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Bartók's funeral: representations of Europe in Hungarian political rhetoric

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Béla Bartók was a master of modern music and, like anyone else, a complex, historically located individual. I will have little to say about him here. This article is concerned, instead, with the representations of Bartók that appeared in the Hungarian press and in my interviews with Hungarians in the summer of 1988, on the occasion of the return of Bartók's body to Budapest after 43 years in a New York cemetery. Bartók had emigrated in 1940, declaring that he could not live in a Hungary that, he feared, would soon succumb to German fascism. Unlike the original funeral, and despite the four-decade lapse, Bartók's reinterment was accompanied by a publicity extravaganza that preoccupied the Hungarian mass media for several weeks. And interest was not limited to official government organs. Despite the obvious role of a distrusted regime in orchestrating the event, and despite the quietly admitted fact that most of Bartók's music is rather difficult—certainly not popular fare—the funeral mobilized the uncoerced participation of many thousands of otherwise politically disenchanted people.

This is the analysis of a single set of events, in its specific historical moment. My aim is to understand how the rhetoric constructing such a funeral constitutes a part of broader political processes. I focus on the ways in which allegory, decontextualization, and myth were used to reinforce and recreate the image of Bartók as a national hero. In understanding these and the other rhetorical devices surrounding the funeral, it is useful to start with discourse analytic techniques to identify recurrent themes (as in Agar 1983) and uncover their semiotic logic. My analysis relies on recent sociolinguistic approaches to political language (see, for example, Brenneis and Myers 1984; Paine 1981; Woolard 1989) while also drawing on earlier, influential insights into the mechanisms of modern myth (Barthes 1972). But any such synchronic analysis of this rhetoric, while indispensable, will be inadequate unless supplemented by a historical perspective, for the representation of Bartók as hero relied on a much older set of images and arguments about the relationship between Europe and Hungary, images and arguments that have constituted Hungarian identity and pervaded Hungarian political and economic life for at least 200

This article analyzes the rhetorical structure of a single set of events—the reburial of Béla Bartók's body in Budapest—and shows how these events were a constitutive part of political processes in Hungarian state socialism during the 1980s. Arguing for a processual approach to the relationship between discursive structure and event, the analysis shows that the funeral was a response to political opposition, a response made by intellectuals speaking for the state. Ironically, although the funeral was orchestrated by the state, its rhetoric reproduced the durable discourse about Europe and national identity that critical intellectuals had (re)introduced into public debate and that state socialism in Hungary had tried to suppress. The semiotic structure of this discourse shaped not only the rhetoric of the funeral but, more broadly, the way educated Hungarians understood political-economic change. [political language, rhetoric, national identity, Europe and Hungary]

years. These images and ways of thinking about Europe have long been dividing and uniting educated Hungarians, often providing material for ironic joking. The arguments about Hungarian identity show important parallels to the construction of many other modern European identities—Romanian, Greek, Russian—which, like the Hungarian, were created in the midst of relative “backwardness” in the periphery of the European political and economic system in the 18th and 19th centuries. As in these other cases, the Hungarian arguments about Europe and its meaning have occurred in widely differing permutations and have repeatedly reemerged in historically disparate political circumstances. Thus, a major task of this article is to relate the durable yet changing discourse about Europe and national identity to the circumstances under which it was once again reproduced and reinterpreted. In this endeavor, two further contextualizations of Bartók’s funeral are essential; these help to explicate the way in which the participants and observers understood the funeral’s rhetoric.

First, the representations of Bartók gain significance within the immediate sociopolitical context in which the funeral occurred. The summer of 1988 was a period of deepening economic crisis and political uncertainty in Hungary, as the 33-year reign of János Kádár came to an end and Soviet pressures for orthodoxy relaxed considerably. This was a moment in the struggle between, on the one hand, elements within the socialist state and, on the other, diverse independent intellectual and political groups that were coming into existence publicly. Such opposition groups were becoming more vocal in their demands for further radical changes in the economic structures of the command economy and in the centralized political system of state socialism. Indeed, within little more than a year, the opposition groups had achieved a multi-party system and substantial steps toward a market economy. The immediate context also included the international relations of Hungary with the European Economic Community, with the United States, and with the governments of neighboring socialist states, especially Romania, that have large Hungarian minorities. In contradistinction to the discourse of Europe, which locates the funeral’s rhetoric historically, these contemporary relationships call attention to the *pragmatics* of the talk that constructed the funeral: the way the themes, images, and rhetorical figures used in the events gained specific meanings through the immediate context of other events with which they were, intentionally or not, juxtaposed.

Second, the larger social context of the funeral is provided by the “actually existing socialist” (Bahro 1978) society in which it took place. Funerals are universally occurring public rituals that often have political significance (Kertzer 1988). Burials, and even reburials, are not uncommon in the symbolic armory of national identity, giving historical depth to “imagined communities” (Anderson 1983; Aronoff 1986), even socialist ones (Binns 1979). Yet there is reason to suggest that such public events should be somewhat differently analyzed in state socialist than in capitalist societies. Scholars have shown that state socialist societies have operated by a different logic than capitalist social orders, and continued to do so in eastern Europe into the transitions of 1989. For example, their founding ideology emphasized internationalism and denied the lasting role of national sentiment; it sought to justify rule by the rationality of centralized planning. Further, the logic of “real socialism” was to maximize the control of the centralized political apparatus over the production of everything—cultural values as well as material goods (Fehér, Heller, and Márkus 1983). Thus, the myriad nonstate organizations and networks that ordinarily characterize capitalist societies were sharply curtailed, giving centralized state organs overwhelming dominance over the public sphere, but rarely assuring either efficiency or popular and elite support (Hankiss 1989). Challenges to this dominance, and thus to the state’s legitimacy, have occurred repeatedly in recent decades, and the rhetorical structure of Bartók’s funeral provides, I suggest, one recognizable variant of state-sponsored response to such challenges.¹

This exegesis of Bartók’s funeral fits into a broad category of anthropological analysis—the study of events—that has taken many forms. Perhaps its currently most familiar version is the reading of events as “texts” that can be decoded to reveal the cultural systems in which they

occur. But, as critics of this approach have pointed out, an event is not necessarily best understood as the reflection of existing social structures or as the exemplification of a coherent cultural system (Moore 1987:729). In the kind of social events I examine here, multiple cultural claims emerge; far from being static reflections of a unified system, such events are the means by which some groups make contingent attempts to shore up a social order, in response to attempts by others to dismantle it. Similarly, analysts of political language have investigated the ways in which speakers use linguistic practices and events in the reproduction and transformation of social systems (Gal 1989). Building on the insights of such broadly processual approaches, I argue that Bartók's burial was neither a reenactment of established notions of national identity nor a reflex of existing social arrangements. Rather, it is best understood as an attempt by intellectuals speaking in support of a morally and organizationally weak state to make a claim for much-needed credibility by symbolically aligning the state with the figure of Bartók. Ironically, in order to do this they reproduced and reinterpreted exactly the powerful discourse about Europe and national identity that had been reintroduced into public debate in earlier decades by critical intellectuals attacking the socialist state's policies and structure. As each side struggled to make its own points using the same discursive means, the image of Europe gained in salience and political force (cf. Simmonds-Duke 1987). Thus, rather than relying on the metaphor of a stable text, I suggest that the funeral was part of an unfolding argumentative exchange between elements of the Hungarian state and its adversaries, as well as other internal and international audiences.

To make this case, I divide my argument into three sections: the first describes the Hungarian debate on Europe, identifying some of its most important semiotic characteristics; the second outlines the immediate sociopolitical circumstances that must be known in order to understand the funeral; and the third covers the funeral itself, the rhetorical structure of the talk associated with the funeral, and the nature of public discourse in Hungarian state socialism.

Europe in Hungary

In 1847, a young cohort of Hungarian writers and poets started their new literary-political journal with a self-critical question: "During the last 30 years of peace, how has Hungary helped the culture of all nations? . . . [A]s a nation, have we truly been partners in Europe's endeavours?" (Abrányi Émil in *Életképek* [1847], quoted in Fábri 1987:731).² In 1906, a weekly picture magazine for the arts and letters in Budapest published a birthday tribute to the founder of Hungary's Ethnographic Museum: "The career of this interesting and worthy man proves that Hungary today is truly Europe, and no longer the Balkans or some other exotic place" (Magyar Szemle 25 January 1906). And in the summer of 1988, Béla Bartók, who was, among other things, an ethnographer of music, was saluted with these words in the banner headlines of a Budapest daily: "He showed the way that Hungarians can truly become Europeans" (Magyar Nemzet 8 July 1988).

For Hungary, the century and a half between the first and last of these pronouncements was marked by full participation in the European continent's political and economic events: several revolutions of various stripes, two world wars, at least five national governments of virtually every political shade known to Europe, rapid industrialization, a large and traumatic diminution of territory and population following World War I, and a change in east/west geopolitical alignment from Habsburg and German junior partner to Soviet ally. Nevertheless, it seems Hungarians still needed lessons to become Europeans. The similarity of the quotations points to the longevity of the wish to "join Europe," something that is nevertheless always "just about to happen," suggesting that we are dealing less with a geographical or political relation than with a durable discourse about that relation.

The idea of joining "Europe"—or of rejecting it—is hardly peculiar to Hungarians. Debates about the meanings of Europe were important elements in the 18th- and 19th-century construc-

tion of national identities throughout the peripheral regions of capitalist Europe. Elites claiming to belong to Europe, and those arguing for the distinctiveness of their indigenous traditions, each offered different images of the nation's identity and with it divergent political-economic strategies and visions of the future. Recent research shows that in each case—Romania (Verdery 1991), Greece (Herzfeld 1987), Russia (Riasanovsky 1985), and Germany (James 1989), among others—the geopolitical circumstances were different, and the recurrent debates among elites about affinities with Europe as against indigenous distinctiveness have taken different historical paths, with varying political consequences. But certain common features of these debates deserve attention: the elites' painful recognition of their regions' economic and political backwardness under peripheral capitalism; the consequent attempt to adopt western (European) models of material and technological advancement, "civilization," bourgeois life, and liberal democracy; the simultaneous but contrary attempt to reject domination, first by demanding political independence and then by valorizing national identity; the creation or recreation of folk traditions and the assertion of indigenous spiritual values felt to be superior to those of the west. As Elias (1978[1939]) has shown, the familiar antithesis between "civilization" and a nationally distinctive spiritual superiority ("*Kultur*") had its origins in 18th-century Europe as the rising German middle class's challenge to the domination of France. Thus, another common feature of the debate about Europe becomes evident: its ironic logic. Even the indigenist position, while ostensibly rejecting Europe, adopts western European ideals and the western image of a world of bounded, culturally differentiated social units (Chatterjee 1986; Handler 1988). It, too, is a way of fitting into the European state system and into expanding capitalism.³

In Hungary the debate I have been discussing has been called a "war" about notions of "Europeanness" and "Magyariness," about how to combine *haza és haladás* (patriotism and progress), a war that has been "raging in Hungary without cease or resolution for two hundred years" (Litván 1978:5). Over that time, discussions about the country's future have faced the question of how that future should be shaped: in a European way, or in some native, eastern, Magyar way. I suggest that a closer examination of this Hungarian argument about Europe, about belonging to the "west" or to the "east," will reveal more of the semiotic logic of national identity that was such a central part of the rhetoric of Bartók's funeral.

In the Budapest of the 1980s, talk of Europe was a mainstay of popular journals and scholarly publications. But it also arose in the most mundane circumstances: in a restaurant a waiter rudely took away the plates before the guests were finished eating, and the host remarked that the establishment was not properly European; a mother apologized for her son's messy room by alluding to its Asian (not European) condition; an amusement park advertised its newest attraction as so exciting that it would be a sensation even in Europe. In a discussion of the difficulties faced by foreign workers trying to enter Hungary, one of the participants suggested that Hungary should simply open its borders, "the way they do in Europe"; a columnist for a weekly magazine, complaining about unresponsive government services, noted that Europe began where they answered your letters; and an intellectual who was asked to give a lecture in a rural adult-education center was so pleased with the large turnout that he wrote in the guest book, "I almost feel as though I were in Europe."

In each of these cases, despite the obvious geographical facts, Hungary is *not* Europe. Indeed, the two terms are part of a dual classification system in which Europe:Hungary can be transformed into parallel oppositions: west:east, civilized:backward, efficient:bureaucratic, ethical:corrupt, and many others. Self-criticism and casual social criticism among educated Hungarians often take the form of calling themselves or the country eastern or Balkan. This is related in part to hostility to Soviet (eastern) power. And, on the other hand, as the examples above indicate, self-praise can take the form of asserting one's Europeanness. However, Hungarian national identity, even when contrasted with Europe, is by no means always negative, as recent survey research shows (Csepeli 1989). In a different mood and different social context, where criticism of non-Hungarians was salient, people often noted, for instance, that there was more

generosity and hospitality in Hungary than in the overly individualized west, that there was better conversation and a more intense, because politically dangerous, intellectual life. Thus, further oppositions could be constructed, such as Europe:Hungary, alienation:community, superficial:profound. But although the valence changes, the contrast with Europe remains a potent semiotic resource.

Thus, for educated Hungarians, as for most inhabitants of the continent, “Europe” is less a geographical region or unique civilization than a symbolic counter of identity, very much like a “shifter” in linguistic analysis (Silverstein 1976). The contrast between Europe and Hungary thus partially parallels what Herzfeld has described as the contrast between “*Ellines*” and “*Romii*” in Greek identity (1987). And, like all such shifters (first and second person pronouns, for example), Europe and Hungary do not have single fixed meanings but change their valence and content according to the context of use. Hungary is not even always opposed to Europe: in a casual conversation about travel, the toilets of Sofia (and Paris!) suffered invidious comparison with those of Budapest, which were, after all, “European.” Here it is Hungary that is opposed to the east and thus can claim all the qualities of civilization, sophistication and, in this case, proper hygiene that this entails.

In addition to such pragmatic reversals, occurring in context, the symbolic contrast itself has to be seen historically. Here we move from the realm of everyday talk to the much more self-conscious and politicized sphere of historical writing, where the discourse about Europe is equally evident.⁴ In earlier eras the debate was bitter: intellectuals and politicians advocating what were called European models suffered accusations of disloyalty and lack of patriotism; those advocating the importance of national tradition were accused of ethnic supremacism and chauvinism. Historians writing about earlier versions of the argument frequently reproduce these antagonisms. The debate has often channeled discussion so powerfully that meta-analyses are difficult to construct. Virtually any commentary (including, no doubt, this one) is sharply contested, and pressed into one or the other camp.

In order to highlight some of the properties of this dichotomizing discourse, I present brief sketches from three well-known moments in Hungarian history when the debates were especially heated. Three properties are noteworthy. First, although the terms—Europe/Hungary, east/west—remain the same, their meanings shift dramatically over time, as do the social groups that advocate each position and the political and economic strategies they propose. Second, it is, in part, the discourse itself that allows participants to link their concerns with apparently quite different arguments from the past. And third, the dichotomy has a recursive quality, being reproduceable on each side of the opposition and in ever-smaller social units.

The first example is from the 1840s, before the anti-Habsburg war of independence, when the Kingdom of Hungary was ruled from Vienna as a dependent agricultural region of the Habsburg Empire. The Hungarian legislative body, consisting of wealthy, aristocratic magnates with great estates and a much larger group of lesser gentry, jealously guarded its ancient feudal rights against what they often saw as the embodiment of the west, the Habsburg monarchy. But opinion among the Hungarian nobility was sharply split: conservatives, who acquiesced to Habsburg rule, clashed with the liberal and Europe-oriented wing, which insisted on the importance of modernization, on the initiation of reforms to transform their feudal society. The east/west symbolism was clearly indicated in an influential liberal political tract entitled *A Kelet Népe* (*People of the East*), which equated the country’s backwardness with the east. But the liberals of 1848 were themselves divided. One of the great magnates and his supporters proposed following a western, indeed a specifically English, model of economic development, based on the technological modernization of the great estates and the efficient commercialization of large-scale farming. The lesser gentry, impoverished and actively seeking ways of supplementing their diminishing incomes, argued for an independent Hungarian state whose bureaucratic offices they would fill. This plan would modernize the economy under the aegis of a powerful but liberal state in a specifically Hungarian way (Dénes 1988; János 1982).

Another intense episode of the Europe debate occurred more than 40 years later. Following the failed war for independence from the Habsburgs, a compromise was forged in which Hungary would enjoy new privileges within what had now become the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. By the last decades of the 19th century, Hungary once again had a government loyal to the Habsburgs, countered by two kinds of political opposition that differed markedly in their visions of the nation. The most powerful was the old Party of Independence, supported by the lesser nobility and other elements in the state bureaucracy. Artists and politicians in support of it constructed a national image based on the life of the nobility while rejecting bourgeois values (Szabó 1983). This image valorized the east and the Asian origins of the Magyars, as against a Catholic Habsburg west. Treatises about the Magyar spirit—proud, dignified, honest but temperamental—were matched by a cult of paintings, sculpture, and monuments to Árpád, the pagan Magyar chieftain from Asia who first conquered the Carpathian basin (Hofer 1989; Sinkó 1989). Folklore and ethnography were also enlisted in this effort at self-definition. Explicitly aiming to develop a sense of national pride, literary men interpreted the highly decorated textiles and houses and the elaborate rituals of contemporary peasant culture as evidence of a love of pomp, color, and extravagance befitting the descendants of warriors from the east (Hofer 1987). The passionate debates about the origins of the Hungarian language also deeply touched the identification of some educated Hungarians with their vision of the east. Although scholarly linguists insisted that the Hungarian language's closest relatives were the languages of simple, tribal fisherfolk in the Urals (a discovery made much earlier, in the late 1700s), their proofs were popularly rejected in favor of amateur theories that claimed to establish linguistic links to the Turkish language and thus to the tradition of a conquering empire. On the one hand, the image of the fierce, nomadic horseman, born to rule, supported Hungarian claims to distinctiveness and the spiritual right to dominate the nationalities within Hungary's borders during the Dual Monarchy. On the other hand, while ostensibly rejecting Europe, the images developed in this period were themselves western European visions. Indeed, some of the images had been foreshadowed in the 18th century by Hungarian artists who, in imitation of English and French orientalist conceptions of the romantic east, created paintings of Asian-looking shepherds on the Hungarian plains (Sinkó In press).⁵

By the end of the 19th century, however, this veneration of the east was being sharply contested by progressive intellectuals and politicians who insisted on the freedom to explore European scientific and artistic trends and bourgeois values. Just as ethnographers and linguists had rejected popular interpretations of Hungarian origins in the name of (positivist) European science, these progressive thinkers proposed a scientific sociology of Hungarian society. Unlike the 1848ers, these thinkers identified the large estates themselves as a part of the problem of backwardness, along with glaring social inequalities and a lack of industrial and urban development. Their solutions pointed to various forms of socialism, workers' movements, and bourgeois radicalism. For them, true patriotism meant a new vision of Hungarian identity that would be congruent with pan-European humanism, economic advance, and artistic modernism; that would draw on folk art in order to develop a new high art. Leading spokesmen of the movement wrote about Hungary ferrying between east and west, holding Asia with one hand and Europe with the other. But the title of their major journal, *Nyugat* (*West*), unambiguously symbolized their stance. Bartók himself was associated with this group, and his concerts were reviewed with great sympathy in the *Nyugat* and similar journals. While the earlier east/west debate had taken place between different factions of the higher and lesser nobility, the progressives at the turn of the century were mostly the children of an emerging capitalist middle class that was not integrated with the older, feudal stratum of Catholic and Protestant gentry, and whose members were often of Jewish or German origin (Hanák 1988:130–173; Litván 1978).⁶

A third episode of the Europe debate can be located during the period between the world wars, after Hungary suffered substantial territorial and population losses that created huge Hungarian-speaking minorities in the neighboring countries. Once again, the opponents of central

authority were divided in their vision of the nation. The heirs of the capitalist urban middle class, who continued to look to European trends, were now opposed by a new populist movement of artists and social thinkers. The populists sought a spiritual renewal that would redefine the relation between politics, art, and the peasantry through an indigenous “Third Road” between communism and capitalism. Their ethical critique of capitalism and the west rested on the first sociological descriptions of peasant life, revealing the massive social problems of the countryside but also uncovering what they believed to be authentic Hungarian traditional values of community and work. Rejecting both the nobility and the urban bourgeoisie, they argued that the peasantry formed the true core of the nation. An influential book revealingly entitled *Magyarság és Europa* (*The Magyars and Europe*) promised that Hungarian rural traditions would renew and redeem Europe. The title of one of their journals, *Kelet Népe* (*People of the East*), once again changed to positive the valence of this phrase. Their artistic goal was to synthesize high culture with peasant culture. Partly in order to deflect the rising influence of German nationalism—but to the dismay of urban intellectuals of Jewish origin—they sometimes spoke in terms of Hungarian national or racial essences. Many of the leaders of this movement were the newly mobile sons of peasants, or displaced intellectuals from the lost territories who were attempting to insert themselves into intellectual and political life. They called themselves populists (*népi*), in contrast to their opponents, the *urbánus* (urban), *européer* intellectuals (Borbándi 1989; Lackó 1987; Némedi 1985). Interestingly, many decades later, the critical intellectuals of the 1970s, expressing opposition to a very different official ideology, the tenets of Marxism-Leninism in state socialism, would identify themselves with the same labels.⁷

In each of the three episodes I have outlined, the specific social groups advocating the opposing visions of national identity have been different; the images of Europe and of Hungary have ranged widely. Yet the recurring opposition that the participants have evoked—east versus west, Europe versus Hungary—links them to one another in the eyes of the participants as well as of many of their chroniclers (cf. Berend 1984; Litván 1978). Other attempts to connect these episodes include the choice of heroes from previous eras—the *népi* writers’ veneration of Bartók, for example—and the choice of parallel names for journals and literary works. The structure of the discourse itself, then, tends to reduce complicated arguments to dualities and helps to unite these disparate movements (over time), constructing a deceptive image of continuity and creating a legitimating solidarity with previous eras.

The recursive property of this dichotomizing discourse is also evident in some of the examples. Reminiscent of the structure of segmentary kinship systems and of fractals in geometry, the east/west opposition is one that can be reproduced repeatedly within each side of the dichotomy, fissioning or subdividing ever-smaller social units.⁸ If Hungary is opposed to Europe or the west, then within Hungary this opposition is recreated, dividing Hungarians themselves into those who defend national ideals as opposed to those who advocate European methods, styles, and trends. But this need not end the reproduction of the contrast. Recall the 1848 liberals who, though all Europe-oriented, split again among themselves on the issue of western as opposed to relatively indigenous models. Recent historical debates about the “place of Hungary in Europe” have a similar semiotic structure: having divided the continent, some argue that Hungary is the eastern part of central Europe, others that it is the western part of eastern Europe, and so on. Another recent example will further illustrate this point. Originally suppressed by the triumph of the Communist party and socialist ideology, the discussion about Europe surfaced again, as I noted above, as a form of opposition by *népi* (populist) and *urbánus* (urban) intellectuals to state-supported socialist culture. Also important was the interest of the young postwar generation in Hungarian folk music and dance. As an initial interest in beat and western “new left” culture was officially banned, thousands of young people turned to folk music and, quite independently of official cultural policy, created the Dance House Movement in the 1970s. In the 1950s, state-controlled popular culture had in some ways abjured national folk traditions, going as far as to replace some of the folk songs in elementary school texts with

newly invented “worker songs” (Hadas 1988). But, on the other hand, it had also attempted to use folk music and dance as a means of control, requiring the formation of dance groups at factories and schools—an imposition much resented as alien by many participants. Interviews and journalistic reports about the first wave of dance houses, however, suggest that the participants were enthusiastic in part because they could *choose* to dance, and expressly because such dancing was different from officially sponsored entertainment (Siklós 1977). Although later versions of the dance house were brought under centralized controls, the first wave of folk dance and folk song revival in the 1970s can certainly be interpreted as an expression of *népi* cultural opposition to the state. However, among *népi* musicians and social thinkers a serious controversy arose. There was substantial disagreement over the way in which folk music was to be revived. Some populist musicians and poets insisted on playing folk music only in its original form, changing nothing; an opposing faction argued that folk music could be made to live again only if it were used as inspiration to write progressive, European popular music (Csoóri 1982:106; Sági 1978).

Indeed, this opposition may also be reproduced within the individual, who may at one time take the stand of the urban cosmopolite and at other times that of the authentic populist. Contextual factors may determine which occurs when. Several intellectuals I have interviewed identified themselves—spontaneously and ironically—as a living example of the two traditions in one body. Others expressed deep ambivalence. This internal division may have psychic costs, but it allows the individual to feel solidary with the idea of the country as a whole, in which opinion is seen to be divided in a structurally parallel way. This is perhaps the extreme instance of the dualism present in numerous European visions of national identity. And it is a dualism that was repeatedly evoked in the rhetoric of Bartók’s funeral.

context: summer 1988

If these enduring features of the Hungarian discourse about national identity form one part of the context for understanding Bartók’s funeral, the immediate social and economic situation in which the funeral was experienced forms an equally important part. The themes of the funeral were drawn from the rhetorical figures outlined above; the *pragmatics* require linking the funeral to the concurrent events with which it was juxtaposed.

Three features of this context deserve mention. The first is the deep economic crisis, including massive international debt, that Hungary faced after a decade of rising consumption and a rising standard of living financed in part by international borrowing. Flying in the face of socialist ideology, the government instituted personal income taxes and announced the likelihood of widespread unemployment. In the view of many Hungarians, the problems were largely due to continued government mismanagement and lack of the frequently promised, and needed, economic reforms. The very forms of legitimacy standardly claimed by state socialism—that it could guarantee employment, the basics of life, and a dependable, planned economy—were being flagrantly negated by the experience of everyday life. This was a more serious problem in Hungary than in some of the other socialist states because the Kádár government justified its rule precisely by pointing to material well-being, especially the relative success of Hungary as compared with the neighboring socialist states. But by the late 1980s people in many walks of life—from entrepreneurs to workers to intellectuals and, lately, newspaper reporters as well—were attributing the problems in part to the government’s lack of *hítel*. This is a revealing formulation, for *hítel* means both trustworthiness and financial credit. An index of popular feeling emerged in opinion polls, which showed that people considered the government and party lacking in trustworthiness (not *hiteles*) to act in the people’s and country’s interests (Bruszt 1988); but the government also lacked *hítel* (credit) from western lending sources, *hítel* that, along with trust and belt-tightening by the population, was seen as essential to getting out of the crisis.

The second factor is related to the structure of real, existing socialism in the Hungary of the 1980s: the emergence, over the previous two decades, of a "second society," one similar to those that developed in some other socialist states, such as Poland. Like the "second economy"—that is, the unofficial market forces and individual enterprises coexisting with the centrally planned economy—this "second society" was a set of social, cultural, and ideological structures existing as sometimes illegal, shadow phenomena, informal strategies and beliefs used to circumvent or subvert the official, bureaucratic, redistributive structures of central control (Hankiss 1988). The emerging *népi* and *urbánus* intellectual camps, as well as the Dance House Movement, were part of this "second society." Just as the second economy operated on structural principles of small scale and competition, rather than on the logic of centralized redistribution, so the populist and urbanist ideologies offered an alternative set of values and principles for the organization of the moral world. In a familiar dichotomy, the urbanists evoked the values of European civil rights and democracy, while the populists emphasized national pride and traditional values. But perhaps the most important feature of the second society, as of the second economy, was its symbiotic relationship with the official, first society. A striking example was the forced interdependence of state farms and a second economy of small family enterprises in Hungarian agriculture (Juhász 1988). Indeed, it was the second economy that, by providing goods and services that the centralized redistributive system was incapable of providing, allowed Hungarian state socialism to avoid earlier economic collapse. Symbiosis also characterized the state policy toward the second society: to encourage it, but only insofar as it did not threaten central decision making and redistributive control. The result was felt as a series of reforms that were withdrawn or undermined, liberalizations that were reversed or subverted. Hankiss (1989) has called this the "colonization" of new initiatives, the "simulation" within a redistributive, centralized system of apparently contradictory processes: market mechanisms, autonomy of firms, and political opposition. In the sphere of cultural policy the encouragement and then officialization of the Dance House Movement might be a good example of "colonization"; the provision for contested elections with no mechanism for choosing opposing candidates, an example of "simulation."

And a third factor was the "discovery" by young Hungarians of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania, Romania. This coincided with the oppositional revival of folk music and dance, which focused especially on the folk traditions of Transylvania, an area (fittingly situated to the east) whose music and dance are often considered more Hungarian than those in Hungary. The Hungarians in Romania were very much in the news at the time of the Bartók funeral. Sizable numbers of them had been emigrating across the border to Hungary because of worsening political and economic conditions in Romania. In addition, only days before Bartók's funeral, an enormous and unprecedented peaceful street demonstration in Budapest had protested the announced plans of the Romanian government to destroy thousands of Hungarian, German, and Romanian villages in a policy of "rural restructuring." Postwar textbooks had essentially omitted any mention of the Hungarian minority in Romania and other neighboring states, largely in order to prevent ethnic conflicts improper between socialist states and to forestall irredentist fantasies associated with interwar Hungarian policies. In addition, as the populist opposition repeatedly complained, official government policy over the years had been silent on the subject of the Hungarian minorities in Romania and their treatment. However, along with the dance houses, visits to Transylvania and the amateur collection of folk custom and music there became fashionable among urban young people in the 1970s. And in the summer of 1988, in contrast to earlier bans on public discussion of Transylvania, the state permitted the huge demonstration against Romanian policies organized by the newly formed opposition organizations. This was not simply a general loosening of the strictures on public assembly. Only days before, a small commemoration of the death of Imre Nagy, leader of the 1956 revolution against Stalinist rule and still in midsummer 1988 an unmentionable figure in Hungarian history, had been

violently dispersed by police. Rather, in supporting the Transylvania demonstration, the state was tacitly and informally aligning itself with public expressions of concern for the minorities.

In the populist developments of the “second society” and the rediscovery of Transylvania, Béla Bartók’s image played a significant part. Bartók’s important ethnomusicological work (some of it in collaboration with Kodály) in the first four decades of the century had included the collection and analysis of not only Hungarian but also Romanian, Slovak, Bulgarian, and Turkish folk songs, as well as much material from Transylvania. Ironically, however, the western European and American appreciation of Bartók, while recognizing his use of folk materials, usually concentrated on his place in the tradition-breaking modernist musical pantheon: his dissonance, formal innovations, and experiments (Stevens 1953). Similarly, the early appreciation of Bartók in Hungary was a cosmopolitan, bourgeois, *urbánus* phenomenon. Later, in the 1950s, just because of its supposed links to bourgeois aesthetics, Bartók’s music was banned: his “formalism” and avant-garde dissonances violated the socialist realist aesthetics required by Soviet and Hungarian party ideologists. One memoir of the period reports that at that time young people considered it a major act of political opposition to play records of Bartók, Stravinsky, Schönberg, and Stockhausen. Yet, in a further twist, for populist intellectuals in the 1970s Bartók’s name became an adjective—similarly oppositional in tone—for purity of interest in peasant art: the *bartóki* model for national traditions, a *bartóki* person, even *bartókiség* (bartókness) as an admirable quality of respect for folk art (Csoóri 1982:3, 12, 15, 106).

Despite the earlier ban, Bartók’s official rehabilitation was under way by the early 1960s, and his name has been increasingly a part of school curricula and public life.⁹ Thus it is certainly not this funeral that made Bartók into a national figure. Rather, what is significant here is the exact idiom of the public drama itself, the precise terms in which his image as hero was constructed at this historical moment, the meanings that were provided and the ways in which some people privately contested them. It is the detailed logic of the rhetoric that reveals the funeral’s place in an ongoing political process.

Bartók’s funeral: allegory and myth

Bartók died in New York in 1945, having emigrated from Hungary in 1940 in protest against the encroachment of German nazism in Hungarian society. Sometime in the spring of 1988 his two sons, one living in the United States and the other in Budapest, decided to return their father’s remains to Hungary. Interviews with musicologists close to the negotiations reveal that the state had long been actively lobbying the brothers to make this decision. But, as one Budapest intellectual commented, however the decision was finally reached, it was damned convenient for the government.

In the two weeks between the exhumation and the reburial almost every newspaper and magazine in the country was preoccupied with Bartók. Although the party newspapers were less active, the press of the Popular Front ran a front-page story or midpaper spread on Bartók every day. All the popular weekly magazines pictured him on their covers, with photo essays inside and often stories about his place of birth and other landmarks in his life; youth magazines followed a similar pattern, providing interviews with public figures somehow linked to Bartók. Regional magazines and newspapers carried major articles reprinted from the national press, but they also published specialty features, in one case even the reminiscences of Bartók’s former maid, who was a native of the region in question; the intellectual weeklies ran front-page tributes.

Instead of being flown directly to Budapest from New York, the coffin was brought by ocean liner to England and by motorcade through France, Germany, and Austria, with celebratory concerts in Southampton, Cherbourg, Paris, Strasbourg, Munich, and Vienna. When the coffin crossed the Hungarian border, people lined the highway to see the motorcade pass their vil-

lages on its way to Budapest. At each stop across Europe and at the border, Hungarian ambassadors, consuls, or ministers greeted the coffin. When the coffin finally arrived on Hungarian soil, and for several days until the burial, the daily *Magyar Nemzet* ran front-page banner headlines. Television and radio news reported regularly on these events, and the entire funeral was televised. On its arrival in Budapest the body lay in state at the Hall of the Academy of Sciences for one day. Well over ten thousand people marched past the coffin, and these visitors were also televised. In addition, several thousand people of greatly varying ages and social strata braved the extreme heat to be present at the funeral itself. The final eulogy was delivered by the Assistant Minister of Culture (the Minister was unexpectedly delayed elsewhere) along with the head of the Academy of Sciences. A large part of the membership of the Academy of Sciences marched to the gravesite with the coffin. As a final tribute, television preempted other programming and presented Bartók's opera *Bluebeard's Castle* on the evening of the funeral.

It is difficult to imagine a similar welcome, four decades after his death, for a classical composer in the United States or western Europe. That Bartók's music is largely for an elite audience and is difficult to understand is an open secret. In any case, Hungarian national heroes have tended to be revolutionaries, kings, or poets. Bartók was, of course, an illustrious artist of the country. Nevertheless, the talk surrounding the funeral suggested that the official effort was not primarily a tribute to his artistic accomplishments. Finally, despite widespread distrust of the government, it is noteworthy that, in one way or another, many thousands of ordinary people chose to be actively involved in the funeral, even though the presence of Hungarian officialdom in its planning and execution was inescapably evident.

I believe the funeral can best be understood as a move by intellectuals closely associated with state socialism and the Communist party to celebrate a national hero who would evoke the sympathy and confidence of a broad internal audience (including oppositional intellectuals in both the populist and the urbanist camp) while appealing to an international one as well. This emerges from a close examination of the discourse themes¹⁰ and rhetorical processes used to construct the representation of Bartók.

In many cases newspapers, television, and official scholarly commentators used selected facts about Bartók's life as well as Bartók's own words, taken from letters and essays, to construct his image. I have quoted many of these below. Although there was some variation in the extent of coverage and in the themes emphasized by the various media organs, there was also a remarkable uniformity. But, as in much of Hungarian publishing in this period, this was probably more a matter of shared images, aims, and assumptions on the part of writers with access to the media than of explicit central control (Haraszti 1987). In all the media the following themes appeared with great frequency.

Bartók as népi scholar and artist. Bartók was a collector of folk music and wrote, "in my works the Magyar element is the strongest. . . . I have only one goal and that is to serve the Magyar nation and the Magyar homeland" (cf. *Magyar Nemzet* 8 July 1988:3; and *Délmagyarország* 9 July 1988:1). He chose Budapest and not Vienna for his musical training, and in his youth he wrote a concerto to Kossuth, the leader of the 1848 revolution. Bartók discovered authentic Hungarian folk music, which he considered his "pure source" of musical inspiration. Furthermore, he was not a real émigré (that is, not an abandoner of his country) but rather someone who lived in self-imposed exile. This distinction was underlined by quotations from a letter in which he said, "I want to come home, once and for all" (cf. *Népszabadság* 7 July 1988; *Új Tükör* 3 July 1988). Bartók was also firmly identified with populism, when the return of his body was compared to the return of the bodies of Kossuth (in 1894) and Rákóczi (in 1906), both leaders of Hungarian revolutions against Habsburg rule.

Bartók as urbánus, European. The testimonials of numerous world-famous musicians as well as western political leaders (the governor of New York State, Margaret Thatcher of Great Britain, François Mitterand of France, a Bavarian provincial leader) were reprinted, sometimes in facsimile, in newspapers. Details of the entire trip of the coffin through Europe were rehearsed in

print and on television, demonstrating the reverence of the world (it was reported, for instance, that French classical radio had played only Bartók on the day the coffin made its way across France). The importance of his contributions to European music was stressed, as was the fact that he had collected not just Hungarian but also Romanian, Slovak, and Turkish folk music. Descriptions of his life revealed that he spoke German, French, Romanian, and English.

Bartók as son of Transylvania and peacemaker there. Born in Transylvania and raised in cities and towns, each carefully named, that had been a part of prewar Greater Hungary (public mention of which had long been taboo), Bartók was as much concerned about the rights and culture of non-Hungarian minorities as about those of Hungarians. His dedication to the ideal of “brotherly relations between nations” (cf. *Magyar Nemzet* 7 July 1988:5; *Magyar Hírlap* 30 June 1988:10) was often cited in support of this theme, as was the fact that he had worked closely with Romanian ethnographers and musicologists. The reprinting of a glowing testimonial from his student and co-worker, the Romanian composer George Sbârcea, made the same point.

Bartók as antifascist. He left Hungary in 1940, declaring that he could no longer live and work in a country threatened by fascism. He was not Jewish nor was any of his family, so that he had only principled political reasons to leave. Furthermore, he declared that he would not come back until streets in Budapest were no longer named for foreign statesmen (clearly meaning Mussolini and Hitler). It was prominently noted that his work had been banned in fascist Germany and, for a period, in prewar Hungary too.

Bartók as victim of Stalinism. His work was banned by the government’s art policy in “the fifties” (a euphemism for Stalinism). In retrospect this policy was faulted for having persecuted Bartók and was labeled wrongheaded and narrow-minded by the press.

Bartók as uncompromising, pure, universalist humanitarian. His ethical “purity,” ethereality, uncompromising morality, and devotion to universal human values were stressed, especially in personal reminiscences and testimonials; the question “Are we deserving of him?” was raised.

It is obvious that the extended trip through Europe heightened the effect of Bartók’s “re-entrance” into Hungary, providing a dramatic tension for the several audiences of the funeral. While for the internal audience the trip through Europe demonstrated Bartók’s link to the west, it worked simultaneously as a display for the states of the Common Market with which Hungary was trying to establish closer economic relations. Bartók’s place in the high culture of Europe is assured, and these events, with their diplomatic testimonials, firmly linked Hungary to Bartók and thus to a prestigious European tradition.

The case of the internal audience is more complex. First, for the intellectuals and others who lined the streets, read the papers, and watched television, these themes provided a representation of Bartók that skillfully canceled the great categorical contrast of populist/urbanist and Hungarian/European, creating Bartók as a hero for both sides who could synthesize these differences, and *momentarily* reconciling the factions in the “war” of oppositional discourse. The state’s claim to Bartók, in these official organs and ceremonies, thus undercut the opposition movements. The constructors of this image appropriated the power to decontextualize Bartók’s own discourse, his words, and then recontextualize them. Most important, his art disappeared entirely from view, in favor of his rare political and moral pronouncements. Some facts about his life, equally true, also disappeared, since they would have disturbed this image: that his mother was German-speaking; that he was a distant, sickly, and difficult person who consistently tried to avoid politics; that he was nevertheless a functionary of the abortive 1919 Communist government; that he had requested in his will that no great ceremony accompany his funeral (see, for example, the biographical accounts by Pethö [1984] and Stevens [1953]). In short, that he was an actual, complex, historical person.

Second, Bartók’s relation to Romania and Romanians became, in the broader context of the summer of 1988, an allegory about the sorts of relations that should exist between the two

nations, under Hungarian tutelage—even a claim about the kind of relations that supposedly had existed in the romanticized Greater Hungary of which Bartók became the synecdochic sign. This meaning was in part accomplished and certainly highlighted by the presence, next to articles about Bartók, of reports about pronouncements from western European states censuring the Romanian government's draconian treatment of its population and especially the plans to destroy villages.¹¹ The decoded allegory seems to say: Romanians respected him; he respected them and even helped to discover their traditions in a peaceful, humane, and brotherly way. The eulogies and testimonials represented Bartók's ethically unimpeachable stance toward Hungary's ethnic minorities as though it were the state's, in silent and accusing contrast to Romania's supposedly opposite current behavior.

Third, Bartók as uncompromising antifascist and Bartók as posthumous victim of Stalinism created a neat pair, allowing spokesmen for the state to criticize earlier policies and to dissociate themselves and the state from earlier "mistakes" (a pattern more and more common in the 1980s as the 1950s became an approachable rather than a taboo topic), while also placing the state on a high middle ground between fascism and Stalinism as the current champion of a man maligned by both.

Fourth, in identifying Bartók's reburial with the homecomings and reburials of Kossuth and Rákóczi, both of whom were revolutionary leaders, also exiled, the state implicitly offered critical and opposition intellectuals a "body" that they had not requested (Bartók), while staying conspicuously silent about the body that the democratic, urbanist opposition had been demanding for years: that of Imre Nagy, the officially still unburied leader of the 1956 revolution.

The final theme, about Bartók's ethics and purity of spirit, is particularly interesting. Its relation to the other themes involves a suppressed premise: Bartók judged wartime, fascist Hungary, found it wanting, and left. If he was coming back now, it had to be because the country now deserved his positive judgment. It was a politically and ethically deserving place. Thus, by this logic, the return of Bartók's body justified, legitimated, strengthened the Hungarian government's very weak moral claims on the population. This matched the strategy of an earlier regime, which had identified itself with the figure of Bartók's contemporary and friend Zoltán Kodály in a search for moral acceptance (Hadas 1988).

The responses of those at the funeral, and of others who did not go, suggest that these themes were indeed heard by the audience. For instance, one woman who went to the funeral explained that she was there because Bartók represented "the other Hungary." That is, the ideal combination of populist and urbanist, Hungarian and European, stood, for her, in opposition to the official socialist ideology that otherwise characterized the country. Even those who criticized what they called the literary and official "Bartók cult," and regretted that the *bartóki modell* of art and life had become empty and clichéd, nevertheless affirmed the rightness of commemorating Bartók. Contestations of the official rhetoric could be heard only in private conversations, outside the state-controlled public discourse. Yet even these contestations stayed within the terms of the public rhetoric: people argued whether Bartók was *really* an exile or an émigré, *really* a populist, an urbanist, or both; like the newspapers, they cited quotations and incidents from his life to make their points. Some musicians, musicologists, and other experts close to Bartók's work felt the funeral was in bad taste; they cited Bartók's own request that there be no special celebrations around his death. And they objected to the stress on Bartók's politics, since they saw Bartók as simply musical. In order to argue with the rhetoric in such detail, these educated Hungarians clearly had to listen to and understand it. A self-defined member of the democratic opposition who did not go to the funeral explained that her respect for Bartók was not any the less for all that. Rather, she objected to the state's claim of him. Bartók, she explained, would not have been glad to be brought back, for, in fact, the streets of Budapest still bore foreign names: Lenin Boulevard, Moscow Square. Like the people who asked where the "other body" (that is, Imre Nagy) was, she was wittily expressing her oppo-

sition to current state alliances and policies, recruiting Bartók for her own purposes, all through the rhetoric of the funeral itself.

In the broadest sense, Roland Barthes' analysis of modern myth-making is germane to this event. Indeed, for the external audience of western European countries and Hungarian émigré populations, this must have been the most striking aspect of the events. Bartók's image was created through the selection and decontextualization of his words and distorted through its pairing with the symbols of Hungarian officialdom. As Barthes (1972:112, 127) has argued, the second-order semiological relationship between the signifier (in this case, Bartók) and the concept with which it is equated (Hungary) is thus made to seem unconstructed, natural, given.

conclusions

In assessing the significance of Bartók's funeral and the rhetoric surrounding it, I will start from the symbolic devices themselves and work outward to the place of the events in the larger political processes of Hungarian state socialism.

I have argued that metaphors, decentering, allegory, suppressed premises, and myth played important roles in the rhetorical processes constructing Bartók's funeral, as much for the domestic audience as for the international one. While it is clear that many people rejected the implicit claims made through these rhetorical devices, the large internal audience was able to see, in the context of current events, a set of idealized and self-righteous images of itself: Hungary and Europe reconciled, Romania and Hungary reconciled on Hungarian terms. However, this analysis should not be taken to indicate that the rhetorical mechanisms I have identified are in any way peculiar to public discourse in state-socialist societies. Such claims have been made by western observers and Hungarian dissidents complaining about the ubiquity of "messages between the lines" (Haraszti 1987:145) and commenting wryly about the "Hungarian periphrastic . . . a language of diabolical circumlocution, of convoluted allegory and serpentine metaphor" (Ash 1989:146). To be sure, such devices were pervasive not only in attempts to circumvent censorship but also in the official public pronouncements I have examined here. But those who complain about the indirectness of Hungarian public discourse appear to be comparing it with American or western English idealized as a straightforward and transparent vehicle of information. Ironically, this is a view that has been identified as part of American linguistic ideology.¹² Quite to the contrary, I believe that these rhetorical processes are common to socialist and capitalist societies alike. Their initial explication in the work of Barthes (1972) and others dealt specifically with bourgeois images; current investigations of American political discourse reveal their presence as well (Woolard 1989). Ethnographic writing itself has been identified as deeply allegorical. Moreover, much ethnographic evidence indicates that circumlocution, indirection, and metaphorical veiling are also characteristic of political language in small-scale egalitarian societies (see, for example, Brenneis and Myers 1984). Thus, although analysis of the precise workings of rhetorical structure is essential to understanding the place of Bartók's funeral in Hungarian politics, it is certainly not the presence or absence of such rhetorical devices that distinguishes between forms of public discourse in social orders built on different organizing principles.

Comparison suggests a different approach and raises the second theme of my analysis: the relation of Bartók's funeral to the state's moral authority. Here we find both similarities and differences between different types of social orders. In small-scale egalitarian societies, allegorical, circumlocutory speech occurs in public meetings where communitywide decisions are discussed. Analysts of these societies argue that linguistic indirection allows speakers to hide and deny public disagreement, interpersonal conflict, and individual differences in power, all of which violate the societies' explicit ideology of consensus and adult male equality (Irvine 1979). In a similar way, the veiling and denial of social processes that contradict reigning ideo-

logies appear to be at work in modern capitalist myth-making as well. In the capitalist west, for instance, social inequality is regularly made to seem biologically determined, thereby shielding from view the ideologically inconvenient way that it is created and maintained by social processes. In one sense the rhetorical structure of public discourse in state socialism works in a parallel manner. But clearly, the principles that justify rule, and thus the social phenomena that must be simultaneously addressed, reshaped, and obscured from view, are quite different. In the summer of 1988, in Budapest, such phenomena included the growing resentment over the Romanian treatment of the Hungarian minority, the increasingly organized intellectual opposition to the state, and, most glaringly, the government's inability to deliver the material well-being it had so long advertised as its major achievement and justification. Increasingly evident was the futility of endless official debates about limited economic reform, debates implicitly assuming that the central redistributive apparatus could somehow survive despite its breakdown.

And this is where, despite parallels with other kinds of social orders, I suggest that an analysis of the events and rhetoric of the funeral shows the funeral to be a step, an exchange, in the historical struggles specific to a Hungarian version of state socialism. For the attempt to obscure, if only momentarily, the grave crisis of the centrally planned economy led the state and party intellectuals to take up exactly the themes raised by their increasingly vocal critics and, following a well-established strategy for dealing with challenges to centralized rule, to "simulate" them in public discourse. Thus, the question is not what kinds of rhetorical devices are used in public discourse, but rather what social groups have control of them and how exclusive that control is. Just as market competition could be "simulated" in the second economy without the effect of threatening—indeed, with the effect of temporarily rescuing—the central redistributive system, so alternative, oppositional visions of Hungarian identity could be aired as long as they remained under the aegis of the state and did not jeopardize central control of public discourse. This is why the rhetoric of Bartók's funeral could implicitly take up the very issues raised by populist critics—the neglect of the Hungarian minorities, the deterioration of everyday ethics, the neglect of indigenous traditions and values—as well as some of the issues raised by the urbanist critics: the importance of western European values in culture and economy, the lack of morality in public life. In attempting to justify the state in some way other than through the longstanding claims of material prosperity and rational planning, intellectuals supporting it reproduced the very discourse about east and west that critics had raised against it; they claimed the posthumous blessing of Bartók, the hero whom all sides pointedly constructed as morally pure, deeply indigenous yet thoroughly European.

It is clear that the terms in which the critical intellectuals and democratic oppositions of the 1980s framed their objections to state socialism were themselves reinterpretations of a powerful and longstanding debate about Europe and Hungarian national identity. Indeed, the discussion about Europe was the field in which elites argued about the future of the nation and their own leadership roles in shaping it. Critical intellectuals used this idiom to provide social goals and political as well as moral visions that could compete with official views. For instance, "east" took on an extra and negative symbolic load in the face of Soviet power; for populists and urbanists alike, "Europe" carried moral meanings of liberal democracy and human rights, as well as market mechanisms. But within these parameters, populists and urbanists split on the ways in which such goals should be achieved in Hungary. Thus, in a number of respects the opposition groups of the 1980s reproduced the structure of earlier versions of this dichotomizing discourse, again deploying it against a central power. The official rhetoric of the funeral played on this. Its claim to have united "Europe" with "Hungary," to have dissolved the great discursive "war," was an attempt to undercut *both* oppositional positions.

The synthesis of Hungary and Europe credited to Bartók is impressive to Hungarians and was admired even by those who argued with the funeral's rhetoric exactly because it assumed a fundamental duality. The proposition that the ideas of "Hungary" and "Europe" can be rec-

onced gains its symbolic weight, its attractiveness for Hungarian listeners, from the fact that the dilemma it claims to resolve is not only a longstanding intellectual and political one, but is inscribed, as I have tried to show, in the everyday expressions, forms of thought, and senses of self of educated Hungarians. The funeral of Bartók was only a small—if a particularly focused—skirmish in the discursive battles among Hungarian elites. With the subsequent demise of the Hungarian Communist party, the larger argument about national identity and Europe continued in the contest between new political parties formed in 1989 out of the earlier opposition groups. The parties tacitly agreed on the terms of the debate: who could bring the country “closer to Europe” while authentically representing the “values of the nation.” One party stressed neglected indigenous traditions and slow, measured change, the other free market ideals and rapid economic transformation. Although the programs and projects were, of course, quite different from those espoused by the 1848ers, the turn-of-the-century progressives, or the populists and urbanists of the interwar period, many observers have noted that educated Hungarians nevertheless understood the differences between the two parties as a matter of “national-populist” and “liberal-Europeanist” positions.

notes

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¹In the scholarly literature debating the terms for analysis of socialist societies, I have relied on the influential work of the economist János Kornai (1980), who described the logic of redistributive command economies, and the theoretical writings of sociologists and philosophers such as Fehér, Heller, and Márkus (1983) and Havel (1985), who have examined the dilemmas of centralized yet organizationally and morally weak states. In my later analysis of the role played by debates among writers, other intellectual elites, and politicians in constructing the “moral justification” or “credibility” of state-socialist systems, I have drawn most directly on the illuminating remarks of Simmonds-Duke (1987), Verdery (1991), Szabó (1988), and Hankiss (1989), all of whom are also interested in the effects of such systems on everyday life and thought.

²This and all other translations from Hungarian are my own.

³Notice that my analysis supplements the recent emphasis, in studies of nationalist discourse, on notions of boundedness and internal homogeneity (for example, Handler 1988), by pointing to a duality that is often present in notions of national identity. The duality is evident as much in Hungary, with its ancient state traditions, as in neighboring states that are not usually considered “historic nations.” And this duality is not limited to Europe. Geertz (1973) identifies a parallel phenomenon in the conflict between “epochalism” and “essentialism” experienced by the states that gained independence from colonial rule after World War II; Chatterjee (1986) provides a much more detailed discussion of India.

⁴There is not enough space here for even a partial inventory of Hungarian books and special issues of magazines devoted to the issue of Europe in relation to Hungary that have been published in the last few years. I can give some sense of the range of interest by mentioning a two-volume compendium called *Helyünk Európában* (*Our Place in Europe*), which collects writings on the subject by Hungarians in the 20th century (Ring 1986). A small popular book called *Az “Európa-paradigma”* (*The “Europe Paradigm”*) ends with a chapter on what it means to be Hungarian in Europe (Vitányi 1986). A special issue of the journal *Századvég* entitled “Kell-e nekünk közép Európa?” (“Do We Need Central Europe?”) collects writings, this time by a range of eastern European, western European, and American scholars, on the subject of the regions of Europe and their current political significance (Gyurgyák 1989); the journal sent prominent intellectuals a questionnaire asking the same question. As many observers of eastern Europe have noted, all of this can be read as a discussion of geopolitical alliances and oppositional movements in the idiom of geography and history (see, for instance, Ash 1989).

⁵It is important to add here that the older notion of a loyalty to the crown of St. István and thus to a multiethnic Hungary was being augmented and challenged by the development of a more romantic and linguistic nationalism. Note that my focus on the Europe debate (east versus west) necessarily slights other arguments woven into Hungarian visions of nationhood, such as whether the nation was to exemplify the values of the nobility, the peasantry, or the capitalist classes; whether the country could assimilate minorities or had to exclude them; and whether Hungary could be a great power. Bibó (1986 [1946]) and Szabó

(1983) provide excellent discussions of some of these issues; see Szücs (1984) for a fine extended treatment of the idea of nationhood in Hungarian history.

⁶The structure of Hungarian society in the early capitalist period (1849–1918) is classically described as “dual.” To put it very briefly and schematically, the new capitalist classes developed side by side with a complete hierarchy of anticapitalist feudal strata. The capitalist strata were often not Magyar but rather German or Jewish in origin; they were matched by a Magyar landed gentry, a Magyar bureaucratic gentry, and a peasantry that imitated the gentry’s cultural style (Hanák 1975).

⁷In the case of the recently formed opposition groups, *népi* writers were at the forefront, along with academics, especially philosophers but also sociologists and historians. The *népi* writers often stretched the limits of censorship but were usually tolerated by the state. The older, illegal “democratic opposition,” which produced Hungary’s *samizdat* literature and was closer to the *urbánus* camp, also consisted of writers, philosophers, and academics, many of Jewish origin and some, ironically, from families who had been committed to communism in the postwar years. However, in the course of this article I have been using the term “intellectual” in a less specific way—descriptively rather than analytically—as Hungarians themselves do, to mean anyone with university or other higher education. For the 1980s version of the Europe discourse, the contrast with Romania is instructive: the discourse of Europe was strong there too, but during the Ceaușescu years of the 1970s and 1980s intellectuals who were aligned with the state and party adopted an anti-Europe, “Romania first” or “indigenist” position (Simmonds-Duke 1987; Verderly 1991). See Bibó (1986 [1946]) for an influential discussion of the special role of intellectuals in eastern and central European nationalisms.

⁸This property of social and cultural structures has recently been described in detail by Abbott (1990), who draws the parallel with fractals.

⁹Indeed, there is by now probably no Hungarian city without a Bartók Street. Budapest has at least six. In addition, many musical festivals, events, and institutions are named after him. The Bartók Archive conducts musicological investigations. The 1000-forint note bears his picture, and in 1987 the third channel of Hungarian radio was named Bartók Rádió.

¹⁰I extracted these themes from a reading of all the press materials related to the event—the daily, weekly, and other press—as well as a monitoring of the radio and television coverage. Any characterizations of Bartók repeated many times and in several places counted as “themes.” Interviews with participants also proved revealing. As illustrations of the media’s use of Bartók’s own words, I have provided two examples from magazines and newspapers for each quotation, but many more could easily be cited. I have omitted authors’ names in my citations even when they were available, because my aim is not to single out particular journalists but rather to point to broad trends in the reporting of the event. My particular thanks to András Wilhelm of the Bartók Archive for access to some of these press materials.

¹¹One rather direct connection between Bartók and criticism of Romania was made through humor. The daily cartoon in the *Magyar Nemzet* for 4 July 1988 (p. 10) was a totally black square. The inscription above read, “In memory of Bartók”; the caption below was the title of one of his compositions, “Evening among the Székelys.” This can only be read as an allusion to the notorious lack of electricity in Romania, home of the Székelys, and it sets up a tragicomic comparison between the deprivations of the present and the supposedly better days when Bartók was there.

¹²Woolard (1989) discusses the American assumption that English is uniquely straightforward and transparent, more a transmitter of information than are other languages, which rather have the capacity for manipulating and obscuring matters.

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