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Twilight Memories
Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia

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Escape From Amnesia

The Museum as Mass Medium

The battle against the museum has been an enduring trope of modernist culture. Emerging in its modern form around the time of the French Revolution that first made the Louvre into a museum, the museum has become the privileged institutional site of the three centuries old “*querelle des anciens et des modernes*” (quarrel of the ancients and the moderns). It has stood in the dead eye of the storm of progress serving as catalyst for the articulation of tradition and nation, heritage and canon, and has provided the master maps for the construction of cultural legitimacy in both a national and a universalist sense.¹ In its disciplinary archives and collections, it helped define the identity of Western civilization by drawing external and internal boundaries that relied as much on exclusions and marginalizations as it did on positive codifications.² At the same time, the modern museum has always been attacked as a symptom of cultural ossification by all those speaking in the name of life and cultural renewal against the dead weight of the past.

The recent battle between moderns and postmoderns has only been the latest instance of this *querelle*. But in the shift from modernity to postmodernity, the

museum itself has undergone a surprising transformation: perhaps for the first time in the history of avant-gardes, the museum in its broadest sense has changed its role from whipping boy to favorite son in the family of cultural institutions. This transformation is of course most visible in the happy symbiosis between postmodern architecture and new museum buildings. The success of the museum may well be one of the salient symptoms of Western culture in the 1980s: ever more museums were planned and built as the practical corollary to the "end of everything" discourse.³ The planned obsolescence of consumer society found its counterpoint in a relentless museummania. The museum's role as site of an elitist conservation, a bastion of tradition and high culture gave way to the museum as mass medium, as a site of spectacular mise-en-scène and operatic exuberance.

This surprising role change calls for reflection, as it seems to have a profound impact on the politics of exhibiting and viewing. Put more concretely: the old dichotomy between permanent museum collection and temporary exhibit no longer pertains at a time when the permanent collection is increasingly subject to temporary rearrangement and long distance travelling, and temporary exhibits are enshrined on video and in lavish catalogues, thus constituting permanent collections of their own which can in turn be circulated. Strategies such as collecting, citing, and appropriating have proliferated in contemporary aesthetic practices, often of course accompanied by the declared intent to articulate a critique of the museum's privileged and pivotal concepts such as uniqueness and originality. Not that such procedures are entirely novel, but their recent foregrounding points to a strikingly broad cultural phenomenon that has been described adequately with the ugly term "musealization."⁴

Indeed, a museal sensibility seems to be occupying ever larger chunks of everyday culture and experience. If you think of the historicizing restoration of old urban centers, whole museum villages and landscapes, the boom of flea markets, retro fashions, and nostalgia waves, the obsessive self-musealization per video recorder, memoir writing and confessional literature, and if you add to that the electronic totalization of the world on data banks, then the museum can indeed no longer be described as a single institution with stable and well-drawn boundaries. The museum in this broad amorphous sense has become a key paradigm of contemporary cultural activities.

The new museum and exhibition practices correspond to changing audience expectations. Spectators in ever larger numbers seem to be looking for emphatic experiences, instant illuminations, stellar events, and blockbuster shows rather than serious and meticulous appropriation of cultural knowledge. And yet the



question remains: how do we explain this success of the musealized past in an age that has been accused time and again for its loss of a sense of history, its deficient memory, its pervasive amnesia? An older sociological critique of the museum as institution that saw its function as reinforcing "among some people the feeling of belonging and among others the feeling of exclusion"⁵ does not seem to be quite pertinent any longer for the current museum scene which has buried the museum as temple for the muses in order to resurrect it as a hybrid space somewhere between public fair and department store.

The Old Museum and the Symbolic Order

To begin with a properly museal gesture, we must remember that, like the discovery of history itself in its emphatic sense with Voltaire, Vico, and Herder, the museum is a direct effect of modernization rather than somehow standing on its edge or even outside it. It is not the sense of secure traditions that marks the beginnings of the museum, but rather their loss combined with a multi-layered desire for (re)construction. A traditional society without a secular teleological concept of history does not need a museum, but modernity is unthinkable without its museal project. Thus it is perfectly within the logic of modernity that a museum of modern art was founded when modernism had not yet run its course: New York's MOMA in 1929.⁶ One might even suggest that the need for a modern museum already inhered in Hegel's reflections on the end of art, articulated over a hundred years earlier. Except, of course, that the first such museum could only be built in the New World, where the new itself seemed to age at a faster pace than it did on the old continent.

Ultimately, however, the differences in the pace of obsolescence between Europe and the United States were only differences of degree. As the acceleration of history and culture since the eighteenth century has made an increasing number of objects and phenomena, including art movements, obsolete at ever faster rates, the museum emerged as the paradigmatic institution that collects, salvages, and preserves that which has fallen to the ravages of modernization. But in doing so, it inevitably will construct the past in light of the discourses of the present and in terms of present-day interest. Fundamentally dialectical, the museum serves both as burial chamber of the past—with all that entails in terms of decay, erosion, forgetting—and as site of possible resurrections, however mediated and contaminated, in the eyes of the beholder. No matter how much the museum, consciously or unconsciously, produces and affirms the symbolic order, there is always a surplus of meaning that exceeds set ideological boundaries, opening spaces for reflection and counter-hegemonic memory.

This dialectical nature of the museum, which is inscribed into its very procedures of collecting and exhibiting, is missed by those who simply celebrate it as guarantor of unquestioned possessions, as bank vault of Western traditions and canons, as site of appreciative and unproblematic dialogue with other cultures or with the past. But neither is it fully recognized by those who attack the museum in Althusserian terms as ideological state apparatus whose effects are limited to serving ruling class needs of legitimization and domination. True enough, the museum has always had legitimizing functions and it still does. And if one looks at the origins and history of collections, one can go further and describe the museum from Napoleon to Hitler as a beneficiary of imperialist theft and nationalist self-aggrandizement. In the case of so-called natural history museums especially, the link between the collectors' salvage operation and the exercise of raw power, even genocide, is palpably there in the exhibits themselves: Madame Tussauds of otherness.

I don't want to relativize this ideological critique of the museum as a legitimizing agent for capitalist modernization and as a triumphalist showcase for the loot of territorial expansion and colonialization. This critique is as valid for the imperial past as it is in the age of corporate sponsorship: witness Hans Haacke's brilliant satire on the link between museum culture and petro-capital in "Metromobiltan" (1985). What I am arguing, however, is that, in a different register and today more than ever, the museum also seems to fulfill a vital anthropologically rooted need under modern conditions: it enables the moderns to negotiate and to articulate a relationship to the past that is always also a relationship to the transitory and to death, our own included. As Adorno once pointed out, museum and mausoleum are associated by more than just phonetics.⁷ Against the anti-museum discourse still dominant among intellectuals, one might even see the museum as our own *memento mori*, and as such, a life-enhancing rather than mummifying institution in an age bent on the destructive denial of death: the museum thus as a site and testing ground for reflections on temporality and subjectivity, identity and alterity.

The exact nature of what I take to be the moderns' and, for that matter, postmoderns' anthropological need for the museum is open to debate. All I want to emphasize here is that the institutional critique of the museum as enforcer of the symbolic order does not exhaust its multiple effects. The key question here is of course whether the new museum culture of spectacle and *mise-en-scène* can still fulfill such functions, or whether the much discussed liquidation of the sense of history and the death of the subject, the postmodern celebration of surface versus depth, speed versus slowness has deprived the museum of its specific aura of temporality.⁸ However one may answer that question in the

end, the purely institutional critique along the lines of power-knowledge-ideological apparatus, which operates from the top down, needs to be complemented by a bottom-up perspective that investigates spectator desire and subject inscriptions, audience response, interest groups, and the segmentation of overlapping public spheres addressed by a large variety of museums and exhibition practices today. Such a sociological analysis, however, is not what I will offer, as I am interested in broader cultural and philosophical reflections regarding the changing status of memory and temporal perception in contemporary consumer culture.

At any rate, the traditional museum critique and its postmodern variants seem rather helpless at a time when more museums are founded and more people flock to museums and exhibitions than ever before. The death of the museum, so valiantly announced in the 1960s, was evidently not the last word. Thus, it simply will not do to denounce the recent museum boom as expressing the cultural conservatism of the 1980s which presumably has brought back the museum as institution of canonical truth and cultural authority, if not authoritarianism. The reorganization of cultural capital as we experienced it in the 1980s in the debates about postmodernism, multiculturalism and cultural studies, and as it has affected museum practices in multiple ways cannot be reduced to one political line. Nor is it enough to criticize new exhibition practices in the arts as spectacle and mass entertainment the primary aim of which is to push the art market from craze to ecstasy to obscenity. While the increasing commodification of art is indisputable, the commodity critique alone is far from yielding aesthetic or epistemological criteria on how to read specific works, artistic practices, or exhibitions. Nor is it able to go beyond an ultimately contemptuous view of audiences as manipulated and reified culture cattle. All too often, such attacks are indebted to vanguard/avant-gardist positions in politics and art which have become themselves frail, exhausted and consumptive in recent years.

Avant-garde and the Museum

The problematic nature of the concept of avant-gardism, its implications in the ideology of progress and modernization, its complex complicities with fascism and Third International Communism, have been discussed extensively in recent years. The evolution of postmodernism since the 1960s is not understandable without an acknowledgment of how first it revitalized the impetus of the historical avant-garde and subsequently delivered that ethos up to a withering critique.⁹ The debate about the avant-garde is indeed intimately linked to the

debate about the museum, and both are at the core of what we call the postmodern. It was after all the historical avant-garde—futurism, dada, surrealism, constructivism, and the avant-garde groupings in the early Soviet Union—that battled the museum most radically and relentlessly by calling (in different ways) for the elimination of the past, by practicing the semiological destruction of all traditional forms of representation, and by advocating a dictatorship of the future. For the avant-gardist culture of manifestos with their rhetoric of total rejection of tradition and the euphoric, apocalyptic celebration of an altogether different future that was thought to be on the horizon, the museum was indeed a plausible scapegoat.¹⁰ It seemed to embody all of the monumentalizing, hegemonic, and pompous aspirations of the bourgeois age that had ended in the bankruptcy of the Great War. The avant-garde's museumphobia, which was shared by iconoclasts on the left and right, is understandable if one remembers that the discourse of the museum then took place within a framework of radical social and political change, especially in Russia in the wake of the bolshevik revolution and in Germany after the lost war. A culture that believed in the breakthrough toward an utterly new life in a revolutionized society could not be expected to have much use for the museum.

This avant-gardist rejection of the museum has remained a staple in intellectual circles to this day.¹¹ The wholesale critique of the museum has not yet liberated itself from certain avant-gardist presuppositions that were rooted in a historically specific relationship between tradition and the new that was different from ours. Few who have written on the museum in the 1980s have thus argued that we need to rethink (and not just out of a desire to deconstruct) the museum beyond the binary parameters of avant-garde versus tradition, museum versus modernity (or postmodernity), transgression versus co-option, left cultural politics versus neoconservatism. Of course, there is a place for institutional critiques of the museum, but they should be site-specific rather than global in that avant-gardist sense.¹² For some time now and for good postmodern reasons, we have become suspicious of certain radical claims of avant-gardism, revived, as they were, to a considerable extent in the 1960s. I would suggest that the avant-garde's museumphobia, its collapsing of the museal project with mummification and necrophilia is one such claim that belongs itself in the museum. We need to move beyond various forms of the old museum critique which are surprisingly homogeneous in their attack on ossification, reification, and cultural hegemony even if the focus of the attack may be quite different now from what it once was: then the museum as bastion of high culture, now, very differently, as the new kingpin of the culture industry.

Alternatives: The Museum and the Postmodern

As we are groping toward redefining the tasks of the museum beyond the museum/modernity dialectic, a look further back into the nineteenth century, the prehistory of avant-gardism, may be useful. This earlier phase of modernity reveals a more complex attitude toward the museum than that held by the historical avant-garde, and to that extent it helps free us from the avant-gardist prejudice without delivering us to the insidious cultural conservatism of recent years. A few brief comments will have to suffice. The German romantics simultaneously attacked the museal gaze of the eighteenth-century classicists and engaged themselves, quite consciously so, in their own museal project of gigantic proportions: collecting ballads, folklore, and folktales, obsessively translating works from different ages and different European and Oriental literatures, and privileging the Middle Ages as site of a redeemed culture and future utopia, all in the name of a radically new, post-classical modern world. In their time, the romantics constructed an alternative museum, based on their pressing need to collect and to celebrate precisely those cultural artifacts that had been marginalized and excluded by the dominant culture of the preceding century. The construction of the cultural identity of modern Germany went hand in hand with museal excavations that later formed the bedrock of German nationalism. The selectively organized past was recognized as indispensable for the construction of the future.

Similarly, Marx and Nietzsche were very much concerned with alternative, anti-hegemonic views of history: their very different celebrations of the storm of progress, of liberation and freedom, and the emergence of a new culture were always coupled with an acknowledgment of the need for a lifeline to the past. More than that: only historical understanding and reconstruction guaranteed for either that the past as burden and nightmare, as monumentally stifling or archivally mummified could be shaken off. Texts such as *The Eighteenth Brumaire* or the introduction to the *Grundrisse* as well as *The Birth of Tragedy* or the second of the *Untimely Meditations* on the uses and abuses of history demonstrate that they fully understood the dialectic of innovative drive and museal desire, the tension between the need to forget and the desire to remember. Marx and Nietzsche's texts are themselves testimonies to the productivity of a thought that locates itself in that tension between tradition and anticipation. They knew that the struggle for the future cannot operate *ex nihilo*, that it needs memory and remembrance as vital energizers.

Of course, one could suggest that despite claims to the contrary, the museal gaze was even present within the avant-garde itself. Apart from the dependence on a shared image of the bourgeois culture one rejected, we might think of the

surrealists' play with obsolete objects as sites of illumination, as interpreted by Benjamin. We might see Malevich's black square as part of the tradition of the icon rather than a total break with representation. Or we might recall Brecht's dramaturgical practice of historicizing and estranging, which achieves its effects by inscribing a relationship to the past in order to overcome it. The examples could be multiplied. However far one might wish to push such an argument, it does not change the basic fact that avant-gardism is unthinkable without its pathological fear of the museum. The fact that surrealism and all the other avant-garde movements themselves ended up in the museum only goes to show that in the modern world nothing escapes the logic of musealization. But why should we see that as failure, as betrayal, as defeat? The psychologizing argument advanced by some, that the avant-garde's hatred for the museum expressed the deep-seated and unconscious fear of its own eventual mummification and ultimate failure, is an argument made with the benefit of hindsight, and it remains locked into the ethos of avant-gardism itself. Since the late 1950s, the death of the avant-garde *in* the museum has become a much cited trope. Many have seen it as the ultimate victory of the museum in this cultural battle, and, on this view, the many Museums of Contemporary Art, all projects of the post-war period, have only added insult to injury. But victories tend to imprint their effects on the victor as much as on the vanquished, and one may well want to investigate the extent to which the musealization of the avant-garde's project to cross the boundaries between art and life has actually helped to bring down the walls of the museum, to democratize the institution, at least in terms of accessibility, and to facilitate the recent transformation of the museum from fortress for the select few to mass medium, from treasury for enshrined objects to performance site and *mise-en-scène* for an ever larger public.

The fate of the avant-garde is tied to the recent transformation of the museum in another paradoxical way. The waning of avant-gardism as dominant ethos of aesthetic practices since the 1970s has also contributed to the increasing (though of course not pervasive) blurring of boundaries between museum and exhibition projects which seems to characterize the museum landscape these days. Ever more frequently, museums get into the business of temporary exhibitions. A number of auteurist exhibitions in the 1980s were presented as museums: Harald Szeemann's Museum of Obsessions, Claudio Lange's Museum of the Utopias of Survival, Daniel Spoerri and Elisabeth Plessen's Musée sentimental de Prusse. While some exhibition practitioners will still hold on to the old dichotomy, fearing the museum like the kiss of death, museum curators increasingly take on functions formerly considered to lie in the domain of the temporary exhibition

such as criticism, interpretation, public mediation, even *mise-en-scène*. The acceleration within the curator's job description is even grammatically indicated: there now is a verb "to curate," and it is precisely not limited to the traditional functions of the "keeper" of collections. On the contrary, to curate these days means to mobilize collections, to set them in motion within the walls of the home museum and across the globe as well as in the heads of the spectators.

My hypothesis would be that in the age of the postmodern the museum has not simply been restored to a position of traditional cultural authority, as some critics would have it, but that it is currently undergoing a process of transformation that may signal, in its own small and specific way, the end of the traditional museum/modernity dialectic. Put hyperbolically, the museum is no longer simply the guardian of treasures and artifacts from the past discreetly exhibited for the select group of experts and connoisseurs; no longer is its position in the eye of the storm, nor do its walls provide a barrier against the world outside.

Banners and billboards on museum fronts indicate how close the museum has moved to the world of spectacle, of the popular fair and mass entertainment. The museum itself has been sucked into the maelstrom of modernization: museum shows are managed and advertised as major spectacles with calculable benefits for sponsors, organizers, and city budgets, and the claim to fame of any major metropolis will depend considerably on the attractiveness of its museal sites. Within the institution, the position of museum director is ever more frequently split into the different functions of artistic director and budget director. The long-standing but often hidden intimacy between culture and capital is becoming ever more visible, not to say blatant, and, as Jürgen Habermas has observed, a new intimacy has developed in recent years between culture and politics, realms which a now obsolete cold war ideology went to great contortions to keep apart.¹³

Of course, this new and public politicization of the museum is highly suspect, but it can also be turned to productive use. Thus it strikes me as a failure of dialectical thinking if the same critics who, at an earlier time, went to great lengths to lament the ideological staying power of the autonomy aesthetic and who insisted that no art can ever avoid the inscriptions and effects of the political now shed tears over the blatant and crude politicization of art and culture in the current American *Kulturkampf* (culture war).

There are, after all, contradictions. On the one hand, the new politics of culture clearly harnesses the museum to improve a city or company image: Berlin and New York need this kind of image help as much as Mobil or Exxon (two major sponsors of 1980s blockbusters in the United States) and in both

cities museum politics has become a matter of high public interest. The museum is pressured to serve the tourist industry with its benefits to urban economies, even to advance party politics, as when Chancellor Helmut Kohl planned to donate a museum of German history to Berlin as part of his effort to nurture a "normalized" national identity for the Germans, to sanitize Germany's past.¹⁴ On the other hand, this new museum politics also decapitates traditional strategies that safeguarded the exclusionary and elite nature of the museum. Thus the myths of aesthetic autonomy and scientific objectivity of museum collections can no longer be used by anyone with a straight face against those who, with persuasive political arguments, claim museum space for aspects of past and present culture repressed, blocked out, or marginalized by traditional museum practice. There has been slow but important progress in the past decade in the tracings of hidden and repressed pasts, the reclaiming of underrepresented or falsely represented traditions for the purposes of current political struggles, which are always also struggles for multilayered cultural identity and forms of self-understanding. New cultural and organizational networks have been created both within and without such cultural institutions as the museum or the academy. It is a great irony that Walter Benjamin's often cited demand to brush history against the grain and to wrest tradition away from conformism has been heeded at a time when the museum itself bought into the capitalist culture of spectacle.

There are yet other ways in which the new intimacy between culture and politics can open up avenues for alternative museum practices. Think of the old quality argument, often advanced by traditionalist critics in order to marginalize the art and culture of minority groups or peripheral territories. This kind of argument is losing ground in an age that does not offer any clear consensus as to what actually belongs in a museum. Indeed, the quality argument collapses once the documentation of everyday life and of regional cultures, the collecting of industrial and technological artifacts, furniture, toys, clothes, and so forth becomes an ever more legitimate museal project, as it has in recent years. Ironically again, it may have been the avant-gardist blurring of the boundaries between art and life, high culture and its various others, that has significantly contributed to the falling of the walls of the museum. Surely, Adorno was quite prescient when, almost forty years ago, he observed: "The process that delivers every artwork up to the museum . . . is irreversible."¹⁵ But he could hardly have foreseen the extent of institutional changes wrought on the museum during the 1970s and 1980s. Nor could he have intimated that what to him had to appear as the victory of the museum over the avant-garde might in the end turn out to

be a victory of the avant-garde over the museum, even though not in the way the avant-garde hoped for it. A Pyrrhic victory, to be sure, and yet a victory.

The Lure of Polemics

Of course, the recent museummania and exhibition craze has its downside, and it is tempting to polemicize. Take acceleration: the speed with which the work of art moves from studio to collector, to dealer to museum to retrospective, and not always in this order, has been dramatically increased. As in all acceleration processes of this kind, some of the stages have been tendentially victimized by this vertiginous speed. Thus the distance between collector and dealer seems to move toward a vanishing point, and given the increasingly poor performance of museums at Sotheby's or Christie's, some would cynically argue that the museum is left in the cold while art itself is moving toward the vanishing point: the work disappearing into a bank deposit and emerging into visibility only when it is put back on the auction block. The main function left to the museum in this process is to validate the work of a few young super-artists (Schnabel, Salle, Koons come to mind) in order to supply the market, to drive up the price and deliver the trademark of young genius to the auction banks. Thus the museum helps put the price of art out of its own reach. And even though the market is no longer quite as overheated as in the 1980s, only a financial crash, it seems, could prevent the further implosion of art via speculative money and museal asset management.

Acceleration has also affected the speed of the bodies passing in front of the exhibited objects. The disciplining of bodies in the show in the interest of the growth of visitor statistics works with such subtle pedagogic tools as the walkman tour. For those refusing to be put into a state of active slumber by the walkman, the museum applies the more brutal tactics of overcrowding which in turn results in the invisibility of what one has come to see: this new invisibility of art as the latest form of the sublime. And further: just as in our metropolitan centers the flaneur, an outsider already in Baudelaire's time, has been replaced by the marathon runner, the only place where the flaneur still had a hide-out, namely the museum, is increasingly turned into an analogue of Fifth Avenue at rush hour—at a somewhat slower pace, to be sure, but who would want to bet on the unlikelihood of a further speed-up? Perhaps we should expect the museum marathon as the cultural innovation of the impending *fin-de-siècle*.

Acceleration, of course, has also occurred in the foundation of new museums all through the 1980s, the expansion of venerable old ones, the marketing of exhibition related T-shirts, posters, Christmas cards and repro-preciosities. The

original artwork has become a device to sell its multiply-reproduced derivatives; reproducibility turned into a ploy to auraticize the original after the decay of aura, a final victory of Adorno over Benjamin. The shift toward show business seems irreversible. Contemporary art is delivered to the museum in the manner of in-time production, the museum itself is delivered to the postmodern culture net, the world of spectacle. What, after all, is the difference between the Rolling Stones' blown-up giant honky tonk woman in their show *Steel Wheels* and the larger than life femme fatale nude in gold, taken from a Gustav Klimt painting, that adorned the roof of Vienna's Künstlerhaus at the occasion of the 1985 exhibit of turn-of-the-century Viennese art and culture?

As one gives in to the temptation to polemicize, one tends to overlook the risk that such polemics may lead straight back to a nostalgia for the old museum, as the place of serious contemplation and earnest pedagogy, the leisure of the flaneur and the arrogance of the connoisseur. One may even perversely long for the museum tourism of the 1950s which was able to "do the Louvre" in ten minutes: Venus de Milo, Mona Lisa and out again, a utopian dream for today's multitudes forced to wait outside the infamous pyramid in the Louvre's courtyard. Surely, the rush of the culture masses into the museum must not be mistaken for the ultimate fulfillment of the call of the 1960s to democratize culture. Nor, however, should it be vilified. The old culture industry reproach, now levelled against the former guardian of high culture, not only has to deny the undeniable fascination exerted by the new and spectacular exhibitions. It also hides the inner stratification and heterogeneity of spectator interests and of exhibition practices. Polemics against the newly found reconciliation between masses and muses skirt the basic issue of how to explain the popularity of the museum, the desire for exhibitions, for cultural events and experiences which cuts across social classes and cultural groups. It also prevents reflection on how to use this desire, this fascination, without giving in unconditionally to instant entertainment and blockbuster exhibitionism. For desire there is, no matter how much the culture industry may stimulate, entice, seduce, manipulate, and exploit. This desire needs to be taken seriously as a symptom of cultural change. It is something that is alive in our contemporary culture and should be worked into exhibition projects in productive ways. It is not exactly a new idea to suggest that entertainment and spectacle can function in tandem with complex forms of enlightenment in aesthetic experience. It may be more difficult to define terms like "aesthetic" and "experience" at a time when both terms have fallen victim to the populist pieties of the anti-aesthetic and the ecstasies of simulation. At any rate, the attractions of the spectacular

show—whether it be of Egyptian mummies, historical figures, or contemporary art—must be explained, not dismissed.

Three Explanatory Models

It seems to me that there are three fairly distinct, though partially overlapping and competing models that seek to make sense of the museum and exhibition mania of recent years. First there is the hermeneutically-oriented culture-as-compensation model developed by a number of neoconservative philosophers in Germany, who go back to Arnold Gehlen's social philosophy, Gadamer's hermeneutics of tradition, and Joachim Ritter's philosophical thesis that the erosion of tradition in modernity generates organs of remembrance such as the humanities, societies for historical preservation, and the museum.¹⁶ Secondly, there is the poststructuralist and secretly apocalyptic theory of musealization as terminal cancer of our fin-de-siècle as articulated by Jean Baudrillard and Henri Pierre Jeudy. And thirdly, least developed but most suggestive, there is the more sociologically and Critical-Theory-oriented model that argues the emergence of a new stage of consumer capitalism and calls it, untranslatable, *Kulturgesellschaft*. All three models are symptomatic products of the 1980s, not only in the sense that they seek to reflect empirical changes in the culture of museums and exhibitions, which they all do, but also in the sense that they reflect the cultural and political debates of the 1980s and offer disparate, even conflicting views on contemporary culture and its relationship to the body politic. I do not think any of these models can make an overriding claim on truth, but that is not a deficiency to be remedied by some as yet-to-be-articulated meta-theory. The lack of, or rather the renunciation of the pretense to an Archimedean point, the impossibility of the one correct narrative must be taken as strategic advantage, a liberating rather than restricting moment. By playing the three positions—neoconservatism, poststructuralism, Critical Theory—against each other, we may indeed arrive at a better understanding of musealization as a key symptom of our postmodern culture.

Let me first take the compensation thesis. Its two major representatives are Hermann Lübbe and Odo Marquard, who emerged in the preunification *Kulturmampf* (culture war) of the 1980s in West Germany as major opponents of Critical Theory, Habermas and so on. Already in the early 1980s, Hermann Lübbe described musealization as central to the shifting temporal sensibility (*Zeit-Verhältnisse*) of our time.¹⁷ He showed how musealization was no longer bound to the institution in the narrow sense, but had infiltrated all areas of everyday life. Lübbe's diagnosis posits an expansive historicism of our contemporary culture, and he claims that never before has a cultural present been obsessed with

the past to the same extent. In the tradition of conservative critiques of modernization, Lübbe argues that modernization is accompanied by the atrophy of valid traditions, a loss of rationality and the entropy of stable and lasting life experiences. The ever increasing speed of scientific, technical, and cultural innovation produces ever larger quantities of the non-synchronous, and it objectively shrinks the chronological expansion of what can be considered the present.

This, I think, is an extremely important observation, as it points to a great paradox: the more the present of advanced consumer capitalism prevails over past and future, sucking both into an expanding *synchronous* space (Alexander Kluge speaks of the attack of the present on the rest of time), the weaker is its grip on itself, the less stability or identity it provides for contemporary subjects. There is both too much and too little present at the same time, a historically novel situation that creates unbearable tensions in our "structure of feeling," as Raymond Williams would call it.¹⁸ In Lübbe's theory the museum compensates for this loss of stability. It offers traditional forms of cultural identity to a destabilized modern subject, pretending that these cultural traditions have not been affected themselves by modernization.

The argument about shifts in the sensibility of temporality needs to be pushed in a different direction, one that accepts rather than denies the fundamental shift in structures of feeling, experience, and perception as they characterize our simultaneously expanding and shrinking present. Here it may be useful to think back to some of the classically modernist formulations in Adorno and Benjamin. Thus today the perpetual appearance of the present as the new can no longer be described critically as the eternal recurrence of the same, as Adorno and Benjamin had suggested. Such a formulation suggests too much stability, too much homogeneity. Consumer capitalism today no longer simply homogenizes territories and populations as it did in America in the 1920s or in Weimar Germany. As mass consumption has spread into the *furthest* reaches of modern societies, the code word has become diversification, whether it is soft drinks or software, cable channels or electronics equipment. The new is precisely not the eternal recurrence of the same. The frantic pace of technological invention together with the expansion of sectors of virtual reality in the *Lebenswelt* (life-world) are producing changes in the structures of perception and feeling that a theory based on the concept of homogenization and homogeneous time cannot grasp. Thus our fascination with the new is always already muted, for we know that the new tends to include its own vanishing, the foreknowledge of its obsolescence in its very moment of appearance. The time span of presence granted the new shrinks and moves toward the vanishing point.

In the field of cultural consumption, too, we can observe a shift in the structures of perception and experience: the quick fix seems to have become the goal of the cultural experience sought after in the temporary exhibition. But this is the crux of the issue: an older concept of culture, based as it is on continuity, heritage, possession, and canon, which of course should not be simply abandoned, prevents us from analyzing the potentially productive and valid side of the quick fix. If modes of aesthetic perception are indeed linked to modes of modern life, as Benjamin and Simmel have argued so forcefully, we would have to take the quick fix more seriously as a type of cultural experience symptomatic of our age, one that reflects the processes of acceleration in our larger environment and relies on more advanced levels of visual literacy. Here the key question is this: How do we distinguish between what I earlier called instant entertainment, with all its shallowness and surface therapeutics, and what a past vocabulary would describe as aesthetic illumination and "genuine" experience? Is it plausible to suggest that the highly individualized modernist epiphany (as celebrated by Joyce, Hofmannsthal, Rilke, and Proust) has become a publicly organized phenomenon in the postmodern culture of vanishing acts? That, here too, modernism has invaded the everyday rather than having become obsolete? If that were so, how could the postmodern museum epiphany be distinguished from its modernist predecessor, the experience of bliss in the museum hall as Proust's remembering gaze associates it with that other symptomatic space of nineteenth-century modernity, his beloved Gare St.-Lazare?¹⁹ Does the postmodern museum epiphany, too, provide a sense of bliss outside time, a sense of transcendence, or does it perhaps open up a space for memory and recollection denied outside the museum's walls? Does the transitory museum experience have to be read simply as banal repetition à la Lionel Trilling's notorious comment about the 1960s as modernism in the streets? Or are those equally negative critics right who would claim that the postmodern museum experience is totally spatial, replacing older presumably temporal and contemplative emotions with free-floating and impersonal intensities characteristic of a culture without affect and expression?²⁰

Empirically verifiable answers to such questions are obviously hard to come by, and some speculative reflection may be unavoidable. But it seems undeniable to me that rather than having been displaced by categories of space, "the great high-modernist thematics of time and temporality"²¹ are alive and well in the museum boom. The question is not if, but how they are alive, and how they are perhaps coded differently in postmodern culture.

One thing seems true. As the present moves experientially toward entropy, feelers are cast toward different times and other spaces, dialogues are opened up

with voices formerly excluded by the strong present of Western modernity. What Benjamin used to call the “homogeneous empty time” of everyday life under capitalism may be emptier than ever, but it is not extended nor substantial enough any longer to be called homogeneous. The turn toward the residues of ancestral cultures and local traditions, the privileging of the non-synchronous and heterogeneous, the desire to preserve, to lend a historical aura to objects otherwise condemned to be thrown away, to become obsolete—all of this can indeed be read as reaction to the accelerated speed of modernization, as an attempt to break out of the swirling empty space of the everyday present and to claim a sense of time and memory. It reflects an attempt by ever more fragmented subjects to live with the fragments, even to forge shifting and unfixed identities out of such fragments, rather than chasing some elusive unity or totality.

Within modernity itself, a crisis situation has emerged that undermines the very tenets on which the ideology of modernization was built, with its strong subject, its notion of linear continuous time, and its belief in the superiority of the modern over the premodern and primitive. The former exclusions and marginalizations have entered into our present and are restructuring our past. Given the current demographic shifts in the United States and the migrations worldwide, this process is likely to intensify in the coming years. Some within the fortress of modernity will experience these changes as a threat, as dangerous and identity-eroding invasions. Others will welcome them as small but important steps toward a more genuinely heteronational culture, one that no longer feels the need to homogenize and is learning how to live pragmatically with real difference. We are far from that.

And this is where the difficulties with the notion of cultural compensation emerge. While Lübbe also accounts for the loss of a sense of future, for a certain fatigue of civilization—even a growing fear of the future—so typical of the early 1980s in Europe, he never really comes to terms with the crisis of the ideology of progress, universalism and modernization, a crisis that produced the museummania of the past decades in the first place. In Lübbe’s scheme, museum culture provides compensation for that which one cannot prevent anyway: Hölderlin’s Rhine hymns and Schumann’s Rhine symphony as compensation for the Rhine as communal European sewer, as a cynic might suggest. Technological progress is accepted as destiny, but the notion of culture as experiment, of the museum as laboratory of the senses, is abandoned to a regressive notion of culture as museum of past glories. A strangely unreal traditionalism of modernity results as the museum is asked to abandon the kind of self-reflection to which modernity owes its very existence. The museum and the real

world of the present remain separated, and the museum is recommended (quaintly and not unlike the family in the Victorian age) as the site of leisure, calmness, and meditation needed to confront the ravages of acceleration outside its walls.²²

The compensation thesis thus ultimately fails to account for the internal change of the museum itself and it remains blind to the multiple blurring of boundaries between museal and non-museal (historical, archeological) sites of cultural production and consumption today. Compensation here means culture as oasis, as affirming rather than questioning the chaos outside, and it implies a mode of viewing that is simply no longer in tune with the specular and spectacular nature of contemporary museum practices.

It comes as no surprise, then, that Lübbe’s companion theorist Odo Marquard, in an explicit turn against all left readings of modernity, calls for a yes to the modern world and offers the philosophy of compensation as the desired non-crisis theory of modernity.²³ For him unavoidable disturbances of modernization are always already compensated for: technification is compensated for by historicization, homogenization by pluralism, the dominance of science and a totalizing view of history by the multi-perspectival narratives of the humanities. Conservative philosophy finds itself in a happy embrace with a caricature of sociological systems theory, but the real crises and conflicts in contemporary culture are left far behind.

These are not innocent suggestions to be excused with the intellectual provincialism of their place of origin. It is almost pathetic to see how the compensation theorists still celebrate the benefits of universal modernization (with some lip service paid to ecological concerns), while discussing cultural compensation exclusively in terms of a national or regional culture. They ignore the new multinationalism of the museum world and thus never even get close to reflecting on the promises and problems inherent in the new multicultural pluralism of recent years. Here compensation theory gets stuck in nationalist muck and one-dimensional identity politics. This is Kohl culture, but I fear it is not just a German symptom. One does not have to be a pessimist to forecast a bright future for this kind of theorizing in a united Europe. National or regional identity on the cultural level compensate for the withering of national political sovereignty in a united Europe and serve as a means to keep the outside out and the foreigners inside in their place: Fortress Europe in this double sense. Compensation theory, indeed.

Diametrically opposed to compensation theory is the simulation and catastrophe theory of musealization as it has been developed by the French theorists Jean

Baudrillard and Henri Pierre Jeudy.²⁴ Where the conservatives paint a quaintly antiquated picture of the museum without ever raising the question of media, Jeudy and Baudrillard view the museum as just another simulation machine: the museum as mass medium is no longer distinguishable from television.

Like the compensation theorists, Baudrillard and Jeudy start from the observation of the seemingly unlimited expansion of the museal in the contemporary world. Jeudy speaks of the musealization of whole industrial regions, the restoration of inner cities, the dream to provide every individual with his or her own personal museum via collection, preservation, and video recordings. Baudrillard analyzes a number of different strategies of musealization, from the ethnographic freezing of a tribe (the Tasaday of the Philippines), the doubling of an original museal space (the caves of Lascaux), to exhumation and repatriation (reconstruction of an original state), and finally to the hyperreality of Disneyland, that strange obsession of so many European theorists.

For Baudrillard, musealization in its many forms is the pathological attempt of contemporary culture to preserve, to control, to dominate the real in order to hide the fact that the real is in agony due to the spread of simulation. Like television, musealization simulates the real and in doing so contributes to its agony. Musealization is precisely the opposite of preservation: for Baudrillard, and similarly for Jeudy, it is killing, freezing, sterilizing, dehistoricizing and decontextualizing. These of course are the slogans of the old critique that dismisses the museum as a burial chamber. But this Nietzschean critique of archival history receives its postmodern spin in the age of unchecked proliferation of nuclear weapons and the armament debates of the early 1980s. The notion of the world as museum, as theater of memories, is an attempt to cope with the anticipated nuclear holocaust, with the fear of disappearance. In this scheme, musealization functions like a neutron bomb: all life will have been drained from the planet, but the museum still stands, not as a ruin, but as a memorial. In some way, we already live after the nuclear holocaust which does not even need to take place any more. Musealization appears as a symptom of a terminal ice age, as the last step in the logic of that dialectic of enlightenment which moves from self-preservation via domination of self and other toward a totalitarianism of collective dead memory beyond any self and any life, as Jeudy would have us believe.

Clearly, this apocalyptic view of an exploded museum as imploded world renders something important of the sensibilities of French intellectual culture in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and it had a certain hold on the imagination during the time of the missile crisis. But even though it valiantly polemicizes against the deadly Eurocentrism of museum practices, it hardly escapes the orbit



of what it attacks. In its desperate desire for apocalypse, it never so much as acknowledges any of the vital attempts to work through repressed or marginalized pasts, nor does it acknowledge the various attempts to create alternative forms of museum activities. The old ossification critique held the day in both Jeudy and Baudrillard.

Yet Jeudy was right in suggesting that it would be a collective delusion to believe that the museum can neutralize fears and anxieties about the real world. He implicitly rejected the conservative notion that the museum can provide compensation for the damages of modernization. He also recognized how the museum had moved from mere accumulation to mise-en-scène and simulation. But neither he nor Baudrillard were able or willing to open up the dialectic movements within this process. The concept of simulation prevents them from focusing on the differences that might obtain between the television gaze and the gaze in the museum. Jeudy gets close to it when he suggests that cultural relics or residues are ambivalent, that they represent simultaneously the symbolic guarantee of identity and the possibility of exit from that identity.²⁵ As relic the object irritates and seduces, he says. The relic is not a sign of death, it holds the secret. But—and this is where Jeudy goes into reverse again—any museal mise-en-scène can only drain this mysterious element that the relic holds. It becomes clear that Jeudy harbors some notion of the original relic, untainted by the present, unpolluted by artificial mise-en-scène. But the notion of the relic before the museum, as it were, before any mise-en-scène is itself an originary myth. Here Jeudy is simply not poststructuralist enough. There never was any presentation of the relics of past cultures without mediation, without mise-en-scène. Objects of the past have always been pulled into the present via the gaze that hit them, and the irritation, the seduction, the secret they may hold is never only on the side of the object in some state of purity, as it were; it is always and intensely located on the side of the viewer and the present as well. It is the live gaze that endows the object with its aura, but this aura also depends on the object's materiality and opaqueness. That fact, however, cannot enter into view if one continues to describe the museum as medium of ossification and death, as simulation machine, which, like television, sucks all meanings into the Baudrillardian black hole of the end of time and the collapse of visibility.

As the nuclear threat has faded in the wake of the political collapse of the Soviet Empire, the argument about the museum as catastrophic anticipation of the end of Europe is fast becoming irrelevant, especially since the museum boom shows no signs of abating. That permits us to focus more pragmatically on the relationship between museum and media consumption, an aspect that was

raised, but short-circuited by Baudrillard and Jeudy. Here the theory of a *Kulturgesellschaft*, developed primarily in the orbit of the Berlin cultural journal *Ästhetik und Kommunikation*,²⁶ can provide a good starting point for further questioning. *Kulturgesellschaft* is a society in which cultural activity functions increasingly as a socializing agency comparable to and often even against the grain of nation, family, profession, state. Especially in youth cultures or subcultures, identities are provisionally taken up and articulated via lifestyle patterns and elaborate subcultural codes. Cultural activity in general is not seen as providing rest and compensation for a subject desiring to regenerate stability and equilibrium in the mirror of a unified (or reunified) tradition. The growth and proliferation of cultural activity is rather interpreted as an agent of modernization, as representing a new stage of consumer society in the West. Instead of being separate from modernization, the museum functions as its privileged cultural agent. Contrary to the simulation phantasm, which reduces social theory to media theory in the shadow of an all-but-forgotten Marshall McLuhan, the notion of a multi-layered *Kulturgesellschaft* holds on to insights of Frankfurt School critical theory, but it refuses simply to extend the old culture industry reproach to include the phenomenon of musealization.

The *Kulturgesellschaft* thesis addresses the culture industry problem where it suggests that the mass media, especially television, have created an unquenchable desire for experiences and events, for authenticity and identity which, however, television is unable to satisfy. Put differently: the level of visual expectations in our society has been raised to a degree where the scopic desire for the screen mutates into the desire for something else. This is a suggestion I would like to pursue, because it puts the museum in a position of offering something that cannot be had on television. The link between the museum as mass medium and television is maintained, but it is not sacrificed to a false identity logic.

Surely, it is no coincidence that the museum boom emerged simultaneously with the cabling of the metropolis: the more television programs available, the stronger the need for something different. Or so it seems. But what difference does one find in the museum? Is it the real, the physical materiality of the museal object, the exhibited artifact that enables authentic experience as opposed to the always fleeting unreality of the image on the screen? The answer to that question cannot be unequivocal, for in human culture, there is no such thing as the *pristine* object prior to representation. After all, even the museum of old used strategies of selection and arrangement, presentation and narrativization which were all *nachträglich*, belated, reconstructive, at best approximating what was held to have been the real and often quite deliberately severed from its context. Indeed,

the point of exhibiting was quite frequently to forget the real, to lift the object out of its original *everyday functional* context, thereby enhancing its alterity, and to open it up to potential dialogue with other ages: the museum object as historical hieroglyph rather than simply a banal piece of information; its reading an act of memory, its very materiality grounding its aura of historical distance and transcendence in time.

In the postmodern world, this venerable museal technique is put to new purposes, enhanced by spectacular *mise-en-scène* and obviously meeting with great public success. The need for *auratic* objects, for permanent embodiments, for the experience of the out-of-the-ordinary, seems indisputably a key factor of our museumphilia. Objects that have lasted through the ages are by that very virtue located outside of the destructive circulation of commodities destined for the garbage heap. The older an object, the more presence it can command, the more distinct it is from current-and-soon-to-be-obsolete as well as recent-and-already-obsolete objects. That alone may be enough to lend them an aura, to reenchant them beyond any instrumental functions they may have had at an earlier time. It may be precisely the isolation of the object from its genealogical context that permits the experience via the museal glance of reenchantment. Clearly, such longing for the authentic is a form of fetishism. But even if the museum as institution is now thoroughly embedded in the culture industry, it is precisely not commodity fetishism in a Marxian or Adornean sense that is at stake here. The museum fetish itself transcends exchange value. It seems to carry with it something like an anamnestic dimension, a kind of memory value. The more mummified an object is, the more intense its ability to yield experience, a sense of the authentic. No matter how fragile or dim the relation between museum object and the reality it documents may be, either in the way it is exhibited or in the mind of the spectator, as object it carries a register of reality which even the live television broadcast cannot match. Where the medium is the message, and the message is the fleeting image on the screen, the real will always inevitably remain blocked out. Where the medium is presence and presence only, and presence is the live telecast of action news, the past will always necessarily remain blocked out. From a media-specific material viewpoint, then, it does not make sense to describe the postmodern museum as just another simulation apparatus. Even when the museum uses video and television programming in supplementary and didactic ways (which it often does to great advantage), it offers an alternative to channel flicking that is grounded in the materiality of the exhibited objects and in their temporal aura. The materiality of the objects themselves seems to function like a guarantee against simu-

lation, but—and this is the contradiction—their very anamnestic effect can never entirely escape the orbit of simulation and is even enhanced by the simulation of the spectacular *mise-en-scène*.

The museal gaze thus may be said to revoke the Weberian disenchantment of the world in modernity and to reclaim a sense of non-synchronicity and of the past. In the experience of a transitory reenchantment, which like ritual can be repeated, this gaze at museal things also resists the progressive dematerialization of the world which is driven by television and the virtual realities of computer networking. The gaze at the museal object may provide a sense of its opaque and impenetrable materiality as well as an anamnestic space within which the transitoriness and differentiability of human cultures can be grasped. Via the activity of memory, set in motion and nurtured by the contemporary museum in its broadest and most amorphous sense, the museal gaze expands the ever shrinking space of the (real) present in a culture of amnesia, planned obsolescence and ever more synchronic and timeless information flows, the hyperspace of the coming age of information highways.

In relation to the increasing storage capacity of data banks, which can be seen as the contemporary version of the American ideology of “more is better,” the museum should be rediscovered as a space for *creative forgetting*. The idea of the comprehensive data bank and the information superhighway is just as incompatible with memory as the television image is with material reality.

What needs to be captured and theorized today is precisely the ways in which museum and exhibition culture in the broadest sense provides a terrain that can offer multiple narratives of meaning at a time when the metanarratives of modernity, including those inscribed into the universal survey museum itself, have lost their persuasiveness, when more people are eager to hear and see other stories, to hear and see the stories of others, when identities are shaped in multiply layered and never-ceasing negotiations between self and other, rather than being fixed and taken for granted in the framework of family and faith, race and nation.

The popularity of the museum is, I think, a major cultural symptom of the crisis of the Western faith in modernization as panacea. One way of judging its activities must be to determine to what extent it helps overcome the insidious ideology of the superiority of one culture over all others in space and time, to what extent and in what ways it opens itself to other representations, and how it will be able to foreground problems of representation, narrative, and memory in its designs and exhibits.

Of course, many museums still have trouble adjusting to their new role as



cultural mediators in an environment in which demands for multiculturalism and the realities of migrations and demographic shifts clash increasingly with ethnic strife, culturalist racisms, and a general resurgence of nationalism and xenophobia. The notion, however, that the museum exhibit invariably co-opts, represses, and sterilizes is itself sterile and induces paralysis. It fails to acknowledge how new curatorial practices and new forms of spectatorship have made the museum into a cultural space quite different from what it was in the age of a now classical modernity. The museum must continue to work with such change, refine its strategies of representation, and offer its spaces as sites of cultural contestation and negotiation. It may be, however, that precisely this desire to move the museum beyond a modernity that hid its nationalist and imperial ambitions behind the veil of cultural universalism, will ultimately reveal the museum as that which it always also could have been, but never became in the environment of a restrictive modernity: a genuinely modern institution, a space for the cultures of this world to collide and to display their heterogeneity, even irreconcilability, to network, to hybridize and to live together in the gaze and the memory of the spectator.

Chapter 1: *Escape From Amnesia*

- 1 On the social history of the art museum see Walter Grasskamp, *Museumsgründer und Museumsstürmer* (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1981); on the universal survey museum see Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach, "The Universal Survey Museum," *Art History*, vol. 3, no. 4 (December 1980): 448–69; on the history museum see Gottfried Korff, Martin Roth, eds. *Das historische Museum: Labor, Schaubühne, Identitätsfabrik* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 1990).
- 2 On the relationship of Western museums to practices of collecting, disciplinary archives, and discursive traditions see James Clifford, "On Collecting Art and Culture," in James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 215–51.
- 3 On the development of the museum in the 1980s see Achim Preiß, Karl Stamm, Frank Günter Zehnder, eds. *Das Museum: Die Entwicklung in den 80er Jahren* (Munich: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1990).
- 4 For an instructive and rather comprehensive collection of essays on this topic see Wolfgang Zacharias, ed. *Zeitphänomen Musealisierung: Das Verschwinden der Gegenwart und die Konstruktion der Erinnerung* (Essen: Klartext Verlag, 1990). For a critical assessment of museal tendencies in the art of the 1980s see Bazon Brock, *Die Re-Dekade: Kunst und Kultur der 80er Jahre* (Munich: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1990).
- 5 Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Darbel, *L'Amour de l'art: Les musées d'art européens et leur public* (Paris, 1969), 165.
- 6 For a critique of the ideological inscriptions in the Museum of Modern Art's organization of architectural and exhibition space see Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach, "The Museum of Modern Art as Late Capitalist Ritual: An Iconographic Analysis," *Marxist Perspectives*, vol. 1, no. 4 (Winter 1978): 28–51. For a feminist critique of the Museum of Modern Art's narrative of the modern see Carol Duncan, "The MoMA's Hot Mamas," *Art Journal*, vol. 48, no. 2 (Summer 1989): 171–78.
- 7 Theodor W. Adorno, *Prismen: Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1955), 215.
- 8 Such a critical view is forcefully advanced by Rosalind Krauss who uses Fredric Jameson's postmodernism paradigm to collapse museum management (asset circulation), exhibition practices (the switch from the encyclopedic diachronic museum to the synchronic museum) and spectator psychology (the search for free-floating and impersonal intensities and schizo-euphoria). While this model is quite persuasive with regard to the type of art exhibit she discusses, it is theoretically limited for a broader discussion of contemporary museum practices. Rosalind Krauss, "The Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalist Museum," *October*, 54 (Fall 1990): 3–17.
- 9 I have attempted to differentiate historically between an avant-gardist postmodernism of the 1960s and an increasingly post-avant-gardist postmodernism of the 1970s in several essays within Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1986). English edition London: Macmillan 1986.
- 10 On museumphobia of the historical avant-garde see especially Grasskamp, *Museumsgründer und Museumsstürmer*, 42–72.
- 11 This avant-gardist position along with a rich and sophisticated critique of the modern museum in the context of contemporary artistic practices and institutional critiques is prevalent in Douglas Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins* (Cambridge, London: MIT Press, 1993).
- 12 Douglas Crimp's (see note 11) and Rosalind Krauss's (see note 8) work contains good

examples of such site-specific critiques, but it does not quite leave the orbit of an earlier totalizing museum critique.

- 13 Jürgen Habermas, "Die neue Intimität zwischen Kultur und Politik," in *Die nachholende Revolution* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1990), 9–18.
- 14 Ironically, the site where this museum was to be erected by Aldo Rossi, namely the Spreebogen near the Reichstag, is now reserved for new government buildings, and the Museum of German History has had to make way for the return of the German government to its new capital, Berlin.
- 15 Adorno, *Prismen*, 230.
- 16 Especially pertinent here is Ritter's 1963 essay entitled "Die Aufgabe der Geisteswissenschaften in der modernen Gesellschaft," in Ritter, *Subjektivität. Sechs Aufsätze* (Frankfurt am Main, 1974), 105 ff.
- 17 Hermann Lübbe, "Der Fortschritt und das Museum: Über den Grund unseres Vergnügens an historischen Gegenständen," *The 1981 Bithell Memorial Lecture* (London: University of London, 1982). Reprinted in Lübbe, *Die Aufbringlichkeit der Geschichte: Herausforderungen der Moderne vom Historismus bis zum Nationalsozialismus* (Graz/Vienna/Cologne: Verlag Styria, 1989), 13–29. Cf. also Lübbe, *Zeit-Verhältnisse: Zur Kulturphilosophie des Fortschritts* (Graz/Vienna/Cologne: Verlag Styria, 1983). The title essay of this volume "Zeit-Verhältnisse: Über die veränderte Gegenwart von Zukunft und Vergangenheit" is available in Zacharias, *Zeitphänomen Musealisierung*, 40–49.
- 18 See Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 128–35.
- 19 On the museum in Proust see Theodor W. Adorno, "Valéry Proust Museum," in *Prismen*, 215–31.
- 20 See Krauss, "Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalist Museum," 14.
- 21 Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," *New Left Review*, 146 (July/August 1984): 64.
- 22 For a similar critique of compensation theory see Gottfried Fiedl, "Testamentskultur: Musealisierung und Kompensation," in Zacharias, ed. *Zeitphänomen Musealisierung*, 166–79; Herbert Schnädelbach, "Kritik der Kompensation," *Kursbuch*, 91 (March 1988): 35–45.
- 23 See Odo Marquard, "Verspätete Moralistik," *Kursbuch*, 91 (March 1988): 17.
- 24 The pertinent references are to Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1983) especially the essay "The Precession of Simulacra"; Jean Baudrillard, "Das fraktale Subjekt," *Ästhetik und Kommunikation*, 67/68 (1987): 35–39; Henri Pierre Jeudy, *Die Welt als Museum* (Berlin: Merve Verlag, 1987); Jeudy, "Der Komplex der Museophilie," in Zacharias, ed. *Zeitphänomen Musealisierung*, 115–21; Jeudy, "Die Musealisierung der Welt oder Die Erinnerung des Gegenwärtigen," *Ästhetik und Kommunikation*, 67/68 (1987): 23–30.
- 25 Jeudy, "Die Musealisierung der Welt," 25.
- 26 See the issue entitled *Kulturgesellschaft: Inszenierte Ereignisse* of *Ästhetik und Kommunikation*, 67/68 (1987), especially Dietmar Kamper, Eberhard Knödler-Bunte, Marie-Louise Plessen, Christoph Wulf, "Tendenzen der Kulturgesellschaft: Eine Diskussion," 55–74. The two approaches separated in my argument, namely the simulation theory approach and the Critical Theory approach, are indiscriminately intermingled in this issue.