B. cinerea* and the concentrating effect of physical dehydration on the grape berry" (Magyar and Soos 2016:30). In other words, as the fungus digests the berry flesh, the fruit dehydrates, its composition altered and condensed.

The process is a complex and only partially understood interaction. *B. cinerea* is unable to fully digest grape skin, and so remains primarily on the outmost layers of the grape, entering the grape through stomata or micro-wounds in the skin caused usually by wind or animal damage. The fungus

then consumes the grape's epidermis and penetrates the cuticle, extracting chemical compounds from the berry flesh while simultaneously depositing its own metabolic products (including glycerol and other sugar alcohols, as well as carbonyl compounds) back into the grapes' juices. The colonization of the grape by the fungus decomposes some of the compounds naturally present in the grape while simultaneously producing new ones; the result is a "modified chemical composition of the grape juice" that is "highly concentrated" (Magyar and Soós 2016:29).

The grape, unaware of the potential 'nobility' of its circumstances, responds in kind. The strength and nature of the grape plant's metabolic response varies between varietals: in some grape varietals (such as the French Chenin blanc) it leads to the concentration of *flavonoids* (flavor compounds)[27]. Grapes may also respond at the genetic level as the result of *B. cinerea* infection (Blanco-Ulate et al. 2015). While much is known about the effects of the fungus on the grape, the role of the grape's response in the production of Botrytis-affected wine is a relatively new area of research; suffice it to say that *B. cinerea* elicits strong and varied, varietal-contingent responses from grapevines. The "nose" of infected grapes is also transformed by *B. cinerea*, where already-present aroma compounds are dramatically multiplied during noble rot by up to *1,000-fold* (Thibon et al. 2011).

In ideal grape types, as with Furmint, thick skin will allow the fruit to slowly dehydrate during long, sunny, windy autumn days, concentrating the resulting flavors and sugars while preventing secondary infections from setting in (Hornsey 2007). The resulting sugar content of botrytized must[28] in Tokaj can reach 700 grams per Liter, some of which converts to alcohol during fermentation (by comparison, Coca Cola contains only 106 grams per Liter of sugar). This makes it the sweetest natural wine on earth (other 'dessert wines', such as the Sauternes of France, are *Botrytis*-affected but include

[27] The link between varietal and responsive flavonoid compounds is an area for further research (Magyar and Soós 2016).
[28] Grape juice with stems, after pressing and before sieving.

added sugar). In specific conditions, this process—called *Botrification*—leaves the berries "not only dehydrated"—as with other sweet wine styles—"but also infected and transformed by *Botrytis cinerea*" (Magyar and Soós 2016:29).

III. NOBILITY FROM HUMBLE ORIGINS

a. *Botrytis*: The winemaker

Producers describe with wonder the ways in which botrytis[29] "works its magic" to transform grapes into nobly rotten fruits—by rewriting the metabolic profiles of the host grapes (e.g. Negri et al. 2017). In the scientific literature, botrytis is often said not to "grow", but to "*occur*" (e.g. Elad et al. 2007). The *fungus-cum-event* is referred to by many as the one remaining variable that technology cannot conquer or reproduce: in other regions, such as California or Australia (where the Hungarian Furmint grape is gaining in popularity) trials of inoculations have proven infeasible. Producers are thus at its mercy, whether it appears, and *when* (often only a few times in a decade).

In response, Tokaji producers and even regulations must adjust accordingly. Bél's original *dűlő* classification scheme (1730s), for example, was predicated on soil typology and economic variables, with reference to *aszú harvests*—i.e., frequency of botrytis affectation—because dry wines were not produced en masse. Aszú berries also formed the basis of the original Tokaji wine quality unit, the *puttony*: a wooden bucket worn on the back, which carried approximately 25 kilograms of aszú berries. Aszú wines were then labelled according to the number of *puttony* used in the making of each barrel; originally this number fell between Three and Six, although today only Five and Six remain while wines that would belong in lower categories are put into the lower Szamorodni class. While the *puttony* originally served as an indicator of sugar content, today, winemakers use modern methods to weigh

[29] The term botrytis (uncapitalized) will be used as shorthand for *B. cinerea* for the remainder of this chapter, as it is colloquially called by producers and in wine literature, and seen in its derivative terms (e.g. "botrytized" and "botrytis-affected").

aszú berries (rather than measure by volume) and determine sugar in must directly during vinification (the puttony is no longer in use as a measure).

The complexity of making botrytized wines continues beyond the harvest, during fermentation in oak barrels. “The microbiology of botrytized winemaking,” note viticultural scientists Magyar and Soos (2016), “is more complex than that of normal vinification…. As a result, atypical microbial communities of botrytized wines can be expected and are actually found” (32). Once aszú wine enters the cellar in oak barrels, a second fungus becomes integral: *pincepenész* (literally, cellar mold: *Zasmidium cellare*) (Figure 15), a so-called ‘noble mold’ that covers the walls of Tokaji cellars in a black-green carpet. This endemic mold maintains cellar humidity at an ideal 85-90% and clarifies the air (Magyar 2006, 2010). Moreover, it feeds on the alcohol that evaporates through the barrels; in cellar tastings, visitors are often encouraged to toss undrunk wine onto the floor to “feed the *pincepenész*”.

Figure 15: More-than-humans at work: endemic mold in Anna's Tokaji cellar (above). This regulates the humidity and creates the unique cellar conditions that have allowed aszú wines to age indefinitely. Bodrogkisfalud, September 2017. Photo by the author.

In the past, barrel fermentation for aszú wines lasted as long as eight or ten years, though today the legal minimum required time is only 18 months. Botrytis makes the fermentation—and the end-product—more complex because it kills yeast, often stopping fermentation before alcohol can accumulate to sufficient levels. Because the fungus consumes the flesh of the berry and deposits the waste back into the skin, aszú wines are in-part already digested: the literal production of botrytis.

In the highest and most prized category of aszú wines, *Tokaji Esszencia*, the aszú berries are not pressed at all. Rather, they are stored in large vats with taps at the bottom. Under their own weight, the berries compress and seep out a honey-like essence that contains over 800 grams per liter of residual sugar and very little alcohol (Figure 16). From 1,000 kilograms of aszú berries (requiring about 125 labor [harvesting] hours), only five liters of esszencia are produced. This type is often called "*No* wine": it involves *no* pressing, *no* fermentation, *no* sulfur added, *no* clarification, and "consists of native features only" (Kerényi 2013:272). Tokaji Esszencia continues to be valued for its medicinal properties and has found its way into exclusive bars and hotels around the world in its pure form (consumed by the spoonful) or as an ingredient. In the United States, a 375-mL bottle by exported by Royal Tokaj costs over 2,000 USD at time of writing.

Figure 16: Tapping and testing the barrels of the slowest and most concentrated botrytized product: Tokaji Esszencia. Photo by the author. Mád, November 2017.

b. *Botrytis*: The winemaker-maker

Turning rotten grapes into fine wines has been likened to turning the garden snail into escargot: “there is no greater evidence of this human ingenuity than wines made from grapes infected with the fungus *Botrytis cinerea*” (Benson 1977:867). This ‘ingenuity’ from another perspective was more a training and tuning of human action and tastes, for botrytizing wines initially required a redefining of what ‘good’ wine *was*, and botrytis continues to necessitate novel tactics, timings, patternings, and modes of adaptive human labor. Producers cannot force the appearance of botrytis but can only adjust its environment. If the timing and pacing of grapevines is evidence of their ‘planty’ agency (Brice 2014), so, too is that of botrytis, which is even less predictable or visible to the human eye. “Some years it doesn’t happen,” Panni related to me of her 2014 vintage with a dejected sigh, “We were waiting for it. We left the grape out in the vineyard for like two weeks, three weeks, and they were shriveling. There was no botrytis. So we just picked it”. As another Hungarian winemaker and author wrote, aszú can be made “only when nature allows it” (Alkony 2006).

Botrytis, affecting the fruit berry-by-berry, arrives at each grape-host at a different time. Grapes are set on course through the different stages of rot individually, and thus each grape is ready to be harvested at a different moment. Additionally, because the pacing of the rot can lead to two outcomes (*sour* rot versus *noble* rot), discreet differences even within a *dűlő* can cause both rots to appear, even within the same bunch. Harvesting aszú berries thus requires intergenerational, experiential knowledge and carefully attuned senses—as Panni describes:

> When you go in the vineyard and you pick the noble rotted, botrytis berries one-by-one, one-by-one—you go look at the cluster, and you only pick that *one* berry that’s ready to be picked. So you actually have to be a skilled laborer

> to do this. You can't just go there and say I'm gonna pick aszú, because you don't know how to do it if you haven't learned how to do it.

A very skilled laborer may pick one kilogram per hour, or eight kilograms during a harvest day. "It's like, crazy work," Panni continues, "But then you taste the [aszú] wine and you see what it results in…so, it's worth it".

Other winemakers describe it as a "precise" wine that requires equally precise work. Panni's winery (and her aszú-making) is large enough to require hired labor during the harvest. They have worked with the same pickers for over twenty years, and her husband affirms they are the best at their job: "No matter how famous the winery is," he insists, "I'll say [our aszú] is far better, because we took much greater care of picking the grapes." Picking/sorting the rotten berries is often outsourced to local experts, mostly older generations. As a new-generation winemaker, Kende prefers experimenting with the lighter, fruity, dry styles that are gaining popularity in the region—but he does occasionally make aszú. Rather than pick the rotten berries selectively, he harvests the grapes with the help of two friends who arrive from nearby cities. He then brings the shriveled bunches to two elderly sisters in the village: "they've got a huge practice. And if we bring in the bunches, they can sort them three times quicker than you or me. Even without seeing it, they could do it blindfolded—just by *touching* them".

Making products from botrytized berries requires additional wine because there is too little liquid in affected berries to press for juice. Typically, this means adding the aszú berries to a base wine of non-botrytized grapes or—especially for those of the 'old school'—pouring old wine over the affected berries. Arpad, who made his first aszú in 1988, follows his grandfathers' 'recipe' for aszú wine: He cuts a barrel in two to create a tub, three-quarters full of aszú berries, then pours *óbor* (old wine from previous vintages) over it, "as they did 100 years ago". He then tramples on it until it becomes a mass. The mass of re-hydrated aszú berries is then placed in a clean cheesecloth sack and

allowed to drip back into the tub. With such intensive and specific work required, it is no wonder that many older generation winemakers are anxious about the future of aszú. Janos, who runs a small, family-owned winery, explained: "The people who like to hoe are getting old…" and, while the situation of vineyards means many cannot even be tilled mechanically, "the aszú harvest cannot be mechanized at all".

c. *Botrytis-affected*: Tuning and timing tastes

The incredible amount of specialized labor required of picking botrytis-affected grapes and the complicated vinification of botrytized wines is proportional to the attraction of its product: Tokaji Aszú. These wines are categorized in most tasting schools as dessert, or *sweet*, although this causes many champions of aszú to bristle. Aszú wine may have a sweet *feeling*, many insist, but they are "not about sugar". Rather, the *complexity* and *concentration* resulting from its fungal visitant become the its defining features. While tasting her aszú wines, Panni ascribes this to the botrytis fungus, which "concentrates sugar and everything else that's already in there, and it gives [aszú] such wonderful flavors and tastes that you would never, ever achieve if you didn't have the Noble Rot."

Generally, the taste of botrytis-affected wines (from anywhere) centers on their characteristic honeyed, dried apricot notes, often with undertones of coffee, caramel, or tobacco (particularly in "old style" types; see Chapter Seven) as well as a distinctive, fungal *botrytis* note. In Tokaji Aszú, however, there is also a unique freshness and citric quality coming from the high acid content of local grape varietals; this means even wines that are several decades old retain freshness. This fortunate coupling of the high-acid, thick-skinned grapes like Furmint and the finnicky Botrytis fungus give Tokaji Aszú its *nem tudom mit*[30].

[30] *Je ne sais quoi*

During fieldwork, I had the fortunate opportunity to sample many aszú wines with knowing guides, who verbalized to me their own affective experience of them in order to guide my own. One middle-aged family producer remarked, "There is something *in* the Tokaji Aszú. You can bite into it". One ubiquitous comment on aszú is its tendency to last: the flavor lasts in the mouth and the impression for much longer. Petra, the young Hungarian wine professional in Budapest commented on her experience leading courses on Hungarian wines: after aszú tastings she would get up in the morning and even brushing her teeth was not effective—the feeling remained, even as the wine was not materially present. "I'm feeling the smell of wine [the next morning]," she explained; "Who knows if this aroma has somehow seeped into my body…for some reason I still feel it. [I'm] *sure* I'm not imagining it." This is after a tasting of 25-30 aszú wines, she insists, so it is not a particular wine, but "the feeling of the whole region [that] is somehow *there*."

This wine professional suggested it was due to the density and the complexity of aszú wines, attributes which were echoed by many at tastings. At another tasting session, Panni summarized of her aszú:

> I don't even think about them being sweet, I just think about them—how rich, how *interesting*, and how—they're *slow* wines. I call them slow wines, because it's like 'slow food'. You have to enjoy them. You have to take the time to taste them, to drink them, to understand them, to smell them, and to enjoy them.

Others report that it moves slowly in its gradual change over time—even after decades in the bottle, the wine *improves* and becomes more complex, more concentrated. Indeed, botrytized wines require a matched slowness and deliberation in its producers and partakers: the grapes must be slow to ripen, the mold must be slow to envelope the berry, the affected berries are slow to harvest, the wine is slow to

mature, and its viscosity makes it slow to drink. Speed is the difference between grey rot and noble rot (Elad et al. 2007:4), and on the other side of vinification, aszú ages slowly and indefinitely—for decades, perhaps centuries. Panni elaborates on this as we tasted her 2010 aszú: "You can put it aside, and in 100 years somebody can open it—our grandkids will open it, and they will think about, for example…like, what were my grandparents doing in 2010? So it's a time capsule."

Its indefinite aging ability allowed Tokaji Aszú tastes to spread geographically toward Northern and Western Europe along trade routes, where its concentrated sugars rendered it stable for travel. It also spread socially amongst nobility across Europe beginning in the 1500s. King Louis XIV of France dubbed Aszú the "King of Wines, Wine of Kings" after being sent bottles as a (failed) diplomatic gesture and appeal for military aid. Transfer up the Danube made Tokaji Aszú accessible for Austria and, by other means, Poland, and Germany; according to wine professionals and export data, the reputation of and demand for Tokaji wine persists in these places today. Ákos, who is a wine expert with a historical orientation, explained this to me: Germany is not only on the Danube (and thus easy to trade with), but also has historic royal alliances with Hungary through Bavarian royalty:

> Beyond the [Danube] river there's reasons—there is a family relationship. A royal family relationship, which elevates Hungarian wines to the highest echelon of the society. That's how Germany became, and still is Hungary's number one wine export market. Who cares what the British have beyond that—[they're] too far [away], not related, too little-minded.… We sell our wines to those who appreciate it. Germany, Scandanavia, Russia—they have been some of our number one customers!

Even in its early days, collaborations with botrytis were beginning to shape trade, alongside human decisions and social patterns in the Tokaj region—the borders of which were defined in part by botrytis appearance. Local writer and winemaker László Alkonyi writes of the 16th century:

> The noble juice of Tokaj was just too precious to allow uncaring hands to do any harm in the vineyard; the owners chose instead to pay workers who knew what they were doing, and did it honestly. This served to protect the wine, and the wine in turn protected those who assisted its birth (2006:90).

By the 1600s, Tokaji day laborers earned about 50% more than elsewhere in the country. A culture of protection and enclosure emerged around the region, which began to solidify as a geographic and political entity (Alkonyi 2000). Soon, the luxury and protected status of aszú wines became a symbol: for nobility's preoccupation with noble rot, 'you are what you drink'.

In the 20th century, socialist-era production aimed to reproduce this luxury for the masses—a contradiction in terms recognized by my participants. Without the acquired taste for the 'true', natural botrytized wines of Tokaj, those exported to the USSR during the 1950s-80s were mostly artificially sweetened, colored, and oxidized (to indicate qualities of aged wines to unknowing consumers). Gabi, a young Hungarian wine professional and lawyer, considers the socialist-era, proletariat "Russian palate" as symptomatic of living in a climate where wines are not made, and noble rot does not occur.

Without a history of taste-exposure to natural botrytized wines, they associated them with nobility and thus desired to replicate their habits—but were unable to taste the falsity and flaws in adulterated Tokaji imports. Meanwhile, only very limited quantities of the best aszú wines were exported to the west. As one middle-aged winemaker explained in a conversation above her cellar that they always made wine in her village, but "[d]uring socialism…we couldn't go out as people, but the

goods didn't go out, either." Where aszú wines once traveled as diplomatic gestures, symbols of luxury, or medicines for the infirmed, they were effectively grounded for four decades. Unlike visual or audio information, the tastes are fixed and thus slow to spread and to naturalize; this means the conditions for aszú production, right down to the *dűlő*-habitat of botrytis, are always politically and socially contingent.

d. "You have to choose": Tending to landscapes as shared places

Botrytis and its noble rot require very particular conditions, which producers foster as shared spaces for producers, grapevines, and the fungus. Since the original 18th-century *dűlő* classification scheme, parcels were ranked according to their suitability to the fungus. Over the last 150 years, the dozens of original indigenous varietals that once populated Tokaj (Chapter Five) have been reduced by phylloxera and human intervention. A middle-aged, hobby winemaker in Tokaj, Kende explained to me how this resulted in six legal varietals "chosen for [the Tokaj] wine region because they have good characteristics for turning into Aszú wines, which means morphologically that they all have thick skin—they more or less resist rotting, the process of 'botrytizing'".

Like native grape varietals discussed in the next chapter, botrytis works its territory. I spoke about this with Balázs, a middle-aged man living in the small village of Tolcsva and who runs a and small winemaking operation with his sister. He makes wines in the "old style," aging the juice in oak barrels underground and bottling wines directly from them at the point of sale. We were in his cellar when he stated his outlook: the uniqueness of Tokaji wines is due to the "extreme concentration" and natural sweetness of the *aszú* berries, which allows aszú wines to mature for centuries:

> There are only a few other areas in the world where they can make similar wines—even if the "number one" botrytized wine comes from the French Sauterne wine region—because of *marketing* reasons. Greater Hungary,

> before Trianon, was lucky in this regard because around Lake Fertő, Ruszt they still make sweet wine with the help of botrytis, and that's in Austria now. Also, the Arad-Hegyaljai, the Ménesi wine region, has botrytis—and that is Romania today.

The sweetness of *aszú*, he explains, is balanced by high acidity—on which Hungarian professional literature bases its claims that a "Tokaji is better than a Sauterne if we look at the facts". Somewhat wistfully, he concludes, "I hope this is true, and sooner or later this will show in the market prices so viticulture and wine economy will grow and develop in Tokaj-Hegyalja".

Balázs's description of *aszú* wine's uniqueness extends geographically to the contested territories of Greater Hungary, borders which ceased to officially exist nearly 100 years ago. Similar phenomena occur in other Hungarian regions that were truncated after WWII, such as in the Sopron region that now spans Hungary and Austria (Monterescu 2017). This has the effect of naturalizing political territories through a sort of more-than-human recolonization. Many of these wines produced outside of today's Hungary, as wine writer Joseph explained of one of these border wines, "look to Hungarian wines, and not to Slovakia…I don't know about the politics or anything, but wine-wise, they're deeply engrained in what's going on in Hungary".

The *terroir* of aszú wines and minerality-inspired dry wines prioritize different factors. As a result of the quantities required for aszú-making, botrytis-affected berries are almost always combined from many vineyards indiscriminately, many bought and sold on the market. Even the largest operations purchase aszú berries from various local growers, often taking into consideration *dűlő* and varietal, but only in the rarest instances sorting them into single-*dűlő* bottles. Aszú wine always reaches a minimum of 180 grams of residual sugar per liter, which means "to taste the specialty of the soil is really hard," according to veteran producer Andras.

This has led Andras, along with others, to choose between dry, *terroir* wines that represent the unique soils or to produce traditional aszú wines as nature "allows". For Andras, single-*dűlő* wines are the only way to show the place in the wine and "get the higher brand". "You have to *choose*," explained wine professional Gabi, who told me that vineyard management for dry/*terroir* versus *aszú* wines are too different to 'play by ear'. In other words, a producer cannot plant in hopes of botrytis's arrival, then make dry wine in a less-than-optimal year. Planting for aszú wine is betting on botrytis, waiting to harvest late in the season, allowing the grapes to mold, letting moisture settle in. This affects canopy management and planting density. She blames recent crop losses to gray mold in large part on the monocultural plantations of furmint, beloved by dry winemakers looking to showcase single-*dűlő* *terroir*. She wishes the Tokaj region would focus on reclaiming its place as the home of botrytis and aszú wines, rather than following broader market trends toward white, dry, *'terroir'* styles.

But betting on botrytis also means counting on demand for botrytized wines, and slow wines are slow money. Aszú is not consumed in the same volume as dry wines: "We know that there are different wine-consuming trends and directions," admits a young producer in the village of Tolcsva, "but we must admit that an experienced wine consumer…doesn't drink half a liter of a late harvested or aszú wine…so we need something else other than the aszú". Kende, another young winemaker in the same village, is skeptical of the influence of botrytis on forward-looking policies in Tokaj: "I know that they classified *dűlő*-s based on the productivity of the aszú berries back in the day, that's clear. But those time are over, and it's very suspicious that aszú berries mean *luxury* now, and [yet] the wine region lives off its dry wines, *not* the aszú!" For many of the market-minded, new generation, aszú-making is a relic or a hobby, while dry, mineral wines are gaining popularity. Following this dry, *terroir* wine trend, however, will require commitment to new conceptions of place (highly localized, single-*dűlő* versus Tokaj region; global tastes versus local preferences) as well as new viticultural ecologies that may not foster Botrytis. As with all things aszú, only time will tell.

IV. PLACE FROM CONCENTRATE

a. Sweet and slow

Sweet wines have always been traded and available for export thanks to their ability to travel (historically, dry or semi-sweet wines were produced and consumed locally) (Scienza 2013). Evidence for a preference for sweet-tasting wines comes from ancient Egypt (Tutankhamun's tomb contained jars of sweet wines). Archaeological evidence from 1500BC includes the production of a red wine "which was sweeter than honey" (Mencarelli and Tonutti 2013:3). "The history of wine," write Mencarelli and Tonutti (2013), "is a story of sweet wines." This was not a matter of selection, per se, but environmental constraints and possibilism: "because of the climatic conditions where the grapes were harvested and processed, and the way in which these grapes were processed, which did not permit a complete fermentation…. The Mediterranean basin is the cradle of these sweet wines" (Mencarelli and Tonutti 2013:1); Hungary, in the Carpathian Basin, has been called a 'climatic bottleneck' of this warmer, Mediterranean climate[31].

Thinking beyond common delineations of "sweet" and "dry" the dehydrated, botrytis-affected wines of Tokaj are often referred to not as sweet or dessert wines, but as *concentrated*. "The concentration characteristic of Tokaji botrytized wines," write the authors of the 2000 UNESCO bid, "comes from long, dry autumns that allow the grapes to over-ripen before the fungus arrives to make a home on the bunches." This complexity has left lasting, sensuous impressions across time and space; in one example, after lunching with the Warden of All Souls in the late 19th-century, diarist E. H. Benson wrote: "I was given a glass of Imperial Tokaji…it was like seeing a new primary colour" (quoted in Ross 2000). Because taste requires material, participatory experience, it is geographically

[31] It is worth noting that, until the Treaty of Trianon in 1919, Hungary was a Mediterranean country, with a substantial coastline along today's Croatian and Slovenian coasts, beginning near Venice and running south/southeast.

fixed in ways that visual or audio materials are not. Thus, the inability to explain the taste of botrytized wines through standardized wine vocabularies and along the sweet/dry spectrum proves problematic.

A review of archival records alluding to the flavors that mark "good" aszú wines (see also Chapter Seven) suggest that it has variably been described as chalky and dense (Wekerle 1888), possess an "overwhelming bouquet" and "golden color" (Buckingham Corporation 1934), and especially suitable for convalescents, children, and the "weak and aged" (Osborn 1907) thanks to its mild antibiotic properties. Historically, there was also a crucial '*twang*' more *felt* than tasted after the aszú wine is swallowed, described as *root flavor* (*gyökér íz*) (Douglass in Lambert-Gócs 2002) or even *earth flavor* (*föld íz*)—at a time when roots and earth were associated with sweet tastes. Above all, aszú wines were said to be characterized by a *Tokaji character* inherent in wines from the Tokaj-Hegyalja region. According to one 1903 source, "the wine of any foreign grape sort…in Hegyalja takes on Hegyalja character to a greater or lesser extent" (Kossuth 1903 in Lambert-Gócs 2002:243).

Lambert-Gócs suggests that this Tokaji character, which also depends on aging methods and viticultural practices for consistency, is often presumed to be "at odds with, or [detract] from, *terroir*" (2010:243), where *terroir* alludes to—at least metaphorically—*tera*. But, while modern investigation into Tokaj *terroir* is preoccupied with soil minerality and indigenous varietals (Chapter Five, see also Brawner et al. forthcoming), evidence suggests that the original Tokaji tastes were the literal product of the botrytis fungus: berry flesh, digested; 'place', concentrated. For all the desire and attachment to aszú wines, we might say that humans—not only grapes—are botrytis-affected.

Today we can as definitively identify *Botrytis cinerea* as giving an undercurrent of warmth and spice to Tokaji Aszú through flavonoids and concentration of spice-category aroma compounds (including benzaldehyde, vanillin, cresols, guaiacols and eugenol) (Negri et al. 2017). Put another way, "fungal metabolism destroys certain aromatic compounds, but conversely, it also synthesizes others"

(Teissedre and Doneche 2013:171). These flavors were referenced in a 1990 article by Hugh Johnson—a famous English wine writer and co-founder of Royal Tokaj—that appeared in London's Sunday Times titled *The Finer Taste of Democracy*:

> What makes true Magyar wine distinct from French and German is its aromatic "fire." It doesn't mean the cauterising burn of alcohol and chillis. Hungarians look for vigour, high flavour, natural energy but also for a dense, slightly soft texture with none of the gum-scouring brightness of the fruit-juice school of wine-making. The give-away Hungarian aroma is a faint breath of yeast with traces of gingerbread and coffee (Johnson 1990).

In another 1990 article, a second professional wine writer praised "Hungary's spicy, exotic wine" for its similarity to French and German but with a more "exotic", more "decadent" edge (Prial 1990). Notably, while these impressions of Hungarian wines were certainly inspired by the flavors present in botrytis-affected wines, they are unmistakably like broader stereotypic tropes of the Magyar as extra-European, with its peppery spice, enigmatic unconventionality, and the decadence of empire: an affect-artifact said in many media accounts to be 'rediscovered' after the fall of communist rule.

b. *Botrytis* becomings: "Good to drink with"

It is the miniscule and capricious Botrytis that has first digested the grape juice, imparting the undertones and flavor notes that earned Tokaj its original (and, for some, its continued) distinction. For aszú producers, botrytis is attributed with the success of Tokaj in the past, if not the future. *B. cinerea* thus influences timing, producers' actions, management decisions, and local/international tastes. Thinking from the fungus's perspective, producers work to facilitate "the special microclimate of the Tokaji Wine Region that *Botrytis cinerea* deserves" (8). This includes canopy management, planting space, and the use of thick-skinned, native varietals with high acid content.

The case of the ‘vampiric fungus’ from former Transylvania reminds us that “human nature is an interspecies relationship” (Tsing 2012:141). Like the foragers of Tsing’s mushrooms (2017), Tokaji producers foster coinhabited *landscapes*: they nurture places as historic sites invested with cultural meaning, but also as a home for fungal companion species (Haraway 2008). Tastes in Tokaj and for Tokaji wines are not precultural but are signifiers of *becoming* (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:241-242); taste becomes the nonhierarchical relationship between mingling human and more-than-human species in viticultural landscapes but also wherever the aszú—ever slow to age—may travel. This symbiotic relationship between producers and the *B. cinerea* fungus is reinforced by taste as a new “contact zone” (Haraway 2008). Here we are confronted by the “foolishness of human exceptionalism” (Haraway 2008:244): while any rational farmer with an aim for profit would eradicate necrotrophic mold (and, indeed, botrytis fungi are the center of a wealth of plant pathology research), in Tokaj, botrytis masquerades as *noble* through its taste appeal—first to noble, botrytis-affected palates, then to the masses. By colonizing and consuming grapes first it *creates* and produces and has coaxed entire centuries’ worth of human labor into the form of its bidding: “staying alive—for every species—requires livable collaborations…. Without collaborations, we all die” (Tsing 2015:27).

In the so-called “value chain” of Tokaji Aszú, botrytis is a crucial collaborator. In creating the unique compounds that give botrytized wines their inimitable tastes, botrytis produces its own perpetuated habitat vis-à-vis specialized human labor, adding the value that propels that labor. It is possible, then, to view Tokaji tastes as the collective product of people, plants, and fungi. Botrytis materially fulfils the promise of *terroir* wines to re-embed production and tastes (Polanyi 1944) through the fetishization of the commodity (Hudson and Hudson 2004). Unlike grapevines, which are literally rooted and thus (largely) immobile, botrytis forges its own protected territory (e.g., the *dűlő* classification system) and naturalizes the labor of local producers. It cultivates boundaries and domesticates its living conditions—and it does so by colonizing not only the material landscape, but

the sensorium of local and foreign partakers. As an otherwise "invasive" and "deleterious" necrotroph, "botrytis labors benignly in the vineyard" (Benson 1977:867). It thus earns a revered place as noble and native; its palatable 'nature' is historically but also ecologically contingent. In cultivating our tastes, *B. cinerea* cultivates its continued existence. As an example of what Sheridan calls "polymarcation"[32] (2016:34-35), botrytis functions in multiple social domains, not only as border-defining, but taste-shifting, policy-crafting, and symbolically laden with nobility in an era of postsocialist reinvention.

Heather Paxson (2018) asks, "What ideological work is accomplished when microbes and other nonhuman living things are celebrated as performing labor?" In Tokaj, the work of botrytis, if implicit, humbles producers and reinforces the limited reaches of human agency. Ironically, it also emphasizes the devastating, unintended consequences of industrial human labor and climate change: several recent vintages have been compromised by warm winters. In 2014 especially, many producers told me, this allowed fruit flies to winter over. When grapes subsequently swelled and split due to heavy rains, the flies carried acetobacteria to the bunches as they ate the exposed flesh, essentially turning them to vinegar. Intense droughts, humid periods, or warm winters mean "the delicate equilibrium determining the process of noble rot can be severely impaired" (Teissedre and Donéche 2013:164). While one producer explained of his uninspiring 2014 aszú, "it wasn't *our* fault!"; such a tenuous relationship emphasizes the interconnected and entangled web that comprise *terroir* on a global scale.

In the literature on winemaking, wine is often fetishized to the point of leaving out the laborers themselves (Demossier 2018). At the same time, the labor studies literature has been decidedly anthropocentric until recently. Considering this, it must be said that there are in fact several other key fungi and other microbes at work in the making of aszú wines. Not mentioned at length here, for

[32] Sheridan uses this term to describe boundary plants that feature in multiple social domains, i.e., not only as boundary markers. Here, I extend the concept to include fungi.

example, are *mycorrhizae*—the thread-like bodies of fungus that live underground, altering root environments, assisting in the vine's uptake of soil nutrients. Beyond these, there are the yeast strains (almost always coming from ambient surroundings, rather than commercial/added yeast) that convert sugars to alcohol during fermentation. In aszú wines, botrytis creates the value of the product materially (altering the grape juice) and socially (via symbolically *noble* rot). Like Paxson's (2018) cheesemakers, artisan labor is normalized by association: both human and more-than-human producers add value, so wine- (or cheese-) making entrepreneurs are naturalized as practicing "good" capitalism alongside their enterprising companions.

Non-human agency (most frequently that of plants and animals) is often reckoned as "stubbornness"—where non-humans act subversively to thwart myopic human enterprise in unforeseen ways (Brice 2014:944)—or as resisting or seducing humans. But in the case of the botrytized aszú, we see that the 'work' of botrytis is not only in the fulfilment of its biological needs acting as roadblocks, but in its active production and creation. From one, perhaps evolutionary biological viewpoint, botrytis depends on the production of viable offspring; consuming sugary fruits is merely the energy-gathering component in this process. But in acknowledging the anthropocentricity of the concept of *waste*, we may view the digested grape flesh not as *byproduct* but simply as *product*. This orientation takes cues from the linguistic position of botrytis, where it is used as a verb (*botrytize*); grapes are its objects (botrytis-*affected*); its method is a named but untamed process (*botryfication*) that cannot be reproduced in labs, nor induced via inoculation. For indigenous wine grapes like furmint (Chapter Five) it is their genetic link to external, international varietals that elevate them to nobility. In aszú winemaking, nobility is visited upon grapes in-situ. In Tokaj (to paraphrase Tsing on mushrooms) "the uncontrolled lives of [fungi] are a gift" (2015:1); after centuries of collaboration, *Botrytis cinerea* remain an unpredictable gift—wild, even as human action and sense experience is tamed.

CHAPTER 7

SENSING TRANSFORMATIONS AND TRANSFORMING SENSATIONS: TASTE IN [POST]-POSTSOCIALIST SPECIALTY WINES

A francai azok ízlése szerint készíti borait, kik azt jól megfizetik, mi ehelyett a vevőinket oktatjuk, s mi ízlésünkre vinni akarjuk.

The French make wine according to the taste of those who pay well for it; we, however, educate our customers, and bring them closer to our tastes.

Széchenyi István, *Hitel*, 1830

I. INTRODUCTION

a. Making sense of taste

According to some etymologists, the English word *taste* has roots in the Latin *taxare*: to touch, to value, to judge. As one of the multi-modal avenues of human experience, the western notion of taste remains undoubtedly synesthetic in this regard, where tasting, valuing, and judging remain closely interlinked. Situated at the confluence of biological necessity and social transmission, historical selective forces, and the contingencies of geographic and economic availability, taste's affiliation with memory has motivated recent anthropological discussion about food and eating as a serious object of study (e.g. Sutton 2001, Korsmeyer and Sutton 2015, Korsmeyer 2017, Caldwell et al. 2009), while scholars of the senses consider the social and political world of taste through time and place (e.g. Classen 1993, Howes 2004). In short, tastes cannot be separated from context; the 'feel' of food consumption is an experience that includes memory, social relationships, past experiences, literal hunger, and intangible nostalgia.

This chapter foregrounds the historical, cultural, and geographic contingency of taste experience. It argues that the overt education of taste and training of palates is an exercise of power: acquired tastes are political. In this view, taste is result of a history of consumption and education practices (e.g., Flandrin and Montanari 1996, Vapatti 1989); collective preferences and shared taste experiences can inform the visceral experience of belonging in groups, including generations or ethno-nations.

Taste emerges in this way through social practices (e.g., Capatti 1989, Camporesi 1992, Flandrin and Montanari 1996), requiring consideration of both the product (material) and its cultural and biological contexts. The shape-shifting quality of food as cultural, environmental, and biological figure is mirrored in the protean nature of its *taste*. Considered throughout this chapter, the transformative/transforming element of taste has been discussed by scholars of alternative and sustainable or local food movements. For example, Carolan highlights the importance of forging "embodied, reflexive connections with non-mass-produced foods [which] is vital to producing new 'sensibilities' and appetites that support their sustainability" (Carolan 2011). It is by exposure to tastes—often in social settings—that they are acquired. Yet, exposure requires availability, and availability, of course, is contingent on geographies, politics, history, environments, and social status. It is the "contingency of products and individuals [that] makes food changes strictly dependent on cultural and social changes" (Teil and Hennion 2004:21). These changes, imprinted on the tastes of social groups, have become objects of study; yet, "advocates of material culture defend the irreducible difference between all forms of consumption but fail to show what irreversible trace these differences leave on food and taste" (22).

In her interview with Hayes-Conroy and Martin (2010), Slow Food International Vice President Alice Waters offered this observation:

> Is having a refined palate or training it a political act? I hope so; politics is not just voting. Politics in the Greek sense was about every interaction that you had with every other person on the planet, and learning to eat and appreciating the person who grew your food is [central to that] (277).

In this sense, the taste for certain foods (local or sustainable ones, in Waters's comments) is a desirable 'political tuning' of the senses. This question of taste then becomes socio-political when we consider "who should have the power to structure food education and agro-food systems in such a way that particular alignments become more desirable then others, and what kind of norms should underline this structuring." (Krzywoszynska 2015:501). In this discussion, taste becomes motivational and politically active in large part because it walks hand-in-hand with demand—a facet of taste my participants below are well-aware of. To paraphrase Jung's (2014) provocative question of the "unknown" Bulgarian *terroir*, what is the taste of *marginalized* "local" foods? Where do we find it, or perhaps, how do we produce it—for ourselves, as well as for outsiders? This question gains even more political-ecological traction if we include questions of traditional production methodology and growing practices. In short, "If Tokaj is to establish its place on the palate of contemporary connoisseurs, how faithful must it remain to historical models?" (US Magazine 2002).

b. Relational view of taste

In their review of prominent literature on food, Teil and Hennion (2002) observe a perennial nature-culture line of division: products are scrutinised either as objects with analysable properties (testable and measurable in a laboratory setting, for example) or simply signifiers of identity—the material means of communicating sociality. Biological approaches suggest that taste preferences result from adaptive mechanisms, themselves the result of local ecologies and food choice: preferences are expressions of needs, a biological adaptation (Farb and Armelagos 1980) that assumes a sort of

universal diet "hidden" in local material contexts. This has the unfortunate effect, Teil and Hennion (2002) conclude, of obscuring *taste*: the "nature of attachments", circumstances of tasting and the taster, and the heterogeneity of these experiences. They propose a relational view of taste (Hennion 2007, Teil and Hennion 2002), arguing that nothing about taste is inherent, nor does it exist outside of culture, but is historical and dynamic, always subject to adjustments. Modification of tastes thus requires cultivation of new tastes through "exposure to new sensations in the company of others with whom experiences can be exchanged" (Krzywoszynska 2015:494).

This framework is led by the notion that taste is an *activity*—not a "passive or determined state" (Teil and Hennion 2002:19), Thus, *taste*-the-activity becomes the heart of this research. "Different people in different situations bring into play a collective knowledge, of which taste is a result. In other words, taste is a way of building relationships, with things and with people; it is not simply a property of goods, nor is it a competence of people" (Teil and Hennion 2002:25).

Critics of Pierre Bourdieu's work on *Distinction* (1984) view his employment of taste as inactive and inert: followers simply reproduce social hierarchies where "[t]aste is culture's way of masking domination" (Hennion 2005:131). For Bourdieu, "the body represents the locus at which class differences in taste are displayed, but has little involvement in this process" (Jackson 2013:219); however, reincorporating the corporeal and intersecting the body with the "materialities of food" requires "an approach that attends to tasting as a 'collective technique' and explores the assemblages of intersubjectivity through which standards of taste emerge and function" (220). The emergence of what Jackson calls "standards of taste", where tasting is a "collective technique" is undoubtedly worthy of political inquiry. Place-brands and *terroir* products that rely on the taste of place rely on the conjuring of place-imaginaries, political geographies, cultural histories, and a judgment of "quality" provenance where the "taste of place" emerges as a synesthetic sense of place. As I will explore later

in Chapters Seven and Nine, the connection between locality and affect motivates the activities of producers and consumers when tastes are embedded in local ecologies (see for example Nazarea 2005). Thus, in this chapter I follow a relational view of taste, where "forms of attachment" such as passion or taste are not taken as primary data, but rather the focus remains on the "pragmatic and performative nature of cultural practices" by amateurs and professionals alike as they "transform sensibilities and create new ones, and not only to reproduce an existing order without acknowledging it" (Hennion 2005:132).

c. Taste in context: Case study

With this chapter, I build on the (to-date) less-discussed topics of 'bad' tastes (as noted by Holtzman 2010) and 'hegemonic' regimes of taste (see Jung 2014). Because humans experience the world through the senses (not limited here to the Kantian five), there is perhaps no more essentially "anthropological" question than the dynamic at this interface between the social and the sensual. This question becomes increasingly complex in the ethnographic case presented below. As a way of introduction, I will present a summary of the early 1990s-era debate around Tokaji taste in the new age of privatization. After a brief discussion of this case and its ramifications in context, I will then highlight three ethnographic vignettes from fieldwork conducted in 2016-2017 in Tokaj and Budapest. Through these three scenes, I index three themes that represent the vast range of examples encountered in my fieldwork. Finally, I 'connect the dots' to argue what I call a politics of acquired tastes, suggesting that this framework runs parallel to the politics of memory in postsocialist spaces.

The case study of Tokaji wines presents an especially rich case study, where communist-era commodification of speciality wines is being renegotiated in the new era of privatization. The "CEE states that joined the EU in May 2004 represent intriguing laboratories of consumption change" (Smith and Jehlička 2007:395), but also of production change in response to (or perhaps *as*) consumption

change. While foodways are often studied in terms of a production/consumption dialectic, I aim to reconsider the role of producer and consumer as mutually-exclusive. In the postsocialist context, where producers are often consumers (particularly in small-scale subsistence farming or homemade wines). Put another way, through tracing *taste*, it is worth considering both how consumption is *produced*, as well as how modes of production are *consumed*.

II. NEW OLD WORLD: REGIMES OF TASTE

a. Plastic definitions of quality

One November evening I take a stroll with Anna, a 34-year-old producer and engineering student working with her family's winery and guesthouse in the village of Bodrogkisfalud, through the center of Tokaj town. Since my first visit nearly three years prior, this main pedestrian way has sprouted several trendy, updated wine tasting rooms with a boutique feel—some with exposed copper pipes and Edison bulbs, others almost Tuscan in appearance with stone entrances to deep cellars and rustic furnishings, their signage in English and German. But what remain the predominant sight are the even more cluttered shop windows displaying plastic, gallon-size bottles of generic *száraz bor* [dry wine] from the Tokaj region. When I ask Anna whether these are lower-quality wines, her answer is somewhat unexpected: she suggests that these wines are not all necessarily bad *quality*—they are simply *inexpensive*. Local university students, young people on holiday in the region—*they* are interested in these value-size offerings, but of course are still looking for wine that tastes good (according to Anna, this often means a very "drinkable" semi-sweet or off-dry wine). Slightly puzzled by my assumption that bulk wines represent bad value, Anna's assessment accepts the validity of the consumers' tastes rather than judging the wine by its container. Her position on these wine containers is more complimentary than others in Tokaj town, where in 2016 a village-level ordinance banned main street shops from displaying plastic-bottled wines in their windows.

Figure 17: Plastic wine bottles in Tokaj village. June 2015. Photo by the author.

Wine in plastic bottles may be a bad look to visitors, but when I consider this feature of Tokaji life I am immediately reminded of the historical inconsistencies of "tradition" in the region's wine-making. The viticultural biodiversity of Tokaj's past included dozens of varietals that spanned white, red, and black grapes, including several that were repeatedly listed in historic texts as ideal for winemaking (e.g. Purcsin). Red grapes (Figure 18), when affected by botrytis, may be left with a "bleaching" of their pigment, resulting in a pale or even greyish liquid that would be entirely unappealing to today's consumer, gazing through the clear perfection of a modern glass wine bottle. But Tokaji wines until the 19th century were stored in barrels of native oak species, bottled at purchase into earthenware vessels. Wines were consumed in earthenware mugs of the same opacity. The visual components of the wine-drinking (and certainly anything resembling the wine 'shopping') experience would not have been foregrounded in the way that they are today, where—held against natural light—color and clarity are starting points in the now-formalized social tasting of wine.

Figure 18: "Unauthorized" varietals on the Slovakian side of Tokaj. Photo by the author.

Now uniformly white, the wines of Tokaj are working to earn back their status as both 'traditional' and 'international'. The tension between these two positions is not only a matter of packaging, but one of experiential *taste*. As I spent time in Tokaj, and in attending related events in Budapest, I began to realize that the battleground for Tokaji wines was not only in the disputed territories within the regional borders (Chapter Three), nor in the rooted nationality of authentic varietals (Chapter Five), but in the visceral experiences of locals and visitors. As I will use the remainder of this chapter to explore, the revival of Tokaj—by local winemakers and international firms—highlights the politics of taste and memory in postsocialist wine country.

b. Taste of tradition

When state-owned cooperatives were broken up and smallholdings returned to private individuals or sold to investors, international firms were free to purchase their share of Tokaji *terroir* between 1990 and 1994. During this period local (often smaller) producers, along with a diminished state-run Tokaj production house, set to work making what they knew as traditional Tokaji wines. At

the same time, international newcomers, many having bought large estates, arrived with aims to "improve the flavour with new methods and new technology" (Hooker 1994) under the guise of resurrecting the "wines people prefer". Citing communist-era methodologies as backwards and unworthy of an international market, these modernists self-identified as the *true* traditionalists. The divide could be encapsulated along a simple production difference; newcomers attributed Tokaj's socialist-era pitfalls to an affinity for *oxidation*: the result of the exposure of wine to oxygen as alcohol evaporates and creates greater surface area within the barrel.

Figure 19: The golden color typical of aszú wine is also a trait of oxidation. Wines are pictured here in a Tokaji cellar and of unknown age. Photo by the author.

The results of oxidation are evident in taste and in deeper, richer colors, where the warm amber hues associated with Tokaj "white" wines is reported in travelogues from as early as 1711 (Eneman in

Lambert-Gocs 2002:60). Unfortunately for today's Tokaji vintners, this color and the taste of oxidation is currently considered by Western European and North American consumers as a *fault*. The sensation of oxidation is generally described as tasting of old apples, bitter chocolate, 'like Sherry', stale, old, or 'not fresh'. This is in stark contrast to the 'new' style Tokaji wines, which English wine writer and Royal Tokaj co-founder Hugh Johnson considers representative of "the finer taste of democracy" (Johnson 1990).

Royal Tokaj was the result of British-Danish investments and British wine expert Hugh Johnson. "No one really believes the old wine is the wine for the future," their export and marketing executive told The Guardian in 1994. "What we produce is not the oxidised, old-fashioned Tokaj Aszú which tastes too much of the barrel and not enough of wine". Aiming instead for lighter, fruity wines, Royal Tokaj's 1992 "Red Label" Aszú was described by critics as "[e]bulliently floral on the nose…decadently creamy…burst[ing] with characteristic honey, peach preserve and dried fig sweetness and a streak of citrusy acidity that adds balance". By contrast, the same outlet described a local's 1993 Tokaji Aszú as an "older style with amber-brown color, [with] an oxidized nose of brown sugar and aged cheese….medium-bodied with decent acidity and flavors of orange marmalade, tea leaves, tobacco and a hint of chocolate". More recently, a journalist reported a 1988 Aszú as containing visible sediment and tasting "distinctly ferrous"—probably the result, she assumed, of the iron equipment used by many state-owned production facilities (rather than stainless steel, which is inert and leaves no discernible effect in the product). The taster determined the "wine was an insult to the quality of the fruit and the soil".

Royal Tokaj's trend toward anaerobic, fresh and fruity aszú wines was mirrored by other foreign (namely French, English, and Spanish) companies who established their presence in Tokaj in the early 1990s. Locals, however, remained sceptical, citing the oxidized taste as *traditional*—the

unique trait of historically famous “King of Wine, Wine of Kings”. The head of the state-owned cooperative, Borkombinát, maintained his position that oxidization is an inherent quality in the maturation of authentic Tokaji wines, while critical investors observed, as one representative of a local French firm, “How much of what is called tradition was because there was no alternative?” (in Hooker 1994).

c. Tasting white, seeing red: Post/communist flavors

Known today as the first “great” vintage of the new regime, 1993 aszú wines were controversial upon their first release in 1995 (after the required aging time of two years). When a prominent, French-owned Tokaji winery requested permission to bottle its 1992 and 1993 vintages, the OBI (the official tasting panel in Budapest tasked with the guarantee of regional typicity) refused on the basis of taste: the wines were not oxidized enough. This prevented the bottling and retail of over 7,500 cases of aszú and late harvest wines. According to a contemporaneous article in *Wine Spectator*, the wines were indeed not oxidized, but were “fresh, lively, well-made, and delicious…far superior to the poor, tired, woody and bitter wines now held up by Hungarian authorities as examples true and traditional Tokays [sic]” (Mansson 1995). Another media outlet summarized the stand-off: “The [OBI] panel is made up of old-timers…whose taste buds were formed during the socialist era and who subscribe to the notion of Tokaj as a heavily oxidized wine” (Friedrich 2000). The tension reached fever pitch, with foreign investors presented in western outlets as liberating benefactors wrangling with stubborn communist palates (e.g., “When foreign investors decided to put their money into Hungary's famous wine-producing region of Tokaj, they didn't expect to have to battle over who has a better recipe” [Hooker 1994]).

Paradoxically for local Tokaji producers, who had long been awaiting this moment of Tokaji revival, these unfamiliar, fresh wines were championed as the new “wines of freedom”, the first

produced outside of an authoritarian regime for many decades. By the early 2000s, the Hungarian National Wine Classification Board (NWBC) pushed back, officialising its support for the tradition of the golden, oxidized aszú wines. This stance provoked rebuttal from many newcomers, who took issue with the equation of 'tradition' with a communist mode of production that had led to poor 'quality' and 'wrong' tastes. Other investors, including a Four Seasons executive living part-time in Budapest, were equally cynical: "Tradition…that comes from the communist years when they didn't have the skills or the money to modernize. Before that the wines weren't oxidized. Some traditionalists may never have had a great Tokay [sic]." (Prial 1996). "We're purists," explained the Dutch co-founder of Royal Tokaj to the Wall Street Journal in a 2000 interview, "We're going back to how Tokajs were made before the war. The others are doing Picasso. We're doing Breughel" (Friedrich 2000).

Figure 20: Communist-era harvest scene depicted on a building's facade near Tokaj village main street. June 2015. Photo by the author.

The NWCB in turn disputed the claims of Royal Tokaj and others to any 'pre-communist tradition' of objectively higher-quality, non-oxidized wines: "Nobody knows quite how they made Tokaji in 1900, or at any other period in the wine's long history…In other words, you can quote tradition to support anything at all. Nobody can prove you right or wrong" (Rand 2000:3, in Lambert-Gócs 2002:59). As one news article summarized, "This was not a fall from grace attributable to Communist bureaucratic meddling, but the authentic practice which originally established the reputation and excellence of the wines" (US Magazine 2002).

In my interviews, conversations, and participant-led cellar tours and tastings with Tokaji winemakers, completed more than a decade after these early controversies, there remains a great degree of heterogeneity in production and more than a hint of the original divide. Nobody can be sure whether the aszú wines of pre-communist times were created through oxidative or reductive processes. Even the 16th and 17th-generation winemakers (a rarity even in this centuries-old wine region) that I interviewed were unable to offer concrete ideas about pre-WWII Tokaji wines and their "recipes".

The cycle of rupture and renaissance has prevented any continuity. The Napoleonic Wars of the 19th century affected winemaking practices during periods of limited trade, losses followed by the devastations of phylloxera in the later part of that century. WWI reparations resulted in the Treaty of Trianon and the loss of over two-thirds of the country's land area, a piece of Tokaj included. After this, the Jewish population of merchants and winemakers who once allowed Tokaj to flourish—and who made up to 25% of village populations—were removed in 1944, and while a few bottles of pre-WWII wines remain in circulation, they have aged for too long to give any real clues about their original character or composition.

While in the small Tokaji village of Erdőbénye, I speak at length with Arpad in the room above his extensive cellar. We sit together at a wooden table, where he is primed with answers to my many

questions about the Tokaji wines of old and the "traditions" of today—he reminds me that he has been interviewed by many media outlets before. When I ask about the production of aszú wines, he begins asking the questions: would I be using only political documents? Or would I entertain *all* sides? The government's knowledge of tradition, he explains, "only goes back as far as it has interest in it". "For example," he continues,

> When we told them that our great-grandpas made aszú using *óbor* [old wine, to which aszú berries were added], they came up with a document from somewhere stating the aszú should be made with must [grape juice] or *new* wine. And so, this was put into law and they didn't care about documents from 500 years earlier. So, you probably understand what I'm saying. The government only goes back in time as far as they want to, no matter if I say it was different before.

He lamented the domination and influence of international firms, particularly the French groups (a subsidiary of the French insurance company, AXA—who also owns several estates in Bordeaux—was behind the investments in the rejected early 1990s vintages). "And then the French came in and stirred things up," he rued, "They started with telling us that we're *stupid*—that our 400 years of history is nothing—and many *stupid* Hungarians believed and accepted that [along with the new methods]!". Arpad's retelling of this era is indicative of a regional pride and indexes a broader conflict around Tokaji wines: whether they will adhere to local or international taste preferences or attempt to dictate them.

If the written "recipes" and methods for creating the aszú wines of old are impossible to reconstruct, even more elusive are their tastes. Yet, tasting panels like the OBI, which are designed to guarantee regional typicity, must find themselves in some agreement on either side of the debate. The

newer, modernist producers are simply trying to guarantee the region a viable commercial enterprise and much needed revitalization after the transition of the early 1990s, yet locals are keen to hold onto old traditions—whatever (and from whenever) those may be. Current Tokaji Aszú guidelines on the Hungarian side of the region still require a minimum aging time in the barrel (though this is steadily decreasing with each iteration of local regulations and is currently only 18 months, down from what would have been five to 12 years during communism). Aside from this, there is the issue of method—namely reductive (topping up the barrels as the alcohol evaporates) versus allowing them to oxidize as the surface area of the wine increases.

This stylistic divide follows the timelines of generational turnover and political regimes: while the oxidized wines are traditional for today's older generation, newcomers with 'international' tastes consider the fresh, fruitiness of reductive wines as returning to a pre-communist 'authenticity'. This is, of course, based on the somewhat circular logic that the wines that made Tokaj famous among royalty must have been better—more exclusive—than what was produced during communism, which was for the masses; and, of course, reductive wines are considered to be "better" by this generation if for no other reason than global trends suggest it is so. Nevertheless, reported the director of Borkombinat in 1992, "We have to sell Tokay in the West now, but we lost our image there and the generation which loved to consume this wine is dead" (in Cohen 1992).

The communist iteration of Tokaji wines, however in-line they may be with pre-WWII vintages, was fostered behind the iron curtain while wines in the west—particularly, French wines—became the object of extreme fetishization, intellectualized tasting, and formalized rating. To date, no comprehensive history of wine tasting exists. However, a review of the literature suggests that the normative language of wine tasting—with all its synesthetic references to sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and textures from around the world—is a product of 1960s and 70s, growing from the officialization

of the French AOC and globalization of the wine industry. Thrown into this scene in the early 1990s, the privatization of Tokaji wines was curtailed by the negotiation of 'good tastes'—not as an intellectualization of consumption, but as a means of survival.

III. THE LABOR OF TASTE-MAKING

After messaging with Hungarian wine professional and legal scholar Gabi for several weeks, we realized we would both be in London one Spring. We finally sat down one evening in a Spitalfields Market wine bar to talk about Tokaji and her experience as a wine professional abroad. She says she learned everything she knows about wine while abroad and in fact lacks the language of formal wine tasting in her native Hungarian. She is passionate about wines and taste education, telling me with a genuine smile, "I make people see and feel things through words—that's my job".

When I ask her about the 'renaissance' underway in Tokaj, she stops me—is it really a renaissance, she presses, or "a *slow death*?" She begins again, explaining that Tokaj is having a massive "identity crisis", using wine as a platform to rehash old vendettas and real or imagined historic events. The people there are dull and sad, and, she admits, "I see this reflected in some of the wines, too". During communism, she explains, Tokaji wines were produced for the Russian palate—for people who did not know anything about wine, because they do not have any experience making wine. They did not understand how winemaking works, and they were *impatient*. They expected efficient production; they wanted the famous, aged wines of Tokaj but they wanted them *fast*. In turn, they fostered a "fake idea of quality" based on the wines Tokaj was sending, which were oxidized, and so appeared—and "felt"—*old*. "Now," Gabi explains, "we see oxidized wines as faulty". Unfortunately, in her opinion, Tokaji producers can afford not to make great wines because there remains a local market—a local taste for "sub-standard" quality wines that I will explore in the following sections.

Like Heather Paxson's French cheeses, Tokaji wines serve as receptacles, embodying and reproducing the "'invented traditions' of country idylls populated by an immemorial peasantry" (Paxson 2012:31). However, while the American cheesemakers in Paxson's account make a voyage east to France to "learn how to make 'real cheese'" and thus reinforcing "European inventions of culinary tradition as authentic and gastronomically superior" (2012:31), many Tokaji winemakers are making a nod to the west—or internalizing their gaze altogether. Flipping the artisan cheese European pilgrimage trope on its head, many Hungarian winemakers hoping to make a living from Tokaji wines now travel to the New World—places like California—to gain contemporary expertise.

This example highlights the unexpected tensions between "traditional" and "authentic", where winemakers sometimes choose—as in the US—to value progress over patrimony (Paxson 2012). Progress is made through a careful balancing act between narratives of tradition and narratives of innovation, which is no surprise in a region that is often said to be simultaneously 30 and 300 years old. Thus, the "invented tradition" of Aszú wines lies at the intersection of several political, social, and environmental factors: 1) the imminent threat of an Ottoman invasion (by a tee-totaling Muslim ruler) in the 1500s; 2) the inventiveness of the Tokaji people (broadly Hungarian/Magyar to the modern imagination, although certainly the population was ethnically diverse); 3) the appropriate environmental context and varietals for hosting the botrytis fungus.

While producers are walking the delicate balancing act between innovation and tradition, old and new styles, other professionals are taking an active approach: educating the receiving end. Often accompanied by maps, history lessons, and Hungarian culinary specialties, wine professionals in urban centers like Budapest host courses designed to educate both locals and visitors through guided tastings and tours, while producers host visitors from near and far for guided cellar tours and face-to-face tasting and bottling. It is in these spaces of overt contemplation of taste that, I will argue, the politics of taste

gains traction through what Michalski has called the "labor of taste" (2012). In order to understand the significance of this labor, it is important to first understand why it is needed; the perceived disadvantage of Hungarian winemakers underscores many of these encounters and motivates decision-making in the oldest appellation on earth.

As winemaker András Bacsó remarked in 1995:

> I'm sure if Europe had not been divided in 1947, the wines of Tokay [sic] would not have been this bad and oxidized. But as the years turned into decades, the region's output of woody, butter, oxidized and flat wines subtly and, it seems, perversely, changed Hungarian's expectations of what true Tokay meant (Mansson 1995:40).

The resulting landscape requires tuning of expectations and experiences.

As often happened when I expressed my deep gratitude to winemakers who so willingly and enthusiastically welcomed me into their cellars or tasting rooms—many refusing to accept a payment, or even gifting me an extra bottle to take home—they insisted, "No, no—this is *important*". Needless to say, it was not the reputation of my research project that they had in mind, but the standing of Tokaji wines and my willingness to taste and crave the *true* Tokaji wines, from the source. In the following section, I use three vignettes from different spaces of taste contemplation representing different modes and levels of formality. The first is a cellar tasting led face-to-face by a producer educated in Budapest but who works within the old style; the second is a casual conversation with a villager in the room above an old-fashioned village cellar; the third comes from a formal tasting led by an American Master of Wine who has relocated to Tokaj, and subsequent interviews with him and his wife. I will intersperse my own analyses of these scenes, concluding with a few final points.

IV. POLTICS OF TASTE AS POLITICS OF MEMORY: THREE VIGNETTES

a. Vignette One | Balázs: Wine is for ~~Drinking~~ Tasting

I arrive in Tolcsva, a small village in the northern hills of Tokaj, in the early afternoon, a bit early to meet family winemaker and guesthouse owner Balázs. He is in his mid-40s, and his family worked in wine during communism; today he is trying to create a livelihood in hospitality and viticulture with his sister. With formal agricultural education obtained in Budapest, he represents what I have come to view the "in-between" generation in Tokaj—those who keep the old practices but also consciously draw from (while remaining wary of) new trends. At his guesthouse, he offers a welcome drink of *házi pálinka*[33] (a traditional fruit brandy made at home), but insists I need not drink it now. He offers to lead me on a tour and tasting of his cellar and expresses a willingness to answer my questions.

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[33] Pálinka also has protected GI status as a PDO in the European Union (since 2004), with regional variations protected under more specific labels.

Figure 21: Classic buildings with modern technological updates in the empty village streets of Tolcsva. April 2017. Photo by the author.

It is worth describing the cellar tasting experience most frequently encountered in the Tokaj region, albeit with varying degrees of formality and intimacy. Generally, these run contrary to the formal wine tastings organized in larger cities and at some Tokaji events. The producers themselves are often the face of the cellar (often alongside their spouse), greeting you—the visitor—and guiding you underground after suggesting, if it is above 17 C outside, that you bring a jacket or *pulóver*, because the cellar will certainly be cooler.

The cellars themselves are historic gateways into another Tokaj that exists only underground, dug typically by hand into the hillsides and equipped with candlelight or overhead lamps. Opening the cellar doors, typically wooden but sometimes utilitarian-style metal, you descend into a wave of cool, humid air that has been fanned outward. Once inside, wine glasses are passed around, and the producer

gives an overview of the space—a sort of what's what between all the barrels, whose dark surfaces are labelled in a distinct white chalk. Some (typically old-style, smaller producers in their 40s or older) then present their wines as they sit in oak barrels kept in these networks of cool, subterranean tunnels, using a glass *lopó* ('thief') to siphon wine directly from an aperture in the barrel. Producers often insist at this point that it is traditional to age the wine like this, usually in Hungarian barrels—often for many years if it is an aszú.

Even the smallest family operations (including many families with home gardens) almost always have even a small cellar on the premises. The cellars can be as old as five centuries and vary from about 20 yards to labyrinths totalling over a mile in length (these expansive networks are the domain of larger companies and are viewable on guided, group tours). The winemaker, having guided you into the cellar, then takes you through a course of 4-6 wines, which you may sip, gulp, or pour out (onto the floor) at leisure. You may notice hundreds of coins pressed into the sticky cellar ceiling by other guests for good luck—unless mossy *pence penész* obscures the surface with its grey-green mats. The producer (usually he, but increasingly *she*) may offer information about the varietal, the *dűlő* of origin, the history of the cellar, and basic characteristics of the wine—often including alcohol percentage, sugar, or acid if known (many small producers will not have these quantitative data at hand). If you are new to Tokaj, the mythology of botrytis, aszú winemaking, and the fated history of the region will be presented. Very often the winemaker provides empty plastic bottles, which they fill with the your favorite wine to take home for a small fee.

In his cellar, Balázs offers basic information about his wines as he shows me his barrels, along with a basket fresh *perec* (a pretzel type of bread stick snack). From one barrel, he offers me wine from grapes left in his *dűlő* from the communist era: *szürkebarát*, or *pinot grigio*. This French grape is contraband in Tokaj today, where only six local varietals are allowed. The irony is not lost on me that

communist-era varietals like pinot grigio, which are now rejected in Tokaj as a communist, *quantity-over-quality* holdover, remain the international staple in many renown Western European regions. Balázs continues to use the grape because it is liked by locals and makes very drinkable wine. “Many people say they drink wine,” he explains, “but in this cellar they *taste* wine”.

This strikes me as unusual, because many of these “old style” cellar tastings avoid formalizing the taste experience. The tasting is usually an exercise of sampling—arranged to help a customer decide what to buy based very simply on what they like—rather than an experience of its own. When I ask Balázs how he came to *taste* wines, he says, “I read academic books and I took part in [professionally lead] wine tastings, and I watched to see how they lead it, and how they taste it. I summarized this, and kept what I thought to be important, and so this is how my method—how I *lead* tastings and how *I* taste—worked out”. Echoing a common complaint that locals drink with only one aim in mind, he clarifies that one of the most important things is to foster “temperateness, so we don’t start drinking like crazy, but we have a *real* wine tasting”.

Based on his experience in formal tastings in Budapest, he admits, “the words to describe the wine can vary lot, they can even be poetic; this depends on the person. Instead, I tell facts about wines, and then it’s subjective, what the smell or the taste is like to you”. He says he does not like to explain everything or influence his guests, but just provide objective information. He appreciates the role of formal tasting and the language that goes with it but offers this joke as a summary of his stance: “At a tasting…the sommelier starts to talk about the ‘citrus’ and ‘almond’ and whatever tastes he senses in the wine glass, and another man goes, ‘*You should’ve washed the glasses!*’”

Balázs’s matter-of-fact approach is based on building trust through transparency in language, presentation, and natural modes of production: “What I find to be most important is that a wine is naturally made, and the guest can decide whether they like it or not, whether it’s a fine wine or not.

Everything else is just a garnish, but that's my opinion. Everyone can decide for themselves". Balázs also emphasizes the importance of building pride of place in his village, where he sees laborers leaving plastic waste in the vineyards, littering the streets, and polluting the environs—bad for grapes and for image. When I ask to take a photo of his cellar, he stands in the center of the frame with a serious pose, holding the *lopó* across his shoulder with an unmistakable pride (Figure 22). When he produces what appears to be an empty water bottle and asks which wine I personally liked the most, I wind up with my own contraband pinot grigio to take home.

Figure 22: Balázs poses in his cellar during our guided tasting.

b. Vignette Two | Miklos: A spoonful of sugar

I arrive at Arpad's rustic-looking winery in Erdőbénye just before noon. Arpad is not in yet, but his assistant Sami—a young man of about 19—seems amused by my presence (and probably more so by my obviously non-native Hungarian) and says he would be happy to chat until Arpad arrives. He offers me some wine, and when I ask what he recommends, he says his local customers typically like either dry or sweet wines, and so they choose based on this distinction. "It depends on this the most," he explains, "and on the price, of course. How much they can afford to spend on it. They may like one better but can't afford it".

I ask if there are any types that visitors prefer, and he replies, "they don't really like the ones from wooden barrels; the old wooden barrel-ish taste is something they don't like, in my experience". "Why," I ask, "is it too strong?" "It's strong. Old-ish. But that's the *real* wine, not this *reductive*—" his voice trails off, and he smirks, possibly to avoid offending my ears with the expletive that may have followed. I sit at the wooden table, which I share with a local villager relaxing in what appears to be a very well-worn spot. I introduce myself to the man, who is certainly a pensioner—though not elderly—and he asks me whose places I have been to and what I have seen. The pensioner, whose name is Miklos, asks Sami for another glass of "the same", which Sami pours for him from an unmarked two-liter plastic bottle stored in a side cabinet. Sami hands me a glass of a local dry white wine that he has chosen for me. "Did this come from a wooden barrel?" I ask, "No," he explains, "this is from a reductive tank, from steel. I mean, we keep it in tanks, so you can't taste those *old* flavors. It's clearer".

Figure 23: Arpad's extensive cellar, with several stories' worth of pathways and traditional, barrel-aged wines. Erdőbénye, March 2017.

I tell Sami and Miklos about my project, and that I am traveling by foot. "Tourism is a handicap," Miklos affirms, "because they don't build our roads…[Tokaj is] famous, but it's not developed". I ask him what he would like to see change in the village, and he answers, "Every winery should have a kitchen where they could cook, and all the guests could smell the food, and they could see that fresh food is served…I've been [in this village] for seven years, but they always bring the food here from a different place…it's different if you sit down and you see where the food comes from, from where they put it in front of you".

"There isn't enough income to pay for that," retorts Sami. Miklos furls his brow and retorts, "30 years ago there were many f-----g good restaurants, *presszós* [socialist-era cafes]—you could find

a pianist in any of the *presszós*, or a drummer, and they sang songs, or they played gypsy music in nicer restaurants. *That* provides a good atmosphere for a lunch, doesn't it? …but there's nothing like that now, they just sell the alcohol and that's it. There's no good *mood*". He takes another swig of white wine, and I notice it is almost noon. Miklos suggests he should pay, and nods when Sami asks if he should total up yesterday's tab as well.

"Is this sponsored by a company or someone?" Sami asks me of my research. I tell him that the Fulbright Commission is supporting me, and Miklos asks ironically whether Soros Gyogy (George Soros) is really behind it—seeing as he is the "number one enemy in Hungary at the moment". He is being sarcastic, but I am still cautious as I divulge that I did attend the school he founded in Budapest. "This regime," he says of the current Hungarian government, "was friendly with Soros when he supported their election in 2002, but their allegiance has changed now that Soros has been critical of the government's policies" (which are increasingly nationalist). With the same breath, Miklos asks if it is any better in the US, then answers for me: "Trump is like Hitler, he wants to attack everyone. He's aggressive…his style is like a dictator's".

I had not prepared to be musing on world politics over white wine before noon, and in trying to keep up, I cannot help sharing my own disillusionment with political affairs and the growing income disparity in the United States. "Here as well," he commiserates, "Since the socialist era ended we don't have a middle class. There are poor and rich people. What we had a long time ago doesn't exist anymore, the middle class, like teachers and so forth. There are no open jobs, factories were closed. Here you either make a great deal of money or you don't make anything and you die of hunger".

Sami answers a knock at the door to greet the postman, a young man who is on his bicycle on his way to Erdőbénye. Sami asks the postman if he would like a drink and says there is an American here asking questions. The postman nods at me, intrigued, requests a *szörp* (a cordial made with fruit

concentrate and soda water), and begins listening to our conversation. Miklos continues to his growing audience:

> When the regime changed everybody stole what they could… Plus there's the money from the EU, they steal that as well. Things that cost billions [of forint], highways...We were promised to get 210 million Ft for our roads but by the time it gets here it will be only 100-something because everybody steals from it. The winner needs to pass on half of the money they won. We give "thanks" to this notary and to that town clerk. And what's left? They dig a hole and that's it. To that poor fellow, who's rolling the asphalt and does everything, there's not 10 *fillér* [1/100 of a forint]….
>
> Well I'm old, I'm already 62 years old. We've always seen how good life was in America, with big cars, and the cowboys who rode around, and they had a *what-sha-ma-call-it*, with those cows they were harnessing—they had great places for having fun, the life there... after '56 everybody escaped to America. Everybody escaped out of Hungary, because of the war.
>
> I was so jealous of people who went to San Francisco, America in '62. My mother was milking cows, there was a woman here who needed the milk…her son went to America in '45, and he lived in this "San Francisco". And he sent her packages all the time. The lady brought these nice, colorful drops that were not sold in Hungary back in '62. She showed us the beautiful photos of the bridge and how the city was all lit up.

> Poverty was big here in ’62, it was a long time ago, but we just couldn’t *wait* until the old lady would come by again, to see if she would bring those drops again, all those red, blue, green and all different kinds.
>
> What did we have back then here? In the stores they were measuring the sugar by the spoonful.

As I listen to Miklos, I cannot help but think of his recollection of rationing sugar by the spoonful as a bittersweet counterpoint to a menu recently forwarded to me by a colleague: the restaurant at Washington D.C.’s new Trump Hotel is selling Royal Tokaj’s Aszú Esszencia (described by their website as “the truest expression of *terroir* known to man” (Royal Tokaj 2013) for $140 per crystal spoonful (Sidman and Freed 2016).

As I am pondering this juxtaposition of worlds, Miklos reiterates the details of his story, as if to conjure the memory more vibrantly, “They were red and yellow but they were so hard you couldn’t chew them. They had a better life there. Now you can have that standard of living here, *if* you have money”.

c. Vignette Three | Jim and Panni: Tokaji time capsules

Back in Budapest, I join a group of about twenty—mostly tourists—in a new culinary spot that organizes dinners and themed tastings. Tonight’s special guest is Panni, a winemaker from Tokaj village, who runs a small production with her brother their parents, who purchased the winery in 1989. Also present is her husband, Jim, a Master Sommelier from the US who explains that it is his profession to taste, rank, judge, and sometimes price wines around the world; he does not make wine, but focuses on maintaining an “international palate”; he uses this knowledge to help Panni guide her family’s winemaking.

As a small team of servers pour the first wine in our glasses, Panni begins her presentation with a map of *dűlő*-s in Tokaj, pointing out their first-class vines and explaining a bit about their *terroir*. As we begin to sip the first wine, Jim offers to talk about the taste and his role in the winery: "I've tasted several hundred thousand wines, minimum, in my life. I try to taste all the world's great wines, and so I have a very good idea of what's really good around the world. And I try to bring that into these wines". In Tokaj, he says, wines were only made in a serious way, explains, after communism ended, meaning—in some senses—for all their history in the region, they only have about 25 years' experience.

Jim swirls the wine in the glass and holds the goblet to his nose, and the room imitates his movements. He says he identifies an "oak character", along with complex and delicate flavors, baked apple or pear, a citrus character—lime, lemon zest, and a tropical fruit character, which he clarifies to be closest to mango and pineapple in particular, but also guava or passionfruit. In the second wine, he identifies notes of the South American fruit *cherimoya*. Sensing a knowledge gap in the room, he clarifies, "I'm not saying you *have* to find those [flavors] in this, but this is what I do for a job and a living. And what I've done for decades". Fully in his element, Jim passionately advocates for the potential of the Tokaj region, where he relocated to live with his wife seven years prior. Tokaji producers have come a long way, he insists, since the 1990s when he thought "the wines were horrible". He is especially proud of his wife's wines for representing the new direction: they are "clean" and "fresh".

We approach the aszú wines of the evening, which necessitate a preamble for the newcomers: Panni explains botrytis, the aszú berries, the labor required, and the resulting tastes. Jim adds to this, "The old style, prior to 1989, and even before the communists…wine makers in the region tended to age the wines in a barrel much longer [rather than in the bottle]". He says this is not done anymore

because winemaking styles have changed throughout the world, even in Italy and France—they, too, have adjusted aging times. He recognizes, however, that this is not standard throughout all of Tokaj:

> I have to tell you this: there's 600 wineries; only 100 of them are making internationally-styled wines…. You can go to some small cellars that have some neat old people in them—and *young* people!—who talk about their wines with passion, whose wines are super dark in color. It doesn't mean that they're good, you know?…. The new aszús are greater than anything ever made in the past. Even though I haven't tasted all of them, I can tell you: they're better.

Jim then offers to share a personal story from early on in his wine career, a wine auction in San Francisco, where about 300 people were invited to sample from about 200 bottles of the greatest wines in the world. "This particular day, there were wines opened worth about $100,000" he says, "and all I had to do was walk up to the table and have a little pour in my glass and I could taste the wine…."

He had saved sweet wines for the end, and so he stood in line for the last wine of the day: a little 500mL bottle from 1876 called "Tokaji Aszú". It had been bottled for the Hungarian court, bought by an American collector, aged for over 50 years in New York, and somehow ended up in California. He stood in line for just "a thimble full", finding the wine "deep, dark in color…but also 100 years old, and had a greenish tint". He continued:

> I tasted the wine; the wine was absolutely extraordinary…. It blew every wine away that I had tasted…. It was the greatest wine in the room, without question. There's no doubt. All these other so-called "very famous" wines that

> cost 3, 4, 5, 10, 20 times as much? I knew they weren't even in the same classroom.
>
> …I swallowed the wine, and then the glass was empty and I smelled the empty glass, and I said, "God, it's almost as though the wine is still in the glass." I said, "I've never had a wine like this in my life." I was a really young guy, but I'd probably already had more great wines than anybody in this room by that time in my life—in fact, all of you, probably, put together. But that's what I was doing back then. And I had the money to do it.

He insists that this experience had changed him forever:

> I took the glass home and I smelled it all the way home….I refused to wash the glass, I put it in my cupboard where I dressed every morning....And I—I was astounded by how much impact it had. It still had incredible intensity, it had more richness than any *young* wine I'd almost ever had.
>
> And I smelled it, and I smelled it, and I smelled it, and I smelled it, and I smelled it, and I smelled it until I felt I *wasn't* naïve and just dreaming this; it was the *truth*—one of the greatest wines I've ever had.

He says he kept the glass for a about 100 days until the scent disappeared, leaving just a trace of caramel—"and that was many years before I met my wife", he says.

> And it stays with me today. I can still taste the wine. I can still relive the entire experience. I can still see myself going like, like *what happened to me?* I was

just *stricken* by something. I mean, it's one of those, you know, moments when your life changes. And I knew how wine could *be*.

The room is silent in the wake of his passionate recalling of this discovery, understanding the gravity of this memory and what this must have meant when Jim met Panni for the first time, a woman from Tokaj, connecting this sensation to her home and propelling their own story. A dampened applause fills the small room. Jim is more direct when we speak at the table after his presentation, where he tells me with some disdain, "Communism f-----g ruined the industry".

Figure 24: Sampling aszú wines in the making, the viscosity apparent on the sides of the glass. Mád, November 2017. Photo by the author.

I meet Panni and Jim for a follow-up interview in Tokaj village. As Panni tours me through their historic cellars, she explains her experiences as one of the new generation in the dynamic world of post-1989 Tokaj. "We look into the past," she explains, "but not, you know—before the *bad* era. We look at what can be borrowed from when they were making *real* aszú". She says she thinks there is a need for modernization when it comes to hygiene in production, "but on the other hand," she says, "we like the old categories…and we like the history. We've tried to keep that, too". She says nobody in her family wants to be *too* modern, adding:

> We have these two forces, because my family is more traditional; we grew up here. And then Jim, my husband, he's the one who's driving us to use new things, and it's great, but I think it's the synthesis of the two…I mean, he knows vastly more than I do about the whole wine world, but I kind of—I'm *attached* to this, I'm *here*.

Over coffee with Jim in his family's other venture—a coffee roastery on the main street—he offers some insight from his professional perspective.

If a bottle of aszú is a time capsule, according to Jim, Hungary is still in a "time warp". He strives for quality, emphasizing, "you have to have a middle class that can afford your wines or else your wine will cease to exist". The Tokaji region remains high-value, high-rent, but full of low-income residents: "The fact is, you have all these peasants living here. Most of them are retired and they just have to die and move on and give up the houses…and most of them retirees, you know, from the communist era". He notes that the coffee house, where we are sitting, has been open three years and only a few locals have ever visited—probably because they can buy a jar of instant coffee for the cost of one latte. "But you know, they will die off. They will move. The houses will sell. And they'll be

done up and it will take all of that", he explains. He sees these locals' presence, and their taste for the old wines, as a primary barrier on the path to quality:

> …that's part of the market. That's why this swill exists, these people buy it and drink it because to them it's wine. Because they can afford it. And it gets them high and that's enough for them. They don't care.
>
> They don't even care about the wine community. I mean they're just—they happen to live here, that's all. They were even given the houses by communists or inherited it from their parents, who stole them.… And the fact that it's wine country mean nothing to them.

Jim's assessment of local tastes and low income as detrimental—if a bit tone-deaf—is in-line with many who wish to modernize the region and promote wine as something beyond a medium for the drunkenness that has reached epidemic levels in the region. I realize, as we stand to leave, that we are in a café I heard about while in Budapest: the former family home of Dora's grandfather and his Jewish winemaking parents.

V. THE PRICE OF QUALITY

a. Ambivalence in the New Old World

The price of "quality" Tokaji wines (and thus their tastes) in a rural area with high unemployment has excluded any local market for them; this duality of existence in Tokaj is evidenced by the lack of very basic local awareness of wine production and industry. One local operator of a tasting room for a large Tokaji firm tells me 88% of their products are exported to countries of the former Eastern Bloc, while a small minority is sold to Hungarians. Tokaji locals do visit occasionally, she comments, but they think her tasting room is a bar. They come in and ask for beer, or for red

wines. "I am very angry," she admits, "when a Hungarian man or woman comes in and asks for red wine. Red wine? In Tokaj! You are *Hungarian*, and you don't know that in Tokaj we make only white wines?" With dismay in her voice she recites, "Tokaj was the first closed wine territory in the world, closed since the middle of the 18th century. It's very old. Two girls came in and asked, 'do you have beer?' It's written on the *wall* that it's a *winery*." She sighs, and adds with an exasperated look and rolled eyes, "*Interesting* people."

For locals who do drink wine, the old style is still broadly preferred. Marina, who runs a small outlet at her family's winery on the Slovakian side of the border, tells me that locals favor their aszú [*vyber* in Slovakian] wine from the oak cask in her cellar, which has "slight oxidation so it's more Tokaji-ish; that is guaranteed by the oak barrel". Even their dry wines are prepared on the spot in the old-fashioned way, freshly bottled for customers who walk in or call ahead. She tells me that I have just missed an interesting "open wine day" where the community of local producers open their cellars for visitors. These producers do not officially have stores and "they're not open in general," she explains, "they don't sell wine, only illegally" (a taxi driver in the same village described these producers to me as "hobbyists"). She explains that few jobs exist in the region outside of winemaking, and even winemaking is not a sustainable livelihood for these small producers. "Even for commuting or going to look for jobs you need money and that's something people often lack here".

Producing small batches in his garage-style, family winery in the village of Erdőbénye, Kende is a 30-something winemaker who is jaded with the new direction of the "elite" in Tokaj. In his view, the narrow definition of today's Tokaji wines as exclusively white, produced within protected borders, or regulated according to an arbitrary definition of tradition, are barriers to innovation and individuality. "I don't care about [the legal] aspect at all," he explains, "because if I sell someone my own red wine they'll all know—I know all of our customers—so they'll all know that the wine was

made here, the grape grew here. If [the law] could become liberalized now…? As I see it, the elite in this line of business are voting instead in the opposite direction... But this is out of accord with the countless unique wines…" He sighs. "Jokingly," he concludes, "I can say, *'több is veszett Mohácsnál'* [more was lost at the battle of Mohács[34]]".

Somewhat ironically, unique and small-batch tastes are at odds with both the hallmark predictability of both communist production as well as the exportable quantities needed for sustainable production in the capitalist era. Writing in 1990, Hugh Johnson explains of communist Tokaj:

> For 40 years their individual wines have been collected in a central warehouse, blended into anonymity, pasteurised and bottled as a homogeneous product of the State…. The new [Royal Tokaj] company will select the best individual wines from each grower's cellar and even credit him on the label. The difference to a proud wine-grower is between night and day" (Johnson 1990).

According to the Hungarian director of an international Tokaji firm, "Every vintage from the 80s tasted the same. It wasn't good, it wasn't bad—just the same" (Signer 2015). Many producers I encountered are afraid of this homogenization becoming status-quo in the new era. Kristof, a small producer in Erdőbénye, contrasts the distinctive possibilities of Tokaji *terroir* and *dűlő*-level wines with drives to produce exportable wines, which he calls "uni-wines" (*egyenbor*)—a term I heard reiterated by several producers. He notes of another nearby wine region's white wines: "they're good

[34] This 1526 battle was lost to Ottoman forces and led to the partitioning of the Hungarian Kingdom, which was then governed for several hundred years under Ottoman, Transylvanian, and Habsburg rule.

quality, but they're a *uni-wine*; they're all the same, so actually it doesn't matter which wine region or in which *dűlő* it was made…I think it would be good if Tokaj didn't make this mistake".

b. Aesthetic detachment: The politics of acquired tastes

While many studies of postsocialist experiences in CEE countries consider foodways as a critical launch-point of investigation (e.g. Caldwell et al. 2009), fewer have considered more specifically the production of specialty foods in CEE that rely on place of origin (Jung 2014 being one exception). What is the fate of CEE products—and their producers—when they, too, must be transformed—from a mass socialist commodity to an exclusive capitalist luxury?

As Guntra Aistara observes of Latvian producers, Tokaji winemakers must "not only invent new material practices in their wine-growing, but must also embed these in the landscape, in people's social networks and sense of taste, so that they become part of the cultural and sensory memory of generations to come" (2014:15). Reframing the experience of postsocialist "transition" (Smith and Jehlička 2007) through the lens of specialty foods, we see that the transformation is not teleological, but instead shows signs of "irony, resistance, independence, revisions and responses to rapid intro of capitalist political economy of food" (Smith and Jehlička 2007:2). Old divides are reinforced when it comes to wine production and consumption: "Wine involves the whole of Europe when it comes to drinking it but only one particular Europe when it comes to producing it" (Gačnik 2014).

The materiality of Tokaji wines embodies imagined pasts, but also imagined presents and envisioned futures—imaginaries that are fragmented. Tastes become proxies for broader tensions; taste is also a space to contest the past or map envisionings of the future. In Tokaj, there are the 'modern authentics' who seek to distance the new Tokaji wines from their socialist past through allegiance to 'pre-communist' tastes, while some locals seek, instead, to venerate what they know as tradition, even if it happened to exist during communism. They do so—not by altering the product en masse—but by

allowing for individuality and innovation, direct selling, and transparency in production. The latter requires, as Halauniova (2018) writes of Warsaw architecture, an "aesthetic detachment" from socialist preferences that is cultivated in the curation of relics from "ugly" socialist artifacts (in her case, architecture) to "beautiful modernist". Contrary to Latour's framing of detachment (conceptualized as a "poor attachment" to a good [1999]), she points out that *detachment* actually requires an enormous amount of labor through a "politics by other means" (Mukerji 2012 in Halauniova 2018). In Tokaj, this "politics by other means" is the *politics of acquired tastes*; it appears in locals' narratives of communist-era Tokaji goods (as flavors enmeshed within an atmosphere of fun and security of livelihoods), evoking a political imaginary of the region and its famous product as simultaneously modern, traditional, local, international, and without rupture.

The inability to decide, amongst all producers, what the literal composition and/or resulting taste of Tokaji wines should be is not only an abstract philosophical debate relegated to the purview of nationalists versus cosmopolitans. Rather, it is a matter of livelihood and rural development, sustained by a devotion to *terroir*, a path with the potential for "rootedness" and "supplying a means for individuals in localities to respond to globalization" (Demossier 2011:685). While dominant international or 'global' brands of goods (the wines of France, for example) have existed in dialogue with markets and consumers more-or-less continuously for the last 120 years, the more isolated production—and tastes—of Tokaji wines must be socialized.

Through the work of producers, who build trust and promote acquired tastes with their face-to-face meetings, and wine professionals, who build confidence through their legitimizing of Tokaji wines, I argue that the labor of *terroir* is not only in the field, but in the creation of what Krzywoszynska (2015) has called an "open taste"—which I would extend to include the "open taster" (see also Aistara 2014, Besky 2014). As Krzywoszynska explains, "[c]ultivating an open taste can contribute to the

survival and flourishing of more ecologically and socially just ways of producing foods…. an important component of a normative change in food markets." (Krzywoszynska 2015:501). Through viewing "taste as relational, malleable, and trainable" we see that there exists "more than one way of matching supply and demand" where "the re-aligning of foods and eating bodies has been noted in historical accounts of changing food markets" (Krzywoszynska 2015:495). This is, as Bruno Latour has written, a matter of learning (or, teaching) to be *affected*.

c. Tasting transformation

It seems redundant to point out that tastes are transformed over time, yet this aspect of time and sense experience is surprisingly rarely taken into serious consideration of socio-political change—that, in fact, tastes *transform* as much as they are *transformed*. The contentions around good tastes, often discussed as a feature of "quality" wines, is thus an equally social and political question. Quality is almost always a recommendation, a positive feature of food. Yet, in today's Tokaj, the quantity production associated with communism represents the antithesis of quality for many.

At the same time, locals who have lived and experienced political changes experience the "new regime" as one of sensuous rupture with the past, where foreigners and new generations are even more unrelatable because they apparently do not exist within the same sensorium. Narratives of absolute 'quality' tastes are discursively—and perhaps more literally (Brawner et al. forthcoming 2018)—linked to immutable ecologies, embedded in the environment. These tastes are often centered in narratives of Tokaj wines not as something new, but as something rediscovered, resurrected by the redemptive arrival of modern technology and international palates.

Food remains extremely affective, inciting emotion in the individual, "while the communal, commensal experience of such sensations binds people together, not only through space but time as well" (Di Giovine and Brulotte 2014:1). Group tastings like the ones described above help to shape a

common wine identity, or 'imagined community' among a diverse population (Harvey et al. 2014:26). Krzywoszynska's example from Northern Italy is hopeful, where natural wine consumption is "reimagined as adventures in taste, aesthetic and pleasurable ways of creating relations and experiencing the world" (500). Some Tokaji producers are not as optimistic, looking instead to the past as a time of greater hope. As one young woman, working as a chemist at the laboratory of a large, international firm tells me, if we were to ask her parents, they would suggest it was better during socialism, with greater security (*biztosítás*), and nobody wondering how they would make a living or when they would eat. "You hear it all the time," she adds. "It was a different world," she explains, but whether it was better or worse, "who can say?" By way of conclusion, she suggests that communism lasted over 40 years, and so it may take "another 40 to see what works".

VI. CONCLUSIONS

a. The political economy of bad tastes

The acquired taste of wines necessitates repeated exposure to products that, while hyper-local, even Tokaji residents often turn away from and are excluded from based on their costs alone. Exposure thus requires more than geographical proximity. As one woman put it related to me about the communist era, "We couldn't go out, as people, but [the wines] didn't go out either". This situation seems to be replicating itself; where lack of freedom of trade and movement prevented travel before 1989, the border remains imprinted in markets and tastes. As I argue this case illustrates, the result is a multiplicity of sense worlds—that is to say, experiences, in the most literal sense.

With this ethnographic account of postsocialist transformation, I aim to begin to contribute toward an anthropology of bad tastes (Holtzman 2010), suggesting we may learn as much from these negative encounters as with the positive gustatory experiences of so many ethnographic travelogues. After all, can food be *bad*—or can one (as Holtzman [2010] ponders) simply "lack the taste" for it? It

is also important to consider how, understandably, discourses of good and bad tastes overlap with anxiety over fraud, where the forging of the taste of place is a dangerous misrepresentation of both.

As the Tokaj case shows, this feature of taste is no small question. Michalski (2015) examines taste as a "moment in the circulation of capital". This moment is not inconsequential; tastes for sugar, or for "Fair Trade" coffee, have ecological consequences and may serve to further marginalize producers. This has relevance in the case of Geographical Indications and origin labelling of foods, where origin products carry a "dual heritage": they define both the producer and the consumer (Allaire et al. 2011) within a "virtuous circle" of authentic production and ethical consumption (Beletti and Mariscotti 2011). Notably, the other points of this circle are rarely discussed—while producers and consumers are two poles, there are many loci of labor in between.

My reading of the political life of taste has focused on a traditionally bourgeoisie product; thus, I consider the professionalization of taste and the contemporary luxury status of speciality wines as especially relevant in the postsocialist context. It was through the interlinking of politics and taste that wine consumption reached its elite status in Europe. Just as *terroir* has the uncanny ability to cloak social relations in "natural attire" (Ulin and Black 2013), so, too, does taste. Narratives of place-based quality in France, the epicenter of contemporary *terroir*-led production, highlights the importance of the taster; French narratives have, since the 1990s veered away from producer as agent of quality to taster as mediator in assessment of quality (Demossier 2011). In marginal places of wine production and "unknown *terroir*" (Jung 2014), it may be that producers themselves, their relative location, and their lack of "sign value" (West 2012) are barriers to entry—cloaked in the language of taste, or the ostensibly more objective 'quality'.

For this reason, the producer/consumer polarity is complexified, where any serious discussion of taste must consider the role of countless 'translators' in-between. Consideration of taste as the

historically-contingent crossroads of the material and the social allows for the "mutual accommodation of the biological and cultural" (Escobar 1999), where food is perhaps the most quintessential nexus of both.

b. The labor of tasting places

Taste represents the potential for opening markets and, as an activity, "re-configuring attachments between consumers, producers, and edibles" (Krzywoszynska 2015:494). Where food products are commodified, affective relationships to food are mediated by capital, and thus by supply and demand. Because demands are linked to (and in some cases linguistically substituted for) tastes, and because social relations define the borders of availability and supply, a more comprehensive consideration of taste requires analysis that is not restricted only to producer or consumer spheres. As I have shown, much of this labor is done by the people "in between"; not only by the hands that harvest the bunches, but also those who educate and evangelize for place-based tastes, those who [re]produce the narratives of *terroir* on which local foods depend (see also Besky 2013).

Of course, much of this work is done by small-scale, family producers, who often build trust with consumers face-to-face, although they almost always interact with a self-selecting subset of visitors who have not accidentally stumbled across their cellars, but who have intentionally placed themselves in the region in the first place. Encounters in urban places like Budapest, where western (and increasingly East Asian) tourists might travel for other reasons, often surprise visitors who would not otherwise have considered the traditions of Hungary outside of Budapest, or the revival of rural life after the urbanizing forces of communism.

These moments of discovery are the work of intermediary taste-makers (or, taster-makers) and educators, many of them well-versed in the formalities of English- or Continental-style tastings, the synesthetic vocabulary, and methods for leading people to explore and consciously consider their

consumption in new dimensions. The sociality of these meetings cannot be overstated. As Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy (2010) note, ‘‘differences in the feel of food result from the heterogeneous ways in which memories, ideas, discourses, moods, tastes and so forth come together in the body’’ (2,966). As Jung (2014) has suggested of Bulgarian wines, for whom there is no recognizable distinction, or *minerality*, this “taste of unknown places” must find an existence in the hierarchy of hegemonic, western taste practices. The labor of countering this hegemony, then, is the active production of new consumption modalities, creating spaces of taste-contemplation and broadening experiences through a socio-political engagement with taste—a socialized taste that is ecologically embedded (Chapters Seven, Nine).

CHAPTER 8

DOMESTICATING TASTE: *TERROIR* AS POLICY LANDSCAPE

I. FROM RED STAR TO GOLD RUSH: OWNING POSTSOCIALIST *TERROIR*

a. Cooperatives to corporations

This final ethnographic chapter illustrates the ways in which policies of place-based tastes become constituent parts of winemaking ecosystems, and discusses implications of place-based authenticity in an age of renewed nationalist sentiment. Through on-the-ground examples of shifting taste expectations, protectionist tools, and shifting production methods, political regimes entail new regimes of taste—these are not without material, ecological consequences. Changes in land tenure from socialist production to today's "renaissance"—alongside shifting explanations of 'quality' tastes—add to existing ethnographic accounts of postsocialist transformations that counter teleological expectations of 'transition' and highlight the ambivalence with which contemporary citizens view their current political situation. Political narratives of innate environmental exceptionalism thus intersect with contemporary nationalist trends in the region and elucidate the complexity within which people negotiate and experience everyday life in postsocialist Hungary.

"In the early 90s," explained one wine writer in Budapest, "all these foreign countries came in—top companies in the world—and bought their chunk of Tokaj". They had aimed to make the great historic aszú wines, he says, but of course today there is little demand for "sweet" wines. Instead, they've begun to make international-style dry wines in bulk, including single-*dűlő* wines that showcase the *terroir*. "Tokaj has always been famous, but for the last 100 years, what has changed? We don't know, but it has moved backward rather than forward," Arpad once lamented to me over a glass of

Kövérszőlő wine, "After the regime change, during privatization, they broke it into pieces and everybody got a part".

The Compensation Act of 1990 (effective in 1991) and Cooperative Law of 1992 was initiated to return collectivized properties to the original owners or their descendants (so-called "insider members"); in Tokaj, cooperative laborers who had not contributed their lands to cooperatives ("outsider members") were granted vouchers in proportion to their time worked, exchangeable for land or machinery at auction, or to trade on the open market (up to the equivalent of $62,000). However, land ownership was difficult or impossible to establish, even as international firms began to purchase large swathes of Tokaji lands. By 1994, the sale of Tokaji lands to foreigners or their firms was banned, but a handful of established major producers had already purchased available first-class *dűlő*-s. Meanwhile, by 1996 Hungarian vouchers had depreciated in value by 65%, even as property prices rose; auction rings and collusion were frequent.

Ironically, the initial plan for privatization involved consolidation of the old aristocratic estates of Hungarian nobles (such as the Esterhazy family)—to be "reconstituted and sold as individual Chateaus, so imbuing the wine once more with individualism after 40 years in the Communist compressor" (Cohen 1992). Investment firm Ernst and Young was consulted in evaluating the 17 chosen estates of 100-500 acres, each valued at $3 to $5 million, but the passing of the Compensation Law delayed sales as older Hungarians emerged to reclaim family plots; "There are more grandfathers and great-grandmothers around than we thought" gritted one would-be investor (Hegedus). The prized Hetszollo estate sold to Bordeaux-based French-Japanese *Grand Millésimes de France* ($4 million for 75.2% of vineyard, with the balance owned by the state).

Media coverage during this time highlighted generational and geographical tensions, where foreign newcomers replaced Hungarian communists with a new regime of top-down production

practices aimed at making wine in the new, global style rather than the "low-quality" communist style (Chapter Seven). Speaking to reporters, one elderly Hungarian grower in Tokaj "vehemently rejected the notion that the wine had declined in quality". He shared with the journalist a 1956 Tokaji Aszú—a "nectar, rich and autumnal, hint of sherry-like dryness". "I was young when I made this wine," he explained, "and now I am old. But I know that our future greatness is rooted in our past traditions. If this is ever sold to foreigners, I will rise from my grave to protest" (Cohen 1992). The selling of Tokaji *dűlő*-s was perhaps more successful than anyone could have imagined; reportedly, one German group offered at one point to buy the entire Tokaj appellation (14,000 acres)[35], but it was the director of the state-owned Kombinat (what was left of the communist trading house) who chose, instead, to allow for competition and sell to multiple investors (Dodds 1991).

Local cooperatives died, leaving growers "at the mercy of large national producers" who offered low prices for unprocessed grapes, as many of the remaining cooperatives did not have bottling equipment. Within a few years, the Russian market was lost when "Quality Wine" categorical requirements included aging of wine at least two years, causing an increase in cost and wait time. By 2001, profit margins in Hungarian wine production were as low as 4 or 5 HUF (about 1 cent USD) per liter (Liddell 2001:30). One producer remarked to Liddell of the remaining cooperatives that "The people who work there do so not to make money, but just so that they may feel tired when they go home at night" (30).

Issues of land ownership were coupled with other negative consequences, such as "the fragmentation of vineyards designed and planted to be run as an integrated whole" (Liddell 2003). Cooperative members might have received, for example, 8 rows of vines on a 20-hectare plantation;

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[35] "Underberg, the German drinks group, wants a foothold in the Tokaj and exclusive distribution rights for the best wine. Yet, with a worldwide glut of good wine, it is not clear who else is prepared to follow the German concern into the technically backward Hungarian vineyards." (Dodds 1991)

attempts to [re]consolidate production for private individuals were largely (and perhaps unsurprisingly) unsuccessful. Some others had inherited parcels in vineyards due to their lineage but had no interest or knowledge and so abandoned them. By 2001, Liddell observed that this led to the ad hoc use of pesticide sprays and partial vineyard abandonment with detrimental consequences: "when part of a vineyard is not properly looked after, the rest can only suffer" (2003:24). "Just as collectivization solved the impracticality of running uneconomic units resulting from the breakup of estates in the late 1940s," he summarized, "the task now is to find a way of stitching broken-up vineyards back together again" (Liddell 2003:25). Integration contracts were introduced, renewable annually by the grower, to encourage producers to commit to harvest dates, sugar levels, volumes, etc. but with mixed results.

b. [Re]globalizing Tokaj

Tokaj has always been—to varying degrees—international (Chapter Three), but the mass arrival of international firms in the 1990s—and power imbalances inherent in wealth disparities between firms and locals—meant the advent of new methods of winemaking and vineyard management. Gabor, who is in his 40s, runs a small family production and guesthouse with his wife and their new baby in the small town of Erdőbénye. He has witnessed many changes since 1989, and thinks that the corporations who bought cheap Tokaji land in the early 1990s brought with them a "much needed" new approach:

> A new attitude arrived…but back then [locals] found it strange that [the new corporations] bulldozed everything and re-planted the grapevines and started using a new cultivation method. They built huge factories with a bunch of [steel] tanks, processing areas, all of these with the newest technology and…trying to keep up with the newest trends…. After these new wineries,

> those with Hungarian ownership started to form, and they also went for the quality; they 'pulled' along with them the smaller companies like ours.
>
> It wasn't like we realized what a treasure we had, actually, like, *we couldn't just throw this away*, but instead we wanted to move toward a direction where we could show people that we can also make wine, and what *kind* of wine comes from these vineyards.

Balázs, who lives in a nearby village and is a similar age, tells me about his family's life after 1989—how they bought a small parcel, and the other half was purchased by a major Spanish company. He explains, "That winery is 100% Spanish property…. I think *we* know where you can have great grapevines and make good wine and *they* know that as well, that's why they bought those areas". Balázs began making wine in 2012 in preparation for the opening of his guesthouse, experimenting with different soils in the *dűlő* and noting that "different areas give different wine".

Janos, a nearly-retired winemaker and former village mayor, recalls the "system-change" as a time when "Hungarian enterprises had no capital" and could not maintain the historic *dűlő*-s properly. "The foreign enterprises practically re-started these processes with a serious capital injection. They brought new technologies…which often served as an example to the [local] winemakers". While he insists that this was useful, he admits:

> I feel regretful about the good territories that are now foreign property. I am regretful for those who had left because of the lack of the capital in Hungary. I am regretful for them because I think, in France, if they have a square meter of good territory they won't sell it…. Here there are territories which should

> have remained Hungarian property; I am regretful about it, but that is the situation.

While multi-nationals bought large plantations in the early 1990s, some locals have more recently invested in the "cast-offs" of these companies: adjacent areas that were too remote for large-scale production. Zoltan purchased one such tract in an original First Class *dűlő*:

> The first parcel we acquired was a small, 0.58-hectare area, offered to us by a larger company. They wanted to get rid of it as it was too far out for them…. The area was in rundown condition with a traditional vine-stock cultivation; no one wants that these days. Winemakers generally dislike that, as it requires lots of manual labor.
>
> So the place was not appealing at all, riddled with fruit trees. However, when I saw the stone walls, saw this valley isolated from everything else, I knew inside that I must try and make this work.

He purchased these places with loans from friends and family, as well as some governmental aide. "Obviously, success wasn't handed to us. It wasn't like I just showed up, someone handed me 4 hectares of a *dűlő* and that was that. I had to establish relationships with local winemakers, slowly purchasing local areas". His scheme to turn the *dűlő* terrain from one of mass-production mode to quality, terraced areas means they have "used construction machines to clean out the terraces one by one". Because these areas are off-limits for tractors, they have also "managed to partner with an equestrian who is particularly handy with horses…. He also helps with horse-powered cultivator, plows, and hoes". Zoltan quantifies the cost of commitment to quality in his *dűlő*-s, some of which have only "2300 vines per hectare," while their "cultivation expenses are basically same as with 6250

vines per hectare". Given the recent political history in the area, it is unsurprising that the "most Hungarian" wine region struggles to unify its image. Pushback against political pasts and present is common but not as vehement as may be expected; rather, it can be read in the subtler language and signs around Tokaj (Figure 25).

Figure 25: Greeting arrivals at the Tokaj train station, this image of Greater Hungary (darker, with current Hungary superimposed in lighter stone) reads, "We believe in the ressurection of Hungary!". Photo by the author.

c. Legacies of communist *Terroir* in the EU era

Communist production left its mark in the viticultural systems of Tokaj—policies written into the landscape through management decisions that perpetuate. Writing in 2007, Hungarian viticulturalists Sidlovitz and Kator explain of the need for assistance from the EU:

> The heritage of socialist viticulture is visible at the level of the vineyard management technique and the state of vineyard, where one part is obsolete, the other is old, and the conversion proportion is [too weak for quality] wine production and quality improvement. Therefore the [EU] aid for vineyard restructuring is essential for Central European wine producer member states (15).

The shift to quality in winemaking implies not only higher prices fetched, but significantly higher costs of production due to the overwriting of communist "landscapes" of production and the transformation of vineyards with wide, vertical rows into images of their historic predecessors. However, for Tokaji producers looking to maintain a living as winemakers, producing quantities of wine in the 'communist style' (which is, broadly speaking, created in accordance with local tastes) is a more guaranteed livelihood than reducing quantity and producing international styles that rarely reach the volumes or prices required for sustainable export.

The serious costs associated with transforming *dűlő*-s into operational vineyards of "quality" *terroir* production has furthered the divide between locals with an interest in winemaking and entrepreneurs with capital, often foreign investors or members of the urban middle class. Many winemakers in the region are thus located in Budapest or other centers, where their wages can afford a *dűlő* tract and a holiday home in one of the many near-empty village centers. For these producers, it is the love of the land and the hobby (often passed down from previous generations or inspired by

mythologies of national heritage) that inspires their craft, which is rarely profitable in any conventional sense.

Kristof, who lives and works in Budapest with his family of five, runs a small winery out of his holiday home in Erdőbénye. He identifies his entry into wine production as having first been a "simple wine consumer":

> I was interested in wine, and 10 years ago a field that once belonged to my father—who also did this as a hobby—was for sale, and then partially because of emotional reasons—and also because I loved wine—I simply decided to buy it.

This is contrasted strongly with two women I met en route to another village, who told me they were unemployed thanks to lack of work in the region. One had worked in a local "ABC" (a small grocery/general store) but it had closed. Mid- and large-size wineries often hire local labor, but this is very seasonal (primarily during the harvest) and occasional (maintenance work in early spring, for example). Specialized labor is required for the aszú berry harvest, which is highly labor-intensive and requires years of knowledge around selecting the right berries one-by-one.

Sitting with veteran winemaker Arpad in his wine shop in Erdőbénye, he asked me about what sources I would consult for my project, eager for me to see every side of the political situation in Tokaj. He explained the current situation in Tokaj as the result of the history of the region—and especially the contention between insiders and outsiders, where the style of winemaking (and thus rules and regulations associated with production) have been debated amongst the newcomers and old timers in Tokaj. While he does not entirely disapprove of foreign wineries in the region, he resents the concessions made by locals and transcribed into law on the basis of Western European influence,

explaining, “The French modified the Hungarian law for wine in 1994. They wrote it, actually, not the Hungarians. Hungarians typed it, but *they* thought it out”.

Part of this new law, he explains, included the doing-away with wooden barrels. They “changed the old system, which entailed the following: as many *puttony* the wine had, plus two years extra for maturing. So, for example, a six *puttony* aszú was matured for 8 years”. His disdain for outsider influence underlines his retelling of these early years of privatization, when “the French” arrived with new, modern methodologies to overwrite communist-era styles:

> Now the aszú’s maturing time is 18 months [instead of two-to-eight years]. And I can’t completely accept this, because I told them at so many meetings that we didn’t become part of the [UNESCO] World Heritage because of the now-used, heated-cooled [stainless steel] tanks which generate “uniwine” they could make in Chile or in France. What does this have to do with a Tokaji wine other than the raw material?
>
> The past 400 years were about the aszú…the wooden barrels, the cellars, the noble rot—this was the process…. And here they re-wrote our 400-year-old tradition. So, this is my opinion but also a fact….
>
> The Aszú wine has only its name now and the fact that you need Aszú berries to make it.

For producers like Arpad, there is a sense that the revival of tradition in Tokaj was *more* possible during socialism: there may have been bulk, falsely aged wines shipped to the Russian market, but at least the “old ways” were maintained by locals who still aged aszú wines in barrels underground for years at a time. Today, liberalized markets require an even faster turnaround: a big task for a slow

wine. His anxiety about the future of Tokaj is parallel to his political concerns around Hungary and the EU directives to accept minimum numbers of refugees during the recent refugee "crisis": "Here, they say we should let in 100,000, because we have ten million people[36]," he explains, "but I say that if this happens, Hungary disappears. Hungary is over. And they don't drink wine! Let's think this over: their kids won't, grandchildren won't, friends won't…. You didn't think about this, did you?" he questions me. Assimilation, he seems to imply, begins with these shared consumption practices: "I'd start with telling them to begin by drinking water, eating pork, etcetera."

Today, local wine laws and the common organization of Tokaj wine communities under a PDO label with production requirements—coupled with the disproportionate influence in the early 1990s of foreign investors—create a playing field with entirely new rules aimed at creating a product that is more suited to global taste trends: specifically, away from oxidation (Chapter Seven) and "sweet" wines, and toward *terroir*-showcasing dry wines. Hungary joined the EU as it was making strides toward draining the "wine lake" that has resulted from the consistent overproduction of wine in its member states in recent decades. In 2007, over 1.7 billion bottles were reported as surplus for several early 2000s vintages (Frank and Macle 2007:15), and "emergency distillation" (into industrial alcohol) becomes the fate of hundreds of millions of bottles of European wine each year (Wyatt 2006). The modern EU, post-productivist era and its rural development schemes, is "defined by the buzzwords of multifunctionality, rural development, heritage and environmental concern" (Demossier 2018:136). This paradigm drives the promotion of rural landscapes as beds of artisan production and traditional methods in ways that simultaneously enhance localized foodways and rural tourism, while encouraging environmental conservation and biological diversity through specialty products (and, implicitly, ecologically embedded tastes).

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[36] This refers to the quota system proposed by the European Parliament for refugee resettlement. I was unable to find any source that supported this 100,000 number.

Efforts to drain the "wine lake" include EU vineyard "grubbing-up" or vine pull schemes, initiated in the EU in 1988. Through these policies, producers with unprofitable vineyards may pull up their vines in exchange for cash payments. Thus, joining the EU in the early 2000s as a wine-producing country entailed much debate in and around Hungary regarding the requirements of new member states to comply with the strict production caps set in place, entering into a single market already super-saturated with wine and with little interest in the contested wines of post-communist Hungary. If the communist era provided a steady market with little room for capitalizing on quality, the new era has not offered the hoped-for replacement.

The status of Hungarian wines leading into Hungary's EU accession can be inferred through contemporary accounts by foreign wine professionals in the region. Writing in 2000, Alex Liddell relates Hungary's suboptimal wine production directly to local tastes as he notes (48):

> Finally—and sadly, because it continues to have a baleful influence on so much Hungarian winemaking—mention must be made of the Hungarian palate. Wine tastes are generally not at all sophisticated, and much wine is simply a vehicle for the alcohol it contains, as the small, dumpy glass usually used for drinking and tasting (filled to the brim) rather suggests. Your glass of wine is likely to be accompanied by a plate of pogácsák (small cheese scones).

Liddell's undeniably classist observation invokes Bordieu's notion of taste (1984) as he observes that wine is a merely "vehicle" for alcohol in local consumption. He zooms in on the carelessness with which he observes locals consume wine: without reflection or cognition, without analysis. But as he also notes (47):

The proper understanding of Hungarian wine culture requires an insight into matters less tangible than laws and research institutes. Wine is in the soul of many Hungarians. It has, for some, an almost sacramental quality. Indeed, when tasting one day, I asked, because I was driving, if I might spit out the samples I was being offered. “Wine,” came the reply, “is the blood of God, and to spit it out is sacrilege.”

Figure 26: No spitting!: The sign on Dani's cellar door in Tokaj. Photo by the author.

Spitting wine is not uncommon in today’s Tokaj, where formalized tastings (and the norms associated with them) are spreading. Nevertheless, many locals continue to consume wine in full, opaque glasses alongside traditional *süti* (baked goods). Dani, who owns a mid-sized winery and guesthouse in Tokaj, took me into his cellar. When I asked him to explain the signage on the door, he laughed, and said it was recovered from a factory nearby where people used to spit tobacco. He uses it now to guard his wine cellar and to jokingly remind visitors: *No spitting* (Figure 26)*!* In the next section, I turn more directly to this question of taste in “quality” wine production.

II. REGIMES OF ECOLOGICALLY EMBEDDED TASTE

a. The problem with "quality"

Availability of Tokaji wines (and thus, their tastes) have always been politically and geographically contingent. It was "[p]roximity to [Tokaj-]Hegyalja and taste preferences in wine" that "determined the direction of exports of the Tokaji sweet wines during the 16th and 17th centuries" (Lambert-Gocs 2010:53). Towards the 18th century, mercantilism (commerce as a vehicle to benefit the nation-state through financial wellfare) emerged as an obstacle to Tokaji export going into the 19th century as leadership prioritized domestic economies, viewing free trade as a potential threat. This philosophy also gained traction in Poland, perhaps Tokaj's greatest long-standing customer, where "Polish statesmen began having serious doubts about the Polish predilection for Tokaji wine" and the resulting draining of money from domestic products. "This outlook went so far as to envision that Polish tastes could be switched away from grape wine altogether, to the advantage of producers of domestic wines from other fruits of honey" (Lambert-Gocs 2010:53).

The Vienna Trade Council convinced the Habsburgs (then under Maria Theresa) to outlaw Hungarian wine export along the Danube and to allow only as much Hungarian wine to be exported as Austrian wine—however, Austrian wine was not in demand, so Hungarian exports were severely limited. Simultaneously, Austria's nationalistic stance promoted their refusal of Prussian goods, and Prussia in turn prohibited Tokaji wine imports. Russia added heavy duties to Hungarian wines in 1766 (with the exception of those purchased for the Russian Imperial Court), giving Tokaji wines in Russia an even more skewed status as the wine of elites.

A simplified story of Tokaji wine history is one in which traditional, sweet "quality" aszú wines that once reflected traditional harvesting practices local ecological circumstances (botrytis, cellar conditions, endemic fungi, etc.) were adulterated by the mode of socialist wine production that

overwrote the region in the mid-20th century through pressures to produce quantities of artificially sweet wine (seen in opposition to "quality"). But today, the question of "quality" wines where GI labels are concerned is simultaneously one of quality *terroir*, where the wines and geographies of Western Europe are often cited as benchmarks. Yet, for all its association with communism and "backwardness", the mid-20th century quantity-driven production was also simultaneously en vogue in post-war Western Europe, where places like Burgundy suffered from quantity drives and the "disappointingly thin" wines of the 1970s when the fashion "was to plant clones for quantity and reliability rather than wine quality" (Demossier 2018:104). It is therefore important to question the objective "quality" turn that is so often associated with the advent of capitalism in Tokaj. Through these narratives, capitalism and its associated agricultural forms is naturalized through visceral experiences represented as objective through 'good' tastes—while, conversely, the obstinate palates of locals is associated with an equally backwards politics.

Communist producers *were* concerned with quality but were working within internal market demands and Russian tastes (which were, in turn, shaped by production). In fact, communist-era research reports suggest Tokaj had rebounded from an era of low quality following the Napoleonic Wars when, in the early 19th century, exports dropped, and producers resorted to lower-quality production (Bartha 1974). Additionally, "foreign" investment (the political boundaries of Central Europe being so mobile) in the region has always played a role, even in the interwar period (1920s and early 1930s) when foreign capital, while small, led to the presence of foreign ownership, incentivizing innovation (Csató 1984). Thus, the use of "quality" as shorthand for market-led and thus associated with the post-1989 era is oversimplified at best, and seems to stand, instead, alongside broader EU objectives to decrease wine production. The quality in winemaking here is, in other words, in the *exclusivity*. For wine regions that are globally unknown, such as Tokaj, small quantities do not serve local objectives for export or place-brand-building.

b. Tasting communist political ecology

The socio-political life of taste described in this section and in Chapter Seven cannot be separated from ecological ramifications. Aszú wines made before the industrialization of communism included stake training (where shoots are tied to a single, often wooden, stake in the ground and climbs upward after being horn pruned). Horn pruning creates giant knobs of old, woody bases at the ground with antler-like spurs where new shoots emerge. They would have been densely planted (around 10,000 vines per hectare). In the 1970s Tokaji vine training entailed the Lenz Moser method with five-foot high cordon to assist in mechanization of vineyard production; the density of these vineyards would have been determined by the wide rows necessitated by the large Russian tractors used at the time (Liddell 2001:62, Figure 27). They were thus spaced three meters apart, with vines planted at one meter apart at a rate of about 3,330 vines per hectare. As of 2001, new plantations considered 5,000 per hectare to be optimal, with north-south alignment, but most remained closer to 3,330 because of the continued use of old tractors.

Figure 27: Training vines to cordons. Tarcal, April 2017. Photo by the author.

The Lenz Moser method is not ideal for varieties prone to rot and may in fact be exacerbating the Gray Rot problems faced in furmint monocultural plantations today, causing reported crop losses of up to 60% (Gabi, personal communication). It is typical to get three liters of must per vine if growth is restricted (and thus considered good quality), while some aim for only half of this. Yet, quantities still meet the needs of locals looking to sell grapes in bulk to the larger corporations present in the region, perpetuating (relative) mass production. “Peasant growers,” writes English wine writer Liddell (2001), “are happy to take all the grapes that God sends, and over-cropping is the Hungarian grape-grower’s besetting sin” (62-63). The other “sin”, he explains, is “cash-shortage disease”, or premature harvesting that leads to underripe grapes being picked in order to sell them (54).

During communism, vines were planted for mass production and responded to cordon planting with vigour, producing as much as 20 tons per hectare (today's top-tier *terroir* wines in Tokaj are harvested at 2-4 tons per hectare). The grapes were often harvested at marginal ripeness, encountered pasteurization, fortification, added sugars, or the addition of old wines to hide flaws. These practices were prohibited in the 1991 Wine Act and continue to be associated with supply-side economics and lack of competition. As one journalist wrote of Tokaj in 1990:

> Perversely, the communist regime made life too easy, both for small farmers and the huge co-operative farms. Their crops were already sold, admittedly at low prices, before they were even gathered. Huge yields were therefore all that was required. Selectivity, the first fundamental for wine quality, was a luxury for which only the proudest and most dedicated growers were prepared to pay (Johnson 1990).

Ironically, the "luxury" of selectivity continues to elude most Tokaj producers today—for lack of market (export) and lack of local demand for the new, fresh taste (and the higher price points associated with low-batch, high-tech production). The Soviet drive to produce bulk wines introduced mechanization, yet preserved certain traditions, such as barrel aging. However, it is ostensibly the residue of these steel and iron implements that wine journalists have considered akin to "tasting communism" (Signer 2015). Notably, the adoption of mechanization (tractor usage) in Tuscan vineyards in 2016 was recently lauded as "modernization" (Ebhardt 2016).

Figure 28: Touring a a mid-size Tokaji winery, November 2017. Traditional stake training (foreground) requires hefty manual labor (occasionally horse-drawn plows are used), as well as financial investment where terraces are not pre-existing. Photo by the author.

Figure 29: Surveying the Melegoldal ("Warm Side") vineyard with Dani, June 2015. Wide spacings between vertical rows, popular since the mid-20th century, allow for mechanization and would require large financial commitments to transform. Photo by Dan Adams.

Today, hilltop vineyards are often viewed as top-tier, because (thanks to the erosion afforded by decades of wide rows during communism), poor soil conditions require the vine to "work" to reach water and result in lower levels of production (and reportedly higher-quality berries). Communist production would have irrigated these areas or pulled them up entirely (as with many marginal plots). Where vineyards remained unpulled, rows were cut and the vines were trained to a high cordon. However, communist practices are to thank for the current conditions (although they rarely enter the *terroir* narrative of producers, and never positively). The "poor" soil conditions are now thought to train the vine toward quality, while the overfertilization of First Class *dűlő*-s appears to have left legacy nutrients in high quantities. Ironically, this high nutrient content is interpreted by many producers (and consumers!) as the elusive *minerality* that is said to mark quality, volcanic *terroirs* around the world (Brawner et al. forthcoming 2018).

c. "For the people to drink": Bittersweet change

Until recently, taste in agrifood chains has been a "monolithic and largely externally defined evaluation of a product" (Demossier 2018:106) with little attention paid to the direct influence of aimed-for tastes on producer labor: how the logic of production systems, motivated by the tastes of the intended recipients, plays out on the material landscape. In Tokaj, it is not so far-fetched to imagine the direct link between the Russian "palate" and their conspicuous consumption of once-elite Tokaji wines with the Tokaji oak industry that prospered in the making of barrels in which wines would mature, or the quantities of wines demanded by the eastern power and the width of Tokaji vineyard rows measuring the width of Russian tractors.

Wine tasting is perhaps the most formally contemplated visceral experience in contemporary food consumption, a model after which craft beers, chocolate, coffee, olive oil, and other place-oriented foods have evolved. For its rich history, a normative language of wine tasting only developed in the

1960s in Western Europe. By 1967 the French AOC included an annual sensory evaluation of wines through tasting that was led by producers, as they were considered the "most knowledgeable experts" (Demossier 2018:96 citing Teil 2010:257). The sensory field coupled with geographies of production remains the purview of a global network of wine gurus, Master Sommeliers, critics, and perhaps less so, producers themselves. Engagements with the results of these tastings (the notes, comments, remarks) vary greatly amongst producers, but can be witnessed in fads (such as the use of new oak barrels in the 1990s). Perhaps one of the most broad-stroke changes in this field is the shift from sweet wine to dry. In order to engage more directly with this move and the education of tastes toward dry, new, fresh, and "*terroir*" style wines, I participated in several tasting courses in Budapest, including 'expert'-led, producer-led, formal tasting schools, and amateur tasting events.

During the summer of 2017 I attend one of these formal tastings—this time, of furmint wines—at a local tourist-oriented culinary center. Here, English wine writer Joseph is leading the group (a mixture of about 18 Hungarian locals and North American visitors) into the aszú portion of the session with a caveat: "You know, I'm not a sweet wine fan at all, but I—I don't really consider Tokaji aszú as a sweet wine, I just consider it a very *rich* wine". He says the high acidity of the indigenous furmint grape in the wine balances the sweetness; where it would otherwise taste "cloying" it is instead something *else*. In a move I have become used to in these settings, he asks a leading question, "Does it taste that sweet, or is it *complex*?"

The silence is interrupted by a Hungarian woman: "I have an interesting question. Why is it that most people don't like sweet wines? Why is it that—that you just *also* mentioned it?" Joseph raises his eyebrows and becomes jokingly defensive, "Ah, but I would drink *that*!" he insists, gesturing to the bottle of aszú. "I don't know," he replies, "because fashions change, I think. Earlier, sweet wines were, like, massively popular". "Right!" the Hungarian woman urges him on. He continues, "Well,

certainly, ehh—one or two generations ago it was seen as a kind of—you know—*luxurious* thing to sit there and absorb lots of sugar. I think now that people are like, you mention sugar and people freak out." "But don't people drink wine with soda water," she asks, "because it can take the sweetness out of it?" She is referring to *fröccs*, a traditional spritzer made with soda water and wine; there are famously over thirty types of *fröccs* in Hungary, each a variation on ratios of water and wine.

Joseph acknowledges the popularity of the *fröccs*, and even that he likes them occasionally, but original woman returns to her questioning: "But in Hungary, it was—people didn't *drink* that expensive wine. They didn't *make* expensive wine before. It was for the *people* to drink. When it's made at home…that's the history. It has changed now". She seems to be deciphering the story aloud as she concludes, "They make something *better* now, but we used to buy and drink wine, when we could make wine at home."

The Hungarian attendee at the furmint tasting is emblematic of the sensorial rift in postsocialist everyday life. Like similar ethnographic accounts of postsocialist transitions, this interaction reveals that these changes are not merely structural but involve an actual reorienting to a new world of capitalism is one of everyday practice and new visceralities. This becomes problematic when an imposed hierarchy of visceral experiences is reproduced uncritically as hegemonic taste knowledge in formalized settings. Aside from the power imbalances inherent in these contexts, which others have pointed out (e.g., Jung 2014), I aim to connect these tensions to the material environment: the sites of wine production themselves as ecologies into which tastes are embedded.

III. TASTE IS A JOURNEY

a. Sweetness is energy

For all the historical significance of sweet—or *concentrated*—wines, today technology makes exportable dry wines possible, where dry wines are thought to be more refined, consumed by serious

connoisseurs, and—very importantly—more directly representative of the *terroir*. Because of this link to material places, dry winemaking discursively emphasizes the geology of wine's provenance (Brawner et al. forthcoming 2018). Although aszú wines are embedded in their ecologies (varietals, botrytis fungus, and pests have all played pivotal roles in the region), dry wines are thought to be more straightforward presenters of the taste of place.

Hungarian wine professional and legal expert Gabi has an explanation for the persistent craving of sweet wines, especially by Tokaji locals: sweetness is energy, and the drive to imbibe sweet things is deeply engrained; "animals like sweet stuff," she points out. When I ask her what it says about someone if they prefer sweet wines, she responds diplomatically, "Every consumer is at a certain stage of their journey". She cuts almost immediately to discussing Hungarians' consumption habits (specifically, their tendency to only consume locally made, sweet wines) as reflective of their narrow worldviews. At the same time, she sees some Hungarian producers as clinging too strongly to literal interpretations of *terroir* and the idea of tasting the soils in the wines; these people remain narrow-minded in-situ while aiming to sell their hyper-local, superior geographies to a global audience: "nationalism stops people from being their best selves in every way". She concedes that there are some Tokaji producers who are looking outward and thinking globally—but they are the ones who are not *so* "precious about the land".

Gabi's discussion of taste as a teleological journey is echoed by many in the professional wine world, suggesting that a "good palate" may be "proportional to the value and size of [their] wine cellar" (Teague 2015). If *terroir* is undemocratic, so is the hierarchy of sensory knowledge required to appreciate it. While in previous eras, winemakers were considered the most knowledgeable judges of taste and quality in the production of their own foods, the formalization of wine tasting externalized the judgment of taste, removing the production of sense knowledge from producers where it is

embodied by a group of trained professionals with (almost always) costly education and international experience. Consider, for example, how in the taste courses I attended featured descriptive language around quality aszú wine included notes like "*cherimoya*" and "*passionfruit*"; these exotic imports are nearly impossible to locate even in Budapest today, and certainly remain untasted by the vast majority of Tokaji producers. In summary, the teleological journey of taste in Tokaji wines as the natural development of a nation's palates runs uncannily parallel to discussions of capitalist 'transitions' in CEE.

Taste has always ranked low in the philosophical hierarchy of the senses; sight and sound allow for distance and so consciousness and morality but taste and smell are "bound up with the chemical physiology of the body" and thus too instinctual (Gigante 2005:3); sweetness is further considered to be a low, immature, or sign of poorly developed taste or signifying an early stage in the evolution of tastes[37] (Figure 30).

[37] Popular articles on the subject abound, parallel to common conceptions about food taste preferences and "mature" palates for less sweet foods (see, for example, Winefolly's *evolution of the wine palate*: https://winefolly.com/update/evolution-your-wine-palate-funny-true/)

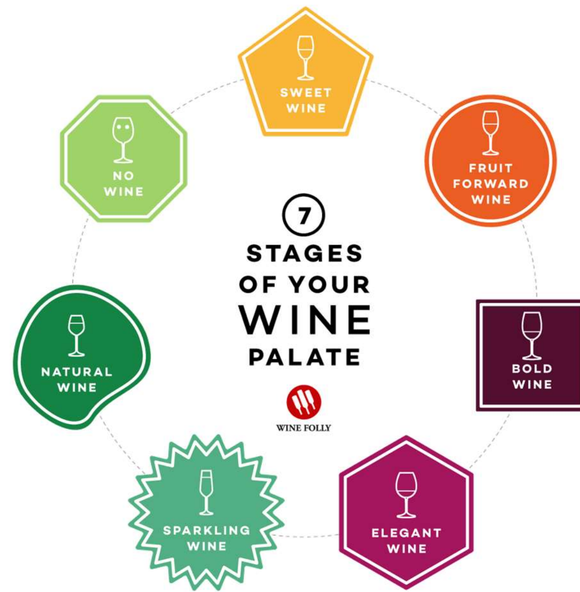

Figure 30: One popular wine blog's interpretation of the evolution of tastes in wine consumption, to be read clockwise; sweet wine is the "gateway wine" and is also the one we return to after a break from consumption.

b. "People only die here"

The shift from sweet to dry winemaking, like that from "mass" to "quality" production, entails new viticultural materialities, including a review of the old *dűlő* classification system (Chapter Three), which was written to classify vineyard tracts with the aim of sweet wine production. Today, there is ambivalence around the use of the old *dűlő* classifications and their relevance to dry, *terroir*-inspired winemaking. The early *dűlő* classification, according to nearly all producers I spoke with, is still relevant in the making of dry wines because Bél wrote the classifications based on the nature of their soils. While Bél assumed it was the soils that "transmitted" sweetness to the wines, today it is a narrative of *minerality* that forms the backbone of *terroir* wines in Tokaj (Brawner et al. forthcoming 2018). According to Panni's husband, Jim, this is also because

> [n]ow that we are equally focusing on dry wines, we are finding out…. that the classification works for the region [in dry winemaking], too. So we're going back to our historical roots now, and saying the [First Class] vineyards do tend to produce dry wines with fantastic character.

With the decline of aszú wine-making goes the decline not only of traditional practices and local knowledge, but also of other ecologically embedded industries. Because winemaking emerges as the result of local ecological knowledge, expertise, and available resources, there are repercussions in related livelihood strategies, as well. For example, while the taste of aszú wines during and prior to communism continues to be debated, what is indisputable is the specialized labor required to harvest aszú berries (Chapter Six).

Other industries experience the shift to dry winemaking as well. In the village of Erdőbénye, reported Balázs, which he calls a historically "cooper, stonemason, and wood-carver village" the locals are "trying to keep these traditions alive". While aszú wines were traditionally aged for years in oak barrels, the new tendency in dry winemaking toward stainless steel aging tanks aboveground means the underground cellar systems and local oak barrels are often in disuse, associated with the oxidized, sweet wines that are no longer desired outside of the region (and occasionally in conflict with official production ordinances). This suggests a limited chance for reviving the cooper and forestry industry that once provided livelihoods for barrel-makers in Tokaj. Panni says it is still important that they recover their craft *because* the quality has declined, so people are not using them, even if they have the option. This is, she says, "because [the coopers] forget—forgot their craft, you know, during [the communist] period, because they were also making quantities…. and I think maybe they can catch up, maybe not".

The emptiness of the towns, and the presence of only winemaking families, has created not a functioning village life, but a sort of museum for hobbyists. Balázs explained: “To make it a well-known, working wine region it’s not enough to make good wine; we need also good restaurants, wine-bars, good guesthouses—plus educated, motivated hosts with good attitudes and customer-oriented staff.” Kristof agrees with this, noting with a frown that “even the *kocsma* [pub] closed this year for good.” Gabor relates to this, noting that Erdőbénye used to have a *mezőváros* (agricultural town) title in the 1800s and 1900s with about 4500-5000 inhabitants; “I’ve been living here officially since 2008,” he explains, “and there were 1300 inhabitants at that time. I checked last year and it was only 1100 people”. When I ask his thoughts on the future of the Tokaj region, Kristof answers, “If [winemaking] was a profitable activity, people wouldn’t leave. If it was truly an option to make a living, whether you were the owner or just an employee, that would help in developing the village. Now, I think people only die here.”

c. Climate

Human population decline is not the only threat of uncertainty for the Tokaji region. While the dominant theme in Tokaji *terroir* is one of geology, the botrytis fungus on which aszú wines depend are very much reliant on particular climatic conditions. This has led some producers to begin questioning the steadfastness of geospatial *terroir* at the *dűlő* level, at least with regard to aszú wines. Budapesti producer Kristof spoke with me at his weekend house in Erdőbénye about the relevance of a changing climate to original *dűlő* rankings of Bel in 1730:

> I’m not sure if we should completely accept the old *dűlő* classification because the climate has changed and is still changing. Back in the old days the southern-facing *dűlő*-s were the most valuable [for maximum heat and sunlight]; now it’s not so black and white because summers are too hot.

Down the street, Gabor is similarly ambivalent about the original classifications:

> Grape-growing has changed a lot since [the first classification]. Also, the climate has changed…. It's possible that a vineyard that used to be first class is weaker now because of deforestation, or the sunshine hits the *dűlő* more strongly, and so the acids won't be that complex or harmonized, or the wine-making process is harder, so I think this is quite complex topic.

Another producer, a middle-aged woman in the village of Bodrog-Keresztur, told me she used to attend the national wine festival in Budapest each September, which was always scheduled just prior to the harvests. Lately, she tells me, she must send someone in her place to represent her wines because the harvest begins too early and conflicts with the festival.

Outside of Tokaj, some environmentalists see protectionist policies and landscape inscription (into lists such as UNESCO) as well-suited to dovetail with communicating potential threats of climate change, as "wine grapes are particularly vulnerable to climatic change and offer a 'canary in the coal mine' situation for the threats of climate change to biodiversity" (Samuels 2017:119, see also Hannah et al. 2013). However, producers in Tokaj—even those who reported a concern—were not worried about losing Tokaj *terroir* altogether due to climate change; there are ways to buffer against additional heat and sunlight, which create additional sugars and ripen the grapes more quickly.

Earlier harvests and new wine styles were reported as responses to interannual climate variations, such as rising temperatures. Climatologists are also paying attention to the role of climate change in wine regions (e.g. Jones et al. 2005, de Orduña 2010, Moriondo et al. 2013). In Tokaj, Gaál et al. (2012) use random forest classifications (temperature-based spatial layers) to estimate similarities and differences between contemporary winemaking conditions and models for the near

(221-2050) and distant (2071-2100) future. They find that, in their near-future estimation, "the simulation does not show any similarity with the present conditions in the north part, e.g. in the famous Tokaji wine region" (131). Perhaps because reinvention is practically a part of the local taste of place itself, much hope remains for the future of *terroir* and aszú style wines.

IV. DISCUSSION: POLICY LANDSCAPES AND COUNTER-*TERROIR*

a. Taste and labor

A 'tasting' disjuncture came up several times during my tasting courses in Hungary, where I encountered two formal schools of tasting: "continental/French" and English. In the English style, according to my participants, the faults must first be identified. In the French school, says 34-year-old Hungarian wine writer Zsombor, the process is handled "more respectably, so you respect the winemaker…. Winemakers always use the French style, because they know the difficulty of the job". According to Ákos, the French (or Continental) style is more diplomatic, because it comes from a place of understanding. He insists to me that he would not be fit to judge Scotch, and questions what—other than capital—gives the English school of wine tasting the right to judge wines.

The everyday realities of producing *terroir* products are neglected in discussions or lessons on taste. During my time in Tokaj as a researcher, this very quickly became my own experience as well, as winemakers' spouses (typically wives) and the role of their guesthouses as sources of revenue and avenue for building trust face-to-face were downplayed and rarely discussed without prompt. In the craft commodity of wine, especially on the rebound from "mass" soviet production, family wineries-cum-lodgings do the "cultural work" for consumers through an apparently transparent chain of production from conception to execution, production, and purchase—in a setting laden with (reproduced or otherwise conjured) authenticity. As in other local food movements, authenticity is also performed through meetings (face-to-face) and personal contact with the producers themselves, who

very often lead cellar tours, tastings (with a high variation of formality), and vineyard excursions, where producers can show-and-tell their *dűlő*-s and explain their viticultural programs. Through these interactions, the ecologically embedded nature of taste becomes translatable; "the work of past generations having been shaped by the constraints and possibilities of the land—and as they did, shaping the land and its possibilities, leaving something of themselves" (Ingold 2000:189).

Because of the contested regimes of land tenure in the region (see also Chapter Three), the capitalization on First Class *dűlő*-s continues to increase the disparity in production methods and taste regimes in the region, where the selling of wines from established, historical *terroirs* "mainly benefit the wealthy elites which will in return increase the monopoly value of their already enhanced plots" (Demossier 2018:156). Especially in place-based food products, taste—as epistemology—links ecologies to producers and consumers alike, tying subjective experiences to material worlds and training visceralities into consumption habits. If *terroir* is a means of "extreme localization" (Demossier 2018) it has global ends, enlisting the—at times literal, and uniquely mobile—embodiment of place (Csordas 1994) in material foods.

b. Simplification: Ecologically embedded tastes and legibility

The political ecology of Tokaji vineyards over the last century solidifies around a move toward simplicity: aiming for legibility (Scott 1998) in the name of translating *taste*. While GI schemes are often touted as enhancing agrobiodiversity, in this case, it may exacerbate genetic erosion as producers, especially since the 1990s, aim to create *terroir* wines using a single, idealized varietal that now makes up to 80% of new plantings. Such an erosion of agrobiodiversity (relative to archival evidence from the 19th and 20th centuries) may be to blame for the recent crop losses due to 'sour' or 'gray' rot.

The turn to furmint and dry winemaking was hinted at in local research of the early 1990s, when there was an expectation that “new market segments [would] appear soon aimed at special consumer habits” (Kecskés and Botos 1990:72). The assumption was that consumer habits—and market demands—were varied enough to inspire variations in production. However, the institutional trap of vineyard privatization, foreign investment, and fragmentation of *dűlő*-s—coupled with the duality of tastes for “old style” and “new”, fresh wines (Chapter Six)—has prevented such a direct transformation of the region from one of prescribed, uniform mass production to the variations associated with and prescribed by free enterprise.

Researchers in the early 1990s recognized the need to modernize and adopt a more rigorous controlled system of *dűlő* control to replace the central planning method of communism. In response, the Hungarian wine regions were organized into competitive areas of production and entailed the further simplification of products—and thus, of varietals and production methods—in part, to acquire GI labels. This included the waning of varietals: “So-called world varieties, traditional and recently bred Hungarian varieties are fighting for the leading position in every wine district…” where there is a “high number of varieties in certain districts. This number must be limited in accordance with the character and tradition of the region” (Kecskés and Botos 1990:71). Variations in technology and grape-growing within wine regions make it “almost impossible to control them” (72). The same authors prioritize the GI label potential for Hungarian wines, as “wines of this category are more valuable than other wines because the origin, the grape variety, the technology and quality is guaranteed very thoroughly” (72). In Tokaj, quality standards continue to be questioned despite the waning of legal varietals to only six white types, where previously dozens of local red, white, and black types were used (Chapter Five). It should be reiterated that this is per official regulations; there remain many local and family producers who grow non-sanctioned types, for primarily for local consumption and trade, and wild types occasionally appear at the margins of vineyards (but are normally pulled up);

spontaneously crossings are not of concern because vines are reproduced through cloning (Chapter Five).

In this insistence that unique Tokaji tastes, along with endemic fungi (Chapter Six) and native germplasm (Chapter Five) have a rightful place-based identity, it is worth considering the relevance of Vidal's (2005) discussion of agro-nationalism:

> Plenty of myths, all over the world, assume the existence of some sort of exclusive relationship between a particular place and the people who are supposed to have originated from it. But this does not prevent us from realising - whether we like it or not - that migration and displacements of all sorts are really the stuff that history is made of. It would seem however, that whenever it comes to the products of the soil, we seem to lose our sense of historicity (48).

Throughout history, European nation-crafting has occurred at various scales, including the naturalization of borders and ethnic groups. A unified and 'authentic' France, for example, was reified as an organic entity through a nature-as-patrimony discourse; meanwhile, for example, the German nation was predicated on an ethnic ideal (Gangjee 2012).

The Tokaj *terroir* discussion seems to be caught between the two: the language of the UNESCO HCL nomination cites Hungarian migration, settlement, and cultivation as influenced by peripheral "outsiders". At the same time, it presents a unified concept of the Magyar nation as rooted in the Carpathian Basin by way of long-term human-environmental interactions like viticulture. This is nowhere more graphically evident than in the very recent *Bormedence* ('Wine Basin') festival that

celebrates “wines, flavors, and experiences from the Carpathian Basin”, featuring winemakers from the entire historic territory of Hungary (i.e., ‘Greater Hungary’) (Figure 31).

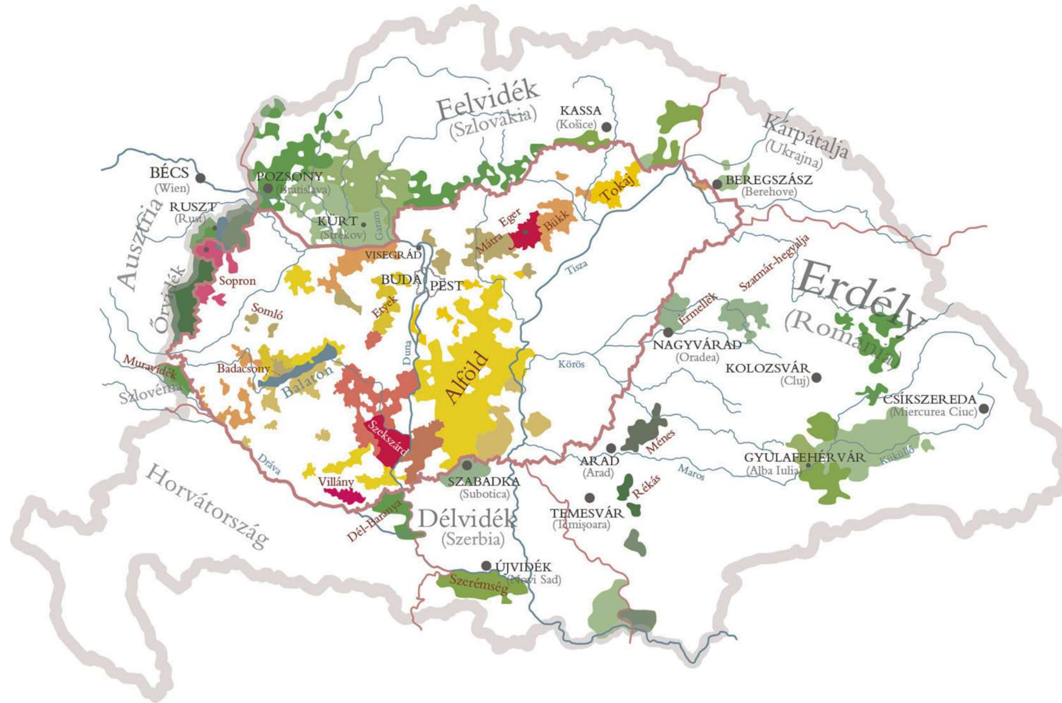

Figure 31: Map from marketing materials of the Bormedence wine festival (Bormedence 2018); contemporary Hungary is outlined in purple, while the thicker, gray border represents pre-Trianon Hungary, or “Greater Hungary”.

The delicate balance between native varietals, the famously fastidious botrytis fungus, and the skilled labor of local people not only overwrites the dynamic history of the landscape (Chapter Two, see also Liddel 2000). In short, through HCLs and PDOs, claims-making becomes a more-than-human territorial endeavor: native varietals are the “planted flags” (Braverman 2009) that have marked foreign territories for centuries and reifies the Tokaj wine region as Hungarian.

The commodification of ecologically embedded, or place-based, tastes has driven policies that, in turn, materialize in ecosystems through shifting cultivation practices. The legacies of political regimes are made material in the *terroir* itself, which is necessarily somewhat anthropogenic. This suggests the necessity of considering policies (such as the PDO that defines Tokaj) as a part of ecosystems. As the following chapter will conclude, such policy-laden landscapes—particularly where food, taste, and identity are indexed—can be understood through an *affective* approach to political ecology.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSIONS: TOWARD A VISCERAL POLITICAL ECOLOGY

I. TASTING POLITICAL-ECOLOGICAL CHANGE

a. Visceral approaches

Perhaps no food product is more culturally, politically, and ecologically entangled than wine. In this dissertation, I have argued the utility of approaching *terroir* with an ecological anthropologist's paradigm, adding to emerging critical studies of *terroir* by expanding my analysis to the socio-ecological and more-than-human labor of taste-making. In this chapter, I synthesize my findings to discuss Tokaji *terroir* as a *visceral political ecology*: a material landscape with sensuous consequences, and which is in turn shaped by sensuous experiences. Returning to the concept of making taste "explicit", I draw from Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy's (2015) notion of a *visceral* approach in order to trace how affective experiences—particularly, those anchored in material geographies—are mobilized to socio-political ends. I also return to Jung's political economy of taste in postsocialist wines to put these frameworks in the political context of postsocialist CEE. Finally, I consider how more-than-human authenticity ties into the current nationalist moment in the CEE region through a discussion of nation, nature, and *biome*.

If a core aim in political ecology is to trace the environmental outcomes of capitalist logic (Peet and Watts 1996), a visceral political ecology begins to account for taste as a "moment in the circulation of capital" (Michalski 2016) and its consequence in the material, ecological world. This seems especially pertinent in the "laboratory for economic knowledge" (Bockman and Eyal 2002) of

postsocialist CEE. Central to this approach is the basic foregrounding of sense experience through which humans experience their environment. Bringing sensuous knowledge—in this case, *taste*—into focus, I present the potential for a multi-modal framework of critical political ecology in which the senses are taken as ecologically embedded, perceptual, and motivational.

As I have explored with this dissertation, place-based foods (those labelled and authenticated by provenance), as overt vessels of ecologically embedded tastes, are an ideal starting point. Following trends in STS and environmental sciences toward consideration of care (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017), the cultivation of taste experiences as a political act (for example, Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy 2010), and the more-than-human networks active within food production (see also Hartigan 2017), I give overt attention to the visceral nature of human experience and politics that play out in agricultural choices—and which, therefore, materialize in agroecologies.

Considering policy and scientific knowledges as tools of governance that shape material landscapes (Chapters Three, Eight), coupled with the social life of ecologically embedded tastes (Chapter Seven) as the product of more-than-human labor (Chapters Four, Five), this sensuous approach to conservation augments the standard critical political ecology framework. For as long has human experience has been a part of socio-ecological systems, so, too, have visceral connections; a visceral political ecology simply foregrounds those relationships. In Tokaj, the primacy of taste as a political-ecological narrative is due to the multifaceted nature of taste as sensation, venue of perception, and normalization of place. Through *terroir* and its associated practices, narratives of taste serve to locate the land itself in the global context; taste is also both communicator of land and signifier of social grouping and camaraderie with a particular past or imagined future. The "regimes of taste" (Chapter Six) that have paralleled regimes of governance in the region have had material consequences. Ecologically embedded taste, as with any other form of knowledge, is thus subject to power and politics.

b. Power, place, plants, and palates

It is well established that power relations have bearing on food, foodways, and agroecological systems (e.g. Peet et al. 2010; Galt 2013, 2016; Giraldo 2019; Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy 2013). A *visceral* political ecology develops these connections a bit further: food and ecology, ever intertwined, affect what we eat, what we taste, and thus shared habits of production and consumption. This involves the shared affinity for particular types of drinks, especially the social, recreational types—as well as their ecological embedded nature, coming from a certain place, the product of an 'imagined community' of human and more-than-human actors: "Especially in the advertising-saturated countries of the global North, most food is sold with a story" (Freidberg 2003:4). When the global North is consuming stories of marginal provenance, the labor of *terroir* lies not only in the field, but in the perpetuation of those reifying stories (see also Besky 2014).

A visceral political ecology approach in the context of CEE contributes to a nascent body of political-ecological scholarship in the former Second World (e.g. Stahl 2012, Harper 2006, Aistara 2018, Brawner 2014). The materiality of Tokaj's mythologized landscape reflects centuries of successive political regimes Because vineyard soils, especially those as old and enclosed as in the Tokaji *dűlő*-s, are inherently somewhat anthropogenic, they are as much a product of policy and cultural practices as 'natural' or geological preordination. For example, it is a somewhat arbitrary feature of history that the USSR became ground-zero for tractor manufacture during the socialist period, yet most Tokaji vineyard spacing still reflects this accident of policy today (with much of the same machinery still being in use). Where capital allows for the (re)terracing of vineyards and hand labor this *terroir*—as historical ecology—is overwritten. Viticultural landscapes in Tokaj thus reflect the tension between rational, mass production and a new rationale: specialty, intentionally limited production.

In another example, Tokaji winemaking laws allowed for household plots early-on, creating spaces of continued tradition where 'unofficial' grape types and wine styles were grown and made (Liddell, 2003:13). This had implications for local (and eventually international) market dynamics, as markets formed to allow the trade of wines from these household plots. These examples of postsocialist transformation add to a body of literature that complicates the narrative of 'transition' from command economy to market capitalism. In fact, no such clear divide (nor trajectory) exists, as localized (and increasingly formalized) markets formed around specialty winemaking even during the height of communism in Hungary. Such ethnographic accounts of postsocialist transformations help explain the ambivalence with which former Eastern Bloc citizens view their post-1989 lives (as well as the resulting and seemingly surprising political trends in the region today).

While *terroir* is explored by recent anthropologists as historically and culturally contingent spaces of elevated production status (e.g. Black and Ulin 2013, Demossier 2012), few have connected *terroir* rationale to policy and state-crafting. Through GI policies such as the Tokaj PDO, this link is made clear. *Terroir* may be inherently undemocratic if it hangs on the chance ownership of select parcels with distinctive qualities; policies that further protect and add value to such literal definitions of *terroir* thus serve to magnify these disparities. The labor of place-making therefore extends to countless intermediaries and translators of place and taste.

For Brad Weiss (2011), sites of production merge with the labor of producers in the complex construction of place as a *sensory field*; this is "carefully crafted through a range of venues in a process attuned to the materiality of ecosystems, landscapes, grapes and wine; it is also built through social relationships amongst farmers, craftsmen and their activities" (Demossier 2018:84-84 citing Weiss 2011:440). In this way, the labor of *terroir* in winemaking is not only in the vineyards, nor in the cellars, but in the relationships between consumers and producers and the networks of actors at this

interface (Figure 32). This happens especially—I argue—in the forging and socialization of ecologically embedded tastes. Despite the relevance of taste demonstrated in this dissertation, the concept of international tastes and standards of quality were neglected in anthropological literature until anthropologist Yuson Jung (2014) addressed the "political economy of taste" in her research with Bulgarian wine. She critiques the "hierarchy of value" that prefers the sensory experiences of certain products while demoting others: because Bulgarian wines lack this sensory field, they are judged to be from inferior *terroirs* (or worse, not demonstrating *terroir* through the taste of minerality at all). With this work, I link Jung's hierarchy of taste to the political reification of place-based taste through *terroir* policies such as GIs.

Figure 32: The cabinets at Arpad's cellar display hundreds of personalized wine glasses for his "regulars". The work of establishing relationships with locals and visitors is taken very seriously by producers committed to Tokaj's revival. Erdőbénye, April 2017. Photo by the author.

The link between place and taste has been "historically, politically, economically and socially reconfigured" (Demossier 2018:86) across time and space. Responding to what Demossier calls a missing "political economy of *terroir*" (2018:157), as well as Jung's "political economy of taste," a visceral political ecological pays acute attention to the unspoken, often implicit role of the senses in

socio-ecological dynamics. I have used the case of wine as a starting point for its uniquely overt, contemplation-saturated approach to taste. However, taste and affect have long been associated with ecological systems and agrobiodiversity (e.g. Nazarea 2005, 2013). Viscerality and sense experiences are therefore vital considerations in the connection between capitalist logic and material, environmental consequences—a central aim of political ecological investigation (Peet and Watts 1996).

c. Ecologically embedded tastes

One potentially fertile path forward in the visceral political ecology approach is the inclusion of multispecies agricultural labor in food systems, especially in the making of tastes. In viticulture, for example, producers' interaction with soils, vines, and tastes are communicated directly to visitors: a visceral interpretation of material ecologies; "to understand materials is to be able to tell their history—of what they do and what happens to them when treated in particular ways—in the very practice of working them" (Demossier 2018:115 summarizing Ingold 2012:434). Producers of value in Tokaji wines include not only the manual laborers or winemakers themselves, but also the multitude of translators between place and taste: the taste educators, vendors, marketers, policy-influencers, and various other experts. Tastes (and their ecological signifiers) become wrapped up in cyclical patterns of supply and demand where taste is a "moment in the circulation of capital" (Michalski 2015). This is especially obvious in the rehoning of tastes following the dissolution of communist modes of winemaking.

Localized food products, particularly those regulated by their place of origin or *terroir*, entail new gustative norms, a "more engaged, alternative vision of taste claiming to be closer to nature and the soil" (Demossier 2018:121). Geographical distances are spanned in alternative food networks and in GI products through the promise of unique visceralities, and educating tastes—toward local or global

products, sweet or bitter, raw or cooked—have political-ecological engagements. For example, the promotion of bitter tastes in French chocolate as *authentic* (rather than sweet imported chocolates) granted a competitive distinction to the French chocolate trade (Terrio 1996). A visceral political ecology also offers a critical framework with which to view the political and social life of the senses, particularly in the education of tastes for "authenticity": "Claims of cultural authenticity in advanced capitalism are often linked to an ideal, aestheticized premodern past as well as the groups, labor forms, and products associated with it" (Terrio 1996:70).

Drawing from the economic-sociological concept of "social embeddedness" used in alternative food systems analysis (see Hinrichs 2000), many researchers of food and agriculture have recently argued that alternative or "quality" food production may also be viewed as embedded in "natural" networks through the concept of *ecological embeddedness* (e.g., Murdoch et al. 2000). Morris and Kirwan (2011) suggest that the utility of ecological embeddedness in agrifood research lies in its reflecting the "change in the relations between economic actors and the natural environment" (322). Writing on natural wines and the marketization of unpredictable vintages and uncertain tastes, Krzywoszynska (2015) conceptualizes the taste of local[38] food products as ecologically embedded, allowing those tastes and their products to undermine what Caliskan and Callon (2009, 2010) have argued is a requisite passivity in marketable goods. As one of Krzywoszynska's participants explains, "wine is not Coca-Cola", prompting Krzywoszynska's argument that ecologically embedded products like natural wines are best coupled with the cultivation of a "taste for uncertainty"—an affective distinction with great potential value in alternative agrifood networks, which often lack the predictableness and consistency supplied by conventional agrifood chains.

[38] Here, I am using the term "local" rather uncritically as shorthand for foods that rely especially on their marketability *as* "local", often through localizing labelling schemes, for their value. All food is, naturally, local to *somewhere*!

I consider *terroir* discourse as the narrative component in the ecological embedding of tastes: the forging of affective experiences by viticultural ecologies and vice-versa. *Terroir* exists as a plastic connection between sensory modalities. Reified vis-a-vis policy through selective discourse about material features, written histories, models of experiences (taste wheels, etc.), they are embodied in the tasting and production of postsocialist specialty wines. *Terroir* is not only material-made-myth, but myth-made-material, where narratives link visceral attachments to material geographies through shared sensuous experience. As Morgan and Wise (2017:2) put it, "narrative works to create coherence between a variety of different elements that otherwise do not appear to hang together, but do need to be made to fit sensibly together whenever an investigator recognizes that they are all elements that belong to the phenomenon to be described or explained".

The element of narrative in winemaking *terroir* offers ecologically embedded explanations of causal links between place and taste in socio-political contexts. Thus, it is unsurprising that "*Vitis viniferae* is the most ideological plant in the history of Europe. It has made its mark on the political systems, church histories and cultures of most European countries, including those in which the grapevine does not grow." (Gačnik 2014:133). Aside from its inherent ideological bent, the contemporary consumption of *Vitis vinifera* and its products is characterized by a fragmented, non-uniform variety (and hierarchy) of tastes from across the globe. 'Appreciation' of, or affinities for, these products requires overt education, or enculturation, of tastes that is unmatched in any other sector; this taste experience requires reflection, contemplation, and is subject to rigorous standardizations of experience. In short, "[j]ust as viniculture converges the human and nonhuman, wine commingles the senses and the intellect" (Gade 2004: 865). Thus, drinkers must "draw objective conclusions about a wine form their subjective responses to it", while "*wine-makers must create conditions they hope will produce a certain taste for us"* (White 2013:12, emphasis added). The conditions of production alluded to by White are material viticultural ecologies, where microbes, grapes, human labor (influenced by

policy), and consumption are all linked in a web of decision-making that enlists sense experience as episteme.

II. AFFECTIVE POLITICAL ECOLOGIES

a. Letting the *terroir* speak: Authentic decisions with ecological ramifications in Tokaj

Sweet and dry winemaking both entail contradictory methods of production; the change in political alliances and resulting changes in markets and taste preferences over the last 80 years in Tokaj have thus been clearly imprinted in local ecologies. While the "old heaviness" entailed wines that were intense and full of flavor, the trend today is not heavy (nor sweet and concentrated), but *new* and *fresh*. According to my respondents, the 20th century USSR demand for *old* and *aged* tastes was rooted in their emulations of elite consumption practices, although easily fooled as they had little knowledge in actual winemaking practices. Today, consumers who are also typically quite distanced from wine production realities are again following the so-called tastemakers in the quest for dry, fresh, new styles that communicate the authenticity of provenance. In order to achieve this new, authentic taste, Tokaji producers plant *terroir*-communicating, indigenous varietals (primarily furmint), into premium *dűlő* parcels that have been re-terraced and use new technology (such as stainless steel), to create the "purest" representations of the terrain. Producers who cannot afford these upgrades may earn a living creating wines for resident consumers using the old, but still-desired styles of the past, reproducing sweet, intense tastes through barrel aging and even unauthorized varietals, creating products with local appeal.

In this case, there are two competing visions of authenticity at play, both with material corollaries: first, there is authenticity by measure of historic continuity (the aszú wines, produced according to some version of historic instruction) and authenticity by transmission of locality and 'unadulterated' place (the dry and *pure* expressions of *terroir*). This authenticity 'catch-22' has further

fragmented an already disjointed region that operates on the selling of the *authentic*. This is not unrelated to recent political history in the region and the advent of late capitalism. As Demossier writes, authenticity has a heightened value within globalized capitalism, "especially with regard to how producers and consumers link cultural production to particular time, social experiences and places as a way of understanding authenticity and of generation new forms of individual and collective identification" (2018:161). If *terroir* has been a functional reading of the landscape and its utility, today it functions also as social currency: producers must place their bets either in 'traditions' or in the (perhaps more simplistic) narrative of ecologically embedded taste. In the latter case, the *dűlő* is "presented as a stable, trustworthy and reliable place" while also "transforming that place by creating new images, norms, and connections and adding a veneer to an old mythology" (Demossier 2018:53). Naturally, this requires an alighting of recent political history in the region.

From one point of view, this tension can be described as existing between human agency (production tradition) and natural agency (literal place-tasting). Meanwhile, in France "good" food today is not more "natural" but more "cultural" while from a specific agricultural soil and "savoir-faire" (Heller 2006:332 in Demossier 2018:36)—a narrative that has shifted from a more earth-based approach. The mobilization of place branding through literal *terroir* narratives, as with many producers in Tokaj, capitalizes more on the supposedly innate properties of the land than the ability of the producers and their traditional knowledge. This may be seen as strategic: the simplistic, scientistic narratives of geologically embedded tastes translate more easily than the complex history of traditions in the region (Brawner in press 2019).

In winemaking today, it is not so much about professionalism or tradition but "reversing this process" and "letting the *terroir* speak" (Demossier 2018:156): the question—for those interested in locating power—is *who will interpret?* As in all vineyards, however, soils and ecological conditions

are largely anthropogenic, especially where the layout of vineyards and fertilization regimes remain in the landscape, "mined" today by indigenous grapevines with foreign rootstocks who translate the legacies of communist (and pre-war) production into specialty wines (see also Aistara 2014). In this way, the taste of place "goes public" (Counihan and Højlund 2018) and reliance on rural tourism is increased in that it builds place-brands through trust and experiential knowledge; "authenticity is constructed through the visual encounter with the place of production, as exemplified by the publication of new blogs" (Demossier 2018:61).

III. *TERROIR*, NATION, AND BIOME

a. "Dispossessing the nation"

If the nation exists in assumed shared sense experiences (Trnka et al. 2013), in place-based foods, sense experiences are tied invariably to terrain. Thus, in place-brands such as *terroir* wines, the purchase of elevated places of production with naming rights is a sort of 'name grab' (see Bonné 2011)—the appropriation of both intellectual and material property. Here, multifaceted property rights are 'mobilized to extract value through rent relations' (Andreucci et al. 2017:29). As with land grabbing more broadly defined, 'the state plays a key facilitating and regulating role' in that it creates, amends, or administers property rights (Andreucci et al. 2017:32, see also Ho and Spoor 2006, Wolford et al. 2013). At the same time, 'the state' is not a unified entity; rather, government and governance are 'processes, people, and relationships' (Wolford et al. 2013:189). By 'unbundling' the state in Tokaj, contemporary land trade can be viewed as the result of multiple, historic state interventions with social and ecological consequences—not only in the collectivization of the late 1940s-1980s—but in the context of post-Holocaust post-socialism (i.e., designating Jewish properties as 'abandoned'). We might also consider how the state's (or crown's) legitimation of the original vineyard classifications, themselves a solidification of the value of aristocratic lands, is perpetuated by contemporary GI laws of enclosure and protection.

If the purchase of value-adding land in Hungary is motivated by *terroir* and quality-based production, so, too, is the opposition to foreign land acquisition in rural Hungary not strictly economic but rather ideologically motivated (Burger 2006). During the 1990-1994 period of foreign investment in places like Tokaj, the Hungarian center-right wing mobilized protectionist ideology and patriotic sentiments aimed at preventing the 'Hungarian motherland' from falling into alien hands (Burger 2006:573). Foreign rule (e.g. by the Austrian crown, Soviet Union) features heavily in the shared history of CEE; in this view, the (albeit reduced) farming population of places like rural Hungary are seen as 'maintaining the nation' (Burger 2006:574). The protection of agricultural lands from foreign investors is thus motivated by land's special features, including not only economic significance but other importance such as its 'evocation of national sentiment and security—which represent much of the wealth of a state and its population' (Humblet 2013:240 citing Sparkes 2007:3). In the growing rural nationalist ideologies of CEE states, emerging from late agrarian land reforms, rural poverty, and a history of foreign occupation, '[l]and was and is a ventral point of the ideology owing to its scarcity. It became a symbol of national being.' (Burger 2006:578).

In short, '[o]ver the course of the 1990s, foreign land ownership in East-Central Europe became what immigration is to Western Europe, a security concern that can increase support for nationalist parties' (Tesser 2004:214). The case of protected specialty foods, hinging on traditions like *dűlő* classification, represents a 'natural movement among Hungarian people' who wish to 'stress their Hungarian identity after [the] Soviet [era]'; according to Botos (2012), the 'Hungarian traditional wines play an important role in this national movement' where wine producers are slowly finding 'the right balance between the traditional and international wines in their production' (34). In the case of GI land/value grabbing, it is not only the land itself that becomes foreign property, but the ideology around traditional food production that becomes a point of contestation and foreign influence. This began in

1989 and has increased with EU integration; as winemaker Arpad related to me, 'The French modified the Hungarian law for wine in 1994…. Hungarians typed it, but they thought it out'.

As in the rest of Hungary, land use here is disconnected from ownership, where there are a large number of small producers and a small number of large producers (Fidrich 2013). The 1994/LV Act on soil and land preventing foreign ownership of agricultural land, which is ostensibly overridden by contemporary EU free trade law, remains in place despite its disputed illegality. This has not prevented the further consolidation of arable land in Hungary, however; the state's plan to sell 380,000 hectares of farmland in 2016 made headlines for including estates over 100 hectares (some even larger than 300 hectares, the legal limit for individual ownership)—lands demarcated 'first class arable land' (Zsebesi, 2016). In short, this transaction (which gave preference to current leasers) was rigged to help 'insider members' (individuals or companies) with connections to Prime Minister Orbán's Fidesz government. Today, an understandable disillusionment amongst small producers in Tokaj has tempered the positive news announced in 2015: Tokaj is receiving 330 million EUR (paid by Hungary and the EU) to promote winemaking and marketing through 2020. One local retiree explained his skepticism with me in a Tokaji wine room:

> …there's the money from the EU—[the government] steals that as well…. We were promised 210 million forint for our roads, but by the time it gets here it will be only 100-something because everybody steals from it…. To that poor fellow who's rolling the asphalt and does everything, there's not ten cents [filler].

Part of this '2020' plan includes a massive rebranding campaign to internationalize the (new) styles of Tokaj, as well as the high-tech, high-resolution assessment of Tokaji soils and *dűlő* potential (to a scale

of one meter). Ironically, the latter may serve to further elevate the (added) value of prime *dűlő*-s (alternatively, it may 'redistribute' this value, motivating new land transactions).

b. Imagined communities, experienced

As Trnka et al. (2013) point out, what is Anderson's (1984) imagined community if not based on shared visceral, sense experiences? Their charge, that citizenship exists in the senses, is highly relevant to this visceral political ecology framework, as locating power in food systems necessitates the inclusion of *tastes*. In my discussion of Tokaj *terroir* narratives as counter-*terroir*—that is, narratives of mobility and environmental exceptionalism, I index nationalism as a context; in this section, I expand on nationalism as more directly linked to place-based tastes—namely, through a multi-species concept of *terroir* and the biome.

As witnessed in the case of Tokaj, the taste of *terroir* entails the enlistment of more-than-human networks of value-creators: fungi, authenticated indigenous grape varietals, endemic moulds, local hardwood barrels. The region, experienced through tastes, becomes equally more-than-human. Rooted in geology and environmental possibilism, through tasting *terroir*, people can imagine themselves as part of a biome (Kirksey 2014)—a biome which, as Hartigan (2014) has suggested, is replacing the concept of *nation* as we know it. Conceptualizing territory as a multispecies web of actors, "[b]iomes are acquiring a public the way nation did about 200 years ago. That is, they are a basis for thinking politically about our relationship with flora and fauna, our relationship with terrains" (Hartigan 2014).

Terroir in this case becomes an important political and social strategy for unifying human inhabitants with their environs—a story with overtones of manifest destiny. "Territory is back," writes Latour, "…not the post-Renaissance idea of a territory, that is, a bounded piece of land viewed and ruled from a center, but very much a new definition of an unbounded network of attachments and

connections" (Latour 2014:15). Counter-*terroir*, drawing upon networks of more-than-human connections, past and present, and visceral experiences cannot be underestimated as a political strategy with geographic consequences. The environmentally exceptional nature of what I have called "counter" *terroir*, observable via "natural" demarcations, grounds and legitimizes the otherwise "unknown *terroir*" (Jung 2014) of CEE wines.

Hungary's accession to the EU in 2003 has since been countered with Euro-skepticism and growing nationalist movements: a perhaps understandable resurgence in reaction to centuries of outside rule. As early as the 1990s, wine writer Alex Liddell reported: "Nationalism [in Hungary] expresses itself in winemaking as much as in any other activity, and I see this as a healthy development except when it takes an isolationist form" (317). He views this as potentially deleterious to the Hungarian wine sector, however, as he argues:

> …there can be no place in Hungary for the sentimental nationalism that, setting its face against progress, turns back to a nostalgic past—and I am not thinking just about Tokaj here! Who in their senses would want to drink the Chianti of thirty years ago, mean and lean as it was? Well, some parts of Hungary will have to achieve an evolution of their wines comparable to that of Tuscany if they wish to reclaim their rightful place in the wine world (317).

While Liddell insists on the need for stylistic evolution of Hungarian wines beyond national tastes, his tone changes when it comes to the material uniqueness of Hungary's base materials: "By contrast, the nationalistic interest in promoting traditional native grape varieties on foreign markets is shrewd, because there is no point in trying to compete with other countries with better climates in producing international varieties" (317). Liddell's take on the link between nationalist, "sentimental" attachment

to outmoded tastes—as opposed to international, forward-thinking styles—is summarized when he says:

> I am continually struck by the fact that the wineries which produce the best wines in terms of quality, and the most successful wines in terms of marketing, have either employed foreign consultants or have winemakers who have been lucky enough to have made wine in other countries. It is not so much that they have greater technical skills – although most of them have usually learned something new and useful while abroad – as that they have had the opportunity to taste the wines of at least one rival exporting country in some depth, and they return to Hungary with a more sophisticated perspective on the international scene (318).

This sentiment is echoed today by many producers, particularly those in the 'new generation' of Tokaji winemakers. If the ostensible aim of PDO protection is to define and perpetuate a unique, place-based food for its irreproducible qualities (itself a circular argument), those who define the 'rules' of winemaking determine the course of the region. Following this, because PDO policies govern food, they create and inform sensory experiences.

Thus, a sensuous approach to political-ecological transformations begins to account for "empirics that can't be participant-observed" (Feldman 2011), particularly how those experiences are geographically/nationally circumscribed: how they create or reinforce collective identities with geographic implications. By drawing upon the authenticated Carpathian grape varietals (and their links to famous, 'noble' types) and through indexing geological, deep time, and endemic fungi, winemakers embed tastes in ecologies and situate themselves as part of a geographically defined biome: the perpetuation of 'old' style wines and tastes is not a quirky relic of postsocialism but a novel political

move. Even those who follow international, 'new' and 'fresh' styles but use native grapes take the education of taste seriously, where 'unpronounceable' varietals and 'unknown' *terroir* must be actively advocated for. Like Stoker's Dracula, the reproduction of tastes for these wines depends on the 'reverse colonization' of place and body (Arata 1990:630). Botrytis, the 'vampiric' fungus from former Transylvania reminds us that not only human nature (Tsing 2012:141), but also human experience, is the product of interspecies relationships.

The postsocialist context of specialty winemaking cannot be overstated; while this nationalist 'moment' is relevant to the case at hand, this project speaks more broadly to the everyday experiences of postsocialist transformations. This dissertation thus contributes to ethnographic accounts of transformations in CEE, illustrating the messiness with which this transformation occurs and countering teleological expectations of 'transitions' to market capitalism. The defensive localism of PDO wines and their associated tastes makes sense as a response to located experiences of perceived oppression: turning to a narrative of earth-based agency, the terrain offers cues that locate the Hungarian nation as the rightful stewards of the Carpathian Basin. There also exists, in this view, the potential for the overwriting of centuries of assumed shared experiences: a nation-biome that extends centuries into the past. Visceral experiences and reactions to political transformations are therefore another, yet underexplored, facet of nationalism in the CEE region.

c. Affective ecologies in political contexts

Because place-based foods are so intrinsically linked to their geographies, *terroir* may be viewed as an affective ecology (von Mossner 2017) that is experienced through visceral attachments, protected through GI policies, and commodified on markets of authenticity. Tastes in this context are not limited to sense experience, but are synesthetic, ideological engagements with ecologies, policy, and social histories. *Terroir* and expectations interface in what Rigaux (2010 in Demossier 2018) calls

"Geo Sensing", or judging *terroir* wines in the mouth, where the viscerality of the material ecology of *terroir* is thought to become sense-able: place, embodied. It is also about "the ways in which the local economy interacted with the national one at a time when there was a powerful political drive to construct the national identity" (Demossier 2018:94); this is highlighted all the more in the controversy over the Slovakian side and witnessed in the increasingly authenticated, "Hungarian", indigenous status of even non-human constituent parts of the *terroir* (Chapters Five, Six).

Because taste is a situated (Haraway 1986) way of knowing place, the "taste of place" represents a politics of knowledge that plays out in viticultural ecosystems. This is reflected in a place-based nostalgia for the positive aspects of previous regimes. As Balázs lamented the loss of village life and secondary industries in the region, he noted, "we have the ability to make one of the best sweet wines in the world, [but] we need authentic surroundings for that as well". As an example, he suggests making *dűlő*-specific wines, then taking visitors into the *dűlő* to see the beautiful views. Today he sees laborers wearing disposable gloves, tossing used water bottles into ditches, eating canned food and leaving the trash in the fields. "We need to shape the area properly, so we don't feel ashamed. We need to exterminate weeds, stop letting vineyard workers litter their trash…we have a lot to improve".

For producers of GI and *terroir* foods, global trends have local consequences. As we move away from rational agricultural practices rooted in homogeneity and standardization and toward one of authenticity, locality, and diversity, taste is emerging as an important feature of this shift (Ekelund and Jönsson 2011) where sensuous experiences may divide generations or other groups along visceral borders (see also Yamin-Pasternak et al. 2014) and as sensory attributes become commercial values (Higa 2013). Similarly, Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy (2013) consider viscerality in politically coded foodways; they "explore how motivation to eat 'healthy' and 'alternative' food is a matter of affective relation, emerging differentially from a rhizome of structural and haphazard forces" (81).

They connect alternative food movements to the body as material and emotional, using a political ecology of the body framework to "expand upon the traditions of political ecology in ways that help to stretch the field into issues of bodies and health" (81). A through-reading of policy and concurrent regimes of taste thus elucidates the sociality of the senses and the playing-out of power relations through the tuning of visceral experiences, while discordant encounters with the taste of the "other" speaks to the embodiment of politics, communicated through ecological, material vessels of place.

d. "Doing" visceral political ecology

A visceral approach to political ecology is not only relevant to the specific case discussed in this dissertation. Attention to power as it manifests in and informs sensory experience is a paradigm that is transferrable to other contexts. A visceral approach necessarily includes (and may foreground) the body (e.g. Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy 2013) or any number of 'sense' experiences, broadly defined (kinetics, seasonality, 'senses' of citizenship). Emerging and experimental methodologies in sensory studies will certainly aid in the development of this approach, although a critical awareness of lived experiences provides a starting point.

A visceral political ecological framework foregrounds the locating of power in human experience. While experiences are impossible to directly observe or narrate, participant-observation and discursive analysis provide useful methodologies for discovering key power dynamics: what sorts of sensory experiences are indexed, and by whom? What sorts of value judgments are being made, and by whom? What descriptors are associated with various experiences? How is sense knowledge being created, legitimized, reproduced (laboratory tests, tasting panels, family homes, formal classes or programs)? How are those spaces coded with meaning, and who invests in them? How are ecologies indexed in those spaces and experiences? Who governs the ecologies/who are the decision-makers? Where are the sensory 'fault lines' between groups or trends (generational, gender-based, ethnic)? In

asking these questions, we must look beyond purely utilitarian/material or immaterial/visceral explanations for human behaviour in food systems. In Nancy Ries's (2009) potato ontologies, for example, a Russian woman is admired for her economy and talent in removing only the thinnest layers of potato skin as she harvests them from her dacha garden—I suggest we begin to ask why these people did not simply learn the (even *more* frugal) habit of eating the skins.

For example, wine discourse—and its associated tastes—is hegemonic in its value assessments and sophisticated standardization of language. The reorienting of taste expectations in and for Tokaj has been a power struggle; as one international newcomer noted in the mid-1990s: "[w]e want to change things, but we don't want to come across as foreign imperialists" (Mansson 1995:40). We see in these discourses, ground-truthed through ethnographic, empiric data, that these words do indeed signify experiences and thus locals' realities. Through attention to power in viticultural ecosystems and sense experiences, the case of Tokaji wine provides one example of how sense knowledge becomes action (Feld 2005). In place-based foods like Tokaj, laden with symbolic and historic cultural meaning, sense knowledge is a shared experience in which collective memory resides; to mobilize these memories through *terroir* narratives is to mobilize the past, understand the present, and imagine the future.

The food quality duality described in Chapter Three would be a worthwhile focus of the visceral political ecology framework. Sense experience has long provided clues and stoked suspicions 'on-the-ground' that disparity existed between 'former' East and West in Europe. What was taken as knowledge (based collective visceral experience, turned anecdotal) was eventually taken seriously enough to motivate the wide-scale laboratory and scientific, controlled testing of food composition. The political debate that has ensued, including the players involved and the various modes through which knowledge is created, sheds light on broader political relationships in Europe. In this case,

ecology may especially include the body itself as location of knowledge production: a visceral epistemology. Interesting tensions thus exist between these lived experiences of difference and official testing of differences, as well as the corporate responses, which cite local tastes in their defense.

This approach must include multi-scalar, multi-sited, and multi-disciplinary data: political/policy discourse, individual and highly localized activities, the view from within and without, environmental/ecological sciences and humanities or even arts-based methodologies. In its aim, the visceral political ecology approach adds to a growing body of work in anthropology that aims to describe the seemingly *naturalized* (in this case, sense experience and branded ecologies) as historically and culturally contingent. To this end, a sense-memory approach to wine making may be an extension of political ecology's charge to find a better, more just, more sustainable, more inclusive way forward (Robbins 2012), particularly in the era of "local" and alternative foodways.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

In winemaking specifically, *terroir* becomes a multi-modal rootedness, offering a "powerful trope of an alternative way of thinking about modernity and engaging with it" (Demossier 2018:9). The playing-out of *terroir* in postsocialist spaces thus affords us a sensible glimpse into engagements with modernity—and imaginings of the future—through connections with the social and ecological past. The legal protection of production ecologies through policy technologies such as GI fixes socio-ecological materialities as intellectual property. As literal property, *terroir* exists as both heritage and land which cannot be 'rolled up' and transposed into other locations (Li 2014:589). *Terroir*-as-territory (i.e., as land area) poses interesting problems (or possibilities) for conceptualizing such value-added and value-giving spaces within human geography. It suggests a 'mineral extraction' of a different kind: through mineral wines, value is extracted from monopoly spaces of production and captured through monopoly rent (see Marx 1993:910).

This dissertation offers novel insights into the managing of affective landscapes. While the preservation of enclosed spaces of production are often justified through ecological sciences or arguments of cultural significance, these arguments are in fact merely the surface: these debates around taste and place are placeholders for broader discussions of power and agency, past and present, and even the location (i.e. west or east) of Hungary itself. Taking borders for granted, Tokaji *terroir* demonstrate how political ideologies are in fact reproduced through borders and parallel visceral experiences.

With the rise of place-based foods and the popularity of "knowing where your food comes from" comes an increasing pressure to authenticate. Like the genetic analyses of indigenous grape varietals, where even the germplasm of grapes becomes social currency in the race for authenticity, novel and more 'objective' methodologies for *terroir* identification will surely continue to emerge. In this way, authenticity in the postsocialist context is 'domesticated' (see Creed 1994). To re-state Heller (2014), "claims to authenticity are linked to Romantic views of the nation as natural, with a core, or essence, located outside of history" (146). Concepts of indigeneity in this case are extended to the more-than-human biome of Tokaji *terroir*: an important insight into rising nationalist sentiment in this region. In her work on the commodification of authenticity, Heller (2014:139) suggests "the idea that products are uniquely characterized by the natural conditions of production [is] much the same [as] ideas we had about nation and race in the years before World War II" (see also Hartigan 2017).

Not mentioned as frequently as might be imagined, climate change stands to 'redraw' the *dűlő* map once again. Many producers reported shifting harvest times and the decline in frequency of botrytis affectation. Yet there is a surprising lack of concern—in my view, this is related to the shift to dry wines (which do not rely on botrytis) and are linked (at least discursively) more to the soils than the climate. Additionally, production methodologies can be implemented to ameliorate the effects of

prolonged sun exposure and rising temperatures (such as harvesting early, before excess sugars accumulate in the berries). Also not reported by producers is the necessary shift in taste that will follow changes in production methodologies due to climate (or political) change. As several respondents reiterated, 'you have to choose': producers must commit to dry or sweet winemaking, which in turn shapes local vineyard ecologies.

I have shown through the Tokaji case study that acquired tastes are political. Like other advocates for food system reform (e.g. Waters in Hayes-Conroy and Martin 2010), Tokaji value-makers understand the significance of 'informed' palates. The labor of taste is a "politics by other means" (Mukerji 2012). The power of taste knowledge, and the experiential knowledge of good and bad tastes, is thus worth further consideration in ethnographic accounts of political and ecological transformations.

It is also important to question the recent 'quality turn' associated with the capitalist transformation of Tokaj, where market dynamics are discursively (and experientially!) naturalized alongside *terroir* itself. Through *terroir* narratives, capitalism and its associated activities (namely, entrepreneurship) are validated, while 'communist' styles, tastes, and production methods are condemned as objectively backwards, naïve, and outmoded. It is important to remember here the double standard that often appears in parallel cases between CEE and its western counterparts: what is considered backwards in Hungary has been lauded as "modern" (as with mechanization of vineyards in Italy [Ebhardt 2016]) or "traditional specialty" (as with goose liver in France [Gille 2011]). Such an erosion of agrobiodiversity (relative to archival evidence from the 19th and 20th centuries) may be to blame for the recent crop losses due to 'sour' or 'gray' rot.

A more inclusive, holistic, and applicable political ecology means we must cease taking taste—and other categories of sensory experiences—for granted in political-ecological analyses.

Programs of food production, including plant breeding (Chapter Four), regulatory schemes (Chapters Three and Seven), heritage valorization (Chapters Three, Four, and Five), and agricultural methodologies (Chapter Seven) are invariably coupled with the shaping and perception of taste and other affective connections to material ecologies. It also speaks to the need in anthropology for a "theoretically informed but practice-based anthropology of the senses" (Grasseni 2005:91). This is especially salient in the place-based, local foods that benefit from increasing consumer demand for heterogeneity and specialized products with knowable, sense-able provenance. Benefitting from this global trend, alternative food movements and equitable GI schemes may be able to enhance agrobiodiversity as it forges affective connections that span distances if enlist the senses in political-ecological change; even more recently, taste and 'preference' has been dubbed the 'missing ingredient' in sustainable food policy (Wilson 2018). Perhaps, in looking to the future of food production, EU integration, or rural development, the revolution will be visceral.

AFTERWORD: PERSONAL CONNECTIONS ON THE FOOTPATH OF MIRACLES

In Haralson County, Georgia, off Route 78, lies a small, unincorporated community called Budapest. Nearby are the former settlements of Tokaj and Nyitra, though their 19th century foundations are long gone. This enclave in West Georgia was once home to over 300 Hungarian immigrant families, brought to Georgia by real-estate developer Ralph L. Spencer to establish a thriving wine region akin to the famed hills of Tokaj, Hungary. Under the guidance of Catholic priest Father Janisek, vineyards were established, and the expertise of Hungarian families soon fuelled the creation of a burgeoning wine industry. Chosen for its resemblance to the original Tokaj, Haralson County is in the hilly piedmont just beyond the Appalachian range, with sandy-shale soils, gentle slopes, and the many hours of sunlight required for producing healthy, sweet berries.

The scale of investment in Haralson County's Hungarian wine colony hints at the 19th-century fame and status of Hungarian Tokaji wines. The restorative properties of the botrytized liquid were prescribed by physicians the world over (indeed, they have mildly antibiotic properties), and even the "normal", non-botrytized wines of Tokaj were traded across Europe, propelled by both status and a mythological connection between their goodness and their geography of origin—even the soils of Tokaj were exported as a panacea for a period. But, by the early 20th century, political opinions in Georgia had swayed and prohibitionist policies swept across the state. The Prohibition Act of 1907 made Georgia's Tokaj production illegal; Hungarian families in Haralson County began to disperse, and the vineyards were left to ruin. Today, only a Catholic priest's home ("Key's Castle"), the Budapest Cemetery, and a few unbridled grape vines remain.

Figure 33: Stake-trained vines against a background of loblolly pines in Georgia's Tokaj, outside of Budapest, Georgia in Haralson County. Haralson County Historical Society (date unknown).

The import of Tokaji winemaking, which in Hungary consisted of a centuries-long history of production and political practices, was inspired by the idea of *terroir*, while its execution relied on the transplantation a political ecology: aligning ecologies and local knowledge, with the assumption that Tokaji wines could be reproduced in similar environments. This venture in Haralson County was hardly a new idea; as early as 1565, entrepreneurs took vine cuttings from the Tokaj region to Alsace in the hopes of reproducing Tokaji wines in other geographies (Lambert-Gócs 2002:55).

Often retold as the tale of a business venture that was not meant to be, this story illustrates the central theme of this dissertation: socio-political ideologies spur interventions that materialize in agro-ecologies with lasting effect; policies and their assumptions and ideologies are as much a part of the taste of place as the bedrock, sunshine, or the hands that harvest. The connection between Southeastern protestant fervor (prohibition) and the demise of the new Tokaji—with all its associated tastes—is, at

first blush, not an obvious one—but the absence of Tokaji tastes from the sensorium of contemporary Georgia dwellers is not an accident of nature, even though sense experiences are often naturalized.

Like all experiences, including taste, fieldwork is shaped by its own social, political, economic, and environmental conditions; the coincidence of a Tokaj, Georgia just 40 miles from my place of birth (and of which I learned only after starting this project) was matched by other coincidences of good and bad fortune. After a disastrous bike tour of Slovakian Tokaj, followed by a thwarted interview that led to cancelled harvest plans, I arrived quite unexpectedly back in the village of Mád by early train in mid-September 2017, ready to cut my interview round short and pack up. I had missed a chance to speak to one of the only remaining Jewish families in the region, which I took as a blow, as I was determined not to write another Tokaji project without mention of Jewish Tokaj.

Stepping off the train in Mád, however, I headed straight to the only place I found to stay at such last-minute: a room in the Jewish hostel, recently built in the refurbished Rabbinical school. The Rabbinical school is now the beginning and end point of the Footsteps of the Wonder Rabbis pilgrimage route. That first evening, I settled into my room and began to hear music playing, chiming out across the village. It sounded like distant church bells, if church bells were music boxes.

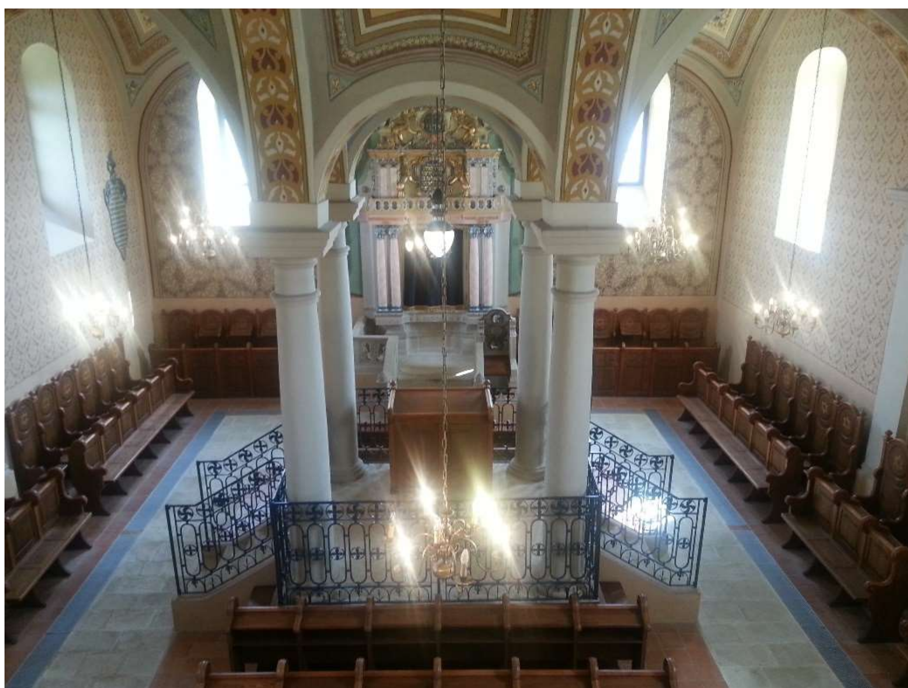

Figure 34: The restored synagogue of Mád, Tokaj region. September 2017. Photo by the author.

I woke the next day to tour the school and beautifully restored synagogue. The wealth of photos, information, and the pure quantity of names of the disappeared put my own anxieties into perspective. It was also fortuitous information, as few sources exist on Tokaj's Jewish population, and what few were available I had yet to track down through the normal channels. After my tour of the old Rabbinical school, I set off on the trail of miracles: the "Footsteps of the Wonder Rabbis" pilgrimage route, which connects several Tokaj towns of religious significance for their historic "Wonder Rabbis" who once performed miracles—some of which are said to continue to perform miracles after their death. Leaving my hostel, I began to walk toward town but quickly changed my mind, deciding instead to head toward the Jewish cemetery of Mád. At one point, I heard the music again. I pulled out my phone to try taking a recording, and at that moment, a nice lady in her 60s appeared in front of a neighboring house and asked if she could help me.

I thanked her but said no, that I was just looking around. I told her I was listening to the nice music and asked if she knew where it came from. She sort of laughed and said she didn't actually know, but that it came, possibly, from some other village! We began chatting, and I told her where I was from and about my project. I mentioned I was staying at the Rabbi's house, that I was looking for the Jewish cemetery and other sources, as I'd been unable to find very much on the topic. With a startled look on her face, she told me her daughter had in fact recently written her doctoral dissertation on the history of Jewish Tokaj using interviews and life histories with the few remaining families. I was stunned by this coincidence, and when I asked for her daughter's name, she said there was one printed copy of her work, that it was inside her house, and that I was welcome to come in and read through it.

She introduced herself as Zsuzsa and offered me coffee—I initially declined as it was late in the day, but she said it was instant (*Nescafe "3 in 1"*) and therefore *gyenge* (weak) enough. She delivered the coffee, along with the manuscript, then disappeared into her kitchen. I began to flip through the book, when she reappeared with *zsíros kenyér* (bread with lard) and pale grapes on a plate. She said if was interested in the harvest going on around us, then I must taste this combination together. In the 1960s, she told me, the poverty was great, so during the harvest the workers would have this simple meal for lunch. Homemade fat (from the pig slaughter, rendered after making bacon), on crusty white bread, with white grapes—but eaten as one, together. She insisted it tasted good together—the lard, grapes, and bread—despite how it looked or sounded! She was right: salty, slightly bitter, but sweet at the same time. It would have given some boost of energy to the people eating it.

Figure 35: "You must taste this, all together": Zsuzsa's recreation of the traditional harvest day meal she knew from her youth. Mád, September 2017. Photo by the author.

She told me about the *puttony*, how it worked, and where I could find an original one to photograph. She laughed, because she is *not* a winemaker, but she knows so much about it, just from growing up in the village! She has old books, maps, and other beautiful tokens of village history, which she showed me spread on her dining table. She said the house she lives in, and in which we were sitting, is the house in which she was born; it was her mother's, her grandmother's, and so forth, and is about 300 years old. The house across the street, she adds, is about 500 years old. After calling her daughter—the author of the dissertation that had drawn me into the house—she told me they would entrust me with the only copy of her work so that I could take it to my room at the Rabbinical School, copy down any notes or make scans using my phone, and return it the next day.

The next day, I returned with a small gift of locally made soap from the shop at my hostel. Zsuzsa thanked me and commented that she had prepared a "light meal" in case I arrived Hungary: stuffed cabbage with sour cream and white bread. I accepted!

Figure 36: Stuffed cabbage with sour cream, a very traditional and hearty Hungarian meal. September 2017. Photo by the author.

Zsuzsa later says she approached me because I had a personable face, and that without explanation, she felt compelled to speak to me. She says we are meant to meet certain people, and we agree that it must just be another miracle.

As I sat down to complete this dissertation, writing from our current home in North London, the significance of these occurrences became impossible to overlook. One summer evening, I took a break from writing and joined my husband, Dan, in a local Vietnamese eatery, where we spotted a red, white, and green sign across the street: a Hungarian grocer. This is now my local grocery shop and source for Tokaji wines and language practice with my Hungarian neighbors, several of whom immigrated from Northeast Hungary.

We brought home some Tokaji wine from this shop, toasted to the completion of my fieldwork, and jokingly went through the motions of the many wine tastings I had participated in: smelling the

"nose", observing the color, the "legs", contemplating the finish. But each time I do this, the joke only lasts so long, because the smell emanating from glass, the tawny color of the liquid, the brightness of the first sip, the coating on the glass, is always enough to send me spinning into a reverie that can only be described as *nostalgie*. "I've caught it," I joke, after catching myself staring nowhere in particular.

It might be a bit heady to suggest we coin such a term as fieldsickness, but certainly the connection between this sensory experience and the place I had just invested 14 months of academic energy (this period being motivated by another three years in residence and the accompanying relationships, memories, and investments) is in me now, too. I carry it with me—this thing that is shared, that is taught, that is reproduced—this visceral and shape-shifting link between embodied, ultimately subjective experiences and the damp, earthy cellar walls made lumpy with indigenous black pence penész, those rolling expanses of parallel vines. It took time, but I have the imaginary that so many Tokaji producers aim to create as they establish relationships with visitors.

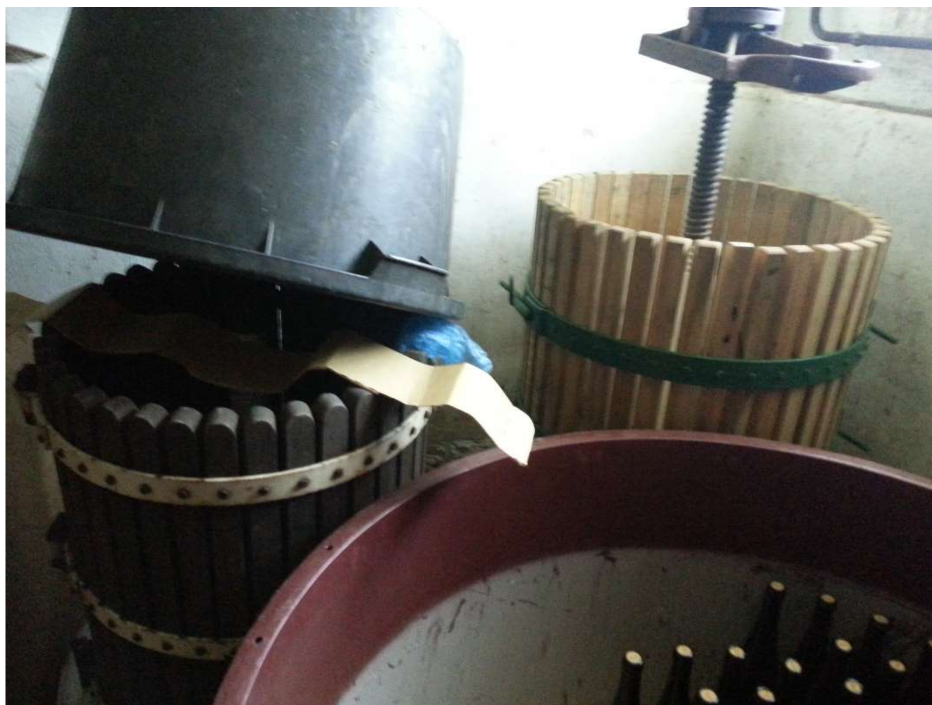

Figure 37: Presses in Dani's small winery. June 2015. Photo by the author.

I wanted to conclude this work with an exposing admission: like so many anthropologists of the "old school", I have indeed "gone native". This is not evidenced in new, unconventional clothing choices, nor in a quirky, hybrid accent, but something much deeper. This is more than a brainwashing; it is a bodywashing. It is not cognitive, but corporeal. This is the exclusivity of shared consumption; the insider's view is not a view at all, but a learned experience. And like any education, sacrifices and investments are required. I am not speaking only of formalized courses designed to train the taster into an efficient instrument in a bid for objectivity, but also of the labor of winemaking, the industry of teaching to taste (often done by the producers themselves in the cramped spaces of family cellars), the work of getting to know a new sensory world, of taking on that new sensory realm.

In today's scholarship food and, increasingly, the sensory experiences that accompany the social act of eating, are taken seriously as a subject of inquiry. Using food as a lens, we return to the most basic of human questions around labor, subsistence, social organization, and cosmology. Wine, with its modern status as object and symbol of prestige, is often discounted as "bougie" (to use an ironically self-referential word another academic used regarding wine research). Yet we anthropologists still want to know why people do what they do, and what makes the human experience uniquely *human* (or more-than-human). Surely one of our long-standing, primary sources of hydration is worth considering.

I return once more to the basic question: what is wine? It is so much more than "bougie" grape juice; it is water, filtered safely through a selective plant that has quenched human thirst for millennia. Its very ubiquity is perhaps at the root of the rise of exclusive wines from exclusive places. It was not always so. In the same way that mineral waters from particular places may be revered, almost mythologized, for healing properties, so, too are wines. Yet wine requires much more than grapes; it

is a cocktail of miniscule, microbial helpers, each with an agenda, consuming and excreting, their life cycles metabolizing grape juice and—almost miraculously—turning near-water into wine.

The association of a particular wine with its place of origin seems almost a given: with so many elements involved in its creation, there must be a way to narrow down the variability, to distinguish the few from the many (and, in doing so, distinguish their consumers). As I sit in North London, I literally imbibe these small inhabitants of Tokaj. I materially consume and metabolize the rain that fell on those grounds, accessed by the roots (which are probably much older than I), along with soluble minerals, to be consumed by the plant. I literally smell the aromas infused by the oak wood of the barrel, which came from the forest nearby. It is a cocktail of locality; it is a taste with provenance. For some, even the literal minerality of the soil is sensed—an evocative suggestion that is almost impossible for romantics with an affinity for geography not to buy into. If I close my eyes (or focus them only on the straw-colored liquid before me), I am effectively in Tokaj—put even more literally, Tokaj is in me.

This dissertation is my view from a place, my sensuous landscape, my "situated knowledge" (Haraway 1986). We can never know exactly how another experiences the world, as our lives are individually sensed. But we see how it motivates, how it causes action: a Tokaj region in Georgia, a Georgia native lost in Tokaj. Sense experience can only be communicated in limited ways, because even the experience itself is not transferable. I could not include a vial of Hárslevelű or furmint wine with each copy of this dissertation and expect it to communicate what I mean to say: The way that I taste the hárslevelű wine in my non-Hungarian home will not be the way most readers would taste it, because my tasting it is loaded with memories, experiences, and knowledges that tinge my experience in a synesthetic way. This dissertation is now a bittersweet tasting note of its own. At the same time, I

am comfortably certain that the way I experience a glass of hárslevelű is closer to my participants' than to someone who has never tried it. How can this be?

I know, for example, that the name hárslevelű means "linden leaf", a clue to the shape of the plant itself. I know that it is the brasher half-sibling of the native furmint grape, and I can taste their relation in the acid, almost sour flavors. I know my way around the narrow streets in the town it came from, and the waft of mildew-laden, cool dampness that breaks over you when you open the cellar door on a humid, summer day. I am reminded of Tokaj, Georgia, and the wine region that was never to be—yet so close to the place I grew up. I think of the tastes they wanted to recreate and share, and I can hear the folk songs they would have sung during their work days. I think of Zsuzsa and her stuffed cabbage, of her kindness on the streets of Mád, spinning miracles again where once a community of believers flourished.

I also think of the hopes planted in Tokaj, Georgia; like the legends of the original Tokaj, even these vines are impossible to extinguish and are still found occasionally climbing an odd fencepost in Haralson County. I think of the way Ákos put it:

> …when you buy a piece of land with wine on it, you either decide to continue making wine, or [you'd] better not buy the piece of land—because you can never get rid of the roots.
>
> But the great thing about those 'leavers': …you can graft [new stock] onto [old roots]. If the grafting is well done, the same roots will keep nurturing the new stock. Isn't that a great thing?
>
> Wine is a very aggressive plant. Its name wine comes from the Latin word *vitis*, which means *life*. It has the strongest living energy of all plants.

Ákos, like the producers I spoke with, is confident in the resilience of Tokaj, even if not quite visible to the eye or the palate: "[p]lants grow, move, penetrate, and even invade, but they do this at velocities that are normally hard to discern with a passing gaze or occasional glimpse" (Besky and Padwe 2016:21).

Today there is a new belief budding in Tokaj, and I have witnessed and bear witness to its propagation. I cannot pretend to be objective about my tasting Tokaji wines—but rather than being a limitation, I now regard this as perhaps the most fundamental conclusion of my work: the evidence is *in* the bias. There is nothing objective, nothing value-neutral, about taste. It is as socially, politically, and ecologically mediated as subsistence, kinship, cosmology, and all other facets that comprise the human experience. And it is worth sharing.

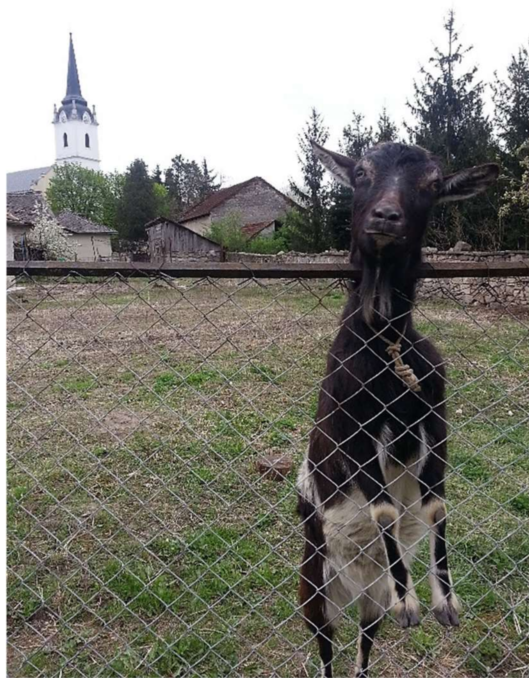

Figure 38: A Tokaji local bids me goodbye as I hike out of Erdőbénye. May 2017. Photo by the author.

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APPENDIX 1: TIMELINE OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

Major events and legal decrees in/affecting the Tokaj region of Hungary

896	Magyars (today's Hungarians) arrive in Carpathian Mountains from southern Russia.
1000	Kingdom of Hungary is founded by Saint-King Istvan, who converts from paganism to Catholicism.
1271	System of local regulation established and supported by the crown with local guilds of growers in each *hegyközség* (mountain community association); this lasted until 1949. Through these associations, each wine community determined harvest dates, marketing, the settlement of disputes, etc.
1400s	Tokaji wines appear in historic records, apparently as dry/off-dry wines.
1500s	Harvest records in Tokaj suggest late timing/possible shrivelled or botrytized wines.
1571	"Fifty-two casks of Aszú grape wine" is written into a deed by Máté Garay for his brother, János.
1590	Tokaji Aszú is mentioned in Balázs Fabricius Szikszay's *Nomenclatura*.
Mid-1600s	First mention of furmint varietal.
1630 (1633?)	Priest Laczkó Máté Szepsi, according to legend, creates the first aszú wine in Tokaj (he is likely the first to write about its production, though aszú predates this legend).
1641	Thirteen Tokaji villages join to decree common standards of production.
1655, 1660	Additional regulations passed regarding Tokaji aszú berry harvest and production.
1730	Matyas Bél (1684-1749) writes *Notitia Hungariae novae,* detailing the Tokaji *dűlő* classification, the first of its kind in the world.
1737	Tokaj is incorporated and designated a protected district of production by royal decree.
1798	Szirmay's *Notitia historica, politica, oecononomica montium et locorum viniferorum comitatus Zenpléniensis* includes a revision of Bel's *dűlő* classification.
1868	The Tokaji Almanac is published.

1890s	Phylloxera endemic reaches Tokaj.
1893	National Wine Law enacted, which recognized the established wine communities. It was largely unchanged until it was made irrelevant in 1949.
1896	The Ampelographical Institute is established in Buda in response to the phylloxera endemic, representing the first viticultural research unit independent of university patronage to be founded on earth.
1903	Baron Maillot forms the Tokaji Wine-Growers' Shareholding Society in Mád, later called Tokaji Wine-Growers' Society by Prince Windisehgrätz.
1909	Proposal by Tokaji Wine-Growers' Society to organize 12 regional coops.
1914-1918	World War I
1918	The Austro-Hungarian state is terminated as the Hungarian government ends its union with Austria.
1920	Treaty of Trianon is signed. This peace agreement marked the end of World War I and redefined the borders of Hungary, which lost over two-thirds of its land area to neighboring countries, including a portion of Tokaj.
1931	Tokaji-hegyalja Wine Growers' Cellar-Cooperative established.
1938	Hungarian Hill-Country Wine-Growers' Marketing Cooperative established.
1939-1945	World War II
1944	Deportation of Tokaji Jewry to Auschwitz-Birkenau, some sent to other Nazi labor and death camps.
1945	Commissioner of Abandoned Goods is established to nationalize "abandoned" Jewish properties.
1948	Land registered in accordance to current property values in gold crowns (poor land equal to about 15 crowns/hectare, good land about 27 crowns/hectare [one crown = 1000 forint, or about $5).
1956	Revolution breaks out in Budapest and is wiped out by Soviet troops when Western support fails to materialize, resulting in mass emigration across Hungary.
1967	Tokaji state farms (Tokaj-Hegyalja, Tolcsva, and Abaújszántó) collected under the *Tokajhegyaljai Állami Gazdaság Borkombinát* (Tokaj-Hegyalja State Farm Wine Combine), covering 7,400 hectares.
1970	Act No. 36 of 1970 on Grape and Fruit Production and Wine Management (revived in 1994).
1970s-80s	Gradual erosion of command economy, informal markets emerge.

1989	End of communist regime.
1990	Compensation Act of 1990 (became effective in 1991). 54 billion forint worth of vouchers granted to 800,000 original property owners/descendants across Hungary, allotted according to the 1948 valuations, exchangeable for assets on stock exchange or at auction (could be unrelated to wine and used to buy vineyards). Vouchers could also be sold and were fully negotiable. Another 8.5 billion HUF are distributed in second round. Vouchers had depreciated in value by 65% by 1996, even as property prices rose, and auction rings/collusion was frequent.
1991	Privatization in Tokaj begins in earnest.
1992	Cooperative Law of 1992: land assets to be returned to "insider members" (original owners or descendants) in proportion to original contribution to cooperative. Buildings, machinery, etc., were assessed/inventoried, and insider members withdrew their share in cash or kind. "Outsider members" (former employees of cooperative five or more years who had not contributed lands) were given shares in the cooperative (almost worth nothing, as most went bankrupt) and some of this inventory. They received benefits based on length of time worked.
Early 1990s	State subsidies around 50% provided to plant new vineyards (declined to 30-40% by 2001).
1990-1994	Foreign investors are allowed to purchase Tokaji lands, which in 1990 were available for about 1/10 their equivalent value in Germany.
1993	1993 Act on Land created an embargo from 1994 on land ownership (excluding housing) by foreign individuals as well as companies, domestic or foreign. After this act, only firms who purchased land prior to the Act on Land can produce grapes in their own vineyards (according to sources, many international firms continue to invest through Hungarian "directors", posing as joint ventures to get around this stipulation).
1994	Act No 102 of 1994 led to the reinstatement of *hegyközség* (hill community) governance. The act was constructed on historical precedents and "on living memory of how the system had operated in the past" (Liddell 2003:35). It is now arranged as a pyramid, with 321 autonomous communities at the base, in which membership is required for producers growing .05 hectares or more. The second tier is regional councils (one for each of the 22 regions) with delegates from each community and an elected president. At the top is the Hegyközségek Nemzeti Tanácsa (National Council of Wine Communities), which meets three times annually and includes the 22 presidents, from which a national president is elected. The duties of the communities are legal (data collection, origin verification, permits for planting or grubbing up, compliance, funded by government) and local (funded by membership fees).
1996	Hungary declares intent to join the European Union.

1997	Act No. 121 of 1997 on Grape Cultivation and Wine Management (pursuant to Article 82 of the Wine Act) replaces Sections 1-3 of 1970 Act but is later modified. Its aim: to develop and consolidate the regulation of wine production through the adoption of EU materials and OIV (International Organisation of Vine and Wine) recommendations.
1999	EU implements Wine Law 1493 of 1999 and rejects Hungary's request for exceptions (regarding Tokaj, especially) over issues such as purchasability of land by foreigners, required distillation of excess wines, etc.
2000	A local committee applies for inclusion of Tokaj in UNESCO as a World Heritage Landscape.
2001	The cost to plant one hectare of vineyards in Tokaj is now roughly 6 million forint, or $18,700; concurrent average salaries were 80-100,000 forint/month in 2001 per Trading Economics data, or $3,684-$4,615 annually). Interest on bank loans in 2001 is 19-27%. The legal minimum wage is 40,000 forint per month (equating to $1842 annually). Manual laborers such as vineyard workers make about $.85/hour, or $156/month—$1,872 annually).
2002	Tokaj receives UNESCO World Heritage Landscape status on June 27.
2006	PDO status is granted to the Tokaj wine region.
2012	European Court rejects Hungary's request to remove Slovakia's Tokaj entry from the EU database of GI/PDO wines.
2014	Hungary becomes a "Government-designated Growth Area" to receive national investment through 2020 totalling 48 billion forint, or about 180 million dollars.

APPENDIX 2: ABBREVIATIONS

AOC	*Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée* (French PDO)
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
EU	European Union
GI	Geographical Indication
HCL	Historic Cultural Landscape
MBSz	*Magyar Borgazdaság Szövetsége* (Union of Hungarian Wine Producers), started in 1988 with 120 members, lobbies on behalf of members
MB	*Magyar Borakadémia* (Hungarian Academy of Wine), established in 1992 to restore reputation of Hungarian wine
OBB	*Országos Borminosít Bizottség* (National Wine Qualification Board), authorizes wines of superior quality, such as Tokaji Aszú.
OBI	*Országos Borminősítő Intézet* (National Wine Qualification Institute), in charge of maintenance of general quality, technical standards of production, and labelling, as well as imported wine. All Hungarian wine goes through their labs for analysis before sale.
PDO	Protected Designation of Origin (one of three types of GIs in the EU)
TWAS	*Tokaji Bormívelők Társasága* (Association of Tokaji Winemaking)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

APPENDIX 3: GLOSSARY OF ENGLISH AND HUNGARIAN TERMS

Állami gazdaság: *(communist era)* state farm of 500-10,000 hectares.

Aszú: a traditional Tokaji wine made with botrytized grapes. Tokaji Aszú is made to different strengths and in different styles.

Borkombinátok: *(communist era)* collective 'wine combines' (buyers and combiners of local grapes/must).

Dűlő: a vineyard tract with defining geographic characteristics, akin to the French *climat*.

Furmint: a popular indigenous Hungarian grape varietal that is thought to express its locality.

Grafting: a process that creates clones of old vines that are genetically identical reproductions, or clones, of the "mother" plant.

Greater Hungary: the pre-Trianon/WWI Hungarian state, which was three times the land area of the current Hungarian state and encompassed much of what is now Slovakia, Romania (Transylvania), Slovenia, Serbia, Austria, and Ukraine.

Hárslevelű: a popular indigenous Hungarian grape varietal related to furmint.

Háztáji: *(communist era)* Three-hectare household plot for private production.

Lopó: A glass siphon with a bulb used to extract wine from barrels. Literally, *thief*.

Magyar Állami Pincegazdaság: *(communist era)* Hungarian State Cellar Organization.

Pancs: wine made from a mixture of various grapes without regard for "quality".

Puttony: the traditional wooden basket used to harvest aszú berries and which historically stood as a unit of measure to determine the sweetness of the aszú wine.

Must, Grape Must: a mixture of pressed grape juice with skins and stems remaining.

Szövetkezet: *(communist era)* cooperative of 400-600 hectares belonging legally to self-governed cooperative members.

Trianon: refers to the Treaty of Trianon and its revision of Hungarian borders. Today's Hungarian boundaries reflect the post-Trianon era.

Vintage: the year in which the harvest is made.