

Common history, divided memories: Slovenian and Austrian struggle for the Carinthian past

Maruša Pušnik

Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana, marusa.pusnik@fdv.uni-lj.si

ABSTRACT

National identity and memory are created and sustained through various representations in a society, also museum exhibitions are among these. Nation states use the museums to display their present and past realities, to glorify their culture and to mobilize and discipline their national subjects. With the help of discursive analytical methods, based on textual and semiotic analyses, and with the help of fieldwork research, the study examines how two museum exhibitions in Austrian and Slovenian Carinthia represent the same historical event from 1920s Carinthia, how they create glorious and opposing national histories in order to produce obedient Slovenian or Austrian national subjects who remember the same past events in two differing ways and how these representations organize the lives of the Carinthian people. The author concludes that the analyzed museums have important roles in the shaping of the uniform national memories and identities, but Carinthian Slovenians, who live at the border between both museum representations are constantly subjugated to two different interpretations of the same past event and they continually negotiate between two different national knowledges about the past and constitute their identity in relation to both national memories and perceptions of the past.

KEYWORDS: national identification, remembrance processes, history, museum, borderland, Austria, Slovenia, Carinthia

Introduction: Connecting museum, history and nation

The memory of a nation is created through various representations in a society, and museum representations are so. Museum exhibitions reflect specific versions of history and are prepared according to the dominant discursive regimes in which they are situated. Specific social, cultural, political, historical, economic or geographical contexts might influence the arrangement and the content of the exhibition as well as the ways in which history or reality is represented in the museum. The purpose of this paper is to disclose how museum representations of the past reproduce and sustain the dominant national

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discursive order in a specific national society, what kind of national memories they shape as well as what kind of national identifications they offer to their visitors and to the national community in general. Jenny Edkins (2003: 130) argues that such spaces as museums, statues, commemorations etc. remember for the community. They organize national knowledge about the past and usually rearrange this knowledge according to the present anxieties and priorities of the community. The museum is not there necessarily to be visited by visitors or tourists, rather 'it is enough, for the national conscience, that it is there' (Edkins 2003: 130). Forms of such memorialisation as museums reinforce the idea of a nation itself since it presents specific national history and offers clear and simple stories about 'Who We Are' and 'Where We Came From'.

National memory is thus a form of collective memory, which is a result of various representations of the past that circulate in the society. The concept of collective memory is borrowed from Maurice Halbwachs, who argues that collective memory is a social construct that needs others for its existence and it has to be continually fed from collective sources:

It is in this sense that there exists a collective memory and social frameworks for memory; it is to the degree that our individual thought places itself in these frameworks and participates in this memory that it is capable of the act of recollection. [...] But it is necessary to show that, outside of dreams, in reality the past does not recur as such, that everything seems to indicate that the past is not preserved but is reconstructed on the basis of the present. Collective frameworks are, to the contrary, precisely the instruments used by the collective memory to reconstruct an image of the past which is in accord, in each epoch, with the predominant thought of the society (1992: 38-40).

The museum is, therefore, treated as a site of memory, in Pierre Nora's terms, as an exercise in nostalgia, offering selective images of the past and thereby shaping memories: "Remembering has become a matter of meticulously minute reconstruction. Memory has begun to keep records: delegating the responsibility for remembering to the archive" (Nora 1992: 8). Remembrance ceremonies, monuments, festivals and museums can in this regard tell stories of a glorious national past, of courage and sacrifice. National museums are spaces where the meanings of the past for the national community are established and fixed.

In this paper, I will concentrate on the function and the role of representations in two national historical museum exhibitions that represent the same historical event but in totally different manners. The event is the 1920 plebiscite in the province of Carinthia that defined the border between two nation-states, Slovenia and Austria. This historical event is still one of the most important national signifiers in Carinthia since it continues to order the everyday lives of Carinthians around the border and it still structures the relations between Slovenia and Austria. It is deeply rooted in the collective memory of the Carinthian people and of the Austrian nation in general as a glorious historical event as well as of the Slovenian nation but as a painful historical event. The plebiscite was held on 10 October 1920 and was preceded by violent and intense election campaigns in both states. Carinthia

was divided into a southern Zone A and a northern Zone B and since the plebiscite in Zone A already decided that Carinthia should become part of the then German Austria, with 22,025 (59%) votes for Austria and 15,278 (41%) votes for the then Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenians, the plebiscite in Zone B did not even take place. In 1920, Carinthia officially became a part of Austria and despite the fact that Carinthian Slovenians were granted the status of an official minority; the construction of the Austrian nation triggered the national struggle and nationalisation of all Austrian citizens.¹

Both museums are located in Carinthian border villages, but one is in Slovenia and the other one in Austria. They are dedicated to the same historical event that is still today a subject of public debate in Slovenia and Austria, but each museum represents the event from a different point of view and legitimizes different definitions of the past as well as different national knowledge. According to Hobsbawm (1997: 5), history is the raw material of nationalist or ethnic ideologies and, in this sense, museums' interpretations of the past become central characteristics of national rhetoric. History can be mobilized to support a specific image of a national identity. The analyzed museum representations have important roles in the shaping of the past and in the creation of collective memories and, therefore, of national identities since they are involved in the struggle over a dominant position in the interpretation of the same past event. Carinthian Slovenians, who live on the border, are thus constantly subjugated to two different interpretations of the same past event and have to continually contest and negotiate between the two different national knowledges that these exhibitions offer. In this respect, I am analyzing the Slovenian and Austrian museum representations with the help of discursive (textual and visual) analysis to disclose how two different exhibitions narrate the stories about the same past event and how they select, instrumentalise and legitimise specific interpretations of the past in order to generate broad public consensus and build ideological identity in accordance with two dominant national discursive regimes: Slovenian and Austrian. Moreover, I also try to illustrate how such representations and interpretations of the past influence the processes of identification for both dominant national societies, Slovenia and Austria, and in what way they influence the community of Carinthian Slovenians and their identification as they manage their daily lives in the spaces in between both dominant nation building discourses that the museum exhibitions offer.

Museum as a popular national historian

It is important to stress that today museums are not just educational spaces but are becoming a part of the leisure and tourist industries. People visit them massively to examine the exhibitions for new knowledge but also for pleasure and enjoyment. Museums function as mass media, bringing specific information and offering specific meanings of

¹ Today, Carinthia is divided between three nation-states, Slovenia, Austria, and Italy. A substantial part of the Slovenian-speaking population that lives in Austrian Carinthia is characterized by the Slovenian state as a Slovenian minority and that is also how they characterize themselves. Accordingly, ever since Carinthia became a part of Austria, the images of Carinthia as 'a grief of Slovenia' and 'the lost Slovenian land' have been dominating Slovenian people's perceptions of Carinthia and of the national border there.

the past to their visitors. Nestor Garcia Canclini (1995: 115) and Andrew Barry (1998) assert that they also create widely popular histories through various attractive forms of representational techniques and narratives. They increasingly combine instruments of education with means of entertainment, such as various multi-media presentations.

Accordingly, the two analyzed museum exhibitions of the plebiscite function as media with specific organizational and narrative structures and distinctive iconographies. The permanent exhibition of the plebiscite, entitled the *Austrian Defensive Struggle* in the small border village Völkermarkt/Velikovec in Austria was first set up in 1970. Today the collection symbolizes the Austrian defensive struggle that ended with this final act: the plebiscite and with the incorporation of Carinthia into Austria in 1920. The other exhibition, the permanent exhibition of the plebiscite, which presents the Slovenian/Yugoslav struggle in small border village Libelîe in Slovenia, was opened in 1997. It was supported by the Slovenian state and was established as a response to the Austrian museum on the 75th anniversary of the annexation of this border village to Slovenia/Yugoslavia. This village was at first annexed to Austria with the plebiscite in 1920 and after two years and several public demonstrations it was annexed back to Slovenia in 1922. As the museum curator explained, this exhibition was opened as an attempt to provide more objective presentation of the past in comparison to the one in Austria and to present more a balanced picture of the historical events of the plebiscite.

When one enters these two museums, one symbolically enters two different representations, two different memories and two different national pasts. Each of them describes the same historical event differently and supports its own particular historical knowledge, which is in accordance with its own national discursive dispositive to promote its own nation building processes. When one enters the Austrian plebiscite museum one symbolically enters the plebiscite itself and the annexation of the great part of Carinthia to Austria. However, when one enters the Slovenian plebiscite museum one symbolically enters the events that occurred after the plebiscite and the final annexation of this village back to Slovenia. The plebiscite museums offer different stories and help to shape specific memories for the members of Slovenian and Austrian national community. They both promote and foster selective remembering, telling their visitors what to remember and what to forget. Both exhibitions are visited by groups of tourists from all over each country, but their target audiences, as explained in both museums, are primarily schoolchildren. Since it is known that universal education goes hand in hand with the dissemination of national ideas, as Ernest Gellner (1991: 249) argues, museums in this regard function as educational apparatuses and define a limited collective memory and at the same time also a bounded membership of national community. This community can be defined as imagined community, to borrow from Benedict Anderson (1995: 6-7), with definite territorial and symbolic boundaries and members of this community share certain fantasies about the social reality, the world around them and about the past. Museum representations in this regard help in creating, adapting and shaping these fantasies about the past that members of the community share among themselves and, on this basis, imagine a national community. This means that neither of these museums can be perceived only as the preserver of the past; above all, they both store, select, control, suppress or privilege, legitimize and instrumentalise specific meanings and memories of that past.

The museum as a medium for mass audience and as a site of memory is a place that helps people remember the past and form their identities (Nora 1992: 6). Entering the museum is thus not only an act of looking at the past, but also an act of searching for an identity. The museum's representations have strong symbolic impact on the construction of the past and also have important consequences for the collective responses of the people. They structure the perception that people, who visit these museums, have of the past, of themselves and of their social milieu. This means that the analyzed museums, as specific national forms of remembrance, create specific national knowledge about the past and in a way 'publicly accuse' individuals of remembering particular things, of having particular knowledge, of acting in a particular sense, and of perceiving the past and the world in a particular way.

Visualizing and praising national history in museum

The museum is primarily a visual medium where the photography (and nowadays increasingly video materials) is one of the most common and explicit narrators of the past. Photographic images also occupy a central position in the case of both analyzed museums and in this regard visualize the not only the past but also the nation itself. There is an abundance of gathered, selected and displayed photographic material. The photographic images that occupy the larger part of the exhibitions immediately attract visitors' gaze and take the visitors into the past plebiscite reality while stirring up their fantasies through vivid presentations of the plebiscite events. They are very persuasive and easily attainable visual forms of knowledge and since all the photographs are black and white, they look old and are, because of that, perceived as authentic. They are granted additional historical documentary value when placed in the space of the museum and function as legitimate evidences of the past.

Photographs in museums are very persuasive media of evidence; they become believable because our/western culturally tutored experience suggests that vision cannot be mistaken and that seeing is the prerequisite of the believing. Moreover, as Hanno Hardt (2002: 320) argues, seeing is becoming more than believing: the image is becoming our world. In this regard, Tony Bennett (1995: 15-29) maintains that a visitor of museum is treated as an individualized source of sight and the museum as the sphere of visibility. Photographs, therefore, function as reflections of the past and have the ability to transform ambiguous knowledge of the past into the truth, as presenting objective facts (Slater 1995: 222-223).

Photographs rouse specific remembrance processes since they act as if they are witnessing the past. Hardt (2004: 5) describes that images are becoming representations of reality and, once they pass through human mind, they become reality. However, photographs do not make the past plebiscite reality immediately accessible for the visitors; this is just an illusion, because they are not reflections of the past but only its representations. Therefore, they make only its images immediately accessible. Photographic narratives in both museums are the entrance points through which visitors experience past events because they foster the remembering of pictured events but also the forgetting of non-pictured events.

The photographs in both exhibitions are ordered chronologically and guide visitors through the exhibition story as a meaningful composition. They unfold the past events in front of visitors' eyes. Photographs can, in this sense, firmly reconstruct the past since they stand for linearity when telling people that they just stand there as true past events and that they only reflect them. They help to create an impression that time moves linearly from past to present. In this sense, they also connect the nation's contemporary situation with a specific past. They produce linear times, which are the times of the nation-states (Anderson 1995: 22-36), and the visitors can imagine their own pasts since they can clearly draw parallels between the present and the past. Moreover, such linear times also confirm the nation's present anxieties and priorities since only those interpretations of the past are chosen that confirm the present situation. Such museum representations stand out as reminders of historical public moments and confirm specific historical narratives. Photographic representation thus rouses specific remembrance processes since it acts as a kind of natural language but it always selects parts from the visible world that are afterwards represented as a pure reflection of the past itself. Photos in the museums retroactively constitute this past and they do this always from the perspective of the present interests. That is why museum exhibitions tell more about the present choices over the past than they tell about the past itself. Michel Foucault (1995: 31) acknowledges that history always tells more about the present than about the past, the analysis of such museum representations of the past can be used also as indicators of the present socio-political context and national identity politics. In order to examine how museum exhibitions shape specific knowledge of the past and promote specific national identity positions, one has to reveal which specific knowledge of the past is chosen, how it is narrated, who is the narrator, which discourses guide the narration and what present interests are behind this version of the past.

Nationalist ritualisation and the museum's struggles over the past

The museum exhibitions of the plebiscite seek to establish particular views that support particular beliefs, knowledge and particular nation-building projects. The contents and styles of the two exhibitions inform public understanding differently and shape people's collective memories in the same way. For example, both museums are visually and textually arranged by specific topics of the plebiscite event. The arrangement of topics is, at the same time, the agenda for the constitution of memory. The museum in Slovenia visually emphasizes peoples' mass gatherings against the newly set border with the plebiscite, and the peoples' frustrations that are reflected on their faces. In contrast, the museum in Austria does not even mention these events, but pictures only official celebrations after the plebiscite, Carinthian authorities' speeches and happy people with smiles on their faces. Museum representations of the plebiscite events are practices that reproduce stories of national glory and heroism in both cases and continually draw borders between two national communities.

Both examples show how state hegemonic power can control and subjugate people's knowledge about the past, their identities and memories. To use Antonio Gramsci's

words (1972: 351-370), the cultural and ideological relations in societies consist in the struggle for hegemony – for moral, cultural, intellectual and, thereby, political leadership over the whole of society. A space of struggles for hegemony is thus a space for winning the consent given by the majority of population about what it means to be a Slovenian or Austrian, for instance. According to the Gramsci's idea of hegemonic struggle, Slovenian and Austrian nationalisms are in constant collision and they strive to reach psychological validity, also through museum's representations, when "[...] they 'organise' human masses, and create the terrain on which men move, acquire consciousness of their position, struggle, etc." (1971: 377). Both national museums in this way not only impose their ideas upon visitors but also teach them how to talk, what to think, with whom to identify and whom to hate because "[...] every relationship of 'hegemony' is necessarily an educational relationship" (ibid.: 350). Both museums teach people how one should be Austrian or Slovenian, they tell them specific stories about the past that are concordant with the present national situation.

Furthermore, photographs in museums are always carefully selected and the selection process also draws the boundaries of the national identities and memories. Some past events or their pieces are selected and granted remembrance, while some others are ignored and silenced. In the Austrian museum, there is a huge and impressive colour mural. It is actually a reproduction of a few photographs that stand next to it and show the identical picture but in documentary black and white. The painting and the photographs show a mass of people waiting to drop their voting leaflets into a ballot box on the day of the plebiscite. In the painting, it is clearly visible that the group of people holds green leaflets in their hands, which cannot be visible in the black and white photographs. Green leaflets represent their decisions to vote for Austria. In the painting, no one holds the white leaflet to vote for Yugoslavia/Slovenia, and this produces the impression that all Carinthians consensually voted green for Austria. The forty one percent of Carinthians who voted for Yugoslavia/Slovenia are excluded from the painting, and thereby symbolically excluded from the Austrian museum story and Austrian national memory. Historical realities that are very complex and enigmatic are simplified and suited to the present Austrian nation building processes. The evocation of memory in the museum's historical narrative in this way reduces knowledge and encourages forgetting. Museums thus not only remember but also forget.

Every act of remembrance is also an act of forgetting. Tessa Morris-Suzuki in this regard talks about the 'historiography of oblivion' which can be found in various contemporary forms of representation, "[...] whose purpose is not simply to 'revise' understandings of the past, but specifically to obliterate the memory of certain events from public consciousness" (2005: 8). National historiographies are historiographies of oblivion since they are very selective about what to remember and what to push into oblivion. The Austrian national historiography thus puts aside the knowledge about the past of the Carinthian Slovenian minority in Austrian Carinthia since it does not fit very well into the story of ethnic Austrian evolution; moreover, the Slovenian minority in Austria is a disturbing subject for its nation building processes and, therefore, the past has to be revised accordingly. The Slovenian national historiography has to tone down the plebiscite itself since this is a part of the history that Slovenian state cannot be proud of, since it lost a

substantial amount of the Carinthian land. For this reason, the plebiscite itself is pictured very negatively in the Slovenian historiography.

When the museums are considered as being representatives of either Slovenianness or Austrianness, the photographs perform the nationalist ritualisation function. Even a single photograph can function as a signifier of these two categories. National historical museums thus resort to the nationalist ritualisation of culture, as Canclini (1995: 123) shows, when the concentration of diverse objects becomes a first basis for the monumentalisation of national patrimony. National cultures have to be protected and the museum is a space where the knowledge of the nation can be preserved and displayed.

In the same sense, another important mechanism is the unfolding of the exhibitions' photographic stories. This unfolding fuses the isolated events and visually positions them to be perceived as directly related components. In this sense, a specific event and its actors can be perceived as the cause or the outcome of some other event although both events might have been unrelated when they occurred in specific historical context. However, in the museum narratives they are represented as being crucially connected. In the Austrian museum, the photographs of the Slovenian soldiers in the attack positions with their machine guns pointed towards the visitors are followed by the photographs of a ruined house. If the story is followed in this order, Slovenians can be perceived as cruel attackers who destroyed the home of a sad looking innocent family, standing in front of their ruined house. The signification of these photographs is established only through their proximity to other photographs in the space of the museum. For example, the visitor can establish that the house was destroyed by Slovenian soldiers only because the previous image pictures the attacking Slovenians. There are no other indicators in the exhibition that can prove this story although the bombshells might have come also from Austrian cannons. Such narrative lines produce a domesticated view of the past; they nationalize the past because they picture it in accordance with the present interpretation of the existing national relations in Carinthia. Museums in this regard organize memories into a logical totality and continuity and they tell stories of who was bad and who was good in the historical perspective. Such stories thus also create and organize the existing relations between these two national communities.

The photographs in the Austrian museum picture Slovenian soldiers mostly as disorderly, undisciplined, untidy, arrogant, lazy and uncivilized, while the selected photographs of German Austrian troops depict order, discipline, comradeship and tidiness. Such, is for example, the photograph of three soldiers that is described in the caption as: "Soldiers of the SHS-occupation (Yugoslav occupation)." The soldiers are sitting by the table, one is holding a beer bottle in his hand, the other is playing a violin, while the third's uniform is negligently unbuttoned. Such images suggest that under the Yugoslav (Slovenian) rule the situation in Carinthia was chaotic. The soldiers are represented as drunkards, as unorganized, disorderly soldiers who came there as savage gangs only to enjoy themselves and exploit the inhabitants. However, there are numerous photos of Austrian soldiers lined up or sitting orderly, holding weapons in their hands and appearing unified in their actions. The caption reads "Home guard squad" and suggests that this was a well-organized, disciplined army, focused on the fighting for its land. Such images of

the past events also structure the images of the present situation when suggesting that Austrians/Germans should be dominant in Carinthia (as they always were, according to these museum representations of history) and that this is a natural state of affairs. Carinthian Slovenians are presented as subordinated in Carinthia in the long historical perspective and such images also excuse the present situation of their subordinate and even inferior position in Austrian Carinthia.

In contrast, the selected photographs in the Slovenian museum represent Slovenian soldiers as brave, well-trained, disciplined, focused and orderly men. The photograph shows soldiers on their battle position in mountains, in high alert and well coordinated, with their guns all pointing to one direction, unselfishly and patiently bearing harsh conditions. The captions describe Slovenian soldiers as the well-focused defenders and the photographic narrative describes that Slovenians are in control of the situation. However, there are no images of the invaders in the Slovenian exhibition. This absence of Austrian soldiers signifies their position in the Slovenian history and in the present. Their non-presence in museum testifies that Austrians and their army had no place in Slovenia and, implicitly, such museum representations suggest that Carinthia is Slovenian land. The total lack of their visualisation in comparison to their intensive textualisation in many documents and captions suggest that they were afraid of the direct military confrontation with Slovenians and rather resorted to highly dubious and unfair diplomatic actions. In this regard, such images also excuse the position and existence of Carinthian Slovenians in Austrian Carinthia and narrate the stories about the Slovenian roots of Carinthia.

Photographs in the Austrian plebiscite museum produce a certain atmosphere in which the German-imbued Austrianness occupies the central position and discards all other views, while the photographs in Slovenian plebiscite museum glorify Slovenianness as the true and the only legitimate orientation. Each museum exhibition organizes the national reality differently and even in opposing ways when offering its visitors, Slovenian or Austrian citizens different picture of the same historical events in Carinthia. The past is used for political purposes; it is employed for the processes of building proper national identity and of mobilizing specific national feelings. Canclini, describing similar process for the Mexican case, says:

But museology subordinates conceptual knowledge to the monumentalisation and nationalist ritualisation of the patrimony. The state gives foreigners, and especially the nation, [...] the spectacle of its history as the basis of its unity and political consciousness (1995: 132).

Furthermore, the very method of displaying, the placement of photographic displays and the internal ordering of the museums enable visitors to remember and to identify with their national community. In the case of the Slovenian museum, the display itself encourages such an ordering of history and historical events in Carinthia that they fit well with the Slovenian official interpretations of history and the same is true for the Austrian case. Although seeing is a strictly individual act, it is also a collective act since mental

structures are inculcated into all minds in the form of collective memory and mentality and, on such a basis, collective identities can be build.

Aestheticising and scientising the nation

Each museum for itself discovers the past, shapes the agreement of what and why to remember and represents this through the spectacle of aestheticised images that fill the gaps in the contents. In such way, they also legitimize the impression of a complete and objective presentation of the past. There are specially enlarged photos placed on the exposed spot, poster- and wallpaper-sized photographs, collage posters of photographs, their specific ordering in the museums, well-designed glass cells, specific photograph stands, various artefacts coated with photographs etc. The aesthetic images of heroic historical personalities in their natural size or of grandiosely enlarged images of crowds of people at protest meetings produce the impression that the observer is a part of that event. They tell specific stories about the past by evoking pleasure, feelings of pride, cosiness or safety.

Such an aestheticised photographic narrative imposes specific interpretations of the past reality and specific memories on visitors; these memories turn them into members of a particular imagined community. The aesthetic form of a historical museum controls the narrative structure, induces pleasure and in this way produces particular ideological effects. The aesthetics of the exhibition functions as national aesthetics giving preferred meanings to the displayed materials. The aesthetics turns objects that represent Slovenian or Austrian national history into objects of immense beauty. For visitors, it is thus easier to identify with specific interpretations of the past and to grasp them as a part of their own identity.

Moreover, beside the aesthetic dimension both museums are also invested with cultural authority to be trustworthy scientific places because they are both indirectly under the authority of national scientific historical institutes. Both museum exhibitions are in the interests of the national state politics and, since in modern societies museum and science are closely connected, this is the way the state can control the knowledge of its own population. Museums are places where science is exhibited, as Sharon Macdonald (1998: 13) asserts, in a way that it appeals to a mass audience.

Museums lean on science to legitimize specific historical narratives, or rather, they lean on the mainstream scientific programs that are, according to Pierre Bourdieu (2004), founded on three supreme principles: objectivity, rationality and truth. This aura of objectiveness, truthfulness and rationality of scientific discourse is inserted into the museum discourse. Museums function identically as such scientific programs: as if their duty is description, as if they only inventory the past, as if their representations are objective and authentic, and as if this can be proven in a measurable sense. Therefore, the museums combine two models of representation: the authoritative model of aesthetic expression, based on a kind of artistic representation of the past reality, and the authoritative model of rational knowledge, based on a scientific representation of the past reality. Both scientific documentation and aesthetic expression are dependent on vision and are involved in the game for the confirmation of the seen, the believed and the learnt. They are the main motors that create the believable knowledge for the audiences in the museum.

Conclusions: Uniform national memory and in-between spaces

The museums' plebiscite exhibitions' narrative is a form of symbolic power that is routinely exercised during peoples' visits of the exhibitions. Before entering the museum, the visitors already possess a specific 'national habitus', to borrow from Bourdieu (1990), specific relatively permanent cultural and social dispositions acquired through socialisation processes in a specific national society. The national habitus equips visitors with certain mental structures with which they perceive the world, remember the past, think and act in a specific way. This specific national habitus involves visitors in a specific game at the moment they enter the museum. They accept the rules and have a sense of the game, a practical sense how to act and react when they encounter such images of the past. When visitors enter the Slovenian or Austrian museum, they read the exhibition according to their own national habitus and, in turn, both museums also shape, confirm and consolidate the specific national habitus and in this regard create specific ideological national identities.

The two museums constitute a pair of differing, even opposing collective memories and thus reproduce two oppositional national habitus and identities. Finally, collective identity and memory are produced when a visitor to a museum sees the images of the past in a particular national setting. The important difference that separates Slovenian and Austrian national habitus and people who perceive the past and remember in two different ways, in this sense does not lie in the peculiarities of particular national characters, but in the constructions of different collective histories through different representations of the past and the world around them. The museum exhibitions about the Carinthian past and, in a broader sense, also about the Slovenian and Austrian past form two uniform national memories and are thus involved in the processes of the creation of national formations, national subjects and a national border in Carinthia. They function as complex networks of power relations, which influence people's perceptions of the past and, in this way, serve the nation state apparatuses that reproduce specific national knowledge. Their symbolic role is in the creation of the ordered pasts of two national communities, of the border between them and, in this sense, they continue to structure the lives of Austrians and Slovenians. Canclini (1995: 81) explains that people like to live their well-established daily rituals and in the organized worlds because they cannot live in permanent indetermination and transgression, but have to organize the complexity of the world in such way that they can control it.

The situation is clear when applying it to the Slovenian or Austrian national cultures, but the problem appears when one wants to apply it to the geographical locale of Carinthia. Carinthia is settled between these two hegemonic national structures; Carinthian Slovenians' sense of belonging is structured in the space of in-betweenness and their visions of the past also coincide with both interpretations in the museums. Their perception of the past and their memories are thus shaped in the space between both museums. This means that Carinthian Slovenians possess formats of memory that are characteristics of both Slovenian and Austrian national mnemonic schematas. In this regard, both museums compete to win the consent among Carinthian Slovenians and to gain the privilege of defining their national past and national status. Both museums actually produce various

discourses about the past that constantly restore the clear border between Slovenians and Austrians, and also between Carinthian Slovenians and Carinthian Germans. They build two distinctive discursive orders that foster two distinctive national politics of the past and, thus, manage the national differences each in their own way. Each of them defines what can be counted as true history and what cannot, and also who is charged with saying what counts as true. In the borderland space of Carinthia, both nationalist speeches from the two museums try to arrest once and for all the interplay of meanings about the plebiscite, to win the hegemonic position for their interpretations of the national past and to set them as the only legitimate interpretations. However, since subjugated to both national interpretations, the Carinthian Slovenian community members cannot accept only one as the true interpretation of the historical events as easily as Slovenians in Slovenia or other Austrians in Austria can. They continually contest and negotiate between both interpretations of the past plebiscite reality and thus between two national memories and identities. This produces the borderland, hybrid space in which the functioning of the Carinthian Slovenians is organized by their own rules. This meaning-production of the past is incomprehensible to both hegemonic nation-building discourses. Nevertheless, they constantly shift, contest and reject dominant representations and interpretations of the past and are for these reasons many times excluded either from Austrian or Slovenian society. Their perceptions of the past and their memories are structured according to their negotiated hybrid identities, which are unacceptable to both nation-building discourses because they threaten the purity of their national pasts and national discursive orders. However, when a Carinthian Slovenian identifies himself/herself in some point with Slovenian and in other points with Austrian museum exhibition and remembers and perceives the past sometimes in 'the Slovenian way' or sometimes in 'the Austrian way', this does not mean that such memories do not really exist: it only means that they do not exist on the map of the ideologically prescribed uniform and clear-cut national memories and identities.

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POVZETEK

Nacionalna identiteta in spomin sta v družbi proizvedena in vzdrževana prek številnih reprezentacij, kot so na primer tudi muzejske razstave. Nacionalne države v muzejih na ogled postavijo svojo sedanjo in preteklo realnost, v njih povečujejo nacionalno kulturo in prek njih mobilizirajo ter disciplinirajo svoje nacionalne subjekte. Na osnovi diskurzivnih analitskih metod, tekstualne in semiotične analize, in terenskega raziskovanja ta študija proučuje, kako dve muzejski plebiscitni razstavi na avstrijskem in slovenskem Koroškem predstavljata isti zgodovinski dogodek iz dvajsetih let prejšnjega stoletja, kako proizvajata veličastne in nasprotujoče si nacionalne zgodovine z namenom, da bi oblikovala poslušne slovenske in avstrijske nacionalne subjekte, ki se istih zgodovinskih dogodkov spominjajo na dva različna načina, in kako tovrtno reprezentacije organizirajo življenje ljudi na Koroškem. Avtorica zaključuje, da imata analizirana muzeja pomembno vlogo v oblikovanju uniformnih nacionalnih spominov in identitet, toda koroški Slovenci, ki živijo v obmejnem območju med obema muzejskima razstavama, so podvrženi dvema nasprotujočima interpretacijama istega zgodovinskega dogodka in zato se nenehno pogajajo z obema nacionalnima vednostima o preteklosti. To pa vodi v oblikovanje njihove identitete, ki nastaja v odnosu do obeh nacionalnih spominov oziroma videnj preteklosti.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: nacionalna identifikacija, spominski procesi, zgodovina, muzej, mejni prostor, Avstrija, Slovenija, Koroška

CORRESPONDENCE: MARUŠA PUŠNIK, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana, Kardeljeva ploščad 5, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia. E-mail: marusa.pusnik@fdv.uni-lj.si