

# THE DE- SOVIETIZATION OF BUDAPEST: A MUSEAL DILEMMA

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[Budapeşte'nin Sovyetsizleştirilmesi: Müzesel bir Açmaz]

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## ABSTRACT

The present paper offers a critical reading of the semantic shift active on the monumental structure in Budapest which, as a city, started to serve as an exhibition itself. The alterations in the meaning of monuments are highly dependent to the circumstantial existence affected by the politics of the current time. While the changes in the meanings depend on time and it is impossible to stabilize them; still the implementation of power pushes for the transformation of the signification of monument to support the maintenance of the system. In case of the monuments in Budapest, which were built either by outsider Soviet rule or by the communist regime of the country, they started a second life to relate oppressive governance with past so to become a part of Europe and justify the present politics inside the borders. These attempts of creating a new present with its own exhibition techniques to create a unified and functional image of a certain place are named as musealization in the frame of this paper. However musealization is a final point in a long process of transforming the meanings. To elaborate the process this paper analyzes the chaotic form of transformation via the help of another museal structure: wunderkammer. While not attempting to present an overall frame

of the present politics in Hungary; this paper aims to present the route of a cultural change which leads to the transformation of politics after the fall of the Soviets.

**Keywords:** Budapest, De-Sovietization, East and Central Europe, Musealization

## ÖZET

Bu makale Budapeşte, Macaristan'daki anıtsal yapılar üzerinde etkin olan semantik dönüşümün ve bunun sonucunda şehrin kendisinin bir sergiye dönüşmesinin eleştirel bir okumasını yapmakta. Anıtların anlamlarındaki değişimler dönemin siyasetinin etkilerine hayli açık bir şekilde anlık varoluşlarının bir parçasıdır. Anlamdaki değişimler zamanın geçişiyle alakalı ve sabitlenmeleri imkânsız olmasına rağmen iktidarın uygulanması sistemin devamlılığı için anıtların anlamlarının değiştirilmeleri yönünde gerçekleşebilir. Ya dış güç olarak Sovyetler ya da içerideki komünist rejim tarafından dikilmiş Budapeşte'deki anıtların Avrupa'nın bir parçası olmak ve sınır içi siyaseti meşrulaştırmak için baskıcı yönetimleri geçmişle eşleştiren bir ikinci hayat yaşamaya başladıklarını görürüz. Kendi sergileme tekniklerini oluşturarak belirli bir yerin tekilleştirilmiş ve işlevsel bir görünümünü yaratma çabaları bu yazıda müzeleşme olarak ele alınacaktır. Fakat müzeleşme anlamın değişmesine dair uzun bir sürecin nihai noktasıdır. Bu süreci detaylandırmak için makalede başka bir müzesel yapıdan, harikalar odasından yardım alınarak karmaşık dönüşüm süreci analiz edilecektir. Macaristan'daki siyaseti etraflıca inceleme amacı gütmemekle beraber bu makale Sovyetler'in dağılmasından sonraki siyasetin dönüşümünde payı olan kültürel değişim sürecini sunmayı amaçlamaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Budapeşte, Sovyetsizleştirme, Doğu ve Orta Avrupa, Müzeleşme

### **Museal Transformations and Dilemmas**

Since the last decade Hungary and Budapest as the representative of the country are frequently subject to the discussions on *illiberalism* and rising authoritarian state actions in Central Europe. During the time of the preparation process of the present article, which passed under the quarantine conditions created by COVID-19, another debate was opened to discuss whether the measures taken by government are to support the health system or to guarantee the dominance of the state (Balkansight 2020). This paper while not contributing to the political concerns about the future of Hungary, aims to discuss one of the cultural developments which, as believed in this work, led to the today scene where the interpretation of the near history becomes the pillar of veiling authoritarianism since that type of rule is locked within the past Soviet experience.

During the past three decades, since 1989, the relations between the past regimes in the Eastern Europe have been reconsidered continuously as a part of integrating to the European re-unification and globalization. Budapest, now being widely discussed about being a capital of the rising right in Europe has entered in this continuous attempt of re-narrating the past. A critical reading of the exhibitionary processes in the city would point to a semantic shift of the meanings of the monuments. This shift, as this paper claims, leads to Budapest's being an exhibition itself by embracing the new meanings loaded on the city surface. The alterations in the meanings signified by monuments depend highly on the circumstantial existence of such constructions which is open to the impact and control of the politics of the current time. The changing time via the help of a chain of imagination (whether biased or not) disables any idea of fixation over a certain subject.

Additionally, in cases of monuments, museums, galleries whose primary reason of existence is deliberately to disseminate a certain ideology or a line of thought about the roots, origins, processes; the semantic shift I loaded ideologically as well. As discussed in this paper, the use of the monuments in Budapest built by the outsider Soviet rule or by the communist regime of the country to create the effect of de-Sovietization led to Budapest's becoming a post-soviet museum by being marked with the ghost of the former regime.

How musealization becomes an important feature of the East Europe is due to the necessity of the centralization processes as well as the globalization in order to keep West to continue to be the focal

point in the global economy. The cities which have been the signifier or representative of the former regime in the former Iron Curtain countries, now attributed a new value of cultural and political signification which speaks the nowadays language of the politics over the city: the world city, the world heritage and the global city. To speak this very language one of the main supporters becomes the monuments and structures stigmatized by the former regime. The differences between the economies within the European borders is reflected on the cultural scene as the marked differences between being an uninterrupted West and an area interrupted by communism. Since this difference is an indispensable part of the new stratification of the past thirty years, one of the effective methods is to *re-exoticizing, re-orientalizing and re-antiquitizing* them by discovering their pre-modern cultural identities (Groys 2003, p.327). Therefore as Groys suggest in “Art Power”:

Post-Communist life is life lived backward, a movement against the flow of time. It is, of course, not a completely unique historical experience. We know of many modern apocalyptic, prophetic, religious communities which were subjected to the necessity of going back in historical time. (Groys 2008, p.154)

The reversal of the understanding of time is, in case of countries with a communist past, bases on the common belief of an unfortunate and unnecessary experience which resulted with a need to go back to the turning point. However, as the case of Budapest depicts, in Europe this turning point is simultaneous with taking sides with rising right-wing regimes. While the Soviet trace is highly criticized, the reason of the entrance of Soviet forces in Europe, which is fighting against invasion of Europe during the II. World War is not much discussed. As a result the above-mentioned turning point becomes the positive node to pass to the global world. Such transformation of the perception of the nodes and the route of history becomes useful in tracing the alterations in the meanings of monument and the new exhibition practices on their newly perceived presence.

For many monumental structures as well as many cities who are representative of a certain time, governance or fashion; the semantic shift becomes also part of this story of re-composing their history divided into different eras and regimes. Therefore the de-composition is followed by re-composition. Therefore the de-sovietization as called in this work is an attempt of loading a new museal meaning to the already existing structures in Budapest. The change in what is signified, in terms of the life of monuments is not a bizarre event, yet, the very process itself is neither anonymously developed nor it depends only to the mystical fate of monuments.

The musealization of Budapest as a whole includes a series of removal and replacement processes in terms of monuments including both their physical and semantic features. In this work, the shift in the way of exhibiting the past and present, will be analyzed under two main structures of exhibition as the *museum* and the *wunderkammer*. Musealization as a process needs supporting phases to achieve its primary goal, which is to transform a certain place to the area of a single signification. It is suggested that this signification aimed by the authorities of exhibition (including the state) requires a supporter structure: the *wunderkammer*. This concept is used here as a reference for the chaotic process of rebuilding history and everyday life. The aim behind the initial chaos is supported to base on the aim to reach the stability of a museum after a big shift in accordance with the newly developed life in Hungary.

Over these structures, the main aim of this article by discussing the mentioned shifts in meaning and exhibition is to analyze the case of Budapest where art itself lost its primal existence as being an artwork and became an exchangeable object within any object sold in the area of consumerism including the value of the city within the world area of consuming cities.

The monuments and structures of Budapest that remain within the spectrum constituted by the line between the *wunderkammer* and museum are chosen as the City park, in which the statue of Stalin has destroyed and built new signifiers of today's world; The Statue of Liberty in Gellert's Hill, The Memento Park the new home of the statue's erected by the Soviet rule and the former regime and finally the House of Terror, the new Holocaust museum, which is opened to present the two dynastic regimes of Hungarian History.

### **From *Wunderkammer* to the Path of Museum**

Becoming a museum, or a part of a global exhibition, does not mean only the market value of a global city. It also refers to the inner dynamics of an ontological shift in the very center of a country. The adaptation to the new world system brings a necessity of inner adaptation to the changing aspects in the country which goes hand in hand with domestication. Domestication methods are strictly related with confinement as revealed in the elaborated analysis of Foucault. The confinement of the body is exercised in a double mode. On the hand there is the "binary division and branding" and on the other the "coercive assignment of differential distribution" (Foucault 1995, p.3). The first side of the mode operates as labeling such as the definition of the modern over the barbaric figure of

the communist. The second mode is the suppression of the body and profile as seen in the determination of Eastern/Central European actor as the oriental character, s/he who to be western one day, within the own borders of the west.

On the fate of the monumental structure of the space, I suggest that the process of musealization is the reflection of these politics on space which function as a mechanism to tame the gaze. Over the basis developed by Foucault, Douglas Crimp, in his article *On the Museum's Ruins*, adds a new institution of confinement, the museum and a new discipline of confinement which is art history. By its denial of heterogeneity, the museum constructs the history via the impact of disciplines of archeology and natural history as a homogenous entity and by the use of materials represents and disseminates the ideology of modernism (Crimp 1999, p. 56).

Following Crimp's way, Tony Bennett extends the limits of this structure claiming that it is not solely museum but the exhibition. As a less limited category, exhibition affects a wider space (Bennett 1994, p. 123). The politics of the exhibitionary complex are defined by the exhibition's mode of operation over the surveillance techniques. The main feature of the particular reversal of the voyeuristic side of the power is the creation of an inverted *panopticon* by the illusion created while keeping the actual aim of regulation of collectivities. Contrary to the dominance of surveillance techniques on the citizens, the exhibition seems to democratize the gaze by positioning the visitor to the dominant condition in observing materials (ibid, p.124). The panorama of Paris seen from the Eiffel Tower, as interpreted by Barthes becomes dominated by the gaze of the visitor who forgets that the structure of the tower shapes what is to be seen (Barthes 1996, p. 11). Secondly, the exhibition reverses the known course of the operation of the disciplines of confinement, which take place in closed, private spaces. Therefore the message to be spread finds itself a greater area of inscription (Bennett 1994, p. 124). The success of the exhibitionary complex therefore lies in the dissemination of a certain knowledge and information selected by the dominating institutions through rendering people to a homogenous group. The very group becomes the subject in spite of their object position in the other institutions of confinement.

On the differences about relating memory with art and locating it to a museal structure through the history of art, Hal Foster points an important passage from the object's *cult value* for the museum to the "exhibition value of art", which replaces the intrinsic value of art by placing it to the market of museums (Foster 2002, p. 91). When the exhibition itself replaces the value of the object, the

*difference* enters as the only element in Eastern and Central European context resulting with the area's visibility on the world while obstructing its becoming a dominant partner in the same space dominated by the market.

I believe one preliminary phase of this process to fix and stabilize the meanings or the teaching of an exhibition is organizing the mess in a simpler institution which is referred here as the *wunderkammer*. The present use of the term differs from that of the Bennett's analysis. According to Bennett, even though the *wunderkammer* -the treasure chamber of medieval lords and later of the aristocrats- differs from the new exhibition system because of private ownership and restricted access, it is still related with the dissemination of knowledge and power display as a primitive version of exhibitionary complex (ibid, p. 137). My use of the term does not refer to a restricted access but to a chaotic structure which externalize the modern mission of organization. The *wunderkammer*, as mentioned by Umberto Eco in *Faith in Fakes*, is the chamber where the wonders are exhibited without any concern for their historical line or their relativity with each other (Eco, 1998, p. 5). They are also wonders among which a certain relativity is constructed due to their way of exhibition -simply because they are there together-, because they have been placed in a certain context by an organizing power. The *wunderkammer* is where "a unicorn's horn would be found next to the copy of a Greek statue" (ibid, p. 5). The specificity and charm of such kind of a place comes from its supposed perfection in order to enable the true connotation; to offer the absolute unreality as real presence. While the museum is the modern attempt to bring an order to the chaotic structure of things, therefore an attempt to tame the gaze with the illusion of a constructed order, what makes the *wunderkammer* distinct is its unappropriated, unveiled chaos.

### **The East within the West: The Post-Soviet Trauma in the Eastern Europe**

In the case of Budapest, the above mentioned chaos is present in the replacement of old statues and monuments, the erection of new ones and in the construction of new structures to contain and appropriate the past history. The City Park in Budapest would display, instead of the former -destroyed- Stalin Statue, the *Millenium Monument*, dedicated to the important figures of pre-Soviet Hungarian history. The display is supported another monument not related to the first but in relation with the temporal reality the Millenium Monument shares: the biggest time-wheel of Europe named *Időkerék* erected to celebrate the entry of Hungary to EU. The fate of the Stalin statue is also highly

symbolical in terms of the death and life gained by the exhibition techniques and their market value. In the complexity started by the challenge towards the old musealization of the communist regime, the new demands for exhibiting the past while keeping its certain parts alive showed its power on the statue, which still remain in Budapest in the form of an imperfectly resurrected replica of the boots of Stalin in a forgotten far away place called the Memento Park. In the Memento Park Stalin's boots stand with its comrade statues where nearly all of the statues remained from the old regime are presented without giving any explanation about their past –why they were erected, by whom and where was their location- in the city. Stalin's boots however, are not real, they are the replicas of the original statue, which are erected after communism. This erection coincides with the time when the Eastern Europe became a place, as commented by Groys, whose only signifier is its past within the Eastern Block (Groys, 2003, 325).

There are other statues also, such as the *Statue of Liberty* on the Gellert Hill symbolizing the emancipation of Hungary from the Nazi Regime, which cannot be removed because its value for an important touristic element of this city, yet its meaning has been changed thorough the developments in the regime and became the focus of many artistic attempts to erase its bonds with the previous history or to criticize the very history of Soviet influence on the city.

On the other side of the process of changing the signifiers and meanings within the city structure, there is the *House of Terror*, as an important attempt for musealization to bring the disorder of the *wunderkammer* down, is open to present the history of Nazi occupation and Soviet occupation making them equals. At this point the museum or the exhibition gains an orderly structure where the concern is shifted from constructing the meaning to keeping it as it is; therefore stabilization of the meaning:

The museum produces its own obscurities, invisibilities, differences; it produces its own concealed outside on the inside. And the museum can only create the atmosphere of suspicion, uncertainty, and angst in respect to the hidden support of the artworks displayed in the museum which, while guaranteeing their longevity, at the same time endangers their authenticity. The artificial longevity guaranteed to things put inside a museum is always a simulation: this longevity can only be achieved through technically manipulating of the hidden material core of the exhibited thing to secure its durability: every conservation is a technical manipulation which means also simulation (Groys 2008, p. 40).

When all these developments gathered, as they were gathered in a *wunderkammer*, Budapest, rather than being a city with museums, itself becomes an exhibition especially due the efforts of adding the post-Soviet history into the construction of a new narrative in Hungary. Besides, as will be analyzed further, since what makes the former Iron Curtain countries visible in the world today is its past relation with the Soviets, Budapest becomes an object in the exhibition of the new world system, as well including various exhibitions within itself. When this meaning is set, it becomes easier to rule the route of everyday historical narration since any memory relate with dynastic regimes would be locked down to another time which has passed three decades ago.

Boris Groys, while writing on the new distinctive value of artworks from East Europe, comments that what makes East European art a different category within the art market is simply because it is coming from East Europe (Groys 2003, 324). His comment can be very well adapted to the general situation of former *Iron Curtain* Countries. After the Western globalization process loses its two main others, communist countries and the former colonies, the new role of the former block countries transformed into playing the East within the West. Represented as the countries saved from a dominance that has been obstructing them to catch the same modern position with the West, these countries became the subject of a differentiation which recalls their pre-communist past and buries the communist past to reach the presence of any Western country. According to Groys, the mainstream approach of the colonial studies on the relation between two opposing groups, where one obstructs the other to achieve modernity, the fact that communism itself from the very beginning was the case of “the most extreme and radical manifestation of militant modernism” is neglected (Groys 2003, p. 327).

Another approach on the categorization of the post-Soviet reality comes from Buck-Morrs who claims that while post-Soviet refers to time; globalization refers to a spatial change. Therefore as globalization does, post-Soviet period also signifies the whole world and not only the former communist countries (Buck-Morrs 2006, p. 498). If there is no apparent way of depicting the lack of modernity for the East within West, the main argument becomes the trauma of people under the Iron Curtain which makes necessary the opening of the House of Terror. The discourse on trauma, the collective trauma related with the communist regime is inscribed on the surface of the city. The problem with the cultural trauma is its unavoidable relation with the present time’s developing ideas and its effects on the memory:

'Experiencing trauma' can be understood as a sociological process that defines painful injury to the collectivity, establishes the victim, attributes responsibility and distributes the ideal and material consequences. Insofar as traumas are so experienced, and thus imagined and represented, the collective identity will become significantly revised. This identity revision means that there will be a searching re-remembering of the collective past, for memory is not only social and fluid but deeply connected to the contemporary sense of the self. Identities are continuously constructed and secured not only by facing the present and future but also by reconstructing the collectivity's earlier life (Alexander 2004, p. 22).

In the transformation of the Eastern Block societies, the trauma plays the role of an agent to build the past again with shifts in the focus. The focus is no more on the Nazi occupation and the end of occupation by the Soviet help. Some of the monuments, including the Statue of Liberty are dedicated to that period, yet now their bonds with the earlier trauma of II. World War have been melted within the new trauma discourse developed after the collapse of the regime. "De-sovietization" as used by Edit András, is related with two main traumata coming from the socialist past and the shock of transition forced by the westernized, globalized present conditions (András 2008, pp. 10-11). The freedom came with the defeat of colonization in her terms, led to a collective exorcism with a need to prove that past cannot come back again:

In general, elements of the Socialist past were collected, put together in isolated statue parks or memorial museums in the Ex-Soviet-block countries, fueled by the illusion that it would be possible to wipe off the dust of the Socialist past and put it aside in quarantine. This illusion, or better, desire, was usually accompanied by the intention of repressing the trauma of being oppressed for a long time, namely with amnesia. In reality, as it usually happens after a trauma, the memory of the Soviet-type globalization is still with us, haunting us with flashbacks and nightmares, even if to a different extent in the affected countries (ibid, p. 12).

Beneath the basic difference between trauma and the exhibition of trauma; there lies the political goal of representing present. While the latter is undeniable and collective, the former is a commoditized version of the actual trauma and it is indeed open for manipulation and distributed rather than shared. The opening of the House of Terror was criticized in this way because as a holocaust museum its equalizing the Nazi and Soviet regimes is criticized as an attempt of neglecting and juristically facing the crimes in the II. World War:

Are we losing "the" memory of the Holocaust because the framework of remembering is muting the experience (...) The history of the post-1945 period is characterize by forgetting. What is particularly

Hungarian perhaps is the secrecy about the past (...) The same strategy –silence – has been applied by both perpetrators and victims (Pető 2009, p.169).

The missed part in the exorcism and quarantine is the lack of perceiving a supporter fact in the development of the discourse on trauma, which is its strong connection with the power groups, and their word on defining the traumatic aspects in the social life. This side of the coin necessarily reverses the goal of burying the past, since what is being done in case of these countries is a continuous link between this past, and its being made more visible than ever. It is not visible only in the museums, galleries, discourses, but in the tiniest commodities of the global world, which is sold in souvenir shops to mock the past. When it becomes something to be exchanged by money and something which serves as an apparatus to help the country's global fame, the discourse starts to function away from the actual trauma and it becomes to be placed within the representation of trauma constructed by outer forces.

Budapest, among the other Central European cities, has entered to the global arena before the structural changes, yet, its appearance in the world after the developments following 1989 has changed rapidly. All of the monuments took a distinct part in the creation of the city as a brand no matter they belong to the pre-communist or communist era (Rátz 2008, 434). The common features of such kind of a destination branding in the area of Eastern Europe are determined by Hall as, to raise the per capital of tourism income and to guarantee recurring visits to stress the common point of Europeanness; to give a response to changing market demands while detaching from recent past, creating a new national image by still focusing on heritage, including the recent one (Hall 2004, 116). The complex status of the past within the market demands and tourism development plans as something to be buried under modernism and something to be stressed coincides with what is called *wunderkammer* in Budapest. The primary attempts to call tourists based on the brand new or face lifted constructions in Western style; institutions for industrial or political heritage (such as the House of Terror and the Memento Park) or culture and shopping facilities, in which the international image mixed with recent communist past. Within this process the communist past became the “valid differentiating factor” for attracting tourists, which started to loose attention with the amnesia of the world towards socialism: “Nevertheless, ‘being a former Socialist country’ is probably the most significant part of this image, so the destination must offer suitable visitor attractions" (Rátz 2008, p. 4463).

These developments for the sake of country's recognition as Western and modern as well as gaining a healthy economic vein from tourism, remains in the borders of centralization and globalization processes developed for the interests of global economy. For the West to continue to be the focal point in the global economy, centralization as well as globalization plays a major role by creating the control over some spaces such as important capitals, which are named global capitals through the process. In Sassen's terms, global cities as the key areas for marketplace in terms of finance and specialized services and as spaces for the production of innovation of the industry serve as "command points" (Sassen 1998, p. 180). Yet, while developing new areas of control and keep their regional position with their selected differences in spite of globalization is a hard task. Since the difference is an indispensable part of this process for the dominant to remain as the dominating power, in cases such as the Eastern European countries, one of the effective methods is translating the cultural specificity of the former Iron Curtain to the market value. For the localized positions to remain the same the global cities' representative value gains mere importance, which leads to the interruptions on their museal value.

### **Transformation of What is Signified**

The death and life brought by the process of musealization is highly active and ideologically dominant in case of Budapest, partially because of the struggle of the present regime to insist on the "new" Hungary. One of the concrete attempts for that was to erase the title "Republic" from the name of the country in 2012 following the impact of mass migration from Syria. The new constitution signed in 2012 was associated by some public groups with the loss of democracy (The Washington Post, 2012). These developments later, during the time of COVID-19, followed by the emergency legislation which can be used to silence collectivities while protecting them from the pandemic threat (). Culture and attempts of stabilizing the meanings supported by the authorities is an important part of this process which requires the destruction and re-construction of the earlier museal structure as seen in the case of the replica boots of Stalin.

The countries of the Eastern Block, through their constant touch with the Soviet regime are the countries influenced by the *monumental propaganda*, which mainly aims to construct cities as museums to enable citizens to read the history from the very structure of the city. One important step in this monumental development was the erection of historical figures from West in the urban space.

In case of Eastern Europe, these figures are selected mostly from the heroes who played an active role in the emancipation of the area from the Nazi occupation during the Second World War, as well as the figures from the Soviet History such as Lenin and Stalin.

On the monuments erected under the effect of monumental propaganda, the relation of art and politics become normally explicit than the implicit ideology of monuments such as the Eiffel Tower, which enables the researcher to discuss the present condition of art and exhibition in their relation with the market. The construction of monuments under the influence of communism, while involving a strong aim to disseminate the ideology also includes a different purpose to unite the form and content. In the absolute structure of the content, the form dissolves and the content takes the freedom of its own economy which was imprisoned in the form by the neglect of its use value (Eagleton 1992, p. 217).

After the collapse of communism, what has changed about the monuments is the union of form and content and their value of signification. No matter what the monuments signify on their own time, after Budapest's entering into the world market, their value is defined according to their signification of trauma and exchange value determined by this signification. Their death lied in the semantic shift rather than their total destruction. For Budapest to create its market value, the communist past had to be exhibited under the new meanings determined by the new world system Budapest entered. Then the problem becomes not the death of these monuments with their history but how to kill them and what to revitalize in them in the very structure of exhibition that by its own nature calls death and resurrection.

The mentioned task, is not as easy as totally destructing the existing material, since because of their relation with the space and memory, these are also monuments to which the public is familiar and the task of change with the goal of guiding collectivities to the new truths constructed by a certain ideology includes the risk of damaging both the global tourism and internal challenge from the citizens.

The boots of Stalin shows the difficulty of such a task. The 25 m. statue of Stalin in the *City Park* was destructed by the public gathered to revolt against communism on 1956 revolt. On 2006, on the fortieth anniversary of the 1956 Revolution, a 1:1 replica of the tribune was built, yet without Stalin on top. What has resurrected was only the boots of Stalin as a sarcastic reminder. This change was

not enough to reflect both the trauma and new life in Budapest. Tribune's death, therefore Stalin's symbolic death in the city, did not come by this bodily deformation. The actual death came also with the relocation of the boots in a new environment, Memento Park, by their loss of the spatial signification. When the City Park remained without the dominance of Stalin, the open area was filled with the signifiers of the new era, which constituted the structure of the *wunderkammer* in the most perfect manner.

In case of Stalin's Boots and the City Park, the presence of the *wunderkammer* comes with the separation of the monument from its original environment. The environment is transformed into a real chamber of curiosities that one can find anything in it except the former signifier. In addition to the complexity of the resurrection of pre-modern times and the birth of modernity once gain on the mentioned space, the multiple deaths of Stalin including also his replica's (the replica of his boots) death on the area constructs the essence of the exhibitionary complex. In this essence, which is strongly related with market in our days, the role Stalin's boots is to be nothing more than an object standing there for any purpose, to show the past, to show the end of the past, to enjoy the public with its lack of union or just to be anything standing on a point that can be exchanged.

But the death of the Soviets and communism in the new exhibitionary dynamics of the market do not have a unique style. The Statue of Liberty represents an interesting case for that. Budapest as the global city, is famous with the mentioned statue which is erected on Gellert's Hill as a symbol of emancipation from Nazi regime brought by the Soviet Army. As a result of its fame, its removal would give damage to both tourism and the spatial memory of people; the statue remained on its place, however, it could not escape from the process of transformation. The intervention to its original meaning came from the art from by the works of two Hungarian artists. As analyzed by Edit András, both Tamás Szentjóbi's *Spirit of Freedom* and Ágnes Szabó's *The Silhouette of the Statue of Freedom* shows the examples of coping with the trauma by transferring the negative message to a positive one (András 2008, p.11). On the other hand, if the relation of trauma's value for the market considered, the artworks gain another meaning. The work of Szabó is the neon variation of the statue in which it turns into a woman doing gymnastics, which in András' interpretation includes both the change in the original message and the sarcasm towards the male politics obsessed with power (ibid, p.12). The other case, that of Szentjóbi, was turning the Statue into a Ghost, a Spirit by covering it with white clothes with holes for the eye as if it was the return of the spirit after the materialism of

communism as well as the death of the liberty brought by the Soviets. Yet, the interesting situation is not the semantic shift or plays with the physicality of the body of the statue, but the fact that none of these attempts challenge the market value of the statue and the will to kill the aura of it goes parallel to the will to keep it alive for the touristic purposes.

Statue of Liberty is saved from being removed yet removal happened to a lot of communist monuments after the changes following 1989. The new location of these monuments is the Memento Park, where they are placed in the open area together, both killing each others' presence and both being killed by the environment. The importance of the park is its effect on the alienation of statues. They are not only removed from their original spaces but also positioned in a placelessness that disables any imagination on the period they were produced. In this celebration of the death the celebration of the new life gains its vitality, which shows itself in the items sold mostly to ridicule the past history. On the other hand of being in the middle of nowhere also the new exchange value reduces their being into sold items with their copies sold in the souvenir shop along with the Mc-Lenin t-shirts and empty cans called the last breath of communism.

The Memento Park is also dedicated to the nonexistence of such statues, making them visible again in their nothingness on the fan pages it has on the social networking websites.

The very existence of the park as a non-place, somewhere built for destruction of meanings, relations and memories as well as its duty to sell this history as an object, which lost its previous status and seriousness challenges the hypothesis of Tamara Rátz, et al.: (...) most visitors only experience a static collection of socialist-realist statues with no interpretation (Rátz 1998, p. 447). In a different style than that of a museum with instructions and concrete lines and relations between the presented objects, *wunderkammer* serves again for the purposes of interpretation in the frame of the musealization where the meaning is created and disseminated in a rather veiled style by the type of exhibition itself: "Gigantic monuments of communist dictatorship. Removed statues from the streets of Budapest with great photo opportunities of Lenin, Soviet Red Army Soldiers and many more communist heroes (Mementopark 2020)."

Contrary to the alienation, placelessness and disorganization of the Memento Park, The House of Terror coincides in Budapest with the resurrection of modern organization. It is the point where the *wunderkammer* loses its validity with the organization of the museum. Yet, it is a new kind of

museum that not only narrates a linear history from an ideological point of view, but by restricting the interpretations of the audience and using a high symbolism, it also creates the meanings.

The House of Terror does not only include material about Nazi and Soviet rule but also reshapes the whole exhibition with the music composed for this project and symbolic exhibitions. After the House of Terror in Budapest, the materials represented from the communist period cannot be taken in their own form and content relationships, but can be seen only as the elements of the exhibition which from the very beginning, from the structure of the house exhibits its own narration.

During the year-long construction work, the building on 60 Andrassy Avenue was fully renovated inside and out. The internal design, the final look of the museum's exhibition and the external facade are the works of architect Attila F. Kovács. The reconstruction plans for the House of Terror Museum were designed by architects János Sándor and Kálmán Újszászy; the contractor was Architecton Share Co. The background music to the exhibition was composed by Ákos Kovács. The work with a timeless scoring for string orchestra in multiple movements goes well with the historical theme of the museum's exhibition and contains special stereophonic mixes and sound effects.

During the reconstruction, the building has turned into a monument; the black passepartout (the decoration entablature, the blade walls and the granite sidewalk) provides a frame for the Museum, causing it to stand out by its sharp contrast to the other buildings on Andrassy street, and befitting its historic significance, focuses attention on the house itself (The Terror House Museum 2020).

As well as the shift in the focus from the material to the exhibition itself, the representation of both Nazi rule and the communist rule gain a new way of co-existence.

While introducing the trauma, the museum itself becomes the part of the trauma industry by selling coffee cups carrying the emblem of House of Terror, making the former discourses on the authenticity of trauma problematic by both producing the trauma in an endless chain and both reducing them into items to be sold in exchange for money.

## **Conclusion**

A traveler who visits Budapest after the fall of communism in the Eastern Block, would find himself/herself in a complex historical narrative that includes pre-communist era linked to the idea of *ancient regime* of nation states; the history of II World War serving mostly as a passage to the history of communism in the country rather than having its own detailed story and the history of post-soviet situation in the country, which still finds its voice in its opposition to the communist

regime. The complexity of the very narrative results from the problematic connection between the different periods in which the main point to travel in the history becomes the communist era. The placement of communist era in between the time-line breaks the linear historicization of the country's past. The mentioned togetherness –due to the opposition between the things exhibited– includes its own value for signifying the existing situation of Hungarian's free world experience.

Announcing the death of communist heritage within the country is not only related with the inner dynamics of the country. The outer connection's effect is highly visible in Budapest's turning into a *wunderkammer* after its museum position in the communist era. The beginning of a new musealization process after this complexity goes parallel with the balance between localization and globalization, which leads the alternation of meanings and structures but also makes their complexity permanent.

In case of Budapest, the order of things depicts a chaotic structure parallel to the disorder of a *wunderkammer*, which as claimed in this work, is an outcome of two governing situations. The first one is the country's position within the West as a post-Soviet country, in which the order has not settled and the goal of westernization has not achieved totally yet. The second one is the necessity of the conjuncture, whose politics obstruct any such goal to turn into a totally Western country because of the economic value of difference in the world market. Therefore, the *wunderkammer* in case of Budapest signifies on the one hand a transition period in its inner dynamics, a recurring project of modernization and in this sense a musealization and on the other a permanence for the chaotic structure demanded by the outer forces of market. This is a condition whose permanence may depend on a new process of orientalizing directed to a new territory and on a shift in the determinants of the global cities. Rather than a change in the outer shell of the exhibition adopted from external dynamics of globalization and localization, a new critique, hopefully of grassroots, in the country's cultural and political life can well show its influence on the subject.

Today, the discussions on Hungary often mention concerns about a new totalitarian potential. The cultural dominance over the significations and the use of inanimate structures as signifiers is one of the ways of rendering the authorities dominant in a regime. Totalitarianism needs a crystallization of meanings –which is impossible on the one hand due to the semantic shift inherent in the meaning, yet it is also plausible to a certain extent. That plausible power becomes real –even if for a short time, when a governance is dominant between the two phases described here: the chaos in the beginning as

wunderkammer and the crystallization at the –impossible- end: musealization. Between these two ends when the negative connotations are made to be related with a separated, enclosed part of history; until the transformation of this new signification the acts in the presence would be away from carrying this negative signification.

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