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Memonautica

Yugoslavia in Digital Memories, Memorials and Storytelling

DISSERTATION

Martin Pogačar

Mentor/s: Prof Dr Tanja Petrović and Dr Andrew Hoskins

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Preface

In November 2009 I had the chance to take part in a weReurope conference in Stockholm where each participant was asked to bring along an object that reminded him or her of another European country. An object that triggered a memory of another place and another time. I brought a computer joystick, an essential part of my Commodore 64 relic which was smuggled, to avoid paying custom tax, in 1984 from Western Germany to Ljubljana, Yugoslavia. At the time I used it to play computer games, but now, a good quarter of a century later, when I was looking for an object to bring to that conference, I realised it was one of the first things in my life to have ‘connected’ me to the world outside of what was then Yugoslavia.

The joystick bears no explicit reference to Western Germany neither it reminds me of that country. Rather, it reminds me of my childhood in Yugoslavia, a country of the ‘socialism with a human face,’ which in 1991 ingloriously dismembered in a bloody war. Today it only exists in official records, archives, monuments, music, films, literature, personal memories and, importantly, on the internet. The post-Yugoslav affairs, nevertheless, feature prominently in regional news and represent a recurrent topic in cultural, media and political landscapes, often eliciting ambivalent reactions.

Playing computer games in the 1980s Yugoslavia somehow made a part of a world beyond the Cold War divide. In that view the Iron Curtain never really existed for me, as even the trips across the border to Italy or Austria to buy a pair of Levi’s or a tin of Coke felt more like an adventure than a quest for otherwise unobtainable commodity. And the divide certainly had not existed for me in 1986 when the Challenger had exploded and when the news of the Chernobyl disaster radiated throughout the world. These two epochal events transcended all borders, national, regional, ideological. Seeing news reports then I felt that as much as these were, respectively, an eastern and a western disaster, they affected people beyond any ideological or geographical divide. On a very intimate level, *we* were affected globally: by the collapse of the post-war dream of a super-flashy-techno-future and by the realisation of the fragility of man in the face of uncontrollable technological challengers and chernobyls.

And when the Berlin wall fell in 1989, as crucial an event as this has proved to be for east and west alike, and also for the future developments in Europe and beyond, for a 1980s Yugoslav kid living in Slovenia the borders have long since fell. To the west, that is. Towards the former

brothers in the remains of Yugoslavia, alas, in 1991 new political, ideological, and cultural borders have been installed: in an effort to symbolically steer the new Slovenian state clear of the ‘uncivilised, undemocratic Balkanites,’ away from all things Yugoslav. In post-1989 political discourses Yugoslavia appeared, and in fact continues to appear even today—as a regime/state/period—inadequate, false, oppressive, criminal or merely plain wrong. Were it not for the emergence of digital media and the resilience of mediated memory, particularly as apparent in the consumption of popular culture, cinema, music, literature, arts, the story at the dawn of the 21st century would, perhaps, have been *rewritten* differently. But, for better or worse, it is precisely through digital media and communications technologies that the past—or rather its numerous remediations—is continually resurrected, disinterred, revisited, ^{de}/_{re}contextualised, ^{re}/_{de}fragmented, renarrated, ab/used, forgotten, deleted, edited, meshed, remixed, hybridised ...

The obsession with the past and memory in the latter part of the 20th century and today can in many respects be seen as a reaction to technologism and futurist ideologies of the early 20th century that focused outward, to the sea, the air and into the outer space. After the two technological disasters and after the end of the Cold War-dominated world, however, the technological research and development have obviously not ended. Rather they seem to have shifted from grand interstellar aspirations to more ‘grounded’ matters: over the past three decades research in genetics, bionic limbs, thermal memory, synthetic biology, research into collective and swarm intelligence, robotics, and the like has developed enormously.

And so have the communications technologies, which started once again massively to reshape cultures and societies, particularly via emergent new tools and devices widely employed for interpersonal communication since the late 1980s. Intriguingly, the rise of the latest new media oddly coincided with the collapse of socialist ‘regimes’ in Eastern Europe. And it is this cleavage that opens up a fascinating space within which the post-socialist, post-Yugoslav socio-cultural realities—in fact the digital afterlife of Yugoslavia—prove worth interrogating. Not least because, in post-Yugoslavia—apart from the techno-futurist impetus for the memory boom—one can trace the interest in the former country also in the processes of nationalisation, purification of new national histories. And this interest and practice is tightly related also to communications technologies and practices thriving online.

Essentially, part of my research motives, and indeed pervasive fascinations, are the implications that the digital communication technologies, or rather the life in digital media ecology, have on the way memory is created/promulgated/shared/narrated. In particular, the fascination focuses on the

memories the post-Yugoslavs may have/share, and their externalisations and appropriations facilitated/enabled by the internet and the many tools, genres, and devices it brings along.

Hence the title, *Memonautica*. It implies the essential navigatory metaphoricity of surfing the internet, invoking the navigation aspect (Gr. *kybernetes*) in the popular cyber- prefix. Crucially, in relation to memories and remembering online, *Memonautica* also implies that the 'sea' we are charting is never calm or still. Rather, it is constantly changing and shifting, to use a poet's metaphor, as if climbing the rocks and retreating back again into the crate it has dug. Thus, in the process of remembering we can only really return to a *cyberplace of memory* which has changed or even disappeared since our last call.

Chapter 1 | Introduction: Cyberplaces of Memory

Perhaps if the future existed, concretely and individually, as something that could be discerned by a better brain, the past would not be so seductive: its demands would be balanced by those of the future. Persons might then straddle the middle stretch of the seesaw when considering this or that object. It might be fun.¹

What This Is All About?

The pervasive fascination with the presence of the past and the very elusiveness of the present seems unending. At the dawn of the new millennium the world is in many respects very different from the 20th century. Yet (and not only) in terms of continuity of techno-cultural developments it is nevertheless still deeply referenced and connected, ‘organically’ bound to the short 20th century.² What makes the past century so intensely short, and all the more intensely represented,³ is the all-around ‘infestation’ of the everyday by the mediated presence of the seminal and not so seminal historical episodes and events, spanning popular culture and politics. These presences, however, are heavily assisted by the developments in the communications technologies which enabled and facilitated a significant change in the ways the past is represented and made sense of. Not unimportantly, the very understanding of time has been subdued to the rhythms of mediated reality.⁴ In other words, the 20th century—with its fascinating achievements in technological, cultural, economic and social development on the one hand and the devastating disasters of the two world wars, the Cold war and many socio-political perturbations on the other—became one enormous historical, and yes, media event. Through ceaseless media appropriations and representations, remediations, admittedly also an immensely fragmented one...

What the 20th century yields to a retrospective gaze is a multitude of variegated, multi-faceted and fragmented remnants of the past. Through their apprehension by the media these remnants

¹ Vladimir Nabokov, *Transparent Things*, New York, Vintage International, 1989, 1.

² Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: The Short 20th Century, 1914–1991*, London, Michael Joseph, 1994.

³ Vivian Sobchak, “Afterword: Media Archaeology and Re-Presenting the Past,” in Erkki Huhtamo and Jussi Parikka (eds.), *Media Archaeology, Approaches, Applications and Implications*, Berkeley, Los Angeles London, California University Press, 2011, 323–334.

⁴ Henri Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis, Space, Time and Everyday Life*, Continuum, London New York, 2004, 47.

seemingly attain an air of defiance to the linear progress of time: for instance, the rusted bombshells and gas-mutilated soldiers from the Great War seem much closer after seeing Kubrick's timeless *The Paths of Glory* which brings the agony of that time as close as affectively feel the agony of the doomed soldiers; on the other hand, the shortages during the rebuilding war-torn Europe in the late 1940s and 1950s are frequently overshadowed by the sound of rock and roll and *popevka*,⁵ timelessly re-presenting the past on ever new editions of remastered records.

The Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) may have been consigned to history along with most other socialist countries, but its pervasive presence not only in cinema, music, literature, daily politics and quotidian culture speaks otherwise. The past is increasingly present in digital media: websites, blogs, forums, YouTube, Facebook and other social networking sites. Thus it successfully defies the dream of 'post-socialist transitionalism,' which ideally was meant to facilitate an eradication of any trace of the 'compromising socialist past.'

Transitionalism, this new 'liberating' ideology, has, however, not quite managed to 'redo' the past. It rather seems it has failed, as numerous digital and analogue remnants of the past and incessant re-presenting of that time duly testifies. Therefore, it seems at least viable to install the 'digital afterlife' of Yugoslavia and Yugoslavs (post-Yugoslavia and post-Yugoslavs) as the central concern to this writing. Irrelevant to some, inevitably important to others, this topic opens a set of critical underlying questions:

- *How are the history of Yugoslavia and popular remediations of its past (re)appropriated and (re)narrated in the realm of digitally enabled communications technologies?*
- *What use users make of the technology in their interventions?*
- *And what implications this has for (post-Yugoslav) memory practices in the digital age?*

In order to try and answer these puzzles, I investigate *vernacular medial externalisations of memory and remembering of Yugoslavia in digital media environments*,⁶ i.e. on the internet which is seen as a *multimodal media system*. In order to do this, I look at three cases where digital

⁵ Popevka was a pop-music genre particularly popular in Slovenia since early 1960s. In other parts of Yugoslavia it was not known under this name, but formally still an all present phenomenon (several festivals were dedicated to it). It is best, although not perfectly, compared to Italian *canzone* or German *Schlager*.

⁶ On *medial externalisation of memory* see Astrid Erll, "Literature, Film and the Mediality of Culture," in Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (eds.), *Cultural Memory Studies: An International And Interdisciplinary Handbook*, Berlin, New York, Walter de Gruyter, 2009, 389–398; Astrid Erll, "Cultural Memory Studies: An Introduction," in Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (eds.), *Cultural Memory Studies*, 1–18; see also Aleida Assman, "Canon and Archive," in Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (eds.), *Cultural Memory Studies*, 97–108.

storytelling, memories and memorials related or dedicated to Yugoslavia intertwine to create not only a place for remembering, but primarily a space for people to participate in a joint process of co-creative remembering. The internet, I argue, technologically and symbolically adds to the establishment, maintenance and development of the changing practices and protocols of consigning to and retrieving stuff from memory.

The starting hypotheses are that the internet (i.e. the internet enabled media, such as blogs, websites, YouTube, social networking sites, etc.) in relation to the processes of memory and remembering is:

- 1) *Decisively influencing the processes of appropriation of the past and, more importantly, the processes of co-creation of digital places of remembering.*
- 2) *Largely taking over the spaces, ways and tools to (publicly) create, co-create and distribute vernacular memory.*

In other words, *digital places of memory* (*lieu de mémoire digitaux*) significantly influence the ways in which ‘traditional’ *lieu de mémoire* are (re)conceptualised and (re)thematized, in the emerging ‘*cyberplaces of memory*.’ In the process of technologising memory and democratising technology, the interpretative authority has been relegated from the institutional bodies (archives, governments, education systems) to individual bodies (individuals who have access to technology and knowledge). In this view, and drawing on Geoffrey Bowker’s discussion on memory traces,⁷ one might argue that the ‘cybertraces of memory’ provide crucial signposts in transient vernacular medial externalisations of memory and remembering in digital media ecology (DME). At its very core, I understand *digital media ecology* as a techno-cultural environment significantly defined through the relationship between individuals and institutions—as producers and consumers of content and power relations—entangled in interactions in a more-than-mere technological system. Crucial for this writing, the DME, its enabling technologies and socio-politico-culturo-economical aspects, are seen also to importantly contribute to the changing ways in which an individual is able to externalise memories or at all remember.⁸ With respect to my research topic, DME is seen as an enabling environment where *the preservation of the past, history and memory is underway on an unprecedented scale both in terms of quantity of preserved material and numbers of people taking more or less active part in these processes.*

⁷ Geoffrey C. Bowker, *Memory practices in the Sciences*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 2008, 1–34.

⁸ On changing the ways the thought is preserved and communicated see Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy, The Technologizing of the Word*, London, New York, Routledge, 2003 [1983].

This poses significant challenges to national histories, historiographies and national identities as in many ways it questions the very idea of the national. Furthermore, it challenges the related concepts of official, institutionally defined heritage and historiographical discourses and unofficial and/or alternative ones, the concepts of private and public, individual and collective, new and old, past and present and future. Not unimportantly, digital media challenge (not necessarily threat) the existence of *medial externalisation of memory*. It is, therefore, necessary to assess and situate ‘new’ modes and practices of memory and remembering, which are seen here as dynamic and processual. These practices are taking place in an environment that more than ever before gives opportunity and space to individuals and collectivities to express themselves and their ideas: to transcend the confinement of relatively tightly regulated and limited oral communities, and negotiate at that the modern, national, mass-mediated public space.

Having said that, it is not my intention to imply too radical a shift or to uncritically advocate too great a liberating potential of digital (or any other) technology.⁹ Instead I remain rather cautious and sceptical of both the inclusive and democratising potential of technology, the internet in particular, and agree with Danah Boyd who maintains:

[W]e’ve made creation and distribution more available to anyone, but at the same time we’ve made those things irrelevant. Now the commodity isn’t distribution, it’s attention – and guess what? Who gets attention is still sitting on a power law curve ... we’re not actually democratising the whole system – we’re just shifting the way in which we discriminate.¹⁰

Just as well as this statement applies to political and social action/activity it applies to the changing processes of memory and remembering. The crucial points in Boyd’s account are, first, that discrimination does not end with a new technology but rather finds a different way of manifestation and, second, the issue of attention. Yes, you can remember and distribute all you want online, but the true question is whether your voice will be heard. The latter, truth be told, was a persistent problem already *before* the internet spun humanity into another liberating dream. Yet the fact remains that comparably, public spaces are much more populated by various forms of content and individual expressions and most obscure ideas. Among others this has grave implications for the ways memory is conceptualised and remembering practiced, and to that end I look, in this Chapter, at three different topics, in three sections: first I discuss the media and memory as essentially related to technological innovations; then I present the theoretical and

⁹ See Evgeny Morozov, *The Net Delusion, How Not to Liberate the World*, London, Allen Lane, 2010.

¹⁰ Danah Boyd, “Danah Boyd: ‘People looked at me like I was an alien,’” <http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2009/dec/09/interview-microsoft-researcher-danah-boyd>, accessed 10 January 2011.

conceptual framework supporting this study, and lastly, I give the research outline and explain the methodological approach.

Technologising Media and Memory

In this section I discuss the historicity of memory and media in view of the fascination with technology. For centuries media and memory have been closely interrelated and in fact essential for functioning and maintenance of any collectivity. Their interplay, crucially and not surprisingly, revolves around communication. As the past is irreparably lost to time as we ‘make progress through time,’ it is, with a view to an at least approximately coherent social edifice, quite ‘natural’ to try and fix and stabilise knowledge of it in the present. John Urry argues that “there is no past out there, or rather back there. There is only the present, in the context of which the past is being continually recreated.”¹¹ Thus, in the process of stabilising the knowledge of the past, this past will fall prey to each new interpretative authority (ideology, government, profession) or interpretative tool (material externalisations, text, audiovideo).

For several centuries writing and print offered a useful and exploitable technological communications solution and to a great extent also facilitated the development of (historiography as a) science as we know it today. At the same time, the modes of memory, remembering and, even more radically, the technologies for keeping record have developed and changed as well. Yet, unlike historiography, which is chiefly defended by the written word, memory “has projected itself into multiple media and formats over the last few centuries: as script, audio, images, artefacts, sculpture, artwork and architecture.”¹² Thus, memory eluded the fixity of the written or printed word.

Over the past 20 or so years it was the internet (deeply textual in algorithmic code, yet far more fluid and ephemeral than text itself) which has been predominantly defining and structuring the spaces and ways of creating, co-creating and distributing memory. Moreover, the rise of the internet has importantly also affected the concepts of historicising, the procedures and protocols of ‘consigning of the past to history.’ It has done so via undermining (and sometimes excessive complementing) the institutionalised, state-sponsored, i.e. official interpretations of the past by giving voice to alternative, personal, intimate accounts, visions and understandings of what was ... or rather of what *should* have been.

¹¹ John Urry, *Consuming Places*, London, New York, Routledge, 1995, 6.

¹² Joanne Garde-Hansen, Andrew Hoskins and Anna Reading (eds.), “Introduction,” *Save As... Digital Memories*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, 1–19, 8.

Thus, the past is hot on the heels of the present, which seems to be saturated and often overburdened with re-presented people and events, ages and places long since gone. Although ‘extinct’ and experientially inaccessible, the past today evermore fiercely haunts the present. “It is astonishing,” Nietzsche wrote well over a century ago:

[t]he moment, here in a wink, gone in a wink, nothing before and nothing after, returns nevertheless as a spectre to disturb the calm of a later moment. Again and again a page loosens in the scroll of time, drops out, and flutters away—and suddenly flutters back again into man’s lap.”¹³

The difference today, one might say, is that the pages in the scroll of time not only flutter, but rather flood and utterly overwhelm the always already severely disturbed calmness of the present moment. Even more, we seem to have lost the scroll to a fragmented synchronicity of the mediatised events.

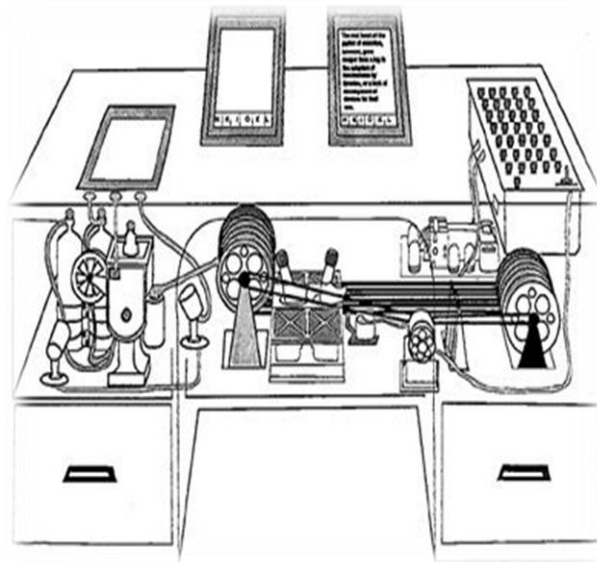


Figure 1 | Memory Extender (MEMEX), Atlantic Monthly, 1945.

¹³ Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life*, Cambridge, Indianapolis, Hackett Publishing Company, 1980, 8.

The most ubiquitous—albeit questionable and disputable in terms of authenticity and validity—way of representing the past in 21st century is through mass, electronic and digital media (where it is endlessly remediated). The media in the most rudimentary sense convey externalisations of individual, internal worlds, and are the *sine qua non* of collectively imagined communities. If in oral societies it was the spoken word that was the (unfixed, malleable, ‘expirable’) conveyor of information, ideas, mythologies, later on it was the invention of writing and print that relegated the word (speech) from the aural to the visual.¹⁴ And it was this shift that enabled the circulation of information and ideas beyond the domain of face-to-face communication bound to specific coordinates in time and space. As Walter J. Ong argued, the shift from orality to literacy was the key development in the history of humankind. It facilitated a re-conceptualisation of not only society and culture, but also of economy and science. Moreover, “print encouraged the mind to sense that its possessions were held in some sort of inert mental space.”¹⁵ With this in mind it could be argued that the mental space conceptualised as an individual, internal and relatively sealed off inner world was in a great need to find means for externalisation of thought beyond the limits of the spoken word.

The long tradition of the study of memory sometimes seems to be obscured, as much as it is fuelled, by the fascination and sometimes outright obsession with the role of memory in everyday life. It would be imprudent, however, to claim that the fascination with memory as we are witnessing it today originated in the 20th century, or with the onset of industrial revolution and the rise of the nation state only a couple of centuries earlier... The fugitive pieces of places and times past and passed have been part and parcel of lives of humans ever since most early days, notably in the Antiquity, and through to the Middle Ages.¹⁶ Nevertheless, the processes of nation states formation throughout much of Europe during the late 1700s and the 1800s necessitated a new, rather ‘unnatural,’ if not entirely fictitious, invention of tradition. The thus far pre-nationals had to be transformed on political, social and cultural levels into a compassionate/compatriot community, if only an imagined one.¹⁷ Into a community whose members believed, as much as felt, that they belonged to this and not that particular nation with long(est)-lasting tradition, millennial glory and heroic history. To this end the past was vigorously and fiercely reinterpreted, renarrated and

¹⁴ Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 121–132.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 129.

¹⁶ See the classic historical overview of memory practices by Frances Yates, *The Art of Memory*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1966.

¹⁷ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities, Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, London, Verso, 1991.

restructured, with a view to comprehensively knead it into a plausible national history or rather mythistory.¹⁸

These processes presuppose intertwined socio-cultural-psychological circular processes of externalisation of memory (monuments, literature, newspapers, images, sounds etc.) and its internalisation (or at least awareness) by the members of a new nation. And it was the media, particularly the rising popularity (and fear from the effects) of print, i.e. newspapers and literature, that crucially assisted in establishing national spaces based upon a network of post roads, coffeehouses, and homes.¹⁹ In other words, “print provided users the means of re-imagining existing community relations,”²⁰ thus effectively procuring a structure and a tool for creating communities of experience and, consequently, communities of memory.

Interestingly enough, the Romantic nationalisation and the homogenisation of ‘national founding stories’ went hand in hand with the rapid and violent colonisation in the Americas, in Asia, Africa..., which started off after one westward bound Christopher Columbus incidentally failed to reach India, only to find Indians. We know from the works of pioneering anthropologists, poised against present-day readings of their readings, that the contact with ‘other’ cultures facilitated a considerable cultural shock. Or, at least a fair amount of doubt and insecurity with regards to, at the time shabby, foundations of the fledgling national communities. And it could be argued that it was also the contact with the distant other (and the not so distant, e.g. the Ottomans and the Balkans in general) that not insignificantly stimulated the occident to look back/inside for its past(s) and collective memories, to embrace progressive development and thus found its national exclusivism and civilisational supremacy.

This civilisational supremacy was, on the other hand, fuelled by another perturbing series of historical events that strangely coincided with the above: the raging industrialisation. These two fundamentally instilled the ideology of progress: “the promise of continuity and a celebration of the continual march of progress in the name of humankind.”²¹ The fascination with reason, science and technology attained unprecedented levels and took the predicates of the Enlightenment into the straights of technological utopianism and scepticism. To illustrate this point, let me take a swift detour into the history of automaton fascination.

¹⁸ Joseph Mali, *Mythistory, The Making of a Modern Historiography*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 2003.

¹⁹ Mark Nunes, *Cyberspaces of everyday life*, Minneapolis, London, University of Minnesota Press, 2006, 105.

²⁰ Arvind Rajagopal, “Imperceptible perceptions in our technological modernity,” in: Wendy Hui Kyong Chun and Thomas Keenan (eds.), *Old media, new media, A history and theory reader*, New York, London, Routledge, 2006, 227–287, 284.

²¹ Siegfried Zielinski, *Deep time of the media: Toward an archaeology of hearing and seeing by technical means*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 2006, 3.

Archiving, Techno-topia and Pervasive Sceptis

The fascination with conceptualising and designing machinic people—androids—seems to have peaked in the 18th century and carried with it a philosophical difficulty, the antithesis of mortal lives: “Man is subject to time, to its inevitable march towards death, whereas the clockwork automaton merely marks time without falling prey to it.”²² For this reason, the fascination with mechanical life was rather paradoxical, just as fascination with ‘mechanical’ or digital memory is. The fascination can be traced back at least to Descartes, but found perhaps its most eerie ‘incarnation’ in Jacques de Vaucanson’s automata, the Flute Player and the Pipe Player. The latter (the player that never got tired albeit playing the pipe at an incredible, ‘inhuman’ speed) “embodied the idea that humans were messy, imperfect, fallible, and that a perfect machine would correct these flaws, improve on humanity.” The former however, attempted to resemble the human imperfection as close as possible.²³

This divide demonstrates the ambiguity inherent in the fascination with machines (or technology in general) which is often laced with fear of the unknown. If initially designed for entertainment, the automata deeply disturbed philosophical minds and spurred inflammatory debates, one of the best known perhaps being Descartes’ the *Treatise on Man*. Later on, at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, the machines that could be used to replace human labour furthered the research into automation of life. Jacquard’s punched card loom, which inspired Charles Babbage’s 1836 computing Analytical Engine, is often seen as the precursor to the punched card computers from the mid-20th century.²⁴ And, significantly, of memory. Considering the Flute Player, for instance, the ‘programme’ inside that enabled the automaton to ‘play’ the instrument is a very raw, mechanic ‘incarnation’ of memory.

This is to show that the technology supporting DME has a rather long history and that one has to be cautious when declaring something ‘new.’ When a new invention comes along, the sceptics tend to turn back into the past for the innocence and uncorruptedness of the previous times (and the olden technologies). Oblivious of the fact that precedent technologies (of externalisation of thought and memory) at the time of invention or innovation were just as problematic.

²² Gaby Wood, *Edison’s Eve, A Magical History of the Quest for Mechanical Life*, New York Alfred A. Knopf, 2002, xvii.

²³ Ibid., 25.

²⁴ Geoffrey Batchen, “Electricity made visible,” in Wendy Hui Kyong Chun and Thomas Keenan (eds.), *Old media, new media, A history and theory reader*, New York, London, Routledge, 2006, 27–45, 29–30.

The very pace of related cultural, social and political and economic changes, along with the rapid technological progress, had severe repercussions for conceptualising and understanding memory matters. Not only in relation to the *preservation* of the past, which saw tremendous development in *recording/archiving practices and technologies*, but also in representing and making sense of memory:

When a new technological invention enters the world [...] we identify it with the world and imagine it brings different parts of the world together like never before. You might say that a new medium provokes a certain boundary confusion [... also because] each new medium changes sense ratios: print emphasises the visual to the exclusion of other senses; electric media emphasise sound and vision.²⁵

With the development of recording technologies, the past was increasingly preserved, and in overwhelming quantity and detail. Yet, the abundance of externalised, mediated records of the past that characterised the “post-scarcity culture,”²⁶ can be seen as an implicit response to the socio-cultural and political upheavals as of late 18th century. Paradoxically it was the abundance that exposed serious issues in terms of memory/archive management: *who* was to remember *what*, *when* and *for how long*, *for what purpose* and in *what circumstances*. One of the most celebrated and still dominant places for storing records, the (institutional) archive, provided the infrastructure for submitting, classifying and retrieving the data. Aleida Assmann argues that

[t]he function of the archive, the reference memory of a society, provides a kind of counterbalance against the necessarily reductive and restrictive drive of the working memory. It creates a meta-memory, a second-order memory that preserves what has been forgotten. The archive is a kind of “lost-and-found office” for what is no longer needed or immediately understood.²⁷

Today, the internet databases, indeed frequently doubling as a lost-and-found office—despite being a ‘terantic’²⁸ archive that offers virtually endless opportunities for the preservation, distribution of and access to content—may in a way pose a threat of archival overburdening and effective uselessness (or hindered usefulness) of digital archiving. The dimensions of the internet

²⁵ Arvind Rajagopal, “Imperceptible perceptions in our technological modernity,” 277, 285.

²⁶ As Andrew Hoskins maintains, “In the ‘post-scarcity’ era there is an emergent tension between the scale of the volume of material that can be made available online and the decreasing capacity of anyone to consume it, or to make sense of it,” see “7/7 and connective memory: Interactional trajectories of remembering in post-scarcity culture,” *Memory Studies*, July 2011, 4(3), 269–280.

²⁷ Aleida Assmann, “Canon and Archive,” 106.

²⁸ I use *terantic* as a word-play on *gigantic*, implying that *gigantic* is barely sufficient for thinking of/counting the saved data in *terabytes*. Added an *r* the terrantic would relate to an archive the size of the world (having said that, the pace of growth of archived material may soon render this obsolete as well).

as an archive,²⁹ the randomness of accessing different online spaces, and the ephemera of large portions of digital content may pose serious problems concerning the retrieval of desired information. At the same time this also poses questions concerning what *not* to preserve and how to manage the preserved. An overwhelming aspect in this temporal fluidity of the archiving practices, which have shifted from archival space to archival time,³⁰ becomes particularly apparent when compared to

the archives of the broadcast era mass media [which] were stored in the archival space of the vault or library subject to the material conditions of order, classification and retrieval (i.e. access), it is connectivity that becomes of primary significance to the digital archive as an unequivocally ‘mass’ medium.³¹

Significant chunks of data may soon become outdated or overrun by more up-to-date content or backward incompatible software; swarms of available routes to take in the search may just prove too overwhelming for an individual to navigate through in any meaningful fashion. Just as problematic is the over-preserving tendency apparent in tracking user behaviour by search engines, email providers, social network site operators, etc. As Laura Schuster notes: “[D]igital information technologies are so rapid and ubiquitous that (objective) information itself becomes less fixed and reliable, and closer to the permeability of subjective experience.”³² It is also for this reason that this ‘anarchive’ as Wolfgang Ernst calls it,³³ may give room to the more non-institutional, grass-root, peer and local archiving initiatives that may lead to preserving and also discovering knowledge, practices, heritage that would otherwise be utterly lost.

With this ‘excursions in time’ (far from time travel) becoming a distinctly subjective experience—and with it memory and remembering an individual, private yet quite possibly highly publicised endeavours—the imminent danger in the limitless archiveability nevertheless lurks in unsolicited

²⁹ It should be noted that, as Wolfgang Ernst cautions, nothing is actually stored on the internet, but only dynamically retrieved through search engines, see Wolfgang Ernst, “Archival phantasms: between imaginary museum and archive: cyberspace,” <http://www.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-l-0012/msg00115.html>, accessed 11 February 2011. The internet, however, can nevertheless be seen as a “vast accumulation of sounds, images and data overwhelming in its scale and diversity.” See Michelle Henning, “The return of curiosity: world wide web as a curiosity museum,” in James Lyons and John Plunkett (eds.), *Multimedia histories: from the magic lantern to the internet*, Exeter, University of Exeter Press, 2007, 72–85, 74.

³⁰ Andrew Hoskins, “The digital distribution of memory,” available from Inter-Disciplinary.net, www.inter-disciplinary.net/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/hoskins-paper.pdf, viewed 8 August 2011.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Laura Schuster, “The Trouble with Memory: Reco(r)ding the Mind in *Code 46*,” available from Inter-Disciplinary.net, <http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/schuster-paper.pdf>, viewed 8 August 2011.

³³ Wolfgang Ernst, “The archive as metaphor: From archival space to archival time,” available from <http://archivepublic.wordpress.com/texts/wolfgang-ernst/>; see also his “Archival phantasms: between imaginary museum and archive: cyberspace,” available from <http://www.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-l-0012/msg00115.html>, viewed 8 August 2011.

forgetting. In a highly ‘subjectivised interest field’ many (historical) events (and other information) pass unnoticed before much (or any) sense can be made of them. This quite likely fertilises ignorance. At best, the highly ‘personalised’ imagining of the past with all the presumed freedom it offers to the *homo memonautilus*, necessarily also marginalises and obliterates the relevance of (national) events and stories, thus raising issues over credibility of sources and interpretive authority. In this respect, Chris Anderson’s notion *long tail* (term originally applied to the economic sector) applies quite well to the situation: confronted by unmanageable pressure to choose, a significant number of people will find a marginal enough website/topic/belief to make it significant/influential enough to exert certain impact on wider socio-cultural processes and phenomena, i.e. significant number of people will produce and many more still will find distributed beliefs and memories relevant enough as to make them into a relevant phenomenon.³⁴

Nevertheless, the problem remains: in a perpetually changing environment (as compared to print) it takes quite some effort to find last years’ news and still more to tell valuable, reliable, credible information from a fake. And it is this mechanism of a certain ‘information overload’ and de-signification of accumulative knowledge that in light of instant connectivity potentially leads to superficial social engagement (click-democracy) and fragmented attention. Still, this is not to downplay the potential for social engagement and mobilisation (particularly when compared to offline mobilisatory techniques). Yet, one has to be cautious when advertising and investing too much potential, as Evgeny Morozov advises, into technological fixes for social, cultural and political problems.³⁵

In the past, the state-sponsored archiving was strictly submitted to the (ideological) archival gaze that set and enforced eligibility criteria. Along the dominant and most obvious externalisations of memory, i.e. monuments and memorials, print, arts and architecture, the new technologies developed in the 19th and 20th centuries, i.e. photography, film, radio and television, opened up a whole new field of ‘capturing’ the present. Jussi Parikka argues that the:

archive [after] the Foucault’s expansion of the concept from the concrete physical places of storage of cultural data to the discourses that govern modes of thinking, acting and expression of cultures has been a key node in relaying and storing data of modern culture, and hence acted as a key medium in itself – very much connected to the bureaucratic mode of control alongside registering and manipulating data e.g. in offices and through office

³⁴ See Chris Anderson, “The Long Tail,” *Wired*, viewed on 15 June 2008, www.wired.com/wired/archive/12.10/tail.html, accessed 8 August 2011.

³⁵ See Evgeny Morozov, *The Net Delusion*, on the over-exaggerated roles and potential of Twitter and Facebook ‘Arab Revolutions’ in the Spring 2011.

technologies (typewriters, calculators, spreadsheets, and later databases, software based applications, etc.).³⁶

In the age of the internet and DME Parikka continues, the “[m]odes of accessing and storing data have changed from centrally governed to distributed and software-based, and the whole culture of digitality has been referred to as one of databases, instead of narratives.”³⁷ The increasing accessibility and public presence of the ‘newly captured memories’ could in this light be seen as the beginning of the process that seems to have culminated in the digital age (so far). At that it radically changed the domain of both archiving and remembering and, not least, the ways of making/creating the records of the past available for the posterity. This process could (arguably) be termed ‘democratisation of memory and remembering.’

Having said that, the ground-breaking potential of digitisation of archive—and memory and remembering for that matter—should not be over-endowed with revolutionary potential. Rather, one should keep in mind that private/individual archives and collections have for a long time played the role of unofficial, alternative, ‘democratic,’ if you will, repositories of memory. Admittedly, with an important difference in terms/degrees of publicness and access. And, consequentially, in terms of social impact/role of private collections in creating public knowledge/collective memory.

The new (in this case digital) technologies appear to be challenging the limits and barriers of the above mentioned eligibility criteria. In other words, it can be maintained that the new media technologies of the 19th and 20th and 21st centuries, with the internet as the last invention, have fundamentally shaken the cultural, social, economic and political practices and processes of memory and remembering.

Above I have demonstrated that the internet and DME in general effectively enable production and storage of previously unperceivable amounts and types of data at the expense of navigability of such data and great danger of loss or info-overload, software or hardware incompatibility and, not least greater potential control over our lives. On the other hand in the domain of everyday life these culturo-technical processes do facilitate more subjective conditions of memory and remembering which implies that in DME—after the *Gutenberg parenthesis*³⁸ has loosened its

³⁶ Jussi Parikka, “The archive,” Cartographies of media archaeology, mediacartographies.blogspot.com/, accessed 11 February 2011.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ The idea of Gutenberg parenthesis as proposed by Thomas Pettitt implies that the print-dominated era, the period from about the 15th until the 20th century was an interruption in the history of human (oral) communication (Megan Garber, “The Gutenberg parenthesis: Thomas Pettitt on parallels between the pre-print era and our own internet age,”

grip—the present condition of human communication can again be seen as returning to the principle of orality, or ‘retribalisation,’ to use Marshall McLuhan’s argument, stating that retribalisation implies “a radical break from the abstract, linear rationality of print and a return to the direct and unmediated character of oral culture.”³⁹ Would it be, then, too much to claim that it was the technology that assisted/enabled the dominance of ‘fixed’ narratives and representations and that it was eventually that same technology which eventually brought us into an age where orality is becoming dominant again? To quote Thomas Pettitt: “The post-parenthetical period is a reversion to the pre-parenthetical period at a higher level of technology.”⁴⁰ The question that comes to mind here is: If we can see radio as the prime media enabler of the rise of totalitarian regimes in the interwar period, can the internet be put to similar ab/use?

Be that as it may, if we take a look into the time of introduction and public adoption (invention, innovation is not as important a factor) of any new technology of externalisation of memory, it is clear that all new media technologies elicited as much doubt and substantial fear as they did enthusiasm. In the domain of memory, media technologies are difficult not to be seen as agents/facilitators of corruption of memory and remembering, predominantly because they often seem to be taking on the ‘work of memory’ that presumably should be the ‘burden’ of humans. Or at least this is how techno-sceptics would have it, ever since Plato expressed scepticism regarding writing as a practice that weakens mnemonic skills. From a techno-enthusiast or technotopian point of view, the technologising of memory can only be liberating. A more balanced stance would propose to see the inevitable abundance of digitally communicable medial externalisations of memory as a valuable source for studying the past. In order to highlight this point and because memory is inevitably related to communication, it is in order to provide some more insight into the history of human communication as conditioned by technologies.

A Peek Into the History of Human Communication

In the history of human communication there are five periods to be discerned, marked by technological innovations (clearly the technologies are overlapping) enabling in different ways the externalisation of memory: the oral age, the chriographic age, the print age, broadcast era and the

(video lecture) available from <http://www.niemanlab.org/2010/04/the-gutenberg-parenthesis-thomas-pettitt-on-parallels-between-the-pre-print-era-and-our-own-internet-age/>.

³⁹ Arvind Rajagopal, “Imperceptible perceptions in our technological modernity,” 285.

⁴⁰ Thomas Pettitt, “The Gutenberg parenthesis: oral tradition and digital technologies,” Nieman Journalism Lab Report, available from web.mit.edu/comm-forum/forums/gutenberg_parenthesis.html, accessed 22 October 2010.

digital age.⁴¹ Yet, considering the modes and strategies of communication it seems perhaps more adequate to look at the history of communication and media in terms of: 1) (primary) *orality* which presupposes face-to-face (one-to-one and many-to-many) communication and relatively closely knit, territorially bound communities; 2) *writing* and *print* (the Gutenberg parenthesis),⁴² characterised by a shift towards one-to-many communication transcending the boundaries of space and time and are closely related to the rise of the nation and Romantic nationalisms; 3) *broadcast era* (electric and electronic media, e.g. radio, TV, telephone) or the *second orality*⁴³ characterised by the transience of electronically transmitted messages; and the 4) *era of ubiquitous digital media* or *digital media ecology*, which remediates and repurposes previous technologies (as do previous new technology) into a media ecology where text, sound and vision are converged.⁴⁴ Here it should be noted that DME not only refers to its enabling technology, but also implies the scale and pervasiveness of digital communications technologies, i.e. subsumes in fact the environmental characteristic of the communication space which ‘invades’ and fundamentally defines other areas of life.

The line of distinction between these media modalities according to Ryan lies in that the text “cannot be transferred into [...] [another] medium without significant loss,” or, might I add, enhancement. However, what differentiates digital texts or narratives from other modalities is that they “depend[s] on the computer as a sustaining environment, and use[s] the screen (or any other display device) as a stage for performance.”⁴⁵ The performative environment thus created isolates the user in front of the screen physically from others, while in exchange providing the setting for real-time, (inter)face-to-(inter)face, communication beyond the limits of space and time, and sometimes beyond life and death.⁴⁶

Speaking of the screen, Pythagorean idea of the *acousmatic* (*akousmatikoi*) comes to mind. In order for his pupils to be better able to concentrate, Pythagoras delivered his lectures from behind a veil. Thus the students were unable to see the ‘producer’ and were ‘exposed’ to his voice only; and forced to focus on his voice only. Later on, Pierre Schaeffer, the French composer and

⁴¹ See Marie-Laure Ryan, “Multivariant Narratives,” in Susan Schreibman, Ray Siemens, John Unsworth (eds.), *A Companion to Digital Humanities*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2004, available from , <http://www.digitalhumanities.org/companion/view?docId=blackwell/9781405103213/9781405103213.xml&chunk.id=ss1-4-9&toc.depth=1&toc.id=ss1-4-9&brand=default>, accessed 8 August 2011.

⁴² See Jill Walker Rettberg, *Blogging*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2008; see also Pettitt quoted above.

⁴³ See Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy*; see also Joanne Garde-Hansen, Andrew Hoskins and Anna Reading, *Save as... Digital Memories*, 3.

⁴⁴ Ibid.; on many-to-many or the third orality, see also Lawrie Hunter, “Text to speech to text: a third orality?” available at www.lawriehunter.com/presns/eurocall_070729.ppt.

⁴⁵ See Marie-Laure Ryan, “Multivariant Narratives.”

⁴⁶ See “Romance Departed,” Chapter 4.

theorist, defined *acousmatic* as “referring to a sound that one hears without seeing the causes behind it.”⁴⁷

In the case of mass, electronic and/or digital media this proposition seems insufficient, but it can fruitfully be extended. Contemporary media necessarily contain the visual, audio and textual elements, and they enable asynchronous and spatially dislocated consumption/exposure. The reader/viewer/listener/user need not be present for the message to be transmitted/received, but can consume/access it any time later or any place else. Therefore, the concept of *acousmatic* can also be understood as referring to content (represented via audio-image-video-text) that one ‘sees’ without ‘seeing’ the source or technology behind it. This understanding entails the capacity of (not only digital) media technologies to discard the source/object of representation and at the same time also camouflage the very means of its production.⁴⁸ This logic of transparency is discernible in computer mediated communication and human-computer interfaces, and is described by Mark Poster as:

The internet interface must somehow appear ‘transparent,’ that is to say, appear not to be an interface, not to come between two alien beings and also seem fascinating announcing its novelty and encouraging an exploration of the difference of the machinic. The problem of the internet then is not simply ‘technological’ but para-machinic: to construct a boundary between the human and the machinic that draws the human into the technology, transforming the technology into ‘used equipment’ and the human into a ‘cyborg,’ into one meshing with machines.⁴⁹

Not wanting to imply that a person intrigued enough by the past in the DME to delve into the reaches beyond the limits of offline memory and remembering is a cyborg, I would nevertheless like to stretch the idea of *acousmatic* just a little bit further to encompass the discussion of the past. In this context the concept proposes understanding of the past as represented on a screen while suspending the disbelief into the ‘artificial’ character of this representation. Or, to paraphrase Schaeffer, it proposes understanding of the past without seeing the ‘real events’ *behind* the screen, but rather as represented *on* the screen. It is the screen, therefore, where the past (already remediated, mediated by another user, never ‘raw’) is represented or enacted at the command of the user in front of it. In a way, then, the user sat in front of a ‘window’—through

⁴⁷ See Pierre Schaeffer, *Traité des objets musicaux*, Paris, Le Seuil, 1966, 91; see also his “Acousmatics,” in Christopher Cox and Daniel Warner, *Audio Culture: Readings in Modern Music*, London, New York, Continuum, 2004, 76–81, 77.

⁴⁸ See discussion on mediatization below.

⁴⁹ Mark Poster, “Postmodern Virtualities,” <http://www-hnet.uci.edu/mposter/writings/internet.html>, see also Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation. Understanding New Media*. Cambridge, London, MIT Press, 2000; Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media*, Cambridge, London, MIT Press, 2001.

which she can, at the click of the mouse, bring a multimodal digital object to life, i.e. an object that in one media or genre, or another, represents a screen separating the past from the present—is engaging with the past and in doing so co-creating it.

At this point another historical example of conceptual approaches that in a way pre-empt the digital logic might prove useful. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries a German art historian Aby Warburg devised his *Mnemosyne Atlas*. Originating in Greek mythology and a personification of memory, *Mnemosyne* in Warburg's rendition was used as a concept and strategy for representation of artefacts. And how does it relate to this study? Using this concept I aim to demonstrate that the history of the principle now discernible in the digital technology is not a radically new invention, but can in fact be traced quite some time back and often works against the principle of linearity (of time, progress) and print-imposed order usually attributed to the pre-digital age. Warburg designed his *Mnemosyne* in the late 1920s as a series of black clothed panels which functioned as screens where the phenomena reproduced were presented simultaneously, as opposed to the linearity of book format.⁵⁰ The panels featured photographs of buildings, statues and other historical artefacts ordered in sequences that gave up to a reader all at once. That is, it functions as a “discontinuous sequence that finds expressive significance only when considered in an arrangement of complex interconnections,” which activated dynamic properties that would be latent if considered individually.⁵¹ *Mnemosyne* was conceived as a “receptive surface, a photosensitive plate on which texts or images surging up from the past reveal themselves.”⁵²

In effect, as Philippe-Alain Michaud notes, *Mnemosyne* was a composite construction which provided a ‘platform’ where physical experience of space met certain mental operations (associations, memories, repetitions, focalisations). Important for this study is the implication of Warburg's constellation where “the distance between the images, which tend to invert the parameters of time and space, produces tensions between the objects depicted and, inductively, between the levels of reality from which these objects proceed.”⁵³

⁵⁰ Philippe-Alain Michaud, *Aby Warburg and the image in motion*, Zone Books, New York, 2007, 260.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 258.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 260.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 253.

The relation to between the Mnemosyne and the concept of the internet is in that the computer screen today can be seen, indeed not quite as a *Mnemosyne* panel, but as a tool to individually, quite randomly create one. What is more, the internet can easily fit into the mnemosynal idea of the platform.⁵⁴ If in Warburg's conception there was an artist who designed the panels and defined order, today an individual may create a digital Mnemosyne on two levels. First, there is the user that through navigating through the various internet paths creates (think of multiple opened windows on the screen) her unique digital Mnemosyne of the past few moments, or in fact her own memorial itinerary. As Huhtamo and Parikka argue with regard to the pre-digital status of Mnemosyne, but which applies to the internet as well, "the project [Mnemosyne] suggested a new idea about dynamics of the image, pointing out how images and motifs in themselves could function as 'time-machines' in an isomorphic fashion to the task of media archaeology."⁵⁵ And second, the actual creation of digital content, for instance a blog, a digital video memorial or a Facebook profile, where photos, videos, sounds and text are produced and distributed online, but first dug from various collections.⁵⁶

What invariantly comes to the fore when looking at (predominantly private initiative) re-narrativisations and re-interpretations of the past in DME is the practice that partially fits into the concept of 'media archaeology' as defined by Erkki Huhtamo who sees it as a term referring to: "'excavating' forgotten media-cultural phenomena that have been left outside the canonized narratives about media culture and history."⁵⁷ Other theoreticians suggest, Wolfgang Ernst among others, that media archaeology should not be seen in the metaphorical or face-value concept. Rather, Ernst proposes to see "not simply as an alternative form of reconstructing the beginnings of media on the macrohistorical scale; instead it describes technological beginnings (*archai*) of operativity on mycrotechnological level."⁵⁸ Essentially, media archaeology is seen as a methodology much more concerned with the physicality of 'ancient' media in operation, with the main focus on the apparatus.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ Cf. Erkki Huhtamo and Jussi Parikka, "Introduction: An archaeology of media archaeology," in Erkki Huhtamo and Jussi Parikka (eds.), *Media Archaeology: Approaches*, 1–21.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 7.

⁵⁶ See Chapters 2, 3 and 4.

⁵⁷ Erkki Huhtamo, "Media Archaeology – Definition, Take 2,"

<http://mediacartographies.blogspot.com/2010/10/media-archaeology-definition-take-2.html>, accessed 31 August 2011.

⁵⁸ Wolfgang Ernst, "Media Archaeography: Method and Machine Versus History and Narrative in Media," in Erkki Huhtamo and Jussi Parikka (eds.), *Media Archaeology*, 239–255, 239–240.

⁵⁹ On a different take on media archaeology see Aleksandra Sekulić, "Korak nazad, dva koraka napred: Medijska arheologija: Devedesete," in *Devedesete: Medijska arheologija*, Beograd, Merkur, 2009, 4–12, 4.

However, in the case of Yugoslav digital afterlife, the concept of media archaeology proves relevant precisely in its metaphorical use: considering the fact that the country ceased to exist and new states came in its wake, much of the country's past was, more often deliberately than not, forgotten, erased, destroyed. Hence, the activities I analyse in the following Chapters snugly fit this definition, as they in fact excavate media content from archives, personal collections, recorded TV shows, etc. In the case of Yugoslavia this applies to a twofold excavation: first, excavating, digitising and distributing (predominantly popular cultural) mediated content that after the break-up of the country and the installation of new regimes were left to their technological and cultural oblivion. And second, this process also implies 'excavation' from underneath new ideological edifices that effectively promoted forgetting/annihilation of not insignificant portions of Yugoslav everyday.

To explicate the point further, Jussi Parikka argues that "[m]edia archaeology has succeeded in establishing itself as a heterogeneous set of theories and methods that investigate media history through its alternative roots, its forgotten paths, and neglected ideas and machines that still are useful when reflecting the supposed newness of digital culture." Crucially, Parikka maintains that media archaeology:

[A]bandons historicism when by it is meant the idea that the past is given and out there waiting for us to find it; instead, it believes in the radical assembling of history, and histories in the plural, but so that it is not only a subset of cultural historical writing. Instead, media archaeology needs to insist both on the material nature of its enterprise – that media are always articulated in material, also in non-narrative frameworks whether technical media such as phonographs, or algorithmic such as databases and software networks – and that the work of assembling temporal mediations takes place in an increasingly varied and distributed network of institutions, practices and technological platforms.⁶⁰

A certain correspondence can be found between media archaeology and the principle of the Mnemosyne, particularly in the part referring to a radical assembling of history, e.g. the creation/proliferation of 'grass-roots' or 'guerrilla' multimodal mobile media objects (4MO) in the processes of co-creating vernacular (digital) memory. With reference to this study, the correspondence lies in a 'guerrilla historian' excavating and reassembling media content—which, as I argue above, in post-socialist transformations became de-canonised, left out from public

⁶⁰ Jussi Parikka, "What is media archaeology? – Beta definition 0.8," *Cartographies of media archaeology*, <http://mediacartographies.blogspot.com/2010/10/what-is-media-archaeology-beta.html>, accessed 11 February 2011.

memory, economically unviable for ‘remastering’ etc.—in a “discontinuous sequence that finds expressive significance only when considered in an arrangement of complex interconnections.”⁶¹



Figure 2 | Aby Warburg, Mnemosyne Atlas 1924—1929, available from <http://www.medienkunstnetz.de/works/mnemosyne/images/3/>.

Warburg’s Mnemosyne concept can be seen as an externalisation of pre-digital logic and the internet (or rather materialisation of content on a screen), consequentially, as offering a representational plane, providing among others the space for historical/memorial representations and mediations. Furthermore, the internet as a platform gives space for a produser to manipulate “‘engrams’ capable [note: engrams can only become *capable* of anything after they have been manipulated] of recreating an experience of the past in a spatial configuration.”⁶²

One of the greatest challenges posed to understanding memory and remembering in DME are the scale of production and the amount of available past related UGC, which is co-created and distributed past the traditional gate-keepers and the usual interpretive authorities (historiography, education system, etc.). By past-related content I refer to numerous re-appropriations, re-

⁶¹ Philippe-Alain Michaud, *Aby Warburg and the image in motion*, 258.

⁶² An engram in Richard Semon’s conceptualisation of memory (“the function charged with preserving and transmitting energy temporally, allowing someone to react to something in the past from a distance”) is a trace that an event affecting a living being leaves in the memory. Quoted in Philippe-Alain Michaud, *Aby Warburg and the image in motion*, 255.

narrativisations, sampling, remixing and remeshing, or remediating existing media forms, genres and content, while also to new, born digital renditions of a certain historical person or event, time and/or place. This includes various digitised collections and databases, digital museums, memorials and monuments, numerous websites and blogs, video and music used in inventive ways, the mani-forms of e-literature, etc. If, dangerously generalisingly speaking, the ‘old’ channels of distributing historical knowledge were ideologically centralised and censored and restricted to a few only, the ‘new’ digital media facilitate a different ecology: one of more decentralised, de-hierarchised, dispersed, fragmented sources and interpreters of knowledge, one of and tools for knowledge production available (ideally) to many. Hence, in DME the ideology subscribed to is to become one’s own, and so are the ‘technological means of content production.’

Grasping Digital Memory: Concepts and Theory

The interrogation of memory in the ‘age of digital reproduction’ of *audiovisuals* (including any combination of sound, image and video and text)⁶³ necessarily runs the risk of conceptual conflation and walking the techno-utopian/dystopian razorblade. In order to avoid this, a more detailed clarification is needed of several concepts I use in dealing with vernacular ‘digital memory’ or remembering in DME. This will also serve to devise a theoretical and conceptual research framework of the study.

Any research of the past, and—because of its ambiguous redefinition of the private/public and official/unofficial distinctions—all the more so in DME, necessarily comes across issues of historiographical or lay appropriation, reinterpretation and renarration of the past. Moreover, any dealing with (representations of) the past in DME has to take into account, perhaps more than ever before, the processes of creating, co-creating, sharing and responding to ‘digital memories,’ which seem to be contributing greatly to ‘enhanced immediacy of remembering.’⁶⁴ The ‘lives’ of (quite likely very private) memories in DME significantly shape and redefine the public spaces and at the same time, as they are made ‘inhabitants’ of DME, become in a way public property; for instance

⁶³ On audiovisuality see Siegfried Zielinski, *Audiovisions, Cinema and Television as entr’actes in history*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 1999 [1989]. In *Audiovisions* (14) Zielinski says that “*Audiovision* has become an amalgam of many media communication forms that used to be separate.” With this in mind, an observation is in order: cinema, television, video, music, radio do not need text to be transmitted. Yet with the internet text regained importance, but in exchange became just as ephemeral as audiovisuals.

⁶⁴ On enhanced immediacy of remembering see Chapter 3, see also Paul Virilio, *Open Sky*, London, Verso, 1997, 24.

publicly shared videos and music, forum debates and comments, numerous blog entries, party photos, etc once gone public lose their status of private property and are 'out there' freely to be re-contextualised, reinterpreted.

Thus in a way, rather than disappearance of the private, we are witnessing the colonisation of the public by the private. Truth be told, the private is also changing, but hardly shrinking (albeit it is heavily controlled, trackable and securitised). Slavoj Žižek's claim in is agreeable: "It is often said that privacy is disappearing. But the reality is inverted: it is the public space which is disappearing, and its dignity. In everyday life we often find ourselves in situations where the only correct conduct is not to say everything."⁶⁵ This also has consequences for the practice and study of memory in the DME. The co-created memories are subject to twofold 'distortion': first, in line with the classic McLuhanian "the medium is the message" postulate it is the medium that determines (or screens off, see the discussion on the acousmatic above) what and predominantly how can be created and shared; second, the redefinition of private/public relationship drives users to actively engage in selection and in-formation of the content they produce, doing so infrequently imposing severe self-censorship measures.⁶⁶

In the process of selecting, editing and publishing stuff online, there are technologically supported protocols in operation that bring together the user and the 'visitor,' the past and the present, and importantly define the way DME is shaped by the progressive 'intrusion' of mediated images. These, in an audiovisually dominated culture are the key vessels for communicating a wide variety of different types of content.

Mediated Memories

A concept that adequately subsumes the variegated individual and collective, private and public actions is one proposed by Jose van Dijck, *mediated memories*. She sees mediated memories as "magnifiers of the intersections between personal and collective, past and future [that] involve individuals carving out their places in history, defining personal remembrance in the face of larger

⁶⁵ Slavoj Žižek, "Lepi maniri u doba WikiLeaks, Sramota me, dakle postojim," www.e-novine.com/stav/43964-Sramota-dakle-postojim.html, accessed 1 February 2011.

⁶⁶ The concept of private is a relatively new invention (intensely correlated with establishment of print culture) and the digital technologies might facilitate a process of blurring the boundaries between the public and private, not unlike the situation in pre-print cultures where much of an individual's private life unravelled in a public, if relatively small, space of face-to-face community. What is more, privacy as we tend to think of it today, is deeply related to the emergence of writing and print (and electronic and digital media later on) and the related radical reshaping of orality-based systems of communication. Privacy in oral culture would mean putting out a fire in the hearth, i.e. shutting down any social contact, whereas in the DME one can eliminate all physical social contact and still remain 'connected.'

cultural frameworks.”⁶⁷ Moreover, apart from carving out places in history, the individuals are, via mediated memories more or less actively engaged in carving out their places and roles in their highly mediated presents. Thus an individual co-creator of memory is involved in contributing to the collectively consumed and produced (prosumed) visions of the past that go well beyond the limits of (national) historiography, and quite often against it.

The concept of mediated memories, as developed by Van Dijck, is related to Jan Assmann’s theoretical distinction between cultural and communicative memory,⁶⁸ whereas the former is understood here as a more latent, storage memory, and the latter as memory as a process under constant negotiation. Crucially, it can be seen as a “tool for analysis of dynamic, continuously changing memory artefacts and items of mediated culture.”⁶⁹

Memory artefacts are, essentially, compounds of “many autonomous objects [which can] be used in many different contexts and combinations, and undergo various transformations.”⁷⁰ In DME, the representations of the past via media objects are necessarily distributed/fragmented between various digital media (or genres). At the same time the content thus co-created is in itself often fragmented, both in terms of what it has to say and how it says it. Yet, this is not necessarily a bad thing. The mediation of digital representations (endowing these objects with the status of mediality)⁷¹ results in bringing together various types and modes of representation, various utilisations of different available digital media and, not least, people. This essentially results in multimodal mediation of memories which not only influences how the memories are mediated, but also how they are represented, shared, distributed, interlinked, etc. More to the point, as Andrew Hoskins argues, “contemporary memory is not principally constituted either through retrieval or through the representation of some content of the past in the present, but, rather, it is embedded in and distributed through our sociotechnical practices.”⁷²

In DME, the questions of distribution of memory and mediation refer to certain aspects concerning the interplay of technology and (memory) cultures that were not deemed important or relevant in previous dealing with media and memory. Now, if the short 20th century coincides with the beginning of the Great War and the collapse of socialism, it also coincides with the rise and reign

⁶⁷ Jose van Dijck, *Mediated Memories in the Digital Age*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2007, 25.

⁶⁸ Jan Assmann, “Communicative and Cultural Memory,” in Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nunning (eds.), *Cultural Memory Studies*, 109–118, 116–7.

⁶⁹ Jose van Dijck, *Mediated Memories*, 24.

⁷⁰ Marie-Laure Ryan, “Multivariant Narratives,” 2004.

⁷¹ See discussion on “Representation and Mediality” below.

⁷² Andrew Hoskins, “Digital Network Memory,” in Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney (eds.), *Mediation, Remediation, and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2009, 91–106, 91. Hoskins continues: “The use of websites and services such as MySpace, Facebook and Twitter allow users to continually display and to shape biographical information, post commentaries on their unfolding lives and to interact publicly or semi-publicly with one another.”

of cinema, radio and television. All these quintessentially 20th century media rendered “their” century into a highly mediated century and saved from oblivion large portions of fact and fiction (or content) produced. Truth be told, as much content that was saved was also (deliberately) forgotten, and much of the stuff that made the history of the 20th century would never have made it till today, were it not for the mass electronic media that transmitted (radioed and televised) the content to audiences of the time and beyond. Content that otherwise would irreparably have been lost to time is now in great detail and amount retained for possible future(s) to make of it any particular sense. Mediation of memories in the digital era, its onslaught intriguingly coinciding with the collapse of socialism, thus opens up questions concerning the ways in which post-socialist states ‘confronted’ the upsurge of wished-annihilated memories in DME.⁷³ Crucial at this point is to look into the very mechanism of mediation and the impact mediation has on conceptualising and facilitating the processes of memory and remembering in DME.

Mediation and Mediatization

What the media essentially do is mediate or mediatise, i.e. transmit (object, carrier) or facilitate transmission of data, video, images, sounds and/or text, and with it content/messages. Theoretical discussion on *mediation* is often poised in relation to the concept of *mediatization*. Heated discussions between Nick Couldry and Stig Hjarvard and others demonstrate there is no easy way to differentiate between them.⁷⁴ Winfried Schulz, for instance, proposes four different aspects of mediatization: 1) media extend the natural limits of human communications capacities; 2) the media provide a substitute for social activities and social institutions; 3) media amalgamate with various non-media activities in social life; 4) actors and organisations in all sectors accommodate to the media logic.⁷⁵ On the other hand, Nick Couldry argues that mediatization may be less useful for grasping the dynamics of digital storytelling, as it presupposes a “more linear transformation

⁷³ Friedrich Kittler notes in *Optical Media*: “In the sequence from silent film to sound and colour film – three stages that oddly correlate with the outbreak of the world wars – we see the emergence of different media-specific solutions”; see his *Optical Media: Berlin Lectures 1999*, London, Polity Press, 2010, 23. The coincidence of technological innovations in media and major socio-political perturbations (wars included) deserves a separate study.

⁷⁴ Nick Couldry, “Digital Storytelling, Media Research and Democracy: Conceptual Choices and Alternative Futures,” in Knut Lundby (ed.) *Digital Storytelling, Mediatized Stories: Self-representation in New Media*, New York, Peter Lang, 2008, 41–60; Stig Hjarvard, “Soft Individualism: Media and the Changing Social Character,” in Knut Lundby (ed.), *Mediatization, Concepts, Changes, Consequences*, New York, Frankfurt am Main, Peter Lang, 2009, 159–178; see also Nick Couldry, “Mediatization or mediation? Alternative Understandings of the Emergent Space of Digital Storytelling,” *New Media & Society*, 10(3), 2008, 373–391.

⁷⁵ As quoted in Lynn Schofield Clark, “Theories: Mediatization and Media Ecology,” in Knut Lundby (ed.), *Mediatization*, 85–100, 87. Cf. Winfried Schulz, “Reconstructing Mediatization as an Analytical Concept,” *European Journal of Communication*, 2004, 19(1), 87–101.

from ‘pre-media’ (before the intervention of specific media) to ‘mediatized social states.’⁷⁶ Yet, importantly, it is the Lynn Schofield Clark wording that describes mediatization as referring to both the “processes by which social organisations, structures or industries take on the form of the media, and the processes by which genres of popular culture become central to the narratives of social phenomena.”⁷⁷

For the purposes of this study, however, the distinction I propose is somewhat basic, yet nonetheless applicable: mediation is understood as the action/process/phenomenon of digital object mobility, i.e. the ‘travel-ability’ of externalisations of memory between users/producers. It implies that mediated content is, once mediatized, able to be circulated in DME. Mediatization, on the other hand, is roughly drawing on the meaning “to annex (a principality) to another state, while allowing certain rights to its former sovereign.”⁷⁸ This implies that in order for mediation to occur, the content to be mediated has first to be ‘assimilated,’ i.e. migrated/adjusted/conformed or mediatized into a media-specific form/at.

It is this understanding of the distinction that yields best grasp for the problematic addressed in this study. To summarise: in the process of mediatization, the historical event for instance, is abstracted, conflated, distorted, simplified, ideologised, politicised, falsified, de-contextualised, re-contextualised, etc. An allsorts of ‘human,’ symbolic and technical interventions are underway that make an event fit for media representation. Mediation as such cannot be read this way, which is why I use it in relation to the ‘content on the go,’ while with mediatization I refer to the process of ‘annexation’ or assimilation of ‘extra-medial’ events, people, ideas, emotions; making it essentially into content.

Remediation and Media Convergence

To provide structural underpinning of the concept of mediated memory, and the processes of mediation and mediatization, there is a twofold process at work which includes *media convergence* (genres, forms representation techniques) and *remediation*. In his *Convergence Culture* Henry Jenkins argues that a specific shift is underway in the field of media and culture.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Nick Couldry, “Digital Storytelling, Media Research and Democracy: Conceptual Choices and Alternative Futures,” 41–60, 42.

⁷⁷ Lynn Schofield Clark, “Theories: Mediatization and Media Ecology,” 87.

⁷⁸ Search term ‘mediatization’ at <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/mediate?o=100083>, accessed 18 January 2011.

⁷⁹ Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*, New York, New York University Press, 2006.

He calls it *media convergence* and defines it as “the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behaviour of media audiences.” Furthermore “media convergence refers to a situation in which multiple media systems coexist and where media content flows fluidly across them [... and it is understood] as an ongoing process or series of intersections between different media systems.”⁸⁰ This conceptualisation forms the background to situating the research cases as *multimodal media objects*, where various modalities of data representation (video, image, text, audio) converge into a digital uni-media within which digital narratives can be created and co-created.⁸¹

To develop the model further, it is useful to adopt Bolter and Grusin’s term *remediation* which in the ‘old’ and ‘new’ media dialectics dismisses theorisations of the radical change in media by rather emphasising the “*processes* of reformulating, reformatting, recycling, returning and even remembering other media.”⁸² Thus Bolter and Grusin maintain that “[n]ew digital media are not external agents that come to disrupt an unsuspecting culture. They emerge from within cultural contexts, and they refashion other media, which are embedded in the same or similar contexts.”⁸³ Furthermore, the concept of remediation also lends to conceptualisation that not only involves the re-applications and re-uses of media forms, but also implies that:

[M]emorable events are usually represented again and again, over decades and centuries, in different media: in newspaper articles, photography, diaries, historiography, novels, films, etc. What is known about a war, a revolution, or any other event which has been turned into a site of memory, therefore seems to refer not so much to what some might cautiously call the ‘actual events,’ but instead to a canon of existent medial constructions, to the narratives and images circulating in a media culture. Remembered events are transmedial phenomena, that is, their representation is not tied to one specific medium.⁸⁴

Although the concepts of convergence and remediation seem to overlap at certain points⁸⁵ they nevertheless successfully subsume the dynamic processes of cultural and technological relations and occurrences in DME. Particularly in the aspects implying that DME and the internet technologically facilitate multimodality of media representations and that no introduction/invention of a new technology is an unexpected occurrence; it can only be seen as such in mythologising, techno-utopian retrospect. With respect to memory and remembering this

⁸⁰ Ibid., 282.

⁸¹ See below.

⁸² Joane Garde-Hansen, Andrew Hoskins, Anna Reading, *Save As... Digital Memories*, 14; italics added.

⁸³ Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation*, 19.

⁸⁴ Astrid Erll, “Literature, Film and the Mediality of Culture,” 392.

⁸⁵ It should be noted here that remediation also to some extent shares affinities with media archaeology, particularly in view of “temporal connections, translations and mergers between media,” see Erkki Huhtamo and Jussi Parikka “Introduction: An archaeology of media archaeology,” 2011.

framework accounts for numerous emerging renarrativisations of the memory of the Yugoslav pasts.

Digital Storytelling

The objects of my research on Yugoslav digital afterlife—*popular music blogs, digital memorial videos and historical Facebook profiles*—are approached as cases of *digital storytelling* (DS). Joe Lambert, the founder and director of the Center for Digital Storytelling defines a digital story as “a short, first-person video-narrative created by combining recorded voice, still and moving images, and music and other sounds.” A digital storyteller in his view is “anyone who has a desire to document life experience, ideas, or feelings through the use of story and digital media.”⁸⁶ In the context of this research I propose to slightly expand Lambert’s conception and use DS to denote an activity in DME, which aims to (re)narrate personal, collective, present or historical experience, and does so by producing media objects; through practicing media archaeology in its most rudimentary form, i.e. searching for online and offline media sources and unravelling the past as preserved in the media.⁸⁷

The one principle/practice that connects all communication modes across time and space is storytelling: an all-pervasive human activity which is intrinsically related to identity management and social interaction, and is crucial for the construction, preservation and transmission of memory. As the author David Grossman notes, “I think in all of us there is an instinct to tell stories [...] it is amazing how quickly we are able to recognise one, or an idea which could be made into a story...”⁸⁸ Regardless of the media modality or genre, yet in a highly media specific way, storytelling is a process and practice of externalising/sharing personal experience, and consequently of preserving traces of the past. This externalisation is done by the way of (re)narrativisation. From the extensive work on narrative theory,⁸⁹ it may be best to adopt Ryan’s medium-free, semantically based definition of narrative according to which:

[N]arrative is a type of meaning, or mental image generated in response to certain stimuli. A narrative text is an artefact designed to bring this meaning to mind. But the cognitive

⁸⁶ Joe Lambert, Center for Digital Storytelling, available from <http://www.storycenter.org/index1.html>, Viewed 8 August 2011.

⁸⁷ Cf. Nick Couldry, “Mediatization or mediation?,” 374.

⁸⁸ Branko Soban, “Rumeni veter, ki odganja mir,” *Sobotna priloga*, available from <http://www.delo.si/clanek/105839>, accessed 8 August 2011.

⁸⁹ See for instance Mieke Bal, *Narratology, Introduction to the theory of narrative*, Translated by Christine van Boheemen, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1985; David Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1985; Monika Fludernik, *An Introduction to narratology*, London, New York: Routledge, 2009; Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, Cornell University Press, 1980.

construct specific to narrativity can also be formed in response to stimuli not expressly designed for this purpose, for instance as an interpretation of life itself. This does not make life into ‘a’ narrative, but it means that life may possess narrative potential – what we may call ‘narrativity.’⁹⁰

With a view to the realm of digital multimodal narratives it should be emphasised that narrativisation here is understood as any activity, as indicated in the quote above, which utilises the potentiality of online space (interactivity, temporality, spatiality), digital technology and combination of video, audio, image and text, and combines them to “bring meaning to mind.”⁹¹ Now, it has to be said that digital storytelling and online narrativity in general feature some traits that establish a line of distinction between oral and digital narrativity: mixing text with other materials (convergence); limiting the length of narrative, standardisation pressures and the unpredictability of (un/intended) consequences.

Representation and Mediality

As narrative is generally defined as being constituted by a *representation* of an event, it is in order to define the use of representation as well. Elusive as the concept may seem, Stuart Hall in his lecture on “Representation and the Media” gives a comprehensive view on representation by contrasting two views: one which sees representation as a presentation of an image/event that is already there, and as standing in for and/or taking place of political/social leaders. In this view representation is the way in which meaning is conferred to what is being depicted, which puts great emphasis on the difference between the ‘true meaning’ of an event, and how it is represented in the media.⁹²

On the other hand, the conceptualisation of representation proposed by Hall construes representation as constitutive, meaning that events in the world do not have an essential, fixed or true meaning against which distortion can be measured, but that the meaning of events taking place depends upon *how* they are represented. This implies that whoever controls the means of representation determines the meaning, and the event has no ‘meaning’ until it is represented, which makes representation a constitutive of the event. This, however, is not really the case in DME and co-creative practices, where the meaning is constantly negotiated, if need be perverted, as a consequence of mediality of 4MOs. Furthermore, Hall stresses that reality does not exist

⁹⁰ Marie-Laure Ryan, “Multivariant Narratives.”

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Stuart Hall, “Representation and the Media,” video lecture, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aTzMsPqssOY>, accessed 8 August 2011.

outside the process of representation.⁹³ To adapt this point for the purposes of this study: neither does memory and history or any interpretation of the past.

However, bringing into the picture affect and mediality Richard Grusin talks about, the very definition of the notion of representation as given by Hall can be altered. To contrast representation to mediality, Grusin argues that “mediality does not simply mean (as Foucault often maintains) that government or media manage or control the imbricated networks of people and things, but also that people and things function actively together to create or invent new forms of mediation.”⁹⁴ Closely related to this is the concept of affect which not only relates to “media practices in terms of their structures of signification or symbolic representation, but more crucially in terms of the way in which media function on the one hand to discipline, control, contain, manage or govern human affectivity and its affiliated fillings ‘form above’ at the same time that they work to enable particular forms of human action, particular collective expressions or formations of human affect ‘from below.’”⁹⁵ In accordance with Grusin, I propose to see mediality as considerably different from representationality, “which concerned itself with a referential fidelity to its object.”

With this in mind, representation in my conceptualisation refers to online content, i.e. to what is out there, and not necessarily implies that meaning is determined by the one who owns the means of representation. To the contrary, I propose to understand representation as constituent of the process of co-creation (of content and meaning). In this respect the aspect of mediality needs some further elaboration. Through the mobility of multimodal media objects the co-creation can occur and it is this on-the-way/in-between status of media objects (representations) that constitutes object’s status as one of mediality. In short, mediality is the status of representations on the move, it is the ‘place’ through which and where the (co-)creation of meaning occurs. At this point it seems viable to draw on Paul Virilio’s discussion on the relation between subjectivity and objectivity. Virilio argues that between subjectivity and objectivity there seems to be “no room for the ‘trajective,’ that being of movement from here to there, from one to the other, without which we will never achieve a profound understanding of the various regimes of perception of the world that have succeeded each other throughout the ages.”⁹⁶ The trajective—unravelling in the space between the individual and the event—in the sense of granting the status of mediality to the stuff mediatised and mediated. The difference between mediation and mediality is here understood in

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Richard Grusin, *Premediation: Affect and Mediality After 9/11*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, 76–77.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 79.

⁹⁶ Paul Virilio, *Open Sky*, 24.

that mediation implies a more technical aspect of content trajectory, while mediality also implies the interaction and co-creation, which may or may not emanate from content circulating among users and machines.

This is an aspect in the concept of mediality which not necessarily opposes representationality but rather implies the mobility or circularity of representations between users and machines.⁹⁷ In this view representation still retains its relevance, but its ‘meaning-value’ is altered inasmuch as it is understood as inherently in-flux, fragmented, and co-created.

Multimodal Mobile Media Objects (4MOs)

Significantly, this research focuses on the medial externalisation of memory via digital storytelling as a practice of co-creating and sharing multimodal media objects which are circulated among users, media, spaces and times. As indicated above, *multimodal mobile media object* is a digital representation in which video, image, text, audio are converged to create a narrative, and is then made publicly available on websites, blogs, audio-video platforms, etc. Here, DS denotes a process while media object refers to a result of such process.

Characteristically, media objects are characterised by *mobility* which, as proposed by Lev Manovich, refers “not to the movement of individuals and groups or accessing media from mobile devices, but to something else, which so far has not been theoretically acknowledged: *the movement of media objects between people, devices, and the web.*”⁹⁸ Furthermore, media objects are characterised by mediality which refers to the relationship (or in-flux engagement) emerging between users, media objects and objects of representation. This relationship is ‘fed’ by the circulation of representations, which, as they go along, are used to co-create meaning (or memory) through their mediality.

The Connectivity Turn

In this research the idea of digital memories, memorials and storytelling is closely related to the *connectivity turn*.⁹⁹ From the perspective of the mobility of media objects, the term rests on an

⁹⁷ See William Straw, “The Circulatory Turn,” in Barbara Crow, Michael Longford, Kim Sawchuk (eds.), *The Wireless Spectrum: The Politics, Practices and Poetics of Mobile Media*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2010.

⁹⁸ Lev Manovich, *Software takes command*, draft book, 2008, available from <http://lab.softwarestudies.com/2008/11/softbook.html>, accessed 8 August 2011.

⁹⁹ Cf. Andrew Hoskins, “Media, Memory, Metaphor: Remembering and the Connective Turn,” *Parallax*, forthcoming 2011, who uses the ‘connective turn’ to grasp “the enveloping of the everyday in real-time or near-instantaneous

understanding of (the production and maintenance of) a collectivity in DME as proposed by Arjun Appadurai: “Where natural social *collectivities* build *connectivity* out of *memory*, virtual *communities* build *memory* out of *connectivity*.”¹⁰⁰ This statement (with its questionable use of natural) brings into play three important aspects: collectivity, connectivity and memory which are essential for the reproduction and sustenance of any community. Such conceptualisation enables grasping the changing condition of remembering and see it, as Hoskins proposes in his conceptualisation of the ‘connective turn’ as “the massively increased abundance, pervasiveness and accessibility of digital technologies, devices and media, shaping an ongoing re-calibration of time, space (and place) and memory by people as they connect with, inhabit and constitute increasingly both dense and diffused social networks.”¹⁰¹

Collectivity, memory and connectivity can be understood as the basic building blocks of any socio-cultural constellation. They enable establishment, maintenance and reproduction of interpersonal, social, cultural, national and international relations. It is essential for a collectivity, if it is to persist over time, that its members be connected to each other and their collectivity beyond the limits of space (territory/state) and time (temporality/history, heritage). It is through the interactions between individual, collective and institutional mediation of memory that a shared interpretation of the past may be created. Yet, for memories to be comprehensible beyond an individual mind, i.e. in order for them to work, representations of memories must not only be communicable and ‘universally’ accepted, but their creation and management must be able to continually recontextualise and renarrate them in the present for the possible futures.

Territoriality and Temporality

Remembering after the connectivity turn thus entails communities dispersed in both space and time, which are no longer exclusively based on territorial/national stories and histories, where “the moment of connection is the moment of memory.”¹⁰² The territorial principle of community formation is in many ways questioned and challenged by the principles of forming communities

communications, including ‘messaging’, be these peer-to-peer, one-to-many, or more complex and diffused connections within and between groups, ‘crowds’, or networks, and facilitated through mobile media and social networking technologies and other internet-based services.” See also Jose van Dijck “Flickr and the Culture of connectivity: Sharing views experiences, memories,” *Memory Studies*, October 2010 (published online before print), accessed 2 November 2010.

¹⁰⁰ Arjun Appadurai, “Archive and Aspiration,” in Joke Brouwer and Arjen Mulder (eds.), *Information is Alive*, V2_Publishing/NAI Publishers, Rotterdam, 2003, 17, italics added.

¹⁰¹ Andrew Hoskins, “7/7 and connective memory: Interactional trajectories of remembering in post-scarcity culture,” *Memory Studies* 4(3), 2011, 269–280, 271.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 278.

based on interest (researchers, fans, etc.) which presumably preclude the shortfalls of offline community (including inequality, segregation, racism, etc.). In reality, however, it is clear that the digital technologies and media are no panacea for the pertaining social and political troubles of humankind. Instead, the shortfalls of offline communication and sociability willingly migrate online. And so are power relations in the field of memory and remembering, with financially well-off institutions producing enviable (if often territory-restricted or payable) online collections of historical knowledge. However, the potentialities of DME in terms of free access and manageability of technology nevertheless facilitate unprecedented development in terms of vernacular memory and remembering which invariantly elude the limits and ideological constraints of institutionalised en-memorisation and remembering.¹⁰³

Regardless of power relations migrating online and of the fact that the offline interpersonal, professional, ideological, political and cultural orientations and beliefs have increasing online presence and relevance, the difference between DME strategies of representing vernacular histories, memories and remembering differs significantly from anything in the past. The effect and implications remain to be seen, but the media objects we have in front of us (if so we click) deserve thorough treatment. First of all because such practices of remembering empower large numbers of people to create and co-create memories, to effectively contribute to a commemorating community. And second, because such strategies and practices of appropriating the past open up important questions about the status of interpretive authority and questions about the status of national histories.

The way the past is dealt with online is distinctly characterised by, as explained above, the convergence of image, text, sound and video and by the related fusion and redefinition of narrative techniques, and by remediation of various media. At the same time, different or modified techniques and strategies of establishing, maintaining and promulgating such representations are being developed. In light of remediation and media convergence, this significantly affects the conceptions of space, time, memory and remembering, representation of the past, identity, individuality-collectivity, and the closely related sense of belonging, credibility, immersion, interactivity, and participation that the digital media enable.

Spatial practice has become a practice of digital interaction where connectivity can be established without physical interaction with the ‘real’ space or people. The traveller/internet user remains seated in front of the screen and meet other travellers/users in geo-remote places. Nevertheless,

¹⁰³ On vernacular memory in digital environments see Aaron Hess, “In Digital Remembrance: Vernacular memory and the Rhetorical Construction of Web Memorials,” *Media Culture and Society* 5, 2007, 812—830.

they are able through digital connectivity to establish shared memories. This physical immobility might have been perhaps one of the strongest opponents' points in the late 1990s when critiquing the cyberspace and cyber communities for eliminating social contact. With the emergence of mobile devices that allow logging in from practically anywhere, such reservations are losing ground, while many others, out of the scope of this writing, will surely arise. The issue of space and territoriality is particularly pertinent to national spaces as online interaction to an important extent facilitates communication beyond the restrictions of territory. Not that this is some grand novelty, but the instant-messaging aspect of it surely is unprecedented. Furthermore, the implications the deterritorialisation has for national histories lies in that remembering is much less contained geographically, but rather becomes a global participatory practice which may also reject the predicates of national history.¹⁰⁴

In terms of temporal conceptions of digital worlds, and consequently their analogue counterparts, a concept of detemporalisation proves useful. On the level of interaction it proposes that the linearity of time is collapsed by the possibility of synchronous communication between individuals in discrete locations, meaning that the time to transport the message is negligible. This enables interpersonal connectivity and synchronicity of various temporal dislocations. Yet what is even more important with respect to the representations of the past is the implication that the mediated pasts can coexist in one time, e.g. multimodal content related to the various pasts, often stripped of many aspects of their original contexts, coexist in one temporal window. This means that the past is easily re-presented as leading to an expansion of the time-present, despite the pervasive ideology of progress resting on ever-faster passage of time engendered by the development of new technologies and the postmodern deconstruction of historicity. An important topic in relation to digital temporality is the so-called 'digital post mortem,' referring both to commemorating online a deceased friend or a celebrity, and importantly to the lives of personal information, profiles, various accounts after a user had passed away.

Digital Memorials

When a digital memorial is put up on the internet, it physically only requires some space on a server located at a certain geographical position, and it can only come to life if accessed from a

¹⁰⁴ An important aspect in this context is the fact that despite the high-flying words about free market of goods and ideas, global accessibility, as resident of Slovenia, I am unable to log into, e.g. Spotify.com service for listening to music (<http://www.spotify.com/int/why-not-available/>) or participate fully as a consuming citizen of the world, being unable to order a second-hand book from Amazon to be delivered to my home address.

certain location. Beyond that point, however, the (narrative) space created by a user is freed from any constraints of physical space apart from that of the visitor and her ability to connect. Thus, such memorial may potentially be present anywhere and anytime. It provides a locus where visitors' paths may intersect, where people meet and interact. In such spatially and temporally unbound connectivity they can jointly participate in the process of remembering. And it is such interactions that posit digital memorials as perpetually changing cyberplaces of memory.

With regard to Yugoslavia this seems particularly interesting: the 'fragmentation' of the country in territorial sense is now reflected in further fragmentation of remembering online: the many websites, blogs, and other digitally mediated content necessarily facilitate mutually ignorant, experientially not shared, processes of remembering. And as much as they may facilitate 'virtual re-territorialisation,' i.e. gathering people in a specific cyberplace of memory, they may just as well lead to parallel digital afterlives, hindering commonality of remembering outside a particular group, which in many cases is not a territorially or nationally defined.¹⁰⁵

An offline memorial requires physical presence of people at a commemorating event in order to exercise the collective re-inscription of shared memory; television allows for displaced, yet relatively nationally bound and (only to a certain extent, particularly with the cable and on-demand TV) still synchronous, 'participation' of the masses at an event. Digital memorials provide an opportunity for deterritorialised and detemporalised participation and interaction beyond the geo-locality of an offline monument/memorial or the user. Such practice of remembering positions the viewer in front of the screen within a collectivity with which one can interact, be detached from it physically and at the same time individually participate (actively or passively) in a collective commemoration.

And what is crucial in this respect is that digital memory, memorials and storytelling seem to be even more infused by both socio-political and intimately personal eventualities/happenings in the present post-Yugoslav realities.

¹⁰⁵ See for instance Cyber Yugoslavia at the Internet Archive, <http://web.archive.org/web/20000229143641/http://www.juga.com/>. The site was available at www.juga.com in late 1999, but has apparently been shut down; today it displays the words: "It works!," accessed 31 August 2011.

Reappropriations and reinterpretations of post-socialist past in the processes of cultural, social, political and economic perturbations in DME demand a thorough analysis. The former socialist countries underwent thorough treatment to set off (more or less) radical changes and were in the process of ‘de-communisation’ substantially exposed to (Western and perhaps more often obsessively self-imposed) demands to ‘sort out’ their unbefitting and essentially indecently corrupted socialist histories. Intriguingly coinciding with the upsurge of digital communications technologies, much of the post-1989/91 debates and developments in Europe as a whole played out through debates on memory and remembering of seminal events that marked the 20th century. In a present which is rapidly moving into unpredictable direction(s), the possible past(s) refuse(s) to retire but instead resiliently haunts and fundamentally defines the dimensions of media dominated present(s).

The fascination with or contempt of the indecent past is to an important extent part and parcel of the post-socialist quotidian.¹⁰⁶ The corollaries of the ‘unresolved affair’ with the socialist past are also apparent in daily politics. The unresolvedness often seems to be the fuel for ‘eternal post-communist catharsis’ or ‘transitionalism,’ where the finished catharsis, about to occur sometime in the future, features as the postponed gratification. This, however, tends to prevent these societies from developing a ‘solid’ post-socialist ‘mythistory,’ leading instead to wobbly state-foundations. An important factor in this constellation is, along the often schizophrenic post-socialist interpretations of WWII and post-war period, also the crumbling nation state and the rising grass-roots, vernacular memories and histories. What is indicative for the post-socialist cultural and political realities in Eastern Europe is that the past is perceived as highly problematic. Problematic in that the 1945—1991 period in new political and historiographical discourses is often interpreted very much as a period of Soviet domination.¹⁰⁷ This interpretation may be valid for the Baltic states and to some extent Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. But applying this perspective to Yugoslavia is at least devoid of wider historical contextualisation and distinct specificities of

¹⁰⁶ This is not to say that western dealings with the past are any more ‘rational’ or unburdened, if often they are presented and perceived as such. On post-socialist dealing with the past and memory see for instance Charity Scribner, *Requiem for Communism*, Cambridge, MIT, 2003; Daphne Berdahl, *On the Social Life of Postsocialism, Memory, Consumption, Germany*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2010.

¹⁰⁷ For instance, Article D of the Declaration on the Proclamation of the “European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism” clearly states that: “the influence and significance of the Soviet order and occupation on and for citizens of the post-Communist States are little known in Europe.” This fails to consider any systemic specificities while also limits “all totalitarian regimes” to Stalinism and Nazism, failing to mention the crimes committed by the Fascist regime; see <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2008-0439+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>.

different socialist systems. Regardless, in post-Yugoslavia such discourses are frequently used as ammunition in daily political struggle ignoring as they do significant portions of Yugoslav history that could fruitfully be used to position new states within a tradition of progressive social welfare and cosmopolitanism. Thus, the memory politics in the former Yugoslavia produce to a great extent a self-castrating discourse that directly impedes these societies from becoming fully fledged members of transnational social, cultural, economic and political constellations.

With this in mind, the central focus of the dissertation is on strategies and practices of representing and renarrating Yugoslav past(s) in DME, i.e. the uses and applications of internet enabled functionalities to create, co-create, share and distribute vernacular interpretations of Yugoslav past. More precisely, I look at the ways the internet media are used to provide alternative narrativisations, interpretations and evaluations of Yugoslav past. In particular, the analysis looks into ‘digital posts’¹⁰⁸ of several mythistorical kernels which have significantly defined and delimited the imaginary, symbolic, cultural and political coordinates of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), and in many respects continue to do so: the WWII, popular culture (film and music in particular), and the myth of Josip Broz Tito. Thus, the analysis will yield crucial insights into the work of memory and remembering in DME. These topics or Yugoslav ‘mythistorical kernels’ even today stir strong emotions, ignite political and historical debates, and also fuel contemporary art production. This makes them all the more relevant topic for investigation, particularly in view of post-socialist social, cultural and political transformations.

After the disintegration of Yugoslavia in 1991 these topics were actively being forgotten/effaced or rewritten/revised by the new regimes. Often they were incidentally dropped out of ‘official’ “frames of attention, valuation and use.”¹⁰⁹ In the post-Yugoslav countries these topics mostly tend to be used in dominant political discourses, when the flaws and violence of the ‘communist regime’ need to be pointed out and/or for discrediting political opponents. Yet, they remained present in the everyday lives and vernacular memories of post-Yugoslavs. This is evident in narrative practices and also in continuous cherishing of the memory of Tito, hoisting Yugoslav banners and flags on various anniversaries (particularly at WWII-related events), great interest in and availability of second-hand and new merchandise (books, pictures, stamps, epaulettes etc.) at flea markets and in souvenir shops, recurrent popularity of ex-Yugoslav (and post-Yugoslav) popular music and cinema across the former country.

¹⁰⁸ Posts here refer both to posts as online submissions and also to imply a temporal marker.

¹⁰⁹ Aleida Assman, “Canon and Archive,” 98.

After the internet and digital communications technologies begun to dominate our lives, DME facilitated migration, or rather expansion, of large portions of everyday life online. Digital technology opened up space where everyday life, politics, economy, culture etc. found another outlet for manifestation. The rise of digital communications technologies proved particularly efficient and was in fact widely used by the many emigrants from the war-torn Yugoslavia and by those who stayed alike; to stay in touch and, not least, to share their memories. And it remains so today. Digital communications technologies and digital sociability facilitate tools and spaces for individuals to take part in a deterritorialised, detemporalised community of ex(iled)-Yugoslavs (this category not only includes ‘proper’ emigrants, but also people who ‘only’ migrated in time). And it is in the lives of online, often on-the-fly communities that (the memory of) Yugoslavia continues to live.

At this point it has to be emphasised that no conceptualisation of memory in DME and hence no research can be adequately designed if departing from a distinction between online and offline spaces. As tempting as it is to try and delimit clearly the two and to seek incommensurable specificities of one and another, it is nevertheless crucial to understand that these are profoundly interrelated domains. If we leave aside the obvious anchoring of the online in the hardware and consider the human component of the constellation, it soon becomes clear that even human actor in the online world is (more or less) firmly anchored in the offline. The life has other aspects as well and these aspects have an influence on online behaviours. At the same time, online practices have effects in offline lives. In other words, it is insufficient to observe or study human action in virtual spaces apart from and as essentially distinct from human action in offline environments. Rather, such research needs to look at the interplay and overlaps, and acknowledge the intrinsic connectedness of social activities in various communication modes and modalities, and their extensions into DME. Or rather, it has to see the offline and online as part of one (if but immensely fragmented) space where human action is externalised, mediatised, mediated.

And all the more so in the case of history, memory and remembering, which across societies and known histories have relied heavily on tools and practices of externalisation, spanning spatial (monuments, museums, architecture) and symbolic (writing, print) inscriptions. To externalise, make visible, tangible, audible, readable and hence comprehensible to others, narratives have been deployed and created in conceptualising and creating externalisations of memory. And narratives have likewise been used to interpret, represent, code or decode the meaning and implications of every new present.

This research proposes to thematise the internet as another in a long line of technological innovations in the field of communications technologies. In historical perspective it is clear that virtually all technological innovations (in media technologies in particular) provoked at first much doubt and fear on the one hand, and fiery advocacy on the other. Another issue with introduction and establishment of new technologies is that despite the fact that a new technology in hindsight may seem to have caused a radical break, it is more often the case that new technologies are a result of innovative evolution.¹¹⁰ Yet, the internet and cyberspace, according to N. Katherine Hayles, should not be seen as an “irresistible force of technological determinism,” but rather as a function of “historically specific negotiations.”¹¹¹ Still, profound changes have occurred in the ways the past is recorded (or better how the present is recorded for the future), archived, preserved, forgotten, narrated. Moreover, media

significantly influence on the way, intensity, structure, rhythm and velocity of interactions between people and also on quality and quantity of transmitted messages. They not only influence how we connect with other people, how we establish contact and exchange messages, but also on how we see other people, the world around us, how we conceive of ourselves, how we present ourselves to others, and how we construct our identity.¹¹²

The online/offline distinction is further invalidated when focusing on online mediatisations of the Yugoslav past. This study implies a strong connection between ‘real’ societies and individuals and online spaces of externalisation of (changes in interpreting) memory and history and counters the dualistic understanding of real and cyberspace.¹¹³ The former Yugoslavs (or today’s post-Yugoslavs) have been facing profound changes over the period of transformation, not least in material externalisations of historical and memorial landscapes (renaming of streets, demolition of monuments, border disputes, etc.). The dissolution and the war made many refugees and emigrants and left even more without a homeland. These people lost a vital connection to their pasts to nationalising states and political discourses,¹¹⁴ which promoted national exclusivism and concomitantly advocated an annihilation of the socialist past, or rather of all the past (or history)

¹¹⁰ A close investigation reveals that before one technology becomes dominant, several similar technologies, media, formats exist simultaneously. This was the case with cinema (zoetrope, praxinoscope, phenakistoscope, etc.), sound recording devices (on Edison’s phonograph see Lisa Gitelman, *Always Already New. Media, History and the Data of Culture*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 2009) and not least with the latest media format battles (and rapid successions), e.g. VHS, Beta, DVD, Blu-ray.

¹¹¹ N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Post-Human: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*, Chicago, Chicago UP, 1999, 20.

¹¹² Maruša Pušnik, “Telefonska razmerja: o razvoju telefona in premenah družbenih interakcij,” in Tanja Oblak and Breda Luthar (eds.), *Mobilni telefon in transformacija vsakdana*, Ljubljana, FDV, 2010, 31–52.

¹¹³ Mark Nunes, *Cyberspaces of everyday life*, Minneapolis, London, University of Minnesota Press, 2006.

¹¹⁴ Roger Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996.

that was made during the era of socialism. And it is this which is largely the reason for continually reinvigorated interest and sometimes obsession with things Yugoslav (as it will be seen in the following Chapters), particularly the country's pop-cultural heritage, which remediates 'old' imageries/imaginaries into 'new.'

Although substantial research has been made in the area of transformation of media ecologies in the former socialist countries in terms of changes in media systems and culture, the field of mediated memories of and remembering Yugoslavia in DME remains under-researched.¹¹⁵ Interrogating these aspects this research relies on studies memory¹¹⁶ and (new) media studies¹¹⁷ and attempts to innovate the emerging field of 'digital memory studies' by bringing into discussion the relationship between the dynamics of post-socialist memory and digital communications technologies. With regards to of post-socialist studies, an important aspect is nostalgia:¹¹⁸ various types of post-socialist nostalgias (e.g. *Yugonostalgia* and *Titostalgia* in the former Yugoslavia; *Ostalgie* in the former DDR) prove to be a permanent and recurrent topic all over former socialist countries, distinctly marking the political and cultural spheres and everyday lives.

Building on the multimodal discourse analysis conducted via non-participant observation of 4MO,¹¹⁹ i.e. the audiovisual and textual online 'social conduct,' it provides a framework to analyse multimodal media objects (including text, audio, video and image, as indicated above), i.e. the individual externalisations of Yugoslav past. Additionally, it offers a tool to grasp individual

¹¹⁵ Maria Bakardjieva, "Virtual Togetherness: An Everyday Life Perspective," *Media, Culture & Society* 25(3), 2003, 291–313; Tanja Oblak and Breda Luthar (eds.), *Mobilni telefon in transformacija vsakdana*; Franc Trček (ed.), *Community-net in South and East Europe*, Ljubljana, Centre for Spatial Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, 2003; Orlin Spassov and Kristo Todorov (eds.), *New media in Southeast Europe*, Sofia, Southeast European Media Centre, 2003; see also Reana Senjković & Davor Dukić, "Virtual Homeland? Reading Music on Offer on a Particular Web Page," *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 8(1), 44–62, 2005, 44–62; Ana Hofman, "Sounding Yugoslavia: Music and Nostalgic Practices on the Internet," <http://sites.google.com/site/musicandminorities/conferencepapers2>, 2008.

¹¹⁶ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1992, Jan Assmann, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," *New German Critique* 65, 1995, 125–133, Frederic C. Bartlett, *Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1932, Andreas Huysen, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia*, New York, Routledge, 1995.

¹¹⁷ Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media*, Lev Manovich, *Software Takes Command*, Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture*, Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation*, Nick Couldry, "Mediatization or mediation? Alternative understandings of the emergent space of digital storytelling," *New Media & Society*, 10(3), 373–391, 2006, Knut Lundby (ed.), *Digital Storytelling*, Knut Lundby (ed.), *Mediatization*.

¹¹⁸ Mitja Velikonja, *Titostalgia: A Study of Nostalgia for Josip Broz*, Ljubljana, Mirovni inštitut, 2009; Tanja Petrović, "The Territory of the Former Yugoslavia in the Mental Maps of Former Yugoslavs: Nostalgia for Space," *Sprawy Narodowościowe*, Seria Nova, 31, 2007; Zala Volčič, "Yugo-nostalgia: Cultural Memory and Media in the Former Yugoslavia," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 24(1) March 2007, 21–38; Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, New York, Basic Books, 2001; Daphne Berdhal, *On the Social Life in Postsocialism, Memory, Consumption, Germany*, 2010, Maria Todorova and Zsuzsa Gille (eds.), *Post-communist Nostalgia*, New York, Oxford, Bergham Books, 2010.

¹¹⁹ Kay L. O'Halloran, "Multimodal Discourse Analysis," in K. Hyland and B. Paltridge (eds.), *Companion to Discourse*, London and New York, Continuum, in press 2011.

(past-preserving) activity in DME as embedded in broader socio-cultural networks which are crucially defined/maintained in the overlaps of online and offline spaces. With this in mind, the study aims to critically discuss the potential of vernacular or ‘guerrilla’ memory practices in wider socio-cultural contexts, particularly in relation to issues of the individual and the collective, and the national history and identity.

This emphasis seems particularly relevant in view of globalism and the present crisis that in search for stability continues to take recourse to the past. According to Slavoj Žižek, with nostalgia the transformation brought along widespread disappointment, which gave room for two more reactions to emerge: right-wing nationalist populism and renewed and late anti-communist paranoia.¹²⁰

Case Studies: An Outline

This study consists of three separate case studies. In the first I investigate the preservation of popular music in a number of *music blogs* (Chapter 2). Distinctly individual endeavours to preserve/archive Yugoslav musical past by means of digitising mostly vinyl records and making them available online is utterly a work of an archivist which should be done either by music industry or preferably by an institution which would see to its longer term preservation. Music blogging may not feature as a typical case of digital storytelling: the research focuses on private databases of no longer available vinyl records. Yet, the investigated music blogs are much more than mere ‘indexing service.’ In posts’ narrative parts the authors often reveal rather personal details related to the posted music, where it was found and ‘where it is from.’ In this sense, the blogs fit into the DS coordinates. More important still, music blogs feature as good examples of remediation and even more so as cases where the online and the offline clearly overlap and interact. Considering the fact that the central tool for externalisation of memory is text (posts), the case study will apply textual analysis, supported, where appropriate, by content analyses of visual and audio material, rather than in-depth analysis of posted music.

The second case study (Chapter 3) deals with several cases of vernacular digital memorials found on YouTube. These cases of digital memorials feature most neatly in the category of digital storytelling. Undertaking a media archaeology approach they combine, decontextualise, recontextualise various media (historical and custom-made) sources (visual, audible, textual) to

¹²⁰ Slavoj Žižek, *Living in the end times*, London, New York, Verso, 2011, vii–viii.

create and communicate, via digital memorial, a very personal historical statement.¹²¹ The research objects are investigated as paradigmatic cases of digital storytelling where multimodal discourse analysis focuses on visual and audio aspects and is combined with textual analysis of comments and posts.

Finally, the third case study investigates memory and remembering in several Facebook profiles related to Yugoslavia, its lifelong president and a popular culture icon (Chapter 4). They are analysed as cases of collaborative digital storytelling and approached as co-created, under-permanent-construction digital memorials which are intrinsically related/networked to and between visitors, administrators and other similar Facebook profiles. The investigation is conducted through discourse analysis including text, video and audio.

Methodology

The three distinctly individual, yet also significantly interrelated case studies in which I investigate a selection of vernacular remediations and renarrativisations of the Yugoslav are approached, as mentioned above, as cases in digital storytelling. They are the result of a co-creative action undertaken by individual users and establish the core subject of analysis: multimodal mobile media objects. Particular attention is paid to the ways vernacular memory practices utilise digital technology and hence the 4MOs. The overarching methodological approach is decidedly qualitative and posits the cases studies as cases that essentially possess a narrative quality. Hence the methodology presupposes an approach adopting content and discourse analysis of digital storytelling in 4MOs.¹²²

As DS is crucially enabled and conditioned by the technological and cultural implications of DME and the internet as an enabling technology, it importantly differs from the 'analogue' narrative formation, consumption and dissemination. Yet, the main difference, as understood here lies in a) mobility of media objects and b) on-the-fly co-creative impetus. This makes the investigated 4MOs the matter of co-creation and incessant permeability and not necessarily proves insurmountable obstacle in seeing 4MOs as discursive elements. To the contrary, to an important degree digital storytelling and digital narrativisations retain continuity with 'classic' storytelling. The cases in digital storytelling and memorials are thus analysed qualitatively following the

¹²¹ See Jean Burgess and Joshua Green, *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2009; see also Pelle Snickars and Patrick Vonderau (eds.), *The YouTube Reader*, Stockholm, National Library of Sweden, 2009.

¹²² On digital storytelling see Knut Lundby (ed.), *Digital Storytelling*.

principles of non-participant observation,¹²³ based on content analysis in audio, video and textual representations.¹²⁴

The approach focuses on content and discourse analysis and doing so intertwines the results of both. Regarding content analysis, the audiovisual and textual elements in the 4MOs are investigated in terms of 'technical' utilisation of audiovision and text (the 'what' and 'how'). At that the ways the content is mediated and remediated features as an important aspect of analysis. The data (as found on music blogs, YouTube videos and Facebook profiles) are seen as "representations not of physical events, but of texts, images, and expressions that are created to be seen, read, interpreted, and acted on their meanings, and must therefore be analyzed with such uses in mind."¹²⁵ Moreover, with mediality in mind, the analysis also takes into consideration the very 'migratory' characteristic of representations and hence tracks the practice of co-creation as an additional aspect of content production and distribution.

Simultaneously, the discourse part of the analysis will be conducted based on 'commentary textual analysis' spliced with audiovisual discourse analysis. As opposed to the content analysis, this element of the methodological compound will facilitate insight into the 'to what effect' is communicated. This approach enables an insight into how the past is co-created (mediated/mediatised/renarrated) in DME, and at that also takes into consideration the 'claws' with which the present inadvertently slashes the interpretations of the past. To that end, the space of co-created renarrativisations of the past as emerging through the interaction between multimodal mobile media objects and produsers is seen as a cyberplace of memory. There the "semiotic cycles (the circulation of symbols, including media content)" are "generated by actions taken in response to a mediated event or in a formation of a social network,"¹²⁶ and it is the discourse that is the main 'transmitter' of (the content of) such action. Important for this writing is Suzie Wong Scollon's arguing that at the heart of discourse are "values [which are] are embodied along with geographical features during the course of living in a particular place at a particular

¹²³ Michael V. Angrosino, Nonparticipant Observation, in Michael S. Lewis-Beck, Alan Bryman and Tim Futing Liao (eds.), *The SAGE Encyclopaedia of Social Science Research Methods*, vol. 3, 2004.

¹²⁴ See for instance Christine M. Hine, *Virtual Ethnography*, London, Sage Publications, 2000; on identifying units of analysis; enhancing contextual information; and understanding indicators of online activity see Jannis Androutsopoulos, "Potentials and limitations of discourse-centered online ethnography," *Language@Internet*, 5, article 8, 2008, <http://www.languageatinternet.de/articles/2008>; Courtenay Honeycutt and Susan C. Herring, "Beyond Microblogging: Conversation and Collaboration via Twitter," *Proceedings of the Forty-Second Hawai'i International Conference on System Sciences (HICSS-42)*, Los Alamitos, CA, IEEE Press, 2009.

¹²⁵ Klaus Krippendorff, "Content Analysis: An Introduction to its Methodology," Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications, 2004, xiii.

¹²⁶ Andrew Hoskins and Ben O'Loughlin, *War and Media: The Emergence of Diffused War*, Cambridge, Malden, Polity Press, 2010, 189.

time.”¹²⁷ Drawing on this conceptualisation, this Study aims to trace “links between subjects, objects and their relations,” and doing so faces the challenge related to the “understanding or explaining such links [...which] demands approaches that do not take units of analysis as a given, but take these phenomena as emergent.”¹²⁸

Now, taken together both strains of qualitative analysis can usefully be subsumed into the multimodal discourse analysis, as elaborated by Kay O’Halloran, who sees it as “concerned with theory and analysis of semiotic resources and the semantic expansions which occur as semiotic choices combined in multimodal phenomena.”¹²⁹ This enables to see the objects of study as non-hierarchical bearers of meaning and hence ‘equal’ elements of the DME renarrativisations and remediations of the Yugoslav past.

¹²⁷ Suzie Wong Scollon, “Calibrating Divergent Discourses in Convergent Geographies,” presented at the Dialogue Under Occupation, November 14–16, 2007, East Jerusalem, <http://www.neiu.edu/~duo/scollon.htm>.

¹²⁸ Andrew Hoskins and Ben O’Loughlin, *War and Media*, 191.

¹²⁹ Kay L. O’Halloran, “Multimodal Discourse Analysis.”

Chapter 2 | Music Blogging: Saving Yugoslav Popular Music

Sounds threatened with extinction should be noted in particular and should be recorded before they disappear. The vanishing sound object should be treated as an important historical artefact, for a carefully recorded archive of disappearing sounds could one day be of great value.¹³⁰

Introduction

In the post-WWII period of rebuilding, Yugoslavia was undergoing processes of industrialisation and modernisation, building at that also a new symbolic tissue. The enthusiasm of renewal, at least in the realm of official politics, was fuelled by the international position of the state and internal insecurity of the regime which provided raw material for motivating mythology of transition. This was successfully fuelled into all pores of social and cultural life, one of the crucial vehicles to do so being music. The everyday life in Yugoslavia after WWII was largely dominated by music, and continues to do so even today, which presented not insignificant portions of cultural production. Moreover, music in SFRY was to an important degree a socio-cultural vehicle for articulating ideological tenets of the state in the making. After the Tito-Stalin split in 1948 and official dismissal of socialist realism in the sphere of cultural production in 1952,¹³¹ the country and cultural production saw relative decentralisation and openness of the system towards the West. This resulted in variety of Western influences (initially predominantly Italian and German, later on increasingly Anglo-American) ‘invading’ the sphere of popular culture. Subsequent acculturation of new ‘foreign’ forms of expression was inevitable, yet the process resulted in a distinctly Yugoslav brand of adopted music genres.

Music in SFRY, as Mirjana Laušević argues, allows for three expressive modes to be discerned: revolutionary songs, the work of cultural and artistic ensembles, and popular music. Where ideology and popular conception of music ‘agreed’ throughout the post-war Yugoslav period was

¹³⁰ R. Murray Schafer, *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World*, Rochester, VT, Destiny Books, 1994 [1977], 209.

¹³¹ Ervin Dolenc, “Culture, Politics, and Slovene Identity,” in Jill Benderey and Evan Kreft (eds.), *Independent Slovenia: Origins, Movements and Prospects*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1994, 69–90, 85.

the different musics' "common feature: the capability of grouping people in categories other than national ones."¹³² This indirectly had significant impact on the musical preferences of the younger population. Being 'exposed' to the sounds of jazz, swing, rock'n'roll, etc., the youth were pretty much 'tuned in' as far as world trends were concerned. Yet, music was far from de-politicised: according to Sabrina P. Ramet, the official Yugoslav politics performed a shift when they decided to tolerate the 'decadent sounds' and to allow different pop-music genres, including the potentially problematic rock music, to flourish without much interference from the regime.¹³³

This approach slyly mainstreamed the political and socio-mobilisationary charge of rock music and thus rendered it a relatively banal and trivial genre, easy to discharge.¹³⁴ This political manoeuvre facilitated a broader platform for identification, which appeared depoliticised and provided another field of transnationally shared experience. The so-called *yugo rock* (also *yu-rock*) after the 1970s, and most importantly in and throughout the 1980s, played the role of one of the most resilient transnational frameworks of popular culture. Peter Stanković argues that the "differences that existed on the level of aesthetics, did not prevent the feeling of being a part of a common yu-rock culture, [which] divided into different genre manifestations, remained one of the few world-views that in the second half of the 1980s functioned integratively."¹³⁵

After the collapse of the country the music and the love of it survived and continued to grow (over the emerging boundaries). When the commonly shared political, economic and cultural framework shattered in face of the nationalised, fragmented, more or less independent states, the interest in former Yugoslav music cultures featured as one of the central cultural vortexes that managed to connect the present with the past. At that it avoided the national purification of homogenising national cultures. In fact, music was one of the more vocal tools/cultural products in what Mitja Velikonja sees as three strategies of approaching, reproducing and referencing the shared past, i.e. using the past in everyday life conduct: inertia (systemic perseverance); innovation (referencing the Yugoslav past and re-contextualising it); and subversion and revolt (particularly against the

¹³² Mirjana Laušević, "The *Ilahiya* and Bosnian Muslim Identity," in Mark Slobin (ed.), *Retuning Culture, Musical Changes in Central and Eastern Europe*, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 1996, 117–135, 118–20.

¹³³ Sabrina P. Ramet, *Balkan Babel, The Disintegration of Yugoslavia from the Death of Tito to the Fall of Milošević*, Boulder, Westview Press, 2002, 127–150; Sabrina P. Ramet, *Rocking the State, Rock Music and Politics in Eastern Europe and Russia*, Boulder, Westview Press, 1994, 103–132.

¹³⁴ Gregor Tomc, "Škandal v rdečem baru," in *25 let punka pod Slovenci: Punk je bil prej*, Ljubljana, Cankarjeva založba, Ropot, 2002, 87.

¹³⁵ Peter Stanković, "Uporabe 'Balkana': Rock in nacionalizem v Sloveniji v devetdesetih letih," *Teorija in praksa* 2, 2002, 220–238, 226–228.

exclusivity of (*Central*) *European* political discourses which sometimes degenerate in cultural self-sufficiency and hate-speech.¹³⁶

Needless to say, popular music became the source and vehicle of Yugonostalgia but also an important factor in re-creating the broken bonds among the former Yugoslavs. This became all the more apparent with the increasing rise in putting to use the communications channels provided by the internet. Sharing music became also a means of sharing memories. The question concerning the digital (after)life of Yugoslav music is: How the ‘music loving community’ scattered all over the world can come about music that was extremely sporadically digitised? Apart from various peer-to-peer services, one of the most intriguing endeavours by far is blogging. Music blogging, that is, where the blogging technology is used to diffuse and share Yugoslav music (and memories).

In this Chapter I investigate the uses of blogs as vehicles for bringing into digital life music that was issued on vinyl before 1991 (for the most part), then more or less incidentally unearthed from the attics or bought on flea-markets and second-hand shops, meticulously digitised (including artwork) and put up online for music lovers throughout the world to download and enjoy. And, doing this preserve and promulgate an otherwise doomed part of Yugoslav popular culture and the country’s history. In the first section I discuss the relationship between blogging and memory, then move on to investigate the relationship between music and memory, the role of music in cyberspace and the role of music blogging in preserving Yugoslav popular musical heritage.¹³⁷ The central part of the Chapter features a detailed analysis of several music blogs which are investigated as cyberplaces of externalisation of memory both through music and the blogger’s posts.

¹³⁶ Mitja Velikonja, “‘Ex-home’: ‘Balkan culture’ in Slovenia after 1991,” in Barbara Törnquist-Plewa and Sanimir Resic (eds.), *The Balkan in Focus – Cultural Boundaries in Europe*, Nordic Academic Press, Lund, Sweden, 189–207, 200.

¹³⁷ I am aware of the connotations of the notion ‘heritage’ implying an important degree of institutionalisation and canonisation. Using it in this context I aim to extend its applicability to include also non-institutionalised heritage (popular culture) and the non-institutional actors that in many cases feature as prominent, although in a way ‘alternative,’ preservers of, in this case, popular music.

The practice of blogging, one of the first ‘next new things’ in early 1990s internet boom, may seem at a first glance a digital practice most straightforwardly deriving from print and writing, providing a link to the writing logic discernible in newspapers, diaries, journals or common-place books. Tracing the history of blogging there are two more ancient ‘technologies’ that need to be taken into account: the diary and the commonplace book. For centuries, diaries and journals, for instance, have served explorers and soldiers to record their explorations, endeavours and fares, while more recently dairies are being kept, for instance, by adolescents dealing with the ups and downs of growing up or by mothers who want to preserve the minutiae of their offspring’s first year of life. Offline diary writing that boomed after the spread of literacy was, at least declaratively, a very private affair, not necessarily intended for other people to read; unlike the scientific notes, captain logs or soldier’s diaries etc., which really were more of a chronicle, not exclusively private. Compared to oral reminiscing and remembering, writing (i.e. keeping diaries) implied the withdrawal of a significant part of commonality of individual experience into the sphere of private. The fact notwithstanding that the latent intention of much diary writing is to be read by someone else and is therefore often left unconcealed and easy to find. But the very process of externalising and ‘stabilising’ thoughts is a distinctly private affair.

The commonplace book, on the other hand was essentially private albeit perhaps not as intimate an endeavour; “‘commonplacing,’ as it was called, involved transcribing interesting or inspirational passages from one’s reading, assembling a personalized encyclopaedia of quotations. It was a kind of solitary version of the original web logs: an archive of interesting tidbits that one encountered during one’s textual browsing.”¹³⁸ Moreover, such a ‘storage facility,’ often embellished with exquisite writing technique, featured as a space where notes and thoughts about everyday ephemera can be kept; including recipes, quotes, proverbs etc. Hence, it provided a ‘technology’ for keeping track of interesting everyday occurrences and not least a personal history. Frequently, a commonplace book was conceived around a particular theme of interest and reflected the keeper’s preoccupations. Thus, its value not only lies in its (potentially) literary quality but also in giving insight into the mundane and personal details of the keeper’s life and the

¹³⁸ Steven Berlin Johnson, “The Glassbox and the Commonplace Book,” <http://www.stevenberlinjohnson.com/2010/04/the-glass-box-and-the-commonplace-book.html>, accessed 8 August 2011.

wider socio-cultural contexts, i.e. “a book of this sort, is in the nature of a supplemental memory, or a record of what occurs remarkable in every day’s reading or conversation.”¹³⁹

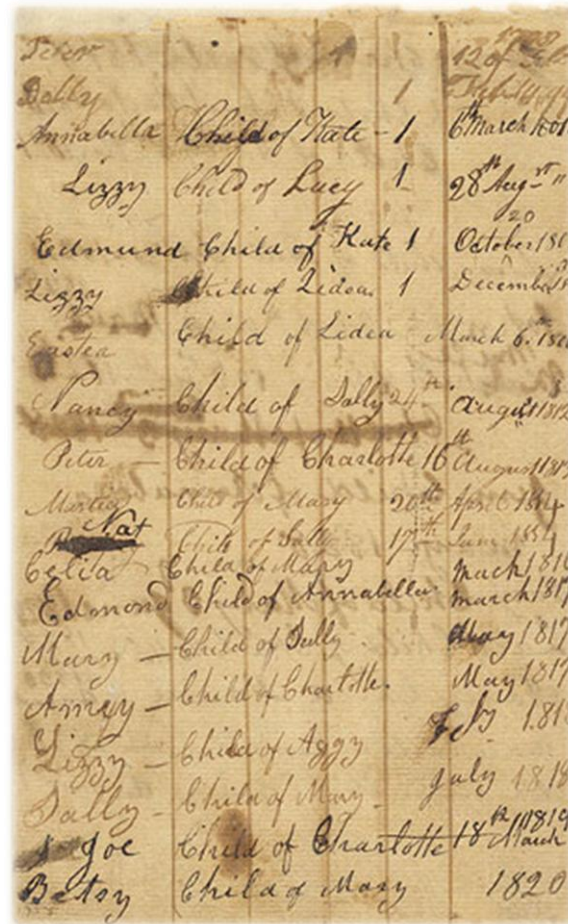


Figure 3 | Ann Powell Burwell, Commonplace Book, 1746–1839, available from http://www.vahistorical.org/img/research/tacl_keckley2b.jpg.

The diary and the commonplace book thus might suit as a techno-logical precursor of blogging. Now, I do not wish to imply any progressivist determinism of a developing perfection through technologisation from commonplacing to blogging. Nor do I wish to advocate direct causal relationship. Rather, I find this historical glimpse interesting in view of the fact that as a popular practice commonplacing has never achieved widespread popularity in terms of number of people practicing it (as opposed to the immensely popular diary writing) nor the ‘effect’ on the public sphere (which even in diary writing was practically absent). Revitalised and substantially

¹³⁹ Jonathan Swift, “A letter of advice to a young poet,” http://classicalit.about.com/library/bl-etexts/js/bswift/bl-jswift-letad.htm?IAM=sheerlock_abc&terms=commonplace+book, accessed 8 August 2011.

enhanced in blogging, it apparently triumphs through the technology enabled by the internet; not surprisingly, it has achieved comparably greater public effect and engagement.¹⁴⁰

The key implication for the purposes of this writing is that that commonplace book, diary and blogging feature as technologies of memory and remembering and while the former was geographically relatively limited,¹⁴¹ blogging eventually became a worldwide practice, professional and pastime, of keeping track of one's life, expressing and sharing thoughts and ideas, political opining, reviewing the latest technical gadgets, unveiling the secrets of the joys of baking etc. Blogging developed into a commonplace practice of participating/intervening/co-creating public spaces. Not unimportantly, blogging was, alongside forums and mailing lists, one of the first tools for creating and maintaining online communities in DME. In line with the implications of the connectivity turn, blogging involves the relationship between the author and the readers/commentators who engage in interaction around a topic or an event. They partake in co-creating a virtual community and its own history, and hence also in sharing memories via digital connectivity, which incidentally makes blogging a practice for creating, co-creating and distributing memory.

Although in many cases blogging may not be explicitly memory-related or have an agenda of creating a record of the past, the practice itself—through its formal organisation (e.g. the chronology of entries)—is nevertheless conducive to forming a temporal structure and thus a means to trace blogging activity. This is the necessary condition for ad hoc communities of interest to be formed. And, with it also communities of memory. To a large extent blog (much like any social activity), contrary to the implication of endless online audiences, develops over time a more or less stable, not necessarily enormous, but an (at least occasionally) interacting community of readers/visitors.¹⁴²

Blog as a Multimodal Mobile Media Object

The readership in this case are not just readers, but rather visitors or users who take part in prosuming the blog's content available via Web 2.0 functionalities (commenting, following),

¹⁴⁰ For instance, “mom bloggers,” according to the Technorati *State of the Blogosphere* (SOTB) report has become an influential blogger subgroup, topics include parenting and family, health, technology, etc., see <http://technorati.com/blogging/article/what-topics-and-trends-day-2/page-3/>, accessed 8 August 2011.

¹⁴¹ Commonplacing was particularly popular in the 1800s (and later) Anglo and Romance world.

¹⁴² According to Jon Sobel's *SOTB* report, the topics people *blog* and *primarily blog* about are at 41 % and 18 %, respectively, “Personal Musings”; 37 % and 9 % on “Technology”; 27 % and 9 % on “Politics”; 22 % and 3 % on “Music”; see Jon Sobel, “WHAT: Topics and Trends – Day 2,” SOTB 2010, <http://technorati.com/blogging/article/what-topics-and-trends-day-2/page-2/>, accessed 8 August 2011.

which enable a blog to transform from a ‘mere’ written text into a multimodal mobile media object (4MO).¹⁴³ As a 4MO, a blog features several elements that define it as such: convergence of text, sound and image and video, the commenting feature, blog following, trackbacking, etc. 4MO features in blogs also facilitate the circulation or mobility of content among its readers, i.e. in the community. Importantly, as a 4MO, blogging is a means of promulgating content and consequentially of creating a community, emerging via more or less active partaking in the discussions and blog inter-linking.

Considering the fact that memory is often a latent or formal component of blogging, it may prove useful first to look at the technological predispositions enabling the practice of blogging and with it the practices of creating, maintaining, co-creating and distributing memory. Typically, blogs are very much structured like a diary: entries are marked by the date, day and time of posting and usually ordered chronologically with the most recent one on top, which provides a temporal structure and indeed a genealogy of the blog and the history of the writer’s engagement in the endeavour. Often, the posts are also accessible via categorising in the archive section, searchable either by topic or time of posting. Tagging is frequently employed to provide a wider selection of search criteria that may lead to finding a topic of interest. This temporal structure inherent in blogging provides for a formal or ‘technical memory,’ as it gives the visitor an overview of blog’s activities: duration of blog operation, coherence of posting, number of visitors, engagement of visitors in discussions, relationship between various connected/related blogs, etc.¹⁴⁴

Among the endless variety of blogging topics where memory may be more or less explicitly present, there is a number of blogs that deal specifically with history (and memory). Such blogs may be managed by researchers with backgrounds in social sciences and humanities, or amateurs

¹⁴³ The *SOTB* 2010 report states 90 % of bloggers use some kind of multimedia on their blogs, with photos leading convincingly at 87 % and video 50 %; the use of both audio (music or spoken) and text only ranges at about 10 % of multimedia used in blogs. See Jon Sobel, “HOW: Technology, Traffic and Revenue – Day 3,” *SOTB* 2010, <http://technorati.com/blogging/article/how-technology-traffic-and-revenue-day/>, accessed 8 August 2011.

¹⁴⁴ A rather intriguing case in topic specific blogging and memory is for instance found in food and travel blogging. In Jaden Hair’s *Steamy Kitchen* for instance (the blog is integrated into the main *Steamy Kitchen* website) the recipe entries are not only recipes but also very personal narratives related to food and to author’s private life. Thus with the recipe for roasted tomato soup the visitor can find out about author’s life in San Francisco. Another case in this vein is the blog of Joy the Baker. Here the author regularly posts recipes and embellishes the entries with very personal/intimate, easy-going, funny frequently food-related vignettes giving insight into the author’s life: “This blog is proof that I’m navigating my way through the world. You’ll get a little bit about life, and a healthy heap of love, cookies, cakes and creams. Together we’ll figure out how they all come together to create one incredibly sweet life.” Travel blogs will give a more or less detailed account of a person’s travelling experience by employing textual narrative interspersed with photos and occasionally videos, depicting a particular place in a particular time. Not only that, as is the case in many narrativisations of personal (past) experiences such ‘photo-writing’ also reveals much about the writer’s attitude to the world, other people and places. Via DME specific blogging characteristics the interaction thus enabled facilitates establishment of a community which through sharing their travel experiences ‘connects’ between themselves and to the world. Their memories are thus enacted at the moment of connection which then becomes the moment of memory, regardless of the exact where- or when-about of the interactors.

and enthusiasts alike. Thus, for instance, Florian Bieber and Catherine Baker keep their blogs and post on topics related also to the history of Yugoslavia, Central and South-East Europe (and beyond). Bieber's, for instance, is part of a website divided into several sections, apart from the blog also featuring a podcasts, books, media, publications, talks and teaching sections.¹⁴⁵ Hosted by wordpress.com, one of the most popular blog service providers, Bieber's blog is not just a blog, but a more elaborate endeavour of an individual to present his professional life occasionally spliced with private musings in the 'fun' section.

This example illustrates the blurring of the private and professional in building a public image or participating in a public sphere. And it furthermore reveals the blurring between genre and/or technology: blog services initially provided space for blogs where remediation worked on the level of transfiguring diary writing into blogging. This example demonstrates remediation underway 'already' in the 'new' media by converging a website and blog (not to mention the use of photos and videos) and is also reflected in Wikipedia's definition of a blog stating that a blog is "(a blend of the term web log) is a type of website or part of a website."¹⁴⁶ Crucially, however, the blog brings academic writing dealing with the past to the readers, for free,¹⁴⁷ inviting them to engage in discussions about the topics related to either their professional fields or their very intimate histories (Bieber writes extensively about post-Yugoslav political developments related to Yugoslav history). The way history enters the discourses on these blogs is mainly via articulation in presentations of research through either podcasts or articles and daily blog entries.

On the other hand, the blog's 'technical memory' gives an insight into the 'history' of posts (author's and commentator'), interest in themes and topic, and not least the development as a blogger. Although it is mainly history (and political science) that these two researchers are dealing with (given that they are trained in these disciplines and their agenda is to present themselves in more academic terms), the implication of fusing private with public remains apparent even in the most mundane responses to the contemporary political situation, be it in the Balkans or in Egypt.

Yugoslavia in Some Blogs' Digital Storytelling

Now, the above mentioned blogs are essentially a public presentation of two academics professionally dealing with their research topics. A gaze into the more everyday attempts, on the

¹⁴⁵ See Florian Bieber, <http://fbieber.wordpress.com>, accessed 8 August 2011.

¹⁴⁶ "Blog," from Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopaedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blog>, accessed 8 August 2011.

¹⁴⁷ Catherine Baker, "Where to Read my Research Without Subscription," <http://bakercatherine.wordpress.com/2011/02/15/where-to-read-my-research-without-subscription/>, accessed 8 August 2011.

other hand, may yield perhaps less structured, rationalised or reflected (although not necessarily) accounts which provide a more emotional, at times deeply engaged encounters with the past. Many such cases of digital vernacular memory and remembering can be found on blogs that more or less extensively or marginally deal with the fate of Yugoslavia. Many of the narrativisations of the past thus presented are only a part of authors' otherwise more variegated interest in a various selection of topics and only devote some attention to the memory of Yugoslavia. To illustrate the scope and the distance between numerous narrativisations, let me point out the multi-authored *Bašta Balkana Blog*, which among others hosts the entry “Treća Jugoslavija – država veća od svojih sinova i poneke kćeri” [Third Yugoslavia – a country bigger than her sons and some of her daughters] by Zlatko Šćepanović. The author published a lengthy post on the past/future fates of the country, rather ironically beginning with:

The former Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia was a big, beautiful, happy and strong country. Far bigger, better and more beautiful and happier than the new Balkan states, sunk in primitivism, corruption, clashes and dealing. The power, greatness and beauty of a country apparently were not enough to keep this allnational fabric last longer. Idiocy and passion of her children buried it.¹⁴⁸

The author proceeds to trace the reasons for the interest some people today take in the country in:

Easy life, continual progress, work actions and socialising, diverse climate, geography, people, food, flora and fauna, beautiful scenery, wealth of waters, nations and diverse lifestyles, developed music and cinema cultures, friendship with most of world countries, positioned the country among one of the top locations for living. Interesting claim, isn't it?¹⁴⁹

Clearly a very nostalgic beginning of an indeed nostalgic (textual) narrative which is further enhanced by embedded YouTube videos, featuring the Yugoslav anthem, the Yugoslav's all-time-favourite *Od vardara pa do Triglava* performed by the Ladarice ensemble, *Yugo* by a contemporary Slovenian band Rock Partyzani and still famous and often covered song by Đorđe Balašević, *Računajte na nas*. These videos provide an audiovisual complement to the narrative which the author in the comment section declares non-nostalgic.¹⁵⁰ The text, in brief, recounts the reasons for the break-up of the country and proposes a possible future, a Third Yugoslavia. The

¹⁴⁸ Zlatko Šćepanović, “Treća Jugoslavija – država veća od svojih sinova i poneke kćeri” <http://www.bastabalkana.com/2010/11/treca-jugoslavija-drzava-veca-od-svojih-sinova-i-poneke-kceri/>, accessed 8 August 2011. Unless stated otherwise, all translations are from the Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ For a detailed account on YouTube videos as digital memorials see Chapter 3.

videos are used as audiovisual records of the past, which in a Kracauerian manner establish in the present and image of and about and from the past.¹⁵¹

In the debate that follows, the nostalgic hue seems to be the central issue: it provides a very positive evaluation of Yugoslav past and its future prospects. The narrative downplays the part of the story often untold, that of the crimes perpetrated by the Yugoslav state. This topic is taken up, on the other hand, by another blogger on *Crni blog komunizma*,¹⁵² where the author engages in disclosing the darker episodes of Yugoslav history, just as vigorously perpetuating an interpretation that disregards the broadness of historical picture and utterly denies any truthful contextualisation.

These two blogs re-presence different shards of the past and hence deal with Yugoslav memory matters in extremely oppositional, contested and exclusive terms. In DME and online renarrativisations of the past this is not to be unexpected, as via the long tail effect the internet provides space and technology to voice obscure stories to not so insignificant, temporally and spatially dispersed audiences; this means that different, opposing and or clashing narratives are bound to abound, attract quantitatively significant following, and find resonance. Yet, the above and many similar instances are not what would seem a particularly interesting topic for my research: there is little temporal consistency, i.e. neither of the two demonstrates (at the time of writing at least) longer term engagement that would entail searching for, digging the material out of the media debris of Yugoslav history. Not dismissing these cases as irrelevant, this research nevertheless engages with digital renditions of Yugoslav past(s) that express more coherence, dedication, and a mission to preserve the memory of the country, particularly in popular cultural reappropriations and renarrativisations.

A Blog as a Virtual Museum

One such case is the blog *Yugoslavia – A Virtual Museum*.¹⁵³ This blog was regularly updated between 2009 and 2010 (the last post at the time of writing is dated 17 December 2010) and only resumed activities in June 2011. In terms of presentation and content it is a more coherent attempt to present an individual's take on Yugoslav past mainly relying on photographic material.

The blog's mission statement reads:

¹⁵¹ Siegfried Kracauer, *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality*, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1997 [1960], xlix.

¹⁵² See *Crni blog komunizma*, <http://crniblogkomunizma.blog.hr/>, accessed 8 August 2011.

¹⁵³ See *Yugoslavia – Virtual Museum*, <http://yugoslavian.blogspot.com/>, accessed 8 August 2011.

Yugoslavia is gone, but the Yugoslavs stayed. We are scattered all over the world, without a homeland. This blog will be an ever-growing collection of items from Tito's Yugoslavia. The right-wing nationalists that split up Yugoslavia are rewriting history, trying even to erase the memory of our homeland. This blog will be a small step in preventing that, and also a window into a Yugoslavian life between 1945 and 1992.

The blogger, a Yugoslav now apparently residing in New York, USA,¹⁵⁴ assembles audiovisual bits and pieces for his blog as an emigrant without a homeland. As opposed to emigration that most often has at least a shade of hope of returning home someday, the Yugoslav (blogger's nickname) and in fact all post-Yugoslavs are de facto 'de-patriated,' left in their new countries to (share) their memories and memories of others (who decide to share them). The post-Yugoslavs—a category that can be applied to residents of SFRY who in 1991 either emigrated or became citizens of one of the new countries—are perhaps the first to have been put to the test and engage with the potential of digital technology and the preservation and distribution of memory in DME.¹⁵⁵

Scattered around the world, the internet served as an affordable, handy and indeed useful tool to re-establish, maintain or mend the bonds that were broken during the collapse of the country. And, as Yugoslav alludes, the newly founded states with their respective national founding myths in the making have been actively engaged in annihilating the memory of Yugoslavia. But, digital memory co-created online and distributed through DME (or any other memory for that matter) is not a monument that can be torn down or a street name to be changed. Rather, memory in DME and 4MOs 'resides' in or rather is enacted, as argued in Chapter 1, through connectivity, i.e. through human-computer-human interaction, and in discrete algorithmic exchanges between machines. Therefore, to delete the record of it takes a different kind of approach, if there is one.

¹⁵⁴ As can be deciphered from "About Me," see <http://www.blogger.com/profile/14316229210367248105>, accessed 8 August 2011.

¹⁵⁵ The Somalis shared somewhat similar fate with the disintegration of Somalia, see: Abdisalam M. Issa-Salwe, "The Internet and the Somali Diaspora: The Web as a New Means of Expression," *Bildhaan: An International Journal of Somali Studies*, 2008, vol. 6, 54-67, <http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/bildhaan/vol6/iss1/8>, accessed 8 August 2011. The topic of diaspora and the internet has been covered extensively, see for instance Jannis Androutsopoulos, "Multilingualism, diaspora, and the Internet: Codes and identities on German-based diaspora websites," *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, Vol. 10, Issue 4, 520-547, September 2006; Ignacio, E. N., Building diaspora: Filipino cultural community formation on the Internet, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2005; Kanat, K., "Ethnic media and politics: The case of the use of the Internet by Uyghur diaspora," *First Monday* 10(7), <http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/1259/1179>, accessed 8 August 2011.

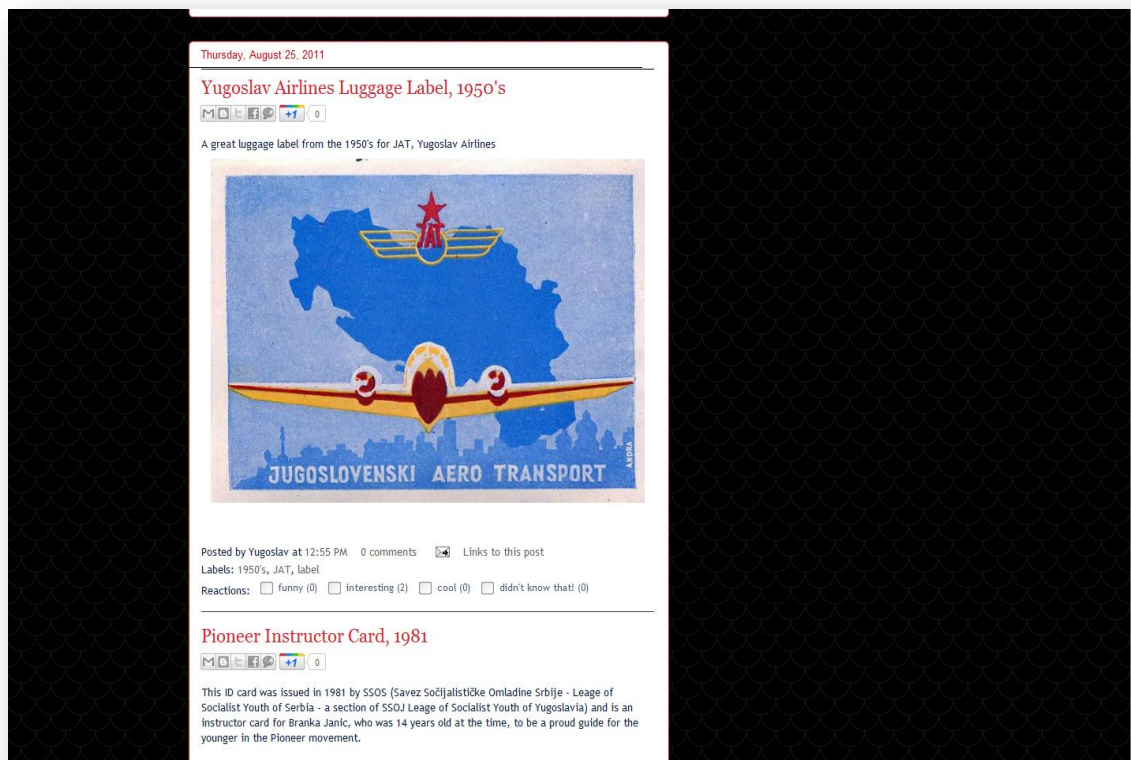


Figure 4 | Yugoslav Airlines Luggage Label, 1950's, available from <http://yugoslavian.blogspot.com/2011/08/1950s-yugoslav-airlines-luggage-label.html>.

Conceived as a window on the Yugoslav ephemera and quotidian, the *Yugoslav Virtual Museum* hosts/curates a number of very different items: photographs, music and video, organised in chronological posts. The first blog posts in 2009 contain photos of film posters of some of the popular Yugoslav films, photographs of several car number plates, accompanied with a note on the logic of assigning abbreviations; a lengthy post on the writer Milorad Pavić, and an entry on the Yugoslav People's Army (JLA). The "Happy New Year with Lepa Brena" entry posted on the last day of 2009 says: "During the entire decade of 1980's it could not be imagined to have a New Year's Eve TV program celebrations without TV stations boasting about the presence of Lepa Brena – a true Yugoslavian mega-star, often referred to as Brena Nazionale, as her millions of fans came from literally all parts of Yugoslavia."¹⁵⁶ The post includes several photos, not scans, of the various magazines featuring Lepa Brena.

¹⁵⁶ "Happy New Year With Lepa Brena," *Yugoslavia – Virtual Museum*, <http://yugoslavian.blogspot.com/search?updated-min=2009-01-01T00%3A00%3A00-05%3A00&updated-max=2010-01-01T00%3A00%3A00-05%3A00&max-results=50>, accessed 8 August 2011.

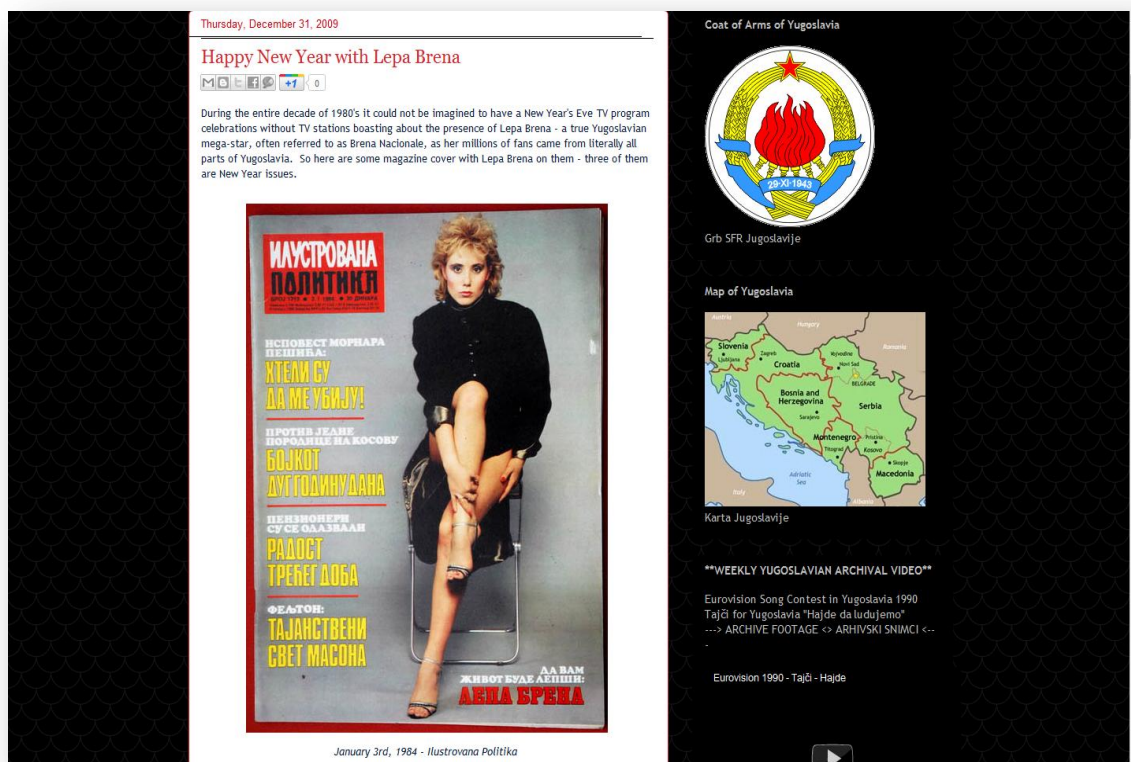


Figure 5 | Happy New Year with Lepa Brena, available from <http://yugoslavian.blogspot.com/2009/12/happy-new-year-with-lepa-brena.html>.

The strategy to photograph rather than scan items seems telling: a scan would eradicate the distinction between the object and its representation, but the photograph of a magazine quite overtly emphasises the fact that the story is about an ‘object’ that can be touched, smelled, torn apart even. Finally, the post has a video embedded of Brena performing on New Year’s Eve 1988. Yugoslavian posts many other things, including photos of toy phones, various medals and orders, post stamps, a series of photos of a porcelain plate featuring a Yugoslav coat of arms in silver. In a post from 1 May 2010, Yugoslavian presents a collection of six LPs featuring working and brigade’s songs, and a homemade video to a popular marching song, “Long live Labour,” featuring panning views over different LPs covers.¹⁵⁷ (This post is a good example of what several other blogs that I am now turning to attempt on a considerably larger scale.)

These posts, taken as a whole represent facets of everyday life in Yugoslavia and indeed provide a window, selectively opened by the blogger; a window all the more in that a photo is in fact a frame opening onto a photographed object and the iconography it conveys. With a few exceptions

¹⁵⁷ See “Labor Day, May 1,” *Yugoslavia – Virtual Museum*, <http://yugoslavian.blogspot.com/2009/05/labor-day-may-1st.html>, accessed 21 August 2011.

the posts are fairly scant textually but provide a compelling visual database. The collection of colour, black-and-white, grainy and pale, photographs of Belgrade airport, for instance, provide the visitor with a view of times past. The effect of ‘pastness’ is achieved precisely via the ‘noise’ in the photos not normally present in images born digital, i.e. slightly deteriorated edges, yellowy hue, etc.: in general, the ‘noisy imperfection’ that cannot be algorithmically reproduced. Online, however, the bite of time will be absent.

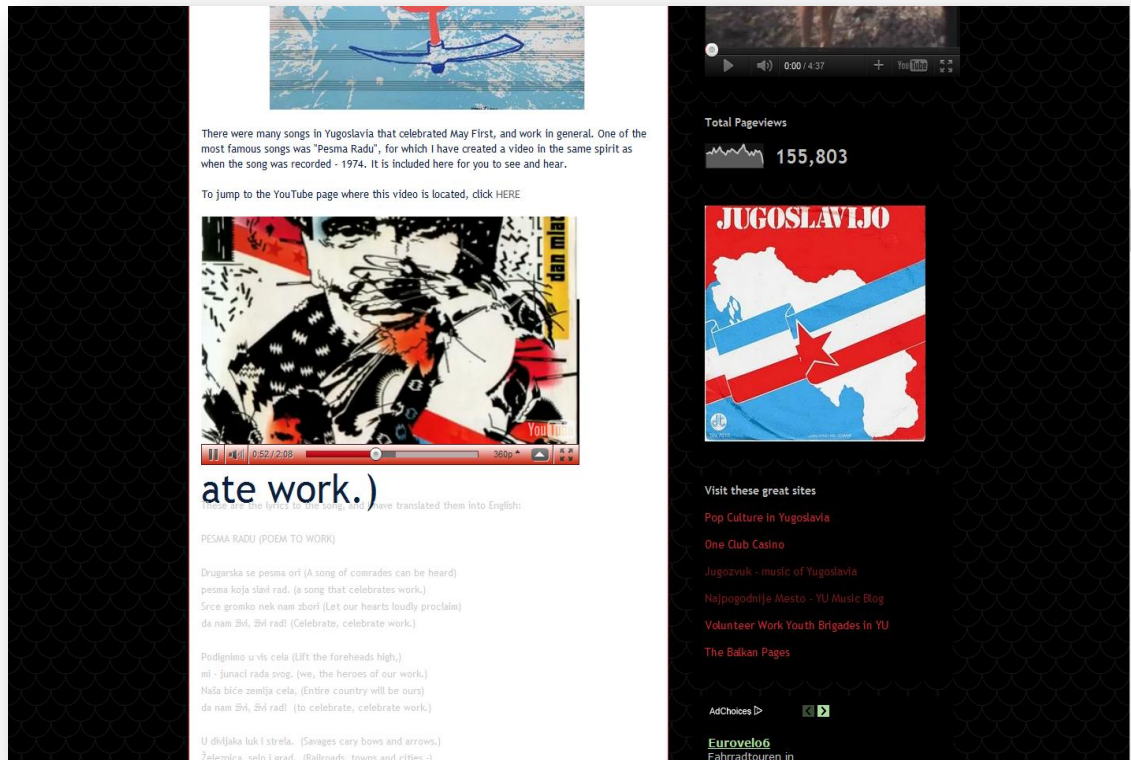


Figure 6 | Embedded videos, “Long Live Labour,” available from <http://yugoslavian.blogspot.com/2010/05/few-songs-from-youth-day-celebrations.html>.

With respect to the scope of the blog it is clear that the topics are arbitrarily chosen and ordered by the blogger with a few not insignificant exceptions in correlating the date of posting with the date of the content represented. This demonstrates a very enthusiastic approach to acquiring the material, and a longer term intention to keep the blog running. The blog seems a good example of grass-roots digital preservation of the past and a vehicle to remembering via diffusing images and sounds. Apart from this, it is one of the online places where remembering is possible via clicking through the posts, reading the (not too many) comments and possibly commenting yourself. As arbitrary as this selection may be, it is a selection that nevertheless brings into the realm of

memory and remembering in DME an engaged attempt to preserve a vanishing past. And this is also what the music blogs do in considerably larger scale, albeit in a slightly different manner.

Popular Music: Heritage and Memory

In this chapter I interrogate music blogging as an online activity aiming to preserve Yugoslav popular musical heritage and musical memory, or memory of the music that after 1991 and the collapse of the country (and its music industry) irreparably became a matter of the past. Or rather, by looking at several music blogs I ask how the Yugoslav popular music may feature today as a vehicle to convey and co-create memories of the Yugoslav era. The practice of creating and running such blogs, as elaborated below, is decidedly related to offline, material worlds and presupposes an individual ‘on a mission,’ i.e. an activity that effectively attempts a media archaeology: excavating long-lost carriers of sound, and sound themselves. By intervention of digital technology these are made available again—online. Before getting to the matter of Yugoslav music blogging, in this section I discuss the relationship between music and memory.

Music is always elusive in terms of its (performed) existence in an environment and even more so as a research object.¹⁵⁸ It was so before and it is just as bad more than a century after Edison’s phonograph first preserved a sound to be replayed later. Initially his idea was to create a device to be used by secretaries to record their boss’s dictation and the phonograph only later made it into the sphere of music industry and stardom and fan cultures and commodity. Since then the recording of sound has come a long way. In terms of technology, from wax cylinders and tin foil rolls to vinyl, MC, CD and finally to an array of digital compression algorithms that mp3 is probably the most famous example of. And in terms of social experience of listening to recorded sound—music: from collective neighbourhood gatherings around a radio or a gramophone to listening to records in teenager’s rooms to walkmans playing back music on streets and buses to individualised head-set ear-plugging shutting-out-world devices that enable a perfectly lonesome experience. Yet, in terms of simultaneity of collective reception, not necessarily a lonely one.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸ The experience of music entails listening to, hearing a sound, or rather a series of sounds that are comprised of melody and lyrics, and the setting/context of listening.

¹⁵⁹ Victor Burgin, *In/Different Spaces, Place and Memory in Visual Culture*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, University of California Press, 1996, 158.

Finally, if initially recording and music were accused of removing the sound from its source,¹⁶⁰ the digital lives of music files seem to have removed the physicality of music entirely.

Music can be encountered either at/as a live performance, heard on the radio or from a playback device. It inhabits the space for a designated period of time and cannot exist outside time and space. To hear the music or to listen to a song means to be permanently on the verge of losing it, until it is over when it is gone completely. Still, its traces may not wear off that easily: the listener is not entirely 'free' from its grasp. Rather, one is left with stirred emotions, bubbling mental images of oneself or someone else in/from another place or another time. During the 'musical intake,' the music participates in creating a decidedly intimate, private space-time continuum. The duration of the sound series, the melody and the lyrics consumed in a particular time and space create a specific soundscape which is 'fatally' related to the psychological constellation of the listening individual, her position in a historical, social, cultural environment and not least to the whim of a moment. The soundscape created by interweaving of melody, rhythm, lyrics and the surrounding environment, and the memories and representations invoked by and while listening to a song, renders an extremely fertile ground to be invested with individual's feelings, visions, thoughts. In sum, consuming music can be understood in terms of fusion and convergence of the song in all its dimensions with the individual's inner world, in all its dimensions.

Here Michel Chion gives a useful approach in conceptualising the role of popular song in cinema: in his *The voice in Cinema*, Chion writes about the specific characteristics of a pop song—materially, it is delimited by the capacity of a circular single record to just about three minutes; formally, it has an overture, peak and ending; and most importantly, the form is repetitive. Repetitive (think of the round shape of the record, circularity breeding repetition) in the sense that it can be played again and again, and also in that the structure of the song is repetitive and contingent itself: it may have a beginning, middle and end, but the very structure of a song (couplet, chorus) yields to filling the structural slots with different lyrics.¹⁶¹

Different words (that fit the same melodic structure) and melody thus can be consumed infinitely. What is more, this randomness facilitates different parts of the lyrics, or in fact entirely new (personalised) lyrics, to be applied and re-applied, in one's mind, to this open musical structure.¹⁶² The dramatic structure of the song is interspersed with a refrain, which breaks the temporal linearity to establish an impression of a circular repetition, of a neverend. In a way the song thus

¹⁶⁰ See Ruth Benschop, "Memory machines or musical instruments?: Soundscapes, recording technologies and reference," *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 2007, 10, 485–502, 488.

¹⁶¹ Michel Chion, *The Voice in Cinema*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1998.

¹⁶² Ibid.

becomes a ‘world’ of its own, a space which an individual may ‘populate’ with mediatised images and personal renditions of realities, past and present. Importantly, this aids the creation of an audiovisual landscape, which significantly informs the way an individual perceives of the song, and consequentially of the surrounding environment and the wider historical, social and cultural milieus in which the song is inscribed through the listeners own ‘bodily’ and symbolical inscription into space and socio-cultural constellations. Not unimportantly, the song is thereupon also inscribed into the memory of the listener. As Karin Bijsterveld and Jose van Dijck argue,

[S]ound and memory are inextricably intertwined with each other, not just through repetition of familiar tunes and commercially exploited nostalgia on oldies radio stations, but through the exchange of valued songs by means of pristine recordings and recording apparatuses, as well as through cultural practices such as collecting, archiving and listening.¹⁶³

A remnant of the past, with its malleability and openness of interpretation, a popular song transgresses embeddedness on the individual level of the performer/listener onto the level of a collectively shared social experience. Listening to a song on the radio is a completely different experience as is listening to the same song on your hi-fi, iPod etc. Knowing that other people are listening to it at the very same time not necessarily facilitates a collective experience, but it surely posits the listener within the wider, collective audio environment.

Moreover, simultaneously a highly private experience and by means of participation-in-listening a decidedly social one, music captures, reflects and produces feelings and “music’s ability to elicit highly personal emotions and associations seems to help people to relieve their past over and over again.”¹⁶⁴ For example, it is common, when listening to a dear song related to one’s past, to relive at least some of the feeling (and with its contextual experience and personal and more collective past as well) experienced while listening to that particular sound and lyrics in a personally significant environment, time, mood. And it is just as common to redefine and reinterpret the feeling every time the song is heard. The collective aspect of listening to music, the Victor Burgin’s simultaneity of collective reception, posits the music in a way so as to inscribe the individual’s experience into a broader social picture. This however, does not imply that listening to music is conducive to forming/maintaining a collective or a community. Still, as Philip Auslander argues, “the sense of community arises from being part of an audience, and the quality of the experience of community derives from the specific audience situation, not from the

¹⁶³ Karin Bijsterveld and José van Dijck, “Introduction,” in Karin Bijsterveld and José van Dijck (eds.), *Sound Souvenirs, Audio Technologies, Memory and Cultural Practices*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2009, 11.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

spectacle for which that audience has gathered.”¹⁶⁵ Although the “reality of our cultural economy is that the communal bond unifying such an audience is most likely to be little more than the common consumption of a particular performance commodity,”¹⁶⁶ the individual’s experience is influenced by her own rendition/identification of the commonality ‘presumably’ residing in or being transferred by music. Thus music does work as a social adhesive, as a platform for shared experience for various populations, sub-cultures or shared-interest groups.

Relevant for this study, however, is the ‘capacity of music to capture a specific historical moment,’ dimension, a feeling, and transmit it along into the future. There, in the future, clearly it has to be ‘de-captured’ decoded into the present mind of the listener in a specifically distinct historical, socio-cultural situation. The strategies, roughly, are two: to just consume such music or in fact use it to establish an engaged relationship with the past, one’s own and that from which this music came. What is crucial in this respect is the investigation into *how* the music is dealt with, interpreted and remediated today (therefore I am not looking into the particular production modes or genre specifics; this is not a history of Yugoslav popular music, rather an insight into the archaeology of vinyl music). The space-time, the past or history captured within the songscape(s) works in close interaction with one’s very private set of experiences and feelings in the present and is also in constant interaction with the realm of the ‘anticipated’ collective. Listening to a song can take us back to when we listened to a certain kind of music, it can remind us of what we were doing and/or feeling at the time, and it can invoke a certain feeling of a time, *Zeitgeist*. Yet it can also serve to narrate a specific view/understanding of the past by virtue of transmitting the audiovisual images of the world no longer present, but highly mediated, and re-placing them into a world today. And it is through this lens that I look at Yugoslav popular musical heritage.

I have argued above that music can serve as a sort of social adhesive and an individual cultural vortex, yet the question arises whether music is capable of transmitting more than personal experiences. To put it differently, is it ever possible to gain through the music of a certain period access to the gist of that specific period (not physical of course)? Due to the massive mediatization of the quotidian, I think popular music can in fact re-presence, if but a fraction, a scent of times passed ... it can provide a glimpse into the socio-cultural environment of Yugoslavia. What is more, music and audio recording can be used in trying to ‘control’ the inaccessible past.¹⁶⁷ Yet, the desire to control the past via navigating, managing, appropriating its representations, is further complicated in DME where the replication, mixing, sampling meshing add to the malleability,

¹⁶⁵ Philip Auslander, *Liveness, Performance in a mediatized culture*, New York, Routledge, 2008, 65.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 64.

¹⁶⁷ Karin Bijsterveld and José van Dijck, “Introduction,” 20.

instability, fluidity of the very source material (i.e. a song), to say nothing about the consequences on the level of individual interpretation or consumption.

Another question is what purpose preservation of music and memory, or memory of music, or memory through music, may serve? The usual argumentation that it is better now to record as much as possible because one never can tell how immensely valuable a historical source that bit of the present may become, just does not do. A more comprehensive and engaged answer in this respect would go in the following direction: preserving music, and in the case the popular music heritage of Yugoslavia, the music that clearly outlasted the country to which it is still fatally tied, both in term of musical and lyrical expression, is not just about preservation. At least not just about the preservation of music itself, rather the preservation of a 'network' of social and cultural milieu or memories thereof, that to post-Yugoslavs today represents one of the few links to the life of a country which gave them the formative experience. Moreover, through the music preserved and available on the music blogs discussed below, an important part of Yugoslav history and also interpersonal and international relations are re-lived, re-formed ... through digital preservation, co-creation and distribution. It is, therefore, as Bijsterveld and van Dijck argue in the quote above, through the exchange of songs, through collecting, archiving and listing that a musical past is preserved and a collectivity (to some extent) recreated. It is clearly sharing that connects music to memory.

Music in Cyberspace

Yet, as soon as we start speaking of sharing in DME we inevitably stumble across the topic of music in cyberspace. The first thing that comes to mind when approaching digitised music and its circulation in DME is the availability of (mostly) copyrighted material which in its peer-to-peer circulation readily becomes 'pirate's bounty.' Downloading mp3s and/or viewing audiovisuals has become a popular pastime over the past fifteen years and has seen a quenching reaction on part of the music industry trying to confine free file sharing and punish the 'criminals.' Several P2P file-sharing services, such as Napster, Audiogalaxy (AG), etc., that were thriving at the turn of the millennium, were forced to cease their copyright violation and were consequently shut down or transformed into payable services. Giving space to large communities of music fans and artists, this was a clash between the DME principles of democratisation and socialising (and doing

business) and outdated principles of copyright based music industry, unable to adapt their business conduct to the shifting creative and business environments.¹⁶⁸

Despite the radical legal limitations and interventions, free music is still massively available on various more or less ephemeral sites hosting links to files at one or more of the numerous remote file-hosting sites. The more flexible policies, such as pay-per-song or album, as implemented/promoted by iTunes, Amazon and others seem to provide a reasonable response to the changes in DME and to the shifting power relations in digital media economy. Instead on rigidity immanent in the giants of music industry, this approach builds on generating revenue in small pieces from a wider crowd (i.e. Anderson's Long Tail Effect).

Nevertheless, sharing music outside the financially sanctioned and copyright abiding services and channels largely pervades digital media everyday practices and strategies, particularly via various torrent services where anything from latest cinema and music albums to digitised books can be found and obtained for free. Another popular way is music blogging, the type of it that provides links to remote file-sharing systems where zip or rar files of entire albums are stored. As fiercely as one might argue that this is an infringement of copyright, intellectual property, it can just as fiercely be argued that P2P file sharing (and this goes for music in particular) is in fact promoting obscure/marginal music and artists—making them available to unprecedented audiences—that would otherwise never be heard. Moreover, and particularly relevant for this discussion, is that such services in fact enable the preservation of music that would otherwise most definitely be utterly lost. For my purposes it is crucial to discuss the function of sharing and circulation of music in DME, and to illuminate the practices and strategies of how music can be repurposed in re-narrativisation of Yugoslav past.

As indicated above, music emerges from a material object situated in space (an instrument, a playback device); it lasts in time for a certain amount of time and is eventually lost (unless replayed) to the flow of time we are all victims of. When played back from a device it leaves no apparent physical trace on the mind and body of a listener, despite its bisensoriality, but, as argued above, it does leave a psychological one. Sound on the one hand is a physical force capable of spreading through the air (airwaves) and 'making things move,' while it also has the capacity of 'attacking' the ears and mind by its 'content': melody, rhythm and lyrics. The transience of sound and music was much more obvious before Edison's recording technology enabled the preservation

¹⁶⁸ As of late 2010, AG is offering flat-rate cloud placeshifting service, after nearly a decade of paying downloading service, Rhapsody, which succeeded the original free P2P service. The 'new' AG service allows for storing your music remotely and accessing it from (streaming it to) whatever device is at hand (mobile, tablet, PC); see Audiogalaxy, <http://www.audiogalaxy.com/>, accessed 8 August 2011.

of sound (albeit initially for different purposes than we usually think today) on an unprecedented scale causing the enjoyment and consumption of music to become considerably different, and everyday life as well.¹⁶⁹ As the playback devices came rather expensive in the early days, the development of radio technology and listening practices seemed to have unravelled within a setting where sound (music, news) could be listened to/consumed collectively, only to be collectively forgotten and remembered. It is precisely the radio as a device that enabled the collective sharing-in the musical experience that caused the emergence of that special feeling one gets when hearing a particular song on the airwaves, knowing that many remote others are probably also sharing-in this very same experience, at this very same time. The verses by a Slovenian poet Janez Menart and sang by one of the famous singers and songwriters from the former Yugoslavia, Arsen Dedić, adequately subsume the experience:

*Noč bo že, glej, zdaj sva sama / Več je noč, gle sad smo sami [It's night already, look, we're alone now]
 tiho radio igra / tiho radio svira [Quietly, the radio's playing]
 in, nad pesmijo, med nama / i and pjesmom, među nama [And on the waves of the song, from me to you]
 od src pa do srca / od srca do srca [From my heart to yours]
 blodi mehka bolečina / brodi naša bolest laka [Wades our joyful malady]
 ki ji sreča je ime / kojoj sreća je ime [Called happiness]
 ki zaljubljenice spomina / koja zaljubljene sjeća [Reminding lovers]
 vsega kar si žele / onog što si žele [Of their desires]¹⁷⁰*

If in the music culture before recorded music listening was an ephemeral experience, it in the (analogue) recording culture became a repeatable one. Now, in DME, the third, post-recorded (i.e. digital) musical culture has emerged which relegates listening to music as a practice of listening to fragmented and recontextualised bits and pieces, of remixed samples, and frequently to less attentive music engagement.

If in the 'good old days' of the vinyl the object-/carrier-/record-centred listening experience revolved around first buying a record, and then playing it and listening to the tracks, usually with a couple of friends, 'unrandomly,' i.e. consecutively, the story has changed somewhat with CDs. The CD enabled random/shuffle and repeat functions and programming of track order (pretty much impossible with vinyl records). It could be argued that the need of the listener to 'physically engage' with the machine to replay, rewind or skip a track kept her closer to the practice of listening to music. On the other hand, mp3s (and inevitable playlists) on the digital end of storing

¹⁶⁹ See Lisa Gitelman, *Always Already New*.

¹⁷⁰ This is a rough translation from the Slovene and the Croatian.

and replaying music require much less effort to set up a list which can then be endlessly replayed and/or updated, thus making music increasingly a soundtrack of our lives.

Hence, the digital listener is in a way much more disengaged from the process of listening, i.e. music becomes in the media everyday one's 'silent,' if remarkably salient companion: always there, with little to say. Or, it has in fact much more to communicate (genre preferences, and not least identity) to the people who happen to hear it (which is also the case with analogue music, but to a much smaller extent, as the mobile is much more handy than a huge cassette player). What is more, when we consider the sheer amount of music files compiled and stored on an ordinary hard drive, iPod or a mobile, keeping track of digital music becomes an act of devout endeavour. This is further exacerbated when downloading large amounts of music. Such pastime activity can turn into an obsession of compiling and never really listening to most of the music. On the other hand, the ways and chances to encounter new music are greatly improved precisely due to random discoveries.

Music in this case becomes a quintessential mobile media object, and considering that downloaded music often bears metatextual data, such as genre tags, release date/year, name of artist and songs, bit-rate, artwork etc. music files circulated online are good examples of multimodality of media objects. Mobility in this sense subsumes downloading and/or streaming music files, their potentially endless distribution and also the creation of unanticipated, ad-hoc audiences, which becomes particularly relevant in view of the capacity of music aired via radio discussed above to entangle the listeners into a 'musical collective.' That said, musical collectivities share their individual memories via sharing the music, i.e. participation in a music (sub)culture even without much (or any) physical contact may on the basis of admittedly partial and fragmented information nevertheless result in a sense of bonding: people tend to fill in the gaps of what they do not know with what they expect, and music is definitely a 'material' and practice conducive to such behaviour. The ever-present media object, a music file, assumes existence beyond the limits of here and now (of an individual or collectivity) to become a trans-temporal marker of another place and another time (of an individual or collectivity).

The interesting aspect of the mobility of music files concerns the individual engaged in enabling such mobility by uploading and/or downloading, i.e. the intrigue lies in why one does it. The first thought is that people refuse to pay money for physical sound carriers or digital tracks/albums. While to some extent this may be the case, it is not, however, the whole story. This interpretation neglects the fact that uploaded music had to be bought at some point and it completely ignores the motives of the uploader to share music. The use of term *sharing* in subsequent stages or online

availability of music is much clearer and hints into the direction where to look for answer. In this respect it is important to acknowledge the motives to search for, digitise and provide music for free to fellow music lovers despite the copyright issues and the potential to face criminal charges. The discussion on music blogging below will further elaborate on these issues.

Blogging Yugoslav Popular Music

I love it when you come here, but you should take a more active part in this blog as this is a heritage of a time and you should understand that any preserved sound may represent your part in preserving the memory of and truth about a country. Well, it had disintegrated but I think that it still lives as an idea and it will outlive all of us who come here, and one day, perhaps under a different name this will once again be the land of the South Slavs. Until then we will write about it and put up sounds from this former and pre-former Yugoslavia.

The number of inhabitants of a large city visited this site or blog and thank you for this. We try (myself and my dear contributors) to provide you with more beautiful things.¹⁷¹

Music blogs in general do not physically store any music files but rather provide links to remote file-hosting sites from where the music is then readily available for download.¹⁷² This strategy of remote file storage and particularly the structure of music blogs remain a constant feature in music blogging, regardless of the genres, periods etc. that they may indulge in. The main reason is clearly an attempt to avoid copyright breach, as in most cases the music is (still) copyrighted, and also the fact that a site with large files would be too 'heavy.' The former is clearly discernible in many blog policies, where the blogger still provides links to full albums, but at the same time

¹⁷¹ "Drugarice i drugovi uskoro prelazimo 500.000 poseta na ovom blogu," *Jugozvuk*, <http://jugozvuk.blogspot.com/2010/01/drugarice-i-drugovi-uskoro-prelayimo.html>, accessed 8 August 2011.

¹⁷² To avoid confusion, let me explain what kind of music blogging I am talking about, as there are several types: 1) blogging about music, i.e. writing about the scene, new releases etc.; 2) adding a music player to a blog that plays tracks or playlists; and finally, what is the central topic here, 3) music blogging this research investigates is the type of blogging where the posts or comments feature, along the description of the posted material, also the link to a remote file-sharing system where the music is 'actually' located.

encourages the visitors to buy.¹⁷³ As ambiguous in terms of copyright compliance as this position may seem, along with storing files on remote servers this strategy clearly features as a cover.



Figure 7 | Friends and followers on JugoZVuk, available from <http://jugoZVuk.blogspot.com/>.

Before moving on to discuss the post-Yugoslav music blogs, first a few words on music blog structure. Much like any other blog, a music blog is usually introduced by a heading explaining in brief what the blog is about, declaring ‘blog policy’ or giving a mission statement. Posts are then ordered chronologically, with the most recent one on top. Usually, a post contains a description of the record, a track list, tags and comment function. Like any other, a music blog usually gives an option to the visitors to “follow” it, and a selection of links to other blogs. A visitors counter is a regular feature included and occasionally a feature such as “whos.among.us” or similar. The latter provides statistics on the number of users “online in past the 24 hours,” “what are they copying,” and “where they come from” which detects the locations of users on the map of the world (“A map showing you where your visitors come from. Flashing pins are people that are online right

¹⁷³ See for instance *Twilightzone! Just for Your Listening Pleasure*: “The music that I post up on this site is NOT for commercial use. I’ll spare you the legal jargon, but in essence, if you LIKE it, BUY it! - pw for most files: rideyourpony,” <http://twilightzone-rideyourpony.blogspot.com/>, accessed 8 August 2011.

now.”).¹⁷⁴ A music blog may also provide chronologically ordered menu of older posts (2009>November (13)) with number of posts in a specific month in brackets.

The (un)randomness of sorting music into daily posts may reveal the rhythms of discovering music in shops or at friends’ homes, and/or the pace with which the ‘curator’ manages—digitises and uploads rips—his collection. The narratives, as obscure and patchy as they often are, develop around a particular record, around a particular memory and are thus conducive to perpetuate a memory in a new time and in a new media ecology. Importantly, the varied musical memories thus presented and preserved invite other users to partake in recreating the musical past, to co-create new memories enhanced through participating (downloading, commenting) in these evolving grassroots archives. In other words, in a music blog the very practice of archiving is a *renarration* of both the (popular) musical past (of Yugoslavia) and the bloggers’ reinterpretation of their past. Although this type of blogging may not be the most straightforward case of storytelling or archiving, it nevertheless elicits practices of remembering that go beyond the experience of remembering as, for instance, in classic archives. The latter presuppose ‘immersion’ into a ‘sacred’ space following a certain protocol of initiation, only upon which one is allowed access. Often, the items are to remain on location meaning that the ‘consumption’ of their content can unravel in a strictly regulated environment. On the other hand, rummaging through admittedly more disorderly digital musical archives permits for a more ‘open’ access and manipulation of data, hence greater ‘on-site’ engagement and attention.

In terms of content, needless to say, the main focus is music although music blogs differ in the ways content is presented. A note is in order here to explicate that I am not looking here at blogs that *also* post music, along some other personal or professional content. Rather, the blogs in question are on a mission to post music, while any other content is secondary, although not unimportant. There are two general focus strategies that discernible in music blogging: a music blog can be a focused *genre* specific blog: such blogs provide collections of music, an artist’s more or less complete discography, possibly album reviews, track listings, duration of songs, and occasionally a blogger’s description/contextualisation of a particular music within her own socio-cultural milieu. It can also be a *period* specific blog focusing on music from a particular music-era, e.g. sixties’ or eighties music, or as in the cases discussed below on a specific historical period. This of course is a very rough distinction as there are numerous in-between combinations, e.g. as in one of the blogs discussed below which apart from being clearly a period specific blog

¹⁷⁴ This feature is no longer included into Jugozvuk, it was available at least until March 2010, see Martin Pogačar, “Music Blogging: Yugoslav Musical Archives, www.inter-disciplinary.net/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/pogacarpaper.pdf, accessed 8 August 2011.

also provides a genre distinction and, moreover, more insight into the blogger's personal (albeit highly music-dominated) life.

When it comes to specific music posted on music blogs, there is an aspect that should not be neglected: the origin of the records. From what can be gathered from navigating a number of music blogs, in many cases the music in question (or the records at least) is fairly old and not easily obtainable (as opposed to many other blogs, where music is plainly ripped from CDs). This is particularly apparent when looking at music blogging that focuses on pre-celebrity music fandom and sub-cultures and particularly musical rarities—that emerged after the rock'n'roll boom in the 1950s, and particularly after the 1960s—that saw comparatively little or none digitisation.¹⁷⁵ An acute under-digitisation—due to the break-up of the country and the ensuing wars—befell the music from the period of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (and also the pre-WWII Yugoslavia). Much of the former Yugoslav music available via music blogs is in fact fairly old and in the offline world only available on vinyl.

After the disintegration of the country, Yugoslav music industry collapsed with it and several national industries and markets emerged in its wake. The political, economic, social and cultural 'de-prochement' meant, in the field of music, that the cooperation, particularly in the early 1990s, was considerably hindered. Records from other parts of the former country were not re-issued both due to issues with copyright and the changing market characteristics (e.g. in early 1990s Slovenia there was a general disliking of former Yugoslav music, and Slovenian music was never hugely popular outside its borders). The consequence was negligible number of vinyl records digitally remastered and released on CDs. Effectively, it was for a long time all but impossible to buy any of this music in legally (with the exception of second-hand shops or flea markets). Thus, along the illegal releases and later on a market driven increase in reissuing former Yugoslav music on CDs, these blogs provide by far most accessible links to music that would otherwise be practically lost. These music bloggers/lovers, however, who go to second-hand record shops, flea markets, browse old collections of records in the attics etc. in search for rarities and oddities of a musical past, are the crucial preservers of significant portions of Yugoslav popular music which would only survive in a fairly limited, private collections of the lucky few who have had the chance or the will to get those records, or in the commoditised (hence selected according to anticipated sales criteria) reissues of 'popular' music.

¹⁷⁵ See for instance, *sa starog gramofona – old gramophone*, <http://starigramofon.wordpress.com/>, accessed 19 September 2011.

Essentially, what the music blogger does after obtaining the record in one or another way physically, she digitises it. This implies ripping the vinyl using a gramophone and a digital recorder; classifying the tracks and ordering them into a folder (album>author>track name) and adding the scanned or photographed artwork/record cover. The final stage is uploading compressed (zip or rar) files to one of the many file-sharing sites (e.g. megaupload.com, drop.io, rapidshare.com ...). The blog post contains a link to that remote storage service website.

Now the question that pops to mind is: Why would someone want to do this? It is a time and money consuming pastime: to find all these records, to buy them, to digitise them, to spend that much time doing all this for free while still make a living. Yet this is an activity that clearly thrives as there are people who believe that musical past should not be forgotten and therefore they invest considerably into making it available (in the case of Yugoslav music to predominantly post-Yugoslav public) worldwide.

This is particularly interesting in view of the fact that all this music would otherwise be unavailable, forgotten and in many cases gone forever. In the case of Yugoslav music thus preserved and shared and in view of the country's history, its demise and the post-Yugoslav realities, music blogging is all the more important socio-cultural practice which in effect is above all about the preservation of the past. The case of Yugoslavia is somewhat specific: the country disintegrated in 1991 and plunged into wars out of which several new states emerged. In the processes of nationalisation/'independentisation,' the former republics, now independent states, suffered a considerable, self-inflicted, memory loss. The newly forming countries and the up-and-coming elites, supposedly cleansed of the communist wrongdoing, tried to eradicate the once common past by supplanting it with newly established national(ist) narratives. This in essence also meant an attempt (on the level of political discourses) at breaking any links with the Yugoslav commonly shared field of popular culture. Apparently and not surprisingly this was a flawed attempt, as it is fairly unreasonable to expect social and cultural bonds to break overnight, particularly in the era of 'mediated everything.' This, among others, decidedly contributed to the emergence of Yugonostalgia. Moreover, as pop-cultural pasts 'normally' tend to find ways into the pop-cultural presents and are in many cases, in the western hemisphere at least, successfully commoditised, the 'cultural cooperation' in post-Yugoslavia was soon re-established even in the most war-and-hatred-stricken areas.

But in the case of Yugoslavia any such activities were actively discouraged (which by no means implies there were not ways, quite to the contrary) or plain impossible due to the politico-belligerent situation. In a situation that pre-empted any overt dealing with the recent past, the

initial way for the past to ‘survive’ was via nostalgifying it. It is probably also for this reason that music blogs find sufficient audience who find interest in these ‘activists’ striving to preserve what would normally be preserved both in official records/institutions and in the media everyday. The post-Yugoslavs’ conduct in relation to their past is thus primarily a search for a lost stability in individual memory narratives. These blogs attract an audience from across the former Yugoslavia yet judging by the “who’s among us” feature on *Jugozvuk* (its counter turned over 600,000 visitors in good two years of the blog’s existence; at the time of writing the number is 751,597) the just as many visitors come from the rest of Europe and North America, with some from South America and Australia.

On music blogs (multimodal media objects) the bits, beats and pieces of Yugoslav past are preserved and distributed globally; music blogging as a practice of vernacular history contributes significantly to creating a worldwide archive of Yugoslav popular music, i.e. via music blogging, Yugoslav popular music becomes a mediator of memories. What is more, as further explicated below, the mediality of digitised music becomes an opportunity to express personal (blogger’s or commentators) views about the music and other social and cultural issues concerning the role and meaning of the past, present and future in contemporary identity management in DME. Moreover, music in DME is not ‘just’ music (if music ever is ‘just’ music) but a powerful tool to co-create and convey if but a fraction of a shattered past. The grass-roots practice of ‘digital preservation of heritage’ is a tool of mediation of memories; the facets of everyday life as mediated through music are renarrated/remediated on music blogs and thus ‘transmitted’ beyond the limitations and obscurisation regularly attempted in the first two decades after the break-up of the country.

In the section below I discuss several blogs that aim to preserve and distribute parts of Yugoslav popular music heritage, i.e. blogs that in their distinct personalised ways mediate memories: both of the blogger and consequently of the visitor by facilitating the mobility of media objects. In these processes aspects of nostalgia, either first or second-hand, are imminent. This distinction is often conceived along the lines of ‘we were there’ vs. ‘you weren’t and ain’t got a clue.’ The blogs in many cases assume such stance but rarely use it as a tool for any kind of exclusion. On the contrary, second-hand nostalgia is often attributed to practices that supposedly lack ‘real’ memory or experience with the matter of nostalgia. And are thus rendered false. However, nostalgia in a mediated age is not only limited to first-hand experience, but is, due to condensed presence of mediated content, applicable beyond the in-the-know collectivities.

The blogs discussed generally feature not only music but also ‘personal musings’—which further adds to ‘mani-hand’ nostalgia—and to that effect employ multimodal media objectification

approach. As this results in a more or less comprehensive, coherent externalisations of memory, that in fact do tell a story, I approach these blogs as cases of digital storytelling.

The Sounds of Yugoslavia – Jugozvuk

The blog *ZVUCI JUGOSLAVIJE – SOUNDS OF YUGOSLAVIA* (hereafter Jugozvuk) is managed by Aktivista and presents an extraordinary collection of music.¹⁷⁶ In selecting what he blogs about, Aktivista is very indiscriminate and posts music that spans popular, rock, classical, folk music, etc. In addition he also supplies other types of various pop-historical materials such as newspapers and magazine clippings, etc. The blog as a whole is his made-public ‘obsession’ with the ‘Yugoslav past in audiovision,’ and represents a non-negligible contribution to creating and promoting vernacular renarrativisations and remediations of the past in DME.

The blog opens with a mission statement:

We’re introducing You to the sounds of the old Yugoslavia, music, sports, theatre, politics, literature, propaganda, commercials, all in the form of sound. Everything that once made up Tito’s Yugoslavia tells its story here before you. There are many stories about Yugoslavia and all of them are beautiful. You are welcome as well to tell the stories and we’ll publish them. YUGOSLAVIA is always a positive inspiration [transl.]. Here on this weblog you can hear and watch the diverse sounds of former YUGOSLAVIA [original in English].¹⁷⁷

This statement delimits the scope, aims and the ambition of the blogger’s endeavours and concomitantly makes an identity statement: it posits the blogger as a dedicated preserver and distributor of Yugoslav musical past which is invariantly viewed positively. This attitude informs the entire blog and is also reflected in indiscriminate blogging about different genres, styles, bands, from all over the former country; it is in fact a continuation of Yugoslav brand of ‘internationalism.’ Aktivista further explicates his mission below:

Here you can expect to find all sorts of sounds and sound memorials of various events that adored this beautiful and strong country. It may sound silly to some, but it doesn’t to me. This Yugoslavia meant a lot to me. I was born and raised there. Every single day I spent in this Yugoslavia. I listened to this and that, and now it’s time you’ve heard too.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ *Zvuci Jugoslavije – Sounds of Yugoslavia*, <http://jugozvuk.blogspot.com/>, hereafter *Jugozvuk*, accessed 8 August 2011.

¹⁷⁷ See *Jugozvuk*, <http://jugozvuk.blogspot.com/>.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

Through referring (nostalgically) to his personal experience, Aktivista passionately addresses the visitors in trying to elicit response from them. They are expected to share-in his feelings of loss which are to be remedied by providing music from the space-time that features as a significant, formative point in his life. To that end Aktivista explicates the coordinates of his endeavour further: “Most of all it’s about music but of a special kind, music that goes nicely with a story or an event. There will be some live performances of certain great bands from all over the country ‘From Vardar River to Mount Triglav.’” The scope and ambition of the blog are broadened by including the ‘silent sounds,’ and rare treats:

Here on this blog you can find a lot of sounds from YUGOSLAVIA, from theater to music, from sport events to jokes and literature. Feel free to join the biggest collection of different sounds from the state that exists no more. If YOU do have some trash and trivia from that time please send me a message [original in English].¹⁷⁹

Aktivista attempts to make *Jugozvuk* into an interactive platform and invites the visitors to participate/engage not only in commenting, but also in sharing with others what music they may have. The place for musical exchange and extension beyond the posts is on the JUGOZVUK forum, where visitors post track listings and links to various material uploaded by themselves or found on other sites.

A regularly updated blog, *Jugozvuk* is further divided into several sections, “JUGOZVUK” (the blog), “JUGOmemorabilia” (mainly featuring newspaper and magazine clips), “JUGOZVUK forum,” “Hronologija koncerata iz JUGOSLAVIJE” (featuring an extensive chronology of concerts in Yugoslavia played by foreign performers in the period (1959—1992), “Eks jugoslovenska muzika” (featuring links to music of famous former Yugoslav performers in the post-Yugoslav era)¹⁸⁰ and “Izložbena galerija JUGOZVUKA” (which at present features several photographs but aims to be further developed into a “a free gallery of JUGOZVUK dedicated to the all arts and performing in former YUGOSLAVIA”).¹⁸¹ In the left-hand column of the blog, Yugoslavia’s coat of arms and flag are situated along with a photograph of Yugoslavia’s lifelong president Josip Broz Tito. Further down is a section of links to other music blogs engaged in preserving and sharing music and music related stuff from the former Yugoslavia, which effectively contributes to creating a wider community of musically, historically and memorially engaged bloggers and visitors. The interlinking enables exchange of music information, files etc.

¹⁷⁹ See *Jugozvuk*, <http://jugozvuk.blogspot.com/>, accessed 21 September 2011, original in English.

¹⁸⁰ “Eks jugoslovenska muzika,” *Jugozvuk*, <http://jugozvuk.blogspot.com/p/eks-jugoslovenska-muzika.html>, accessed 8 August 2011.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

and not least an easy way for an accidental visitor to find other sites of interest. A more general link selection further down the site includes links to ‘friendly’ blogs and other sites related to Yugoslavia.

The blog also features a visitor counter which at the time of writing has turned 732,969 visitors, and a widgeo.com application which counts visitors ‘today.’ Some time ago, *Jugozvuk* also featured another counter (Live Traffic Feed by Feedjit) which gave a more detailed view on visitors locations (no longer available), time of access, and where they left to from the blog, or where they came from (a separate icon for respective action).¹⁸² At one time it recorded 34 visitors from Serbia, 8 from Croatia, 7 from Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2 from Slovenia, 2 from Montenegro, 2 from Macedonia, about the same from Italy, Switzerland, the UK, and 8 from the USA. The Feed also took record of the accessing computer operating system and internet browser. Along the map showing the user location ‘today’ (based on a Google Maps), the Feedjit tracked in a separate window which particular sections of *Jugozvuk* have been accessed (in %), and also gave statistics on visitors’ geographical locations (in %).

Now, this immodest use of user tracking might suggest several things: it grounds firmly the fact that this site has a global reach and at the same time alludes to a not insignificant interest of visitors, from the former Yugoslavia and elsewhere, in the Yugoslav popular music. Here, however it should be noted (taking into account the linguistic specificity of music) that the majority of these visitors are probably former Yugoslavs who have left either during the life of Yugoslavia or in the aftermath of its demise. And who now make use of online environments (including such as this and similar blogs) as spaces for personal interaction and tracing their shared pasts. At the same time visitors to such sites more or less actively participate in the co-creation of the memories of the Yugoslav past. This is done on two levels, first passively, as listening to downloaded music individually or further sharing it with friends thus taking part in the perpetuation of Yugoslav popular music soundscapes; and second, actively participating in online reminiscing or discussing or uploading a particular song, artist or album. Not unimportantly, user counting serves the purpose of improving the rating of the site among visitors and fellow bloggers.

Digital Storytelling in Jugozvuk

The central part of the blog, however, are the entries. Aktivista’s digital storytelling fuses text, (links to) posted music, and various visual material, including photos, scans and videos). In textual

¹⁸² At the time of writing, the counter is no longer active, but was so until at least September 2010.

posts he uses a first-person, very informal language, which is not free from grammatical and typographical errors and rather inconsistent use of upper case (although Yugoslavia is consistently written in uppercase). The textual part of a post typically invokes general thoughts on the Yugoslav past and details about the posted music. Regularly, Aktivista addresses the visitors inviting them to enjoy the music and reminisce about the good old times: “One great festival from former YUGOSLAVIA that took place in Belgrade, its capital city, in 1963. After all this fantastic music is not buried with YUGOSLAVIA, it lives on this blogs, forever I would like or until BLOGGER lives.”¹⁸³

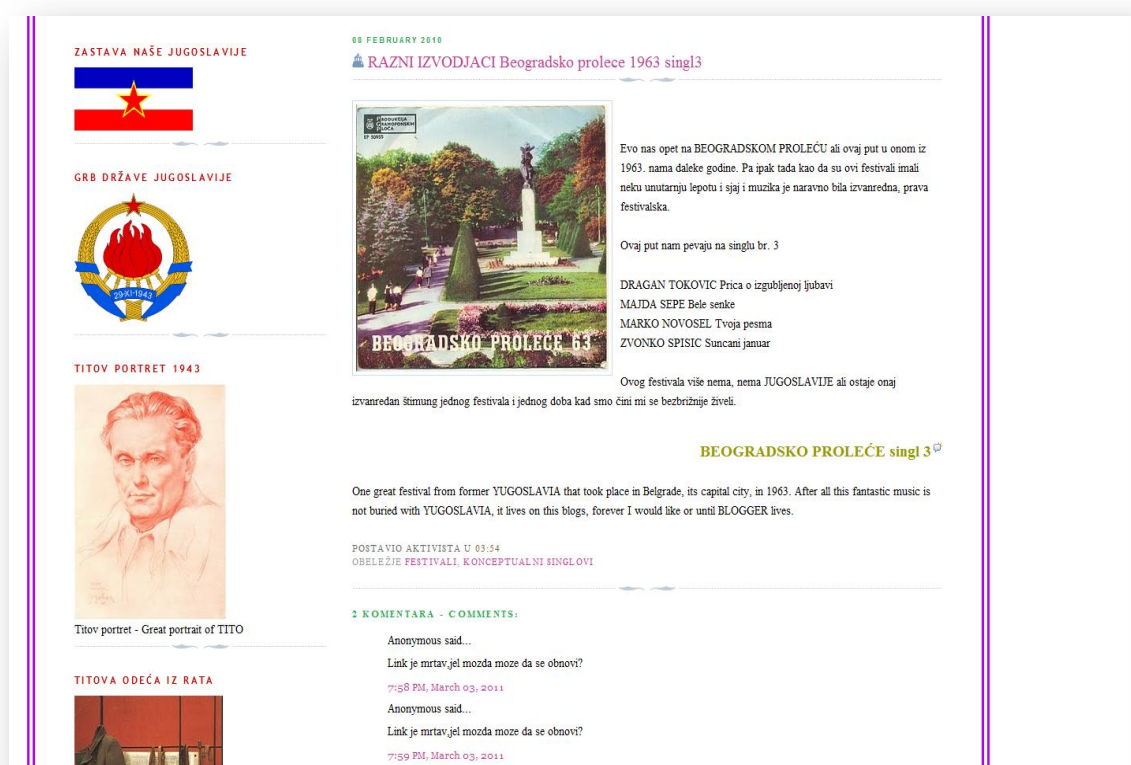


Figure 8 | A post about Beogradsko proleće festival 1963, available from <http://jugozvuk.blogspot.com/2010/02/razni-izvodjaci-beogradsko-prolece-1963.html>.

An aspect that often comes to the fore in the posts is explaining how he gets about acquiring the records: “I love such records and when I buy them I love to listen to them (I buy them at flea markets). This [the Yugoslav period] is a time long since gone. Such records are today unimaginable. Therefore I’ll be putting them up until I am able to find them myself or download

¹⁸³ “RAZNI IZVODJACI Beogradsko prolece 1963 singl3,” *Jugozvuk*, <http://jugozvuk.blogspot.com/2010/02/razni-izvodjaci-beogradsko-prolece-1963.html>, accessed 8 August 2011.

them from stealing sites.”¹⁸⁴ Aktivista admits to sometimes taking music from the “stealing sites,” i.e. from bloggers who ‘steal’ the music from other blogs, give no credit to them, and invest no time into obtaining the records offline. ‘Theft’ is established by the bloggers through inspecting the quality of the files (bit rate, artwork scan) and comparing it against their own work.

The time invested into finding music at flea markets, digitising it and making it available online is immense. Apart from buying records at flea markets, Aktivista gratefully lists his ‘donators,’ who help him by providing links to remote sharing sites to the material digitised/uploaded by them. As of August 2009 the donators are duly listed on the site while some have also become *Jugozvuk* editors. *Jugozvuk* is thus becoming a joint enterprise comprising several devoted preservers of Yugoslav popular musical heritage and has thus largely outgrown a solitary endeavour. The joint efforts by several editors and donators thus effectively expand the community and also enable much better ‘coverage’ of the material and, not least, improve the prospects of its continual existence. Apart from time to be invested into digitising the ‘musical artefacts’ in high quality, music blogging involves issues of honesty and dignity pertaining to creating and maintaining such blogs. Genuine effort is rewarded by overt/public appreciation and doing it the easy way is discouraged and condemned.

Aktivista’s digital storytelling emanates regret and nostalgia for the times passed which converge in the posted music, photos and his textual accounts. His posts are thus not only a means to preserve/archive the music but also a place for expression of his memories, and hence his attitude, relation to the present. In a way Aktivista (and his donators) perceives himself (and quite rightly so) to be the ‘messenger of the past,’ bringing forgotten and/or rare music into the present, saving it from oblivion. He does so through post composition, which includes the title, record’s artwork, text, and the comment function. It is through engagement or convergence of these elements that the personal relation is established between the author, the posted music and the place/time of its origin. True, the blog offers little personal information and the recounted memories do not go much beyond cliché statements such as in “those times we seemed to have lived more carefree.”¹⁸⁵ Nevertheless, referring to the role of music in individual’s life and the lives of collectivities, and at the interstices, it is clear that it is the music that is the primary trigger of memories. As scarce as the posts may be in terms of elaborate personal textual accounts, they nevertheless provide affective contextualisation of music and endow the very activity of following such a blog, browsing through posts and downloading music with a particular aura of disinterring, excavating

¹⁸⁴ “RAZNI IZVODJACI 1976 Mi smo mlada vojska Titova,” *Jugozvuk*, <http://jugozvuk.blogspot.com/2009/10/razni-izvodjaci-1976-mi-smo-mlada.html>, accessed 8 August 2011.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

the past ... on the part of the visitor and, primarily, the blogger. Excursions in archaeology of the musical past by both the blogger and the visitor are probably the most intriguing activity enabled by music blogs. For the latter it is a mission, and a time consuming one. Yet it is also a rewarding preoccupation with finding old rarities and valuables, to feel the dusty decaying record sleeve under the fingertips, to smell the touch of time, to hold the record in your hands and wipe it clean, and play it on the gramophone.

All this invokes very material-based, physical sensations, and in the view of Aktivista's statement that much of the posted music is the music he used to listen to (or at least hear occasionally on the radio) in the 'old days,' this discovery must be a very tangible and emotional, affective affair. Through the interaction with the 'material,' tactile memory is invoked that despite all the technology can only be a personal, intimate experience. On the part of the visitor, the just as intriguing aspect of looking for music on blogs is, indeed, an act of discovering—not only of music that one once was a fan of but rather of—music one had no idea it was ever made/recorded. Despite the fact that it cannot be touched or smelled, the very clicky and hissy sounds that the digitised tracks played back via one or another player make, are incentive enough to arouse a sense of pastness in the music.

Now, the analysis of such a blog seems difficult as it is impossible to go through all the posts and comprehensively analyse all of them. Therefore, a certain selection is essential, and I am aware that any selection will necessarily be partial and subjective. In the case of this and other blogs discussed, the selection provides a comprehensive enough picture and enough material to delimit and investigate the strategies and reaches of digital storytelling. Moreover, these blogs not only feature as digital storytelling but in a way also as digital memorials: in that that they provide an interactive more-than-archive of Yugoslav (popular) music. In fact they represent a living memorial to one country's music (on digital memorials see Chapters 1 and 4).

09 April 2011

[Opera iz davne 1972. godine uživo za DAN BLOGA 9. april](#)

WELL BROTHERS AND SISTERS YUGOBLOGGERS TODAY IS THE DAY OF THIS BLOG, ON 9 APRIL THAT DISTANT YEAR THREE YEARS AGO I DECIDED TO BUILD THE FOUNDATIONS OF THIS BLOG WITH A VIEW TO PERSONALLY PRESENT TO YOU ALL THE EXISTING SOUND OF YUGOSLAVIA ON ONE PLACE THIS IS HOW

A BLOG WITH MANY MOST DIFFERENT SOUNDS OF OUR UNSURPASSED AND MOST BEAUTIFUL AND GREAT YUGOSLAVIA. I'M PROUD OF

YUGOSLAVIA AND OF THIS BLOG BECAUSE THIS IS THE WAY I REPAY MY DEBT TO THE COUNTRY WHERE I GREW UP AND LIVED AND WAS A FULL FLEDGED YUGOSLAV. TODAY WE CAN ONLY REMEMBER ALL THIS AND I WILL REMEMBER ALL THIS HERE ON THIS BLOG AND SO CAN YOU COME HERE AND REMEMBER HOW IT ONCE WAS.¹⁸⁶

This post recapitulates the general attitude of the blog in general. Proudly celebrating three years of existence, Aktivista nicely subsumes the mission of music blogs in general: “today we can only remember all this and I will remember all this here on this blog and so can you come here and remember how it once was.” Interestingly, he posits music as the main vehicle to remembering, but at the same time also defines *Jugozvuk* as the place (from) where remembering can take place.

Faulty Records

The interlinking among ‘brotherly’ music blogs provides the visitor (and researcher) with a way to trace other blogs that are (loosely) related in the post-Yugoslav musical blogging endeavours. One such blog is *Nevaljaleploce* (ova ploca nista ne valja, ima rupe u sredini! [this is a faulty record, it’s got a hole in the middle!]),¹⁸⁷ managed by Basta! Pex a.k.a. Gramofonije Plocanovic. Cross-commenting between the two blogs (and some others) suggests existence and emergence of a sort of community between the music bloggers. As compared to Aktivista, Gramofonije takes a different approach and makes his blog a much more personal endeavour by blogging also about his private life, travelling and his band. At the beginning he states:

Vinyl and stuff – if someone finds anything disturbing or if I broke any law, please feel free to say so – we’ll consider everything, but change nothing! I suggest you buy these records, if available [translation of text in Serbian]. If anyone is upset about anything, whether the content or copyright breach/whatever please get in touch. I recommend everyone and anyone and their families go out and buy these records, if available [original in English].¹⁸⁸

In the part of the mission statement available in Serbian, Gramofonije ironically adapts the usual quotation used to provide some excuse for posting copyrighted material (e.g. “let me know, I’ll remove it”) by saying: “If someone finds anything disturbing or if I broke any law, please feel free to say so – we’ll consider everything, but change nothing! I recommend you buy the vinyl/CD, if available. If you wish distribute links, feel free to do so. Those that expire will probably not be re-

¹⁸⁶ *Jugozvuk*, <http://jugozvuk.blogspot.com/2011/04/opera-iz-davne-1972-godine-uzivo-za-dan.html>, accessed 8 August 2011.

¹⁸⁷ Basta! Pex, *Nevaljaleploce*, <http://nevaljaleploce.blogspot.com/>, accessed 8 August 2011.

¹⁸⁸ Basta! Pex, *Nevaljaleploce*, <http://nevaljaleploce.blogspot.com/>, accessed 8 August 2011.

uploaded, so do share with others.”¹⁸⁹ Thus he deliberately and consciously admits to not paying much attention to copyright issues and to go about his music-blogging ways regardless. In the English part of the statement this aspect is lost and the tone is less ironic.



Figure 9 | Ova ploca nista ne valja, available from http://nevaljaleplocce.blogspot.com/2011_05_01_archive.html.

In terms of form, Gramofonije’s blog is much more manageable and transparent as compared to *Jugozvuk*. It offers access to posts in chronological order, which makes it easier to navigate and follow. In this respect the storytelling on this blog is much more straightforward, with more extensive textual narrative supported by references to music records (and links to remote storage services) that clearly are important to the author, who overtly declares himself to be a fan of certain groups, and in that way establishes a much stronger, more personal relation to the music blogged. The quantity of music posted is considerably smaller than on *Jugozvuk* but on the other hand more selective and nearly each post related to Gramofonije’s past, although at the very beginning he decidedly states:

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

Greetings comrades.

H-e-l-l-o, hello, hello, hello!!!!

Just checking if everything works as it should, so I can get to posting vinyl. I hope the selection will be considerably different from what you can get on the net these days. The goal is the more bizarre the best! Clearly, you should not take the title too seriously – there will be valid records as well ;)

Posted by Basta! Pex, a.k.a. Gramofonije Plocanovic at 1:16 AM 0 comments).¹⁹⁰

As compared to *Jugozvuk*, Gramofonije provides a longer description of the music of bands such as Piloti, Haustor and Paraf.¹⁹¹ These 1980s punk/new wave bands significantly influenced the last decade of the (cultural, social and political) life in Yugoslavia, and also his own musical tastes, preferences and the music he plays.¹⁹² Gramofonije posts more sporadically than Aktivista since 2007 and is still active in mid-2011.

The interesting thing about the above call for the bizarre is the way bizarre is selected and presented, and above all re-contextualised. Clearly the criteria are artwork and music but when looked at from the present perspective, the application of the term bizarre has to be recontextualised. What is bizarre today was not necessarily so thirty years ago.¹⁹³ The question, however, is in the perception of the material in historical perspective. For instance, the Svetlana Miljuš's single artwork it is fairly safe to claim that in 1970s when Miljuš published the EP and two singles, her demeanour was rather perceived lascivious than bizarre.¹⁹⁴ Another consideration with regard to this particular record and others filed under bizarre, and albums blogged in such a manner in general, is the issue of their status as period/genre/era/country representative music: due to the whimsical market and taste preferences it is hardly impossible to predict which music will make it to feature as 'representative' of a period. Likewise, it is fairly imprudent to judge past taste upon random discovery of an oddity or rarity that might well have passed unnoticed back in the day.

In other words, the availability of vinyl on various second-hand markets and consequentially availability of digitised music online is not a representation of past musical tastes and preferences. On the contrary, it is a multivariant result of what is available on the 'market,' what 'attracts the eye' of the buyer and only in the last instance what 'attracts the ear' of the one who downloads

¹⁹⁰ Basta! Pex, *Nevaljaleploce*, nevaljaleploce.blogspot.com/2007/02/drugarski-pozdrav.html, accessed 8 August 2011.

¹⁹¹ Basta! Pex, *Nevaljaleploce*, nevaljaleploce.blogspot.com/, accessed 8 August 2011.

¹⁹² See Martin Pogačar, "Yu-Rock in the 1980s: Between Urban and Rural," *Nationalities Papers*, 36(5), 2008, 815-832.

¹⁹³ Basta! Pex, *Nevaljaleploce*, <http://nevaljaleploce.blogspot.com/2007/02/juso-pre-nekoliko-godina-kad-sam-bio-u.html>, accessed 8 August 2011.

¹⁹⁴ Basta! Pex, *Nevaljaleploce*, http://nevaljaleploce.blogspot.com/2007_02_01_archive.html, accessed 6 September 2011.

and the feel. Yet, now I also understand some secretive sexual connotations, which escaped me then. Did you?

http://rapidshare.com/files/17548536/7_Mladih.rar.html

Posted by Bassta! Pex, a.k.a. Gramofonije Plocanovic at 7:21 PM 14 comments¹⁹⁵

The above post nicely illustrates how the record (acquired by chance) can serve as a kernel around which a personal narrative is built. And blog posts are the cases of digital storytelling precisely because of the narrative bits emerging via interrelation of such kernels and the narratives developed around them. This case demonstrates the intertwining of memories of childhood, alluding to being an emigrant in search for ‘connections’ to the country, and approaching the records simultaneously as objects of the past (life) and immediately (re)integrated into the present (life). It is via this mechanism that blogged music becomes relevant for the preservation of music in general—as so many private memories are ‘organically’ related to music.

Another aspect in this story, however, is the downloader: she simultaneously participates in a very much private experience of downloading the music (one may know it or not, have a special relation to it or not), giving it ‘access’ into her own experiential reality, while at the same time participating in the story provided by the blogger.

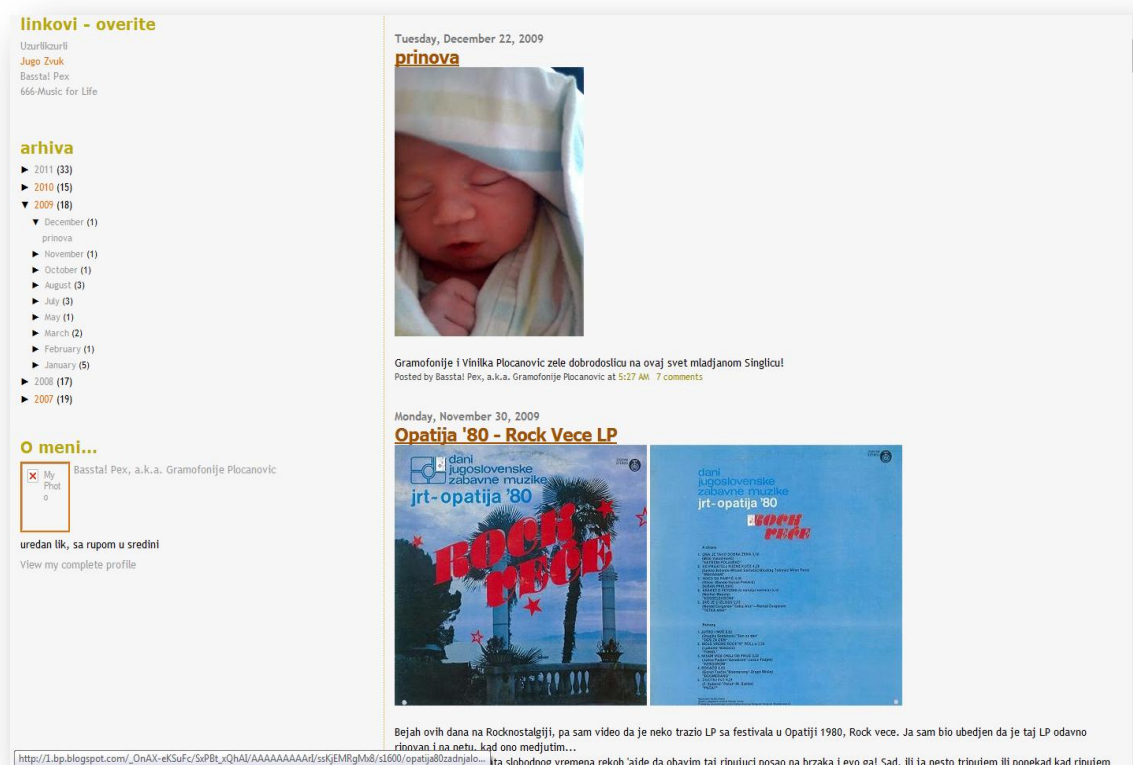


Figure 11 | Personal and musical aspects of life intertwining in the blog, <http://nevaljaleploce.blogspot.com>.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

This activity is in a way similar to listening to a song on the radio (see the verses above), only here it is more the case of 'discrete radioing' with the 'broadcaster' and the recipient separated beyond the reach of radio waves and temporal synchronicity. Nevertheless, the experience is similar particularly when taking into account the awareness on the part of the listener (and the blogger) that they are not alone in listening to the music from/about an 'audibly crafted' past.

One of the more elaborate blog posts is a selection of records made by a 1980s punk-rock/new wave band Paraf, from Rijeka, now Croatia. This and other posts related to the 1980s (punk, rock) music feature prominently on Gramofonije's blog, and as it is clear from the posts, this genre also represents an important feature of his contemporary music endeavours and 'musical identity' in general. As this is an important topic both for the blogger and in the history of Yugoslavia, let me linger here for just a while. The post links to five remotely stored files (links now expired!) and gives a review/brief history of the music, the band and the period. The narrative is a subjective interpretation (what else can it be) of the 'illegal' CD re-issue of the band's LPs and offers insight into the blogger's personal rendition of the role and impact of the band on the late 1970s-early 1980s:

"Rijeka/Moj zivot je novi val" CDSINGLE

The legend has it that Paraf played their first ever gig on 31 December 1976 in a park in Rijeka. Regardless of the accuracy of this, the fact remains that the Rijeka three-piece band was one of the pioneers of punk in SFRY. The question is why Rijeka played such a pivotal role in Yu music, particularly in punk/new wave, but I guess it's about the coincidence of 8un)happy circumstances: province, working class, large port, greater contact with other countries is s fertile ground for development of rage and its externalisation. And what is better than r'n'r? Although it was not our first punk single, the first Paraf's record at the time it was issued (1979, RTV Ljubljana) showed that there's something cooking in Yu rock and that things are going to turn for the better (if only for a while). I suppose it is all about two numbers from the time of the band's early 'career.' "Rijeka" is a two-minute "ode" to Kocijancic's (band leader) birth place, based on the riffs deeply based on the classic "Chinese Rock." "My life is new wave" is nevertheless the best thing on the single with its addictive intro riff and great lyrics. The song also features on "Blood stains across Yugoslavia" LP compilation of YU punk. As a bonus track features a "Novi punk Val 78-80" version of "Narodna pjesma" which is by far superior (particularly textually damn censors!) to the one from original album. On the front cover image we see, assuming classic posture, our bassist Zdravko Cabrijan and the words: "Listen loud!" Of course!¹⁹⁶

Here the blogger brings into the present a fusion of his own memory of the 1980s punk-rock/new wave scene (which he somewhat lived through and followed), of the period which begot perhaps the most radical musical movement/sub-culture that in many respects broke with the tradition of

¹⁹⁶ Basta! Pex, "Paraf nas nasusni," *Nevaljalaploce*, <http://nevaljaleploce.blogspot.com/search?updated-min=2009-01-01T00%3A00%3A00-08%3A00&updated-max=2010-01-01T00%3A00%3A00-08%3A00&max-results=18>, accessed 8 September 2011.

‘state rock’ bands and sounds,¹⁹⁷ and the numbing effects of the ‘social deafness’ which up until late 1970s was preventing much musically engaged response to the state-of-affairs. In fact, the state politics adopting since the early 1960s the let-go attitude towards rock, effectively turned many rock projects into harmless, pro-regime or plain de-politicised endeavours. Just to the contrary of what the rock sub-culture was supposed to represent.¹⁹⁸ The Paraf, among other punk-rockers that decidedly influenced not only musical scene, but ‘disturbed’ also the political constellation,¹⁹⁹ is clearly an important reference in bloggers musical (and otherwise) memory of his youth and the country. And by way of presenting their music, he also engages in analysis of the music and its musical and culture-historical contexts:

"A dan je tako lijepo pocelo" [But the Day started off so nicely] features 14 punk numbers, although you can almost sense the ‘scent of new time’ and what the band will be doing about a year later. The texts move from socio-political to more jokey ones, such as the one poking Bijelo dugme [Yugoslav band, representative of the so-called shepherd’s rock] titled “Pritanga i vaza.” “T kao krava” is about a dear opiate of us (another in a line of our pot hymns) and one of the strongest, along the “Visokotirazni Mir,” “Morao sam ici” i “Visoki propisi.”

I can’t help it not to see some influence of our hard rock bands, such as Yu Grupa [...] and Vatrene poljubac. To be fair, most of our early punk band in the late 1970s were deep into hard rock, psychedelia and similar. The fact is that our then pissed off punkers perhaps heard of about ten foreign most famous bands and that they had roots in 1970s hard rock. Naturally, no hard feelings.²⁰⁰

In this post, as suggested above, individual recollections are applied on a more universalised account of that period and music, i.e. the blogger craftily blends subjective and generally accepted accounts of the past. The comments, however, prove to be a place of dispute or contestation, contributing thus to the co-creation of the narrative in blog as a 4MO:

Anonymous said...

I saw Paraf live at least 5 times. I used to hang out with them and I know Tica didn’t kill himself, but died of heart arrest. Tica RIP. In future please check your data.
July 18, 2009 3:55 PM

[Bassta! Pex, a.k.a. Gramofonije Plocanovic](#) said...

Well, I said I apologise in advance for any stupid stuff, particularly this one. As I heard Tica did die of hear arrest...

July 18, 2009 7:07 PM

[safetblaj](#) said...

¹⁹⁷ Sabrina P. Ramet, *Rocking the State, Rock Music and Politics in Eastern Europe and Russia*, Boulder, Westview Press, 1994, 103–132.

¹⁹⁸ See Martin Pogačar, “Yu-rock in the 1980s: Between Rural and Urban.”

¹⁹⁹ The punk-rock scene was perhaps the most eloquent in, but not exclusively limited to, Ljubljana, Rijeka, Zagreb, Sarajevo and Beograd, the larger cities where power resided or where rapid urbanisation was by the time well underway. The political implications often attributed to punk and new wave in Yugoslavia were by no means part of the musicians’ agenda, but rather the ‘incidental’ consequence emanating from the ‘interaction’ between the sub-culture and power as mediated in the academic discourses which significantly shaped and mobilised social action in the rising nationalisms in the Yugoslav republics.

²⁰⁰ “Paraf nas nasusni,” *Nevaljalaploce*, <http://nevaljalaploce.blogspot.com/2009/07/usgoro.html>, 8 September 2011.

I guess that in 1984 Luna and Katarina II [new wave bands, Katarina was later renamed Ekatarina Velika] issued albums. Pankrti issued their most serious Rdeci album. I think you're mistaken about the reception of Zastave, as far as I remember Polet glorified this album and if it wasn't for Laibach and Borghesia records that were appearing largely, it [Paraf album] would have probably be better off.
July 20, 2009 1:40 AM²⁰¹

Although the comments seem promising when first considered as a characteristic part of 4MO, unfortunately they only seldom prove to be 'fleshy' enough for much analysis. This suggests that the majority of visitors mostly just browse through posts and music and download what they find interesting, and rarely engage in any extended discussion about music. Most often, the comments feature pleads to the blogger to re-upload an expired link ("C'mon, re-post Parafs please. I've got all the vinyls but haven't had a gramophone in the last 20 years:)",²⁰² or expressions of gratitude for posting and admiration of the posted music.

Still, the discussions among more or less regular visitors, as seen above, also reveal particular user's views on certain music and affective attention to detail. In complementing the posts, the storytelling is to some extent enhanced and features in fact as co-creative storytelling. Moreover, the vernacular history of Yugoslav (in this case punk rock) music thus proves to be a history in the making by people who apparently are fans and connoisseurs. Hence, it often seems lucrative to look at the dynamics/dialogic between the posts on one blog, or even between various blogs. Roughly, as we have seen, these may feature as an expression of fandom and critic/ironic depictions of music. A telling case in point is the entry on Plavi Orkestar, a once very popular Yugoslav pop band that Gramofonije thought deserved some attention. Attention in a very ironic way which showed his contempt for the band's music. This post also emphasises the controversy this band stirred later on in the 1980s when they allegedly turned too poppy and nationalist. What is particularly interesting in this post is the way he positions himself in relation to both the music and the period:

Considering the fact that I never liked "Plavci," I said to myself right, let's just listen that out and see what was to the band and the album that wreaked such chaos in its time. And chaos was massive – who's old enough to remember – he remembers! Who was young doesn't. I remember it all started overnight: they were all over radio and TV stations, in newspapers and magazines.²⁰³

Illustrative is also the generation boundary explication (not really exclusion), which posits distinct delimitation between those who can actually remember and those who cannot, i.e. those who are

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Post comment on : *Ove ploca nista ne valja – ima rupe u sredini!*, "Paraf nas nasusni," <http://www.blogger.com/comment.g?blogID=5189995390510371193&postID=8410724251369245000>, accessed 8 August 2011.

²⁰³ "Plavi orkestar," *Nevaljaleploce*, <http://nevaljaleploce.blogspot.com/2010/10/plavi-orkestar.html>, accessed 6 September 2011.

left to mediated narratives only, historiographies, media, songs, films, forums and blog posts like this, to make up their own ideas about the past.

Gramofonije, however, goes in this post even further to correlate the rise of nationalism and the war to the nationalisation of music that was overtly practiced by several rock and folk performers:

1985 was the year of Plavi Orkestar. Now, we can debate till morning, but I agree with a theory that this band, along some others, was one of the culprits for the war in SFRY. I may be wrong, but Plavi Orkestar, Merlin and the likes massively imbecilised the nation from the role of rock musicians. Naturally it all started with Bijelo Dugme ten years earlier, although there was some hope left in 1983 when Zeljko Bebek was about to leave the group. unfortunately this escalated a year later in much worse album and sealed the fate of YU rock'n'roll, and much else. Who knows how the political situation might have unravelled had the leading role been taken by still mainstream, but much more cultivated bands such as EKV, Film, Haustor, Leb i sol, Zabranjeno Pusenje...²⁰⁴

Now, this post, be it a joke or not (“for your information this whole text is a joke. and an obvious one at that. Plavi Orkestar is still an awful band. This is no joke”),²⁰⁵ unlike many at *Jugozvuk* and elsewhere, expresses much more elaborate arguments and actually uses the space for both music criticism and historico-political commenting. Thus, Gramofonije manages to situate the music within a broader historical context.

Some Other Post-Yugoslav Music Blogs

Among the many blogs that do Yugoslav music, there are not many that provide more elaborate cases in storytelling. Another case in point is another Aktivista's blog, *ZABORAVLJENI ZVUCI – Forgotten sounds*, a “blog with forgotten records from the countries that exist no more.”²⁰⁶ On this blog, he is not strictly limited to Yugoslavia, as is the case with *Jugozvuk*, but endorses a wider Eastern European approach:

WHY ANOTHER SUCH BLOG IF THERE ARE SO MANY ALREADY?

You know that a whole world of sounds that once belonged to the eastern bloc is COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN. We here on this blog are will keep trying to bring such recordings from the darkness of the past and post them here. These are the sounds of USSR, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria and Albania. All these enormous sound archives lurk about foreign attics and it would be good if they are granted a trip into the present here. Welcome!

THIS IS A BLOG ABOUT THE FORGOTTEN SOUNDS OF EASTERN BLOCK IN EUROPE. HERE YOU CAN HEAR THE SOUNDS OF USSR, pOLAND,

²⁰⁴ “Plavi orkestar,” *Nevaljajleploce*, <http://nevaljajleploce.blogspot.com/2010/10/plavi-orkestar.html>, accessed 8 August 2011.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ *Zaboravljeni zvuci – Forgotten Sounds*, <http://zaboravljenizvuci.wordpress.com/>, accessed 8 August 2011.

TCHECHOSLOVAKIA, HUNGARY, ROMANIA, BULGARIA AND ALBANIA.
WELCOME!²⁰⁷

The blog has a much different feel to it, despite being run by the same person: the posts are more uniform in terms of presentation and invariably include a cover image and a short note about the record, but often alluding to the present (political situation). Regarding the not so specific field of interest, as compared to *Jugozvuk*, on this blog Aktivista discloses much more about himself as he does on *Jugozvuk*, particularly with respect to the post-1991 situation. Thus, in one instance, he blogs about a particular Bosnian tape-record containing songs for Bosnian soldiers (made during the Yugoslav wars):

As you've already grown used to, on this site we keep all kinds of forgotten music, a bit repressed, or a bit nationalistic. Today, it's music made for Bosnian Muslims who were burning down Christian villages or slaughter Serbian or Croatian civilians to the sound of it, strictly purposeful music. The cassette brings some knownnames of the former JUGOSLAVIJA who ran to embrace the mujahidin. This nice and educational tape is here for us never to forget what they did to Serbs and Croats. What is says on the tape cover that "out wounds are great" is really funny. How grave are the wounds of other Bosnian nations?

[Хитови ОМЕРА ПОБРИЋА](#)

This cassette contains the music for muslim mujahedins from Bosnia. With this music they went to war and kill Serbs, Croats and Jews. Some of these names are very well known musicians from ex YUGOSLAVIA.²⁰⁸

As fiercely critical as he is of the alleged nationalist hue allegedly defining this music, he nevertheless fails to see a problem in his statements about present day political situation in Serbia and turning the blind eye on the complexity of the situation of post-1991 wars and the non-negligible part that Serbia played in the latest Yugoslav wars.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ "RAZNI IZVODJACI Hitovi Omera Pobrića (BIH) – The songs of muslim nationalists from Bosnia," *Zaboravljeni zvuci – Forgotten Sounds*, <https://zaboravljenizvuci.wordpress.com/2010/12/10/razni-izvodjaci-hitovi-omera-pobrica-bih-the-songs-of-muslim-nationalists-from-bosnia/>, accessed 8 August 2011.

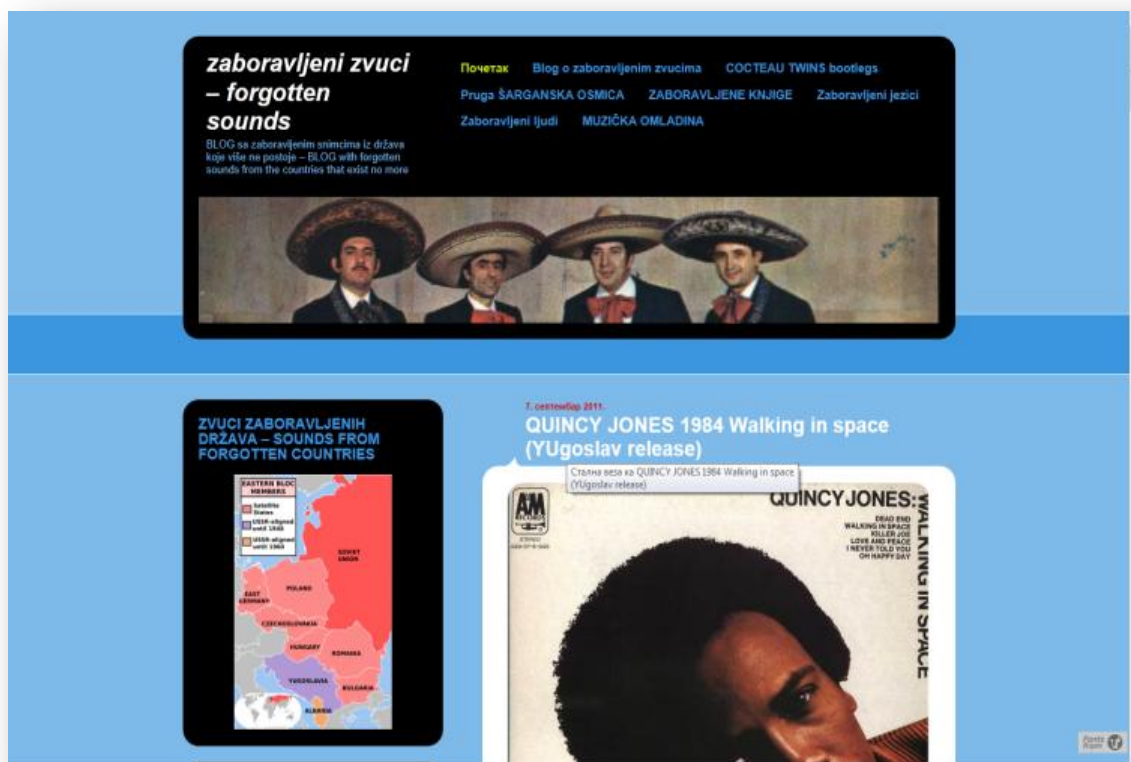


Figure 12 | Zaboravljeni zvuci, available from <http://zaboravljenizvuci.wordpress.com/>.

On the other hand, as suggested in the discussion of *Jugozvuk* above, Aktivista remains highly appreciative of music regardless of its origin, particularly if it originates from the former Yugoslavia, and shows great admiration for all the music he considers good quality. This would suggest that the memory he invests in or draws from the music is essentially related to Yugoslavia of his youth, which was his homeland. After the breakup the homeland shrank somewhat, as it did in geo-political terms for post-Yugoslavs. It would, perhaps be too much to say that the homeland of Yugoslavia was reapplied/transfigured into the homeland of Serbia.

Generally, the selection of the blogs examined here features all sorts of different genres, but nevertheless rock and pop music dominate. *Najpogodnije mesto*, for instance, is a music blog strictly devoted to “(ex)yu psychedelic, progressive, rock’n’roll, folk, punk music.”²⁰⁹ Extremely scarce in terms of textual entries, the blogger in this case just posts music, i.e. cover image, track-listing and the link to the remote storage service, and has in time of blog’s operation (2006-2010) posted about 600 entries, and the selection of the posted music, the broadness and inclusivity

²⁰⁹ *Najpogodnije mesto, (Ex) Yu Psychedelic, Progressive, Rock’n’roll Folk, Punk Music*, <http://yurock.blogspot.com/>, accessed 8 August 2011.

makes it into an organised database or heritage site of Yugoslav rock. Regarding the absence of textual entries and the very few user comments (along the lines: “I like this band.”) it could be said that a database is a poor example (it sure is poor in research analysis) of both memory and heritage preservation, as for several posts the internet search yields no results about the band. However, the extensive album listing, the working links, and the visitor counter at the time of writing at 384,111 visitors from 144 countries (spanning Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia, USA, Bosnia, Germany, Japan, France, UK, Macedonia, with numbers between 75.000 and 7.000 visitors) suggest that the site has received (and still does, the links are still active) significant attention from all over the world and that it is the music which is what is sought after and still appreciated, not necessarily the blogger’s memories.

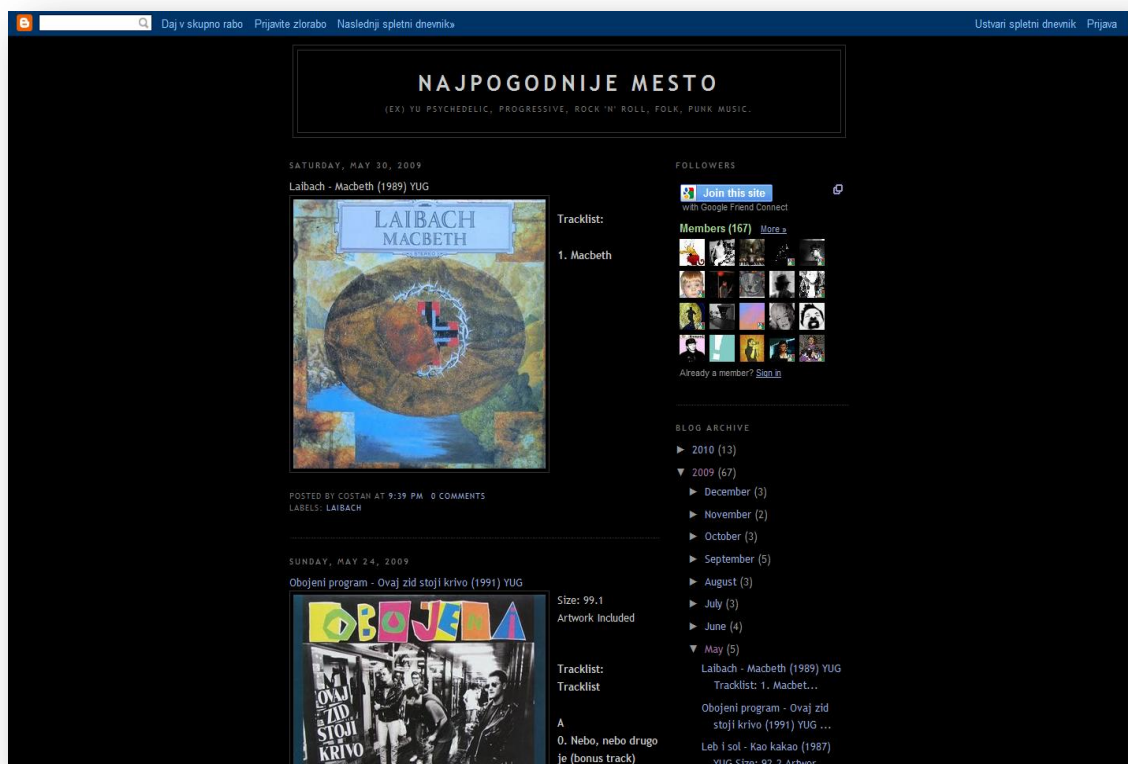


Figure 13 | Najpogodnije mesto, http://yurock.blogspot.com/2009_05_01_archive.html.

Conclusion

Blogs such as *Jugozvuk* and *Nevaljaleploce*, *Zaboravljeni zvuci*, *Najpogodnijemesto* and many others make it is possible for many (not only post-Yugoslavs) to discover, excavate, re-discover

and hear great amounts of music which was once a part of everyday life of Yugoslavs, but only sporadically, if at all, made it through the dissolution of the state. Over the recent years, however, the music industry has realised the potential of (and in fact a strategy of survival in) the ‘Yugoslav’ approach as a necessary orientation for re-establishing the circulation of music (records and performers) not only within the former country, but also ‘abroad.’

The fact is that over the last 20 years music exchange has never completely stopped between the newly formed states.²¹⁰ Many bands gained popularity or remained popular also in the countries where their ‘country of origin’ was perceived ‘inappropriate’ by the new national elites, majority of mainstream media and daily politics. This was all the easier, as compared to the pre-1991 music, with the new productions that primarily targeted the markets with digital records (CD) and more or less elaborate marketing approaches. However, as much as this has been the case with contemporary productions, there are fairly little (admittedly increasing over the past 10 years) exceptions of digitisation of the pre-1991 Yugoslav popular music, which for the most part remains accessible only on vinyl and/or cassettes. And it is here, in the commercial and institutional preservation void, that the work of music bloggers becomes valuable both in terms of preservation of popular musical heritage and as a practice of externalising memory. Precisely because of enthusiasts such as Gramofonije and Aktivista significant parts of Yugoslav (not only) pop-cultural or musical past are saved for the digital future.

Now this last statement may seem slightly exaggerated as it quickly becomes obvious that there are certain problems with archiving music in such a way. These sometimes extremely large digital collections of music (Aktivista claims to have made 1,500 music posts which implies his collection to be at least this big) kept by music bloggers are fairly difficult to navigate, i.e. maintaining such a private archive is extremely demanding in terms of organising, updating, managing. In the case of Aktivista’s posts this problem appears visible in him having stopped meticulously naming the mp3s: in the zip one thus gets, apart from the usual cover scan, a selection of tracks titled as they are numbered on the record, i.e. 01-X. This issue makes it difficult for him in the first instance, but perhaps even more so for the user/downloader to organise and make a navigable database; this is a painstakingly time consuming job.

The blogger’s and users’ ‘laziness’ inevitably results in a collection of music that remains fairly inaccessible/unsearchable in terms of identifying the title/artist with the sound. This makes listening to such collections extremely different from the practice of listening to vinyl (or CD)

²¹⁰ Catherine Baker, “Popularna glasba v nekdanji Jugoslaviji: Prek meja do novih,” *Yuniverzum – Ženske v znanosti, Časopis za kritiko znanosti*, 34, 226, 2006, 30–43.

which required more ‘action’ to get the music playing and in a way a more intimate, sensual ‘getting to know’ the music. At this point, it seems fair to ask what music-memory function the abundance of ‘historical’ music may or can play? Is it the act of downloading that in a way gets the user into Menart’s radio waves of sharing/connecting over a song, and no longer the act of listening to the music? Or have the listening habits changed so as to make human ear and mind attentive to the more general soundtrack-like musical backgrounds?

It would seem that the act of downloading has taken on at least some of that feel, as it is in the precise moment that the user is ‘connected,’ on-the-fly, not only to the blog and the blogger, but also to the several hundred-thousand-big community of people who have previously connected to and shared-in their own experience. Although rarely expressed, the absence of experiential textual accounts can be generically ‘filled in’ by user’s own ideas of what the others’ motives for coming to the blog are. Not insignificantly, this idea is co-created with the music. The visitors all seem to share-in at the point where music is the cause of affect, a trigger to agitate the user into visceral look into the past that others have at some point also had the opportunity to take. And when it comes to listening, the playlist on the level of the device-induced immediate aural environment re-creates the musical soundscape of the past. Thus it not only ‘connects’ the digital listener to other temporally displaced people who downloaded the same music, but also to people who have at some point listened to this music in the past. Here it seems perfectly reasonable to paraphrase Burgin and introduce the idea of ‘asynchronous collective reception’ of music.

However, if blogged music is to be available globally and over longer periods of time, these privately created, maintained and curated archives need to be sustainably maintained and safe from the finitude of archivist’s life, interest, the limitations of her resources, or ephemerality/expirability of links at remote storage sites etc.

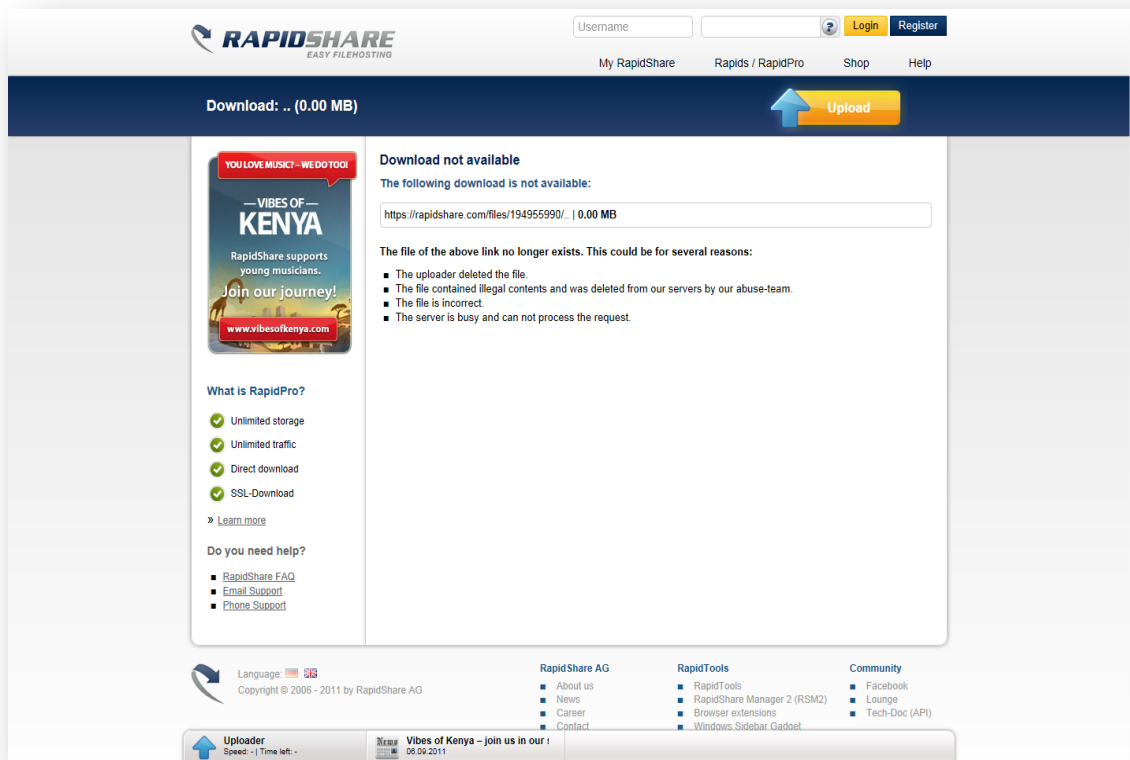


Figure 14 | “Download not available,” available from <https://rapidshare.com/#!download/0tg/194955990/..0.00>.

The problem with archiving is that the endeavours described are solely individual and intimately motivated actions, and are also funded by the enthusiasts (apart from some compensation they might get from ad-hosting) themselves. Consequently they are forced to use more or less free/affordable and more or less expirable remote file hosting services. Apart from the fact that music blogging is a sort of semi-legal activity, the sad reality is that many files are only available for a relatively short period of time. Within a couple of years or even months, they may expire. Unless continually re-uploaded (re-upped), which adds further complexity to the issues of database maintenance. For instance, some of the oldest posts on Gramofonije’s blog and on *Jugozvuk* are no longer available (links have expired), and Aktivista noted in a comment that as of January 2010 he will no longer be re-upping the files as his archive has become too large/difficult to navigate. Re-upping is the usual procedure in cases when the links have expired because of time-out restriction of a particular remote storage service and it is usually done upon request.

This effectively means that large collections of already digitised music no longer available in shops are lost once again (as they have been in the attics, before having been sold at flea markets). One way of digital survival of music preserved via music blogs is in the circularity or mobility of

files as digital media objects. As opposed to a few records that are available for ripping, terabytes of downloaded music exist on many private hard drives and can potentially be exchanged all over again. Talking about expirability of links it has to be said that monthly or yearly payable plans available at remote storage service ensure a longer (interminable) durability of posted material, yet the problem is it takes funds again to keep subscription alive.

In the case of digitisation and online sharing of Yugoslav music there is another point that needs some attention: for much pre-digital audio sources the “major impediment remain[s] the fact that most of our audiovisual memory is in one analogue format or another.”²¹¹ In effect this means that records are lying about in old suitcases (or neatly stored in private collections) still unavailable to the public. And it is hardly a question as whether to make such activities part of larger (institutional) frameworks for preservation of audio heritage (by means of supporting such endeavours).

A question is, however, how to better operationalise the role of blogs (4MO) which apart from raw database indexing often feature also as cases of digital storytelling and consequently as a media-historical resource. In most cases the attempt to (co-)create a narrative, albeit not in classical terms, is clearly discernible, particularly if we see blogging as related to diary writing or commonplacing. And as such music blogging can serve as object of researching personal narrativisations of the past. The blogger’s ambition to present her life, parts of it, or the music of her life, to perform and manage identity further provides tools to look into (music) blogging as a historical and/or archival source. What is more, music blogging, at least to some extent, contributes to (on-the-fly) community building, through merely passive browsing and downloading to more active commenting and reciprocal linking among blogs. Thus individual elements, narrativisations of the past emerge as ‘grounded’ in wider on-the-fly, displaced and transtemporal, informal networks offering an ‘ordinary’ visitor an impression of a wide network/community of people who are interested in/impressed by/immersed into sharing and co-creating a past.

Finally, what does such utilisation of a medium mean for understanding, representing and re-presenting of the Yugoslav past? First of all, it enables/facilitates the recovering, disinterring and representing the music and with that the aspects of the past that usually escape the grip of historiography. In remediating the fragments of personal histories, these are intertwined with particular music and the wider, past and present, contemporary socio-cultural environments of

²¹¹ Daniel Teruggi, “Can we save our audio-visual heritage?,” <http://www.ariadne.ac.uk/issue39/teruggi/>, accessed 8 August 2011.

both bloggers and visitors. Furthermore, such mediation of memories and circulation of 4MO functions as a tool and process of constant re-articulation of the past. Yet it is also a most ordinary everyday activity of individuals engaging with wider socio-cultural constellations which significantly rest on re-actualisations of the past. It has to be emphasised here that the former Yugoslav popular music is not at all de-presented from post-Yugoslav realities. On the contrary, over the years much music has nevertheless been reissued and the interest in gig-attendance of former Yugoslav musicians is definitely increasing. However, this does not mean that the sort of consumptory engagement with the former Yugoslav popular music implies actual interest in the country's past any more than eating out in a 'foreign' restaurant presupposes admiration of 'foreign' culture.

When, however, it comes to the bloggers and their ways discussed above, it becomes clear that their conduct does not fit into the consumptory, cursory engagement with music. What their work demonstrates is great appreciation of the music they seek and post. Moreover, it is also clear from their posts and their storytelling that their motives in using the music are distinctly different. They in fact use the music to narrate their personal stories and they do so also actively engage with the history of Yugoslavia and the history of Yugoslav popular music. What is characteristic for these cases is active re-establishing of a link to the past, indeed a vernacular treatment of Yugoslav popular music as a relevant historical resource that even today may have something to say, about the past and present alike.

Unless digitised, made available in DME and subdued to participative co-creation, the music featured in the music blogs faces a twofold extinction—from history and the media everyday. Through preserving music in this way the aspects of the past that are re-presented in and through the music, in and through the technologically enabled media communications channel, face a better chance of survival in the commoditised world. The extinction, full-on commodification or top-down institutionalisation for that matter would even further exacerbate the consequences that the collapse of the state had for the preservation of Yugoslav history, eliminating the experiential, engaged, affective, caring attitudes to the musical rarities of the past.

Chapter 3 | YouTube and Digital Memorials: Broadcast *your* past

Now, as I recollect my memories and try to invent a past for myself, I find this a portrait of happiness fit for the fables I heard as a child, exactly as the painters of the pictures in those fairy-tale books would have it.²¹²

Introduction

In this Chapter I discuss the potentialities of YouTube as a social networking platform that mobilises/facilitates/engenders the creation and co-creation of digital memorials, i.e. vernacular historical narratives, by giving space for publication and co-creation of 4MO. The cases of externalisations of memory analysed here are understood as typical cases of digital storytelling and the most straightforward examples of vernacular digital memorials (further discussed below). The central object of analysis are *YouTube digital memorials* with a mission to renarrate and/or remediate some of the foremost Yugoslav founding myths, particularly those related to the WWII and the anti-fascist resistance. The topic of WWII and anti-fascism in Yugoslavia was an important tenet of everyday life and popular culture, and such ‘mixing’ continues to be widely present also in ‘YouTube digital memorials.’ What is more, as the WWII and anti-fascism played an important part in the everyday,²¹³ the analysis also takes into consideration the wider Yugoslav popular cultural aspects (particularly music). With this in mind I look into the lives of such ‘*historical*’ (re)interpretations to interrogate the *potentiality of such videos to open up space for articulating narratives which counter the prevailing national(ist) ones*; I approach the issue through content and discourse analysis.

The investigation focuses on video-making strategies employed and the variegated responses that streaming videos evoke. Moreover, analysing the politics of memory in several vernacular-

²¹² Orhan Pamuk, *The White Castle*, translated from the Turkish by Victoria Holbrook, New York, Vintage Books, 1998, 41.

²¹³ Cf. Catherine Baker, “‘Death to Fascism isn’t in the Catechism’: Legacies of Socialism in Croatian Popular Music after the Fall of Yugoslavia,” *Narodna umjetnost: hrvatski časopis za etnologiju i folkloristiku*, 47, 1, 2010; also available at <http://hrcak.srce.hr/file/81655>.

historical videos, I trace the contemporary “reaction formation”²¹⁴ inflamed by the perplexities of the rising nationalisms in the region and elsewhere. In my view this is ignited by the fragility and elusiveness characteristic of the rapidly changing socio-cultural constellations, and mostly as a reaction to the pervasive east-central European disillusionment over the prospects of ‘freedom’ and ‘democracy’ which turned out to be not quite what was expected before the transformations started in 1989.

The changes in the spheres of politics, economy and culture which occurred in the aftermath of the 1989–1991 events seemed to have brought light into the murky communist dungeons of the east. It seemed that the oppressive past was done away with and that the future, once freed from the yoke of ‘illiberty’ and terror, was ‘ours for the taking.’ It was, alas, not quite so. Along with the high-flying dreams, the transformation processes brought about disappointment which, as Slavoj Žižek stresses, “gave room for three reactions to emerge: (1) nostalgia for the “good old” communist times, (2) right-wing nationalist populism; (3) renewed and late anti-communist paranoia.”²¹⁵ Thus, instead of ‘moving forward’ the past this is still very much a burden—surfacing and bubbling in the creaks of the new ideological edifices—and significantly informing the diverse post-socialist realities. In a techno-political situation that more than before enables (and demands) publication, hence politicisation, of individual stances and beliefs, references to WWII and anti-fascism seem to have again become the stronghold of resistance to the present socio-politico-economical perturbations in Europe. It seems that at the beginning of the 21st century very little alternatives to the present politico-economic system can be conceived of, let alone practiced, collectively;²¹⁶ despite the new ‘liberating’ technological solutions to tackle age old problems.

Co-creating and Sharing Memories in YouTube

Before going any further, let us take a look at how YouTube, one of the most popular video sharing websites, works as a platform for publication and co-creation of digital narratives. YouTube is a place to share and store, user-generated (ripped or ‘actually’ made) videos among

²¹⁴ Andreas Huyssen uses this concept in a different meaning (in relation to the memory boom), but is nevertheless applicable to other socio-cultural phenomena; Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia*, New York, Routledge, 1995, 7; see also Chapter 5.

²¹⁵ Slavoj Žižek, *Living in the end times*, ix–x.

²¹⁶ Tony Judt, “Manifesto for a new politics,” <http://www.underpaidgenius.com/post/561132456>, accessed 23 August 2011.

users of the site.²¹⁷ Moreover, as the technology behind it also enables embedding videos on websites, blogs, news portals etc., the culture of video making and watching inevitably also reaches far beyond the site itself. At that YouTube also features as a social networking site, with functionalities that enable creating a channel, adding/making friends, subscribing, viewing and uploading videos, (video and textual) commenting, creating playlists and choosing ‘your’ favourite videos etc. Thus YouTube, via video-sharing functionality, is a site where individuals (and corporations) can make their digital appearance, i.e. manage their digital identities audiovisually and textually, and interact/engage with other users.

Since launched in 2005, the number of users and uploaded content has been soaring and continues to grow exponentially.²¹⁸ During 2010 only, 13 million hours of video were uploaded reaching 700 billion playbacks.²¹⁹ The types of posted videos span music videos, gigs recorded with mobile devices, home videos, funny videos, video blogs (vlogs), various sorts of ‘how to’ instructions, jokes and pranks, commercial and advertising content, feature films, clips from sporting events etc.

The most appealing functionality perhaps is that YouTube enables publishing and sharing user-generated content (UGC). This do-it-yourself philosophy is an important part of YouTube culture which builds upon the technological potentiality of publishing/sharing content which otherwise (in traditional media) would be facing considerable difficulties in reaching wider audiences. YouTube gives very personal, individual narratives, digital stories and practices of digital storytelling a platform where they can be voiced. The question, however, remains if also (or at all) heard. On the level of the basic idea promoted by YouTube and its slogan “Broadcast Yourself”²²⁰ the service is also giving space to under-represented, unheard voices, providing a media channel for expressing marginalised views, obscurities and rarities from personal lives, histories and memories that rarely, if at all, find their way to the big media or out-of-the-know communities. The reality, however, is that it is very difficult indeed to see this as an entirely democratising venture; the

²¹⁷ As of early 2011 YouTube lifted all video length limit which since the beginning of the service was 10 minutes and in mid-2010 increased to 15 minutes.

²¹⁸ For chronological overview see Viral Blog, Viral Ideas, Social trends, <http://www.viralblog.com/research/youtube-statistics/>, accessed 23 August 2011.

²¹⁹ *Jeremy Norman's From Cave Paintings to the Internet, Chronological and Thematic Studies on the History of Information and Media*, “YouTube Statistics 02-2011 (February 2011),” <http://www.historyofinformation.com/index.php?id=3252>, accessed 23 August 2011.

²²⁰ In July 2009 the slogan was removed from the logo on the website (<http://www.hotforwords.com/2009/07/21/youtube-removes-broadcast-yourself-slogan-again/>; accessed 23 August 2011), yet it can still be seen occasionally in the website title, plus it is part of YouTube Broadcast Yourself Live feature. It can also be seen at www.archive.org, the Internet Wayback Machine, where users can also see the first slogan, *Upload, tag and share your videos worldwide!*; the modification from December 2006, *Broadcast yourself. Watch and share your videos worldwide!* already introduces the latest slogan and emphasizes the sharing of videos.

attention is crucial,²²¹ or rather the prospect of the lack of it, which in DME is as pervasive as it is in the ‘big old’ media and power structures. In the abundance of channels and uploaded videos, corporate media and established publishers may get the greater share of attention and also be in a position to monetise their activity, whereas the vast majority of posted content and its makers have relatively small audiences and negligible impact in terms of virality/penetrability of posted content.

Another case in this vein, from a different internet social networking perspective, is Evgeny Morozov’s argumentation drawing attention to the mediatisation of the Iranian Twitter Revolution. The DME coverage excessively promoted what he calls cyber-utopianism, as several cyber-utopian blogs promulgated the impression that Twitter, marrying Iranian protests and technology “clearly indicated that authoritarianism was doomed everywhere,” despite the fact that the Green Movement was quickly disintegrating and was unable to mount a serious challenge to Ahmadinejad.²²² This clearly shows that a grassroots action can quickly be monopolised by powerful media, at that essentially distorted in the process of interpretation. Hence, the democratic potential of networked grassroots action can easily be over-invested with unrealistic liberating potential and concomitantly stripped of much real subversia. More to the point, Morozov, coming from the former eastern bloc, critically approaches the western Cold War triumphalism which built on the fallacy that “many of the Western strategies tried back then, like smuggling in photocopiers and fax machines, facilitating the flow of samizdat, and supporting radio broadcasts by Radio Free Europe and the Voice of America,” discarding them as having been “given much more credit than they deserve”²²³:

Much of the present excitement about the internet, particularly the high hopes that are pinned on it in terms of opening up closed societies, stem from such selective and, at times, incorrect readings of history rewritten to glorify the genius of Ronald Reagan and minimize the role of structural conditions and inherent contradictions of the Soviet system.²²⁴

Not forgetting the context on account of the tool, as Morozov cautions, the YouTube activities (creating, uploading, viewing, commenting) and the (more and less stable ad hoc) online communities can still be seen as ‘emitting’ eloquent, often political statements; despite the fact that considerable portions of YouTube content are music related or various approaches to self-presentation. As we will see, in Yugoslav YouTube digital memorials, music itself plays an important role; if not entirely political it is definitely beyond mere entertaining.

²²¹ See Chapter 1.

²²² Evgeny Morozov, *The Net Delusion*, 3, 4.

²²³ *Ibid.*, xi.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, xii.

In the category of vernacular or user generated digital storytelling it seems viable to distinguish two DS types: in terms of approach to content organisation, presentation and its management. First, vlogging usually features a person in front of a video camera narrating/recounting her quotidian experiences, preferences, giving advice, lectures in foreign languages... Vlogging thus creates a record of a person's activity both in terms of narrated content and in the 'history' of posts. Social networking functionalities enable sharing such content among friends and absolute strangers alike. Moreover, given the functionality of both audiovisual and textual commenting, such multimodal digital externalisations of intimacy/personality/identity are subject to scrutiny and (dis)interest and (dis)like by other users who may add to the creation of a 4MO by liking, grading, commenting on the posted material. This may facilitate a very loose, on-the-fly community of quite possibly unfamiliar users, who may (or not) nevertheless get to meet another user via, first, participating in the co-creation of a person's digital storytelling, and second via taking this initial encounter further. The co-creation at work here is in that any action related to a posted video (as a 4MO thus including search bar, description, tags, comments, likes, etc.)²²⁵ contributes to its expansion in terms of content and meaning. Such video thus becomes a public site for externalisation (and indeed management) of intimacy about a particular topic. Moreover, and in addition to its archival component, YouTube gives space for externalisation also of very personal memories which the video maker decided to "be exposed before [her] peers."²²⁶ This approach engages both the maker and the user into a very direct relationship (the person is usually facing the camera), where the potential addressee/participating user becomes the co-creator and the judge.

The second UGC DS type in YouTube is audiovisual material that fits more directly into Joe Lambert's definition of digital storytelling (see Chapter 1) and uses audiovisuals to narrate a several-minute piece informed by one's personal experience. In Lambert's conceptualisation of digital storytelling this practice entails a "short, first person video-narrative created by combining recorded voice, still and moving images, and music or other sounds."²²⁷ In most cases digital stories thus conceptualised are life stories, as several authors discuss in Knut Lundby's *Digital Storytelling*.²²⁸ In DS as memory practice individuals embark on a journey of audiovisual (self)discovery and create digital stories of pictures, moving images, music and occasionally

²²⁵ See Frank Kessler and Mirko Tobias Schäfer, "Navigating YouTube: Constituting a Hybrid Information Management System," in Pelle Snickars and Patrick Vonderau (eds.), *The YouTube Reader*, 275–291, 279.

²²⁶ As the Judge in Pink Floyd's *The Wall* shouts it in the concluding *The Trial*, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FCMHmDnfD6I>, accessed 23 August 2011.

²²⁷ <http://www.storycenter.org/index1.html>, accessed 23 August 2011.

²²⁸ Knut Lundby, *Digital Storytelling*.

captions; these are edited into an audiovisual narrative. As such material is produced using digital equipment ((photo) camera, scanner, editing software) and it is consequently also published online, it is rightly called digital storytelling.

Crucially, the latter type of vernacular DS, which also includes audiovisual content, is created using media archaeological approach, i.e. the maker searches for various media content (photos, songs, archival footage, feature film excerpts) to create a digital audiovisual narrative with which to express her bizarre fascination, interpretation, understanding of a personal memory, an event or an experience etc. Typically such a video features photographs, film excerpts, magazine covers, 'photoshopped' material, captions, music etc. What essentially makes such a video and indeed its entire environment (the URL location, including description, number of views, comments, etc.) a 4MO, is its use of different media sources, the tags relating it to other not necessarily related videos, other videos created or posted by the same user and video or textual comments; all this contributes to mobility and co-presence of the video in different users browsers.

YouTube as a platform for sharing and co-creating audiovisual (externalisations) of memories offers an extensive selection of Yugoslavia related material, vernacular and audiovisual interpretations and renditions of its past. Formally and typically, digital audiovisualisations of Yugoslav past and history (and post-Yugoslav present) are made of (still or moving) images and dubbed with music. In most cases the images depict various themes, people, events from the WWII (1941—1945), the post-war (1945—1991), and the post-Yugoslav periods, and are either digitised (scans) or born digital. The topicality or referentiality of the images is used to re-create/re-construct the spatio-temporal coordinates of the country. On a very general level the makers of digital memorials construct a visual time-line spanning the birth of the country and its demise, which typically features a four-act scenario (in any combination or any one of them): WWII, post-war period, post-Yugoslav wars, and post-Yugoslav/post-socialist realities the newly formed countries found themselves in.

This by no means implies that images are used with any sort of chrono-loyalty or subordination to the 'actual' time-line. Rather, they are used in a distinctly chrono-arbitrary way, all in service of assisting creating a specific, often decidedly personal narrative (unravelling in the continuous present of the internet).²²⁹ Another oft used feature on the visual level are the titles and captions introducing the video, marking 'chapters,' or providing an explanation/detail that both the image and sound fail to transmit. On the level of sound, most often popular music is used, either from the Yugoslav era or from later on, and occasionally partisan chants and revolutionary songs. The

²²⁹ See Lisa Gitelman, *Always Already New*, 138; on the temporality of the internet see below.

selection is in many cases thoroughly considered as it is through music (much like in cinema) that additional communication (often more emotive) is added to the visual content. In this audiovisual and textual interplay, in many cases, a general double-line of distinction can be drawn between these engaged interventions, first, that of *valuing the past*: through nostalgia or contempt; and second, *attitude towards the past*: ‘dead-serious’ or ‘jokey.’

An eloquent case of the jokey intervention is a video where an excerpt from Star Wars film is dubbed with Zdravko Čolić’s famous interpretation of “Druže Tito mi ti se kunemo” [Comrade Tito, we swear to you].²³⁰ In this video several mythological levels are fused together, first Lucas’ symbolisation and transposition of earthly matters into the realm of sci-fi, a distancing critique the earthly reality. Čolić’s song on the other hand is a once popular ode to Tito still resonating today across post-Yugoslavia; a reinterpretation of a partisan song from WWII, which in his cover attained a much more widespread attention and appreciation, is a glorification of the ‘image and work’ of Comrade Tito and at the same time an expression of devotion to him and the Yugoslav cause. In the marriage with the Star Wars excerpt, this song attains a rather different meaning, as it is re-contextualised, by way of meshing or renarrating, into the wider mythological and fictional framework which distinctly marked the western hemisphere at the end of the millennium. One comment even traces the analogy between the subject matter depicted in the film with the mythological referential point, WWII of Čolić’s song:

Tito is a hero! Star Wars rule!! The best combination!
 Memories!!! when I was a kid partisans and Jedis were the coolest!
 And also the analogy- alliance- partisans, fascists Empire.
 At the end of the day, I think this is what Lucas thought! Just look at the uniforms.
 elendil77²³¹

Now, as amusing as cases such as this might seem, the central concern of this analysis are videos on a mission to commemorate²³² Yugoslavia by editing music and images into digital stories—in some cases vernacular interpretations of history—and digital memorials. It is in the manner of creating tribute videos that this kind of digital storytelling becomes a fine conduit to externalisation of memories and remembering. But before delving deeper into this issue, a few words are in order to explicate the concept of digital memorial.

²³⁰ See BogdanDLR, “Star Wars Druze Tito,” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-irP4AAcyo>, accessed 23 August 2011.

²³¹ See comments at http://www.youtube.com/all_comments?v=y-irP4AAcyo, accessed 23 August 2011.

²³² I use the term ‘commemorate’ throughout this writing very broadly to denote an online activity where users/visitors engaged in mundane digital socialising commemorate on-the-fly an event/period/person and in doing so often use pop-cultural multimodal mediatisations.



Figure 15 | Star Wars meet Yugoslav Leader, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-irP4AAcyo>.

Digital memorials

The issues of memory, remembering, and vernacular commemoration practices are taking various forms and turns in DME and are not unimportantly related to preserving, storing and archiving. As I have argued in the previous Chapter, archiving practices as can be discerned, for instance, in (music) blogging are not merely archiving. Rather, through collecting, preserving/archiving, and eventually ordering (or curating) the various materials, posted on blogs, YouTube channels or another SNS profiles, the ‘collector’ tells her story. I can agree with Lev Manovich in that a database (as a digital incarnation of an archive) is essentially non-narrative,²³³ but the database, or the internet as a ‘ubiquitous database’ and with this memory in general cannot be reduced to non-narrative memory. It may well be that with the changing nature of archiving the very nature of

²³³ Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media*.

database is changing as well. As Geoffrey Bowker suggests, and taking Manovich's argument further, the "epoch of potential memory [critically related to Hoskins' memory on-the-fly]²³⁴ [... is an epoch] in which narrative remembering is typically a post hoc reconstruction from an ordered, classified set of facts that have been scattered over multiple physical data collections."²³⁵ It is true, that narrative can only emerge after the elements have been edited into a new whole. But the question is what exactly the element is. In the case of YouTube as archive, a digital memorial video could be seen as an element in a database; and it does possess a narrative quality, as does the digital memorial videos as a database as well.

The more straightforward externalisations of both official and vernacular memory online include numerous instantiations in digital memorials/monuments,²³⁶ spanning 'proper' digital monuments (e.g. *Memory Loops*, www.memoryloops.net), personal online memorials (e.g. *Light a Pixel*, *The Online Memorial*, www.lightapixel.com) and more grass-roots, vernacular attempts at remediating the past (YouTube digital memorials). Digital memorials are typically, albeit not necessarily, characterised by a certain degree of interactivity (the user must interact with the interface to 'visit' the memorial and/or participate in a commemoration) and particularly by the possibility for a user to participate in a commemoration, and while doing so co-create the memory of an event or an individual; or a country for that matter. Once a memorial is published/posted it becomes publicly available for others to visit, navigate to/through, comment on or share. Although the co-creation is in many cases rather limited, the *Light a pixel* for instance, enables a visitor to 'literally' 'light a pixel' and pay tribute to a celebrity. The user thus engages in an act of online commemoration; in many cases, though, co-creation comes down to comments and discussions, or plain viewing.

Digital memorials work very much like 'classic' memorials do: as public externalisations of memory which may enable/facilitate/perpetuate remembrance in a public space/publicly. By doing so on the level of collectivity, they engender social, cultural and/or political continuity. Or at least this is the intention. In the offline memorials and monuments, or sites of mourning rather strict rules are imposed defining whom, why and how to is to be commemorated (and by that also excluding certain aspects, persons, events unsuitable for the present commemorating fashion). Digital memorials, on the other hand, tend to remediate to some extent offline memorials and monuments and the corresponding protocols of 'en-memorising' the past.²³⁷ In digital memorial

²³⁴ The 'potential memory' is 'actualised' on-the-fly.

²³⁵ Geoffrey Bowker, *Memory practices in the sciences*, 30.

²³⁶ Here it has to be emphasised that abounding official externalisations of memories (e.g. e-museums and other digital or digitised collections, archives) are not discussed in much detail. The main concern is devoted to vernacular externalisations.

²³⁷ With en-memorising I imply the proactive, dynamic and processual nature of 'consigning to memory.'

landscape, however, less strict eligibility criteria are imposed for a person to be qualified to be commemorated and remembered publicly, i.e. present in the public sphere: several online memorial sites enable ‘ordinary’ citizens to create a digital memorial for their loved ones and make it globally available, side by side with celebrity memorials, 9/11 victims or the victims of the Holocaust. Now, what does this mean for remembering, collective or individual? As has been argued above, the alleged democratisation of remembering to some extent at least opens up new spaces for remembering and mourning.²³⁸ Moreover, technological tools and correspondingly developing cultural practices to commemorate private loss publicly permeate the very structural frameworks of remembering: along the public (on- and offline) commemoration of nationally acknowledged heroes and anniversaries the distinctly private remembering, previously confined to family and friends, has secured its space (not necessarily attention) in public.

By becoming a public event, an individual’s transpiring is inscribed into the DME and the broader socio-cultural contexts of remembering. It is brought closer to the collectivity of mourning, regardless of mourners’ spatio-temporal location. An interesting case in this respect is the above mentioned *Light the pixel – The Online Memorial*,²³⁹ clearly playing on the metaphor of lighting a candle. The website was created by Ariel Demi after Michael Jackson died: “I figured there is a void for fans who want to pay tribute from anywhere in the world. As I see it, it’s a unique, visual and somewhat intimate approach. Light a Pixel allows anyone to pay tribute and/or create an online memorial page just for their loved ones for free.”²⁴⁰

In the press release, the website promotes itself as follows: “Light a Pixel (www.lightapixel.com) introduces a new, creative approach to online memorial. Instead of the usual guest-book candle tributes, you can light a pixel on an image, with a tribute. The pixels lit slowly reveal a colorful, bright image.” As opposed to early online commemoration facilities (signing a guest-book, which is a typical remediation of offline commemoration practice), the website claims to offer more in terms of technologically enhanced mourning experience. “Light a Pixel also features a section for famous people who passed away where fans can pay tribute from anywhere in the world using this simple visual method. Famous people like Michael Jackson and Elvis Presley have their online memorials. Whether you want to light a pixel as a tribute or create an online memorial for your loved ones, it’s free. No trials, no fee. All you have to do is create a memorial and upload an

²³⁸ See “Archiving, Techno-topia and Pervasive Sceptis” section of this chapter.

²³⁹ See www.lightapixel.com. Note: the domain name expired 17 July and is pending renewal or deletion, accessed 23 August 2011. This poses further issues with the preservation and availability of digital memorials that often depend on payable service.

²⁴⁰ Jim Cherry, “Jim Morrison Memorial, Light a Pixel,” [examiner.com, http://www.examiner.com/the-doors-in-national/jim-morrison-memorial-light-a-pixel](http://www.examiner.com/the-doors-in-national/jim-morrison-memorial-light-a-pixel), accessed 23 August 2011.

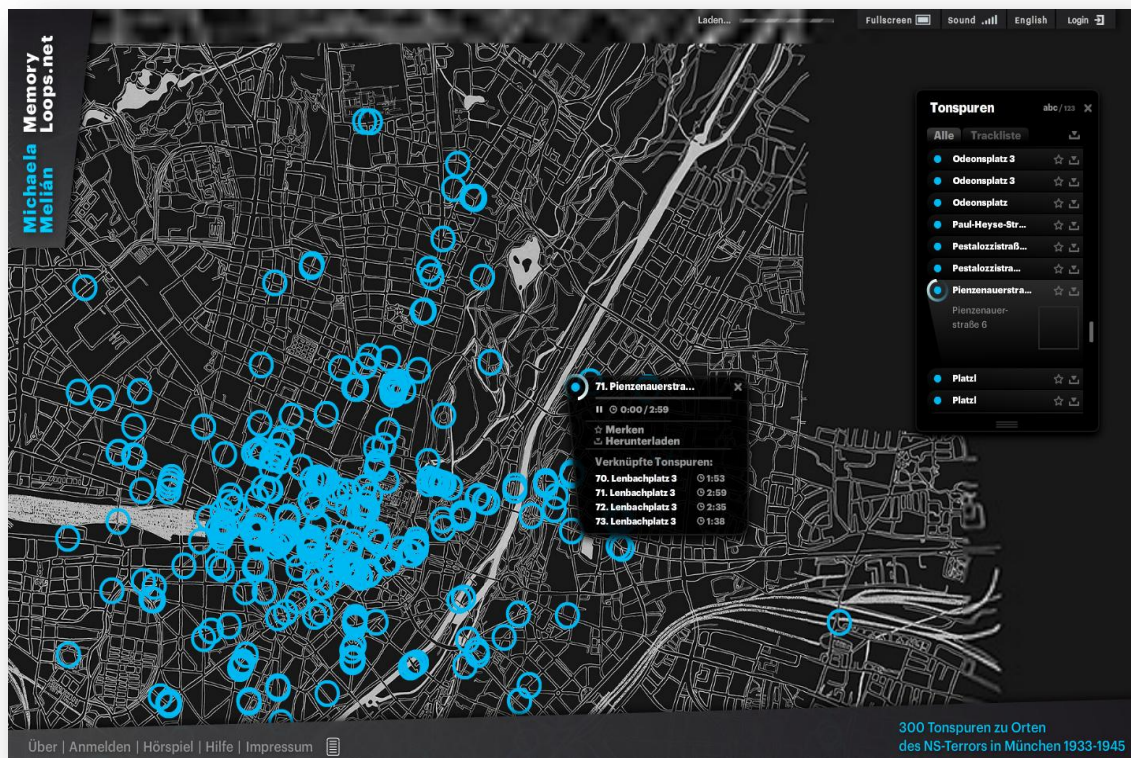
image. That's it.”²⁴¹ The fact is that despite a very overt call for anyone to create a memorial the majority of memorials are dedicated to celebrities (singers and actors), politicians (Yitzhak Rabin) and, for instance, a victim of 2009 Iranian protests, Neda Agha-Soltan, while some are dedicated to ‘impersonal’ causes or initiatives (Tsunami Indian Ocean Casualties, September 11, etc.).

Another interesting case in point is the Memory Loops.net; conceived by Michaela Melián,²⁴² the memorial site is Munich’s “virtual memorial for the victims of National Socialism [... comprising] 300 German and 175 English audio tracks which can be found on a map drawn up by the artist [...] Each track is a collage of voice(s) and music thematically tied to a place in the former ‘Capital of the Movement.’”²⁴³ When the visitor surfs to a map that features circles—these stand on locations where some event occurred during the Nazi reign—she can connect to an audio track. The tracks are audio recordings of reports and interviews read by actors and actresses, while historical documents are read by children. Clicking through the circles on the map the visitor can navigate through the audio landscape of Munich in the period 1933—1945 and thus encounter audio slices of history. Using oral histories and official documents (e.g. NSDAP memos, radio broadcasts) the website creates an image of the past, devoid of any visual representation (bar the digital map), that enables a connection to that past through the words and voices only. The method of reading the transcribed texts by actors establishes an ‘interpretative distance’ through which the ‘voices’ and the people interviewed are posited into a transtemporal historical landscape. Furthermore, the use of children in reading the official texts makes this memorial even more detached from the then reality, but at the same time—drawing on the supposed innocence of child readers—further emphasises the gravity and intolerability of the Nazi rule.

²⁴¹ “Light a Pixel – New approach to Online Memorials,” *PRLOG, Press Release Distribution*, <http://www.prlog.org/10378312-light-pixel-new-approach-to-online-memorials.html>, accessed 23 August 2011.

²⁴² Michaela Melián, *Memory Loops.Net*, <http://www.memoryloops.net/>, accessed 21 August 2011.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*



Slika 16 | Mapping audio spots of memory, www.memoryloops.net.

A particular phenomenon in creating a digital memorial was the attempt of two former Yugoslavs who migrated to the Netherlands after the collapse. They decided to put up a parallel, virtual country, Cyber Yugoslavia, with all the works: the constitution, “variable” symbols, digital passports, located on the internet and occupying the area of 0 m².²⁴⁴ They explain:

For us, the only reality that could be real was virtual. The last ten years look like a dream, an illusion. People might say that the site was made by nostalgic ex-Yugoslavs but I don't see us as that. We spent our youth in a country which at that time was very good if you were young. But nobody wants to make a political statement, we don't want to say that this was a better country. It was a very tolerant and interesting intellectual climate – this site doesn't refer to the country or the politics, it's supposed to be fun.²⁴⁵

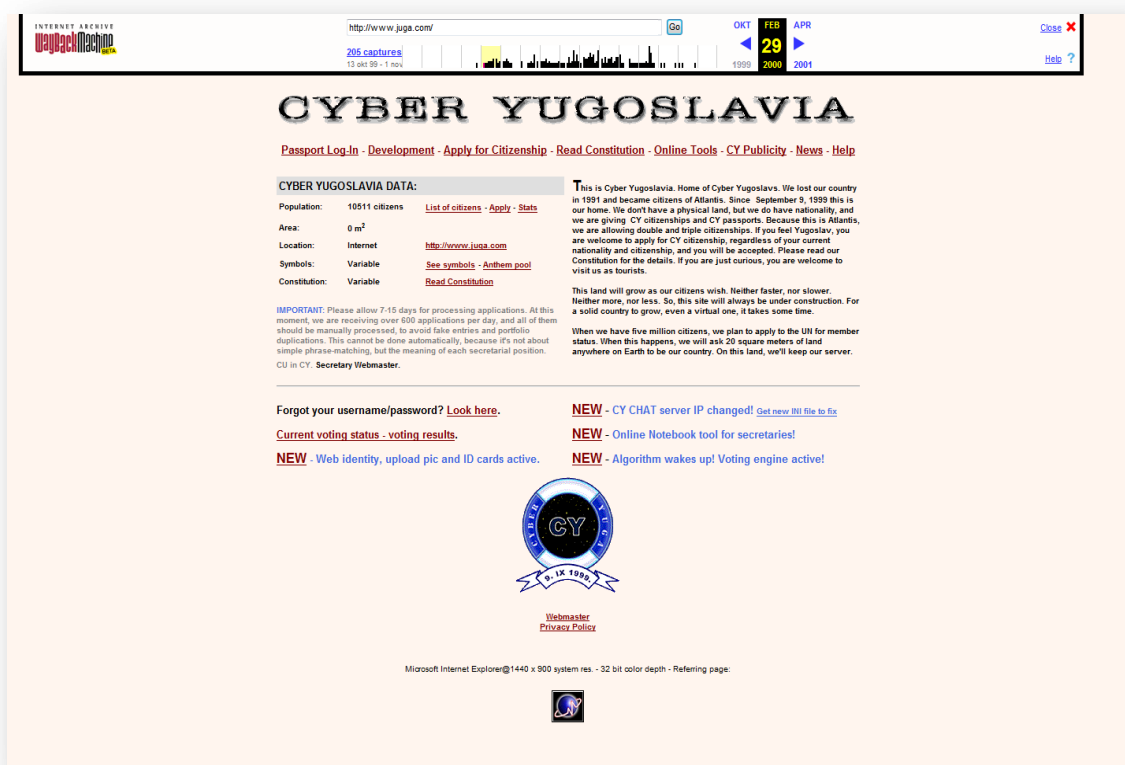
²⁴⁴ The site was available at www.juga.com since late 1999, but has apparently been shut down; today it plainly displays “It works!,” accessed 31 August 2011.

²⁴⁵ Apparently the site attracted not only former Yugoslavs, but other ‘nationals’ as well: even before the official launch, 400 Bangladeshi applied for citizenship, see Chris Nuttall, “Sci/Tech Birth of a Nation,” [bbc.co.uk](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/413420.stm), <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/413420.stm>, accessed 31 August 2011.

The site is no longer operable, yet as can be seen from the archived version it was a rather humorous attempt to paying tribute to the deceased country. It was not so much a commemorative attempt as it was an attempt to create an online social space for post-Yugoslavs.

When it was founded, CY had no territory. There were 152 founding citizens. When the number of citizens reaches five million, CY will request membership of the United Nations, and soon after CY will request a territory of 20 square meters, anywhere on the Globe, where it will place its server. This will be the official territory of CY, where its DNS entry will be located: <http://www.juga.com>.²⁴⁶

What makes this site a digital memorial can be traced in the fact that the website and the initiative tried to revive Yugoslavia in several aspects (tolerance, intellectual freedom), which in a way presupposes taking an active part in translating a part of history into the present (which essentially is the role of a memorial). Moreover, today the site can be seen as a memorial in that it has ceased to exist and has become the stuff of memory of the early Yugonostalgia, only available in the Internet Archive.²⁴⁷



²⁴⁶ See “Constitution of CY (English),”

http://web.archive.org/web/20000229172317/http://www.juga.com/Constitution/const_eng.htm, accessed 2 September 2011.

²⁴⁷ Internet Archive, <http://www.archive.org/>, accessed 21 September 2011.

The difference in these instances to offline commemorative places, monuments and memorials is in that digital memorials, precisely via their detemporalisation and deterritorialisation, provide for a deterritorialised and detemporalised participation in a commemorating community. Or, to turn this perspective around, digital commemoration enables a somewhat revised temporality and territoriality to emerge: even more so than in the mass media era (print, TV, radio) where the community could identify with a specific topicality and/or materiality (news, commemoration) still in territorial terms, the sense of belonging in the DME is redefined through the perspective of individual's participation in the process. Or, in the mediatised event, which in terms of web publication can be seen as the “most condensed and semantically wealthy unit of time.”²⁴⁸ The pervasive fascination and determinant of online temporality, the ‘real time’ of publication and experience/consumption, as Lisa Gitelman argues, is an act “unlabored, immediately lived and immediately real [...] more of an effect, then, an experience of data ‘on the fly,’ than it is the literal copresence or cotemporality of users and events.”²⁴⁹ Yet, the anticipation of co-presence and co-temporality is, apart from the on-the-fly-ness, an important aspect of online (commemorative) participation.

Following Frank Kessler and Mirko Tobias Schäfer, participation can be seen as *explicit*—uploading, commenting, flagging, tagging; and *implicit*—random, accidental click, unintentional cybertracing that feed into the database.²⁵⁰ In the case of YouTube they argue that “every interaction with the YouTube site leads to a trace in the system and becomes a record relevant to the statistics that can be read at the surface as an indicator for ‘popularity.’”²⁵¹

As liberating as this (ideally) may seem, such vernacular, private, individual initiatives may in fact sap the traditional national edifices, which despite the globalising structural trends still exert significant influence over the everyday. It is not my intention here to argue that the internet or globalisation (should) necessarily lead to withering away of the national. On the contrary, it is fairly obvious that the globalising trends and the new communications technologies importantly

²⁴⁸ Mary Ann Doane, quoted in Lisa Gitelman, *Always Already New*, 138.

²⁴⁹ Lisa Gitelman, *Always Already New*, 2009, 138.

²⁵⁰ Frank Kessler and Mirko Tobias Schäfer, “Navigating YouTube: Constituting a Hybrid Information Management System,” in Pelle Snickars and Patrick Vonderau (eds.), *The YouTube Reader*, 275–291, 285.

²⁵¹ Frank Kessler and Mirko Tobias Schäfer, “Navigating YouTube: Constituting a Hybrid Information Management System,” in Pelle Snickars and Patrick Vonderau (eds.), *The YouTube Reader*, 275–291, 285.

inflame a reaction formation: the ‘existential insecurity’²⁵² coming in the wake also of globalising market economy, the digitisation and the fluidity of the present gives rise to right-wing nationalism and rejuvenated fear of the other. Thus, digital (or any other) technologies cannot be seen entirely as a liberating force, as they also provide a fertile ground for the flourishing of backward, authoritarian policies and practices. These tend to reflect conspicuously also in politics of memory and remembering.

The urge to control the memorials (in the post-Yugoslav contexts) may not be overtly directed towards censoring online content. Rather, it seems that the struggles over the (re)interpretation/revision of the past in post-Yugoslavia tend to widen the gap and inflame and perpetuate socio-cultural clashes. Not infrequently these clashes originate in the recent processes of the break-up of Yugoslavia and the emergence of new independent states: the roots to these issues clearly go well beyond 1991, reaching at least in the interwar Yugoslavia (1918—1941). In effect, the reduction of daily politics (of the past) to the clashes inhibits and incapacitates constructive social action. Instead of constructive ‘dealing with the past,’ the ‘memory wars’ are relegated to the sphere of the public and media, where the symbols, monuments and memorials, idea(l)s and beliefs are mediated and hence left to often futile debates between members of diametrically opposing convictions. Moreover, the mediation of memories of Yugoslavia (positive and negative) and the externalisations of individual reinterpretations are mushrooming in DME, opening up spaces of digital encounters for like-minded and bitter non-argumentative interventions among the poles. It could be argued that desecration of material memorials migrated in DME but changed somewhat in the process: if we take it that commentaries to online memorials “reveal a related ritualistic behaviour to that of placing flowers, teddy bears, photographs and messages on a memory fence,”²⁵³ we could also draw an analogy and say that the desecration in online memorials can occur either via hate-comments or through a fairly widespread practice of creating counter-memorials.²⁵⁴ Unlike in the offline counter-memorial practices, where a community can hardly form around a desecrated monument, in DME counter-memorial can serve well to provide a point of encounter for like-minded people.

²⁵² Cf. Zygmunt Bauman, *Globalization: The Human Consequences*. Cambridge, Polity Press, 1998, 2; see also David Harvey, “Time-Space compression and the postmodern condition,” in Malcolm Waters (ed.), *Modernity: Critical Concepts*, vol. 4, New York, Routledge, 1999, 98–118.

²⁵³ Malin Wahlberg, “YouTube Commemoration: Private Grief and Communal Consolation,” in Pelle Snickars and Patrick Vonderau (eds.), *The YouTube Reader*, 218–235, 232.

²⁵⁴ The use of counter-memorial here draws but differs from James E. Young’s conceptualisation of counter monument, alluding to a shift from traditional monument iconography in order to raise “awareness of the fact that while monuments do highlight historical connections, they can never replace public and individual responsibility for critical recollection and responsible remembrance” (<http://www.goethe.de/kue/arc/dos/dos/zdk/en204638.htm>, accessed 23 August 2011): rather, it refers to online action whereas one digital memorial is countered by creating another one prompting a different point of view (e.g. video responses on YouTube).

The relation between on- and offline memorials needs some further explanation: along the potential of participation, digital memorials differ significantly from offline ‘hardcopy’ memorials and monuments in the convergence of the media and in the strategies of mediation of memory. In digital memorials (particularly the vernacular video memorials) the video, sound, image and text are converged to create a digital media narrative. An offline memorial, for instance a statue or a cenotaph, features inscriptions, a photo, a candle etc., while in digital memorials the channels of mediation/mediatisation are converged into unimodality to create a 4MO. This schematic distinction will necessarily fall when we consider many offline memorials that feature other strategies of mediation/mediatisation, successfully employing video, sound etc. Yet, it is in digital memorials that new temporalities and territorialities can come to their full: via mobile devices, a memorial can be ‘visited’ any time from any (connected) place, a trace of the visit can be visibly left in the comment (or a lit pixel) and the act of commemoration can further be enhanced by sharing-in the ‘digital contemporaneity’ of experience. Additionally, the affect may further be enhanced by fusing the location of viewing (where I am connecting from) with the location of memorial.

What makes the digital memorials—and particularly the vernacular ones—significantly different is their emplacement or embeddedness into the coordinates of public space and the potential for social action this generates. What is crucial here is the detemporalisation and deterritorialisation (or the new temporality/territoriality) of such memorials, i.e. the characteristic of them potentially being present/accessible/changeable/archivable in many spaces at many different times (or simultaneously). This became one of the main characteristics of the DME after the “connectivity turn,” which implies a shift in conceptualising social collectivity, propelled by digital technology-enabled connectivity.²⁵⁵ With this in mind it can be said that public remembering in digital media ecology can in a way be seen even more as a ‘living matter’: the externalisation of memory and hence remembering in and through digital memorials is becoming a process ever more ongoing, debated, contested, renarrated and recontextualised.

And what is important in this respect, as compared to material/offline memorials, ‘digital memory’ seems to be even more infused by both socio-political and intimately personal eventualities/happenings in the present; in a way we could speak of *enhanced immediacy of remembering*—the events and the commemorative acts are brought closer to the user/on-the-fly commemorating community. In view of the enhanced immediacy, the commemorated event—through the technological tools and corresponding practices—entangles the user into an affective

²⁵⁵ On connectivity, see Chapter 1.

commemorative act, crucially (co-)determined by the “continuous present tense of Web publication [...] imbued with the cultural logic of timelessness [which aids to] make a new medium authoritative in a sense by co-opting cultural authority, by entwining the new means and existing subjects of public memory.”²⁵⁶ Still, to curb the somewhat enthusiastic tone of the enhanced immediacy of remembering it is necessary first to remind the reader of all the previous (understandably unfulfilled) promises by the technological in(ter)ventions: to bring the communication closer. And second, to relate it to Paul Virilio’s concept of ‘residual abundance’; Andrew Hoskins argues that it is not just that “the infinite scale of the Internet and digital archives tests the parameters of human imagination, but it is their availability in the here-and-now that is both exhilarating and overwhelming.”²⁵⁷

Regarding the ‘ways and places of circulation,’ it seems adequate enough to understand the videos commemorating the former Yugoslavia posted on YouTube largely as cases of private initiative, grass-roots, vernacular endeavours, which, importantly, often ‘fail to reproduce’ the official or revisionist renarrativisations of the post-WWII history in post-1991 socio-political environments. Rather, they counter them.

The content on the internet as a remediating medium is to some extent bereft of the materiality of offline representations of the past and instead merges four basic discursive elements, text, sound, image and video into cyberplaces of memory. When a digital memorial is put up on the internet, it physically only requires a server located at certain geographical position, and it only may come to life if accessed from a physical location. Beyond that point, however, the (narrative) space created by a user is freed from any constraints of physical space apart from that of the visitor and her ability to connect. Thus, such artefact may potentially be present anywhere/time and provide a locus where visitors’ paths may intersect, where people meet and interact. In such spatially and temporally unbound connectivity they can jointly participate in the process of remembering. And it is such interactions that make the audiovisual and textual artefacts the ‘living’/changing cyberplaces of memory.

The very private and often intimate *raison d’être* of a YouTube digital memorial is essentially in opposition to much offline, material, architectural constructions dedicated to remember/commemorate the dead, as they intervene in a public sphere with a most private agenda which may or may not appeal to or attract other users into the community of mourning. Despite its

²⁵⁶ Lisa Gitelman, *Always Already New*, 145, 141.

²⁵⁷ Andrew Hoskins, “Media, Memory, Metaphor: Remembering and the Connective Turn,” *Parallax*, forthcoming 2011.

private function these memorials doubtlessly have a public status; they indeed are on an overt mission to not only address a mourning community but to create one. This is enabled by technological functionalities such as posting videos, creating channels, making friends, posting video-responses and textual comments.

As argued above, digital memorials—official and vernacular—are marked by media convergence renarrativisation and remediation. At the same time, different or modified techniques and strategies of establishing, maintaining and promulgating such representations are being developed. In light of remediation and media convergence, this significantly affects the conceptions of space, time, memory and remembering, representations of the past, identity, individuality-collectivity, and the closely related sense of belonging, credibility, immersion, interactivity, and participation in DME.

On the other hand, an offline memorial requires physical presence of people at a commemorating event in order to exercise the collective re/inscription of shared memory; television allows for displaced, yet nationally bound and (to a certain extent) still synchronous, ‘participation’ of the masses at an event decidedly marked by liveness.²⁵⁸ In DME an opportunity arises for deterritorialised and detemporalised participation and interaction beyond the geo-locality of a monument/memorial. The practice of remembering thus enabled positions the viewer in front of the screen in a collectivity with which one can interact, be detached from it physically and at the same time individually participate in a collective commemoration on-the-fly. Cyberplaces of memory thus provide a collective/shared space for a person to immerse in, while at the same time retain/reinstate/express his/her individuality/identity, i.e. a very personal reinterpretation of history. But, does it really and if so to what effect? In the next section I investigate several cases of digital (video) memorials where the Yugoslav past, the wars and the possible future(s) are digitally remediated in forms of vernacular externalisations of memory.

Some cases in vernacular digital memorials

In terms of rough, unofficial, individual, bottom-up and hence far more numerous vernacular externalisations, YouTube offers numerous interesting cases that would qualify, due to its content

²⁵⁸ On liveness see for instance Lisa Gitelman’s discussion on in the chapter “New Media </Body>” in her *Always Already New*; see also Phillip Auslander, *Liveness*, New York, Routledge, 2008.

and use of technology, also as ‘guerrilla history.’ The path I took in researching Yugoslav vernacular (or YouTube) histories is very simple indeed: the most straightforward search term, “Jugoslavija” [Yugoslavia], when first attempted in 2007 yielded 2110 results. In September 2011 the number was 8570, which means a fourfold increase. Clearly not all results are relevant in the scope of this research: they feature ‘curiosities’ such as an excerpt from Family Guy series where Yugoslavia is mentioned and a clip from 1982 football match between Spain and Yugoslavia, etc. A quick look reveals a large amount of music videos, sports clips, and topics related to the WWII and the 1990s Yugoslav Wars. As the focus is on the user-made videos, many videos were immediately eliminated from the corpus. Still, navigation is time consuming and touches upon issues regarding classification and keeping track of the videos. Some change, some are removed, but most of all, the 4MOs are perpetually changing. Comments are added, the users add ever new stuff to their channels. This analysis, therefore, is not an all-embracing investigation of vernacular externalisations of memory of Yugoslavia on YouTube. Neither is it a comprehensive all-time valid interrogation of the developments of Yugoslav memory practices in YouTube. Rather, through analysing several tribute videos I aim to trace the ways in which (memory of) Yugoslavia is digitised in YouTube in 2011, i.e. how the past is used in the digital communications technology enabled media ecology (DME).

Tatu - Jugoslavija

Following the link to “Tatu - Jugoslavija” posted by Jaalo, the user is taken to a video where the song by the Russian pop duo t.A.T.u. is used as an audio track to a user-made video from April 2006.²⁵⁹

From: [Jaalo](#) | Created: 6. apr. 2006

Yugoslavia video made by me

Categories:

[Music](#)

Tags:

[Yugoslavia t.A.T.u. fanmade tatu taty Lena Katina Yulia Volkova war](#)

The actual song was allegedly recorded in support of Serbia (then still Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) during the NATO bombings in 1999 and has seen many remediations on YouTube ever since. The video remediation by Jaalo features various types of visual material, including war footage and shots featuring the singer, Lena Katina (the other singer, Yulia Volkova, also tagging

²⁵⁹ Jaalo, “t.A.T.u. - Yugoslavia,” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2rdLsoD4c78>, accessed 23 August 2011.

the video does not sing this song). The editing required formatting the still and moving material into a low-resolution black and white and colour video. In doing this, the maker added the impression of movement also to stills, by applying the effect of shaky camera and the slightly flickering light. Thus a certain visual unification was achieved which significantly contributes to creating a coherent video technically, but also assisting in presenting the storyline as a comprehensive, well-organised whole.



Figure 18 | A shot from Jaalo's video.

This narrative whole of the video is enhanced by the maker's description, the category, the tags and the comments. If we take a look at the tags we can see that a very broad spectrum of terms is used with some interesting relations. For instance, through this video Yugoslavia is fairly arbitrarily related, simultaneously, to the war and the singers as well. What is crucial in this meta-dating is that the tags applied to this video facilitate search results which will bring a user to this video either when looking from fan culture perspective (the band) or from the perspective of someone interested in Yugoslavia or wars.

Now, in this remediation attempt three storylines can be discerned running simultaneously on the visual level: 1) Yugoslavia bombing, 2) the singers and 3) textual subtitles. The first refers to

photographs and footage from often unidentifiable locations: the photos show live footage of bombing a city (probably Belgrade), casualties in the streets (quite possibly from Bosnia or elsewhere), barricades in the streets and some footage from a US city (register plates on a car) etc. On the one hand this may work well in creating a narrative, but the photo of the truck in the street used to stop a Yugoslav army tank, for instance, does not really relate this reinterpretation to the NATO bombings. Neither do the photos of dead people in the streets in Bosnia. Rather, it hints at that the maker, and hence also the users tend to invest a song with their own interpretation(s); and that in creating such video the maker is often left to use what is at hand. The second storyline features the Russian singers enveloped in a plot that could also run independently of the war footage. In this storyline the girls ‘act’ in a love story video that involves assembling an explosive device. The third, closely related to the second storyline is conveyed via subtitles, a poem that in a way connects the first two, and in fact the entire video into a narrative (fictional) whole. Using this three-layer visual storyline a very personal love story is intertwined with a more general, universal one of loss and grief. This is further enhanced by the song, music and lyrics which, combined, convey sadness and regret:

*For the night in the rain of leads
For that I'm not by you
You, forgive me, my sister, Yugoslavia!
For the death in the spring rain
For that I wasn't helpful to you
You, forgive me, my sister, Yugoslavia!*²⁶⁰

This video is not a rendition of Yugoslav past as such, rather it is an artistic attempt—enabled by digital editing and communications technologies—at creating a personal statement. In this case it is a personal view of the music, the singers, and the country in flames. Amusingly, the readings of this video, just as the interpretation presented by this video as already hinted at above, are not uniform. In the comments section over the past five years there were some 500 comments posted. Some of them are expressions of fascination with the making of the video, others yet, and these are in majority, take this video as a point of departure to argue about the rights and wrongs, about the winners and losers of this unfortunate war. Often the ‘discussions’ boil down to calling names and blaming members of any one nation involved in the wars for the collapse of the country.

One of the more interesting bits in this respect is a comment exchange where a visitor (apparently a Croat), says:

²⁶⁰ n/a, “Yugoslavia, composed by A. Voitinsky,” <http://tatu.lovelove.jp/en/yugoen.html>, accessed 5 September 2011; the lyric transcript is in English, but the song is originally sang in Russian.

t.a.t.u.forever,croatia in my heart READY FOR HOME[LAND],and keep your fingers away from croatia and lenockha and yulka!!!

YULEN16²⁶¹

Sounding like a jokey, yet decidedly nationalist comment, this reply elicited some very furious responses:

this has nothing to do with yugoslavia but with serbia which was bombed listen to what lena is singing

viki88

But then again, the following comment:

First of all the song is devoted to serbia and its “suffering” in the bombing. Therefore this is a song about suffering.. Now you croats be so nice and explain to me how you can spit on serbia and serbs? Spit on her on your links to your “liberating Storm” or your “homeland war”, but not here... really ain’t nice... We nevertheless lived together in one house... Now we are all neighbours, sadly... I don’t undersant for how long are we going to offend one another when we had a good time... a really good time..

AlexCaky²⁶²

... attempts a more nuanced response. On the one hand, AlexCaky is furious about ‘Croats attacking’ Serbia in relation/response to this particular video, opposing the ‘desecration’ of the memorial to Serbian suffering (but allowing for expression of contesting views and opinions elsewhere). On the other hand, what could easily be understood as a nationalist outburst is toned down in the second part of the comment where the user alludes to the common/shared (and “good” one at that) past which is evoked as a topos from where a possible path to a convivial future could be taken.

Regardless of the fact that neither the song nor the Jaalo’s video are clearly not about the former Yugoslavia, a number of comments nevertheless sees it as such:

Kids you really dont know what Jugoslavija was!!

I was born in 70" I must say No country like Jugoslavija. That was life not this shit today.

Peace for all

ttfchelson²⁶³

Wow this is sad, and once again by the replies I see that we haven't learned a single thing from our errors. Why can't we people just get along and forget the freakin nationalism imposed by old pride?! We used to live like brothers, and like balasevic said [English original] "Svetom smo se rasipali ko đerdani/ Nosili nas nebom ćilimi/ ... Da li su to stvarno bili bolji dani, ili smo to bolji bili mi?/ Nekad smo se bratimili po pogledu/ Sluteći da isto sanjamo/ I bogu je prosto bilo krstimo l' se ili klanjamo

²⁶¹ See comments at http://www.youtube.com/all_comments?v=2rdLsoD4c78.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid.

[We have scattered around the world like .../we have travelled the sky by/Were these really better days, or is it us that were better?/We used to fraternise .../Supposing we're dreaming the same dream/And the god didn't care whether we cross ourselves or bow]

SpAcE126²⁶⁴

As seen from the above comments, the responses to this video range from positive to negative evaluations of both 'intended' reading of the song (the NATO bombings) and the 'delusive' reading seeing in this video a 'commemoration' of the socialist Yugoslavia. But for most of the commentators responding to the video it seems they inadvertently/unconsciously refer to the former Yugoslavia and write from the position of at least some personal or first-hand experience. In any case, there still seem to be also more distanced voices that express utter confusion over the past, and the debates this past fuels twenty years after the collapse:

I'm born in '87. This period really is engraved in my head. The too long 1993. it seems it lasted an eternity. I don't even know whether I have anything to be sorry for. I feel hatred and nostalgia at the same time. And they say it was all great :(

steffanKM²⁶⁵

This last comment—expressing both hate and nostalgia (clearly a second-hand, mediated one)—demonstrates that the post-Yugoslav wars instilled both contempt and appreciation. The former is probably mostly a result of a scarred childhood. The hatred seems to be a somewhat undesired/inappropriate feeling precisely because the nostalgic discourse in many post-Yugoslav societies and emigrant communities alike, is often very explicit. But it fails to explicate the complexity (if it can allude to senselessness) of what was going on at the time of the country's collapse.

This, however, is not where the life of the Russian song in user generated videos ends: the search yields several more cases that use an elaborate approach in terms of narrativisation. Interestingly, none of them explicitly relates the song to the NATO bombings: rather the makers seem to interpret the song in terms of loss of Yugoslavia and also create their videos along these lines. The following two, in which commenting function has been disabled, establish an intriguing communication between each other.

The video "Tatu – Jugoslavija" created by user mejerchold had 286,370 views in May 2011.²⁶⁶ The video starts off with a twilight shot of a river and a city in the background (Danube? Belgrade?) and cuts abruptly to a scene of Dubrovnik shelling at the beginning of the war in Croatia in 1991. Thus, at the very beginning the digital memorial maker clearly delimits the object

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Mejerchold, "Tatu – Jugoslavija," <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k0Git1piHts>, accessed 2 September 2011.

of memorialisation and also her interpretive framework: the referential framework/perspective is (the grief over) the collapse of the country and the tragic wars that came in its aftermath. The then video gives shots of tanks rushing through villages, shelling, and images of demolished cities. Footage showing people running for shelter is followed by footage showing bodies being taken away after an explosion in the streets (of a Bosnian town?).



Figure 19 | Dubrovnik under fire, mejerchold's video.

The verses: "For the death under the summer rain," are dubbed over a scene showing a body being dragged into a van to be taken away. At this point, the textual and visual coincidence culminate in an increasingly tragic tone. This is followed by footage of tanks at the barricades (in Slovenia) and shots of torn-down minarets. As the song draws to its end, the original video footage (that was time and again seen on television) switches to a night-vision shot from an aircraft bomber aiming at, firing and hitting a target (presumably the NATO bombing of Serbia), to which the lyric of the song is synched: "For the night under the leaden rain/for not being there for you/forgive me, my sister Yugoslavia." To the last verses of the song: "For death under the summer rain/For not sending in help/Forgive me, my sister Yugoslavia," shots are edited of panic in the streets during shelling and the demolishing of the Mostar Bridge. The video ends with two girls running away.

The ending of the video sends a very clear message: the world renowned tourist attraction and cultural monument being torn down overtly plays the metaphor of the bridge as an architectural and symbolic object that connects people and as such represents a topos of encounter and exchange. Implicit present in the ending (or rather explicitly absent) is the entire (imagined) history of Yugoslavia: with the demolition of that bridge not much more remains but to run away (for life).



Slika 20 | The closing scene in mejerchold's video.

The other case, SerbianGhost's video, posted under the same title as mejerchold's is in many respects similarly structured, particularly in terms of editing and using the original footage. Still, there are several particularities that offer another reading of both the song and the message created by the user. Unlike the mejerchold's digital memorial primarily referring to the collapse of the country leaving out any explicit references to the pre-1991 Yugoslavia, SerbianGhost's with 162,787 views in May 2011, starts off in somewhat more distant history:²⁶⁷ just days after the death of Josip Broz Tito his body was taken in the Blue Train from Ljubljana through Zagreb and

²⁶⁷ SerbianGhost, "Tatu – Jugoslavija," <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bs0SVgWCBHo>, accessed 21 August 2011.

some other larger towns to Belgrade. The footage also shows the masses along the track, waving flags and crying. Tito's farewell is followed by a map of Yugoslavia going up in flames, implicitly alluding to the role and importance of Tito's figure, and indeed the myth, in keeping the country functioning. The ensuing images of Slobodan Milošević giving a speech to agitated mass of 'nationally-inflamed' supporters or Franjo Tudjman kissing the Croatian flag work to take the narrative of inter-national socio-political exacerbation further: the nationalist politicians are posited as precursors to the wars that followed, as immediately after their appearance in the digital memorial, the flames take over the screen again and the transition to demolition of the Mostar Bridge (same footage as in mejerchold's video) explicitly marks the breaking of all bonds.



Figure 21 | The ubiquitous footage of the Mostar Bridge destruction , Serbianghost's video.

The footage of warmongers is interspersed with the flames and a shot of a UN peace-keeping forces' armed vehicle. The montage in this case correlates the war criminals and the UN forces. As opposed to mejerchold's video where only television footage is used, SerbianGhost on the other hand uses also digitally created content: maps and flames. The map is used again, with the borders drawn between the republics; in the map of Serbia (including Montenegro) a shot of

Milošević giving a speech is embedded. In the following shot the I with no internal borders drawn is split up, and Croatia and Serbia are coloured in red and yellow, respectively. In both ‘territories’ footage is embedded showing rallying masses waving flags (I still contains the red star). Then the visitor sees Milošević again at a rally, followed immediately by tanks and I National Army soldiers at a military parade. This shoot is followed by a delegation visiting Tito’s grave, switching swiftly to out-of-the-car shots of a demolished village with bodies in the street and interspersed with people crying. The video ends with a long ‘procession’ of people leaving, left without a country, a home, a past and a future. The way the ending is edited suggests a reading that the country’s collapse started with Tito’s death and the ensuing nationalist independence projects, wars and struggles over the country’s legacy were in fact the wake. Tito’s funeral in 1980 was attended by world’s leaders, yet this reference is entirely absent from this narrativisation. Instead, the attendants are the people walking in the long line in the streets of a war-torn town.

Much like mejerchold’s, SerbianGhost’s digital memorial uses the song in reference to SFRY, rather than the NATO bombing. And while both videos use the same shot of Mostar Bridge being torn down, the respective placements prove illustrating: in mejerchold’s, the scene is placed at the end of the video, thus in a way subsuming the wars and the collapse (although the bridge was torn down in 1992, and the war did not end until at least 1995) as presented in the video; the end of the bridge, the end of ‘bridges.’ In SerbianGhost on the other hand, the footage of tearing down the bridge comes right at the beginning of the war as presented in the narrative, which then acts as another in line of events that brought the people apart. Yet, the ‘war-torn destinies’ in mejerchold’s video seem to have a future (open ending; the girls running away), while in the SerbianGhost’s the people are bound to the ruins in a collective despair.

These three ‘renditions’ are digital memorials to the I wars with only fleeting references to SFRY. Using the same song that was created in early 2000s they each give the song in the memorial a different role and meaning. And it seems this is the advantage of digital memorial landscapes: giving room for voicing/videoing different interpretations using similar material, i.e. the song and the bridge scene.



Figure 22 | People along the Blue Train trail, SerbianGhost's video.

“Triput sam video Tita”

Moving now to more explicitly SFRY related digital memorials, on mejerchold's channel one can find another digital memorial by the same maker. Here mejerchold takes a once extremely popular song by Đorđe Balašević “Triput sam video Tita” [I've Seen Tito Three Times]²⁶⁸ as an audio part of the memorial and a selection of video clips from a Serbian Radio Television programme and a show on History Channel, and a selection of material already used in “Tatu – Jugoslavija.” Now, the 1981 Balašević's song is a first-person memorial narrative in which the singer recounts the three occasions he saw Tito: first as a five-year-old, second as a youth playing at a concert and third when Tito was taken across Yugoslavia in the Blue Train in 1980. An overtly personal narrative was at the time of its first release an expression of grief over the loss of the president, but at the same time an appraisal of youth and perhaps even more an adoration of a country that ‘materialised’ precisely through the mythology/cult of Josip Broz. The nostalgic tone with which the song is invariantly invested in many present day interpretations could only have developed over the years. And it has, clearly, as since the collapse of Yugoslavia the song came to be used in

²⁶⁸ “Tri put sam video Tita,” mejerchold, accessed 6 August 2011, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E2N-WUeHwRo>

memory practices and nostalgic references by post-Yugoslavs in exile and the citizens of one of the new countries, alike. For one, it is a nostalgic rendition of the (nearly) entire Yugoslav post-war history in extremely poetic terms; moreover, it is also a 'Bildungsgedichte,' a song of becoming in the age of post-war prosperity and bright prospects. The intersection between these two narrative levels is probably the most affluent space for emotional and nostalgic responses to flourish.

The visual part of the video comprises TV broadcast material from history programmes (from Serbian Television and History Channel). The clips are edited roughly to fit the lyrics, i.e. following fighting scenes from WWII, random footage of children is featured to depict the singer's childhood. Later on in this memorial the scenes from the television shows are edited to depict the fame and glory of Josip Broz, but no particular chronological order is imposed upon the footage, which includes many shots of Tito, cheering crowds, etc. Recounting the third encounter, a shot of a tram departing a station is followed by a shot of the Blue Train interior featuring the coffin, and an aerial shot of the train. This inconsistency (with regards to the shot of a tram leaving a station, the footage used to in lieu of 'missing' footage of the Blue Train leaving a station) does no damage to the narrative which in the following features almost identical selection of shots related to the funeral as those used in Tatu song video by the same maker; with the difference that more close-ups are featured, including those of world leaders who attended the funeral (Margaret Thatcher, Indira Gandhi, etc.).

Although perhaps not as elaborately conceived as some other videos related to either Yugoslavia, Tito and/or WWII (as further discussed below), this one nevertheless presents a vernacular historical/memorial statement, which is particularly interesting in that it selectively remediates televised content (history programmes). As opposed to many other similar interventions, such approach brings more 'moving' material into the vernacular memorial landscape. As more and more video material is becoming available on YouTube (due to 'excessive' uploading) the widespread practice of using photos in digital memorials is thus further enhanced by the incorporation of original footage. Thus, using archival footage, otherwise mainly used in television programmes, becomes a practice where movement is added to previously very much textual (e.g. the first memorial sites, blogs, and even first videos) or still-photographical externalisations of memory. In other words, the practice of remembering via vernacular remediations and renarrativisations of the past is also through YouTube videos becoming a very much individualised practice: not only in terms of creation but also in terms of consumption, better still, in terms of co-creation.

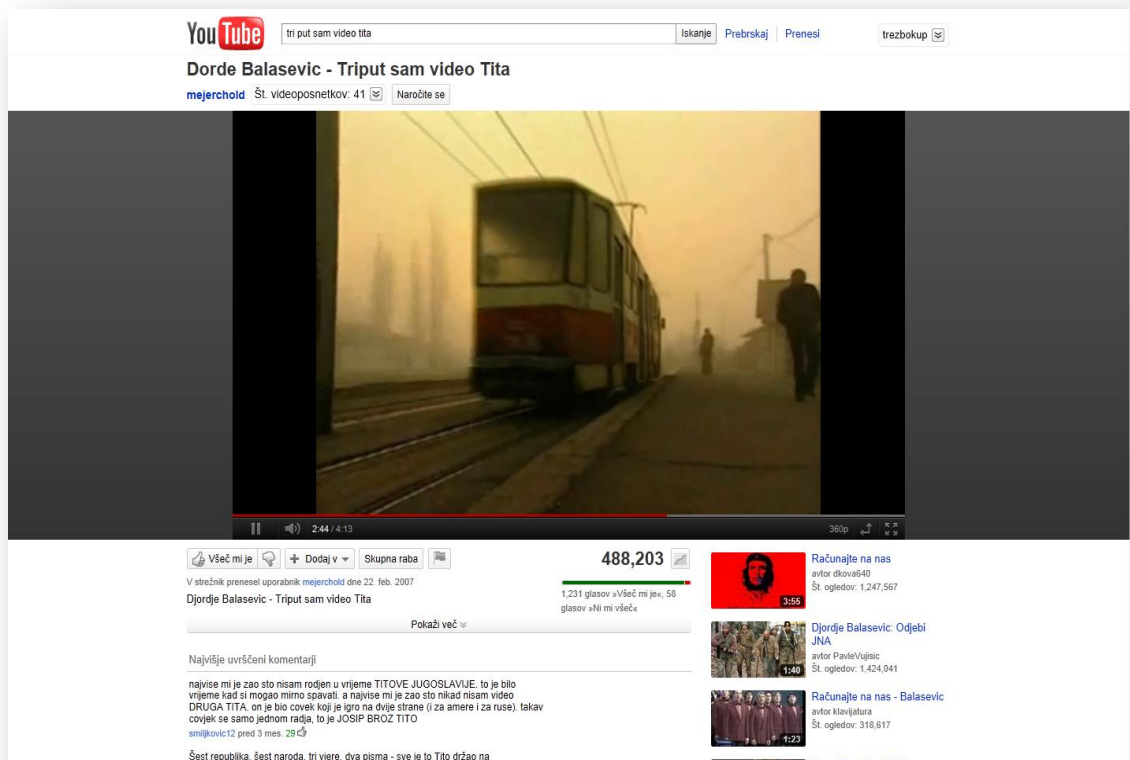


Figure 23 | The tram aka Blue Train leaving the station, mejerchold's video.

This is particularly interesting in the television—internet dialectics: where the televised temporality is essentially marked by elusiveness of a televised event by the ‘etherial’ characteristic of broadcast content, the internet is a distinctly on-demand media. Once the TV show has gone past the listener/viewer it can only be accessed in one of the official archives (unless pre-emptive action is taken to record the content). The internet on the other hand gives the user the opportunity to track and trace literally any content ever created/posted. Ideally, that is, as a different set of restrictions nevertheless applies: what has (not) been digitised and uploaded, has it been taken offline, what about the region specific access restrictions?

What makes this mejerchold's video particularly interesting as a 4MO is the ‘authorial’ utilisation of the particular popular song, the visual material and the commenting function. Moreover, the lyrics play an important part, as they re-tell the story of Yugoslavia, which in a new time and with a new historical context becomes a source of memory and of making sense of the past.

*I ja sam stajao malen [there I was standing young]
s gitarom, preda mnom sve [with my guitar, in front of me]*

*moje detinjstvo, sloboda, mir [my childhood, freedom, peace]
bratstvo, jedinstvo [brotherhood, unity]
preda mnom on, nasmejan, večan [there he was, smiling, eternal]*

*Al' ja sam video visoke peći [and I saw tall chimneys]
fabrike dim, široke njive [factory's smoke, wide fields]
gradove što slobodni žive [cities living in freedom]
decu i mir i jato ptica [children and peace and a flock of birds]*

*I opet sam video Tita Maršala [and I saw him again, Marshal Tito]
legendu tu, slobodotvorca [the legend, the maker of freedom]
čoveka tog, druga i borca [the Man, comrade and fighter]
opet sam svud video Tita [and again, I saw Tito everywhere]*

The response directly related to the lyrics is a telling one. 123kg refers to the song and extends the Balašević's story into the present. In doing so she establishes a connection between failing to live up to the Yugoslav dream and the self-inflicted consequences.

@peromakata now we have demolished buildings, mines, not to mention health service, education system and other ministries, I'm fed up with profiteers and stealers...but the worst of all is that we've lost those we loved the best, our memories are burnt destroyed are our memories that no one can ever bring back and now we only have hatred between one another...whatever people say and wrote they are all sorry for yugoslavia...and so we should be for having followed tudman and milosevic (may they burn in hell)

123kg²⁶⁹

Moreover, through this post protrudes an affective take on the present which is significantly informed by an image of the past firmly embedded in Balašević's nostalgic (or made so after the collapse), now entirely personalised, internalised narrative.

The song recapitulates several of the pillars of Yugoslav mythology: the industrialisation and post-war prosperity, peace, brotherhood and unity, indeed an autarchic political, social and cultural world that easily becomes both the topos of further, post-Yugoslav, mythologisation and nostalgification, while at the same time also an indication of the delusion in which Yugoslavs lived, according to the 1941—1991 period's most ferocious critics. The life of this song after 1991 and its uses in such and similar vernacular interventions at the same time also exposes the social and cultural perturbations the post-socialist societies have been confronting after the installation of new political and economic systems. The demontage of socialism in many respects, along the

²⁶⁹ See mejerchold, "Tri put sam video Tita," comments, http://www.youtube.com/all_comments?v=E2N-WUeHwRo, accessed 2 September 2011.

desired free market economy and alleged greater personal liberties, also facilitated (at least a perception of) processes of deterioration of social bonds and on a more general level insecurity and distrust to the new political systems.

[@taurunumurban](#) Welllllll, interestingggggg! What political freedoms were suspended during the SFRY time= Oh, yes, those full of hatred and nationalism... Don't forget, most of us were not born yesterday.

[antun](#)

[@antun](#) antune, that's right

[nedislav1](#)

[@antun](#)

- 1) It was a one-party system.
- 2) It was nearly fully blown planned economy, especially in the beginning.
- 3) The Party had a monopoly over politics, education, culture, the media.
- 4) Any disagreement meant punishment, hence no freedom of speech.
- 5) Do you remember the Goli otok [Barren Island]?²⁷⁰

[taurunumurban](#)

[@taurunumurban](#)

- 1) so what, now it's two parties, same shit
- 2) does it bother anyone, who wanted to work could find a decent job as soon as he finished school, people lived better, houses were being built, much much less stealing, people weren't slaves to the banks
- 3) and now, is it any different? then at least abroad appreciated our faculties, you couldn't buy a degree.
- 4) same thing again, now it's the same, where do you live that you believe in the freedom of speech?
- 5) if only we had 10 such islands now, so much there's scum

[hristo7777](#)

[@hristo7777](#)

- 1) In Serbia it's not two party, not even in Croatia. And even if it were, so what?
- 2) People lived on credits, there was a lot of spending, the economy had to collapse anytime, by the law os economy. People are not slaves to the banks, because they freely sign contracts with them. This could not be done then. [...] No, there was not less stealing. If people didn't know about it or it was hushed, doesn't mean there was any less of it.

[taurunumurban](#)

[@hristo7777](#)

- 3) It is different, but not different enough. The liberalisation goes into that direction and if not before, then when entering the EU this will have to change. There is NO such thing there.

²⁷⁰ Goli otok was an island turned into a prison mainly for political prisoners (in the period 1949—1956, the prison was under federal authority, later on and until 1988 it was under authority of Socialist Republic of Croatia).

4) In Zemun [part of Belgrade]. How is freedom of speech sanctioned here?? HDZ [Croatian Democratic Union, party] cannot prevent you from talking about whatever. Tito could do that. And he could also kill for that.

taurunumurban

@taurunumurban you seem like a decent enough person for not insulting etc. me at once. The system is not two-party, just seems so, as there are only two parties that can put together a government, and as far as life on loan is concerned, here you're wrong, Croatia inherited some 10 billion euro debt (not sure, something like that) and now we owe 42 billion, in just 20 years, nothing in Cro was done, everything is being sold and everything is in debt

hristo7777²⁷¹

Triggered by Balašević's now already nostalgic song,²⁷² this exchange seems telling enough in illustrating different understandings of both the past and the present. Roughly speaking, taurunumurban takes the position of looking at the past through an idealised present (with flourishing democracy, free economy, idealised EU), or at least a present against the backdrop of an unbearable past. hristo7777 on the other hand quite differently observes the present through the perspective of an idealised past (and significantly through a should-be-present). This appears to be the archetypal distinction in conceptualising Yugoslav past in popular renditions, debates and interpretations. Importantly, it exposes many of the perturbing issues today in post-Yugoslav countries, from malfunctioning multiparty systems to inefficient economies, as the "[i]ndividuals who negotiated these local and national changes were simultaneously caught up in late 20th century consumer capitalism, which sold itself as the most successful model of social organisation."²⁷³

In many cases making reference to the Yugoslav socialist past in any sort of positive manner is labelled 'mere' nostalgia. But such reasoning is often amiss with the broader context within which 'nostalgic' statements are being made. The most basic distinction can be drawn between emigrants and citizens of the new republics, both of whom were suddenly left without a homeland, without a history, a broader referential (social, cultural and political) framework. On one level, yes, this may cause nostalgia in its most rudimentary form and also in the more elaborate distinctions, as proposed by Svetlana Boym,²⁷⁴ who differentiates between restorative and reflective nostalgia. However, where 'mere' nostalgia approaches fail is that they do not acknowledge a most ordinary desire for a coherent past, for a comprehensive referential framework, in short, 'nostalgic

²⁷¹ See mejerchold, "Tri put sam video Tita," comments, http://www.youtube.com/all_comments?v=E2N-WUeHwRo, accessed 2 September 2011.

²⁷² Cf. Catherine Baker, "'Death to Fascism isn't in the Catechism,' 168.

²⁷³ Ibid., 164.

²⁷⁴ Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*.

treatment' of Yugoslav past is in many cases a far more basic and notoriously neglected quest for normalcy.



Figure 24 | Live footage of Tito on a visit, mejerchold's video.

In light of the great pre-1991 expectations, the post-socialist societies seem to be failing to re-instate, for instance, social solidarity (inter-generational, inter-class) as a counterbalance to the pressures of market economy. Moreover, the persistent subordination of the post-Yugoslav (and indeed the former eastern bloc entirely) countries to the victorious 'Democracy of the West' discourses further adds to re-evaluating of the Yugoslav past in the light of the so-called *purification from socialism* or the annihilation of the problematic socialist past (which in many cases entails the entire socialist past). The newly established elites readily adopted the role of self-subordination: by promoting the 'redemption via democratisation' they took on themselves the role of the intrinsically problematic and flawed and, because of its experience with socialism, essentially handicapped actor in the Europeanising Europe. Moreover, as Tanja Petrović maintains, "The East Europeans themselves often treat socialism as something essentially non-

European that originated in Asia and was enforced upon them, threatening their otherwise profoundly European identity (as a result, accession to the EU is *returning home*).”²⁷⁵

First of all, they’ve wrecked our country, then they turned us against each other to a bloody fight and they mugged us, and now they’re forcing us into “European Union” which is much like another much bigger Yugoslavia, but we’re much much smaller and more pathetic...

ufaxx²⁷⁶

Now, do the early 1980s song and archival footage of Tito play any part at all in all this post-socialist troubles? mejerchold’s 4MO brings together a popular song with (easily seen as) nostalgic text and footage that would otherwise have remained part of ‘serious’ television (archived beyond access). In this 4MO, very personal motives to make a very personal memory statement are externalised using a ‘public property’ audio and video: thus, a ‘public record’ of Yugoslav history becomes, via personalisation, a ‘personal record’ of one’s remediated history. Albeit on a different level: as a 4MO such an individualised public record begs discussions and (visual and textual) comments (indeed co-creation); making, in a way, ‘pub-talk’ public talk. Thus, the co-creating intervention of recontextualising audiovisual and textual content creates a cybertrace of memory and/or remembering. In the contemporary DME a topicality is thus reintroduced that in one historical period had a different set of meanings, values, interpretations attached to it: today, the remediating and indeed remixing practice in a way denies the historicity of both the song and the visual content, as it strips them of their original context. Still, it facilitates an expression of a distinctly contemporary reaction to the present day problems in everyday lives, historical reinterpretations (annihilations) and daily-political and economical instabilities.²⁷⁷ Moreover, the shift to a nostalgic song was also made possible in a climate (with some variations across the newly established countries) where:

The previous, socialist system of values [had to be changed] and transformed into, just as authoritarian, but completely different system which originated on the nationalist ideology widespread by the end of the 1980s. New authoritarian concept of values required the centre be taken by national sentiment, and that the former class collectivism be changed by ethnic one.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁵ Tanja Petrović, “Balkan Legacy of the 19th century and post-Yugoslav societies in the context of the EU Accession,” unpublished paper.

²⁷⁶ See comments at mejerchold, “Tri put sam video Tita,” comments, http://www.youtube.com/all_comments?v=E2N-WUeHwRo, accessed 2 September 2011.

²⁷⁷ Although not all nostalgic practices (or feelings) should be seen as ‘mere’ opposition to the “negative side effects of the ‘transition period’ alone, as nostalgia is also present in post-socialist countries that went through a relatively painless transition” Monika Palmberger, Nostalgia matters: nostalgia for Yugoslavia as potential vision for a better future, *Sociologija*, L (2008) 4, 355–370, 356.

²⁷⁸ Dubravka Stojanović, “Tumačenja istorije, sistem vrednosti i kulturni obrazac,” <http://www.republika.co.rs/466-467/20.html>, accessed 23 August 2011.

In such an environment that at the same time rejected also significant portions of once common/shared history nostalgia is not surprising.

Great video. Really.

It shows the effort put in.

Damn those motherfuckers who killed her. If I could I'd fuck them all for ever.

It was a good life. Someone will say his granny always cries when she remembers Tito. And it's no wonder. Because I don't believe that the generations today, that grew up in a paranoid world where man is wolf to man, are in any condition to comprehend how it used to be.

The atmosphere and values of kindness can't be explained. This has to be experiences [lived].

A different world all together.

MarshalRedDog²⁷⁹



Figure 25 | The making of the socialist man.

²⁷⁹ See mejerchold, "Tri put sam video Tita," comments, http://www.youtube.com/all_comments?v=E2N-WUeHwRo, accessed 2 September 2011.

A much more elaborate vernacular experiment in creating a digital video historical narrative, indeed a distinctly straightforward type of digital memorials is the video made by dugmicmala. On her YouTube Channel she states:

I'm living the dream of Yugoslavia, I'm living in a world where it is not important who you are, how you're called and what religion you belong to. You can take me everything, but not my idea of a better world. Fascists will always happen, but in my world, they have no access. Stop the silence and speak up. We need to be brave in a world full of corruption and hate! Maybe we can't change the world, but we can change our attitude!²⁸⁰

In the video the maker used as a musical structure Boban Rajović's song "Jugoslavija" which is dubbed over an edited series of digitised images/photographs intercepted by textual captions, much like in a silent film.²⁸¹ The video starts with the text: "Yugoslavia... What has happened? It all fell apart," which is followed by an image of the map of Yugoslavia. The first 'chapter' begins with a caption: "Comrade Tito... 1892-1980, Glorious President, combatant, communist, fisherman, maker of freedom," which is followed by a series of digitised photos (Tito during WWII; meeting politicians and celebrities, addressing people, rebuilding the country, on the cover of the Time magazine etc.). The next chapter is called "1980, Yugoslavia is crying. Yugoslavia is afraid of the future. Comrade Tito is gone," depicting the year 1980 when the president of the country died. It features photographs of his last farewell in Yugoslav capitals. The chapter "After Tito... The country is falling apart..." presents the flags of the newly established countries and the inscription: "Independence is no guarantee for peace." Photos follow of the war in Bosnia, dead people, concentration camps... "Did we really need this? Nationalism rules, this has nothing to do with religion, it has everything to do with people and the blood that was spilled."

²⁸⁰ See dugmicMala's channel www.youtube.com/user/dugmicMala.

²⁸¹ dugmicMala, "Jugoslavija," <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M7SorJzdBtc>.

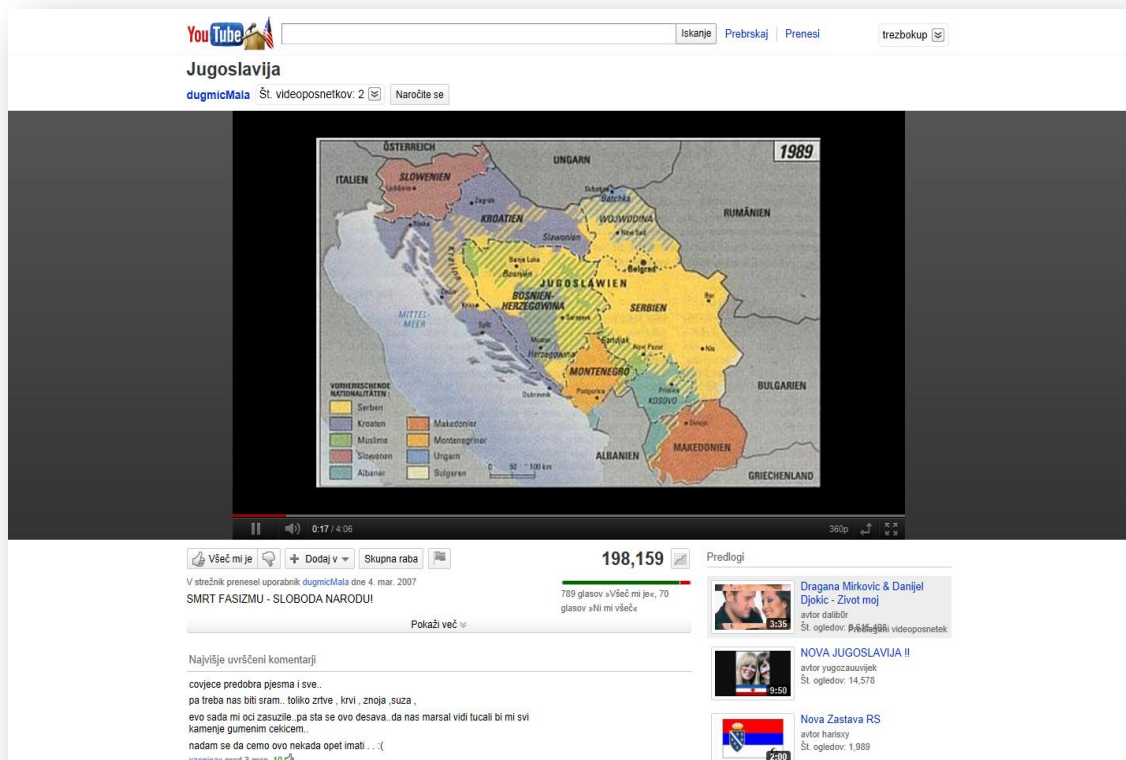


Figure 26 | The Map of Yugoslavia, in German.

And a photo-answer to a textual question (a series of photographs of cemeteries). “Sadness, death and pain. Ruins. Cries. Fear. Broken hearts. Ruins. And in the end, only memories... of a glorious country remain.” A series of photos of Yugoslav paraphernalia, iconic objects, symbols: 1 Yugoslav Dinar coin, a monument to Tito, a post stamp, a digitised image of Tito’s profile on the background of a digitally edited Yugoslav flag. The video ends with the words: “In the memory of our Yuga, we could have achieved so much with the brotherhood and unity, comrade Tito, without you nothing is as it once was, now we all live in an exile... Ex-Yu.”



Figure 27 | Photograph of a delegation at Tito's funeral.

Much like the cases discussed above, this digital memorial includes text, image and sound (melody and lyrics). Textual, audiovisual elements work as a whole, while also carrying their own storyline. Looking at the text, it gives an overarching temporal structure to the Yugoslav past: clearly located in the present our 'guerrilla historian' attempts to represent her own view of the Yugoslav past. The fact that the state had disintegrated is presented at the very outset and from this point the narrative then shifts back in time to present the leader of the state, the disintegration and the wars, and the establishment of the new states. This is a nostalgic yearning for the past that never was and for the possible future that never was meant to be.

The text itself is extremely emotional, particularly the last line: "We now live in exile – Ex-Yu." Ex-Yu is a widely used abbreviation of the former Yugoslavia, but in this statement and audiovisual context attains a telling undertone: those who refer nostalgically to ex-Yu are today's exiled Yugoslavs. As such it figures as a highly personal statement, a statement of loss, which endows the entire digital memorial not only with nostalgia, but also a condemnation of the 'perpetrator(s) unknown' who had shattered the country and, concomitantly, the dreams of many people; and many a family, friendship, livelihood and life. The textual tone shows that the author

addresses a wider public and aims to invoke in it similar feelings. Particularly, in my opinion, addressing the people who were forced to flee, either emigrate (spatio-temporal migration) or just leave the Yugoslav past behind to live in the new countries (temporal migration). This enables us to extend the idea of geographical migration to migration in time, which is a central issue in any dealing with nostalgia.

The analysis of the visual aspect shows that the images are ordered randomly, defying and indeed negating the linearity of time (images of Tito from the post-war period are followed by the ones from the WWII). This disregard of linear representation/perception of time/history is particularly characteristic for the digital: e.g. in the DME disregard of the print-imposed reading style, the user can have several windows opened with temporally and/or spatially dispersed content. This, however, is also characteristic for everyday life conduct and unofficial discourses in general, i.e. for narratives not as strictly confined to the prescript of canonicity and official discourse, which in turn brings social action in DME closer again to the realm of orality.²⁸²

At the same time, this is also apparent in nostalgic ‘filing’ the representations of the past according to ‘feeling,’ personal preferences... In this case we can see the post-WWII Yugoslav period uprooted from the linearity of time, the historical context. Moreover, in this video it is meant to exist in its own symbolic universe and to reproduce its own *Yuniverse*. The music, although Rajović’s song is not an all-(post-)Yugoslav hit and it is in fact a post-Yu production, works as an overall ‘feeling enhancer’ and it binds the digital memorial successfully together. Via musical dubbing, the images emerge in a new dimension, which additionally contributes to the creation of this particular interpretation/rendition of the *Yuniverse*. Similarly as in the case above, the Yugoslav past, as renarrated according to the maker’s interpretation, comes to its digital (after)life considerably differently as the daily political debates and clashes over historical interpretation would have us believe. The lyrics, originating in the present, again present a nostalgic statement:

Kad ponos ljubav ubije [When the pride kills the love]

i kada sveto i proketo se spoje [And when the sacred and the damned merge together]

kad sjutra nam ne osvane [when the sun doesn’t rise in the morning]

i kada jedno se rastavi na dvoje [and when one breaks in two]”

... implying that the reasons for the collapse of the state lie in nationalisms that prevented any prospect of commonly shared future. In the next line, Rajović sings:

Tek tada sebi priznaću [Only then will I admit to myself that you’ve been]

²⁸² Orality in the sense of many-to-many ‘communicative disorder’ unimaginable in one-to-many print or broadcast media communications.

moja radost, moja snaga, moja sreća [My joy, my power, my happiness]

And breaks into the refrain:

Jugoslavijo, ko ne bih žalio [Oh, Yugoslavia, who wouldn't regret]

nevina si bila a živog si me ubila [You were innocent, but you murdered me alive]

Over the four years online, in May 2011 the video, although removed from the user's Channel, had 2636 comments, spanning swearing and adoration, and not very much discussion as such. Regarding the nature of the YouTube commenting function (500-character limit) and the practice which is focused on expressing (also due to the space limit) short thoughts and ideas triggered by the video in question, this is not surprising. To the contrary, the fleetingness of engagement with a posted content seems conducive to short, (ideally) concise text. In relation to memory and remembering the concept of on-the-fly proves again more than adequate. However, as fleeting and random as visiting a certain video, the responses seem to be often extremely emotional, affective.²⁸³ Through users commenting, a 4MO—its content/message—becomes subject to its networked mobility which in turn contributes to the mediality of the content.²⁸⁴ In the case of Yugoslavia and digital memorials, the popular remediations/reinterpretations/renarrativisations of Yugoslav past/history—as mediated in individual interventions remixing popular music, images and videos—assume a status of mediality, i.e. a life in between machines, individuals, between official and vernacular interpretations/externalisations of the past.

It is not an easy task to analyse (or only read) such amount of comments, which for the most part bear little relevant information for substantial analysis. In the following I will nevertheless attempt to look at several comment and some discussions that developed among the visitors to the site. Unlike the oft taken quantitative approach looking for occurrences and usage of particular words or phrases, I propose to look at these comments through the perspective of affect. Considering the turning-point character of the country's collapse, the wars and weakling democracies and the emotional/affective reactions to both the rupture in history and the ambiguous presents, this might prove a good strategy.

In terms of content the commentators rarely seem to apply much self-censorship; formally (orally) they often use upper case to 'shout' and emphasise a point; moreover, the language they use, Serbian, Croatian, Macedonian, Slovenian, English (or any odd combination of any of these) is full of grammatical and orthographical errors. This is due to three common reasons: the commentators are not native speakers of the language (Slovenian commentators commenting in

²⁸³ On affect see Richard Grusin, *Premediation*.

²⁸⁴ See "Representation and Mediality," Chapter 1.

Serbian/Croatian; or when posting in English to reach greater audience); in case of emigrants, the commentators have been socialised in another language (English, German) and only learned, say, Croatian, from their parents or were too young at the time of emigration to fully grasp their mother tongue. Moreover, in online communication the ephemerality (indeed very close to orality communication principle) and fleeting engagement with the topic, which frequently results in abandoning any orthographical rules (omission of punctuation, uppercase, diacritics), seem to be resulting in freer grammatical rules, effectively democratising online textual communication, bringing written language closer to spoken idiom.

The comments span positive and negative affects and bring into play various aspects of Yugoslav past, particularly the glorious, cherished aspects, such as friendship, brotherhood, security etc. Yet, while positive in their assessment of Yugoslav past, not infrequently such posts radicalise their stance in defending their interpretation:

dugmicMala respect for the video and the song. And for the rest of you asses, idiots, cretins and all the other similar types, I can only say I'm sorry for you... Fantastic memory...

ru33erman

I'm just gonna say that you're a bullshitting horde, like, you've made your dream come true you're free now what are you free from little pathetic hating people there's no jobs drugs fucked up your kids no more travel you need a visa and you, like, that's the way it has to be done you're imbeciles and remember never again are you gonna live like you did in yuga this will be 6 derelict little states western colonies you should socialise but still live in the war you with just 3 meters of territory oh you twats you're not normal you need more war cause your lives clearly mean nothing to you

saleyuga

Yugoslavia took care of CHILDHOOD, YOUTH, MATURITY, OLD AGE who is now taking care about that? WE'RE BECOMING NOTHING of a man! To be a slovene, a macedonian..., doesn't mean that you're a man, to be catholic or orthodox..., doesn't mean your a man the money in your pocket doesn't make you a man. today lie is in, deceit, abuse, hatred, mocking and more and more. Not every ape does that to each other. WE'RE BECOMING NOTHING of a man!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

vrtnicann²⁸⁵

These comments in the dugmicMala's 4MO offer an interesting read in that they entail utterly personal memories but with a more or less clear goal to 'reach' another person and motivate her to share-in with her own memories.

It appears that the majority of posts are a one off engagement of by a visitor who rarely engages again in posting (co-creating the memorial). On the other hand, there is apparent domination, in terms of a 'feeling of presence,' of users who engage in often bitter discussion/clashes. The following string of posts illustrates quite vividly the radicalisation of view around the memorial:

²⁸⁵ See comments at http://www.youtube.com/all_comments?v=M7SorJzdBtc.

Damned be Josip Broz "Tito" all he achieved is gone now in dust and ashes like his life. May God's curse be cast upon him till the Day of the Great Honourable Judgement. "Comrade Tito" DAMNED YOU AND YOUR SOUL AND TOGETHER WITH YOUR PIONEERS TUDJMAN AND MILOSEVIC BEFORE YOUR MASTER COME YOU WITH YOUR BLACK FACE CRAWLING, LET THE FIRE BURN YOU, EVERYTHING YOU LEFT BEHIND YOU IS DESERT AND FOR THIS DEAR GOD DO NOT LESSEN THE PUNISHMENT NOT IN THE SLIGHTEST AMEN.

[XBOXEUROPE](#)

Only mentally ill can imagine what a life would have been like in any kind of new so-called Yugoslavia. After all that's fallen upon us I can only say DEAR GOD DO NOT PUT US TOGETHER WITH THEM TO BE LOST AGAIN BECAUSE YOU HAVE SHOWN US THE WAY, DEAR GOD, YOU KNOW WHO LOVES YOU SO PROTECT US FROM THE EEIL THAT AWAITS US.

[XBOXEUROPE](#)

You my son are well mental go see a doctor (psychologist) only he can help you, on ili zapis kod hodze. I recommend the one in Pazaric near Sarajevo, he's meant to be good.

[titovpionir](#)

Hey there, you great believer cool down a bit. I personally respect all confessions unless sickos are in question like yourself. Take a walk now to some other site and leave us who respect what you do not in peace, so I don't have to use the same primitive vocabulary.

[titovpionir](#)

your motherfucking yugofascist you call me miserable..

[XBOXEUROPE](#)

Now then...again a bit nervous? What for?

Maybe you're bigger "Yugonostalgic" than you dare admit?

It's not too late to come back to renew our Yugoslav community.

My Bosnia we can cry from Vardar to Triglav! Or we can shout "Croatia to Zemun" or "Serbia to Kordun."

Whichever, I'm open for suggestions.

[Jugoslaveni](#)

what am I nostalgic about??? about self-called "yugoslavia" that I've never recognised as my homeland...

Explain to me how can I be nostalgic for something I was never proud of?

There's no way I can or want to be sorry for the selfcalled "yugoslavia" cause I'm from BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, a land and NAME that was unfortunately covered by "Yugoslavism... Today when finally there's blue skies over BiH...

[XBOXEUROPE](#)

now then xboxeurope, I think you're writing nonsense here, against everything, but I think if you were really against it you'd never set eyes on this site or even seriously watch it if you weren't missing something from old yuga... be real. the directing's been what's been but the times of tito were not all that bad, now when you see nationalism surfacing after his death many forget what it was like back then...

Despoty²⁸⁶

Such externalisations of rage and mental diagnostics seem to be the case in majority of the irreconcilable positions. The fact that these are not just one-off posts but actually strings of message exchanges, poses some questions to consider. Is this a joke, is it an expression of a severely troubled mind, or is he serious? I am afraid there is no easy answer to this, if there is one. In any case, once a visitor comes across a comment exchange like this she can dismiss it as utter nonsense or take it seriously. Again there's no way of knowing what one may make of such radical statements. However, the fact remains that such statements leave cybertraces and with that also the message...

The other end of the spectrum brings more positive, dialogical, if frequently utopian or proactively nostalgic, discussions that tend to commonsensically allude to the nonsense of the wars and the present condition of division, invoking rather a prospect of a better future.

If only we would get off our asses & do something. Make Yugoslavia thrive again. Protest & do what we can to create a new revolution.

Undo the stupid mistakes the generation before us made. Why does this generation have to suffer?!... Why cant we have the GREAT life everyone else got to savior before 1991?... We had everything, imagine what we could have been NOW.

I'm very sure there are so many people who want a great future, we would easily overrun the nationallists if we wanted to!

Jasexxxx

Continued in another comment

I'm a Bosnian, however in my heart I will always be a Yugoslavian. I will always remember the day when I could go outside & play with any child on the street without caring where they came from & what they think of me. Oh man.

What did you do? WHAT DID YOU TURN US INTO? we had everything. We had a friendship ALL countries ENVIED & now, they laugh at us.

WE HAVE NOTHING. WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU?!!

To every Serb, Croat, Maco, Slovene I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU - NO MATTER WHAT!

Jasexxxx

Hello comrade..LETS GO AND MAKE A REVOLUTION..LONG LIVE REPUBLIC OF BOSNIA AND GERCEGOVINA..SOCIALIST INDEPENDENT BOSNIA AND

²⁸⁶ See comments at http://www.youtube.com/all_comments?v=M7SorJzdBtc&page=5, accessed 23 August 2011; note that XBOXEUROPE was banned from posting to any of dugmicMala's videos in 2008, soon after the above exchange. The posts, however, remain visible and constitute an aspect in co-creativity of remembering and storytelling (if of a more desacrillary type).

HERZEGOVINA, THAT IS, IT IS THE ONLY SOLUTION FOR OUR PEOPLE.
DEATH TO FACISM FREEDOM TO THE PEOPLE REGARDS COMRADE

Jugoslavija1945

I'm a croat and must say brother serbs, slowenes, montenegrins, bosnians and macedonians let's offer a hand to one another cause we were and we'll remain in the war we died and didn't get that we were killing our own nation, yugoslav nation, and it was all done by tudjman, alija [Izetbegović] and milosevic and I think without them a new beautiful YUGOSLAVIA will be created. LOOOOOOOOOOONNNNGG LIIIIIIIIIIIVVEEEEEEEEEEE

CRO694

there'll be yuga, that's something natural long live yugoslavia

ustaskicetnik²⁸⁷

The proactive nostalgia discernible in the comments above adopts a strategy, which in the absence of commonly imagined alternatives on social and political levels, seems to be one of the strategies to counter the situation of 'disimagined commonality,' perhaps an ill-fated one. The question is whether in a society, which "celebrates choice but in which the only available alternative to enforced democratic consensus is a blind acting out,"²⁸⁸ such peaceful social practice has any socio-political leverage at all. Seemingly residing in the concept of restorative nostalgia²⁸⁹—but with an important distinction: the past here is not intended to return 'as it once was' (political system etc.); rather, through referring to the past that 'should have been,'—a future is envisaged that still corresponds to the ideal of the (Yugoslav) future that 'never was.' However, the question remains how (if at all) online initiatives can be successfully translated offline, particularly regarding the fact that to a large extent the commentators are scattered (at least) across Europe.

Considering the comments as radically opposed as those above, on the formal level a distinction (in very broad sense of the term) can be drawn with regard to the motive of comments. It is based on the distinction already proposed by Walter Benjamin, who differentiated between stage and film actors; a distinction that has its implications also for the DME.²⁹⁰ If stage actor performs for the audience in the theatre, the film actor performs for the cinematic apparatus.²⁹¹ The former can be transposed to the characteristics of oral and technologically mediated communication, where the interlocutor in a face-to-face communication act is performing for an audience here-and-now;

²⁸⁷ All the comments in the above quote from dugmicMala, "Jugoslavija," comments, http://www.youtube.com/all_comments?v=M7SorJzdBtc&page=4, accessed 11 September 2011.

²⁸⁸ Slavoj Žižek, "Zero-degree Protests," *London Review of Books*, 33(17) 8 September 2011, 28–29 28.

²⁸⁹ See Svetlana Boym, *The future of nostalgia*.

²⁹⁰ Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility: Second Version," in *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media*, edited by Micheal W. Jennings, Brigid Doherty and Thomas Y. Levin, Cambridge, MA, London, The Belknap Press of the Harvard University Press, 2008, 31–32.

²⁹¹ Cf. Richard Grusin, "Are recent protests test performances for social media?," <http://premediation.blogspot.com/2011/02/are-recent-protests-test-performances.html>, accessed 23 August 2011.

in the latter case the interlocutor is performing for the apparatus (cinema), which then mediates the performance to the audience. Translated into DME, a similar distinction emerges in performances by the participants in online communication: all commentators perform for the apparatus:

SUFFICE IT TO SAY: TITO!!!

[MaxDaneLaf](#)

While many among them, those engaged in discussion (e.g. some of the bitter commentators above), also perform for a more specific audience. As members of an on-the-fly community (of remembering) they mainly direct their comments to one another (although also to all who happen to surf by).

Partisans Forever

Another case I would like to discuss in some detail is a digital memorial “Azra-Partizan” made by user [xPartizani0zauvijekX](#).²⁹² The video description reads:

Uploaded by [xPartizani0zauvijekX](#) 5 February 2009

Mome djedu [For my Grandad]

R.I.P

21.3.1921-3.1.2009

Category:

[Film and animation](#)

Tags:

[antifa partizani azra partizan antifascist red star hammer and sickle tito](#)²⁹³

This video offers a particularly interesting read on the both audiovisual and textual-commentary levels. It is dedicated to the maker’s grandfather and features a selection of photographs and archival footage edited into a visually narrative. On the audio level, the video builds the story on the song “Partizan [The Partisan]” performed by the former Yugoslav band Azra, which is a cover (indeed a thorough re-writing) of the WWII “La complainte du partisan.”²⁹⁴ The song became increasingly famous when Leonard Cohen released the English version, “The Partisan,” on his 1969 album *Songs from a Room*. It was then covered by numerous artists throughout the remainder of the 20th century because of its celebration of the resistance against Nazi occupation and more: it was the song epitomising leftist conceptualisation of resistance against any

²⁹² XPartizani0zauvijekX, “Azra-Partizan,” http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pSOA_B11SjU, accessed 23 August 2010.

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ The song was written in London in 1943 by Emmanuel D’Astier de la Vig rie and Anna Marly. See “Song of the French Partisan,” www.leonardcohensite.com/partisaneng.htm, accessed 23 August 2011.

oppression. And the cover by Azra, i.e. and the re-write by the band's lead singer Branimir Štulić Johnny continues in this vein, particularly when the singer's personal stance of opposition to any regime is taken into consideration. Throughout the 1980s Azra was one of the new wave bands that expressed occasionally fierce discontent with the state-of-affairs in Yugoslavia, and remaining true to his views. Štulić refashioned his oppositional stance in response to the changing situation in Yugoslavia, particularly in Croatia. Hence it is clear why it was chosen by Xpartizani0zauvijekX: it fits nicely into the Yugoslav myth of partisan resistance movement which was essentially related to pan-European anti-fascist resistance during the WWII and it conveys neatly the general idea of the memorial. The fight for liberation was an honourable act marked by hardship and devotion to freedom. And, along the very personal grief, it is this, the essentially humane act that deserves respect in the 'corrupted' present. Moreover, it fits even more snugly into the present when the old generation is inadvertently leaving and the new youth is to find their place in the debris of the shattered post-war dream.

Taking a look first to the formal structure of this 4MO, it can be seen that since it first appeared in YouTube in February 2009 the video has had 37,735 views. Within the first month online it was embedded on Facebook; geographically, it is understandably most popular in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. Before going any further, it has to be said that this is not the only digital memorial that uses this song: as I go along I will bring into discussion another one, uploaded in June 2008 by stjepko357²⁹⁵; additionally I will also discuss a video uploaded by majorsnag,²⁹⁶ which tells a story in a similar fashion, using a much more globally popular Leonard Cohen's version. The reason why these three digital memorials are investigated together is—due to the topic (global anti-fascism), music and narrative strategies—fairly obvious, yet it has to be said that xPartizani0zauvijekX's is the archetype of a digital memorial. Archetype in the way it uses audiovisual elements, in that it is dedicated to a specific person and at the same time to a country and a worldview, anti-fascism.

²⁹⁵ stjepko357, "Branimir Štulić – Partizan," <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Ax1NkaBAWM>, accessed 23 August 2011.

²⁹⁶ majorsnag, "Leonard Cohen – The Partisan," <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oG4ndbhOkpI>, accessed 23 August 2011..

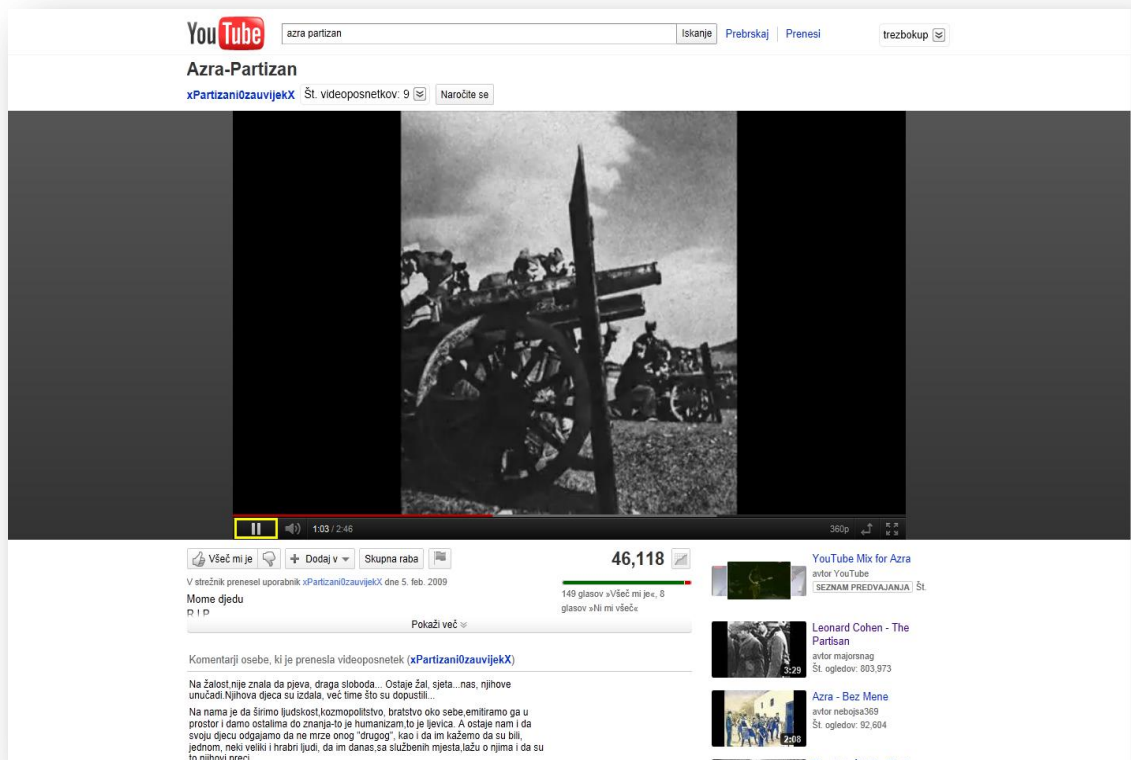


Figure 28 | Fighters in battle.

On the visual level xPartizani0zauvijekX employs lo-fi moving and still images. The latter are manipulated so as to appear as if they were moving—white vertical lines are added to give an impression of an old film strip running (remediation). The images in the memorial depict resistance fighters engaged in battle, marching through the woods, and scenes of the liberation. At that it has to be said that it is very difficult, also because of low-resolution images to tell by the uniforms which formations or Yugoslav units the soldiers in the memorial belonged to. Presumably they are Yugoslav partisans or at least this is their function in the narrative. At the end of the video footage is inserted of a man who just broke the shackles on his hands and a Yugoslav flag waving in the background, the words in the song go:

*Trojica od nas toga jutro [There were three of us this morning]
a samo jedan živi [There's only one this evening]
al taj nisam ja [But that's not me]
grobnica je javna kuća [The cenotaph is a brothel]*

The video ends with a photo of Xpartizani0zauvijekX's grandfather in officer's uniform and the singer sings:

Kroz čempres vjetar duva [Through the cypresses the wind is blowing]
i kroz groblja vjetar duva [Through the graves the wind is blowing]
draga sloboda [Dear freedom ...]
da l' će znati da pjeva [Will she know how to sing?]²⁹⁷

At the end of the video, the image shatters (fragments) into small tiles that disappear into the black background.

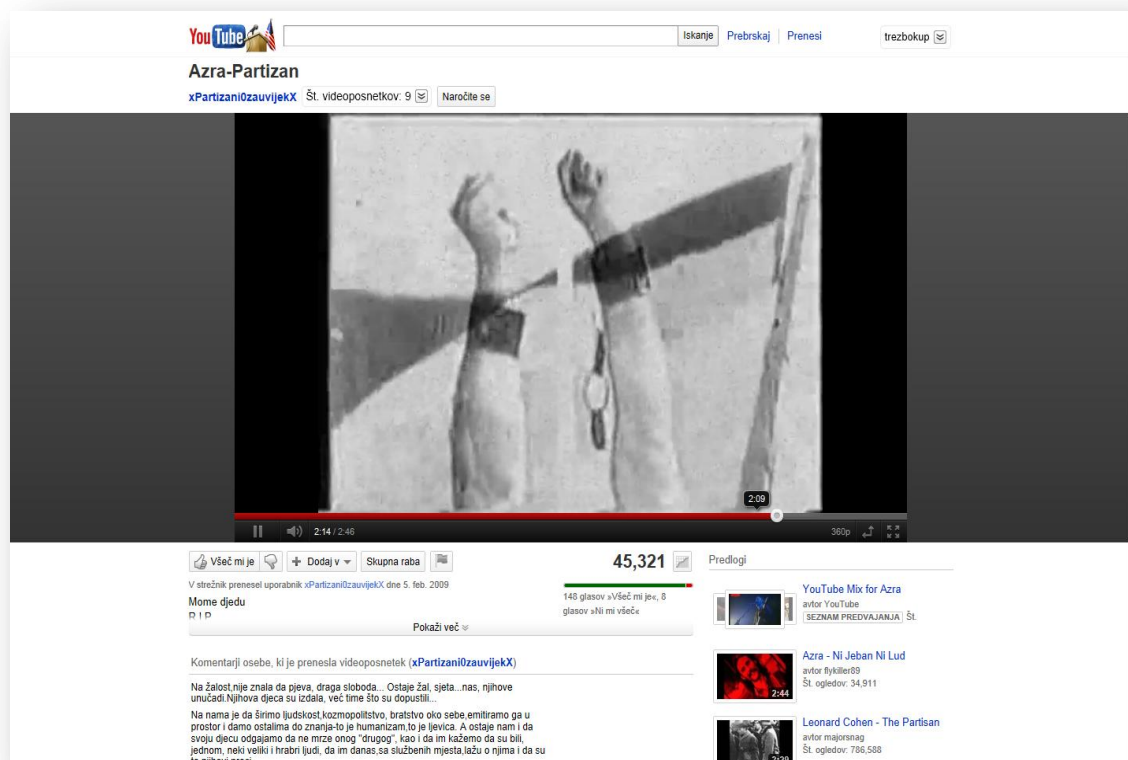


Figure 29 | The shackles are broken.

The fact that this is a cover, relates the digital memorial into a broader, international framework of anti-fascist tradition both in terms of remembering the WWII and the renewed European interest in anti-fascism. Anti-fascism is not only a popular ‘mantra’ adopted by some left-wing initiatives which see in it a way to counter or mitigate the neoliberal and neo-colonialist tendencies in the

²⁹⁷ XPartizani0zauvijekX, “Azra-Partizan,” http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pSOA_B11SjU, accessed 23 August 2010; One user posted the complete lyric in the comment:

bijah uhvaćen u zamku i pozvan da se predam al taj nisam ja štuc u ruke i crta kako gordo teku suze skrivao sam mnoge ljude kao i imena a sad i ona ginu sa mnom zatim djevojka u bašti i spas u njenoj duši baš u pravi čas umrla je bez riječi trojica od nas toga jutro a samo jedan živi al taj nisam ja grobnica je javna kuća kroz čempres vjetar duva i kroz groblja vjetar duva draga sloboda da l' će znati da pjeva
saladinvelicanstveni pred 1 mesec

post-post-war world.²⁹⁸ What is often neglected in contemporary dealing with Yugoslav socialist past in post-Yugoslavia, is that the “rejection of the socialist legacy caused marginalization of antifascism as a value, despite the fact that antifascism is regarded as a foundation of a “common European identity.”²⁹⁹ Moreover, as Catherine Baker argues, “insisting on separating anti-fascism and socialism ignored 45 years of their inseparability in Yugoslav public discourse.”³⁰⁰

This trend notwithstanding, the broader dimensions of the situation after the collapse of the country is often perceived as a deterioration of the standard of living, indeed a deterioration of certain rights that were the result of the socialist rule. Furthermore, the (implicit) correlation in this video between anti-fascism, Yugoslavism and, the post-Yugoslav situation, whereas the latter is particularly apparent in the comments, is for the most part an expression of discontent over the present situation of (alleged) degradation of humanness, of erosion of solidarity and genuine interpersonal relationships, etc. In other words, reading the individual and collective (or wider socio-political) levels together, this 4MO is also an expression of existential insecurity, typical for any present. And all the more so for a present at the crossroads of perpetual social, political, economic and technological change.

And even more for a present on the verge of losing the few witnesses to the making of the today still dominant historical referential framework (no matter how hard one tries, WWII is still the pinnacle event of the 20th century and everything that came later, at least for the western hemisphere). And, on a very personal level, losing one’s grandparents irreparably breaks the last ‘organic’ link to a past that hence only remains accessible through historiographical, media, personal narratives seems the only stable thing. In fact, in the eternal present and the industrious production of ever new seminal events—but little remarkable or lastingly memorable ones—the (perceived) coherence that the past used to have is necessarily withering away. Further adding to this in post-Yugoslav countries is the contested memory of the WWII resistance movement: a place of ideological post-socialist/Yugoslav struggles where invariantly it is problematised as ‘communist revolution.’ This remains an ever present daily political topic even today and none the less pervasive one online.

²⁹⁸ I am alluding here to the “post-war dream,” as Pink Floyd once sang about, a utopian world of peace and justice which rests upon the WWII victorious worldview, and was widely present in the political mythologies and popular cultural spheres, both in the East and the West.

²⁹⁹ Tanja Petrović, “Balkan Legacy of the 19th century and post-Yugoslav societies in the context of the EU Accession,” unpublished paper.

³⁰⁰ Catherine Baker, “‘Death to Fascism isn’t in the Catechism,’ 174.

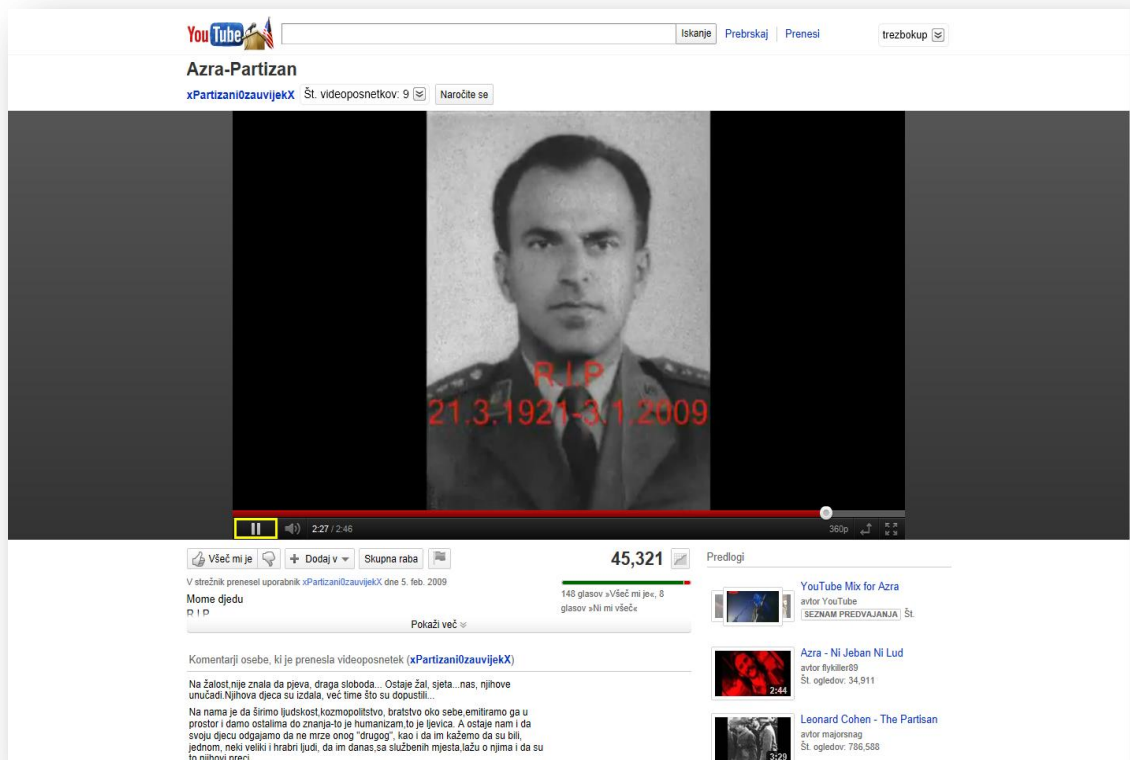


Figure 30 | The closing scene.

What this digital memorial essentially does is that it remediates, via media archaeology, ‘ancient’ media sources: archival footage and vinyl rip of the song. In doing so twenty years after the collapse of the country and socialism, it renarrates in a considerably different socio-political environment: in a very personal (vernacular) externalisation of memory, a history once important, then almost annihilated, but not forgotten, comes to life again. The YouTube as a media platform enables the posting and hence the distribution (circulation of 4MO) of such private-initiative externalisations of memory and judging by the responses to both the video and Xpartizani0zauvijekX’s channel it managed to create an on-the-fly community of remembering. The video features as a cyberplace of memory, a place where personal views and understandings of the past can be voiced in the above described manner of stage/cinema differentiation. This video does not spur as fierce debates as dugmicMala’s, rather, on several occasions it also serves as a ‘prosthetic memorial,’ a generic model upon which other users can attach their own very personal memories:

Thanks for the video I also dedicate this song to my granddad and his fellow combatants from the fourth Yugoslav army. Spring 1945. Eternal glory to them all.

[vucic89](#)

Respect maestro!

My granddad

1913-1991

3rd Overseas Brigade (26th Dalmatian Division, 4th Army)

pozz

death to fascism-freedom to the people

[stari31](#)

To all our grand fathers, rest in peace!

Raise your voice against fashism!

[WooyaBG](#)³⁰¹

Considering the above comments, it could be argued that very personal memory in DME is externalised—i.e. an event, a period, or a person are remembered in such co-created and network-distributed content—at the point of ‘connection.’ At the point of connection (comment), a personal memory is fused with the entire digital memorial and its specific content. This contributes both to the very co-creative nature of the 4MO as a memorial and also to extending the commemorated stuff to include other mourners. When a user navigates to a video, watches it and comments it, or just reads comments, the process of on-the-fly remembering is enacted via the connection to the posted content and to the users who have been there before; additionally, leaving a cybertrace, a comment, also creates a ‘memorial-radical’: a posted comment becomes and remains part of the 4MO (unless removed by the commentator or hidden due to receiving a certain amount of ‘dislikes’) for future users to react to (or not). In a 4MO, thus, a temporal structure is asserted that allows for the continuity of co-creation.

The comments to “Azra-Partizan” reveal that the visitors generally are quite impressed by the video and watching it often urges them to express their fascination by the video, the song and often with the topics beyond those depicted in the video. This digital memorial, dedicated to a partisan, reveals a much wider practice of online remembering:

These were good times when material things didn't divide us, material things that today divide more than do religious or national. Today it's essential just to have, whichever way you can. Once being a thief was a disgrace while today it is a cherished skill and value and that's why I love this song, because in those times at least you knew who's a thief and who a partisan.

[TheChongista](#)

@TheChongista

³⁰¹ XPartizani0zauvijekX, “Azra-Partizan,” http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pSOA_B11SjU, accessed 23 August 2010.

This is a time when men were gentlemen, women were ladies, it was a time of being fair, truthful and proud, the last of the heroes. today the manners, as much as they've been empty then, they were the standard, today everything is alienated.

Peacerelm³⁰²

In the above 'post'n'reply' the past is depicted beyond any rational degree. Nevertheless it serves as an indication of how the past is reinterpreted today, in fact, it (implicitly) explicates what partisanship and/or anti-fascism today can stand for: not only a resistance against fascism or occupation but much more. In these stances anti-fascism and references to the partisan resistance reintroduce a set of values which are increasingly being missed today. Such comments establish an interpretive lens through which the entire post-WWII period can be interpreted, its 'essence' re-presented. What is more, extended past the year of 1991, this lens lends a standpoint for rejecting the post-1991 historical revision, as well as a gateway to at least try to think about alternatives.

The important part of the story is that these comments are often indeed personal and related to one's own (mediated) experience:

A really good song about brave and good people. It is touching because like many others', both my granddads were partisans. I don't know for which one it was worse. The one who died right at the beginning of the war in 1941 or the one who saw liberation in 1945 but then had also to witness the collapse of everything he'd unconditionally believed in until the end of his life. this is what is missing today. Faith. Because of faith, pride and honour I am proud of both my granddads. Glory to all the National Liberation War fighters, where ever they were and whatever their names.

slunianer³⁰³

This 4MO is part of the Xpartizani0zauvijekX's channel but via its mobility also becomes part of other users' lists of favourites, part of their YouTube activity, indeed a cybertrace of memory in their memorial imaginary. The question, however, is how online action translates into offline environments. Departing from the vantage point that the two are not two distinct, unrelated worlds, but rather seeing them as nesting extensions of and within each other, it could be argued that such videos facilitate an enhanced immediacy of remembering. Significantly informing human action, in DME in general and cyberplaces of memory in particular, the immediacy emerges through memory and remembering practices becoming part of the quotidian (unlike a planned pilgrimage to a particular lieu de memoire). Paying respect thus becomes a part of most mundane activities, in a way de-ritualised. Or perhaps, memory practices in DME become part of individualised, private rituals that include clicking through a memorial, reading the text available and watching and listening to the audiovisual part. This is not to say that the emotionality of remembering has grown weaker. To the contrary, the cyberplaces of memory in fact provide for

³⁰² See comments at "Azra-Partizan," http://www.youtube.com/all_comments?v=pSOA_B11SjU, accessed 6 September 2011.

³⁰³ Ibid.

expressing emotional externalisations both in creating a memorial as well as in commemorating, i.e. viewing, commenting, interacting with it. This is quite inconceivable in offline memorials, apart from participating at highly orchestrated commemorations, or graffitiing a memorial during the night. Hence, it can be argued that the immediacy of remembering is also facilitating a more active/intimate engagement (if not necessarily ‘civilised’ or absolutely decent) of the ‘rememberer’ with the past, present and future. I am aware this may be somewhat speculative, precisely in view of the fact that thought in DME is fragmented “into ever smaller bits, bits that can be distributed and sampled, even ingested and enjoyed, but that in the glut of multiple circulating contributions tend to resist recombination into longer, more demanding theories.”³⁰⁴ Or into an argumentative debate which might surpass the fleetingness of fractured, often decontextualised thoughts. There is a telling example at the Xpartizani0zauvijekX’s channel comments section of very inconsiderate and offensive commenting:

CROEAGLE1941

My granddad died in black legion 1962 and I’m the next generation to fight the reds!for now on you tube and then, if it’s needed, for real as well!

CROEAGLE1941

are you a woman?WHEN DID YOU LIVE?! HOW ARE YOU NOT ASHAMED TO GLORIFY PARTISANS AFTER WHAT THEY HAVE DONE IN BLEIBURG?=U=³⁰⁵

CROEAGLE1941

what end of Zagreb are you from so I can come and slaughter you when you’re sleeping?
=U=jasenovac is waiting for you!³⁰⁶

SOTUzakon

bingo!!! you just won a ticket to bleiburgXD

Hehe...well done comrade...the little one can finally join his pals ustasha.hehe

One more thing, tiny, a useful story for you...you know my granddad had a brother ustaša(there were 6 partisans and one ustaša)...and when he was killed at bleiburg his brothers thought, although they were sorry for them: well he deserved it better a dead brother than an ustaša....you see you’re favourite...it seems I caught some of that thinking blame it on me but that’s the way it is...as far as I’m concerned it’s a shame that the partisans didn’t finish them all off.hehe

Respect!!!

CROEAGLE1941

you red faggots snugging četniks, motherfuckers!siege heil=U=ready for home[land]³⁰⁷

³⁰⁴ Jodi Dean, *Blog Theory, Feedback and Capture in the Circuit of Drive*, Cambridge, Malden, Polity Press, 2010, 2.

³⁰⁵ Ustaša sign.

³⁰⁶ Jasenovac was a NDH (Independent State of Croatia) run concentration camp during the WWII.

³⁰⁷ Needless to say, CROEAGLE1941’s user name has been terminated (but the comments remain on other channels and under videos!) due to repeated or severe violation of community guidelines, although SOTUzakon’s comments are not far behind.

The string of post'n'replies reveals a heated hate-speech series of posts by CROEAGLE1941 on the channel's comments section. Apart from the sporadic jokey and just as offensive replies by some other users, the comments failed to initiate any kind of debate. What is indicative in the CROEAGLE1941's outburst is the distinction he instils between online and offline action: "I'm the next generation to fight the reds!for now on you tube and then, if it's needed, for real as well!"³⁰⁸ Having no boundaries expressing hatred and threats online, he nevertheless 'reserves' the 'real action' for the time when needed. The question, however, is at what point does online hatred translate into 'real' action. Is the internet just a stage for performing identity without any 'connection' to the person 'behind'?

Be that as it may, the fact that such content, i.e. virtual memorial desecration, is present/read/consumed by visitors gives plenty of substance to thinking beyond the screen of anonymity and to question the effects such actions have offline. As this is not the subject of this study, suffice it to say that calls for offline action are frequently present in Yugoslav digital memorials. Particularly those calling for re-unification of South Slavs base their arguments on positive re-interpretation of Yugoslav past: brotherhood, unity, solidarity.

Unfortunately it did not know how to sing, dear freedom ... Our regret and remembering remains, of their grandchildren. Their children had betrayed by letting all this happen ...

It's up to us to spread humanity, cosmopolitanism, brotherhood around us, to emit it into space and let other people know – this is humanism, this is the left. And we can also raise our children not to hate the 'other' and to tell them that once upon a time there lived some great and courageous people, that today the they [the children] are being lied to by people in power who lie about them [the great and courageous people] who were their ancestors.

IvoLola³⁰⁹

This last comment clearly links the present day disillusionment with hopes invested into the post-socialist future, which in many digital memorials dedicated to the former Yugoslavia is seen in light of disillusionment over the democratisation/transition project, failing to offer progressive/proactive solutions to often existential problems. Thus, the options that remain are easily formulated in promoting the returning to or reintroducing the ideals and values that once were prominent; and indeed only made possible by the anti-fascist resistance. Now, as much praise for the socialist past as one can find in digital memorials such as this, there is also a great number of radically opposing views and interpretations.

³⁰⁸ See XPartizani0ZauvijekX's channel at <http://www.youtube.com/user/xPartizani0zauvijekX>.

³⁰⁹ See comments at "Azra-Partizan."

Another intriguing thing (which to some extent was already discussed in Tatu videos) is the use of the same song in different memorials. The Xpartizani0zauvijekX's digital memorial was in fact only made after stjepko357 posted his version:

Uploaded by [stjepko357](#) 26 June 2008

Branimir Štulić – Partizan

.....this song is about the ideals of human freedom and unconditional sacrifice for her [*freedom* in Slavic languages is feminine], freedom is not to be thrown about, neither is it enforced, it has to be earned, for her we fight, for her we spill blood like our ancestors and like our grandchildren, in freedom we're united.....FREEDOM

Category:

[Glasba](#)

Tags:

[Branimir Štulić](#) [Partizan](#) [Azra](#) [rock](#) [1995](#) [sloboda](#) [naroda](#)

In this video the same song is used to dub a completely different selection of photographs (no video), and it seems to be perhaps slightly more structured as it features a title and the makers name at the beginning, and it opens with a socialist realist picture depicting a group of partisans in black and white and a colour Yugoslav flag. After this introduction, the photos are edited and feature various content: partisans engaged in battles, marching through a snow-covered plain, a photo from a concentration camp, etc. The video has been seen by 126,031 visitors, considerably more than Xpartizani0zauvijekX's (37,943), it has 182 comments, not that much more than Xpartizani0zauvijekX's video (95), relatively speaking. Interestingly, however, the responses to Xpartizani0zauvijekX's memorial are considerably more elaborate and emotional. In great part they are related to the memorial and the topic depicted (memory of a person and also of a country and ideology), while stjepko357's video elicits more responses related to the performer of the song, to issues of authenticity and originality (Cohen vs. Štulić), to the way the video is made. In this respect, the issue of song's origin seems particularly relevant to the commentators: the debate ensues over whether it was Leonard Cohen who is the author (which is often taken for granted), and whether Štulić plagiarised the song or just covered it. One fairly apparent reason for this seems to be the very intentionality of both videos: while the Xpartizani0zauvijekX's is in fact declared a personal memorial, stjepko357's has no such overt ambition, but rather declares at in the very first post:

Right, I made sort of a video clip for this excellent Štulić's thing comment how you like it

[stjepko357](#)

Despite no explicit ambition of the maker, the video does nevertheless play the role of a memorial, as several comments demonstrate:

Croats had the greatest fascists and also the most famous communists who fought in the occupied Zagreb and under most horrid torture in 90 % of the cases gave anyone away. True they were Soviet patriots and died easyheartedly for this homeland and idea but no one wrote more famous pages of anti-fascism in this sense than did the Croats. I'm a Serbian but I say only one is Johnny Stulic.

[slavakomunizmu](#)

i'd give my life for the partisans even today!!

The song is great it reminds me of all the people who lost their life fighting for FREEDOM and LIBERATION FROM FASCISM. but today when I see kids "ustaše" I ask myself what did these people give their life for!! Not for this the didn't. that's why mentality of the kids has to be changed and become familiar with it and don't let the journalists and the press shape the next generations of HDZ! [Croatian Democratic Union, party]

ANTIFA FOREVER, FOREVER!!

[MrWux](#)

As these last two comments demonstrate, the affect triggered by this song and the video is deeply related to both the past and the present, it thrives on the discrepancy between the mediated (individually imagined) past and present on the one hand, and on the discrepancy between the contested interpretations/histories/memories of the Yugoslav past itself. Interestingly, this video attracted mainly Croatian commentators, which is seen both from treating the Štulić's redoing of the song, and from the conceptualisation of the contemporary Croatian political situation. However, as much as there is contestation over the singer and the song, the past and the present, there are also voices that clearly aim to distance the singer (and the song) from any relation to Yugoslav history.

What relation štulić has with yugoslavia, četniks, ustaša, or whomever?! it's all about an anarchist who sings against all idolatries people may come up with (in the time of single-mindedness he sang, ridicule and criticised) but in the time of senselessness there's nothing to criticise cause it's senseless, and naturally that he then became "ustaša, četnik, jugović [southerner] and similar" But the man nicely said that he left and has no intention to return (and he went where there's no southerners) not long now and I'll do the same:))) THANKS GOD!

[mislav76](#)

Questioning the Štulić's take on Yugoslavia may seem relevant on the level of his personal life story. Having emigrated in the early 1990s from Croatia was a statement against the national(sti)sation of post-Yugoslav Croatian political and cultural space. And considering his 1980s often politically engaged lyrics (if not anti-Yugoslav at least very critical) the above commentator may have a point in the senseless co-relation of the singer with either ideological side-taking. And it also emphasises the characteristic of post-Yugoslav memorial (and to a significant extent the political, social and cultural) practices which tend to see in the past in many daily events that have no or very little connection to the Yugoslav past. In this case the situation is clearly different, yet it seems very difficult to see the reactions that would reach beyond the WWII

framework, not dismiss it altogether, but rather take this song, for instance, as a commentator suggests, as a metaphor:

That bollocks your saying, got no idea what the man is singing about,.... everybody right away start off with ustaša, partisans, četniks etc. the song is METAPHORICAL!!!

The Vasiljevic

This, however, may prove a difficult if not unrealistic task, as much ‘bitterness’ seems to dominate the DME memorial landscapes as well. In an atmosphere of bipolar interpretations there often seems to be no way to think, conceive of, or debate about the past, present or future outside the limits imposed by the WWII interpretive clash unravelling in the post-1991 socio-political constellations.

Frequently, the narratives in the digital memorials presented are often countered by a whole-sale problematisation and criminalisation of the entire socialist/post-WWII period, which is based on the alleged crimes committed under the rule of the Communist Party, and on the terror and oppressiveness of the socialist regimes as such. It is not my intention to resolve this issue here, but would just like to point out one thing: the abundance and variability of digital memories, memorials and storytelling in DME facilitates an enormous number of reinterpretations (quantitatively, that is) of the past which are particularly hot topics in societies divided over the interpretations of their pasts. Sadly, however, they usually boil down to pro-partisan, pro-Yugoslav and those defined in extremely nationalistic, right-wing terms, often relying on one of the collaborating parties during the WWII. The comments under several YouTube videos related to issues of interpretation of WWII (particularly in terms of collaboration and antifascism in Slovenia) clearly demonstrate the reterritorialisation and renationalisation. Nest0rsen thus comments: “I don’t have to argument anything to you :). Keep believing in your Stalinist mentality and keep yourself as distant as possible from other people. Thanks.”³¹⁰ Legijasmrti says: “a good commie is a dead commie! Home nation God! To the battle, for home! ...” and further on: “after we seize the power again, every trace of the red manure will have disappeared, from the memorial plaques also.”³¹¹ Furthermore, strongSLO explicates his position:

I’d rather pact with the Germans than with the southerners [a derogatory term for people from other former Yugoslav republics, often used in Slovenia] and I’d even rather be independent, like Slovenia. It’s dishonourable that for so many years we have lived with the southerners. There’s heaps of this dirt. The Germans are our only allies. They gave us the reforms which did us good, but it was the communists who made problems. What did we ever get from the southerners? Laziness, stealing, destruction of Slovenianness, hatred

³¹⁰ nest0rsen, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ACtl8Xi2I&feature=related, viewed 13 September 2009.

³¹¹ Legijasmrti, http://www.youtube.com/comment_ser_vlet?all_comments&v=CcpPMDegfLo&fromurl=/watch%3Fv%3DCcpPMDegfLo%26feature%3Drelated, viewed 13 September 2009, channel no longer available.

among the people [...] commie, do you know that your place is in a gas chamber? Be cautious or the blackhand will come for you.³¹²

Unlike many nostalgic expressions demonstrating significant tolerance, pacifist stances and willingness to find and pursue a certain *convivenza* of dislocated souls, the latter ones overtly express hatred (sometimes well into hate-speech discourse), both ethnic and ideological, and profess highly intolerant debate-positions in the name of love, god, home etc. Although it has to be said that in several instances hate-speech is conspicuously present ‘on both sides.’ This implies that frequently certain realms of DME (just as in offline environments) are often just a meeting place for people of same beliefs not necessarily leading to a co-created knowledge space.

This notwithstanding, the enhanced immediacy of remembering fosters, at least potentially or latently, a more engaged relationship with the present and the prospects of the future. Stjepko357’s video, for instance, is a video response to majorsnag’s take on the song and its message. A large number of responses (845) and views (652,405) to majorsnag’s video demonstrate that the topic of anti-fascism in stricter sense and of opposition and resistance in broader, liberating terms are far from forgotten across the world, particularly in Europe and North America.

Destroy the Injustice of the world !

Contre Attack !

[YoungBelaLugosi](#)

Let's cry and dance together, all you brave man and women of the world! Let's fight against every person, institution or system that's suppressing us!

[Mugukaupo](#)³¹³

The fiercest response, however, is related to the Yugoslav role in the history of WWII, burdened with collaboration and civil war. In the comment exchanges some people, who participated in the debates at the other two videos assume the role of interpreter of the situation in Yugoslavia, which leads to great generalisations and inaccuracies. As the Yugoslav responses have been to some extent discussed above, let me here briefly bring refer to the fact that anti-fascism as co-created by 4MO is indeed a vital ideology bringing together people from different places.

Warsaw uprising 1944! For those who took thier city back from the germans and prayed for help that never came. The end of war didnt stop them fighting for the idea of free Poland against the communists regime.

[PuertoPoland](#)

This song is about the French resistance. But we Irish can relate so well....

³¹² StrongSLO, http://www.youtube.com/comment_servlet?all_comments&v=CcpPDegfLo&fromurl=/watch%3Fv%3DCcpPMDegfLo%26feature%3Drelated>, viewed 14 September 2009, no longer available.

³¹³ See comments at http://www.youtube.com/all_comments?v=oG4ndbhOkpI.

eoin79³¹⁴

Needless to say, different people invest the video with different interpretations/meanings; it seems that a topic/historical period/mobilisatory ideology as it can be presented in DME (with fusing audiovisual ad textual levels) is in fact very applicable, via individual ‘personalisation,’ to many different cultural, historical, political contexts. Such digital memorials, despite and because of affective reactions they (may) trigger, transcend political borders and to some extent offer a platform for maintaining international, occasionally cosmopolitan networks.

One of the most disturbing songs ever, and with good reason. I grew up listening to this song and have to say it is one of my favourites, but it does teach us about things in the past (it is based on true events) and I for one hope this song and its meaning never disappear.

toohottie001³¹⁵

To bring focus back on Yugoslavia: despite the perils of potential lingering on the past, which is the usual reproach of anti-nostalgics and nationalist elites, the fact remains that the *quest for normalcy*, i.e. the desire to reassemble the transition- and war-torn historical, is an action that can also facilitate an engaged take on the past, the present and the future.

Conclusion

The vernacular digital memorials are not necessarily intent to cause heated debate neither do they aspire to give professional historical accounts. Rather, they are made-public individual interventions which, once posted, elicit various kinds of responses and, by means of participation, also co-creation. These interventions are then a good indication of 1) the diversity of individual interpretations of histories 2) the diversity of feelings, personal views and beliefs invested into such storytelling and the related power of mediated content (4MO) to mobilise, once made public, affect.

And it seems that YouTube vernacular digital storytelling dealing with the Yugoslav past is a good/popular tool to do that. True, the audience is necessarily dispersed and often marginal in terms of potential grass-roots action, but it is also around such (numerous, basic in terms of narrative techniques deployed) digital memorials that the shared knowledge spaces and spaces for

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

(potential) action are being built. Now, to refer again to Michel Chion and the discussion in the “Popular Music: Heritage and Memory” of Chapter 2, what in the practice of listening to the music is done internally, mentally, is (not only) in the digital memorial videos taken a bit further: typically a three-minute number (as long as the typical single record song) used in making a digital memorial involves adding and editing of images to the sound, rhythm, words of the song, for real. Not just in your head. Thus, apart from mere entertainment, nostalgia or pure subversion and private-made-public dealing with one’s past,³¹⁶ the past online becomes, through remediation, an important factor in externalising and vocalising individual mediated memories.

In the case of Yugoslavia where after the break-up of the country the past was (is) subject to thorough revision, if not annihilation, this is all the more relevant. With the newly established countries ‘producing’ their separate national histories, the ‘shared,’ ‘Yugoslav,’ ‘socialist,’ ‘communist’ past finds little space in grand national narratives. Or, at best, as alluded above, this is predominantly to create a symbolic distance on which the new democratic transition is based. Online interventions such as the videos discussed above certainly question the very idea of the (new) national in the digital (post-socialist) age, and also propose a sort of undermining of nationalist narrativisations of history, by creating and voicing particular, singular, individual stories. The nationalistic escapades on the other hand clearly demonstrate the rising reappraisal of territoriality (reterritorialisation) and nationalism (renationalisation) in post-Yugoslavia, and contemporary Europe as well, which is to a great extent also the result of increasing insecurity emerging in contemporary world. The following exchange in the dugmicMala “Jugoslavija” 4MO nicely illustrates the bitter reality of post-socialist displacement and even despair:

what are you fuckers drying over yuga and none of you is living in ex yuga. this bane and yugoslavija1945 are really funny.Are you not ashamed???Posting here but living in germany.I live with my own [parents] because I don’t have the money to live on my own with 350 euros.Talking about the frontlines LOL what frontline is that you went to stealing home appliances.Where do you get the money to go to germany you stinking cunt. And not just you but everyone from ex yuga who are full of shit like you are traitors.

[gremlinBG](#)

[@gremlinBG,](#)

look now, I came to Germany in 2006, do you think it’s easy to live abroad without your own people, in a land where you’re a stranger although you speak the language. I was forced to go because of the shortage, to work and study as my parents were not able to support me financially, and I couldn’t find work there. I’m here all by myself, and I miss

³¹⁶ Not to overrate the exposure on the private in public digital spaces, one should have in mind Nick Couldry (2008), who notes: “Young people are *holding back* personal material that might in theory have gone into their MySpace or Facebook site. This problematises any idea that social networking sites represent *simply* the mediatisation (and publicisation) of formerly private self-narratives. [W]e might argue young people, by holding back personal narratives from such sites are protecting an older private/public boundary, rather than tolerating a shift in that boundary because of the significant social pressures to have an online presence.”

home and folks more than ever. You say you work for 350 €, and I live here, work, study, buy clothes, eat and pay rent with 600 €.

Bosancheros85³¹⁷

What gremlinBG and Bosancheros85 communicate between themselves is a story of two migrants: one migrated in time, leaving his homeland behind, while the other migrated as well geographically. Both of them have lost their homeland, but they observe it from a different perspective, finding different solutions to their problems. And it seems it is this perspective that prevents them from finding a common ground. But what they communicate to 4MO visitors (and the apparatus) is a piece of a wider post-socialist problematic: displacement, bad living conditions, and general disappointment.

We can see that digital memorials as examples of co-creative storytelling, apart from an externalisation of memory by the maker, also present a conduit to expressing very personal issues by visitors in a public space: unlike the ‘classic’ memorials where little room is available for expressing disagreement or even debate about the contested part of history. Different ‘versions’ of history or externalisations of memory are frequently materialised in different spaces: monuments, memorials, commemorations, and they may clash for instance in professional debates, political campaigns and round tables. 4MO on the other hand, ideally offers a space where divergent, opposing interpretations can meet and interact without ‘authorial mediation.’ The reality, as I have shown, is usually not as ideal. Rather, ‘problematic’ historical events/people/periods, or rather their cybertraces, provide fertile ground for radicalisation and affect around certain topics. Despite the potentialities offered by digital storytelling and the co-creative functionalities in 4MO, to a large extent the public debates seem not to go beyond the limits of pub-debates and fixed positions.

With this in mind it can be said that a tendency of users/co-creators (makers and visitors) in digital memorials is not to discuss or debate a particular topic in very much detail. Despite the technological dispositions of the internet, and YouTube in particular, that at least in a utopian view should facilitate a world of knowledge, these are only to a limited extent used this way. From a techno-cultural point of view this may be an indication of the discrepancy between the intended use of a technology on the one hand and its actual, experiential application on the other.³¹⁸ The prevalent strategy seems to be a more on-the-fly connection to the posted content without lengthy or serious involvement into the topic. True, the short statements may not be totally disengaged. To

³¹⁷ See comments at http://www.youtube.com/all_comments?v=M7SorJzdBtc&page=4.

³¹⁸ See Gitelman, *Always Already New* on the gramophone; see also Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1999.

the contrary, they are often overly engaged and affective in relation to the audiovisual stories that on many occasions seem to strike a very delicate note with the visitor. And in case of Yugoslavia, and the interested visitors, it is indeed a delicate topic that this storytelling is taking as its subject. Hence, the memorials themselves are bound to fuel, as the ones discussed do, (also) affective reactions.

In the co-creation of digital memorials two aspects are important: the maker's and the visitor's points of view, both intrinsically related to identity performance. The former may indeed externalise memory in the sense that she creates a digital narrative in which music, photos and video (and text) are employed to convey her own historical statement. This externalisation is conditioned on two levels. First, the digital memorial is incomplete unless co-created (acknowledged) by the users who visit it, comment on it and/or share it in their networks. It is only then that the memorial, albeit technically already public, attracts public attention (however limited). Second, and just as crucial, is the phenomenon of the 'jukebox metaphor.' With the jukebox metaphor I refer to the relatively limited number of objects available to be used in digital memorials (scanned photographs and songs) which become recognisable and widely used through repetitive use and reproduction. Consequently they become understood as 'the' representations of a particular topic. For instance, among a large number of photographs of Tito that exist, there is a certain assortment of those most often used, hence most 'representative'; postcard motives (often used in digital storytelling, although not discussed here) representing Mostar Bridge, Lake Bled, republic's capitals, etc. The jukebox principle, in principle, implies that an individual can only choose from among a pre-determined collection of objects, images, songs, ideas ... much like in a jukebox. The trick is in that every choice is usually understood as 'free choice,' and the "from among a ready-made selection" part is often obscured.

This phenomenon is characteristic for both the maker and the visitor who tend to take the video and its constituent audiovisual parts as a given. Or if not so, not questionable in terms of accuracy. This is particularly apparent in the absence of any observation of the fact that in many memorials the images used are stripped of all referentiality. Thus the visitor is in no position to establish whether a person depicted in a photograph is 'real,' or is it from a feature film, the locations are often unidentifiable, sometimes it is even hard to tell if a person in a low-resolution video is a partisan or a Nazi. All in all this seems to play no significant role. To the contrary, the storytelling in DME works along the principle of suspension of disbelief,³¹⁹ yet it also invites a consideration

³¹⁹ See for instance "Suspension of Disbelief," [Mediacollege.com](http://www.mediacollege.com/glossary/s/suspension-of-disbelief.html), <http://www.mediacollege.com/glossary/s/suspension-of-disbelief.html>.

along the lines proposed by Jonathan Harris: “Stories online aren’t really stories right now. They’re like fragmentary reactions to things for the most part. They’re like little nerve firings.”³²⁰ Nevertheless, it’s the interaction of fragmentary stories and user responses that evoke a more complex narrative that to some extent rests, apart from the suspension of disbelief, also on digital empathy.

And yes, this is present in offline memorials and statues etc. as well: presupposing that the viewer will, ‘for the sake of the argument,’ tolerate obvious inaccuracies and inconsistencies and impulsibilities, and ‘buy into the story.’ The perspective can be shifted somewhat to suggest that in the case of digital memorials, as opposed to cinema for instance, where the characters and plot are usually the carrier of the narrative, the effect of suspension in digital memorials, “incorporating taken-for-granted knowledge and unspoken assumptions,”³²¹ is that of a different scale of immersion: into one’s own memories or interpretations of the past. Yes, the viewer may ‘see’ a picture of Josip Broz or of partisans engaged in a battle or of the bombing of the Mostar Bridge, but that is not all. The wide array of different comments, different accents and opposing views demonstrate that in fact when people comment on these videos they comment on their memories, i.e. they externalise (to the machine at first), often briefly and loudly, what they ‘actually see’ when watching a digital memorial; they perform what they believe or want to voice as an indication of their identity, belief, worldview.

³²⁰ Jonathan Harris in interview with Kristina Loring, “The Never-Ending Story,” *designmind, business/technology/design*, <http://designmind.frogdesign.com/articles/the-never-ending-story.html>, accessed 23 August 2011.

³²¹ Catherine Baker, “‘Death to Fascism isn’t in the Catechism,’ 164.

Chapter 4 | The Past on Facebook: Profiling Yugoslavia

We live with those retrievals from childhood that coalesce and echo throughout our lives, the way shattered pieces of glass in a kaleidoscope reappear in new forms and are songlike in their refrains and rhymes ... We live permanently in the recurrence of our own stories, whatever story we tell.³²²

Introduction

One of the most popular social networking sites (SNSs) of the time, Facebook, is not only a platform for forging new and maintaining old acquaintances, for ephemeral status updates and evanescent chit-chat or for sharing holiday photos and posting/performing all sorts of personal, identity-defining stuff. It is also a place for corporate viral marketing, online gaming, and various fan cultures. Once ‘expanded’ to Facebook, an individual, a service, an artist, an obscure business or a marginal political view can use the space and the connectivity emerging between ‘friends’ to diffuse their particular agendas/missions/everyday banalities. The various uses and unforeseen (innovative) approaches to using Facebook as a stage for performing one’s activities (identity/ies) via regular status updates, posting links and photos, etc. provide the basis of the ‘digital sociability.’³²³

In this Chapter I discuss the practices of memory and remembering in several Yugoslavia related Facebook profiles and pertaining user activities. To do this I look at four profiles, *SFR Jugoslavija* and *Josip Broz Tito* which are dedicated to the country and its leader, respectively, *Nova Jugoslavija* which is a remediation of Nova Jugoslavija website and the profile of *Olivera Marković*, a famous Yugoslav actress and singer who died in July 2011. These cases are approached via multimodal discourse analysis aiming to detect the strategies deployed in remediating the past. In other words, I trace—in the audiovisuals and textual comments—the contours of a ‘facebooked’ digital memory of Yugoslavia, i.e. of how Yugoslavia gets ‘profiled’ on Facebook. In particular, I focus on *how the Yugoslav past, or rather the re-interpretations and*

³²² Michael Ondaatje, *Divisadero*, London, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2008, 136.

³²³ See Manuel Castells, *The Internet Galaxy*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001, 116-132, Fiona Brideoake, “The republic of Pemberley: Politeness and citizenship in digital sociability,” *Interdisciplinary studies in the long 19th century*, thematic issue *Minds, bodies, machines*, 7, 2008, <http://www.19.bbk.ac.uk/index.php/19/article/view/483/343>.

re-mediations thereof, is used in selected Facebook profiles particularly in relation to dealing with present socio-political situations in post-Yugoslavia. Moreover, I investigate the potentiality of this SNS as a vernacular memorial platform for re-articulation of ideas of ‘new Yugoslavia/Yugoslavism.’

The analysis approaches the (multimodal mobile media) object of investigation as a *digital memorial* whereas the related digital storytelling practices (as elaborated on in the previous Chapters) are understood as the central tenets of co-creating historical and memorial narratives on Facebook. Importantly, the analysed ‘historical profiles’ are seen as digital memorials because the space of remembering and sociability they create facilitates the emergence of very loose, on-the-fly communities, members of which co-creatively partake in the ‘construction’ of that space by sharing-in their individual/intimate thoughts, songs, videos. By posting links to videos and other content, by commenting on and discussing various topics a process is underway of creating a complex digital memorial. This process, significantly, facilitates the remediation of audiovisual and textual records of the Yugoslav past. Albeit in a radically transient manner.

The co-creation in this case, on the one hand, effectively presupposes individual externalisation of memory (in a decidedly many-to-many manner). On the other hand, a vernacular individual externalisation at least to some extent (not necessarily ‘on purpose’) features as a memorial (although quite imperfect in terms of longevity/access). Audiovisual and textual content is posted into the public space and thence collectively wrought into a fragmented, perpetually evolving narrative. With this in mind I argue that as much as memory in DME can be seen as on-the-fly, so can digital memorials: constantly shifting and changing, growing or withering, and, as 4MOs, constantly on the move between users, subject to mediality.

A note on 4MO is in order: historical Facebook profiles are understood here as 4MO in that they ‘host’ and serve as a crossroads of intertwining textual comments, descriptions, discussions and (embedded) videos, links to news/web sites, particular articles more or less directly related to the past, present and future of Yugoslavia; at that they also fulfil the condition of mobility of digital media objects.³²⁴ The key feature that makes a (not only historical) Facebook profile a 4MO are the networked characteristics of the synergy of the posted content (status updates, video links, news) and user activities (discussions, comments) and the externalisations of memory and remembering at work in such co-created environment. The underlying question here is: How and for what purposes the Yugoslavia related Facebook profiles utilise Facebook functionalities? What

³²⁴ In this Chapter I am not looking at ‘real personal’ profiles but exclusively at profiles that ‘personalise’ Yugoslavia or a particular aspect of the country’s past.

to make of the interweaving of politics and remembering in DME in relation to offline situation and actions? Speaking of historical profiles, Facebook technology and its cultural appropriations, along other more ordinary uses, also open up the stage for the officially deceased countries to reappear: their citizens, political figures, music, cinema and literature may continue to live and ‘actively’ participate in the country’s afterlife. Run by one or more administrators, the profile—as a temporally structured string of audiovisual and textual posts, comments, discussions—then gets a life as co-created digital narrative or indeed memorial.

Before I continue, let me emphasise on a fairly problematic aspect of conducting Facebook research: the user and visitor activities are extremely difficult to trace retrospectively, particularly over a longer period of time. Posts cannot be accessed by date search, but only browsed to/through ‘analogically,’ i.e. by hitting the ‘Older posts’ button; moreover, they cannot be accessed/browsed via topic search.³²⁵ Upon following several profiles over the course of one and a half years, which gave me significant insight into the working of Facebook as a memorial profile, I have decided not to attempt an all-embracing analysis of the entire life-span of a particular profile.³²⁶ Instead, I focus on four profiles in the time window May—August 2011, but also look at actions from before this period. Although this may turn out to be too small-scale an approach to analysis, I believe that with reference to the on-the-fly-ness of Facebook sociability and connectivity and particularly to externalisations of memory, it will prove adequate. Even more so because the ways they are managed and used in re-presenting Yugoslav past in post-Yugoslav presents have proved consistent: the content posted clearly differs, but formally remains ‘limited’ to links to YouTube videos, news, articles etc. Furthermore, the profiles exert either regular activity with large numbers of daily posts, peaking at important dates in Yugoslav history (the Day of the Republic, 1 May, respective republican days of WWII uprisings, etc.); or more sporadic overall activity, with more engagement around the aforementioned days.

Regardless of the issues in conducting Facebook research, there is one feature that makes Facebook ‘historical profiles’ a particularly relevant phenomenon for this study: apart from a ‘real’ personal profiles, the service also enables the creation of profiles dedicated to individuals who are no longer alive (despite violating service’s Statement of Rights and Responsibilities), i.e.

³²⁵ This, however, may change with the new development of the service design and content organisation; see “Introducing Timeline,” <http://www.facebook.com/about/timeline>, accessed 23 September 2011.

³²⁶ Also because the some of the investigated profiles advocate the policy of not communicating privately. Another point to consider is this: the profile activity is technically inaccessible over longer periods of time. This issue could be tackled by print screening relevant posts and saving them. However, all further activity in the post is as good as lost.

celebrities or war victims (from WWII to the most recent military adventures),³²⁷ and even countries (although non-personal profiles are actively discouraged). These in turn get an afterlife, make friends and attract followers. Let us consider Danah Boyd's argument for a moment:

The dominant networked publics have shifted from being topically organized to being structured around personal networks. Most users [...] are hanging out online with people that they already know. SNSes [social networking sites] are explicitly designed to be about "me and my friends" [meaning that] people are exposed to the things that their friends choose to share.³²⁸

This bears some important consequences for this study: if we see SNSes as being about "me and my friends" than it can be argued that in the case of 'impersonal' historical profiles they can nevertheless be viewed as essentially personal endeavours. As such they (usually) evade any official, top-down ideologico-political imposition, but precisely through the ephemerality and transience (which is so problematic for research) of content create an extremely 'oral' (in terms of immediacy and unofficiality) environment for the co-creation of renarrativisations of the Yugoslav past. The profiles are all the more personal in the sense that the life of a profile is initiated and managed by a 'real' person (or more of them) and also that it is understood by the users in very 'personal' terms. Hence, the renarrativisation and remembering Yugoslavia in such a particularly on-the-fly manner might, due to the erroneous transience and intraceability, prove irrelevant. Yet, the number of people engaged in 'following' and 'liking' the life of Yugoslavia in Facebook prove that this is no marginal matter. To borrow a quote from Nagisa Oshima's *Night and Fog in Japan*:

Man 1: Forget about your theories and join hands with us.

Man 2: Theorising is not good for group cohesion. There are plenty of girls tonight.

Man 3: What's that got to do with Marxism? What has singing Russian or Swiss folk songs got to do with revolution?

Man 2: You're always so direct.

Man 3: Last year during the street protests of '52 you called us fence-sitters. Now we're too direct?

Man 1: Things have changed after the Korean war. We must discuss matters to resolve them.

Man 3: I know, our policy changed. That's why we hold meetings.

Man 1: I hope this doesn't lead you away from the others. Singing together makes us feel united. The revolution won't advance unless the student movement feels unity.³²⁹

³²⁷ See Dieter de Bruyn, "World War 2.0: Commemorating War and Holocaust in Poland through Facebook," *Digital Icons: Studies in Russian, Eurasian and Central European New Media*, 4 (2010): 45–62, also available at <http://www.digitalicons.org/issue04/dieter-de-bruyn/>.

³²⁸ Danah Boyd, "Can social networking sites enable political action," in Allison Fine, Micah Sifry, Andrew Raseij and Josh Levi (eds.), *Rebooting America*, New York, Creative Commons, 2008, 112–116, 115.

³²⁹ Nagisa Oshima, *Night and Fog in Japan*, Yume Pictures Ltd., 2008. 6:20–7:30.

Facebook: Digital Sociability and Memory

In this section I look at the implications that Facebook has for ‘making a digital re-appearance’ and memory practices. Through the profiles and the connectedness (and also exclusion) they facilitate, Facebook as a SNS is conducive to the emerging ‘digital sociability’ which takes place in technology enabled virtual spaces of togetherness.³³⁰ Much like any (offline) togetherness, virtual togetherness (re-)creates the conditions of inclusion/exclusion. Communication and social relations in DME are often just as discriminate as are any offline. As Lisa Nakamura observes, patterns of offline behaviour very well translate into online spaces and relations.³³¹ By creating a profile on Facebook, asking for confirmation of friendship and confirming friendship requests the user is at the very outset of her digital sociability engaged in a process of selection and more or less in/discriminate practices of non/confirming such requests, and later on engaging in interaction. True, the vast majority of requests, particularly in the initial period after one has joined the service, indeed come from ‘offline’ friends and it seems that one is only rarely approached by a complete stranger.

Nevertheless, Facebook-enabled sociability is conditioned by one’s socialising preferences which show in the number of friends, in who is among them, with whom one has most contact and what kind of contact/interaction this is, in terms of content and intensity. It seems the process of friend making is essentially a remediation of offline friend-making and -keeping where people come together and maintain a relationship because of a shared interest(s), i.e. it is a continuation of friendship with different means.³³² However, Facebook has redefined the meaning of friend. Two people who do not know each other can become friends without meeting, just by clicking ‘Accept.’

³³⁰ Maria Bakardjieva, *Internet Society: The Internet in Everyday Life*, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi, Sage, 2005.

³³¹ Lisa Nakamura, *Digitizing Race: Visual Cultures of the Internet*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2008.

³³² In many cases, ‘friendship’ in Facebook is primarily a ‘directory’ of friends who are thus always at the click should the need to contact them arise. Facebook friendship, it could be argued, is to an extent ‘prosthetic friendship,’ meaning that the friends are all readily available stored in a cloud, their data (birthdays, employments, schools etc.), social activities (also with third parties, invisible in real life) included.

And “[s]ince anybody can establish friendship with any stranger, the definition of what a real friend means on Facebook is disoriented.”³³³ Yet it still does not seem that the nature of communication has changed all that much. As Boyd maintains, “[m]ost people are simply logging in to hang out with friends that they already know [...] Not surprisingly, offline or online, gossiping is far more common and interesting than voting.”³³⁴ This last statement is interesting in view of the problematic of Yugoslav politics of memory in Facebook: Are the administrators/owners and visitors engaged in co-creation of a narrative ‘really’ on a mission to renovate the deceased country (as is often at least implicitly manifest)? Or is this rather an on-the-fly hanging out where users arbitrarily post/comment on the stuff that they stumble upon? What in all this is the role of memory and remembering?

The ‘history’ of user engagement, particularly when it comes to tracking the past, is practically untraceable. Although a compressed file of an almost entire history of one’s Facebook engagement can be downloaded, this only presents one side of the story. The other part is in some friend’s profile and practically unobtainable, unless agreed by the person in question to share it. This effectively renders Facebook extremely ephemeral as ‘repository of memory’ and further testifies to its on-the-fly-ness and to the radical transitoriness of a record of a relationship. What remains to be done, it seems, is browsing through the older posts hitting the back button: the problem is that when the user clicks through to older posts, they load into one successive string of posts and any navigation from this sometimes extremely long list brings the ‘historian’ back to the starting point: the most recent page of posts.

This, as already explained above, poses considerable problems when attempting to research any activity over a longer period of time (unless deliberately traced and recorded). It is for this reason that I have decided to design my analysis so that it only includes content available without any intervention of the owner of the profile. In other words, I focus, on-the-fly, on whatever content is available in the final research period. This approach seems best suited also in the context of approaching a profile as a 4MO: the posted content is often very ‘fresh’ yet in many cases the use of remediated content (films and music) establishes a relation to the past at the same time as a connection is created between the temporarily and spatially remote users. With regards to the ‘impossible history’ of a relationship on Facebook this radically alters the characteristics of

³³³ David Adelman, “Anthropology Behind Facebook,” <http://www.helium.com/items/1452870-facebook-interview-anthropology>, created 18 May 2009, accessed 24 August 2011.

³³⁴ Danah Boyd, “Can social networking sites enable political action,” in Allison Fine, Micah Sifry, Andrew Raseij and Josh Levi (eds.), *Rebooting America*, New York, Creative Commons, 2008, 112-116, 115.

keeping in touch; or, in the case of a historical Facebook profile as digital memorial also the characteristics of remembering.

The latter is particularly important for the purposes of this study: the changing characteristics of co-creating and sharing memories in DME. It is at the intersection of sociability and co-creating memories that the key lies to further unravelling the processes of memory and remembering in Facebook. In order to do this I propose to make a swift detour to discuss the workings of the Facebook logic with an emphasis on some non-personal and fake historical profiles. Then I move on to discuss the ways in which popular cultural content (particularly music and cinema) enters the spaces of Facebook induced digital sociability, with a view to elucidate how in Yugoslavia historical profiles popular culture is used as the central part of digital storytelling.

Non-personal and Fake Historical Profiles

The issue of memory, remembering and commemorating on Facebook requires a multilayered approach, as there are two practices of remembering at work: one in the already discussed problem of keeping track of past activities among interconnected profiles, and the other regarding the practice of using Facebook as a medium of “performative rather than reproductive”³³⁵ commemoration and remembering. It is the latter that is of particular relevance for this study (although the former is crucial in terms of research design). To illustrate the span of memorial and commemorative engagement in Facebook, I would like to bring into focus two cases. The first in a very humorous manner presents the chronology of WWII by emulating a wall post exchange between countries engaged in conflict. Subtitled “a modern adaptation of world war II for the american teenager” the narrative that unravels takes in all the major events of the war.

It starts off with status update: “Germany and Italy are now friends 1 October 19:36” where the names of the countries are linked to their respective profiles. One of the following posts says “Germany taking Czechoslovakia & Hungary back to my place! 29 September 19:39,” which is ‘liked’ by Italy. France replies “gross, you can have’em, just not Poland, she’s mine” and UK says “i’m going to pretend i didn’t hear that;” Czechoslovakia says “thanks guys... if there was a

³³⁵ Astrid Erll, “Cultural Memory Studies: An Introduction,” in Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (eds.), *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*. Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1–18, 2.

‘dislike’ button i’d be all over it.”³³⁶ While this is not a real Facebook conversation but rather an emulation using popular and oft used features it nevertheless serves as an example of how interaction unfolds in Facebook (note the use of the time of the post to mark the relevant year). Moreover, it demonstrates how via a profile a country can get extremely personalised.



Figure 31 | WWII on Facebook, <http://www.collegehumor.com/article/5971108/omg-wwii-on-facebook>.

The second case is analysed in Dieter de Bruyn’s study of Polish commemoration of the two Facebook profiles, one commemorating the Warsaw Rising and an educational project on the young Holocaust victim Henio Żitomirsky. The former involved the creation of two fictitious profiles of Kostek Dwadzieściorzy and Sosna Dwadzieściorzy, who were ‘in a relationship’ with one another. In the course of existence the ‘characters’ performed as if they were real, posted photos of war-time Warsaw and added links to insurgent songs, video clips etc.³³⁷ The second is a profile of a boy born in 1933 and killed in Majdanek concentration camp by the Nazis.³³⁸ The

³³⁶ “OMG WWII on Facebook,” <http://www.collegehumor.com/article/5971108/omg-wwii-on-facebook>, accessed 24 August 2011.

³³⁷ Dieter de Bruyn, “World War 2.0,” 52.

³³⁸ Ibid., 56.

author traces in both the “importance of a successful mediation in order to render its consumers a valuable, ‘prosthetic’ experience.”³³⁹

Designed in similar vein there are several historical profiles, which effectively are hoaxes, but that attempt at remediating and re-presencing a historical period, a country, an event... This is particularly relevant for the former socialist countries that have gone through a regime change, but less for the west, as unlike the entire socialist eastern bloc, no western regime has yet expired. For instance, one can find a number of profiles dedicated to the former DDR president, Erich Honecker, Ostalgie³⁴⁰ and the DDR itself, which rarely have more than a few dozen followers.³⁴¹ Czechoslovakia, likewise, is not too exuberantly resurrected on Facebook; there are several profiles which do not seem to attract large numbers of followers. The Soviet Union features on Facebook with more than 100 profiles, but only a few with more than 1,000 followers.

Other countries once filed under the ‘Eastern Bloc’ are even less present on Facebook, particularly as compared to Yugoslavia which, for reasons evidently related to the characteristics of the collapse of Yugoslavia—the wars and the dissolution of the country at the brink of the digital era—seems to dominate the former Eastern Bloc-country-specific Facebook profiles. The search term ‘Jugoslavija’ yields more than 300 results in Facebook profiles. Much like in other post-socialist historical profiles, Yugoslavia related profiles rarely exceed 1,000 members or followers. One exception is the profile *SFR Jugoslavija – SFR Yugoslavia* with more than 118,000 people who ‘liked’ it in early June 2011, with the next in line reaching slightly above 4,000.

Now, whereas an ordinary ‘real’ user usually has one profile, Yugoslavia has many. Apart from the Facebook profiles that explicitly refer to Yugoslavia, even more (above 500) take as their main point of reference/departure the name of Josip Broz Tito or Marshal Tito, perhaps the most recognisable and most widely used icon of Yugoslav past online.³⁴² Thus one can find profiles such as the above mentioned *SFR Jugoslavija*, *Jugosloveni smo zauvijek* [We, Yugoslavs, are forever], *Josip Broz Tito*, etc.

³³⁹ Ibid., 60.

³⁴⁰ On Ostalgie see Daphne Berdhal, Daphne Berdahl, *On the social life of postsocialism, Memory, consumption, Germany*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2010.

³⁴¹ Search term “Deutsche Demokratische Republik,” <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Deutsche-Demokratische-Republik/147192811966943#!/search.php?q=deutsche%20demokratische%20republik&init=quick&tas=0.5241627246387202>, accessed 18 September 2011.

³⁴² It should be noted that not all of these profiles are ‘commemorative profiles’ as many use the name as an alias and go about their digital sociability as usual, with no other references to this historical figure.

An interesting and telling thing happened earlier in 2011: a profile *Josip Broz Tito* has been disabled by Facebook. In a discussion section of the *SFR Jugoslavija* profile an embittered exchange provides some insight into how this was received by some of the more engaged users:

Goran Mandić Facebook shut down the profile Josip Broz Tito. The profile had 5000 'friends' and several thousand of those who couldn't be accepted.

Has anybody got any wise advice? [original in BSH]

Your account has been disabled because we have determined that you are not representing yourself authentically on Facebook. Fake accounts are a violation of our Statement of Rights and Responsibilities. All accounts must abide by the following policies:

- You must provide your real first name and last name.
- Impersonating anyone or anything is prohibited.
- Profiles created to represent celebrities, pets, ideas, or inanimate objects are strictly prohibited.
- Profiles created for the purpose of spamming or harassing others are strictly prohibited.

People on Facebook want to interact with their real friends and the people they know in the real world. Since fake accounts can damage the integrity of this environment, they are not allowed to remain on the site.

Unfortunately, we will not be able to reactivate this account for any reason, nor will we provide further information about your violation or the systems we have in place. This decision is final and cannot be appealed.

Thanks for your understanding,

Avery

User Operations

Facebook³⁴³

This reveals the very 'technicist' conceptualisation of sociability by the service provider, in fact rather a strictly regulated sociability that can be terminated without notice by the provider, should they so decide.

Ivo Lola E, my dear Yugoslavs and all the honourable people from the territory of Yugoslavia what ever the nationality.... That's the way they do it at Mr. 'berg from Face and in the 'democratic' (capitalist) West. What they have done is the RIGHT picture of 'democracy' THEY promote as global. And the 'explanation' is so hypocritical and rotten that you can spit on it.

Disgrace, but what's the point.

They haven't fought us so that they would now let us free of charge advertise what they hate the most (and what we love the best)...

[...]

PS – Maybe we are not yet technically up for these global gulanferima, but we've got heart and soul.³⁴⁴

³⁴³ *SFR Jugoslavija – SFR Yugoslavia*, "Facebook ugasio profil Josip Broz Tito...", <http://www.facebook.com/pages/SFR-Jugoslavija-SFR-Yugoslavia/36436743833#!/topic.php?uid=36436743833&topic=15244>, accessed 24 August 2011.

³⁴⁴ Ibid.

Nevertheless, many of these profiles increasingly figure as places for post-Yugoslavs to re-present topics spanning the country's past and the post-Yugoslav present(s). The profiles at that also tend to feature as forums where one can 'nostalgicise' while visiting massive amounts of posted (links to) content (predominantly YouTube videos and news papers). Or, one can actively engage in heated debates on the country's past, and, more importantly, its future. Among numerous profiles dedicated to socialist countries, a conspicuous number openly calls for 're-forming' or resurrecting, recreating this or that socialist country.

This is particularly relevant with regards to the 'historical profiles' in the case of Yugoslavia where "the central architectural organisation of Facebook as a fluid hypertext of interconnected profiles"³⁴⁵ enables for a rapid diffusion and, in the next turn, also for the potential for establishing contact between post-Yugoslavs based on a historical commonly shared historical and cultural referential framework. Living in exile, at 'home' or abroad, those who come to 'like' or befriend Yugoslavia historical profiles tend to have one thing in common: they continue to like the country also in its afterlife and seem to a considerable extent 'convinced' by the truthfulness of both the profiles and the 'commemorated.'

Memories are Made of ... Popular Culture

Departing from Boyd's observation on the cursory rather than more substantial interaction above, it can be argued that the unofficiality of Facebook spaces, in all its 'gossipy predisposition,' renders practices of remembering evermore informal, presupposing unfixed, face-to-face quotidian communication, with all the works: linguistic inaccuracies, affective and emotional responses, superficial commenting. All this, importantly, tends to (yet not always) remain much more restrained as compared to outbursts of rage in YouTube.³⁴⁶ Remembering and sharing-in someone else's audiovisualised memory is, for instance, performed either through more 'digitally engaged' emphatic commenting on a holiday photo (also using emoticons) or via less engaged actions such

³⁴⁵ Dieter de Bruyn, "World War 2.0," 47.

³⁴⁶ To go into much more detail regarding the distinction between YouTube and Facebook sociability would be out of the scope of this writing. Suffice to say that communication in Facebook (between friends and stranger alike) seems much more restrained and deliberate as compared to YouTube, to some extent because of the 'status of acquaintance' (not entirely, as in the memorials such as those analysed here, absolute strangers meet as well) but predominantly because in most cases, the users 'perform' via their real names. In this respect, it has to be noted that the communication on Facebook unravels on two levels: public (e.g. Wall posts) and private (e.g. emailing and instant messaging) and that this study only looks at the public level.

as ‘liking’ it. In this respect, Facebook communication and sociability (and, as it has been argued particularly in the early days of the internet, the entire online communication) could be seen as a certain degradation of offline face-to-face interaction: in the most instrumental user practices friends are ‘stored’ to be ‘retrieved’ when needed, communication may easily be ended by not replying, or plain ignoring what a friend has just posted. Another common reproach to digital communications, also applicable to Facebook, is the degradation of ‘pristine’ eye-to-eye and/or flesh-to-flesh contact. Yes, communication in Facebook is indeed often fragmentary, cursory ... although often also the most practical substitution for face-to-face communication.

However, this can only be seen a degradation, if ‘real’ offline face-to-face communication, on matters both serious and mundane, would invariably exert elaborate arguments and high levels of linguistic accuracy and style, etc.³⁴⁷ If, in other words, one would presuppose the existence of what Zygmunt Bauman calls “human individual’s capacity for immaculate conception.”³⁴⁸ Attention and devotion to linguistic detail and solid argument in media and/or political discourses is, more often than not, staggeringly low. The media (and politics as well) are usually a field of thriving gossip and little argument, just as much as the most quotidian pub-talk is. Hence, the difference between online and offline communications practices cannot be based entirely on what and how is said. Additionally, John Storey’s warning that “we must always be alert to the what, why, and [also (and this is important!)] for whom something is being articulated, and how it can always be articulated differently in other contexts,” retains all its relevance.

A more valid line of distinction has to be sought elsewhere: regardless of the ‘argumentative power’ of whether gossip or argument (I put this in such distinctly oppositional terms for the sake of the argument), what eventually counts are the ripples they make when chucked into the networks of social, political interactions. Or rather, the attention should be directed to the resonances and effects that the mundane and/or political discourses have in the fabric of social interaction. Once this is acknowledged, the media and political discourses can be approached more critically. Just as well, online ‘gossiping’ can, just as critically, be given credit as a non-negligible, not at all irrelevant, frequently democratising factor in creating a public space. John Storey further argues that the postmodern culture offers the possibility of many different articulations,³⁴⁹ and it has to be added that it is the DME enabled/enabling technologies that do much the same in the realm of digital communications. This is a corollary predominantly of mass and digital mediation (and mediatisation) of everyday life, politics, science, consumerism, entertainment. In their particular

³⁴⁷ See “Jugoslavijo,” Chapter 3 on use of language in Youtube comments.

³⁴⁸ Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid modernity*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2000, 168.

³⁴⁹ John Storey, *Inventing popular culture*, Malden, Oxford, Carlton, Blackwell Publishing, 2003, 73.

ways, these domains and the different articulations they foster (within and between them) become the subject and field of sociability.

Taking this to the realm of history, memory and remembering, another distinction arises very clearly: the one between historiography and popular historical interpretations. In certain aspects and contexts it can also be seen as an everlasting opposition between history and myth, between myth and truth. Through the lens of postmodernist approach, as Storey argues, this does not necessarily implies the collapse, but a decreasing importance and taken-for-granted-ness of the modernist distinctions between high and popular culture, past and present, history and nostalgia, fiction and reality.³⁵⁰ The idealised immaculate modernity and thereafter many a nostalgic quest for stability of the past, presupposed a unified and an authoritative historiography and vision of the past. Alas, the differences in articulations enabled and facilitated to a significant extent also by the digital media, shattered yet again such a rigid, a-dynamical, authoritative understanding of past realities.

The different articulations, i.e. different re-narrativisations and remediations of the past are largely present in popular cultural renditions: particularly in cinema, music, literature. In a very accessible way these articulations—increasingly virally—have become a relevant companion to many lives, individuals', collectivities', nations', especially in the latter part of the 20th century. As such they can also be regarded as (complementary) historical sources. First in terms of reflecting or re-creating an illusion of times past,³⁵¹ and second in terms of being closely connected to/embedded into personal/intimate histories, and at that also widely (collectively) shared and acknowledged 'records' of the time. Thus, what we are witnessing today (and have for quite some time) on a larger scale is not just historicisation of popular culture (in that popular culture becomes relevant for historiography), but also 'popculturalisation' of history (in that history becomes interpreted through popular culture). And it is the latter that is in fact the crucial reason to investigate the ways the Yugoslav past—remediated and renarrated through endless music videos, film excerpts, cultural references to film, music and cultural and political celebrities—is remembered, co-created in Facebook.

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

³⁵¹ Siegfried Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, xlix.

Profiling Yugoslavia

The focus of analysis are, as already mentioned above, Facebook profiles that in one way or another ‘deal’ with Yugoslav past and co-create its digital afterlife. In the following I interrogate the ways in which the profiles/administrators remediate the past via popular cultural audiovisualisations, textual interventions and management practices. Moreover, by tracing the ways in which these profiles operate, I propose to show the significance that the mediatization of the past in predominantly audiovisual and affective terms has on the digital afterlife of Yugoslavia.

That the historical Yugoslav profiles are to an important extent invoking the past is to be expected. Yet this is only a part of the story. In addition, by frequently posting content explicitly related to the present socio-political situation that the post-Yugoslav countries found themselves in, the profiles/administrators as a rule transcend the tenets of a ‘guerrilla’ historical or ‘merely’ nostalgic mission. To the contrary, as I demonstrate below, Yugoslavia related historical profiles to an important extent exert explicit concern about, if not (political) engagement with post-Yugoslav political situations. What is more, these renarrativisations do not seem to end at the country’s borders but rather bring into focus global (or at least occidental) socio-cultural-political problematic. It is, essentially, this deeply tangled constellation of co-creating and re-presencing the Yugoslav past—with references to the radically problematic present—that forms the central crux in these profiles worth interrogating.

SFR Jugoslavija

Firstly, as indicated above, I look at the *SFR Jugoslavija* profile, which is by far most popular among the Yugoslav-specific Facebook profiles. In terms of ‘laying out the argument’ of its existence and mission is the profile *SFR Jugoslavija*,³⁵² which in terms of profile’s identity management/construction/presentation and everyday activities features as one of the central Yugoslavia historical profiles. At the time of writing (early September 2011) 119,941 people ‘Like’ the profile, defined as “Community”.

In the Info section of the profile, the administrator can fill in several fields to provide “Basic Information”: “About,” “Company Overview,” “Mission,” “Products” and “Website.” In the ‘About’ section the *SFR Jugoslavija* states: “Nobody in our country has to renounce his national

³⁵² *SFR Jugoslavija – SFR Yugoslavia*.

allegiance. But, at the same time we are still also Yugoslavs... -Tito.”³⁵³ But the rigid structure of the site gives little room for much personalisation/adaptation to specific use such as a historical profile dedicated to a country. Thus the “Company Overview” reads:

From Vardar river to Triglav Mountain
From Đerdap to the Adriatic Sea
As a shiny necklace
Bathing in the bright sunshine
Proudly standing in the midst of the Balkans
Yugoslavia, Yugoslavia...

The unofficial Yugoslav anthem is used here as a territorial marker that delimits the symbolic, material and mythic dimension of the ‘company’ in question. Referring to the north-westernmost and south-easternmost ends of the country stretching between the rivers in the east and the Adriatic Sea in the west, effectively pins the virtual space of togetherness down to the ‘ground.’

The rather lengthy mission statement delimits the scope of the profile in some detail, starting off with a very straightforward statement:

WE ARE DEPARTING FROM THE FACT THAT WE ,AND PREDOMINANTLY
THE YUGOSLAVS WILL NEVER ACCEPT AND ADMIT THE DISSOLUTION OF
YUGOSLAVIA NOT ITS OCCUPATION AND PLACING DEBT SLAVERY ON THE
SHOULDERS OF OUR CITIZENS AND MEMBERS OF YUGOSLAV NATIONS
AND NATIONALITES]³⁵⁴

Furthermore, the profile is conceived as a digital memorial in co-creation: “We are here first of all to remember Yugoslavia and all of its values,”³⁵⁵ giving at the very beginning a self-definition of this historical profile. While a place where memory and remembrance may be externalised by visitors and administrators, this is also a virtual space of togetherness where through most mundane actions of online communication/participation the past of the country is given a new presence/present. As much as by the very nature of the profile this is a digital memorial, it nevertheless has a relatively strict ‘management’ policy. The aspect of co-creation is discussed in more detail below, so let me just say a few words about the administrators’ setting up this specific space where the digital sociability may take place. The admins are very clear and strict in terms of what they stand for:

1-TO REMEMBER YUGOSLAVIA AND ITSVALUES ,
2-TO EDUCATE THE YOUTH AND PROVIDE THE TRUTH ABOUT LIFE IN
YUGOSLAVIA , ABOUT THE LEGENDARY NATIONAL LIBERATION
STRUGGLE OF OUR NATIONS

³⁵³ Ibid.

³⁵⁴ Ibid.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

3-TO CONNECT THE PEOPLE OF SIMILAR OR SAME STANDPOINTS AND
THUS DESTROY VEŠTAČKE AND IMPOSED BARRIERS BETWEEN OUR
NATIONS

4-TO PRESERVE THE MEMORY OF THE LIFE AND UNIVERSAL WORK OF
MARSHALL TITO

5-TO RAISE THE TRUTH AGAINST REHABILITATION OF FASCISTS AN ALL
DOMESTIC TRAITORS WHICH TODAY REPRESENTS A GENERAL AND
WORRYING PHENOMENON IN THE REGION

8-TO TALK ABOUT THE DIFFICULT SITUATION OF THE WORKING
CLASS,FARMERS,INTELLECTUALS ,YOUTH AND RETIREES IN THE
VAMPIRISED BOURGOUISE-MAFIA-ROBBING ECONOMY

9-TO CREATE A COMMON FRONT AGAINST
NATIONALISM,PRIMITIVISM,CLERICAL FASCISM,THEFT AND ALL THE BAD
THINGS THAT WE'RE EXPERIENCING TODAY.....

10-TO FOLLOW UP ON THE LATEST POLITICAL,ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL
DEVELOPMENTS IN ALL APRTS OF Yugoslav TERRITORY.....³⁵⁶

The task is a comprehensive one, one that at first sight raises doubt whether the communications platform such as Facebook can actually prove a feasible technological solution for their realisation in full. Or, to be more precise, can Facebook as a technology (e.g. the historical profiles) offer a 'proper' solution at all—or as Evgeny Morozov calls it, a *technological fix*—to remedy the apparent unease transfixing post-Yugoslav cultural and political levels still heavily burdened by the collapse of the country and its wholesale substitution with 'freedom and democracy.'³⁵⁷ Particularly, for instance, in terms of educating the youth about the everyday life, politics and culture in SFRY; about the once prominent values and the Yugoslav ideology that in the time was mythologised and remains no less mythical today. The concern that comes to mind is whether and how a Facebook profile can facilitate activities that would involve what in the pre-digital thinking was considered a detailed study of 'serious' sources. This however, seems to be beyond the scope of profiles which overtly try to keep things (posts) 'simple,' but rather serve as an invitation/stimulation for further interrogation on the part of the visitor (the extent to which this is (not) done seems questionable).

Overall, the *SFR Jugoslavija* mission statement is a very proactive programmatic summary of a radically emotional stance both toward the past, the present and the future of post-Yugoslavia. It proposes the visitor to consider the entire post-WWII history and also post-Yugoslav political realities; the former through the latter, and vice versa. Extending the exclusively Yugoslav aspect of the profile, the admins propose to counter the rehabilitation of fascists and collaborators (alluding as they do, to the more European-wide phenomena); even more, promoting a humanistic

³⁵⁶ *SFR Jugoslavija – SFR Yugoslavia*, "Info," <http://www.facebook.com/?sk=lf#!/pages/SFR-Jugoslavija-SFR-Yugoslavia/36436743833?sk=info>, accessed 4 August 2011.

³⁵⁷ See Evgeny Morozov, *The Net Delusion*, 301–315.

view they call for forming a front against nationalism, primitivism and clerical fascism. In a similar manner they also emphasise the grave situation the working class, farmers, intellectuals, youth and pensioners found themselves in,³⁵⁸ once the post-Yugoslav countries have renounced the social in socialism. This programme is essentially a case of emotional politicisation of the past which demonstrates how—before and after the collapse of socialism—the “people in Central and Eastern Europe have been politically motivated and manipulated by hope, disappointment, joy and fear.”³⁵⁹

The “Product” section contains the ‘Terms and Conditions’ which elaborates on what visitors may and may not do when participating in the profile/community. To illustrate let me just point out a few articles:

1. it is strictly forbidden to use offensive tone particularly on national basis, as well as sarcastic ,tendentious, or ambiguous message that may cause quarrel. Any such post will be deleted without notice!
2. it is strictly forbidden to post on the WALL anything related to the wars on the territory of SFRY after second world war
4. any invitation for a laugh, a party etc. IS MOST WELCOME!
5. if you still have the need to debate, you have the right to do so in the Discussions, and post there. This does not mean that the he may take the right to offended other nationalities nor any one else. so, all in good manners. any post failing to follow our principles will be deleted without notice!

The two most generously visited/updated features are the Wall and the Discussions section. The status on the Wall is regularly (several times a day) updated predominantly posting links to videos on YouTube and various newspaper articles. In fact, the updates-pace is such that it is virtually impossible to go back to posts older than a few months, without risking browser overload. Furthermore, once browsing to an ‘older’ post and clicking to see it in full (expand the collapsed comments), it is virtually impossible to return to the precise location ... unless one keeps track of how many times one has hit the ‘older posts’ button.

In terms of content, the posts to the *SFR Jugoslavija*’s Wall (this also applies to other profiles) can be roughly divided in three categories: 1) links to YouTube videos, 2) links to daily/political news reports, 3) routine posts. The most vastly represented in the first category are the so-called ‘musical posts’ i.e. links to YouTube videos which typically feature a pop-song video or a digital memorial as discussed in Chapter 3. Such posts generate quite some response in terms of ‘Liking’ (passive participation) and commenting: “This song reminds me of... [...] This song was my

³⁵⁸ *SFR Jugoslavija – SFR Yugoslavia*, “Info.”

³⁵⁹ Maruška Svašek, “Introduction: Postsocialism and the politics of emotion,” in Maruška Svašek (ed.) *Postsocialism: Politics and emotions in Central and Eastern Europe*, New York Oxford, Bergham Books, 2008, 7.

father's favourite, and now it's mine," but in general tend to express a rather superficial engagement.

The first category, i.e. the links to musical videos featured on YouTube, seem to be the most dominant and affective means for eliciting response, if the least conducive to much debate. The links generally include popular (predominantly pop, rock) songs, but also ethno and revolutionary or army songs from the Yugoslav period and from after the collapse. In many cases they elicit rather nostalgic responses and reminiscences about the pop-cultural socialist Yugoslav past. For instance, the post from 4 June at 01:51 contains a link to Toma Zdravković's song "Da mi je stari ziv". The responses to the video are very brief, yet emotional:

[Dušan Koprivica](#) What a legend , respect..... 04 June at 01:59

[Nermina Jukic](#) when I see this flag I know I'm about to hear or see something good and even remember one old good time regards 04 June at 02:01 [2 people](#)

[Nena Rehberg](#) It made me cry ... 04 June at 02:42

[Dusan Stojkov](#) fanatic and unrepeatable legend of folk music... :) 04 June at 09:56³⁶⁰

The post with a link to the Yugoslav anthem elicits just as emotional responses but also alludes to the present day dissatisfaction with the post-Yugoslav situation:

[SFR Jugoslavija – SFR Yugoslavia](#)



[Himna Jugoslavije](#)

www.youtube.com

Yugoslav anthem with photos

04 June at 03:11

280 people like this.

[Tanja Urosevic](#) the one and only for all the times. 04 June at 13:45 [5 people](#)

[Koviljka Starjacki Ex Mumovic](#) Never forgotten. 04 June at 15:16 [6 people](#)

[Rudolf Diosi](#) we'll never have a better anthem, death to fascism freedom to the people, for yugoslavia, always ready. 04 June at 21:46 [2 people](#)

[Olga Rück](#) this is the most beautiful anthem in the world. For me even today ,this is my anthem.once we would stand up and listen to it. 05 June at 00:33 [3 people](#)

[Nada Tosic](#) The only anthem I ever respected, loved and new the lines, because I often used to sing it at manifestations and celebrations! 05 June at 17:08³⁶¹

³⁶⁰ *SFR Jugoslavija – SFR Yugoslavia.*

³⁶¹ *SFR Jugoslavija – SFR Yugoslavia, post from 4 June 2011 at 03:11.*

The comments here, as cursory as they may be, nevertheless contribute significantly to the crucial attributes of the profile as a digital memorial: co-creation of remembering and the enhanced immediacy of remembering. With regards to the former, the visitor who engage in commenting bring in their own, often personal considerations of the past and the present. Thus the visitor indicates her intimate relation to the posted content. The fact that the statements rarely bring into the process of remembrance an elaborate explanation of why somebody likes particular music or the description of feelings it arouses calls for another consideration. The case is that people, when contributing to Facebook posts, are not in any way required to justify their thinking or beliefs. By participating in a pub(lic) interaction they are also not required to make consistent or sensible statements ... which does not free them (users nor posts) from politicisation.



Figure 32 | SFR Jugoslavija, Facebook profile, <http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/SFR-Jugoslavija-SFR-Yugoslavia/36436743833>.

On the contrary, the Facebook-facilitated/enabled digital sociability—along with the limitations that discourage and prevent longer posts generally being accepted, by the technology (character limit) and the users—actively encourages brief, also inconsistent posts. As such they could easily be dismissed as irrelevant both as a research object and politically. True, the comments in music

videos posts are not necessarily overtly political and posses little distinct political agenda. Still, as externalisations of affect and memory they are far from insignificant in political terms. That the comments are public expressions further adds to ‘transcribing’ their very existence in political terms. If we look at the [Olga Rück](#)’s statement above, at the first glance it appears an ‘innocent’ one. Yet it undeniably bears an expression of emotions that can, once made public, easily ignite fierce reactions. Either in terms of positive or negative reactions, such a statement—uttered in a fundamentally intimate manner—is an expression of adoration of a country, its past and also the respect for the country (“once we would stand up when hearing the anthem”). In post-Yugoslav (nationalistic) environments where Yugoslav past is often discarded as foul full-on, such statements may attain a political dimension.

Considering the fact that the statement was made in 2011—in the time of grave political and economic crisis and instability, regional and global— it attains an even more ‘radical’ tone. With this I do not wish to imply that every expression of intimacy is necessarily politically motivated, rather that once emitted into a DME it becomes stripped of much ‘real’ person’s data/information. Instead it becomes a ‘populant’ of DME and as such also part of the post-Yugoslav mediality of the country’s past and variegated presents and possible futures.

Another story is the second group of posts, employing a strategy of linking to newspaper articles which deal with the present day situation in post-Yugoslav states, mostly focusing on Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia but also Slovenia, Montenegro and Macedonia, and the rest of the world. This practice attracts considerable attention and features even more clearly as a practice of representation of Yugoslav—predominantly political—past in decidedly contemporary environments and contexts. I.e. in linking to and commenting various newspaper sources the users/participants in the co-creation inadvertently try to present a certain problematic through a distinctly ‘Yugoslav’ perspective. Or rather, through what the Yugoslav perspective is believed to be 20 years after the country’s demise.

This endows the memorial with an overtly political dimension making it in turn a site of active use of memory for contextualising/making sense of the post-socialist realities. In dealing with these issues, the ‘enhanced immediacy of remembering’ enables the interweaving of the present with the ideals of the past. And this is quite far from ‘mere’ nostalgia usually attributed to any positive evaluations of the Yugoslav past. On the contrary, it is a most rudimentary quest for normalcy, a quest to acknowledge the past (and continuity, which is essential for any present) that the generations born in Yugoslavia are systematically denied by the democratic, anti-communist

regimes.³⁶² A recent post links to “Nacionalizam velika pretnja za EU” at e-novine.com, and status update says:

SFR Jugoslavija – SFR Yugoslavia NATIONALISM IS NOT JUST A BALKANS PROBLEMEVEN EUROPE BEGINS TO ADMIT IT.....BUT STILL THEY FORGET.....THAT FASCISM FOLLOWS CLOSELY.....AND ANGELA MERKEL HAS ALREADY DECLARED THE END OF MULTICULTURALISM IN GERMANY.....THE BRICKS OF THE TORN BERLIN WAL WERE USED TO RAISE THE WALS IN THE BALKANS.....

e-novine.com - Van Rompuj: Nacionalizam velika pretnja za EU

www.e-novine.com

Van Rompuj: Nacionalizam velika pretnja za EU³⁶³

The comments to this post stretch from “Death to fascism, freedom to the people” to more elaborate comments: “well people just don’t understand one thing while I watch satellite programme on ASTRA all in German –even today they depict hitler as their hero and what did you think they can so easily forget two defeats in the Balkans you’re wrong if you think they can this now is their revenge to our nations for the defeats...” eliciting replies such as: “This was proved in the balkans. Hitler as hero? Only the dumb germans can do that who don’t yet understand who dragged them into the shit and problems. Many today see Milosevic, Karadzic, Seselj, Arkan not to go on, as heroes of Yogo-war, not remotely considering how these people brought sanctions, NATO bombing and human misery beyond description...”³⁶⁴

The comments in this post tend to be very emotional (if not irrational), but still informative enough to flesh out one of the recurring topics in many online dealings with Yugoslav past: anti-fascism. This topic is particularly emphasised in relation to contemporary developments in political fields all over Europe, where re-nationalisation is taking most unpleasant political and violent turns. Opposition to this is in post-Yugoslav digital spaces often conceived as a continuation of the WWII anti-fascist struggle, the difference being that today the ‘Nazi/Fascists’ are on the one hand ‘national’ right-wing extremists subdued to the *Blut und Boden* rhetoric, and the neo-liberal capitalism. Both are seen as a threat to and in fact the cause of deterioration of ‘eternal values’ supposedly thriving in the period of socialism. And consequently the social action in this perimeter positions itself as a defender and promoter of multiculturalism, tolerance, social solidarity etc, and heavily rests on the imagery and sounds from the period of socialist Yugoslavia.³⁶⁵

³⁶² See for instance e-novine.com: “Rođenima u SFRJ zabranjeno sjećanje,” <http://www.e-novine.com/drustvo/41789-Roenima-zabranjeno-sjeanje.html>, accessed 18 June 2011; on the quest for normalcy see Chapter 5.

³⁶³ SFR Jugoslavija – SFR Yugoslavia, 10 November 2010.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

³⁶⁵ See Chapter 3 for a discussion on anti-fascism in digital memorials.

And, finally, a telling illustration for the third category: the post from 3 June at 22:55, for instance, features the following text: “Good evening to all Yugoslavs wherever you are and welcome to the night programme” and a link to a popular song “Igra rok en rol cela Jugoslavija” by the band Električni orgazam.³⁶⁶ ‘Liked’ by 358 people, the post is also enhanced by 30 comments. For the most part the comments express the most mundane, ordinary expressions of wishing a ‘good night’ to all the other users of the profile: “[Marica Grbić-Maca](#) Evening good, YUGOSLAVS! 03 June at 23:16.” In response another user says: “[Dragan Zekić](#) Good evening to all the lot of you! The more of us the sooner the borders will be deleted! 03 June at 23:22.”³⁶⁷ The exchange spurred by the song generally remains very superficial:

[Sasa Ilic](#) LEGENDARY STUFF

04 June at 03:45

[Ivi Špelko](#) Yuga was a real rock and rol country. ♥♥♥

04 June at 09:21

[Goran Stojakovic](#) First dringks, then all dance on the tables... :)

04 June at 11:31

[Jasmina Zivkovic](#) my son and his mate are singing karaoke at a fourth birthday party :))))))))))

04 June at 22:26

Referring to the song, the above posts reveal the very emotional involvement of the visitors into the song’s symbolic universe, and at that also to the past and the present (the last post). An interesting link here can be established, once again, to the commonality emerging when listening to a song broadcast on the radio,³⁶⁸ dispersed in space and time, the users all ‘tune in’ to listen to the song ... and share their most banal and intimate response with the ‘audience.’ This perhaps is the case of a very intimate on-the-fly community, with the positive recognition of the most blatant biological aspects of being human (go to sleep) and the technology-supported sociability. Very brief posts may bear little analytical value and express little narrative or elaborate remembering. They are predominantly affective expressions of emotions/memories which are intrinsically interwoven with the visitors’ respective presents and their pasts. In the process, a pop-cultural excerpt/trace/remnant of the past is digitally remediated into DME as a 4MO: first in YouTube and then in this particular historical profile.

These examples actively engage with the interpretations of the past and often give a very personal understanding of the Yugoslav past, publicly available and open to debate. These debates usually

³⁶⁶ *SFR Jugoslavija – SFR Yugoslavia*, post from 3 June 2011 at 22:55.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁸ See the discussion on radio and listening in Chapter 2.

boil down to pros and cons of Yugoslav existence in general and more often than not end up in the abyss between partisan movement and collaborationists. The debates frequently overtly refer to the present, post-socialist socio-political constellations in newly independent states and, particularly in Slovenian digital media space, vigorously appropriate the past for interpreting present political dead-ends.

Occasionally, the debates spill over to the discussion section. Regardless of the possibilities of media convergence and remediation, it appears that it is the realm of the textual ('unburdened' by the audiovisual) that still provides the means for mediating memories, and for expressing thoughts and arguments that fuel the field of re-appropriations of not only Yugoslav past but also of the issues related to the EUropean problematic. Apart from this, the discussions tend to be much more 'permanent' repositories of discussions/memory as compared to Wall posts, they are considerably smaller in number and much more accessibly stored. As such they promise to offer more elaborate/detailed accounts of remembering Yugoslavia. The case with discussions, however, is often that a topic rarely gets much response. In some cases though, the debates evolve to a remarkable level. The problem, however, with *SFR Jugoslavija* in particular is that the admins have the right and means to intervene into the discussions. And not only textually curbing the passions, but also by deleting the posts they find offensive or inappropriate. They play the role of moderators of the discussions and, importantly, also as curators/censors (of memory and remembering). Effectively, such actions contribute to impoverishing their own archive, hindering the potential of the profile as a digital memorial. At the end of the day, the profile is reduced to a community of like-minded users. In a way they act much like Facebook management in the case described above, or, for that matter, any totalitarian regime. As an employee of Facebook stated in an interview:

Silencing stupid people is not how you make stupid people go away. It's by pointing out how stupid they are and bringing those people into the light of day so everyone with a shred of common sense can see who they are and remember never to give them an ounce of respect in any aspect of life. [...] You do not combat ignorance by trying to cover up that ignorance exists. You confront it head on. Facebook will do the world no good by trying to become its thought police.³⁶⁹

The following debate between a user and a former admin in the "Deleting posts and comments in the group (Brisanje postova i komentara u grupi)" topic reveals quite heated emotions:

Mirko Kontić [...] You've deleted a post where a d e v e l o p m e n t occurred, thinking. The essence you deny is that Yugoslavia will never rise again as it once was if someone goes above the majority to block pluralism.

³⁶⁹ Quoted in Caroline McCarthy, "Hate speech on Facebook: How much is too much?" the social by Caroline McCarthy, http://news.cnet.com/8301-13577_3-10239926-36.html#ixzz1QTbj0cZ4, accessed 24 August 2011.

[...]

Therefore, deleting posts and comments which are not by your liking you admit that STAGE TRIALS [montirani procesi] are a done thing in this group and should be expected? Then you're really much like that Yugoslavia was that was eventually destroyed by nationalist fractions of the 7 SFRY nations. Is this the point of the group?

[Vedran Stefanac](#) the very fb is staged [montaged]... have you ever thought about the fact that someone does a statistics on everything you do? fb is as it is... you can use it or not. Today the thing is that something is more or less popular and not necessarily practical and functional.

[Vedran Stefanac](#) guys, mirko 'hided' me, so this is personal. Don't make a revolution of this. ok?

Another thing, he's noone's mate. said so himself. a man of his own...³⁷⁰

The fact that some posts are deleted, as brought up by the user and also apparent from the discussion page ("Brisanje postova" [Deleting Posts]) demonstrates the stakes the admins claim on the ways the profile—or the co-created memorial—should look like. The volatile topics of censorship and pluralism evidently play an important role: much like in any offline memorial site. The difference, however, is that the policy that governs participation and archiving is completely within the jurisdiction of the admins. Unlike the offline commemorative space where the curatorship/censorship is nevertheless the province of a 'representative' body/institution/government, a digital memorial such as Facebook profile proves to be 'responsible' to nobody, except the sanct-idea. And to the admins. And to the service's terms and conditions.

Effectively, this appears to be a pseudo-grass-roots initiative with a view to tailor the debate, and the entire profile, to very particular ideas. In a way this is an instrumentalisation of participative, co-creative practices of both the Facebook facilitated digital sociability and online remembering (further exacerbating the already tailor made, interface appearance). And what is worse it prevents much discussion and opposing views to develop and become part of the profile, its history and country's afterlife.

More a matter of online remembering is the topic "Jugoslavija DA ili NE" where users address the issue of whether a new Yugoslavia is a viable prospect or not. The rather provocative topic expectedly features fairly high number of comments.

³⁷⁰ *SFR Jugoslavija – SFR Yugoslavia*, discussion topic: "Brisanje postova i komentara grupi," <http://www.facebook.com/board.php?uid=36436743833&f=2&start=0#!/topic.php?uid=36436743833&topic=13104>, accessed 21 September 2011.

[Enver Dizdarevic](#) Is the idea to create the third YU realistic or not? Is the third YU necessary at all? What do you think?

[Darko Špoljar](#) it is realistic, as soon as nationalism is removed from the consciousness of people, but first of all from textbooks so as to prevent it from being fed to new generations.

[Emir Muranovic](#) Of course we would like the door to open by some miraculous magic wand. I personally would like Yuga back... these were the most beautiful days of my life...now I'm struggling to survive, like all nations...Maybe some can go somewhere, but the most of us have got nowhere to go. Only Yugoslavia could give us that...this door with the magic wand...

[Miloslav Kacjak](#) COMMUNISTS OF THE WORLD, GET SERIOUS

[Mile Ljepojevic](#) NO. Just to make it clear, we can love Yugoslavia as much we want, were it sound it would break as it did... I love Yugoslavia but love even more Serbia, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Bosnia or Slovenia...

[...]

[Meho Pilipovic](#) The creation of the third Yugoslavia is a need and a reality and a possibility but unfortunately not one that we once used to have. Europe and the World have changed and I think that such Yugoslavia would never even be recognised as a state. Among others, they, assisted by some extremist internal circles have also destroyed it. [...] we need a third Yugoslavia exclusively from economic reasons because the European Union, where we have to go willy-nilly, we simply "gobble us up" It is crucial for us in this moment to have normal and reasonable people who will lead us, or who are not burdened with nationalism and fascism [...]³⁷¹

Inasmuch as these comments express more or less elaborate and consistent opinions they are nevertheless mostly one-off interventions, statements that bring into the memorial a personal view much in the manner of on-the-fly engagement. Some strings of comments (this is mostly present in forum debates), however, constitute elaborate debates which develop over a certain period of time, but tend to 'die out' once the topic is exhausted. Unlike an offline conversation which usually leaves no trace but in the memory of interlocutors, an exchange in a forum or a discussion section such as this continues its 'life' even after the discussion has ended. The string below features as an illustrative case of such an exchange:

[Tonsi Cristian](#) honestly...a new yugoslavia will never ne again, because even if someone rises up and moves towards that goal, 95% of people will not follow, because no one wants to bring shame upon oneself, and you say now that slowly they understand what they've done and for what countries they've voted and warred, now I see a lot of people who are Yugonostalgic SFRY, but be real why the fuck did they ever vote for independent states?? when Tito was alive there was not bickering and so on, when he died and the homeland war came, well than it was all his fault.

it takes people who would do something but not war, bombs should be set in 7 goverments and then let the nation make their own republic until there's fighting for power we can only dream about it, we in Rijeka have great plans and some 390-430 people have gathered who are all for Yugoslavia and want to make something of it. but it takes will and effort to do anything, it rests upon the youth. in croatia now nazis and fascists are heroes, while partisans are criminals. I mean, sad thing, but what to say, in our

³⁷¹ *SFR Jugoslavija – SFR Yugoslavia*, discussion topic: "Jugoslavija DA ili NE," <http://www.facebook.com/pages/SFR-Jugoslavija-SFR-Yugoslavia/36436743833#!/topic.php?uid=36436743833&topic=14232>, accessed 13 June 2011.

territories idiotism and nationalism rule cause we have a lot of primitives in our alnds and until we're rid of them there'll be no peace. and i'll never have mercy for those people but will always hate them from the bottom of my heart, and if it will take fighting, for a new Yugoslavia I'm ready to take a gun in my ahnd instantly, cause we'll never give us bread.

about 5 months ago · [Report](#)

[Becic Esmir](#) what are you ustasa, balija or cetnik? real question, what are you, are you something of the three or not, this is not provoation!

and you also should know this site SFR Jugoslavija is for people who know about themselves and their sountry! So I'm asking what do you want here..? go be smart somewhere else;)

about 5 months ago · [Report](#)

[Tonsi Cristian](#) I'm neither because I don't live in that time nor was I born in the time of the second world war, so I can't be neither, :)))..

listen, I'm a croat, I live in rijeka, I know this is a SFRY site I can read, but if you don't get it it's your problem, I'm not provoking anyone, this is not my goal, and what are you???

D'you think a country is being born like this, on the internet there are nostalgics, like myself, because I'd give everything for the brotherhood and unity to return. Second, d'you reckon a yugoslavia can return just like that, talking about it??? and talking about the past, you're badly deceived if you think that ;))

Honestly, I don't consider myself a croat but a YUGOSLAV, and if you consider my previous post a provocation, then yuo totally failed to get what's the case and what I was writing about. I LOVE YUGOSLAVIA AND I LOVE COMRADE TITO and I don't care for anything else for the last ten years I've been attending every day of youth, and I enjoy the company of good people, and we're creating a federation which is called "association of youth of yugoslavia" which exists now for two years, and it's not on the internet for particular reasons. It's got 400 members from Rijeka alone , and how many there are from Zagreb Dubrovnik Ljubljana Split, and so on we're about to see over the next couple of years what'll happen, but tell me, Becic, what are you???

about 5 months ago · [Report](#)

[Becic Esmir](#) I come from rep yugoslavia BiH! My first countr is Yugoslavia!

Without Tito and Yugoslavia the two of us wouldn't exist now and many other things wouldn't either, just think a bit;)

Yugoslavia for ever!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GsmO0mGJT0E>

have a look at this video, maybe it will open your eyes.

Yugoslavia is a solution of all of us, particularly to our parents and their relatives.

Much can be said but the fact is that our Repb. are nothing without Yugoslavia;) this is the truth Remember this.

YUGOSLAVIA ALL OVER THE WORKLD! J.B. TITO!!!!

about 5 months ago

[Tonsi Cristian](#) I watched it and I was also there that day.. on the 30 death anniversary, and a lot of people cried but then from the other side the so called ustasa are laughing and provoking they're glorifying the ustasa ideology and genocide, but I think many of us are too kind, and let them talk what they want. But still, Tito was an excellent man, and my granddad often told me how his family died for yugosalvia, and this is alright, but then again it's difficult for Croatia to free itself from ustasa after the JNA genocide in Vukovar. Listen I never med my dad for this reason precisely as he died in the war, 92',

but how can you explain to the people that this was not JNA but serbian army carrying this name, and how to explain to the people that Milosevic Tudman and Izetbegovic, tricked and robbed this nation??"³⁷²

At first this exchange appears very superficial, particularly in the first several posts. Tonsi Cristian approaches the matter in a very straightforward manner stating there is no future for a new Yugoslavia. In addition he uses a very affective language in describing the situation in Croatia today. Again, the persistent topics of historical revisionism, of denigration of the partisan movement and glorification of collaboration with Nazism come to the fore. Interestingly, and apparently a result of the affective response of the commentator, the post towards the end shifts away from the initial doubtful stance expressing a more proactive hue: Tonsi Cristian declares the dedication to defend the new Yugoslavia, should it ever come about. The reference to Europe is telling: Yugoslavia in this (and many others) (memorial) statement is in fact seen as a historical and symbolical resource which caters to the contemporary need for normalcy. Moreover, the prospect of the future (in European Union) is in this case portrayed (or rather alluded to) very bleak, in line with the predominant sentiment present across the post-Yugoslavia cyberplaces of memory that the past could give an answer to the present, provided the present is not corrupted by Europe or neo-liberalism for that matter.

[Becic Esmir](#)'s response proves affective in another way: if Tonsi was being ironic in concealing his affection for the country (as is also revealed in his other posts), Esmir's response reveals he has taken offense. Consequently he takes recourse to a discrediting practice attributing his interlocutor the preference for either Nazi collaborationists (ustaše and četnici) or balije (derogatory term used to denote Bosnian Muslims). Furthermore, exclusivism, already discussed above in this string, comes to the fore again, as Esmir says: "and you also have to understand that SFR Jugoslavija is for people who know themselves and their country! So I'm asking, what do you want here..? go and be smart somewhere else;)." In the exchange that follows, Tonsi clearly elaborates his position and also, tellingly, reveals his background: he is a post-Yugoslav Croatian child who lost his father at the very beginning of the war.

This adds further dimensions to the Yugoslav digital memorials and memory online, and offline as well. Although the majority of users have at least some experience from the former Yugoslavia—which are often renarrated through posting videos and comments—Tonsi is a member of a generation whose memory of Yugoslavia is, experientially, inexistent but as the memory decidedly related to the war. It is from this perspective that his position and appreciation of the country, its past and future, becomes particularly interesting: despite the strictly 'mediated

³⁷² Ibid.

experience' of the past in question he manages to recognise certain value in it and take it as a point of departure in striving for a different future than that of "debilism and nationalism."

In the discussion topic "Journalist Request," related to the workings of the profile management, reveals further issues with profile (memorial) exclusivist management policies. In 2010, a French journalist inquired:

[Marc Etcheverry](#) French journalist writing an article about Yugoslavian people in 2010, I'm looking for testimonies about how you live your yugoslavian aspirations, your state of mind about what hapenned in the 1990's and about the european integration of the Balkan countries.

Above all, I'm looking for projects built through the Balkans, based on the Yugoslavian principles

You can join me by sending a message ... Thanks about 12 months ago

[Senada Dada Causevic](#) Hello Marc, do you mind if I ask you why do you have such interest in Yugoslavia or Yugoslavien people? What kind a project are you working on? Thanks! about 12 months ago ·

[SFR Jugoslavija – SFR Yugoslavia](#) Experience tells us that we must be pažljivi [cautious].A addition, journalists are not looking for witnesses to the FB page than on the spot discover what interests them .. So welcome as a journalist goes through all of the former Yugoslavia and you'll get what you need. about 12 months ago ·

[Senada Dada Causevic](#) Marc, please do not feel offended, but you need to understand that we have to be very careful, we dont know who you are, you can be anyone. We dont trust anyone unless they show us they're on our side, on the side of justice for all Yugoslavien people. about 12 months ago ·

[SFR Jugoslavija – SFR Yugoslavia](#) Very interesting that i found this discussion today, even thoug i wasnt here for some days, but as i understand Mr Etcheverry tries to find about what we feel, does anyone wanna travel with him trough Balkans and SFRJ, Ex SFRY of course in our hearts and minds still SFRY FOREVER,i mean il be glad to help u explain what i think about SFRY, that time , and for the traveling and meeting, who pays for it? How much money we talking here?

Anyway, all members here are members of country that was honorable, very known in the world, strong in any way and form, we all miss our country of SFRYugoslavia, unfortonately it does not exist any more on the atlas or papers, but it does exist in our hearts and we are proud to call our selfs SFR Yugoslavians, actualy Titos Yugoslavians.and the good thing is no one can take that away from us or me

Il be glad to help u with some questions,as a witness i do not know what is that have to do with being SFRYugoslavian, we are proud Titos Yugoslavians in heart in mind, in beeing, that can you put in the paper Mr Etcheverry.

Regards

Long Live Brotherhood and Unity/Zivijelo Bratstvo i Jedinstvo!! Deni/B

PS sorry if i misspelled [original in English].³⁷³

For the most part the discussion unfolds between the reporter, one of the profile's admins and another user. What stands out as most interesting/intriguing aspect is the somewhat paradoxical

³⁷³ *SFR Jugoslavija – SFR Yugoslavia*, discussion topic: "Journalist Request," <http://www.facebook.com/topic.php?uid=36436743833&topic=14232#!/topic.php?uid=36436743833&topic=14198>, accessed 21 August 2011.

intertwining of, on the one hand, the desire to share Yugoslav story and attract other people into its past, and on the other utter suspiciousness and fear of conspiracy. Not infrequently fanatic devotion to the idea, the historical, social and political ‘truth’ on part of the admins and users/followers (uncensored), unhindered love and affection for all things Yugoslav seem to find apt tool and space on Facebook. However, much in the manner of technological scepticism, the profile also provides ample evidence of an unease related to the openness and accessibility of the profile to ‘potential enemies.’ At times it seems much like a customs control interrogation, *SFR Jugoslavija – SFR Yugoslavia* states “marc be specific what you want to know and for whom are you doing, what is the purpose of your research and why Yugoslavia-batric.” Initially this comes seems somewhat contradictory, particularly because of the otherwise extremely inclusive/inviting rhetoric used in the profile.

Nevertheless, when the Yugoslav specific socio-culturo-political history is considered, this may prove to be a residual of the mythologised self-perception of the country. In terms of national and global politics the country was neither East nor West, rather non-aligned (officially since 1961); culturally, it was adopting from western popular culture yet managing to come up with a distinctly Yugoslav music and cinema that profoundly contributed to mythologisation of state ideology and music and cinema as well;³⁷⁴ socially, closely intertwined with previous aspect, the country, in the process of modernisation and urbanisation, and its youth ever since the 1960s relied heavily on western references but translated them, again, into distinctly Yugoslav terms (e-g- new social movements). The appreciation of this unique global position of the country seems to be retained in the above discussion, but is, somewhat paradoxically, considerably burdened by the pervasive regime search for the enemy.

Now, to get back to the issue of censorship, not all curator interventions are necessarily censorship. The newly added additional paragraph in the *SFR Jugoslavija*’s “Rules and Regulations” threatens to ban any user promoting war criminals from the Yugoslav wars or any leader of WWII collaborators:

³⁷⁴ Pavle Levi, *Disintegration in Frames: Aesthetics and Ideology in the Yugoslav and Post-Yugoslav Cinema*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2007; Daniel J. Goulding, *Liberated Cinema: The Yugoslav Experience 1945—2001*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2002; Martin Pogačar, “Yu-Rock in the 1980s: Between Urban and Rural,” Breda Luthar and Maruša Pušnik (eds.), *Remembering Utopia, The Culture of Everyday Life in Socialist Yugoslavia*, Washington, New Academia Publishing, 2010.



Wall Photos

*****NOTICE*****

Facebook group SFR Jugoslavija – SFR Yugoslavia added the following paragraph 7 into rules and regulations :

ALL MEMBERS WHO TAKE AS THEIR PROFILE PICUTRE A PHOTO OF WAR CRIMINALS AND ANY POLITICIAN WHO TOOK PART IN THE BLOODY DISSOLUTION OF Yugoslavia ..IN 1991...OR DEFENDED THE POLITICS OF CRIME AGAINST ANY OF OUR NATIONS AND NATIONALITIES AND YUGOSLAVS.....1991-2000. OR WAS LEADER OF ANY TRAITORS UNIT IN SECOND WORLD WAR ..1941-1945.....WILL BE BANNED WITHOUT NOTICEBECUASE SUCH TYPES ARE NOT WELL COME IN OUR GROUPTHIS IS A Yugoslav GROUP AND SUCH THINGS WILL NOT BE TOLERATED HERE

THANK YOUR FOR YOUR SUPPORT AND UNDERStANDING

DEATH TO FASCISM-FREEDOM TO THE PEOPLE

by: [SFR Jugoslavija – SFR Yugoslavia](#)³⁷⁵

The posts that follow, however, quite often give the profile policy a much more exaggerated policing hue. Thus, through affective responses to the policy is further radicalised, beyond the immediate intention of the admins' intervention:

[De Dragana](#) we're thestrongest ...that many positive links on one place.....this has the potential to grow..... 15 hours ago

[Dejan Traikovsky](#) Who doesn't like it here FEEL FREE TO GO !!! comrades no one is forcing them to stay ... wide is the SURAT KNJIGA (facebook) :-)))))) !!!³⁷⁶

The very specific classification of the off-limits content nevertheless seems too vague and in need of additional clarification. Thus the post is not only an inhospitable memorial space for supporters/fans of war criminals and collaborators (and justifiably so), rather, the ban is expanded to exclude anyone who does not like the profile or its content, i.e. the object of commemoration, as presented/curated/censored. Which is fair enough, but still poses a question about the role of a memorial that only appeals to a relatively limited loyal or superficially engaged part of users and actively excludes the more critical ones. Can such a memorial then serve as a platform for discussing the prospects of a renewed Yugoslavia, as the profile claims, or it thus essentially, collaboratively co-creates its inherent 'self-destruct protocol'? Unless the aim is strictly to commemorate, or rather co-create pop-cultural historical cyberspace of policed memory, and abandon any wider political action... as one user observes:

³⁷⁵ [SFR Jugoslavija – SFR Yugoslavia](#), accessed 10 June 2011.

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

Zlatko Crnogorac unfortunately I see this is only about Face-Book site , and that you do not want to go any farther , and I see that many do not even have the basic manners . If YU were to be born again at least 8,000,000 people would have to be deported . SFRY has to be sympathetic to those also who might be against it , one has to know how to forgive like a mother forgives her child.³⁷⁷

This post expresses the main concern in terms of profile's (and Facebook historical/memorial profiles in general) conceptual reach: is such a profile an adequate solution to diffuse and widely acceptable commemorative and political views? If it remains politically correct it may never attain a critical exchange in externalising memory and articulating the potential prospects of post-Yugoslavs. If it would be entirely open to any views it would lose itself in endless reductionist/revisionist radicalisations. Nevertheless the presence of not insignificant 'force' of followers of the profile and the affective engagement testifies to continuous relevance of the quest for historical normalcy in post-Yugoslav countries and among post-Yugoslavs alike.

To go into this issues a bit further, I discuss below two other profiles which explicitly refer to Yugoslavia and Josip Broz Tito, respectively. Unlike the *SFR Jugoslavija* profile, these have less followers and friends, but still represent interesting research cases due to the ways they utilise Yugoslav past and digital communications technologies.

Josip Broz Tito

In September 2011, *Josip Broz Tito* profile had 7,487 'Likes' and sporadic activity since September 2008,³⁷⁸ which makes it one of the oldest profiles Yugoslavia related I came across during this research. The profile is listed as 'Politician,' meaning that it was not set up as a personal profile but overtly assumed the 'appearance' of a politician. This is usually the case with politicians, although some may opt for personal profiles and then use them to promote their political views within more personal network. Politician profiles also cannot be 'befriended' but only 'liked.' Considering the fact that Josip Broz was a politician this comes as no surprise, what is surprising is that he has been dead for 30 odd years.

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

³⁷⁸ *Josip Broz Tito*, <http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Josip-Broz-Tito/39180551998>, accessed 3 August 2011; it was chosen purely by the name and the first matching profile was looked at.

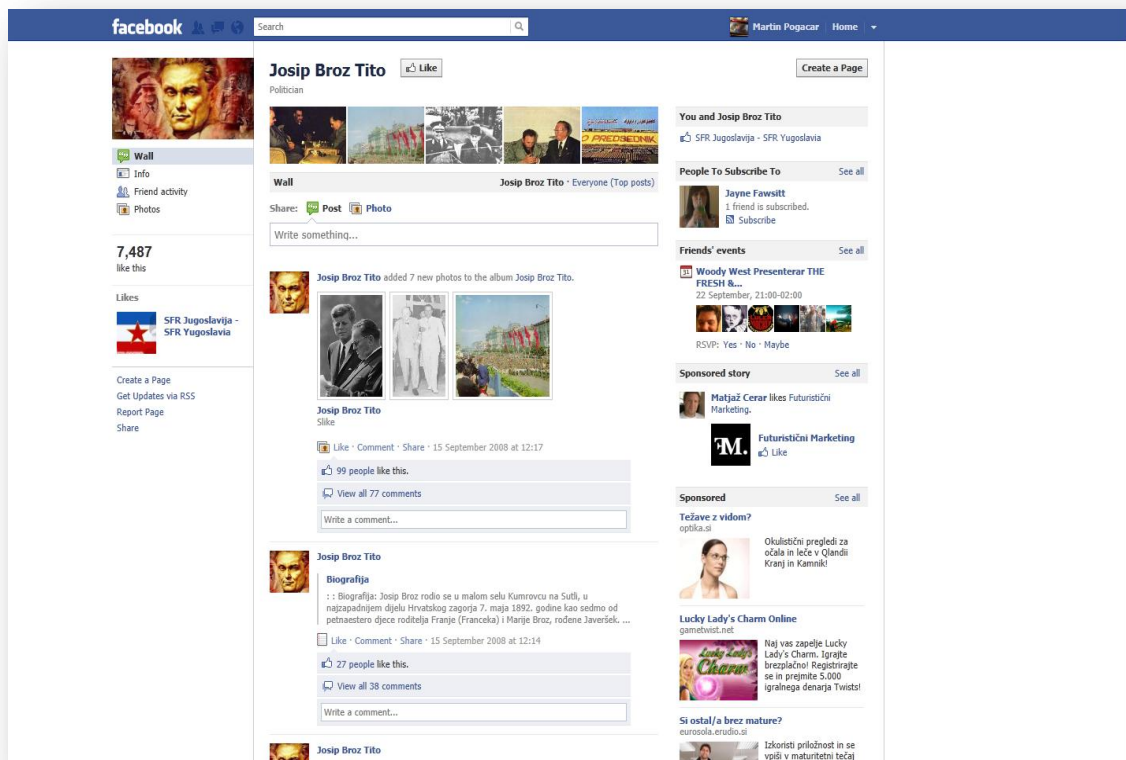


Figure 33 | Josip Broz Tito, Facebook profile, <http://www.facebook.com/reqs.php#!/pages/Josip-Broz-Tito/39180551998>.

This is more interesting still in view of post-Yugoslav continually renewed and perpetuated interest in one of the greatest political and pop-cultural icons marking the period of Yugoslavia. The profile offers some intriguing insight into the ways the past is renarrated and applied to contemporary socio-political situation, i.e. how the past is digitally reinterpreted in a Facebook profile. As a space of digital sociability which is orchestrated around a particular historical personality this is predominantly a space where different interpretations of the present intersect on the historical background. As is further discussed bellow it says more about the present as it does about the ‘f/actual’ past (as is usually the case with (Yugo)nostalgia).³⁷⁹

In the “Info” section Josip Broz ‘states’ he comes from Kumrovec and is “Currently running for”:

County: Jugoslavija was composed by Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, and Macedonia

District: Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia

³⁷⁹ See Mitja Velikonja, *Titostalgia*; see also Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*.

Party: Komunistička Partija Jugoslavije - Savez komunističke Jugoslavije³⁸⁰

If we take a stroll down the wall the very first post from 14 September 2008 contains 12 photos depicting Josip Broz at various occasions and with different people. The post elicited 71 comments over the period of two years. Needless to say, the comments/thoughts made public by users are extremely emotional:

[Elmedin Cuk](#) COME BACK 14 November 2009 at 15:57

[Snjezana Isakovic](#) OOOOOOOOo WHAT BEAUTY FOR SOUL AND EYES 10 March 2009 at 21:52

[Admir-Amira Dedic](#) druze tito ljubice bjela tebe jebe jugoslavija cjela 24 April 2010 at 05:32

[Danica Rankovic](#) Those were happy times...Among others my youth is in this period... 26 June 2010 at 20:27³⁸¹

Looking at these comments one can see two radically different approaches towards the profile/the past/the person commemorated/profiled: utter appreciation and utter contempt. Such affective responses are to be expected with a historically controversial personality burdened with nearly half a century long rule and an active role in both WWII and post-war periods. Particularly with regards to the social, cultural and political parameters of Yugoslavia's demise on the one hand, and to the post-socialist self-inflicted eradication/rewriting of the socialist past.

Again, as in the *SFR Jugoslavija* profile this is the case of on-the-fly practice of remembering: it is not an elaborate historically accurate record, rather it is an externalisation of memory both personal and collective. What is at stake here is a participation (take-in part) in a collective practice of remembering, i.e. each 'lone statement' contributes to textual co-creation of a string of thoughts/feelings. Such statements often stand on their own, making no reference to previous posts. Unlike the censorship/curatorship policing enforced in the *SFR Jugoslavija* profile, here there be room for all sorts of opposing, contesting and even offensive comments. On the one hand, this makes the profile as a digital memorial site a 'democratic' forum of expression of ideas. Yet on the other hand such un-policed (or at least very permissive admin policy) gives room to futile kerfuffle in the manner of "He is my hero" and "No, he was a war criminal." This essentially leads to a dead-end in any debate and may do little for facilitating a commonly shared vision of the past.

The dead-end in a debate or commemoration practice in this profile not only takes the form of hate speech and offensive language that serves no reason but externalising one's particular ideologically burdened views. The other 'extreme' is often found in the already mentioned

³⁸⁰ *Josip Broz Tito*, "Info," <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Josip-Broz-Tito/39180551998?sk=info#!/pages/Josip-Broz-Tito/39180551998?sk=info>, accessed 3 August 2011.

³⁸¹ *Josip Broz Tito*, accessed 3 August 2011.

expressions of utter adoration (of the country and/or its leader) and absence of any critical confrontation with the past in question. Moreover, what is particularly disturbing in such comments—because of the futility of such action—is that frequently they ‘exist’ alongside other comments. Indicatively, they totally ignore what is being said.

[Jasco D Ripper](#) It feels so good to know we're all the same and nobody hates anybody, long live Yugoslavia, Yugoslav nations who support Tito!!!!

27 June 2011 at 01:14

This makes sense when the enabling logic of SNSs is considered: as much as people may participate in digital sociability, they also may freely choose how to participate, i.e. how to use the technologically enabled space of sociability. In the above case and many others the conspicuous bit is the indifference: to what somebody says. On the one hand this proves the cursory nature of the Facebook interaction and sociability where things may be said in affect, as an expression of one's fleeting engagement, taken as offence or just as easily ignored.

[Nena Maric](#) ...will someone remember today...Tito...Maybe...we who lived then and lived normally and carefree...and maybe those will remember as well who today live carefree, but not also normally, cause there's no feeling, no friendship, there's only lies and false promises in the air...still I see at least some have remained...

25 May 2009 at 11:45

[Bischof Alma](#) God is one – be it called Allah, Jesus or similar. I call him TITO.

04 December 2009 at 11:14

This nevertheless contributes to the co-creation of the memorial, much like offensive conduct does. In the following I discuss some cases of overt hatred and nationalistic provocations in the profile, which go entirely unsanctioned by neither the admins nor the service. The question, however, is what to do with such escapades? The exchange below involves two people who appear regularly in the profile, with clear positions:

[Šime Zelić](#) for the Commander and Christ against communists!!!!!!!!READY FOR HOME LOYAL TO GOD!!!!!!!!

10 March 2010 at 11:47

[Nena Maric](#) ah, you're something, idiot...have you seen your commander, met him, dimwit...

19 March 2010 at 01:20

[Šime Zelić](#) no shit you red idiot.....and where's your tito.....

24 March 2010 at 12:55

[Nena Maric](#) If you weren't dimwit you'd never compare an ustasa to Christ, but my Tito rests peacefully and you know where, but to your regret people have been going to visit him for 30 years...and where do you go?! Only LEGENDS live for ever!

25 March 2010 at 02:15

The user [Šime Zelić](#) stands firmly on the belief that the post-WWII Yugoslav history was a hoax to deprive the Croats of their rightly deserved state and the glory of the ustaša soldiers. This appears regularly in post-Yugoslav states (as has already been discussed in Chapter 3), i.e. that the historical perspective in the present is reduced to the WWII and the post-war era, and in the next step to the ideological confrontation between proponents of liberation or collaboration. The above exchange features some of the typical disqualifiers, e.g. “you red idiot,” and a number of ‘glorification’ rhetorical elements: “for the Commander and Christ against communists!!!!!!READY FOR HOME LOYAL TO GOD!!!!!!!,” “tito is no legend, tito is turd...here’s legends: ANTE PAVELIĆ,JURE FRANCETIĆ,BOBAN.....” In the exchange the tone of the Croatian nationalist appears much harsher, judging by the content and the use of upper case and punctuation.

However, this is not a rule, invocation of war and post-war crimes further attest to the affective, if not irrational, expressions of personal stances—hateful and utterly disrespectful of war victims and users engaged:

[Fadil Jahic Spanac](#) Ismet, do you even know that you were sold in 1941 by pavelic to musolini what would you have were it not for communism do you know when you’d set the border with italy never yu ustaša cunt what have you got to talk about jasenovac, you should be ashamed, just try to remember

Bleiburg 15 svibnja 1945 god 200 tisuca

28 September 2010 at 06:28

[Šime Zelić](#) well, JASENOVAC is our pride you red stench....of course we killed you..we should’ve killed you all and we’d have today a normal state.....

30 September 2010 at 21:47

[Šime Zelić](#) Ahhhaa..sell...haha....he was forced to give the land because of this mussolini... we would have liberated it if it weren’t for you red turds

30 September 2010 at 21:53

[Fadil Jahic Spanac](#) well, bleiburg is Our pride you Stinking Ustasa I Know How You sold today Croatia to Foreigners and Now They Telly you What to Do you cunt.

03 October 2010 at 08:39

[Šime Zelić](#) and our pride is JASENOVAC!!! you reds are a special breed...should all be exterminated

04 October 2010 at 14:32

[Fadil Jahic Spanac](#) Motherfucker ustaša traitor I’m not a Serb nor muslim I’m a Croat but I hate ustaša degenerates

30 October 2010 at 09:51

[Šime Zelić](#) a croat called fadil...well, fadil a nice muslim name you’ve got here...you aren’t a serb nor a muslim, you put it well,but d’you know what you are,you’re juda’s son,and here’s one nice song for you you red turd
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJ_sPOx4CSM

24 January at 21:40

[Aleksandar Sasa Ivanovic](#) apart from swear words and that your're a proud ustaša you Comrade know nothing about life.....but it's probably not your fault.....you've heard it from someone!!!!.....enjoy now in this state with all the possibilities it offers you!!!

04 May at 14:13

In the exchange above the users, again all regulars, bitterly invoke the traumatic past of the WWII and manage to discard 'civilised' interaction, despite the fact that users are here represented with their names (as opposed to the earlier on 'mask of anonymity' as the main facilitator unrestrained digital sociability). What conspicuously comes to the fore is the use of first person in recounting the massacres: "of course we killed you..we should've killed you all and we'd have today a normal state....." This coming from someone who was apparently not born before the late 1980s is surprising inasmuch as it reveals an affective identification with a criminal regime. What is more, from this position the youth apparently judges not only the past, but also the present: as if living at the brink and during WWII he manages to bring in the 'debate' not only anti-communism but also anti-Semitism.

Now, what to make of digital sociability breeding hate speech in terms of memory or even commemoration? The bitter exchange above makes reference to two historically and mythically strongest markers of post-Yugoslav history of the latter half of the 20th century, the Jasenovac concentration camp where the Ustaša regime under the auspices of the Independent State of Croatia carried out extermination predominantly of Serbs, but other nationals as well. Bleiburg in Austria, on the other hand, is associated with the extermination of NDH forces after the end of the war, when the troops were returned to Yugoslav authorities by the British. Thus, in a profile pop-culturally remembering Josip Broz, a historical topic emerges significantly reduced and simplified. Moreover, apart from any wider historical contextualisation and reasoning the two episodes become the tool for discrediting and insulting. In the exchange the historical facts are deemed irrelevant, just as any respect for the dead. Even more, the interlocutors go as far as to wish upon each other a very same sort of death. Thus, the traumatic past is prozaically abused.

In the conspicuous absence of any admin intervention, a couple of regular users express their discontent with the absence of any admin sanctioning of such content.

[Nena Maric](#) There are sites that don't allow to offend what the site is serving,this is disgrace,whom that many people, admins let various fascists to post nonsense... I don't understand at all.

19 March 2010 at 02:03

[Ana Jesen Lukic](#) I don't undersand why nationalists want to be members of this group? now you have "your own" states share your opinions there, not here... it was an honour to live in the time of comrade Tito. we weren't aware how good it'd been before this low-

lives came to power. we promulgate brotherhood and unity not hate!!! DEATH TO FASCISM! FREEDOM TO THE PEOPLE!

13 March at 05:46

[Senka Mejremic-Krijesorac](#) We who wanted “our own states” are not nationalists, them who wanted “their own state” are.

25 March at 23:20

Ana Jesen Lukic aptly asks: “I don’t understand why nationalists want to be members of this group at all?” Why indeed would one want to partake in a profile/fan group that one finds so irritating? Why not leave it to the worshipers? The question is a difficult one to answer and would require extensive psychological research into the user’s offline and online conduct. Inasmuch as this may be seen as an outlet for externalising frustration with intimate and social perturbations or a mere provocation, it nevertheless exposes the pervasiveness of the past in contemporary post-Yugoslav realities. In fact it exposes the obsession with the past and clashes precisely over the interpretations of the roles of personalities and events that in post-Yugoslav independent states still resonate in daily politics and popular culture.

On the other hand, the comment below might suggest there is nevertheless a desire to know more about the past that has so radically been made problematic over the last 20 years:

[Tarik Smajlagic](#) I would be thankful if someone would be so kind and explain certain things I was born after the collapse of SFRY

and I would like to know what it was like in yugoslavia

what kind of living, standard and quality of life there was

thank you beforehand!

03 June 2010 at 22:54

Due to the dissembled historicity, this might furthermore suggest that in post-Yugoslavia there is notoriously little comprehensive information/knowledge about that past. Knowledge that would go beyond first-person accounts by parents to their children, beyond pop-culturalised renditions of the past either in film or music, and beyond the daily political abuses of the past. In short, what is notoriously lacking in cultural landscapes is a normalcy of the past which these profiles aim to some extent to rectify...

[Nikola Stojanov](#) Comrade Tarik on the first day of the month you take your salary, put it in the red passport and you go wherever you want and when you get back on the first day of the next month new salary is waiting for you on your desk. On every border post when the customs man sees your passport he bows incants TITO TITO and wishes you a safe journey

06 June 2010 at 01:06

In this rather ironic statement several socio-cultural issues come to the fore: secure jobs and ease of travel with the increasingly famed ‘red passport.’³⁸² This statement, ‘unhistorical’ in its form and content nevertheless contains affective response to both the past and the present: by evoking two aspects of life in Yugoslavia that from today’s perspective feature as tenets of most basic, yet absent, human dignity. In this view the past once again becomes a repository of (all kinds of) cultural and historical value worth knowing about; and on the other hand, the present, a bleak reflection of the life as once was imagined and as far away from the socialist post-war dream of a better future and just as distant from the liberty, opportunity, democracy famed by the ‘transitionalists.’ As one cannot learn much factually from such statements, the resentment and affect are telling.

Romance Departed

If we take the issue of resentment a bit further and connect it with the discussion of the digital afterlife, or in fact the ‘digital post mortem,’ an even from the 2 July 2011 provides an intriguing insight. On that day, a Yugoslav and Serbian actress and a singer (interpret of Russian romances), Olivera Marković had passed away. I first found about this when logging into my Facebook account that Saturday evening, in a routine practice of what could also be termed ‘hovering attention.’ As I browsed through the posts on my Wall, one of the many posted by *SFR Jugoslavija* brought the news:

[SFR Jugoslavija – SFR Yugoslavia](#)

ETERNAL GLORY AND MANY THANKS TO THE GREAT DIVA OF YUGOSLAV THEATRE....

OLIVERA MARKOVIĆ - DOVIDENJA DRUŽE DOVIDENJA(1973)

www.youtube.com

IN MEMORIAM..... After a long and difficult illness the diva of Serbian and Yugoslav theatre passed away in Belgrade, 2 July at the age of 87, the National Theatre, Belgrade informed.³⁸³

Before I realised I was involved in an act of co-creative commemoration, on-the-fly. As I was browsing through the post and the comments, I actually witnessed a digital memorial in the making. Within hours of the posted news over 70 people expressed their condolences in short

³⁸² See Stef Jansen, “After the red passport: towards an anthropology of the everyday geopolitics of entrapment in the EU’s ‘immediate outside,’” *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (N.S.) 15, 2009, 815-832.

³⁸³ *SFR Jugoslavija – SFR Yugoslavia*, post from 2 July 2011, 14:23, accessed 21 September 2011.

comments and 245 people ‘liked’ the news.³⁸⁴ The post contained a short notice of Mrs Marković passing away and a link to an audiovideo of her song, “Doviđenja, druže, doviđenja” [Goodbye, Comrade, Goodbye] on YouTube.³⁸⁵ In response to the post users commented in brief messages mostly exclaiming eternal glory to Olivera Marković. The responses, expressions of grief and regret utilise similar linguistic forms (“eternal glory,” “may the earth be easy” etc.) and use standard textual markers of feeling-expression (“[Natasa Lambulic](#) :(((“).

Interestingly, in terms of formulating the expressions, the users use three different textual externalisations: first person address (“[Sinisa Lazetic](#) olivera we love you”), general (“[Apostolski Mite](#) may the earth be easy and may she rest in peace, our best cinema actress [original in Macedonian]), personal/individual descriptive externalisations of grief (“SFR Jugoslavija – SFR Yugoslavia SHE WAS A COMPLETE ARTIST AND ACTOR AND SINGER OF ROMANCES AND SCHLAGER [CROONS] AND A COMEDIANNE AND TRAGICIAN ALL IN ONE IT HURTS TO SEE ANY GREAT ACTOR GO BECAUSE THEY ARE THE ONES WHO MARKED AN EPOCH.....TOO BAD THEY DON’T LEAVE BEHIND THEM WORTHY SUCCESSORS.....OR AT LEAST VERY FEW TODAY”).³⁸⁶ The first case is particularly indicative of the memory shift in DME. The unofficiality, or democratisation, of remembering that not only breeds change in *what* or *whom* to remember, but also in *how* to remember, i.e. externalise memory. In the first case the user uses first person plural, implying a wider grieving community, and addresses the deceased in a very informal, friendly manner. The other two cases are interesting inasmuch as they also ‘disrespect’ punctuation and capitalisation (the second case). While the *SFR Jugoslavija*’s one expresses affect through the use of capital letters and also in content: portraying the actress as a person who marked an epoch. What makes the posts particularly interesting is their unrelatedness to each other: in the end the memorial becomes a multi-vocal space of intimate and singular expressions/externalisations of grief where the assembly of voices effectively co-creates a memorial/commemorative space of feeling/emotion.

The emotions are perhaps best subsumed in the following statement: “[Snjezan Stojkovic Stojka](#) Legend after legend, they slowly depart...:(”³⁸⁷ as it eloquently relates a desolation of post-

³⁸⁴ The issue of users being forced to like bad news is apparently part of the Facebook ‘no-offence-policy,’ since the absence of ‘dislike’ button prevents from expressing disagreement or negative stance. Paradoxically this may lead to cases, such as this one, where the user just has to ‘like’ the bad news if she wants to participate in the on-the-fly collectivity.

³⁸⁵ See cumcaki, “OLIVERA MARKOVIĆ - DOVIĐENJA DRUŽE DOVIĐENJA(1973),” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xNmOvUcTPyo>, accessed 2 July 2011.

³⁸⁶ *SFR Jugoslavija – SFR Yugoslavia*, post from 2 July 2011, accessed 21 September 2011.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

Yugoslav realities: slowly but steadily the people who marked the period and the commonly shared popular culture are passing away, and with them also a lived link to that past.

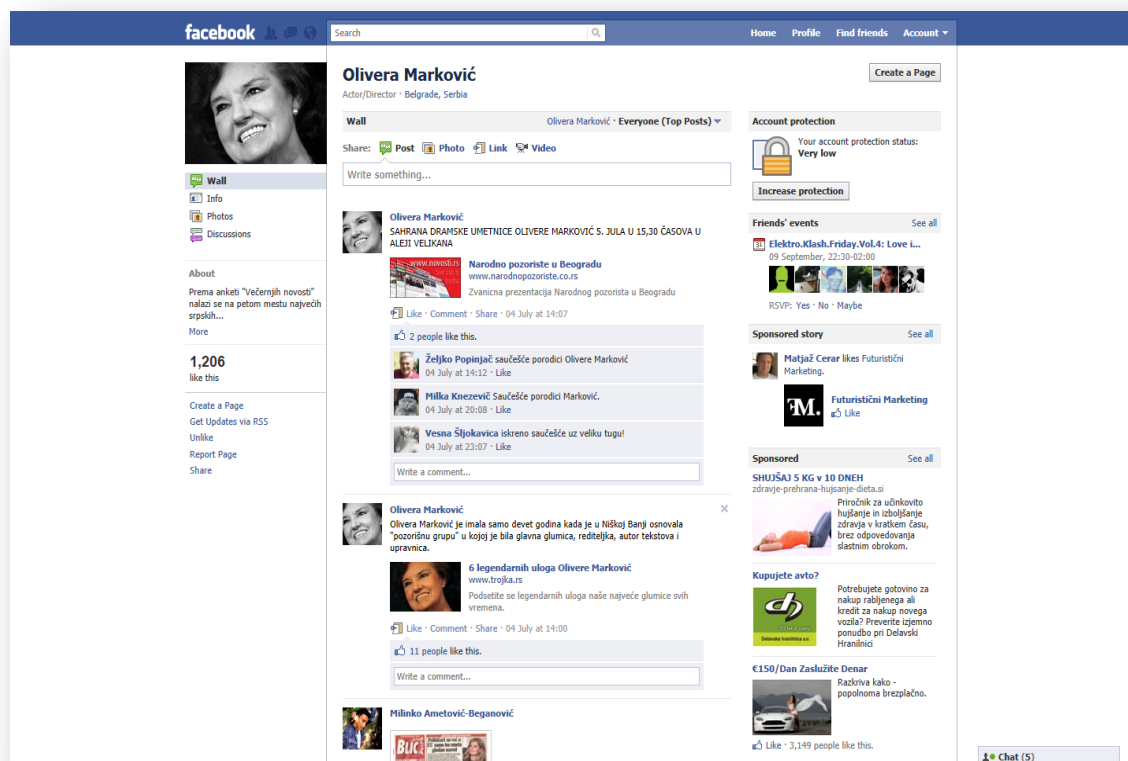


Figure 34 | Olivera Marković's official Facebook profile page, <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Olivera-Markovi%C4%87/367876368153>.

What makes this case particularly interesting is that the memorial activity does not end here. After some browsing, I came across *Olivera Marković's* personal Facebook profile.³⁸⁸ Soon enough the profile turned out not to be *her* personal, but rather a fan page in her name, judging from the statement in the about section: "According to a 'Večernje novosti' poll she comes fifth among the greatest Serbian actresses of the 20th century"; such a statement is extremely unlikely to be found in a private profile. 'She' joined Facebook probably in February 2010; exact date is not available, but the first post is dated 25 February 2010 and contains a transcript of a dialogue from the TV series *Tesna koža* [Tight skin]. The 'Info' section features a short biography and a list of her appearances in films, TV series, theatre and a list of awards she received.

³⁸⁸ *Olivera Marković*, <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Olivera-Markovi%C4%87/367876368153>, accessed 24 August. Within hours of establishing the profile, the number of people who 'liked' it grew from below 1,000 to 1,136.

Ever since April 2010, the profile activity is sporadic; it is apparently managed by one Jovanka Brasanac Stojicevic who regularly posts links to YouTube videos, both to Mrs Marković's songs and excerpts from TV and films, and also to relevant newspaper articles. One of the articles, linked to from the profile 2 April 2010, is a portrait of the actress and singer and also alludes to her serious medical condition.³⁸⁹ This suggests the profile was, unintentionally perhaps, already conceived as a memorial when Mrs Marković was still alive. Surely, it was conceived to pay respect to her work and theatrical and musical engagement. An 'obituary in the making' it soon enough became a place of commemoration with numerous routine posts and links to videos and news.

Despite the fact that the profile was fairly obviously not managed by the actress herself (at least in the last period), people still tend to respond to it, to interact with it in a very personal manner. Thus they either address her directly or indirectly:

[Željko Popinjac](#) I ADORE YOUR POEMS OLIVERA PARTICULARLY THE OLDER ONES LIKE "ZA KIM" AND "TROJKA" thank you for the joy you shared through your film appearances...

24 April 2010 at 12:51

[Ljilja Drazic Ex Kasagic](#) Dear Olivera, I'm glad to communicate with you at least this way. I love Your songs, especially the one: "Ja o proslosti ne mislim vise", and you're also a great artist in acting. With a bit of a delay: HAPPY BIRTHDAY AND MANY YOU LIVE HEALTHY THROUGH WHAT GOD HAS GRANTED YOU.

06 May 2010 at 15:28 · ·

[Branko Svilar](#) Unsurpassable, unforgettable and eternal... Only one is Olivera Marković... A goddess on the boards that mean the life!

05 September 2010 at 07:11³⁹⁰

The second post is particularly interesting in that it refers in passing also to the technology of communication: in the absence of meeting in person for 'real,' the user finds it adequate enough to communicate with her idol via digitised, mediated profile. However, from the initial motivation, the profile was considerably less active in the period after September 2010, with only a few posts until 2 July. On 2 July *Olivera Marković* edited her 'Personal Information' and 'Location,' which now include the date of her death and location Belgrade, Serbia. Profile activity boomed after Vesna Miletić posted "RIP Olivera! :(“³⁹¹ This was followed by a string of singular (unrelated) posts which but solely directed to their subject of commemoration.³⁹²

³⁸⁹ Zeljko Jovanovic. "Umetnica za sva vremena," naša borba, nezavisni politički dnevnik, http://www.yuorpe.com/nasa-borba/arhiva/Feb98/0802/0802_15.HTM, accessed 24 August 2011.

³⁹⁰ *Olivera Marković*, accessed 24 August 2011.

³⁹¹ Ibid.

³⁹² Viewed on 2 July, 23:50

2 hours ago · ·

7 hours ago · ·

ETERNA GLORY to her !!!

www.rts.rs

8 hours ago

8 hours ago ·

8 hours ago ·

What is particularly interesting, fascinating even in terms of digital memories and memorials is the apparent afterlife activity on the part of Mrs Marković, having posted a link about her passing away. Even more intriguing are the comments/replies to the post that apparently reply to ‘her,’ but formally the addressing is in third person ([Miroslava Radovic](#) Hvala joj za predivne uloge i pesme. Ona je obogatila nas zivot....uvek je tesko kada se oprastate sa prijateljima 02 July at 21:16).³⁹⁴

Despite the fact that the profile is run by another person, the very structure of the profile (personal photograph, real name, personal, first-person addresses) shifts the understanding of the post-mortem presence of a person. Comparing the *Josip Broz Tito* profile discussed above and the selection of profiles dedicated to Olivera Marković, there are certain differences and similarities. They are both cases of digital post mortem in that they commemorate a deceased person. Similar in a way is also the way they structure and organise content. The crucial difference, however, lies in the very positioning of both personalities within the respective digital memorials:

394 Ibid.

It remains to be seen what will become of this post in the future, writing this in early September 2011, the last post to the profile is dated 4 July. The active life of the profile has thus stopped very soon after her death, with the last post announcing the date of the funeral. It was not long, however, for three new commemorative profiles to be created: *Olivera Markovic R.I.P.*, *Olivera Markovic RIP* and *Olivera Markovic (In memoriam 1925—2011)*. At the time of writing the three profiles had very little recorded much activity (editing ‘personal’ details). *Olivera Markovic R.I.P.*, for instance, has 544 likes and a single post: “Now, she’s gone too,” linking to a new about the death of Amy Winehouse.³⁹⁵ The fact that only a day after her passing away there are four Facebook commemorative profiles/places—that not insignificantly also feature as a tool to access Yugoslav and Serbian pop-cultural pasts—nevertheless demonstrates the importance invested by people in cherishing and paying tribute to their past (icons).

Nova Jugoslavija

The profile *Nova Jugoslavija*, on the other hand is a personal profile, although the name might suggest otherwise, who at the end of the research period had 417 friends. Not entirely a digital memorial or a memorial site as for instance the above discussed cases are, the profile is rather oriented into the present and future. It takes the past not as a source of nostalgic reminiscing but rather as an inspiration and a source of values for the present.

In the “Info” section the user states atheist as her religious views and quotes Josip Broz’s famous quote often used in many present day dealings with the Yugoslav past: “We have spilt an ocean of blood for fraternity and unity of our nations – and we shall not allow anyone to touch this or destroy it from inside, to break this fraternity and unity.”³⁹⁶

In the “About” section the owner of the profile states:

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.novajugoslavija.eu

Change is possible! We'll make the first step - enlightenment!

We are living with the spirit of Ex-Yugoslavia in today's world, we are living in a world where it is not important who you are, how you're called and what religion you belong to. You can take us everything, but not our idea of a better world. Fascists will always happen, but in our world, they have no access. Stop the silence and speak up. We need to be brave in a world full of corruption and hate! Maybe we can't change the world, but we can change our attitude!³⁹⁷

³⁹⁵ *Olivera Markovic R.I.P.*, <http://www.facebook.com/#!/oliverarip>, accessed 21 September 2011.

³⁹⁶ *Nova Jugoslavija*, “Info,” <http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=1224441601#!/profile.php?id=1807652139&sk=info>, accessed 24 August 2011.

³⁹⁷ Ibid.

This quote clearly positions the profile, its content and activities within the realm of continuation of the Yugoslav idea, if but in digital terms. The mission statement promotes ‘eternal’ values of internationalism and cosmopolitanism, which are frequently attributed to the Yugoslav enterprise. It thus ‘embeds’ the project within wider regional, European and global striving to discard nationalism. Moreover, it also anchors its ideological tenets in the anti-fascist legacy of the WWII.



Figure 35 | Nova Jugoslavija, Facebook profile, <http://www.facebook.com/#!/profile.php?id=1807652139>.

Interestingly, as compared to *SFR Jugoslavija* and other open, community type profiles there is not much activity user activity in the *Nova Jugoslavija* profile over the last year: she rarely posts content or replies to posts. Before that, however, *Nova Jugoslavija* appeared quite active, posting various stuff related to her off-Facebook projects: YouTube channel and website (discussed below). The main activity recently thus is by the users/friends who post, comment and ‘like’ the stuff posted by other users/friends of *Nova Jugoslavija* and by one Dragan Gasic who has taken up the regular interventions to the profile in terms of updates to the website. Apart from Gasic’s posts and some other friends who post various Facebook applications, these interventions for the most part are brief, emotional expressions: such as birthday greetings around 25 May. This offers an interesting read: this day was celebrated during the SFRY period as the birthday of Josip Broz,

while the country's 'birthday' was 29 November, celebrating the day Yugoslavia became reality in the plans set out at the meeting in Jajce, Bosnia in 1943. However, the user *Nova Jugoslavija* stated as her birthday 25 May 1957, so it is safe to assume the best wishes are intended for the user. Although from the posts below it is also clear that the friends congratulating *Nova Jugoslavija* are clearly referring to the 'old' Yugoslavia ... hence creating an emotional historical confusion (which apparently troubles no one).

[Goran Popov](#) Happy birthday our dear homeland.

26 May at 01:58 · ·

[Milanka Zdravkovic](#) Long live our YUGOSLAVIA we shall never forget you.Happy Birthday!!!!!!

25 May at 19:23

[Recep Gürdal](#) Long live all who love you Happy Birth Day

25 May at 19:15

[Jasna Stanisic](#) Happy birthday Our Homeland ,for being and remaining in our hearts !!!!

25 May at 17:03³⁹⁸

Now, the story presented through the profile is a Facebook outlet of the website www.novajugoslavija.eu, a German-based home to an association which is undertaking activities related to forming a new Yugoslavia. Ambitious in scope, the association lays out the programme quite succinctly,³⁹⁹ basing it on the premise of senselessness of the Yugoslav wars and on the values of democracy, freedom and equality. Tracing all of these in the former Yugoslavia, the programme states that they aim to create a platform for common post-Yugoslav action:

Our basic wish is to create a common platform within a framework of an organisation for like-minded people, in whose work – not excluding political – the former republic of the former Yugoslavia could one day become involved. This new platform offers the possibility to define concrete steps in the outlined direction.⁴⁰⁰

Despite the rather ambitious scope, and unlike many endeavours found on Facebook and elsewhere in DME, the *Nova Jugoslavija*'s aspirations surprisingly profess a high degree of caution and awareness that there is more to action than just posting words, images and sounds. In fact, they invite participation of individuals who would be willing to take part in their projects; admittedly with little apparent response. The fact that there are not any projects listed in the "Project" section of the website or on the profile might suggest an assumption that the idea may be difficult/impossible to put to any reasonable practical use. Thus the goal is carefully curtailed by the statement that they are: "Aware of the fact, that any realisation of whatever idea is always

³⁹⁸ *Nova Jugoslavija*, <http://www.facebook.com/#!/profile.php?id=1807652139>, accessed 24 August 2011.

³⁹⁹ *Nova Jugoslavija eV Kultur und Förderverein*, "O nama," <http://www.novajugoslavija.eu/hr/nova-jugoslavija-informacije/10.html>, accessed 24 August 2011.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid.

related with persisting work and also that the tangible results mostly come after continuous work, it is our wish that from the work process a ‘Movement’ would develop on the basis of the ‘Yugoslav Idea.’”⁴⁰¹ The approach of ‘sustainable’ promotion and development seems at odds with many other initiatives already discussed in more detail above.

The story does not end here but also extends to a YouTube channel novajugoslavija09, albeit this does not give it much more substance. The channel is promoting the mission using the same mission statement as on the website, along with a short video.⁴⁰² The video is in fact an advertisement for new members who would be willing to collaborate with the association. The channel is not very regularly updated and has had no recorded activity in over a year, but a couple dozen comments. Interestingly, however, although the channel is not directly related to dugmicMala’s channel,⁴⁰³ we can find the very same mission statement on the latter channel as well. This taken the Facebook *Nova Jugoslavija* profile posting of events and activities from *Nova Jugoslavija* and Dragan Gasic, we can trace the development of the approach to the *Nova Jugoslavija* endeavour in that the channel has become explicitly devoted to the *Nova Jugoslavija* cause, while in Facebook the profile attained a more personal appearance suggesting there is a ‘real’ person behind all this. Conspicuously absent on the website are people’s names, while even Gasic’s appearing as a friend of *Nova Jugoslavija* does not suggest any direct link between him and the profile/website administration. The practice of non-disclosure of names could be part of the general cautious approach to the topic seen elsewhere.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

⁴⁰² Nova Jugoslavija eV, YouTube channel, <http://www.youtube.com/user/novajugoslavija09>, accessed 24 August 2011.

⁴⁰³ See the discussion on “Yugoslavia – Tatu” video in Chapter 3.

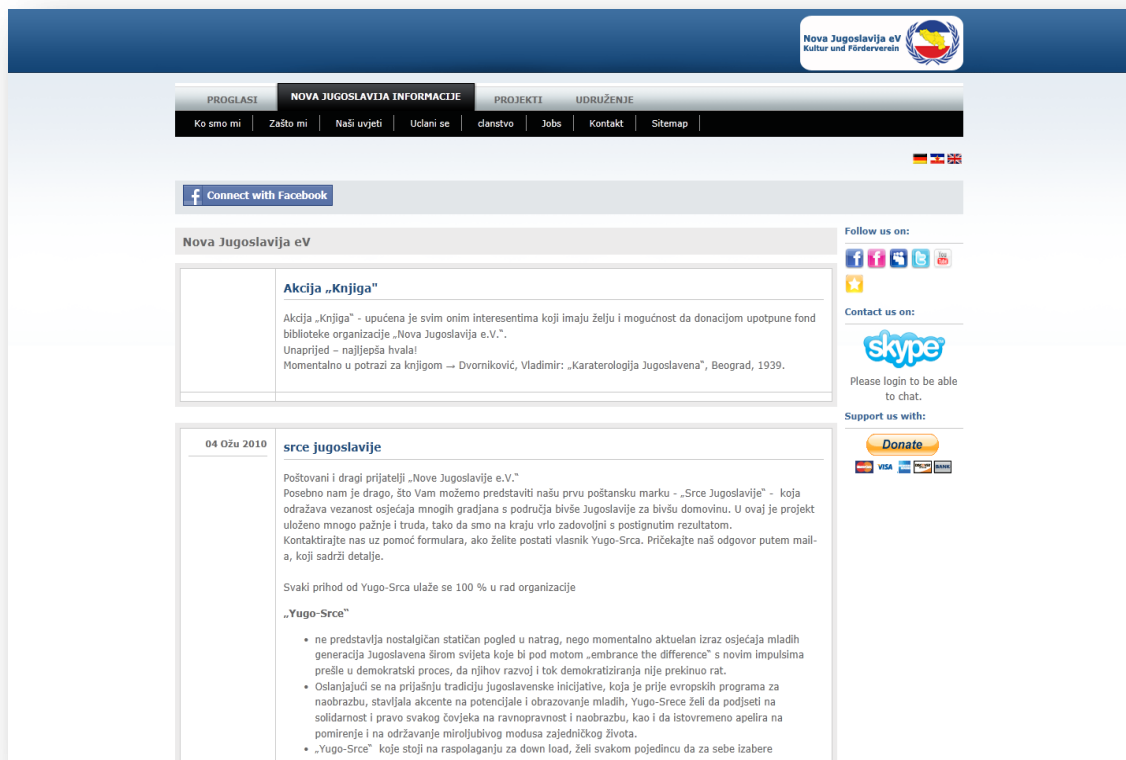


Figure 36 | Nova Jugoslavija, website, <http://www.novajugoslavija.eu/en/nova-jugoslavija-informations/1.html>.

Conclusion

When I first attempted to approach Facebook historical profiles as the object of research, the whole endeavour seemed fairly vague and difficult to grasp. Indeed, tracing the externalisations of memory, digital storytelling and remediations of the past appeared tauntingly overwhelming. In light of endless profile changes, rapid updates and ever-new posts, keeping track is on the verge of impossible. And even if one would be able to make a consistent record of everything posted, this would still only make a partial record, far from comprehensive. Still, as a place of digital sociability which daily preoccupies a not insignificant number of people, an important shift is underway in the ways memory is externalised via profiles by both owners/admins and users.

Considering the arbitrarily posting/commenting on the stuff that users stumble upon (hovering attention), occasional provocation and taking stuff at face value, it could be said that remembering as unravelling on Facebook has become an utterly mundane preoccupation. Moreover, exchanges going on Facebook can be seen as clearly affective stimuli that can be discerned in many heated posts and responses. So, what in all this most ordinary interaction is the role of memory and remembering?

The audiovisual and textual posts/comments rarely feature as a narrative as such, as they often have no elaborate plot or agenda: due to the co-creative character of the profile-memorials this is unlikely to happen. But precisely from a perspective of the co-creation such singular-collaborative endeavours do serve the purpose of creating a joint endeavour in portraying the past beyond the constraints of either historiography or fiction. The on-the-fly-ness and haphazard participation of users in the re-narrativisation of Yugoslav past admittedly do not create a chrono-proof hi/story. And this is not their primary intention. Instead, through most mundane interactions and participation in a collaborative practice of bringing the past to the present, and through sharing-in mediated memories, people engaged in such actions are effectively quite randomly weaving together a different vision of the past. Readily available videos from YouTube, for instance, not only present a material with which to share-in other people's digitally re-narrated memories. By posting 'other people's property' on a profile, as for instance *SFR Jugoslavija*, the 'memory' is transferred into a different space and 'exposed' to the users to comment on it or ignore it.

As already indicated above, the case is much more about the present than it is about the past. The Yugoslav past as unravelled in Facebook historical profiles is, mostly, but a precursor that—through evoking that past—radically informs mundane making sense of the present. It is in this view that the question of New Yugoslavia/Yugoslavism can be addressed in relation to the analysed censorship/curatorship practices discussed above. What appears at least somewhat problematic is the fact that commemoration is fragmented into so many different profiles. And while none claims exclusive rights or dominance over the others, and while many users are simultaneously members or supporters of more than one such profile, and while even the different profiles 'like' and support each other (as for instance music blogs), the question remains whether this could prove a viable tool at all for a widely shared collective action. In terms of remembering this may not pose much of an issue, as it is fairly easy and non-time consuming to 'participate' in one or another digital memorials, historical profiles. Yet, if one would seek a platform to organise a 'front' or a massive movement such fragmentation may prove an obstacle difficult to surpass.

Hence it comes as no surprise that in the analysed profiles, little reference is made to any offline (political) engagement, let alone to a New Yugoslavia. Even when taking into consideration other profiles/initiatives not dealt with here, the picture remains much the same. In fact, it seems that for the most part the profiles do not even aspire for any grand politico-ideological agenda to be conceived and fruitfully implemented. Rather, their declarative missions, on the one hand, tend to stay within the realm of 'nurturing nostalgia' in providing a space for externalisation of inner-most thoughts about the country and its past. The nostalgic participation could in many cases easily be

dismissed as a-political. And even when the profile is declared to be on a mission to restore or reinvigorate Yugoslavia (at least in certain aspect), the actual response rarely goes beyond “Yes, let’s do it!” The appeal and outreach of any ‘real’ action deriving from online initiatives is fairly difficult to assess. In sum, the posts, comments, responses to videos, news etc. are to a large extent affective, particularly in cases of nationalist outbursts and hatred.

However, in line with Svašek’s argument,⁴⁰⁴ it is imprudent to strip the emotional/affective of any political potential. The many examples of exchange in debates on the *SFR Jugoslavija* profile can by the tone and rhetoric be said to not exert much substance in terms of political argumentation. Mostly, the comments/debates are characterised by a strong personal imprint and in this respect also quite inflexible in terms of amending/changing beliefs. In many ways what radiates through many comments, not least because of the invasive curatorship, is in fact onesidedness, occasionally intolerance in defending all things Yugoslav. What is more, the strictly policed sites often seem to become a refuge for ‘blind followers’ leaving little room for constructive debate. In fact, whereas it seems that many of these sites do (or at least could) harbour a potential for an insightful discussion on the future of Yugoslavism, or at least for renovation of the (war)torn cultural and social Universe, the reality is that all too often the debates slide from passive adoration and glorification of the past, and into mutual accusations. From this perspective it is quite understandable that the ‘translation into offline’ is far away.

Still, despite this relative scarcity of ‘constructive’ ‘New Yugoslavism,’ what remains an important contribution of this and similar digital endeavours is in their providing a virtual space where offline practices, usually limited to relatively closed circles, can find public space for externalisation/voicing. True, these online spaces breed similar types of exclusivism and ‘enclosedness.’ With the difference, however, in that the communities thus formed facilitate enhanced instantaneity of networked extensions of public cyberspaces of memory. Interlinking between different sites in terms of content, and between different internet media (e.g. *Nova Jugoslavija* Facebook profile is connected with the website and it also has a YouTube channel), and linking to external sites provides for constructing a larger digital memorial landscape. Debates are complemented by debates/video responses on linked sites thus reaching various segments of potential users.

Now before I conclude, a few words are order on the relationship between text and audiovisuals. As mentioned above, it is fairly clear that it is via text that content acquires most ‘legible’ form and presentation of political aspects of New Yugoslavism is most elaborate precisely in textual

⁴⁰⁴ Maruška Svašek, “Introduction,” 7.

accounts (as poor as they are). However, in the DME it is the audiovisuals that gain an important role in co-creating and co-narrating the story. Thus, via media archaeology conducted by digital enthusiasts, users are in many vita memorials presented with a large selection of audiovisual material. In a pop-cultural historical manner the past and the present are much more eloquently depicted and, importantly, lent to further interpretation.

In line with the ‘enhanced immediacy of remembering’ of the past, memory and remembering as mediated and mediatised in DME:

[b]ecome[s] increasingly insinuated by the rapid spread of digital networks and a potentially continuous connectivity. This includes social networking sites, which host a continuous, accumulating, dormant memory, with the ongoing and often unseen potential to transform past relations through the re-activation of latent and semi-latent connections.⁴⁰⁵

In line with what I have argued in this Chapter, this leads to a conclusion, which is really another question: as seen in many Facebook digital memorials dedicated to the former Yugoslavia, the potential of DME and its enabling technologies to democratise public spaces of remembering can hardly be seen happening. True, many different views can be voiced and also heard, but can they really be translated into offline action? Are they ‘mere’ action-hindering nostalgia? Has the talk of new Yugoslavia, as a potential socio-cultural and even political alternative, got enough mobilisation potential, as compared to flourishing nationalist/racist online initiatives which seem to resonate quite prominently offline? Or, to draw an analogy with Edison’s intended use of the gramophone, is the potential of digital media technologies to contribute/shape a knowledge space indeed a course that the development should take? Is it reasonable and not naive to expect that the technology in the state as it is today and in the world as it is today will ‘naturally’ become a tool of revolutionary global order toppling, a tool for promoting peace and *convivenza*? From what history has taught us (or has it?), communications technologies may be used to propel political opposition or projects that strive to better the world etc. But, as I discuss in the last chapter, this is not enough.

⁴⁰⁵ Andrew Hoskins, “Media, Memory, Metaphor: Remembering and the Connective Turn,” *Parallax*, forthcoming 2011.

Chapter 5 | Conclusion: ... Archiving Nostalgia?

Life is irreversible.
It will be staged in a new theatre,
In a different way, with different actors.
But the ultimate happiness
Is to fold its magic carpet
And make the ornament of the present
Match the pattern of the past...⁴⁰⁶

In his study, *Everything was forever until it was no more*, Alexei Yurchak traces the contours of political opposition and cultural dissent during the late period of Soviet socialism in what he calls deterritorialisation.⁴⁰⁷ He argues that “the logic of the techniques of ideological production [...] has hinged on the principles of the performative shift [implying that] the signifiers of the authoritative discourse (how it represents) were meticulously reproduced, but its signifieds (what it represents) were relatively unimportant.”⁴⁰⁸ This implies that at that time in terms of ideological and system reproduction it was all form and little content. And in such an environment it is not difficult to imagine (‘uncontrolled’) content and meaning sprouting in most unexpected places.

Hence, alongside the relatively marginal and often hastily subdued overt confrontation or dissidentism, the much more prominent type of opposition was voiced ‘from within’ the system, also, and in a specific way, in Yugoslavia.⁴⁰⁹ More important still, a considerable (and also often neglected) part of the ‘disagreement’ was enacted through the quotidian ideological ignorance and

⁴⁰⁶ From Vladimir Nabokov’s “Paris Poem” as quoted in Victor Pelevin *The Sacred Book of the Werewolf*, London, Faber and Faber, 2008, 49.

⁴⁰⁷ This concept is different than the one used throughout this dissertation.

⁴⁰⁸ Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until it Was No More, The Last Soviet Generation*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 2006, 114.

⁴⁰⁹ In Yugoslavia, for instance, cultural (and political) criticism was an ongoing phenomenon since at least the late 1950s, yet it remained firmly within the socialist paradigm. It was not until late in the 1980s that ‘extra-socialist’ ideas and solutions gained prominence (see for instance Mastnak, Tomaž, “From Social Movements to National Sovereignty,” in Jill Benderey and Evan Kreft, (eds.), *Independent Slovenia: Origins, Movements, Prospects*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1994, 93–111; Božo Repe, *Jutri je nov dan: Slovenci in razpad Jugoslavije*, Ljubljana, Modrijan, 2002. This reflected in music and cinema as well. On ‘dissidentism’ in cinema see for instance Daniel J. Goulding, *Liberated Cinema: The Yugoslav Experience 1945–2001*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2002; Pavle Levi, *Disintegration in Frames: Aesthetics and Ideology in the Yugoslav and Post-Yugoslav Cinema*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2007; in music *25 let punka pod Slovenci: Punk je bil prej*, Ljubljana: Ropot, Cankarjeva Založba, 2002; Branko Kostelnik, *Moj život je novi val, razgovori s prvoborcima i dragovoljcima novog vala*, Zagreb, Fraktura, 2004; *Punk pod Slovenci*. Ljubljana, Univerzitetna konferenca ZSMS, 1984; Sabrina P. Ramet, “Shake, Rattle and Self-Management: Making the Scene in Yugoslavia,” in Sabrina P. Ramet (ed.) *Rocking the State: Rock Music and Politics in Eastern Europe and Russia*, Boulder, CO and Oxford, Westview Press, 1994.

cultural subversion, which slowly added to de-substantiating the system via pro-forma subjugation, i.e. to hollowing out its very foundations. Such a cultural stratagem could only succeed in societies that perceived of themselves as culturally, politically, and, most of all, ideologically self-sufficient: in a sort of an autarchic universe—which in the case of Yugoslavia can be called Yuniverse.⁴¹⁰

Such reasoning may be related to Evgeny Morozov's line of argumentation claiming that not too much credit should be given to western strategies in scheming the collapse of (Soviet) socialism.⁴¹¹ Even more, in terms of 'western' political intervention, Yurchak's deterritorialisation could be seen as a practice whose effects radically question the western 'contribution' to the collapse of socialism. Moreover, his argument can be read as a proposal to question the role of top-down (western) political/ideological intervention as such. Instead, the collapse can be considered as a much more system-intrinsic affair. Instead of "the exaggerated role of smuggling in photocopiers and fax machines facilitating the flow of samizdat and supporting radio broadcasts by Radio Free Europe and the Voice of America,"⁴¹² it was rather 'western' popcultural forms (cinema and music) that were particularly well appropriated/'indigenised' and put to use in voicing (not necessarily programmatic) alternative views. Thus it becomes apparent yet again that it is not until the technology or a cultural form has been ado/aped into the vernacular use, that a systemic change can be attributed to it. In the case of socialist countries and Yugoslavia in particular, it was the emergence of new social movements and subcultures that significantly contributed to the (Yurchak's) deterritorialisation and effectively provided an apt tool for voicing alternative views, not unimportantly also through popcultural production.⁴¹³

However, the demise of socialism was not only conceived/perpetuated by and through new social movements and the engaged subcultural initiatives, spanning among others punk-rock and human-rights movements, and the spreading technological innovations.⁴¹⁴ They lacked any thoroughly 'revolutionary' dissident plot to overturn the regime. In many opposition-inclined actions the dissent relied heavily on ironicisation and subvertia that heavily imbued the most mundane social conduct (e.g. jokes and puns in some TV shows, films, music, the press). As such it lacked any (or

⁴¹⁰ On Yuniverse see Martin Pogačar, "Nostalgia in Cyberspace: Yuniverse Goes Broadband," unpublished paper presented at ASN Conference April 2009.

⁴¹¹ See Evgeny Morozov, *The Net Delusion*, xi.

⁴¹² *Ibid*, xi.

⁴¹³ This is not to say that popcultural production was subversive as such, rather some niche productions were. Still, in the (perceived) opening-up of social and political spaces these productions and practices found resonance in wider social contexts (inevitable politicisation and mainstreamisation).

⁴¹⁴ For instance, the role of the photocopier in the production of samizdat would serve as an interesting media archaeological research topic.

much) political agenda. Nevertheless, the process of deterritorialisation and the practices of popcultural subvertia opened up the space in which the emerging political figures were able to masterfully appropriate (abuse) the grassroots initiatives and articulate them in political terms.⁴¹⁵ But still, it was not, as Slavoj Žižek argues, until the third form of resistance to communism, an open struggle for power—following the “‘revisionist’ Marxist critique of really-existing Socialism [and] the demand for autonomous space of civil society”—took stage, in 1990/91, that the regime was forced to go.⁴¹⁶ It was only then that it became clear what ‘is no more.’ And it was then that the annihilation of socialist pasts broke out most conspicuously, eventually giving birth to emotions that can today, in ‘inept and not quite normal’ societies can be interpreted as nostalgia. And it was then that the internet emerged as a factor that eventually enabled people to start piecing the pieces of their shattered historicity together once again.

Now what role does this play in the story of post-socialist and post-Yugoslav digital memories, memorials and storytelling? 20 years after the collapse of socialism in Europe and the demise of Yugoslavia it seems that a thread of continuity in cultural subvertia can be discerned in dealing with the Yugoslav past in digital and offline environments and discourses. As much as socialism failed due to the intertwining of the intrinsic reasons and the lure of the prosperous West, the subvertia present then, seems in many respects to have persevered in the newly implemented ‘permanent transitionalism.’⁴¹⁷ In an environment where no (or little) alternative can be collectively imagined and effectively voiced (or rather heard), the future can best be conceived via taking recourse to the past. The socialist subvertia was indeed radically oriented into the future: “away from Yugoslavia, destination west, capitalism cannot hurt, as it will enhance the feeling of individuality, and Slovenia, Yugoslav Switzerland, will be better off,”⁴¹⁸ as the popular pre-independence mantra went. Yet, it presupposed a sharp detour into the treasury of the most mythical nationalist stories. Nevertheless, the popular conception would suggest that the socialist subvertia was immanently emancipatory/future oriented, while any dealing with the socialist(/)Yugoslav past is invariantly interpreted as retrograde.

Despite the fact that in post-Yugoslavia not everyone is interested in the Yugoslav past, the topic nevertheless remains central in the media and political discourses. And how could it not? It is a

⁴¹⁵ See Martin Pogačar, “Yu-rock in the 80s,” 2008.

⁴¹⁶ Slavoj Žižek, *Living in the end times*, ix–x.

⁴¹⁷ At the it has to be said that mythologies of transition were among the most elaborate in socialist regimes (the quest for a better tomorrow justified and rationalised scarcity in the present); interestingly, in the process of ‘de-socialisation’ it was the same mythological principle that was imposed on from the ‘West’ and excessively self-imposed by the democratising societies of eastern Europe.

⁴¹⁸ Janez Markeš, “Politični kulturi na rob,” *Sobota priloga*, 7 August 2011, <http://delo.si/mnenja/kolumne/politichni-kulturi-na-rob.html>, accessed 7 August 2011.

half-a-century-worth of past that in the past 20 years has been thoroughly revised and rewritten, and discarded, when and if needed. Clearly, the past (in both history and remembering) is always ‘under construction’ but such severe interventions—tearing down monuments, renaming streets, rewriting history textbooks, etc.—into the ‘desired tranquillity’ of society’s history and memory, necessitated a past in shards. Combined with the deterritorialisation⁴¹⁹ and detemporalisation of socio-cultural realities (due to technological and globalising developments) and the intensified re-presenting of the past in and by the media, the annihilation of a ‘comprehensive representation of the past’ could lead to nothing else but a nostalgic/perhaps political/cultural return to that past (truth be told, the reaction is as often retraditionalisation/renationalisation). Or, rather, the pervasive recurrence of mediated spectres of that past haunting the de-historicised, de-mythicised post-socialist presents.

In the thesis (see Chapters 2,3, and 4) I have argued that dealing with the socialist past (in DME) in post-Yugoslav societies is in many respects a vernacular attempt to preserve the (facets of the) past. In the process of the Yugoslavia’s demise and the establishment of new states, this past was stripped of all normalcy and socio-culturo-political currency. In fact, the socialist/Yugoslav chapter in the histories of the South Slavs inadvertently became a burden in need of discarding in exchange for a better past (yet to be invented) and a better future (yet to be imagined). But as Katherine Verdery argues, “revising history in Eastern Europe by snipping out and discarding sections of the timeline, then attaching the pre-communist period to the present and future as the country’s true or authentic trajectory will hardly help us put the communist past behind.”⁴²⁰ In this view it is hard not to see memorial practices as the essential building blocks which act as foundations for our conceptualisation of who we are in global socio-political constellations.⁴²¹

After the collapse, there was no ‘decent’ past to substantiate memory and no past worth remembering; and upon which to build that new future. In the process of the country’s demise and independentisation of the successor states, the *historical* of the post-Yugoslavs was shattered and rendered invalid. True, new politico-ideological and mythological narratives were developed, but have apparently failed at forging a ‘devoted,’ no-questions-asked community. Impossible as it is to impose a grand narrative, and even more so in DME, the inappropriate past keeps haunting the present, indecently. Yugoslav popcultural films, series, actors, performers, political figures, ideology, values thus understandably feature prominently as that missing historical substance

⁴¹⁹ Not as Yurchak understands it (see Chapter 1).

⁴²⁰ As quoted in Oto Luthar, “FORGETTING DOES (NOT) HURT: Historical Revisionism in Post-Socialist Slovenia,” *Nationalities Papers*, 2011, forthcoming.

⁴²¹ Ibid.

(cultural reference). Today, in a time of dominant “sense of lost unity and disappeared community [and the] disaffection with democratic pluralism and market economy,”⁴²² it seems radically absent. And it seems that many online endeavours are essentially tracing that lost historicity.

One of the key characteristics of online memorial practices is the vernacular character and individual initiative in delimiting both the scope (themes and topics) and the tone of remembering/commemorating in DME. Above all, and despite the co-creative qualities of externalising memories and remembering, the practice of remembering online is singular, individual, fragmented. As opposed to the universalising tendencies of historiography and political and ideological interpretations, online remembering is singular in that an interpretation is co-created in an on-the-fly community of which ‘I’ (or any other individual, or another on-the-fly collectivity for that matter; remember the commentators discussed above taking no notice of each other) may have no experiential knowledge: “If the bits can mean something to someone they can only do so if experienced. When that happens, a commonality of culture is enacted between the storer and the retriever of the bits. Experience is the only process that can de-alienate information.”⁴²³

What nevertheless makes remembering in DME impactful in broader, societal terms, is the co-creative aspect of ‘producing’ memories/memorial narratives and kernels around which a renarrativisation or reinterpretation of the past can unravel. For it is the “[p]articular voices [that] can, nevertheless, be crucial in understanding the dynamic between collective memories and everyday life, in illuminating the ways the past is read through the lens of the present.”⁴²⁴ Despite the singularity, the co-creative aspects of reading the past, collecting, editing and publishing (digital or digitised) re-interpretations/re-narrativisations into cyberplaces of memory, nevertheless feature prominently in substantiating, if only relatively insular on-the-fly collectivities.

Now to extract the basic characteristics defining the memory practices and politics in the analysed cases, it has to be noted that these vernacular attempts at remediating the past are essentially *archiving practices that can be defined as nostalgic practices*. And it is also in this view—making public the results of intimate archival work—that the singularity of endeavours is transcended or at least mitigated, i.e. translated into broader/more universal perspective. In the variegated ways that remembering and re-presencing of the Yugoslav past are developed by particular users, it is archive and nostalgia that feature as the founding elements used in digital memories, memorials

⁴²² Vladimir Tismaneanu, *Fantasies of Salvation: Democracy, Nationalism and Myth in Post-communist Europe*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1998, 14.

⁴²³ Jaron Lanier, *You are not a gadget. A manifesto*, London, Penguin Group, 2011, 29.

⁴²⁴ Oto Luthar, “FORGETTING DOES (NOT) HURT.”

and storytelling. The commemorative and remembering practices they foster are, as I have shown in the analysis, in many cases expressions of utter disillusionment with the present (i.e. undelivered promises of transitionalism) and also the vessels that carry the co-creative ‘quest for normalcy.’

Archiving ... Nostalgia

In the analyses above there was some discussion on nostalgia, yet as it remains the underlying and often notorious topic in dealing with the past, it seems only fair to say a bit more now. So, in this section I look into how archive and nostalgia are often intertwined, i.e. into the why nostalgia (as a practice), often used derogatorily, can in fact be seen as a predominantly an archiving practice. I argue that, in the case of the digital afterlife of Yugoslavia, digital remediations (as found, for instance in blogs, YouTube memorials and several Facebook historical profiles, and as discussed in Chapters 2, 3, and 4)—and the practices of renarrating memories, co-creating memorials and engage in digital storytelling—are effectively a result of media archaeological endeavours that lead to often mnemosynal audiovisual constellations. These, in addition to being re-narrativisations/externalisations of vernacular memory, in many cases also become vernacular archives. Importantly, I argue, such archaeological and archiving practices are intrinsically driven by nostalgia. In this view, I understand nostalgia as a socio-cultural practice of navigating through and collecting what was consigned to cultural oblivion. As a nostalgic mind not only likes to brood over the bygones but also often compile remnants of the past, nostalgia can be seen as an inherently archiving practice.

As has been discussed in more detail in case studies above the individuals/users/producers engaged in remediating the Yugoslav past, and their own, do so principally by a method of media archaeology and editing and publishing the ‘disinterred’ material. ‘Digging’ through massive amounts of audiovisual material, the producer, a memonaut, is navigating through the records and traces of the past that may no longer be part of the official post-socialist (political, media, historical, personal) narratives and canons. Thus the memonaut navigates her way through ‘a jukebox of memories’⁴²⁵ or rather ‘externalisations of memory in the audiovisual.’ However,

⁴²⁵ On jukebox metaphor see Chapter 3.

rather than digging for material traces, she copies, cuts and pastes the bits and pieces to create a new, individual 4MO. Posted in one or another form in this or that internet genre a 4MOs attains a life of its own. No longer a 'mere' trace of the past audiovisually remediated, a 4MO as a new externalisation is repurposed as an individual 'vision of the past,' only to become a 'victim' of the process of co-creation (comments, video responses, etc.). In the next turn, such co-creative, vernacular externalisations serve as intimate renditions of the past, as interventions in terms of what the past *should* look or sound or read like.

Yet, they also feature as 'files' in the newly composed vernacular archives and effectively do what institutions fail or refuse to do: preserve vast amounts of, predominantly, popcultural traces of the past 'un-normal.' Be it a music blogger, a YouTube digital memorial architect or an admin of a Facebook profile, or a user participating in any of their activities/creations, these individuals—entangled in the on-the-fly tech-enabled commonality—compile, sort, curate and share the(ir vision of the) past. Much such conduct can easily be dismissed as mere (Yugo)nostalgia. Yet, it would be a definite loss to do so. Yugonostalgia, as Monika Palmberger notes is not only “a longing for Yugoslavia [that] has the potential to paralyse individuals, who realise that what was lost can never be regained, which puts them into a constant state of ‘waiting.’”⁴²⁶ It is also an “expression of criticism of the present situation and in this way can become a source for future aspirations.”⁴²⁷ It is, however, also considerably more.

I agree with Svetlana Boym that “what is most missed [in post-socialist countries] is not the past and the homeland exactly, but rather this potential space of cultural experience that one has shared with one's friends and compatriots.”⁴²⁸ From this perspective it is not difficult to agree with Mitja Velikonja's three strategies of approaching, reproducing and referencing the shared past: *inertia* (systemic perseverance); *innovation* (referencing the Yugoslav past and re-contextualising it); and *subversion and revolt* (particularly against the exclusivity of (Central) European political discourses which sometimes degenerate in cultural self-sufficiency and hate-speech).⁴²⁹ With this in mind, the vernacular interventions into the past and into the way that past is made sense of today (remembered), in DME, have to be approached with attention not only to *what* they deal with but also *how*.

⁴²⁶ Monika Palmberger, “Nostalgia Matters: Nostalgia For Yugoslavia As Potential Vision For A Better Future,” *SOCIOLOGIJA*, Vol. 50 (2008), No. 4, 356–370, 358. Also available at http://www.komunikacija.org.rs/komunikacija/casopisi/sociologija/L_4/index.html?stdlang=ser_lat.

⁴²⁷ Ibid, 358.

⁴²⁸ Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 53.

⁴²⁹ Mitja Velikonja, “‘Ex-home,’” 200.

Very generally speaking, nostalgia can often be seen as a pre-modern phenomenon in that it clearly defies factuality and historicity as outlined during the period of the Enlightenment and later on throughout the age of ratio. In the same vein, the archive, an invention that dates to that same period (at least in terms of proportion and arduousness) can, arguably, be seen as the resource of ultimate fact and a pillar of science.⁴³⁰ However, it may just be that the both are much more connected: nostalgia could only ‘erupt’ once the archival ‘sanitation units’ took over the definition of the past-preserving/archiving criteria; and hence remembering criteria as well. In this view nostalgia, at its very essence, can be seen as a reaction against formalisation, institutionalisation of the past.⁴³¹ And not only that, archive and nostalgia share the ‘obsession’ of collecting, compiling, sorting and curating.

To take this somewhat further, memory—and nostalgia as its ultimate distortion—can be seen as a reaction formation against technological, political or cultural developments, i.e. as an attempt to “slow down information processing, to resist the dissolution of time in the synchronicity of the archive, to recover a mode of contemplation outside the universe of simulation and fast-speed information [...], to claim some anchoring in a world of [...] heterogeneity, non-synchronicity and information overload.”⁴³² These processes can be readily observed in western and post-socialist environments alike. Yet, as appealing as this concept may be, the developments in DME (and as analysed above) suggest that it is not entirely adequate; and not because digital technology facilitates the loss of anchoring. Yes, Huyssen accurately traces the memory boom in the reaction formation,⁴³³ which is not unimportantly related to the technologising of the world. Yet, in DME the technology offers itself as the salvation of memory, although it is in many respects also the doom of it. The processes of mediation of memories and the related co-creative practices essentially prevent—as it is clear from several cases in the above analysed often chronologically ‘unnavigable’ Facebook profiles—much contemplation or brooding characteristic for reminiscing or nostalgic feelings. Transcending the on-the-fly-ness of digital experience requires a pacing down of production and consumption.

Now, to reiterate, dismissal of (cyber-)nostalgia is not in order. Instead, what the cases analysed above also suggest is a different take on (Yugo)nostalgia. I do not want to discard the concept

⁴³⁰ See Geoffrey C. Bowker, *Memory practices in the Sciences*, 1–34.

⁴³¹ Here I have to emphasise that nostalgia is particularly deeply related to becoming of age, and that it is childhood that is often most nostalgically remembered. This applies to personal as well as collective childhood, i.e. to the ‘day of the making of a nation.’ Having said that, growing up can also be seen as a process of institutionalisation and consequent loss of innocence and freedom. This would make then tracing nostalgia in formalisation/institutionalisation a more widely applicable one.

⁴³² Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia*, New York, Routledge, 1995, 7.

⁴³³ Ibid.

altogether, but aim to suggest that it is, having been burdened with the transitionalist discourse, essentially insufficient and in need of a better theoretical conceptualisation and practical use.⁴³⁴

The cases in digital storytelling, memory and memorials related to Yugoslavia, as I have argued, demonstrate that online remembering may not necessarily serve just the purposes of tranquilising the individual and the collectivity, or of mere entertainment. To some extent, of course this is inevitable, but then, even contemporary situation in the world, political and economic, does not spur excessive awareness, social unrest let alone action (which suggests it is not necessarily the topic that tranquilises but the feeling of pervasive ‘impactive impotence’). This is not to dismiss the role and importance of the demonstrations in the Middle East and Mediterranean Africa in 2009–2011 nor the 15 October Occupy demonstrations, but just a cautious remark to not invest too much hope into their revolutionary potential of technology. However, I believe that externalisation of memory and memory practices in DME may in the future be the catalyst of offline social action.

Thus, in order to retain the subversive character and continuity of nostalgia as a relevant socio-cultural concept and phenomenon,⁴³⁵ I propose to emphasise an aspect that perhaps seems far too obvious, but is nevertheless all too often missed: to see Yugonostalgia as a *radical urge to reassemble the historical*. Discovering and posting the forgotten audiovisuals and remediating them so as to reposition them as kernels of post-Yugoslav *commonality of shared experience*, i.e. digital sociability spanning geographical and temporal determinants, the media archaeologists and archivists resiliently keep on saving the (audiovisual) past from oblivion. And doing so they reintroduce into the present the bits and pieces which are then often quite arbitrarily used in co-creating a more coherent understanding of the Yugoslav socialist past.

Reassembling the Historical

The cases in digital memories, memorials and storytelling dedicated to the former Yugoslavia can be read as a desire to ‘reassemble the historical.’ The phenomenon and practice of reassembling

⁴³⁴ “We could abandon these terms and invent new one, of course, but we would leave behind too long history of struggles, dreams and aspirations that are tied to them. I think it is better to fight over the concepts themselves in order to restore or renew their meaning.” Michael Hardt “The common in communism,” in Slavoj Žižek and Costas Douzinas (eds.), *The Idea of Communism*, London, Verso, 2010, 131–144, 131.

⁴³⁵ Many thanks to Tanja Petrović for elaborating on this topic.

the historical rests, as already discussed above, on the presupposition that the collapse of socialism and Yugoslavia—with the ensuing wars and the problems with finding a place in a globalised market economy-dominated world—effectively rendered the Yugoslav past inadequate/false/problematic/oriental/non-European etc (and in many respects the post-Yugoslav present(s) as well). However, since the past and the continuous re-interpretations thereof, feature as the basic elements for a collectivity to design and define its identity and sociability, it is clear that a shattered/annihilated past can hardly fulfil that role.

So, my argument is that the most human and the most radical stance an individual or a (on-the-fly) collectivity can take is to try and put the broken pieces back together. In other words, to try and make the past a comprehensive whole again which can (at least potentially) endow the present with some meaning and sense. Thus the going-ons in the field of digital vernacular externalisations of memory speak of an endeavour to save from oblivion audiovisual records of the past and re-position them in contemporary socio-cultural constellations. The drive toward ‘reassembling the historical,’ however, is inherently connected to and contemporaneous with another activity characteristic of post-Yugoslav online practices of co-creating and remediating the past—the ‘quest for normalcy.’

The Quest for Normalcy

As it is usually the case with regime changes, the break-up of Yugoslavia and the establishment of new, independent states failed in its crucial, yet inherently impossible mission—to start from *anno zero*. Where the shift *was* successful was in alienating the past and the former brotherly nations (the war was an effective tool, alongside the nationalist propaganda). The new regimes have tried hard to distance themselves from what in the democratic perspective appeared as a stain on the national fabric. Yet, in justifiably detecting and locating and problematising the indeed authoritarian aspects of the Yugoslav experience, the collateral damage was the historicity and the present of South Slavs.

Rendered unacceptable, the entire Yugoslav history of former constitutive nations and, most importantly, of individuals became inadequate: collective and personal histories and memories,

social bonds among 22 million people were attributed a status of ‘historical unfitness.’⁴³⁶ In such an ideological constellation personal memories were displaced from the wider socio-culturo-political narratives. Important, often formative episodes of individual histories related to childhood, education, serving the army, friends and family, were no longer the legitimate stuff of memory. From an individual perspective, this is, in fact, an utterly unbearable situation.

The least illogical response action then is to try and reassemble the shards of personal pasts. The internet, itself a deterritorialising media, provided a useful tool for reinvigoration of the Yurchak style deterritorialisation: a bottom-up, vernacular take on popular uses of technology served the role of the voice-disseminator of opposing, un-official, alternative, subversive renarrations and remediations of the past. Representing media archaeological ‘excavations’ and re-presencing the past in nostalgic terms features as a strategy to make sense of the present and of the past. It is indeed a vehicle of the quest for normalcy.

What, finally, are the implications for memory and remembering online? What is the role the technology plays in changing practices of remembering? *And what use users make of the technology in their interventions?* As I have argued throughout this thesis, the technology and the related changes in conceptualisation of connectivity, the individual and collectivity, and the incessant redefinitions of space and time show that memory cannot be associated exclusively to territorial/material traces of the past. Instead, in response to ever swifter ‘consignment to the past’ of ‘everything,’ practices of memory and remembering seem to be becoming ever more immediate: much of the mediated life is always already past, yet via mediated memories always readily available for endless consumption. This in turn fosters (at least ideally) greater access and participation (residing on ‘digital empathy’),⁴³⁷ admittedly heavily relying on click-engagement.

Remembering practices thus seem to be becoming more flexible and adjustable to contemporary needs of a remembering individual or collectivity, yet at the same time far more ‘vulnerable’ to random whimsical interventions. This, however, is not an assessment of quality or accuracy of remembering in respect to historical facts: of how and what is represented. For better or worse, the quality may have very well degraded, but this is not really the point. Especially if we take into consideration that remembering in the history of humankind has never been any more accurate.

⁴³⁶ See the discussion of Yugoslav Army soldiers’ memories, Tanja Petrović, “Nostalgia for the JNA? Remembering the Army in the former Yugoslavia,” in Maria Todorova and Zsuzsa Gille (eds.), *Post-communist nostalgia*, 61–81.

⁴³⁷ See Chapter 3.

But what appears particularly fascinating in contemporary practices, techniques and technologies of remembering/remediating/renarrating the past is that the work of memorising and the publishing and mediating memories can be, ideally speaking, done by anyone who can use a photo/video editing software and then create records that represent a perfectly *valid vernacular historical* testimony. Valid inasmuch as such externalisations may gain followers and hence wider social impact. Moreover, the relative availability of the means to publish online various content, including most personal renditions or re-interpretations of the past, could be an indication that the grand narratives do not stand a chance.

Or do they? The everlasting division between universality and singularity in understanding and representing the past, i.e. their roles in social presents, is to some extent surely ‘endangered.’⁴³⁸ Online we can observe a rise in individual interpretations of the past, increasing relevance (or at least presence) of individual records. Concomitantly, grand national narratives are being questioned and ^{re}/_{de}valued. What is a national history if its narrativisation cannot be experienced? Is it to become just another of the singular renditions (as discussed above)? Considering the fact that we more or less continue to live on-the-ground, this seems unlikely. Still, the collectivity’s cohesive value might have to be sought (also) outside the national perimeters.

At the same time it is clear that these individual interpretations often attract followers worldwide and are no longer all that individual. On the other hand, not unrelated to globalisation (deterritorialisation and detemporalisation) and the rise of nationalism (at least) in Europe, it can be maintained that grand national stories are regaining momentum in precisely same-type on-the-fly formations as the ones discussed in the analyses above. The supposedly greater freedom of association and more immediate interaction obviously does not open up a direct way to freedom as such. In many respects, the past in digital memory and remembering remains often just as obscure and remote as it would have been in any other medium. The implications this has for (post-Yugoslav) memory practices in the digital age can thus be identified in the following: there is indeed a considerable presence of mediated Yugoslav past in DME (blogs, YouTube, Facebook) which also attracts a non negligible following.

In many cases the Yugoslav past is dealt with, i.e. mediatised and mediated, with great care and attention, and often demonstrates high degrees of involvement and personal engagement. As I have shown in the chapter on music blogging, for instance, the lengths some people go to in order to dig out and then post (not only) musical rarities and oddities is astonishing. The *SFR*

⁴³⁸ On singularity and universality see Paul Ricoeur, *Lectures on ideology and utopia*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1986; *History and truth*, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1998 [1955, 1964].

Jugoslavija Facebook profile case demonstrates along the same lines that the admins' engagement is enormous both in terms of posting continuity and the span of content posted. Finally, YouTube digital memorials are perhaps the best example of individual intervention into the how the past is represented/re-presented. What these cases have in common is personal engagement and a desire to create and publish a (digital/digitised) record of the past. Unearthing media records, photographs and moving pictures, they keep reassembling the historical in the quest for a comprehensive, normal history.

However, despite the potential the technology has for forming on-the-fly communities and share and distribute information and knowledge, what remains an ever-present characteristic of these endeavours is a sort of (inherent?) impediment to translate these actions into offline or massive online actions and environments. This applies particularly to YouTube and Facebook cases which most overtly propagate the 'redemption' of the Yugoslav past. As such they are 'automatically' expected to aim for a larger-scale action; yet, if seen as attempts to reassemble the historical and reinstate normalcy they function perfectly well as 'mere' competing and complementing voices. Through this perspective the endeavours by these individuals and the co-creative interventions of users can be seen as a reflected use of technology with no particularly grand aim to reinstate the past, but rather to open up spaces in the present for continual present of the neglected past.

Furthermore, it could be said that the features of the emergent digital media have affected the ways we conceive of collectivity and memory; particularly considering mobility of both the user (mobile devices and wi-fi) and the content. In short, remembering in DME is much less institutionalised and sanctioned top-down. Hence, to take part in a collective event of remembering one does not have to travel to far-off places or wait for a scheduled TV broadcast; instead, through a connection to a digital memorial or a Facebook profile one can easily participate at various spatially displaced memorial events. The mobile commemorator is effectively rendered an abstract partaker in the event and at the same time also an active co-creator of the memory of the commemorated event.

Finally, the hypothesis introduced at the beginning, i.e. that the digital technologies have largely taken over the spaces, ways and tools to (publicly) create, co-create and distribute vernacular memory, seems a valid one. Considering the fact that memorial and commemorative activities—most basic human need to deal with the past and its loss collaboratively/collectively—have not only been translated, but rather extended into the digital realm, enables us to trace a relation between the 'reaction formation' Huyssen speaks about and the need for sociability in increasingly individualising world. Not insignificantly, the processes and dynamics of offline relationships

(personal, national etc.) are translated online and present a distinct continuity with the offline worlds. In the process of full-on digitisation, memory and remembering practices have become at the same time more personalised and public, more easily and widely adjustable, yet also more vulnerable and even more elusive. With this in mind, it can be maintained that the internet and the internet enabled media are in fact decisively influencing the ways in which the past is appropriated and re-presented. The digital “‘reliquaires’ ‘preserve and cherish the fragment, the souvenir, the talisman, the exotic’ and treat ‘the ephemeral object as if it were the rarest heirloom’.”⁴³⁹ More importantly still, and not entirely unrelated to digital empathy, the co-creation of cyberplaces of remembering nevertheless seems to offer a space for the aspects of remembering that in the Yugoslav case ‘fell out’ of the official narratives; despite the difficulties and drawbacks discussed above. However, due to decisive interrelatedness and the mutual nestedness of the on- and off-line, any potential liberating power attributed to technological remedy alone, seems ill fated to challenge and transcend the persistent socio-cultural perturbations or motivate people to challenge their walls of belief that bitterly persevere in the face of change.

⁴³⁹ Vivian Sobchack, “Nostalgia for a Digital Object,” in Lauren Rabinowitz and Abraham Geil (eds.), *Memory Bites, History, Technology and Digital Culture*, Durham and London, Durham University Press, 2004, 305–329, 306.

Povzetek

Zdi se, da sta splošno razširjeni fascinacija s prisotnostjo preteklosti in izmuzljivost sedanjosti brezmejni. Ob začetku 21. stoletja je svet sicer res v marsičem precej drugačen od tistega v prejšnjem stoletju, vendar pa je, z ozirom na kontinuiteto tehnološko-kulturnega razvoja, vseeno še vedno globoko povezan, »organsko« pripet na obdobje, ki ga je Hobsbawm poimenoval kratko 20. stoletje. Kar preteklo stoletje dela tako zelo kratko in vsebolj re-prezentirano (pri-sedanjeno oziroma po-prisotnjeno), je trajna prisotnost avdiovizualnih in besedilnih zapisov odločilnih epizod in dogodkov, ki se v vsakdanje življenje najočitneje pretakajo prek popularne kulture in politike. Ta nenehna prisotnost je v veliki meri podprta z razvojem komunikacijskih tehnologij, ki so omogočile in pospešile znatno drugačen način razumevanja časa. Z drugimi besedami lahko tako rečemo, da je 20. stoletje – s svojimi fascinantnimi dosežki na polju tehnološkega, kulturnega, ekonomskega in družbenega razvoja na eni strani ter uničujočima katastrofama dveh svetovnih vojn, hladne vojne in mnogimi drugimi družbenopolitičnimi pretresi na drugi strani – postalo velikanski zgodovinski in hkrati tudi medijski dogodek. Skozi nenehna medijska prisvajanja in reprezentacije, remediacije, pa se to stoletje obenem kaže tudi kot neizmerno razdrobljeno ...

Socialistična federativna republika Jugoslavija (SFRJ) je bila, skupaj z večino drugih socialističnih držav, morda res izročena zgodovini, a njena izdatna prisotnost, ki ni omejena le na polja filma, glasbe, literature, dnevne politike in vsakdanje kulture, kaže drugačno podobo. Preteklost je vedno pogostejše in vedno bolj prežemajoče prisotna v digitalnih medijih: internetnih straneh, blogih, forumih, YouTubeu, Facebooku in drugih socialno omrežnih straneh (SOS). S tem uspešno kljubuje sanjam o »postsocialističnem tranzicionalizmu«, ki bi moral v idealnem primeru pospešiti izkoreninjenje kakršnekoli sledi »kompromitirajoče socialistične preteklosti«.

Tej novi »osvobodilni« ideologiji se zaenkrat še ni prav posrečilo, da bi na novo napisala preteklost, prej nasprotno. Posledično je temi »digitalnega posmrtnega življenja« Jugoslavije in Jugoslovanov (post-Jugoslavije in post-Jugoslovanov) v tej disertaciji namenjena osrednja pozornost. V nadaljevanju poskušam najti odgovore na skupek naslednjih temeljnih vprašanj:

Kako so, v domeni digitalno podprtih komunikacijskih tehnologij, zgodovina Jugoslavije in popularne remediacije njene zgodovine (re)apropriirane in (re)nativizirane?

Na kakšen način uporabniki uporabljajo tehnologijo v svojih intervencijah?

In kakšne posledice ima to za (post-jugoslovanske) spominske prakse v digitalni dobi?

Da bi lahko artikuliral odgovore na ta begajoča vprašanja, v pričujočem delu preiskujem *vernakularne medijske eksternalizacije spomina in spominjanja Jugoslavije v digitalnih okoljih*, tj. na internetu, ki ga pojmem kot *multimodalni medijski sistem*. Pozornost namenjam trem primerom, kjer se digitalno pripovedništvo (DP), spomini in obeležja, ki so povezani z ali posvečeni Jugoslaviji, prepletajo, da bi ustvarili ne le kraj spominjanja, ampak predvsem prostor, kjer lahko ljudje sodelujejo v skupnem procesu soustvarjalnega spominjanja. Trdim, da internet tehnološko in simbolno prispeva k vzpostavitvi, ohranjanju in razvoju spreminjajočih se praks in protokolov izročanja spominu in obnavljanja stvari iz spomina.

Izhodiščni hipotezi sta, da internet (tj. prek interneta podprti mediji, kot so npr. blogi, internetne strani, YouTube, SOS itd.) v odnosu do procesov spomina in spominjanja:

- 1) *Odločilno vpliva na proces prisvajanja preteklosti in, še pomembneje, na procese soustvarjanja digitalnih prostorov spominjanja.*
- 2) *V veliki meri prevzema prostore, načine in orodja za (javno) ustvarjanje, soustvarjanje in distribucijo vernakularnega spomina.*

Z drugimi besedami to pomeni, da so *digitalni prostori spomina* (*lieu de mémoire digitaux*) v pomembni meri vplivali na način, na katerega so »tradicionalni« »lieu de mémoire« (re)konceptualizirani in (re)tematizirani v nastajajočih »kiberprostorih spomina«. V procesu tehnologizacije spomina in demokratizacije tehnologije je bila interpretativna avtoriteta prenesena od institucionalnih teles (arhivov, oblasti, izobraževalnih sistemov) na posameznika (ki ima dostop do tehnologije in vednosti). V tem smislu bi lahko dodal, da »kibersledi spomina« nudijo ključne kažipote v začasnih vernakularnih medijskih eksternalizacijah spomina in spominjanja v digitalni medijski ekologiji (DME). *Digitalno medijsko ekologijo* v osnovi razumem kot tehnološko-kulturno okolje, ki je v pomembni meri opredeljeno skozi odnos, v katerega vstopajo posamezniki in institucije – kot producenti in potrošniki vsebin in oblastnih odnosov. Ti so vpletenimi v interakcije znotraj sistema, ki ne more biti opredeljen zgolj kot tehnološki, ampak je v pomembni meri določen prav z vsebinami in načini komunikacije, ki jih omogoča. Ključno za to delo je tudi, da DME, njeno omogočujočo tehnologijo in družbeno-politično-kulturno-ekonomske vidike, ki se vzpostavljajo v DME, razumem kot dejavnike, ki pomembno prispevajo k spreminjajočim se načinom eksternalizacije spomina; še več, ti dejavniki pomembno vplivajo na samo zmožnost spominjanja. Z ozirom na mojo raziskovalno temo, DME obravnavam kot omogočujoče okolje, kjer *ohranjanje preteklosti, zgodovine in spomina poteka na do sedaj še nevideni ravni, tako v smislu kvantitete ohranjenega materiala, kot tudi v številu ljudi, ki bolj ali manj aktivno sodelujejo v teh procesih.*

Pričujočo raziskavo sestavljajo tri študije primera. Prva študija raziskuje ohranjanje zvočne dediščine in *glasbene bloge*. Izrazito individualna prizadevanja za ohranitev/arhiviranje jugoslovanske glasbene zgodovine prek digitalizacije večinoma vinilnih plošč, ki so nato prosto dostopne prek spleta, je dobesedno delo arhivarja, ki bi ga morala opraviti glasbena industrija, po možnosti pa institucija, ki bi si za cilj zadala njeno dolgoročno ohranitev. Ta prizadevanja se morda ne kažejo kot tipični način DP: raziskava se namreč usmerja na zasebne zbirke vinilnih plošč, ki niso več dostopne. Vendar pa so analizirani glasbeni blogi veliko več kot le nekakšni seznami objavljenih plošč. Avtorji v narativnih delih objav namreč pogosto razkrivajo precej osebne podrobnosti glede objavljene glasbe, pišejo o tem, kje so jo našli in »od kod prihaja«. V tem smislu se blogi umeščajo v koordinate DP. Še pomembneje pa je, da se glasbeni blogi kažejo kot dobre ponazoritve remediacije in še bolj kot primeri, kjer se področji mrežnega in nemrežnega (»online« in »offline«) prepletata in vplivata druga na drugo. Študija primera bo tako, ob upoštevanju dejstva, da je osrednje orodje eksternalizacije spomina besedilo (objave), namesto poglobljene analize objavljene glasbe, raje uporabila metodo besedilne analize, ki bo po potrebi podprta tudi z analizami vizualnega in zvočnega materiala.

Druga študija primera se ukvarja z več primeri vernakularnih digitalnih obležij, ki se nahajajo na YouTubeu. Ti primeri digitalnih obležij najbolj ustrezajo kategoriji DP. Z uporabo pristopa medijske arheologije kombinirajo, dekontekstualizirajo in rekontekstualizirajo različne medijske (zgodovinske in po meri izdelane) vire (avdiovizualne in besedilne), da bi skozi digitalno obležje ustvarili in sporočili zelo osebno zgodovinsko izjavo. Predmete raziskave sem analiziral kot paradigmatične primere DP s pomočjo multimodalne diskurzivne analize, ki je vključevala besedilno analizo komentarjev in objav ter analizo avdiovizualnega materiala.

Nazadnje se v tretji študiji primera osredotočam na raziskovanje spomina in spominjanja, kot ju lahko najdemo na več Facebook profilih, ki za svoj predmet jemljejo Jugoslavijo in Josipa Broza Tita, njenega doživljenjskega predsednika in popularno kulturno ikono. Profili so analizirani kot primeri so-ustvarjalnega DP, do njih pa pristopam kot do digitalnih obležij, ki so v nenehnem procesu izgradnje in spremembe ter bistveno povezani in omreženi z in med uporabniki, administratorji in drugimi podobnimi Facebook profili. Raziskava poteka prek multimodalne diskurzivne analize.

Skozi za splošni metodološki pristop te študije primerov razumem kot primere *digitalnega pripovedništva*. Predmeti raziskave so s tem posledično prek DP postavljeni kot multimodalni mobilni digitalni objekti (4MO), ki učinkovito posedujejo pripovedno kvaliteto. Ker je DP bistveno omogočeno in pogojeno s tehnološkimi in kulturnimi implikacijami DME ter internetom kot omogočujočo tehnologijo, se tako v pomembnih vidikih razlikuje od »analogne« narativne

formacije, potrošnje in diseminacije. Vendar pa DP in digitalne narativizacije vseeno v pomembni meri ohranjajo kontinuiteto s »klasičnim« pripovedništvom.

Teoretski in metodološki pristop, ki je bil sem ga razvil v namene te raziskave, gradi na spominu in (novih) medijskih študijah in poskuša podati inovativen prispevek k polju nastajajočih »študij digitalnega spomina« s tem, da v razpravo vpeljuje odnos med dinamiko postsocialističnega spomina in digitalnimi komunikacijskimi tehnologijami. Pri tem se opiram na metodologijo multimodalne diskurzivne analize, ki vključuje širok spekter besedilnih in avdiovizualnih pripovednih elementov, ki jih najdemo v različnih obravnavanih eksternalizacijah spomina. To podaja okvir za analizo mrežnih reprezentacij (ki vključujejo, kot je bilo nakazano že zgoraj, besedilo, zvok, video in sliko), še posebej pa individualnih eksternalizacij jugoslovanske preteklosti. Poleg tega ponuja tudi orodje, s katerim posameznikovo (preteklost ohranjajočo) dejavnost v DMO razumemo kot vpeto v širše družbenokulturne mreže, ki so bistveno opredeljene / vzdrževane v preseku mrežnih in nemrežnih prostorov. Upoštevajoč vse to, poskuša raziskava kritično obravnavati potencial vernakularnih ali »gverilskih« spominskih praks, znotraj širših družbenokulturnih kontekstov, še posebej v odnosu do vprašanja posameznika in kolektiva ter nacionalne zgodovine in identitete.

Prva študija (drugo poglavje), kot nakazano zgoraj, obravnava prakso bloganja, eno prvih »naslednjih novih stvari«, ki se je pojavila v obdobju razcveta interneta v zgodnjih devetdesetih letih prejšnjega stoletja. Ta se na prvi pogled kaže kot digitalna praksa, ki kar najbolj neposredno izhaja iz tiska in pisanja. Deluje kot nadaljevanje logike pisanja, ki jo lahko razpoznamo v časopisih, revijah, dnevnikih, in tako imenovanih »commonplace books« (lat. locus communis), splošno uporabnih zapiskih, beležkah. Ob sledenju zgodovini bloganja, je potrebno pri tem upoštevati dve »tehnologiji«: dnevnik in beležko. Raziskovalcem in vojakom so tako npr. dnevniki in zapisniki že stoletja služili za zapisovanje njihovih raziskovanj, prizadevanj in jedilnikov, medtem ko so dnevnike v ne tako davnih časih pisali mladostniki, soočeni z vzponi in padci odraščanja, ali matere, ki bi rade ohranile najmanjše podrobnosti iz prvega leta življenja njihovega otroka. Nemrežni dnevniki, ki so doživeli razcvet po razširitvi pismenosti, so bili, vsaj na deklarativni ravni, zelo zasebna stvar; za njih ni bilo predvideno, da jih bo, razen pisca, bral še kdo drug (z izjemo znanstvenih zapisov, ladijskih ali vojaških dnevnikov itd., ki so bili v resnici bolj kronike in tudi niso bili izključno zasebni). V primerjavi z ustnim spominjanjem je pisanje (in to še posebej velja za dnevnike) pomenilo umik v zasebno sfero precejšnjega dela tega, kar je bilo skupnega individualni izkušnji. In navkljub predpostavki, da je skriti namen pisanja dnevnika na

splošno prav v tem, da ga prebere nekdo drug in je zaradi tega pogosto odložen na očitnem mestu, je sam proces eksternalizacije in »stabilizacije« misli tako izrazito zasebna stvar.

Čeprav bloganje v veliko primerih morda ni eksplicitno povezano s spominom ali namenom izdelave zapisa o preteklosti, pa ima ta praksa – skozi njeno formalno organizacijo (npr. kronologijo vpisov) – vseeno za posledico formiranje temporalne strukture in s tem tudi načina, s katerim je možno slediti blogovski dejavnosti. To predstavlja nujni pogoj za formiranje ad hoc interesnih skupin, skupaj z njimi pa tudi za skupnosti spomina. V nasprotju z implikacijo, da ima lahko blog neomejeno spletno občinstvo, bloganje (tako kot vsaka druga družbena dejavnost) skozi čas v veliki meri razvije, ne nujno ogromno, a bolj ali manj stabilno skupnost bralcev/obiskovalcev, ki vsaj občasno stopajo v medsebojno interakcijo.

To poglavje v nadaljevanju preiskuje glasbeno bloganje kot spletno dejavnost, katere cilj je ohranjanje jugoslovanske (popularne) glasbene dediščine in glasbenega spomina oz. spomina na tisto glasbo, ki je po letu 1991 in propadu države (ter njene glasbene industrije) nepopravljivo postala del preteklosti. Praksa ustvarjanja in vzdrževanja takšnih blogov, kot so opredeljeni spodaj, je odločilno povezana z nemrežnimi materialnimi svetovi in predpostavlja posameznika »na misiji«, tj. dejavnost ali družbeno delovanje, ki se poskuša ukvarjati z medijsko arheologijo in koplje za skritimi nosilci zvoka, ki sicer že dolgo veljajo za izgubljene. Prek intervencije digitalne tehnologije ti zopet postanejo dostopni – na spletu.

Po razpadu države je razpadla tudi jugoslovanska glasbena industrija, posledično pa je vzniknilo več nacionalnih industrij in trgov. Ta politična, ekonomska, družbena in kulturna »oddaljitev« je na glasbenem področju pomenila občutno praktično prekinjeno sodelovanje, plošče iz drugih delov bivše države pa niso doživele ponovnih izdaj, tako zaradi problemov z avtorskimi pravicami kot tudi zaradi spreminjajočih se lastnosti trga (v Sloveniji je bilo tako prisotno splošno neodobravanje bivše jugoslovanske glasbe, sama slovenska glasba pa obenem nikoli ni bila pretirano popularna zunaj njenih meja). Posledica tega je bila, da je bilo le zanemarljivo število vinilnih plošč digitaliziranih in izdanih na zgoščenkah. Dolgo časa je bilo to glasbo praktično nemogoče kupiti na legalen način (z izjemo trgovin z rabljeno opremo ali boljših sejmov). Tako ti blogi v mnogih primerih prinašajo povezave do glasbe, ki bi bila sicer praktično izgubljena. Ti glasbeni bloggerji/ljubitelji, ki v svojem iskanju glasbeno-zgodovinskih dragocenosti in nenavadnosti hodijo po trgovinah z rabljenimi ploščami, obiskujejo boljše sejme, brskajo po starih zbirkah plošč na podstrešjih itd., so ključni ohranjevalci precejšnjih delov jugoslovanske popularne glasbe, ki bi sicer preživela le v dokaj omejenih, zasebnih okoljih redkih posameznikov, ki so imeli možnost in željo, da so te plošče našli.

Glasbeno bloganje je v primeru tako ohranjene in deljene jugoslovanske glasbe in v luči zgodovine propada te države ter post-jugoslovanskih realnosti, še toliko pomembnejša družbenokulturna praksa, ki si za svoj glavni cilj postavi prav ohranjanje preteklosti: spomina in dediščine popularne glasbe. Primer Jugoslavije je zanimiv, ker je, v primerjavi z nekaterimi drugimi državami, vsaj nekoliko specifičen: država je razpadla leta 1991 in zdrsnila v vojne, iz katerih je izšlo več novih držav. Nekdanje republike, zdaj suverene države, so v procesu nacionalizacije in osamosvajanja utrpele precejšnjo izgubo spomina. Novo nastajajoče države in razvijajoče elite, ki naj bi bile očiščene komunističnih grehov, so poskušale izkoreniniti nekdaj skupno preteklost in jo nadomestiti z novo vzpostavljenimi nacional(istič)nimi pripovedmi. To je dejansko pomenilo tudi prekinitev kakršnihkoli stikov s skupno jugoslovansko popularno kulturo, ki je (med drugim) odločilno prispevala k vzniku jugonostalgije. Za preteklosti popularnih kultur je sicer značilno, da najdejo svojo pot v popkulturne sedanjosti in so v mnogih primerih, vsaj na zahodni polobli, tudi uspešno poblagovljene.

V glasbenih blogih so ohranjeni in globalno distribuirani biti in ritmi jugoslovanske preteklosti. Glasbeno bloganje kot praksa vernakularne zgodovine pomembno prispeva k vzpostavitvi svetovnega arhiva jugoslovanske popularne glasbe, tj. jugoslovanska popularna glasba prek glasbenega bloganja postane posrednik spominov. Kot je podrobneje razloženo v dizertaciji, pa postane posredovanost digitalne glasbe nadalje tudi priložnost, da blogerji ali komentatorji izrazijo svoje osebne poglede na glasbo in druga družbena in kulturna vprašanja, ki zadevajo vlogo in pomen preteklosti, sedanjosti in prihodnosti v sodobnem upravljanju identitet v DME. Glasba v DME namreč ni »samo« glasba (če to sploh kdaj je), ampak tudi močno orodje za soustvarjanje in sporočanje, četudi morda le delčka razbite preteklosti. Ta bazična (rass-roots) praksa »digitalnega ohranjanja popularne dediščine« je orodje za posredovanje spominov; glasbeni blogi renarativizirajo/remediirajo vidike vsakdanjega življenja, kot so posredovani skozi glasbo in zapise o njej, s čimer so ti »prenešeni« onkraj omejitev in obskurizacije, značilnih praks prvih dveh desetletij od razpada države.

Obravnavani blogi navadno ne vsebujejo le glasbe, ampak tudi »osebna tuhtanja« – ki so še dodatni prispevek k nostalgiji iz 'tretje roke' – in za ta namen uporabljajo multimodalni medijsko objektifikacijski pristop. Ker ima to za posledico bolj ali manj razumljive, koherentne eksternalizacije spomina, ki dejansko povedo neko zgodbo, te bloge tako obravnavam kot primere DP.

Blogi, kot so npr. *Jugozvuk* in *Nevaljaleploce*, *Najpogodnijemesto*, *Stariprdec* in mnogi drugi, veliko ljudem, ne le post-Jugoslovanom, omogočajo, da velike količine glasbe, ki je bila nekoč del jugoslovanskega vsakdana, a se je v procesu razpada države ohranila le sporadično, (ponovno)

odkrivajo, jo privedejo na površje, o njej pridobijo informacije in jo seveda tudi poslušajo. Vendar pa je tudi glasbena industrija v zadnjih letih spoznala potencial (in dejansko tudi strategijo svojega preživetja) »jugoslovanskega« pristopa kot nujne orientacije za ponovno vzpostavitev kroženja glasbe (plošč in izvajalcev) ne le znotraj nekdanje države, ampak tudi »na tujem«.

Kaj takšna uporaba medija pomeni za razumevanje, reprezentacijo in pri-sedanjanje jugoslovanske preteklosti? Najprej omogoča/lajša povrnitev, odkrivanje in reprezentiranje preteklosti – ali bolje rečeno vidikov preteklosti, ki običajno uidejo prijemu zgodovinopisja. Skozi proces remediacije fragmentov osebnih zgodovin, so le-ti prepleteni s širšimi sodobnimi družbenokulturnimi okolji bloggerjev in obiskovalcev. Tovrstno posredovanje spominov in cirkulacija 4MO pa funkcionira tudi kot orodje in proces nenehne re-artikulacije preteklosti. V tem smislu gre za kar najbolj običajno vsakdanjo aktivnost, ki posameznika umešča znotraj širših družbenokulturnih konstelacij, ki se v pomembni meri naslanjajo na re-aktualizacije preteklosti. Ti vidiki preteklosti bi se v odsotnosti njihove digitalizacije in dostopnosti v DME znašli pred grožnjo dvojnega izničenja – iz zgodovine oz. zgodovinopisja in iz medijskega vsakdana –, kar pomeni še dodatno težavo pri razumevanju in osmišljanju posledic razpada države in jugoslovanske zgodovine.

V tretjem poglavju obravnavam potencialnosti YouTuba kot socialno omrežne platforme, ki z dajanjem prostora za objavljanje in soustvarjanje 4MO mobilizira/pospešuje/omogoča (so)ustvarjanje digitalnih obeležij, tj. vernakularnih zgodovinskih pripovedi. Analizirane primere eksternalizacije spomina razumem kot tipične primere DP in kot kar najbolj neposredne primere vernakularnih digitalnih obeležij (ki so podrobneje obravnavana v nadaljevanju). Osrednji predmet analize so *YouTube videi (digitalna obeležja)*, katerih namen je *renarativizirati in/ali remediirati* nekatere izmed najpomembnejših utemeljujočih jugoslovanskih mitov, kot npr. drugo svetovno vojno in z njo tesno povezan antifašistični odpor. V tem kontekstu svoj pogled osredotočam tudi na življenja takšnih »zgodovinskih (re)interpretacij«, da bi lahko preučil, kakšne so *možnosti, da ti videi odprejo prostor, v katerem bi se lahko, v odnosu do prevladujočih nacional(istič)nih pripovedi artikularne opozicijski narativi*. Druga svetovna vojna in antifašizem sta v Jugoslaviji predstavljala pomembno potezo vsakdanjega življenja in popularne kulture, takšno »mešanje« pa svojo široko prisotnost ohranja tudi v »YouTube digitalnih obeležjih«. Zaradi pomembne vloge, ki sta jo ti temi igrali v vsakdanjem življenju, analiza v premislek nadalje vzame tudi širše vidike jugoslovanske popularne kulture (še posebej glasbe).

Zdelo se je, da so spremembe, ki so se v sferi politike, ekonomije in kulture zgodile po dogodkih med leti 1989-1991, v mračne komunistične ječe vzhoda pripeljale luč. Vtis je bil, da je bilo z zatiralno preteklostjo opravljeno in da je prihodnost, ko je bila enkrat osvobodjena jarma »nesvobode« in terorja, ležala pred nami in samo čakala, da jo »si jo vzamemo«. Na žalost pa

temu ni bilo povsem tako. Namesto, da bi »naredili korak naprej«, je preteklost še vedno zelo živa – vre in plava na površje skozi razpoke ideoloških struktur – in v znatni meri in-formira precejšnjo raznolikost postsocialističnih realnosti. Znotraj tehnološko-politične situacije, ki v večji meri kot prej omogoča (in zahteva) objavo, in s tem tudi politizacijo individualnih stališč in prepričanj, so nanašanja na drugo svetovno vojno in antifašizem znova postala trdnjava odpora do obstoječih družbeno-politično-ekonomskih pretresov, ki pestijo Evropo, še posebej, če se strinjamo s stališčem, da je na začetku 21. stoletja mogoče konceptualizirati, še manj pa kolektivno prakticirati, zelo malo alternativ sedanjemu politično-ekonomskemu sistemu (in to navkljub »osvobajajočim« tehnološkim predhodnikom in priložnostim posredovanja).

Menim, da se lahko v kategoriji vernakularnega oz. uporabniško proizvedenega DP glede na pristop do ureditve vsebine, njene prezentacije in upravljanja, razlikuje dva tipa. Vlog, prvič, običajno vključuje osebo, ki pred video kamero pripoveduje / poroča o svojih vsakodnevnikih izkušnjah, preferencah, daje nasvete, predava v tujih jezikih ipd. Vloganje tako ustvarja evidenco o dejavnosti osebe tako v smislu povedane vsebine kot tudi »zgodovine« objav. Funkcionalnost socialnega mreženja omogoča deljenje tovrstne vsebine med prijatelji kot tudi med popolnimi neznanci. Glede na funkcionalnost avdiovizualnega in besedilnega komentiranja, so takšne 4MO digitalne eksternalizacije intimnosti / osebnosti / identitete nadalje tudi predmet skrbnega pregleda, (ne)zainteresiranosti in (ne)odobravanja s strani drugih uporabnikov, ki lahko prispevajo k ustvarjanju 4MO prek »všečenja« (t. i. »liking« oz. javno odobravanje objavljenega materiala prek klika na za to namenjen gumb), ocenjevanja in komentiranja objavljenega materiala. To lahko vodi do zelo ohlapne, ad hoc skupnosti posameznikov, za katere je prav lahko možno, da se med seboj ne poznajo, a se lahko z drugim uporabnikom vseeno (ali pa tudi ne) seznanijo ali spoprijateljijo tako, da najprej sodelujejo v soustvarjanju posameznikove DP ter nato poglobljajo ta začetni stik. Soustvarjanje, ki je tu na delu, sestoji v tem, da vsaka aktivnost, ki je povezana z objavljenim videom (ki kot 4MO tako vključuje iskalno vrstico, opise, oznake oz. (angl. *tag*), komentarje, všečenja itd.), prispeva k njegovi razširitvi v smislu vsebine in pomena. Takšen video s tem na nek način postane javno mesto za eksternalizacijo (in tudi upravljanje) intimnosti glede partikularne teme. Tako ustvarjalec kot uporabnik sta v tem pristopu zapletena v zelo neposreden odnos (oseba ponavadi gleda naravnost v kamero), kjer potencialni naslovnik / sodelujoči uporabnik postane soustvarjalec in sodnik. In drugič, kratki filmi oziroma videi, ki so običajno sestavljeni iz avdiovizualnih in besedilnih elementov: digitalizirane fotografije, arhivski filmski in video posnetki, glasba in ponekod besedilo. In tovrstne prakse so osrednji del tega poglavja.

Kot platforma za deljenje in soustvarjanje avdiovizualnih (eksternalizacij) spominov YouTube ponuja obsežen izbor materiala, povezanega z Jugoslavijo, vernakularnih interpretacij in

avdiovizualnih izvedb preteklosti. Digitalne avdiovizualizacije jugoslovanske preteklosti (in postjugoslovanske sedanjosti) so formalno in tipično sestavljene iz slik in podložene z glasbo. Podobe, tako v obliki fotografij kot videa, v večini primerov prikazujejo različne tematike, ljudi in dogodke iz druge svetovne vojne (1941–1945), povojnega (1945–1991) in postjugoslovanskega obdobja in so digitalizirane (optično preslikane) ali pa so že v svojem izvoru digitalne. Aktualnost ali referencialnost teh podob izhaja iz njihove uporabe/montaže v videih, ki ponovno ustvarjajo/re-konstruirajo prostorsko-časovne koordinate države. Zelo splošno gledano ustvarjalci digitalnih obeležij konstruirajo vizualno časovnico, ki zaobsega rojstvo in propad države in ima ponavadi štiridelno strukturo (v kateremkoli zaporedju elementov ali uporabi kateregakoli izmed navedenih): druga svetovna vojna, povojno obdobje, postjugoslovanske vojne in postjugoslovanske / postsocialistične realnosti, v katerih so se znašle na novo oblikovane države.

To nikakor ne pomeni, da so podobe kakorkoli zvesto uporabljene glede na časovno zaporedje ali »dejansko« časovnico, ampak prej velja, da se, za namen njihovega doprinosa k ustvarjanju specifične in pogosto izrazito osebne pripovedi (ki se odvija v neprekinjeni sedanjosti interneta), z njimi časovno rokuje na precej arbitraren način. Pogosto uporabljena poteza na vizualni ravni je tudi vključevanje naslovov in podnapisov, ki video uvedejo, v njem zaznamujejo »poglavja«, ali pa nudijo tisto razlago/podrobnosti, ki jih tako slika kot zvok ne zmoreta sporočiti. Na ravni zvoka je stalnica uporaba popularne glasbe, ki izvira iz časa Jugoslavije ali kasnejših obdobj. Ta izbira je ponavadi predmet tehtnega premisleka, saj je skozi glasbo (tako kot v filmu) vizualni vsebini pripeta dodatna (pogosto bolj čustvena) sporočilnost. Skozi to interakcijo zvoka, slike in besedila, lahko v veliko primerih med temi angažiranimi intervencijami vzpostavimo splošno dvojno razlikovanje: opraviti imamo z 1) *vrednotenjem preteklosti* (skozi nostalgijo ali prezir) in 2) *odnosom do preteklosti* (»smrtno resen« ali »šaljiv«).

Vprašanja spomina, spominjanja in vernakularnih komemorativnih praks v DMO privzemajo različne oblike in smeri. Arhivske prakse, kakor jih lahko razločimo npr. v (glasbenem) bloganju, niso (kot sem trdil že v prejšnjem delu) zgolj arhiviranje. »Zbiratelj« nam prek zbiranja, ohranjanja / arhiviranja in eventuelnega urejanja (ali konserviranja) raznolikega materiala, ki je nato objavljen na blogih, YouTube kanalih in drugih SOS profilih, pripoveduje svojo zgodbo. Strinjam se, da ima podatkovna baza (kot digitalna inkarnacija arhiva) v bistvu ne-pripovedni značaj, vendar pa podatkovne baze, ali interneta kot »vseprisotne podatkovne baze« in s tem tudi spomina na splošno, ne moremo zreducirati na ne-pripovedni spomin. To velja tudi za številna digitalna obeležja / poklonske video posnetke na YouTubu. Vendar pa so nekatere stvari v primeru digitalnih obeležij na splošno morda nekoliko drugačne.

Digitalna obeležja delujejo na precej podoben način kot »klasična« obeležja: kot javne eksternalizacije spomina, ki lahko omogočajo/spodbujajo/nadaljujejo spominjanje na javen način ali v javnem prostoru. Prek tega, da to počno na ravni kolektiva, vzpostavljajo družbeno, kulturno ali/in politično kontinuiteto. Takšen je vsaj namen. Vendar pa nemrežna obeležja, spomeniki ali mesta žalovanja nalagajo tudi dokaj stroga pravila glede tega kdo, zakaj in na kakšen način naj se spominja (kar pomeni, da so s tem kot neprimerni za ustaljeno navado komemoracije izključeni določeni vidiki, osebe in dogodki). Na drugi strani se digitalna obeležja nagibajo k temu, da do določene mere remediirajo nemrežna obeležja in spomenike ter njim ustrezajoče protokole »uspominjanja« preteklosti. Vendar večinoma nalagajo tudi manj stroge kriterije sprejemljivosti, ki jim mora oseba zadostiti, da bi bila upravičena do mesta v javnem spominu in do komemoracije, tj. prisotnosti v javni sferi. Številne mrežne spominske strani »običajnim« državljanom omogočajo, da ustvarijo digitalno obeležje za njihove ljubljene in ga naredijo za globalno dostopnega, vzporedno z obeležji, posvečenimi znanim osebnostim, žrtvam napadov 11. septembra ali žrtvam holokavsta. Kakšen pomen ima to za spominjanje? Domnevna demokratizacija spominjanja do določene mere odpira nove prostore spominjanja in žalovanja. Tehnološka orodja in njim ustrezne razvijajoče se kulturne prakse za javno komemoracijo zasebne izgube, prežemajo same strukturne okvire spominjanja: vzporedno z javno (mrežno in nemrežno) komemoracijo nacionalno priznanih herojev in obletnic, dobijo svoje javno mesto (ne pa nujno tudi pozornosti) tudi izrazito zasebna spominjanja, ki so bila poprej omejena na ozek krog družine in prijateljev.

Potreba po nadzoru nad obeležji (v postjugoslovanskih kontekstih) ni nujno odkrito usmerjena v smer cenzure spletnih vsebin. Bolj se zdi, da boji okrog (re)interpretacije/revizije preteklosti v post-Jugoslaviji težijo k poglobljanju vrzeli in prilivanju olja na ogenj družbeno-kulturnih konfliktov. Ti imajo neredko svoj izvor v nedavnih procesih razpada Jugoslavije in vzpostavitvi novih neodvisnih držav, vendar pa korenine teh problemov nedvomno segajo tudi pred leto 1991 in se raztezajo vsaj do medvojne Jugoslavije (1918–1941). Redukcija dnevne politike (preteklosti) na konflikt dejansko zavira in onemogoča konstruktivno družbeno akcijo. Namesto konstruktivnega »soočenja s preteklostjo« so »spominske vojne« premeščene na področje javnosti in medijev, kjer so simboli, spomeniki in obeležja, ideje, ideali in prepričanja posredovani in posledično prepuščeni pogosto brezplodnim debatam med pripadniki diametralno nasprotnih prepričanj.

Posredovanje (pozitivnih in negativnih) spominov o Jugoslaviji in eksternalizacije individualnih reinterpretacij nadalje beležijo izredno rast znotraj DMO, kar odpira prostor za digitalna srečanja enakomislečih kot tudi za zagrizene neargumentirane intervencije med nasprotujočimi stranmi.

Lahko bi se reklo, da je bila praksa oskrunitve materialnih obeležij prenesena tudi v DMO, a je v tem procesu doživela nekatere spremembe: oskrnitev se lahko na omrežnih obeležjih zgodi bodisi skozi objavljane sovražnih komentarjev bodisi skozi dokaj razširjeno prakso ustvarjanja nasprotujočih obeležij. Za razliko od nemrežnih proti-obeležnih praks, kjer je skupnostno oblikovanje okrog oskrunjenega spomenika komajda možno, pa lahko nasprotujoče obeležje v DMO služi kot primerna točka za srečanja enakomislečih.

Kar digitalna obeležja – še posebej vernakularna – dela za občutno drugačna, je njihova umeščenost ali vpetost v koordinate javnega prostora in možnost za družbeno delovanje, ki ga to (vsaj potencialno) generira. Tukaj je ključnega pomena detemporalizacija in deteritorializacija (oz. nova temporalnost/teritorialnost) takšnih obeležij, tj. njihova lastnost, da so lahko potencialno prisotna/dostopna/spremenljiva/arhivabilna v številnih prostorih ob številnih različnih časih. To je po »obratu povezljivosti«, ki implicira premik v načinu konceptualizacije družbene kolektivnosti, in ki ga poganja z digitalno tehnologijo podprta povezljivost (o povezljivosti glej prvo poglavje), postala ena izmed glavnih značilnosti digitalne medijske ekologije. Z ozirom na to je lahko javno spominjanje v digitalni medijski ekologiji videno kot »živa materija«: eksternalizacija spomina (in s tem spominjanja) v digitalnih obeležjih in prek njih postaja proces, ki je vedno bolj predmet razvoja, debat, izpodbijanj, renavitizacij in rekontekstualizacij.

Vernakularna digitalna obeležja niso nujno vzpostavljena z namenom povzročanja razgretih debat, niti ne stremijo k temu, da bi podajala profesionalne zgodovinske razlage, ampak služijo bolj kot dobri indikatorji: 1) raznolikosti individualnih interpretacij zgodovin in 2) raznolikosti čustev, osebnih pogledov in prepričanj, ki so investirana v takem pripovedništvu, ter s tem povezane sposobnosti posredovane vsebine (4MO), da, ko je enkrat javna, mobilizira afekt.

In vtis je, da je vernakularno digitalno pripovedništvo o preteklosti (npr. v 4MO), kot ga lahko najdemo na YouTubu, dobro/popularno orodje za ta namen. Res je, da je občinstvo, če ga obravnavamo glede na možnosti *grass-roots* delovanja, razpršeno in pogosto obrobno, vendar pa se okrog tovrstnih (številnih, rudimentarnih v smislu uporabljenih tehnik pripovedništva) digitalnih obeležij gradijo prostori skupne vednosti in prostori (potencialnega) delovanja. Mrežna preteklost (poleg gole zabave, nostalgije ali čiste subverzije ter zasebno-javne obravnave osebne preteklosti) skozi remediacijo postane pomemben dejavnik v artikulaciji reinterpretacij preteklosti. Tako bi se lahko reklo, da uporabniki/soustvarjalci (ustvarjalci in obiskovalci) digitalnih obeležij specifičnih tem večinoma ne obravnavajo in o njih ne debatirajo zelo podrobno. Navkljub tehnološkim dispozicijam interneta, in še posebej YouTubea, ki bi morale, vsaj skozi utopični pogled, pospešiti rast skupnosti znanja, sveta vednosti, pa so te dispozicije na ta način uporabljene le v omejenem obsegu. Gledano s tehnološko-kulturnega vidika, se lahko v tem vidi znak

diskrepance med nameravano uporabo tehnologije in njeno dejansko, empirično aplikacijo. Prevladujoči vzorec kaže na bolj sprotno navezavo na objavljene vsebine, ki ne vključuje dolge ali resne poglobitve v tematiko. Za te kratke izjave ni nujno, da so v celoti nezainteresirane. Pogosto so, ravno nasprotno, čezmerno zainteresirane, afektivne v odnosu do avdiovizualnih zgodb, ki pri obiskovalcu pogosto zadanejo na prav posebno noto. In v primeru Jugoslavije (ter zainteresiranih obiskovalcev) to pripovedništvo za svoj predmet jemlje temo, ki je v resnici zelo delikatna. Obeležja tako posledično neizogibno spodbujajo (tudi) afektivne reakcije, kar je bilo mogoče opaziti tudi na obravnavanih primerih.

Če grem še nekoliko dlje, bi lahko trdil, da uporabniki obeležja/4MO, namesto za »resne« debate o preteklosti, pogosteje uporabljajo kot oder za uprizarjanje svoje identitete ali za izražanje svoje drže glede preteklosti. V soustvarjanju digitalnih obeležij sta pomembna dva vidika: gledišče ustvarjalca in gledišče obiskovalca. Prek vzpostavitve digitalne naracije ustvarjalec eksternalizira spomin, skozi pripovedništvo, kjer je uporabljena glasba, fotografije, video in besedilo, pa sporoča svojo zgodovinsko izjavo. Ta eksternalizacija je pogojena na dveh ravneh. Najprej se lahko izpostavi, da je digitalno obeležje nepopolno, če ni predmet soustvarjanja (pripoznanja) s strani uporabnikov, ki ga obiščejo, o temi komentirajo in/ali ga naredijo za dostopnega v svojih lastnih mrežah. Le tedaj obeležje, čeprav je v tehničnem smislu javno, pridobi tudi svojo javno pozornost (kakorkoli omejena že je). Drugo, enako ključno raven, pa lahko vidimo v t. i. »metafori džuboksa«, katere pomen se nanaša na relativno omejeno število objektov, ti se »prezentirajo« kot končna oziroma reprezentativna množica, ki so na voljo za uporabo v digitalnih obeležjih (pesmi in optično preslikane fotografije), njihova prepoznavnost in široka prisotnost pa izhaja iz njihove stalne uporabe in reprodukcije, ki je iz teh objektov naredila »avtentične« reprezentacije neke specifične teme. Tako npr. kljub velikim številom fotografij Tita obstaja nabor tistih, ki so najpogosteje uporabljene in s tem »reprezentativne«, gre za motive, ki jih lahko najdemo na razglednicah (ti so pogosto uporabljeni v DP, čeprav tukaj niso obravnavani) in predstavljajo, recimo, Most čez Neretvo, Blejsko jezero, glavna mesta republik itd. Metafora džuboksa s sabo nosi implikacijo, da lahko posameznik (tako kot to velja pri uporabi pravega džuboksa) izbira le iz predhodno določenih zbirk predmetov, podob, pesmi, idej ipd. Trik je v tem, da je ponavadi vsaka izbira razumljena kot »svobodna«, pri čemer je nadaljevanje tega stavka – da gre torej za svobodno izbiro, ki se izvaja znotraj »že vzpostavljenega izbora« – pogosto zamolčano.

V četrtem poglavju obravnavam prakse spomina in spominjanja na več Facebook profilih, ki se nanašajo na Jugoslavijo in »komemorirajo« državo ali njenega vodjo. Pod drobnogled sem vzel tri zgodovinske profile (ki so videni kot 4MO) in izvedel multimodalno diskurzivno analizo, da bi odkril strategije, ki jih uporabljajo pri remediaciji preteklosti. Z drugimi besedami tako sledim –

skozi avdiovizualne in besedilne komentarje – obrisom »Facebook« digitalnega spomina Jugoslavije, tj. temu, kako je Jugoslavija na tej spletni strani »profilirana«. Osrednja pozornost je namenjena vprašanju, *kako je jugoslovanska preteklost, ali bolje rečeno njene re-interpretacije in re-mediacije, uporabljena v izbranih Facebook profilih, še posebej v odnosu do spoprijemanja s sedanjimi družbenopolitičnimi situacijami v postjugoslovanskem prostoru*. Nadalje raziskujem, *kakšen je potencial te SOS, da služi kot vernakularna spominska platforma za re-artikulacijo idej »nove Jugoslavije / jugoslovanstva«*.

Analiza (multimodalne mobilne medijske) objekte raziskave obravnava kot *digitalna obeležja*, z njimi povezane prakse DP (kot so bile elaborirane v predhodnih delih raziskave) pa razume kot osrednje principe v procesu soustvarjanja zgodovinskih in spominskih pripovedi na Facebooku. Omeniti je treba, da so analizirani »zgodovinski profili« videni kot digitalna obeležja zato, ker družabni prostor, ki ga ustvarijo, olajšuje nastanek zelo ohlapnih, sprotnih skupnosti, katerih člani so prek deljenja svojih individualnih / intimnih misli, pesmi in videov na soustvarjalen način udeleženi v »konstrukciji« tega prostora. Skozi objavljanje povezav do videov in druge vsebine, prek komentiranja in diskutiranja o različnih temah, se odvija proces ustvarjanja spominske pokrajine. Ta proces v pomembni meri olajšuje vzpostavljanje avdiovizualnega in besedilnega zapisa jugoslovanske preteklosti. Pa četudi je slednja radikalno začasne narave.

V tem primeru soustvarjanje po eni strani predpostavlja individualno eksternalizacijo spomina, ki ima nedvoumen »many-to-many« (oz. »od-mnogih-k-mnogim«) značaj. Po drugi strani vernakularna individualna eksternalizacija vsaj do določene mere (a ne nujno namenoma) deluje kot obeležje (čeprav kot obeležje, ki je precej nepopolno v smislu življenjske dobe / dostopa). Avdiovizualna in besedilna vsebina je objavljena v javnem prostoru in tam kolektivno obdelana v fragmentirano, nenehno razvijajočo se pripoved. V povezavi s tem trdim, da so lahko, prav tako kot spomin v DME, tudi digitalna obeležja pojmovana kot entitete, ki imajo značaj sprotности: so v nenehnem premeščanju in spreminjanju, rasti ali upadanju in, tako kot 4MO, v nenehnem gibanju med uporabniki.

Ob govoru o historyčnih profilih lahko omenim, da tehnologija Facebooka in njegovih kulturnih prisvojitvev olajšuje vzpostavitev prostora za uradno preminule države: njihovi državljani, politične figure, glasba, film in literatura lahko še naprej živijo in »aktivno« participirajo v digitalnem posmrtnem življenju države. Profil, kot temporalno strukturiran niz avdiovizualnih in besedilnih objav, komentarjev in diskusij, voden s strani lastnik(ov) ali administrator(jev), tako dobi življenje kot soustvarjena digitalna pripoved.

Navaden, »dejanski« uporabnik ima ponavadi zgolj en profil. Jugoslavija jih ima mnogo. Poleg Facebook profilov, ki se eksplicitno nanašajo nanjo, jih še večje število (več kot 500) za svojo

glavno referenčno točko/izhodišče vzame ime Josipa Broza Tita oz. Maršala Tita, ki je na spletu morda najbolj prepoznavna in široko uporabljena ikona jugoslovanske preteklosti. Tako lahko najdemo profile, kot npr. zgoraj omenjeni *SFR Jugoslavija*, *Jugosloveni smo zauvijek*, *Josip Broz Tito*, *tovariš Josip Broz Tito* ...

V tem kontekstu je potrebno poudariti precej problematičen vidik glede izvajanja raziskave na Facebooku. Dejavnostim uporabnikov in obiskovalcev je namreč izjemno težko slediti za nazaj, v daljših časovnih obdobjih. Do objav ne moremo dostopati tako, da iščemo po datumu, ampak lahko po njih brskamo le. tako, da pritisnemo na gumb »starejše/prejšnje objave«. Poleg tega po njih ne moremo brskati in tudi niso dostopne prek tematskega iskanja. Po letu in pol spremljanja številnih profilov (kar mi je dalo pomemben vpogled v način delovanja profilov na Facebooku kot obeležnih profilov) sem se odločil, da ne bom poskušal izvesti vseobsegajoče analize celotnega življenjskega obdobja določenega/ih profila/ov. Čeprav bi lahko bil ta pristop zaradi svojega majhnega obsega viden kot neprimeren za analizo, pa menim, da se bo, glede na sprotnostno naravo druženja in povezanosti na Facebooku in še posebej glede na eksternalizacije spomina, izkazal za ustreznega.

Ne glede na težave, ki se postavljajo na pot raziskovanju, pa obstaja specifična poteza, ki Facebookove »zgodovinske profile« naredi za posebej relevanten pojav za to raziskavo: Facebook, kot reečno, omogoča tudi ustvarjanje profilov, ki so posvečeni posameznikom, ki so že preminuli (kljub temu, da to krši pogoje uporabe Facebooka), tj. slavnim osebam in žrtvam vojne (iz druge svetovne vojne, kot tudi tistim iz najnovejših vojaških avantur) ter celo državam (čeprav Facebook uporabnike aktivno odvrča od ustvarjanja neosebnih profilov). Ti s tem zaživijo digitalno posmrtno življenje, si ustvarijo prijateljstva in pritegnejo privrženca. To ima za raziskavo nekatere pomembne posledice. Če gre namreč pri SOS v osnovi »zame in za moje prijatelje«, je s tem pertinentna tudi trditev, ki pravi, da gre v primeru »neosebnih« zgodovinskih profilov kljub temu še vedno za bistveno osebna prizadevanja, ki kot taka (navadno) uidejo kakršnimkoli uradnim ideološko-političnim direktivam od zgoraj, a ki prav zaradi začasne in bežne narave (ki je tako problematična za raziskovanje) svoje vsebine ustvarijo izjemno »oralno« (v smislu takojšnjosti in neuradnosti) okolje za soustvarjanje in renarativizacije jugoslovanske preteklosti. Profili so še toliko bolj osebni, ker so vzpostavljeni in upravljani s strani »dejanske« osebe (ali več takih oseb) in razumljeni na zelo »oseben« način s strani samih uporabnikov. Sprotnost, ki v poemmbni meri zaznamuje renarativizacijo in spominjanje Jugoslavije, je zaradi svoje opredeljenosti z začasnostjo in neizsledljivostjo obenem tudi vir nedoslednosti, zaradi česar bi se lahko tovrstno upovedovanje in spominjanje izkazala za irelevantna. Vendar pa število ljudi, ki »sledijo« in dajejo svoje glasove odobravanja življenju Jugoslavije na Facebooku, dokazuje, da to nikakor ni le marginalna zadeva.

»Zgodovina« uporabniške dejavnosti v prostoru digitalne pripadnosti (angl. *belonging*) je praktično neizsledljiva, še posebej ko gre za sledenje preteklosti. Čeprav je teoretično mogoče pridobiti stisnjeno datoteko skoraj celotne zgodovine dejavnosti posameznega uporabnika Facebooka, pa to predstavlja le eno stran zgodbe. Drug del se nahaja v profilu katerega izmed njegovih prijateljev in je praktično nedosegljiv, razen če ta oseba ne privoli v deljenje teh podatkov. Facebook kot »skladišče spomina« je s tem zaznamovan z izredno parcialnostjo in začasnostjo, kar nadalje priča o njegovi sprotni naravi ter radikalno prehodnem značaju evidence odnosov. Kot kaže, nam tako preostane le brskanje po starejših objavah s klikanjem na gumb »nazaj«. Problem je v tem, da se starejše objave naložijo v en zaporedni niz, kjer vsaka navigacija po teh, včasih izjemno dolgih seznamih, »zgodovinarja« pripelje nazaj do tja, od koder je začel: do strani z najbolj svežimi objavami.

To bi predstavljalo velik problem za analizo, ki bi si za nalogo zadala dolgoročno raziskovanje katerekoli tovrstne dejavnosti (razen v primeru njenega namenskega sledenja in snemanja). Zato sem se odločil, da svojo analizo zasnujem tako, da vključuje le vsebino, ki je na voljo brez kakršnekoli intervencije lastnika profila. Z drugimi besedami to pomeni, da se sprotno osredotočam na kakršnokoli vsebino, ki je dostopna v končnem obdobju raziskave. Ta pristop se zdi kot najbolj primeren tudi v kontekstu obravnavanja profila kot 4MO: objavljena vsebina je pogosto zelo »sveža«, vendar pa v mnogih primerih uporaba remediirane vsebine (filmov in glasbe) vzpostavi odnos do preteklosti in obenem ustvari povezavo med prostorsko in časovno oddaljenimi uporabniki. Z ozirom na »nemožnost zgodovine« odnosa na Facebooku, postanejo značilnosti ohranjanja stikov predmet radikalne spremembe, v primeru zgodovinskega Facebook profila kot digitalnega obeležja, pa se spreminjajo tudi značilnosti spominjanja samega.

Na preseku družabnosti in soustvarjanja spominov namreč leži ključ za nadaljnje razpletanje procesov spomina in spominjanja na Facebooku. Da bi prišli do tega, predlagam hiter obvoz preko obravnave delovanja logike Facebooka, kjer je poudarek namenjen neosebnim in lažnim profilom. Nato bom, z namenom pojasnitve tega, kako se v jugoslovanskih zgodovinskih profilih popularna kultura uporablja kot osrednji del DP, obravnaval načine, na katere vsebine popularne kulture (še posebej glasba in film) vstopajo v prostore digitalne družabnosti, ki so bili vzpostavljeni s Facebookom.

Spominjanje in deljenje avdiovizualnega spomina nekoga drugega se npr. izvaja skozi bolj »digitalno angažirano« in izrazito komentiranje počitniške fotografije (ki uporablja tudi čustvene simbole) ali pa prek manj angažiranih dejanj, kot je npr. »všečenje«. V tem smislu bi lahko bili komunikacija in družabnost na Facebooku (pa tudi celotna spletna komunikacija, kot se je pogosto trdilo v začetnih fazah interneta) videni kot določena degradacija nemrežne interakcije, ki poteka

iz oči v oči: prijatelji so pri najbolj instrumentalnih uporabniških praksah »shranjeni«, da bi lahko bili po potrebi »priklicani«, komunikacija, ki jo z objavo vsebine prične prijatelj, je lahko prekinjena s tem, da ostane brez odziva, ali pa je preprosto ignorirana. Drug pogost očitek digitalnim komunikacijam, ki se lahko nanaša tudi na Facebook, je degradacija »avtentičnega« očesnega in/ali fizičnega stika. Poleg tega je komunikacija na Facebooku pogosto tudi dejansko fragmentarna, površna ... kratka banalna.

Lahko bi se reklo, da je spominjanje na Facebooku, ob upoštevanju arbitrarnosti objavljanja/komentiranja uporabnikov o rečeh, na katere naletijo, občasnih provokacij in površnem dojetanju stvari, postalo povsem banalno opravilo. Izmenjave na tej strani so lahko nadalje videne kot jasni afektivni dražljaji, ki so lahko razbrani v številnih razgretih objavah in odzivih.

Avdiovizualne in besedilne objave/komentarji so, o analiziranih primerih (blogi, YouTube, Facebook) le redko v obliki pripovedi kot take, saj največkrat nimajo nobene tovrstne eksplicitne agende načrta: in zaradi soustvarjalnega značaja profilnih obeležij je verjetnost, da bi do tega prišlo, majhna. A prav s perspektive soustvarjanja takšna individualno-kooperativna prizadevanja služijo namenu vzpostavitve skupnega podjetja prikazovanja/dekodiranja/zapisovanja preteklosti onkraj omejitev kodificiranih družbenih kanalov. Sprotno in naključno sodelovanje uporabnikov v re-narativizaciji jugoslovanske preteklosti sicer res ne vodi v nastanek faktografsko neoporečne zgod(b)ovine. A to pa tudi ni glavni namen teh prizadevanj. Namesto tega ljudje skozi kar najbolj vsakdanje interakcije in participacijo, v svojem prispevanju k skupinski praksi ponavzočenja preteklosti v sedanjosti, dejansko na precej naključen način pletejo drugačno podobo preteklosti. Prosto dostopni videi na YouTubu tako ne predstavljajo zgolj materiala, prek katerega se je moč pridružiti deljenju digitalno re-narativiziranih spominov drugih. S tem, ko je »tuja lastnina« objavljena na profilu, kot v primeru *SFR Jugoslavije*, je »spomin« prenesen v drugačen prostor in »izpostavljen« uporabnikom, da nanj komentirajo ali pa ga preprosto ignorirajo.

V poglavjih 2, 3 in 4 sem trdil, da lahko soočenje s socialistično preteklostjo (v DME) v postjugoslovanskih družbah v mnogih pogledih vidimo kot vernakularni poskus ohranjanja (vidikov) preteklosti. Ta preteklost je bila v procesu razpada Jugoslavije in vzpostavitve novih držav oropana vse normalnosti in družbeno-kulturno-politične aktualnosti. Socialistično/jugoslovansko poglavje je v zgodovinah južnih Slovanov postalo breme, ki ga je bilo potrebno zavreči v zameno za boljšo preteklost (ki je morala biti še izumljena). Vendar pa po propadu ni bilo nobene »dostojne« preteklosti za utemeljitev spomina in spominjanja, na podlagi

katere bi se lahko gradila ta zaželena prihodnost. V teku razpada države in vzpostavitve neodvisnosti držav naslednic, je bilo »historično« post-Jugoslovanov razbito in neveljavno. Res je, da so bile razvite nove politično-ideološke in mitološke pripovedi, vendar pa le-tem očitno ni uspelo izoblikovati »predane« in neomajne skupnosti. Ker pa je vzdrževanje velike in vseobsegajoče pripovedi nekaj nemogočega (kar še toliko bolj velja za področje DME), neprimerna preteklost tako vztraja v svojem neprimernem strašenju sedanjosti. Tako je razumljivo, da se jugoslovanski popularnokulturni filmi, serije, igralci, izvajalci, politične osebnosti, in nenazadnje ideologija in vrednote prominentno kažejo kot tista manjkajoča zgodovinska substanca (kulturalna referenca).

Ključnih lastnosti mrežnih spominskih praks sta vernakularni značaj in individualna iniciativa, ki sta prisotna v procesu zamejitve obsega (tem in topik) in opredelitve značaja spominjanja/komemoracije v DMO. Zlasti pa se za prakso mrežnega spominjanja, kljub soustvarjalni kvaliteti, ki jo lahko najdemo v dejavnosti eksternalizacije spomina in spominjanja, izkaže, da jo v veliki meri opredeljujejo značilnosti individualnosti, fragmentarnosti in partikularnosti. V nasprotju z univerzalizirajočimi težnjami zgodovinopisja ter političnih in ideoloških interpretacij, je mrežno spominjanje singularno v smislu, da je interpretacija proizvod soustvarjalnega in sprotne procesa skupnosti, o kateri »Jaz« (ali katerikoli drug posameznik ali, nenazadnje, tudi druga sprotna skupnost) morda nimam nobene empirične vednosti.

To, zaradi česar ima spominjanje v okvirih DME učinek v širšem, družbenem smislu, je vidik soustvarjalnega »proizvajanja« spominov/obeležijskih pripovedi in jeder, okoli katerih se lahko razvije renarativizacija ali reinterpretacija preteklosti. Partikularni glasovi so namreč tisti, ki so lahko ključni za razumevanje dinamike med kolektivnimi spomini in vsakdanjim življenjem. Soustvarjalni vidiki branja preteklosti, zbiranja, urejanja in objavljajanja (digitalnih ali digitaliziranih) re-interpretacij / re-narativizacij, pa kljub svoji singularnosti v kiberprostorih spomina vseeno zasedajo prominentno vlogo v utemeljevanju (četudi relativno ozkih in sprotnih) kolektivov.

Analizirani primeri DP, spomina in obeležij kažejo, da namen mrežnega spominjanja ni le v uspavanju posameznika in kolektiva ali v goli zabavi. Temu se sicer v določeni meri ni mogoče izogniti, vendar pa je potrebno po drugi strani omeniti tudi dejstvo, da sodobna globalna situacija, tako politična kot ekonomska, pri ljudeh ni uspela vzpodbuditi kakšne posebne ozaveščenosti, družbenega nemira, kaj šele akcije (kar namiguje na to, da uspavalni učinek ne izhaja toliko iz tematike, ki je obravnavana, ampak bolj iz vseprisotnega občutja nemoči) zato, ker bi bila mediirana v DME (tehnološko omogočena), pač pa gre bolj za to, da je v zadnjih primerih protestov tehnologija uporabljena kot sredstvo komuniciranja, brez pretiranega povečevanja.

Kakšne so, končno, implikacije spomina in spominjanja na spletu? Kakšno vlogo ima v spreminjajočih se praksah spominjanja tehnologija? *In na kakšen način tehnologijo v svojih intervencijah uporabljajo uporabniki?* Tehnologija in z njo povezane konceptualne spremembe na področjih povezanosti, posameznika in skupnosti ter nenehne redefinicije prostora in časa kažejo, da spomina ni možno povezovati le s teritorialnimi/materialnimi sledmi preteklosti. Namesto tega se, kot odziv na vedno hitrejšo izročanje preteklosti »vsega, kar je«, za prakse spomina in spominjanja prej zdi, da privzemajo vedno močnejši značaj neposrednosti: velik del posredovanega življenja je vedno že prešel, a je vendarle skozi posredovane spomine vedno na voljo za nenehno potrošnjo. Ta pojav nato (vsaj v idealnem primeru) vodi do večjega dostopa in participacije, katerih efektivnost je v veliki meri odvisna od klik-angažmaja.

Za spominske prakse se tako zdi, da postajajo fleksibilnejše in bolj prilagodljive glede na sodobne potrebe spominjajočega posameznika ali kolektiva, hkrati pa postajajo tudi vse »ranljivejše« za naključne kapriciozne intervencije. Vendar pa to ni ocena kvalitete ali natančnosti spominjanja glede na zgodovinska dejstva: ni ocena tega, kaj in na kakšen način je reprezentirano. Kvaliteta se je povsem verjetno lahko poslabšala (pa naj bo to dobro ali slabo), vendar pa to ni bistveno, še posebej, če upoštevamo, da spominjanje nikoli v človeški zgodovini ni bilo kaj dosti bolj natančno.

V sodobnih praksah, tehnikah in tehnologijah spominjanja/remediiranja/renarativizacije preteklosti pa je še posebej fascinantno dejstvo, da lahko delo spominjanja in objavljanja ter posredovanja spominov, idealno gledano, opravi vsak, ki zna uporabljati programsko opremo za urejanje slik/videa in nato ustvariti zapise, ki bodo, »tam zunaj«, predstavljale popolnoma *veljavno vernakularno zgodovinsko* pričevanje. Veljavno, v kolikor lahko tovrstne eksternalizacije pridobijo privržence in s tem širši družbeni pomen. Nadalje pa je lahko relativna dostopnost sredstev za spletno objavljanje raznolikih vsebin, ki vključujejo kar najbolj osebne uprizoritve ali re-interpretacije preteklosti, znamenje tega, da velike pripovedi za svojo prevlado nimajo nobenih resnih možnosti.

Ali pač? Trajna delitev, ki v razumevanju in reprezentiranju preteklosti poteka med univerzalnostjo in singularnostjo, tj. delitev glede njune vloge v družbenih sedanostih, je v nekem pogledu gotovo »ogrožena«. Na spletu je opazen porast individualnih interpretacij preteklosti in rast pomembnosti (ali vsaj prisotnosti) individualnih zapisov. Istočasno se postavljajo pod vprašaj velike pripovedi, ki postajajo predmet ponovnega (raz)vrednotenja. Kaj je nacionalna zgodovina, če njene narativizacije ni možno izkusiti? Ali naj postane le še ena izmed singularnih uprizoritev (obravnavanih zgoraj)? Glede na to, da so naša življenja še vedno bolj ali manj prizemljena, se zdi

to malo verjetno. Kljub temu pa to morda pomeni, da bo potrebno kohezivno vrednost kolektiva iskati kje drugje.

Nazadnje se lahko kot veljavna potrdi na začetku postavljena hipoteza, tj. da so digitalne tehnologije v veliki meri prevzele prostore, načine in sredstva za (javno) ustvarjanje, soustvarjanje in distribucijo vernakularnega spomina. Obeležne in komemorativne dejavnosti – ki so odraz najosnovnejše človeške potrebe, da se s preteklostjo in njeno izgubo sooči na skupen/kolektiven način – niso bile le prenesene, ampak tudi razširjene v domeno digitalnega. Prav tako ni nepomembno dejstvo, da so procesi in dinamike nemrežnih odnosov (osebnih, nacionalnih itd.) preneseni na splet in tako predstavljajo razločno kontinuiteto z nemrežnimi svetovi. Spomin in spominske prakse so v procesu neomejene digitalizacije istočasno postale bolj personalizirane in javne, lažje in bolj prilagodljive, a hkrati tudi ranljivejše in še bolj zmuzljive. Glede na zapisano tako trdim, da internet in z njim podprti mediji dejansko odločilno vplivajo na to, na kakšen način je preteklost prisvojena in po-prisotnjena. Še pomembneje, in ne brez povezave z digitalno empatijo pa je, da se za soustvarjanje digitalnih prostorov spominjanja zdi, da nudijo prostor za vidike spominjanja, ki so bili v primeru Jugoslavije »izpuščeni« iz uradnih pripovedi; in to navkljub težavam in pomanjkljivostim, ki so bile obravnavane zgoraj. Vendar pa je za kakršenkoli osvobajajoči potencial, ki bi bil pripisan zgolj zdravilu tehnologije, zaradi odločilne medsebojne povezanosti področij mrežnega in nemreženega ter hkratni odsotnosti njune skupne organiziranosti, malo verjetno, da bo lahko izzval in transcendiral stalne družbenokulturne pretese ali uspel motivirati ljudi, da pod vprašaj postavijo svoje trdnjave prepričanja, ki v luči sprememb zagrizeno vztrajajo naprej.

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