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# Colonizing Knowledge: New Museology as Museology of News

## Abstract

The paper examines the impact and influence of the Peter Vergo's book *The New Museology* and the ways it colonized the knowledge already existing outside United Kingdom. It discusses the concepts that existed before the 1989 book following the development of *La Nouvelle Museologie* and ecomuseums, ideas spread at conferences, symposiums and round tables, diverse declarations and resolutions. Also, beyond the *New* there is the narrative of museology itself and its past in the centers outside the "traditional" centers of colonial powers. The paper follows the early development of ideas in East Europe and Poland and the practical solutions recently developed in the country in a relation to British publication.

**Keywords:** museums, museology, new museology, colonization, knowledge

## "New" museological "upgrade"

The following text is developed version of the presentation delivered during the conference *What's New? New Museology 30 Years After* in the National Museum in Cracow in 2019. The conference's focus was at the book *The New Museology*, edited by Peter Vergo in 1989, and its aftermaths. It seems that there's nothing wrong with the intro sentences. Facts are right, meaning is clear. Yet, there is something troubling – values. First of all, why the National Museum in Cracow finds appropriate to mark three decades of publishing a book from UK? Has the museum followed *The New Museology* recommendations during all that time, or some of the latest projects exemplify the operational "philosophy" or ideas developed in Vergo's book? Unfortunately, none of the two is the case. Polish museum "boom" started a decade ago (Jagodzińska 2015: 91). Having in mind the

“most prominent” exhibition in National Museum up to date, the one from the end of 2017 – #Heritage – the recommended methodologies by diverse authors of Vergo’s book are manipulated for the sake of promotion of quite retrograde values (Krstović (A) 2018: 45–47; Krstović (B) 2018: 79–98; Lehrer 2017). It might be the cultural/ political/ symbolical decision to make connections with *The New Museology* edition considering the publishing year – “1989”. But isn’t it too loose and too cliché? Yet, as the reason it stands the best chances.

If one digs into the corpus of (museological) knowledge and explore the factual relevance and authenticity of *The New Museology*, the reason *why* the conference was held in Cracovian National Museum are becoming benign and even naive. The market of producing and spreading the knowledge is very important tool in many areas. Knowledge about museums (not only about their operating) and heritage in general is also important as much as where are the centres of its dissemination. Knowing this, it is crucially important to question what knowledge *The New Museology* represents, or to be more direct – how original and how really referential it is. This is the focus of the discussion. The knowledge has its own past. How that past is “curated” is crucially important for recognizing the relevance of knowledge. One of the latest “curatorial” activities in promotion the Vergo’s book importance and confirmation of (established) centers of knowledge was the conference in Cracow.

The case around *The New Museology* is inspired by the presentation methodology of ‘essayistic’ documentary *Rembrandt’s: J’Accuse* by Peter Greenaway, Dutch/British art historian and film director. Greenaway has accused us all of visual illiteracy and dependence on the museums’ authority to tell the truth. Similarly, this paper is critique not only of Vergo’s book and its (un)intentional colonial approach to knowledge, but rather the critical stand towards its uncritical reception. This might have forced us to “sign the contract” with continuous contemporaneity (Osborne 2013: 24; Osborne 2014; Smith 2006: 703; Groys 2009: 2–5). What I’m trying to “accuse” us for is the acceptance of the colonization of knowledge and even the celebration of that process for sake of being constantly trendy and up-to-date. I argue that we were obliged to know and think more and beyond the dominant and privileged Anglo-Saxon position during the whole process. This is the “sin” we are still gladly commit. The “dramatization” is modelled as “*What if?*” alternative. But, as usual, if we want to perceive alternative we have to go to pre-“Vergo and Co”-era and advocate what was *not* “written essentially from a British perspective” (Vergo 1989: 4).

## 1989 and issues of beginning

This text is not about any text particularly, but about Vergo’s intentions represented in the Introduction and the position from which the book was produced (edited).

What is new museology, according to Vergo? It is museum actively engaged in education, attempt to resolve the dilemma about entrepreneurial notion of museums as places of public diversion, the permanent questioning of museums' collecting as political, ideological or aesthetic acts and idea of constructing history throughout arrangement, acquisition or disposal. Vergo says (1989: 3): "Such considerations, rather than, say, the administration of museums, their methods and techniques of conservation, their financial well-being, their success or neglect in the eyes of the public, are the subject matter of the new museology". So, this is what his view of new museology is about. Vergo specifically defines new museology as "a state of widespread dissatisfaction with the 'old' museology, both within and outside the museum profession". Being aware of the logic that the definition is negative and even circular, he continues with arguing that "what is wrong with the 'old' museology is that it is too much about museum methods, and too little about the purposes of museums".

The religious-like reference is obvious throughout the distinction between "new" and "old". Yet, for the *old* is being put in single inverted commas we are to perceive that *old museology* and *museology* are the same thing – just *museology*. Following the next sentence: "Museology has in the past only infrequently been seen, *if it has been seen at all*, as a theoretical or humanistic discipline, and that the kinds of questions raised above *have been all too rarely articulated, let alone discussed*", it comes out that museology almost did not exist before 1989 at least in England. The first following sentences are expressing lament over position of museum profession. In that sequence of ideas one might conclude that position of museums (in society) is the consequence of the position of the museum professionals.

Not to get lost in too detailed tautological experiments, let's broaden the perspectives. Where the phrase *new museology* came from? According to Vergo's *Introduction*, it seems that it just popped up almost as a God's creation and it is elevating the (old) museology to completely new level of thinking and theoretical/humanistic considerations. I recall *The Museum as Forum and Actor* conference held in Museum of Yugoslav History in Belgrade in 2009,<sup>1</sup> during which one of the key note speakers claimed very emotionally that 1989 (when he was 15) was the most important year in his life for two reasons: one globally known, and the other was the book – the book we are still discussing today. Isolated from "the rest of the world", as many try to observe it nowadays, it looks like New Testament, kind of a new museums' contract signed with societies.

But, is it really like that globally? Or, is it just a British case only? There's no doubt that Vergo's publication is important endeavor for introducing the term museology to Anglo-Saxon sphere of knowledge. However, if we go to the year of

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<sup>1</sup> Later published as *The Museum as Forum and Actor*, edited by Frederik Svanberg, published by Statens Historiska Museum, Stockholm 2010.

the fall of the Berlin Wall and read some other language than English, the image of “new (museological) religion” would look like quite different.

## Pre 1989 (new)museological era

“Pre-history” of museology, seen and understood as non-anglo-saxon version of pre-*new museology*, looks quite dynamic and interesting (see Mayrand 1985: 200–201). Let’s rewind the facts: *International Movement for New Museology* (MINOM) was founded in 1985 in Lisboa, Portugal. It was the outcome of the First *International – Ecomuseums and New Museology* Workshop in Quebec (Canada), held in 1984. Museologists from fifteen countries adopted *The Declaration of Quebec – Basic Principles of a New Museology* as a reference point of the Movement. But, it was not the establishing of something new, it was also the kind of the rapture with the traditions. The text of Declaration (Point 2. Making a stand) reveals even more: “Considering that *over fifteen years of experiments in new museology – ecomuseology, community museology and all forms of active museology – throughout the world have been a critical factor in the development of the communities that have adopted this way of managing their future*” (ICOM 1984).

Over fifteen years of experiments in *new museology* suggest that “prehistory” could not be considered as such because there was abundance of experiments and attempts, even the written materials. Furthermore, the *Introduction* of Declaration states that: “A movement of new museology has its first and international public expression in 1972 at the Round table of Santiago (Chile) organized by ICOM. This movement claims the social function of the museum and its interventions’ global character”. So, the ideological origins of “Canadian document” can be found in “Chilean” *The Santiago Declaration about Integral Museum*, even though the focus back in 1972 has been on the museums of Latin America (Round Table Santiago do Chile ICOM 1972). And, not only *new museology* appears as a phrase but few others that clearly indicate active forms of museology. So, the question of museology was not “rarely”, or “if at all”, discussed, but quite actively and on the global level.

Between Quebec and Santiago events the *International Committee for Museology*, ICOFOM, was established in 1977. After years of development and diverse discussions, the Committee came to life thanks to support of the ICOM’s president, Georges Henri Rivière. Social and cultural context must be illuminated here. In the 1967 iconic publication *The society of Spectacle* by Guy Debord started radiating from the University of Sorbonne. It was harsh critique of what Western societies have become and what they are streaming for. It was expression of the left wing stand, justified at a time, shaped as manifesto. Yet, observed from the today’s perspective, even worse kinds of spectacles were about to come in the ‘80s with New Right political option, globalism, and neo-liberal consumerism. In

France, where left wing political options and the movements for decolonization were strong at the time, the new ideas and philosophy about heritage preservation and management came to life – ecomuseums. The first one – L'Écomusée de la Communauté le Creusot Montceau – was established as early as in 1971. Georges Henri Rivière and Hugues de Varine were founders and developers of the concept that spread over time and geographies, being more or less successfully practiced today in all parts of the world. Rivière's 1976 definition of ecomuseum is that it is:

a fragmented, interdisciplinary museum, representing man in time and space, in his natural and cultural environment, inviting the entire population to participate in his development through various means of expression based essentially on the reality of sites, buildings, objects, real things more meaningful than the words or images that invade our lives (Rivière 1978: 441).

Throughout diverse early examples of ecomuseums the new practice in which the term and idea of *museum* was put in symbiosis with the term and idea of *ecology* led to establishment of the new, rather applicable museology – *La Nouvelle Museologie*.

The year of establishing of the first ecomuseum was also the year of the 9<sup>th</sup> ICOM General Conference in Paris and Grenoble (1971), where more than 600 participants from 56 countries united around the discussion theme *The Museums in the Service of Man, Today and Tomorrow – Educative and Cultural Role of Museums*. Rivière has already been thinking of museum that “must, faced with aims of its actions, take constantly critical stand” (Rivière *et al.* 1971: 2). The name of that critical museum was *Nouveau musée*, which is the result of already ongoing *radical transformation*.

Some of the conclusions of the 1971 ICOM Conference are very interesting, like:

Resolution No. 1: The Museum in the Service of Man – That the museum must accept that society is constantly changing; (2) That the *traditional concept of the museum* which perpetuates values concerned with the preservation of man's cultural and natural heritage, not as a manifestation of all that is significant in man's development, but merely as the possession of objects, *is questionable*; (3) That each individual museum must accept that it has a duty to evolve means of action specifically designed to *serve* best the particular *social* environment within which it operates;

or

Resolution No. 4: Training of Personnel – Recognizing the appreciable progress made in the last few years, particularly the increased *number of museology courses* in numerous countries, (1) Request governing authorities responsible for teaching and research to recognize *museology as a scientific discipline* of university level, (2) Recommends most strongly that national and international organizations, museums and universities encourage and permit *research on museology* and the publication of this research, in that this is the most efficient method for the promotion and development of museology as a scientific discipline (ICOM: 1971).

The crucial question here is whether Vergo knew anything about ICOFOM, MINOM, Quebec, Santiago, ecomuseums, *La Nouvelle Museologie*. Considering the title of the book, it is very probable that he must have known something about “the rest of the world” initiatives in museology for past twenty years. Then, *The New Museology* is nothing but the deliberate intellectual and mental colonisation of ideas and methodologies. The other option, the one that neither Vergo nor other authors knew nothing is in the domain of science fiction. But, why then, there’s no any mention of all those people, organizations and practices, ideas and theories, and why there’s no mention of any (outside English speaking world) reference related to as Vergo pointed out (1989: 223) – “growing literature on museology generally”?

If “What Is Wrong With The ‘Old’ Museology Is That It Is Too Much About Museum Methods, and Too Little About the Purposes of Museums” is a hypothesis, there’s nothing in the book’s *Introduction* or even other authors’ texts to support or negate the claim. If it is a statement, then it is fundamentally wrong and intellectually disturbing, regardless of being geographically restricted. At least one of the authors should have “informed” the editor that there was *something* in the “old museology”, though outside United Kingdom, about the purpose of the museums already happening globally. Or, someone that has had those experiences. The first one to come to mind is a journalist, *anti-museologist*, broadcaster and author, Kenneth Hudson, who had a bit ironical and critical notes: “Who are the ‘museologists’ and for whose benefit do they exist?” (Hudson 1997: 102). The parallel between Hudson’s funny and most quoted museum aphorism, popular even on the social networks – *Tiger in the museum is tiger in the museum. It is not a tiger* – and Vergo’s book inspire somewhat tricky thoughts: just because the title refers to the (new) museology, it doesn’t mean it is (new) museology. The other one, instantly coming to my mind is, Geoffrey D. Lewis, who was President of ICOM and diverse committees during the eighties of XX century. He was also introduced to ideas of Zbyněk Stránský during seventies (Brulon Soares 2019: 83).

## Beyond “new” – museology as a conflict

So far we have mostly discussed the issues of *new* in *The New Museology*. But, what about the museology itself and the context in which it is used? If one wants to be radical, they might say that we have been discussing about (*new*) *musography* so far, not *museology* as the academic discipline or even science. Even though the borderline is fluid there is quite enough space for deepening the discussion. Let’s remember the 1971 ICOM Declaration and its *Resolution No. 4: Training of Personnel*, where it was strongly recommended promotion of museology as an academic discipline. For that, we have to be grateful to Vergo’s book for sharing the term in English speaking territories and cultures. Vergo stated in his Intro-

duction: “The present volume is not intended to do justice to museum theory and practice outside the United Kingdom”. Logic question is – why not? The answer comes promptly further in the text: “And while innovations elsewhere may hold important lessons for museum practice in this country, in our view it is here, in Britain, as the twentieth century draws to its uneasy close, that the problems, the issues and the controversies are to be found in their most acute form”. Considering that the term *museology* appears in the title of the Vergo’s book, one might ask, whether the museology is about practice or theory, or both. This is where the most intriguing debate occurred (and is still active). But, from the perspective of knowledge, this is the area where the colonization of knowledge is also in its most acute form as well. What meanings and ideas behind the Vergo’s usage of term museology were disseminated?

As it is implied earlier, the notions of “outside” or “inside” (United Kingdom) are quite suspicious, even for the year 1989. If in 1969 the famous series of Kenneth Clark *Civilization* represented very knowledgeable yet culturally centric and elitist perspective, John Berger’s *The Ways of Seeing* from 1972 offered early post-modern and (for the time) provocative stands towards art and its interpretation (usually imposed by museums). In years that followed (up to 1989) Western museums were “forced” by the New Right politics and policies to act at the (cultural) market thus redefining their position and roles in the societies. In that milieu science and/or scientific disciplines, and especially the most effective tool for dissemination of (“our”) cultural and civilizational standards – museums – became (and still are) very effective tools for (national or cultural) “games of (soft) power”. Having that in mind, *The New Museology* rather ended the era, than proposed new one. The concept of *museology* itself, after being colonized (Vergo’s book title) in its adoptable forms, meanings and values and adjusted to “inside UK” needs (Vergo’s attempts to theorize what has already been done globally), was “sold as a final product” to the rest of the world as a way of improving museums in the new socio-cultural environments of post-1989. The global promotion of the book into iconic publication reflects the acceptance of easy solutions and all-purpose recipe for the success. That’s what marketing usually does. What that marketing was for?

In the process of globalization, after “East” (and “Rest” or “non-West”) collapsed, economically dominant “West” became the role-model and the only focal point for all values. The requests and conditions for joining the circle of “Our/Civilized” world were accepted by the candidates. This is, of course, understandable. Yet, if this process of “civilizing” was to be successful the quick and easy solutions and changes were needed (and expected). This urgency was an excellent platform for “selling the established” values, among which the cultural ones were crucial. The fields of collective memory and contemporary art were very important. The narrative of dusty and ideologically constructed institutionalized memory was the synonym for “old museology” and something that was expected to be changed (by both sides) in the process of joining the Western standards.

Numerous conferences, round tables, seminars, and symposiums were organized all around “East” in order to promote examples of good practices. “The New Museology” was “the promise”, because it consisted of something recognizable (museumology) and marketing-like word as a tool – “new”. Practically, one ideology has been replaced by another. Current colonial and postcolonial tendencies in memory field might illuminate this hypothesis further. Globalization (or global acceptance) of English language instigated this colonization of public memory field even further. This pressure gradually pushed the French and Latin (American) museumology schools closer to the Eastern thoughts from pre-1989 period. ICOFOM activities in last two decades clearly represent these tendencies.

For those who urgently tended to become the part of the globalized world of collective memory forgetting own museumological heritage as non-efficient, not too easy to be transformed into practical solutions and not applicable for museums as business (or creative industries) became acceptable philosophy. Subordinating the corpus of existing knowledge to the one coming outside organically developed traditions was reckless act. Cultural development is not possible throughout subordination, but exchange. This was not possible because the “old knowledge” was branded as outdated, not liberal, and restrictive for democratic development of museums, public memory, and societies in general. This need (or demand) for instantly applicable solutions was fruitful filed for promotion of something easy to adopt (rarely adapt), easy to understand and, above all, popular, let’s dare to say even seductive and sexy. It was “new” way of talking, new discourse acceptable and understandable for new political aspirations. The Vergo’s book was the iconic (promotional) symbol of above mentioned having in mind its year of publishing, the associative title, popular tone and more than welcomed “critical” stand to anything “old”. It was a “product to be sold” to those, who were already excited about anything new, because the “old” one was unbearable. The fact that political and ideological “old” and academic “old” had nothing to do with each other was not of any importance. Also, the fact that “academic new” was even older than the “academic old” was not ideologically acceptable.

But the bigger “sin” is the auto-colonization. It came from neglecting of diverse and genuine efforts in the field after the World War II. Bruno Brulon Soares and Anna Leshchenko opened interesting issue in their text *Museumology in Colonial Context* (2018: 75):

Since these works [French and Anglo-Saxon] have marginalised other views on museumology – such as those from Eastern Europe where theoretical museumology was born, or the more recent production from Latin America, where museumology was considered a «science» by some authors – a critical consciousness for this discipline will take time to develop.

Are there some mitigating circumstances? We might argue that French academics colonized what originally came from East Europe in the process of producing the new corpus of knowledge from the late fifties to the eighties, and sig-



nificantly influencing ICOFOM perspectives from its establishment in 1977. But that won't be the truth entirely. Both Rivière and Varine, from the position of ICOM presidents, supported the diverse geographies and their right to express the practical and theoretical stands. If one reads *The Key Concepts of Museology* (Mairesse, Desvallées 2011: 48–52), it easily become obvious that the terms which are determining the field of museology (*musealia*, *museal*, *musealisation*) come from the East Europeans. Yet, offered definition(s) take into consideration all current vivid proposals, including *museum studies* as a practical side of museum functioning or as the outsiders' expert look on the museums and their functioning and, more commonly, social purpose.

Considering that this paper is following Polish based initiative of National Museum in Cracow and thus is referring to Polish perspectives, let's consult efforts from East Europe and the host country. Two texts are interesting to be followed in the 2017 international conference Proceedings *Extended Museum in Its Milieu*. The first one is by former ICOFOM president, François Mairesse's, text (2018b) *Sur trois neologismes liés aux musées: Muséal, Muséalité, Muséalisation*, where he returns to the origins of East European and particularly Czech Zbyněk Stránský's formulating principles of museology. The other one is by ICOM Poland chair, Dorota Folga-Januszewska, where she argues that: "Extended museums are institutions forging active, bilateral relationship with their milieu. In that process they become centers of expert knowledge in the scope of their specialties" (Folga-Januszewska 2018: 9).

Let's navigate through Stránský's concepts of museology briefly. He argued that the task of museology is to "perceive and identify the documents of realities which in every respect best represent certain social values and therefore warrant selection, collection and presentation in the interest of society's development" (Stránský 1980: 38). Commenting on that, many years later, Brulon Soares noticed:

First, there were museums. Then, museology. In the middle, there was, and somehow there still is, Stránskýan geminal thinking as the missing element for our disciplinary structure. Beyond defending museology as a science, Stránský's ideas dislocated the focus of museum studies from the collections and the very museums, to the processes that constitute them: *musealia*, *museality* and *musealization* (Brulon Soares 2016: 6).

The prominent figure of American museology during seventies and eighties, George Ellis Burcaw, admitted that it was difficult for him to adopt the East-European views on museology, Stránský's in particular. However, he quoted him extensively because majority of American museum workers were not dealing with museology: "Eastern museology [...] is founded more on philosophy than on pragmatism. In my opinion, the Western approach is likely to be more productive in the short run, but for efficiency and worth in the long run, the Eastern approach is needed" (Ellis Burcaw 1981: 33). Yet again, Stránský was inspired by Jan Jelínek and, especially, Jury Neustupny, doctoral dissertation from 1950, *Questions of Contemporary Museology*. This title of Neustupny is very provocative from

the perspective of this paper – if there were questions of *contemporary museology* – there must have been some pre-contemporary. At the same time Jan Jelínek thought that:

the profession is not a question of whether a person *is* or *isn't employed* in a museum, but primarily whether this person has acquired the specific knowledge. In this sense, in the beginning of the 1960s, the question frequently posed by museum workers was 'From where should an employee or specially the beginner acquire such a specialized knowledge?' (Jelínek 1974: 10).

When one recalls the *extended museum* concept and Folga-Januszewska's notion that museums are becoming centers of expert knowledge during the process of cooperating with communities isn't it circular argumentation? Regardless of the answer it depicts that the gravitational axis stays the same or quite similar for almost half of the century.

Thinking of Polish traditions in museology in the light of *The New Museology* the good reference comes from Anna Żakiewicz and her paper for ICOFOM's 42<sup>nd</sup> symposium during the ICOM 2019 General Conference. Analyzing Wojciech Gluziński's *Principles of museology* [*U podstaw muzeologii*] from 1980, she argues that it is "a clear vision of the contemporary museum, partly preceding Peter Vergo's concept from his book *The New Museology*, published in 1989" (Żakiewicz 2019: 197–198). This short Żakiewicz's text summarizes the ideas of Gluziński, the critics to the developed ideas about museology, especially Stránský's idea about the museology without museum. Being translated to Serbian and being the part of the university course *Museology*, it is easy to follow the accents that Żakiewicz selected. Maybe the most interesting parts are the importance of establishing *what museum is* and *what it should be at a specific historical moment*. Following the idea of establishing identities and visions, museum must confront controversial problems of the present with the same kind of problems from the past and trying to find connections between them. Furthermore, museum must be treated as a reflection of the world and an integral part of a society in development as well as philosophy and/or science must be created to serve as a reliable foundation for museum activities. Also, one of the Gluziński's conclusions is that really important role of museums is to serve as hubs helping people to understand the world around them in all its complexity.

Can we argue the Gluziński's claims are not proceeding only Vergo's book for some ten years, but also the ideas of extended museum, or even new ICOM's museum definition proposal? Stránský was looking beyond institutional boundaries of the museum in order to recognize common principles of collective memory. Jan Jelínek, Rivière and Varine, as well as many others sought for common ideas and solutions throughout all the continents and cultures.

## The aftermaths of 1989 and what if?

Knowledge is very powerful resource. Controlling the resource and flow defines the academic possibilities and shapes the future. Transformed into sophisticated and systematically elaborated commodities museum practices (theorised as museum studies) are laboratories for producing the constant “novelties” in order to preserve dominant positions of ideological centres of power. Yet, the cracks in the system of *new museology* practical applications (like there were any others?) were indicated by Max Ross and his analysis *Interpreting New Museology* (Ross 2004: 84). What Ross develop as a conclusion after the analysis of series of museum professionals’ remarks and critiques, and even though as the British case only, inevitably resembles the ideas of already mentioned “state of contemporaneity”. Having in mind the pressures of being constantly contemporary or *in* contemporaneity, it is clear that Vergo’s “recommendations” about museums’ role and functions in the societies represent just another New Right business model of liberal, socially aware, yet corporately operated museums with the expiration date.

What Vergo (and Ross, although the Ross’s text is expected outcome of the Vergo’s solutions) essentially misunderstood was that museology doesn’t refer to museum practices and institution operations exclusively. The museology is far wider set and developed research field. What Vergo is doing is selective cutting off of what he doesn’t need (the most obvious is the absence of all previous knowledge) and direct his attention to what is practically applicable for museum professionals and management, thus abusing the term *museology*. Stránský pointed out (1970: 34) – the school is not the subject matter of education. There’s no science or discipline in which the research focus is on an institution. Thus, logical question is – can museology be about museums? Insisting on museological laboratory instead on the very process supports only management aspects of institutions, its tools and skills. It is the case even when one argues the questions like museums’ roles in the societies, museums’ diverse forms of activism in the fields of environment, equity or wellbeing in general, participation, co-creation. Thus museum studies, even being interdisciplinary and beneficial for the development of museum field and its influence on collective memory, are the studies of the institution which forces them to be equally ideological or limited to answer more complex questions of musealization and values of collective memory.

Obvious example is visible in Poland: after the decade of developing contemporary museums in Poland, the pressures of the new ideological and political powers became obvious and reveal all the fragility of practices without firm theoretical base – from being continentally recognized as one of the museum superpowers (European award schemes)<sup>2</sup>. Poland came to be the subject of the ICOM

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<sup>2</sup> Poland was the only country whose museums (Polin, Polish Emigration Museum, Solidarity, Cricoteka) all been awarded during one year (2016) by different award schemes accros Europe:

Statement about independence of museums (ICOM Statement 2018). Obviously that contemporaneity of Polish museums came out to provoke very conservative (political) (re)actions. Gluziński's "lessons" about connecting controversial issues of past and present seems to be skipped in favour of celebrating Vergo's ones. Stránský's "lessons" in museology point out the obvious issue: museums are just part of much wider process of collective memorizing. Being isolated from the system (reality/ memory/ man) they show themselves in all of its fragility to be misused and abused.

All of these open yet more questions. One of them is posted by François Mairesse (2018a: 21): "Should we speak of museological imperialism Scheiner, 2016: 21] to recognize certain dominant forms?". Following the historian Serge Gruzinski's work, *The Colonization of the Imaginary*, which refers to the process of Westernization of imaginaries as a continuation of the colonial process, Brulon Soares and Leshchenko pointed out that using "colonizing imaginaries" in a broader sense refers to knowledge as an instrument to shape and colonize mindsets (Brulon Soares, Leshchenko 2018: 63). Buying "final products" and not developing own mindsets in relation to collective memory and values (to be musealized), and implementing them only in the field of museums seems to be trendy but highly risky methodology. Finally, let's conclude with the words of Wilke Heijnen: "New museum professional should be personified in a culture as scouts/ mentors. But their knowledge should be already engaged by the museum and sophisticated in that environment" (Heijnen 2010: 22). There's nothing like that in highly corporative museums, like Louvre Abu Dhabi or even Louvre Lens, blindfolded celebrations of Guggenheim – Bilbao "effect", Colonial Williamsburg management racism, MoMA super rich board members – the role of business based museums was mocked even in the moves – Square. On the other side, stand the practices that are in line with the Hugues de Varine's article title *Heritage: When People Are Solving Their Problems* (2017), like *Museum of Contraception and Abortion* in Vienna, project *Homeless* in Den Gamle By in Aarhus, Denmark, CW's *Journey to Redemption* (Krstović 2017), or the one represented at the Cracow's conference – *Curatorial Collecting – Curating University as a Maternity Unit* and the main unifying quality follows Solnit's *Hope in the Dark* (2004) "the hope is ability to work for something because it is good, not just because it stands a chance to succeed".

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Council of Europe, EMYA, EMA, EUHA. The info is based on the three-months residency research project *East&W/Rest* in the framework of scholarship Thesaurus Poloniae by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of Republic of Poland implemented in the International Cultural Centre in Cracow.

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