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COMMODIFICATION OF THE COLLECTIVE MEMORY:
YUGONOSTALGIA AS A MARKETING STRATEGY

Master Thesis

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Hereby I declare that I worked out this thesis independently, using only the listed resources and literature, and I did not present it to obtain another academic degree.

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Abstract

This study focuses on a specific type of contemporary nostalgia for the Yugoslav past, emerging in recent years across the post-Yugoslav space. Beginning with cross-border broadcast media cooperation (TV shows, reality shows, talk shows, national news media...), public expressions of what Dubravka Ugresic dubbed Yugonostalgia are now to be increasingly found in every-day life, popular culture and cyberspace.

Growing idealization of the Yugoslav socialist past and the continued evocation of the visual artefacts and ideological values of the communist era in contemporary media have contributed to Yugonostalgia's popularization. This study focuses particularly on the commercial aspects of Yugonostalgia and argues that companies in the region are largely exploiting 'nostalgic' capital by stimulating positive emotions from the past. Nostalgia has been used to brand products as Yugoslav and to mobilize collective memories as leverage over consumers' decision-making.

Key terms: nostalgia, Yugonostalgia, commodification of nostalgia, collective memories, nostalgic advertising, Yugoslav brands.

Apstrakt:

Rad predstavlja sociološki osvrt na koncept Jugonostalgije, kulturološkog fenomena koji je posljednjih godina sveprisutan na prostorima bivše Jugoslavije. Analiziraju se ne samo različiti aspekti jugonostalgичnog narativa, već i proces komercijalizacije kolektivnih sjećanja u bivšoj Jugoslaviji. Pokazuje se na koji način kompanije iz regiona koriste Jugonostalgiju kao svojevrsnu marketing strategiju, kako bi stimulisale emocionalnu, "nostalgичnu" potrošnju i osigurale sopstveni komercijalni uspjeh. Studija nastoji da predstavi i analizira različite forme ekonomske upotrebe Jugonostalgije, kao i odluke potrošača zasnovane na nostalgичnim narativima.

Ključne riječi: nostalgija, Jugonostalgija, komercijalizacija Jugonostalgije, kolektivna sjećanja, marketing strategija, Jugoslovenski proizvodi, socijalistički brendovi.

Résumé :

Cette étude va essayer d'introduire certaines idées concernant l'émergence, les causes et les conséquences de la Yougonostalgie. Dans un premier temps, elle va s'intéresser aux diverses interprétations de ce phénomène : la Yougonostalgie comme stratégie de confrontation de mémoire au présent, comme utopie de jeunes générations, comme réponse aux crises économiques et politiques dans la région, comme moyen de réconciliation, comme passage vers la Yougosphère (Judt)... L'idée sera d'identifier les Yougonostalgies dans la vie quotidienne des générations Yougoslaves et post-Yougoslaves, dans les médias, dans la culture populaire, etc. Les différents usages publics et ses manifestations culturelles, politiques et marchands seront ensuite évoqués afin de suivre la Yougonostalgie dans tous ses états. Finalement, les différents exemples de la marchandisation de la Yougonostalgie seront analysés afin d'identifier les stratégies marketing employées par ces acteurs sur le "marché de la Yougonostalgie" pour séduire les consommateurs. Les marques nostalgiques doivent-elles leur popularité à une efficace commercialisation de la mémoire collective ? Certaines marques de grande distribution, certains produits culturels ou productions artistiques utilisent-ils la Yougonostalgie pour déclencher d'agréables souvenirs de l'époque, stimuler la consommation et générer du profit ?

Le Train Bleu de Tito, un des symboles de la Yougoslavie communiste, sera au centre d'une des études de cas. Celle-ci va se focaliser sur les usages commerciaux de cet objet patrimonial, sur ses stratégies publicitaires et sur leur caractère nostalgique afin de mieux comprendre les usages pratiques de la mémoire collective dans un contexte économique.

Preface

In May 2011, European Commission and European Public Law Organization (EPLO) gathered 30 European students in the project named Wheeling EU Enlargement. This 30 days-long road trip from Rome to Athens was aimed at raising awareness on the enlargement process by becoming familiar with political, economic and law systems in old (Italy, Greece) and new (Slovenia, Bulgaria, Romania) member states, candidate countries (Turkey, Croatia – at that moment, FYROM) and potential candidates (Serbia, Bosnia, etc). What is extremely interesting about these kinds of projects, conferences, exchange programs or summer schools is that one can often find students and scholars from the Balkans spontaneously finding each others in no time and forming sort of “Yugoslav” groups in a way that looks rather logical and natural, as they always have their common language, their distinctive sense of humour and jokes about their stereotypes (lazy Montenegrins, dumb Bosnians or naive Slovenians¹), their memories and traditions. In no way this project, gathering young people from 14 European cities (Rome, Parma, Ljubljana, Zagreb, Sarajevo, Belgrade, Podgorica, Tirana, Skopje, Sofia, Bucharest, Istanbul, Thessaloniki, Athens), was different. During the first couple days smaller groups were formed (as keeping a group of 30 people together for most of the day is not quite practical, and rather impossible) – groups of young people who were sharing hotel rooms, bus seats, project tasks and most of their time were formed. One of those, unsurprisingly, was a distinctly “Yugoslav” space of socialization; four girls - Ilma from Sarajevo, Dunja from Belgrade, Mojca from Ljubljana and myself, from Podgorica - were spending most of their time together during the 30 days of the trip from Rome to Athens. Similar personalities, backgrounds, geographical and historical proximity, common language, culture and traditions – all of these might have influenced this kind of consolidation, and friendly ties that subsequently developed. Discovering each others’ cities through the journey, we have probably felt, at least partially, as our parents whose youth stories always included some distant but still vivid memory of crossing (travelling around) Yugoslavia and enjoying companionship with compatriots from Zagreb, Skopje or Belgrade. When on the streets of Zagreb and Sarajevo, or bars in Ljubljana and Belgrade, people would ask where we were coming from, four answers (Ljubljana-Podgorica-Sarajevo-Belgrade) would unequivocally make them laugh and comment “Ah, Yugoslavia!”, followed with some

¹ For more information on the stereotypes and joking in post-Yugoslav space, see S. Vucetic, *Identity is a Joking Matter: Intergroup Humor in Bosnia*, “Spaces of Identity”, Vol.4, No.1, 2011
<http://pi.library.yorku.ca/ojs/index.php/soi/article/view/8011/7168>

sort of an anecdote/story of a lost friend from another ex-Yu country and a tribute to the brotherhood and unity concept, social security or the enjoyment of the border-free travels through the Yugoslavia. This is how I first started asking questions about Yugonostalgia – how can people actually lament over something they have deliberately destroyed? How many artefacts of that same past are still haunting us from the TV screens, supermarket shelves, popular culture and even cyberspace? And, yet, how is it possible that people find it appealing and entertaining, and even enjoy the appropriation and consumption of nostalgic memorabilia? Various questions and controversies concerning this phenomenon instigated my interest and result of that reflection is the study which aims to analyse different interpretations, cultural representations and commercial manifestations of Yugonostalgia.

To Mojca, Dunja and Ilma, because I'll always be Wheeling with you.

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Introduction

Twice there was a country called Yugoslavia – once during the interwar period (1918-1943), known as The Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and the second time, after the Second World War, when a country named Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia came into existence. The later, a confederation of six Balkan republics (Montenegro, Macedonia, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Slovenia), was renamed into a Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1963, and it is a country to which media, scholars and most of the people nowadays refer when discussing 'Yugoslavia'. Led by the charismatic socialist dictator Josip Broz Tito (1892-1980), country based its political identity on its distinctive socialist experiment, combining elements of the both Soviet ideology and Western free-market system.

Successful political and economical unification of the six republics was managing to transcend its ethnic and religious diversities for almost 50 years. Fall of the communism in the Eastern Europe (1989), economic instability and political crises at the beginning of '90s intensified the resurgence of the nationalist tensions, which eventually brought the country into a series of atrocious civil wars. In the collapse of the country more than 140.000 people have lost their lives, and some 4 million were displaced. Six independent states (status of the Kosovo, which unilaterally declared independence from Serbia, still remains controversial) constitute the post-Yugoslav space today.

While the region is slowly, but steadily recovering from its turbulent past, and even unifies once again through the EU integration process (Slovenia and Croatia are already EU members, while the others, with the exception of Bosnia which is still a potential candidate, are in the process of the accession negotiations), Yugoslav symbols, rituals, products and narratives re-emerge again. Increasingly popular phenomenon of the contemporary nostalgia for the Yugoslav past, dubbed Yugonostalgia, can be understood as a longing for the solidarity, sociability and dignity of the socialist past. Its artefacts today can be found all around the region - in media, popular culture, every-day life and even cyberspace. This controversial phenomenon creates a new Yugoslavia from the ashes of the old one – it is a depoliticized Yugoslavia, not a state or an ideology, but a life story, a personal and social history that happened to take place within the former state.

At the interface between the socialist heritage and capitalist commercial orientation, Yugonostalgia also became something more than a simple discursive construction, emerging from the idealized collective memory – it turned into a profitable marketing strategy. Media campaigns that instigate warm feelings for Yugo-commodities and positive associations with the former state create new patterns of consumption seeking to commercialize the nostalgic experiences. Therefore, the ambiguity of the phenomenon lies not only in the contradictory lamenting over the country that Yugoslavs destroyed themselves, but also in the commercial manipulation of the nostalgic remembrance.

The following pages will try to describe how popular identification with certain values and products from the period of communist Yugoslavia created a whole new market of nostalgia – selling everything from beverages and newspapers to music, movies and tourist destinations. First chapter will provide a theoretical framework for studying nostalgia, focusing on its various conceptions, characteristics and classifications, before introducing the Yugonostalgia, as a distinctive form of the larger phenomenon of the post-socialist nostalgia in the Second chapter. Third chapter will highlight the most important concepts of nostalgic marketing, retrobranding and nostalgic consumption, while the Fourth will advance the ideas and the examples of how nostalgic capital has been employed in branding Yugoslav products.

Before opening the analysis, it would be important to emphasise the purpose and limitations of the essay. The objective of this paper is not to engage in the historical debates on Yugoslavia and its demise. Not only that there is a substantive corpus of literature on these topics, but, as Francois Hartog argues in “Usages publics du passé” – how can one at all write a Yugoslav history today, or a history of the nations born out of its demise, when it is obvious that all the arguments are mobilizing the same sources, just reading them differently, only to reach absolutely contrary conclusions.² Therefore, this paper will not deal with the history of Yugoslavia, but with the memory of it. It is interested in representations of Yugoslavia that are to be found in popular culture, media, in everyday life and consumers habits.

Generally speaking, this paper aims to extend knowledge bases in the area of Yugonostalgia and perhaps even contribute to the development of the new field of Yugonostalgia – the one concerning its commodified and commercialized forms. It will try to establish and develop criteria for the definition and evaluation of Yugonostalgic marketing and of the consumption

² F. Hartog, “Les Usages Politiques du Passé”, Editions de l’EHESS, 2011.

patterns based on Yugonostalgia. Aware of the limitations of this research, paper intends only to suggest new ideas and concepts which might instigate and inform new work across disciplines.

Methodology

It should be emphasised at the very beginning that this research is just an initial exploration of the field with which the author was not initially familiar either. As far as it could be determined after the literature review, while there is an abundance of work on the anthropological, historical, sociological explorations of Yugonostalgia, there has still been no serious attempt to address its complex commercialization practices. Therefore, although it relies on the set of established theories of nostalgia, Yugonostalgia and nostalgic marketing, it should be seen as a pioneer project aiming to set a general framework and suggest some ideas and examples concerning commodification, advertising and consumption of Yugonostalgia. Although one part of the research relies on the data collection and analysis, it is not for finding hard evidences that might be used to support certain arguments, accept or reject hypothesis. The purpose of the research is only to suggest the new direction that the studies on Yugonostalgia might take and to indicate whether it will be feasible to set up a large scale research related to the topic.

Generally speaking, the thesis attempted to systematize and combine theoretical interpretations of Yugonostalgia and commodification of nostalgia, and to contribute to the ongoing debates on the representations of history and public uses of memory. However, in order to produce more accurate and more nuanced model of the past reconstruction and its commercial application, these conclusions were paired with the illustrations of everyday life, representations of popular (Yugoslav) culture, examples of Yugonostalgic advertising, and marketing studies from the region. This approach was chosen because of the very limits of the topic – as every other emotional state or ideological narrative, nostalgia is not easily measurable and cannot be quantified. It can only be illustrated through the cultural representations, memorial practices, public discourses and commercial success. Therefore, this study's objective is not to propose absolute truths and universal conclusions, but to suggest different approaches to the phenomenon, various interpretations and analysis of nostalgia commodification practices in former Yugoslavia.

In terms of Kruman's typology, this research has been developed as applicative, as it aims to apply the existing theoretical knowledge to a particular issue or problem.³ It is structured in a

³ N. Johns, D. Lee-Ross, *Research methods in service industry management*, Cassell, London and New York, 1998

way that three particularly important notions were developed – those of nostalgia, Yugonostalgia and nostalgic consumption (advertising). The analyses of these phenomena have been based on the substantial literary corpus. Diverse publications from various disciplines were scrutinized and different theories employed in order to develop a comprehensive literature reviews on each notion, only to be subsequently applied to the particular examples on the commodified Yugonostalgia. The aim was to identify to which extent practices of commercial exploitation of Yugonostalgia can be explained by the results of the existing studies on nostalgic advertising and patterns of consumption.

Considering the objectives of the research, it is considered to be an exploratory research, undertaken to answer certain questions, but even more to identify the possibilities for larger research studies to be performed.⁴ Secondary data used in the study have been reviewed mostly through diverse libraries (Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Clementinum, Pompidou library, BULAC, Radosav Ljumovic, MSH library...), but also using a range of online databases (such as EBSCO, CEEEOL, SAGE PUB, etc) and Internet search engines. Various journals and television programs around the region have been reviewed in order to analyse the official discourse and media narratives.

Additionally, semi-structured interviews and spontaneous conversation with the people from the region were employed, as well as ethnographic observations of the memorial sites and events commemorating Yugoslavia. Yugonostalgic representations in the ordinary life were also observed – such as bars and restaurants with Yugoslav thematic and cultural products (movie, songs, theatre plays) borrowing Yugoslav memorabilia. Finally, part of the results were driven from a questionnaire, which was elaborated in few phases and aimed to collect some information about the (potential) impact of Yugonostalgia on the consumers' preference, brand attachment and purchase decisions. The process of its elaboration and its results will be presented in the Chapter 4.

⁴ R. Kumar, *Research Methodology: A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners*, SAGE Publications, London, 1999.

Chapter 1: Introduction to Nostalgia, a Disease of Homesickness

The purpose of the first chapter is to explore and challenge traditional academic definitions, hypotheses and concepts of nostalgia, which have been established in various disciplines. It will first suggest historical and theoretical overview of nostalgia in reference to various notions, such as collective memory, historical discontinuity or *lieux de memoire*, before engaging in the ongoing academic debates on the characteristics and classification of the phenomenon. In the conclusion, post-socialist nostalgia will be briefly introduced, with the intention of illustrating the before mentioned characteristics of nostalgic longing, its particularities and controversies. This should provide an invaluable theoretical infrastructure for developing the concept of Yugonostalgia in the following chapters.

1.1. On The Nostalgia and The Collective Memory

Nostalgia, a phenomenon that just recently got into the modern literature, academic discourses, and circles of interests of scholars in various disciplines, was actually described already in 1688. The term had been derived from two Greek words, *nostos* (returning home) and *algos* (meaning pain, longing), in order to describe a newly diagnosed disease of “homesickness,” “desire for return to one’s native land,”⁵ whose victims were various displaced people of XVII century (students, workers, soldiers, servants), often unable to accustom themselves to living outside their previous life.⁶

Nostalgia was therefore considered to be a pathological condition caused by the grief and obsession with a return to the place of origin, “the authopagous desire to deny the truth of the present by returning to a source.”⁷ In her famous publication “The Future of Nostalgia”, considered to be a manifesto of nostalgia, Svetlana Boym explains the course of the nostalgia, the disease of distorted imagination: “Longing for home exhausted the ‘vital spirits’, causing

⁵ J. Hofer, “*Medical Dissertation on Nostalgia*,” trans. Carolyn Kiser Anspach, “Bulletin of the Institute of the History of Medicine”, vol. 2, 1934, pg.381.

⁶ S. Boym, *Nostalgia and Its Discontents*, essay in Hedgehog Review, vol. 9 Issue 2, Summer 2007, pg.7. http://www.iasc-culture.org/eNews/2007_10/9.2CBoym.pdf

⁷ M. Todorova, Z. Gille, *Post-Communist Nostalgia*, Berghahn Books, New York, 2010, pg.18

nausea, loss of appetite, pathological changes in the lungs, brain inflammation, cardiac arrests, high fever, as well as marasmus and a propensity for suicide.”⁸

Yet, at that period nostalgic symptoms were treated with opium or leeches and it was considered to be a curable disease. “While tuberculosis eventually became treatable, nostalgia did not” and soon afterwards poets and philosophers introduced their version of nostalgia – a fatal, introspective and melancholic one. However, it is not before the mid-XX century that nostalgia entered systematic research and academic discussions.

Scholars never actually reached the agreement about the discipline to which nostalgia belongs – psychologists, sociologists and philosophers all attached nostalgia to their own disciplines and tried to contribute to the understanding of the phenomenon. Moreover, this complex notion “keeps delaying its disciplinary homecoming”⁹ by penetrating new areas of study, most recently it entered the sphere of interest of the economists and marketing experts. Most of these disciplines, however, consider that modern nostalgia is a discursive construction, a social disease of longing for home, “an uncommon and ever-present idea of the recalled native land in the mind.”¹⁰

Although different scholars suggested different definitions of the phenomenon, it is generally considered to be inseparable from the studies on the collective memory. Maurice Halbwachs, prominent French sociologist and father of the notion, in the posthumously published “*La mémoire collective*” argued that memory (both collective and individual) is a socially constructed phenomenon. According to Halbwachs, individual memory cannot be observed as isolated and unbiased by the social context – every person, in order to evoke its own memories, often needs to make reference to the remembrance of the others - “*il se reporte à des points de repère qui existent hors de lui, et qui sont fixés par la société.*”¹¹ Therefore, memory is not a faithful reproduction of the past; it is a reconstruction of the past events, achieved through the complex process of multi-levelled collective retrieval which considerably alters the genuine history. Just as memory, nostalgia is also a collective process

⁸ S. Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, Basic Books, New York, 2001, pg.20.

⁹ E. Rychter, *Nostalgia and its manifold (be)longings*, Annals of “1 Decembrie 1918”, University of Alba Iulia, issue: 11/2 / 2010, pp. 7- 24, on <http://www.cceol.com/>

¹⁰ S. Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, Basic Books, New York, 2001, pg.20.

¹¹ M. Halbwachs, *La mémoire collective*, Édition critique établie par Gérard Namer, Albin Michel, Paris, 1997, pg.98.

(and product), and numerous authors defined it in reference to the notion of the Halbwachs' collective memory.

In "The Future of Nostalgia," Svetlana Boym asserted that collective memory represents "common landmarks of everyday life," which "constitute shared social frameworks of individual recollections."¹² For Roger Cardinal, nostalgia refers to the "emblems of that bitter-sweet yearning directed across space and time."¹³ Therefore, collective memory and nostalgic representations of the past are both narratives that tend to dissolve the border between the past and the present, to abolish spatial and temporal displacement by evoking a time that seems irretrievably lost. According to Mitja Velikonja, "nostalgia is a complex, differentiated, changing, emotion laden, personal or collective, (non)instrumentalized story which dichotomously laments and glorifies romanticized lost times, people, objects, feelings, scents, events, spaces, relationships, values, political and other systems, all of which stand in sharp contrast to the inferior present."¹⁴

1.2. Main Characteristics and Classification of Nostalgia

Great variety of academic definitions share few basic ideas when it comes to nostalgia - emotional reconstruction (and recreation) of the certain time, romantic displacement of utopian past and longing to bring it back through sentimental rhetoric are the ones that are most frequently cited. Certain characteristics, which are particularly relevant for this research, will be introduced in this section.

Firstly, as most theoreticians of collective memory agree, certain degree of irreversibility of the past events is necessary in order that nostalgia can develop on a greater scale. As Maria Todorova and Zsuzsa Gille, authors of "Post-Communist Nostalgia" observe, "nostalgia indexes a particular type of memory, one that is based on lived experience and thus not too old or too far back, yet one that despite being relatively recent is not reversible or restorable."¹⁵ Indeed, numerous examples proved the existence of the positive correlation between nostalgic convictions and impossibility of the return to the past condition. Nostalgia

¹² S. Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, Basic Books, New York, 2001, pg.53.

¹³ R. Cardinal, *Collecting and Collage Making: The case of Kurt Schwitters*, in "The Cultures of Collecting", Harvard University Press, Cambridge, pp. 68-96.

¹⁴ M. Velikonja, *Titostalgia - A Study of Nostalgia for Josip Broz*, Mediawatch Series, Peace Institute, Ljubljana, 2008, pg 57.

¹⁵ M. Todorova, Z. Gille, *Post-Communist Nostalgia*, New York: Berghahn Books, 2010. pg.37

seems to appear only when it is certain that there is no chance of going back, that this romantic longing cannot be translated into the reality and the past cannot be recreated besides through the nostalgic narrative.

Another particularity of nostalgia considers its imaginary, almost utopian character, its romantic conceptualization, as past in nostalgic discourses is almost always idealized. According to Boym, “modern nostalgia is a mourning for the impossibility of mythical return, for the loss of an enchanted world with clear borders and values; it could be a secular expression of a spiritual longing, a nostalgia for an absolute, a home that is both physical and spiritual, the edenic unity of time and space before entry into history.”¹⁶ Therefore, most of the time the image from the past recreated in nostalgic discourse is more a romantic fantasy than a historical fact, more the past ‘as it was supposed to be’ or ‘as we would want it had been’ than how it actually happened. Therefore, a curious capability of nostalgia is to ‘repair’ the history, to rewrite it and make more pleasant to remember and more suitable to long for.

Subjective character of collective (as well as individual) memory and its intentional or unintentional adjustments will distort nostalgic remembrance and make it extremely unreliable. Furthermore, different perspectives and different alterations, made by different agents, will make plenty of different “nostalgias” for one same space or time, shaped by completely distinctive remembrance or emotion, although perhaps triggered by the same (general) memory (sound, smell, joke...). Therefore, Clair Bancroft is suggesting that these ‘times imagined’ did/will never actually exist and that consequently “even nostalgics have trouble identifying what exactly they feel nostalgic for.”¹⁷ As Chase and Shaw point out, “the counterpart to the imagined future [utopia] is the imagined past [nostalgia].”¹⁸

Some other authors also argued that more than a longing for the irretrievable and idealized past, nostalgia is longing for a “past that never existed as such - there is a yearning for something that never was, a sentimental return to the never-existing world, dreams about past dreams and not about past reality.”¹⁹ Svetlana Boym's definition also suggested that nostalgia is “a longing for a home that no longer exist or has never existed,” summarizing well both

¹⁶ S. Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, Basic Books, New York, 2001, pg.24.

¹⁷ C. Bancroft, *Yugonostalgia: The Pain of the Present*, Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection, 2009.

¹⁸ M. Chase, C. Shaw, *The Dimensions of Nostalgia*, quoted in: C. Bancroft, *Yugonostalgia: The Pain of the Present*, Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection, 2009.

¹⁹ M. Velikonja, *Titostalgia - A Study of Nostalgia for Josip Broz*, Mediawatch Series, Peace Institute, Ljubljana, 2008, pg 30.

characteristics mentioned - irreversibility and imaginary character of nostalgic sentiments. Although I tend to agree with the ideas concerning this reconstructive dimension of nostalgia, and its projection on the dreams that once seemed real, I believe that this notion is perhaps too complex to be reduced to the simple 'longing for something that never was.' A necessary condition for nostalgia to develop is the existence of positive memories, of which at least certain are reliable, objective and pertinent. While there is no doubt that imagination subsequently shapes nostalgic memories, nostalgia is still a vision of the past that once existed, or at least was believed to exist.

Writing about history, memory and identity in Francois Hartog's "*Les usages politiques du passé*," Pedro Ruiz Torres argued that through the act of remembrance, one travels through the time and constructs "*en s'appuyant sur les restes, sur des fragments de l'expérience*" a combination of fiction and reality.²⁰ As every imperfect remembrance, nostalgia also might have a utopian dimension, but it is based on the real experiences and beliefs. Therefore, another alternative might be suggested to the Mitja Velikonja's distinction of nostalgia as "not (only) a story about *how we were* in the past, but one about *how we never were*"²¹ – nostalgia as a legitimate story of *how we believed we are/could be*. The past for which nostalgics yearn might be idealized, but it is certainly not entirely fictional either.

In reference to the this debate on real/imagined/invented nature of the period for which nostalgics tend to yearn, it is very important to emphasise that the past for which one is nostalgic is not just some randomly chosen moment in time - otherwise it could be anything, including war periods, inflations or times of individual tragedies. It is one particular, deliberately chosen moment of (personal and collective) security and prosperity, from which most of its disorder and hardship have been extracted. Claire Bancroft stressed an interesting point concerning the nature of the selective memory of nostalgic reconstruction: "although memory cannot ever represent the past as it actually happened, it is important to explore why people have chosen to remember what they remember."²² Indeed, the basic precondition for the development of nostalgia is what Pierre Nora defined as the "intention to remember."²³

²⁰ P. R. Torres, *Les Usages Politiques de l'Histoire en Espagne : Formes, Limites et Contradictions*, in : "Les Usages Politiques du Passé", Editions de l'EHESS, 2011.

²¹ M. Velikonja, *Titostalgia - A Study of Nostalgia for Josip Broz*, Mediawatch Series, Peace Institute, Ljubljana, 2008, pg 30.

²² C. Bancroft, *Yugonostalgia: The Pain of the Present*, Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection, 2009.

²³ P. Nora, *Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire*, "Representations", no. 26, Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory, Spring, 1989, pp. 7-24.

But there is even more than deliberately chosen remembrance – another French scholar, Ernest Renan was writing about the importance of forgetting in the construction of a nation; to forget and “to get one’s history wrong” was in his opinion as important as to remember.²⁴ In the construction of nostalgia, a romantically distorted memory, we find these same ideas – it is a process of remembering certain details (most attractive ones) of certain (irretrievable) past, in a certain (adorned, embellished) way, and at the same time of forgetting and ‘getting wrong’ something else, in order to make nostalgic picture more coherent and as flawless as possible. Following quote from Boym’s “The Future of Nostalgia” pinpoints the capricious and deceptive nature of the nostalgic remembrance:

“There should be a special warning on the side view mirror: The object of nostalgia is further away than it appears. Nostalgia is never literal, but lateral. It looks sideways. It is dangerous to take it at face value. Nostalgic reconstructions are based on mimicry; the past is remade in the image of the present or a desired future, collective designs are made to resemble personal aspirations and vice versa.”²⁵

Finally, all these “distortions” of nostalgic remembrance illustrate very well the controversy of youth nostalgia – nostalgia of the past events felt and expressed by the people who never actually experienced these events. Socialization, collective imagination, public evocation and generational transmission of the values, popular culture and social dynamics “as they once were”, can often strongly influence people that have no real memories of that period. That way, they also become “infected” by nostalgia for something that does not actually belong to their own past experience. Illustrative example of this is one of my informants, husband of a Montenegrin friend, who, in spite of being British and having no experience with Balkan region older than 5 years, occasionally grieves deeply over the popular Yugoslav band, *Indexi*, arguing that he is feeling “extremely Yugonostalgic.” Mitja Velikonja drew attention to different forms this contradictory ‘borrowed’ nostalgia can take:

“Put differently, it is not necessary to insist that someone ‘actually had to live’ through a certain period to be nostalgic for it or to perceive it as truly ‘his/her’ memory. Illustrative of this are various (sub)cultural, (sub)political and other narratives, practices and groups which, within their safe nostalgic enclaves, create and cultivate the images, values and general culture of a time they never actually experienced; or the rhetoric of present-day religious conservatives swearing by ethical models, cultural values, gender relations etc. dating from (at least) the 19th century.”²⁶

²⁴ E. Renan, *What is a nation (Ou'est-ce qu'une nation?)*, Lecture at Sorbonne, 11 March 1882.

²⁵ S. Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, Basic Books, New York, 2001, pg.355.

²⁶ M. Velikonja, *Titostalgia - A Study of Nostalgia for Josip Broz*, Mediawatch Series, Peace Institute, Ljubljana, 2008, pg.30.

An extensive number of essays on nostalgia draw on the traditional Boym's classification, which might help resolve this ambiguity over the objectiveness and distortion of nostalgic memory. Boym was the first one to suggest that there might actually be two quite different types of nostalgic longing for past – the restorative nostalgia, which “manifests itself in total reconstructions of monuments of the past” and the reflective one, which “lingers on ruins, the patina of time and history, in the dreams of another place and another time.”²⁷ While the first one is the expression of reconstructive longing for the essential past, considered to be a ‘general truth’, the other one is the “individual meditation on history and passage of time.”²⁸ Restorative nostalgia is a recovery, a reconstruction, reflective nostalgia is a remembrance. “The two might overlap in their frames of reference, but they do not coincide in their narratives and plots of identity. In other words, they can use the same triggers of memory and symbols, the same Proustian madelaine pastry, but tell different stories about it.”²⁹ It should be stressed that the subject of this paper will be nostalgia of this second type, a reflective one, with its “self-consciously ambivalent and critical frames in indulging fantasies of this past.”³⁰ Boym made an interesting observation concerning the nature of the reflective nostalgic narrative:

“Nostalgics of the second type are aware of the gap between identity and resemblance; the home is in ruins or, on the contrary, has been just renovated and gentrified beyond recognition. This defamiliarization and sense of distance drives them to tell their story, to narrate the relationship between past, present and future.”³¹

For Todorova and Gille nostalgia also “signals a rupture between past and present; a separation.”³² It is as much temporal as the spatial displacement, a “dislocation in space” but also “changing conception of time.”³³ But whether being a spatial sanctuary or time not measurable by clocks and calendars, nostalgic representation is always an imaginary escape from reality, which therefore discloses more about the present situation (community, space, period) than about the past.³⁴

1.3. Post-Socialist Nostalgia

²⁷ S. Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, Basic Books, New York, 2001. pg.54.

²⁸ *Ibid*, pg.62.

²⁹ *Ibid*, pg.69.

³⁰ N. Lindstrom, *Yugonostalgia: Restorative and reflective nostalgia in former Yugoslavia*, East Central Europe 32:1-2, 2006, pp.231-242

³¹ S. Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, Basic Books, New York, 2001, pg.63

³² M. Todorova, Z. Gille, *Post-Communist Nostalgia*, Berghahn Books, New York, 2010, pg.37.

³³ S. Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, Basic Books, New York, 2001, pg.32.

³⁴ C. Bancroft, *Yugonostalgia: The Pain of the Present*, Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection, 2009.

In this spatio-temporal identification of nostalgic discourses, one specific kind turned to be particularly demonstrative – the post-Socialist nostalgia seems to be the subject of special interest for both Western and Eastern academics. Indeed, it might be noted that all the before-mentioned criteria of nostalgic remembrance are met in the post-Socialist case: it is an irreversible past, which is individually interpreted and collectively idealized, translated into a specific sub-culture with reflective character. Referring to this specific form of nostalgia, it is important to emphasise, already at the beginning, that it is never the attempt to restore socialism or praise its ideological and political framework, but “a desire to recapture what life was at that time, whether innocent, euphoric, secure, intelligible.”³⁵ Todorova and Gille’s seminal work, the already mentioned “Post-Communist Nostalgia”, laid the foundations for the field:

“In other words, such nostalgia is understood as a psychological or emotional prop, a ‘coping behavior’, what sympathetic West Germans in my experience described to me as a ‘completely understandable’ defense mechanism for people who lived half their lives in a state-imposed stasis only to have all those certainties, true and false, swept away in the second half of their lives by the uncomfortable forces and, of course, ‘realities’, of life in a marked-centered society.”³⁶

Yet post-Socialist nostalgia at the first glance seems to be highly controversial – both from Western and Eastern point of view. After all, how can one be nostalgic of the dream that turned into a nightmare?³⁷ And why would anyone exorcise this nightmare? How one can long for the ideology which was, even in the official discourses, recognized as a repressive, corrupted and dysfunctional regime of stagnation and violence? If “the Communist state was in a permanent condition of undeclared war against its own citizens,”³⁸ why the Eastern Europeans are increasingly nostalgic of their socialist past? Why, more than 20 years after the fall of Communism in Europe, they are trying to open this ‘Pandora’s box’? Should not they be afraid of what is to be found in there? And does it finally say more about the (dis)satisfaction with the present than about the remembrance of the past?

One has to be cautious when addressing the ambiguous post-socialist nostalgia, especially having in mind the already elaborated selective nature of the social memory. The post-

³⁵ M. Todorova, Z. Gille, *Post-Communist Nostalgia*, Berghahn Books, New York, 2010, pg.19.

³⁶ *Ibid*, pg.19.

³⁷ Nightmare in this context refers to violent conflicts and more specifically atrocities of war in former Yugoslavia

³⁸ T. Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*, Penguin, 2005, pg.192.

socialism has not erased memories of problems and pitfalls of the communist regimes, but it has brought the new ones that stimulated reflection on what has actually been lost. According to Francis Pine, post-socialist nostalgia is a way to criticize the present, not by “denying the corruption, the shortages, the queues and the endless intrusions and infringements of the state”; but through “choosing to emphasize other aspects: economic security, full employment, universal healthcare and education,”³⁹ which capitalism failed to deliver in a way socialism did.

Moreover, we may even interpret this Eastern European melancholy for the past life and its socialist simplicity and security in the light of growing Euro-skepticism, the overall disappointment by ‘western’ democracy in many post-socialist states, or the sense of “being on a periphery of someone else’s center, being a second-class European”⁴⁰. Todorova and Gille argue, however, that the post-socialist nostalgia is something more or other than a simple disappointment by the long-awaited process of westernization, as its “obsessional method of past insistence can also serve as a way of drawing attention to an emergent politics of the future that is by no means settled.”⁴¹ As already pointed out, how we choose to remember past says more about the present than about the past itself. “To put it bluntly, these sentiments and discourses have, in the final analysis, no more to do with the past than with the future, no more to do with the desire to return to a remembered or idealized past than with the project of defining and claiming autonomy in the present.”⁴² Following quote from Velikonja’s “Titostalgia” implies that a possible explanation of the phenomenon lies in the deception with the ‘imaginary West’, as Alexei Yurchak dubbed the socialist idea about the western promise of happiness, which at the end could not deliver what Eastern Europeans’ expected.

“The bigger the promises and the more unrealistically stimulated the hopes, the greater and the bitterer the disappointment if these are not fulfilled. This often leads not only to political radicalism, on the one hand, and complete apathy and bitterness, on the other, but also to nostalgic dreams about a better past.”⁴³

³⁹ M. Todorova, Z. Gille, *Post-Communist Nostalgia*, New York: Berghahn Books, 2010, pg.5.

⁴⁰ T. Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*, Penguin, 2005, pg.254.

⁴¹ M. Todorova, Z. Gille, *Post-Communist Nostalgia*, Berghahn Books, New York, 2010, pg.29.

⁴² *Ibid.* pg.25.

⁴³ M. Velikonja, *Titostalgia - A Study of Nostalgia for Josip Broz*, Mediawatch Series, Peace Institute, Ljubljana, 2008, pg.33.

“Nostalgia speaks in riddles and puzzles,”⁴⁴ but one can easily identify in the nostalgic discourse an underlying critique, a dissatisfaction with Europe that profoundly disappointed or/and with weak post-socialist states and their long transition processes marked by widespread corruption, unemployment and growing economic inequalities.

“What I think we are witnessing instead in Eastern European nostalgia are tropes of idealized pastness that set out to accomplish two very contemporary projects in communication and knowledge: (1) to signal and voice estrangement from the fact that post-Socialist transformation in Eastern Europe has been a process steered by social and political interests largely lying outside Eastern Europe, and, (2) to make a claim upon a right of future self-determination. Given the social reality of contemporary Eastern Europe, it should be clear to us why both these projects are vitally important and so contingent as to give rise to a repetitive practice of signaling that is easily interpreted as either full of grief or obsessive.”⁴⁵

In the case of post-communist nostalgia, one can identify the importance of Boym's distinction of restorative and reflective types - while Eastern Europeans might be nostalgic of the reliable health care, job security, welfare state, former friendship and cooperation, it certainly cannot be considered as a call for the restoration of communism. The object of longing is socialist (idealized) everyday life, “articulated as nostalgia for minute things and products from the socialist period”⁴⁶ and not the official ideology of the communist regime.

This romantic recreation of the communist past was taking place all around the Eastern Europe, in Eastern Germany it was known as *Ostalgie*, in Russia as Soviet nostalgia, in regard to the former Yugoslavia it is called Yugonostalgia. They all long not only for the stability and prosperity of the communist past, but also for the solidarity, sociability and dignity of the socialist life-style. As Boym argues, “the object of longing is not really a place called home but this sense of intimacy with the world; it is not the past in general, but that imaginary moment when we had time and didn't know the temptation of nostalgia.”⁴⁷ Following passage, borrowed from Berkley's sociologist Alexei Yurchak and his extraordinary publication on late socialism, “Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No more;” may help to understand the complex nature of nostalgic yearning for socialism.

“An undeniable constitutive part of today's phenomenon of ‘post-Soviet nostalgia,’ which is a complex post-Soviet construct, is the longing for the very real humane values, ethics,

⁴⁴ S. Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, Basic Books, New York, 2001, pg.14.

⁴⁵ M. Todorova, Z. Gille, *Post-Communist Nostalgia*, Berghahn Books, New York, 2010, pg.27.

⁴⁶ M. Velikonja, *Titostalgia - A Study of Nostalgia for Josip Broz*, Mediawatch Series, Peace Institute, Ljubljana, 2008, pg.33.

⁴⁷ S. Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, Basic Books, New York, 2001, pg.253.

friendships, and creative possibilities that the reality of socialism afforded—often in spite of the state’s proclaimed goals—and that were as irreducibly part of the everyday life of socialism as were the feelings of dullness and alienation.”⁴⁸

Indeed, it is exactly the typical communist every-day life, with its cultural representations and symbols of the past that is in the centre of all these post-socialist ‘nostalgias’, and not exclusively the communist ideologies and the political ideas. With the use of the nostalgic brush, the communist picture became a veritable masterpiece, the socialism itself got a ‘human face’ and turned into a critique of the contemporary western consumerist aesthetics.

⁴⁸ A. Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More*, Princeton University Press, 2005, pg.8.

Chapter 2: Yugonostalgia – Longing For the Home That No Longer Exists

Following the same pattern of post-Socialist collective memory developed in the previous chapter, twenty years after the disintegration of the socialist federation, nostalgia for the “brotherhood and unity,” Yugoslav wellbeing, successes and order, has become an omnipresent phenomenon, increasingly popular and more and more commercialized. Started with cross-cultural productions (TV shows, reality and talk shows, national news), public expressions of what Dubravka Ugresic dubbed Yugonostalgia are to be found nowadays in media across the region, but also in popular culture (music, film...) and cyberspace. Shared memories of the common Yugoslav past, socialist legacy and collective Yugonostalgia seem to be connecting “people who are nowadays divided by national borders and who even fought against each other during the 1990s.”⁴⁹ Even although, having in mind the violent clash of the socialist Yugoslavia and atrocities of the Yugoslav war, one might not easily understand emergence of this phenomenon, most Yugoslavs will agree that there is a lot to be nostalgic about. And even more than a lot using these “purple glasses” of the nostalgic retrospective.

Aleksa Djilas, the author of “The Contested Country: Yugoslav Unity and Communist Revolution, 1919-1953”, suggested that there are yearnings for Yugoslavia not “only because of what it was, but even more so for what it might have been.” Zala Volcic, another author who was studying Yugonostalgia, argued that nostalgia, especially Yugonostalgia, is “less a longing for a real past than a kind of longing for the desires and fantasies that were once possible”⁵⁰ - before the society changed. These are exactly the arguments that were developed earlier, in the chapter 1 - nostalgia is a longing for the dreams and possibilities of the past, of the moments when one believed into a certain positive future development. Observed like that, nostalgia becomes even more complex, and its temporality multilayered – it might be interpreted as a phenomenon that tends to criticize the present situation for the lack of positive vision of future, by recalling a memory of one past moment in which future seemed bright and promising.

2.1. Origins, Development and Interpretations of the Notion

⁴⁹ M. Todorova, Z. Gille, *Post-Communist Nostalgia*, Berghahn Books, New York, 2001, pg.61.

⁵⁰ Z. Volcic, *Yugo-nostalgia: Cultural Memory and Media in the former Yugoslavia*, “Critical Studies in Media Communication”, vol. 24, no. 1, March 2008, pp.21–38.

It would be important to start the analysis of the Yugonostalgia, its cultural representations and public employment by tracing the origins of the term. It should be said, however, that, as someone who used to hear and to refer to the notion of Yugonostalgia for most of its life, the author of this paper was indeed surprised to find very complicated the process of identifying the origin and the first scholar uses of the term. Even after having read countless publications dealing with the various aspects of the phenomenon, it still seemed that most scholar works have ignored the historical and the contextual framework of the emergence of nostalgia. There were, however, numerous ‘vague’ insinuations that the appearance of the term is somewhat linked with the very period of the dissolution of Yugoslavia. There is a general agreement in literature that in these years, at least in official discourse, Yugonostalgia had a strongly pejorative connotation, describing political sabotage and national betrayal of the newly established states.

Precise identification of the word’s origin showed that, indeed, one of the first public uses of the term had a strong negative implication and was probably the one that made it widely known and embraced by the nationalists, who used it to disqualify those who still referred in positive (or even neutral) way to Yugoslavia (as there was anything worth of referring to).⁵¹ It was in 1992, in December’s issue of Croatian journal *Globus*, that Globus Investigative Team accused five Croatian writers and journalists – Slavenka Drakulic, Rada Ivekovic, Vesna Kesic, Jelena Lovric and Dubravka Ugresic of being traitors - “Yugonostalgics.”⁵² In the article entitled “Croatian Feminists Rape Croatia,” these five authors were designated as “witches from Rio,”⁵³ “daughters of communism,” “intellectual sect” and “a group of selfish middle-aged women who have serious problems with their own ethnic, ethic, human, intellectual and political identity.”⁵⁴

Not only that through this article Yougonostalgia had became a controversial and highly unpopular accusation (that will be auto-defended by its own mechanisms of preserving memories in spite of required oblivion), but even the moment of its entry into public discourse seemed to be ambiguous. In fact, while SFRY ceased to exist in April 1992, after Croatia, Macedonia and Slovenia declared independence, the country called Federal Republic

⁵¹ C. Simmons, *Miljenko Jergović and (Yugo)Nostalgia*, “Russian Literature”, no. 4, 2009, pp. 457-469.

⁵² <http://www.meredithtax.org/gender-and-censorship/five-women-who-wont-be-silenced>

⁵³ Article accused them of having tried to sabotage, during the 58th Congress of International PEN in Rio, plans to organize the next PEN Congress in Dubrovnik, therefore they were castigated as “witches from Rio”

⁵⁴ Translation from Croatian provided by the author: “*Skupina samoživih žena srednje dobi koja ima ozbiljnih problema s vlastitim etničkim, etičkim, ljudskim, intelektualnim i političkim identitetom*”
<http://forum.ffzg.unizg.hr/viewtopic.php?t=12839&sid=1601e558b1dad38a5e8321472f65062c>

of Yugoslavia existed until 2003 (afterwards being renamed into Serbia and Montenegro, before these two peacefully separated in 2006). Therefore, Yugoslavia was not officially “dead” when nostalgia for the Yugoslavia was already a recognized (and castigated) phenomenon. In a way, nostalgia preceded the vanishment of the country.

Especially during the post-war years, when the new countries were still struggling to offer (newly created) national identity as a remedy to the war sufferance, economic despair and social instability, the control over the official version of history has become crucial. Therefore, no place was left for lamenting a country that was accused of causing all that pain and insecurity, and even more, of oppressing the national identities throughout years. Explaining the connotation and the political use of the term in the early post-war years, one of the before mentioned ‘witches’, Dubravka Ugresic, claimed that the very term Yugonostalgia was coined by the authorities in the new states to designate the “public enemy”, the “person who regrets the collapse of Yugoslavia.”⁵⁵ It is under these circumstances that ordinary people sought to legitimise their past, by not letting anyone confiscate their memories and make them feel ashamed of these. In a recent interview, famous Bosnian novelist Miljenko Jergovic set out similar ideas and impressions:

“I am not nostalgic about the state, but about people, time, particular city or my own youth. If I have lived in that period of time and in that country, I don't want to allow anyone to take that memory from me. It would be as if someone convicts me to prison, retroactively.”⁵⁶

Reflecting on the nostalgic specificities introduced in the first chapter, we can trace in case of Yugonostalgia a portion of what Ugresic explained as “defending oneself from forgetting by remembering”. Indeed, not only that war in Yugoslavia made the return to the socialism inconceivable (unimaginable), which is, as already argued, a necessary condition for nostalgia to develop, but the official discourses and new nationalist ideologies tried subsequently to erase all the legacy of the Yugoslav state and society. And it was exactly the complex web of paradoxes concerning the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the process of violent wiping out of all its traces and souvenirs and the ‘erasure’ of everything with “Yugo” prefixes, that instigated a contra-revolution, a vengeance of the nostalgic remembrance.

⁵⁵ D. Ugresic, *The Culture of Lies*, Phoenix, London, 1998, pg. 231.

⁵⁶ Translation from Serbian provided by the author, “*Nisam nostalgican u odnosu na državu, već na ljude, vrijeme, društvo, neki grad ili sopstvenu mladost. U tom smislu ja sam sasvim normalno nostalgican čovek i vrlo često me ta emocije drži. Ako sam ja živio u tom vremenu i u toj zemlji, ne želim nikom dozvoliti da mi to sjećanje uskraćuje. To bi bilo kao da te neko retroaktivno osudi na zatvor.*”

<http://www.klix.ba/vijesti/kultura/jergovic-jugoslaviju-danas-mrže-oni-koji-su-od-nje-dobili-sve/111106022>

“Yugoslav ideas were marginalized in favor of the nationalistic discourses. Yugonostalgia is a way for ex-Yugoslavs to legitimize their past and memories that have a minimized space in their present-day situation. The right to remember this past is a ‘right that was taken away from ordinary people for the sake of national projects’.”⁵⁷

According to Dubravka Ugresic, after the country collapsed, memories were practically stolen from Yugoslavs for the sake of national identity construction and legitimization of war as a necessity.

“Yugoslavia, Tito, Partisans, the slogan *brotherhood and unity*, the Cyrillic alphabet, Yugoslav popular culture—all this stuff, and a lot of other stuff besides, was tossed into the ‘dustbin of history,’ into a memory zone where admittance was strictly prohibited. Accusations of “Yugonostalgia” whizzed back and forth past people’s heads like bullets.”⁵⁸

Disappeared overnight, and brutally replaced with nationalist ideologies, ethnic divides and dialectics of war culpability, Yugoslavia has not only “died in pains”, she was afterwards exorcized, in the ideological manipulation that consisted to erase Yugoslav past and to confiscate positive memories from its citizens. In this “collective amnesia,” Yugonostalgia was not only seen as the lack of patriotism, it was almost a crime against one’s nation. And it was exactly the opposite - a legitimate defense against the usurpation of memories and the theft of identity.

“Nationalism is first and foremost individual and collective paranoia,” wrote Danilo Kis and as already explained, post-war nationalist ideologies have labelled Yugonostalgia as a pejorative expression referring to the disgraceful loyalty to the socialist oppressor and to the national betrayal. As Dubravka Ugresic pointed in her long interview to Svetlana Boym, “nationalism is also a struggle for the control of collective memory”⁵⁹ and in post-war national identity construction there was no place for Yugonostalgia, considered to be a subversive activity directed against new governments, a memory that challenges dominant interpretation of the Yugoslav past. It was “a political and moral disqualification,”⁶⁰ a dangerous accusation “applied to any reference of Yugoslavia that is not derogatory, any comment that might suggest that there was anything worthwhile created under the auspices of

⁵⁷ N. Lindstrom, *Yugonostalgia: Restorative and reflective nostalgia in former Yugoslavia*, in “East Central Europe”, 2006, 32:1-2, pp.231-242

⁵⁸ D. Ugresic, *Nostalgia*, Column: Homelands& Exiles, December 2011.
<http://cms.skidmore.edu/salmagundi/excerpts/upload/a1-UGRESIC-Nostalgia.pdf>

⁵⁹ S. Boym, *Dubravka Ugresic, An Interview*, Bomb 80, Summer 2002.
<http://bombsite.com/issues/80/articles/2498>

⁶⁰ D. Ugresic, *The Culture of Lies*, Phoenix, London, 1998.

that state that is worth preserving.”⁶¹ According to Nicole Lindstrom, “the Yugoslav ideology of ‘brotherhood and unity’ was replaced with exclusionary ideologies that sought to divide former inhabitants of SFRY along cultural, linguistic, religious, and economic lines.”⁶²

According to Svetlana Slapsak, Yugoslavia as a historical fact, biased by national discourses of the successor states, needed to be “neutralized” using the terms that ditched it in the past, such as tautology “former Yugoslavia” or the “ex” prefix.⁶³ Indeed, even today, lexical controversy is more than obvious - Yugoslavia cannot be current or modern, it is a former state, a historical fact, and there would normally be no need to emphasize this when referring to the country. Just as much as “I was born in ex-Yugoslavia” does not actually have sense – one cannot be born in the “ex” country, he can be born in the country that does no longer exist.⁶⁴ Yet, lexical manipulation entered public narratives, scholars’ debates and ordinary life and conversations, and Yugoslavia kept the prefix “former”, just to make sure that it will not somehow resurrect.

In the previously described atmosphere of the collective amnesia, nostalgia was a retaliation as much as a purgatory, a right to keep one's own memories of socialism “thus giving sense to their personal past and justifying the role they had in that past.”⁶⁵ According to the Belgrade journalist Teofil Pancic, nostalgia is a proof that “everything from our past that we remember so well was not a dream or an imagination, a proof that we were and remained somewhere and someone.”⁶⁶ In a certain way, nostalgia is a rebellious protector of the memories that are threatened to be stolen, in terms of Milan Kundera’s famous maxim stating that “the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting.” Dubravka Ugresic explained this process in the “Homeland and Exile” column:

“I convinced myself that if I managed to preserve in memory the name of the first Yugoslav brand of chocolate, or the name of the first Yugoslav film (hardly a stretch, I admit), I could

⁶¹ I. Pauker, *Reconciliation and Popular Culture: A Promising Development in Former Yugoslavia?*, in “Local-Global”, Culture, Issue 2, pp.72-81, on <http://mams.rmit.edu.au/wcch64c2r40r.pdf>

⁶² N. Lindstrom, *Yugonostalgia: Restorative and reflective nostalgia in former Yugoslavia*, in “East Central Europe”, 2006, 32:1-2, pp.231-242

⁶³ S. Slapsak, *Twin Cultures and Rubik’s Cube Politics: The Dynamics of Cultural Production in ProYU, PostYU, and Other YU Inventions*, in: “Southeast Europe. Journal of Politics and Society” (Südosteuropa. Zeitschrift für Politik und Gesellschaft), issue: 03, 2011, pp.301-314. on www.ceeol.com

⁶⁴ <http://pescanik.net/2008/12/jugonostalgija-i-smeh/>

⁶⁵ M. Jergovic quoted in: M. Todorova, Z. Gille, *Post-Communist Nostalgia*, Berghahn Books, New York, 2010, pg.70.

⁶⁶ T. Pancic quoted in: M. Todorova, Z. Gille, *Post-Communist Nostalgia*, Berghahn Books, New York, 2010, pg.70.

perhaps halt the impending terror of forgetting. When Yugoslavia finally sank, my neurosis got both a name—Yugonostalgia—and a definition—political sabotage of the new Croatian state. And I got epithets too—traitor, and ‘Yugonostalgic.’ Eyewitness to how brutally and efficiently the confiscators of memory could erase collective memory, and with it, my personal history, I became a member of my own personal resistance movement. I defended myself by remembering—remembering as weapon of choice against the violence of forgetting.”⁶⁷

Defending itself by remembering a past that never existed as such - it might be a tagline for a ‘Yugonostalgic’ brand. Idealization of the Yugoslav socialist past, collective imagination and evocation of visual artefacts and spiritual values of the communist era in contemporary media further contributed to the popularization of the phenomenon throughout the region. Over the time, significant discrepancy appeared between the official and personal history, between the way politicians presented Yugoslavia, and the way ordinary people remembered it.⁶⁸

It is possible to argue that it is certainly not unusual that Yugonostalgia is one of the best known post-socialist nostalgias - its emergence and strengthening are often linked to the war. Generally speaking, the degree of nostalgic emotions is proportional to the (idealized) loss: “the stronger the loss, the more it is overcompensated with commemorations, the starker the distance from the past, and the more it is prone to idealizations.”⁶⁹ This paradox explains well why nostalgia is often an answer to a social (or an individual) trauma, following catastrophes, wars and other disasters - there is something in the war atrocities and mass destruction that stimulates the reconstruction of the past. According to Stephen Legg’s observations, dealing with trauma by nostalgic remembrance is not a phenomenon typical only for post-Socialism.⁷⁰ Finland’s Civil War, Rome’s occupation by Nazis and post-communist exiles in US, to name only a few, follow the same pattern of traumatic events’ impact on the nostalgic reconstruction.

Explaining complementary phenomenon of ‘Titostalgia’, Mitja Velikonja also highlighted the collective memory and return of Yugoslav legacy as “a consequence of the catastrophic events over the past two decades or so: war, slaughter, destruction, destitution, economic and

⁶⁷ D. Ugresic, *Nostalgia*, “Column: Homelands& Exiles”, December 2011.

<http://cms.skidmore.edu/salmagundi/excerpts/upload/a1-UGRESIC-Nostalgia.pdf>

⁶⁸ K. Ghodsee, *The Book of Laughter and Remembering*, “Transitions online”, issue: 05- 10, 2011. <http://www.cceol.com/>

⁶⁹ S. Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, Basic Books, New York, 2001, pg.42

⁷⁰ S. Legg, *Memory and Nostalgia*, in “Cultural Geographies”, 2004, 11, pp.99-107.

social underdevelopment, political crises etc.”⁷¹ During the socially and economically unstable period, people tend to turn to their past to find stability ‘benchmarks’, their identity and community markers. Faced with period of ‘rupture’, war and transition, Yugoslavs “approached the past as a stable source of value and meaning”⁷² to restore a sense of historical continuity and fluidity of remembrance patterns.

The notion of discontinuity is perhaps essential for understanding the power of nostalgia. Whether the disruption from normality was caused by the personal (divorce, someone's death, the loss of employment), collective (war, inflation, earthquake) or transitional events (adolescence to adulthood),⁷³ nostalgia acts as a shelter from the current instability. According to Fred Davis, nostalgia allows individuals to preserve their identity by “maintaining internal continuity in face of external discontinuity.”⁷⁴

“In principle, the worse the present seems compared to the past, the stronger nostalgia is. Dissatisfaction and despair inspire and provoke nostalgia, and the past appears a safe haven when confronted with present-day problems.”⁷⁵

Indeed, what could ex-Yugoslav be nostalgic for if not this country of prosperity and social security? War and fratricide? NATO bombing? Transition process? Inflation? Taking into consideration growing disappointment with integration processes of the national states, economic backwardness and social exhaustion, it cannot be surprising that Yugoslavs choose to remember Tito's country and give it a utopian character. From that point of view, the period chosen to be the carrier of nostalgic remembrance (Yugoslavia and not war, transition, inflation...) and the moment in which this remembrance emerged (economic and social discontent), both seem to be quite logical.

⁷¹ M. Velikonja, *Titostalgia - A Study of Nostalgia for Josip Broz*, Mediawatch Series, Peace Institute, Ljubljana, 2008, pg.94.

⁷² S. Tannock, *Nostalgia Critique*, Cultural Studies 9, 1995, pp. 453-64.

⁷³ J. Rutherford, E. Shaw, *What Was Old Is New Again: The History of Nostalgia as a Buying Motive in Consumption Behavior*, in Proceedings of the 15th Conference for Historical Analysis and Research in Marketing, Leighann C. Neilson (editor) New York, NY: Association for Historical Research in Marketing, May 2011, pp. 157-166.

⁷⁴ F. Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday: Sociology of Nostalgia*, New York, The Free Press, 1979, pg.35

⁷⁵ M. Velikonja, *Titostalgia - A Study of Nostalgia for Josip Broz*, Mediawatch Series, Peace Institute, Ljubljana, 2008, pg.94.

2.2. Borrowed Memories – Yugonostalgia and Youth

It has been so far stressed that the nostalgia of the older generations, of the so-called Tito's youth, is a longing for the time of their childhood, enthusiasm and ideals, conviviality and brotherhood - a "kind of nationwide midlife crisis."⁷⁶ Therefore, it is hardly surprising that people who lived the best years of their lives in Yugoslavia are "projecting personal affective memories onto the larger historical picture and partaking collectively in a selective forgetting."⁷⁷ But while increasingly popular appeal of Yugonostalgia might be understood in the context of restoring continuity for these generations that lived in and loved communism and "brotherhood", where it becomes highly controversial is in the passionate discourse of young people having no memories at all of this period (often born too late even to have a Yugoslav passport). However, it seems to be coherent with the general hypothesis that young generations may carry some nostalgia for the certain period or homeland, even though they have never really, consciously experienced it.

This controversial questions of the transfer of nostalgia, a paradox of the young generations being born too late to have memories of Yugoslavia, but still being Yugonostalgic was developed in the interview with Svetlana Boym, in May 2013 in Paris. Do young people also try to "find in the past what they miss in the present?"⁷⁸ Or, as much as the older ones use nostalgia to defend themselves from forgetting, does the youth defend itself from current westernization? According to Svetlana Boym, youth-nostalgia might be seen as a rebellion against modernity and westernization, but it still does not give a complete explanation – as, paradoxically, Yugoslavia was the most western of all the socialist countries and now there is a rebellion against this same Western culture? Boym also agreed that the very specificities of the Yugoslav communism ("socialism with human face," utopian socialism) allowed young people to develop a strange attachment to this "mythic paradise".

It might be argued that for the young people, communism is most of the time the source of the satirical fun and creativity. In contemporary Balkans, most teenagers attend regularly "ex-Yu rock parties" and discuss on the social networks the "good old times" ("when we were all Yugoslavs") and even go as far as to establish communities and events celebrating socialist

⁷⁶ S. Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, Basic Books, New York, 2001, pg.70

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, pg.70

⁷⁸ L. Pečjak quoted in M. Velikonja, *Titostalgia - A Study of Nostalgia for Josip Broz*, Mediawatch Series, Peace Institute, Ljubljana, 2008. pg.95

Yugoslavia. But in the consumerist society of the contemporary Balkans, these “memories” (real or imagined) are necessarily associated with the popular culture and nostalgic products from the everyday life. Therefore in real life, one can find these same young people (as much as the older ones) drinking their favourite “Cockta” (a “socialist” version of famous Coca-Cola, a drink popular in the communist Yugoslavia, which made its comeback in the 21st century Balkans), discussing about famous Yugo car, Gorenje refrigerators and other symbols of Yugoslav consumerism.

Maybe even more than the causes of the youth nostalgia, it is important to identify the source of their ‘borrowed’ memories. It may be argued that longing for communist values and Yugoslav prosperity have most probably been transferred to them by their parents, relatives and partially even through the media. The fact that many of my informants referred to the stories told by their parents or grandparents as a source of their longing for Yugoslavia supports the argument of ‘inherited’ nostalgia. Marian Hirsch brilliantly explains this phenomenon in her essay “The Generation of Postmemory”:

“Postmemory describes the relationship that the generation after those who witnessed cultural or collective trauma bears to the experiences of those who came before, experiences that they ‘remember’ only by means of the stories, images, and behaviors among which they grew up. But these experiences were transmitted to them so deeply and affectively as to seem to constitute memories in their own right. Postmemory’s connection to the past is thus not actually mediated by recall but by imaginative investment, projection, and creation.”⁷⁹

But while the generational sense of ownership and memory preservation certainly influences what Hirsch calls “postmemory”, it would be oversimplifying to consider the families as the only point of transmission of memories, as many other influences tend to shape the nostalgic utopia – such as media, social environment, popular culture, etc. Generational transmission, therefore, is passing not only through the family remembrance, but also through the history textbooks, teachers’ narratives, political discourses, images in media, social activism, music and film iconography...

Nicole Lindstrom explained the phenomenon of youth nostalgia by referring to the Balkan parties taking place in Ljubljana already in the early 1990s, gathering students that would enjoy together the old Yu-rock or Partisan ballads. Lindstrom observes that the popularity of these parties was partially due to “a subversive desire to undermine nationalist discourses so

⁷⁹ M. Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory*, Poetics Today 29:1, Spring 2008, pp.103-128.

dominant at the time.”⁸⁰ Svetlana Slapsak suggests that “Yugoslav rock music has become the symbolic utopia, a non-space and non-time in which young people enjoy the freedom of meeting each other, speaking each other’s languages, having fun and ridiculing their parents’ readiness to do what they are told.”⁸¹

Indeed, a survey on Yugonostalgia among Slovenian youth showed that they imagined “a secure, stable, just and united Yugoslavia, simple, satisfied and non-ambitious people who cultivate the values of collectivism, solidarity and equality.”⁸² Yugonostalgia in this context is more a fantasy associated with the country, where no necessary relationship exists between reality, memories of that reality and transfer of memories on the young generations. Their present desires, expressed through Yugonostalgic representations of the past, consist to rewrite a history and create a new phenomenon to which Mitja Velikonja refers as “neostalgia.” However, although it is encouraging that young people are not “reading history as deterministic,”⁸³ there is a danger of creating an imaginary land, an intoxicating utopia. It is exactly what Boym implies in “The Future of Nostalgia” – “The danger of nostalgia is that it tends to confuse the actual home and the imaginary one. In extreme cases it can create a phantom homeland, for the sake of which one is ready to die or kill.”⁸⁴

Another interesting aspect of Yugonostalgia should be addressed here. Generally speaking, in the modern literature nostalgia is almost always a story of exile, of temporal and spatial discontinuity and immigrant's longing. Just as Svetlana Boym, Dubravka Ugresic and other scholars whose focus on nostalgia almost always led them into the immigrant communities, a French philosopher Olivier Remaud, writing about the nostalgia and exile, recognized another strange paradox. According to Remaud, when it comes to the exile and (real or imagined) home that no longer exists, it is not even necessary that one was previously happy there; he can still be nostalgic about it. He claimed that “it is sufficient to have been there and to associate that place with the experience of estrangement. The simple fact of estrangement makes a thing inaccessible. In becoming inaccessible, the thing acquires an aura of

⁸⁰ N. Lindstrom, *Yugonostalgia: Restorative and reflective nostalgia in former Yugoslavia*, in “East Central Europe”, 2006, 32:1-2, pp.231-242.

⁸¹ S. Slapšak, qtd in N. Lindstrom, *Yugonostalgia: Restorative and reflective nostalgia in former Yugoslavia*, in “East Central Europe”, 2006, 32:1-2, pp.231-242

⁸² Pečjak quoted in M. Velikonja, *Titostalgia - A Study of Nostalgia for Josip Broz*, Mediawatch Series, Peace Institute, Ljubljana, 2008. pg.96.

⁸³ Svetlana Boym in private conversation, May 2013, Paris

⁸⁴ S. Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, Basic Books, New York, 2001. pg.13.

ideality.”⁸⁵ Numerous authors asserted that nostalgia might be understood as a result of interactions between the imaginary home landscape and the exile reality, while in case of Yugonostalgia, curiously, there is no reality of immigration, diaspora or host community (at least it is not the subject of this study). But then again, after dismemberment of Yugoslavia, how many people felt being in exile without ever changing the address?

As have been previously discussed, it was not simple to determine the exact moment of the emergence of the Yugonostalgic discourse. Yet, as can be seen from these pages, it is possible to trace its development and even to identify in this particular phenomenon the tendencies and the concepts of nostalgia (in general), which have been developed in the first chapter. One of the before mentioned characteristics referred to the amplification and intensification of nostalgia as a consequence of growing disappointment in the current socio-political realities and impossibility of the return to the previous state.

It might be claimed that nostalgia is almost exclusively linked with the economic context and social trajectories, and it allows us to understand why in former Yugoslavia, exhausted by painful transition process, nostalgia seems to be everywhere, while in Poland, the increasingly prosperous European country, one can hardly grieve over the communist past. But here we need to take into the consideration the specificity of the Yugoslav trajectory - its “socialism with the human face,” easy to be recalled and idealized, and the trauma of war genocide that stimulated reconstruction of the recent past. Similarly, impossibility of the return to socialism in Yugoslavia (after the violent break-up) and the increasing certainty of joining the European Union created conditions for the nostalgic, non-reversible memory to develop.

“The new resonance of the concept of nostalgia indexes a tipping point, when there is still lived memory but little hope or even desire for return because of an exhaustion of options and some improving hope for the future. That’s why nostalgia emerged quickest in the East German case, in the wake of reunification, and last perhaps in cases such as Bulgaria where a Socialist return seemed more possible due to strong Socialist heritage parties, declining economic circumstances and equivocal timetables for joining the EU.”⁸⁶

⁸⁵ O. Remaud, *At home or away: On Nostalgia, Exile and Cosmopolitanism*, In: H. Jordheim (ed.), *Conceptualizing the World*, Berghahn Books, Oxford, 2012, <http://rethinkingdemocracy.org.ua/themes/Remaud3.pdf>

⁸⁶ M. Todorova and Z. Gille, *Post-Communist Nostalgia*, New York: Berghahn Books, 2010. pg.37

Nostalgia is therefore a sort of collective therapy for these perturbations of the memory, generational fatigue, both emotional and economic deception and violent rewriting of history and “truth”. It became the only bridge to the ex-compatriotes, providing common point for conversation by recalling common memories. In former Yugoslavia, nostalgia represents a mirror through which the present diseases are reflected. Yugonostalgia is in this context as much a longing for the times when Yugoslavs shared common values and lived in the more stable and less egoistic society, as a critique of the current consumerist aesthetics of the modern capitalism.

Before moving to the practical expression of Yugonostalgia and its discursive constructions, one last thing should be highlighted. Although longing for the Yugoslav past stability did not yet completely lose the pejorative connotation, and being Yugonostalgic is sometimes still seen as a sign of the sentimental weakness and impossibility to adapt to the current situation (although in a less extent than ten years ago), scholars, ordinary people and politic elites seem to agree in one - more than “an innocent self-fulfilling fairy tale,”⁸⁷ nostalgia might actually have the important socio-political impact. By changing the surrounding cultural landscape and evoking positive memories of cohabitation, Yugonostalgia might contribute or at least be a step towards the regional reconciliation. Even the basic idea of possible reconciliation acknowledges, according to Iva Pauker, “that at some point in time there was a positive experience of co-existence.”⁸⁸ In her opinion, “the very term ‘RE-conciliation’ suggests that a conciliatory relationship existed which needs to be re-established.” Indeed, it is not denying that road to reconciliation in the former Yugoslavia will be the long one, but the fact that ex-Yugoslavs share at least one common thing, although as unreliable as nostalgic memory, brings back hope into the conflictual Balkans’ relations.

“Rather than being an entry point for serious research into an understanding of Yugoslav socialism, to a real and enduring settling of accounts between the old and the new, or acting as a generator of productive memory—if not also, a better future—today’s commercialized Yugonostalgia has been transformed into its opposite, into a highly-effective strategy for conciliation and forgetting. Buying a pair of souvenir Tito’s socks, the post-Yugoslav symbolically lifts a twenty-year ban, removing the stigma from his or her socialist past.”⁸⁹

⁸⁷ M. Velikonja, *Titostalgia - A Study of Nostalgia for Josip Broz*, Mediawatch Series, Peace Institute, Ljubljana, 2008. pg.28

⁸⁸ I. Pauker, *Reconciliation and Popular Culture: A Promising Development in Former Yugoslavia?*, in “Local-Global”, Culture, Issue 2, pp.72-81, <http://mams.rmit.edu.au/wcch64c2r40r.pdf>

⁸⁹ D. Ugresic, *The Culture of Lies*, Phoenix, London, 1998, pg. 231.

Every nostalgia, according to Boym, is a “memory with a feeling of guilt removed”. By removing guilt, pain and feelings of injustice from the collective memory, Yugonostalgia acts as a ‘harmonizator,’ fostering the rapprochement by insisting on the positive aspects of the common past. Nostalgia celebrates “brotherhood and unity,” acknowledging that if peaceful coexistence was once possible, why ex-Yugoslavs wouldn’t nowadays be at least the devoted neighbours and each other’s closest friends?

2.3. Yugonostalgia and Yugosphere

It would be important to make at this point a distinction between nostalgic representations and regional cooperation, as two rather different types of post-Yugoslav integration. While these two are mutually influential, and both have a certain reconstructive (and reconciliatory) potential, they certainly do not belong to the same phenomenon. Examples of the European diplomats being unequivocal in their insistence on cross-border cooperation of the ‘Western Balkans’ (which stands for the former Yugoslavia, without mentioning the controversial name), of fire-fighters and medical experts in the region mobilizing to help their colleagues in neighbouring states, or the entrepreneurs working to establish cross-border businesses - these are not nostalgia, not even its profit-oriented representation – these examples are ‘Yugosphere’.

Yugosphere is a concept developed relatively recently, in 2009, by Tim Judah, British journalist of *The Economist* (covering Balkans) and LSE Visiting Senior Fellow. In his LSEE publication “Yugoslavia is dead, long live the Yugosphere” (published in London in 2009), he insists on the interconnectedness and mutual dependence of the former Yugoslav neighbours, namely 22 million people who in greatest part share the language, tradition and culture.⁹⁰ He focused on the economic aspects of the cross-border cooperation, such as major Slovenian investments on the Serbian or Macedonian soil, and vice versa, a proliferation of the supermarket chains such as Kozum (Croatia), Delta (Serbia) or Mercator (Slovenia) all around the region, but also on the common media landscape. According to Judah, this confirms that the post-Yugoslav space is more than one, but still less than plurality. Indeed, in almost every local newspaper or magazine, the price is marked in several currencies (Serbian or Macedonian Dinar, Euro for Slovenia and Montenegro, Croatian Kuna and Bosnian Convertible Marka). In addition, each local or national journal dedicates, on a daily basis, a

⁹⁰ T. Judah, *Yugoslavia is dead: Long live the Yugosphere*, London: LSEE, 2009

few pages to the regional news. Television channels most of the times are broadcasting all over region, as focusing on national audience only seems to be insufficient when one can advertise and present its program to tens of millions of neighbours who speak the same language, have similar interests and recognize the same stars and brands. In Montenegro, for example, Croatian Radio Television (HRT), Serbian Pink or National Television (RTS) are often referred to as 'local' channels, as much as local Television of Montenegro (RTCG). Taking into consideration their similar taste for music, it is not surprising that every year at the Eurovision Song Contest former Yugoslavs, as good neighbours, vote exclusively for one another. According to Judah, "the emergence and identification of the Yugosphere does not imply uniqueness for the region of the former Yugoslavia, but rather a kind of maturity, in the sense that the postwar Balkans is becoming again, more like any other part of Europe..."⁹¹

2.4. Cultural Manifestations and Commercial Orientation of Yugonostalgia

Through the interaction of Yugonostalgia as a motivator, and Yugosphere as a commercial opportunity, cultural curiosities and nostalgic artefacts referring to the socialist past became popular across the former Yugoslavia. Examples of the genuine existence and popularity of the Yugonostalgia can be traced in almost every bigger city from Macedonia to Slovenia, such as the bars and the restaurants with nostalgic themes, the museums and exhibitions of the Yugoslav history, its popular culture or every-day life, the re-emerging Yugoslav brands, the street names that commemorate socialist heroes or events or the stores offering items and goods that memorialize the times of Yugoslavia. In "Titostalgia", Velikonja treated various cultural and commercial forms of Yugonostalgia:

"Its manifestations are extremely diverse, varying with the region, time, group of people or intentions. It involves pleasant memories of various 'things Yugoslav,' rather than things specific to individual nations of former Yugoslavia. These include Yugoslav pop-culture (ranging from *starogradske* songs and Dalmatian *belcanto* to rock'n'roll, punk and new wave), Yugoslav film, television series, comedy programs, the entertainment scene, victories of national sport teams, informal (friendly, love) relationships and formal ones (forged while participating in work brigades, serving in the military, visiting twin towns or schools, taking part in country-wide contests), travel and vacationing from the Vardar River in Macedonia to Mount Triglav in Slovenia, employment opportunities across the former country, various phenomena of everyday life, cult industrial and food products etc."⁹²

⁹¹ T. Judah, *Yugoslavia is dead: Long live the Yugosphere*, London: LSEE, 2009

⁹² M. Velikonja, *Titostalgia - A Study of Nostalgia for Josip Broz*, Mediawatch Series, Peace Institute, Ljubljana, 2008. pg.13

Unsurprisingly, these omni-present nostalgic manifestations (as Boym's theories suggest) create a new Yugoslavia on the ashes of the old one, a depoliticized Yugoslavia, not a state or an ideology, but a life story, a personal and social history that happened to take place within the context of that state. In no way it is a call to re-establish a Yugoslav state or praise its ideological propaganda, but only the use of the nostalgic brush to trigger some pleasant memories. While, as every other nostalgia, Yugonostalgia might also be romantically displaced, misinterpreted and full of historical inaccuracies, it has to be credited for offering the "first real opportunity for a democratic, honest, cross border and inter-ethnic discussion of the common social history; history that took place under the umbrella of the Yugoslav state."⁹³

All over former Yugoslavia, one can find symbols and relics referring to the communist aesthetic, Yugonostalgic cultural productions such as music, movies, TV shows, becoming widely popular and commercialized, displaying openly (and even celebrating) common socialist past. Even major football teams in Belgrade proudly keep their socialist names: *Partizan* and *Crvena Zvezda* [Red Star]. While notion of *Partizan* is one of the most popular communist legacies, referring to a communist fighter, a hero who fought for the Yugoslav ideals, a five-pointed Red Star is a well-known symbol of the communism, understood to symbolize the five entities, "classes" of socialist society: workers, farmers, intellectuals, soldiers, and youth. Even Croatian sport clubs still have a strong reference to their communist past, as for example *Mladost* [Youth] from Zagreb.

Through the use of myths, jokes and positive memories from the communist time in highly profitable form, numerous companies from the region started the commercial exploitation of this 'collective nostalgia,'⁹⁴ selling not only cultural products such as books, music concerts, movies tourist attractions, but also t-shirts and jewellery adorned with photos of Tito or Yugoslav flags, reality shows, restaurants and bars with nostalgic thematic and decor, supermarket brands and other consumers goods. Basic idea is to use these artefacts to trigger positive memories and emotions and send consumers back to the idealized past of the Yugoslav 'brotherhood and unity.'

⁹³ I. Pauker, *Reconciliation and Popular Culture: A Promising Development in Former Yugoslavia?*, in "Local-Global", Culture, Issue 2, pp.72-81, <http://mams.rmit.edu.au/wcch64c2r40r.pdf>

⁹⁴ Baker and Kennedy, 1994, quoted in: I. Pauker, *Reconciliation and Popular Culture: A Promising Development in Former Yugoslavia?*, in "Local-Global", Culture, Issue 2, pp.72-81

The shaping of the collective memories and images is the phenomenon on which the extensive body of literature already exists, focusing mostly on how the images and sounds from the past can create favourable attitudes towards the products and how nostalgia can be economically exploited. In their study of nostalgia, social connectedness and marketing management, Dennis Kopf and Marco Wolf defined nostalgia as “a phenomenon that describes the emotional involvement of individuals with their past and re-negotiates it with the individual’s presence”.⁹⁵ This emotional involvement is often prompted by the objects, pictures, music, movies, taste or smells and “understanding the powerful nature of nostalgia has allowed marketers to create consumer products that capture or create nostalgia through fantasies or memories.”⁹⁶

Media campaigns that instigate the warm feelings for Yugo-products and the positive associations with the former state create the new patterns of consumptions, based on the nostalgic experience. Speaking about the interconnectedness of the rise of nostalgia and popularity of the commercial terms evoking the past, Todorova and Gille concluded:

“Of course there is an interaction here: while the move to nostalgia makes the Socialist past marketable in a capitalist economy, the commercialization of these ideas and images further associates them with capitalism rather than an alternative. In other words, commercialization of socialism depends upon the domestication of the past accomplished by nostalgia, but also furthers the process.”⁹⁷

Commercial orientation of nostalgia and targeted advertising speak the language that is most familiar, most convincing and appealing to the key consumers. In the evermore alienating and depersonalized world, lacking the social connectedness of the socialist times, advertising strategies tend to create a shared sense of belonging through the personal and cultural associations with the socialist past. The chapters that follow will try to explain in details how the collective memory that keeps disintegrated communist Yugoslavia alive found its capitalist monetization through the various advertising, profit-oriented strategies. However, it is important to set previously a theoretical framework, and identify in which degree scholars already tried to connect nostalgia with commercial practices. The next chapter will therefore

⁹⁵ D. Kopf, M. Wolf, *Nostalgia and the need for social connectedness: implications for marketing Management*, 2010, http://swdsi.org/swdsi07/2007_proceedings/papers/837.pdf

⁹⁶ W. Havlena and S. Holak, *The good old days: Observation on Nostalgia and its role in consumer behavior*, In: “Advances in Consumer Research”, Vol. 18, ed. Rebecca H. Holman and Michael R. Solomon, UT: Association for Consumer Research, 1991, pp. 323-329

⁹⁷ M. Todorova and Z. Gille, *Post-Communist Nostalgia*, New York: Berghahn Books, 2010. pg.39

present a comprehensive review of literature on nostalgic marketing, consumers' behaviour and advertising strategies that employ nostalgia.

Chapter 3: Nostalgic branding, advertising and consumption

This chapter will focus on the recent publications addressing the interrelation of nostalgia, advertising and consumers' behaviour. Generally speaking, the objective is to suggest a selection of ideas and concepts of nostalgic branding and buyers' attachment, developed by various scholars at the end of the XX century. These studies provide consistent evidence of the positive correlation between the perception of the brand as nostalgic and the consumers' preference towards it. They should therefore contribute to the better understanding of the commodification of the Yugoslav collective memory and Yugonostalgic consumption patterns.

As early as 1979, in "Yearning for Yesterday," Fred Davis laid the groundwork which still sets the terms of the discussion, suggesting that there is "money to made from nostalgia"⁹⁸ and introducing "nostalgia exploitation potential," as well as possibilities for recycling, manipulating and earning from the nostalgic reminiscence. According to Davis, by temporarily restoring a sense of socio-historic continuity, collective nostalgia creates the self-identification patterns that can subsequently be employed as a profit-making tool. The underlying idea is that, as was later developed by Rutherford and Shaw, nostalgia stimulates the consumption of the products that develop and enhance one's identity.⁹⁹ Davis, however, limited his research on how the media can benefit from exploiting nostalgia – by creating shows, personalities and genres (with high "NEP" - "nostalgia exploitation potential") that will have the best chances to be successfully recycled over the following decades.¹⁰⁰

Although Davis mentioned "nostalgia specialists" as the potential future employees of media companies (in charge of creating shows with high NEP, and afterwards restoring the past cultural products for the present pleasure and profits), it did not seem highly probable that already by the end of the XX century, in 1990s, scholars all around the world will be specializing in the nostalgia management and promoting nostalgia as a new branch of marketing. Holbrook and Schindler have developed a concept of "nostalgia proneness" as a

⁹⁸ F. Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday: Sociology of Nostalgia*, New York, The Free Press, 1979, pg 126

⁹⁹ J. Rutherford, E. Shaw, *What Was Old Is New Again: The History of Nostalgia as a Buying Motive in Consumption Behavior*, in Proceedings of the 15th Conference for Historical Analysis and Research in Marketing, Leighann C. Neilson (editor) New York, NY: Association for Historical Research in Marketing, May 2011, pp. 157-166.

¹⁰⁰ F. Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday: Sociology of Nostalgia*, New York, The Free Press, 1979, pp 130-133

predisposition to nostalgia, a person's propensity to become nostalgic and examined it as a customer characteristic.¹⁰¹ Zimmer, Little and Griffiths argued that nostalgia proneness influences consumer perception of the historical branding (evoking nostalgia through the use of the old images on the new product)¹⁰² and Lisa Penaloza suggested the expansion of the conception of history as “a source of market value”¹⁰³ and “a cultural marker of legitimacy and authenticity.”¹⁰⁴ Some authors focused on the capacity of certain tangible stimuli to generate nostalgia, such as visual representations and nostalgia collages that can help marketers understand how to use the visual images to stimulate consumers' nostalgia,¹⁰⁵ or taste of certain alimentary products,¹⁰⁶ or even consumption of the ancient brands.¹⁰⁷

It was always evident that certain personal possessions, such as souvenirs or gifts might trigger nostalgia and serve as a materialization of the memory, but it was not before early '90s that marketers have become interested in how 'nostalgic' supermarket brands and cultural products can also evoke consumers' sense of the past and stimulate the consumption. It was actually the 'retro revolution' at the end of the century that instigated marketers' interest in revival and re-launch of the old brands. After decades of uncompromising demands for product differentiation and innovations, it seemed strikingly obvious, and yet so little exploited, that contemporary markets have actually craved for elicitation of nostalgia through retro products.

Having understood the importance of nostalgia branding as the management tool, scholars tried to identify the patterns of creation, stimulation and commercialisation of nostalgic

¹⁰¹ M.B. Holbrook, *Nostalgia and Consumption Preferences: Some Emerging Patterns of Consumer Tastes*, “Journal of Consumer Research”, vol. 20, No. 2, pp. 245-256, September 1993.

¹⁰² J. Rutherford, E. Shaw, *What Was Old Is New Again: The History of Nostalgia as a Buying Motive in Consumption Behavior*, in Proceedings of the 15th Conference for Historical Analysis and Research in Marketing, Leighann C. Neilson (editor) New York, NY: Association for Historical Research in Marketing, May 2011, pp. 157-166.

¹⁰³ L. Penaloza, *The Commodification of the American West: Marketers' Production of Cultural Meanings at the Trade Show*, “Journal of Marketing”, 64, October 2000, pp. 82-109

¹⁰⁴ S. Brown, R. Kozinets, J. Sherry, *Teaching old brands new tricks : retro branding and the revival of brand meaning*, in “Journal of Marketing”, 67, July 2003, pp. 19-33

¹⁰⁵ W. Havlena and S. Holak, *Exploring Nostalgia Imagery Through the Use of Consumer Collages*, in “NA - Advances in Consumer Research”, Volume 23, 1996, eds. Kim P. Corfman and John G. Lynch Jr., Provo, UT : Association for Consumer Research, Pages: 35-42

<http://www.acrwebsite.org/search/view-conference-proceedings.aspx?Id=7864>

¹⁰⁶ A. Vignolles, P.E. Pinchon, *Un goût de nostalgie : liens entre nostalgie et consommation alimentaire*, 3^{ème} Journée AFM du Marketing Agroalimentaire, 21 Septembre, 2007, Montpellier.

¹⁰⁷ A. Kessous, E. Roux, *Les marques perçues comme « nostalgiques » : conséquences sur les attitudes et les relations des consommateurs à la marque*, in “Marketing et Génération”, Recherche et Applications en Marketing, 25, 3, octobre 2010.

experience. In their essay on “Nostalgia for early experiences as a determinant of consumer preferences,” Schindler and Holbrook argued that consumers are most likely to be nostalgic of the products from their youth (consumed or somewhat associated with their childhood, adolescence and early adulthood).¹⁰⁸ They also suggested that, in general, these products, the so-called “nostalgic targets,” had to be, at least in some point, hardly accessible or completely unavailable. While these are interesting points, asserting that products disappeared from circulation sometimes do make successful come-back evoking consumers’ nostalgia for their own youth, in no way nostalgic branding should be reduced to a discontinuity in life cycle of popular childhood brands. Many products that have never disappeared from the market and had a continuity of availability and popularity, still managed to position themselves as ‘nostalgic,’ using the appropriate advertising campaigns.

In the previously mentioned Schindler and Holbrook’s study, the authors advanced an idea that “the experience of a period of intense affective consumption” is absolutely necessary for the development of the nostalgic consumers’ preferences. This idea, however, certainly might be questioned - just as nostalgia does not require that one has actually experienced the past he was longing for (borrowed memories), it can be argued that nostalgic preference towards the product might be transferred in the same manner, and therefore created “out of nothing”, or at least without a concrete previous bond with the product/brand. It can be actually implied that these authors omitted the distinction between the collective and the private nostalgia, developed by Davis in 1979. While the subjective experience (consumption) is certainly an important trigger for the private nostalgia, the collective nostalgia allows some other generations to recall certain objects via collective memory, making these symbolic artefacts at the same time highly public and still keeping their familiar character.¹⁰⁹

As already argued in the first chapter, nostalgia does not necessarily need to be a personal reconstruction of the intimate memories, it might just as well focus on the past things and activities which are recollected through the collective memory, or simply combine the personal and collective memorabilia, and even invent traditions and “falsify” nostalgic

¹⁰⁸ M.B. Holbrook, R.M. Schindler, *Nostalgia for early experiences as a determinant of consumer preferences*, “Psychology and Marketing”, Vol. 20, No. 4, 2003, pp. 275-302

¹⁰⁹ F. Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday: Sociology of Nostalgia*, The Free Press, New York, 1979, pg.122

material to serve the needs of present.¹¹⁰ In other terms, yearning for the romanticized moments of (real or imaginary) collective history is just as legitimate as yearning for the personally experienced past. Therefore, “nostalgia may be based on personal experience, but also on myth and abstraction of communal history.”¹¹¹ Likewise, just as much as nostalgia is, according to Boym’s classical definition “longing for a home that no longer exist or has never existed as such”, the commodified nostalgia and the very past that is used to sell the products “is often ‘manufactured,’ that is, not based on experience”.¹¹² Havlena and Holak made a distinction between the different types of this ‘manufactured’ nostalgia - they used the term ‘interpersonal nostalgia’ to refer to the memories borrowed from the family or friends, and ‘virtual nostalgia,’ the one based on memories recollected through the media, historical books or popular culture.¹¹³

Christina Goulding was seeking to identify the factors that influence nostalgic reaction of consumers who were not even born when the products they are nostalgic for were consumed.¹¹⁴ According to her study, most of the time, these “neo-nostalgics” were socialized in youth with the nostalgic people and were exposed to the nostalgic discursive and visual stimulus (stories, movies, clothes). These consumers felt also that they were born too late and expressed dissatisfaction with the current style and aesthetic of products’ design. Finally, she also argued that their preference for these types of products endured over time and that the nostalgic consumption was used as a basis for social experience. Indeed, it can be argued that nostalgic discourse is often just a source of socialization, process of sharing of mental maps and utopian landscapes and creation of common ideals. Translated into the advertising logic, according to Barbara Stern, use of the personal nostalgia will be effective in marketing items that are privately consumed and provide comfort, while ‘historical’ nostalgia

¹¹⁰ A. Hemtsberger, C. Pirker, *Images of Nostalgia - Effects of Perceived Authenticity and Nostalgia on the Evaluation of Visual Images*, for SCP (Society for Consumer Psychology) conference, Carnival Cruise Miami, 2006

¹¹¹ A. Hemtsberger, C. Pirker, *Images of Nostalgia - Effects of Perceived Authenticity and Nostalgia on the Evaluation of Visual Images*, for SCP (Society for Consumer Psychology) conference, Carnival Cruise Miami, 2006

¹¹² D. Kandiyoti, *Consuming Nostalgia: Nostalgia and the Marketplace*, in C. Garcia and A. Menendez, “MELUS” 31.1, Spring 2006, pp. 81-97

¹¹³ W. Havlena and S. Holak, *Exploring Nostalgia Imagery Through the Use of Consumer Collages*, in “NA - Advances in Consumer Research”, Volume 23, 1996, eds. Kim P. Corfman and John G. Lynch Jr., Provo, UT : Association for Consumer Research, pp. 35-42.
<http://www.acrwebsite.org/search/view-conference-proceedings.aspx?Id=7864>

¹¹⁴ C. Goulding, *Romancing the Past: Heritage Visiting and the Nostalgic Consumer*, “Psychology & Marketing”, Vol. 18(6), June 2001, pp.565–592

might be triggered by products that are publicly consumed, that “project status and image, and target the consumer's ideal self”.¹¹⁵

Over the years scholars focused on the different aspects of nostalgia and its transformation into the consumer good. Important idea was outlined by Marilyn Halter in “Shopping for Identity: the Marketing of Ethnicity” - consumers nowadays assume not only their personal (and collective stories and memories), but also the ethnicity and identity through the commodities they buy. As one of the pillars of the identity, nostalgia re-shapes collective memories and creates romantic landscapes of everyday life, utopian communities to which consumer wants to return through the purchase of the symbolic objects and the of the nostalgic heritage. According to Kandyoti, it is exactly because the return to a place or past ways of life is often impossible that “the need for strong cultural identities is fulfilled through the purchase of foods, clothes, crafts, travels et al., which are marketed through nostalgic discourses”.¹¹⁶

Important results have been presented in recent studies of Aurelie Kessous,¹¹⁷ a French author who focused on the relationship between nostalgia and brand attachment. According to her, consumers have a tendency to strive to “materialize their memories” and this can be achieved through the possession of ‘nostalgic brands’. What is created here is a sort of brand connection, a nostalgic consumer attachment that allows the translation of real or ideal memories of certain period into the privileged connection with certain brand and its frequent consumption. Earlier studies confirmed that brand memory is created at the very early age and influences the future consumption preferences, and Kessous empirically proves that the consumer preference, attachment and purchase intention are stronger for brands considered as nostalgic.¹¹⁸

Another concept should be mentioned here, the one of the brand loyalty, which is according to Tunisian scholars Acrout and Bellaaj Gargouri “a consumer’s propensity to behave in a

¹¹⁵ B. Stern, *Historical and Personal Nostalgia in Advertising Text : The fin de Siecle Effect*, “Journal of Advertising”, December, 21, 4, 1992, pp. 11-22.

¹¹⁶ D. Kandyoti, *Consuming Nostalgia: Nostalgia and the Marketplace*, in C. Garcia and A. Menendez, “MELUS”, 31.1, Spring 2006, pp. 81-97

¹¹⁷ See: Kessous 2008, 2010, 2011, Kessous and Roux 2006, 2008, 2010

¹¹⁸ A. Kessous, E. Roux, *Brands Considered as “Nostalgic”: Consequences on Attitudes and Consumer-Brand Relationships*, “Recherche et Applications en Marketing” (English Edition) , 2010, 25: 29

constant, cooperative and loyal manner toward the brand”.¹¹⁹ They argued that nostalgic values that stimulate acquisition and re-purchase of certain brands strengthen the brand attachment and therefore also the consumers’ loyalty. In order to encourage this nostalgic brand attachment, communication strategies should therefore focus on the creating of a complicity, a certain sense of sharing the same values as their consumers and being a part of their positive memories.

3.1. Nostalgic Advertising

Advertisements with visual and verbal nostalgic cues are proved to be effective in provoking nostalgic thoughts and feelings and creating a strong bond with their audience.¹²⁰ These nostalgic elements create a favourable attitude towards the advertising and the brand and evoke emotional response to the ads. In recent years, brands all around the world understood that in order to exploit their nostalgic potential, they should be able to evoke, recreate or even produce collective or personal past of the consumers.

Examples of nostalgic advertising could be found everywhere lately – *Paul*, international chain of bakery shops use a slogan “French Family Bakery and Patisserie since 1889” (USA), or “Passion of bread since 1889” (France); Evian with “Live young” campaign released a publicity in which diverse group of people discover their inner infants in a storefront window (drink Evian and bring out your inner child); *Converse* launched its “Connectivity” campaign to celebrate the 100th year anniversary, using the images of the influential musicians from the past decades that wore Converse as well as more contemporary artists that wear Converse to emphasize a feeling of connectedness between the past and the present; *Virgin* mobile presented a life story of its founder Richard Branson as a nostalgic tribute to the childhood dreams that might come true, etc.

One of the ways to advertise nostalgia that numerous brands adopted is to present the history of the brand in connection to a personal history of their consumers, making them inseparably intertwined. For example, before launching the PlayStation 4, *Sony* created a series of videos presenting the evolution of the game console over its 20-year history and encouraged

¹¹⁹ R. Bellaaj, F. Akrouf, *Nostalgie et Fidélité du Consommateur: Le rôle médiateur de l’attachement à la marque*, presented at the Venice-Paris International Marketing Trends Congress, 2008.

¹²⁰ Mueling and Sprott, quoted in: A. Hemetsberger, C. Pirker, *Images of Nostalgia - Effects of Perceived Authenticity and Nostalgia on the Evaluation of Visual Images*, paper presented at SCP (Society for Consumer Psychology) conference, Carnival Cruise Miami, 2006.

consumers to share their favourite PlayStation moments through the social networks. Similarly, last year *Microsoft* browsed the past with the “Child of the 90s” commercial whose nostalgic tagline “You grew up, so did we” and myriad of the artefacts from the end of the century (such as floppy disks, palpable sneakers and trolls), brought the consumers back through the time, and brought to *Microsoft* 18% of growth in the BPI (Brand Power Index).¹²¹ In the commercial “It couldn't be done”, another multination, *Audi*, have sent the consumers to a nostalgic journey through the evolution of the brand over its 100 years.

As already mentioned in Chapter 1, nostalgia acts as a buffer zone for the rupture between the present and the past and another way to stimulate nostalgic bonding is to use icons from the previous decades and to associate them with the present consumption patterns. “Legend” campaign by *Jack Daniel's* features a sentimental sampling of nostalgic images and music, and even Frank Sinatra as a central figure, for whose 100th birthday they issued a special Sinatra-branded whiskey. *Citroen* also used icons one is often nostalgic of – Marilyn Monroe and John Lennon, who both deliver the message “Do something of your own, don't look backwards, invent your own lifestyle, live here and now!” What marketers addressed in this campaign (*Citroen DS3*) is a “back to the future” concept, a nostalgia inviting progress and innovations – the idea is not to recycle their iconic DS model, but to “recapture the values that made it a myth.”¹²²

Nostalgia in advertising has been also used as a tool for customer segmentation by age, as the example of *Renault's* 2005 campaign “*Regrettez-vous vraiment vos 20 ans? Nouvelle Laguna, le meilleur est pour maintenant*” illustrates. *Kinder* and *Haribo*, on the other hand, played with nostalgia to capture generations that might not be their target group (“*Haribo, c'est beau la vie, pour les grands et les petits*”, “*Le grand Kinder pour les grands enfants*”). Most of the time, however, nostalgia advertising addresses the “Circle of Life”, which is exactly how the *Mercedes Benz*' recent campaign was entitled, suggesting that “Some things never seem to change. Which is why sometimes a life story can repeat almost entirely unnoticed.”

Kinder Maxi's commercial from 2003 was among the first that strived to create a nostalgic bond between the childhood and the adulthood – presenting the adults enjoying childish

¹²¹ <http://www.adweek.com/news/advertising-branding/seven-brands-are-winning-nostalgia-149174?page=1>

¹²² <http://bambooinnovator.com/2014/03/15/using-nostalgia-for-an-improved-brand-communication-strategy-brands-use-nostalgic-theme-to-expand-their-target-market-and-create-a-link-between-generations/>

games – such as drawing smiley on the window glass of a bus, riding on a chariot through the supermarket or painting nails using office material (fluorescent markers). Similarly, *Ikea* and even *Orange* with its commercial “Christmas Toys for Adults” (Les Jouets pour les grands – “*Il n'y a pas que les enfants qui revent d'avoir des jouets. A Noel les jouets pour grands sont chez Orange*”) were seeking to wake up the inner child and incite the purchase as a way of fulfilling this nostalgic longing and of reconnecting with the childhood. One of the brands whose campaigns often look back to the past is *Lego*, ‘everybody’s favourite childhood toy’ for over 50 years now. A company recently launched a campaign that challenged consumers to decipher 55 graphic riddles hiding iconic childhood stories, movies and other cultural highlights such as The Three Little Pigs or King Kong.

For some brands, nostalgia is all in details – the selling points of French *provençal* cosmetic brand *L'occitane*, *Paul* bakeries or *Ralph Lauren* boutiques all recreate traditional universe, a romantic vintage celebrating family traditions, coziness of a family home, into which they embody their authentic smells or tastes. Nostalgia marketing seems to be flourishing on the Internet too – as the companies found the inexpensive ways to reach a large number of customers – and many companies created virtual communities inviting their consumers to share childhood memories and good moments in which their product participated (most recently Nutella, celebrating its 50th anniversary).

These are only some of the large companies whose public slogans and advertising campaigns celebrate traditional values and memories. Marketing experts from Chevrolet confirmed that with their successful “From fathers to sons” campaign, they searched to establish a more emotional connection; they stopped marketing cars and started marketing a feeling. But even more than a simple feeling, nostalgia turned to be a powerful marketing tool that, in subconscious level, triggers perception of brands authenticity, longevity and credibility.

Chapter 4: Yugonostalgia and Its Commodified Forms

This chapter aims to introduce, describes and asserts certain forms of commodification of Yugonostalgia. Although most of the authors choose to the term “commercialization”, I would suggest here to describe this phenomenon as a “commodification.” Word commodification, , which refers to the “assignment of economic value to something not previously considered in economic terms,”¹²³ although belonging to the Marxist terminology, has been recently accepted by the few scholars (Zala Volcic, Nadya Chushak, etc), as seemingly the most adapted to designate the commercial exploitation of nostalgia and its expansion on the market as a tradable commodity.

Mitja Velikonja has put forward an interesting classification of nostalgia - on one hand, he identified (materialized) discursive practices, what he calls “the culture of nostalgia”, and on the other, mentality pattern, a “nostalgic culture”. While nostalgic culture is a popular conviction, social and cultural notion; culture of nostalgia has a strong commercial character, it is a product of modern consumerist culture. The two are strongly intervened - mental maps of nostalgic culture are used for “culture-of-nostalgia's” public manifestations, media representation and advertising strategies. “What is involved is a kind of nostalgia engineering, management or marketing – a ready-made nostalgia, pret-a-porter, polished and designed for the ‘local market’ and for ‘export’”, claims Velikonja.¹²⁴ It could be understood as a capitalization (culture of nostalgia) of promise of happiness (nostalgic culture).

Indeed, while it might be possible to explain, to a certain extent, the complex processes of fabrication of nostalgia (discussed in the Chapters 1 and 2), it is more challenging to try to identify and trace the elements of its instrumentalization. It has been already argued that consumer culture commercializes nostalgic memories and emotions. Nonetheless, this process might go in both ways, and it is not impossible at least a portion of these memories and emotions has been directly created by the marketing experts. It can be argued that not only modern consumerism shaped the people’s memories and emotions, making them more suitable for further commercial exploitation, but to a large extent “culture of nostalgia” shaped the “nostalgic culture”. How sure can one be that his/her nostalgia is authentic? One

¹²³ <http://english11toadvine.weebly.com/uploads/1/7/4/6/17466191/vocab.doc>

¹²⁴ M. Velikonja, *Titostalgia - A Study of Nostalgia for Josip Broz*, Mediawatch Series, Peace Institute, Ljubljana, 2008, pg 30.

could strongly contest my conclusion and claim that one's memories cannot be artificially created and implanted into human's mind, but it is at least an idea worth of considering, as numerous studies on the use of nostalgia in advertising purposes, confirmed (see Chapter 3).

It will not be argued here that nostalgia industry, especially in former Yugoslavia, developed out of nothing. However, as already described, the seductive potential of nostalgia has been recognized long ago by the marketing experts, and subsequently manipulated. It can be implied that silent manipulations of the consumers' emotions, desires and habits, conducted on every-day basis by the media and advertising campaigns, are not only targeted at triggering our nostalgic memories, but also at implanting a few. As "implantation" does not completely refer to all the aspects of "inserting into someone's mind," I prefer using the word "inception," but not in the original sense, as a "commencement", a "beginning", but in Christopher Nolan's¹²⁵ futuristic meaning, closer to the word "insertion". In his 2010 thought-provoking blockbuster "Inception," Nolan 'derived' a new word from the old one (or at least changed its meaning). His etymological game has given to the word 'inception' a new sense; it became the opposite of the 'extraction', namely "the planting of an idea into someone's mind without the victim's being aware of." It can be argued that it is exactly how media and culture of advertising created consumerist society, one into which they plant the ideas, and even memories, from the outside – before the society even realize that has been – "incepted".

4.1. Yugonostalgia – "Mental Supermarket"

By translating past souvenirs into a present-day reality, Yugonostalgia might not only be stimulating positive thoughts and evoking pleasant memories, but also guiding consumers, theirs thoughts and behaviours, including purchase behaviours. Therefore, diverse marketing strategies ensured its 'inception' into everything from supermarket brands people buy, haircuts they wear, music they listen, trends they follow, movies they watch, etc. Nostalgia industry made sure to create a large spectre of nostalgic souvenirs, such as badges, lighters, fridge magnet stickers, pen holders, ashtrays or decorative plates and bottles, printed t-shirts or even socks bearing Yugoslav flag, Tito's portrait or other symbols of the former state. One can also buy Tito's cookbook featuring recipes for his favourite dishes, attend concerts of the

¹²⁵ Christopher Nolan is a famous British film director and writer.

biggest Yu-rock stars, watch Yugonostalgic TV shows and theatre performances, etc. As Ugresic noted, Yugonostalgia “has become a mental supermarket.”¹²⁶

Yugonostalgia as a “consumer good” has not been sold only on the Balkans; in Brussels, Prague and Paris, expatriates from all over the region gather in Balkan restaurants to share memories and anecdotes from ‘Yugoslavia’ and enjoy traditional food and music. Curiously, all the differences between Serbs and Muslims (Bosniaks), Muslims and Croats, language barriers¹²⁷ strangely disappear once they find themselves ‘on the West.’ While this phenomenon is certainly too complex to be reduced only to Yugonostalgia, and requires much more elaborate analysis, expatriates community and their Yugo-solidarity are still interesting as an illustration of the nostalgic rapprochement, as the following quote from Dubravka Ugresic’s “Nobody’s home” describes.

“I don't know why, but every time after similar encounters - and there were loads of these - I feel like a principal character of a fairytale. And there, in the fairytales, there are helping hands. Macedonian offered me a free ride in the bus number 15, Bosnian lady gave me a right to have a smoke, a Russian free use of the toilet. And suddenly it occurs to me that global brotherhood still exists. It is us, a proletarian class. We recognize each other in a second, we encourage each other by words, we make to each other small favors as children, we take off each other some heavy invisible burden, and we keep on.”¹²⁸

Even more than simple ‘proletariat sensitivity,’ it seems that Yugonostalgia, expressed through a certain form of solidarity (Yugo-solidarity), and food and music from ‘back home,’ might actually be most visible ‘abroad.’ And ‘back home’ seems to be same for Croats, Macedonians and Montenegrins - and if it is even a little bit more than a simple home, other neighbour is certainly less than ‘abroad.’

The already mentioned interaction between Yugosphere and Yugonostalgia is probably partially responsible for the fact that, over the last ten years, popular Yugoslav brands, that

¹²⁶ D. Ugresic, *Nostalgia*, “Column: Homelands& Exiles”, December 2011.

<http://cms.skidmore.edu/salmagundi/excerpts/upload/a1-UGRESIC-Nostalgia.pdf>

¹²⁷ denominations of the language, once known as serbo-croatian, and now Serbian/Bosnian/Montenegrin/Croatian

¹²⁸ D.Ugrešić, *Nikog nema doma*, Edicija REČ, Beograd, 2005, pg.96

Translation from Croatian provided by the author: “*I ne znam zasto, ali svaki put nakon slicnih susreta- a bilo ih je bezbroj - osjecam se kao glavni lik u kakvoj bajci. I tamo, u bajkama, postoje pomagači. Makedonac me častio besplatnom vožnjom autobusom broj 15, Bosanka mi je ponudila pravo na dim, a Rus besplatnu upotrebu zahoda. I najednom pada mi na pamet da globalno bratstvo ipak postoji. To smo mi, klasa proletera. Prepoznajemo se u sekundi, tapsemo se rijecima, castimo se sitnim uslugama kao djeca, skidamo jedni s drugih neko nevidljivo breme i guramo dalje.*”

were partially or completely unavailable in neighbouring countries in the after-war years (case with many Serbian brands in Croatia, Slovenian brands in Serbia or Bosnia, etc.) made their come-back across the region. Their popularity competes with the reputation of the popular multinationals – on the post-Yugoslav space Croatian *Kraš* chocolates and biscuits are as important as *Milka* or *Nestlé*, Slovenian white goods (*Gorenje*) considered more reliable than Korean (*Samsung*), Macedonian fruit, Montenegrin wines (*Plantaže*) and Serbian sweets (*Jaffa cakes*, *Medeno srce*) irreplaceable on the shelves of the local supermarkets, all around the region.

Illustrative of the topicality of the subject is a recent TV reportage of Al Jazeera Balkans, entitled “Made in communism, cashed in capitalism”. Journalists around the region were asked to address the complex issues of nostalgia, communism and brand popularity and deliver stories from all the corners of former Yugoslavia, illustrative of nostalgic branding. Their conclusion asserted that in the region that significantly changed in every possible way during the last twenty years, it is however very unusual to be able find in the supermarkets the exact same products as few decades ago.¹²⁹

Since 2010, a Slovenian-based marketing research company, *Valicon*, conducts an annual FMCG (fast-moving consumer goods) brand strength measurement in the former Yugoslavia (including all the six¹³⁰ countries).¹³¹ Aside from the two world’s most popular brands, *Milka* and *Coca Cola*, former Yugoslav brands regularly dominate on the regional list. The basic condition of the study is that the brand must be present across the entire region, without exceptions, and therefore, some strong local brands of beer, coffee, still water or ice cream, are not taken into consideration. Similarly, brands are measured within a specific category, and for example, *Domaćica* (Housewife, if literally translated) biscuit produced by Croatian *Kraš* company was positioned in 19th place, while if the variety of sweets produced under the *Kraš* name were taken into consideration, *Kraš* would have been ranked the second. The table below shows the list of 25 strongest FMCG brands in former Yugoslavia in 2012, according to *Valicon*’s study, with regional brands in red colour.

¹²⁹ Al Jazeera Business: Made in Communism, on: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pQ1rjIuzXwE>

¹³⁰ The ambiguity here (six or seven states on post-Yugoslav space) refers to the still undetermined status of Kosovo, who made unilateral declaration of independence in 2008, but at the present day its international recognition stays controversial.

¹³¹ Valicon, Press Release, 18.April 2013.

http://www.valicon.net/uploads/Sporocilo_za_javnost_2013-04-18.pdf

1	Milka	14	Dorina (Kraš)
2	Coca-Cola	15	Aquafresh
3	Vegeta	16	Plazma keks
4	Argeta	17	Smoki
5	Cockta	18	Chipsy
6	Nivea	19	Domaćica (Kraš)
7	Orbit	20	Fanta
8	Cedevita	21	Medeno srce
9	Nescaffé	22	Ariel
10	Pepsi	23	Bajadera (Kraš)
11	Jaffa cakes	24	Fructal
12	Lenor	25	Kiki
13	Paloma		

Table 1: 25 strongest brands in former Yugoslavia in 2012, with “Yugoslav” brands in red
(source: Valicon)¹³²

¹³² Valicon, Press Release, 18.April 2013.

As shown in the Table 1, just next to *Milka* and *Coca Cola*, among the top five FMCG brands in 2012 were Slovenian *Argeta* (pâté) and *Cockta* (coke), as well as Croatian *Vegeta* (food additive). Some of the most popular products from Macedonia to Slovenia are also Croatian drink *Cedevita*, followed by Serbian sweets such as *Jaffa* cakes, *Plazma* and *Medeno Srce* (Honey Hearth), and Slovenian *Paloma* tissues and toilet paper. Overall 15 out of 25 most popular brands in the region are ‘Yugoslav’ products, and here ‘Yugoslav’ and not ‘regional’ is a deliberate choice – as, without exception, brands from the list are notably known from socialist period.

Yugonostalgic brands, according to Mirna Horvat, Research Director at Valicon, “can serve as a link to the better past. For that reason they have a strong point of departure when it comes to the brand strength - they are highly recognized and respected by the population older than 35.”¹³³ However, if certain Yugoslav brands penetrated the neighbouring countries and markets, becoming regional giants, it is not only due to their nostalgic capital and traditional quality. They also learn from the multinational leaders how to constantly innovate - they regularly introduce new products, tastes and advertising campaigns, yet still keeping the traditional, often nostalgic slogans such as “a taste that brings generations together” (by *Kraš*, Croatian brand confectioning chocolates and biscuits).

One of the most amazing Yugoslav brandings is the story of *Cockta*. This refreshing carbonated drink, a Yugoslav Coke with the addictive extract of dog rose berries, came into being in 1952 in Slovenia, allowing Yugoslav Communists to have their own ‘most popular Western drink’, as people often referred to it. Imitating Western lifestyle, in the very first year, Yugoslavs consumed 4,5 million bottles of the fizzy liquid. The story of *Cockta* is seen as one of the first ‘brandings’ of socialism - they were adopting Western forms of advertising and shaped the consumers’ culture in contemporary Yugoslavia. By the end of ‘60s, more than 80 million bottles have been sold per year, and *Cockta* was even shipped to Netherlands. As can be seen on the graph (Fig.1), after ten years of great success, *Coca Cola*’s entry into

¹³³ Translated from Serbian by the author, "Danas je nostalgija in, nostalgični brandovi mogu služiti kao veza s boljom prošlošću. Zbog toga imaju dobru polaznu točku kada je riječ o snazi brandova jer - imaju visoku prepoznatljivost i iskustvo kod populacije starije od 35 godina", <http://www.tportal.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/98623/Jugonostalgija-je-kapital-koji-je-tek-nekoliko-brandova-iskoristilo.html>

the Yugoslav market plunged the popularity of *Cockta*. Nevertheless, managers managed to reposition *Cockta* just few years later, using (already then) nostalgic slogan “The drink of our and your youth,” as well as “The drink consumed by three generations already.”¹³⁴

This short overview of the brand history and its advertising strategies during late socialism can help understand how *Cockta* was shaping consumerists’ habits and marketing horizon and culture of advertising in Communist Yugoslavia. In the short study “The Cockta Brand: From Socialist Copycat to Authentic National Icon,” presented at 15th Conference on Historical Analysis & Research in Marketing (CHARM), at Quinnipiac University in 2011, Slovenian authors Domen Bajde, Janez Damjan and Tomas Kolar argued that *Cockta*’s lifecycle was in a way a mirror of political and economical development of the country.¹³⁵ According to them, the brand had a strong impact on the development of marketing culture in Yugoslavia during the second half of the XX century.

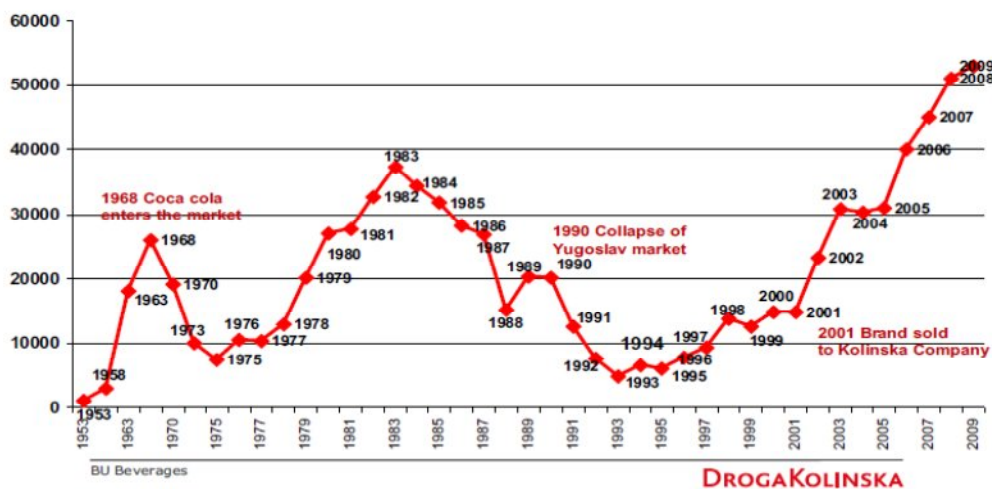


Fig.1 – Total sales of Cockta in the period of 1953-2009

Referring to the (Fig.1) borrowed from their study, starting from the 1983 and through the years of the Yugoslav wars we may follow a decline of the *Cockta*'s popularity. According to the graph, sales reached its lowest point in 1993, when the country was falling apart, and everything Yugoslav, as already discussed in the previous chapters, dismissed and disgraced.

¹³⁴ <http://www.cockta.eu/>

¹³⁵ D. Bajde, J. Damjan, T. Kolar, *The Cockta brand: From socialist copycat to authentic national icon*, presented on the Conference on Historical Analysis & Research in Marketing (CHARM), May 2011, New York.

At the time, it seemed highly improbable that Yugoslavia can ever again be restored or that Yugoslav *Cockta* can ever again capture significant part of the market. Nonetheless, during the following two decades, Yugonostalgia ‘restored’ a demised country (at least a memory of it), and *Cockta* also found its way back to the consumers around the region. Starting from the 2001, the new investor, *Kolinska* Company, redesigned the packaging and, following the same pattern as 50 years ago, launched a strong marketing campaign in a traditional, retro-style, this time with a new motto: “You will never forget your first.” This strategy once again seduced young customers all across former Yugoslavia, and *Cockta* made a great return to the shelves in shops, bars and restaurants.

“Consumer research shows that Cockta invokes various associations with various generations of consumers. For older consumers (50+) the prevailing association about Cockta is “The drink of your and our youth” slogan, while the main advantages of Cockta are found in its domestic origin and nostalgic meanings. Several older respondents mentioned that Cockta was “a special drink”, which they used to drink only at special occasions (e.g., Sunday family lunch in a restaurant).”¹³⁶

Over the last ten years *Cockta* positioned itself as one of the strongest brands in the region, as seen in the previously discussed study, where it comes just after *Milka* and *Coca Cola*.¹³⁷ While its recent popularity might be explained by some other factors – such as its good taste, price or availability, I argue that the brand owns, at least part of its commercial success to its ‘Yugoslav’ nature, and strategic nostalgic advertising. For most of my older informants, *Cockta* is a drink associated with Yugoslavia and the very beginnings of their own culture of consumption. For the younger ones, it is a ‘stable value’, a vintage, but still trendy drink “that makes them feel connected.”

The company, on the other side, use nostalgic slogans for several decades and plays with tradition and modernity in a way that is probably appealing to consumers (according to its popularity, their advertising is extremely effective). One of the best known marketing campaigns of the popular former-Yugoslav brand, targeted at consumers all around the region, had a clearly Yugonostalgic character – “Cockta: Drink the Yugoslav Coca-Cola!” This explicit slogan is a good illustration of what this chapter argues – companies from the

¹³⁶ D. Bajde, J. Damjan, T. Kolar, *The Cockta brand: From socialist copycat to authentic national icon*, Faculty of Economics, University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2011, presented in the Conference on Historical Analysis & Research in Marketing (CHARM), May 2011, New York

¹³⁷ Valicon, Press Release, 18.April 2013.

http://www.valicon.net/uploads/Sporocilo_za_javnost_2013-04-18.pdf

region recognized nostalgia as a marketing tool and therefore tend to associate their brands with the positive values from the past, sense of belonging and of socio-historical importance and otherness (as Yugoslav also meant ‘non-Western’ and ‘non-Eastern’). This strategy subversively promises the satisfaction of Yugonostalgic longing through the consumption of the brand. Yugonostalgia in the advertising context therefore acts as a stimulus for purchase, which is supposed to bring consumers back to the values, ideas and processes for which he was nostalgic.

Another “local” brand from the top of the *Valicon*’s list, which regularly leaves behind big multinational brands such as *Nivea*, *Nescafé* or *Nutella* is Croatian *Vegeta*, a condiment made of a mixture of spices and various vegetables. It was developed by Bosnian chemistry professor Zlata Bartl and commercialized in 1959. By 1962 more than 16 tons per day were produced and sold all around Yugoslavia and at this moment company fabricates about 96 tons of *Vegeta* per day and ships to more than 40 countries.¹³⁸ Regional marketing strategy of *Vegeta* might be an interesting example of nostalgic advertising. Most of their commercials evoke traditional atmosphere, conviviality and values such as family and friendship, while slogans suggest stable quality and longevity – “Already 50 years in your lives” or “Taste of reminiscence” (“Unforgettable taste”).¹³⁹

Over the last years, most of their commercials were made under the slogan “Small secrets...” which refers to the famous culinary program that made the product widely known, “Small secrets of the great chefs.”¹⁴⁰ This culinary TV show was extremely popular in Yugoslavia in ‘70s and ‘80s and it is believed to be one of the reasons of *Vegeta*’s amazing success during the late socialism. It positioned *Vegeta* as an iconic product, an indispensable food additive that was at the time establishing its place in the shelves of the Yugoslav households. Using “Small secrets...” as a catchphrase more than thirty years later, *Vegeta* aims to create a strong bond with its consumers, using nostalgia to suggest its durability and trigger consumers’ fidelity.

This example illustrates how by using nostalgic slogan (“Small secrets...”) in its advertising, *Vegeta* still makes reference to the well-known Yugoslav culinary show as to a pillar of its identity, recognisability and longevity. Moreover, on the occasion of product’s 50th

¹³⁸ Al Jazeera Business: Made in Communism, on: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pQ1rjIuzXwE>

¹³⁹ Translation provided by the author : “Vegeta – ukus (okus) koji se pamti”

<http://www.vegeta.podravka.rs/products/vegeta>

¹⁴⁰ Original name: “Male tajne velikih majstora kuhinje”

anniversary, televisions around the region broadcasted *Vegeta*'s nostalgic tribute to its popular show, bringing Oliver Mlakar, Yugoslav TV icon to "Welcome to *Vegeta*'s kitchen", once again, as he was doing for over 24 years, when the most important Yugoslav celebrities were cooking with him in *Vegeta*'s "Small secrets of the great chefs." Deliberately using Yugonostalgic memorabilia (TV show from 70s, Oliver Mlakar, nostalgic rhetoric), one of the most successful regional brands engages consumers' emotional side, suggesting that good values from the past should be preserved, and constantly re-purchased.

But not only supermarket brands pinpoint the good sides of the common past and culture, the very supermarket chains have also long ago understood the lucrative nature of nostalgic sentiments. Therefore, when in the early 2000s Slovenian retailer *Mercator* started opening its first supermarkets in neighbouring Pula (Croatia), Sarajevo (Bosnia) and Belgrade (Serbia), it had a clear strategy of emphasizing once again similarities and historical friendship, rather than disparities and conflicts. Its marketing strategy tended to nostalgically remind of the "good old days", common past and mutual interests – the opening of the Belgrade hypermarket was advertised with the slogan "Friends forever", while in Croatia and Bosnia its catchphrase for more than a decade now is "Mercator, the best neighbour."¹⁴¹ Entering soon afterwards Montenegro and Macedonia, but also Bulgaria and Albania, *Mercator* became one of the most successful commercial chains in South Eastern Europe, with more than 1500 retailing stores in the region.

The company, however, has recently launched the activities of withdrawal from Bulgarian and Albanian market, in order "to focus its future activities on the development of its businesses in Slovenia, Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia Herzegovina and Montenegro."¹⁴² Clearly, *Mercator* managed to position itself rather in former Yugoslav republics than in Albania or Bulgaria, because the memory of a common state and market, friendly ties and similar business culture enabled Slovenian company to create loyal consumers within the Yugoslav space. On the other hand, it is not only the appealing advertising and the Slovenes' good reputation in doing business (quality, punctuality, tidiness) that helped *Mercator* establish itself as a leading retailer in the region – consumers were seduced partially due to the prevailing traditional norms in the Balkans, where familiar brands associated with positive memories (such as *Mercator* was in comparison to some Western chains) certainly have more

¹⁴¹ <http://www.poslovni.hr/strane-kompanije/mercator-smanjio-poslovni-minus-250761>

¹⁴² http://www.just-food.com/news/mercator-confirms-bulgaria-market-exit_id123172.aspx

chances to succeed. Once gained, consumers' confidence turns easily into store fidelity. This is an auto-reinforcing mechanism typical for Eastern Europeans, who will always, due to often limited financial resources, decide to choose a well-known and reliable brand rather than to risk experimenting something new.¹⁴³

4.2. *Yugonostalgia and Consumption Practices*

In order to empirically verify if the consumers in the region are indeed biased in favour of nostalgic products, a short questionnaire has been introduced to 50 individuals from the region. The questionnaire was prepared using the methodology similar to the one used by Aurélie Kessous and Elyette Roux in their study on "Brands Considered as Nostalgic".¹⁴⁴ Firstly, a sample of 42 individuals of different age, gender and social structure was interviewed in the spring 2014. Age range was from 19 to 59 years and they were all of Croatian, Montenegrin, Bosnian, Macedonian, Slovenian or Serbian origin (out of which 31 still living in the region). The question was asked in serbo-croatian and it was formulated as "Can you cite a few brands which remind you of some good moments/periods of your life". Answers varied mostly in reference to the age of the respondents – younger ones tended to cite *Audi*, *HTC*, *Honda* or *iPhone* (even *Durex*) among the others, while the older than 30-35 mostly quoted brands from their youth, such as *Levis*, *Cockta*, *Marlboro*. But this too cannot be generalised, as most of the younger informants also referred to some brands from their childhood, such as *Kinder*, *Smoki* and *Lego*. However, it was evident that in cases when the question was raised in the open spaces (offices, discussions in cafés), when younger ones would hear from the others examples of the Yugoslav brands such as *Cockta*, *Plazma* or *Vegeta*, they had a tendency to add them to the list of the brands they have already quoted. This might be showing that they are biased by the others' choices, or simply that the evocation of these brands reminded them of the some bond they have also created with the brand (real, or imaginary, created through media, Yugonostalgia or simply socialisation with older generations).

Through this process a list of 82 brands was established, which are believed to be the source of nostalgic memories for different individuals around the region. Out of this, 38 were the brands from the region. The list was then reduced to 8 brands (*Argeta*, *Vegeta*, *Smoki*, *Jaffa*,

¹⁴³ <http://www.mercatorgroup.si/assets/Medletna-porocila/mercator-medletno-porocilo-1-3-2012.pdf>

¹⁴⁴ A. Kessous, E. Roux, *Brands Considered as "Nostalgic": Consequences on Attitudes and Consumer-brand Relationships*, "Recherche et Applications en Marketing" vol. 25, No. 3, 2010

Kras, Eurocrem, Plazma, Cockta), according to the criteria that the brand had to be mentioned in at least three of the six former Yugoslav republics whose citizens were interviewed, and more than five times in total score. List was subsequently completed by adding 8 ‘non-nostalgic’ brands – ones that belong to the same category, but have not been mentioned by any of the respondents (regional, as much as international brands) – *Rio Mare, Zacin C, Chipsy, 7 days, Nutella, Nestle, Petit Beurre, Pepsi*. The choice of both nostalgic and non nostalgic brands, was not in any case random – it was conditioned by several strict criteria – such as that brands have to be sufficiently old, but still present on the market, that they have been purchased by a wide range of consumers around the region, that they were targeting women as much as man. *Coca Cola* and *Milka* have been intentionally left out of the study, as their status as the most popular brands in the region might have altered the results.

Final questionnaire was then established, structured in three parts. In the first part, respondents were asked to select the brands (out of 16 present on the list), that they feel attached to. Questions in this part aimed to identify the level of confidence consumers have about each brand (The Brand in which I have a complete trust), level of their attachment to the brand (I am specially attached to this brand), brand loyalty (I have been loyal to this brand for many years), purchase intention (Purchase of this brand often cheers me up), and finally word-of-mouth (The brand which I recommend to/about which I discuss with my family and friends). Second part of questionnaire was constructed as a series of multiple-choice questions, where each question was presented as a pair of brands among which respondents were asked to choose the one they usually decide to purchase. Aside of eight couples ‘nostalgic and non nostalgic brand’ from the same category (*Cockta-Pepsi, Vegeta-Zacin C, Jaffa cakes – 7 days, Smoki-Chipsy, Nestle-Kras, Plazma-Petit Beurre, Argeta-Rio Mare, Nutella-Eurokrem*), couples of random brands (such as Ariel-Persil, Colgate-Aquafresh, where none is perceived as nostalgic) were added to prevent respondents from identifying a pattern, which might have had biased their answers.

Last part of the questionnaire consisted of the set of statements concerning consumers’ behaviour and purchase decisions and respondents were asked to indicate the degree of agreement/disagreement with each one of them. These affirmations aimed to evaluate the consumers’ propensity for nostalgic purchase, based on the factors that impact their decision making. Questionnaire has been presented to 50 individuals from the region in May 2014.

Kras, *Plazma*, *Jaffa cakes* and *Vegeta* were recognized as trustful brands by more than half of respondents, while only few of them put *Pepsi* or *Rio Mare* on their respective lists of brands into which they have a complete trust. Similarly, *Plazma*, *Jaffa cakes*, *Smoki*, *Vegeta* and *Eurocrem* (all of which nostalgic brands) were chosen by more than 50 percent of respondents as brands to which they have been loyal for a long time. Concerning the couples of nostalgic-non nostalgic brands, a tendency to choose nostalgic brand was obvious – 87% of respondents rather buys *Plazma* than *Petit Beurre*, 70% chooses *Smoki* over *Chipsy* (only 30% of respondents choosing *Chipsy* which is also a regional product, but with non-nostalgic character shows that it is not only about buying ‘local’), 65% preferred *Argeta* and only 35% *Rio Mare*. Other results show a similar tendency of respondents, whose age range was between 18 and 83, to choose nostalgic brands. Exception of this was *Kras/Nestle* duo, where both brands were supported by about 50% of the respondents.

The last part of the questionnaire aimed to identify consumers’ propensity for nostalgic purchase by asking them to indicate a degree of agreement/disagreement with certain statements (such as “Most often I purchase brands that I know since childhood”, “I have a tendency to choose products and brands from Yugoslavia”, “I tend to make purchase decisions emotionally, especially when it comes to products I feel attached to”, etc.). Some of the results this would be interesting to mention here are strong propensity for purchase concerning brands that remind respondents to their childhood in Yugoslavia (74% agreed with the statement) and importance of the emotional stimulus for purchase (79% claimed that they do make purchase decisions emotionally, especially when it comes to products they feel attached to). While these results cannot be generalised and rather present only the pilot study of the Yugonostalgia and consumers’ behaviour, it was important to confirm that there might be a certain pattern of purchase and consumption based on nostalgia for Yugoslavia.

4.3. Yugonostalgia and popular culture

In December 2013, only few months ago, newspapers around the region were announcing a ‘spectacular’ TV show that was about to come, a nostalgic journey through the ‘good old days’, namely the years of Yugoslav socialism. Each of the twelve episodes was commemorating one specific year (from the period 1958 – 1989) – reproducing décor, costumes and hairstyle typical for that particular moment, inviting actors, singers or sportsmen, whose projects or success made that year extraordinary in life of Yugoslav citizens. In the very first minutes of the program that was broadcasted in Serbia, Montenegro,

Bosnia and Macedonia, audience was greeted by a very nostalgic narrative of the host, Nikola Kojo, one of the most important actors in Yugoslavia: “I have brought you here because I am a great fan of the good old times. And I will be boring, and probably even pathetic in my intention to explain how good we have once lived, in the time that was more romantic, slower, more tender and more human.”¹⁴⁵

Throughout the whole first episode of the show, whose guests were Serbian actors and Croatian and Macedonian singers, not only nostalgic memorabilia has been evoked, but the participants themselves could not avoid to mention how “some small things were enough to make people happy and that is a big thing” (Kaliopi Bukle, Macedonian singer) or that “this state was among the most safe places in the world” (Nikola Kojo, the host). Some even went as far as to compare - “we are the children of socialism, and I am glad to be a child of socialism, I am glad that I have lived in a system that is, in every regard, better than the one we have today” (Dragan Bjelogrić, Serbian actor).¹⁴⁶

According to its rating, the nostalgic show seduced the audience – and probably sponsors too, employing a strategy similar to the one observed in the case of commercial brands and companies from the region – narrative stays festive and pleasurable, with no reference to anything that might contradict the nostalgic idealization. One of the episodes was therefore introduced in this form: “In the third episode of the ‘Show of all times’, we will take the audience to a nostalgic adventure and a sentimental journey to the 1989. It was a year of great turnovers – The Berlin Wall fell, Vaclav Havel became a president of Czechoslovakia, and in Yugoslavia an algal bloom happened”.¹⁴⁷ Careful observer will notice that while the ‘Episode 1989’ was actually recalling the year when the socialism collapsed and Yugoslavia found itself in the spiral of deteriorating economy and raising nationalist tensions, it chose to emphasise the process of “algal bloom” of the Adriatic, and subsequently that Kusturica won a Golden Palm in Cannes and Dino Dvornik made a great hit “Zasto pravis slona od mene”.

¹⁴⁵ Translation from Serbian provided by the author: “Doveo sam vas jer sam ja veliki ljubitelj starih dobrih vremena. I bicu dosadan, a verovatno i patetican u nameri da vam ispricam koliko smo mi nekad ziveli lepo u vremenu koje je bilo romantичnije, sporije, neznije i humanije”

¹⁴⁶ Translations from Serbian provided by the author: “Mi smo deca socijalizma, I meni je drago sto sam dete socijalizma I sto sam ziveo u jednom sistemu koji je po svemu bolji od ovog danas.”... “this town and that state were among the most safe places in the world”... “ljudi su se znali radovati na male stvari i to je jedna velika stvar”

¹⁴⁷ Translations from Serbian provided by the author: “U trećoj epizodi serijala “Šou svih vremena”, koji se emituje na TV Vijesti, gledaće vodimo u nostalgičnu avanturu i na sentimentalno putovanje u 1989. godinu. To je godina velikih preokreta - pada berlinski zid, Vaclav Havel postaje predsjednik Čehoslovačke, a u Jugoslaviji dolazi do fenomena cvjetanja mora.”

This is a clear illustration of the very selective nature of the nostalgic discourse, especially of its commodified (mediatised) forms.

4.2. “Sportostalgia”

“How good Yugoslavia would be if were still together?” This question was raised in the British Guardian, in the article entitled “Nations of former Yugoslavia prove that size doesn't matter,” discussing the success of the national teams and football stars from the region. In the same article, with the help of their colleagues from the former Yugoslavia, Guardian’s journalists made a contemporary Yugoslav football team made of superstars, which would bring together Mirko Vucinic (Montenegro), Dario Srna (Croatia), Nemanja Vidic (Serbia), Edin Dzeko (Bosnia), Goran Pandev (Macedonia) and Samir Handanovic (Slovenia), among others.¹⁴⁸ The article has been subsequently recycled in local journals for few weeks, and according to the fuzz it made and readers’ comments, Guardian’s idea was apparently very appealing to the football lovers around the region, who mostly were seduced by the idea of uniting all these superstars under the same team.

It has been showed so far that Yugonostalgia takes the most unexpected forms and laments all kinds of memorabilia. It is not unusual that one of its aspects, sport, also found its commodified version. More than just a romantic collective sport-utopia (as in the example of the imagining regional football stars together on the field), this sort of nostalgia found practical expressions too - there are nowadays sports channels in the region specialized in “recycling” biggest Yugoslav victories in the history. As people have had a tendency to nostalgically recall sport heroes and their unforgettable goals and scores that made Yugoslavia world champion in one or another sport, television channel *Arena* decided to offer them a possibility to review and relive these moments. Costly, but yet popular channel broadcasts historical games, interviews and celebrations, which once made Yugoslavs proud.

However, “sportostalgia” is even more than simply nostalgia for the days when Yugoslav national football, basketball or volleyball teams were bringing medals from big European and World championships. Yugonostalgia is also about lamenting competitive national leagues in almost every collective sport, success of local clubs on the international scene, days when it was common to travel from Croatia to Macedonia or from Bosnia to Slovenia to support one’s local team in national championship games, etc. Highly competitive Yugoslav football,

¹⁴⁸ <http://www.theguardian.com/football/blog/2009/apr/01/world-cup-2010-former-yugoslavia-jonathan-wilson>

basketball or water polo leagues, each with mostly two or three excellent clubs from each republic, were attractive not only for thousands of supporters in every major Balkan cities – but also for great sports stars and for sponsors and investors whose financial participation further contributed to the quality of the competition. With the dissolution of the country, common Yugoslav league was replaced by national leagues, to which, aside of these two or three top class clubs (that were present already in the Yu-league), another dozen of teams were added to fill up the gap, mostly low class competitors whose participation dropped significantly the quality of leagues. Talented players started to leave while still very young, clubs and leagues were losing supporters and investors and media also lost their interest in the national championship games.

In 2001, as the initiative of the Slovenian private company *Sidro*, Adriatic (ABA) league was established, featuring 14 basketball teams from all the former Yugoslav republics (Kosovo was still a part of Serbia back then). Playing its thirteen season now, league turned out to be a veritable success – the quality of the six national champions and other top clubs from the region significantly increased through sparing with competitive neighbouring clubs, sponsors and fans are once again seduced by the ambitious regional competition, basketball stars are coming back to play in one of the most attractive European leagues. Moreover, following the same principle, other sports also moved back in time to create leagues that bring back together (more or less) the same teams that made Yugoslav championships so entertaining and popular. In 2008 Adriatic Water polo League assembled regional water polo clubs and it is believed to be the one of the most important European championships, South East European Handball Association (SEHA) established in 2011 handball regional league, soon becoming such a big success that Belarus, Austrian and Hungarian major clubs expressed their interest in joining regional (yet still mostly ‘Yugoslav’) project.

“With the exception of soccer, then, we observe a tendency towards an economically beneficial, financially lucrative and hence pragmatic and intuitive approach to re-integration. Just like in the other spheres, the rationale behind gathering former Yugoslav clubs together is not a primarily reconciliatory one, nor is it motivated by requirements from the EU. It is instead a genuine attempt to bring back quality for athletes and sports fans.”¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁹ I. Ristic, *Rapprochement as a Paradigm Shift : Does the Wheel Come Full Circle in Former Yugoslavia?*, “Southeast Europe, Journal of Politics and Society” (Südosteuropa. Zeitschrift für Politik und Gesellschaft), issue 03 / 2011, pp. 286-300, on <http://www.cceol.com/>

According to Irena Ristic, this tendency of re-integration of Yugoslav sport clubs through the regional leagues has nothing to do with Yugonostalgia or reconciliatory movements; it is a basic desire for profit that instigated creation of regional competitions. I tend to disagree with this statement, as, while economic interest of the actors is non-negligible, common culture, language and sport heritage certainly inspired, prompted and encouraged the process of sport re-unification. Even if the creation of these leagues has been motivated by the profit-making, these competitions are still playing an important role in bringing back together the ex compatriots and promoting regional cooperation, its attractiveness and its benefits.

4.3. *Lieux de memoire: Tito's Blue Train*

Before introducing commodification practices that concern one of the most important Yugoslav “memorial sites”, Tito’s Blue Train, a complex notion of *lieux de mémoire* should be addressed. Pierre Nora, a distinguished French historian, was probably among the first who suggested that memory and history are not of the same nature (even that they are fundamentally opposed). While history, according to Nora, is “*une reconstruction problématique du passé*,” memory is “*un absolu*” that can allow itself even factual errors, through the idealised historical reconstruction.¹⁵⁰ His most famous contribution is certainly the idea of *lieux de mémoire* (sites of memory), which came into being as with modernisation, urbanization and mass culture, *milieux de memoire* (real, genuine environments of memory) ceased to exist. To explain in author’s own words: “*Un objet devient lieu de mémoire quand il échappe à l’oubli, par exemple avec l’apposition de plaques commémoratives, et quand une collectivité le réinvestit de son affect et de ses émotions.*”

While Nora might (and certainly already was) criticized for arguing that the true memory is an inexistent category, replaced by individual constructions of simulacra and remembering (*lieux de memoire* were produced instead), I tend to agree that just as much as memory re-configurates history, history (and its ‘acceleration’ as argued by Nora), “transformed and deformed the memory”. According to Nora, “*le passage de la mémoire à l’histoire a fait à chaque groupe l’obligation de redéfinir son identité par la revitalisation de sa propre histoire.*” This identity reconstruction will go through this famous ‘*lieu*’ of a memory that is not necessarily objective, a memory that chooses, fosters and embellishes certain memoirs, while it codifies, invents or erases some others.

¹⁵⁰ Nora P, 1984 dir., « Les lieux de mémoire », Gallimard, Bibliothèque des sciences humaines, 1984-1993.

This idea of collecting remains of memory and puzzles of history into a collage *called lieu de mémoire* is extremely important for approaching Yugonostalgic memorial sites – ones that commemorate Tito, country's cultural heritage, or just consumerist goods from the period. According to Nora, any site can become a lieu de memoire “if the imagination invests it with a symbolic aura”¹⁵¹

One of the most fascinating Yugoslav *lieux de memoire*, the example not only of this revisited Yugonostalgia and its commodified forms, but also of the complex interaction of capitalist market economy and socialist cultural heritage is Tito's Blue Train (*Plavi Voz*). To understand historical and symbolical importance of the train one must make reference to Tito's personality cult. Few months ago U.S. intelligence agency published recently unclassified document arguing that, based on the phonetic analysis of his speech, Tito was not of Yugoslav origin.¹⁵² As always, for the media around the region it is the occasion to recycle his biography, controversies, to interview his personal doctor, cine-projector or just someone who was once a boy that gave to Tito famous *stafeta*. The information echoed over the region, different conspiracy theories resurged and people just found themselves once again absorbed into the never-ending discussion on Tito's origin and background (Russian or American spy are the most often cited theories), lifestyle, and even sexual orientation. Why, more than thirty years after his death, his life still tantalizes former Yugoslavs?

Officially, more than 17 million people visited ‘House of flowers’, the famous Tito's mausoleum, over the last twenty-four years. His birthday, the popular ‘Youth day’, the 25th of May is traditionally celebrated in Sarajevo, Kumrovec, Belgrade or Tivat, where thousands of people gather to share memories, buy souvenirs and recall some of the old dreams. Almost 2500 people visited Tito's grave on 4th may this year, on the occasion of the 34th anniversary of his death. Buses arrived from Montenegro, Slovenia, Macedonia, Croatia and Bosnia, in the cinema of the Museum of History of Yugoslavia his speeches have been read, and world reports about him projected.¹⁵³

Mysterious statue of Tito surprised citizens of Skopje, Macedonia, just a day after (what would be) the 70s anniversary of Yugoslavia (29th of November 2013). On the 30th of

¹⁵¹ P. Norra, *Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire*, “Representations”, No. 26, Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory., Spring, 1989, pp. 7-24.

¹⁵² http://www.nsa.gov/public_info/files/cryptologic_spectrum/is_yugoslav.pdf

¹⁵³ <http://www.blic.rs/Vesti/Drustvo/462548/Stotine-ljudi-odale-postu-Titu-na-godisnjicu-njegove-smrti>

November, in the morning hours, not only citizens of Skopje, but also the local authorities have been caught by surprise by a giant bronze statue of Tito, 6 meters tall, erected in the courtyard of the high school named after a Yugoslav president, in the very centre of the town. Since local and national authorities admitted that they have “no information who illegally erected the statue that has no building permit,”¹⁵⁴ media around the region were reporting of the “indigenous” monument that came into being to remind Yugoslavs of the forgotten socialist values. They even went as far as to connect this mysterious ‘resurrection’ with the famous picture of Tito that is circulating over the Internet for years now, showing Tito glancing at his watch, with the added message: “It is time that I come back” (picture 1). However, this source of entertainment for the media from the region, turned to be a very sensitive and complex issues for the Skopje’s authorities, who were perplexed by this ‘cultural’ act of vandalism, and unable to find a solution for (nor the responsible of) this situation.¹⁵⁵ Soon afterwards, however, Macedonian party “Union of Tito’s Left Forces” declared responsibility for the illegal erection of the monument, but at the present day, 6 meters tall Tito still watches over Macedonians.



Picture 1: Tito glancing at his watch, sending the message “It is time that I come back”

Numerous conferences (such as the International multidisciplinary symposium “Culture of Tito’s Yugoslavia 1945-1980”, Vienna, October 2013), exhibitions (ex. Tito – A Yugoslavian icon, Ljubljana, November 2013), books (such as famous Tito’s cookbook, Titostalgia, or How we entertained Tito),¹⁵⁶ movies (recently Cinema Komunisto) and newspaper articles deal with Yugoslav leader, its political, cultural and social life and legacy.

¹⁵⁴ <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/tito-s-monument-catches-macedonians-by-surprise>

¹⁵⁵ http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2013&mm=12&dd=04&nav_id=785121

¹⁵⁶ M. Subota, *Kako smo zabavljali Tita*, Čigoja, Beograd, 2006

Thousands of people still commemorate important days of Yugoslav past by visiting his birth house in Kumrovec, or simply by organizing celebrations in one of the bars around the country named by the Yugoslav president. His pictures, once required to be hanged everywhere, today still can be found printed on countless souvenirs – mugs, t-shirts or lighters, and even in some completely unexpected places, as can be seen in the picture (Pic.2) showing a recent meeting of European Commissioner Stefan Füle and Jean-Paul Philippot, president of the European Broadcasting Union.¹⁵⁷ Surprisingly, just next to the European flag, behind the diplomat's back, one can spot a popular picture of Tito and his wife Jovanka on the window of the Blue Train.



Picture 2: Tito's memorabilia in the EU offices

According to Mitja Velikonja, author of "Titostalgia", Tito's popularity in contemporary Balkans can be explained by the fact that he represents a "symbolic centre of the political mythology and narrative imaginary of socialist Yugoslavia."¹⁵⁸ Personality cult, built through what might be one of the most brilliant examples of the official propaganda in socialism, outlasted not only Tito, but the country itself. Opinion polls that Tanja Petrovic synthesised in her study "The territory of the former Yugoslavia in the 'mental maps' of former Yugoslavs: Nostalgia for space" show that Tito's cult of personality is still very strong all around former Yugoslavia – 77 % of Slovenes considered Tito as a positive historical personality in 2005

¹⁵⁷ <http://www3.ebu.ch/fr/services/partnership>

¹⁵⁸ M. Velikonja, *Titostalgia - A Study of Nostalgia for Josip Broz*, Mediawatch Series, Peace Institute, Ljubljana, 2008, pg.16

(comparing to 64% in 1998), and in Croatian 2003 polls Tito emerged as the greatest Croatian historical figure.¹⁵⁹

According to my correspondents, it is not only Tito's extraordinary life that still seduces people around the region; it is also the myth of the 'father of the nation', of his political power and particular importance on the geo-political world map. He is still considered to be the one that made, at least for a while, the "third road" and "non-allignment" possible and legitimate, that established Yugoslavia as a sovereign country respected on the both sides of the Iron Curtain. There is a certain pride attached to the country's prosperity and Tito's political importance which still makes him the most emblematic figure of the communist Yugoslavia.

Maybe even more than a status of one of the most powerful political figures in the world, Tito's hedonism and decadent life-style created a myth of his personality, establishing him as the ultimate Yugoslav icon. In the West he was recognized, according to Atilla Balasz, as "a communist with style,"¹⁶⁰ and mediatization of his luxurious journeys and 'friendship' with worlds most influential people, such as Winston Churchill, Indira Ghandi, Sofia Lauren, John and Jacqueline Kennedy or Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor were only a part of his "Casanova-style statesmanship."¹⁶¹

One of the object that was undeniably recognized as a symbol of both Tito and Yugoslavia is the Blue Train, to which was referred mostly as to Tito's Blue Train, as it was constructed exclusively for the Yugoslav president in 1959.¹⁶² At the time, it was considered to be one of the most luxurious trains in the world. Besides of the locomotives named by distinct partisan battlefields – *Sutjeska*, *Dinara*, *Kozara* (made in Germany) and *Neretva* (made by General Electrics, US), almost all parts of the train were manufactured by Yugoslav workers in Maribor ("*Boris Kidric*") and Smederevska Palanka ("*Goša*").¹⁶³ Main convoy of the Blue Train included locomotive and 5 wagons - Tito's salon, ceremonial conference salon, wagon-restaurant (dining car), apartment saloon for guests and energy-distribution wagon.

¹⁵⁹ T. Petrovic, *The territory of the former Yugoslavia in the "mental maps" of former Yugoslavs: Nostalgia for space*, "Nationalities Affairs" (Sprawy Narodowościowe), issue: 31 / 2007, pp. 263-273, on www.ceeol.com

¹⁶⁰ A. Balázs, *Ship of Blithe Spirits: President Tito, Dinners and Women- a fictive documentary*, Hungarian Review, issue 06 / 2012, pp. 49- 59, on <http://www.ceeol.com/>

¹⁶¹ <http://balkanist.net/tito-has-been-dead-for-35-years/>

¹⁶² http://zeleznicesrbije.com/active/en/home/glavna_navigacija/prezentacije/plavi_voz/node_1157030172.html

¹⁶³ <http://beautifulserbia.info/plavi-voz-luksuz-u-stilu-josipa-broza/>

Additionally, kitchen-wagon, six sleeping cars and three flat wagons (transporting cars) could be added to the train. The interior in magnificent Art Deco style was mostly made of the precious materials – as for the wood – mahogany, pear and walnut, while saloons and hallways were decorated with marquetry, and wool carpets, velvet and silk were mostly used to decorate wagons.

Indeed, Tito's "Residence on Wheels" was considered to be one of the most opulent trains in the World, the "Orient Express of the East" – it disposed also with particularly innovative acclimatisation system (that apparently still functions), radio, phone, television and cinema projector. Although for the security issues, Tito's journeys on train, their timetable and route were all kept secret until the last moment, common pictures in journals were showing people waiting on the train stations to have a glance at the train, often throwing flowers on it while passing nearby.

Until his death in 1980, Marshal has crossed more than 600.000 kilometres in his residence on wheels, where he used to work and also complete protocol obligations. More than a simple train, this convoy had a diplomatic role too – it was in the Blue Train that Tito was used to welcome his most distinguished guests, such as Queen Elizabeth, Indira Gandhi, Leonid Brezhnev, Kadhafi or Francois Mitterand (after Tito's death, in 1983, from Belgrade to Zagreb).¹⁶⁴ After Tito's death, in 1980, it was in his train that Yugoslav leader made his last journey around the country, when his coffin was transported from Ljubljana (where he passed away), to Belgrade (where he was buried). According to the pictures and articles published in the media around the world – this last official service of the train was a very "emotional" journey – all around the country, along the railways and on the train stations, tens of thousands of people had been waiting for the train to pass. Documentaries and pictures showed grieving nation in tears, standing on the rain, all around the rail tracks that Blue Train was taking, throwing flowers and paying a tribute to the president.¹⁶⁵

More than 20 years later, having understood the logic of nostalgia market, Serbian Railways decided to put "Yugoslav Orient Express" back on the rails. Surprisingly, train that had spent two decades in a dusty hangar near Belgrade did not lose anything of its communist splendour – moreover, it kept its original appearance entirely – precious mahogany floors,

¹⁶⁴ <http://www.hubertvedrine.net/article-562.html>

¹⁶⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fAu9HEqhN50>

luxury carpets, elegant Art-deco furniture... Original idea was to make of it a magnificent museum, a memorial site that commemorates Yugoslavia and Tito's heritage, but the process of patrimonialisation of the train will turn to be significantly different.

It was in the evening of the 31st of December 2004, almost 25 years after his "retirement", that Blue Train was put back on the rails, taking about hundred of passengers from Belgrade to Vrnjacka Banja, for the New Years' 2005 Celebration.¹⁶⁶ Commercial success and publicity that transcended the borders of the former Yugoslavia persuaded Serbian company that the Tito's Train still fascinates people around the world and that journeys like that one might be an interesting way to exploit growing Yugonostalgia. Soon afterwards, commercial exploitation of the train has started, offering journeys in Tito's train as one of the most interesting tourist attractions in Serbia. But even more lucrative opportunity subsequently appeared – a possibility to rent a whole train, or some of its wagons. Splendid Marshal's salon, conference wagon and wagon-restaurant since then regularly welcome private celebrations, cinematographic projections or expensive birthday parties with Yugonostalgic character.

In 2007, for example, the train was rented more than 40 times, most mediatised being the one made by Vlade Divac, one of the biggest basketball stars in former Yugoslavia, who used it to transport his friends to his hometown, Prijepolje. Explore Montenegro, travel agency that organizes 12 hours long journey from Belgrade (Serbia) to Bar (Montenegro) in Blue Train, recently confirmed that 215 British tourists already discovered Tito's train in 2013 and more than 300 confirmed the journey this summer.¹⁶⁷ Serbian Railways estimated that only British tours will earn the train around 50 000 Euros (train journey is a part of the Explore Montenegro's six to eight days tour priced around 1300 Pounds). For the sake of comparison, it should be noted that the journey in the ordinary train from Belgrade to Bar costs between 20 and 40 Euros. In 2013, British tourists were paying 99 Pounds for the same ride in Tito's Train. The following quotation of one of the visitors describes the 'sacral' dimension of the object, for which Yugonostalgics are ready to pay a high price:

"The bed is still so comfortable. The wall covered by luxurious silk fabric. Blankets clean cupboards in excellent state. There is also the old "grundig" radio with equalizers. Toilet is simply breathtaking. Bathtub unscratched, and in front of the sink a leather chair – looks like

¹⁶⁶ <http://www.novosti.rs/vesti/naslovna/reportaze/aktuelno.293.html:164429-Sad-263e-smeti-i-da-kasni>

¹⁶⁷ <http://www.novimagazin.rs/ekonomija/britanski-turisti-vole-titov-plavi-voz-zarada-do-50000-evra>

new. There has the hot water all the time. Boilers operate as if they were yesterday produced. Buttons are still fully functional, at least those who are used to call the crew. One cannot tell which room is more beautiful. Is it the conference hall, where behind one picture there is a cinema projector, or maybe the resting cabin...¹⁶⁸

However, an interesting point of rupture happened when train that is explicitly Yugonostalgic object surpassed the commercial use with symbolic meaning (as for the premiers of films or books with Yugoslav thematic) and entered the sphere of commercial exploitation for the events that have no “Yugoslav” or nostalgic character. To put it simply, the symbolic seemed quite logical when in 2006, film crew of Yugonostalgic¹⁶⁹ “Karaula” (Border Post), coproduction of Croatian, Macedonian, Slovenian, Serbian and Bosnian Ministries of culture, starring Toni Gojanovic (Croatia), Sergej Trifunovic (Serbia) and Emir Hadzihafizbegovic (Bosnia), made one of its journeys to the film screening in Tito’s train.¹⁷⁰ It was, however, slightly more peculiar when Microsoft used it to organise a presentation of their Microsoft 7, or when participants of the tennis tournament Serbia Open, now traditionally make excursions from the Dorcol tennis court to Topcider hill.¹⁷¹

Another controversial aspect of the train’s patrimonialisation can help understand the complexity of the heritagisation processes, regional cooperation and its interactions with Yugonostalgia and business logics. Recently Slovenians showed interest in renting the train (still based in Belgrade), but although the offer was symbolically (as last official journey of the train was from Ljubljana to Belgrade), historically and also financially very attractive, train never made its journey to European Union. Actually, Serbian Railways realized that property rights still have not been completely resolved. Practically, as the main convoy of the train has six wagons, each ex-Yugoslav republic might be the inheritor of the one wagon and there were no guaranties that while travelling through Croatia and Bosnia, neighbours will not decide to keep “their” part of the train.

¹⁶⁸ Translation from Serbian provided by the author: “Krevet i dalje udoban. Zid prekriven luksuznom svilom. Čebad čista, plakari očuvani. Tu je i stari „grundig“ radio sa ekvilajzerima. Toalet takođe oduzima dah. Kada neogrebana, a ispred lavaboa kožna stolica - kao nova. Ima tople vode non-stop. Bojleri rade kao da su juče proizvedeni. Tasteri nisu zakazali, bar ne oni koji služe za pozivanje posluže. Ne zna se koja prostorija je lepša. Da li konferencijska sala, u kojoj se iza jedne slike nalazi kino-projektor, ili „sobica“ za odmor”
<http://www.kurir-info.rs/izlet-u-komunizam-clanak-21982>

¹⁶⁹ While film director, Rajko Grlic, explicitly refused all the accusations” of making a nostalgic movie”, grief over the brotherhood and unity in the movie, its nostalgic advertising and premiers organized almost at the same time in all ex-Yugoslav republic, made that film have a strong nostalgic connotation.

¹⁷⁰ http://www.blic.rs/stara_arhiva/kultura/106069/Grlic-u-ulozi-Malog-Joze

¹⁷¹ <http://www.kurir-info.rs/u-cast-drugu-titu-clanak-210218>

Last issue I will discuss is probably the most paradoxal and complex one. Knowing the importance of the wedding in life of contemporary Serbs, Montenegrins or Macedonians, one may easily understand why renting a Blue Train for the wedding turned to be a very lucrative business. For about 3000 Euros, one may organize its wedding in the Train, and by this day, there are no scholars or even journalists that critiqued practice which often includes overuse of alcohol in Tito's salon, gipsy trumpet orchestras in the Conference wagon or guests making out on Tito's bed. Furthermore, originality of the train also seduced another multinational company, at least its local branch. In 2010, Playboy created for itself a new tradition - of celebrating its birthdays in Tito's Blue Train. Pictures of half-naked playboy girls dancing on the precious antiquities such as Tito's worktable, Jacuzzi or one of the sofas in 'Charles de Gaulle wagon' were to be found everywhere in journals, and still there are not any comments suggesting that this type of commercialization might be slightly inappropriate. Not that I argue the mystification and fetishisation of the place, yet less sentimentality towards Tito and his regime, but current policy of exploitation of the magnificent patrimonial object, with no proper preservation strategy, seems to be highly controversial.

On one hand, there is a legitimate concern that this type of commodification of the past can jeopardize the historical objectivity and authenticity of the historical sites, pursuing "disneyfication" more than commemoration, becoming "false because more commercial than other versions of the past,"¹⁷² a veritable "historical bricolage, a melting pot for historical memories".¹⁷³ On the other hand, the history itself became "something to be established and managed through tours, exhibitions and representational practices in cinema, literature and other forms of cultural production."¹⁷⁴ However, when "packaged and commercialised" in order to become more appealing and more adequate for the mass consumption, heritagised past often end up in kitsch and superficial mystification.

In recent years numerous scholars addressed issues such as heritagization of the *lieux de memoire*, memory tourism and commodification of heritage. These interpretations of heritage

¹⁷² Lowenthal, quoted in: R. Andreescu, *No Humble Abode: Edith Wharton's The Mount and the Commodification of Heritage*, University of Bucharest Review, Series Literary and Cultural Studies (ex University of Bucharest Rev. Journal of Lit), issue 01 / 2013, pp.96-105

¹⁷³ Hewison, quoted in: R. Andreescu, *No Humble Abode: Edith Wharton's The Mount and the Commodification of Heritage*, University of Bucharest Review, Series Literary and Cultural Studies (ex University of Bucharest Rev. Journal of Lit), issue 01 / 2013, pp.96-105

¹⁷⁴ C. Kaplan, *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1995

as economic commodity and not only a cultural good overlap with processes of nostalgia's commercialization. Just as the notion of heritage, the phenomenon of nostalgia also turns memorial sites into the tourist destinations. And Tito's Blue Train is not the only tourist attraction that based its commercial success on the Yugoslav memorabilia and nostalgia as a stimulus for spending and consuming. Brijuni is another memorial site that offers for about 5000 Croatian Kuna (about 700 Euros) an hour long ride in Tito's Cadillac Eldorado, or pricey sleeping in one of Tito's famous Brijuni's villas (prices ranging from 5000 to amazing 15000 Kuna for a night in Primorka, the most luxurious one during the summer season).¹⁷⁵ Of course, at this high-class holiday destination, there is a possibility to buy one of the myriad of "Titostalgic" souvenirs, for which Brijuni national park has an exclusive right granted by the Broz family – as they have recently signed an official contract, granting National Park the right to the commercial use of Tito's name, seal and image. According to local newspapers, CSEBA (Chinese South East Business Association) showed interest to invest 13 million Euros in another memorial site dedicated to Tito, Kumrovec, more specifically into revitalisation of the existing objects and construction of recreational and scientific centres as part of the "Josip-Broz Tito" memorial complex.¹⁷⁶

Another *lieux de mémoire* also deserved to be mentioned at the very end, as in recent years, irony also emerged as a way to legitimize Yugonostalgia. In the unusual attempt of re-territorialisation, a Serbian Blasko Gabric founded in 2003 a mini version of the former country, the Fourth Yugoslavia, spreading on some three hectares of his own land near Subotica. Gabric and his neighbours have constructed miniatures of important geographical spots such as Triglav mountain or Adriatic sea, put up the Yugoslav flags, communist red stars and Tito's portrait all around it and unintentionally created one of the most popular attractions for Yugonostalgics. His Yugoland theme park was visited by thousands of admirers of the former communist state, mostly on Tito's birthday or other important Yugoslav holidays.¹⁷⁷

4.4. *Yugonostalgia – critics and limits*

Yugonostalgia and its commodification practices open a whole set of questions concerning the tragic futility of the Yugoslav wars, commercial exploitation of the collective memory

¹⁷⁵ J. Bousfield, *The Rough Guide to Croatia*. Rough Guides, New York, 2007

¹⁷⁶ <http://www.blic.rs/Vesti/Drustvo/453120/Kinezi-ulazu-13-miliona-evra-u-Titov-Kumrovec>

¹⁷⁷ <http://www.blic.rs/Vesti/Vojvodina/186885/Mini-Jugoslavija-dobija-prve-stanare/komentari>

and capitalist ‘disneyfication’ of the socialist past. Therefore, it would be important, at the very end of the study, to discuss at least some of the critics and limits concerning this complex phenomenon.

For its kitsch aesthetics and carnivalesque celebrations Yugonostalgia certainly might be accused of triviality, for its romantic lamenting of sentimentality, for its manipulative character when it comes to historical facts, for oversimplification and misinterpretation. Certain authors went as far as to consider it “a sort of posttraumatic syndrome of the transition.”¹⁷⁸ In Predrag Marković’s reading of nostalgia for socialism, it is a retrograde phenomenon, potentially dangerous and stagnating, locking the society into a utopia instead of moving it towards democracy and the free market.¹⁷⁹

While the aim of the paper is not to suggest determinately positive or negative picture of Yugonostalgia, there is a particular need to draw attention to one particular set of critics, addressed to the “dangerous and stagnating” nature of the phenomenon. In December 2013, a conference of CERSA/CNRS/University Paris 2 brought to discussion the topic “Yugonostalgie ou Europe Liberale”. The interpretation suggested by some of the scholars at the conference was that Yugonostalgia is a phenomenon which is absolutely opposed to the idea of European Integration and democracy. Attempts to discredit nostalgia as the causality underlying the Euroscepticism, however, failed to produce any stable evidence that the correlation between the two phenomena actually exists. Yugonostalgics do not gather to try to bring down the current system, protest against EU accession or govern the return to the communism. Contrary to this, they gather, as already stated, to fulfil their inner necessity to reinvigorate their memories, enliven the values and ideas they once believed in, recreate a sense of past belonging and sharing they probably miss in present. If there is a socio-political agenda behind Yugonostalgic longing and gatherings, it can only be drawing attention to the certain aspects of life in Yugoslavia (such as stable healthcare, education, employment) that new system still has difficulties to deliver. As argued, Yugonostalgia in the region is a sentimental mourning for the attractive utopia, packed into a commercial framework and presented through various cultural productions, but not a political strategy. Therefore any implication of negative correlation between Yugonostalgic sentiments and practices on one,

¹⁷⁸ <http://balkans.aljazeera.net/vijesti/bauk-i-jauk-jugonostalgije>

¹⁷⁹ N. Chushak, *Yugonostalgic against All Odds: Nostalgia for Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia among Young Leftist Activists in Contemporary Serbia*, Doctoral dissertation, August 2013.

and political stability and Europeanization on the other side, would have to be much more strongly argued and based on evidences (such as anti-European discourse of Yugonostalgics for example).

The most serious and significant criticism was raised by Zala Volcic, who argued that, while Yugonostalgia as a cultural phenomenon is not problematic, its manipulations, appropriation and exploitations for nationalist or commercial purposes seem to be controversial.¹⁸⁰ According to her, “creating a marketable version of the past requires smoothing over its rough spots and filling in its contradictions in order to consume it rather than engaging with it.” Indeed, uncritical nostalgia might as well be interpreted as a way to avoid coming to terms with past (german 'Vergangenheitsbewältigung', for more information refer to Ludtke¹⁸¹), confronting personal or collective guilt, or maybe only admitting the flaws of that same “Yugoslav” past, which contributed to the wars and ethnical hatred of 1990s. But while it might be argued that Yugonostalgia “serves as an avoidance mechanism that postpones indefinitely a crucial reckoning with the past”, this harmless yearning still makes the cohabitation possible and opens the possibilities of reconciliations. In that sense, even if manipulated as a tool to hide the past pitfalls, Yugonostalgia is certainly not an apologetic discourse aiming to create an alibi or a vindication for the past crimes. Most of the time, it only strive to liberate “their” Yugoslavia of the burden of the violence and wars, to discharge it of political accusations and ideological narratives.

¹⁸⁰ Z. Volcic, *Post-Socialist Recollections: Identity and Memory in Former Yugoslavia*, Published in “Cultures of Globalization: Heritage, Memory and Identity” (eds. Yudhishtir Raj Isar & Helmut Anheier). London: Sage, 2011, 156-167.

¹⁸¹ A. Ludtke, *Coming to Terms with the Past: Illusions of Remembering, Ways of Forgetting Nazism in West Germany*, “The Journal of Modern History” Vol. 65, No. 3 (Sep., 1993), pp. 542-572 The University of Chicago Press, on: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2124850>

Instead of Conclusion

It would be important to address, at the very end of this study, the issue of the “Yugoslav exceptionality,” namely the complex combination of socialism (with human face) and capitalist freedoms (at least certain, such as liberty of travel, or principles of free market economy). Although socialist countries were not supposed to generate consumers' societies, as explained in Patrick Hyder Patterson’s “Bought and Sold: Living and Loosing the Good Life in Socialist Yugoslavia”, the emergence of consumerist values actually happened in Yugoslavia, and even quite early – during 1960s and 1970s.¹⁸² The inner contradiction of the process that brought together socialist values and consumerism is quite obvious – state was unconditionally keeping Marxist commitments to the ‘culture of production’, with a worker-producer in the centre of the system, while at the same time allowing, or even encouraging emergence of ‘culture of consumption’, in which productive, utilitarian dimension of goods is replaced by its symbolic, satisfaction-seeking and status-expressing role.

“It was a different time. We were not burden by the identity issues... I mean we were, but not as identity today – defined by national, religious belonging or even worse by class status... Back then it was your education that was part of your identity, your family, your good manners, your commitment to the community – and not some silly car or iPhone.”¹⁸³

For Patterson, “Yugoslavia was its consumer culture” and lamenting over the country is actually not as much about the affection for the old values, good practices or stable bonds, as for the appealing consumer experience, and “shared consumer opportunities of the past”.¹⁸⁴ Certainly, one may argue that one cannot be nostalgic about something that is today a widespread phenomenon - even more easily accessible (and more various too) than once. However, it is still possible that it is exactly this accessibility, habits and presence of the whole new system based on that very consumers culture (unlike wise when in socialism consumption was one particular form, distinctly opposed to the system values, seen as a “reward”, an “occasional little luxury”) what made it less appealing. Consumers simply do not find the same pleasure in purchase and consumption, and it can be argued that they are not nostalgic for the consumerism per se (as they enjoy the same phenomenon in larger extent nowadays), but for the consumerism in socialism. With all its inner inconsistencies and

¹⁸² P.H. Patterson, *Bought and Sold: Living and Losing the Good Life in Socialist Yugoslavia*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell U.P., 2011.

¹⁸³ Private conversation with young girl from Belgrade

¹⁸⁴ P.H. Patterson, *Bought and Sold: Living and Losing the Good Life in Socialist Yugoslavia*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell U.P., 2011, pg 327-332

perplexities, nostalgia for the Yugoslav consumption practices still remains at least a portion of comprehensive and complex Yugonostalgia. Because, at the end, nostalgia is always puzzling and paradoxical, as much as longing back to the past to find what one does not miss in present.

According to Patterson, it is exactly consumption and the centrality of the consumer that made the Yugoslav 'socialist experiment' so distinctive, so popular, so appealing.¹⁸⁵ Society that promoted social welfare, but rather often experienced shortages, was unsurprisingly seduced by the abundance, modern advertising and pleasures of consumptions. Furthermore, Patterson even argued that not only the stability of the Yugoslav reformist socialism, but also its collapse, were in great part influenced by the consumption practices.¹⁸⁶ By importing western techniques of advertising and capitalist business practices, Yugoslav consumers started to replace ideology of productive forces and human needs by the ideas of hedonism, consumption for pleasure and "potential of better living through spending." According to Patterson, it is exactly this ideological transfer that was happening through the adoption of 'western' lifestyle and consumerism, that contributed to the demise of the socialism and country few decades later.

Consumerism, which had helped keeping Yugoslavia together by bringing the western culture, ideas and dreams into socialist promise of happiness in the 1960's and 1970's, therefore subsequently helped it "collapse into a civil war". In particular, with the economic downturn of 1980s, the culture was also disintegrating at the interface of patriarchalism and consumerism (socialist values and advertising-driven spending culture), which ultimately deprived the Yugoslav "socialism with human face" of its legitimacy.

This study tried to argue, among the other, that the same phenomenon, consumerism with its legacy of merchandising fantasies, nowadays helps to reconstruct Yugoslav space and to economically, politically and culturally reconnect former YU republics. The notion of discontinuity was therefore essential for understanding both consumerism and nostalgia, since both phenomena tend to restore sociohistoric continuity, allowing individuals to preserve their identity by "maintaining internal continuity in face of external

¹⁸⁵ P.H. Patterson, *Bought and Sold: Living and Losing the Good Life in Socialist Yugoslavia*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell U.P., 2011, pg.17

¹⁸⁶ Ibid. pg.1

discontinuity.”¹⁸⁷ The central notion here is the one of “nostalgic” product, consumers’ commodity whose acquisition, possession and consumption develop and enhance one’s identity. More precisely, both nostalgia for consumption (shared consumers culture) and consumption of nostalgia fight the same battle against the confiscation of memory: they both strive to preserve and reconstruct the past and the legacy which has been taken away from Yugoslav citizens in the after-war period, for the sake of construction of national identities.

The paper argued that in an increasingly alienating and depersonalized world (lacking the social connectedness of socialist times), advertising strategies tend to create a shared sense of belonging through personal and cultural associations with the socialist past. As one of the pillars of identity, nostalgia re-shapes collective memories and creates romantic landscapes of everyday life, utopian communities to which consumer wants to return by purchasing symbolic objects and evoking nostalgic heritage. In order to explore various aspects of Yugonostalgia's commodification, this study used statistical data from marketing studies in the region and examined the advertising strategies of some of the most prominent “Yugoslav” brands.

The central argument stands that, while people have relied on nostalgia as a collective form of therapy for the multiple perturbations of their memory, to preserve values from the socialist period and create a bridge with their ex-compatriots, certain brands (supermarket goods as much as rock bands, politicians, or TV shows) have based their success on Yugonostalgia's commodification. Therefore, this paper tried to identify Yugoslav consumption patterns and trace historical transformations of the prevailing mental attitudes towards its consumer’s culture. The principal arguments stands that in this complex interaction of nostalgia and consumerism in former Yugoslavia, the collective memory has been used as a reconciliation tool as much as a marketing strategy.

¹⁸⁷ F. Davis, *Yearning for yesterday: A sociology of nostalgia*, The Free Press, New York, 1979

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