

Ep04_ BetweenAcrossThrough_NhungVietnam

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[music]

00:03 Speaker 1: You're listening to Between, Across and Through.

[music]

00:22 S1: They say that dead men don't talk, but if that were true, learning history would be far more complicated. They talk through the records they leave behind, their memories, thoughts, and experiences inked into the pages of history. But what happens when dead men aren't allowed to speak, to tell their stories? When their journals, letters and memories are left to dust? What happens when the inking of history is ignored? Deep in the archives of the Vatican, a new story is emerging, a story literally plucked from the margins of crumbling books. Today, Professor Kevin Lewis O'Neill, Director of the Centre for Diaspora and Transnational Studies, sits down with Professor Nhung Tran from the Department of History at the University of Toronto. In a conversation that reveals what it was like to be a Vietnamese Catholic during the 17th and 18th century, by paying attention to the amazing things that dead men have to say. Please join us as we travel between, across and through.

01:34 Professor Kevin Lewis O'Neill: Hi, I'm Professor Kevin Lewis O'Neill, and I'm speaking with Professor Nhung Tran. Thanks for joining us. Nhung, for your research, you travelled to the Vatican and searched through the archives. What did you expect to find?

01:48 Professor Nhung Tran: Better organized records, first of all. [laughter] But...

01:51 PO: Was it just... It was just a mess.

01:53 PT: It wasn't even just a mess, it was... There are some aspects of it that are still classified as secret or closed. Besides that, I expected to find many more hagiographies, some more prescriptive religious sources, Christian sources. How to behave like a Christian? What does it mean to be a good Christian? But the most... So those were the expectations, and to be sure, there's some of that, but the most interesting things were letters or testimonies written by local believers, tucked between all these other materials, other materials that had been used before, but for whatever reason, the particular letters from the perspective of the Vietnamese believers had not been used.

02:44 PO: And so, why were you so interested in finding these texts, or so excited to discover these particular letters?

02:51 PT: The fact that many of the letters I'm looking at are written in a script that expresses their vernacular, but borrowing from Chinese characters in a new form. But they're writing to the Pope, and maybe as a 21st century consumer, it's striking to me, or as a member of the body politic, I think of writing to the head of government, or in this case, the head of their community, as an act of claiming identity in this global order.

03:24 PT: In fact, they don't view themselves as any less of a Catholic than a European sitting in Paris writing to the Pope. And they start out in very familiar terms. It's almost like, it's a dirty joke

about five priests, excuse me, walking into a bar, because in fact, it starts out, "We seven catechists must have a lot of time on our hands such that we're [laughter] writing to you, oh Holy Father."

03:51 PO: The letter starts as such?

03:51 PT: That's literally how it starts.

03:52 PO: How do you explain such informality?

03:55 PT: Well, I think if we look at the words, I think it allows us to think about transitions in epistolary culture. They're using a vernacular script to express things about their daily life, complaints about one set of missionaries over another, describing illicit massages. These are things that you don't necessarily see [laughter] in letters to the Pope.

04:21 PO: Sure.

04:21 PT: But they see this as integral to their practice of their religion.

04:25 PO: And you say illicit massages. What's that?

04:30 PT: Well, I'm trying to make sense of it myself. I have several cases when this comes up. There's one letter that I found, it's quite a lengthy letter, and the author who is a catechist, somebody who's not been ordained a priest, but who is doing confessions, providing some sort of pastoral care, and that may mean baptisms to confessions. He's writing about his experience and violence perpetrated on him by a Portuguese Jesuit and his household members. And he tells a story about how the Jesuits are telling these local catechists or priests that they are not allowed to confess sins because they have sinned. And this guy, a new kind of catechist says, "What are you talking about? You say I'm a sinner, but you're a sinner, too? Isn't it true that you got punished because the villagers found you being massaged by a married woman?"

05:34 PO: I see.

05:36 PT: So, "Of course, you're a sinner, too. How come you can absolve sins?"

05:40 PO: And these are all in the letters to the Pope?

05:41 PT: Yes. Well, Pope or the Council of Cardinals at the Propaganda Fide, not something you would expect in European epistolary culture to be writing about a massage.

05:51 PO: Absolutely.

05:52 PT: But then, there's another massage... In the same letter, another massage shows up, [laughter] and that's kind of crazy to me. Why would there be... So this guy then gets into... He gets to telling his stories. And so, this angered the teachers so much... They called them teachers, that he sent his household members out, and they, among them men and women... He's very clear, "Men

and women came out, nearly beat the life out of me." So there's lots of violence on his body. "My bruises, my body was black and blue and per chance, by God's grace, I rolled into the rice paddy, so they thought I must have drowned. When they left, I pulled myself out," so it's very vivid pictures from the mud. So you imagine all this mud, [chuckle] and a non-believer walks by, the guy uses the pronoun 'it' for the non-believer. He says, "I told it the story about what happened to me and how the Jesuits household members and followers beat me to a pulp. And the non-believer could not imagine this kind of violence perpetrated on all this, so it started crying tears of pain..."

07:03 PO: It started crying?

07:04 PT: "It started crying tears of pain for me, etcetera, etcetera. It rented a carriage and hired some people to carry me back to its house where upon, [chuckle] it gave me a full body massage for my wounds." And clearly, the non-believer is a woman. Clearly, because why else would everybody else in this story has a gender, except for the...

07:25 PO: A gender specific pronoun.

07:27 PT: Except for the person who has given him the massage. What I imagine happened, and I'm not sure, is he got so involved in telling his story that he forgot that, oops, early in the story, he had already made this accusation and reminded the Jesuit missionary, "You're not allowed to get a full body massage [chuckle] from a young woman."

07:46 PO: [chuckle] Right. Right.

07:48 PT: But then now he's telling his story and the way he hides it, is I'm sure is that he calls the person 'it', without revealing their gender.

07:55 PO: And so, these are letters to the Pope, which you're arguing says that or indicates that this relatively new Catholic community in Vietnam feels itself to be fully integrated into the global Catholicism, such that these letters are intuitive, that they have every right to engage.

08:14 PT: Yes.

08:15 PO: The informality though, it signals a kind of intimacy, but is it an over... Is it gossip that they're trafficking in? Or how do you understand the content of these letters?

08:27 PT: I'm not sure they thought of themselves as integrated into the global church. 'Cause they rarely used the word church, but they certainly see themselves as no less fervent of a believer, and being just as righteous and able to contact the head of their community. In fact, that's the word they use. We, in the way, as in the way, Dao or... If you're a Chinese speaker, or the religion or the community, but which I translate as we believers. So clearly, they're imagining themselves to be a community of believers, not simply in Vietnam, but also having something very much in common with any believer elsewhere.

09:12 PO: And you speak in your research about... I'm thinking about the confessional nature of the

letters themselves, but you also speak a great deal about the importance of confession in 17th century Vietnam to these Catholics. Why was confession so important?

09:28 PT: I don't know. I'm trying to figure that one out. Really, the one thing they say that's inadequate about their life is confession. And my suspicion also, it has to do with the limited number of people who can perform confession. In the sense that in Catholic theology, in extreme emergencies, many people can perform baptisms if death is near. And so my... I don't know, maybe it's partly that there is an allowance for a greater variety of people to perform baptisms. But confession is very narrow. It's who... It is the priest.

10:06 PO: Yes. Yeah. Sure. With the priest having the sacramental authority to be able do baptisms and confessions. And in some of your research, it just gets me thinking about something you've mentioned called vicarious baptisms. What is vicarious baptism?

10:26 PT: Most of us are familiar with vicarious baptism through the Church of Latter-day Saints. A believer would get baptized on behalf of their deceased relatives in the... I know this is a simplification of the Mormon Church.

10:42 PO: With the idea that people have already died can still be baptized?

10:45 PT: Yes. And join us and join them in the Kingdom. In this context, it blew me away because I found this book at the Vatican, and the book was mis-catalogued. It was catalogued as simply the Latin Roman missal written by a French missionary in 1755. But you read the book, sure, it's the Latin-Roman missal, but there's instructions in Vietnamese. And it's very clear that the instructions in Vietnamese and the instructions and Latin demonstrate that this is written by a Vietnamese priest probably relatively high up, who knows Latin, but he's writing it for people who do not read Latin. Do not...

11:34 PO: Oh so... And so, is this an instructional material?

11:37 PT: Yes, it's an instructional material, but you wouldn't necessarily know that if you didn't read the Vietnamese part. For example, how to perform the mass, the writer, the author, declines the verb and the noun for you depending on the gender...

11:50 PO: Wow.

11:50 PT: The person, the part of speech, all these things. That's significant in that we know clearly, this is written for probably the very many Vietnamese priests who don't read Latin. And the long section on baptism, there are the sacraments and what one would do and how the priest and the helper would perform it, or what they would read. But there's one really strange section that is comprised of about three or four pages. And if you were only to read the Latin, you would say, "Oh sure, this is just another iteration of the Roman missal, how you do baptisms." But if you read the little notations in Vietnamese...

12:14 PO: Notations in the margins?

12:14 PT: Yes. It says, "And in this case, the person who is baptized," instead of the baptizee, I suppose, "would do this." So, it's the notations of how you do things. And so, if you didn't read Vietnamese or didn't care to look at it, it would just look like, "Oh, this is where you stand. This is who holds the cloth." But actually, it says, "In this case, this is the person who is baptized instead of the dead soul." So clearly, this is about what we would call vicarious baptism.

13:07 PO: And it's not an example of like a post-mortem baptism where you're baptizing a dead body, it's someone else.

13:14 PT: No. Yes. So there's a very clear... And in fact, the manual goes into great detail of what would you do if you ran over and you couldn't do it in time, etcetera. So there's that. But what's even more interesting and crazy about this book is that at the back, there's what we would call an erratum page, so errors in the text. There are about 20 or so instances where he says, "This is an error in the declension of the noun or this is an error here." And he says, "Pages 36 to 39," let's say.

13:50 PO: Okay.

13:51 PT: "Don't worry about these pages. [laughter] This is just stuff."

13:52 PO: Nothing to see here.

13:53 PT: Nothing... Exactly. [chuckle] Nothing to see here. And then he signs it. Well, in the space that's nothing to see here, is about vicarious baptism. And of course, he can't say... 'Cause this is clearly a book that's being sent back to the Council of Cardinals to tell them, "This is what's going on in the church. This is how the Vietnamese are practicing." Clearly, he can't say, "Well, they're practicing vicarious baptism," because he's ahead of the mission, and they would reflect poorly upon him.

14:22 PO: And then, what does this episode of vicarious baptism suggest to you about the relationship between the Vietnamese and the Vatican?

14:31 PT: What we have in this... In my other work, I've done research on ghosts and dead ancestors. And what I think Vietnamese people in this period believe, is that when they die, unless they have an heir maintaining regular annual offerings to their dead spirits, they will become hungry ghosts.

14:56 PO: Wow.

14:56 PT: That is, dissatisfied.

14:58 PO: The word is hungry?

15:02 PT: Hungry ghosts.

15:02 PO: In the sense that they would... Hungry as in, like, unsettled or hungry as in will consume...

15:09 PT: Literally unfed.

15:10 PO: Unfed.

15:10 PT: Unfed, but that means they're unsettled.

15:10 PO: So powerful. Yes.

15:11 PT: And the thing is there's no ontological separation between the living and the dead. And so, in this case, if they're hungry and unsettled, just think about it. This is a period also in the 17th to 18th centuries when you have civil warfare. So people are dying. So if you imagine yourself to be a 17th century Vietnamese and you don't have male heirs to make offerings to your... Or you cannot or you might die early, etcetera, etcetera, then there's an immediate concern about your own spiritual well-being and your spirit's satiation. But there's also a concern if you don't have or you don't care about your own family, about all the ghosts around you not being satisfied, because then they wreak havoc on you. If they're hungry, they might take your food, they might wreak havoc on you, they might burn your crops, any of these things that are happening.

16:10 PT: And so, I think what is... It's a question about why people are converting. And I'm not quite convinced I have the answer to that, but the question to ask about vicarious baptism, it makes perfect sense to me then. If somehow, their ancestors missed the boat on this whole Catholic and eternal paradise thing, well, I'll just give them that opportunity now.

16:31 PO: Absolutely. And if there's no ontological distinction between living and dead, then what is the sacramental obstacle there? Probably nothing.

16:37 PT: So, yeah. So I think that's why the vicarious baptism would be practiced and would be so appealing.

16:43 PO: Is there something... 'Cause I'm already thinking vicarious confession, but you do not see any kind of hint of that?

16:52 PT: No.

16:53 PO: 'Cause you go through all the sacraments, and you think, well, vicarious confession would be quite compelling.

16:57 PT: But I don't even know what they do in confession. 'Cause they... That's the interesting thing. As you say with...

17:02 PO: Oh, I see.

17:04 PT: Like they say, [chuckle] "He confessed my souls," but what does that mean?

17:06 PO: Right. All you have is a request for greater access to confession, but what that look like?

17:11 PT: And they said they did confession all day. Maybe that meant he got a massage all day. I have no idea.

17:15 PO: [chuckle] Sure. For sure.

17:16 PT: We have no idea what confession means.

17:18 PO: The limits of the material. Totally. Do you think there's anything... That all of this was written in Vietnamese, there's something to that? Would it be a stretch to say that there's something intentional here, that writing these things in a language that the Vatican wouldn't really check, has a certain kind of intentionality to it?

17:41 PT: No, I don't think so. Because I think that they're writing in the language they're most familiar with. The other interesting aspect of it was that there... I spoke about the hagiographies, catechisms, instructional materials that are... If you look at them, they're attributed to European missionaries, but clearly, the European missionaries couldn't possibly have written about them, unless it means they're genius linguists, as well as theologians, as well as scribes.

18:20 PT: One of the craziest ones, as in, you really see that this is a European Jesuit sitting in Vietnam, in central Vietnam, 20 years in, working out his issues about [chuckle] the counter reformation.

18:32 PO: Wow.

18:34 PT: And a Vietnamese Christian trying to articulate why this matters to his listening audience. One of the crazy stories is about a medieval Saint named Lidwina, a Dutch medieval saint, who is injured in an ice-skating accident, but she has blood coming out of her eyeballs, she can't walk, she's... They say that she was one of the first to suffer from MS, so she has no bones and she can't walk, so she kind of crawls on the floor and stuff, but she performs these miracles, like providing entire meals for people, et cetera, et cetera. That's all crazy and far out in itself. But then the other crazier thing is that the soliloquy that I envision the Italian Jesuit is having, the performance he's having with the scribe, or the person who is trying to figure out how to render this to Vietnamese, is this is really important because we have this very faithful saint, even though in fact... This is written in the middle of the 17th century. She doesn't become a saint, she doesn't become canonized until the 19th century.

19:42 PO: Oh, he's already calling her a saint?

19:43 PT: He's already calling her saint in Vietnamese...

19:44 PO: It's presumptuous.

19:45 PT: Which is a big no-no. "The saint who comes from the Dutch land, which is the heartland of where that evil rascal Luther projected his lies."

19:57 PO: Yes. Yes. Yes.

19:58 PT: So, it's really about how he's working out his Counter-Reformation issues, 20 years on. And he talks about Luther as leading Lucifer's army against the world.

20:11 PO: And then... But this is all a Jesuit 20 years into his stay in Vietnam?

20:17 PT: Yes.

20:18 PO: On the other side of the world.

20:20 PT: On the other side of the world. And so, one of the things I'm left to imagine is, what is the person who's collaborating with him thinking? Why does it matter?

20:27 PO: I see. Yes.

20:28 PT: And then there are also really interesting things that come out of this. I haven't read it yet, but I found a book that is the Acts of the Saints, right?

20:39 PO: Yes.

20:40 PT: We know from early modern European history, that the first Latin publication of this doesn't come out until... I think it's 1663 or '65. In any case, why is there a Vietnamese version of that 20 years before? But there is not just a Vietnamese version of it, a Vietnamese version of it written in the Vietnamese vernacular script that uses combinations of Chinese characters. This is clearly not even the Vietnamese script that uses Roman characters, that's easy for a Jesuit priest from Naples to learn. But this exists, a book like this exists in Vietnam before the formal publication of it in Europe.

21:24 PO: So Nhung, the book is an object, and has its own social life. What does its travels tell us about the life of Vietnamese Christians?

21:34 PT: First is about... It speaks to the relationship between the Vatican itself and Vietnamese believers. On the one hand, requires a bit more conjecture. Historians don't like to do that, but sometimes, we may have to step back and take a guess and leave it open. And that conjecture is maybe, at this moment, we see that the church is certainly trying to exert more centralized control over the missions.

22:06 PT: And the life of the book, having traveled this far, suggests that to some extents, they were successful, because, the local priest or the apostolic missionary or the bishop, is sending to the Vatican, examples of these books that are being circulated in Vietnam. But on the other hand, the

notations in the book demonstrate to us, that it survives [22:27] that in fact, the Vatican was completely unsuccessful with its efforts to reform or to implement the Counter-Reformation standards of proper adherence to church teachings.

22:41 PT: Because in the notations, which we wouldn't know about, except that it survived, quite literally; it tells us about the fact that Vietnamese priests aren't learning Latin, and they're just reading from a script, and everybody knows it, or that people are baptizing their dead relatives, or standing in to baptize their dead relatives. The fact that this book traveled all this way, but retains inside it clues of these things give us some indication of the ways in which Vietnamese Christians ignored, elided, or just weren't even taught. Maybe they weren't even taught the dictates of the Vatican.

23:25 PO: And just to take a step back, so, the intention of your research is really to ask this profound question about if one takes a different set of geographical interest and political interest as well as language skills to the Vatican, one gets an entirely different story about medieval Catholicism.

23:45 PT: Yeah. It's an entire story different about Catholicism, its believers, and what was important. In fact, I think most people who write about Catholicism in other parts of the world, just assume that it's natural that Catholics in Europe had faith and performed it as correctly as they were supposed to. But of course, we know that's not true, because that's what the whole Council of Trent was supposed to be, it was to reform them. And it seems like there are two different kinds of narratives about the practice and performance of Christianity in people's daily lives. And so, maybe if we can make them move closer together.

24:30 PO: Right. All of this also reminds me that you're in the middle of writing a memoir. Is there any parallel in these projects?

24:38 PT: A little bit of parallel and this fact that much of the memoir has to do with Catholics, and Catholics who imagine themselves... They're 20th century Catholics, so they imagine themselves to be just as fervent believers as anybody else. So there's that. Travels, I think the other thing that's striking between these two different stories is, that there was an incredible amount of mobility, as I point out in some of this earlier research in the 18th century, much more so than we imagine, that people from within Southern Asia and Southeast Asia traveling to Siam, young people, and to Macao, to study to become priests. This is kind of... They're going essentially to university and it's called a college, to study how to become a priest. So Peguans, Burmese, Vietnamese, Chinese, all these people in the 17th century getting on a boat owned by the English East India Company to what is now modern-day Thailand, to study with French priests. That's kind of crazy itself.

25:49 PT: I guess in some ways, how it relates to the memoir, is the memoir was supposed to be a kind of modern history of three generations of my family. I start the memoir in this way is that on my first trip to Vietnam as a graduate student in Hanoi, and most of the other graduate students had left for the year, and I thought, "Okay, well whatever", I heard my mother speak about this province which is not far from Hanoi. And the only thing she ever spoke about her past life was about this apple that was indigenous to her village. So those were the only clues I had about where she could...

26:31 PO: Apple?

26:31 PT: Apple.

26:32 PO: And you had the name of the apple?

26:34 PT: No.

26:34 PO: Just...

26:35 PT: Apple.

26:35 PO: So distinct apple?

26:36 PT: Special, small apple.

26:37 PO: Alright.

26:37 PT: And so I asked the receptionist at the hotel. I said, "Do you know how I can find this?" And so, they looked at me and they said, "You should call information." And I said, "You mean like... "

26:50 PO: Like on the phone?

26:51 PT: Yeah, like 1-411. And she said, "Yes", and I said, "But I thought information just gave you the phone number of another, a business." And they said, "No, they know everything."

27:01 PO: Alright.

27:02 PT: So I pick up my hotel phone and I call information, and I said, "So I was wondering if you could tell me how to get there."

27:10 PO: Yes.

27:10 PT: And the woman on the other side says, "Is this Nhung Tran from the University of Pennsylvania in..."

27:16 PO: Stop.

27:17 PT: Room 201 at the Army Hotel?

27:19 PO: What?

27:19 PT: And...

27:20 PO: This is like pre-Google, what's going on?

27:22 PT: This is pre-Google.

27:22 PO: Yeah, yeah.

27:23 PT: So that freaked me out, but sure enough, information knew everything. And I told her about the apple...

27:29 PO: How, and Nhung, how did information know that?

27:31 PT: Well, 'cause it's the Army Hotel, it's the secret police.

27:34 PO: Alright.

27:35 PT: I'm guessing. And my motor bike cab guy, was of course, also a secret police, [chuckle] because of the students studying Vietnamese, the only two customers he was interested in was the Mormon. Oh, three, he was only interested in three customers: The Mormon, the Army Ranger, and me.

27:51 PO: Alright.

27:52 PT: So anyway, diasporic Vietnamese. So I said, "Okay". So she gave me of course, directions on how to get to the apple place.

28:01 PO: Is this information for the entire city?

28:04 PT: Yes, the city of Hanoi, so she knew...

28:06 PO: Alright continue, continue.

28:08 PT: So I get on the motorbike, and we drive out to this province. And it's about an hour and a half outside of Hanoi. And it's really hot, the burning sun, and so, we stopped by this roadside stand to get a drink. And the kids run by and people look, and I'm not quite native and not quite foreign, but I'm foreign enough because I'm... So kids point at me and says, "Western backpacker, Western backpacker," but then they're surprised because I speak near native Vietnamese. And the lady who sells us the drink, she's, "What are you doing here? Because there's nothing to see here, you're a backpacker." So, I tell her about my apple.

28:45 PO: Your interest in the apple?

28:46 PT: My interest in the apple, and I said, "Really, I'm looking for my mom's family, or not my mom's family, but I just kinda wanna know where she comes from. The only thing I know is that her last name is this and she's a Catholic. And she talked about these apples." And the lady said,

"Oh well, that house over there... " [chuckle]

29:08 PO: [chuckle] Stop.

29:09 PT: Which is about 500 yards away, their last name is the same last name, Lum, is my mother. And I think they have Catholics in their family. They have the family genealogy, but it's in Chinese. And I said, "Well, it happens that this is what I'm trained in doing."

29:27 PO: Oh my gosh.

29:28 PT: So we walk, literally walk over across the rice paddy to that house over there, and they take out the genealogy to show me. And they said, "Well, I don't know, we don't... Yes, we do have Catholics in our family, but that's a long time ago." And in a certain generation, there's a reference to a guy who goes to Europe. Now, I know nothing about my great grandfather. And I said, "This can't be right." He goes to Europe and then there's a reference that he comes back, but he moves villages, because he's clearly become a Catholic. And then they told me where I could find the apples, because it's specific to the village, in this [30:07] .

30:07 PO: Just to the village?

30:07 PT: In this area. So I go back and then maybe a few weeks later, I come back, and this time, we drive by the stand. And people, they're running behind me, they run behind me, "We found your family."

30:20 PO: No.

30:20 PT: And I'm like, "No, I'm not even looking for my family, I just kinda wanted to go look at the apples." And they said, "No, we found your family." And so they told me exactly where to go, which was one of the provincial centers, the market. "You get to the market, once you get there, you tell people that you're looking for the family which sells tofu and noodles." And sure enough, the people who are there is my mother's second cousin who's living in my great grandfather's house, because my great grandfather came back to Vietnam in the 1930s, in this nearby community where the apples are from. He built a church there, he became a kind of mid-level peasant, had property, had a tofu and noodle business. So they were known for having the orchards, the apples, but also known for selling tofu and noodles.

31:18 PO: And noodles.

31:18 PT: So that was interesting. And then I find out all these other stories. And of course, my grandmother is still alive, but she never spoke about these things and just knew not to ask.

31:18 PO: Interesting.

31:18 PT: As the story was, it was in 1954, when my grandmother and my mother went down south in the exodus, my great-grandfather and his wife and the other relatives presumably stayed,

my grandfather's siblings stayed there. Between 1954 and 1955, there was a land reform movement, so they were executed.

31:18 PO: Whoa.

31:18 PT: So the whole family was executed.

31:18 PO: Oh, no.

31:18 PT: Because they were classified as landlords, and capitalists because of the tofu business.

31:18 PO: Oh my gosh.

31:18 PT: And the noodles business. So they were all executed and so this is kind of the... It starts out with that side of the story, and that story. So it's about a modern history of Vietnam, the revolution, starting from the Great War, but it's also about what happens to people in northern Vietnam during the revolution, which other people have written about. I use the memoir as a device to talk about their daily lives. It's not about the evidence, it's about the silences of... The silences that affect people's lives that aren't spoken about, how you retrieve it. And I think what I grapple with is, not just how I retrieve it, but how I retell it in a way that doesn't do disservice to my sources, who in this case... I was quite lucky all of my previous sources had been dead for 200 years. In this case, some of my sources are still alive, and they happen to be my family. And how do I harness these stories to tell about their lives and to recapture the wilful silences without seeming to profit from it?

33:20 PO: Right, without leaving them hungry.

33:21 PT: Yeah, anyway.

33:22 PO: That was awesome, thank you so much Nhung, this was great.

33:24 PT: Thanks for having me.

33:25 S1: That was Professor Kevin Lewis O'Neill, in conversation with Professor Nhung Tran from the University of Toronto. On our next episode, we'll talk to Professor Rinaldo Walcott, about how success for the one, may not be success for the many. Please subscribe on Stitcher, Apple Podcasts, Spotify or your favorite app, so you won't miss it. This monthly podcast was brought to you by the Center for Diaspora and Transnational Studies at the University of Toronto. I am Iana Romero, thank you for listening and joining the conversation.

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