

LEKSIKON YU MITOLOGIJE:
READING YUGOSLAVIA FROM ABRAMOVIĆ
TO ŽMURKE

JESSIE LABOV

Introduction

A lexicon is by definition more flexible in its approach than a dictionary or an encyclopedia. It professes only to be a guide to the vocabulary or specialized terms of a particular area of interest, without the promise of a comprehensive knowledge implicit in the other two concepts.¹ The prescribed subject of a lexicon, therefore, has a profound effect on its final form and audience, whether it is about butterfly collecting, military terminology, or a completely fictional world such as Tolkien's Middle Earth. In the case of the recently published *Leksikon Yu Mitologije* (literally, the "Lexicon of Yu Mythology"), the very subject presents a riddle: what realm is it describing? who is its intended audience? and what form will it therefore take?

Upon examining the book we learn quickly what it concerns, as the first item after the table of contents is a comprehensive timeline from 1943 ("birth of the new Yugoslavia") to 1991 ("the disintegration of Yugoslavia"). The events listed correspond to known historical markers ("1948: Tito's "no" to Stalin"), while focusing mostly on literature and culture ("1961: Dušan Vukotić is awarded an Oscar for his animated film *Surrogate*"). The *Leksikon* is the result of a joint publishing project between the publishing house "Rende" in Belgrade and "Postscriptum" in Zagreb, and it is an unprecedented cultural artifact. The 500-page volume contains over 800 entries on Yugoslav popular culture; a brief glimpse beyond the chronology into the alphabetized contents reveals entries on comic books, female arm-wrestling champions, hairstyles, and the automotive blueprint for the Yugo (Fig. 1). There is an extraordinary number of entries concerning music—rock stars, pop stars, clubs, magazines, posters—that seem to dominate the book, but there are also references to film and television, mass-market print culture, sports, bits and pieces of material culture, fictional characters, logos, and icons. There is a lot of emphasis on the graphic design of the entertainment industry (Fig. 2), which correlates with the innovative field of

film poster design in contemporary Poland and Czechoslovakia. Just as important to the nature of the *Leksikon* is what cannot be found in its pages. There are no famous writers, politicians (unless they are large enough to qualify for a cult of personality, like Tito), scientists, major historical events—in short, there are no entries one would expect to find in a standard encyclopedia or lexicon. It would seem, then, that this is a lexicon of Yugoslav cultural history. By excluding the words ‘Yugoslav’ and ‘history’ from the nominal subject of the book, the editors signal that both terms have become problematic in defining this project. One implicit question buried in the title of the volume is whether or not Yugoslavia, and the belief system it was supposed to represent, ever really existed.² Another is what kind of history would be possible to write about this possibly mythical entity?

In “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” Walter Benjamin challenges the idea inherited from nineteenth century historiography that there can be any “‘eternal’ image of the past”; instead, his approach of historical materialism “supplies a unique experience of the past,” which reflects as well the present moment in which the history is written and its relationship to the past (Benjamin 1968, 262). Benjamin’s historical materialist is firmly grounded in the present but *recognizes* the past:

The true picture of the past flits by. The past can be seized only as an image which flashes up at the instant when it can be recognized and is never seen again. [...] For every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably. (255)

In his essay on Benjamin and Bachofen, Joseph Mali also invokes this moment of recognition as a window into Benjamin’s “theory of historical mythology” (Mali 1999, 174). For Mali, in a work like the *Arcades Project* Benjamin’s historical materialist is unearthing layers of myth that surround material objects, demonstrating that “history was not really determined by certain mythical beliefs, images, and tales but rather that certain historical conditions of material and anthropological necessities determined these mythic forms and compulsions” (175). It is in this material basis of mythology that I think we can locate the project of the *Leksikon*. The book offers a series of recognitions of literary, cultural, and mass-produced objects which both reconstructs the belief system of the time (much more complex than the state-sponsored one), and also grounds these objects in the present. It is more than a tool of explication; there is also a task of preservation involved, as hinted at in Benjamin’s warning that images of the past *not* recognized by the present will be lost.

Furthermore, the process by which the *Leksikon* came into existence reveals how closely its contents align with Benjamin’s vision. The project of the

Leksikon dates back to 1989 when the well-known writer Dubravka Ugrešić, together with two editors of the Zagreb journal *Start*,³ issued a call for contributors to document “homegrown popular culture.”⁴ This was to be a way of exploring and questioning Yugoslav identity, “not just for the world, but most importantly for ourselves [...] the political situation today really demands it.” The current editors of the *Leksikon* note that this sentence sounds ironic when read with hindsight; they add “from the question *who are we?* we have arrived at the question *who were we?*” Indeed, while the original intention behind the *Leksikon* was a search for self-identity in a time of transition, it has become a virtual museum of memories, lost languages, and untenable subject positions.

After the first call for contributions was disrupted by the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the outbreak of war, the *Leksikon* was re-located in the mid-1990s to a website, where it took on new life. Ex-Yugoslavs living in all corners of the world contributed entries, on the model we now recognize as a ‘wiki.’⁵ The editors Iris Adrić, Vladimir Arsenijević, and Đorđe Matić describe this process in their prologue to the print edition, which is worth quoting at some length here:

Like from a shipwreck, with ‘messages in a bottle’ our former neighbors began to report, literally from all corners of the world. This isn’t just a platitude: a musician from Novi Sad in Jerusalem, a clerk in a London law firm, a famous Black Wave director from Paris, from New York two former Zagreb teenagers, our writer in Ireland and a young Zagreb TV star were among the first who sent contributions. They started quickly and continued: some professional writers, but many more among them who had never published a line. Authors from diverse demographics answered our call, by the tens, and then by the hundreds.

They showered us with memories, personal and collective, in the forgotten name of domestic popular culture—sometimes as entries, sometimes as essays, literary texts, often as a mixture of styles and genres. And they were in different languages. Some preserved a style not biased by recent linguistic changes, others mixed registers, unconsciously making use of ‘newspeak.’ And both were sometimes tormented in describing the phenomena of the united era. (LYM, 5)

The resulting pages often did present a real mixture of registers, Cyrillic and Latin script, ekavian and ijekavian spellings, and other vocabulary signaling the varied ethnic backgrounds of the contributors.

What Benjamin emphasizes as a “unique experience of the past” is expressed here by unique voices testifying to their particular experience of *Yu Mitologija*. The contributors’ present state of physical, psychological, and political dislocation from this experience often adds a self-conscious layer which brings into relief the relationship of past to present. Furthermore, there are two dominant modes through which these voices mark their distance from

the past: nostalgia and irony (and sometimes through a fascinating mixture of both). Both concepts, discussed at greater length below, challenge our traditional understanding of history and mythology. Nostalgia we might suspect of ‘coloring’ the past, and therefore corrupting an official version of history; irony, on the other hand, might testify to skepticism towards a given belief system, which would undermine a belief in a mythology. The collective authorship inherent in the *Leksikon*, its grounding in subjective experience over an official, fact-based version of history, and its constant vacillation between the modes of nostalgia and irony, all point towards a conflation of the two presumably separate constructions of myth and history.

I. Mira

This is ultimately a story about the transfer of knowledge, and the recording of that knowledge as both myth and history, across spatial and temporal borders. By way of example, I will use one of my first interactions with the *Leksikon*—just after I brought it back to California. I showed it to my friend Mira. We’re exactly the same age, but she happened to grow up in Rijeka, which is now in Croatia, whereas I grew up in the States. The difference in our reactions to this book was vast: to me, it unearths a fascinating and only semi-penetrable layer of culture which is not recorded in other histories of Yugoslavia or the Balkans. It contains a massive amount of knowledge to digest. For Mira, it served to unearth her *own* encyclopedic knowledge of this same layer of culture: every time she turned a page, she either gasped and laughed, or pointed: “Ahh...*Buldožer!*!” “Tsk...*Radio sto jedan...pa da...*” As someone with first-hand access to this knowledge, it is a source of nostalgia, recovered memories, a series of recognitions and—most importantly—amendment. Mira’s desire to amend these entries, to tell me about how she remembered particular events or places differently, generated a steady stream of commentary which I was almost powerless to interrupt or interrogate. In what follows, I will investigate the following three phenomena: 1) my attempt to discover what is in the book; 2) Mira’s recognition of its contents; and 3) the new information that it generated and demonstrate how these approaches can be useful in enabling us to ‘read’ Yugoslavia.

I propose to read the *Leksikon*, along with the history of its development, from three different vantage points. First, as a work of fiction: in the period bounded by the *Leksikon* there were some important Yugoslav novels and short stories inspired by the genre of the encyclopedia or dictionary, most notably Milorad Pavić’s *Dictionary of the Khazars* (1984), and Danilo Kiš’s *Tomb for Boris Davidovič* (1978) and *Encyclopedia of the Dead* (1983). In these works

we see an interrogation of the idea of authorship, of the production of a single historical truth; in their place there is a plurality of authorial voices, and a preeminence of mythology. It is worth noting here the fictional cast to the *Leksikon* project: it claims to document the mythology of Yugoslavia, and testify to the belief system that Yugoslavs lived *by*, as well as the myth of the ex-federation itself. Returning to the initial example of my reading the *Leksikon* with Mira, this approach would correspond roughly to my sense that I can ‘discover’ Yugoslavia by reading this book.⁶

Secondly, I read the text as a museum, using Ugrešić’s 1996 novel *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender* to identify a path that an individual might take through the *Leksikon*, encountering objects, words, and historical characters as both documentary evidence of everyday lives in the Socialist republic, and totems for individual, Proustian journeys through time. This would correspond to Mira’s reaction: she sees the book as a physical manifestation of something she carries inside of her, but needs to be triggered by an encounter with a material object or referent.

Lastly, I will read it as a *wiki*: as a source of information that will continue to evolve according to the needs and interests of its community of users. The fact that the *Leksikon* developed in a virtual space which connected those ‘kod kuće’ [at home] and those ‘preko grane’ [across borders] means that it continued to prescribe a virtual Yugoslavia long after the actual state dissolved. Its lack of physical borders allowed the virtual Yugoslavia to exist at a time when conversations about the former Yugoslavia could not take place on the ground. In the exchange with Mira, one can see in her impulse to speak *more* about each entry that this type of *Leksikon*, or encyclopedia, does not present itself as an authoritative, fixed source of knowledge, but rather one with limitless possibilities for amendment and growth. According to the self-regulating quality of the wiki, with some policing of the extremes, the truth is supposed to work itself out through a collective striving for accuracy and balance.⁷ I would argue that we have also learned to read wikis with a sliding scale of belief in the text, and often a suspension of disbelief at its extremes. In this way, the wiki is by its very nature a compromise between history—as a self-regulated account of actual people, events, and places; and mythology—as a manifestation of a collective belief system.

II. Reading the *Leksikon* as a (Literary) Encyclopedia

While there are many works of Kiš and Pavić that could be related to the *Leksikon*, a few key features of their most ‘encyclopedic’ writing stand out. First, in Kiš’s *Tomb for Boris Davidovič* (1976) and Pavić’s *Dictionary of the*

Khazars (1984), there is a constant commingling of historical events and personages with fictional events and characters. Kiš's book features footnotes citing both real and invented sources (he was notoriously accused of plagiarism in one case for citing a real source). Pavić intersperses apocryphal stories about a real people, the Khazars, with fragments of chronicles found by real historians, with invented fragments found by fictional historians. Within that framework, the facts usually don't add up. We are faced with several versions of the historical record, and learn *as a reading practice* not to trust any of them. This is more than a postmodern gesture towards the radical relativity of truth; it draws our attention to the distrust that developed in the Yugoslav socialist era of official versions of history, either because of state-sponsored distortion of the historical record, or because of rival national claims to historical facts and figures. As a reader, we learn to carefully monitor our suspension of disbelief—to derive our own fact of the matter, watch for distortions, and read as carefully as we can 'between the lines.'

Another text bridging fact and fiction is the masterfully short entry for Josip Broz Tito in the *Leksikon*.

Action hero of Dedijer's "Prilog," Tito was born in Kumrovec, after which he cooked the head of a pig to feed his brothers and sisters and broke a trough while sledding. After that he left to go to work in Sisak and from there to the Eastern front, where the Čerkezis stabbed him with a lance [fencing in A-H army], and he fell into Russian captivity and married Pelagija. After that he is employed with the Komintern and quickly becomes general secretary of the KPJ [Communist Party of Yugoslavia], thanks to which he stayed in Lepoglava for some time where he recognizes only the law of his own party. After getting out of prison he instigates the uprising and revolution, creates AVNOJ [anti-fascist council of national liberation of Yugoslavia] and liberates the country from foreign occupiers and domestic traitors. After the war, he tells Stalin "no," arrests Đid [Milovan Đilas], and drinks whiskey with Churchill. He marries Jovanka, plays the piano, hunts bears, and promotes Non-alignment. Travels in a blue car and "Galeb" [his boat]. He wears white suits, gloves, a ring and a Rolex. He likes Chivas, štrukle [cheese pastry], ground chicken, young men, and of course, young women. He owned a good collection of wines which he would drink at Brioni [his island estate] with his own personal stuntman Richard Burton. In his old age he went to Cuba especially to get his own supply of cigars, tormenting Fidel on the way and jumping over the Great Wall of China on the way back. Tito died in Ljubljana, and after he stayed a while in Zagreb, the funeral was held in Belgrade. Because he was a dictator, nobody was sad when he died. Nor did anyone go to the funeral. Especially not from around the world. It was shown this way on TV, but of course they were always lying.

—Dejan Novačić (*LYM*, 396)

The humor of this entry, and the irony embedded in the style in which it is written, is evident even to those who did not grow up hearing phrases like “liberated the country from foreign occupiers and domestic traitors.” The entire story of his life is a pastiche of official anecdotes (such as the fact that when they were children the Brozes were extremely poor, and one day Tito boiled a pig’s head to feed his starving brothers and sisters) and unofficial opinion about those anecdotes. The foreshortening of time and the leveling of large-scale geopolitical moments (he tells Stalin “no”) with everyday personal tastes and weaknesses (he likes cheese pastry) makes the man *and his own tendency towards self-narration* seem absurd. It is the last few sentences about Tito’s death, however, which push the parody past one of Tito into questions of historiography and distinguishing fact from fiction. Tito’s death was perhaps better documented than any single moment in his life. When Tito died in Ljubljana, the state procession via train to Zagreb and then to Belgrade, and the masses of people who came to pay homage were captured in images broadcast around the world. It is also universally claimed—a part of oral as well as written history—that everyone in Yugoslavia cried. What is parodied in the statement “it was shown that way on TV, but they were always lying” is not Tito but the *post-Yugoslav* revisionist history that indiscriminately distrusts all information that was transmitted by official Yugoslav news outlets. Of course, much Socialist-era journalism cannot be taken at face value, as it was subject to both censorship and State-sponsored distortion. Yet the above statement points to the absurdity of taking this sentiment of distrust to its logical extreme, and the very real crisis in historiography (how do we now construct a reliable historical record when so much of our evidence is distorted by political propaganda?) that plagues much of the post-Soviet world. Kiš and Pavić anticipate this problem; the *Leksikon* thematizes it.

Another major feature of both Kiš’s and Pavić’s novels is that they are fragmented into ‘entries,’ and as readers we must do some work to construct a narrative, linking people, places and events into a coherent story. This is part of the game of both the novels and the *Leksikon*: we get to play alongside of the authors at meaning-making. What would it mean to ‘read’ the *Leksikon* as a narrative, and by extension, as a work of literature? The index provides us with a list of characters: some of them play a major role in the *Leksikon*, such as Goran Bregović; others such as Danilo Kiš or Slobodan Milošević don’t appear as entries at all, yet their importance to the ‘story’ is signified by the number of references cited in the index. A figure who falls somewhere in between, pop idol Zdravko Čolić (Fig. 3), will serve as my example of how to follow one character through the narrative of the *Leksikon*, as if it were an encyclopedic novel, fragmented into entries, which we as readers must reconstruct into a whole.

There are two different entries under the heading Zdravko Čolić, both of which testify to his legendary status in different ways. The first, which I will call Entry A⁸ reads like this:

The first star whose life-sized poster came out in installments in the 1970s in the most popular teenage magazine *Zdravo*. He succeeded in conquering the redheaded Frida, the singer in the biggest worldwide group at that time, ABBA. He was a star on such a big scale that Tito, on the occasion of meeting him, vehemently acknowledged, “you’re living it up!”

During the second half of the seventies he attempted a real worldwide career in recording the German disco-house single “Robot-man” under the name “Dravco.” As he was born in Sarajevo, he lent his voice to *Vučko*, the mascot of the 1984 Winter Olympic Games in that city. Throughout his whole career rumors spread that he was gay. (*LYM*, 78)

The second entry we get about this character, designated here as Entry B, is very different:

America, 1995, Chicago winter. Bitter and furious for everything that is alive. We’re sitting in a warm café, in a low building nestling amid the architectonic giants of Chicago. At the table is Šone, an ex-Yugoslav man, and me, an ex-Yugoslav woman, and about ten of “them,” Americans.

Topics are falling one after another. [...] With nostalgia I caught sight of some faaar away spot and I say: “People! all this is beautiful, marvelous, fantastic. All of them are super, I don’t have to say it. But...Zdravko Čolić!” And then came a moment of silence.

I spoke about his voice, his physique, his charm and charisma, his silk shirts and the Lokice, of his wives and fainting women, of *crazy heads* and *stars*, how with these *gypsy rhythms* and *Ružicas ripe as pears...*⁹ (*LYM*, 78)

In the case of Entry A, written by a man, Čolić’s popularity is illustrated not by his hit singles, but by his complete conquest of the female demographic, from the teenage fans reading *Zdravo* to the lead singer of ABBA. We sense that the author is somewhat threatened by this power, as he is certain to include potentially emasculating details. By the end of Entry A, we see Čolić’s transition from active and ubiquitous pop star to enigmatic and idiosyncratic legend. The immediately striking contrast in Entry B—written by a woman—is that we have left Yugoslavia: Entry A’s frame of reference is relentlessly local, dismissing Čolić’s attempt at a worldwide career; Entry B, on the other hand, projects Čolić’s impact from 1970s Yugoslavia all the way to present-day Chicago. Instead of tracing his biography, the author of B recreates in a single

anecdote the spell Čolić cast over her teenage years, both personalizing and elevating his impact. If there is sarcasm in Entry B, it is directed towards the naïve Americans who stand in for the world that didn't 'get' Čolić, not directed towards the star himself. By concluding with phrases in English and German, the author of B betrays her own path in emigration, and shows that Čolić is indeed an international rock star now, if only because he is carried in the teenage hearts of the ex-Yugoslav diaspora.

These testimonies, put side by side, illustrate the collective authorship of the volume, the editors' wish to highlight the deeply subjective nature of the entries, and the foregrounding of personal experience—all of which are also important to the reading of the *Leksikon* as a *wiki*, to be treated in the last section of this essay. In my attempt to stitch together a *narrative* as it appears throughout the pages of the *Leksikon*, however, I will continue through the book to the next indexed mention of Čolić.

This is under "digitalni satovi" (digital watch). An anonymous author describes getting his first digital watch in 1983, and using it to time the length of "Julie" by Daniel Popović as well as some Čolić songs. Next Čolić appears in Mira Tinska's entry, a ballerina who became the most famous of the *Lokice*...looking up *Lokice* we find that this was a Belgrade dance troupe under the leadership of Lokica Stefanović, best known for accompanying Čolić at the peak of his career (the Traveling Earthquake tour of 1977 and the concert at the Belgrade Marakana in front of 100,000 people). In another entry, we learn of Čolić appearing with Milena Dravić in 1974 on the cover of the first re-issue of the resuscitated music magazine *Džuboks*; later, he stars in an early music video on the TV station Eurovision; Čolić also appears in numerous entries of other musicians as a musical collaborator, promoter, occasionally rival; he is depicted performing at legendary soccer matches, and for the role he played in representing the city of Sarajevo (such as with Vučko in the 1984 Olympic Games above).

Through this journey, we see not just the adoration of Zdravko's fans, but also his presence in pop culture—and through this, which technology, media and cultural spaces were responsible for disseminating pop culture in the late 70s and early 80s. We could trace the very important relationships and liaisons between rising and falling stars, the successful collaborations and obvious animosities. As with Kiš's and Pavić's encyclopedic novels, we follow one character in order to satisfy our sense of narrative, but learn much, much more about the world they travel through and the people with whom they intersect. If we were to read the *Leksikon* as a novel, either from cover to cover or by following particular characters (a choice Pavić offers us with *Dictionary of the Khazars* as well), we would come away with a rich social history as well as well as a curious mix of fact and fiction.

III. Reading the *Leksikon* as a Museum

While Dubravka Ugrešić appears as the patron saint in the story of how the *Leksikon* came to be, there is only one mention of her in the book itself (there is an entry for Štefica Cvek, the main character of her first novel *Steffie Speck in the Jaws of Life* (1978)). In her recent essayistic novel *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender* [*Muzej bezuvjetne predaje*, 1996], Ugrešić examines the legacy of things, of objects that people collect from their past, dwell on, fetishize, and/or destroy. The narrator autobiographically wanders from Berlin to New York to Moscow to Lisbon and then back to Berlin again in a kind of ‘temporary exile’ from Yugoslavia, while constantly returning there through things, or rather through memories invoked by material objects.¹⁰ It is not just the metaphor of the museum that binds memories and objects together: there are photo albums, many different artistic collections of tokens of everyday life (from Kurt Schwitters to Ilya Kabokov), and random accidents of collecting, most notably a list of all of the objects recovered from a walrus’s stomach when it died after a lifetime of captivity in the Berlin Zoo. The reading practice demanded and prescribed by this novel has us forge connections between each object listed in the collection—whether accidentally or intentionally—and wonder with the narrator how to piece back together a life fragmented by war and exile. In the prologue to the book, Ugrešić demonstrates this practice by quoting from her own text, and then extending the metaphor to the level of meta-narration.

The visitor stands in front of the unusual display [of the contents of the walrus’s stomach], more enchanted than horrified, as before archeological exhibits. The visitor knows that their museum-display fate has been determined by chance (Roland’s whimsical appetite) but still cannot resist the poetic thought that with time the objects have acquired some subtler, secret connections. Caught up in this thought, the visitor then tries to establish semantic coordinates, to reconstruct the historical context (it occurs to him, for instance, that Roland died one week after the Berlin Wall was erected), and so on and so forth.

The chapters and fragments which follow should be read in a similar way. If the reader feels that there are no meaningful or firm connections between them, let him be patient: the connections will establish themselves of their own accord. And one more thing: the question of whether or not this novel is autobiographical might be of some hypothetical concern to the police, but not to the reader. (Ugrešić 1999, xi)

In this way we stand before the novel as an object, searching for semantic coordinates both within and beyond the text. It might occur to us, for instance, that Ugrešić began work on this novel when the first attempt to compile the *Leksikon* fell apart (1991), and that she completed it just as the project was revived on the internet (1996). By reading the *Leksikon* alongside *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender*, we learn more about why this project of collective remembrance was so important to ex-Yugoslavs at the time.

As with Pavić's and Kiš's novels discussed above, *Museum* contains many entries, and Ugrešić is also challenging the distinction between history and fiction, particularly in ridiculing the reader's instinct to make biographical connections between the author and narrator of the novel. Yet what makes this novel evoke a *museum* rather than an encyclopedia is that the 'entries' become objects, and the novel depicts characters interacting with and interpreting those objects. In one case, Ugrešić presents six month's worth of entries from a journal kept by an elderly woman; in the next section of the novel, it becomes clear that these entries are from "a little notebook with a flowery cover" which the narrator gave to her mother in order to record her thoughts (38-49). Now faced with this journal filled with misspellings and misused words, the narrator "cleaned the sentences, removed the burs and mud, spat into a handkerchief and washed them with my own saliva" (50), placing it *as an* object directly into the novel, except without the markers of personal identity contained in the pages of the journal. Phrases from the journal about memory, forgetting, the past and the present, are then interlarded with quotations from writers whose voices appear and reappear throughout the novel: Brodsky, Borges, Conrad, Handke, Shklovsky, and Babel. The result is that this object from Yugoslavia is removed from its original context and placed in a different frame—a frame where we are more likely to reexamine it at length, wonder about its meaning and the mind that produced it. By filling in other details and perspectives on her mother's life, the narrator provides us with more and more semantic coordinates with which to place this object.

Other books that appear in the novel are also examined and discussed as objects: albums containing photographs; the narrator's first-grade primer; the novels in Mother's library; a "book of knowledge, a popular lexicon with pictures" (81). The primer contains objects, too—"an antiquated radio, archaic pens and erasers" (75). The novel itself is even discussed in these terms in another metatextual moment as the narrator compares the genre of the autobiography and that of the album, "the most sincere and personal of all genres" (29), both ruled by nostalgia and a complete lack of irony. All of the examples of books serve two functions here, first as objects in Ugrešić's novelistic museum, and then as alternative (and unsatisfactory) models for the *Leksikon*. As the narrator describes what it depicts through a double lens of

nostalgia and irony, we learn how these objects are recorded in the service of Tito's Yugoslavia, and that they are utopic, realistic, and mythological all at the same time. It depicts the coming of age of Ugrešić's generation, the first to grow up in an entirely Yugoslav era ("I recognize them even when they're traveling in the opposite direction...After all, we're out of the same primer" (77)).¹¹ What the *Leksikon* will eventually do that the books within *Museum* cannot is integrate the images from that world with those of later generations, vacillating constantly between positions of nostalgia (e.g., Entry B on Čolić) and irony (e.g., Entry A on Čolić), but never resting on one or the other extreme.

In addition to bringing two groups together across a temporal gap, the *Leksikon* bridges a spatial divide which other types of reference books have reinforced. Ugrešić imagines what a "dictionary of the world" would have looked like in 1949, the year of the narrator's (and Ugrešić's) birth.

In that year I was born the dictionary of the world contained...a world.

That was when Harry Truman became the thirty-third President of the United States [...] in China the civil war was still going on and then ended with the proclamation of the People's Republic of China [...] Berlin was divided [...]

In the dictionary of the world there was a world. In the dictionary of the world there is no sign of us. In our dictionary there is no sign of the world. On the day I was born, 27 March, physical education was developing successfully in the Belje agricultural estate, the progress of the Velimirovac commune was noteworthy, the country was preparing for the full completion of the spring sowing plan, and 10,000 women from Split joined the Front Brigades [...]

In my mother's dictionary there is no world. In her dictionary there is me, a husband who will not die and caraway soup. (61-2)

Another task of the *Leksikon* would be, then, to begin to reconcile these two dictionaries. This passage points to a lacuna in the dual histories of the Cold War era, as existing reference books reflect only an impermeable ideological border between East and West. Because it is collectively authored by those that have crossed that border, both spatially and temporally, the *Leksikon* presents the history of the primer as it appears through the looking glass (see Novačić's entry on Tito). Additionally, it merges the history of West and East by recording many instances of popular and material culture permeating the Iron Curtain (e.g., Čolić's conquest of the lead singer of ABBA and the digital watch).

It is significant, however, that Ugrešić's novel does not take as its title *The Museum of Checkpoint Charlie*, or some other permanent exhibition of objects documenting the Cold War. The actual Museum of Unconditional Surrender, once located in Karlhorst where the Soviet army troops were stationed in East Berlin, was closed during the period when Ugrešić was writing this novel. Once a testament to the Soviet legacy of fighting and defeating fascism, it is now the German-Russian Museum Berlin-Karlhorst, with new exhibits depicting the end

of WWII, and without the imprint of Soviet propaganda. In the novel, the narrator visits the Museum of Unconditional Surrender and observes “musty exhibition rooms contain[ing] some three thousand documents [...] The museum is the property of the former Soviet Union. What will they do with the museum? I wonder” (222). This museum can no longer exist, as both the state and the ideology to which it was attached have disappeared; the project of the *Leksikon* is similarly haunting in its stateless existence.

At several points in the novel, Ugrešić foregrounds the dilemma of remembering a state which no longer exists (or might not have ever existed), but nowhere so explicitly as in the final chapter, “*Wo Bin Ich?*” which takes the museum as its central topos. The narration has returned to Berlin, and we visit actual museums (such as the Museum of Unconditional Surrender), flea markets, art exhibitions, and ‘verbal pictures’ of Yugoslavia from a friend’s letter. When the narrator visits the Deutsches Historisches Museum with her ex-Yugoslav friends, she describes two collections of objects:

One corner of the Deutsches Historisches Museum is devoted to things. There, under glass, are Babysan baby food; [...] metal plates with golden numbers which were awarded to the tidiest houses in East Berlin (*Goldener Hausnummer*); [...] a child’s toy, *Sandmännchen im Helikopter*, made in 1972 according to a popular television series; a faithful model of a typical three-bedroom flat in a typical DDR apartment-block (with a miniature poster of *Lady and the Tramp* hanging on the children’s bedroom wall!)

“I fed Saša on Babysan when he was a baby,” says Mira, moved.

“We had the Tramp at home...” says Zoran.

In another corner objects from West Germany in the fifties are displayed. A ‘modern’ kitchen; posters for Coca-Cola and bubble-gum; [...] a Phillips television set; a popular children’s toy, Mecki-Puppe; a dress with the name of airlines and airports printed on it, a design manufactured in 1951.

“We had the very same kitchen at home,” says Mira. (233)

The collections of objects are meant to represent two separate ways of life in the GDR and FRG; in this case, we can see the beginning of the *Leksikon* project in the character’s reaction to these objects. They respond to the displays from both East and West, again demonstrating the liminal zone that Yugoslavia occupied between these two concepts.

Here it is important to point out that the objects in the *Leksikon* are more than ‘verbal photographs’: there are also visual illustrations, posters, stickers, and all types of logos and icons. Given the relative abundance of consumer goods and the quasi-free-market atmosphere that characterized Yugoslavia in the sixties and seventies—relative to the rest of the Soviet Bloc—it is not surprising that we can trace the development of advertising and branding in the graphic elements of the book, alongside of products that look more typically

Socialist in origin. An ad for “Perion” laundry detergent, for example, is practically indistinguishable from a contemporary American ad in 1953 *Life* magazine; “Zvijezda” (“Star”) margarine packaging (Fig. 4) is wrapped in the unmistakable symbol of the Yugoslav state.¹²

When reading the *Leksikon* as a museum, the visual nature of these material and graphic objects provokes the reader just as much as the characters and events described in the text. In my real-life re-enactment of Ugrešić’s museum scene, when Mira and I turned to the “K” section to discuss (the rock band) Bijelo Dugme, she became distracted with the “K” marking the beginning of the section. (Each letter signifying the beginning of a new chapter is also a graphic icon in its own right, and glossed at the side of the page.) This particular “K” was the logo for the chemical company “Karbon,” which Mira associated very strongly with a rubber cement-paste that she would use in elementary school. The *Leksikon* annotates “K” for “Karbon” as the maker of carbon paper, which is perhaps how an older generation was more likely to encounter the logo. The two associations with “Karbon”—that of Mira and that of the editors—also show how the *Leksikon* knits together the experiences of Ugrešić’s generation with those born 20 years later.

People, therefore, are both the repositories and the conduits for the information that belongs in this ghostly museum. Why must the individual testimony be mixed in with the institutional? One concept that reappears throughout the novel is that people from states which no longer exist “are walking museum exhibits.” The scene at the Deutsches Historisches Museum continues:

“We’ll never have a museum like this,” says Zoran.

“How could we when the country has disappeared,” says Mira.

“That’s why we’re all walking museum pieces...” says Zoran.

“But if the country has disappeared, then so has memory of the everyday life that we lived. And besides, memory of the former country is tacitly forbidden. And when the ban is one day lifted, everyone will forget... There’ll be nothing left to remember,” I say.

“Then everyone will remember something that never existed...” says Mira.

“I remember everything,” says Zoran.

“What?” I ask.

“Gavrilović meat pâté,” he says.

“I remember as well,” says Mira.

“What?” I ask.

“The first Yugoslav washing powder, Plavi Radion!”

“I remember as well,” I say.

“What?”

“The first Yugoslav television programme, *Studio Uno* with Mike Bongiorno and the Kessler sisters!”

“There, that’s what I’ve been telling you all along. We’re just walking museum exhibits...” says Zoran. (233-234)

According to the logic of this exchange, the museum of Yugoslavia that is waiting to be recuperated is clearly located in that stratum of everyday life which includes brand names, television personalities—in sum, the objects which we will find in the *Leksikon*. For example, there is an entry for “Plavi Radion” in the *Leksikon*:

First Saponia synthetic detergent for hand washing, put on the market in 1956 [...] Before Plavi Radion, housewives used soap, which one bought in a chunk and sliced with a thread. Or they soaked the linens in lye-water—water boiled with wood ashes. [...] Those who remember maintain that it didn’t just clean linens well, it also was used for softening hair. (LYM, 311)

It is interesting that in this case the entry of a consumer product onto the market also triggers a memory of what life was like before: in this way the author links her generation (presumably Ugrešić’s) with the pre- as well as post-Yugoslav generations. Their memories are being held there until some moment when a museum like the Deutsches Historisches Museum can exist in the former Yugoslavia.

There is one last aspect of the exchange between the “walking museum exhibits” in Ugrešić’s text which resonates strongly with the *Leksikon*, and that is the illicit nature of these memories (“and when one day the ban is lifted”). This is the reason that there can be a Deutsches Historisches Museum despite the fact that the GDR no longer exists, while the Muzej jugoslavenske historije remains an impossibility. Most of the characters in Ugrešić’s text—and contributors to the *Leksikon*—are writing from outside of the former Yugoslavia, at both a spatial and temporal distance. While they are considered either refugees or emigrants from states such as Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia, and Montenegro, Ugrešić portrays them as being in *exile* from the state formerly known as Yugoslavia, as they did not leave it voluntarily and can no longer go back.¹³ The violence of this dislocation is echoed in the narrator’s many interactions with refugees from Bosnia, and only partially submerged memories and accounts of actual violence. The result of the real and metaphorical dislocation is that the “walking museum exhibits” must keep walking, and there is no physical place where those objects they remember might be collected. Ugrešić cites one line, attributed to a Bosnian refugee, at several different points in the novel: “Refugees are divided into two categories: those who have photographs, and those who do not” (5). In addition to serving as a museum, the *Leksikon* and its many objects and images can stand in for other tokens of remembrance missing from the refugee’s life: an album, an autobiography, a journal.

Yet reading this book as a museum, or perhaps a traveling exhibition, or simply a catalog is not the same thing as conducting an anthropological study of the use of these objects in their original context. It is enough to note the differences between accounts (the way Mira remembers the “K” and the way the editors do), and the haze of nostalgia and irony through which these pieces of material culture reach us. The objects in this book are no less mediated than those in Ugrešić’s novel. The true enactment of reading this book as a museum must take place in a scene like those described above: of someone like Mira revisiting the myth and mythology of Yugoslavia through the *Leksikon*, experiencing her own dislocation in time and place, and the emotions that accompany it.

IV. Reading the *Leksikon* as a wiki

It is the act of cultural transmission—Mira taking great joy in *explaining* to me what all of these signs and symbols meant, in *disagreeing* or *supplementing* the explanations in the book—that lends itself to the model of the wiki. It is not a coincidence that the *Leksikon* came into existence through this form: firstly, because of the dislocation of its potential contributors; secondly, because of the desire of those contributors to add their own, personal experience to the official record. As Entry B on Čolić supplemented Entry A, Mira added her own reminiscence when we looked at Entry B, what we might call a virtual “Entry C”:

When I was just a little girl, maybe 7 or 8, we were traveling together, everyone in the car, and we stopped at this rest area. And there he was, drinking a coffee. I was so excited, I couldn’t believe it, I wanted to go up and get his autograph. And my family was pushing me to do it...

So did you?

I did! I didn’t have a piece of paper, so he had to write it on a napkin, I think.

Do you still have the napkin somewhere?

Oh no, I’m sure I did something with it or threw it out when I got to be a teenager.

If Mira had run across the two entries on Čolić online, she might have added her reminiscence, or perhaps some song lyrics—she remembered quite a few. The two entries on Čolić are listed as two separate ‘threads’ on the website,¹⁴ and they provoke two very different sets of responses which continue to trickle every three months (as I write this, the most recent entry is from January 2006).

The responses to Entry A tend to be factual, disagreeing with some points, or adding information about Čolić's movements.¹⁵ In response to Entry B, there are many more song lyrics.¹⁶

The idea of collective authorship of a 'dictionary of the world' has a long history, when we think of religious texts compiled in medieval Europe, or certainly in the most famous incarnation of this genre, the French *Encyclopédie* authored by over 140 different French intellectuals and proto-scientists.¹⁷ One of the features that is new in the concept of the wiki, and the application of it in a form like Wikipedia, is that the accretion and deletion of information never ends. It can continue indefinitely. In fact, the web-based incarnation of the *Leksikon*, which generated content for the virtual novel/museum while it did not have a physical home, continues to record a collective belief in Yugoslavia to today (Fig. 5). Considering how the *Leksikon* came to be, and the way that it is still developing, we might consider the printed volume as a snapshot—or a screen shot—of an ongoing process. The process of emendation, supplementing, editing, is not limited to what happens on the webpage; it also happens when two or more people meet and discuss the contents of this book. This can be a real life process of explication and extrapolation, as happened with Mira and I, or it can be a virtual debate over how a particular entry is written.

Is this always a peaceful process, fulfilling the multicultural utopia described in the Yugoslav primer of the 1950s? Given the politically sensitive nature of some of the subjects covered, and the wide range of opinions represented in the ex-Yugoslav diaspora, this is certainly no virtual island of harmony and tolerance. In some cases, the very active debates challenge the factual nature of previous entries, and the historical record itself.¹⁸ There have also been examples of so-called 'web vandalism' and flame wars between contributors, although the editors do monitor the content, and what remains on the site represents diverse views, but not extremism. The goal of the *Leksikon* is not to provide an authoritative, fixed source of knowledge, but to collect and juxtapose as many sources on one subject as possible, generating an 'exquisite corpse' image of people and events with a limitless number of contributors.

On the splash page of the website, the editors claim they are "contributing to the archeology of the future," and in order to read the *Leksikon* both as literature and as a wiki, we must interrogate what that means. Reading it as literature or a museum seems to have much more to do with recuperating the past. Are the editors expressing more than the automatic association of all things cybernetic with the future? In a recent essay in the *Organization of American Historians* newsletter, Marshall Poe calls on his colleagues to explore the wiki universe as a potential tool for historians of the future.

To a significant degree, the way historical sources are gathered mirrors encyclopedia creation of old. In the stead of editors, experts, and publishers, we

have archivists, organizations, and repositories. [...] Though significantly better than nothing (as any premodern historian will tell you), this system suffers from a cardinal deficiency, namely, it does not capture the lived experience of regular people. People not only make history, they also experience it. [...] But perhaps, as our experience with MemoryWiki shows,¹⁹ they should be creating archives so that future historians can write better histories. (13)

Poe is drawing on a larger analogy between the encyclopedia and Wikipedia to characterize the relationship between traditional historical sources and the MemoryWiki. Both the print and online version of the *Leksikon* fulfill a similar mission to the one Poe suggests for his project, which is essentially a wikipedia designed to capture experiences rather than facts.

Finally, when reading the text as a wiki, we must keep in mind that while it is open to all contributions, its contributors *will* be circumscribed by certain factors: they must speak BCS, for example, and have access to the internet. Additionally, the voices adding posts are still scattered all over the globe. The people most likely to participate in shaping Yu Mythology are those who have left that physical space, and looked for some incarnation of it on the web. The 'exquisite corpse' generated by this process will retain some of its users' collective profile, which is what distinguishes an entry in the *Leksikon* from a similar entry in Wikipedia. Despite the apparently infinite vacuum of cyberspace, there are still some borders to Yugoslavia's virtual existence.

Conclusion

In her essay on Pavić's *Dictionary*, Katherine Hayles proposes that the form of the novel reflects a "corporeal anxiety [of print books], a fear that their bodies are in jeopardy from a multitude of threats, especially in the dematerialization that comes from being translated into digital code" ("Corporeal Anxiety" 801). Many theorists have used Pavić's creation as an example of hypertext, as one can theoretically choose which 'link' to follow in the narrative from one entry to another.²⁰ Hayles takes this argument much further, describing an anxiety that the reader faces in reading hypertext: when is the reading process ever finished? In Pavić, she claims, the Body stands in for the Book: the entries in his *Dictionary* are full of bodies that are pierced, dismembered, and in other ways rendered incomplete; Hayles reads this "not as a sign of bloodthirsty taste but as an indication of how much is at stake in the Body = Book equation" (819). With the *Leksikon*, there is both a finite text (the printed volume) which gives the impression of containing all there is to know about the popular culture of Yugoslavia, and an infinite text (the website), which undermines that impression, as its entries are constantly shifting and changing. The fact that the

book has been constituted from the website is most palpable in its multi-authored entries, and the nostalgia and irony within them which challenge any single, official version of history.

Meanwhile, Ugrešić has spent the post-communist period pointing out to us the *lack* of history of the communist period, what she sees as an officially-endorsed erasure. In her 2005 essay “The souvenirs of Communism: home as marketplace or deletion of the past,” she points to Franjo Tuđman’s “grafting” of the new Croatia onto the fascist state of the 1940s, eliding everything that happened in between.²¹ As a result, the memories of “Yugo-Communism” were banished from view, eclipsed by nationalist revisions of textbooks and iconography.

If home is usually the place where the past is saved and protected, how are we who were born in Yugoslavia to think of home? Home for us has become the place where the past—our past—is deleted, badly distorted, stigmatized, or at least for now, prohibited. Therefore, returning home seems impossible, because home has become a “foreign place.” That is why many Yugoslavs, like myself prefer to stay abroad. Abroad is, if nothing else, less foreign. (Ugrešić 2005, 35)

For Ugrešić, the *Leksikon* is serving as a virtual museum, a repository of memories that cannot be housed in the former Yugoslavia. According to her logic, this also makes it a kind of underground text, similar to *samizdat*—or perhaps *tamizdat*,²² as it came into existence outside of the zone of censorship.

One last model through which to understand the *Leksikon* as a wiki—an infinite source of knowledge on everyday life—could be Kiš’s image of the *Encyclopedia of the Dead*. In his short story of the same title, the narrator is conducting research at an institute in Sweden when she comes across the famous *Encyclopedia of the Dead*, and looks up the entry for her recently deceased father. The entry contains everything there is to know about her father: details that would only be important to his family, the names of everyone he encountered, the quality of each landscape he passed through. The *Encyclopedia* exists “so that everyone will be able to find not only his fellow men but also—and more important—his own forgotten past. When the time comes, this compendium will serve as a great treasury of memories and a unique proof of resurrection” (Kiš 1997, 43). One of the most striking things about Kiš’s “Encyclopedia” is the effect it has on the narrator as she reads it. She is constantly visually drawn into the scenes described as if they are projected in front of her, and at times Kiš’s language is even cinematic. The intensity of the narrator’s reactions, and the responses that the act of reading trigger, form a narrative arc to the story parallel to the chronology of her father’s life. Reading the *Leksikon* as a wiki accounts for this future generation, and anticipates the need not only for a museum (the Royal Library in Sweden where the

Encyclopedia is housed) but also for a continuing act of engagement by future generations with the contents of that museum (the narrator frantically copies as much as she can into her notebook, and fills in much more in her narration). Just as Kiš's short story is not simply about the existence of the book, but about an encounter with it, the *Leksikon* as wiki records a potentially endless series of encounters with objects and stories from the past.

What we notice in all of these different approaches to reading the *Leksikon* is that a moment of nostalgia blended with irony is transformed into a cultural expression which then generates new meaning. When those, like myself, who are trying to read the story of Yugoslavia, encounter others, like Mira—or the author of Entry B on Čolić in her Chicago café—who are driven to describe their experience, we propel forward a Benjaminian historical mythology which was in danger of being lost, and preserve its relevance to our present. Instead of fetishizing and freezing historical moments, as we can see in cases such as the Serbian nationalist movement in the late 1980s to resurrect the Battle of Kosovo Polje as an historical benchmark, the wiki format allows these meanings to shift and change.

Finally, it is not a coincidence that the shaping and re-shaping of a fluid historical mythology is more likely to happen in emigration, or beyond a national border, either temporally or spatially. As I argue above, this state of physical dislocation, political or economic expulsion, and isolation, will only intensify both the longing for a return (nostalgia) and the wry acceptance that such a thing is not possible (irony). Yet in documenting their experiences of a multilayered past, ex-Yugoslavs are leaving a rich archive for future generations—a chain of testimonies to the present, each with a unique relationship to the past. As long as the wiki continues to evolve, the *Leksikon Yu Mitologije* will record not just the historical mythology of the period 1943-1991, but also the post-Yugoslav legacy of that culture.

Figures

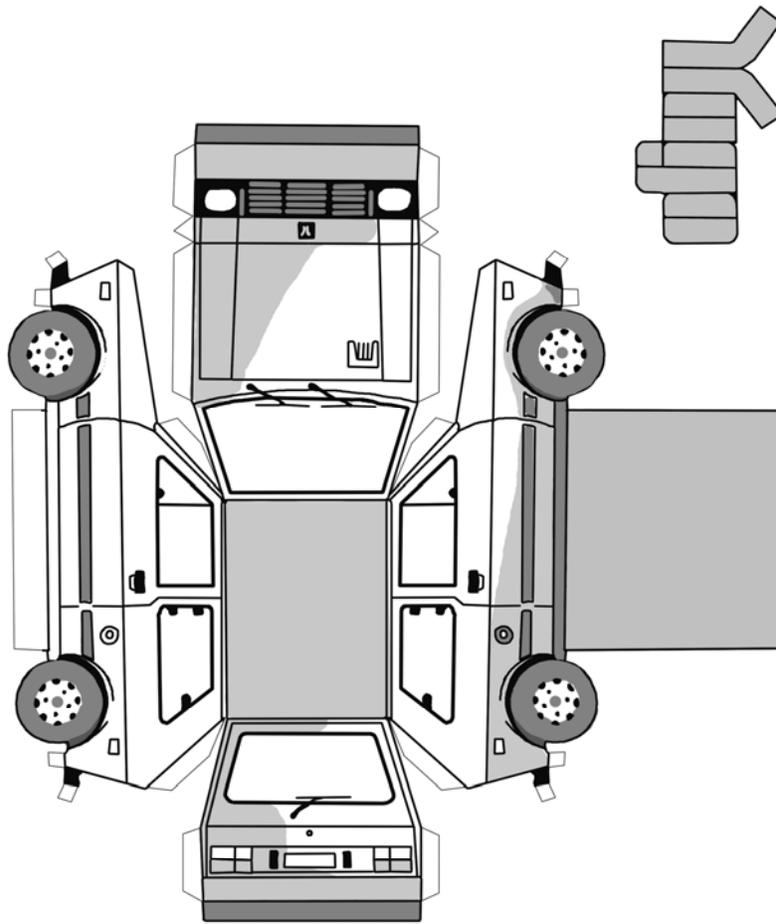


Figure 1. Yugo car blueprint. Illustration by Dragan Mileusnić.



Figure 2. *Laibach* poster. Designed by *Laibach*.



Figure 3. Zdravko Čolić. Photo by Dragan S. Stefanović



Figure 4. "Zvijezda" margarine wrap. Design by Zvonimir Faist.



LEKSIKON YU MITOLOGIJE

WWW.LEKSIKON-YU-MITOLOGIJE.NET

O čemu se radi...

Leksikon Yu-mitologije prilozi za jednu arheologiju budućnosti

O Socijalističkoj Federativnoj Republici Jugoslaviji napisano je mnoštvo djela. Njena povijest, društveno-političko uređenje, privredni sistem, pravni sistem, obrazovni sistem, kulturno-umjetnički život itd. osvjetljeni su (i još uvijek se osvjetljuju) iz najrazličitijih kutova. Nakon iščeznuća SFRJ ove knjige još uvijek postoje, no u njima nećete saznati tko su tratatari, tko je Džuli, tko je Milka Babović, tko su Mujo i Haso, tko je mama Kukunka, a tko mali Juju, tko je Vučko, tko je Suada, tko je Mile Lojpur, tko je dječak sa Sutle, tko je Mica Trottrajka, tko je Bernarda Marovt, tko su Džirio-djevojke, što je hrkljuš, otkud "Mirko, pazi metak!", "Vozi, Miško!" ili "Cijena - prava sitnica", što je Kluz, što je Cockta, fičo ili Plavi radion, što su Trumanova jaja, što drnč, a što gušterov let, kako je to mala moja kad ljubi Bosanac i zašto je svakom pioniru ostala urezana u sjećanju svinjska glava ...

Godine 1989. Dubravka Ugrešić i urednici u tadašnjem "Startu", Dejan Kršić i Ivan Molek, uputili su poziv za suradnju na projektu "Leksikona YU mitologije". Krenulo se od premise da ne postoje artikulirani pojmovi jugoslavenske popularne kulture koji bi pripomogli definiranju naših identiteta. Problem je, pisali su, bio "širi od puke manjkavosti domaće popularne kulture", i tvrdili da bi pitanje jugoslavenskih identiteta trebali istražiti "ne samo zbog svijeta već prvenstveno zbog nas samih", dodajući da "današnja politička situacija to jasno pokazuje". Zadnja rečenica danas zvuči ironično - od pitanja "Što smo?", došlo se do "Što smo bili?". Nove su se države različito odredile prema prošlosti i sjećanju - od konfiskacije pamćenja i reinterpretacije prošlosti do apsolutnog negiranja i novog brojanja vremena, neke vrste "godine nulte". Činilo se da je raspadom SFRJ nestala i potreba za sastavljanjem Leksikona.

Projekt je ipak ponovno zaživio u drugoj polovici devedesetih, kada je u suradnji sa zagrebačkim "Arkzinom" ponovno oformljena redakcija i postavljena ova internetska stranica. U međuvremenu, tim je upotpunjen suradnicima iz beogradske izdavačke kuće "Rende" i

- Arhitektura
- Auto-moto
- Dizajn i marketing
- ESEJI
- Estrada
- Fenomeni
- Festivali
- Film
- Geografija
- Hrana i piće
- Ideologija
- Igra / Zabava / Razbibriga
- JIA
- Josip Broz TITO
- Kazalište / Pozorište / Teatar
- Književnost
- Ličnosti
- Mediji
- Mitska i kulna mjesta
- Narodna i HMMuzika
- Narodne mudrosti i uzrečice
- Narodni heroji

Figure 5. *Leksikon Yu mitologije* homepage:
<http://www.leksikon-yu-mitologije.net>

Notes

¹ The exception would be the linguistic usage of the term, which according to the OED represents “The complete set of meaningful units in a language.”

² “THE *lifestyle* magazine of Yugoslavia. Ran from the late sixties to the early nineties” (*LYM*, 369).

³ All quotations in this section from the editors’ preface to the *Leksikon*. All translations from *LYM* are mine, with much gratitude to Sanja Medić for her oversight.

⁴ A wiki is a web-based forum devoted to one topic where multiple authors can add, remove, or edit the contents of the forum. See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wiki> for a discussion of wiki history and development.

⁵ See John Seigenthaler’s editorial in *USA Today* as one of the first critiques of the truth content of Wikipedia (30 Nov 2005); also the *Economist* (22 Apr 2006) and Hafner’s *NYT* article on Wikipedia’s revision to its policy on editing (17 Jun 2006).

⁶ The entries are not anonymous (they are signed by Branko Rosić and Mina Babić, respectively), but presented in this way to simplify the discussion.

⁷ These are all titles and lyrics from Čolić’s best-known songs.

⁸ In this sense, the narrator is a character not unlike the author of Entry B on Čolić, except that in Ugrešić’s novel, B’s memory would be triggered by an album cover, or a poster, or perhaps an autographed napkin of Čolić’s.

⁹ In this case the tension with Ugrešić’s own biography is a little harder to ignore, as she published an essay in April 1991 on “My First Grade Primer” which details many of the same observations (1998).

¹⁰ “The Yugoslavs had many things that tied them to the citizens of other Communist countries: Communist iconography, the aesthetics of totalitarian kitsch, parades, pioneer membership for children, massive celebrations (of Tito’s birthday), and massive monuments. But they had some things that citizens of other Communist countries could only dream of: open borders, a passport that allowed them to travel, self-management, American movies, a much better living standard, and a more liberal media.” (“Souvenirs of Communism” 35).

¹¹ Of course, it is necessary to add that Ugrešić was considered by many, including herself, to be in exile from the *Republic of Croatia*, as well as more metaphorically from the former Yugoslavia. (See *Museum* 235-236).

¹² One piece of information that we can glean from comparing the wiki with the printed volume is that the posting of Entry B actually predates Entry A, which means that there was an editorial decision made to put Entry A first.

¹³ <http://www.leksikon-yu-mitologije.net/read.php?id=635>

¹⁴ <http://www.leksikon-yu-mitologije.net/read.php?id=265>

¹⁵ See Robert Darnton, *The Business of Enlightenment: A Publishing History of the Encyclopédie, 1775-1800* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979).

¹⁶ Some of the longest threads on the site are filed under “The Day Tito Died” (that particular phrase is rendered in English), which contains the subtopic “Announcement.”

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It contained (as of 10 Jun 2006) sixty-eight posts, ranging from personal reminiscences to political slogans (pro- or anti-Tito, pro- or anti-nationalist).

¹⁷ <http://www.memorywiki.org/>

¹⁸ See for example Mihajlović (1998).

¹⁹ Franjo Tudman was president of Croatia from the moment it seceded from Yugoslavia in 1990 to his death in 1999. His particular brand of nationalism was not as vilified in Western Europe and the U.S. as that of Milošević, but was similarly effective in leading his nation through two wars and campaigns of ethnic cleansing.

²⁰ *Tamizdat*, or 'publishing from there,' is the general term for banned materials published outside of the Soviet bloc during the Cold War and then smuggled back across the Iron Curtain.