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Ethnographies of Silence

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Ethnographies of Silence

Introductory Notes

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Silence. A topic that has not been sufficiently problematized in ethnological, anthropological, and folklorist research. When ethnologists deal with people as the main subjects of their studies, the focus is mainly on what they say or express through verbal and non-verbal communication. We are rarely trained to identify how much of the unspoken is hidden behind the words and gestures of their interview partners, how they can become aware of it, and analyze the meanings they inscribe to the world around them through silence. The unspoken, on the other hand, is the basis for psychotherapy. For psychotherapists, the right silence is a medium for entering the intrapsychic world of a person, where changes can be conducted (Bohak 2012, 40–51; Tojnko 2014, 72–75; Hrobat Virloget and Logar 2020). For ethnologists and folklorists, the questions of how, why, and on which occasions people choose—or are forced—to be silent and what they are silent about can lead to a deeper understanding of strategies and tactics of everyday life. Although the combination of those two gazes can open up a fruitful discussion on the causes, practices, and consequences of silence, both on an individual and collective level, so far, there are to date few interdisciplinary interactions between ethnology / folklore studies and psychotherapy in this respect.

The collection of articles gathered in this special issue of *Cultural Analysis* under the title *Ethnographies of Silence* aims to critically analyze the topic of silence.[1] Their editors and authors approach silence as a cultural phenomenon, viewed as a means of communication and interaction of individuals and groups with other human and non-human agents (cf. Jurić Pahor 2004, 53). In the current Western ethnological and anthropological literature, silence is mostly viewed negatively: as a lack of interest or communication; as the expression of secrecy that stems from the power relations between the researcher and the researched; as a result of repression, avoidance of specific topics seen as undesirable within the given socio-political framework; as unuttered and suppressed individual or collective traumatic memories (Kawabata, Denise Gastaldo 2015; Kidron 2009; Lovell 2007, 56–57). These and other diverse perspectives on silence are presented and analyzed in this volume. However, rather than treating

the production of silence as a void or a lack (of narratives, experiences, performances and so on), the authors and editors focus on its potential to reflect and trigger specific cultural, social, and political processes. We view silence as an affectively charged *action* purposefully stimulated and maintained to achieve—or avoid—specific effects. The silence in this volume is a dimension immanent to many cultural and social phenomena and processes. The articles discuss silencing processes from different points of view and in different spheres: in periods of social changes, in everyday life, in the production of heritage, in nation-building processes and in home-making practices.

We cannot observe silence in the same manner in different cultural settings. Makie Kawabata and Denise Gastaldo (2015) have shown that the Western perspective on silence from the so-called individualistic cultures, which use direct and explicit messages to convey meaning, is not appropriate for the study of the so-called non-Western cultures based on indirect and implicit expressions, where silence presents the usual part of a communication strategy. Such conclusions indicate the heterogeneity and multilayeredness of silence. At the same time, they remind us of the importance for its contextualization in each research setting.

There is another dimension of silence we would like to highlight in this special issue, and that is its intertwinement with the mechanisms of remembering and forgetting. Although silence is a constitutive part of remembering, it is surprising to note how little attention it has received in the ethnological reflections on what and how people remember. Silence encountered in fieldwork, as well as the one that occurs in the process of producing ethnological knowledge (Corin 2077, 23), has not been the object of systematic and extensive discussions in its own right (with a few exceptions, some of them mentioned in the present volume). As Kathy Charmaz argues, in the ethnographic work, it is not sufficient to focus on what people say; other sources, such as silence, observational data, and research context, must also be carefully considered (Charmaz 2002, 2004; Kawabata, Denise Gastaldo 2015). Furthermore, Carol A. Kidron showed that silence does not mean only the absence of speech or voice, as the Western logocentric paradigm would claim (Kidron 2009, 6). Silence can be perceived and grasped through the embodied memory or bodily memory practices (Kidron 2009), but it can also be full of sound and covered with words (see **Hrobat Virloget** and **McKean**).

In the field of memory, we observe how individuals and social groups move from silence to voice their memories and vice versa and the outcomes of those shifts. Silence is immanent in the processes of establishing a consensual collective memory, which includes the contests between different groups for the hegemony of their memory and the obliteration of the other. Already Maurice Halbwachs, one of the pioneers in memory studies, argued that the dominant collective memory rejects and censures individual memories that do not fit into the dominant image of the past (1925; 1980). The silencing of memories is frequent in nation-building processes that sustain dominant patterns of remembrance and produce the silenced "others," in defeated alternative political ideologies, religions, in colonial or other contested pasts and presents. Silence can be a consequence of disciplining memories and traumatic experiences, signalling

vulnerability. It can also be a way of rewriting the past by omission, but also a mechanism of maintaining power in an (unbalanced) personal or collective relationship.

The scope of the selected articles goes beyond collective silences and suppressed memories in the dominant political discourses usually accentuated in the memory studies. Our goal was also to gain an insight into silence as encountered by researchers in their ethnographic practice, which is usually a reflection of broader socio-cultural processes. In that way, we aim to present and analyze situations and processes that we often treat as side effects and backstage narratives of ethnographic research. As those factors influence the construction of ethnological knowledge, silence has to be taken as a relevant medium just or sometimes even more than words are.

This issue of *Cultural Analysis* gathers six research articles from the fields of migrations, ethnic conflicts and identities, religious heritage, monument studies, and language communication. Some authors focus on the individual silences in the ethnographic fieldwork, while others reflect more on silence in a broader socio-political and cultural frame, although they are aware of those spheres' intertwinement. They discuss the reasons, characteristics, transformations and effects of these diverse silences.

In her article "'Better be quiet': Silence in Memories of 'Istrian Exodus,' National Heroes and Beliefs" **Katja Hrobat Virloget** considers the different silences she has encountered in her ethnographic fieldwork, on one side linked to the mass migrations of Italians from the former Yugoslavia ("exodus") and to World War II heroes, and on the other in her research on beliefs and folklore traditions. Diverse silences, including embodied silenced memory, are interpreted as a consequence of incompatible individual and collective memories, traumas, relations between winners and the defeated, power struggles. In contrast, in the context of beliefs, they function as secrets, clashes of different worldviews, and the reflection of power relations between the researcher and the researched.

Janine Schemmer and **Marion Hamm** contribute the article on "Silenced Memories and Practices Of Un-Silencing: Mobilities in a Dynamic Alpine Border Landscape," which deals with the contentious silenced heritage, which is based on the plurality of ethnic identities in the Alps-Adriatic border region. They treat silence here as a consequence of wars, nationalization policies, and population exchanges. The hegemonic national discourses in this Austrian-Italian-Slovenian Alpine setting has erased narratives of mobility, migrations across borders, multicultural pasts, and unsolved ethnic conflicts. Instead of transnational commemorations, nationalistic rhetoric prevails in the strategies of remembrance, which are based on the victimhood of the dominant nation and the exclusion of the "others." The authors reveal the potential of artistic performance as a tool against silence since they can serve as effective resistance against the hegemonic discourses and the media for un-silencing the marginalized and suppressed memories.

Post-war ethnic conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the consequential silences and denials, are at the core of interest of the article entitled "'Nothing Much Has Happened Here': Memory, Denial and Identity Among Postwar Youth in Republika Srpska" by **Michele Bianchi**. By analyzing critical statements from his eth-

nographic notes such as "We do not talk about it" and "Nothing much has happened here," the author argues that the collective memory in Republika Srpska has been trapped "between the massive culture of silence and the various practices of denial." The broader system of genocide denial, silence, and omission influence the everyday practices of the Bosnian Serb youth in their post-war strategies of self-representation, re-codification of the past, the avoidance of the dichotomy victims/perpetrators and post-war nationalisms. Silence thus has an impact on the public and private spheres of sociability, different moral economies, and practices of resisting global narratives about the war in Bosnia.

Marijana Belaj's article, "The Dissonant Heritage of the Blessed Alojzije Stepinac: The Case of the Silencing of a Religious Tourist Route," looks at complex relations of power in terms of political, religious, and economic discourses. Belaj argues that the reason for silencing the religious heritage route connected with Stepinac derives from the conflicting perspectives on both it and the figure of this martyr. The Croatian Catholic Church's view of the blessed as a symbol and generator of religious and national unity and values differs significantly from the tourist perspective, tied to European processes of economic integration and the idea of "unity and diversity." Grounded in Stepinac's religious and spiritual legacy, the Church opposes the transformation of the national martyr into an object of commercial industry, resulting in a weakening and silencing of dissonant religious, national heritage.

In "Our Voices: Navigating the Silences between Refugee and Immigrant Women's Narratives," **Amy Skillman** reflects on silence in her ethnographic encounters with refugee and immigrant women in Pennsylvania. She reflects how they articulate silence in their biographical narratives. Her approach is original because she perceives silence as an active presence in social life, as a way to find agency rather than as a means of disempowerment. Her reflection focuses on a single woman's autobiographical migration story with the question of how she organizes silence around it and how silences have shifted through time concerning different personal psychological states and social contexts.

The volume concludes with a different kind of perceiving silence—the one created by speaking. In this case, being voiceless and silent emerges from the absence of communication, due to the loss of superimposed languages that have replaced people's native tongues. In the moving article "The Sound of Silence—Dementia, Language Loss, and Being Heard," **Thomas McKean** draws our attention to "the sounds of silence" produced by an increasing number of people living with bilingual dementia in second-language environments. They become silenced after they lose their later-acquired hegemonic languages and revert to their first languages of Gaelic and Scots. "Crying out in a linguistic wilderness, in a language [they] do not understand," they lose the medium of communication and interaction, which results in a loss of identity and humanity itself.

All the contributions to this volume reflect dilemmas that researchers face while analysing silence. When we turn silence into a topic of ethnological or folklorist research, we start asking ourselves whether we have the proper methodological tools

and knowledge to understand the layers of meaning, the worldviews, and attitudes that frequently lie behind the silence. Some of the contributors to this special issue thus stress a need to enrich the existing disciplinary approaches to silence through collaboration with other fields, like psychotherapy, the discipline that centers on silence, its manifestations, and embodiments (ex. Corin 2007; Hrobat Virloget, Logar 2020). The articles in this issue are thus also a call for revisiting and developing the theoretical and methodological strategies that can allow us to enter and analyze moments, episodes, spaces, and communities built around silence. They are all grounded on the authors' own fieldwork experiences, their encounters with silence in their research, limitations they became aware of in the attempt to make silence an integral part of their studies, and analytical potentials that emerge from their ethnographies of silence.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1 This special issue derives from the panel *Silencing Memories: Routes, Monuments and Heritages*, which was organized in the frame of the 14th congress of the International Society for Ethnology and Folklore (SIEF) in Santiago de Compostela, Spain, in 2019.

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"Better be quiet": Silence in Memories of the "Istrian Exodus," National Heroes and Beliefs

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Abstract

From a reflexive point of view, the author questions the problem of silence in ethnographic research. Different types of silences in her field of expertise are discussed: from folklore, beliefs, and memories of World War II and its aftermath, linked to migrations of Italians from the former Yugoslavia ("exodus") and national war heroes. In different contexts, silence can be seen as a consequence of incompatible memories, traumas, relations between winners and the defeated, etc. In the field of beliefs, silence is generally linked to secrets, be it a sort of resistance against the researcher's authority or a consequence of the clash of different world-views. The author also focuses on the embodied silent memory, which is difficult to detect.

Keywords: Silence; secret; ethnography; trauma; memories; beliefs; "exodus"; heroes

Ethnography[1] can be understood as a dialogue between the researcher and the researched through which we try to understand the meanings of social lives in time and space (Reed 2012, 87) or as a meeting of two sets of meanings, those of the ethnographer and the individuals encompassed by the study (Benzecry 2017, 25; Reed 2010). The strength of the ethnographic method by which cultural anthropology or ethnology differs from other humanities and social sciences is, at the same time, its weakness. Namely, the researcher himself is the most important scientific tool. This means that the research involves the researcher's personality (which in turn makes the researcher question the objective perception of social reality) and ethical principles, such as interfering with the social, political, or religious life of the community, the problem of "real" friendships with informants, the representation of community's interests, etc. (Eriksen 1995, 25-28; Monaghan and Just 2000, 31-33; Keesing 1981, 9). The psychologist and anthropologist Ellen Corin emphasized the importance of subjective experience in shaping ethnological knowledge, arguing that objective reality is illusory; all of our descriptions of the "other" are the result of our visions that lie deep inside us, and often we are not even aware of them (Corin 2007, 23). One of the consequences of this subjectivity and the effect of the unconscious on the part of the researcher and the researched is silence. In my research field, silence proved to be a linking subject between research topics that seem incredibly different at first glance, namely migrations or population transfers and memories of World War II and its consequences on the one hand, folklore and beliefs on the other. Keeping in mind that one of the tasks of ethnologists is to look into their own overlooked shadow in the process of knowledge creation (Liebing & McLean 2007, 21), this paper reflects on the silence I encountered during my diverse ethnographic field research.

Silence around the Post-War "Istrian Exodus"

"People communicate in language, gesture, silence" (Lichterman 2017, 39). Memory is defined as "a narrative structured by individual and collective oblivion" in the frame of "the relationship between the present and the past, silence, and word, between the individual and the collective" (Passerini 2008, 224–225). Therefore, memories cannot be fully analyzed without putting them into the context of silence. We have to understand its boundaries and references, depending on whom or what it is established (Passerini 2008, 252–253).

Silence fills my work on the "Istrian exodus." This part of the article draws from nine years of ethnographic fieldwork, including participant observation and interviews with over fifty interlocutors of different ethnicities, Slovenian, Italian, Croatian, Serbian, etc., living in the present-day Slovenian part of Istria.[2] The "Istrian exodus" presents the final stage of (mainly) Italian emigration from Yugoslavia, which started shortly after World War II, when the Yugoslav National Liberation Army occupied the territories along the Adriatic coast (Istria, Dalmatia), ceded them to the Kingdom of Italy marked by fascist ideology after the fall of the Austro-Hungarian empire.[3] The total registered population of ethnic Italians in coastal towns of the Slovenian part of Istria dropped from 90 % before the war to a mere 10.5 % after the "exodus" (Troha 1997, 59). According to censuses, in the period from 1945 to 1958, 49,132 people left the Slovenian part of the territory, mostly Italians, but also Slovenes and Croats (Volk 2003, 51), between 200.000 and the exaggerated 350.000 persons left the whole of Istria (including the Croatian part) (Ballinger 2003, 1, 275). The Italian and Slovenian sides have for a long time defended their parallel histories and various reasons for migrations; they have also come up with different numbers of migrants and differing appellations. The dominant Slovenian public discourse presents the "exodus" mostly as a free choice, which comes from the legal right to opt for Italian citizenship, or sometimes as an escape of Italians perceived as war criminals and fascists. In contrast to this, the Italian side perceives the "exodus" in the victimization scope, as a national tragedy, which is expressed by the mythic appellation of "*esodo*," the "exodus" (Ballinger 2003, 42–45; Hrobat Virloget, Goussef & Corni 2015, etc.). Much research has been done on these migrants,[4] especially on the Italian side, so my research focused on Italians who remained in Istria and were granted the official minority status in Yugoslavia.

In terms of individual memories, the main problem in research on the "exodus" has been silence, especially among Italians (Hrobat Virloget 2021). During the decades following the "exodus," speaking about it was "taboo" in Istria, not only in the dominant (Yugoslavian) discourse but also among the remaining Italians themselves, especially before the democratization of society and the fall of socialism (Dota 2010, 85; Hrobat Virloget 2017a, 90; Hrobat Virloget 2017b, 40). We have to bear in mind that with the "exodus," the Italians in Istria lost all essential foundations of their identity. After the emigration of 90% of their ethnic population, they became foreigners in their own homes due to the shift in social/political circumstances and suffered a total loss of their social networks, including even the closest members of their families (Hrobat 2015a, 164–168; Hrobat Virloget 2017a, 2019; Ballinger 2003, 207–244).

With the "exodus" and the new national/political system, they also experienced a change in their social status. Before "exodus", especially in the time of fascism, they self-perceived themselves as the representatives of *civiltá* (the civilized) as opposed to "barbaric" Slavs, while in the new Yugoslavian context after World War II they have been marginalized and held collectively responsible for decades of fascist oppression and war crimes (Baskar 2010, 110–118; Hrobat Virloget 2015b, 2017b; Hrobat Virloget and Čebron Lipovec 2017).

On one hand, we can understand silence as a result of incompatibility between the individual and the dominant collective (Yugoslavian and later Slovenian) memories (Hrobat Virloget 2017a). Individual memories can enrich and support collective memory if they are valued, but on the other hand, those individual memories that do not fit into the collective self-image or do not correspond to the collective view of the past are censored, rejected, stigmatized, or excluded from collective (national) discourse (Halbwachs 1925; 1992; Assmann 2007, 16). The memories of Italians who remained in Istria as a national minority are not compatible either with the Slovenian dominant perception of the "exodus" as voluntary migrations or with the official Italian discourse which disregards the period of Italian fascism and starts the narrative with the "exodus" and *foibe*[5] (Fikfak 2009, 243; Dota 2010; Ballinger 2003, 129–167). In contrast with the latter, the Italians who remained in Yugoslavia are well aware of the causal link between the "exodus" and the preceding fascist violence in Istria. As an Italian interlocutor put it in an interview, "shifting things now [about the 'exodus'] is like placing a mine and not knowing when it will explode," while another Italian answered, whispering, "Better be quiet. There are plenty of ears everywhere."[6]

Silence in the research of memories can also be attributed to the fact that the researcher (me) belongs to "the other (Slovenian) side," that has never shown any empathy for the minority which, before the arrival of the Slovenes, was the majority, at least in urban areas (Kalc 2019, 146). An Italian interlocutor only discovered the "exodus" decades after it occurred through its thematizing in the works of the Italian Istrian novelist Fulvio Tomizza while studying the Italian language at the university in Belgrade:

> I remember wondering at home, in 54, 55, how there were 43 of us in class during the first year and every day someone went missing. I would return home and ask: "Mom, Vinicio, Lucio, Maria are all gone, where did they go?" "Ah, they will come back, you will see," she would reply /mother/. I was young, we lived in isolation. But I tell you, I only discovered the exodus when I read the books of Tomizza. And that happened at the University of Belgrade. /.../ Nobody talked about that. (Vittoria[7])

The interviews with this Italian woman were accompanied by a constant flow of tears. I was probably the first person interested in listening to her memories of the "exodus." According to my Italian interlocutors, if by chance the conversation shifted to the "exodus," everyone immediately fell silent (Hrobat Virloget 2021).

The underlying cause of silence lies not only in the incompatibility of memories with the dominant collective memory but also in individual and collective traumas. This silence can be saturated with words. Curiously, this silence is not only the absence of speech or voice, as the logocentric paradigm would claim (Kidron 2009, 6). Silence is usually understood as "signaling psychopathologized processes of avoidance and repression, socially suspect processes of personal secrecy, or collective processes of political subjugation" (Kidron 2009, 6). There is an interesting case of an Italian interlocutor who prepared herself for the interview by writing a long essay on the topic. The unusual interview was conducted so that the lady did not let herself speak freely about her memories but mostly kept reading her notes for one hour. She intertwined her memories with some "objective," historical facts, written down, and explained why she wrote down her memories.

> Because things are painful, people don't want to talk about this, because they re-experience… That's why I wrote it down yesterday, I wanted to re-experience a bit, but not cry in public. People do not want to re-experience because these are painful situations, very painful and we are not even guilty for it. Neither Slovenes, neither Croats, neither Italians. Things happen, history. (Amalia)

Like the others, she was deeply wounded by the "exodus."

> My family was split in two [with the exodus] and it never united again. This is a wound that has never healed. (Amalia)

The memories of many of my interlocutors can be understood as childhood trauma pushed into the subconscious. As Primo Levi says, "whoever has been wounded, often refuses to remember so that it would not hurt even more" (Levi 2003, 18; Jurić Pahor 2004, 52). Silence can be a consequence of trauma in the sense that avoiding remembrance protects from re-experiencing the pain (Hrobat Virloget 2017a). Similarly, Andrea Smith (2006, 147–159) noticed that the *pieds-noirs,* the French deriving from Algeria, would censor, discipline, and consciously avoid their memories of the Franco-Algerian war, or if they had to speak about, they would structure memories in a rational, impersonal way. She interprets these tactics as an attempt to control the emotionally burdensome memories which were not compatible with the French collective memory of the war (and not recognized for a long time) and which recalled their participation in this civil war.

Historians also explain silence as a consequence of tense social relations that emerge in rebellious movements and which, by the reversal of the social system and hierarchies, conceal social conflicts, shifts in power relations, and civil war in a time when violence occurs among members of the same nation, community and even family (Portelli 1997; van Boeschoten 2005). In some cases, my Italian interlocutors told me that the silence of some of the Italians who stayed in Yugoslavia has to be attributed to their collaboration with the new socialist authorities and the politics of "ethnic cleansing" of Italians from Istria (Hrobat Virloget 2021).

Silence arises when memory cannot rely on collective memory because it is deleted or censored. Psychoanalysts note that in the case of intergenerational transmission of experiences of genocide (although these are far grislier events), if the experiences of parents are not acknowledged as historical truth and if the perpetrators have not admitted their crimes, the trauma breaks into delirium, a suffocating nightmare. According to Freud, parents' experiences have to be perceived as historical truth; otherwise, family experiences remain similar to delirium that has no connection with the actuality of their own lives (Althounian 2005, xiv). It can be perceived as inappropriate to express mourning, associated with painful memories in a society of where the affected person is on the side of the defeated (Erzar 2017, 85), as Italians are perceived in the prevalent Yugoslavian (later Slovenian) collective memory in a black and white dichotomy. The internalization of this prohibition against mourning may be a consequence of unauthorized mourning where, due to external, public expectations or prohibitions, broader society does not approve or denies the historical events connected with it (Erzar 2017, 85-87). The pain of remaining Italians is kept inside, in the intimate world of the individual, due to the disregard of their right to be perceived as victims by the winning side, the Yugoslavians/Slovenes. In the Slovenian dominant discourse, the Italians have been perceived as perpetrators, fascists, or having the free will to opt for Italy. From this perspective, one can understand silence or refusal to take part in my interviews; on one side the Italians who migrated refused interviews with me because they continue to experience deep pain and anger towards the Yugoslavians/Slovenes, whom they perceive as perpetrators. And on the other side many of the Italians who remained in Istria refused to speak with me because they experience pain in how they are seen, not understood by the dominant society of the winners.

When referring to post-imperial and post-colonial displacements in the "postwar" period, as the "Istrian exodus" can be interpreted,[8] Pamela Ballinger and Michèle Baussant use the term "extruded histories" or *exclus de l'histoire."* As stories of defeat, they are uncomfortable for both scholars and societies, the bearers of negative heritages and imaginaries (Ballinger 2012, 380; Baussant 2019, 38, 155, 176; 2002, 286). However, the breaking of public silence surrounding the "Istrian exodus" in Italy took place in a time of emerging alternative memories across Europe (see Assmann 2007), with the right-wing Italian government using "selected chapters" ("exodus" and "foibe") from Italian history in the national memory (Corni 2018, 75–77). Omitting the period of fascism transformed Italy's role in World War II from that of perpetrator to that of victim (Fikfak 2009). On the other hand, in Eastern and Central European states, histories have been rewritten and similar massive expulsions silenced, with the symbols and monuments of migrants destroyed, erased, or transformed (Bazzin and Perron 2018, 31). Although in the former Yugoslavia a minor fraction of the Italian population remained and became protected as a national minority, they have been marginalized in the dominant collective discourse, with their memories and heritage silenced and neglected (Hrobat Virloget 2021; Hrobat Virloget et al. 2016, 80). As was the case in most communist countries, the new inhabitants of the newly colonized urban areas after World War II were under the influence of the hegemonic hegemonic on

new national states, which altered urban histories and explained the material remains of the expelled inhabitants in line with the uniform state vison of reinvented history (Ruble 2003; Sezneva 2003). Decades had to pass before alternative memories were heard (in the time of the democratization in the 1990s). However, in the case of Istria, the remains of the past were physically present in the form of the Italian minority and its heritage, but remained silenced or adapted to the Yugoslavian hegemonic project.

Memories of Post-War Society in Yugoslavia and National Heroes
Researchers who deal with the transmission of extremely traumatic experiences among concentration camp survivors have noticed that they did not talk about their experiences of persecution to their families but rather kept silent (Jurić Pahor 2004, 52). However, silence does not mean non-communication or a failure to communicate. On the contrary, it can be a strong form of communication (Jurić Pahor 2004, 53). Although silent, the intergenerational interaction between concentration camp survivors and their children can be considered a form of communication or transmission through a system of signs or embodied memory (Kidron 2009; Waynryb 2001). In Halbwach's words, the transmission is performed intimately as a "lived" memory interwoven with everyday experience's social milieu (Kidron 2009, 18; Halbwachs 1992).

This kind of embodied memory or bodily memory practices (Kidron 2009) reminds me of an interview about experiences of World War II and population transfers in Istria, which I conducted together with a psychotherapist whose primary role was to observe the interlocutor, his uncle. This person has lived through intense and difficult pasts experiences, being forced to serve in two opposing armies (German and Yugoslavian) during World War II, experiencing captivity and, after World War II, being sent off as a teacher to establish the Slovenian school system in the annexed part of Istria. Despite all these traumatic life experiences, I did not notice any signs that would indicate a silenced memory or trauma during the interview. However, the psychotherapist noticed some tiny physical signs indicating the interlocutor's silence which I did not notice. A tiny moment of hesitation, a slight unconscious change in his behavior was indicating the presence of fear when talking about communist spies more than seven decades later (Hrobat Virloget, Logar 2020). This collaboration made me realize how feeble we, the ethnologists, sometimes are in deciphering body language in the absence of words, having no professional knowledge of the human psyche. As psychotherapists are well aware, "the body always remembers" (Gostečnik 2008, 251). Are we, the ethnologists, able to detect this?

The fear of speaking out more than seven decades after World War II was evident also in the collective silence surrounding a Slovenian national hero from World War II. Although memories of this hero were kept in silence, making it almost impossible for me to find hints of the perceptions surrounding this figure, many years ago, the collective silence was loud enough to prevent an erection of a monument in his honor. In two municipalities, the one that he originated from and the neighboring one, the idea of erecting his likeness was abandoned because of public disapproval. His bust was eventually placed in Koper/Capodistria in Istria (in 2010), a town largely unknown

to the local community (Hrobat Virloget & Čebron Lipovec 2017, 55–65). Although I come from his home region, I encountered severe difficulties when searching for any information concerning him. I had to pass through villages in the company of my uncle, a local, searching for someone who would tell me something about the man, hoping that the familiarity and friendship with my uncle would encourage people to speak. In their eighties or nineties at the time of my research, the people who personally knew this man would immediately fall silent when the conversation shifted towards him. The only ones who told me something more on the topic were their children, who heard about him in their families' intimate circles. Among the answers received were such as "You are walking on thin ice," "the one who was killing people [after the war] with a pick," "many people lost their lives because of him for nothing,"[9] "women would never let him get out of his village alive if he was brought in," "a rapist," etc. When I tried to get some data about him with the help of a friend, a local from the area, she received a definitive answer: "I hope you haven't told them [the researchers] that somebody from [village] knows something about him!!!" Multiple accounts of rape and other similar misdeeds are recorded and available on personal on-line blogs and even published in a monograph (Perme, Žitnik & Žitnik 2000). They underline the dissonance between memories on the national, regional, and individual level or in the national glorification of a man who is locally perceived as an anti-hero, illustrating the perversion of politics after World War II. As somebody commented: "It was worse after World War II than during it" (Hrobat Virloget & Čebron Lipovec 2017, 60).

From the ethnological point of view, it is not so much the historical truth about this anti-hero that is interesting, but the persistent collective silence concerning him. The situation can be compared to the reflections from Croatia, where (like in Slovenia) after World War II, only one official version of memory existed, one of anti-fascist fighters, which became sacralized. Unofficial memories were preserved at the margins, especially within the diaspora. The end of socialism and the democratic processes of the 1990s re-evaluated the winners, i.e., the anti-fascist fighters, who were protected from all criticism until then. Furthermore, it led to historical revisionism, to the criminalization and demonization of the winners of World War II, and the rehabilitation of the defeated Ustasha (Čapo Žmegač 2015, 123–124; Cipek 2009). Generally, the collapse of the bipolar political system in 1989 triggered an explosion of suppressed memories all over Europe. Many of the nations from the former Eastern bloc are still in the process of re-making their ancient national myths and establishing new ones, based on the intertwined memories of both persecutions and collaborations, both victimization and guilt (Assmann 2007, 16).

Yet, in the scope of the given case study, it is outstanding that the suppressed memories (concerning heroes or post-war times) of ordinary people did not "explode" —as could be expected after the fall of the system which was prescribing official memory—but rather remained in collective silence. Why? Is it because Slovenian identity is still based on the "just"[10] Nation Liberation Movement struggle and any tarnishing of it is still considered inappropriate? It reminds us of Orlando Figes's book *The Whis-*

perers (2007), which talks about ordinary people under the Stalinist system having to whisper from fear of being heard. People got used to living double lives: information, thoughts, religious beliefs, family values, interpersonal relationships, and everything that was not congruent with the measures of the Soviet existence was hidden from one's neighbors, even from one's own children. People learned to whisper (Figes 2009, 13). Similarly, people "had to be careful of what they say /…/ because they ended up in jail for every wrong word."[11]

Why do people continue to whisper today? Besides ascribing the persisting collective silence to the incompatibility between the individual, regional memories, and national collective memory, there are also deeper reasons, connected with psychological aspects, due to which "silence became the base, constructor of peoples identity."[12]

Psychotherapists argue that after the war, the official narrative demands only heroic stories to be told. Victims can only speak if the injustice has been unambiguously recognized and named (Erzar 2017, 31, 85). This has not occurred in the case of the anti-hero glorified by the authority of the state, which is in dissonance (or ignorance?) with horrifying local memories of the man.

Silence in the research of beliefs
Another type of silence in ethnographic research is that I encountered during my research on folk beliefs. In contrast to the previous type, this silence is more closely connected to individual or community secrets than traumas or incompatible memories.

Pre-Christian beliefs of the so-called "staroverci," "old faith believers," have long been kept a secret. This community was primarily composed of elderly unmarried men who maintained pre-Christian beliefs and practices in west Slovenia until the 1960s. At that point, some of them decided to unveil a part of their religious secrets (not rituals) to a single person, Pavel Medvešček. His publication of the interviews with them and the fragments of their beliefs (Medvešček 2015) after the end of his long-lasting silence, honoring an oath, encountered an enthusiastic acceptance by the wider public on the one hand and divided professionals on the other. Some distanced themselves from this material, finding it unreliable; others (including me) considered this material seriously and begun to analyze it (see Hrobat Virloget 2019; 2017a).

A question often raised was why such pre-Christian beliefs would only come out so late, keeping in mind that many ethnographers have previously performed research in that same remote mountain region in west Slovenia but have not found anything similar. An eminent Slovenian researcher of folk beliefs Zmago Šmitek (2013), questioned in this regard the efficiency of the ethnographic methods of so-called "insiders" against that of "outsiders" ethnographic method. While ethnologists and cultural anthropologists focused on the "outsider's view" as the basis for their research, these data demonstrated the importance of the "insiders view." These community secrets were unveiled to persons[13] close to their communities and not to outsiders, which is what ethnologists frequently are.

Mattijs van de Port (1999, 26) questioned the classical ethnographic method, warning about the pitfall of "good informants" in ethnography because much anthropo-

logical knowledge is only based on small groups of cooperative "others." But these are in fact, those who accept strangers—researchers, speak their language and are not "the others" to the extent we imagine.

Often ethnologists or folklorists visit and leave a community as strangers. We do an interview with a person, sometimes several of them, and we rarely return. This was how I was doing my folkloristic research, and only years later, when I returned to my home area and the region of my research to settle down, I was told that people had misled me in my studies. They did not want to tell me their community's secrets about their past worship or beliefs, so they told me other stories just to give me a sense that they were collaborating. For them, I was an outsider, and personal beliefs are not meant for outsiders. On some occasions, I was well aware of something secret, something people would hide from me, like in the case of a stone monolith called *Baba*/Hag worshiped decades ago.[14] Some communities have secrets, which are widely known to have the status of a secret. Such is the case of a ritual with sexual symbolism performed in Boljunec/Bagnolli della Rosandra, a village with a Slovenian population in Italy, performed every year when the boys enter the community of young men in the village. The secret ritual cannot be unveiled to any strangers, researchers, not even to the local villagers (Slavec 2017, 89; Hrobat Virloget 2017a). This was clearly shown to me on the occasion when, after researching for fifteen years in a village (Rodik), a contributor finally told me about a stone connected to local beliefs. When I asked her why she had not told me this before, she just shrugged (Hrobat Virloget 2017a).

The question of the role of silence in ethnography requires further reflection of the influence of the researcher's position, i.e., the position of the authoritative observer (Lichterman 2017, 37). Anne M. Lovel questions how a secret from which ethnologists are excluded influences the production of ethnological knowledge. The secret implies power relations between the ethnologist and the researched and can often be seen as resistance to the anthropologist's authority or others who exercise power. In these cases, it is not about intimate individual secrets that require the same degree of unveiling by the anthropologist or at least the promise of secrecy (Lovell 2007, 57, 72–73), but the secrets of a particular social group. Important, in this case, is the ethical attitude of the ethnologist, which leaves people with their right to their intimate knowledge and accepts ethnological knowledge and descriptions of "the other" as limited and incomplete (Benzercy 2017, 31). The right to the secret of "the other" among us is well illustrated by the case of one of my students, who studied the traditional medicine of her grandmother. The woman refused to describe to her a traditional medicine rite saying, "once it's uttered, it loses power." Words, therefore, have power, and only the designated can have access to them.

Researchers of beliefs often narrate their difficulties in ethnographic research, such as the unwillingness of contributors to explain beliefs to "outsiders", often even more pronounced when their religious beliefs have been persecuted. A question is raised about the responsibility of the researcher penetrating into such intimate worlds as beliefs (Jordan 2003, 152).

Claire Laurier Decoteau points to the problem of a difference of worldviews between the researcher and the researched. In exploring the narratives of illnesses and explanations of their causes in South Africa, she noted that her interlocutors felt the presence of their ancestors just as much as they were aware of structural inequalities in neoliberal capitalism and as they believed in modern medicine. The "witches" were just one of the social forces among many others that influenced them. In any case, they saw the world in a slightly different way than the researcher. If we consider ontology as a matter of perspective, one of the ethnographer's tasks is to learn "to see otherwise" by situating him-/herself in the systems of the signification of the researched (Decoteau 2017, 68-69). Mattijs van de Port also mentions the conflict of two different worldviews in his ethnographic film The Possibility of Spirits (van de Port 2014; 2017). In exploring African-Brazilian *candomblé* beliefs, the researcher became aware of the limitations of his own Eurocentric belief that ghosts do not exist and indicated the limitations of research when the researcher's perspective or worldview influences the production of knowledge about the "other" (van de Port 2014). In discovering "otherness," he argues for reducing the cultural distance between the anthropologist and the anthropolog*ised* (van de Port 1999, 8; Cohen 1994, 5), for giving up the a priori superiority of anthropological knowledge and "seriously play with the possibility of the truth and authority of an (alien) culture" (McGrane 1989, 127–128; van de Port 1999, 8).

I got the chance to reflect on these issues during my field research of the mythical landscape in Cavtat, Croatia. When we discussed the links between pre-Christian cult places and "energy sources" and dowsing with the local ethnologist, his mother showed us a family secret, an object, a little bag with unknown contents, called the "house force" (Cro. *kućna moć*).[15] She was interested in my opinion about the "force" this object was supposed to possess. It made me think that the lady would have never shown me this object if I were to ask her about her beliefs as an ethnologist. But as she understood that my worldview did not differ so much from hers because of my interest in dowsing, as she felt that I would not condemn her for being superstitious from an authoritative scientific position, she unveiled to me her family's secret. When the lady oscillated between acceptance and doubt concerning her object, we see a casual event that Carlo Severi calls the essence of any belief (Severi 2015, 207–228). Let us think of the limitations of ethnographic research when different worldviews or "world-makings" (van de Port & Meyer 2018, 16) clash. Because of all these silent secrets, we, the ethnologists have to be well aware of our limited access to "others," even if those "others" are among us. Similar limitations can be illustrated by the object discussed above, the "house secret." As an ethnologist, I can say nothing about it and must agree with van de Port (1999, 13): some phenomena can simply not be measured with scientific tools.

Conclusion

This discussion has approached different types of silence encountered during the author's field research related to folklore, beliefs, and memories of World War II and its

aftermath linked to migrations and national heroes. It has been shown that the ethnologists only produce partial knowledge, one reason for which lies in silence.

In the field of memories, silence can be interpreted as a result of incompatible individual and collective memories. Individual memories that do not fit into the collective view of the past are censored, rejected, stigmatized, or excluded from collective (national) discourse (Halbwachs 1925; 2001; Assmann 2007, 16). Such is the case of the silent memories of Italians who remained in post-war Yugoslavia despite mass migrations, the "exodus" of most of their fellow Italians to Italy after the annexation of Istria to Yugoslavia. Their memory is not compatible with either the official Italian national discourse based on victimization or the Yugoslavian/Slovenian perceptions of the "exodus" as voluntary migration. The incompatibility of individual, collective, regional vs. national memories also explains why the silence surrounding the national hero or the regional anti-hero persisted.

The second cause of silence lies in individual and collective traumas. The Italians who remained in Yugoslavia after the "exodus" became foreigners in their own homes due to the change in social/political circumstances and total loss of their social networks, including even the closest family members, for many of them a wound that never healed. In this case, avoiding remembrance protects people from re-experiencing the (childhood) traumas pushed into the subconscious (Levi 2003, 18; Jurić Pahor 2004, 52). Memory is censored, disciplined to control the emotionally burdensome events, not compatible with the dominant perception (Smith 2006, 147–159). On the collective level, the remaining Italians experienced the reversal of their social status from the "civilized" under fascism to the marginalized, collectively stigmatized as fascists or the defeated in the war. It can be inappropriate to express painful memories in a society of war winners where the affected area on the side of the defeated (Erzar 2017, 85). Italians are perceived in the prevalent Yugoslavian/Slovenian collective memory in this black and white dichotomy. As historians argue, silence can also be a consequence of power struggles within the community, especially during times of reversals of social systems (Portelli 1997; Van Boeschoten 2005). Besides, until historical events—or better to say, someone's vision of the past—are acknowledged as constructs, memories concerning them remain suppressed (Althounian 2005, xiv). As shown in the case of memories of the hero or anti-hero, silence can become a way to survive in a politically repressive system (Figes 2007) or a constructor of peoples' identity. As Hana Ostan Ožbolt, the curator of a contemporary art exhibition on silence, reflects, silence is how individuals avoid the pain of remembering traumatic experiences and in which the rest of society avoids the victims unwanted truth (Kač 2020).

A type of silenced memory that ethnologists—in contrast to psychotherapists—are not trained to detect are the bodily memory practices or embodied memory (Kidron 2009). To grasp the meaning of silence, an interdisciplinary collaboration between anthropology, history, and, most importantly, psychology is required.

In the field of beliefs, silence is more closely linked to secrets of individuals or communities, as has been shown in the case of the long-lasting silence by the so-called "staroverci," "old faith believers" in Slovenia, and during some of the author's field

studies on folklore. A question has been raised about the efficiency of "the outsider's view" versus "the insider's view" in accessing the most personal beliefs. Since anthropologists are usually "the outsiders," strangers to the researched community, attention has been drawn to the pitfall of the "good" informants, the small group of cooperative "others" who are not as "other" as we imagine (van de Port 1999, 26). Silence in the field of beliefs can be the consequence of keeping an individual or community secret from the researcher, of resistance against the authority of the researcher, or the result of the clash between different worldviews or world-makings (van de Port and Meyer 2018, 16; Decoteau 2017, 68–69). To bridge this gap resulting in silence, I agree with Mattijs van de Port who argues for a need to reduce the cultural distance between the anthropologist and the anthropolog*ised* and to surrender the superiority of anthropological knowledge (van de Port 1998, 8; Cohen 1994, 5; McGrane 1989, 127–128).[16]

Notes

1   The article derives from a previously published article on silence in ethnography written in Slovene (Hrobat Virloget 2017a); some excerpts from post-war memories and the Istrian "exodus" were published in English (Hrobat Virloget, Čebron Lipovec 2017; Hrobat Virloget 2019). However, the present composition is much more detailed and includes new reflections, case-studies and literature references.
2   The peninsula of Istria is located in the Northern Adriatic and it is divided today between different states, Slovenia and Croatia and a tiny part in Italy.
3   Fascist ideology and violent Italianization of multi-ethnic areas were the cause of migrations of thousands of Slovenes and Croats to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (Gombač 2005; Ballinger 2003; Verginella 2015).
4   Named *optanti* in the Slovenian and Croatian discourse, deriving from the legal right to opt, or *esuli* by Italians, denoting refuges.
5   In Italian discourse, the *foibe* (deep natural sinkholes, common in Karst and Istria) have acquired the national status of *liéux de memoire* with political, almost mythical connotations. In the Italian dominant memory. They are believed to contain the remains of ethnic Italians, who were killed in 1943 and 1945 under the alleged Slavic terror, with their only crime "being Italian" (Fikfak 2009, 358; Ballinger 2003, 98). Slovene researchers, on the other hand, argue that the *foibe* killings were motivated by ideology and included executions of many members of the Slovenian anti-communist home guard and collaborators (Pirjevec 2009).
6   The speeches have been translated from Italian to English by the author.
7   Due to the sensitivity of the topic, the names of the interlocutors are invented. The interviews are kept by the author of the article.
8   Although most of the researchers interpret the "Istrian exodus" in a broader framework of displacement out of Central and Eastern Europe during and immediately after World War II, Pamela Ballinger argues for its interpretation in a (post)imperial frame when after the defeat of fascism Italy lost territories in Africa and the Balkans (Ballinger 2015).
9   Such was the case of the interlocutor whose father was killed by the Nazis in revenge of the

hero's attacks.

10   From the words of the president of the national assembly Milan Brglez in the commemorative speech, held in Strunjan/Strugnano in Istria 20 March 2015 (Hrobat Virloget 2015a, 161).

11   Ana Nekič, a local social worker, who performed a study on psycho-sociological aspects of World War II in Brkini for her Master's degree, personal communication.

12   Ana Nekič, personal communication.

13   Another author reporting of these pre-Christian beliefs, but in another area, Karst, is Boris Čok (2012). Neither him or Pavel Medvešček are ethnologists.

14   The worship was registered in the interviews of »staroverci«, »old-faith believers« (Medvešček 2015).

15   Interestingly, the same expression, force, "moč", can be encountered in "staroverci", "old faith believers" in Slovenia and similarly, the secret knowledge of the house forces called the "tročan", Eng. triangle, was kept secret by certain family members (Medvešček 2015, 37, 42, 43, 48, 49 etc.).

16   Reflections in this article derive from several ARRS research projects: Migration control in the Slovenian area from the times of Austria-Hungary to indipendent Slovenia, lead by Aleksej Kalc (J6–8250; 2020-23); postodoctoral ARRS project, The burden of the past. Co-existence in the (Slovenian) Coast region in light of the formation of post-war Yugoslavia (Z6-4317; 2012-14), and Inventory, analysis and evaluation of the primary and secondary sources of Slovene researchers on 'the old faith in the region of Soča river', lead by Anja Ragolič (V6-1923; 2019-21).

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Silenced Memories and Practices of Un-Silencing: Mobilities in a Dynamic Alpine Border Landscape

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Abstract

This article addresses a complex heritage configuration in the northern part of the alpine Adriatic region, taking a relational approach to landscape, memorials, and actors. Albeit shaped by wars, population exchanges, and multiple emigrations, this border area is primarily represented as static in Austrian, Italian and Slovenian national heritage discourses. An ethnographic exploration into silenced memories of mobility reveals a dynamic, outward-looking cross-border setting. An analysis of biographical memories and artistic initiatives leads to three modes of un-silencing, which affirm inhabitants' right to dwell and traverse dominant representations of ethnic belonging and exclusion, mobility and settledness, and mono- and multilingualism.

Keywords: ethnography; alpine region; landscape; mobilities; memory; heritage; ethnicity; multilingualism; biography; art

Silenced memories may be unspeakable within the hegemonic narrative. They do, however, speak eloquently in a language of embodied practices, omissions, or biographical narratives. As newcomers to the Alpen-Adria-Universität Klagenfurt/Univerza v Celovcu, we noticed eloquent silences amongst students and staff. They made us aware of a complex heritage configuration in Carinthia, Austria's southernmost federal state. Historical incidents and conflicts appeared to be relevant for deep-running divides in the present. They are the continuation of a historical formation where repercussions of World War I were articulated with a settled Slovene minority and longstanding regional bilingualism. The resulting divisive narrative has been politically exploited for decades.

We set out to look for silenced (counter-)memories in the northern alpine Adriatic border region of which Carinthia is part, to trace the complexities and the reappraisal of local and supra-regional histories and heritages. Based on observations and interactions, interviews, and digital ethnography, we found that interpretations of the present are grounded in a regional heritage structured by multiple silences, perpetuated by different communities of memory, governmental measures, and activities aimed at economic development. Exploring the representation, silencing and un-silencing

of regional heritages in various national narratives, we shifted our focus to everyday experiences, stories, and informal practices of memory-making and un-silencing. Different forms of mobility stood out amongst the silenced and un-silenced memories that traverse, subvert or challenge hegemonic discourses on the area.

Our ethnographic research is located in the northern alpine Adriatic border region. It encompasses the southern part of Carinthia in Austria, the northwestern Slovene regions Gorenjska, Goriška, Obalno-kraška, and the region Friuli-Venezia Giulia in the northeast of Italy, including the micro-region Valli del Natisone, the villages situated in the valleys of the river Natisone. First, we outline how contested pasts have shaped the region's contemporary heritage and social memory, including the silenced parts. Second, we visit the politicized alpine landscape through public memorial culture, including official memorials, commemorations, and heritage initiatives, as well as visible landmarks in the form of unintentional memorials and material relics of the past. Third, we argue that unofficial heritage practices and social memory carry counter-narratives. Turning to silenced memories of migration, mobility, and multilingualism, we present, fourth, three modes of un-silencing by examining contemporary individual and artistic cross-border practices as expressions of a social memory that challenges hegemonic discourses. We conclude with a look at alternative narratives.

The northern alpine Adriatic region was the site of major European conflicts in the twentieth century. Major battles of World War I and World War II were fought here, followed by territorial reconfigurations, population exchanges, and nationalization measures. The Cold War drew one of its frontlines through mountains and valleys, leaving military fortifications behind after its end. Depopulated mountain villages are evidence of various waves of emigration. All this shaped official heritage as well as collective social memories, silencing some dimensions and representing others. Positioned between Western and Eastern, Northern and Southern Europe, the borderland is marginalized due to weak socio-economic development. Today, the area is slowly developing into a tourist destination.

Marginality is not only a feature of peripheral geopolitical location and weak economic position. As Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing points out, margins are sites "from which we see the instability of social categories" and "where discrepant kinds of meaning-making converge" (1994, 279). While border areas are often politically and economically peripheral, they are also "linguistic, cultural and ethnic areas of transition in which various different influences cross paths and often also mix together" (Ther 2003, xi), and important "spaces of transfer between different memory cultures" (Ostermann 2012, 246). In borderlands, where old controversies persist, legacies and memories of unresolved conflicts over territorial demarcations, ethnicities, and identities assume a significance they do not have in the national center. Looking at the margins of Europe (Römhild 2009) sheds light on conflicts of the past and their contemporary repercussions, especially on crossings, interlinkages, creolization, and omissions. Latent ambivalences contained in hegemonic narratives of the past are tangible in everyday practices at the periphery and in the marginal landscape itself. This is why, with the rise of populist politics in recent years, we took a closer look at the alpine Adriatic

border region and its troubled past, where many of the divisions exploited for political gain by Austrian, Italian, and Slovene right-wing politicians have their painful origins. Political conflicts are also "conflicts over emotional practices" and "clashing emotional styles" (Scheer 2012, 218), reproduced, implemented, and valorized in political discourses, commemorations, and actions. We approach the complex and contentious heritage configuration (Hamm 2020) through relations between space, heritagization, and memory-making in artistic and everyday practices.

Oral historian Luisa Passerini recommends taking the word silence "literally to indicate what is pre- and post-sound, particularly the area around the word, the space where speech is located" (2009, 238). She proposes a relational perspective on silenced memories: "When trying to understand connections between silence and speech, oblivion and memory, we must look for relationships between traces, or between traces and their absences; and we must attempt interpretations which make possible the creation of new associations" (2009, 240). Taking a relational approach, our research confronts powerful discourses with everyday and artistic forms of social memory and informal heritage practices. To capture the power relations between silencing and un-silencing, we approach the region through the lens of contentious heritage.

Beneath imageries of idyllic alpine tourist landscapes—seemingly untouched by the flows of globalization—and despite worried debates on the depopulation of remote regions, our research uncovers a rich social memory of political, military, and ethnic conflicts, subsequent labor migrations, periodic returns, and multi-local settlement. Hegemonic national discourses dominate the memory landscape in all three parts of the border area. The alpine landscape as a whole is caught up in the discourse on progress and backwardness, where mobility symbolizes the urban and the present, while the settled symbolizes the rural and the past. To maintain the Alps as a counterfoil to urban progress, this discourse requires the erasure of mobility. A closer ethnographic look at seemingly depopulated villages counters the widespread assumption of a settled and stable rural area.

Ambivalences that are contained but silenced in hegemonic narratives and political centers become palpable when engaging with the marginal landscape itself. Tim Ingold (1993) conceptualizes landscape as a permanent store of past material and marks left by cultural developments of times past. He emphasizes the relational context evoked by engaging with a landscape, which is culturally shaped by the experiences of transient people and settled inhabitants, and draws attention to local practices of actors and the impact and effects these have on space. Our research reveals new relations established in everyday and artistic practices of connecting to the landscape. Profound knowledge on and personal experience of mobility and ethnic identifications, virtuosity in multiple language use, and linguistic displacement reveal a heritage configuration that is more complex than dominant narratives suggest. Such knowledge, contained in social memory, enables border dwellers to create new modes of un-silencing in the private space of home and family, in entire villages, or by taking artistically enhanced hiking tours in the alpine cultural landscape.

Unsettling Pasts: Political Conflicts and Ethnic Belongings

Most parts of the provinces of the alpine Adriatic region once belonged to the Habsburg monarchy. Today they form a finely meshed border area. In the course of history, these borders were pushed back and forth, and with them, the populations, with many inhabitants going through several "ethnic metamorphoses" (Purini 2010). Nationalization policies initiated since the late nineteenth century turned ethnic and linguistic difference into a divisive political force. The alpine Adriatic region became one of the main European theatres of World War I, with its frontline running along the mountains, valleys, and rivers.

With the collapse of the Habsburg monarchy after World War I, heated and violent controversies over the distribution of its former territories set in, along with bitter conflicts over ethnic belonging along the lines of language use. Carinthia was now the southernmost federal state of the new Austrian state, with a border to the newly established Yugoslav Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. Territorial claims by the Yugoslav side for the Slovene-speaking part of Carinthia were countered by a Carinthian militia. This militarized border conflict was locally propagated as *Abwehrkampf* or "defensive struggle." As part of the post-war peace negotiations, the *Entente* powers stipulated a plebiscite in the disputed area to be held in October 1920. Following intense propaganda campaigns, a slight majority of the population voted to remain with Austria rather than joining the Yugoslav Kingdom. These events became the founding myth of a distinctively German-Carinthian identity, constructed through profound othering of the Slovene-speaking and bilingual population (Moritsch 1996; Entner 2010a; Holfelder 2020). Under Nazi rule, a strategy of ruthless Germanization and deportations intensified the Carinthian conflict over ethnic belonging (Brunner & Gombros 1990; Entner 2010b). Throughout the post-war decades, the German-speaking elites attempted to silence the Carinthian-Slovene minority and their painful social memory by fueling suspicion of Yugoslav irredentism, refusing implementation of contractually guaranteed minority rights, and withholding cultural recognition (Sima 2006). Tensions came to a head in the 1970s with a conflict over bilingual road signs which significant parts of the German-speaking population rejected vehemently (Gstettner 1988; Hamm & Schönberger 2020c; Entner 2005). Following the rise of the extreme right politician Jörg Haider since the 1990s (Brunner & Gombros 1990, 357), both groups' representatives eventually established a fragile consensus on the issue in 2011 (Graf & Kramer 2007).

We observed similar strategies of silencing, marginalization, and othering in the Italian-Slovene border area. The administration started the assimilation and Italianization of the Slavs in Friuli-Venezia Giulia shortly after the Italian state's foundation in 1866 (Banchig 2013, 205), profound anti-Slavic actions set in during the 1920s (Wörsdörfer 2004; Purini 2010). The Italian fascist party intensified Italianization and started violent actions against Slovene-speaking people and institutions, especially in Trieste and in bilingual border areas like the Valli del Natisone. Hence, actions against and conflicts over linguistic minorities and ethnic belonging have both a political and a cross-border dimension in this area.

World War II generated an echo of conflicting memories that reverberates all over the region. While Nazi-Germany annexed the northern part of Slovenia, Italian fascists annexed Slovenia's south in 1941. Following Italy's armistice with the Allies in autumn 1943, Nazi-German troupes took control of Northern Italy, supported by Italian Fascists. Friuli-Venezia Giulia and parts of Slovenia were attached to the administrative unit of Carinthia as part of the German *Operational Zone of the Adriatic Littoral*, where partisans and occupiers were facing each other.

After 1945, European national governments strove to create clear-cut, unambiguous national states and identities with the creation of the Italian republic, the Austrian republic, and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Different national readings around unresolved incidents during World War II put the blame for certain crimes on the respective other side. These readings continue to shape national narratives as well as silenced memories of former conflicts. Between Italy and Slovenia, there are continuous "silenced and divided memories" on the so-called "Istrian exodus," where Italian-speakers were forced to leave the now Yugoslav peninsula (Hrobat Virloget 2015, 159). Another highly controversial issue is the *Foibe*, referring to deep holes in the ground of the Karst area near Trieste into which the bodies of victims of war crimes were thrown (Cernigoi 2005; Manin 2006; Koroschitz 2013).

Accounts of crimes committed by occupying forces and the unresolved killings and deaths in the turmoil of the post-war period left many questions unresolved. These silences are about collaborations and allegiances that cannot be integrated into the national narratives of the respective countries on their roles during the war (Fransecky et al. 2010). They leave ample space for reduced and distorted versions of events, which continue to circulate for the purpose of revisionist politics (Focardi 2005; Mattioli 2010).

The Cold War, a crucial period especially in Friuli-Venezia Giulia, left a further legacy of silences. As part of one of the Cold War's front regions, the region became the most militarized area in Italy (Baccichet 2015). While Carinthia was not affected by the Cold War in the same way as Friuli-Venezia Giulia and saw considerable touristic development (Koroschitz 2018), this era shaped collective memories through the solidification of an image of the Balkans "as the 'other' of Europe" (Todorova 2009, 3), and created prevailing stereotypes.

Quite a few European border regions have "fragmented cultures of remembrance" (Wóycicki 2004), and some borderlands became "site[s] of transnational symbolic politics" (Becker 2005, 100). For instance, various programs were initiated and implemented between Germany and Poland to support regional development following the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 and the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The very naming of the alpine Adriatic region highlights a cross-border initiative established in 1978 when the Alpine-Adriatic Working Group in Carinthia began to stimulate cultural, economic, and political cooperation, develop a vision of a peaceful common future, and thus overcome a troubled past. Under the umbrella of the Alpine-Adriatic Group, new "neighborhood politics" (Valentin 1988, 173, author's translation) brought some progress in the field of cultural and economic exchange. Eventually, the idea of a po-

litical working group stalled for several reasons. One was the fall of the iron curtain, as a former member of the group explains: "With the disintegration of Yugoslavia, the Alpine-Adriatic lost the special charm of overcoming ideologically determined border lines and bringing together countries with different social systems" (Valentin 1988, 203). Regionally, various actors and institutions made cross-border efforts and realized various projects. Besides transnational natural parks, they established an extensive network of hiking routes known as the Alpe-Adria trail, and built cycle paths running along former train lines. However, on a discursive level, these borders have rarely been transcended, and the multi-layered heritage of the region never became a discursive political focus. A European memory remains a work in progress (Assmann 2007), and so does the institutional realization of a transnational everyday life. For instance, infrastructure between the three regions is poorly developed, as its capitals Klagenfurt, Ljubljana, and Trieste, are hardly connected by public transport. In recent years, infrastructures started to consolidate. The spatial separation along national boundaries is also mirrored in memorials and monuments in the alpine landscape.

The Politicised Alpine Landscape—Materialised National Narratives

Monuments and memorials in Friuli-Venezia Giulia illustrate the relatively linear and homogeneous story of national states, ethnic identity, or language groups that is being told in the region. The example of World War I memorialization illustrates that in these material traces, memories of war, fighters, enemies, victims, and nation-building processes are omnipresent.

With the centenary of World War I commemorated on multiple occasions and with events between 2014 and 2018, the former war landscape was placed in the spotlight of political and cultural happenings. An online article on the development of peace tourism (Wohlmuther 2014) and cultural activities marking the 100th anniversary of the beginning of World War I describes the region Friuli-Venezia Giulia as a "great open-air museum of warlike events" (Science Apa 2014, author's translation). Citizens' associations and other public and political initiatives engaged in preserving warpaths and turned them into peace walks, with itineraries leading through the last tangible remains of former main battlefields and trenches. Information boards along these routes explain military strategies, some of which were re-enacted during commemorative events. When driving along the alpine valleys' small streets, one often passes border demarcations, indicating the drawing and re-drawing of national borders after 1918. Besides, hidden in the alpine landscape are several caves that served as a deposit for ammunition or water supply infrastructures for soldiers. Ironically, peace tourism consists mainly in remembering military actions and environments and rarely features people's everyday perspectives.

Local politics tend to adopt this perspective on the war-scape and perpetuate established narrations. In a statement published on the region's website, the regional council emphasizes the importance of remembering the past and maintaining its traces throughout the landscape. Besides the initiatives' cultural work, these new tourist sites also have a significant economic dimension. Debora Serracchiani, the former

President of Friuli-Venezia Giulia, stated in the village of Castelmonte at the presentation of the initiative "Paths of the Great War along the former Border of the Natisone Valleys" that "[t]he rediscovery and enhancement of the ancient paths located on the sites of the Great War (…) serve to make known to the public often forgotten territories and represent an opportunity to revitalize and bring life to the Natisone Valleys while creating new jobs" (Regione Autonoma Friuli-Venezia Giulia 2017, author's translation). The website then provides information on excursions that offer opportunities to discover "the value of peace among the people but also of celebrating the memory of the countless fallen Italians" (ibid.). The monuments themselves and the mode of remembering represent hegemonic narratives, framed by a national discourse that shapes the collective social memory in the present. By commemorating victims of the war as "Italians," "Austrians" or "Slovenes," the national commemoration discourse silences, once more, the specific position of people who have long been in-between national alignments.

While these monuments and infrastructures inform visitors on technical and strategic aspects of former battles, with panels explaining routes or military operations for conquering the territories, other memorials emphasize the Great War's human tragedy. One of these is situated on mount Kolovrat in the Valli del Natisone, in Slovenia's immediate vicinity. The *Monumento al primo caduto della Grande Guerra*, the monument of the Great War's first fallen, was erected at around 50 meters distance to the border, still discernible through an empty border post. It is dedicated to Riccardo di Giusto, who stands as a symbol for the war's many victims. However, the monument does not only commemorate the fallen. Its position on the edge of the Slovene border, on mount Kolovrat, at the heart of this ethnically heterogeneous area characterized by bilingual inhabitants since centuries, shows that monuments of this kind are "not only sites of memory and sites of mourning, but also sites that mark national territory" (Klabjan 2010, 403). The monuments stylize the countless dead to heroes who sacrificed their lives for the nation and thereby uphold the myth of the nation.

Rather than offering a transversal perspective, the commemorations continue to be framed by national narratives. In doing so, they suggest a clear and straightforward belonging and nationhood among border populations that never existed in this strict sense, as language and culture had traversed boundaries long before they were marked by national borders and continue to do so. The lives and actions of the people commemorated may bear completely different stories and meanings from those represented by the memorials. Their traces remain in cemeteries throughout the region. The information given on gravestones reveals stories of cross-border family relations and multilingualism, occupation and resistance, and inhabitants' mobility, indicating their stories of emigration and their return to the country of origin.

Besides intentional monuments, implemented with a particular purpose and delivering a clear statement, the Friulian landscape speaks of silences also through "unintentional monuments" (Riegl 1996). Many military buildings remain from the Cold War era. An architects' studio published one of the few accounts on this topic. As the military archives in this era are still closed, the authors collaborated, among others,

with the former military. While the exact number of empty military buildings and compounds in the region is unknown, an estimate amounts to 285 abandoned military sites (Corde architetti 2016, 88). Such architectural military heritage can be found in city centers, urban peripheries, and the countryside along the Austrian-Italian-Slovene borders. The enormous fenced complexes for thousands of soldiers from all over Italy added to structures that remained from the preceding World Wars, as the „reuse of the existing defensive system was almost never pursued and its constant implementation turned the Friulian territory into one of the densest defensive structures in Europe" (Corde architetti 2016, 19, author's translation). Friuli-Venezia Giulia presents itself as a distinct political and "strategic" landscape (Corde architetti 2016, 34), where memorials and the architectonical heritage underline ideas of power, authority, and nation.

These unintentional monuments at first sight merely provide evidence of yet another political conflict. However, they are closely linked to different individual experiences. Many people moved from Southern Italy to the northern part of the country to work for the military. Due to the limited development of agriculture and industry, the militarization triggered emigration within the region itself, for instance in border areas such as the Valli del Natisone. The Cold War era generated silenced memories of the experience of living on a border and the migration movements connected with militarization. The military strategy vis-a-vis the socialist neighbor reinforced the idea of a Slavic Other and led to further divisions among the population. In the Valli del Natisone, the Italian state, supported by the CIA, implemented the "Gladio," a secret anti-communist paramilitary service, to observe the nation's supposed traitors (Pacini 2014). Its existence was revealed in 1990, and it became known that the organization was closely connected to right-wing movements. Such operations intensified the remoteness and lack of development in this area. They influenced not only how it was perceived from the outside but also the social cohesion and relations amongst the population, profoundly shaped by mistrust. Political conditions continue to shape everyday practices, as the example of Stazione Topolò/Postaja Topolove below shows.

While some military compounds currently serve as refugee accommodation, most remain abandoned and are slowly decaying. Neglect of this heritage indicates the self-perception of a society and ambivalence in dealing with its past. Material representations of a divided history stand in contrast to a living heritage performed in the dynamic processes of people's everyday experiences. Only a few memorials pay tribute to cross-border practices or the mobility of the border population. One hint to such activities during the Cold War era can be found in the Val Rosandra, a national park just outside Trieste. A small badge fixed on the former border post informs passing hikers that it was possible to cross the border here as early as 1982.

Concepts: Social Memory and Contentious Heritage
The alpine landscape, and the ways people relate to it, can help understand the complex entanglement of the national discourse about the past and recollections of personal experience embedded in everyday practices. The World War I commemorations in Friuli-Venezia Giulia exemplify how heritagization forges a fluid and ambiguous

legacy into a territorially bounded, unified, stable, and monolingual identity, in tune with the national narrative. Silencing, oppressing or forgetting memories that run contrary to this imagined community was crucial in forming modern nationalism, as collective memory "has mainly been effective in virtue of all it has *left out*" (Ginzburg & Gunderson 2005). Codification and legal enforcement of cultural memory can take violent forms (Assmann 1995). In the process of "regulating and legitimizing" heritage (Smith 2006, 82), the silencing of memories in dominant narratives of the past often mirrors historical marginalization or oppression. This explains why the agility and transient dynamics of the border region are unspeakable within collective national memory. In places other than the national narrative, lived experiences and unintentional relics form a social memory that speaks of mobility and multilingualism, displacement, exclusion, and perseverance.

Since Maurice Halbwachs (1991) drew attention to the political and social dimension of memory and its collective cultural construction, scholars have grappled with the rift between collective memory that is publicly represented from a position of power and forms of popular memory produced and reproduced in more fluid and informal ways from a position of exclusion. For Stuart Hall, the impossible position of marginalized experiences is crucial for identity formation: "Identity is formed at the unstable point where the 'unspeakable' stories of subjectivity meet the narratives of history, of a culture" (Hall 1987, 44). Jan and Aleida Assmann account for this by making an analytical distinction between communicative memory and the more normative, institutionally framed cultural memory (Assmann 1995, 61). However, in everyday practice, both forms of memory-making are "interdependent" (Welzer 2001, 15).

James Fentress and Chris Wickham introduced social memory to tackle the societal influence and various processes comprised in Halbwachs' concept. Grounded in oral traditions, "social memory is a source of knowledge. This means that it does more than provide a set of categories through which, in an unselfconscious way, a group experiences its surroundings; it also provides this group with material for conscious reflection. This means we must situate groups concerning their traditions, asking how they interpret their own 'ghosts', and how they use them as a source of knowledge" (Fentress and Wickham 1992, 26). Similarly, scholars of critical heritage studies distinguish between official and unofficial, formal and less formal forms of heritage (Harrison 2010). Memory as representation, understood as a network of discursively articulated ideas (Fentress and Wickham 1992, x), is aligned with what Laurajane Smith (2006) calls the "authorized heritage discourse." In contrast, unofficial or personal ways of memory- and heritage-making can function as forms of social action (Harrison 2010; Fentress/Wickham 1992). Drawing on life-worlds and creating new significance for traces of the past, "people can transform and refigure the ways in which their societies operate" (Harrison 2010, 245f.).

Producing, affirming, transmitting, or performing alternative narratives of the past can challenge or subvert hegemonic discourses. The "heritage dissonance" (Kisić 2016) resulting from the interplay of official versions of the past and those that are excluded from public representation is increasingly recognized as a productive cul-

tural force that "can function as a form of resistance to hegemonic discourses" (Kisić 2016, 281). Tuuli Lädesmäki and her co-editors highlight "the productive and creative effect of frictions and connections" (Lähdesmäki et al. 2019, 13) in the European heritage landscape. Research in a recent EU-project on transmitting contentious cultural heritages aimed at the "productive articulation of conflict and difference, rather than promoting unity and thereby exclusion" (Hamm & Schönberger 2020a, 7f.). Marion Hamm and Klaus Schönberger advocate applying Chantal Mouffe's concept of agonism (2007) to the process of heritage, to create open platforms where difficult pasts can be negotiated without the pressure to terminate irresolvable conflict, but also without perpetuating old antagonisms (Hamm & Schönberger 2020b). Outlining contentious heritage as an "emergent research perspective," Marion Hamm argues that it "draws attention to the political dimension of history and collective memory" (Hamm 2020, 127). She holds that engaging with the contentious aspects of heritage is worthwhile, "[e]specially where no dispute over a certain manifestation of heritage is publicly articulated, where heritages are silenced, absent or ignored" (Hamm 2020, 110f.). Conflicts inscribed in the power-relations between silencing and un-silencing are not necessarily articulated in public discourse. Although the selective silencing of heritages is not always openly contested, conflicts are always present in strategies of silencing and un-silencing. Our exploration of the alpine Adriatic border landscape adds to the notion of contentious heritage.

As Harrison (2010) has pointed out, "heritage […] can be something that people create and use actively to maintain the connections between themselves and other places and things" (ibid., 145). Border-dwellers' ways of relating to the landscape in actions, objects, and performances, evoking corporeal experience, sensual feeling and understanding, demonstrate that a region is "a space created by interaction" (de Certeau 1988, 126). Their cultural productions are performative in that they "do not merely reflect social realities, but constitute them" (Hamm 2020, 130). The corporeal dimension (Butler 1993) of "embodied [heritage] practices" from below (Robertson 2012, 2) adds to their performative potential in transforming and transgressing established boundaries (Fischer-Lichte 2005).

While biographical experiences are rooted in the personal and mainly negotiated and performed in private space, artistic representations and re-formulations assume a more public character. Artistic approaches to memory, heritage, identity, and silence can uncover ambivalences, open up new perspectives, and enhance the visibility of silenced memories. Engaging with silenced memories, artistic and everyday practices of remembering and "past-presencing" (Macdonald 2013, 15ff.) offers alternative perspectives on contentious heritages, challenge imposed national accounts, create new cultural practices of social memory and have the potential to shake and tackle the authorized heritage discourse. The private and artistic cultural production of social memory is both political and "highly personal in its 'assertion of a right to dwell'" (Muzaini and Minca 2018, 9).

Mobilities and Multilingualism: Three Modes of Un-Silencing

The Valli del Natisone are situated in the Italian-Slovene part of the border area in the North-East of the alpine Adriatic region. The river Natisone rises in the Julian Alps in the borderland and gives its name to the valleys to its right, which comprise of seven municipalities. The further you go into the valleys, the narrower become the country roads that wind through the sparsely populated hilly landscape. Many villages in these valleys range amongst the abandoned alpine homesteads mentioned above (Pilgram et al. 2010). In these remote valleys, everyday practices are traversing the borderlands in ways that question, challenge and subvert a predefined territorial, linguistic and cultural unity of the Italian nation. People living in the villages were confronted with global conflicts like the twentieth century World Wars and nation-state ideologies. The Italian nation-building process turned a Slovene-speaking population who had lived in the valleys for centuries into an ethnic minority. In the nineteenth century, measures were taken to prevent the inhabitants from speaking the standard Slovene dialect. During the fascist dictatorship, these policies came to a head. Speaking Slovene was forbidden altogether, affecting politics and individual positioning ever since.

Donatella Cozzi studied the impact of border politics on and experiences of the Slovene-speaking minority in these border villages, a group that "appear[s] to have been 'written off' by Italian state history" (Cozzi 2009, 152). She analyses how people internalize the border by delineating its "inner dimension" (2009, 159) and emphasizes how inhabitants challenge the state's clear categorizations.

Besides the ethnic aspect, the Cold War's political handling influenced local living conditions, identities, and practices. The strategic policies of the era led to the depopulation of entire stretches of land. Political authorities literally emptied some of the villages to establish a military protection zone. Since no businesses were allowed to operate in the military zones, hardly any jobs were available. Consequently, more and more people emigrated. They were one of those "groups who are doing much physical moving, but who are not 'in charge' of the process" (Massey 1991). Consequently, the Cold War left behind a silenced memory of depopulation, displacement, and loss of home.

At the beginning of the 1950s, about 18,000 people lived in the villages. Today, their number has decreased to about 6,000. In this period, many emigrated to work in Switzerland, Germany, Canada, Argentina, Australia, and the US (Banchig 2013, 344f.). Soon after the war, more than 100,000 Italians found employment as miners in Belgium. As their number was high and the hard work claimed many victims, this is commemorated in one of the few existing monuments expressing people's experience, located in front of the town hall of the municipality of San Pietro al Natisone. In many families, the experience of emigration is still present, having been passed on through the generations. The story goes that families received sacks of coal for every man who went to work in the mines.

The following parts introduce three modes of un-silencing. After showing how one woman performs her emigration through narrative and material performances, we introduce two cultural initiatives, dealing with the area's heritage in different ways:

the festival Stazione Topolò/Postaja Topolove and UNIKUM with its artistically enhanced hiking tours. Their artistic work aims at the transgression of mental, symbolic, and topographic demarcations. By physically experiencing and exploring the alpine Adriatic region, both initiatives develop and support an intimate relationship to the landscape and the stories inscribed in it.

Everyday Performances—Glimpses of a Life Story

By relaying her migration experience, Marica, a woman of around 70, demonstrates how a personal life story is narrated, embodied, performed, and thereby made political. Janine met Marica during an organized walk in the Valli del Natisone; Marica led the group around some villages. She spoke Italian to the (primarily Italian) participants but switched to Slovene when she talked to other locals coming our way. Marica is one of those who have returned. She went to Switzerland as a young girl and worked there in the hospitality sector. In an interview in 2017, she remembers her emigration:

> I left in October 1957. And I loved going to Switzerland. Because in my village, they wanted me to marry someone. [...] For the young men who emigrated, there were celebrations in the village and people were singing good-bye. But they wouldn't do that for us girls.

Hers is a gendered perspective on migration and the roles and expectations attributed to young women, which eventually became a reason for her emigration.

Many valley-dwellers were forced to emigrate because of the dire economic situation. Along with the spatial displacement came a linguistic one, as many lost their language. As part of a Slovene minority, the emigrants had been stigmatized as outsiders by their dialect even before they left their villages of origin. Often, the social marginality continued in the host countries, now for being Italian. For Marica, the stigma she had experienced at home continued in Switzerland. She did not speak Italian or Slovenian in public in order to avoid discrimination, as she says, and quickly learned German. Later she moved on to work in Munich, where she met her husband, who originally came from East Germany and shares a similarly mobile background. They stayed in southern Germany for the next 35 years. Eventually, it was her husband who gave the impetus to return to Italy when he retired. Today, they run a small guesthouse for tourists who appreciate the Valli del Natisone, where there is hardly any tourist infrastructure. After the walk, she invited us for a drink and hosted us in her garden, where she introduced us to her two Bavarian lions, garden sculptures not only watching her doorstep but also symbolizing her migration experience and her multiple belongings. Besides narrating parts of her life story, she expressed her multiple identities in several small everyday performances. She demonstrated virtuosity in flexibly applying language for identification and positioning and proved that it is an important instrument, applicable in conscious and situational ways.

Although some emigrants return permanently, some homes in the valleys remain empty for most of the year. However, many of those who stayed abroad and their

descendants maintain relatively close connections to their villages of origin, families, friends, and their bond to the region itself. Even for those who took permanent residency in other countries and continents, the region remains a central emotional point of reference. Many visit their villages of origin during the summer months when various returnee meetings and village festivals occur. The international license plates of the cars that catch your eye during that period bear witness to this.

Policies against minority groups have been and remain a phenomenon in the border area. In Italy and in Austria, national discourses are superimposed on the Slovene-speaking border-landscape and its dwellers. Decades of discrimination and persecution during the years of Nazi-Fascism are shaping personal recollections and a social memory within the Carinthian-Slovene community of memory (Wutti 2013). Artistic expressions and practices can help translate individual experiences with silenced memory into a publicly perceived narrative. This clearly shows in the book "Na pamet. Aus dem Gedächtnis einer Slowenisch-Deutsch schweigenden Familie," where artist Petra Kohlenprath (2015) enounces silences in her family's memory as they are passed on in German and Slovene language. Kohlenprath describes several dimensions of silence and its manifestations. While the title hints at bilingual language knowledge and cross-border family history, it also expresses the anxiety and the restraint that comes from not speaking at all. In very sharp and personal vignettes, she evokes how the conflict over languages is transmitted to younger generations, who in severe and sometimes playful ways continue to feel a marginalization that started generations ago.

When talking or writing about life experiences, everyday actors rarely draw an idyllic picture of the alpine landscape. Their accounts show that past conflicts are reproduced in the everyday, but also that the area continues to hold multi-lingual and pluricultural heritages. Material arrangements and narrated experiences give evidence of their agency and the manifold social and cultural mobilities that are an essential but silenced part of this area's living heritage. Contemporary realities are lived through overlapping and contradictory collective memories, amounting to a contentious heritage. Some may be silent and hardly represented; others are hostile and divisive and perpetuated in bitter antagonisms, for instance, over the rights of the Slovenian-speaking minority. Other memories form a repertoire of border-crossings and convivial relations in a variety of dimensions.

Stazione Topolo/Postaja Topolove—Re-Establishing an Imaginary Center

The international cultural and art festival Stazione Topolò/Postaja Topolove bears the name of a small village situated in the Valli del Natisone, around two kilometers from the Slovenian border. It has been held since 1994 each summer in July and is curated mainly by Donatella and Moreno. The village's border location and marginality is inscribed in its name, Topolò, which does not sound particularly Italian. Its entry on Wikipedia illustrates the place's in-between-ness by listing two names and spellings in addition to Topolò: while the Slovenian name is Topolovo, it is Topoluove in the

local Slovenian dialect. On street signs, the variation Topolove is printed next to the Italian spelling.

In the artistic positions presented at the festival, the village's peripheral location, landscape, and history of depopulation are taking center stage (Schemmer 2018). The festival's program was strongly oriented towards re-appropriating the rural environment and new approaches to its eventful past from the outset. The curators invite artists as well as visitors to interact and build a relationship with the empty houses, stables, streets, squares, surrounding fields, and the people. One of the central places for playing and exhibiting during the festival is the old school building. The principal approach is to establish a new kind of presence and locality.

Donatella grew up in the area and is bilingual. She left the Valli del Natisone as a young woman to study architecture in Venice. In our interview in 2018, she emphasized that she could not imagine returning to the valleys back then. Nevertheless, connections to the area always remained, as she was already running a cultural association there as a young woman. She explained that many coincidences influenced her decision to resettle in the area. One of the reasons was Stazione Topolò, although it was not easy to establish in the area. She explains that when they first held the festival, the fall of the Berlin Wall had only just happened a few years before. Although the mood of the Cold War shaped the mentality of the inhabitants, the people in Topolò supported the project:

> The community in Topolò was very tolerant and organic. At that time, it would not have been possible realizing a project like this with people from outside... There was still a climate of cold war, so frightening, full of distrust, of bad thoughts. Everyone had become accustomed over time to living with the need to control the territory. Because they had to protect it from a possible invasion of communists, all this paranoia that everyone who stayed here had was somehow in the pay of this organization called Gladio, which had...a pretty bad history over which the families were also pretty much divided into pieces. My father didn't talk to his brother, this one to the other etc. All a bit of an enemy and all controlling each other. There was a lot of social control. Everyone was an informer.

The Gladio operation divided the people living in the area and adds to a contentious heritage until today, having left silenced memories of distrust and cleavage among the local population. Despite the hostile atmosphere and the difficulties it brought along, Donatella and her partner at the time, who originally came from Topolò himself, decided to locate and initiate the festival in this "post-cold war place" (Kozorog 2014, 43). In the first years, the couple also lived there. The inhabitants were particularly open to the project through connections on different levels. Hence, the artistic festival's establishment and location were driven by personal motivations but took place within a specific political and public setting. Despite divided and contentious memories and values, the inhabitants still share the same environment and living heritage: the grass must still be cut and gardens planted.

The importance as well as the difficulty and complexity of establishing or renewing relations between curators and residents, but also amongst the inhabitants, points to the relational approach that runs through the project:

> It's the relations that build places. It's the affections that make places. If a relation is non-affective, let's say a normal working relation, then what remains? Maybe a financial satisfaction. But if instead all relations turn into relations of love, then there will be different levels, right? And in that moment, that thing, that specific place takes on a different meaning. It becomes part of your life. And in the end, this is Topolò. It's really about this sharing in a very transparent way, very lightweight, and at the same time intense. It doesn't ask you to explain who you are, it just asks you to be there, be present, to spend time together. To share something. And this thing has built incredible relationships. So there are always parts of Topolò that are alive all around the world.

Donatella takes up the fear and the distrust that existed, but through the relational approach applied by artists from all over Italy and the world, the festival's activities are not restricted to local narratives. Instead, the conflicts function as a backdrop and stand paradigmatic for the significance of confronting silenced and contentious memories. This open, affective approach is mirrored in the organization of the festival. Everything is kept rather vague. Spectacles, walks, and events start "around noon" or "at sunset," not at a precise hour, which may be confusing for visitors from outside (STAZIONE TOPOLO/POSTAJA TOPOLOVE 2020). Conceptual vagueness and blurring of fixed rhythms and demarcations emphasize once again the importance of an open atmosphere, allowing for spaces of encounter. This approach includes the notion that there is nothing unambiguous in anything.

Movement and mobility are inscribed in the name of the festival: the Stazione refers to a train station, a place where routes and paths cross, a place of arrival and departure, a place of transit, which is missing in the valleys. The name thus refers to the difficult peripheral location of the village that so many people left. According to Donatella, the name explicitly stands for something that cannot be found in a materialized form:

> Topolò was a place you couldn't even find on a map. So our credo was: let's make it a place of encounter. […] One of the first artists of the festival, with origins in this area, created a timetable with arrival and departure times of the trains in the first year. And so there was this timetable, which was finally passed around in the bars of some of the surrounding villages. [...] A folding plan with false sponsors on it.

With the circulation of this fake timetable, the festival playfully approached the village's marginalized position. The artworks reflect upon mobility and consequences of migration movements from different perspectives. If you browse through the catalogs of the last decades, you will see that the themes that emerge repeatedly are identities and negotiations about home and belonging. Donatella says it is the perspective

that matters in the artistic involvements and discussions that take place: the focus is not on the border, which was once heavily armed and impenetrable, but on the idea of being in a center and developing new perspectives for the future.

The curators, artists, and visitors of Topolò are distorting the common understanding of center and periphery, and constantly reflect on and challenge the idea that the urban and rural are contradictory. In artistic works and organizational developments, curators and artists transfer attributions conventionally related to the city into this peripheral mountain area. Therefore, just as in other important centers, there are two embassies in the village, representing relations to the Netherlands and New Zealand. By creating urban references, curators and artists position the festival in an imaginary center and generate a continuous relation between people and spaces. In fact, the village steps out of its marginal position and instead centers the periphery and the narratives inscribed into this marginalized landscape.

Topolò is more than an art exhibition. Artists do not deal with landscape as a memorial but counteract hegemonic discourses through their appropriative actions, transcend the boundaries of established narratives, and find a new language and new perspectives (Kozorog 2014, 53). Even more important, the festival itself provides occasion and setting for a gathering of people. Approaching contentious heritage relationally is a delicate way of un-silencing by touching conflicts without perpetuating them.

The initiators want artists and visitors to experience the village and its area with all their senses. One understands the natural environment through the eyes, nose, ears, and legs. Walks through meadows, forests, and streams, and installations along these paths are an elementary part of the event. By entering the village, moving the body through its tiny roads, spending an afternoon or an evening there, communicating with the others, being present, the festival stimulates reflection, dialogue, and tight contact with the people and the landscape. Relational and spatial practices are designed to find new readings of this landscape. In this sense, the festival can be an example of un-silencing memories, as it focuses on the consequences of depopulation and contested memories from different perspectives and encourages a re-negotiating of the border area.

UNIKUM—Walking the Landscape

Passing hikers may notice the abandoned military compounds, the plaque in Val Rosandra, the Bavarian lions at Marica's doorstep, or the closed shutters in villages like Topolò. Experiencing the landscape itself can make them palpable as signs of un-silencing in ways beyond a vague sense of nostalgia or a photographic motive. In the process of walking on partly overgrown agricultural tracks, old trade routes, or cracked tarmac roads, the landscape unfolds as a "pincushion of a million stories" (Massey 2013, 3). The University Cultural Center Klagenfurt/Kulturni center univerze v Celovcu or UNIKUM, founded in 1986 and affiliated with the Carinthian university, incorporates the physical and mental activity of walking the landscape in many of their activities. UNIKUM's directors Gerhard Pilgram, Emil Krištof, and Niki Meixner

describe the Center as a "place for applied cultural work that combines artistic practice and creative research" (UNIKUM 2020, author's translation). As visual, media-, performance, and sound artists as well as curators, they address silenced memories with art-trails, performances, concerts, and exhibitions. UNIKUM positions itself as part of a bilingual Carinthia, for instance by relaying all information in Slovenian and German, and, at times of heightened tension and when the political situation requires it, by light-handed commentary that is at once humorous and biting behind a surface of creative gentleness. UNIKUM's aesthetic activities are taking into account the ambivalent heritage politics of the place, affirm a claim to be part of it and yield to the desire of escaping the bitterness of ever-perpetuated conflict. Roaming the alpine landscape while "reading" the silenced memories contained in it allows for a departure from the entrenched situation in Carinthia while providing ways to connect the place, and maybe oneself, to the wider borderlands. In the process of walking, one literally moves away from ideological trenches. Maybe the most popular of their formats is the artistically enhanced hiking tour—a form of gentle tourism and, as we will show, a mode of un-silencing.

Early in our exploration, we participated in a philosophical hike in the Carnian Alps in Friuli titled "Landscape as a Text." It was part of a cycle of different ways of approaching the landscape, the other two being "Landscape in Motion" and "Landscape in your Ear." We vividly remember the physical experience of the day: the early start in Klagenfurt, together with two coach-loads of co-walkers, the steep ascent up a still-barren pre-spring mountain, the relief as we arrived at the first resting-point and the water bottles came out, settling down on the dry grass to enjoy the first philosophical intermezzo. Moving on in loose formation, silent or casually chatting to familiar and unfamiliar people, a dry-stone walled track took us past a village with all doors and windows shut. A sense of contemplation was punctuated by the strain of walking, resting, listening to readings on walking, thinking and landscape then moving on again. In the absence of any spectacular destination, the landscape itself became the destination. The day concluded with an excellent meal, and the coach journey back to Carinthia. Refreshing our memory of the philosophical readings by Wilhelm Berger and Gerhard Vitzthum on UNIKUM's YouTube channel, we found an accurate reflection of our physical experience. The walk was enriched by gems from the cultural history of walking going back to the ancient Greeks and spiced with rebuttals of the eighteenth/nineteenth-century romantic approach to walking. For UNIKUM, the landscape is not merely a reflection of the self. Neither do they adopt the competitiveness of touristic summiteers or ambitious explorers. The politics of walking, as practiced by UNIKUM, is about setting things in motion and being part of this movement, suspended in and exposed to otherness (Berger 2004, 20), distant but not detached from nationalist or other exclusionary fixations. In this vein, UNIKUM situate their work in a "communicative space in-between (author's translation)" (UNIKUM 2020): between various art-forms, between entrenched political positions, between inside and outside, settled and on the move. This liminal space resonates with Homi Bhabha's analysis of the postcolonial condition as a third space, "which enables other

positions to emerge." It "displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives" (Bhabha 1990, 211). The third space is a space of hybridity, "a place that simultaneously is and is not one's home" (Amherst College 2008). Considering their political agenda of openness, it is not surprising that UNIKUM became a focal point for resistance against right-wing politics in Carinthia in 2000 when the conservative people's party ÖVP formed a government with the far-right Freedom Party.

Besides countless site-specific and often temporary artworks, UNIKUM's artistic research process has led to a range of publications, where the knowledge is gathered systematically, making the region accessible for lovers of remote areas. Seven popular guide-books for hikers cover the cultural landscape of the northern alpine Adriatic region, with a sharp eye for social relations. They combine evocative photography with laid-back descriptions to create landscape portraits that are both poetic and pragmatic. Assessments of the architecture of towns and villages, descriptions of forgotten industries, and stories of resistances, for instance, of the partisan republic in Carnia (Koroschitz 2019) are given the same weight as random encounters en-route or recommendations for places to get a decent meal. In a chapter on the Valli del Natisone, a host is quoted as bidding farewell with the comment: "Qui il silenzio fa rumore" (Vitzthum 2010, 255). In a landscape "where the silence makes noise," walkers are well-advised to take note of the blank spots on the map because "what the map cuts up, the story cuts across" (de Certeau 1988, 129).

The "Atlas of special places," edited by the Stazione Topolò community and the Slovene cultural association Opoka, invites the reader to discover no fewer than 72 villages in the Austrian-Italian-Slovene borderlands. In the introduction, the authors explain how walking a marginalized landscape, far from the established traffic routes, opens up a new and critical horizon. The villages, places, and walks presented, they write, "stand for the forgotten landscapes on our doorstep, for those areas which have been completely marginalized as a result of emigration or structural change and which represent a kind of parallel world to the economic and tourist agglomerations" (UNI-KUM 2011, author's translation). In this way, walking the landscape as open space becomes an act of remembrance. With books, tours, and artworks, UNIKUM produces and provides knowledge that allows the walker to read the landscape, hear the silence and find the stories, highlighting the beauty and the sadness of the passage of time.

Transcending Boundaries—The Power of Alternative Narratives

Exploring practices of un-silencing with a focus on mobility, we found that inhabitants and artistic groups live and operate within a distinctively local dimension while embracing transversal and transnational cross-border perspectives in their narrations and actions. The actors discussed above take a dwelling perspective without reproducing the narrative of a permanent fixed home. At the same time they relate to different forms of mobility. Their attitude enables them to engage with the dynamic relation between mobility and staying put. The actors create connections and reanimate spaces, share an ability to change places, and match this with mental agility. Through

their relational approaches, they mobilize knowledge on constellations that were there before, and for different reasons, were destroyed or oppressed. They disengage from the national discourses covering the area while crisscrossing and marking the borderland in their very own ways. As local dwellers and passing wanderers perform mobility in everyday and artistic acts, long-silenced memories become tangible, presenting a challenge to the idea of rigid settledness while producing a global sense of place. The performative practices of installing biographical markers, temporary settling in a depopulated village, and walking the landscape stand for three modes of un-silencing, each comprising performative practices that claim the alpine Adriatic border region as a transcultural entity by creating it as a tangible, lived reality. Acts of narrating and performing mobility are ways of un-silencing memories from different perspectives. They operate with different means, focusing on multi-layered identities and pluri-locality, home-making and dwelling, place, and settledness.

Marica returned to the village of her origin after many years abroad. She shares the story of the multiple de- and relocations she experienced in the course of her migration from a biographical perspective. Marica frames her mobility with the socio-economic conditions and gender aspects of migration. By displaying objects in her garden that clearly originate elsewhere, she turns prosaic garden sculptures into biographical markers that traverse the established narration of uni-local home-making.

While the village Topolò has suffered from population decline, the festival Stazione Topolò/Postaja Topolove re- and prefigures the village, carrying several kinds of mobility in its name. Mobility is performed as a phenomenon extending across different generations and containing the arrival and contemporary dwelling of artists and other guests. Stazione Topolò/Postaja Topolove re-establishes movement in everyday village life and re-invents a specific sense of community on top of a broken village structure. Adding and integrating voices and perspectives from outside former structures leads to new forms of temporary home-making/settling.

Without a venue of its own, UNIKUM regularly invites the public to depart and traverse the alpine landscape on foot. Mobility opens up new perspectives; it allows reading the landscape with an open mind, moving on, and finally going, with an open mind, back home to Carinthia. UNIKUM thwarts the hegemonic discourse by gently refusing and traversing what it means to be settled.

An important feature of social memory is dealing with memories in everyday life, integrating them, working them through, repeatedly confronting oneself with them, and reconfiguring them. It may be the easygoing, delicate and non-provocative, witty, and sociable way of everyday and artistic practices that produces their counter-hegemonic quality and annoys not only politicians on the extreme right. Artistic initiatives such as UNIKUM and Stazione Topolò/Postaja Topolove, full of perseverance, distort established narratives and create new discursive formations on what it means to live in this area with its multi-layered contentious heritages. Their ways of handling and reading the landscape give back agency to those who dwell in it. The artists' careful, gentle, and curious approaches to the landscape, its heritage, and inhabitants stand in sharp contrast to the strong emotions intended by memorials recalling death, un-

certainties and grief, unresolved conflicts and revenge, intentionally entrenched in divisive politics.

One example of UNIKUMs challenging interventions was installing a water depth board by Gerhard Pilgram at Klagenfurt's Lendkanal for the project "Stadt unter" in 2017. He graphically modified the markers to indicate a swastika as a commentary on an increase in xenophobic and anti-democratic tendencies in Austria. Turned upside down, the device could also indicate the decline of right-wing populism. After its first installation at the oldest bridge in Klagenfurt/Celovec, it temporarily moved to the university's outdoor area.

Positioning and assessment of right-wing tendencies are themselves part of the complex configurations of Carinthian memory. The region is the birth-place of Jörg Haider, a popular politician of the extreme-right Austrian Freedom Party. In 1999, when he was Carinthia's cultural secretary, he cut all grants for UNIKUM in response to their longstanding critical commentary. The group responded by setting up a shop specializing in "Terror of Virtue" in the center of Klagenfurt/Celovec. A wave of solidarity swept across the Alpine region, with numerous Austrian and international artists participating in the opening. Stazione Topoló/Postaja Topolove, having experienced threats by a right-wing government, supported the action and even offered asylum to UNIKUM. Lived reality had caught up with transversal cross-border practices of un-silencing.

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The Dissonant Heritage of the Blessed Alojzije Stepinac: The Case of the Silencing of a Religious Tourist Route

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Abstract

A religious tourist route, the Stepinac Path (Croatia), is a project designed to connect four mnemonic sites related to selected parts of the Blessed Alojzije Stepinac's biography. The project follows the European model of the Camino de Santiago. The Stepinac Path includes the reconstruction of several old pilgrimage paths leading to the national pilgrimage shrine of Our Lady in Marija Bistrica. It was also conceived to be incorporated into a wider network of Croatian and international Marian pilgrimage paths. The project was created and is managed by various tourism institutions, with the aim of heritagizing the figure of Alojzije Stepinac by highlighting several aspects of his life. However, the phrase "the heritage of the Blessed Alojzije Stepinac" is mostly promoted by the Catholic Church in Croatia, emphasizing the religious aspect of his legacy. The complex power relations between religious and heritage politics have pushed the Stepinac Path project's implementation into a silent phase. Without the proper support of the Catholic Church in Croatia, the project has little public recognition and momentum has slowed. This paper examines the Stepinac Path's silencing in terms of dissonant heritage policies and heritagization processes in political, religious, and economic discourses and power relations.

Keywords: dissonant heritage; heritagization; the Blessed Alojzije Stepinac; the Stepinac Path

Introduction

A religious tourist route, *the Stepinac Path*, is a project in northwest Croatia designed to revive old pilgrimage routes and to connect places that preserve the Blessed Alojzije Stepinac's memory. The project was created and is managed by tourism institutions, seeking to heritagize the life and work of the Blessed Alojzije Stepinac by highlighting several different aspects of his life. However, as the project concerns a beatified member of the Catholic Church in Croatia, it is burdened with complex power relations interweaving between religious and tourism heritagization politics. This has pushed it into a silent phase—the project is hardly recognized by the public and progress has slowed.

The framework for my observations is a notion of heritage as a "social construction [and] the manner in which contemporary interests shape and mobilize views of the past" (Madrell et al. 2015, 12). The production of heritage (heritagization) includes and excludes; it is selection, interpretation, and representation of content from the past following the needs and demands of the present, and with the intention of consigning

such things to the future; it "is as much about forgetting as remembering the past" and more about meanings than material forms; it is contested political, socio-cultural and economic process (Ashworth and Graham 2015, 4–7). Heritagization, as the management of the past, reflects the demonstration of the power of one group and, simultaneously, the silencing and exclusion of others. In connection with this, Tunbridge and Ashworth use the term "dissonant heritage" (1996, 21). As a consequence of these guidelines and bearing in mind the silencing of the Stepinac Path, it is my intention to analyze why the religious tourist route has been silenced and what this silencing tells us about wider processes and power relations in heritage production and society.

The Stepinac Path project follows in the footsteps of the European model of the Camino de Santiago, a route that has been promoted in Europe since 1987 as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe, and subsequently designated a UNESCO Cultural Itinerary in 1998. With this, as with many other projects in Europe that tend to varying degrees to replicate the Camino de Santiago in their home countries, the Stepinac Path reflects the contemporary phenomenon of "Caminoization"—the transplantation and translation of various aspects and assumptions of the contemporary Camino to other pilgrimage sites, routes and contexts (Bowman and Sepp 2019, 75). However, apart from being a model, the Camino de Santiago conceals problems connected with the creation and production of heritage, i.e., with heritage politics. Cristina Sánchez-Carretero (2005) drew attention to this in her writing on the Camino de Finisterre. This route connects Santiago de Compostela with Finisterre and Muxia on the Galician North-West Atlantic coast. She wrote that, in 1993, when the Camino de Santiago was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List, the Government of Galicia initiated the Camino de Finisterre's inclusion in the list as one of the Caminos de Santiago. Despite being placed on that list, that part of the Camino was not officially recognized by the Catholic Church and the pilgrims on that route do not receive the Compostela—the recognition granted by the Church to the pilgrims who have walked at least 100 km. In fact, the route is shorter than 100 km and does not end in Santiago de Compostela. Consequently, writes Sánchez-Carretero, and also because Finisterra is associated with the cult of the sun, this route is often named "the Camino of the Atheists." The Catholic Church does not obstruct the Camino officially but rather ignores it (Sánchez-Carretero 2005, 5).

In the context of heritagization, the Camino de Finisterre, as an example of heritage production issues, finds an analogy in the silenced Stepinac Path. To understand the essence of this analogy, it is first necessary to briefly present critical segments of the Blessed Alojzije Stepinac's complex biography, according to which the project and route received its name.

The Blessed Alojzije Stepinac

Alojzije Stepinac was born in 1898 in Brezarić, a village in the parish of Krašić, about 50 km southwest of Zagreb, the capital of Croatia. He was baptized in the Church of the Holy Trinity in Krašić. In 1906, his family moved to Krašić. At that time, Croatia was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. After completing his end-of-school exams

in 1916, Stepinac was drafted into the Austro-Hungarian Army and in 1919, he participated in combat on the Italian battlefield, where he was injured and captured. After the Austro-Hungarian capitulation, as a volunteer in the Yugoslav legion, he was sent to the Solun battlefield, at a time when combat on that battlefront had already ceased. He was demobilized in 1919 through an act by his lieutenant-colonel, and in 1920 he was promoted to the rank of reserve lieutenant. From 1924 to 1931, he studied at the Pontifical Gregoriana University in Rome, in 1930, he was ordained as a priest, and in 1931 he received a PhD in theology and philosophy. Three years later, in May 1934, Pope Pius XI appointed him as the Archbishop Coadjutor with the right to succeed the Archbishop of Zagreb, Antun Bauer. In June 1934, Stepinac was appointed bishop in Zagreb, with only three years experience as a priest and the youngest bishop in the Catholic Church (Butler and Burns 2000, 263). He was almost entirely unknown among the wider Croatian public, but two weeks after his consecration, he led a 15,000-strong pilgrimage to the old Marian shrine in Marija Bistrica near Zagreb (ibid.; Ćorić 1998), followed by annual pilgrimages to this site. After the death of Archbishop Bauer, in 1937 he became the Archbishop of Zagreb and remained in this position until his death. This period included fascist Ustasha rule (a Croatian fascist, nationalist and terrorist organization) over the puppet state named the Independent State of Croatia under Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy's auspices during World War II. After the war, in 1946, the Yugoslav communist government convicted Stepinac of treason and of collaboration with the Ustasha regime in a show trial. He was sentenced to sixteen years in the Lepoglava prison with forced labor and a five-year deprivation of political and civic rights (Stanić 1946, 453). A few years later, Milovan Đilas, one of the leading Yugoslav communist politicians and dissidents, clearly emphasized in an interview with the sculptor Ivan Meštrović how Stepinac, in the name of the political goals of that time, was innocent yet had been convicted because of his powerful attachment to the Holy See (Benigar 1974, 638–39). In fact, Stepinac had steadfastly opposed Josip Broz Tito's[1] idea of the separation of the Catholic Church in Croatia from the Vatican (ibid., 639). After five years spent in Lepoglava prison in 1951, Stepinac was placed under house arrest with his movements confined to his home parish of Krašić. In 1952 he was appointed cardinal by Pope Pius XII. On February 10, 1960, still under confinement in Krašić, Stepinac died. Three days later, he was ceremonially buried in a completely crowded Zagreb Cathedral. Many years later, in 1985, the Chief Trial Prosecutor, Jakov Blažević, admitted that Stepinac's sentencing had been framed (op. cit. Stanojević 1985, 66–67). In 1992, the Croatian Parliament passed a declaration denouncing the political process and judgment passed on Cardinal Stepinac. In 1998, Pope John Paul II declared Stepinac a martyr and beatified him before 500,000 Croatians in the Croatian National Shrine of Our Lady in Marija Bistrica near Zagreb. He was declared a martyr based on the torment he had suffered in prison. Stepinac became a crucial figure in Croatian national mythology, and as Pope John Paul II declared, "a sort of compass" with "its cardinal points: faith in God, respect for man, love toward all even to the offer of forgiveness, and unity with the Church guided by the Successor of Peter" (John Paul II 1998). The process of his canonization is ongoing.

The Blessed Stepinac's feast day in the Catholic Church in Croatia is celebrated on February 10. Each year, a grand celebration is held in the Zagreb Cathedral, with more than 5,000 people and representatives of the Church, state, and city authorities, attending Mass. On the same day, a grand celebration in Krašić is held, visited by more than 3,000 believers from all over Croatia.

In the process of preserving memories of the Blessed Alojzije Stepinac, around twenty monuments and busts have been erected in Croatia and one in Melbourne, Australia; in Croatia, eight parishes bear his name, as well as streets in thirty-two cities, four squares, one promenade, one coastal promenade, and two primary schools; outside Croatia, one street and one school in Chicago bear Stepinac's name, one school in New York and Toronto, one nursing home and one home for the elderly in Australia, and a children's center in Haiti. Two films have been made about Alojzije Stepinac. The high representatives of the Catholic Church in Croatia call the Cathedral in Zagreb the Stepinac Cathedral. However, it is dedicated to the Assumption of Mary and the Kings Saint Stephen and Saint Ladislaus. The Museum of the Blessed Alojzije Stepinac is located next to the Zagreb Cathedral, and his memorial house is in Krašić. There is also a religious tourist route project in his honor, the Stepinac Path.

The Stepinac Path Project

The Stepinac Path project began with the document *Idejni program "Stepinčev put"* [The Conceptual Program "The Stepinac Path"] in 2006, as suggested by the Tourist Board of Marija Bistrica, which is also the project bearer. Two years later, the conceptual proposal for the Tourist Board of Marija Bistrica was further detailed by Eduard Kušen, an architect and urban planner at the Institute of Tourism at that time, and the project creator, in the *Osnove programa Stepinčev put [Foundations of the Program The Stepinac Path]* (2008; 2013, 168–70). In 2010, the Tourist Board Marija Bistrica put together the official document *Stepinčev put [The Stepinac Path]* (2010), which contained a short description, the primary goals and justification for the project, a report on completed and planned activities as part of the project and a financial plan.

The Stepinac Path project consists of two components: "Stepinac's Pilgrimage Path" and "Stepinac's Croatian Foursquare."[2] Both components link up to four "religious-tourist destinations," but the first is mostly made up of old and a smaller number of newly formed pedestrian pilgrimage routes, while the second is made up of existing roads intended for vehicles (Kušen 2008, 6; 2013, 168). The project goals are: (1) renewing the old pilgrimage routes toward the shrine in Marija Bistrica and to a lesser extent forming new ones in the area around Krašić, (2) "devoting Cardinal Stepinac the special recognition of the Bistrica pilgrims" and (3) "linking up with other shrines in and outside of Croatia"; conceptually, these goals "mostly tend toward worshiping the Mother of God of Bistrica and her traditional pilgrimage routes and the life and works of the Blessed Alojzije Stepinac" (2008, 6; 2013, 168, 170). According to the words of the project's author, the path "connects the places and towns related to the life and work of the Blessed Alojzije Stepinac." The project is managed by local tourism institutions and supported by the Ministry of Tourism, the Croatian Tourism Authority, and three county-level tourist boards.

The Stepinac Path incorporates the following four mnemonic sites related to "the work and life" of Stepinac "which were of special importance for the Blessed Cardinal" (Kušen 2008, 11):

1. Krašić, where the Blessed Alojzije Stepinac spent his childhood and the last nine years of his life under house arrest (after he had left Lepoglava prison and up until his death). In the former parish court in which he spent the final years of his life, a memorial house has been set up on the first floor, which is always open for visitors. The memorial house presents Stepinac's living space: his study and bedroom with an inventory, books, writings and objects that he used, holy pictures, photos from his life, and the death mask that Mila Wod (Ludmila Wodsedalek) made on February 12, 1960 just before the transportation of Stepinac's dead body to the Zagreb Cathedral (Benigar 1974, 851–853). The space underscores Stepinac's deep devotion to his faith and his martyrdom.

Apart from the memorial house, there is the Holy Trinity Parish church where Alojzije Stepinac was baptized. In 2004, a new altar was blessed and installed in his honor. In the church, and especially around his altar, numerous objects and votive tablets with messages of gratitude can be found, addressed to the Blessed Alojzije Stepinac. Today, the church is a pilgrimage site, especially around Stepinac's Feast Day.

Besides the church and the memorial house, the location is marked where Stepinac's blood was spilled during attempts to heal him through bloodletting. A low fence marks out the location, flowers have been planted, and it has been marked with a tile with the inscription: "This place retains the memory of more than 36 liters of the spilled blood of the martyr, the Blessed Alojzije Stepinac." In front of the Holy Trinity church, there is a 2.65-meter-high statue of Stepinac, by the academic sculptor Josip Poljan, raised in 1998 on the occasion of the one-hundred-year anniversary of Stepinac's birth. Behind the church and the memorial home, a park sticks out with the Way of the Cross, named "The Space of the Way of the Cross of the Martyr Alojzije Stepinac." According to the words of the local priest, this was set up in memory of Stepinac's walks.

2. Zagreb Cathedral was where the Blessed Alojzije Stepinac worked as a priest, was ordained as a bishop, served as archbishop, and is buried. His tomb is behind the main altar of the cathedral. His tomb is lined with silver panels on which events from Stepinac's life and the Marian dimension to his spirituality are portrayed, alongside a golden death mask of Alojzije Stepinac. On the tomb's pedestal there is a headstone with the most important dates and events from the life of the Blessed Alojzije Stepinac. His body has been on display for public worship since 1998 and became the pilgrimage site and a destination for worshippers.

On the archbishop's court's ground floor, behind the cathedral, the Museum of the Blessed Alojzije Stepinac can be found. The museum was opened in 1995. It contains documents and records from the Cardinal's life, from his baptism to his will, clothes and other objects connected with his life and works, and his documentary photographs.

3. Marija Bistrica is the Croatian national shrine of Our Lady, noted as a favorite

pilgrimage site of the Blessed Alojzije Stepinac. Stepinac went there as a pilgrim or as the leader of the famous Zagreb vow pilgrimage, greatly aiding the worship of the Blessed Virgin Mary among Croatian believers (Benigar 1974, 150, 303). Alojzije Stepinac was a passionate promoter of the devotion to Our Lady of Marija Bistrica and encouraged the restoration of the shrine: "I wish that it [Marija Bistrica] will become our Croatian Lourdes, Loretto, etc." (op. cit. ibid, 304–305). Finally, Marija Bistrica is the place where Alojzije Stepinac was beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1998. The shrine representatives refer to Stepinac as one of the shrine's dearest pilgrims, alongside Pope John Paul II (Susović 2007).

4. Lepoglava is the place where Stepinac was imprisoned from 1946 to 1951. Today, his prison cell is a memorial room with a bed, chair, wardrobe, washbasin, alongside the additional small space with the kneeling bench on which Stepinac prayed. As part of the prison, above the cell, there is a refurbished chapel dedicated to the Blessed Cardinal Stepinac, where these days prisoners gather for prayers, Mass, and other sacraments. The chapel has been equipped with Stepinac's bust, which Pope John Paul II consecrated in 1998 in Marija Bistrica. Above the chapel altar is a painting of Stepinac, and three plaques with the date of his death, the number of days he spent in prison and his detention number. Apart from the cell and chapel, memories of Alojzije Stepinac are kept alive by the Lepoglava Parish Church of the Immaculate Conception, in which the altar on which Stepinac served Holy Mass inside his cell is located. Besides the church, in the wake of the 50th anniversary of Stepinac's death, in 2010, Alojzije Stepinac's statue was erected, a work by the sculptor Anđelko Odak. Finally, in Lepoglava, in honor of Stepinac, "The Way of the Cross with the Blessed Cardinal" has been set up, from the Parish Church, along the walls of the Lepoglava prison, up to the Chapel of St. John the Baptist on the Gorica hill above Lepoglava. The Way of the Cross is inspired by Stepinac's martyrdom, with fourteen stations set along a 1600-meter Way of the Cross. Alongside descriptions of Jesus' suffering, stations also include descriptions of the suffering of the Blessed Alojzije Stepinac, therein linking Stepinac's suffering with Jesus' way of the cross:

1. Jesus is condemned to death: "The People's Court" sentenced the Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac in a show trial on October 11, 1946 to 16 years' imprisonment.
2. Jesus takes up his cross: On October 19, 1946, Alojzije Stepinac was brought to the Lepoglava prison.
3. Jesus falls for the first time: For the first month of imprisonment, Stepinac was in total isolation from the outside world and other prisoners.
4. Jesus meets his Mother: Mother Barbara visited her son Alojzije twice in the Lepoglava prison.
5. The Cyrenian helps Jesus carry the cross: The priests Stjepan Pavunić and Nikola Borić, as prisoners, occasionally dared to spend time in the company of Alojzije.
6. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus: Mrs. Julijana Fidler saluted the imprisoned Stepinac before one of the guards. As a result of this, her assets were seized, and she ended up in prison.

7. Jesus falls for the second time: The discourteous guards often humiliated the Archbishop by mocking and insulting him, withholding visits, and by other means.

8. Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem who weep for him: The Lepoglava women would sing songs of reverence beside the prison so that the archbishop could hear them in his cell.

9. Jesus falls for the third time: On December 5, 1951, the extremely ill Archbishop was transferred to Krašić to serve his sentence.

10. Jesus is stripped of his garments: The authorities attempted to take away the people's trust in Archbishop Stepinac, through various defamatory false accusations.

11. Jesus is nailed to the cross: Illness riveted Alojzije to his bed, and he himself felt that his final hours were nearing, and he asked for his last rites.

12. Jesus dies on the cross: With a lit candle in his hand, Alojzije died on February 10 1960 in Krašić.

13. Jesus is taken down from the cross and given to his Mother: The Croatian Parliament issued a declaration in 1992 condemning the political process and unfair verdict passed against Cardinal Alojzije Stepinac, and the Zagreb County Court revoked the verdict in 2016.

14. Jesus is laid in the tomb: The Cardinal Alojzije Stepinac was buried on February 13, 1960 behind the main altar in the Zagreb Cathedral.

The Way of the Cross was conceived of and initiated by the parish priest Andrija Kišiček on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of Stepinac's arrival in Lepoglava prison and is held from Palm Sunday to Good Friday.

The designer of the Stepinac Path project, Eduard Kušen, pointed out that "the underlying idea [of the project] is to commemorate Stepinac's life and work in their entirety," to heritagize the figure of Stepinac by highlighting not only the religious aspect of his life but his life as a whole: as a Catholic believer, a martyr, a key figure of the Catholic Church in Croatia, as well as a person with a political, charitable, cultural and prison life. By contextualizing these religious and secular aspects, the project includes rural and urban landscapes and their natural and cultural resources and heritage.

As earlier stated, an essential component of the project is the reconstruction of old pilgrimage routes to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Marija Bistrica. The network of pilgrimage routes toward Marija Bistrica has developed over the past 300 years, reaching the peak of its development between the two world wars. The use of the footpaths practically dying out after World War II, partly due to the political circumstances, and partly due to a pilgrimage changes, i.e., the frequent use of vehicles instead of walking (Kušen 2008, 8; 2013, 170). With the restoration of pilgrimage routes toward Marija Bistrica, as the project outlines, Stepinac's Path would, via the Marija Bistrica shrine, on the one hand, connect up with the Croatian Marian holy sites in Trsat and Sinj (Kušen 2013, 230), and on the other hand, be incorporated into the existing network of the International Cultural Pilgrimage Trail—Mary's Pilgrimage Route: Marija Bistrica (Croatia)—Ptujska Gora and Svete Gore (Slovenia)—Mariazell (Austria)—Levoča (Slovakia)—Częstochowa (Poland) (Kušen 2008, 26). Thus, along with the heritagization of the religious and secular life of the Blessed Alojzije Stepinac,

on the symbolic level of Marian piety, the project aims to link Croatia with the shared European cultural (religious) heritage and to emphasize a Croatian affiliation with the European cultural area and values.

In one interview in 2009, Eduard Kušen announced that this project, like many other projects that include pilgrimage routes, not only garners attention in the areas of culture and tourism but also in the sphere of the regional development of rural spaces (as cited in Genc 2009). According to project documentation, the Stepinac Path is designed as a cultural and tourist product with a clearly expressed economic component. It would thus contribute to the regional development of the areas included in the project. Thus, in the aforementioned official document *Stepinčev put* (2010), the project holder, the Tourist Board Marija Bistrica, in the project justification study, gives two exclusively economic components—the economic development of the region and the economic development of the municipalities, based on the development of entrepreneurship, production, and services, in fields such as rural economic activities, accommodation, and catering facilities, etc.

The sections of the Stepinac Path have been traced and marked with tourist signs and signposts. Certain locations (churches) have been marked with interpretative panels that include a description and a map of the route, with the current location marked out. All panels and signposts, alongside the route's name, have its symbol, a white cross in a yellow square.

In a period of the blossoming development of routes based on the European model of the Camino de Santiago, and in a period of the process of seeking to declare this beatified person a saint (the act of canonization ensuring reverence beyond the local level), it is to be expected that the Stepinac Path has experienced a growth in popularity and number of visits. To paraphrase Christopher McKevitt (1991, 79) and Laurajane Smith (2006, 46), just the conscious effort and engagement of those who visit and use religious, cultural, and tourism routes and who inscribe their experiences into them make those routes "alive" and ensure the continuity of the routes' lives. However, several years previously, apart from Krašić, the Blessed Alojzije Stepinac's birthplace, the Stepinac Path is poorly recognized in the wider public domain. Apart from walks occasionally run by certain hiking groups, cultural-tourist walks are not organized along the Stepinac Path. Promotional materials, tourist maps, brochures, or guides cannot be found, and the Tourist Board of the City of Zagreb, on whose territory a large portion of the Stepinac Path's routes lie, has not included this route in its pool of local tourist attractions. When asked, numerous passers-by in the wider Zagreb area do not recognize or even recognize the path's symbol and signs. It appears that the project's development has slowed down and is now in a silent phase. And Eduard Kušen himself, who designed the Stepinac Path project, emphasizes the fact that the project is dormant, and in this context, directs attention to Church institutions:

> It is a ready-made product. It is another matter that you don't have any accompanying information about it. Not even from the Church. As far as I know, in *Glas Koncila* [*Voice of the Council*]³ the Path has never been mentioned. This means that the Church is absolutely not interested in it, in such possibilities. (Interview from December 17, 2017)

The Catholic Church's Perspective on the Heritage of Alojzije Stepinac

While tourism institutions strive to heritagize the life and work of Alojzije Stepinac through the Stepinac Path project, the term "the heritage of Alojzije Stepinac" had already been invented by the Catholic Church in Croatia, striving for public recognition of Stepinac as a martyr. In 2008, Josip Bozanić, the Cardinal and current Archbishop of Zagreb, published a book entitled *The Blessed Alojzije Stepinac—a Binding Heritage* [*Blaženi Alojzije Stepinac – baština koja obvezuje*] (2010), a collection of homilies that Cardinal Bozanić held on Stepinac's Feast Day in the Zagreb Cathedral between 1998 to 2008. In the book, he presents Alojzije Stepinac as a martyr and a role model of the faith and hopes found in God. Mons. Juraj Batelja, the Postulator for the Cause of the Canonization of Stepinac, uses the term "the spiritual heritage of Stepinac" in the sense of human dignity and freedom of thought, speech, faith, and human rights; the freedom of the Church and the fidelity to the Church, which is not a human institution but a divine one; persistent faith and the devotion to the Mother of God; forgiveness. He denoted him a patriot, an advocate for the right of Croats to their free state and the free Catholic religion, a promoter of the idea of the unity of the Catholic Church and the Croatian people. Batelja also includes in Alojzije Stepinac's heritage numerous built or renovated buildings, and institutions that are Stepinac's legacy to the Croatian people. Finally, Batelja concludes that it is a "legacy that goes beyond any one era, particularly with the power of Christian love" (as cited in Cvjetičanin 2013). Pope John Paul II, in his 1994 visit to Zagreb, described Alojzije Stepinac as "the brightest figure" of the Catholic Church in Croatia (John Paul II 1994a), who after the Second World War "paid in sufferings and trials of every kind for his courageous devotion to the Gospel" (John Paul II 1994b). The Archbishop of Zagreb at that time, the Cardinal Franjo Kuharić, in his opening speech to Pope John Paul II, emphasized how Alojzije Stepinac was a "sign and symbol" of the temptations and tribulations, and persistent devotion to God and the Church "at the price of various forms of renunciation and humiliation, even to the level of martyrdom" (Kuharić 1994).

The Church emphasizes the martyrdom of Stepinac as a counter-memory to the communist regime and its anticlericalism and atheism. For the Church, Stepinac is a symbol of the struggle against the seizure of the Croatian people's right to self-determination and their homeland, and also a symbol of the devotion of the Catholic Church in Croatia to St. Peter's successor—devotion paid with the price of martyrdom. As a victim and martyr of the communist regime, whose martyred death was caused by the suffering of prison (*ex aerumnis carceris*; "Dekret o mučeništvu" 1998, 82), Stepinac was beatified and declared a martyr of the Catholic Church. The ceremony for the declaration was held in the Croatian National Shrine of Marija Bistrica, as requested by Croatian bishops (John Paul II 1998). National-oriented Croatian politicians welcomed the concept of Alojzije Stepinac's heritage as the brightest figure of the Catholic Church in Croatia into their political agenda to articulate and promote the honor and exclusivity of Croatian people. The (recent) president of Croatia also referred to this in her writing in a book of remembrance in the Stepinac memorial house in Krašić, in January 2019: "His love of man and the testimony of truth will always remain a living part of our spiritual heritage and a guiding light of our deeds for the good of the Croatian people and their homeland."

Dissonant Heritage

The material presented in the previous sections suggests a dissonance in the conceptualizations of Alojzije Stepinac's heritage. This question is addressed by the term "dissonant heritage," which as Tunbridge and Ashworth state, is not some unforeseen result "of the heritage assembly process," but is rather "intrinsic to the nature of heritage" and inevitable "in a system where selection is unavoidable" (Tunbridge & Asworth 1996, 20–21). The phenomenon of dissonant heritage points to the coexistence of various inconsistent and discordant concepts and narratives in the construction of heritage.

The present-day silencing of the Stepinac Path, as the data demonstrates, points to fractures in the process of creating and producing the heritage of Alojzije Stepinac, i.e., to the evident gap between the perspectives of the two main actors of the process, tourism institutions and the Catholic Church in Croatia. The forms in which Alojzije Stepinac's past is manifest, and the emphases in his biography are different in these perspectives. This diversity is based on dissonant ideas and viewpoints on current economic, social, and political needs and goals (also including the creation of a pledge for the future) that are set out in the framework of two discordant heritagization policies. "Different intellectual backgrounds, working methods, goals, and ethos" (Ashworth 2011, 3) fill the concept of the heritage of Alojzije Stepinac with inconsistent, dissonant, and contested meanings (Tunbridge & Ashworth 1996).

When considering relics of the past, as Ashworth (2011, 4) states, over time, various paradigms have just been added to, so that they coexist today. When speaking of Alojzije Stepinac's heritage, tourism institutions see heritage in the "*heritage* paradigm," which is based on the idea of "us[ing] the past in the present." At the same time, the Catholic Church understands heritage in the "preservation paradigm" directed at: "preserv[ing] from the past" (ibid. 10). In this vein, the heritage of Alojzije Stepinac for the former is a "contemporary product shaped from history" (Tunbridge & Ashworth 1996, 20) with economic and social goals that intentionally encourage specific desired changes (Ashworth 2011, 3, 5); for the latter, it is "the contemporary use of the past" for conservation purposes, i.e., "the prevention of change" by which to avoid potential harm (ibid. 5, 7). From the Church's point of view, the potential harm would be the transformation of Alojzije Stepinac's heritage (as the Church conceives it) into goods on the market of ideas and interpretations. The heritage of Alojzije Stepinac, as with everything it considers exclusive religious (i.e., its own) heritage, the Church strives to represent, above all, in the realm of spiritual enrichment and wellbeing.

In speaking of the different meanings of heritage, Nick Merriman focuses on two aspects:

> On the positive side, the word is used to describe culture and landscape that are cared for by the community and passed on to the future to serve people's need for a sense of identity and belonging. (...) These positive values of care and identity are in sharp contrast to the more negative and pejorative views on the term heritage. In this sense, as used in the 'heritage industry', the word has become synonymous with the manipulation (or even invention) and exploitation of the past for commercial ends. (Merriman 1991, 8)

Although Merriman's value judgments of different understandings of the term heritage are problematic, in the context of the heritagization of Alojzije Stepinac, tourism institutions would represent the negative side. Nevertheless, the fact is that the process of Stepinac's heritagization, irrespective of whether the perspective of tourism institutions or the Church is concerned, includes "positive values of care and identity," using (rather than exploiting) the past, and managing (rather than manipulating) it, to achieve benefits that include those of a commercial nature. However, while keeping to Merriman's aspects, the question is who and which community and level of identity are contemplated, how the past is used and managed, and for whom benefits are generated. Furthermore, heritagization can be a "top-down" process or "bottom-up" decision-making; it can be based on separate projects using separate legislation or joint projects; it can be directed at encouraging national, or local and regional values and distinctiveness; it can be a source of national unity or cultural diversity; it can be based on formal and authoritative interpretations or interpretations open to different values; it can rest on an idea directed at a specific designated site, or on an idea of significance to the landscape as a whole (Clark 2000, 104–105).

The Stepinac Path project focuses on various aspects of Stepinac's biography written into the landscape of a whole region and is conceived as a link to the European cultural trail the Mary's Pilgrimage Route. According to the ideas of tourism institutions, as a regional religious tourist trail, it connects and gathers together the religious, cultural, and natural heritage of many local communities. It thus depends on the collaboration and decision-making of local and regional institutions in the area it passes through. One of the project goals is the economic development of the communities it connects, so the project's benefits are directed toward the communities themselves. On the one hand, in connecting the community's cultural and natural heritage in one space marked by various aspects of Stepinac's life, the Path separates and highlights local and regional values and distinctiveness. On the other hand, as a link to the European Marian Trail, the Stepinac Path is written into the idea of shared European identity based on the motto "unity in diversity."

Other than that, insisting on the martyrdom of Alojzije Stepinac, based on which he is beatified, and representing the heritage of Stepinac's entire biography exclusively in a religious and spiritual register, is an instrument for securing the political power of the Catholic Church in Croatia in decision-making in the heritagization process. In the Church paradigm of creating heritage, Stepinac is transposed in a historic site, the exclusive locus of which is centered in the Zagreb Cathedral. A thus-conceived concept of heritage directs the benefits of heritagization toward the Church. As "the brightest figure" of the Catholic Church in Croatia, a Croatian patriot and an advocate for Croatian religious and national rights and freedom, the Church concept promotes Stepinac as a symbol of national values and a generator of religious and national unity.

A consequence of the dissonance "of the heritage assembly process" is a profit for one and a loss for others, because the created heritage is someone's and therefore not someone else's:

> [A]ny creation of heritage from the past disinherits someone completely or partially, actively or potentially. This disinheritance may be unintentional, temporary, of trivial importance, limited in its effects and concealed; or it may be long-term, widespread, intentional, important and obvious. (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996, 21)

The discrepancy in the various approaches to creating Alojzije Stepinac's heritage is reflected in the current silencing of the Stepinac Path. Such an outcome points to the heritagizing power relations and wider social and political processes in Croatia, which heritagization mirrors.

Of What Does the Silenced Stepinac Path Speak?

Reviewing the use of heritage, Smith writes of how heritage can support and legitimize national narratives and identities, or even "the diversity of community experience and identity claims" (Smith 2006, 5). In Croatia, but also in other countries, as stated by Astor et al. (2017), where national and religious identity are powerfully interwoven, the discourse of heritage with religious symbolism supports national myths and symbols of the "iconic representation of the nation"; at the same time, more recently, such processes have intensified due to, among others, "questions regarding the cultural foundations of European identity stemming from deepening processes of European integration" (Astor et al. 2017, 128, 129).

In the previous section, it has been shown how the Catholic Church in Croatia has shaped Stepinac's legacy into the concept of the "spiritual heritage of Alojzije Stepinac," referring to the religious and spiritual aspects of his life. Addressing such a legacy of Stepinac in the form of "the brightest figure" of the Catholic Church in Croatia seeks to strengthen the Church's unity as an institution and, as a community of Croatian believers gathered in solid faith, loyalty to the Church, its credibility. In addition, the heritage of Alojzije Stepinac in creating the Church is related to the idea of nation-building; it strives to instill a sense of belonging to the nation and national unity. As imagined by the Church, Stepinac's heritage reflects opposition to the suppression of national identities in the concept of European unity and blurred European identity. From that way, it seems, the Church opposes a pluralist and democratically oriented policy that breaks strong ties with religious beliefs and restricts the role of the Church in public life. For the Church, Stepinac symbolizes a strong ecclesiastical institution and of resistance to anticlericalism and secularization.

Tourism institutions identify heritage as a part of economic development strategies, moreover, as "an economic sector in itself, using resources, producing products and generating returns in profits and jobs" (Graham et al. 2000, 155). From the perspective of tourism institutions, Stepinac's heritage strives to incorporate a version of Stepinac's figure, made up of different aspects of his life, into European processes of economic integration and identity formation. This implies the weakening of national borders and the strengthening of local and regional communities and development. Consequently, the layers of Stepinac's martyrdom and his role as a leading figure in the national mythology and Croatian Catholicism become diluted.

The Stepinac Path project designer said: "The question of Stepinac is a question of fracturing worldviews." According to the tourism sector, which relies on the Council of Europe and the UNESCO's concept of cultural heritage, heritage with an included religious component is "fashioned [...] for the benefit of all, regardless of their religious or non-religious affiliation" (Astor et al. 2017, 139). Thus, religion in such a discourse no longer mirrors an inherited tradition of the nation and can hardly be embedded in the process of national identification.

The silencing of the Stepinac Path reflects the advantage of a discourse on the monolithic legacy of Alojzije Stepinac, which addresses his martyrdom and patriotism, and which ensures the power of the Catholic Church in Croatia and the unity of the Catholic Church and the Croatian people. As the Stepinac Path project subsumes the original martyrdom and sacred quality of Stepinac in other aspects of his life and other cultural and economic contents, the Church does not support such a polyvalent approach to his legacy. The Church contravenes the idea that Stepinac becomes part of an industry, the object of "the manipulation (or even invention) and exploitation for commercial ends" (Merriman 1991, 8). Additionally, it resists the dispersal of veneration from its power center, the Zagreb Cathedral, to Krašić and other places that feature in Stepinac's biography. The center of veneration is also a resource of various benefits.

The silencing of the Stepinac Path points to the power of the Church, even to its self-naturalizing role in orchestrating the creation of Alojzije Stepinac's heritage. Moreover, the Stepinac Path generally casts light on the authority and primacy of the Catholic Church in Croatia in the heritagization of a legacy with religious attributes.

Conclusion

The silenced Stepinac Path, like every silenced space, reflects and points to the multiple and often dissonant meanings framed in the dimensions of power, as well as pointing to current social processes. The coexistence of divergent and contested perspectives in creating and understanding heritage was given the term dissonant heritage by Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996). In this article, the term serves as an analytical category deployed to discuss what the silenced Path communicates about the controversy over discordant conceptions of Alojzije Stepinac's heritage, a martyr and beatified person of the Catholic Church.

The meaning of Stepinac's heritage produced by the tourism institutions, which have created the project of the religious tourist route, differs from that created by the Catholic Church in Croatia, which first inaugurated the idea of "spiritual heritage" connected with him. The disparity of concepts surrounding the Stepinac heritage reflects different views of current social, economic, and political needs and goals, different roles that the heritage can and should have in contemporary socio-economic processes, different approaches to Stepinac's past and different paradigms in the creation of heritage. The preservation paradigm of the Church in its approach to the heritage of the Blessed Alojzije Stepinac presents him as a figure who confirms and preserves the program and unity of the Catholic Church in Croatia. The Church, as an institution

and community of believers, also consider Stepinac as a symbol of national values and a generator of religious and national unity. Such a paradigm mirrors a reckoning with the atheist political past in this region and the opposition of the Church to contemporary democratic and pluralist politics marked by secularism. Tourism institutions base their concern for Stepinac's legacy on a heritage paradigm, promoting his figure by inscribing different aspects of his life in the regional landscape and incorporating them in European processes of economic integration and the idea of "unity in diversity." In such a paradigm, the martyrdom and holiness of Stepinac melt into a cultural polyphony, while the man and martyr, from the position of the Church, transforms into an object for commercial benefit. The result of the power relations between these two perspectives in shaping Alojzije Stepinac's heritage is the silencing of the Stepinac Path.

The notion of the Blessed Stepinac's heritage necessarily falls into a religious register. In so doing, the Church's insistence on "their" heritage of Alojzije Stepinac excludes the plurality of the political space around his figure. The silenced Stepinac Path reflects the power and leading role of the Church in the heritagization of a religious legacy, which furthermore opens questions concerning the attitude of the Church to its natural primacy in managing such processes.

Notes

1   The leader of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and the President of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from 1945 to 1980.
2   A part of the project linking four mnemonic sites of Alojzije Stepinac.
3   A renowned Roman Catholic weekly in Croatia, published by the Archdiocesan Cathedral in Zagreb since 1962.

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Our Voices: Navigating the Silences in Refugee and Immigrant Women's Narratives

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Abstract

Reflecting on over 20 years of collaborative story circle work with newcomer women, this paper examines silence as capital in sharing one's life experiences. In a field that seeks to amplify narrative, we often forget it is in silence that women find agency. From fieldwork to the co-curatorial process of designing public events, I explore one woman's migration story and the choices she made to organize her silences. With the benefit of a longitudinal association, I began to understand how and why her silences have shifted over time. Rather than amplifying her voice, I have learned to amplify her silences.

Keywords: Silence, refugees, immigrants, women, public folklore research and programming, migration narratives

Silence as Wealth

> …the trick to living … away from all agitating entanglements, allurements, and expectations, apart from one's own intensity, is to organize the silence, to think of its mountaintop as capital, silence as wealth exponentially increasing. The encircling silence your chosen source of advantage and your only intimate (Roth 2000, 44).

An unlikely group of women sits comfortably in chairs around the rehearsal studio of a local theater. Remnants of Indian, Vietnamese, and Colombian snacks clutter the side table; half-full bottles of water stand within reach, ready to quench thirsty throats. They have been coming together once or twice a week for a few months to share stories and create a performance piece about their experiences coming to America. Originally from Vietnam, Colombia, China, India, Ecuador, Guinea, Cambodia, Turkey, and Trinidad, what brings them together is their struggle to make a new life and their desire to share their stories with new neighbors. The atmosphere is one of camaraderie, but they are feeling stalled. They know each other's stories and are committed to sharing them with others, but are struggling to find the starting point; where to begin.

Suddenly, the artistic director jumps up and says, "Okay, I am going to give you one word. Then I am going to leave the room and give you five minutes to create a freeze-frame scene with your bodies that illustrates that word." She explains that a freeze-frame is like a frozen picture, a silent image. The word she gives them is *freedom*. With that, she leaves the room. For three minutes, the women discuss what the word

means to them and how to depict such a significant concept in silence. Then someone suggests they replicate the Statue of Liberty. They all agree and use the remaining two minutes to figure out how. Should they stand side by side, each one in the pose of the Lady? Should they each take a different pose to represent the sculpture's various components, use props, or mime their roles? Or, can they create a single living statue using all of their bodies together? After short deliberations and a few practices, they take their positions and call the director back into the room. She walks through the door and stops still in her tracks, hand to her mouth, a single breath caught in her throat. Tears fill her eyes as she gazes at the single "statue" made of so many diverse bodies. She begins to understand what Lady Liberty means to these women who came to the shores of America in search of freedom. For many, their first sighting of the statue was evidence they had arrived safely. This silent pose, representing their perception of a land of freedom and inclusion, became the closing scene in a one-hour theater production called *Story Circle: Coming to America in the 21st Century.*

This camaraderie between the women was not always there. While they created and staged the play in a mere six months, the feeling of trust and community that made the play so successful was four years in the making. By combining narrated stories with moments of mimed silence, the play enabled the women to express their migration experiences on their terms, using voice to move the narrative along but using silence when language failed to represent the significance of critical moments. Silence requires deeper audience engagement. By its very nature, the ambiguity of silence involves the audience interpreting the narrative from their perspective. As Nancy Gates-Madsen notes in her study of silences in post-dictatorship Argentina, "it is this very ambiguity that gives silence its power" (Gates-Madsen 2016, 8).

Setting the Scene

I began working with refugee and immigrant women in my community in 2001. According to the state's Refugee Resettlement Program, Pennsylvania has welcomed over 60,000 refugees in the last 25 years. The result has been dramatic demographic shifts; in some cities increasing diversity by as much as 40%. Unfortunately, these changes have given rise to unprecedented levels of prejudice and hate crimes. It is challenging to hear newcomers talk about the prejudice, misunderstandings, and stereotypes they face in our country after traveling so far to escape that very experience in their homelands. In my role as state folklorist, I wondered if we could create some public programming to counter what Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie calls the "single story"—the one-dimensional narrative that fuels stereotypes and fosters prejudice (Adichie 2009).

To that end, I began to seek out refugee and immigrant women who might be interested in exploring a project together. Every person I asked mentioned Ho-Thanh Nguyen and her work with refugee and immigrant women. Finally, I gave her a call, and we had lunch. A refugee herself from Vietnam, Ho-Thanh worked for six years as the domestic violence and sexual assault advocate for immigrants and refugees at the local YWCA. Concerned that standard domestic violence services were not enough to

help women get out of the cycle of violence, she gathered a group of women from diverse backgrounds to discuss ways to improve those services. The idea they all gravitated toward was to assist one another in developing leadership skills, self-confidence, and fellowship, while also educating the local community about the contributions they bring. Within three months, we had launched the Pennsylvania Immigrant and Refugee Women's Network (PAIRWN). As word of PAIRWN spread, so did its membership. Thus, not all of its members come out of the domestic violence program, nor has domestic violence been a common topic of conversation, though it does come up.

Working Together

Since that first meeting in 2001, we have worked closely together on many projects, including an oral history initiative to gather women's resettlement stories in central Pennsylvania. My work with this group of women has drawn on Elaine Lawless's theory of reciprocal ethnography, a collaborative methodology for fieldwork and knowledge-sharing that allows for dialogue and which serves to "privilege no one voice over any other" (Lawless 1991, 35). In her work with women ministers, Lawless sought to establish a polyphonic dimension to both the research and the presentation of the work. I was inspired by this approach to folklore work and consciously implemented it in this new project. I am also mindful, however, of the potential for public presentations of migration stories and narratives of trauma to reinforce stereotypes of refugees as marginalized, helpless, and powerless (Kisiara 2015). Reciprocal ethnography offers an approach that democratizes the process and ensures that no story surfaces to become the single story of refugee women.

With over 30 participating women representing a diverse range of experiences, histories, and cultures, the process would be challenging. Shared authority requires more attention and time. It also requires the folklorist to be willing to recognize and let go of her assumptions and expectations—to become vulnerable to the needs, fears, ideas, and expectations of others (Behar 1997). This vulnerable approach may be even more true when working with women who have faced trauma in their lives. The stories told and the relationships created by sharing those stories prohibit any semblance of objectivity.

Working together, we designed an interview protocol to explore the role of women in community life and the changing roles of women in diaspora; the ways they recreate their material culture and artistic traditions in a new world; their experiences of emigration and resettlement; adaptation, and change; and their perspectives on diversity in Pennsylvania. Many also attended monthly Story Circles (which continue today), where they have the opportunity to practice their English and share everyday experiences. The format for the Story Circles is simple. We pick a topic for the month and begin by throwing out a question. As one story precipitates another in this circle of women, they have drawn closer in friendship and understanding.

We recorded all the interviews and story circles and had them transcribed to share among the group. Everyone read each other's interviews, and then we brought an exhibit designer, a theater director, and a filmmaker to a Story Circle where they shared

their ideas about how they might work with the stories in their particular medium: exhibitions, theater, and film. The women listened and decided among themselves how to share the stories publically. They wanted to do all three, so we did. My job was to gather the resources to make all three happen: an exhibition, a short film, and a theater production.

The heart of the exhibition, entitled *Our Voices: Refugee and Immigrant Women Tell Their Stories*, combined black and white portrait photographs with short stories chosen by the women from among several excerpted from their interviews. The play took five of those stories and dramatized them through imagery, mime, dance, music, and narrative. The short film documented an afternoon at the museum when 12 immigrant women from as many countries painted wooden kitchen chairs. We included these chairs in the exhibition to replicate the story circle concept. The film captures their conversations while spending the afternoon together, painting chairs.

Cora's Story

With that background for the overall project, I want to focus on one woman's story as a way for us to consider the complexity of silence in women's migration narratives, especially in our work as ethnographers and cultural advocates. Her stories appear in both the exhibition and the play, but in very different and, I believe, iterative ways.

Cora (not her real name) came to the US as a "mail order bride"—a modern form of human trafficking. Over several months, she communicated by phone and letter with an American man and eventually felt like she knew him reasonably well. When he asked her to come to the US to become his bride, she accepted. It was an opportunity to find a better life. At first, things went well. Soon, however, small constraints began to define her relationship with him. He prevented her from calling home to her sisters, saying he wanted her to forget Spanish and learn English. She did not see it at the time, but this was his first attempt to constrain her voice, to silence her. Then he began forcing her to stay home and prohibiting her from going out to meet with friends she had made in this community. Eventually, he locked her in the house, essentially jailing her. The final blow that woke her up was when he handcuffed her to the bathroom pipes while he was away. She ran away to the YWCA's domestic violence shelter at her next opportunity where she met Ho-Thanh Nguyen. She filed a restraining order, but his last egregious act was to withhold her mail, including an official letter with the dates for her immigration hearing. Thus, she missed that meeting and was sentenced to a real prison for three months. Ho-Thanh found her an effective attorney (after two ineffective ones), and she was finally released. She is now a thriving, active member of the community, remarried, and raising a son who is the apple of her eye (Personal Interview, 2004).

When I scheduled my interview with Cora, I had only met her once or twice and knew very little of this story. I did know that Cora has a fantastic sense of humor and an incredible capacity for love and resilience. We talked for an hour about her life growing up in her home country; how her family's home was the thriving center for all children in the neighborhood, how her sisters played together all day long, how

she climbed the mango tree in her back yard to eat the delectable fruit in the sunny warmth of a tropical summer afternoon. I prompted, I listened, and I asked probing questions as any good ethnographer will do. We nibbled on cookies as she transported us to her childhood home. Her face was open; her eyes were bright.

When the conversation shifted to her migration story, the light faded. I expected her to share some of the stories, but I also expected her to gloss over the details. We were, after all, doing a recorded interview and I was not a close acquaintance. I expected silences. Cora saw it differently. This moment was her opportunity to get the story out. I am sure she had told the story in court. I am sure her attorneys and support team had coached her about how to tell the story. But I did not expect this to be what she wanted to share with me. As she began to share the details of those experiences, I thought to myself, Oh no. What do I do? I am not a counselor. I'm a folklorist. How do I respond? Do I turn the recorder off and just listen as a friend? Would that essentially silence her again? This is the field worker's dilemma, especially when gathering stories of vulnerable moments in people's lives. As Ruth Behar asks in her powerful study of the anthropologist as *The Vulnerable Observer*,

> …do you, the observer, stay behind the lens of the camera, turn on the tape recorder, keep pen in hand? Are there limits—of respect, piety, pathos—that should not be crossed, even to leave a record? But if you can't stop the horror shouldn't you at least document it? (Behar 1997, 2)

Ultimately, Behar (1997) concludes that fieldwork is a lived experience; we are in relationship with each other in this process, and to deny our own reactions and connections to the experiences of our collaborators is to deny the power of the narratives themselves. In the end, I had to trust that Cora knew what she was doing. I kept the tape recorder running and shared Cora's goal to make her story known, perhaps to prevent others from having the same experience.

Embodied Silence

Cora's story was one of 23 featured in the exhibition. As a group, we were interested in presenting a full range of migration stories, and Cora was willing to share a crucial part of her trafficking and imprisonment story. She agreed that it was an essential part of today's immigration experience, so we worked on the language to ensure it was succinct and in her words. However, when it came to the play, she was interested in participating but did not want her story to be part of the script. Instead, she wanted to share the delightful stories of her childhood and the often hilarious encounters she had with Americans in her first several months here. I was a little surprised and even disappointed because I thought she had decided that people needed to hear her story. But none of us questioned her decision. We had known each other as a circle of women long enough that everyone knew her story. Everyone in the group had their own silent memories. It was something they shared—unspeakable stories that defined them. In some way, those silent memories nurtured a sense of community even more than their stories did.

The play and the collaborative curatorial process of creating an exhibit provided a safe place for these women to practice their English and grapple with ways to present their feelings. They understood the challenges of expressing essential ideas in a second language and often helped each other find the right words. They also knew when silence was more powerful than speaking, silences that kept the unspeakable at bay. Writing a story for the wall of a museum, or sharing it in the confines of a small group of friends, is far different from enacting it in a community theater. They had seen how their silent freeze-frame of Lady Liberty had been a more powerful statement than their attempts to verbally describe "freedom." They all respected Cora and enjoyed her delightful personality. So, no one pushed her.

In her study of silence among Holocaust survivors, Carol Kidron notes that our logocentric society views the absence of voice as signaling an unhealthy avoidance and repression of personal trauma. Silence is often seen as socially suspect, while "well-being is thought to be contingent on the liberation of voice" (Kidron 2009, 6). Kidron's study found that silence is, in fact, a tool we use to carry past trauma into the present, to hold it as part of our identity, without the need to vocalize. In this context, Cora's physical embodiment of light-hearted stories allowed her to participate in the narratives of migration without the need to enact her own story.

The script presented five migration stories, told by five different women who worked together to fine-tune the script, participate in diction and improvisation workshops with a theater educator, and gather props, fabrics, and images to help tell their stories. Those who chose not to be actors learned sound, lighting, and stage management. One woman made colorful oversized bags for each woman to carry. They served as both "cultural baggage" and a quick way to change scenes with props and clothing. In total, ten women were involved in the production. The piece re-creates the Story Circle setting with women sitting or standing around a room telling stories. Through music, movement, mime, visual art, and the spoken word, *Story Circle* dramatizes the courage, heartbreak, and dreams of immigrant and refugee women. Created and performed by the women themselves, the play depicts the challenges and triumphs that newcomers to America have conquered and celebrated.

Cora served as the comic relief between each of the five migration stories. As one story ended, she would saunter on stage and begin talking to the audience with the ease of a standup comedian. She drew on stories that most refugee and immigrant women experience and that become quite funny once the pain or embarrassment of the original experience has faded. These were stories they had all shared in their Story Circles. Challenges with the pronunciation of some English words, misperceptions of cultural norms of behavior, and cultural collisions around constructs of beauty were all fodder for her scenes. These are the stories she chose to share, remaining silent about her own migration experience and preventing that from being the story that defines her.

Silence and Truth-Telling

For Cora, silence is not just the opposite of vocal. Being silent is a choice, just as being vocal is a choice. Silence is as much a part of what Gates-Madsen calls the memory phenomenon as is voice. Silence is "an integral part of the fullness of expression, not just secondary to the spoken word" (Mazzei in Kawabata and Gastaldo 2015, 2). While the standard perception is that speech is about remembering and silence is a kind of emptiness, Gates-Madsen argues that the ambiguous, even expressive, nature of silence gives it its power. She says, "Silence obliges the audience to stake a claim to an interpretation and define his or her position" (Gates-Madsen 2016, 14). Thus, through *Story Circle*, with its use of mime and freeze-frame scenes, the women engaged the audience in their form of truth-telling.

The omission of Cora's migration story is the space left undefined for the audience to interpret. While all the other "actors" told their stories of coming to America, Cora filled the space between (as we often do with silences) with more benign stories, which, for a time, allow the audience only a little discomfort as they see themselves as complicit in the minor mishaps she describes. Through these funny stories, she lets them, and perhaps herself, believe her migration story was uneventful. Through these vocal narratives, she chose to be silent.

We presented *Story Circle* for three nights to sold-out audiences as part of our local community theater's celebration of women playwrights and women-centered theater. Six months later, we restaged the production to accompany the exhibition at the State Museum of Pennsylvania. After each performance, we held a talk-back session so the audience could ask questions of the performers. During one of those talk-back sessions, an audience member asked the women, "Why did you decide to do this play?" I was moderating, and I looked at the women on the stage to see who might want to answer that question first. Cora looked at me and began to raise her hand. My look said, "You don't have to do this," but her silent look back said, "I am ready." Thus, she publicly shared her story with the audience, acknowledging that Ho-Thanh Nguyen was the person who finally believed her and helped her change her life. She was telling her story in honor of all women who never feel heard, and in honor of the one woman who listened. She was voicing the unspeakable so others would know that trafficking still happens.

Silence as Agency

Cora's migration story moves through a series of iterations, from the disembodied text panel on a museum wall to a conscious omission within the context of a theatrical script, and finally to her own unscripted, vocalized public embodiment at the close of the play. Her experience prompts an examination of the complex and multiple ways that we, as ethnographers, might share the stories that are gifted to us. Although the museum text panel was in her own words, she was not always present when people read it. As Kidron notes, "[…] self-narration, allows [the speaker] to transform previously tacit knowledge of the surviving traces of the past into explicit text" (Kidron 2009, 15); texts that are controlled by the teller. Kawabata and Gastaldo expand on this in their study of day laborers in Japan, noting not only that silence may be framed by

one's culture, but that maintaining silence enables the interviewee to "successfully construct his identity […] and control the conversation […]" (Kawabata & Gastaldo 2015, 3).

We did not use surnames on the text panels, so Cora had some anonymity, although her photo is there. The story is in her own words; however, she did not have to engage with anyone directly responding to the story in the exhibition. She was safe; she could remain silent. At the same time, her story was being "heard" in the context of a public, even official, space. On the other hand, the play was too powerful in that it meant enacting and embodying her story once again. She may have known some people in the audience, but this was still too raw, filled with all the emotions women experience when facing gender-based violence. Here she enacts what Kidron calls the silent copresence—an alternative, nonverbal way of being, through which the past is communicated and made actively present in lived daily interaction (Kidron 2009). Yet, when prompted by an attentive and appreciative audience, she found the courage, or perhaps the need, to share her story in her own words, her voice, and her own time. Why then? Had she decided it was time to honor someone else for their belief in her? As Roth (2000) describes above, she saw her silence as capital and the source of her advantage. And she chose to release it. Her silence was no longer necessary and, in fact, impeded a higher purpose. She controlled the narrative elements of her life story and ensured no one would assume a single story.

Concluding Thoughts

As ethnographers and cultural advocates, we often see our role as amplifying the voices of communities and individuals who have important stories to tell. The research (Kidron 2009; Kawabata & Gastaldo 2015) reminds us that silence in qualitative research is often perceived either as a failure on the part of the interviewer or lack of knowledge on the interviewee's part. We value the verbal, the narrative; it is the core of our discipline. But Cora's experience amplifies the importance of recognizing both the positive and negative spaces in a story. As Kidron reminds us, lingering logocentric conceptions of silence as absence and speech as presence could "potentially blind us to the rich world that lies between these two poles" (Kidron 2009, 19). Kawabata and Gastaldo take this a step further, arguing that silence is part of a larger communication strategy that is cultural. To ignore the silences contributes to social inequalities, especially among marginalized groups (Kawabata & Gastaldo 2015, 6). As ethnographers, we must do more than allow the silences to fill the space; we must understand the implications of our own culturally informed notions of silence and create strategies for analyzing those silences (Kawabata & Gastaldo 2015, 7).

If my research had stopped after the first interview, Cora's story would be the single story of her trafficking experience as shared on the museum's public walls. By developing deeper relationships with our collaborators over time, we create the environment for stories to breathe and thrive on their own more powerful terms. We also honor the right for silences to breathe and thrive. More importantly, we honor our collaborators' right to find agency with their silences; to use those silences to construct their own identity, and engage with the community when it serves their higher needs.

The Sound of Silence—Dementia, Language Loss, and Being Heard[1]

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Abstract

Language usually implies and embodies communication, but this paper explores the silence created when people living with dementia revert to their first language. I explore the connotations and denotations of the word "silence", and the cultural dimensions affected by its imposition or adoption. When communication and entire languages are lost, either by attrition or hegemonic pressure, culture is lost, stories are no longer told, experience no longer valued, and our very humanity silenced.

> It is not difference which immobilizes us, but silence. And there are so many silences to be broken. (Lorde 2019, 32)

We generally think of silence as an absence of sound, but here I want to look at it as an absence of communication, a figurative silence paradoxically spoken into being when no one understands what is being said. I will explore this idea through the progressive silencing of bilingual speakers as they traverse dementia in a monolingual, second-language environment. Though still able to speak their native tongue, they become linguistic exiles, prefiguring what happens to all who progress through dementia in any setting, losing their memories, their language, and, ultimately, their very selves, at first lost *in* language and then *to* it as it retreats.

This piece owes its existence to an intriguing conversation I had with Alex Macdonald, a Gaelic speaker from the Isle of Lewis in northwest Scotland, who perceptively observed that dementia-related second language loss is creating *monoglot adult speakers* of Gaelic, when it has long been agreed that there are none, due to the complete saturation of Scottish life by the English language (Macaulay 1992, 141).[2] The same situation pertains in the North-East of Scotland, where native-speakers of Doric (the region's dialect of the Scots language) are losing their later-acquired English through dementia and becoming, in effect, monoglot Scots speakers,[3] a phenomenon my colleague, Simon Gall, has observed within his own family. Fieldwork profoundly shapes projects in Folklore studies[4] and my thanks go to Alex Macdonald and Simon Gall for sharing their experiences in recorded interviews. The result is this reflection, intended to explore some intellectual and social ideas that relate to how we interact with our elderly citizens.[5]

An individual speaker's language attrition is almost invariably discussed in relation to a bilingual speaker's loss of their lesser-used native tongue in a majority-language environment, usually a "minority" language no longer necessary for community interaction. The "minority" language's loss of functionality can be due to gradual cultural shifts but can also result from hegemonic social or political pressures, sometimes backed by colonial(izing) power, which often sees bilingualism as a threat or at least an opportunity to exercise control.[6] An individual losing the *majority* language, as in the contexts that Macdonald and Gall discuss, raises a completely different set of issues. Such loss is not about the loss of linguistic heritage and identity, or about dementia, but rather about how its consequences impact communication, understanding, listening, and, ultimately, caring.[7]

Oftentimes in our society, we valorize silence: "silence is golden," "can you keep a secret?", "don't tell," children should be "seen and not heard." These are positives, something to aspire to. We attend quiet, contemplative retreats; we admire monks and others who live in silence as a contemplative tool. Even sound itself, and language carried by it, *requires* silence "which does not cease to surround it and without which it would say nothing" (Merleau-Ponty 1964, 46).

But we are confused, and equally celebrate speaking out, when required: "speak up for yourself," "be a whistle-blower," or, at a wedding, "speak now or forever hold your peace" (though we usually hope that nobody will). We also decry silence as indicating complicity, for example, in the widespread use of "Silence is Violence" in protest movements. Here, we hope to end a silence that has allowed oppressors and their regimes to perpetuate themselves and the status quo (see Marching 2017). Silence is thus complicated by a diverse set of subtexts.

Imagine yourself listening to someone on a train who is speaking a language from a different linguistic family than your own. You listen for a minute, straining for lexical meaning, for the smallest unit of understanding, but there is none. The speaker's voice is thus, in effect, silenced. Intonation and tone can, of course, convey aspects of meaning and, sometimes, a *sound* can evoke a range of meta-meanings, though not necessarily the correct ones, precisely *because* you do not understand it.

Incidents like this are likely to happen every day around the world when bilingual speakers lose their second language minority-language native speakers find themselves losing their second language to dementia in majority language care settings and are left with their mother tongue as the sole means of communication. The speaker is left adrift, like you on the train, hearing but not understanding.

It is well known that many living with dementia tend to lose their more recent memories first, falling further and further back into the remembered, hard-wired past and their native tongue.[8] Thus, native speakers of Scots or Gaelic living with dementia leave behind English and revert to their mother tongue. Individual language attrition can also happen from disease or injury destroying parts of the brain or the connections that make them useful. People living with dementia, however, following patterns of memory loss, regress through their acquired languages in reverse order of familiarity and embeddedness, sometimes rediscovering one that they had "forgotten." Alex Mac-

donald told me of a woman from the Netherlands who reverted to speaking Dutch, a language her children thought had been "taught out" of her many decades before when she was evacuated from Holland to New Zealand during the Second World War. "Birth languages do not simply disappear from memory" (Macdonald 2019), but are instead silenced through teaching, immersion, hegemonic language replacement, and sometimes active suppression, whether from outside forces or the person themselves as they jettison their native language to "get ahead," a common enough scenario internationally.

A regression to native language is, of course, perfectly unproblematic if it is the majority tongue, but when the mother tongue has been supplanted in the community by another, the speaker is effectively silenced. Simon Gall has noticed such a situation developing in his grandmother's home in Aberdeen. She is losing her English language skills as dementia takes hold, a change particularly noticeable when she talks to a non-Scots speaker like Simon's Venezuelan wife, Sol.

> I'll tell you when it started: when Sol spoke to her.
>
> Sol obviously doesn't speak Doric, being Venezuelan, although she tries, and she does well sometimes.
>
> She would say stuff to her. And Sol speaks great English and is easy to understand, I think, for most folk, and ma grama, *every* time she'd say *anything*, ma grama would look at me and say, "Fit? Fit's she sayin?" [What? What is she saying?] An she's sittin right there in front of her.
>
> And it started to dawn on me that maybe it's not just because of Sol. […]
>
> So then I started doing my own wee experiments. I'd say something to her, as I would in Standard English, and say, you know, "Have you seen Margaret today?" She'd look at me an go, "Eh?" "His Margaret been roon theday?" "Oh no, I hinna seen her." [Oh no, I haven't seen her.] So, I started tae realize she's […] hardly comprehending English now.
>
> It's really weird.
>
> (Gall 2019)

In recent months, the situation has become acute, "When the doctor visits, my mum has to be there to translate, and the doctor is Scottish. She wouldn't get the medical care she needs otherwise" (Gall 2020). The communications affected are no longer simply phatic speech, social visiting, or even practical interactions about quotidian needs, but about vital health care.

In a home setting like this, a regression to the mother tongue is not a problem, but Gaelic and Scots speakers can grow increasingly isolated as they find themselves in the predominantly English-language settings of care homes, institutions, and even whole communities, towns, and cities. The voiced become voiceless, losing their ability to communicate their story, their experience, and, at times, even their most basic needs, as Alex Macdonald recounts of a care home in the Isle of Lewis,

> There was an incident with a man who had been asking for a glass of water all day and hadn't got it, because there was nobody understood what he was saying. He was asking in Gaelic. And his relatives were very angry, quite rightly, and pointed out that, actually, there needed to be a lot more thought in a place like this where there were patients, who were only speaking Gaelic now, that there would be Gaelic-speaking staff. (Macdonald 2019)

The man had spent most of his life bilingual, with Gaelic as his native language and English learned when he attended school from the age of about six. He lived his life in an English-dominated world, but with the onset of dementia, began to lose his second language, leaving the deeply embedded Gaelic still usable. Usable but ineffective. This phenomenon is the *sound of silence*; he was capable of speech, of making sounds, but was silenced for all intents and purposes in the very act of speaking.

Dementia-related silencing can also be brought about by a physical journey into a different linguistic realm rather than shifting language patterns. One of Alex's relatives, who had moved away, "*regressed*, only spoke Gaelic the latter year of her life, which you would think isn't unusual, apart from the fact that she lived in Detroit." The woman had left in the 1920s, existed in a monoglot English environment all her days, until, with dementia-induced language loss, she found herself effectively silenced though still able to produce sound. "There must have been other people who left here who found themselves in nursing homes across the world and unable, really, to communicate. Her children don't speak it." Even the woman's own family was unable to help directly, though "they tried to access people in Detroit who could speak it and it was very sad for Lewis relatives, who understood, but could do little from four thousand miles away" (Macdonald 2019).

While such distances are dramatic, there is no necessity for an international journey for a similar silencing to take place, as Alex recounts,

> The worst scenario, I think, was the one where a man from here told me that his mother was no longer speaking English and had no understanding of it now. […] And his father didn't speak any Gaelic, so they weren't able to speak to each other.
>
> That is something that happened here, but I can equally see that happening in any other community where people are speaking minority languages and perhaps are in a situation where they've got a partner who's not from the same background as them, or whatever. His father had never learned Gaelic, so they weren't able to speak to each other. So that's an extreme example, but it shows the importance of language.[9]

Sometimes, the arrival of new populations creates new language environments. While English has long been a *lingua franca* for many Scottish communities, including care homes, the last few decades have seen an influx of carers from overseas. Some learn Scots or Gaelic, like the woman from India who assists Simon's grandmother. She has "been living in Scotland for a long time. […] And she finds that she *has* to speak Doric to her to be understood" (Gall 2019). Without this kind of linguistic adaptation, silence is easily created, here by omission or a lack of knowledge.

Organizers in very local settings, however, sometimes have a better sense of the need for cross-linguistic awareness. A care home in Lewis, for example, says Alex Macdonald, "advertises which languages are spoken there, which I think is a fantastic thing, because you can then look for a home where […] there's somebody who can converse with your relative" (Macdonald 2019).[10]

Aside from such apparent exceptions, people living with dementia in non-domestic settings, while still having voices, often lose their ability to communicate their story, experience, and even most basic needs, as the example of the man asking for water shows, becoming effectively voiceless. There is widespread acknowledgment of the need for linguistic accessibility within hospital medical settings, but while various regional branches of Scotland's National Health Service offer interpreters for more than forty languages, neither Gaelic nor Scots is among them.[11] Granted, new monoglot speakers are small in number, and they are usually found in the home or in care settings rather than hospitals, but it might be valuable and rewarding for carers to learn and perhaps even be formally taught these *local* languages for the sake of our growing elderly population.[12]

We often tend to think of those with dementia losing *their* ability to communicate, but the disease reaches far beyond the individual. While someone is losing their second language, a carer who cannot speak the first becomes an equal partner in the creation of silence. Meaning, typically created in the communal space between speaker and listener, is left inchoate because the dementia dynamic militates against it, creating a vacuum notable for its absence of lexical communicative engagement. It may, at some level, be a communicative act, but one defined by negation—the lack of reciprocal exchange and understanding. Thus, dementia enforces silence on both sides, quieting both by progressively deleting their shared language and experience. Thus carers, too, are silenced.

Through the *in*action of passively allowing such linguistic isolation to develop, silence becomes a verb. To "silence" something is to end its communicative activity, neuter its power. Sometimes we do this to ourselves, consciously or subconsciously suppressing memories to create a desired "reality." Often, we mean it metaphorically, as with "cancel culture" on social media, not paying attention to what some individual, group, or culture is saying, often as a result of a power dynamic that allows, or *makes* us not listen to a certain individual or perspective. More aggressively, silencing includes history being written (voiced) by the winner, the pervasive, unremarked control of women by (white) men's domestic, political, social, and religious practices, and prison regimes that disproportionately affect people of color, those in poverty, or those who threaten the status quo in some way. Silence, the verb, can also be violent, in extremis taking explicit physical form, as in the "Colombian necktie," a form of execution in which the perpetrator draws the victim's tongue out through a slash in the throat, a physical silencing and an aggressive warning to others to keep silent, but also symbolic in that it embodies overt external control over the instrument of speech itself.

Preventing people from being heard is the first step to retaining power. Thus, regimes aim to silence dissent, suppressing discourse that undermines their perspective or authority: protestors who disagree, women campaigning for the vote, or voters simply trying to exercise their democratic right, for example.[13] This can even extend to the visual, most famously in Stalin's habit of altering photographic images to eliminate troublesome evidence.

In the Scottish context, the repression of Gaelic as a means of politico-social control has been deliberate and explicit for a long time, as seen in the Scottish Education Act of 1616, which explicitly calls for Gaelic to be "abolisheit and removit," abolished and removed (Donaldson 1970, 178–179). For the Scots language, attrition and disempowerment were the results of hegemonic power methodically applied since the seventeenth century by a confluence of political, religious, and social forces.[14]

For the last few centuries, Scottish children have been taught English as their *lingua franca*, often completely leaving behind their native tongues, which were often beaten out of them from the age five or six—figuratively by a politically motivated education system, and literally through corporal punishment meted out to pupils for using of their native language in a school setting. Following on, Gaelic and Scots have been devalued and ghettoized into the realms of home and rural life. Today, they are thus often seen as best suited to self-deprecating humor, characterized by those in power (and wishing to stay there) as unsophisticated and uneducated.[15] Our governmental systems have, moreover, institutionalized a dismissive attitude to "minority languages,"[16] as all the civic institutions of education, law, and government use the medium of English. So, Scots and Gaelic as languages of authority and learning have become silenced through deliberate action. Even today, a "cultural cringe" exists, leading many to recoil when they hear their native tongue—Scots or Gaelic—used in formal settings such as a university, the workplace, in the media, or "high culture."

Many Scots spend a lifetime, it is commonly said, *thinking* in English, but *feeling* in Gaelic or Scots, reflecting a commonly held belief that our native tongues remain the languages of emotion and childhood, even in later life.[17] In our day-to-day lives, of course, we pay little attention to what language we are speaking. Simon Gall had "absolutely no idea" that he and his family were speaking Doric (North-East Scots) in his youth; it was the language of home and family and, as such, was the norm. For Alex, there seems to be a clear distinction between speaking our native tongue(s) and the effort required to speak a second or third language: "I've always felt it was an effort to speak the poshest of English, the proper English, at school. "Indeed, most Gaelic and Scots speakers feel more comfortable using their native tongue in the home setting as they have been raised from the earliest of times to think of their native tongues as inferior, in the case of Scots as a broken-down, bastardized relation of English (the use of which is often tellingly referred to as "talking" as opposed to spikkin, "speaking posh," or speaking "properly."

Conversely, hearing our language in a non-native environment puts us at ease immediately, surrounded by the deep foundations of earliest (hopefully positive) memory.

> Well, it's the "tuigsinn," "tuigsinn"—understanding. There's an understanding straight away that, if […] I meet a native somewhere, that they understand my *culture* as well as my language. (Macdonald 2019)

Our native tongue elicits visceral feelings of connection even before we consider the content of what is being said.

> To me, as a Gael, I'll make a connection with somebody instantly if they speak to me in my own language. So even the fact that they can do that connects you in a way that you can't…
>
> You know, you can obviously connect to people speaking in English, as we are now, but if somebody comes through the door and speaks to me in my own language, then instantly […] there's an extra connection between you. (Macdonald 2019)

Simon, raised in a Scots-speaking environment but schooled, like most Scottish children, through the medium of English, is now able to use it in a work setting:

> I've had this feeling of a *weight* being lifted off when I can speak it, if you know what I mean. […] I always felt that it was an *effort* to always speak the poshest of English, or the "proper" English, at school and afterwards, etc. An there's a feelin of relief, almost, recently over the last wee while when I can use it [Scots]. […]
>
> I'm not able to put ma finger on it, but I certainly felt a bit of relief. I think that's the only emotion that I can describe easily. I'll spik the wey I spik at hame, I canna be arsed haein tae think o fit it is I'm sayin. (Gall 2019)

Part of this sense of ease derives from the domestic setting, in which conversation is generally far less formal, linguistically, and topically.

Many older Scots and Gaelic speakers have not had this opportunity and exclusively use English, their second language, in the formal settings of education, work, and civic life, able to switch with inconspicuous proficiency when the social context calls for it. Nevertheless, this subtle dexterity is the crux of language loss, being precarious and particularly vulnerable to changes in the brain, whether through injury or disease. Our mother tongue is so closely tied to identity that we do not think of it as a separate entity, as Alex suggests,

> People could be taken halfway across the world, but, actually, their birth identity remains somewhere hidden deep in their head and it […] came out when they developed dementia. It just never went away, is what I'm saying. You *never lose* your key identity. (Macdonald 2019)

Nevertheless, when you lose your communicative language, that "key identity," while not lost, lies unheard.

Silence can derive from the active suppression of a voice or a lack of linguistic understanding, but, equally, from the absence of a simple but crucial bridging step: listening. A wave of sonic energy released is effectively not a sound until it is *heard*. Creating meaning requires that we hear, and that we *pay attention*, so that we may understand.

In the context of those with dementia-related language loss, one kind of paying attention is an awareness that "their silence may be triggered by a failure in *our* methods of communication" (Macdonald n.d., 9, my emphasis). So, we must be alert to non-linguistic entryways. Sometimes a sensory experience, smell, taste, seeing or touching an object, can release language, bringing silence to an end: "A fisherman recently demonstrated mending nets in one of the hospital wards and a patient, who hadn't spoken in over two months, informed a care worker that he used to do that task too, and assisted with the demonstration" (Macdonald n.d., 6). Dementia can bring about an age of enforced silence which traps people in an internal world, but even before that a lack of contextual understanding and effective triggers can bring an end to communication. Thus, while we often think of silence as an *absence*, it can become *manifest*, something *we* bring into existence by our actions or just plain neglect.

Though there is technically sound in the case of Gaelic and Scots speakers adrift in an anglicized sea, silence reigns supreme when there is no one to listen or to understand. Entire languages are lost, stories no longer told, experience no longer understood or valued, and culture no longer passed on. We lose the interaction and communication that define us as *homo narrans* and, with that, our humanity itself.

It is easy to conflate silence with *quiet* and connotations of peace and serenity. Those used to city dwelling, for example, often remark on how quiet the countryside is but immediately describe it in terms of sound: "the silence/ Of the wind through the trees" (Gibbard 2020). A listening ear soon picks up on many sounds: that very wind through the trees, a breeze over the grasses, water flowing, birdsong. The unpractised ear may experience a kind of silence, however, because these rural sounds can be experientially devoid of meaning, empty of the understood vocabulary of cars, crosswalk indicators, piped music, overheard telephone conversations, and media. "Silence," in everyday parlance, is, therefore, relative. It is not acoustic silence but instead an absence of meaning parsable to the individual experiencing it. So, we might better conceive of "silence" as an *absence of communication*.

What if the world around us really was silent, truly quiet? That would equate to death, in our imaginations, Hamlet's "quietus" (to discharge, release, or end in death). Quiet might be the end of all things, connecting to a visceral fear deep within, but even in a silent, anechoic chamber, we hear things: the sounds of our blood moving around the body, the heart beating, the sound, by contrast, evoking life and living. Thus, our embodied selves are our best insurance against the desolation of quiet, death, silence, and silencing.

The Gaelic for dementia is "gad do chall fhèin", literally, losing yourself, says Alex.

They would explain away, you know, an older person maybe, 'Th'ad air call', they're lost. It's this whole thing of losing themselves as a person. […]

　　This is the thing that's most interesting to me. It's the fact that there's a drawer somewhere in your head where English no longer makes sense. You go right back to the beginning. (Macdonald 2019)

Language is a vital weapon in defying silence and silencing of every kind, making the rapid global trend of language loss nothing short of a tragedy.[18] When we lose a language, we lose a particular ontology of the world and the capability to listen to voices and perspectives other than our own. When communicative language is lost to neurodegeneration, we lose a crucial mechanism for making sense of the world and, concomitantly, the world loses its means of making sense of *us*.

　　Ultimately, we must develop a deeper understanding of silence and what it means to be heard. It behoves us today, then, as we care for people living with dementia in a context of hegemonic world languages, to pay attention to the sounds of silence, to see if we might hear, and listen carefully, to the still, small voice of one crying out in a linguistic wilderness, in a language we do not understand.

Notes

1　I would like to thank Sarah Brown, Stephen Plotkin, Sophie Morse, and Christine Kydd for their thoughts on this essay as it took shape.

2　Alex was kind enough to share her presentation "Bilingualism and Dementia" with me as a starting point (Macdonald n.d.). Her place of work, An Lanntair Arts Centre in Stornoway, runs "Ciannalas" a dementia-friendly Creative Care community project that uses various arts media, crafts, objects, and reminiscence work to engage sufferers and their carers, aiming to "uphold rights to be included, involved and to make valuable contributions to the community together" ("Ciannalas").

3　A "monoglot" speaker is, of course, much easier to discuss in the context of two very different language families, such as Gaelic and English, than with close cognate tongues like Scots and English, or Norwegian and Swedish. Most Scots speakers today "commute" along a continuum between Scots and English, adeptly adjusting their use of each language to suit the linguistic environment in which they find themselves (McColl Millar 2018, 3)

4　See Jackson 1985, 132–134, and *passim*, for reflections on the leading role that fieldwork, and what we find, plays in shaping both our findings and the project itself.

5　As an exponent of co-production, I am grateful to Alex for bringing the phenomenon to my attention and discussing her ideas so freely. Interviews with Macdonald and Gall were digitally recorded and reside in the Archives of the Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen. Quoted interview material is transcribed using a "revised verbatim" style; I have indicated editorial interventions with […] for an ellipsis and [*xxxx*] for descriptive "stage directions".

6　The very term "bilingual" can be used hegemonically, as Helot and Young suggest, noting that in France its official use is "reserved for the acquisition of mainstream European language and for immersion programmes in Brittany, Alsace, the Basque country, etc." (2002, 97), rather than to describe people who speak migrant, or smaller *indigenous* tongues.

7   There is a large body of clinical work on language loss, "semantic dementia", and its effects on various aspects of life, including social connections and community interactions. I refer to a number of studies that speak directly to my discussion, but, not being a neuroscientist, it would be inappropriate for me to draw on the more technical scholarship in any detail. It is, moreover, not central to this qualitative approach and I leave it to the reader to explore as their scientific interests and prowess permit.

8   For popular reporting on this phenomenon, see "Losing your English" and "Bilingualism and Dementia".

9   This scenario has been used as the centrepiece of a play, "Five to Midnight", by Theatre Tog-ì, a Gaelic drama group based in Glasgow ("Bilingualism and Dementia").

10   Macdonald drew attention to a potentially contentious aspect of this question, noting that employment law might make it difficult to require a particular linguistic proficiency for what is, ostensibly, a physical job (as a carer). Nevertheless, this particular case suggests that we should perhaps place more emphasis on the social aspect of care than we often do: "These are incidents of why one size doesn't always fit all" (Macdonald 2019).

11   Greater Glasgow and Clyde offers English, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Bengali, Bulgarian, Chinese (Simplified), Chinese (Traditional), Czech, Dari, Estonian, Farsi, French, German, Greek, Gujarati, Hausa, Hindi, Hungarian, Italian, Kiswahili, Krio, Kurdish Sorani, Latvian, Lithuanian, Oromo, Malayalam, Pashto, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Romanian, Russian, Sindhi, Slovak, Spanish, Somali, Tamil, Tigrinya, Turkish, Urdu, Vietnamese, Wolof, Yiddish ("Greater Glasgow"). NHS Grampian, in the North-East of Scotland, lists Polish, Bengali, Arabic, Latvian, Lithuanian, Russian, Cantonese, Mandarin, Portugese, French, German, Spanish, Romanian, and British Sign Language on its site ("NHS Grampian").

12   Closely intertwined with these ideas, the Elphinstone Institute at the University of Aberdeen is currently developing a training programme in Doric/North-East Scots for carers designed to improve communication and, we hope, enhance immigrant carers' sense of belonging.

13   See Jackel & Thompson 2018, and Leonhardt 2016, on deliberate voter suppression in the United States.

14   Politically, in the Union of the Crowns in 1603, when Scotland and England were joined under one king, James VI and I, and the Union of the Parliaments in 1707, when the two were joined politically and administered by a central government in London. Religiously, with the 1611 publication of the King James Bible in English, with no published Scots translation until a 1900–05 academic edition of Murdoch Nisbet's early sixteenth-century translation of the Wycliffe Bible, and William Lorimer's 1983 *New Testament in Scots* (the only version from the biblical Greek). Socially, with political and religious power gone, and industrializing economic forces pushing towards centralization and emigration, English quickly became the language of "improvement".

        Though not formally part of the mechanics of power until the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act of 2005, Gaelic has been included in the decennial census since 1881 (MacKinnon n.d.), while a Scots language question was only introduced in 2011. There are other encouraging signs, for example in local government, with Aberdeenshire Council ratifying guidelines for the use of Doric/North-East Scots in 2017 (English: "Scots Language Guidelines;"

Doric: "Scots Leid Guidelines," along with recommendations for the use of Doric with young people ("Bairns' Chairter"), while Aberdeen City Council, though without a formal policy, produced a Doric translation of its new cultural policy ("Culture Aiberdeen").

15 **This has happened throughout Europe with languages such as Breton, Occitan, and Cata-**lan, to name a few, and in the USA, "a veritable cemetery of foreign languages" (Portes & Hao 1998).

16 This term is something of a misnomer in the case of Scots, as it is spoken by more than a third of Scotland's population (Census 2011). It would be considered a "minority" language, however, in terms of its place within the power structures of state.

17 Greenson (1950) was an early advocate, exploring a patient's use of native and acquired tongues when accessing, or at times evading, deeply emotional matters. Recent studies, e.g., Anooshian & Hertel (2008), have reinforced the idea, but Pavlenko (2006) challenges its universality, giving examples where the native tongue is left behind for traumatic reasons (see chapters 10–11, in particular), and Jończyk (2016, 75–101) suggests that the native-language-emotion idea is itself emotionally anchored, rather than neuro-linguistically placed. Perhaps more significant even than language choice, in the context of thinking about silence, is the idea that emotion is often, in fact, *beyond* words. In such cases, the medium of song, with its stylized, structured language, and integral musical component, can be an effective bridge. Breandán Ó Madagáin recounts an example from Irish tradition in which song is able to carry unspeakable emotion when spoken words will not, offering an opening for expression and the beginnings of healing (1985, 149–151). In the context of dementia, Margaret Bennett describes a moving encounter with peerless Newfoundland singer, Jerome Downey, in which the sound of her voice, and their shared song tradition, is able to forge a deep connection to a pre-dementia past (2012, 153–154). For more formal studies of song and dementia, see, for example, Moser 2001, 712–717; Davidson & Fedele 2011. Song is also a useful tool in general mental health areas (e.g., Clark & Harding 2012; Bailey & Davidson 2003), or in the recovery from trauma (e.g., Duhl 1999; Robarts 2006; Davis 2010; von Lob, et al., 2010). For examples of the use of music in reaching dementia patients, see Groene 1993, and Halpern, et al., 2012, while its wider use in relation to trauma is explored in Garrido, et al. 2015.

18 There are five to six thousand languages in the world today, but within a century that number is likely to be an order of magnitude lower (Harrison 2007, 3). This is more than the silencing of individuals; it is the loss of entire "domains of knowledge" (Harrison 2007, 26) that are central to our understanding of ourselves and the diversity of societies around the world.

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Responses

Seven Strands of Silencing

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Research on memory and memorialization constitutes a rich and complex interdisciplinary space that tackles important questions, such as those presented by the articles on the "ethnographies of silence" in this special issue of *Cultural Analysis*. In the last few decades, there has been a boom in memory studies, exemplified, for instance, by the foundation of *Memory Studies*, a journal started in 2008 to give "recognition, form, and direction to work in this nascent field" (Hoskins et al. 2008, 5), or by the creation of the Memory Studies Association in 2016. This association brought together more than 1,500 scholars, artists, and memorial practitioners in their last—pre-COVID—congress in Madrid in 2019. One of the main strands of the memory studies field of research focuses on violence, with a recent paradigm change from focusing on victims' perspectives to analyzing perpetrators' narratives. This shift has also been acknowledged in the creation of a specialized publication, the *Journal of Perpetrator Research* in 2017, and an international network.

The perspective proposed in these ethnographies of silence adds to the state of the art in memory studies because it focuses on silencing strategies. My title is based on a combination of Paul Connerton's "The Seven Types of Forgetting" (2008) and Dan Ben-Amos's "The Seven Strands of Tradition" (1984). Both of these are seminal contributions to memory and folklore studies. Connerton suggests that at least seven types of forgetting can be distinguished, "repressive erasure; prescriptive forgetting; forgetting that is constitutive in the formation of a new identity; structural amnesia; forgetting as annulment; forgetting as planned obsolescence; forgetting as humiliated silence" (2008, 59).

The repertoire of these ethnographies of silence follows different silencing strands and adds to Connerton's seven from the silenced—and contested—heritage of the multicultural area of the Alps-Adriatic border (Italian, Slovenian, Austrian) explored by Marion Hamm and Janine Schemmer to the silences in memories on massive migrations of Istrians analyzed by Katja Hrobat Virloget. Marijana Belaj explores dissonant heritagization processes and the silencing of a religious route in different discourses and power relations, while Amy Skillman concentrates on silences in refugee and immigrant women's narratives.

In addition, the articles offer innovative explorations of silencing strategies. The strand of denial, for instance, is explored in depth by Michele Bianchi. His contributor suggested that "nothing much has happened" expresses the terms on which local identity is built and has gained *social acceptance*. It allows people to present themselves as something outside from the dichotomy of victim/perpetrator. Silencing can also be due to illness, such as dementia. What happens when dementia provokes the forgetting of a second language, and your mother tongue is not understood? Thomas McKean addresses this question in an inspiring way, looking at adult speakers of Gaelic and

Scots forced by their illness to be monoglot. Silencing, in this case, means the absence of communication because of the use of a language that is not understood in the speaker's current environment.

Methodologically, the focus on silences or the unsaid is an ethnographic goose that lays golden eggs. Ethnography is a powerful methodological tool to enter into the unsaid. During fieldwork, discourses are a particular form of communicative practice, but the unsaid is a gem for the ethnographer. Several authors in this volume (Hrobat Virloget, Bianchi) explore these silences that the ethnographers encounter during their fieldwork.

These types of silencing, I want to add two more: (1) silencing mechanisms linked to pre-traumatic stress—or anticipated mourning—which I consider particularly relevant in the current COVID-19 pandemic; and (2) the silencing of specific research topics, such as non-violent situations. Regarding the first one, the memory of what might be called "anticipatory imagined events" is its main component. In a sense, it is related to expectations about what the future will be like in the face of specific traumatic events, such as pandemics or climate change. There are different vocabularies employed for the memories and the grieving of future situations and places. For instance, the term pre-traumatic stress, for example "was allegedly coined by Lise Van Susteren, a psychiatrist who specializes in the psychological effects of climate change" (Craps 2020, 277), while the term "solastalgia," a combination of solace and nostalgia which refers to the feeling of being homesick at home, "is the distress produced by negative environmental change impacting on individuals while they are

directly connected to their home environment" (Craps 2020, 276). The silences created by the anticipated future are a fruitful field of research. Its fundament is nostalgia, not only of a past, but also of a present that faces an uncertain future.

Finally, I want to focus on the realm of not-so-violent daily life situations to stress the importance of moving beyond the link between memory studies and conflict. Silencing is also happening in memory processes dealing with "small happiness," everyday moments. For instance, research on utopias and dystopias related to silencing mechanisms is an area that could be developed. Humanities and social sciences are essential to creating alternative scenarios and options for the future.

In the end, experts on imagination are much needed, and anthropologists, ethnographers, ethnologists, folklorists, and culture specialists all have in common their ability to understand, propose and imagine in potential futures, which is a much-needed ability in exploring the strands of silencing.

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To Not Forget and to Not Remember: The Blurred Faces of Silence

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The texts collected in this volume address the unequal access of groups and individuals to the production paths of history. They highlight how the production of traces that render some narratives possible and valorize certain artifacts of the past and not others is always accompanied by the production of silences. They tackle both the question of who imposes this silence and on whom, including studies on women refugees in Pennsylvania (Skillman), post-war Bosnian youth (Bianchi), actors and narrators of the Istrian exile (Hrobat Virgolet), or individuals and institutions involved in the patrimonialization of a religious tourist route in Croatia, the Stepinac path (Belaj).

In his contribution, Thomas McKean reminds us that silence is a verb that reveals the asymmetry of power relations, forms of violence, repression, exclusion, even eradication: "To 'silence' something is to end its communicative activity, neuter its power." However, the author also demonstrates that, as a noun, this term encompasses very different matters, which we often fail to explain in our work. Therefore, the characterization of a lacuna as "silence" might also result from a misunderstanding and thus refer to a (false) shared meaning. Thomas McKean poses the central question of the "what":

namely, what is silence? Secrecy or incompleteness? Denial, omission, erasure? Is it relative, absolute, partial or total, intimate or public? Is it a choice or an imposition? Is it a refusal or an impossibility to speak? Associated with the "weak" and the oppressed, is it not, in its ambiguity, a refuge, a force for life, for continuity, as robust as the voice to which it leaves space and which it thereby gives existence? Is it the unspeakable, the unspoken, the inaudible? Or is it the result of a misunderstanding or a lack of communication? An absence of sound and voice which, as Henri Meschonnic reminds us, is a matter of both body and language, questioning what remains of the voice when it is no longer sound and what remains of the body in written language (2005, 61)? Moreover, to what extent isn't it also a matter of the seen and the unseen?

While silence often refers to what is deliberately concealed or hidden, it is less likely to be seen in terms of what we do not want or cannot see. Maybe because "there is a shame as well as shock in looking at the close-up of a real horror […]. In each instance, the gruesome invites us to be either spectators or cowards, unable to look. Those with the stomach to look are playing a role authorized by many glorious depictions of suffering" (Sontag, 2003).

Similarly, often analyzed as a form of oppression that deprives the "excluded" of history, of a public voice and of recognition, most works define silence as a problem, a reverse of memory, a disease of history, the symptom of trauma or imbalance of power, where the communicated triumph of some becomes the silent catastrophe of others. Nevertheless, silence is more rarely challenged from the actors concerned themselves, especially when they remain silent by indifference, lack of interest, or even choice or tactics.

Do all these questions inevitably lead us to the issue of how it is happening? What point should we call the beginning of silence? How is silence created, and how does it occur? As Foucalt suggests, we must examine why "and how the decision was made, how it was accepted by everyone, and how it hurts this or that category of people" (Foucault, 1984, 56–58)? How are certain events, traces, stories, signs, and actions discarded and others not, and does a community decide what to include and exclude from remembrance and history? What is the process involved in creating the facts, assembling and recovering them, and finally giving them retrospective meaning (Trouillot, 1995)? To what extent can facts be reduced to narratives produced about them and the absence of such narratives to silence? "Facts are not created equal" as Michel-Ralph Trouillot reminds us. "Some occurrences are noted from the start; others are not. Some are engraved in individual or collective bodies; others are not. Some leave physical markers; others do not. What happened leaves traces […] that limit the range and significance of any historical narrative" (Trouillot, 1995, 28).

Recently, somebody asked me what benefits societies can obtain in erasing traces, transforming places beyond recognition, forbidding "memory," ignoring or silencing events that matter for specific communities, and telling the tale in different ways to conceal and delegitimize them better. I do not think that such a reducive approach in terms of benefits is relevant. Beyond "benefits," any attempt to silence the memory of the others might

also be the result of "enormous mobilization of political and cultural effort" that finally condemns people "to remember and remember, and remember" (Confino, 2015), whether they are silenced or are imposing silence on others.

There is a "home" where I once lived, a place whence people today gaze at their skies crossed by planes, full of weapons, towards Azerbaijan, in the ruthless war waged by this country, amid a pandemic, against Armenia. Some do not even hear or see them. Others do. While writing these few lines, their image comes vividly to my mind. This conflict is not theirs. They cover their ears, and they wish they could no longer hear the noise of daily flights, the sound of death passing over their heads, the shattering sound of the silence surrounding this conflict, barely disturbed by a few press articles. They would like to see and not see what these weapons do and that it is their people who have sold death. They dream of not forgetting, but they would also like not to remember anything. Through Skype, I see their silent faces when communicating with each of them, every time a plane passes by, thundering. I look at the silence: it is a place on a map, in Nagorno Karabagh, that has almost already left its place (Benvenisti 2002, 3); and it is a place on a face (Kaygusuz, 2009) that remains when the men are wiped from the landscape and have definitively left the scene.

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Silence and its Many Forms: A Reflective Response

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What people say, write, reveal, or represent has traditionally been the primary source of information for understanding how individuals and groups deal with their past and present. However, an emerging field of scholarship suggests that silence and silencing are equally rich and promising research areas (Biguenet 2015; Hrobat Virloget, Gousseff & Corni 2015; Kidron 2009; Rosoux & Ypersele 2011; Sue 2015; Vinitzky-Seroussi & Teeger 2010). There are many different types of silence, and this heterogeneity of silence, or "silences," is what this special issue examines and explores. The seven presented articles cover topics as varied as the power dynamics of silencing within dissonant heritagisation processes, the problem of silence in ethnographic research, and silence as a consequence of the loss of communication due to the loss of language with dementia. Faced with the myriad of in-depth case studies, one inevitably asks how we can understand and conceptualize the phenomenon of silence in our everyday social lives? While reading the articles, three fundamental questions come to mind; the question of the use of silence, of the meaning of silence, and of silence as alienation.

How can we understand the *use of silence*? Does silence always relate to forgetting, as common sense would have it, or can it also be a means to remember? How, why, and by whom is silence used? In Skillman's article, one can see the incredible array of how silence can be employed by different social actors. On the one hand, the portrait of an abusive husband silencing his wife, and on the other, migrant women using silence as a choice of self-expression, poignantly shows us how silence can be used in strikingly distinct ways; Silence can be a means of subjugation as well as a source of empowerment and agency. Power dynamics play an essential role in Belaj's study of how the Catholic Church in Croatia uses silencing. Is it possible that neither silence nor speaking is more potent on their own, and instead, that power resides with those choosing to be, or those making others, silent or vocal?

Secondly, how is *the meaning of silence* being constructed? Commemorative silence is a deliberate act designed to show respect and keep memories alive. That said, silence is also used as a means to forget and to move on. Not only that, but there are also uncomfortable or unintended silences. Therefore, it needs to be narratively created and meaningfully framed. How do we imbue meaning into silence, and why is it important? In Hrobat Virloget's article, the author reflects on the different meanings of silences that she encountered during her diverse ethnographic research experience. Silence can indicate a secret, but its meaning can also be the result of "incompatible memories, trauma, or relations between winners and the defeated" (in this volume). Further, rather than merely being an absence of sound, figurative silence is symptomatic of a loss of meaning and communication, as McKean illustrates in his contribution to dementia-related silencing.

The third theme that emerges from this collection of articles is *silence as alienation*. As much as silence can bring people together, it can also divide them. In some cases, silence can refer to a profoundly traumatic subject deemed "unspeakable." As such, silence can also be revealing of broken communication, divisions, contestations, and alienation. For example, as Bianchi's article demonstrates, remembering the Yugoslav war is highly problematic and marked by what the author calls "institutional knowledge of denial" (in this volume). The struggle to publicly articulate past violent memories indicates the friction and divisions between different ethno-national groups. Hamm and Schemmer evocatively demonstrate how a dominant national master narrative is silencing local practices and vernacular understandings of the Alps-Adriatic border region. However, the authors also remind us of the possibilities of "un-silencing" as a form of resistance.

Silence is a complex, multifaceted, and somewhat paradoxical phenomenon. On the one hand, silence is a conspicuous absence of sound, drawing attention to a void. For instance, during commemorative events, silence is often used to draw our attention to something or someone missing, as if what is commemorated should be present but is not. In this way, silence represents not only the absence of sounds but also absence in general. Hamlet's dying words "the rest is silence" feel inherently existential and anti-religious, as it suggests that there is nothing after death. To defy silence is, in a way, to defy death by remembering what would have been forgotten otherwise. On the other hand, as many articles in this special issue remind us, silence can be just as immensely powerful an instrument of expression as sound. One might even argue that in music, for example, a rest, an interval of silence in a piece of music, can be even more expressive than any accompanying notes. The untold and / or the unspeakable can be viewed as an absence of presence as well as it can be explored as an expression in its own right. In this way, silence can be loud and seen as "presence" in and of itself.

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