For many people in Roșia Montană, living within their environment means mining gold, whilst also attending to some farm animals, a small garden, and collecting hay in a fairly traditional manner on the steep slopes surrounding the villages. The process of dwelling imbues the landscape with aesthetic qualities that prompt the unfolding of what Michael Uzendoski calls “somatic poetry”: webs of interwoven lives and life narratives emergent in complex and dynamic social and ecological relationships, the experiencing of beauty and belonging (Uzendoski, 2008). In the somatic poetries of people in Roșia Montană gold and mining have central importance—primarily as indicators of worth and value—and experiencing and articulating beauty and value differently isolates locals from ‘Others’ and emphasises generational differences in understandings of loss.

In this chapter I present a (hi)story of dwelling in Corna, a village that belongs within the commune of Roșia Montană. My aim is twofold: to unveil the context, i.e. the micro-world where individual stories and the lives of locals unfold and intertwine, on the one hand, and to weave my own analysis into the landscape on the other. In describing the context I draw on the narrative of a local councillor, ‘nea M.,’ who in his very
eloquent, persuasive and oratorial style, took me back to times to which all my other interlocutors made references, but never described in such a detailed and composite manner. I chose his narrative because he was the only one to present details, context and general information about Corna in the form of a ‘(hi)story’ (poveste), and because many of these details and information—albeit in a different manner—would sooner or later resurface in the accounts and life stories of my other conversation partners. I will complement his story with my story-analysis. This latter story-analysis I understand to be the ongoing conversation between many of the voices (some of them more prominent than others) that I encountered throughout my research, both in person and in reading.

I first started this research back in 2011, and then recommenced it in 2017. In the process of presenting this particular (hi)story of dwelling, I would like to draw attention to three aspects that emerged from my conversation with ‘nea M.’s story: temporality and livelihoods, social and ecological (inter)actions, and an emerging aesthetics within the telling of a (hi)story dwelling.

First, there are three distinct ways of experiencing time in the (hi)story of Corna, that surface from ‘nea M.’s narrative, noticeable both in the ethnopoetic style as well as in its content. These different ways of conceiving time and ways of living are defined by three successive political-economic regimes, delineated by macro-economic changes that severely impacted the way people could earn their livelihoods. The relationship with them will probably never become so close as to call them aunt and uncle in personal conversations, the terms used in my writings express the sense of familiarity I feel towards them in the field.

There are a total of eight verb tenses in the Romanian language, four of which are used for the past tense. The imperfect (past) tense marks cyclical actions, habits or actions that were not finished, while the other three mark actions that were finished at various points before the present or past. The narrative style I refer to throughout the text includes the rhythm of talking and the choice of actions that are related, but is also very much defined by the choice of verb tenses. For the pre-communist period ‘nea M. consistently uses the imperfect tense (marking cycles, or habits), when talking about the communist period, he always uses perfectul compus, which marks definite finished actions, and for the present—where the empirical uncertainties are more clearly defined through the lack of focus—he uses the present tense.

Although the three time constructs roughly correspond to Bauman’s categorisation of societies, i.e. cyclical time for stable societies versus linear time for developmental societies; future-oriented time in modernism versus permanent present in postmodernity, or in liquid modernity (Tarkowska, 2006), I am reluctant to refer to this grouping, as I do not consider the past to be a different society (see Ingold et al.,

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pre-socialist period is marked by a cyclical time in how ‘nea M. recounts this period, which is manifest in the portrayal of repetitive, patterned activities, a perpetual rhythm of constant interaction with the landscape. The shifts in the way of living later presented in the story invoke changes in people’s relationship to this land, to this landscape and to the state. While in the pre-socialist period miners relied on the landscape for a living, in the socialist era this turned into complete reliance on the state as the primary ‘provider’ of wealth and social life. Whereas the landscape is central to this way of dwelling in the sense that its ‘voice’ is constantly ‘heard’ in the conversation between people and their surroundings, later it becomes viewed as a setting and a tool for economic advancement, both for individual actors and for the state. The socialist era is then recounted in a linear style, where time becomes flattened, actions are completed and follow each other in a consecutive manner. Goals and life trajectories become visible, and focus from daily or annual cycles turn towards a vision of an attainable future. The third period depicted is the post-socialist period, wherein time becomes fragmented, life turns unstable and unpredictable, and the narrative style becomes erratic. It is a characteristic “liquid modernity” in its state of permanent precarité (Bauman, 2001: 41–42), and a “permanent liminality” in the way the ever-expanding, accelerating present is experienced as anti-structure (Szakolczai, 2015a; 2015b; Thomassen, 2015; Wydra et al., 2015; see also Eriksen, 2016). The process of dwelling—along with the landscape—is lost in civil and corporate discourses about the environment, about unemployment and poverty, about profit, wealth and exploitation, about sustainability and tourism (see also Velicu, 2015). The conversation that defined dwelling in the first part of the story has been reduced to a minimum: the landscape has become alienated by the mining company and environmentalist discourses, it has lost its giving properties in the eyes of many locals (who, unlike newcomers, do not see berries, healing plants or tourism as a valuable resource) and it has become increasingly threatening through its aggressive regenerative force, which confers an unfamiliar image to a mining landscape.

1996). However, I do refer to the (post-socialist) present as liquid modernity (see Bauman, 2000; 2001), which in my view has many similarities with the concept of permanent liminality in the way instability (flexibility, if you will) is made standard (see Horváth, 2013; Szakolczai, 2015a; 2015b; Thomassen, 2015; Wydra et al., 2015).
Second, I would like to point to the changing social and ecological dynamics in Corna. I have already noted the ways in which livelihoods for miners’ families have changed in the three different economic structures, but I would also suggest that the changing landscape is a visual testament to a changing social fabric in the past twenty-three years of accelerating post-socialist transformations. The landscape, according to Ingold, is the “taskscape in its embodied form: a pattern of activities ‘collapsed’ into an array of features” (Ingold, 2000: 198). Social relationships, therefore, are intrinsic to the landscape in which humans dwell, as in the process of dwelling, “humans attend to one another” (ibid.: 196).

Finally, through my conversation with ‘nea M.’s narrative, I would like to allude to the aesthetics (of loss, of beauty, of belonging) emergent in telling the (hi)story of dwelling in Corna. In this I stress the inseparability of life and story (Uzendoski, 2008): the creative improvisation (Ingold and Halland, 2007) through which the historical time, the temporal perspective and the rhythm of storytelling are in unison, through which the different modes of livelihood are a metonymy for state-political processes, and through which the dynamics of the processes of dwelling become articulated. By following Uzendoski’s (2008) idea of somatic poetry, I stress that the (hi)story of dwelling is not simply textual, it is an intersection of many lines (Ingold cited in Uzendoski, 2008: 13), a composite poetry that unfolds—almost implodes—in the many interactions it holds. In this respect my focus in determining the somatic poetries emergent in Roșia Montană differs slightly from that of Uzendoski, who in his account of two healing experiences in Amazonian Ecuador and Amazonian Peru, emphasises the “visceral role the body plays in experiencing [...] poetry” (ibid.: 25). The differences in our focus are also determined by the differences between the stories and experiences growing in the Amazonian rainforest and those unfolding in Roșia Montană: the differences between the texts and their respective contributive creative subjectivities, and the differences between our relationships with our respective research sites and participants. The lived and narrated somatic poetries of the people from Corna incorporate the Romanian macro-historical processes to the same degree as they include personal feelings and experiences. Instead of the bodily dimensions of experiencing and creating beauty,
therefore, I will emphasise how the dynamics of interactions between the various participating agencies, both human and non-human, define the emergent (hi)story of dwelling in Roșia Montană. These interactions include the conversation with ‘nea M., the two women (his wife and our neighbour) watching us from the side, my many encounters with local people from Roșița and Corna, each of which informed and changed the way I could add to the story, and they also include the dynamic and changing interactions between people in the process of dwelling. These I could not personally witness, but rather, were already presented to me as a (hi)story. My conversation with ‘nea M.’s text, therefore, is also a conversation between the empirical realities and the various types of relations and networks I am part of during my field trips, and the many types of (hi)stories that are disclosed to me in conversations.

In the following section I will first describe the event-context which led to Roșița Montană becoming one of the places most frequently visited by social scientists and archaeologists. This is a context that strongly determines every story that is told in and about the area—including my own attempt to present the (hi)story of Corna. After that, I will describe this (hi)story composed of ‘nea M.’s account (in which I recognised facts, happenings and ways of narration, which emerged in some form from interviews with other conversation partners as well) and my own analysis (which is informed by stories and bits of information presented to me by all my other interlocutors from and connected to the area). Finally, I will conclude my chapter by pointing to how a somatic poetry of the young population from Corna might grow into different memories of the past in the way they advance into their future differently. This emphasises the awkwardness of telling (hi)stories in the process of living them.

A Context for Now

The landscape of Corna is one typical to the Apuseni Mountains of the Romanian Carpathians, a group of mountains with its highest peaks ranging between 1400 metres and 1800 metres above sea level. The villages in these mountains are relatively densely populated, the houses have small gardens and are close to each other. Most of the agricultural work is done on the margins of the villages and consists of harvesting
hay for the few cattle that locals keep for personal use. Corna itself is situated in a valley with steep slopes surrounding the two sides of the road that slithers down, connecting the village centre with the town of Abrud. The houses line up (or used to line up) next to each other on the two sides of this road, only occasionally forming clusters of two to five houses further up or deeper in-between the hills.

The Apuseni are particularly rich in deposits of iron, gold, silver, copper, coal and other precious or rare minerals. This is important, because what lies in the depths has defined the activities of those living on the surface for decades or even centuries, and continues to have a strong hold on communities even where mining activities have ceased. (In fact, in many places where the extraction of natural resources has stopped, the mining of cultural and social resources has started. Enter anthropologists, sociologists, historians, politicians etc.: new types of exploiters, who instead of mining the depths of mine galleries dive into the intricacies of human minds and relationships!).

The village of Corna was proposed as the site of the tailing pond for the new Roşia Montană mine more than twenty years ago. In 1996 a Canadian company, Gabriel Resources Ltd. came with a proposal to build Europe’s largest open-pit goldmine on the site. They obtained a twenty-year lease from the government for mining purposes (see also Alexandrescu, 2012) and proposed to extract more than 300 tonnes of gold and around 1600 tonnes of silver from the mountains Cârnic, Cetate and Jig-Văidoaia (Timonea, 2015). The Roşia Montană site of the state-owned Minvest Deva S. A. gradually closed down from the 1990’s, completely ceasing mining activities in 2006, and making 427 employees redundant at the time of its closure (Timonea, 2006; see also Egresi, 2011). For the new project to start, however, most of the population of the village of Roşia Montană, and all of the population of Corna, would have to be resettled. From 2002—despite not having obtained the necessary permits to start mining even to this day—the company started buying people’s lands and properties, using various techniques to pressure or convince them (Velicu, 2014; Velicu and Kaika, 2017; Vesalon and Cretan, 2013). As a result, more than seventy percent of the population of the two villages have moved away between 2002 and 2007—something the remaining locals refer to as “the great exodus”—and more than eighty percent of the lands in and surrounding
the villages of Roșia Montană and Corna belong to Roșia Montană Gold Corporation (RMGC). RMGC was founded in 1997 as a joint venture of Gabriel Resources Ltd. (80.69%) and the Romanian state (19.31%).

Although most (if not all) of the local population was opposed to the new mine at the beginning, the way unemployment rose, and the ways economic and social insecurity seeped into the village, prompted many people to reconsider their position vis-a-vis the company. In 2002 the county council declared Roșia Montană a mono-industrial mining area (Ivanciuc, 2013), cutting access to European funds, and halting all other types of development. In the late 2000’s and early 2010’s RMGC was the only opportunity for employment within the commune. The arguments of older local miners and Romanian environmental and economic experts,5 who considered the project unfeasible from socio-economic and ecological perspectives, and unsustainable in the long run, faded into the background from the perspective of locals, who experienced drastically worsening economic conditions.

As an initial response to the mining project, in 2000 locals (aided by Romanian and international activists) formed the Alburnus Maior Association, whose primary aim was to promote sustainable alternatives to mining, while opposing the Canadian project in an organised manner. Today, however, many of the people still living in the village find it difficult to identify with this agenda, as they find the discourse of the opposition—which became increasingly a narrative about the necessity to protect the environment, archaeological, and mining heritage—less and less relevant to their empirical realities, which were more readily defined by economic and social lack. Anti-mining activists present tourism and agro-tourism as the most viable economic alternatives, but they often fail to tackle the socioeconomic disparities that prevent a large part of the local population from investing in such businesses. In an attempt to achieve permanent protection against large-scale industrial developments, NGOs (including the Alburnus Maior Association) started advocating for the inclusion of Roșia Montană as one of the UNESCO World Heritage sites. The inclusion amongst the

5 The Romanian Academy of Sciences was firmly against the project from the beginning. In their official statement regarding the project they express concerns about the negative environmental, economic, social, and cultural impacts that the new mine would have. See: https://acad.ro/rosia_montana/pag_rm04_decl.htm.
UNESCO sites would somewhat protect Corna from the environmental consequences of the unsustainable mining project, but would also limit the possibilities for development in the area, where (heavy) industry has been the main economic driving force for decades. This leaves many locals torn between what seem to be the only two equally unappealing alternatives, neither of which has any connection or regard to the ways they understand and experience their relationship to each other, to the landscape and to ‘Others’, or to the ways they perceive their identity, which is rooted in their stories of how they have ‘traditionally’ lived through changing historical times.

**A (Hi)Story of Dwelling in Corna, Roșia Montană**

Roșia Montană, dating back to 131AD, is the first documented settlement in Romania. An important (gold)mining and trade hub belonging to the Roman Dacia Superior, mining was the primary occupation in Alburnus Maior (the Roman name) since time immemorial (Ion, 2014). Their identity as miners is stressed not only by the memory of the fifty years of socialist industrial revolution in the area, but is also evidenced by the landscape of archaeological findings of Roman and pre-Roman-time mining galleries and cliffs (ibid.). Furthermore, there is a complex web of family histories that connects nearly every local person to mine openings, through a deep sense of (lost) ownership, as before collectivisation most families either owned or rented a mine entrance. This was a necessary step for being able to make a living in Corna and Roșia Montană in the first half of the twentieth century.

An ideal picture of the village lives in the memories of the local people, and that picture invariably dates back to this era before communism. It is a frozen instance in time that depicts everyday, hard, and often unrewarded work—that men, women and children took their share of—as a quasi-fairytale ideal. ‘Nea M. (63) recounts:

So, this has always been a mining community, one hundred percent. In what sense? They have mined gold here for centuries. There were privately owned mines until 1948. Every family had a stamp mill, which used the power of water to break stones. Do you understand? Now, they used these installations only when the waters were not frozen over. They were not operational during the winter. This was the livelihood of people. [...] So the men worked, they carried the ore with wagons
from the inside of the mountain, from where the women and children transported the stones with horses to the stamp mills. There, the head-sized rocks were broken into smaller pieces (first of approximately the size of a fist, and later, at a different installation these were further smashed into powder, until the gold, silver and pyrite could be separated on a woolen reel. They then washed this sand from the reel and gathered the gold powder into a bigger piece with mercury. This they could then sell). This is how people around here lived up until ‘48.

There is a rhythm to this fragment of narrative through which ‘nea M. describes the pulse of life in a time that he himself only knows from the memories of an older generation, a generation that is no longer able or willing to tell their stories. It is one that evokes the cyclical time ‘remembered’ from the everyday of the pre-socialist era, a time defined for the people of Corna by the cycle of finding–working–selling of gold. This was a time when making a living involved direct, often intimate or dangerous interaction with the ore by all (or most) members of a family, a time when locals depended on the qualities of the landscape emergent in all their dynamic interactions. This was, for example, a time when it was not uncommon for men, women and even children to encounter the \textit{vâlva băii}, the elusive fairy of the mines, who held all knowledge of the whereabouts of gold veins and had the power to share it, but who also caused the death of many miners by leading them astray.

Although the hardships, unpredictability and dangers of the lives of miners is often stressed when villagers talk about this time, they also attach a beauty to this rhythm of life. Almost all my interlocutors talked about beauty with a sense of loss, whether they mentioned the aesthetic qualities of landscape, of the culture or of the lively social life, and many people talked about the beauty of their distinct way of life in a time that pre-dated their own lived experiences. In ‘nea M.’s account the first instance that emphasised a change from the way their life went “as usual” was the instalment of the socialist state and the socio-economic changes that resulted:

Then, in 1948 nationalisation happened. They closed all the stamp mills... they took away the livelihood source of people from these villages! Those communists came and they [...] carried the miners away to work, to Salva Vișeului and other places. To work on building sites, the poor men! And the women remained here alone, with the children. They [the communists] said that they were rich, they should hand over their gold.
But my grandmother told me, that there had been months when they could barely afford 15 kg of cornflour. [...] Then they opened the state mine and employed the men there. It was in the fifties and sixties when the mine really began to work well, but they were working underground and many got ill from silicosis. They were called Stakhanovite, their photographs were put on billboards, they received awards, money for their hard work! But by the time they managed to build a house, put a roof on it, they died, leaving their wives and children behind. Then they opened the pit in the seventies.

There is a duality in the way people from Corna remember the socialist period. On the one hand, before the late seventies working in mines had very grave health consequences and nearly all of my interlocutors had at least one male family member (father, husband) who had died as a result of working in the mine. On the other hand, however, as 'nea M.'s account also reveals, there was also a sense of growth in terms of personal and collective economic conditions and an overall improvement of the status of the mining class (see also Kideckel, 2004; Vasi, 2004).

One can notice the change between the two depicted time periods even in the narrative, ethnopoetic style as the pulse becomes somehow suppressed, and a series of events are recounted in a successive manner. Although working in the goldmine as a state employee had its own rhythm in the everyday toil of being a miner (at least for adult male members of the family), and the agricultural cycles continued to define a large chunk of the family’s life, the focus of the story here shifts to plans and outcomes, which seems to parallel the socialist pursuit of development and modernity (see also Verdery, 1996: 39–57). Life is no longer made up of the rhythm of gold finding–working–selling cycles, but adopts a more linear understanding, where the emphasis is on achieving life goals. Time becomes flattened in the sense that lifelines no longer reflect the rhythm of interpersonal and ecological relationships, but rather, they become a connecting dash between a starting and an ending point. In this type of story there is no longer an intimate connection between miner and ore. Gold (and implicitly the landscape) as a means of sustenance and the ecological relationships, that defined everyday living, lose their central roles in favour of the mine as a state-owned enterprise, which provides its workers with everything that was previously connected to the soil and the mineral: livelihood, relationships, status.
An important aspect of the post-socialist experience of the working class is that many people observed the greatest technological advancements in industry and entertainment during the socialist period, and these innovations had a positive impact both on their social and on their cultural lives during that time (see also Hann et al., 2002). There was a cinema, a casino-ballroom, food markets, social and cultural events in Roșia Montană during the communist reign, all of which were closed down during the 1990s. Many are nostalgic when remembering the miners’ choir, and the fact that the state-mine had a football team. Moreover, during the socialist time workers in heavy industries were highly regarded, and all (post)industrial communities in eastern Europe are greatly defined by this period that they experienced and now perceive in terms of stability (Wódz and Gnieciak, 2017), clear life trajectories (Pine, 2017), and a sense of worth (Kalb, 2017; Pine, 2017; Wódz and Gnieciak, 2017).

These elements are all experienced and incorporated into post-socialist realities and life stories in terms of loss. Miners were a privileged group of workers, enjoyed many benefits, had a very strong union, and a complex social network that extended beyond their workplace through the activities of their wives and families (Kideckel, 2002; 2004; Vasi, 2004). The growing class differentiation in post-socialist Romania, however, left the working class—especially those (formerly) employed in the heavy industries—in a disadvantaged position. Former miners from Roșia Montană talk about the social and economic security from before the fall of the communist regime and always juxtapose it with the current precarity of young people, the high rates of unemployment and general social and economic insecurities (Velicu, 2012a; 2012b; see also Narotzky, 2017).

In arriving in the present day in his account, the sudden change in style of ‘nea M.’s monologue also expresses these insecurities and the frustrations of the community, which is unable to reach a resolution to the current situation:

That is when [in the ’70s] they gave up those ideas, that these rocks are valuable and we should protect them. Now everyone thinks, that wow, we should marvel at the nice rocks and the mining landscape in Rosia Montana and die of hunger! There is an unemployment rate of 80–90%, we don’t have anything to live from and now they want to include it in
the UNESCO!... So that you can live off a little cow?! You cannot live off that! You can only do semi-subsistence farming here! On a small scale, not like on the plains!... And the young people no longer stay here! [...] Okay, if they don't want the Canadians to take the gold, the Romanian government should invest in it. Why? Is this place so beautiful that we cannot touch it?! [...] 

The shift from socialist stability to this state of precarity, however, was not as abrupt as the swift cut in 'nea M.’s narrative flow would suggest. The events leading to the closure of the state mine were a gradual process, after which the company employed a strategy of slowly ‘easing the people into’ the new situation. Throughout the 2000s, RMGC slowly took over the position of ‘patron’ in Roșia Montană—previously the role of the state—by providing jobs (which were temporary), by filling in some of the missing infrastructure, such as bus routes to the nearby towns of Câmpeni and Abrud (which were not in any way sufficient to meet the needs of the local population), and even by providing social assistance to some of the locals (who were ‘forgotten’ by state institutions). The much less mediatised village of Corna was, however, almost entirely neglected as far as infrastructure was concerned and locals became more and more isolated both from each other and from other communities.

Most of the adult population from both villages have worked for the company at some point between 2001 and 2015, when in the increasingly acute unemployment crisis after the gradual closure of the state mine, Goldul (RMGC) was the only employment opportunity in the area. This ‘opportunity’, however, only increased insecurity, as envy and suspicion rose amongst locals, and it is rumored that people were pressured into selling their lands and houses with the promise of a job (see also Velicu and Kaika, 2017).

Locals refer to the company as Goldul (the Gold). This reveals an interesting process through which the social, symbolic and economic values attached to the gold mineral (a source for the livelihoods of locals for millennia) was transferred to Gold, the company which in the post-socialist liquid modernity first assumed the socio-economic (and even cultural) role that the state(-mine) had during socialism, and later became the denominator of value and the only potential source of livelihood, development and future for the youth in Roșia Montană.
In the socio-economic equation of the taskscape of Roșia Montană, thus, gold(mining) in pre-socialism was what (state) mining was in socialism, and is what the Gold (Corporation) is in post-socialism. Aur (the Romanian word for gold), however, became something strange in this process, alienated from them by the foreign company and the foreign word. Whereas there were heightened expectations attached to the technological and economic changes a transition to free-market economy would bring, their experience of the post-socialist capitalism of the late 1990s was simply one of loss and disempowerment as economic and social resources grew more and more out of their immediate and symbolic control. This estrangement was felt in changes in everyday activities, but also quite literally in the 2000s, through losing ownership and control of surrounding lands.

Stories Unfolding

A total of forty-two households remain in Corna today, within which there is usually only one elderly person or an elderly couple. Most people have as neighbours long stretches of uninhabited lots: the empty spaces of houses that were demolished shortly after being bought by the RMGC. Demolition has left locals in a vulnerable position and with visible signs of their disrupted social fabric. In the dynamic interaction of dwelling, in which people and the landscape are in constant co-constitution, broken or waning social relationships also mean dissipating ecological connections. The forest has almost entirely recovered from its previous state of over-harvesting, and its foliage now covers the former hayfields and has started to grow on the empty house lots, inviting wild boar, foxes and other animals into these places, into the landscapes where the human involvement with other human and non-human actors, including the activities of making homes and making a living, were much more visible. Thus, the landscape, this ongoing conversation between people and their environment (Ingold, 2000), has somewhat lost part of the human ‘voices’ that were so intrinsically a part of Corna.

The temporality of the landscape becomes questioned along with the disappearance of “histories”—which in our case includes, but is not limited to, the dynamic interchange between man and minerals—“that are woven, along with the life-cycles of plants and animals into
the texture of the surface itself” (Ingold, 2000: 198). Many of my interlocutors lamented the fact that it is no longer possible for them to walk on the road after dusk: the street lighting hardly exists anymore, the distances between inhabited houses are far too big, and the roads have become populated by wild animals. The once dynamic network of mutually affecting correspondence between different types of actors (Ingold, 2017) has dramatically changed, and both human and ecological relationships have become uneasy.

The ongoing dispute and the resulting disruptions in relationships and in personal and community narratives create a state of permanent liminality (Horváth, 2013; Szakolczai, 2015a; 2015b; Thomassen, 2015; Wydra, 2000; Wydra et al., 2015; see also Sampson, 2002), where the people of Corna experience everything as fragmented, fragile, inconsistent, and provisory. Although unpredictability and insecurity are experiences that resurface time and again when narrating the (hi)story of Corna, the current empirical realities connect to a wider context of similarly destabilised post-industrial and post-socialist places and communities (see Bridger and Pines, 1998; Narotzky and Goddard, 2017). Whereas the accounts of the pre-socialist time present difficult periods, inherently vulnerable and unpredictable cycles in the acquiring of what was necessary for oneself and for the family, this was something immanent to the certitude of an ongoing relationship with the landscape, of a life lived in a mining environment (which in socialism transformed into the stability of employment in the state mine). The fragility of their livelihood today, however, is on the one hand evidence of disrupted (social, ecological, economic and intergenerational) relationships (see also Pine, 2017; Kalb, 2017), and on the other hand, an acute experience on the micro level of the present erratic macro-economic and state-political processes (Goddard, 2017; Wódz and Gnieciak, 2017). This latter aspect determines their long-term and everyday economic decisions, as many become uninterested or afraid to invest and plan for the future in a context where they see everything as dependent on a single decision that keeps getting postponed.

The disrupted social and ecological networks create a background where the young population from Corna (the young adult children of those who did not relocate during the “great exodus”) find themselves in a peculiar position, especially if their understanding of themselves and
their future prospects incorporates feelings of belonging to the place. The (hi)story of dwelling in Roșia Montană is a complex one that should include the multiple voices, which—through the principle of human correspondence (Ingold, 2017)—co-create each other. The somatic poetry of the youth, however, is entirely different from that of the older generation in the ways that it stresses beauty and belonging differently, in the calm of nature and feelings of homeliness vis-à-vis the bustle and foreignness of the city or of a different country. Young people from Corna today are either unemployed and/or do seasonal work abroad, or have migrated to cities, where they either have stable employment or change their jobs frequently, returning to Corna occasionally for periods between two jobs or for short visits ‘home’ to rest. Only some of the extremely few, who have family members employed at the copper mine at Roșia Poieni (the only ones in the area who still work in a mine) are hopeful that they will manage to ‘get in’ and secure a job there as well—a form of the reproduction of the working class not uncommon to industrial and post-industrial communities (see Perelman and Vargas, 2017). In general, however, they seem uninterested in mining and do not consider working in the mine as a career option.

A continuation of the mining (hi)story, thus, is revealed as the vision of the older generations, rather than a necessity for the younger ones. Neither the personal and collective memories or stories, nor the aspirations of the young adult population of Corna are connected to the goldmine. While—similarly to their elders—they do understand their (hi)story in terms of loss and they perceive their future prospects to be thwarted because of how the community changed as a result of the activities of the RMGC in the area, they do not necessarily perceive

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6 The copper mine at Roșia Poieni is also on the territory of the Roșia Montană commune, but is operated by a different state-owned company, Cupru Min S. A. It is Romania’s largest, and Europe’s second largest, copper reserve. The mine is open-pit and the tailing pond was created by flooding the village Geamăna. The polluted lake with the still visible bell-tower is often photographed by media and activists to illustrate the effects mining pollution can have on the environment and on communities. Comparison is often made between Corna and Geamăna due to their possibly analogous history. However, the apparent demise of Corna seems to be going in a very different direction: instead of socialism, it is a post-socialist capitalism that forces people to leave, and instead of being filled (with polluted waste) and taken over by industry, it is emptied (of built history) and taken over by the regenerating force of an increasingly hostile and unfamiliar natural environment.
the discontinuation of gold-mining as the most important aspect of these changes, and they are very rarely involved in the discussions regarding the protection of the heritage of Roșia Montană. They are in-between (places, memories, future possibilities), and they navigate the unpredictability of the post-socialist, post-industrial condition, highlighting only the loss of reliable connections (Narotzky, 2017).

I have suggested before that life and story are inseparable in the (hi)story of dwelling, a (hi)story that imbues the landscape with aesthetic qualities that unfold into the individual and collective somatic poetries, into a sense of beauty and belonging. Whereas the experiences of loss of this younger generation connect to different aspects of life and memory, their understanding of beauty in dwelling also unfolds in response to conversations with a landscape and with all types of different actors, who are connected in a variety of ways. Although at this point their stories remain untold, both due to a still heightened interest in what is perceived as the ‘real’ (i.e. concluded) history of the place, and due to the difficulty of narrating life in the process of living, I believe that these new poetries will undoubtedly affect the ways the (hi)story of dwelling in Corna might develop in the coming years.

References


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