

Workshop: Boundary, Inter-ethnic Relations and Differentiation in Contexts of Impending Ethnicity

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The Organization of Collective Memory by Romanians and Hungarians in Cluj-Napoca (Romania) after 1989

Theoretical points of reference

Although the research on collective memory cannot be considered an ancient discipline, the attention drawn to precedents of today has always been a characteristic of societies. Understanding that all that preceded the present is in the meantime related to it in a somehow reconsidered, symbolic way has become obvious in the last few centuries. Accumulated, utilized time – in the sense given by Lévi-Strauss – is conceived as tradition within modern societies. Modernity has been the one to do the ideological selection of this tradition and to create those canons that led to the definition of such categories as *own* and *national*. The past, as a part of collectively possessed cultural knowledge, has become the determining element of national identity. Common past, collective knowledge does not necessarily mean a homogeneous knowledge for the members of the community in question. Its forms, rites, means of organization become loaded with emotional burdens and conflicts. In this meaning collective memory is not only knowledge, but a process, a mechanism: it is not only something that a certain society has, but something that creates a certain society; something a society can organize itself through.

In my study I will present the processes of memory construction after 1989 in the city of Cluj-Napoca, all based on my fieldwork carried out in this multiethnic settlement. I investigate memory and identity as a process, not as a product, and the organized knowledge on the past as a narrative represented, exposed and presented within public spaces. I consider the placement of commemorative plaques and statues as the creative acts of memory, while the commemorative ceremonies as usage of memory, as acts of identity creation and consolidation.

In the case of modern societies this temporal dimension, the relation towards past and history created from the past might be one of the most important symbolic mechanisms. Nevertheless the research on collective memory has become the central topic of social sciences.

1. In the concept of social sciences tradition is something that mediates the past. In the last few decades the canonized, materialized or symbolic forms of cultural goods are described with the term *patrimony* or *cultural heritage*. The term has become quite overloaded after the memory dumping of the “age of commemorations”¹ : “in fifteen years the term of cultural heritage has incorporated recent past, casting element’s architecture and buildings of common use, railway stations and market places, things that today we look at in a different way.”²

2. Political representations are very closely tied to cultural traditions. These two categories and intentions are not worth dividing, because we have to observe that there are so many traditions or images of the past that were invented within the context of political ideologies and movements.³ In Eric Hobsbawm’s interpretation collective memory is an invented tradition, created in a 19th century Europe showing rapid socioeconomic changes. The period of mass tradition-production was the five and a half decade between 1870 and 1914.⁴ We are talking about those social and political initiatives that resulted in the presentation of certain political characters and historical events, processes in a different connection, in a different context, thus a different image of the past and of history itself is being produced.

3. The research of cultural knowledge becomes possible through representations made public and exposed on different scenes of social life. According to this meaning collective memory is not an abstraction for the research, but a phenomenon represented in specific spaces, locations. One of the scholars who elaborated the research on memory, including the thesis on space transformed into the site of memory, as a medium, a physical frame of memory was Pierre Nora.⁵ In his provoking programme study he is talking about the disappearance of memory: “We speak so much of memory because there is so little of it left”. The feeling of the continuity of past and memory moved into sites combining material, symbolic and functional aspects. „There are *lieux de mémoire*, sites of memory, because there are no longer *milieux de mémoire*, real environments of memory.”⁶

4. The organization of memory is a result of a collective process, rather than of an individual one. According to Maurice Halbwachs the evocation of memories is done and it functions in a given

¹ Nora 2007: 35–37.

² Chastel 1986. In Hungarian: Chastel 2006: 125.

³ Cf. Hobsbawm–Ranger (eds.) 1983.

⁴ Hobsbawm 1983.

⁵ A monumental undertaking regarding the research of memory transformed into tradition was edited by him under the title *Les lieux de mémoire*, published in seven volumes (Nora (éd.) 1984–1992).

⁶ Nora 1989: 7.

social frame, within the given conditions. The collective character of a memory is given by the reference to a common state of consciousness, so the belonging to a social environment is reflected in it. And the social frame is considered as an institution supervising and running memory, which assures social consensus by regulating the memorial event. This identical social environment is formulating, modelling memory and the process of remembrance in a similar way. Common social situations, common social experiences – these are the things which near individual memories to each other.⁷ From the point of view of this research such regulating institutions can be considered those social groups (societies, associations, clubs etc.), which create, sustain and run the memory of the analyzed events.

5. The use of collective memory usually takes place within festive frames of time. During the commemorative rite a community is reminded of its identity as represented by and told in a *master narrative*: “...commemorative ceremonies are distinguishable from all other rituals by the fact that they explicitly refer to prototypical persons and events, whether these are understood to have a historical or a mythological existence; and by virtue of that fact rites of this sort possess a further characteristic and one that is distinctively their own. We may describe this feature as that of ritual *re-enactment*, and it is a quality of cardinal importance in the shaping of communal memory.”⁸ The rhetoric of re-enactment means the use of articulation by *calendarically* observed repetition, *verbal* repetition and *gestural* repetition.⁹ For the periodically repeated festive events *chronological similarity* entails or permits the repetition of the same actions.¹⁰ The continuity of collective memory is assured exactly by this temporal structuring and the permanency of evocation.

6. The organization of collective memory, the commemorative practices are the result of considering present as past. According to Émile Durkheim each and every society creates its own time.¹¹ Therefore time defined as a social product is valid only in plural: times are social products. For this plurality suggested Fernand Braudel in 1946 the notion of “almost still” “geographic time”, for the history that is written in a “timeless” time, then later on long duration time, (*longue durée*).¹² This is the time dimension that commemorative groups would like to

⁷ Halbwachs 1925: VIII–IX.

⁸ Connerton 1991: 61

⁹ Connerton 1991: 65–68.

¹⁰ Connerton 1991: 66.

¹¹ Durkheim 2002.

¹² The most complete version: Braudel 1958.; in Hungarian: Braudel 1972.

expose their history in.

A digression: historical contexts

Cluj-Napoca is a Hungarian founded medieval city, if we do not take into consideration that the centre of the Roman Empire's Dacia province, Napoca was situated in the same spot. The first document mentioning the city (as *castrum Clus*) dates back to 1213. It has been a location of great importance even since it was founded. Under the Hungarian Kingdom it had the status of a free regal city, being considered the ganglion of culture and arts. The first Saxon (German) settlers arrived in the middle of the 13th century with the support of the Hungarian King. In the second part of the 14th century a few Romanian families were allowed to found a village near Cluj-Napoca, in order to defend the road. Later on (from 1541), during the independent Transylvanian Principality fulfilled the role of the first city (*civitas primaria*). Its first Jewish inhabitants settled down at the beginning of the 17th century.

The union of Transylvania with Hungary – as one of the major requirements of the revolution against the Habsburgs in 1848 – was declared by the Transylvanian diet at Cluj-Napoca. The 1849 war of independence was defeated. The accord with Austria took place in 1867. As a consequence Hungary (together with Transylvania) became a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

After WWI, according to the Treaty of Trianon (July 4 1920) two third of the territory of the former Hungarian Kingdom, together with more than three quarters of its population was annexed to the surrounding countries. Therefore Transylvania was annexed to Romania. After this political change the build up and consolidation of the Romanian administration and political control started in Transylvania. During WWII, according to the Second Vienna Award North Transylvania (including Cluj-Napoca) was reannexed to Hungary. But after WWII, in addition to the Paris Peace Treaty, the Romanian authority was reinforced.

Starting with 1947 we could witness the built up and consolidation of communism, the decades of Ceaușescu's totalitarian dictatorship. The central leadership was keen on systematically changing the ethnic ratio of the Transylvanian cities (most of them with a Hungarian majority). During the 1960s and 1970s several residential districts had been built, several smaller settlements had been annexed administratively to Cluj-Napoca, thus its territory had been

multiplied. The need for workforce due to enforced industrialization had been satisfied with the population of many Romanian villages. To illustrate this rise of population and the drastic change of the ethnic ratio, we shall present a few numbers.

Year	Total population	Romanian	Hungarian	German	Jewish	Other
1890	37 184	5637 (15%)	29 396 (79%)	680 (2%)	Nincs adat	(2101)
1910	62 733	8886 (14%)	51 192 (82%)	1678 (3%)	Nincs adat	(977)
1930	103 840	36 981 (36%)	55 351 (53%)	2728 (3%)	6722 (6%)	2058
1941	114 984	11 524 (10%)	100 172 (87%)	1841 (2%)	832 (1%)	615
1948	117 915	47 321 (40%)	67 977 (58%)	360	1625 (1%)	632
1956	154 723	74 033 (48%)	74 155 (48%)	990 (1%)	4530 (3%)	1015
1966	185 663	104 914 (57%)	76 934 (41%)	1333 (1%)	1689 (1%)	793
1977	262 858	173 003 (66%)	86 215 (33%)	1480 (1%)	1009	1151
1992	328 602	248 572 (76%)	74 871 (23%)	1149	344	3666
2002	317 953	252 433 (79%)	60 287 (19%)	734	217	4282

According to the Daco-Roman myth of origin of the Romanian people in 1974, at the 1850th anniversary of *Napoca* becoming a Roman municipium, the Roman name was added officially to the name Cluj.

After the system change of 1989 we can witness the built up of democracy. The coexisting ethnic groups (especially the Romanian majority and the Hungarian minority) are exposing their conflicts of interests and values in symbolic spaces. A question specific to Central Europe is renewing like never before: whose is this territory? Cluj-Napoca is an outstanding example of

nation building endeavours, of the rivalry and symbolic debates between the Romanian majority and the Hungarian minority.

Besides treatment of memory, one of the most important field of ethnical conflict and consensus is the use of the past.

Creating the past

The concern about the past, the need for the possession of the past seems like a permanent determining element of Cluj-Napoca's public life. The first official registered date goes back to the year 1442, while the first memorial plaque (on building) to 1450. The first statue placed within the city (St. Trinity statue) dates back to 1744, and the first monument of a political nature (the Státua) was raised in 1831 in the honour of the visit of the Austrian emperor and his wife to Cluj-Napoca. These actions are not identical with the organizations of memory as we mean it today, namely if we consider memorial actions as ways of representing the identity of different social groups and debates through symbolic means.¹³ Dating, marking, reminding mean historically changing categories, showing different connotations in different periods of time, with different approaches, attitudes related to them. But from our point of view they have a common characteristic: these objects and gestures of the public or quasi public sphere structure social time, representing the societies' methods of dealing with time – and later on – of using the past.

Data regarding Hungarian–Romanian ethnical contrasts date back to the first half of the 20th century. The first Romanian memorial plaque was revealed in 1919 (reminding of the Memorandum trial), the first statue in 1921 (referring to the Roman myth of origin). After 1947 interethnic confrontations were pressed under the level of public sphere by the Romanian power. Communist ideology didn't match neither with the ethnical question, nor with the former statal form (monarchy). The central power had gradually formed its own public spaces, spacializing the fundamental memory of its origin (illegal communism before 1945, working class, organizations of the working class, the communist intelligentsia), and in the mean time eliminating a part of the former (Hungarian) plaques and statues, restricting, then forbidding the manifestation of the Hungarian memory.

¹³ It is modernity that creates the memorial actions which are based on national consciousness, or even consolidating it. For more details see the concept of *invented tradition*.

I have succeeded in identifying 349 *memorial objects* (inscriptions, memorial plaques, statues, monuments) covering the period of time between 1442 and 1989. (These include also the elements that do not exist anymore.) Regarding its content this material shows quite a heterogeneous character. I consider it important to outline its structuring by the used language, which mirrors the dominance of the coexisting nationalities: 112 were written in Latin,¹⁴ 3 in Hebrew, 1 in Hebrew and Romanian, 120 in Hungarian, 2 in Hungarian and Latin, 1 in Hungarian, Hebrew, Latin and German, 5 in German, 100 in Romanian and 5 in Romanian and Hungarian.

The year 1989 – besides a political system change – brought along also a fracture within the imagined past. On the social level it resulted in the drama of the institutions and officialities losing the trust of the people. The past that had been constructed to that point has naturally lost its political legitimacy. According to Eric Hobsbawm, when political systems are changing and the social ties are coming loose the societies reconsider their relations along the creation of new traditions.¹⁵

In connection with the past there were two kinds of attitudes appearing within the self-legitimizing strategies. In the one hand the denial of continuity, the rejection of the past created by the previous societies in the interest of the new historical order. The new order did not wish to continue the previous economical, social and political relations. On the other hand a demand of historical depth was rising in the same time: how could the present be legitimated, how could a kind of continuity be created in the historical space. The new system too considered it necessary to trace the new social order back to history. It needed the past also because it defined itself in contrast with it, respectively it delimited itself from it: therefore in the one hand the past is surpassed, in the other hand it served as an example to follow.

About the period between 1989 and 2008 can already be stated that it was one of the most productive one regarding local construction of memory. 163 memorial plaques, statues and monuments had been unveiled, most of these being *political* ones, some of them being of a *memory preserving* nature.¹⁶ In quantity matters this represents almost half of the so far known memorial actions in only two decades. (A few numbers will follow on the structuring by the used

¹⁴ Latin was the official language in Middle-Age Hungary. So this material is also related to Hungarians and Saxons.

¹⁵ Hobsbawm 1983.

¹⁶ For more details on this matter see Bodó–Biró 2000: 15–16. I must also mention that in this present paper I present my own data on the memorial objects known by myself.

language after the year 1989: 3 written in Hebrew, 3 in Hebrew and Romanian, 34 in Hungarian, 113 in Romanian, 1 in Latin, 2 in Hungarian and Romanian, 4 in Romanian and English, 1 in Romanian and Hebrew, 1 in Romanian and Latin, 1 in Romanian, Hungarian and German.) In the following I would like to analyze in details the tendencies of past construction that came with the changes of 1989. What part of the formerly exposed past was made invisible by the new system? What was accepted and preserved, respectively what kind of past was unveiled?

Liquidated tradition

As it had become usual during the previous social and political changes, former historical representations offered neither the feeling of legitimacy, nor of homeliness for the new system. Therefore this depreciated, decredited past was meant to be ignored. Elder memorial plaques were removed from the public space. These were mainly political mementoes, which had not only lost their actuality, but had become compromising ones, the overloaded memories of a misinterpreted past.

The memorial plaques of communism, those important for the socialist ideology were the ones to be removed from the public space. Together with them, the mementoes of former heroes, personalities were also liquidated, if they had been risen for individuals representing an unwanted ideology: the 1944 Soviet liberators, the antifascist and illegal communist heroes, personalities before 1945 – if they had declared their appertaining to communist ideology (Romanians like party secretary Gheorghe-Gheorghiu Dej, sergeant Aurel Suciu, writer Emil Isac, working class hero Ilie Pintilie; Hungarians like working class heroes Béla Breiner and Béla Józsa), institutions, centres, houses (the centre of the Party of Communists of Romania, the Romanian State Railway Union House, the centre of Soviet Fellowship Society, the house of Béla Józsa), trade union and illegal communists' meetings (the 1939 meeting place of the Party of Communists of Romania).

The trends of past creation

After 1989 there is mainly one period of time that stands out: the Funar-era (1992–2004).

Gheorghe Funar (as a candidate of extreme right Great Romania Party) outlined already in his first campaign speeches the re-evaluation of the past, promising the exposition of Romanian history (by memorial plaques and statues), naming the “recovery” of the city centre for the Romanians and the consolidation of identity by memory construction as his political programme. Later on, as mayor of the city, he had forbidden all initiatives regarding the organization of Hungarian memory (giving to permission for the placement of memorial plaques and statues in the public sphere, obstructing Hungarian national festivities etc.), using gestures and means directed to the symbolic elimination of the Hungarian nationality (removing the Hungarian flag from the Hungarian consulate considering its presence illegal and anticonstitutional, giving no authorization for the inscription of the city’s name in Hungarian, placing inscriptions in the most busy parts of the city with paragraphs from the constitution according to which Romania is a unitary nation state, organizing manifestations against the use of Hungarian as a mother tongue and for expelling Hungarian organizations beyond the law, organizing a false funeral at the signing of the Romanian–Hungarian state contract symbolically burying the “Peace of Romanians” etc.). For the nationalization of the city, he ordered the benches, dust-bins, flagstones, balustrades, playing grounds to be repainted in national colours. Hundreds of Romanian flags were placed onto pylons and buildings. He also ordered a new city blazon including Romanian symbols and some referring to the Roman origin, making this blazon official ignoring the protests of the National Heraldic Committee.

December 21 1989.– the genesis of democracy

The events, personalities that were important for the communist dictatorship were replaced by necessity by the victims of the totalitarian system. The revolution had 26 victims in Cluj-Napoca. 1989, at the moment of democracy’s genesis, has become immediate history (*histoire immédiate*), the memory of its own ideas.

Several social groups have tried to expropriate, respectively to consider of its own the events of the near past. In place of the ideological monopoly of the previous régime’s memory, the democratic change made the differentiation of memory possible. In 1990 the Vatra Românească Union – a cultural organization – placed memorial plaques on four tragic locations of the system change: “Eternal honour for our heroes December 21–22 1989. Vatra Românească Union”. We

can consider this form of the revolution's expropriation as a self-propaganda for an organization that tried to fill the space of the city with its own presence. The Turda Glass Factory reminded people about the same event, as one of its employees fell in the city centre. The Cluj County Prefect's Department together with Cluj-Napoca City Hall also marked – usually – the same places in order to legitimate political structure and suggest trust for the inhabitants: “For the memory of those who sacrificed their own lives for liberty and democracy on December 21–22 1989.” In 1996, at the anniversary of events the City Hall placed marble plaques featuring the name and age of all those deceased (26 persons). On October 17 2003 the memory of the revolutioners was consolidated with another monument. The piece from the city centre wears the name of *Shot Posts*: there are seven posts illustrating stylized human forms, victims of the shooting. Near these figures there is a memorial plaque on the ground containing the list of the deceased. This monument was made also at the initiative of the City Hall.

Prototypes, heroes of democracy

Smaller groups have been commemorating newer Romanian personalities, some of them being in opposition in the previous system, having an important role in the legitimacy of the new system. One example can be Iuliu Moldovan, a doctor who experienced several communist jailhouses, or in the last few years the cult of Iuliu Maniu party leader (and Iron Guard leader). The rightist party leader was “the president of the temporary Romanian organization that was founded after the great union for the integration of Transylvania”¹⁷ and he represented the prototype of the Romanian democrat for the new political system and the local nationalist leadership. Other exposed personalities were “unrightfully forgotten”, just passed away or re-evaluated.

The representatives of science and arts had an important role in the new memorial strategies as well, according to the new paradigm they had been used or discredited by the totalitarian system. Some personalities have been newly installed in the memorial space (e.g. composer Sigismund Toduț, poet Aurel Gurghianu, poet and dramatist Radu Stanca, poet Alexandru Căprariu, writer Ion. D. Sîrbu, scientist Ion V. Boeriu, historian David Prodan, academician Raluca Ripan,

¹⁷ The complete text is the following: THIS BUILDING HOSTED THE CENTRE OF THE CONTROLLING COUNCIL BETWEEN THE FALL OF 1919 AND APRIL 1920, A PROVISIONAL ROMANIAN ORGAN FOR THE INTEGRATION OF TRANSYLVANIA AFTER THE GREAT UNION WITHIN THE UNITARY ROMANIAN NATION STATE, HAVING IULIU MANIU AS PRESIDENT. DECEMBER 9 1994.

literary historians Dumitru Popovici and Ioana Em. Petrescu). The valuation and consolidation of valid intellectual achievements were represented by actions when memorial plaques and statues – suitable for the new conception – were placed in the memory of personalities that could be used for the creation of the national image by the new system, too (e.g. historian Alexandru Lapedatu, linguist professor Grigore Silașii, literary historian and critic Ion Agârbiceanu, educator Onisifor Ghibu, doctor Dominic Stanca).

The most important points of the memorial entrepreneurship of the Romanian elite were represented by the Dacian-Roman myth of origin, national evolution, national offences experienced under Hungarian and Austrian leadership, the blow of Romanian culture and science under the era of repression, the national integration, the union of Romanian principalities with Transylvania, the formation of the nation state. All this was meant to ballance the heterogeneous nature of memory organization before 1989.

The Romanian 1848–1849 revolution and war of independence

During the events of 1848–1849 Hungarians and Romanians were enemies. Transylvanian Romanians wanted to make themselves acknowledged as a separate nation within the frontiers of the country. The leader of the Romanian troops was Avram Iancu. His statue was unveiled in 1993, at the national day of Romania, in a square bearing his name. His memory was meant to upload the new alternative centre of Cluj-Napoca with symbolic content, and to ballance the cult of King Matthias Corvinus within the centre of the city, a centre that got its own symbolic power from the personality of the Hungarian king who was born in the city.

Other Romanian intellectual/political personalities of 1848 were also awarded with memorial plaques. Those about George Barișiu and Nicolae Bălcescu wear inscriptions in Romanian and English, they were placed in 1996 and present the events of 1848–1849 adversely for the Hungarians: it was all about the proclamation of the Romanian national unity and liberty's "sacred ideas and their bloody retribution lead by Hungarian aristocrats", during which "40 000 Romanians were killed and 230 villages were burned and totally destroyed".¹⁸ In order to

¹⁸ The English inscription of the bilingual plaque is the following: IN THIS BUILDING/ WERE HOSTED BETWEEN/ 1848–1849,/ DURING THE DEVELOPMENT/ OF THE BATTLE/ FOR/ FREEDOM/ AND NATIONAL UNITY,/ GEORGE BARIȘIU/ AND/ NICOLAE BĂLCESCU/ GREAT PERSONALITIES/ OF THE

counteract Hungarian memory, official ideology underlined the moments of the events that could be compromising in the judgement of the war of independence. The data exposed on the plaques are undertaken neither by Hungarian, nor by Romanian historians. Independent historians consider that the whole loss of the Transylvania in this war would not exceed 18 000 victims. The justification of the plaque was done by its consecration by important ecclesiastical superiors. Other important locations were also marked with the Romanian memory of historical events. In 1997 an earlier wooden cross from the citadel was replaced with an imposing huge monument that can be seen from the most distant parts of the city as well. One of the text featuring on this monument is an anticommunist one, while the other is a specific interpretation of 1848: “On this citadel as well as in other parts around Cluj-Napoca a great number of Romanians were executed during the retributive action on the revolution of 1848. To the memory of prefect Alexandru Bătrâneau, councillors Vasile Simonis, Vasile Turcu, Alexandru Micudi, great German historian and philosopher Stefan Ludwig Roth and to many others, whose names were recorded by historical documents as well as to the others, whose names has remained unknown. Made by S. C. Turnatoria Metalul in 1997”. The plaques placed onto this monument mention only the Romanians who were dragged through the mire and killed.

The Memorandum Trial

The interpretation of the Memorandum Trial has come to the front with a disadvantaged presentation of Hungarian history. The event took place in 1894. Its premise dates back to 1892, when leaders of the Transylvanian Romanians sent a memorandum to the emperor of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy asking for equal ethnic rights with the Hungarians and for mother tongue institutions. The authors of the letter of complaint were tried for “homeland betrayal” in Cluj-Napoca. The location of the trial was also marked using a quotation from the defence attorney Ioan Rațiu: “In this building took place the Memorandum Trial in May 1894. The existence of a nation is no question, but an affirmation.” In 1994, within a great festivity the Monument of Memorandists was unveiled, a belfry in the centre of the city. This monument has become a

ROMANIAN REVOLUTION/ THE ATTEMPT OF THE ACTION/ TAKEN BY/ THE ROMANIAN PEOPLE/
FOR RACHING/ ITS SACRED IDEALS/ UNLEASHED A/ BLOODY REPRESSIONS/ LED BY HUNGARIAN
ARISTOCRACY/ WHILE OVER/ 40000 ROMANIANS/ WERE KILLED,/ 230 VILLAGES WERE BURNED/
AND TOTALLY DESTROIED.

component of the officially used Cluj-Napoca blazon. During 1992 and 2004 streets had been named after all those condemned in the trial.

Romanian national unity

In Cluj-Napoca the preparation, manifestation and history of the union of Transylvania with prewar Romania on December 1 1918 was also promoted. The day of the national meeting that announced the intention of union (December 1 1918) was declared Romania's National Day in 1990. this festive day means naturally something totally different for Romanians and Hungarians, the former are reliving the fulfillment of the nation and the country, while the latter the detachment from nation and country. Therefore the Romanian National Day is a periodic manifestation of the nation state, so the construction and organization of the event's memory does not integrate Hungarians.

The place where the Romanian National Senate of Transylvania was functioning was also marked. The Council was led by Amos Frâncu and Emil Hațieganu "who had been fighting for the political declaration of the Romanian nation and for the great union of December 1 1918."¹⁹ Within the newly constructed memory a place was given to a Romanian student, Octavian Petrovici, who was murdered by (Hungarian) aristocrats when defending the centre of the Romanian National Senate of Transylvania in 1918.²⁰

The promoters of the great union were separately commemorated: politician Alexandru I. Lăpușanu, "the indefatigable militant of Romania's union" received a statue and a memorial plaque, also a street was named after him, while historian Ioan Lupaș was presented as "the promoter of the great union, the professor of Upper Dacia University, the founder and director of the Institute of National History, an outstanding personality of Romanian erudition" for the

¹⁹ The complete text is the following: IN THIS BUILDING, FORMER CENTRE OF THE "ECONOMUL" BANK, WAS FOUNDED AT NOVEMBER 2 1918 AND ACTIVATED THE ROMANIAN NATIONAL SENATE OF TRANSYLVANIA HAVING AS LEADERS DR. AMOS FRÂNCU AND DR. EMIL HAȚIEGANU WHO HAD BEEN FIGHTING FOR THE POLITICAL DECLARATION OF THE ROMANIAN NATION AND FOR THE GREAT UNION OF DECEMBER 1 1918." «1 DECEMBRIE 1994»

²⁰ The complete text is the following: THIS IS THE PLACE WHERE ROMANIAN STUDENT OCTAVIAN PETROVICI WAS SHOT ON DECEMBER 19 1918 WHILE FIGHTING WITH THE TROOPS OF THE ARISTOCRATS, DEFENDING THE CENTRE OF THE ROMANIAN NATIONAL SENATE OF TRANSYLVANIA, SITUATED IN THE BUILDING OF THE "ECONOMUL" BANK ("DACIA FELIX" BANK 19 DEC. 1993)

present and the future. The nature of memory construction is well illustrated by the fact that Upper Dacia University has never existed. This fantasy name has an active influence on national identity: Dacia is the country of Dacians, and according to the Romanian romantic historical approach, Romanians have their origin in the mixture between Dacians and Romans.

The New York Hotel, considered the icon of the Hungarian bourgeois society, has become – according to the memorial plaque placed in 2001 – the haunt of Romanian intelligentsia, who in 1921 founded here an important press product in the spirit of the great union (a periodical called *Gândirea*).²¹

The memorial plaque from the City Hall feature these lands as ancient Romanian territories, fought for and liberated by the Romanian army on October 11 1944. In the council hall of the building was refounded and “meeting Romania’s cabinet on March 13 1945, with the occasion of Northern Transylvania’s reannexing to Romania, a territory stolen by the fascist Second Vienna Award.”

In 1946 Romanian students – being against Hungarian territorial revision and communism – were also initiating a movement for defending democracy and the territorial integrity of the Romanian state, after their residence “was attacked and ravaged by armed groups” – states a memorial plaque on a former students’ residence.²²

National discourses

These mementoes after 1989 are characterized by a strong ethnic colour, by an image of the past exposed within national paradigms. The manifested histories of coexisting nationalities are confronting each other, the past becoming disadvantaging, degradating, compromising for the Hungarians. Thus the construction of Romanian historical memory becomes one-sided,

²¹ The complete text is the following: HERE, IN FORMER “NEW YORK”, PRESENTLY “CONTINENTAL” RESTAURANT WAS PREPARED THE APPARITION OF THE WELL KNOWN PERIODICAL “GÂNDIREA” ON MAY 1 1921, A RESULT OF THE IDEAS OF THE GREAT UNION, BY THE HARD WOK AND TALENT OF WRITERS FROM ALL ROMANIAN PROVINCES: CEZAR PETRESCU, GIB I. MIHĂESCU, LUCIAN BLAGA, ADRIAN MANIU, D. I. CUCU AND OTHERS. THIS PLAQUES WAS PLACED BY CLUJ-NAPOCA CITY HALL AT MAY 2 2001.

²² The complete text is the following: IN THE NIGHT OF MAY 28–29 1946 THIS STUDENTS’ RESIDENCE WAS ATTACKED AND RAVAGED BY ARMED GROUPS. THE VIOLENCE CAUSED BY THEM WAS FOLLOWED BY THE PROTEST OF THE STUDENTS OF CLUJ CONCRETED IN THE GREAT ANTIREVISIONARY AND ANTICOMMUNIST STRIKE OF JUNE 1–19 1946, THE FIRST MOVEMENT DEFENDING DEMOCRACY AND THE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF THE ROMANIAN STATE.

overshadowing, repressing the emergence of the Hungarian one.

From all the facts presented above it is obvious that in the present there is a kind of (symbolic) debate going on. There are two ethnic groups living in a common space. Their historical past is judged differently, so their representations on the past do not coincide. Two different historical memories are competing with each other in the public sphere, “two parallel memories of a common, but differently lived past”.²³

Two historical memories, two opposite worlds, consequently two powerful but different – even opposite – interpretations of the past are given in the same time. The fact that Romanians and Hungarians commemorate different things goes back to the different character of the past, of the events that are interpreted in the present. The urge to form a historical memory, the endeavour to shape lifeworlds will be the cause of interethnic conflicts.

The collective possession of memories is not the result of evolution, but of a contest. In this area of Central Europe the fight for collective memory has been tied to the problem of territorial possession, ownership. For a better understanding of the present situation a proper mean would be the theory of Michel Foucault on discourses. The author defines discourses as social methods of speech and states that through history there has been a constant fight for it, as “discourse is the power that man try to get hold of”. There is a fight for the discourse and in the same time with the means of discourse. And discourses are not open for everyone, the owners do not permit the access to them: “not every field of the discourse is equally open, one cannot enter everywhere; there are severely forbidden (differentiating and differentiated) fields”.²⁴

If we consider the promoters of memorial actions from Cluj-Napoca – according to the theory above – the directors of the collective memory discourse, the model of Foucault becomes quite simplified. Regarding interethnic relations all differences become minimal within the same nationality. The Romanian power is the one to live with the privilege of discourse formation. Hungarians are excluded, they have no place within these commemorations, having no access to the usage of discourses on their own historical past. The Romanian elite/power takes into its own and exclusive possession the discourse on the past and the construction of memory.

²³ Mannová 2002: 28.

²⁴ Foucault 1998: 51. and 60.

The formations of Romanian commemorations

How does the Romanian elite, the *discourse community* fight for visualizing its own historical interpretation? How is its contest for the expropriation of space going on? What kind of tools, procedures, commemorative formations is it using?

Commemorative actions do have a structure, a consciously deliberate rhetoric. The actors choose a space, time and event for the commemoration.

Choosing the space

There are several ways of *choosing the space*. One of the most obvious ones was born in the 19th century Europe and still lives on today, a commemoration along the creation of new traditions.²⁵ The new elite – being in the position of the legitimate speaker – creates new memories. Its urge is oriented towards “covering completely if possible the important spaces with symbolically marked locations”²⁶, to attach these to the Romanian national space. Especially the centre or the spaces close to the centre were the targets of symbolic reconstruction. That would be the oldest part of the city, built during the old Hungarian and Saxon *world*, thus being strange from the Romanian ethnic group. The Romanian power has tried to discover Romanian mementoes here, respectively to create some for this space. As a result, the monument of the Memorandists was placed here, along with the memorial plaque of the formation of the National Guard,²⁷ of the Romanian National Senate of Transylvania, of mayor Iulian Pop and so on.

Another way of creating space is closely related to the first one: the Romanian elite is placing its own colonizing intentions over the spaces previously marked by Hungarians. (This cannot mean a parallel creation of space, because it is about a non symmetrical organization of memory and space.) This action is motivated by the fact that these spaces can be somehow the locations of a common past: on the house where the great Hungarian mathematician, János Bolyai was born a

²⁵ Cf. Hobsbawm 1983.

²⁶ Bodó–Biró 2000: 27.

²⁷ The complete text is the following: IN THIS BUILDING OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY'S ACTIVITY WAS FOUNDED THE ROMANIAN NATIONAL GUARD OF TRANSYLVANIA BY THE MEETING FROM NOVEMBER 3 1918.

plaque was placed reminding of the editorial office of the Romanian “Steaua” periodical,²⁸ the location of the 1848 union of Transylvania with Hungary is held by the memory of the Memorandists’ Trial from 1894,²⁹ while the memory of the Romanian Nicolae Bălcescu was assured by a Romanian and English plaque on an old inn previously marked with the memory of the Hungarian poet Sándor Petőfi.³⁰

Finally, in the confrontation for the past the dominant elite tries to overwrite and symbolically degrade the spaces of the other ethnic groups. This could be considered another separate method. The memorial plaque of Romanian poet Octavian Goga, placed by the City Hall on the building of the Faculty of Letters – the former girls’ school Marianum – “reminds everyone that the poet and politician” was conferred the degree of doctor honoris causa in this building, while on the New York Hotel, which was built by Hungarians, another Romanian plaque was placed about *Gândirea* magazine and its writers working in the spirit of the great union. The plaque of Romanian historian and politician Ioan Lupaș was placed on the centre of DAHR (Democratic Association of Hungarians of Romania) in 1994.

Another bilingual (Romanian and English) plaque was placed near the old Hungarian one (from 1889) on the house of King Matthias, according to which “the Romanian Matthias Corvinus is considered the greatest of all Hungarian kings”.³¹ On the statue of Matthias, unveiled in 1902 in the city centre, a Romanian plaque placed in 1992 quotes historian Nicolae Iorga, according to which the king was defeated in Moldavia, land of Romanians: “Victorious in battle. Defeated only by his own kind at Baia, when he tried to get on the knee Moldavia, the invincible.”

There was an archeological search going on in front of the statue for more than a decade (1994–2008), aiming Dacian-Roman artefacts which would confirm the priority of Romanians in this space according to the romantic theory of continuity. In the same place was meant to be raised the copy of the column of Traianus from Rome, as it had been planned by the mayor of that time,

²⁸ A teljes szöveg: THIS BUILDING HOSTED THE ACTIVITY OF THE “STEAUA” MAGAZINE BETWEEN 1950 AND 1951 THE LITERARY ALMANACH AT THAT TIME. THE FIRST ROMANIAN POSTWAR CULTURAL PERIODICAL FROM CLUJ-NAPOCA. UNVEILED ON JUNE 14 2000. CLUJ-NAPOCA CITY HALL.

²⁹ The complete text is the following: IN THIS BUILDING TOOK PLACE THE MEMORANDUM TRIAL IN MAY 1894. THE EXISTENCE OF A NATION IS NO QUESTION, BUT AN AFFIRMATION.

³⁰ Quoted in footnote no. 18.

³¹ The English text of the bilingual plaque is the following: ACORDING TO HISTORICAL TRADITION/ THIS IS THE HOUSE WHERE/ MATTHIAS CORVINUS/ THE SON OF THE GREAT VOIVODE OF TRANSYLVANIA/ AND GOVERNOR OF HUNGARY/ IANCU OF HUNEDOARA/ WAS BORN/ THE ROMANIAN MATTHIAS CORVINUS IS CONSIDERED/ THE GREATEST OF ALL HUNGARIAN KINGS/ DUE TO HIS ACHIEVEMENTS DURING HIS REIGN/ 1458–1490.

so the foot-stone was placed together with a memorial plaque. In 1994, under the instructions of the same mayor the memorial plaque of 1848 revolution leader and general József Bem was plastered over, while the Monument of Memorandists was raised. These action can also be interpreted as an overwriting of a previously existed Hungarian symbolic occupation of space.

These different ethnical representations appearing in the same space are “engaged in battle” with each other, as a result the Hungarian ones are losing their symbolic value. Such colonised spaces are meant to show a growing Romanian symbolic value by periodical practices, commemorations, laying wreaths, speeches, all expressing the fact that these spaces are lived and used. The exclusion of Hungarians from the symbolic spaces and from historical memory is also served by the elimination of ethnical signs from the public sphere. The power in force had liquidated several of the representationst important to the Hungarian ethnic group (memorial plaques, statues, inscriptions related to Hungarians). This intention had been continuous and also present in the media until 2004.

Choosing the event

The power and the local leadership, as owners of the historical discourses, “follows a retroactive change of historical time, a reconstruction, rewriting of history, a legitimation of the present constructed by the past”.³² *By choosing the event*, the commemorating Romanian elite aims nation building and the legitimacy of the nature of commemoration. We could see above that the great union, the cult of the personalities related to it and the postwar rightist movements have an outstanding role. Within the common past of Hungarians and Romanians these historical events are offending for the former.

There are many memorial plaques for the memory of the “first” Romanian institutions. According to the inscriptions these were founded by the “first” Romanian (culture) heroes: the first local Romanian school was founded in 1853, “after centuries of darkness and intolerance”,³³ “famous linguist and professor, president of Upper Dacia University” Sextil Pușcariu founded the Museum of Romanian Language in 1919, “the first Romanian linguistic institute of the

³² Barna 2002: 160.

³³ The complete text is the following: THIS BUILDING WAS THE CENTRE OF THE FIRST ROMANIAN SCHOOL FROM CLUJ-NAPOCA, FOUNDED IN THE BLESSED YEAR OF 1853, AFTER CENTURIES OF DARKNESS AND INTOLERANCE. UNVEILED ON APRIL 24 1998.

country”,³⁴ while the first Romanian hospital of the city was founded by Dominic Stanca in the same year of 1919.³⁵ Iulian Pop was the first Romanian mayor of the city,³⁶ Grigore Silașii was the first professor of Romanian language and literature at the university of Cluj,³⁷ while Nicolae Drăganu was “dean of the Faculty of Letters, president of Alma Mater Napocensis and mayor of Cluj”³⁸ – as our attention is drawn to this by the memorial plaques. The texts of these plaques would deserve a more detailed analysis. The memorial plaques of this period expose a Romanian history that has been rising to a golden age, to the quality highlight of the present, an entity that was struggling and was able to create values in the “dark and intolerant” (Hungarian) past, too.

Choosing the time

The date of commemoration, *choosing the time* deserves also a lot of attention. We can observe that the “round” anniversaries of important events or the great festive days are much desired for the unveiling of memorial plaques. Some ceremonies were organized precisely on the same day as the commemorated event: on the 81st anniversary of Iulian Pop becoming the mayor of the city, on the 80th and 85th anniversary of the 4th Transylvanian Legion, on the 125th anniversary of the opening of the local railway station, on the 80th anniversary of the foundation of *Gândirea* magazine. Other “round” anniversaries were the 50th of the “liberation” of the city, the 80th of the Iulian Pop Economical College, the 75th of George Coșbuc High School and of George Barișiu High School. These dates are drawing our attention upon things that have been always working

³⁴ The complete text is the following: IN THIS BUILDING FUNCTIONED THE MUSEUM OF ROMANIAN LANGUAGE, THE FIRST LINGUISTIC INSTITUTE OF THE COUNTRY, FOUNDED IN 1919 BY SEXTIL PUȘCARIU (1877–1948), RENOWNED LINGUIST AND PROFESSOR, THE FIRST PRESIDENT OF UPPER DACIA UNIVERSITY. JULY 2 1998. CLUJ-NAPOCA CITY HALL

³⁵ The complete text is the following: DR. DOMINIC STANCA (1892–1979), FOUNDER OF THIS “WOMEN’S HOSPITAL”, THE FIRST ROMANIAN HOSPITAL IN CLUJ – March 1919/ 22. Oct[ober]. 1992

³⁶ The complete text is the following:: IN THE MEMORY OF DR. IULIAN POP, THE FIRST ROMANIAN MAYOR OF CLUJ-NAPOCA 19. 01. 1919–13. 04. 1923, UNVEILED ON JANUARY 19 2000. CLUJ-NAPOCA CITY HALL

³⁷ The complete text is the following: THIS BUILDING WAS THE HOME OF ILLUSTRATE LINGUIST, UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR DR. GRIGORE SILAȘII (1836–1897), THE FIRST PROFESSOR OF ROMANIAN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE AT THE UNIVERITY OF CLUJ. UNVEILED BY CLUJ-NAPOCA CITY HALL ON MARCH 15 1999.

³⁸ The complete text is the following: THIS BUILDING WAS THE HOME OF ILLUSTRATE LINGUIST, UNIV[ersity] PROF[essor] DR NICOLAE DRĂGANU (1884–1939), DEAN OF THE FACULTY OF LETTERS, PRESIDENT OF ALMA MATER NAPOCENSIS AND MAYOR OF CLUJ BETWEEN 1933–1938. UNVEILED BY CLUJ-NAPOCA CITY HALL ON FEBRUARY 18 1999. Alma Mater Napocensis did not exist. This fantasy name has an active influence on national identity: it sustains the illusion of Latin erudition.

in a generation's time memory. This time of a generation goes back more or less to the great union, or for Hungarians to the tragic Paris Peace Treaty from the end of WWII. István György Tóth and Jan Assmann altogether consider the time period of 80 years as the limit value between communicative and cultural memory.³⁹ Historical memory has other steps and values regarding commemoration of the deceased. Historical events has to be commemorated after a longer period of time, opposite to the memory of the deceased, who are commemorated for a shorter period of time (6 weeks, half a year, one year). The commemoration of "round" anniversaries has an additional rhetoric content: it is underlined that the era of those who are commemorating is at a distance of 50, 75, 80 years from the events in question, therefore commemoration is needed.

A specific group of commemorations are tied to the *national festivities*. The Romanian plaque was placed onto the statue of King Matthias the night before the Romanian National Day (December 1) in 1992, amidst the (useless) protest of numerous Hungarian representants and of a group of Romanian intellectuals. Other actions were taken on the occasion of the same day, namely the statue of Avram Iancu (1993), the memorial plaques of historian Ioan Lupaș (1994) and the Romanian National Senate of Transylvania (1994), the foot-stone of the Column of Traianus (1998)⁴⁰ and at last the re-edition of Lupa Capitolina monument (2003, then 2008).⁴¹ Choosing this outstanding date will tie the selected events to the (great) Romanian national memory.

Another way of the spatialization of memory, of the ethnical marking of space – known to me only from Cluj-Napoca – would be the action of the Romanian elite consisting of the unveiling of memorial plaques on the Hungarian national festivity (March 15). On this day mememntoes were placed for Nicolae Bălcescu, George Barișiu and the Romanian victims of the Hungarian aristocracy (1996), for the Romanians executed in 1848 (1997), for linguist Grigore Silașiu (1999), for historian Ștefan Meteș (2000) and for the reannexing of Northern Transylvania to Romania (2004). The fact that not only the symbolic event and festive time of the Hungarians was confronted, but also their symbolic spaces, stands as a clear signal towards them. The locations marked were mostly the same as the ones used as media for the Hungarian memory, or they were situated on the nearby streets.

³⁹ Tóth 1996; Assmann 1999: 51–53.

⁴⁰ The complete text is the following: IN THIS PLACE WILL RISE THE NATURAL SIZE REPLICA OF THE MONUMENT COLUMN OF TRAIANUS DECEMBER 1 1998. CLUJ-NAPOCA CITY HALL.

⁴¹ The statue was donated to Cluj by Rome in 1921. The complete text is the following: ALLA CITTÀ DI CLUJ/ROMA MADRE/MCMXXI. ('To the city of Cluj from mother city Rome')

Hungarian reactions and commemorations – the constructions of national martyrdom

Romanian memorial entrepreneurship has consolidated one of the most characteristic attitudes in the Hungarians' reception, one that based on everyday and literary language use we can describe as *minority fate tragedy*. As a result even the non political memorial texts were filled with politics and a strong ethnical colour. The Hungarian interpretation considered the memory of Romanian personalities (scientists, artists) only a pretext for the power to expose a historical way of speech that is disadvantageous for Hungarians. Therefore Hungarians have interpreted all Romanian memorial actions with the codes of ethnicization. The same real space hasn't become equally symbolic for both of the ethnic groups – as the actions are organized along different ethnical discourses. The Hungarian elite refused the garland of the Romanian statues and memorial plaques. The meaning of this gesture is as obvious as it can be: Hungarians did not accept the new historical interpretation, considering the plaque – as a representation of it – profane and offending. The Hungarian elite was not represented at the Romanian ceremonies, but it did not miss to manifest its own nation fear through the press.

There was no possibility for Hungarians to expose their historical representations in the most public spaces (squares, street facades). These initiatives were stopped by the Funar-leadership, no authorizations were emitted to Hungarians. Thus Hungarian memorial actions and memory organization have been located in quasi public spaces, in Hungarian churches and schools. There was a commemoration of the 1849 soldiers of the former college in Brassai Sámuel High School (2002), a memorial plaque was placed within the Reformed church with the occasion of the 1000th anniversary of the formation of the Hungarian state (2000), the Evangelical congregation hosted the memory of Lajos Kossuth, governor of Hungary in 1848–1849 (2002), while the memorial plaque of the 1956 Hungarian revolution was unveiled in the Unitarian church (2006). The busts of Hungarian poets Sándor Reményik (1991) and János Bartalis (1992) were placed in churchyards. Educational institutions hosted the bust and memorial plaque of Hungarian prince István Bocskai (2006), the bust of Unitarian religion founder Ferenc Dávid (1992), the plaques of the Hungarian victims of WWI and WWII (2006), the plaque of writer Dezső Szabó (2006), the monument of the 1956 Hungarian revolution (2006). The space itself has narrowed the content of memory as well: we can enumerate the 90th anniversary of the Unitarian Ladies' Union, the 115th

of Dávid Ferenc Association, the 100th of the Youth Association (2000), the memory of Evangelical bishop Pál Szedressy (1996), the 100th anniversary of the Unitarian College (2001), the 145th anniversary of the consecration of the Reformed church with two towers (1996).

The retreat of Hungarian memorial actions into these interior spaces shows the sanctity as well as the national and moral value of memory obtained from the spaces in question, a manifestation of national martyrdom and also the isolation of memory. The community of memory shows itself as a particular one, while in these homogeneous spaces memory cannot be refilled by the ethnical interpretations needed for its functioning. In the same time the profile and closed nature of these institutions do not allow a permanent reception by the outsiders.

Instead of a résumé

The analysis from above is concerning the organization of memory, the memorial rhetoric of a limited period of time and it is not intended to be exhaustive. I have presented its specificities regarding content and form, proving that the appearance of collective memory is not a spontaneous formation, but a result a conscious organization. The eternal commemorating entity, the present/the power controlling memory is fighting for the possession of the past, using it in the interest of the actual social and political prosperity. Different ethnic groups, associations, parties, congregations are in rivalry by the spectacular gesture of commemorating the past. Based on previous research I was able to state that conscious commemoration, the memory of the past is meant to consolidate and represent the identity of the communities of memory.

We can dispatch one specific period from the organization of memory after 1989, and that is the Funar-era. The endeavour of the triple seat mayor and of the Romanian elite aiming the creation of the past can be regarded as memorial entrepreneurship. This period of time was characterized by a highly considered, systematic usage of the past. The local leadership had insisted on the created memory contents, and in the same time it targeted other formations of the sites of memory: use of street names, giving name to institutions, nationalization of public spaces (national colour benches, dust-bins, flags etc.), representation of the Romanian city (monographs, illustrated books, other publications).

Hungarian leadership and press had been arguing from the position of the offended. National sensitivity activated the means of martyrdom. Hungarian media and political life reacted to these organizations of memory as to the “proceedings” of Funar, who has done another “cynical provocation” or “chauvinist irritation”. The “new memorial plaques and statues of the mayor”

were considered as the dramatic continuity of the minority fate tragedy and the cause of national martyrdom, thus the minority discourses had been continuously reproduced.⁴²

It is obvious that power sustenance due to political position contributes to the success of the organizations of memory. But for the created memory to become collective and accepted by the community a permanent use of the memory contents is needed. It is difficult to measure this effect: maybe through the analysis of the spontaneous and organized procedures of living and using the memorial spaces we would be able to measure these collective emotional affections.

We can observe different motifs and effects due to the creation of the past: 1. a continuous organization of the past results in the creation of local memory and locality; 2. through the spatialization of memory the domestication of history is provided (*domestiquet l'histoire*), a present inhabited by the past; 3. the ethnicization of space visualises and sustains the ethnic boundaries; 4. attitudes manifested within the organization of memory reproduce the structure and the political positions (majority–minority, in force–opposition etc.); 5. the structure of society becomes visible and can be learned; 6. the past functions as political capital: different groups profit from the imagined past, accumulating political advantages; 7. a Romanian ethnical dominance in the public sphere.

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⁴² Quotations are taken from the Hungarian gazettes of that period.

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Abstract

The Organization of Collective Memory by Romanians and Hungarians in Cluj-Napoca (Romania) after 1989

Transylvania, annexed to Romania in 1920, is a place of continuous Romanian–Hungarian conflicts. There is always a domain of conflict between the Hungarian minority and the Romanian majority represented by the construction, the invention and commemorative use of the past. In my ethnographic and socioanthropologic analysis I focus on the memory entrepreneurship and the interethnic relations and symbolic behaviours that stay behind it in the social context of multiethnic Cluj-Napoca.

The system change of 1989 brought along not only a political fracture, but also one in the imagined past. On the social level resulted in the drama of diminution of belief in the institutions and authorities. The past constructed up to that point naturally lost its political legitimacy.

There were two kind of attitudes appearing within the self-legitimizing strategies regarding the past. On the one hand the denial of continuity, the rejection of the past constructed by previous societies in the interest of the new historical order. This new historical order didn't want to continue the previous economical, social and political relations. But on the other hand, in a parallel way, there was a need for historical depth rising: how can one legitimate the present and create a continuity in the historical space. Nevertheless the new system considered it necessary to deduce the new social order from history. It had a need for the past also because it defined itself in opposition with the past, distancing itself from it: thus the past became surpassed and at the same time an example to follow.

The period of time between 1989 and 2008 proved to be one of the most productive regarding local construction of memory, a fact shown already by previous researches. Therefore I would like to analyze more deeply the tendencies of past construction that appeared starting with 1989. What previously exposed component of the past was made invisible by the new system? What was overtaken and what new components were brought to the surface? What conflicts were

revealed, what kind of identity strategies, legitimating processes and national discourses were put into motion by the construction of (new) memory?