DRACULA TOURISM IN ROMANIA
Cultural Identity and the State

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Abstract: The state plays an important role in tourism development, in planning and policymaking, and also as the arbiter of cultural meanings. States choose to encourage forms of tourism that are consistent with their cultural and political identities. But they may have to contend with forms of demand that are beyond their control. ''Dracula tourism'' in Romania is one example. Founded on a place myth of Transylvania as the home of the supernatural, this activity is discordant with Romania's self-image and the way it wishes to present itself to the wider world. This paper examines the way the Romanian state has managed and negotiated such tourism, in both socialist and post-socialist contexts. **Keywords:** Dracula, the state, identity, Romania. © 2007 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Résumé: Tourisme Dracula en Roumanie: identité culturelle et l'état. L'état joue un rôle important dans le développement du tourisme, pas seulement aux niveaux de la planification et des positions des principes, mais aussi en tant qu'arbitre des significations culturelles. Les états essaient de promouvoir des formes de tourisme qui conviennent à leurs identités culturelles et politiques. Néanmoins un état pourrait confronter des demandes touristiques au delà de son contrôle. Le «tourisme Dracula» en Roumanie en est un exemple. Basé sur le mystique de la Transylvanie comme milieu du surnaturel, ce genre de tourisme s'accorde mal à l'image du pays tel qu'il veut se présenter au monde. Dans cet article on examine la façon dont l'État roumain a pu gérer et répondre au tourisme Dracula dans les contextes socialiste et post-socialiste. **Mots-clés:** Dracula, état, identité, Roumanie. © 2007 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

INTRODUCTION

  This paper examines the role of the state in the development of tourism in Romania over the past four decades. There is increasing recognition that government is ever present in the character and organization of this industry (Harrop and McMillan 2002) and such involvement may take a number of forms (Elliot 1997; Hall 2000, 2005; Jeffries 2001). For example, many states formulate policies and plans to encourage and support the development of particular forms of tourism. They may also introduce legislation and regulation to provide a framework for development. Some go further by providing the facilities and infrastructure upon which the industry depends. The extent of state intervention can vary considerably. In some instances it

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may go no further than promoting a favorable business environment in which a private sector industry can operate. At the opposite extreme are cases where the entire development and planning are directed by central authorities, as in the formerly socialist states of the Soviet bloc (Hall 1984, 1990). Most states adopt an intermediate position that involves a degree of intervention, and many states have established a government ministry responsible for coordinating tourism planning.

However, the engagement of the state goes beyond the technical processes of legislation, planning, and policymaking. There is also a cultural politics of tourism development (Burns 2005). Nation-states make various choices about what forms of development are (and are not) considered appropriate, how they will be promoted, where, and for whom. Through such decisions the state adopts the role of the definer and arbiter of cultural meanings (Cano and Mysyk 2004; Wood 1984). Each state will encourage and support forms of tourism that accord with, and affirm, its sense of its own cultural and political identity. Therefore, the representation of local cultures is a political act (Burns 2005) and the choice of which resources and places are developed and celebrated can constitute a statement of national identity (Wood 1984). In this context, it is not surprising that states have long encouraged domestic tourism to promote nation-building and social solidarity. Visits to places of national significance are a means of affirming senses of citizenship and identity (Edensor 2002; Franklin 2003; Palmer 1999).

At the same time, through its policies, a government can make a statement to international tourists about its cultural identity and values. Indeed, tourism can become a significant element of a state's foreign policy and international relations (Franklin 2003; Hall 1994). All countries seek to project a positive image of themselves to the wider world and to ensure that their unique character and cultural identity is appreciated and respected by Others (Lanfant 1995). Thus, nation-states use various means—such as postage stamps, national currency, national stadia, and parliament buildings—to project themselves to Others (Cresswell 2004). States also encourage tourism development that contributes to raising their international profile and prestige (Morgan and Pritchard 1998). For example, many vigorously promote their heritage and culture to international tourists. The intent is to encourage their developing a greater appreciation of, and respect for, a people's cultural identity through experiencing and understanding their history and way of life.

The potency of tourism in projecting a cultural identity is such that many states undertake considerable investment in external promotion (Hall 2000). This activity is usually undertaken by a dedicated agency (a national tourism office) and, while it is clearly intended to contribute to economic development, it is also underpinned by a political agenda. In particular, the office will seek to project a nation to the rest of the world in a way that flatters and affirms national identity (Lanfant 1995). Promotional materials will be imbued with messages about ''who *we* are'' and ''how *we* want *you* to see *us*'' (Light 2001:1055). As such, official promotional materials can be read as expressions of political and cultural identity.

One of the best contemporary examples may be found in the former socialist states of Central and Eastern Europe. Since the end of Communist Party rule, these states have been reconstructing themselves according to democratic, pluralist, and capitalist models, and they have been eager to project these new political identities to Western Europe. Thus, state-sponsored promotion in this region has stressed historical and cultural ties and shared values with Western Europe in order to project an image of Europeanness appropriate to an aspirant member of the European Union (Hall 1999, 2002; Light 2006; Morgan and Pritchard 1998).

However, while states may encourage forms of tourism that enable them to present themselves to the wider world on their own terms, it is only within the most rigidly totalitarian systems that states can exercise complete control over this activity. Whether they like it or not, states are situated within broader historical, political, and cultural discourses that are grounded in, and reinforce, existing relations of power (Echtner and Prasad 2003; Morgan and Pritchard 1998; Pritchard 2000; Pritchard and Morgan 2001). These structure the ways in which people and places are portrayed, with some groups having greater power to represent than others. Consequently a state may be represented in a way that it would not choose. This, in turn, may give rise to forms of tourism demand that a state would not seek to encourage. Such a situation may be regarded as unwelcome and unacceptable by the host community (Morgan and Pritchard 1998) and may even compromise the political and cultural identity that it wishes to present to the wider world (Burns 2005).

One example is sex tourism in South East Asia. Although many countries of this region have pursued policies intended to promote their beach and cultural resources (Wood 1984), some have acquired global notoriety as sex destinations. For these states such a reputation is embarrassing and harmful to their international standing. Another example is the special interest tourism that has developed in Central/Eastern Europe since the fall of state socialism. During the 90s, parts of the material heritage of communism have become popular sights among cultural and heritage tourists from Western Europe (Light 2000). The states concerned have done little to encourage this: instead, Western travel guides and holiday operators have constructed the socialist past as something ''exotic'' for the Western gaze. This situation is problematic for these countries since it directs attention to a past that is emphatically rejected. This dilemma has been described as ''identity versus economy'' (Light 2000; Tunbridge 1994): such a past can attract foreign tourists and generate revenue, but at the same time it directly collides with post-socialist identity-building.

Many of these themes are also present in the case of what could be termed ''Dracula tourism'' in Romania. This is something generated by external demand that is problematic in a number of ways. For a start, the association with vampires and the supernatural is at odds with the country's sense of its cultural and political identity as a modern, developed European state. Furthermore, many Romanians regard this activity as insulting to the reputation of one of their medieval rulers

(coincidentally also known as Dracula). This paper will later examine the ways in which the state has responded to, and sought to manage, such tourism. However, first, it is necessary to consider the Western Dracula myth and the dilemma that it poses for Romania.

Romania and the Dracula Myth

In 1897, Bram Stoker published *Dracula*, the story of a vampire from Eastern Europe who travels to Britain intent on colonizing the West. Although most of the novel is set in the Victorian England, it famously begins and ends in Transylvania (one of three regions that make up contemporary Romania). Stoker had no first-hand experience of this particular region and relied on travelers' accounts for his information (Miller 2000). Nevertheless, he produced a vivid portrayal of it as a fitting home for a monster. Stoker's Transylvania is a sinister, remote, and backward region where evil and the supernatural run wild. Thus, Jonathan Harker (the novel's narrator) writes, ''I read that every known superstition in the world is gathered into the horseshoe of the Carpathians, as if it were the centre of some sort of imaginative whirlpool''. Later he is told, ''It is the eve of St George's Day. Do you not know that tonight, when the clock strikes midnight, all the evil things in the world will have full sway?'' (Stoker 1997:10,12).

In writing *Dracula*, Stoker created an enduring ''place myth'' (Shields 1991) of Transylvania as the social and spatial Other of the West: it is somewhere peripheral, pre-Modern, and untouched by Western progress and rationality. As such, the novel can be situated within a discourse that Todorova (1997) has termed ''Balkanism'' (Bjelić 2002). Todorova takes, as her starting point, Edward Said's (1995) analysis of Orientalism, the practice (within colonial contexts) where the West creates myths about other people and places and in so doing constructs them as Others. However, Todorova argues that, while Orientalism is a discourse about the opposition between Europe and an imagined East, Balkanism is a discourse about the ambiguity of Southeast Europe. This region is evoked as a transitional zone between West and East and is often described as a ''bridge'' or ''crossroads'' (Todorova 1997:15). It is a region that is European but not ''fully'' so (Dittmer 2002/2003). To the West it represents the Other ''within'' (Todorova 1997:188).

Dracula is clearly an early expression of the Balkanist discourse. The novel is insistent on the opposition between ''Western progress and Eastern stasis, between Western science and Eastern superstition, between Western reason and Eastern emotion, between Western civilization and Eastern barbarism'' (Arata 1990:637). Jonathan Harker writes, ''The impression I had was that we were leaving the West and entering the East''. Later he complains, ''It seems to me that the further East you go the more unpunctual are the trains''. Dracula himself states, ''We are in Transylvania; and Transylvania is not England. Our ways are not your ways, and there shall be to you many strange things'' (Stoker 1997:9, 11, 26-7). But while Transylvania is evoked as ''one of the

wildest and least known portions of Europe'' (1997:10), it is nonetheless a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire where German is widely spoken. Count Dracula himself is a Hungarian aristocrat who speaks German and English fluently and has little difficulty passing unnoticed in the latter society.

Dracula has enjoyed enormous popularity since its publication and has spawned an extraordinary vampire subculture in the second half of the 20th century (Melton 1999). More than 200 films have been made that feature Count Dracula (and several hundred more that have vampires as their subject). More than 1,000 novels have been written about Dracula or vampires along with a plethora of cartoons, comics, and television programs. At the center of this subculture is the place myth of Transylvania, which has become almost synonymous with vampires (Gelder 1994). As one writer has noted, ''What other land calls up such mystical visions of shrouded, misty forests; of driverless coaches pounding up treacherous, uncharted trails to hidden castles; of black-cloaked figures stalking across moonlit cemeteries in the chill of night?'' (Brokow 1976:12). Thus, well over a century after it was written, *Dracula* continues to structure the ways in which Transylvania is understood in the Western popular imagination. By extension Romania has become the ''land of Dracula''.

Paradoxically, until recently Stoker's novel was almost unknown in Romania, since a translation was not published until 1990. Thus, for Romanians the name Dracula brings to mind not Stoker's vampire but instead a medieval Voievode known as Vlad Țepeș (Vlad the Impaler) who ruled Walachia during the 15th century. He gained notoriety for his exceptionally harsh rule and his practice of impaling both lawbreakers and his Ottoman enemies on wooden stakes. In medieval Romanian Drăculea simply meant ''son of Dracul'' and was used to distinguish the Impaler from his father (known as Vlad Dracul). For all his cruelty, Vlad Țepeș has enjoyed an esteemed position in Romanian historiography for his efforts to defend Walachia's independence and restore internal order during a turbulent era.

Vlad Țepeș would be almost unknown outside Romania were it not for attempts to link the Draculas of fiction and history. The most influential is a book written by two historians working in America entitled *In Search of Dracula* (McNally and Florescu 1972). Its authors argued that, when writing the novel, Bram Stoker had undertaken detailed historical research during which he had discovered medieval stories about Vlad Țepeș. Claiming textual support from the novel, they reasoned that the Impaler had been the model for Stoker's vampire. McNally and Florescu were relentless in portraying the Voievode as a tyrant and, although not accusing him of vampirism, they were insistent that the vampire (something almost unknown in Romania) was an essential element of Transylvanian folklore.

In Search of Dracula proved to be a bestseller and successfully caught the public mood in America at a moment when popular interest in vampires was on the increase (Auerbach 1995). It brought global recognition to the hitherto obscure Vlad Țepeș but more significantly McNally and Florescu established a new orthodoxy: Count Dracula

and Vlad the Impaler were essentially the same character. However, this claim has recently been subject to a vigorous critique (Miller 1997, 2000). From an analysis of Stoker's working notes, Miller argues that Stoker's historical research was perfunctory at best and that he knew little more about Vlad the Impaler than his nickname of Dracula. Although these arguments are persuasive, they have yet to gain widespread acceptance, and the equation of Stoker's vampire with Vlad the Impaler is firmly established among many enthusiasts.

In Search of Dracula was not published in Romania, although the country's historians were familiar with its contents. The reaction was one of dismay and anger that a historical figure regarded as a national hero should be promoted in the West as the prototype for Stoker's vampire. For more than three decades, Romania's position has been to deny any association between Vlad Ţepeş and Count Dracula, a stance that underpinned the country's response to the growing popularity of Dracula tourism in the 70s.

DRACULA TOURISM

This discussion examines the ways in which the Romanian state authorities have responded to, and attempted to manage, Dracula tourism. This is an externally generated phenomenon in which enthusiasts (primarily from Europe and America) have traveled to Romania in search of the literary, historical, and supernatural roots of the Dracula myth. This narrative focuses on both the state socialist era (1947-1989) and the post-socialist period (1989 onwards).

Study Methods

An obvious source for examining how the Romanian authorities dealt with Dracula tourism during the socialist era would be policy documents produced by the Ministry of Tourism. However, locating such material proved problematic. Various ministry officials agreed that such an archive probably existed ''somewhere'' but none had any idea of its whereabouts. Another source suggested that the archive had been lost or destroyed after 1989. In any case, access to socialist-era archives is notoriously difficult for non-Romanian researchers, since legislation permits access only to documents that are more than 30 years old (Tismaneanu 2003). In the absence of primary documentary sources it was necessary to reconstruct Romania's position through other means.

This was undertaken in two ways. The first was through interviews with a number of former employees of the National Tourist Office (*Oficiul Naţional de Turism, or National Tourism Office*). The interviewees were: one, a former guide and interpreter of this office who is currently president of the Transylvanian Society of Dracula (a nongovernmental organization concerned with disseminating information about the literary and historical Draculas); two, the former head of the office in

New York during the 70s; three, the former head of the local tourist office for the county of Bistriţa-Năsăud (the focus of many Dracula enthusiasts); four, the former head of the *Securitate* (the socialist-era internal security service) for Bistriţa-Năsăud during the 70s; five, a former custodian of Bran Castle. All interviewees gave permission to be quoted.

The interviews were supplemented by published sources from the socialist era. These included *Holidays in Romania* (an English-language promotional magazine produced by the Ministry of Tourism); *România Pitorească* (a Romanian-language promotional magazine produced for the domestic market); and *Almanah Turistic* (a tourism yearbook). Given the nature of censorship in socialist Romania, these published sources are taken as mirroring the ''official'' position of the state. The principal sources for examining the state's position regarding Dracula tourism in the post-socialist era were newspapers (particularly *Adevărul, România Liberă* and *Cotidianul*).

The Early Development of Dracula Tourism

Like the other socialist countries of Central/Eastern Europe, Romania began to open to international tourism during the 60s. In part this was driven by the need to generate hard currency to fund imports (Hall 1991), but, having consolidated their rule, socialist regimes came to recognize the propagandist potential of tourism as a way of proclaiming the achievements and ideological superiority of socialism (Hall 1984, 1990). In Romania's case there was also another dimension. Since the late 50s, the leadership had been gradually drawing away from the Soviet Union, seeking to assert the country's national independence within the socialist bloc (a policy pursued with vigor after 1968 by Nicolae Ceauşescu, the General Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party). At the same time, Romania sought to develop closer relations with the West.

In the context of this policy of détente, the promotion of tourism was one way for the country to project its independent stance to the rest of the world. Thus, a government resolution of 1959 declared that international tourism could lead to collaboration and friendship between peoples and promote the achievements of the Romanian People's Republic (Consiliu de Miniştri 1959), while later statements affirmed its role in promoting international peace and understanding (Trofin 1969). Socialist Romania undertook considerable investment in tourism during the 60s, particularly in hotel construction at the Black Sea coast (Turnock 1977). In a period of relative liberalization during the 60s, Romania was an accessible destination for Westerners (Turnock 1991), and by 1965 it attracted 200,000 tourists from non-socialist countries (Turnock 1977).

Most Westerners who visited Romania did so as part of organized package tours, centered on the beach resorts of the Black Sea, the ski resorts of the Carpathians, or the cultural heritage of Transylvania. However, once the country had opened to the West, Dracula

enthusiasts were also quick to take the opportunity to visit. Their motives were various. Some were seeking the literary roots of Stoker's novel (interview one). Such ''literary tourism'' is a long-established phenomenon, and as such there was nothing particularly exceptional about the search for the places mentioned in the novel. But since many more people had encountered Stoker's vampire through the medium of film, the Dracula appeal is also an early example of movie-induced tourism.

Other tourists were searching for the supernatural roots of Stoker's novel and the *frisson* of an expected encounter with the ineffable and supernatural in Transylvania (interview one; Inglis and Holmes 2003). This was not an isolated phenomenon. In the United Kingdom, Scotland is a well-established location for ''ghost tourism,'' while cities such as Edinburgh and York also have a long history of offering ghost tours. Whitby in England also became a popular destination for Dracula enthusiasts. In the United States, places such as Salem and New Orleans are also the focus of those interested in the supernatural (Morgan and Pritchard 1998). As such, Transylvania was just one location within an emerging global network of places linked with horror and the supernatural.

These early Dracula enthusiasts found little to cater for their interests, not because of hostility from the socialist authorities but simply because the Western Dracula myth was virtually unknown in Romania at this time. Vampire fans had no choice but to engage in their own searches. For many, the most sought-after place was Castle Dracula, and their search took them to the Borgo (Bârgău) Pass where Stoker placed his entirely fictional castle. During the 60s, increasing numbers of foreign tourists hunted in vain for the ruins of the castle (interview one; Păduraru 1973), and as early as 1968, Western film crews had arrived in search of it (interview three). Yet the national tourism office guides were initially bewildered when asked for directions to the castle, or for more details about vampirism in Romania (interview one).

In the absence of any ''real'' castle, Western tourists invented one—at Bran Castle in southern Transylvania (Figure 1). This construction is never mentioned in Stoker's novel and is over 100 miles from the location of the fictional castle. Similarly, Bran has only tenuous connections with Vlad Ţepeş. The National Tourist Office actively promoted the castle as a sightseeing attraction but only as a museum of feudal art. However, a visit to it was included in many organized tours of Transylvania, and the castle was a popular site for day excursions from nearby ski resorts (interview one; Ciobanu, Moisescu and Ciobanu 1984). Situated on a low hill in a wooded valley and featuring an impressive assemblage of spires and turrets, Bran bears a superficial resemblance to the Castle Dracula of the novel and films. Moreover, the castle *is* situated in Transylvania. At some stage in the 60s, a Western tourist gave Bran the nickname of ''Dracula's Castle'' and the name was rapidly adopted outside Romania in brochures and travel guides (interviews one and five). What is significant is how quickly this took place: a Romanian academic visiting America in 1968 recounted being given a copy of a brochure describing Bran in this way (Giurescu 1971). Less

Figure 1. Locations Associated with the Fictional and Historical Draculas

than a decade after opening to international tourism, Romania's foremost attraction in the eyes of Westerners was Dracula's castle.

Bran Castle illustrates how the significance of sights is constructed as much by the tourists themselves as by their official presentation. Franklin argues that tourism is an interaction ''between the intentions and designs of the providers of tourist sites. . .and the background and biography of the visitors themselves'' (2003:15). In particular, tourists take with them on their holidays the ''prior knowledge, expectations, fantasies and mythologies'' generated in and by their culture of origin (Craik 1997:118; Hennig 2002), and this cultural baggage will circumscribe their encounter with the destination. There can have been few Western tourists to Romania with no knowledge of the vampire Dracula of popular culture. Consequently, a visit to Bran was framed intertextually by prior representations of Castle Dracula from books and films. In the absence of a real castle, Western tourists projected their fantasies and expectations onto Bran (interviews one and five), which became an appropriate substitute for those who wanted to find Dracula in Transylvania. Renaming Bran as Dracula's Castle was an act of appropriation by Western tourists to ensure that the experience of

visiting Transylvania accorded with the Western stereotype of the land of Dracula.

The Reluctant Engagement with Dracula Tourism

The publication of *In Search of Dracula* (McNally and Florescu 1972) brought about a major change in Romania's position regarding Dracula tourism. Following the success of their book, McNally and Florescu conceived a package tour themed around the historical and literary Draculas (Florescu and McNally 1976). A travel company based in New York developed the idea and invited the head of the national tourism office in New York (hereafter, the head), to participate. The head was initially surprised by the suggestion, since, like most Romanians, he knew little of the literary Dracula. However, at a time when Romania was seeking closer links with America (Ratesh 1985), the head had been charged with attracting more American tourists and was open to new ways of doing so. As a result, he collaborated in the production of an 18-day package entitled *Spotlight on Dracula: An Adventure in Transylvania* (General Tours 1972) that included visits to locations associated with both Vlad Ţepeş and Stoker's fictional vampire (interview two).

While *Spotlight on Dracula* was well received in America, it caused consternation in Romania. The head, acting on his own initiative, had neglected to obtain prior approval for the tour from the central authorities and had not predicted their reaction. But Romania's socialist regime was unprepared for a tour that light-heartedly advised tourists to stock up on garlic to ward off evil and which presented Transylvania as the home of vampires and ancient superstitions (General Tours 1972). The head was told that the tour would not be permitted to continue in the future (interview two). The Minister for Tourism was equally perturbed by *Spotlight on Dracula* and called a meeting of his staff to discuss Romania's response. Present were several national tourism office guides and interpreters who knew something of Stoker's novel from working with Westerners, and at least one interpreter present had read a copy donated by a tourist. As a result, some within the Ministry understood the power of the Western Dracula myth for attracting foreign tourists to Romania (interview one). The country's planners now faced the choice of whether to exploit or discourage this form of tourism.

Dracula tourism was problematic for the Romanian state in a way that was disproportionate to the numbers involved (given that many Westerners visited for reasons other than Dracula). For a start, while Romania's leadership was eager to increase the country's popularity with Western tourists, the whole notion of vampires and the supernatural was fundamentally at odds with the country's political identity as a socialist state. Socialism was a political project based on a radical break with the past and with its eyes firmly fixed on the future. Its aim was no less than the creation of a new society and a ''new man''' (Boia 1999). Moreover, Marxism-Leninism was firmly materialist in its outlook and ''scientific'' in its foundations. As such, anything associated with the

supernatural was part of a discredited past that socialism was busily sweeping away. At this time, the Romanian state was seeking to develop international tourism on its own terms in order to celebrate the agenda and achievements of socialism. However, Dracula tourism, rather than contributing to this effort, focused attention on something that was the very antithesis of the socialist project.

Equally problematic were the long-established ways of seeing Romania that were an inseparable part of the Western Dracula myth. The country found itself represented in ways that were not welcome but over which it had little influence (Morgan and Pritchard 1998). In particular, the Balkanist discourse of *Dracula* insists on the Otherness of Transylvania by portraying it as part of a backward and undeveloped periphery of Europe. Dracula tourism both resulted from, and was constitutive of, this trope through its construction of Transylvania as a liminal space—a border ''between the mundane and the extraordinary'' (Pritchard and Morgan 2006:764). But such a portrayal collided with Romania's image of itself as a rapidly modernizing, industrialized country engaged in building a new society to rival the capitalist West. Moreover, at a time when Nicolae Ceauşescu was seeking both to raise Romania's profile on the global stage and to project himself as an international statesman, he had no wish for his country to be regarded as a vampire-stalked netherland.

Romania's socialist authorities were also unhappy about a form of tourism that contributed to confusion between a fictional vampire and the historical figure of Vlad the Impaler. During the 70s, socialist historians were busy idealizing Vlad Ţepeş as a heroic leader who had fought to maintain internal order and defend his country's independence against external threats (Cioranescu 1977). As such, a form of tourism that equated a national hero with a vampire was unacceptable to socialist Romania. Indeed, in its role as the protector of the public (national) interest (Hall 2000), the state embarked on a vigorous domestic and international campaign to dissociate Vlad Ţepeş from Count Dracula. A planned translation of Stoker's novel (Cioculescu 1971) was abandoned, while a major biography of the Impaler (Stoicescu 1976) was issued in English and Japanese translations in which the author strenuously refutes any connection between the fictional and historical Draculas.

In these circumstances, the Romanian state had little desire to promote or encourage the development of Dracula tourism since it was dissonant with the country's political and cultural identity and brought little reciprocal cultural benefit or understanding (Burns 2005). On the other hand, the country's economy started to stagnate during the mid-70s and the foreign debt increased rapidly, reaching US$10.2 billion in 1981 (Deletant 1999). Romania needed hard currency and Dracula had considerable potential to generate it. Moreover, the principal demand came from the country, the United States, with which Romania was most eager to develop closer ties.

Facing a dilemma of ''identity versus economy'' (Tunbridge 1994), the state adopted a position of reluctantly tolerating Dracula tourism without doing anything to encourage it (interviews two and four).

A Ministry of Tourism official expressed the position as follows: ''Vampirism never existed in Romanian folklore and this character depicted by Stoker was purely the product of his imagination…What we want to do now is show the people the real Dracula, our hero. We are, of course, always pleased to earn money, but not at the expense of our history'' (quoted in Tyler 1978:4).

This stance was apparent in Romania's foreign-language promotion (*Holidays in Romania*). There was no attempt to highlight Dracula tourism as the magazine repeatedly stressed the country's wide range of other attractions. However, some writers (often national tourism office guides) seem to have recognized that many Western tourists were interested in Stoker's novel, and the magazine contained a few articles that acknowledged the fictional Dracula, although these were frequently written in a rather mocking tone (Raicu 1978). Bran Castle is never referred to as ''Dracula's Castle'' in *Holidays in Romania* (or in any English-language guidebooks published during the socialist era) although a few articles indicate recognition that the building was known in this way by Western tourists (Raicu 1975). *Holidays in Romania* also formed part of the campaign to defend the reputation of Vlad Țepeș (Negoe 1976).

The Romanian state also sought to manage Dracula tourism on its own terms. In 1973, the national tourism office launched a package entitled *Dracula: Legend and Truth* (which continued to run up to 1989). The tour was firmly centered on the life of Vlad Țepeș and avoided any mention of vampires. It included visits to his birthplace at Sighișoara; his castle at Poienari; and his grave at Snagov (Figure 1). The tour was overtly propagandistic and intended both to communicate a positive message about Vlad Țepeș and to counter the negative portrayal popularized by *In Search of Dracula*(interview one). The tour represented the state's attempt to challenge and contest Western representations of Romania's cultural identity and history. It was popular with enthusiasts of the real Dracula, but vampire fans were disappointed to be following the trail of a medieval Voievode in whom they had little interest (interview one).

This uneasy compromise continued through the 70s. Alongside *Dracula: Legend and Truth*, Western tour operators continued to organize themed tours in Romania for vampire enthusiasts (Cioranescu 1977). Other organized tours that were not overtly themed on Dracula continued to visit places (particularly Bran Castle) associated with both Stoker's vampire and Vlad the Impaler. Romania continued to tolerate such tourism but with little enthusiasm. However, during the 80s, Ceaușescu's rule became increasingly harsh, and Romanians experienced unprecedented austerity and repression. Western journalists and opponents of Ceaușescu's regime increasingly started applying the label of ''Dracula'' to the president himself (Simpson 1990), subverting his continued posturing as a global statesman. Consequently, the Romanian authorities became increasingly hostile towards the Western Dracula, something described by one of Ceaușescu's ''court poets'' as ''just a page from the great pact of political pornography through which our enemies work against us'' (Păunescu 1986:13). In

any case, by this time, visiting Ceauşescu's Romania had become a form of horror experience in its own right and the number of Western tourists declined dramatically (Hall 1991).

Dracula Tourism in Post-Socialist Romania

Following the collapse of Ceauşescu's dictatorship in December 1989, Romania embarked on an erratic course of political and economic reform. The state disengaged entirely from any attempt at censoring Dracula, which, combined with the influence of cultural globalization, meant that the vampire of Western popular culture slowly penetrated into Romania. A translation of *Dracula* was published and the first film—*Bram Stoker's Dracula*—opened in 1993. Many newly-established private sector businesses adopted ''Dracula'' as a trademark and, once freed from any state controls, a thriving market in souvenirs with vampire and horror themes developed around Bran Castle.

Nevertheless, while the emerging private sector proved adept at exploiting the commercial possibilities of Dracula, the position of the state remained ambivalent. Nationalist politicians and historians continued to resist the confusion between Bram Stoker's vampire and Vlad Ţepeş. From the mid-90s, Romania sought to present itself as a credible future member of the European Union and NATO and to convince Western opinion that it shared the values and agenda of the West. In this context there was no desire to be associated with the Balkanist discourse of Dracula that insists on the Otherness of Romania. The problem was compounded by global media coverage of issues such as the ''orphan problem'', political and economic instability, and corruption, which continued to portray Romania as somewhere not fully European. Unsurprisingly, the state remained reluctant to promote Dracula tourism in these circumstances: instead, officially sponsored promotion highlighted other forms of tourism based on Romania's heritage, culture, and rural traditions (Light 2006).

Consequently, the announcement in 2001 that Romania intended to construct a Dracula theme park in Transylvania was entirely unexpected. After decades of resisting the Western Dracula myth, its exploitation was, for the first time, government policy. The project, entitled ''Dracula Park'', was to feature an eclectic range of attractions including a castle, a labyrinth, an Institute of Vampirology, a conventional amusement park, exhibitions of Romanian history, along with shops, restaurants, and accommodation. The park was to be sited at Sighişoara in Transylvania (Figure 1), the supposed birthplace of Vlad Ţepeş.

Dracula Park was quite unlike any previous project in Romania. It was presented as a radical initiative intended to bring about the relaunch of tourism (Constantinescu 2001) after a period of prolonged decline. But the project was more than just an economic enterprise: it was also a statement about Romania and what the country could achieve. The Minister of Tourism, Matei Dan, described it as ''the most

spectacular tourism project of the start of this millennium'' (Constantinescu 2001:7). The park was a way of projecting a positive image of Romania as a forward-looking country with bold and innovative ideas. The project also demonstrated that the country had come to terms with the Western Dracula myth and was self-confident enough to exploit it in its own way, on its own terms. A previously unwanted stereotype was now being put to use for Romania's advantage (Morgan and Pritchard 2002). Thus Matei Dan argued, ''it would be a foolishness for the myth to be neglected in its own country and exploited for tourism in other countries which don't have any relationship with Dracula'' (Moroianu 2001:6).

Nevertheless, Dracula Park did not proceed as planned. It was to be partly funded by a public share offer but investors were reluctant to purchase shares on account of a clearly implausible business plan (Fabini 2001) and suspicions that the government had a vested interest in seeing the plan succeed. The park also generated a vigorous campaign of domestic opposition. Some were concerned at the impacts on Romania's international image, arguing that the country would become synonymous with horror. Others objected to the import of a Western myth that is unknown in Romania's folklore (Valendorfean 2002). Others opposed the choice of location. Some historians argued that locating the park in Sighişoara would further the confusion between Count Dracula and Vlad Ţepeş, something the state had resisted for 30 years. Conservationists were concerned about the proposed location for the park on an area of 500-year-old oak forest already protected by Romanian law. Moreover, the park was to be situated less than a mile from the center of Sighişoara's medieval citadel, a site included on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Critics argued that the citadel was fundamentally unsuited to the mass tourism that would be generated by a theme park.

Various international organizations (including UNESCO, Greenpeace, and the European Parliament) also objected, and by May 2002 the government could no longer ignore the opposition to the project. Dracula Park was becoming a profound embarrassment and was damaging Romania's international image. The project appeared to demonstrate that the government had little regard for the protection of its natural environment and historic heritage and was apparently prepared to disregard both its own laws and its obligations under international treaties. Romania had unintentionally presented itself as out of alignment with the norms of the European Union (at a crucial moment when it was trying to convince the Union of its suitability for membership). In the context of the long-standing Balkanist trope, Dracula Park again portrayed Romania as not fully European in the eyes of the West. Thus, the first serious attempt to exploit the Dracula myth for tourism had projected a message about Romania that was exactly the opposite of that intended. Unsurprisingly, the Sighişoara location was quietly dropped in July 2002, and the project was finally abandoned in February 2005, following a change of government (Anon 2005).

CONCLUSION

There is increasing recognition that the role of the state in tourism development is not confined to technical and administrative matters such as planning and policymaking. The state is also an important actor in the cultural politics of tourism. States make choices about what to promote and for whom. They will support forms of development that are in accordance with their self-images and which enable them to project their cultural and political identities to both domestic and international audiences. Through such choices, the state acts as an arbiter of cultural meanings and a protector of public and national interests (Hall 2000; Wood 1984). Yet, a state cannot control how it is represented globally, so forms of tourism demand may emerge that are discordant with the way that a nation-state imagines itself and wishes to be imagined by others. Dracula tourism is one example of this phenomenon. Since the 60s, the Romanian authorities have been eager to promote the country's beach resorts and natural and cultural heritage for Western tourists. But in addition, many have visited for other purposes, including a search for the origins of the Dracula myth.

Romania's dilemma with Dracula is complex. The association with a piece of horror fiction is not in itself especially problematic, and other places have had no reticence in exploiting such literary connections. Instead, it is the supernatural associations of *Dracula* that are most unwelcome. Stoker's novel both expressed and constituted a place myth of Transylvania as a sinister and marginal location where the supernatural runs wild. This way of seeing Transylvania (and more broadly, Romania) has been repeatedly reproduced through the success that Dracula has enjoyed in Western popular culture, so that Transylvania has become synonymous with the supernatural in the Western popular imagination. Romania's efforts to present itself as a modern, developed, European country are compromised by the Balkanist discourse of *Dracula* that constructs the country as somehow not fully European. The situation is further complicated by the unwelcome linkages between Stoker's fictional vampire and a medieval Romanian ruler.

Faced with a form of demand that generated foreign currency, yet collided with the country's identity as a socialist state, Romania adopted a strategy for almost three decades of reluctantly tolerating Dracula tourism, while doing nothing to encourage it. As such, there was (and is) a fundamental incongruity between the expectations of Western Dracula enthusiasts and the unwillingness of the Romanian authorities to cater for them. However, in the absence of any state encouragement, Dracula fans had free reign to project their fantasies onto the Transylvanian landscape. The creation (from nothing) of a ''Dracula's Castle'' at Bran was the result. This castle swiftly became a focus of interest, further stimulating the development (outside Romania) of Dracula tourism. As such, this paper has demonstrated the role that tourists themselves play in constituting the significance of sights and landscapes, in this case despite the opposition of the host authorities.

But while Dracula may be an unwelcome stereotype for Romania, it may also represent an opportunity for the country. As Morgan and Pritchard (2002) argue, such stereotypes can be utilized in marketing and branding campaigns as the starting point for promoting other resources and experiences that the destination can offer. The 2001 Dracula Park project seems to have been just such an attempt by the Romanian government to use Dracula to its advantage. The project was intended to reinvigorate international tourism but also to project a message to the wider world about the country itself. Yet Dracula Park simply reasserted existing stereotypes in the West about Romania as an unpredictable country lacking a full understanding of Western norms. This project illustrates the difficulties Romania faces in trying to manage (on its own terms) a global cultural phenomenon over which it has little influence.

While Dracula tourism is something specific to Romania, it also illustrates wider issues of power, representation, and inequality within international tourism. In particular, it demonstrates the tension between those with the power to represent—the West—and those who are represented (Morgan and Pritchard 1998). Like many other countries, Romania is not represented in the way that it would choose but instead in the way that the West chooses. In particular, the West has long portrayed Romania as being part of an uncertain and ambiguous periphery of Europe. Dracula tourism, an activity generated in the West, is the product of such ways of seeing but also plays a key role in constituting them. Yet, this is a situation that Romania has vigorously resisted. As such, Dracula tourism can be identified as a site of struggle between the West's assertion of Romania as Other and the country's efforts to define itself in its own way and on its own terms. ∎

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