



THE IRONIC ETERNITY OF OBJECTS IN DUBRAVKA
UGREŠIĆ'S *THE MUSEUM OF UNCONDITIONAL
SURRENDER*

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Abstract

Dubravka Ugrešić's *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender* is a melancholy text of nostalgia-inflected memory that communicates experience and narrative through material objects (socialist era paraphernalia, for example). Such projects can be perceived as trivial in their encounter with history because they commodify knowledge of the past without being critical of the foundations of their memory. This article traces how these anxieties and questions about value – monetary, historic, aesthetic – are embedded within Ugrešić's novel through the literary idiom of *flânerie*. Walking the streets of Berlin is less about acts of remembrance than the provenance of the narrator's own labour. By examining these depictions of the writer's industry, this essay highlights the processes by which aesthetic and mnemonic properties are discovered (or recovered) in order to give value to socialist ruins, memorabilia and commonplace objects.

Keywords: *Ugrešić; Flânerie*

I. The historian Greil Marcus would no doubt classify Dubravka Ugrešić's *Muzej bezuvjetne predaje* (*The Museum of Unconditional Surrender*) as "dustbin talk":¹ it is a novel of exile and melancholic waiting in which a nameless narrator joins the disaffected chorus of diasporic identities – Yugoslav gypsies, Bosnian refugees, sex workers and American-Jewish artists – in

the reclamation of historical and recurringly socialist landscapes that are bankrupt, confiscated or ruined. “Dustbin talk” is coined by Marcus on the basis of Trotsky’s famous utterance, the dustbin of history, which Marcus adds, “is one of our terms for finality, for putting history behind us, where it seems to belong”.² In that case, Ugrešić reverses this closure by rummaging around the dustbin, acculturating waste into a literary discourse and thereby marking the return of repressed histories through the discarded, obsolete materials of migrants and refugees.

Set in post-unification Berlin, during that vaguely defined epoch of postsocialism which unfurled both promise and crisis across the eastern part of Europe, *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender* is a text whose subject matter is historically and culturally irrelevant. By matter, I refer to socialism’s cultural objects, rapidly made useless in democratic, civic societies and the capitalist marketplace. These artefacts are out of production, having been replaced by the shiny veneer of Western goods. They are not, however, out of circulation. From refuse to refuge, these materials (whether army uniforms or moth-eaten fur coats) are exhibited in Ugrešić’s novel as repositories of mnemonic value. I use the word “exhibit” intentionally: the novel is an inventory produced out of specific circumstance. The circumstance, as Jacob Emery has shown, is primarily the insecurity of the subject in exile that the subject attempts to overcome via “the transmissional function of organization” in order to “make an internal collection of an alien context, to represent [that collection] within the substitute familiarity of language”.³ In this reading, the self who has already lost the contours of one’s identity (through displacement) contrives to produce a personality by “routing its consciousness through an ‘objective’ image” – such as the contents of the novel-archive.⁴ In turn, choosing to display and store these objects through a collection reinstates an imaginary system of space.⁵

Beyond the parochialism of the self in exile, the collection of *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender* responds to the existential and ideological void left behind by the collapse of state socialism. The loss of ideological orientation across Eastern Europe and Russia in the 1990s – and the political instability this occasioned – was fertile ground for what Vladimir Tismăneanu calls “compensatory mythologies” that replaced the homogenizing social vision of communism.⁶ The rhetoric of nationalism was the instrumental tool of compensation, reinstating long-repressed values, folkloric heroism and valour of mythic dimensions and origins.⁷ In some countries, the official government rhetoric was engaged in promulgating vociferous anticommunist propaganda during this period.⁸ In the former Yugoslavia, there was discernible contrition between bellicose patriotism and the symbolic residues of Tito’s socialism; a contrition in which Ugrešić herself participated. At the onset of Yugoslavia’s civil war, she aggravated the Croatian public sphere by parodying the emerging nationalist hegemonies of the government in a series

of essays published in the foreign press (such as the German *Die Zeit* and the British *Independent*), a seemingly strange turn for a writer whose work is characterized by its affinities to formal features of postmodernism.⁹

In the first of these essays, Ugrešić undertook a semiotic mockery of Croatia's kitsch souvenir industry that had mushroomed not long after the announcement of the country's internationally recognized sovereignty. The item in question was an aluminium can (filled with air) that looked like a can of Coca-Cola but was inscribed with the slogan: "Clean Croatian air".¹⁰ The sale of this kitsch souvenir coincided with an advertising campaign for a brand of sweets, the consumption of which – so the copy claimed – made it "easier to breathe". For the author, these two messages become semantically intertwined to form: "It is easier to breathe with clean Croatian air!"¹¹ In combining the two marketing slogans, Ugrešić extrapolated the discourse into a metaphorization of its linguistic properties: clean becomes cleansed, or cleansing, and in turn brings forth numerous associations of expulsion, purging, purifying, sanitizing and sterilizing. This Croatian "hygienic euphoria" was intent on eliminating all forms of rubbish (such as Yugoslav Unitarianism).¹² Ugrešić wished to articulate in no unclear terms that national sovereignty, being disseminated by a conservative-reactionary government, actually involved instituting a rigorous and reductive structure of purity and pollution.

These elements of low culture, bad taste and kitsch were core to the author's dismantling of illusions of democracy and national supremacy – although both Serbia and Croatia regurgitated discourses of victimhood to project a sense of exceptionalism. Ugrešić was interested in the symbolic and semantic "topography of terror", taking apart lyrics from soldier's songs, popular music, new genres of folkloric and spiritual literature, and newspaper adverts (2002: 78). More specifically, Ugrešić's poetics were animated by the connotations of the Russian word *poshlost* which, as Vladimir Nabokov writes, "is especially vigorous and vicious when the sham is *not* obvious and when the values it mimics are considered, rightly or wrongly, to belong to the very highest level of art, thought or emotion".¹³ Military logic and elite political discourses interested her insofar as they metamorphosed into images and ideas within everyday communication – and they invariably did. An outsider on the inside – Ugrešić experienced separation even before leaving that particular society – she estranged this *poshlost* by responding in kind; her prose crackles with digested, reworked and parodied public opinion.¹⁴ Even the machine of literary production took part in her orchestrated estrangement: once *The Culture of Lies* was finally published in Croatian, a selection of the best reviews decorated the back cover in way of endorsement. Without exception, they proclaimed the essays to be vulgar and traitorous to Croatia.¹⁵ The reviewers themselves were maintaining the regime of *poshlost* and, to Ugrešić, they were very clearly demonstrating the premise of her thesis.

A curious parallel to this souvenir industry and its manifest nationalism emerged in the aftermath of war through the cult of Yugonostalgia. This industry trades in on its own appropriation of kitsch: key rings of Tito's bust, partisan symbolism, socialist mottoes, and the Yugoslav flag have all been resuscitated and sold for hard currency. With growing success and profits so grew the ambition of the traders: reality TV-shows permit individuals to recreate the Yugoslav way of life while tourist agencies sell the experience. In a similar manner, *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender* extends the life of Yugoslavia's consumer industry, shoring up miscellanea – from washing powders, TV broadcasts to meat pâtés – against the ravages of nationalist revival: "If our country has disappeared, so will our collective memory. If all the things that surrounded us disappear, so will our memory of the everyday life we lived."¹⁶ The anxiety surrounding this memory crisis is legitimate, and Ugrešić's literary creation strives to address existential needs. Recently, Cynthia Simmons has shown that the presence of Yugonostalgia within literary discourse serves "to preserve identity and the ontology of lives lived in the present" while also providing "some foundation for post-war reflection and recovery".¹⁷ Indeed, it is not implausible that other forms of nostalgia purchased through the marketplace can contribute in one way or another to the recovery and reflection Simmons identifies (especially if we consider the literary text as a commodity).

The reservations lie in method: random and unanchored from any historical signifiers or narratives, one suspects that a consumer-mediated memory and history might be too trivial. A similar phenomenon has appeared elsewhere with German *Ostalgie* – packaged to the brim in Wolfgang Becker's *Goodbye Lenin!* (2003) – being equally marketable. Nor, it seems, are official strategies and commemorative activities any less ahistorical than their commercial partners. In Budapest's Szobopark, statues of Marx, Engels and Béla Kun offer great spectacle but little reflection. In the words of Régine Robin, the park "museif[ies] without explanation".¹⁸ It museifies socialist history without any acknowledgement as to how such monuments have been translated by the methodology of the curator. This prompts Robin to ask:

can fallen History simply be exhibited or installed artistically? Can fallen History be placed behind glass, transformed into a hologram? [...] Because after all, as much as one might want to turn the past into ruins, garbage, artifacts, relics, to invert the signs and symbols, to parenthesize the past, to invent another, fake past, to create a simulacrum; as much as one might want to museify the past, to parody it, mock it, pastiche it, or criminalize it, to find those responsible for it, to make scapegoats, to destroy statues and put their pieces in museums, to obsess about symbols, digging them up to bury them again, all this fabrication of ruins would be meaningless relative to the necessary

work of mourning and of a critical, nonhysterical rereading of the past.¹⁹

The hastiness of these symbolic appropriations – some are works of art, others are instituted by government policy – troubles Robin. Though she does not specify a more ethical course of action, one should presumably proceed with critical scepticism towards the socialist past and its practices, disengaging from the values of the time in order to mourn the traumatic and oppressive experiences.²⁰ In her opinion, one should also articulate the impossibility of commemoration (too many absences, too many traces, too few certainties) that signifies the lack of equivalence between history and memory (rather than present memory as a substitute for history) and question the memorial function of monuments itself.²¹

My essay concentrates on a different angle of this debate. In my reading of *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender*, I will explore how the methodology of a collection narrative seeks to accumulate or construct value through a network of objects perceived as trifles. In laying bare the skeleton of the novel's construction, I will address some of Robin's concerns – namely whether fabrication of history through materiality is as uncritical as it appears. The focus here will be not so much on the individual vignettes that are emitted by the miscellany of this book but on the dynamic between object and the detached observation of the narrator, a dynamic in which the gaze motivates the object towards a textual purpose (anecdotal, for instance) when it is obsolescent under other parameters.

Such an approach merits attention because it deflects an overdetermined interest from the end-product; as Aldo Rossi reminds us, "the emergence of relations among things, more than the things themselves, always gives rise to new meanings".²² The general tendency towards ruins-as-art (or found objects and symbols as art) from the postsocialist period has been to presuppose that the strategy by which these appropriations occur is of second-level importance, if important at all. But Ugrešić's novel, in order to achieve its effect, is predicated on an obfuscation of alternate economies – monetary, symbolic, mnemonic – so that various properties are perceived as commensurate and overlapping (such as the aesthetics of ruins and the history of the very same). This obfuscation results from the formal organization of the novel which is predicated on randomness and kaleidoscopic fragments. While reading, it takes a supreme effort to organize the archive, to compartmentalize its folds – almost a second-order curatorship – in order that one may demarcate between and then designate significance to public and private realms; commercial and cultural activities; the logos of corporate capitalism and the symbols of socialism. In doing so, the novel begins to yield a commentary about its own practice.

In gathering worthless objects, Ugrešić's archive summons the question of value, where it lies and where it is being transferred. In this, the novel reflects Mark Thompson's thesis that we have to study rubbish "in order to study the social control of value" and, by proxy, the social change in value.²³ The narrator's own fabrications as a curator begin where the external, indifferent system of transition leaves off. The ideology of privatization and the efficiency of capitalism does not care to construct a museum of, say, anecdotes and audiocassettes, the sounds of which "die like flies" as they are played in Berlin's flea market (1979: 283). The metaphors and the poetic imagery here are clearly central in establishing artistic value in order that these objects may be inscribed into the collection but as much as they appear specific to this particular environment, they are part of a more general paradigm. A collection, writes Susan Stewart, "is often designed to serve as a stay against the frailties of the very monetary system from which it has sprung".²⁴ These frailties are precisely the properties, or qualities, imposed on objects by usage, functionality, and novelty (the basic premise of consumerism). The crucial logic of that system, argues Tim Endensor, is "the reproduction of obsolescence".²⁵ Once something is devalued, it is removed in order to make room for working, updated commodities. Waste, that which is out of place in this cycle of production, has a stubborn but dynamic afterlife as artists and writers reclaim its formal properties. The displacement of the object itself into an aesthetic system makes visible the structure and relations governing the object's circulation.

How does this happen in the novel? At its most prosaic, *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender* traces the artist's labour – it is a journey which begins in a particular marketplace, enabled by a nameless narrator, a flâneur-type. Producing occasionally ekphrastic descriptions, the narrator maps the trajectory of frailties (properties, qualities, values) as they are lost, withdrawn and recuperated. Complicating this journey is the social specificity of Berlin which offers a ready-made topography of written traces and residues that become "sites of pleasure"²⁶ (in the words of Christine Boyer) after some dozen artists of international reputation fashion its particles. The narrator follows the movement of the artists (Richard Wentworth, Ilya Kabakov) and inspects their work (Jochen Gertz, Christian Marclay, Christian Boltanski), their actions substantiating her own project.

So the strategy of the novel becomes – as Sven Spieker says in a different context – "analytical of the relationship between the archival base and what the archive stores".²⁷ The city, our archival base, is not a blank canvas, an objectified place but one that is very visibly decorated with *lieux de mémoire* where, according to Pierre Nora, "memory crystallizes and secretes itself".²⁸

This rhetorical yield of Berlin is unmistakable: offering a duplicitous face of East and West, the city represents the closest point of encounter with

former cold-war communist zones within the comfort and tolerance of the Western critical eye. This chosen landscape brings together two elements that characterize 1989 in the public imagination: the revolutionary fervour of the people and the fall of the Berlin Wall. Such a truncated vision, however, revolves around a symbolic prelude to years of gradual transformation towards democratic, capitalist societies. Ugrešić's novel bypasses the spectacle of the revolution in favour of the small-scale remains and ruins of an epoch. From the Brandenburg gate where the Wall once stood to the formerly Soviet neighbourhood in Karlshorst where, according to the novel, some 30,000 inhabitants remain (including a soldier from Moldova who acts under the instruction of a non-existent state), there is necessary slippage between what we deem the foundations of the collection and its contents (282). This dialectic demonstrates that the city as archive – that is to say one characterized by “repositories of written traces enshrined in topographies”²⁹ – must itself be probed, inventoried, measured, and tabulated. So, as much as the experience of the city is related to the exteriority of the landscape, it is also the passage to the interiority of an archive with its own realms of data. The narrator is thus poignantly immersed in two parallel systems of remembrance. On the one hand, she traces the industry of the artists (extensions of her own labour) who use the city as their archival base, storing the past in a new key, a new aesthetic. This theme will be explored in the second part of the essay. On the other hand, she charts the relentless pressures on the city's physiology (in this particular case as related to the end of socialist ideology) and documents them within her own repository, the subject of the first section.

II. *Flânerie* is an archival act. As an activity of idle wander, it makes conspicuous the perceiving, absorbing and eventual recycling of historical materials into fundamentally new contexts to reflect on modern life. As an activity of textual production (such as Walter Benjamin's posthumously published *The Arcades Project* on nineteenth-century Parisian arcades), the author lives in the archives of the past in order to concomitantly construct one.³⁰ To write and interpret the city – for both the scholar and the writer – means to immerse oneself in the conceptual language of the best city-critics (Charles Baudelaire, Georg Simmel, Walter Benjamin) who in their different ways, writes David Frisby, “were all concerned with the new modes of perception, and experience of social and historical existence set in train by the upheaval of capitalism”.³¹ It was in the work of these modernists that our contemporary understanding of modern life and the metropolis came into being, when the demands of city life – the external, objective pressures of history, culture and the public – filtered down to the individual with the possibility to mould, reject or diversify these structures. This produces a dialectic nature to the city-text whereby a mechanized, brash and exploitative production enabled a creative and aesthetically innovative response from

nineteenth-century thinkers who were, Marshall Berman writes, “simultaneously enthusiasts and enemies of modern life, wrestling inexhaustibly with its ambiguities and contradictions; their self-ironies and inner tensions were a primary source of their power”.³²

Though the flâneur is an extinct figure with a historically determined origin (the Parisian arcades, Haussmann’s boulevards), he exploded into “a myriad of forms” which “continue to bear his trace” in the twentieth century, as Susan Buck-Morss points out, in no small part due to the commercialization of public spaces in the city through mediums such as advertising.³³ While current scholarship perceives the street as the domain of the loiterer and not the flâneur (who is relegated to the sterility and insularity of the shopping mall),³⁴ a wandering figure versed in the spectacle of the contemporary city is crucial to Ugrešić’s poetics of Berlin. For many, the experience of cities such as Berlin, New York and London – home to so many exiles, migrants, and refugees as well as their cultures – is the experience of difference as a ubiquitous terrain, opening up a paradoxical situation in which variety no longer stimulates the senses. These cities become, in the words of Zygmunt Bauman, “a world of universal particularity; a world integrated through its diversity, a world little worried by difference and resigned to ambiguity”.³⁵ While the flâneur would have previously coalesced fragments into a city-vision through sheer intoxication of the excrescent variety of life induced by new infrastructure and forms of production, Ugrešić’s narrator is faced with the opposite task: to break the satiety of the uniform experience and the social isolation of the street.

The source of homogeneity at the end of the twentieth century is presented in the novel via globalization. In particular, it is the growth of global capitalism that creates a thorough privatization of external spaces, a recognizable iconography from Moscow to New York.³⁶ *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender* closes with the following imagery: “On top of the Europa Centre, the three-pronged Mercedes star revolves slowly. [...] This metal deity smoothens the rough scars of the city and reconciles the people of the world, the present with the past, the East with the West” (1997: 301). Overall, a rather unambiguous conflation of religious terminology and mechanized production that leaves no doubt as to the panoptic centre of control and observation (global, economic capital). The reference to “deity” is particularly ironic in this case as corporate values signify a desanctification of life. It is, however, potent with symbolic connotation for the migrants, refugees and the “people of the world” who parade through Ugrešić’s novel:

At dusk rose-sellers swarm through the city, dark Tamils with round childish faces and moist eyes. [...] White Jamaicans with their hair woven into innumerable tiny plaits pass through the streets thick with the shadows of vanished lives, like angels. In smoke-filled taverns on

Oranienstrasse Turks listen to Turkish music and play cards. [...] Not far from the Café Einstein, a prostitute, a Polish woman, walks nervously up and down. An American Jew, a writer and homosexual, looks through the bars for male prostitutes and settles on a young Croat from Zagreb, who had turned up in Berlin escaping the draft. Alaga, a toothless Gypsy from the Dubrava district of Zagreb, tinkles awkwardly on a child's synthesizer in front of the Europa Centre. (136)

This paragraph of meanderings responds to the new era of turbulence and movement, a shrinking world gravitating towards one totemic building – the Europa Centre – which in its synecdochic name-structure presents a sublimated desire (of the immigrants) for the continent's economic capital and its Western discourses of potential, freedom, creativity, whatever. But this cosmetic cosmopolitanism is predicated on an ironic construction of Berlin as the "Europa Centre": the city is this centre precisely because the gypsies, the Tamils and Croatian refugees ethnically diffuse the homogeneity of fortress Europe – they form its eccentricity and peculiar mix of attributes. But, as Edward Said reminds us, "this is not a positive or comforting thing for a resident who is connected to neither the corporate nor the real estate nor the media world", nor, one might add, any other capital except the symbolic.³⁷

Whatever fortune, conspiracy or disaster brought them here, there is no switch in narrative terms as these migrants fail to become legitimate commuters in the city. Instead, they embody the mutation of this poorly illuminated contemporaneous space of a Europe seeking to unite its two halves (and to unite its corners with the world) but a Europe which remains half-understood: Tamils and Croats might be companions on Berlin's streets but this is hardly a continent without borders, without exploitation and second-class citizenship. Thus, no matter how certain we are about the changes we observe (such as the undeniable fact of mass migration in recent decades), to simply call this process globalization, as Kwame Anthony Appiah notes, "tells us very little about how it is either novel or significant".³⁸ In a similar vein, Ugrešić's novel struggles to intellectually substantiate much of what it witnesses, a shallowness that is both symptomatic of its era and a short-coming of the novel's philosophical reach.

Even though post-unification "Unter den Linden is turning into Fifth Avenue",³⁹ this visual typology of internationalism and corporate conformity is intersected by Berlin's very particular history, signified by breaks in tradition and continuity. At the end of the long twentieth century:

Not even thinking about it, a pedestrian could step on someone's roof or someone's grave [on the streets of Berlin]. The asphalt is only a thin crust covering human bones. Yellow stars, black swastikas, red hammers and sickles, crunch like cockroaches under the walker's feet. (210)

Does the itinerant city-dweller boldly keep walking or pause to examine the human bones? Or, more prosaically: can we afford not to address the history, can we afford not to stop? The reader encounters at every corner unprocessed remnants of historical ruptures, the streets imagined as “alimentary canals” spewing forth inorganic objects of expired lives (216).⁴⁰ This metaphoric chain of indigestion gathers under its semantic arc various designations – flea markets, manmade hills (such as Teufelsberg),⁴¹ neighbourhoods and museums – the content of which the city-dweller needs to rationalize and assimilate (292).⁴²

Yet, there is a structural imposition between the city through which historical complexity is crystallized and the self who navigates through it. The residues of Berlin are local and national; the city was both command centre of the National Socialist Party and the GDR, the governing seat of a society that had to address the determination of political guilt, post-war reconstruction, and subsequently arbitrate on policies of official commemoration. Berlin, as mentioned already, also had the fate of being cleaved into two so that the common past its halves shared receded through economic, political and ideological differences – only to be brought into encounter again, turning it into a “schizophrenic terrain” (294). Though German history made its mark internationally, it is problematic to envision that migrants and exiles of Ugrešić’s novel (including the narrator herself) can insert themselves entirely into Berlin’s narratives and legacies (assuming that in assimilating to a new culture, they establish some ties to their community, some sort of membership to their society). How do these migrants relate, if at all, to public discourses of responsibility and commemoration that form part of their new host environment? How do they engage with prevailing attitudes, reservations and conflicts? And, in the words of Andreas Huyssen, “how can diasporic memory have an impact on the national memory into which it migrates?”⁴³ Between a subject and the host environment, there must be slippages between distinct identities that are consolidated by history, memory and culture. However, when we talk about diaspora and the nation, these relations are often rigidly schematized, Huyssen argues, as the liminal and the centre. Memory discourse of diasporic conditions is traditionally perceived as “cut off, hybrid, displaced, split” while national memory presents itself as “natural, authentic, coherent, and homogeneous”.⁴⁴ We see how these distinctions, even if overgeneralizations, are based on unequal and reductive measures of creating a dialogue with the wider community. Ugrešić’s novel, however unwittingly, proposes a different mechanism in which no single event, or a single identity, overdetermines another. Instead, the fragments of *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender* – anecdotes, quotations, and obsolescent goods – are picked up in hope that they will be framed by the social whole while themselves symbolizing the disruption of synchronic and diachronic continuities. This resonates with Benjamin’s vision of historical materialism:

the crystallization of "the total event in the analysis of the small, discrete moment".⁴⁵ Yet, the only attribute of Benjamin's philosophy of historical practice that survives in Ugrešić's novel is the focus on materialism. The expectation that fragments, marginalia and refuse might specifically delimit the world of their origin and the premise of their significance is simply not there. Instead, recovering objects is fraught with ambiguity (a relief, not a burden) that legitimizes Ugrešić's own improvisation.

To exercise this notion, Ugrešić chooses not only a junk heap haunted by a procession of ragpickers who gather and inventory (thereby mimicking the narrator's own *flânerie*) but one that is subsequently a "commodity landscape": the flea market.⁴⁶ A source of trifles and non-functional objects, the flea market houses the detritus of modern life, measured and included by their obsolescence:

A Turkish man is sitting in a trailer, guarding his territory: a sprawling pile of old books, records, albums, photographs. The seller of dead souls smokes in silence and when asked for the price, he holds up his fingers: one, two, three marks. (293)

At the flea market, the narrator dirties her art with the economically worthless (waste) but also with the exchange of money and commodities. It is an unpoetic source for her creative discourse but crucially it is a place that is liberating, a quality that can be employed in a host of ways, although it originates exclusively in the displacement of the consumerist order or the collapse of socialism. The market's other visitors are also contemporary ragpickers who gather and produce in line with Baudelaire's *chiffonnier*, a social type who "goes through the archives of debauchery, and the confused array of refuse. [...] like a miser hoarding treasure, he collects that garbage that will become objects of utility or pleasure when refurbished by Industrial magic."⁴⁷ In Ugrešić's novel, the ragpicker is most likely to be an established and renowned artist who finds himself fashioning projects out of such rubbish. Richard Wentworth, in particular, is dedicated to gathering abandoned objects, ritually cleaning them "in his cave" and subsequently exhibiting his "treasures" which evoke in the narrator an aesthetic frisson brought on by the "incompatible materials" of Wentworth's collections (208-209; 211-218). The artists' gestures are metaphoric and actual. They gather objects under the auspices of chance and illegitimacy (beyond *use* value) but at the same time return it to "Industrial magic". Their bricolage is, after all, about exchange-value as they find a commercial space (an exhibition) for their refuse.

The site of the flea market itself is a recurring obsession for Ugrešić, a site that signifies a deviation in a homogeneous landscape of commerce. In an essay from *Nobody's Home*, she unravels its logic:

The flea-market is the shortest and most efficient lesson about human life. It is the psychotherapist séance, a nightmarish encounter with your own self. Many people are happy to loiter at the flea market. Some are there for practical reasons: they may wish to find a specific item, such as an out-of-date part for their washing machine. Some come to the flea market as if to a department store for the socially outcast. Others are collectors, pearl divers in a sea of junk, adventurers without money for adventure, nostalgics, freaks, socialites from society's gutter.⁴⁸

The symbolism is clear: the flea market disrupts the formal economy, thereby liberating desires from commodity fetish and novelty, defined by Benjamin as "a quality independent of the use value".⁴⁹ The flea market rescues these objects from the debasement commodities acquire by virtue of their price. As an analogue to the dry, insular world of the department store (or the shopping mall), it is equally an analogue to the history of these commercial sites. The precursor to the shopping mall are the Parisian arcades of the nineteenth century which, in Benjamin's materialist history, arose out of two primary conditions. The first of these was the growth in the textile trade, initiating the subsequent growth of consumerism and commodity production, while the second was the technological innovation of iron construction that led to new architectural forms.⁵⁰ In the arcades, the quality of novelty (introduced by the first condition) could be displayed and fetishized in the windows of the new passageways (of the second condition).

The flea market is a link in the chain of this process, even though it is presented in Ugrešić's essay as a foil to the discourses and categories surrounding the sterile gratification of the department store (equating shopping with class, equating adventure with money). The presence of the flea market in contemporary society is virtually guaranteed by the diminishing returns of consumer culture. The more we seek the gratification of novelty, spurring increased production and innovation, the more is reproduced as junk, making even the new, glossy product tinged with its future obsolescence. The overwhelming quantity of objects on the flea market, spewing out "like an open digestive tract", contrasts highly with the art of the window dresser (216). The piles colonize the street space; a chaotic belt of stalls and tarpaulin on which the objects are organized (the self-image of an archive) that challenges the gentrification and renovation of urban planning. Many refugees, Ugrešić writes, pose as traders while waiting for an opportunity to "meet their own", to converse and "lighten the soul" (287). This place of liminality is the only possible world for the dispossessed.

In one respect, the possibility of emancipating objects from an efficient economy or unanchoring urban spaces from homogeneity is not a new phenomenon, nor is it exceptional that we should seek such sites in the city. Alan Latham points out that Benjamin himself sought to release "the utopian

traces which lay dormant within material objects” by “blasting away the fetishism and reifications that were embedded within them”.⁵¹ The paradox is that a subsequent consumption is necessary to quantify and articulate the precise nature of these properties; for instance, Ugrešić’s text will play on the romanticism of the market because it comports with the pursuit of her thematic issues. Within the wider context of the novel and in our attempt to understand the dynamics between narrator and flâneur, the flea market sets the tableau for further debasement (rubbish) or redemption (perhaps aesthetic, perhaps mnemonic). This is the point at which the narrator’s initial survey of the marketplace – functioning as the archival base – gathers pace in two different directions. The first involves the metanarrative reach of the novel while the second follows the trajectory of the object from the marketplace to the archive.

IIa. *The Novel*

Scholarship has documented that the flâneur of Baudelaire’s time – Baudelaire being the model for Benjamin’s own interpretations of the activity – was a producer of texts, most distinctly of the *feuilleton*, pieces attesting to “harmless physiognomies” of contemporary society published in French newspapers.⁵² As Benjamin notes, this activity characterizes the flâneur who “set foot in the marketplace – ostensibly to look around, but in truth to find a buyer”.⁵³ That is to say, to find a buyer for his *own* work. This is the ambiguity of flânerie, an activity dictated by a freedom to observe and decipher images of the metropolis but one equally attached to the necessity to produce. Ugrešić’s novel is a reminder of this often forgotten feature: the nineteenth-century flâneur has close affinities to the marketplace, a fact often bypassed for his more spontaneous insights into the nature of the modern city.

Ugrešić, whose collection *Thank you for not reading* is devoted entirely to the commercialization and histrionics of literary spheres in the West, is cognizant of the dynamics of labour and exchange that structure her bouts of idleness and writing in the city.⁵⁴ In her essay on the flea market, Ugrešić relays an anecdote of an alcoholic loiterer who sells her a blue fish in Moscow in the 1980s. A pitiful vignette is saved from sentimentality (but not from *poshlost*) by Ugrešić’s aesthetic interventions: between allusions to the “the warm, dissident heart of the market” and the “cold power of totalitarian order and rule”, the man becomes a cipher for a multitude of wasted lives and oppressed souls.⁵⁵ Walking away with the fish, she wryly notes: “I paid for the conversation.”⁵⁶ Ultimately, however, the conversation pays *her*: the opportunity of the encounter, furnished with the miscellany of dissidence and authoritarianism, sells to the West. *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender*, in this respect, is a novel of nostalgia that fetishizes materials of expired cultures for the west European appetite for Communist kitsch. In exile and in

order to stay solvent, Ugrešić found a buyer for her work. In nostalgic mode, western Europe still wishes to prolong the experience of the exotic that adheres in the traces of Communist rule. Once the East is democratized and once it moves away from the aberration it appeared to be, there is little to hold the West in rapture. This acknowledgment, however, does not diminish the value of the novel as a document, as a text which demands the critical act. It is worthwhile remembering, as Marshal Berman said of Baudelaire's pastoral essays, that "[t]here is an important body of modern writing, often by the most serious of writers, that sounds like advertising copy".⁵⁷

The future of the novel's fate – what happens to Communist kitsch when no longer captivating? – is suggested in an anecdote about Ilya Kabakov, the Russian artist known for his extensive collection of biographical rubbish.⁵⁸ When the narrator of *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender* encounters his collages in a New York gallery, far from the social context of their conception and context, she is duly worried about the effect of this transplantation: "At that moment it crossed my mind that exposure to air, light and the admiration of the public would destroy the nature [of his work] and that its painful beauty would become ordinary trash" (58).⁵⁹ Everything, but everything is ephemeral and transient: aesthetic and experiential qualities and life itself. This embodiment of the ephemeral (message) in a permanent vessel through art projects an exhilarating feature: the unknowability of its future signification. The stories or qualities that currently prop up the project will not be transmitted, nor can we predict what the future beholder might deem worthy or valuable in the text or the installation. What will be transferred instead is the configuration of waste and art as an alternative economy which, Aleida Assmann argues, "compel[s] the observer to look beyond the external boundaries of his or her symbolic sensory world and to recognize the cultural system with its mechanisms of (de)valuation and exclusion".⁶⁰ In other words, when objects circulate outside the environment for which they were intended, the processes that governed this sequence are made conspicuous since we tend to perceive matter which is out of place, out of line. In this reading, such uses of artistic form contain the possibility for creative re-invention over time.

Only the objects, the detritus, can claim an "ironic eternity" as Ugrešić is aware, insisting on characterizing the flea market as a "graveyard" whose traders are "sellers of dead souls".⁶¹ (Death is figurative here, but actual too.) The irony is this: the novel itself is predicated on the metaphor of digestion to signify multiple forms of assimilation yet none of its material is digestible. None of it can be integrated, only stored again (and again, and again). This acknowledgment signals that the artist's attempt to process this material is of secondary importance in the long-term evolutions of cultural phenomena. Such a concept wittily rationalizes Ugrešić's own project as a sediment in the landfill of the future.

IIb. *The Artists*

In order to organize an art installation or a novel around experiential qualities demands that the artist or author engage the object as empty signifier. The object loses with great ease its historical signification when decontextualized, when presented as a solitary specimen or simply when exposed to the ravages of time. The photograph, found in abundance on Berlin's flea market, is most liable to this type of distortion of origin.⁶²

I leaf through a stranger's family album. I guess that the owner of the album is Bavarian, a German soldier, his rank difficult to establish. [...] Two seasons reign in the album: summer and winter. The vision of the photographs is often *artistic*. He photographs landscapes through natural frames: windows, open doorways and tunnels. [...] The photographs were taken during World War II, compiled into an album that yawns with emptiness and absence of life. The owner of the album wished to see his own biography as an aestheticized collage of snowy mountain peaks basked in sunlight. (293)

Identifying the German soldier as "the owner of the album" serves to underscore that the narrator is now the owner of his story. No matter if her interventions are make-believe ("he wishes to see his own biography as..."), she provides the afterlife to the soldier's lost history, succumbing to the impulse to substantiate the pictorial evidence. It is not enough just to handle the photographs, they must be rationalized within the environment of the present: fleshing out his story momentarily eclipses the ambivalence of the host environment towards the presence of the wanderer. This act engages two types of discourse: one which is evidentiary in aim (the photo) and the other artistic or creative (the narrator's story). The latter discourse is partial, selective and fictional. In this particular example, the matter of World War II is incidental to the narrator. She maintains a silence with regard to this man's military service, refusing to speculate on whatever association he might have to the Nazis. It is a silence which, much like the photographs themselves, "yawns with emptiness and absence". This short vignette actually complicates its own procedure since its storytelling is more about nothingness than meaningful transference.

Within *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender* inserting documents into an artistic or literary discourse comes with the intention of generating parallel stories – parallels to an "original" that is lost – in order to intimate (one would hope) a greater truth about historical consequences. But such a vignette could easily slip the attention of the reader; it is obscure and hardly consequential (in its content) beyond making a statement about the novel's method of reclaiming fragile traces. In order to generate the tension and confrontation between aesthetics and history, Ugrešić incorporates references

and descriptions of artists who, like Christian Boltanski, self-consciously promulgate questions of veracity in order to offer the spectator a de-personalized but nonetheless collective imagery. Boltanski's installations, according to the novel, are a visual reminder of Berlin's flea markets, composed of "rows of cardboard boxes tied with rubber bands that bury photographs of anonymous people; these unchecked archives of the ordinary dead resemble children's corpses" (295). The effect of Boltanski's art relies on the sedimentation of imagery pertaining to collective experiences, particularly of the Holocaust – an interpretation he has helped promote.⁶³ He is often credited with creating "intelligible parables"⁶⁴ from key materials (such as heaps of clothing, unidentified photographs) in order to reify the silences of World War II trauma. What brings these parables to the forefront is the uncanny combination of the constituent elements, very much the Freudian *Unheimlich*. The items that comprise the installation come from home – personal mementoes, never intended for a detached, voyeuristic gaze – but crucially they "no longer belong to it".⁶⁵ The scale of the installation (Boltanski's work is usually laid out in rooms for spectators to walk through) inflates the internal encounter with the self with feelings of surprise, shock, and recognition.

In both examples – that of the Bavarian soldier's photographs and Boltanski's artistic installations – the impulse of subjective expression is sourced directly from the objectively impersonal; a feature that, as Craig Dworkin shows, is attributed to the genre of the note, traditionally viewed as a textual prosthesis.⁶⁶ Paratextual apparatuses incorporated into literary and artistic texts (through mapping, labels, indexes, tables, footnotes), Dworkin argues, "seek to supplement, support and displace the body of the text".⁶⁷ In discussing the "note" (of which the footnote is an example), he highlights that it has "always been an anecdotal site that attracts speculative, conjectural and incidental remarks" but at the same time comes to be understood as the "proper repository for material beyond the writer's personal authority".⁶⁸ In fact, this definition of the note and its dialectic function has resonance for most prosthetic devices because any paratextual apparatus is organized around the frame and content. The frame is generated by organizing, listing and filing – necessary actions for the artistic or literary collection, no matter how eclectic. But, in partaking of these gestures, one objectifies the thematic axis. This is how Boltanski and Ugrešić can both objectify that which we conventionally identify as deeply engrained in the private, individual sphere of our lives.

This type of activity is not neutral although it might be aesthetically necessary. It is one thing to ruminate about discarded family paraphernalia on a flea market but altogether another to give physical property and shape to disappearance and extermination through aesthetic accomplishment. The anonymity of such endeavours makes of spectators occasional voyeurs and out of

the participants – depicted on photographs – unwitting victims. The spectators or readers do not have to face those whose objects and memories they are handling and interpreting which effaces the worry that they are distorting other people's values and experiences. The sensitivity of these activities lies not so much in the production of such artistic creations but in the subsequent assessment of this historical representation – assessment that will be undertaken by future generations with perhaps minimal access to the sedimentation of this imagery. Observation thus becomes an ethical encounter. The risk lies with the audience who might consider the object encased in the exhibit (whether textually or visually) as an invitation to supply a fiction.

Their ambiguity is also unnerving for the viewer because these images lack the gravity of an ultimate referent. This, of course, is the risk that the artist insists we take because there *is no ultimate referent* that provides the certainty and closure and, in turn, existential reprieve. It is not, by any means, a naïve risk: as Linda Hutcheon points out, the only “genuine historicity” is that which “would openly acknowledge its own discursive, contingent identity”.⁶⁹ This position corroborates that of Hayden White who illuminated the affinities between the compositional techniques in historical and fictional writing. White identified that a historian “fashions the fragments of the past into a whole whose integrity is – in its representation – a purely discursive one”.⁷⁰ With this in mind, it is evident that artistic and literary creation possesses an integrity that lies in highlighting the lack of integrity, the lack of unity, and completeness. This becomes the socially responsible act of its creators: revealing their own blind spots at the moment of making a claim for historical recall or memory.

The concern over referent and veracity is not redundant or outmoded because exhibited art is part of the public domain. Introducing a new rhetorical mode is hardly a straightforward activity made especially controversial when it concerns the insurmountable obstacles in representing the Holocaust. This has relevance for Shimon Attie, another artist referenced in *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender*, who mounted his installation (*The Writing on the Wall*) in 1991. He projected images of Jewish businesses and institutions destroyed during World War II in Berlin's Scheunenviertel quarter onto the façades of new buildings at the same address (214-215).⁷¹ Because some of the results were “a visual and aesthetic failure”, Attie decided to compromise on the historical accuracy. On the whole, the projections drew support as well as opposition from current residents of the quarter and the project, while being critically lauded, was also pejoratively reviewed.⁷² Attie touched a nerve with the public and the critics because he coalesced the weight of history with the experience of the city. As pedestrians, we are inured to the blows of the metropolis (alienation, antisocial behaviour, speed) and we reflect some of those blows through a practiced, mechanical detachment. The shock of the crowd that Baudelaire's flâneur experienced pierces

the contemporary city-dweller only when history is exhibited or installed artistically on the street. It disrupts our self-absorption and the ease with which we roam or hurry. The images projected by Attie do not offer much in way of rationale or justification because the accidental spectator must work at it, a point at which the city (though open in front of him) “closes around him as a room”⁷³ and becomes a site of introspection and examination. How does the spectator respond? Is the task a burden? Would we become inured to such exercises, in the same way we are to other features of the city? Perhaps tellingly, the afterlife of Attie’s project has been far less controversial. Photographing the projections, he created a new archive of conflated historical moments: postsocialist East Berlin with its construction sites and glossy windows (accentuated and saturated with colour) is matched with its historical counterpart of World War II. The palimpsest is a document of the violence that is on the cusp of occurring, the threat frozen. The enduring feature of Attie’s work, however, is that it cannot endure on the city’s streets.

The efforts of Ugrešić’s artistic cohort, and the narrator who mimics their gestures, innovate the streetscape: they gather its waste in order to supplant the pervasiveness and homogeneity of global capital; they modify the commodity and short-circuit the fiscal economy by creating one of aesthetics. They conserve and show, in turn, that conservation is a form of consumption. Their spectacles are never didactic but open, porous and inclusive – perhaps too inclusive. Along the way, these artists are controversial, provocative and captivating but principled even in those moments. They sell their wares but they are metaphoric ragpickers too: cognizant of sentience and the obstacle of loss even when that experience is not direct or personal. They are, as Berman stipulates in a different context, “unacknowledged legislators of the world”⁷⁴.

III. The structure of memory in *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender* relies more on the echo of Benjaminian rubble with its countless possibilities than the spatial framework of Maurice Halbwachs as set down in *The Collective Memory*:

Now space is a reality that endures [...] we can understand how we can recapture the past only by understanding how it is, in effect, preserved by our physical surroundings. It is to this space – the space we occupy, traverse, have continual access to, or can at any time reconstruct in thought and imagination – that we must turn our attention. Our thought must focus on it if this or that category of remembrances is to appear.⁷⁵

In Ugrešić’s novel, space still holds the promise of reconstruction but those who (re)turn to it are not consolidating nation or ethnos. The aim of their archiving is a symbolic and social integration of strata, akin to Edward Said’s

typology of exile as contrapuntal. Borrowed from musical terminology, the counterpoint gathers the activity of new life occurring against the memory of these moments in the environment left behind so that "both the new and the old environment are vivid, actual, occurring together contrapuntally".⁷⁶ In this combination of contrasting themes and structures organized around the counterpoint lies the possibility of achieving distance in terms of judgement (perhaps generating irony) but also an "originality of vision".⁷⁷ Ugrešić's act of flânerie changes the focus somewhat: the novel is not so much about the "there" seen from "here" but about the possibility of inhabiting sites of "here" in their various stages of decomposition. Animating memory thus necessitates a crossover between content and form.

The Museum of Unconditional Surrender (which gives the book its title) was "closed in the summer of 1994 when several thousand remaining Soviet soldiers departed from Berlin" (286). Historically, it was founded by the Soviet troops stationed in the GDR in 1967 in order to commemorate the surrender of the German Wehrmacht at Berlin-Karlshorst in 1945; a fact which escapes mention in the novel. Ugrešić thus updates the capitulation in her text by transferring the semantics of World War II and the German defeat to the collapse of Eastern states and ideology, the political nerve of the text. There is no disguising that this is language of surrender: what the academy would have as the language of transition – transitional economics, justice systems, transitory social and cultural forms – Ugrešić translates into the embodiment of physical and architectural ruin. In the neighbourhood formerly belonging to the Soviets and home to the museum, the narrator spies deserted apartment blocks "with broken windows and peeling wallpaper, like lichen" where any valuable remains are "looted by petty criminals at night" (282). The museum itself functions as a subterranean, mnemonic void:

There is a café in the basement of the *Museum of unconditional capitulation*. It is an improvised bar with a couple of chairs and tables. A shapely Russian waitress stands behind the bar on which sits a television set. Various Russian souvenirs clutter a table beside the bar: *matrioshkas*, a samovar, wooden spoons, a white goat's wool scarf. [...] The café is visited by my countrymen, Yugoslav refugees, many of whom live in the deserted apartments of Soviet soldiers. (285)⁷⁸

The ghostly presence (or should that be near absence?) of the Soviets is here reinvigorated by a group of Yugoslav refugees, a group which exists in suspension on two accounts: their fragile collectivity has not been splintered into multitude of ethnic categories (for how much longer can they be identified as Yugoslav?) and their refugee status is legally a threshold position. As such, it is appropriate that they find shelter in a building that has officially lost its functionality and is on the verge of becoming something else – or

nothing at all, approaching “zero-value”.⁷⁹ On all accounts, the ruin and its visitors are awaiting a categorical change. In gathering under this one roof both the inert architectural ruin and the dynamic aesthetic vision, Ugrešić produces a monument to the processes of confiscation and obfuscation which will inflict future generations.

Yet while the novel overwhelmingly mourns the loss of any knowledge, this extract capitalizes on the proximity of aestheticism to ruins; it provides for the author’s own fictional ideas and imperatives. The novel self-consciously sidesteps the historical surrender of the German Wehrmacht by appropriating it to its own postcommunist condition, some forty years later. This trope is made possible by the exile-narrator travelling into the history of the host nation in order to take up its thread of surrender, gathering under the collapse of socialism two diametrically opposed moments – Germany’s unification and Yugoslavia’s descent into war. This aesthetic intervention is a “‘metaphorical’ treatment of socialism’s ruins” in the words of Thomas Lahusen.⁸⁰ The notion of engaging metaphoric properties to animate insight reveals Ugrešić’s own motivation as conceptually oriented: the novel’s act of commemoration (whether official or unofficial) is predicated on recurring destruction. Even a new monument, writes Mikhail Yampolsky, “seems to incorporate a sense of unseen future ruins”.⁸¹ This awareness is more pertinent than the narrative of history itself.

Ultimately, Ugrešić’s novel sets a challenge. By demystifying the methods of the novel’s own creation (which is to say parading the object or ruin as a cluster of formal properties) and by inscribing the transience of this aesthetic into the foundations of the collection, the reader is forced to project such strategies into the future and expect subsequent appropriation and estrangement of our material culture. The possibility of re-invention is a hope, free of vanity, that we can avoid ossification of memory.

NOTES

- 1 Marcus (1997: 5).
- 2 Marcus (1997: 4). Trotsky used the term “dustbin of history” when addressing the Mensheviks at the second All-Russian Congress of the Soviets on 25 October 1917.
- 3 Emery (2002: 291-306; 295-296).
- 4 Emery (2002: 298).
- 5 Frances Yates has demonstrated how museums function as storage devices for the spatialization of knowledge. See Yates (1966).

- 6 Tismăneanu (1998: 154).
 7 See Čolović (2002).
 8 See Tichindeleanu (2010: 26-32). Although his intent in the article is to propose a theoretical framework for postcommunism, Tichindeleanu also presents a case study of Romania's 'The Final Report', the aim of which was "to pronounce the final word on communism" (28).
 9 These essays, subsequently collected in *Kultura laži* (*The Culture of Lies*), made Ugrešić an enemy of the state, an internal saboteur. They formed the basis of a media smear campaign undertaken by Croatian weekly *Globus* against Ugrešić and four other prominent women in which they were identified as traitors to the homeland, sympathizers with the enemy, and politically disloyal. Ugrešić decided to leave Croatia in 1993 after her professional and personal position was made increasingly precarious. For an overview of this series of events, see Kesić (1993: 16-17). For an analysis of Ugrešić's early works via postmodernism, see Đekić (1995).
 10 Ugrešić (2002: 80). All translations of Ugrešić's prose are my own.
 11 Ugrešić (2002: 80).
 12 Ugrešić (2002: 86).
 13 Nabokov (1989: 72). Ugrešić herself makes reference to Nabokov's definition of *poshlost* in *Kultura laži* (2002: 68).
 14 There are recurring references in *The Culture of Lies* and *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender* to Ugrešić's Bulgarian heritage from her mother's side (see 2002: 234-236 and 1997: 83-105).
 15 The edition in question is published by Arkzin, Zagreb in 1996. I located this copy in the holdings of the British Library, London.
 16 Ugrešić (1997: 297). All further references to this edition are given in the text.
 17 Simmons (2009: 457-469; 461).
 18 Robin (1997: 337-354; 354).
 19 Robin (1997: 349-350).
 20 Her objections are shared by others. Zara Volčić has argued that this type of memory discourse (with particular reference to Yugonostalgia) is detached from the truth of the political and historical life of the time it remembers. Yugoslavia's socialist experience thus becomes "the most ahistorical, eschew[ing] historical narratives" (Volčić 2007: 21-38; 34 and 28).
 21 To illustrate this point, Robin uses the example of Jochen Gertz, a German artist, who "takes the work of mourning very seriously, without making any concessions". Gertz is known for his "antimonument" *Mahnmal gegen Faschismus* (Monument against Fascism), a twelve-metre column that slowly, over the years, sank into the ground (Robin 1997: 351-353).
 22 Rossi (1981: 23).
 23 Thompson (1979: 10).
 24 Stewart (1984: 159).
 25 Edensor (2005: 101).
 26 Boyer (1994: 19).
 27 Spieker (2008: 11).

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- 28 Nora (1989: 7-24; 7).
 29 Sheringham (2010: 1-17; 7).
 30 Benjamin intended to publish a history of Parisian Arcades. Though he never
 completed his project, the notes and documents he had collated were
 published as *Passagen-Werk*, a text which was consolidated after his death
 and published in 1983 (Benjamin 1999).
 31 Frisby (1985: 4).
 32 Berman (2010: 24). See also Berman's introduction in the same monograph
 for a general overview of the theme (16-36).
 33 Buck-Morss (1986: 99-140; 105).
 34 See Tester (1994). Of particular interest is the essay by Zygmunt Bauman,
 'Desert Spectacular'.
 35 Bauman (1996: 569-597; 571).
 36 It is not just iconography: it is values of corporate capitalism as underwriting
 all sites of cultural expression, creating a "City of Spectacle[s]" which, Boyer
 argues, is a distinct phenomenon in the history of urbanity (Boyer 1994: 63-
 65).
 37 Said (2001: xv).
 38 Appiah (2005: 216).
 39 Ugrešić (2005: 31).
 40 The metaphoric chain begins with an exhibit of the dead body of Roland the
 Walrus at the Berlin Zoo. More correctly, Roland's body is signified by the
 objects retrieved from his stomach – plastic jewellery, ice cream sticks,
 lighters (1997, no page)
 41 Teufelsberg is one of several hills in Berlin made out of rubble by the Allies
 at the end of World War II ('Teufelsberg', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 2010).
 42 Emery first suggested that the motifs of digestion throughout the novel are
 related to the method of cultural assimilation. This can and should also extend
 to historical rupture and residue (Emery 2002: 295-296).
 43 Huysen (2003: 147-164; 154).
 44 Huysen (2003: 152). Huysen suggests that there is scope for diasporic
 memory to influence historiography of national memory. His own case study
 considers the work of the Turkish-German writer Zafer Şenocak.
 45 Walter Benjamin (*Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. 5, p. 575), quoted in Irving
 Wohlfarth (1986: 142-168; 144).
 46 Gleber (1999: 40).
 47 Baudelaire (1971: 7-8). Also cited in Benjamin (1999: 349).
 48 Ugrešić, 'Buvljak' (2005: 12).
 49 Benjamin (1999: 20).
 50 Benjamin (1999: 3).
 51 Latham (1999: 451-473; 456).
 52 Frisby (1985: 89).
 53 Benjamin (2006: 40).
 54 *Thank You for Not Reading (Zabranjeno čitanje)* is a collection of essays on
 the institution of literature in the capitalist marketplace that reflects on the

general decline of the West but that also offers insights into the experience of exile (Ugrešić 2001).

55 Ugrešić (2005: 13).

56 Ugrešić (2005: 13).

57 Berman (1982: 137).

58 Anei Wallach (1986).

59 Ugrešić's anecdote sits nicely along the observation made by Svetlana Boym on seeing Kabakov exhibited in New York's Museum of Modern Art. She intimates that the physical decontextualization alters the tonality of the work of art. Boym writes:

Some of Kabakov's work was presented in the Museum of Modern Art, in the exhibition appropriately entitled "Dislocations". It is uncanny to see Kabakov's happening in the communal apartment placed (displaced) in the Museum of Modern Art and framed by the pure white museum walls. This is not the virginal whiteness of the avant-garde utopia, but the conventional whiteness of commercial modernism. (Boym 1994: 162)

60 Assmann (2002: 71-82; 72).

61 The reference to "ironic eternity" – and the set piece of the flea market as graveyard – recurs in both *Nobody's home* (2005: 12) and *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender* (1997: 293 and 295).

62 On the discourse of photography in the novel, see Mijatović (2003: 49-68).

63 See Boltanski (1989).

64 Werner Spies, "Schweizer sehen doch ganz normal aus. Streiter wider die Statistik des Todes: Laudatio auf den Maler Christian Boltanski zur Verleihung des Goslarer Kaiserrings" (p. 1 quoted in Jussen 2004: 50).

65 Freud (1919/2003: 124).

66 Dworkin (2005: 1-24; 2).

67 Dworkin (2005: 1).

68 Dworkin (2005: 2-3).

69 Hutcheon (1986-1987: 179-207; 183).

70 White (1978: 125).

71 Marianne Hirsch has developed a critical idiom for artistic creations that are characterized by such archival tendencies, an aesthetic which she considers governed by a "postmemory". This is a type of memory dominated by narratives that preceded a person's birth, a person "whose own belated stories are evacuated by the stories of the previous generation shaped by traumatic events that can be neither understood nor recreated" and often characterized by exile or diaspora. For Hirsch, such artworks offer the possibility of mediating a trauma that does not have the language of direct experience but that has the sentience of knowledge (Hirsch 1997: 22).

72 Attie (1994: 10). During the projections, Attie documented the responses from pedestrians and residents. For a critical review of Attie's work, see (1995).

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- 73 Benjamin (1999: 417).
 74 Berman (2010: 132).
 75 Halbwachs (1980: 140).
 76 Said (2001: 173-186; 186).
 77 Said (2001: 186).
 78 The museum reopened its doors in the mid-1990s and is now officially called German-Russian Museum Berlin-Karlsborst. Previously, it was known as Museum of the Unconditional Surrender of Fascist Germany in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945.
 79 Edensor (2005: 99).
 80 Lahusen (2006: 736-746; 741).
 81 Yampolsky (1995: 93-112; 99).

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