This phrase is used as a motto also by the author, Kathy Fox, in her investigation (p. 39) and I consider it most appropriate for numerous reasons. It applies also to the tremendously slow pace of change, seeming to remain 'frozen in the project', within the Romanian countryside.

This volume takes the term 'peasant' seriously as a 'source of significant economic difference' (p. 41) and investigates how far the Romanian peasant, caught in transition, is from this status. This book is the result of a year-and-a-half ethnographical research into the European agricultural integration in the Southern Carpathian Mountains of Romania. The study succeeds to discuss the European agricultural policies, while identifying interesting correlations between practices and personhood. EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is analysed in terms of policies, elites, but mainly livelihood possibilities of the peasants. The realities of Romanian peasantry's life (related to the subsistence farms and peasant households) are confronted with the "intelligible, efficient, standardized and commensurable" profile of the EU model.

The effort to surprise the local colour and to reach the essence is substantial: quickly going through the "Glossary" one can easily understand the varieties and the depth of the conversations with the local peasants. The list of acronyms, measurements and the schematics of the Agricultural Institutions in Romania are indicators of the analysis with the consciousness of the policy and local particularities, within households and inter-households, following cooperation, exchange and kinship.

Relating 'modernity', 'progress' and 'civilisation' with 'transition', the complexity of the status of peasant and the threat of marginalisation are unveiled. EU integration is seen also as Enlightenment epistemology and as a neo-liberal process of social and economic alignment in the implementation of common legislation. The analytic direction is to assess what persons are produced by the neoliberal project and how resilient are the manoeuvres of resistance (or compliance) in the long run. "Through the [modernization] project, an epistemology of colonisation is deployed: the expert subject creates an object of transformation, the peasant, which is diagnosed to be in need to change." (p. 97) But within the particular Romanian context, this change intended by the elites is undermined by the weakness of the information vector – the "object of transformation" is not object of information too. "Generally, the institutions in formation in charge of CAP implementation were not well versed on how to get the 'information' to their 'target audience'. The Ministry of Agriculture, it was often said, was one of the most 'closed' ministries in Romania, where little 'reform' had happened during the 1990s, and where procedures were very slow to be adapted to the new European framework." (p. 97-98) Even the specialists have sometime a hard time dealing with the

confusion and secrecy surrounding the details of the policies and regulations. Indeed, Romanian agricultural bureaucracy in charge with this modernisation lives off secrecy and manages ignorance very well to its own advantage (cf. Weber).

The study addressed also the orientation and effects of CAP in Romania. Kathy Fox notices four aspects of disjuncture "between integration and participation, information and institutions in formation, training and work opportunities on the countryside and welfare and the good life." (p.111) Progress is related to real, material conditions that sustain or not the developments of this progress. When material infrastructure is absent or deficient, the progress policies are not founded. Originally CAP's policies were designed for countries without the experience of state socialism. In post-communist states they might function as neoliberal rather than welfare measures, as they were originally intended. People experience closure and "make do with what they have feeling both the constraints and the potential in their lives as they unfolded along a 'margin of manoeuvrability' and possibility". (p.135) Human affairs emphasize the tension between means and ends and evolve unpredictably. The author identifies the male-centred organisation of the economic activity, especially the bounded character and closure status of women in the household. Their work is devalued and their life projects especially challenged.

From the perspective of 'restructuring', within Romanian agriculture and animal husbandry the import and imposition of standards was not accompanied by the necessary accumulation of capital, with the exception of the large-venture entrepreneurs. The Western profit logic was thus impaired in Romania and led to a situation where animal welfare seem to value more than human welfare. Kathy Fox discusses the small improvement brought about by the EU's Direct Payments (DP) policy (implemented for the first time in 2007). Thus, the implementation of DP gave in fact another boost to the bureaucratic systems, installing a reality of misunderstood and incomplete implementation. As a consequence, the idea of 'partial' implementation became the norm. Another aspect under investigation is here the paradoxical trait of the reform that disembeds local food production and shows that EU legislation and processes of branding further marginalized Romanian peasantry and did not bring much benefice through EU's 'certified traditional produce' policy. (p.231)

Philosophy, sociology and ethnography come together to present the peasant as a homo economicus, who sought self-interest in a quest for improved positioning, while he understood when to cooperate and when to manoeuvre, despite the shaken trust in others both by state socialism and aggressive capitalism. The very idea of progress seems conquered by a dispiriting perpetual transition. The valuable perspective of the author is to relate to EU legislation as visions of social order and frameworks for 'thinking forward', and

not just technical regulations. People are to learn not merely legislation and procedures, but the wider lesson that dichotomies, incomplete stages and partial success are part of the modernist vision that modern economic and political projects share. The key element is not the elite and expert benevolent action addressed to the immature and knowledge-deprived peasantry, but rather the transparent dissemination of information and the construction of material conditions and the infrastructure crucial for the successful implementation of the EU policies and reforms.