ABSTRACT

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THE CULT OF HEROES IN THEATRICAL AND CINEMATOGRAPHIC MEMORY IN THE HUNGARIAN CULTURE OF ROMANIA BETWEEN 1945 AND 1975

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In the Romanian state socialism (1945-1989), the cultural and collective memory formation according to the dominant ideology focused on the cult of heroes. To construct the cult of heroes, to dramatise the rise of heroes, the state power narrative used the retelling of history. In the process of *narrativizating* the past, the distinction between the real and *the real could-have-been* disappears. The stake of my research is not other than to prove my claim that the state power sought to shape, influence and control cultural and theatrical memory in Romania through the construction of the cult of heroes.

The period I will examine is between 1945 and 1975. 1975 is not a clear political epoch, but the regression, the closure that followed the opening of 1968, seemed irreversibly final by the middle of the decade, irreversible, and therefore I see it as a kind of closing line in the post-war decades. Moreover, if we consider that the historical feature film *Ștefan cel Mare*, was released in 1975, and if we look at the thirty years following the second war, we see that the heroic image of state power moves from the peasant worker to the figure of the great king in 1975, that is, the emphasis shifts from the heroic image of the common son of the people to that of the great Leader.

Based on the analysis of the theatrical processes and Hungarian-language performances, texts published in the Hungarian and Romanian-language press in Romania, and films produced (and partly co-produced) in Romania within the boundaries of the period I have chosen, I assume that theatre and cinema, as mediators of dramatic texts and films on historical subjects, have significantly shaped cultural and collective memory. To prove this hypothesis, I will examine (mainly) through the performances of the Szekler State Theatre in Târgu Mures and the commemorations in Târgu Mures (Ady and Bolyai celebrations) the construction of the cult, the ways in which the cult of heroes is constructed in Romanian (historical) films, and the creation of sites of memory. In my research, I use material from the contemporary press, archival material (archives of editorial correspondence from the True Word, one of the most important literary journals of the period) and, to a lesser extent, oral history.

In the chapter of *The (institutionalised) intertwining of professional and amateur theatre in Romania between 1948 and 1953*, I assume that the state's cultural policy and its intention to shape cultural (and theatrical) memory attempted to blur the professional boundaries between professional and amateur theatre in order to unify them ideologically. In this phase of my research, the questions raised by the performance of János Taub's 1970 political-agitation drama *Don't Intervene, Listen to Me*, which evokes the 1939's Petőfi

celebrations in Sighisoara, led me to consider the institutional framework of the post-war cultural reorganisation. Understanding the process of building up a network of amateur, village and urban theatre circles, which emerged after 1945 but gained momentum after the electoral victory of the Romanian Workers' Party in 1948 and the start of nationalisation, and the cultural competitions and institutional frameworks created around them, seems essential not only for understanding Taub's performance, which goes back to the patterns of the 1950s, but also for understanding the state power intentions that created the new pantheon of heroes. The *Művelődési Útmutató* magazine (Cultural Guide), noted as the most important forum for the cultural struggle that began in 1948, offered the theatrical masses new heroes through the publication of a vast number of dramatic texts. In my analysis, I will try to identify and delineate these new heroes, highlighting the constraints imposed by the repertory demands made on professional theatres - the intertwining of amateur and professional theatre.

Also in this chapter I will discuss the two most frequently performed plays of the 1950s by contemporary Romanian Hungarian playwrights, András Sütő and Zoltán Hajdu's *Mezítlábas menyasszony* (*The Barefoot Bride)* and Magda Simon's *Százházas lakodalom* (*The Wedding of the Hundred Houses*), as mainly ideological and to a lesser extent dramaturgical forerunners of the script of the performance directed by János Taub. Since the Taub production was written for the 50th anniversary of the Romanian Communist Party and reflects the Petőfi celebrations of the illegalist workers' movement, a brief analysis of the development of the post-war Petőfi cult is inevitable.

In the chapter *The Ady celebrations of 1957 as a site of memory*, I analyse the process of cult creation in the context of the Ady celebrations that took place throughout in Romania in the 1950s. More broadly, I explore how the post-war socialist state power introduced its heroic figures into literature and theatre, creating its own sites of memory. In examining *lieu de mémoire* in Pierre Nora's sense, it seems important to note that the new sites of memory created by power - museums, statues, heroes, life's work, literary evenings in theatres, etc. - give the appearance of continuity, but in fact convey a radically new message, and that it tries to achieve this mainly through the hero at the centre of the cult.

In the chapter *Theatre in the spirit of fraternal coexistence (1954-1957)*, I will examine three examples of theatre and cultural memory-making in Târgu Mureș in the 1950s.

The three performances I have highlighted, created for the Székely Színház in the mid-1950s in the ideological perspective of Romanian-Hungarian fraternal coexistence, were staged from the plays of Gyula Illyés Fáklyalán (Torchlight), Ágoston Horváth *Katalin Varga* and Károly Kós *Budai Nagy Antal*. In my analysis of the discourse of power around the 1954,

1955 and 1957 performances, I argue that in Târgu Mureș, in the mid-1950s, the development of a strictly controlled repertoire accompanied by critical statements was an attempt by the authorities to create and "influence" historical memory, including theatrical memory. The three flagship performances are linked by the genre of the plays performed, the historical drama, and by the fact that they thematise Hungarian-Romanian coexistence through different stories from different eras - and, of course, through their heroes.

The application of the theses of the literature revealed the processes that determined the theatre-making of the 1950s, and from this, important questions such as its ideological-aesthetic relationship emerged. I think it is a fascinating question to what extent the ideological elements have been incorporated into a performance, and can we talk about whether certain elements have been transferred from the ideological to the aesthetic domain? What helps us to determine, from the perspective of many decades, without moving images, to what extent a performance has been imbued with an ideological message imposed by the authorities?

In the chapter *The evolution of the cult of Bolyai in the theatrical memory of Târgu Mures after 1968*, I will examine how theatrical memory in Târgu Mures rethought the cult of Bolyai after the political and cultural opening of Romania in 1968.

To do so, I analyse the Bolyai celebrations and the inauguration of the statue of Bolyai in 1956-57, as well as the staging of László Németh's drama *A két Bolyai (The Two Bolyai)* in 1970.

I will also examine the visit of the writer László Németh to Târgu Mures in 1970 as an important moment in the creation of memorial sites and the shaping of cultural memory, Németh's visit being closely integrated into the process of the creation of cultural memory and memorial sites in Târgu Mures, which I have identified in the research carried out in the previous chapter, such as the visit of Gyula Illyés to Târgu Mures in 1954 to give a lecture at the *Torchlight*, and the visit of the writer György Bölöni to Târgu Mures for the Ady celebrations in 1957.

Finally, in the chapter *The Cult of the Hero in Romanian Cinema (1948-1975),* I analyse the films made from the beginning of the state takeover of the film industry until 1975 through the figure of the hero. Recognising the importance of feature films (with audiences in the millions), the state socialist authorities in Romania rewrote history in Romanian films. From the 1960s onwards, the figure of the hero, who initially did agitation work, returned from the war, learned about the Soviet model and embraced it, began to shift towards that of the national hero. Film epics that depict historical heroes creating or

attempting to create unity in the country also signal changes in state power politics. The films *Mihai Viteazul* and *Ștefan cel Mare*, which became the great foundations of the unity discourse promulgated in the 1970s, focus on the cult of the Leader of the People who defies foreign powers. The films *Dacii* and *Columna*, which dramatise the Dacian origins, complement the grand national narrative and the ancient rulers who become its heroes.

The analysis of the heroic types in Romanian films is based on Bordwell's findings on Soviet films. However, as there is not space in my thesis to examine the entire films, I will limit myself to a visual representation of the deaths of eight heroes in the definitive films of the period. In examining the visual representation of the hero's death, I will assume that Romanian cinema after 1945, which was heavily influenced by Soviet ideology, was working with the stylistic tools of Soviet films.

In the analysis I use the montage definitions described by Yvette Bíró.

Bíró distinguishes two types of montage: the first is called narrative, narrative montage, while the second is called expressive montage. Narrative montage refers to the logical and chronological ordering of the image fragments captured on filmstrip, while expressive montage refers to the particular juxtaposition of the plots. I consider the analysis of film to be of utmost importance in the analysis of the cult of the hero, since the state power considered film as a propaganda tool that reached the masses, and thus it can be assumed that it was the primary medium for shaping the cult of the hero. While there is no film footage of many theatrical performances, all the films of the period under study are available.

The results of the analysis of the heroes of the feature films and the contexts they reveal thus contribute to the study of theatrical memory.

András Murai believes that the characteristics of collective memory that can be discerned from the films of a given period can be revealed if the analysis examines the structure and film language of the films. This analysis can be approached through the specificities of visual representation and narrative structure.

Historical context

In the following, I will briefly outline the historical-political context of Romania between 1945 and 1975, including Mures County as it is understood today and partly

Szeklerland, touching on the Magyar Népi Szövetség (Hungarian People's Union), which was established after the war and played an important role in the early years of the culture war. I will also outline the aspects of the formation and history of the Maros-Magyar Autonóm Tartomány (Hungarian Autonomous Province of Mures) that are important for the research. I will refer to the 'easing' that began in the mid-1960s, the changes in the direction of state power from internationalism to nationalism, the opening up of 1968 and the reintegration that began in the 1970s.

Historian Nándor Bárdi outlines the period between 1948 and 1961 in the history of Hungarians in Romania along seven breakpoints in the foreword to the volume of studies he edited on the 1950s. The first breaking point, according to Bárdi, is the dream transformation of 1948, when Romania was transformed from a kingdom into a people's republic. The second is the start of collectivisation in the summer of 1949, the purges and church arrests within the Magyar Népi Szövetség's (MNSZ). The third was the new constitution and the creation of the Maros-Magyar Autonóm Tartomány (MAT) in the summer of 1952.

The fourth was the consolidation of the rule of Gheorghe Gehorghiu Dej.

The fifth is the period from March 1956 to the first months of 1957, in which the Hungarian cultural elite is influenced by the changes in Hungary and hopes for its adaptation in Romania. The sixth breaking point is the mass reprisals in place of de-Stalinization, the dismantling of separate Hungarian institutions, and the beginning of nationalization processes at the system level.

The seventh is the change of the boundaries of the MAT and the replacement of its leaders in 1961.

Bárdi writes that after the events of 1956 in Hungary, the reintegration efforts of the Hungarian elite in Romania led to a change in Romania's Hungarian policy, and the ideological legitimacy of the Hungarian minority communist elite was significantly weakened both inside and outside the MAT. Although, according to the historian, the new centre of political power under Ceaușescu was reasserted (1965-1968-1972).

The MNSZ was created in 1944 with the primary aim of integrating the Hungarian population of Romania into political life. The negative experiences of the Maniu period in 1944-45 and the Soviet military administration pushed the Hungarian population of Romania towards the orientation of left-wing political formations, which, according to Stefano Bottoni, meant that the Hungarian community in Transylvania turned towards the MNSZ between 1944 and 1945. The MNSz, which was responsible for political, cultural and social issues at the same time, was responsible, among other things, for the reorganisation and control of the

Hungarian theatre in Romania, the most visible process of which was the movement-like, top-down and controlled transformation of amateur theatre. On 6 May 1945, the MNSZ held its first congress in Cluj-Napoca, during which a Central Executive Committee of 100 members was elected, eleven of whom were appointed to head the Central Executive Committee (KVB).

Gyárfás Kurkó will be the chairman of the KVB, and the other ten members include writer and critic Edgár Balogh.

The congress will also see the creation of various committees, including the Public Culture Committee. As a political entity, the MNSZ, which had a publishing role in several periodicals and newspapers launched after 1944, entered the national elections in an electoral coalition with the Romanian Workers' Party (and some other parties), but after the election victory, the Workers' Party, which wanted to impose a one-party system, gradually supplanted it and finally dissolved it in 1953.The traces of the MNSZ's work in the post-war years led to significant changes in cultural life.

The decline in the importance of the MNSZ was also linked to the creation of the Hungarian Autonomous Province (MAT) in 1952. According to Zoltán Novák Csaba Novák, the creation of the political-administrative structure uniting historical Szeklerland was preceded by the reform process that began with the 1948 Constitution, which meant the institutionalisation of the Romanian Workers' Party (RMP). The essence of this process was to redefine the relationship between the party and society, and in the course of which a significant elite exchange took place. As a result of the cadre change, the number of Hungarian cadres in the MAT leadership increased, and this elite, according to Novák, tried to follow and implement the central instructions, i.e. to faithfully follow the Party's directives, which also applied to the running of cultural institutions.

According to Stefano Bottoni, with the creation of the MAT in 1952, the Hungarian question was narrowed down from a national to a regional issue, and the political and social integration of the Szekler population began, which after 1956 was significantly reinterpreted and Transylvania became a matter of state security. At the first congress of the Soviet-style MAT in 1953 (before Stalin's death), the MAT's first leader, Lajos Csupor, attributed the creation of the MAT to the success of the international workers' movement led by Stalin, in which the Soviet Union played a key role. According to Bottoni, the empowerment of the Hungarian ethnic group within the framework of autonomy were the goals that determined the creation of the MAT. After Stalin's death, Gehorghiu-Dej, who was prime minister, dissolved the MNSZ and also closed down several press outlets. At the same time, the literary

magazine *Igaz Szó* is established in Târgu Mureș and the national daily of the MNSZ is renamed *Előre*. After the death of the Soviet leader, the Romanian authorities do not take a more relaxed approach, on the one hand, they begin purges and, on the other, they seek to enforce the cultural laws more strictly. Fearing that the religious holidays could be used by the faithful for anti-regime demonstrations, the RMP orders the provincial authorities to refrain from holding Pentecost celebrations. According to Bottoni, the Provincial Committee has drawn up a detailed cultural action plan in which Hungarian cultural institutions are to play a central role.Mobilising directors and actors from state-run Hungarian theatres in Cluj Napoca, Târgu Mures, Oradea and Sfântu Gheorghe, the institutions held three to four performances a day for a whole week in the counties with Catholic populations, while ten cinema caravans were also launched, which reached the most isolated villages, offering an alternative programme for the time of the Holy Week.

Bottoni puts the beginning of 1956 as the beginning of the stalemate between the central leadership in Bucharest and the MAT leadership, as a result of which the RMP central leadership sought tighter institutional control of the cultural departments, counterbalancing the excessive autonomy of the Hungarian-language institutions. According to Nándor Bárdi, between the consolidation of Dej's position of power in 1952 and 1956, while the process of social transformation within the MAT was taking place in hungarian language, the use of hungarian outside the MAT was becoming more restricted. The events of 1956 in Hungary led to reprisals and arrests launched by Bucharest, but the MAT party leadership sought to respond to the public mood among intellectuals by erecting a statue of Bolyai, which was both a revival of local and national tradition. However, according to Bottoni, the statue of Bolyai was not followed by any other gesture from the authorities in the years that followed, and the rise of nationalism from 1958 onwards made this impossible.

Nándor Bárdi places the dismantling and merging of independent Hungarian institutions with other Romanian institutions and the process of transforming the MAT between 1957 and 1961 (as part of the repression in Romania following the events in Hungary).The consolidation of these processes took place until 1965, and then he divides the rise to power of Nicolae Ceaușescu into four periods.

From the point of view of my thesis, the first two periods are the most relevant: the first three years are characterised by liberalisation tendencies and the emergence of new Hungarian politicians and intellectual groups, together with the proclamation of a policy of national independence, and the 4-6 years from 1968 onwards can be considered as a period of reconciliation with the Hungarian elite, with the establishment of institutions, which is then

concluded by the Cultural Revolution, which is proclaimed from 1972 onwards and which brings with it the dismantling of Hungarian-language institutions. The abolition of the MAT takes place in 1968, in the middle of what Bárdi calls the reconciliation of power with the Hungarian elite, when Nicolae Ceaușescu, at the height of power, condemns the Prague invasion and does not participate in it.

The historian Lucian Boia describes the period between 1964 and 1971 as a gradual rehabilitation of Romanian national values, and also describes the seven years as a period of relative calm (compared to the 1950s, in any case). Boia sees the period as a transition from internationalism to nationalism, which, for example, encouraged and promoted the birth of feature-length films in the film industry, which told great national epics and attracted huge audiences.

Methodological approach. Heroes as sites of memory

The spatial difference of the cemetery of soldiers killed in war (the arrangement of graves and headstones in regular rows, geometric design, the provision of separate plots, other spatial arrangements such as pavements and staircases, etc.), according to Gábor Gyáni, draws attention to the difference between military death and civilian death. Based on Gyáni's observation, we can conclude that commemoration is in many ways a way of highlighting difference. We remember soldiers and heroes who died in war differently, and we remember the dead of civilian life differently. The act of remembering the hero is thus a shaping of the commemorative space created in the community. Remembering a hero's story, his figure, is different from remembering someone who died in peaceful circumstances, which is much more personal.Remembering the death of a hero is also an act of necessary remembrance of an example of self-sacrifice for the community, a kind of gratitude with which the survivors pay tribute to their dead in return for their sacrifice. The death-linked nature of remembrance (respect for the deceased hero)

My thesis is a cultural analysis, a history of theatre, a study of memory and a political history. My hypothesis is that by analysing cultural phenomena, one can gain insight into political-social processes, and vice versa: by analysing political processes, one can shed light on the reasons and contexts of the latter's efforts, decisions and choices that influence cultural memory. In this thesis, memory research attempts to identify the figures of the hero or heroes in a context that gives them a new meaning and makes them usable in the ideological message of the present.

The question arises: which meaning of the concept of the hero am I using when I examine the staging of dramatic texts, and when these performances are often used to shape cultural memory? And in the same way: what kind of hero is the hero of the screen?

As Patrice Pavis explains in his article on the hero, the hero is a subtype with uncommon abilities, and the hero, elevated to the status of a demigod, is above mere mortals in Greek mythology. Going further, Pavis explains that the classical hero is exclusively "in the dramaturgy of the actions of kings and princes," and that their actions are exemplary. According to the Encyclopaedia of World Literature, published during the years of state socialism, the hero of modern epic was already "a central figure, not a prominent character." This is confirmed by Pavis's reflection: the hero "loses his value as a parable and his mythicality" from the 19th century onwards. So, if we simplify it very much, we arrive at the 19th century, through the hero of Greek mythology, who rises above men, through the dramaturgy of kings, in such a way that the heroic figure loses both his mythic and his moral greatness.

The Encyclopaedia of World Literature writes of the positive hero: "In his relation to the ideal, he may be a positive hero who embodies the ideal, or a negative hero who is in harmony with it, or a negative hero who is opposed to it," and adds that the dogmatist approach to the cult of the person was dominated by the expectation that "in each work there should be positive heroes who embody the socialist ideal of man as clearly as possible." Bahtyin, in the relationship between the author and the hero, addresses this issue, stating that "it happens that the author puts directly into the hero's mouth ideas which are his own in terms of their theoretical or ethical (political, social) meaning, and does so in order to convince him of their truth and propagate them, but this can no longer be called an aesthetically productive principle of the relationship with the hero." Thus, according to Bakhtin, it is the act of propagating the idea, not necessarily the idea itself, that distances the hero, speaking in the spirit of dogmatism, from an aesthetically fruitful (i.e. productive) relationship with the author. „Propaganda is an extreme example of didacticism", writes Eric Bentley, adding that the line between extreme and non-extreme is difficult to draw, and in fact would be an imaginary line between didacticism and non-didacticism. The hero, who (according to Bakhtin) can also become a mouthpiece for the author's thoughts, becomes the central figure of the plot in the spirit of an obvious tendency to teach.

Pavis points out that, according to Brechtian dramaturgy, the hero's individual dramatic life is interpreted in its social and political context, i.e. the working method, which favours the individuality that is eliminated in the process of historicisation, serves to direct

the spectator's attention to understanding the historical context behind the personal conflicts. Alienation, as the main instrument of historicization, transforms the hero into a multifaceted, contradictory figure, linking his fate to collective destiny. Brecht, when speaking of the contradictory nature of the historicized, constructed figure (the hero), explains alienation, and with it the figure of the contradictory hero and, of course, his possibilities of representation, through the example of a man standing in the valley and speaking, but constantly changing his mind or uttering contradictory sentences and confronting them: „...imagine a man who makes a speech in a valley and sometimes changes his mind, or merely utters sentences that contradict himself, and the echo, constantly interjecting, confronts the sentences."

However, the heroes of the period under study are heroes of the struggle, but they always know the right direction, and therefore seem less contradictory figures, their presence not disturbed by echoes. I assume, therefore, that the heroic image of the period from 1945 to 1975, as it is distributed in theatre performances and on the screen, suspends the heroic image of both 19th century and Brechtian dramaturgy as a consequence of obvious ideological influences, and returns to a dramaturgy whose central figure has exemplary value, whether in contemporary issues (federalisation, land distribution, etc.) or in the present.), or in narratives exploring the origin stories of the past (Dacian-Roman origins, reunification, revolutions, etc.). In addition, it may also seem an important question when this suspension falls, or may fall, into suspension, i.e. what patterns, if any, might be followed in the return to the use of the multi-planar, more complex, perhaps failing hero.

Closely related to the study of the hero are Hayden White's views on the *narrativization*. By narrativization, White means the narrative selection of past events according to a certain scheme. Narratives of the past compete with each other and those that are favoured by cultural memory are able to survive. White explains that when historians undertake to describe the past, that is to say, to plot it, they always select among the facts as follows: they transform events into stories, by relegating or subordinating some of them to the background, emphasizing others, giving them character, repeating motifs, varying tone and point of view, using different descriptive strategies, that is, using all the techniques we are used to when plotting a novel or a play. No historical event, for example, is inherently tragic; at most, it can be seen as tragic from a particular point of view or in the context of a systematic group of events. If we accept, therefore, that the hero is at the centre of stories, we can assume that the plot always highlights one hero (and relegates several others to oblivion), whose figure is preserved in cultural memory.

I further assume, along the lines of Pierre Nora's theory of lieu de mémoire, that the text, including the dramatic text and its various performative representations (theatrical performance, film) through the change of medium, does not refer exclusively to sites of memory that can be visited in real physical space, but that heroes as lieu de mémoire can also be grasped and described through the concept.

Pierre Nora describes sites of memory by the co-existence of three characteristics of actual places: material, symbolic and functional. However, in order for a building, a historical work, a generation, an archive, a monument, a comradeship or a hero (Mihai Viteazul, Tudor or Decebal, etc.) to become a site of memory, the will to remember is necessary first and foremost. Nora attributes the existence of memorial sites to the disappearance of real memory. After the disappearance of memory in the traditional sense, it is the honouring of traces that becomes characteristic. For memory, only those facts that confirm the memory are important, so memory sanctifies memories and derives from a community that is bound together by it.

The treatment of the heroes as lieu de mémoire can be understood in relation to Nora's notion of distant memory. Nora replaces continuity with discontinuity in the relationship between history and memory: history seeking itself in the continuity of memory has been replaced by memory projecting itself into the discontinuity of history. Nora points out that instead of origin, we must now speak of birth, where by the past we must understand a world radically different from the present, from which the rememberers are cut off. The method of visualising the vast distance separating this world from the past is not fragmentary, but focuses attention on points of significance. This "memory of dots", which is the result of the retelling and re-enactment of history, makes it possible to describe the process by which the post-1945 state socialist power highlighted the significant moments of the past that were significant for it. Such 'moments' in Romanian culture include the conquest of the Dacians by the Romans (and thus the birth of the Romanian people), the victory of Stefan cel Mare over the Turks, the unification of Mihai Viteazul, the outbreak (and suppression) of the 1848 War of Independence, the bloody suppression of the Grivica strike, the peasant uprising of 1907 (and suppression), and finally Romania in 1944. All of these events are immediately reflected in the hungarian culture in Romania. It is important to see that all these 'moments' are dramatised with a prominent hero in the leading role.

The person who is elevated to heroic greatness functions as a site of memory on the basis of material, symbolic and functional aspects: he is linked to geographical landscapes (specific geographic formations, the Danube, pine forests, mountains, plains, marshes, etc.),

he is characterised by a fraternal coexistence mentality, justice, hard-heartedness, and he is present at the birth of something (nation, country, working class, Party) or he himself symbolises the birth.

According to Nora, the distant memory that is made up of dots is fundamentally linked to the fact that contemporary culture is dominated by the image and cinema, which suggests that an analysis of the hero in historical films can reinforce the very treatment of it as a site of memory.

Another way of conceiving of heroes as memorials is to point out that Nora emphasizes that only those works of history that are fundamentally aimed at transforming memory are memorials. Since from the years after 1945 to 1975 new heroes are constantly at the centre of the memory politics of state socialism, and they retell history embedded in new and new narratives, it can be argued that heroes born to transform memory function as sites of memory.

In addition to historical heroes, the state-socialist cultural policy that began in 1945 included in its pantheon the everyday, unknown heroes: the worker and the peasant (who are always living workers), or their movement versions, the revolutionary and the striking heroes, who in many cases became martyrs.The commemoration of the unknown hero has become part of collective memory through the practice of creating a tomb or monument for the Unknown Soldier. According to Gábor Gyáni, in the practice that emerged after the First World War, the monument to the Unknown Soldier „fulfils the official cult of the single fallen soldier, unidentified in his own person, who is supposed to represent everyone", which at the same time refers to the huge mass of those who died in the war.The first memorials of the Unknown Soldier type were unveiled in Paris and London in November 1920, followed by the erection of memorials in several European capitals.The cult of death is therefore often part of the cult of the hero, and the unknown or ordinary hero is no exception.

It cannot be a coincidence, therefore, that Gábor Miklóssy's painting Grivica 1933, exhibited in 1952, will be part of romanian cultural memory for decades to come as the most emphatically canonised work of art of state socialism, reaching a wide audience. Miklóssy's monumental painting (3.3 x 4.5 m) depicts the workers' strike in Grivica: workers armed with sticks and iron bars and gendarmes firing at them. The heroes in the painting have no names, they are all unknown. The painting became enormously famous: many reproductions were made, it was included in textbooks for decades, and five official copies were made for the sister countries, including the Soviet Union. Grivica 1933 would become a representative work of Romanian socialism, a reference for the artistic representation of historical events,

and Miklóssy would become a celebrated artist of the period, receiving state awards.As a memorial site, the painting commemorating the unknown heroes legitimizes the presence of unknown (martyred) heroes in the cultural memory shaped by state socialism, at the same time underlining the last line of Petőfi's poem of the 1848 War of Independence, also canonized: „Heroes are given to a common grave", which makes the concept of the hero particularly charged after the mass grave experiences of the wars, especially the Second World War. It is probably due to this uncomfortable experience that forgetting plays a significant role in the memory policy of state socialism.

Reflecting on the visual tools used by the authorities and the visual language of the period, the chapters of my thesis will explore the ways in which memory is formed.The stamps and posters published on the occasion of national Ady celebrations, the monument to the Bábolna uprising, the statue of the Bolyaiak, etc., but above all the imagery of feature films, which were viewed by millions of viewers, are examples of the visual tools of power, both above and below the texts. The most important question of film analysis (and thus also in relation to cultural memory) will be whether the visual language used by the film was able to renew itself in the ideological milieu of state-promoted culture, whether it was able to show real value, taking into account the fact that, for example, the feature film The Forest of the Hanged Man achieved considerable international success, which could hardly have been achieved by using the socialist-realist schematic filmic tools.

There is also the question of whether the roles of Hungarian actors (Anna Széles, György Kovács, András Csíki, etc.) in the feature films produced in Romania, and their presence on the screen, have shaped cultural memory.One might ask, for example, how the figure of György Kovács, who repeatedly played the role of the negative hero, could have captured, if at all, the image of the enemy, or even of the stranger, in cultural memory. Finally, I would like to clarify my concept of the pantheon.To do this, I will use the idea of Tibor Porkoláb, who draws attention to the system of linguistic and non-linguistic rituals that are at the service of cultural memory and play a major role in the creation of a kind of imaginary hall of fame for heroes: "Pantheonization" can be understood not only as a procedure of admission to the Pantheon (or some other object elevated to the status of a national pantheon, necropolis, etc.), but also as a system of linguistic and non-linguistic ceremonies of pantheon formation in general, i.e. a variant of ceremonial communication whose task is primarily the construction and operation of an (imaginary) hall of fame representing the collective memory of the nation.

Summary

To sum up, in order to keep memory alive in our culture, we need linguistic constructions, texts that are passed on from generation to generation.

Hayden White says in a conversation that historical events cannot be repeated. Physical experiments can, but historical events cannot. Then he says in the same interview. It can only be researched through the prism of the things that are left to us as a consequence of the existence of the past. So the past does not exist, only the stylistic variants about it, and why not: literary works, theatre performances, films.

The texts, performances and films researched in this thesis are, I am aware, stylistic variants of the past, and the hero presented to us by the politics of memory is a figure of the non-existent past existing at a particular moment.

By analysing the figure of the hero, I have tried to describe the shaping of cultural memory in the period 1945-1975. In fact, it was the effort to shape the memory of state socialism, because it became clear during the research that the new hero, and even the new heroes (with few exceptions), were always 'at the service' of the authorities, their cult became part of state socialism, the re-telling of history was achieved through the figure of the hero.My most important insight is that from the end of the Second War until 1975, when cultural actors seek to respond to the politics of memory of state socialism, they always go back to and draw inspiration from the dogmatism of the early years up to the mid-fifties. Hungarian-language drama in Romania and Romanian-language films as fields of research are seemingly distant from each other, but they have several points in common.Firstly, the same administrative and geographical area and, of course, all the political, ideological and historical circumstances that this entailed, which, secondly, made the people living there - Romanians and Hungarians alike - common consumers of the stories used to retell the past. The hero created by the will to create a common space of memory acted in both languages in the name of the same ideology, especially in the first decade and a half. The two media - theatre and film - were both seen by the state as channels of communication to the masses, and the proliferation of state-controlled amateur theatre, for example, networked Romania to an unprecedented extent during this period.

The most important forums and institutions for the interweaving of amateur and professional theatre, enforced by the authorities, were in the beginning: the Cultural Guide, cultural clubs, workers' (factory) and peasant theatre circles, the cultural department of the Hungarian People's Association, theatre competitions, rural tours of professional theatres.

Examining the repertoire of the Cultural Guide, established in 1948 as the main press organ of popular culture, I came to the conclusion that by publishing at least two dramatic texts per issue, the editors of the paper, and through them the state socialist cultural policy, introduced new types of heroes.Thus, the state power tried to transform the cultural memory primarily by building a pantheon of new heroes, namely through the mass activation movement of popular drama. The Cultural Guide not only offers texts, or even makes them compulsory, but also provides theatre lovers with advice and concrete guidelines on how to build the theatre and design the playing space, and the discourse of power takes over the space, moving into the community space.

An analysis of a drama and a staging by Magda Simon and András Sütő revealed that the themes present in amateur theatre were being diverted towards stone theatres in the early 1950s. The two dramas were performed in almost all Hungarian-language theatres, and their themes (cooperativeisation, land division and their social aspects and conflicts) brought the struggle of the heroes of the new and the old world to the stage of the stone theatres. After or alongside the workers' and peasants' heroes, the historical heroes also found their place on the stage: an analysis of three performances at the Székely Theatre in Târgu Mures shows that their analysis provides a significant coverage of the first decade and a half of the socialist era as far as professional theatre is concerned.

The examples found, the three performances in question, are an integral part of the discourse and staging of a re-told history, of historical heroes highlighted by the authorities. The three performances have in common the theme of Hungarian-Romanian fraternal coexistence, and one of the most important attributes of the heroes of the selected texts is that they can and want to feel at home in both nationalities.

At the beginning of the reforms of 1968, the staging of Győző Hajdu's drama Fidelity, at the beginning of the 1970s, becomes a cuckoo's egg compared to the outstanding theatrical events of the period. Its ideology and dogmatism were conceived in the 1950s and thus perfectly anticipate the cultural policy of the following decades.Its heroes are Hungarians (and workers) who, before the war, even took the risk of martyrdom for the communist cause, i.e. the author's intention is that Hungarian heroes in Romania have a place in the pantheon. It also became clear to me during my study of the Bolyai performance and the Bolyai cult in the city of Veszprém that when we talk about theatrical memory between 1945 and 1975, we must always look at the 1950s, and that different processes become more visible at the boundaries of an era, such as 1968.In researching the cult of Bolyai and performance, I have come to the following conclusions:

1. the cult of Bolyai after 1968 was founded on the Bolyai celebrations and statues of 1956-57.

2. The theatre as a site of memory acts in this case as the culmination and closure of the cult of Bolyai, and by staging dramatic texts written about Bolyai, it also puts into place the last elements of the cult that can be learned and told about it.

3. In the opening of 1968, power uses acts of forgetting and remembering at the same time. In analysing the cult of Bolyai, I could see the meeting of two parallel processes (the construction of the Bolyai cult in the workshop of László Németh in Veszprém and the Bolyai drama in the workshop of László Németh) in the birth of the 1970 performance.The cult of Bolyai in Târgu Mureș seems to be one of the best examples of how the theatrical memory of the period could be strongly present in the locally constructed cult of the hero.

Thus, the hero and his cult play a prominent role in the memory politics of state power in the first thirty years after the war. The memory of the hero always serves the continuity of power, the linking of past, present and future is realised in the cult of the hero.The hero is always a leader, a conductor who revisits the past, derives the present from this knowledge and sees the future clearly.

While film in Central and Eastern European countries more or less remains in the field of cinematic language experimentation, which was liberated after Stalin's death, in Romania, after the wave of films of the 1960s, which achieved major international success, there was a regression with the emergence of the great historical epics. Romanian cinema has not been able to renew itself since the 1970s, and only after the turnaround in 1989 was it able to produce international successes again.My research suggests that this process in Romanian cinema can be described by analysing the visual representations of the heroic figure, and that the heroic image in Romanian cinema and the interpretation of the heroic concept in the early years until the late 1950s suspend the modernist-realist conception of the hero and return to the distribution of exemplary heroes.In Pădurea spânzuraților, the character of the hero becomes problematic again, and then, with the emergence of the great historical films, there is a return to the exemplary hero.

The new heroic image of ideological production films, thinking in socialist realist schemes, chooses the figure of the worker, the peasant or the figure returning home from the front/captivity as its central character in the 1950s. In the study of films from this period, the visual representation of the hero's death is mainly characterised by socialist realist stylistic features, socialist realist narration, and only a very limited presence of Ejzenstein's expressive

cinematic language, so that expressive montage is only occasionally present.The latter can be seen in the depiction of the hero's death, for example in the montage that disrupts the unity of space and time in the death of the hero Setea, or in the death of Petre, the hero of Răscoala, where the filmmakers use an upside-down shot, a strongly tilting, shaky camera, and the frightened face of the soldier. However, there is no expressivity comparable to Patyomkin's staircase scene, the images cut one after the other are less disruptive of the spatio-temporal unity and the power of the emotional states expressed in the montage is little different from the emotional, almost graspable meaning that is already achieved. A reference film of the period is Mitrea Cocor, released in 1952, in which the poor peasant-turned-hero ends the story by distributing land to the peasants after his enlightened return home with the Soviet army.

From the year after Stalin's death, there was a slow opening up of Romanian cinema, with Liviu Ciulei directing two films that became international successes.The first was Valurile Dunării, a war drama about the events of 23 August, released in 1960, and the second was the 1964 Rebreanu adaptation Pădurea spânzuraților, also a war drama.Both films were markedly influenced by the European cinematic new wave, both in terms of narrative and means of expression. The heroes of Ciulei's films are complex heroes who do not clearly possess only positive qualities. The visual depiction of the death of the protagonist in Pădurea spânzuraților (The Forest of the Hanged) is marked by an expressive montage, while the execution scene at the beginning of the film, shot with a hand-held camera gliding back and forth, saturates the film with tension and a strong emotional charge.It is not the execution that makes the scene disturbing, but the impact on the witnesses of the execution that makes the sequence emotionally stirring. This is precisely why the filmmakers do not physically show the death of the protagonist at the end of the film, but merely allude to it, but the omission of the scene may create a feeling of unease in the viewer, since the filmmakers leave it to the viewer to fill in the gaps between the missing frames, i.e. to symbolically carry out the execution. The *Padurea spanzuratilor* won the Director's Prize at the 1965 Cannes Film Festival and was clearly the reference film of the sixties in Romania.

However, with the historical release of Tudor in 1963, the series of film versions of heroes who could be presented as great national epics began. Tudor, together with Mihai Viteazul and Ștefan cel Mare, retold the Romanian history of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, no longer depicting as heroes workers or peasants from the common people, but rulers. Patrice Pavis writes of the classical hero: „A hero in the narrow sense is only found in the dramaturgy of the tragic deeds of kings and princes (...) His actions must be exemplary

and his fate freely chosen." The return to the classical hero in Romanian cinema is also a return to the positive hero. The death of the hero in these films is portrayed in a pathetic way, with no trace of expressive montage. The melodramatic portrayal of the end makes sense in the sacrifice for the future, in the building of the future.According to Zoltán Csaba Novák, the concept of the socialist nation, redefined by the Romanian Communist Party in the 1950s, was expanded so that in 1966 it „already merged the concepts of the historical people and the working people." The historical epic films *Dacii* and *Columna*, which tell the story of the origins of the Romanian people, were created to ideologically reinforce the concept of the historical people.The heroes of the films about modern Romanian history (*Ştefan cel Mare*, *Tudor* and *Mihai Viteazul*) are complemented by the heroes of the Roman-Dacian origin story, the Dacian kings and the Roman generals. The visual depiction of the heroes' deaths is melodramatic and bears no traces of the cinematic language revival of the early sixties.To sum up, the peak of Romanian cinema was in the early to mid-1960s, with the heroic image of the hero, which was distributed between 1945 and 1975, beginning with the immaculate, positive hero, then, in the 1960s, the hero became a multi-faceted, conflicted, contradictory figure, and then, with the historical epics, the positive hero returned to the screen.