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Master thesis

Mediation of memory of socialist past – Dealing with nostalgia and politics of oblivion: Case study the Museum of Yugoslav History

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I Résumé

Le patrimoine joue un rôle essentiel dans la construction de l'identité (communautaire et individuelle) et de ses représentations. Il permet à une communauté, d'avoir un sentiment de fierté et de respect de soi-même. Il est un moyen de montrer aux autres qui 'nous sommes' et comment nous souhaitons être perçus. Historiquement, il a été utilisé comme un élément essentiel dans le processus de construction de la nation. Toutefois, il est important de noter que les processus de mémoire sociale sont toujours sélectifs et incluent des segments (périodes, événements, personnalités) qui doivent être éliminés et oubliés. Le travail de mémoire inclut toujours un travail actif d'oubli. Les musées, en tant qu'institutions garantes des témoignages, des valeurs et des lieux d'un autre temps, perçus comme utiles et importants, devant être préservés pour les générations futures, sont des acteurs importants dans le processus de mémorisation.

La muséalisation est un processus de transfert d'un objet du monde réel, vers le monde des musées. Quand un objet devient un sujet du patrimoine ou une pièce de musée, il perd sa signification, sa "vraie vie" est terminée et il devient à partir de ce moment, le témoignage d'une autre réalité (en général le passé) différente de celle que nous vivons actuellement. La tâche des professionnels des musées est de transmettre les "messages des collections" au public, de lui fournir les interprétations et les valeurs qu'incarnent les collections, qu'ils protègent et étudient. D'une certaine manière, ils doivent connaître le passé et le présent, être des experts en traduction transculturelle ou transhistorique, pour être en mesure de trouver des moyens pour médiatiser les valeurs des différentes réalités de celles dans lesquelles le musée existe.

Cette thèse de master étudie comment la période du socialisme a été décrite et médiatisée par les musées spécialisés. Le Musée d'Histoire de la Yougoslavie (Muzej istorije Jugoslavije, MIJ) qui travaille sur cela, a un immense potentiel de développement, et c'est pourquoi il a été choisi pour le cas d'étude. Il est le plus grand musée de la région traitant de la période socialiste. Tout en analysant les nouvelles initiatives liées à la médiation et en proposant de nouvelles approches de management des musées et de muséologie, cette recherche présente les méthodes de la médiation du passé qui peuvent être utilisées dans la Serbie contemporaine où le passé socialiste est rapidement oublié.

Afin de comprendre la tâche que ces institutions ont, il est important d'analyser les images du passé socialiste qui sont encore prédominants aujourd'hui (à partir de débats publics à des manuels scolaires). Ces images sont d'abord influencées par des facteurs politiques d'une part et d'autre part par la situation socio économique actuelle difficile. Il est de plus, important de noter de quelle manière le passé a été marqué par la conscience collective des peuples.

Pour présenter le contexte dans lequel le Musée évolue deux types de données sont présentés et analysés:

- l'attitude officielle envers le socialisme, la politique de mémoire (comme par exemple la négligence des monuments, des changements dans les célébrations officielles, les noms des rues, des écoles ...)
- le discours quotidien sur le socialisme (l'utilisation la culture populaire et l'interprétation des symboles et des signes de l'époque socialiste, les révolutions nostalgiques, hormis les "interprétations réductionnistes" accusant ce passage de l'histoire pour le scénario tragique qui l'a suivie.

Il est nécessaire d'avoir à l'esprit le rôle des musées pour servir l'intérêt public général. Les musées doivent initier des projets portant sur des sujets négligés de notre passé proche, pour être des lieux de rencontre et de débat, entre le public et les spécialistes. Certains des projets en cours du Musée d'Histoire de la Yougoslavie, institution qui a des idées de démocratisation et de d'inclusion de divers groupes sociaux sont analysés.

En utilisant l'exemple du patrimoine socialiste, ce document problématise les enjeux suivants:

- les musées sont-ils capables de traiter de cette période, au regard du climat politique actuel et en fonction des diverses couches et des différents aspects politiques, sociaux, et culturels qui caractérisent une période historique?
- Les musées peuvent-ils amener la paix entre le rôle des institutions qui représentent identité et des institutions qui remettent en question notre vision du monde?

Hypothèses:

- Si le musée veut être une institution culturelle pertinente et agir conformément à sa mission d'intérêt public, il est nécessaire de prendre la responsabilité pour ouvrir des questions contradictoires et des questions essentielles négligées par la société. Le musée a besoin de travailler constamment comme un forum de débats (débats d'experts, membres de la communauté, organisations de jeunesse, etc.);
- Si le musée veut servir les intérêts du public, il doit communiquer avec l'audience et trouver un moyen de devenir un lieu que la communauté perçoit comme le lieu de confiance où ils laisseront leurs souvenirs, à conserver pour l'avenir;
- La démocratisation de l'approche et l'inclusion de la communauté dans le travail du musée (par exemple, "lire" les collections grâce à l'inclusion de différentes expériences et voix, et créer des enregistrements de mémoires et d'histoires personnelles) permettrait d'enrichir les connaissances que le musée propose et serait l'opportunité pour que le celui-ci se positionne comme une partie intégrante de la communauté;
- Les nouvelles interprétations (expositions) ont un rôle de transfert de connaissances du passé aux générations qui ne l'ont pas vécu;
- Le musée se doit d'être le gardien d'une mémoire collective, mais aussi d'agir comme un "récepteur" actif des mémoires individuelles et privées, qui contribuent à de nouvelles connaissances et interprétations de l'histoire;
- Le manque de nouvelles lectures contemporaines de la période socialiste dans les musées (en Serbie et dans les autres ex-républiques yougoslaves) montre que la relation envers la récente période socialiste n'a pas atteint un niveau de consensus.
- Dans le but de contextualiser son activité, le musée doit confronter la politique présente de l'oubli (qui est souvent implicite). Cette politique peut être vu à travers de nombreux exemples de négligence du patrimoine (enlèvement et destruction des monuments,

changements des noms des rues, des institutions et villes¹) mais aussi à travers des musées, aux expositions démodées, où les moments critiques de l'histoire ne sont pas présentés, et même des efforts visant à fermer les musées etc.;

- Le musée doit aussi contribuer à la rupture de la “tradition des discontinuités” dans la société serbe et à la réécriture politique de l'histoire, de chaque nouveau gouvernement pouvoir idéologique, afin de donner une chance à la période socialiste de devenir l'objet d'une recherche appropriée et d'une évaluation critique;
- Les réalisations positives de cette période n'ont pas été reconnues, la plupart des attitudes à l'égard du passé socialiste sont injustes et biaisées. L'une des missions du musée est d'essayer de vaincre ces stéréotypes et d'offrir une évaluation critique des phénomènes de l'époque;
- Les incertitudes de la situation actuelle font du passé socialiste un topo idéal pour la projection nostalgique;
- Les éléments communs de la culture populaire yougoslave sont encore partagés et ils peuvent servir de bon point de départ pour des projets conjoints pour réexaminer la mémoire et pourraient être utilisés dans le MIJ dans de nouvelles pratiques muséologiques;
- De bons soins et une bonne préservation, joint à une prise de conscience du rôle que l'héritage socialiste joue dans nos identités contemporaines seraient une bonne base pour l'élaboration de stratégies de tourisme culturel basé sur le patrimoine socialiste.

Méthodologie de la recherche:

Le contexte théorique de cette thèse est basé sur une approche interdisciplinaire combinant la théorie de la culture de la mémoire (Kuljić, Halbwachs, Todorova, etc), la nouvelle muséologie (Šola, Maristine) et la politique culturelle (Dragičević Šešić, Dragojević, Djukić). À partir de ces

¹ Par exemple dans toutes les anciennes républiques yougoslaves, les villes qui portaient le nom de Tito, ont changé de nom, après la dissolution de la République fédérale socialiste de Yougoslavie.

auteurs auxquels j'ai emprunté les notions clés et les catégories nécessaires à la compréhension des phénomènes, j'ai consulté d'autres documents pertinents en muséologie, en anthropologie et en sociologie, traitant des questions de la mémoire collective, de la politique de l'identité et des représentations.

La recherche documentaire, mais aussi l'observation ethnographique et l'analyse des médias ont été les types de recherche empirique à travers laquelle j'ai généralement recueilli des données. La majeure partie des données a été recueillie à travers l'étude de cas de Musée d'Histoire de la Yougoslavie. Ayant réalisé mon stage de diplôme de conservateur de musée, au Musée d'Histoire de la Yougoslavie et y travaillant désormais, ceci me donne l'occasion d'observer le processus d'élaboration en cours, la planification et la réalisation de projets futurs. Des entretiens non-directifs ont été réalisés avec les commissaires d'expositions analysés.

Les méthodes d'interprétation qualitatives, tels que la narration et l'analyse du discours, l'analyse comparative, etc. ont été utilisés pour expliquer les données recueillies et dessiner les remarques de conclusion et recommandations.

La structure du document:

La partie introductive présente l'idée générale et les problèmes dont le document traite plus loin. Le plan et la structure du mémoire sont présentés dans cette partie ainsi que la méthodologie. Les premières réflexions et idées sont exposées.

Dans le second chapitre un aperçu des principaux termes et les théories de la nouvelle muséologie qui sont importants pour le présent document sont présentés. Pour commencer, un large éventail des modifications de la mission du musée est présenté, afin de souligner l'importance de la tendance de l'expansion progressive des tâches et devoirs que les musées ont envers les citoyens et les communautés. Un changement dans l'approche théorique de la théorie des musées et des défis qui influencent les musées, auparavant temples exclusifs de la connaissance, qui sont désormais des lieux de débats et de questionnement de l'histoire de l'identité et des vérités contestées. Ce processus de démocratisation des musées est suivi dans le mémoire, en se concentrant sur les nouvelles relations avec le public et les diverses

communautés qui sont les nouveaux partenaires et parties prenantes dans les programmes de développement du musée. Un sous-chapitre traite de la mission des musées d'histoire et de leurs possibilités de médiation du passé, de prendre soin, de préserver les valeurs du passé et de trouver des moyens de les communiquer dans le présent.

Dans le troisième chapitre, une situation spécifique concernant la mémoire du socialisme dans le contexte serbe, est décrite. La mémoire contestée et les présents narratifs dans le discours public sur le passé récent sont esquissés et classés dans le but de dépeindre le contexte socio culturel, qui est l'un des intérêts principaux du Musée de l'histoire de la Yougoslavie. Comme indiqué précédemment, en utilisant l'exemple de Musée de l'histoire de la Yougoslavie certaines des questions importantes des nouvelles tâches du Musée sont discutées.

Le quatrième chapitre est consacré à l'étude de cas de Musée de l'Histoire de la Yougoslavie. Un aperçu historique du développement de MIJ et les institutions qui existaient avant et à partir desquelles le musée fut fondé, sont présentées. L'institution a été marquée par la longue période de dépendance politique de la programmation. La nouvelle gestion du musée et les changements qui se produisent actuellement au MIJ, serviront de base pour l'analyse de la tendance à la démocratisation du musée et de l'ouverture du processus décisionnel en invitant des experts, artistes et le public.

Prenant en considération les différents aspects et théories discutées dans les parties précédentes, le chapitre cinq porte un regard critique, sur les pratiques d'exposition du MIJ au cours des deux dernières années. Le but de cette partie est d'examiner les récits et les discours, des programmes proposés par MIJ. En d'autres termes, ce chapitre montre à quoi ressemble l'image du passé socialiste que le musée diffuse.

La conclusion résume et souligne quelques propositions pour le développement futur du Musée de l'Histoire de la Yougoslavie, comme un musée à vocation communautaire.

II Abstract and key words

Museums, as institutions that keep testimonies and values of other times and place that are worth preserving for the future, are important actors in **memorizing processes** and shaping **culture of memory** of communities.

Using interdisciplinary approach, this thesis examines how the period of **socialism** has been portrayed and mediated by the **Museum of Yugoslav History (MYH)** that serves as a case study in order to comprehend the role of museums in these processes. In this respect, the recent Museum's exhibitions are analyzed. In order to provide a contextualization of conditions in which the Museum of Yugoslav history acts, **images of socialist past** that are still predominant in the present (official and everyday discourses) are outlined. By analyzing new initiatives related to mediation and by suggesting some methods of museum management and **new museology** approaches, this thesis will try to propose methods of mediation of the past that can be of use in contemporary Serbia where socialist past is rapidly going towards oblivion. It is argued that having in mind the role of museums to serve the overall public interest, museums have to initiate projects dealing with neglected topics of our recent past, to be places of encounter and debate of scholars and wider audiences.

Key words: museum, heritage, socialist past, culture of memory, mediation, politics of representation, Tito

III Introduction

Heritage plays a vital role in identity building (of communities as well as individuals) and its representation. It gives a sense of proud and self-respect to a community, it is way to show to others who ‘we’ are, and how we want to be perceived. Historically it has been used as an essential element in the process of nation building. However, it is important to note that processes of social remembrance are always selective and include segments (periods, events, personalities) that are to be avoided and hopefully forgotten. Work on remembrance always includes active work on **oblivion**. Museums, as institutions that keep testimonies and values of other times and places, perceived as valuable and important to be preserved for the future generations, are important actors in these **memorizing processes**.

Musealization is a process of transferring an artifact from real world to a museum world. To make something an object of heritage or a museum object means that the ‘real life’ of the object is over and that it will, from that moment on, serve as a testimony of another (usually past) reality different from the one we are experiencing now. The task of museum professionals is to transmit the ‘messages of the collections’ to the audience, to provide audience with interpretations of meanings and values embodied in collections that they protect and research. In a way, they have to know the past and the present, to be experts in trans-cultural or trans-historical translation, to be able to find ways to **mediate** values of different realities to the one in which museum exists.

3.1. Subject explanation and main hypotheses

This thesis will investigate how the period of **socialism** has been portrayed and mediated by the specialized museums. The **Museum of Yugoslav History (MYH)** will be in focus of this work as it is the largest museum in the region that deals with socialist period and that it has immense developing potentials. By analyzing new initiatives related to mediation and by suggesting some of museum management and **new museology** approaches this research will try to propose

methods of mediation of the past that can be of use in contemporary Serbia where socialist past is rapidly going towards oblivion.

In order to comprehend the task that these institutions have it is important to discuss - **images of socialist past** that are still predominant in the present (from public debates to school manuals). These images are influenced primarily by political factors and by difficulties of the present socio-economic situation. In addition, it is important to notice the way past has been remembered by collective consciousness of peoples.

In globalized world of today, images of socialist past present in global media are often taken from experiences of Soviet Union and countries of former Warsaw block. These mediated images are coming to Serbian children and youth who have no direct experiences in living in socialism. For this reason, we have to note important differences that marked the Yugoslavian type of socialism. The position of being between two blocks, power of local communist party independent of Russia, loose type of communism, relative freedom in cultural expression, possibility to travel are just a few of significant differentiations. Beside the fact that Yugoslavian experience of socialism was specific and different from other eastern European countries, present situation of former Yugoslav republics regarding economic situation, political position, relationship with EU, etc. offers the space for projections of nostalgic images to those times.

For presenting the **context** in which the museum is working two types of data will be presented and analyzed

- the official attitude towards socialism, **politics of memory** (examples of neglect of monuments, changes in official celebrations, names of streets, schools...) and
- **everyday discourses** on socialism (pop culture uses and interpretations of symbols and signs of socialist times, nostalgic revocations, besides reductionists' interpretations 'accusing' that part of history for the tragic scenario that followed it.

It is argued that having in mind role of museums to serve to overall public interest, museums have to initiate projects dealing with neglected topics of our recent past, to be places of encounter and debate of scholars and wider audiences. Some of the ongoing projects of the

Museum of Yugoslav History, the institution that have ideas of democratization and inclusion of diverse social groups will be analyzed.

By using example of socialistic heritage, this thesis will problematize following issues: are museums capable to treat this period regardless of present political climate and with regard to variety of layers, different political, social, cultural aspects that characterize one historic period?; can museums make peace between role of identity representation institutions and institutions that challenge our worldview?

Hypotheses:

- If museum wants to be a relevant cultural institution and to act in accordance to its **mission** to serve to **public interests**, it is necessary to take responsibility for **opening up conflicting issues and critical questions neglected** by a society. Museum needs to work constantly as a forum for debates (debates of experts, community members, youth organizations, etc).

- If the museum wants to serve to the public interests/good, it needs to communicate with audience and find a way to become a place that the community perceives as **the place of trust** where they would leave their memories to be kept for the future.

- **Democratization** of the approach and inclusion of community in work of museum (e.g. “reading” the collections through the inclusion of **different experiences and voices**, making records of personal histories and memories) would enrich the knowledge that museum provides and would position museum as a relevant part of the community.

-New interpretations (exhibits) have a role to **transfer the knowledge** about past to generations that haven’t experienced it.

- Museum role is to be keeper of a collective memory, but also to act as an active ‘receiver’ of individual/private memories which will contribute to new knowledge and interpretations of history

-The lack of new contemporary readings of period of socialism in museums (in Serbia and other former Yugoslav republics) shows that the **relationship towards recent socialistic period** has not reached a level of consensus.

-In order to contextualize its activity museum has to confront present (**often implicit**) **policy of oblivion**. This policy can be seen through many examples of heritage neglect (removing and destroying monuments, changing names of streets, institutions, and cities²), efforts to close down museums and also through old-fashioned museum displays where critical historical moments are not presented etc.

- Museum also has to contribute to breaking of “tradition of discontinuities” in Serbian society and political rewriting of history with each new government and ideological power, giving chance to socialistic period to become subject of a proper research and a critical evaluation.

- Positive achievements of this period have not been recognized, the most of attitudes towards **socialistic past** are partial and biased. A part of museum’s mission is to try to overcome these stereotypes and to offer a **critical evaluation** of the phenomena of the time

-The uncertainties of present situation make a socialistic past an ideal *topos* for **projecting nostalgia**.

- Elements of common Yugoslav popular culture are still shared and they can serve as a good starting point **for joint projects of memory re-examination** (e.g. *Leksikon Yu mitologije*) and might be used in MYH within new museological practices

- Good care and preservation together with a consciousness of the role that socialist heritage plays in our contemporary identities make a good base for **developing strategies of cultural tourism based on socialist heritage**.

3.2. Methodological considerations

Theoretical background of this thesis would be based on interdisciplinary approach combining theory of culture of memory (Kuljić, Halbwachs, Todorova, etc), new museology (Šola, Maristine) and cultural policy (Dragičević Šešić, Dragojević, Djukić). From these authors I will borrow key notions and categories necessary for understanding of phenomena. I will consult

² For example in all Yugoslav republics the cities that had Tito’s name changed it after the dissolution of SFRY

other relevant literature in museology, anthropology and sociology dealing with issues of collective memory, politics of identity and representation.

Desk research, but also ethnographic observing and media analysis will be types of empirical research through which I will collect data generally. The most important part of data will be collected through the case study of MYH. Due to fact that I have spent my curatorial internship in the Museum of Yugoslav History and that I have been working there now, gives me the opportunity to observe the ongoing process of conceptualization, planning and realization of future projects. Non-directive interviews will be conducted with curators of analyzed exhibitions.

Qualitative methods of interpretation, such as narrative and discourse analysis, comparative analysis etc. will be used in explaining collected data and drawing conclusion remarks and recommendations.

3.3. Structure of the thesis

The introductory part will present the general idea and problems that the research will discuss further on. An outline and structure of the thesis will be presented within this part as well as the methodology. Preliminary thoughts and ideas will be exposed.

In the second chapter will be presented an overview of key terms and theories of new museology that are important for this work. As a start, broad sketch of changes of the mission of museum will be shown in order to underline the importance of trend of gradual expansion of tasks and duties that museums have to citizens and communities. Change in theoretical approach, theory of museums and challenges that influenced museums, once exclusive temples of knowledge now turning into places for debate and questioning of identity history and contested truths. This process of *democratization* of museums will be followed focusing on new relationship with the audience and the various communities that are the new partners and stakeholders in developing museum programs. One subchapter will discuss the mission of the museums of history and their possibilities to mediate the past, take care of, preserve the values of past times and find ways to communicate them in the present.

In the third chapter, a specific situation concerning the memory of socialism in the context of contemporary Serbia will be described. Contested memories and narratives present in public discourse on recent past will be sketched and classified for the purpose of portraying context of the heritage that is of main interest of the Museum of Yugoslav History. As noted before, using the example of MYH some of the important issues of the new museum tasks will be discussed.

The fourth chapter is dedicated to the case study of MYH. Historical overview of the development of MHY and the institutions that existed before and on what basis it was founded will be mapped out. The long period of dependence of program policy on political climate marked the image of this institution. The new managerial approach and the changes that are happening in the MYH at this period will provide the basis for the analysis regarding the tendency of democratization of the museum and opening up the decision making process by including experts, artists and the audiences.

Taking into consideration different aspects and theories discussed in previous parts, chapter five will try to examine critically exhibition practices of the MYH during the last two years. The aim of this part is to scrutinize narratives and discourses that programs proposed by MYH were built upon. In other words, this chapter will sketch how does image of socialist past that the museum mediates look like.

The Conclusion will summarize and try to underline some proposals for the future development of the MHY as community oriented museum.

IV New museum's role

The world of today is a profoundly museological world and it would take a considerable effort to think of a reality without museums. This 'social technology' shapes the way we conceptualize our identity³ states Daniel Preziosi. This thought reminds us of important museums' ability to frame basic assumption of 'ourselves' (the identity) and the past. On basis of supposed authenticity 'we' see museum objects as direct links with past upon which 'we' form attitudes and judgments about 'our' identity and pictures of the Others.

“Museum is changing. In the past, it was the place of absolute certainties, the fount of definitions, values and education in all matters artistic, a place not of questions but of authoritative answers. Today, the museum is at the center of the heated debate about its nature and methodology. At the most extreme its very purpose is questioned and denied. It is a perpetually inconclusive discussion, yet it profoundly affects the way museum are perceived and run.”⁴

The epistemological turn in philosophy, social sciences and humanities connected with broader changes in society as well as requests of civil rights movements for their place in the dominant discourse started in the sixties has reached and influenced different disciplines (some sooner some later) in the next decades. Post-colonial and feminist interventions in science that incited this change influenced understanding of art and its representation as well as understanding of role and authority of museums. Museums did not escape the broad critique of institutions of bourgeois conformist culture. They were criticized as the obsolete institutions and keepers of the existing social order and exclusive places for privileged. The critics suggested that there is a need that museums leave behind elitists' attitude and start offering educational as well as entertaining material that has relevance for day-to-day life of the broadest range of audience. New museums were supposed to change and stop being only for ones that enjoy privilege of having sufficient free time; who were in old, essentialist perceptions perceived as the only ones that are adequate audience for reception of art and understanding museums.

³ Jane Maristine (ed.), *The New Museum Theory*, Introduction, Blackwell Publishing , 2006, p 1

⁴ Schubert, Karsten: *The Curator's Egg: The Evolution of the Museum Concept from the French Revolution to the Present Day* 3rd ed., London: One-Off Press., 2009

The crisis provoked by these questionings and requests that resonated in the museum world, fortunately did not develop further arguments for the end of the museums but made new theory of museums that faced the challenges presented by the critics.

The conceptual shift of modern museum moved the focus of attention from collections to the public. The traditional museum activities - collecting, safeguarding and protecting were not replaced but enriched by adding new tasks of communication and participation in social life of the society. Museums couldn't hide in the ivory tower of the experts devotion to collection any longer, the new museology required institutions that are aware of the outside world and react to new challenges and trends. New museum has to participate in the creation of social values and take active role in current debates in communities it is part of.

International Council for Museums (ICOM) in 1989 adopts the definition of a museum as a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment. The concept of new museology emerged in theory with the publication of Peter Vergo in 1989⁵. This approach tried to reformulate the new set of ideas and rethink museums for challenges of new time.

The theorists of new museology argue for a museum that is place of debate and critique and where tools of representation are shown more transparently. The new museum is transparent regarding its policies, inclusive in reading collections and asks general public to become active participant who will criticize and to embrace the museum as a place that belongs to the community, that has duties to serve the best interest of a community.

The concept of a *post museum* proposed by Hooper Greenhill or a *discursive museum* debated on a symposium in MAK in Vienna could be inspirational for envisioning the future work of the museum in need of a change. One of the key issues in the critique of museums were power relations in relation to knowledge that museums offer to the public through all types of communication and decision-making process within museums. The theorists that propose post

⁵ Vergo, Peter, *The New Museology*, London, Reaktion, 1989

museum advocate new institution that seeks to share the power with communities it serves, including its source community.

The *post museum* acknowledges that the visitors are not passive consumers and actively tries to get to know its public. The messages that museum transmits to the audience is not sent to monolith all encompassing public, but the museum seeks to get to know various groups and find the ways to include them in different ways to the museum discourse. The curators take responsibility for the represented material and engage seriously in the debates. Essential characteristic of this approach is the request that post museum does not evade difficult issues but exposes the material that can provoke debates and disagreements.⁶

A *discursive museum* is envisioned as a place that is not about keeping a collection but a place of the various discourses about the objects that mutually compete. This standpoint takes this concept further so that the objects are not important as such but as the impetuses that provoke the various discursive constructions and their conflicts.

“The discursive museum would be filled with the discursive people being challenged by the discursive installations, challenging juxtapositions of objects and provocative graphic elements, questioning audio guides, argumentative texts, debating lectures and inquiring docents. It would be a fun, noisy place, a kind of a cultural forum, a market place for ideas...”⁷

The authors who speak from skeptic standpoint (James Cuno, Carol Duncan, etc.) claim that the museum adopted the vocabulary of change, but that they are not undergoing a real change. The power relation is maintained and the experts do not give more visibility to different voices, decision-making process is presented through the elusive enthusiastic commercial like mission statements, but a core of it stays the same. New rhetoric is used to change the image without the real changes in the approach. These skeptic and pessimistic views are very important for to the museum staff. The museum professionals have to constantly keep skeptic stance in their mind in order to always be aware of the necessity to constantly suspect and try to escape the self-satisfaction and the dangers of the unbelievably-easy-to-get institutional fatigue... Even though some of these requirements seem too idealist and impossible to apply in practice, it is important

⁶ Maristine, Jane (ed.), Introduction in *The New Museum Theory and Practice*, Blackwell, 2006, p. 20

⁷ Cuno, James: Against the Discursive Museum in *The discursive Museum, Vienna, Exhibition Halls, 2001, p 48.*

to have them as a set of reminders and to try to test as often as possible the readiness of the museum staff to apply them and level of their applicability in each new project.

4.1. Functions of the museum

The idea of materiality of objects and their capacity and power to outlast their authors and owners are at the foundation of collecting practice. Relying on permanence of artifacts, one tries to do the impossible, beat transiency and mortality, and leave lasting seal of his or her existence. In this historical period museums are the institutions enabling this desire to be realized.

Museums have not always been as we know them today. They are not unchangeable and eternal. One`s desire to collect is as old as human civilization lasts, but in different epochs it embodies in different forms.

The development of museology as a discipline codified and systematized the organization of museum functions. The basic functions of a museum include **creating a collection**, i.e. work on collecting and use of museable values and **communication of collection**.

Creating collection consists of

a) collecting

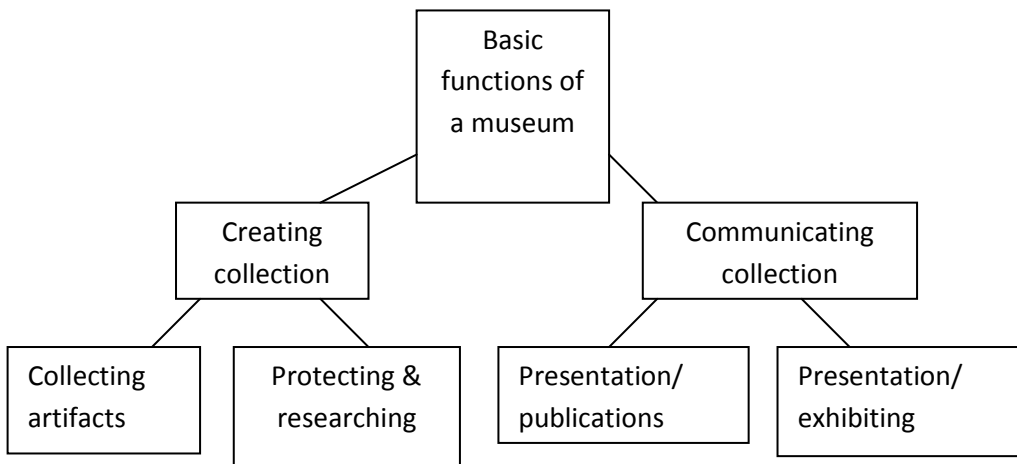
On an abstract level, collecting means capability and competence to recognize museable values in overall reality, and on a concrete level - selection of specific objects that are recognized as sources or testaments about other realities.

b) protecting and researching

Safeguarding includes a specific level of physical protection of artifacts, so-called vaulting and conservation of cognitive values. Besides experts` catalogue processing, the process also includes an obligation of scientific research and interpretation of artifacts. By ensuring an

adequate safeguarding of artifacts and thorough scientific interpretation, museums participate in improvement of knowledge.

Communicating of museable values consists of *museum presentation through exhibitions and publications*. The publications can be in the form of *catalogues* (expert museum presentation) or *scientific papers* dedicated to interpretation of museum's collections and exhibitions. In process of communicating, in accordance with museum aspiration for entirety one should be guided by the idea of most comprehensive presentation combining different disciplinary, theoretical, and methodological positions.



As we know from the very history of museum activities, a museum is not a static or an eternal institution. From chaotic, astonishing *cabinets of curiosities* over an increasingly systematic and specialized collections, to museums of nowadays, ways of functioning changed radically in comparison with institutions that embody one's aspiration to show the world around us for himself/herself and for others, and to give desired projection of oneself through such shows.

Each episteme changes the whole way of collection structuring – who can be a collector, what objects are to be collected, how collections are arranged, whom the collections are intended to, and at the very end, whom they are accessible to. The question of whom the collection is addressed to and whom it is accessible to is an old and, it seems, still present dilemma of whether

museums are scientific institutes or institutions for educating. Institute/educational institution is in fact pseudo-dichotomy because the two functions should not be excluded in any case. “Consciousness of united museum functions, consciousness of institutional work intended for any customer (dedicated and undedicated alike) could only mean elimination of dichotomy.”⁸

The task of new museology is to give purpose to and redefine museums in order to bridge the differences between those two conceptions and to avoid a danger of museums becoming survivals that live on by inertia in a new age, while still working by the rules that were functional in the past. New concepts of museums are quite different, from information centers to open laboratories. What is common to all those visions is that they are turning towards up-to-now non-audience, uninterested ‘ordinary people from the street’. “A museum needs a support from the man in the street and his vigorous interest.”⁹ Museums as we know today have to transform and try to catch the attention of fellow citizens who visit museums only in other towns they tour as tourists.

4.2. New practices in museums – museums as laboratories and creativity hubs

Jorge Glusberg uses MacLuhan’s division of media into hot and cold, and applies it to museums¹⁰. By analogy, a *hot museum* would be rich in information, would provide audience with multitude of data, but at the same time not encourage them to engage and react. Watching such arrangements a visitor could not in any way react to or change the contents offered to him/her. On the other hand, a *cold museum*, to which Glusberg is committed to, is relatively poor in information, but is structured in a way to encourage communication with the audience, their engagement and creativity. New museology aims at promoting changes of museums into places of upbringing, education, and even entertainment, while keeping and at the same time constantly developing all the activities connected to work with the collection, to collecting process and an adequate safeguarding of exhibits. A museum laboratory only extends a scale of its functions,

⁸ Bulatović, Dragan: *Definisanje predmeta i naučna kodifikacija muzealne delatnosti sa strukturom programiranja i standardizacije delatnosti*, Beograd, 1986, p. 9 reader for the course Museology and heritage protection at University of Belgrade

⁹ Glusberg, Jorge: *Hladni i vrući muzeji, K muzeološkoj kritici*, Muzejski dokumentacioni centar, Muzeologija 23, Zagreb, 1983, p. 45

¹⁰ Ibid p. 48

besides its traditional functions without which, it must be remembered, no further step could be made, becomes also a place for educating the audience, a place of lively artistic production, a place of researching and analyzing, a place of spreading esthetic and cultural values. Thus, it should have informative, creative, and educational role. Each museum has its specific history, unique collection, it exists in particular cultural context, it was opened for particular reasons, it is located in particular part of the town, and particular audience visits it... All these particularities of the context should be taken into account when deciding what specific strategies to adopt in order to transform the existing museums.

4.3. Museum in a context of new cultural policy demands

In the course of the past few decades, speeding up globalization and new economic relations caused the new rules of functioning in social, economic, cultural life and imposed new roles and responsibilities of the social actors. In the context of the new development, culture is no longer seen as a confined area of social world. In order to adapt to the new situation, the cultural institutions had to go through serious reorganization to be apt to response to these challenges. As it is expected to be more active participants in the social processes and with the new requirements that culture serve as a means for economic development museums found themselves in need for new knowledge and expertise. Widening the range of activities produced new type of tasks for employees in museums.

The principles of market economy entered some previously protected spheres of cultural area and the new socio economic order brings new challenges for museums. In order to adjust with the requirements of the contemporary conditions museums had to broaden the array of activities and expand capacities, skills and competences. Museums are now considered cultural enterprises focused on users and run by using contemporary managerial methods. This involves dealing with finances, diversification of funding sources, strategic planning, positioning the museum, thinking

about the competition, planning the product etc¹¹. Museum management as a specific type of cultural management offers a series of methods how to conceptualize, plan, organize and successfully realize all museum activities (from collection management to developing PR strategies and audience development programs). Shift of focus to satisfy the needs of users and putting the serve to public interest in the core of their mission did not only cause changes in relations from museum towards outside world, but the very way of functioning and internal organization transformed.

Positive reaction to such conditions was a shift in focus of museum activities from the collection (collecting, making archives, conservation, studying, preserving) to presenting the collection to the public. The emphasis on communication of collection with the public brings many new challenges to curators. Exhibitions have to be planned in a new way and new concerns become more important than before. Tomislav Šola calls this development phase a theatre phase of museums. Modern museums often use theatrical forms to recapture impressions of other times and/or places, combining scientific facts and fiction. ‘Theatrical museum’ wants to tell the story, evoke the event, and provide experience, not only to show objects from its collection.

4.4. Museums and audience

„The audience did not on their own enter the museum temples that by definition were places of awe, seriousness, and thus of certain uneasiness, even resistance. First, they changed strategy and turned to the audience offering different light and gloss of their collections and arrangements, new approach and way of thinking concerning the presentation...”¹²

Democratization of museums essentially changes museum practice. Museums are no more limited places confined only for the privileged. New audience has no habit of visiting museums

¹¹ Tomislav Šola, *Marketing u muzejima, ili o vrlini i kako je obznaniti*, Clio, Beograd, 2002, p 35

¹² Subotić, Irina: Stvoriti i voleti publiku u Žilber, Klod, ed: *Muzej i publika/Musée et Service des Publics*, Clio, Beograd, 2005, p. 11

or the education that traditional museum requires. A museum truly wishing to be accessible to different groups has to start actively dealing with education of its visitors. It is a very complex task. Museums should access new audiences having no predetermined educational requirements, audience comes from diverse social groups and therefore museum should find ways to reach out and be inclusive.

It means systematic research into audience and potential audience, their lifestyles, cultural and other needs, work on particularly adjusted way of advertising and on methods to attract specific groups, programmes especially adapted to the level of knowledge and the needs of the group. Thus socially involved activity, directed to community, assures a new social role of museums. Museums become institutions with pedagogical and educational missions. 'Museums are places of privileged knowledge and education, areas in which memories of man and nature are kept and communicated, where analyzing of processes and meanings of the world, as well as of artistic, cultural and scientific achievements takes place, where something untouchable is touched and invisible is seen. For those who are fond of museums – there is no more precious area of learning than a well-loaded, well-realized and well-guided museum.'¹³

4.5. Museums (of History) as Memory Mediators / Museums as Memory display sites

Together with the theatre and film, museums represent the sites where both memory production and memory archiving is happening. These are the *stages* for memory performances, and the specific ways of commemorating¹⁴ - the organized reenactments and ritual repetitions of the past events which are considered to be formative and which are performed by every community. In the course of these performances, the signs and symbols that are produced are immersed in a given cultural context. Within that specific context, they can be read and understood and as such,

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ The goal of commemorative ceremonies is to make the past present and to eliminate the distance in time in order to create a consciousness of continuity in Connerton, Paul: *How Societies Remember*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, pp 41–71.

they provide a relation between the memory of an individual and a group. The individual and collective memory are in a complex and mutually formative relation.

Collective memory understood as a set of narratives that defines the identity and self-perception of a group and that is shared and commemorated by a group is produced and stored by utilization of a complex net of devices: education system, legal system, cultural production, media, and oral histories. Museums play significant part in the processes of memory making that is always rooted in the nexus of social life. This means that the memory is always determined by struggles of the various interest groups that are trying to impose their version of narrative as the official one. In spite of this inherent potential to be contested, and accused by various groups as non inclusive, the important characteristic of the collective memory as a set of narrative structures is the tendency to represent itself (or to be represented by social actors) as one and homogenous story, shared by everyone in the community. In other words, the remembrance of the collective narrative is usually posed as the precondition for belonging to a group.

An act of memory is in fact a series of activities – inscribing or recording, interpreting, narrating, recalling etc – that may involve a number of memory products. One of the most interesting sites of memory production has been and continues to be the sphere of material culture¹⁵. Museologists, anthropologists and other writers in the field of humanistic disciplines study the many ways in which the objects of material culture act as *memory containers* and as such have different roles in the various stages of their lives.¹⁶ Kopytoff¹⁷ draws our attention to *biographies of objects* as a method of tracing broader array of characteristics of histories and contexts that objects transcend in the course of time. By jumping from one to another cultural context and by changing the value and the meaning the objects both reflect these contexts and serve as constructive elements in the process of memory keeping. “Objects are seen as agents in the construction of memory rather than external instruments that mould our past: objects are mediated memories, material inscriptions of (historical) experiences that are always filtered

¹⁵ Ester Võsu, Ene Kõresaar, Kristin Kuutma: Mediation of memory: Towards Trans disciplinary perspectives in current memory studies. Preface to the special issue of *Trames*, 2008, 12(62/57), 3, pp. 243–263

¹⁶ In 1994, *Journal of Material Culture* was founded. This magazine publishes important papers and presents new approaches in various fields of studying the cultural meaning of things as Daniel Miler explained in “Why some things matter?”, the introductory text of the first volume.

¹⁷ Kopytoff, Igor. The Cultural Biography of Things in Arjun Appadurai, ed. *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 64-94, 1988

through discursive conventions, social and cultural practices, and technological tools”¹⁸ Museologists speak about three different contexts in the life of the object: primary, archeological and museological context. Primary context is the one in which the object was created and where it has a function which is usually defined by its utilization. The archeological context is the situation when the objects are not being used but are stored to wait for the possible future new utilizations and meanings; i.e. they are put in the attic. The museological context is the one that is not part of the biography of each artifact; this is the situation when the object is extracted from its primary or archeological context and put in the new one where it serves as a testimony and a carrier of the information about the realities from which it was extracted. The ability of the objects to serve as the information containers is usually referred to as a quality of *museality*. It is the task of the museum professionals to have the capacity to recognize the museological value or the museality of the specific object.¹⁹ This is the point that links museums’ roles to specific social realities. The power and the authority of the curator to be the one who decides upon the value of the objects and to chose which are to be preserved as the memorabilia or as the objects of mnemotechnic (the objects that encapsulate the ideas, values and characteristic of the other reality) is established through the development of the museums as institutions.

In this way, curators can be considered as keepers of a collective memory, those who determine collecting policies and design exhibitions and the ones who choose what to collect and what to leave out of collections. By exercising this authority, they have a rather close link to the power of deciding about memory and forgetting of collectives that they belong to. This task and privilege was many times subjected to criticism and in the course of time, the task of museums has undergone many changes, but it seems that in this matter authority of the curator remained intact. This place upon serious professionals the duty of being careful and trained observer and interpreter of the reality in order to be able to detect the important objects that have museological values and that should be preserved and furthermore to be skilled and ‘gifted’ to interpret the objects i.e. to develop a plot of meaning and realities around the artifacts.

¹⁸ See José van Dijck: Memory matters in the digital age in *Configurations* 12, 2004, pp 349–373

¹⁹ Maroević, Ivo: Uvod u muzeologiju/Introduction to Museology, Zavod za informacijske studije, 1993

Museums created to structure the ‘storage memory’²⁰, and to archive cultures in all their forms of expression, have currently become a ‘collective memory medium’²¹. “Thereby modern museums [...] have turned from previously closed ‘archives’ to more public open spaces where memory is explored, produced and performed...”²² For the purpose of this thesis, the task of the curator as the memory mediator will be underlined and put in the centre of the attention. This means that the curator is seen as professional with a great amount of responsibility and important mission bearing in mind the task of the mediation of the (collective) past.

Mediation as a concept is used in many different settings, from legal to cultural sphere. It is derived from the Latin word *mediationem*, which means to be in the middle or to intervene. Mediator is a person that acts as cross context translator. She or he knows the specificities of both sides and tries to find the way to establish communication and interaction between two parties. In the field of culture, mediation is usually used to describe animation activities organized by cultural professionals to include the audience that is not regularly attracted by cultural offer. In this situation mediator tries to intervene in order to provoke the communication of the audience with the cultural content.

In the context of history museums, that are in the focus of our interest, the word mediation is understood as a part of the communication as one of the basic functions of museums. Memory is observed as something that is mediated in culture by means of different media (both material and immaterial, both technological and ‘traditional’).²³, museums being one of them.

Gable describes history museums as places where versions of the past are produced through words, pictures, and artifacts, and where the messages they contain are consumed by visitors with a variety of motives for coming to the site.²⁴ The task of a museum professional as a mediator is to represent various versions of past to the audience and to take active part in process of developing the *critical visitor* – the one who understands and at the same time re-questions the past as well as the views and perspectives offered by museums. This research argues that

²⁰ Assmann, Alaida: Spaces of memory, Shapes and changes of cultural remembrance, 1999, quoted according to Ester Vösu, Ene Kõresaar, Kristin Kuutma, op. cit. 244

²¹ Ibid 244

²² Ibid 252

²³ Ibid, p. 249

²⁴ Gable, Eric: How we study History museums: Cultural studies at Monticello in Jane Maristone: *The New Museum Theory and Practice*, Blackwell Publishing, 2006, p. 115

curators and museum professionals have to give up the part of their authority in order to regain the interest and trust of the visitor by seriously engaging them in the process of the museological work. On the other hand, it is argued that museum professionals in Serbia need to regain the part of the authority, act in accordance with the missions of the museums, and finally leave the 19th century perspective of being the places that represent the magnitude of national past.

V Memory, identity, mediation

Even if they are relatively new words, *identity* and *memory* have become among the most frequently used concepts in social sciences and humanities in last few decades. Those words populate pages of the academic texts and thesis as a resonance of their frequency in the so-called real world of social relations, struggles and exchanges of meanings and words ... Huyssen²⁵ speaks about unexpected emerge of memory in the modern world that was until yesterday wearing futuristic glasses and proclaiming the end of history. The optimism of the orientation towards the future was shaken in the first half of XX century by the atrocities and mass destruction of the World Wars that were in a way enabled by the technological achievements of the progressive scientific mind. After Second World War, the importance of memory as a means for preventing the future crimes seemed to be understood and established as a principle. In recent times, the other factors gave new-fangled impetus for the *memory boom*²⁶. It seems that the current acceleration of the world gave a new drive for shift of attention to the past and to the memory. The globalized planet of today offers promising potentials to many and more than ever before in the history, people can be part of various movements and social changes. The incredible development of technology and new communication tools brought up the interconnectivity of immense scale. It also brought the rapidity into lives of individuals and collectives. The fast way of changing and the change as the only continuum in contemporary society have produced the tendency towards archiving and *lost in advance battle* of trying to memorize and thus save the present moment. In fear of losing *identity* and melt into the global consumerist culture, individuals and groups strive to define and preserve the characteristics that delineate them from the others. This feeling of acceleration that is going to swallow 'Us' (our identity) is often being hyperbolized in 'real' life as well as in theory. In reality, (if brought to the extreme) it produces rigid attitudes and groups that watch carefully to preserve what they claim to be their 'true identity'.²⁷ This is usually constructed and invented view that draws some

²⁵ Huyssen, Andreas: Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia, in *Public culture*, 12, winter 2000, pp 21 -38

²⁶ Ester Võsu, Ene Kõresaar, Kristin Kuutma, op cit. 250

²⁷ For example, identity politics driven conflicts that Balkan countries had gone through in last decades of XX century.

periods of glorified history that is supposed to be reinstated as a model for behavior of nowadays members of the group²⁸. Erikssen argues that tendency of sticking to the past is a symptom of trauma and anxiety of unexpected possibilities of change that we live with. With technological development, in past decades the life has changed more than during the lifetime of the previous generations. Tyrannized²⁹ by the possibility to use each second of their lives the possibility that new technologies equipped them with, resulted in practice of multitasking and the attention disorders as normal way of functioning of modern men and women.

Pierre Nora argues that previous generations were so immersed in their past that they did not need the politics of commemoration and professionals to take care of their memory keeping. It was transmitted by the means of tradition. He underlines the importance of rupture in the generation of collected memory, the point being that moments of social stress or fracture ignite desires to collect memories that can be shared. These situations (when social order is being shaken) produce various nostalgic responses: "...for example, in places like New England, the rupturing effect of nineteenth-century 'progress' generated a nostalgic, melancholic, yearning for a forgotten past that, in turn, generated conscious strategies of memorializing, not least within the domestic landscape of the household, itself a place of collectivity."³⁰

Identity and memory are interconnected and mutually dependent in many ways. Idea of identity depends on the idea of memory and vice versa. The central meaning of any group or individual identity, the feeling of permanence/constancy in time and space is maintained by memory. At the same time, the supposed identity defines what is to be memorized.³¹

We have to be aware of the fact that neither memory nor identity is fixed category. People tend to understand and represent them as natural and pre discursive categories but they are subjective,

²⁸ See Hobsbawm, Eric, Ranger, Terence, eds: *The Invention of tradition*, Cambridge University Press, 1984

²⁹ For analysis of phenomenon of 'acceleration of time' and its influences on cultural practices and the modern way of life see Hyland Erikssen, Thomas, *Tiranija trenutka/ Tyranny of the moment*, Beograd, XX vek, 2003

³⁰ Tadhg O'Keeffe *Landscape and Memory: Historiography, Theory, Methodology* in Moore, Niamh and Whelan, Yvonne, Eds. *Heritage, Memory and Politics of Identity: New Perspectives on the Cultural Landscape*, Ashgate eBook, p 7

³¹ Gillis, R. John, "Pamćenje i identitet: povijest jednog odnosa", in reader for the course *Memory: Remembrance and forgetting*, Peace Academy Sarajevo, 2009.

based on the social constructions and applicable to changes. On one hand, memory helps us to know who we are and on the other hand, the fact that we are who we are defines what content, in which circumstances and for what reasons will fill in our memory space. This process is accepted as the 'being who you really are' or the true essence of one's identity on psychological level and that is why the reaction to deconstruction of someone's identity is rapturous.

Memory is the ability to retain the information about the past events. One of the pioneer researchers of this topic, Maurice Halbwachs has noted that social processes in which individual and collective partake are what determine the memory.³²

Collective memory can be defined as a socially constructed representation of the past that is shared by members of the group and marked by power relations³³.

Selectivity is the important characteristic of the process of remembering. In order to remember, selection has to be made; some content that is considered unimportant, traumatic or not dignifying enough for supporting a desirable identity perception is being suppressed. The process of selection and forgetting makes the memory subjective and keen to provide distorted picture of the past events. According to Hockert, collective memory is determined by three factors: culture of remembrance, history (scientific discipline) and primary experience.³⁴ The present political culture provides the set of values that form the **public culture of memory**. The past is not remembered for the sake of itself, it has an important influence to the present and the future of the collective, since each culture makes meaning of the present and the expectation of the future by "inscribing the past into the contemporary horizon."³⁵

Work on memory is just like any other physical or mental work - immersed in complex net of class and gender relations and power struggles that determine what is important to be

³²Halbwachs, Maurice: *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1952, originally published in *Les Travaux de L'Année Sociologique*, Paris, F. Alcan, 1925

³³ Staiger, Uta: Memory, www.phil.mq.edu.au/staff/jsutton/Socialmemory.htm, accessed on 29 August 2010

³⁴ Quoted according to Kuljić, Todor: Tito u novom srpskom poretku sećanja, *Sociologija* Vol. XLV (2003), No 2, p 98

³⁵ Staiger, Uta, op.cit. 2

remembered (or forgotten), who should remember it, in what way and for which purposes.³⁶ In a *community of remembrance* that is connected by true history (e.g. family as a community of remembrance) or invented common history (e.g. nation as a community of remembrance) always exist the parallel **rival sets of memory** and it is the result of a power struggles, which will be the central and which will be marginalized ones. If the period of history is more recent, the influence of the actual political interest and struggles is more apparent. Time passing and generation shift influences memory changing within a community of remembrance.

Assmann³⁷ makes distinction between memory that is close to the experience of the present generations – *communicative memory* and the *cultural memory* that has no living witnesses and is therefore stored and mediated by the various institutions and media.

Cultures differ by their relationship towards the time and the past. Klaus Roth³⁸ differentiates cultures on basis of their conceptualization of time. The perception of linear time is characteristic for contemporary Western cultures; the time is viewed as a linear progressive flow and the main orientation is towards the future. The circular view of time is characteristic for traditional peasant societies. Way of life and the process of production that is connected with the agriculture and life cycles of nature determine circular perception of time. Roth finds that the cultures of South East Europe are characterized by *liminal* conceptualization of the time; this perception focuses on some events in the history and sees them as crucial for later development. These cultures are more oriented towards history and use selected events from the past to explain the further situation of the collective (e.g. the meaning of Kosovo battle in Serbian history). Even if the serious remarks could be put on this classification, it points out the differences in basic relation to the category of time. Even if they all thrive to the past for the narrations to fill in the identity narrative, some cultures are more past oriented than others.

“... Memory is of particular relevance to the post-conflict and post-crisis field of research due to its pivotal role in (re-)constitution and negotiation of the present by addressing past conflict or critical events.”³⁹ In recent past, the strongest influence is one made by day-to-day political

³⁶ Gillis, R. John, loc.cit.

³⁷ Quoted according to Kuljić, Todor, *Kultura sećanja*, Beograd, Čigoja štampa, 2006, p. 107 (English title: *Memory culture*)

³⁸ Rot, Klaus, *Slike u glavama: ogleđi o narodnoj kulturi u jugoistočnoj Evropi*, Beograd, XX vek, 2000.

³⁹ Staiger, Uta, loc.cit

interests in its mediation. Culture of remembrance modifies past through (public) institutions in accordance with values that dominate contemporary political and societal arena. Collective remembrance is strengthened through sense of belonging to certain group and it fortifies basis of constructed identity i.e. body of nation.

5.1. Socialism and recent history in the collective memory / public culture of remembrance vs. everyday discourses

Previous chapter provided an outline of basic notion and their relations in the field of study of memory. In the lines to follow, I will draft the outline the context of the memory politics and public culture of memory in contemporary Serbia. These circumstances are important to explain in order to provide framework within which the Museum of Yugoslav History that will be subject of the case study, functions and develops.

It can be said that histories of the Balkan countries are marked by interrupted continuities. Only in the second half of the last century, the ‘Yugoslavian’ space passed through two radical changes of the master narratives – one after WW2 with the installment of the socialist political order and in the late eighties and nineties, and the other in the period of the end of the communism and development of nationalistic democracies in new formed countries.

To trace the relationship towards the socialist past in public culture of memory and in the everyday discourse it is important to say that the character of the lifelong president Tito⁴⁰, as a central figure is often used as a symbol of that time and of that country⁴¹. In any narrative or reminiscence of ex Yugoslavia eventually a character of Tito will appear. This does not mean that the one’s relationship to Tito is necessary the same as her/his relationship to the socialist past. In official public culture of memory, the relationship towards recent past is molded according to the interest of the dominant group in the cultural hegemony, and to trace it back

⁴⁰ In this text it will be referred to Josip Broz Tito by using his full name or JBT or Tito

⁴¹ Marković, J. Predrag, *Emocionalna topografija sećanja jugonostalgije: Primer Leksikona YU mitologije*, in. *Pamćenje i Nostalgija (Neki prostori, oblici, lica i naličja)*, ur. Gordana Đerić, Institut za filozofiju i društvenu teoriju, 2009, Beograd.

would be helpful to see the main ideological framework and its characteristics⁴². The new elites in Serbia and other former Yugoslav republics embraced nationalism and democracy as pillars of their political ideology and their newly made national states. In accordance with that, the previous regime is presented as the radically different, accused to be the cause of many historical injustices. Very often, the accusation of the previous regime is used as an excuse for many problems that persist today. With the end of official protection of cult of Tito the first anticommunist tones appeared in public discourse. To dismantle the image of the existing memory order it was important to dismantle the basic frameworks of the socialist ideology: communism, antifascism and the *brotherhood and unity* principle that undermined the differences and placed focus of attention to joint efforts of all nations in antifascist fight in WW2 and in later building of new society.

Dragičević-Šešić and Kuljić find that the rigidity of the propaganda in time of SFR Yugoslavia is also important factor in the explanation of post socialist relation to remembrance of socialist period. "...Yugoslav nation, regions and the cities had lived through socialism with divided memories: private memories which kept alive 'dissonant memories and heritage' (Turnbridge J.E. & G.J. Ashworth) – sometimes even tabooized (certain religious events, royal histories of different dynasties, inter-ethnic conflicts and mass graves, etc.) making them present in collective sub-consciousness, and on the other side: collective 'official' memories, stimulated through educational system, public representation events, ceremonies, historical research (memories of revolutionaries, autobiographies and biographies) and monument building policies."⁴³

As a reaction for the long term propaganda of the socialist state that included a carefully developed manifestations such as relay baton celebration of the president Tito's birthday – a mass event that was supposed to join together the whole country, and a meticulously developed work on memory (building of the memorials and monument dedicated to selected events in history: mainly World War 2, and the successes of the new country, but also the uprising of

⁴² Kuljić, op cit, p. 100

⁴³ Dragičević-Šešić, Milena, Monument policy as an anachronistic strategy within memory policies of Balkan countries within the project Art, culture and media in the process of European Integrations, n. 149004, supported by Ministry of Science and Technology, Republic of Serbia

peasants in the age of feudalism) in the late eighties and nineties, after loosening of the state control mechanisms of freedom of speech, communism was the first target for hate speech that in late eighties and nineties entered public arena. Later on came the mass production of revisions of official history that explored the topics that were not allowed in the previous regime. As usually in time of crisis, the production of books of publicists and amateur historians was vast and the popular media (that had just gained freedom) opened space for the previously neglected topic of national history. These textual products exploited stereotypes and gained publicity by providing populist oversimplifications or untruths about alleged glory or national past and its roots back in the middle ages. There are lots of examples but the most striking one is the title *Serbs, the oldest people*⁴⁴

School history textbooks were slowly changing during last decades, but the most radical move was depriving communist resistance movement of the antifascist aura. Namely in the books from 2004 the Chetnic movement was enlisted as antifascist movement together with the Partisans. The Serbian language and literature curriculum is cleared of many literature/reading that was connected to WW2 and more national literature was introduced.

The demarcation from the socialism and its representation as something imposed (dungeon of peoples) and against the national being also was very important in order to gain the European aura of the new national identity. After the fall of the Berlin wall and with the apparent end of communism, it was important for the new constructed identities of Serbs, Croats, etc. (or in *emic*⁴⁵ categories the rediscovered long existing national being that was kept in prison during communist dictatorship) to prove their European identity. The communism was perceived as identity stain that was usually explained as imposed and not having anything to do with 'us' in Central European countries too. (e.g. Terror Haza museum in Budapest⁴⁶ is criticized to be the example of effort to present communism and fascism as evil forces that were imposed to

⁴⁴ *Srbi narod najstariji* by Olga Luković Pjanović

⁴⁵ *Emic* speech in ethnography means the point of view of the informants; *etic* is used by the authors that believe in the possibility to speak objectively

⁴⁶ Péter Apor, Eurocommunism Commemorating Communism in Contemporary Eastern Europe, lecture at workshop The Legacy and Memory of Communism in Europe organised by EURHISTXX, Paris, 2007

Hungary thus providing amnesty to Hungarian nation and avoiding to problematize the specificities of the phenomena).

There are several modes in which the official policy creates desirable culture of memory, these are the instrument used in that purposes:⁴⁷

-creation or representation of certain type of narrative (supporting production of a film, theatre play, translation or other project that is considered to be important for projecting desirable message)

(example: the movie “Kosovo Battle” made in 1989, on the 600th anniversary of the historic event; Made in short time in order to be ready for the anniversary, film was exploited by the regime to raise nationalistic sentiments. The movie is reused and broadcasted each time when it was estimated that the moment had been critical for the nation; it was broadcasted in 1999 during the bombing or even in 2006 to raise the number of voters for the new Constitution.)

-renaming of institutions, streets, squares, parks, bridges

(e.g. Since the nineties majority of streets that were connected to World War 2 or the period of socialism got new names. All towns in ex Yugoslavia that had the prefix Tito’s were renamed (prefix *Tito’s* was removed except Podgorica). In 2009 an interesting affair that happened alluded how decisions about memory policy are not taken as a result of strategically developed memory policies, but rather impulsively as a result of the estimation of the current political moment. Just before the visit of Russian president Medvedev on the 65th anniversary of the liberation of Belgrade in 2009, the initiative was passed, much faster than the usual procedure should last, to name streets after Russian generals that participated in liberation of Belgrade (there were streets named after those generals but they were removed at some point). This was followed by statements of politicians that we have to keep memory of our antifascist heritage. Antifascism was relativized in the public sphere and in a rather funny way it seems that local politicians needed a reminder of the ‘Great power’ to refer to antifascism.

-creation of new types of festivities, awards, new homage policy

⁴⁷ Dragičević-Šešić, Milena, op.cit. 3

-re-appropriation of the institutions sites or destruction of ‘dangerous’ memories

(The Museums of Revolution that existed in each republic in ex Yugoslavia were transformed. The Museum of Yugoslav History that will be further discussed in the next chapters is just one example of re-appropriation. The Museum July 4, also located in Belgrade, that was dedicated to secret meetings of Communist party and Tito’s illegal staying in Belgrade during WW2 – its building was returned to its previous owners Ribnikar family (founders of *Politika*) and it was planned to be transformed into Museum of *Politika* (the newspaper publishing house with longest tradition in Serbia). This project was not realized and the building is closed for public.

In Vojvodina, Museum of Workers’ Movement and Peoples’ Revolution founded in 1956 is transformed to Museum of Socialist Revolution, and eventually to Historical museum of Vojvodina. In 1992, The Museum of Vojvodina and Historical museum of Vojvodina merged to form The Museum of Vojvodina. The new museum shares the building with the Museum of Contemporary Art of Vojvodina.)

- monument policy (building and removing) and policy towards existing memorial spaces

(E.g. removal of the monument of Tito in Užice from the central square to the museum park; negligence of Memorial Kadinjača near Užice⁴⁸)

- decisions about national insignia

5.2. Everyday discourses on socialism, presence of socialism in popular culture (nostalgia and reductionist rejections)

“Today, almost two decades after the fall of communist regimes, scholars working on the recent past are paradoxically challenged by the abundance of memory and the variety of witnesses’ accounts, which confront the professional historical narrative with the simple claim “I was there and it was completely different.” Walking down the street, having a family dinner, or flipping

⁴⁸ NGOs Yustat, Culturklammer and Academica initiated a public debate dedicated to this issue with an aim to raise public awareness of this policy of neglecting and to point out the importance of socialist heritage for contemporary identity of the region. See http://www.yustat.org/edukacija/socijalisticko_nasledje.html accessed on 20th August 2010

through postcards and photo albums, we all make daily inroads into history. What happens to the sites of memory which remain fiercely contested in the present?”⁴⁹

On the other hand in opposition with official politics of remembrance that did try to reduce the memory of socialism and that often use it as a space for projecting the cause of all troubles and as the alibi for many problems that still prevail, the researches about attitudes of ‘ordinary’ people towards recent past show different standpoints and feelings. The findings of these researches show that people remember socialist past as the time of prosperity, social security and optimism⁵⁰.

Personal and public selective remembrance are interwoven, they constitute and refuel one another. Personal memories are often in disaccord with discourse reinforced by institutions. Organized and personal memories of some conflicts, persons or phenomena are constantly being changed depending on the needs of the time present, the official narrative influence but cannot control the personal memories. In personal memories of the ordinary people, the memory process had a different turn as ‘people stick to their opinion about the socialism as a regime of general social security more than the intellectuals who find the national situation more important’⁵¹. The researchers detect the spreading of nostalgia all over ex communist countries⁵². People tend to idealize the past and to diminish or forget the bad aspects. In the situation of insecurity this effect is even more developed. This phenomenon is usually referred to as nostalgia. Nostalgia is complex, differentiated, emotionally colored, personally or collectively (un)instrumentalized narrative that speaks in binary oppositions and celebrates romanticized lost times, people, objects, feelings, senses, events, spaces, relationships, values, political and other systems; at the

⁴⁹ Apor, Peter, op.cit. 12

⁵⁰ Marković, J. Predrag, Emocionalna topografija sećanja jugonostalgije: Primer *Leksikona YU mitologije*, in *Pamćenje i Nostalgija (Neki prostori, oblici, lica i naličja)*, ur. Gordana Đerić, Institut za filozofiju i društvenu teoriju, 2009,

⁵¹ Kuljić, Todor: Kritička kultura sećanja, in *Pet godina tranzicije u Srbiji, Beograd, Socijal demokratski klub, Fondacija Fridrih Ebert Stiftung, 2005, 109*

⁵² see Jochnatan Bach. Ukus ostaje – potrošnja, (n)ostalgija i proizvodnja Istočne Nemačke; Peace Academy, Sarajevo, 2009, course reader *Memory: Remembering and forgetting*, professor: Stef Jansen;

Veenis, Milena. 1999 Consumption in East Germany, *Journal of Material Culture* 4, no. 72: 79-112

same time opposing them to the less valuable contemporaneity and regretting for the irreversible loss⁵³. Similar to neologism Ostalgia, that is used to refer to the recently developed nostalgia towards the East, or so called Red nostalgias that are present in various forms in all ex communist countries, Velikonja develops the term Titostalgia and describes it as the nostalgic discourse developed in connection to the character of president of ex SFRY.⁵⁴ The researches of this occurrence distinct two types of nostalgia – the so called *real* nostalgia that is the result of sincere regret for the past time and *postmodern nostalgia* which is more playful and uses irony and the strategy of patchwork to develop a certain statement. This other type of uses of the socialist signs and symbols is important to observe, as it is the core of understanding the emerging popularity and the status of retro chic symbols that insignia of socialism have.

To go back to ‘really’ nostalgic nostalgia, one of the key elements for its understanding and interpretation is the (partially) fictional quality of it. The nostalgic memory about the past is a longing mixture of melancholic feelings of regret for the past (that is) painted with the elusive memory make up distortion. This is longing for the past that never happened. It does not mean that it is always completely false, fictional memory that one is nostalgic for, but this state of mind usually speaks about the present moment from which one feels nostalgic. In the situations of crisis, when the main categories are shaken and insecure, people tend to project the imaginariuim of times before the crisis as the *golden age*. The golden age is usually installed in far past, but in the case of nostalgia it can be situated in the time that is still present as a live memory of the present generations.

In the atmosphere of general insecurity – social and economical as transition period is by its nature, these narratives flourish. Nevertheless, it would be an easy way out, to interpret them as completely invented and only referring to the critique of the present. In nowadays Serbia, these narratives have the foundation in the memory that, in above-mentioned circumstances, can be called ‘dissonant’⁵⁵ if we bear in mind the official politics of neglecting and oblivion of the socialist heritage.

⁵³ Velikonja, Mitja, *Titostalgija*, Beograd, XX vek, 2010

⁵⁴ Ibid p. 31

⁵⁵ Tunbridge, J. E., & Ashworth, G. J. *Dissonant heritage: The management of the past as a resource in conflict*. Chichester: Wiley, 1996

In the private sphere, these narratives keep the memory of wellbeing, social security and optimism but what is more important, they also memorize the idea of living together regardless cultural, religious, ethnic differences and cosmopolitan ethos of intercultural communication. This is a significant potential that shouldn't be missed in rethinking the identities of post Yugoslav countries in light of, on one hand envisioning their future European identities that they all strive for, and on the other hand, the process of post conflict reconciliation that is inevitable precondition for future development.

To conclude this chapter, it is important to note few remarks that can be drawn from theoretical approaches of memory studies which are important for the Museum of Yugoslav History as a keeper and a mediator of the recent past:

-Since socialism is a period of recent past, the memory of socialism is a *communicative memory* – meaning that there are people that have memories in their primary experience, people who are witnesses of this period.

-Memory of socialism is still **contested**, used and misused in political debates of today.

-There are **sets of rivalry memory narratives** that struggle for dominance in the public arena.

Societal occurrence/circumstance, that is determined by dissolution of Yugoslavia, wars in the nineties, mass movement of the population, economic crisis and general feeling of insecurity and the beginning of market economy and development of the market arena in almost all public spheres caused the proliferation of the reductionists interpretations of the (recent) history that can be sum up in two opposed approaches to socialism:

it was either the epiphany of the almost utopian social order, where everyone had enough to fulfill the needs, where education and health system was free and accessible for all, security was on a high level. People felt secure and had positive expectation of the future. What is even more important, the differences between people were not cause of conflict, au contrary, different nations, and nationalities lived in *brotherhood and unity*. The country was respected around the globe and people could travel freely...

or

it was the prison of the nations, with no religious freedom, no freedom of speech, against national being and the national interest, a repressive dictatorship with the developed propaganda. No human or religious rights were respected and the country was under control of the state security service.

Usually analysts use these extreme versions of the attitudes in order to make the interpretation more explanatory. These poles of the continuum are made up for the purpose of the analysis, but in reality, they usually exist like this, with the moderate versions of both but it rarely happens that opinions are moderate and come to the middle of this continuum.

It seems that put together these opposite opinions state that 'there is something wrong'. They could be indicators of a deep gap in society where opposed parties almost do not have the means and the common grounds to communicate.

Knowing and researching the status of heritage of socialism and its place in the 'collective unconsciousness', the trends of its interpretation and reuses in contemporary culture is an important task for the museums that deal with it if they want to provide programs that are relevant and significant for today's audiences. This could be useful because many different interpretations can pop up, many different narratives and *past* can be seen through various perspectives – *mainstream*, alternative (delivered by diverse interest groups), individual perspectives which can collide but also can be in discord and that might show that there was no one *past* but that the history means something different depending on the source and the perspective.

VI Case Study - The Museum of Yugoslav History

6.1. Historical perspective - genesis from representative to cultural institution

The Museum of Yugoslav History in its present form has been legally ‘founded’ in 1996⁵⁶. However, the history of this institution and the heritage that it takes care of, lasts much longer.

One of the pillars of the Yugoslav socialist ideology was building the cult of personality through a constant reproduction of ‘spectacular’ image of Tito, the only president of Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. Tito’s image was created as an image of a politician who rose from the masses and continued to have a good relation with the people.

During his lifelong rule, as he was a figure of national and international charisma, he was given many gifts – both as a result of diplomatic protocols and a part of way peoples of Yugoslavia wanted to show their devotion. Meetings with political leaders as well as with other prominent people of the time (sportsmen, celebrities, scientists...) included exchange of gifts. The most numerous gifts given to Tito were those of the peoples to the ‘beloved president’. As socialism was the ideology that tried to erase the class differences, it was crucial to put the ordinary man in the focus of attention. Many ceremonies mobilized ‘ordinary’ citizens to participate in spectacular embodiments of the official ideology - *brotherhood and unity*, the prosperous life in socialism, the great results of self management economy and the determination of people of Yugoslavia to “advance in bright future”. A gift for the president was the way to position oneself as a part of the socialist community⁵⁷. The simplicity and naiveté of the majority of gifts donated (and in many cases handmade) by ordinary citizens stood together with the luxurious, expensive and valuable works of art that Tito got from the politicians, statesmen from all around the world.

⁵⁶ Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) existed from 1943 to 1992 when it dissolved. Slovenia, Croatia and Macedonia declared the independence in 1991 and Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992. The dissolution of SFRY was followed by inter ethnic wars that ended with the development of nation states with exception of Bosnia and Herzegovina but is also divided on the ethnic principle. Serbia and Montenegro formed Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) and declared to be the successor country. FRY existed until 2003 when it was transformed to Serbia and Montenegro that lasted until 2006.

First Yugoslavia was founded after WW1 as Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. To diminish ethnic tensions king Aleksandar Karadjordjević introduced the name Yugoslavia in 1929. Second Yugoslavia was a socialist, while the third Yugoslavia consisted of Serbia and Montenegro was only a phase in process of forming the nation states. The MYH, due to way it was founded and due to the content of its collections is dedicated mostly to the period of so-called second, socialist Yugoslavia (SFRY).

⁵⁷ Manojlović Pintar, Olga: On gifts, and gift giving in *Tito Effect*, exhibition catalogue, Museum of Yugoslav History, Belgrade, 2009, p 35

In 1950's the idea of creating space where all those presents would be exhibited came up and the depot for the 'museum' of gifts was built⁵⁸ in the residential complex.

6.1.1. The Museum May 25

In 1962, the building of Museum May 25 was constructed and given as a present to JBT from the City of Belgrade for his 70th birthday. Museum was opened on 25 May 1962. Its mission was to collect, keep, study and exhibit all presents dedicated and connected with the personality of Marshal Tito and his political and other activities, with accent to his contacts with citizens, representatives of political, industrial and other workers' associations related to socialist development, fight against colonialism, spreading policy of peaceful coexistence and fight for the world peace.⁵⁹

After 1957, May 25th was proclaimed the day of Youth and not 'only' the birthday of JBT. With announcing president's birthday to be the Youth Day authorities tried to disguise the cult of personality. When it was opened for public, Museum May 25 contained 2205 artifacts that were chosen from the collection of presents, respecting criteria of rarity, diversity and material value⁶⁰. Permanent exhibition was displayed for twenty years; it consisted mostly of relay batons that Tito got for his birthdays and presents that were offered by common people. Other much more valuable artifacts were exposed in the residential objects and available for the guests who visited the president. It was a peculiar collection of trivial objects and valuable works of art. In a way, this collection can be compared with the cabinets of wonder - *Wunderkammern* as the precedents of the systematical and disciplinary museums that we know today.

6.1.2. The Museum of Revolution of Peoples and Nationalities of Yugoslavia (MRPNY)

During the same period the idea to create a museum which will keep the memory of the revolution was developed. In several republics, the initiatives have been successfully realized

⁵⁸ Sarajčić Erceg, Gordana, Memorial centre Josip Broz Tito, foundation and perspectives, unpublished MA thesis, Faculty of organizational science and informatics, Varaždin, University of Zagreb, 1990

⁵⁹ Odluka o osnivanju Muzeja 25. Maj, Narodni odbor Beograda / Decision of foundation of Museum May 25, Peoples committee of Belgrade (City assembly)

⁶⁰ Sarajčić Erceg, Gordana, op.cit.

and museums of revolutions as the key institutions to represent state ideology (socialist and antifascist ideals) have been created. However, in Belgrade, Museum of Revolution of Peoples and Nationalities of Yugoslavia was established as only federal cultural institution in 1959.

As the Antifascist struggle was one of the core unifying narratives of Yugoslav country, the mission of this museum was clear - to study and keep the memory of the antifascism, liberation movement together with the history of socialist idea and development of the socialist movement throughout Yugoslavian space. The role of the Communist Party was represented as a main actor of this development. For that reason, the educational role of this museum was particularly important.

6.1.3. The Memorial Centre Josip Broz

After Tito's death in May 1980 it was seen by authorities as necessary to keep the memory of his contribution to the development of Yugoslav society as well as of his accomplishments in positioning Yugoslavia in the world politics and international relations. For that purpose was passed the special law according to which was founded The Memorial Centre JBT⁶¹. The mission of the centre was to safeguard and spread the knowledge about achievements of the late president by collecting, documenting, studying, and exhibiting of documents and artifacts related to his life and work.

The Centre consisted of Museum May 25 and all the residential objects previously used by the president. In accordance to types of displays and functions - these memorial objects can be divided as follows⁶²:

*-monument houses*⁶³: the Winter Garden known as The House of Flowers (a place where JBT was buried according to his wish)

-memorial houses: The Residency, Billiard House, and objects that were used as residence spaces outside Belgrade - Residency at the island Vanga in The Adriatic and The House in Tito's birthplace Kumrovec).

-museum venues: The Old Museum, Hunting House, Oval building, Museum 4th July.

⁶¹ Law on Memorial centre Josip Broz Tito, Official Gazette of SFRY, No 69, 19 November 1996

⁶² Sarajčić Erceg, Gordana, op.cit.

⁶³ My translation, in English I could not find adequate term to differentiate monument and memorial houses

As it was a political decision to form the Memorial centre, not enough attention was paid to museological criteria and adequate scientific research. It was important to provide the official memory space, inscribe desirable image of Tito into collective consciousness and ensure that this image of Tito and socialism will be archived for the future. This memorial was in a way continuation of policy of production of spectacular image of Tito as the ‘father of Yugoslav nations’. The Centre was formed thanks to accelerated procedures. Moreover, cultural institutions in Yugoslavia were organized at the republic level, and the Centre as a federal institution was not governed by these regulations, which was another obstacle for introducing and developing professional standards.

After Tito’s death, the first inventory of all items from the buildings he used was made.⁶⁴ All artifacts in 38 books of inventory were treated equally, from works of art to materially worthless mass-produced utility items (furniture and equipment used by the personnel).

Having in mind the fact that the cult of Tito’s personality was still present, active, and maintained by the authorities through organizing relay baton and other ceremonies and proclaiming the policy *And after Tito - Tito*⁶⁵, in the first years, the activity of the Memorial centre was at its peak. At the time, the centre had the highest number of visitors, the exhibition activity and cooperation with other museums in the country was vivid and dynamic. The centre organized many exhibitions for other towns that presented the legacy of the late president and his accomplishments. It would be interesting to make a thorough research of these programs; perhaps the further analysis of these programs would show the anxiety of a disoriented society that had been developed around the cult of personality, which tries to maintain the illusion that the societal mainstays have not been dramatically shaken by the death of the leader.

Unlike The Memorial Centre and previously Museum May 25 that were founded in order to take care of the existing collections that were compiled by chance and without any program of

⁶⁴ Panić, Ana: On griffins, unicorns and Moon rocks, or the collection of the last ruler in *Deadly Treasure*, exhibition catalogue, Museum of Yugoslav History, 2009 /O grifonima, jednorozima i kamenu sa Meseca ili o poslednjoj vladarskoj kolekciji u *Smrt u trezoru*, katalog izložbe, Muzej istorije Jugoslavije, 2009

⁶⁵ This meant that a memory of Tito would live both metaphorically and as symbol of wellbeing, welfare, brotherhood and unity, and that Yugoslavia will continue to follow in future paths and principles of socialist ideology proclaimed by Tito. From 1980 to 1988, the last year of this ceremony, relay baton ceremonies had a title *And after Tito - Tito*.

collecting, the Museum of the Revolution of Peoples and Nationalities was on the other hand formed with the aim to collect, safeguard, research and educate the future generations about the history of socialist ideas and movements, the achievements and struggle of the working class and the important events of the revolutionary past of Yugoslav people. The idea of the museum preceded the forming of a collection. Due to a lack of funds and diminished ideological pressure, the building⁶⁶ has never been finished and the museum was in a villa in the residential part of Belgrade. Few years later, the museum got the space in central Belgrade, in the building which used to be the Central Committee of the Communist Party (which was a bank previously). Now this building is the seat of Ministry of Culture and other institutions (Institute for recent history, Institute for European Studies, Historical Museum of Serbia, etc.). Even though both institutions have the same background meaning that they both were founded with highly political and alike agendas, the collections that they were safeguarding are quite different. The Memorial centre JBT was a typical presidential museum whose artifacts were gathered without any plan or program of collecting i.e. they were a mishmash of presents and personal belongings of the late president while on the other hand the MRPNY was made with a specific aim and concept of what it will be collecting and exhibiting (concept preceding collection). Collections were rather reduced with major lack of materials so permanent exhibition was based on photos, copies of documents and printed materials. Later unification of two radically different collections also adds up to the specificity of the MYH as a museum.

Late eighties and nineties brought a radical ideological change. The fall of the Berlin Wall marked the end of communism in Europe – in next few years, all of the countries of former Eastern block faced changes of the existing political and economic order. In Yugoslavia the nationalistic tendencies were more and more present and the new elites (majority of whom were actually ex members of the communist party) changed the rhetoric and embraced the discourse of nationalism and long neglected national aspirations that were enslaved in form of multinational socialist Yugoslavia. Once beloved president, JBT became the dictator in public discourses of all former republics and the ideology of *brotherhood and unity* was then reinterpreted as repressive

⁶⁶ According to the project of Zagreb architect Vjenceslav Rihter, foundations of building were set in New Belgrade, in between the building of SIV (Federal Executive Committee of Yugoslavia), building of the Central committee of the Communist party and the Museum of Contemporary Art Belgrade (built in 1965). New Belgrade was a neighbourhood built by mass work actions in which youth, workers etc. from all over Yugoslavia participated voluntarily. It was built on empty space, and as such it was neutral and did not carry any meanings connected with (royal) past. Thus New Belgrade became a symbol of socialist zeal and achievements, and the most appropriate place for the federal Museum of Revolution.

and untrue. The institution that had the mission to keep the memory of JBT, Memorial Centre was no longer considered to be important nor the institution of public interest, on the contrary, it had lost its prestige, many of employees got fired and the Museum May 25 fell under the authority of the City Council. Many debates were organized with the intention to decide the future of this institution.

6.1.4. Foundation of the Museum of Yugoslav History

In 1996, after few years of public debates⁶⁷, the government made a decision to put an end to work of MC JBT and MRPNY and decided to found the MYH as the only federal institution at the time⁶⁸. The new formed museum inherited all the art and cultural history content of the both museums and only three buildings⁶⁹. Again upon a decision of political authorities, a year later the wall was built and the museum park was divided into residential and museum part. The other buildings were turned into residential objects where at the time president Milošević moved. One of the residencies was bombed in 1999 and from the Oval building Milošević was sent to International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in Hague.

Strangely enough or maybe quite expectedly, the history of this institution was interconnected with the history of the country whose name it bare.

From 2000 on, the MYH management addressed state institutions in order to reclaim buildings for museological purposes, however this gave no results. Part of the collection remained in those buildings so if curators want to work with artifacts they need a permit of the General secretariat of the President of the Republic. The problem of lack of the storage space still exists.

⁶⁷ In 1992 a broad panel discussion *Memorial centre JBT – how to continue* was organized by The Art Historians Association suggested the need to establish museum that would deal with the Yugoslav idea among many other suggestions (to become an information and documentation centre, science centre, art school, etc.).

⁶⁸ In order to find solution for the function of Memorial centre JBT, White Palace, Old Palace, Museum of 4th July and MRPNY, the Government formed the experts' group in 1992. (some of the members of this experts' groups were: Dragoslav Srejšović, Dejan Medaković, Vojislav Đurić, Branko Petranović, Irina Subotić, etc). This experts' group passed proposal to the Government regarding the future use and function of representative institutions that were state-owned. This experts group proposed in 1993 that White Palace, Old Palace and Memorial Center JBT, together with all their collections and surrounding parks should be preserved as a whole and proclaimed as cultural and historical good of exceptional value and importance for Yugoslavia. The proposed idea was that Old Palace and White Palace deal with the history of Yugoslavia from 1918 to 1941, whereas other institutions should merge and deal with Yugoslav history after 1941.

⁶⁹ The objects that MYH got to use were on the same location where previously was the Memorial centre JBT

Not surprisingly the life cycle of these museum(s)⁷⁰ from its beginning in the 50's is overlapping with the history of Yugoslavia. Founded as the place for representation of the ideology and power of the state and the dominant ideology, the scientific and professional dimension of the work was never in focus of the attention of its founders, (but something that the employees did if they were personally motivated to do). Many problems that remained until now can be to certain extent explained as a result of the special status that this institution had.

In 2007, the MYH became a cultural institution for the first time. This change included a new statute that defines the activity of a museum as a cultural institution. The Ministry of Culture became the authority in charge - the minister appoints director, funds are allocated through the Ministry, and the Ministry supervises the programs. In accord with the new Statute decision making process is divided amongst three bodies in charge of different spheres of museum's running: Steering Committee, Executive Board and Program Council.

MYH and the precursor institutions passed a long way from the representational to disrespected institution, from the position of high importance to the situation of being demonized and attacked as the bastion of retrograde order, which should be closed.⁷¹

It seems that the task of 'becoming the museum' and establishing the ways of functioning based on criteria of museological profession and new managerial standards is still to be completed.

6.1.5. Review of collections

MYH comprises 200.000 museum objects. Most of them were part of MC JBT, and up to 10% of MRPNY. They are divided in 23 collections⁷².

⁷⁰ Use of words such as 'this institution/s' or 'this museum/s' for referring to the Museum May 25, The Memorial Centre and the Museum of the Revolution and MYH many times in this paper, does not mean that they are regarded as the same institution. This happens for the reasons of continuity in development of various museums on the 'same spot' and with the same 'content' and it speaks about changes of social and political climate in the society. Also the fact that Tito's grave is part of the Museum, targets Museum in the public discourse as one of the central symbols of socialism.

⁷¹ During the nineties, politicians who used rhetoric of anticommunism to gain popularity and spread nationalistic sentiment raised question of the purpose and meaning of existence of such an institution. The most known is the example of Šešelj, extreme right-wing politician who publically threatened to ruin the place.

⁷² Collection of Fine arts, Ethnographic collection, Applied art collection, Numismatic collection, Collection of Charters, Plaques, Medals and Badges, Collection of Josip Broz Tito's decorations, Collection of Relay Batons, Philatelic collection, Archeological collection, Collection of old arms, Natural History Collection, Collection of Historical and Memorial objects, Collection of Weapons and Military Equipment, Collection of Documents and

The Collection of Batons can be singled out, as it is the specificity of the Museum for its uniqueness and the special status this ceremony had in former Yugoslavia. Ceremonies of carrying relay baton existed in SFR Yugoslavia since 1945 to 1987. Relay Baton in Yugoslavia was organized as mass running of students, workers, youth, peasants, sportsmen, workers, etc. who were passing the baton containing messages for the long life and good health of the president Tito. Ceremonies were organized on Tito's birthday - May 25, on these occasions the whole nation was symbolically united in devotion. This secular ritual existed in the Yugoslav kingdom (introduced for King Peter Karadjordjević in 1940) and it was later on taken and re-appropriated by the new state. The MYH keeps more than 22000 batons that are material remnants of this ritual. There were three periods of this ritual: *Tito's Relay Race* (from 1945 to 1957), *Youth Relay Race* (1957 to 1980), *And After Tito – Tito* (1980-1987). The relay races were divided into major (given by the republics and important political organizations) and local ones (given by schools, factories, communities, villages, etc.). With proclamation of Day of Youth in 1957, it was unified in one central happening at the Stadium of Partisan and one central baton was handed to Tito as a symbol of all batons. Relay baton ceremony was increasingly formalized as the time was passing. Batons were made by prominent artists who got an opportunity to enjoy this honor either through competition or by being invited (Karanović, Petrić, Kučukalić, Hadži-Boškov, Kilić, Nemeč, Soldatović, Murataj, Siladji, Dešpali, Delziha, etc.).⁷³

Similar practice existed in other contexts such as The Commonwealth Games relay torch; the Olympic baton initiated by Hitler's propaganda for the opening of Olympic Games in Berlin in 1936, etc.⁷⁴).

The criteria of forming the collections are not clearly defined nor in accordance with the new database formed by The National museum in Belgrade as the central institution for heritage protection in the country. The revision of collections is supposed to reorganize the collections based on the criteria of the types of the museum objects. This typology is based on classification of art works and materials that objects were made of, while collections of MYH do not have one

Manuscripts, Collection of Printed Materials, Technical collection, Collection of Documentary Photos and Negatives, Phonographic collection, Collection of Micro Films, May 4th 1980 collection, Miscellaneous collection, Cinematographic collection, Josip Broz Tito Library collection

⁷³ Panić, Ana, Ristić-Kastratović, Veselinka: *Relay Races 1945-1987*, Exhibition catalogue, Museum of Yugoslav History, Belgrade, 2008

⁷⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olympic_Flame accessed on August 25 2010

founding criteria. Some collections were created based on type of material, some based on the time when they entered the Museum. This decision provokes many debates among the curators – if the criteria of type of material is used, many objects would lose their primary characteristics that define their museological potential. This is best explained by using the example of many trivial objects that are part of the collections – their main value is the fact that they are the testimony of the widespread practice of giving presents to the president; they do not represent the unique style or a specific virtue of the maker.

Documentation of MYH consists of documentations of precursor museums, when collections were merged, they were only physically moved, re-inventarization has never been done, so that until now, inventory cards date back from Memorial Centre or Museum of Revolution.

This is one of manifestations of the ongoing process of ‘becoming’ the museum.

6.2. Renaming as part of representation politics

Many authors recognized the policy of renaming as important strategy in shaping and reshaping the collective memory. As mentioned before, the most prominent examples are the names of streets, schools and towns all over ex Yugoslavia. The case of MYH, its foundation through renaming of two other forerunner institutions is also example of this policy. From the perspective of an insider and from professional point of view it can be also regarded as a chance for the museum to widen its practice and field of activity to topics of social history, private lives, and research of the entire Yugoslav cultural space. New name brought new obligations and possibilities for conceiving broader programming policy. Several curators that have been working at the time of the renaming stated in interviews made for this thesis that they believe it was thanks to the renaming and erasing the name Tito from the Museum’s name that the institution was ‘saved’ during the nineties.

However, even if the renaming has happened so many years ago, the museum is still popularly referred to as Tito museum (Tito’s grave or Tito’s house etc.) and it might remain like that since the House of Flowers is within the Museum complex.

6.3. The Program policy and the politics of representation through time

Since the creation of Museum May 25, and later on, all of MYH precedents museums were the institutions of special political significance. The Museum May 25 had a mission to present to public gifts that the president of Yugoslavia got and provide one more space for meeting of audiences (especially pioneers and youth) with the official ideology and a space where people could admire the achievements of their country. After that, from 1982 to 1996, the Memorial centre had a mission to keep the memory to the late president, his life, work, special achievements, and the role in the historical perspective. Legally MYH became a cultural institution in 2007 and the authority in charge for its functioning and financing is Ministry of Culture. This special legal status was also reflected in functioning of the Museum. The program policy was in accord with the aim of the institution to represent. If one takes a look at the list of the exhibitions organized by Memorial centre from 1983 to 1993⁷⁵, one can see that the majority were dedicated to JBT and organized for museums and galleries all over the country (*To Tito from Kragujevac, The most beautiful portrait of Tito, Tito's baton, We grow under Tito's Flag, etc...*). The exhibitions that did not have the personality of the president in focus are in most cases about what was recognized as an important historical event (the Assembly of the Communist Party, important battles in WW2, Non Aligned movement...) or represent the collections of the Museum i.e. the presents that Tito received. The politics of representation behind the program policy and exhibition plans of these institutions were clearly connected with official ideology. The museological criteria and ideas were used to represent the political statement of the establishment. This representative function continued after JBT died in 1980, when a new institution was established and when memorial and presidential museum were formed. In interviews with curators this is not perceived as a limitation to their work, they usually explain it by referring to different type of political regime of that time and specific status of the institution in the country. It is interesting to note that the older curators see the imposing of the authorities in the museum activity as a normal state of affairs probably because they have witnessed it so many times (especially during the nineties).

In the beginning of the nineties, the link with JBT personality started to be less visible; exhibitions were made mostly in cooperation with the associations of artists and applied artists,

⁷⁵ Ten Year Report Memorial Centre JBT

as their yearly or biennial events that were not connected to the Museum collections and programs (Museum only provided space for exhibitions). At the time, the Memorial centre was still functioning as the presidential museum and a memorial place but as a popularity of JBT and the ideology he had represented rapidly faded, the program policy had changed. It was less and less connected to the personality of Tito and to the former Yugoslavian phenomena, and more and more turned to 'art' - art without any political connotation (e.g. Biennial Exhibition of the Association of the Applied Artists, as typical 'representational', formal exhibition of association members).

In 1996, when new institution had been created under the name of the Museum of Yugoslav History, neither the law nor other relevant documents defined clearly an idea of its new mission and future roles.⁷⁶

In the same time, the content of the inherited collections from both museums and the meaning that all those spaces had in collective consciousness of both curators and citizens, prevented substantial change in the profiling of the newly created Museum, which kept both functions – those connected to Tito and revolution (in minimal extent) and those connected to the exhibiting of the arts. More and more, the Museum was seen as a Tito's grave (memory place) on one side, and the only huge exhibiting space in Belgrade, on the other side.

New change occurred with political changes, which happened in January 2001 when the new Serbian Government was created. However, this Museum still belonged to the Federal structures, and Ministry of Culture started negotiations to include this Museum in the Serbian museum system. The program reports from period after 2001 show the great disproportion in numbers of guest programs and their own exhibitions (curated by MYH employees).

As one of the biggest exhibition spaces and the building under authority of the City Council⁷⁷, Museum May 25 hosted many shows of contemporary art, design, diploma exhibitions of the students of the Faculty of Applied art etc... However, this practice kept the venue present in

⁷⁶The law defines the museum's activities as collecting, researching, protection of cultural and historical material of importance for Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. Unlike previous regulations on predecessor institutions, this law widely defines that the Museum's role is to research history of genesis of Yugoslavia, organize scientific conferences dedicated to important people, dates and events in the history of Yugoslavia. This Law is published in Official Gazette, No 43, 13 September 1996

⁷⁷ MYH have a right to utilize the building, but it belongs to the City of Belgrade

contemporary cultural life, giving chance to new generations to gain the habit to visit it. So from 2001 to 2008, there were no evident advancement neither in museum management practices nor in development of the museological concepts and clear program policy within the MYH. The fact that only 21 exhibitions out of 86 that took place in this period were autonomous projects of the MYH indicates the lack of initiative. In the same time, there was no clear focus in choosing guest programs - the exhibitions varied from Chinese bronze to Swedish Contemporary Design. It seems that in years that followed democratic change the same as majority of other museums in Serbia, MYH did not catch up with the requests of the time and transitional society demands. The funding was more than 90 % from the state subsidies, no new program policy or fundraising strategies were visible nor new ways of communicating with the audiences.⁷⁸ Management mainly put the effort in trying to get political support for returning museum buildings that were taken by the state and where Milošević had moved in. Exhibition politics was more turned to showing values of the collections, commemorating historical events was not in focus any more (only three examples, exhibition about liberation of Belgrade *Belgrade is free*⁷⁹ and *May 9*⁸⁰ on the 60 anniversary of end of WW2, and *Hommage to Spanish fighters*⁸¹). Important project was a permanent display of relay batons in the House of Flowers.

⁷⁸ In the interview for the new Strategic plan made in summer 2008, all of the interviewees stated the absence of public relation activities as the primarily weakness of the Museum.

⁷⁹ 20 October – 3 November 2004

⁸⁰ This exhibition can be seen as the Museum's proactive gesture towards new memory politics, as the state missed to commemorate this date as important. Many critiques were addressed to Serbian politicians for having missed this important jubilee, especially because May 9th as the date of Antifascist victory and liberation of Europe is also important for contemporary European Union identity. Political elite have missed to embrace and incorporate antifascist traditions into newly designed identity of Serbia, which would be helpful in present quest for recognition of its belonging to Europe. However, the exhibition did not raise much attention and did not success to open debates. This is probably because it was not conceptualized attractively and because Museum in that period was not positioned as important factor in public debates.

⁸¹ *Hommage to Spanish fighters* was opened on 14 September 2006 and has been traveling throughout Serbia until 2009.

6.4. New Managerial Approach – introduction of the project-logic orientation

In 2008, the Ministry of Culture appointed new general manager⁸² that is a person with a background in nonprofit sector and with highly developed managerial skills. As the system gives large authorities to directors, this selection meant the new beginning for MYH. The logic of project functioning is introduced to replace the logic of the public institution. New vacancies for project manager, PR and sales manager are introduced in new systematization of job posts. Project management methodology and strategic planning meant a radical change for the institution that has been functioning on budget subsidies and without any efficacy requirements. The strategic analysis and a plan for next three years were created with these priorities:

–Maintenance, safeguarding and indexing of the collections

Project 1.1. – Depot space reorganization

Project 1.2. – Primary protection of the most endangered artifacts

Project 1.3. – Creation of the electronic database

Project 1.4. – Digitalization of the collections

Project 1.5. – Preparation for new categorization of the artifacts

Project 1.6. – Enabling adequate storage for artifacts

– Renewal and improvement of premises and technical capacities of MYH

Project 2.1. – Basic preparation of premises for attending audience

Project 2.2. – Small scale renovation

Project 2.3. – Investing in future

Project 2.4. –Modernization of exhibition and work premises in 2010/11

– Improvement of Human resources

Project 3.1. – Improvement and reorganization of existing human resources of MYH

Project 3.2. – Enlarging the team of employees

⁸² This is regular practice, the general managers of the cultural institutions are appointed by the authorities. This usually leads to *'partitization'* of the cultural system (member of the political parties, or people close to parties are getting the leading positions). In planning further development, the instability of the leading position is always a factor of threat.

Project 3.3. – Networking

– **Modernization of program contents of MYH**

Project 4.1. –Thematic exhibitions as main programs in Museum May 25

Project 4.2. – New permanent exhibitions

Project 4.3. – Daily programs

Project 4.4. – Launching the Virtual MYH

Project 4.5. – Project proposals for 2010

- **Intensified communication with general public**

Project 5.1. – Entrance fee

Project 5.2. – Souvenir shop

Project 5.3. – Organization of travelling exhibitions

Project 5.4. –Improvement of PR activities

It is evident that strategic plan was created in a pragmatic way using project logic as the main instrument of capacity building and development. Among those projects there are some of strategic importance (networking, organizing travelling exhibitions), but majority represent only new activities which are normal for good functioning of a museum (Souvenir shop, entrance fee), or indicates tasks and improvements in methods of operation (PR activities).

In addition, a vision and a mission statement were formulated to express the focus and course of development of this institution.

VISION:

The Museum of Yugoslav History is a significant, contemporary, modern and networked cultural and tourist destination which is popular in Serbia and abroad for the material it exhibits, the way in which it processes and presents this material and the topics it raises, as well as for the modern resources it uses for promotion and communication with the public and with colleagues and associates.

MISSION:

The development of the full potential of this exhibition and tourism complex, with the aim to research, develop art and educational programs to facilitate repeated study of museum collections in order to raise questions and topics about Yugoslavia and the life and work of Josip Broz Tito, and to link these to the current moment in Serbia and to the country's joint future in the European and international context.

This vision and the mission of the new management of MYH rather correspond with a flow of current projects and ideas implemented through partnerships, exhibitions, and overall course that seeks to open up to new museological approaches, to communities as well as to tourists. This work is being carried out through various tasks, ideas, partnerships whose outcomes will be visible in times that follow, if the museum sticks to plans made for the near future, continues, and upgrades its managerial approach.

At the same time with process of opening up to 'outer' world, museum employees are developing and educating themselves through various internships, trainings, visits to museums abroad, wider cooperation with local experts, visits of foreign experts which cooperate with the MYH, attendance on international conferences where new ideas and new approaches are discussed, challenged, etc.

With strategic plan and renewal of the staff there might be a chance for MYH to restructure itself into a new museum in accordance with the principles of contemporary museological practice, next pages will focus on analysis of its activities and relationship with the audiences and try to propose a direction for the further development of this area of activity.

6.5. Strategies of program and organizational development

Applying methodology of management of cultural organizations in times of turbulences developed by Dragičević Šešić and Dragojević⁸³ the following strategies can be recognized in future development of the MYH: diversification of programs, diversification of resources, increasing the range and number of services, strategy of harmonization with the professional standards, orientation to partnership and coproduction, strategy of networking.

It seems that there are too many strategies to be implemented in the new organizational dynamics of the MYH. This choice is necessary considering the state of the organization before the strategic plan was written and when many organizational functions were non-existing or were in the state of hibernation.

Diversification of the programs – In the period of last two years, the MYH organized and co-organized many programs other than its primary activities. Apart from exhibitions, concerts, poetry evenings, book promotions, workshops and parties were taking place. Cinema hall was re-initiated as well as the plateau in front of the Museum that has big potentials for organizing open-air events.

Diversification of the resources – apart from the subsidies allocated by the Ministry of Culture, funds were raised from international foundations, as well as the public funders in charge for the sphere of economy and tourism. The connections were established with the Ministry of Foreign affairs and City secretariat for culture, City secretariat for tourism, etc. The project proposals are regularly sent to open calls within the related fields. A source of self-generated income is established with the opening the souvenir shop.

Strategy of commercialization and increasing the range and number of the services – The entrance fee is introduced and a souvenir shop is open within the premises of MYH. In this way, a source of self-generated income is attained. Space is rented for guest events, but since the law

⁸³Dragičević-Šešić, Milena, Dragojević, Sanjin: *Arts management in turbulent times: adaptable quality management*, Amsterdam, European Cultural Foundation, Boekmanstichtung, ISSN/ISBN:ISBN 10:9066500832

does not allow museums to rent their premises ways of in-kind support or donation had to be introduced.

Strategy of harmonization with the professional standards – As the new status of the cultural institution implies some regulations that were not respected before, the changes in order to harmonize with the museological and other professional standards are ongoing. The revision of the collections started and this will be the introduction into the re-inventarization of the collections. After these are finished, the collections can be reorganized in accordance with the standards of the National museum as the central institution. In addition, this is to be followed by the entering the data to the central database formed by the National museum and by the process of digitalization. Since each of these processes requires a lot of time, they have been initiated simultaneously with the intention to reach the professional standards as soon as possible. The employees have to learn or improve foreign language skills and to pass necessary curatorial exams. With the intensity of work dynamics, these activities stay undone - computer or foreign language trainings are not provided by the Museum even if they were agreed upon; the new systematization of work positions demands knowledge of foreign languages and there is only a yearlong period for the improvement. The human resource development consists of attendance to seminars and conferences. Recently a good cooperation is established with the cultural attaché of Swedish Embassy and this resulted in study visits to Swedish museums and cultural institutions and open possibility of further cooperation.

Strategy of collaboration: orientation to partnership, coproduction and networking – the MYH has defined networking and partnership as its priorities in order to offer new possible ways of reading the collections and the period of history it refers to. Because the age structure and the working biographies of the majority of the employees show that they were related to the same job position their whole life, it is considered that they need the output from outside in order to get the ideas for new approaches. The new employees are not experienced enough in this field, which can additionally explain the need for coproduction and partner projects. The partnerships are developed within and out the sector of culture (with other museums, but also nongovernmental organizations that deal with education and youth projects, city touristic organization, Film Festival *Motovun* and Subversive film Zagreb, *Cinematèque* Sarajevo, *Ebart*

Media documentation...). By this means, the MYH covers the areas it lacks expertise or human resources and by the same means develops a network of partners.

One example is the exhibition *Political practice of (post)Yugoslav art* (November 29th-December 31st 2009) - an important regional initiative that the MYH supported and offered a space for. This exhibition was one of the rare examples of exhibitions that deal with marginalized artistic episodes of Yugoslav art that are in the new readings recognized as marking points of alternative culture (Experimental cinema clubs of the 1960s and the 1970s, Novi Sad Neo Avant-garde, artistic projects developed in Student Cultural Centre in the 1970s). This exhibition also treated relations to negligence of socialist heritage in recent period (works of sculptor Vojin Bakić), and presented contemporary art works that refer to episodes of Yugoslav art (Black Peristyle by Igor Grubić)⁸⁴.

Another project that should be mentioned is the installation of the artist Andrej Džerković 88 *Roses for Tito* contrasts two meanings of the word *rose* in different periods of the life of the artist: During his childhood, roses for Tito designed the love and devotion to late president; after his death, many parks had 88 roses (Tito died at the age of 88). In the nineties the 'roses' (hole made by missiles and bombs filled with paint, done by anonymous person/s) in bombed Sarajevo were marking places where bombs exploded on the pavement. Džerković made a wreath of photos of Sarajevo roses instead of flowers and brought it in the House of Flowers as the final act of this ten-year long performance. Together with wreath was the letter addressing Tito, written in English, explaining the artist's loss of country and identity that happened in years following Tito's death.

⁸⁴ Dojić, Zorana, Vesić, Jelena, eds.: *Political practices of (post-)Yugoslav Art*, Exhibition catalogue, Beograd, Prelom kolektiv, 2010

Need for audience development strategy

As it is visible from the presented data, in attempt to articulate the main problems and challenges that should be addressed by the new strategic plan, the Audience development has not been enlisted as one of the priority strategies. “**Audience development and market expansion** is the strategy that is most frequently ignored in turbulent circumstances, because the organization is fully engaged in seeking self-sustainability and dealing with the day-to-day concerns. Audience development requires a long-term systematic effort, regardless of whether it is intended to animate non-audiences, to develop young audiences, or to introduce programming and methodological innovations targeting specific social groups.”⁸⁵ This strategy implies an investment that is usually considered too exigent or it is believed that if all other activities of organization are developed, the audience will come.

However, even if not set up nor created as a strategy we can see that this orientation is present in numerous programme activities of the Museum.

In the context of a museum, this strategy is of a vital importance taking into consideration the mission of museum institutions. The mission should be discussed and developed by the Museum team in order to conceive each individual program. In the case of the MYH, as it will be shown in next examples, there are a number of innovative and interesting actions that were organized recently. It is suggested here that the relationship towards the audience should be a subject of serious discussions and planning, later formulated in a few principles and steps that need to be taken in order to have orienteering in future work.

Due to the lack of available vacancies in the systematization of job posts defined by the Ministry of Culture, the MYH does not have education department or educators employed. Until now, this problem has been addressed by organizing sporadic educational programs in cooperation with other organizations that are experienced in that field. In this way, the effort is made to educate the curators to incorporate in their work perspectives of various social groups (youth, children, professionals, disabled, marginalized communities, etc) in conceptualization of future projects. It is expected that by being involved in a variety of programs organized by public institutions,

⁸⁵ Dragičević-Šešić, Milena, Dragojević, Sanjin: op.cit. 124

NGOs, artistic groups, the curators will become familiarized with different approaches and methodologies of working with and for audiences.

6.6. Opening up the decision making process – existing examples of good practice

In the following pages, few projects will be presented as examples of establishing inclusive and more open approach as common practice of MYH. These projects include cooperation with other museums, experts, civic organizations, independent artists and in that way broaden topics and fields Museum covers in the course of its work. What is also visible in these projects is the fact that this approach ignites making of programs for various and diverse target groups.

6.6.1. New permanent exhibitions: the House of Flowers and New Old Museum

Today the MYH consists of three premises: the House of Flowers, the Old Museum and the Museum May 25. Museum May 25 is the venue where temporary exhibitions produced or coproduced by MYH and partners and guest programmes are taking place, while permanent displays are in the House of Flowers and the Old Museum. In the House of Flowers, audience can see a permanent exhibition of relay batons followed by photos and related document, the Chinese salon that used to be in one of the chambers in Tito's residency, room of remembrance, a place where admirers of Tito and official delegations come to sign in into the 'Book of sorrow'. The fact that Broz was buried (white marble tomb with no religious or political-party symbols) here gives this venue a memorial function.

Permanent exhibition in the Old Museum dates back to 1987. It was envisioned as part of Memorial Centre (that was much bigger and with more (8) buildings with displays), so now it

does not represent all the collections that Museum keeps⁸⁶ and its context has been changed. This exhibition represents artifacts from Ethnographic, Applied Art and The Collection of Old Weapons. It lacks clear concept or criteria of representation⁸⁷ and more explanatory labels. While the new exhibition concept is being conceived, the new curator had the task to address these problems and try to remake the display. This intervention included new labels, explanatory texts, and visuals to accent some artifacts⁸⁸.

Seeing that new generations of visitors as well as tourists from abroad did not experience nor have memories of living in socialism and know little of this period and about Tito, the museum management intends to create new permanent exhibitions in both premises. The plan is to set up exhibition dedicated to life and work of Josip Broz Tito in the House of Flowers (the central space would remain undisturbed by the exposition. Authors' team consists of two curators from MYH (historian and art historian), project manager (MYH employee), designer (freelance, author of the exhibition *Tito Effect*), historian (member of Museum's Managing board) and one external expert consultant (historian). A practice of inclusion of external experts is implemented in this project, as well as in plan for new permanent exhibition in Old museum where this principle is even more developed and can serve as a groundbreaking example of opening up museum's decision-making process.

Project *New Old museum*⁸⁹ is envisioned to bring together MYH to cooperate with interested partners and young experts from the region, aiming to result in the proposal of the conception of the new permanent exhibition in MYH. Due to dominance of the war related issues, history of Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav idea are both rather neglected topics in public discourse.

Publically visible initiative for the new approach to the history of Yugoslavia is not coming from any of the existing historical institutes and even opposite image is constructed from the academic circles: history of Yugoslavia as undermined and publicly present(ed) only in segments and instrumentalized by different ideological or political agendas. Young generations are growing with no overview of the Yugoslav idea. Since the break down of former Yugoslavia, there was

⁸⁶ Stranski argues that the aim of permanent exhibition is to represent the collections of a museum which obviously is not the case in MYH.

⁸⁷ In the first room

⁸⁸ It was presented for the Night of Museums, on May 16 2009, with a subtitle *Travel around the world in 23 minutes*. This title was supposed to underline the diversity of the origin of displayed items.

⁸⁹ Conference took place in MYH from 10th to 12th December 2009

no institutional frame for the long lasting outcome of the regional projects. Regional projects were based mostly on short spin, one time touring (exhibitions) projects.⁹⁰ *New Old museum* project was organized to address all mentioned circumstances. This initiative is relevant as a pioneer practice of this kind in the region. It was envisaged as open platform for discussion about the new permanent exhibition in one of the premises of MYH (in The Old Museum). This was a unique example of the public institution opening up for the ideas and proposals of young experts in various fields. Imagined as a broad and diverse platform this project risks to have the ineffective results having in mind that there are no easily attainable solutions and that the discussion are at this level rather disperse. Such a broad and democratic principle of participating can considerably slow down the work process, but is extremely valuable for showing and really opening up a museum and practically implementing theories of the new museology that have criticized power relation structure where curators have the exclusive authority to decide what will be represented in museums. Project gathered postgraduate students and experts in sociology, social history, museology, art history, anthropology who have chance to participate in re-conceptualization and rethinking the new permanent exhibition of MYH. The interested participants had an opportunity to get the valuable professional experience, but also this is the chance to exchange the experiences of living in the communities that do not have developed channels of exchange in the past few decades. The project is still ongoing and at the end, MYH will hopefully have a concept of the exhibition that will be a new reading of the cultural and social history of Yugoslavia. The first phase of the project has passed and it is still not clear whether it will be successful in terms of providing desired result. Results might be in question from solely financial reasons, choice of lecturers or even because there is no basic consensus reached in discussing this demanding topic during only one session. Since this was an opportunity to test this specific method of conceptualizing the exhibition including a large group of people, it is valuable and pioneering attempt in local museological practice. What makes this process even more challenging is its topic (history of Yugoslavia) for the reason that there is not even a wide consensus concerning some aspects (such as the war in former Yugoslavia a civil war or aggression) not to mention that there were differences in museological approaches, differences caused by diverse approaches of experts from different fields.

⁹⁰Extract from the text of project proposal

6.6.1. Programme *end.yu* (*End dot Yu*) - March 30th 2009

At the occasion of the final shut down of internet domain .yu that was given to SFRY in 1989 and that continued to exist and survived the existence of all countries with Yugoslavian name the MYH organized an event named *End dot yu* (*end.yu*). It was the opportunity to gather younger audience and people who are interested in new technologies. The first administrators of this domain participated in debate on development of internet in the region and on influences of dissolution of the country on virtual space. Short documentaries about illegal practice of hacking were shown and the first computers made in SFRY were exposed. On this occasion MYH announced its first virtual acquisition - .yu domain entered museum collections and the public was called to bring their old web sites with the extension .yu. This project was important in raising the visibility of the MYH and attracting the younger audience by underlining the connection of the museum to the contemporary culture. By inviting people to contribute to the museum collections by donating their old web pages, museum also contributed to the breaking of the attitude that museums keep objects that belong to elite and opened up for objects that are important to 'ordinary' people. Virtual acquisition of .yu internet domain and collecting old web pages is in a way sign of Museum's openness to recognize products of popular culture and new technologies as a kind of intangible heritage.

VII Images of the past constructed and mediated by the Museum of Yugoslav History

*... use and misuse of the memory opened a question whether the past should be breakup with or kept alive forever. Is there memory that enlightens at all?*⁹¹

This chapter will analyze the activities of MYH and the ways this institution contributes to public culture of memory by mediating certain images of past. In focus of this analysis will be the content of MYH activities, and for this, few types of sources will be used. Discourse of press releases, and texts published on the museum web site as the main ways of institutional representing and addressing the public, and content of exhibition as the main media in creation of meaning. The analysis includes only the period of past two years as this is indentified as time of new managing and programming policy of this institution.

These are exhibitions that have been realized in the given period of time which will be subject of our research: *World of Silver, Hunting Weapon of Josip Broz Tito, Tito's New Years, Tito Effect – Charisma as a Political Legitimacy, Deadly treasure, Tito photo, Yoko, Lennon, Tito – One Conceptual Action, Women's Corner.*

7.1. Politics of representation

After comparing content of press releases on the MYH, I decided to choose one of the emblematic statements that contain a message more or less present in majority of other addressing the public. Application of content analysis approach would lead this chapter away from its purpose and that it would be lost in counting the number of times that some word or phrase had showed up. Therefore, I opted for more qualitative approach in content analysis of the

⁹¹ Kuljić, Todor: Kritička kultura sećanja in *Filozofija i društvo*, issue 1 (32), Filozofski fakultet, Beograd, 2007, p. 109

meaning, which enables an insight to self-reflection of the museum and better understanding of meanings of museum practices through understanding of the values and intentions.⁹²

This is the extract from the introductory text sent to journalists in order to provide more information about the exhibition *Tito Effect*. This exhibition introduced general public with the new management and programming policy:

“The intention of MYH is to draw the public attention to the richness of its collections by organizing a series of exhibitions and other activities (seminars, debates, workshops, film projections, musical programmes). Material that MYH holds is valuable in terms of art and history, and inevitable source for sociological and culturological analyses of the period after WW2 i.e. socialist period of the ex Yugoslavia.

We hope that the public display of this material will provide a context for new readings, attract attention of the audience and raise interest of historians, sociologists, culturologists, politicologists, art historians from Serbia and abroad in dealing with marginalized issues in our history.

Period of so-called second Yugoslavia and the person that symbolizes it (Josip Broz Tito) are indelible and irreplaceable part of our everyday lives today. We consider that this period, which still functions as a political application should be included in regular historical and memory flows and that the character of Tito should be moved from political to historical context and from the entertaining representation (estrade) to subject of analysis and cultural studies.

*The exhibition *Tito Effect*, that offers a hypothesis of the charisma as political legitimization of Tito, is the first step in this direction.”*

This text represents the essence of the message sent out by MYH in addressing community (general public, journalists, etc). From this message, we can extract several statements:

The effort to prove the **value of the material** that MYH holds. In a sense, the exhibitions as the *Tito Effect* and *World of Silver* have a mission to give the opportunity to public to be familiarized

⁹² For the importance of the qualitative approach in empirical analysis see more in Zagorka Golubović, Isidora Jarić: *Kultura i preobražaj Srbije*, Beograd, Službeni glasnik, pp 53- 55

with the values of the objects that are being kept in MYH depots. Majority of those exhibitions are exhibiting the artifacts from the MYH collections.

Nevertheless, MYH has the intention to show its collections not only as valuable objects, but also **as the testimonies of the recent past that still influences the present lives** of ours. E.g., the artifacts displayed at *Tito Effect* have not been regarded as valuable materially, historically or artistically but as the manifestations of the cultural practices of that epoch.

Consequently, as an effort to engage larger cultural public within the museum work, the **open call for the experts from different spheres** of scientific disciplines and humanities is regularly sent from MYH. The main aim of this open call (meaning invitation to experts, artists, students, academics, non-governmental organizations interested in participating, cooperating, researching, etc.) is to raise their attention and curiosity for this period and thus help Museum to “produce” relevant knowledge for further museological work.

The experts, colleagues and artists are invited to provide new interpretations and new readings of these, neglected or marginalized topics. This can be understood as a dream come true for those museologists who generally criticize the museum’s experts for not being open to share their authority with the others. MYH curators now have opened up the space for different voices to be included in the reading of their collections.

As some projects (e.g. *New Old museum*) show, this openness is more visible here than in other public institutions, that never had public debates before creating concept of the display or other projects.

Important message that is repeated several times is the one that states the importance of knowledge about socialistic period and Tito’s role for understanding of contemporaneity and the call for the ‘serious historical’ analyses of the period and the end of its uses in everyday politics. The employees of the MYH very often speak from ‘defensive’ position, always with the presumption that this institution should be defended, and always in the effort to prove its importance as a keeper of significant **sources for research**.

This defensive position comes from the feeling of the curators that everything linked to socialist period is seen and judged with lots of negative prejudices today. To fight this position, the new

management had introduced new approach and methodologies, undertaking efforts to enable researchers to develop proper historical approach to socialism, to scrutinize it, critically re-think it and put an end to 'mythological', uninformed and biased approaches.

The main mission of the museum is reinforced through its discourse underlying the importance and the cultural and social value of the museum and its collections for contemporary cultural processes. Through its discourse the MYH at the same time, establishes two layers of links: one aiming to researchers and another aiming to include wide public who have in their individual memory experience of socialism, way of life and its practices. Encountering those two types of audiences the MYH creates conditions for integration of research-based knowledge with practice-based knowledge enabling new approach in creation of collective memory instead of the one based on official memories and official interpretations.

7.2. Exhibitions

7.2.1. World of Silver (May 23 – August 23 2008)

Continuing the cycle of thematic exhibitions of items which are not part of the permanent exhibition, *World of Silver* represented an extremely valuable part of the Museum's applied art collection – the objects made of silver. The exhibition is conceived in three integral parts. The first comprises individually displayed items which are gifts from the highest state level (from thirteen presidents of states, five royal families, two prime ministers, two ministers, religious leaders, generals, governing parties and mayors), while the remainder are gifts from famous people or from various organisations and political parties. Some of these items were used by Josip Broz and some were later displayed as part of the ambient exhibition in Tito's residence, which became part of the Memorial Centre after his death. In keeping up with the contemporary museological practices of displaying artefacts within their primary context thus bringing them closer to visitors, the entire interior of Josip Broz's dining room in his residence at 15 Užička Street in Belgrade (which does not exist any more because it was destroyed during the bombing in 1999) has been reconstructed. The second part of the exhibition is a room conceived as a reproduction of the authentic living space of Tito, including furniture, table linen, tableware, paintings by old masters and silverware which represents the greater part of the formal tableware. The third group is the 61 silver items which Josip Broz Tito and his wife Jovanka

Broz received during their visit to Fez, the royal and cultural centre of Morocco, at the invitation of the Moroccan King, Hassan II. On this occasion King Hassan also gave them a piece of land, KUDIA I, in Marrakesh as gift⁹³.

One of the aims of the exhibition was to present the value of the museum's applied art collection. Objects exhibited show differences in styles and ways silver was modelled and decorated, various ways this precious metal was used in everyday life since majority of presents were not only decorative objects. Reconstruction of the dining room of the residency provided the audience the opportunity to look inside the private premises of Yugoslav president. The decoration of the room re-enacted the power of the ruler. Each object was a present and serve as testimony of encounters of Tito with different politicians, liberation movements' activists, but also celebrities of the time. Through reading protocol gift exchange one could find out about relations of Yugoslavia and different countries. *World of Silver* shows how Tito was treated with respect and as equal by both western and 'third world' rulers and even more he was prominent political figure that had influenced in international political matters. In the non-aligned countries, Broz enjoyed enormous popularity to the degree of a personality cult. Grand receptions were organised for him as a "peace traveller" and a white man fighting against colonialism.

This exhibition attracted many visitors and was awarded as the exhibition of the year 2008 by Museum Association of Serbia.

7.2.2. *Hunting Weapons of Josip Broz Tito* (December 16 2008 – February 1 2009)

This exhibition represented selection of hunting weapons and the importance of hunting as politicians' favorite way of spending free time while meeting each other and getting an opportunity to discuss important political matters.

Exhibition comprises of 72 models, most of them rare and unique, manufactured for special purposes, which are hardly to be found in mass production. The material value of the collection lies in precious metals for the production of certain models as well as in their decoration (gilt

⁹³ Cvijović, Momo, Panić, Ana: *World of Silver*, exhibition catalogue, Museum of Yugoslav History, Belgrade, 2008 (*Svet od srebra*)

game engravings, arabesque engravings, inlays and incrustations made of silver and gold). In addition to hunting weapons, the collection includes hunting accessories: binoculars for game-watching, bags for equipment and ammunition, chairs, leather cartridge-belts, hand warmers, cleaning kits etc.

Hunting as a social event symbolizes ruler's power since it was a place of gathering and entertaining of noble, rich and powerful people during history. It represents both power of man over nature and social power, since hunting, as leisure activity was exclusive and reserved for privileged. Therefore, the role of hunting itself and representative power that lied in hunting weapons through this exhibition placed Tito in the center of power and connected him to the rulers and higher-class members. Right after he gained power, Tito took over former King's hunting fields. Journalists and photo reporters of the time followed him on the occasions of hunting and these photos (of Tito hunting, or Tito with dead prey) were important part of the public representations of Tito thus reflecting the power of the ruler and symbolically connected him to images of royalty, sovereignty as historically this was necessary retreat of kings and tsars. In the introductory text, curators say, "Tito's collection of hunting weapons was created spontaneously, from 1945 to 1979. Its particular value lies not only in the outstanding figures who contributed to it, but also in the outstanding figure who received the gifts."⁹⁴

One could read the irony if comparing a luxurious way of life of president of socialist country, which was founded on principle of eradicating class divisions and establishing social equality, but the exhibition did not raise these issues. This exhibition had two main aims: to present a collection of weapons by showing rare and remarkable artifacts and through explaining the latent social function of hunting it emphasized the honor and respect Tito enjoyed.

⁹⁴Kuprešanin, Dragoljub: Hunting Weapons of Josip Broz Tito, exhibition catalogue, Museum of Yugoslav History, Belgrade, 2008

7.2.3. *Tito's New Years* (December 26 2008 – February 1 2009)

The exhibition *Tito's New Years* was made up of secondary museum materials (i.e. archive documents and photographs) and it represented ways in which Tito celebrated New Years. Also, archive documents show transcripts of meetings of political organizations debating importance of introducing celebration of the new holiday - New Year in 1955.

Focus of the exhibition were photos of New Years celebrated in Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Brioni, on the boat *Galeb*, as well as in Indonesia and Egypt. Documents from the archive tell us a story about protocols and detailed planning of New Year's celebrations of the president of SFRY: programs, invitations, guess lists with sitting charts and precise schedule of performers for the evening. There were also newspaper articles, archive video materials and audio recordings.

Public commemorations are removing boundaries between public and private sphere and one of its primary functions is integration of the community.

New Year celebrations gains special significance in Yugoslavia after the WWII and the exhibition analysis how this intention of the governing structures to suppress from public sphere the most important and the most popular holiday – Christmas was conducted. In order to avoid gap amongst peoples of different confessions and to exclude religion from public sphere since official ideology was against religion and also to create sense of belonging to the community, authorities made gradual shift of attention towards celebrating New Year which was secular holiday.

Audience was given the chance to have an insight in ways Tito celebrated this new 'holiday of peoples', with whom he was celebrating it, his clothes and the way people were dressed at those times, how elite had fun, etc. In addition, this gave an insight of relation of new formed secular state and religious communities and ways the state dealt with multi-confessional society. By 'removing' from public sphere basis of potential conflicts and misunderstanding that could off rise up from religious differences, socialist state tried to produce the new 'nation' that corresponded with its socialist ideology that was atheist.

By using a popular theme, and representing the time of joy and fun while exposing the semi private moments of Tito (if we suppose he had private moments) and in this way recalling the well-liked nostalgic themes that keep the memory of socialism as the time of carelessness,

having fun and well-fare. At the same time, this exhibition starts a short analysis of *inventing traditions*, the practice that was often present in the time of socialism. In order to integrate the community and to build up a nation above the nations, inventing new traditions and festivities was one of the implied strategies in SFR Yugoslavia. Contrasting two types of documentary material present the story that the exhibition *Tito's New Years* tells – on one side, there are documentary photographs showing the moments of celebrations and on the other, there are archive documents that unveil the ‘behind the scene’ events that are related to this celebratory times.

7.2.4. Tito Effect: Charisma as a political legitimacy (March 14 – May 31 2009)

The Exhibition *Tito Effect: Charisma as a political legitimacy* consisted of three parts: gifts, celebration of May 25 and testimonies. It showed the portraits of Josip Broz Tito in broad range of techniques from oil on canvas to collages, hand-made embroideries, tapestries, photographs, etc. Most of these items were gifts made by amateurs – workers, students, people of all professions and interests. Second part showed video materials, photos, audio materials from different radio stations dedicated to the Youth Day celebration and relay baton races. The third part of the exhibition displayed selection of gifts given to Tito by common people – workers, factories, pupils, sports clubs, factories etc.

Team of authors consisted of a designer, author of the exhibition concept and authors who wrote texts, so there was not the usual simple author/curator position in the project team.

The exhibition was seen as the most provocative one, it raised a broad attention of media and had a high number of visitors. It was a way of introducing new program orientation of the museum. Displayed objects belong to Collection named Miscellaneous and the most of it was never presented thus far. Most of these artifacts do not have high material value, they are made of simple materials and by amateurs, but they represent material remains and testimonies of a specific cultural and political system and a specific relation of people and the ruler.

The exhibition itself was modernly designed but did not include a clear custodian statement meaning that based on ways objects were displayed it was hard to read the statement and the message that exhibitions authors wanted to send. To some it looked as if this exhibition was

working on simply displaying cult of Tito as it was, to some that it showed relation of people and Tito and the ways he was perceived and celebrated as the comrade and the ruler. Other interpretations say it was allusion and ridiculing people for following blindly their president. This exhibition tried not to give a comment (or it was not stated clearly enough) on displayed material but only indicated that this is the exhibition about 'us'. About 'us' implied the importance of facing the recent history and analyzing subordinated and adoring relation to the ruler (embodied in practice of giving presents to the ruler, participation in baton rituals etc) in understanding the relationship of the people to power of ruler. This thesis was developed more in texts in the catalogue. As a result, *Tito Effect* was read by the audience in accordance with their previous attitudes towards Tito (which is usually the case), according to media reports it attracted mostly yugo-nostalgic people.

The exhibition showed the pillars of the cult of Tito's personality:

- presents and portraits representing a desirable image of being a ruler close to people;
- relay batons and celebration of May 25 as the ultimate manifestation in which all citizens participate symbolically (through running and carrying baton all over the country) and in the mass ceremony (called *slet* in local language) of the final handing of baton to Tito.
- letters addressing Tito and school papers about his significance in lives of the youth, desirable perceptions of Tito as means of implementing in day to day life values, ideals and ideology.

The main critiques of this exhibition are in regard to the choice of title and the vagueness of the author's statement. The title was not proper solution and it did not represent the effects of Tito's charisma but rather the means of production the desirable image of him and of 'us' – people who made and gave those gifts. However, *Tito Effect* is important as a step in opening up critical questions of Yugoslav past, and research of cult of Tito personality.

7.2.5. *Deadly treasure* (June 27 – August 23 2009)

The exhibition showed valuable objects attempting to draw public attention to the poor condition of the storage premises of the museum. Exhibition presented artifacts that were in recent years the most interesting to experts and artists who wanted to include them in their research and projects. There was also timeline showing the broad overlap of the museums history with crucial moments of the state whose name it bears and videos showing conditions of depot premises.

Exhibition presents objects that are located in treasury of the Oval Building. This is a representational object that was built for Tito in last years of his life but he never lived there; when Tito died it became part of Memorial centre; in 1997 the MYH had to move out since Milošević wanted to live there while part of collections stayed in treasury of the building. These artifacts were not accessible to curators and researchers until 2003. Even now, curators have to obtain special licence in order to gain acces to treasury. When chosing the objects which would be presented at this exhibition curators did not follow museological criteria, instead they chose ones that were interesting to experts, film directors, writers, archeologists, astrophisics etc. who addressed the Museum in past years asking to research them.

Exhibition presented their video interviews explaining the importance and the value of chosen artifacts, as well as their own subjective attitude to and relationship with Josip Broz and his time, thus creating the material for a new analysis of the museum items. Beside the treasury in Oval Building, the exhibition showed other premises in which museum collections were kept as well as dreadful conditions that seriously harm them. In order to contextualize the situation that provoked present situation of artistic and historical objects in the Museum, there was the timeline showing parallel between important events in the museum and political events in the country. In this way, together with being familiarized with precious items from Tito's cabinet of wanders, the visitors were also introduced with the history of the state's attitude towards the heritage. The exhibition title *Deadly treasures* (accurate translation would be *Death in the treasure*) introduces also a dilemma of museum's skeptics who even claim that museums kill cultural values and destroy their meaning by tearing them from their original surroundings and historical context⁹⁵.

⁹⁵ Museum skeptics do not, of course, deny that the museums contain many old objects, but they do reject the claim that this old art gives us true beliefs about the past. (...) When you put a Raphael in the museum, the museum skeptic argues, and then you preserve an old object, but not that painting itself. Carrier, op. cit., 52. Quoted

7.2.6. *Tito Photo* (February 13 – 28, 2010)

This exhibition showed selection of photographs taken by Tito and cameras that he used. Photographs show his travels, landscapes, welcoming and farewells by officials and peoples of countries he traveled to. It seems that people were familiar with the public life of Josip Broz but despite the efforts of propagandists of those times to depict his private life, this topic still raises attention. Marriage of Tito and Jovanka always raised interest of public, especially because she was removed from the public life after their separation.

The material shown on exhibition *Tito Photo* provides an insight into: the people Tito associated with in his free time, his private life, where and how he spent that time and, the way he saw all this through the camera lense.

This exhibition opened up the questions about public and private sphere and their overlapping in lives of public figures. By showing the photographs made by Tito himself it offered insight in - 'authentic expression' of him. These photos are valuable sources of information and can be used in many researches, however this exhibition just displayed photos and did not seek to offer further answers nor immerse itself into inquiries.

The exhibition drew huge attention of the general public and was followed up by a large media attention that mainly produced tabloid reports which focused on making a sensation of some of the photographs (such as photographs of maids). After it was finished, *Politika* (daily paper), published a series of interviews with Tito's widow (who complained for being represented not as honored warrior, but on the seaside in a bathing suit – which is not an image she wants to be remembered for), representatives of the Agency for copyrights, curator who spoke about diverse issues raised by this exhibition. This also opened a question of non-usable legal remedies and non-applicable solutions for copy-right issues in actual legal system. The Museum was claiming the right to display items that belong to its collections, on the other side is the attitude of Mrs Broz that those items belong to family heritage and family members can claim copy-rights. (there is still an on-going legal process about right to inheritance of Tito between Jovanka Broz and the state). The interpretation of the copy-right law provided by the Agency for copyrights

according to Panić, Ana: On griffins, unicorns and Moon rocks, or the collection of the last ruler in *Deadly Treasure*, exhibition catalogue, Museum of Yugoslav History, 2009

referred to another issue – right to use the museum items in commercial purposes. According to this there is very complicated procedure that needs to be undertaken if museum wants to publish and sell books and catalogues that contain photographs from its collections.

7.2.7. *Yoko, Lennon, Tito – one conceptual act* (May 1 – August 1 2010)

In 1968, Yoko Ono and John Lennon planted an oak tree in the yard of the cathedral in Coventry, as a ‘sculpture’ for the peace in the world.

Their idea was to involve politicians all over the world, as they were the ones with power to decide on peace and war, so Yoko and Lennon sent packages with acorns and the request to fifty presidents asking them to plant trees in their gardens as a sign of the efforts they would make towards peace in the world. Tito received one packages.

Exhibition displayed documentation on this action, represented other peace actions of Lennon and Ono, displayed her drawings, and photographs made by Tito. The documentation shows how the protocol responded to this artistic request but does not prove if the acorns were actually planted in Belgrade.

During the exhibition there was interactive action *Wish Tree* where visitors had an opportunity to leave their messages of peace. All of this messages were sent to Yoko Ono who added them to her conceptual installation *Imagine Peace Tower* in Reykjavik, Island, which she started in 1981 in honor of John Lennon and their peace-building activities. So far, this project collected 700.000 messages of people from all over the world and through the *Wish Tree* visitors of the Museum had an opportunity to become part of it.

At a first glance, it seems as an innovative idea to make a narrative of the exhibition around an episode of conceptual action that addressed Tito besides 50 other political leaders through the invitation of the world famous contemporary artists. Nevertheless, in realizations, the facts are vaguely explored, material is presented in a confusing way and the conclusions are imposed without enough data. This reinforces cosmopolitan image of Tito and Yugoslavia opposing images of other communist countries, but instead of exploring these topics thorough the exhibition stays on the surface trying to tease the viewer imposing question if Tito actually understood and participated in the conceptual action by Yoko Ono and Lennon and if the trees were actually planted. By adding Tito’s photographs that were part of few previous exhibitions, a vague line of analogy is created and it is suggested that there was artistic side of Tito.

7.2.8. *Women's Corner* (May 15 – August 1 2010)

The exhibition *Women's Corner* had a goal to present some of the questions related to the theme of *life of woman in socialism*, from the forties to the sixties, displaying “one day in the life of working woman”. By using the model of everyday life, social and private obligations were presented at the exhibition. This model actually punctuates different roles of woman in urban environment after the Second World War, as well as how these roles were officially, socially presented. Socialism as a system strived to remove the concept of class divisions and to remove, through principle of general equality, the material, legal and formal inferiority of women. It was considered that a woman should take part in the work equally, that her role is to not only look after the household and children, but that it is a non-static, socially active role, which makes woman available and functional in all the spheres of life, in the field of work, politics, education. During the Second World War, woman attains a perspective of independence and social-political equality. She becomes a fellow fighter in the war, equally responsible in social life. However, as early as in the fifties, during a period of stabilization of the country, her socially engaged role “quiets down” and she returns to previously established roles in the reproductive family framework. Exhibition *Women's Corner* presents interviews with three elder women from different social classes, professions and roles. Through their life stories, the social time frame and everyday life in Serbia in the mid 20th century are reconstructed, exactly as a confirmation, but also as a contrast to the proclaimed ideal of woman from the documents of the Women's Antifascist Front (AFŽ) as well as texts in women's magazines that contribute to forming of social consciousness, taking over the educational role as well.⁹⁶

This exhibition was a joint project of MYH and Museum of Contemporary Art Belgrade (MoCAB). It was important as an example of new contemporary approach to the collections and the period that these museums are dedicated to. By combining different sources the authors have developed the exhibition around a topic that is close to experience of everyone and as a part of a pulp culture at first glance it seems trivial. Yet, through investigating the women's magazines, the authors have brought up questions of the development of political and economical rights of women. Having in mind the status of women in previous epochs the period of socialism brought

⁹⁶Djorgović, Marija, Panić, Ana, Popović, Una: *Women's Corner*, Exhibition catalogue, Belgrade, Museum of Contemporary Art Belgrade, Museum of Yugoslav History, p 2

a radical change – women got the right to vote, to work, were paid equally and were equal in terms of their rights and status. This is one of the examples of the positive sides of the socialistic heritage. The authors do not present these achievements uncritically and biased, au contraire, they critically examine the actual meaning and effects of the emancipation process and question how the women were in a way used as educators of the new man of socialism. They demonstrate one example in the history when women entered the public sphere in a time of crisis (war and just after the war in period of reconstruction of the country) and seized certain rights, but in the period of stabilization the patriarchal order reinstalled and women were ‘called’ to go back to their traditional roles of mothers and wives. Nonetheless, emancipation was to certain extent irreversible process and a significant amount of rights could not be restrained and taken away. With the propaganda of a new society of equality, socialism contributed a lot to emancipation of women and the development of more equal gender relations. This exhibition chose the magazine, a product of everyday trivial culture and woven an educational and emancipator narrative around it. The topic of women’s rights is provocative and significant for the contemporary society as well as a historic topic. The raise of nationalism and ‘epochal turn to the right’⁹⁷ also brought the re-traditionalization of gender relations and revival of the discourse that tries to naturalize the inequality of genders. As a part of the exhibition, an interactive wall was set up where visitors could leave their thoughts and comments about the equality and position of women today. The magazine as a central element of the exhibition provoked much attention and attracted even the media that usually do not cover museum events. The audience was diversified and attracted by the activities and a number of different side programs. Side programs included feminist conference, celebration of the jubilee of most popular women magazine today, performance of women activist choir, poetry reading. As MoCAB has a developed Children’s and Youth museum club, the programs for younger audience were organized too. This exhibition is the example of an interesting and challenging topic that was represented in the way that is acceptable for different type of audiences that explores the heritage but also raises the topic that is actual and relevant for today’s society.

⁹⁷ Kuljić, Todor: Kritička kultura sećanja, in *Pet godina tranzicije u Srbiji*, Beograd, Socijal demokratski klub, Fondacija Fridrih Ebert Stiftung, 2005, p 113

7.3. Construction and representation of meaning in the exhibition practices

Ames noted the paradoxical situation of the cultural institutions and the fact that they sometimes function as the ventriloquist of the system and sometimes have radically different and brave statements that oppose the official standpoints.⁹⁸ To understand the ideas behind a new program policy and a quality of impact of new museum work and its resonance in the public sphere, it would be very important to analyze and compare construction and representation of meaning in each specific museum exhibition.

The attention will be focused on – image of Tito, image of Yugoslavia; given historic perspectives; presence of nostalgic and critic discourses in representing specific topics from Yugoslav history.

7.3.1. Represented image of Tito:

In analyzing the meaning of contents represented through exhibitions, the stepping stone will be the analysis of the image of the main actor - Tito and ways he is presented in the narratives of these displays. Curators and management have many times stated that they want to shift the perceived image of the museum away from tight connection with one person. If we take a look at the list of recent exhibitions this does not seem so obvious. Five out of eight exhibitions have Tito's name in the title and only two have no direct link to his character. Consequently, in the texts that follow exhibitions in catalogues and on the web site Tito's name will be seen many time as well as in following examples.

As shown in the table 1 majority of the exhibitions have Tito as a central figure. He is presented as a politician who enjoyed respect of the international community (*World of Silver, Hunting Weapons of Josip Broz*), who was meeting up and had close contacts with many prominent

⁹⁸Michael M. Ames: *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes The Anthropology of Museums*, UBC press, 1992, p. 17

people of the time. In some cases Tito is represented in a 'light' perspective, in moments of relaxing or having fun (*New Years* and *Tito photo*); two exhibitions thematized Tito as an amateur photographer (*Tito photo*) and person dedicated to peace-building (*Yoko , Lennon, Tito*); *Tito Effect* sketched him to certain extent as adored ruler.

In some cases, we can even say to say that Tito is presented as the *star* and that there is maybe an effort made to produce him as a *pop icon* (as it was the idea of one exhibition that was not realized). As the agenda-book entitled *Tito and other celebrities* that has been sold in the souvenir shop suggests, he enjoyed celebrity status. This tactic of representation is in accord with one of important museum strategies: the strategy of market orientation and audience development. It is aiming to achieve popularity with wide public therefore Tito is represented in regard with nostalgic evocations that float in the public and everyday discourses.

However, images of Tito used in exhibitions differ a lot, as there is no consensus about his roles and importance in the public discourse, and as there cannot be only one 'proper' representation of any personality. Therefore, his images float from a strategy of presenting him as a good old man that knew how to have fun (much alike those that live in popular memory of those people with first-hand experience of living in his times), a stylish and elegant ruler (ironically, because he ruled in the country of no class differences), a respected political leader with influence in the internal and international politics, to end with the image of Tito as a central figure produced by meticulously designed cult of personality .

The popular image of Tito is also used sometimes in promotion of exhibitions that do initiate critic-based issues. This is the case in the exhibition *Tito's New Years* that showed protocol documents on organization of the event parallel to photographs of Tito having fun while celebrating New Year. *Tito's New Years* had multifaceted and complex approach in which several layers of the exhibition narratives appeared. Besides representation of Tito's entertainment, the second line of the exhibition critically examines process of inventing and installing the new tradition.

Tito photo suggests that Tito was a common person who took photos in his free time. Image of Tito offered by these exhibitions that reveal the private preferences of Tito, showing him as passionate photographer, we can say that he has been shown as dedicated to his hobby, again in

the moments of relaxation and fun. The intention was to show him as careless ruler who enjoys his time of leisure as if he solved all problems of his country – it was part of propaganda to show his spontaneity but actually there was nothing spontaneous about it. On this display, the viewer can see the perspective from the lenses of the person that has been portrayed so many times. Choice to focus on Tito's perspective may be interpreted as the attempt to show him as the ordinary person who simply enjoyed his hobby, but on the other hand, the situations captured on his photos (faraway places, welcoming by the crowd, elite parties, etc) disabled this interpretation simply because they are way out of reach of the ordinary person's experience (because he had opportunity to visit many places that were not available to common people). Setting up display of Tito's perspective and informing public about newly discovered material as goals of this exhibition, saved it from the accusations that the material was not properly researched, titled and explained.

Yoko, Lennon, Tito presented Tito as involved in art (his photos were from the exhibitions that were organized while Tito was alive), admirer of art who was devoted to peace building in the world together with most famous persons of global popular culture.

Tito Effect showed Tito as the charismatic leader who is celebrated by his peoples in various ways – as comrade, ruler, role model, synonym of liberty and virtue, somebody who was so respected but also perceived as somebody who is close to common people.

7.3.2. Differing Historic Perspectives –mixing *top down* and *bottom up* history and its implications

The important shift of the attention (that is) suggested by the new orientation of the Museum can be seen if we compare *World of Silver* and the *Tito effect*. *World of Silver* exhibited the silver objects from the collection of the applied art. These were the presents from around the world that Tito received from politicians, organizations and celebrities that he has met. *World of Silver* can

be placed amongst exhibitions that was well accepted but did not raise any debates in public sphere.

As it was explained in the catalogue introduction, the aim of this exhibition was to continue the cycle of thematic exhibitions of items from the collections, (items which are not part of the permanent exhibition). It displayed the treasury that museum keeps, and tried to reconstruct the ambience i.e. the primary context in which they existed.

The next big exhibition, *Tito Effect*, on the other hand puts on display the objects from the collections which have least importance judging by traditional criteria – the presents of citizens of Yugoslavia, factories, schools, various organizations, etc. This material is traditionally regarded as non valuable, as majority is created by amateurs and would probably be described as kitsch popular production items. By displaying these objects, the MYH announced the shift of its perspective from presenting the official view to the interest for lives of common citizens and the interest for a more complex contextualization and interpretation of history that broadened the area of possible future research. However, the exhibitions that followed this one, had not endorsed this intention as they all focused on private and public life of Tito (*Tito photo* and *Yoko Lennon Tito*) or have the history and the current state of the Museum for a topic (*Deadly Treasure*).

The recent exhibition the *Women's Corner* is the first exhibition that shows referred focus of attention to lives of the people and not only the president. Exhibitions that investigate various topics important for Yugoslav cultural space are needed if MYH wants to move away from the popular perception of Tito's museum that follows it and in order to justify the name that it bears.

7.3.3. The image of socialistic Yugoslavia – from idealization to criticism

How does the image of the socialistic Yugoslavia look like in the recent MYH projects? The topics that are thematized by the exhibitions of MYH in the analyzed period and the way that

they are approached imply the overall positive view of the socialism, although done with certain critical tones, but also with also ironical, but at the same time nostalgic elements.

In *World of Silver* and *Hunting Weapons*, the Yugoslav state is represented as a **respectable country** in the international community, and this respect is connected to its leader who was a prominent figure of the political scene of the era.

In *Tito Effect*, the focus of attention is drawn to and the spectator gets a bit **parody perspective** of the phenomenon of adoring the president when s/he meets all the bizarre presents and all the ways and techniques of portraying the president. The peoples of Yugoslavia are represented as a naïve mass blinded by Tito's charisma and adoring him.⁹⁹ In the same time the exhibition avoided to mention or to show all those representations of dissidence, which were not that spread, but, in spite of authoritarian regime, still present.

The exhibition *Yoko Lennon Tito* evokes SFRY as different from the other communist countries, in tune with the western cultural influences and trends in popular culture, **as modern and cosmopolitan country**. The intention was to represent Tito as the one who understands if not the conceptual art than the contemporary world and its features.

As explained before *Tito's New Years* takes a rather critical position and draws the viewer's attention to the process of **inventing traditions** in socialist Yugoslavia.

The exhibition *Women's corner* presents the socialist state as **emancipator** and explores the development of rights of women. Choice to focus on the emancipatory project of the socialist era and the heritage, which would be degraded in anticommunist context, in this case, does not imply that it is uncritically overvalued. Together with the presentation of positive inheritance left behind such as getting the right to vote, organization of mass literacy courses and introduction of kindergartens, the exhibition also represents the decline of these efforts: the auto cancelation of the Antifascist Women Front as the main organization and the pressure on women to get back to their traditional gender roles. The discrepancy of the officially proclaimed rights and the practice is shown through many examples. The exhibition follows the return to traditional gender roles of

⁹⁹ This exhibitions got the opposing critiques, it was read as the critical and but also as apologetic by different viewers. It is probably due to fact that the author team was not collaborating through the process; at the end, the author of the concept was not the person that wrote the texts. It was visible in interviews and debates about the exhibitions that the conception of the exhibition is not clearly defined.

women during fifties. The propaganda character of political party media which demanded the participation in the re-building of the country is visible as well as the efforts which the state invested to facilitate double role of women as both mother and shock-worker by opening nurseries, public kitchens, etc.

It is obvious that the Museum does not represent one undiversified picture of the socialist past, as it is not the case in overall society. These representations differ from positive with almost invisible time distance, through parody perspective, nostalgic evocations to critical analyses of various societal occurrences.

7.3.4. Yugo / Tito - Nostalgic or not

To make a division of nostalgic or critical might seem too harsh but it reflects divisions and reductions present in the public and everyday discourses about socialism. As it can be seen through the analyses of the exhibition practices, relation towards recent past proposed by the programs of MYH is rather nostalgic than the critical one. In the present social context where the official institutions have control over tools of power and can create and reshape the collective remembrance and systematically try to neglect the socialist period of history, this strategy of MYH can be better understood. It seems that curators and staff of MYH always speak from the position that opposes the dominant discourse that does not recognize the socialist heritage as important as heritage of other historic periods that are perceived as more valuable for building national identity. Even more, socialism is today a period about which there is not much debate in public sphere, however it is seriously researched in scientific and academic filed. In this sense, role of the Museum becomes more important as a catalyst for igniting future debates.

We can detect two strategies repeated in each exhibition:

- Either there is a struggle to prove that the heritage of socialism is a valuable part of history and thus should be **included in a critical way in a collective memory or**
- That it is significant to deal with it **using the tools and methods of history and social sciences or humanities** and not as a part of banal debates and accusations that reflect political interests of today.

There is also the strategy of representing socialism by using nostalgic evocations of the era, presenting its glory, carelessness and naïveté that in most cases use representations of Tito. This tactic has justifications if it is primarily used as the first level of narrative, as a mean of attracting attention and not if there are no seriously implied analyses of the chosen topics. Here, the exhibition *Tito's New Years* can serve as the most obvious example as the one that goes into deeper analysis even if at first site it looks as a light theme and on the opposite side *Yoko Lennon Tito* that unfortunately does not go beyond the first level of fascination. Even if we accept the explanations for the attitude of MYH towards socialism and accept that this position is valid in the present moment, it is important to say that if this institution wants to develop and grow, it should in following period rethink its strategies and open up for projects that are more critical towards the recent past.

	The image of socialism	The image of Tito	Nostalgic or critical	Focus on official or everyday perspective	Issues in conflict, dissonant voices
World of Silver	SFRY as respected state (Tito =Yugoslavia)	In focus , respected statesman	Nostalgic	Official	No
Hunting Weapons of Josip Broz Tito	SFRY as respected state (Tito =Yugoslavia)	In focus , respected statesman, A ruler, hunting as ruler's insignia	Nostalgic, reminds of the exhibitions from the epoch	Official, hunting is represented as important costume in high level politicians' circles	No
Tito's New Years,	A society of newly installed practices and festivities	In focus, hedonist, pop star	Has both dimensions, but uses nostalgic images to attract the audience	Official and private moments of Tito's life, not of the citizens	Uses the approach of inventing traditions to explain the process of inventing New Year as a public holiday
Tito Effect	Ideologically blind masses; Absolutely adore Tito	A hero of the masses	Unclear The conception was not clear	Focus on common people and presents they	May be seen if we interpret it as it was suggested in

			enough and it turn out as an exhibition open for different interpretations	donated; by offering a gift they could ensure a contact to the ruler	the catalogue texts, as a first step in research of cult of Tito's personality
Deadly treasure	Shows valuable objects from the collections, and speaks about the history of MYH, with the aim to raise awareness to the present problems	Not in focus, connected to Tito indirectly because it speaks about the conditions of keeping Tito's legacy (valuable objects in the MYH collections)	Critical towards the authorities and practices of neglecting and harming valuable art and cultural artifacts	Focus on officials and their acts in treating cultural heritage	Yes, but it mainly targets the problems of today and the relationship of the nowadays authorities and the society to cultural heritage. By choosing the most valuable objects, MYH tries to raise the attention of the importance of the heritage that it keeps , but never mentioning

					the socialism, but using the 'traditionally accepted' cultural values (statue of Osiris from 6century B.C., antique coins, Moon rock, Stalin's saber decorated with diamonds
Tito photo	Tito's perspective	Passionate photographer (beside the career of successful politician)	Nostalgic	Private life of the president	No
Yoko, Lennon, Tito	SFRY as different from the other communist countries, connected to western cultural influences	Understands contemporary art and practice art himself	Nostalgic	Official	No

Women's Corner	Emancipator state, officially proclaimed equality of man and women focus on Antifascist Women's Front; follows the emancipation in practice	Mentioned few times, not in the focus	Nostalgic at first site, it puts the fashion and style in focus cause it analyzes Women's magazines, but critically examines the problems of implementing emancipation	Lives of women , the officially proclaimed models and experiences in practice and everyday life	Yes
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VIII Ethical issues and dilemmas

*The ability to overcome and deal with the plurality of past is frequently tested and only time will show are societies able to tolerate the differences they are facing.*¹⁰⁰

8.1. Work in post conflict environment

The fact that MYH bares heritage of former Yugoslavia it implies that it cannot negate the tragic end of the former country and has the obligation to take the active role in the process of questioning of the traumatic memory of the recent wars and in the efforts of reconciliation. Work on the memory is of particular weight in the post conflict areas because of the need to address the past in order to overcome the conflict or at least to find the common grounds for debate about the critical issues.

In 2010, the part of the commemoration of the victims of Srebrenica genocide was held at the premises of the museum. The event was organized by civil society organization, but the fact that it happened in the Museum gave a specific tone to it. Even though in Serbia museums do not have the importance one could expect, they do have the aura of state institutions. With the risk to make a mistake and be too harsh, I would say that, if asked, the authorities would have been against this event taking place in the museum. We can say this was almost a guerilla tactic in an atmosphere where cultural policy decisions on the issues of memory politics¹⁰¹ are lacking and the attitude of the authorities towards the role of Serbian state in the wars of the nineties is schizophrenic¹⁰². The event attracted broad media attention, as this anniversary usually does.

¹⁰⁰ Gillis, op.cit. 46

¹⁰¹ Dragičević-Šešić, Milena, Monument policy as an anachronistic strategy within memory policies of Balkan countries within the project Art, culture and media in the process of European Integrations, n. 149004, supported by Ministry of Science and Technology, Republic of Serbia p 2

¹⁰²David, Lea, Sećam se, dakle postojim: Identitet Srba kao refleksija kulture sećanja u *Pamćenje i Nostalgija (Neki prostori, oblici, lica i naličja)*, ur. Gordana Đerić, Beograd, Institut za filozofiju i društvenu teoriju, 2009

Some of the curators did not agree with the decision of the Museum management to host this program. They also felt excluded because they were not asked for the opinion. This is in my opinion symptom of the processes within the Museum and the whole society. On the one side, it would be good for Museum staff to be familiar with all the guest programs and all proposals should be discussed. However, this happened during a time when many other activities were happening and half of the staff was on summer holidays, so the mistake was not intentional, but it shows the gap in the decision-making process and information flow within the institution. The more important signal that this episode sends is the need of debate inside the organization, the need of re-examining the role of the Museum in the society that would put together the opposite standpoints:

I Logic of state owned culture

The Museum should deal with the history and take care about the objects; the state founded this Museum, therefore we have to speak what the state wants us to speak about. If they (the authorities) decide, they can close us tomorrow. In the case of the MYH this attitude is even more widespread, because of the specific history of its precursor institutions (presidential memorial museum). The other even more important reason for this apathy is the series of acts linked to political decision, like one regarding the funeral of Milošević¹⁰³, or other occasions when the politicians decided to literally take the art pieces that they needed for the decoration of residential or work-space. This was done in spite of the experts' estimation that there is a need for special restoration or special conditions for the display of the specific piece. Works of art were in most cases neglected – nobody took care of conditions they were in paid attention to conditions they were displayed in. Sometimes the institutions that took them stated that they have lost the documentation about borrowing items. (Last case of this kind happened in July 2010 when 17 sculptures were taken upon request of the general secretary of the President of the Republic.)

II Logic of public interest and public good

We are the professionals who deal with the heritage of this culture have a mission to safeguard it, study it and educate people about the values of it. The fact that we are the public institution

¹⁰³ The body of Milošević was exposed in Museum May 25 in spite of protest of the MYH director and the experts.

gives us the responsibility to taxpayers / wide public to work in best public interest. That includes, among other things the effort to create the atmosphere that enables people to share opinions. Otherwise, museums are supporting development of society of apathy and anomie where citizens are either xenophobic and do not know how to deal with the differences that they meet in their everyday experience, or indifferent about their surrounding or afraid to say what they think. If this is the case, museums should be afraid for their future.

This dilemma shows that in dealing with the challenges of developing the Museum according to new museum management methods the theoretical and ethical issues must not be left aside. The work on these topics is crucial and cannot be covered by the effects of the good PR campaign or fundraising skills. In fact, these activities cannot be separated and developed one by one if the positive and long term results are expected. This is also the indicator of the state of the profession's self-respect and confidence in Serbia. Moreover, this is the task for the professional associations to work on the strengthening of the ethical and professional standards and for each museum director, manager, curator, archivist etc. to work on his/her own and institutional excellence.

This current state of the profession needs to be addressed in future if museum professionals want to regain the authority and respect of the society for their professional devotion.

IX Conclusion remarks

9.1. Democratization in access policy and social inclusion

To conclude the paper it would be useful to go back to the hypotheses proposed in the beginning in order to estimate if and how they have been proven or rejected.

The most important part was to investigate if the Museum is realizing its mission as important public institution, which serves the public interest by initiating discussions regarding neglected issues in Serbian past by providing new interpretations. The Museum uses its collections as public goods, making them as accessible as possible through different forms of representation such as exhibitions, debates, workshops and seminars.

Slowly MYH is becoming a place of trust for both academic and wider audiences, as demonstrated in the analysis of the exhibition (partnerships, involvement of the audience in enlarging the collection).

Democratization of the approach and inclusion of community as a principle of museum work is the foundation of this paper and it is proposed as a core value that should be integrated in museum's mission. This research provided the overview of the Museum of Yugoslav History development and focused on the analysis of the period of last two years using criteria of democratized and inclusive approach as the element of the qualitative assessment of museum work. In this respect, we can conclude that the program and managing policy of the MYH is developing and taking into consideration and implementing the democratization of the approach as one of the significant principles, as shown in the description of several exhibition and research/ debate projects. By initiating and joining projects of other organizations and by offering museum as a space and as a partner for various projects of individual artists, independent organizations and institutions, this museum is developing as an open public institution in a permanent dialogue with the community.

9.2. Culture of memory

In chapter III, the theoretical basis related to notions of memory and remembrance is proposed, and group of hypotheses related to these topics were examined. This chapter offered an outline of dominant images of socialist past by describing two opposite, though both reductionist, attitudes towards socialistic past: one that is accusing and one that is nostalgic (with many variations between two poles of the continuum), that MYH should take into account when designing future programs.

Analysis of the MYH programme activities has shown that museum positions itself as an active actor in creation of *culture of memory*. This is done by creating various initiatives and acting as institutional space for civic engagement and opening for dialogue and reconciliation on cultural and social issues.

I relations towards official political instances in memory politics

The lack of new contemporary readings of period of socialism in the museums (in Serbia and other former Yugoslav republics) shows that the **relationship towards recent socialistic period** has not reached a level of consensus. In Serbia, there are several official institutional levels that are in charge of dealing with the past and the politics of memory: Ministry of education (proposing national curricula), Ministry of culture (supporting cultural projects), Ministry of Social Affairs (deciding about annual cycle of dates that are commemorated and celebrated, and persons that are going to be remembered), Ministry of Science (supporting research projects), etc. The way in which the political system is organized creates a situation where the ministries do not have a common point of view of the past. In fact, these attitudes are changing together with changes of current political interests of party responsible within coalition government for a specific domain. Cultural institutions under the authority of the Ministry of culture are controlled in terms of appointing managing boards and directors, but content wise they are autonomous. This autonomy leaves space for managers of the institutions to be proactive and raise issues that are neglected in the public sphere and in the society as a whole. As previously mentioned, it also means that it will depend upon personal decisions of general managers in culture to what extent cultural scene would be radical/critical, and whether the *culture of memory* would be re-

questioned. Some managers might implement an auto-censorship policy, but also policy that might differ from policy of relevant ministry. (Up to now in these two years the MYH curators had several times been debating dilemmas regarding some elements of memory policy, but the final decisions were made based on professional criteria.)

In culture of memory and in collective remembrance the MYH should have a crucial role together with other relevant partners from the community such as Institute for contemporary history, Department of History at the School of Philosophy, independent experts and intellectuals, etc. It is up to the manager and the curators to work on achieving professional respect and the excellence to gain the authority and develop an institution of trust and credibility that will critically deal with recent past. Their task is to create a museum that would go beyond the *site of memory*¹⁰⁴ in Nora's terms and move away from overshadowing aura of Tito's memorial.

II relation to science and experts' community / possibilities to mediate new theoretical achievements

This research showed that strategies of representation used by the museum are diverse, and that MYH does not mediate one monolith image of socialism, as the experts' community produces many different narratives. The presented images vary from nostalgic evocations that predominate to critical analyses of certain phenomena.

The implied strategies of representations and the proposed images of socialism are in accord with different demands that MYH as a modern museum has to face: from one side there is a demand of the authorities and new (neo liberal) cultural policy to answer cultural market needs, to adjust and commercialize the offer, respecting the interests of different target groups. These market interests favor the nostalgic and noncritical approach. In the same time, popular culture of the ex Yugoslavia was used in a few exhibition projects of the MYH also as a part of this market driven approach, which raised interest of audience but also of media and cultural professionals. So

¹⁰⁴ "A *lieu de mémoire* is any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community (in this case, the French community)" Nora, Pierre: 'The Era of Commemoration', Pierre Nora & L. Kritzman (eds.) *Realms of Memory: The construction of the French Past Vol. 3*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996, 609–637

elements of Yugoslav popular culture will be more and more used especially in regional¹⁰⁵ joint projects of memory re-examination. (an example would be *Women's corner* exhibition).

On the other side, the International museum community (ICOM) to which the Museum wants to belong expects a certain level of professional excellence and an ethical approach to heritage. Here, a priority is the development of the museum and its operational and programming standards in research and gaining knowledge in history, ethnology, sociology and cultural studies, and other disciplines. Museum professionals need to be continuously up to date with the new theories and approaches in science, humanities and museology since the programs they create are meeting points and opportunities for audience to obtain new knowledge and understanding of phenomena museum treats.

Since the Museum has a long-term vision to be an institution of excellence, in creating and envisioning future projects it should tend to merge and balance demands to stay true to its professional criteria and market demands.

9.3. Policy recommendations

Concluding this research - more proactive role of the MYH is expected in the future in relation to:

- demands of cultural policy (searching for ways to reconcile the need of commercialization and responsible treatment of heritage)
- achievements of the academics (being in tune with the new developments in historical science, but also to serve as a mediator of those achievements to the audience. However, it would be important to work also as 'experimental' field for new methodological approaches, not being 'behind' but in front of the science, enabling multiperspectivity and multivocality...
- positioning itself as a responsible social actor that takes care of the heritage of a community and works on including the community members into its work.
- cooperation with other similar and complementary museums, memory sites, memorial houses in Serbia and in the region in different types of mediation projects such as exhibitions, cultural routes, memorial ceremonies, publications, conferences, seminars etc.

¹⁰⁵ In the region there are many institution of relevance such as Kumrovec, AVNOJ Museum in Jajce, Memorial house Tjentište, Drvar memorial, etc which have not up to this moment developed joint projects with MYH

- joining European and international networks as well as a partnership with alike museums in the world (Stalin museum in Gori, Lenin museum in Moscow, Teror Haza in Budapest, other presidential museums, etc.) and foundation dedicated to personalities that marked XX century history (Martin Luther King, John F. Kennedy, Charles de Gaulle, Winston Churchill, Willi Brandt, Gandhi - but also comparative studies with Hitler, Mussolini, Franco and particularly non-aligned movement and its leading personalities - Nehru, Nasser, Indira Gandhi etc.).
- initiate contacts and partnerships with NGOs and individual artists that are interested in this topic, such as Monument group, Škart, TkH, WHW, Andrea Kulundžić, etc.
- development of strategies of cultural tourism based on socialist heritage. Although MHY is developing cultural tourism as a strategy, it has not yet resulted in coherent touristic products. This will be possible only with other actors in the field (Tourist organizations, other museums and memory sites in the region...)

As a prerequisite of all these demands, it is necessary to develop a set of high ethical standards. Ethical standards would apply not only in the research and in the treatment of the artifacts but in overall memory politics and in this way contribute to the re-creation of a public *culture of memory*. Ethical issues will be inevitably raised during regional collaborations where it will be necessary to reconcile different views on our common past.

Taking into consideration the new approach and suggestions offered by theorists of new museology this paper tried to point out some characteristics of the current condition of MYH. As each museum should be regarded in a specific socio-cultural and historical context that influenced its formation, development and the potentials for future growth, a part of this paper is dedicated to the outline of the MYH environment and its cultural context. Moreover, the fact that the heritage of socialism is still not properly treated and is not yet left to be solely a matter of history and that it still plays important role in day-to-day debates and political misuses, leave to the work of curators to contemplate, interpret and mediate this recent past. This situation can be found challenging and it offers possibilities to create various programs.

The democratization of the approach is a necessity, as many theorists have shown, but in the case of the MYH this principle have even more value given that the heritage of socialism is still in a vivid memory of many generations. Organizing programmes that would invite audience to participate in the process of research, by contributing with their personal memories and

experiences is valuable as a new source of knowledge and information and as a way of building close relationship of mutual trust between the Museum and public.

The fact that the collections of MYH consist mainly of the presents that Tito received makes this museum close to museums that hold the collection of rulers (be it kings and aristocrats or presidents) and thus contribute to the image of the Museum as a treasury. Nevertheless, in this case the majority of presents was given by 'ordinary' people and as such they speak more about 'us'/peoples of former Yugoslavia/ and the ethos of the period than only about their previous owner. Call for implementing the ethnographic method in a curatorial research is not related only to call for eyewitnesses that could clarify the history of for example relay baton ceremonies. Even in the case of the collection of relay batons, the use of oral history as a means to get deeper knowledge of the phenomena is evident and of utmost importance, this approach was suggested as valuable resource of insights in reaching a broader scope of topics (way of life, cultural specifics, everyday life, popular culture, social values...).

Oral history method could be used for getting the information about phenomena important for social history, everyday life, cultural climate of the decades, relation of private and public sphere, experience of living in a society with the different official ideology...and many other themes. This broadening of the topics of interest of MYH is logical having in mind that new museology recommends to go beyond the collections and research the issues that are important for development of the community that they belong to. Combining traditional 'research based' knowledge with 'experience based' knowledge of the audiences enables museum professionals to provide multifaceted views and perspectives.

In the post conflict situation, communities that had pieces of peaceful common past, it is important to ignite explorations of periods of common history, projects and achievements because the official policies are emphasizing differences and are rather intolerant towards other communities. This is important as a means of developing cross-generational transfer of knowledge, especially in the situations when school history curricula changes rapidly and there is limited space dedicated to these topics.

ICOM suggests main tasks of museums in way that follows: function as a stimulus for broader community, social and sustainable development in partnership with international heritage and cultural organizations;

1. design programming initiatives to act as institutional space for civic engagement by promoting dialogue and reconciliation on cultural and social issues.¹⁰⁶
2. develop and function as civic and social spaces, beyond the maintenance and presentation of collections;

This research shows that these goals have been realized to a certain extent and are included in the long-term vision of the Museum. The Museum is using some of the strategies of involving broader community and also there is an effort to democratize the Museum approach and audiences' access to cultural heritage. However, a lot is to be done in order to be reach the standards of museological profession: besides the maintenance and presentation of collections, main tasks would be to develop and to function as civic and social platform, as a centre for new culture of memory but also as a place of dialogue promoting regional cooperation and reconciliation.

¹⁰⁶ Carlos Roberto Ferreira Brandão, Chairperson, ICOM-Brazil: National & International Development Strategies in *ICOM news*, 2008, no 1, p. 4.

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XI About the author

Mirjana Slavković graduated ethnology and anthropology at the University of Belgrade in 2008. In the same year, she enrolled in MA programme for Cultural policy and Management and Policy at University of Arts. In 2005, she finished alternative academic courses Women Studies and Peace studies. Participated in several projects focusing on culture for children and children's rights. Volunteered and worked for *Feminist Theatre 5 A*, *Beton Hala* Theatre, *BELEF* Festival, Children's Cultural Centre, etc. In 2009, after having spent a yearlong curatorial practice in the Museum of Yugoslav History, she passed state curatorial exam. Since 2010, she is employed in the MYH in maintaining PR activities. She speaks English and French.