

Four Monuments and a Funeral –

Pathological Mourning and Collective Memory in Contemporary Hungary

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Abstract:

In this chapter, through an exploration of the imagery and engagement with four monuments and a sequence of political reburials, I suggest that the form of the rhetoric and emotional production from the Hungarian far right largely resembles what Vamik Volkan has called Established Pathological Mourning. In such circumstances, mourning becomes extended, whereby an individual – or in the present case, a collective – cannot adaptively work through the loss of a loved one or loved object. Mourning rituals are extended, if not incessant, whereby the repetition of mourning is an attempt to ‘keep alive’ the lost object. The mourning rituals appear to be the recognition of loss, but they are not. Rather, these complicated mourning rituals in their endless repetition forestall the work of living on without the lost object. I suggest that similar to the re-grief therapy that Volkan promotes for patients stuck in the mourning process, collective cultural mourning may offer an adaptive way forward in working through the issues of loss and control for a larger segment of a society troubled by traumatic loss.

‘We would be in a completely different situation if the majority would come to realize that we have been living together for many decades now, that their history is our history too.’

- Ágnes Daróczi, *Magyar Narancs*¹

Introduction

Clad in black clothes, combat boots, and military style hats, banners and flags flying around them, the assembled members of the self-styled Hungarian Guards (Magyar Gárda²) shouted ‘You are going to die here! You are going to die here!’ (Balogh 2013). They threw rocks and bottles at the homes of people they believed to be Roma. The demonstration in Devecser in August 2012 was like so many that year and since: thousands of young and old, men and women, all members of direct action groups with names like Hungarian National Guard (Magyar Nemzeti Gárda), Hungarian National Front (Magyar Nemzeti Arcvonal), The Civil Association for a Better Future (Szebb Jövőért Polgárőr Egyesület), Defence (Véderő), and even the Outlaws’ Army (Betyársereg), descended on this small Hungarian village with a sizable Roma population in order to conduct ‘self-defence patrols’ against ‘Gypsy crimes’ (*cigánybűnozé*). Similarly, in

March and April 2011, elements of these rightist direct action groups descended upon the village of Gyöngyöspata to run ‘military exercises’ and walk ‘security patrols’ to ‘defend’ the residents against ‘crime’ (BBC 2011). Véderő announced that it was going to establish a paramilitary training centre in the Roma section of town. The village became such a focal point for tensions between far-right militants and the Roma community that the Hungarian National Front published on their website that they believed the confrontations in Gyöngyöspata were the ‘outbreak of a cleansing civil war.’³ These demonstrations, which were intended to foment political violence, were also inspired by a series of violent attacks on Roma in 2008 and 2009 that resulted in fire bombings, shootings, and murders (Athena Institute 2014a).⁴

The demonstration in Devecser opened with a welcome speech by Gábor Ferenczi, a local politician from the Jobbik party, the third largest party in parliament, and one of the most popular with young people (Varga 2014; Phillips 2010); he said to the assembled that ‘self-defence is a fundamental right’ (Szentkoronaradio 2012). Next to speak before the ‘patrol march’ was Zsolt Tyirityán, the leader of the Outlaws’ Army, who stated that he would use ‘any means necessary to protect our species! I am a racist and I am proud of it, because I love my race I’m going to defend it’ (Szentkoronaradio 2012). Later that year at commemorations of the 1956 Uprising, on 23 October 2012, Tyirityán vented his hate against Jews, saying in a speech that they ‘should be put into freight cars and taken a good distance away and put to work’ (Balogh 2013). The invocation of this kind of language is not deafness to history and the past, but an intentional direct link to it. Further, in a good deal of far-right propaganda in Hungary, anti-Semitism and anti-Roma sentiments are explicitly linked. For example, a December 2012 propaganda pamphlet from the Hungarian National Front claimed: ‘A virtual bulldozer is destroying our country. The blade of the bulldozer is made up by gypsy criminals and its driver, who is directing the whole process, is the Zionist Jewry’ (Athena Institute 2014b). But while anti-Semitism and anti-Roma sentiments are a problem across all of Europe, especially Central and Eastern Europe, I argue in this chapter that there is much more going on here.

Hungary has had a violent history in the twentieth century: the losses from the First World War; a civil war and a campaign of violent retribution in the immediate aftermath of the First World War; the losses of the Second World War; the Holocaust; the Soviet Occupation after the Second World War; and the failed 1956 ‘revolution’ – the spectre of which continues to haunt Hungarian politics today. In particular, the losses associated with the end of the First World War have had both immediate and long-term impacts on the discourses and alignments of major political forces for the past one hundred years. I will argue here that these losses remain particularly salient as they have come to function as what the Turkish Cypriot psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Vamik Volkan has called a ‘chosen trauma’ – a loss so deep that a social group comes to draw a ‘mental representation of the event into *its very identity* [emphasis added]’ and to link all subsequent losses and injuries to it (Volkan 1988, p.xxv; Murer 2009). As this loss comes to define a social group, it is quite difficult for that group to meaningfully work through, or mourn, the losses, lest the group ‘destroys’ its defining feature. This chapter explores this tension between experiencing loss and trying to work through it, and the difficulties of mourning a loss that defines a group.

Volkan has explored one facet of this difficult mourning process, where the bereaved attempts to mourn a loss but cannot complete the process. Volkan termed this ‘established pathological mourning’ (1981, p.84), and I will explore how these complex processes of experiencing losses, and attempts to work through them, complicate contemporary Hungarian identity politics and manifest as anti-Semitic and anti-Roma violence. I will suggest that the form of the rhetoric and emotional production from the Hungarian far right largely resembles mourning rituals that are extended if not incessant, whereby the repetition of mourning is an attempt to ‘keep alive’ the lost object (1981, p.12). This will be done through an exploration of the imagery of and engagement with four monuments in central Budapest, and an analysis of a contentious political reburial. These monuments are (1) a Soviet era memorial to the Red Army’s liberation of Budapest at the end of World War II, (2) a 2013 counter-statue memorialising

Miklós Horthy, the anti-communist wartime leader of Hungary, (3) a follow-up 2014 monument attributing the atrocities under Horthy to German occupation, and (4) a 2005 instalment along the Danube commemorating those Budapestian Jews and others who were murdered in mass executions along the river by members of the Hungarian fascist Arrow Cross militias.

While the mourning rituals appear to be the recognition of loss, they are not. Rather, these complicated mourning rituals in their endless repetition forestall the work of living on without the lost object. By contrast, in the course of what Volkan calls ‘uncomplicated grief,’ the mourner ‘loosens his ties to the representation of [the lost object] ... in a loving way that promotes his own growth’ (Volkan 1981, p.13). This is similar to the distinction Freud made regarding mourning and melancholia. For Freud mourning was a healthy and natural process during which the mourner grieves for a specific lost love object. In melancholia, the mourner is either unable to fully comprehend or accept the loss (Freud 1917). Similarly in situations described by Volkan as ‘complicated mourning,’ the mourner has a profound but ambivalent connection with the lost object, and is conflicted about ‘killing’ or ‘not killing’ the one he has lost. This ambivalence however has within it a sense of control for the mourner (1981, p.85). While the mourner is stuck, and perhaps even tormented by the idea of ‘killing’ the lost loved one, the ambivalence is characterised by a desire to control circumstances that are otherwise completely outside of the control of the mourner. This sense of control offers the possibility of ‘managing’ the loss, especially when the loss was unexpected, or traumatic.

To promote adaptive and healthy mourning for patients stuck in the more complicated process, Volkan suggested a reflexive, engaged ‘re-grieving’ process, in which mourners are “‘deconditioned” toward the disruptive introject’ – the introject being the representation of the lost object with which the mourner is so identified (Volkan 1981, p.8). I argue here that it may be possible to extend the ‘re-grieving process’ through collective cultural mourning as an adaptive way forward in working through the issues of loss and control for a larger segment of a society troubled by traumatic loss. In particular, I am interested in the potential that monuments and

formal sites of mourning and remembrance offer both as ritual sites in ‘established pathological mourning’ and as sites for adaptive working through.

On the one hand, the four monuments presented here represent different aspects of the core identity of the Hungarian far right – namely as a people who have been severely injured, and whose injury is not recognised by the Hungarian political left nor by the European ‘West.’ These monuments also represent in the narrative of the far right those who are responsible for these great injuries: Jews, whether as Hungarian Jewry, or ‘internationalist’ Jewry as reportedly connected to Communism. However, it is precisely at these four sites in Budapest that the conflicting narratives of Hungarian identity are represented both in the aesthetics of the monuments themselves, and through symbolic and cultural politics that occur at these sites in the forms of protest and demonstrations. These demonstrations are calls for violence, and also glimpses of the possibilities of reconciliation. This chapter will explore monuments in Budapest and their contributions to both the condition of complicated mourning and the possibility of adaptive mourning.

The Four Monuments

Among the monuments in the heart of Budapest, four [near or within](#) Szabadság Tér or Freedom Square represent four different narratives of contemporary Hungarian history. Together they reveal a troubled and contentious relationship between contemporary Hungarian politics and collective national identity, and the role of history within them. These four monuments represent both how the narratives of history can become stuck or ossified, presenting a narrative loop that draws the present to the past and back to the present again, as well as how sites of memory can provide the basis for collective working through – the possibility of adaptive cultural mourning – whereby differing groups, even conflicting groups, can discover comparable elements, attributes, and experiences with one another, affording transformative cathexis in the creation of new senses of self-understanding and narration.

Of the four monuments, three were created quite recently, and yet each speaks to a different understanding of the past. The first of the four monuments created is a large war memorial to the Red Army and the Soviet liberation of Budapest, following a very destructive and bloody siege. Built in 1946, the large white marble monument of stairs and platforms supports a large obelisk that features a bronze hammer and sickle. The obelisk is topped by a five-pointed Soviet star. At the obelisk's base are two bas-reliefs which depict Red Army soldiers fighting in the very spot, approaching the Hungarian parliament building. The Battle for Budapest was an intensely fought one, including street-to-street and even house-to-house fighting much like in Stalingrad, leaving nearly 50,000 Hungarian and German soldiers, 80,000 Soviet and Romanian soldiers, and 38,000 Budapest civilians dead (Papp 2015). The loss of more than half of the 156,000 Red Army soldiers demanded a monument to their sacrifice, and indeed the monument remains protected by a treaty between the Hungarian and Russian governments today. But for many Hungarians this is monument to Soviet Occupation, as Red Army forces remained in Hungary from 1945 until 1991. In 2006 the monument was attacked by protesters, who defaced the reliefs, and organisations have demanded the monument's removal ever since (Seleny 2014).

Not having received satisfaction in their efforts to remove the Soviet monument at the top of Szabadság Tér, rightist political organisations banded together in 2013 and erected a bust of Admiral Miklós Horthy, the interwar leader of Hungary, at the south end of the square in front of the Hazatérés Temploma of the Hungarian Reformed Church. A staunch opponent of Communism, Horthy led rightist, White forces against the Hungarian Soviet Revolution of 1919, unleashing what is regarded as a 'White Terror' against Communists, Anarchists, Trade Unionists, Roma, and Jews (Sakmyster 1994, p.23). Bennett Kovrig described the 'White Terror' as a pogrom, and that its 'vengeful anti-Semitism ... remained a feature of the nationalist ideology that would dominate Hungary's interwar political system' (Kovrig 1979, p.74). The Hazatérés Temploma itself is associated with the Hungarian fascist movement, the Arrow Cross,

which ruled Hungary at the end of 1944 and implemented the liquidation and deportation of Hungarian Jewry, Roma, and Communist in the brutal Hungarian Holocaust that saw the elimination of 800,000 people in six weeks in 1944. The event celebrating the placing of the bust on the square included people dressed in Arrow Cross uniforms, and similar paraphernalia from the Second World War.

If a bust of Horthy was the definitive anti-Communist/anti-Soviet statement, it was also an ambiguous one regarding the role of Hungary in the Second World War. For many, this appeared to be an attempt at ‘white washing’ history, through a ‘rehabilitation’ of Horthy.⁵ For while Horthy himself never ordered any deportations of Jews to Auschwitz or other death camps, he also proudly declared himself to be a ‘life-long anti-Semite’ and believed that socialists, communists, and Jews were the sources of all of Hungary’s ‘misfortune.’⁶ [Further Horthy](#) created laws banning Jews from positions in Hungarian public life that would pre-date the Nazi Nuremburg laws by nearly twenty years.

If Horthy’s role in the Holocaust, and therefore all of Hungary’s responsibility in it, is problematic, the Fidesz government of Viktor Orban tried to clarify it by creating in 2014 a monument to the ‘Victims of German Occupation.’ This third monument, a mere twenty metres from the Horthy bust, is an awkward mix of artistic styles. At its centre is a classically rendered Archangel Gabriel⁷ representing the Hungarian nation, being attacked by a modernist, black iron eagle, talons out, ready to strike Gabriel from above, representing the German Reich. The eagle swoops down from above a classical Greek pediment supported by columns, with other fluted columns, broken and cracked, surrounding the figures. Written across the pediment are the words ‘To the Victims of German Occupation’ declaring that Hungary is no different from Denmark, the Netherlands, or even Belgium, as Hungary too [was](#) a ‘victim’ of German occupation. However, this occupation came late in the course of the Second World War, occurring in March of 1944, a full four years *after* Hungary allied itself to Germany in the war against Britain and France. In October 1944, the German Reich returned self-rule to a Hungarian government led by

the indigenous fascist Arrow Cross Party, which in the next three months alone would organise Arrow Cross death squads, killing thousands of Jews (Karsai 2012). For many reasons and for many communities, especially within Budapest's Jewish community and amongst its allies, this new monument was beyond offensive.⁸ It suggested that the Hungary under the Horthy regime – despite its anti-Jewish laws, its forced inscription of Hungarian Jews into military labour battalions largely responsible for clearing landmines, its banning of Jews from universities, owning property, and from many professions, and its seizing of Jewish assets and property – was somehow a victim of German oppression. Yet those who support this narrative that undergirds and is expressed through this monument are presented with a paradox regarding the narrative of the Soviet monument: if Hungary was occupied and victimised by the Germans, are not the Soviets liberators of Hungary from that occupation? For some on the Hungarian far right, the resolution of the paradox is through a narrative of constant victimisation: it begins with the Treaty of Trianon which formally ended the First World War for the Kingdom of Hungary, stripping it of nearly two-thirds of its population and 70 percent of its territory. This victimisation by the Allied powers of the Entente at the end of the First World War is then followed by German occupation during the Second World War, and then Soviet occupation afterward. For many who articulate this narrative, Hungary, even now, after the end of communism, continues to be victimised by the Capitalist West (Murer 2015).

The fourth monument of this quartet is not in Szabadság Tér but about a hundred metres from it, on the bank of the Danube River, just in the shadow of Hungary's parliament building. It is also different in tone and aesthetics. A monument to the brutality against innocents, the sculpture conceived by Can Toguy, and executed with the cooperation of the sculptor Gyula Pauer in 2005, is a moving remembrance to the atrocities of the Holocaust realised as a series of bronze shoes strewn along the quayside. Toguy and Pauer describe the shoes as a memorial to the 3,500 or so people, 800 of them Jews, shot by storm troopers of the Arrow Cross, which presided over a reign of terror in Budapest from the Autumn of 1944 until the end of the siege in

February 1945.⁹ The Arrow Cross lined up their victims on the quayside, ordered them to remove their shoes, and shot them into the Danube so that the river would carry the bodies away.

The 'Shoes on the Danube' is a direct confrontation to the 'The Victims of German Occupation' monument. It was not Germans who shot these Budapestians into the River. It was Hungarians. Hungarians who were clearly not victims of the German occupation, but facilitators, collaborators, and murders. Who are the victims here, and who and how should they be remembered? While these monuments speak of the past, they are part of the political landscape of the present. They represent different narratives, and depict in many regards different versions of history. They do not bury the past as much as keep it quite alive. It is the difference between remembrance as preserving a memory and an obsession of not letting the past go. However, as will be discussed in the final section, it is *in the conversation between these monuments* that they may, in fact, facilitate adaptive mourning. Each of these narratives captures an element of Hungarian history.

If these presently conflicting and entrenched narratives can become integrated and related to one another, a new vision of both the past and the present could emerge, through spontaneous, undirected engagement of these monuments by an active public. [At present, however, it](#) is at these very sites where many extreme-right political elements [actively](#) call for violence against Jews, Roma, and anyone perceived as their allies. For those fomenting political violence, these monuments are sites of memory, but not sites of mourning.

Reburying the Past: The Politics of Funerals

Hungarian politics have been marked by a number of emotionally powerful and quite ceremonial reburials of the remains of significant political figures. A reburial, in many ways, brings the dead back to life. Suddenly, those who had been put to rest in the past return to the present. But more, the process of reburial becomes an attempt to exert ownership over the past. Reburials become political resurrections, making important again figures and issues that may

have seemed settled. This is an act of possession, claiming the body for one political purpose or another. This attempt at reinterpretation, and inserting new political meaning, changes the act of burial from one of possible closure to one creating fissures, ripping the scab off a wound that may still be sensitive, irritating the body politic, and inflaming pain. More than merely being a sequence of burials and mourning rituals, the [disinterment and](#) reburial of political figures [has often brought about a convergence of](#) political currents, the funerary site of one figure often [connecting](#) or [relating](#) to another.¹⁰

These processes of reopening the past in order to reclaim or reconstruct a narrative from the past that is associated with a dead political figure has particular resonance in contemporary Hungary, where politics oscillate between the two dominant positions associated with the [four](#) monuments [described](#) above.¹¹ One is highly nationalist, radically conservative in tone and attitudes regarding religion and immigration. It is often placed far to the right along the spectrum of European politics, and sees the losses of Trianon at the core of its identity. The other political position is cosmopolitan, internationalist in outlook and orientation, and leftist in tradition, and often sees the losses of the Holocaust and the brutality of Stalinist repression at the heart of its political identities. These two currents compete for control of the country's political institutions, and at times were willing to completely destroy challengers and competitors. But even in phases of ascendancy of one current, the other is never far out of the political consciousness of Hungary; even when buried, vanquished political opponents linger just under the surface, sometimes quite literally. The reburial of bodies becomes an act of possession, conveying a new narrative associated with the meaning of the lost. The disinterment of a body, which [is](#) then subsequently reburied without ceremony or reverence, conveys a very powerful message; this is paralleled by the opposite case of the discovery of a body in an unmarked grave, subsequently reburied with state honours and rituals.

Such a formal or elaborate reburial can create a new date of significance in public culture and political imagination, especially when no significant date existed before. In Hungary there is

no date, no event, no place to represent the end of communism. The Hungarian political philosopher István Rév (1995) noted that there was no revolution in Hungary in 1989, ‘not even a velvet one.’ Rather, he observed, ‘Hungarians skeptically watched the not-so-dramatic suicide of the [communist] system’ (p.23). Rév added that in Hungary, ‘Communism killed itself rather than letting the people do it’ (Rév 1995, p.24). With no special date to remember, the reburial of Imre Nagy on 16 June 1989 serves as the proxy date for when the system began to change noticeably. The reburial also marked the very public beginning of the political career of the current Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. One of four university students acting as an ‘honour guard’ in memory of the students who led the 1956 protests *cum* revolution, Orbán starkly, rather brazenly, and speaking ‘in the name of young people,’ demanded that Soviet troops leave Hungary, and declared that ‘democracy and communism are irreconcilable’ (Ittész 2005; Orbán 1989). In a direct condemnation of Soviet repression following the unsuccessful revolution, Orbán pronounced to the gathered crowd that exceed 250,000: ‘The bankrupt burden on our shoulders is the direct consequence of the bloody strangulation of our revolution, and the forcing us back into the dead-end Asian street, from which we are trying again to escape.’¹² But if the reburial of Imre Nagy marked the end of communism, he was a problematic figure. Nagy was an adamant communist, of a particular homegrown type. He was not ‘Moscow’s man.’ The challenge for Orbán and other speakers on that day in 1989 was to transform the battle against Stalinism into a broader battle against communism. Indeed the internal battles of communism may have culminated in its ideological ‘bankruptcy,’ but Nagy did not represent a historical current against the left. That would come from yet one more reburial.

The first post-communist government elected in 1990 was anti-communist indeed, but it was not liberal politics that won the day as the West had hoped and expected. Rather, the then newly elected Prime Minister József Antall, from the rightist Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF), decreed that Miklós Horthy was to also be disinterred and reburied. If the reburial of Nagy was about the politics of the closing of an era of communism, the reburial of Horthy had

the effect of collapsing time from the end of the twentieth century back into that of the nineteenth, and perhaps, with the fantastical reproduction of rituals, even earlier moments of Hungarian history. The reburial of Horthy was an attempt to '(re)construct a fictional historical continuity in order to erase the whole period of Communism from national consciousness' (Rév 1995, p.32). [The Horthy ceremony signalled this leap of history through sartorial choices](#) with honour guards dressed as seventeenth century hussars in contrast to the contemporary university students in attendance at the Nagy funeral, an opulent stage of traditional sack cloth [associated with the nineteenth century](#), and official mourners dressed in traditional national costume [evoking a pre-modern past](#). The reburial event also allowed the mourning of those who had been forgotten and made *personae non gratae*, such as the nearly two million Hungarian soldiers who died on banks of the Volga and Don rivers, participating in Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union. Surely those who fought against the Soviet Union were fighting against communism, and their leader, Horthy, must be the leader of anti-communism. Through mourning Horthy and those who perished fighting for his regime, many could distance themselves from the recent past of the communist era. Rév suggests:

They [those mourning Horthy] wanted to believe – they wanted the whole country, the whole world, believe – that they and the Hungarian people had already fought Bolshevism in the Second World War, had resisted *in advance*, and thus had paid their dues for the years when they had suffered Communist rule without demur. (Rév 1995, p.33).

Yet, if all Hungarians 'fought Bolshevism' were they also culpable in the Holocaust? Were they also responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Jews and Roma? For whom does one mourn? Memorialisation and memory become political. Whose history is remembered; who is remembered? These are questions of identity. Those who do not mourn the 'fighters of Bolshevism' are not part of the 'whole country,' and are therefore not 'true Hungarians.' Those

who mourn Jews and Roma are mourning ‘outsiders’ and align themselves with bodies and the memories of those outside of the ‘nation.’ The acts of remembering become the performative acts of identity, and the emotional and affective connections to the dead are the physical and visceral embodiments of those identities. They are also acts that foment political violence. The references to the past also become the references to the present; they are the acts of asserting to which side of a political debate does one belong, and the acts of fantasising who is the enemy.

The reburials bring the dead back to the surface, back from the past into the present, where the emotional reactions – mourning or revulsion, grief or guilt – become the demonstrative performances of which camp or side one belongs to. Through the contentious and immediate encounters, ‘the deceased is looked upon as having not yet completely ended his earthly existence’ (Hertz 1960, p.36), and perhaps worse, the acknowledged possibility of the dead returning is the very anxiety, the dread, of the psychodynamic ‘return of the repressed.’ By turning to the psychoanalytic one can come to understand the emotional and affective motives and bases for actions, and connections that may otherwise appear inexplicable, or at least are difficult to understand in terms of an individual’s or a collective’s ‘rational’ interests.

Traumatic Loss and Suspended Mourning

As we have seen above, the fear of the return of the repressed, made all the more immediate and real through the acts of disinterment and reburial, is part of not being able to let go of the past and of the lost objects of the past. In this section I look to explore the process of mourning, its importance, and what happens when this process becomes complicated and pathological. Mourning itself is the process by which people come to ‘accept changes in reality, acknowledging that a loss has occurred and accepting the responses of others as well as our own’ (Volkan 1988, p.156).

As the mourner wrestles with this anger, and images of the lost object, so too will the mourner ‘test the reality’ of the loss, experiencing the lost object through memories, and relating

and comparing present conditions to those prior to the traumatic event. Through this process, the mourner examines representations of the lost object and corresponding self-representations. As time passes, 'psychic ties to the representations of the [lost object] are loosened and the work of mourning comes to a practical end when the mourner no longer has a compulsive need to cling to the representations of the [lost object]' (Volkan 1981, p.67; see also Freud 1917). Though marking a loss, the process of mourning propels the mourner to engage in self-reflection, whereby at the end of the process the mourner may have new power, or a reinvigorated sense of self, incorporating images of the lost object into self-images, expanding and strengthening the sense of self. This 'uncomplicated mourning' leads to identification 'with the "good" aspects of the [lost object]' and thus enriches the mourner's personality structure' (Volkan 1981, p.15).

Volkan discusses two types of complicated mourning, reactive depressive mourning and established pathological mourning, each with its own psychopathologies. The distinction between the two types depends upon what the mourner does with the representations of the lost object. With reactive depressive mourning, the mourner internalises both negative and positive images of the lost object within himself. In this way, the mourner identifies *totally* with ambivalently related representations, both the loved and hated attributes of the object, such that the mourner himself becomes the battleground of these unintegrated and contradictory depictions. The mourner struggles within himself, and against himself, to reconcile these conflicted aspects of the lost object. This can produce a pathological condition when the mourner may believe the only way to destroy the internalised object representation is to destroy himself.

With established pathological mourning, on the other hand, the mourner externalises the representation of the lost object, simultaneously clinging to these representations and trying to loosen the bond to them. The mourner is conflicted as to whether 'to kill' the lost object, recognising its passing, or 'not to kill' the lost object by attempting to maintain contact and interaction (Volkan 1981, p.63, p.84). The mourner maintains a representation of the lost object as an unassimilated object; thus, the mourner can keep alive an illusion of communication with

the dead or lost object, a communication over which the mourner seems to have absolute control. He does this externally by means of a linking object or linking phenomenon. Such a linking object or phenomenon is something present in the environment of the mourner that is psychologically contaminated by various conflicted aspects of both the lost object and the mourner himself (Volkan 1988, p.160). The linking object or phenomenon thus provides the mourner with the means to maintain a relationship with the lost object. Thus, in established pathological mourning, the mourner will use the present tense when speaking of the lost object. '[A] listener gets the impression that the mourner's daily life includes some actual relationship with the [lost object]' (Volkan 1981, p.92). However, the mourner consciously realises (or is aware at one level) that the loss has occurred. Established pathological mourning is not a condition where the mourner completely denies the loss; rather, it is an attempt to maintain an on-going relationship with the lost object.

In established pathological mourning, the mourner knows the [loss] has taken place, but at the same time harbors a contradictory perception that allows him to behave as though the dead person were not lost. (Volkan 1981, p.111)

The relationship between the mourner and the lost object reproduces the original ambivalent relationship before the loss. 'It is not some value-laden, primitively split-off, "all good" or "all bad" aspect of the [lost object] that is represented, but the whole ... as [it] was historically and ambivalently experienced by the mourner before the [loss]' (Volkan 1981, p.100). Unassimilated representations are maintained through linking objects which furnish an external locus where self-representations 'can meet with representations' of the lost object. They appear in crisis to modify distressing situations regarding the lost object. Moreover, such a crisis can be exacerbated by temporal and spatial distance from the loss or the intervention of a third party that prohibits or interferes with the mourning process. A common example occurs when a mourner is unable to attend a funeral or obtain closure due to distance or time. In the absence of

mourning, the significance of linking objects or phenomena will not fade over time. Rather, linking objects and linking phenomena will increasingly demand the attention of the mourner with their aura of mystery, fascination, and terror (Volkan 1981, p.101). The processes associated with established pathological mourning are particularly important if the lost object is either abstract or if the relationship between the mourner and the lost object is somewhat ambiguous.

Established Pathological Mourning and Linking Cycles

Working through ambiguous or abstract losses is particularly difficult at a collective level. Disagreements as to the nature of the loss or its significance can themselves become the bases for creating the sense of difference, splitting groups into distinctive identity constellations. Within much larger social groups the ability to mourn itself may divide and distinguish groups that had previously been thought of as a larger whole. Groups stranded in suspended mourning link unrelated conflicts to the original trauma through what I call the linking cycle (Murer 2009). That is when a collectivity, unable to mourn the losses associated with a chosen trauma, experiences a *secondary trauma* – that is, a loss unassociated with the *chosen trauma*. The self may defend against the loss by perceiving it as continued oppression by the original ‘victimising’ enemy-other. Losses accumulating without being adaptively worked through can cause the group to conflate all subsequent losses with the chosen trauma. The linking cycle is this subsequent invocation of the abject-other created during the chosen trauma. In an analysis of Kristeva’s work, Norma Moruzzi describes the abject as ‘that which, though intimately part of an earlier experience, must be rejected so that the self can establish the borders of its unified subjectivity’ (Moruzzi 1993 p. 144). To defend against further traumatic losses, the self creates an object responsible for the losses: an object it knows well for it had previously been part of the self, but in an act of self-preservation the group-self casts out this element that is sufficiently ‘foreign’ as to warrant its amputation, and yet sufficiently familiar to be a fitting vessel into which the responsibility for these losses can be placed (see Murer 2009, p.116).

This conflation of losses and those responsible has a number of effects. First, the linking cycle provides a narrative of understanding subsequent and perhaps unrelated losses and injuries, through their incorporation into the master narrative of the chosen trauma. If trauma is that which cannot be spoken, the chosen trauma narrative provides the means for speaking about losses. Further, in a linking cycle characterised by established pathological mourning, the subsequent losses, wrapped within the narrative structure of the losses associated with the chosen trauma, become likewise 'recoverable' in the ongoing fantasy relationship with the lost object and the wish that the lost object may return in whole. The chosen trauma provides not only a narrative that 'explains' the losses associated with it, but through the linking cycle the chosen trauma narrative 'explains' a whole series of subsequent losses.

The unwanted traits and qualities of the group-self exposed by the secondary trauma are easily projected into the object, thereby reinforcing the separation of the self and the familiar foreigner. Here the self is sure to find these unwanted traits within the object, as the object is constructed through the unwanted parts of the self. This process may make coping with secondary trauma easier, as the defence is so readily available; however, it perpetuates the psychopathology associated with the original chosen trauma. Hate can construct a link between the present, the future, and a recreated past; as the collectivity engages in constantly rewriting its autobiographical narratives, hatred can be included as the consistent element of identity. As such hatred serves as a social link for successive generations to both the lost object and the initial traumatic event, it also prevents future generations from engaging in adaptive mourning. 'When the inability to mourn is chronic, grievances connected with it are passed on from the older to the younger generation' (Pao 1965). Successive generations will attempt to erase the sense of humiliation associated with the event by mythologising the trauma and intertwining it with the group's sense of self. 'Once a trauma becomes a chosen trauma ... the historical truth about it is no longer consequential' (Volkan 1988, p.xxvi). The associated mental representations then serve as a marker of group identity, and redefine the original event. This allows a humiliating trauma to

become a source of pride, such as in the case of the Battle of Kosovo for the Serbs. 'For each new generation the account is modified; what remains [constant] is the role [the chosen trauma] assumes in the overall psychology in the group's identity' (Volkan 1988, p.xxvi).

This process also reinforces the bonds between generations, as secondary trauma generally affects second and subsequent generations. By invoking the abject created by previous generations, the collectivity is unified, allowing younger generations to experience the pain and sense of loss of their elders. Moreover, just as a chosen trauma threatens the continuity of the collective sense of self, so too secondary traumas require an alteration in collective narrative in order to defend the group self. By expanding the chosen trauma to include losses associated with secondary trauma, the group self 'reinvents' the previously ascribed abject with the traits necessary to be applicable in the new case. The 'old' enemy-other is, therefore, responsible for 'new' losses. Successive generations may increase their union with earlier ones by invoking the narrative structures utilised first to create the abject. The renewed application of iconographic mechanisms, rhetorical structures, narrative imagery, and shared ego representations provides both the links to the past, as well as appropriate structures for the present.

The conflation of traumata can seem like tradition in a collective memory, as previous imagery and rhetoric will be modified to reflect the secondary trauma. But hatred is a key, distorting ingredient. Hatred itself is an emotional link connecting experienced humiliation and the victimisation associated with it into the new context. Genuine targets of frustrations and rage are replaced with the abject-other, linked through an expression of rage similar in both circumstances. Further, as the abject is renewed with extended qualities and traits, a period of renewed debasement will follow. Loathing, which may have subsided in the past, is re-emphasised to ensure that the self does not collapse. Both the fear of and desire for the abject, the 'return of the repressed,' likewise will be reinvigorated. In fact, depending upon the magnitude and social circumstances of the secondary trauma, the process of abjection may be marked with an increased intensity and violence that was not originally connected to reactions to the chosen

trauma. New demands for the 'revival' of the previously lost object may occur in relation to the process of abjection.

As the self experiences a new threat, it defends itself most expediently by reviving the abject. In fact, the self may bestow upon the abject a completely new set of traits, which match the circumstances of the secondary trauma. Moreover, as the self turns to previously activated defence mechanisms, the self may reexperience the sense of loss associated with the chosen trauma. Secondary traumas, therefore, further obstruct the mourning process of both the original and the new losses. By reexperiencing the primary loss, the self is completely ill prepared to deal with the secondary loss. Moreover, by reexperiencing the primary loss, the secondary trauma will renew the self's original ambivalence over whether to 'kill' or 'not kill' the lost object. It is this process which often leads casual observers to conclude that ethnic conflicts may be 'timeless.' It is possible, then, to see how 'irrational' hatreds may arise. 'Hatred may become an essential element from which one derives a sense of self-sameness and upon which one formulates one's identity' (Pao 1965, p.260). Moreover, as abjection requires the prohibition that divides the self from the abject other and dictates that it has always been so, hatred can provide a vehicle to reconstructing the past. The continuity of hatred can replace the disrupted continuity of the previously whole self.

Dialogue as Mourning: A Conclusion

Mourning recreates the self as whole, while continued hatred and debasement of the abject prevents mourning. The desire for reconciliation contributes to the powerful simultaneous fear of and desire for the return of the repressed, so important in abjection. The return of the repressed by its definition requires adaptive and successful mourning of the lost object. So it is here that we can see how established pathological mourning can be connected to the fomenting of political violence. A group's identity may be forged through its connection to a chosen trauma; in this way, the group's identity is linked to the memory of a lost object. This connection makes it difficult to work through and mourn the loss. Moreover, the group may 'blame' another group for

the loss, and in this way hatred is an active form of connection to the lost object. The more members of the group want to express their membership in the group, the more that they want to express their connection to the lost object, the more they may express hatred of another group. In the Hungarian case, the far right expresses itself through the fomenting of political violence against Jews and Roma, or anyone that they symbolically connect to conditions that result in losses, whether those losses are directly connected to the chosen trauma, or are losses associated with secondary traumas linked to the chosen trauma through a linking cycle. It is potentially in the weakness of these linking cycle connections where openings might be possible to initiate adaptive mourning, allowing adaptive engagement with the relationship to the underlying chosen trauma. As the narratives associated with monuments change and evolve to promote linking cycles, the very spaces dedicated to keeping memories ‘alive’ may also be potential spaces for losses to be put to rest.

The public encounter with monuments is one when the ideas of the past meet conceptions of the present. The creation of a public imagination around these is a political act as it is part of the creation of an emotional attachment to a social group. In Budapest this political quality is apparent as different political groups have such vocal and demonstrated views of the meanings and reactions to the narratives attached to these memory spaces. But it is the public conflict which may present the space for engagement and potential rapprochement. Ironically it may be the monument to the ‘Victims of the German Occupation’ that initiates a process of reconciliation and adaptive collective and cultural mourning. In advance of the completion of the monument in the spring of 2014, spontaneous protests against the construction, claiming that the monument itself was representative of a kind of Holocaust denial, included the presentation of personal objects and photographs. Literally hundreds of people placed the personal objects directly across from the construction site. However, unlike the similar spontaneous displays of personal objects at, say, the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington DC, which represent a personal

use of the memorial by those visiting, these displays in Budapest represented a counter-narrative to the official one embedded in the new monument.¹³ Handwritten notes, candles, plants, photographs of relatives killed in the Holocaust, household objects such as chairs, and stones referencing the Jewish tradition of leaving stones on grave markers when visiting the dead, created a kind of counter-monument in Szabadság Tér. Very movingly, people also left shoes in the spontaneous counter-piece, referencing the ‘Shoes on the Danube’ monument. One placard read ‘Dialogue instead of double-talk!’¹⁴

In many ways, this placard captured both the challenge and the solution to this troubled contest of memory and the politics of history. At present the two political traditions, which represent two narratives of history and their implications for the present, do not engage one another. Ostensibly the placard was referencing the double-talk by the prime minister, Viktor Orbán, who said of those who oppose the monument:

I can hardly believe that efforts made to erect a memorial to the victims [of the German Occupation] requires any explanation. This is a question of humanity and not politics or taking sides. There are those who wish to undermine the memory of the victims [of the German Occupation] and the memorial honoring them with current speculation. I can assure you that we will firmly reject these attempts.

(Nagy 2014)

As Orbán puts it, to not support the erection of the monument is to not honour the victims of that occupation, including all of those who were deported and murdered. He states that neither he nor his party will accept any criticism of the project, rejecting such positions as simple political manoeuvres and posturing, rather than substantive critiques. But the two narratives also move past one another, representing competing monologues, and can be thought of as a kind of ‘double-talk.’ Dialogue on the other hand requires engagement and listening, as well as speaking. More than that, true dialogue requires empathy, relating to the position of the other on the other’s

own terms. Dialogue cannot be a demand that one interlocutor concedes her subject position to the terms of the other. Each must work to understand the other on the other's terms. Julia Kristeva (1994) puts this well when she entreats us all to find the 'stranger' in ourselves. As such, seeing how the other is like us is a profound act of narcissism, thinking only of the self and trying to imagine how the other is like me or us. Trying to image how we are like the other is a different act all together. As such, we can liken dialogue to processes associated with adaptive mourning, or even what Melanie Klein called working through to the 'depressive position,' whereby a self comes to recognise both the good and bad attributes of a person or of one's self, not demanding absolute good or absolute bad as a defining quality (1932, p. 195). Such a recognition makes both the self and the other deeper, more complex beings, with neither reduced to one attribute, nor requiring that one be subsumed or incorporated into the other. Each stands in the recognition of the other as a whole person.

In such a dialogue, the previously competing monologues must be reconciled with one another. As such, this requires not only an engagement with the narrative of the other, but also a critical reflection on the self, and an evaluation of the self's own narrative. This critical engagement is an exploration of both the other's interpretation of the self's own narrative, as well as a deeply critical analysis of why and how the self conceives of its own image. To initiate this dialogue, similar to the initiation of a mourning process, the self must come to understand the 'weight of meaning invested' in postponing mourning (Volkan 1988, p.157). That is, the self must find some opportunity to reflect upon the emotional costs of maintaining an identity based upon loss. The very evaluation of a collective identity is itself the beginning of the mourning process, whereby a group examines its past and the way in which it resonates so loudly in the present. It is this dialectical process of reflecting upon the past and present by which a group 'works through' those losses of the past which dictate the interpretations of the present. Identification with the object both requires and initiates critical reflection on the collective narrative.

The reconstruction of collective narrative frees a group from the hold of a chosen trauma and allows this event to be ‘de-mythified.’ However, group mourning is not a rejection of the past. It is a reintegration of the past into the collective narrative in such a way that the chosen trauma no longer dominates the narrative, either as its central event or through negation. The practical end of the mourning process¹⁵ occurs when the mourner ‘is no longer virtually obliged to recall, review, and effectively respond to mental representations of the [lost object] except on occasions of ceremonial recall such as anniversaries’ (Volkan 1988, p.157). In the Hungarian case, this would mean that, for those on the political right, the Treaty of Trianon would no longer dominate everyday politics. Those who ascribe to populist-traditionalist identity would no longer feel obligated to reference the Trianon when making statements regarding the conditions of the present. Trianon would be reduced to merely one more event in the past, to be referred to or reviewed equally to all other events. Further, the ability of the bereft to interact with the past, unfettered by the image of the chosen trauma, allows for a ‘healthy interpretation’ of the present. In addition, this critical engagement also ends cycles of denial. Just as those who no longer place Trianon at the centre of contemporary politics would need to recognise the role of the Hungarian state and individual Hungarians in the atrocities of the Holocaust, those who see the Holocaust at the centre of their own narratives would need to recognise the vast losses associated with those who might otherwise be seen as ‘unmournable.’

Unfortunately politics in contemporary Hungary remain polarised. Those active at the extreme end of the political right not only are lost in cycle of established pathological mourning, but also include as acts in the ritualistic repetition of complicated mourning expressions of extreme hatred. This displacement of the anxiety of loss results in the fomenting of political violence against those who are seen as not sharing their pain. In particular the anti-Semitic and anti-Roma expressions of the far right, encouraging violence, have shaped the character of Hungarian politics for the past decade. The narratives of loss, used by the political right to justify the violent exclusion of others, are repeated and retransmitted in these rituals of mourning, often

located at the sites of memory in these four monuments. However, in the symbolic contestation of the two competing narratives of loss it possible to see the potential for dialogic engagement. As those associated with these two competing narratives encounter one another, even in protests, it might be possible that a dialogue could be initiated, which would transform the ways these monuments are seen and engaged, and represent the initiation of adaptive cultural mourning. Until then, Hungarian politics will continue to be characterised by loss, anxiety, hatred, and violence.

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¹ *Magyar Narancs* [Hungarian Orange], 13 July 1995, pp. 8–9.

² The Metropolitan Court of Budapest disbanded Magyar Gárda in December 2008, and the ruling was upheld by the Budapest Court of Appeal in July 2009. Yet the group has reorganised under at least three banners: the Új Magyar Gárda (New Hungarian Guard), Magyar Nemzeti Gárda (Hungarian National Guard), and the most active, Szebb Jövőért Polgárőr Egyesület (Civil Guard Association for a Better Hungarian Future), which has roots to paramilitary organisations from the interwar period and during the Second World War.

³ To ‘celebrate’ the anniversary of Hungarian-German attempted breakout from the Siege of Budapest on 11 February 1945, Blood and Honour Hungary, 64 Counties Youth Movement, New Hungarian Guard, Hungarian National Front and Pax Hungarica met with representatives of German National Front. This has become an annual event (Athena Institute 2014b).

⁴ Three men, Árpád Kiss, István Kiss, and Zsolt Pető, received life sentences in August 2013, while a fourth man, István Csontós, received thirteen years, for their participation in nine assaults over fourteen months, in which guns, petrol bombs, and hand grenades were used to terrorise Roma communities. The first murder was in Nagycséc in November 2008, where the four similarly threw Molotov cocktails at two Roma homes, and then shot people as they escaped the flames. A man and a woman died from their gunshot wounds. In April 2009 a Roma was murdered by the four as he was walking to work at dawn in Tiszalök. Finally, on 3 August 2009, the four shot a Roma and her 13-year-old daughter from close range, killing the woman and critically wounding the girl, who survived. (Source: author interview with András Vágvolgyi, writer and journalist covering the trial of the four, Budapest, 21 October 2014.)

⁵ Author interview with Tamás Dési, Administrator of the Foreign Department of the Hungarian Federation of Jewish Congregations (MaZsiHiSz), 4 April 2014.

⁶ Horthy makes this declaration in a 14 October 1940 letter to Prime Minister Pál Teleki (see Szinai and Szűcs 1965, p.150).

⁷ The angel is an echo of the angel atop the 1896 monument in the centre of Heroes’ Square (Hősök Tere), which celebrates the presence of Hungarians in the Danube Basin for 1,000 years.

⁸ Author interview with Tamás Dési, Administrator of the Foreign Department of the Hungarian Federation of Jewish Congregations (MaZsiHiSz), 4 April 2014.

⁹ Author correspondence with Can Toguay April 2016.

¹⁰ The American anthropologist Katherine Verdery explored this cycle of exhuming and reburying political figures after the end of communism, in her appropriately titled book *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies*. But this is not only a post-socialist phenomenon in Hungary.

¹¹ [The two dominant narratives exclude the Soviet one. While those remembering the losses of the Holocaust indeed see the Soviet as vital to defeating Nazi Germany and its Arrow Cross fascist allies, many on the political left critique the excesses of Stalinism and repression of freedoms under Hungarian Communism. On the political right, those seeking to remember Horthy and mourn Hungarians who died fighting in the Second World War often do not emphasise a narrative of victimisation at the hands of Nazi Germany. There is a narrative of domination by the West, beginning with the Treaty of Trianon which Horthy opposed.](#)

¹² Orban's quote in Hungarian: 'A ma vállunkra nehezedeő csódtömeg egyenes következménye annak, hogy vérbe fojtották forradalmunkat, és visszakényszerítenek bennünket abba az ázsiai zsákutcába, amelyből most újra megpróbálunk kiutat találni' (Index.hu 2014).

¹³ Indeed publics often transform monuments for their own purposes. Nearly everything about the Vietnam War Memorial defies an official narrative. Maya Lin, the architect of the memorial, wrote that it is important to know that she 'had originally designed it for a class [on funereal architecture] I was taking at Yale and not for the competition.' Nevertheless, Lin thought hard about how a public would interact with the memorial and within its space. In the former Soviet Union many war memorials have become important sites of civic life, where newlyweds come and visit and pay respects on their wedding day as part of the wedding ritual. See Maya Lin, "Making the Memorial," *New York Review of Books*, 2 November 2000, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2000/11/02/making-the-memorial/>.

¹⁴ 'Kettős beszéd helyett párbeszéd!' Author eyewitness, January 2015.

¹⁵ Vamik Volkan points out that there is no end to the mourning process, but is a continual action of recalling the losses of the past and integrating them into the representations of the present. However, the 'practical end' is the end of obsession with and domination of the representations of the lost object in the group collective or individual personal narrative (see Volkan 1988, p.158).