

Memory, Museums and Multidirectionality in Dubravka Ugrešić's *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender*

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Collective and cultural memory are essential for the creation of ‘imagined communities’ and forming the outlines of the community that we feel a part of. Over the past decade or so, debates surrounding the establishment of a common European memory have proliferated. As the European Union is seeking to expand with the accession of Eastern European countries, there is a need for new conceptions of identity. Following the belief that a shared historical consciousness can help foster a shared European identity, EU institutions have turned to cultural remembrance practices in order to establish a common European memory (Rigney, *Transforming Memory*), such as the House of European History and the Musée de l’Europe in Brussels (Cesari, Settele, Sierp), or the annual European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism (Littoz-Monnet). Memory politics and remembrance culture have become fundamental to identity formation and community configuration in the European Union, ever since Europe started addressing and reviving the memory of the Second World War in the late 1980s, building on the Holocaust as its “negative foundational myth” (Probst). Coming to terms with one’s past has even become a ‘soft’ requirement for candidate member states to be granted accession (Littoz-Monnet 1182). However, scholars have criticised the EU’s attempts to establish a common European memory, arguing that these institutional remembrance practices are based on a politics of exclusion, resulting in homogeneous and fixed narratives that favour certain (Western European) experiences of the past and neutralize or marginalize local and minority memories that are in possible conflict (Settele; Rigney; *Transforming Memory*; Cesari; Sierp).

One of the complications in establishing a common European memory is the integration of Southeastern European memories. The socialist legacy and post-socialist experience are almost completely absent from dominant European memory narratives, and whereas the memory of the Holocaust has been established as a solid shared memory and identity marker, countries in the Balkans are still grappling with their past and their relationship to the European Union (Petrović 11). Memory cultures in this part of Europe are highly contested and exist within various national and transnational concepts (Zimmerman 16). Furthermore, an assimilated European memory of Western and Eastern Europe is obstructed by Western European conceptions of and discourse on the former Yugoslav republics (and the Balkans in general) as ‘the other within Europe’. Scholars such as Todorova, Vesna Goldsworthy and Larry Woolf have demonstrated that representations of (South-)Eastern Europe in Western European discourse are based on high ignorance of the region and perpetual cultural stereotypes, and that the discourse of European identity is ultimately based on (a politics of) exclusion. However, scholars argue that not including Eastern European memories and experience means omitting “an imminent part of European (and global) history” (Reinprecht 10, see also Zimmerman), and warn that “ignoring or downplaying aspects of one’s own history, can lead to societal disintegration” (Settele 406). It is precisely in conflict, revision, and discussion that memories can develop and more inclusive views of the past and new

conceptions of identity can emerge. Overall, scholars from various disciplines express a pressing need for more inclusive understandings of remembering, citizenship and belonging within Europe.

In order to begin articulating these, we might perhaps look to literature and the more inclusive models of remembrance it can propose. According to Ann Rigney, literary works can work as catalysts of memory by drawing attention to hitherto neglected or omitted versions of the pasts in dominant cultural remembrance narratives. Moreover, as calibrators, they can reflect on and contest existing views on the past and suggest more inclusive ways of understanding and relating to it (Rigney, *The Dynamics* 351). Therefore, against the backdrop of the various attempts to create a common European memory discourse in recent past and present, this thesis analyses Dubravka Ugrešić's 1996 novel *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender* as a cultural memory work that approaches memory in a transnational, multidirectional and performative way. The central research question is: How does Dubravka Ugrešić's *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender*, through the trope of museum and archiving, assert the difficulty of reconciling memories of contested pasts and how does it relate to debates surrounding the formation of a common European memory?

The Museum of Unconditional Surrender relates the life of a former Yugoslavian literary academic in exile in Berlin. An undefinable combination of novel, essay, memoir, notebook, diary, and catalogue, the book reflects on modes of remembering, displacement, life in Berlin, history, ideology, art, and loss as it assembles people's life stories, personal collections, photographs, artworks, biographies, lists, quotations, and a recipe. Approaching the novel through a lens of cultural memory, I will explore the various layers and uses of the museum and archiving in the novel to see how the text challenges and adds to the debates surrounding an accurate and inclusive representation of European memory and experience. I will argue that with this novel, Ugrešić curates her own museum of exile experience by adopting the modes of museum and archiving, strongly grounded in the everyday. The novel takes on the modes of museum and archiving, which provide a way of relating to dominant representations of the past and can serve as a place from which to acquire individual agency. In doing so, it resists the homogeneous narrative that the top-down approach of a common European memory and identity that the EU seems to offer and suggests a different approach beyond a model that mirrors a traditional nationalistic approach.

The work of Dubravka Ugrešić as an exile writer provides a striking example of how literature can question dominant discourses of culture, memory and identity. Ugrešić left Croatia after the disintegration of Yugoslavia following the Balkan wars, after she was publicly declared one of the five 'Croatian witches'¹ and eventually moved to Amsterdam. Since then, she has written extensively on contemporary social, cultural and political issues, surrounding questions of ethnicity, nationalism, citizenship, globalisation and the postmodern experience in her essay collections and novels, with a prominent position of critical writer

¹ In a 1991 article, Ugrešić and four other women intellectuals and female writers (Slavenka Drakulić, Rada Iveković, Vesna Kesić and Jelena Lovrić), were publicly attacked as one of the "Croatian witches", seen as enemies of the state because they spoke out against Croatian nationalism and the government of president Franjo Tuđman. See Tax for an elaborate explanation and documentation of this issue.

and “transnational public intellectual” within the European circuit (Karpinski 43). While she is often characterized as a Croatian writer, she resists this label and prefers to be seen as ‘Balkan’, ‘post-Yugoslav’ or simply transnational (Spina, Bucan). A self-proclaimed “literary smuggler” (Spina, Bucan), she often draws upon Eastern European literary tradition in her work, thus bringing the tradition into European cultural discourse. In her work, she challenges different conceptions of Europe from a position that Karpinski calls “minor transnationalism”, that is “transnationalism reconceived through lateral rather than mostly vertical power dynamics between European minority cultures and the West” (44).

The first chapter of this thesis outlines a theoretical framework of a multidirectional, transnational, performative understanding of memory that draws upon theories by Astrid Erll, Ann Rigney, Michael Rothberg, and Marije Hristova. Such a model allows us to understand how cultural memory is a continuous process that is constantly reassessed beyond the various borders of national, local and transnational communities as well as an ongoing interplay and mutual constitution of private and public. Moreover, the chapter will briefly relate conceptions of the museum and archive to understand how the novel relates to cultural memory through the trope of museum. The second and third chapters of the thesis provide a close reading of *The Museum* through various levels and uses of museum and archiving in the text. The second chapter focuses on the material media and genres Ugrešić uses to voice her own exile memories while also continuously relating to others in a multidirectional, transnational manner: everyday collections, artworks, photography and flea-markets. The third chapter explores two sites of remembering that exemplify an enactment of multidirectional remembrance, while challenging a traditional, state-funded, institutional conception of the museum. The fourth and final chapter provides a conclusion to the thesis, which will relate how the novel as a cultural memory work largely aimed at a European audience brings the socialist legacy into the realm of common European memory and suggests new ways for relating and articulating pasts.

i. cultural memory as a transnational, multidirectional and material process

Cultural memory can be understood as “the interplay of present and past in socio-cultural contexts” (Erll 2). Cultural memory is an ongoing dynamic process in which (dominant) representations and interpretations of the past are constantly (re)configured, in the interplay of various levels of individual, group, or (trans)national remembrance in a variety of genres and media (Erll and Rigney 2; Erll 2; Rigney, *The Dynamics* 345). It emerges from the interplay of the individual and collective: individual memories are shaped by their socio-cultural contexts and can help shape collective representations of the past, but memories represented by institutions and media must also be “actualized” by individuals in order to have meaning and impact (Erll 5). Cultural artefacts, such as literary works, provide an essential connection between individual and collective since they make sense of the past by mediating between historical events and subjects (Erll and Rigney 1, 3). Additionally, they can mediate between individuals through common engagement with narratives (3). Not only do they help shape cultural memory by articulating memories and bringing them into circulation (Rigney, *Cultural Memory Studies* 65), as “agents”, cultural artefacts can actively engage in the process of constituting and challenging dominant discourses of cultural memory (Rigney, *The Dynamics* 349). Due to their creative, imaginative and reflexive nature, literary works can act as “spaces for imagining things otherwise” in ways that for example institutional practices of remembrance cannot (Cesari and Rigney, 21).

While the production of cultural memory can thus be viewed as a dynamic process, the social formations and borders within and across which cultural remembrance occurs can, according to the concept of transnational memory, also be understood as “a dynamic”, operating at various local, national, transnational and global scales that are interlocking and mutually constitutive (Cesari and Rigney 1). Transnational memory moves beyond the problematic idea of the nation-state as the “natural container, curator, and telos of collective memory” and identity making, while acknowledging the influence in and between those various borders on cultural memory (1, 11). The interplay between cultural remembrance practices and social formations is constituted in the relation between local, national, global and other spaces (1). Transnational memory offers an especially fruitful approach in the case of European memory because it can help to illuminate how social, political and institutional practices and cultural products of remembrance and memory narratives interact and form the real and imagined borders of Europe – an ultimately transnational social formation that is established in and between various national and international levels (5).² Considering agency and justice, the “double role of memory” becomes clear: it can function as a mechanism of discrimination and exclusion, as the EU institutions of remembrance are criticized of, but can also help to articulate and acknowledge the marginalized and expropriated (11). Since a common European memory is not shaped strictly within and by the borders of the EU but also in relation to what is seen as non-European, it is just as important to consider those memories deemed

² See also Rigney, “Ongoing: Changing Memory and the European Project” in the same volume, pp. 339-359.

'other' since they are just as constitutive. Artworks and individual memories can bring these into circulation and challenge institutional modes of remembrance to be more inclusive, and Ugrešić's *The Museum* is an example of this.

So not only do we relate to the memory within the borders of our own societies, but these are always also shaped with other frameworks of remembrance, increasingly so in the global and digital age. Multidirectional memory, developed by Michael Rothberg, gives insight in how cultural artefacts travel within and across the various borders of spaces, time, and social groups and how we might think about remembering those histories and events outside of the borders of our own national, social and cultural identity. Memory should not be viewed as a competitive "zero-sum struggle" for visibility and recognition (Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory* 9), but rather a dynamic process in which disparate and opposing memories exist alongside each other and are often linked (2,3). Moreover, expressions of difficult, traumatic and formerly repressed memories, especially from marginalized and minority groups, can serve as a memory framework from which other social groups can draw to articulate their own past in order to gain social recognition and justice (2, 3). According to a multidirectional understanding, memories as well as group identities emerge in and between various social and cultural boundaries, between top-down and bottom-up processes, and between ideological assertion as well as counter-memories (Assmann 21). In *The Museum*, the narrator relates her own post-Yugoslav memories and experiences in a transnational and multidirectional way by relating to other individuals from various countries and backgrounds, and also by drawing upon the already established (institutional) memories of the Holocaust in Germany and the Soviet regime.

People can also actively remember (traumatic) events in which they were not a direct participant. Rothberg refers to all relations to the past outside of immediate experience, in fact those "in which many of us live most of the time" as one of "implicated subject" (*The implicated subject* 40).³ Witnesses that are for example bystanders, beneficiaries, belonging to the next family generation⁴, but also readers of a historical novel or museum visitors are not merely passive viewers of "time passing by" but, for Hristova, the most important agent in cultural memory production (37). Memory is a performative process: it is only possible to actively recreate or perform the past in the present moment (Hristova 37). Cultural artefacts transmit memories in a performative manner: the subject has to actively engage with its representation (in this case a literary work) through for example identification, empathy, emotion and affect. Individual readers of literary works can adopt secondary memories and consequently become an implicated subject or witness. Remembering in these kinds of witness positions can actively reconfigure memory narratives on individual, national as well as transnational levels. Moreover, such an understanding of witnessing shows how memory is not only an active cognitive process but also embodied, affective and emotional (37, 45).

³ There have been numerous concepts surrounding the relationship between a past and people who have not directly experienced this past. For a discussion of these, see Hristova 31-34. For the purposes of this thesis, I will largely stick to the concept of implicated subject since this, while it has not been extensively developed, seems to offer the most broad understanding of various subject/witness positions.

⁴ See Hirsch for the concept of postmemory that elaborately explores this relation.

Cultural memory is not a strict faculty of the human mind, but the non-human and non-cognitive also have the agency and ability to evoke and shape memories and create modes of remembering (Hristova 45, 46). Objects, materiality and everyday experiences can create “an affective space” and establish a relation to the past, as well as reflection on the present (44). Studies of everyday objects in material culture studies confirm and emphasize that especially small, seemingly unimportant objects can represent and construct notions of selfhood, identity and belonging, and mediate human relations (for example Hurdley 7; Morgan and Pritchard 32, 46; Whiteley 35). As an institution that deals with the collecting and representing of objects, the museum can establish a material relation to the past (Huysen). Accordingly, representations of material and everyday memory in *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender* will be the focus of this thesis.

In *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender*, Ugrešić thematises and reflects on cultural memory by adopting the trope and strategies of museum and archiving, practices that are concerned with the preservation and organization of material artefacts. Now that a framework of cultural memory that the novel seems to support has been established, a short discussion on the concepts of the museum and the archive will follow in order to understand how the novel’s take on the museum can be positioned in relation to broader conceptions of museums and archives.

ii. poetics and politics of the museum and archive

The museum developed itself as a cultural institution designed to help foster the shape and identity of the nation-state by social regulation in the nineteenth century, as explained by Tony Bennett. According to Foucault, the museum as a heterotopia⁵ perfectly encompasses the spirit of nineteenth-century modernity as a rational and enlightened attempt to accumulate everything (26). However, while presented as natural and neutral, the museum and the universal master narratives it aims to represent have been revealed to be configured by specific socio-cultural contexts and politically and ideologically shaped principles and values (Bennett 1-6). Accordingly, the museum has been criticized as an “ideological state apparatus” (Althusser) and a space of social differentiation and exclusion (Bennett, Huysen). As we have entered the postmodern era, where time is accelerated and fragmentary rather than linear, museums and its relation to the public have changed (Huysen). No longer a “single institution with stable and well-drawn boundaries”, the museum has become a broad, nondescript phenomenon (Huysen 14) and there is no longer a consensus on what really belongs in museums (22). Huysen speaks of “musealization”: everyday life and culture and museum practices are inextricably linked, evident from for example museum villages, retro fashion and self-musealization through technology (14). Driven by the ethical imperative to remember, contemporary (memory) museums are underpinned by an optimistic hope that visitors will acquire “a better historical understanding” and active political engagement through immersive exhibition

⁵ Foucault describes heterotopia as a place in which ‘all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted’. Heterotopias are both a real, in the sense that they are located in a specific and physical place, and unreal, in that they require something “other” in order to be able to perceive the reality (24).

forms (Arnold de-Simine 13). Museums carry the potential to overcome problems of representations by providing “a terrain that can offer multiple narratives of meaning” in which identities are shaped by multiply layered interaction with others (Huysen 34). Still, we should be aware of the fact that, as museums are asked to balance political, ideological, emotional as well as commercial narratives, and are expected to offer a broad social and/or political consensus as an often state-funded institution, museums risk political instrumentalization (Arnold de-Simine 2, Huysen 34). The question of agency is thus always at play in the museum.

In *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender*, Ugrešić takes on the medium of the museum and its practices of collecting and curating and its contemporary function as a space to contest representation, while also reflecting on the dangers and problematics of (contemporary) institutional museums. The novel is a perfect example of how artworks can draw upon and blur the boundaries of different media (Erl and Rigney 3,4) to put forward new modes of remembering that can change dominant memory narratives to be more inclusive. In offering personal, individual memories grounded in everyday life, the novel suggests an alternative to traditional, state-funded models of remembering and contest ultimately homogenizing metanarratives. Writer Orhan Pamuk similarly relates the museum in his novel *The Museum of Innocence* and argues that museums should “reveal the humanity of individuals” rather than represent states, nations of companies (no pagination). He stresses that museums should look for different representations of the past, grounded in the everyday and individual in order to accurately represent humanity. Literature can contribute to this effort, because it can uniquely represent individual narratives and imaginatively explore alternative viewpoints. Moreover, literature is a mnemonic art (Lachmann), “a way of collecting, preserving, displaying and interpreting fragments of the past” (Vervae 295).

The Museum presents itself as a museum but also adopts the archive, as it represents a fragmentary, almost redundant repository of memories and references, in fact the novel oscillates between these two modes. For Aleida Assmann, in contrast to active cultural remembrance in the ‘canon’ (for example through public institutions such as the museum), the archive signifies a more passive form of cultural memory as a “storehouse” (Assmann 99). The archive is a “reference” memory that counters the reductive workings of active remembrance (Assmann 106). However, the archive is not merely a neutral repository of total human knowledge, but constituted by principles of organization and classification, which not only determine the content of the archive, but also determine the shape and structure of what is archived, and how the archive can relate to present and future (Derrida 17). Like the museum, the archive is a space of exclusion (Assmann 106), that is primarily influenced by specific socio-cultural circumstances and informed by ideological and power interests of particular institutions (Derrida 30).⁶ The question of agency, of *who* is archiving and *how* rather than *what* is archived, is thus central to (museum) archives.

⁶ In his ‘Archive Fever’, Jacques Derrida traces the origin of the word ‘archive’ back to the initial meaning of the Greek ‘arkheion’: the private space of the house of the superior magistrates, ‘archons’, where official documents stating the law were stored (9). The archive was thus in the hands of public figures of authority who were the only

Besides a specific enclosed, physical institutional space, the archive can also function as a metaphor, concept or imaginative site (Voss and Werner i, Assmann 102) and/or signify a private space of collection and conservation. Archives and especially non-official, individual micro-archives and popular (digital) versions of the archive can serve as important topoi from which to acquire agency and empowerment, especially for individuals and minority groups (Appadurai, Pogačar 63). Ugrešić uses a similar approach to memory as these minority archives. In taking up practices of assembling, storing, ordering and curating that are grounded in everyday life in order to facilitate their archives, personal and individual archival initiatives acquire their own agency, actively re-assembling history in their own right (Pogačar 60). These alternative archives decentralise dominant collective remembrance and practices of archiving and interpreting, and help form an ethical basis from which to (re)produce cultural identities (Appadurai). As the archive can never be fully extensive, literature, as a medium marked by reflexivity and imagination, can identify knots and gaps in the archive and problematize, (re)imagine and alter practices of archiving and remembering like the archive cannot (Assmann 106). It can ask questions of agency and voice those stories and experiences that are marginalized, thus actively contributing to and intervening in active cultural memory.

Discussions of the archive are cast in a specific light in the case of post-Yugoslavia. Following the break-up of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the cultural memory of Yugoslavia was replaced by the construction of nationalistic memory and identity. Official records and archives, Yugoslav popular culture and “the constitutive elements of everyday life” and its underlying ideology of state socialism were done away with – “buried under the rubble of the crumbled state” (Pogačar 59-60). The new ideological structures pushed an “unseeing of significant portions of Yugoslav everyday life”, yielding the experience of everyday and cultural life unworthy and problematic (60). This strongly affected people individually and intimately: with their former cultural life, their precise personal histories and memories were rendered problematic (60). In reaction to this, grassroots memorials and especially online spaces that stored recreated symbols and artefacts of everyday life in Yugoslavia proliferated to actively remember traces of a lost homeland by the proliferation of (60-63).⁷

Now that a suitable theoretical framework of cultural memory as a dynamic, transnational and multidirectional process and the functions of the museum and archive in this has been established, the trope of the museum in its various manifestations in *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender* will be analysed in order to understand how the novel embodies cultural remembrance. The next chapter will explore material remembrance as a way to articulate the narrator’s own exile and post-Yugoslav remembrance as well as relating to others’ through the tropes of collections, artworks, photography and the flea-market.

ones with the power to access and interpret it (Derrida 9-10). Just like the museum, the primary function of the archive has always been linked to institutions of power such as the state, law, church, using it in order to legitimize their positions, present a certain view of history and organise the future (Assmann 102).

⁷ See, for example, “Yugoslavia - Virtual Museum” <http://yugoslavian.blogspot.com/>.

structure, genre, fragmentation

The trope of the museum and collecting in *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender* works at various levels. Most evidently, the novel presents itself as a museum on a formal level in its title and structure. The text is constructed not as a linear narrative following an unfolding plot, but a collection of fragments of different kinds of media, modes, and genre: it contains personal memories and stories as well as essay-like parts on art, history, collecting, exile life and the city of Berlin, quotations by and biographies of writers, artists, theorists and characters, diary excerpts, enumerations, a recipe and a photograph, linked up by the technique of motifs. These are divided into seven parts, each containing subdivisions, in a way that echoes archiving or cataloguing. The odd-numbered sections, titled with German phrases (*Ich bin müde* (I am tired); *Guten Tag* (Good day); *Was ist Kunst?* (What is art?); *Wo bin ich?* (Where am I?)) contain 125 short, essay-like numbered sections. Part two and six are lengthier and are prompted by photographs: her mother's photo albums trigger the story of the narrator's mother in 'Family Museum' and a (blank) group photograph triggers memories and characterizations of seven friends before the war. The middle section of the novel, part four, consists of six stories containing the motif of an angel, entitled 'Archive: six stories with the discreet motif of a departing angel'. The structure of the novel and the use of different kinds of media, modes and genres (photography, biography, objects, novel, essay, diary excerpts, enumeration, quotations from writers, artists and theorists) give the text a fragmentary nature. As will become clear from the analysis, the fragmentary nature of the novel can also be seen as a postmodern rejection of grand, totalizing narratives and the notion of ultimate truth. Fragmentation resists any notion of memories and histories in homogeneous narratives and identity as a fixed concept and it is used in the novel to create a new or alternative meaning (Popescu 344).

collecting material memories of the everyday

The trope of the museum and archiving is introduced from the beginning in the much quoted opening of *The Museum*, where the narrator describes an unusual collection of objects on display in the Berlin zoo found in the stomach of the deceased Roland the walrus, including keys, wooden ice-lolly sticks, "a box of matches" and "a green plastic car" (xi). This passage establishes the trope of 'trash' and demonstrates the workings of unimportant everyday objects in memory production from the outset. 'Trash' relates actual waste but also found materials/objects and the remains of everyday life (Whiteley 8), such as those in the walrus' stomach. As a trope in material culture studies, it foregrounds the agency of everyday objects to configure relations the past and identity (Whiteley 31). The importance of materiality in memory is stressed: objects can act as agents of memory, and can embody and produce affect and emotion (Hristova, Whiteley, Hurdley). In Ugrešić's novel, a similar understanding of objects can be discerned. The importance of physical objects of everyday life, often those seemingly trashy ones, is explicitly emphasized throughout the novel: "Things last longer than people. Albums outlive their owners.

A prolonged life hides in an old coat, in a senseless object which meant something to someone and which will again mean something to someone else. That is how souls migrate” (Ugrešić 230). Everyday objects, sometimes hidden in unexpected places, thus have the ability to involuntarily conjure up memories, emotions and meaning in perceivers and ‘keep alive’ memories in ways that people cannot. They are not simply static holders of particular memories, but can gain new meaning over time and are entangled with various memories as well as other objects and perceivers (Hristova 45). In order for the viewer to understand and to be able to establish connections between objects, they need to actively engage with them - materiality, viewer and meaning are thus inextricably linked.

Furthermore, this inclusion of an enumeration of random things demonstrates that establishing history and memory is always a matter of attempting to make sense of fragmented, random matter, to find meaning in the whole of artefacts and relationships (Vervaeke). The passage and the novel reflects that what constitutes and imbues any collection with meaning is the intimate relationship to its owner, and the relationship to the other artefacts within the collection. Moreover, immediately from the outset the reader is invited to participate in the process of meaning-making and the very constitution of the museum that is this novel. They are asked to read the text in a similar way as the objects in Roland the walrus’ stomach are read: “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” (xi). The reader will not be presented with a linear narrative and an easy plot but is expected to take an active attitude and establish the subtle connections between the objects in the various collections of the characters, as well as the “chapters and fragments” (xi) of the novel. In order to be able to do this, the reader has to actively engage with the seemingly random objects and other artefacts represented and allow themselves to be touched by them.

The narrator of *The Museum* holds on to an everyday representation and remembrance of life by continuously relating to other collections of everyday objects or trash. She constitutes her own biography through her own collections (such as recipe, her primer, a collection of things in her suitcase, quotations from exile artists), but also other’s biographical objects and collections (such as discarded photo albums, little personal bits and pieces, diaries). These little collections can be seen as personal spaces of collection and conservation that stretch the conceptions of genre of museum and archive. Indeed, besides a specific enclosed, physical institutional space, the archive can signify anything: a library, family photo album, warehouse, attic, diary, zoo, treasure chest, shoe box, a “verbal album” - the examples are endless (Hawkes, Voss and Werner). The boundaries between different media and genres of collecting are blurred in the novel. In Popescu’s words: “forms of memory preservation flow and ebb into each other, borrowing strategies and recreating themselves anew as genres” (341). While materiality is stressed, Ugrešić continuously juxtaposes representations of certain phrases, scenes, gestures, sounds and smells to material objects throughout the novel.

An example of this is Mihajlo P.'s recounting of impressions of his former life in Yugoslavia in a page-long enumeration, ranging from objects ("the check shirt I received as aid from Mexico") to spatialized experiences ("sleeping in a tent in the Karst mountains of Hercegovina and travelling slowly from Mostar, down the Neretva valley, to Dubrovnik") to songs ("a tramp on lake Matko singing to a squeaking oriental instrument: 'What we'll have for our teas...") (228-229). He calls these "cold, melancholy, objective images (or more precisely: verbal photographs) (...) which it will never again be possible to connect into a whole" (229). This stretches the conception of the museum, as difficult to grasp, non-material artefacts are included and placed on the same level as physical objects as legitimate artefacts. The rigid distinctions between different kinds of media and modes of remembering become blurred. Remembrance here might offer a sense of coherence as a process, a fluid form, the outcome of the different juxtapositions of variously mediated memory fragments and not something static. This can be seen a kind of embodiment of exile experience in general: there is a loss of coherence as the various fragments can never *again* be shaped into a whole, precisely because the combining factor, his home country, has disintegrated and will not exist in the same way anymore, both geographically and ideologically.

Moreover, by including memories that are not embodied in materiality, Ugrešić reflects on the fact that archives are always marked by loss: not all relics can be put into an archive due to their form (Voss and Werner i, Assmann 98), and here, if they could have been, they are not, as the memory of everyday life in former Yugoslavia has been forbidden by the consecutive nationalistic regimes (Pogačar 58-63). The passage is followed by a remark by character Zoran that "we are all museum exhibits..." (229): as Mihajlo has lost physical proof of his earlier life, he only has his fragmented mental and verbal snapshots that he carries with him with no place to put them. The inclusion of Mihajlo P.'s verbal memories allows him and his personal memories and identity to occupy a particular space where they are preserved and legitimized. Ugrešić's narrator saves the experiences from those who lived in former Yugoslavia from oblivion throughout the novel. She does this in a manner that resembles that of a collection of artists who create their art out of the commonplace ("archaeologists of the everyday" (Ugrešić 33). This, as well as how the narrator relates her own memories through these artworks in a multidirectional way, will be discussed in the following part.

archaeologies of the everyday

The trope of "trash", has become, according to Gillian Whiteley, "the trope of the turn of the twenty-first century" and has proliferated in artistic practices (8). Artworks employing the trope of 'trash' reflect on the agency and various functions of objects (relics, repositories, signs, texts) in general and question the social and cultural contexts in which objects acquire their meaning (Whiteley 31). A striking example of art made from everyday objects is the work of Ilya Kabakov, a Russian artist who the narrator designates "the king of rubbish" (Ugrešić 33). With the transmedia installation *The Man Who Never Threw Anything Away*, Kabakov created a catalogue of Soviet everyday life, an "(auto)biography of triviality" (36).

In this way, he highlights the importance of everyday experience to the construction of people's memories and identities and relations to social contexts (Whiteley 31-34). He reminds us that we should document rather than discard the fragile and transitory nature of everyday life and its remnants, especially during times of changing political regimes. He reveals how everyday culture and people's personal lives are strongly imbued with politics, ideology, and popular culture (Pogačar). By continuously referencing artists of the everyday (such as Richard Wentworth, Christian Boltanski, Ivan Dorogavtsev) and employing similar techniques, Ugrešić establishes herself within a framework of artists working with the fabric of everyday life and 'trash' in order to relate to life, others, society and politics.

Not only does the narrator align herself with this artistic tradition of 'trash' artists', she also relates to them on a level of memory. Her encounter with a later performance by Kabakov provides an example of how someone else's experiences can provide a powerful, emotional way of relating to or voicing our own. Kabakov's performance simulates the typical Soviet communal kitchen. While the narrator cannot explicitly identify with it because these actual kitchens were never a part of her everyday reality, she undergoes an embodied and affective experience of the artwork, as she is "deeply moved" and physically affected by it, feeling an "exclusive right" to her emotions. She relates: "Kabakov's performance pulled a thread of undefined sadness in me, that of a shared 'East European trauma'" (38). Although the dissolution of Yugoslavia differed from the fall of the Soviet regime, the narrator finds in the artwork a powerful expression of the loss of her everyday life and culture with the dissolution of her homeland and a way to remember her lost personal history. This can be considered multidirectional: both the memories of Soviet everyday life and Yugoslav everyday life and their respective losses can exist alongside each other in their specific historical contexts, but also intertwine with one another as a shared transnational memory. Kabakov's performance of the Soviet past provides a framework for the narrator to engage with and articulate her own past (Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory* 2,3).

In their collections of everyday life, the narrator, characters and artists in the novel act as actors in the archive, or "archaeologists of the flea-market" (Beronja 241), foregrounding and legitimizing those personal and collective memories that are excluded. Besides creating her own biography through her collection of various fragments, she continuously refers to others to a network of memory that surrounds post-Yugoslav exile experience, exemplified above. In what follows, I will continue to explore the way that Ugrešić constitutes her own museum and simultaneously creates a space for a community of exile in two further incarnations of the museum in the novel: photography and the flea-market.

photographs and the poetics of the album

Photographs and photo albums are one of the objects essential to memory in *The Museum*, in various artworks and –projects, in the flea-markets, and in the shape of two specific important photographs. Before moving on to a discussion of these, the conception of photography and its relation to memory in the novel will be briefly outlined. The chapter titled "The poetics of the album" opens with a

quote from Susan Sontag's *On Photography* that expresses the main understanding of photographs in the novel: "All photographs are *mementos mori*. To take a photograph is to participate in another person's (or thing's) mortality, vulnerability, mutability. Precisely by slicing out this moment and freezing it, all photographs testify to time's relentless melt" (Ugrešić 13). Photography is a mnemonic art, photographs are objects that document the everyday and can involuntarily evoke particular memories and perform relations to others. The importance of photographs as physical, material proof of the past is stressed as a Bosnian refugee is quoted multiple times: "Refugees are divided into two categories: those who have photographs and those who have none" (5). Photographs, especially family and personal ones, give one the right to remember and can serve to legitimize experiences and come to terms with the past, especially in the case of difficult and violent histories.⁸

One of the first and most elaborate discussions of photography in which this becomes clear is the collection of photographs by the narrator's mother in the second part of the novel, "Family Museum". She keeps these in a pigskin bag that serves as "a storehouse for memories" (13), that contains her photographs as well as some material mementos: her husband's letters, "a gold coin, a silver cigarette case, a pure silk scarf" and a lock of the narrator's hair, each with their own description, history and associations (14-5). The collection is an unorganized heap, discarded into the back of the wardrobe, that eventually explodes and overflows the space of the closet where they are stored, and the narrator and her mother keep stuffing the photographs in shoe boxes, drawers and books, various shapes of the archive. While her mother deems the photographs "rubbish" (15), they appear to have an almost sacred value for the narrator (Vervaeet 299) as a considerable amount of narrative time is spent on this "treasure-trove of memories" (Ugrešić 14). As the mother eventually undertakes to organize her photographs into albums into an "unwritten history of everyday life" (22) it becomes clear that albums serve as a way to form life stories, and photography and autobiography are even inseparable genres (27).⁹ The emphasis here is not on eventual result of the collection, but on the process of memory, which is shown to be fragmented and ongoing (22). Her mother's struggle over a long period of time to assemble, re-assemble and maintain the photographs in the albums is dictated not by objective principles of organisation but by her confused "inner sense of things" (17). Also, even when they have settled into a final arrangement, "the currents of new life" keep permeating the albums: postcards, telephone numbers, a face cream label disturb the constructed personal history (25). Life and memory is inextricably bound up with the senseless objects of everyday life, which keeps the album alive and authentic as past and present keep merging into each other. Memory in the shape of the mother's pigskin bag signifies a familial and feminine form of remembrance,

⁸ The narrator also relates the story of the war criminal Ratko Mladic who spotted an acquaintance's house and called him to tell him to get his family photograph albums before fleeing. The general, who "knew precisely how to annihilate memory", granted his acquaintance "the right to remembrance" in the shape of bare life and some family photographs (Ugrešić 5).

⁹ A photograph is a reduction of the endless and unmanageable world to a little rectangle. A photograph is our measure of the world. A photograph is also a memory. Remembering means reducing the world to little rectangles. Arranging the little rectangles in an album is autobiography." (27)

that by taking up the strategies of collection preservation on a personal level, sets itself off against the grand narratives in institutional modes of remembering in national and patriarchal history (Popescu 345).

The history of her mother is deeply connected to the narrator's own life and identity through these albums and provides a striking example of how memory is constituted through engagement with others' personal memories. For her, they signify the experience of post-war childhood (Ugrešić 14). Moreover, even when the mother is not actually in her memories, she is present: "I am hunting for pictures of myself in the darkness of oblivion, but all our pictures are shared, even if she is not in the picture for a moment, she is present" (78). This relation represents Marianne Hirsch's model of familial postmemory. Postmemory according to Hirsch is how later generations relate to and ultimately adopt the traumatic pasts of the previous generation in our own life story; the familial version takes place within the family, while affiliative refers to broader historical and social contexts and non-genealogical transmission (114). In the context of the family, memories are transmitted through the language of the familial space; especially traumatic past and loss of home and belonging, "bleed" from one generation to the next" in this way (112). The medium of photography is a highly embodied form of transmission and mediation: photographs as memory artefacts can inscribe the past, and prompts bodily acts of engagement with the material past (Hirsch 117). The embodied transmission of postmemory returns throughout the novel when the narrator gets her own pigskin photo albums and similarly struggles to arrange the photographs and she reminds us that she inherits her mother's mannerisms, expressions and gestures. Finally, by representing the album of the mother and her process of organisation, memory is also transmitted to the reader. They are drawn into this process of remembering and as such become situated as an implicated subject or subject of affiliative postmemory.

The Museum of Unconditional Surrender not only emphasizes the potential of photographs for transmission of memories in the familial sphere but also reflects that photographs can be re-appropriated within a different context. Part of the narrators collection of "bits and pieces" that she has brought with her as an exile are two photographs: the photograph of three anonymous bathers, and the group photograph of the narrator's friends. As individual material relics of the past, photographs can be a way of relating to a stranger's history.¹⁰ In what follows, I will explore this function in relation to the two photographs as examples of the ability of apparent trash to hold high meaningful and emotional value in the personal sphere.

The first photograph is an old, yellowed photograph from the beginning of the twentieth century, depicting three unknown women in bathing suits and cloths in the river Pakra, Croatia (near the town where the narrator grew up (169)). It stands out to the reader because it is printed on one of the first pages

¹⁰ While photographs are seen as an important testimony, the text at the same time acknowledges that they are never purely objective and there is the ever present possibility of misinterpretation (as exemplified by the narrator's story of her distant cousin who declared a photograph of the narrator as one of herself (24)) or even altered, "touched up" in service of a specific ideology or construction of the past (for instance, a woman has smudged up a photograph of her husband in order to make his partisan uniform look like a regular suit after the fall of Yugoslavia (23)).

of the novel, as well as on the cover of the English paperback edition, and is referenced multiple times in the text. The photograph has lost its original value as a family relic and now serves the narrator in its 'afterlife' as a ritualistic object "whose real meaning I don't know" (169). As she interacts with it by looking at it, carrying it around, describing it, it prompts her own thoughts and memories while she also establishes a connection with these unknown women (who might have died or lost their homes, since the time of the picture was framed by two wars) and preserves them as part of her own biography. This "private ritual remembrance" signifies another small, feminine space of remembering, rooted in the everyday, rather than grand monuments as in national and patriarchal history (Popescu 345).

This photo is juxtaposed throughout the novel with the next: an overexposed, blank reject photograph that was taken at the last dinner the narrator and her female friends had together before the outbreak of the war, that should have been a group snapshot:

"I finger a worthless souvenir, the only photograph of all of us together. And there, from the left (was it the left?) should have been dark-eyed Nusa, then Doti with her broad face and piercing look, then Ivana with a smile that spread over her face like warm water, then Alma, the colour of copper, beside her the reliable and serious Dinka and I (...) It is also perfectly possible (...) that I am projecting on to the white expanse faces which do not exist and recording something which never occurred. For all I have in my hand is a blank, reject photograph...." (173)

The photograph signifies both "absolute blankness" and "absolute potentiality", a reflection of memory itself as the widest possible scope imagination while also recognizing its possible failures, distortions and false connections (Popescu 345). The memory recalled here is prompted by an absence, a literal blank canvas. As a photograph in itself, the reject photograph is completely worthless, a piece of rubbish that failed to fulfil its function of documentation. It would never be used as a museum piece or official historical document, however, as the shape of the women was supposed to be imprinted on this very picture, it is the last proof the narrator has of the memorable dinner and however "worthless" it might be and however unstable or inaccurate her recollection, she holds on to it.

Through the literal touch of the narrator as owner of the collection and her interpretation of the photographs within her collection, they are together imbued with (new) meaning. Throughout the novel, both photos are placed alongside each other. Concluding the part on the group photograph, the narrator reflects on the two together as she tries to recall the shapes of her friends. As she actively draws "them on to the surface of the picture" with her finger, all she can remember is fragments, blurs, traces of gestures and outlines of features. It appears that the two different pictures are not so distinct as they might seem, since our narrator perhaps knows just as little about her friends than she does about the three bathing women clearly depicted in their photograph. Popescu argues that the blank photograph in its function as both a blank and an inscribed space signifies the erasure and re-inscription of history, identity and ideology after communism (347-349). I would add that in the context of a European memory, the insistence on personal memory grounded and articulating it in a work of cultural memory, resists the lack

of representation of Yugoslav history in dominant narratives. In any case, photography here signifies the intricate connection and tension between the private and public sphere of remembrance and brings ethical involvement into the question. This brings us to the discussion of another incarnation of the museum in *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender* that oscillates between private and public, namely, the flea-market.

the flea-markets

The Berlin flea-markets, “that rubbish heap of time”, are another incarnation of the museum: “The Berlin flea-markets are *open museums of everyday life, past and present*” (Ugrešić 229, my emphasis). Here, one can find discarded photo albums, old maps, plates, old radios, cassettes and gramophone records, steam-irons, old fur, kinder-eggs; flea-markets are collages, bricolages, of objects that are no longer of use and which have lost their original context, meaning and value. Flea-markets deal with a different class of materiality than those material artefacts that are highly selected and carefully presented in the institutional museum, namely those leftovers gone out of their original use in consumer society, often rooted in everyday life – indeed, trash. They represent the fragmentary nature and chaos of the everyday. The flea-markets are an in-between space, much like an archive, which is according to Assmann “a space that is located on the border between forgetting and remembering (...) It stores materials in the intermediary state of ‘no longer’ and ‘not yet’” (103). We can understand that ultimately, what is deemed valuable and worthless is relative, as it is determined by social factors (Vervaeke 299).

Artefacts can, according to their determined value, travel between the realms of canon and archive and can be done away with as rubbish altogether, but rubbish can also (re-)enter the archive as artefacts are newly discovered and/or deemed relevant and valuable (Assmann 102-3). As flea-markets are accessible to anyone, and objects can be freely selected and used by whomever, they offer a place from which to take agency over determining what is useful and valuable. The past can be purchased, re-appropriated and as they are taken from their original context and referent, assembled anew and given a new identity (Popescu 342-3). Objects one can find at the Berlin flea market are allowed to have a second life, removed from the context of personal and family history. Indeed, they enter “a new cultural circuit that relies on different values than the ones for which they were intended” (Popescu 343). A very striking example of appropriation from objects found in the flea-market is that of Jane, who “bought some old photographs at the flea-market, had them tidily framed, hung them on the wall and now explains animatedly... “These are my great-grandmother and great-grandfather, this is my grandfather, this is my grandmother, those are my parents, and these are my aunts...” (231). She has taken these photographs to literally assemble a past from discarded objects and creating a new construction of her life story.

The flea-markets are a treasure trove for the ‘trash’ artists in the novel. Richard Wentworth¹¹ creates art from objects found in flea-markets, one of them plates. The plates, with so many different

¹¹ Based on the actual English artist Richard Wentworth, with any resemblance between the character and the artist “both intended and accidental”, as explained in a footnote (159).

characteristics and features that they “are like living beings” (162), exhume their own biography in their shapes, smells and decorations: “They are so full of conversation, so full of different kinds of cooking. I can hear it” (162). As he washes them, he engages with these abandoned objects in a “semi-religious ritual” and feels himself become intimate with these inanimate objects (163). He feels like he is saving them from ruin, from the garbage heap and out of oblivion and connecting them into a family: for him, “Remembering is actually an act of love” (164). The flea-markets thus bring cultural memory into the realm of everyday life as well as art. As Vervaeke argues, when we look at trash as something out of the mechanism of control of national/social institutions such as historiography, museums, elite arts and private archives, “then elevating rubbish to the level of art becomes a way of creating a counter-memory” (302). Artworks created out of trash remind us that narratives and memories are ultimately constructions, and offer resistance to totalizing and homogenous narratives as disregarded and marginalized artefacts and memories are foregrounded. In this way, private memory becomes public.

The Berlin flea-markets are not only a place for an alternative material memory, but also occupy an important social function in the novel, a space for community building. Besides focusing on particular material and everyday memories in various genres that constitute modes of remembering between various exiles in the novel, the text explicitly enacts a cultural remembrance within sites of remembering that represent objects of everyday life. This will be explored below, further discussing the flea-market and actual museums in the text.

the flea-markets as multidirectional sites of remembering

I would like to suggest that in the novel, the narrator is continuously creating a community of experience, based around the experience of exile. Through encounters, conversations, mannerisms and similar memories or experiences, she creates links between herself and others based on everyday materiality and experience. Horvat and Mandelc argue that many people from former Yugoslavia live a sort of “remembered cosmopolitanism”, which originates from and is enacted in everyday practice (28). This renders the shared memory of historical experience of going through several empires (the Venetian, Ottoman, Habsburg) as well as “living in a supra-state formation in which alternative, cosmopolitan and/or hybrid collective identities were favoured to the national ones” (27). Identities and alignment with others surround shared experiences of everyday life rather than national or ethnic identities. This is almost literally exemplified in *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender*. Working from the experience of everyday life in former Yugoslavia, but also from the general experience of exile, the narrator connects with people and relates her own experience through theirs. These people are close friends, family and strangers from former Yugoslavia but also for example beggars, Russian ‘byt’ artists, gypsies, Indian girls, exile writers from Russia and Hungary in the 1920s, crossing classifications of ethnicity, class, and era.¹² Finally, the stories of and encounters with various people are not coherently narrated. It is up to the reader to engage with them and draw the connections, subtly inserted on textual levels through recurring motifs. In doing so, she asks the reader to empathise with both her and others’ experiences, and the reader becomes an implicated subject in the multidirectional network of memory.

Refugees and exiles from former Yugoslavia bring many objects to the Berlin flea-markets. Discarded elsewhere, here they become very valuable: they prompt a revisiting of the past, not of specific personal lives but a recollection and perhaps recreation of the homeland and everyday life and culture that is no more (343). The flea-market functions as a space for community building for Yugoslavian refugees and exiles. They go here to experience a bit of their lost past, but also and perhaps more importantly, meet each other: “They enquire after souls... (...) Along the way they buy some small thing which will help their little refugee room look like home. Here, in Gustav-Meyer Allee, on Saturdays and Sundays, the country that is no more, Bosnia, draws its map once again in the air, with its towns, villages, rivers and mountains” (Ugrešić 230). The narrator, not a Bosnian but a Croatian, also roams these markets. As she approaches a Gypsy woman who is selling clothes, the woman asks her if she is ‘one of us’, and when the narrator replies affirmatively, a group of other Yugoslavs forms. They enquire after each other, where they are

¹² While the people related to in this novel are diverse, this text and Ugrešić’s work in general has been criticized for being still largely limited to a European world-view that does not fully recognize (Karpinski 54-55). Here and elsewhere, the danger of imagining a “borderless world” is that this can lead to similarly excluding views on memory and identity than the very institutional and state-funded modes of remembering that the novel seems to critique and oppose. Instead, in thinking about multidirectional, transnational communities of remembrance, we should be aware of historical, social and cultural specificities that memories and identities are informed by, and see transnational processes “as products of particular histories, times, and places” (55).

from and a feeling of warmth and recognition ensues (232). She also tells the story of Kasmir's mother, who crochets little mats and sells these at the markets, but more importantly goes there in order to "meet our folk" (225). Whenever she meets anyone from Yugoslavia takes them home, where they engage in a ritual of drinking coffee (226). The Berlin flea-markets are where the conception of "remembered cosmopolitanism" is enacted: people from different kinds of countries engage in the remembrance of their common Yugoslav past, despite their ethnic, national or class differences. While the flea-market thus acts as a kind of alternative museum constituted of objects that have lost their original value, as a place for articulating a renewed history through these objects, it is also a literal space where histories and memories that are usually obliterated can find their place and communities of marginal groups are (re)shaped.

public museums as multidirectional sites of remembering

Another place where multidirectional, transnational, "cosmopolitan remembrance" is enacted is through actual public museums. More than offering alternative modes of memory, some museums in the novel provide literal spaces for Yugoslav exiles and refugees to relate to and articulate their past in a multidirectional way, like the flea-market. Placed alongside the Toy Bear, Hairstyle and Sugar Museums (examples of Huyssen's "musealization" (14) that demonstrate that there are indeed museums for everything, and emphasize the everyday and seemingly trivial as a source for collective memory) is the Museum of Unconditional Surrender.¹³ Although it is out of use and many of the houses are abandoned, people still live there. The museum displays maps, photographs, official documents, but, more importantly, the museum has a basement café with some tables and chairs, a television running ads in Russian, and a small table with souvenirs from Russia: "matryoshkas, wooden spoons, a white goat-hair shawl" (224). The café is visited every day by the narrator's "countrymen", Yugoslav refugees living in the surrounding buildings who stay for hours, drinking coffee "exactly like 'our', 'Turkish' coffee", playing chess and cards (224). Here, they find a piece that reminds them of home and among the remains of Soviet everyday where they can enact everyday rituals to remember their lost homeland. This passage recalls Kabakov's example: while the Soviet past is not the same, the refugees can relate to their past in a multidirectional manner through "a shared Eastern European trauma", that of a lost past and lost everyday life because of a change of political regimes.

On a visit to the Deutsches Historisches Museum, the narrator and two of her friends, Zoran and Mira, both from former Yugoslavia, find a corner dedicated to everyday objects: "There, under the glass, are Babysan baby food; brightly coloured plastic shoppings bags; a Narva light bulb; (...) a faithful model of a typical three-bedroomed flat in a typical DDR apartment-block (with a miniature poster of Lady and the Tramp!)" (233). These remind them of life in the former Yugoslav Republic - Mira fed her baby on Babysan, Zoran had the same poster at home. However, unlike the Germans, they reflect that they will never have a museum like this because their country has disappeared. Zoran reflects, "we're all walking

¹³ This is the place where the German capitulation was signed in the final year of the Second World War, in Karlshorst, in the same areas as the former Soviet barracks and living quarters for Soviet soldiers.

museum pieces” who carry their past with them, a past that does not exist anymore and whose traces have been wiped out. However, they refuse to let this happen and here, in the museum, take up space to remember their lost past through everyday objects, like that of East Germany: “Gavrilovic meat pâté”, “Yugoslav washing powder, Plavi Radion”, “Studio Uno with Mike Bongiorno and the Kessler sisters!” (233). “I remember ...”, they say, a statement that in itself subversive because it signifies an active acknowledgement and remembrance in the present of the existence of the memory of a former life, that is ultimately repressed by the nationalist regimes in present-day countries in former Yugoslavia.

In both museums, a specific past is thus related by relating to the state-funded, institutional remembrance practices of the official history museum through the emphasis on everyday life objects and rituals. Moreover, the museum is appropriated as a public social space for something it was not intended for: the performative remembrance of rituals of lost everyday life in Yugoslavia. Thereby the institution of the museum as state-funded and national is subverted. At the same time, by practicing these rituals, the refugees and exiles establish links with each other, create a sense of unity, coherence, community and thus a memory community. Like at the flea-market, the map of the lost country is once again drawn in the air, this time by engaging with the past in a multidirectional way and through the convergence of Russian, German and Yugoslav history.

It is only here (in Berlin in Europe), where these pasts can converge and where they can freely do this, however there is still a tension at hand since their past is still largely ignored or overlooked in dominant memory narratives. The refugees from former Yugoslavia only seem to find a place in in-between spaces at the margins of society (the flea-markets, particular housing areas, niche museums) rather than places situated in regular Berlin life. While they acquire a certain agency, there is still a certain frustration or hopelessness in the tone of the novel. “We are all just walking museum exhibits,” emphasizes the exiles’ past life, designating them leftovers from the past, like flea-market objects or trash. Such a relation to the past risks nostalgia, an inability to move forward and adapt to the present. Nevertheless, the novel is not entirely negative in this part, because it has shown the potential of discarded objects previously. Moreover, it engages with the state-funded frame of museum in a subversive way, showing that a productive engagement with traditional narratives is possible. The novel does not offer an easy solution to reconciling memories but inspires to imagine differently.

With *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender*, Dubravka Ugrešić has constituted her own museum of exile and post-Yugoslav experience, using the trope of the museum in a variety of ways. By means of collecting and juxtaposing various genres, media and different fragments, from her personal collections, to artworks made from everyday trash, to sounds, photographs, stories of and encounters with strangers, she, like the artists or “archaeologists of the everyday” she draws upon in the novel, saves those stories, artefacts and memories that would otherwise be lost or discarded and preserves them in *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender*. She does this for herself, but at the same time establishes a multidirectional map of memory among herself and people from the different countries emerging after the break-up of Yugoslavia, but also other exiles and refugees in Berlin, as she also draws upon the history of the city and the Second World War and former Soviet Russia. By taking up practices of assembling, storing, curating and ordering, the narrator acquires her individual agency and re-assembles history in her own right.

The novel presents itself as a museum and expresses the trope of the museum through various figures, such as collections and everyday objects, photographs, flea-markets, stretching the traditional boundaries of the museum in terms of genre and form but also in terms of agency. In constituting her own, personal archive, the narrator articulates those memories and relics that are important to her, offering an archive much like Appadurai’s migrant archives: personal archives grounded in the everyday that resist and interact with dominant, exclusive archives and identity narratives, and help to establish a common identity or community. Resisting any singular or coherent narrative or form and constantly playing out the relation between individual and collective memory, the novel continuously reminds us of the complex and processual workings of cultural memory. From the fragments, disruptions and conflicts in the novel arise a constant opening up and constructing of new meaning. Different ways of remembering on personal, institutional and collective levels can and do exist alongside each other and influence each other.

Moreover, materiality, trash, and everyday objects and experiences are central modes of remembering in reconstructing the past from the ‘leftovers’ of history and help to establish personal and individual counter-memories grounded in everyday life to institutional, top-down and homogenizing narratives. Photographs and albums as an example of individual objects are shown to be able to evoke memories and establish strong familial connections by means of memory, strongly in line with Hirsch’s conception of photography and postmemory. Photographs can not only mediate between events or generations but can also serve to provide strong connections between strangers, and even function as a means to artificially recreate one’s past as they can, like all cultural artefacts, be taken from their original context in order to serve the present. The flea-market is the ultimate incarnation of ‘trash’ employed to create new memories, but the importance of everyday materialities for (re)constructing memories and histories is also expressed in the numerous artists who create art from discarded objects and even the spelling errors in the diary of the narrator’s mother. An important role is reserved for the reader, who is

asked to actively participate in the narrative in order to pierce the fragmented novel together along various modes of remembering and, with/like the narrator, attempt to make sense of the past through ordering, classifying and (re)constructing the various artefacts and memories.

Besides articulating her own history, the narrator thus also articulates the stories of other's that might otherwise be lost and those exile, post-Yugoslav experiences and memories of Yugoslav everyday life, of which she creates a multidirectional map of exile experience. Not only does this articulation respond to the need for a public commemoration of the Yugoslav past as there is no place to remember it in the following states and does it offer a counter-memory to the nationalistic and reductive narratives who employ the past in order to foster their own ideologies, as has been shown by previous discussions of the novel (Popescu, Vervaeke), but it also can and does relate to the establishment of a common European memory and dealing with difficult pasts on a European level. The novel subverts traditional and homogenizing conceptions of memory, showing how memories interact on various geographical scales and in a constant process of mutual (re)constitution with each other. The novel offers a transnational and multidirectional conception of memory as an example of "remembered cosmopolitanism" where different and even conflicting memories can exist alongside each other and mutually constitute each other, bringing into play a more inclusive understanding of memory. This is acted out in the novel most explicitly through the actual spaces of flea-markets and public museums. In these marginal social spaces, they relate to the past by relating to state-funded, institutional remembrance practices of the official history museum through the emphasis on everyday life objects and rituals, while also establishing a coherent community of exile remembrance. Finally, as the memories and experiences are transmitted to the reader through everyday objects and personal life stories, readers become 'implicated subjects' (Rothberg) or part of an affiliative postmemory generation (Hirsch), drawing them into the multidirectional map of memory that the novel establishes.

Ugrešić, as a Yugoslav exile and transnational intellectual figure, brings these into the European cultural sphere with her novel. As such, she resists the omission as well as marginalization of the Balkan experience in common European memory discourse and can add to a more complex and accurate view of the Balkans. But she also provides a solution as she sets an example of "remembered cosmopolitanism". One homogenous, coherent common narrative and modes of remembering is from this view not a precondition for a common European memory or even something we should strive to achieve and force, but the novel shows that different conflicting memories, of the same event but also different histories of different groups, can exist alongside each other, influence each other, and even draw upon each other without reducing, simplifying, diminishing or having to leave out certain memories. Perhaps this is how we should undertake the establishment of a common European memory, rather than the singular, exclusive narratives that have been provided thus far. In order to understand Ugrešić's role as a writer within the European literary field fully, a more extensive and comparative approach should be taken than has been done here, also taking into consideration her other novels and essay collections outside of *The*

Museum. Nevertheless, this thesis demonstrates and stresses the prominent role that literary works as cultural artefacts can have as mediators between events as well as people and act as an agent of cultural memory, offering new and alternative modes of remembering in themselves (Rothberg 42-43, Erll and Rigney 1-8, Rigney, *The Dynamics*, Hristova 44-46). Literature can bring voices that are usually dismissed or overlooked into the dominant narrative and help understand positions of the other. As readers are strongly involved in the text, they eventually gain a more inclusive understanding of European history, memory and identity. They are made aware of the different power dynamics at play in the constitution of cultural memory, as well as gain an understanding of personal experiences.

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