

MNEMOSOPHY

A painting depicting an elderly man with a wrinkled face and a young girl in a dark, intimate setting. The man, wearing a dark coat and a white shirt, is lighting a pipe for the girl. The girl, wearing a red dress, looks up at him with a focused expression. A single candle provides the light, casting soft shadows and highlighting the textures of their clothing and the man's hands. The background is dark and textured, suggesting a dimly lit room.

AN ESSAY ON
THE SCIENCE
OF PUBLIC MEMORY

TOMISLAV S. ŠOLA

TO LELA

Tomislav S. Šola

Mnemosophy

An Essay on the Science of Public Memory

Limited Edition

Published by: European Heritage Association

Layout & prepress: Luka Cipek

Cover: P. P. Rubens "Night Scene", *Wikimedia Commons, Public domain*

Print: Web 2 tisak

ISBN 978-953-56836-3-6

Zagreb, 2015

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1. Introduction

1.1. Some thoughts for a reluctant reader

I was unable to provide an accomplished and well-disposed editor. Besides the clumsy and impoverished language of World English¹, there are repetitions I could not correct myself. As for the first, it is logical, maybe even a justified consequence of globalisation so let us use the “lingua franca” the way we foreign speakers can (and by the way, among ourselves, we get along very well). For the latter I would like to count on those who read books randomly and will take this defect (and others if I am lucky) as an advantage. This being a limited, *zero edition* of the book, it can hopefully contain more than average number of imperfections.

A benevolent reader should note that an essay is but “a short piece of writing that tells a person’s thoughts or opinions about a subject”² and not a scientific book. This essay is only a reflection founded upon active and long international participation in the heritage sector. I believe that one should read manuals for the job and books for the profession.

The social psychologist Kurt Lewin³ said: “There is nothing so practical as a good theory”. His wisdom about theory has been largely misinterpreted. It was a corrective call for a balanced appreciation of both, theory and practice as one feeds the other, though it mildly reminds us that thinking usually precedes an act. He who thus praised the practicality of theory, also said: “If you want truly to understand something, try to change it”⁴. For the last thirty years I have been trying to contribute to the change in museums, then in curators and

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¹ International English is the concept of the English language as a global means of communication. It is also referred to (Wikipedia) as Global English, World English, General English, Engas, or Globish.

² <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/essay>

³ Kurt Lewin (1890-1947) is considered the father of modern social psychology. His work was influenced by Gestalt psychology and stressed the importance of both personal characteristics and the environment in causing behaviour.

⁴ <http://www.wilderdom.com/theory/FieldTheory.html>

finally, getting into the heart of the problem, in the very understanding of the art of public memory. The references to museums are prevailing, but they were meant to concern the entire domain of public memory.

Though, naturally, I owe a debt to many people, this work is dedicated to the memory of my mentors Georges Henri Riviere and Kenneth Hudson, both masters of change. It is worth noting that both were predominantly practitioners and neither of the two was academic. One liked theory and other did not, yet both loved life, heritage and social commitment. I believe that they would approve what I have to propose. Trying to change museums I tried to widen the understanding of heritage, seeing it forever closer to the meaning and mission of public memory. Other heritage occupations share their basic structures and working processes with museums, but I still lack a lot of insight into their specificity. This book is meant to be a mere contribution to an understanding of their shared core concept. Having spent half of my career in different aspects of practice⁵, I will certainly be (again) too theoretical for practitioners and too practical for theoreticians. So, the following text has developed unintentionally in contrast to the tastes of some of the scientific, high-brow curatorial opinion makers whose great or smaller institutions play the role of the public face of the heritage establishment. It has also taken the shape of an intercession between theory and practice, of an understanding of occupation(s) and life, so some will hopefully recognise at least their own frustration. The usual authorities operate in a world of similarly high-achieving, respectable professionals with multiple credentials, where communication is done in a scientific language that lay people aren't meant to understand. This long essay has been written in their name and for their sake.

The domain of heritage is not “covered”, sanctioned or run by a profession and a science of its own. Several occupations within it claim to have the attributes of both, the profession and the science. But, again, the theory and praxis will intertwine to offer, hopefully, a timely grand perspective to the disparate domain.

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⁵ Besides being a curator and director I have been doing consultancy and occupied various positions within the museum domain.

The periodical essayist tone is intentional. If the ideas expressed here prove to be relevant, if the concepts are well chosen and the way of thinking correct and honest, - that should suffice as *scientific-ness*. Stirring up the imagination, stimulating the occupational conscience and responsibility, or provoking opposition to what bothers us, would be a good enough effect. This book is also moralizing which, to make it worse, I find an unjustly abolished right.

The reader who cares to continue might learn there is a reasonable claim that there is a potential and exigency for a science of heritage. In spite of the rising mass of scattered arguments it needs to be defined and its uses explained. The paradigm requiring a new mind set is changing over the last 30 years at least⁶. Any research would abound with arguments of early beginnings. There is a vast and growing literature dealing with all the specific and specialist aspects of these grand questions of the heritage domain⁷. I use it here only occasionally as I have no intention of reinterpreting, repeating, approving or correcting it, but merely adding to it. There is a dose of intentional naivety in proposing this science-to-be as a *panacea* for the heritage occupations. Public memory makes little sense if socially inert and inefficient, in spite of grandiose institutions that represent it. In a world so burdened by dramatically rising calamities the public memory sector would provide a great benefit by becoming part of the solution.

In the future the spread of heritage awareness will put many in the position of contributing to a common good by consciously managing heritage. Honest devotees of museums or heritage in general, or other independent practitioners, will need help. Treating heritage as the privilege of public institutions is becoming obsolete. Why should people be deprived of an understanding of the “secrets” of our occupations that deal with *their* memory? We shall witness a balanced development of a new and real professionalism, on one side,
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⁶ I have written about this in some chapters of my other books and lectured about it extensively.

⁷ The older literature on theory is too often vague and quasi-philosophical. The newer is growing fast, much of it being published in magazines and conference papers. A few voluminous anthologies of relevant literature are available to readers wishing to have overviews.

and on the other the opening up of forms of cultivated amateurism through private initiatives and ownership. It is a brisk development with many temptations and challenges that we are not as yet prepared to face. All will have to be working together. This book should raise at least a moderate interest in anybody interested in answering the question: if heritage is so important as it seems, why is it not more present, efficient and workable in our lives? Why don't we use it more for our pleasure and prosperity? Why is it more and more treated as a luxury expense of the state, or a privilege of the rich, or why it is readily admitted if turning into entertainment or mere addition to, say, tourism industry? Are museums still aloof refuges of scientists deeply immersed in grave and impenetrable problems? In a changing world the understanding of heritage should be widespread because it will increasingly be a target of greedy developers, "brand doctors", cultural entrepreneurs and all sorts of smart rogues. They would be just snatching at their chances for profit: "casino capitalism" will turn anything into resource of money. Though much harm has been already done, heritage is one of the few remaining areas where profit-making individuals or corporations can move in and, according to their custom, after fierce superficial exploitation, turn it into yet another mountain of useless rubble. Public memory institutions (PMI) as a sector would have a power to frustrate such development.

1.2. Heritology, the search for concept

The need for theory is, naturally, not mere intellectualising. Any science needs a specific concept, as every theory is a "coherent group of general propositions used as principles of explanation for a class or phenomena"⁸. If theorizing makes it logical, the legitimacy of proposing neologisms should not be a problem. Even Sociology, a prominent, unquestionable science wasn't very convincing when proposed in the 19th century. Only the practitioners, not necessarily the best, can be relevant theoreticians elaborating set of rules, principles and methodological claims which offer an understanding and assist the practice they relate to.

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⁸ Webster's Encyclopaedic Dictionary of the English Language

Would a *mere* theory be able to take up such a set of ambitions or is the name of science more appropriate, - it depends upon ambitions. Politics, which is (ideally speaking) a set of principles, methods, and practices of government, - hardly presents a science in its own right, but it has its own philosophy⁹. Why shouldn't public memory? Therefore, a science of heritage might be at least a challenging objective. It stems from practices of memory like philosophy itself stems from life. Philosophical science has, naturally, evolved to be at such a distance from the reality of common people that it has lost the link to it. However, the brightest philosophical minds were able to formulate maxims and statements that explained the essence of their albeit inaccessible speculation, and present high inspirational standards for daily reflection.

Heritage occupations need a common theory to understand the nature of their medium, to grasp the spread of the concept of heritage, to be able to form their own mission, to create a conceptual basis of their involvement wherever the nature of "their" heritage is, to be accountable partners to state administration, to media and to commercial corporative sector and its industries. They need the theory to create a strategy for accomplishing the mission, thus assuring their own survival through being irreplaceable. If they do not see clearly their own strengths and weaknesses, they will give wrong or even harmful responses to the offers of the other sectors, requiring too much or too little in any proposed deal¹⁰. They should be able to take full responsibility for the public welfare they keep and represent, so that it gains value and stays under the control of democratic forces of society.

The hundred years of failure of theoretical endeavour would not alone be enough to produce the long expected change. Insisting upon museology as a science we were after, would be like being satisfied to have "churchology" as a science behind our striving to un-
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⁹ According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, "the meaning of the term political is itself one of the major problems of political philosophy".

¹⁰ Take the example of the second-rate presence of museums in the formation of the great databases, which are done by businesses possessing no knowledge or responsibility that collective memory requires.

derstand the Divine or content with “schoolology” if professionally being concerned with transfer of socially formed knowledge. The decisive impulse came from the crisis of practice. The “profession(s)” of heritage care and communication started to need usable answers to the questions their tormented position imposed. Compared to anything they used to experience, this new need was partly caused by sudden success. People admired museums increasingly as rapid change raised the need for firm structures of memory and convincing, unbiased narratives. The success did not imply, that they like us the way we are and are satisfied with what museums do. It was rather their unmatched expectations that kept bringing them to spaces of memory, - their search for security and safety for their disappearing values. Most citizens voting for new museums do out of prevailing feeling that heritage supports their specificity. But they have little capacity to require museums that would really respond to their needs. Extreme political forces (usually of the right orientation) that calculate with insecurity and vulnerability of people readily proclaim themselves the protectors of their identity and self-confidence. Like corrupt media, they do not elaborate positive properties of human nature but exploit their dark opposite.

Therefore, responding to prevailingly conservative establishment, museums were an unlikely source of grand, opening theories that assist the human condition and project simple visions of its needs. This explains the persistence of traditional, conventional museology which is little more than just an extended domain of museography, deprived of an inherent need for profound reflection or consideration of the fully formed profession. The concept of heritage that unifies the occupations growing on it, in all the variety of their practices and competencies, entails a theory which is formed on the same wide foundation. Thus, heritage science is a logical notion, and its derivative term, be it heritology or some better chosen neologism is only (though intentionally provocative) an attempt to provide it with a short and logical name. As any other term, this one challenges the change of the current state of affairs, and if (hypothetically) accepted, it would become conventional, just as any other. Yet, if the term is a mere convention it comes in handy if it points to the core concept and its ultimate use.

It took a decade since the first proposal to articulate it further¹¹. By that time it “museology outside museums” was¹² one of the ideas widening the theoretical concern. Museums, encompassing all the variety of their complexity and specialisation, were too engaged with the technicalities of their job to admit any far-fetched conclusions that could challenge their right to splendid isolation. This isolation, of course, differed from one part of the world to another, from one country to another, from one city to another and, indeed from one museum to another. Therefore, it was seemingly impossible to propose a theory that would be valid for all that comfortable richness of experiences and circumstances within the imposing domain of heritage.

As technologies and management gained importance, theory and their neologisms were rather resented by practitioners. Yet, the academic milieu inhabited by university professors is still more distant from reality than that of curators. It is due to their influence that museology has often gone astray becoming armchair philosophising and losing contact with the great, motivating questions for the successful realisation of a social role. Until recently, we have been accustomed to living with this attitude of rejection¹³, but the ideal aim is having a science that supports a real profession. Practice goes well with theory. In the last few decades the higher aspirations to understanding the entire heritage, reaching beyond museums were not obvious. Eastern Europe was highly ideologized and expectations from institutions and culture were part of that social and political project. Less pragmatic and with slower processes, they were more ready to theorise and find in it part of self-realization. Whenever or wherever serious, socialism was an inspiring albeit corrupted project. Therefore, speculative museology was born. Because of its strong

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¹¹ What is Museology? // Papers in Museology: Local and Global. Umea: Acta Universitatis Umensis. Department of Museology, Umea University, 1992. p.p. 10 - 19. ; this text marked the end of decade of ill success of the proposal;

¹² Professor Ivo Maroević, University of Zagreb

¹³ A very well conceived complementary academic education for future curators in Croatia started in 1987, has failed to produce any significant difference for the museum sector, let alone for other public memory institutions, because of this rejection; most of the established curators denied the need for formal curatorial education and demonstrated it by a reluctance in employing pretenders to other knowledge. This paradox is, however, a widespread phenomenon.

inclination to philosophy and semiotics (only the University of Zagreb was already in the mid-eighties insisting upon an extraordinary model of museology as an information science) it lacked clarity and vision but nevertheless paved the way for what the world today is taking for granted.

So, no wonder, the crisis of museology is as long as its existence. The hundred odd years¹⁴ of solitude has been spent in an ambiguous “status nascendi”¹⁵, in fact a state of never being born. Only in the last three decades, with a few exceptions though, there are relevant theoretical contributions and the looming, blossoming practices that suggest the fight for some compact theoretical approach and, ultimately for a renewed, or, indeed, a new profession. There is no doubt that well-conceived practice (as learning from the best examples) will always reach the same conclusions as any good theory, but the time, effort and resources spent on the method of trial and error are wasted. Traditionally the quality that mattered was that of collections, excellence of scientific research and the neatness of its stern, methodological presentation. The number of museum professionals able to give a solid, critical and convincing account of their profession, analysing its nature, its role in society was still very small in the 1970s when the new theoretical paradigm was finally born and demonstrated through the practice of eco-museums. It was not all that obvious: Georges Henry Riviere¹⁶ still called it museology, but the ampleness of his approach and holistic vision belonged to the decades to come. After the prophetic announcement of the public memory sector that J. C. Dana¹⁷ implicitly made in the 1920s, G.H. Riviere and the circle he created continued to push the boundaries of museum idea. Curiously enough, the inherent conservatism of museums was too strong to allow a quicker re-conceptualisation. It was like their *paseotropia*¹⁸ prevailed as an overdeveloped, impulsive pro-

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¹⁴ Neickelius, C.F. used the term “museographie” already in 1727, signalling correctly its substance.

¹⁵ Stransky, Z. Zbynek used the term in his numerous texts upon the scientific status of museology

¹⁶ Hugue de Varine, and, in the case of the first eco-museum, Marcel Evrard.

¹⁷ Dana, John Cotton. The Plan for a New Museum, Newark, 1920.

¹⁸ Šola, Tomislav S. Eternity does not live here any more, glossary of museum sins, Zagreb, 2012. (Paseotropy is a neologism, one of the “sins” of traditional

pensity towards inherited institutional values. Two centuries of the modern museum institution, until relatively recently (1970s) so well protected from change by the establishment, is too a short historical period to oblige us: heritage institutions, museums especially, should be part of the change in any society.

Most of the museum community is by now ready to talk about theory and yet, globally speaking, only a fraction of it would consent to the obligatory professional training for newcomers or mid-career one for the others. The growing industry of professional education mainly by conferences and workshops¹⁹ is an almost cynical consent to the obvious need for obligatory professional training. But, still, be it curators, archivists or librarians, though being an occupation, they mostly consider themselves a profession. The claim gained official status.

Professional theory gets momentum any time the critical and structured transfer of the professional experience happens aimed at the advancement of the profession and its service to society. There will always be quite a few museum specialists for whom museums will be scientific institutions and to work in them they claim the study of the basic academic discipline suffices. Some big Western museums prefer to be complacent about theory. Museums and other heritage institutions in the undeveloped world, pressed with lower priorities, also take theory as twaddle.

The centuries in which attitudes towards the past were either arbitrary or left to prestigious institutions gave way to the heritage age. What is the difference between the two? The first was dominated by science and the quest for knowledge and the present one is dominated by the mission and participation in development, - science comprised. The first one was a certain public practice of sciences, while the second is the business of communication retaining scien-
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museums, denoting fixation upon the past resulting in their conservatism, i.e. not understanding that past is just the means, not the aim;

¹⁹ Two types of business are discernible: one where all the participants are delivering papers upon a given theme (these survive by high admission fees and local or EU incentive money channelled to underdeveloped regions or cities where they organise their conferences), and the other that fills the need for training and education by offering well reputed lecturers at a very high registration fee.

tific criteria.

A simple institutional framework which embraced national, regional, and some specialised and memorial museums boomed especially after the Second World War: there was a feeling that knowing past prevent repeating it. The second wave came in the 1960s while discovering the educational force of the heritage institutions and it was followed by new increase in the 1970s when commitment to the changing community was an obvious need. Finally in the 1980s and 1990s, the theoreticians' early calls for a development concerned institutions, became a notorious reality. The participation in (sustainable) development was assisted by a call from marketing, advocating user oriented, value-for-money product. During these phases of growth of the public importance we have seen the formation of educational museums, of eco-museums, of science centres, various complex museums, visitor centres, interpretation centres, heritage centres, visitor attractions, educational trails, company museums, site-specific museums and finally virtual and hybrid institutions. Several years ago, much of it would have been possible to classify as the heritage industry²⁰. Today, the synergic interaction is such that the blending of culture, business, the tourist industry and the marketing of place presents a challenge to the traditional standpoint and creates a need for a new ability to discern the limits and inevitable blends. The simple practical question is how to survive and still retain integrity, - how to be successful while still being loyal to science and to the ethics of the common good. This delicate task will be successfully accomplished only if there is still time for an excellent theory that would help to build a professionalised force able to face the challenges.

This development occurred with only a small portion of pro-active theory²¹. Many people see this giant convergence of professions as a dangerous maelstrom which they either do not want to see or consider an evil which would gain importance and legitimacy if taken into account. Libraries, documentation centres, archives, conser-

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²⁰ Hewison, Robert. *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a climate of decline*. A Methuen, London, 1987.

²¹ It is about the theoretically induced foundation of ecomuseums although, as said elsewhere, it is impossible to give theory exclusive credit for that.

vation institutes and various services for the protection of cultural monuments and sites are positioned at a further distance from the centre of this turmoil of constant change and challenge.

More important reasons for the convergence lie in the speed of development, the spread of profit-oriented ideology, managerial expansion and the nature of information technology. This convergence should be recognised, accepted, made to serve the social ideals and sustainable development. A society with no utopia will sooner or later become a society with no ideals, which makes it susceptible to failure when faced with the cruelty of institutionalised greed, turned into ideology of wild liberal capitalism. The mission of culture and heritage in the broadest sense, goes beyond the inherent, conventional willingness of related occupations to organise their knowledge and societal impact using their best judgement. It is not a matter of coercing them into some prearranged expectations neither. The simple fact is that modern society craves for them to react responsibly to the democratic claim by which public institutions are supposed to read, detect, know the common needs and respond to them accordingly. Civil society is rapidly appropriating abilities to articulate these needs but, yet, no one will ever know better what the capacities and performances of institutions are but their employees. Being public is obliging. Unfulfilled requirements, even if not rationalized by the public mind, create a climate of failure that cannot be endured easily or without consequences even by the former, publicly inconspicuous institutions.²²

Even in doubt when the answer to a problem is not obvious the obligation of a scientist, probably any professional, is to develop a hypothesis. Then it becomes a basis for reviewing the existing state and encourages possible progress. This is why long ago, in order to scandalise the profession in a manner that would help create intellectual impulses, I proposed abandoning the unproductive, confusing term “museology” and using “heritology” instead²³. The main

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²² Last decades the news of closing down or even sale of museums are more and more frequent, and public debates on the efficiency of museum institutions have become everyday reality.

²³ “System of Museology and Interdisciplinary”, ICOM-ICOFOM, 20–23 October 1982, Museum of Decorative Arts, Paris. At the time when the term was proposed it was

objections to “heritology” throughout the years were basically two: the linguistic clumsiness of the term and the lack of relevance to the museum profession (the English disagreed, the French refused, the Germans never cared and the Americans hardly saw any need for an applied science at all). After the premature birth of heritology, a whole range of new terms emerged: new museology, ecomuseology, economuseology, social museology, general theory of heritage²⁴, heritage studies, cultural heritage sciences²⁵, heritage management²⁶, identity management²⁷, - some quite bizarre, but all witnessing the frustration with museology. While the age of heritage was still well below the horizon, using the term heritology and its logic applied to museums was good only as provocation acquiring the air of heresy and non-conformism. Besides, I was increasingly dissatisfied with heritology’s clumsy mixture of Latin and Greek. It was not suggestive enough of the final objective I had in mind, - the counteractive nature of public knowledge.

It implies that heritage institutions, as we know them, are but one and the changing possibility of an institutional answer to a set of needs. Introducing some Heritage Action System Unit seemed to suggest or imply an organized network able to deal with its complexity. This early proposal (1987) still acquires further arguments in its favour²⁸. The future heritage institutions will function as a network, being cheaper and more efficient to run. The very nature of ICT and the resulting informatisation of society almost compels a merger and

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but a linguistic nonsense of a foreigner in English language and too radical a thesis to be taken seriously so it was literally laughed out of court.

²⁴ Šola, Tomislav. The General Theory of Heritage. Zbornik radova “Težakovi dani” / ed. Slavko Tkalac, Jadranka Lasić-Lazić, 2002. p. 241. I have taught the subject under this term at the Department of Information Sciences, Faculty of Humanities, Zagreb, since 2001. I reiterated from heritology which was not revealing its contents well enough for students to choose it as elective course.

²⁵ Italy. Translated as such into English from the original Scienze del Patrimonio by the authors of this university programme.

²⁶ The name of the Chair of Museology at the University of Zagreb is now Chair of Museology and Heritage Management.

²⁷ The name of the proposed subject at the University of Zagreb by Tomislav Šola in some phases of reorganisation of the Department of Information sciences..

²⁸ The proposal I have made in the “Annual Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Lecture”; 1987. The text was later published: Role of museums in developing countries. Varanasi: Bharat Kala Bhavan Hindu University, Benares, 1989. pp. 24

“marriage” (both in the sense of technologies as well as conceptually) of the analogue and the digital reality. Trans-disciplinarity and multi-disciplinarity use the specialist sectors as resources in the process of upgrading the levels of concern. There are still more practical circumstances to this unity, which theory (or science) can signal, inspire, enhance, and spread: mission, legislation, networking, ethics, professional education and partnerships. In North America, whose models we seem to follow, the theory seems to be less important but the practice precedes it well pushing towards the broader, all embracing schemes; the U.S.A. Preservation Act (1966) was the first of the regulations that started the broadening of the heritage domain: the National Register of Historic Sites, the Advisory Council on Historic Places (1978), the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service at the Department of the Interior (thus showing the widening tendency, both terminologically and functionally). Similar development, has been advanced furthest by CHIN, the Canadian Heritage Network, which literally encompassed entire heritage as a common resource to the society.

The connections between the three basic sectors suggest the existence of the same central concept of heritage but each of them naturally retains the theory (librarianship, archivistics and museology) peculiar to their working processes. The core concept of heritology seemed to be at first the *total museum* and then *total heritage*, in its lost integrity. The dissonance between three great traditions (those of museums, archives and libraries) appears unhappy and restrictive when about social context and strategy.

Kurt Levin²⁹, who said that there was nothing so practical as a good theory, implied that there could be no usable theory without the praxis from which it derives. The practice is paramount but can neither improve nor carry forward without reflection upon its experiences. (The corrective feedback is the core of the cybernetics). The implied error in judgement, contained in a dilemma, is the result of the division of labour taken unnecessarily far. Professional education should be as close as possible to practice, but dividing the world into

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²⁹ Lewin, K. (1951). Problems of research in social psychology. In D. Cartwright (Ed.), *Field theory in social science: Selected theoretical papers* (pp. 155-169). New York: Harper & Row.

doers and thinkers is harmful. Public memory institutions should form a powerful alliance of humanistic, cybernetic response to the challenges any society encounters. The terms “heritology” and “mnemosophy” are proposed as an intentional provocation that should lead to a usable, open definition of the heritage domain and its organized forms.

Since a decade or so ago there is a heritage science but it happened as the result of the rising frustration of what the Anglo-Saxon world calls (real) i.e. exact sciences. They have noticed that any time they wish to employ their scientific methods in preservation and restoration, they lack common ground for all the engaged scientists and their respective sciences. Thus it happened that the first journal bearing the name of Heritage Science³⁰ has been created by academics primarily from the field of chemistry. There may be also individuals susceptible to the evident gap and calling their interest and activities by the similar term of Cultural heritage science³¹. While usual encyclopaedias do not mention these terms, the flux one, Wikipedia, records acutely the fact of the heritage science regarded as “science for access to cultural heritage and for its conservation, interpretation and management”. The term is relatively novel and has become widely used only after 2006. Paradoxically this initiative grew in the circle of conservation practitioners, - not the bearers of theorising museums where theory was long cherished. Heritage science involves all the aspects of research performed by scientists employed in heritage institutions, in universities and research institutions, where scientific research is often necessary not only to support conservation (often called conservation science), but also access to heritage (e.g. development of new ICT tools), heritage research and interpretation, including archaeometry (e.g. dating, provenance, attribution), heritage management (e.g. development of tools and knowledge supporting strategic decisions) and wider societal engagement with heritage (e.g. heritage values and ethics). The “firm” practice takes the lead though somewhat reluctant to take up the big issues of mission of public memory.

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³⁰ <http://www.heritagesciencejournal.com/>

³¹ <http://chsopensource.org/about-this-blog/>

The grand arena has been stepped in by the “real” sciences which were better methodically equipped and had a better instinct for what is necessary to be fully operational, both in practice as well as in theory. But, again, without any social let alone humanist premeditation, they are ready to go as far as regarding heritage science as a science about methods, materials, technologies, mostly of conservation and restoration. Their “cloud” will have all the technical terms as priority (moisture, plasters, raisins, glues, nano-particles, ICT, managerial and security matters etc.), and will quite positively lack references to sustainable development, wisdom, mission, society, world-view, values, inclusion, diversity, variety, democracy etc. Seemingly, the UK is leading the way as it has created an exceptionally bright heritage science national strategy³². That fact narrows the territory of cultural heritage and the possibility to name its scientific ambitions by the same term. What heritage science does perfectly well is that it recognises its domain of research and impact as referring to museums, galleries, libraries and archives, the built historic environment and archaeology. This synoptic approach is exceptionally important and timely, in spite of their tendency to reduce its themes to the matter-of-fact terms. This development being correct and precious leaves out the potential for the new paradigm. Heritage is flux of forms, expressions, methods and technologies but its public function may well be concentrated into syntagm of public memory. It is about wider a panorama: the frustration of mankind about which of the gigantic inheritance to retain, care for and build into the living or future value systems. In this hypermnesic frustration of indiscriminatory remembering, we increasingly scrutinize the rising knowledge, continually attempting to extract from it a usable wisdom. Selection which is the paramount art of memory is also the art of forgetting. This dramatic dichotomy requires efficient tools and powerful protagonists.

In theorizing museums the first concern was the history of collections and institutions. Then it spread to methods, techniques and the technology of museum work. It was gradually becoming a reflection upon institutional services and professional matters, including some basic ethics, - a sort of professional deontology as a code of conduct. In the following phase, we have witnessed the tendency of

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³² <http://heritagescienceforum.org.uk/>

seclusion between practical matters (which were supposed to be museography) and “theoretical” which were destined to acquire the status of science - museology. The latter also comprised the transfer of professional experience - professional training. Museography³³ was questioned and finally taken to denote techniques and technologies like exhibition design, taken as inapt to interpret the entire working process. So the “scientific” term of museology was introduced only to reflect the wider ambition and aspirations.

It did seem to many that museums were easily interpreted at the level of intellect, as their practice seemingly demanded, but the mastering methods and technologies adopted for the museum environment and for that the body of knowledge named museography, (rarely) museology or museum studies satisfied the specific needs of every sort of museum. However, a growing number of questions widened the practicalities further into the sociological and philosophical domain. Frustrated by the inert context and encouraged by the ideals of a society where heritage institutions were part of the right to culture, professionals in Eastern Europe took museology more seriously, much to the dismay of Western colleagues. Time was sometimes wasted on shallow philosophising but the world of heritage recognizes this insistence and resulting contribution. But as it was unable to conceptualize problems on widest level, frustration led to aberrations like *special museologies*, according to the type of museum theory (or science) they were supposed to serve, and made the effort reproduce in variations and endless theorising. Most of what can be said about this history of museology (except the last decade or so) has been systematized in the PhD of Peter van Mensch³⁴. Since then the tries to build up sociomuseology or some other museologies have been good and welcome additions to the already long discussions and, sometimes, perplexity. The process persuaded the West to appropriate museology as a relevant conceptual base and even accepted the use of the term naming some university programmes and chairs after it. Very soon this benevolence took a more realistic standpoint and the academic training turned correctly into Heritage

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³³ The famous Nickelius who was first to introduce the term did in fact have in mind the very museum institution from its first period.

³⁴ Mensch, Peter van. *Towards a Methodology of Museology* PhD, University of Zagreb, 1993.

studies. This accumulation of essays argues that this might not be the end of the development. The solid mainstream theorizing also started to doubt the capacities of museology, so responding to the almost forgotten early calls. François Mairesse tried to question the very existence of museology³⁵ to conclude that it has arrived at a delicate stage when it might be turned into some science of patrimony. So, the proposals of the 80s, namely those of heritology and mnemonosophy acquired thus supportive and well founded arguments. F. Mairesse finds that man, society and patrimony are central to the interests of museology, but implies that museology can hardly endure this extended ambition. Retaining the misleading term, this possibility of a shift cannot change the centre of gravity of recognized academic speculation enough to provoke a wider reform. Giving a panorama of efforts he, though proposing the widening of the scope of museology, attempts to see it as extension of history, a discipline that has to be based more upon education. He does support, though only lightly, the rather recent proposal of P. van Mensch that the new theory should refer to cultural memory organisations. There we are, finally, after suggestions made in writing since 1982. This, however, repeats the difficulty of institutions - centred theory. Namely, there could be the theory of any institution or institutional complex, but not at all, a science. François Mairesse has accepted that the solution must lie in finding the central concept and he agrees that it must be heritage³⁶. When heritology asserted it in 1982 as the central concept for the wide configuration of occupations, it was too early, just like it may now be too late. Maintaining museology as a term and preferential orientation will only discourage the chances. Heritology has long kept place in its more advanced, more convincing version that would be able to deal with the potentials and dilemmas of today. Logically, as there was a formidable opening provided by the Department of Information Sciences in Zagreb, I tried to propose what the correct understanding of museology would suggest but, again, it was still too early³⁷. Brilliant theoreticians of digitalisation like Lorcan Dempsey

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³⁵ http://www.museoliniers.org.ar/museologia/ICOFOM_FrancoisMairesse-es.pdf; the resourceful and honest article that covers most of the hesitations the last decade of reflection on museums bears challenging albeit unanswered title: ¿Ha terminado la historia de la Museologia?, 2006.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Šola, Tomislav. Muzeološki prilog teorijskim osnovama informacijskih znanosti.

perceived as obvious the forces of convergence in a job which is defined as collecting, care and communication of information. However, information experts find any heritage institution as just another entity of interest in the big configuration of providers of information or knowledge at best. Rare were calls suggesting some social intelligence and were never rationalized in a sort of participation in a societal project. Their response to the challenges (the knowledge society) is still more exact than that of museums. But, finally, the frustration with an obvious wider concept behind all diverse attempts in understanding or interpreting the past started to bring, in the last decade (especially in recent years) different proposals. A neologism deriving from the term *heritage* was rather improbable in the UK because heritage has been rather compromised by the heritage industry and other profitable uses. To avoid the term, it sounded better even to propose *patrimony* which sounds more convincing as if keeping the substance of the former meaning of heritage. Deriving from the same frustration, the proposals were made of *patrimonology*, *patrimonologie* in French³⁸ or *patrimoniologia* in Spanish (a term more and more used in Spanish occupational literature). But the latter proposal often comes from linguists interested in specific languages in Information science. However, in Spain, Mexico, Portugal and Brazil *patrimonology* is gaining momentum. Again, it is not so much a coherent attempt for a new science as much as an accommodation of frustrations with the narrowness of museology. Only rarely would there be a mention of heritology, as an attempt dating from decades ago³⁹ within the most appropriate framework of ICOFOM. At the time, the proposal suggested not so much a science but a theory that would be as be capable of encompassing the variety and richness of organisational forms of heritage collecting, care and communication, - also anticipating obvious developments. As it often happens, things do get accepted on the level of mere wording. Engaged in a relevant discussion in museum circles recently, I have heard again that the term heritology has been used approvingly, giving an impression that it has also been accepted and understood. Yet the add-

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Informacijske znanosti i znanje /ed. Slavko Tkalac, Miroslav Tudman, Zavod za informacijske studije, Filozofski Fakultet, Zagreb, 1990.

³⁸ http://publicus.culture.hu-berlin.de/umac/pdf/Programme_Vienna.pdf; <http://www.ilam.org/viejo/ILAMDOC/universo-sociocultural.pdf>

³⁹ <http://www.klepsidra.net/klepsidra21/fazendas.htm>

ed explanation made the opposite obvious: “as museology is theory of museums so is heritology a theory of heritage”. Here is the point where it is important to understand what frustration keeps museology in use. Museums need their theory. The problem is the term as a strong reminder of decades of effort aimed at creating the science out of it. This being redundant and unnecessary should have meant that Museography should have been good enough as theory, upgraded and elaborated to suit the social and technological changes. Theory of an institution is justifiable request. But the aspiration for a science can be comfortably realised on a higher level of order, where it stems from the core concept. The implication is that the same concept may concern other institutions. The practice was suggesting certain unity of heritage concerned institutions since beginning⁴⁰ of the organized care for the past. But, the scientific taxonomy and institutional pride caused specialisation and dissolution of this unity. As challenges grew, the long craving for a science was forcing museology and museography to yield the impossible.

When it is about expertise in practical circumstances, we might discern three phases of theoretical claim. The first one is of minimal requirement and fixed upon practicalities. The state of mind it encourages is that of *cleverness*, depicting a constant striving to devise craftier ways to the successful functioning of institutions. When collecting, related science and taxonomy govern the process. There, the theoretical level should be named museography. The second phase could be called pragmatic, knowledge being its state of mind. In it, curators try hard to organize and manage institutions for the most effective transfer of knowledge. It is marked by intensive activity, expansion and conformism to dominant forces of society. This phase is quantitative while its theoretical level is still museography or, because it already claims some professional status and wider social relevance, however little sense this aspiration may have. The third phase is idealist, while the state of mind it proposes may be wisdom. In it the curators understand the concept of total heritage and devise ways (institutional and non-institutional) to respond to specific public needs; they follow the life logic and mobilize the interested

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⁴⁰ Most of museums and archives and related share the origing having been primarily established as part of wider context usually described as „antiquities“.

parties on projects of harmonious continuity and survival; the *profession* acts and counter-acts, doing what is true or right by strong ethical responsibility, moderating thus the forces of change. This is a qualitative phase in which theoretical level is whatever one chooses to call it: new museology, heritage studies, heritology or, why not, mnemosophy? It is an entity consisting of the history of the past, the cybernetics of human experience, and the philosophy of heritage. What was an intellectual problem was transferred to the domain of the mind, the level of concepts where questions arose on the meaning of institutions, their existence and the sense of their action. Its role of prediction concerned the very missions of these institutions in society. Unlike specialist telescoping, this level makes sense only if it is universal and if it involves the whole of the concepts and the whole of the different practices.

Any concept will comprise a double movement - of theory towards practical experience and of practical experience towards theory. Although it may seem that the third concept describes the necessary theory as rather esoteric, it indeed derives its motives from the very practice⁴¹ and, consequently, admits the verification by practice. Thus museography as occupational theory is about the *hic et nunc* of the institutions, - determination of a factual state, of an individual, actual situation with exclusively practical concerns of methods and technologies. So is library science and, with equal reasons, archival science or archivistics⁴².

Contrary to the focused concern of occupational theories, science is about *semper et ubique*, where necessarily general definitions apply, therefore, *always and everywhere*. Seemingly paradoxical, it is only from these general features and qualities that tailor-made solutions can be deduced.

The simple aim of this book is to reject the very possibility of the existence of a science centred upon and named after a particular institution, signalling at the same time the obvious need and a chance for

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⁴¹ The movement of ecomuseums started as theory, became practice and fed further theoretical development. It is still there but wider heritage scene never profited enough from its main lesson: that of active preservation in situ

⁴² <http://www.archivists.org/conference/neworleans2005/readings/609-ketelaar.pdf>

a real science⁴³. Heritage will withstand the danger of misuse and be used in public institutions as contribution to progress of human condition. However, we shall increasingly discuss public memory, taking heritage as its formative and communicational, pulsating contents. They will continue the inseparable existence in a way knowledge and wisdom do: the first is neutral and passive while the second, inexistent without it, is almost a programme.

1.3. Heritage

There is a transition from the great historical accumulations of memory banks into a social service with an organised structure and a clear mission. It is the quality of memory, its organisation, the efficiency of the transfer of societal experience that the memory embodies, - that make the whole difference for the social development. A Neanderthal child would be perfectly able to get into a modern kindergarten and, by following a long and expensive transfer of public memory that modern society practices, - end by becoming a respected philosopher, medical doctor or underwater archaeologist. It is the quality of the memory transfer, in fact, the systems of value and wisdom that will create the difference.

The meaning of heritage is still rather uneven: in some parts of the world it is losing momentum and in others it is gaining it. If the English language stresses the original meaning of heritage, compromised by the heritage industry, then patrimony would probably be the word to be used. In some countries it still bears a romantic, nationalist aura that museum and archives, let alone libraries, have difficulty in appropriating as rather unscientific and general. Their (still) modest exposure to dynamic public communication keeps them still relatively close to scientific reluctance to be associated with media and popular perceptions. However, popular use is spreading

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⁴³ The initial version of the book contained rather extensive explanations of basic concepts that the study of the past is concerned with. It was also much concerned with explaining the world in which we have to adapt to certain changes, to oppose the others and to explain them all. However, it did seem too apologetic and certainly too long to make the basic claim for establishing a new science of public memory. By cutting out most of the context, I have also omitted most of the references to my previous works and works of others.

much to the disadvantage of serious understanding of heritage, as the leisure and entertainment industry, commercial companies, media and all sorts of amateurs try to gain profits through the exploitation of it. The cultural (or creative) industries exploit heritage heavily, also for the sake of profit in increasingly ruthless competition, but the best creativity always contributes to heritage by its testimonies and interpretations. Though fictional by form, these contributions as indispensable structure of heritage, public memory and, finally, wisdom that any human society is finally after. This social memory of the cultural industries absorbs also the immense energy of collective memory and, in fact, creates most of the substance of heritage as it is lived in any society. The appearance of mass-media, and their recent predominance and still more recent manipulated decadence, takes away much of the quality heritage used to have when dominated by the culture industries.

Memory is always a choice, - a selection. The natural one happens “involuntarily”, guided by arbitrary circumstances, presuppositions and illusions. The one formed in scientific research and culture is also influenced by many a subjective input. Choosing what to remember implies a panoply of questions and dilemmas as it comprises the existence of interests, priorities and criteria. Seemingly paradoxically, selection is both condition for and the consequence of value systems. Memory in contemporary society, inundated by media production, is a boiling complexity of rising importance when it comes to engineering public consent (the latter being the main manipulative method for the staged democracy). That might explain the rising interest of society, both of its institutions and its civil alternative, for the way the memory is formed and how narratives are formed and proposed. Being a part of the ruling elite, the great masters of *ars memoriae* in the Ancient world were part of the ruling system, themselves not questioned or disputed. But, ever since the Renaissance the *official memory* has been developing differently. The consensus reality is what we collectively, more or less spontaneously decide to agree upon, - as valid and based upon prevailing, common experiences. Such reality is determined decisively by the big inputs of authorities be they imposed institutions, or by means of creative, convincing individuals or groups. With the reign of obsessive profit, public memory that seems to form the core of the consensus reality

is more important than ever as the omnipotent, corrupted media appropriate this role. This socially constructed reality has its stakeholders. Their composition is always unstable, whether they are constantly negotiated due to changing relations, imposed as forced political power or as authoritarian rule. The public intellectual social conscience is withering in a world which is dominated by overwhelming interests of combined corporative, political and financial power holders. An increasingly reluctant and deterred public is in a state of apathy, preconditioned for being an amenable and pliable consumerist mass, euphoric because immersed, or latently rebellious, - feeling that objective reality with all its declarative democratic corrections is unjust and harsh. There are a few friendly, objective, unbiased voices.

David Lowenthal says that “active involvement distinguishes heritage from history” because “making history” and “steering its course” are quintessential *heritage* activities as “heritage privileges action over books”⁴⁴. There is certain regret in these words. Lowenthal writes this from amidst the flourishing heritage industry in the UK, a profitable business in its own right. The notion of heritage without its context and connotations will have another meaning in Europe, and on others elsewhere. But, on the other hand in the very same UK, Museum studies (that rarely turned into museology) are usually transformed into Heritage Studies. Again, the logical continuation would be allowing for some science of heritage, whatever it may be called. Philosophy, with all its varieties, is a universal science that all others developed from, and a sort of underlying pattern to any speculation, so there surely might be a certain philosophy of heritage, probably with a necessary specific weight and coherence.

There is still a chance to secure dignity for heritage against forced commoditisation. Quite conveniently some of its relevance is however preserved in the heritage industry whenever it tries to be a reliable part of, what I believe it belongs to, - experience industries. But, the temptations of profit are worsening and heritage tourism may further aggravate the risks as endeavours towards sustainable tourism fail against the fascination with profit. An ambivalence will remain

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⁴⁴ Lowenthal, David. *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*. Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 125

between what the term *heritage* brings as ever quite expansive in the creative industries domain, in art, tourism, - and public memory as a more disciplined yet wider framework of it. This paradox needs to be further explained. Heritage is expression and the way that public memory will use it to win a broader unanimity in a given community about major developmental or other crucial issues. Public memory is a sector and it is an abstract phenomenon describing the effort of any society for a sort of consensus upon its own memory. Public memory as a term should be more convenient for the converging occupations in the domain and their role as will later be explained. Beneath the seemingly occasional consent in regarding themselves as heritage institutions too, neither archives nor libraries (and the hybrid forms of both) are yet ready for it. Therefore, the syntagm close enough to museums and acceptable to the latter two great memory systems would be that of public memory. However, heritage is a sort of memory matter permeating an entire scope of memories in any society, a sort of elusive common expression of it. It is formed through them (collective, social) and, by the effort of science, turned into a higher quality, - that of public memory. With a decisive role of science, through its usual channels and instances, heritage is then refined and ennobled into a public memory, and collected, further studied, cared for and communicated through the public service of memory institutions. Its furthest reach and quality is, alas, elusive but omnipotent and paramount, - wisdom as perfect memory of the past. As will be a few times claimed here, what the age of heritage is after, contrary to the age of museums, is perfection not in knowledge, but its filtered, usable essence.

Heritage is a good example of a concept founded upon different phenomena, where the lack of precision in understanding it is at the same time an advantage and a defect. The professionals (those to come), have freedom to take it seriously and, almost like a new opportunity, as a focal concept of their future and their science (because there is no profession without a serious science in its centre). The others (in professions already) use it as their domain of profitable business. We already have a heritage industry which is a profit-making, heritage - based edutainment, just vaguely concerned with facts or morals or any other long-term beneficial implications of their activity for the society or community this heritage belongs to.

Collective memory is highly unstable and a pulsating set of values. It is an amorphous whole formed from particular contributions of individuals, groups and communities. These are often composed of divergent evidence, testimonies, accidental knowledge, by culturally or politically diverse impressions, permeated by illusions or simply psychologically conditioned responses to the challenges of the environment. Collective memory is the raw material of social and, finally, of public memory, but it is communicated as heritage.

Social memory, like any, has various definitions but let us just remember that it is formed by what we could widely call the sector of creative industry, or to disambiguate, - of cultural industry. Plastic arts, literature, performing arts, theatre, cinema and alike, all use the past in all its accessible, disposable forms. At its best, social memory is highly creative, selective and dares to produce words and images that communicate the meaning of that memory as heritage, - specific, symbolic and factual. Artistic creativity earns the right to imaginary and seemingly invented, as it possesses the power of transformation. It can reach the ideas and concepts, the core of the meanings, helping itself by facts but creating reality bigger and deeper than life. Playing with factual history it sometimes more relevant due to the fact that it is fictional, as its humanist, creative relevance grasps the spirit and quintessence of phenomena and events. But, any great art earns this right by moral relevance⁴⁵. Changing the sides of the barricade is part of this right and its curse, as it serves balance (virtues) in its different emanations. The most genuine among authors and works are totally or to an uncomfortable extent “on the wrong side”. Social memory thus forms its specific contribution to common heritage, by using it and producing it, though with a proud mission and burden of responsibility, unlike the un-obliging collective memory.

The part of public memory formed by the knowledge and educational industries is the bulk of what can be considered the material of heritage, or its institutional use in the social project. Universities and institutes, like so many other institutions and sectors, collect, store and communicate memory as it is essential to any facet of human ex-

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⁴⁵ This very same potential exposes with a similar force the entire sector to the risks of misuse and vicious, mischievous use of values.

istence. Besides producing memory they also produce heritage and communicate it too. But, there are institutions which made part of this scientific sector and were taken publicly as such. Yet, in fact, differ by their nature. Museums and other public memory institutions (PMI) are just a memory manufacturing industry with its own scientific apparatus but tuned to serve the communication for the sake of the community that made them possible. The fate of that emerging sector is the subject of this collection of essays.

Heritage can be shared or individual, belong to a group, to any community be it a village, region, city or nation. Though heritage can be highly coherent and relevant, it remains arbitrary and peculiar to a specific entity. Besides, heritage is more the expression of what has been derived from collective reminiscence, from collective and social memory and finally used in the arena of public memory. It is an expression of culture, a changing set of narratives that tell stories, - to us and to the others about ourselves, but basically functioning as a representation of identity/-ies they stand for. It is doomed to represent our rationalisations and actualisations, as heritage is the content and the form of the past that we communicate within the group and towards others. It is elusive and in constant flux making any coherent definition hardly possible. Heritage is always a set of shared values deriving from selected and evaluated memory and regarded as necessary and suitable to be continued. Like cultures, heritage is a composite construct however relying upon the pillars of facts. As science adds or removes certain pillars devaluating or re-valuating some of them, so is the construction based upon them changing accordingly, guided further by all the challenges that life of, say, a community proposes. Though specific in their gravity centre, both culture and heritage overlap with other cultures and other heritage: they are shared sets of values. A historic personality, an art, certain memory or tradition can belong simultaneously to two or more entities, - nations, communities, or (using the word in the meaning of identity), - cultures. Culture, in its proper wideness contains heritage as heritage contains identity. The latter is a set of relatively stable values of being different from the other, in staying what it is, in remaining the same even if changing coherently and retaining its specificity. Itself in *fluxus*, identity is the established system of values, that we like to regard as indivisible and distinctive, in which someone identifies as

different from another or even similar, and which others do not have any difficulty in accepting.

The ennobled, active and responsible memory will affirm itself as the central, obligatory concept, the core of the future profession and their science. This would make the obvious and necessary difference between future profession and the other different uses of heritage and memory as in heritage industry, heritage tourism or destinations industry. They are but vaguely concerned with facts or morals or any other long-term, sustainable, beneficial implications of their activity for the society or community that the heritage they use belongs to. Heritage is also used, adopted and practised by politics or other businesses, sometimes as changed, adapted, distorted (in political campaigns, marketing and advertising) or even misused to become the substance of acculturation and cultural kitsch. Exporting Santa Claus, Christmas, St. Patrick's Day, or Valentine's Day for the consumerist reasons are both grotesque and drastic examples of this.

Heritage can be understood with an obscurantist attitude and it can initiate devastating processes like becoming a seed of conflict or ostracism. The safe way was to confide it to scientific scrutiny, but the risk was becoming ineffective, as it often turned into aloof scientificism so peculiar to conventional museums. To acquire the quality of public memory, heritage has to be constantly checked against practice and life challenges, and further refined by applying the creative criteria of art to its power of mediation.

Heritage is any relatively well defined set of values extracted from collective memory and culture (which is a source and accumulation of societal memory) as its expression. Heritage is composed of many forms of memory and spreads throughout the realm of collective, social and public memory. It is formed and stored also as a set of values needed for the constant redefinition of the value system(s) that define any identity.

When writing about the definition, the most serious among the authors, like Lowenthal, are giving evidence that most practitioners

and theorists are neither clear nor sure what heritage is⁴⁶. Is it so much different with defining the past or history? Alas, a scientific discourse in explanations often puzzles and discourages the lay public by its doubts. So, some practical simplifications are welcome. Why should heritage not simply be anything a community prefers to carry on further with from where it is and seemingly wish its descendants to pass on? Following John Updike's metaphor that compares composing history to packing a suitcase, we could say that this is still more appropriate when describing heritage. If the historical suitcase is a rectangular, expected type, the heritage case is always a different, strangely shaped one: in fact an ultimately customised one, basically in the form of an identity that the values in it should comprise.

1.4. Public memory

It will always be difficult to make easily discernible differences between public memory and heritage, at least in daily use. A memory made public, recognized as such and used as common to all, in fact is – heritage, yet public memory denotes its public function, tied to science and a social contract and thus responsible and necessarily institutionalized. Collective and social memory can produce heritage but only the one communicated by the PMIs has the socially agreed function. Humanity, in its infinite complexity of particular identities and their relationships, depends on its functions, upon public memory. Public memory is a sort of social genotype, a set of inherited political and cultural characteristics passed on and yet conditioned and changed by its predecessors and by their own choices. Public memory, or heritage if not *stricto sensu*, - is communicated memory, memory in circulation and in the formation process. In this respect, heritage creates narratives to achieve soft-power, - the main ingredient of image or brand - the obvious core of identity. It would hardly become possible to compress, condense and abstract its many possible intellectual, cognitive and heuristic aspects into a rather depleted and relatively compromised term of *heritage*. Public memory is the framework and effective use of heritage, when it is meant to be used for specific purposes in a given community or society. Public mem-

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⁴⁶ Lowenthal, David. *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*. Cambridge University Press, 1998, p.94

ory is heritage turned into a social service.

As a sector in making it is in need of self-awareness and the congruence of mission, the way the public health possesses. The starting definition of the latter by its founder C.E.A. Winslow (1920) was that public health is “the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through the organised efforts and informed choices of society, organisations, public and private, communities and individuals”⁴⁷. Memory institutions have been around almost as long as medical ones and it appears logical that they develop this active attitude in society. Medicine was a more obvious case and so museums stranded with science and became elicited. They have become aware of their potential for development only in the late 60s, - quite possibly a belated discovery for a world threatened in its vital qualities. If public memory is a distinctive sector than it is also a theoretical body at a certain corresponding general level. Maybe we could regard it, to paraphrase public health’s first definition, - the science of preventing hazardous oblivion, prolonging the (life of) values and promoting wisdom through the organised efforts and informed choices of society, organizations, public and private, communities and individuals, - a public memory science. The art of public memory will have its chance in the grand search for a better world.

The societal project always comprised common, agreed memory structures and contents. So the public memory in a modern society is embodied into an organised, intentionally artificial, controlled, research-based, mission-driven public memory service with its own technologies and methodologies. We shall easily recognise the content of it if we call it, even interchangeably, - heritage. Yet, as any closer insight may reveal, the syntagm *public memory* implies the consent, tacit or official, that legitimises this heritage further by supporting its claims and its wide public responsibility. Unlike heritage which is dispensable, often suggesting rather arbitrary solutions, public memory tries to be accurate, suggestive and responsible regarding itself as part of a guidance force in society (and its natural environment) now increasingly or entirely managed systems.

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⁴⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_health#cite_note-1

Public memory is supported by history, practised by public institutions and represents a conscious scientific, social, political and technological effort, an “official” platform, - a public mind almost. In a fluctuating reality, - nothing is stable by definition, so public memory is itself changing, partly by the occupations in charge, partly by the imposing, changing needs that demand fulfilment.

All revolutionary regimes, in fact all totalitarian states, consolidate their power by erasing collective memory and manipulating the public one. It should be therefore true that democratic systems do the opposite. The rising problem, though not of direct concern in this essay, is whether democracy still exists or whether it has been irretrievably lost to almost global manipulation. Staged democracy, there only to obtain formal public consent, has become a blatant expertise of politicians and the media for the benefit of multinational corporations and their power structure in almost any society. Since info-sphere became also a *mnemosphere*, any artificially created cyberstorm bearing subversive data and manipulated information can change not only available narratives but also their space, context and quality, literally overnight. Public memory is an idealist ambition to retain or regain some of public power, retrieve some of the basic rights, some of them heavily dependent upon a reliable memory of the humanist value system.

Individuals, groups or the media constantly change heritage. In the world of profit, the media immediately grab it to squeeze out of it sensationalist contents, so instead of being a formative, en-culturing, self-reassuring quality for relaxed living, heritage is perceived as an obsession, as a nostalgic fascination with the past, as a reservoir of inspiration for the groups and individuals with social disturbances rationalised in intolerance, nationalism, right-wing extremism etc. But, then, there is an acceptable solution, - a sort of popularized science, the one made obvious and transparent in its main claims and put on disposal as infinite opportunity to anybody to deepen this human experience, - a true public memory: agreed, socially responsible, open, available, changeable in accordance with advances in social contract, as any public service would be.

Like an operating memory, in the process of formation, active heri-

tage not only remembers but also questions the proposed knowledge and beliefs. Public memory cannot, indeed must not, remain limited to museums and other institutions but has to be well chosen and effectively and constantly (re)introduced into the society it serves. Then it has to be a correction to the burdensome changes and a way of using the beneficial ones. This seemingly simple task has all the wisdom of dynamic quality. There is a practically endless series of possible actions that assure the continuity of virtue as well as the opposition to the harmful and worthless phenomena and concepts. Public memory cannot but assume a role of an arbiter exposing the nature of the reality for insight and evaluation.

As no science can be founded upon a particular phenomenon, be it a fact or institution, the obvious concept in our case is the wide concept of public memory. Therefore, this common memory is central to any attempt in evolving a theory of what is the origin of a huge configuration of institutions and occupations. Heritage is usually the property of many. It can be shared and combined. It is usually composite and compiled, in some parts or character common to many. Its differences often stem from a variety in combinations of relatively equal or similar elements. Any particular entity can be composed of the same elements and yet in different proportions and thus be, as whole, legitimately different because of it. Public memory will in some cases use common heritage for the general purposes of education and cultural awareness, but others will strive to use heritage to serve local specificity, self-knowing and self-respect - the latter being an obligation and right in guarding the diversity in any of its forms.

Public memory is a projection of socially and scientifically formed knowledge in a form of a value system, i.e. a body of knowledge, experience, style, needs and wishes, formatted mostly into a tradition(s), and implied as our projection of collective self, - perceived as valuable to inherit and to be passed on to future generations. As history overestimates knowledge, we may use the quotation from McLuhan: “New, simple, and inclusive concepts, make an enormous number of ‘facts’ obsolete”⁴⁸. As we may gather, it is often the ways of

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⁴⁸ The Medium is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects (with Quentin Fiore) Random House, 1967. p. 37

thinking, the fashion of reasoning and the quality of ideas (formed upon certain knowledge) that count more than the array of facts it was based upon. Same facts, as we have learned in everyday life, may be a basis to much different wisdom. So, heritage, paradoxically, even if passed on, is never the same.

While public memory is the whole of memory collected, researched, cared for and maintained, - heritage, though sometimes overlapping or being virtually the same, may present its surface, its changing, pulsating programme. In other words, public memory is the totality of socially relevant and acceptable knowledge, formed upon scientifically selected and organised information and recorded experiences, - used as heritage. A museum, archive or library may found decades of programmes upon the same collection and change or adjust it gradually as inner or outer circumstances make necessary. But, the very same collection may abruptly (in the case of, say, a political upheaval) become a basis of different interpretation and programmes: the heritage, at least its material substance, remains the same but public memory founded upon it changes. The rules change, value system change, and even the public memory institutions will to some extent, as nothing is stable and inert. In a sense, though being rather interchangeable, public memory is a sort of social agreement whereas heritage, being closer to the temptations of changing meanings, interpretations/accumulations of evidences and experiences, - is its performative version.

Public memory is a presumably relatively objective, benevolent and well intentioned memory suited to specific collective needs, applying to the set of specificities of a particular group or community and intended for daily use. It is the maintenance of the norm, - tacitly understood, spontaneous or, indeed, in the case of institutions and intentional actions, - openly encouraged. Norm, a term unsympathetic and too “normative” may just be the name for the constant effort to foster the virtues. The implied assumption is not an idealisation of the human race but a constant striving for an improved quality of life. Dignity, for instance, is not a virtue as much as it is the right to this quality, a human right and designation.

Therefore, public memory is also a construct. However, it is implic-

itly or outwardly proclaimed to be the common convention and property. We shall do well to claim that public memory might be the justified object of an organised, societal effort intentionally charged with some idealist projections that one may call a societal project. It is, though, highly arguable if any project of the sort, inevitably political in character, can currently acquire such a critical support to make a difference on a global scale. All of them are denigrated by the provoked failure of the social state as well as the by the debacle of mismanaged socialism and so called communism. Namely, public memory was always after some improved, better world, as otherwise it would make little sense.

Public memory is not just any old memory but the one outwardly or implicitly agreed upon as a sort of a formal, and binding agreement, engraved into science and societal structures, - a solemn though tacit covenant servicing the social contract. Besides its political essence, any social contract is founded upon an agreed public memory that serves public virtues and prosperity as defined within a certain ideological framework: it protects the identity, values and freedom of the community and each of its members. It has to be constantly checked against practice and life challenges, and further refined by applying the creative criteria of art to its consequences. The globalised world must be balanced by tolerance and co-existence of differences. Museums have to care for the present, their object must be the reality of their users: like in the human brain, the real time must be constantly checked against the accumulation of the memory of the past.

1.5. Public memory institutions

The conventional heritage institution was formed as the end of a process of institutionalisation. The immense past was transformed into the classified, limited, taxonomic quantity of museum, archival or library collections. Even scientific procedure could be arbitrary (as might already be obvious), but an individual collector's interest is always arbitrary and even biased: exceptions just support the rule. To make the modern history of memory more delicate, we should remember that most institutions were formed from private collections. Thus, we can say that the majority of museums came into be-

ing without an exact or balanced reference to some identity, missing the complexity and interconnectedness of the whole, while, usually, dealing with (consequences and logic of) specific fascinations. They have inherited the material evidence that supported only limited range of narratives and world-views, usually with little or no consideration for public interest. This, once again toppled by often selfish though scientific interests, slowed down the development of museums. Traditional heritage institutions are still burdened by seeing themselves as an end instead of being a means to an end.

However, the random nature of the birth of heritage institutions is much corrected in modern times. By changes, additions and a consistent collection policy, the scientific knowledge of curators shapes museums to correspond better with their mission and their proclaimed public profile. The same happens with libraries, archives and other hybrid and virtual variants of collective experience transfer. On the other hand, heritage curators are by training and often by implicit academic ambitions choosing and structuring their collections to illustrate not the reality, but the scientific view on it, or, - worse, - the expectations of the ruling powers. Therefore, in many cases science is the authority which justifies the choice made. As result, the meta-reality of most museums corresponds more with the scientific, specialist view of the past than with the complex reality of it. The past is what we can or wish to document to produce heritage which is then further processed and disseminated. It is a construct. Yet, we must have realised that any construct is further denoted or justified by the moral stance: what do we use heritage for? Is the motive scientific and educational (knowledge), is it delectation (amusement, leisure), is it (also) part of any political project, or it is the wise, active use of it for the sake of the quality of living?

Let us stay with museums as the epitome of heritage institutions. By devouring the future and producing more and more past, which is then put into museums, the world is turning into an immense museum itself. Once in secure storage hideaways, the past becomes a reality of heritage. Researched and drastically selected once again to form whatever small percent average of the original entity, it is then presented to the public. As such, it is usually nothing more than representation of a fragmented specialist view of reality. The public,

besides fellow professionals, itself well selected, cultured and conditioned by education, comes regularly to meet the created illusion of eternity exposed in glass cases. The same happens with archives and libraries but it is still much less obvious. Even if being poorly served, the public (usually educated and socially conditioned to be cultural consumer) nevertheless feels quite privileged in belonging to this knowledgeable and secure world of science. Like in any real theatre, the revelation, the ecstasy, happens by the stage but not on it: it is the users that make theatre possible. Thus, any museum, like any other public memory institution, is not the end but the intermediary, the transmitter, selector and amplifier, a medium and means given to a society for its use, advance and improvement.

Museums, complex as they are, are rather an instructive case in understanding other PMIs. The process of musealisation implies making a choice, using analogy and abstraction, scientific knowledge and common sense respectively. But any act of choice, as known in physics or in art, is necessarily a creative act. The process of musealisation (like acquisition of books in a library, or making choice of documents for an archive) implies creative responsibility. It should be explored and used to the advantage of professional effectiveness. Competing with reality, museums tried to amass as big collections as possible whereas the point was always their quality and the creativity of their use.

Like museums at the time, heritage steps into the place of real things, real life, real factories, barns, mines, - heritage is not the real thing but a meta-reality, acted, suggested, interpreted, imagined, which forces us to understand that it is a necessarily specific art if not even an art form of communication. Heritage and the identity of today are externalised: we see it from aside and above, too well from the outside to be the insiders and true participants. The delicate task will be to use all practical wisdom to employ heritage for a balanced development, to recognise what is usable and noble to be injected into the present and guarded for the future. In the managed world, in which all is observed and controlled, no matter what the ultimate reasons are, we can hardly achieve spontaneity any more. Living our identities consciously almost as an art form, we shall have to learn the subtle ability of balancing between the real and the projected self.

Understanding heritage, most often in its physical nature, we shall retain its precious capacity to link us to realities in an increasingly elusive world. Living one's own reality partly formed upon and enriched by the heritage is probably the solution.

Since the heritage institution is not an aim in itself, its nature will be realised by the balance of *musealisation* and communication. The latter is the finalising part of the process in the mediating role of heritage institutions. It should happen as a process of interchange, guided by the vital forces of development, life itself, and very much by its affective qualities.

Museums, archives, zoos, aquariums, botanical gardens, nature centres, archaeological and historical sites, are all memory structures. In the Renaissance, Giulio Camillo was the first of the great connoisseurs of *ars memorativa* to create, somewhat naively as historians claim, his "Memory theatre" which was supposed to be a physical version of the imaginary complex of memory places, a sort of scientific, artistic and hermetic teachings turned into palpable reality. There is a magnificent and long tradition of art of memory, - a subject valid for educationalists too, as by externalizing our memory to electronic devices we have become socially and psychologically crippled. But here, we deal with the specific art of public memory, the one with a mission as a societal function which became possible and needed with the inception of modern citizenry. In some rudimentary ways it was always there like its archetypal institutions preceding museums, archives and libraries⁴⁹. The *studiolo* or *camera dell'arte e delle curiosità*, or *camera delle meraviglie* (to mention only the Italian variety of the spreading fashion of the time) initiated collecting which, latterly, became the beginnings of modern memory institutions. They belonged to the rich connoisseurs but their communicational power and the prestige of the knowledge inspired their rising public use. The rise of bourgeois society and the forming of nations turned them into public institutions, first elitist but slowly opening, as education itself demanded, to the wider public. A sort

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⁴⁹ This book relies upon that tradition for inspiration and evidence, but I have hardly more ambition than to introduce the seemingly amazing capacity of this wide science to accommodate ambitions of different occupations frustrated by their position in society.

of memory theatre themselves, they were also naive in their reliance upon palpable, three-dimensional objects to record a lost reality. This fascination with objects, after its hermetic, scientific non-communicative phase (of a century or two, depending upon the country) is now rediscovered as almost a sentimental return to the world of real things made of real materials, usually meant to last, - unlike the mass produced, anonymous ones that we are now surrounded with. We now have to deal with the wider notion of heritage, as it is stored in individual memories, the social memory of the cultural industries or as the public memory in the institutions. Now we admit the intangible and the virtual as quasi equal to the palpable. To an extent possible, we take digitally born institutions and actions as equal to the physically existing, and we presume privately owned ones as admittedly of real or potential public interest. Thus, the grand scene of memory for society opens with unprecedented capacities. The words of Giulio Camillo inspire as he speaks of his theatre as of “a built or constructed mind and soul”⁵⁰. Don’t we strive for the same with our immense collections of physical objects in our sumptuous memory institutions? He claimed not so much the knowledge but the imagination and total memory and understanding otherwise “hidden in the depth of the human mind”⁵¹. Camillo was seemingly not as great as his fame but there was a need for him and his art in the world starting to burst with discoveries and the need to record them. “With a commission of 1200 ducats from the King of France, Francois I, he created a theatre that contained divine powers: whoever entered the theatre would emerge with a complete memory of all the knowledge that had ever existed”⁵².

Knowledge seemed to be able to reveal the secrets of creation, and much seemed at stake: emerging science was fighting the doctrines of the Church. The long fight for a secular society, paradoxically revived at the beginning of the 21st century, was begun. The good, general reason for Camillo’s and others’ efforts was storing the new power in a retrievable way, that is the one by which knowledge could be readily used for understanding and projecting the world. It complied

⁵⁰ Yates, Frances A. 132 *The Art of Memory*. The University of Chicago Press, 2001. p. 132

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² http://www.creationproduction.org/maguire/pdf/memorytheatre_mmaguire.pdf

well with the eternal human aspiration of fixing memory in a perfect and reliable way. During these processes of selecting knowledge and trying to store it most effectively it became obvious that the sheer quantity of knowledge at anybody's disposal, at any time, in a trice, requiring no effort counts as ideal. It also made obvious that quantity will not be a decisive measure of perfection. Centuries later, in our energised time, - seduced by the unlimited ability to produce knowledge and to store ever bigger quantities of information, modern society has succumbed to quantity as the ease of hoarding commanded. The advice of Lao Tse seems to have found a place in our aspirations; he id: "To attain knowledge, add things every day, to attain wisdom, remove things every day." But again, all cultures seem to agree upon fundamental humanist wisdom "molecules" and yet retaining their specificity. Half a millennium after Lao Tse, Romans claim the same by saying "Omne nimium nocet", meaning that all that is superfluous is harmful. And again, we stumble upon the omnipresence of virtues implied or called for as reminder that quality will finally matter.

The collective effort to store information or valuables that made the physical evidence of any entity was part of human adventure from the very beginning of time. Any transfer of a collectively formed experience was already the beginning of any of today's memory institutions. It may have even looked like one, in the case of the central house of the village. The process happened any time the generative values of any group have been passed on be it in the lap of a grandmother whispering old tales and legends to a grandchild or by the rituals marking the stages of maturing or initiation into society. To a connoisseur, the new convergence may inspire disdainful comment as seeming that "memorials, monuments, commemorations and museums merge into muddled incoherence"⁵³ but in fact the merging force is drawing together much more than those. So it is rather a challenge and suggestion for a new mindset that can cope with it. Wherever the speed of change reached the level of threatening the very essence of what society considered as its own identity, it reacted by producing counter impulses. Collecting and storing the material evidence of a decaying culture is the legitimate expression

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⁵³ Lowenthal, David. *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*. Cambridge University Press, New York, NY, 1998. p. 94

of the fascination with material effects. What we call public memory today, probably coincides with the idea of education as a basis for citizenship, - as besides schools, society needs access to its memory in the form of public libraries, museums and archives. The latter were remaining for a long time the domain of public administration and science. Nowadays, archives are open and communicative heritage institutions. All these storages, more or less publicly available, contain in fact documents and evidence in all available forms capable of supporting claims for significance and the status rights of the owner, - be it his own property, own history or own conquests, be them in science, other cultures or nature.

So, asking when it was that first museums, archives and libraries happened should be answered by: Were we ever without them? What was the accumulation of facts, stories and myths learned by heart, all stored in the minds of gifted individuals in a certain community? It was a library. Was any storage of memory keeping facts about accumulated knowledge, about agreements, contracts, appointments or keeping material evidence of own importance and superiority, - ever anything else except a rudimentary form of modern public memory institution?

The moment the need for passing on a certain experience to others was turned into an organised effort of the group or community - public memory was born. It was aimed at sharing and influence, trans-generational by character and contributing to survival and advancement of the community. The entire human history had to occur for this to become fully developed and universal. The archives, libraries and museums that some diligent researchers have spotted in Babylon, Egypt, Ancient Greece or elsewhere, were still not public memory institutions, though on some occasions these predecessors seem to be quite convincing in their public aspects. It will be only their systemic organisation within the division of societal, public functions that will turn them into public memory institutions in the modern sense. But, from the imaginary whole of the transfer of the collective experience, paradoxically, we arrived at the extremely fragmented specialisations with the same cumulative objective. A still further paradox that in the simplest way explains the essence of the new paradigm is their grand convergence towards the imaginary

lost whole.

Neither Giulio Camillo nor his scientific successors of modern times would be ready to declare libraries places of reliable memory: besides being an unsurpassed accumulation of recorded knowledge they include contents of fictional character. Yet, any serious, broad insight would find out that fiction is not entirely arbitrary or even not arbitrary at all: deeply rooted in human experience, well written literary works are the most complex, compressed testimonies we can hope for in recording the past and present of any society. They are not only sublime artistic realities but also suggest order and value judgments upon an immense domain of collective memory composed of individual ones and that of society, as it absorbs it and turns it into culture. In this capacity, libraries span an enormous ambition of memorising and of passion: from individual and emotional to highly socially responsible and scientific. As a whole, the case of libraries in whatever form they happen is paradigmatic, the most ample proof of the social need for knowledge or eventually wisdom, one is tempted to believe. In that sense, cultural institutions in general are temples of civic conscience and awareness, - not only by their contents, but also by their symbolic rivalry with religious institutions which claim their spiritual influence on society. Some libraries demonstrate this quality so much and in such a profound way that they are rightfully venerated as civic cult places, as temples of a free humanist, secular society.

Memory institutions came into existence mainly in the 18th and 19th century anchored in their taxonomical, scientific basis. In the last few decades life took over in museums and archives to transform them into truly public institutions turned towards society and its particular users. It was a discovery that their public commitment has to be more obvious and effective. In their specific practices, all those institutions differ greatly, but the essence of their process remains the same when changes occur. Collecting, care and communication is their basic formula. The essential structure is denoted by the “three C” which, *mutatis mutandi*, apply well to all the institutional forms of public memory. If collecting is reduced to its main functions it comprises recognition, documenting, cataloguing and research. The same is done with the second function, - care, which can be broken

down to conservation, restoration, storage, security and management. As for communication, it basically implies access, interaction, discovery, participation, creation and evaluation. Any memory occupation does this in differing proportions and described in their own interpretations, due to the material they collect or stemming from their different perceptions of the mission they all fulfil.

One is prevailingly full of objects, the other contains boxes with documents and the third is filled with endless shelves of books. Being most composite, museums contain an archive and a library, almost by definition. But archives also make exhibitions, and so do libraries, increasingly. Moreover, archives do not possess only paper but all sorts of materials, and libraries often have archival material and a wider memory than museums. With an orientation towards the needs of society, the configuration of PMIs boomed into a variety of new forms, be they documentation centres, theme parks, visitor attractions, visitor centres, interpretation centres, heritage centres, heritage attractions etc. Not all of them respond to needs only but also, or say increasingly, to wants.

Archives often turn either into hybrid institutions or continue entirely as records and information management systems in a separate, new occupation of the memory domain. Toppled by multimedia, a sphere of information and knowledge storage and retrieval, all these institutions have in common an expansive, endlessly growing and perfecting common denominator of ICT. An information bank, a knowledge bank, or digitally born institutions, ignore being tied to or characterized by the provenance of their content. They are what they want to be, composite, amalgamated from different practices, hybrid by nature, different and changing as conditions require. In fact public memory is a whole, immense infrastructure, much like roads, electricity, sewage or a water supply system, and yet an obvious parallel to public health or public education system. Will public sectors survive the mounting extensive privatisation remains a different problem of how globalisation will develop⁵⁴. Like all other societal functions memory is there for ages, in some form or another,

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⁵⁴ In this respect, pessimism is well founded and that renders this essay intentionally idealist.

but in the managed world that we live in, it is turning into a great public sector with its own imposing coherence. Again, private and individual participation is not excluded as long as it is successful in inserting itself into the system in a tolerable, community beneficial and compatible way. Some individuals, as ever, are natural memory makers, consciously or not, but also researchers and communicators of it. Some own institutions that either have or might gain public relevance. The private domain has been treated by the heritage occupations as “wild” and unaccountable and yet, any reflection suggests that in the future we shall try to understand but also use their performance within this flexible and amazing network.

Rightfully, the problems importunately arise if public money is channelled into private initiatives that avoid proper public insight and quality control. As it is claimed in different chapters here, - we are about to witness a parallel development, - the birth of a mega-profession and a great public movement as its lay counterpart. The point is that they become one. With the ecological movement we shall all unite in the campaign for Earth’s survival not only in terms of nature but that of culture(s). A vulgarised economy which is solely after profit and not as it should be, - after general prosperity, - prefers a flat and uniform world much resembling the new awkward landscapes of monocultures created by the multinational agrochemical and agricultural biotechnology corporations. Culture by its very logic prefers to keep a rich diversity as a way to sustainability. So the united heritage sector is not a scientific speculation but a way for society to prepare for a clash with the corporate world, already there but yet to gain its full force. The traditional division of small occupations provides the logic by which the museum idea is transformed into all sorts of imaginary “glass cases” that “cover” protected areas: any natural park is covered by an imaginary hub and thus a conventional museum. Such *musealisation* implicitly suggests that the world outside is not only unprotected but even left to the mercy of forces of change and the interests that govern them. It is like suggesting that the rest can be ruthlessly destroyed. It is part of callous, increasing hypocrisy of the world⁵⁵. The opposite should be true, - that the pro-

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⁵⁵ The spread of this logic is universal and permeates all the domains of life. The department with organic or healthy food, separated from the rest of the supermarket suggests that the rest is non-organic or harmful.

tected objects or areas imply the need for protection of the whole.

Libraries and archives are inconspicuous, unshowy, rather unassuming and discreet if compared with museums. They have rarely caught the attention of the “general practitioners” of culture, of cultural philosophers who, as a consequence, never revealed that they do just about the same job with different material collected. Understood and managed as part of PMIs, their contents are presented and used with a different mindset. Taken as a conscious public force, they may be employed in solving some actual problems of society, be it by mere acquisition policy or by their exhibitions or events. A library on natural history has its counterpart in a natural history museum or a similar archive. They should form a vigilant ecological observatory able to draw a wider cultural context and action through their network. In the managed world, tasks widen and become more complex: protecting a cultural landscape or a skyline by its nature calls for multidisciplinary and trans-institutional action. All these “3C” institutions are but social spaces of social and public memory. Most of them provide an opportunity “for being alone together” as they are social spaces for contemplation, meeting, interaction and action.

The philosophy of the profession is a way of determining the scope of activities and interests of institutions, indeed a way of understanding the context which brings together formerly divided and unrelated institutions. It unifies them through common dominant characteristics of their social role and the shared conceptual basis. Heritage, or public memory as its social service, actually means gaining understanding and then decisive, healing influence over processes of disintegration of vital forces of value systems. Only theoretical thinking enables understanding of heritage as the manipulative, volatile, and yet chosen part of the past which we decided to take with us into the future. Determining that unstable process by science and creativity requires education.

Reacting to the challenges, very obvious in the early 80s, heritage institutions naturally turned to professionalisation. It happened as rising number of educational programmes, conferences, seminars, normalisation, standardisation and descriptivism. Instead of noticing that new diversity needs a wider vision, looser definitions and

deeper understanding, it seemed more secure to immerse further into specialisation. Already then, Kenneth Hudson has lectured that defining museums is more and more difficult and maybe unnecessary. The same was claimed by others like Richard Grove, who found that the definition would be impossible as it would have to cover an insurmountable variety. What they meant was that the new reality would not fit into the tight, tradition- based, conventional museum definitions. Assuming the necessary flexibility (but retaining their institutional identity), all the heritage occupations were faced with potentials of shared mission and concerted action.

1.6. A proposal for definition

There is probably no problem in retaining any of the existing correct if not excellent definitions that heritage (or public memory) occupations possess as they prove usable in practice. Moreover, as the world museums organisation's one (ICOM) has recently been amended to include finesse upon the span of heritage and its representations, namely, virtuality and intangibility, it appears logical that two other main sectors have, to an extent, done so already. So, why is the frustration still there? As many curators still question whether we can have a museum without original objects, so librarians mourn the exclusively paper-libraries as archivists nostalgically remember sphragistics, paleography and the like, while being pushed by reality into information and records management. Such a belated lack of connection to reality or certain disorientation remains part of the problem for professional training. The search for the holy grail of definition demonstrates the frailty of our low professional coherence and wrong order of priorities. Forming a profession is the priority.

In brief, what we need is a major re-conceptualization, re-thinking so that we understand ourselves thoroughly as institutions of public memory, or heritage institutions, to use the term closer to our central, unifying concept⁵⁶. The Museum is not a place; it is a relationship between past and present, between what we have been and what

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⁵⁶ Of course, colleagues from the UK, for instance, see the problem there as the term of heritage has been largely spent on a futile industry that uses heritage and museums as its profitable resource. Many outside still have their heritage, or patrimony intact as profit has not yet snatched at it.

we want to be. It cannot be isolated and limited to an institution and distributed to the masses. A museum is an idea, and yet it is a form, - a form of relationship⁵⁷. And so are to a different extent and specificity the other public memory institutions.

Definitions are like laws. Even when perfect in shape and content they may be just hiding inequality, injustice, intolerance or even tyranny. It is the interpretation of it and daily application that matter. Definitions and issuing legislation are everywhere but a formal tool of exercising an agreed order and rules of behaviours, all founded upon the dominant value system. The culture of peace, prosperity and democratic rule make the law more effective and less oppressive. Similarly, definitions in profession help little where there is a lack of professionalism or where inefficiency and obsolescence outweigh what has to be done.

We are living in an increasingly fluid world, too quick and too multi-dimensional for usual definitions to make sense. If we cling too closely to our particularity and sectoral divisions, there are public memory institutions that will remain secluded. Taken as a complex whole (which they are) they increasingly deny any possibility of complying with our sectoral definitions. National-socialismus Documentation centrum in Cologne, or The Galleries of Justice - The National Centre for Citizenship and the Law (Nottingham, UK), to name just two examples among hundreds of new institutions are everything you wish to see in them: museum, library, archive, documentation centre, research centre, social action centre, community centre, cultural centre....Many others, though retaining their dominant features be it in names (titles) or practices, demonstrate ever more their hybrid nature in mingling different, once separate institutional practices. Being too close to definitions and too distanced from life, we often have difficulties in dealing with them. They deny our structures and refuse the imposed limits of usual types. Versatile, effective and honest, they obey life and respond to their environment, i.e. the needs around them rather than the formal conventions they belong to.

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⁵⁷ It has been a definition used since 1993 in my the teachings and exams at the University of Zagreb and other universities or instances where I have been active.

Good definitions have to be durable and usable. To be as such, they have to remain open and anticipative, - able to absorb other, different concepts, ambitions, behaviours, practices... Therefore, they will be either seemingly vague because they are too general, or very precise, but will then aspire to define a very narrow scope of practices and ambitions. Our basic philosophy, concepts and meanings, the frames of reference, may on the contrary acquire more stability by accommodating the width of scope and apparent trends.

Many colleagues feel comfortable if confined with their own scientific field, their collections and even their users. So, why worry once we have so many good definitions? Changing definitions may bring us closer to a better position, to doing things right, but no definition by itself can help the advance.

The definition is the final, and sublime extraction of any theory or science. Thus, any theory may be regarded as a formative analysis, an elaboration on different arguments and uses, and finally an explanation of implications. Outside our fiscal, administrative and specialist circumstances we may say “a heritage institution” instead of saying “museum”. “Heritage centre” sounds too administrative, but understood correctly, any institutionalised action of this sort actually is a part of something more widespread, - most of the heritage anyhow being outside the museum, library and archival storage. A long time ago in India⁵⁸ I proposed that PMIs should function as units within a network (HASU, Heritage Action System Unit). I was guided by the conviction that Western museums should be only a sideshow in the country that has a different understanding of originality, authenticity and the use of heritage. Only recently have I dared to go further into this, at the time, useless heresy. The very term “unit” insists upon the existence of a network substructure that serves it and presents the same ambition within society. A network, usually the consequence of an active profession, enables the circulation of energy and derives cumulative effects that its individual members could not generate by themselves or divided into small groups with overlapping functions. The general term was just a provocative proposal that I still

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⁵⁸ Šola, Tomislav. The Limited Reach of Museology. Museology and Developing countries – help or manipulation? ICOM/ICOFOM Annual conference and symposium, 1988, Hyderabad, India.

find inspiring. Ecomuseums, for example, do not exist without antennae, the outposts and interpretive points planted *in situ* to which the central “museum” serves as focal point in terms of professional functions, organisation, communication and management.

In view of the evident convergence of heritage institutions and their changes introduced by the orientation to societal effectiveness, communicational creativity and ICT diversifies their practices and spread. They cover thus a vast domain, from grand conventional museums, libraries and archives, to science centres, visitor centres, visitor attractions, interpretation centres, ecomuseums, grass-root activities, temporary, pulsating heritage action etc. Hence they take the changing shapes of the flux of reality interpretations, be it virtual (VR) or only temporary (heritage festivals, re-enactments...) and otherwise unstable or fluctuating in all sorts of media (journals, periodicals, TV, film). It seems appropriate to address this variety as public memory institutions (PMI), although the institution may rather often be too a strong an expression.

So, here are the parts of a possible definition:

- The PMI is any non-lucrative, regular or temporary activity in the domain of public memory and within the totality of heritage, encompassing, partly or entirely, collecting, care and communication of a certain value system expressed in the richness of difference, be it in terms of physical evidence or any other effective way.
- The PMI is methodologically diachronic or synchronic; it covers some periods of the past and present of a certain phenomenon or concept expressed as heritage as it responds to the circumstances and public-oriented needs of its founder(s) or community; it is necessarily founded upon scientific knowledge, but is open to questioning and to the unknown;
- The PMI is creative and educational in its striving to fulfil the human need for the pleasure of understanding of phenomena and concepts, through sensory, intellectual and emotional experience; it extends the human senses and amplifies the con-

sciousness of flexible yet stable notions of virtue and quality in the unity of the universe. Although based on science, PMI is a communication institution required to dispose of a specific art of creative mediation.

- The PMI is a way to self-knowledge, a means of critical insight into the present, a democratic way and a counter-active tool producing wisdom which works towards harmonious development; it preserves the richness of life by enabling the survival of any endangered identity estimated as of worth, by assisting the continuation of the generative forces of nature, community and individuals concerned.

This wide framework should be good enough to serve all kindred institutions and actions in their variety. The big basic sectors of public memory like archives, museums and libraries and the growing variety of hybrid forms will continue to need their own applied theory (Archivistics, Museography, Librarianship). The definition alone will not unite them immediately into an unprecedented alliance, but may remind them that they have more and more in common to form a mega-profession based upon the triple “C” (collecting, care and communication). Their synergy will be assisted by unifying phenomena of user orientation, the ICT reliance and mission mindedness, as responding to the needs of society. They all have the craving to realize fully their inherent potential and mission using the past to build the present and the future, using inheritance to retain the richness or, simply using their stored knowledge (once refined and ethical) to improve the world and assure its survival.

Assuming a rather voluntary position off the mainstream, I do not imagine that any plausible definition of a museum, one that may be used and quoted as a common denominator to all varieties of it, could differ much from the one currently proposed by ICOM (International Council of Museums). Likewise, the definitions appropriated by IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) and ICA (International Council of Archives) of their basic institutions are simply correct if not impeccable for the general use they fulfil. But besides these “working” definitions at the level of particular heritage occupations we need a definition of the common

theoretical body that would both encourage the advances in practice and help to form a public memory profession. The arguments are scattered throughout this book but there seems to be more and more of them pouring from the practice of public use of collective memory and its diversifying practices of collecting, care and communication, which not only innovate official practices but also bring in other agents from the civil and private domain.

The purpose of the proposed wide and, in form, descriptive discourse is to place PMIs in the wider context. Its main quality may be that of challenge and impetus, to question what we already have or to invent what we deem necessary. In a more condensed form I propose that we define PMI as follows:

The public memory institution (PMI) is any non-lucrative, regular and structured activity in the domain of public memory, based upon the holistic notion of heritage, comprising, partly or entirely, collecting, research, preservation, care, and creative communication of the particular value system expressed in phenomena and concepts, material or intangible in nature; it is a relation between past and present, between humans and their environment; it is creative, educational and convenient in fulfilling community and individual needs, serving the pleasure of understanding; its objective is a continuation of values, achieved by supporting the awareness of virtue, by preserving the richness of difference, by enabling the survival of any valuable identity and assisting the continuation of its creative or generative forces; it uses intellect, emotion and humanist ethics to produce wisdom, supporting and maintaining quality norms for harmonious development.

As extensions to our natural brain, and our collective instinct for life in the community, public memory institutions, are in fact a collective artificial memory⁵⁹. They will follow the implicit likeness to the human brain and develop accordingly. The seemingly unused capacity of the human brain hides things to discover. One of the less known functions is its performance of comparing any new informa-

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⁵⁹ Surpassing the automatic, biologically conditioned memory, there because of some implicit, projected collective ambitions.

tion with the entire available memory in the matter of fractions of a second, leading to founded reaction to it. This might just be the implied function of the PMIs for a society. As nature is proverbially perfectionist in economising its powers, it may just mean that these $\frac{3}{4}$ or more of the human brain contain the entire software of what we are and could potentially bring to consciousness. After a seemingly heroic epopee mankind is facing a degradingly banal, self-destructive destiny, unworthy if we know what gigantic knowledge of the period of painful growing we have stored. Can we liberate this capacity? I cannot but regard our public memory institutions, even relatively primitive as they are, as almost compulsive manifestations of some inherent capacities to understand our reality in a better and wider scope than we presently do. Human society is probably meant *to use its entire brain* to get closer to some of its idealist visions. How far can we transform our public memory institutions to inspire this process or at least follow the openings readily, remains the concern of the entire broad field of heritage. This is why we should re-think the practices, provide for the specific scientific insight, and create a profession that can reach wherever human experience is preserved. The brain has the capacity for emotions and creative imagination, and it is hardly a banal *biologism* to expect such development from the societal extension and the collective form of it. Public memory serves individuals as well as communities and feeding it is a sort of implied duty of any human being. This immense task has always been there and only kept growing in importance: books, archival documents, museum objects and a myriad of other forms of imprints of sedimenting experiences. They form memorial notes, a sort of mnemonic accumulation of testimonies and interpretations of the human experience.

The existence of non-collecting museum institutions is one of the proofs that practice cannot wait for theory to catch up. The Museum, or heritage institution that in dominant part functions as the transfer of collective experience complies with the requirements. One author says that as such, it “can focus its resources, funds, and staff on exhibitions, educational programming, and public outreach, allowing a more comprehensive interaction between the museum and the pub-

lic⁶⁰. But the more important fact is that such institutions nowadays get accredited by the museums association in The States. Though the mentioned opinion actually describes art museums, in fact there are other museums which do not collect, and the phenomenon is spreading. Again, the mindset this essay proposes deals effectively with the seeming nonsense: collection is all around us. In other museums, in private possession, - everywhere. What matters is the quality of the process. Therefore it is finally possible to have exploding variety of museal, heritage actions which claim the name of museum in different syntagms. They all derive from the basic museum idea and turn part of the essential museum process into some form of practice under an array of names: pop-up museum, temporary museum, museum-to-go, museum on the move, travelling museum etc. These practices will develop further⁶¹. It is important to note that examples pour in from all sides of the world and comprise the domain of libraries, archives and museums. The traditional occupational theories, let alone the definitions offered by them, cannot accommodate neither this diversity nor their lack of any discipline. But, the science of public memory can. It has actually foreseen their existence in different early examples⁶² like Museum der Dinge (Berlin, 1970s), Anti-muzej of Vladimir Dodig Trokut (Zagreb, Croatia, 1979), Museum of Jurassic Technology (Culver City, California, 1988), a pop-up type of museum (the remnant of eco-museum exhibition, Kapele, Slovenia, 1997), etc. The future will be still more interesting and it will be good to see this dynamic scene being explained and used for the best of it.

Everything on our Planet, not only its visible surface, is a grandiose memory configuration. Besides its natural state, we are mostly attracted by the man-made, spiritual, cultural, linguistic and other character of it. By an urge of curiosity and survival, it is constantly recognized, collected, researched and shared. Seen with this sensibility, we actually live in memory structures, - in a total museum whose

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⁶⁰ <http://chicagoartmagazine.com/2012/01/non-collecting-museums/>

⁶¹ <http://nomadaq.blogspot.com/2014/02/kalhofer-korschildgen-moving-icon.html>
<http://vizkultura.hr/najmanji-muzej-na-svijetu/> ;
<http://www.themmoaa.org/information/>; http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/culture/2015-01/14/content_19315601.htm; <http://tinymuseum.org/about/>

⁶² <http://www.mjt.org/>; http://www.museumderdinge.org/actual_state_of_affairs/

doors we open only partially and occasionally. Very recently, even in historical measures of time, this structure has been enveloped by the new, obvious but immaterial reality in its magnificent omnipresence, - the world wide web. It creates a global memory environment consisting of man-made electric impulses & social actions, forming a pulsating shell of a giant, primitive, hypermnestic⁶³ brain. Its big, flux layers, - not to mention the frenzy of wireless telephone communication as a sort of memory itself in the nebula of Internet, - are growing daily (Second reality, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and many others) and will act as a sediment to a still greater likeness to a mega-brain. This mnemosphere is an unexpected challenge to the conventional, spontaneous and never finalised project of public memory institutions. They are presented with a still bigger challenge than to date, be it for theorising the role of the widened domain of public memory or for the developmental implications of this potential. The research so far has dwelt too much upon the direct implications while the significance of philosophical impact has not had its prophetic figures as the information revolution has had in M. McLuhan. The eschatological gravity of this unprecedented capacity faces mankind with the urgent need to answer a pending decision: will it grow up to face its powers or will it perish under its own crushing potential. It is a scary coincidence that no matter how much we improve technologically or organisationally, we still remain framed by the same human capacities: our responsibility only rises, the fragility of memory only increases, the tasks grow bigger... The dark side of human nature seems to have ever more resources and subtle methods to impose its solutions serving the shrinking percentage of society. As everything we know has already happened though in different circumstances, the task seems clearer as that of public memory finally made efficient. In spite of encouraged religious craze (so convenient for manipulating human beings) we are aware that solutions will have no external assistance... It is, finally, only us. Gods' willingness to help grows only with the spirituality of society. Whether this immense memory will serve good or bad remains the sadly banal reminder of the meaning of existence of the human race. The frightening fact is that this immense knowledge is an unstable quality, be it in the uncertainty of its

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⁶³ See the note No.99

use or its very existence: it can be practically turned off by a switch, suffocation or major electronic failure.

Somebody may wonder why public memory cannot be produced by private institutions or individuals. It can. But it has to pass the subtle public recognition to build up a required consistency, coherence, relevance, - so that it joins public institutions in their effort. It also has to pass however insufficient and inadequate verification or even a non-binding judgement of an advanced (though still only partially existent) profession that would guarantee minimal standards of excellence. To make it possible, some grand social components, some dominant ideological features will have to be set up in advance as the framework of liberty, proposing what are the minimal standards of relevance and quality individual owners of heritage institutions must grant to society in order to acquire and maintain the status. It is also an ideological question. Restoring modern society damaged and injured by the Rule of Greed will happen by returning to an ideology of freedom in a civil, lay and spiritual society. Private interests neither in business and let alone in the matters of collecting, caring and communicating collective experience are totally inadequate in providing a sustainable development on a managed planet.

2. Nature of the public memory science

2.1. Would mnemosophy be a better neologism?

None of the seven Muses were dedicated to anything like a museum. It is their mother, by Zeus, Mnemosyne that should have come into mind instead. The daughter of Uranus (Heaven) and Gaea (Earth), Mnemosyne is the personification of Memory, a goddess of it. What we deal with is the art of public memory and what we discuss in our theory of heritage is in fact the qualities of that memory, including the beneficial use of it. The earlier classical mythology offers the possibility of terminological linkage to the central concept itself, -memory. *Mouseion* from Ptolemaic Egypt had little resemblance to the present museum concept; it was probably world's first university, founded Alexandria. The universalist nature of first publicly accessible collections suggested the variety, ancient dignity and comprehensiveness, so museum appeared a proper term to encompass it. The 19th century uses of the term suggest the amplitude of occurrence. It denoted equally the collections of Barnum Circus as well as the trade catalogues of the first department stores. The modern museum institution, based upon scientific taxonomy and specialisation, largely exceeded the romantic inspiration of its name linked to the beauty and charm of the symbolic dealings of the muses. Besides, they were formerly only three, out of which the first two were "in charge" of song and meditation but the third one, Mneme⁶⁴ was concerned with memory. Memorizing for transcending oblivion and enabling collective transfer refers directly to the fundamental issues of collecting and the motives that make it a permanent urge of any group, community or society.

This concern is wider than it looks like from specific social emanations. There exists Memetics, a discipline with the evident technological background and vicinity of the mindset that created telematics⁶⁵, computer science and information science. A proposal founded upon the same basic programme could be formulated as Mnemetics,

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⁶⁴ <http://www.theoi.com/Titan/TitanisMnemosyne.html>

⁶⁵ The expression was conceived in the late 70s in France, but replaced by Internet and multimedia; it meant the „marriage“ of communications and computers.

but this term would hide more than it would reveal as to the nature of the science of public memory. The difference between museology(-ies), memetics / mnemetics (on the one hand) and mnemosophy on the other, can be vividly demonstrated by a comparison between a segment and a vector. One is passive and static while the other is active and dynamic. One exists, the other acts also. Therefore, the neologism mnemosophy, would not only imply memory as its main substance, but also the intentionally chosen quality of it, - declared as the objective, - *sophia*, wisdom, with all its active and counter-active qualities.

Why would there not be a philosophy of heritage, among so many acknowledged *philosophies*? History, though a much older concept, when concerned by the big questions of meaning and sense, calls itself the philosophy of history. There is also the philosophy of science, even of politics, or philosophy of education, - logically even closer to our need; philosophy of memory should research its formations, narratives and meanings (like some mnemography and mnemology), or, indeed its schemes of the ideal, active and effective memory. It might suffice to have mnemosophy as an inspiring utopia.

The best a science can do is to return to the universal adequacy of common sense. Art does it too when it returns to its origins to draw fresh inspiration and strength from the imaginary perfection. It does it by reaching for clarity and pictorial essence, to the world of forms ,as Henri Focillon would put it. It surfaces the reality, for instance, as the visual expression of primitive people, of children or mentally disturbed. The science proposed should be about the ways of deliberation about the world (past, present and future), meanings and variety of forms of memory, development of aptitude to conceive and comprehend the mission of public memory institutions (PMIs), or any other regular action of the sort, - and about seizing the ethic quality of their presence in society.

Any profession has to have its own world view, is obliged to have its own wisdom and set of its own ideals. Any profession should be able to provide itself and its professionals with an answer to the simple but crucial question: Why are we here? Why would society need us and support us as a public service?

Are we the same as the poets who say they are here to do good and thus make the world better⁶⁶ or even (as themselves probably) provide delectation and be useful? Are we here just as scientists engaged in research into the past, and with an obligation to render our results accessible? Or are we unwitting performers and entertainers, appropriately tethered in one place? Who are our bosses? Who are the real owners of our museums? Whose past or – a task even harder yet – whose history and identity are we supposed to research or present? Are we scientific, educational, or communicational sector? Are we expected to be part of solution to the problems or just an auxiliary structure flattering our natural curiosity and tacitly pertaining to the leisure domain (as, for instance, theory of mighty tourism industry classifies us)?

Finally, how do we define our own jobs? No serious marketing expert you invite to help your museum prosper will start the consultancy session without asking “What kind of business are you in?” Do you define your job as science-with-presentation or communication based upon science? What are you trying to “sell”? Can you define your own product? Whose need was it designed to meet? And when you answer, are you supposing and guessing, repeating what you yourself have been told, or do you have a body of scientific and empirical research that supports your answers?

Leaving the methodological field, where some practical solutions to specific problems are found, we move towards the substantive field. What museography (usually called museology), librarianship, archival studies (archivistics) or informatics (including computer science somewhere) have as specific differences will rarely be obvious at the ultimate speculative level of their common field. Going so far up may seem to some as the loss of professional identity (like leaving one’s own fortress in troubled times) and quite understandably the risk of incompetence (as a multidisciplinary approach requires fair insight). Yet, they all share the same subject which is information pertaining to past human experience, its acquisition, analysis, care and dissemination⁶⁷. The scientific community benevolently en-

⁶⁶ “We are here to do good. What others are doing here, - I would not know”. Wystan Hugh Auden, English and American poet.

⁶⁷ University of Zagreb was pioneering this approach thanks to Prof. Božo Težak, but

trusted museology with the status of a science by allowing it to be taught in universities at its own chairs. Yet, it is far from being a rule. Museology, in whatever variant taken, was rather disregarded and is surely not included among the “mature” or “compact” sciences⁶⁸ even in the times of its ascent; it thus remained rather “diffuse” and a “discipline for the future” as it was often claimed by its critics. Most of these relatively new disciplines appropriated a “gestalt” approach which is very “soft” in its ambition to understand the wholeness in things and concepts, acknowledging however that the whole is more than the mathematical sum of its parts. Modern Western sensibility, which is so attracted by holistic view, derives from it the “religion” of modern atheists as well as ecological concerns. In that similar spirit, we need a compound theory for memory, a composite body consisting of many ambitions, but, finally coherent enough to be stable and recognisable. One aspect of it should be *aetiology*, a science, able to offer understanding of the causes of our dependency upon the past. We need it as dialectics of heritage to understand the laws that govern changes in the past and our expectations from it. As such, this theory should also be a sort of ontology of heritage institutions, not concerned much with their history (as it should be left to occupational theories like museology/museography, archivistics or librarianship) but with the philosophy of their inception. It should be able to embrace the dimensions of space and time beyond them. It should not be another, all inclusive “theosophy” or “pansophia”, but, again, enough of these to let us understand the logic of the world surrounding us, - maybe a branch of metaphysics which, itself is “the part of philosophy that deals with the nature and structure of reality”, to paraphrase Aristotle.

The idea of having the concept of heritage in the metaphysical “high country of the mind”⁶⁹ looks ambitious enough for a theory with so many aspirations. Ideally speaking, Komensky’s utopian science of

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the war and fear for particular interests among specialities never allowed its full development.

⁶⁸ Toulmin, S., *Human Understanding: The Collective Use and Evolution of Concepts*, Princeton University Press, Princeton N.J. 1972.

⁶⁹ Pirsig, Robert M. *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance - An Inquiry into Values*. Bantam New Age Book, 1981. p.179 first published by William Morrow and Company, Inc. 1974.

pansofia contains some key words of our idealistic construction. Its ambition was to present the results of the entire human knowledge with a social and psychological objective of creating a harmonious community of all people. The dozen encyclopaedic, gigantic museums of the Western hemisphere, harmonise well (or could do so) with both the scientific and the ethical ideals of Komensky, his striving to offer a science that would offer an understanding of the entirety of the world.

Visionaries and utopians always tried to attain some level of “*scientia generalis*” (Leibnitz) which would synthesize the results of all the sciences (to paraphrase Kropotkin). David Hume was trying to establish a “science of man”, about human nature and the limits of the human spirit. What we may rightfully strive for is a science about the relation of man to his realities⁷⁰, the past and present. The relationship is always there, but should be subdued to the criteria of quality, some structured and orderly relationship that we can then manage towards societal objectives. Likewise, this science of heritage, mnemosophy, is also the ethics of heritage, trying to find the final moral purpose of memory. We are still told that museums and kindred institutions are just about scientific memory and, until a decade ago, demonstrably about three-dimensional objects documenting it. If that would hold, we would be in a frustrational deflection against the new technological environment and new needs of society. The ambivalent role of PMIs will continue as we shall try to balance their commitment to a palpable reality and the fact that most of the reality is increasingly in flux or understood that way. The utopia of materialism and its duration in time remains a sort of sympathetic poetry of cultural tradition. Their flirting with Eternity by using the arguments of materialist nature possess a touching naivety. Modern science was born as the discovery of infiniteness, and yet we try to prove in our museums the finite and definitely material nature of our worldly reality. Though we must rely upon science, we need to leave space for spiritual, extra sensual and, why not, inexplicable. We need a theory which would also function as a hermeneutics of the past, able to decode and give meaning to the inherited signs and codes.

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⁷⁰ Zbynek Stransky claims that museology is about man and his relation to reality, but, taken in their relevance to a certain sector of human endeavour, any science is about that.

We need principles of interpretation, beyond the clues given by each specialist science. In this respect, an individual, specialist analysis of a particular object should not exist without a parallel striving to understand the wholeness it constitutes the part of. This general science would excel the ambition of specialist sciences by undertaking the idealist ambition towards an understanding of humans' "being-there" (Heidegger). Demonstrating the multi-faceted nature of an ideal science of heritage, let us remember that hermeneutics, itself a possible aspect of it, was constituted as a science of understanding historical reality, of understanding the world's experience (Hans Georg Gadamer). Besides, like heuristics, this new science should also teach us "methods" of researching new concepts and the art of finding the truth. Once a separate, autonomous body, this science of heritage, composite as it may be, could derive its coherence from the practical use.

We can rightfully object to scientism and the possessiveness of museums, as a certain vice of knowledge obsession and perverted acquisitiveness, because of the lack of a clear vision of quality objectives. These would call for a better selection criteria and a mission well defined. This need is a growing one as the centre of gravity of the character and performance of public memory is rapidly changing. The world needs effective institutions, and cyberspace needs cultivating and certain urbanism. The cyber jungle is being actively encouraged and created by the same companies that sell us the best technologies, navigation tools, and (path and places) search engines. This way they keep us in the jungle where they can lead us solely to the places of their choice, - not ours, but to the cash-in points created for the most part to suit their needs and please our basic instincts and wishes. The world is quite at ease with any amount of quantitative analysis soundly based on official science, but we all have difficulties with quality judgements as the quality is either disappearing from our lives or it is disappearing from our reach. After a period of an advancing world we have seemingly entered again a new phase of fascination with metricism, expressing everything in terms of quantity and being fascinated with information so acquired. To some it may even seem a part of a manipulative conspiracy as the apparent excess of information can conceal or prevent the essential insights. Mnemosophy is seemingly an old-fashioned call for wisdom, sug-

gesting quality as the only alternative to the “easy” quantitative solutions.

Before we discuss its structure and other elements that may therein be contained, let us claim that this philosophical discipline has as its aim the understanding of the essence and value of the entire heritage. The term “mnemosophy” probably embraces the essence and meaning without trying to suggest the ultimate aspiration to the status of science. Understood as a theory of the very relationship human society has towards its own heritage from where its identities are formed, the new theory (or, indeed, a science maybe) suggests that the profession behind it must be communicational, humanist and socially productive in its nature. Besides being one of the information sciences about public memory, some general level and widest scope of heritage, mnemosophy should also be the cybernetics of heritage as it has the active principle in-built into its structure. Memory is regarded as serving as a survival tool and a basis for a co-ordinated response of society, the community, or a group when confronted with a situation, stimulus, challenge or aggression tending to disturb its condition or function. Memory is the basis for processes of homeostasis of identity. That is a complex balance, which, if maintained, enables the harmonious development of society, while retaining the coherence of its own identity. This does not happen in a spontaneous way but is “engineered” through different institutions of modern society. Heritage institutions have to produce the filtered, adjusted, selected, appropriate wisdom to generate the proper reaction aimed at regaining the balance. Therefore, it isn’t just any memory, random or arbitrary, that restores lost harmony as a condition of successful survival. Wasn’t Aristotle suggesting “the wisdom of the world” as a separate science? The practice of philosophising may have forgotten the simple meaning of “sophia” (wisdom), whereas, ultimately speaking, it is nothing less that we are after. Needless to say, this approach changes radically the focus and mentality of the present institutional tradition of the heritage sector. It involves, namely, as daily practice, the risk of institutional action in real time and living circumstances. It is about taking part of the responsibility for the destiny of the identity the institution stands for, - be it language, local architecture or natural resources. The birth of community museums (eco-museums) coincided with the conviction that mu-

seums bear their part of responsibility for the development of society on a day-to-day basis. The notion of sustainable development, i.e. one that retains a balance between change and preservation clearly justifies the notion of the museum as a cybernetic, guiding mechanism of society⁷¹. To preserve the variety and vitality of the forces of the complex identities we inherit merits a theory. Its aim is to support and enhance the quality practice issuing from our relationship with the past. But, not even that would be but an ancient ambition. Philology traditionally describes “a love of learning, of literature as well as of argument and reasoning”⁷². Philology was “traditionally, the study of the history of language, including the historical study of literary texts”⁷³, or even more: “.....the study of language in written historical sources; it is a combination of literary criticism, history, and linguistics. It is more commonly defined as the study of literary texts and written records, the establishment of their authenticity and their original form, and the determination of their meaning”⁷⁴. Here is again a science of some “pansophic”, comprehensive temptation to understand the messages of the past, probably pertaining to the necessary structure of any professional education for PMIs.

2.2. Norm as cybernetic objective

The *norm*, however simple a way of saying *balance*, is too a seductive a notion to be easily admitted even as a subject. The false claim that we live in an open and free society in which a norm is undesirable ideal, discourages public institutions to deal with their major challenge. The existence of good norms is a confirmation of a responsible society caring for the common good. What puzzles citizens is that quest for the norm has been vilified as a totalitarian temptation. Norm should be expressed as the importance of and the need for a positive, constructive, humanist, wide, tolerant, ethical attitude, well

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⁷¹ The concept of the “cybernetic museum” is part of my lectures from 1989, also mentioned in quite a few of my published texts; the employment of cybernetics in this book merits further research as it is only an opening of the grand, increasingly present theme of heritage being relevant for the development of society.

⁷² <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philology>

⁷³ Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Ultimate Reference Suite. Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, 2013.

⁷⁴ <http://beta.merriam-webster/dictionary/philology+>

intentioned and generative in nature, making beneficial effects possible. The very invention of public memory institutions is part of the norm chosen by society to manage its past with certain rules and expectations, and so is the very civil state which claims the right of organizing society, implicitly declining it to the religious authorities or corporative sector.

Norm is the name of quality we are willing to put as a landmark, - an incessant effort in clarifying our vision of what is good and what is bad, what is constructive and what is destructive, what is useful or what is harmful. Norm is the name of the obligation to perpetual evaluation process, a balance any entity strives to achieve. Moliere called norm the “juste milieu” and Horatio referred to it as the “golden medium”. In some cases it is called beauty and in others the fair trade, or sustainability in the development, or in any other circumstances, - an expected, well balanced value.

The troubled society of today needs humanist and social sciences and their institutions as the counterpart to the dichotomy of development. The world is, however, heading exactly the opposite way as the drastic example of Japanese government confirms in its warning to universities. “Japan’s Minister of Education has asked all national universities to close their social sciences and humanities departments” and “26 universities have so far confirmed plans to close affected faculties or convert them to “areas that better meet society’s needs”⁷⁵. They are the essential part of the active role of correction and appropriation, - the role of a cybernetic, counter-active mechanism for moderating and guiding the societal system towards some basic humanist ideals (or at least keeping it from drifting hopelessly away from it). Public memory institutions are the best executors of this task because they are not there to serve science but to use it for the public benefit. They are not in charge of knowledge production and distribution as much as in moderating the change. What society today needs desperately, drowning in the rising ocean of knowledge and gasping under the burden of perfect recall is, simply, - wisdom, as will be elaborated later on. We are talking about

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⁷⁵ <http://monitor.icef.com/2015/09/japanese-government-asks-universities-to-close-social-sciences-and-humanities-faculties/>

knowledge with purpose, with ethical claims and truly democratic ambitions⁷⁶, - recognized, gathered, selected, researched, documented, preserved, cared for and communicated with the simple aim of making the world a better place. Therefore, wisdom has to be turned into counter action. That is the basis of maintaining the meaning of, for instance, whatever sustainability in development is.

If wisdom is a banal claim then love is too, and so is pity, compassion, beauty... There is no museum too elitist by its history or collections that cannot be used for the betterment of the human condition. The users of PMIs need a hand, assistance in understanding the world and the meanings of human existence.

Advanced museums are much more houses of ideas than of objects. They are places and processes where concepts and ideas are communicated. Ideas are a thought model, a sort of basic paradigm or the ideal essence of things and phenomena. In a sense, this theory is a management towards the ideal goal, determining a course of events towards some purposefulness. What is the task in the community we are supposed to solve and function to serve? As in certain reminiscence of Aristotle's *ideotelia*⁷⁷ we need a strong purpose of our entire potential and performance. We are not here for augmenting knowledge as there are better ones for the task. And, of course, we are not there for education as nowadays, the blooming education industry does it professionally using arguments of well regulated strategy, from the coercive to a highly profiled offer. We are a free, complementary public offer. We are neither here for entertainment because some other professions care for that. Our task may prove decisive if we manage to affirm public memory sector as profession.

At the end of any mercantilist world-view there is always a profit, a pervasive, omnipresent and quick one. It will push the heritage sector towards unthinkable practices in comparison with the traditional criteria of heritage occupations: privatisation of museums, de-ac-

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⁷⁶ This is only an attempt to say that the power structures formed upon elections assisted by biased media, based upon manipulated information and led by corrupted politicians is not a democratic system but a dangerous deviation.

⁷⁷ Ideotelia, from eidos (Greek for "idea") and telos (Greek for "end", "purpose", or "goal") used by philosophers such as Aristotle.

cessioning, putting institutions and their collections on the market, reducing the community commitments and competencies etc. That will obstruct the use of accumulated memory for the sake of steering the course of societal development, so we must put our potentials in use while there is still time.

There is a science of cybernetics paradoxically developed by the military but having an immense humanist potential, as it was obvious in the 1960s and then ignored. It is a science about balance, or an art of maintaining the norm. In its military use it was able to develop ways of keeping a ballistic or torpedo trajectory stable, and securely guided to its target in spite of the changing atmospheric or maritime conditions. Cybernetic principles enable us to ride bicycles, steer boats, fly planes. Steam turbine was possible as a stable system by virtue of its fly valve rotating to regulate and control the flow rate of steam into the turbine and thus maintaining the speed of turbine rotation a constant. Watt's centrifugal governor is the epitome of all other applications of cybernetic principle: a standard set and a added regulatory system that reads deflections and signals to corrective mechanisms to react and regain the norm. In fact, any institution too could design its targets and set up systems that control and correct deviations from the set goals. It can happen as the inner process say in museums, regulating so called basic and communicational functions. What should interest us more is the outward performance, when public memory institutions function as a regulatory, guiding system added to a society or/and its identities. Most of our environment is regulated and maintained within pre-set conditions by the action of cybernetic devices in constantly unstable or changing conditions. It is about counter-active corrections as response to threats any norm is exposed to, or simply about knowing where we want to arrive or what we want to achieve within changing circumstances. The corrective system analyses the state of the norm and using feedback information acts on the erroneous influences.

The use of cybernetics in the 1960s seemed inevitable and salutary for a society turned towards progress, but little was proved in practice and the concept was largely abandoned; the socialist era was one of ideological solutions, ideally meant to establish and maintain a balance and guidance in a social project, but again, wrongly target-

ed and ruled, it failed⁷⁸. Its use of social cybernetics sank under the burden and mismanagement of bureaucracy. To the cynicism of all, the West lives now in an outwardly velvet totalitarianism defending its bossy habits all over the world, creating chaos while deserting its own project of a free and open society. The use of the prefix cyber to refer to all matters deriving from the virtual information sphere symbolically ruined the chances of cybernetics, creating by its power a hampering use of the word, otherwise so appropriate for describing the processes of guiding the systems⁷⁹.

Heritage institutions have to be formulated on the logic of dialectics and cybernetics; both of them explain the evolution of things in the terms of tension between two poles. "In dialectics the tension between the theses and antitheses creates synthesis; in cybernetics the tension between the threat and counter activity produces a stable balance capable of maintaining the norm"⁸⁰.

Cybernetics, - often defined as a science about guiding systems, is also defined as a science of communication, the latter being presumably the widest interpretation of its potentials but in fact hitting the essence of the cybernetic processes⁸¹. What heritage institutions should do is use their principles of cybernetics to ameliorate the art of guiding and governing society as a system, assisting in managing it towards certain harmony by the use of memory input. The best means will always be communication. They cannot change the world but they certainly can help make it better, as W. H. Auden would put it (see the note 66). There are many museums but also a growing number of other heritage institutions today demonstrating this quality. When in 1969 astronauts photographed the Earth as

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⁷⁸ The reasons were double in nature: inner defects (the communist party's bureaucracy usurping its mandate and turning it into a mere power void and forgetting the intellectual project they never understood anyhow), and the outer (undermining such experiments by aggressive, voracious capitalism).

⁷⁹ The term cybernetics comes from the ancient Greek word *kybernetikos* ("good at steering"), referring to the art of the helmsman. (Encyclopaedia Britannica)

⁸⁰ Duyn, Roel van. 1982. *Prema novoj moralnoj revoluciji*. Kultura, No 59, 1982. Beograd.

⁸¹ This is why this book contains seemingly excessive chapter (8.8) on the art of communication. The aim is to stress how the way of transferring the messages decisively contributes to the contents of those messages.

a blue sphere hanging in a black unfathomable infinity, one would have expected this to have changed the world for the better, but it did not. It was like thinking globally turned instead into a project of globalisation, - the opposite of a borderless alliance of common sense, the unity of diversity, for the survival of the Planet. Museums themselves also diluted the grand inspiration into countless specialist exhibitions, missing the wisdom of the common human destiny. Only rarely, in culturally most developed countries, did they reach this level of taking their responsibility for sustainable development seriously. They should serve the needs of society in maintaining the norm, i.e. sustaining the value system or systems which deserve to provide a coherent continuity and survival.

At their best, all intellectuals, - curators, archivists and librarians included, are independent, unbiased, objective observers and analysts of any given situation. Ideally intellectuals should exist as public intellectuals. Their very position makes them permanently engaged in a constructive critique of the state of matters. Such individuals are able to remember the quality norm and devise ways whereby its changes, reconsideration and maintenance remains their dominant mission. Though increasingly profit oriented, even the creative industries have to assume an elevated responsibility in society.

But the norm is a demanding and delicate claim and it deserves further explanation as mere mention of it will provoke especially the pretenders to false democracy the West has established. Fortunately, in itself it is an unstable set of ideals, of virtues describing the human condition and a societal project, - a description of what we wish to be or to remain. Therefore, the norm is a condensed reminder about harmony, about equilibrium... Happiness or truth are negotiable qualities and their inspirational examples are exposed to manipulation and oblivion. To propose to society a norm of happy people as a blunt administrative project has always been dangerous. In comparison with subtle, creeping totalitarianism (that imposes tyranny of young, beautiful, resolute... of perfect exterior image among people and products), the historical totalitarianisms were naive. Taken operationally, the ideal of attaining happiness for all can be rightfully turned into an effort of reducing human suffering and encouraging or inspiring a defence against threats. An entire society needs a norm

the way an orchestra forges harmony out of diverse tunes, tonalities, - sounds and instruments put to work on the same project, producing a result of desirable quality. Perfection has to remain only an idealist reminder, not the goal. The forces of chaos and the false elites are changing the codes of culture in the name of unconditional innovation and the myth of individualism. Cultural industries and their institutions (increasingly also those of the public memory sector) acquire devastating spam- and worm-like informational tools, causing decay and disintegration of their mission. The “temples” of civil society become increasingly infected by illusions and imitations softening their attitudes towards sensationalism and kitsch. Their “priests” get corrupted by interests foreign to their art or those of society. As rhythm increases, the only solution to sweeping change is total flexibility which excludes stable pattern solutions, but incessantly proposing if not stability then convincing general criteria and a reliable mindset based upon principles of articulating free negotiable action.

There is hardly a more central concept to the norm than virtue(s) chosen and prevalently respected so that a consensus about the meanings of virtue(s) creates and renews the definition of the norm itself. Cicero defines virtue as “a habit of mind in harmony with reason”⁸². His description of virtue as consisting of prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance became the four cardinal virtues in medieval times but the question will remain central in any epoch.

The most profitable exploitation of citizens derives from an increasing knowledge of their primary impulses and instincts: the closer to biology (with all the implications for psychology and social behaviour) the more profitable. However, the human minds’ idea of equilibrium, of harmony is also our projected self, part of our serial programme too, - the imaginary reign of the norm as ideal, elusive, unattainable state. Human society was always after some system of values that would be agreed upon, appropriated and lived by. But, these attempts to implement a wide mobilisation were taken advantage of. The power brokers of the world recognise ideologies and collective projections as an opportunity to impose an obligatory obe-

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⁸² Yates, Frances A. *The Art of Memory*. The University of Chicago Press, 2001. p. 20

dience by fixing the rules to ensure their power. Humanity has had a very bad experience with these appetites that immediately snatch ideals only to misuse them. The rise of humanist ethics and the freedom of creative expression in a meritocratic society will heighten the level of attained equilibrium. Public memory, alike public health, - like any public service cannot exist without a basic political agenda.

The norm cannot be a stable value as life itself isn't. The PMIs can thus act against multiplying threats as they recognise them and according to their significance. These heritage institutions are therefore the counter-active societal subsystem aimed at regaining balance and harmony when lost or threatened. However, a well-managed selfishness, human nature manipulated into utter egoism as Ayn Rand⁸³ embodied so well and spread internationally, has attained its climax in the last two or three decades. The race for business efficiency has seen opportunities in an ever increasing specialisation that brought narrow-minded competition. Virtue "as a passion for good and beauty" (Lord Shaftesbury) in any activity has been given little chance. What we see happening is growing reaction and conservative return to "real" sciences and "invaluable" specialisation. So, instead of better education that would provide for specialist knowledge and skills but opening at the same time a wide view upon the totality of any domain and the welfare of society as a whole, - the world is now exposed to dumbing down by rising quantities of deficient education producing, paradoxically, ignorance. That is quite a threat to prove cybernetic potential of public memory sector!

The inverse developments are subtly but ruthlessly promoted by the money makers that smuggled in their "mercenaries" in the form of managers and marketers into any profession. The post-modernism invented an attitude of free disposal with all the inherited achievements: "anything goes". Citations and a rather relaxed manner of borrowing on all sides was acceptable to an age so well aware and informed with its multiple heritage that this stance was easily interpreted as a new sort of creativeness. So, within this syntagm was

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⁸³ Russian and American novelist and popular philosopher, advocating ethical egoism, that much influenced conservatives and libertarians who, in their turn, helped create the present predatory capitalism based upon individual insecurity and ultimate individualism.http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand ; <https://www.aynrand.org/>

seemingly contained all the freedom of re-composition, re-make, re-mix, - a creativity that took entire heritage as a means to create new values. But that was a call of connoisseurs to their equals. The challenge for creative cross-fertilization, actually a call of elites to elites, soon turned into petty (and growing) theft, and ended in an ordeal of bad taste. With “bad painting” (in plastic arts) and other “cultural” contributions to an emerging and tacit cult of noise, shock, ugliness and aggression, - a new official kitsch, as non-taste has been launched. Most of the international stars of the present day art scene are cheap dissidents, grand masters of folly and magicians of vanity disguised into staged non-conformism. They are the perfect antinomy to, say, Malewich or Picasso. The almost charming call for a play to a tired civilization turned into quite a monstrous, explicit public reality: “nothing matters”. The world of loosing values, of dying qualities gained over a few decades a legitimacy. It was a wide and apparently quite a huge undertaking that worked its way in any facet of culture or social reality, - topped by a very mean and seemingly banal invention of “karaoke”. As never before, the *karaoke world* praised amateurs and disdained professionalism, making possible that any profession, let alone occupation, receives its input of incompetent contractors. The insightful and informed see them multiplying in the heritage sector. The cycles of losing quality were thus boosted with little or no response from public institutions. The “nothing matters” deviation is a briefest description of a chaotic present with a growing lack of reliable values: even a mention of a need for values, virtues, or norm is immediately denounced as undemocratic intrusion into individual liberties and suspicious as obscure moralisation (most readily by the subservient, trendy intellectuals). Public memory institutions usually remain silent too. The huge reservoirs of human experience continued to be used poorly, yielding the products that, even at their best, would not interfere with premeditated consequences of globalisation.

G. Camillo’s theatre was not supposed only to remind its users of the whole of knowledge (found relevant and available) of the world, but also to inspire a discourse about its qualities, as it was “perfectly proportioned and therefore magical”⁸⁴. He was suggesting the healing

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⁸⁴ Giulio “Delminio” Camillo (ca. 1480–1544) was an Italian philosopher. He is best

nature of the arts and part of it was the noble knowledge he was proposing. But culture in general has this power. For many theologians and philosophers, virtues were attributes or dignities of God. Putting it on a general level, these values are only a description of perfection embodied, as an ideal, in an ultimate Good. God or Gods were more often than not a metaphor of perfection inaccessible to humans. (The Ancient Greeks were, say, more realistic and tried to find perfection rather in human endeavours). Describing the good seemed the best way in demonstrating its practical qualities and thus making a distinction to its antinomy. This being one the most delicate tasks of culture meant that the lists and ranking of virtues always change. Virtue may be just one, like Perfection, but would necessarily appropriate many faces. An exhaustive collection of attributes is a possible description of an ultimate sum, taking sometimes quasi poetical form which official science usually renounces as simply unscientific therefore unreliable. Most of the claims are universal while descriptions of attributes overlap in a number of them, much narrowing the differences of the cultures they come from. But, as cultures change, so do the evaluations, narratives and ideals, suggesting thus different faces of Perfection as names of virtues. It is fair to add that the cultures themselves are subject to change in time and by the circumstances. Taken as reminders to inexhaustible possibilities, the very number and description of virtues always present an attempt in trying to outline a possible norm, and stand as an open call for further deliberations. Even same by the name, the virtues have always been differently defined. There are many variations of lists but the aim remains the same: to stipulate sets of values that may help us improve and live better, sometimes to please the Divine, at other times out of the humanist striving for the perfection of human kind. Goethe says in his conversation with Eckermann that barbarism is contained in the fact that it does not avow what is of value⁸⁵. He certainly did not mean the primitive cultures by that, but the damaged, shattered ones probably like those we live today. Quite reassuringly, most of the big religions and philosophical world-views (like Taoism, for instance) seem to propose rather compatible value systems. While values vary as they are part of culture and heritage, it might help to mention

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known for his Theatre of Memory, described in his posthumously published work *L'Idea del Teatro*.

⁸⁵ <http://www.hxa.name/books/ecog/Eckermann-ConversationsOfGoethe-1827.html>

some of their underlying structure woven of virtues that rarely differ much in any value system. Maybe also the idea of “natural law”⁸⁶ can at least partly be explained by a certain anatomy of good, a sort of inborn, intuitive knowledge only perfected by culture. A possible, necessarily arbitrary description of faces of virtues, - but merely as an illustration of practically endless combinations, could be this:

- **Love.** If **virtue** could be given only one name which belongs to people - it would be this one.
- **Splendour.** When the fluttering spirit, ingenuity and glowing mind depict the ease of creation it is the name of this **virtue**.
- **Brotherhood.** That is the name of **virtue** when we see the Absolute in every being, when we share with everyone the attention that belongs to it.
- **Truth.** That is the name of **virtue** for the words obstructed by no language, - but such as the Absolute would speak if itself wishing to say what we want to utter when depicting the world or facts with ultimate acuteness and responsibility.
- **Equality.** This **virtue** earns its name when we see others as our equals, no matter how modest and inconspicuous, every person is an indispensable part of an infinite whole.
- **Logic.** This is the name of **virtue** in matters of the mind – the name for the boundless bond between mind and matter, since everything that exists is interdependent and not a thing can move without stirring others.
- **Beauty.** This is the name of **virtue** when light, sound, and forms of substance achieve the quality or aggregate of qualities that please the senses or pleasurably exalt the spirit.
- **Clemency.** Such is the name of **virtue** when our best judgement brings our kind or merciful treatment of someone who could otherwise be given harsh retribution.
- **Hope.** This is the name of **virtue** when we want to name our devotion to life and our trust in a final good, when wanting something to happen or to be true and when thinking that it could happen or be true, a beneficial sentiment we can also offer to others.
- **Justice.** This name is given to **virtue** by everyone who wants to

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⁸⁶ <http://scholarship.law.campbell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1562&context=clr>

penetrate into “the maintenance or administration of what is just, especially by the impartial adjustment of conflicting claims or the assignment of merited rewards or punishments”⁸⁷.

- **Wisdom.** This is *the* name of **virtue**, for wisdom is an attempt to follow the guidelines born solely by a deep insight into the nature and meaning of ideas, a knowledge selected well and with responsibility, - impartial, simple and ennobled by love.

Norm is a sort of order we choose to maintain, and practically the entire social construction serves it in one way or another. PMIs might be effective in helping to reduce entropy demonstrated by rising chaos and reduction of potentials. As one among many mechanisms of societal self-defence, museums and other PMIs solve little, but can contribute to possible solutions considerably. This very idea of a counteractive reaction is much older than cybernetics – we can trace it in our cultural circle back to Hippocrates. He used the term *ponos* to describe the defence effort of a body in an illness in regaining the lost balance. The N. Wiener’ book on cybernetics published first in 1948 ⁸⁸ is standing as the revelatory civilisational reminder for an era of unprecedented potentials and risks. Its primary inspiration was never appropriated by the cultural sector let alone by heritage organisations. When McLuhan is talking about “equilibrium as a strategy of a governing force of any body” we should understand it as a fundamentally cybernetic approach. In this sense the governing force of society (if society is to live and prosper) should be culture - spiritual culture; it should be understood as a system of values, a sort of norm guiding to supreme aspirations of any society or humanity in general. The very appearance of museums is, taken generally, a reaction to the devastating change the Industrial revolution produced. We have good reasons for alarm when seeing that the forces of *pragmatic* blindness (be it profit or “just” the prevalence of *possessing* over *being*, to quote Fromm) have taken over. The corporative world is currently in the final process of *hostile takeover* of our spaceship Earth, as we might call our lonely and ever shrinking planet⁸⁹.

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⁸⁷ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/justice>

⁸⁸ Wiener, Norbert. *Cybernetics: Or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine*. Paris, (Hermann & Cie) & Camb. Mass. (MIT Press) ISBN 978-0-262-73009-9; 2nd revised ed. 1961.

⁸⁹ Spaceship Earth is the iconic and symbolic structure of Epcot, the second of four

Of course, the holistic approaches like cybernetics are denounced as mechanistic, as “passé” because they “dehumanise” life by treating all reality as systems to be managed. But we do live in a managed world, though much of it has been forcefully imposed by the liberal rampage. The media supported incessant campaign in favour of chaos is an enormous manipulative scheme, a spin, - as the culture of lying is now euphemistically called. The pragmatic alliance of power brokers blurs the fact that there is still another kind of management, which is not a technocratic art of extracting rising profits at any cost. Instead of the selfish conspiracy of managerial elites we need professions and institutions to manage the world wisely. The corporations, true rulers of the world, undercut the true essence of democracy by corrupting politicians and the media and undermine it further by introducing the sub-system of privately run corporative lobbying which, ultimately, is nothing but a euphemism for corruption. One of such inexistent and badly needed professions is the one of heritage, or (if we want to imply its importance) of public memory.

Counter activity becomes possible only if we know the situation, i.e. the size and range of aggression, so knowing the world and knowing the medium of action is essential. The first thing is attainable when we realize that our present is the only logical point of departure and the sole point of return whether we want to explore our past or foresee our future. The second comes by studying the nature of our institutional practices. Preoccupied by their basic academic discipline, curators, to take an example, have limited knowledge about the present world and are quite discouraged to consider themselves part of its current problems. Consequently, their institutions, too, avoid the present. Immersed in the past most institutions and their employees do not see its true role.

All our problems have their past and their future. The past is changing, being constantly re-thought and re-evaluated, but stays there as a challenge. To paraphrase Goethe, there is nothing new in the world, there are only things discovered anew. We always live with the same problems, be it as individuals or as social groups. They evolve

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theme parks built at the Walt Disney World Resort; the dome was done after the one invented by Buckminster Fuller who proposed the very term.

in a somewhat irregular spiral of time, but at the same place in the configuration of our reality we find the same problems though in different social, technological and cultural circumstances. Everything except the highlights, known as technological revolutions in human history, has happened before. While receiving information from the actual environment we unconsciously compare them, in a matter of micro-seconds, against an entire past knowledge and experience. The basic collective urge is the same as the individual one. We also know that our past is the construction material of our present. The question is what past shall we use or let be used in building the present and what of the present so constructed do we intend to pass on to become an immediate or some further future. If we have an ideological framework, and some social contract that elaborates our criteria, the task will be easier and more beneficial. Sometimes however, if without clear criteria or with biased ones, we let the past be invented, so that it best suits the value patterns of the most powerful protagonists or simply the engineered illusions. Since this is to a certain point inevitable, the problem is that any society should strive towards a rationalised, well managed and moderated process. If *the noise* can be sufficiently reduced, the process can be effective, adjusted for ethically correct purposes, so that the experience of the past responds to present needs: sometimes by supporting and at other times by opposing the ongoing practices in society.

Although the theme of cybernetic responses is discussed in the chapter 8. a suggestion on potentials of public memory institutions may be offered here to illustrate the challenges of norm maintenance. Excessive urbanisation and agricultural industries deplete forests on a daily basis, - not only in the Amazon or in the Third World. But deforestation was a big problem in Medieval times too. Being almost the sole source of energy, woods disappeared around cities. The array of changes in the fate of different populations caused by sways of development is very instructive as, like today, some phenomena have bizarre causes and unforeseen consequences. Facts seemingly convey that Denmark, for instance, was by the middle 15 century all burnt because the wood was spent for salt production and that changed not only the landscape. The picture of surviving medieval castles protruding idyllically out of woods is but their modern appearance. Formed on bare mountain tops, they were an immediate symbol

of fear and threat, - much different from the romantic suggestion they present today. Some woods disappeared but some existing now, were not there. We do have innumerable old lessons to be learned in today's circumstances. Indebtedness, inflation, hostile takeovers, imposed regulations, blockades, restrictions, taxes, changed interest rates, provoked bankruptcies, political extortions, grafts... all these anomalies existed in some form since the beginning of the ancient world. When was the last time we have seen an exhibition explaining a dangerous development that we have been exposed to? Have we ever seen an exhibition like "How developers can be estranged from life", or "The Damnation of Usury - from the Middle Ages to contemporary society"? Or, "Why were corporations ever allowed?" (because there was a time when they were just regarded as merely participating in shady dealing), or "Slavery Today" (so that we see that it only changed but not disappeared), "Violence - the real face of modern times?"; or, indeed, "War - the most lucrative of all businesses" etc. It would merit explaining how notorious values and particular interests are manipulated into mounting wars so that in a time of no rules and inverted priorities the masters of war can grab unimaginable profits. We would be able to see that the wars are usually triggered by a staged provocation or hostile act. It would also make obvious how ferocious and imposing warlords eventually transform into peace-loving keepers of their spoils. It would also be good to see the reasons for migrations and what pattern they followed for centuries. "Refugees - the world's shame"... would be a good international travelling exhibition...It would be instructive to know what particular change in the law on inheritance in the 19th century Germany caused millions to emigrate to The States. History was moved by strange occurrences and coincidences as well as by well concealed, or seemingly too banal interests of the rulers. Blurred by particular interests and selfish carelessness, the truth needs new allies, and society needs new impulses that would assist in this constant search and need for it. When Frances Yates comments on "Phaedrus" by Plato, she says that rhetoric is not an art of persuasion for personal or political advantage, but "an art of speaking the truth and of persuading hearers to listen to the truth"⁹⁰. It is so often forgotten that science is,

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⁹⁰ Yates, Frances A. 132 *The Art of Memory*. The University of Chicago Press, 2001. p. 37

besides complicated definitions, simply about finding the truth and about using it for the benefit of mankind. The skill directly based upon the ancient art of memory seems to have been understood as counter-active by nature; the truth in public discourse on past experiences is the ideal goal of the heritage sector.

All these issues do need a sort of theoretical body of its own so that a profession that deals with them gains coherence in dealing with the challenges of the world. With a constant flow of questions of this ilk – can anybody imagine living and working in this field without dealing with them? The advanced, daring reality of contemporary museum and other heritage practices needs support and debate in the constant circling of practice and theory.

We need a science that would serve this basic requirement of knowing ourselves. Classical philosophy mentions *heautology*, as teaching that says how we are able to understand who we are and what we need. It demonstrates that cognizance of what we are was always regarded as important. The eternal philosophical concern may thus appropriate a form of a preoccupation needed for daily use and for practical life circumstances, not a distant and vague history. The “invention” of “the recent past” happened in the eighties, in time of the fall of socialism and communism. The issuing geopolitical changes, created an enormous quantity of the past which was literally lived yesterday and needed to be recorded. The time was again speeded up and “zeitgeist” acquired still a greater sensitivity for the elusive, passing, disappearing reality. It certainly did not happen without accumulated experience and a change of attitude, - without a theoretical ambition. *Historical distance*⁹¹ (an expression and a way of thinking so peculiar to socialism) has been a rudimentary basis of political manipulation and lost the dignity of a scientifically justified approach and the respect of cultured citizens a long time ago. Seen as a process and a sequence of variables, history has become less holy, but though more inconsistent, it has got closer to the truth. However, three decades of wild deregulation and privatisation revealed that

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⁹¹ As a young professional in the early 80s I was told by my senior curators that historical distance measured between 30 and 50 years long. The folly of this “scientific” invention helped to develop a mentality that bore the reasons for the lag in East European collections.

the West was only waiting to get rid of the alternative to demonstrate its worst aberrations. War industries and casino capitalism revealed their fatal capacity to undermine the systems or expose the virtues to a devastating hypocrisy, devaluing them and disorienting the population: all has turned into illusion, a travesty. All this insight has not yet been appropriated or explained in museums, though occasionally we have signs of practice playing the role of inventor. The collecting exercised in public memory institutions is mostly representative but changing into representational, - meaning that we are not bound to keep the best (the oldest, the most elaborate, the most expensive, the rarest) but the most illustrative for the set of values we document, communicate and stand for. The door for the new notion of institutional richness has been opened⁹², - not exclusively that of collections but that of responsible mission, rich agenda, holistic expertise and the formidable technology of communication. This new science should apply to the private sector too. It has to be able to explain how and why private museums thrive and what they represent in memory. How far is that part, if at all, of the public memory sector and what is the nature of the processes in which they appear⁹³. In fact, the usable science of heritage should be able to accommodate all the issues concerning the private owners of heritage, be they proprietors of small publicly available collections or big museums, because in any advanced strategy of public memory or planning their role may be great. Never since the time of robber barons, has there been such an increase in creating private museums⁹⁴ but unlike then, these museums do not seek legitimacy from the state or the museum sector. Most of them are single-donor museums. It seems that reputation of the official museum sector has decreased. Wherever there is a steep rise in number of billionaires and their wealth, there are private museums to witness it. The danger is that they might be reducing their ambitions merely to prestige of showing off, to a good

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⁹² Šola, Tomislav. *Prema totalnom muzeju (Towards the total museum)*, PhD theses, University of Ljubljana, 1985.; The theses has been integrally published in 2010 by University of Belgrade. One chapter tells about "new richness" of museums aiming at their ability to communicate values that they cannot "document" by the palpable objects.

⁹³ China had in 2014 about 600 private museums, their number steadily growing like in many other countries.

⁹⁴ <http://www.theartnewspaper.com/blogs/Will-there-be-life-after-death-for-new-private-museums/36782>

investment (as most of them are art museums) or a simple obsession with eternity. But, they also claim a place in the public memory scene, and the shares in forming the public mind. If this essay is late in raising the questions about the future that dismembered ranks of heritage minded occupations never took up as their own responsibility, - there would be still reasons to form a profession at least as a counter-weight to risky uncertainty that awaits us.

Mnemosophy is not so much about the final product but more about studying the causes and reasons which underlie the emergence of some phenomena or concepts in memory selection, storage and interpretation that rule our lives. This is seemingly our eternal preoccupation as Ancient Greece knew of *eidōs* (Plato)⁹⁵ which was described as the formal content of culture, encompassing its system of ideas and its criteria for interpreting experience etc⁹⁶. The interpretations happen with certain effects as aims. The communication (of public institutions) is a two-way process with an offer on one side and a need it fulfils on the other, - preferably actively demonstrated by the users. If the need is detected while designing the mission we probably already have a cybernetic action aimed at improving some defect situation. It is an inevitable and legitimate ambition, a justified objective of any science and any art⁹⁷. Art was always tempted to contribute to societal project, but so is the case with the art of memory, especially if it is transformed into public memory institutions. The inspiring fact is that they can do it with their arguments adding to them the persuasive power of art, as will later be explained (Ch. 8.8.).

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⁹⁵ Like certain Aetiology which, apart from medical meaning may refer “to investigation or attribution of the cause or reason for something, often expressed in terms of historical or mythical explanation” (<http://beta.merriam-webster/dictionary/etiology>).

⁹⁶ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/eidos>: ...”the cognitive part of cultural structure made up of the criteria of credibility, the logic used in thinking and acting, and the basic ideas by which the members of a culture organize and interpret experience : logical structure the *eidōs* is visible wherever group behaviour is characterised by intellectual efforts of a similar kind — S.F.Nadel

⁹⁷ In the preface to the 1826 edition of “Gulliver’s Travels” the Earl of Orrery says: These voyages are considered as a practical romance, - to correct vice, by showing its deformity in opposition to virtue, and to amend the false system of philosophy, by pointing out the errors, and applying salutary means to amend them”.

Maintenance of the norm, a task of many institutions at the time, is an art of designing and defining the social contract. The idea of the norm is probably nothing less and certainly no more than what a good, creative conductor with perfect hearing can elucidate from a symphony orchestra. To use Popper's idea, in society we can only talk about "piecemeal engineering", a long process of gradual balancing, as in the processes of cybernetics. So the norm is a constant striving, a direction taken with good arguments and the constant balancing of opposing arguments to produce higher levels of orderliness in the meaning of harmony and sustainable systems. Speaking in terms of physics – the objective is that of managing diverse forces into a common resultant which in turn produces the desired effect. In this way of gradual adjustments, in a versatile society that by definition respects flow and continuity, pulling down and destroying becomes questioned as aesthetic fact, maybe aggressive and ugly and therefore practised only when change and adaptation to the changed circumstances fails. A society that throws out buildings and things throws out values as well, demonstrating that it consciously betrays the laws of nature. Refugees and emigrants are paroxysm, also some sort of rejected "things", a consequence of *throwism*, but this time in the geopolitical game. Maybe the wide view of norm seen in this way could influence even the decisions traditionally peculiar to specialists: would we be prevented from the aggressive returning of a monument (by restoration) to its "best" period because this action would deny its right to its existential integrity.

The search for a norm may just turn into a secure assumption that we have created obliging core values (because they are relevant) that keep us from harmful deviations. The quality, indeed a position of value is that of a general attitude, of the mindset. In a world so devoid of idealism, a world outlook, a *weltanschauung*, *conception du monde*, is often manipulated into nihilism, chaotic assumptions, extremist positions, fragmented insight or mere indifference. Therefore, it offers no basis for usable information and messages, suggesting quality change as the value framework is missing. That general stance, the notion of what quality society is, what presents the quality of the human condition and the rights of individuals, - probably presents the basic norm we ought to possess. Leaving the decision bluntly to the crowd, or suggesting that it depends solely upon democratic

consent, would be another manipulation, as the majority if left ignorant never ruled any society. The biggest natural stakeholders of this process, essentially a democratic one, are, however, the professions. They, with the help of impartial politics, are then obliged to provide the public consent. Without the public memory sector and its profession in charge of our dynamic heritage, we can only deplore the state of the world. If dismembered, heritage occupations can only scrupulously watch what is going on, feeling vaguely that memory is our only hope in upgrading the human condition. There cannot be sustainable development without the noble interpretation of the messages of our predecessors. Nietzsche claimed: “All sciences are now under the obligation to prepare the ground for the future task of the philosopher, which is to solve the problem of value, to determine the true hierarchy of values”⁹⁸. Our problems are always the same, only circumstances and protagonists change. If we substitute “philosopher” with curator or librarian and think that curating the system of values makes a perfect though very generalized call for the definition of their mission.

2.3. Credibility

The very concept and the structure of any theory or science have to gain the recognition of the academic community. It has to be verifiable too. However, there can hardly be a better verification for any science than the praxis, the empirically verifiable concepts that support the system of the science. Theory should be able to assist us in making correct decisions be it in particular situations or when designing the systems to deal with public memory. Any science is about life, can be explained in its terms and, if applied to life situations, can demonstrate beneficial effects.

Mnemosophy teaches us that the totality of heritage implies unity of the domain, suggests that the practice should recognize that. The prevailing practice lags behind the concept which claims and proves that we are in (prevailingly) a creative, communication business. It says that the main task of our marketing (like any other) is the cre-

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⁹⁸ <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/f/friedrichn109378.html#DpSfyu57b-dlpYCmy.99>

ation of useful and honest products tailored to the needs of the owners of a heritage project or institution. This science in making claims that the fundamental understanding of the role of memory in a society makes it the underlying pattern of any (though unwritten) social contract; - in any case, of a vision of community or society we desire to live in and leave behind us. Public memory is a political issue as is any mission statement. This being a tough, socially and ethically charged task, we need a clear mission that defines what we do and for whom. After answering “why” even “how” becomes increasingly important. We may be considering an art almost autonomous in its application to communicating surely a collective social and (necessarily) public memory. That art of public memory communication is not design, - it uses design, as it uses plastic, performing and any other art as the way to convey its meanings and effects.

Mnemosophy reminds us that any regular, systematized action of the transfer of public experience managed towards noble purposes in a society might be some form of a public memory institution: it is the nature of transfer that matters. In a far away village of a distant culture, ravaged by acculturation and social, economic and cultural annihilation, the central house (where all the rites, ceremonies, festivities and events are performed) is lopsided and decaying, - unfit for use. Instead of being the main tool in that transfer of collective experience, as a space which is filled with spiritual energy and where this energy is dispersed, - it becomes not only the sign of disintegration and dissolution but also a main obstacle to the coherence of the tribe and the village. Their identity is fast fading. Then, the West, the likely cause of all that misfortune, sends its tutors and saviours, formerly only scientists, and lately all sorts of so-called non-profit organisations and ill-prepared groups and individuals who aggravate the situation by proposing expensive measures of musealisation. The numerous true stories, be it from Papua New Guinea or the Amazon (Mehinaku, Kayapo), develop in a similar manner everywhere where these primordial cultures still persist. In some cases, at great expense, greater than the miniscule economy could imagine, they build a museum of the local culture and tradition to protect it from further decay. Mnemosophy would just suggest that money and efforts be invested in reconstructing the house, helping in restoring it to the former shape and function and in slowing down the degrading

processes of their environment. The more discrete this assistance, - the better. Globalisation will, alas, stay as a perpetual danger.

The new heritage science seeks ideally the return to some elements of plain common sense that appears so unattainable to over-educated and mind-corrupted individuals who are overwhelmed by information, knowledge and selfish ambitions. In a central European country a sum of four hundred thousand Euros has been spent in establishing a museum of Roma culture, - their community being disadvantaged and, actually, a victim of mistreatment by the majority. The investment was supposed to restore their endangered integrity and self-esteem. Nicely designed, expensively run and lavishly staffed, it attracts about nine thousand visitors per year, - none of them Roma. It is hard to conceal the hypocrisy of the so called developed world. Mnemosophy would have advocated spending the same money and public energy in activities maintaining the dignity and cohesion of the Roma people, promoting their own advancement and integration on fair terms into society. God would have liked it and people would have enjoyed it. That includes the Roma people too. Of course a steady activity for their heritage, supporting it and amplifying its life signs would present a kind of cybernetic heritage action and could bear healing effects.

Mnemosophy is just another term if it does not bring a new quality to insight (understanding the nature of public memory), and to effects (outputs that make a difference while achieving the mission). It is deliberately and logically leaving the public memory occupations' autonomy unquestionable in their practicalities and their theories. In itself, it is about the *what* and *why* of memory (collecting, study, care, and communication) in any society, not at all *how*, - a problem that any interested party would give its own solution to. Applying the central concept and the general features of the practice, this science will have to exist, paradoxically fighting the entropy to save particular identities from the vulgarized process of globalisation. Applied to memory institutions, to heritage institutions or, to make the profession more evidently a framework, - to the public memory sector, - it should be, like physics, or any other science good enough for the entire world, just anywhere, no matter what value systems it supports within their changes and moderates them into sustainable develop-

ment⁹⁹. It is supporting not the processes of globalisation that create a grey mass of indifference to specificity but internationalisation which signifies self confidence and enjoyment within variety.

But, if heritage is more pliable than history then it will be heritage which will be the object of political manipulation. Only statesmen, not the mere peddlers of political influence (what politics seem to be turning into) are up to the task of meddling with history, burdened as it is. But if we live in times when great individuals are scarce, it still leaves space for great institutions.

Mnemosophy consists of results of several sciences to which it serves as a common denominator. Composite sciences are made up of many others behaving as autonomous clusters (Technical science, Medicine or Information science, Life science, to name but a few) but it really matters little whether mnemosophy is named just a scientific study. It will be the need for it and practical consequences of its achievement that will decide upon its credibility. It might be perceived as a new one among the so called formal sciences. They are the branches of knowledge that are concerned with formal systems, such as logic, mathematics, information science, computer science, systems theory, and some aspects of linguistics. But mnemosophy is also based upon the observation in real life circumstances and derives much from all the social sciences. Categorization of sciences is quite arbitrary as it depends upon the choice of denominators so the formal sciences can comprise Epistemology and philosophy of science, ethics, history of science, philosophy of law and value theory¹⁰⁰. The latter is very inspirational because the basic process of public memory institutions is selection. Selecting from what has amounted, due to the incredible technological advancement into almost perfect memory is necessarily a great art, so maybe the Value theory may swerve to this issue finding it central to its domain. “Value theory encompasses a range of approaches to understanding how, why, and to what degree humans should value things, whether the thing is a person, idea, object, or anything else. This investigation began in an-

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⁹⁹ Šola, Tomislav. The Limited Reach of Museology or, can Museology stand sand-storm and tropical rain. ISS, No. 15, 1988, Varanasi, India

¹⁰⁰ <http://www.springer.com/philosophy/logic+and+philosophy+of+language/book/978-1-4020-1154-2>

cient philosophy, where it is called axiology or ethics. Early philosophical investigations sought to understand good and evil, and the concept of “the good”. Today, much of value theory is scientifically empirical, recording what people do value and attempting to understand why they value it in the context of psychology, sociology, and economics¹⁰¹. This, again, reminds us of “norm” as the vague but positive depository of the ready criteria of evaluation. Like from a hard disc in a computer, any society can retrieve only what it has stored for retrieval, and in a hierarchy that shapes the very essence of life of that community. Therefore, this book (as stipulated in the subtitle and introduction) is but an essay describing the need and provoking the further research. Public memory institutions are more than this hard disc, as they have to offer a usable, responsible version of both social and collective memory and help inject it into the societal programme.

The leading forces of economic and political globalisation are trying to overpower other cultures and politics by imposing theirs. Traditional cultures of the less powerful entities rely only upon heritage and cannot defend themselves effectively without falling into the extreme of aggressive defence and xenophobia, if globalisation leaves even this choice available anymore. A good, convincing theory of heritage, let alone a science, serving only one public sector is not the solution to the problem but it can be a powerful means to the preservation of the right to own answers to the challenges of development. Can this be a part of the solution in retaining a rich world, politically polarised by creative differences, and infinitely diverse in cultures?

The best we can expect is that wise artists and scientists will produce an interpretation of our world in a meaningful and attractive way, by creating insights and feelings using knowledge, images, myths (if anything harmless of the kind exists anymore), with the ability to inspire and excite with positive ideals. Therefore we have to put in charge those able to dispense their stored knowledge by turning it into an ethical memory.

Any theory might seek to reach a compact structure of doctrine, but

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¹⁰¹ https://www.princeton.edu/~achaney/tmve/wiki100k/docs/Value_theory.html

that would be wrong and unnecessary. It is more about an approach and a way of reasoning which have to be relevant to the matter and have a problem-solving capacity. The attitude is likely to be more important than an excess of facts and information. A negative, unfounded or malicious attitude distorts the facts, misinterprets the received information and thus turns them into inadequate, useless or harmful assertions. A wrong, bellicose attitude can turn a cause for peace into a cause of conflict.

2.4. Predictive and “retro-dictive” capacity

“If you do not know where you are going any road will take you there” a Chinese saying tells us. So, any theory of heritage, - let alone a general theory of public memory, is there to sanction, confirm and verify the achievements, to support the desirable trends and provide arguments for the further advance of the entire domain, with an aim, as addressed elsewhere, of creating a strong profession.

The theory also entails “a proposed explanation whose status is still conjectural, in contrast to well-established propositions that are regarded as reporting matters of actual fact”¹⁰²; therefore, a theory must also be anticipatory. Naturally, its speculations and assumptions should not be arbitrary but founded on a serious scientific analysis, professional insight and some convincing consensus of the academic community. The meaning is to have projections which will enable correct and timely planning. Speaking about the limits of physical growth concerning the consequences of conspicuous acquisition practices in museums, archives too, a few of us raised the alarm a long time ago about the need to establish dislocated museum storage¹⁰³ as of the function of the network. Just thirty or fewer years ago, that proposal was a blasphemy whereas today it is a reality nobody

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¹⁰² Webster’s Encyclopaedic Dictionary of the English Language

¹⁰³ As far back as 1983, the Museum and Documentation Centre in Zagreb, where I was a director at the time, requested from the City a dislocated common storage for the entire city museum network; my claim was that it could have provided extra space for already constricted storage in museums as well as sparing the space by allowing temporary storage, for all those occasions when needs arise because of storing the cases of a temporary exhibition, of a renovation project or a big donation that still waits for its own space.

questions. In the long passage of years, similar things happened with the predictions about museums as venues for performing arts. The prediction was related to the attempt of museums to formulate their messages as attractively and thoroughly as possible so as to convey their best to their users. Today, the heritage theatre is a fact, which has been only recently seriously been dealt with¹⁰⁴.

The purpose of planning is to create a successful, prosperous profession as an open and efficient system. It will not take long for the speculative, conceptual idea of heritage to break away from everything that stands for conventional institutional practice. That will provide an overview and a sense of belonging to the wider sector. That might not be true immediately and everywhere. The protagonists of the heritage occupations may currently be focusing on the need to create conditions for their quality survival instead. But eventually, they will acquire a wider perspective of working together. Otherwise, they might be turning into mere transfers, resources and mediators, slowly melting into a new cultural, creative and/or entertainment industry. These occupations will reach fulfilment through a solid common theoretical basis and education so that they comply with four essential conditions of their own future:

- Understanding of the essence of the heritage concept
- Knowledge and understanding of the world in which they need to accomplish their mission
- Thorough knowledge of their own community and identity they represent, that is, which they keep alive
- Understanding of the media which they have at their disposal for the abovementioned tasks

Without some predictive capacity theory is just a dead speculation. Any good analysis is predictive, because it leads to logical conclusions concerning future circumstances and possible answers to the changes they present. For a quarter of a century¹⁰⁵ I have been trying

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¹⁰⁴ La Lettre de l'OCIM, Office de Cooperation et d'Information Museographiques, No.82, juillet-aout 2002, Dijon (an issue on theatre in museums); three books however were published since then and IMTAL, an international association on museum theatre has been established and planted its headquarters on different continents.

¹⁰⁵ A paper referring to the strategy and nature of national museums, done for the

to say that a sound science for a profession is like a set of headlights for a vehicle. If nothing else such a science would help point us towards the best probability as the strategic choice when determining the best direction for future development.

It was theory that predicted the rising use of performing arts in museums, trying to convey their messages in the most effective way. Today, museum theatre is a technical term, in use, though not widely recognised¹⁰⁶, but it will be a part of a new and extraordinary confluence of arts and curatorial expertise, as the rightful fame of Peter Greenaway so well demonstrates.

It will be theory, constantly fed by practical inventions that could push heritage institutions' practice into a very vibrant, versatile and processional mode. First, to take the easy example, museums were born from tradition and an unspoken scientific convention. The scientifically conditioned world made them possible. At the end of approximately two centuries of development we saw the first museums without original objects, and then without any, and those that do not collect at all, then museums that had no stable part, that were temporary, simply a place of happenings. Any space that will successfully re-create, even temporarily, the transfer of selected and purposeful collective experience may be (at least a kind of) a museum, or public memory institution of whatever variety or simply a heritage action of the same ambition.

In the dawn of the new nationalism followed by a war that broke in S-E Europe, I felt we should restructure our thinking about national museums¹⁰⁷. Trying to stress the importance of managing a successful national identity at the time, I suggested provocatively at some occasions that the heritage sector should be a new department in the Ministry of Defence of any state. The point was not to reinforce its political and military importance but to shift the concern from them

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conference in Goethe Institute in Zagreb, 1989.

¹⁰⁶ The International Museum Theatre Alliance (IMTAL) is very much the fact and distinctive organisation.

¹⁰⁷ Šola, Tomislav. Prilog reformi nacionalnih muzeja ili pledoaje za hrvatski nacionalni muzej// ur.Višnja Zgaga. Muzeologija br.37, Zagreb: Muzejski dokumentacijski centar, 2000. Str. 120-128.

to heritage and identity. I thought that wars in the form of survival and competition for attention in the rapidly globalising world will be the only wars left. Instead we have wars multiplying as they seem to be the very method of globalisation; they have been re-discovered as the most lucrative business of all, and a way of forced globalisation inspired by corporate interests. Engineering public consent is so much a matter of political, *democratic* and media kermis that we can hardly call it a serious issue any more. By lowering the level of communication and back filling communication channels with silliness and manipulative baits *the masses* are being ignored. Since then, the heavy rollercoaster of globalisation circling the Planet is levelling the configuration of cultures reducing them to manageable two-dimensional images. Many have discovered in this increasingly warring Planet that eternal *Conquista* never ends but changes its methods and appearances. Heritage may well have been a part of peaceful, secured strategies of defence but nobody took it seriously enough. Instead, it remained ravaged amid the spoils of war. Humanity is in the process of regressing. Equipped with memory like never before, we make scandalously poor use of it. There was no profession to impose and defend it but rather only the partial reactions of the dismembered ranks of memory conservationists. And this has been said over and over again in trying to figure out what museums and heritage institutions could do in this world, but with little use.

In the meantime we have discovered that marketing can define its product-base not only as a new item on the shelf of a shop but also as an offer, often rather intangible, as a place (site, city, region or even a state) or value. Even continents aspire to become brands. The Earth is branded The Blue Planet, but paradoxically for eventual visitors, we never agree upon the action to retain arguments for its shining, optimistic spatial image or even its very existence. Branding may help to us to see more clearly the diminishing arguments for it, so it may serve as a reminder to repair what we neglected or forgot to maintain and continue. We shall have to return to an endless process of collecting, study, care and communication of values, - designing ever more effective ways for their reinforcement, conservation and continuation. This is what museums and other public memory institutions are about. Mnemosophy is a probable looking glass which enables us to see it clearly.

Museography was there first as a theory of history, methods and technologies of museums. Librarianship and Archivistics did rather the same for their respective institutional practices. Then there was a strive to overcome this level of mere practice, the level of shrewdness whose predictiveness concerned technicalities of the occupation. So now, all the three institutional sectors are offered separate academic training aspiring, seemingly, to cover the entire span, from the very practice to the sublime if not philosophical implications of their existence. But to do it on single institution and its phenomena without perceiving the higher common denominator is short-sighted. With mnemosophy we have more than a theory. It is the level of mind which (re)considers the phenomena and concepts in their spiritual dimension, as well as in their natural spread, and yet as an open system. Its predictive strength is far more an evident task and a natural consequence of its possible definition. We want to know the nature of our recollection, of its selected and active component, be it in science or in culturally formed and communicated memory. We want to know the importance, the nature and the use of narratives. The managed world entails managed memory. It was always managed, or, indeed, mismanaged. What we want now is to manage it consciously, purposefully, with projected values as the intended outcome. The mentioned theories of heritage occupations were about a static world of the past, or how to preserve it or, sometimes, even how to make it better. They were about static quality. Mnemosophy is about us, moving in time and space and about what public memory can do for the advance of the human condition, - a dynamic quality.

By a process of establishing a profession, we shall move from “scribe culture”, subsequent, methodical and obedient, to research-based cultural action, - proactive, counter-active and creative. As it will be repeatedly claimed, one is a museum age and the other a heritage one; the first is the age of analysis and the other that of synthesis¹⁰⁸.

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¹⁰⁸ Šola, Tomislav. Novi profesionalci u vremenu sinteze. Obrada jezika i prikaz znanja; Zavod za informacijske studije. Zagreb, 1989. Book 5. p. 235-242.

3. Critique of theory and practice

3.1. Introduction

Mnemosophy has to offer a usable critical view of the world so that the profession can form strategies of response in favour of their users. Many of us who have developed resentment towards the prevailing discourse on museums refuse to be accused of being against science and hard working practitioners¹⁰⁹. Museums are usually well behaved and respect authorities, the order of things and instances of power. To a sensitive *mnemosopher* the modest subservience of conventional curators reveals a manner of vagueness that seems to cry out to the bosses, the actual ones or those yet to come. We have made the truth so relative and antiseptic, in which opposites still exist as equal probabilities that you needn't be afraid of public protest or rebellion. Your manipulative space is secured by our tacit consent with a good dosage of truth, yet just weak enough to behave like a vaccine against the distress of social criticism. Like in the correct scientific literature, - the scientific format, the language and number of references by themselves can only demonstrate assiduity but not moral determination, value of the ideas or useful public attitude. Honourable and encouraging exceptions confirm the sentiment.

This book was meant to discomfort the mind of opportunists and advocates of the status quo. They live on secure guesses because, historically, they are the secure guess themselves, - for the most, hovering and drifting in a political and social comfort zone. Like their political counterparts they run the system at all different levels but always "democratically" chosen (i.e. in accordance with the current, ruling deviation of democracy) and provided with the due formal conditions. They are always the mathematical average of opposed possibilities and human ambitions, - mediocre but disguised by the wording, manners and plausible attitudes: the code masters. They are addicted to power, because they like the comfort it offers for the services. Inherently conservative, they make regular signals of being reliable to

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¹⁰⁹ Šola, Tomislav S. Eternity does not live here any more, history of museum sins, Zagreb, 2012. As far as I know, this is the only book dedicated to the critique of museums. It has been translated and published in Spain, Latvia and in Russia.

the system (interest and/or political group, community, team) they adhere to. Their heads are full of defensive ditches, impediments, walls as “required” by their regulated world. They are the fastest to grab the buzzwords to be “in”, to present themselves “tuned”, like by knowing a new *meme* (!) as the recent slang requires. They know how to deal with the challenge of responsible, demanding innovation by turning it into a harmless passing fashion, dismissing it as a hassle in the gracious manner of bored grown-ups dealing with childish fantasies. The majority of the educated class has passed a conventional education, that is the process of knowledge acquisition and minimal training in which all creativity or dissonance is systematically discouraged. Hence the unreleased, underlying concord of mediocrities well organised and controlling most of the society. The establishment knows how to pretend to have scruples and allows for a well-calculated dose of reproach and different thinking. Only a specific critique is supported or encouraged: the one which is out of focus, treating everything but the consequences and not the causes, taking the inducement for the motive, or being directed to unimportant problems from the bottom of the priority list. Most of the criticism is than preferably presented in such a sophisticated way that the intended meaning escapes the reasonable mind. With the monstrous misuse of marketing, we have arrived at obscene public praise of evil and aggressiveness, while plain liars get called “spin doctors”, in a sort of shameless cynicism, tolerated by the intellectual establishment¹¹⁰. In the same way, the so called lobbying turned into highly praised democratic practice while it is just an exercise of invasive, aggressive pressure and subtle bribery. Some renowned philosophers of our reality use a strategy which allows a rather daring dose of criticism, but somewhere in the final part of their books or articles they propose conclusions that relativise and disavow all that was previously said that seemed constructive. There are others, still worse, who propose that we all blame it on us, individually and personally, sometimes offering such impossible explanations as to count with the paradoxical reaction by which absurdity is believed more readily than an unfamiliar truth. The injustices committed against the historical civic effort of advancing human society are hardly ever denounced by heritage institutions although they contain memory

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¹¹⁰ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/spin%20doctor>

and evidence of equal misdeeds and similar protagonists as they change on the world's stage.

People like to have a clear stance, an orientation when confronted with such an unaccountable and dangerous world, but instead of being helped they are subtly persuaded into blaming themselves for the lack of understanding. The sentry intellectuals, curators included, reduce any instigation to change and conscientiousness, at best, to *tracking trends*, a mere ambitious or extravagant design or the use of buzzwords and a complicated intellectual discourse. So this becomes a substitute for the much needed explanation and orientation within the sudden changes. By such comportment the original implicit demand is channelled into all sorts of well designed and ornate impasses. The concept that puzzles them stunningly is freedom, because they are not free. Any war demonstrates that most intellectuals and the institutions they run have no moral attitude and change sides and minds according to the change of power. Such is the strength of threat and such is the lack of their integrity. The subtle mechanisms of disturbance and disruption of career and public repute are in force in most countries. It is a devastating cognition to know that most public institutions and public intellectuals either become part of any conflict by taking the stronger side, or are unable to heal or help when they are most needed.

Belonging to false elites is usually the refuge for the mediocre and opportune, ever ready to keep the public space safe from disturbing factors, say engaged intellectuals or groups. In the former, less sophisticated totalitarianism, at least they were publicly known because of the etiquette "alienated elements"; now they are forcibly submerged into anonymity and/or blackmailed if they want to retain basic social security for their family. In the intellectual sphere of society the mediocre, be they individuals, groups or institutions, behave like commissioners of power, in exchange for their privileges. Some curators, even if intellectually capable, fail to be creative because they do not love what they do: they assumed their positions with no understanding that it is a socially responsible position. In general, the false elites, often led by managers and marketeers spend much of their time on socialising within the power groups where they seek or guard their

positions¹¹¹. Heritage curators should pass appropriate education which would raise their awareness of the actual world around their institutions. Without this critical stance their activity might turn into conventional practice offering popular three-dimensional scientific books and chapters, in little or no relation to the reality of their users.

3.2. Self-evaluation

The critical process provides the material for feedback, and feedback in this way creates an improved, better performance. Only professions are capable of this self-evaluation and know best how important it is for their affirmation, their place in society, - the place of their ideals in a social project. The insight into heritage occupations reveals that there is only a symbolic inner criticism or evaluation. The best we have achieved so far seems to be the positive sanctioning, - implied criticism by awarding the quality and creation. There are about 50 different award schemes in the world, most of them annual, offering about three hundred different awards and prizes. But, to be a real profession, a regular critical analysis should be the practice.

Marketing defines the working process as exchange in which we offer our product getting in return the attention, time and support from our users. A product has its quality and being able to define it in every changing circumstance is what can be the only barrier defending the non-profit, non-commercial quality of the public memory sector. These unquestionable attributes are very much the essence of good theory. It has to be convincingly planted into the very nature of heritage institutions and become an instinctive attitude of professionals. This sort of introspective conviction is purification and strength whenever faced with choices and, indeed, compromises.

The feedback is a method of cybernetics, but it has to be turned into an attitude of wisdom so that it would matter little whether one is able to explain why cybernetics is about the guidance of systems and communication with the environment. It is only by correcting

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¹¹¹ A Swiftian cynic would regard with contempt this suit ever hungry for opportunities to conquer more space and more people, and would likewise find their invention of eating and drinking while wandering from person to person at a reception, - a habit strange, unhealthy and boorish.

what is not good enough that we get better. To be able to perform a simple procedure, one must be familiar with the criteria needed to assess this, and have answers to most of the questions proposed by professional philosophy. To have such criteria available is to have a clear idea of just what quality service really is. In this respect, only theory can sum up the experiences that demonstrate the criteria of culture. Culture makes us what we are, so only to some extent can it be bought and sold, which is what we do in the cultural industries. Culture derives from inner, self-perpetuated motives, as an expression of self; living it should remain the right, undisturbed by motives outside its own logic. The subordination of culture to the laws of profit means its ultimate abolition. It always compromises itself but it's vital practice must remain autonomous and free from the innate creative processes of change and continuity. The very same applies to heritage. Public memory as its "normative", projective form is also too subtle a matter to become a mercantile good. Culture is increasingly being irreversibly compromised so much that the word in certain places of the West holds hardly any practical value. Europe still believes it bears importance, like denoting codes of specificity and standing for what one believes important for the self-consciousness. With advancing mercantilisation convictions are fading into a resigned widening of the notion of what economic assets are. The *Soft power* counted as economic asset, is actually telling us that we are already in statistics and strategic projections of sources of revenue. Some with little insight would probably exclaim: Finally! But, this Leviathan has not the least concern for the subtle existence of culture. Like it has been said: if it dies (culture, heritage, identity...) we shall make something better, more original, more specific, even older and certainly more attractive¹¹². The spread of barbarism is done in many ways, especially by wars but also poverty and despair that go with the abandonment of a welfare society ideal. The middle class, which is the gravity centre of balanced society, is shrinking.

Self evaluation happens best as the transfer of acquired and compressed professional experience on to its new members, and so serves directly to their improvement. The ability to perceive good and bad

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¹¹² It is a paraphrase of an exclamation of a military leader in the war that accompanied the fall of Yugoslavia.

in the profession's practice is the ability of critical insight. Only that enables corrective actions. The lack of thorough (self) criticism of heritage occupations in the field of public memory (apart from occasional polemics which have limited importance) is proof of their pre-professional phase of development. Reviews, deliberations and debates can beneficially influence future projects. Theory advises assessments which are not only summarised in a way that they evaluate efficiency by comparing it to ideal projections or successful practice, but can also have a formative significance, foreseeing the best outcomes.

Criticism will, therefore, contribute to the understanding of the profession and to the acquisition of a sense of measure in situations of opposed possibilities, say, between populism and elitism, entertainment and scientific seriousness, direct and sublime, theatrical and scientific, between new technology and tradition...

Criticism is not only an inevitable part of any science, but also a natural defence of any system, an evaluation aiming at betterment and change, - leading to the survival and sustainability of the system. The masses are incapable of finesse and prone to sensationalism. Mass media misuse can develop further this frailty but public institutions have to encourage the first and denigrate the latter. The casino capitalism does just the contrary, thriving upon ignorance and inducing selfishness and social debility. Are heritage institutions able to support noble memory, enhance our ability to understand our troubles, indicate the sources of the general loss of quality? Institutions should equip us to fight back, to work upon the sustainable present and prevent perilous development. Wisdom is, like healing opportunities, all around us. All solutions have always been within reach but society was manipulated towards particular interests. In brief, Mnemosphy is there to offer a critical view to the accomplishment of the institutions in relation to the character of the society and communities they serve.

3.3. The critique of the occupational practice

This chapter is only a prolonged plea for employing critical view, but if possible, to the widest understanding of the mission. Like memory itself, public memory also can be manipulated and it has been so very often. Yates says that *ars memorativa* was invented by Simonides but perfected by Metrodorus of Scepsis, also master of the art. He also quotes Quintilian¹¹³ who says about the latter that “he was a vain and boastful man”. An extraordinary mind, able to store and reproduce immense quantities of knowledge obviously does not comprise or purport a noble purpose or attitudes. It is hard to resist hubris while possessing extraordinary powers; this arrogance is sometimes perceptible in museums as the most downright institution in the public memory domain. It is like memory can exist serving its own purpose. One can also imagine curators turning their backs on the need to their true bosses, or even avoid the question entirely. Yet the answer is right there in full force: the owners of museums are the taxpayers, the citizens. Consequently, they in fact have the mandate to care for the common memory. Most curators consider themselves scientists working in a public institution so they are apt to avoid being perceived as creative communicators, or having no training for working in a museum let alone education for a public memory profession, - they naturally fail to understand their direct share of responsibility for the world.

Similarly to public education and health care, PMIs are part of the rights of citizens. That right reaches as far as requiring free access quality provisions. Squeezed by the increasing demands upon efficiency, the public sector proves to be weak and corrupted in many countries. The seemingly logical conclusion of inevitable privatisation is much assisted by the relative decrease of quality in the public domain. It happens because of de-stimulating, weakening support, unconcern and mismanagement of the state, - at least in transitional countries. Welfare state structures and even public conscience have been washed away and eroded by the growing manipulation of the corporate world. Curators, librarians, archivists and the like are worriedly waiting what will happen to them, - unable to prove their case

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¹¹³ Yates, Frances A. 132 *The Art of Memory*. The University of Chicago Press, 2001. p. 124

or impose their responsibility. One could tendentiously claim, - because they are not united in their intentions.

In another book entirely dedicated to criticizing I have tried to be explicit about the ways museums (but also other heritage institutions) fail to be professional and deliver a product that is rather questionable¹¹⁴. The public memory sector in the last three decades has passed from a quantity to a quality phase, becoming redefined as prevalently communicational potential. The interpretations of the world relying upon quantity criteria are seemingly recoiling. After the phase of institutional reproduction and growth in size, the traditional institutional sector is constantly shaken by crisis¹¹⁵. However, the quality is pushing its way too as time left (for public institutions in general) to remain eligible for the social project, is scarce. The lack of resources and privatisation will reduce the public sector in size, power and expectations. Will the swiftly rising number of private institutions and actions serve the public interest, to what extent or not at all remains to be seen. The small, civil society and individual initiatives are bound to be socially committed. But even in the digital extensions of our memory that suffers from excessive technologisation we see the arguments of quantity thrive. It seems we still want to remember more and more - everything if possible, - like it were an advantage by itself. Lewis Carroll mocks the paradox:

“That’s another thing we’ve learned from *your* Nation,” said Mein Herr, “map-making. But we’ve carried it much further than you. What do you consider the *largest* map that would be really useful?” “About six inches to the mile.” “Only *six inches!*” exclaimed Mein Herr. “We very soon got to six *yards* to the mile. Then we tried a *hundred* yards to the mile. And then came the grandest idea of all! We actually made a map of the country, on the scale of *a mile to the mile!*” “Have you used it much?” I enquired. “It has never been spread out, yet,” said Mein Herr: “the farmers ob-

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¹¹⁴ Šola, Tomislav S. Eternity does not live here any more – the brief history of museum sins”, Zagreb, 2012. pp. 320. The „sins“ I have listed there are 27 in number.
¹¹⁵ In the museum sector, at least, the crisis often took on the air of unprecedented success, because of favourable statistics. Numbers rose. Nowadays it is still the numbers, but also the marketing-built fame of prestigious projects shaping the public mind.

jected: they said it would cover the whole country, and shut out the sunlight! So we now use the country itself, as its own map, and I assure you it does nearly as well.”¹¹⁶

In the absurdity of a map as big as the territory it represents there is a grain of inspiration for a total museum: a territory “covered” by awareness of its character by a sensitivity and knowledge that, because it is so complete, requires no assistance of institutions. If we would be at one with Divine why would temples be necessary? The greatness of some minds, like that of Lewis Carroll, is not only in the metaphors by which they spot the sources of folly but in questions that imply wisdom that shatter secure assumptions of the ordered “official” thinking. He says: “We confront the problem of representation every minute of every day. What constitutes a useful map? What kind of a map do we have inside our heads to help us navigate the world? Do we navigate with an “objective” birds-eye non-perspective view inside our heads? Or do we navigate by landmarks and signs? To what extent do we use the world itself as a map of itself? To what extent do we construct our own version of the world? Answers to these questions are relevant to the practical and philosophical question of how do we, as humans, represent the world inside our heads? How smart and rational are we really? How much of our lives are controlled by our conscious plans? How much of our lives are controlled by unconscious mechanisms? How much of our insight bubbles up from beneath our intellect or from outside? Does our conscious mind take credit for unconscious processes? Is consciousness an epiphenomenon, something that says, “I knew that” when in fact it didn’t?”¹¹⁷

Whether we talk about unbound human perception or history, we always remain in the insecure ground of human inability to grasp the perfect totality of any phenomenon or idea. It is because of this that science, relying upon art for the capacity of expression and upon ethics for the quality of approach and understanding, - would be the only secure foundation of representations. The entire world, to use the Carol’s wisdom, is the object of museums and other representa-

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¹¹⁶ <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/620/pg620.html>...from Sylvie and Bruno Concluded, by Lewis Carroll, 1893.

¹¹⁷ <https://web.duke.edu/isis/gessler/topics/lewis-carroll.htm>

tional institutions. The past of it is only the most obvious and rather opportunist choice, just a natural urge repeating what our brain does when faced with any new information or stimulus. Public memory is not about the past but about values and their management. The proper insight into the concept of ecomuseums helps to understand the magnificent simplicity of memory institutions as a part of our assisted appreciation of the quality, of rich diversity of the world¹¹⁸. They are a way to retain, care for, study and continue in time and practice what we find precious, what makes the world and us better selves. The implied philosophical questions are inevitable and eternal. We have to admit that hardly anybody passes a single day without trying to answer some of them, - even without knowing it. It is because of the weight and delicacy of the task that we have created our institutions and why we cannot do without professions, - creating new ones when tasks become insurmountable or simply too important.

3.4. Temples of science or communication

Once heritage institutions are prevailing understood as communicational by their nature, as part of the very life of community, they are already re-conceptualized, re-programmed. That, however, is a long process of professionalization in which some have advanced well and others are still far behind. The term “material evidence”, used in explaining what museums contain, is referring to the objects, revealing a sort of aberration. History and culture are treated similarly to an outcome of a scientific experiment that can always be proved. Yet, the choice in collecting or the very interpretation (though entrusted to science) derogates the claim to the extent of denial. Instead of the broad overview of wisdom as derived from the past human experience, be it in culture, civilization or nature, we have a bureaucratic hearing of evidence similar to a judicial procedure. In the absence of the true protagonists, the main witness is the respective scientific discipline and scattered evidence, as was in some instances surprisingly haphazardly accumulated. Our jury is dispersed in the domains of individual/collective memory and that

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¹¹⁸ I had a privilege of being a formal disciple of Georges Henri Rivière at his Course of Contemporary Museology, Sorbonne, 1978/79.

of arts and culture, even when they have to earn their existence and produce profit. I would argue that their profitable status should however never exceed the nature of social entrepreneurship¹¹⁹.

Museums are still perceived as elitist and many, in spite of novelties in practice and changed public perceptions, remain “of interest only to those who are initiated into the mysteries of these silent cathedrals of learning”¹²⁰. In many countries “museum days” and “museum nights” create massive, one-off, annual public visiting, encouraging some to come back, needless to say, but changing little in the everyday practice of museums. Real change would be offering a changed product: a needed and useful one that responds positively to the daily reality of their communities.

A conventional museum will please a scientist and interest a student, but will also tire out and discourage a layperson. An average visitor needs to find out things that are connected with reality so that they can relate these to his or her own experiences, appropriating thus a valuable sense of understanding and of being informed. Knowledge for knowledge’s sake cannot offer this. The safest formula of professional orthodoxy in the issues regarded as the very domain of museums, which, at the same time, represents dignity beyond criticism, is scientific work. Even though their activities should be based on scientific criteria, museums are not, with rare exceptions, quintessentially scientific institutions. Although museums have a scientific base, or even produce knowledge, what we rightfully expect from them is more wisdom, not more knowledge. Even scientific institutes and faculties increasingly survive on the projects of application of their knowledge and research.

Kenneth Hudson categorically criticized museums for becoming temples of science by saying that a scientist reacts with the brain, not with sentiments, but most of the visitors are neither scientists nor intellectuals, a fact, he added, that museums have not grasped for a very long time. Happily enough it is a piece of criticism that is becoming less justified since museums do change for the better.

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¹¹⁹ I have discussed it at length in my latest book on public memory published in 2014 in Zagreb, Croatia.

¹²⁰ McLean, Fiona. *Marketing the museum*. Routledge, 1997. p.110.

However, there are still enough arguments for making objections: once turned into a public institution, the museum is bound to serve democratic rights. Only professionals are masters of balanced offer. This is why on the one hand museums are accused of their elitist approach and orientation to high social classes, and, on the other of populism renouncing social ambitions and becoming entertainment. By using modern technology and a democratic mind for researching, processing, storing and presenting knowledge and human experience all PMIs can simultaneously function at multiple communication levels.

In the age that bore museums there was a new need for retaining a memory of an evasive past reality, for which myths and collective memory no longer presented recourse, everything needed to be proved by material facts. Though science cannot be overestimated, learned societies were protagonists and creators of the myth of science by uncritical affirmation of analysis, - often forgetting the whole while studying the parts. Their approach offered the elegant truth, hiding esoteric knowledge for which a term "occult" (hidden) was simultaneously disqualifying. Observation, experiment and control, as the path towards truth, still dominate as the genuine agents of truth. Their inherent value will remain but needs to be complemented with the broad humanist vision. Putting the needs of the community of users at the centre of some, formerly rather exclusive, scientific institutions will change them beneficially.

In fact, curiously, the ecomuseum movement did take this paradoxical challenge and turned it into the most innovative and worthy strategy so far invented in the domain of heritage. It worked as a common effort of museums and the territory of identity with inhabitants sensitised to the continuation of quality memory. This extraordinary achievement of theory-in-praxis, made quite an impact but it was never fully capitalised on by the occupations caring for the domain of public memory. Until recently, and only occasionally, they formed associations and started to do joint projects, exchange experiences and build the network. But for the most part they still ignore having a common denominator, miss the fact of the same theoretical core and fail to see that they serve the same identity. This has to be repeated because deciding for communication presupposes the changes of

capacity and the ways the potentials are used. Museums are the most backward among PMIs by the prevailing absence of obligatory training for the job. Their divisions prevented creating a strong movement leading to a common profession. The lesson of ecomuseums remained only partly learned by museums and passed unperceived by other heritage occupations. In the meantime, the world was becoming a worse place. The common good and down-to-earth (and yet noble) celebration of one's own identity soon started to fade away in favour of profit and sensationalism or became a source of chaotic action. Museums proved inutile in the wars (serving their causes or staying neutral) and are of limited use in the times of peace as problems incessantly amount. The *integrated museum*, *inclusive museum* and the like are updates of ecomuseums, - advocating a museum that would be able to communicate in a sensible, honest way the holistic knowledge to an entirety of a certain society, not taking notes but taking part. Though we did not yet score a strong profession, numerous awards and surveys of quality demonstrate that many advanced institutions have achieved an impressive level of changes towards professional excellence¹²¹ and a consciousness of a certain *heritage sector* (ICOM).

3.5. The reflective critique of technology

For a hundred years the set of the questions that the theory was supposed to answer was practical, but that was changing as museums and kindred institutions were changing position in society. For a quarter of a century, this reflective critique of practice is producing a gradual change in museums¹²² affecting the whole configuration of heritage-concerned occupations. This reflection appropriates structure, standards, criteria and vocabulary which signal the coherence needed for any distinctive discipline. Academics may be concerned whether that theory would reach the status of science. To the practitioners, the status bears no great significance. What we live through is the biggest re-conceptualisation of our ways of dealing with the

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¹²¹ www.TheBestinHeritage.com; the site contains among other things the only exhaustive information base of award schemes and awards globally.

¹²² What Mathilde Bellaigue calls "les grand etapes successives": Santiago de Chile, Lourmarin, Le Creusot, Quebec.

past that ever happened. This matter is too important to be left solely to practice. The theory of heritage is born any time there happens to be a critique of current practices, any time the transfer of professional experience is effectuated and any time the concerned occupation is trying to project usable guidelines for its own future, be it through self reflection or user research. In that, compared with professions, we are well behind our proper time. Technology is proposing capabilities that we are not able to take the advantage of, that require ways of conceptual thinking we are not prepared for. Intranet, to use one example, has been installed in all academic institutions and most memory institutions at great expense in times of growing scarcity but only to reveal that there is no culture of sharing and team-work that Intranet comprises. Again, it is the education that builds wide insight and a rich humanist mindset that everything should start with. Computers will soon be able to evolve their own versions of programmes we have installed, because they will be able to analyse the results of their actions themselves and correct the programme and perfect it against the general, ideal agenda of their purpose. But, which direction will they take and based upon what value judgement? Being thus the means and the reminder, technology, suggests that we should be ready to manage its potentials and also those of society itself. Using technology in both ways, as reminder and means, will again mean the art of cybernetic effort to reach balances we judged as desirable and advantageous for the group, community or society, - wherever we realize the capacities of our memory institutions' potential.

As long as artificially intelligent machines are not themselves inventing their own world, or re-inventing ours, the challenges and potentials will remain the same: we will interpret only what we can find in our (ever extending) memory and think what our mind can reach, whether we do it with a goose feather or dictating it to a computer. However, more and more people will write books in all their forms, and the amount will likely decrease both the quality of supply and of reception. The global ICT cyborg, the most powerful extended collective self has outgrown the vision of M. McLuhan. If by medium we also comprise the underlying, embedded ambition of its owners/creators, we move even deeper into the abyss that McLuhan opened by claiming that "medium is the message": the world

has never known more and was never less wise, it was never more unified and more divided, it was never better equipped and, indeed, never so helpless. The most wonderful technologies, despite their extraordinary potential, became part of the problem rather than part of the solution. The invention of television remains the best example! The world got a chance to fight for new value orientations and viable social agreements on a planetary scale, let alone of extraordinary self consciousness in particular cultures. Those who remember the time of the ascent of television will know that most people expected it will lead to a better world. In a few decades we have become daily victims of corporations which transformed television into a hideous way to sneak into our homes and heads.

Technology is always only a means. Our museums will not start speaking the wisdom of our worthiest ancestors because we have ICT, VR, Augmented reality, 3D mapping and similar technologies at our disposal. That inheritance of the brightest and the best of their achievements can be transferred only by our own effort, through our own understanding and vision of the human condition. That cannot be done without science, but science alone is not enough. All constructive human history consists of our endless tries to resemble our ideals or our good gods and establishing deserving earthly circumstances. We have a right to idealism that can promise us rewards here and now and public memory institutions should reflect that claim. The technological euphoria, that took over in the early 80s suggested that all of our catalogues, all our documents, in short everything will be computerised and accessible by pressing a button. Unimaginable resources (which we never had enough of), was spent on an ever newer generation of computers; millions of hours (which many in museums still seem to have in abundance¹²³), are spent on barren arrangements and temporary knowledge. The curious occurrence is that in many countries the collections have remained not only informatically untreated, but in fact neglected as traditional methods were withheld. No computer will bypass the basic, conventional procedures of curators and registrars. The investment into technologies pays off only to those who want to improve what they already do

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¹²³ I should hasten to say, not so much really in the developed Western countries and not at all, say, in museums like „independent“ ones in UK, those dependent heavily on volunteers and numerous others.

well enough. The proposed example of the Intranet, or any analysis of digitization demonstrate well that bad practice and false expectations can compromise technology and invalidate the investment.

Only professional, obligatory education can make quality answers to the multiplying challenges and dilemmas. It is not flattery to professionalism and can resemble boring and redundant parental admonition before a journey. One of the professional caveats is: the fascination with technology can make us victims of retailers (programmes, unnecessary equipment) and helpless customers for regular, expensive, mass migrations of memory. Unfortunately, which is but a sober reminder, only our catalogue cards are stable. We all know of disastrous losses with simple software or hardware failures; How many people using e-mails daily can reconstruct decades of their correspondence? And, yet we do know that correspondence was one of the most reliable sources of heritage. Institutions can take little risk. The professional art is to choose always what one really needs as there are small museums where tasks require the minimum of technology. The same goes for architecture as technology of accommodation of institutions.

Only a strong profession is able to create its own right solutions in the negotiation with providers of services and equipment or, if that would be possible, condition the choices. There are all the reasons for praising new technologies, but they are best when they dutifully serve the creative, diligent personnel and good willed users. The professional excellence must not depend on the technology, nor should it be compromised by yielding to the pressures of suppliers, multi-media studios, software producers and dealers alike. But even architecture and design are part of the technology which heritage needs for its transfer. So architects and designers also require demanding, knowledgeable and self assured heritage sector as a customer. If that is not the case the results are new old institutions, burdened with unnecessary technology, exaggerated architecture and superfluous design. When best, they appreciate having reliable and convincing partners.

4. Transfer of professional experience

4.1. Introduction

In the world where heritage becomes a real problem and a familiar issue, there is a need for a deeper insight into professional assignments and opportunities. In its most advanced role eloquent practice always theorises, at least through generalisations, recommendations and reasoning without which it could not advance.

Like any science mnemosophy, once formulated, will have a level of applicability which can be of practical use to anyone, a claim many affirmed sciences also have to cope with. Once the curators and other heritage professionals grasp the grand scheme of their task they will change their attitude and see that (own) science is part of the way to professionalism. Whether the theorists of it be called heritologists, mnemosophers or differently matters little. Their task is to provide motivation and assure a transfer of experience, to produce different experts, not least the ones that would appropriate some qualities of votaries and tribunes of their respective community.

Any great museum's glory lies partly in continuity provided by passing curatorial traditions to the new generation of curators, - a process too expensive and slow to fit the dynamic present. Starting a career in the vicinity of an experienced curator is a rare chance. When one curator reads dozens of books and hundreds of articles about occupational performance, goes through decades of swapping experience, visits hundreds of museums and, whenever in position, shouldn't the occupational community get inspired to create regular opportunities for this transfer? It is exactly what is increasingly happening, but what does a profession do? There are quite a few passionate members of the occupation who possess enormous accumulated experience. It can remain personal and unknown; it can be retold as a series of casual, unrelated anecdotes or accounts, or used at occasional conferences and seminars, but it can also be conveyed systematically and intentionally to those whom it can be of valuable use. However, one-to-one experience is hardly ready for such a process: it needs to pass filters of generalisation, abstraction, sublimation and compression

which would enable the transfer. Improving performance or designing a strategy for the profession is dependent upon the regular and obligatory transfer of professional experience, happening for majority of world curators only as spontaneous process or one that occurs at conferences, seminars and workshops. But, even if they receive the occupational training, it will hardly suffice to see over the limits of their institutional sector. This is why we simply cannot afford our heritage occupations continuing to exist without this natural mechanism of experience transfer, - the only thing that really makes steps forward possible. The rationality of business, and even more the ever-rising speed of change, is still prevailingly against teaching the occupation (though the word *profession* is used) through practice. It cannot be afforded, but rather curiously, not many still believe that it is indispensable. Some curators will pass a formal exam after a year of practice requiring from them to peek into the vast museological literature and related sources about legal matters and, in rare cases, after several lectures. It reduces the initiation into the occupation to a symbolic process. Most curators enter their practice without the specific knowledge of heritage and its institutions and hardly with a notion of the concept of collective, social memory and public memory as their overall operational version. So, hundreds of places scattered around the world where museum theory is taught is excellent news but not the objective of this discourse.

Not being a profession but an occupation may sound disparaging to any hard-working curator. Yet, the difference between profession and occupation is enormous in functioning of any society. The opinions of the members of a profession are taken into account and they are considered partners in the overall enterprise – while those considered a mere occupation are ignored or marginalised. Members of a profession take on a significant responsibility in society (health, justice, architecture...), their decision-making is considered socially important and they are relatively well paid. Occupations have theories of their practice while professions are supported by “their” proper science. Science has its objective, its coherence, its own criteria of content and of applicability. It claims right to its own approach in understanding the world and ways of conceiving its service to society. It should ensure ways of developing professional intelligence as ability to react creatively in new circumstances. Professionalism means lit-

erally the understanding of the profession and mastery of sense of measure when arguments are weighted. It comprises acquisition of the sense of measure, openness to creative alliances and challenges, development of professional language, style and taste. Any profession bears and perfects its specific responsibility for the human condition.

At many universities the study of museology takes four or five years after which one becomes a graduate student in museology. The same happened earlier with studies of Journalism. It is hard to imagine that a graduate in museology is ready to assume curatorial job¹²⁴, or that a graduate of Journalism can really become a journalist without the graduate study of, at least, one basic academic discipline. Some try to overcome it by offering a combination of courses that give a wide education but fail to address specific academic discipline as the central interest. Such graduates may fit the requirements of very small museums where they might be the only professionals employed. The appropriate education should be at least a complementary study, the one that, with the aim of practicing a public memory profession, can be added to the finished study of the academic discipline(s) of choice. Depending upon the quality of the curriculum and the rhythm, the complementary study should take a year or two. It can be an option offered to many as a parallel study during the two last years of the graduate study of the basic academic discipline. That was practice at the University of Zagreb from 1987 until 2005 when the Bologna process blurred it into a process of five years with a theoretical opportunity that one succeeds combining a basic academic discipline and museological education. Prior to this, it was a complementary study and took four semesters to accomplish. Admission was allowed to students of any faculty or study who have regularly attended the fifth semester there. Students were accepted after a written exam that would test their general knowledge upon science, culture and the history of museums to which was also added an interview that would test motivation¹²⁵. Needless to say, this scheme was relatively success-

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¹²⁴ The long tradition and excellence of relevant studies in Leicester and Amsterdam are two among a few exceptions.

¹²⁵ Markedly, many candidates would express their conviction that the study of museology (at the time), would be about museums certainly, but necessarily about art history, styles in art and applied arts, collecting etc. Other common fallacies reflecting the rising fame of (mainly art) exhibitions was that the complementary study would provide a diploma enabling them to curate exhibitions.

ful as it was able to attract students from very diverse backgrounds and therefore had a potential to produce curators for all the types of museums. Enlarged in scope, such theory should service the entire sector of public memory. This scheme was happening at the Information science department containing archivistics and librarianship so it was only natural to introduce heritology, heritage institutions, marketing of Heritage and Heritage management as subjects. That was a rare and already belated try to initiate disciplines that would form a specialist study of public memory science.

4.2. Consensus of the scientific community

The scientific community exists as a reputed society scattered through all the scientific institutions, institutes, research centres and universities. Their consensus in introducing new disciplines and sciences is formal but preceded by the evidence of coherence of a certain distinctive body of knowledge, critical mass and quality of arguments for its inclusion and later usability. A formal admittance to the circle of recognised sciences is a basis for scientific careers, mechanisms of evaluation, funding etc. To all who crave founding their own science, as it gives them certain legitimacy, this consent is the inevitable formal condition, on their way to a profession.

Scientists should be differentiated from researchers in some way, because any research can be done by many eligible, methodical academics but science can be practiced only by those with the vision. Some are investigators, researchers and gatherers of facts, “documentalists¹²⁶”, while others are thinkers and visionaries. Scientists and such researchers are different from each other like statesmen differ from politicians, or climatologists from weathermen. Researchers often undertake the job of scientists and their effects lack significance, noble vision and substantial meaning. The hyper-production of scientists has lowered the level of expertise; by definition they are few. The inflation of doctorate degrees is more a witness of a blooming educational industry than of the need for theses that are not proposing any novelty. In some countries, one of the firmest expectations for curatorial careers is to publish scientific texts. So, many suffer this im-

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¹²⁶ The term is used in its generic value.

posed obligation, demonstrating their scientific capacity mainly in exhibition catalogues which are meant for public purpose, depriving thus their public of the legible interpretations they owe them. They frustrate real scientists and blur their role and excellence while forgetting that museums are meant for public communication. Except in huge museums (with a few hundred employees) where specialisations make possible posts of full time researchers and scientists, - research remains an obligation but not necessarily a responsibility of all and every curator. In many an institution, research should be outsourced, as an outright logical consequence of a serious organisation.

The general theory of heritage or even an outline of the science of public memory seems almost at hand. That, however, will not be an obvious fact to a scientific community. It has to be offered arguments, both in number and quality, to open up that formal door. The new taste for novelty might serve us well, as more and more of the scientific community sees that multi-disciplinarity is a way to fight the new challenges.

4.3. Education is more than acquisition of knowledge

Most educated people passed their time in schools which were a subtle torture of force-feeding with vast amounts of factual knowledge. Their view upon the world is social, cultural and a political construct. Those who understand art will notice that the same injustice to wisdom was done when art has withdrawn from life into picture frames and onto pedestals. So did the past, splitting into an arbitrary collective memory and the formal structures of social or public memory institutions. Little is said about the traumatic side of schooling contained in fear, discipline, and imposed regularity, - a seemingly inevitable experience in social conditioning¹²⁷. Most teachers seem to have been trained to chase life from their institutions. As most curators were not trained for the job they do, so, in a sense, there is some additional hope: their basic academic training made the problem already but if they were offered a complementary

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¹²⁷ http://ournature.org/~novembre/illich/1970_deschooling.html (the e-version of the famous book of Ivan Illich, Deschooling Society).

academic training for the job, - that would be a good chance for the practice. They have to learn how their institutions should stem from life, serve life and speak its language.

The transfer of factual knowledge continues to be dominant in traditional education. Some innovations, especially in the private educational system are mere pretensions as the rut is still stubbornly supported. Even occupational education requires an understanding of the basic phenomena, whereas the professional one requires a philosophical, humanist and symbolical dimension. Only a high level of abstraction and a refined study of ideas and concepts can bring long-term usefulness. Besides speculative quality, this means the art of common sense and learning from the most instructive examples, i.e. mostly from the best but also from the failed ones, as the existence of critique is essential to any profession. The intention of a case study approach, like any other, is the creation of paradigms, as the way to increase quality, - such knowledge can be temporary and dependent upon specific circumstances. So, examples are reminders and illustrations for a more useful level. The transfer of experience happens out of a full insight into the nature of the concept of heritage and the phenomena that mark it.

It is easy to learn the history of ecomuseums and technicalities of their existence, but understanding their way of thinking is far more subtle in its simplicity. Many, who only browsed some facts still connect ecomuseums with ecology and rural areas. Those who are not puzzled by linguistic implications may understand more but only a few are able to apply the true understanding of ecomuseums to just any museum¹²⁸. Their message is that a museum is better the nearer it is to the needs and the language of the users that live and use the identity the museum protects and continues. Therefore, not many professionals are aware that the ecomuseum paradigm is still able to change the practice of most museums, making them useful and beneficial, - even those so distant in concept, such as museums of contemporary art or science centres. There is a fine logic in their merits which can be applied everywhere. Among the idealistic professional

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¹²⁸ *Oikos* is a Greek word meaning house or habitat, or in case of ecomuseums the territory of an identity. The word serves as the root of two English words: ecology and economy.

goals one objective is the creation of professional intelligence. Therefore, the goal of professional education is, besides factual knowledge and skills, the acquisition of qualities which are super-ordinate: the ability to understand basic concepts and acquire deep insight into the essence of the profession that enhances the capacity of trainees to manage well, once they find themselves confronted with new challenges that no manual could describe. Manuals are good enough for business but only the material sub-structure to professions: like with artists, the so called *metier* (skills and technology) is only the basis, though an inevitable one, for what latterly *may* be achieved as original creativity.¹²⁹

4.4. Professional training for the public memory sector

In the last decades there has been a fast growing number of places where professional education (usually at post-graduate level) is offered cumulatively to a variety of future professionals, from museums, art galleries, archives, historic sites, libraries, interpretation centres, heritage planning groups and to those from similar institutions¹³⁰. Those offering courses only for museum occupation must be now more than a thousand¹³¹. A true heritage professional will not be submerged in scientific discipline or specialist institution but would acquire an awareness of the broader scene and see his/hers speciality as part of bigger whole. A public heritage curator is trained for the specific job and educated for the professional domain. A medical doctor whose frame of reference is not based on common good is just another lost member of a noble profession. Ways of corruption of ideals are various and numerous. Finding a comfortable margin for one's expertise is also part of the responsible attitude in societal commitment of any profession.

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¹²⁹ The plastic arts, for instance, have been inundated by ignorance and pretence, a trend of devaluation and a lowering of quality that is rather universal but quite dismal because the inherent character of art is just the opposite. But crisis is immanent to any profession. The ability of self-evaluation and upkeep of high standards of performance and conceptual stance is what professionalism is about.

¹³⁰ Advance Studies in Cultural Resource Management (University of Victoria, Canada); Ecole du Patrimoine (France); Reinwardt Academy (Netherlands); University of Zagreb (Croatia), to name just a few.

¹³¹ Edson, Gary. International Directory of Museum Training. London, New York: Routledge, 1995

Curators pass the obligatory training for the working process only in a few countries, but the situation is far better with librarians and archivists. However, only a new science can provide curators of heritage in all their diversity with the necessary integrity with which to build a large, successful, real profession capable of significantly affecting development strategies. That is a huge task to face as out of few millions of PMIs' qualified personnel only a small number has been trained for the job and only a few educated to face the challenges of their emerging profession. Devotion and talent that many possess and turn into innovative, influential projects give false picture. Profession cannot depend upon gifts and sacrifice and, it has to be repeated, even a good education solely in a basic academic discipline would not suffice. A congenial archeologist or art historian can make a poor museum curator.

Still, most of the curators readily claim that their interest and devotion qualify them for the museum work, but in most countries, job is gained by the criteria that do not evaluate these arguments. Without the upper motives of the heritage profession even the university education as offered, in many cases fails to be diversified by credits from other scientific domains. The usual solutions to training needs remain frustrated between the pragmatic needs of the occupations and the higher aspirations for the profession not yet formed. In fact, they fall short of both expectations, the pragmatic one of the occupation as well as the one that would draw the institutional practices into the motivated alliance leading to a profession. For that, we need a short but intensive education in public memory matters.

Heritology was an inspirational approach¹³². Though mentioned often, it is taught under its name only in Zagreb¹³³, Ljubljana, Bel-

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¹³² With heritology being taught as a subject at the Faculty of Humanities and social Sciences since the beginning of the 90s, the University of Zagreb might have had a greater share in the professional education had it not been for the context, war circumstances etc.

¹³³ My proposal of heritology in 1982. was a consequence of my studies at Post graduate study of Museology and the wide concept of information science by Professor Božo Težak, University of Zagreb, and the continuation of it at the Sorbonne, under the guidance of Georges Henri Riviere in the same decade when he, together with two other experts, conceived what will later become ecomuseums as the most innovative paradigm of the 20th century in the West, concerning the theory and the practice of heritage protection.

grade and in Jyvaskyla. In Belgrade an institute is called by that name whereas their book series is named after mnemosophy¹³⁴. There are other places and circumstances all over the world where the institutions of public memory in various ways search for their common denominator, a sort of higher ground of aspirations of the individual theories of the diverse occupational practices from the field we usually recognize as heritage¹³⁵. Some of these occupational theories have acquired the recognition and consent from the scientific community and exist in the nomenclature of sciences. To reiterate upon it would be a delicate problem so academic practice will decide as it already has in many cases. Instead of museology many have opted for Museum studies and, under the same logic that appeared to be inevitable, Heritage Studies, or, though for only similar reasons, -recently, Heritage Science. The latter has been bravely named “science” because it is proposed by experts in several scientific disciplines that form the operational core of conservation. The term “theory” or “studies” are in fact bridging the gap while we still hope that museology or other theories in some form can deal with frustrations. In the Anglo-Saxon world, more than elsewhere, the difference between the strongly defined term science denoting the “exact” ones as against those in humanities and social “sciences” is still stressed. But since many exact and “hard” sciences proved to be quite unable to offer solutions but rather unhappily bent to the will of adverse corporations and politicians, - the arguments for this difference tend to invert.

The theories of the particular practices in heritage occupations are just a natural consequence of ambition in raising their specialist efficiency. Knowing more and more about less and less they lose the capacity to pursue goals of wider concern. Mnemosophy, as some trans-disciplinary science of heritage offers this capacity as it is dealing with the cumulative power of collective memory, as it is select-

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¹³⁴ <https://sites.google.com/site/heritagefbg/index/centar-za-muzeologiju-i-heritologiju>; 2013 Centar za muzeologiju i heritologiju, led by Dr. Dragan Bulatović, Faculty of Philosophy, Belgrade, Serbia. In this book series, created by Dr. Bulatovic, the my PhD theses “Towards the Total Museum” has been translated into Serbian and published, 27 years after a doctoral defence at the University of Ljubljana.

¹³⁵ The Department for information and communication sciences in Zagreb is based upon the concept suggested in its basic wisdom by Dr. Božo Težak, back in the 80s. The Department contains chairs of Archivistics, Museology, Librarianship, Communicationology, Informatics, Encyclopaedistics etc.

ed, accumulated, documented, researched and, again, publicly expressed. It will take some time before it gets the recognition of the academic community but the value of trans-disciplinary insight is steadily rising. The occupations will surely continue their training for their specific heritage practices but will be constantly upgrading their social service upon common denominators.

“Public memory” has become, in the last decade, a relatively well known term used in the humanist and social sciences. Though it is evident that sciences in general lose what little was still there of independence, we may hope that the new sciences will be a cybernetic motivation of managing the values they refer to. To gain autonomy it has to take an active attitude, shaping its messages according to its proper ethics and issuing forth a public mission. Forming the potent, efficient and healing narratives is the function of public memory institutions. But, there is a fatal disproportion and often a growing gap between the objectives of the governing elites and those of the citizens. Nowadays, without grand ideological schemes out of which the welfare society is the most pragmatic one, the manipulation of the public sector was never so drastic. The public memory sector has a huge but inefficient potential as long as it stays fragmented and does not engage for the direct benefit of society. Only the realisation of the common professional conscience changes the benign giant (somnolent by its scientific perfectionism and idolatry of knowledge, *objective* and aloof) into a persuasive machine, able to stir the mind, to incite ideas, offer multiple solutions and above all, - inspire. The past cannot have better use. Only a responsible profession can safely manage such force. Fascism recognized that power, used it and planned great institutions to make them part of their totalitarian plan. Today public memory institutions must become the counter-part and corrective to the public scene masterly turned into a mega-media performance of illusions and controlled chaos of staged democracy.

The battle for dominance in the society of today and tomorrow will be fought about the credibility and legitimacy to formulate the dominant narrative, the common truth, - to propose the values to live by, or according to which it society will realise its sustainable goals. Whether those be cherished and supported by society may largely depend upon how successful are those who manufacture public con-

sent for their own purposes or those others that would guarantee quality survival here and now with wise offer of collective experience. The public has hardly perceived that the global debate on the meaning of public good has been repressed, almost suspended. Yet, its definition describes the essence of societal contract. To take part in this grand happening so decisively important for the future of mankind, we must employ and unite occupations that care for the social and, especially, for the public memory. Ideally, the essence of democracy should be care for the common good. We should be able to moderate and manage the constant flow of collective memory to the social and cultural domain where, through social dialogue and artistic creation, it is filtered to reach the social usability. There, in the public memory domain, it gets its active forms and contents for quality management of values, helping to oppose, adopt or moderate change which would otherwise serve only particular interest. We live on a managed planet where nothing in the public sector happens spontaneously nor we can afford it anymore. Politicians, corporations and the financial sector service their interests and do their part of management forming patterns of thinking, model mindsets and suitable mass consciousness serving their agenda. Occupations do not take any role of significance in this. Professions, as a rule, do, - trying to follow their mission. Most are derogated or threatened in their supposed autonomy, so it is utopian to propose still another one to stand in the way of negative developments. But professions will fight by the nature of their emergence. All of them interpret their aspect of inherited human experience so there must be one which studies the phenomenon of patrimony as a whole and projects its use in society. For it we need educated professionals.

“In the last twenty years the term of public memory has lived through different uses in such disciplines as architecture, communication studies, English language, history, philosophy, political science, religion, rhetoric and sociology. This gave rise to arguments on the brisk ascent of the trans-disciplinary study of public memory”¹³⁶. Today there are magazines, conferences, still rather rare, that take this multidisciplinary domain as their predominant interest. The construc-

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¹³⁶ Framing Public Memory. Edited by Kendall R. Phillips, with contributions from Stephen Howard Browne, Ba, The University of Alabama Press: 2004;

tion and the communication of the narratives that form contemporary society have become issues of importance in strategies, be it general societal interest or some specific sectors. Before the probable foundation of the studies of public memory, - a development rightfully logical and expected, - some universities have chosen to realise different projects as, for instance, The Public Memory Research Cluster (University of Southern Queensland) which researches ways in which contemporary societies archive, understand and use the past¹³⁷. The valid strategy has to stem from the clear vision of the “3-C” institutions and be coloured by the unique communicational experience of museums.

The courses on Public memory should become a final, maybe also an initial, part of any professional training now undertaken at the specialist level of heritage occupations. Adding to them subjects that elaborate the common concept of total heritage, of the collective memory as it is filtered into the public one, should prove the inevitable part of the convergence processes and concerted action. Again, the common denominator would not serve to subdue the particular practice into a whole where they would lose their autonomy but rather provide them with the sense of self-respect and feeling of power. The members of heritage occupations will realise that they can form a profession the same way the different specialities of medicine do, remaining different and powerful, while at the same time belonging to the proud, self-confident profession. They too, the entire configuration of the public memory institutions and their occupations, can form a mighty societal service dependent upon professional consciousness, defined by the mission in a society.

In view of the fact that the employees of the cultural heritage/memory institutions have not reached the full status of a distinctive profession, - those and educational institutions usually in charge of professional training, should undertake measures to enable the transfer of professional experience in a joint effort. The heritage institutions are dissociated from universities which follow their own logic and do not dispose with good insight into their potentials, needs and societal position. This general remark concerns the majority of them.

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¹³⁷ <http://www.usq.edu.au/pmrc>

The lack of a uniting vision turned often into antagonism, as museums often claim that Universities provide inadequate education of the work in institutions, is the reason for a missed opportunity. The prevailing occupational environment of conservative curators sees in the young educated potential cadre disavowing their own, in practice and hard-earned, expertise. Being better structured and more uniform a system, archives and libraries have managed in most cases to arrange the common interest when concerned with professional education. This training stays at the level of theory of their particular practices (history, methodology and technology), without offering much on public memory service as a whole. This training matter is certainly about increasing expertise and applying it to the working process, - concerning traditional skills as well as digital management and preservation. But, it should also be about the level where principles and missions unite to form a grand structure of contemporary society that has to assume responsibility and build its own arguments and persuasive capacities for counter-active action. Memory institutions have to fight oblivion badly chosen or remembrance ill conceived.

We might soon witness the creation of chairs if not departments of Public memory at Universities that grasped the spirit of contemporaneity and its needs for trans-disciplinary command of processes of memorizing and communication. Once profession gets its contours other actions and institutions may follow as in any profession: institutes, associations, regular conferences, websites, seminars, - all on the subject of public memory. Universities that would establish the study of public memory, perhaps first as a chair, would be participating in the formation of a decisive segment sector of active culture. Many will, out of precaution, create just a prestigious multidisciplinary project on the topic of public memory. Diverse tendencies may puzzle as they may inspire: in an age equipped with a gigantic digital memory there are returns in an unprecedented way to oral and pictorial communication. This is an ongoing process in which heritage occupations will gradually create a multitude of ways of quasi-simultaneous transfers of the best experiences as a way to a true conceptual leap. Numerous award schemes and prizes, suspiciously interpreted three or even two decades ago, now (for the most) present serious efforts in building professional excellence and

making it widely accessible¹³⁸.

The circumstances of former times, generous in their sluggishness, have expired and, without knowing it, we are racing against time. Any societal need will find its performers and contractors. An obvious job will always be done if not by the obvious party then by someone else who jumps in¹³⁹. We witness already the private and civil sector reacting severely to the challenges traditionally reserved for the public institutions. Again, like at the beginning of museum tradition, private individuals are founding their collections and museums at an unprecedented rate. The corporations, seeing the multiple uses in affirming identity or ameliorating image also create museums to serve their interests. The tourism industry is trying to serve its cultural appetites the way it finds suitable, - not the one any cultural expert would find best. They create interpretive instances based upon museum tradition and using the same expertise but for their lucrative goals. Theme parks, heritage attractions, visitor attractions, visitor centres, theme parks, heritage trails, cultural routes.... all that already functions in a great deal besides and without professional influence or quality control of museums and other traditional heritage institutions. We are entering an era of unprecedented challenges that will shatter the very foundations of the European tradition of social projects for the common good. The world will suffer after the liberal shock that by slander, privatisation and corruption devalued the state as, irrevocably, a poor master. However, as a way of organizing society, state deserves any chance in perfecting public services. A good administration is a blessing without which any project, let alone the societal one, is doomed to failure. The money making corporations (which are not the same as traditional private capital funded in expertise and entrepreneurial ethics) have moved into the traditionally communal services and will most probably compromise some of the most cherished ideals of human kind. In some cases it can be a public right to property of basic natural resources like water or air or even plants; in others, their interest may mingle into diverse humanist

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¹³⁸ The best in heritage web-site contains 14 years of a survey of the awarded practices globally, but it is just a reflection of hundreds of awards for professional advance.

¹³⁹ Šola, Tomislav. *The future of Museums and the Role of Museology // Museum management and Curatorship*. Oxford: Butterworth and Heinemann, 1992, 11, P.p.393

practices, some basic ideals of progress or universal rights. The rising hypocritical rhetoric of freedom and rights has to be renounced, the right of guidance of the processes reclaimed from the masters of chaos, and meanings re-translated into a living value system, - real and effective. That wide transformation includes the creation of reliable public memory sector and its conscience. There is a decade or so in front of us, in which professions will either prove their strength to guide their sectors for the public good or will dissolve into commercialised training and succumb to further mercantilisation. The transformation will be happening in the atmosphere of “crisis” when austerity and restrictiveness easily become a ready excuse to create a reductive mindset. The change being gradual might accelerate and radicalise the process ending in “Disneyfication” of heritage institutions. Adopting of the American model of private financing (while missing the original context and original prosperity that created them), may produce confusion and costly mistakes if implanted into cultures and economic systems that have no experience of the sort. Besides that any imitation leads to social and cultural kitsch, science of heritage (there to found and support creativity) will surely deny possibility of any ready models.

The failure of museology to live up to its gained status of science resulted in an excess of theorizing. However, some educational institutions in continental Europe restricted museology to undergraduate level, be it three or four years of study, while many supposed that such an important job might as well be supported by equally important science, allowing for it mistakenly five years of study¹⁴⁰. Some departments of Museum Studies and later on of Heritage studies came much closer to the possible conceptual opening and justification of appearing science. Any so expanded teaching should fulfil the basic offer:

- Build the basic vocabulary, facts and figures
- Orientate in the main features of the profession and its theory
- Give an overview of the profession

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¹⁴⁰ No occupational theory would deserve five years of study, as the badly implemented Bologna process implied. To help to overcome it, I have introduced to our Chair of Museology at the Department of Information studies semester-based courses: heritage institutions, heritology, general theory of heritage, among other collegia.

- Build respect for the profession, its mission and future
- Boost or install motivation for success
- Orientate in resources available
- Inspire
- Offer a basic philosophy, ways of thinking and *weltanschauung*
- Elucidate forms and contents of quality
- Present the contemporary world and the possible tasks in making it better through the skill and the theory studied
- Promote a usable, practical theoretical body
- Offer case studies and advice
- Assert simple DOs and DON'Ts

Modern society increasingly craves for the grand role of humanities and social sciences though is in fact turning away from them. The latter should be acting as the conscience of sciences, especially those that supply the forces of change. They should be part of a guiding system of society, and that includes, hopefully, creating new professions when the need commands. We must appropriate our past without having to live through it again. Mnemosophy responds well to the most reflective part of the theory of public memory, and explains well its essence as well as the purpose of its diverse practices in contemporary society. Its teachings concern all the heritage occupations and represent the common denominator to be taught after training in the specific performances of any institutional art in the domain. Whoever would aspire to leading positions or, especially to decision making ones where strategies and organisation of the network are in question, would need to acquire such a multidisciplinary knowledge. Two semesters of specialist study, covering all the views of the disciplines significantly concerned with public memory, would suffice. Such personnel would be qualified to organise the sector, to create networks, decide upon criteria, oversee digitalisation or the dynamic character of hybrid institutions, judge fusion with digitally-born creations, be involved in audience development, work in bodies deciding upon the organisation of collecting or help private or civil society organisations towards the ways of their functioning in the network. It would provide interested individuals with the basic knowledge needed for scientific research within the domain of public memory and the sector of its practices. This sort of supra-education, should remain optional, reserved for professional managerial positions and

researchers.

To make sure, what may still be called museology, in case of museums, still needs to be taught. There are good reasons to prefer the term of Museography, admitting its ambitions on the level of practice, - indispensable, unavoidable and important. All curators, librarians, archivists and others possess their basic academic training so learning the skills of practice for two semesters, preferably while working, or after being exposed to the frustrations of practical work, again, seems a fair, realistic hence minimal obligation towards becoming a professional. An exam arranged by a professional body would not be so much a verification of acquired knowledge as a psychological act of full accreditation. At last a semester of heritology/mnemosophy (for practitioners) of subjects related to common roots, common philosophy and common ambitions, would represent the higher level of theoretical insight. This would be another minimal requirement on the way to a real professional status. An additional semester of it should be provided for those aspiring to managerial positions, - maybe in a form of specialist study. These three/four semesters should be complemented by a semester of practice in the main institutions of the sector so that the candidate for the profession gains an insight into its main practices. Only with this kind of training a curator, archivist, librarian and the like should be allowed to practice their art. A professional code should also prescribe stages of professional proficiency, as knowledge is upgraded, updated and specialised by adequate additional or midcareer training.

4.5. Transitory conclusion on public memory studies

For some time already, as the inspiring general theory is finally emerging, heritology is taught at several other places. In Belgrade, at the Faculty of Philosophy, the Centre for Museology and Heritology¹⁴¹ was founded a decade ago and the recent book series is named "Mnemosophia"¹⁴². At the University of Zagreb, Information sciences seek to overcome the former static nature arising from a conservative interpretation of the processes they address (collecting,

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¹⁴¹ <http://www.f.bg.ac.rs/sr-lat/instituti/CMiH>

¹⁴² "Prema totalnom muzeju" (Towards the total museum), T. Šola, 2012

classification, care, research and distribution) as they acquire a new meaning. It might eventually be combined with communication sciences whose interests cover journalism, human resources management and the media, so that the focus is shifting towards the creation and use of symbols and meanings in cultural, economic, social and political spheres. That makes a fertile ground for some body of public memory studies. If heritology as a term fitted better the configuration of information sciences, mnemosophy is meant to reach further towards the communication sciences. Whatever the term (as any is just a convention) at some stage in the future it needs to build coherence and gain recognition from the academic community. It should affect the essence of all specialist activities dealing with collecting, organisation, storage, retrieval, interpretation and communication of information in the various institutions of memory. It will define the contents of the mission and the ways to accomplishing it by common strategy. The new science will repose on the top of the pyramid consisting of the basis of information theory topped by individual descriptive disciplines (archivistics, museography, librarianship, linguistics, communication, cultural semiotics), and apparently by other sciences or disciplines (encyclopedistics, lexicography, records management, information (knowledge, document, management)...) that have memory as the core or at least a strong aspect in their structure. *Public memory* has become a known key term in the humanities and social sciences. “In the last twenty years the term has seen use in such diverse disciplines as architecture, communication studies, English language, history, philosophy, political science, religion, rhetoric, and sociology. This made arguments for the swift rise of trans-disciplinary studies of public memory”¹⁴³. Today, there are magazines and conferences, still rare though, dealing with these multidisciplinary areas. The construction and communication of narratives that form modernity imposed multiple issues that are now popping up as we see that memorialisation is a process we are all exposed to as an opportunity and a risk.

Public memory (or heritage) scientists, existing or future ones, will always remain few¹⁴⁴ in number as this sector is not enormous nor

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¹⁴³ Framing Public Memory. Edited by Kendall R. Phillips, with contributions from Stephen Howard Browne, Ba, The University of Alabama Press: 2004;

¹⁴⁴ Theoreticians are many but scientists, generally speaking, are few in any field; the

are the needs. The creation and maintenance of the profession remains central intent. The fragmented efforts aimed at professionalising the occupations are not entirely futile but, globally speaking, the level of protection and respect for cultural heritage is suffering blows which can cause irreparable damage. We cannot even agree on principles of protection against the tribulations of heritage¹⁴⁵ let alone offer a global strategy. It does also reveal frailty and the endangered integrity of heritage institutions and the lack of a profession behind it, able to oppose and prevent the assaults of grubbing investors.

Public memory studies is the new integrated domain, but it will take time before it is established, before it acquires the consent of the scientific community. The start is pending and actions will multiply. After the experience of infinite retreat, occasional tiffs and skirmishes it seems like we shall finally have a battle for a memory that can help the world get better. If this is not a mere assumption, some new profession will take charge.

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embarrassing proliferation of doctorates is a sign of the crisis both of society and of scientific institutions.

¹⁴⁵ USA and Great Britain never ratified the 1954 and never signed the 2003 Hague Convention.

5. Making the profession

5.1. Concept and elements

Curators talk about themselves as a profession, - a museum profession. Their striving for status is incessant but their claims are unfounded and therefore unsuccessful because they are based on false assumptions. Their striving for this top status any social endeavour can gain is rightful. However invaluable, curators fail to prove their case outside their own ranks.

In the world we have inherited and might retain for a certain while, only professions count. There where the most concerned among them meet and debate, curators demonstrate willingness to learn about big issues beyond mere practice¹⁴⁶. The same goes for other respectable occupations like librarians and archivists. Those understand they have to acquire much larger insight into the philosophical and social implications of their work. Some make up for the lack of education by talent and a long exposure to the challenges of their position and some through the chance of having an older and eager devotee at their side. The rest never arrive at an understanding of the essence of their job and what they call a profession is but an unproclaimed rut. The real curators will have to have at their disposal, besides their basic academic discipline, a usable knowledge of their institution, their community and the world, - also with the philosophy of their growing profession of heritage carers and communicators. Due to developing programmes of education, there are already professionals among us, - curators with a basic academic discipline and the knowledge of theory. They and the god-given talented others born with vocational zest (like say legendary teachers or journalists) are to be credited for all the conceptual advances the heritage profession has achieved, pushing the limits and setting up new standards.

It does not go without drawbacks: if not naturally born, the hastily, incompletely trained or, indeed, not-trained-at-all, curators are apt

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¹⁴⁶ International lectures are usually attended by rather motivated participants, usually talented and successful. They resent criticism as they judge their job by their own example, but still listen readily. The problem is the curatorial majority that is not there.

to be the professionally mediocre and resist any change. They usually have a negative reaction to any mention of theory: they would imply the rather hard, almost macho adherence to acting, not “vain speculation”. “Good scholarship and opened doors, my friend, that is all to it”, - you may hear them say. Others, who have more difficulty in dismissing reality proclaim it a matter of trends, taking that their changing art is a matter of fashion or trend-setting. Funnily, that they try to imitate (buzz-words, technology, appearances) as to appear updated. The true professionals produce change or thrive upon it their own way: versatile and creative they may not even be aware of *trends* and might just pursue actively and continuously what changing circumstances bring as challenges.

The scientists’ task is to build up factography. They do research to discern what is credible and reliable, they collect data, produce information and form it into knowledge. Then, some of them continue their task by educating others, transferring this socially formed knowledge. That would be the task of heritage scientists too. They should provide the contents for professional training that must be more than a mere acquisition of knowledge. Only some educated practitioners assume also the role of scientists as researchers and disseminators of their art.

In this transitory time (and maybe any is such) when the need is there but neither the strategy nor performers are, there still might be too many knowledgeable dullards doing this professional education for the yet appearing public memory sector. Whereas nothing is wrong with scientific seriousness and reliability, scientificism¹⁴⁷ is wrong, as it suggests that science is about complicated, unattainable heights of intellectual dilemma specially when facing ordinary, daily situations. Much of scientific practice is a mystification. Mnemosophy should be to heritage professionals what theology is to priests, so that it offers convictions, value judgements and inspiration. In this case it is about communication in active citizenship.

A specialist practice, the particular set of practical, applied skills

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¹⁴⁷ Šola, Tomislav. Eternity does not live here any more – A short history of museum sins. Zagreb, 2012. (the book has been translated and published in Spanish, Russian and Latvian language)

and knowledge is much the matter of wilful choice and natural inclination, be that a type of a PMI or a particular part of the working process. It can be formed within the institutional and working context, as an internship or later upgraded with conferences, workshops, courses and the like. As proposed, a heritage general practitioner has to acquire a full education in one scientific discipline and complement it by, probably, four semesters of theory that would provide skills and give humanist sense and social meaning to this knowledge. Yet only practice, however, would produce a “specialist” (if we use a parallel to medical education), a good one at that as he/she would dispose with a broad basis for general practice even in institutions where such heritage professionals would be the only trained persons.

The future will prove that we are in the decades when the beginnings of a heritage (mega-) profession emerge into reality. The irony already mentioned is that most occupations assign to themselves the attributes of profession. Various sources claim that there are maybe twenty five or more than thirty proper professions while occupations are countless. Whatever the number of professions may be, it is very small. Some obvious elements of any profession¹⁴⁸ would be:

- obligatory instruction in historical & scholarly principles of the profession and its skills and methods
- legal regulations of status, social function and position
- standards of performance and achievement
- specific methods of research and performance
- set of working yet open and anticipatory definitions
- license system
- specific professional culture
- idealist imperative
- autonomy in action
- ethical codex
- professional associating

Hardly anywhere would PMI practice comply with all of these conditions for the professional status. The first of them is practically un-

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¹⁴⁸ The list has been composed in the 1990s and received minimal alterations during the last twenty years of my teaching; however, the lists are increasingly many as different jobs aspire to the higher status and a bigger share in decision making.

fulfilled, at least for curators. Some elements of the profession have been dealt with. Some, like the second, - referring to legal regulations is fairly well in existence and essentially poses no problem in this check up. It is in a sense logical that a neglect of the conceptual side of the public memory domain could have its *satisfactory* counterpart in the formalities of its legal status. It may have happened as a compensation for frustration: museum people feel that they should be considered more important in society. On the other hand, later in the book much will be said about social position and the function of PMIs, - which is what legal regulations should frame and secure.

Standards of performance and achievement have been a long and specific theme in museums and, even more, in other PM occupations. Numerous tries to achieve performance indicators were partly successful. The Museum Documentation Association was formed as a limited company in 1977 in the UK. The organisation began life as the Information Retrieval Group of the Museums Association. In the 1980s it was well advanced in elaborating performance indicators. What was unknown widely was the fact that in the late 70s the Yugoslav self-management system was trying hard to measure worker's performance in order to achieve an objective evaluation of jobs. It proved to be a disastrous administrative burden which became an end in itself. Re-launched in 2008 as the Collections Trust's the MDA has developed into the UK's lead organisation for documentation and the management of information about museum collections: metricism is no longer a priority. The prevailing attitude in the West is led by the logic of marketing, misunderstood as a superficial success with the crowd and the media. Therefore, the success of the PMIs is too often understood in terms of numbers of visitors and press coverage. Mnemosophy teaches that the heritage profession is a creative business, though founded in science, and that sets the ground rules clearly for a different evaluation. The seemingly elusive nature of creative culture and arts forced managers to coin syntagm *soft value* where evaluation is admittedly delicate but its effects generate almost palpable influences and spin-off effects.

Any profession must possess a set of working yet open and anticipatory definitions that are able to fix the achievements in its own memory, and enable the transfer of experience. They should be open

and function as a constant reminder in advance of the direction they are indicating. PMIs possess mostly a very developed body of such knowledge¹⁴⁹.

The position of other possible elements of a solid professional profile of the sector will be briefly described on the following pages. It should be clear from it that our present PMIs do not comply with some of the expectations of a profession. All the professions are socially recognized and appraised; their role in society is accepted and highly positioned by the dominant forces of society. They are most frequently either members or supporters of that power structure but at their best also demanding partners. “Professionals see themselves as part of a community of like-minded individuals who put their professional standards above the individual self-interest or their employer’s self-interest”¹⁵⁰. In that sense, with a rising social consciousness, the work in the domain of heritage institutions, as a set of conjugate occupations, - might qualify for a profession. Together they make a convincing and impressive whole of occupations in the domain of collective memory. We are witnesses of the formation of a mega-profession of heritage workers¹⁵¹.

Belonging to a profession, brings an ‘a priori’ multidisciplinary mentality to any heritage expert who would be able to use the general theory of heritage as a tool to achieve autonomy. Curators in Japan were recognised as a position, as a distinctive job, only in 1951, only in art museums and, besides, were regarded as impostors if adhering to western art historical perspectives. Science works everywhere but we realise that we do not live in a synchronised world. In some countries archivists and librarians¹⁵² are forced by law to obtain proper professional training before practising their “profession”. Real pro-

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¹⁴⁹ This book offers both, a general definition of PMI and the general theory of it.

¹⁵⁰ <http://www.alexsbrown.com/prof9.html>

¹⁵¹ I have initiated the General Theory of Heritage as a joint project of museologists and librarians initiated started in 1994 at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb; the conference Archives-Libraries-Museums took place more than fifteen years ago witnessed the development of awareness of the commonality of these occupations. Internationally, both activities, conferences and institutions connecting the heritage sector are abundant.

¹⁵² Croatia, though not being a developed country obliges future librarians to get a university degree in librarianship and it has become an unquestioned practice.

fessions, like medical doctors in the USA are checked every five years if they are “up to speed”, if they satisfy the standards of the General Medical Council, because, if not, they would be prevented from practising. It is similar with university professors in most of the countries. In engineering where technology changes quickly, the all sorts of trainings and certificates follow the needs of particular jobs. These self-imposed rules contribute to obligatory professional standards but do not exclude certain liberty of any profession to interpret their own integrity.

5.2. Licence system

Licences are non-existent in museums. Libraries and archives are communicationally less attractive, but they too abound with examples of private, amateur initiatives, probably because only in the marginal activities can they be linked with some form of direct profit. Like universities these institutions get certified as a guarantee that they will offer adequate levels of professional service. The museum world is very divergent in practices. There are different sorts of accreditation (like in the USA) or registration (like in the UK and many countries in Europe). The implication is that if museums comply with the criteria created by the members of the *profession* and for the benefit of *profession*, then they are granted the status that makes them eligible and liable to perform their expertise both internally and as public functions. That comes in handy when sponsors or patrons evaluate their requests. But, above all, successful accreditation or registration means that the institution is eligible for public financing¹⁵³. Other organisations that wish to act as museums and bear the name but would not care for this privilege, - the certification is not obligatory. Some European countries have retained much of the former socialist legislative heritage. So a “museum law” is there to regulate most of the occupational reality. There is nowhere a mention of a possible common strategy of heritage institutions, let alone a hint towards a network. It appears to the public that making a museum is a thoroughly regulated matter and, consequently, out of reach of individuals and particular organisations. The reality is opposite. Anybody can make a museum, even in the most deceitful form as amateurs more

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¹⁵³ Some sponsors or patrons may condition their support by this certificate.

and more do. So, the law is there instead of accreditation, which is simply the only way the occupation itself grants a verification of professional quality performance to anybody who deserves it. The law, instead, closes the gate between public institutions and the rest of society suggesting that this division is desirable. On the contrary, not only a vision of total heritage but also the practical use of heritage, suggest that the sector should be mixed in terms of ownership while any striving to quality public service should be encouraged. Therefore, this regulatory machinery of the ministries involves and affects only a part of the institutions that are there, allowing the rising chaos and loss of opportunity for “official” institutions to maintain and impose standards. Anybody can create a museum, call it a museum, call oneself a curator and develop a public programme. Anybody can create a museum as his own product or about one’s own product. There is no licence for creating a public offer in the entire domain of heritage. Memory institutions are dominant proposal but surely not the only one. As ever, it has some excellent consequences but some are surely risky. Any creative individual or a group in a well to do society can express itself by creating a museum or archive and add to the common good. But the frightening negative possibility is also there, that memory is privatized, re-composed or manipulated into contents and forms that undermine common good and serve whatever particular interests of a single person or a group. There are basic needs of any society in the maintenance and use of its various memory flows. Creating the minimal underlying structural support as a sort of official service to the society is the least we can do to assure scientific standards, relevance and reliability. Licence for the job should exist in a form of standards of excellence, offered by experts with scientific insight and approved within the democratic process. What is ugly, aggressive, intolerable and inappropriate will always aspire to public attention and public money. As the future promises much of these pretensions we shall need authority and a strong voice of a distinctive profession.

5.3. Professional culture

Knowledge can suggest some value orientation but it entirely depends upon the criteria of acquisition and is, generally speaking, neutral¹⁵⁴. Definitions do not suggest that knowledge possesses *a priori* any particular humanist quality. So, extremely knowledgeable people (as history demonstrates lavishly) can at the same time be extremely vicious and dangerous, or even plainly stupid, if we just for a moment think about social and emotional intelligence. But so can be institutions. Knowledge is only the structural basis of intellectual and emotional performance with people and institutions alike. If knowledge is the only objective, what we end up with is a deceptive ease of education.

As the world is turning into a dangerous and ugly place, heritage (as accumulated experience), can assist in finding plausible solutions. The public memory project should strive to demonstrate both theoretical and practical ways that unite the entire potential of public memory be they resources or communicational skills, into an unprecedented medium. Retaining the memories, ideas and dreams of mankind and guarding the fine tissue of quality, be it beauty, natural or man-made resources or relations, may keep alive concepts and values that ameliorate the human condition. To do it well requires taste and a specific language that makes the profession effective. With *Dictionarium Museologicum*¹⁵⁵ and the *ICOM/ICOFOM handbook*¹⁵⁶, and texts that propose, widen and cultivate professional phraseology and syntagms, we have advanced well in the direction of having precise communication for described purposes. Specific “language” is a peculiarity of any profession.

Intuition may be preceded by knowledge as it benefits from a great-

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¹⁵⁴ Knowledge is a (1): the fact or condition of knowing something with familiarity gained through experience or association (2): acquaintance with or understanding of a science, art, or technique (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/knowledge>)

¹⁵⁵ *Dictionarium museologicum*. István Ęri, Béla Vĕgh, ICOM-CIDOC Working Group on Terminology and Hungarian Esperanto Association, 1986

¹⁵⁶ Mayresse, Fracois. Devallees, Andre have written/edited for ICOM a most useful handbook for theory: http://icom.museum/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/Key_Concepts_of_Museology/Museologie_Anglais_BD.pdf

er knowledge, but at one point, eventually, it can become superior to it. Any specific knowledge develops within general language but any trade or profession develops its elaborations that derive from its specific interests and experiences. The best professionals in whatever field make their important decisions on intuition but explain it in their specific language. Both are part of the particular culture. Taste is also a category of specific experience that derives from knowledge but is rightfully regarded as a top characteristic that only rare arbiters acquire or can boast of. Contrary to usual reasoning, taste exists in any profession as it exists also in pursuit of science. Neither intuition or taste can be learned from a technical manual nor they are usually inborn but rather painstakingly earned qualities. No virtue is the matter of knowledge only nor of skill, but of deep insight ennobled finally by emotional intelligence. When it comes to heritage curators, they should be the arbiters of measure, masters of proportion, in our relationship with the past, or in judging how to use memory properly and wisely for the present needs. Being more than knowledge, intuition and taste, - like culture, cannot be taught, but can be inspired and encouraged preferably in a process of good education. They are the privilege of those who understand and appropriate the essence of a certain art or study. Specific professional language with its subtleties is necessary to make transfer within the profession effective or even possible.

A knowledgeable, responsible heritage profession as it has been stipulated often (and will be further explained in the next chapter) can help run the world. It is sometimes the taste and a sense of measure as properties of that professionalism that determine the quality of that contribution. In the case of contemporary art museums, curators are proactive so much so that they turn into trend setters or opinion makers. There they have to be aware of their specific responsibility and play the role of spreading the visual literacy more than the fame of a certain author pushed by the gallerists, collectors or political lobbies. But that is not the usual curatorial temptation. Other heritage curators explain the world through the experience of our predecessors, critically interpreting their messages or deeds. Further on, they may evaluate and keep stable the measure of change within the limits of what is acceptable, with certain wisdom, without risking the loss of balance, and assuming the position of elders, unlike the

crowd that may be more susceptible to immediate or momentary impressions.

The best a heritage curator can do is to understand the world and its media and manage it towards a usable future. The ways we communicate heritage will become an art in itself, reliable, creative and useful for development. Science was often (miss)used to create incredible means of accelerating change but change can become uncontrolled, hasty and harmful if not moderated by humanist ideas, by good taste and wisdom. Culture must be perceived as “the conscience of science” i.e. forces of change, and can become the driving force of development. If they ever existed, long are gone the days of balance achieved in traditional cultures. André Malraux describes in one of his books a Chinese peasant who is painstakingly pulling buckets of water from a well. Asked why he does not do it by a counterpoised well-sweep, he says that he would find it somehow an inappropriate thing to do to the water. Departing from this parable, we should remember how much injustice we have committed to our environment. The good survival strategy starts with knowing ourselves, the readiness to face the challenges and the ability to communicate it. Academic and other public institutions, intellectuals and artists largely fail to fulfil their possible mission because of the lack of integrity, self-consciousness and self-respect, or even arguments about this precious sense of importance no profession can do without. Arrogance that many cloak themselves with to cover the deficiency is regrettable. There is also a superficial, pretended consent on new ways of dealing with professional problems by which change is postponed, its protagonists exhausted and the pressure amortized. In such a way, it happens often, - a formal, superficial or declarative change can for long occupy the place of the real solution. Most of the official, occupational conferences pass in mutual persuasion about reformist ideas being accepted while the mindset stays the same. The professional circumstances are comparable to those in politics and culture where (usually) false elites grab some concept or idea from aspiring, eager reformist groups or individuals and impose it as the theme of the year or a certain period of time. After “spending” its potential of novelty, they throw it away declaring it spent and obsolete. In such a way, ideas and concepts overnight become regarded as a waste whereas their entire potential remains unused or, even

worse, broached and rejected. Such unused, unspent potential might be proposed under a new term, seeking a new chance. It may however be disavowed at the loss of reformers and innovators, who must propose it again in some other form or context. Of course, a science of the profession could care systematically that valuable ideas get continuous support and attention.

Besides language and taste, professional education should cultivate feeling and instinct, needed for creative resourcefulness and orientation in new professional situations, in brief, a professional intelligence.

5.4. Ideal professional

The true and final idealist objective of heritage cybernetics is establishing the approach to quality, selective collecting, research, storage and communication which would obey the needs and ways of life. The objective is the dynamic quality of wisdom, put at the disposal of the community PMIs referred to. The final purpose of any science is the truth and the scientists' mission is ideally contained in their reliability through dedication to the truth and public good. Anybody can pretend the form but only those who transcend it by vocation can act within the spiritual dimension of reality. The ideal of the perfect heritage professional, heritage officer, heritologist, mnemosopher, heritage curator is of course like any projected ideal a sort of superhuman being. As they are in the public service, disposing with enormous accumulations of human experience, practically a memory of society, they should possess:

- Superior moral integrity
- Self-assurance based upon knowledge and being well informed
- Commitment to the superior, daring mission
- Determination by direct action
- Idealist goals
- Capacity for creative and effective communication
- Readiness to stand up to the public judgement of the job and justify confidence

Science is there to propose the idealist perspective as a direction to follow, as a set of values unattainable but ever inspiring in the constant perfecting. This request is rather the same for any abstract, perfect doctor or architect. Speaking with cybernetic principles in mind, the heritage curator is an artist of homeostasis, of balance, of equilibrium, and one among the professionals who will raise a voice in the imposed and unjustified silence, pose the reasoned questions when they are hushed, or propose doubts and provoke when conformism avoids certain themes. There is not a single problem that human society experiences today that has not been experienced in the past¹⁵⁷. Mnemosophy signals that our accumulated deposits of evidence be used towards solutions, never by proposing or even less by imposing them, but always by serving the democratic insight, rightful claims (embedded in human and nature's rights) and quality of democratic society by feeding decision making with easily accessible, well explained and reliable information. One can imagine curators, archivists and librarians frowning at this proposal of becoming saviours of the world. But, such frequent reaction is playful reticence: nobody meant them right away as they need to be convinced first, - that is, trained to know their job and see their importance. Nobody said their poor little institution (when that is the case) has to be burdened by this huge task. Yet, none is too little to play a part on the side of a solution within a cumulative, concerted action of the entire sector. Training in mnemosophy would certainly provide motivation and arguments for it. Occupations do their art in isolation because their work is given final sense by the professions they serve. Architects have a great respect for builders, structural engineers, electrical engineers and the like, and stand no chance without them, but it is the architects that design the projects, having decided upon any of the strategic ideas that made the edifice possible. Alas, so they often do when designing heritage institutions, where the brief and responsibility should be those of curators. In the cooperation composed of an occupation on one side and a profession on the other, the result is necessarily prevalently coloured by the stronger partner.

The heritage curator is a rebel and a tribune when it is about some

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¹⁵⁷ mutatis mutandis i.e. with the respective differences having been considered (stemming from technologically and economically changing contexts);

convention, - not necessarily to question it or destroy it but also to defend, say, its initial, original or necessary quality. What we often need is in our hands but changed, manipulated, washed out of essence, - of primary concepts that created it. So, getting back to the core qualities, using the public memory and collective experience to make the rightful claims, to propose the criteria of quality and defend them with arguments scattered in time and space of the human experience – that is a general description of the heritage curator’s role. People remember with bias, prejudice, presuppositions and often shallow considerations. This is why institutions are called upon to form reliable memory that reaches beyond personal shortcomings. Culture industries and art interpret but also create memory, in most cases guided by noble inspiration. Society would be at loss if not using both ways of memorizing as resources for scientific research and to feed various channels of scientific interpretation of the world; it would be advantageous to entrust this task to an accomplished profession. One of the ways happens in memory institutions. Besides the contents of memory, these institutions can assist people in art of selection, art of measure, the responsibility of fine reflection, the value of cultivated attitudes, the orientation in assessing values etc. The past can be used for many grand tasks like educating people for solidarity, diversity, truth or freedom.

PMIs are today prevalently conformist and opportune so they support the actual systems and identity imposed or manipulated by them. The point is, intentionately repeated, that they should become the effective feedback for upgrading the social and cultural system they belong to maintaining the credible coherence of the identity in spite of the inevitable changes.

5.5. Autonomy in action

Opportunism, servitude, manipulation¹⁵⁸ is probably the uneasy truth about the autonomy of PMIs in most countries except some very advanced ones. As the world is passing through a turbulent reality anybody offering some solutions would acquire additional at-

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¹⁵⁸ Based upon a chapter bearing this title from the book “Eternity does not live here any more – A short history of museum sins”. Zagreb, 2012.

tention and importance. It would be good to find that heritage, when used for the best, brings the wisdom of ancestors who themselves lived through troublesome times.

But, for most institutions, as for individuals, it is much easier to join the establishment, adjust to the holders of power and prestige, to work out remunerative arrangements of mutual support and, in brief, serve their own selfish, institutional aims instead those of the community. Yet, all public institutions inevitably face the public commitment. The servility in fawning on the powerful and influential among the stakeholders is a simple and, by a long practice of conformism, seemingly legitimate practice. The alternative can be reached by professionalization, - a long and steep path but the right one to take.

As they have mostly emerged from the establishment itself, most heritage institutions tend to overemphasise the importance of past and present authorities, reflecting the attitudes and values of dominant groups. When their curators try to think critically, they are always up against the dominant system of values. Therefore, most of them are socially and politically conditioned, burdened also by the conservative audiences who want their heritage presented *the way it used to be*. Most avoid societal reality by shrewdly appropriating the “neutral”, uninterested attitude. At worst, they align more or less openly along the political agenda. They do not stir up the traumatic memories of wars and atrocities to learn from them but, when unwilling, prolong the wars and continue the conflicts by feeding the discourse that cause them. Public memory institutions are mechanisms of continuity, but upon the positive choice of experiences. PMIs cannot only bring facts or aloof description, but must discover the causes and, if not otherwise, give floor to opposed views. Needless to say, only rarely has this been the case, only to prove the opportunism or helplessness of heritage institutions. The meaning of the war archive is not to support any of the protagonists but, ultimately, to maintain the objective picture from which to see how to avoid repeating the atrocious experience.

The false elites that are creating crisis (be it a war or transition) generate insecurity, fear and intolerance. Unfortunately, the entire world

seems to be in transition because globalisation is a constant, forcible change in which the rules and the speed are dictated. In this, PMIs share a destiny of limited autonomy with the entire scientific and educational sector. As globalisation takes on the contours of velvet totalitarianism, the need for protection of human and political rights grows daily. Disobedient societies are being punished if they do not subjugate. International community is at loss. Politicians and the media are racing to pay lip service to issues of freedom but it has never been so endangered. Therefore, doing nothing is in compliance with the prevailing behaviour as non-conformism is discretely but severely sanctioned. For public institutions it is the sin of omission, committed before they even think what the appropriate reaction would be. Obsequiousness to the power-holders seriously endangers civic ideals. The growing civil sector is easily blackmailed into a calibrated, arranged, - pretended opposition. But the lack of freedom usually means lack of autonomy of public institutions and professions. They can either fall and turn towards a futile, unproductive existence, or take an active role and become parts of a wider solution building up an unbiased, sane voice. But, once found outside the influence zone of the state administration or ruling groups of society, heritage institutions are bound to suffer a blow to their finances. There is a political insistence that the private interests, be them actions or institutions, are financed by the state, the same way public institutions are. It will happen so but the criteria of public interest are the only precaution against misuse. It will be a double process. Public institutions will have to de-etatise, - so that the employees will assume new responsibility. According a new deal with the state must lead to public responsibility and autonomy at the same time. Only through this conditional separation from the state, which will oblige institutions to rely (even financially) partly upon the public answer to their actions, will heritage institutions acquire the necessary public credibility. The negative consequence may be a lower priority given to once self-comprising public heritage institutions. What seems impossible to avoid has to be embraced with outstretched hands. The widely known "Delta Plan"¹⁵⁹ in Netherlands was a formidable scheme for preventive conservation allegedly extended into a successful attempt

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¹⁵⁹ Kirby Talley, M. The Delta Plan: a nationwide rescue operation. *Museum International*, No. 201, vol. 51, Issue 1, 1999.

to increase the performance of PMIs. Museum staff has been denied the status of civil employees pushing them further towards autonomy but also towards being responsible for the working process and the institutional strategy. It also meant fewer financial resources but more independence and an obligation to create their own significant revenue. The large conceptual leap in all heritage institutions is the inescapable consequence of changed circumstances or, indeed, a goal thus made possible. PMIs are heading to new partnerships and a new possible autonomy in accomplishing their mission, just like other professions.

5.6. Heritage curators and theorists

It was recently that marketing was ridiculed, bio-technology regarded as nonsense, Internet seemed a vague innovation and 3-D, a moving, digitally born image, was taken for a futurist dream. Mighty computers are being reduced to a bending, translucent foil or to any shape and use. Nanotechnology has difficulties in separating mechanics from biology and why should it? We witness professions merging into incredibly complex disciplines, forming unprecedented amalgams. Philo-sophers, as amateurs of wisdom, are an obvious fact. Why should not there be mnemo-sophers? The term denotes those who process public memory into wisdom, - collected, stored and communicated¹⁶⁰.

No matter whether Mnemosphy as a term prevails or not, there is an appearing science of heritage or indeed collective experience. Once trained with this conceptual basis common to all of public memory occupations, the practitioners will assign to themselves the consciousness of a wider concern, as some sort of curators of public memory. *Cura* in Latin means “care”, so a curator is a manager, overseer, superintendent of whatever she or he curates: heritage, for example. “Heritologist”, and mnemosopher (unlikely, I admit) will be the terms describing those engaged in theory of heritage and science of public memory. The practitioners of the profession might

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¹⁶⁰ A usual reader of professional, scientific literature may rightfully wish less naïveté and some more restraint and discipline, but the book has been admittedly declared unconventional. It would be desirable but these notes should be able to offer some food for thought.

just plainly be called heritage managers, heritage officers, or indeed heritage curators (with all its different meanings and training programmes available). Whatever the name, it is a kind of public memory ecologist, someone who watches and understands the man-made, or produced, memory environment of modern societies and its relation with nature. Such would be a member of heritage or, better, a public memory profession, like any lawyer is part of the legal profession, and a doctor of the medical one.

The new reality of heritage will require a new definition from its protagonists. After decades of slow advance on innumerable occasions and contributions, museums finally decided in 2005¹⁶¹ to agree that heritage exists also as an intangible entity with no physical dimensions but only spiritual ones. Only a few decades ago, it would not have been admitted as it was somehow in the care of philology, or culture in general, - not museums. So, implicitly by definition, museums were allowed to be founded upon *stricto sensu* inexistent matter, presumably even without a single museum object exposed¹⁶². The implication was a triumph of concept, of the quintessence of what any heritage institution is: the socialised transfer of collective experience usually by using objects as the substance of their mnemotechnics and communication.

With the door finally wide open, a definition started to function as open, anticipative and wide enough to accommodate other kindred institutions. To the traditionalists it appeared that a museum could be anything, but that is not so. Institutions will keep their pragmatic, specific definitions but the conceptual opening will make possible to indicate new protagonists wherever the process of intentional transfer of collective experience happens as part of societal mission. Digitally born information was hard to put into the framework of any traditional curatorship, librarianship or archive management but they just demonstrate the configuration of public memory sector. In it, we need someone in charge of quality substance, a matter indeed

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¹⁶¹ General Conference of ICOM in Seoul, South Korea

¹⁶² Museum of Jewish Diaspora in Tel Aviv (now The Museum of the Jewish People) was probably the first museum of the sort, founded in 1978; it took almost two decades to get the concept through and some years for it to be received among the others into professional organisations and the network.

more sensitive than knowledge and defined as an active ingredient of contemporary society's democratic decision making. "Heritage curator" as a name for a professional will not make many happy; nor would heritage manager because it somehow excludes the creativity which is supposed to be the main feature of the future grand profession. The heritage curator is a scientist with a public mission. If it has vague contours, future challenges will sharpen it by adding some qualities to this eternal *homo duplex*, a scientist–communicator with the nerve of investigative journalists and the creative Eros of an artist. A public memory manager is almost a good description but lacks the suggestion of effervescence, a slight air of public tribune mentality. How should we call anybody who is a professional in such an important position in a value system management business? The proposal as well as questions are growingly legitimate as new jobs in culture abound and many would include heritage: cultural capital consultant, cultural advisor, cultural entrepreneur, cultural catalyst, cultural planner etc.

The heritage environment, the "3 C" (we have to add the private sector in time!) is made up of memory institutions and projects that comprise highly skilled people. Nobody will need to disturb what is there already: the nomenclature of heritage occupations will stay as it is and will further grow at the same level: archivist, librarian, (museum) curator (in all variety of museums), archaeologist (underwater archaeologist, battle field archaeologist, paleobotanic archaeologist) etc. A variegated choice of positions is offered only to witness that the field is developing at a speed that can hardly be grasped, let alone articulated unless we offer a new, comfortable framework. One accountable, active source upon museum and heritage management counts occupational positions like this: Archaeological conservator, Archaeological museum keeper, Archaeologist, Archivist, Genealogist, Herald, Heritage manager, Heritage officer/interpreter, Historical researcher, Museum education officer, Museum/gallery curator, Museum/gallery exhibitions officer¹⁶³. A step aside, when it is about information management, we find traditional occupations listed in rather a technological context: Abstractor, Academic librarian, Archivist, Careers information officer, Indexer, Information officer, In-

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¹⁶³ http://www.prospects.ac.uk/p/types_of_job/information_services.jsp

formation scientist , Library/information assistant, Public librarian, Records manager. It is not in any country but the UK which is if not the most advanced then among the few leading countries in the world when it is about heritage jobs and occupations.

The same source goes further to offer descriptions of the jobs and definitions as well as the unifying name to all, - a heritage manager, saying: “Heritage managers are responsible for the conservation of, and all aspects of public access to, heritage sites. The range of sites includes: ancient monuments; historic buildings, including industrial sites such as former collieries; landscapes and gardens; museums. Heritage managers need to balance preserving the fabric and character of their properties with the need to promote and present them appropriately, often within commercial constraints. Management in the heritage sector encompasses a considerable diversity of job titles and actual roles, with individual post holders coming from a wide variety of backgrounds both within and outside the sector”¹⁶⁴. These lists will be widening and the newcomers will be different in two aspects. Firstly, by the time they get the assignment they will have passed the obligatory professional training and, secondly, they will have no complexes towards the inner traditions of their particular trade in the great configuration of the heritage profession. They will have no inferiority complex or any feeling of being endangered by any change. An archivist, for instance, who has passed a good theoretical preparation, will understand without difficulties that he or she is a part of a bigger whole and will feel more secure, not endangered, because of it.

In 2013, at the conference of the national committees of ICOM in Lisbon a plea was passed to European Parliament and European Commission to support culture in the times of scarcity. This demand it says is done in the name of “museum and heritage workers”. Rather expected a simplification if we remember that the last ICOM’s strategic document was developing its theory as applying on “heritage sector”. So ICOM does perceive museums, one would add, rightfully (being the most publicly imposed sector) leading much a larger sector of public memory. Even the modest history of heritology hap-

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¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

pened also within ICOFOM, - its IC on museology.

Communication is impossible without collecting and care but finally colours the nature of the entire process as communicational, probably inasmuch as classifying a PMI as a communicational business. Good news for marketing. Indeed, neither part of the process can be done without creativity but communication is the focal point. In mnemosphere, almost solid by the dense frequency of pulsations, users find divisions among memory institutions incomprehensible and almost inappropriate, - impractical, at any rate. The convergence of all memory institutions and their societal functions would happen without hesitation even if plain common sense would guide the processes. Mnemosphere is expanding also through the creation of hybrid institutions. Those are with us already, as well as those which exist only as digital reality in the mnemosphere. They change the existing institutions by introducing a new mindset and by changing their very structure. Many will still become hybrid institutions. Curiously, again museums are just a source of inspiration instead of, maybe, guiding the process. The management of such information is nowadays termed as *digital curating*. A sort of fragmenting is rather logical. Protagonists of *records management* (that derives from archivistics) have little sensitivity for the older forms of their occupation; they simply choose to be what the description of the job requires as most obvious. Whether it means that all public memory professionals are public memory curators or simply heritage curators remains a matter of the future of convergence, but the truth is that memory institutions should have had a majority stake in the conceptual shares of that development. The new professionals in the age of synthesis¹⁶⁵ should be able to lead an artistically tuned team that designs the communication so that it is reliable, useful, precise, meaningful and attractive.

As in other professions, the new positions reveal the nature of the process. The usual kind of consultant for museums (as libraries and archives rarely employ such experts) would be a former practitioner in some part of the working process or an ambitious generalist with

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¹⁶⁵ Šola, Tomislav. Novi profesionalci u vremenu sinteze. Obrada jezika i prikaz znanja / ed. Slavko Tkalac, Miroslav Tuđman, 1993. P. 247.

a practical, institutional experience. Except in the West, the role was rarely played: curators on one side and the architect, designers, ICT experts on the other would only occasionally need anybody else: the curators lack self-esteem while others have a surplus of it. Their unequal relationship is evident all over the world. An archaeologist might have had a chance to have some museology (whatever that might mean in their particular circumstances), but a machine engineer or a naturalist working in respective museums are at a loss unless exceptionally talented. Pressed by the daily tasks and rationalisations, directors and curators of the heritage occupations have to deal with the corporate world, politicians and their own users. These are new requirements which will call for a different expertise and some outsourcing. The outsourcing will professionalise public memory institutions and make them more efficient. The increasing partnerships with corporations and civil society will require real professionals able to negotiate the public interest with diverse stakeholders. Well educated mnemosopher, a heritage curator, familiar with practice and concepts can complement the practitioners by offering consultancy. Such a consultant in heritage planning and/or management, increasingly called by a modest term „facilitator“ may have many roles¹⁶⁶:

- acting as a catalyst and creative interpreter of ideas between the client (often politicians), the professional heritage staff and the professional designers and architects;
- ensuring that the aspirations of the client have been met, and by satisfying the professionals involved that their hopes for the project have been presented effectively and in realistic terms to the professional designers etc.;
- guiding the planning process of the whole scope of the project in a way that it is being kept within the budget;
- interviewing interested parties for the design-team appointments;
- making presentations on the projects to the decision-makers from the position of “neutral experienced professional” and presentation skills (often saving a project that would otherwise end in argument and disharmony);

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¹⁶⁶ Based upon Stephen Harrison’s (The former Director of Manx National Heritage) description of his own consultative practice and enhanced by my own experiences.

- acting as the “trusted professional intermediary” – both the political client side, the professional design teams, and the lowly but all-important curators, having confidence in the professional reputation and wide experience of the consultant;
- offering objective, truthful, unbiased and professionally authoritative advice on any particular issue of all the various sides in a project, who are, perversely, often in competition against each other;
- helping with “branding” exercises, elucidating mission, vision or values definition from the public memory point of view;

It would merit mentioning that excellent heritage projects return the investment and have become notorious for the spin-off returns to their own community. However, not many heritage projects are excellent and that seems to be another simple reason, for building professionalism. A view upon the configuration of positions of this professional performance discovers the role that well informed, experienced individuals can play as facilitators in PM projects. Such an expert can substitute the overburdened director, unite the divided curators, support the side of the PMI in negotiations, be familiar with the job of the architects and designers, keep their ambitions within the function of the project and the framework of the budget etc. Good facilitators/consultants get to know the institution better than its employees, and are able to see the hidden potential and discover the true capacity of the mission of the particular institution. They act as a kind of “conductor” who makes a well-functioning orchestra out of perhaps individually excellent soloists. That is somebody able to make up for the deficiencies of hierarchy and the dangers of professional vanity.

This conductor, like the real one, - seemingly redundant in front of the orchestra, - is probably the person unburdened by local relations, who is able to convey to the decision makers (usually with non-existent or wrong ideas of heritage) why, say, a new museum or heritage project is needed at all. Unlike an unversed director, such an experienced professional might be able to put all the necessary wisdom into brief, decisive moments of the project.

We are entering the phase of fascination with heritage, shared by all,

be it lay public, rich or entrepreneurial individuals, the civil sector, politicians, private businesses or corporations. Grand investments based on cultural industries and the values of heritage, creating prevailing public narratives, media attention and relevance for the development will require more and more rules and criteria to assure excellence. The future profession will have to cultivate its advanced representatives and arbiters, - outstanding figures of public confidence. Otherwise, their role will be increasingly played by the self-made media figures with little understanding of public memory.

5.7. Ethics of the heritage profession

This small contribution is just an addition to a vast literature of experts on ethics but from the most general perspective as suggested by mnemosophic speculation. This view suggests that institutions which fail to know and fulfil their social and cultural mission are corrupted. Ethics has for too long a time been regarded as regulating occupational conduct. Both, the professional conduct and legislation should logically derive from an ethical understanding of the nature and role of public memory in society. Only in the last two decades is it expected to respond to the fundamental questions about the ownership of heritage, its perceptions and the rights it poses or affects¹⁶⁷. Ethics assures integrity and stability of profession(s) and sets the affective tone. It affirms responsibility and represents basis for the idealist goal. It is a sort of glowing orientation point amidst discouraging practical circumstances. If perceived correctly, only the ethical definition of the museum service, to take one example, will firmly define the museum as a community oriented institution. It is practically impossible to do a good job in mission-driven institutions without a clear conscience of its ethical basis. While a law expert knowing the profession may create ethical conduct and professional rules, the ethical foundations of it can only be created and disseminated by those having a profound theoretical insight and responsible social conscience along their academic expertise.

The first ethical question of heritage is that of ownership of memory. The simplest answer is that it belongs to all citizens but remains

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¹⁶⁷ Edson, Gary (ed). *Museum Ethics*, Routledge, 1997.

scattered, fragmented and largely inaccessible. The science of heritage sees it as a grand collection of the total museum, of boundless memory storage. Any city or any landscape are perfect examples of recorded, inscribed memory and cemeteries are but a memory institutions *par excellence*¹⁶⁸. This complex memory is a reservoir of collective conscience, of collective self, - always in flux, tormented, manipulated and yet respectful. Mnemosophy is about the entire effort of retaining quality memory, but it suggests that the operational, societal memory is the conscientious, higher societal effort or processes so well crystallised in the “3 C” of PMIs. Though public memory belongs to citizens, it is the political society, the *de facto* state that is in charge. The state has been much denigrated since the 80s when privatisation of the public economy sector became a target of neo-liberal capitalism. The state for some became a bureaucracy (imposing ever new taxes) and for others the epitome of corrupted politicians (who distribute public money to private entrepreneurs and corporations). There are reasons to believe that the state will be increasingly corrupted as a tool of aloof decision-makers, but such a state that deserves contempt is not the one Western society has been painfully, laboriously cultivating since the bourgeois revolution. The well organised, cultivated and politically mature state, the substructure of civic society, is the inevitable tool of democracy. It will remain the only worthy framework to promote and protect common interests and pursue the common good. Memories are as many as there are particular, different holders of memory and the interests they express and so the policy of memorizing is the great ethical task that society entrusts (through administration as agent of state) to PMIs and the profession they present. Heritage may take many forms too, but however dynamic and diverse their composition, - public memory, that is public heritage by its content, is the only common one. It is the one which is obligatorily scientifically based, generally agreed upon as necessary and cherished as public property and public mnemotechnics of values.

Ethical consideration of the heritage professions is yet another responsibility of the theory which is very close to the “philosophical”

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¹⁶⁸ Glasnewin Museum in Dublin of the cemetery bearing the same name is probably the best example.

ambition of their self-cognition: For whom do we work? What are our intentions, for what social goals and with what motives? Whose past do we assert and which value system do we proclaim? These are the questions too rarely posed in heritage institutions and even more rarely answered. The entire impact of PM institutions seems to depend on the answers to these questions. Should memory institutions advocate a world view founded on the democratic values of justice, equality and the welfare state? Could such institutions exist in a certain social and political system resting on the power of financial oligarchy and brazen enrichment? Such questions prove disturbing and demanding. “Luckily” for the conservative majority of PMIs’ staff, - our users, in general, are not able to pose them. The reality is growing in opposition to what public institutions in the European tradition should be, but shows how narrow a door we have for any significant ethical philosophy of our own. We are allowed to be conformist, but what if we are not? Would non-conformism grow if regular, obligatory professional education is made possible? Formerly science was serving social groups or religious institutions and then politics in authoritarian systems. It did try otherwise through the temptations of maturation but it may well still be fatally suppressed today. Only the one that brings money is preferred. Will that be the destiny of scientifically based communicational institutions of public memory too? What ethics can they assign to themselves if limited by such expectations of the governing forces of the society?

The ethics is part of any profession and it poses endless questions that require usable answers. Will museums and other heritage institutions yield to the pressure of commercialisation maybe through the excessive and sneaking privatisation happening in many western countries? What is the final future of the so called non-profit, public sector where public memory is high on the scale of importance? Will the science of heritage be there to assist us in answering our part of great questions posed more vehemently than ever? The challenge and the stakes are bigger than ever and so would be the impact of any decisive response. The only way to create and save the autonomy of the heritage sector, - the public memory sector especially, is by building the profession that will manage it. Until these recent decades heritage institutions have been building the public consciousness and the point is that they become responsible and effective part of it. The

two differ as values of length and vector would in geometry, - the first neutral and static and the latter active by assuming the direction. The same parable can be used to describe the basic difference between knowledge and wisdom. Moral foundations are inherent, not entirely explicable heritage of mankind and stem from the consciousness which itself poses no exhaustive scientific explanation. Science neither denies the inexplicable nor does it abstain from establishing a reliable system. There is no alternative to human endeavour to rationally explain the world as far as possible and affirm this ambition as legitimate and reliable. Yielding to the irrational would make us prey to many threats. The framework should be humanistic ethics which is a salubrious garden where each planted knowledge will yield beautiful and good fruit whereas the reality often offers ugly, deceptively seductive, harmful, bitter, and poisonous one. It is the soil that matters. Society creates its own institutions and structures of advancement and those structures are expected to work for the perfecting of that society. The vicious cycles have to be replaced by the virtuous and beneficial ones.

What would be the purpose of heritage institutions if not drawing knowledge from a deep well of the past and how to distinguish right from wrong, the good from bad, things that serve to continue or consolidate quality from the thing that degrades it? So, what heritage institutions bring us is what English philosophers called *moral sense*¹⁶⁹ and claimed that it was innate, congenital to human kind, as some gift of morality, almost an instinct, like coming from a *natural law*.

Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas, according to Yates, saw memory as part of ethics, or more precisely as a part of the virtue of prudence, -as the capacity of reason, of telling good from bad. This lesson finds ready circumstances in today's concept of sustainability. Pronounced in a word, only wisdom can fit the sort of noble knowledge. The usual code of ethics is about the pragmatic level of heritage occupations. What we need is debate about public involvement, responsible science, and the memory as pursuit of truth. Thomas Jefferson claimed: "In a truly democratic society, everything depends upon the consent of the public." But, the quality of this consent will

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¹⁶⁹ Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Home

be the ethical touchstone not only of public memory institutions but of the entire contemporary society. If the definition of quality is given away to the managerial elite that started to invade museums in the middle 80s (with their first problems of financial efficiency), it will be only an acceleration of the privatisation and disintegration of the public memory sector before it has been properly formed.

The ultimate ethical concern of PMIs is the well-being of society. Unable to be the resource for counter-active action, public memory institutions became part of the problem, - sometimes actively participating in the subtle manipulation or de-focusing of the public mind. Consequently, they themselves have become the prey of the Machine, as L. Mumford would put it¹⁷⁰. He saw the totalitarian state not only in the USSR but as the future and deuced the powers that would impose it. The growing populism, privatisation and “industrialisation” of heritage are all against the very essence of what any public memory should mean in a society. Yet it is rather obvious that there are practically only rare individuals and isolated groups that demonstrate objection and disapproval. There is no systemic response let alone refusal or rejection by a profession, because there is none there to do so. Organising spending a night in a museum for a class of school children is not a proof of professionalism, but a proof that inventiveness can be simulated by professionally uneducated civil servants. The night of museums with hundreds of thousands of individuals crawling and gabbling from one ghastly over-crowded museum to another, is more a sign of a collective neurosis and a sensationalist, populist drive than of a steady devotion to whatever heritage may mean in the lives of both sides involved. The world we live in creates myriads of illusions as surrogates for real contents. It may put the truth in thick, inaccessible books as it puts the common heritage into the vaults of public memory institutions: a heterotopia instead of utopia, a dystopia instead of usable future.

Public memory is about the quality of living. Offering well-disciplined knowledge with no synoptic insight and no social activist urge to serve a change in quality is as wrong as currying favour with the

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¹⁷⁰ Mumford, Lewis. *The myth of the machine: Technics and Human Development*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1967

masses. Both solutions lead to a blind alley. Public institutions are a part of positive elites, - necessarily open and pro-active in attitude. Democracy is the constant process of building equal chances and an incessant care for the needs of all, especially those who have difficulty in formulating them. The big manipulation of the economy has spread into the social field, so the illusion is created that some „invisible hand“ of democracy regulates the processes in society. Emptying thus the vessel of the state, where it exercised (through its institutions and professions) its role of organizing, mediating, articulating actions towards the common good, - the neo-liberalism created the unprecedented opportunity for manipulating the democratic system by the media. Adding to this weakened structure of professions one more that would confront the manipulation and push for the common, public memory, will be hard: partly because of the inertia of the heritage occupations and partly because the state is systematically weakened by the managers of change. But, again, it is worth trying. This ethics coming from the imagined science is not a set of rules written once forever. Sovereign profession will know how to adjust it to changes.

5.8. The area of expertise

One would think that a museologist is a person engaged in the theory of museology, - not necessarily a curator, or probably an unsuccessful one that turned to theorising instead. But it was so often taken that anybody working in a museum is a museologist. Accepting it, they demonstrated the frustration of lacking status. In some places a diploma of the study of museology renders one a title of museologist, assuming that there exists a science by that name.

To do our job well, be it in a tiny museum or a huge institution, we have to master four areas of expertise and insight:

- knowing well the nature of the world in which museums operate and our users live
- having a clear philosophy of the profession as a total understanding of the museum and heritage ideas
- perfectly knowing our users

- knowing well the set of techniques, methods and procedures known as the museum working process

The dilemma here is that these areas suggest the need for obligatory professional training, as only the fourth expertise can be learned on the job, although it is not advisable, because it is too long a process, risky and expensive. However, for professional training to be effective we have to have the heritage sector ready, legislation making it obligatory and a theory that complies with the expectations of our grand future. The latest trends give right to *mnemosophic* thinking: heritage is likely to be so important that its notion will spread out¹⁷¹. The touchstone of any theory is its relevance to practice. If there is any more it is the capacity to project the successful future. Arming oneself with the understanding of not only of own occupation but also the profession, brings better performance and status. In the crucial operations like planning, this approach suggests strategic venues of thinking which bring good results when applied to the particular circumstances of an institution. To demonstrate this reasoning, one application can be called “Upgrading” comprising the following issues and enclosed advice how to improve the practice by different reasoning. The supposition is that we deal with limitations that need to be overcome in turning, say existing museums, into better places:

Collection

Collection can be poor, limited, partial or simply specialist. In order to overcome its shortcomings, add above, below, behind, beside and around objects, contextualizing, expanding it by borrowing from others, by using secondary material, other media, by treating collection also as interpretive inventory.

Theme or themes

An isolated, specific theme may not be very attractive to many. So, add context, enhance multi-disciplinarity, use comparison, think of the importance of it to others, study and calculate indirect effects ...

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¹⁷¹ Šola, Tomislav. Some trends and tendencies in the Public Memory Domain. See: <http://www.thebestinheritage.com/conference/conference-publications> 2014 edition, pp. 126-134

Past

If you place yourself in the past, put all your messages and conclusions in the past, sometimes because science expects so and at other occasions because it is a safe ground, remember that users like what they connect to their present and like the feeling of getting more ready for their future.

Institutions

Institutions can be severe and uninspiring, - from their name to their atmosphere and their capacity. So, give them a good look, assign them a proper, *personal* name, establish links to other similar or complementary institutions, and build better shows through trans-sectorial attitude.

Science and knowledge

Mengele was, technically speaking, one of the most skilled European doctors. Even monsters can be good at science and possess huge knowledge. So, be the contrary: keep the science, amount the knowledge but connect all to emotions, enter the doubts and the transcendental to question it and often to leave it open; focus on useful and usable knowledge that your users live by; form targets beyond the mere delivery of information; make your outcome a moral and responsible product of science.

Topics

Although everything overlaps (because it must serve the same mission) move away from exclusive speciality and preoccupation with own institution or expertise and make references to issues beyond the local and regional, to the identities other than own. Diversity must always be perceived as richness.

Discourse

Instead of being scientifically dry as cool scientific thinking would have it, shift away from mere informative to creative and communicational; risk, a bit, to shift to the art of theatre and make an attempt to effective dramaturgy, to “montage of attractions”, as both W. Disney and S. Eisenstein knew well and turned it into a most suggestive art.

Any theory will always depict an ideal professional: relegation to reality is the matter of practical circumstances once the concepts are wide and clear. A heritage curator will necessarily be against the tacitly agreed behaviour of curators and archivists that is being usually introvert and somewhat alienated from society. Societies are necessarily run by canons and rules, but the heritage curator should above all respect life, and be open to a constant need for re-thinking, re-definition, re-evaluation as an effort towards improving performance. Opposed to self-indulgence and complacency such professionals, though coming from different academic backgrounds (from *exact* to *soft* sciences) would find their common denominator in the social and humanist sciences. The criteria of the quality of the human condition will be their ultimate art. Like journalists, they, should be able to offer an unbiased view of our circumstances. Knowing the sad destiny of journalism, the prospect of heritage curators may appear gloomy; they share the delicate task of interpreting reality.

There should exist a new one still one among professions that would use the accumulated experience, in evidence and documentation, and using well-equipped public places to effect the transfer of the quality part of that experience, of public memory. They are there to teach quality of life. Schools have some similar public tasks but do it in a peculiar way, sometimes so distorted by their long formal tradition that calls for their thorough redefinition will be repeated from time to time¹⁷². Heritage curators have to possess a capacity for creative and effective communication, self-assurance based upon knowledge and be well informed and ready to stand up to the public judgement of the job and justify the confidence. Besides a usable knowledge of facts, responsibility, integrity, and sense of mission, - good professionals possess a unique sense of measure. In some cases it is called by the simple word of wisdom. Proposing a profession with such high ideals in a world where professions are being reduced to portable, changeable skills does not seem a plausible project, - but needs may prevail finally.

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¹⁷² http://ournature.org/~novembre/illich/1970_deschooling.html; "Deschooling society" is an extremely challenging book of a legendary philosopher and priest, social critic; he describes pitfalls of institutionalization of society.

6. Public memory institutions and their idealist objective

6.1. Mission

Conventional heritage institutions confine the physical substance of heritage within their walls into storage, shelves and glass cases. Within this conservative paradigm and at a “secure” distance from life, heritage withers away or falls prey to advancing commoditisation in some form of privatisation or heritage industry. The new ones (their occupational independence retained) are the chance for new efficiency in matters of public memory (formed all along the flashing configuration of collective and social memory). Museums, archives and libraries are the core of the public memory sector that will mature into a new profession with its proper upper conceptual ground, - its own science, and finally, recognition of its decisive role in strategy of development. A good, well selected, noble memory is unavoidable condition for any societal project.

This science, as cybernetics of heritage, changes the attitude by creating a defence system of identity through understanding, evaluation and supportive action enabling continuity of quality detected in past experiences. The same cybernetic impulses are applied as counter-active in all situations of threat. An expert in the science of public memory should be able to offer a vision of what would be a usable, pragmatic and symbolic use of heritage. The departing assessment would probably be that neither museums nor other heritage institutions are collection but mission based, not object but user centred.

The failure to deliver or fulfil such a vision has been the reason for the certain limping of the entire public sector. Civil society intervened by providing what official domain failed to offer. The space has been also cleared for the private initiative. Collectors were the great source of public museums but nowadays prefer to take up the initiative and offer directly their own, often selfish and biased contribution. The impoverishing state is leaving its responsibilities to citizens also due to the irresponsible passivity of the public institutions and its “professionals” (who do not meet true public expectations). All

professions were created to make the world a better place. The real professions are as a collective body “the grown-ups” of society, able to take responsibility and manage a sustainable, long-term policy that transcends particular and temporary interests, especially of the governing groups but also, paradoxically, of (manipulated) citizens. Theirs is the proverbial role of the elders. This traditional notion of knowledge was always meant to be a sort of privilege of prudence provided by a long, compressed experience. Naturally, the social function of such ultimate importance was always usurped by the religious and secular potentates, therefore rarely realized in its full positive capacity as it was compromised by their particular interests.

Only modern society has had a chance to control these processes of generative, quality memory for the common benefit. Alas, the obstacles are rising and multiplying due to a certain global mediatisation of societies. The violent elites, false by any standard, are plundering not only the wealth of the subdued classes, but also the human chances for survival, - be it in the sense of endangered civic values or the literal survival due to the devastation of the natural environment. It is from this profound social need the PMIs were given the mandate for their function. Though entrusted with such a power, they have never emancipated themselves from their relevant science and its telescoping specialist aspirations. So, gradually the method took the form of the purpose. With the help of societal manipulation (say, by political subordination) and their own opportunism, the PMIs degraded into scribes of power holders instead of establishing themselves as preceptors, instructors, teachers, or tutors.

We necessarily generalize as the excellence in performance and reflection was rare and limited to developed countries and big, prosperous cities. Since the beginning of the 80s the world has become an unsafe and risky place. The mission of heritage, especially in its function of public memory, cannot depend upon politicians and corporate sector, nor can it be entrusted to civil society or to some self-regulation. The very vision, the dream of democratic, free society in its sustainable relation to nature is at stake. Corporations misuse media with the assistance of politicians and campaign rallies to work against a value system that is acceptable to the entire society.

The age of lonely and desperate egoists has been conjured and advocated for some eighty years¹⁷³ as a desirable selfish social code. It now so successfully conquers the planet that the consequence is not only the individual separation, but selfishness that has secluded and isolated individuals to such an extent as to threaten the natural social impulse for collective living. This cult of wild, unleashed egotism has found many ways to express its insatiability. But the principles are pushed outside the domain of economy and finance. Private museums are an intervention into the modern society much the same way as private educational institutions and private health institutions are. There is no harm in their complementing role or in a humble contribution to the society, but any tendency of replacing the public domain in its key positions in managing society's interests is delicate if not openly dangerous. Any advanced community will build its own freedom upon the freedom of minority cultures, sub-cultures and individuals, balancing the harmonious diversity. Equally, the excessive role of politicians and religious authorities in managing culture must be returned to profession(s). Cultural industries and art, when best, can help the process. But PMIs, not-for-profit by definition, should demonstrate their power in giving back to life what they have extracted from it, as injections for the reinforcement of the immune system of their community or society. Acting where the need exists, being part of life is the shortest lesson of philosophy of heritage. Culture that wants to be effective, like heritage, - has to be practised, - lived. Heritage stored in museums is heritage stored in museums, not heritage. PMIs should speak by the language of life and in the favour of it. Heritage, in all its rich complexity, has to be turned into public memory as wisdom to be prescribed to the world in crisis. Of course, nothing of these proposals is new nor will it be endangering present structures: the plausible changes happen by addition and by detecting hidden potentials.

Mnemosophy cannot be but a science in constant change as its domain is the praxis of public memory institutions. As it serves society, it constantly adjusts to the changing world. The profession of heri-

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¹⁷³ Ayn Rand and Edward Louis Bernays are seemingly the symbolic and the functional beginning of that long succession of promoters of dehumanisation of society, - finally triumphant. Caricatures like Donald Trump are only the evidence of the overall degradation of values that has permeated the West.

tage must derive from its own philosophy its ways of reasoning, its inspiration and the arguments for vocational dedication, - to be able to conceive and maintain their mission.

Having the mission or not, may be the divide between an occupation and a profession. An occupation has tasks to solve and needs to fulfil, all concerning the performances of their institutions, but having a mission is a step further. The term implies engagement for the common good, and this attractive claim soon caught the imagination of the commercial world. Any company now procures a mission statement at the very start of any public communication but, though at its best it may be revealing good intentions, or a useful product, - that is still far from serving the welfare. The heritage industry is culture based but still one of the profit driven industries. Any honest endeavour in any profit making industry can claim that the happy customer is its final goal and there can hardly be anything disputable in it. But the mission of any profession is about its specific contribution to the common good of society in its entirety. Having such a mission is the condition for existence of professions. Probably any human being is, at least potentially, born with a mission, - with a possibility to transcend the limits of mere biology and social pragmatism, but institutions have to be made as such. Sadly, many public employees do little to surpass the narrow scope of their selfish interests or the mere skills of their trade. If public institutions or entire sectors fail to do what is their encoded duty, - that is inexcusable.

As disciples that stumbled in the exam, we have to return to the vision of daring great utopias. Creating a world without big visions has led to an entirely non-ideological world turned into chaos and an ideal ground of diverse totalitarian rules. Only utopia as a place and state of ideal perfection can offer steady inspiration¹⁷⁴ towards the realisation of humanist visions. In perfecting laws, government, and social conditions, - security and solidarity are simple values to start with. Striving for a system in which social and civil merits are at the top of the scale of values will offload us from the fascination with selfish profit and other aggressive behaviour. Otherwise it creates

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¹⁷⁴ The hypocrisy created self-indulgent narratives so the required practice has been replaced by the correct public discourse.

pressure upon the cultural and socio-humanist sphere which has to be either entirely freed from pursuit of profit or assisted to retain large independence. The direct profits in the processes of managing public memory are in general and so far rather negligible. The exceptions to this only demonstrate their inherent non-profit nature but also witness that the changing world might increasingly appreciate their soft offer. For the time being at least, any substantial economic benefit will prevalently be the indirect consequence or expressed in spin-off effects. It is however a new econometry and statistic insight that reveal serious relevance of PM sector even in economic terms.

Most conventional museums in the world are inept at coping with the challenges of the world, the needs of their users and the demand for developmental relevance. To make it possible they have to change the mindset and become part of the daily lives of their users and assist them with challenges. To provide for a successful mission within the growing competitive market, public memory institutions have to have an effective theory and daring practice. Their publicly visible experiments demonstrate their new potential, strengthening resistance to threats and enabling reasonable compromise with the administration and sponsors. The examples of well developed heritage scenes give hope that PMIs will not necessarily fall prey to the corporative sector in order to survive the times of scarcity and remain non-profit sector by definition.

6.2. The counter-active nature

Any ethical striving seems to be inherent in human kind so sustainability as a vision of a balanced, harmonious world is not an invention of modern man, nor are its abuses. The lessons to be learned are embedded in the giant memory of mankind, and much of it, though less than claimed, is stored and (still drastically less) exposed.

The already mentioned culture of conquest is based upon a high expenditure of resources: ever more energy intensive and less labour intensive is a lesson badly learned. Our heritage again proved to be a matter of manipulation or mere entertainment because it did not communicate the essence of human experience. The dominant proj-

ect of humanity was to use science and reason to ameliorate the human condition. It has been manipulated into a machine that creates mayhem composed of self-multiplying problems. Forgetting the big humanist agenda, the laborious human nature was steered towards creating industries that solve the artificially created problems. Entrepreneurial human endeavour remained based upon incessant new conquests penetrating into places and domains which were either too distant or too scarce for its requirements. Will PMIs feel part of it or will they be able to denounce this erroneous reasoning by the historical examples, still remains to be seen.

The effort of PMIs could be probably called, after Aristotle, an “intellectus agens”. It is a facility of these institutions for abstracting intelligible and effective communicational contents from different sources of knowledge and human experience and employing them in an active way. They achieve social relevance by finding solutions to problem situations of their community. Heritage institutions strengthen the “immune system” of culture against the invasion of acculturation, the melting of cultures in irreversible process of entropy. Globalising processes in culture are harmful and should not be confused with internationalisation as they bring uniformity to cultures instead of connectedness. Acculturation in the sense of forcefully replacing one culture with another has been always a danger, only the processes today are more aggressive and quicker. In fact, the illusional, instant culture, as created by the Western media and entertainment industries, can annihilate fragile, shattered cultures and lead a process of dis-culturation. Deprived of their framework and support, identities vanish like animal species do in their destroyed natural environments. The East and South (not speaking only about the under-developed countries) are disintegrating before the eyes of the world. Specific cultures and identities exposed to degradation continue their lives only as commodity. In a sense, it is sad paraphrase of conventional museum procedure by which living culture is extracted from life and and “musealised” to continue its empty life in a museum. These “stuffed” cultures and identities are exactly the opposite of productive practice that science of public memory advocates.

PMIs should consolidate self-confidence, pride and awareness of the distinctiveness of the identity of their community by using collec-

tions to reinforce the very existence of their values. Without identity, the awareness of it and its recognisable public input, neither individuals nor communities can win any recognition. “Soft power” that PMIs care for has been recognized by business sector as an asset. The faceless, anonymous production will remain the reality but so will products with a “spirit of place” that count more: at last there is a rising, or rather, deepening pressure upon culture to yield profits. Conventional curators may still lead in the quantity of locally centred knowledge, but they should understand the fine tissue of local identity in order to help it live and change while retaining its recognizable specificity. Curating the quality encompasses that if an identity is threatened with extinction or distortion, museums and other PMIs should be creating the counteraction whose purpose would be to re-empower the dying values, to invigorate the fading features of identity. Heritage is about quality as sifted from the past of changing human experience and about subtle ways to pump it back into society in quantity, quality and timing that corresponds with its needs. At the beginning of any effective museum or other modern heritage institution, there is the enormous conceptual condition: which community, or maybe even which layer or group of it do we want to contribute to? Before acting against or in favour, we have to decide upon the norm, the set of qualities we wish to retain or regain. This is why no job of a public institution is at any occupation’s discretion as norm makes sense only if adjustable and agreed. That makes the importance of building a strong profession real, as it would be able to engage in a wide effort of researched insight and transparent debate upon what kind of public service it should provide. In a managed and growingly hostile world, the heritage institution is an arbiter and opinion maker, friendly, subtle, unimposing, wise, - a strong partner stemming from the wider mission.

Heritage institutions are part of the counter-active defence, a way to sustain the changes while keeping the quality. “Only when men sense the waning history of a civilisation do they suddenly become interested in its history, and probing, become aware of the force and uniqueness of the ideas it has fostered”¹⁷⁵. I guess Bazin would have changed his mind consenting to see that not only history is waning

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¹⁷⁵ Bazin, Germain. *The museum age*. University of Michigan., 1967. p. 6

but civilization itself. That explains why we have recently developed a general awareness that heritage matters. Coming into the spotlight, we shall either be instrumental in earning money for the reigning oligarchies (the corporate world tries that with any value system) or in earning a future. Staying ever tuned to the present and future and treating the past as a means to other goals but itself, we need also to re-invent our original selves, our institutions being changed but still guarding the positive difference towards the others. The change by addition guards the specificity of heritage occupations but builds their cumulative power into a new professional identity.

The wisdom PMIs generate should also be instrumental in bringing down the obsessive speed of the rollercoaster of contemporary development with its ever-increasing impetus. We need to get off as slowing down is probably the basic, banal suggestion of wisdom we have accumulated in our vaults. Memory is about quality. The flood of facts renders them useless and dangerous.

How should we understand Bazin (in the quoted book) claiming that both Athens and Rome were filled with libraries and museums before their decline? He must have been influenced by the harsh “Social contract”, written by a raging Rousseau just before the Revolution who complained that excessive indulgence of culture and arts coincide with decadence and disintegration. Maybe he just wanted to warn that only quality and purpose count. Maybe it is about forgetting the reasons of their creation, not the fact of their flourishing. Or, the reasons for their success were the unfulfilled expectations? The eternal question of art (and science too, by the way) is how far in and in what way are they engaged in managing human destiny. Though much ideologized and disputed, this dilemma seems easy under one condition: the utmost excellence of art and science, free and supported in their unquestionable freedom. That is the most we can offer to their protagonists and to the society, but in never happens. Particular interests of power holders and peoples’ flight from freedom (as Erich Fromm brilliantly warns) make it an impossible and yet obligatory social project. Now, in an age with no vision and absence of care for the future, it is only culture, as a set of values to create or return to, that can put us back on the track of humanist advance. With its formidable stored memory, selected and interpreted,

used as sorts of antibodies, human civilisation may try to fight the defects of its worsening condition. Only a counter-action, strengthening resistance to threats can, defend contemporary society from decadence and loss of cohesion. The mere Confucians' phase, some *li* that would consolidate the rules of good social relationships, will hardly be enough though much of it would help us: the rationality of social order, the sense of measure and a certain respect for the solutions suggested by successful customs and plausible tradition. Sticking to Chinese inspiration, we also the Taoist wisdom, though not without the fighting spirit of the civil revolutions.

So, what should citizens do against threats in an alienated democracy? The prevention, suppression and "re-programming" should be combined because the ruling system proves to be dangerously unsustainable. Citizens must engage ever anew in trying to re-conquer the public institutions (health, education...), "de-profit" public institutions, strike a better deal with corporations, boycott the corrupted politicians and administrators, talk the religious institutions back into the realm of privacy and general spirituality and establish public control of the media (gone wildly corrupted); casino capitalism is not an obliging economic form that would require respect for being, say, a different ideology: mere greed is not ideology but just plain societal perversion imposed upon the economy and social behaviour. A new breed of politicians whose ideal is welfare society must have the ready set of eager professions to help them in all tasks they face, - especially the ones that present new challenges. Thus the civil society and private organisations are called on, but sometimes only to hide the fact that the public sector is discouraged to take up its role. As everything in the world has already happened, the memory, researched, selected and communicated, could offer most of the answers. Without professions, it is possible only to deconstruct and mutilate further the hard-earned civic society experience in the centuries long process of emancipation. Like public intellectuals, the public institutions are now largely compromised by the different extortions, benefits and subtle coercion coming from corporative world and corrupted politicians.

The great task of contributing decisively to sustainable development cannot be achieved without political awareness and social engage-

ment. Democracy is the last utopia we have, a fortress of humanist ethics, assaulted daily and constantly besieged. Besides being a society of equal opportunities, democracy is primarily a society of the rule of law, of, respect for human rights (among them the right to being what one is, as being one's own and different from the others), - the society founded upon virtues inbuilt into a value system. What we now have is, alas, a version of this that retains and encourages the right to vote but, through a range of barriers, denies the right to be a well-informed and educated voter. Understanding that public discourse might suffer from the misuse of collective participation, Voltaire distrusted democracy which he saw as propagating the idiocy of the masses, as it proved to be the case in modern times. Access to unbiased and objective information along with free education as the most effective way of bettering society is the *conditio sine qua non* of democracy. In short, public memory institutions are facing challenging times: they are called upon to make their contribution, yet this cannot be done with their former occupational (soloist and "professional") attitude and their social inaptitude. Their virtues are as old as their vices, but only relatively recently has their extraordinary potential become clear in terms of assisting society in problem solving. It should be that PMIs, like art, come into existence out of need and challenge, that they live out of confrontation and action and that they die out of fulfilment. But "dying" is rather a reminding, unattainable picture of total realisation. Therefore, it suggests their constant rebirth which happens with some needs and challenges fulfilled by the beneficial response and others discovered to be dealt with. Art is not meant for investment, prestige or decoration but to render beauty and harmony to the world, eventually to be spread as the way of true, noble understanding the world and our environment. So archives, libraries and museums are about wisdom and truth. They are not about scientific facts illustrated by the objects but about enjoying and using the immense, stupendous experience of (as the claims is) 90 billion people like us who have once lived on the same planet. If we give up on the idea of progress as advance of human condition all that remains is but a selfish, brutal delirium of possessiveness of endless oligarchies who turn all the rest, be them people, institutions or natural environment into serving their insatiability. Progress cannot be reduced to technology and (neutral) knowledge. We cannot accept that artificial intelligence of the machines is the way

to realize human intelligence. Public memory institutions with solid two centuries of institutional practice cannot accept acclaimed ideal that people are taught the art of short memory and machines the art of thinking. Knowing so much about the phases we have passed in developing our societies, they should consent to *financialization* of economy so that human work is devalued and their economic destiny dependable upon machination at the stock exchange. PMIs have even material proofs of their good insight and understanding of the nature of the world, - enough to denounce technological and biological re-invention as a perverse assault, only to acclaim its authorship and blackmail the entire world population into a disgraceful serfdom or slavery. There are so many museums of water in the world. Naturally, as we all use it for drinking or extract energy from it. All of them should begin or end their site specific story by a permanent or, indeed, a changing exhibition on incredible misuse of it. Treating water with dignity is what they should teach citizens as well as making them aware that the criminal corporative strategies will soon turn water (like as the case with oil so far) into the object of new wars of unprecedented cruelty. There is no theme that lacks its own teleological dimension. PMIs contain myriad of un-showed stories.

6.3. Understanding the users

There is no segment of heritage practice which has not coloured itself with communicational orientation or community commitment. For example, archaeology which for a long time seemed only concerned with science turned very much to outward thinking in its aspects like community archaeology, public archaeology or participatory archaeology. Conservation started to open up its premises to visitors since the middle 80s. Now it works often together with population and makes events or set up exhibitions. The avant-garde national library of France has been creating legendary exhibitions since its relocation almost three decades ago. Archives of France started already in the early 80s creating rare but celebrated exhibitions. There is hardly any archive of significance or any library of importance that does not run diverse, participatory programme for the users. PMIs are coming of age and revealing their prevailing nature: although manifold in their structure, they are a communicational, cultural sector, a sort of so-

cial enterprise by the versatility of their business. To make clear, it is one that creates its communicational contents independently and in a non-profit status.

Democracy is an impossible project without the responsible choice of memory formed into the purposeful whole to serve the best interests of the public good, in making decisions that matter for society. Devaluing of the majority was expressed in all totalitarian societies by the term “masses” which was readily appropriated by a consumer society¹⁷⁶ one way or another, though in pretentious subtleties. Unlike what one could expect, or what has been repeatedly denied in the media, many modern societies are generating crowds in a pejorative reality, intentionally illiterate and desperate. The proofs are many, but the economic traces are most convincing: the biggest and fastest growing class in Western societies is precariat¹⁷⁷. The public education sector in Europe is still resisting but suffers important blows. The imposed and extensive privatisation, the rule of managers and the obsessive push for profits have lowered standards in the public sector so dramatically that we may claim that education is being gradually destroyed. Privatised education is being crushed by the pursue of profit resulting in reduction of social sensitivity, superficial knowledge and, actually, a production of ignorance. Other public services besides education are being increasingly suspended or impoverished, very much in contrast to the proclaimed aims of democracy. However, the PMIs, - the latecomers to the arena of professions, are doing quite well in the prosperous part of the world, not elsewhere though. The unspoken, hardly rationalized underlying condition is that they stay out of the hot public issues and remain what they are, - therefore divided and separated occupations, - not turning into a self – confident, socially engaged profession.

Surveying the users is often understood as recording their wishes and ambitions. The reduced understanding of democracy and the stan-
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¹⁷⁶ Mass culture, mass media, mass-consumption and then a term which bears hardly more respect, - crowd, so often used now, be it as a noun or in compounds is hard to perceive as morally correct.

¹⁷⁷ <https://www.bloomsburycollections.com/book/the-precariat-the-new-dangerous-class/ch1-the-precariat>; the author of the book that stirred a lot of attention is Guy Standing.

dards of spiritual and social quality may suppose that most people know what they need. They quite possibly know what they want, but needs are a higher ground of mind, rather discouraged by the gigantic manipulative input through the media. It is a matter of honesty to admit that “vulgus” is not a Roman invention and that it disappeared with it. In the pink, impersonalised dictatorships of today, most populations are pre-conditioned and manipulated in such a subtle way that they see only what corporations can profit from and what politicians can score upon at election time. Once in position and with legitimacy, the media are pandering to people’s baser instincts. Such a population is not likely to be a helpful interlocutor and therefore we need some kind of possible expertise to deduce plausible and true information from them. The professionalism and responsibility that goes with it is so much more urgently needed, be it in extracting true public opinion or in evaluating our working processes in order to satisfy their needs. Some museums are currying favour with the multitude and slide into “euphoria”¹⁷⁸ but that is a short-term gain just as political systems resting upon the mob would be doomed to failure. In most developed countries only about half the population uses the services of PMIs in some regular way. Paradoxically, it is the non-goers that should be the priority of the institutions as most of the problems and unasked questions are with them. The usual public is conditioned by education, self-indulging, rather conservative and inert when about innovation and radical change. But, having confidence in institutions, they participate and adjust. However, to answer the needs of the silent, unattainable majority is a matter of professional research and good insight into the nature of memory and its public uses. The rule, supported by marketing, is that a good product (that is, the one adjusted to the real needs) will be readily accepted.

A counter-active museum, library or archive (or all of them together) could appropriate much interest if making exhibitions on democracy, on truth, on masses, crowd, classes, on human destiny...The “conspiracy” of modern democracy lies in the fact that people are offered the form while their capacity for taking part in the process

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¹⁷⁸ Sola, Tomislav. Eternity does not live here anymore – A short history of museum sins. Zagreb, 2012.; „Euphoria“ is one of the misdoings.

is either intentionally overestimated (which is demagoguery) or is drastically manipulated by the spinning (that is a fancy way of avoiding the word *lie*), by partial truths, truths mischievously contextualised to look like lies, or simply prompt the reactions of the lowest kind. “Crowd funding” and “crowd sourcing” can also be viewed as terms denoting methods of extracting the last penny from the population and for using their feelings or unemployment as the source of free labour, which in fact is often the case. With minds so totally engineered towards the dream of becoming a millionaire or marrying one, of becoming famous (business person, inventor, writer, composer...) or lucky (winning a jackpot or finding a dusty Rembrandt in the back room of an antique shop) “The Machine” (L. Mumford) can do whatever it wishes with the rights of voters. The ideological era in which public space was functioning upon the presumption that humans are noble beings (after all), when debates and revolutions were possible around the thesis of social equity, - has long passed. The poor now do not crave for quality: they themselves want to be wildly rich and powerful. They are infected by an existential fever, like suffering from social rabies and one sees it on all sides of the world¹⁷⁹. The vanishing middle class splits between those sinking into latent poverty and those who, by their courage and determination use their creativity towards an egoist agenda. The well-being of a society depends on the number of people whose actions transcend their selfish purposes. The ruling value system is reducing that number daily. The world does not need great plunderers turning into great benefactors, as it was the case on so many occasions. Public intellectuals should do well to take up simple questions that bother most people. Say, why would any well-intentioned, normal person wish to possess a billion dollars or dozens of billions? Would a disregard for them instead of idolatry be bad, or would it deprive the world of development? With our magnificent repositories of public memory, with the splendour of human achievement and natural richness of the Earth there presented, we can all rightfully feel rich. With free access, underlying the the idea, it demonstrates simple ideals behind the welfare society and democratic access. With professionals in charge we can enjoy the fruits of this communion. The obsessive acquisition of wealth

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¹⁷⁹ My relatively recent visits to Venezuela, Cuba and China show that the majority of people, the crowd or the masses, are sheepishly craving for the exhilarating consumerism at any price.

and the syndrom of 1% as governing the value systems, can be demolished by concerted actions of cultural, and educational institutions. The mission of PMIs implies research and communicating on all the themes of strategic societal interest, like the “nature of richness”, or “luxury and its meanings in history and cultures”? Offering answers to the big, seemingly banal questions is the way to success.

The most effective manipulation happens within the memory domain. All politicians and corporative decision-makers increasingly rely on spinning or trawling so that public mind is disoriented. They count on the brevity of public memory and produce amnesia by flooding communication channels with trivial information. Their mischievous government thus gets through. Extorted, bought or tacitly served self-censorship of the media is parallel to PMIs' confinement to the themes that cannot hurt the interests of the true stakeholders of reality.

Why is it that we think that museums and archives are about the distant, romantic or dramatic past taken as rather irrelevant for the present? Why does the public think that libraries are passive stores of scientific, non-fictional and fictional writings? Some science of public memory may ponder not only who and how, but what, why, to whom and in whose name, - no matter what the theme is. Generally speaking, the real understanding of users comes more from researching them than from asking their opinion. Whichever party in the social contract offers them a feeling of dignity and security, the essential, durable sensation of both, then that will be successful with them. Alas, they have to be facing the perilous and uncertain future to regain social sanity. The PMI cannot obtain financial security but can contribute to it by liberating creativity, by reminding us of qualities that are oblique or indistinct but existent in an individual, collective or public memory. The qualities of democratic society i.e. of social humanity are: equal chances, humanist ethics, objective information, free education, free access to knowledge, free social and health security, respect for ancestral heritage and respect for nature.... The list is always open and debatable though founded in the charters on rights of humans and rights of nature, but it outlines what makes the quality of life. The meaning of heritage is the wisdom usable for the maintenance of this quality of life provided by

the cybernetic counter-action and efforts of continuation, whoever does them. For their part the entire responsibility of PMIs to their users is contained in the answer if they can perform their specific task in a way that contributes to these qualities.

Visitor and user studies are a common feature in the university programmes, and rightfully so. This contribution was not aimed in evaluating them or adding to their profound knowledge. It is a comment they might use as a reminder when they plunge into their deep experience. The most important issues are banal at least by the form so we tend to neglect them. Are we good enough to our visitors? When you have all the expertise, you will still need some place in your head for your user. He/she will check anything you intend to do and you will immediately know: *Si vis amari ama!* If you want to be loved, love. - says a Roman thinker. And then there is a thought by Goethe who claimed that we only learn from those whom we love. So, these *molecules* of wisdom may matter.

6.4. Heritage movement

True professionalism starts with absolute benevolence in sharing the expertise and spreading the professional wisdom among the laity. Professionals are givers and sharers. They are aware that heritage is everywhere, all equal and valid, making the whole only when it is considered as integrated and comprehensive no matter where it is stored or whether it is still used. The keenest among them understand also that we are all in charge of heritage, while only some have chosen it for their career. Properly understood, they are in charge to be the leaders of the process, regular and knowledgeable in their multiple responsibilities concerning heritage. The process of refinement of memory, to history and then to heritage belongs to various experts not necessarily collaborating, but represents a gigantic collective effort in which the population takes an increasingly active part. It is the strategic duty and moral responsibility of heritage curators to spread the task of memory recording, of its selections and ways of dissemination assisting natural social processes to happen. Exposed to an unprecedented and aggressive change, the world population realises that retaining identity is a question of any survival,

- cultural, political and economic. Losing one's character or specific potentials, be them called soft power or simply uniqueness seems to ruin chances for prosperity and quality living. The task of PMIs is managing this process for the community and with the community, assuring the well selected and needed transfers of relevant experience. Their mission is to act as catalysts and leaders in the process of awareness raising and issuing activism, taking shape as heritage movement.

The movement is already there in some way through the rising membership of thousands of heritage organisations and through the mass-happenings like museum or heritage nights, days or weeks. It is a steady and gradual occurrence, rather imperceptible if regarded or measured in brief segments of time. Even the non-users (which are of course also the non-goers) increasingly feel that museums may be the rare public institutions left at their disposal and, maybe, at their side too. The polls on confidence to public institutions show that. It is the part of the policy of "restructuring" societal property, so much advocated by the international monetary organisations. As the consequence of commoditisation, privatisation is being imposed even to the traditionally public domains. The privatisation in Europe pushes its way into the sector of traditionally official culture and heritage, but each time it encounters a rather strong opposition from all layers of society. But, paradoxically, the heritage sector is nevertheless becoming increasingly private by the fact that private subjects, be them individuals or corporations, take up the initiative and found their own museums, not seeing any more a need for entering public domain via existing institutions. The phenomenon of amateurisation has become the peril and, in a sense, a chance for the heritage sector too. It became rationalized as a phenomenon of the present relatively recently through the development of Internet and the new culture of participation, but actually applies to all the facets of life¹⁸⁰.

The corporative sector is perfectly skilled to use the opportunities that scarcity creates. When marketing suggested that we get clear about who our stakeholders were, the question initiated a well need-

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¹⁸⁰ Shirky, Clay. *Here Comes Everybody - The Power of Organizing Without Organizations*. Penguin Group, 2008; 327 pp

ed discussion about the ownership of museums. In the European East the “boss” was the abstract “people” (the state, in practice) but the most advanced European countries enjoyed the difference as “people” were citizens, with well defined rights and seemingly a prosperous future. In France it was always a proudly declared state standing up for its citizens as their incarnation. Now the citizenry is passing some globalizing tendencies and much is at stake of the former ambitions for the free society. These citizens form our “community of users”, at different levels and contexts, but they need our beneficial presence. The discussion on entrance fees is as long as the existence of museums. It has intensified in the 80s and some *status quo* has been achieved, - most of them charging the entrance fees. The long discussion on free access is by far finished or abandoned, as the practice in United Kingdom where access to national museums is free still demonstrates. It continues to puzzle the economic and socially conservative societies, especially now when the legitimacy of profit has grown beyond traditional limits¹⁸¹. No matter what will future bring (though it takes courage to be optimistic) the free access to public memory institutions will remain one of the great achievements of the spiritual ambition of the secular society. Our public memory institutions, however communicational, quotidian and secular, are in a sense also the temples of science and humanism, - a major historical contribution of *civitas* to the spirituality of society.

Most people understand heritage as a natural phenomenon, a sort of common sense. A step further, all are easily convinced that there are values and memories that make us what we are, and that the process of verbalizing, let alone of recording the issuing narratives is far from being simple. Yet, in modern society, unlike in the primitive one, the slippery ground of collective memory can be crossed safely (without being trapped into mystifications, illusion, preconceptions or harmful biases) only by the help of science and, if possible, professional guidance. In a society of *great greed*¹⁸² anything is targeted

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¹⁸¹ The former socialist countries where socialist ideas have compromised by the corrupt bureaucracy now live the hard experience of wild liberalism within an atmosphere of a general, imposed belief that left ideas have proven useless and discredited.

¹⁸² I have been using this syntagm, in my lectures and writings since the late 90s. It describes well, I believe, the essential character of troublesome times we live in.

to become a commodity so the culture and heritage can become industries driven by profit. The excessive privatisation has impoverished the modern state. This made it crucial to define the limits of the public sector and the activities that should be funded with public money. The private sector has found ways not only to privatise what was public before but to extort public money. If private education, administration and private prisons exist, why shouldn't we renounce public ownership of museums, archives and libraries and sell them or give them over to private individuals or corporations? It is an Orwellian scenario but a close one too. It heavily coerces culture and heritage to commercialisation because it sees there unexploited, potential earnings. The high price of opening to business is the gradual disappearance of public mission. The consequences are probably, in a strange way, even more serious than we know them in the commercialisation of health, education and public services. Generally it brings rising prices, lower quality, further destruction of the middle class, it gives a new push for the rich to get richer and causes further impoverishment of the poor. Though we have seen that the pretext of crisis can lead to the empowerment of imposing political figures without prior elections, - we still enjoy the potential of the massive vote. It has become crucial to the rise in the quality of information upon which voting is done. Therefore the general mindset has to imply sensibility towards the generative issues of heritage and identity, so that time for action is not spent on acquiring basic social and cultural literacy. There is no value that cannot be humiliated by the lack of expertise, knowledge and taste¹⁸³. We could probably return our stolen wallets but hardly the stolen memory. To put societal memory in the private hands and make it dependable upon making profit even sounds like a dangerous development.

With a highly professional public memory sector supported by a wider, active citizenry, which is still not the case nowadays, cultural industries would have a good competitor and quality motives to earn their profits by working themselves for the common good, - at least to the extent of sustaining from doing the outward harm referring to the basic instincts of growingly illiterate public. Fortunately, part of

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¹⁸³ Šola, Tomislav S. Eternity does not live here any more - glossary of museum sins, Zagreb, 2012.

the public sector are in an unexpected way the activists, - representatives of the otherwise silent or suppressed majority. They are natural and beneficial response to the terrible fix in which the public sector finds itself. The best, the liveliest part of civil society, is led by excellent professionals; this, of course, only means a salutary mix of power represented by the civic activism and good, experienced governance towards the strategic objectives of the society. English Heritage¹⁸⁴ (until recently a state founded and financed institution) has 665,000 members who pay 45 pounds a year for their membership fee. The organization however, has more than 1,500 employees in various statuses, and 75% of the budget is public money, but it additionally realizes a third of it as own income. It maintains and takes care of 400 locations, which are annually visited by 5.5 million visitors. To make things better for the public memory of UK, this covers only one part of the heritage outside museums. The other part is taken care of by a non-governmental organization National Trust¹⁸⁵, which has 3.5 million members, 52,000 volunteers (who have contributed in the year 2007/8 about 2.3 million hours of work), in maintaining “their” 300 historic buildings, 45 monuments of industrial heritage (plus forests, lakes, swamps, villages ...) which were visited that year by 12 million visitors. These data are old and since then the National Trust has improved its performance in serving the public need for identity maintenance. Fortunately, the practice and the experience of National Trust has spread, by the power of good example and party as tradition in Commonwealth world-wide, so it made possible the hub organisation INTO (International National Trust Organisation) which organises regular meetings and has recently managed to include wider participation of its membership.

This is changing the professional atmosphere and both the state and the institutions are seeing new chances in an activist attitude. In Ireland, “Heritage Council” is a state owned, but “community based” organization, whose purpose is to “engage, educate and advocate, in order to develop a broader understanding of the vital contribution that our heritage makes to our social, environmental and economic

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¹⁸⁴ http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/upload/pdf/Annual_Report_and_Accounts_0708.pdf?1247903125

¹⁸⁵ http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-trust/w-thecharity/w-thecharity_our-present.htm

prosperity.”¹⁸⁶

Fast growing number of organizations has begun filling up the space for action which is left out by the state institutions. In Poland Association “Propamatky” collects all the information concerning the heritage condition, needs, references to the media and politicians, available jobs, user education, magazine, tips to raise funds for the repair, restoration ... The association is a necessary and effective key-stone of the heritage care system. Such Associations grow one after another, and their positive energy and commitment grow fast, overcoming the local boundaries. “Asociacion Castano y Nogales” has, out of nothing, so to speak, emerged to be engaged in “network of trails that make up the core element of the European identity”; they may fail, but the positive energy will be, at least locally, to materialize as a 15 km long promenade and the experience and contacts gained will lead them further. Interestingly, for these new, mobile tasks the business world and politics find a common language with culture: “Fondacion de Patrimonio Historico de Castilla y Leon” gives awards to high schools in their activities on discovering the local heritage. Numbering such initiatives is rather the matter of electronic media as only there can we trace this dynamic scene, updating the swift changes. Flexibility in the organization and keen interest in discovering the needs erupted in several hundreds of organizations.

There is a widespread often unspoken reticence of ceding culture and nature to patenting and private ownership and, with the rise of humiliation imposed by the insolent, reckless 1%, we might see the protest growing. The oligarchies manage to suggest that such protests are political or ideological, or even leftist (whatever that may mean nowadays), and they build up repressive strategies to prevent them. But once the numbers increase and some professional structure articulates the claims for public control of societal memory, the voices of the civil society will appropriate the attributes of a movement. Heritage is part of human rights, an expression of public memory and a domain of freedom to be guaranteed. Even curators in it, though scientifically trained and responsible, will be more the leaders, - sort of shamans of the movement where their scientific

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¹⁸⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heritage_Council_%28Ireland%29

concern will convert to an extent into an “ideology” of identity: acting as catalysers and guiding the processes with the rising participation of population they will support the crowds of votaries, followers and adepts. After all, we know that the 60’s, seemingly out of blue, emerged the ecological movement and turned into a doctrine of sustainable development. The latter has become a political topic for the many global political and economic summits. It has not been a triumphal march but we have preserved some chances for success. The heritage movement in making will not be as massive but will emerge as still another popular response to the risks that the world faces.

The mission of the movement, only partly centred in institutions like museums, will be a multiple one. Ideally, it would be realised as a Total Museum¹⁸⁷, an ideal consciousness about values so that no institution or rule would need to be applied to protect them. This being outright impossible, in the harsh reality we shall just persevere in seeking ever growing awareness of the population for the matters of public memory and the ways it is formed. Equally, the ultimate realisation of the museum idea is dissolution of museums by the fulfilment of their mission, the same way that a completely healthy population could renounce their hospitals. An equally idealist goal in democracy might be to dissolve the state as a repressive mechanism due to the perfection of the system of self government. The idealist goals are practical as they provide orientation; being unattainable we only try to approach them as close as possible, to have them as a constant call for de-institutionalisation and freedom. Whether the movement will result in still more organisations on the local and global level¹⁸⁸ and turn into a trans-sectorial network like a possible “Global Heritage”, an organisation yet to be, - comparable to Greenpeace and others of the sort, - matters little but pieces of this puzzle are being assembled by the logic that produces them: we have interests in heritage and interests necessarily get organised.

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¹⁸⁷ Šola, Tomislav. *Prema Totalnom Muzeju (Towards the Total Museum)*, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, 2013.
¹⁸⁸ World Federation of Friends of Museums, an organisation affiliated to ICOM has probably, though loosely and indirectly, over 6 million members.

6.5. Making the world a better place

The Absolute may have demonstrated a lack of insight not protecting his/hers spectacular product such as Earth by a copyright, - neither the whole nor the particularities of this immense complexity. Quite carelessly, a Christian God (for instance) entrusts to (his) humans control and ownership over nature and other people and puts it in writing. It did not help humans and has enabled barren and greedy entrepreneurs to steal and change the product with the help of embarrassed and corrupted scientists. We need more of those to stand against and lead this dynamic process, sometimes appropriating, and other times correcting the changes to suit the best interests of humans and nature. Therefore, for the profession of public memory, knowing the world is being able to respond.

Knowledge society

Public memory is part of this understanding of the world. But, the memory institutions, maybe even the decision makers, should agree at least to an outline of the solution. It is said that the so-called *knowledge society* is the general goal of all. But, as it has already been mentioned in another context, we are the Knowledge society already. Besides the rising sea level due to pollution, the rising oceans of knowledge might also be a problem. Do we indeed need “more knowledge” as we are constantly reminded or just different one, - some better, superior kind of it, - selected, compressed, filtered, humanist, responsible...? The growing sea of conventional knowledge actually reversed the rivers that filled it so that we may talk about the intentional production of ignorance. Paradoxically, most public memory institutions know little or nothing about the present while knowing much about past. They rarely put the past into the function of present. In a documentary on the Smithsonian Institution released in the late 70s, its legendary secretary, Sidney Dillon Ripley a natural historian (*exact science!*) claims that the role of museums is, *verbatim*, the “salvation” of society. Memory is blessed though it leaves us with messages to be understood only later: what at the time to many sounded as a figure of speech now becomes a reality.

Post-ideological world

PMIs never offered much usable comment on the great changes in the world after 1989, let alone offered pragmatic, critical conclusions. It was an obvious fall of The Wall and the dictatorship of single party, but what was it the beginning of? Bluntly, “of democracy”, the claim goes, but how come that we ran into wars, conflict, unrest on the very European stage. Quite obviously, we shall have to wait once again for memory institutions to consume their “right” to historic distance to tell what we have been able to store as evidence in the real time. The owners of the truth change but they tell what they have to say or remain silent when publicly summoned. Unsustainable and gloomy as it was, Eastern European socialism was never structured upon megalomaniac greed. Socialist elites were cheating on the covert privileges but economic substance was neither compromised nor endangered. If it was, then it was by incompetent bureaucracy, but so very often by unmotivated and careless workers as well. Unlike the West of the time, the East was an unsettling site of neglect and the meanest egalitarianism. Yet, free education, free health care, full employment and free housing turned, by the mentioned incompetence and apathy into an even distribution of poverty. Its dullness and monotony were notorious, but precariat and chaos were not the probable results of any likely scenario. It collapsed due to its immense bureaucracy, social irresponsibility and sabotage of the West. Metaphorically, Kodak colour photos and movies (which impeccably induced the hunger for glamour and egotist dreams) and the inconceivable concept of mortgage (that is of quick, easy ownership) were the killer blows. Nobody dreamt or doubted that behind this attractive, prosperous society, there could be a lurking deviation; since then the world has turned into a glamorous, gaudy and carnival-like hubbub of permanent kermis amidst revolutions, wars, mass tourism, millions of panic-stricken refugees and travelling mercenaries. The post-ideological masters of the Great Greed Era got rid of both the conventional capitalism and the long socialist experiment, both of which were relevant solutions for the societal contract. The false myth of omnipotent market economy has obstructed the fact that the solution is always at its place, - somewhere in between and close to the vision of welfare society. Would it be closer to the powerful individuals or the crowd is precisely the subject of social agreement.

Pandering to the public

Instead of any sort of a known capitalism, in its name the world has been offered a financialisation of economy into a sort of casino capitalism in which the stakes are real but the rules are not. Business people were pushed into becoming tricksters and swindlers, which (some claim) was not a difficult task. The quality of mass production was made dependent upon advertising campaigns and lobbyist intriguers. The Planet that was by some supposed to be the gloomy community of united proletarians turned into a Mouse Planet, Planet Hollywood, a version of Huxley's brave new world.¹⁸⁹. One was heading towards the welfare society taking the wrong path while the other still advocates democracy while destroying values of public interest. Since ancient Rome, *vulgus* was not in such a way the induced, underlying social reality only to make the top 1% live in the apogee of power and richness: the poorer and more chaotic the environment, the greater seems their euphoria of exceptionality. Paradoxically, the disparagement of the mob is hidden by the distorted myth of individualism as the right to the notorious Warhol's "fifteen minutes of fame", - not a space of personal freedom and growing up. This prescribed individualism, as André Gide knew a century ago, can be "pitiable" or "regretful". It produced selfish, lonely and greedy individuals, - darkly glorified by the media. Never before was individualism such a cult and the mob such a reality. In this social environment, PMIs which are truly the means of democracy are at loss, because they lack all prerogatives of a powerful profession to oppose or negotiate.

Managing memory

Science, be it at universities or in PMIs, can prove by evidence that it can solve problems, -that it can be useful. It can suggest that the flow of knowledge, as collected and researched by curators, must be employed for the benefit of the owners of institutions. It can demonstrate that the past utters powerful words of wisdom to those who use collective memory institutions as decoders and amplifiers. A scientist of the somewhat occult art of memory, Ramon Lull revealed that this art was no longer passive memorizing but "an art of inves-

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¹⁸⁹ Huxley, Aldous. The Brave New World, Chatto & Windus,1932.

tigation, an art of finding out truth. It asked questions”¹⁹⁰. Instead of treating the reality as a matter to be memorised, Lull advocated memory as the objective, - based upon research and responsibility, in which abstract ideas and virtues should be actively pursued. Within such complex memory “intellectus” is in charge of research of what has to be understood, whereas “voluntas”, the will, decides how to apply such memory. A very modern view and maybe a testimony to universal language¹⁹¹ we have been instinctively trying to find. In organizing memory he saw a potential of revealing all the truths about world. Lull’s pragmatic effort was conversion of Muslims to Christianity, but persuasion remains inexhaustible inspiration for memory accumulation. Pentagon’s Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) in a programme that started in 2011 even looks at finding ways to engineer memory so as to generate versions of events that could be used in attempts to persuade people not to support the enemy. Known as Narrative Networks, it seeks to “understand how narratives influence human thoughts and behaviour, then apply those findings to a security context in order to address security challenges such as radicalisation, violent social mobilization, insurgency and terrorism, and conflict prevention and resolution”¹⁹². Any narrative is constructed upon memories but their interpretations can change perception, conclusions and, consequently condition any reaction. To reveal the cumulative potentials of PMIs in engineering consent makes their case all the more delicate. To deny the potential of making positive selections and choices in their entire working process would be futile. All professions are there to guarantee the ethical and scientific impartiality of their engineering. We have always lived in the managed world, only now we cannot look away.

PMIs – a role of public intellectual

Culture has many domains, different protagonists, an immense configuration of institutions, professions, occupations and social phenomena. It is finally perceived by the most pragmatic sceptics as building power. There is a growing awareness that the tourism industry depends upon culture and heritage. Yet, PMIs have not

¹⁹⁰ Yates, Frances A. *The Art of Memory*. The University of Chicago Press, 2001. p.190

¹⁹¹ <http://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/L/bo3620360.html>

¹⁹² <http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20120501-building-the-like-me-weapon>

convinced decision makers that they are productive and need more space and support. A famous Croatian poet writer and publicist (A. G. Matoš), noted more than hundred years ago, while studying Polish history: „Sienkiewicz defends Poland better than Kosciusko., – (the later being the famous statesman). Once, cultured and enlightened people, *culturati*, *illuminati*, were just intellectuals. In modern times those terms acquired negative connotations of shallow philosophizing, phrase mongering and belonging to secret groups etc. Gradually, intellectuals have consented to probably their lowest rate in modern history. In times when society might dump culture by turning it over to business sponsorship for survival, PMIs should demonstrate solid and stable possessions of knowledge and experience inherited from the past for the public use. First, they should probably try to defend the role of public intellectual, as they are only an institutional extension of it. In narrowing the space of futile speculations and sensationalism they can make exhibitions like “Lost meanings - the history of interests”, or simply “Illuminati” to expose uses and abuses of great insight and knowledge, so that public can judge them.

The pursuit of truth and the risk

In its entirety the PM sector contains an enormous and yet dismembered body of human experience that can help their communities appropriate a stance and opining upon otherwise oblique, manipulated themes. When was the last time we made an exhibition “Free-masons – the myth and reality”? The practical knowledge tells that we should spectacularly disassemble the myth and pose more important questions, like who needs to scare us with freemasonry? The masonry of today diluted into hundreds of thousands of *lodges* scattered to the last village in Alaska, composed of elderly immature males frustrated by their threatened masculinity and utter insignificance. At their best, they are just another (socially unfair) power club, one of many, disguised into seemingly esoteric myths. Maybe proposing them as a historical scapegoat serves to hide the real plots and organisations; any interest clique hiding from the public insight can disguise itself into masons or any other organisation of interest. In the course of such dissection the notorious and “benign” networking may reveal its gloomy and oblique forms of organized interests. Maybe we should use the exhibition events as clearing away (by open

discussion) other conspiracy theories that, rightfully or not, occupy our public space (Bilderberg, Babylon, Opus Dei, le Cercle, The Illuminati etc.). What is a better use of collective experience than denounce the known protagonists in their present disguise? Who would explain, say, usury in a historical perspective, or clear up some terms like “robber barons” and tycoons, so that we may see what social and moral defects we encounter in different times and spaces, disguised in the attire of modern technologies and new buzz words. The human condition is always concerned with the same grand issues and they always appear anew, disguised by a different context of social, technological and economic circumstances. There is the engineered mass conviction that welfare society is but an idealist dream, historically proved as dysfunctional. Can we add some arguments to the truth? The negative myth of the Earth that is unable to feed its growing population can be discredited by any engaged and socially active science or natural history museum. Can the cluttered storages of PMIs yield anything better than healing truths that function as mythbusters? Well posed questions and public debate would suffice in narrowing the space of manipulation or double manipulation of public space.

The claim is that the practice of heritage institutions becomes better as the result of any newer theoretical approach, mnemosophy included. A new mindset suggests immediately to any practitioner dozens of neglected themes; it may recall hundreds of desperately needed exhibitions, - maybe even new heritage institutions. Either we cannot conceive why we would extract some of the wisdom from the hundreds of millions of physical objects and stored knowledge resources (in our institutions) for the public use, or we are afraid we might step over the invisible line of allowed, socially or politically conditioned behaviour. The question: What if your main sponsors or stakeholders fit the description of deceivers we are willing to unmask? In both cases we're but hostages or concealers of sinister ventures, and certainly not a profession, autonomous as any should be. Of course, most professions are largely compromised but that is a visible sin because they are visible as professions. Such shortcomings are then the object of correction or critique. The imperfections of heritage institutions are not obvious to the general population because they do not recognise us as a public factor. Their malcontent is

not rationalized and articulated.

Complementing schools

Our public institutions will tell us a lot but little of it may be of what we really need. Why is it that after a dozen years of schooling most people do not understand the nature of loans, interests, mortgages etc.? They fail to understand the basic rules of the society in which they have to pass their lives. The famous cry from the depth of human experience directed to the responsibility of disciples should have been instead turned to preceptors: *Scitote discipuli, vos no scholae sed vite discere!* (Know students, no school, but for life, you learn!). Can PMIs afford the same mistake? Are institutions able to help at all or we witness a certain inability to deliver? Most things that we live by or live with are not explained in our public memory institutions. They are not taught in schools and can rarely be accessed at faculties. The usual knowledge transfer implies that we should all be given a chance to become (however pale) a copy of the geniuses that produced that (scientific) knowledge. Most of the knowledge in average schools in Western countries is either unnecessary, precocious or is improperly presented. No one teaches the young how to find their own place in society, how to choose a partner or friends, or what is the meaning of human existence and how we are constantly led up the garden path or sold down the river. Who will explain that democracy, as presented by politicians, corporations and their media, is a mere manipulation system in which freedom and welfare are not objectives? Heritage institutions, and museums as the most communicative among them, will not save the world but they can contribute to the solution. Defining them through the virtues and qualities that make their mission a plausible one is a worthy task.

Understanding the troubled world

Public memory institutions have much to say about the fears and inhibitions that bother their users or non-users, both sides being the taxpayers that make them possible. The role of public memory institutions is to refine the raw material (knowledge) into a superior value, a finished product (wisdom). The true profit for society lies in the quality of that transformation. With PMIs as they are, the bet-

terment of society remains a suggestion, - a possibility occasionally demonstrated. To improve, they should enable us to understand the world and our place in it: "The simple message of cybernetics is: Understand yourself! Look at what you are doing!"¹⁹³. And that, without adding much, seems to be a sound basis for any PMI's mission. We, as individuals and collectively, have to be well aware of what we are and what we are doing. Most PMIs, as they are now, do not help us: they prefer either scientific aloofness or nostalgic passivism as both approaches are well tolerated by the power holders and by the educationally conditioned public.

Marketing says clearly that there cannot be a successful product without all its arguments based upon analysis, be it the market, users or a situational one. Hidden in management mystifications is a cry of common sense that most people today, professionals included, do not care or do not arrive at understanding the world they live in. As it changes so should we in it, accordingly: sometimes to adjust, at other times to adopt its values and on other occasions oppose it. The myth of knowledge is imposed to block the need for understanding. Of course, the more scientific and objective the analysis the better, but, again, the standpoint, the world-view and definition of mission are a delicate matter. Professionalism is a wide, elaborated platform, agreed and consented upon as a set of values the professionals stand for, what they depart from and return to, - what can sustain all basic challenges be they cultural, religious or political. The science of public memory must be able to endure a harsh winter, tropical rain and sandstorm and remain effective and workable¹⁹⁴. Namely, western museology was never appropriate to be applied to Africa or Asia; it is by paradox that those locally in charge of conservation of identities have become part of alienation, simply by letting other cultures offer ready responses like they would be automatically appropriate for somebody else's particularity. Any science must be based upon concepts and principles that make it applicable anywhere as it never conditions the practical solutions that inevitably stem from the par-

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¹⁹³ Duyun, Roel van. 1982. Prema novoj moralnoj revoluciji. *Kultura*, No 59, 1982. Beograd.

¹⁹⁴ Šola, Tomislav. The Limited Reach of Museology. *Museology and Developing countries - help or manipulation?* ICOM/ICOFOM Annual conference and symposium, 1988, Hyderabad, India.

ticularities of any place.

This science should be able to suggest putting heritage and our knowledge about it forward in trying to improve the world. Sceptics immediately jump up saying that it provokes totalitarian ambitions and means unavoidable ideologisation like it isn't the daily ambition of any person of significance or of a public institution. Just remember what the poet Auden said¹⁹⁵. There will be an eternal difference between wild liberalism and the welfare society. Humanism cannot hesitate in advocating the common good in a mixed, free economy, where free education would affirm virtues and denounce greed as the only content of the proposed non-ideological society. It is a harmful and dangerous fallacy to interpret freedom as loneliness and selfishness, tolerating hypocrisy as the public face of social violence. The lost individual, unsupported by community and humanist values is usually unable to form value judgements necessary to provide for any usable version of democracy guaranteeing peace and solidarity. Even great knowledge does not suffice, but understanding human needs and rights, and humanist ethics does. Though briefly explained in this book, it seems obvious that this understanding acts as a usable departure point of the desired theory.

As the world suffers mankind is exposed to the degradation of value systems, be it nature or social structures. They are in the process of decomposition into more primitive forms, in a sort of general decline. There is a degeneration of former balances or achieved sophistications in the organisation of society, social justice, and public services. Food, water, air, soil...are endangered in quality within a generation or two, within the span of living collective memory. The entropy is turning values into useless chaotic mess, making the world unhealthy, ugly and dangerous place. It is the general involution, social, cultural and spiritual. The ability and willingness to produce strong illusions turned into the general malice drowning contemporary society's religious, social and political institutions into dangerous hypocrisy. The contemporary world is suffering processes probably similar to those Babylon has gone through with successive

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¹⁹⁵ "We are here to do good. What others are doing here, - I would not know". Wystan Hugh Auden, English and American poet.

destructions, that China experienced after the Mongol invasion, or what Arab culture suffered after Seljuk intrusion¹⁹⁶. At present the reality in most of the countries of the West can be described as a lowering of standards attained through centuries of bourgeois class rule and emancipation of citizenry. Specially hit, and paradoxically so, are the former socialist or communist countries: with the defeat of the political system some social achievements have been denigrated and devalued as a civilisational mistake. Accelerated, socially unnatural transition (and in some cases induced wars) left devastating damage in the total configuration of values no matter what facet of life, nature or culture they concern. The false elites, assisted, initiated, instigated, stimulated by greedy Western corporate capital and insatiable banks forestalled any constructive reaction to the shocks of such intensity. They made many countries pray to this involution and turned them into a burden to themselves and the world. The European Union, alas, was formed more according to a political and economic pragmatic agenda and not nearly enough by the humanist vision of a harmonious, equitable, rightful unity of differences¹⁹⁷. Culture, heritage, indeed public memory, again failed to play the decisive role. The revisions of history in most of these nations “born again” took unjustified and retrograde forms. There is a war of the collective, but also public memories, smouldering beneath the facade of official diplomacy. The opposed narratives chose historical arguments by their pragmatic preference. Some ghostly troops are again marching the same streets they misused 65 years ago. The changes that happened in museums and PMIs are visible and dramatic but hardly anybody dares to comment them critically in public. The understanding of the world may be regarded as a general, maybe too general a claim (valid for any profession) but in this case of the “engineers” of public memory it has to be top class: responsible and honest, socially engaged and mission-minded.

Understanding of the world will necessarily lead to pondering its future. It will not be resolved in knowing the existence and nature of the ever new unattainable planets in the Cosmos. Even the almighty

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¹⁹⁶ Even if improper, these examples should suggest that the past abound in hundreds of instructive happenings illustrating our fatal inability to learn from it.

¹⁹⁷ Šola, Tomislav. The three faces of Europe. International Cultural Centre, Cracow, 2006

technology will neither be our saviour nor our fatal indomitable adversary. We shall be our fate as we are but our own given eternity. The noble task of recognizing and maintaining the best of what we are able to produce (in our clandestine effort to imitate gods) will finally excel all our other abilities.

Product as action and responsible strategy

The immediate “historic” prospects are grim. So, awaiting political and economic change to tumble into a different paradigm, we have to build up the means and tools of still another turn of social evolution: the affirmation of quality - in fact the return to quality. It is a long process to be simultaneously taken up by a few concerned professions, and it may well be that the real start will need some state of climax, some purgatory tragedy. That is certainly a theme for other concerned professions like politicians and history scientists. Our will be to use all the available experience and serve the society by restoring, preserving and communicating the parts of the damaged value systems that deserve to be re-introduced into societal consciousness. This task, again, is not about collecting objects but negotiating who we are and what we want to become. Objects and images may be a mnemotechnic structure of it. That is what public memory is about: admitting the change, but moderating it, - recognising quality and enabling it to continue for the sake of society as any other of its public services. The restoration and re-use of humanist ideals is also the big task we might not notice by turning our attention to particularities. Our tasks, - so simple and clear in our restoration laboratories or our storages, get their real shape when we raise our eyes and see that they only make (part of) a material substance reminder of our mission. To meet such challenges that penetrate into the very substance of culture, into the very nature of heritage as a common value of public memory, - we shall need a good theory and practice forging strategies that only a specific scientific discipline can elaborate and maintain.

Besides the already mentioned immediate applications of scientific experience (transfer of professional experience, defining mission, defining excellence, setting criteria for collecting) we have that projected importance which is becoming part of the strategic solution to

the amassed problems of the contemporary world. If based upon exploitation of the lowest impulses of human nature, it is being reduced to human involution or wars as humiliation of humanity. PMIs and their theory can actively fight for peace¹⁹⁸.

But, all great things are usually the consequence of persistent daily practice according to some professional philosophy and the issuing strategy. So, trying to demonstrate responsibility of any theorizing to suggest practical attitudes and decisions, I propose these points for further reflection:

- Conservation starts by a mindset, by a world-view. You are not here only to appropriate your job and do it within then walls or reach of your institution. You are here to spread your job as inspiration, as a way of thinking and the way of behaviour, - as a certain culture of memory. So schools, media and convincing quality practice of individuals and institutions is the true beginning and the only usable fate of any conservation. PMIs are islands of care and inspiration, places of excellence that should spread into the *total museum* as a sort of sensitivity and awareness that would, ideally, make museums obsolete and unnecessary.
- In small places and in provinces often exposed to depopulation, some subventions are obtained and channelled through the local heritage institution, usually a museum that protects traditions. Thus, supporting local identity and pride encourage people to stay; PMIs have often to assume the role of the elderly brother, a more experienced and educated one and engage in administrative and organisational matters that stand in the way of any development of community. When in the need of repairing traditional architecture or maintaining old craftsmanship inexperienced people have to be taken by the hand and led through the labyrinth of administration and forms to fill. Local heritage curator can build or reinforce their arguments for saving their old house when they have the crisis of motives and find the proper professionals to do the job. In many countries permanent ser-

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¹⁹⁸ Šola, Tomislav. Can theory of Heritage help peace? // Museums for Peace: A Contribution to Remembrance, Reconciliation, Art and Peace / Gernika-Lumo : Fundacion Museo de la paz de Gernika, 2006. pp. 360–365.

vices consisting of various professionals have been established; being neither from museums nor from the conservation they prove the wide contours of the future profession.

- The successful survival of traditional crafts can be helped by turning the usual workshops into economuseums. This has been a successful story in Quebec and spread widely by the mere logic of the endeavour. The formidable results come out as a result of unusual strategy that assures functional unity of top intellectuals/professionals and practical, ordinary people with their skills, traditions and ambitions for prosperity. The structures are done in constant agreement with tourist industry. What is important, these „museums“ are self supported and provide jobs.
- Conservation of built heritage has changed its doctrine in the last decade or two. It does nothing without forethought about the future use of the object and without foreseeing the interpretation of the place. The programme for any endangered value is thus the condition offering arguments for re-vitalization. Only then will life get back and the maintenance will be assured. If good, the programme will guarantee sustainability as monument has to live on its own arguments that PMI in charge can research and finding firm ground propose solution which are logical and inherent to the nature of the object.
- Use and encourage or own media to educate, influence, indoctrinate, prove, and promote. Building a circle of like minds and susceptible potential partners is crucial as they can also spread your messages. Deals with the profit-making media are rare as they insist upon attractiveness and sensationalism and are not ready to work for results that would take long time to become visible. PMIs have to have their media or state supported deals where they can prove and follow their case with more success.
- Allow change which is inevitable; since PMIs are managers of change, of course, change is welcome if it stems from the specificity and keeps some of its spirit. Identities change but some do it successfully by retaining the *red line*, the generative forces of its specificity alive. The economuseums' model comprises that the production they protect and affirm possesses a dimension beyond mere reproducing the tradition, - a new, derived and yet acceptable part of tradition. Since PMIs are about managing change they should change themselves too; this partly explains

why such tasks cannot be entrusted to a mere occupation.

- Marketing¹⁹⁹ is about making a good, logical, virtuous, necessary, useful, honest product; conceiving and sharing the quality product is the essence of marketing well understood. Users are paramount because marketing is defined as exchange. All the rest about methods and technologies rightfully fills the handbooks where the true nature of marketing may rarely be obvious. Consequently, PR is not a self sufficient occupation but a part of marketing: an art of making the virtue (of a product or value) known and appreciated with the right arguments, and providing trust and support for the protagonists of it to proceed to a fair exchange.
- You are there to make the life of your community/users, - better; this is an attitude and professional commitment which, when it comes with both, rational and affective arguments, opens up to creative solutions and fulfillment.

Direct action option

The last statement, however true, may sound like a good, unobliging intention. But the contrary is the case. Assistance given to the users and community can be very palpable. Again, one can use distant calls for the correct orientation: *Res, non verba!* /Deeds, not words! People like to see the real, palpable consequences happen. The past will make sense if used to meet the shortcomings and diminish the threats of the very community of the users that the concrete PMI serves. Such needs will always be specific but from knowing our society there is probably a sort of general list of problems bothering an average community. It is probably very long, but any PMI dealing with specific culture or circumstances can do its own exercise. This is a process similar to creating the mission statement (as theory of marketing explains in detail) and it is possible departure analysis for a programme. Needless to say, it is not about saving the world but may certainly be about contributing to it. Here are some *hypes* for “making the world a better place”, a short and arbitrary list of prob-

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¹⁹⁹ T.Šola, Marketing u muzejima ili o vrlini i kako je obznaniti. Zagreb: Hrvatsko muzejsko društvo, 2001. pp. 322. (The title translates into: Marketing in museums or about the virtue and how to make it known; this subtitle is, I believe, is the shortest description of marketing)

lems that PMIs can help neutralize or reverse their processes:

Manipulated consumers

Training consumers is what museums can easily do by demonstration and comparison. In a world in which quality products withdrew to the top of social ladder quality is still around but the population, is forced into the consumption of mass produced or even GMO food has lost the criteria for quality. It does not concern only food but clothes, appliances, building materials... As a sector, PMIs have a giant, documented memory of quality. They can even refresh the knowledge and awareness for the quality of professional services. PMIs need to teach their communities how to discern quality in any domain and thus considerably contribute to the quality of living.

“Culture” of aimless wandering

The Jeremy Rifkin’s “travelling mankind” is the result of better communications but, in the last decades, mainly the consequence of the tourism industry and its success in creating culture or demand for displacement. Not many people know that the low-cost air carriers receive lavish financial compensation from the destinations they serve. (Tourists are lured to them so that explains some of the misbehaviour of the hosts). Media promote the ideal of travelling as the outer sign of personal success. But, the passion for travelling is a privilege and art of a few. That virtue has been used by the media to produce a fascination with mere roaming and traipsing, by changing places like one disposes of things without really giving oneself a chance for enjoyment. Mankind travels more than ever but, paradoxically, with the weakest motives so far. Romantic hitch-hikers of the 70s who would move from one pleasurable travelling experience to the other as the experiences command. The ideal of the rising majority of travellers be them backpackers or cruise ship passengers is to visit as many countries as possible.

Uncritical, indifferent consumption

The science of public memory must be able to endure a harsh winter, tropical rain and sandstorm and remain effective and workable¹⁹⁶. Possessing no criteria or having only those that are proposed, imposed or manipulated by media, is downplaying the capacities of hu-

man nature to enjoy the richness of the world. It is also hurting the inbuilt variety of value systems. The vulgarized marketing has in fact embarrassed and debased criteria of quality that culture cherished. What is the taste of real chicken meat? How does the true ice-cream tastes? What is the basic register of quality in any product and how to recognize the artificial, false abundance expressed mainly in packaging and names? The satisfaction and delight sensations and feelings that consuming, for instance, good food or good wine, listening to good music, admiring art can offer to the human senses and spirit are given to some as natural gift. The others should also have the access to this enjoyment of world. Here the norm appears as it is only acceptable: as set of basic, inspirational criteria. So, if schools have forgotten their main task of teaching pupils first and foremost the pleasure of living and joy of creation, of work, - PMIs should not. Particularly museums can educate people for balanced but enthusiastic hedonism. Any museum that proposes creations, outstanding by its simplicity or quality, for enjoyment of its visitors is already doing it.

Unemployment and lack of inventiveness

Besides the fact that PMIs cause spin off effects that create jobs (the number of visit to a certain place, boosting motivation, helping in realisation of branding promises), they can also offer inspiration that reveals collective experience, local pride or traditions worth actualisation. In some cases the PMI can literally breathe life into forgotten knowledge or skills and increase local motivation. As the predatory post-capitalism imposed the value system by which one is most successful if gaining fortune by speculation, exhibitions or museums dedicated to work and creativity should be another counter-active reaction of the sector. There are more 200 museum dedicated to this in the world but their number should be urgently multiplied as labour is infamously devalued.

Poor quality of family life

This social deficiency is the cause and consequence of the deep crisis of contemporary society. It has been an issue throughout human history and almost any museum and heritage institution could contribute to the debate. The importance of harmonious family for the

growth of any child is decisive and that is where society takes its chances. Most of the troubles of this world stem from the misery of unhappy and traumatized childhood. This horrible truth has been made to sound banal and moralizing only to hide this transgression of the modern society. The failure of providing conditions for a well balanced and stable family life is the core sin of societies we live in. But since this was the problem throughout the human history, we have entire past cluttered with this memory as our sad reminder.

Lack of social discipline, solidarity

Museums, and not only them, can well demonstrate that social harmony was the condition and consequence of prosperity. Advanced societies were always able to show the ability of differences living together and to see diversity as richness. Demonstrating that the social peace was throughout history always a certain balance of interests and solidarity, PMIs can to an extent help conflict modern societies. This they can prove to be the quality of mind and soul, of a world view, not the ideological state.

Lack of criteria in evaluation of services and goods

The contemporary society is dumped into the consumerist paradigm of throwism where work is impersonal while its creative component is entirely hidden. Wherever the services are still evident their true quality is pushed aside by imposing only its external, monetary or formal qualities. The personal touch of a salesman in a shop, of craftsmen that adjust to the taste and need of customer has been preserved only in the highest price range, available to the excessively rich. The population is thus deprived

Rudeness, imbalance, violence

Human nature was always the same and it has not become better nowadays. It is seemingly true that "All history is little else than a long succession of useless cruelties" as Voltaire has claimed. Yet, we have never had such a splendid record of our entire past, accessible and plentiful with documents and evidence. This insight seems to make no differences. Instead of living in the most democratic, civilized and technologically advanced world ever, it is but a place of

wars, conflicts and rising insecurity. Though this may be regarded as none of the concern of PMIs the fact that they dispose with such an enormous potential in concentrated collective and social memory makes them natural mechanisms of adaptation, opposition or regulation.

Ugliness

The fact of uglification of the world is accepted by the thinking part of society as a general truth: both the natural and the cultural landscape have suffered assaults that degrade their beauty and their inherent values. Teaching beauty and virtues is the only way we can suppress or slow down these processes. Making them obvious and explaining the nature of aggressiveness they suffer, be it plain greed or lack of wisdom, - PMIs can assist society in its resistance. Teaching ethics of quality and harmony is the best we can do with our collections of art, crafts or different other human endeavours. Beauty, truth and justice, in fact all the virtues are the shortest description of values of a humanist society or hardly dissociable from the social humanity project.

Low quality of social and political life

Any citizen is a political being and the least PMIs can do for their community or society in general is to teach civic values, advantages of social harmony and respect for or even enjoyment of diversity. Political literacy is the best possible achievement serving directly the quality of social agreement. How can democracy be but a formula for ill intentioned engineering of a massive public consent if the voters have no civic education and cannot discern sides and interests in the social contract? Of course, museums or archives will not advise the users which side to take, but their exhibitions and actions may explain the alternatives they face and put the choice into the historical context.

Of course, as with the expectations for the profile of an ideal heritage curator, a disinclined reader may wonder how could PMIs meet such idealist expectations. Only in rare cases, any one of them could comply, but the new mindset followed by practice would clearly imply that they would possess mentality and means for a concerted action.

They can regard all their capacities as a common potential be them amenities, premises, storages or collections, research personnel and services and finally common stages for their performance. Exhibition centres, conceived with mnemosophic premeditation would be mighty tools²⁰⁰.

6.6. Wisdom as product

Introduction

Public memory institutions usually fail to serve reality as memory stored in them and communicated is often dissociated from it. It is a curious kind of paradox, but the existing and well established professions have either become part of the world's problems or merely helpless observers. What if the requirements and expectations largely transcend societal capacities? Slowing down the processes in society is an unlikely turn. The Olympic credo (higher, faster, stronger) has itself perverted into tyranny but application of this invasive mentality (much more ruthless than in sports) is devastating the world. Must the revenue be always increasing, the speed of development constantly faster and the powers acquired ever stronger or it is just a myth never questioned? What if development becomes directed inwardly? Say, that we conquer yet uncultivated wastelands of human nature?

As unscientific as it may seem, this account may need some additional argument as the humanities are too severely judged. Ever since in 1964 a Scottish physicist Higgs prophesied *boson* "as the only visible manifestation of the Harry Potterish notion....that there is a secret, invisible force field running the universe"²⁰¹ the feverish pursuit started. The pan-European project of the CERN²⁰² institute near

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²⁰⁰ I have shortened the text of this essay on the account of exhibiting more practical projects as they might blur the main proposal of this book (new profession and its science) while making the text longer.

²⁰¹ http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/05/science/chasing-the-higgs-boson-how-2-teams-of-rivals-at-CERN-searched-for-physics-most-elusive-particle.html?_r=0; A cynic would exclaim: like we did not know before! The mystery has been *origo* of all the religions and inspiration to many a science.

²⁰² Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire (European Council for Nuclear Research); Europe would have earned great recognition and advantage had it so well

Geneva has created the gigantic Hadron Collider, - with all that this accelerator comprises, in fact, a surreal underground city employing more than 3000 physicists. They are kept busy with research of sub-atomic structure of matter, at the cost of more than \$10 billion so far. After half a century of chasing for what was popularly named “God’s particle” they are still as close to the beginning: beyond Higgs’ boson, if they finally spot it, only the new expanse of infinity is laid out. Humanistic and social sciences are superior to this craze. Philosophy in ancient India or maybe China a few thousand years ago would be offering usable, better answers without that expense, and the philosophers in ancient Greece would have been able to say what we know now: no matter how powerful the means of gazing through ever more powerful telescopes and microscopes, we shall always be discovering only yet further dimensions of infinity. The secret of life cannot be revealed to the human brain and if it were ever attainable it would be conceived by the spirit, as spiritual quality. Let us imagine what would have happened to the world if an equal investment and effort were undertaken if *summum bonum* as the framework would be the project. How important would studying, elucidating, storing, communicating and promoting the most noble human experience extracted from the global collective memory be in comparison with hadron collider? Would posing the question in a major international museum institution by an exhibition be an account of wisdom given back to the humanity, - to Europe in this case? Such a European investment would have significantly raised the odds of human survival. The top bright minds among scientists deciding and running the project suffered not a moment of hesitation about the best use of the resources. An additional step into infinity is more important than giving spiritual development a chance.

Could humanity invest the hundreds of billions of dollars meant to bring us to Mars by the 2030s for the goals inspired by the charters on human rights and nature? Or, that humanity decides to finance slowing down both the change and the growths so that we first catch our breath and pause to think? This unquestionable myth is supported by statistics based upon false presumption of growing consumption. It is a notorious fact that 17 billion worth industry of bottled

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financed some European Council for Heritage Research.

water is an engineered, artificially created need, - to take just one example. So this improbable scenario is as unlikely as the reign of love among humans. Yet, happily enough, love remains our dominant theme in spite of unprecedented assaults upon it. But honestly, as anybody would rightly ask, does it stand a chance? So, should we give up other idealist claims too? I guess that would be the real appearance of Armageddon. This is why it is always hidden in disguise of catastrophes, be it a clash of Earth with a meteorite, a nuclear war or another Deluge.

Virtues

In spite of evident irrelevance, let us explore further at least what PMIs can talk us into. Maybe society could one day mobilise its energies into perfecting the human spirit and turning attention to our real concerns, instead of caring for particular interests of the ruling elites. But, alas, it requires a major switch from one mindset to a completely different one to find out that the economy should divert some of its forces into labour intensive instead of energy intensive mode. As might admits only arguments of the force, the major changes in the destiny of modern society will remain difficult task for all positive public bodies and organisations. The logic of great numbers that owners of this civilization rely so much upon will turn against them to produce pressure of the desperate. PMIs will have to do their part. Culture knew their strategy long ago, so we recognize the *somma*²⁰³ they are distributing and we are not happy with their apparent success. Culture, including heritage and PMIs, has to feed reflection with stimulating insights into the past explaining the ways in the world in according to scientific insight and public responsibility. The devotion to virtues is not the privileged domain of religions. Just the contrary, interpretation and teaching of virtues is the obligation of the underestimated and humiliated civil society. It has its institutions and professions. Citizens need to stand for them so that they cling to their mission, caring for their ideals.

Prodigality, to use one example, as the wasteful disposition with resources, be they human, artificial or natural, has to be denounced as the cause of much evil in society: imitating the formidable econ-

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²⁰³ I am referring to the book "The Brave New World" by A. Huxley.

omy demonstrated by nature is a worthy inspiration. All solutions and inspirations are there anyhow. Wherever applied, such change of mindset immediately demonstrates beneficial consequences. All the solutions are at hand but they have been proclaimed as unattainable. It is also suggested that changes of the ruling value system either happen by revolution or by cataclysm. The first is a sort of purposeful chaos, highly risky and improbable development. The latter, is a growing probability but with so unpredictable a scenario and consequences that any option, including the disappearance of fundamental life conditions, is a possibility. Therefore, changing the values we live by should happen as a steady trans-generational and very much a global project.

Managing values

Managing systems in crisis becomes a major art and duty. These scientifically based and ethically founded duties need their culture, their institutions and their movement. In such a society literacy would have a layer more, - that of using socially minded memory as a condition for quality decision making in democratic processes. Those who are responsible, among citizens and their institutions, will be guided by devotion, civic pride, vocational zeal and compassion. These qualities united with natural talents and learning would qualify them to lead the others. Their privilege would be, besides justified earnings and self-recognition, the importance and esteem of the others. It is true that the majority would rather follow its wants, - not the needs, or would even accept enjoying the unearned privileges than face challenges and toil. That remains a burden to any societal project. Not everybody is or can be creative, diligent or responsible. The problem is if pretentious, selfish elite imposes itself to rule in the name of that frail, unconscious majority, - against the interests of its benevolent members and endangered minorities. Enormous social energy and enormous capital is channelled into religious systems which in practice demonstrate little of its supposed spirituality. Religious institutions are co-opted as partners in a division of power. The striving for spirituality is thus spent in liturgy and hypocritical practices, while the critical mobilisation of their followers is unscrupulously provided by contentious antagonizing of the different others. The Liberation theology was drowned in blood, before the eyes of the

Catholic Church and social institutions demonstrating the cruel nature of that power contract. Instead of filling up such gaps in spiritual mission (unrealised for the millennia) with their immense potential, PMIs, arts, and culture in general, behave like a dismembered army corrupted by egotism and bogus social consciousness. Thus they fail to offer consolation and spiritual enjoyment at least as the pleasure of understanding of the human condition. Instead of wisdom, they offer their “liturgy” of redundant, fragmented and useless knowledge. Wisdom is a social product, worked out as a substratum, excerpt, a quintessence of knowledge. So, understanding is realised upon universals which are to be abstracted from the particular (as Thomas Aquinas taught). In a world being congested with “particular”, with myriad of facts and information, result is a poor orientation of what is credible and important and what is not. Understanding becomes overwhelmingly difficult.

Having taken this stance, everything else becomes possible, with a deliberate, beneficial influence exerted on public opinion and public agencies so as to improve the developmental strategies. The simple way to do this is to provide public insight and explain the ethical choices that have to be made: these form the true substance, be it about democracy or sustainability as a balanced, harmonious and responsible development. The simplicity of this choice is what the protagonists of the cataclysmic scenario hate the most – less greed and reduced profits, more quality via a labour-intensive economy instead of an energy-intensive one, and re-inclusion of decision-making based upon inherited positive values and the ethics of the welfare state. But it would, of course, be hard to imagine that any of the governing pyramids of power would relinquish the repulsive devastating concept of incessant conquest in which anything – literally – can be turned into more power. The latter, as they prove, exchanges easily into money. The ruling concepts are simple and may, for the sake of the general view, require little explanation. An abstentious reader should excuse the seemingly pathetic tone: love is Mammon’s final intended bite. The chaos is supposed to devour all and every value, relativize and empty it of meaning.

When at its best, our memory occupations can revive or preserve values we find constitutional for our sense of self, or reinforce those

we recognise important for our quality survival. It is a sort of general formula that can easily receive substitutes as any particular culture or specific circumstances would command. An object, three-dimensional and original, may be the material part of that effort, very specific and dear to many of us, but which is just one possibility in a much wider and bigger task.

In Christian philosophy, which is the prevalent context of the West, the syntagm “*Summum bonum*”²⁰⁴ denotes God, the entity of divine virtues or can point to an ideal state of the similar deeds by humans. In philosophy, it describes “the ultimate importance, the singular and most ultimate end which human beings ought to pursue”²⁰⁵. The *summum bonum* is generally thought of as being an end in itself, and at the same time containing all other good. Whether this may seem a mystification or not, simple wisdom would support the existence of an impeccable, immaculate ideal. So it can serve as a prevailing definition of good, even of a set of ideals of an imaginary elite of mind and spirit. We may act in any society in the name of such projected elite as of the vision of an ultimate better self. The ideal visions that were the essence of grand social ideologies were wrongly taken as dogma while self chosen guardians or keepers (sic!) usurped the right of interpretation of criteria of what constitutes final objectives. So the glowing markings indicating the direction were proclaimed targets which then turned into obsessive nightmares. Ideals are there to define and propose the presumed direction at the endless path to perfection, while the perfection itself remains unattainable.

Norm maintenance

The social majority is nowadays addressed as “crowd” even when we expect the money and dedication from it. Although it is not saying *vulgus* or mass it is neither trying to allow dignity that comes with the term *citizens*, demonstrating in such a way how much the majority is estimated by the managerial elites, politicians and corporations. Any human being is the picture of the universe in itself, different from any other and enriched in difference by the variety of cultures and traditions. Their final aspirations and pursuits are the same.

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²⁰⁴ Latin, for the highest good

²⁰⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Summum_bonum

Their tendency towards the divine, to the bliss of the metaphysics of their own existence, and practicalities of living together, - constantly convert into sets of values by which they decide to live. Within the basic human properties, these “overlaps” in value contents form the areas of norms. The world that has assigned to the *norm* negative connotations though it is actually a neutral manifestation of general aspirations. Though the norms are culturally, religiously, politically and socially conditioned, there is their essential part contained in the rights of humans, animals and environment inherent to the secular, civil society. Norms fill the social inter-space and are the matter of the medium in which our world of objects is placed. As a structure of value systems, norms change themselves or we change them by our specific interpretation so they should be researched, documented, illustrated, evidenced, communicated and contemplated. They are one of the reasons we have public institutions including those of public memory. Societies survive upon the art of managing the norm(s) and it is hardly ever knowledge but wisdom that can balance values into a manageable and sustainable system.

Understanding wisdom

Frances Yates mediates that Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas speculated about the more practical and concrete aspects of wisdom denoting it by the term *Prudentia*, and understanding it as ethics, - as an ability to discern good from bad²⁰⁶. According to their interpretation the prudence consists of *memoria* (the faculty of mind to recall what has happened), *intelligentia* (the faculty by which it ascertains what it is) and *providentia* (a foresight; a faculty to see what will occur). Curiously, that can be a brief description of information science and a basic scheme of the PMI working process: the past is (scientifically) selected and remembered, then it is evaluated according to some criteria and needs, and finally used in building the future. *Sapientia* is wisdom, - in a sense a step further than prudence but we seem to be more familiar with that term than with prudence, as the former contains it anyhow. It is: “Good judgement with respect to abstract truth or theoretical matters (in contrast to prudence in concrete, practical affairs). For Plato, wisdom is the virtue appropriate to the rational soul, and for Aristotle, it is the highest intellectual

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²⁰⁶ Yates, Frances A. The Art of Memory. The University of Chicago Press, 2001. p.75

virtue²⁰⁷.

Wisdom is the beginning of everything, of whatever the quality of social life is, or to say in a simple way, - good cannot come into existence without it. Without it, good is just a gesture, a nice manner, a compliment or a phrase nicely put. The most important theme of any art is wisdom. It is the substance of any definition of a life worth living: in one moment it is a sense of measure, in the other a harmony struck or accord achieved, - a balance between divergent elements²⁰⁸ achieved in a creative way. Wisdom is the revelations point in knowledge, - the moment of completeness becoming obvious, - simultaneously the substance and the catalyst. Without it, nothing of worth can happen and nothing is fruitful. Wisdom is the basis and the end of everything, as to everything it gives sense and the conclusive value. Perfection, in any stage, cannot exist without the triumphant role of wisdom. Wisdom is the name of the potential of counter-active actions aimed at regaining balance, in any given situation or society, because balance in all its forms is the universal underlying principle.

Uses of wisdom

People were forever after usable forms of wisdom, seeing in it like the alchemist's a "mysterium magnum", a magic formula or procedure that allows the ultimate creative ability of the transformation of matter. Nothing else, more important or better (as unattainable and elusive as it may seem) had been there to be discovered anyway. When alchemy turned into chemistry, the practical discoveries showed that wisdom consists of many rational and emotional parts but its value is honoured only when it is recognised as such. It is like concluding that the quest for the Holy Grail naturally ends as searching for divine inspiration in humans.

All too often, the zest in rising knowledge was so pervasive, that knowledge seemed omnipotent. Powerful as it is, knowledge gives the impression that merely more of it will reveal all the answers to the questions we were ever posing. Knowledge was seen as might, as power so important that it made us close to gods. Instead, knowl-

²⁰⁷ <http://www.philosophypages.com/dy/w9.htm#wisdom>;

²⁰⁸ A paraphrase of the definition of beauty by Thomas Aquinas.

edge, however potent, demonstrated that it gives us only more reasons to search further. Understood as might it has the propriety to turn against us. Technology was as close as we could reach in comparing ourselves with gods, or rather their power of destruction. We are discovering that disposing of it implies a mature mind. Maybe, a wise mind. There is a glorious history of knowing but the main mysteries of the universe cannot be answered by science and the knowledge, nor by the act of faith. Poetry or music are much closer to the definition of the universe than science. Ultimately it is wisdom, no matter where we locate its capacities, that answers what is good or what is bad, what, in the case of Christian teachings, keeps us from Hell and what leads us to Paradise. The way to wisdom will always remain the first ethical choice to make. PMIs conventionally opted for science and it is the best choice possible if at the same time leaving liberty to enhance its limitations by any form of noble and moral insight.

The way to wisdom is metamorphosis and transcendence, a sense (however dependent upon knowledge) beyond appearance, well planted into the essence of the human condition. Science gives this impression of some natural flow as it develops according to inquisitiveness and (less sympathetically) following the interests of ruling groups, - but there is nothing natural to it: at best, it is a sort of artificial wisdom. Such wisdom is like a decorative work of art, resembling more a fountain than a brook. Like culture, like art, like heritage, - wisdom is a matter of discipline and craft and yet in endless movement, not so much about really reaching the premeditated idealist objective as about achieving precious moments of completeness and balance.

Glimpses of wisdom

The life of anything and anybody is usually a more or less banal routine: it is recounted, retold, romanticised or summarised to its highlights because what we want from it, is its quintessence. So it inspires, frustrates or revolts, but if done well, - for a good reason. Art is banished from life and ostracised into works of art, put on pedestals, framed, hanged, disciplined into orchestral and other forms. And all that is good. Yet, life is meant to be itself a work of art and all the

ninety billion lives spent on the Planet so far, bore such a potential. A myriad of them reached the temporary unstable, volatile, intermittent moments of happy coincidence when everything came together to produce a moment of perfection. Those moments are more frequent in times of peace, prosperity and with individuals of higher potential, but are not limited to class or social layer. Some kings and princess were never happy to live through a moment of perfection. Everything can be art or may become such. A torrent of knowledge is the accumulation of structured data and facts, information becomes knowledge, but at certain moments it crystallises into units of high density, power, credibility: is this wisdom? Mneme? Sopheme? The same happens in other human endeavours no matter what they concern. Out of different entities at certain moments some parts stand out as if illuminated, - topped with meaning that stands for the larger whole. Thence the shapes and compositions, sentences, chapters, stanzas and verses, melodies and motives, tastes of wine or food... that give us this special elevated feeling: all there is, being in its place, clear, bright, balanced and able to transfer us, even for a brief moment, to a level higher than the banal routine of daily imperfections. There are museums that provide these moments of completeness and insight beyond knowledge. In the absence of rational, sensory explanation, some museums resort to the safe ground of official science where such questions are not posed. Thus, they leave people a pray to individuals and institutions who spread superstitions or quackery. Others take the challenge of unexplainable and seemingly supernatural to propose philosophical, poetical or otherwise creative answers. As protagonists of spiritualisation of society they may play with different understandings of the presence of the divine. We have all reasons to believe that public memory itself is the medium that enables this arcing. There are moments of true excitement with a certain creative act stored in a painting, building or natural environment that occur as bursts of finest energy. Aren't they the revelatory moments of wisdom, a sort of close encounter with the ultimate meaning, however mysterious it still remains?

Wisdom as the task of PMIs

Humans always looked rather foolishly romantic, if not tragic and greedy, when searching for the ultimate knowledge that would turn

lead into gold or life incertitude into happiness and affluence. Looking for what we have gained or should gain from life is in contradiction to our gift of being able to transcend what is immediately material and selfish into a spiritual contribution to the common good. Receiving as the consequence of giving is well beyond the opportune self interest, so the wise demand should be how to redeem for life: in understanding it, in serving it, in respecting it and in celebrating it. That is what memory institutions should remind us of.

Be that as it may, curators, the mnemosophers, the hiero-mnemons²⁰⁹ of public memory should finally become the interpreters of wisdom, as facilitators and guides, as communicators, *praeceptores*, - teachers who open the doors and dare say the truth, or, rather, pose the right questions and produce material for answers available in abundance, in a credible variety and in a non-discriminatory way. Is that the way of humanist ethics as the only common denominator for the equation of achieving the common good? Is this utopia possible? Why not, though there might not remain many to witness it. A person created in the popular mind as a „serious scientist“, is unlikely to propose utopia or to assume the language of life while communicating. This book is therefore but a plea for a change in mindset. Like the rebellious man, the Sisyphus, as A. Camus²¹⁰ is convincing us, we also can find satisfaction in the mere act of constant striving. Heritage institutions are not educational in the strict sense so they are closer by their basic nature to the proverbial role of grandmother or a wise aunt, - a collapsed, archetypal process of intergenerational transmission of values.

When idealising for the sake of inspiration and understanding one could say that we should return to the Ancient Greek ideal of *paideia*, as a comprehensive upbringing and education of the spirit and body. Even schools try to remember this ancient inspiration. Passing knowledge on to the young has been the task of later years or various substitutes for the traditional elders. The Internet has created an immense though primitive brain, whose capacities are democratically

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²⁰⁹ Hieromnemon [NL., from Gr.; “iero`’s sacred + mindful, fr. to think on, remember.] In Ancient Greece it meant “The sacred secretary or recorder sent by each state belonging to the Amphictyonic Council, along with the deputy or minister”. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/hieromnemon>

²¹⁰ Camus, Albert. *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Hamish Hamilton, 1955

offered to all. To be effective its use reverts to the ability or the art of selection and of discerning concepts. The eternal task of the elders hovering above is entrusted to public memory institutions as they have to provide the transfer of social norms and qualities that guarantee a successful survival of the community and its members. Any particular PMI is a *geront* in the proverbial *council of elders*. Now we can correct “old” by meaning those who have the longest and the best memory supported by the criteria of selection and the courage to propose evaluations. PMIs should therefore act in society as part of a wisdom “committee”, to which also belong the scientists, as rare and important as they are²¹¹. Wisdom will have to become (now more than ever evidently) the way of thinking and judging. The facts juxtaposed in a circumstantial order, or malevolently manipulated, can lead us astray and bring us to wrong and harmful conclusions, and so can knowledge composed of them. The condensed truths, statements, assertions serve as guidance and reminders, build the mnemotechnics of quality memory, - the base for plausible development. A belief in a general competence of harmony over most of the processes can bring us a favourable way of thinking and mindset that opens up solutions. No problem comes without a close solution, as well as any well posed question contains a germ of an answer, Wisdom by nature counts with humans as social beings, its benefits being quite often obvious or effective only in the time spans which are not tied to the duration of individual life. Yet if any generation shows the same trans-generational solidarity, the continuum of beneficial effects is assured. This civilisational defect of selfishness and lack of confidence should be the main object of any education. The arguments of this wisdom constitute the structure of the mission of the public memory institutions. The process we need to maintain is more than education and requires more than deduction. It requires more than rational, discursive thinking and implies a result in more than intelligence: it should offer an impressive, influential collective experience, - close to intuition by its ability of insight beyond facts.

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²¹¹ The criteria for scientific status must be very high and selective, quite contrary to what is a growing as rather grotesque and counter-productive tendency in the world: anybody with a doctoral degree appropriates the status. Scientists are a rare occurrence. Even if expertly done, a doctorate does not make a scientist, no more than a driving licence would make a formula-one driver.

Wisdom as moral stance

Maybe the social and humanist sciences should be intentionally *inexact* and *soft* so as to remain able to claim that giving is the clue to advancement. In the case of PMIs it is the humanist new credo. Such somewhat engaged public wisdom of the nascent profession implicitly advises new practices. The new mindset may suggest benevolence as giving back and giving away. One should readily risk turning any claim for wise credibility into advices to demonstrate its relevance. Here are some advices to museums:

- Return what does not belong to you; any entitled owner of whatever you might possess due to the strange habits of „civilized nations“ should be repatriated; whenever there is an owner of identity able to care for his treasure, - all should be done to strike a deal which would turn injustice into cooperation and provide right cultural context for what has been extracted from it and where it can function as reminder and amplifier of endangered values.
- Return to the places where the collections come from and see what you can do in reinforcing or sustaining the value systems they belonged to. Any ethnographic museum would have 80% of the collection in the vaults, never to show them and deprive the dying villages where the material comes from having their material culture at hand to inspire them and give back to them their self-respect. Most ethnographic museums should reverse their way of functioning acting as the providers for the cultures they once „explored“, literally working for them.
- Be a pacemaker to the dying hearts of identity so as not to be their mechanical, institutional substitute.
- Do not resurrect: leave it to the heritage, entertainment and tourism industries; the factination with multimedia is rightful but, again, only a ripe profession can boast of the sense of measure, of taste that guarantees that one should not try what is impossible and improper.

Giving can be unsuccessful but cannot be wrong. As moderators of our relation to reality, PMIs can develop significant culture of popular, reliable service that people gladly turn to for a relevant though

unobliging opinion on, practically any issue. If the institutional culture changes so much as to offer brisk reactions to the changing world it might become indispensable part of everyday life, exactly what it actually strives to.

7. Defining mnemosophy

7.1. Introduction

After the failure of museology to deal satisfactorily with frustrations created by the changes in the last three or four decades, heritology seemed the solution as it is finally a theory which is concept based. If it is a general theory of heritage or even a science of heritage it may matter little to the practice. It seemed good enough as a provocative suggestion for an approach that would finally widen the ambition but any name is always more or less logical convention. The theories of heritage occupations were so far founded upon the factors of separation. The tendencies to synthesis demonstrate that PMIs now aspire to some additional level of theoretical understanding of what is happening to their practice and their mission. Usual definitions are like frames to the creations, like censorship to a thought or an institution to a well intended action. They explain specialist practice, render it simple and manageable but imply limited reach of separate institutional sectors.

The wide, relaxed framework of mnemosophy respects and encourages generalisations and connectivity. Wisdom as its objective, however processual and elusive it may seem, is a powerful open system. In the so-called exact sciences the paradigms are often stable because natural laws, molecules, or amino acids, do not change. The “soft” ones deal with change as the variable that can destroy any equation. Therefore we should accept the flux nature of memory, the social needs that condition it and all infinite variations of context that may influence it. Yet, though seemingly an endlessly elusive a task, we need as precise and correct reasoning about it. All definitions have to be able to bear the strains of their universal application. In this phase of building the proposal, definitions may well be verbose and seemingly prolix as they are bound to be descriptive, before practice adopts them and turns them into the working tools.

The term mnemosophy probably describes in a more accurate and linguistically coherent way the reach of an integrative science. When proposing the new term what I expected was merely one more asser-

tion that the best theory we are looking for will actually be related to the quality process of transforming *mneme* (memory) into *sophia* (wisdom), a sort of wisdom of memory or memory as wisdom. Such a wide ambition is likely to receive the entire potential there is, so as to bring the number of dilemmas to a higher level of order. Heritage, like identity, is the name of different layers of functional memory. It is composed as a dynamic pulsating whole within the overlapping fields of collective, social and public memory. Though the latter is a part of the societal project it is or should nevertheless be, in constant dialogue with the more vivid other two circles. The privilege and the risk of art is in its ability of reaching any of them and seeing it in its domain of creation or intervention. It will remain negotiable whether we should understand heritage itself as public memory. I believe we should, although heritage as expression describes better that significance of public use. The common science is a powerful means of integration, it is simultaneously and paradoxically a way to accommodate better the constant tendencies of major heritage occupations to self-sufficiency and autonomy without pressure. Different creative occupational solutions will serve well their comfortable, seductive temptation of having the safe haven of their own practice and its adequate theory, while at the same time belonging to a powerful sector able to defend their particularities and interests. Otherwise, the walls and fortresses of specialised disciplines and their specific theories will for a long time prevent us from seeing that we all belong to the same societal, cybernetic reaction. We need to become part of the developmental decision-making through the democratic nature of our status and the capacity of wisdom we can contribute to. We need to be one resource with a shared, common philosophy that consists of many different forms of practice, but has the same basic strategic aim in society – the survival of quality.

If we return to the parallel of public health, the science of heritage can be defined as the science and art of preventing the decay and disappearance of values, prolonging their life and promoting wisdom through the organised efforts and informed choices of society, organizations, public and private, communities and individuals. The object of mnemosophy is therefore the mission of public memory institutions in the social project: the use of stored, selected, researched and ethically founded knowledge. It is a trans-disciplinary theory,

most probably a science that allows an understanding of the origin and purpose of heritage and of its use as public memory. It helps to understand the emergence and the nature of public memory institutions. Mnemosophy researches collective memory, culture and knowledge to understand and manage identities and elucidate public memory as a wisdom necessary for the quality development of contemporary society. It tries to understand the changing world, the state of its cultures, identities and societal needs so that occupations, professions and institutions from the domain of public memory are able to assist possible solutions. It has a task to develop intelligence, taste and insight, becoming a source of inspiration, a transfer of experience, containing the conscience of the (appearing) profession, and explaining its mission in a broad, development concerned context. This composite science includes political economy and sociology as its specialist components, because it provides this profession-to-be with the proper understanding of the world.

7.2. An Information Science

Mnemosophy, if already a science, is an information science, - one that should be among other “cultural sciences” (like linguistics, ethnology, or history of art). These “soft” humanistic sciences cannot match “hard” sciences which are “hard”, as we are told, due to the level of the impersonal in citation and capability of demonstrating their theories and laws in mathematic formula²¹². Be that as it may, sciences grow and change, and others (usually trans-disciplinary) get conceived, this way Biotechnology has been created, and so was such an amalgam as Sociobiology. The information science as the basis of the General theory of heritage has itself been made possible only half a century ago²¹³ through the cumulative effect of three “discoveries”. Firstly, Shannon-Weaver designed the information theory model (claiming that the mathematical laws govern the systems designed to communicate or manipulate the information), and thus signalled the importance of information. Then Norbert Wiener conceived the

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²¹² Storer, N.W. The Hard Sciences and the Soft: Some Sociological Observations, Bulletin of the Medical Library Association, 55, 33-52.

²¹³ The facts about information science used here are derived from the article of the same title from Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1998.

science of cybernetics (as a theory of system guidance) and made a clear case for the use of information in guiding systems. The ascent of electronic computers (later on matched with telecommunications) made the magnificent tools for selecting, collecting, storage and distribution of the information. All the heritage institutions are easily defined in terms of information science, no matter what variety of forms the information can take in their proper use: “collection, organisation, storage, retrieval, interpretation, and use”²¹⁴.

When this general theory attains scientific coherence and recognition by the academic community, its content will define new boundary determinations, placing it as a sort of applied science at a slight shift from information science, - in fact defining probably its new gravity centre. Deriving from computer science and acquiring some consciousness about concepts, information science itself formed imperceptibly into “the collection, classification, storage, retrieval, and dissemination of recorded knowledge”²¹⁵ - so very close to the basic definition of the working process of any heritage institution as to be its basic description (that is with collection, care and communication of public memory). A small step outside the phenomenon of mere knowledge, we find public memory and heritage as concepts in the need of theory that defines their use, i.e. the ultimate purpose of their communication.

Information science is always pulsating between being a general theory of knowledge and being anew broken down to theory (computer science), technology (engineering) and management (information systems subjects). It shelters different bodies of knowledge: several derivative disciplines such as librarianship, archive studies, museology/museum studies, encyclopedistics, lexicology and the like. It usually refers to the history, methods and technologies of the working processes in libraries, archives and museums, encyclopaedic, and lexicographic institutions, basically encompassing therefore the theory of their practices. The point is that it can offer a framework for a coherent general theory uniting all of them at the conceptual level. The converging comprehension that a new framework will provide a

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²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Webster Merriam Dictionary

new definition of their societal function is increasing. They seem to understand that circumstantial pressures can be not only a trouble but an inspiration:

- Conceptualisation of the collected material which is increasingly electronic and secondary
- “Invention” of recent history by erasing the historic distance and perception of history as a simultaneous happening
- Pragmatic demand for a continuous purposefulness of information
- Use of electronic media for all stages of heritage institution work
- Appropriation of a wide aspect of managerial science
- The advance of industries that use heritage as a basis of their business

It does look preposterous to ask for a new science. It may also be exaggerated to expect that much from it. But convictions of any nature gain relevance only if able to respond to the tests that stem from the harsh practice and, besides, gain consensus about it.

7.3. Applicability

Any science must comply with certain high expectations to deserve the status. Any must be universal, at least in its main claims. Mnemosophy as an open system must be applicable to any culture and any heritage, able to design and inspire creative and specific solutions to different cultures and political systems. It also has to apply to entire memory and especially to its derivations in the forms of selections and choices. When saying “heritage” museums and other institutions have usually meant the heritage stored in their premises, the heritage *they* have accumulated. But, what about the remaining 70%? Or less? Or more? Whatever the case, most of that “un-stored” past has become someone’s heritage, personal or belonging to a group or community, and it is being acquired, cared for, researched and disseminated, in some way at least. The lack of any standards of excellence and scientific responsibility for most of it does not make it irrelevant. Ethnologists, anthropologists, different experts engaged in culture treat this heritage from their side, but unattended or out of

focus of occupational theories and institutional practices. Occasionally, connections are forged due to the field work, interested individuals, collectors or organisations of civil society. However, placing the concept and not the institution in the middle of the concern, it becomes obvious that institutions are only one solution to saving the past, often not the best one. Indeed, only the part within their reach, - be it historically or by the limitations of their performance, seemed to matter so far. Unlike the useful memory of primitive society, transferred to the living and those to come in the form of artistic expression, - this heritage is largely artificial. Any past, namely, becomes heritage once we are aware of its value and once we manipulate it into becoming such. Once selected and structured according to current value systems it becomes official heritage.

The science of heritage will have to be applicable to any heritage not just the official one. Some cultures prefer the living heritage; other would have enormous difficulty to apply the perfectionist stance of the rich and climatically luckier North-West. And yet, as physics counts for them too, so should a science on public memory. The world is passing through the processes of degradation of diversity. Paradoxically, the exported western museum model is partly immobilizing the inherent specific reactions to the loss of identity. A proper science of heritage should formulate a problem in such a way that accommodates well local peculiarities. There are reasons to doubt that far Eastern cultures would create museums the way the West did had it not been for acculturation and export of the models of thinking. This process is still in a full swing, showing that even heritage and educational institutions take part in Westernisation of their societies. The notion of originality and authenticity is not the same there: the meaning, the ideas, still seem to prevail over the mere physicality. Sometimes the very climate would be source of wisdom if some, say, mnemosophy could suggest the common sense. How can one apply fascination with European standards of authenticity to the tropical Far East? We should be honest to admit that in constant rebuilding and maintenance, wooden churches of the North of Europe are, *stricto sensu*, but reminders of their original versions. Mnemosophy, by the way, has no difficulties with that.

With this comes another recantation: science is not the paradise

of certainty but rather a hell of plain probabilities. The so-called “theory of chaos” is a tacit admission from the part of physics and Mathematics that the System must be there but we cannot grasp its final regularities nor understand its ultimate nature. This is hardly hinted at in the temples of Certainty. The syntagm is borrowed from Goethe (“Faust”) and would apply to conventional museums²¹⁶ and most of universities. Even the physicists had to accept the heresy that there are physical things and phenomena that cannot be proved by experiment. In its final claims, physics always liked to use a poetic metaphor. Therefore, the science of heritage might well allow itself the lack of finiteness and bravely claim an openness of the system, able to anticipate the future by the already appearing circumstances.

The Bible was written through a span of time but expresses a relatively coherent spiritual projection. Yet, it served several different religions and still more schisms as their basic “manual”. To an extent we wish this to happen to heritage theory writings which, though seeking rightfully for a compact vision will profit themselves if we see different “liturgies” being practised and some local language or even minor local perceptions of the god mingled into it. Curiously enough, though declaratively democratic and free-minded, the West has always intentionally or by an unconscious prejudice offered training to present or future heritage professionals from the so-called Third World countries. Having witnessed some of these occasions, I claim that, paradoxically, the education offered was at the same time largely an acculturation. Instead of making them able to cope with their original problems, the eager students are trained into becoming some museological *askari*²¹⁷, unable to function without the conditions of the environment where their newly acquired knowledge came from. While in charge of their own identity, they are importing, by their education, the models of perception and understanding of

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²¹⁶ The exceptions are growing in number, many of them in the new museum forms and actions. Proposing unanswered questions, doubts and inviting to discussion where usually final answers were offered is the practice of some new, daring elite among heritage institutions.

²¹⁷ European trained troop member. The term was normally used to describe local troops in Africa serving in the armies of European colonial powers. The designation can however also describe police, gendarmerie and security guards. (source: Wikipedia) I am using it to emphasize the concept and deception it presents when those in charge of keeping local values are training the foreign ones.

a world alien to their culture, - becoming finally unable to protect it.

7.4. Sopheme

Since there is an eternal strive for wisdom, philosophy remains a good reminder and a tool. As it assumes often unattainable levels of reflection, so cherished by the successful public intellectuals, we increasingly need a clear, critical view of ourselves and our performance, - a limpid insight in to our own identity. If the public institutional sector wishes to be or remain in charge of the process (as competitors and partners multiply), this is part of the imperative.

In the long art of memory, the ancient world treated the intentional, artificial memory of notions and ideas to remember, as a memory of things. How will memory be stored and retrieved, - or communicated eventually, will be the object of study of the future professionals. Understanding the nature of artificial memory, distinguishing the different interpretations of “memory of things” and “memory of words”, as proposed by ancient masters and the recent theoreticians, will be in the upper levels of the heritage curators’ mind. They will have to translate the ancient art of memory into the amazing potential that ICT technology has put on disposal to us. Remembering by images becomes an adventure like never before. By mastering this, they will create the change yet to be conceived of the (usable version of) *total memory* and its disposition to society. They will open and circulate the hidden memory (where it is unattainable out of commercial or other reasons) and be the protagonists of the new art of heritage communication. Frances Yates interprets those memory images as forms, marks (*notae*) and *simulacra*.

When about communicating, part of this art inaccessible to all except the talented and wise is - simplicity. It is so complicated to keep things simple! The more effective the memory “pictures” (or should we say *installations*) that serve the memory, - the better the art of it. Art itself has an ability to instigate and challenge our capacities of balance and reflection. Most good works of art (they are not as numerous as it may seem) are a mnemonic experience. They contain experience, knowledge and reminders of many things they trigger,

proposing often an adventure of continuous quality; a work of art may not be exact as an information collage of scientific facts in a museum, but those two approaches to the depth of human experience when combined can prove a potential that both sides, taken separately, - lack. Contrary to what is believed, great works of art are very precise both in the language of forms, in symbolic and metaphoric meanings and may possess huge associative and lucid power. "We have been taught by Albertus Magnus that poetic metaphors, including the fables of pagan gods, may be used in memory for their 'moving' power"²¹⁸. So, with an event the created effects are "agentes", as sort of activators and even motivation to retain proposed meanings.

Communication is more than a one way discourse, more than interpretation. It stems from the perfect understanding of the subject, a clear mission based upon the known needs of users, and the art of conveying the corrective impulses, why not indeed, messages and the more complex ones aimed at producing a balance (no matter the shape of what virtue it may appropriate in a given situation). It is an art in itself, applied, composite but still an art²¹⁹. The ideas are located somewhere between the words and images, in the spaces between and around the sentences. The same way visual art is not in a *ductus* of the painter's brush or in the composition of diverse formal elements, in contrasts of light and dark, but somewhere in the space between them. The same way truth is formed as intuition, feeling, consciousness, even a sentiment, somewhere between the documents, around the experiences, in the vaults and suspensions held by poles planted into the facts and individual testimonies. A scientist cannot afford to be less creative than an artist, only differently.

Why would it not be that these ancient images which served as reminders for an argument or assertion, are also the elementary wholes upon which further explanations and meanings could be built? When communicated, experience is dependent upon articulation and order. J. A. Comenius, the Czech educational reformer and religious leader, is remembered for his *pansofia* but mainly for his in-

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²¹⁸ Yates, Frances A. *The Art of Memory*. The University of Chicago Press, 2001. p.97

²¹⁹ Šola, Tomislav. *El octavo arte: consideraciones sobre la comunicacion de la memoria publica*. 6. Encuentro Internacional Actualidad en Museografía, ICOM Espana, Bilbao, 17-20. 06. 2010. pp. 171-196

novations in methods of teaching. In creating the most efficient ways of remembering he proposes the use of compact, composed wholes of knowledge (*gnoma*, or in some places, *sententia*). These compounds of intelligence and knowledge “a short pithy saying or maxim expressing a general truth or principle”²²⁰, he proposes, facilitate the communication and transfer. The notorious Latin *sententiae* are what literature often mentions as gnomic maxims. In fact, his *Orbis Sensualium Pictus*²²¹ is the best educational offshoot of *ars memorativa*, based, dully, upon the ancient notion of rhetoric and introducing us to the reign of the image, the real culture of pictures, that will happen only some three odd centuries later. His book is not merely “the forerunner of the illustrated schoolbook of later times”, as even the Encyclopedia Britannica proposes, but probably a perfect example of how after, practically, two millennia long-cherished and then forgotten memory “for words and things” (practiced in the Ancient world) came to life again. When referring to *similitudes*, Comenius in fact describes them as pictures by which we remember something.

The present digital age presents potentials and hazards never dreamt of. We can remember all, and in a way close to ideal perfection of some externalized mega brain. Like ever, the ideal capacity is counterweighted by unprecedented frailty and equally astonishing creative boost. It appears in unprecedented abundance, never so widely dispersed, and so overwhelmed by its power reproduction, that it again faces the same questions of use and misuse. Great questions only get more dramatic. Again, the selection, in a sense and paradoxically a controlled oblivion, is the true mastery of the memory profession. Selection is also the same cybernetic temptation already described, as managing a norm. Comenius had his project. Aware of the elusive chance of affirming a well chosen memory, Comenius seized the moment when his lexicon, seemingly meant for children, was affirmed as an exercise *par excellence* in the basics of teaching. So he used the old experience of memory images to foster well chosen

²²⁰ From Greek *gnōmē*, from *gignōskein* - to know, or, as it is explained under The-saurus: axiom, maxim - a saying that is widely accepted on its own merits; Collins English Dictionary – Complete and Unabridged © Harper Collins Publishers 1991, 1994, 1998, 2000, 2003)

²²¹ *Orbis Sensualium Pictus*, A World of Things Obvious to the Senses drawn in Pictures. London, 1728. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/28299/28299-h/28299-h.htm>, page. 122; J. A. Comenius published his work in 1658 in today’s Czech Republic.

knowledge, - a wisdom implanted into the modern Christian values of the time. As a protestant preacher, he was very much concerned with teaching concepts within the overall ambition for a better, balanced world, governed by harmony and prudence, as any engaged, idealist social reformer in his place would do²²². Comenius was well aware of the long tradition he was inheriting as education was tightly connected with memory, and therefore also of the techniques and selection it implied. He knew that wisdom and the need to communicate it in the most direct and effective way was the right strategy. Therefore, he meticulously records the practical tools of rhetorics (among them adage, apothegms, sentences) to memorizing the concepts and values they contain²²³. Any memory system sooner or later stumbles upon the decisive notion of the purpose of memory, because the “how” and the “what” finally also imply the “why”. In some periods of the absolute dominance of a certain world view, it was not so much a dilemma: memory was there to support the ruling value system. Even today, especially when memory institutions are public, they support the prevailing set of values, - again a certain norm, even if defined at the lowest level of consensus. Managed by academically trained specialists in particular scientific disciplines, modern memory institutions have often elevated their discourse beyond the understanding of the majority of the population that sustains them by paying taxes. Like with majority of public intellectuals it is the flight from responsibility and mere conformism. The method is to claim that, say, museums are scientific institutions so, allegedly, their language (alas) cannot be that of life itself. Their concerns refer to some higher grade problems outside of trivial reality. But the damage is not contained only in their lost chance. Even Comenius in his social project as well as Paracelsus in his, knew that any redundant elitism (so supported by the hermetic communication of the great pretentious, highbrow men of science and priests) leaves unnecessarily an enormous space for charlatans and manipulators. Cultural industries help to fill the frustration, being versatile and more obliged to listen to the needs of the public, but still leave much to the industry of heritage, as well as to tourism and entertainment industries. So

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²²² His work was, significantly, translated by William Godwin, social reformer and utopian, therefore it was an obvious ambition worth continuing.

²²³ *Elegantia*, *Adagia* (proverbia), *Apothegmata*, *Sententiae* (*Gnomae*), *Similia*, *Hieroglyphica*

Comenius is a good example of care and responsibility trying to devise means of compression, of reminders, of mental pictures that can serve people in attaining what he saw as dignified, meaningful existence (while accomplishing his proper mission).

An adage, a saying, often in metaphoric form, embodies a common observation, sometimes quite playful, but is almost desperate in trying to compress life wisdom: “If the shoe fits, wear it,” “Out of the frying pan, into the fire,” or “Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.” The scholar Erasmus published a well-known collection of adages as “Adagia” in 1508²²⁴. The word is from the Latin *adagium*, a “proverb”, an intentionally condensed container of wisdom. Coining and collecting apophthegms — pithy, witty or wise sayings— is common to all cultures throughout the ages.

When about understanding the nature of memorisation processes, mnemosophy should study ancient cultural practices as we only repeat them in the different technological environment but with the same basic agenda, however seemingly different. Talmud (besides its religious significance), with its tractates encompasses Jewish understanding the world and gives instruction for wise living. Other religions contain similar efforts but of smaller scale. Seemingly the Jainist *monades* or Zoroastrian Avesta scriptures serve the same function, containing compressed energy of extraordinary spiritual power. On the other hand, The Zhuangzi (a book done by Master Zhuang Zhou in the 4th century BC) is an ancient Chinese collection of anecdotes and fables, one of the foundational texts of Daoism. It is witty, whimsical, full of parables and allegories not only related to reality, - a perfect description of art of memory turned into instructions for a meaningful life.

Aphorisms are defined as “a concise expression of doctrine or principle or any generally accepted truth conveyed in a pithy, memorable statement”²²⁵, applied more to an abstract truth than to practical matters. The term was first used in the *Aphorisms* of Hippocrates²²⁶

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²²⁴ <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/4907/adage>

²²⁵ <http://universalium.academic.ru/74573/aphorism>

²²⁶ <http://universalium.academic.ru/74573/aphorism>; the first aphorism, which serves as a kind of introduction to the book, runs as follows: Life is short, Art long, Occa-

as a lengthy series of propositions concerning the symptoms and diagnosis of disease and medicine as an art of healing. It continued to be the compacted well of medical experience until the 18th century. The aphorisms that would deal with ethical, mostly poetical and philosophical matters would be *gnomae*. However, the ability to discern the shades of dividing characteristics in what overlaps in meanings and uses, -requires philological experts. Some elaborate criteria would be needed to make a difference between apothegm and aphorism which in turn have many synonyms as their meaning overlaps with adage, byword, epigram, maxim, proverb, sententia²²⁷ ...or, as some add, with *gnomae*, axiom, dictum, moral, precept, proverb, rule, truism. So *Gnomae* are ordinarily considered to be only those aphorisms which deal with ethical and/or important philosophical issues, but that would necessarily remain rather arbitrary. Heraclitus' work, *On Nature*, was a collection of *gnomae* written in a prophetic way.

The art of compressing knowledge into dynamic, manageable entities was deeply rooted in Ancient Greece. The very variety of terms of these entities of knowledge is a proof of a monumental concern, firstly for understanding the past and the world and secondly for transferring the wisdom of it to those around and especially to these who would yet come. Compressing it and putting it in different mnemonic forms was the matter of pragmatic solutions.

Apophthegms - both gnomic maxims and anecdotal aphorism - had an acknowledged place in the Greek tradition from early on. Collections, later called *gnomologiae*, of Spartan sayings, of the sayings of rulers, philosophers and other illustrious persons were compiled at least from Hellenistic times. Perhaps originally intended for school-room instruction, the collecting of apophthegms gained a new and significant function during Hellenistic and early Imperial times as the main medium for the propagation of the tenets of philosophical schools that owed their popularity and wider appeal to their ethical content²²⁸. This was a sort of portable wisdom, and suggested

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sion sudden and dangerous, Experience deceitful, and Judgement difficult.

²²⁷ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/apothegm>

²²⁸ The text is a reinterpretation of contents at: <http://newman.se/apophthegmata>

guidance towards a wider insight. Some would contain certain general or generally accepted truth as a maxim or frank, clearly spoken opinion²²⁹, a terse or pointed saying. They were always regarded as important and different translations and collections were formed, like “Apophthegmatum opus”, - a translation of Plutarch’s “Apophthegmata Laconica” by Erasmus of Rotterdam²³⁰. A few compilations were done by Francis Bacon²³¹ but he enlarged it by meticulously chosen accounts of his contemporary or recent history in which almost anecdotal apophthegms reveal his long and dramatic political experience²³². These historic examples should only suggest that we always have the same general problem of transferring collective experience to the population presently living and enable them to pass on what was worth remembering or could prove crucial in the maturation of humanity; we have inherited ways, methods and solutions that only require to be adjusted to our technologies and needs in the specific circumstances. These traditions have little chances with modern people that have lost the penchant and understanding for the edifying tone and attitude: it is, alas, the opposite of the *anything goes - nothing matters paradigm* of the post-modern world as imposed by the mass media and fascination with quick profit. Modern “mass-man”²³³, finally a proverbial barbarian (as a result of de-culturation), has been induced with so much impatience and selfishness as to regard social and intellectual improvement as a dull subject, let alone its methods.

The importance of the fables, once so cherished, can be implanted by the educational system in the first years of creative schooling. They have this quality of compressed meanings carefully deduced from a story which guides to the heart of morality and wisdom it serves. Fable was a practical solution in difficult times as “narrative form, usu-

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²²⁹ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Apophthegms>; [from Greek apophthegma, from apophthengesthai to speak one’s opinion frankly, from phthengesthai to speak] apophthegmatic, apothegmatic

²³⁰ Speroni, Charles. Wit and Wisdom of the Italian Renaissance. Berkeley. University of California Press, 1964.; “Apophthegmatum opus” is one of “the most monumental collections of classical apophthegms[...]ever assembled..”

²³¹ <http://www.bartleby.com/178/1.html>; Francis Bacon (1561–1626). Apophthegms New and Old. 1857.

²³² <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/francis-bacon/#6>

²³³ José Ortega y Gasset

ally featuring animals that behave and speak as human beings, told in order to highlight human follies and weaknesses”... “A moral—or lesson for behaviour—is woven into the story and often explicitly formulated at the end”²³⁴. Many forms of literature elicit this kind of searching interpretation, and the generic term for the cluster is allegory; under it may be grouped fables, parables, and other symbolic shapes²³⁵. Understanding much of fiction as allegory is the rightful claim, and adds to libraries like no other argument, the aura of public memory institutions. Though the world is a rather tormented and exhausted place, maybe the time has come again for some instructive romanticism that memory institutions, credible as they are, could produce. However, metaphors, parables and aforisms as memory structures abound in everyday life as a reminder of value sets and correct judgements. It would be worth to throw around on the long tradition of devising different means for collective use that would make us able to retain and disseminate what it’s worth remembering. The subject will have more and more admirers as the already accepted omnipresent theme of narratives reveals its dependence upon the ways and contents of storing memory. As impressive and notable maxims and principles condensed into a few words, aphorisms have had a long prehistory in medicine, agriculture, jurisprudence etc., “but in the modern era they have usually been vehicles of wit and pithy wisdom. Celebrated modern aphorists include such unique and timeless minds as Friedrich Nietzsche and Oscar Wilde”²³⁶.

The books containing the *gnomae* of Lao Tzu or Zen Buddhist teachings are multiplying as self-healing literature in the West. The pragmatic conclusion after a glimpse into this richness may be that the abundance of forms in different cultural traditions witnesses the importance given to this ambition of extracting and compressing quality knowledge.

After we start discerning better whether we communicate data, information or knowledge, - it becomes easier to see the wisdom as the essence of communication. Is there a minimum amount of com-

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²³⁴ Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Ultimate Reference Suite. Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, 2013.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ <http://universalium.academic.ru/74573/aphorism>

municational entity that can be involved into an interaction? This communicational *quantum* is the higher level than *meme* of the information science, or of information management, - an apparent or discrete packet of stored wisdom, - a *mneme*, - maybe. If this is correct, an attempt to try to construct a meaningful communication out of these building elements, may in any future prove useful exercise. In the intricate structure of pulsating memory, flowing in the oceans of knowledge of which each of us knows but a few shores, there are quanta of *mneme*, - always within reach. Can one, for the sake of experiment, invent some? We can even try to give them the usual form. Say, in the form of aphorism. An attentive, active audience or an author with an accumulated experience would take up the challenge in creating aphorisms. If they function, so much the better²³⁷:

- Whoever retaliates crime to crime becomes a double victim.
- Who breeds the hatred in his heart leaves no place for anything else.
- Neither anger nor hatred can become a source of justice.
- Be the source whoever might claim the river.

Curiously, even medicine uses the term *mneme* in the meaning of “the persistent or recurrent effect of past experience of the individual or of the race²³⁸. Between this medical inspiration and the *meme* of cultural studies and information science might lay the meaning of *mneme* which seems more appropriate for the purpose of understanding how the public memory functions. Let us see and further affirm the difference if it is discernible. *Meme* is “an element of a culture or a system of behaviour passed from one individual to another by imitation or other non-genetic means²³⁹. It does seem to function. We are very interested in how information spreads and how popular narratives are formed. And indeed, the proposal has been quite well understood albeit a bit superficially as it rapidly caught

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²³⁷ Of course, I claim no ultimate inventiveness for these three as, according to Goethe (if I may paraphrase), there are no new things on Earth, but only those discovered anew; take it, say, as part of my personal experience of a war closely lived.

²³⁸ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/medical/mneme>; the uses are various, for instance to describe pre-natal trauma, specific to early birth through surgery, thereby causing the foetus psychologically being traumatized by *mneme*, ‘cellular irritation’ (as one medical doctor explains).

²³⁹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meme>

the attention of Internet users. They accepted and understood it in a somewhat simplified meaning as a sort of talk-of-the day catch and gave the expression an additional legitimacy. What we should be after is a step further than *meme*, an entity as a sort of memory molecule or autonomous quantum of memory. So, some *mneme*, should be a composition of information bonded together in a compound, representing the smallest fundamental unit of experience (knowledge) that can decisively influence processes of formation of meanings and narratives. The ultimate quality version of it would be, of course, wisdom. Structures of interpretation form upon collective or social experience. Narratives crystallise into implied or explicit value judgements as a sort of wisdom, maybe in form of *mneme*, the compressed essence of knowledge we are after. The neologism *mnemosophy* invokes that public memory is about wisdom, itself unattainable perfection and unfathomable concept. Trying to protrude into it is a rather preposterous ambition but maybe we can dare to understand how this process of refinement works.

The protagonists of the Philosophy of life²⁴⁰ would probably approve of this proposal as they liked the power of condensing meanings. But others were doing it too. The notebooks of famous writers, that usually form a rare treasury of the most intimate part of their collected works, contain the wealth of notes, of sayings or *pensees*, in fact of *mneme*, around which they would then construct the narratives, be it as literary plots or as views, mindsets, interweaved into the testimonies and messages of fictitious characters and situations. In comprehensive editions, those notes were often published presenting a charming, and overwhelming view into the intimacy of the creative process, into the *techne* of their humanist or artistic “construction sites”. These are notes, reminders or thoughts as materials used or left waiting, elements of partly finalized structures, some ready to be the base of a magnificent column here or design of a dome there, but never used; in fact, they are witnesses of intentions, even of capacities realised or failed, or sometimes of hesitations and dilemma. Notes crossed and rewritten, sketches changed, sentences with corrections and marks, images disfigured, - all of it testimonies of the fight for the perfection, of defeats admitted, but also, almost as

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²⁴⁰ Montaigne, La Rochefoucauld, Vauvenargues, La Bruyere

a rule, - scattered, compressed reminders, assertions, revelations and statements, - all of them parts of a bigger whole that they could or should have been done. The *hypomnemata*, the notes, in ancient Greek culture “constituted a material memory of things read, heard, or thought, thus offering these as an accumulated treasure for re-reading and later meditation”²⁴¹. As notorious notes in a diary, as a collection of highlighted texts or commented notes on Kindle, or bookmarks on the Internet today, such reminders serve as building material for different uses. “They also formed a raw material for the writing of more systematic treatises in which were given arguments and means by which to struggle against some defect (such as anger, envy, gossip, flattery) or to overcome some difficult circumstance (a mourning, an exile, downfall, disgrace)”²⁴². If this was a procedure at Plato’s Academia, or, as Foucault convinces us, part of the ancient culture of keeping personal notes as a method of refreshing memory and self-knowledge, why wouldn’t it inspire the understanding of memory institutions of today? We seem to be at the beginning of turning the Internet into the mentioned mega brain, but the one that would gradually appropriate noble qualities as a sort of public or social intelligence. The objects from the collections and the documentation they are accompanied with can by far outmatch their present use, as millions of these *notes* can indeed be understood as gathered and ready *hypomnemata* for the range of final products of PMIs in the changing times, changing space and changing purposes. Like great individual minds, the collective ones can store their thoughts and understanding in the form of physical collections, in the secondary material, in recordings of any nature or as interpretive material, and this is what they do on a gigantic scale, - ever frustrated how to compress it, as quantitative growth will always challenge the limits and call for selection. The poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe was one of the great minds and, characteristically, he tried to secure the flux matter of his creative process and preserve the building material of his spiritual edifice. Such is his work “Maxims and Reflections”, - a collection of sayings and his intellectual *hypomnemata*. It was published in 1833 as an example of recognition and attention

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²⁴¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hypomnema>

²⁴² Ibid..

that such temptations of great minds receive²⁴³. It is an enormous body of knowledge that would describe the spontaneous or purposeful effort of many creative authors to produce well-condensed statements that are glittering pieces of some ultimate wisdom. Bertrand Russell has consciously tried to make himself clear in such laconic chapters of his knowledge of the world and human nature. You can recognize his kind of intellectual and moral capacity even by the statistics, as he belongs to the great spiritual authorities recognizable by the number and incidence of their quotations. Like our ancestors we still have our wise men as authorities. Cultures have their selections and so do the professions. Architects do it, artists and musicians do it.... Poets do it in such a superior way that their verses have become the coagulated wisdom of the world. Some personalities from the literature, or arts and sciences have become themselves mnemonic form, - metaphors of deep and wide meanings that even their names suggest value systems and messages assigned to their particular human insights. Here we actually describe the elements of the grand system of memory retention, an outline of a true system of the art of memory.

The history of philosophy offers many examples of this search for wisdom, - philosophy being, in its ideal projection, exactly that. According to the essence of *ars memoriae* by term *nota* Leibnitz describes the image of some sensible thing attached, associated to the thing to be remembered. Using the mnemonic power of this image, the *nota*, its difference or likeness to the thing to be remembered, he joins the classical masters of the art of memory. Only a step further is the ambition to form brief statements which function as a sort of expanded *nota*, invoking complex meanings. Digitization has changed much and immediate access to immense collective memory including sciences makes it less urgent for individuals to memorize. But the challenges of this sort of specific autonomy and personalized memory will stay and so will the inspiration stored in *ars memoriae*. A *mneme* could be a particle of wisdom, or at least of a noble reminder

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²⁴³ It was published by Johann Peter Eckermann and Friedrich Wilhelm Riemer as the last in the authorized edition of Goethe; appeared posthumously in Cotta bookstore. In 1840, the collection was expanded again. The collection of notes and thoughts of nobel prize winner, writer Ivo Andrić have also been also published, but prominent examples are very numerous.

to knowledge or experience worth remembering that it stands for. The search for wisdom with some institutionalized philosophy is the destiny of human thinking. McLuhan was implying that the “message” was both moral, socially minded, comprehensible, striking and effective in its importance, - much unlike what his superficial critics preferred to understand, - a message as a telegram or letter handled by the post office, as he was often ridiculed. He prophetically announced a communication that obliges, that aims at influencing and changing some state by claiming that the medium is the message. In the case of PMIs, the medium through which we choose to memorize and communicate is deeply embedded into the messages and influences their nature, meaning and use.

In Greek mythology, Mneme (Μνήμη) was one of the three original Boeotian muses, the muse of memory. These ancient poetical constructions for the understanding of the world are meant to be inspiring. One of her sisters Melete was the muse of thought and meditation, while the other was dedicated to voice and song. The important symbolic value of names lies further in their genesis: they are daughters of Mnemosyne who, herself is the fruit of the marriage of Heaven and Earth (Uranus and Gaia), - a high and ultimate origin indeed suggesting the importance she embodied.

As time is articulated by segments that we have devised and recognised as time units, so is heritage, especially when regarded important, constructed upon points of support in the form of *mnemes*. They might behave like synaptic areas or zones in the structure of public memory, itself a part of mnemosphere’s global brain, as a structure of mnemo-technique and a memory at the same time. So we may take *mneme* as the heritage particle, the molecule of public memory, - the unit of wisdom if we push it towards some idealist projection.

But, since there exists a term *meme*, only slightly different one in form but being used in information science, - maybe a more appropriate term should be better. Besides, *mneme*, though a logical possibility is so close to the memory as its literal meaning that it does not suggest any further potential that we are looking for. The thinkers which were associated with the Philosophy of life, an informal

school of philosophy, were moralists who liked to express themselves with condensed messages of wisdom, the *pensées*. Moralism is a delicate attitude, certainly not entirely wise but it bravely demonstrates the stance that all quality is about values: how to recognize them, collect them, care for them and disseminate them. Their ambition was honest and so was their choice that learning has to reach individuals. The knowledge they promote is of a higher kind as it promotes ethical attitude and intentional improvement of the human condition by doing good and ameliorating the life of people. Having stipulated wisdom as the aim of memory on many occasions, there seems to be a better solution. In the present world so pragmatic and so recklessly deregulated, the perverted modernist credo of “anything goes” turned into admitting that world can be ruled by ruffians and rascals just because they seem to be most successful in the seemingly democratic aversion to any norm. The fact of chaos must bring back new “moralising “however unsympathetic and obsolete it could sound. Having the 21st century as spiritual one, does not go without the moral, civic renaissance. The plain proposal would therefore be that we use a term *sopheme*²⁴⁴ instead of the indeterminate *mneme*. When well constructed, a *sopheme* functions as memory structure, like pictures, diagrams or mental maps. “Man is the measure of all things” is probably a *sophem*. Right or wrong, this *sophem* coined by Protagora sums up as a memory token, - an entire anthropocentric attitude. Certain names (Adonis, Europa, Titan, Piscis, Appolo, Leviathan) are compressions of multiple meanings chosen because of their strong symbolic value or as being prominent feature of some narratives. As sort of *sophems*, they can be employed for a variety of uses to convey messages or discourses otherwise too long or oblique. They possess not only the value of supporting memory, but even their underlying narratives contain multiple, dense layers of meaning. The very choice of them even expresses the claims and ambitions of their users. Like the words, concepts, terms, names, - a language itself (being also a medium) is the grandest and most perfect accumulation of

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²⁴⁴ Philosopheme (.....) A philosophical proposition, doctrine, or principle of reasoning. [R.]; This, the most venerable, and perhaps the most ancient of Grecian myths is a philosopheme. Coleridge. As the example demonstrates, the use in philosophy is very much in line of the possible use of it in the theory of public memory, or a possible inspiration, indeed. <http://machaut.uchicago.edu/?resource=Webster%27s&word=philosopheme&use1913=on> (Webster’s Revised Unabridged Dictionary, G. & C. Merriam, 1913)

memory ever, - an immense storage of messages already by its form and structure let alone by the stored information and experience.

Sophem suggests the ultimate intention of memory, - the wisdom. What makes *sophems*, the quanta of wisdom is their message and implied beneficial, almost self-healing effect, - knowledge being but a raw material of wisdom and the beneficial action it encompass. *Sopheme* is an ethically active piece of knowledge, a scientifically supported and approved assertion, an artistic statement or metaphor, or maybe even a meaning that hovers over certain creative acts (that only artistic creation can achieve).

The cover of this book is a *sophem*, a compounded and compressed contemplation upon the nature of human society. Peter Paul Rubens explains, in a glimpse, the nature of memory we cherish in a society. What he created was a picture of primary process that precedes any institution and which reveals the very nature of the process they are about. PMIs are just an organised, sophisticated version of this primeval transfer of collective experience, - so distinctly and yet simply described here. Heritage is, we can see, the process of transmission: we have the source, the need is vividly expressed, and we see the happening dramatically suggested in a somewhat mysterious night scene. The old woman is of an age in which any human does question the meaning of existence. She is the proverbial grandmother, a symbolic carrier of the entire social experience (not only of the masculine adventurism), - contemplative, resigned and with a touch of self irony in her hardly perceptible smile. She is sitting, almost stiffly, en face, gazing with her vague unfocused view as if simultaneously contemplating the event. She holds her candle, - her light of wisdom, and protects it by the other hand to the edge of being hurt by the heat of the flame.

The boy is bright and brisk young adolescent, - an epitome of continuation of life: waiting to explore, expand and conquer experiences. Demonstrating by his forwardness the *élan* for life, - this eager youth is enthusiastic and curious. Leaning forward almost over her shoulder he expresses, probably unwillingly, insistence and yet his humble attitude towards authority, with his head turned left and upwards, he stares with hope, expectation and admiration, - almost love, at the

profile of the old woman with her faraway look.

Like it should be, learning is possible from those whom we love, from their past, and only by demonstrating motivation: his candle is already tilted towards the other; it is like his hand might be trembling from anticipation. In a moment, the circle will close and the stream of social transmission, spiritual and material, will start to flow anew in one of its cycles. The transfer of collective experience will happen. The life can go on re-born socially, with an inbuilt hope that new experience will be founded upon the solid ground prepared by of predecessors, able to advance the society and fathom deeper into the meaning of life.

A painting, a verse or even a whole poem can be a *sopheme*, and so can also be, at their best, a caricature or an aphorism. Many writers or thinkers like Walter Benjamin have been much inclined to brief essays in the form of fragments of some possible whole. The persistent presence of books in the virtual society actually announces the triumphal return of story-telling will parallel be balanced by a deconstructed discourse; individual thoughts and sentences will (like individual objects in an imaginary museum) be composed and re-composed according to ever new purposes, - maybe with a suggested freedom to readers or users. This is one of the noble capacities of Internet where many applications offer to users an opportunity to compose their particular wholes out of the offered elements according to their need or creative demands. Therefore, some messages will be highly defined while others will be a sort of creative and inspirational *nota*. Creative communication serving a defined mission will be the common denominator. A *sophem* may be any coherent, acceptable value judgement of durable quality that improves the conceptual or practical understanding of either the total environment or its parts and may be used in composing larger entities of wisdom. Rene Magritte has been notorious for his *blitzes* of clear vision, and some of his created images remain permanent mind openers, windows upon a certain wisdom he was keen to draw our attention to. It is not the seemingly primitive and simple figurativism that attracts people so much: it is the fact that most of them are *sophems*, *pictograms* or *psychograms*, - wisdoms at any case, that they recognise as inspiration and reminder.

The multi-faced mnemosophy accommodates diverse social ambitions and assumes phenomena like images and their reflections in the consciousness demonstrating that it is a science, appropriating facts but caring about the essence. The facts remain a sort of weft knowledge, the structural tissue of memory. Knowledge without understanding can be dangerous or (at least) useless, so it is completed only if refined and ennobled into wisdom. As wisdom is the privilege of a few, - *sophems* are both reminders and messages of that deeper and bigger whole. To such proposals of sharing, the average highbrow scientists react like their privilege of oblates is threatened. Heritage occupations' academic employees in most of the world identify themselves with scientists, declare themselves as such, and often feel depreciated for having to work in an institution so burdened with public commitment. Paradoxically, they see their identity deriving from their basic academic discipline and not from the job they do, the mission it comprises, nor the sector it belongs to. What a privilege goes by them unnoticed! Their refusal of the chance to have their own constituting science (referential to the role of public memory sector and their proper profession) is such a miss: it would acquire them importance and badly needed aid to the society. Managing modern society requires all natural stakeholders contributing to the societal project. Such a project, rooted into economy and politics and served by the occupations and made possible by professions, cannot function without the decisive input of memory. The way any society manages its memory decides upon its nature and reach. So, PMIs as a strong sector in the societal strategy will unite in a federation because it is needed, and so will emerge the science of public memory and its underlying profession. What changes and circumstances make inevitable, is apt to happen. If those who are naturally in charge do not do it, somebody else will²⁴⁵. With the processes of privatisation in a world actually denying its humanist heritage, PMIs might miss their chance, lose their integrity being undercut and disowned. Compared to the any bigger scenario of the sort, let alone a gloomy one, a *sophem* appears a mere pun, but in any optimistic vision, it might be at least a good inspiration.

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²⁴⁵ Šola, Tomislav. *Prema totalnom muzeju* (Towards the total museum)

7.5. Proposing a definition

The general theory of heritage, or the science of public memory, trans-disciplinary by the challenge it faces, - studies the nature of collective and public memory, and consequently of heritage and identity in relation to public needs. It is decisive for the existence and mission of the appearing profession of public memory. It may be named heritology, mnemosophy or any other name that the interested parties decide upon. It applies cognition to the policies, strategies and practices of the heritage concerned institutions and occupations. Its purpose is the use of heritage as the wisdom necessary to preserve the vitality of inherited values and as a contribution to sustainable development. It is a constant effort of evaluation of practice, of transfer of professional experience, and of planning the future of the profession. It is the entirety of principles, theses and theorems used in elucidating the concept of heritage, the nature of public memory institutions, their practice and their mission, as well as their role in society²⁴⁶.

This definition may need further explanation, still in a compressed but more explanatory form. In fact, the explanation lies in the concepts it contains – the principles, theses and theorems that make it acceptable as one of information sciences. The science of heritage is a whole of principles, theses and theorems used in elucidating the concept of heritage, the nature of heritage institutions, their practice and their mission in society.

The general principle of the theory is the existence of collective, social and public memory. Patrimony or heritage is being formed throughout the society, as being extracted from its informal and institutional structures. When provided with a mission it functions as public memory. Heritage is a body of selected and documented memories and experiences, functioning as collecting, care and communication of the inherited values, with the aim of preservation and as a means of quality development. It is a fluctuating, dynamic phenomenon whose credibility is maintained by the commitment to science and humanist ethics.

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²⁴⁶ I have taught this definition to my students at the University of Zagreb since the mid-90s, and proposed it widely when lecturing internationally.

The main theses are two. One is the similarity of working process in all the disciplines deriving from the concepts of the information and communications sciences and, practically, the sameness of it in public memory institutions. The second thesis is the convergence of their social practices and even the public perception which tends to ignore their external differences.

The theorems are several, - meaning that they are all heritage institutions, non-commercial and not-for-profit, based on scientific research, user-oriented, mission driven, constantly integrated by the potential of ICT, increasingly discovering and practising their capacity of creative communication.

More on the nature of the science of public memory:

- The science of public memory is trans-disciplinary in nature, serving an understanding of heritage, of its use as public memory and of the mission of related occupations.
- It studies the nature of memory, heritage, identity and inherited experiences, applies it to the public memory sector while evaluating their contribution and performance and researching public needs.
- It draws its potential from collective memory as proposed by individuals, groups, communities, social memory as created by science and creative industry and the very public memory as an amalgam, a composite body of knowledge and wisdom as formed by the PMIs and actions that perform the same standardized and accredited public procedure.
- It applies its study to the policies, strategies and practices of the institutions and professions concerned with memory, encourages and performs the process of information and knowledge selection and refinement into heritage so that it is then used as the wisdom necessary to preserve the vitality of inherited values in the processes of sustainable development.
- It is a constant effort of evaluation of practice, of transfer of professional experience, and of planning the future of heritage and its profession.

If this is a relatively comprehensible though belated account of a long

process of advocating the existence of public memory science, the further order and elaboration should be able to make it still more a convincing proposal. The arguments for mnemosophy (or whatever the science “X” may be called) will lay with reflections on information and communication science. Curiously enough, many solutions relating to both practice and strategy of public memory aim at the same direction: “Information science is a discipline that deals with the processes of storing and transferring information. It attempts to bring together concepts and methods from various disciplines such as library science, computer science and engineering, linguistics, psychology and other technologies in order to develop techniques and devices to aid in the handling – that is, in the collection, organization, storage, retrieval, interpretation and use – of information.”²⁴⁷ Even in Zagreb where it was so early and visionary proposed by Božo Težak it met with tendencies of fragmentation instead of being used as fertile ground for conceptual advance²⁴⁸.

Mnemosophy has the capacity to deal with the mission of one whole social sector - as a reflective discipline on the use of selected, stored, researched and ethically based knowledge in a social project. It is a science of the entirety of heritage that serves to understand the genesis and purpose of memory chosen to survive and continue, able to suggest forms of mission and action of a united sector of memory occupations.

Once elaborated and provided with the consent of the academic community and that of the public memory institutions, it may increase the quantity and value (to use the language of the epoch) of conceptual shares in the eternal and ongoing memory project of any society, - that of memory and heritage. Having created the managed world we shall have to accept the challenge to manage all its facets, as even the areas traditionally left to nature will not remain without our intervention. “Whose memory and for what purposes?” will be a question any inhabitant of the Planet should find justified. Only

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²⁴⁷ Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1998.

²⁴⁸ His proposal of “ETAkSA” model, in fact a vision of cybernetics as the final use of information sciences was so advanced that it produced some consequences, beyond those he was himself putting into practice, only long after his death in 1980. I was one of his lucky students at the post-graduate study in the years 1976 and 1977.

an accomplished profession in charge can offer a credible answer. Many should share the concern: population and its cultural production (strong contributors to accumulation of memory), heritage occupations (makers and maintainers of public memory), politicians (mediators and facilitators), business (partners and marketers) and society (users of public memory). Whatever called, the science of public memory will serve as an understanding of the complex nature of memory and its public use. It will serve the potential of the converging heritage occupations. Once they unite into a strong profession (still retaining their specificities) they will be an able partner within a social contract for the advance of human condition.

8. The afterword as a glimpse upon the future

Traditionally founded heritage occupations have rarely seen the danger of the competition, ignoring the new context of competing industries, but that privilege has expired. Formed upon omnipotent profit, heritage as a marketable good may just become an unavoidable temptation in the future, devouring the non-profit institutions in the process of the commoditisation of public memory. As that would mean the end of culture, not only of public memory,- we should not tacitly admit such defeat.

What is a natural human strive? A liberal society with domination of corporations and obsessive profit orientation, or a pluralistic, multicultural, communitarian society built upon social and democratic values, comprising private initiative and free circulation of capital? Is it common wealth or wealth for the few and chosen that we envisage? The threats and challenges of commoditization in innumerable variants will increasingly inundate the heritage domain of public memory, cause heritage to be communicated with an aim of cultivating particular, biased sets of values or, at least, particular platforms for some to be weighted one against the other. The privatisation of museums is our tentative reality. It can start as the concession of a management, influence definitions of public property, penetrate the ownership structure, and move towards the right of disposal of collections: all in the name of effective management dealing with real or provoked, otherwise non-existent problems. Politicians will be corrupted into proposing privatisation and deregulation as the only strategy for the times of scarcity. In fact the opposite is true. In the financialized, total capitalism, any property is or may become a marketable good. So if a museum is the property of a city, and the city faces bankruptcy, the city fathers will make no distinction in selecting what property to sell²⁴⁹. In 2014 the Detroit Institute of Arts was prepared to sue the City to prevent the sale of its collection if Detroit's plan for exiting bankruptcy is not approved. Newspapers all over the world published the news of the sale already. Some recognized their own situation, while others only sensed the approaching

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²⁴⁹ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/09/18/us-usa-detroit-bankruptcy-art-idUSKBN0HD2OI20140918>

danger.

Privatisation of the traditionally public sector in Europe may also happen as the consequence of the impoverishment of the state. The vicious nature of the scheme lies in the fact that the state is impoverished because of the very privatisation. That time has already come in certain countries and will advance proportionally to the expansive and perversely speculative nature of economy. The scarcity in financing thus causes great changes. It pushes the institutions towards separation from the state which, to an extent is a very good, stimulating circumstance. It also reveals that there is much of inertia and lack of professionalism within the sector and that is good as well. The responsible employees in charge will have to assume full responsibility for the effectiveness of these institutions: their product must be based upon the same principle as that of profit-run companies: value for money. Marketing is exchange. Their task is to offer convincing explanations for their interpretation of profit as social, cultural and psychological, taking forms of verifiable contribution to development. Only the science of public memory or the real profession behind it will maintain the basic norm needed for a harmonious development: public property of memory institutions and their unquestionable non-profit character. The siege is in full swing and we are already pushed into the donjon.

A recent report from the world's oldest museum association (MA, UK)²⁵⁰ estimated that the nation's 2,720 museums generate an average of £3 of income for every £1 of public sector funding invested in the sector. What is very impressive is that for every £1 of public sector grant received, the museum sector generates an estimated £2.20 of direct economic output. According to the same report museums in England generate £2.64bn of income a year (most of which they spend in their cities and regions) and employ almost 40,000 people and, we could add, create at least as many jobs outside. They should be advertising new econometric methods which clearly show that a successful heritage project may measurably increase the motivation for visiting certain destinations, increase general visibility, improve

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²⁵⁰ http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/The_Economic_Impact_of_Museums_in_England-FINAL_REPORT.pdf(Feb. 2015)

the image of certain places and enhance its soft power. All that is calculable revenue. The Arts Council that produced the report also released an advocacy toolkit to help arts and cultural organisations make the case for funding with public and private funders.

Profession should be able also to decisively influence the professional standards and public requirements in case of private museums. The public status of certain private museums that promote a creationist world view is not part of democratic rights but rather a misuse of them. The right to privacy in a secular society is not the right of claiming public memory status. Common wealth and the advance of the human condition cannot be achieved through the private ownership of public institutions, least of all in the domain of spiritual values. The history of public institutions is largely built by private contributions but exercised as contribution to the public domain, - not as usurpation of it. Anybody can contribute to the common good but terms can only be publicly determined. That is part of the basic democratic agenda.

So, again, if a new professionalism is not to ensue from long consideration and new challenges, - able of overcoming the phase of deregulation from the state by a proper response, - then financial trouble will gradually surrender public memory institutions into the hands of private companies. The same process is happening in Europe and elsewhere with the privatisation of higher education, a new, rather puzzling practice, especially to the newly arrived in the European Union. Private colleges in the sense of charitable trusts have had the appearance of an already privatised sector but that is not the case. They would rather belong to some fourth sector of social enterprise²⁵¹, or eventually will change in that way, but the fact is that privatisation in many countries of what has traditionally been the public domain will bring unforeseeable troubles²⁵² and demand responses not yet thought of. Although private-public partnership is a welcome innovation in the funding of public institutions it is

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²⁵¹ Šola, Tomislav S. Javno Pamćenje – čuvanje različitosti i mogući projekti (Public memory – protection of diversity and potential projects). Zavod za informacijske znanosti. Filozofski fakultet, Sveučilište u Zagrebu, 2014. (Croatian edition)

²⁵² A part of a letter to New College of Humanities (2013) as a comment upon a daring, controversial, successful experiment of Professor A. C. Grayling.

important that a strong profession protects the free and unbiased public character of institutions. Public-private partnership is a realistic possibility but a very demanding challenge. If the public part is defended half-heartedly and reluctantly by public servants, as is prevalently the case, the more aggressive, personally interested other part will undoubtedly prevail and impose its own agenda. That is a probability that rises with the lack of professional training and status. Very few strong and convincing public institutions could take the challenge. The economy in difficulties is a ready-made excuse for many concessions to particular interests already, - often to the detriment of the public good. Consequently and in spite of promises (easily offered) and contracts with flexible, conditional changes, culture becomes commodity, - yet another soft value industry. How and by whom will that process be recognised, and how should it be handled? Theory can help by motivating the practice and feeding it with arguments. It should be persuasive enough to prove to the emerging heritage profession that it is responsible for collecting, caring for and communicating value systems, not objects. It requires a profession to maintain high criteria in a world surrendering itself to ephemeral illusions and profit-making schemes in a cultural or artistic disguise. Do we inhabit this Earth or Mouse Planet or Planet Hollywood? Thirty years ago while Europe was still a continent with its own political and cultural agenda, we would have laughed at these syntagms as defamatory and grotesque. Globalisation is a natural process, but it does not necessarily mean unifying at the level of the lowest and the meanest common denominators. A society that offers culture and self reflection as a free service to its citizens is not a socialist ideological invention but a consequence of devastating elitist models, therefore pertaining to the very idea of civil society and democracy. This lesson is part of the traumatic, victorious and obliging heritage of Europe.

One can rightfully be inclined to believe, as suggested throughout this essay, - that we are soon to witness the birth of a heritage mega-profession. It will happen parallel to an increasing engagement of the population in a way that will change the position of public institutions. The latter will unite with the ecologically conscious to engage in a permanent campaign, a movement, for the survival of inherited richness, - not only natural and artistic but also of civilizational and

cultural environment. There have been enough of self-indulgent scientists who are often dangerously close to foolishness, even when they are genial. It would be preposterous to call the culprits among great contemporary public intellectuals who, though being pundits and connoisseurs in philosophy, sociology or culture science, failed to follow the unbiased path of public interest and, allowing themselves decorative and declarative criticism always opted for the love of media owners. They have committed multiple treason by failing to demonstrate honesty, integrity and self denial, - the same virtues we have the right to expect from our public institutions. Truly great minds cannot propose that the future of humanity is finding another planet to live on and yet there is a whole literature on the subject. Even the Folly just changes its parameters: Paradise was a comfort for all while Planet X is meant only for those that accumulate enough to pay. If the expansive conquest remains the only paradigm of development that is indeed the general failure of modern times. The popular press speculates rightfully how many hundreds shall be able to pay for the trip. Who would the “lucky” ones be? Why museums never took up the challenge to explain that conquest is the essence of wars or how impossible a period of time it is to travel the 3 or 6 light years? People are embarrassed by the lack of serious clues and reasonable orientation in delusional and manipulative environments daily created for them. Why would anybody ever think of leaving the Planet? What if conquest as a dominant Western concept of development has its limits? Should we, indeed, finally reverse this obsessive ideology into the conquest of inner worlds, - of our societies and our own selves and try to gain victories and chances there?

The sad evidence confirms that the profit of four centuries of rationalism, might be manipulated and reduced to the ability of perfect recall, a total memory, gigantic in size and, ironically, never so unstable, fragile and manipulated as nowadays. The Great Greed spoiled our societies, simultaneously and increasingly turning the Planet into the warring, insecure, unhealthy, ugly and uncomfortable place. The world of permanent conflict creates ideal circumstances for the marauding raid of global bankers and corporations. The drones, cyborgs and robot soldiers are a picture of ultimate destruction. When they happen, mistakes are dismissed as collateral, but wisdom tells us that devastation is a process that at one point inevitably gets out

of hand. As all systems are interconnected, a wrongdoing inflicted in one part brings consequences in another. The global masters of chaos took many faces and imperceptibly penetrated channels of communication and crated the mass illusion of democracy only to blur the insight into the continuing disintegration of survival values. The ampleness, scale and speed of these challenges require quality memory and wisdom to recover our chances as human kind.

The perfect memory is not yet turning into a global conscience, into a sort of functional global mind. There might have existed philosophers of the Ancient world who were, due to the art of memory, at the same time giants of knowledge and of selection, - the wise men. Shall our public memory sector take the role and be there in time? A pathetic phrase, some will exclaim, a heresy, others will add, but the world can be made better every day, by anyone, let alone by the institutions serving the common good. When Versailles gets a permanent exhibition, - a visitor centre by the name “Museum of Power – the faces of rule”, - we will know that we stand a chance. By that time the Louvre, magnificent institution in more than one aspect, will have part of a permanent exhibition on the history of looting other countries and other cultures, to bow to them and admit that the French state is only in charge of what belongs to many. As a consequence, both the contents and outreach programme of the Louvre will change. The British Museum will progressively return (also) the Elgin marbles to the new, top class museum *in situ* and will gain a prestigious contract in exchange. Musee du Quay Branly²⁵³ will hopefully become a place where, on Saturday evening, you will be looking to meet a friend from Benin, Peru or Tahiti, living in Paris; it should have become their place, instead of becoming yet another of *ours* talking about the exotic *them*. Instead of deriving from the mentality of conquest, heritage institutions will be returning what they have gathered only to overcrowd and congest their storages. The grand re-distribution will be a new division of offices and exchange of custodies.

This time, the logic of communication will be re-arranging collec-

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²⁵³ What a cynical way to avoid any obliging implication in any of the possible names depicting the contents!

tions or creating a function for all sorts of pools and agreements with a common cumulative acting. Sometimes “returning” will mean literally that: a bust of a founder of the first regional public school belongs to entrance of the very edifice he has created and not to the darkness of the museum storage that collects sculptures of that particular author. Mnemosophy has different priorities and will not mystify the obvious risk of the famous gentleman’s face losing the tip of his nose if moved from the gloomy museum storage to the vestibule of the school he founded. While again actively “working” for the good reputation of the region and for his big victory for education he will be, naturally, exposed to risks. Any damaged nose is worth fighting for the big public interests, the more so as the very same schooling system (once the hope of emancipated society) is most probably under threat of privatisation. And, incidentally, why would we always imply disrespect and vandalism as destined behaviour: it strangely resembles some awkward invoking it.

In the increasing number of occasions or circumstances, heritage will turn into direct action: on the spot, site-specific and centred, with site situation-specific creations and connected to its local inspirations. Here and now, the old call for efficiency will be the motto of many innovations. A new self-confident and assertive professionalism will be able to deal with improvisations, producing transporting & site- immersive projects of mixed media. Some new professionals with liberating theory on their mind will be producers, a sort of responsible facilitators, while present occupations like curators will be directors, much like in film projects. Curating a project will grow further in importance. One of the reactions to the shortcomings of heritage occupations are the rising individual, non-corporate and non-governmental initiatives which avoid the stiffness and corruption of the grand institutions. Unlike privatisation and mercantilisation, that is the positive challenge the growing, nascent profession will hopefully meet with goodwill and anticipation. Creating public narratives from memory will become so popular that all sorts of guerrilla curating will appear. Some of it will be done by restless professionals, some by amateurs, while the rest will be done by powers from the corporative world. Public memory will descend to the street while collective memory will seek its legitimacy and ways of public expression. The creative alliance of curators and artists will

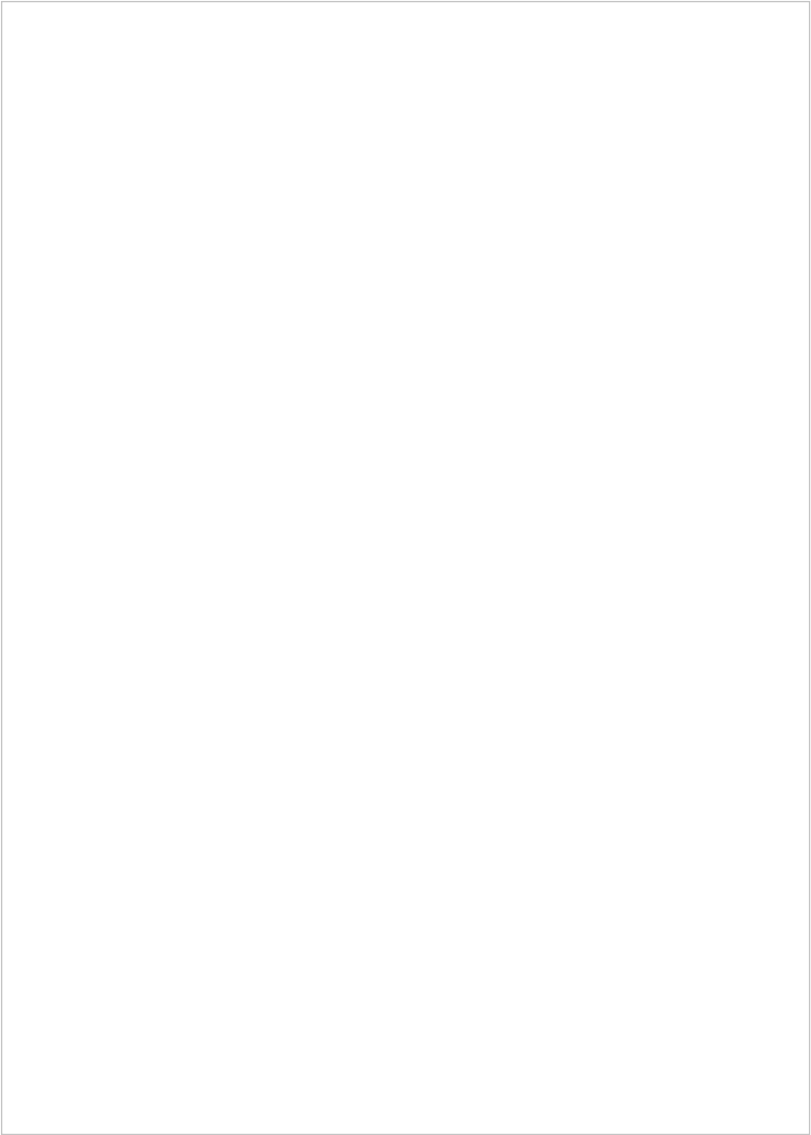
join to this the immense potential the social memory as created in cultural industries and science to build an unprecedented truthful theatre. This leavening scene enriched by the increasingly “combative”, reformed, public memory institution, as a healing reaction to the world around, - should be the subject of books to come.

The age of museums, a triumph that Germain Bazin was cautiously exploring, - seems to be over. A society of knowledge was thought to be the solution to most of the problems of modern society. The modern museum institutions were presenting an omnipotent science for a hundred odd, or even two hundred years, changing from scientific to (prevalently) communicational institutions. Archives opened up and “stepped down” to serve the wider community. Libraries realised that they form a collective memory and shape public opinion. Understanding their job as a common civil society project they retain specificity and acquire new importance. Together they articulate the age of heritage in which knowledge is refined into developmental wisdom: peaceful prosperity in a preserved richness of the world. The perspectives that change civil society into a spiritual one will become the context of the new role of public memory in the destiny of the world. The calls for a new profession, explicit like this book or implicit like at many other instances may still stand a chance though the time is quickly running out.

Once the public memory profession reaches maturity, it will be able to negotiate the position for its mission within the scope of a fourth sector, - the very one that gives rise to arguments for re-thinking capitalism. “Natural capitalism”²⁵⁴ is a proposal, but still more a sign of a new consciousness that may pass as a new practice even with no name on it. What the conventional capitalism-gone-wild proved is the dangerous fragility of the spiritual sphere and culture as its social practice. The owners of economic potential might be forced to realise that business has a paradoxical task to encourage and sustain culture and a vision of a spiritual society, - as any other leads to disaster. The irony is that the value system of social entrepreneurship, the one in which the world will re-integrate, will have to play the role always

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²⁵⁴ Hawken, Paul; Lovins, Amory B.; Hunter Lovins, L. Natural capitalism – The Next industrial revolution. Little, Brown & Company, 1999.

assigned to ideologies. It will support the vision of a civil, open society, not any more as a gimmick for the unified world but as the only reality. After “communism” failed and after “capitalism” brought us to self-destruction, we shall be happy with the vision of a spiritual society in which common wealth will become the core value system and the contribution to it the measure of social (and hopefully individual) success. Not so far from now, we shall find ourselves in bio-technological surroundings, immersed into a total illusion, suppressed by the engineered mental environment and imposing simultaneous realities. Within a giant, nebulous and dangerous illusion into which the entire world is being dragged we shall need a friendly and wise profession to remind us what real reality is. No definition we have inherited will be good enough even to describe what human being is, let alone the emanations of his tortured creativity. By a mere click or voice command (whoever may control it), we shall perceive our environment in different dimensions of time and space, with much more strained mind and blurred limits of reality. Another click or two will populate our immediate environment with past or even future protagonists and circumstances, some acted, some synthetic and some self-generated, - proposing a life of their own. Our augmented reality will require augmented tools of comprehension and orientation or simply, a reliable connection to real reality. Our science on selecting and using memory will have to function and give us a way to deal with that set of challenges in a meaningful way. The stones of its foundations are multiplying to turn into the foundation of a future scientific edifice for the heritage domain, - seemingly a cute and fun vision. This intercession in favour of the science of public memory was about contributing a reflection to the past and present deliberations upon its practice and theory. A counter-active public memory sector will assist us in constant endeavour to perfect human nature, and remind us (to paraphrase Roland Barthes) that the only eternity given to us is that of human kind. But if eternity escapes us, - future will always happen. The whole matter was always who the builders of it will be, and by what selected values would it form a decent social contract.



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