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Forgiving, listening, waiting: Ethics of solidarity in Kosova’s movement of civil resistance in the 1990’s

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Abstract

As the breakup of Yugoslavia in the early years of the 1990’s turned violent and pitted constituent republics against one-another, an overwhelming majority of ordinary people in Kosova embraced a societal-wide movement of civil resistance to the oppressive policies adopted by the state of Serbia. Kosova’s civil movement, which ran for almost a decade, emerged upon strong moral foundations stemming from tradition and was characterized by the invocation of an ethics of solidarity. In this paper, I elaborate on three concrete ethical and affective practices in which ordinary people were invested during this period – forgiving, listening, and waiting. I argue that a heightened degree of ethical comportment was central to the conception, as well as to the life of, the civil movement.

Keywords: *Affect, ethics, morality, solidarity, tradition, Kosova*

Introduction

In 1989 the state of Serbia acted illegally, without opposition by the federal institutions of Yugoslavia, to revoke Kosova’s status as an autonomous region with its own governing bodies. As part of so-called “special measures”, hundreds of thousands of employees of Kosova’s public institutions were forcibly removed from their workplaces and were left jobless in a state-run economic system. Thousands were imprisoned. Tens of thousands fled towards western Europe.

The response of the people of Kosova to this extraordinarily adversarial situation was unexpected. Whereas other peoples around Yugoslavia moved quickly, by taking up arms, to respond to Serbia’s growing hegemonic interests of taking full power within the federation, the people of Kosova defied the logic of violence by deciding to channel their energies towards such communal practices as the campaign for the reconciliation of blood feuds and by setting up informal institutions of solidarity in the fields of education and healthcare.

The conception and the life of the movement of civil resistance, widely embraced by the people of Kosova in the early 1990’s, has been a topic of research for a number

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of scholars (see, in particular, Clark 2000, Pula 2004, Krasniqi 2010, Maliqi 2012, Marsalevski 2016).[1] In recent years there has also appeared a growing number of activists and artists from Kosova who have looked back at the movement as a whole for inspiration and who have made noble efforts to conduct more in-depth investigation on selected segments of it.[2] The majority of these scholars, coming from different fields of research, have recognized the relevance of an ethic of solidarity as a catalyst to the early popularity of the movement but their explicit focus has largely been on attempting to underline the movement's perceived political achievements or failures – that is, its final outcome. There has been little focus, therefore, on the role of ordinary people and their everyday practices as active participants of the movement.

In a recent overview study from an anthropological point of view focused on process rather than outcome, I have argued that Kosova's movement of civil resistance was grounded in strong moral notions of solidarity derived from tradition and was sustained, in great measure, thanks to the capacity of ordinary people to affect and be affected (see Jashari 2019).[3] Drawing from the broad conceptions of tradition and affect elaborated therein, in this paper I wish to add a third layer, travelling more concrete terrain, to show how specific notions derived from tradition and the presence of affect informed the way in which ordinary people led their lives during the period. There are three ethical practices, in which ordinary people were deeply invested during this period, that I view as fundamental to the emergence and consolidation of Kosova's movement of civil resistance. These are the practices of forgiving, listening, and waiting.

Forgiving, manifested primarily in the campaign for the reconciliation of blood feuds in the earliest stage of the movement (see Neziri and Çetta 1999), is a fundamental virtue of ethical life for all human beings. It was in the act of forgiving, in emotional scenes in villages across Kosova, that an affective bond was made between individuals and families in bringing people together in a collective struggle for survival and freedom. Forgiving is naturally followed by the impulse of caring for others and listening to what they have to say.

Listening to one-another, to the elderly, to the wise, was perhaps the most important ethical feature of Kosova's movement of civil resistance. None of the institutions and practices that gave life to the movement would have been possible, I argue, without the patience of the people of Kosova to attend and listen to one-another. The affective bond that the people of Kosova built over the years with Ibrahim Rugova – who was to become the symbol of Kosova's civil resistance – was primarily based on an ethics of listening. For many years, every Friday morning, people listened to what Rugova had to say in press conferences. For all those years, his message was very similar. He urged people, time and again, to be patient and wait.

Waiting and learning to wait, I maintain, was the third ethical practice which characterized Kosova's collective struggle. In a time of convulsive tension and daily police provocation, it was through waiting that the people of Kosova sustained the movement. Waiting, as I show, is not the passive activity that it is often made to be but it requires much sacrifice and deep ethical attunement.

I refer to these practices as the embodiment of an ethics of solidarity and will discuss each of them in turn in separate sections of this paper. First, however, I will dive into a brief discussion of the complex notion of tradition, with its idiosyncratic understanding

among ordinary people in Kosova, and will attempt to draw a link between moral norms deriving from customary knowledge with a particular form of ethical formation that the people of Kosova experienced during the period of civil resistance.

Tradition: A treasure or a burden?

What does it mean to say that something has, or is rooted in, tradition? As with many other notions and concepts, the term "tradition" is extremely difficult to define. There are, however, two broad views of tradition that I take to be dominant in the contemporary public opinion: These are the views of tradition as, on the one hand, a "treasure" to be guarded and preserved for the future, and on the other, as a "burden" that is better to dispense with and leave in the past.

The first of these views, namely that which takes tradition to be a treasure, is thought to be one in which tradition serves either as a loose guide, or as an elaborate code of conduct, based upon which individuals and groups organize their lives within the close circle of the family and the vast ensemble of the society. According to this view, the transmission of customary knowledge from generation to generation is crucial for human beings to survive and lead their lives in the world. In this sense, the eminent scholar, Edward Shils (1981, 17), considers tradition to be "whatever is persistent or recurrent through transmission, regardless of the substance and institutional setting." The metaphor of transmission, however, is a bit misleading since it implies that the knowledge that is passed on remains intact and those who receive it, in turn, pass it over to others who come after, adding nothing to it. It is as if customary knowledge, be it concrete or abstract, were passed from predecessor to successor as codified information – without being put into practice at all. But as the anthropologist Tim Ingold has convincingly shown – although he is more specifically concerned with such performative endeavors as artisanship – customary knowledge is carried from one generation to the next not so much through the transmission of codified information but through what he appropriately calls the "education of attention" (Ingold 2001). By immersing themselves in the intricate process of the "education of attention," the recipients of customary knowledge are not so much handed precise information by the previous generation – as, for example, in contemporary recipe books or user guides – but are offered hints and leads to discover and create this knowledge for themselves as they mature and take on greater responsibilities in life.

This view of tradition, as a treasure which is carried over from generation to generation through the education of attention – rather than through the transmission of codified information – is one which takes customary knowledge to be something that undergoes growth through time and not something that remains static in it. In the process of growth, customary knowledge is inevitably modified. For, as Shils (1981, 14) notes: "Traditions are not independently self-reproductive or selfelaborating. Only living, knowing, desiring, human beings can enact them and reenact them and modify them." It is this view of tradition, as a growing and modifiable treasure, which I take to have been fundamental for the movement of civil resistance in Kosova.

But, first, let us do justice, albeit briefly, to the other view of tradition to which I have alluded here, namely that which takes it to be a burden rather than a treasure. In this

other view, tradition stands as a synonym for that against which individuals and groups of people must rise if they are to succeed in our modern world. Considered to be a kind of "longue durée" during which human societies lived in accordance with unchanged rules and ideas generation after generation for hundreds of years, in this perspective, tradition is commonly viewed as the opposite of such notions as freedom, progress, emancipation, and education. This charge against tradition, to some extent, has its roots in the Enlightenment. As Shils (ibid, 21) reminds us: "The pure light of reason and scientific knowledge illuminated the path of the crusaders against substantive traditionality… [it] stood in marked contrast with beliefs which were believed because they had been believed previously…"

Few places exemplify this dialectical take on tradition, as a treasure or a burden, in the same measure as Kosova and her people today. This is so, perhaps, because Kosova's society is still largely considered to be a traditional one by both defenders and detractors of tradition. Unlike the economically developed and politically emancipated societies of Western Europe, Kosova's society is still considered by most to be stuck, for better or for worse, in the thick mud of tradition. Already in 1981, Shils sharply noticed that in the modernist academic view "[t]radition seems to belong to one kind of society and be out of place in others" (1981, 18).

It was against this academic and intellectual backdrop that, while completing her anthropology dissertation of rural life in Kosova at the end of the 1980s, Janet Reineck concluded that clinging to tradition was the only way in which the people of Kosova made sense of their lives, implying, between the lines, that their inability to transcend tradition had left them far behind other peoples in the ladder of emancipation, and was even threatening their very existence as a group in the emerging order of a very complex and interconnected world of globalization. In her words:

> It is my understanding that the people of Opoja have responded to this compromised social position by seeking refuge in the one thing that offers them a sense of personal and collective dignity: Tradition. By grounding their behavior in the customary law considered passé in other parts of Yugoslavia, they see themselves as part of a unique moral community. By appropriating the absolute authority of the past, they dignify their lives.
> (Reineck 1991, 15).

Clearly, in her study, Reineck aligns herself on the side of those who view tradition as a burden. However, while this view was already dominant in Western academic thought when Reineck conducted her fieldwork in the late 1980's, it was not so among ordinary people in Kosova. For them, tradition was something they lived with every day, not something they carried in their heads as they conducted their daily affairs. As one man from the western region of Opoja, Bajram, told Reineck: "We guard the tradition because it is the law of our lives. That is all we have" (Reineck 1991, 198). For Bajram and the majority of the people of Kosova, especially those living in rural areas, tradition was, quite literally, all they had. In this context, many people to whom I have talked to in the last few years, admit that tradition for them represents "our customs" or "our way of life" which have been carried over and preserved "generation after generation"

(*brez pas brezi*). Indeed, as I have noted here and shown elsewhere (e.g., Jashari 2019), ordinary people continually invoked notions from customary knowledge in the conduct of activities as part of what I have been calling the institutions of solidarity within Kosova's movement of civil resistance.

In the remainder of this paper, therefore, I will show how this idiosyncratic understanding of customary knowledge was instrumental to creation of a heightened level of ethical comportment among ordinary people during the years of the civil resistance.

Moral norms and ethical formation

In this section I will attempt to draw a link between notions stemming from tradition – which could be referred to as moral norms and values – and the three ethical practices which were manifested in the everyday activities of ordinary people during Kosova's movement of civil resistance. In doing so, I want to follow the lead offered by the anthropologist Saba Mahmood (2005), and attempt to delineate what is entailed in the ethical formation that human beings undergo by following the norms and values of a certain tradition – in our case, the tradition of customary knowledge which informed the lives of ordinary people in Kosova during the movement in discussion.

As Mahmood (2005) notes, there exist two major conceptions of ethical formation in the scholarly and philosophical tradition of Western thought. The first, and more recent one, belongs to Enlightenment ideas and was best articulated by the renowned philosopher Immanuel Kant. For Kant, one's ethical formation is achieved exclusively through the faculty of reason. In this view, there is little attention paid to the shape and form that bodily actions take in one's ethical becoming. By contrast, in the second and much older conception, attributed to Aristotle, one's ethical formation is realized through outer behavioral forms. In the Aristotelian view of ethical becoming, Mahmood (2005, 27) notes, "you ask not what a particular ethical theory means, but what it does." The importance of emphasizing the distinction between these two conceptions of ethical formation is to note a split between reason (given by Kant) and affect (found in Aristotle). My aim here is to note that in the case of Kosova's movement, this split is untenable. My argument, in other words, is that in the process of one's ethical becoming – that is, in the process of following moral norms and values – reason and affect are closely intermingled. Indeed, offering Kosova's movement as a case in point, I have ventured to say that, in many ways, affect has the ability to become reason (see Jashari 2019).

Drawing on a number of scholars, Mahmood (2005) argues that the relationship between moral norms and the ethical practices stemming from following them, is not a straightforward one. Mahmood aptly notes that, in following them, people do not simply comply with or resist these norms. Rather, she continues, there are many ways in which one may form a relationship with a norm and the "precise embodied form that obedience to a moral code takes is not a contingent but a *necessary* element of ethical analysis in that it is a means to describing the specific constitution of the ethical subject" (2005, 29, emphasis in original). Moreover, for Mahmood, these ethical practices – including, importantly for us here, modes of comportment and spiritual exercises –

could be considered "'positive' in the sense that they are manifest in, and immanent to, everyday life" and their significance "does not [only] reside in the meanings they signify to their practitioners, but in *the work they do* in constituting the individual" (ibid, emphasis in original).

Broadly speaking, there were three moral norms, derived from tradition, which were continually invoked by leading figures during the years of Kosova's movement of civil resistance: prudence, patience, endurance. How were these norms manifested, or translated if you will, into ethical practices in the course of the movement? How did their abstract understanding, among ordinary people, turn into a powerful tool of resistance that they could actually put into use in their everyday activities during the period? How did obedience to these norms enable ordinary people to turn to action (or restrain from it) and come together? Can subordination to norms, in Mahmood's terms, endow people with a capacity for action? Can submission to discipline and hierarchy – in our case, to tradition and its norms – allow people to acquire the ability to resist? These are some of the questions I hope to implicitly engage with in the following sections while discussing the ethical practices of forgiving, listening, waiting.

Forgiving

One of the practices which had an immense effect on the ethical formation of the people of Kosova during the early years of the conception of the movement of resistance was the impulse towards forgiveness. As I have already noted, the campaign for the reconciliation of families caught in blood feuds – through the elaborate process of the forgiveness of blood – was an early catalyst that drove people closer to one-another and showed the way for unity in the face of adversity.[4] What I will consider in this section is the way in which this process actually occurred and how the practice of forgiving empowered people, through the shaping of their ethical comportment, in the struggle for civil resistance.

Persuading families – and, in many cases, one family member after another – to forgive the blood, and thus pardon the murder of a loved one, is a difficult and laborious undertaking. Indeed, the group of students who initiated the campaign for reconciliation were very much aware of the difficulty of this task when they decided to reach out for help to elderly professors, intellectuals and community and religious leaders. They knew, in other words, that in order to persuade people to come out and forgive the blood, they had to have the knowledge and courage to appeal to other faculties, in addition to pure reason. Forgiveness, as noted by the eminent philosopher Roger Scruton (2017, 83-86), is not just a simple act whereby the person who has been wronged offers it arbitrarily. It is, rather, a long and difficult process which requires hard work and sacrifice. As one of the mediators in the process of reconciliation put it: "Only those who have gone through it may understand, but there's nothing more difficult than the offering of forgiveness" (Gashi 2016). Many of the mediators – referred to as reconcilers (*pajtimtarë*) – have noted in writings and interviews that their mission entailed "removing the stone from people's hearts," "liberating hearts," or "moving people's interior world." It was a mission, therefore, that was to be accomplished through a technique of affective persuasion and with the aim of changing people's minds by warming their hearts. It

was, furthermore, a mission to instill, though affective actions, an ethics of solidarity and camaraderie among individuals and families.

As recounted by one of the mediators, the Catholic priest Don Lush Gjergji (2015), the first few cases were the most difficult ones and needed much persuasive work. He remembers many people, whom they were persuading toward forgiveness, asking the mediators such questions as: "Are you really Albanian?" "How can you ask us to offer forgiveness?" And he also remembers that many of the initial responses were swift: "We do not forgive!" But the affective techniques, to which I have pointed above, were instrumental in persuading people and families to change their position. Consider the following two cases, as examples of the way in which these techniques of affective persuasion were put into practice.

The first comes from Hava Shala (2016), one of the students of the group that initiated the campaign for reconciliation and one of the few women activists within the campaign. In a recollection, she notes that in order to take the oath for the forgiveness of blood, the mediators (made up of men, but also including herself and another woman activist) in the majority of cases discussed exclusively with the men of the families in traditional men's chambers (*odas*). However, she tells of a case in the village of Isniq, in western Kosova, in which reconciliation was not achieved even after the mediators had managed to take the oath (*besa*) for forgiveness from the men of the family which had been wronged. The men, she recounts, argued that even if they gave the oath for forgiveness, the wife and children of the man who had been killed might disagree and break the oath in their quest for revenge. They claimed, Shala continues, that the wife and the children had to be persuaded in the same fashion as they had. This was unusual and unprecedented, as Shala aptly notes, because the mediators were well aware that it was the men who would ultimately make the final decision (especially in a matter of such importance as this). The way in which Shala interprets this case is that, even though the men's minds had been changed, their hearts needed more time. And thus, they – at least, to some extent – used the wife and children as an excuse to get more time and postpone their decision. Shala then recounts how she and another woman mediator went, with the men's permission, and persuaded the wife to agree not to break the oath for forgiveness. Aware of the insecure future of her young children, who could be trapped in the cycle of revenge killings, the wife did not take long to offer her promise of not breaking the oath for forgiveness. But when the mediators went back to the men's chamber with the positive news, the men ignored them and still said, No! After some time had passed, however, Shala remembers that the men called on the mediators themselves and offered the hand of forgiveness in a public reconciliation ceremony.

The other case I want to mention is recounted by Lala Meredith-Vula (2016), a British-Kosovan artist who was present (as a student) in some of the discussions between the mediators and wronged families, as well as in many public reconciliation ceremonies. She recounts how, in one case, the mediators had spent hours in a men's chamber, trying to persuade the men of the family to offer the oath for the forgiveness of blood. With no success, Meredith-Vula remembers, they had tried all the known and possible forms of verbal persuasion that they usually invoked during the discussions. They had appealed to the men with calls to reason. They had asked them to consider the future of their family. They asked them to offer the hand of forgiveness for the

sake of Kosova's youth. They mentioned the need for unity of the people in a period of adversity. But it was to no avail. To the surprise of those present, Anton Çetta, in his distinguished position as head of mediators, politely asked the elderly men of the wronged family to leave the *oda* and discuss only between themselves in another room. After some time, when they came back to the chamber, Meredith-Vula recounts, they announced that they would forgive the blood. She remembers that crying and hugging ensued and the process of forgiveness was thus initiated. I have picked these two cases, out of many others, merely to illustrate the elaborate process of seeking and offering forgiveness. The affective techniques used by the mediators went beyond mere verbal persuasion. As shown in both cases, in making their decisions, the two groups of men were persuaded by words, as much as by the lack of them.

Fig. 1. Mediators persuading a wronged family to forgive the blood in the *oda*. (Reproduced from Neziri and Çetta 1999)

These long and difficult processes, which in most cases culminated in public ceremonies of reconciliation, had a great impact on the ethical conduct of members of families from both ends of the divide. On one hand, members from the families of victims opened their hearts toward forgiveness, while on the other, those from the families of perpetrators were given the chance to make amends. The process of forgiveness and reconciliation, therefore, directed individuals and families towards solidarity and a heightened degree of ethical comportment in the years following – those of civil resistance.

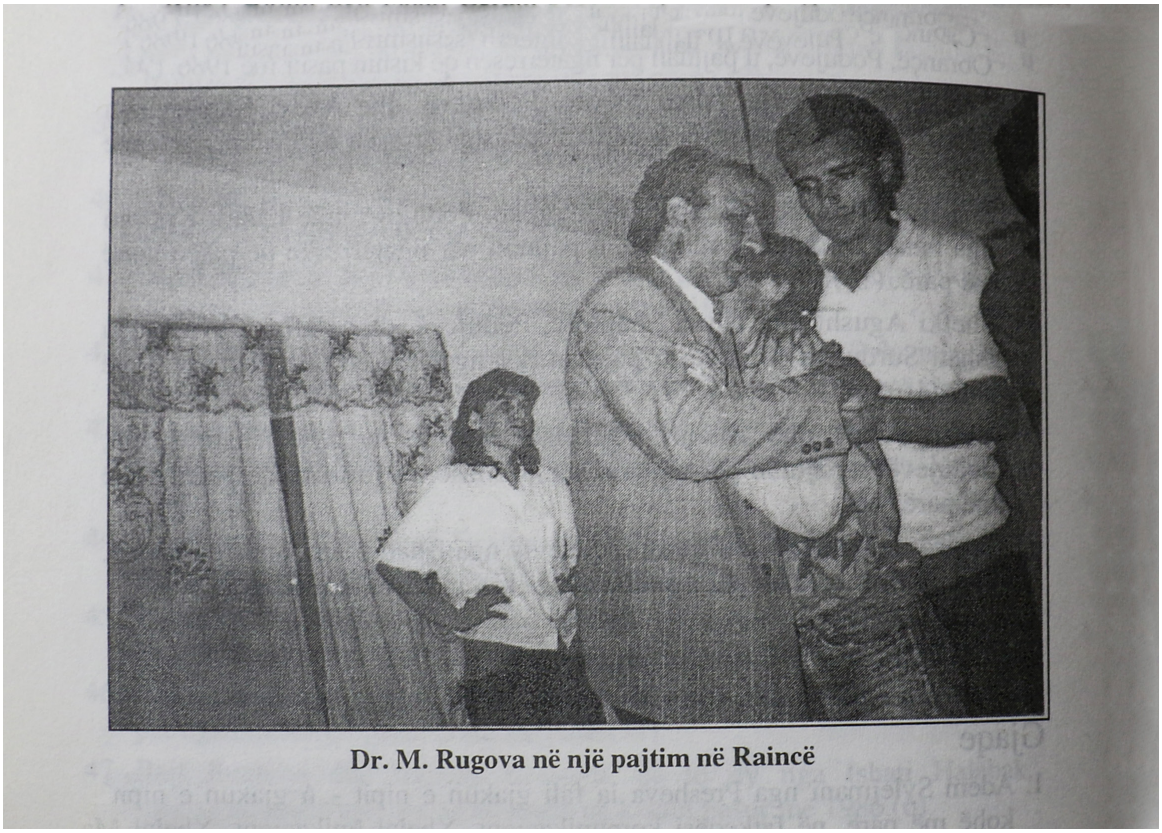

Fig. 2. Mediator embraces a member of a wronged family that has forgiven the blood. (Reproduced from Neziri and Çetta 1999)

Listening

If engaging in the difficult, yet ultimately liberating, process of the forgiveness of blood marked the basis upon which many ordinary people in Kosova turned to a renewed cultivation of affective and ethical comportment, it is in the practices of attentive listening and patient waiting that this comportment was best exemplified and is most easily observed and understood. In this section, I will attempt to analyze how the practice of listening to one-another, as well as to those with moral and intellectual authority, was instrumental to the work of the institutions of solidarity to which I have been referring to. The practice of listening that I am concerned with here, however, is a specific one. It is, thus, around the ethical dimension of this practice, with its instrumental importance for the shaping of the comportment of the people of Kosova during the movement of civil resistance, that I want to weave the present discussion.

Many scholars have, in recent years, noted that in the modernist conception, – one stemming primarily from Enlightenment ideas – hearing has come to signify a passive activity as opposed to the more active one of seeing. It is often argued that while one deliberately chooses what to see, the sounds that reach a person, more often than not, come to him arbitrarily. In this understanding, moreover, the act of listening, with the aural subjugation and the passivity that it entails, is thought to be threatening to the calm reflection that is necessary for rational decision-making. The anthropologist Charles

Hirschkind (2006, 14) has noted how, for critics of the ear such as Immanuel Kant, "the very phenomenological structure of the act of listening came to be seen as a danger to the autonomy of the enlightened liberal subject…" More to the point, as Hirschkind (Ibid.) argues, for Kant and his contemporaries, it was only through a detachment from "the spiritual sense" (as hearing has been called) that one may give full authority to the faculty of reason.

The style of listening that I am referring to here is somewhat different from the conventional understanding of the practice of listening, as a detached and individual activity. While I want to keep some features that are closely associated with the conventional view, namely a heightened degree of aural attentiveness, I also want to follow Hirschkind (2006, 25) in considering how the act of listening "recruits the body in its entirety." In the context of Kosova's tradition, the practice of listening could be positioned within the elaborate arrangements of hierarchy and discipline that the tradition entails. In this kind of arrangement, listening is to be understood as a form of respect and obedience, by certain members of the family and society, toward other, usually elderly, members – and the norms and values that the latter have attained through the experience of life. For example, young people are continuously instructed to listen attentively to what the elderly have to say, as well as to the way in which they communicate their thoughts (e.g., the tone of the voice, the bodily gestures, the pauses in between thoughts). Moreover, in this arrangement, not only are the young instructed to listen attentively, but they are forbidden to interrupt the elderly speaker or confront his or her opinions. This is echoed well in the words of a man who, lamenting that these values were in decline, told the anthropologist Janet Reineck (1991, 195): "Before, there was no hot water. There was little to eat. But there was discipline. People listened to each other. When the master of the house spoke, everyone listened." In a recent personal experience, while visiting as a guest (along with other scholars and students) with a family in the western part of Kosova, I had the chance to witness how the head of the family, an elderly man, fervently reprimanded his married son for interrupting him as he was immersed in telling a story about the village to the respected guests. It is, thus, this form of listening – one that could easily stand in for respect and obedience – that I am concerned with here and which was influential for the shaping of the ethical comportment of the people of Kosova during the movement of civil resistance.

Writing in 1991, Reineck noticed a predisposition among the people of Kosova to listen and show respect to one-another in hierarchical arrangements (primarily based on age and gender), and analyzed it in terms of acquiescence, a "feature of Albanian consciousness which guides experience and perception" (1991, 186). Reineck considered this attitude to be restrictive and ultimately fatalistic for the near future of Kosova's society in the modern and globalized world. Yet, despite Reineck's grim conclusions, it was precisely this attitude of respect and obedience – expressed in the practice of ethical listening – which came to have an important role only a few years after her study of Kosova's society. It was through the practice of attentive listening, and in the willingness to submit to moral authority, that the people of Kosova managed to set up elaborate institutions of solidarity during the movement of resistance.

There is an abundance of examples of the way in which ordinary people were deeply immersed, with their entire being, in the ethical practice of listening. Take, for example,

the predisposition of ordinary people to refuse to engage in violence; their willingness to comply with an elaborate arrangement of voluntary work and taxation system; their enthusiasm for turning their houses into homes for education and healthcare; the humility with which they embraced the advice of the elderly, the intellectuals, and religious leaders (see Jashari 2019). Yet it was an attentive listening to the figure of Rugova – to what he had to say, and especially, the way in which he said it – that shone above all other areas in which ordinary people were immersed in the practice of listening. As I have shown elsewhere (Jashari 2019, 68), Rugova came to embody a moral and intellectual authority that ordinary people acknowledged and respected. When Rugova spoke – and even when he remained silent – ordinary people listened attentively. This form of ethical listening among ordinary people turned into faith in Rugova that, as Clark (2000, 116) has noted, "[as a] wise, brave and careful man [who] knew what was best…" And what was best, Rugova had argued, was to be patient and wait.

Waiting

Having gone through the difficult process of forgiveness, and with a renewed predisposition for respect toward those with moral and intellectual authority through the practice of attentive listening, ordinary people in Kosova seemed to have attained the necessary capacity to turn to the next phase of their ethical formation in the movement of non-violent resistance: waiting. Now, conventionally speaking, waiting is, of course, considered to be the most passive activity that a person can be engaged in. Indeed, in most cases, it is not considered to be an activity at all. It is highly unlikely to hear a sentence such as: "I am very excited that today I am going to be waiting!" But, waiting is something that human beings are continually engaged in, and have to persistently work at, during our lifetimes. Whether it be for a date to show up, a bus to arrive, a job offer to be made, a flower to bloom, a tree to grow, or water to boil, the practice of waiting is a fundamental component of our inseparable social and biological life. Waiting, in this sense, is a practice that must be learned as children and recognized and honed as adults. It is this understanding of waiting, as a life-long practice, that I am concerned with in this section.

In the case of Kosova's movement of civil resistance, I want to suggest that learning to wait could be considered as morally-informed and an ethical practice. In Kosova's tradition, as with the practice of listening, waiting could be said to also denote respect for, and obedience to, moral norms and authority. Making note of this feature, Clark (2000, 31) had this to say: "There are strong pressures to conform in Albanian society, each person feeling observed by their social circle (rreth), usually preferring to wait until it reaches consensus to change a norm rather than acting individually to breach it." Another feature, found in Kosova's tradition, which is closely linked to the practice of waiting, is the notion of suffering. Even today, many people will acknowledge that, in order to succeed in life, you have to endure and suffer first. As Reineck (1991, 193) learned, with regards to the presence of this feature among the people of Kosova: "Vuajtje, suffering, is considered a fact of life," she concluded. It is this type of waiting, as an acknowledgment of suffering and a will to endure, that I am attempting to emphasize here.

Many scholars have railed against a perceived passivity which is believed to have permeated the movement, particularly in its later years. Clark (2000, 117), for example, has criticized Rugova and other leading figures for failing to build upon the initial determination that the movement achieved, arguing that "politics 'as if' became reduced to a test of endurance – better than war, but a strategy of waiting rather than empowerment." More to the point, he questioned political and community leaders for their attitude of "extreme passivity, waiting for something to happen on the international stage, while taking a posture of laissez-faire on improving daily life in Kosovo" (ibid., 201). Yet, as I mentioned in the introduction, Clark and other scholars of Kosova's movement of civil resistance – whose concern is more with outcome rather than process – have unfortunately overlooked a central point with regards to the process of ethical formation that the people of Kosova underwent during the period. It is, therefore, valid to speak of this period as one of patient waiting – in the sense just described above. As early as 1992, speaking to the New York Times, Rugova was already certain that a focus on the moral sphere, with an immersion of ordinary people in ethical practices, was necessary for the period: "We know that if we wait patiently, we will win," he told the magazine, which went on to describe him – appropriately enough – as "a gaunt and ascetic-looking man" (Kaufman 1992). Writing at around the same time and meditating on the renewed predisposition of the people of Kosova to struggle and resist by working on their ethical comportment, rather than channeling their energy on a violent confrontation with the state, Maliqi seized the point well when he said: "Despite these hardships, Albanians have gained moral and political satisfaction from this situation, as well as confidence needed for long-term total resistance. Unlike Serbs, they can wait" (1998, 110, emphasis added).

Waiting, therefore, was not a matter of passivity during Kosova's movement of civil resistance. It was, rather, a conscious and ethical posture. And it was one that ordinary people had to continually work at to achieve and maintain. As Salla (1995, 3) has argued, this posture – including, in addition to waiting, other ethical practices such as forgiving and listening – became essential to the struggle of the people of Kosova and "served to strengthen their moral position in dealings with Serbs and was a source of renewed determination to continue the non-violent campaign."

Conclusion

In this paper, I have attempted to argue that it was through the ethical practices of forgiving, listening, and waiting that the people of Kosova were immersed in the movement of civil resistance to targeted state oppression by Serbia. Far from being of only partial utility to the movement, as most scholars of this period have suggested, here I have attempted to show that the moral superiority of the people of Kosova – achieved through the process of ethical formation – was central both to the conception, as well as to the life of, the movement. Therefore, in addition to recognizing its foundation upon moral norms derived from tradition, Kosova's movement of civil resistance must also be viewed from the perspective of a heightened level of affective and ethical practices. Indeed, an anthropologically-informed examination of the events that occurred during the movement, rather than a mere focus on the movement's outcomes, has shown that it

was precisely by relying on the presence of affect, and by cultivating ethical practices, that ordinary people in Kosova played an instrumental role in the movement of civil resistance.

**Note on figures used*: Figure 1 and Figure 2 are reproduced with permission from the publisher, the Institute of Albanology in Prishtina, acquired via personal correspondence with the director of the institute, Dr. Hysen Matoshi, and with the editor of the book, Dr. Zymer Neziri.

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ENDNOTES

1 For a detailed chronology of the key events during the period of Kosova's movement of non-violent resistance, see Clark (2000) and Jashari (2019).
2 Some examples here include: An archive of interviews with activists from the period of the non-violent movement created by the Oral History Kosovo initiative; a series of journalistic articles about life in Kosova during the 1990s published by the Kosovo 2.0 magazine; the architectural artwork "The City is Everywhere," which represented Kosova at the 2018 Venice Biennale; the documentary videos "Drums of Resistance" and "Kurrizi."
3 This artcle draws from my unpublished MA theses (see Jashari 2019).
4 Blood feuds or "honor killings" have been present in Kosova – particularly in her western region – for a long time. They are tied to the code of customary law and are considered to have been an effective way of keeping and restoring social order in communities of the past where state power was weak or lacking (see Yamamoto 1999; for a recent scholarly article on the phenomenon, see Pratt 2013). It should be noted that the practice of the "forgiveness of blood" (pardoning for the murder of a family member) has emerged in parallel to blood feuds and is even practice in contemporary contexts in Kosova.

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Arbër Jashari is a researcher and ethnographer from Kosova. In the past, Arbër made a few short films and was a recipient of fellowships by such institutions as the Flaherty Film Seminar (2014). In 2019 he earned an MA degree in Anthropology from Southern Illinois University (SIU) where he studied through a Fulbright fellowship. His thesis, on Kosova's movement of civil resistance in the 1990's, was recognized with the Arshi Pipa Award by the Society for Albanian Studies (SAS). Arber's short-term plans include academic studies related to cultural practices of mourning in Kosova as well as the publication of a biographical book motivated by his mother's struggle for inheriting her parents' property.