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"Trauma and the Limits of Redemptive Critique: Interrogating the Haunting Voices of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution"

Karl P. Benziger and Richard R. Weiner

The authors continue to test the limits of Emile Durkheim/Maurice Halbwachs approach to collective identity in the experiences of trauma, shame, and yearning related to the ill-fated Hungarian Revolution. In a more poststructuralist vein the authors move from a focus on piacular subjectivity to one of baroque subjectivity, especially in understanding the October 2006 fiftieth anniversary commemorations of the Revolution in Budapest. Specifically, what indexical undercurrents of disposition persist and can not be ignored in attempts at redemptive critique, as well as in colonized nostalgia and the re-enactment of pathos. To what extent do the commemorations of the 1956 Revolution reveal an incomplete text of haunting voices open to diverse re-assembling and contesting narratives? Beyond the mourning, Walter Benjamin asked, can we transcend the spectacle of shared suffering, shared melancholy and shared atonement in interrogating a text of presence and absence? Can we do so in a meaningful and knowing participation in the tragic, not as a closed drama based on myth, but as an incomplete and unfolding drama? Such a text can be interpellated through ongoing redemptive critique rather than imbedded in redemptive finality. This redemptive critique characterized by a collective conscience of how history might have been different.

I

The fiftieth anniversary commemoration of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution offered the promise of a redemptive moment that inextricably linked the nation to the liberal ideals expressed in the failed Revolutions of 1848 and 1956. Justice had been delivered in the form of the Republic established on October 23, 1989 and Hungary was now part of the European Union after a tortured journey that had included alliances and occupations by both Germany and the Soviet Union. And yet, the days surrounding the event were marked by an unleashing of the furies marked by riots and a bitter resurrection of memories of treachery and terror. Why such tumult in the days leading up to and during the commemorations?[1]

Imre Nagy a founding member of the Stalinist state in Hungary gained immense popularity among students and workers after 1953 for his reforms known as the New Course following the death of Joseph Stalin. He became Prime Minister of Hungary 1953-1955 and his calls for democracy in the context of a one party state seemed radical in comparison with the repressive state that had preceded him. His rivals brought him down in 1955 and he was ousted from the communist party. His continued critique of Stalinist politics after his ouster demonstrated the limited potency of his enemies and in the radicalized atmosphere of October 1956 students demanded that he be returned to power in the context of a multiparty state, a political concept he considered anathema. The outbreak of the Revolution ensured his return to power, but he only gradually joined

[1] The case for this study stems from Karl Benziger, *Imre Nagy Martyr of the Nation: Contested History, Legitimacy, and Popular Memory in Hungary* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008) 151-166.

with the Revolutionary's conception of a multi party state. Although he forcefully defended the legitimacy of the Revolution after its failure he went to his death on June 16, 1958 proclaiming his faith in communism. He was buried anonymously after his execution as were approximately 400 other persons accused of counterrevolution who suffered juridical murder at the hands of the state.

Opposition to the Soviet backed state that was established after the Revolution was premised on the concept that the Revolution was in fact, a counterrevolution. A host of factors accounted for the ending of the one party state that included a worsening economy and Mikhail Gobachev's policy of glasnost and perestroika, but perhaps the most potent weapon wielded by reformers within the communist party and those in opposition outside the party was the demand that Imre Nagy be reburied.

The funeral of Imre Nagy on June 16, 1989 can be seen as a critical moment in the Hungarian transition to a democratic republic as it explicitly undermined the moral and political authority of the communist government then in power. This Nagy memorial *signified* a *longing* for a national identity tied to the spirit of republicanism that had been thwarted in 1956 and had roots going back to 1848. The unity of purpose displayed by the Hungarian people at the funeral brings to mind Emile Durkheim's analysis of piaculum and the conscience collective. This is what the sociologist, Robert Bellah described as how a society interprets its historical experience in light of a transcendent reality.[2] In this case study of the Nagy memorial, the republican spirit emerges as a possible transcendent social movement that fills the collective conscience.

For Emile Durkheim, piacular rites emerge:

- where the trauma of collective misfortune is valorized as an intensely cathectic basis of identity [transcendent signifier];

- where propitiatory sacrifice associated with the trauma reveal a need for self-negation felt by the community [i.e.: through atonement practices]; and

- where the metaphoric shared "drinking of the blood" generates a "collective effervescence" that restores sacred identity and mutual recognition of stabilizing social bonds [i.e.: through sacralizing imagery].

Piacular subjectivity is the collective experience of those moments revealed in specified collective representations. The concept can be understood as a collection of representations mutually created ("phenomenologically constituted") by a particular community as [1] normative attachments and commitments in a public language; and as [2] reconstructable chains of practices and practical reasoning. The piacular moments reveal what Durkheim called the *collective conscience*.

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[2] Robert Bellah, *The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in Time of Trial* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975) 3.

Commemoration in Hungary is marked by the fusion of personal and public memorial rituals that often provide an appearance of solidarity reminiscent of Durkheim's concept of piacular ritual. Indeed this concept is useful in examining the legitimizing power of Nagy's funeral in 1989, but it obscures the divisive dialogue that informed the political actors and the volatile politics that have continued to intensify after the establishment of the Republic on October 23, 1989, as exemplified by the fiftieth anniversary commemoration of the Revolution. Commemorations reveal a constructed reality advantageous to those with the upper hand.[3] The commemoration is only enhanced when the moment reflects a point of drama or effervescent moment that Durkheim referred to and serves to shroud competing narratives. Nagy's funeral provided a moment of atonement for the politics of cooptation that marked communist politics in Hungary after the Revolution. After enacting a brutal terror Nagy's successor Jánós Kádar demanded silence about the Revolution in exchange for a limited economic liberalism that was the envy of the other satellite states in the Soviet sphere. Dissent existed but was suborned not only by Soviet occupation but by economic possibilities and a certain freedom of movement that ultimately included travel to the West. Widespread dissent in Hungary gained momentum only after 1985 and included many who had collaborated or had been coopted by the regime.

The political and economic transition in Hungary was marked primarily by negotiation; events such as Nagy's funeral provided the legitimacy the opposition needed to drive the communists from power. History was rewritten to accord with the establishment of the Republic, but beyond Nagy's funeral and a referendum that created a level playing field by stripping the communist party of power there was no political process that would provide an accounting for the trauma and shame that had gripped the nation. This fact all but ensured that political parties would call upon an arrangement of past events that damned their opponents and legitimized their own political fortune. To many belonging to the center right factions Nagy and many of his confederates are problematic because of their earlier association with Stalinist politics. Nagy's role in creating a Stalinist State was shrouded by his martyrdom and the symbolic role his funeral played. The devotion of Nagy and many of his confederates to communism seems contrary to those interested in creating a liberal economy. At the same time center left coalitions view Nagy's policies as precursors to the western oriented social democratic state that they wish to create. The selection of heroes and stories from the Revolution that highlight or diminish the role of the communists or other political factions is central to political grandstanding in contemporary Hungary. Was the Revolution the work of reform communists within the party or those who remained loyal to the short lived Republic established in 1945?

The hope that ushered forth with the Republic was soon dampened by a worsening economy and austerity measures that ultimately left close to a million Hungarians

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[3] See John Bodnar's discussion of public memory in "Public Memory in an American City: Commemoration in Cleveland" in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Memory*, edited by John R. Gillis (Prineceton: Princeton University Press, 1994) 75. See also Katherine Verdery's discussion of the use of dead bodies by the elite in post Socialist societies to create new meaning in *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Post Socialist Change* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999) 50-51 and Patrick H. Hutton, "Sigmund Freud and Maurice Halbwachs: The Problem of Memory in Historical Psychology," *The History Teacher*, 27, 2 (February, 1994): 150.

unemployed. The return of the Socialist Party to power in 1992 was premised largely on economic pain and a certain nostalgia for the Kádar era's social safety net. Parliament changed hands with each election until 2002. The unprecedented re election of the Socialist Party and revelations regarding Hungary's economy all set in the context of 2006 ensured that the fiftieth anniversary commemorations would become ensnared in this debate about the past. The volatility of this debate moves us from a focus on piacular subjectivity to one of a Baroque subjectivity. Baroque has several meanings that includes the bizarre and at the same time evokes the multi layered voices of a fugue. This paper centers on the many voices revealed by the fiftieth commemoration in the assembling and reassembling of contested narratives related to the 1956 Revolution and Hungary's unsavory twentieth century past.

II

The spectacle of Nagy's reburial on June 16, 1989 undermined the moral authority of the communist government and can be analyzed as a contested narrative on the power to suppress and the power to actualize republicanism in terms of Emile Durkheim's analysis of piacular rituals and the collective conscience. As a collective celebration of the vértanuk (blood witnesses) Nagy and those reburied with him provided contrast to the Soviet backed regime then in power, and thus, deadly attachment to the Soviet backed counter-revolution.

This first level of meaning revealed by the funeral, though important as a contingent factor of political change, tends to downplay the more complicated narrative of this political history. The effervescent moment of unity displayed by the Hungarian polity certainly contributed to a referendum decision that stripped the party of power. This moment was short lived, however, as evidenced by debate over the nature of the state, haunted throughout by memories of the Revolution and Hungary's tumultuous twentieth century past. What was the meaning of Nagy's symbolic status in a country whose revolutionary spirit had been largely subdued and co-opted by the socialist "prosperity" that separated Hungary from other satellites under Soviet thrall? In this guise, historical attachment needed to be found in the events leading up to the Revolution or prior to the ascension of the Stalinists in 1948. As we have briefly reviewed, the example of Nagy who had played a key role in the establishment of the Stalinist state is problematic to the kind of heroic narrative used to legitimize various contemporary political factions, especially those that view the political transition of 1989 as the triumph of the capitalist model. Historical memory in this light is selective.

The political scientist Katherine Verdery claims that Nagy's symbolic magnetism can be found in his power to legitimate a diverse number of platforms [both negatively and positively].[4] According to Verdery, Nagy has legitimating effects "not because everyone agrees on [his] meaning but because it compels interest despite divergent views of what

[4] The anthropologist Clifford Geertz discusses the importance of charismatic figures in their ability to stimulate both negative and positive political dialogue in his seminal essay "Centers, Kings, and Charisma: Reflections on the Symbolics of Power" in *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthroplogy* (New York: Basic Books, 1973) 121-146.

[he signifies].[5] Because of this, Verdery claims that she is "not interested in the shared mentalities found in the conscience collective, but for conflict among groups over social meanings."[6] But is it not possible that the shared mentalities that Durkheim found in the conscience collective are a result of, or a manifestation of continuing discourse regarding the various social frames under consideration?

Jay Winter underscores the importance of affect -- how the ritual associated with World War I memorials served both the purpose of commemoration and the possibility of forgetting. Citing Sigmund Freud's discussion of melancholia, he reasons that forgetting helps create the boundaries necessary for one suffering from melancholia to once again look forward rather than remain locked in grief.[7] In this light, perhaps the funeral of Imre Nagy created the possibility settling the past and looking towards the future, or more cynically as an attempt to lock out the past. For example, political factions associated with the former communist regime or those to whom Marx is anathema. As noted earlier, however, forgetting and selective remembering stimulates discourse as well as contest of the memory narrative.

Winter's discussion also underlines a limitation of structuralist theory as formulated by Durkheim in that his theory relies on a collective conscience determined by social facts that exist externally to the individual.

Durkheim associates epistemological and phenomenological connotations with the collective conscience which enables him to employ this concept in explaining moral obligation.

With respect to its *epistemological* meaning, the collective conscience according to Durkheim refers to:

(1) a conscience "which is shared in common with our group (i.e., a particular social entity) in its entirety, which, consequently, is not oneself, but society living and acting within us."[8]

(2) a conscience of shared moral meanings, i.e., the awareness and sharing of moral norms derived from symbolic representations engendered collectively;[9] and

(3) a conscience which "by definition is diffused throughout the whole society, but it nevertheless has specific features which make it a distinct reality."[10]

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[5] Katherine Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Post Socialist Change* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999) 31.
[6] Ibid., 36.
[7] Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 113-114.
[8] Emile Durkheim, *Division of Labor*, George Simpson, trans. (New York: Macmillan, 1933) 151.
[9] See Ernest Wallwork, *Durkheim: Morality and Milieu* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972) 35-36.
[10] Durkheim, *Division of Labor*, 79-80.

As for the various qualitatively distinct *phenomenological* experiences associated to such a conscience of collective norms, Durkheim notes:

(1) that the projections of the collective conscience are experienced as an echo in ourselves of a force which is foreign to us, and which is superior to what we are;[11]

(2) that these projections are experiences
- (a) *impersonally*
- (b) *objectively* (as they are external to the associated individuals of a social entity[12]
- (c) as *obligatory*, i.e., these collective norms function as moral constraints[13] which have an "imperative character;"[14] they "exercise a sort of ascendancy over the will which feels constrained to conform to them.[15]

(3) that the moral experience comprises
- (a) the perception of collective representations, and
- (b) the internalization of collective norms;[16] and

(4) that such collective norms may be internalized differently and hence may affect individual members of society very differently.[17]

The sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, a student of Durkheim, saw the collective conscience as fluid. Asserting that, "what we can know of the remembered past depends entirely upon its commemorative leavings."[18]

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[11] Wallwork, op. cit., 35.
[12] Durkheim, "La Science positive de la morale en Allemagne," *Revue philosophique*, v. xxiv, 134.
[13] Ibid., 56.
[14] Durkheim, "Cours de science sociale: *Revu internationale de lénseignement*, XV, 48. Cited and translated by Steven Lukes, *Emile Durkheim* (London: Allen Lane, 1973) 42. This passage is from the opening lecture of Durkheim's first course at the University of Bordeaux entitled "La solidaite sociale."
[15] Ibid.
[16] Wallwork, op. cit., 36.
[17] Collective representations in Durkheim's scheme do not constitute the social reality itself; they are only the projections, only the manifestations of it. Such typical manifestations of collective life include: moral rules, precepts, religious beliefs and practices, juridical codes, myths folklore, proverbs, popular sayings, and language. These collective representations, he indicates, "cannot form a circle closed upon itself, the source whence they derive must be found outside them. Either the *conscience collective* floats in the void, like a sort of inconceivable absolute, or it is connected with the rest of the world through the intermediary substratum on which, in consequence, it depends. On the other hand, of what can this substratum be composed if not of the members of society as they are socially combined." Cited by Lukes, op. cit., 231 (from a review on Antonio Labriola in *Revue Philosophique*, XLIV in 1897, 645-651; cf. Peter Winch, *The Idea of Social Science* (London: 1958) 23. That substratum to which collective representations are attached are what Durkheim labels institutions: recognized normative patterns or social bonds. And this notion gave rise to his development of "depth levels" of social reality.
[18] From Patrick H. Huttan's excellent discussion of Halbwachs in his article "Sigmund Freud and Maurice Halbwachs: The Problem of Memory in Historical Psychology," *The History Teacher*, 27, 2 (February, 1994): 149.

According to Halbwachs each generation must reinterpret the past in the context of the present in order to come to a collective understanding of the event or person under study.[19] His seminal study entitled, "The Legendary Topography of the Gospels" provides an historical case study of how contemporary understandings and needs over time created sites of memory in Jerusalem that would accord with the stories laid out in the four gospels. Importantly, Halbwachs claimed that in spite of differences found in the stories of the gospels themselves, they represent a collection of memories held in common [traces of history]. Legitimacy of the sites rests in how closely they remain to the gospel, not the historical reality of the site itself.[20] As Lewis Coser reminds us in his introduction to Halbwachs' work on collective memory, "the past is always a compound of persistence and change."[21]

Halbwachs' presentist approach recognized the continuing discourse that surrounds issues of memory. As historian Patrick H. Hutton asserts "memory is a function of power to determine the way the past is to be represented…setting scholarship on a genealogical course."[22] Addressing the construct of power Barry Schwartz asserts that collective memory has an "orientational function…being both a mirror…and model for society."[23] Unlike Durkheim Halbwachs' approach to collective memory considered groups rather than attempting to create universals. In this guise collective memory is multifaceted and can be an "effective marker of social differentiation."[24] Seen in this light the funeral signified the republican spirit infused with the demand for a sovereign state and at the same time stimulated "discourse and argument" regarding the meaning of the 1956 Revolution and its relationship to Hungarian politics in 1989 that was temporarily subdued during the funeral.[25]

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[19] Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyc Robbins, "Social Memory Studies: From 'Collective Memory' to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices," *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24 (1998): 109, 123. The author's point to the connections between Halbwachs, Edward Schils, and Benedict Anderson in regad to generational memory. Edward Schils asserts that younger generations define themselves in contrast to earlier generations and both authors underscore the importance of youth in nationalist movements. See: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communisties: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1991) and Edward Schils, *Tradition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981).

[20] Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, Translated and Edited, Lewis A.Coser (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992) see: "The Legendary Topography of the Gospels in the Holy Land," especially, 194, 231-235.

[21] Ibid., 26.

[22] According to Hutton the historians job is to "trace present ideas retrospectivelt" in "Sigmund Freud and Maurice Halbwachs,"150.

[23] See Barry Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000) 18-19 and Olick and Robbins discussion, "Social Memory Studies,"124.

[24] Olick and Robbins, 111.

[25] The speeches at the funeral were remarkably similar calling for Hungarian sovereignty, democracy, and the withdrawal of Soviet troops. See especially the Speches of Sandor Kopacsi, Imre Mécs, Victor Orban. It has been remarked that the applause stirred by Orban's speech could be found in the tenor of the presentation and he fact he represented the future generations of Hungarians at the time. Karl P. Benziger, "The Funeral of Imre Nagy: Contested History and the Power of Memory Culture," *History and Memory*, 12, 2 (Fall/Winter, 2000): 152-153. See also: Richard R. Weiner, "Discourse and Argument in Instituting the Governance of Social Law," *Central European Political Science Review*, 5, 15 (2005): 6-34.

The collective conscience can be seen not as external to each conscience, but immanent within it. This is based on the phenomenologists' of "intentionality:" the conscience exists as a tension towards that which is beyond it and resists it; consciousness is consciousness of something. Contrary to Durkheim's "classical" conception of the individual consciences closed up within them, and passively receiving external and objective representations of the collective conscience, Georges Gurvitch's notion of the collective conscience is presentative. By virtue of the latently open conscience, there can be interpenetration or participation of consciences, immanent within each conscience.[26]

Moving beyond the more morphological structuralism of Durkheim and Halbwachs we are moved to ask, "To what extent does the June 16, 1989 memorial serve as a collective memory sigifier?" this addresses Pierre Bourdieu's poststructural critique—the need to move beyond a focus on the categorical to one of texts, forms of life and their effects/affects.[27]

These themes are developed by Gilles Deleuze, who moves beyond the inter-subjectivity orientation of Gurvitch (and Habermas/Ricoeur today), to the affect/effect of constellations of "subject positions," "zones of indetermination and experimentations" - - where things may go off in unforeseen directions or work in unregulated ways.[28]

Deleuze following Bergson moves beyond representation to memory and desire/remembering and yearning. The historicization of the experience of time and memory are not understandable as coherent wholes, but open to critique and deconstruction.[29] Collective memory is the presence of the past in public. And the flows of desire re-cathect to images – movement images and time images. These are the stutters, the hesitations, the moments of rapture and fragmentation, the prolonged duration (durée), the juxtapositions, the flashbacks, the flash-forwards, the perception of

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[26] Symbols are the mediation between the content of the signification intended, and the collective actors involved. Such symbols can veil the communication they seek to disclose and so hinder participation in it. Gurvitch believed that there are depth levels of social reality below the symbolic levels that are spontaneous, innovating and creative in nature and ontologically prior as the foundation of any social framework of knowledge. See: Georges Gurvitch, *The Social Frameworks of Knowledge*, translated by M.A. and K. A. Thompson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971) supplement, 231-234. It is a social interaction that Alfred Schultz saw as essential to all communication: "a mutual tuning-in relation" by which I and Thou are expressed by the participants as a "We." See chapter nine especially pages 214-217 in Alfred Schultz, *On Phenomenology and Social Relations*, Helmut O. Wagner, ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970). Gurvitch asserts that beneath all forms of collective attitudes, organizations, patterns, signs, roles, and symbols, there exists a sphere of collective behavior, ideas, and values, and at the most profound level: the collective conscience.

[27] Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, translated by, R. Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

[28] See: Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonianism*, translated by H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 1988), *Pure Innocence*, translated by A. Boyman (New York: Zone Books, 2002), and *Difference et repetition* (Paris: universitaires de France, 1969).

[29] See for example, Reinhart Kosalleck, *Vergangene Zukunft Zur Smantic geschichtkicher Zeiten* (1979) (Futures Past: On Historical Semantics of Historical Time, translated by Keith Tribe (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985).

time not just as chronology.[30] They involve what Derrida calls "spectral" or ghostly remembrance – as presence that counters an absence, caused by suppressing, forgetting, repressing, and/or traumatically sealing off.[31] They never die; they are always to come - - and to come back. Memory traces. Flows of desire, Flows of movement, Flows of time, Unconscious wishes, Suppressed pasts, Haunting specters. The desire to make meanings, The desire to make narratives and myths. Conjuring up hidden pictures, Signifiers of desire and attachment.

Deleuze frames movement images and time images in a manner that recalls the *disemptive* method of Georges Sorel:[32]

- foregoing an attempt to grasp a thing in toto/resisting any tendency to discover internally consistent totality; and
- viewing totality from various vantage points, rather than seeking the single focus from which totality can be taken in.

Diremptions differ from Weberian ideal types in that they do not set out to present internally consistent ideal pictures or repetitive causal occurrences or sequences of events. They take us from one plateau to another.

Unlike Durkheim, Halbwachs or Gurvitch, poststructuralism presents memory culture not as a field of reflective representation, but as a field of traces– as an *assemblage* establishing connection between multiplicities, between deconstructable moments of experience without ever providing an assured final resting place for a reflection on ourselves.[33] We are moved by poststructuralism from the use of concepts of role-playing and role-taking (*la langue*) -- to an understanding of the concept of "positioning," that is, the ways in which subjectivity is positioned in discursive practices (*le langage*).[34]

The recollected text is a field of recombinatory elements for novel imaginative projecting and instituting. The constellation of discursive subject positions exist as arcs and trajectories - - as a predicate logic with unfulfilled commitments and claims. Along this

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[30] Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement Image*, translated by H. Tomlinson and R. Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989) and Gilled Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time Image*, translated by H. Tomlinson and R. Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989).

[31] See for example, Jacques Derrida, *Spectres of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, translated by P. Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994).

[32] See John J. Cerullo, "A Literary Sorel: Disrempting a *Fin de Siecle* Moralist," *History of Political Thought*, 24, 1 (2003): 130 and H. Stuart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society*, revised edition (New York: Random House Vintage, 1977) 92-93, 173.

[33] In *The Deleuze Connections* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000) chapter one footnote 11 John Rajchman cites Isaac Joseph, "Gabriel Tarde: Le monde comme féerie,"*Oeuvres de Gabriel Tarde*, vol. 4, pp. 9ff in an anthology edited by Eric Alliez, *Empecheurs de penser eu rond* (Paris, 1999). Rajchman sees the Joseph piece as "Deleuze inspired,"in developing Deleuze's idea of Tarde "as inventor of micro-sociology -- in opposition to Durkheim's holism and historicism."Tarde is presented in a Bergsonian context where he "discovers another kind of space and time of belief and desire."

[34] Rom Harre and Bronwyn Davies, "Positioning: the Discursive Production of Selves," *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior*, 20, 1 (1991): 44-63; Rom Harre and Luk van Langehove, *Positioning Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998); Jacob Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse: Ladau, Mouffe and Zizek* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999).

arc of subject positions, relations are constantly being dissolved, recast, and reformulated so that an identity emerges and is not discovered.

Diremptive scanning reveals floating signifiers that have not delivered on their commitments. They are positioned within narratives not as sedimented moments or static snapshots, but as panning shots of a collective identity/collective conscience in motion.

III

October 23, 2006 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution and was marked by the Hungarian public being denied access from much of the public state ritual that had been broadly advertised prior to the event.[35] The Parliament had been cordoned off and the official flag raising ceremony that began the day's events was attended only by guests and the diplomatic corps. As if to underline the emptiness of what had been the epicenter of mass mobilization fifty years past a televised broadcast later that day revealed dancers performing to an empty square in front of the Parliament.[36] Instead of a demonstration of political unity as revealed by Nagy's funeral in 1989 the event was marked by deep political divisions that included a separate commemoration staged by the Socialist's main opposition party FIDESZ (Young Democrats). Indeed, mass participation was revealed only in the FIDESZ event attended by over 100,000. Demonstrations and violence erupted in the streets and were met head on by the police with one confrontation ending only in the early hours of the next day.

Hungarian Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany of the Socialist Party and President László Sólyam who had been a founding member of the center right Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) claimed it was their intention to celebrate fiftieth anniversary commemorations of the Revolution with the entire country. Jenö Fonay a revolutionary and member of the Emlékévet Előkészitő Bizottság (Committee to Prepare for the Anniversary Year) asserted that the statue being erected on the site where one to Joseph Stalin had stood until torn down by the Revolutionaries would bring a renewed sense of solidarity among the Hungarian people. Underlying these assertions of unity, however, was a sense of bitterness that threatened to dilute the plans for a unified celebration. Speaking on the occasion of the annual commemoration held for Imre Nagy on June 16, 2006 Mária Wittner a revolutionary and member of FIDESZ bitterly criticized what she claimed was a false sense of unity asserting that "we are not going to assist in the preparations for the commemorations [in this context]." Raising the well worn linkage between the Socialist Party and the former Communist Party she stated, "Those who suppressed or assisted in the suppression of the Revolution will have their celebration and those righteous people [revolutionaries and those who remained true to those ideals] will have their celebrations."[37] Another FIDESZ MP János Horvath who had been a member

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[35] For example see "Köszönet a szabadság hőseinek, 1956-2006 (Thank you to the heroes of freedom)," *Népszabadság*, 21 October 2006, 10. The events began on October 21 and continued through November 4.
[36] Fireworks that took place later in the evening could only be viewed on the public television see: Zsolt Gréczy, "Zárt kapuk mögött, méltósággal (Behind closed doors with dignity)," *Népszabadság*, 24 October, 2006, 2.
[37] Zsolt Gréczy, "Két ünnepre készül a jobboldal?" (Does the right wing prepare for two celebrations?), *Népszabadság*, 16 June, 2006, 3.

of Nagy's government hoped that differences could yet be put aside for the sake of the momentous national occasion. And yet, at the time of the memorial former FIDESZ Prime Minister Victor Orbán had remained silent and FIDESZ did not organize a memorial for the occasion giving the impression that Nagy embodied ideas only for the left center parties.[38]

In the wake of the Socialist victory in the Spring of 2006 questions of economy dominated the Hungarian's attention as the Socialist/SZDSZ coalition unrolled an agenda that proposed severe cutbacks in health and education to the chagrin of the public.[39] The election like the one held in 2002 was close in both rounds of voting.[40] The opposition seethed over what they viewed was a purposeful subversion of democracy made plain by the withholding of critical information regarding Hungary's economic health during the first and second rounds of voting. Discussions and problems regarding the fiftieth anniversary commemorations were placed in the background as the public discussed and debated the economic program forwarded by the majority.

On Saturday September 16, 2006 a stunned nation listened to the broadcast of a leaked tape that captured Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány admitting in a closed door session of the Socialist faction that his Party had lied about the state of the economy. The effect was immediate. Demonstrators primarily from the center right opposition parties gathered the next day at Kossuth Square, and the demonstrations continued day and night through the evening of October 22. FIDESZ responded to the Prime Minister's announcement by insisting that he resign based on his lack of veracity with the public.[41] The size of the crowd ebbed and flowed, and swelled to the size of tens of thousands at major events sponsored by FIDESZ that included speakers and music.

Protestors moved from Kossuth Square to the headquarters of the National television on Monday September 18, 2006, taking up in the downstairs foyer. The demonstrators were ultimately driven out, but not before they set several cars on fire and damaging the building.[42] The violence and the vandalism was apparently the work of an extreme right

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[38] Zsolt Grécy, "Nagy Imre csak a balodalé? (Does Imre Nagy belong only to the left?)," *Népszabadság*, 17 June, 2006, 3.

[39] For example, the proposed reduction of hospital beds, closing of hospitals, introduction of co-pays for medical visits, and the introduction of tuition in higher education. See: "Miniszteri programmorzsák,: Megkezdődtek a bizottsági meghallgatások-Slágertémák, hatósági energiaár (Ministerial program crumbs: Committee hearings began-Most popular subjects co-pay, centrally regulated energy pricing)," *Népszabadság*, 7 June, 2006, 1-2.

[40] In the first round FIDESZ polled 42.16% of the vote as opposed to the Socialist majority off 43.30%. The other two parties polling over 5% were the SZDSZ 6.29% and MDF 5.03%. See: "Négypárti parlament! (Four Party Parliament)," *Népszabadság Online*, 9 April 2006, http://www.nol.hu/cikk/400127 and Csaba Lukács, "Még négy nehéz év (Four hard years)," *Magyar Nemzet Online*, 24 April 2006, http://www.mno.hu/print.mno?type=3&id=350393&rvt=114&t=undefined.

[41] President Solyom seemed to support the opposition's position saying, "There was nothing new in the content of [Gyurcsány's speech]" and claimed that the false promises made by the Socialists had created a moral crisis. As the President however, he could not request his resignation. "Morális válság Magyarországon (Moral crisis in Hungary)," *Népszabadság*, 19 September, 2006, 2.

[42] After the crowd was driven away from the building they attacked a monument commemorating the Soviet liberation of Budapest. "Megtámadták az MTV-t, az ellenzék sem ura a helyzetnek-Mi lesz ma (They attacked the MTV, even the opposition parties can not control the situation, what will happen

wing faction associated with a soccer club, although a FIDESZ representative was spotted among the crowd. Victor Orbán, co-founder of FIDESZ, disavowed the use of violence and distanced himself and his party away from the incident at the television station and other instances of violence in the streets that occurred later that week. But the Socialists quickly countered that FIDESZ in its support for the demonstrations in front of the Parliament and confrontational demands that Gyucsány step down were in fact encouraging the more extremist right wing elements that had attached themselves to the demonstration. Indeed, some demonstrators carried flags emblazoned with the Royal Coat of Arms, and the red and silver Árpád flag that had been incorporated into the fascist Arrow Cross flags and the end of World War II. Some even voiced their demand for the restoration of the *Királyság* (Hungarian Kingdom) before its dismemberment after World War II.[43]

Neither Gyurcsány nor Orbán were willing to back down and both jockeyed for political advantage. The countrywide elections for local governments on October 1 provided the opposition with an opportunity to gauge public dissatisfaction with the Socialist coalition and their economic program. During the run up to the election FIDESZ leaders energized their base with demands for Gyurcsány's resignation. The mayor of Debrecen suggested that local leaders be given the power to veto governmental budgets in order to "help Hungarians defend their towns and cities against the Prime Minister." Orbán hoped that if the Socialists lost they would be forced to give up on the Socialist economic program.[44]

The rhetoric became even more heated as election-day approached. At a rally in mid September Orbán stated "We need every single vote so we could begin moving against the government…Once they have the results of the Revolution [election]…they [the opposition in Parliament] can stand up to the government in a radical deliberate way…the foundation to stand up against the government must be laid by the people." Gyurcsány pounced, "Orbán is questioning the legitimacy of the government…we can have a debate about everything, government decisions, promises…But to promote radical resistance…steps over the line…Today the President of FIDESZ crossed over the Rubicon."[45] If Gyurcsány's proposed cutbacks to Hungarian's social security had enraged the populace, his revelations on September 16 sealed the deal and the Socialists took a beating at the polls.[46] Gyurcsány all but ignored calls for his resignation and his coalition remained firm in their promotion for austerity. He instead requested of vote of confidence from the Parliament on October 2, 2006.

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today)?" *Népszava*, 19 Septmeber, 2006, 1-2 and Összecsapás a tévé előtt (Riot in front of the television station)," *Népszabadság*, 19 September, 2006, 1.

[43] For example see: Antónia Rádi, "Ria, ria, Hungária (football slogan that rhymes with Hungary)," *hvg*, 28, 38 (22 September, 2006): 10-11 and in regard to the sighting of the FIDESZ representative *Népszava*, 19 September, 2006, 1. These symbols were ever present throughout the demonstrations and were available at small stands set up along the periphery of Kossuth Square.

[44] Dávid Trencséni, "Vakhit (Blind belief)," *168 óra*, 18, 36 (7 September, 2006): 10-11.

[45] "Orbán radikális fellépést ígér (Orbán is promising a radical platform)," *Népszabadság*, 14 September, 2006, 2.

[46] The FIDESZ victory at the mayoral and county level was decisive. Though SZDSZ/MSZP and MSZP candidates won mayoralties in four of Hungary's major cities, Budapest, Szeged, Miskolc, and Pécs, FIDESZ won decisive county majorities in all but Budapest and Heves county. See: *Népszava*, 2 October, 2006, 1-2.

Orbán responded to Gyurcsány by demanding that the Socialists dismiss Gyurcsány from office within 72 hours. Orbán dismissed Gyurcsány's request for a vote of confidence saying that this was "an old trick," what was really needed was a vote of censure.[47] The vote was a foregone conclusion for the center left coalition, 207-165, with 12 abstentions. The vote was followed by an apology of sorts from the Prime Minister. He apologized that "…they [the Socialists] had tried to avoid simple answers…they did not speak honestly with the people." Gyurcsány continued by apologizing for his use of "harsh and rude language" that many found offensive. He also defended himself against the accusations that the government had cheated and knowingly misled the people in connection with the national elections the previous spring. He then launched into a frontal attack against Orbán stating "…the debate in Parliament is an attempt by the minority to attack the constitution…their goal is to force early elections…and [once in power] rewrite the constitution to Viktor Orbán's taste."[48] It was in this atmosphere that FIDESZ spokesman Péter Szijjártó announced that they would not participate in any of the planned commemorations in which the Prime Minister was scheduled to speak. FIDESZ would only attend ceremonies where the President would speak as he represented a symbol of national unity. The final blow came with the announcement that FIDESZ would hold a separate commemoration on October 23.[49]

In this poisoned atmosphere the FIDESZ demonstrations in front of the Parliament replete with calls for the Prime Minister's resignation and the "Revolution" of October served to fold the contemporary political crisis into the memorialization of what was the pivotal event of Hungary's twentieth century history. Who were the inheritors of 1956?

Discussion of 1956 and the principal actors like Imre Nagy can easily melt into an evaluation of the communist period. Though committed to a unified celebration of the Revolution President László Sólyam expressed his unease with Nagy and his confederates when he stated, "It's up to the youth to create a holiday on October 23 like that on March 15…we have almost everything for that…even if we do not have symbolic individuals like Petőfi and Kossuth…"[50] The Revolutionaries of 1848 present less controversy as they are portrayed as remaining steadfast to the ideals of the of the liberal revolution to the end. Though utilized for different political ends the events and players of 1848 have been highlighted by Hungarian governments since the establishment of the Dual Monarchy in 1867. Even the Stalinist state included the glorious story of the

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[47] See: "Gyurcsány Ferenc bizalmi szavazást kér (Gyurcsány requests a vote of confidence)," and Ildikó Csuhaj, Orbán Viktor 72 órás ultimátomot adott (Viktor Orbán issues a 72 hour ultimatum)," both in *Népszabadság*, 3 October, 2006, 3.

[48] "Folytathatja munkáját a kormány (The government can continue with its work)," *Népszava*, 7 October, 2006, 3 and György B. Nagy, "Gyurcsány harmadszor is bizalmat kapott (Gyurcsány received a vote of confidence for a third time)," *Népszabadság*, 7 October, 2006, 2.

[49] Ildikó Csuhaj, "FIDESZ-Gyurcsány ne szólaljon meg az 56-os megemlékezéseken (Gyurcsány should not speak at the 56 commemorations)," *Népszabadság*, 12 October, 2006, 2.

[50] From a speech given at the State Opera House as part of the national commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the 1956 Revolution, Zsolt Gréczy, "Zárt Kapuk Mögött, méltósággal, Biztonsági okok miatt az állami vezetők többsége lemondta részvételét az esti ünnepségeken (Behind closed doors with dignity, due to security reasons the majority of the state leaders excused themselves from the evening celebrations" *Népszabadság*, 24 October 2007, 2.

revolution in secondary school textbooks, albeit with a Stalinist interpretation tagged on at the end. 1848 provides a certain consensus that legitimizes the actions of its heroes, unlike the historical actors of 1956 whose actions are interwoven in the past and present.[51]

As we have reviewed former revolutionaries themselves were divided over the idea of reconciliation. In the politics of the new Republic of 1989 the right wing factions proposed various narrative strands from the past that portrayed the communist period as an aberration not reflective of the national spirit. In this guise the leader of Hungary's interwar regime, Miklos Horthy 1920-1944 is recognized for his steadfast stand against Bolshevism and preservation of Hungary's independence. Hungary's alliance with the Axis powers and Horthy's role in the holocaust is either downplayed or ignored.[52] Likewise Socialists and other center left parties see themselves as inheritors of Nagy's social reforms. His Stalinist past is in part shrouded by his association with land reform following World War II that was a common goal of the majority parties of the short lived Republic 1945-1948. Further complicating this story was the common goal among many within the dominant Smallholders Party and governing coalition that included the communists to rid Hungary of its fascist strand. The problem lay in the fact that the Soviets and their Hungarian cohorts used this purge in their bid to create a one party state. Politicians regularly resurrect the past in order to bludgeon their opponents.

The historian Zoltán Ripp has suggested that from the perspective of the second Soviet attack against the revolutionaries on November 4, it is possible to portray the Revolution selectively as a War of National Liberation where focus is placed on the heroism of the streets and as an uprising against communism.[53] This has also served the needs of those distancing themselves from Nagy and his fellow communist reformers.[54]

According to journalist Ildikó Hankó, "We will need many decades to understand that the true heroes were not those thinking within reform [Imre Nagy and his confederates], but the young ones [street fighters] whose natural instinct was for freedom."[55] The terror enacted by Kádár very deliberately targeted workers and adolescents who had fought

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[51] "When past and present remain interwoven, there is no clear dichotomy between history and memory." Saul Friedlander, "A Conflict of Memories? The New German Debates About the Final Solution," Leo Baeck Memorial Lecture 31 (Leo Baeck Institute: New York, 1988) 18.

[52] Horthy enjoyed wide backing for these policies that were seen, in part, for redressing the unjust settlement at the Trianon Palace. Alliance with the Axis powers had ensured territorial redress that restored parts of Slovakia, Serbia, and Transylvania to the Hungarians. István Deák, "A Fatal Compromise? The Debate Over Collaboration and Resitance in Hungary," István Deák, Jan T. Gross and Tony Judt, eds., *The Politics of Retribution in Europe: World War II and its Aftermath* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000) 48.

[53] Hungary withdrew from the Warsaw Pact and declared neutrality on November 1, 1956.

[54] Zoltán Ripp claims that this approach can easily be connected to the hero cult of the *Pesti Srác* (young street fighters of Pest) whose memory can be constructed in contrast to the communist reformers in "Problémák, hiányok és nézetkülönbségek 1956 történetírásában (Problems, absence and differences of viewpoints in the writing of history of 1956)," *Múltunk*, 51, 4 (2006): 106, 108.

[55] Ildikó Hankó, "A Magyar Jeanne d'Arc, "Te is tudod, hogy a vád hamis, csak a szent forradalmat akarják bemocskolni," *Magyar Demokrata*, 10, 2 (12 October, 2006): 66.

alongside them.[56] For some within the spectrum of the center right coalition it remained galling that former members of Kádár's regime were still actively engaged in politics and desired what they considered a completion of the goals of the Revolution that included purging communists from government.[57] The question of lustration had been raised in 1989 and in response to the demand for a more radical regime change József Antall replied, "[you] should have fomented Revolution."[58] In 2006 scores remained unsettled.

The demonstrations continued right up to the weekend that the official State commemorations were to begin. Initially the demonstrators had been told that they would have to clear the square by midnight Friday October 20. At the last minute the authorities changed their minds and instead erected a barricade that cut off the demonstrator's sight line to the area where the ceremonies would take place.[59] In response, demonstrators threatened to use their amplifiers to drown out the commemorations taking place on the other side of the barricade. Then, early in the morning of October 23, the police used the pretext of a security search to ensure the safety of the foreign delegation attending the ceremonies that day, and cleared the demonstrators off the square.[60] The square was sealed off from the public with a fence manned by the police. A series of noisy but small demonstrations ensued later that morning resulting in the police expanding the security zone around the Parliament.

Commemorations did take place, but with the public in most cases kept at a distance for fear of violent disruption. The exclusive nature of the official celebrations was a sharp contrast to the mass participation that was the mark of the actual Revolution, and a photograph of the Prime Minister performing *kegyelet* at the new monument to the Revolution during the dedication ceremony seemed to heighten this fact.[61] Even more

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[56] For example, Péter Mansfeld who was hanged in 1959 was fifteen when h fought with the Revolutionaries at Széna Square. György Litván, ed., *The Hungarian Revolution of 1956: Reform, Revolt, Repression, 1953-1963* (London: Longman, 1996) 142 and Attila Szakolczai, "Repression and Restoration, 1956-1963," Lee W. Congdon and Béla K. Király, ed., *The Ideas of the Hungarian Revolution, Suppressed and Victorious, 1956-1999* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002) 174, 179.

[57] A policy of lustration had not been enacted in 1989. According to Beverly A. James, A verbal agreement had been reached at the Roundtable talks that ensured there would be no retaliatory justice of this kind in her fine work *Imagining Post Communism: Visual Narratives of Hungary's 1956 Revolution* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2005) 107.

[58] András Bozóki, "The Hungarian Roundtable Talks of 1989 in a Central European Comparison," *The Ideas of the Hungarian Revolution*, 252.

[59] The demonstrators had the legal right to be on the Square until October 25, and so, the government had to negotiate with them. The police ordered them off the square, but renewed negotiations led to an arrangement in which the demonstrators agreed to a police cordon and to maintain order. Later it was reported that they could stay with norestriction. See: "Feltételekkel maradhatnak a tüntetők (The demonstrators can stay with restrictions)," *Népszabadság*, 19 October, 2006, 2 and Maradhatnak a Kossuth tériek (The Kossuth Square demonstrators can stay)," *Magyar Nemzet*, 21 October, 2006, 5.

[60] "Vízágyú, könnygáz és gumilövedék az utcákon (Water cannons, tear gas, rubber bullets on the street)," *Népszava*, 24 October, 2006, 11.

[61] For example see Gábor Kertész' picture of Gyurcsány on page 3 of *Népszava*, 24 October, 2006.

bizarre were a series of performances at the Parliament that took place with no audience. During the performances a television camera panned an empty Kossuth Square.[62]

This pattern continued throughout the next two weeks and concluded on the evening of November 4. The final event of the commemorations that took place on Heroes Square was the wreathing of the tomb of the Unknown Soldier in honor of those Revolutionaries who had died fighting for their country.[63] Prior to the ceremony the public was told via loudspeaker to leave as the official commemoration was about to begin. The Prime Minister, his guests, and a military honor guard alone in the square conveyed a message far different from the message that briefly informed the Hungarian polity on June 16, 1989.

Where did everybody go on October 23? A counter commemoration was sponsored by FIDESZ and KDNP at Astoria, the site of bitter fighting during the Revolution. A crowd of over 100,000 showed up, and included many families with children. The speeches were fiery in their denunciation of the Gyurcsány and the Socialist coalition. FIDESZ and the Christian Democrats proposed that a referendum in which education, pensions, health care, and what they identified as democratic guarantees should be presented to the Hungarian people. Orbán proclaimed, "This [the referendum] will seal the fate of the government based on lies." He explained that by lying about the economy during the spring elections they had "cheated us…they took away the right of free elections…the right that was achieved by the heirs of 1956." The impassioned speech hearkened back to the tactics FIDESZ and SZDSZ had used to push the communists out of power in 1989. He concluded, "1956 was a miracle in its birth, short life and death…it happened in a country tortured twice by the greatest lie of the twentieth century, Socialism!"[64] The speech concluded with thunderous applause by an enthusiastic audience unaware that the police were driving a violent demonstration in their direction.

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[62] Fireworks that took place later in the evening could only be viewed on the public television see: Zsolt Gréczy, "Zárt kapuk mögött, méltósággal (Behind closed doors with dignity)," *Népszabadság*, 24 October, 2006, 2.

[63] The construction of Heroes Square was begun in 1896 to celebrate the millennium of the Hungarian Kingdom. Alice Freifeld makes the point that the "Millennium Exhibition remained in Hungarian historical consciousness as a monument to past greatness." *Nationalism and the Crowd in Liberal Hungary, 1848-1914* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000) 277. The establishment of the Dual Monarchy enabled Hungarians to re-imagine the glory of their past medieval kingdom. See: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1991) 82 and Éva Somogyi, "The Age of Neoabsolutism, 1849-1867,"*A History of Hungary*, ed. Peter F.Sugar, Péter Hanák, Tibor Frank (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994) 251. Like the manipulation of holidays and textbooks by liberals, authoritarians, and communists, Heroes Square serves the same purpose. See: Alice Freifeld, "The Cult of March 15: Sustaining the Hungarian Myth of Revolution, 1849-1999," in *Staging the Past: The Politics of Commemoration in Hapsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the Present*, ed., Maria Burcur and Nancy M. Wingfield (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2001) and Benziger, *Imre Nagy Martyr of the Nation*, 88-90, 144-145. The sociologist Gabor Gyanni underscored this penchant for manipulation regarding the replacement of statuary in the square to accord with politics of the day. For example Marx and Engels replaced Hapsburg figures after the 1919 Commune in his paper "Collective National Memory and the Cultic Use of Metropolitan Space," Humanities Center Workshop on "Contested Spatialities," Harvard University, 2 May, 2008.

[64] "Refomnépszavazást kezdeményez a Fidesz (FIDESZ will initiate a reform referendum)," Magyar Nemzet Online, 24 October, 2007, http:/www.mno.hu/print.mno?type=2&id=380010&rvt=2&t=undefined.

A group of several thousand noisy demonstrators confronted the police on Károly körút, which is part of the inner ring of Pest and not far from Astoria. The violence was reminiscent of clashes that had characterized the week of September 18, except this time the police were much more aggressive in their use of tear gas, water canons, and rubber bullets. Orbán had again distanced himself from the violence and instructed those attending the commemoration to do so as well. The demonstrators cast themselves as inheritors of the Revolution and were not to be quelled. Their nationalist banners pointed to the recidivist politics of the extreme right wing, and yet there was also a certain feeling of anarchy to the event. At one point several young men commandeered a Russian tank that had been on display and drove through the streets adding to the unreality of the scene.[65] The riot ultimately wound up near Erzsébet Bridge with the police and demonstrators doing battle until the early hours of October 24. Accusations abounded that the police had trapped innocents in their cordon, including some of those who attended the FIDESZ event at Astoria only a few blocks away.[66]

Denying the public the opportunity to participate in the State commemorations certainly played into the hands of the Socialist's opponents. But what of the many who had stayed at home? Many Hungarians were disconcerted to see a building that had been beautifully restored after the Revolution being damaged. Further the chaos in the streets and demonstrators mocking the police with chants of AVH from behind barricades served to alienate many. What FIDESZ might have gained by Gyurcsány's revelations seemed to be somewhat thwarted by a public disgruntled by the violence. Finally, though many Hungarians sympathized with the FIDESZ critique of the Socialist's economic program, their accord with the various aspects of the right wing agenda was dubious.

At a conference held at the Italian Institute of Culture in Budapest on September 28, 2006 Jenő Fónay provided an account of the fighting at Széna Square, his relationship with Péter Mansfeld, and his time in prison. Fónay's anti-communist views are well known and he wrote passionately regarding the Socialist appropriation of Imre Nagy prior to the parliamentary debate over the Memory Bill. And yet, at the conference he underscored the connection between Imre Nagy and the Revolutionaries, echoing Ottó Sándorfy's assertions that the two can not be separated.[67] He was among many former

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[65] See the Árpád Kurucz photo and "Az erőszak dúlt az utcán (Violence in the streets)," *Népszabadság*, 24 October, 2006, 4 and "Vízágyú (Water cannon)," *Népszava*, 24 October, 2006, 11.

[66] Dávid Trecséni, "Ünnep az utcán (Holiday in the streets)," *168 óra*, 28, 43 (26 October, 2006): 10. Népszava reported that the day began and ended the same way with the police dispersing demonstrators. In the middle of Orbán's speech it was learned that the police were dispersing the riot on Károly ring and some tried to leave, but were unable to do so because of the size of the crowd. "Tízezrek az Astoriánál (Tens of thousands at Astoria)," *Népszava*, 24 October, 2006, pages 1 and 9 respectively. According to László Rab some thought that the crowd had been provoked but the nature of the crowd definitely changed around seven in the evening when a barricade was erected and some within the crowd appeared with baseball bats and masks. The location of the rally certainly made it hard for some at the rally trying to leave in "Csapdába csalt nagygyűlés (Entrapped Rally)," *Népszabadság*, 24 October, 2006, 6. According to *HetiVválasz* the police were supposed to protect the FIDESZ rally from the other group in "Erőszakspirál (Spiral of violence)," 6, 43 (26 October, 2006): 4.

[67] "1956 and Hungary: The Memory of Eyewitnesses in Search of Freedom and Democracy," Conference, Italian Institute of Culture, Budapest, 28-29 September, 2006.

Revolutionaries who accepted honors from the Hungarian government and on October 22 shook hands in the Parliament with both the President László Sólyom and Prime Minister Ferenc Gyucsány. This act of reconciliation was not followed by all present, but indicated the possibility that the commemorations signified.[68]

IV

Dominick LaCapra claims that the generalizations found in competing narratives pose a danger in the ability of a society to "come to terms with the past."[69] Societies that have experienced trauma and violence are often thought to require a re-birthing in order to come to terms with what has happened-to face its truth and "work through it." LaCapra has repeatedly emphasized how the psychoanalytical concept of "working through" is essential to any adequate understanding and response to trauma.[70] In *The Origin of German Tragic Drama / Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels*, Walter Benjamin talks of chasing spirits back into their bodies, and redeeming them through law. In discussing these German "mourning plays" (*Trauerspiels*), Gillian Rose recalls the burial of the Athenian general Phocion, unjustly executed and slandered. His wife – determined to mourn his death and provide proper burial rites beyond the city walls of Athens – ate his ashes, giving them a proper burial, incarnating him. Rites of mourning extend into hope for the future, for new attachments and for re-engagement with life.[71] LaCapra points us to a third option. This is more self questioning meta-narrative--one which helps us to gain critical distance from the trauma and collective effervescence associated with it so that we can assume responsibility in dealing with it.[72]

The Nagy memorials ultimately refer to how we participate in the tragedy of Nagy's execution. It is in the tradition of the lamentation and spectacle of the Central European mourning play that Benjamin critically analyzed in the middle 1920's. This is a tradition that Benjamin saw as dissolving the tragic into spectacle.[73]

Beyond the mourning, Benjamin argues, can we transcend the spectacle of shared suffering, shared melancholy, and shared atonement? Can we do so in a meaningful and knowing participation in the tragic, not as a closed drama based on myth, oracular mystery, martyrdom or the un-interred corpse? Can we do so as an incomplete and unfolding drama characterized not by a sense of redemptive finality, but by an ongoing

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[68] "Kitüntetések az évfordulón (Honors on the anniversary)," *Népszabadság*, 22 October, 2006, 7.
[69] Dominick La Capra, "Revisiting the Historian's Debate: Mourning and Genocide," *History and Memory*, 9, 1/2 (Fall, 1997): 84.
[70] See: Dominick La Capra, *The Holocaust Historians: Theory and Trauma* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999) and "Revisiting the Historian's Debate: Mourning and Genocide," *History and Memory*, 80-82.
[71] Gillian Rose, *Mourning Becomes the Law: Philosophy and Representation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
[72] Interview with Professor Dominick La Capra. Shoah Resource Center, Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 9 June, 1998, http://www.yad-vashem.org.il/odot_pdt.
[73] Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* (Ursprung der deutschen Trauerspiel), translated by J. Osborne (London: Verso, 1988) and *Undersanding Brecht* (Versuche über Brecht), translated by S. Mitchell (London: New Left Books, 1973).

redemptive critique – with a collective conscience that history might have been different and can be different?

Narratives enable us to grapple with the ambiguity, the diversity, the discontinuity and the mystery that comes with our being in the world, and with the collective memory that comes with being. To an extent, the collective representations involved in the reconstruction of knowledge within a narrative may reveal an immanent propositional content of the way we negotiate our world and our humanity. Narrative attempts to provide closure to some sense of our being in the world. In so doing, narratives foreshadow, backshadow, and side shadow. As readers [or viewers], we need to guard against illusory or mythic unifying narratives.

The dead refuse to go away. They stir up dread and haunting - - until their promise is fulfilled and their narrative is completed, "until their stories register."[74] Events, images, memories, and explanations are conjured up diremptively. There is both a collective forgetting in overcoming trauma by confining it to oblivion;[75] and there is a collective remembering.

Piacular Subjectivity and *Collective Conscience*, as Charles Lemert notes,[76] are ghost concepts that live on, haunting us, refusing to go away, open to revision. Piacular subjectivity as a collective conscience could be understood as the master narrative from which the aforementioned meta-narratives derive. Thus, piacular subjectivity can be understood as the depth level narrative relations of moral conscience shared collectively - - both in terms of a need to recollect and recognize transgressions/sins, and a need to atone for them.

Yet our attempt at narrating the piacular subjectivity involved in the funeral reveal less of a master narrative, and more of a field of traces - - both representational and non-representational images and practices.

What we have re-collected and revealed is a text of yearning and longing for a Hungarian collective identity in the practices and movements of historical groups. That text reveals a great deal of presence of absence, and a field of recombinatory images, ideas and yearnings open to diverse re-assembling.

In closing, we may also ponder the events of October 23, 2006. Specifically, we may consider the extent to which the piacular subjectivity studied in the Hungarian context can fragment into an extremism that can be characterized as a baroque subjectivity: the mournful and melancholy evocation of a sense of passion and ecstasy, the assaulting of the senses and the emotions rather than the invocation of resignifying commitments that relate past moments to the present and future ones, as well as to a rebirth. A baroque subjectivity can manifest the weakness of a core collective conscience: marked by the

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[74] Charles Lemert, *Durkheim's Ghosts: Cultural Logics and Social Things* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) 6.
[75] Marc Auge, *Oblivion*, translated by M. de Jager (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004).
[76] See: Charles Lemert, *Durkheim's Ghosts*.

grotesque, the bizarre (*barroco* in Portuguese); and positioned between a melancholic despair and the dizzying, inhabited by ghosts, zombies, and the dead, bleeding both into the past and into the future.[77]

The historian Saul Frielander has commented that when examining a contested historical event that includes the memories of living political actors the line between memory and historical reality is blurred. Constructing a narrative in this context is enhanced by the memories of victims, perpetrators, and bystanders who then shed light on an event as interested parties.[78] The bitter struggle that marked the fiftieth anniversary commemoration called upon specters and traces from the past in an attempt to manipulate the event to accord with political ends rather than a detailed accounting of the event that would reveal the complexity and ambiguity associated with the event. The focus on political ends shrouded rather than highlighted contemplation on this contested history dampening the possibility for the reconciliation hoped for by the planners of the commemoration. The national narratives of the 1848 and 1956 Revolutions found in school texts provide a certain consensus regarding the heroism and righteousness of these events. The stories found in more advanced texts actually make an attempt to engage the complexity of these events and provide evidence of a collectively shared story. But the possibilities presented by these narratives are occluded by the ideologies we have identified and their differing portrayals of these histories, providing a counterpoint that has yet to find resolution.[79] Myth provides answers without ever explicitly posing a problem, specifying an argument, or developing a demonstration. It may be that a certain resolution/reconciliation can come only as the actors of this drama leave the political stage. The liberal society that lies at the heart of 1848 and 1956 were realized only for a brief moment before being repressed. The generation that only now is coming to its full is the first to live fully in the context of a democratic state, what stories will they write?

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[77] Our discussion of the "baroque"is informed by Boaventura de Sousa Santos: (1) "Three Metaphors for a New Conception of Law: The Frontier, The Baroque and the South," *Law and Society Review* 29, 4 (1995): 569-584; and (2) "Nuestra America: Reinventing a Subaltern Paradigm of Recognition and Redistribution," *Theory, Culture and Society*, 18, 6 (2001): 185-217. Also note the Chilean film-maker living and working in Paris: Raul Ruiz, *Poetics of Cinema*, translated by Brian Holmes (Paris: Dis Vior, 2005).

[78] For example, Saul Friedlander uses this technique as he debunks the myth of German ignorance of the Holocaust in *The Years of Extermination: Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1939-1945* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2007).xxvi, 510-517.

[79] Political actors continue to perceive the benefit that might accrue to them in a battle over history. Ideology of the present obscures the complex historical layering of the past century. See: Benziger, *Imre Nagy Martyr of the Nation*, 116 and Gyanni, "Collective National Memory and the Cultic Use of Metropolitan Space respectively.