Introduction: Ideology, Cultural Politics, Intellectuals

The identity of a people and of a civilization is reflected and concentrated in what has been created by the mind—in what is known as "culture." If this identity is threatened with extinction, cultural life grows correspondingly more intense, more important, until cultural life itself becomes the living value around which all people rally.

—Milan Kundera

Culture is the arena in which there occurs the political struggle to obtain identity and legitimacy.

—Mihai Dinu Gheorghiu

In March of 1989, six former officials of the Romanian Communist Party wrote an open letter to Romanian President Nicolae Ceauşescu protesting his policies.[1] Among their accusations was this: "Romania is and remains a European country. . . . You have begun to change the geography of the rural areas, but you cannot move Romania into Africa." An emigré Romanian writer echoed this image, lamenting the shift from "ideocracy" to "idiocracy" in his native land and the "offensive against competence, intelligence, talent, in a word, against culture" and decrying Ceauşescu's personality cult as "worthy of an Af-

rican state." Other writers, too, despaired at the thought that Romania had ceased to be a European society, and they begged assistance from the "European family" to restore Romania to the "civilizing principles" of the French Revolution: "Romania must once again assume its place in Europe." A literary critic at war with a highly placed writer opened his book of essays with an anti-European quotation from his opponent ("I hate French for its much-vaunted cartesianism") and then, calling such an attitude "barbarian," launched a defense of European culture against it. All over Romania, during and after the violence that overthrew Ceauşescu's "barbarian" rule, demonstrating students chanted "Europe is with us!" and newspapers and jubilant Romanians writing their friends abroad exclaimed, "We are returning at last to Europe!"[2]

Illustrating quite the contrary attitude, a sociologist insisted: "[Our culture] cannot keep limping along behind European civilization, fixated on a peripheral identity. . . . [Ours] is not a subaltern culture and the road to our values does not pass through the West." He was joined by others who railed against European influence as an "intellectual dictatorship" and "an attack on Romanian cultural tradition." One critic condemned the intolerable "boycott of our values," complaining that "we have translated the fourth book by [French anthropologist] Lévi-Strauss but not one by [Chicago-based Romanian emigré] Mircea Eliade." Still more graphic illustration of these people's point of view was the board game "Dacians and Romans" being sold in Romanian toy stores in 1987, which cast the ("European") Romans as the game's villains against the ("native") Dacians.[3]

Europe and Africa, culture and barbarism, colonial exploitation and western dictatorship: these images ricocheted through the space of Romania's cultural and political life in the 1970s and 1980s. As is evident from the exultant Europeanism of the anti-Ceauşescu forces, such images were the distilled expression of fierce and passionate sentiments, the emblems of diametrically opposed political positions. To be against the regime had become synonymous with being pro-European, whereas Ceauşescu and those in factions more or less allied with him ranted against western imperialism and the Europeanizing obliteration of the national soul.

Although these highly charged symbols adorned political speeches often enough, it was in a somewhat different domain that they formed the very essence of political discourse: in the world of Romanian culture. They were the currency of life-and-death struggles in intellectual life under Ceauşescu. They flowed easily, however, between intellectual

and political domains, for two reasons, one historical and one contemporary. Different political options had been intertwined for over three centuries with alternative definitions or representations of Romanian identity (as European, as eastern, as something different from both); and the relations established between Romanian intellectuals and the Communist party ensured that cultural life would be entangled with politics.

This book is about how images of Romanian identity entered into battle with one another in the politicized world of Romanian culture and, in so doing, perpetuated a Romanian national ideology within an order claiming to be socialist. It is about the relations among those who created such images (different groups of intellectuals or, more broadly, producers of culture), and between them and the leadership of the Romanian Communist Party. These various groups, producers of culture and of rule, wrote and talked about "the nation," constructing it as a politically relevant field of discourse. Their words coexisted with words on other themes and with a larger set of strategies that included subtle coercion and outright violence. Together, these formed the system of "legitimation" or "consent" in Ceauşescu's Romania, as well as the elements of its transformation. The following chapters discuss intellectuals' contribution to these processes, asking how philosophers, artists, writers, historians, journalists, and others created and recreated a national ideology, and what difference it made that this was occurring in a "socialist" system rather than one of another kind. Underlying these are larger questions: What was there about twentieth-century Soviet-type socialism that brought politics and culture together in mutually informing ways? What was there about the idea of "the nation" that made it so apt a junction for culture and politics? And what consequences, finally, did the discourse on the nation have for the socialist order that sought to appropriate it?

Most of this book deals with apparently esoteric matters—arguments among sociologists, literary critics, historians, and philosophers. Its significance, however, goes far beyond these. To begin with, it is precisely the nexus between politics and culture which enables us to understand why the new government that emerged in late December 1989 included not only communist reformers but several poets (such as Mircea Dinescu and Ana Blândiana), literary critics (Aurel Dragoş Munteanu), philosophers and aestheticians (Mihai Şora, Andrei Pleşu), and a teacher of French (Doina Cornea). The Romanian example can thereby enlighten even more striking instances of the same thing, such

as Václav Havel's extraordinary transformation from jailed playwright to president of Czechoslovakia.

More important, I believe, is the relevance of the material in this book to what will surely be a prominent feature of Eastern Europe in its transition from socialism: national ideologies and the mobilization of national sentiments in the new "democratic" politics. Some commentators attribute a possible "new nationalism" to the resuscitation of interwar politics, as if everything that had intervened was inconsequential. In contrast, I see national ideology as having been built up in Romania throughout the communist period—and not just by the Party's recourse to it, but by intellectuals' continued elaboration of the national idea, which was also highly functional within Romania's socialist political economy (see chapters 3 and 5). Moreover, I suggest, this national ideology disrupted the Marxist discourse and thus—despite the Communist party's apparent appropriation of it—was a major element in destroying the Party's legitimacy. The analysis in these chapters, then, not only offers the history of how a national identity was reproduced within a particular Eastern European socialism and how it contributed to undermining that social order, but also illuminates the context for politics in the 1990s and the place national ideologies will occupy in them.

My analysis presupposes that intellectual activity is complexly related to power and may construct empowering ideologies even when intellectuals intend otherwise. In addition, I presuppose that intellectual activity is *situated*: that it does not emanate from a neutral zone of ideas floating freely above and indifferent to social conflict, order, and interest but that it is, rather, one of several instruments for realizing these. Intellectual arguments about identity are sometimes seen as expressing the dilemmas of those from subaltern cultures (see, e.g., Herzfeld 1984, 1987; Jowitt 1978; Sugar et al. 1985), and contradictory images of national "selves"—as eastern, as western, and so forth—are sometimes read as evidence of confusion about identity, resulting from interstitial placement between dominating imperial powers (Herzfeld 1987: 112, 114; McNeill 1964: 209). Although I, too, recognize that the overwhelming crosscurrents of influence from powerful "cores" have profoundly disorienting effects on intellectuals in "peripheries," I take a different approach in this book. I attempt to show how various groups, variously situated in Romanian society, have taken advantage of these crosscurrents to produce rival images of their nation while competing

with one another to be the nation's acknowledged cultural representatives. It is for this reason that I see questions of identity as wrapped up in a *politics* of culture, whose result is to strengthen the national ideology.

My analysis has several different audiences concerned with diverse literatures and conceptual issues. Anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists, and historians have pursued either theoretically or empirically one or another of the themes I explore. These include the politics of culture (especially in socialist societies); the social role of intellectuals and their relation to power; the theoretical analysis of socialist-type systems; and processes whereby hegemony, ideology, and legitimating discourses—specifically national ones—are formed. Different facets of the book will recommend it to different audiences. From an anthropological point of view, it contributes to writings on the political economy of cultural production and on culture as practice ("culture" understood here in the sense of "high culture," which is also, of course, a form of culture as anthropologists usually treat it). The book also addresses literature in social theory—especially the work of Foucault, Gramsci, Raymond Williams, and Pierre Bourdieu—on the nature of discourse, of intellectual work, and of the relation of these to power. Among other things, I seek to modify Bourdieu's notions of "cultural capital" and "symbolic markets," which I see as inappropriate for socialist systems, where "capital" and "markets" do not work as in the systems he describes. Political scientists interested in questions of legitimation, especially in the very precarious regimes of the formerly socialist Eastern Europe, may find my treatment of this issue useful, along with my account of politicking in Romanian culture. Students of historical and contemporary national ideologies may benefit from my somewhat unusual definition of "ideology" and my atypical account of nationalism, as compared with the modalities common to intellectual history and political analysis.

An investigation of these subjects might do or ought to do many things that this one does not; I should state its limitations at the outset. First, and most alarmingly to many of my Romanian friends, this book does not pretend to be a study of Romania's cultural life under Ceauşescu and of the works of value it produced. Of the several Romanian colleagues who read parts of this book in draft, nearly all complained that it tells too little about the excellent things that appeared in Romanian art, letters, and scholarship. I agree with them that much of value was created, but to describe it and its contribution to Romanian

civilization is not my aim. The entire orientation of this work problematizes the notion of "value" their urgings took for granted. In short, persons coming to the book for a taste of Romania's cultural achievements will leave it hungry. Although I have, certainly, my preferences in Romanian culture and scholarship, I view my own evaluations as situated, just like those of Romanians. I see my task in these chapters not primarily as upholding one or another of their definitions of cultural value but as inquiring into the total field in which different definitions of value conflicted with each other. If in the end I nevertheless take sides, I do so not from unquestioned attachment to values of "truth" or "creative freedom" but because, in an irredeemably American way, I prefer pluralism to centralization. Despite the self-serving quality of intellectual invocations of truth and creative freedom, I support the actions of any group that tends to slow the absorption of values into the political center and to maintain an environment of alternative possibilities.

An analysis of elite discourse or ideology might be expected to ask how these shape the subjectivities, or the consciousness, of persons in society. Some scholars would phrase the entire problem in this way: rather than talking about how domination is ideologically organized, they would investigate the aspects of power relations in which the identity of groups and individuals is at stake, creating in people an experience or a consciousness that makes them *subjects* (Foucault 1982: 212; Corrigan and Sayer 1985: 1–13). Scholarship has only just begun to scratch the surface of this fascinating problem; the present book will not carve into it more deeply. As for the more general relation of intellectual discourse to "the masses" (the "is-anyone-listening" problem), the circumstances of my research made it difficult for me to answer this question.[4] More important, I do not think that *every* interest in public discourse must be treated in a whole-societal way. It is legitimate to ask how communities of culture-producers were engaged with the Communist party without also asking what peasants and workers thought of it all. I proceed, therefore, to look primarily at activities within the elite, seeing there a process of ideological construction whose consequences for the masses can and should be studied in their own right. I refer readers interested in the latter problem to Gail Kligman's work on the Romanian party's attempt to create a mass culture, eliminating altogether the distinction—central to the phenomena I write about here—between mass and elite culture (Kligman MS).[5]

A final set of limitations has to do with my sources and the way I

treat them. This book is chiefly about various forms of speech acts, mostly printed. (For my interpretations I also rely upon extensive conversations with Romanian intellectuals, but I do not directly cite them.) I am not trained in discourse analysis and interpret these texts differently from those who are. I do not attend adequately, for example, to questions of genre, such as the difference between things published as books or as articles in periodicals. To some extent, that difference was often moot for the material I discuss, because articles were collected into books and books were often serialized in periodicals (sometimes in quite significant ways, as chapter 7 will show). I am attentive to the *kind* of periodical a piece appeared in, but do not ask if the form in which it was published is significant.

Moreover, I do not attend much in this book to *silences*. Although I do indicate a few significant silences, on the whole this book concerns what was said more than what was suppressed. This is a limitation, because the centralization of discourse under the control of the Romanian party conferred ever greater value upon silence. Silence became a way of resisting totalization. Nevertheless, one could fight only so far with silence: for people struggling to obtain the resources necessary to produce culture, speech became essential. One could not make a claim or justify one's rights to an allocation silently. Thus, given how Romania's socialist bureaucracy worked (see chapter 2), power forced speech: producers of culture could not hold their ground if they refused to speak up.[6] For this reason, I believe that despite the significance of silence, we can still learn something valuable about cultural politics by attending to speech.

Concepts and Terms

Nearly every term in the title of this book is imprecise and its definition contested. Although there is a certain rudimentary agreement on what "national" and "identity" mean (not, however, on the processes that generate national and ethnic identities), the same cannot be said of "ideology," which has multiple and contradictory uses. "Socialism" has changed radically in a very short time. "Culture" is both vague and specific, a lay notion and a specialist one. It will be easier to follow my discussion if I explain how I understand such terms. Because my ambition in this book falls short of theoretically advancing these

concepts, I have dispensed with an extended critical review of the literature concerning them and have restricted myself to what is necessary to locate my conceptual point of departure. In the remainder of this introduction I will discuss "ideology," "cultural politics," and "intellectuals," reserving my somewhat lengthier treatment of "socialism" for chapter 2.

IDEOLOGY, LEGITIMACY, HEGEMONY

I begin with "ideology" because some notion of its meaning will be necessary for discussing the other terms treated below. Any author who puts the word "ideology" in a book title is asking for trouble. I do so partly because some of this book's possible readers would never even pick it up if the title contained the word "discourse," which in some ways might serve my purposes better (though not by definitional simplification). Other terms that one occasionally finds tangled up with these two include "consciousness," "legitimation," and "hegemony." How do I understand these terms and what place do they have in this book?

The easiest to dispose of is "consciousness," for it is largely extraneous to my interests in this analysis. Consciousness is, naturally, an element of any social experience involving national values, and the formation of a consciousness that feels itself to be national is a complex and fascinating problem; but it is not my problem in these chapters, except indirectly (some form of consciousness being implicated in the actions of persons I discuss). As stated above, I am also not much concerned with the extent to which the national ideology being formed and reproduced through elite discourses has entered into the consciousness of "the masses." This choice is particularly defensible for the present case, in which most of the action occurred between intellectuals and the Party bureaucracy, action to which the broader public was fairly irrelevant.

I am less interested in questions of consciousness than in questions of representation: how was Romanian identity represented, what images of the nation were proposed and fought over, and how are we to understand the social space from which these images were generated? Owing to the sources I employ, these images are largely *discursive*, offered in politically relevant public discourse. I do not use the term "discourse" in its strictly Foucauldian sense (as something independent of the subjects who are its agents), yet I follow Foucault in assuming

that it is not necessarily about "consciousness." Moreover, like him I assume that discourse acquires its own properties and autonomies beyond the utterances that bear it. Specifically, in the situations I discuss, it is obvious that Romanian intellectuals' capacity to act was limited by their participating in discursive fields, in which no one effectively controlled what was said: as people's words entered into a discursive field, they were instantly available for reinterpretation, to be seized and turned against their speakers.

Discourse is, for the cases I examine, the most common form of signifying practice through which ideological processes occurred. I speak, whenever possible, of "ideological processes" rather than "ideology" because the reification seems to me—as so often happens—to violate the phenomenon of interest. Nonetheless, it is impossible, this being English and not some other language, to avoid the reifying noun. By "ideology" I do not intend the generally pejorative sense that has clung to the word since its early days, and in particular I intend neither the "false consciousness" nor the "propaganda" meanings common to fundamentalists of Marxist or sovietological persuasion. Ideological processes are not just a form of blinding, and they are not well exemplified by their official Soviet version (in Fehér's words, "Soviet ideology is not an ideology but a dogma"; see Fehér et al. 1983: 188). Nor do I understand this concept as referring simply to a system of thought, or to ideas or beliefs held. Rather, it means the systemically structured processes and the experienced social relations through which human subjectivities are constituted and through which humans act upon the world. Ideologies—and I employ the plural because there are always more than one, forming ideological and discursive fields—are beliefs or ideas materialized in action, often in political conflict (for which ideology constitutes an arena), and often in discursive form.[7]

To the extent that "ideologies" thus conceived shape consciousness, the emphasis is upon their doing so through *experience and action within* social relations, rather than through *thinking or hearing about* such relations. To ask whether ideology "reflects" social and economic relations is less useful than to see it as a means for enforcing and contesting them. Ideological processes are contests in which alternative conceptions of the world enter into conflict and, through their encounter, acceptance of or resistance to the existing order of domination is furthered. In talking of ideology that is national, I refer to discursive struggles in which the concept of "the nation" or "the Romanian people" has formed a central preoccupation, sometimes intersecting with other sorts of dis-

cursive struggles (about development, for example, or socialism, or the state) not treated here. (I do not see national ideology as synonymous with "nationalism," a word that rarely appears in this book since it has, for some East Europeans, a negative connotation I wish to avoid.)

Ideological processes are among the most basic to any mode of domination, for through them are formed what Gramsci calls hegemony: the inscription of consent into various forms of coercion, through which subordinate groups accept their subordination. Hall expresses well the relation between the two notions:

> [I]deology provides the "cement" in a social formation, . . . not because the dominant classes can prescribe and proscribe, in detail, the mental content of the lives of subordinate classes (they too, "live" in their own ideologies), but because they strive and to a degree succeed in *framing* all competing definitions of reality *within their range*, bringing all alternatives within their horizon of thought. . . . Gramsci makes it plain that ideological hegemony must be won and sustained through the existing ideologies, and that at any time this will represent a complex *field* (Hall 1979: 333, original emphases).

Hegemony suggests a society-wide regularization of discursive productions and practices that elicit minimal contestation from the subjugated. It is provisional, a matter of degree, and is not present at all times in all societies.

Among those from which it was wholly absent are those of East European socialism.[8] To discuss these cases, I prefer a perhaps idiosyncratic use of the more limited concept of legitimacy.[9] In Weber's formulation, this concept does not mean that all major groups in a society accept the system of domination; it means only the assent of a part of the population, with the remainder *not* adhering to some alternative image of a possible social order.[10] In short, it is the nonorganization of an effective counterimage. Legitimacy is not necessarily the opposite of force, for if a segment of the population sees a regime as having effective force they may fail to organize against it for that reason, which makes it "legitimate." A similar point is made by Corrigan and Sayer (1985: 198): "Integration [of persons into a polity] needs to be understood at least as much in terms of rendering the subordinated speechless—striking them dumb—as in terms of the active securing of assent." From a different angle, legitimacy in this sense may intersect with Bourdieu's notion of "doxa," that which is taken for granted, which goes without saying and is therefore unquestioned (Bourdieu 1977: 166); this is rather different, however, from consent. One should proceed with caution, then, in assuming that consent is necessary to legitimation.

I would argue that like Gramsci's hegemony, legitimacy is always in process and is linked with ideology and ideological struggle. Particularly important in both processes is *debate*, which constructs hegemonies or legitimating ideologies by obscuring the premises upon which the debate occurs. To the extent that debate thereby promotes unspoken agreement—howsoever circumscribed—on certain fundamental premises, then one can speak of this as a "legitimating outcome" or "legitimating moment." The importance of debate in generating such outcomes suggests that ideological fields are preeminently fields of *dis*agreement (Ghani 1987), rather than of conscious, consenting belief. The basis for understanding legitimating moments and the larger ideological processes they participate in is thus to look at language as a realm of disagreement that is, simultaneously, a realm of agreement—on premises such as the existence of "the nation," for instance.[11] (My wording should not suggest that discursive fields are always unified. The extent to which people engage in loosely coexisting, overlapping, fragmented fields of discourse as opposed to fairly unitary ones varies from case to case. For the Romanian case, Party control made the discursive field more unified than most.)

If there was an ideology in Ceauşescu's Romania that had potentially hegemonic force, it was national ideology. Virtually all Romanians accepted and still accept the importance of the national idea, with its accompanying unification of the social world (and its implied blurring of internal social divisions). Lefort argues that a peculiar characteristic of what he calls "totalitarian" ideologies is the production of a unified discourse that explicitly asserts the homogeneity of the social domain (Lefort 1986: 284); this would make national ideology a candidate for hegemony in socialist Romania. However, Romanians who agreed that something called "the nation" exists were far from agreed on how to define and protect it. Some argued to me, moreover, that the Party's effort to preempt the discourse on the nation threatened to evacuate national ideology of the element of consent the regime was seeking. For these reasons, then, I see struggles over "the nation" in Romania as part of processes I would call ideological and potentially legitimating, but not hegemonic.[12] Alternatively, one could argue that in this case—and perhaps more generally—legitimation and hegemony are *nothing but* processes of struggle, rather than achieved conditions: in other words, struggle is all there is.[13]

The process of contention did not involve only individuals and groups, however, but also discourses. As I suggest in chapters 3 and 4, the years between 1947 and 1989 were the locus of a battle between

two powerful discourses: Marxism, and the discourse on the nation. "The nation" entered into this battle fortified by many decades of work that had given it an institutionalized base (see chapter 1). In its encounter with Marxism, it proved itself capable of subordinating the latter and subverting its terms. Thus, "the nation" as a kind of master symbol can be seen to have *structuring properties*: discourses concerning it had the capacity to interrupt other discourses (see Laclau MS) and redefine them. A discourse about unity and continuity—the nation—overwhelmed one about differentiation and change—Marxism. This outcome shows another aspect of the ideological construction in which Romanian intellectuals were taking part.

THE POLITICS OF CULTURE

In this book, I do not use the word "culture" in the specialist sense typical of most anthropologists, although the way in which I treat my subject is very much part of contemporary anthropological reconsiderations of what "culture" is or means.[14] Instead, I employ the word in something like its lay sense, and particularly its meaning as "high culture"—that is, what artists, writers, musicians, and scholars produce, sometimes for fairly narrow specialist audiences and sometimes for broader publics. I use the expression "politics of culture" to refer to the processes of conflict and maneuvering that go on both internal to communities of this kind of cultural producer and between them and the political sphere "proper," dominated by the Communist party, as it sought to manage and shape the culture being produced.

Research into the politics of culture proceeds, in its most general form, along a path opened by Milan Kundera's celebrated remark in *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, "All man's life among men is nothing but a battle for the ears of others." My inquiry into cultural politics in Romania follows the part of this battle that was waged by different groups in the political and intellectual elite, as they strove through discourse to suppress alternative messages and capture "ears," crucial to gaining the resources that would facilitate a broader hearing for their message. (Cultural politics occurred at many other sites besides the elite level, such as the Party's selective encouragement or suppression of various forms of popular culture;[15] these forms do not figure in my discussion, however.) Not all human speech is fraught with contention, not every word uttered is political; but in Romania (and other highly centralized systems), the politicization of culture made contention per-

vasive. This affected how culture was produced and how its texts should be read. My investigation concentrates on specific instances of politicized cultural production in literary criticism, history, philosophy, and sociology, suggesting how we might read some of their texts.

Cultural politics occurs in societies of all types, as writers and scholars form and reform the canons that define their fields, for example, or create and break reputations (see, e.g., Rodden's [1989] excellent study of the reputation of George Orwell). The subject has been of particular interest, however, to students of socialist systems, for whom the principal form of politics to be analyzed has generally been that between intellectuals and the Party. Much of the extensive corpus on socialist cultural politics comes from emigré artists and scholars, having firsthand experience of the battle between writer and censor or historian and Party.[16] Indeed, emigrés have been the best source of detailed information of this kind, even though their unpleasant personal experiences tend to give their narratives the form of heroes' tales of the beleaguered intellectuals defending Truth and Art from assault by Power (e.g., Hruby 1980; Georgescu 1981; Shlapentokh 1987). Most of these writings give details on the relation between scholarly or other activity in some domain, such as history or literature, and "the Party," often presented as monolithic. Processes examined include the purging or rehabilitation of one or another writer or thinker, the "game" of censorship, politically motivated shifts in subjects of research or themes in fiction, and so on. The best studies differentiate both within the community of producers (e.g., different kinds of historians or sociologists) and within the bureaucracy (e.g., reformist vs. conservative factions), and acknowledge that political processes are more complicated than the simple manipulation of cultural production by Party leaders (cf. Heer 1971: 92–94).

To clarify what distinguishes the present study from others on this topic, I might briefly compare my approach with that of a few exemplary works. Nancy Heer's (1971) book on the politics of Soviet historiography—which, despite its age, is conceptually more sophisticated than many more recent works—admirably refuses a simple dichotomy between Party and scholars and does not see the latter as passive instruments in Party hands. She insists on the complexity both of these interactions and of the politicking within Party circles, which produces contradictory messages for historians and facilitates struggles internal to the profession. She also views historiographic methods as an active force, not simply the malleable tools of a capricious power. Heer is less

helpful on what the stakes might be for scholars who debate each other, and she tends to see the "scholars" as the "good guys" in the story without explicating adequately the social or moral grounds upon which such an evaluation should rest: she takes for granted that people defending canons of "truth" or "science" are doing the right thing. In contrast, I do not take this for granted. I seek to show in greater detail than Heer what kind of political claim it is to defend "truth" and what social positions and stakes in struggle such a claim reveals. As already stated, my partisanship of one or another group does not rest on automatic adherence to "science" or "truth" as values.

A similar bias toward "professionalism" and "scholarly values" (unexamined as claims) characterizes Shlapentokh's study of the politics of Soviet sociology. This work is more sophisticated than Heer's in its sociology of the field of contenders—its treatment of disciplinary definitions and of sociology's birth from philosophy, for example, is particularly illuminating (Shlapentokh 1987: 24–29, 74–75). Nevertheless, although Shlapentokh mentions in passing that the development of sociology shows the effects of its socialist environment, he does not explain what it is about command systems that creates a special environment for cultural production. The same conceptual absence appears in another of the best studies, Gabanyi's (1975) detailed examination of relations between writers and Party in Romania. Gabanyi is relatively more neutral toward the claims of the participants than are Heer and Shlapentokh, and like them, she gives a nuanced presentation of a complex field of cultural-political interaction; she too, however, does not make explicit the nature of the socialist milieu or of the competition taking place.

My analysis differs from these in proposing a model of the dynamics of socialist society and of their implications for cultural production. In this respect, it is closest formally to that of Kagarlitsky (1988), who also theorizes the field of intellectual activity, using a model of socialism somewhat different, however, from mine. The conceptualization employed by Shafir (1983*b*), although less fully articulated and using other terms, resembles mine more closely. The claims I make for the present study, then, are that it places its examples within an explicit model of socialist systems and within an explicit understanding of intellectual activity, as other treatments of cultural politics in socialist settings do not. My hope is that this will facilitate further scholarly analysis that might either refine the conceptualization, which is still rough, or offer a better one.[17]

INTELLECTUALS

Many, though not all, of those engaged in Romania's cultural politics are persons we might loosely call "intellectuals." The operative word here is "loosely"; there are so many definitions of intellectuals and of the related but distinct term "intelligentsia" that any invocation of either can hardly be motivated by a quest for precision.[18] Intellectuals and their social role are a topic of wide interest, as scholars (creating their own genealogies and charters) examine the quest of intellectuals for power or autonomy, their role in promoting revolution, their prospects for transforming socialism, their contributions to state-building, and so on.[19] Most scholars who use the term "intellectuals" comment on the definitional morass in which it is mired (see, e.g., Camp 1985: 33–49).

I would call the bulk of definitions functional, behavioral, or self-ascriptive—that is, they define intellectuals as persons playing a particular role in society, as advisers to or critics of power, shapers of values, legitimators of social order, guardians of morality, self-appointed defenders of their nations. For example: "In every society there are social groups whose special task it is to provide an interpretation of the world for that society" (Mannheim 1955: 10). They are defined as "liv[ing] for rather than off ideas" (Coser 1965: viii) or as filling occupations that produce ideas and knowledge (Brym 1980: 12), or they "create, evaluate, and analyze transcendental symbols, values, ideas, and interpretations" (Camp 1985: 38). For some, they ought to be concerned with "purely disinterested activity of the mind" as "officiants of abstract justice sullied with no passion for a worldly object" (Benda 1969: 44, 51). Self-ascriptive definitions emphasize communities of educated persons united by "a charismatic sense of calling and a certain set of values and manners" (Gella 1989: 132); some such definitions underscore a subjective sense of alienation from and criticism of power as basic to the "calling" of intellectuals. The literature is full of unanswered questions as to whether intellectuals constitute a class, a stratum, or a category; whether they are spokesmen for a class interest, and for which one; and whether in the contemporary era "intellectuals" have been superseded by professionals and technicians.

In my view, Bauman is right to see all such "trait" and "role" definitions as part of an exercise whereby the persons offering them draw a boundary between themselves and everyone else. He observes that all definitions of intellectuals are self-definitions; their most important

property is the creation of in- and out-groups, a second social space being implicitly created by the act of characterizing the space proper to intellectuals:

> What most definitions refuse to admit is that the separation of the two spaces (and the legislating of a specific relationship between them) is the purpose and *raison d'être* of the definitional exercise . . . . The specifically intellectual form of the operation—self-definition—masks its universal content, which is the reproduction and reinforcement of a given social configuration, and—within it—a given (or claimed) status for the group (Bauman 1987*b*: 8–9).

For Bauman, the point of "trait" definitions and of their accompanying anxiety about who is and who is not an intellectual is to legitimate separate status for knowledge as a societal value, enthroning this central element of intellectual praxis at the heart of social superiority (p. 18). With this, he joins social theorists such as Foucault, Bourdieu, and Elias in identifying intellectuals by the kinds of claims and resources they employ in social struggles—claims to a monopoly on knowledge, competence, and truth (Foucault 1980: 128), or possession of a specific form of "capital" (symbolic, or cultural) upon which their social position rests (Bourdieu 1988: 285, n. 1). To invoke "culture," "science," "truth," and related values, then, is a form of boundary-maintenance by which a certain segment of the privileged classes sets itself off from those around it—including (perhaps especially) others in the elite (cf. Elias 1978: 1–50). All these theorists understand such knowledge claims, or the legitimation of social position through values of "culture," as bearing a relation to power and reproducing the system of domination, but they leave the nature of that relationship an open question, to be answered differently for each case.[20]

The present book adopts a version of this perspective on intellectuals. I do not seek a precise definition of who is in or out but include anyone whose social practice invokes claims to knowledge or to the creation and maintenance of cultural values and whose claim is at least partly acknowledged by others.[21] That is, to "be" an intellectual means to make knowledge/value claims, to gain some degree of social recognition for them, and to participate in social relations on the basis of this exchange of claims and recognition. If possible, I would altogether avoid the term "intellectuals" (which, when it does not individualize, inaptly suggests a bounded collectivity), speaking instead of a structural or relational space. Bauman offers something of this sort:

> [W]e will confine our search to the task of locating the category of the intellectual within the structure of the larger society as a "spot," a "territory" within

such a structure; a territory inhabited by a shifting population, and open to invasions, conquests and legal claims as all ordinary territories are. We will treat the category of the intellectual as a structural element within the societal figuration, an element defined not by its intrinsic qualities, but by the place it occupies within the system of dependencies which such a figuration represents . . . (Bauman 1987*b*: 19).

Following Bauman's lead, I treat "intellectuals" as sometime occupants of a site that is privileged in forming and transmitting discourses, in constituting thereby the means through which society is "thought" by its members, and in forming human subjectivities. The site they occupy is therefore part of the space of ideology and legitimation, distinguished from other sites within that space by its coordinates: recognized specialist claims to knowledge or symbolic capital, as opposed, for instance, to occupancy of formal political positions. (Occupants of political positions may themselves invade the intellectual "site" with knowledge claims of their own.) This "space of legitimation" does not always serve the existing system of power but may be a locus for forming alternative consciousnesses or images of social reality. One cannot assume, however, that all seemingly oppositional activity will have this consequence, for argument and debate often congeal the legitimating premises of rule even when their participants intend otherwise (see chapter 6).

To clarify what sorts of activity take place in this "space of legitimation" I make use of the writings of Pierre Bourdieu (e.g., 1977, 1984, 1985, 1988), although I do not import his conceptual apparatus wholesale, with all its talk of cultural "capital," symbolic "markets," "investments," and "profits." For Bourdieu, the domain of culture contains processes absolutely vital to political order. Political struggles are quintessentially about "the very representation of the social world . . . [which] can be uttered and constructed in different ways" (Bourdieu 1985: 723, 726):

Knowledge of the social world and, more precisely, the categories that make it possible, are the stakes, par excellence, of political struggle, the inextricably theoretical and practical struggle for the power to conserve or transform the social world by conserving or transforming the categories through which it is perceived (ibid., 729).

The social reality that human beings perceive and experience, including its relations of power, are constructed through social practice. Although *all* social actors engage in this practice and thereby make social meanings constantly, a central element of orders of domination is that some

persons enjoy privileged access to the means for constructing and disseminating a particular view of reality. Their privileged placement rests on what Bourdieu calls "symbolic (or cultural) capital": those who possess more of it are more likely to have their version of reality recognized and accepted. To give a specific example, a scientist who gains a professional reputation accumulates symbolic capital in the form of scientific authority, and the weight of that authority makes it more likely that in a scientific dispute, his version of what is happening will prevail over the version of someone lacking such authority.[22] Similarly, writers, artists, scholars, and so forth, accumulate symbolic capital enabling them to produce and impose cultural meanings, which may generalize more widely to become part of the legitimate vision of the social world (ibid., 730–731).

Any mobilization of symbolic capital in such disputes is relative, however, to recognition of it: that is, one's version of reality will not be accepted by people who have not learned the distinctions upon which one's claim to status, or one's authority, rests. This means that any claim to competence, to scientific authority, to stature in the cultural world requires a corresponding recognition somewhere else in society—first by other "intellectuals" accepting or contesting one's claims, but beyond this by holders of power, who thereby authorize the view presented, or by others in the broader public. Bourdieu's research on these questions in France assumes that stable, class-differentiated publics already exist, socialized into certain patterns of recognition of the entitlements of others. This assumption is clearly wrong for East European socialist societies, in which a situation of stably socialized groups orienting to a more or less secure set of values was precisely what the political authorities had hoped to achieve but did not. Thus, I argue, much of the cultural politicking in socialist Eastern Europe involved defending prior definitions of cultural value (and grounds for authority) that had not yet been wholly eroded and working to form what I call "cognizant publics," who would recognize and support the values being defended. (This notion will be further explicated in chapter 4.) Processes of this sort are absent from Bourdieu's account of the activity of those holding "symbolic capital"—one of several ways in which his ideas about culture and its production must be respecified for socialist societies (see chapter 2).

Seen in this light, then, intellectuals engage in contests over different definitions of cultural value, competence, and authority; they strive to impose their definitions of value and to gain recognition for their version of social reality. To see cultural politics in this way is to emphasize

the inextricable connections between social definitions of what is valuable—authenticity, first-rate scholarship, artistic excellence, what have you—and the politics through which these judgments, evaluations, and discriminations are produced. It is also to emphasize not questions of meaning but questions of action: how culture is an instrument for social action becomes a more important issue than what a particular cultural text or performance means.

This set of assumptions will be offensive to those who see in them a reduction of fine sensibilities and noble motives (the quest for truth, the creation of the beautiful) to some base quest for power.[23] It is important to answer this objection. The point of view expressed above does not assume that *underlying* people's attachment to values, their aesthetic preferences, their standards of scholarly work, and so on is a quest for power. It assumes that people "become intellectuals" for any of a variety of reasons, that they may form a genuine attachment to certain values, preferences, and standards as against other ones, and that because values, preferences, and standards are multiple, under certain circumstances one's own will be forced into competition with other standards. Although the participants perhaps do not *experience* their activity as one of "struggle" or "competition," this is no proof that their activities are not bringing alternative values into competitive relation. The investigator's task is to specify the circumstances under which this competition will occur and the forms it might take. It is wholly true that sincere attachments may motivate defense of one or another standard of taste or evaluation. Nevertheless, analysis should not stop there: it must also recognize that knowledge and cultural values play a central part in maintaining and transforming social orders, and that defense of one or another value participates in this. As a result, culture and intellectual activity are *inherently* political (not *underlain* by politics, but *interwoven* with it), at two different levels: that of their encounter with alternative values within their own sphere, and that of their place in reproducing society.[24]

Methods[25]

Finally, a word about the methods I employ. Although this book focuses on the analysis of texts, it does so through an anthropological method that supplements a reading of texts with fieldwork. "Supplements" is perhaps the wrong term, for what an ethnographic

approach to textual analysis entails is a thorough-going revision of the idea of reading. Fieldwork places the texts themselves within the context of sets of social relations. It substitutes for the relation "text: reader [analyst]" a whole nexus of relations among producers of texts—who are also readers for one another—and the institutions they inhabit; all of these also bear a relation to the world of the "reader [analyst]," as I show clearly in these pages. Instead of having the unit of analysis be texts, then, it becomes the field of social relations within which texts are generated, consumed, and commented upon in still other texts. The possibility of ethnographically exploring these fields of social relations changes the reading one might otherwise give the texts produced within them. As a method, the ethnography of textual production requires reformulating what it means to "give a reading." At the same time, it enables us to see more clearly, as in the case at hand, the ways in which textualized discourses both constitute and alter the nature of power and its exercise.

Science, says Claude Lévi-Strauss, does not consist of simplifying the complex but of making complexity more intelligible without sacrificing its complexity (1966: 248). Although I would not want to claim "scientific" status for the method I employ in this analysis, I believe it has the effect Lévi-Strauss sees as desirable. Neither political science nor literary analysis, with their customary methods, reveals the complexities that surface when an investigator can interrogate not only written works but those who wrote them. These complexities make more intelligible and more interesting a world that western scholars have mostly managed to render grey and unpleasant: the "communist" world. They also animate lifeless texts. Even if (as in my case) the possibilities for interrogation are constrained—very few people on the "indigenist" side of cultural arguments would make themselves available for interviewing, a limitation that should be kept in mind—they nonetheless permit us to link the realm of the "symbolic" with the activities within which symbols have their social life. To separate these spheres (symbols, and action within fields of social relations) simplifies and distorts complicated processes to which a different method does more justice.

Organization of the Book

An empirical investigation based in the above assumptions about knowledge, cultural values, and the intellectual "space"

could, in principle, center on any subject in which knowledge or creativity is at issue—scientific research (Latour and Woolgar 1979), the professions (Abbott 1988), or history-writing (Novick 1988), among others. The present study focuses on intellectual politics around the idea of Romanian identity. This focus is not idly chosen: decades of intellectual activity in Romania have centered on the idea of the nation—defining its nature, winning allies for it, gaining its independence, protecting its interests. All of these were pursued through the creation of philosophies, histories, literatures, musics, ethnographies, even biologies and geographies suitable for an authentic and valuable Romanian being-in-the-world. For centuries, much of Romanian politics has been conducted precisely through representing Romanian identity. Representations of Romanianness were simultaneously products of cultural striving and means of politics, elements of a relation to the peoples both within and beyond Romania's borders. To be a producer of culture, in Romania, to be an intellectual, has long meant having a central role in defining the Romanian nation to itself and to the world.

Subsequent chapters show some of the ways in which this occurred in recent times. The first three chapters give the historical, theoretical, and political context for the arguments discussed in chapters 4 to 7. I begin with an overview of the politics of identity prior to World War II, an overview necessary to understanding the meanings and claims evident in struggles of the 1970s and 1980s. In addition to this, chapter 1 shows that specifically in the realm of scholarship and letters, arguments about national identity were instrumental in forming an institutional infrastructure built on "the nation." This fact had important consequences for both intellectual life and the national discourse once the Communist party came to power. Chapter 2 provides a theoretical discussion of the nature of socialist systems and the place of intellectual activity in them. This discussion might have fallen in the Introduction, but its length and its stronger relation to the material in chapters 3 through 7 suggested separating it from the conceptual issues I have raised here. In chapter 3 I describe how the Party initially sought to suppress the entire subject of "the nation," which nonetheless insistently reasserted itself in hidden arenas and at length reappeared within public discourse.

Following these three chapters are four others on cultural politics in Romania under Ceauşescu. Each of them focuses on a different domain of cultural life and suggests different aspects of the reproduction of national ideology. Chapter 4 provides a sort of dynamic glossary for some of the terms employed in arguments within cultural politics, and it de-

scribes a few techniques through which Romanian intellectuals sought to build up their own cultural authority and undermine that of others. Unlike chapters 5 to 7, this one does not revolve around a central debate and does not explain the organization of the contests whose means of struggle it describes; the full significance of its examples will be clear only after subsequent chapters, the exposition of which it is intended to smooth. The more important burden of chapter 4 is to raise the question of how Marxism was related to the national discourse. It asks, how was a discourse that nearly all Romanians perceived as alien brought into relation with the native discourse on nationality, so highly developed prior to the installation of a Marxist-Leninist regime? I describe how the unification of these two discourses and the subordination of one to the other proceeded through conflicts in which opponents strove to excommunicate each other and deny one another access to political favor.

In chapter 5, I show these factional struggles for recognition and for access to bureaucratic resources in greater detail, as they appeared through an innovation in the sphere of literary criticism. Persons differently situated in the community of literary criticism tried to outdo each other in claiming that their version of Romanian identity was more representative of the values on which the nation's cultural life should be founded. Literature proved a complicated domain for the Party to control, for it sits atop an immense reserve of prior symbolic accumulations, arguably the largest of any area of culture; the destruction and reappropriation of those values was a complex process into which I hope to provide some insight.

Chapter 6 shows an intellectual debate in historiography, a field even closer to the heart of the Party leadership than literature. Owing to its ideological centrality, it was somewhat more subject to direct political control and at the same time less influenced than literature was by market forces. These differences made competition among individuals, which I emphasize in chapter 5, somewhat less important than competition between institutions. Although the discussion centers on a debate between two persons, it uses this to explore relations between institutional sites for producing history and between history-producers and Party control. I argue that the debate strengthened national ideology, even though some participants believed they were opposing the center, but I also suggest ways in which opposition among historians served to diminish central control.

Chapter 7 looks at a development within a corner of philosophy, a discipline once central to the Party's legitimation but subsequently less so. Whereas literature had a wide audience, and history—depending on how it was written—an only slightly narrower one, the audience for philosophy was potentially the narrowest of all, and its prior accumulations were smaller than those of the other two domains. In this quiet sphere, however, I find the highest potential for an alternative vision of reality, one that raised a challenge to the Party leadership and gained the adherence of some in the more powerful literary community. The chapter attempts to show how this opposition constituted itself discursively and sought to bring its message to a wider public.

In all the domains considered, much more was going on than disputes in which national identity and its definitions were implicated. Yet in my opinion, by placing the matter of identity at the center and seeking to understand the arguments that developed around and through it, I believe we have an especially fruitful vantage point for understanding the relation of culture to power in socialist Romania: through the ideological constitution of identity and its use in intellectual contests.