Flesh, Blood, Relic & Liturgy

On the Subject of the Museum

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Abstract

This thesis models a methodology for disturbing the liberal-progressive accord in museum practice and for contesting the ascendancy of post-criticality within museology. Together the liberal-progressive accord and post-critical museology normalise a subject position that, despite appearances of agency, cannot act upon its socio-historical situation. How, I ask, might the subject of the museum be reinvested in ways that counteract its demise in the relation between the contemporary museum and museology? Seeking to re/establish the conditions of existence for (a) critical museology, in the first instance this thesis asserts the primacy of "the subject" as *the* museological problematic requiring theorisation.

A poetical-analytical schema of *flesh*, *blood*, *relic* and *liturgy*, a schema that pivots on the transposition of the work of Eric L. Santner into a museological frame, provides the means for reasserting the primacy of the subject in a manner able to anticipate new capacities for action in that subject.

Incited by the museal representation of violent legacies, in particular the centennial commemorations of the First World War, this thesis encircles one institutional formation and two exhibitionary productions: The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa and its exhibition *Gallipoli: The Scale of Our War* and the standalone production, *The Great War Exhibition*. These monographs provide material instrumental to the argument.

Emerging as a negation of the negation that follows the schema's intervention into the relation between the museum and museology are three affirmations addressed to the prospects of (a) critical museology: (1) *a critical museology must transfer crisis into the heart of its language*; (2) *a critical museology must attend to that which does not work but which is made to work in the museum*; (3) *a critical museology must strike at that which is not there*.

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Part One

Introduction

The Subject of the Museum

Subject Matter

Occasioned by questions concerning the emancipatory potential of the museum form, this thesis spins on the relation between the subject, the museum and museology. Seeking to re/establish the conditions of existence for (a) critical museology, this thesis asserts the primacy of "the subject" as *the* museological problematic requiring theorisation. Devoted to teasing out the mutations of ideology in the museum and museology, the focus of this thesis is the place the subject occupies in liberal-progressive museum practice, and the way this positioning is conceptualised by post-critical museology. Where, I ask, do such practices situate the subject in both present and future tenses? Where do they leave us with respect to emancipatory prospects? While framed as liberatory, this thesis argues that these practices in fact deliver the subject into the domain of the undead in which prospects for the subject to act upon its socio-historical situation are barred.

"What fundamental purposes," Carol Duncan (1995, p. 3) once asked, "do museums serve in the context of Western societies?" To take this a step further, what fundamental purpose should (a) critical museology serve? My contention is that post-critical museology misapprehends both the "fundamental purpose/s" of the museum and the position of the subject within such functioning. This thesis seeks to disturb the foundations of such practices and strike at such misapprehensions. This immodest ambition has been pursued earnestly though with my tongue firmly in my cheek.

The principal mechanism for achieving these aspirations is found in the development and deployment of the poetical-analytical schema of *flesh, blood, relic* and *liturgy*. The crucial theoretical pivot for this methodology is provided by American scholar Eric L. Santner and

his critical synthesis of the compound and contested legacies of psychoanalysis, biopolitics, political theology and Marxism. Addressed to understanding the representational deadlocks and dilemmas of modernity, to those processes in which the symbolic is *made* (to) *matter*, the subject of such Santnerian thinking is (continually) formed from such representational impasses, is (mal)formed as an inoperative yet manic figure of crisis, as a *creature* (Santner, 2006).

Although the museum is the key formation in this study, it is this figure of crisis, this figure similarly spinning and endlessly caught in webs of sticky but spectral relations that stirs at its heart. It is both the subject and the subject *en masse*, the public body of bodies, that interests me here, and it is to stories of the production and exploitation of this body (*these bodies*) in modern, capitalistic, liberal and (allegedly) disenchanted society that I attend most closely. The objective of this thesis is to find (a) language capable of striking at those museal practices and discourses that are complicit in the conservation of this figure of crisis.

The flare-like point of excitation for my inquiry is the remembrance and representation of violent and traumatic legacies within the museal matrix outlined above. This is in part because it is at sites of the memorialisation of violence and trauma that the structural stresses and deadlocks that striate the social body and bodies more generally draw into view (Edkins, 2003). Encircling one institutional formation and two exhibitionary productions, The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa and its exhibition *Gallipoli: The Scale of Our War* and the New Zealand Ministry for Culture and Heritage funded *The Great War Exhibition*, this thesis is also illustrated by a series of museal anecdotes and vignettes. What these provide are opportunities to further scrutinise the trajectories of the museum form and the subject of the museum, and to consider museology in motion.

Conceived as a means of catching those processes that ensure our creaturely stuckness in the act, the poetical-analytical schema aims to make as fact the determining museal relations that (unwittingly) intensify such representational impasses. Further to the question of museal trajectories, what, I ask, has been conceded historically, is being given up in the present and forfeited in terms of the future? Put differently, what has become normative in museums and museology, how, and to what end? Cutting across the relation between the subject, the museum and museology, this thesis models an (embryonic) methodology for contending with the post-critical and (neo)liberal hegemony that has become normative within museums and museology.

In the first instance, I suggest that the "turn to the visitor" that has exemplified museums since the late-twentieth century (Weil, 1999; Hooper-Greenhill, 2007b) and the arrival of the "new

museology" (Vergo, 1989) must be read against the grain. This turn, a turn informed by historicist and specifically Foucauldian orientations and underpinned by notions of authorial dispersal and subjective empowerment, has almost exclusively been framed in positive – in progressive – terms. Emerging from this accord have been a further series of developments, including the adoption of "affective practices" (Matthews, 2013; Waterton & Dittmer, 2014; Witcomb, 2013); a commitment to "ethics" (Gluhovic, 2013; Message, 2007; Sandell, 2012; Arnold-de Simine, 2013); and an emphasis on the "real" of trauma (Edkins, 2003; Foster, 2015; Powell & Kokkranikal, 2014; Arnold-de Simine, 2013). That this turn to the visitor and that such practices have, paradoxically, consummated a simultaneous objectification *and* evacuation of (the position of) the subject is a central contention of this thesis. Rather than expediting liberation, my question is whether such emphases and practices function to further limit the possibility of really-existing transformation.

My wager is that by bringing such questions into the orbit of the work of Santner and that of figures occupying his critical pantheon, figures such as Walter Benjamin, Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, Giorgio Agamben, and Slavoj Žižek, resources for the (re) establishment of (a) critical museology may be found. The constellation of "outmoded tropes" that comprise the poetical-analytical schema, arise out of an engagement with the expanded field in which Santner operates and in reaction to the post-critical position (Dewdney, Dibosa & Walsh, 2013; Kletchka, 2018) that, and despite rarely being named as such, has become a default setting within museology. The schema is conceived as means of (re)apprehending the subject of the museum, for grasping how liberal-progressive museum practice positions the subject with respect to power. Essential to this schema is Santner's (2011) conception of "the flesh."

Formed from a tense interweaving of Foucauldian biopolitics as read by Giorgio Agamben (1998) and Roberto Esposito (2008), Ernst Kantorowicz's (1957) theorising of the king's two bodies, and Freud's notion of libido as interpreted by Lacan, Santner's theory of the flesh is addressed to the question of how we come to be and to feel invested in – and tied to and bound by – our ways and forms of life. By way of introduction, Santner's (2011) argument is that biopolitics assumes:

> its particular urgency and expansiveness in modernity because what is at issue in it is not simply the biological life or health of populations but the 'sublime' life-substance of the People, who, at least in principle, become the bearers of sovereignty, assume the dignity of the *prince.* (pp. xi-xii)

According to this line of argument, biopolitics is – indeed *must be*, and whether "it" knows it or not – concerned with more than simply the management of health and hygiene. The "thing" that is being mis/managed, Santner contends, is the flesh. My proposition is that the museum

is one of the institutions involved in the (essentially unknowing) mis/management of the special immaterial stuff that is the flesh, and my ambition is to bring these fleshy structural relations into a new museological language.

Arising from the schema are three interlinked affirmations, affirmations intended to provide scaffolding for re/establishing the conditions of existence for (a) critical museology. (1) *A critical museology must transfer crisis into the heart of its language*. A language must be found that is capable of contending with the figures and forms of crisis around which the museum revolves. (2) *A critical museology must attend to that which does not work but which is made to work in the museum*. That which exceeds the intelligible is turned into a source of glory and *more* – meaning undeadening – *life* by the museum, and a critical museology is tasked with catching such processes in the act. (3) *A critical museology must strike at that which is not there*. This Dadaist aspiration is conceived as a means of troubling – in its very articulation – museological normativity. However, and vitally, it also has *very real* application. Firstly, it is precisely that which is "not there" that is *constitutive* of "the museum." And secondly, it is imperative to arm the subject of the museum with a language by which it might strike at that which ensures that recognition of itself as capable of acting upon its socio-historical situation is foreclosed on.

The possibility of radical transformation at both individual and collective levels underpins this thesis. Further to this, and as the communist hypothesis suggests, *the existing world is not necessary* (Badiou, 2008). Put otherwise, the forms of domination and subordination that characterise modern existence are neither inevitable nor inexorable. However, and to return to the matter at hand, if the culture industry, as Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno made clear in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947/1972), "gears itself almost entirely to the development of cultural forms which are compatible with the preservation of capitalism" (Merriman, 1991, p. 13), there being, in other words, no "outside," and if the revolutionary futures of modernism now lie in ruins about us (Hatherley, 2008), what more is there to say? *Today's museums cannot be redeemed*.

Firstly, however, the impossibility of redeeming *today's* museums does not eliminate "the museum" from communist horizons. To bring Alain Badiou (2008) into conversation with Walter Benjamin (1968), it is precisely the revolutionary promise of the museum "out of time" – for example, the "degraded" museum of the French Revolution with its universal ambitions (Haider, 2018) – that excites me here. Secondly, it remains imperative that we trace the fractures, that we seek to understand in what ways and to what degree/s today's museum contributes to our similarly constitutive *and* contingent stuckness.

Why, in other words, and to draw on a question that needled the Frankfurt School scholars, is revolution "not on the table" (Jeffries, 2016)? Why does the prospect continue to provoke such terror when the alternative is demonstrably *terrible* (Miéville, 2022)? In terms of the subject matter in question, my argument is that it is precisely – and paradoxically – the notion that the museum can act as a site of and conduit for the betterment of society which, and even if (or *specifically* if) in "liberatory" (Knell, 2019) or "disobedient" (Message, 2018) mode, that forecloses on the possibility of really-existing (revolutionary) transformation. It is the promise of betterment without corresponding structural transformation that ensures our stuckness.

In other words, the idea of the new museum being, in Andreas Huyssen's (1995, p. 15) words, "counter-hegemonical" is a central preoccupation. "No matter how much the museum, consciously or unconsciously, produced and affirms the symbolic order," Huyssen writes, "there is always a surplus of meaning that exceed set ideological boundaries, opening spaces for reflection and counter-hegemonic memory." However, and as theorists such as Žižek (2008) and William T.S. Mazzarella (2017) make clear, it is just such surplus and ambiguity that enables ideology to function effectively. We have to be given the space to believe that we participate of our own volition. What I ask is that the reader keeps this coagulation of instrumentality and freedom in mind here and, in particular, the notion that these must be understood not as two separate operations but the same. It is precisely our "freedoms" that are performing the most valuable ideologically instrumental work. To draw on the Lacanian insight that the subject must *act as if* the system is a system for the system to function as such (Beckett, 2020), the subject must *feel* free in order for the liberal mirage of freedom to operate effectively.

Although capitalism could be said to be feasting on the decaying libidinal economy of popular sovereignty, "the People" has re-emerged as a primary locus of feeling and investment (Haider, 2018). The re/turn to explicitly authoritarian-populist political imaginaries – these conduits for (misplaced, surplus) energy that coalesce fractiously around immunitarian ideals ("freedom from") of the nationalistic, nativist, or ethno-centric varieties on the one hand, and libertarian impulses (the "freedom to" identify, hate, fuck as one pleases) on the other – in no way suggests a withering of the power of capital. In fact, the opposite is the case (Žižek, 2008; 2022; Haider, 2018), with it being easier today to imagine the end of the world than it is the end of capitalism (Fisher, 2009). In other words, the recent upheavals do not signify a break from the usual run of things but a ramification and coming into the light of symptomatic torsions by which the modern subject is woven and which are structurally integral to the liberal-democratic capitalistic order (Mazzarella, Santner & Schuster, 2019).

Regarding the symptomatic torsions by which the subject is woven, I ask how bodies are turned into subjects and into subjects that come to feel as if things *matter*? How do we come to be *libidinally* implicated? That is, how do we come to be invested in the field of the other? How do we come to inhabit, occupy, and erotically invest in the signifiers that represent us in the world? Or, and as Mazzarella (2017) asks: what powers authority and what in us responds to it? How are we – and again, how do we come to be – attached to certain things? To expand on a question posed above: how is the subject conceived and imagined, recognised and represented, and, for that matter, misrecognised and misrepresented by the museum? How does the museum situate us in – or against or over – the world? To tie these two strands together – that is, the museum as a technology of investment *and* representation – what binds bodies to communities, discourses, markets, particular emotional regimes or, indeed, particular subject positions and offices? What is it that binds subjects to – or together with – those very real fantasies such as the People or the market or, for that matter, *Trump*? My argument is that "the museum" works to charge-up and underwrite such eminently social though utterly personal fantasies: its business is everyone's business. Better still: its business is everyone's *enjoyment.*

Our enjoyments and affiliations are compelled – and whether positively or negatively – by the troubling and perplexing "memory" of the violence that attends the foundation and continuation of the social order. By this I am referring to "the ultimate arbitrariness of the rule of law insofar as it is founded and thereafter sustained by a dimension of force and violence" (Goodman, 2015, pp. 2-3). Or as Facundo Vega (2017, pp. 697-698) puts it, the arbitrariness of law follows "the absence of incontestable principles that justify life-in-common and the persistence of political orders." What I am suggesting is that these "memories" manifest not as narcotics but as stimulants. That such excitations are fundamentally undeadening is the crucial point (Santner, 2001). In this way, my objective in this thesis is to elaborate on the role played by the museum-form in the production of such undeadening effects, effects that come into being and come to be enjoyed in the process of *making matter*.

Thomas Laqueur (2010, p. 23) once observed that "communities are made and remade through shared memories and obligations to remember." And yet just as these obligations never signify unambiguously, in the sense that there are always missing bits, surpluses and remainders, there is also no innocent way of approaching legacies of violence. Or, and as Santner (2011, p. xx) writes, "we might say that all human projects are not only haunted by but also to some extent sustained by the persistence of archaic forms of projective identification." Put differently, modernity is not only haunted but dialectically structured by, for want of a better word, the "irrational." Such irrationality holds everything (and *everybody*) together while

simultaneously tearing it (and *every body*) apart. To lodge such irrationality in the "throat" of museology is one of the objectives of this thesis.

Public practices of memorialisation are frequently enlisted as sources of verification and substantiation for symbolic authority. Elaine Scarry's theorising around wounded bodies provides us with a decisive intervention here. Scarry (1985, p. 14) argues that at certain moments when there is a societal crisis of belief, when a central idea has stopped functioning, has ceased to elicit a population's belief – either, she writes, "because it is manifestly fictitious or because it has for some reason been divested of ordinary forms of substantiation" – the "sheer material factualness of the human body will be borrowed to lend that cultural construct the aura of 'realness' and 'certainty.'" Additionally, and to bring Scarry into dialogue with Santner (2006), the symbolic pressures of remembrance manifest as bodily impingements. Subjects are *made creaturely* by (conscious or otherwise) acts of remembrance. The oscillating circularity at work vis-à-vis the *enjoyment* of remembrance, capital's manufacture of wreckage, the exploitation of wounded bodies, and the generation of creaturely subjects is important to keep in mind as we proceed.

The issue of enjoyment (of *jouissance*) recurs throughout this thesis. In Lacanian theory (Sharpe, 2010) *jouissance* stands for the pure surplus of enjoyment over standard satisfactions. Customarily though imperfectly translated as enjoyment, *jouissance* refers to that which goes beyond pleasure and into the realms of excess and pain. *Jouissance* thrives on thwarted or illegible desire (Johnston, 2023). Our relations with one another and indeed our "selves" are (unconsciously) structured by *jouissance*. What this means is that the *fact of enjoyment* must be taken into account when considering questions relating to investments and attachments. In terms of my inquiry, if, as the theory of *jouissance* suggests, the subject is endlessly prey to obscure hungers and at the mercy of opaque diktats, the issue of "museal mattering," of its function as a technology of investiture, is cast into a degree of disarray. That *enjoyment* often pivots around relations – whether conscious or otherwise – with the dead (Santner, 2011), and whether known or unknown, further clouds the scene.

In this thesis, the *fact of enjoyment* is also brought into contact with the project of authorial dispersal that has – and whether rhetorically or otherwise – come to characterise today's museums and which is theoretically underwritten by both new and post-critical museologies. In order to circumvent the problem of representation, the problems posed by speaking and standing for, museums have been reconceived as institutions of feeling and feeling free. Staged in the liberal-progressive museum is the spectacle of authority attempting to become consubstantial with its subjects.

That such incorporative fantasies are a vital element of the authoritarian-populist imagination (Mazzarella et al., 2020) needs recognising. In terms of the museum, it is via affect, via the production of spaces of feeling and spaces of feeling free that this project is able – at least in theory – to take place. In further elaboration of this point, Mazzarella (2017, pp. 4-5) has argued that the "fate of human flourishing" is closely entwined with "what Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin called the *mimetic faculty* – a sensuous, transformative, ability to resonate with the world." This faculty, Mazzarella continues, has "increasingly been harnessed by sovereign pretenders, whether political or commercial." I suggest that the museum form, this mimetic faculty, this functionary in the service of *making matter matter*, presents an invaluable resource for sovereign pretenders of all stripes.

Notwithstanding the programmatic coherence with which I have presented this project of authorial dispersal, questions of continuity and rupture are important here. For example, if the modern museum "lives on," in what forms or guises does it appear? What remnants of the revolutionary moment of the modern museum might be said to persist? And what has the museum become in response to the conquest of political, cultural and social space by capital? And, keeping in mind Benjamin Kunkel's (2014, p. 58) counsel that "a basic feature of dialectical thinking is the liability of subject and object to turn into each other, for the way a thing is looked at to become part of the look of the thing," where has that which has been disavowed fled to and what has it – have they – turned into? Such lines of inquiry and argument were precipitated by an unease with certain turns and trends within museology and museum practice since the advent of the new museology, a desire to understand the consequences of neoliberalism having become normative within museums over this period, and scepticism with respect to the liberal-progressive museum's ethical messianism.

It might seem puzzling to be critiquing the museum at a time when around the world not only do those not at the apex continue to exist in a state of financial purgatory (Heal, 2021) but also find themselves under assault in the *soi-disant* "culture wars" (Hicks, 2020; Hicks, 2021; Savage, 2021). That museums today exist as pressure points and "possible sites of a reclaimed public sphere," as American art historian and critic Hal Foster (2020, p. x) has suggested, I neither dispute nor seek to undermine. However, that the museum-form continues to endure and proliferate under what often seem to be radically inhospitable conditions – the opening of an outpost of the Louvre in Abu Dhabi in 2017 being one of the most telling examples – suggests an extraordinary degree of plasticity. In other words, my critique is directed at both liberal and totalitarian versions of the museum. Not only do they make use of the same frames and methodologies, I argue, but they are structurally homologous. They must be thought of

and theorised together and it is upon an understanding of their inseparability that the possibility of "moving beyond" arises.

Additionally, the museum's entanglement with capital via the revolutionary-normative paradigm that is neoliberalism is understood not as a matter of a pure form having being subverted or corrupted but instead signifies the exacerbation of an already compromised one. However, the idea that at the moment of its revolutionary conception on the 10th of August 1793 – with the opening of the Louvre, no less – the public museum *promised*, if only for an instant, *otherwise* is one that stirs at the heart of this thesis. Reflecting on Walter Benjamin's messianic historical vision, Giorgio Agamben (1999, p. 267) wrote of remembrance restoring possibility to the past, "making what happened incomplete and completing what never was. Remembrance is neither what happened nor what did not happen but, rather, their potentialisation, their becoming possible once again." In other words, how might remembrance of this revolutionary moment be an *event*? How might such remembrance be *eruptive*?

In order for such promise to be realised, in order for the revolutionary futures of the museum-form to become possible, critical museology must be reconceived in the present. Two key reference-points and points of departure with respect to this aspiration are British-Australian sociologist Tony Bennett's *The Birth of the Museum* (1995), and American art historian Carol Duncan's study of museums of art, *Civilizing Rituals* (1995). Read in concert, these texts – the first Foucauldian and the second anthropologically-informed – provide a framework for understanding the function of the museum. As located by Bennett, the primary calling of the modern museum is that of parity of representation and parity of access. Put schematically, the museum is framed as a site of *emulation*, *representation*, *observation* and *regulation*. For Duncan, the museum is understood as a ritual structure – both a site of ritual and a ritual form in and of itself – that furnishes "the secular" with new value, and is organized – is scripted – as a site for rites of citizenship. My wager is that in the work of Santner resources may be found with which to relitigate the museal landscape established by Bennett and Duncan and, in the process, for a new critical museology to begin to take shape.

Framework

There are three interlinked movements that require attention when addressing questions relating to the theoretical framework of this thesis. The first of these is the transposition of Santnerian thinking into the field of museology. Drawing on these Santnerian foundations, the second movement consists of the generation of a theoretical framework – the poetical-analytical schema – capable of addressing the questions and crises around which the thesis revolves. Finally, and arising from the schema's findings, three critical affirmations are proposed, affirmations addressed to the prospects of (a) critical museology.

My subject, in a word, is (a subject of) *crisis*. What this means in the first instance is that this thesis was written in and out of an extended moment of crisis. Bearing in mind that crisis is endlessly manipulated for the purpose of hegemonic ascendancy (Burke, 2006), the current crisis in which we find ourselves, a crisis that should be understood as being comprised of the various interleaved crises of late capitalism – climate change and ecological collapse; rampant and breathtaking degrees of exploitation and injustice; democratic deficit and precarity; culture wars, resurgent authoritarianism, Trumpism; COVID-19 – has intensified the chronic state of uncertainty vis-à-vis processes of symbolic investiture. "The museum" – this symbol of authority and validator of our highest values (Duncan, 1995) – is invested in and to varying degrees productive of these crises, and therefore my task has been to conceive of a theoretical and methodological approach that permitted these various crisis vectors to be similarly accounted for and held to account.

However, that the "crises on show" are only part of the equation is a central contention in this thesis. In order to contend with these crises, and whether manifest or veiled, this research is positioned within a series of converging critical *wakes*. Given its emplacement within museum studies, a disciplinary field most closely aligned with sociological and historiographical accounts of human being and human community, this approach – this convergence of political-theological, Marxist, and psychoanalytic thinking – may well appear eccentric. However, what such a conjunction affords is a distinctive form of triangulation and one that brings alien and estranging currents into museology. The central feature of this approach is the transposition of the complex and expansive thinking of Eric L. Santner into the field of museology.

However, although orbiting fixedly around the theoretical insights of Santner, German Jewish cultural critic and philosopher Walter Benjamin and his compatriot, the academic, novelist and poet, W.G. Sebald could be said to serve as totem authors here. Their work, work attuned to the aftereffects of theology in modernity, continually intrudes. Additionally, and to borrow an astrological – and theatrical – image from Benjamin (as cited in Sontag, 1979, p. 8), this work came into the world "under the sign of Saturn – the star of the slowest revolution, the planet of detours and delays."

Eschewing case studies and historical chronology, this thesis is conceived of as *constellatory* in the Benjamin sense (Gilloch, 2002). With this term, Benjamin points to moments of legibility that "ignite the explosive materials that are latent in what has been" (Benjamin as cited in Mazzarella, 2017, p. 9), that arise when "what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation." Keeping in mind that "constellations are accidents of our limited vantage point" (Dillon, 2020, p. 17), what this means is that I favour quotation and juxtaposition, echo and association, argumentation and provocation, allegory and detour. To rework a line Terry Eagleton (2021) used to describe Benjamin's *The Arcades Project*, the eclectism of my source material and the fragmentary structure of the text are reflective of the scattered ruins and ruined histories from which the material arose.

The constellatory method is also modelled in the work of Santner. As Kevis Goodman (2015, p, 12) notes, although interested in "the specificity of (a long) modernity," Santner is primarily interested in historical constellations rather than historical chronology. Attuned to the "conditions of bodies caught up or defined by a history that lies beyond their immediate experience but everywhere affects and seeps into their everyday life," Santner is "everywhere concerned" with what Goodman (2015, p. 12) describes as the experience of historicity. To be such a subject means to be creaturely, it means "to exist in forms of life that are, in turn, contingent, contested, susceptible to breakdown, in a word, *historical*" (Santner, 2014, pp. 84-85). This is an existence that, "as Jacques Derrida writes about haunting in *Spectres of Marx*, 'is historical, to be sure, but is not dated'" (Goodman, 2015, p. 12). To read the museum as an historical constellation means that rather than necessarily focusing on truncations or ruptures, the emphasis falls on listening for those echoes of forms of life that continue to signify despite having lost or changed their meaning. It means being attentive to (the possibility of) *afterlives*.

My thesis is aligned against the post-critical theoretical position that is, and whether consciously or otherwise, increasingly ascendant in the academy (Foster, 2012), in museology and in the museum. It also sits at an oblique angle to the affective (see Jill Bennett (2005))

and new materialist (see, for example, Jane Bennett (2010)) orientations that exist in concert with post-criticality. In contrast to such outlooks, and despite seemingly dwelling on and in similarly interstitial spaces, at the nexus of the semiotic and the somatic, for instance, and correspondingly attentive to the unruliness of world-and-subject-making forces, I maintain a fidelity to the promise of (a) critical museology.

Unlike other claimants to the appellation "critical museology" such as Anthony Shelton (2013) and Jesús Pedro Lorente (2022), I insist that the legacy of critical theory requires repair rather than repudiation. As a – or perhaps *the* – methodology of suspicion (Barnwell, 2020), critical theory is a form of "inquiry into, and interrogation of, basic assumptions in practices and forms of thought" (LaCapra, 2009, p. 2). The particular critical lineage that is most important in this embryonic critical ekphrasis of the museum is the Benjaminian one; a lineage, however, that cannot be associated categorically with any school or, in a sense, progeny. Benjamin worked at a blurry *but* distinct point where the political economy of Marxism faded into political theology; religious thought touched literary theory; historiographical research became divination; cultural archaeology slithered into an astronomy of the street and brothel; and aesthetic inquiry encountered (messianic) revolutionary Romanticism (Löwy, 2016).

This oxymoronic Benjaminian methodology is one of detours, allegory, cabalistic aphorism and eruptive quotations (Jameson, 2022). Such a mode of inquiry is also found, though in very different forms, in the anecdotal approach of Žižek, and the circuitous and dilatory methods of Sebald. Such a methodology is envisaged as providing the tools with which to (attempt to) strike at what is not there. With respect to Marxism, which I take to be both an analytical apparatus and political injunction, I am in broad agreement with Andrew Pendakis and Imre Szeman (2014, p. 16), when they write that it pertains to the need to contest the limits "placed on thought and practice by the historical existence of capitalism."

There are three primary Santnerian texts which I call upon in the development of the poetical-analytical schema: *On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life* (2001); *On Creaturely Life* (2006); and *The Royal Remains* (2011). Drawing on Ernst Kantorowicz's magisterial study of political theology, *The King's Two Bodies* (1957), the latter of these found Santner tracing the dispersal of sovereignty in post-revolutionary Europe. According to Kantorowicz, if the king was to be invested with sovereignty a liturgically formulated doubling was required, leaving the monarch with a natural body that was subject to decay and a sublime body. In order to stand for the "general equivalent," part of the King's "very nature" had to be "elevated to a quasi-divine immortal state" (Bristow 2015, p. 91). Santner's wager was that the advent of modernity did not announce the demise of such complex liturgical processes and dynamics –

not to mention their attendant paradoxes and impasses – but rather their migration to the bodies and social body of the population itself. *The Royal Remains* is devoted to probing the ecstatic character of post-monarchic flesh, to tracking the flesh as it "makes its progress through the institutions, social scenes, somatic disturbances, and ways of desiring that characterize modernity" (Lupton and Gordon, 2012, p. 1). It is in pursuit of some of the enigmas and deadlocks that arose when we became sovereign pretenders that this thesis is dedicated.

Martin Heidegger (as cited in Žižek, 2008, p. 125) once advised that "Our worlds, and consequently our meaningful relations to things, are always based in something that can't be explained in terms of the prevailing intelligible structure of the world." For the purpose of attempting to circumvent such prevailing intelligible structures, a series of outmoded theological tropes are deployed here. Alongside the figures of flesh, blood, relic and liturgy, I also employ concepts including Eucharist, acclamation and glory. These terms perform an estranging function; they are intended to insert crisis into the language of museology.

These theological concepts, concepts in keeping with Santner's analytic sensibilities, emerged out of an engagement with political theology. For Julia Lupton and Graham Hammill (2012, p. 1), political theology is "less a concept like sovereignty," and "more like a coupling or entanglement of ostensibly discrete domains – the political and the theological – out of which early modern and modern concepts, forms of government, and views of history are born." Santner's argument is that political theology – that is, "sacral kingship and its founding metaphors" – "dies into *biopolitics* (the management of life as the administrative project of the modern state), but not without remainders that mutate and manifest in the border phenomena of modern politics as well as the dream work of literature and art" (Lupton and Gordon, 2012, p. 1). Once more, nothing is simply done away with: there are always vestiges, wakes and uncanny remainders and that which is repressed often returns in distorted form.

With respect to my deployment of political theology in relation to the museum and museology, Jeffrey Olick (2007, p. 3) provides a point of entry when he writes of the "persistence of sacred rituals – both political and religious – in the midst of the seemingly secularised economy and polity." Further to this, museum theorists such as Carol Duncan (1995) and Mary Bouquet and Nuno Porto (2005) argue that museums are generative of and constituted by secular rituals. Others such as Sharon Macdonald (2005) and Bruno César Brulon Soares (2009) also relate museum-going to new forms of religiosity sought by the modern self. Each in their own way, and following the compensatory model of modern culture, argue that the museum helps fill the void left by the crossed-out god.

Further to this, in Donald Preziosi and Claire Farago's introduction to *Grasping the World: The Idea of the Museum* (2004b, p. 6), they argue that the emergence of the modern museum needs to be studied in terms of its role in the secularisation of society. Their volume was intended "to open up the theoretical discussion of the social transition from a predominantly dynastic and religious to a secular social organisation that museums effectively engineered and maintain today." The story of this transformation, Preziosi and Farago (2004b, p. 6) wrote, "is complex." It is this complex story that I hope to circulate with here. That said, while in accord with their proposition, the supposed linearity of this process demands close scrutiny. Following the lead of Gil Anidjar (2014), I also understand the secularisation of society to be an enduring fiction. Or, and to turn the kaleidoscope once more, as Carl Schmitt (2005, p. 36) once agued: "All significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularised theological concepts." In other words, "theology" persists *within* "the secular." This, I suggest, has profound implications for understanding the "subject of modernity" and, indeed, the "fundamental purpose" of the museum.

The subject in question here is the subject as conceptualised by Eric Santner: that is, the psychoanalytic (non)subject of Freud and Lacan passed through political-theological and Marxist lenses. Situated at (or *as*) the juncture of the somatic and semiotic, this Santnerian subject is prey to the flesh and rendered creaturely by the representational impasses and structures (material and otherwise) of modernity. It is important to note that a psychoanalytic account suggests that the subject is not only *not* transparent to itself or to others, but is in fact at odds with itself, "split by thoughts, desires, fantasies, and pleasures it can never fully claim as its own and that in some sense both do and do not belong to it" (Santner, 2006, p. xii). Psychoanalysis draws attention to "the constitutive 'too muchness' that characterises the psyche," by the fact that "it includes more reality than it can contain" (Santner, 2001, p. 8). Psychoanalysis concerns itself with the various ways in which this excess is (mis)released and dis/charged.

Becoming a subject "with" an unconscious means to restlessly and repetitively (fail to) metabolise one's existential dependency on institutions that are in turn "sustained by acts of foundation, preservation, and augmentation" (Santner, 2001, p. 26). The institutions in question are those "that endow us with social recognition and intelligibility, that produce and regulate symbolic identities" (Santner, 2001, p. 26). Santner (2001, p. 26) situates the unconscious as "the psychophysical inscription of the procedures – and impasses – of symbolic investiture and legitimation, procedures that are bound up with the notion of sovereignty." In this way, what makes the subject a *subject* and what makes the other *other* is

the fact that "they" bear "an internal alterity, an enigmatic density of desire calling for response beyond any rule-governed reciprocity" (Santner, 2001, p. 9). The subject is "what remains" – the psychosocial effluence – of these ongoing and infinitely differentiated process. This brief excursus on the subject of the unconscious foregrounds some of the difficulties involved in theorising the missing subject of museology.

Poetical-Analytical Schema

The poetical-analytical schema of *flesh*, *blood*, *relic* and *liturgy* is conceived as means of locating the fundamental purpose/s and power of the museum in the present and disturbing the hegemony of post-critical and liberal-progressive thought within museology. What this means in the first instance is to assert the primacy of the subject within the museum and museology. To insist on the centricity of the subject means to demand that this subject be seen in its proper light: as a fleshy creature. Without accounting for this subject, museology, I argue, is condemned to endlessly repeat. Accordingly, the poetical analytical schema performs an intercessionary function with respect to that which is missing from post-critical and liberal-progressive accounts and, specifically, the missing relation between the subject of the museum and post-criticality. Put differently, if criticality is the spectre I desire to haunt museology, post-criticality and its missing relations could be said to be the spectres that I wish to find a language to strike at.

By way of critical engagement with specific emphases of liberal-progressive museum practice, the schema seeks to draw-out and draw attention to particular ideological mutations in the museum and museology. What, I ask, do these practices – practices framed as liberatory – *do* to the subject? My concern in this thesis is with how the misapprehensions of post-critical museology inform the liberal-progressive museum's (unknowing) immunitarian operations that render the (creaturely) subject a (glory-producing) relic. The intervention modelled here takes the form of a methodology that seeks to locate that which produces such dynamics and, in turn, a series of critical affirmations addressed to the question of how such dynamics might be suspended. To bring the subject that is missing into museology is one of the conditions of existence for (a) critical museology.

In terms of their specific functions and affordances, the Santnerian concept of *flesh* is deployed for the purpose of apprehending the liberal-progressive museum's libidinal economy. *Blood*

works to capture the museal production of "more life" (of glory) by way of the representation and remembrance of legacies of violence. By way of a re-reading of the museal dialectic of empiricism and enchantment, *relic* seeks to account for the way in which the fleshy and creaturely gash that is the subject is stitched-up by liberal-progressive museum practice. An adaptation of Svetlana Alper's notion of the museum effect (1991, p. 26), that is, the way the museum "turns all objects into works of art," this conception of the subject as relic is addressed to understanding the consequences of the new museological turn to the visitor. Drawing together the other elements of the schema, *liturgy* is employed as a means of accounting for the mutations of ideology in the museum and museology; for getting to grips with the relation between the subject, the museum and museology.

The poetical-analytical schema similarly situates the museum within the space of representation and highlights how dominant trends within museology have failed to properly account for the deadlocks of and pressures produced "within" this representational space. It needs stressing that this space is generative *of* and formed *from* crises of symbolic investiture. Further to this, Santner described the "present historical moment" in 1990 (p. 150) as being "generally perceived to be one of great disorientation, even despair [...] and one in which most people find it difficult to see themselves as participants in ongoing historical processes and tradition endowed with a legible meaning." Today, not only do we still feel the "shattering impact of modernity" (Žižek, 2008, p. 33), but its effects could be said to grip us with fresh intensity.

Put simply, the three primary institutions of modernity that determine the horizons of experience and meaning – liberalism, scientific discourse and capitalism – cannot plug the crisis of meaning to which modernity has (necessarily) given rise – to "the disintegration of the link [...] between Truth and Meaning" (Žižek, 2008, p. 34). My argument is that it is "here" and "in this capacity" that the museum's business truly begins and where it endlessly fails. That this "here" is in a certain sense a point of absence needs reiterating. My argument is that it is *within* this impasse that (a) critical museology must be situated. Over the following pages I outline the foundations and coordinates of the schema, a schema directed precisely at this deadlock.

Processes of symbolic investiture generate, as Santner (2015, pp. 45-46) explains, "the pressure of a surplus carnality." It is this additional bit that Santner conceptualises as *the flesh*, and it is this that can be, "and historically has been [...] elaborated and figured as a kind of second, virtually real and, indeed, glorious body." Žižek's (1991) reading of Hamlet and the

enigma of Hamlet's inability to slay Claudius provides us with a further opening here. It is not fear that stays his arm, Žižek (1991, p. 256) writes, as he "has nothing but contempt for the guy." Instead, it is because he knows that "he must strike something other than what's there." Given the dispersal of power in modernity, a dispersal similarly (negatively) exacerbated and (positively) undermined by capitalist practices of accumulation by dispossession (Harvey, 2003), and to return to the communist hypothesis and the question of alternative futures, the problem remains finding the *proper loci* for a strike.

For Santner (2015, pp. 45-46), such a strike must target the modes of production of the immaterial stuff that is the flesh, and "new topologies" are required in order "to orient new kinds of 'strikes'". My ambition is to provide both a topography and a set of possible coordinates for just such a strike against one of these modes of production. Santner's intention in *The Royal Remains* (2011) was to provide a psychoanalytically informed account of the biopolitical pressures that arose in the transition from royal to popular sovereignty and to track the vicissitudes of the flesh in modernity via a series of readings of literature, philosophy and political thought. The approach adopted here is a museological means towards such an end.

To modify a line from Kevis Goodman (2015, p. 9), and to expand on a point made above, my contention is that the museum is "charged with the impossible task of indemnifying an order founded upon a core groundlessness and an inaugural violence." Or, and as Santner (2011, p. xxi) argues: "Because this logic of representation can never absolve itself of its own ultimate groundlessness – its lack of an anchoring point in the real – the normative pressures it generates for its members, the pressures to be recognised as *fit* and *fitting* for the symbolic system in question, are always in excess of what could ever be satisfied." Crucially, with the dispersal of sovereignty *every body* was made to bear – was branded with – political weight while simultaneously being made less legible because of the fracturing of the normative codes of monarchical sovereignty (Campbell and Sitze, 2013; Kornbluh, 2012). A person's place in the social order became, concomitantly, less clear *and* more significant. Another way of putting this would be to say that the sovereign subject of modernity is *rendered* sacred in the paradoxical sense outlined by Giorgio Agamben in *Homo Sacer* (1998). When psychoanalysis is brought to bear on this scene things become stranger still. Put simply, because of the essential impersonality of enjoyment (Phillips, 2007), the subject may assume the dignity of the prince, may enjoy the office, but the enjoyment is not her own. *We are all sovereign pretenders*.

The fracturing and dispersal of monarchical sovereignty meant that new sources of spiritual and cultural authority were required, resources that could, as it were, call such affective affiliations into being and "sustain their vitality" (Santner, 2011, p. 163). One such site and

source of spiritual and cultural authority – of glory production and *making matter* – was, as my argument would have it, the museum. However, the ultimate groundlessness of the order of representation means that all such attempts at making matter cannot but fall short and, in a compensatory movement, become excessive. It is this representational impasse that the modern museum revolved anxiously and ultimately fruitlessly around. And it is an impasse that endures.

Indeed, museums continue to produce and stimulate what might be termed affective chronoscapes, visceral though ever-shifting and equivocal temporal landscapes that provisionally bind subjects to particular forms of life. That said, the ways in which the subject is enlisted and branded have undoubtedly become more complex. For example, the museum of today speaks in "our voice," and its glory is not only generated through the mediums of spectacle and authority but via our ("freely" given) affective labours. In this way, the representational impasse is magically resolved. It is in pursuit of such ideological sleights of hand that the schema is addressed.

Dialectical in the sense of existing (continually) as both a formative *and* surplus spectral substance, *the flesh* names that unbearable excess that figures as a – or *the* – source of pressure that drives the subject. For Santner (2011, pp. 18-19), the flesh is that *bit* that goes missing not "once and for all but over and over again" once what he terms the "sovereign operation" is under way. That is, "once the subject has contracted the 'master signifier' that represents it for other signifiers in the space of human action that Lacan referred to as the 'symbolic order'" (Santner, 2011, pp. 18-19). Without taking into account this errant bit of flesh, Santner argues, we cannot make sense of the aforementioned agitated automatism that seems to characterise not only social structures and systems but the subjects of said structures and systems. As I have it, what the museum – this functionary of such sovereign operations – is engaged in (unwittingly) manufacturing, (mis)managing and (mis)representing is precisely this special immaterial stuff that is the flesh.

Although my focus is the representation and remembrance of bloody legacies, it needs emphasising that such disturbance may not feature or read *as such*. The "highest calling" may produce the most profound disorder. Put differently, my concern is with how "documents of civilization" are active in the stimulation of nervous disorder/s. Moreover, the (first) paradox at work here is that liberal-progressive museum practices may be said to excite nervous disorder/s while simultaneously providing therapeutic relief for them.

Mary Bouquet and Nuno Porto (2005, p. 21) take this line of thought into somewhat different terrain when they describe museums as wrapping things "in a mythological universe, indeterminate enough to accommodate multiple layers of identification." I would add that museums are also "mythologically" procreative in the sense of manufacturing a *little extra time*, a *little extra life*. It is precisely the *mythos* of the museum, its extra-temporal mythological universe, that, and apropos Walter Benjamin's critique of the present being characterised by a mythic, dream state (see Susan Buck-Morss, 1991, p. x), is generative of *undeadness*. In the process of producing *a little extra life* the living subject is converted into a relic. The subject is at once (ecstatically) salvaged *and* embalmed.

The museum is also understood here as a – or in fact *the* – space in which natural historical remnants and hieroglyphs, those ciphers of "the irrational" that have validity rather than meaning, come to be (mis)represented and (liturgically) kept alive. In more matter of fact terms, the museum turns things into signs. And, in a further move, the museum is where "things" are turned into Žižekian "sublime objects of ideology" (2008b), those signifiers that give body to the whole (Sharpe, 2010). Trailing in the wake of Santner, my account offers up the incitement that the "carnal" and "irrational" dimensions of power – those elements that do not so much exist as *insist* and elements that are overlooked by post-critical museology – are in certain ways stimulated and mis/managed by the museum. Indeed, the liturgical business of the museum is, I argue, waste management, is the conversion of surplus matter into certain types of (undeadening) energy and enjoyment. The liturgical business of the museum is to transmute blood into glory and redirect glory into the plane of immanence.

Indeed, at the "heart" of the museum – and forming as the poetical-analytical schema's Gordian knot – is the fleshy and fantastic matter of *glory*. Glory is one of the names of the "substance" that stops-up "the law's" vicious circle. As Agamben (2011) might put it, it is the inoperative centre of human being and human community that the machine of glory ceaselessly attempts to capture within itself. Santner (2015) describes the process of glory production and consumption as involving a transferential dynamic. The subject, Santner (2015, pp. 102-103) explains, works at sustaining and "entertaining" the "*Instanz* or agency" of "the Other," *feeding it* with the "splendour of surplus value" that, in turn, "entitles the subject to enjoy its entitlements, its being in the Other." Over the course of this thesis, I seek to trace the role played by the liberal-progressive museum in these transferential dynamics. The implications of post-critical museology's failure to account for such dynamics are also reflected on.

Against this background, Santner (2015, pp. 102-103) continues, "a properly Marxist view of class struggle and revolutionary action would ultimately involve some form of intervention in

these transferential relations, transactions, negotiations." Such an intervention involves *striking at something other than what is there*. What this means is to be attentive to the (de)structuring role of *fantasy*. For Santner (2011, pp. 18-19), the dimension of fantasy refers to those activities by and through which "forms of life find and elaborate their imaginary access to [the] bit of the real that sustains the vibrancy of its resources of representation." My contention is that the liturgical business of the museum is specifically to maintain the vibrancy of such (fantastical) representational resources and to serve as a conduit for the transferential dynamic mentioned above. As an apparatus of doxological production, the museum similarly captures, generates, distributes and vampirically feeds-off glory, off semblances of the real.

To modify a line from Lacan (2011, p. 46), the museum recycles truths that no longer function as such into very real fantasies. That the subject's affective fantasies – fantasies nourished by the museum – are then able to be fed on in perpetuity by the museum adds a further (frightful) dimension to this. More than this, those affective intensities and affiliations that determine the shape and texture of "being" are organised around *signifiers* "rather than full-fledged meanings, beliefs, purposes or propositional attitudes" (Santner, 2001, p. 28). What this means in this context is that things can continue to address us and get under our skin even if we do not possess their meaning. The flesh can (be made to) resonate without "explanation."

Just over a decade ago, art historian and museum theorist Donald Preziosi (2009, p. 39) wrote that "our idea of the museum is essentially theological and ethical." Having puzzled over this line for some years now, this thesis and its concern with *rotting flesh* and *lively blood*, *animated relics* and *undeadening liturgies* is if nothing else a record of my attempt to work through some of its possible implications. In this way, the critical work that is required is to find a museological language with which to strike at "the museum's" *violent absent centre*, a "centre" that is (pre)occupied by glory. The task of (a) critical museology is to disentangle these theological and ethical stitch-ups; it is to *negate the negation* upon which the museum rests and upon which it depends.

Setting

Consisting principally of a sustained theoretical exegesis, my argument is amplified by way of the instrumental monographs mentioned above and a series of museal anecdotes and vignettes. With regard to the monographs, because of the heightened pitch of public feeling and sentiment around the centennial commemorations of the First World War – the endless acclamations, the incessant injunctions to remember, and the desire to "make it real" for commemorating subjects – what these memorial exhibitions disclose are certain stresses and hyperbolic aspects of the museum that tend to remain out of sight. Ranging from Berlin to County Durham, New Zealand's Marlborough Sounds to Andalucía, London to Auckland, the vignettes span survey museums and war museums, museums of art and museums of remembrance, local and national museums. They are intended to perform both a quilting and interruptive function; at once augmenting and disturbing the theoretical exposition.

Empirically speaking, the monographs and anecdotes were developed by way of physical encounters and online archival research. The latter of these encompassed such things as institutional webpages and associated documents and news reports. I refer to the monographs as exemplars rather than case studies, with case study suggestive of a degree of empirical scope absent from these accounts. With respect to instrumentality, what is meant by this is that the final focus is not the individual institutions but the signifier and institution of *the* museum.

In terms of interpretation and analysis, the process adopted involved feeding the particular institutional formations through the theo-digestive tract. What such processes enabled was the generation of a series of vantage points and provisional openings from and through which to consider recent movements and preoccupations, problems and paradoxes vis-à-vis the relation between the subject, the museum and museology. While acknowledging the particular circumstances of each exhibition and institution, I maintain that they are symptomatic of broader trends. Despite being extreme or idiosyncratic they are, to draw on a line from Jonathan Crary (2014, p. 8), "not disconnected from what have become normative trajectories and conditions elsewhere."

Fashioned out of a ferment of neoliberalism, state-sponsored biculturalism and postmodernism, and opening to the public on the 14th of February 1998, "there appears a general consensus," Paul Williams wrote in 2003 (p. 11), that Te Papa "represents the farthest

example of the application of new ideas about museum practice." This accord remains in place today (Knell, 2018; McCarthy, 2018). Because of its particular history – on inception it was criticised for resembling a theme park (Dalrymple, 1999) while today it is perceived to be a paragon of ethical practice (Knell, 2018) – Te Papa provides a telling set of images with which to consider some of the compulsions, methodologies and effects that characterise contemporary museological practice and for analysing the recent trajectories of its subjects.

Envisaged as the central showpiece in New Zealand's First World War commemorations (Ross, 2015; TVNZ, 2016), *Gallipoli: The Scale of Our War* went on to become the most-visited exhibition in Te Papa's history (Te Papa, 2016). Created in partnership with film and special-effects company Weta Workshop, it is said to be an "emotional journey" that will 'take you back to Gallipoli" (Te Papa, 2015). It was described on Te Papa's website (2016a) as a "ground-breaking exhibition" that "tells the story of the Gallipoli campaign [...] through the eyes and words of eight ordinary New Zealanders who found themselves in extraordinary circumstances." Each of these figures is "captured frozen in a moment of time on a monumental scale – 2.4 times human size." The exhibition, which is said to "take you to the core of this defining event," is dominated by these giant hyperreal latex sculptures. Composed in labyrinthine fashion and marked by a distinctive institutional voice, a so-called "soldier narrator," it features six "bell-jars," darkened circular spaces containing the giants, and five annexes. These are more conventionally conceived exhibitionary spaces containing 3-D maps, projections, miniatures, models, dioramas, and interactive experiences that are said to bring the story "to life."

Central at least in financial terms to New Zealand's centennial commemorations, *The Great War Exhibition*, which ran from April 2015 until December 2018, was funded primarily by New Zealand's Ministry for Culture and Heritage and created by filmmaker and entrepreneur Sir Peter Jackson. Housed in the Old Dominion Museum building in Wellington, a building which overlooks Pukeahu National War Memorial Park, the exhibition was a self-styled "national legacy project," and one which took "a wide and chronological look at the Great War – at all forces and countries involved." It was intended to acknowledge and celebrate "the lives and experiences of New Zealanders who served and lived during that time" and to "highlight the bravery and enduring spirit which helped shape who we are as a people and what it means to be a New Zealander."

Comprised of "state of the art" interactive technologies, hundreds of colourised photographs, 5000 hand-painted miniature soldiers "charging across model battlefields," a surfeit of military weaponry and paraphernalia, and numerous dioramas, *The Great War Exhibition* also featured "Quinn's Post Trench Experience," which opened as an addendum to the exhibition,

or its *pièce de résistance*, in April 2018. Combining a Victorian theatrical trick called "Pepper's Ghosts" with "cutting-edge" technology, in this "immersive heritage experience" visitors were guided through "a faithful replica" of Quinn's Post by the "ghosts" – the holographic projections – of actors playing New Zealand soldiers. The MCH press release which accompanied its opening stated that visitors were provided the opportunity to "experience the sights, sounds and even smells of Gallipoli [as it was in] 1915. There is nothing else like this in the world." An unintentional parody of a museum exhibition, it is precisely because of its mimicry of museal and museological norms and codes that it affords unique opportunity to scrutinise some of the overlooked assumptions and disavowed aspirations of the museum-form.

Reading the Thesis

In 1992, Tomislav Sola (as cited in Macdonald, 1996b, p. 1) proposed that "the truth is, we do not know any more what a museum institution is." Although I do not claim to answer the question that founds this statement, what I provide here are a series of entry-points and the nucleus of a framework for rethinking *the truth* of the subject of the museum. In this way, what the current crisis demands is a museology that attends to the possible conditions of existence of the communist hypothesis; is a museological language that is attentive to the fleshy structural relations and "nowhere bits of power" of the actually-existing museum that dictate the textures and possibilities of human being and human community in modernity.

With respect to the long argument I make vis-à-vis the function of the modern museum and its continuance in the present, I am, once more, interested in historical constellations rather than historical chronology. This is not a history of the museum. However, I am concerned with the material experience of history, with how subjects come to be in the world and with how bodies are contorted in the process of becoming historical subjects. To find (a) language capable of striking at that which condemns the figure of crisis that is the subject to "liturgical servitude" is the intention of this undertaking. Put differently, how might the subject of the museum be reinvested in ways that counter its demise in the relation between liberal-progressive museum and post-critical museology?

With regard to the "style" of the thesis, it could be said to favour the gestural, the provocative and the aphoristic. Such an approach is intended to counteract what I perceive to be a loss of nerve within museology. However, rather than this being a sign of confidence "in (the) language," the contrary is the case. Indeed, the hazards of language are at times acutely present in these pages. The poetical element of the schema is, in part, precisely a means of foregrounding the fact of language being under strain. The most obvious expression of this can be found in the proliferation of italicised words and phrases and immoderate use of scare quotes. Language in this thesis is an object of enjoyment *and* terror. Or, and to refashion a line from Sebald (2005, p. 63), language in this thesis continually threatens to lead a sinister life of its own.

The square-format digital photographs that appear throughout the thesis are my own. Adjusted using a demotic editing programme and standardised procedure of darkening, sharpening, and with a vignette-effect applied, this rudimentary aesthetic contrivance is intended to augment the analytic-allegoric argument. Sebald's influence here is significant, with Mark M. Anderson (2003, p. 109) explaining that the use of images in his texts "seems to follow the contradictory logic of [a] dual affirmation." Every image – every "scrap of reality" – can serve as a "corrective to the unreliability of human memory." However, "every image lies, or is capable of lying, and must be subjected to careful scrutiny and interpretation" Anderson (2003, p. 109). In this way I ask that the reader keep the *very real fantasies* that both the museum and indeed the author are engaged in manufacturing *very much in mind*.

Divided into two parts and comprised of nine chapters alongside this introduction and a conclusion, in the first part of this thesis I develop the theoretical framework and contextual foundations of my argument. The second-half of the thesis is devoted to elaborating on the poetical-analytical schema.

Although concentrating on the present-day givens of the museum and museology, these cannot be understood without surveying historical horizons. Accordingly, the first two chapters provide a broad prospectus of the flight-lines of the museum and museology. The first chapter, "The Secrets and Truths of the Museum," précises problems involved in theorising the museum; outlines the arc of the museum since the eighteenth century; and introduces Te Papa Tongarewa. In the second chapter I trace certain trajectories and currents within museology, particularly that of post-critical museology, and address the conceptual architecture and implications of the new museology and liberal-progressive museum practice.

Chapter Three situates Santner within the expanded field in which he operates and locates a number of his conceptual prisms and manoeuvres that either underpin or are exploited in later chapters for the purpose of creating a form of museological criticism capable of accounting for the relation between the subject and the museum. Addressed to the subject of representation in modernity, the fourth chapter reflects on Santner's theory of the flesh. Meanwhile, Chapter Five, "The Liveliness of the Dead," considers the complex and pyretic relationship between the museum, the remembrance of trauma and the subject.

The second half of the thesis opens with 'Flesh." Via an account of the archetypal new museum that is Te Papa, this chapter revolves around the question of the "place" of the flesh in the museum. How, I ask, does the museum cope with, defend against and enflame it? How is the subject enfleshed by the museum? And how is the museum engorged by this fleshy subject? The liberal-progressive museum's production of "more life" – its transmutation of violent legacies into a source of glory – is addressed by way of Santner's conception of "Egyptomania" and the exhibitions *Gallipoli* and *The Great War Exhibition* in the seventh chapter, "Blood." This chapter also seeks to bring into focus the bloody structural relations of the representational order of which the museum stands at the apex.

With a particular emphasis on *The Great War Exhibition's* "Trench Experience," Chapter Eight is devoted to elaborating on the idea that liberal-progressive museum practices are stimulatory of creatureliness and, in a second (immunitarian) movement, (unwittingly) "fix" the subject as a relic, a subject at once sanctified *and* inoperative. Via the theological conceptions of Eucharist, eschatology and acclamation, in Chapter Nine I further elaborate on how the fleshy (non)thing that is the subject, a subject that dwells at the threshold between sovereign and creature, is liturgically sutured by the museum. Liturgy, it needs noting, functions as a quilting point for the poetical-analytical schema, a schema designed to contest the hegemony of post-critical and liberal-progressive museologies and, in turn, foment the conditions of existence for (a) critical museology.

Concluding the thesis is "Vanishing Points," a coda in which I clarify my argument and elaborate on the three critical affirmations. In this closing commentary I reflect on the ways in which the museum has fed on and been propelled by the difficulties and impasses within the space of representation, a space in which it plays a conductive part. It is, I suggest, the violence and barbarism (and their remnants and echoes) that lurk at the "heart" of – and are indivisible from – the space of representation that drives the museum. These are the (auto)vampiric points of excitation around which the museum feverishly revolves. If the creature that is the subject of the museum is to be released from undying service as a "relic," it is just such heightened absences, I argue, that require flushing out and apprehending. In light

of this, the affirmations stress that (a) critical museology must act on behalf of creaturely life; must seek to negate the negation of the subject by post-critical museology; and must work to counter the liberal-progressive museum's (unwitting) rendering of this (missing) subject into a relic.

One

The Secrets (and Truths) of the Museum

> No assertion about the museum – and that means: no museum of the museum – can show us the truth of the museum.
>
> — Werner Hamacher (as cited in Carbonell, 2012, p. 1)

1.1. An Empty Throne

1.1.1. In this chapter, a chapter tuned-in to the question of the "fundamental purpose/s" of the museum, I touch on some of the problems involved in theorising the museum, provide a circumscribed genealogy of the modern museum, and introduce The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. What I seek to establish over the following pages, and with the objective of laying the groundwork for the poetical-analytical schema, are a series of entry points for taking stock of the emancipatory potential and fundamental purpose/s of the museum-form.

To begin with, and in keeping with the constellatory approach adopted in this thesis, I would like to take the reader to three very different museums: one in a small town in New Zealand; one in central Paris; and one on the banks of the River Thames in London. Each of these museal scenes provide different forms of ballast for the argument that develops over the course of this thesis. Each hints at secrets kept and shared, enjoyment had and pleasures granted and taken. Each also suggests that "within" the museum something of "the royal" remains. In fact, it is suggested that these "royal remains" may be precisely where the museum's *fundamental purpose* – and I use such a phrase both warily and gleefully – may be found.

1.1.2 Cloistered in a back-room in Picton's Heritage and Whaling Museum, a museum from which the blue-green dazzle or downpour of New Zealand's Marlborough Sounds can be glimpsed, a museum also seemingly out of time and off-kilter, is an intricately carved and brown-black-stained throne-like chair. Accompanying the (empty) throne is an entirely capitalized text panel. It reads:

> This chair was carved at Chatham Islands in 1892 by Te Matenga Te Haurangi. His carving was influenced by American Indian missionaries. The chair was brought to New Zealand by Mrs Mihi Vercoe (nee Tahuhu) of Chatham Islands. Property of her son Mr Dale Vercoe.

A survey museum in miniature, all the impulses that informed the development of the public museum can be found within its rudimentary breeze-block walls. Tasked with collecting and representing the heritage of the people of the region, it is also truly a museum of natural history in the Santnerian (2006) sense. Whether inadvertently or otherwise, it is representative of the cycles of transcendence and decay that striate human and, particularly, capitalistic history. Within it can be found taonga Māori; a history of the local whaling industry and its links to global capitalism; a First World War exhibit; nineteenth-century interior dioramas; geological specimens; taxidermied birds; various local mementoes and anecdotes, with the Museum's website (2021) stating: "We have many remnants from Picton including artefacts from the Picton hospital and inventions used in the area." It – *history, the past* – is, in however minor a form and however meagre, all here.

Visiting the museum in 2018, I made inquiries as to whether additional information concerning the throne was available, but was informed by a volunteer docent – for it is an institution that exists in the twilight-zone of cultural production and labour, with negligible funding and a staff comprised entirely of volunteers – that nothing further existed, that this was all there was.

Over the ensuing years, this throne has come to figure for me as something of an aporetic allegorical cipher. That is, *I know* (that it has meaning) but just *not what*. "Within" this perhaps parodic *taonga* – which is also, which cannot but be because of the context in which it exists and is displayed, a *relic* – are those countless massacred whales of the south Pacific; within it is Hobbes' *Leviathan*, within it is Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*; within it are blood and blubber, flesh and death. That, and as Giorgio Agamben (2011, p. 245) writes, "*the empty throne is not* [...] *a symbol of regality but of glory*" further enriches the scene. "Glory," he also notes, "precedes the creation of the world and survives its end." As we proceed, I would like the reader to keep in mind that the museum is precisely an apparatus that is endlessly "open"

(the tasks of collecting and representing can never end), that is devoted to the suspension of "endings."

1.1.3. A century prior to the carving of this throne, on the morning of the 10th of August 1793, crowds assembled at Place de la Bastille in Paris as part of the Festival of National Unity. Andrew McClellan (1994, p. 96) describes a glorious scene, with people drinking "from a fountain of regeneration in the form of a neo-Egyptian statue of Nature squeezing water from her breasts, which at once cleansed them of any association with the past and 'baptised' them citizens of the Republic." The Museum Français, as the Louvre was originally known, opened on the very same day, a day that marked the first anniversary of the storming of King Louis XVI's residence in the Tuileries Palace. The Declaration of the Rights of the Man and of the Citizen, a more radical document that followed on from the original 1789 declaration, had been ratified by popular vote July on 1793, and on the 10th of August was officially adopted. That it never went into effect is significant. However, while the *Ancien Régime*, as François Furet and Mona Ozouf (1989, p. xiii) argue, "meant inequality and absolute monarchy, under the banner of 1789 appeared the rights of man and the sovereignty of the people." This "sharp divergence," they continue, "is the most profound expression of the nature of the French Revolution, at once philosophical and political. It is this that gives the Revolution the dignity of an idea and the character of a commencement." That the Revolution remains in a state of commencement is a supposition that excites this thesis.

McClellan (1994, p. 97) situates the festival as "a brilliant allegorical drama, sanctifying the new symbols of the Republic while doing away with those of the monarchy, and with the nation joined as one reliving the progress of the Revolution from the fall of the Bastille." In the words of Ozouf (as cited in McClellan, 1994, p. 97), the festival was conceived as the "*mise en scéne* of the birth of the Republic and its citizens." In its revolutionary form the Louvre was conceived as a symbol and expression of popular sovereignty, of Republican identity and of triumph over despotism. This communal enjoyment of the now nationalised royal palace contributed, McClellan (1996, p. 7) notes, "to what Abbé Henri Grégoire, the priest turned revolutionary, called the 'republican mould.'" Underpinning this thesis is the idea that the radical and bloody – and ultimately failed – nature of the Revolution and indeed its carnal and Eucharistic enjoyment similarly haunts and drives (both as threat and promise) today's museum. Indeed, and to return to the image of the "royal remains," I picture the Louvre on that late-summer's day as the modern museum's primal scene. It was here in the Royal Palace that the King's flesh was "torn free" and turned over to, or turned *into*, the People. And

it was here that many of the contradictions and paradoxes that have plagued modern subjects and political communities were first "revealed."

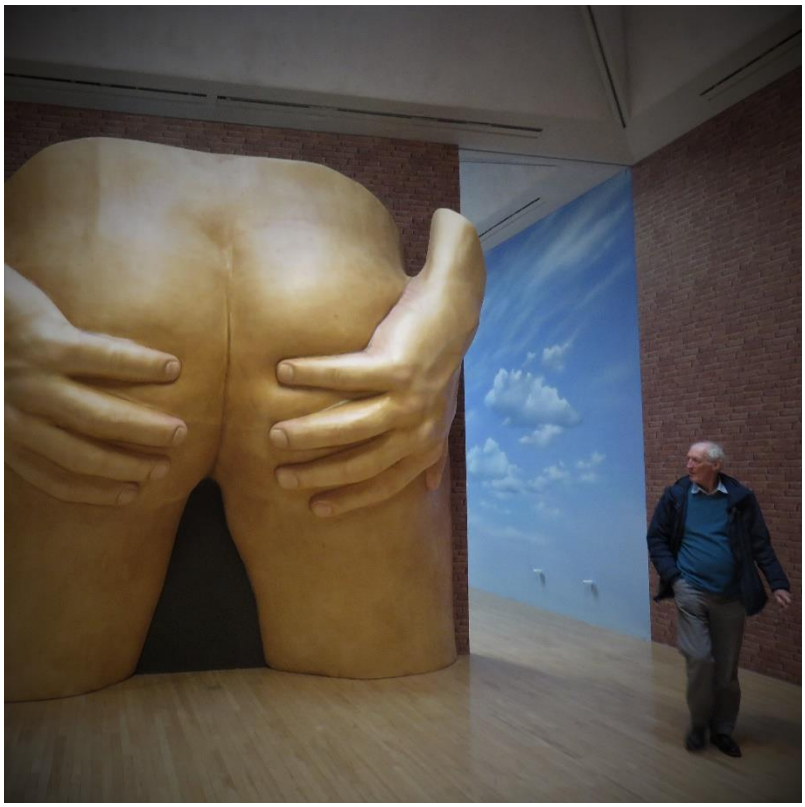
One of these paradoxes is foregrounded by Asad Haider in *Mistaken Identity: Class and Race in the Age of Trump* (2018). "A fundamental aspect of the paradox" of the modern subject, Haider (2018, p. 63) writes, is that it is tied up with what Judith Butler has termed "a passionate attachment" to power. In other words, our freedom needs to be understood as inescapably knotted up with so-called unfreedom, and our lives as inevitably characterised by "marbled experiences of compulsion, discipline, possibility, and surrender" (Nelson, 2021, p. 9). The question of how we develop a taste, in Maggie Nelson's (2021, p. 8) words, for "unfreedom," for (forms of) subjection, has profound implications for understanding the work of the museum, this apparatus of sovereign enjoyment. In other words, what forms of power and possibilities with regard to power and enjoyment now course through the walls of today's museum? And, with respect to the promise of liberal-progressive museum practice, what are we being "liberated" into? What new alignments – class, identitarian – are forming and taking hold? And to expand on this final question, what new affective affiliations, those investments and attachments that could be said to revolve around *signifiers rather than fully-fledged meanings*, are taking root?

Anthea Hamilton's *Project for a Door (After Gaetano Pesce)* (2016) provides an – admittedly unlikely – point of entry with respect to such paradoxes and enigmas. A giant backside shown as part of the 2016 edition of the Turner Prize at Tate Britain in London, it figured as both provocation and triumphant symbol of glory. Tate Britain itself stands on the site of Millbank Prison and was established on the basis of a bequest from Henry Tate, a sugar magnate and beneficiary of the historical slave trade. It is an institution that models *marbled experiences of discipline and possibility*.

Hamilton's piece was inspired by a photograph showing a model of a proposed – and finally unrealised – doorway into a New York apartment block by Italian designer Gaetano Pesce. This non-functioning portal, this homage equally magnificent and redundant, this clenched and grasped backside "made for Instagram" (Frizzell, 2016), this symbol of desire (and thwarted desire) and rebuttal (and comedy rebuttal), seemed in the context of Tate Britain to similarly satirise the museum's transcendent aspirations to be a portal to other worlds, to be a saviour of that which would otherwise pass over, and caricature its fleshy ambitions. But it also signalled that Tate Britain – this bastion of the cultural establishment, this emblem of the power of global capital in shaping our cultural horizons – was well and truly open for everyone's business and enjoyment.

Figure One

Anthea Hamilton's Project for a Door (After Gaetano Pesce), shown as part of the 2016 iteration of the Turner Prize at Tate Britain, London, 2016.



1.2. Origins, Arcs

1.2.1. "Museum" is a baggy concept; a persistent though unruly fantasy; a signifier equally freewheeling and encumbered with the tremendous weight of history and expectation. Both system and object, both set of concepts and techniques and their material outcomes, that a former royal palace in Paris and a breeze-block shed in Picton can bear the same appellation hints at the plasticity of the term. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, this most orthodox of organs, is worth quoting here.

> Museums have been founded for a variety of purposes: to serve as recreational facilities, scholarly venues, or educational resources; to contribute to the quality of

> life of the areas where they are situated; to attract tourism to a region; to promote civic pride or nationalistic endeavour; or even to transmit overtly ideological concepts. (Lewis, 2020)

Although Geoffrey Lewis (2020) goes on to describe them being bound by the common goal of preserving and interpreting some material aspect of "society's cultural consciousness," museums are, it would seem, and paradoxically, *defined by difference*. Museums are dazzling in their diversity of forms and functions.

Standing at the "the intersection of a wide variety of social, cultural, scientific, and political developments in every corner of the world" (Preziosi and Farago, 2004b, p. 3), according to historicist and Foucauldian (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992) accounts, there is no such thing as "the museum," there are only historically and culturally specific museological or musealizing practices and discourses. As Werner Hamacher notes in the Chapter's epigraph, attempting to capture them as a totality or to seek out their truth leads only to conceptual warping. The most obvious mistake when considering museums is to assume homogeneity or constancy, whether over time or across space. For Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (1992):

> There is no essential museum. The museum is not a pre-constituted entity that is produced in the same way at all times. No "direct ancestors" or "fundamental role" can be identified. Identities, targets, functions, and subject positions are variable and discontinuous. (p. 191)

According to such arguments, we cannot speak of "the museum" only *museums*. For Donald Preziosi (2009, p. 39), because of its complex nature as "both a kind of thing and way of using things; as an artefact operating on other artefacts so as to fabricate stories, which are then made legible as causal agents of artefacts themselves," the museum is impossible to theorise *in toto*.

Nevertheless, my objective in this thesis is to make a series of propositions concerning the truth of "the museum." Contrary to historicist (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992) and post-critical (Dewdney, Dibosa & Walsh, 2013; Kletchka, 2018) accounts, I maintain that the dynamics of the museum *are* universal but that these dynamics exist in variable forms. Although this aspiration may seem to imply a desire to elide difference and whitewash the prismatic array of museal possibilities, my concern is to produce an interpretation which properly accounts for the complexities and contradictions of the museum, and which refuses to mistake difference with transformation, affects with effects, diversity with equality. Of course, and as Lacan (as cited in Copjec, 2015, p. 15) once put it: "saying the whole truth is materially impossible: words fail."

In order to "earth" such truths, in order to make them material/ist, the museum needs to be studied in "complex relation" (Henning, 2006, p. 3) to the wider culture of which it is a part. Its objects and subjects cannot be understood without taking into account the broader historical *nomos*, or attending to those systems and structures of power – such as capitalism, democratic liberalism, or totalitarianism – that either positively or negatively determine its operations and horizons of possibility. To theorise the museum means to historicise it. However, once more, and with Santner and Jacques Derrida in mind (see Goodman, 2015), my intention is to provide an account which may be said to be historical though not dated.

My argument, and in response to Preziosi and Claire Farago's (2004b, p. 6) proposition that the "function of the museum as part of a discursive formation in the Foucauldian sense is as yet insufficiently understood and under-theorised," is that by introducing the work of Santner into museology, this Foucauldian museological tradition is similarly enriched and troubled. In *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*, Hooper-Greenhill (1992, p. 10) suggests that the question to be asked with respect to the shifting terrain and prospects of museums and museology is not: "How have things remained the same?" but "How are things different; how have things changed; and why?" In contrast, my concern is with signs of (fractious) continuity *within* difference.

Although I do not doubt that Hooper-Greenhill (1992, p. 191) was correct when she stated that museums have not only actively "shaped knowledge over (at least) the last 600 years," but have been constituted according to prevailing epistemological contexts, and hence "enabled different possibilities of knowing according to the rules and structures in place at the time," my contention is that the *irrationality* of this knowing remains hitherto un(der)examined. In fact, what I am principally interested in are questions pertaining to our – and to "the museum's" – *not knowing*. It is not the museum's shaping of knowledge per se that requires our attention, but rather its harnessing and generation of that which transcends sense, that which *does not work*. The "charisma" or "mana" of the museum is not simply a product of its integrity but rather its capacity to turn that which is surplus into *more life*.

1.2.2. To apprehend the museum means to contend with the human propensity to locate, gather and accumulate objects and to form and assemble collections from these things. The history of the museum is inextricably bound with the history of collecting and accompanying activities of organising and classifying the material and immaterial world into taxonomies and hierarchies, constructed from, for example, epistemologies of faith, science, taste or morality. Collections are entangled with often competing or contradictory conceptions of value and

worth (Shelton, 2013; Vergo, 1989). More than this, however, and as Hilde Hein (2000) writes:

> To be a museum object is to have *prima facie* value independently of the material properties an object may possess and partially independent from the object's status in an earlier incarnation. However its material worth is calculated, an object's museum value derives from different norms. (p. 55)

Anthony Shelton's (2013) description of the museum's "truth effect" enriches Hein's observation. This should be understood, Shelton (2013, p. 10) argues, as a technical procedure which is guaranteed by "supposed transcendental laws that exist and govern behaviour independent of society," but whose effects can be demonstrated and "proven." "Museums," Shelton continues, "legitimate their own 'stories' and activities by reference to transcendental criteria." The *matter* of the museum is transcendentally conceived.

However, collections do not merely hold evidence but are expected to be evidentiary. They are presumed to be, ipso-facto, truth-telling, to be unequivocally of the category of "the real" (Bennett, 2013; Knell, MacLeod and Watson, 2007; Weil, 2002). With respect to this question of the interrelation between the "verifiability of fact" and the "emotional truth of fiction," it is important to remember, and as Ashley Barnwell notes in *Critical Effect: The Politics of Method* (2020, p. 2), that questions concerning "which method produces the most authentic account" remain pivotal to academic scholarship and, I would add, museal theory and praxis. Whether named as such or otherwise, providing authentic visitor experiences has long been a museological aspiration. To provide encounters with the "real thing" outside of "ordinary time" is precisely *the* (paradoxical) *enjoyment* of the museum.

The activity of collecting means to be engaged with the vicissitudes of time, with the chaotic exigencies of temporality. Noah, it is sometimes said, was the first collector: "Menaced by a Flood, one has to act swiftly. Anything overlooked will be lost forever: between including and excluding there can be no half-measures. The collection is the unique bastion against the deluge of time" (Elsner & Cardinal, 1994, p. 1). To create a collection means to fashion a waymarker in the cascading avalanche of temporal existence. It means to deny (our) "nothingness." As John Elsner and Roger Cardinal (1994, p. 1) contend, "in the myth of Noah as ur-collector resonate all the themes of collecting itself: desire and nostalgia, saving and loss, the urge to erect a permanent and complete system against the destructiveness of time." In this way, the museum could be said to generate *a little extra time, a little extra life*.

Peter Vergo (1989, p. 3), meanwhile, writes of the subtexts that shadow museum collections, subtexts "comprising innumerable diverse, often contradictory strands," woven from the "wishes and ambitions" of all those who both directly and indirectly shaped them. Collections are the im/material manifestations of human desires (Knell, MacLeod, Watson, 2007), and the act of collecting, Vergo (1989, p. 2) notes drily, has political and ideological dimensions that "cannot be overlooked." Psychoanalysis, of course, has much to say on the subject of temporality, on acts of amassing and repeating, on the facts of accretion and recurrence (Bersani, 2002; Freud, 2006). Psychopathology is nothing if not an expression of the hazards of the past and the dangers associated with (inevitable) estrangement from the past, not to mention the abyss that is the future.

Alongside their incorporative and assimilatory functions museums are also animatory: continually raising their "dead' collections, conjuring with that which is "lifeless," making "(a)lively." In other words, they are also, primarily some would say (Shelton, 2013), spaces of representation and exhibition. Hooper-Greenhill (2002, p. x) puts it like this: "Museums are social and cultural institutions. Their purposes are the collection of objects and their display and elucidation. These two foci – collections and their use – are inextricably linked." However, the passage from collection to museum is neither inevitable nor linear. A museum can exist without material objects and a collection may not be museumified.

Conversely, the contemporary museum lives beneath the tantalising shadow of virtuality and the fantasy of frictionless and seamless (simulacral) collection, representation and exchange (Dewdney et al., 2013). Museums, and setting aside the triumphant march of musealization (Macdonald, 2006), the delirious pitch of archive fever (Derrida, 1996), the relentless pace of algorithmic data collection, now *ooze out*. This process, which is at once expansionary and self-eviscerating, has a long lineage. First, it was "beyond the glass case" (Merriman, 1991), then it was beyond the walls, and today any mediatory interferences are seen as obstacles, with André Malraux's (1947) conception of the *musée imaginaire* now appearing quaint. Similarly, the desire to reach new markets, new audiences is endemic. This compulsion to be everywhere and be (open) for everyone may be seen as a transfigured echo of the "heroic" purpose of the museum in its originary modern form.

Stepping back, until the mid-eighteenth century, museums or their forebears such as cabinets of curiosities, *Wunderkammer* or *Kunstkammer*, were, at least for Jon Simmons (2016, p. 259), typically "reliquaries or storehouses with limited intellectual justification for their existence." Although a reductive account, the intellectual ferment of the Enlightenment was indubitably transformational with regard to these proto-museums. "Enlightened men made a fetish of reason, and they demanded proof to substantiate their claims. This need for evidence gave the

museum, for the first time, a strong *raison d'être*" (Orosz as cited in Simmons, 2016, p. 259). From the mid-eighteenth century, princely collections were increasingly made available to the public and were, correspondingly, reconceived in more explicitly didactic terms (Hooper-Greenhill, 2002).

In France, for example, the royal collection came to be perceived and understood as national property, as part of "the nation's cultural patrimony that had to be preserved for posterity" (McClellan, 1994, p. 7). This shift anticipated the rhetoric of "collective ownership and fostering of national pride" that came to characterise national museums the world over. "The Crown," McClellan writes, "became the guardian of transcendent cultural values embodied in works of art that belonged in the public sphere and to the public as much as to the king." Questions of restoration and conservation assumed significant political weight over the course of the eighteenth century: "Accepting responsibility on behalf of the nation, the [French] Crown turned the maintenance of the royal collection to its advantage by forging an equation in the public eye between careful conservation of valued art treasures and good government" (McClellan, 1994, p. 7). Such careful conservation was a means of manufacturing glory.

The nineteenth-century museum was conceived as a crucial part of the pedagogical architecture of the capitalistic nation-state (Hooper-Greenhill, 2002). At a time of rapid population increase and demographic change, museums were envisaged as performing a "civilizing" function (Duncan, 1995). By providing the working classes with hitherto unavailable access to arts and culture, by encouraging them to contemplate "things of beauty," the "mob" could be tamed (Hooper-Greenhill, 2002, p. 27). Concomitantly, Preziosi and Farago (2004b, p. 3) write of the museum of this period developing alongside or as a symptom of colonialism and imperialism, and stress the inseparability of these – and their "consequent moral, social and epistemological effects and affordances" – from museology. Drawing together and classifying artworks, artefacts and specimens, with an increasing focus on "primitive" and "exotic" artefacts, a central motivation of the nineteenth-century museum was to produce an "encyclopaedic world-view, understood from a Western perspective" (Hooper-Greenhill, 2002, p. 151). In short, it was designed to promote the values of capitalism and liberal individualism (Duncan and Wallach, 2009).

Returning to the theme of glory, insights with relevance to the subject can be found in the second of Foucault's "Tanner Lectures" (1979). This was addressed to certain aspects of modern pastoral power and in particular the institution of "the police," an institution which in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries encompassed public policy and civil administration. Drawing on Turquet de Mayenne's *Aristo-Democratic Monarchy* (1611), a utopian treatise in which is imagined a fully policed state, Foucault divided the duties of the police into two

categories. First, they were charged with fostering "working and trading relations between men, as well as aid and mutual help" (de Mayenne as cited in Santner, 2015, pp. 37-38). And second, they were tasked with providing "adornment, form and splendour." "Splendour," in this context, denoted not only "the beauty of a state ordered to perfection" but also "its strength, its vigour." The modern museum would seem to fit squarely within such a paradigm.

1.2.3. My contention is that the opening of the Louvre on that summer's day in 1793 represents the moment the public museum as it came to be in its modern form – that is, *of* and *for* the p/People – was first given full (if truncated and fleeting) expression. McClellan (1994, p. 2), on the other hand, argues that it was the Louvre "as it came to be under Napoleon [that] is usually and correctly identified as the archetypal state museum and model for subsequent national art museums the world over." However, and although undoubtedly the culmination of earlier initiatives, I would suggest that it was the act of the royal palace *being made public* which marks the point at which the modern museum came into view. That said, that the modern "disciplinary" museum – and I use this term in the Foucauldian (1991) sense – should come to fruition under the dictatorial and yet still revolutionary regime of Napoleon Bonaparte is no less important. Nevertheless, what sets the Louvre of 1793 apart, I maintain, is its properly social and universal claims: it being a (liturgical) emanation of (and for) *all* people. It is this ideal which, as my argument would have it, returned in mutated form in the late 1980s "as" the "new museology."

Similarly structures, structural effects, and structuring devices, today's museums exist on multiple planes and spin on innumerable axes. They are the result of an ever-expanding and contracting, multiplying and diminishing interplay of forces and compulsions: of economic interests, cultural attitudes, political agendas, historical structures, epistemological frameworks, ontological assumptions (Hein, 2000; Shelton, 2013). In terms of the "museum effect," Preziosi (2009, p. 38) describes the contemporary museum as a "uniquely powerful semiotic instrument" for the "creation, maintenance, and dissemination of meanings by fielding together and synthesising objects, ideas, and beliefs."

Preziosi and Farago (2004b, pp. 5-6), meanwhile, style the museum a "staged environment" that elicits subjecthood – the "self" – and locates and orients "our desires within the trajectories of an imagined past." Put in more politically proximate language, in the contemporary museum is enacted an ongoing "struggle by individuals and groups to establish what is real, to organise collective interests, and to gain command over what is regarded as having authority" (Luke, 2002, p. xxiv). In other words, museums shape, define and affirm cultural

and socio-symbolic realities and produce and maintain collective values and imaginaries (Dibley, 2005; Luke, 2002; Lumley, 1998). Devices for the production of ideological dreamwork, museums cover gaps and fill in (the) blanks (Duncan and Wallach, 2012).

However, in *Re-Imagining the Museum: Beyond the Mausoleum* (2003), Australian museum studies scholar Andrea Witcomb emphasises that museums are not only instruments of power but sites – in an affirmative sense – of pleasure and consumption. Witcomb (2003, p. 17) also describes the museum as having its "irrational moments," with certain recent developments having amplified tensions that had "always been there – between high and popular culture, between the rational aims of government and the 'irrational' pleasure of the populace." By way of Santnerian thinking, my thesis seeks to problematise and expand on Witcomb's notions of the irrational moments and pleasures of the museum. Enmeshed in the politics of pleasure and enjoyment, politics that have profound implications for subjecthood and political community alike, my argument is that the museum assists in liturgically generating, sustaining and (mis)managing the subject's *enjoyment* (with all the complex affordances of this term very much in mind) of social bonds and offices.

1.3. Always of the Moment: Te Papa Tongarewa

In 1937, Joseph Mordaunt Crook (as cited in Simmons, 2016, p. 4) described the modern museum as "a product of Renaissance humanism, eighteenth-century enlightenment and nineteenth-century democracy." Although the benign museum-form described by Crook faced numerous challenges over the course of the twentieth century, such an image typically remained what sprung to mind when the word museum was used until the end of the century (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992). Meanwhile, a year prior to Joseph Crook's comment, the Dominion Museum reopened in new premises in Wellington, New Zealand.

Coalescing the collections of the National Museum (formerly the Dominion Museum) and National Art Gallery, costing $317 million and taking five years to build, The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa was first conceptualised in the late 1980s during a period of sweeping economic and state reform and cultural reconfiguration. Envisaged as representing a new vision of the nation, one distanced from its colonial origins and able to speak for this "new" New Zealand, it emerged as a "symbol of the Nation's sleek, new international competitiveness. The museum meant business, and Māori and Pākehā cultural identities were its assets" (Williams, 2006, p. 2.3). Williams (2003, p. 6) describes the finished

museum as an idiosyncratic and "unwieldy nexus of popular spectacle, candid commercialism and state-promoted biculturalism." More than just a site of humanism, enlightenment and democracy, Te Papa was to be a space of identity, leisure and pleasure, a space of *enjoyment*.

Established by the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Act in July 1992 and governed by a board appointed by the Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage, Te Papa is an autonomous Crown entity. The Te Papa Act stipulates that the Museum:

> [...] shall provide a forum in which the nation may present, explore, and preserve both the heritage of its cultures and knowledge of the natural environment in order better—
>
> (a) to understand and treasure the past; and
>
> (b) to enrich the present; and
>
> (c) to meet the challenges of the future.

Te Papa's performance framework stipulates that under the government objective that "New Zealand's culture enriches our lives" comes Te Papa's vision and then its purpose: "to be a forum for the nation." In 2012, Te Papa adopted a new corporate vision: "Changing Hearts, Changing Minds, Changing Lives." This vision underpins all of Te Papa's activities and provides the framework for its decision making (Te Papa, 2015a). However, it is the originary corporate slogan of "Our Place" that remains Te Papa's most recognised and telling branding metonym.

The Te Papa Act states that the Museum should be "a source of pride for all New Zealanders." Te Papa's legislative remit and corporate character is lent vernacular expression on its website (2015b): "[Te Papa is] renowned for being bicultural, scholarly, innovative, and fun. Our success is built on our relationships with and ability to represent our community. [...] We also have thriving commercial enterprises [...]." In 2021, and in a clarifying note accompanying a document outlining its strategic priorities, one of which is for it to be a "place to be," it was stated: Te Papa will continue to be "an iconic visitor destination and home for all New Zealanders." Fifteen years previously, Williams (2006, p. 2.1) had described "market policies" being visible both "within the museum, where 'customer focus' is manifest in a casual institutional style and myriad interactive exhibits, and from without, wherein the museum forms a provocative symbol of corporate involvement in the public sector." In other words, there is and never has been a secret capitalistic, nationalistic or infotainment agenda: it is all in plain sight.

New Zealand's Department of Internal Affairs, which oversaw the Museum's development, stated in 1989 that it "is difficult to separate out cultural policy from social and economic

policy [...]. It is clear that cultural diversity and an innovative society are necessary ingredients for economic development" (as cited in Williams, 2006, p. 2.3). Te Papa's commercial success continues to be promoted and celebrated by the institution itself: "[Te Papa makes] an important economic contribution while serving as a catalyst and forum for research and creativity, and also supporting social and cultural outcomes for New Zealanders" (Te Papa, 2014, p. 3). It is required to return both a commercial dividend on the state's investment and a cultural result in terms of the public good (Wedde, 2006). As of 2015, Te Papa received approximately 55% of its revenue in Crown funding ($29.5 million), with the balance ($28.9 million) coming from commercial and exhibition revenues, corporate sponsorship and donations (Te Papa, 2015c). Conal McCarthy (2018, p. 180) argues that the commercial imperative has in fact been integral to Te Papa's cultural and social success. Its embrace of "leisure sector techniques" has helped position the museum as a "dynamic attraction," and one with "a much larger and more diverse audience" (McCarthy, 2018, p. 180).

Te Papa's waterfront premises not only encompass temporary exhibition spaces, "learning hubs," and galleries dedicated to the culture, history and environment of New Zealand, but cafés and gift shops, conference facilities, *Rongomaraeroa* marae (a communal and sacred meeting ground), and outdoor areas with (artificial) caves, native bush and wetlands. Former Te Papa CEO Dr Seddon Bennington (as cited in Davidson & Sibley, 2011, p. 177) described it as "an enriching mix of entertainment, education, hospitality and retail." *All of life is here*. Although British critic Theodore Dalrymple (1999) famously derided it as "an amusement arcade masquerading as a museum," I would submit that instead, and much more ominously, it is a museum masquerading as an amusement arcade.

Williams (2006, p. 2.3) makes the point that visitor statistics are Te Papa's "main cause for celebration and the chief weapon in its defence." Measured according to its own performance framework, Te Papa has been remarkably successful. It is one of the most-visited museums in Australasia, with more than 34 million visitors between 1998 and 2023 (Te Papa, 2023). Additionally, despite socio-economic variables and educational accomplishment still playing a fundamental role in patterns of visitation, its visitor demographics have tended to mirror the wider population (Davidson and Sibley, 2011). In its own words, Te Papa (2014a, p. 3) has "redefined the visitor's experience of what a museum is all about'" and "re-energised the idea of a museum as a place for fun and learning."

Although Kylie Message (2007, p. 235) has situated Te Papa as an institution that prompts and encourages "debate about what constitutes citizenship," for Ian Wedde (2006) such a notion is dissembling. Its function as a democratic forum, in other words, is essentially scenic and specular. As a highly choreographed pageant which reflects and perpetuates normative

ideals and agendas it is a place to stage debate rather than have it. However, both Wedde (2006) and Williams (2003) describe Te Papa as a space of negotiated tensions. For Wedde (2006, p. 14.1), its genesis in the crucible of New Zealand's neoliberal experiment meant that from its inception it was forced to "mediate significantly tensioned and even conflicted remits." While for Williams (2003, p. 31), the need to become "a vital part of public culture" came up against the demand to occupy "a competitive place in the tourist and leisure industries." Moreover, pedagogic priorities stressing "a revised view of indigenous culture and ethnic relations" were perceived by Williams (2003, p. 31) to be in conflict with aspirations to represent the "new" – bifurcated but unified – nation to the world.

For Williams (2003, pp. 20-21), although a "conceptual framework of unimpeded cultural access, bicultural national identity and a corporate approach to culture may appear feasible ideals," analysis "of their entangled effects [...] unearths problems." I would suggest that these tensions and problems were, and indeed remain, less acute than Williams made out. Indeed, it could be said that Te Papa works well, *all too well* one might say. It clearly fulfils its statutory governmental obligations (McCarthy, 2018), and makes absolute sense not only within the neoliberal moment but in terms of the edicts of liberal democracy and the originary functions of the disciplinary museum. That it is also already/always "of the moment" and already/always "ours" would seem to enhance its hegemonical efficacy. As Simon Knell wrote in 2018 (p.12), "the question is, what should [museums] be like? What should they attempt to do? Te Papa is an answer to these questions."

1.4. Secrets and Thrones, Goods and Gods

What has been presented in this chapter are a succession of theoretical and contextual foundations and points of departure for the argument that is developed in this thesis. In pursuit of the question of the "fundamental purpose" of the museum, the historical scene from which the modern museum emerged was surveyed, some of problems involved in theorising the museum sketched and Te Papa Tongarewa introduced. Before turning to consider the "critical" trajectories of the museum and museology since the late twentieth century, a few further comments are necessary in order to attune us to those discussions from the vantage point of "the museum."

In an essay on Johan Peter Hebel (1760-1826), W. G. Sebald (2013, p. 33) wrote of the "doom-laden glimmering of a new age which, even as it dreams of humanity's greatest happiness,

begins to set in train its greatest possible misfortune." It is precisely such form of negative dialectical puzzle that is of concern here. Further to this, in *Making Museums Matter* (2002), American museum administrator and museum studies and legal scholar Stephen E. Weil asked: what constitutes a good museum? Weil's attributes of a good museum – illustrated by his "three Es" of entertainment, education and experience – revolved around notions of public service and public benefit. "If our museums are not being operated with the ultimate goal of improving people's lives," Weil (2002, p. 61) asked, "on what alternative basis might we possibly ask for public support?"

Robert Janes (2012), emeritus editor-in-chief of the influential journal *Museum Management and Curatorship,* wrote in support of this conception.

> [Weil] was crystal clear about this fundamental point: there is no 'essence of museum' that must be preserved at all costs. Museums exist in, of, by, and for society and are obligated to continually ponder their work in an effort to be worthwhile and make a difference. (p. 559).

The "good museum," for Weil (2002, p. 62) is "one that is operated with a clearly formulated purpose, describable in terms of the particular and positive outcomes that it hopes and expects to achieve." As I understand it, the "problem" of liberal-progressive museology, a museology that Weil and Janes have been influential in shaping, can be located precisely in its encouragement of the pursuit of just such forms of normatively instrumental *goodness*.

One such exemplar of a "good museum" can be found not far from Tate Britain in London. Established in 1852, and named after Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) is one of the globe's "premier museum brands." The world's largest museum of applied and decorative arts and design, its collections range from "ancient Chinese ceramics to Alexander McQueen evening dresses" (V&A, 2021). Its primary residence in South Kensington is today augmented by a garrison in the East of London, Young V&A, and an extraordinary "outpost" in the post-industrial port city of Dundee in Scotland.

Since 2020, a series of behind-the-scenes documentaries that are said to reveal "the design treasures tucked away" in the V&A's vast collection and "the experts preserving priceless objects for the future" have aired on BBC Two. *Secrets of the Museum* was described by *The Daily Telegraph* as "a stately, fascinating new series rummaging through the treasures of the Victoria and Albert Museum." *The Radio Times*, meanwhile, readied viewers to "sigh at the [Museum's] heavenly constellation of sparkling jewels." It is an ameliorative, hypnotic spectacle.

Just before Christmas of 2016, I visited the V&A's "You Say You Want a Revolution? Records and Rebels 1966-1970," an exhibition that asked: "How have the finished and unfinished revolutions of the late 1960s changed the way we live today and think about the future?" Despite the bold premise and the elegantly-conceived parade of textiles, photographs, documents, films and photographs, the abiding memory I have is of lounging on a bean-bag with dozens of other somnolent figures in the exhibition's final space watching footage of Woodstock on a wall-length projection.

This re-creation of a 60s vibe in such an august environment verged on the absurd. However, the high fever of the museum exists in part because of the commandment that all and everything within its walls must be treated equally: all must be preserved and displayed with the same degree of care. Museums make things matter. Museums can make anything matter. Indeed, even failed or unfinished "revolutions" can be reified, can be *made* (to) *matter*.

> The apparatus of glory finds its perfect cipher in the majesty of the empty throne. Its purpose is to capture within the governmental machine that unthinkable inoperativity – making it its internal motor – that constitutes the ultimate mystery of divinity. (Agamben, 2011, p. 245)

Having left an imprint in the bean-bag, a Styrofoam throne, I rose up.

Two

Critical Trajectories: Museal Prospects

2.1. Theological or Discursive?

In this chapter I plot-out the "critical" trajectories of the museum and museology since the late-twentieth century. What, I ask, have museums become over this period? And how has museology similarly steered and conceptualised such becoming? For example, is the function of today's museum theological or is it discursive? Is the role of museology to reflect (on) what is there, to direct operations, or is to make the museum "strange"? Where and how do museological representations of the museum of today situate, whether knowingly or otherwise, "the subject"? And what forms of "emancipation" are available to this subject thus situated? Answers to this set of questions help us understand the relation between the museum and museology as a site which normalises a subject position that, despite appearances of agency, cannot act upon its socio-historical situation. They provide insights into that relation as being precisely generative of "crisis."

The late 1980s marked the advent of the "new museology" in the Anglosphere, a movement predicated on the re-evaluation of museal horizons. It was also a moment when prospects for the establishment of *a* critical museology seemed in evidence. However, and as outlined in the pages ahead, the new museology can now be recognised as having provided the foundations for the liberal-progressive museum and the critical moment swiftly became a post-critical one.

Two further points require attention here. First, post-criticality has become an (undertheorised) default setting within museology. I seek to rectify that lack. And second, the liberal-progressive museum should be understood as one of the manifestations of post-criticality. To recapitulate the objective of this thesis, if criticality is the spectre which I desire to haunt museology, post-criticality could be said to be the spectre which I wish to find a language to "strike at". My methodological assumption is that post-criticality, in its relation

with the museum, hosts "the negation" able to negate its own negation of an agency able to transform its socio-historical situation. This chapter sets the scene with respect to these avenues of argumentation.

2.2. Critical Currents

2.2.1. Although it had long been understood that since their earliest incarnations museums had been enmeshed in the organisation of power and its exercise, it was in the late-1980s and early-to-mid-1990s that such sentiment was given full expression (Henning, 2006; Hooper-Greenhill, 1992; Mason, 2006). Over this period a series of texts emerged which, drawing upon the work of figures such as Antonio Gramsci, Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault, and also the theorising of Frankfurt School scholars Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, explicitly identified museums as sites for "the classification and ordering of knowledge, the production of ideology and the disciplining of the public" (Henning, 2006, p. 1). For example, in *Beyond The Glass Case: The Past, the Heritage and the Public in Britain* (1991), Nick Merriman could be found riffing on Horkheimer and Adorno's seminal work *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. The culture industry, Merriam (1991, p. 13) wrote, of which the museum stands at the apex, "gears itself almost entirely to the development of cultural forms which are compatible with the preservation of capitalism." The critical voices of the museology of this period stressed that the modern museum was designed to produce new forms of social cohesion, a cohesion that simultaneously secured bourgeois hegemony (Sherman & Rogoff, 1994).

This "critical moment" – a moment that only exists retrospectively – was short-lived. Today, critical museology is a spectre. That said, traces of this criticality are apparent in museums and museology. However, its emancipatory aspirations – for example, a commitment to communist horizons – have been abandoned. What happened or what has happened to critical museology? Firstly, it is important to note that the name critical museology lives on. However, rather than signifying an adherence to critical theory, to the legacies of Marxism, psychoanalysis and structuralism for example, the critical museology championed by figures such as Anthony Shelton (2013) and Jesús Pedro Lorente (2022) is analogous to a post-critical position. This position in turn should be understood as one of the successors of the new museology.

This situation – an evacuation of criticality in the name of criticality, a retreat from the project of universal emancipation in the name of difference – mirrors trends elsewhere (Flaherty, 2015; Foster, 2012). But that is not to say that many of the criticisms that were articulated at this initial moment of critical museology have not been absorbed and accommodated by museology and by museums. It is also incontrovertible that today's museums are more welcoming, tolerant, polychromatic and polyvocal than their precursors. Nevertheless, my hunch is that these achievements, these cultural accommodations, function as proxies for structural change and mask the need for more radical transformation.

2.2.2. The new museology, a museology that Lorente (2022) distinguishes from its French namesake *nouvelle muséologie*, arrived in the Anglo imagination in 1989 with the publication of the Peter Vergo-edited collection *The New Museology*. It is this museology that is typically being referred to (knowingly or otherwise) when a fundamental paradigm-shift (Anderson, 2012) is mentioned within the Anglophone sphere of museum studies. Although evident that the critical and new museologies of this period cannot be decisively separated, broadly speaking, while critical museology was focused on making visible the social, political, economic, and historical underpinnings of "the museum" for the final purpose of societal transformation, the new museology was oriented towards transforming *museums*.

With respect to the origin story of the new museology, the "old museology" was said to have been overly preoccupied with "how to" matters of administration, education and conservation (Macdonald, 2006). The "old museum," meanwhile, was criticised for "petrifying and decontextualizing living traditions, alienating people from their past, disseminating hegemonic national narratives and ideologically instrumentalising bodies of knowledge" (Arnold-de Simine, 2013, p. 7). The new museology, on the other hand, aligned itself with the politics of representation and recognition (Macdonald, 2006). Foregrounding issues of identity and difference, new museological research was characterised by historicist and particularly Foucauldian orientations. The following comment from Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (1992) exemplifies such inclinations. It would be a mistake, Hooper-Greenhill (1992, p. 1) wrote, to assume "only one form of reality for museums, only one fixed mode of operating." New museological research tended to be locally situated, politically aspirational (within the coordinates of capitalistic liberal-democracy), and practice-focused (having "real world" applications) (Mason, 2006).

In 2006, Sharon Macdonald declared that museum studies had come of age. Although a premature declaration, her account of said maturation is instructive. Macdonald (2006, pp. 1-

2) suggested that a number of waves within museology were discernible, and observed that museum studies had moved beyond the first wave of new museological work "by broadening its scope, expanding its methodological approaches, and deepening its empirical base." This expanded and expanding museum studies, she wrote, "does not, however, have a single line." The museum studies of Macdonald's (2006, p. 2) mind was, and in a development which mirrored the multiplicity and complexity of museums themselves, "correspondingly rich and multi-faceted" and one which offered "a range of perspectives and approaches to comprehend and provoke museums themselves."

What I would like the reader to take from this is that the new museology should be understood as descriptive and prescriptive, aspirational and illustrative. Correspondingly, although museology undoubtedly went through a period of adjustment around this time, the coagulated and inflexible nature of the old museology is often exaggerated. However, the new museology's impact and influence has been called into question. Shelton (2013, p. 8), for example, argues that it "never defined a distinct field or method of study." What Shelton overlooks is its application – rhetorical or otherwise – within museums. Indeed, although not necessarily named as such, the principles and attitudes that formed during the new museological moment have unquestionably dominated recent museal horizons (Lorente, 2022).

Insights into the strange fate of critical museology are provided by Jesús Pedro Lorente in his text, *Reflections on Critical Museology: Inside and Outside Museums* (2022). Lorente's (p. 88) definition of critical museology, which he also refers to as "reflexive museology," emphasises that it is historicist in form and aspiration. Its focus, according to Lorente (p. 88), is and should be "the representation of minorities or peripheral cultures, the reconsideration from postcolonial perspectives of ethical dilemmas about the exhibition and return of indigenous materials, [and] the impugnation of dominant narratives etc." Lorente (2022, p. 19) also stresses that "the promotion of positive values of equality, tolerance and democratic culture should be considered a priority goal" for critical museology. His insistence on the term begs the question: if this is critical museology, what is *non-critical* museology? In other words, the critical museology outlined by Lorente is indistinguishable from the liberal-progressive museology that is currently ascendant within western museums. If this is the case, if "critical museology" *is* active in museums, my question is this: is such a brand of criticality sufficient? What, for instance, does difference represent other than *difference*?

Anthony Shelton (2013, p. 8), meanwhile, describes critical museology as a field of study that "interrogates the imaginaries, narratives, discourses, agencies, visual and optic regimes, and their articulations and integrations within diverse organisational structures that taken together

constitute a field of cultural and artistic production." While agreeing with the interrogatory premise of this definition, my own understanding of critical museology diverges sharply from Shelton. Firstly, Shelton's ambition for critical museology to be centred on museum renewal brings his thinking into alignment with the aspirations of the new museology. And secondly, Shelton's critical museology, and much like Lorente's, is post-critical in all but name.

Emerging in the slipstream of thinkers such as Bruno Latour (2004) and Jacques Rancière (2009) and out of a sense of dissatisfaction with the practice and vocabulary of symptomatic reading (Flaherty, 2015), post-criticality has become, and even if not named as such, a default setting within the academy (Foster, 2012). In summary, and as Hal Foster (2012, p. 3) explains, there has been a rejection of *judgment*, of the "moral right presumed in evaluation," and a rejection of *authority*, of the "political privilege that allows the critic to speak abstractly on behalf of others." Drawing on the work of Foster (2012) and Slavoj Žižek (2000), my contention is that post-criticality is tantamount to relativist capitulation.

The most significant account of post-critical museology can be found in the work of Andrew Dewdney, David Dibosa and Victoria Walsh (2013). Proposing a reconfiguration of the relationship between the museum and its publics, "critical museology," they argue, has consistently misinterpreted and misrepresented the relationship between visitor and museum. The visitor, as their argument would have it, should not be considered merely a passive receptor and nor should the museum be understood as inevitably hegemonic. According to this line of argument, "the subject of the museum" *does not exist*. Dewdney, Dibosa and Walsh's version of post-critical museology assists in understanding the ascendency of historicist thinking in museology and for apprehending the ideal of authorial dispersal that is now prevalent in museums.

Dana Carlisle Kletchka (2018, p. 298) illustrates these aspirations for us when she writes of post-critical museology envisaging museums as being "human-centred, socially responsive, and informed by multiple voices and perspectives." For Kletchka (2018, p. 299), post-critical museology is "based on the notion that museums may foster progressive social change and take up political positions on social issues that affect the communities they serve." My own understanding, an understanding that is advanced incrementally throughout this thesis, is that post-critical museology functions as a theoretical alibi for the liberal consensus that dominates museums and museology.

Indeed, what I term liberal-progressive museology now shapes and clips the ideological horizons in which museums operate. The progeny of the new museology and underpinned (consciously or otherwise) by post-critical orientations, liberal-progressive museology

emphasises normatively instrumental applications. Kylie Message's (2007, p. 235) contention that contemporary museums "aspire to function as popular, demotic spaces dedicated to representing a variety of experiences and modes of citizenship" captures something of the tenor of the liberal-progressive position. Ben Dibley (2005, p. 5) provides further illumination when he writes: "Seduced by the institution's own rhetoric of its democratic potential, [many theorists] produce redemptive narratives that ultimately mimic the reformism of the museum's own political logic." The Simon Knell edited *The Contemporary Museum: Shaping Museums for the Global Now* (2019) is illustrative of this tendency. In his introductory commentary Knell (2019, p. 3) writes: "As institutions centred on the citizen, truth and increasingly on human rights, the autonomous museum has an important role to play in our present-day world." Knell's notion of the autonomous museum – a museum that is, paradoxically, ideologically and materially unencumbered *and* a bastion of liberal values – is one of the points of agitation in this thesis. Throughout this thesis, liberal-progressive museology and new museology are used interchangeably.

2.2.3. This thesis was initially envisaged as a labour devoted to the production of critical appendages for two of museology's seminal texts, Tony Bennett's *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (1995) and Carol Duncan's *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (1995). These texts function as the principal museological foundations for my research. Although they cannot be conflated, the insights they offer with regard to the museum's historical relationship to power and the subject's relationship to the museum dovetail in various instructive respects. That these works came into being at the moment – and hence may be said to mark the moment – that critical museology faded from view also needs bearing in mind.

At the centre of Bennett's Foucauldian and Gramscian-inclined project was the argument that the public museum's advent following the French Revolution "exemplified the development of a new 'governmental' relation to culture in which works of high culture were treated as instruments that could be enlisted in new ways for new tasks of social management" (Bennett, 1995, p. 6). Bennett placed the rise of the nineteenth-century museum in a wider context of what he called the exhibitionary complex. This complex, a complex in which scientific discipline, surveillance and spectacle were entwined, encompassed a set of cultural technologies which acted to stimulate and manage the "voluntary" self-organizing of the citizenry via the panoptical logic of surveillance/self-surveillance. Following Foucault, Bennett stressed that in the modern period the instruments of government shifted from being

explicitly coercive to encompass a range of sinuous tactics and practices, with the museum, for example, targeting the popular or public body as an object of reform.

Bennett highlighted three critical tasks the museum performed within this new calculus of power. First, the museum was a social space, a space of *emulation* where "civilized forms of behaviour might be learnt and thus diffused more widely through the social body" (1995, p. 24). Second, it was a space of *representation*. The disciplinary aspect of this representational function – that is, the particular signifying processes through which museums endow objects and (master) signifiers (such as the nation or the People) with meaning – is particularly important to keep in mind here. Finally, the museum was a space of *observation* and *regulation* in which the visitor's body was "taken hold of" and "moulded in accordance with the requirements of new norms of public conduct" (Bennett, 1995, p. 24).

A vital qualification within this schema is highlighted by Helen Graham (2012, p. 566), when she writes that although the "public rights demand" is "produced and sustained by the democratic rhetoric governing the conception of public museums as vehicles for popular education, a dissonance is set up as the political rationality of museums is also and simultaneously an 'instrument for the reform of public manners.'" A further and related dissonance resides in the museum being a space of universality and a space of particularity. This tension, Bennett (1995, p. 7) argued, continues to determine "the discursive co-ordinates" for museum "policies and politics oriented to securing parity of representation for different groups and cultures." Andrea Witcomb (2003, p. 17) adds to this when she notes that museums continue to function as institutions for civic reform in the contemporary period, "even if the specific aims of such reform are now couched within a rhetoric of cultural diversity rather than public morals." My thesis considers the expansion of such reforming agendas.

Although it was in *Civilizing Rituals* (1995) that Carol Duncan's theorising was given full expression, the foundations for her thinking can be found in her earlier work with Alan Wallach. In "The Museum of Modern Art as Late Capitalist Ritual" (1978), for example, they stated that the museum transformed ideology "in the abstract" into "living belief," and this insight remained integral in her later work. Duncan's argument in *Civilizing Rituals* was that museums needed to be understood as ritual structures – as both sites of ritual and ritual forms in and of themselves – that furnished "the secular" with new value. Museums, which functioned according to a dynamic interplay of text, site, visitor, and organisational structure, were sites for rites of citizenship. Visitors to museums were written into these ritual proceedings, were inscribed into a particular set of ideological and historical coordinates: first as *devotees* (as audience members) but also as *actors*.

Museums visitors, Duncan argued, were prompted to enact a performance and in this way directly and vividly experienced the beliefs and values represented. Put differently, ideology was embodied in the museum. Ritual experience, for Duncan (1995, p. 13), functioned to renew or confer identity, or to restore order "in the self or world through sacrifice, ordeal, or enlightenment." Correspondingly, museum visitors come away feeling spiritually nourished or restored. However, the real point of such operations was not palliative and nor was it to secure and enable democratic access to the arts, to culture and to heritage. The fundamental purpose of the museum was to fix and maintain new relations of power. That the provision of spiritual nourishment and democratic access is precisely how such fixing occurs needs reiterating here. To take this a step further, and as Walter Benjamin (1968, p. 256) once put it: "There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism." My contention is that by transposing Santnerian thinking into the critical framework established by Bennett and Duncan, new avenues with regard to getting to grips with the "document of barbarism" that is the museum may emerge.

2.3. The Museum in the Future

2.3.1. In their introduction to *Sovereignty, Inc.: Three Inquiries in Politics and Enjoyment* (2020, p. 17), William Mazzarella, Santner and Aaron Schuster write with regard to the now commonplace notion that the normal framework of politics is shifting that the problem "lies not so much in normalizing Trump but in normalizing normality." In other words, while important to grasp the novelty of recent events, it is also imperative that we seek out their structural foundations. The crisis in which we find ourselves is certainly experientially unprecedented but that is not to say that the causes are exceptional (Mazzarella, Santner & Schuster, 2020). However, and contrary to Bertolt Brecht's advice to his allies on the left not to "start from the good old things, but the bad new ones," my approach here is instead to begin with the "good" new ones (as cited in Davies, 2023). In this way, the following reflections address the issue of how the "bright new norms" that were either conceptualised or inaugurated by the new museology have taken root in museums. In the process of locating certain emphases and presuppositions of liberal-progressive museum practice, my hope is that the dead-end that is post-critical museology is brought further into focus.

The International Council of Museums' definition of museum provides a useful starting point for reflection on these new norms of the new museology. An important standard and bellwether for institutions and practitioners alike, the definition also provides insight into the museological zeitgeist. In this way, following the 2016 ICOM General Conference in Milan, a new standing committee was appointed, the Committee on Museum Definition, Prospects and Potentials, with the brief of exploring "the shared but also the profoundly dissimilar conditions, values and practices of museums in diverse and rapidly changing societies" (ICOM, 2020).

In January 2019, ICOM invited its members and other interested parties to take part in creating a more current definition. Subsequent to this process the following definition was recommended.

> Museums are democratising, inclusive and polyphonic spaces for critical dialogue about the pasts and the futures. Acknowledging and addressing the conflicts and challenges of the present, they hold artefacts and specimens in trust for society, safeguard diverse memories for future generations and guarantee equal rights and equal access to heritage for all people. Museums are not for profit. They are participatory and transparent, and work in active partnership with and for diverse communities to collect, preserve, research, interpret, exhibit, and enhance understandings of the world, aiming to contribute to human dignity and social justice, global equality and planetary wellbeing.

However, ICOM's Extraordinary General Assembly, which took place in September 2019, postponed the vote on the new museum definition. Three years later, on 24 August 2022, the Extraordinary General Assembly of ICOM approved a new museum definition:

> A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing.

Both the proposed and the recently adopted definitions capture something of the trajectory and tenor of museological thinking in the present.

The foundation for this trajectory can be found in the title of Stephen Weil's 1999 article: "From Being *about* Something to Being *for* Somebody: The Ongoing Transformation of the

American Museum." The conclusion to be drawn from Weil's titular maxim was that the historical object, formerly the *sine qua non* of museums' existence, had been superseded by the experience of the visitor. Taken to its logical conclusion, this turn thereby indicated that the object of the museum had become, essentially, the subject. This transposition engendered much debate, though it needs noting that this move away from artefacts did not signify "a rejection of somatic and sensory address to the visitor" (Henning, 2006, p. 91). Instead, there was an increased emphasis on the visitor's own perceptions, desires, body and identity. A spectator or passive recipient no more, the visitor was now framed as an active and empowered agent. That this emphasis on agency, performance and desire mirrored and emulated the sexed-up neoliberalism of the time should be self-evident. Moreover, and crucially, although "visitors" and "somebodies" were relentlessly spotlighted by museological thinking at this time, the theorised *subject* was nowhere to be seen.

2.3.2. The new museology arose in response to perceived shortcomings in museology and museums. However, the period of its formulation also witnessed a museum "boom" (Macdonald, 2006). As Hooper-Greenhill (2007b, p. 1) put it, museums moved with "nimble flexibility and creative fluidity to respond to the conditions of post-modernity." There has been a significant growth in the number of museums and memorial sites and, with respect to their influence on the cultural landscape, visibility as cultural icons and destinations since the 1980s (Doss, 2012; Arnold-de Simine, 2013). The success of the museum, as Andreas Huyssen wrote in 1995 (p. 13), should be perceived as "one of the salient symptoms of Western culture in the 1980s [...]. The planned obsolescence consumer society found its counterpoint in a relentless museummania." Ninety-five percent of existing museums are said to have been founded since the Second World War, and although so-called "superstar" museums have monopolised the headlines, most additions to the museological landscape have been local, small-budget, and community-focused (Witcomb, 2003). "This phenomenon," as Macdonald (2006, p. 4) puts it, demonstrates not only that the museum should not just be understood as "an 'old' institution or relic of a previous age, but also that the critiques of representation [have] not undermined confidence in the museum as a cultural form." The museum form demonstrated over this period that it can assimilate and accommodate anything. Anything, that is, unless it is presently ethically ticklish.

The successive evolutionary stages of the museum, at least according to the new museological theorising of thinkers such as Hooper-Greenhill (2002) and Sharon Macdonald (2006), could be formulated as follows: from homogenous-universal (the modern/old museum); to cosmopolitan-global (the new museum); to cultural-ethnic-local (the museum of the future).

Meanwhile, for Margaret Lindauer (2007, pp. 305-306), "a combination of modernist qualities (authoritative, elitist, exclusive and conservative) and post-museum qualities (discursive, democratic, inclusive, progressive) can probably be found in many museums at the turn of the twenty-first century." To adapt a phrase from Trotsky (as cited in Miéville, 2018, p. 28), and applied to the material at hand, an amalgam of archaic with more contemporary forms striate the contemporary museum. History, in a word, does not clean-up after itself. The disparagement of modernist is perhaps the most revealing element of Lindauer's reading. Nevertheless, that museums have evolved over time and have served different needs and fulfilled varied and variable functions at different periods of history is beyond doubt. The adaption to and embrace of neoliberal capitalism being a case-in-point.

Although highlighting the collapse of the distinction between commerce and culture is today so evident as to be *passé*, it needs reiterating that museums have become ever-more explicitly and indeed ecstatically intertwined with spectacle and promotional culture, with "the global traffic in symbols and flows of capital" (Macdonald, 2006, p. 5), with neoliberalism. The dominant paradigm underpinning late capitalism, neoliberalism has been defined as the elevation of capitalism "into an ethic, a set of political imperatives, and a cultural logic" (Thompson, 2005, p. 23). For David Harvey (2004, p. 2), it is in the first instance "a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade." Precipitating a deepening penetration of market relations into political and social institutions as well as into cultural consciousness itself (Harvey, 2004; Thompson, 2005), neoliberalism has occasioned, as Jean and John Comaroff (2001, p. 27) argue, "a synergistic spiralling of wealth and poverty" and a dialectical dance of "homogenization and difference."

For museums, the unambiguous emphasis on economic rationalism and the "liberatory" potential of the market occasioned a number of realignments (Sandell, 2012). Museums became, in the first instance, subject to "economic analysis, managerialism and accountability" (Hooper-Greenhill, 2007, p. 18). A corollary expectation was that they provide evidence of social value (Scott, 2013). Due to the "reimagining" of their funding models, it also became necessary for them to compete in the culture and leisure industries. While new museological theorists tend to stress that it arose within the ferment of a critically self-reflective moment and as an affirmation of trends within cultural theory and politics (Mason, 2006), economic drivers were integral to the new museum moment. That the museological literature of this time was characterised by disputations over the purpose and value of museums should be read as evidence of both critical engagement and exogenous pressures. Haunted by the spectre of irrelevance, the question of whether museums could "make a

difference" took centre stage (Black, 2012; Golding, 2009; Weil, 2002). The outcome of this flux was that museums were repositioned – and repositioned themselves – as "icons of new and emerging consumer cultures" (Healy and Witcomb, 2006, p. 1.2). Museums, these seemingly antiquated reliquaries, became *signs of the new* (Jameson, 2015).

In this way, the new museum phenomenon can be seen as a heady mix of aspirational motivations, critical engagement, realpolitik accommodations, and reactive measures. For Macdonald (2006, p. 5), this phenomenon was marked by a series of concerns: "These include, *inter alia*, anxieties about 'social amnesia' – forgetting the past; quests for authenticity, 'the real thing,' and 'antidotes' to the throwaway consumer society; [and] attempts to deal with the fragmentation of identity and individualization [...]." Meanwhile, that the (rhetorical or otherwise) transfer of responsibility from author or producer to visitor or consumer mirrors more widespread evolutions in economic and cultural life is clear. As Henning (2006, p. 152) writes, increased flexibility in capitalist labour relations and production is "connected to the 'hybridization' of the museum, as museums increasingly find that the way to compete in a global marketplace of attractions is to 'exploit the plasticity of the museum idea'". For Huyssen (1995, p. 13), "the museum's role as site of an elitist conservation, a bastion of tradition and high culture have given way to the museum as mass medium, as a site of spectacular mise-en-scène and operatic exuberance." While something of a wilful – or at the very least peculiar – misreading of the modern museum's originary form and function, what Huyssen highlights is the importance of capitalistic spectacle culture on the triumphant new museum moment.

2.3.3. Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (2002) laid the groundwork for post-critical museology with her conception of the post-museum. Writing in 2002 (p. x), she suggested that the modern museum is still "partly in place today, but subject to great challenge. During the last twenty-five years, a new museum model has begun to emerge, which I am calling [...] the post-museum."

> Where the modernist museum was (and is) imagined as a building, the museum in the future may be imagined as a process or an experience. [The post-museum] is not limited to its own walls, but moves as a set of processes into the spaces, the concerns and the ambitions of communities. (Hooper-Greenhill, 2002, p. 153)

This conception of the museum being coterminous with its communities, with its representational functions dissolving or (positively) fragmenting, with it becoming mediatory rather than representative, can be seen to be at work – to varying degrees and in various forms – in museums the world over today.

For Hooper-Greenhill, the modern museum should be understood as a site of authority and the post-museum as a site of mutuality. In an explanatory passage which, curiously, echoes sentiments that could have been heard two centuries ago, Hooper Greenhill (2002, p. 21) described "long-standing structures" being in flux; "strongly held values" being questioned; "new opportunities" being "demanded and seized" by those who felt their "life-ways" had been subject to disadvantage. She went on to write of "territories fragmenting" and of identities being "reshaped and reasserted," and of the cultural sphere being "newly prioritised as the generative power of culture" came to be "recognised and exploited." Berlin's Humboldt Forum, which opened in 2020, perhaps comes closest – at least on paper – to fulfilling the criteria of Hooper-Greenhill's post-museum.

Coalescing four institutional partners and incorporating the Ethnological Museum of Berlin and the Museum of Asian Art, the Humboldt Forum desires to be "a place for the arts and sciences, for exchange, diversity and a multiplicity of voices, [...] a place where differences come together." Stationed in the middle of Berlin's Museum Island, the Humboldt Forum, as Oliver Wainwright (2021) puts it, is a "Frankenstein complex," its 'beige walls and freshly carved stonework' gleaming with the "unreal quality of a high-definition digital model." Berlin's former royal palace, the *Stadtschloss*, was damaged by Allied bombing in 1945 before being demolished by East German authorities in 1950. In 1976, the German Democratic Republic opened their parliament buildings and a leisure centre, the *Palast der Republik*, also known as the People's Palace, on the site. This was bulldozed in 2006 and now, in its place, stands what Wainwright describes as a "bizarre reconstruction of the baroque royal palace [...]. Pieced together from photographic records, it is a simulacrum for the media age: […] made [...] to project an image of an idealised past."

The original idea to rebuild the Stadtschloss is typically accredited to tractor tycoon Wilhelm von Boddien. Beginning in the 1990s, von Boddien presided over a campaign that cleaved politics and commerce and tapped into the inchoate euphoria following German reunification in 1990. Crowned with a golden crucifix, and with statues of Prussian princes parading through its white halls and an inscription beneath the dome exhorting all on Earth to "kneel before Christ," the stage-set that is the Humboldt Forum presents a revealing coming-together of political-theology, capitalism and the ethical sensibilities of new museum practice.

2.3.4. The museum has come to be seen not only as an exemplary site of leisure, pleasure and learning, but as a "panacea for social exclusion and discrimination" (Arnold-de Simine, 2013, p. 7). As noted in the previous chapter, museums are now asked to "sustain societal health and improve the human condition" (Cameron, 2007, p. 330). They are expected to

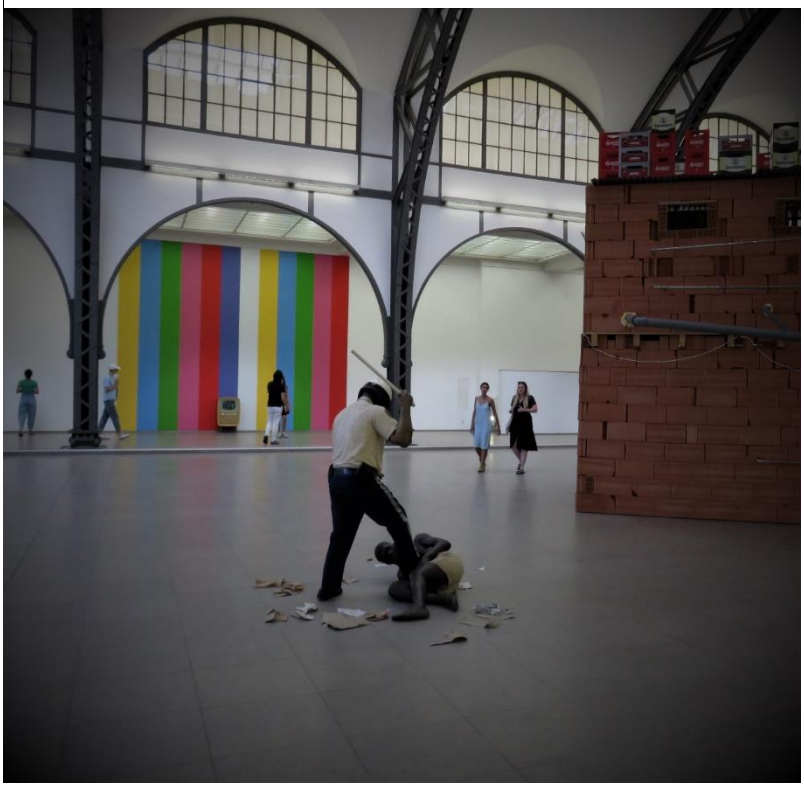
produce demonstrable *goods*. In this way, the "reconfigured" museum "promises to offer democratic and inclusive approaches to difficult pasts" (Arnold-de Simine, 2013, p. 8). Further to this, Jens Andermann and Silke Arnold-de Simine (2012, p. 3) write of museums today identifying themselves not "as disciplinary spaces of academic history but as places of memory." Rather than being purveyors of "authoritative master discourses," museums have embraced "horizontal, practice-related notions of memory, place, and community" (Andermann & Arnold-de Simine, 2012, p. 3). Correspondingly, museums have also embraced affective practices and increasingly privilege trauma discourses.

Indeed, affective pedagogical practices and strategies have seen wide application within museums in recent years (Bedford, 2014; Golding, 2009; Matthews, 2013; Trofanenko, 2011; Waterton & Dittmer, 2014; Witcomb, 2013). Museum displays are increasingly designed as explicitly theatrical environments which emphasise the "visceral, kinaesthetic, haptic, and intimate qualities of bodily experience" (Arnold-de Simine, 2013, p. 12). Such strategies are envisaged as affording visitors opportunity for more personal encounters in which they can emotionally invest and empathise with the experiences of others. Elaine Heumann Gurian (as cited in Bedford, 2014, p. 49) puts it like this: "If we are interested in changing our exhibitions into exhibitions of meaning, we will have to be prepared to include frankly emotional strategies." Writing in the context of the affective representation of trauma in museums, Arnold-de Simine (2013, p. 120) notes that the expectation is that the suffering depicted will enable "a cathartic experience through which the visitor can become a 'better person'". In other words, there are often implicit moral agendas at play, with the desired responses typically involving "a commitment to a shared system of ethical values promoting pluralism and tolerance" (Arnold-de Simine, 2013, p. 120).

Although envisaged as high-cultural analogies of theme parks and shopping malls in the 1980s and 1990s, the museum as moral(ising) force has returned. For example, in recent years they have been described as: therapeutic sanctuaries and sites for social healing (Greene, 2006; Golding, 2009; Janes, 2012), forums for cultural exchange and democratic renewal (Barrett, 2001; Black, 2012; Gurian, 2006; Lavine, 1992; Sandell, 2012), spaces of contemplation, fantasy and spiritual experiences (Henning, 2006; Weil, 2002); and as "safe places" for the presentation of controversial subjects (Cameron, 2006; Golding, 2009). To summarise some of these recent emphases, in ideal form today's museums should be visitor-focused; democratised and participatory; interactive, experiential and affecting; empathetic and ethically engaged; pedagogically fluid; and grounded in horizontal historiographical methods and models. They should be "distributed hybrid forums" that are "transcultural, transvisual and transmedial," resources "to extend lines of difference" (Dewdney et al., 2013, p. 233).

Figure Two

Installation view of "Hello World: Revising a Collection" at Berlin's Hamburger Bahnhof featuring Duane Hanson's Policeman and Rioter (1967), 2018.



The exhibition "Hello World: Revising a Collection" (2018) at Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin exemplifies such aspirations. Generated from "a pluri-vocal collaboration between internal and external curators," it was intended to call into question the Eurocentric character of the *Nationalgalerie's* collections for the purpose of opening up a discussion on how museum collections can reposition themselves today. Unsparing with respect to historic reflection, transparent with regard to motivations and methods, and unfailingly inclusive, "Hello World" models the reparative and therapeutic ethics and visitor-centred pedagogies that are increasingly evident in museums (Lorente, 2022; Arnold-de Simine, 2013). More than this, it affords insight into how the means of glory and energy production have shifted in recent years. Not only does it exhibit the doxological affordances of the affected visitor, but demonstrates the expedience of canon disruption, and the rich seam "the traumatic" and cultural difference provide in terms of new sources of museal raw material.

The incessant sliding of meaning that characterises new museums' representational activity undoubtedly mirrors the capitalist economy itself, which in its contemporary dynamic "raises

to new heights Marx's old description of its dissolvent power on all fixed identities" (Žižek, 2008, p. 105). Daniel Trilling's (2019) vernacular description of the new House of European History in Brussels provides another means of grasping what is at stake here. Trilling writes that it is "a 19th-century bourgeois edifice whose insides have been stripped and replaced with the airy glass and steel architecture of a twenty-first-century office block," and that it is an institution "caught between the language of nineteenth-century nationalism and smooth-talking global capital." It is, Trilling argues, "an example of the weird vacuum you get when you try to avoid ideology." This weird vacuum figures here as another of the *glorious absences* that, I argue, stir at the "heart" of the liberal-progressive museum.

The following observation by François Hartog (2015, pp. 181-182), made in the context of discussing the revitalising role of heritage, serves as an epilogue to this summary of the "critical" trajectories of the museum and museology. Hartog asks whether we are witnessing the emergence of a new museum "without the limits of the museum – a kind of museum coextensive with the community? A museum genuinely *of* society rather than *about* society?" What Hartog alights upon is the fantasy, also articulated by Hooper-Greenhill (2002) above, of the museum being coextensive with those it represents; a fantasy of authorial abnegation which is also, paradoxically, one of vampiric engorgement.

2.4. Glorious Matter/s

In an article published in *Curator* in 1971, Duncan Cameron asked: *the museum, a temple or the forum*? Cameron's question continues to inform the critical parameters of museology. For example, in 2009 (p. 200) Carol Scott wrote: "Museums have symbolic value as sites of commemorative events and they provide spiritual value through generating experiences of wonder, awe, and meaning." Three years later, and approaching the question from a critical vantage, Fo Wilson (2012, p. 219) declared that "the idea of the museum as a secular, ceremonial temple that Carol Duncan posited […] is starting to wear down in the new century." Meanwhile in 2013, the Museums Association of Great Britain (as cited in Bedford, 2014, p. 50) released a statement announcing: "Museums need to become places where emotion is encouraged, where stories are told and where a visceral response is preferable to an intellectual one – more like places of worship." Murawska-Muthesius and Piotrowski's (2016, p. 6) more recent and no longer binary typology goes as follows: "Museum-as-temple – that is, a conservative one; museum-as-entertainment – that is, a populist one; and museum-

as-forum, which we will call democratic, and the category to which the critical museum strives to belong." It is important to note that I consider Murawska-Muthesius and Piotrowski's conception of the "critical museum" to be post-critical in all but name. As established in this chapter, a degree of scepticism must be brought to bear on all claims of museological criticality.

Cameron's (1971, p. 20) own answer, that "those museums that attempt to integrate these two discrete sociological functions of forum and temple are in error," is circled around throughout this thesis. However, that I understand such an argument to be itself "in error" needs to be stated at the outset. Cameron's dichotomy, I argue, must be understood dialectically. "Within" the museum, forum (the "discursive") and temple ("theology") are held in irreducible tension. The museum is precisely where "matter/s" and "glory" circulate and feed on and turn – *ad infinitum* – into one another. Whether or not the active embrace of social responsibility *and* discursivity witnessed in museums since the advent of the new museology signifies an intensification of this dynamic – and correspondingly an amplification of the museum's hegemonical function – is one of the key questions in this thesis. The prospects for a subject able to act upon is socio-historical situation – which means, in the first instance, to learn how to strike at what is not there, to negate the – and indeed *its* – negation – turn upon this matter.

My wager is that by considering this question via the prism of Santnerian thinking new possibilities with respect to the conditions of existence of (a) critical museology may emerge, and it is to the work of Santner that I turn in the following chapter.

Three

Santnerian Foundations (1): Strange(r) Things

> By marrying biopolitics and libido theory [Santner] is able to demonstrate how the social bond is constructed not only through sovereign power and the rule of law but through our libidinal investment in such legal and juridical practices. Such a manoeuvre opens up various questions as to how we may think through a relation between symbolic structures and an individual subject's psychic economy.
>
> — *Alan Bristow* (2015, p. 97)

3.1. Metaphysical Subtleties and Theological Niceties

3.1.1. The focus of this chapter is the thought of Eric L. Santner, thought that provides numerous resources for reconsidering – and intervening in – the relation between the museum, the subject and museology. Over the following pages I outline the foundations of Santner's thinking; sketch the contours and pre-figure the museological purchase of the Santnerian concepts of creatureliness and Egyptomania; and establish the grounds for the elaboration of the flesh that occurs in the subsequent chapter.

Knitting together political theology, psychoanalysis and Marxism, the work of Santner provides a distinctive means of grasping the mutations of ideology in modernity; for (re)apprehending how power and its uneven distribution are continually naturalised. However, it is Santner's theorisation of the subject that is of particular interest here. Specifically, Santner provides a set of images and concepts that assist in the recognition of how we come to participate in – *enjoy*, even – our own stuckness and unfreedom. Such thinking affords a series

of openings with respect to understanding (the complexities of) the subject, a subject currently "on leave" in museology. Through the use of the theoretical framework offered by Santner, we can see how the subject is constructed in the relation between the museum and museology. Although with every appearance of agency, this subject of the museum is, I argue, unable to act upon its socio-historical situation.

3.1.2. In thinking through the discourses, the circuitries and agglomerations of power, and the sticky and hooked webs of relations in which human subjects are ensnared, I am continually drawn back to the picture painted by Walter Benjamin at the beginning of his *Theses on the Concept of History* (1968). This image shows "theology" pulling the strings of "materialism." A vulgarization, but what I take from this image is the notion that there are uncanny forces that subtend or, better still, *outwit* "the sensible."

This in turn suggests that without both a theory of the drives and desire, that is, without psychoanalysis, and without political-theological perspectives concerning, for instance, the structuring role of ritual, fantasy and affective affiliations in the production and maintenance of "the social," analysis of subjecthood and human community founder (Edkins, 2003; Rust, 2012; Santner, 2001). In other words, an effective critique of political economy must engage this "irrational kernel, this 'neo-liturgical' dimension of our lives" (Schaffer, 2017). Or, and as Santner (2006, p. 13) argues, "the emergence of the political *generates* a uniquely human form of animality or creatureliness." As an apparatus of social and political representation, the museum represents an important locus of inquiry for understanding how it is that such creatureliness is produced and (mis)managed.

Over the last four decades Santner has sparked and blazed at the intersection of European literature, continental philosophy, psychoanalysis, political theory, and religious thought. Given that his thinking over this period has been richly iterative and accumulative, my attempt at translating and transposing his theorising into museology is similarly hazardous and presumptuous. Not only is it inevitably truncated but it is riddled with theoretical homonyms. Although I have been interested in Santner's work for some years now, it was Alan Bristow (2015) who prompted this particular line of museological inquiry. Specifically, it was his question as to how one might apply Santner's theory of the flesh to particular fields of interest. Bristow (2015, p. 97) writes of Santner providing us "with the beginnings of such an enquiry by focusing on aesthetic and literary artefacts that correspond to this new incarnation of the *flesh* within the body politic."

Central to Santner's project is the insight that biopolitics involves – and whether "it" knows or not – more than "simply" the management of the biological health and fitness of the population. For Santner (2011), biopolitics does not, as it does for Foucault, signal a fundamental break with political theology but rather its expansion, an expansion which is, paradoxically, also a contraction. In contrast, for example, to Tony Bennett's (1995) strictly governmental approach to the function of the modern museum, my contention is that Santner's thinking – this ongoing critical encounter with the sticky point where the somatic is disturbed by the semiotic and vice-versa – offers a way of apprehending the libidinal aspects of the business of the museum.

It needs restating that although Santner is interested in historical constellations rather than historical chronology, he is "everywhere concerned" with the *experience* of historicity, with the fate of those bodies that are "caught up or defined by a history that lies beyond their immediate experience but everywhere affects and seeps into their everyday life" (Goodman, 2015, p. 12). To read the museum as an historical constellation means that rather than focusing on truncations or ruptures, the emphasis falls on seeking out that which persists – in however distorted or misshapen form – despite having been disavowed or repressed or cast-aside. Such an approach demands that we listen for those echoes of forms of life that continue to signify despite having lost or changed their meaning. It demands that we attend to that which "does not work." Interpretation, as Santner (2001, p. 28) notes, that "remains strictly within the registers of sense, of the practical unity of life as a space of reason, is helpless before the insistence of unconscious formations which are ultimately insensitive to the question: 'why are you doing that?'"

To bring these considerations into the realm of (dialectical) materialism, "a commodity appears at first sight an extremely obvious, trivial thing. But its analysis brings out that it is a very strange thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties" (Marx, 1976, p. 163). Adjusted for my purposes, the implication is that the museum, this *strange object*, also twitches with metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties. And the subject of the museum is nothing if not a jittery creature caught in the midst of political-theological antagonisms of which s/he, and to riff on Peter Sloterdijk's (1988) conception of cynical reason and Robert Pfaller's (2017) theory of interpassivity, is often *knowingly unaware*. Further to the issue of the persistence of theology in modernity, my argument is that we remain, and in part precisely because of our cynical distancing – that is, because we have been given the space in which ideology can take its "full swing" (Dolar, 1986; Žižek, 2008; Zupančič, 2008) – very much enchanted. We remain "captivated" (Santner, 2006, p. 88). Or, and to adapt a line from Fredric Jameson (2015, p. 101), *an ontology of the subject in the*

present is a science-fictional operation. The poetical-analytical schema of flesh, blood, relic and liturgy that is developed in the second half of the thesis is conceived as a means of inserting just such "theological niceties" and "metaphysical subtleties" into museology.

3.2. Prefiguration: On Bonds and Offices

3.2.1. Despite the museum visitor having been extensively theorised, the theorised subject is entirely absent from museology. "The subject" is either overlooked (by positivist accounts); made at once superficial *and* essentialised (by the identitarian liberal-progressive position); or actively (a)voided (by post-critical orientations). The influence of Foucault on these two final positions is pronounced, with the subject existing as a contextual cipher, as being reducible to cultural and historical circumstances. More recently, the affective turn has further evacuated the subject position. According to such lines of argument, the subject is *pure affect(ion)*. What I suggest is that without seeking to understand the ways in which the subject is (mal)formed and (de)structured, is made creaturely, the subject of the museum will remain an ominously spectral presence and one that will incessantly haunt museology.

Although the potential difficulties facing such an assignment require little elaboration, the complexity of the field is foregrounded by Maurizio Lazzarato (2014, p. 8): "It is impossible to separate economic, political, and social processes from the processes of subjectivation occurring within them." At the risk of plunging into the realm of paranoiac-cosmic hokum: *everything matters*. But then again, and as Adam Phillips (2015) argues, the Freudian tradition, a tradition that I am captive to here, is inherently a practice of (incessant) overinterpretation. It is remorselessly open-ended. Meanwhile from a Lacanian perspective, the psychoanalytic cure (analysis) is no "cure" at all in the conventional sense but an often terrible confrontation with (the) "truth" (Turkle, 1990).

The convergence of materialist criticism, political-theological analysis, and psychoanalytic theory in Santner's thinking – this series of seemingly divergent arguments concerning the nature of human being and the organisation of the forces of social relations – is unquestionably testing. Hanna Schaefer (2017) puts it like this: "How can one sustain a materialist critique if one also identified the idea of the (Christological) two-body doctrine as the organizing force behind social relations?" Schaefer (2017) goes on to suggest that:

> Santner's belief in a historical-ontological *continuity*, which allows him to argue that our political horizon is still (unconsciously) determined by ideas forged within a Christian theological discourse, is problematic. He sees constancy where other social theorists, especially historians, see truncated lineages and heterogeneity.

I would submit that this is not in fact Santner's argument. What he traces is a trajectory of intersecting fault-lines.

Gil Anidjar's (2014, p. 34) absurdist provocation: "what is the community made of?" provided another point of departure for this inquiry. In *Blood: A Critique of Christianity* (2014), Anidjar suggests that although communities are made and made contiguous by way of legislative and juridical procedures, by rights and laws, they are also conjured and sustained by forces invisible and indefinable. What, in other words, is that intangible thing, that "virtual reality" that seems to be both utterly ours – that ties us to particular forms of life in a very real, bodily sense, that moves us, compels us, drives us – and entirely immaterial and unable to located? The Lacanian concept of extimacy (*extimité*) (Mazzarella, 2017), which problematises the distinction between exteriority and interiority and which courses (whether consciously or otherwise) through all psychoanalytic thinking, helps us apprehend this aporia. "The personal," in other words, is never just that.

3.2.2. Orthodox Lacanian accounts of subjectivity stress that the subject is formed around *lack* and in the face of trauma (Sharpe, 2010). Crucially, this is – at least at the deconstructive tip of psychoanalysis – a matter of logical limitation rather than originary disturbance (Edkins, 2003). The subject, paradoxically, is posited – is *pre-figured* – as impossible. Put in terms of language – *a*, or *the* key element in the Lacanian tradition – rather than simply naming things that already exist in the world, language *produces* what we call reality. However, and vitally, in this process of naming not only is the sign marked by the inevitable disjunction between signifier and signified, but something is always and unavoidably missed out.

This *missed out something*, this thing (*das Ding*) that cannot be symbolised, is one part of what Lacanian theory calls "the real" (Pound, 2008). Žižek (2008, p. 127) provides further elaboration when he writes that in the first instance the real is that impossible "thing" that can only be encountered "through the lenses of a multitude of symbolic fictions." However, an additional movement is required in that this "thing" is "purely virtual, actually non-existing, an X which can be reconstructed only retroactively, from the multitude of symbolic formations which are 'all that there actually is'" (Žižek, 2008, p. 127).

Our entrance into the social order (into the symbolic), our figuration *as a subject*, is a far from painless passage. Jenny Edkins (2003, p. 11) describes the subject being formed around and indeed "through a veiling of' that 'which cannot be symbolised – the traumatic real." The real, in this sense, is traumatic and has to be hidden or forgotten, because it is a threat to the (imaginary) completeness of the subject (Žižek, 2008). Edkins' (2003, pp. 11-12) account emphasises that the subject only exists as far as "the person" finds their place within the symbolic order.

Conversely, "no place that the person occupies [...] can fully express what that person is" (Edkins, 2003, p. 12). There is, in a word, always something *more*. This is not, however, "a question of people not fitting into the roles available to them," and "nor does it concern multiple or fragmented identities in a postmodern world" (Edkins, 2003, p. 12). It is, rather, because it is a structural impossibility. Santner's insistence on the "political" nature of our (non-natural) nature further enriches this picture. What I mean by this is that although the "split" subject is a *fait accompli*, the subject's *creatureliness* is the result of contingent and contestable socio-economic conditions. The offices we inhabit ("willingly" or otherwise) are never made to measure.

Crucially, however, and as Santner (2012, pp. 44-45) writes, "our sense of entitlement to enjoy the rights and privileges proper to the various 'offices' with which we have been invested," is underwritten by "another mode of enjoyment, a *jouissance* sustaining our attachment to these offices, to our socially intelligible, socially recognized places, positions, roles, identities." Santner (2012, pp. 44-45) goes on to suggest that "our symbolic investiture with this or that 'office' always produces a surplus of enjoyment that must be organized, managed, economized – *re-invested.*" Our various callings "generate a pressure that can never be fully metabolised [...]; these socio-economic interpellations generate a surplus (of) voice, a sort of vocal object that induces ever more activity." To bring the argument into explicit contact with materiality, the success of capitalism, Santner (2012, pp. 44-45) writes, lies in its capacity "to convert this surplus object into value, into a vast economy of 'too-muchness.'"

3.2.3. Historically speaking, the shift from monarchical to popular sovereignty – the vesting of the people and the subject with sovereignty – should be grasped as something "akin to a trauma, an inassimilable enigma" (Kornbluh, 2012, p. 17). Once more: the emergence of the political – of the bonds and offices of modernity – generates a uniquely human form of creatureliness (Santner, 2006). Two points need highlighting here. First, the secular assumption "that every life is and must remain sacred" (Campbell and Sitze, 2013, p. 6) is

nothing if not deeply ambiguous (Agamben, 1998). A second and interrelated point can be found in the work of controversial German political theorist Carl Schmitt. The "law," Schmitt (2005) argued, is founded on and maintained through recourse to extra-juridical power. Santner (2006, p. 13) explains that the sovereign agency "enjoys the power to suspend the law – the decision on the state of exception – in the name of protecting the security of the state or re-establishing the stability to which law can then apply." Schmitt's theory of the state of exception serves as a pivot for Santner, as it did for Agamben before him, with respect to his particular conception of biopolitics. In the sense that I am applying it, the sovereign impasse that *is* the state of exception works to disclose the traumatic kernel that (spectrally) underscores the socio-political dynamic.

The issue of the position of power is further illuminated by Slavoj Žižek. It is imperative, Žižek (2014, p. 40) argues, that we draw a distinction between the alienated situation in which "we, as living subjects, are under the control of a virtual Monster/Master (Capital), and a more elementary 'alienated' situation in which, to put it in a somewhat simplified way, *no one* is in control." The "objective process," in other words, is itself "also 'decentred,' inconsistent – or, to repeat Hegel's formula, the secrets of the Egyptians are also secrets for the Egyptians themselves" (Žižek, 2014, p. 40). To draw on another Žižekian (1997) locution: *the big Other doesn't exist*. These gnomic maxims enable one to grasp anew Santner's insistence on the purpose of critique being *to strike at that which is not there*.

To drill still further into the structuring role of negativity, Walter Benjamin's (1996) conception of mythic violence provides another valuable analytic for us here. Mythic violence, Benjamin argues, is that violence which (inevitably) accompanies the rise and fall of states and institutions. Such mythic violence leaves enigmatic spectral material deposits, deposits that could be said to have *significance but not meaning*, which then act as sources of what Santner (2006) – following Jean Laplanche – describes as "signifying stress." The modern subject is precisely a subject of the perpetual aftermath of mythic violence. And, as Santner (2006) suggests, it is precisely these deposits of mythic violence that render the subject creaturely. My argument hinges on the idea that these material deposits and traces are also the essential subject matter of the museum and one of its core problems.

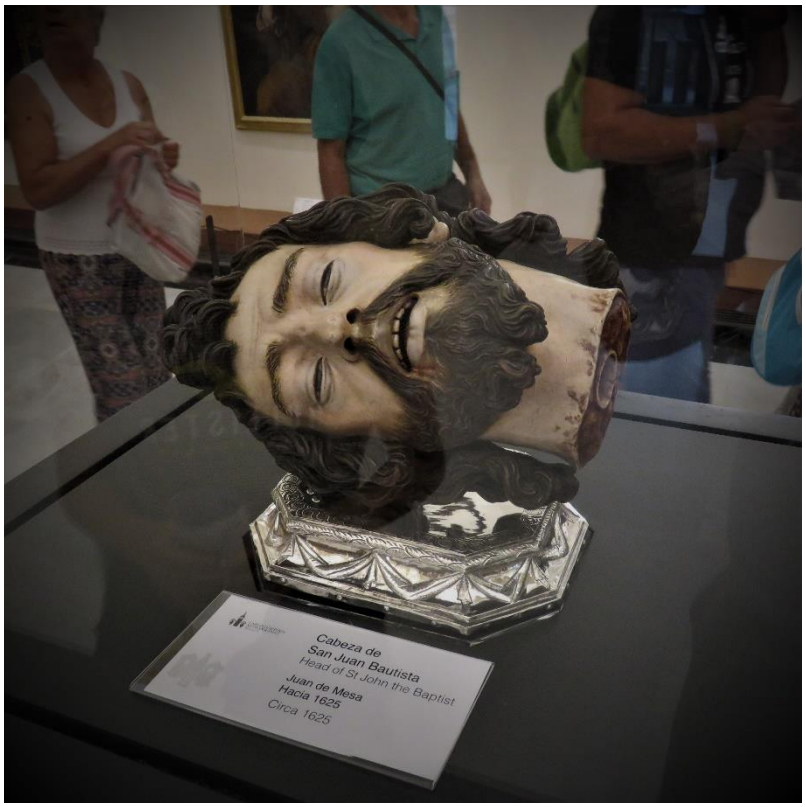
By this I am referring, firstly, to the histories of violence which striate the socio-political formations of which the museum is a part and which lurk within and haunt its foundational premise. Included within this schema is the impossible – and impossibly unbearable – aspiration to represent all and be for all. Secondly, this pertains to the museum's history of accumulation by dispossession, of being representative of centuries of plunder alongside its role in normalising epistemologies of dispossession. Finally, these stories and tokens of

destruction – these enigmatic deposits – also play a central role in the exhibitionary performances and imaginaries of museums. These deposits could be said to be the museum's most valuable raw material in that they afford seemingly unlimited significatory potential. A further dialectical twist must be confronted apropos this formula: that is, the subject being conceived as a *relic*, as an emblem of natural history; as an artefact able to be exploited but unable to act.

3.3. Situating Santner

Figure Three

Head of Saint John the Baptist, by Juan de Mesa (circa 1625), in the Catedral de Sevilla, 2018.



3.3.1. In the entrance to the Cathedral of Saint Mary of the See in the southern Spanish city of Seville is a small museum in which is located the severed head of John the Baptist. Just over from the Baptist is a painting, *The Magdalene* (circa 1622-1625), by Artemisia Gentileschi, the painter of the gory wonder that is *Judith Slaying Holofernes* (1620-1621). The *Catedral de Sevilla* itself is almost too much to bear.

Seville's cathedral was once – *first* – the Almohad Mosque (1172–1248); then a Christianised mosque (1248–1434); then a Gothic cathedral; and today a site of touristic pilgrimage and pleasure. The final resting place of Christopher Columbus – or perhaps not: there is some dispute over whether the interred body is his or his son's – with his body migrating from Spain to what is now the Dominican Republic, to Cuba, and finally back to Spain in 1898, the Cathedral is awash in the loot and blood of the Americas. Columbus's tomb itself, a shrouded coffin held aloft by four fleshy-cartoon-realist allegorical figures representing the four kingdoms of Spain during Columbus' lifetime, is comically monstrous. The comingled sovereignties that exist – that persist both spectrally and carnally – in the Cathedral, alongside the more recent collision of host and guest, a collision that is felt palpably in its entreaty to parade and purchase, to enjoy and worship, make it an exemplary site in which to consider, both historically and in the present, those structures that determine the management of life and (life after) death. In other words, it is a fitting place to begin an account of Santnerian biopolitics.

Awash with contests and treacly with congealings, the biopolitical field must be understood as a complex suite of ideas. Biopolitics is used by theorists in often radically diverging ways (Lemke, 2011; Campbell and Sitze, 2013; Lemm & Vatter, 2014). Nonetheless, a simple formulation would suggest that it names those procedures dedicated to the management of life (Agamben 1998; Foucault, 1998; Lemm & Vatter, 2014). Marking the entrance of the living species into the calculous of political rationality, it is a form of power that "seeks to administer, secure, develop and foster life" (Lemke, 2011, p. 35). Biopolitics captures those processes concerned with the management of populations, with the suturing together, even if in actuality (and simultaneously) tearing apart, miscellaneous fleshy bits (human bodies) into governable units, into subjects, citizens, populations. However, and as Timothy Campbell and Adam Sitze (2013, p. 2) suggest, it should also be considered as "the expression of a kind of predicament involving the intersection, or perhaps reciprocal incorporation, of life and politics." This predicament is at the heart of Santner's inquiry into the problems of human being and human community in modernity.

Directed at tracing and tallying the dispersal of power in modernity and the various (psycho) pathologies that have emerged as a consequence, and in keeping with the traditions of which

he is heir, Santner's focus is in on the way power is given form and comes to inform bodies, with how it is charged and maintained outside strictly legislative or bio-carceral spheres. It is the cryptic amorphousness of modern manifestations of power – and the unstable transition from monarchical to popular sovereignty and the more recent shift from popular sovereignty to the sovereign power of capital(ism) – that Santner has continually reckoned with in his work. Most recently via an engagement with the anthropological concept of mana (2020), and prior to that through his theories of the flesh (2011) and creatureliness (2006). What each of these circle around are the affordances and effects of what could be termed the *nowhere bits of power*.

Further to this, given the ongoing adjustments in the calibration of political power structures and techniques over the course of modernity, it is ever more difficult to fathom and locate a point of critique (Žižek, 2008c, p. 403). That is, given the incalculable contingencies that characterise life in the twenty-first century, a life at once intensely bureaucratised and yet uncertain, there appears nothing tangible to strike at, no cynosure to focus on. The hypercharged neoliberal moment has precipitated a quickening of the wild spasms of late capitalism, with capital having, on the one hand, taken on a properly virtual character, and on the other, having indiscriminately annexed all facets of life (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2001; Harvey, 2004). Similarly, our affections and allegiances have been scattered *and* magnified; our identities engorged *and* blown-about. Neoliberalism has led not only to the conquest of political argument and social structures by economic reason (by the il/logic of capital), but the capture, to use Raymond Williams' expression, of the structures of feeling of modern life, or, in psychoanalytic terms, its libidinal economy. We are all now bodily implicated (interpellated) as entrepreneurial, self-valorising, self-branding subjects in the liturgical labour which feeds and propels, following Marx, an economic system whose continuation depends upon perpetual growth.

Frantic and convulsive as they are, the paroxysms and crises of the current moment are not without precedent; with different intensities, certainly, but not unfamiliar (Mazzarella, Santner & Schuster, 2020). With regard to capitalism, and as Žižek (2008, p. xv) explains, because of its "dynamics of perpetual self-revolutionizing," capitalism's normative state is one of crisis: "Crisis is in capitalism internalized, taken into account, as the point of impossibility which pushes it to continuous activity." This crisis is found in the ceaseless production and consumption-destruction of commodities, in the new becoming obsolete at the moment of its conception, and in the eternal hunt for surplus value. Marx perceived capitalism to be "propelled by its own inner obstacle or antagonism – the ultimate limit of capitalism (of self-propelling productivity) is Capital itself" (Žižek, 2014, p. 37). The very "development and

revolutionizing of its own material conditions," Žižek argues, and the "mad dance of its unconditional spiral of productivity," is ultimately "nothing but a desperate attempt to escape its own debilitating inherent contradiction." This evocative image is useful to bear in mind when thinking through the operations of the museum.

3.3.2. Michel Foucault's inquiries into modern forms of power are similarly drawn-on and contested in the work of Santner. Foucault's formulations were conceived of successively as: discipline (in *Discipline and Punish*); biopower or biopolitics (in *The History of Sexuality Volume One*); and governmentality (explored primarily in his lectures at the *Collège de France*). Rather than being explicitly repressive or monolithically imposed from above, Foucault theorised these new forms and techniques of power – myriad *relations* of power – as more fluid and sinuous forms of social organisation and control (Simons, 2004). Governmentality refers to the multiplicity of techniques and processes that promote and enable self-government (Beel, 2017; Dean, 1999). For Isabel Lorey (2015, p. 23), governmentality designates "the structural entanglement between the government of a state and the techniques of self-government in modern Western societies." These dynamic arts and relations of governing include intersecting and diverging discourses and regimes and have relied on self-governing citizens becoming "self-disciplining" (Lorey, 2015).

According to Foucault, biopolitics was called onto the scene in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries following the demise of monarchical sovereign power, a power which was formulated as the power of life and death: *the power to take life and let live*. The transfer from royal to popular sovereignty, with the body politic being commissioned to head itself, marked the entrance of biological life into the order of bureaucratic-scientific knowledge and power (Lorey, 2015). The old power of death was "carefully supplanted by the administration of bodies and the calculated management of life" (Foucault, 1998, p. 139). Although this moment marked the advent of the celebrated subject of liberal democracy and the ascension of the People, it also occasioned the People and the subject becoming the *objects* of power *par excellence* (Kornbluh, 2012). Foucault (1998) argued that the modern Western state had "integrated techniques of subjective individualisation with procedures of objective totalisation to an unprecedented degree" (Foucault as cited in Agamben 1998, p. 5). This political double bind is constituted by the simultaneous individualisation and totalisation of structures of power. This double-bind remains one of *the* enigmas one is confronted by when considering contemporary political economy.

Politics, according to the logic of biopolitical governmentality, becomes a domain of bodily capacities and health and wellbeing, and comes to be characterised in turn by the proliferation and expansion of systems and institutions concentrated upon the optimisation of life and designed to "protect and promote the art of living" (Bristow, 2015, p. 93). For Agamben (1998, p. 5), Foucault's most important contribution was to provide a framework with which to comprehend the "concrete ways in which power penetrates subjects' very bodies and forms of life." However, Agamben (1998) also problematizes Foucault's theorising with his insistence on the insertion of Schmitt's politico-theological notion of the state of exception into the field of biopolitics. Bristow (2015, p. 94) explains it in these terms: for biopolitics to function "as such," sovereign power must be "endowed with the paradoxical ability to revoke the social contract [...]." Santner (2006, p. 13) adds to this when he writes that "the very constitution of a space of juridical normativity [...] always includes an immanent reference to a state of exception." It is the immanence of such references to descriptions of juridical power that imbues the operation of power with the attributes of a natural force.

"Natural life" becomes an ambiguous political project and indeed object in modernity (Agamben, 1998; Foucault, 1998). As Foucault (1998, p. 143) once put it: "For millennia, man remained what he was for Aristotle: a living animal with the additional capacity for a political existence; modern man is an animal whose politics places his existence as a living being in question." Agamben takes Foucault's thought to its most drastic conclusion by arguing that the biopolitical, which is dedicated to the optimisation of this natural life, also contains within it its opposite: *thanatopolitics*, the politics of death. The Holocaust is the inevitable "final solution" of the biopolitical: *the end-point of biopolitics is the camp*. As an apparatus also involved with the production of "a little extra life," the museum's place in this equation needs careful consideration.

3.3.3. Santner's insistence on the continuing significance of political theology further enriches and complicates the landscape of the biopolitical. However, and as Adam Kotsko (2015) has observed, political theology is "more a field of affinities than a clearly delineated disciplinary space." It designates both an area of study and a specific conception of political life. Following Julia Lupton and Graham Hammill (2012), I take it to name a nexus of exchanges and contests between political and religious life. Put in an Agambenian vernacular, political-theology, as an activity rather than a field of study, and the ceremonies and liturgies that accompany it (that *give* it and *are* its life), should also be perceived as *an echo of the acclamation that calls divinity into being*. Turning back to Anidjar (2014, p. viii), the formulation – "blatantly plagiarised from Carl Schmitt" – which partially summarises *Blood*,

and which provides insight into the quivering and tensile province of political-theological theorising, is this: "*all significant concepts of the history of the modern world are liquidated theological concepts*." It was this provocation that first prompted my decision to deploy the outmoded theological concepts of flesh, blood, relic and liturgy as a means of encountering and coming to terms with the contemporary museum and with museology.

For Santner (2012, p. 45), political theology is Schmittian in the sense that "it encompasses all efforts to transfer and appropriate religious concepts and practices, even and perhaps especially those that involve the formation of community – a *mass* congregated in and through the *mass* – to sustain the legitimacy of political institutions." Jennifer Rust (2012) raises an important point when she notes that the "liturgically generated social flesh" first emerged in the early Christian church as a communitarian or congregational bond and only later was appropriated by and concentrated in a single sovereign. This, Santner (2012, p. 46) suggests, "is the very definition of political theology; that is precisely what it does." The implications of these two interlinked contentions vis-à-vis the work of the museum – this instrument of *mass production* and *sovereign enjoyment* – are profound.

Political theology signifies the investment "of political institutions and actors with the trappings and charisma of sacred authority" (Santner, 2011, p. xii). However, this *expansion* of theological values and concepts into the sphere of political life also signifies a *contraction* of religious life and practices. Political theology is thus an agent of secularisation. It names those processes whereby religion was displaced by politics "as the central organizing force of sociality and collective identifications" (Santner, 2011, p. xii). Vitally, however, modern political formations are themselves sustained by theological ideas and values. Another way of thinking about this, and to put it in terms that have particular resonance here, would be to say that remnants from other times continue to exert pressure (to enchant, one could say) in endlessly enigmatic but ultimately decisive ways.

3.3.4. Throughout his career, Santner has pursued questions relating, as he puts it, to how "bodies come to be symbolically inscribed and libidinally implicated in political collectivities" (Santner, 2012, p. 44). One such example can be found in his re-examination of the case of Daniel Paul Schreber. In November 1893, and having recently been named presiding judge of the Saxon Supreme Court, Schreber was on the verge of a psychotic breakdown and entered a Leipzig psychiatric clinic. On his release, he published *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness* (1903), an account of "real and delusional persecution, political intrigue, and states of sexual ecstasy as God's private concubine." Freud's famous case study of Schreber elevated the *Memoirs* into the most important psychiatric textbook of paranoia. In *My Own Private Germany: Daniel*

Paul Schreber's Secret History of Modernity (1996), Santner describes the *Memoirs* as a "nerve bible" of *fin-de-siècle* preoccupations and obsessions. What it archives, Santner contends, are the paranoiac phantasms that eventually coalesced into the core elements of National Socialist ideology. The crucial theoretical manoeuvre performed by Santner in his reading of Schreber's breakdown is to frame it as a crisis of investiture. The vital twist in his argument is that Schreber succeeded in avoiding the totalitarian temptation specifically by way of his own series of perverse identifications.

Santner's emphasis on the centricity of the social and the symbolic within psychoanalytic thinking is of course not new. For example, from *Totem and Taboo* onwards, Freud was focused precisely on tracing the "complex, contradictory patternings of individual desire in relation to social forces" (Elliot, 2002, p. 2). Nevertheless, Santner's account enriches understandings of "the various ways in which trans-subjective collective fantasies bind modern communities and continue to animate social life with a crypto-theological vitality, beyond the conscious will of purportedly rational, secular agents" (Rust, 2012, p. 6). Recasting the relationship between "self-hood and desire, reason and passion," the subject in psychoanalysis, as Anthony Elliot (2002, p. 2) explains, "is not a stable or unified entity." Instead, the subject "is constituted to its roots through the representational dynamics of desire itself." "The subject" emerges and exists as an outcrop of the unconscious.

Although a Lacanian position is often equated with the notion of the subject as lacking unity, as being structured on and around (a sense of) lack, with the subject being driven by desires that can never be wholly satisfied, Santner (2001) speaks instead in terms of surplus and excess. "Human being," according to Santner, is characterised by that fact that it includes more reality than it can contain. We are the bearers of an excess, a too much of pressure, that is not simply physiological. The central focus of libido theory is precisely the problem posed by this surplus life, with the psychopathology of everyday life, for example, being the collective designation given to those means by which the subject seeks discharge from this *too muchness*.

Psychoanalysis, for Santner (2006, p. 155) is "that peculiar mode of attending to the singular ways a human life gets (dis)organised around enigmatic signifiers and 'partial objects'". In this way, libido theory should be understood as a special kind of social theory which elaborates upon the way in which individuals get initiated, drawn into and "seduced" by historical forms of life. It is a means of accounting for, though not necessarily coming to terms with, "the fundamental impasses plaguing human flourishing" (Santner, 2011, p. 73). Crucially, and as hinted at above, Lacanian psychoanalysis "does not show an individual a way to accommodate him or herself to the demands of social reality; instead it explains how something like 'reality' constitutes itself in the first place" (Žižek, 2006, p. 3). It provides a method for coming into

contact with unbearable truths, truths that must (somehow) be lived with. The power of this meeting of political theology with psychoanalytic (anti)ontology, a meeting that runs counter to the empirical and affective settlements that have come to dominate museums and museology, lies in it providing a means of grasping the socio-symbolic and political fields in relation to the "irrationality" of our affections and attachments and, indeed, our *reason/s*.

3.4. Creatureliness, Natural History and Egyptomania

3.4.1. Standing outside London's Imperial War Museum (IWM) are a pair of 15-inch naval guns. Both were fired in action during the Second World War and went on permanent display in May 1968. That it should have been at the height of the counter-culture movement and the very month of the student uprising in Paris, an event that shaped the political thinking of Foucault and others, is a historical quirk that seems more fateful than mere happenstance. Originally housed in the Crystal Palace, the gargantuan cast-iron and plate-glass structure originally built in Hyde Park to house the Great Exhibition of 1851, this pinnacle of the nineteenth-century exhibitionary complex, the IWM opened to the public in 1920. In 1936, the museum acquired a permanent home in what was previously the Bethlem Royal Hospital in Southwark, otherwise known as Bedlam, a name synonymous with the most egregious excesses of asylums.

In January of 2021 it was reported that the Museum was refashioning its Holocaust exhibits in order to involve the visitor more fully into the historical subject matter. *The Guardian* (Davies, 2021) quoted lead historian on the project, James Bulgin, as stating: "Holocaust museums for years have been asking visitors: 'Beware the Holocaust because you could have been a victim.' I suppose we are thinking: 'Beware the Holocaust because you could have been a perpetrator.'" In a more recent *Guardian* (2023) article, Bulgin stressed that "ordinary people were active participants" in the Holocaust and that "the path to genocide did not seamlessly unfold in front of those who walked along it: they had to build it for themselves."

Such subjective implication and indeed imputation also represents a twisted instance of what Mazzarella, Santner and Schuster (2020) label prosumption, that is, the reconciliation of production and consumption, sovereignty and citizenship. This issue is addressed in later chapters but for the moment the question to keep in mind as we proceed is this: what "types" of subjects and subjectivities are called to and called up by today's – "ethical" and "empathetic," "good" and "coterminous" – museum? What, and bearing in mind Žižek's (as

cited in Santner, 2006, p. 16) remark concerning "the anxiety-provoking abyss of the Other's desire," does this museum *want* from the subject? In what ways and in what directions does the museum want to *move* this subject? Santner's inquiries into the subject of modernity provide telling clues with regard to such questions.

3.4.2. As previously noted, Santner's abiding preoccupation is with questions relating to the ways in which social and political antagonisms and tensions are registered and inscribed in the intimacy of bodies and psyches. His concern is with "life that has been *thrown by the enigma of its legitimacy*, the question of its place and authorisation within a meaningful order" (Santner, 2001, p. 30). The subject of psychoanalysis begins, for Santner (2001, p. 30), "where biological life is amplified and perturbed by the symbolic dimension of relationality at the very heart of which lie problems of authority and authorisation." *On Creaturely Life: Rilke, Benjamin, Sebald* (2006) finds Santner confronting the problem of sovereign power and its inverse corollary, *creatureliness*. A central premise of this work is that subjects of modern society "still feel the effects of sovereign power's dependence upon the 'lawless law' of sovereign exception" (Faber, 2007, p. 2). Faber (2007, p. 2) writes of these effects – and of this *sovereign jouissance* – having dispersed and proliferated along "new pathways and relays" into "practices of commodity exchange and sexual practices, among others." It is in the (unconscious) encounter with and experience of these animatory deposits – *these globules of royal enjoyment* – that the subject is rendered creaturely.

Santner's conception of creaturely is crafted from the trails and traces left by the literary projects of Rainer Maria Rilke, Franz Kafka and W. G. Sebald, and also the theoretical excursions of Walter Benjamin. Synthesising Agamben's notion of bare life, the decentred subject of Lacanian psychoanalysis, and *die Kreatur*, a figure that haunted the writings of a number of German authors in the early-twentieth century, Santner's creature is a product of the periodically strange, equivocal and pitiless traumas of modernity. The creature is precisely that subject that is similarly cast adrift – abandoning or being abandoned by God and the Sovereign – *and* made the centre of the universe. It is a creature of shame *and* glory. Although bare life, which Bristow (2015, p. 95) describes as "the remainder or remnants of life once symbolic entitlements and the social bond are stripped away," is an important touchstone, Santnerian creatureliness must be understood as the product of symbolic entitlements that are both excessive *and* do not fit and a social bond that is at once attenuated *and* unyielding.

Important to foreground here is the Freudian conception of human being and human sexuality revolving around *Trieb* (drive), a compulsion to act which does not have a specific object, rather than instinct. The paradox of *Trieb*, as Lacan pointed out, "is that it is driven by what it

cannot have; it is, in other words, motivated by lack" (Buchanan, 2018, p. 143). For Santner, what ostensibly makes humans "creatures" is what "radically distinguishes them from all of nature: the perverse dimension of their sexuality" (Santner, 2006, p. 105). Meanwhile, that creature stems, etymologically, from the Latin *creatura*, a thing created, and recalling the social nature of libido, signals that it is the product of political, social and material processes (Faber, 2007). In other words, we become creaturely.

Rilke's novel *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* (1910) provides Santner with a set of images for apprehending the lived experience of creatureliness. In this novel, the eponymous narrator is exposed to the obscene, the simultaneously hollow and teeming, spaces of early twentieth-century Paris. Santner (2006, p. xvi) describes Malte being confronted by "the husks of men that fate has spewed out. Wet with the spittle of fate, they stick to a wall, a lamp-post, leaving a dark, filthy trail behind them." Malte's response to this, a condition described as *skinlessness*, is characterised as a typical creaturely posture. It needs stressing that "to be traumatised" means to be haunted or left possessed or under the ban of something "that profoundly matters without being a full-fledged thought or emotion, that is, anything resembling an orientation in the world" (Santner, 2001, p. 39). For Agamben (1998), validity without significance or meaning is the key to the crisis of legitimacy that defines modernity, a crisis that is *ipso facto* traumatic.

The cringed, contracted and melancholic characters populating the work of Kafka, who appear under the force of a law which refuses to reveal itself, are also scented with symptoms of creaturely life. Their agitation and stupefaction may be read as a response to – or as a register of – the state of exception, this chronic dimension of the political field which renders the boundaries of the law uncertain. Santner (2001) argues that the universe of Kafka's protagonists is:

> [...] animated by a message that penetrates, even frames, intentional life, a message that in some sense *causes life to matter*, but not in the form of a belief, thought, or meaning; what is at stake is a form of expressivity – "interpellation without identification" – that, in the absence of any propositional content, nonetheless gets under the skin and has some sort of (hindered) revelatory force, has, as Scholem puts it, *validity without meaning*. (pp. 38-39)

This startling insight undoubtedly has wide application. In the context of my study it is particularly instructive with respect to understanding the potentially empty expressivity engendered by those affective museum practices championed by liberal-progressive museology.

Crucially, both the normative order and creatureliness (as a product of this order) are sustained by fantasy. It is fantasy that nourishes our captivation and "entanglement with regimes of power and authority, our psychic attachments to existing social reality" (Santner, 2001, p. 24). However, it needs noting that in Lacanian terms (Sharpe, 2010) there is no "reality" without fantasy. We never approach things directly, just the way they are, but always perceive them, and hence perceive reality, within certain (within specific and specifically ideological) coordinates (Žižek, 2008). Furthermore, at the core of this work of fantasy is desire. In Lacanian terms, and as noted above, desire is an interpretation of excitation caused by "a determinate lack of some sort, by something having gone missing" (Santner, 2001, pp. 32-33). The implications of the museum being a custodian and translator of "missing things" is picked up in the chapters ahead.

3.4.3. Benjamin's multivalent idea of natural history also plays an important role in Santner's conception of creaturely life. Originally formulated in *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* (1928), natural history has been elaborated on most extensively by Adorno in the first instance and Beatrice Hanssen (1995) in more recent years. Placing history and nature in one another's presence and finding them commensurable in their moments of transience and decay, natural history obviated their traditional aporias and pointed instead to their "originary dialectical interplay" (Hanssen, 1995, p. 810). In this way, natural history should be understood as a refusal of the category of the natural and, concurrently, a way of framing how it is that forms and ways of life become naturalised and take on an "organic air."

Natural history, in Santner's (2006, p. 17) reading, also names the processes whereby "the symbolic forms in and through which this life is structured" are "hollowed out, lose their vitality, break up into a series of enigmatic signifiers, 'hieroglyphs' that in some way continue to address us – get under our psychic skin – though we no longer possess the key to their meaning." We find ourselves in the midst of natural history when "a piece of the human world presents itself as a surplus that both demands and resists symbolization, that is both inside and outside the 'symbolic order'" (Santner, 2006, p. xv). The spectral material emblems of natural history may be read as ciphers of the mythic violence of the state of exception. And creaturely life is precisely that dimension of human existence that is called into being at such natural historical fissures or caesuras in the space of meaning. Creaturely life is thus conjured by the "never-ceasing work of symbolisation, and failure at symbolisation, translation, and failure at translation" (Santner, 2006, p. 33). That the museum "is an institution of recognition and identity *par excellence*" (Macdonald, 2006, p. 3) would seem to make it an exemplary site for investigating and elaborating on creatureliness.

The work of Sebald stands at the centre of Santner's *On Creaturely Life*. Preoccupied with the subject's captivation and excitation by the spectral material traces of natural history, Sebald was endlessly attentive to the "inexorable interweaving […] of desire and destruction, pattern and chaos, proliferation and decay" (Eva Hoffman as cited in Santner, 2006, p. xv). *Austerlitz* (2001), his final novel, finds the narrator engaging with various fissures and lacunas within the order of meaning. A work of immense – and hence disquieting – aesthetic satisfaction, *Austerlitz* orbits queasily around the fact of the subject's creaturely excitation and undeadness when exposed to the uncanny stresses of natural history. Undeadness here should be understood not simply as a synonym for the unconscious, that site where a "traumatic truth speaks out" (Žižek, 2006, p. 3), but instead as referring to a subject made melancholically manic by a failure to fathom or adequately address the historical consequences of the state of exception, this condition in which the law is at once everywhere and nowhere.

3.4.4. The quasi-mechanical animation that typifies human being, Santner (2001) argues, is inextricably linked with the enigmatic seductions and stresses of sovereign power and authority in modernity. What the subject is confronted with in its efforts to inhabit a meaningful place in the symbolic is a tragic cycle. As Santner (2006, p. 33) explains, "my signifying stress is called forth – *ex-cited* – by my efforts to translate the signifying stress emanating from the other, indicating in its turn the other's 'addiction' to his or her own enigmas." Or, and as Jean Laplanche (as cited in Santner, 20006, p. 33) puts it: "Internal alien-ness maintained, held in place by external alien-ness; external alien-ness, in turn, held in place by the enigmatic relation of the other to his own internal alien." Unconscious mental life forms around and is mobilised by such enigmatic signifiers. These are signifiers that can never be fully metabolised or translated into the space of meaning. In this way, they persist as "loci of signifying stress" (Santner, 2006, p. 33). It is the excess of pressure that emerges at such sites of ex-citation that Santner calls creaturely.

Freud's great insight, according to Santner (2001, p. 28), was not only that unconscious mental life has something mechanical about it, but that there is a "psychophysical dimension of symbolization 'below' the level of intentionality."

> This is why any understanding of repression as a form of bad-faith or self-deception, that is, of merely competing propositional contents, one of which we manage to hide from ourselves but that is still, in principle, responsive to the question 'Why?,' will always miss the distinctive feature of the Freudian discovery. In Lacanian terms, unconscious mental activity – *symptomatic agency* – is, at its core, organised

> around *signifiers* rather than full-fledged meanings, beliefs, purposes or propositional attitudes. (Santner, 2001, p. 28)

The "persistence of mindlessness immanent to mindedness – a persistence that typically causes the subject a certain amount of pain (or rather, pleasure-in-pain) – is what Lacan ultimately means by the term *jouissance*" (Santner, 2001, p. 29). In this way, "a first definition of fantasy," could be said to be "the specific way in which a subject organises this *jouissance*" (Santner, 2001, p. 29). Fantasy, in this sense, must be grasped as fundamentally adaptive.

3.4.5. Another way of conceiving *jouissance* that helps us understand the "prospects" of the subject is as a "dimension that arises as a kind of collateral damage to the body's inscription in a web of relations, a field of signifying differences" (Santner, 2012, p. 48). Such a subject position faces disassembly by the very conditions that bring it about. However, Santner (2001, pp. 36-37) is at pains to point out that our induction into the socio-symbolic order has little to do with our "learning a language," which would, as he puts it, reduce this process to a "cognitive achievement and relation." Instead, it is the (mis)encounter with enigma of the other's internal alienness that fixes the destiny – and, I would add, ("juicy") *density* – of my own desire. We are, Santner writes (2006, pp. 36-37), "placed in the space of relationality not by way of intentional acts but rather by a kind of *unconscious transmission* that is neither simply enlivening nor deadening." In other words, such unconscious transmission is *undeadening.* Such transmission produces in us, Santner (2006, pp. 36-37) argues, "an internal alienness that has a peculiar sort of vitality and yet *belongs to no form of life*." This notion of undeadening guides my thinking with respect to what I term the museum's production of the subject as relic.

A further and vital Santnerian locution related to *jouissance* and undeadness is that of Egyptomania. In terms of my inquiry, it figures as a diagnostic for getting to grips with the febrile relationship between the museum and its subject, and between remembrance and fantasy. In what could be called its pure form, Egyptomania refers to the at-times maniacal interest in the remains of ancient Egypt, an interest that made its modern appearance following Napoleon Bonaparte's Egyptian Campaign of 1799–1801. Interest was further enflamed following Howard Carter and Lord Carnarvon's discovery of the tomb of Pharaoh Tutankhamun in 1922. However, it was not only the find itself that ignited public curiosity: the tale of the mummy's curse which was said to have killed Lord Carnarvon in 1923 has had enduring appeal. In the Santnerian (2001) sense, Egyptomania refers to the psychically rigidifying defence mechanism that *is* passionate investment or cathexion, and one that results

from coming too close to a surplus of validity over meaning. As I understand it, it stands for that zealous fantasy that does not so much fill-in as fill-out (engorge) what could be termed *the subject supposed to be*.

Inaugurated in the processes and dramas of investiture, those "freely conceded" interpellations that distinguish the creaturely life that is human being, Egyptomania is, or at least that which generates it is, operative in all institutions that produce and regulate symbolic identities. One way of understanding this is provided by Agata Bielik-Robson (2014). In an essay exploring the messianic in psychoanalytic thought, and writing with respect to Santner's conceptions of creaturely life and Egyptomania, Bielik-Robson suggests that creaturely anxiety is first and foremost an anxiety of legitimacy. It is a compromise formation. In other words, it works to similarly appease *and* sustain anxiety. It does so "by delivering ideologico-religious structures of meaningful support for the surplus flow of indeterminate energy," while also "setting the psyche on the course of seeking [...] sense where it simply cannot be found" (Bielik-Robson, 2014, p. 92). What Bielik-Robson is referring to here are those enigmatic signifiers that plague the universe of meaning. This double movement of stimulation and placation, of what could be termed defensive incitements, is important to keep in mind as we proceed.

Our lives are lived within the ban of such enigmatic signifiers by virtue of the historicity of meaning. We are always at the mercy of the remnants of lost or forgotten forms of life, "by concepts and signs that had meaning within a form of life that is now gone and so persist, to use Lacan's telling formulation, as 'hieroglyphs in the desert'" (Santner, 2001, p. 44). Returning to Žižek's (2014) comments above, and to add to this impasse: *the secrets of the Egyptians are also secrets for the Egyptians themselves*. These dead letters can, indeed do, become the focus of intense affective charge, and "what psychoanalysis ultimately tells us," Santner (2001, p. 45) suggests, "is that this is always the case, that our bodies are haunted [...] by an ontological incompleteness against which we *defend* by this or that *symptomatic hypercathexis,* by our specific form of 'Egyptomania.'" In this way, Egyptomania names a fundamentally defensive fantasy formation in which energy and imagination collide with severity and inflexibility.

Once more, crucial to understanding Egyptomania and psychoanalytic conceptions of fantasy more generally is that they are essentially adaptive.

> If there is a 'Jewish' dimension to psychoanalytic thought, it is this: the cure is indeed a kind of 'exodus,' only not one out of Egypt; it offers, rather, an exodus out of various forms of Egyptomania that so profoundly constrain our lives and, while sustaining a level of adaptation, keep us from opening to the midst of life. (Santner, 2001, pp. 44-45)

Such an exodus involves a suspension of or a sabbatical from what Santner terms the haunting or undead supplement of the law and the surplus – *fantasmatic* – labour at the core of sovereign relations. One labours "not only in this or that Egypt, but also in the hypercathected fields of one's 'Egyptomania'" (Santner, 2001, p. 64). In other words, those things that *matter* – that *seem* to matter, that have a hold on us and that we hold on to – can be precisely those things that render us undead. With respect to my inquiry, Egyptomania aids in illuminating not only some of the paradoxes that course through the work of remembrance, this vital "charge" of liberal subjecthood, but the potentially (un)deadening passions *enjoyed* by liberal-progressive museum practice.

3.5. An Outlaw Dimension Internal to the Law

Creaturely life emerges in response to the disturbances generated in the production, representation and perpetuation of social bonds and offices. It also names that form of existence lived in the paradoxical domain of the state of exception: "what is included in the state of exception is not simply outside the law but inside, an *outlaw dimension internal to the law*, subject not to law but rather to sovereign *jouissance*" (Santner, 2006, p. 22). Not simply a product of man's throwness into the enigmatic openness of being, it *marks the spot* of her/his exposure to the traumatic (but rarely named as such) dimension of political power. Because human existence in modernity means not only to be rendered bereft of any "secure reference to transcendence" but to be left "utterly exposed to the implacable rhythms of *natural history*" (Santner, 2006, p. 18), creatureliness is indicative of an ontological rather than strictly biological vulnerability.

Santner's theory discloses how it is that bodies and psyches come to register being at the threshold of law and nonlaw; creaturely life is life exposed to the fundamental impasse imposed by the (perpetual) threat of the state of exception. Crucially, however, this creaturely category is not a moralising or pejorative one. In fact, the specifically human experience of being made creaturely, of being made melancholically mad, is conceived as both an impasse and a resource (Santner, 2006). To conceptualise the subject as a creature means to be attentive to – and means to bring into the light – the fissures and contradictions in the social and symbolic order. As I understand it, to act on behalf of creaturely life is another means of conceiving class struggle, is another means of fomenting conditions for the existence of the communist hypothesis. In terms of my argument, what this necessitates in the first instance is

to find a means of disturbing the relation between the subject and the museum as conceptualised by post-critical museology. The poetical-analytical schema of *flesh*, *blood*, *relic* and *liturgy* has been conceived for this purpose and in the hope that out of which possibilities (in a theoretical register) may emerge for the subject to act anew.

Prior to turning to Santner's conception of the flesh and to the problem of political representation in modernity, a few concluding remarks on creatureliness are necessary for the establishment of grounds for that turn. Human life is creaturely life not because we are all constituted as "unique bundles of differential relations," but rather because we "exist as a kind of tear in the web of relations" (Santner, 2012, p. 48). We live, that is, "'in excess' of any differential field of representations, differ in a different way than culturally recognizable (or not yet recognizable) predicative identities" (Santner, 2012, p. 48). The subject is – always already – (an) outlaw. The subject is a strange/r thing. Though that is not to say that this "outlaw" need be *outlawed* vis-à-vis those forces that manufacture creatureliness. To seek out those museal practices that assist in engendering creatureliness and, in a second movement, neutralise said creature by making it into a relic and to identify a means by which to negate this negation is the objective of this inquiry.

Four

Santnerian Foundations (2): Matters of the Flesh

4.1. A Phantasmagorical Presence

4.1.1. This chapter *turns* upon Santner's theory of the flesh and its worth for us in illuminating the dilemma of the subject of the museum. In outlining Santner's theory, attention will fall upon the role of the historical museum within this construction. Notes on how this construction intersects with post-critical museology will need to wait a process of elaboration as this goes beyond the point where Santner initially takes us.

Santner's object of analysis in his theory of the flesh is the subject of representation – political, optical, affective, and whether subjective or collective – as it develops within modernity. Questions of "standing for," "standing *in* for" and "speaking for," questions of capture and questions of correspondence haunt all inquiries into the field of representation. The present work is no exception. Specifically, this inquiry is haunted by questions relating to the position of power, in the sense of both force (the charismatic energy of power, for example) and authority (for instance, the legitimacy of power). The poetical-analytical schema of *flesh*, *blood*, *relic* and *liturgy* is conceived precisely as a methodology for locating the museum's (missing) locus of power. It is addressed to questions of how this power, how the museum's ideological force, if you will, has mutated and how it is cultivated and (mis)represented by post-critical museology. What this chapter provides are a further series of fundaments for this locational exercise.

To expand on a line of inquiry touched on in the previous chapter, what is it that nourishes power? And what nourishes identification with power? What keeps us, as an effect in part of that power, attached and tied to it? What keeps us enflamed? Further to this, and as Žižek

(2008, pp. 35-36) writes, “Today, when everyone complains about dissolving social ties (and thereby obfuscating their hold over us, which is stronger than ever), the true job of untying them is still ahead of us, more urgent than ever.” In other words, questions concerning how we are bound and tied to something like “the relation” between the museum and a post-critical museology and how we come to (feverishly) labour beyond sense on behalf of such a relation remain germane. What Santner’s theory of the flesh provides is a means of understanding how our labours are (made to be) in concert with power and how we come, in the Lacanian sense, to *enjoy* such concert.

Our journey into an understanding of the flesh begins in Santner's *On Creaturely Life* (2006, pp. 80-82), in which he described the long nineteenth century as representing a radical stage in the protracted process of “immanentization.” By this term, he meant whereby “the divine charisma” that had “stuck to the sovereign” became “disseminated throughout the social space.” Persisting as an exciting phantasmagorical presence, “as a dimension of *surplus value*,” and attaching itself to “objects and bodies,” this sublime stuff became a focal point of “ceaseless economic, cultural, and political administration” (Santner, 2006, pp. 80-82). This phantasmagorical presence was conceptualised as *the flesh* only in his later works, and this spectral substance has come to occupy an increasingly privileged position since that point, in his diagnosis of the pressures informing subjectivity in modernity. *The Royal Remains* (2011), for example, considered the flesh by way of the fetishism of persons, while *The Weight of All Flesh* (2015) was devoted to examining the fleshy fetishism of the commodity. It is in pursuit of the strange spectral substance that is the flesh that this chapter is dedicated.

There are two interlinked primal scenes that are orbited over the following pages. The first is Jacques Louis David’s painting *The Death of Marat* (1793), an image that T.J. Clark (1999) and Santner (2011) argue captures some of the equivocations and paradoxes of representation and power in modernity. And the second is the opening of the Louvre 10th of August 1793. Upon opening, the Louvre was invested with the power of a Revolutionary sign. As Ozouf (as cited McClellan, 1994, p. 98) once remarked, the forced occupation of this space previously tightly controlled by the Old Regime was one of the first climactic pleasures afforded by the Revolution.

Firstly, that the modern museum – that is, the approximately conceived material hypothesis of a public museum – should emerge at precisely this violent and expectant moment is not inconsequential. These beginnings signal the inseparability of the subject, as it forms within the relation between the actually-existing museum and the discourse of internal reflectivity of that museum-form (museology, as it would develop), and socio-historical violence. And secondly, it is precisely such climactic pleasures and pressures that the contemporary museum

works ("mechanically") to manage on the one hand and replicate on the other in conjunction with the signifying processes of museology. What these primal scenes supply are occasions for thinking through the dilemmas of representation in European modernity, and, specifically, the issue of seeking to represent that which cannot be represented. The contemporary museum, as an institution of *that* modernity, as an institution of representation, inherits and stages, repeats and refuses these dilemmas.

4.1.2. Circling the question of how we come to be and to feel invested in – and tied to and bound by – our ways and forms of life, Santner's conception of the flesh is formed from an interweaving of Ernst Kantorowicz's theorising of the king's two bodies, of Foucauldian biopolitics as read by Giorgio Agamben and Roberto Esposito, and of Freud's notion of libido as interpreted by Lacan. Underpinning *The Royal Remains* (2011) is the idea that with the decapitation or suspension of monarchical absolutism, the sublime substance that is the flesh migrated haphazardly to the popular body and the bodies of the new sovereign entity, the People. Santner's argument is that this carnal dimension of sovereign transcendence remains very much alive today. Modern democratic societies continue to struggle with the displaced and distorted flesh of sovereign power, and *The Royal Remains* finds Santner lingering over these perturbing virtually-real vestiges.

Santner's theory of the flesh provides a means of getting to grips with the ways in which the ambiguous blessing that is the "gift" of sovereignty has been absorbed and accommodated, contested and struggled with in modernity. It does so by tracking the complex trajectory leading from the political theology of sovereignty to the political economy of the wealth of nations. This fleshy formula functions as a modern history of libido, a genealogy of this force that is brought about through the subject's insertion into socio-symbolic structures, into the domains of bonds and offices. It is this genealogical politicisation of libido – it being located in the texts, textures and structures of modernity – that makes Santner's theory so valuable when considering the business of the museum, this apparatus devoted to (sovereign) representation and enjoyment.

Crucially for my argument concerning the museum as a resource of representation, it needs emphasising that psychic life is structured "by the enigmatic procedures and processes whereby a human life becomes authorized, placed in relation to the resources of value and legitimacy that constitute the very 'stuff' of sovereignty" (Santner, 2001, p. 27). However, our inscription within a social order, "the normativity infusing our collective lives," always "entails a remainder, an 'unnerving materiality' that indexes the contingency, the ultimate groundlessness, of the norms in question" (Schaeffer, 2017). In this way, the flesh should be

grasped as impetus, as a means of production, and as a product; as a dynamic and lively spectral substance that operates according to a circular and auto-vampiric logic. In its modern incarnation, the undead drive that Santner names the flesh is (mis)managed, (mis)directed and (dis)organised through biopolitical practices, practices that perpetually miss the/ir mark.

The fundamental restlessness of human being pertains to the "constitutive uncertainties that plague identity in a universe of symbolic values" (Goodman, 2015, p. 4). That these values cannot absolve themselves from their own groundlessness is a crucial element in this equation. Every call to order addressed to a human subject, every act of symbolic investiture, secretes what Santner describes as a surplus value of psychic excitation. And it is this that "bears the burden, holds the place, of the missing foundation of the institutional authority that issued the call" (Santner as cited in Goodman, 2015, p. 4). With the retreat of transcendent supports for institutional authority "this paradoxically dearth-generated surplus," as Goodman (2015, p. 4) writes, "becomes all the more insistent." No longer secured to a life or power beyond this one, it exerts its force in the very fabric of everyday life. And it is this pressure that *produces* the flesh.

The strange surplus flesh that Freud called libido, Santner (2011, p. 68) writes, "and that constitutes the stuff of our erotic attachments in the world, is 'born' from the fact that our being is compelled to unfold within a matrix of signifying representations, a field never quite made to the measure of the animal that we also are." The loci of the flesh, this libidinal force, is thus the enigmatic jointure of the normative and somatic, an ever-tense coupling that Santner argues defines human life. Libido, in other words, must be understood not purely as an intra-psychic affair but specifically a socio-somatic one. Because, as Claudia Breger (2012, p. 416) notes, creaturely life is provoked by exposure to the "ultimate lack of foundation for the historical life-forms that distinguish human community," there is a corresponding pressure to feel libidinally implicated in the world, to seek ways of fleshing out this abiding absence. Amidst the lingering vestiges of absolutism, there is, and as we have already heard Agamben arguing, a corresponding need for the cultivation of *glory*.

4.2. Word Made Flesh

4.2.1. In early-modern Europe, sovereignty was understood to protrude into and amplify the king's material body, producing a carnal dimension of royal authority and power. The abstract principle of power was, in a word, *enfleshed*. Christopher Clark (2019, pp. 67-68) writes that

in France, for example, functionaries and historians of the royal house constructed "a myth of unruffled continuity that effaced the changes of dynasty." The doctrine of the king's two bodies sought to preserve the continuity, unity, and legitimacy of sovereignty via the creation of a mystical body of kingship: that is, *the king is dead – long live the king*! In order to ward-off crises of investiture, monarchs were invested with the "sacredness of power and the permanence of an ethical and political ideal" (Chantal Grell as cited in Clark, 2019, p. 68). This involved the (liturgical) production of a super-body, a more-than-human part of kingship conjoined to the king's natural body. For Santner (2011, pp. ix-x), this should be grasped as a "virtually real substance." And it is this fleshy fiction that "the various rituals, legal and theological doctrines, and literary and social fantasies surrounding the monarch's singular physiology [...] originally attempted to shape and manage." The king was, in a sense, invested with libido.

In Lacanian parlance, the royal personage should be perceived as the master-signifier holding the symbolic order together. Given that human life is intertwined with and constituted by the dynamically fluctuating production and circulation of symbolic investitures and entitlements, and given that there is no ultimate reference or anchoring point for such investitures, the sovereign must be liturgically formulated as the one who guarantees the symbolic itself. The monarch functions as the last guarantor of meaning in the social space. According to the formula at play here, the position of king, master or sovereign is characterised "by a strange sublime substance which underwrites the semiotic space of titles, words and utterances" (Bristow, 2015, p. 92). Like Ernst Kantorowicz, Santner conceives of the sovereign secreting a supplementary body designed to secure royal succession. Unlike Kantorowicz, Santner conceives of this body "as a fleshy, twitching excess that is later redistributed – rather than abolished – with the advent of popular sovereignty" (Rosello, 2014, p. 740).

Because, and as noted previously, the logic of sovereign representation can never absolve itself of its own ultimate groundlessness, the "normative pressures it generates for its members, the pressures to be recognised as *fit* and *fitting* for the symbolic system in question, are always in excess of what could ever be satisfied" (Santner, 2011, p. xxi). Vitally, and not to say confoundingly, one of the crucial tasks of the figure of the sovereign is not to take up the slack but rather the *excess* of pressure, the surplus of immanence produced by the very logic of sovereignty. And it is this excess, Santner (2011) argues, that constituted the flesh of the king's sublime body and hence organised the symbolic networks of authority in the first place. And it is this excess that is then passed on to "us" in modernity. That this transfer, this passing one might say, is not entirely successful is a central element in this formula. As discussed in the previous chapter, we never properly fit the office of the sovereign subject; we

are not made to measure for our new symbolic authority. However, that the king never did either also needs noting.

4.2.2. The complex and tortured history of the flesh of the Christian church (Rivera, 2015) informs and intrudes on Santner's conception of the flesh, this account of how "the word" gets under our skin, how "the word" makes us *twitch*. Emphatically undecidable, the Christian flesh could be described as at once a theological marvel and nightmare. As Mayra Rivera (2015, p. 17) notes in the *Poetics of Flesh*, "The Christian body has never been one." Flesh makes an early appearance in the Gospel of Saint John (1:14): "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." More than simply the body, the flesh in Christianity refers to physical needs and desires, especially as contrasted with those of the mind, soul or spirit (see Galatians 5:17). From a fundamentalist perspective, the flesh is typically described as being that part that disagrees with the Spirit and is alienated from God, as fuelling sin. It names a corrupted body. The flesh demands to be fed. Saint Paul's distinction between *soma* (the body) and *sarx* (the flesh) provides Santner with a useful precedent. Whereas "*soma* describes the existence of all creatures, *sarx* denotes fallen temporal existence, historical entanglement in the world and one's relationship to other fallen creatures" (Goodman, 2015, pp. 8-9). In this sense, the flesh captures the coincidence of "being human and being a sinner" (Ridderbos, 1997, p. 93). *The flesh is the word animating the body*.

The roots of the two-bodied king were, of course, Christological. Although not explicitly elaborated on here, one of the ironies of secularisation has been the expansion and dispersal of this Christological notion: every individual has become (hypothetically) similarly *king* and *Christ-like*, while in reality being perhaps ever-more creaturely, or forever on the brink of creatureliness. For Jennifer Rust (2012, p. 6), the flesh names a "surplus of immanence that oscillates between the sublime and the abject," and this vacillation between the sublime (the glorious) and the abject (the creaturely) is of particular importance here. Similarly, and paradoxically, remainder *and* stimulant of processes of investiture and subject formation, the flesh is also both a part of and in excess of the bodies of the subjects from which it extrudes (Bost, 2017). In this sense, the flesh bears both the somatic weight – the gravity – of bodies as well as being prey to the slippages of language. *The flesh is language made un/real.*

4.2.3. Santner's account of the fleshy stuff that *is* libido is, at least as Schaefer (2017) argues, "one of changing social fantasies." What Santner seeks out in *The Royal Remains* and *The*

Weight of All Flesh are some of the new guises or semblances of this somatic "too muchness" that similarly guarantees and unnerves the norm. This process of fantastical elaboration, this fleshy extrapolation, becomes more restless, complex and ambiguous as modernity progresses. To reiterate, given the fundamental void at the heart of social life, work must be done to establish – inevitably provisional and precarious – bonds across it. And it is through the collective work of fantasy that these bonds are produced. Endlessly (*always-already*) confronted with normative pressures, expectations and obligations, while knowing (or knowingly "not knowing") all the while that there is no ultimate grounding or authorisation for them, it is precisely this that leads to the too much of pressure that distinguishes human being. Put simply, such pressure indexes the contingency of the norms in question. And it is this pressure that gives flesh to forms of life, and it is this that compels us to seek out dimensions of psychosomatic passion (Ronge, 2016). Put differently, our investments in the field of the social, in normative domains, are similarly reliant on and generative of the flesh.

As another means of developing – in historical terms, and via Foucault's new physics of power – Freud's notion of the libido, the flesh wins its contours as the product of nature's intertwining with the symbolic order. Flesh names "the affective grip that a social formation is able to call forth – ex-cite – in its members (meaning also the body's 'members')" (Santner, 2012, p. 44). Such libidinal implication is sustained by the "collaborative" work of fantasy. However, instead of explaining away this this excarnated surplus as mere political fiction, Santner conceives of the doctrine of the dual body as pointing to a "real" beyond the theatre of appearances. It is a fantasy construct charged with "shared human desires, fears, and values, a virtual reality that has often gathered around bodies, whether individual or corporate, yet remains abstracted from them, like some enigmatic halo [...]" (Goodman, 2015, p. 7).

Above all, the flesh must be understood as a social medium, and one that *binds* individuals and communities. Goodman describes the unbearable pressures of modernity arising in no small way because of the super-body floating free of the person of the king. The crucial function of this figure, as Goodman (2015, p. 6) writes, was not only to "secure the principle of sovereignty but also (and just as importantly) to bind subjects to each other and to help them feel both invested and represented in a larger polity." Casting back to Tony Bennett's (1995) description of the modern museum as a place of emulation, representation, observation and regulation, no great leap is required in order to also perceive it as a space of fleshy ex-citation.

4.2.4. Neither merely individual and nor merely social, the flesh exists and operates at – or *as* – the jointure of the two. A further dialectic requires our attention here, in that the popular body of the new nation-states was composed both of the People as "an incorporated national group ('body politic'), and the multitude that found itself increasingly disenfranchised and unrepresented in the mass displacements caused by industrial capitalism, racism, and world war" (Lupton and Gordon, 2012, p. 1). In this way, the two bodies needs to be understood both in terms of the public body and individual body: the People and the multitude on the one hand, and the Sovereign and the creature on the other. Further to this, the People are "given or assumed to bear," Goodman (2015) notes, a "somatic dignity" that mirrors the liturgically produced and divinely ordained royal flesh and has sometimes been given, "ominously and disastrously," the name *race*. Meanwhile, the other body, analogous to "the abject subject ruled by an absolute sovereign" (Goodman, 2015, pp. 6-7), is the creaturely body.

It is precisely within the political economy of the biopolitical where these two bodies and where this displaced flesh, this released surplus of immanence, is (unwittingly) organised and liturgically performed. Bristow (2015, p. 93) explains that Santner's contention is that with his conception of biopolitics Foucault located, "perhaps unbeknownst to him," the "transmutation of the King's two bodies into the people's two bodies." Once more, biopolitics, which is concerned above all with administering the health, vitality and productivity of bodies and populations, obsessively testing and measuring these fleshy units, plays in Santner's argument a primary – but fundamentally fruitless – role in the elaboration and management of this renovated fiction.

Biopolitics, according to Santner, is (unknowingly) dedicated to the management of the strange materiality of the flesh, that "bit of the *real* that guarantees the functioning and maintenance of social space" (Bristow, 2015, pp. 93-94). It names, in other words, "the strategies deployed by modern societies to secure this new underwriting arrangement" (Santner, 2011, p. xv). That the museum provides an exemplary site for the production and relay of signs and values would seem to make it a prime apparatus for securing the flesh of the new bearer of the principle of sovereignty, for managing the sublime substance which came to be disseminated (unevenly, it needs noting) through the population at large.

Following Agamben and Roberto Esposito, Santner also emphasises that biopolitics – which is focused on the optimisation of life – necessarily contains an obscene underside. It must by definition also confront questions relating to who is permitted to die (Bristow, 2015). As established above, in order for the system to function an outside point which guarantees the social contract and underwrites those processes focused on the immunological preservation of life must be posited. This transcendental point may be embodied in the sublime body of the

sovereign King or indeed that of the sovereign People. However, this logic results, as Esposito (as cited in Bristow, 2015, p. 94) argues, in the "necessary linking of the preservation of life" with "the possibility – always present if rarely utilised – of the taking away of life by the one who is charged with insuring it." Once more, biopolitics is always already thanatopolitics. The line, in a word, between immunity and autoimmunity is a fine one. And *to be enfleshed* means to be *prey*. It means to be forever on the brink of the sublime, on the cusp of abjectness.

4.2.5. Emerging from his delivery of the Tanner Lectures in 2015, *The Weight of All Flesh* (2015) is addressed to the liturgical production of (surplus) value, the new flesh of late (neoliberal) capitalism. Accompanied by an introduction by Kevis Goodman, commentaries by Bonnie Honig, Peter E. Gordon and Hent de Vries, and a response to these commentaries by Santner, this work, the complex arguments that comprise *The Weight of all Flesh* are only touched on here, as my explicit focus remains the fetishism of persons rather than fetishism of things.

The flesh in this instance is perceived to be extracted from the busy bodies of labour itself, with the royal remains taking on a new form as surplus value. In this way, the king's two bodies reappear in the dual character embodied in commodities. Unmoored from stable investment in the body of the king, Bost (2017, p. 326) writes that "free flesh (in Marx's sense of free labour) comes to be characterised by a 'manic frugality' that embraces its contingency while also creating new forms of busy-ness that drive bodies to constant excitement and vigilant self-surveillance." For Marx, and as Goodman (2015, p. 10) explains, commodity exchange involves what he terms "a nightmare intensification of precisely the inscription of subjects into matter – so much so that they appear, fantastically, to vanish into the invisible network in which commodities interact with each other." In other words, "as subjects are occluded by the things they make, and things appear person-ified (made into persons), they acquire precisely that 'surplus of immanence,' the 'spectral materiality' that characterises the flesh" (Goodman, 2015, p. 10). They form a new – but no less virtual – flesh.

Following Marx, Santner's concern in *The Way of All Flesh* is the way in which subjects and human labour disappear into "weirdly animated" and "acrobatic" commodities (Goodman, 2015, pp. 10-11). Just as sexuality for Freud is inherently perverse, inherently "in excess of teleological function" while "exacting an insistent force on human motive and action," (Bost, 2017, p. 326), so too is capitalism for Santner. It stimulates and demands an *uncanny vitality*. It is *procreative* of the flesh. For Schaeffer (2017), the uncanny vitality that is the flesh might even be more prominent in our economic lives, "with the fantasmatic substance 'materializing' not only in the People but also in the products around us." Commodities, in

this sense, come to function as the bearers of a new kind of splendour. They come to function as figures of glory. In this way we move, Schaeffer (2017) continues, "from the glorification and valorisation of the sovereign to the self-valorisation of capital; the spectral materiality of the king's sublime soma morphs into the mystical character of the commodity."

The *busy-ness* of capitalism comes to function as another form of incarnational liturgy, as another production site for the (endlessly new, endlessly unchanging) flesh. "One's" flesh is now produced, shaped and framed in explicit if not necessarily knowing relation to capitalism. Crucially, the (sense of) debt or anxiety (the *policing* that such a state engenders) that accompanies our tenancy of capitalist space ensures that our fleshy labours resonate "with the demands of the market" (Bost, 2017, pp. 326-327). The "call to resonate" has wide application with respect to the various climatic pressures and pleasures that are discussed in these pages.

4.3. Sovereignty at Large

4.3.1. In a letter dated October 1792 from the Minister of the Interior, Jean-Marie Roland, to whom the Louvre's development had been entrusted, to the painter and revolutionary Jacques-Louis David, the role the Museum was to play in the Republic was made clear. "This museum," Roland (as cited McClellan, 1994, pp. 91-92) wrote, "must demonstrate the nation's great riches." It was called, in a word, to *resonate*.

> France must extend its glory through the ages and to all peoples: the national museum will embrace knowledge in all its manifold beauty and will be the admiration of the universe. By embodying these grand ideas, worthy of a free people [...] the museum [...] will become among the most powerful illustrations of the French Republic. (Roland as cited in as cited McClellan, 1994, pp. 91-92)

Meanwhile, art historian T. J. Clark (1999, p. 15) once wrote that his "candidate for the beginning of modernism – which at least has the merit of being obviously far-fetched – is 25 Vendémiaire Year 2 (16 October 1793, as it came to be known). That was the day a hastily completed painting by Jacques-Louis David, of Marat, the martyred hero of the revolution [...] was released into the public realm." The painting in question depicted the death of revolutionary journalist and leading-light Jean-Paul Marat, who was murdered in his bathtub by Charlotte Corday in July of 1793. Materialising mere months after the opening of the Louvre and the Festival of National Unity of August 1793, a festival David helped bring into

being, this painting, as Santner (2011, p. 89) has it, appears dedicated to the "very project of a reconfiguration of the flesh" in the wake of the monarchy's demise.

Styling David's secular icon as "perhaps the greatest 'political' picture ever painted," John Fleming and Hugh Honour (1995) go on to suggest that:

> the painting's significance is universal, a stark image of the finality of death in which the unrelenting horizontality of the composition is broken only by the downward descent of the right arm, which seems to deny any hope of redemption above. The upper part of the canvas is a limitless, empty void. (p. 595)

It should be understood, Fleming and Honour (1995, p. 595) write, as "a revolutionary icon, a secular *Pietà*, intended to immortalise Marat in the memory of his fellow men, as ruthless in its logic and unyielding in its austerity as the political ideals of the Jacobins – a fitting memorial to the writer who had extolled 'the despotism of Liberty.'" Although the Christological allusions, the stigmata for example, in David's painting are undoubtedly of significance, the truly momentous element (or *non-element*) of the painting for both Clark and Santner is the aforementioned empty void. While *Marat* figures for Clark as the moment contingency comes to invade painting, for Santner it serves as a pivot for understanding the consequences of the transition from monarchical to popular sovereignty. In order to grasp what is truly at stake here in terms of my argument concerning the subject of the museum, the theoretical manoeuvres that comprise Clark's initial reading and Santner's fleshy emendations need further elaboration.

4.3.2. Clark (1999, p. 29) writes of David undoubtedly seeing in the cult of Marat that arose following his death "the first forms of a liturgy and ritual in which the truths of revolution itself would be made flesh – People, Nation, Virtue, Reason, Liberty." The problem, however, is that while such conversions were still possible within the context of the political-theology of kingship, they could not succeed under revolutionary and post-revolutionary conditions. Marat could not be made to embody or represent the revolution (its value or meaning) and its various attendant principles "because no one agreed about what the revolution was, least of all about whether Marat was its Jesus or its Lucifer. David's picture – this is what makes it inaugural of modernism – tries to ingest this disagreement, and make it part of a new cult object" (Clark, 1999, p. 38). That David's painting appeared a little more than a month after the Revolutionary Committee of Public Safety had declared terror "to be the order of the day" (Furet, 1989, p. 137) adds an additional layer of intrigue.

Santner (2011, p. 91) expands on Clark's reading when he contends that it is not simply a matter of a provisional disagreement as to the meaning of the events in question, "but rather of an impasse affecting the possibility of converting events – and these events in particular – into representative images and bodies that would convincingly incarnate their truths." David's painting not only exposed the difficulty of substituting one absolute for another, but highlighted the impossibility of representing this absolute in the first place. In other words, it called into question "the entire apparatus of *representation* in all its complex and intersecting meanings" (Santner, 2011, p. 91). How, in a word, to *embody* sovereignty? How to replace the king, this mystical receptacle of sovereignty in whose person, it was said, "the nation resided in its entirety" (Hartog, 2015, p. 131)? Put differently, the entrance of the People onto the stage of power formerly occupied by the monarch could not involve a simple transfer of power or "properties."

David's task, and indeed the real task of the Revolution itself, was to generate a body that was able to "incarnate the now empty place of the king, the figure that had traditionally been charged with corporeally representing the subject for all other subjects of the realm" (Santner, 2011, p. 92). The task was "to *incarnate* in some ostensibly new way the *excarnated* principle of sovereignty" (Santner, 2011, p. 92). Marat had to stand or be made stand for the People. Clark (1999, p. 47) notes that it was not simply that Marat was a "disputed object" pulled this way and that by the "play of factions," but that "at a deeper level any body was inadequate to what had now to be done. Or any technique of representation." And it is here that the issue of representation is revealed in full. As Clark (1999, p. 47) puts it: "That representation was henceforth a technique was exactly the truth that had not to be recognised."

4.3.3. The real *tour de force* of Clark's reading, Santner (2011, p. 92) suggests, consists in his "account of the ways in which David's painting ends up succeeding in bringing this fundamental impasse to a commanding painterly presence [...]." In this way, Clark provides the groundwork for what Santner characterises "as the spectral yet visceral dimension of the flesh no longer figured and contained by the means of the royal physiology – by the King's Two Bodies" (Santner, 2011, p. 92). Once more, the sticking point in David's painting is not the body of Marat or the stab-wound but instead the nonfigurative and negative space above, a space that seems to be of the same substance as the body of Marat and of the wound. For Santner (2011, p. 92), the flesh that "can no longer be figured by the body of the king becomes, in a word, the *abstract material* out of which the painting is largely made." The murky expanse stands in for the missing and indeed impossible representation of the People. It embodies, Clark (as cited in Santner, 2011, pp. 92-93) notes, "the concept's absence, so to speak." For

Santner it has a "positive, even oppressive presence," while for Clark it is "abstract and unmotivated."

The source of Marat's "continuing hold on us," Clark (as cited in Santner, 2011, pp. 92-93) argues, is the "endless, meaningless objectivity produced by paint not quite finding its object, symbolic or otherwise, and therefore making do with its own procedures." Santner urges us to think further about the consequences of Clark's virtuoso reading, particularly with regard to the notion of the *shame* of modernism which David's *Marat* may be seen to be the inaugural representation. For Clark, this shame pertains to what he characterises as a "distinctly modernist stuckness in technique, artifice, mediation, self-reflexivity, and so forth – a shame, ultimately, of painting's 'nominalism,' its moving within a frictionless universe untethered from lived life and the things that make it matter" (Santner, 2011, p. 93). Technique in modernism is a kind of shame; technique serves to cover the gap of the failure to reach its – to reach *the* – object.

For Santner, this shame emerges in *The Death of Marat* precisely at the point and in the space where the People ought to appear. The murky expanse figures as a kind of shameful aura or halo. Santner (2011, p. 93) writes of this "sovereign absence" appearing in the guise of the "pure activity" of painting, as a "kind of dream work made painterly flesh." The empty upper half of the image "forms not so much a vacancy as the site of an excess of pressure, a signifying stress that opens onto a vision of painting as pure drive" (Santner, 2011, p. 93). Meanwhile, the *dénouement* of Santner's (2011, p. 93) reading is that the shame at issue concerns an "almost defiling contact" with the flesh that has been torn free from the king's sublime physiology and claimed for and by the People. In this way, the flesh is categorically both ours and not ours. We are *closed upon* by the flesh but fundamentally unable to *close upon it*. To repurpose a line from William Mazzarella (2017): *the flesh should be understood as as much a problem of the social in the subject as it is a problem of the subject in the social*.

4.4. Securing the Flesh: The Museum at Work

Over the preceding pages I have sought to paint a picture of the strange work the "representational" institutions of modernity were tasked with performing following the demise and dispersal of monarchical sovereignty. Before turning to address the issue of memorial representation, I would like to recapitulate the rudiments of this strange scene. To begin with, Santner's (2011, p. xxi) aim in *The Royal Remains* was, as he puts it, "to track the remainders

of a figure who already served as the imaginary site of a remainder or surplus produced by the logic of sovereign representation." With the shift to popular sovereignty, this divinely authorized sacral soma, which was perceived to embody a vertical link with transcendence, came to be dispersed horizontally among the people, who came to be both blessed and plagued by this *fleshy* surplus of immanence. The new bearers of the principle of sovereignty, in other words, "are in some sense stuck with an excess of flesh that their own bodies cannot fully close in upon and that must be 'managed' in new ways" (Santner, 2011, p. xxi). It is, as my argument would have it, precisely here and in this capacity that the museum enters the scene.

However, and to problematise things still further, "the forms of the social," as Clark (1999, p. 47) writes, "outrun their various incarnations." This striking image is one that demands application. In the first instance, what I would suggest is that the museum, this incarnation of the social, is perpetually *outrun*, though that is not to say that its anterior manifestations do not continue to signify. In other words, the representational impasses of monarchical sovereignty and indeed the Revolution *persist*. Put differently, if the Christ-impersonating two-natured king was as an "effluence of a sacramental and liturgical action performed at the altar" (Goodman, 2015, p. 11), the subject of modernity could be said to be the fumes of said effluence. Moreover, the altar has been pluralised, the liturgies diversified, the functionaries scattered, the acclamations multiplied, but the liturgical activity functions according to much the same rationale and remains (unknowingly) directed at the same (*fleshy*) object.

Returning to the Louvre of 1793, "the feeling of Revolutionary conquest" inside its great halls following its opening, McClellan (1994, pp. 98-99) writes, "was unequivocal." Prized from their pre-Revolutionary settings, the works of art on display were "returned to their 'rightful' owners: the people." The treasures – "statues, paintings, and books [...] charged with the sweat of the people" – which were "previously visible to only a privileged few," according to Abbé Grégoire (as cited in McClellan, 1994, pp. 98-99), would henceforth "afford pleasure and instruction to all." The Eucharistic and liturgical resonances of the *pleasures of heritage* are addressed in the second half of this thesis. For the moment, however, what I would like the reader to keep in mind is the proposition that it is the *feeling* of revolutionary conquest that the liberal-progressive museum seeks semblances of, seeks to emulate. That post-criticality is, in a sense, the "name" for the dispersal of authority in the museum, for the spectralisation of the museum, also need noting. In other words, all that can be produced in the relation between post-critical museology and the liberal-progressive museum are representational semblances.

Meanwhile, that *The Death of Marat* hangs today not in the Louvre but instead lurks in the Musée Oldmasters, originally known as the *Musée royal d'art ancien*, in Brussels, an

institution founded by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1801, only adds to its jittery allure and intimates that the painting got too close to the real: it could not be faced. What I hope has become clear in this synopsis of the flesh and excursus into the business of representing Marat *qua* the People, are the numerous parallels that can be made with the museum, another modernist artefact charged not only with liturgically performing the impossible task of representing the People and the subject but also with coping with the flesh. Indeed, the stink of the decaying flesh of the King and the glorious fresh flesh of the People and the sovereign subject may be said to have mingled uneasily and not to say excitedly in the modern museum. Such matters are returned to in the second part of the thesis. Meanwhile, the next chapter is devoted to the issue of memorial representation and to providing the foundations for answering the question of how "that which cannot be faced" is put to work in the museum.

Five

The Liveliness of the Dead: Remembrance, Now

> The history of the work of the dead is a history of how they dwell in us – individually and communally. It is a history of how we imagine them to be, how they give meaning to our lives, how they structure public spaces, politics, and time.
>
> — *Thomas Laqueur* (2015, p. 17)

5.1. Surplus Vitality

5.1.1. In this chapter, the final part of the first-half of the thesis, I establish the foundations for the "bloody current" that runs through the poetical-analytical schema. The role of blood within this lies with the significance of museal remembrance, a principal contextual pivot in this thesis. "Blood" plays this role in remembrance because it is at sites of the representation and memorialisation of violence and trauma that the structural stresses that striate the social body and bodies more generally reverberate most acutely. At these points, those structural stresses – and the subjects that form from such stresses – become available for a particular form of scrutiny (Edkins, 2003). It is at such sites that many of the passions, paradoxes and refusals of power come into view. It is at such sites that ideology could be said to go into overdrive. It is at such sites where ruptures are sutured, are worried, are exploited. In other words, it is at such sites that creatures emerge and the flesh starts to hum.

The objective of this chapter is to establish just what is at stake vis-à-vis the remembrance and enjoyment of violence and the representation of trauma in the emergence of the subject of the museum/museology. In this way, over the following pages I provide a sketch of the theoretical and historical scene from which developed those memorial methodologies that are currently

in vogue in liberal-progressive museum practice and post-critical museology. The influence of trauma discourses and specifically Holocaustal remembrance on such practices are then addressed. Finally, I touch on the entwinement of remembrance – particularly the remembrance of violent legacies – with fantasy and enjoyment. While discursive in approach, the crucial subtext that threads through this chapter concerns the way in which the subject is positioned by museal "representations" of trauma. Where, I ask, do such discourses and practices leave the subject? What are the consequences of trauma being "put to work," being made (to) matter, being made (via the affective – the symptomatic – performances of the subject) into a font of glory?

5.1.2. For American historian and sexologist Thomas Laqueur (2015), human practices and rituals associated with the dead are precisely the demarcation point indicating the emergence of culture. Although such a claim demands considerable elaboration, what I take from Laqueur is the idea that the dead play a far more significant role in the socio-symbolic and affective imaginaries of human community in modernity than is often acknowledged. By this I am referring not only to the negatively structuring relationship death has with existence, that is, with our lives being lived against its temporal boundary, but to the various ways in which the dead and their (un)doings are – even if unconsciously or inadvertently – put to work. From a psychoanalytic perspective, and as Dominick LaCapra (1998, p. 10) explains, "what is denied or repressed in a lapse of memory does not disappear; it returns in a transformed, at times disfigured and disguised manner." Bodies may be laid to rest and forms of life may be superseded but that which is dead does not necessarily *die*. "The past" will just not go away (Hartog, 2015, p. 7). In other words, the question of afterlives remains germane in modernity.

The following passage from Santner (2005), a passage that considers German-Jewish philosopher and theologian Franz Rosenzweig's work of 1921, *The Star of Redemption*, provides us with an opening of sorts with regard to such dilemmas. "With respect to human being," Santner (2005, p. 95) writes, "Rosenzweig suggests that what is irreducible there pertains to a constitutive, rather than merely contingent, dimension of *trauma*." This trauma, Santner goes on, a trauma that makes us, paradoxically, "something more than just a piece of the world, *more* than a link in 'the great chain of Being,' is a function of our finitude, our subjection to death."

> For Rosenzweig, we acquire our singular density as human beings – Heidegger would say as *Dasein* – only by way of anxiety in the face of our own, ultimately unknowable, mortality, (our death is not a natural fact to be known but a 'facticity'

> to be borne). This absolute nullity that borders mortal life *intrudes* into our being as a strange sort of surplus vitality that has no proper place in the world, that can't be put to work, can't be fully absorbed [...]. (Santner, 2005, p. 95)

These notions of failures of absorption and surplus vitality serve as uneasy quilting points throughout this thesis. In a first movement, what they describe is a subject caught in a state of *restless immobility* by forces (by modes of production) that exceed the sensible, that are not (entirely) there.

Although coming from alternate conceptual coordinates, Laqueur's (2015, p. 550) assertion that both "the deep anthropological past as well as the helter-skelter of more recent history" informs our practices of remembrance also serves as an interrogatory premise. Remembrance is never shaped or enacted in a vacuum and the motives of memorialisation are never pure or entirely self-evident (Hansen-Glucklich, 2014; Margalit, 2002; Müller, 2002). There is always *more*, there is always *excess*, and the activity of remembering is inevitably subtended by drives indeterminate or out of sight. And to problematise things still further: where does that which cannot be absorbed end up?

What also needs to be kept in mind is that social reality is structured around trauma (Žižek, 2008), this thing that cannot be *named as such*, this thing that cannot be absorbed. In other words, it is not only symptomatic trauma but the constituent trauma mentioned by Rosenzweig (1921) *and* the objective trauma that *is* the representational impasse of modernity (Kornbluh, 2012) that must be taken into account when considering the trajectories and affordances of "the traumatic." The point being laboured here is that in the avoidance of the causes of constituent and objective trauma, symptomatic trauma is endlessly re/produced and, given its subjective "nature" and how it is precisely an evacuation of the possibility of "the objective," is endlessly able to be put to work.

5.2. The Dead at Work: Mourning, Remembrance and the Museum

5.2.1. Memorialisation fulfils multiple and often competing purposes (Assmann, 2011; Moore, 2009; Simon, 2006). It may provide symbolic justice for victims. It may function as a device for reconciliation. Or it may work as a "pedagogical tool to inculcate the preventative lessons of 'never again'" (Moore, 2009, p. 47). To heal, it is often said, we must remember. Subjects and collectivities are forged by way of relations with the dead; their precious dead

and the dead which they are not (Lacquer, 2015). However, even the precious dead are nothing if not ambivalent: they too can bare a stink, the stink of guilt or shame (Margalit, 2003). The chorus of the dead, in other words, is a commotion of contradictory demands and stresses. "Collective memories," those past-facing signifiers that arrange groups' temporal horizons, are instruments for fixing identities and for securing and legitimating certain social relations and making "normative claims on the conduct of human behaviour" (Simon, 2006, p. 115). Such memories are also potential sources of explosive libidinal charge. That it is precisely libidinal charge that is sublimated, captured and made use of in order to establish and fix identity needs bearing in mind.

What *was* is written and re-written, shaped and re-shaped in order to fit and meet our current appetites and needs (Bond, 2015). "As gravity bends light," writes Christopher Clark (2019, p. 1), "so power bends time." Once again, however, "the past" also has a potentially eruptive or, perhaps better still, incessantly if fitfully disturbing force. To draw on the Proustian notion of involuntary memory, there is no knowing when or in what form particular images or affective affiliations or animosities "from" or "of" the past will emerge or ascend (Tukey, 1969). Furthermore, there is no knowing the depth of response or the place events will ultimately occupy in "the rhythms of forgetting and remembering" (Postone and Santner, 2003, p. 5). Measuring the pedagogical effect or political consequences of public remembrance practices is an unfailingly testing task (Bernard-Donals, 2016). Memorial injunctions exert considerable and considerably indeterminate pressure on the remembering subject (Edkins, 2003; Müller, 2002).

Public practices of remembrance catalyse particular affective intensities while also crystallising (however imperfectly) with each iteration or re-telling into altered forms (Dickinson et al., 2010). Conversely, and as Katherine Verdery (as cited in Müller, 2002, pp. 30-31) has pointed out, the mark of a successful political symbol is that it has legitimating effects "not because everyone agrees on its meaning but because it compels interest despite (or because of?) divergent views of what it means." Take, for example, such seemingly simple and clichéd injunctions such as "never again" or "lest we forget," or historical metonyms such as Gallipoli. Each is freighted with enormous rhetorical and performative potency and ambiguity. In *Did Somebody Say Totalitarianism* (2001), Žižek warns that:

> the very word 'fundamentalism,' like 'totalitarianism,' far from being an effective theoretical concept, is a kind of *stopgap*: instead of enabling us to think, forcing us to acquire a new insight into the historical reality it describes, it relives us of the duty to think, or even actively *prevents* us thinking. (p. 3)

It is not hyperbolic to suggest that an injunction such as "lest we forget" works in a similar fashion, the dreadful irony of which is addressed in the second half of the thesis.

Our personal and collective relations with the past are endlessly kaleidoscopic, a continually fluctuating series of revisions, erasures, addendums, and (re)imaginings, both voluntary and otherwise. And "history" is not a sequential chain of fixed points and occurrences but a prismatic field of pressures *and* possibilities (Gluhovic, 2013). That which has been – the strange, the violent, or indeed the humdrum – will inevitably create enigmatic stresses that linger beyond the life-span of those who were there or were immediately affected. Our affective affiliations and attachments are bound, whether rhetorically or otherwise, to "things" and "others" from far-off (Bond, 2015). Put in more emphatic terms, the past poses unique problems in the present, *always*. Or, and to turn to the issue of historic hurt, trauma – this crisis of legibility, this crisis of representation – is not an "unfortunate by-product" of modernity but "a central feature of it" (Olick, 2007, p. 154).

Continuing with the theme of memorial recovery and hijack, in Sebald's *Austerlitz* (2001) the titular character who, in 1939, was sent from Prague to England on a Kinder-transport engages in a form of what could be termed associative archaeology. I think of this as a fevered process of searching for (and in turn being searched out by) hints and rumours from a past of which he is, in a sense, *unknowingly aware*. John Wylie (2007, p. 176) writes that in the work of Sebald, "set in restless motion […] place and memories, presences and pasts […] orbit and kiss in ghostly, poignant fashion, as if the narrator were stepping through a series of wheeling, interlinked *tableaux*." Despite the redemptive tone of Wylie's observation, the complexity and intractability of the circumstances in which Austerlitz finds himself, his ensnarement by a past that similarly refuses to let him be while also refusing to disclose itself, makes it impossible for him to mourn in any reasonable way. The subject of his past is spectral and the subject that he is because of this past is seemingly irredeemably haunted.

But then again, loss, quite simply, and as Sebald (see Bigsby (2006)) once proposed, is one of the commonest experiences we have. *To be a subject is to be subject to loss*. Vitally, however, and as Santner suggests, when you lose a concept you also lose the capacity to name it. As we found Santner (2001) explaining in Chapter Three, we are always within the "ban" of such signifiers by virtue of the historicity of meaning. We are always in the midst of – are haunted by – the "remainders of lost forms of life, by concepts and signs that had meaning within a form of life that is now gone and so persist, to use Lacan's telling formulation, as 'hieroglyphs in the desert'" (Santner, 2001, p. 44). When one has "lost the capacity to pray," for example, "God," Santner writes, "assumes the status of a desiginfied signifier, a stand-in for an otherwise *nameless loss*." *The word signifies but not for us*. Seemingly oxymoronically given

its emphasis on material culture, but it was this dilemma, I suggest, that the modern museum was envisioned as working to overcome: to name that which is missing; to give form to that which has been lost; to flesh out the spectral; and to "make fleshy" that which is "lifeless."

5.2.2. Over the course of the twentieth century memory came to occupy an increasingly important place in public discourse (Hartog, 2015). Invoked to legitimate, to reconcile and heal, to censure and blame, it became "a major idiom in the construction of identity" (Antze and Lambek as cited in Assmann, 2011, p. 6). Questions of heritage and associated issues relating to "protecting, [...] promoting, and rethinking it" (Hartog, 2015, p. 6) remain very much alive today. Hartog (2015, p. 149) suggests that this contemporary fascination with heritage is an "expression of a crisis of time." In other words, the surfeit of memory should be understood as "a sign not of historical confidence but of a retreat from transformative politics" (Charles Maier as cited in LaCapra, 1998, p. 15). The turn to memory, in this sense, may be perceived to be at once compensatory and act of (helpless) protest. Political philosopher and historian Jan-Werner Müller (2002, p. 16) puts it like this: "If one cannot change the future, one can at least preserve the past." Following Eric Hobsbawm, Müller (2002) describes history and memory becoming vital precisely when traditional ways of life or modes of being appear to be losing their salience. "Memory and modernisation," Müller (2002, p. 15) writes, "are not opposites – they go hand in hand." A *sense* of loss or the "presence" of (imagined or otherwise) temporal crisis is pivotal in the (immunological) invention of tradition.

Aleida Assmann (2011, p. xi) maintains that the interest in memory should be understood as a response and reaction to changes and challenges concerning cultural moorings (that is, *a loss of bearings*), and specifically as a way of coping "with two phenomena that became ever more pressing since 1989: a growing interest in questions of (collective) identity and transmission on the one hand and the new experience of traumatic or 'hot' pasts that will not fade away on the other." In more immediate terms, Pankaj Mishra (2017) writes of neoliberal globalisation as having precipitated further crises of legitimacy with respect to questions of identity, community and nationhood. For example, today's culture wars are being waged – "fantastically" – via the mediums of history and heritage. See, for instance, Donald Trump's pledge to "Make America Great Again" and pro-Brexit visions of "Imperial Britain." However, in accounts of the origins of the memory boom it is the Holocaust that typically occupies centre stage.

> There can be no doubt that the crimes of the twentieth century, its mass murders and monstrous industry of death, were at the origin of these shock waves of

> memory, which finally caught up with our contemporary societies and shook them in their blast. (Hartog, 2015, p. 7)

Whether consciously or otherwise, all public memorial activity operates today within this Holocaustal purview.

5.2.3. Representations of the past give form and habitation to uncertain ephemera, to that which is absent. However, in the construction of such habitats that which has been is inevitably recast and made (further) askew. Memory, according to Henry Rousso (as cited in Gluhovic, 2013, p. 1), should be conceived within a "horizon of expectation rather than within a space of experience." The past is not simply here in the present or indeed "there" where it occurred. It is belatedly assembled rather than exhumed (Bond, 2015; Arnold-de Simine, 2013). Remembrance is thus always of the present, "of the moment" one could say. Further to this, there is a perpetual dissonance between the space of experience and the horizon of expectation that characterises historical or memorialising activity: slippages, rogue pollination and unruly "bits" of desire continually threaten to confound or sabotage.

"The past" is a ghostly repository of endlessly variable and malleable possibilities. However, what is known about actual events depends upon and is assembled out of an inevitably incomplete canon of existing medial constructions, is pieced together from the "narratives, images, and myths circulating in a memory culture" (Erll as cited in Bond, 2015, p. 4) at any given moment. As institutions of collection and documentation and, indeed, immortalisation, museums are key players in this (inter)medial re/production of the past. For Clark (2019, p. 177), museums are instruments for temporal manipulation, and can be used to both "distance the viewer from the epoch or phenomena on display and to establish a sense of immediacy."

That the museum serves as an unparalleled medium for and conduit of memorialising practices is well established (Andermann and Arnold-de Simine, 2010; Crane, 2000; Ostow, 2008; Preziosi and Farago, 2004a; Williams 2007). Charles Garoian (2001, p. 237) once described the museum as a "stage for which the script of history is written and upon which it is performed by the viewer." Conjuring and seeking to represent the past with and by way of material props, artefacts, visual representations, and narrativisation, museums shape the wreckage of what has been into patterns and arrangements of sense and meaning. Involving the interaction of myriad practices and media (Assmann, 2011; Bond, 2015; Arnold-de Simine, 2013), the dynamics of memorialisation can only be comprehended if the medial frameworks and processes through which it emerges into and out of the public arena are addressed (Erll and Rigney, 2009; Hansen-Glucklich, 2014).

In his essay "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias," Foucault (1984) described the museum as a *heterotopia*, as a site of an "indefinitely accumulating time."

> The idea of accumulating everything, of establishing a sort of general archive, the will to enclose in one place all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes, the idea of constituting a place of all times that is itself outside of time and inaccessible to its ravages, the project of organising a sort of perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in an immobile place, this whole idea belongs to our modernity. (p. 7)

Bouquet and Porto (2005, p. 22) continue in this vein when they write that "the making of heritage may constitute a significant act of modernism." The museum, this maker of heritage, is a chronopolitical apparatus, insulating its collections (and *life*) from the ravages of time and alchemically transforming the "dross" of matter into auratic artefacts. The museum is a device for the manufacture of extra-temporality, and the spell that *is* (and that is cast *by*) the duty "to remember" may also be seen to make time expansive. However, and crucially, the museum's temporal manipulations and animations are often, and to draw on the work of Santner (2006), *undeadenings*.

5.3. Holocaustal Remembrance

5.3.1. The twentieth century is often said to have existed under the sign of trauma, with the Holocaust serving as its defining event (Assmann, 2011; Postone and Santner, 2003). It has become a negative *axis mundi* around which contemporary notions of ethics, morality and, indeed, remembrance turn (Hansen-Glucklich, 2014). As Pierre Nora (as cited in Müller, 2002, p. 14) puts it: "Whoever says memory, says Shoah." Or, and as Herbert Muschamp (as cited in Hansen-Glucklich, 2014) argues:

> In a century of shifting, elastic morality, the Holocaust stands out as something very close to firm. For a civilisation that cannot agree on a standard of absolute good, Auschwitz asserts itself as an absolute evil. Perversely, it offers the foundation of a moral universe. It is an ethical base line, humanity's nadir. (p. 195)

We continue to dwell in the shadow of the Holocaust, with it persisting as an "impasse to understanding and as a claim on our moral imagination" (Postone and Santner, 2003, p. 1).

The Holocaust could be said to be the absent centre of modernity; the *im/moral touchstone* in an age of uncertainty. However, what are the implications for subjecthood when there is no possible chance of restitution or reparation? As Bülent Diken and Carsten Lausten (2005, p. 75) write: "a genocide cannot be redeemed." In the early years of the new century, Postone and Santner (2003, p. 1) described the Holocaust as taking on a new life, of it "haunting the imagination with increasing force." Traces and remnants of the Holocaust not only persist but demand interpretation and elaboration. In more affirmative terms, Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider proposed in 2006 that the Holocaust had become a transnational commemorative event that had ushered in a new era of cosmopolitanism. I would suggest its legacy is far more uncertain and perilous than they made out.

5.3.2. In Canadian poet Anne Carson's elegiac text *Nox* (2010), she wrote of it being comforting to assume that there is a secret behind what torments you. This helps shed a little light on the propensity toward *not* wanting to understand the Holocaust; to posit it as a transcendental evil that exists outside existing sense-making categories. Further to this, Adorno's famous dictum, "To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric" has operated as the fulcrum around which discussions concerning the representation of the Holocaust typically revolve. And yet, and as Shoshana Felman (as cited in Radstone, 2000, p. 6) has argued, Adorno's point was not that poetry should no longer be written but that it would need to be written "through its own impossibility." Susannah Radstone (2006) adds to this when she writes that post-Holocaust remembrance was:

> Freighted both with the irretrievable memories of the untold dead and with the unspeakable, traumatic memories of those who lived on. At the same time, and as Adorno insisted, even in entering into representation, memory entered into the world that had produced the Holocaust. Yet there was no choice but to remember. This was, if you like, the founding equivocation of post-Holocaust memory. (p. 6)

In the context and text of modernity, the Holocaust typically appears either as a barbarous regression, an uncanny return of the repressed, or as an event that could *only* occur in modernity: that is, as a tragedy of reason, of Enlightenment thinking, of modernity itself.

The question of whether the Holocaust should be perceived as a singular and traumatic event beyond comprehension and indeed language itself, or as one horror among many and as, essentially, an inevitability, is one that endures. Elie Wiesel has long advocated for the notion of the Holocaust as a sacred event, declaring it "to be equal to the revelation at Mount Sinai,

finding in it a sacredness of the highest order in Judaism" (Hansen-Glucklich, 2014, p. 15). "Auschwitz," Wiesel (as cited in Hansen-Glucklich, 2014, p. 15) writes, "cannot be explained nor can it be visualised." "The dead," Wiesel continues, "are in possession of a secret that we, the living, are neither worthy of nor capable of recovering. [...] The Holocaust [is] the ultimate event, the ultimate mystery, never to be comprehended or transmitted." Who, in other words, can bear witness to Auschwitz given that its true witnesses died in gas chambers? Wiesel situates critical historical analysis as similarly impossible, inappropriate and sacrilegious.

In contrast to Wiesel, Giorgio Agamben stresses the aporetic character of testimony: we are urged to communicate what is incommunicable (Diken and Lausten, 2005). "Unsayability," for Agamben (1999, p. 157), is a problem in need of interrogation rather than a *fait accompli*. Although Auschwitz was a "unique event in the face of which the witness must in some way submit his every word to the test of an impossibility of speaking," if this uniqueness is joined to unsayability, if Auschwitz is transformed into a reality "absolutely separated from language," one is left "in secret solidarity with the *arcanum imperii*" in the sense of unconsciously repeating the attempted silencing of the "Nazi gesture." By positing the Holocaust as an ultimate rupture it is denied a place in memory and history, "leaving a space of erasure rather than inquiry" (Marion, 2006, p. 1020). For Agamben, Auschwitz materialises the aporia of historical knowledge: "that facts and truth, verification and understanding can never coincide" (Dicken and Lausten, 2005, p. 70).

5.3.3. The interlinked issues of historical and memorial overidentification and appropriation are also important here. What, for example, are the implications of the Holocaust being an event with which we can all identify? Further to this, and as Imre Kertész (as cited in Diken and Lausten, 2005, pp. 73-74) proposes: "A Holocaust conformism has arisen, along with a Holocaust sentimentalism, a Holocaust canon, and system of Holocaust taboos together with the ceremonial discourse that goes with it; Holocaust products for Holocaust consumers have been developed." A series of common tropes and representational strategies have emerged, pre-made schemas which threaten to turn Holocaust remembrance into cliché. Mario Di Paolantonio (2014, p. ix) puts it like this: "The problem [is] how to recognize the past 'as one of our concerns' without cannibalizing and compressing its alterity within the terms of spectacle or identity." The dimension of kitsch in relationship to remembrance is picked up in Chapter Eight, though for the moment it needs noting that the issue of mass and spectacle culture – populism, in a word – with respect to revolutionary futures is one that theorists on the left have long struggled with (Laclau, 2018).

Postone and Santner (2003, p. 7), meanwhile, argue that with the Holocaust "something new entered the world." This event, as they put it, "was not simply an actualisation of already existing human potential but a shift in the space of possibilities itself, a space we all now inhabit." The possibilities unleashed in and by the Holocaust continue to circulate, though as Postone and Santner note, its legacy is essentially one of gaps rather than content. The nature of the afterlife of historical trauma, the way in which disaster "inscribes itself not only in human memory but also in the very texture of cultural, social, and political life across generations," creates enduring problems.

> The difficulties of taking the measure of this afterlife are exacerbated by the fact that traumatic events make their impact felt largely in the form of *gaps* in understanding rather than a legacy with a clear and stable representational content. (Postone and Santner, 2003, p. 12)

Santner's (2015) conception of "striking at what is not there" takes on (yet) another meaning in this context.

Debate continues over the representational affordances of trauma, particularly with respect to the politics of victimization, and with establishing identity on the basis of injury (Žižek, 2008). For instance, in his Marxist inquiry into the perils posed by current – prevailing – strands of identity politics to the project of universal emancipation, Asad Haider (2018, p. 107) writes of the hazards posed by perspectives of liberal tolerance which "may trap groups/people within a victimised identity rather than joining them in a project of collective emancipation." Judith Butler (1997) further enriches and complicates the scene.

> Called by an injurious name, I come into social being, and because I have a certain inevitable attachment to my existence, because a certain narcissism takes hold of any term that confers existence, I am led to embrace the terms that injure me because they constitute me socially. The self-colonizing trajectory of certain forms of identity politics are symptomatic of this paradoxical embrace of the injurious term. (p. 104)

To demand restitution or recognition or inclusion in the structure of society may well mean, as Wendy Brown (1995) has pointed out, forfeiting the possibility of structural change and reinforcing the very norms that are responsible for the injury in the first place.

Müller (2002, p. 14) suggests that the Holocaust and its aftermath were crucial in shifting the focus of memory and historiography away from a history of victors to a history of victims. Another way of putting this would be say that the focus shifted from Nietzschean

"monumental history" to *histories* of trauma. Though that is not to say that traumatic histories have not been made monumental. As has already been established, following the Holocaust, memory became an "all-embracing term, a metahistorical and even at times a theological category" (Hartog, 2017, p. 7). Müller (2002, pp. 18-19) writes that for certain thinkers "memory has turned into a new secular religion, or at least an 'ersatz metaphysics,' which feeds on a new emotionalism, and gives rise to endless grievance claims couched in the language of personal memories." Müller (2002, p. 18) describes this having given rise to "a kind of bondless mnemonic subjectivism," though I would suggest that it out of such flux that affective affiliations form and take root. Or they can be made to form and take root. However, the important point here is that the duty to remember has become a moral injunction and arising alongside the figure of the victim has come the figure of "the witness."

With respect to the study of trauma, which first developed out of research into the survivors of the First World War (Fassin and Rechtman, 2009), there was an upsurge of interest from the 1980s, with the issue of its representation taking centre stage. How, once more, does one represent – or go about representing – what is unable (or impossible) to be represented? How to recall that which has been exiled or destroyed? For Cathy Caruth (1996), trauma is an experience that is not (able to be) fully assimilated; it is a crisis that simultaneously defies and demands our witness. Or, and as Žižek (1991, pp. 272-273) suggests, "the essence of trauma is precisely that it is too horrible to be remembered, to be integrated into our symbolic universe. All we have to do is to mark repeatedly the trauma as such." Trauma, in this sense, is similarly forever obsolete and incessantly contemporary. Santner (2001, pp. 31-32), meanwhile, emphasises that "at least under certain circumstances a trauma is generated by a too much of address, by an excess immanent to an address that resists metabolisation, that is symbolically 'indigestible'". In other words, victimhood and indeed witnessing do not provide access to any "special truth."

5.4. The Glorious Dead: Bloody Memories

5.4.1. Just off the First World War Hall of Memories on the top floor of the Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira is an intimately-scaled, dimly-lit and windowless gallery, a gallery which ("sightlessly") faces the drowned valleys and volcano-caressed expanse of the Waitematā Harbour. On the far wall is the injunction: "They must not be killed again through forgetfulness." Below it, and behind a glass screen, is a pile of bricks. Between

the quote and bricks, a video plays: a montage of various scenes of abjectness, brutality and horror accompanied by a soaring aria. The quote is from Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel, the bricks are from the Warsaw Ghetto, and the space itself is the Holocaust Gallery, a space that "tells the story" of the Holocaust through artefacts, photographs and the personal stories of Jewish refugees who came to New Zealand. It is also a space described by the Auckland Museum as "unashamedly emotional." The Holocaust Gallery (once again, "sightlessly") overlooks the AWMM's Cenotaph, a cenotaph modelled on Edwin Luytens' design for the famous Whitehall Cenotaph. Incised into the Cenotaph is the inscription: "The Glorious Dead." Staged and spectacled in this small space are many of the memorial demands and injunctions that characterise liberal-progressive museum practice. Staged and spectacled in this small space are many of the impasses and paradoxes that we are confronted by when trying to come to terms with the horrors of the past.

One way of illustrating this memorial deadlock is provided by Russian filmmaker Andrey Zvyagintsev. In his film *Leviathan* (2014), a series of charges concerning Kolya, the Job-like protagonist, are read by a magistrate. Seemingly inexplicably, the charges are read too quickly for sense to be made of them. How – and bearing in mind Santner's (2001) insights concerning dead letters and hieroglyphs in the desert – can we make reparation if we do not know with what we are charged? And specifically, what does it mean to be formed as subjects *of* and *to* trauma?

Conversely, what might the transvaluation of trauma into a source of transcendence, whether affirmative or otherwise, mean? Or, and to turn the dial, and as Stuart Hall (1999) once asked in the context of exploring the often sickly amalgam of heritage and nostalgia, "what is 'the heritage' for?" To whom or to what is it truly directed? And what does it *want* from us? To turn the dial once more, individual and social life clusters around and is formed from the strange work of remembrance, work which is inevitably, apropos Lacan, riddled with fantasy (Sharpe, 2010). In 2003 (p. 12), Jenny Edkins wrote with regard to public practices of remembrance that we tend to conceal the "traumatic real," and "stick with the fantasy of what we call social reality." This is assuredly not the case today. Though that is not to say that the trauma "on display" is not equally entangled in fantasy.

If the past typically returns with a vengeance during times of crisis (Müller, 2002), and if crisis drives capitalism, if it is in fact integral to it (Žižek, 2008), then it follows that increased contestations over the past will shadow capitalism's intensification. This is precisely what has been witnessed over the last forty years with the "triumph" of neoliberalism. Remembering becomes an urgent task when the past is continually being threatened with erasure, which, according to Maurizio Lazzarato (2014, p. 8), explains the on-going recourse to "the

formidable modern subjectivations of nationalism, racism, and fascism," all of which "aim to maintain social ties capitalism continually undermines." To paraphrase Müller (2002, p. 18), whenever identity seems to be in question, whenever there are crises of symbolic legitimacy and investiture, memory comes to be a key to recovery through reconfiguration of the past. However, an alternate reading would suggest that globalisation (cosmopolitan neoliberalism) and localised memory discourses, what could be termed mnemonic particularism, are mutually supportive, especially if culturally/ethnically specific memories can be packaged and sold (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2009).

5.4.2. Memorialisation never occurs in a vacuum. In fact, practices of memorialisation are always overdetermined (Hansen-Glucklich, 2014). Injunctions such as "lest we forget" are interwoven with and predicated by presuppositions of a political and ethical nature (Arnold-de Simine, 2013). As Margalit (2002) asks: what is the nature of the obligation? What is demanded of us? Engagement with collective historic trauma, with memories of communal suffering, always brings into being the possibility, as Di Paolantonio puts it, of "falling into a certain compulsive conservatism, mimetic self-enclosure and a competitive memory politics" (2014, p. ix). For Radstone and Schwarz (2010, p. 8), memorialising practices are inevitably connected to attempts to "fashion, authorize, and motivate specific definitions of moral community in the present." Edkins (2003, p. 11) takes this a step further when she argues that subjecthood and the socio-symbolic realm are "produced and reproduced through social practices, including practices of trauma and memory." Testimonies of loss and post-factum sacrifices, that is, "bloodletting retrospectively classified as sacrifice and invested with generative agency" (Stier and Landres, 2006, p. 3), are integral to political community.

It was Maurice Halbwachs, according to Olick (2007, p. 6), and to return Lacquer and the opening sortie of this chapter, who revealed that "memory is no mere by-product of group existence but its very lifeblood." For Müller (2002, p. 26), memory – this resource of power – can afford "the power to define what is put on the political agenda, in what terms political issues are framed and which conflicts get avoided." While for Hartog (2015), memory, heritage and commemoration are oriented toward a virtual point of convergence: *identity*. Or as I would have it, they are oriented toward the production and maintenance of symbolic offices, titles and mandates. As noted above, in the absence of compelling visions of the future the past can become a vital source of legitimacy for political imaginaries. Though it is not simply that the "bloody" dead can be (made) "glorious." They can be *sources* of glory. The socially sustaining fantasies of collective remembrance are inevitably set in motion in times of disturbance or upheaval, whether "real" or otherwise. However it also exerts often

unbearable – though equally exhilarating – pressure on the subject of remembrance. To restate a point made earlier, trauma could be said to exist as *the* (enigmatic) signifier of late capitalism. Today, this is in certain ways even more pronounced as battles over victimhood rage. For instance, in 2007, Olick (p. 14) wrote that "regret may be the emblem of our times," and that the politics of regret is a new principle of political legitimation.

Conversely, and as Müller (2002) suggests, memory – collective or otherwise – can be refigured to present a narrative of victimisation which can then become an incentive for aggression. Recent global events would suggest that this moment of regret, if it ever truly existed, has if not passed then undoubtedly been problematized. What seems more prevalent is a politics of grievance, and one built from a culture of resentment and disgust. For example, the capitalo-nationalist-populism of the Trumpian and Faragist kind certainly appears to tap into – similarly harness and exacerbate, call-up and dial-up – such sentiments. Olick's (2007, pp. 121-122) observation that "in many places in the world today, the past is very much present [...] but it is more often a horrible, repulsive past then the heroic golden ages so often part of public discourse in previous centuries," would seem to capture the trajectory and tenor of remembrance in recent decades. However, I would suggest that this has now been met with an equally strong force: an unapologetic politics, a rebarbative politics of (hostile) nostalgic fantasy. The politics of apology has in many cases been trumped by a bellicose politics of retribution, with new "heroic" regimes invested in and conceived out of – often imagined or at the very least distorted and misapprehended – trauma.

Žižek's (2022) writings on depravity and the new right, on the active mobilisation of libido in contemporary politics, on the surplus enjoyment of the obscene, provides another opening for us here. In particular, they assist in answering the question of where does that which cannot be absorbed end up. What I mean by this is that it is precisely the aimlessness of trauma and its very superfluousness – it being incapable of being absorbed or metabolised and instead simply being repeatedly marked as such – that makes it (or its *semblance* or *image*) so potent a stimulant with respect to surplus vitality and enjoyment. That it can function as a stand-in for the mysterious and elusive "X" that drives and compels us, and can appear self-generated and self-propelled (a variation of auto-eroticism), furthers its fleshy potential. The abject dialectic at work here in which signifying stress is let loose – ricocheting and recoiling, colliding and collapsing – is palpable.

5.5. The King is Dead, Long Live the King!

A product of the Enlightenment and liberalism, of capitalism and imperialism, the institution of the modern museum took on an instrumental role in the politics of identity of the nation-state. Targeting the popular or public body as an object of reform, the modern museum was designed to produce new forms of social cohesion and to secure bourgeois hegemony. Its function, as Silke Arnold-de Simine (2013, p. 7) suggests, was "not only to organise knowledge and educate the public in questions of manners and taste, but to have a civilising effect and produce self-regulating [...] citizens who would identify with their nation and heritage." Museums were to be integral to the production and maintenance of the "imagined communities" of modernity (Anderson, 1991). Such politics cannot be divorced from the representation of violent episodes through which the nation-state has come to be identified and with which its population are invited to identify. "Blood" sustains those points of identification.

For example, and as charted in this chapter, "bloody memories" are mobilised for the sake of establishing and staking out moral claims and for substantiating and ensuring political legitimacy (Müller, 2002). Memory is manufactured for the purpose of conjuring offices and subjects, for policing the living and the dead. More profoundly still, and as is argued in the second half the thesis, "memory" is liturgically formulated and performed for turning kings into subjects, subjects into kings, kings into creatures, and creatures into relics: *the King is dead, long live the King!*

The question that shadows this undertaking is how these fevered, cyclic and "mythical" dynamics, dynamics that the museum is similarly invested in and plays a conductive part in perpetuating, might be suspended. How might the subject be not subject *to* remembrance, but a subject – and precisely *via* "traffic with ghosts" (Santner, 2006, p. 88) – that can strike at the "surplus animation," an animation that is not so much enlivening as *undeadening*, that is called onto the scene by such dynamics? Santner (2006, p. 75) provides a point of clarification for us here when he writes that the word "myth" should be understood "not simply as an effort to distort the truth of history, to cover up its catastrophic aspect; it also names a dimension of immobilizing fantasy at work in that [catastrophic] image of history." Put differently, and to return to Agamben (1999), facts and truth may not coincide. Catastrophe, in other words, may not provide illumination. In fact, it may be *enjoyed*.

Before turning to elaborate on the poetical-analytical schema of *flesh*, *blood*, *relic* and *liturgy*, a museological methodology conceived as a means of refiguring the relation between the

subject and the museum, I would like to briefly recapitulate that which has been established in the first part of the thesis. What these foundations provide are a set of problems, images and concepts out of which such a reconfiguration is made possible.

Addressed to the question of the "fundamental purpose" of the museum, the first chapter surveyed the historical scene from which the modern museum emerged, touched on some of problems involved in theorising the museum and introduced The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. In the second chapter, a chapter devoted to the "critical" trajectories of museology since the late 1980s, the (unspoken) "triumph" of post-critical museology and the strange fate of critical museology were reflected on. In this chapter, the foundations of the new museology and some of the emphases and affordances of liberal-progressive museum practice were also outlined. Chapter Three attended to the thought of Eric L. Santner. With a particular focus on his concepts of creatureliness and Egyptomania, the museological purchase of Santnerian thinking was also introduced. The fourth chapter orbited Santner's theory of the flesh and its worth for us in illuminating the representational impasses confronting the museum. Meanwhile, in this chapter I have sketched the contextual and conceptual grounds for the particular brand of museal practice that I focus on in this thesis: that of the remembrance of legacies of trauma and violence.

In the second part of the thesis, and via engagement with Te Papa and the exhibitions *Gallipoli: The Scale of Our War* and *The Great War Exhibition*, the symptoms of post-criticality in contemporary museum practice are fed through the Santnerian optics of flesh, blood, relic and liturgy. In Chapter Six, the flesh is deployed for the purpose of apprehending the museum's libidinal economy. Chapter Seven, "Blood," considers the museal production of "more life" (of glory) by way of the representation and remembrance of legacies of violence. The liberal-progressive museum's (unwitting) immunitarian operations that render the (creaturely) subject a (glory-producing) relic are expanded on in Chapter Eight. In the ninth chapter, a chapter that draws together the other elements of the schema, liturgy is employed as a means of accounting for the mutations of ideology in the museum and museology. In the Conclusion, and emerging from the schema's findings, three critical affirmations addressed to negating the negation of the subject by post-critical museology and (re)establishing the conditions of existence for (a) critical museology are proposed.

Fittingly, Santner (2006, p. 84), and via the theorising of Alenka Zupančič, provides us with an inaugural image for this endeavour when he writes that "religion" – and I am including the museum in this schematic – "*qua* ascetic ideal," far from being an "opium of the people," and one "that allows them to escape from a harsh reality, functions more as a stimulant, 'an 'excitation-raiser' which binds us to this reality by activating some mortifying passion."

Santner goes on to write that "Discomfort is soothed (or silenced) by crises and states of emergency in which a subject feels *alive*. But this 'alive' is nothing other than 'undeadness,' the petrifying grip of surplus excitation and agitation." In other words, and recalling the paradox(es) of Egyptomania and the unexpected convergence of trauma and surplus enjoyment addressed above, such excitation-raisers, as we will encounter in the second half of the thesis, can be fundamentally adaptive and defensive rather than liberatory.

Part Two

Six

Flesh

> The field is framed by two fundamental questions: first, why does power – heavenly and earthly – need glory? And second, what are the historical modes and relations of production, circulation, and consumption of glory?
>
> — *Eric L. Santner* (2015, p. 95)

6.1. The Subject Enfleshed, The Museum Engorged

Staged against a backdrop of the explicit revivals of authoritarian, populist and "obscene" – *fleshy* one could say – politics in polities formerly considered bastions of democratic liberalism (Mazzarella et al., 2020), this thesis came into being at what appeared to be a heightened moment in recent human history, a moment, as Anton Jäger (2023) puts it, of "incessant yet diffuse excitation." However, in emphasising such heightened states and such revivals there is a risk of normalising the crisis that *is* the liberal capitalist order, an order which, moreover, calls on to the scene and is ever-adjacent to such obscenities. The poetical-analytical schema was conceived as a methodology for getting to grips with the museum's investment in and production of this "fleshy order" and, consequently, for re/establishing the conditions of existence for (a) critical museology.

In contrast to Jesús Pedro Lorente's (2022, p. 5) contention that "what really matters is to advocate for a museum and a museology that will open to public debate a plurality of subjective points of view," my argument is that "what really matters" is to advance a museology capable of grasping the fleshy complexities of the museum form in order to transform it, its subject and wider society. Or, and as Žižek (2008, p. 160) writes: "One should [...] not allow our opponents to determine the terms and topic of the struggle." What this necessitates in this instance is the inhabitation of interstitial space, of space on the periphery

of the normative. What this means is to insert a language of fleshy fracture into the "heart" of museology.

Further to this, in *The Royal Remains* (2011, p. xx), Santner sought to develop "a kind of philosophical anthropology" for the purpose of locating "what animates, deadens, and 'undeadens' human life in the vicissitudes of the normative pressures that human beings take on by virtue of being subjects of symbolic systems." As a vital site for the conjuration of symbolic offices and the manufacture of (*very real*) fictions of the collective kind, my argument is that the museum is precisely a liturgical apparatus that *animates*, *deadens* and *undeadens*. The museum, in a word, is a locus of the spectral matter that is the flesh.

What the reader will find in this chapter are a series of propositions addressed to the "place" of the flesh in the museum. How does the museum cope with it, defend against it, enflame it? How, I ask, is the subject enfleshed by the museum? And how is the museum engorged by this fleshy subject? The primary empirical scene in this chapter is the exemplary new museum that is Te Papa Tongarewa, this place that is "Our Place." Meanwhile, the crucial theoretical pivot is Santner's insertion of the psychoanalytic conception of enjoyment into political theology and Foucauldian biopolitics. What this means is to read what seems most personal in social terms and, indeed, vice versa. *The flesh*, in a word, is a social substance. The flesh cannot be decisively separated from that which begets it and that in which it resides.

As noted in Chapter Four, the new bearers of the principle of sovereignty come to be "stuck" with an excess of flesh that, as Santner (2011, p. xxi) puts it, "their own bodies cannot fully close in upon and that must be 'managed' in new ways." More than this, the flesh is not only unable to be fully closed upon, but bodies are closed upon (or, indeed, and paradoxically, *closed open*) by it. In this way, the flesh similarly binds bodies to particular forms of life while endlessly undoing such bindings. In terms of Santnerian thinking, the key to understanding this dialectic is *enjoyment*.

> How the subject (unconsciously) finds a way to inhabit a symbolic order in which it is necessarily alienated, how it lives and unlives this alienation in and through its fantasmatic investments and bodily drives – this is what is at stake in enjoyment (Mazzarella et al., 2020, p. 8).

As Matthew Sharpe (2010, pp. 249-250) writes apropos Žižek's notion of ideological *disidentification*, the fantasmatic – and unconscious – belief that the "big Other" has access to "the *jouissance* they have lost as subjects of the Law, and which they can accordingly reattain through political allegiance" must be recognised as one of the foundations of political identification. Enjoyment, Mazzarella, Santner and Schuster (2020, pp. 8-9) insist, must also

"be understood from its symptomatic formations and concrete expressions, its surprising disturbances and wayward lapses."

Santner (2020, p. 35) provides us with an opening here when he writes that "the stuff that binds is the stuff that unbinds; the social glue is also a social solvent." What I take from this is that it is at those moments or sites of the production of splendour or glory that these expressions and lapses of enjoyment should be sought out. The new museum, with its perpetual and anxious hunt for glory and relevance, for new audiences and products, provides one such location. Memorialisation, this endlessly paradoxical activity that inevitably coalesces repression and displacement, acting out and working through, enjoyment and melancholy, affords another. While the enjoyment of remembrance is explicitly addressed in the following chapters, the emphasis here is on the on the "good news," the "love" and the "glory" of the new museum.

It is important to reiterate, at least as far as I understand it, that by overlooking or discounting "enjoyment" post-critical museology is consigned to endlessly misapprehend the *fleshy* and *creaturely* subject that is the museum visitor. Further to this, rather than this visitor requiring activation, a position advocated by proponents of post-critical museology (Dewdney et al., 2013; Kletchka, 2018) and one drawn from the work of Jacques Rancière (2009), I maintain that the subject requires *deanimation* from the surplus vitality that is the flesh. Additionally, the dispersal of authority heralded by post-critical orientations as signalling emancipation must be understood as functioning to further inflame the flesh. Put simply: the creature and that which produces it must be recognised as such.

A concern with the afterlives of the dispersal of symbolic authority in modernity threads through this chapter. In other words, what occurs when the symbolic system appears inverted? What transpires when sovereign power is not simply made horizontal, when it not only appears like us, reflecting our every want and desire, but *as us*? What are the implications – in terms, for instance, of revolutionary horizons – when we perform (ecstatically, lovingly) this spectacle of power, which is in reality a spectacle of alienation, *ourselves*. If the subject is able to enjoy – is able to "get off on" – its alienation, a significant impasse arises with respect to the possibility of a revolutionary act. Put schematically, the museum's doxological production involves utilising *doxa* (meaning, in the first instance, public opinion, public feeling, and public enjoyment) for the production of *doxa* (meaning in the second instance, *glory*). And it is this (auto-vampiric) dialectic that occupies my attention in the final part of this chapter.

However, and before addressing the new museum's desire to be "our place" and before considering its "good news" and its "love," I would like to take the reader to a small corner of London, a corner where *the flesh* seems to exist not as a "matter of fact" but as an ambience,

as a "fact of nature." As a consequence, everything in it and everything associated with it becomes allegorical. It was here that some of the fleshy complexities of human being began to form in my mind, began to grip me.

6.2. White Chapels and Elephants

6.2.1. A few weeks prior to Christmas of 2016, I took a walk in the East End of London, a walk that took in Whitechapel Gallery and Altab Ali Park, in search of a graveyard just beyond Whitechapel, in Stepney Green. Named after a young British Bangladeshi clothing worker murdered in a racist attack on 4 May 1978, Altab Ali Park is also the site of a fourteenth century white church, Saint Mary Matfelon, from which Whitechapel gets its name. Heavily bombed during the Blitz of 1940, all that remains of the church is the floor plan and a few graves. Over the entrance to the park stands a commemorative arch created by artist David Petersen which was developed as a memorial to Ali and other victims of racist attacks. On the right are remnants of the white church, with an inscription from Acts (16:31) which reads: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." A little further on and running down the centre of the park's main path are letters spelling out a fragment of a poem by Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore: "The shade of my tree is offered to those who come and go fleetingly." I knew nothing of this history and noted neither text as I sat in the park. Meanwhile, it was in a flat overlooking the Ashkenazi burial ground of Alderney Cemetery in Stepney Green that the titular character – and cipher of twentieth-century trauma – of Sebald's novel, *Austerlitz* lived. I arrived at Alderney Street in the semi-darkness of a wintry late-afternoon and found that the high-walled cemetery was inaccessible without a key.

At Whitechapel Gallery I had found an exhibition by South African artist William Kentridge and also a film titled *Disarming* (2013) from Hong-Kong based artist Mak Ying Tung, featuring a hand plucking – without hesitation and one after another – the prickles of a cactus. Some years previously, I had been a regular visitor to another of Kentridge's exhibitions, *The Refusal of Time*, at City Gallery in Wellington. Said to combine "the magic of theatre, film, sculpture, drawing, music and dance," it centred on a five-channel video installation which addressed the elusive nature of time and our political and personal efforts to control or deny it. Each time I visited I felt a little like I had been similarly put upon by something quite inexplicable and relieved of a burden I did not know I had. But then again, and as we heard Martin Heidegger (as cited in Žižek, 2008, p. 125) argue in the Introduction, "Our worlds, and

consequently our meaningful relations to things, are always based in something that can't be explained in terms of the prevailing intelligible structure of the world." *We are compelled to seek sense where none can be found*. We are compelled to "read the signs."

6.2.2. Novelist David Barnett (2021) describes museums as "the perfect backdrops for fiction of pretty much any kind." He also styles them as "repositories of secrets [and] windows on to worlds and people long disappeared." To riff on Patrick Wright's (as cited in Mitchell, 2020) description of Britain's National Trust, museums are ethereal holding companies for the "spirit/s" of the past. However, in order for loss to be economised and for the spirit of the past to be produced and maintained, and for reality itself to be sustained, museums must enter the realms of fiction and fantasy. In the middle of Kentridge's *The Refusal of Time*, and seemingly powering the work, was a pumping, breathing, accordion-like sculpture known as "The Elephant," a reference to Charles Dickens's novel *Hard Times* (1854), in which machines move like elephants in a state of melancholy madness. That *Hard Times* – Dickens' only novel not to have scenes set in London – was set in a fictional industrial conurbation called Coketown cannot be passed over. It is Coketown, this place that is not there that *sustains reality*. It is to Coketown that we outsource our "shit." And it is Coketown that enables the (fantastical) spirit of the past to be kept alive.

That museum-going is a form of devotional practice is well established (Bouquet & Porto, 2005; Bennett, 2013; Bedford, 2014). Although with differing emphases, both Bennett (1995) and Duncan (1995) highlight this in their respective accounts. Preziosi (2014), meanwhile, describes the museum as a social technology of believing. The (performative) work of the museum involves the "*enchanting of worlds and things*: the spectral rendering of experience that troubles clear or fixed distinctions between the material and the immaterial" (Preziosi, 2014, p. 1). More than this, I would suggest that museums are sites of haunting and enjoyment, of fantasy and violence. They are "indexes of mass atrocity" as one "unnamed 'Oxford Don'" recently put it (Hunt, 2021). Museums nourish and sustain the fantasies that are necessary for the maintenance of the symbolic systems that dictate the textures and hues of human being. They are apparatuses of glory, are intimately acquainted with glory, with its production and its necessity. However, and as noted in Chapter Five, that the excitations of religion – that *glory* – may produce "only" *undeadness* is the key in this equation.

For reasons I still cannot fathom, I pictured Kentridge's Dickensian elephant as I made my way to Te Papa one autumn afternoon in the early days of this research to visit the recently opened renovation of Te Papa's *Toi Art*. The work that I had come specifically to see was New Zealand artist Michael Parekowhai's exhibition *Détour* (2018). That within this exultantly

parodic display in which one was catapulted between the registers of lampoonery – of art history, of the institution of the museum (this white chapel), of oneself – and revelation there should be an elephant, a garish and imposing model constructed from fiberglass and automotive paint hung from the ceiling, felt awfully serendipitous. Titled *Standing on Memory* (2018), Parekowhai's cartoon-kitsch monster, a parody of sculptural gravity, left me stranded at the margins of sense, suspended somewhere between shame and splendour, bewilderment and illumination. To be a subject of the museum means to be subject to the technique of representation. And these prevailing intelligible structures – these techniques of representation – are endlessly *ex-citing* and fundamentally *useless* (Clark, 1999; Santner, 2011).

6.3. Our Place

6.3.1. A series of dilemmas confronted those tasked with the manufacture of Te Papa in the early 1990s, dilemmas which, in differing forms, have troubled all public museums since the nineteenth century. To recapitulate some of these impasses: first, how can the People – a "virtual-reality" – be represented? How can a multitude be turned into *a* people or into *the* People? Second, how can what has been termed the original sin of the democratic revolutions (Haider, 2018), that is, the tension between the individual subject and the collective People, be traversed? Such dilemmas could be said to have become increasingly acute. How, for instance, to represent *homoeconimus*, or the commodified "non-people" of neoliberalism? How can the museum reflect or represent the expansive and expansionary – or fractured and shattered, similarly connected and anomic – lifeworld of the contemporary subject? How can the museum begin to account for the disenchanted-but-superstitious, cynical-but-paranoid lifeworld that now predominates?

As for "the People" in the twenty-first century, it could be said to be so indistinct a term as to be meaningless. Elastic and perpetually elegiac and utopian (*nostalgic*, in a word), the People, and much like the concept of the public (Barrett, 2011), is predicated upon imagined boundaries and imprecise normative standards. It has an inherently aporetic quality (Haider, 2018). However, although similarly passé and problematic, recent developments – such as Trumpian hyper-capitalistic-populism, the various strains of (highly-absorbent) right-wing "conspirituality" (Ward & Voas, 2011), Brexit – confirms that the People remains a significant rhetorical figure on the global landscape. It is also one that continues to haunt the museum,

with Conal McCarthy (2018, p. 107), for example, describing Te Papa as being "firmly on the side of the people."

Te Papa, or "Our Place" as the corporate slogan has it, was designed to be democratic (Message, 2007), demotic (Williams, 2003) and popular (Dalrymple, 1999). In Conal McCarthy's (2018, p. 37) prosaically rhapsodic terms, it was aimed both "high and low." For Paul Williams (2003, p. 305), in its initial form Te Papa was a meeting place of "market-driven accessibility, liberal historical revisionism and indigenous assertion." Via the mediums of storytelling and technology, Te Papa aspired to popularise the experience of the museum, and realign and "equalise" New Zealand's heritage.

A series of more ambivalent liberal aspirations, aspirations aligned to or a corollary of the new museum's active imbrication with the endlessly liquefying power of capital, informed these "good intentions." Namely, the new museum was envisaged as being a space of *free choice*. From its inception in 1992, the line between commerce and culture at Te Papa was blurred to the point of indistinguishability. One of its primary functions was to normalise the newly neoliberalised nation and the bright new ("self-forming" and "entrepreneurial") subjects of late capitalism (Williams, 2003). Predicated on visitor satisfaction and enjoyment, commercial positivity and cultural positivity are expected to braid seamlessly within Te Papa (Wedde, 2006).

Further to this issue of free choice, Žižek (2018, p. 26) argues that because it has today been "elevated into a supreme value, social control and domination can no longer appear to infringe on the subject's freedom – it has to appear as (and be sustained by) the very experience of individuals as being free." There are numerous ways in which this un-freedom appears in the guise of its opposite. Assailed by so-called free choices, we increasingly experience "our freedom as what it effectively is: a burden that deprives us of the true choice of change" (Žižek (2018, p. 26). In other words, consumer choice is always a forced choice and the personal freedom promised by the market is also the very source of unfreedom.

Returning to Heidegger's contention concerning our destitution vis-à-vis the intelligible structures of the world, Žižek (2008, p. 123) suggests that Heidegger's concern was to emphasise the underlying *sameness* of the ideological, political and economic choices we are confronted with. Furthermore, although "bourgeois society generally obliterates castes and other hierarchies, equalizing individuals as market subjects divided only by class difference," today's late capitalism, "with its 'spontaneous' ideology, endeavours to obliterate the class division itself by way of proclaiming us all 'self-entrepreneurs,' the differences among us being merely quantitative [...]" (Žižek, 2018, p. 26). In this way, the subject's failure to "achieve" is made to appear entirely of its own making. In terms of situating Te Papa within

this schematic, not only was it expected to facilitate the cultural liberation of the subject (a liberation modelled on an economic archetype), it was also tasked with singing songs of praise to the (paradoxically disaggregated but ever more vital) public body.

The numerous paradoxes of "Our Place," a refrain similarly equivocal and definite and one that I take as shorthand for the project of the new museum more generally, take on a new life when considered via the prism of Santnerian thinking. Mazzarella (2017, p. 69) provides a point of entry with respect to these questions of ideological (un)attachment and (dis)association when he suggests that critical theorists often write as if "any kind of excess, undecidability or internal instability in a social formation" inherently "points toward freedom." Such thinking, he notes, is "premised on the tacit assumption that authority, power, and ideology work better and more efficaciously the more seamlessly and tightly they are able to 'capture' us" (Mazzarella, 2017, pp. 69-70). It is, rather, precisely such undecidability or, as Mazzarella puts it, "excess potential," that captivates us. It is precisely such superfluousness that makes our thirst more insatiable. What this means in this instance is that it is the very nowhereness of "Our Place" that ensures its efficacy. And, as a corollary, we are "liberated" – we are *liberally dispersed* – into *nowhereness*.

6.3.2. As a semiotic-somatic vibrancy generated by the inscription of bodies into normative social space, the flesh is product of the crisis that accompanies all acts of symbolic investiture. It needs restating that the life that is of concern to psychoanalysis, at least for Santner (2001, p. 30), is "life that has been thrown by the enigma of its legitimacy, the question of its place and authorisation within a meaningful order." Daniel Paul Schreber's "secret history of modernity" (Santner, 1996) is one "expression" of this crisis of investiture and, I would suggest, the museum is another. The crisis is made apparent in the museum precisely because of its role in the management of the fallout of the sources of legitimacy dispersing and multiplying, dissolving and re-congealing. More than this, a certain circularity may be perceived in that the museum is an *expression* of this crisis, a device for the *management* of this crisis, and a *producer* of this crisis. Given the warped relationship between political, economic and cultural power and the shifting – and not to say *shifty* – centres of power and prestige, the museum's functions with respect to such operations, whether active or passive, purposeful or (seemingly) incidental, have become ever more complex and difficult to discern.

The idea that the museum should be perceived as an expression of the fundamental crisis of legitimacy that characterises modernity appears counterintuitive. However, and as we have previously encountered Benjamin (1968, p. 256) arguing, every document of civilization is at once a document of barbarism. More specifically, precisely in the museum's attempts to

collect, classify and represent, to be *our place*, certain "pathological" tendencies are revealed. The second of these crisis vectors has been conceptualised at length, most notably in the work of Bennett (1995) and Duncan (1995). Although I draw upon the foundations provided by such thinking, I also depart from it (and from them) in a number of ways.

For example, my point is that ideology is most effective when taken on board *freely* and *willingly*, or, indeed, and conversely, and to draw on the work of Pfaller (2017), *interpassively*. With regard to the production of crisis, the museum's much theorised role of making legitimate (normalising and indemnifying) and making things matter (glorifying), involves a set of procedures and practices that are not only highly charged and unstable but are liable to bring on to the scene their obverse. The museum's role in terms of subject production, for instance, needs to be understood as both constitutive and destitutive; the sovereign and the creature are different sides of the same coin.

Vitally, and as Santner (2011, p. xiv) notes, the issue is not simply that the sources of representation have dispersed but, as he puts it, "our capacity to feel represented in the social field, to experience those representations [on offer] as *viable facilitations of our vitality*." What the Schreber case demonstrates is that "the more attenuated this capacity becomes, the more such vitality comes to be registered as an invasive excitation of nerves" (Santner, 2011, p. xiv). The normative pressures that arise as part of our inscription into and inhabitation of symbolic orders return or are imagined to return as bodily impingements and violations. In this way, Te Papa's promise to be "our place" becomes not just an invitation but a threat.

While on the one hand being characterised by the attenuation of viable sources of vitality, the potential sources of vitality have also proliferated and multiplied in modernity. And today we are responsible for forming and generating – all in the name of freedom as outlined above – our "very own" sources of vitality. Before, in a further twist, packaging, marketing and selling them to others (Haider, 2018; Mazzarella, 2017; Žižek, 2018). For Santner (2011, p. xiv), the more we become object of such operations that seek to interpellate us into various spaces of representation in modernity, "the more (un)deadening the space of representation becomes." Put simply, we are charged with objectifying ourselves. That this process involves an inevitable if often "knowing" (Sharpe, 2010) misapprehension of our objective position is important to keep in mind.

Furthermore, that glory can be defiled, that the office can be inverted, and that the wellsprings of political authority, for example, can dry up means that each of these are in need of continual management and maintenance. They all require "new" expressions and representations of continuity and vitality. More than this, the paradox at work here is that the very sources of vitality are in themselves, or have the potential to be, undeadening. The substance of our "good

news" is a fluid excretion, and "our place," when positioned within this fleshy schema, becomes the scene of chronic detumescence and inflammation. *Our flesh* may be said to be like a charcoal rubbing of a royal insignia. *Our place* is always an adumbration.

6.4. (Re)branding: The Museum's Good News

6.4.1. With the creation of Te Papa, a new cultural logic was said to have been given form (Knell, 2018; McCarthy, 2018; Message, 2005; Williams, 2003). For Williams (2003, p. 16), this entailed the development and deployment of a new deal between the museum and its public, a public that was conceived as encompassing "citizens, communities, tourists, sponsors and consumers." Williams (2003, p. 16) also suggested that "Our Place," this ambivalent entreaty that is at once, and among other things, an expression of accommodation and an uncertainly circumscribed performative, positioned "the museum as a microenvironment for the nation" while also evoking "ingratiating notions of home and belonging." Its more recently adopted corporate vision of "changing hearts, minds and lives" (Te Papa, 2015a) and explicit emphasis on cultural health and wellbeing further compounds this new deal, signalling both an avoidance of ideology and an embrace of instrumentality. Te Papa's ideological ambiguity and methodological sophistication coalesce to ensure that the flesh of the visitor can resonate effortlessly with the (ever mutating) *good news* on offer.

Architecturally, Te Papa is the result of a collision between a postmodern riff on temple architecture and a solemn interpretation of the Museum's foundational Māori concepts (McCarthy, 2018). While on one hand reminiscent of an Atlantic City casino, a Martian cathedral, or a cashed-up survivalists' citadel, on the other it brings to mind the cosmic principles of Te Ao Māori (McCarthy, 2018). The building was intended to represent both the triumphant "good news" of the freshly-minted globalised (meaning neoliberalised) world order and, as Knell (2018, p. 11) put it, a "deep and sincere biculturalism."

The most obvious special effect of Te Papa, and one that new museums generally aspire to be equally adept at (Andermann and Arnold-de Simine, 2012), concerns a certain sleight-of-hand, a form of bait-and-switch, vis-à-vis difference. What I mean by this is that visions and effects continually switch places or take on the guise of the other. Moreover, difference is no longer othered or exoticised but personalised. What I am driving at here is that Te Papa's accommodating welcome, its invitation to participate, its emphasis on subjectivity and tolerance, its aspiration to appeal to and appease all, must be understood within the rubric of

the neoliberalisation of culture. The desire to attract a representative mass audience is driven by economic necessity. Te Papa's emphasis on "self-generated income, commercial sponsorship, and an active relationship with leisure and tourist industries" (Williams, 2003, p. 19) is congruent with its bicultural and identitarian obligations. Asad Haider's (2018, p. 12) description of identity politics is instructive here. It should, Haider argues, be conceived as the "*neutralisation* of movements against racial oppression. It is the ideology that emerged to appropriate this emancipatory legacy in service of the advancement of political and economic elites." The expression of identity at Te Papa, an institution, one will recall, that is "firmly on the side of the people" (McCarthy, 2018), has undoubtedly tended to minimise political and economic contradictions and conflict, to be consolatory and accumulative rather than antagonistic.

6.4.2. Like other publicly-funded museums, and forming out of and emerging alongside its legislative remit (see the Te Papa Act 1992), Te Papa is answerable in financial, social, and ethical-aesthetic terms. Its anticipated production of social and cultural capital is measured by way of compound-but-blunt performance metrics and indices of success – chief among these being visitor approval and satisfaction ratings – and increasingly modelled on the social media paradigm. Focused principally on growth and operating with relentless "neutrality," rewarding whatever content captures and retains users (Williamson, 2022), the social media realm is dominated by affirmations ("acclamations") and their opposites, the relentless "hidden hand" of the algorithm, clickbait, and predictive consumption ("if you like this, you'll like that"). What this means at this juncture is that Te Papa's good news is inevitably *more of the same*. Though that is not to say that it does not need to maintain the appearance of ceaseless transformation.

Although Arnold-de Simine (2013, p. 2) writes of "the rhetoric of good intentions" veiling the "twin dangers of commodification on the one hand and political instrumentalisation on the other," my argument is that commodification and political instrumentality are structurally integral to today's museums. Understanding that this frenetic state of perpetual innovation – and whether real, rhetorical or imagined – is driven by the necessity of commercial positivity is crucial in appreciating the success of Te Papa. "The constant struggle to win visitors' hearts, minds and currency," Williams (2003, p. 19) writes, "sees a broadening of ideas about what constitutes "culture" worthy of museum support. Exhibitions not only popularise historical topics but also historicize popular topics." Te Papa's restless and relentless (*sales*) pitch has only increased in the years since the publication of Williams' thesis.

The increasing emphasis on the affective experience of the visitor and a more pronounced foregrounding of issues relating to social justice and reparation would seem to signify a movement away from the sometimes ironic mode of Te Papa's initial incarnation. This ethically-minded model, however, is peppered with contradictions and hypocrisies. The liberal-humanist recourse to ethics presumes, as Peter Hallward (2001, p. xiii) writes in the introduction to Alain Badiou's *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil* (2001), "the assumption of an a priori evil (totalitarianism, violence, suffering), then the imposition of an essentially defensive ethics, a 'respect' for negative liberties and 'human rights.'" "Ethics," Badiou maintains, is principally a means of ensuring protection from abusive interference. In other words, ethics functions to maintain the status quo. In terms of Te Papa, although rebranded as a site of democratic access and participation and, indeed, *ethics*, these are in fact ideals associated with the nineteenth century reformist period that the new museology sought to distance itself from (Cameron, 2007).

For Anthony Shelton (as cited in Basu and Macdonald, 2007, p. 18), the museum of today is driven by "the delivery of external institutional objectives broadly related to social engineering policies and subordinated to market forces." And yet, and as Kylie Message (2006, pp. 198-199) writes, the ideal museum today acts "self-consciously" as a political agent and plays "an advocacy role in the reconstruction of cultural identity." Andrea Witcomb (2003, p. 17) provides a further point of clarification when she explains that museums continue to function as institutions for civic reform in the contemporary period, "even if the specific aims of such reform are now couched within a rhetoric of cultural diversity rather than public morals." However, that today diversity is equated precisely *with* morality furthers this imbroglio.

6.4.3. Te Papa's focus on identity, on expressing and the expression of cultural identity rather than displaying heritage, indicates a preference for what Williams (2003, p. 17) terms the "communicative" over the "representative or objective." Telling stories, as Williams notes, has been a favoured method for new museums, with the idiomatic, the multi-accentual, the affective and the personal being perceived as being more ethically appropriate. Attention to individual voices and to stories and storytelling allows museums "to sidestep charges of didactism by encouraging groups to 'speak for themselves' in the parlance of their collective memory" (Williams, 2003, p. 17). Such an approach affords Te Papa an ideological parachute. Politics, in this instance, and to borrow a line from Haider (2018, p. 67), is reduced to the (anxious) performance of identity. The personalisation of the political means to be "left with no practice of politics outside of the fashioning of our personal identities and surveillance of the identities of others" (Haider, 2018, p. 67). By inserting the flesh into Haider's account,

and remembering that flesh "sutures human bodies to the structures that enable them to make sense of their being in the world and motivate them to action" (Bost, 2017, p. 325), the picture becomes more complex still. Enjoyment, in other words, is never just that and nor can it truly ever be said to be entirely one's own.

Within the "free space" of the new museum, the aspiration is to provide visitors with representations and expressions which will, strangely given the emphasis on individual expression, cohere with their own. Visitors are also encouraged to speak for themselves and, indeed, feel just as they want, which might mean not at all and might mean a great deal. Opportunity is provided, in other words, for one's flesh to resonate "freely." Alenka Zupančič (2008) provides one way of understanding the implications of this altered praxis when she suggests that:

> one can easily show that ironic distance and laughter often function as an internal condition of all true ideology, which is characterised by the fact that it tends to avoid direct 'dogmatic' repression, and has a firm hold on us precisely where we feel most free and autonomous in our actions. (p. 4)

The "free choice" museum cannot but be seen as an exemplary ideological formation. To take this line of thought a step further, creaturely life, one will recall, is life that is called into being, is *ex-cited*, by the exposure to what Santner (2006, p. 15) terms the peculiar "creativity" associated with the threshold of law and nonlaw. It is the life that has been "delivered over to the space of the sovereign's 'ecstasy-belonging,' or what we might simply call 'sovereign jouissance.'" The *free-forced-choice* museum should be seen as existing at precisely such an ex-citing threshold of law and nonlaw.

Returning to Knell's (2018, p. 3) previously mentioned contention that "as institutions centred on the citizen, truth and increasingly on human rights, the *autonomous museum* has an important role to play in our present-day world," my argument is that it is precisely this fantasy of the autonomous museum which is what keeps it – and museology – stuck in crisis. The "free choice museum" is in reality a "forced-choice" museum, and while this condition of the free-forced-choice – that is, the museum's hailing of us no longer being a call to order but a call "to be free" – is disturbing, the concomitant attempt to provide therapeutic succour for this state of material and transcendental homelessness is perverse. The logic at play here can be summarised as follows: the museum leaving it up to the individual means that there is a call, an act of hailing, an act of interpellation, but this call now comes (ostensibly) from nowhere. Or, if it comes from anywhere, it comes from oneself. The museum, in a word, asks that we give ourselves, that we interpellate ourselves, freely, *lovingly*.

As outlined in Chapter Four, every call to order addressed to a human subject – such as taking on the symbolic investiture afforded by the museum, such as becoming subject to the museum's interpellation – secretes, a surplus value of psychic excitation. The surplus "bears the burden" or "holds the place" of "the missing foundation of the institutional authority that issued the call" (Santner, 2001, pp. 50-51). The fundamental "restlessness or unsettledness" of human being, its *too muchness*, is in part product of and indeed indexes what Santner (2001) has described as the constitutive uncertainties that torment identity in a world of symbolic values, values that cannot absolve themselves from their groundlessness. Consequently, these values are filled with a surplus charge that can never be either entirely diffused or discharged. With the withdrawal of (explicit) transcendent support or underwriting of the social – juridical, political – order, this "paradoxically, dearth-generated surplus becomes all the more insistent" (Santner, 2001, pp. 50-51). As this order no longer references or is tied to a life or power beyond this one, a pressure in the fabric of everyday life, a surplus of immanence is produced.

What Goodman (2015, pp. 4-5) describes as the "outward manifestation" of this surplus immanence "in both psychic experience and representations of the outer world" is "a troubling and perverse animation, whose quasi-mechanical insistence makes it more like 'undeadness' than anything resembling true life." The implication being in this context that the embrace of what could be called normative counter-hegemonical practices and philosophies, those interventions that stay within the confines of prevailing intelligible structures, only deepens the museum's ensnarement in the undeadening of life. Te Papa's "good news" resides in it providing subjects opportunity for performative self-branding, for the charcoal branding of one's flesh, for making oneself *undead*.

6.5. Certain Types of Energy

6.5.1. The following reflections similarly expand on ideas already addressed in this chapter while also foreshadowing particular themes and concerns that are picked up and picked over in subsequent chapters. To begin with, and as Donald Preziosi (2009, pp. 40-41) once proposed, "the social management of memory and desire is the central business of the modern museum." More than this, I argue, the central business of the modern museum is the (mis)management of the flesh. That this fleshy work involves the production of and indeed consumption of glory (of both the spectacular and auto-doxological kinds) and the economization of fantasy are underlying assumptions here. These assumptions are informed

by the work of Santner, Mazzarella and Schuster (2020, p. 3) and, specifically, their question of how "libidinal investments can/not be harnessed to projects of power and value?" How are we recruited and drafted into the production of glory? How do we come to inhabit, occupy, and ("erotically" or "lovingly") invest in the signifiers that (mis)represent us in the world? And what role does the museum play in said production, recruitment and (mis)representation?

Although Te Papa is not, for the most part, explicitly addressed over the following pages, Te Papa CEO Courtney Johnston does provide the riddle around which this part of the chapter revolves. Upon her appointment in December 2019, Johnston stated that "Museums today are about love" (Radio New Zealand, 2019). This seemingly quixotic opinion surfaced in response to interviewer Kathryn Ryan's question: "What is your plan for a national institution that has been in some turmoil and has significant morale issues. *What is your plan*?" Johnston's full reply went as follows:

> Lots of love. Museums today are about love. They're about love and emotion. They're about care. They're about acknowledging the difficult things that happened in our pasts. They're about a diversity of voices. And they're about collectively coming together to form a future. (Radio New Zealand, 2019)

It would be tempting to read too much into Johnston's comments, and that is precisely what I intend to do here. Johnston undoubtedly had *agape* or *philia* in mind when speaking of love; that is, a transcendent, fraternal or Platonic love. However, Te Papa and indeed all public museums are riddled – are dripping – with *eros*, are driven (mad) by *libido*. That said, the first of these forms of love is no less potentially unnerving than the second. In other words: *Che vuoi*? What do you want from me?

With respect to libido, Orhan Pamuk's novel *The Museum of Innocence* (2009) provides an opening with respect to grasping the museum's libidinal economy. It is précised by James Lasdun (2010) as follows:

> Kemal, a wealthy Istanbulli playboy, spends a decade besieging his beautiful young cousin and then, after certain tragic events, devotes the rest of his life to creating a museum in her memory, stocking it with panties, nutcrackers, china dogs, 4,213 cigarette stubs and sundry other trifles recovered from their moments together.

Firstly, I would submit that all museums are the result of such fleshy pursuits; pursuits that are then repurposed or renamed. In psychoanalytic terms, they are products of *fetishism*, *sublimation*, *displacement*, *condensation*. And secondly, and in more active terms, museums are mechanisms of transvaluation and metamorphosis. That which enters the museum is never

the same again (Hein, 2000). That which enters the museum is, correspondingly, *(re)enfleshed*.

Throughout Kemal's binge of self-abasement, he drifts, Lasdun (2010) writes,

> in and out of a state of morbid, precarious ecstasy, fuelled by the little personal objects – contents of his future museum – that he pilfers from the household and pores over in the solitude of his own room, licking and sucking them in an effort to recreate the precise look or gesture of his beloved that each piece has been selected to memorialise.

Despite this image being far removed from the antiseptic world of today's museum practitioners, it captures the fleshy pressures that I suggest compel and shadow all museal pursuits.

6.5.2. Writing in the context of Brexit, John Harris (2020) proposed that "Even now, twenty-first century politics is still less about hardened matters of success and failure than [it is about] expressions of culture and history, and the sides they force people to take." What Harris is hinting at is that politics remains, and despite the technocratic triumphalism of the first part of the century, a matter of affect and emotion, of glory and spectacle (Davies, 2018; Mishra, 2017). Governmental accounts of the present moment fall short in a number of ways, including the following two highlighted by Mazzarella, Santner and Schuster (2020):

> [...] where in this scenario do we place the manifestly excessive gestures, the glorious gratuitousness, of our current crop of neopopulist leaders? And where in this neoliberal dream of seamless governmentality, of a perfectly harmonized society, do we place our own increasingly compulsive *inability* to rest? (p. 3)

My immediate concern is with the first aspect of this dyad, though a certain excessiveness (though one that is often "fat free" in the Žižekian sense) can be detected across the political spectrum. At this current juncture is visible both a (rhetorical) politics of what could be characterised as "loving incantation," a politics exemplified by former New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern (and echoed by Courtney Johnston); and a politics of "hateful incitation," of (often imagined) victimhood and violent and vengeful incandescence, a politics typified by Donald Trump. These are different sides of the same coin: the content may be different but the *satisfaction*, to draw on the work of Alenka Zupančič (2017), is the same.

During a campaign event in August of 2020, Donald Trump (*The Guardian*, 2020) said that his presidential rival, Joe Biden, would "Take away your guns, destroy your second

amendment. No religion, no anything, hurt the Bible, hurt God." Trump added of Biden: "He's against God, he's against guns, he's against energy, our kind of energy." Meanwhile, in an article for conservative British current affairs magazine *The Spectator*, Caroline Reinhardt (1998) described new museums as aspiring to be "genuinely populist." Reinhardt went on to contend that the new museum not only welcomed but actively sought out all sectors of the community and eschewed anything that smacked of elitism. Above all, however, Reinhardt suggested that the new museum sought to "pull its head out of the historical sand" and to address issues in and of the contemporary world. The "buzzwords," Reinhardt noted, were "access and relevance." Reinhardt's account of the aspirations of the new museology was, for the most part, astute. Today, museum's remain under the spell of a certain form of "populism" and would seem to desire above all to make their visitors *feel*, for them to come into contact with and indeed generate the *certain kind of energy* that is "glory."

6.5.3. By bringing the flesh (psychoanalysis) and glory (theology) into consideration, certain assumptions that underpin the hegemony of the secular and indeed post-criticality are called into question. Further to this, Mazzarella, Santner and Schuster (2020, p. 2) contend that for some decades now the global present has easily, "perhaps too easily," been diagnosed as neoliberal. Despite critical emphasis on the body – the body as "the signifying surface of disciplinary power, the body as the evidentiary support for hegemonic agendas whose purpose and telos always lie elsewhere, and of course the body as irreducible site of resistance" – this diagnosis has "smuggled in a kind of excarnation of the social, a forgetting of the flesh" (Mazzarella et al., 2020, p. 2). Their argument, which is set against the "prevailing tendency to theorize the neoliberal moment as a time of administrative capture, as an era of increasingly watertight logic of governmentality," is that bodies should be considered as "sites of exceedingly laborious enjoyment, as localizations of the business – and busyness – of corporate *jouissance*" (Mazzarella et al., 2020, p. 2). Apprehending the political present as "an anxiously vital, and vitally corporeal, space of fantasy," they write of us having been "drafted into the liturgical labour that animates this space and thereby sustains the effects of sovereignty in its new forms and configurations" (Mazzarella et al., 2020, p. 2). In other words, there is more "psychotheology" (Santner, 2001) in everyday life than is typically assumed.

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2004), meanwhile, suggest that biopolitics signifies a blurring of the traditional distinctions between the economic, the political, the social, and the cultural. For Mazzarella, Santner and Schuster (2020), this "biopolitical blur" is seen not necessarily in terms of immaterial labour, as Hardt and Negri would have it, but rather "liturgical labour." Biopolitics, they argue, "needs to be grasped in relation to the fundamental

fantasies that help make multitudes governable" (Mazzarella et al., p. 5). Much of what has come under the heading of the biopolitical needs instead "to be grasped in relation to the new locations and production processes of the sovereign's *sublime body*, one made of, as Žižek has put it, 'a special, immaterial stuff'" (Mazzarella et al., 2020, p. 5). According to this logic, biopolitics should be understood as involving an unknowing or endlessly misdirected liturgical labour in pursuit of this special, immaterial stuff. It is this that I picture Johnston perhaps unwittingly acknowledging and tapping into when she spoke of "the love" of the museum. If, and as Susan Crane (2000) once argued, the museum represents an organisational principle, then the (non)principle that is truly being (liturgically) organised (given shape, form, expression), and – however erratically or unsuccessfully – tamed within the nomenclature of the museum is that of the flesh.

The role the museum plays with respect to this liturgical labour is unquestionably complex. With libido having been "let loose" – see, for example, Žižek's (2008) ongoing polemic concerning the *punishing permissiveness* of the contemporary moment and the superegoic injunction to *enjoy*! – and with our sources of affiliation and attachment having similarly proliferated and been attenuated, those conceptions of the museum that emphasise its disciplinary or "civilising" functions have to be rethought. Furthermore, the implications of the museum, this model apparatus of symbolic representation and investiture, explicitly turning to, or returning to in a theorised fashion, the body and to affective states are profound.

That *jouissance*/enjoyment does not (have to) coincide with material interests (Mazzarella, 2020) is crucial with regards to understanding the museum's affective economy. To be moved means to be *incited*, and the consequences of such incitation are endlessly uncertain. It also needs to be kept in mind that what is "ours" can *hurt*; that "our place" is never *just that*; that entreaties to *enjoy* the office of the subject or to be "at home" are profoundly ambivalent; and that glory – and much like the sublime, which is beyond all possibility of calculation, measurement, or imitation, and hence *terrible* – is inexorably volatile. The "love" of the museum cannot but be ambiguous and, potentially, terrifying.

6.5.4. Returning to the epigraph that opened this chapter, my argument is that the museum is precisely an institution for the production, circulation, and consumption of glory. Glory, from the Latin *gloria*, "fame, renown," is used in a theological sense to describe the manifestation of the divine: it hails the presence of God. An important qualification is required here, and it relates to the ambiguous status of *doxa*. In Ancient Greek, *doxa* means "to appear, to seem, to think, to accept," and came to be understood as "common belief" or "popular opinion." In classical rhetoric, *doxa* is contrasted with *episteme*, "knowledge." Sometime

between the third and first centuries BCE, *doxa* gained a new meaning and added complexity when the Biblical-Hebrew word for glory (*kavod*) was translated by the Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament) as *doxa*. *Doxa*, in other words, means both common belief or popular opinion *and* glory. By conceiving of the museum as *doxological*, as at once popular and glorious, and in the service of glorifying popular or common opinion, in the service of the glorification of "normativity," the problem of the museum is freshly illuminated.

In *The Kingdom and the Glory* (2011) Agamben addresses questions relating to the doxological aspects of power. Santner (2015, p. 95) writes that over the course of this archaeology of glory, Agamben homes in on the intimate relation between those "liturgical doxologies," those rituals of praise and glorification that constitute "so much of the cultic activity of the Church," and those "acclamations that have historically accompanied the investiture of rulers, whether ancient emperors, Christian kings, or [...] the German *Führer*." What this archaeology turns up, for Agamben, is an "archaic sphere in which religious and juridical action and speech become indistinguishable [...]" (Santner, 2015, p. 95). Glory, for Agamben is precisely that uncertain zone in which "acclamations, ceremonies, liturgies and insignia operate" (as cited in Santner, 2015, p. 95). The museum cannot but be seen as just such an uncertain zone, a zone of indistinction where the theological and empirical collide and become, in a sense, impossible to differentiate.

For Agamben (2011, pp. 255-256), we are today witness to "a new and unheard of concentration, multiplication, and dissemination of the function of glory as the centre of the political system." Linking Guy Debord's diagnosis of the transformation of capitalist politics and economy into an "immense accumulation of spectacles" with Carl Schmitt's "thesis according to which public opinion is the modern form of acclamation," Agamben describes a scene in which the production and consumption of glory has taken on a life of its own.

> What was confined to the spheres of liturgy and ceremonials has become concentrated in the media and, at the same time, through them it spreads and penetrates at each moment into every area of society, both public and private. Contemporary democracy is a democracy that is entirely founded upon glory, that is, on the efficacy of acclamation, multiplied and disseminated by the media beyond all imagination. (Agamben, 2011, pp. 255-256)

Another way of putting it would be to say that we are witness to an ecstatically procreative stasis.

Continuing with the theme of manic stasis, I would like the reader to recall, firstly, the agitated stuckness that characterises the (enfleshed) creaturely subject (Santner, 2006). And secondly, that representational technique in modernism, is a kind of shame, is a symptom of stuckness

(Clark, 1999; Santner, 2011). In other words, the frantic production of glory – this technique of representation – described by Agamben has to be understood in relation to shame. If an empty throne is a symbol of glory, an ever-filled and filling throne, the throne that glory demands, is a symbol of shame. And to be *enfleshed* means to be a creature of both shame and glory.

The vulnerability that creaturely flesh is heir to consists in the shock of the unnatural forces that come with radical subjection to sovereign authority. In this sense, creatureliness may be understood as the "oppressive sense of internal constraint that occurs in reaction to a non-contractual, archaic rule" (Santner, 2006, p. 30). My point is that, firstly, such non-contractual, archaic rule can also be found in the most glorious and ostensibly "loving" of embraces. Secondly, the injunction to feel free can generate an equally oppressive sense of internal constraint (Žižek, 2008), remembering that creatureliness is generated by an inability to adequately flesh-out the office of the subject, to localise the libido. The symbolic mandate the museum produces for – and which in a sense precisely produces – the subject is always too much to bear. Once again, the deconstitutive shadows all acts of investiture.

Further to this issue of the deconstitutive, and as Mazzarella (2017) points out in the context of discussing Émile Durkheim's elaboration of the concept of mana, although Durkheim tended to presume that the "stimulating action of society" was, as he puts it, "unambiguously vitalising, that it was the source not only of our sense of commitment to life in common but also of our moral faculties," more attention needs to be paid, for example, to "racist or nationalist ideologies that offer their adherents a sense of common energy and solidarity at the cost of abjecting an other" (Mazzarella, 2017, p.2). In other words, what of murderous forms of collective effervescence? And what of flesh enflamed? Such questions are addressed in the following chapters.

6.5.5. Before turning to such "bloody" matters, a number of further points need to be made vis-à-vis the museum's movement from being an expressly doxological apparatus to a facilitator of autodoxology. Mazzarella, Santner and Schuster (2020, p. 3) illuminate the interlinked issues of power becoming (*seeming to become*) "ours" and the museum desiring to be consubstantial with its visitors when they write that we no longer need to accept "the faceless authority of distant corporations and bureaucracies." Today, they argue, "politicians as well as brands present themselves as always already 'ours' – intimately solicitous, customisable, concerned only with the immaculate realisation of our desires" (Mazzarella et al., 2020, p. 3). They go on to write that in a time of "immediation," or "the intensely mediated production of immediacy-effects," the "besetting problem of liberal democracy" appears to

have been overcome. The "brand-sovereign" is today able to be "fully present, fully responsive, and fully isomorphic with the agitated flesh of the multitude" (Mazzarella et al., 2020, p. 3). In this way, "the medium is not so much the message as a site of the burning *jouissance* of the brand" (Mazzarella et al., 2020, p. 3).

The new museological emphasis on participation, experience and affect is an exemplary means of encouraging and ensuring the exuberant involvement of visitors (of the subject, of the People) in the service of *glory*. The labours of the engaged (participatory) subject may in this way be conceived as a form of auto-doxological spectacle. That is, the subject turns itself into a spectacle, into a brand, into a glory-producing machine. The animated (passionate) visitor both enhances the glory of the self *and* provides an additional source of doxological labour for the institution and its various ideological affiliations. In this way, "the museum" could be said to "feast" on those semblances of the real, those "certain types of energy" provided by the affective experience of the visitor.

I would like to return here to Andrew Dewdney, David Dibosa and Victoria Walsh's (2013) account of post-critical museology. Museology, they suggest, has consistently "misrecognized" the audience as an abstraction "which stabilizes museum-audience relationships on a 'contributive basis'" (Graham, 2015, p. 102). The contributive museum, they argue, presupposes a uni-directional flow. "Tribute," in this model, "goes to the centre, while an established set of values is disseminated to the margins" (Dewdney et al., 2013, p. 157). By thinking of this dynamic dialectically and in terms of autodoxology and transferential relations, such analysis is turned on its head: tribute and contribution, in this schema, flow both ways.

Put differently, while on the one hand the contemporary museum is witness to the passionate participation and "self-made" spectacles of the visitor (a visitor that is asked to believe, to enjoy, to be affected, to love), on the other the museum itself may be seen to be so passionate that the visitor need not be. Perhaps this, and with Pfaller's (2017) conception of interpassivity (a theory of delegated consumption and enjoyment) in mind, is what Johnston was alluding to: *the museum loves (and loves you) so you do not have to*. "The museum," in a word, feels and believes and enjoys and loves for us. What this means, and in Žižekian (2008) terms, is that the subject can adopt a position of disavowal while doing and being otherwise. Thinking of affect as another form of acclamation and bearing in mind that the object of our affections and affiliations is endlessly mutable and transferrable, further complicates the scene. Our enjoyment is not our own. *The flesh has no home*.

6.6. Critical Flesh

Without accounting for the flesh and the ways in which it is (mis)managed by the museum, the conditions of existence for (a) critical museology are significantly diminished. In view of this, what I have sought to trace and outline in this chapter are some of ways in which new museological praxis as exemplified by Te Papa (unknowingly) administers, copes with and "works-up" the flesh. In a further step, this chapter has identified how "new" and liberal-progressive museum practice drafts the subject into the (fleshy and glorious) liturgical labour that animates the space of representation. Meanwhile, it is to the question of how "bloody" histories and trauma are put to work in the service of such glorious labour that I turn in the following chapter.

Seven

Blood

> And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.
>
> — *Luke* (22: 19-20)

7.1. More Life

7.1.1. Comprised of a series of movements, in the first instance this chapter is devoted to elaborating on how "bloody" histories and trauma are "put to work" in the liberal-progressive museum. This builds upon the set of observations generated by the preceding chapter's use of "flesh" to analyse the museum. Animating the use of both analytic lenses is a concern with how the "objective trauma" that *is* the representational impasse of modernity materialises in today's museums. Indeed, this concern animates the poetical-analytical framework being developed in the present work: a schema addressed to understanding the relation between the museum/museology as a source of modern subjectivity. This chapter advances this concern via the question of how liberal-progressive museum practice (unwittingly) intensifies the subject's creatureliness by way of those practices envisioned as being "ethically enlivening." And, in a second movement, my attentions rests on how this fleshy and bloodied creature and its surplus enjoyment is, in a transferential sense, converted into (a source of) glory. The post-critical (a)voidance of the subject as a creature of surplus enjoyment ensures, I argue, that such museal dynamics are continually misrecognised. It is therefore in pursuit of such bloody dynamics that this chapter is directed.

It needs emphasising, however, that blood – whether as substance, metaphor or analytical frame – is slippery and paradoxical (Anidjar, 2014). Blood *turns*. In terms of its deployment here, blood names one aspect of the museum's work. It names the liberal-progressive museum's transmutation of violent legacies into a source of glory and all of that which such glory-production provokes and brings onto the scene. Cutting across the employment of blood as an analytic framework are a flood of undercurrents. This bloody baggage includes those fantasies relating to "the right sort of blood" and to "bloodlines" and to the fact that blood is "enjoyed." As we have heard Santner state previously (2011, p. xx), "all human projects are not only haunted by but also to some extent sustained by the persistence of archaic forms of projective identification." This includes "blood." My contention is that museums perform a regulatory function with respect to the psychosocial energy that flows from the blood of human history.

The second part of this chapter finds me employing Santner's conception of Egyptomania as a means of getting to grips with the forms of (bloody) remembrance currently in vogue in liberal-progressive museum practice. Te Papa's exhibition, *Gallipoli: The Scale of Our War* figures as the interrogatory meat with respect to this Egyptomaniacal reckoning. The forms of remembrance promoted by such practices are, I propose, fundamentally defensive, are fundamentally fantastic. This chapter circles around this collision of remembrance with fantasy; morality with enjoyment; defensive or immunitarian operations with pleasure. Via an account of *The Great War Exhibition*, in the third part of the chapter, "Extra-Temporality," I pursue the paradox that it is precisely the museum's production of "more life" that is stimulative of *undeadness*.

The chapter's final movement appears under the heading "Bloodlines." What I seek to tease out here are further signs of the dead-end that is the liberal-progressive museum. It is not, I suggest, "subjective trauma" but the bloody structural relations – the *dead-ends* – of the representational order of which the liberal-progressive museum stands at the apex, that must be brought into focus by (a) critical museology. Three institutional formations – the museums of the Third Reich, Berlin's Jewish Museum and Te Papa – provide the empirical ballast for this part of the chapter.

7.1.2. In Caroline Walker Bynum's *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond* (2006), she argues that death of Christ was represented in the late Middle Ages – in blood relics, in holy communion – not as a sacrifice but as "a gift without end" (Rubin, 2010, p. 123). Christ's blood was associated not only with pain and violence and guilt but with *life*. Additionally, and here it is possible to perceive the

relationship between the king's two bodies and biopolitics, "the liveliness of controversies over blood relics in the fifteenth century was linked to the awareness of the physiological properties of blood as the body's lifeline" (Rubin, 2010, p. 123).

For Daniel Joslyn-Siemiatkoski (2007, p. 662), Bynum illustrates how "the twin paradoxes that God became human in Jesus Christ and that this death yielded life for all" lie at the centre of Christianity. In the tripartite events of incarnation, sacrifice and resurrection, Christ's blood emerged as an object of devotion and as a central motif in soteriology (the doctrine of salvation). Eucharistic miracles of Christ's blood materialising in miraculous hosts were feverishly sought after.

Further to the theme of "more life," Andreas Huyssen (1995, p. 16) once wrote, and "against the anti-museum discourse still dominant among intellectuals," that the museum should be understood "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." It is this life-enhancing element of the museum that interests me here. In contrast to Huyssen, I would suggest that death is no longer denied but put to work. Trauma is turned into *more life* (glory), and violent legacies provide a source of excitation and enjoyment. The flesh is stimulated by the blood of the dead. Libido is ignited and shaped by (fantastical) representations of violence, by the remembrance of the spilling of blood. The relationship between "bloody" remembrance, enjoyment and fantasy is endlessly overlooked, and my concern is how such volatile and ambiguous memorial enjoyment is manufactured and directed by the liberal-progressive museum.

Returning to Foucault's (1979) account of splendour discussed in Chapter One, a central function of "the police" was the provision of adornment and glory. Splendour, according to this formulation, denotes not only "the beauty of a state ordered to perfection" but also "its strength, its vigour." Or, and as Santner (2015, pp. 37-38) puts it, the fundamental charge of the police was "to cultivate a sort of *surcharge*, or *surplus of life*, on behalf of the state."

> As a form of rational intervention wielding political power over men, the role of the police is to supply them with *a little extra life*; and by doing so, supply the state with a little extra strength. (Foucault as cited in Santner, 2015, pp. 37-38)

In *The Royal Remains* and *The Weight of All Flesh* Santner (2015, pp. 37-38) sought to account for the fate of this surplus life, to track "the vicissitudes of this splendid surcharge of animation." His argument was that it – the flesh – "became the *subject-matter* of classical political economy and has become an ever more dominant dimension of contemporary capitalism." In this chapter I consider the *glory of blood*, and the subject's failure to absorb or metabolise the strange pressures of bloody and glorious remembrance.

7.1.3. What is it that shores up belief in the institutions of modernity? In *The History of Sexuality* (1998, p. 147), Foucault wrote that until the modern period, societies were societies of *blood* – of sanguinity – "where power spoke *through* blood: the honour of war, the fear of famine, the triumph of death, the sovereign with his sword, executioners, and tortures; blood was *a reality with a symbolic function*." Ours however, Foucault went on to argue, is "a society of 'sex,' or rather a society 'with a sexuality': the mechanisms of power are addressed to the body, to life, to what causes it to proliferate, to what reinforces the species, its stamina, its ability to dominate, or its capacity for being used." The modern period moved, Foucault claimed, from operating via a *symbolics of blood* to *an analytics of sexuality*. "Clearly," Foucault (1998, p. 148) wrote, "nothing was more on the side of the law, death, transgression, the symbolic, and sovereignty than blood; just as sexuality was on the side of the norm, knowledge, life, meaning, the disciplines, and regulations."

Foucault, I suggest, was premature in his dismissal of the significance of blood. Indeed, sex and blood, and as the Lacanian concept of *jouissance* (of enjoyment) "makes plain," cannot be decisively separated. More than this, we are today witness to the inversion of Foucault's formula, with an "analytics of blood" (I am thinking here, for example, of things such as genome editing) and a "symbolics of sexuality" (which captures the drift of identity politics and its existence as a primary symbolic battleground). Moreover, what is it that ensures that subjects remain *invested*? Blood remains a source of splendour, of *more life*. In terms of the museum, trauma – this synonym of blood – has resolved into an ethical aesthetic, into a moral mode. That blood, in terms of it being a metonym for trauma, has become a source of "knowledge" with respect to the privileging of affect is also important to keep in mind. And the *cordon sanitaire*, the immunological operations of power, still include blood and trauma.

In *Civilizing Rituals*, Carol Duncan (1995, p. 8) wrote that "To control a museum means precisely to control the representation of a community and its highest values and truths." And yet this must also be seen otherwise. A museum is where a community's fantasies and traumas, its histories of blood, are both held – however opaquely and no matter how often disavowed – in check *and* amplified. Moreover, and referring back to the problem of the groundlessness of power and to Elaine Scarry's (1985) theorising around the mis/uses of bloodied and damaged bodies, legitimacy is often assumed and assured, produced and maintained through and by recourse to violence or, as is the case with the museum, the *representation* of violence and barbarism. The "highest values and truths" of human culture exist in a relation of "exploitation" with blood and trauma. That, and as elaborated on in Chapter Five, the

Holocaust functions as the point of excitation around which museums in the twenty-first century revolve also needs bearing in mind.

T.J. Clark (1999) referred to Jean-Paul Marat – this cipher of the Republic, this agent of secularisation – being made into a *totem*. However, and crucially, that this operation failed – indeed, could not but fail – is the crucial point. Firstly, and as Santner (2011, p. 91) writes, one should recall here "Freud's hypothesis of the emergence of totemism out of the murder of the primal father and the incorporation of his powers by way of the ritual repetition of the totem meal – the symbolic enjoyment of his sublime flesh." In other words, it is vital to keep in mind the manufacture of post-factum sacrifices, for bloodletting to be *ex post facto* classified as sacrifice and invested with procreant and stimulatory agency, with a certain kind of energy (Stier and Landres, 2006; Edkins, 2003). More than this, I would like the reader to consider how we come to *enjoy* the bloody remnants of "the flesh" of the dead. It is, I propose this, *still palpitating* spectral stuff that moves and troubles us. The im/moral touchstone that is the Holocaust (Hansen-Glucklich, 2014) must be placed squarely within this dialectic.

The notion that historic hurt and trauma can be transformed into a source of vitality is well established. However, where I take a turn in the context of museology is in the contention that certain new museological practices are, and even if indirectly, stimulatory rather than propitiatory in this regard. It is important to recall here that politics in modernity, at least according to the logic of biopolitical governmentality, becomes a domain of bodily capacities and health and wellbeing. It comes to be characterised by the proliferation and expansion of systems and institutions designed to protect and to promote the art of living (Bristow, 2015). As I understand it, as an apparatus devoted to the production of "a little extra time" and "a little extra life," the museum is, paradoxically, generative of *undeadness*.

7.2. To be in Egypt

7.2.1. Prior to opening, *Gallipoli: The Scale of Our War* was advertised as offering an opportunity to "Experience the triumphs and countless tragedies of this 8-month campaign through the eyes and words of the ordinary New Zealanders who were there [...]." Meanwhile, upon entering the exhibition, the "voice" of Lieutenant Spencer Westmacott can be heard declaring: "I shouted fix bayonets – rapid fire!", while the first two lines of the first text panel read: "We were in Egypt when they told us we would be invading Gallipoli. The Turks had

sided with the Germans in the war, and we were itching to take them on." Although Westmacott's words are his, or at least those recorded in his diary, the text panel is the work of Te Papa's storytellers. For the moment, however, I am less interested in the question of ficticity than I am with the problem of Egypt. The coincidence of New Zealand's Gallipoli campaign – this purportedly defining moment in the Nation's history – beginning with a departure from Egypt is also set aside. Instead, what I am interested in applying and expanding on is Santner's rendering of the "persistent fad" that is *Egyptomania*.

Figure Four

"Lieutenant Spencer Westmacott," Gallipoli: The Scale of Our War, 2015.

In 1880, a ship carrying an Egyptian obelisk docked in New York. "Nothing," Tom Holland (2020) writes, "proclaimed imperial might quite like a phallic pharaonic monument."

> No wonder civic leaders in New York, eager to draw attention to the growing wealth and might of America's financial capital, should have been desperate to obtain one as well. 'It would be absurd for the people of any great city,' as the *New York Herald* put it, 'to hope to be happy without an Egyptian obelisk.'

This interest in all things ancient Egyptian, whether of the sensational (scarabs, pharaohs, man-eating monsters) or scholarly (antiquities, burial customs, monuments, architecture and so on) variety, remains very much part of the global museological and memorial landscape. In 2019, a touring exhibition of artefacts linked to Tutankhamun became the most-visited exhibition in French history (Chrisafis, 2019). Ancient Egypt seems to exist as everybody's past.

In the Santnerian (2001) sense, Egyptomania refers to the psychically rigidifying defence mechanism that *is* passionate investment, and one that results from coming too close to a surplus of validity over meaning. It names those passionate fantasies that do not so much fill-in as fill-out the subject-supposed-to-be. Egyptomania exists at the point where symbolic investiture, fantasy, trauma and immunitarian operations collide and coalesce. Trauma, as Santner notes (2001, pp. 31-32), may be generated by a "too much of address," by an "excess immanent to an address that resists metabolisation, that is symbolically 'indigestible.'" In *Moses and Monotheism* (1939), Freud invokes the theory of trauma to make sense of the uncanny compulsiveness that is a distinctive feature of human being. In the course of this presentation, Santner (2001, pp. 31-31) explains, Freud uses "an expression devised to capture the purely *quantitative* aspect of trauma, its status as a 'too much' of pressure that interrupts the working of the pleasure principle, the patterns of diffusion and discharge that constitute human mindedness in its normal functioning." Every trauma contains an excess of demand or, in Freud's terms, a *Zuiviel von Anspruch*.

Derived from the verb *ansprechen*, which means, Santner (2001, pp. 31-32) writes, "to address an other, to demand or call for the others' attention and response," when the two meanings of *Anspruch* are brought together it can be said that the dimension of trauma arises when a "too much of address" persists "beyond what can be *translated* into a demand for work, a task to be discharged, *something we can do* (or, for that matter, refuse to do, feel guilty for not doing, and so on)." More precisely, Santner (2001, p. 32) argues, "trauma ensues when such a 'remainder' precipitates a breakdown of this very operation of translation, leaving the mind flooded by excitation." This purely quantitative aspect of trauma takes on new meaning when placed within the context of the museum, this inherently accumulative apparatus.

Meanwhile, "revelation," for Santner (2001, pp. 100-101), is ultimately "nothing" but "a clearing away of the fantasies that confine our energies within an ultimately *defensive* protocosmic existence – our various forms of 'Egyptomania' – that keep us at a distance from our answerability within everyday life." Egyptomania is the name given to those, for the most part unconscious, labours of translating and, crucially, failing to translate superegoic pressures into meaningful communication or "legislation." However, to be released from this or that

Egyptomania is to be released "not so much from the call or *citation* by the law as from the *excitations induced by its superego supplement*" (Santner, 2001, p. 104). As an institution, the museum could be said to be prototypically Egyptomanical. Not only is it charged with giving refuge to, translating, and (re)vivifying dead and often bloodied letters, it is also tasked with (fantastically) shielding the subject from said letters. Although the rightful home of Egyptian antiquities is open for debate, the proper home of Egyptomania is undoubtedly the museum.

7.2.2. To make sense of the past, to make it *make* sense, means to occlude and to fabricate. It means to enter the world of fantasy. Novelist Hilary Mantel (2017, p. 3) once wrote that when we memorialise the dead we are "sometimes desperate for the truth, and sometimes for a comforting illusion," and when "we reach into the past for foundation myths of our tribe, our nation" we tend to found them on glory or grievance rather than "cold facts." Or, and as Shelton (2013, p. 10) notes, "every history is a constructed fiction and every fiction has its own history." While discussing Louis-Ferdinand Céline's cataclysmic novel *Journey to the End of the Night* (1932), Claudio Magris (1989, p. 51) writes of "unforgettable pages [describing] the horror of war and the inability of men to imagine it as it really is even when they are living through it." In other words, memory, this technique of representation, is as likely to deliver one "into Egypt" as it is revelation.

Memory figures as both an ethical imperative and methodological panacea in today's museum (Arnold-de Simine, 2013). However, and as Margalit (2002, p. 5) observes, memory "breathes revenge as often as it breathes reconciliation." Margalit also argues that "the hope of reaching catharsis through liberated memories might turn out to be an illusion." That liberated memories are potentially *terrible* is of course a foundational contention of Lacanian psychoanalysis (Turkle, 1990). Further to this, "the idea," Margalit (2002, p. 6) continues, "that truth by itself will bring about reconciliation is a doubtful empirical assumption." This remark calls into question the very premise and promise of the museum. Returning to questions of historic hurt and trauma, as we heard Bülent Diken and Carsten Lausten (2005, p. 75) state in Chapter Five: *a genocide cannot be redeemed*. The consequences for the subject of today's museum – a subject continually placed "in the way" of memorial trauma – are significant. Injunctions to remember and to feel cannot but engender a degree of Egyptomania.

While unquestionably singular in terms of its genesis, *Gallipoli* is symptomatic of certain tendencies within museums and museology. Underpinned by reparative and affective approaches, *Gallipoli* also models the project of authorial dispersal – outsourcing, in a word – vis-à-vis cultural production in the museum (Haig, 2016). Aspiring to make the past real and immediate and to take visitors into the paradoxical present of the past, *Gallipoli* utilises

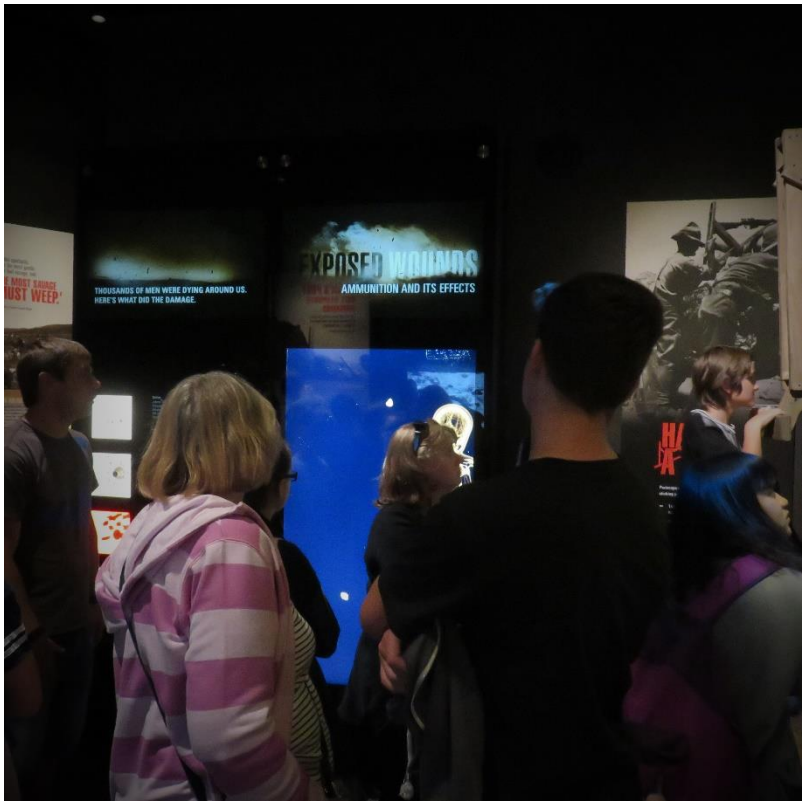
ground-up historiographical methods, a narrative approach to historical exposition, intermedial practices, and interactive technologies (Haig, 2016). While not overtly jingoistic that it is not to say that *Gallipoli* is not inflammatory or painfully pleasurable. That this theatrical and forensically-detailed exhibition, an exhibition that sought to replicate the "feel" and "feeling" of the war, left me passionately nauseated, blooded one could say, forms the interrogatory premise of this part of the chapter. Over the following pages I take a walk through *Gallipoli*, stopping here and there to gesture to some of the ethical and affective directives that structured and interleaved the exhibition. Following this, I consider the types of subjectivities that were envisaged and called-up by *Gallipoli* and reflect on its Egyptomanical resonances.

7.2.3. After entering Te Papa and riding the escalator to the first floor I found a zigzagging queue arrayed in front of a cut-out of an oversized New Zealand soldier with gun raised and beneath *Gallipoli: The Scale of Our War* spelled out in cinematic white and red sans-serif font. Stepping across the threshold, I was confronted by the giant – 2.4 times life size – pistol-wielding figure of Lieutenant Spencer Westmacott, a dramatic Hollywood score, sounds of battle and a voice proclaiming: "Good boys. I felt a glow of pride." It is a startling opening gambit. The first annexe, "The Great Adventure," documents New Zealand's pre-war military preparations, response to the outbreak of war, and the early days of the campaign. Occupying the second bell-jar is Lieutenant Colonel Percival Fenwick, "one of our first doctors ashore. In the next god-awful 24 hours, he treated hundreds of us Anzacs on the beach." Fenwick, eyes downcast, hands clasped, kneels above a figure – a corpse – shrouded in a greatcoat. In these crypt-like spaces there is little room to move. They are claustrophobic, intimate, and it is impossible to ignore the presence of other – hushed and reverent – visitors.

Entering "Order from Chaos," the second annexe, I was informed that: "Our landing on April 25th had been a bloody shambles. The Turks weren't about to let up, and we hung on by our fingernails." I took a pair of glasses and entered the 3D cinema showing images of Armistice Day (24 May 1915), with narration provided by soldiers' recollections of this eerie day which saw the guns fall quiet and the bodies of the dead of no-man's-land laid – *barely*, given the rocky terrain – to rest. I spent time bent-over a painstakingly detailed cut-away model of Quinn's Post, before turning to test out the "Exposed Wounds" touchscreen interactive which allowed me to select a particular military technology and then watch as a glowing spectral skeleton either got pierced by bullets, blown to bits by grenades, or ripped to pieces by shrapnel. I watched a visitor test out another interactive, "Have a Shot," which features a periscope rifle and offers the opportunity to "pull the trigger."

Figure Five

Visitors in front of Gallipoli's 'Exposed Wounds' and 'Have a Shot' interactives, 2015.



In the third bell-jar sits Private Jack Dunn; fly-blown, sweat-soaked, glazed-eyed. Dunn contracted pneumonia "after the first brutal month of fighting," and after returning from hospital "the poor bugger fell asleep at his post and was sentenced to death for endangering his unit. It could have been any of us." The third annexe, "Stalemate," is comprised of three sections. Firstly, "Bully beef, biscuits and water," which documents the living conditions on the Peninsula and which includes an "action station," "Writing Home." Provided with "field postcards," visitors are asked to respond to the questions: "If you knew you might never make it home, what would you miss most?" And: "What would you say to your loved ones?" "Stalemate" also features a model of Lieutenant Colonel Malone's dugout which visitors can enter and which features an audio recording of an actor reading Malone's final letter to his wife. To exit, you are compelled to walk through a darkened tunnel which contains graphic audio-visual re-enactments: "soldiers" rush at you with bayonets; lights flare; screams and cries are heard in the distance.

The fourth bell-jar is populated by three figures from the Māori Contingent machine-gun section: Private Colin Warden, Corporal Friday Hawkins, and Private Rikihana Carkeek. On the night of the 7th of August, Warden guided his 16-man team up Rhododendron Ridge, just below the summit of Chunuk Bair. "The next day, the boys came under intense fire. But they kept firing the guns no matter what […]. More than half of them were killed or wounded that day." These three figures – Warden sprawled in the dirt, Hawkins and Carkeek manning the machine gun in concentrated terror – approximate a military Calvary. In the fourth annexe, "Chunuk Bair," I found a captured Turkish gun in a case; a 3D diorama projection of the battle for Chunuk Bair; a mural of the battle; and a "Wall of Death," which documents some of those killed on Chunuk Bair.

In the fifth bell-jar sits the mournful figure of Staff Nurse Lottie Le Gallais. A military nurse on board the hospital ship Maheno, Le Gallais we are told, had:

> [...] hoped to meet up with her brother Leddie, who was stuck on Gallipoli, but their paths would never cross. In November, all of Lottie's letters to Leddie came back to her. An official stamp read: "Killed, return to sender." He'd been dead four months.

The final annexe is introduced as follows: "Things got more and more desperate after Chunuk Bair. We'd lost countless mates, the cold was setting in, supplies weren't getting through, and the boys were in bad shape." "Saying Goodbye," includes text panels charting the last months at Gallipoli and the final evacuation; and "Off with a bang," a reconstruction of a self-firing rifle used "to make the Turks think our trenches were fully manned – and armed – while we evacuated." The final text panel reads: "Almost 3,000 of us had been killed on Gallipoli. But that was just the beginning. More than four times that number would die on the Western Front. The losses would be felt for generations. The full scale of our war was immense."

By the exit is a bowl of paper poppies; a pile of "Memorial Stones" gathered from the sea at Anzac Cove; and a desk where visitors are invited to write a message on a poppy: "[...] share your thoughts – someone's name, a war story, your response to the exhibition, or your feelings on conflict. Feel free to lay your poppy at the feet of the solider ahead of you, or take it home." Outside the final bell-jar containing Sergeant Cecil Malthus is "He wai," a bowl containing water which visitors are encouraged to cleanse themselves with, and also a "research station" with access to the Online Cenotaph database. However, the finale of *Gallipoli* is to exit through the gift-store, on the counter of which stands a tissue-box contained within what appears to be a bespoke wooden holder. In carved-relief are the words: "Lest We Forget." When observed through the prism of trauma and Egyptomania, the puzzling injunction that is

"lest we forget" assumes even stranger expression. What is the nature of the obligation? And who is the "we" that is obligated to remember?

7.2.4. *Gallipoli* is structured along the lines of the Stations of the Cross, with each bell-jar providing opportunity to reflect on the passion of the Christ-like figure (or figures) found there. Where does such passion position me? How am I elicited by *Gallipoli*? What am I by virtue of the past that I am being asked to remember and to feel? And why am I being asked to enter into trauma? Recalling that every trauma contains an excess of demand, our representation and remembrance of violent legacies will always be fundamentally inadequate and, correspondingly, too much. Put differently, and as Edkins (2003, p. 59) writes, trauma "is that which refuses to take its place in history as done and finished with." Trauma, this "thing" that only becomes traumatic retrospectively, *is ever present, is ever absent*. It is also – and this is its properly traumatic aspect – unsayable and unable to be represented. Trauma "can only be *shown*, in a negative gesture, as the inherent failure of symbolisation" (Žižek as cited in Edkins, 2003, p. 174). Meanwhile, and as seen in *Gallipoli*, when entreaties *to remember* (this trauma) are paired with appeals *to enjoy* (this trauma) and *to feel* (this trauma), "things" become truly unbearable.

The passions of and stimulated by such bloody forms of remembrance, forms of remembrance that *matter* and that we *enjoy*, may be precisely that which keeps us in a state of petrified unrest (Santner, 2006). In other words, the past can become reified, can take on the quality of an emotionally compelling or binding possession. However, although memorialisation may offer "sustained and sustaining temporal identification" (Dickinson et al., 2010, p. 27), such temporal identification is also potentially exciting and volatile (Diski, 2000), while the identifications made are often unreasonable or senseless. As psychoanalysis makes clear, our possessions, identifications and affiliations can hurt: we can be made possessed by such possessions, just as such possessions can come to possess us. Fantasy, as we found Santner (2001) arguing in Chapter Three, could be said to be the specific way in which a subject organises *jouissance*. It is fantasy that manages our *possession/s*. In this sense, to be in Egypt means to be engaged in the fantastic work of translating and transposing trauma and enjoyment. The compulsion to recall that is both a methodology and objective of *Gallipoli* is fundamentally Egyptomanical.

7.2.5. Individual and social life clusters around and could be said to be formed from the strange and fantastical work of remembrance. The subject is (continually) (re)formed by way of her affections and affiliations, her attachments and animosities to "the dead" and to those

"dead letters" that continue to signify. In this way, the subject that is called up by *Gallipoli* should be understood as a subject of trauma *and* enjoyment. What does it mean to be formed as subjects *of* and *to* loss and trauma? For Hal Foster (2015, p. 28), the "trauma discourses" that became prevalent in the 1990s "continued the poststructuralist critique of the subject by other means, for, strictly speaking, there is no subject of trauma – the position is evacuated." On the other hand, trauma was also "treated as an event that guarantees the subject, and in this register the subject, however disturbed, [rushes] back as survivor, witness, testifier." In other words, the subject was at once evacuated and elevated.

Foster (2015, p. 28) goes on to write that, in this way, "a magical resolution of contradictory imperatives of the culture of the period" was performed via:

> the imperative of deconstructive analyses on the one hand, and the imperative of multicultural histories on the other; [and via] the imperative to acknowledge the disrupted subjectivity that comes from a broken society on the one hand, and the imperative to affirm identity on the other. (p. 28)

In the 1990s, Foster (2015, p. 28) continues, and three decades after "the death of the author announced by Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault," we witnessed the "strange rebirth of the author as zombie, to a paradoxical condition of absentee authority."

If remembrance is thought of by way of interpellation – as the process by which we encounter a culture's or ideology's values and internalize them, as that which hails us – how might the hail of the remembrance of trauma be said to work? How do we internalise that which is unspeakable and cannot be represented? If trauma is understood as that which is difficult, impossible even, to recount or remember, as that which holds an unrelenting grip on memory yet is unspeakable, as repressed or buried in unreachable psychic recesses (Schwab, 2010), the notion that it can be affirmative becomes ever more confounding. Foster's magical resolution, in other words, needs to be taken as precisely that: *magical*.

7.2.6. "The tradition of all dead generations," Karl Marx (as cited in Green, 2020, p. 13) once wrote, "weighs like a nightmare on the living." More than this, "just as they seem to be occupied with revolutionising themselves and things, creating something that did not exist before, [the living] anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service." The museum is one such site at which the spirits of the past are, in the first instance, *generated*. And subsequently, the museum calls these spirits into service for the purpose of summoning subjects from bodies, and for binding these subjects together and making them feel *invested*. In other words, this necromantic function is entangled with the production of symbolic offices

and titles. It needs reiterating that processes of office production inevitably oscillate excitedly between glory and creatureliness. Creaturely life, as previously established, is characterised by exposure to the ultimate lack of foundation for the historical forms of life that distinguish human community, and this exposure creates a corresponding pressure to feel libidinally implicated in the world (Breger (2012). This dialectic goes to the heart of the problem of remembrance, this activity of summoning and exposure on the one hand and immunological screening and affective investiture on the other.

As a space of representation, the museum is tasked with facilitating the vitality of its subjects, of the People, of its "members." In other words, the museum is an ideological site *par excellence*. "'More than simply one among many 'ideological apparatuses' in the institutional arsenal of contemporary society," Preziosi and Farago (2004b, p. 3) write, "museums worldwide pervade many of the social practices [...] that determine the perception and function of objects and environments, no less than of ourselves as social subjects." However, and as noted in the previous chapter, ideology operates most effectively on the plane of *undecidability*. It is most effective where meaning – where one's perception of one's "proper office," for example – is uncertain. *Gallipoli* is exemplary in this regard, in the sense that it revolves around signifiers rather than fully-fledged meanings, and what it encourages is a form of expressivity that could be said to have *validity without meaning*.

Once more, we never simply have an entitlement or an office: whether we like it or not we *enjoy* it. In Santner's (1996) study of Daniel Paul Schreber, he characterised this as the drive dimension of signification, or as the signifying stress that supplements acts of symbolic investiture. Being invested with social status (of any class) inevitably places one in relation to the "normative authority regulating the enjoyment of the incumbency of that 'office'" (Santner, 2011, pp. xiii-xiv). When, and as witnessed in *Gallipoli*, these normative positions are based on trauma, when they revolve around the amorphousness of affect, and are "without author," it becomes difficult to differentiate between processes of investiture and divestiture.

It is precisely the question of how such processes of investiture – those pressured processes, as Rosello (2014, p. 743) suggests, where "a certain symbolic dignitas is conferred" – turn into or are in fact in themselves processes of divestiture that occupies me here. These pressures, Santner (2011) argues,

> pertain not only to questions concerning the foundation and constitution of political authority, but also more generally to those concerning the patterns and procedures whereby human beings come to be vested with the authority of the various 'offices' they occupy and the ways in which such procedures of investiture, such transferences of symbolic authority, are ultimately legitimated. (p. xii)

The inability to metabolise these pressures relates, at least for Schreber, to a "fundamental uncertainty as to the proper addressee or audience for his memoirs." This issue of the proper addressee – or absence thereof – provides another means of grasping the Egyptomanical aspect of the museum.

In other words, and I write here with the paradoxical pressures of the superego (Žižek, 2019) very much in mind, when I mourn, when I participate in remembrance practices, to whom or to what are my respects paid? If authority is absent but expectant (lest we forget!), and if there is no proper addressee but a letter must still be sent (lest we forget!), are we not, and as Foster (2015) suggested above, left in the space of the undead, in the zone of the zombie? It needs reiterating that undeadness denotes and is "correlative to the encounter [...] with the Other's desire and the seemingly endless drama of legitimation it inaugurates" (Santner, 2001, pp. 36-37). What Freud called the death drive signifies just such uncanny vitality, a too much of pressure, as well as the urge to put an end to it. The "*destructive* face of the death drive is thus aimed" not at the natural cycles of life, of death and decay, but "at this uncanny, excessive 'life' that comes to human being by virtue of its thrownness amidst enigmatic messages" (Santner, 2001, pp. 36-37). *Lest we forget*.

7.3 Extra-Temporality

7.3.1 In the modern museum, "the new social bond," as Tony Bennett (1995, p. 50) has observed, was to be "made manifest, eternal, and untouchable." What I am interested in here is how the museum goes about *manifesting* (in pursuit of "eternity") a little extra time and (in pursuit of the "untouchable") a little extra life. In particular, what I am concerned with is the relationship between temporal representation and more life (*glory*), and specifically the question of how bloody legacies function within this matrix. *The Great War Exhibition* figures as the empiric pivot here, not because it is exemplary in this regard but because like a spark in the darkness it casts into sharp relief some of the pressures informing the museum-form today with respect to temporal representation. What it stages is the mutually sustaining tension between the forces of "presentism" (Hartog, 2015) and *the* memorial injunction of our age that is to *never forget*. However, and once more, the paradox I am in pursuit of here is that it is precisely the production of what could be termed temporal splendour – a stimulant of more life – that is generative of *undeadness*.

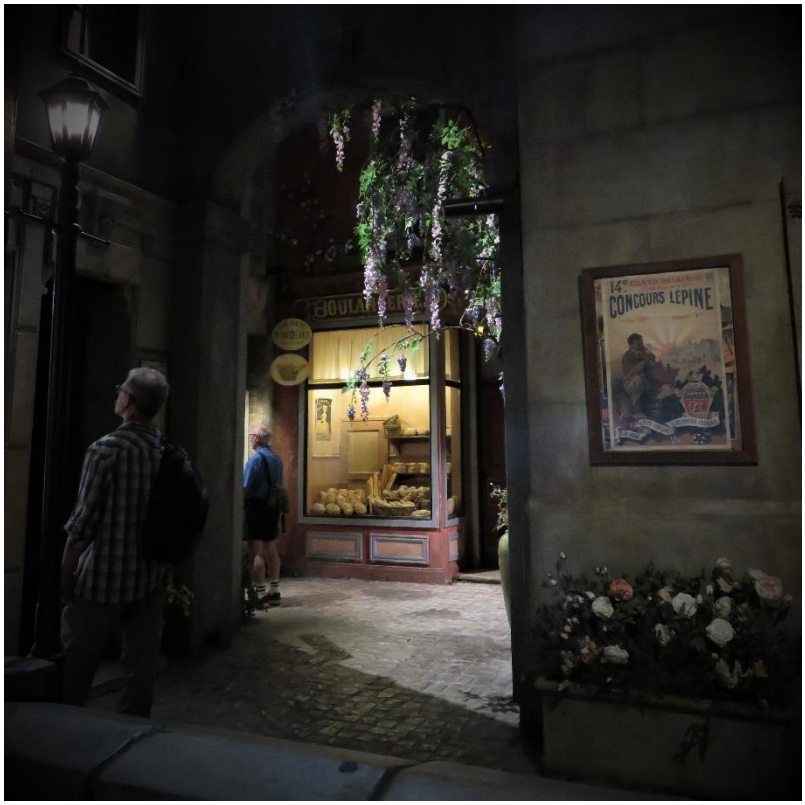
7.3.2. On the morning of the 13th of October 2017, the day after the centenary of New Zealand's 'blackest day' at the battle of Passchendaele in which some 843 New Zealand soldiers died in the course of a failed attack on Bellevue Spur above the village of Passchendaele in Flanders, I made my way to Mount Cook in Wellington to visit *The Great War Exhibition*. My approach took me over the Arras Tunnel, a plastic poppy bedecked memorial motorway underpass and through the manicured no-man's-land of *Pukeahu*, New Zealand's National War Memorial. I walked through the parade ground, with its assembly of foreign memorials – some Disneyish, some grave – and the disjunction between the horror of that day and the efforts to acknowledge it and others like it tilted into absurdity. Presiding over this currently benign Nuremberg-in-miniature is the 51-metre-high carillon tower, and at its foot, New Zealand's Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Banners advertising the exhibition, one bearing the insignia of the "Principal Partner," the Australian-owned ANZ Bank, and stating "Created by Sir Peter Jackson," framed the entrance of the neoclassical façade of the Old Dominion Museum. Upon entering the exhibition I found myself standing outside a boulangerie in a Belgian village. On a wall of one of the houses was a poster advertising the 1910 edition of the *Concours Lépine* at the Grand Palais in Paris. I ducked under a wisteria in full-fake-bloom and made my way along a cobbled street. In my exhibition guide, it was introduced as "an example of one of the little towns where many aspects of traditional life has carried on largely unchanged for centuries. In mid-1914, the people living there would have had no real sense of the raging fire that was about to engulf them." Making my way through the dimly-lit halls and corridors, I encountered a Big Bertha siege gun; a Shorthorn plane – a replica with an original engine – flying above a London bus; a BL Six-Inch Gun; a MK1 Tank; a Bruno Railway Gun; cases displaying rifles, trench clubs, gas canisters; life-size dioramas of trenches, battle, bloodshed.

Similarly sweeping in contextual scope, conceptually vague, lacking in interpretative penetration, and granular in graphic detail and material content, *The Great War Exhibition* paid lip-service to historiographical and museological codes and practices. It was a one-off, a singularity, and more akin to a world-fair production than a museological one. An unintentional parody of a museum exhibition, it is precisely because of this mimicry, of it looking like a "real museum exhibition" that *The Great War Exhibition* affords opportunity to scrutinise some of the underlying assumptions and aspirations of the museum-form. It is revealing because of its imitation of normative museological protocols and methods: in the "fake museum" those typically occluded or massaged aspects of the "real museum" are more readily discernible. That it is dangerous to assume that surface is the level of the superficial (Copjec, 2015) must also be kept in mind.

Figure Six

The opening stanza of The Great War Exhibition, 2017.



Signed-off by then Prime Minister John Key and overseen by the National Military Heritage Charitable Trust, *The Great War Exhibition* was a conceptually and operably muddled public-private partnership. Troubled throughout its three-and-a-half year existence by financial difficulties triggered by various failed production targets, lower than expected attendance numbers, and problems securing sponsorship (Nippert, 2018), it was also the subject of unfavourable media attention. Matt Nippert wrote in 2018 that the exhibition "had inauspicious beginnings." "Documents show despite the date of the World War I commemorations being known for a century, government decisions were only made at a very late stage leading to a haphazard process lacking usual public sector oversight and accountability."

With funding from the New Zealand Government, ANZ Bank, numerous private donors, including Peter Jackson and Fletcher Construction, a fog of public and private interests – of governmental policy and personal "quests" – veiled the exhibition. What can be said is that it came into being primarily due to the influence, wealth, and particular vision of entrepreneur

and film mogul, Sir Peter Jackson. Not only did he have creative control of the exhibition, but ninety-five percent of the objects on display were from his private collection (Dykes, 2018). In light of this, Stephen Clarke (2018) labelled the exhibition "a state-funded indulgence of Sir Peter Jackson's private passion for World War One." Fashioned primarily from Jackson's "princely" collection, via the "spellbinding brilliance" of his "special effects magicians and wizards" (Dykes, 2018) this collection was "brought to life" in the exhibition. *The Great War Exhibition* was rich in costumes, cosplay, and caricatures; flags, uniforms and weaponry; blood, bombast and bereavement. It was unquestionably *glorious*.

Alongside the primary exhibition there were a series of additional exhibitionary spaces, most notably: 'ANZ Presents Gallipoli: The New Zealand Story in Colour'; a space which held a series of temporary exhibitions over the course of the centenary; and from April 2018, "Quinn's Post Trench Experience." This final flourish is explored in the following chapter.

7.3.3. On the wall at the far end of the semi-circular final room of *The Great War Exhibition* was an (unattributed) "fresco." The upper half of the painting, a reproduction of a British recruiting poster from 1915, showed six smiling uniformed men and below them text read: "Join the brave throng that goes marching along." Beneath the text and merging with the painting above was the ironic twist: an unattributed section of John Singer Sergeant's painting *Gassed* (1919), in which a group of blindfolded (blind) and ragged soldiers – echoing Pieter Brueghel's *The Blind Leading the Blind* (1568) – walk in file over a sea of twisted, contorted, bloodied bodies. In front of this composite illustration was a mock-graveyard, featuring five crosses all bearing the inscription "A New Zealand Soldier of The Great War," and two life-size model figures: an elderly veteran, one-armed and with an array of medals on his breast, sitting on a bench, and a young boy standing at his side bearing an ersatz poppy. A few steps further and you entered the tastefully curated gift-store, with an array of World War One themed trinkets – toys, tea towels and so on – and period tea-room. A review of the exhibition which appeared on the news-site *Stuff* in November 2018 (Dykes), concluded with this line from a visitor: "It was a great experience [...] we will never forget."

Meanwhile, inscribed on the wall of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C. is a quotation from then US President Bill Clinton's speech at the dedication ceremony on 22 April 1993: "This museum will touch the life of everyone who enters and leave everyone forever changed – a place of deep sadness and a sanctuary of bright hope [...]. If this museum can mobilise morality, then those who have perished will thereby gain a measure of immortality" (Clinton as cited in Eaglestone, 2002, p. 56). Such sentiment could be seen

coursing through the exhibits of *The Great War Exhibition*. Put colloquially, it was hell-bent on displaying and encouraging (*temporal*) virtue.

The temporal weave of each moment is continually fraying, with "new pasts" being endlessly constructed "to displace old futures" (Clark, 2019, p. 18). It is often said that the past returns with a vengeance during times of crisis, and although often explicitly glorious or tinted with nostalgia, the past called up is just as likely to be bloody and traumatic, is just as likely to reference collective ordeals (Fritzsche, 2004). It would be wrong to think of such remembrance discourses as referring to and being constructed from something complete, unchanging, and naturalised. Instead, Fritzsche suggests, they are often framed "in a subjunctive tense, [as] a 'longing for form.'" The historical or memorial representation of war and economic disaster play a crucial role in "nation-making," for example, "because each intensifies the moment of danger and the effort at reconstitution and reintegration" (Fritzsche, 2004, p. 208).

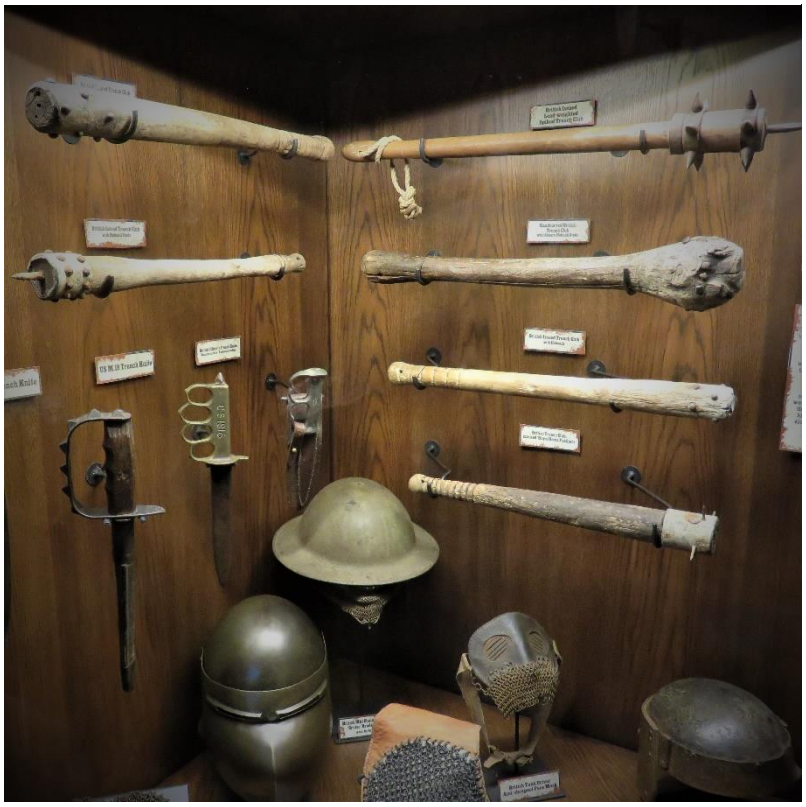
To reiterate a point made previously, this state of crisis – and this temporal crisis in particular – is not an unfortunate side-effect of capitalism but hardwired into it. Capitalism is predicated on "creative destruction," and can accommodate itself to anything other than its own dissolution. Given this, it is unsurprising that *pasts* keeps returning today, with social conservatism and neoliberalism often forming a demonic dyad. The logic of bait-and-switch underpins this union, with so-called traditional values serving as balms or antidotes to the perpetual state of emergency that *is* capitalism. With capitalism continually "dissolving all that is solid into thin air," the normativity of the present must continually be reiterated or reformulated on the one hand, and the past never forgotten on the other.

7.3.4. In the modern museum, particularly museums of natural history and ethnology, so-called "primitive peoples" and "exotic cultures" were presented to audiences, as Susan Crane (2000, p. 1) writes, "as objects for their fascination and consumption." Because of their difference they also served a comparative function in the constitution of national identity. "A certain timelessness," Crane explains, "was attributed to 'primitive' cultures, as if they modelled an earlier, universal human past, one beyond the memory of advanced societies and yet visible in the evolutionary mirror presented by these peoples." Modern museum displays, Crane argues, "tended to 'freeze time,' achieving a state 'beyond time'" through the permanent preservation and display of objects. Selecting what "deserved" to be kept, remembered and treasured, the modern museum "fixed" the memory of peoples and cultures. In this way, artefacts and customs were saved "out of time."

Today's museums look, for the most part, very different from those described by Crane. However, the attribution and manufacture of timelessness remains integral, while fascination and consumption endure as methodological models. When read alongside the museum's more recently embraced role in the representation of trauma, Crane's observations unlock further lines of argumentation. First, trauma, which is "ever-contemporary," is by its very nature "timeless." Second, one is able to trace within the museum an elastic – and liable to ricocheting – arc of fixation: from a passion for the exotic other, to exotic otherness, to the exotic otherness of experiences that are *other*. And trauma, of course, is "alterity itself." It is unexperienced experience, or experience that cannot be experienced *as such*.

Figure Seven

Great War Exhibition hand-to-hand combat weaponry display, 2017.



A further temporal dialectic is highlighted by Huyssen (1995, p. 15), when he notes that although perhaps *the* "paradigmatic institution" of salvaging, collecting and preserving that which has fallen prey to the "ravages of modernisation," the museum also inevitably "constructs the past" in light of "the discourses of the present and in terms of present-day interests." Similarly burial chamber and site of possible resurrections, the museum is also

"tasked" with finding or providing names for these ghostly aspects of social life, for those things that continue to address us and get under our skin even though we are unable to locate their meaning. But it also traffics and trades in them: these are precisely its currency. *The Great War Exhibition* luxuriated in such natural historical impasses. It provided a stream of essentially arbitrary etymological clarifications of "old-fashioned" terms and phrases on the one hand, while on the other seeming to revel in the enigma posed by the indiscriminate display of surplus military hardware.

For LaCapra (1998, p. 8), "one particularly dubious phenomenon" with respect to present practices of remembrance is "the nostalgic, sentimental turn to a partly fictionalised past that is conveyed in congenially ingratiating, safely conventionalised narrative form. Indeed, the immersion in memory and its sites may at times have the quality of junk-Proustian *Schwärmerei*." The prevalence of nostalgia, this longing for a lost homeland, is today undoubtedly symptomatic of the alienation and anomie that characterises life in late capitalism. This lost homeland is of course fantastical, it exists in the imaginary. In order for the pleasure afforded by nostalgia to be possible, it must be irrecoverable and it must exist outside of time. It must be "extra-temporal."

However, I would also suggest that trauma needs to be written into accounts of nostalgia in the twenty-first century. Today's lost homelands seem just as likely to be obscene as they are liable to be sentimental (Olick, 2007). Meanwhile, depending on the way relations between past, present and future are configured and represented, "certain types of history are possible and others are not" (Hartog, 2015, p. 17), and, I would add, certain types of living. The temporal possibilities on offer in *The Great War Exhibition* revolved around ideas of sacrifice, purification, and traumatic nostalgia. The temporal prospects of *The Great War Exhibition* were fundamentally *undeadening*.

7.4 Bloodlines

7.4.1. By thinking of the museum in terms of "bloodlines" I seek to bring into focus the bloody structural (and structuring) relations that emerge as a result of the "core groundlessness" (Goodman, 2015, p. 9) of the representational order of which the liberal-progressive museum stands at the apex. The provocation performed for the reader here is this: rather than existing in a relation of decisive separation, liberal and fascist museum-forms need to be thought of as part of the same bloodline. I contend that the failure of post-critical

museology to account for this consigns it to continually labour under a misapprehension. In other words: *today's museums cannot be redeemed*.

7.4.2. On the 15th of September 1933 a new museum opened in Berlin. The Berlin Revolutionsmuseum's purpose was to commemorate the transfiguration of Germany's political landscape following Adolf Hitler's election to the position of German Chancellor in January 1933 and, following the Enabling Act of 22 March, his assumption of dictatorial powers. The main exhibition chamber displayed weapons and objects confiscated from the Communist opposition and its walls, as Christopher Clark (2019, p. 174) writes, were "a chaos of political posters from 'years of struggle.' An adjacent room was set aside as a 'Hall of Honour': here, party banners framed neoclassical memorial arches and plaques bearing the names of fallen Nazi comrades." Numerous such attempts were made to inaugurate a different chronoscape, an alternate regime of historicity during the twelve years of the Third Reich.

Dominick LaCapra (1998, p. 3) once described Nazism as an "uncanny return of the repressed in the form of phobic ritualism and paradoxical sacrificalism bound up with a desire for purification and regenerative, even redemptive, violence towards victims." With respect to fascist temporal imaginaries and the musealisation of fascist regimes, Clark (2019, p. 172) notes their liturgical character. Specifically, Clark highlights their focus on rebirth *and* acceleration, on the glorification of idealised and mythical pasts *and* appeals to ideas of eternity. Fictionalised pasts, according to this logic, are (to be) realised in the future. In Eric Michaud's exploration of Nazi myth-making, this paradoxical relationship between motion and motionlessness is related to "the logic of Christian eschatology, in which the subject is suspended between the memory of a past redemption (in the form of Christ's incarnation) and the anticipation of a future collective salvation" (Clark, 2019, p. 13).

In more general terms, sacred time, that time which *nourishes* ideology, is renewed through festivals and rituals. As Hansen-Glucklich (2014, p. 23) puts it, such time "is liturgical and mythological." It exists in space as "a closed circle, always turning and repeating back to itself." The museum's promise – and whether of the liberal-progressive or fascist kind – lies in time within its walls taking on a quality at odds with the natural forces of destruction. It offers *gifts without end(s)*. Conversely, it is precisely the threat of destruction – "the state of exception" – that is the stimulatory force that *drives* the museum.

Although the "blind indestructible insistence of the libido" is what Freud called the death drive, it is important to bear in mind that the death drive is, "paradoxically, the Freudian name for its very opposite, for the way immortality appears within psychoanalysis: for an uncanny excess of life, for an 'undead' urge which persists beyond the (biological) cycle of life and

death, of generation and corruption" (Žižek, 2008, p. 54). The violence that resides "within" the museum can be located not only in it being an "agent for capitalist modernisation" and a "triumphalist showcase for the loot of territorial expansion and colonisation" (Huyssen, 1995, p. 16), or in its imbrication with neoliberalism, this inherently violent model of political economy, but in its manufacture and mis/management of such uncanny excesses of life. What Freud called the death drive signifies just such uncanny vitality, a too much of pressure, as well as the urge to put an end to it. Through the museum's representational materialisation of trauma, via the mimetic or metaphorical return of the real, via its emphasis on uncanny vitality, not only is the theological nature of the social order made visible but also its abyssal and bloody fundament.

7.4.3. Drawing on a line of thought first developed by Santner and Moishe Postone (2003) in relation to Holocaust remembrance, the First World War continues to provoke such feeling not simply because of issues around representational adequacy or efficacy – that is, how to properly bear witness to and acknowledge or indeed integrate the trauma and, indeed, *jouissance* it elicited – or because of its radical otherness or uniqueness, but because of a kind of *overproximity*. We are, quite simply, still caught up in the forms of life and social fantasies that made it possible, and we cannot adequately represent *or* forget it because we are still implicated in it. More than this, if memory is "personally reworked, officially recast and often violently re-instilled, especially after wars" (Müller, 2002, p. 2), what happens when "the war" never ends? What is engendered when the precipitating conditions and occasioning structures remain in place, or when the violent legacies are not "in the past" but in the present – when they actively haunt us, or are made to haunt us by way of immersive memorial encounters such as that provided by *The Great War Exhibition*? Moreover, under the cover of mourning, of heuristic entreaties of "never again," in the midst of tragedy, we are given opportunity to *enjoy* (the) *horror*.

In what seems to be the depths of the Daniel Libeskind designed zig-zagging extension to the Jewish Museum in Berlin are a series of voids in which walls become cliffs and openings abysses. Torturously angular, shafts and slivers of light fall sporadically from slit-windows set high above. The museum is said to represent "that which can never be exhibited when it comes to Jewish Berlin history: Humanity reduced to ashes." The experience of walking through the space – though in each of my visits I have only ever noticed footfalls rather than movement – is disorientating. Although a museum of mourning dedicated "to the memory of the Jews of Berlin," it also cannot but be seen to be the subject *per se* – the hopeful subject of modernity, the revolutionary subject of the French Revolution, the subject of Enlightenment

and Reason – that is being mourned here. That subject, the Museum intimates, is a *relic*. Although the Museum in its modern form opened in 2001, the first Jewish Museum in Berlin was founded on 24 January 1933, six days before the National Socialists officially gained power. I was in my early-twenties when I first visited and was ill-prepared to know what to do with the demand to simply "be" in this space in which so much of the telling resides in *not* telling.

Figure Eight

Interior of the Jewish Museum, Berlin, 2018.

On my most recent visit in 2018, and after navigating the sparsely-curated and sparingly-furnished corridor galleries, I pushed through a heavy door and emerged into a rooftop garden. Except that this "rooftop garden" is in fact sunk into the earth. I wove clumsily beneath and between a phalanx of forty nine slanted monolithic pillars out of which grow oleaster trees. Set on sloping cobbled ground, the Garden of Exile is a space in which you cannot help but walk on a *tilt.* And then up I went, up to Israeli artist Menashe Kadishman's installation *Shalekhet* ("fallen leaves"). Comprised of ten thousand rudimentary faces punched out of steel and strewn on the ground of a progressively narrowing space, visitors are invited to walk over

these roughly hewn steel heads, and listen to the metallic clank as one's footsteps force them to clash against one another. I tried to make my way up the bottle-neck of the Memory Void without making a sound: *impossible*.

Like in The Imperial War Museum's renovated Holocaust Gallery and in the exhibitions discussed in this chapter, visitors are implicated by the Jewish Museum whether they "like it" or not. The most recent iteration of Berlin's Jewish Museum opened three years after Te Papa and these institutions should be understood as two sides of the same coin. Each is involved in a different form of liturgical labour, labour that is always a labour of *implication*: the (bloody) glory of remembrance and the (fleshy) glory of new dawns and new deals. But neither is static nor unequivocal. There is a continual movement, a switching of places. Once more, remembrance is *enjoyed* and glory brings *nausea*. It is possible here to draw a dreadful line between the vacancy found in Jacques-Louis David's painting of Marat (1793), the quasi-mechanical insistence that is libido, the passionate autoimmune fever-dreams of Nazism, the voids that run through the Jewish Museum in Berlin, and the new dawns of Te Papa. It is possible here to suggest that the same blood runs through all of them.

In other words, the questions raised by the National Socialist museums with regard to the museum-form have not been answered. In Nazi Germany, Sandra Esslinger (2004, p. 31) notes, "the museum acted as a frame wherein a prescribed process of forming the ideal citizen, a subscriber to the Aryan spirituality, the *Volk*, was catalysed." To compare the new museum and in particular new museums such as Te Papa or Berlin's Jewish Museum to the Berlin Revolutionsmuseum would seem perilous in the extreme. However, the liberal-progressive museum, for example, continues to act as a frame in strikingly similar ways. The content may be different but the form remains (much) the same. The way the past is staged and spectacled – is *formed* – by these museums condemns the subject to equivalent forms of creatureliness. In this way, the new museum is not simply part of the same bloodline as the Revolutionsmuseum but should be understood as a precursor from the future.

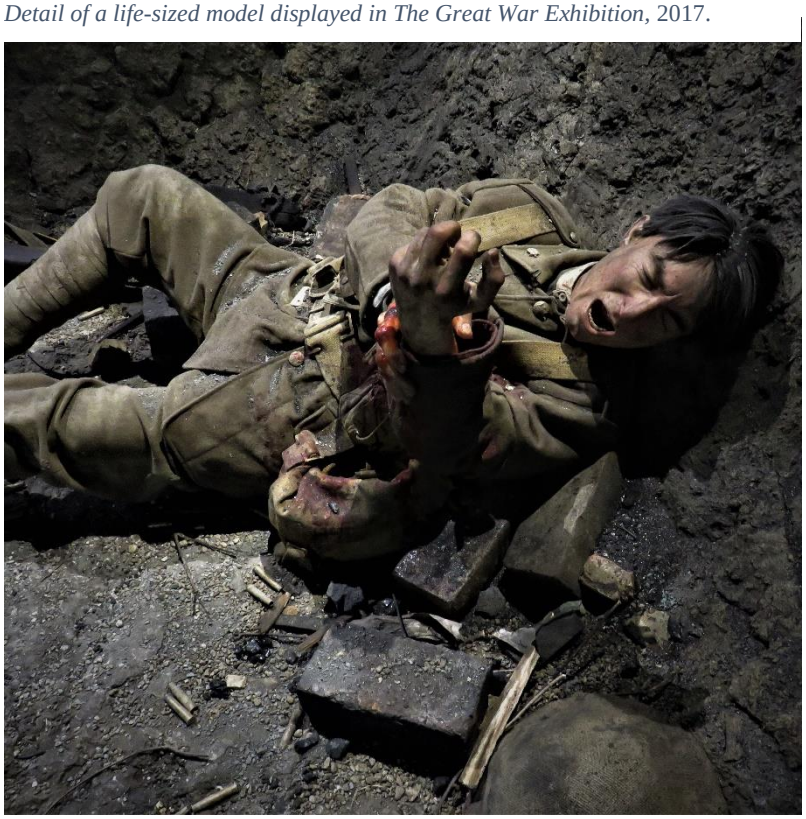
7.5. Perpetual Crucifixion: Bloody Gifts Without End/s

By conceiving of *Gallipoli* and *The Great War Exhibition* as late-capitalist passion plays, as devotional performances *and* forms of blood-sport, as works of mourning *and* enjoyment, the subject of the museum is able to be reappraised. A number of points of elaboration are required here. First, and to cite Freud's (1909) characterisation (see Santner, 2001, p. 82) of his patient

dubbed the "Rat Man" (see Santner, 2001, p. 82) – a patient suffering from unbearable obsessive thoughts and compulsions – what such bloody remembrance generates for the visiting subject is a horror at a pleasure they derive from the experience, of which they themselves are "unaware." Second, where there is no subject, and remembering that the subject of trauma becomes a non-subject as the position is evacuated (Foster, 2015), we are condemned to go on mourning; we are condemned to occupy the realm of the undead. Third, and with the reparative mode of liberal-progressive museum practice in mind, in Christian terms, memorial reparation involves an unceasing effort to stand beside the cross on which Christ *continues* to be crucified. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10). Egyptomania can be seen to take on an additional resonance here.

Figure Nine

Detail of a life-sized model displayed in The Great War Exhibition, 2017.



If genocide cannot be redeemed and if trauma exists only as the inherent failure of symbolisation, such attempts at reparation will continually fail. Structured (both knowingly and otherwise) around (and out of) trauma *and* enjoyment, what "does not work" is, however, put to work in the liberal-progressive museum. Those things that escape capture or are surplus, or cannot be quantified but are quantifiably excessive, such as spilt blood, such as trauma, are

turned into sources of glory, into *gifts without end*. It is towards the mobilisation of such gifts, and the normalisation of their mobilisation, that post-critical museology could be said to labour. Moreover, and paradoxically, that which *might work* is rendered inoperative by post-critical and liberal-progressive museologies. For example, the creaturely subject – the subject that holds "within it," *in extremis* and only if seen in its proper light, the promise of a revolutionary subject – is turned into a relic, into a *gift without end/s*. It is in pursuit of this "relic" that the next chapter is dedicated.

Eight

Relic

8.1. A Blinding Light

8.1.1. The problem of the museum is not the visitor it is the (creaturely) subject. This is the argument I have been making through the use of flesh and blood to analyse contemporary museum practice. This argument is taken a step further here with the aid of the analytic relic. The failure to acknowledge the distinction mentioned above, a distinction that enables the creature that is the subject to be seen for what it is, is precisely the deadlock around which post-critical museology (fruitlessly) revolves. In this chapter I elaborate on the idea that the (missing) subject of the liberal-progressive museum, the subject that post-critical museology refuses, is (unwittingly) rendered a relic by the very practices envisaged as being ethically *comme il faut*.

Structurally speaking, there are three main parts to this chapter: "Being, Affected," "The Sacred-Real," and "The Subject as Relic." Towards an elaboration of "the subject as relic," the first two movements amend *the* museal dialectic of enchantment (theology) and empiricism (the discursive). Firstly, enchantment is (re)viewed through the prisms of affect and historicism, these privileged discourses of liberal-progressive and post-critical museologies. And secondly, empiricism is revised via an oxymoronic pairing of the sacred with the (Lacanian) real. In this way, affect and the sacred-real are conceptualised as the two poles out of which the relic materialises. At one stroke relativized *and* essentialised, the subject of such operations, I suggest, comes to approximate the living dead.

The theoretical manoeuvres that animate the kind of museal practice by which the subject is rendered a relic are read in this chapter via *The Great War Exhibition's* "Trench Experience" and Te Papa's *Gallipoli: The Scale of Our War*. By turning upon themselves and indeed taking at their word the discursive moves by which liberal-progressive museum practice valorises the

figures of enchantment and empiricism, insights into this dynamic are afforded. This in turn enables the poetical-analytical framework to occupy the discursive space that is the relation between the museum and post-critical museology, in anticipation of new capacities for the subject to act upon the socio-historical situation(s) in which it is given to live.

8.1.2. In his prose poem *After Nature*, and at the conclusion of a cataclysmic passage in which German painter Matthias Grünewald's (c. 1470 – 31 August 1528) *Isenheim Altarpiece* (1516) is similarly reflected-on and conjured, Sebald (2003a) wrote this:

> The panic-stricken / kink in the neck to be seen / in all of Grünewald's subjects, / exposing the throat and often turning / the face towards a blinding light, / is the extreme response of our bodies / to the absence of balance in nature / which blindly makes one experiment after another / and like a senseless botcher / undoes the thing it has only just achieved. / To try out how far it can go / is the sole aim of this sprouting, / perpetuation and proliferation / inside us also and through us and through / the machines sprung from our heads, / all in a single jumble [...]. (p. 27)

Grunewald's depiction of the supernatural temptations faced by Saint Anthony the Great in the Egyptian desert show the Saint overwhelmed by thirsting, oozing, erupting creatures. The museum, I suggest, is a – or perhaps *the* – repository for the remnants and relics of such sprouting and proliferation, for the vestiges of such perpetual crucifixion.

Although subjects, publics and peoples are "posited immanently, modelled and produced by the discourses, events, objects, and practices that name and animate them" (Dickinson et al., 2010, p. 15), the subject is not privy to all that posits and produces it. More than this, and as Jacqueline Rose (2020) writes, "Psychoanalysis begins with a mind in flight, a mind that cannot take the measure of its own pain." It begins with the recognition, Rose continues, that the world makes "demands on human subjects that are too much to bear." *The subject is enfleshed by that which cannot be posited*. The subject is similarly lit up and abandoned on the altar of modernity. The subject – and the (missing) subject of the museum – is condemned to circle haplessly around a certain impossible (ceaselessly vanishing, one might say) point, is condemned to compulsively repeat (Žižek, 2008, pp. 147-148).

To backtrack, the impossibility of adequately representing this subject, the impossibility of representing the *real* of the subject, is *the* problem around which the museum spins. By actively though unwittingly turning the visitor into a relic, by rendering it undead, liberal-progressive museum practice (as informed, intentionally or otherwise, by post-critical

thinking) attempts to traverse this problem. The unruliness of the subject, its propensity to be, as Rose suggested, "in flight," is (rhetorically) diminished by such operations.

Conversely, if the subject is a relic, its *flesh*, its "little piece of the real," is able to be more readily harnessed and put to work. Important to recall here is Elaine Scarry's (1985) argument that the "sheer material factualness" and affectedness of the human body being borrowed for the purpose of lending cultural constructs the aura of realness and certainty. If flesh is inserted into this formula, the degree of potency and indeed peril is greatly magnified. Cultural constructs not only take on an aura of realness and certainty but come to throb. In this way, the relic becomes a source of glory for the museum. It is this vampiric and indeed cannibalistic dialectic of production and consumption that is my concern here. Ruth Kluger's aphorism "where there is no grave, we are condemned to go on mourning" (as cited in Schwab, 2010, p. 1) presents us with an additional line of flight. If the subject exists without a grave, if it is undead, there can be no end to our mourning and, like moirologists, our grief is simply labour: a gift without end/s.

8.1.3. Deriving from the Latin *reliquiae*, meaning "remains," and a form of the verb *relinquere*, "to leave behind or abandon," relic may refer to:

> (1) an object surviving from an earlier time, especially one of historical interest; (2) the physical remains of a saint or martyr or site or object with which they had contact, kept as an object of reverence and often attributed with healing or miraculous powers; (3) a person or thing that has survived from an earlier time but is now outmoded.

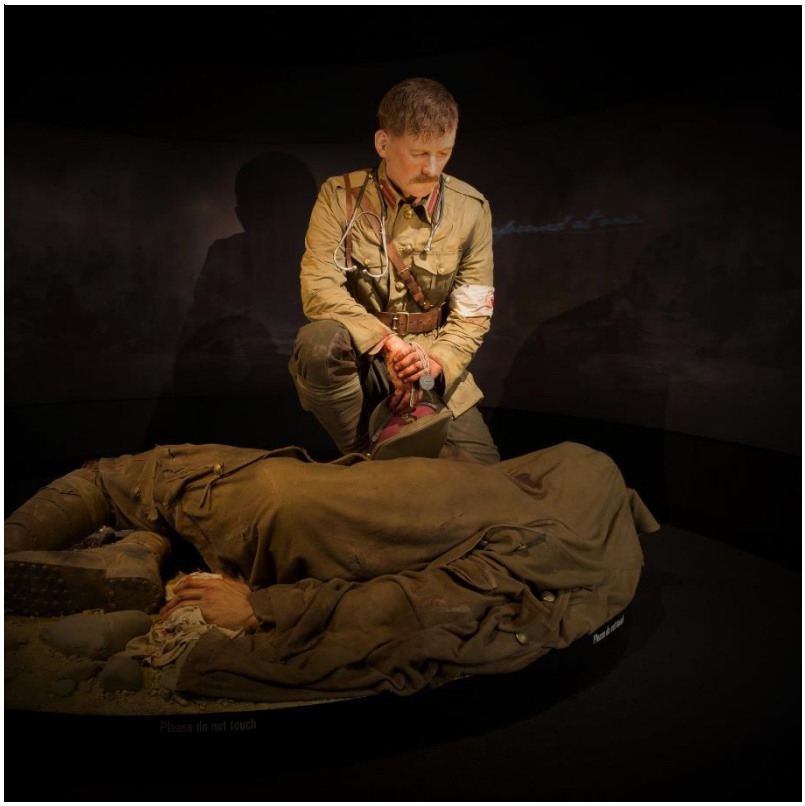
The cult of the relics of martyrs and saints prospered in the Middle-Ages. People came to look upon, to touch and to pray before these sources of spiritual, political and material wealth and prestige (Hartog, 2015). Saintly morsels such as bones, hair, teeth, blood, milk, or clothes brought the believer closer to the saint, who might intercede on her behalf. The French monarchy's possession of Christ's Crown of Thorns, for instance, a relic which currently resides in the Louvre, amplified and legitimised the divine right of successive kings. Working, and as noted in Chapter Seven, to bring (the) people onto the side of power, the museum performs an analogous intercessionary function. However, when read via psychoanalysis and with *jouissance*, autodoxology and affect in mind, this "being on the side of power" becomes anything but straightforward. The splinters of the one true cross, for example, do not simply persist but *insist*.

With respect to the relationship between the museum and relics, I take my point of departure from Hal Foster's (2020) observations concerning the National September 11 Memorial and Museum in New York. Can the remains of that "fateful day," Foster (2020, p. 6) asks, be "both relics and artefacts, iconic and evidentiary?" Can this institution, Foster continues, "both rehearse the trauma of the day and assist in its comprehension? Might a memorial and a museum be at cross-purposes in this respect?" This is, I argue, precisely what the museum-form provides: "the empirical" (and whether bodies or objects) is ballast for and indeed is generative of "the sacred." Meanwhile, and in relation to the Shoah, Hansen-Glucklich (2014, p. 7) argues that through an abundance of evidence the gaps of the "permanently ruptured and fragmented history" that came into being with the Holocaust, are attempted to be sutured or filled. That an "abundance of feeling" functions in a comparable way is a central contention here.

Meanwhile, and apropos questions of temporality and subjectivity, "our relationship to time," Tom Crewe (2018) writes, "changes when we cannot establish distance from the past, from our pasts." As noted in the previous chapter, the mimetic or metaphorical return of the real via the (oxymoronic) representation of trauma figures as a guiding impulse for both *Gallipoli* and *The Great War Exhibition*. For example, Mervyn Dykes (2018) described *The Great War Exhibition's* "Quinn's Post Trench Experience" as involving an encounter with "startlingly realistic holographic soldiers" who "crawl through the mud and speak directly to you." *Gallipoli*, meanwhile, is said to be an exhibition in which "the worlds of movies, model-making, and museums combine to take you on an immersive journey through the battlefields" (Te Papa, 2015). What these exhibitions provide are occasions for reflecting on the necromantic function of the museum. This function – the "museum effect" – is typically understood as involving the revivification and animation of inert objects. That which is "dead" is brought to life by way of the museum's immediacy-effects, its spotlighting and dramatic *mise en scène* (Preziosi, 2009). There is, however, a different type of (paradoxical) necromancy at work. What I mean by this is the subject being animated mechanically, being rendered undead, being made into a *relic*.

Figure Ten

"Lieutenant Colonel Percival Fenwick," Gallipoli: The Scale of Our War, 2015.



8.2. Being, Affected

8.2.1. "Those who are still alive," the Polish-American poet Czeslaw Milosz (as cited in Müller, 2002, p. 33) once wrote, "receive a mandate from those who are silent forever. They can fulfil their duties only by trying to reconstruct precisely things as they were by wresting the past from fictions and legends." Firstly, however, myth in the Lévi-Straussian (as cited in Dolar, 1991, p. 16) sense of the word is "a logical model to resolve a contradiction (an insoluble task if the contradiction is real)." And secondly, in order to create "authentic experiences," to reconstruct precisely "things as they were," to take visitors as close as possible to the "truth of war" without materially eviscerating them, for example, means to fashion elaborate (and fantastic) mimetic and affective parascapes and chronoscapes. Additionally, the problem of the aporia of historical knowledge – that facts and truth,

verification and understanding need not coincide (Postone and Santner 2003; Dicken and Lausten, 2005) – means that a proliferation of evidence may produce *a blinding light* and *panic-stricken kinks in the neck*. Or as Sebald (2002d, p. 7) put it in a scene in *Vertigo* in which, via the medium of nineteenth-century novelist and early practitioner of literary realism Marie-Henri Beyle, better known by his pen name Stendhal, he reflects on the inadequacy of memory and witnessing: "for in reality, as we know, everything is always quite different."

For the visitor *to be affected* has become both a methodological strategy (Arnold-de Simine, 2012) and an end for liberal-progressive museology. That the representation of trauma and horror are considered expedient for achieving such aspirations is the first point to note (Edkins, 2003). Additionally, and given that capitalism is premised on the continual generation of "ruins" (Harvey, 1990) and the museum manufactures feeling and glory from "the ruins of life," the relationship between the two must be understood as mutually sustaining. Affect as a museal methodology becomes ever-more problematic when the demand for ceaseless product and market development is taken into account. Over the following pages, and by way of a consideration of some of the implications of this drive for heightened states of feeling, for *enchantment*, I establish the groundwork for my argument concerning "the subject as a relic" that occurs in the final part of this chapter.

8.2.2. A few days before Anzac Day of 2018 I made my way to *The Great War Exhibition* to visit the long-awaited "Quinn's Post Trench Experience." The Ministry for Culture and Heritage (2018) press release explained that it was intended to provide visitors with the opportunity "to experience the bleak and dangerous conditions New Zealand soldiers endured during the Gallipoli campaign." Clare Olssen, Executive Producer at Jackson's Wingnut Films, stated: "We hope visitors find the experience both exciting and insightful. It is truly immersive and will, we believe, bring people as close as you can get to experiencing the conditions faced by our Anzac troops." After purchasing a ticket for $20, I sat for a few minutes until the guide appeared, and was then taken on an exactingly choreographed and timed "pilgrimage" through a foul-smelling and bomb-blasted underground warren populated by wraiths and spectres.

Mervyn Dykes' (2018) description of his encounter with the "Trench Experience" is instructive. Dykes writes of shuffling along a "shaft burrowed through yellow clay," and of "trying to ignore the gloom, the smell of death, the harsh stutter of machine guns and the shaking ground."

> 'What are you people doing down here?' snarled [a] voice off to one side. 'You don't belong here.'

“Stumbling across” a room “hacked out of the clay,” Dykes was confronted by “an unkempt and slightly manic soldier glaring back at me.”

> Suddenly, he froze.
>
> ‘Listen.’
>
> There was a scrabbling noise from somewhere beyond.
>
> ‘That’ll be the Turks,’ he said. ‘Sounds like they're only six or seven yards away, digging toward us. Get out of here. Quick. Seal off the shaft. Bring up the explosives.’
>
> We ducked around a corner of the tunnel just before an ear-cracking blast erupted at our heels.
>
> For just half an hour of one 2018 day I was back in the hell men called home at Quinn’s Post, Gallipoli.

It needs stressing that consuming the pain of others is attributed the capacity to “satisfy the nostalgic longing for that ontological fiction called ‘the real thing’” (Rothe as cited in Arnold-de Simine, 2013, p. 67).

In her essay “Suffering like Mel Gibson,” novelist Zadie Smith (2020, p. 31) writes that privilege and suffering have much in common, in that “they both manifest as bubbles, containing a person and distorting their vision.” Although it is possible to “penetrate the bubble of privilege and even to pop it,” the “suffering bubble,” she writes, “is impermeable.” “Language, logic, argument, rationale and relative perspective [are] no match for it.” “Suffering,” Smith continues, “applies itself directly to its subject and will not be shamed out of itself or eradicated by righteous argument, no matter how objectively correct that argument may be.”

Meanwhile, in writing about the bombing of Dresden by the Allies in February 1945, Sebald (2003) advised that although we know precisely the ordnance used, have accurate information concerning the numbers of deaths and injuries and even the quantity of rubble created, we cannot grasp what it actually *meant*. Marked by the rhythms of attraction and repulsion, by mania and abhorrence, the traumatic brings onto the scene the utmost need to communicate with the ultimate speechlessness. How can museums bear witness to or address the psychic legacies of events or experiences incapable of decipherment or representation?

8.2.3. Particular developments in museum practice and theory that need restating here include the abnegation of the occupation of an authoritative position; a shift from being sites of history to being spaces of memory; the foregrounding of empathy as a pedagogical method and objective; and an attachment and attunement to suffering and trauma, to the possibilities of trauma to serve as an (anti)representational motif, ethic and methodology (Edkins, 2003; Arnold-de Simine, 2012; Witcomb, 2013). The language of and emphasis on empowerment – emotional and identitarian – alongside the focus on affect and the accentuation of trauma that characterises the liberal-progressive museum requires close scrutiny. Firstly, what these ethical emphases indicate is the idea that the museum's primary function is as a public educator and catalyst of social reform remains very much alive today (Black, 2012; Message, 2007; Sandell, 2012). What has changed, Arnold-de Simine (2013, p. 8) suggests, "are the aims and the means."

New methodological and representational strategies are evident throughout the museum world, though the question of whether these are differences-of-degree rather than differences-of-kind remains germane. Nevertheless, that there are different accents with respect to reality and the real seems undeniable. Today's museums are not only fixated with empirical reality and its remains, but also the traumatic real of uncanny affective experience, with the mesmeric fluids of *affectus*. The desire to move visitors is partly driven by the assumption that "memories and traumas can be passed on through processes of meditation and that these processes foster empathy, understood as an ethically constructive response" (Arnold-de Simine, 2013, p. 2). The desire to move visitors, for them to *feel* – and traumatic representation is a primary method of achieving this aim – should, I argue, be correlated with liberal-progressive fantasies of unimpeded access and unmediated experience.

Such approaches, and to repurpose a line from Žižek (2008, p. 2), are modelled on the belief that personal sincerity and emotional expression are guarantees of truthfulness. To further problematise matters, in her 2008 work, *The Odd One In: On Comedy*, Alenka Zupančič raises the issue of the difference between what people *think* they feel and what they *really* feel. "One of the fundamental axioms of what is now officially called 'happiness studies,'" she writes, "is that there is no difference between the two" (Zupančič, 2008, p. 8). "It often happens," she continues, "that we don't know how we really feel, and that emotions (far from constituting a direct insight into the real of the subject) can lie and be as deceptive as anything else."

The invitation to inhabit emotional space provides a new way of the museum being for all, remembering that affect is perceived to be inherently "egalitarian." However, when such paradoxically permissive but moralising injunctions such as *just feel* and *feel free* are read alongside cynical reason – that is, the notion that we know full well but do it anyway – this

"being for all" begins to look more like hegemonic expansion and less like liberation. More than this, *feeling* free and *being* free produce the same effects (Zupancic, 2008). That feeling "is its own reward" further problematises its pedagogical and ethical application. The insertion of trauma into this matrix thrusts it into a stranger orbit altogether. As already noted, ours is "an age of crowdsourcing and 'prosumption' – the supposedly democratised reconciliation of production and consumption, of sovereignty and citizenship" (Mazzarella, Santner & Schuster, 2020, pp. 2-3). "New" museums are exemplars in this respect, with them continually blurring the line between citizen and consumer. That such prosumption is often engorged with trauma means that it must also be read with the crucial Lacanian (1977) question of why it is that we feel pleasure in what hurts us – why it is we that we come to *enjoy* such experiences – in mind.

There are a series of movements that require our attention here. First, liberal-progressive museum practice similarly generalises and stimulates the underlying condition of lack by way of this emphasis on trauma. Second, its rhetorics of authorial dispersal and visitor empowerment (you decide!) function as a corollary to this distribution of trauma. Third, the liberal-progressive museum fills the ensuing void with excess (of emotion, of empirical matter) and excessive demands (to remember, to feel, to feel free). The emphases on affect, enjoyment and engagement are exemplary means of ensuring the exuberant participation of the subject in the service of glory. What can be perceived here is a circular and self-sustaining dynamic, and one in which doxology and autodoxology oscillate in-sync. Consuming the pain of others in this schema is not simply (subjectively) experiential but (objectively) structural. To risk a form of pathetic fallacy, the museum thirsts after a share of the real thing that is (our) pain and glory. The museum hungers for *a pound of* (our) *flesh*.

8.2.4. *The Great War Exhibition's* "Trench Experience" was advertised as follows:

> NEW! The Trench is Open! Live moment to moment, as the ANZAC troops did in the trenches at Gallipoli, only a bomb's throw away from the Turks. In this unique re-creation of Quinn's Post, encounter the noise, the explosions, the stench, the confined environment those men had to deal with during the ferocious struggle between opposing forces. At times confronting, this will be an experience like no other!

Although its vocabulary was kitsch, its grammar was anything but: it was vivid, sincere, of the real. This echoes trends elsewhere, with museums today conceived as mediums for enactment and performance, as spaces for encounter, as places of memory and recollection,

narrative and storytelling (Basu and Macdonald, 2007; Bennett, 2013). This investment in the methodology of memory and the ethical imperative to remember is motivated by "the conviction that mere knowledge about the past does not suffice to prevent the perpetuation of violent and traumatic histories" (Arnold-de Simine, 2013, pp. 1-2). Memory and the corresponding affected-embodied-sensorial states in which it is said to reside and which a mnemonic approach is understood to generate, is perceived as a more sincere, truthful, one might say, approach to the past. In this sense, memory is both a museal methodology and a pro-forma for the visitor to adopt.

In his novel *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1984), Milan Kundera wrote of kitsch's "transformation of disgust into universal approval and thus its dissimulation of the presence, in human life, of shit." Kitsch is thus the embrace of cliché as a defence against the weight of human reality, and one characterised by the "idiotic tautology" of "long live life!" (Kundera, 1984, p. 249). In its refusal of shit (which, of course, revolves inevitably into the production and embrace of "metaphorical shit"), kitsch functions, ironically, to hollow out human existence, with it losing its dimensions and becoming unbearably light. Such a dimensionless state, it needs noting, is also a characteristic of relics.

Returning to "The Trench Experience," the opening announcement was accompanied by the following offer:

> The Trench Experience may be booked as a stand-alone option, however, our combo deal is the best way to experience The Great War Exhibition and Quinn's Post Trench Experience. Our combo includes admission, a 45-minute guided tour from one of our knowledgeable guides and the 30-minute sensory experience within The Trench.

Meanwhile, upon leaving the exhibition visitors were invited to fill in a customer satisfaction survey. This survey, with a five point rating scale from excellent to not good enough, asked visitors to respond to statements such as: "overall experience"; "overall customer service"; "quality of the displays"; "personal war-time stories"; and "value for money." In its explicit meeting of morality, commercialism, affective injunctions and "unsparing" reality, *The Great War Exhibition* provides us with a ready-made scene with which to consider the transfiguration of shit into glory, with the revolving of trauma into kitsch (and indeed vice-versa).

8.2.5. How to take the measure of the afterlife of violence given, as we have heard Postone and Santner (2003, p. 12) argue in Chapter Five, that "traumatic events make their impact felt

largely in the form of *gaps* in understanding rather than a legacy with a clear and stable representational content." Substantial knowledge of an event – the Holocaust, for example – may serve "to heighten an awareness of the insufficiency of cognition in the encounter with the reality of what happened; knowledge itself produces gaps in understanding, exposes us to 'the unimaginable.'" If trauma is unimaginable or impenetrable or, in the case of the First World War, of a scale or magnitude beyond belief, how can it be grasped? How can this imponderable be understood?

The "Trench Experience" took the idea of providing, in Arnold-de Simine's words (2013, pp. 1-2), "experientially oriented encounters with the help of multimedia technologies" to a point from which the next logical step was physical violence being meted-out to visitors. In fact, this threat, this promise of danger, was undoubtedly part of the attraction. "The smells of death and defecation [were] scientifically reproduced to further heighten the experience. So realistic [were] the odours that they had to be scaled down after some of the early trench visitors became nauseous" (Dykes, 2018). Visitors were invited to respond emotionally, were supposed to gain access to the past by stepping into the shoes and seeing through the eyes of these hurt and hurting historical others, were asked to identify with and invest in their experiences and trauma.

The "Trench Experience" sent visitors deep into the realms of fantasy, though that is not to say its formulations were not exact. As Mervyn Dykes (2018) put it: "It is the most realistic representation you can experience of the place." Much like the sacred experience of pilgrimage, the museum promises a departure from the ordinary in which one will "encounter rare or unique relics, learn about highly significant events or people, and/or be moved in particular ways by the experience of the place" (Dickinson et al., 2010, p. 26). Importantly, this "out of the ordinary" today lingers on and over the situated and particular – the ordinary – memories of individuals and groups. However, and as Colin Burrow (2016, p. 13) argues, the epic can be recuperated in "the register of the humdrum." Such approaches, Burrow suggests, can enable "what might be called post-colonial parallax, in which a master text of a dominant civilization is deliberately transformed from the ostentatiously low perspective of an unheroic life."

An immersive – but non-participatory in the sense that nothing was optional – and experiential trauma text, the "Trench Experience" was intended to mimic the creaturely horror experienced by New Zealand soldiers as they fought and died on this narrow band of foreign land in 1915. The visitor was positioned as witness, was made present and contiguous with the "scene of the crime." In this way, they were doubled in time, were turned into both first-hand and secondary witnesses. Unlike eyewitnesses, and as Arnold-de Simine (2013, p. 18) explains,

secondary witnesses are confronted by the testimony of traumatic incidents and are supposed to feel a "moral obligation to engage with the event and especially with the suffering on a personal and emotional level through identification and empathy." This doubling which is also a splitting, this coincidence of participant and witness, this merging and muddling of interior and exterior can be captured conceptually by way of Mladen Dolar's (1991) description of the Lacanian dimension of extimacy (*extimité*). For Dolar (1991, p. 6), extimacy "points neither to the interior nor exterior." Instead, it "is located there where the most intimate interiority coincides with the exterior and becomes threatening, provoking horror and anxiety." The extimate, Dolar continues, "is simultaneously the intimate kernel and foreign body; in a word, it is *unheimlich*."

That trauma is not experienced as such at the time but only encountered belatedly further problematises its memorial and museological application. The traumatic event or incident "is repressed or denied and registers only belatedly (*nachträglich*) after the passage of a period of latency" (LaCapra, 1998, p. 9). Trauma returns in the form of dreams or flashbacks, though as Edkins (2003, p. 40-41) notes, "these re-enactments are absolutely literal: the detail is exact." This does not, however, mean that this gives us access to a "true account" of what happened. As we encountered Žižek (1991, pp. 272-273) explaining in Chapter Five, the "essence of trauma is precisely that it is too horrible to be remembered, to be integrated into our symbolic universe. All we have to do is to mark repeatedly the trauma as such." Traumatic recall "possesses the survivor, rather than being possessed by them" (Edkins, 2003, pp. 40-41). Trauma brings about lapses or ruptures in memory, it disorders continuity, fractures our temporally-formed identitarian affiliations and understandings. Trauma signifies a failure to put the past to rest as *past*.

Edkins (2003, p. 9) raises another important point when she notes that the concept of trauma oscillates "between victimhood and protest and can be linked with or articulated to either." The fact that testimony cannot but approximate further complicates the scene. Language cannot get "to the heart of the matter" and must make do, as it were, with its own procedures. If, as Arnold-de Simine (2013) suggested, the witness is in some sense answerable though forever unable to locate the real of trauma, she will inevitably be found wanting, will be unable to fulfil the office of remembrance. Furthermore, once victimhood is understood to endow special claims and rights, and when the rhetoric of suffering and victimhood circulates with glory and fantasy production, the tasks of testifying and witnessing that the museum facilitates and demands become almost unbearable. That the "Trench Experience" was physically sickening (Dykes, 2018) is instructive.

8.2.6. Arnold-de Simine (2012, p. 18) makes the point that for many museums concerned with the representation of violent legacies "the stated aim might be to disturb the visitors into a state of active responsibility, yet as a site of moral and national instruction the openness of this 'text' is limited, not least by interpellating a predetermined moral position." It is not, however, the compulsion to adopt moral positions that is my final concern here but rather the way such museological practices are generative of fleshy excitations. It is the interpellation achieved by a disturbance and with disturbance as a (perhaps inadvertent) end-point that matters in this instance. That said, that such disturbance can also be produced by the impossible or ambiguous demands of such moral positioning is a central element of this schema. Creatureliness in this instance is engendered by exposure to the hypnotic and enigmatic messages emanating from the lawless law of the morality of remembrance within the ambit of liberal-late-capitalism. This lawless law being the permissive/punitive, tolerant/disciplinary dialectic that is characteristic of life today (Žižek, 2008). Turning back to the excitations of remembrance, what, for example, escapes or is called onto the scene in the manufacture of affect?

The psychoanalytic concept of transference provides another means of apprehending the contortions and sproutings that occur in the (attempted) representation of trauma. As LaCapra (as cited in Crownshaw, 2009, p. 86) puts it, the transference of trauma may be understood as the way in which "problems and processes active in the texts or artefacts we study are repeated in displaced and often disguised or distorted form in our very accounts of them." Transference implies "the tendency to become emotionally implicated in the witness and his or her testimony with the inclination to act out an affective response to them" (LaCapra, 1998, p. 12). Further to this issue of transferential dynamics, the subject feeds "the Other" with the "splendour of surplus value" that, in turn, "entitles the subject to enjoy its entitlements, its being in the Other" (Santner, 2015, pp. 102-103).

The "Trench Experience's" emplacement of the visitor in the scene demands identifactory appropriation of this transferential kind. Writing in the context of the Holocaust, Edkins (2003, p. 2) argues that survivors, those that witnessed the unspeakable, those that came to testify – even if silently – to the unimaginable, took on a "special aura." Although the experience of New Zealand soldiers serving in the First World War was profoundly different to that of Holocaust survivors, their trauma testimony also generates an "aura." In reliving the experience – in "ducking around corners of a filthy tunnel just before an ear-cracking blast erupts at their heels" (Dykes, 2018) – the visitor takes on this special (traumatic and uncanny) aura. The visitor becomes auratic. The visitor becomes, through this transferential element of trauma, a *relic*.

It also needs to be remembered that that which is traumatic is not free from fantasy, and nor is it immune from being fetishized. We can be made (imaginarily) whole by way of our (adopted or otherwise) trauma. Identity can be formed around or out of lack or rupture (Butler, 1997). Narrativized or mimetic trauma may also perform a screening function. We may remember such atrocities precisely in order to *forget* a contemporary one. Furthermore, remembrance of atrocities or spectacles of misery may not "move men to pity," as Arendt (as cited in Olick, 2007, p. 153) once put it, but instead serve as incitations. The subject may "glory" in the heightened states engendered by getting as close as possible to the "real" of war and trauma (Žižek, 2008).

On the other hand, and as Arnold-de Simine (2013, p. 8) notes, many visitors "seek emotional affirmation and reinforcement of 'known knowns' in the museum rather than expect to be confronted with uncomfortable or indigestible home truths." The important point is how these – how security and insecurity for example, or the indigestible and consoling, or the familiar and foreign – collide and cleave in the museum and become, in a sense, indistinguishable, forming a knot of intimacy and horror. In his account of the Freudian dimension that is the uncanny (*unheimlich*), Dolar (1991) notes that although it should function in opposition to or as the negation of *heimlich* (the homely), it is already implied in the root word. All that is homely and intimate and agreeable is also hidden, concealed and secret and hence potentially threatening and fearful. There is a point, Dolar (1991, p. 5) writes, "where the two meanings directly coincide and become undistinguishable, and the negation does not count – as indeed it does not count in the unconscious." Trauma, which cannot be either *known* or *unknown*, should also be thought of in these terms, is also of the order of the uncanny.

Two further points require elaboration here. First, and as noted above, by focusing on the aporetic quality of trauma the specific historical referents can become detached from their material foundations. In this way, historical events can revolve into "theological" ones (Hansen-Glucklich, 2014). Secondly, this aporetic quality can be enhanced rather than dispelled by an abundance of evidence, by quantitative and qualitative excess, by reading by the letter, or indeed, by reading every (hieroglyphic) letter. Such excess may serve in the production of fundamentally defensive fantasy positions or, indeed, Egyptomaniacal known unknowns/unknown knowns. As Agamben (as cited in Postone and Santner, 2003, p. 12) writes, although what occurred in the camps appears to those that survived as "the only true thing" and, as such, "absolutely unforgettable," this truth is, "to the same degree," unimaginable, is "irreducible to the real elements that constitute it." In other words: "Facts so real that [...] nothing is truer; a reality that necessarily exceeds its factual elements – such is the aporia of Auschwitz" (Dicken and Lausten, 2005, p. 70). To reiterate: *the truth is irreducible to the real elements that constitute it*.

8.3. The Sacred-Real

8.3.1 Although a space of "bloody" and "sacral" wonder, *Gallipoli: The Scale of Our War* is also distinguished by a passion for "the real." According to Stathis Kouvelakis (2018, p. 3), such a passion is a "defining feature of the twentieth century." Deriving from the Latin *res*, meaning "property, goods, matter, or thing," the OED definition of "real" includes the following entries:

> 1. Actually existing as a thing or occurring in fact; not imagined or supposed. 2. Significant; serious. 3. Relating to something as it is, not merely as it may be described or distinguished. 4. Not artificial or made in imitation of something; genuine.

Running parallel and in contradistinction to these meanings is the Lacanian real, which refers, paradoxically, to that which resists or evades representation or symbolization *absolutely* (Pound, 2008). Given that it cannot be integrated into the symbolic order it should be understood as being "opposed to reality" (Buchanan, 2018, p. 412). Deborah Levy (2021, p. 22) twitches a different etymological strand in her idiomatic account: "The word "Real" derives from the Latin word 'Rex,' meaning 'royal.' 'Real' also means 'king' in Spanish. For Lacan, the Real is everything that cannot be said."

In Durkheimian terms, religion transpires in relation to sacred things, to that which is set apart or forbidden. Conceptualised as ambiguous in early anthropological work and in Durkheim's sociology (Edkins, 2003), the sacred referred on one hand to that which is holy and hence untouchable, and on the other to that which is untouchable because unclean: the untouchability of that which is taboo resembles the untouchability of that which is sacred. Agamben contests this polarity, suggesting that "this ascription of ambiguity is not an explanation of the sacred but rather is itself what is in need of explanation" (Edkins, 2003, pp. 99-100). However, it remains a useful problematic for the purposes of my inquiry. Sacrality is understood here as a matter of emplacement within a ritual or ritualised context (Hansen-Glucklich, 2014). Situated and relational ritual treatment (liturgy, in a word) and collective affective feeling create "the sacred" (Hansen-Glucklich, 2014, p. 17).

With respect to the relationship between the sacred and memorialisation, through ritual re-enactment "sacred moments of the past are experienced as still present" (Hansen-Glucklich, 2014, p. 23). Rituals of remembrance can have the effect of suspending time. They enable "a certain kind of contemplative consciousness" (Henning, 2006, p. 16), with participants emerging transformed or restored. Turning back to Carol Duncan (1995), her argument is that

the art museum is a secular ritual and space of ritual. Aesthetic experience is "the secular counterpart to religious contemplation" (Henning, 2006, p. 16). What is of interest to me is the aesthetic production and experience of mimetic trauma. A number of supplementary points need to be made here. First, "the sacred" evokes the *mysterium tremendum*. That is: "a feeling of terror or awe […] which is beyond comprehension and 'wholly other'" (Otto as cited in Hansen-Glucklich, 2014, p. 16). And second, "sacred time" possesses "the paradoxical aspect of circular time, reversible and recoverable, a sort of eternal mythic present that is periodically reintegrated by means of rite" (Eliade as cited in Hansen-Glucklich, 2014, p. 23).

Returning to Dolar (1991) and the notion that a specific dimension of the uncanny emerged with modernity and "constantly haunts it from the inside," the museum is precisely one of the sites – if not *the* site – at which such haunting occurs. Dolar (1991, p. 7) writes that in premodern societies "the dimension of the uncanny was largely covered (and veiled) by the area of the sacred and untouchable." Assigned a specific place in the symbolic, a place from which the structures of "power, sovereignty" and the "hierarchy of values" emanated, with the arrival of modernity this "privileged and excluded place (the exclusion that founded society) was no more." The uncanny, Dolar argues, thus became unplaceable. "It became uncanny in the strict sense." My argument is that the museum functions in both senses outlined by Dolar. Within it is a continual transposition of sacralisation and profanation. What is uncanny, Dolar (1991, p. 15) reminds us, is "the recuperation of [...] loss: the lost part destroys reality instead of completing it."

8.3.2. Further to this matter of (*the avoidance of*) "lost realities," museums such as the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington or the Imperial War Museum in London attempt, Edkins (2003, p. 175) writes, "to present a coherent story that promotes a clear moral message. They focus on historical accuracy, displaying authentic artefacts to back up their claims to irrefutability." "There is," Edkins continues, "a reassuring assumption that a historical narrative based on firm evidence can lead to a form of closure, a final solution to outstanding questions." Although Edkins' institutional critiques are no longer necessarily apposite, the museum continues to be perceived as inherently veridical, as a site of truth, whether material or moral, empirical or emotional (Knell, MacLeod and Watson, 2007). Museums are expected to coincide with reality in the sense of collecting "real things" and accurately representing or mirroring reality itself. It is where heritage – the "real thing" of culture – is produced and spectacled. Museums are tasked with making visible and legible this real thing: with collecting, managing and providing evidence. And, as discussed in Chapter One, they are also

expected to be evidentiary, to be truth-telling. They are expected to be unequivocally of the category of the real.

In his essay "Fiction and the Age of Lies," Colin Burrow (2020) draws our attention to the fact that, etymologically speaking, the word evidence is haunted by the rhetorician's narrative device of *vividness*. First-century rhetorician Quintilian, Burrow notes, described a part of judicial speech called "narration," or "the narrative about the alleged crime that the orator wishes the jurors to believe." In such a narrative, the orator is not expected to "tell the truth," but rather to "describe things in a way that is plausible – or like truth."

> The ideal way to do that is to create what he calls *enargeia*, the kind of vividness that will make your audience believe your version of events. [...] The Latin word for this kind of vividness, intriguingly enough, is *evidentia*, the root of our word 'evidence.' (Burrow, 2020).

The liberal-progressive museum coalesces a concern with (objective) empirical reality, an emphasis on the traumatic real of (subjective) phenomenological experience and, finally, an unspoken and certainly untheorised obsession with the real itself, an obsession which is at once fruitless and agitating. Not only is it disturbed by the insufficiency of its representational and reality-coinciding functions and by the "necessary lies" that occur in its production and pursuit of evidence and vividness, but by the traumatic void that is the real.

8.3.3. Collecting and preserving the primary evidence – the raw material – of existence, museums transform this stuff of life into specimens, into heritage, into history. Within the museum, history and heritage are named *as such*. The function of the museum could be said to be to fight fiction and to represent the world *as it truly is*. However, museums also bestow significance, assign value, confer iconic status, ascribe sacrality. And they do so, as noted above, using the tools of fiction. Meaning to make sacred or imbue with sacred character, sacralisation might also be thought of as the process of instilling the ambiguous blessings of *more life*. Although its subjects, objects and content are unquestionably different, it appears in altered form and transfigured guises and operates under different signs, such processes of sacralisation have not withered in modernity. Memory, for example, is often treated as "a sacred set of potentially absolute meanings and stories, possessed as the heritage or identity of a community" (Blight as cited in Dickinson et al., 2010, pp. 9-10). In a phenomenological sense, memory is perceived as providing "direct access to the experience of the past" and in this way is sacralised or made into an "auratic affair" (LaCapra, 1998, p. 14).

For LaCapra (1998, pp. 3-4), the sublime, which he describes as a "secular sacred," may involve "the attempt to transvalue trauma into a disconcerting source of elation and transcendence." A perverse pleasure may also arise in receiving the superegoic injunctions of remembrance. Further to this, Santner's reading of *jouissance* alongside Agamben's understanding of the state of exception suggests that "the sovereign essentially functions like a punishing superego issuing the single injunction, '*Enjoy (bare) life*!'" (Santner, 2012, p. 49). Being duty bound to remember may afford the subject, to put it colloquially, an opportunity to "feel good about feeling bad," or alternately, particularly in such palpably enjoyable remembrance events as *Gallipoli*, "feel bad about feeling good." Visitors are able to inhabit a time and place more vital than their own, are encouraged to *enjoy* the traumatic difference of the past. Such enjoyment has an additional resonance here: the enjoyment of the "bare life" of the dead on display.

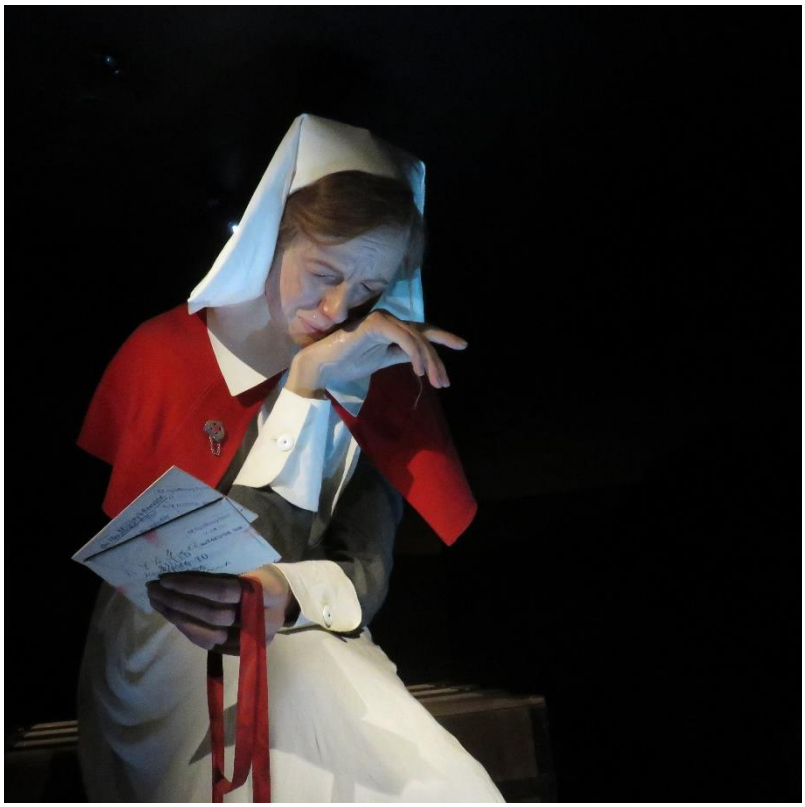
Gallipoli is intended to be dismally phantasmagorical: a concatenation of shocks and excitations in which the subject, to borrow a line from Benjamin (as cited in Santner, 2006, p. 80), follows an arc which leads "from emblem to emblem down into the dizziness of bottomless depths." Conversely, the intimacy of the exhibition, its personal address, is obscene. Like prey, the visitor is hunted down by the emotional exhortations of the exhibition. Thinking of *Gallipoli'*s entreaty to affectedness by way of Pentecostalism provides a further opening for us to consider. Emphasising a direct personal experience of god through baptism in the Holy Spirit, Pentecostal evangelicalism revolves around the idea that the essence of the Gospel consists of the doctrine of salvation by grace alone. In this way, *Gallipoli's* exhortations are fundamentally indecipherable: the demand is simply to be affected, to have faith in the miracle of grace. However, and vitally, the visitor is able to traverse these shocks and traumas without obstacle. There are only performative demands, closed-circuit interactives, and a one-way-street. Suspended between obscene proximity and spectacular separation, the visitor is caught in raptured rupture, in ruptured rapture. The liturgies of investiture and divestiture are performed at one stroke.

8.3.4. In discussing Patrick Hutton's *History as an Art of Memory*, LaCapra (1998, p. 24) raises the issue of maintaining a belief in the possibility of "unmediated access to the past" via imaginative "reliving." LaCapra writes that the past, for Hutton, "is construed as a pure, positive presence that is not beset with its own disruptions, lacunae, conflicts, irreparable losses, belated recognitions, and challenges to identity." It is, in other words, "utterly idealised and mythologised." Ensnaring visitors in just such a temporally and spatially indeterminate myth-space, *Gallipoli* engenders a form of creaturely captivation. To rework a passage found

in Santner's *On Creaturely Life* (2006, p. 11), a passage that draws on the work of Agamben, this state of being delivered over to an arresting opacity, of encountering something that obstinately refuses itself, brings the subject into close proximity with the blank entrancement of animals, into an almost literal rendering of creatureliness.

Figure Eleven

"Lottie Le Gallais," Gallipoli: The Scale of Our War, 2015.



If the recent emphasis on memory signals a desire for temporal (re)anchoring, if it signifies a longing for the recovery of the real, the question arises as to what makes a memory real or authentic? Although I take issue with the metaphor, that Gallipoli was a "deadly dance of bravery, madness and fear" (Bowers, 2014) is beyond dispute. Nonetheless, what constitutes facticity is manifestly "a matter of a certain style of presenting things in what in a given time and place may be *legible as* factual" (Preziosi and Farago, 2004c, p. 13). In the process of being reworked by and filtered through "unconscious desires and defensive strategies," memories acquire both "veridical and fantastic elements" (Arnold-de Simine, 2013, p. 15).

Meanwhile, and as Henning (2006, p. 27) observes, the theatrical and dramaturgical aspect of the museum enables objects to perform while all productive activities occur out of sight; the

properties "an artefact gains through being processed by the museum come to seem its own properties." Much like Marx's account of commodity fetishism, "the labour that goes into making the object a museum object is, to use Marx's term, 'congealed' in the object, which appears to us to 'come to life' in the museum." Put in different terms, even the most "authentic arrangement" of objects is "the one that is the most rhetorically convincing because it *coheres* rather than *inheres*" (Bernard-Donals, 2016, p. 49). It is convincing because it is *vivid*. Additionally, "any attempt," Bernard-Donals (2016, p. 87) writes, "to render an event authentically" will inevitably be confronted by that which "cannot be integrated into history and memory." Any attempt to render an event authentically will be met "by the impossibility of ever being able to point to an object or an image and to finally say, 'See? That's what happened. Understand?'"

Continuing with the issue of evidence, proof and representation, Edkins' (2003, p. 17) argument is that "to require irrefutable proof of testimony is to fail to hear what is being said." Edkins (2003, p. 18) goes on to write of trauma testimony being a matter of "a witnessing of the void," and "listening to something that is not there." This brings the (impossible) representational function of the museum into stark relief: it is asked, in other words, to listen to and represent that which is not there. That those who did not survive are the "true witnesses" further ramifies this and, as Edkins (2003, p. 18) states, "this paradox forces a rethinking of what is meant by human being." This pressure to bear witness to that which is not there is another way in which the liberal-progressive museum renders its subjects into "relics." The visitor in this instance is a quiver of flesh unable to locate either the message or the proper addressee. What the museum asks, in the final analysis, is that the visitor makes herself spectral or ghost-like as, paradoxically, the only true witness to trauma is a dead witness. *We can never mourn enough*.

8.4. The Subject as Relic

8.4.1 Over the following pages, and drawing on that which has been established in the first parts of the chapter, I further elaborate on how the subject of the museum – this figure that *can never mourn enough*, this *natural historical emblem*, this creature that post-critical museology refuses to recognise – is resolved into an effervescent effigy, is rendered undead, comes to assume the strange mantle of an animated relic. In an immunitarian operation

marketed as liberatory, the liberal-progressive museum turns, I argue, the subject that is missing (the creaturely subject) into a relic.

To adapt Santner's (2006, p. xv) description of natural history, a relic is that which both demands and resists symbolisation, that is both inside and outside the symbolic order. Relics could also be said to have *validity* without meaning. Capturing the repetitious cycles of advent, ascendance and decay that structure and striate human existence amidst orders of meaning, natural history points "to the fact that the artefacts of human history tend to acquire an aspect of mute, natural being at the point where they begin to lose their place in a viable form of life [...]" (Santner, 2006, pp. 16-17). In this instance, the subject as relic is precisely that subject that exists – paradoxically – in such a state of "natural being." Furthermore, the attenuation of viable forms of life under the aegis of late capitalism mean that such processes have accelerated and intensified. This period has witnessed the death of the subject, the rise of the ironic non-subject, the apotheosis of the individual, and the emergence of the subject of trauma. As a paradigm, "the subject as relic" cleaves these various contortions.

8.4.2. The modern museum is the latest iteration in a long line of repositories for sacred remnants; an elaborate echo – or perhaps better still, a *mishearing* of an echo – of those practices relating to grave goods. Mementoes and artefacts seem to constitute a direct link to the real of events and are often treated as sacred relics. "In some sense this can be seen as a way of bringing back the sanctity of lives lost, giving them back their individuality and uniqueness" (Edkins, 2003, p. 153). Bodily relics, meanwhile, belong both to this world and the next. On the day of the Last Judgement the saint will "surely claim them back" (Hartog, 2015, pp. 153-154). Such relics are similarly traces of the past which testify to the sanctity of their owners, while also being fully existent in the present. Incorporated into the liturgies of the Church, relics are continually reactualised. As Hartog (2015, pp. 153-154) puts it, their role of intercession makes them ever-contemporary, and they function "as particularly potent *imagines agentes* or sites of memory." Meanwhile, Holocaustal relics, as Edkins (2003, p. 152) writes, seem to "escape temporality." Although intimately entwined with the living body, they survive its demise, they are the last witnesses. Another way of conceptualising such relics would be to say that they are undead.

A form of statuary, an effigy is an often life-sized sculptural representation of a particular person or archetypal figure and is today most commonly associated with makeshift dummies used for symbolic punishment and political protest. Temporary effigy were traditionally used as part of rituals to mark the change of seasons; to administer symbolic justice in jurisprudence if the perpetrator was absent or unable to be apprehended; or, in popular justice, as a means of

social shaming or exclusion. Effigies were also used in early modern France and England as part of the theatre of royal funerary rituals. Dressed in coronation garments and displaying the insignia of sovereignty, these wooden, cloth, wax or leather representations of the deceased sovereign were placed on top of the coffin and waited upon as if alive. It was precisely in this ritual that the doctrine of the King's Two Bodies was made material. They were doubles not of the body natural but of the undying Doppelgänger, or the *persona ficta* as Kantorowicz put it, of the king (Santner, 2011). This notion of the fictive nature of the king's second body is picked up by Santner who stresses that there is a vital difference between symbolic fiction and fantasy. For Santner (2011, pp. 42-43), such fictions "get a grip on the imagination of individuals and collectives" precisely because they are "ultimately sustained by the 'real stuff' of fantasy, by the dimension I have been calling the flesh."

Effigy also names those sculptural figures that adorn the tombs of the dead. Such life-sized and, until the early-modern period and Renaissance, typically recumbent figures were first found in the tombs of royalty and the clergy before spreading to adorn the tombs of nobility across Europe. The *transi*, or cadaver monument, was another feature of such tombs. These were often shown in an advanced state of decomposition reclining beneath the immaculate figure above. At this time, small figures of mourners called weepers or *pleurants* were sometimes added alongside the insignia and coats of arms as an additional adornment around the base of certain tombs. In the early-modern period, tomb effigies began to be depicted alive or lively. The recumbent effigy made a return during the Gothic revival period of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

That this revival and the advent of the Gothic novel should occur, as Dolar (1991, p. 7) notes, at the same time as the French Revolution is hardly coincidental. "There was an eruption of the uncanny strictly parallel with bourgeois (and industrial) revolutions and the rise of scientific rationality." Dolar goes on to write that monsters, ghosts, vampires and the undead flourish precisely where least expected, when you "might expect them to be dead and buried, without a place." They are, he writes, "brought about by modernity itself." Meanwhile, in Bram Stoker's late-Gothic novel *Dracula* (1897), the undead are described as being *cursed* with immortality: "They cannot die but must go on age after age adding new victims and multiplying the evils of the world." Seen in this light, and once again, the blessing of more life – of immortality – that the museum offers is also an affliction.

One of Santner's (2011, p. xiii) vital provocations is that Foucault's investigation into the new kinds of power that proliferated in modernity needs to be grasped as "a crucial contribution to the original Freudian research paradigm concerning" as he puts it, "the relation between representation and nerves." Both the Freudian and Foucauldian research paradigms are

concerned with how a certain intensification of the body, an electrification of matter, one might say, can be "correlated with disorders or shifts in the resources of representation available to subjects and the capacities of subjects to use those resources, to discharge the normative pressures they introduce into the life of subjects" (Santner, 2011, p. xiii). If the museum is thought of as a resource of representation, then the recent emphasis on affect and embodiment, on the amplification and intensification of embodied experiences should be understood as a response to the withering of its traditional resources of representation and challenges to its established representational functions.

Aimed not only at representing or holding a mirror up to reality but at both producing the real and grasping (feeding and siphoning off) the real of the subject, the museum thirsts after a piece of the real. But then again, and to accentuate agency: to manufacture a semblance of the real is the task of the museum. However, perhaps a contrivance such as r/Real is necessary here in order to highlight the museum's heightened ambivalence in this regard, with it seeking after sensible quanta *and* the real of *jouissance*. Furthermore, and applied to the matter at hand, the affected bodies that pervade today's museums come to look less like liberated subjects and more like fleshy spectres.

Relics in their most elevated form are the remains – or the partial remains – of saints. They are also, *ipso facto*, excessive. Relics are the congealed essence or vitality or energy of saints. Put differently, they carry the surplus *jouissance* of saints. Given the paradox of secularisation – that is, that we are all now "saintly," with human being itself appearing "as a kind of sacred *office* with which each member of the species is invested" (Santner, 2011, p. 44) – what implications follow from the work of the reliquary that is the museum, this mechanism dedicated to the r/Real *and* the glory of the People and the subject? And what if the subject as relic is thought of as what remains of the rotting flesh of the sublime body of the sovereign?

8.4.3. Although interspersed with material evidence, and with an emphasis on detail and event, it is the giants, these hyperreal oversized effigies that function as *Gallipoli's* primary auratic evidence. It is they that testify to the "special truth" of the trauma on display. And it is they and all that accompany them – the soundscape, the script, their sepulchral habitat – that produce the most significant affective charge with regard to the subject. These glorious latex monsters that took 24,000 hours to create, these sublime historical doppelgängers that were produced by way of the self-sacrificing doxological labours of "creative workers," function and in fact should be perceived as late-capitalist sacred relics. That the production process involved utilising contemporary models who were taken to most closely resemble the historical figures further electrifies the scene. If the uncanny is a dimension that places us in

a zone of indistinction with respect to being unable to distinguish good from bad or pleasure from displeasure, and results in an irreducible anxiety that gestures to the real, the visitor, in being confronted by these quasi-doubles – they are almost "themselves," they are almost "us" – is brought squarely into just such a realm.

A number of supplementary points need noting here. First, fallen soldiers – the "glorious dead" – remain the property, the patrimony, of the state (Edkins, 2003). Second, in being sanctified or made sacred, they are no longer ordinary people: those that fall on the battlefield do not die in the usual sense. Third, in the cult of the fallen soldiers that arose following the First World War, "the shared memory of the battlefields and the ritual attached to them" contained "strong elements of revivification" (Margalit (2003, p. 68). Such revivification took the form "of the living assuming the roles of their fallen comrades." Yet another double movement can be discerned here: that of the visitor assuming the office of the dead subject and playing dead.

As noted in Chapter Seven, Eucharistic miracles of Christ's blood materialising in miraculous hosts were feverishly sought after. Although the etymologies of guest and host cannot be rehearsed in any detail here, it is important to note that their meanings have at certain moments in history collided and coalesced. In this way, "host" has encompassed guest, the person who entertains guests, stranger and enemy (Liberman, 2013). Furthermore, the consecrated wafer of the Eucharist is known as a host or *hostia* in Latin, meaning sacrificial victim, and in the Eucharist, Christ figures as stranger, guest, victim, and host. Anatoly Liberman (2013) draws our attention to the linguistic term *enantiosemy*, meaning "a combination of two opposite senses in one word, as in Latin *altus*, 'high' and 'deep.'" The visitor in today's museum has come to take on such a quality, performing an uncanny double duty as both guest and host. The visitor as guest is envisaged as a miraculous host (with all corresponding connotations). As psychoanalysis continually stresses, the distance between antinomies is often short.

Slavoj Žižek, Kenneth Reinhard and Santner afford a further opening for us here, and one that enlarges on the idea that the "only good witness is a dead witness," in their inquiry into neighbourly love and the limits of tolerance as a model for ethical life in *The Neighbour: Three Inquires in Political Theology* (2005). Their respective essays orbit around Freud's response to the biblical injunction to "love one's neighbour as oneself," which was to suggest adopting "a naïve attitude towards it, as though we were hearing it for the first time," and Søren Kierkegaard's provocation that the only good neighbour is a *dead neighbour*. Firstly, the liberal shibboleth that is tolerance – multiculturalism as an ethic, for example – functions as a means of avoiding the creatureliness of the other (Santner, 2001). The *enjoyable* aspect of the representation of trauma and the awful relief that is the dead neighbour also needs emphasising here. Furthermore, and with this provocation of the "only good neighbour is a dead neighbour"

in mind, the problem that is the fleshy creature is able to be traversed if this neighbour is (made) *undead.* In other words, the ethical solicitations of the liberal-progressive museum – its demand for "love of neighbour" – could be seen to be precisely (if unknowingly) *undeadening*.

8.4.4. "The museum," Henning (2006, p. 18) writes, "animates objects as sources of knowledge, and simultaneously as aesthetic, auratic things." In my argument this should also include the visitor, the "new object" of the liberal-progressive museum. In this way, and in what can only be seen as an expansion of the "museum effect," the subject/visitor is animated as an aesthetic, auratic thing. A further movement both ways presents itself here. The museum's artefacts and displays, its epistemologies and corporate visions are enlivened by the visitor and vice-versa in an entanglement of branding and consumption, spectacle and engagement. Visitors are both productive of and absorbed within the spectacle, become self-disciplining and auto-doxological, intersubjectively punishing *and* glory-producing. However, and once more, it is the real of the subject (a bit of the *flesh,* a trace of *jouissance*) that such practices are thirsting after, and it is this that they are hoping to provoke and incite in their appeal for feeling. In other words: *enjoy*!

Turning back to the intercessionary functions of relics, affect should be considered in this context as another form or expression of intercession. There are a series of constituent points to consider here. For example, the very real sacramental performance of remembrance in the liberal-progressive museum needs to be seen-through the prism of autodoxology. In this logic, to be affected is its own form of potency, is a sign of grace, in the sense of the sacrament being, as Saint Augustine once described it, as "an outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible grace." The absence at the heart of life lived without transcendental supports for meaning is seen in this tragic spectacle of autodoxological remembrance, in this performance of mortifying self-glorification. In this way, the affected subject, a subject characterised by a form of quasi-mechanical animation, becomes an intercessionary object, a truly biopolitical relic.

In *The Great War Exhibition* and *Gallipoli* "we, the visitor" take on a necromantic function. Our affective labours bring the dead to life. And, concomitantly, we are brought to life in the process of animating the dead. Via the passions and traumas of the dead we are made "real." The aspiration to conjure some semblance of feeling that might mimic that of having been there relies, however, on *spectacle*. What occurs when trauma, which would seem antithetical to spectacle, is represented in precisely these terms, as an – indubitably oxymoronic – participatory or autodoxological spectacle? Glory needs to be understood here as "properly"

doxological in terms of public opinion or common belief figuring *as* glory. In this way, glory is formed from the opinions (the testimonies) of those ordinary people who fought in this campaign and the ("freely formed") affective opinions of those visitors who are moved, who cannot help but be moved by the trauma testimonies.

Visitors to the "Trench Experience" were deposited, to use Santner's (2001, p. 22) phrase employed to describe Rosenzweig's account of his own petrified unrest, into a paralytic realm of artificial death. In this space, the subject was constrained by being burdened "with an uncanny sort of surplus animation." The subject was constrained by means of *excess*, was left "stuck and paralyzed precisely by way of a certain intensification and amplification, by a 'too much' of pressure that is unable to be assumed, taken up into the flow of living" (Santner, 2001, p. 22). I can think of no better way of capturing the pressures that are called onto the scene by way of embodied remembrance practices than this image of engorgement and (inevitable) failure of metabolisation.

The subject is similarly conceived of as and rendered both auratic and abject, glorious and creaturely by the liberal-progressive museum. The subject of the liberal-progressive museum, this animated relic, is at once a nostalgic liberal fantasy; an outmoded piece of arcana; beatified, fetishized and sacralised; and reified (the subject as relic also means, of course, the subject as capitalistic – in all senses – object). The subject as relic, and to draw on and pervert Lacan's conception of the *objet petit a*, should be understood as a *partial object*. However, it is the wounded body and the injured identity that I would like to dwell on here.

The incontestable reality of the body, and as Santner (2011, pp. xvi-xvii) writes after Elaine Scarry and her recasting of the concept of transference in more social and political terms, functions as an "unspeakable piece of the real that provides the ultimate support or backing of a symbolic order, that (unconsciously) helps to make the social facts constituted within the space of representation feel real rather than fictional." What becomes manifest in both war and torture, Scarry (as cited in Santner, 2011, pp. xvi-xvii) argues, "is the process by which a made world of culture acquires the characteristics of 'reality.'" This "made world" of invented ideas, beliefs, and objects is accepted and entered into as though it has "the same ontological status as the naturally given world."

Over the course of this thesis I have discussed the idea of the museum as conceived by liberal-progressive museology desiring to be "coextensive" with those it represents, with this fantasy of authorial abnegation also being, paradoxically, one of vampiric engorgement. The subject as relic provides the most telling image of this aspiration. The social turn in the museum not only signifies a recuperation of sociality by a service economy hungry for the real thing, but, in biopolitical terms, the subject becoming the object of its reality-making processes. Simply

put, this subject provides a more plentiful and accessible source of the real. And when this subject is undead, it provides an eternal source.

Rendering the subject "dead" and performing a sacramental "revivification" simultaneously; this is the true miracle of the museum. In both death (abjectness, in other words) and revivification (the sublime, in a sense), at these limit points of human being, a piece of the real is made available or visible. The terrible magic of the museum lies in its capacity to "kill" (by removing from circulation for example or, as we have seen here, by its insistence on the "death of the subject" for the purpose of bearing witness to trauma) and revive and make immortal (by turning into heritage or making sacred). It is in this sense that exhibitions such as *The Great War Exhibition* and museums such as Te Papa function decisively within the orbit of theology. The exception, in other words, and as Carl Schmitt (2005) once noted, is analogous to the miracle.

8.4.5. The title of Andrea Witcomb's 2003 work, *Re-Imagining the Museum: Beyond the Mausoleum*, provides us with a concluding image with respect to understanding the liberal-progressive museum's (unknowing) production of the subject as relic. While Witcomb's concern was with the reinvention of the museum as a place that was "about (the) people," what I would suggest instead, and with my reworking of Kluger's aphorism in mind, is that "the mausoleum" has seeped into the everyday, into everyone. In the Santnerian sense, this leaching should be understood as productive of *more* – meaning undead – *life*.

Another way of conceiving this is presented by the ideal of *rex exsomnis*, the figure of the sleepless king, the perpetually vigilant sovereign. The dispersal of this (*undreaming*) "dream figure" into the everyday fabric of modern life could be seen to complement the diffusion of the mausoleum. For Santner (2015, pp. 36-37), "the 24/7 regime of neoliberal capitalism" should be grasped as "a sort of popularisation/democratisation of the ideal of the *rex exsomnis*." I would suggest that this figure may also serve as a cipher for understanding the subject of the museum, this animated relic, this figure characterised by a state of *petrified unrest*.

8.5. Fixing the Panic-Stricken Kink in the Neck

In terms of the thesis problematic and the question of how the poetical-analytical framework can occupy and reconfigure the relation between the museum and post-critical museology, intervention with regard to the impasse that arises with production of "the subject as relic" *matters*. The impasse takes the form of points of impossibility in the dialectic of "enchantment" and "empiricism" that (unknowingly) propel both the museum and post-critical museology. This impasse undermines the abilities of both liberal-progressive museum practice and post-critical museology to represent the r/Real of the past and the r/Real of the subject. By turning the subject into a relic, this representational impasse is both magically resolved *and* kept alive. Such operations ensure that the subject's *panic-stricken kink in the neck* is "fixed." In the following chapter "Liturgy," I further expand on these dynamics, while in the Conclusion I seek to establish the grounds by which intervention into such dynamics may be made.

Nine

Liturgy

> What *powers* authority? What in us responds to it? How is *vital energy* turned into *social form*? Conversely, how do social forms activate new *vital potentials*? Why do certain times, people, places, and things feel *heightened* in relation to humdrum life? How are we to understand not just the *meanings* to which we find ourselves attached but also their *rhythms*? What is the social basis of commitment, engagement, identification, and desire? In short: how is it that we have not only meaning, but *meaning that matters*?
>
> — *William Mazzarella* (2017, pp. 2-3)

9.1. Fundamental Purpose/s

9.1.1. Returning to a question we heard Carol Duncan (1995, p. 3) pose in the introduction of this thesis: "What fundamental purposes do museums serve in the context of Western societies?" To take this question a step further: what fundamental purpose should (a) critical museology serve? As deployed here, liturgy draws together – *in a flash* – the constellatory elements that comprise the poetical-analytical schema, a schema that seeks answers to these questions. Put differently, liturgy functions as a quilting point for this museal methodology designed to contest the hegemony of post-critical and liberal-progressive museologies and, in turn, foment the conditions of existence for (a) critical museology, for a museology that brings the creature that is the subject into the "heart" of its language.

A liquescent formulary, liturgy is employed here as a means of accounting for the mutations of ideology in the museum and museology; for getting to grips with the relation between the subject, the museum and museology. Liturgy names the point at which the museum and the

subject coalesce, a point of coalescence aimed (hopelessly) at plugging the hole in the socio-symbolic order. The liturgical apparatuses, practices and subjects of modernity are tasked – via the production of glory – with filling the core groundlessness that marks the representational order in which they operate and out of which they emerge. In this way, the poetical-analytical schema names and seeks to flesh out some of the ways in which the museum in the present (unknowingly) (mis)manages the representational pressures that have arisen in modernity. My contention is that post-critical and liberal-progressive museologies have consistently misapprehended these pressures and hence the fundamental purpose of "the museum."

A series of insights with respect to questions of fundamental purposes are provided by Agamben in his work *The Kingdom and the Glory* (2011), a work that traces the "economies of glory that attend the formation and sustenance of power in West" (Schaeffer, 2017). In this work, Agamben (2011, p. 245) describes the apparatus of glory as finding its "perfect cipher in the majesty of the empty throne. Its purpose is to capture within the governmental machine that unthinkable inoperativity – making it its internal motor – that constitutes the ultimate mystery of divinity." For Agamben, glory (doxology) and ceremonials are essential to power.

What is at stake with regard to glory, "is the capture and inscription in a separate sphere of the inoperativity that is central to human life" (Agamben, 2011, p. 245). Glory-producing "festivals" – and I place the museum firmly within such bounds – return ceaselessly in "the dreams and political utopias of the Occident," Agamben (2011, p. 246) continues, "and are equally incessantly shipwrecked there." "They are," he writes, "the enigmatic relics that the economic-theological machine abandons at the water's edge of civilization, nostalgically and in vain."

> Nostalgically because they appear to contain something that belongs to the human essence, but in vain because they are really nothing but the waste products of the immaterial and glorious fuel burnt by the motor of the machine as it turns, and that cannot be stopped. (Agamben, 2011, p. 246)

In terms of my argument, in the act of "eating the flesh" and "drinking the blood," the auto-vampiric and cannibalistic nature of the socio-symbolic order – it functioning by liturgically *feeding off itself* – is brought to light. And it is precisely here that the liberal-progressive museum performs its most valuable function: the undead relics of that liberal-progressivism provide everlasting ingredients for a never-ending (*fleshy*) meal.

9.1.2. Derived from the ancient Greek *leitourgia*, meaning "work of" or "work for" the people, though with the caveat that this typically denoted public service performed voluntarily by wealthy Athenians, liturgy is the name given to those forms or formularies according to which public religious worship, especially Christian worship, is conducted. The liturgical genealogy that I draw on is that of it being the official public expression of the Christian Church in the world. Liturgy responds to, structures and gives rise to participation in the sacred, establishing relationships with both the divine as well as with those other liturgical participants in and out of time. Whether of thanksgiving, remembrance, praise, repentance, or supplication, liturgical activity is dependent on ceremonial symbols and acclamation.

Liturgy functions here in structural, theological and socio-historical senses. First, I locate the subject of the museum within the lineage of Eucharistic liturgy and eschatological traditions in order to expand on the role the museum plays in the (mis)management of the flesh, and in its conversion of blood into glory. Second, I consider the function of liturgical acclamations for the purpose of further fleshing-out the way in which liberal-progressive museum practice turns the "subject that is missing" into a relic. It needs reiterating that *as a relic* the subject is at once unable to act upon its socio-historical situation while providing an endless font of glory. In a final movement, a movement that draws together the ideas developed in these pages, I apply a liturgical lens to the idea of the museum effect, to the way in which the museum *makes matter*.

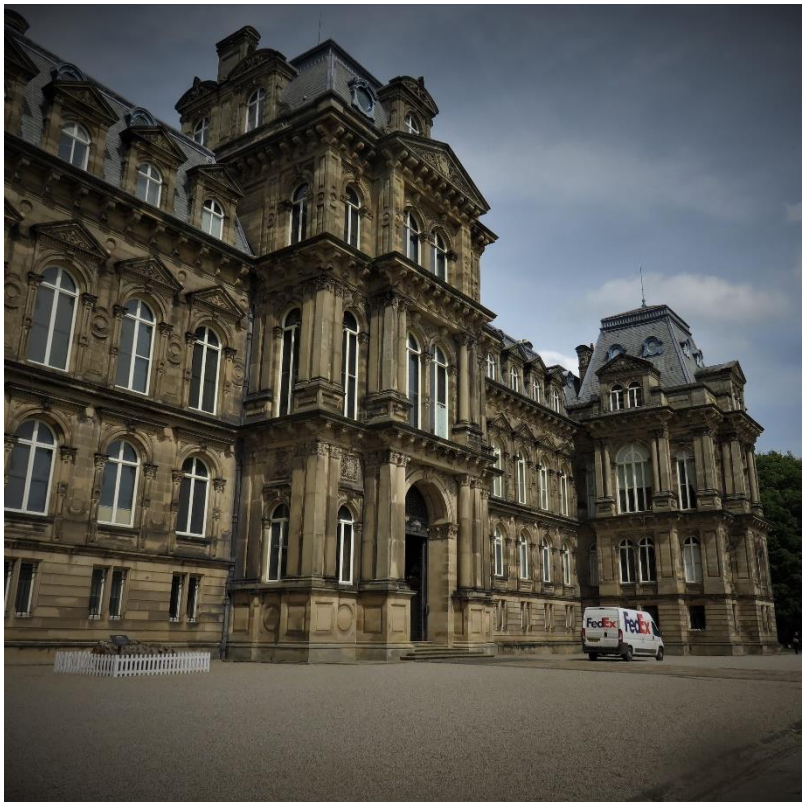
With respect to the critical lineage of liturgy and its relationship to ideology, the foundations for this liturgical turn are found in the work of Santner. For Santner (2015, pp. 87-88), ideology remains "too attached to the ideational, to thought and image." Liturgy, on the other hand, focuses attention on the "the practices in and through which they form and consolidate the value – and so, at some level, the valour, the glory, the splendour – of their social being." As I understand it, and in terms of its application here, liturgy affords a more acute optic for studying the subject's absorption in and petrification by the very "matter" that it produces. It also opens up how it is that "the museum" is "made (to) matter" by the liturgical labours of its subjects, is formed as an effluence of "the mass."

9.1.3. Some of the complexities of the subject's liturgical labours and the liturgies of "the museum" may be introduced – impressionistically – as follows. On the pastoral outskirts of the market town of Barnard Castle in the north of England stands a nineteenth-century French Empire-style château. The Bowes Museum opened to the public on the 10th of June 1892, the same year Picton Museum's (empty) throne was carved in the Chatham Islands. Housing an internationally significant collection of fine and decorative arts, it was built at the behest of

John and Joséphine Bowes; the former a successful businessmen and illegitimate son of the 10th Earl of Strathmore who, although not inheriting his father's title was in receipt of his Durham estates and profited from the coal reserves on his land; and the later, born Joséphine Coffin-Chevallier, a Parisian actress and amateur painter who, according to the Museum's website (2021), "shared John's love of the arts."

Figure Twelve

Front entrance of the Bowes Museum, 2019.

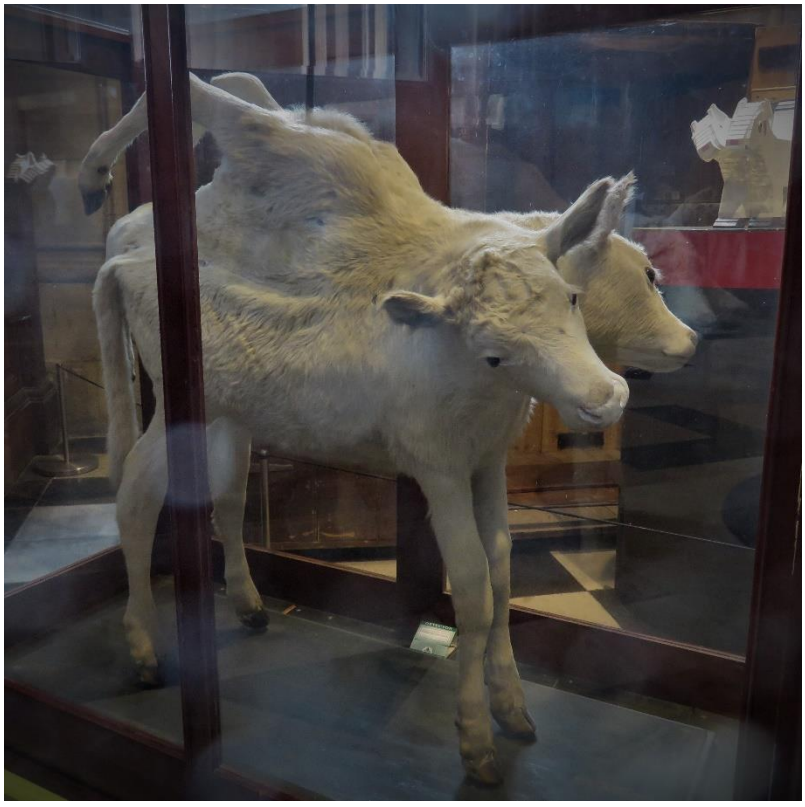


Once married in 1852, the couple began "to develop the idea of creating a world-class museum back in John's ancestral home of Teesdale in order to introduce the wider world of art to the local people" (Bowes Museum, 2021). Between 1862 and 1874 the couple purchased some 15,000 objects, with construction of the museum beginning in 1869. Although both Joséphine and John died prior to its completion, the project continued and in its first year it is said to have attracted 63,000 visitors. The Museum houses works by artists such as Canaletto, El Greco, Tiepolo and Goya, porcelain produced at Sèvres, and marquetry attributed to André-Charles Boulle. "The magnificent legacy that John and Joséphine left to the people of

Teesdale," the website (2021) states, "retains its charm and intrigue yet sympathetic developments have made the attraction a popular, vibrant and exciting day out for all."

Figure Thirteen

The Bowes Museum's double-headed calf with LEGO® version behind, 2019.



Together with my wife and in-laws, in June of 2019 I visited the Bowes Museum. After crossing the River Tees, we skirted the ruins of the town's eponymous castle, meandered around the octagonal market cross, before, on a rise set back from the road and with parterres in front and woodlands behind, being met by the incongruous pile itself. In the entrance hall stood a glass vitrine in which gambolled a two-headed calf and next to it a crude LEGO® model of this same creature. As it turned out, the Museum had run a competition to find out which item from the collection people most wanted to see reproduced in LEGO®. It was described on an information panel as being a pair of White Dales Shorthorn calves which developed as identical twins but did not separate before birth. Born with "7 legs, 2 heads, 2 tails, 4 ears, 4 eyes, 2 mouths, 2 backbones" on a farm near the famous High Force waterfall in the mid-1900s, it "didn't live very long." The calf was taxidermied and toured around local

fairs before being donated to the Bowes Museum in 1977, where it has been "an unusual favourite ever since!"

Upstairs, I looked upon an implacable marble bust of Napoléon Bonaparte; fourth century CE Roman beakers; a diminutive baroque cornucopia from seventeenth-century Flemish still-life painter Cornelis de Heem; ornate nineteenth century pot pourri vases from the Staffordshire potteries of Stoke-on-Trent; winsome scenes painted by Joséphine Bowes.

A little before two o'clock, the Museum's hum began to converge and concentrate in the main gallery, with visitors gathering expectantly around a life-sized silver swan. Its plated feathers shimmering in a lagoon, the swan rested, motionless. A functionary appeared. After a brief introduction in which the musical automaton was described as the finest example in the UK, with great solemnity he inserted a starter-handle into the base, pressed a button, and the bird became animate.

> To the plinkety plonk of metallic chords, the bird looks left, peers right and swings its neck around to preen its lustrous feathers. It swings back and appears to spot fish in the running 'water' at its feet. It darts down and raises its beak to display its catch, chews and swallows it. (Holledge, 2012)

Lasting for less than forty seconds, the display relies on an intricate concatenation of clockwork mechanisms. Constructed in 1773, it was the creation of London showman James Cox and watchmaker and inventor John Joseph Merlin. The only artefact like it is the "Peacock Clock" in the State Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg, which was bought by Catherine the Great in 1781.

Given the heterogeneous liturgies that it draws on and responds to and the amalgam of liturgical elements out of which it is comprised – texts, scripts, acclamations, symbols, relics, officiants, participants – it is unsurprising that it is a multivalent liturgical spell that the Bowes Museum casts. This bourgeois pleasure-palace is a space of Egyptomanical disciplinary fantasy and corrective pleasures. It is a space of liberal and capitalistic mirage production at both "high" and "low" ends of the spectrum, of splendour and doxa.

In this space we are invited *to pass* as sovereign. Seething with ideological phantasms and spectres, "within it" are premonitions of the counter-revolutionary fascist museums of the 1930s. Within it are hints of the promise of the Louvre. Within it are remnants of what the failure of the French Revolution called onto the scene. Within it are visions of the flesh of the sovereign dispersing and re-congealing. The subject of the Bowes Museum, a subject animated by the enigmatic aftereffects of the various climactic pleasures and pressures of modernity, is called on to resonate, is called on to produce a "certain type of energy," is called

on to produce *glory*. Further to this, although in modernity the subject may take on *the dignity of the prince* (Santner, 2011), the throne remains empty. Glory, it needs stressing, does not so much fill-in as fill-out. Equally, we may enjoy the office of the prince, of the image or feeling of the throne, but the enjoyment is not our own. Agamben's empty throne should be read as correlative to Žižekian (1997) formulations such as "the big Other does not exist." *Striking at what is not there* means, in this instance, precisely that.

9.2. Liturgy, Eucharist, Eschatology

9.2.1. Liturgy is similarly the source from which the Church's life flows and the summit to which that life is directed. Liturgy may confer or impart divine grace, may work to sanctify, but it cannot function without popular participation. A generative *and* climactic activity, liturgy is an oxymoronic participatory spectacle. It is the Eucharistic liturgy of Mass or Holy Communion, that incarnational ritual that emulates the Last Supper, which is of particular interest here, with the museum conceived as an echo of the Eucharist, this sacramental feast – this sharing of and in flesh and blood – to which "everyone is invited." In other words, the concept of liturgy assists in understanding the dispersal and the afterlife of the royal remains, the spectral matter that Santner theorises as "the flesh."

By placing liturgy in relation to the Lacanian concept of *extimacy* further insights into such dynamics emerge. With regard to extimacy, and as Mazzarella (2017, p. 4) asks: "What, exactly, is activated by the charismatic leader or by the desirable brand? Where is it? Is it inside us or outside us?" Such questions are enriched by thinking of them liturgically. For example, and in terms of the museum, by conceiving of the "business" (and the *power*) of the museum as liturgical, its role in the production of social bonds and the office of the subject is able to be perceived *de novo*. Firstly, liturgy is both an activity of the mass, that is, of the people, *and* a mass which excretes the People with a capital P and its subjects, its public members. By apprehending liturgy in terms of *discharge*, as both satisfying and terminating, as liberating and expelling, as a matter of a discharging of surplus and a discharging of duty, the fleshy aspects of the work of the museum are freshly illuminated.

It needs to be recalled that libido is "the very substance of a wound correlative to the emergence of the human subject (as represented by a signifier)" (Santner, 2011, p. 69). As an "*informe* surplus of immanence," an inflammatory pressure rubbing against the skin of

"modern man," "a new symbolic knotting or suturing of *physis* and *nomos*," the flesh references both "man's being as animal and his being as locus of initiative in the space of reasons, commitments, responsibilities" (Santner, 2015, pp. 23-24). Put otherwise, libido and trauma, the flesh and the wound must be theorised together.

In discussing Roberto Esposito's (2008) immunitarian paradigm and specifically the question of the flesh in the Christian tradition as found in the writings of Saint Paul, Santner (2011, pp. 29-30) makes the point that for Esposito the critical Pauline operation involves "the transfiguration of the *flesh* into the animating principle of *corporate* integrity and unity." Rather than expelling the flesh, Esposito writes, Paul conceived of its "incorporation into an organism" that is capable of domesticating its "centrifugal and anarchic impulses."

> Only the spiritualisation of the body (or better, the incorporation of a spirit that is capable of redeeming man from the misery of his corruptible flesh) will allow him entrance into the mystical body of the church. (Esposito as cited in Santner, 2011, pp. 29-30)

The decisive technology of such a conversion being the sacrament of the Eucharist, this liturgical practice conceived to stimulate what Esposito terms the salvific passage from flesh to body. The museum, I argue, should be understood as an inflammatory point of Eucharistic convergence, should be grasped as one of the administrators of such salvific passage.

With respect to my field of inquiry, glory and trauma are understood to be held in irreducible tension in the museum, feeding off one another and being fed by – and being fed through – the museum's liturgical operations. Museums are ecumenical, are – in theory – open to everyone and everything. Museums are omnivorous, are endlessly incorporative and relentlessly assimilative. Museums are stimulants, are sites of incitation and excitation. Museums are paradoxically necromantic, rendering the subject *undead*. Museums are Eucharistic *and* eschatological. While on the one hand consumed by the idea and promise of the enjoyment of shared meals, on the other the museum is preoccupied with the end time of trauma and with end times more generally. Of course, the two overlap and converge. For example, the Eucharist functions precisely via the consumption of Christ's flesh and blood.

In discussing Foucault's account of the shifting regimes of power in modernity and, specifically, the spectacle of the scaffold, the ritualised spectacle of punishment that functioned to (re)affirm sovereign power, Tony Bennett (1995, p. 95) notes that "although often little remarked, the exhibition of past regimes of punishment became, and remains, a major museological trope." If the parameters of punishment are extended, if we take, for example, capitalistic wars and relations of production as forms of punishment, this becomes ever more pertinent. However, Bennett's (1995, p. 95) principal argument was that museums

and the exhibitionary complex came to supplant "the scene of punishment in taking on the function of displaying power to the populace."

The rhetorical economy of the power that was displayed was, however, significantly altered.

> Rather than embodying an alien and coercive principle of power which aimed to cow the people into submission, the museum – addressing the people as a public, as citizens – aimed to inveigle the general populace into complicity with power by placing them on this side of a power which it represented to it as its own. (Bennett, 1995, p. 95)

If this inveiglement is read via the lenses of the flesh, sovereign *jouissance* and Eucharistic liturgy, the strangely benign picture painted by Bennett takes on a different countenance. We may have been placed on the side of power, the place of power is now *our place* but that is not to say that this power ("our" power!) is not treacherous or maniacal. Our flesh, according to the logic of liturgy, cannot be severed from the flesh of the Other. And this flesh – this bit of sovereign *jouissance* – is always excessive.

9.2.2. Before more directly addressing the Eucharistic "character" of the museum, I would like to rehearse and further elaborate on Santner's argument vis-à-vis the place of the flesh in modern society. For Foucault, the body of the king, with its "strange material and physical presence," and with a *force* that "he himself deploys or transmits to some few others," is at the opposite extreme of the new physics of power, of the relational and multiple power that emerged at the threshold of modernity. The "maximum intensity" of this new power is, for Foucault, found not in the "person of the king," but rather in those bodies that are "individualised by these relations." However, Santner (2011) argues that an intervention must be made in this account, in that:

> [...] insofar as the agents of this new physics imagine themselves as addressing the care and discipline of living bodies and the biological life and health of populations rather than securing the strange materiality of the 'flesh' – the bit of the real that underwrites the circulation of signs and values – they do not and cannot fully grasp the urgency of their tasks. (p. xv)

In a word, they know not what they do: *the flesh has no home*.

In the process of the dispersal of the virtually real supplement to the king's mortal body, new practices and forms of knowledge, power and administration were summoned onto the scene (Santner, 2011). These biopolitical practices and institutions were charged with coming to

terms with and, indeed, cultivating these royal remains, remains that had dispersed into the life of the People. Vitally, biopolitics, which is "in essence a politics of pure immanence," erroneously conflates the flesh "with the organs and tissues of the biological body" (Santner, 2011, p. 61). For Santner, biopolitics must be read alongside psychoanalysis and with the aftereffects of political theology in mind. In other words, the neurological lineage of Freud's "new science" needs to be supplemented. It needs to take into account the "second body" that *is* the flesh and "its emergence out of a displacement and redistribution of 'emergency powers' previously concentrated in, *enjoyed* and *embodied* by, the sovereign person" (Santner, 2015, pp. 23-24). Psychoanalysis, Santner (2015, p. 24) argues, should be conceived as the science of those royal remains. The museum, I suggest, is precisely one of the institutions (unknowingly) tasked with getting to grips with these royal remains, remains that insist beyond reason as "a quasi-discursive and quasi-somatic pressure in the souls of modern citizens" (Santner, 2015, p. 24).

As previously noted, Santner's (2011, p. xx) ongoing concern is with locating that which "animates, deadens, and 'undeadens' human life in the vicissitudes of the normative pressures that human beings take on by virtue of being subjects of symbolic systems." Because "the enjoyment of life and goods is always intertwined with processes and procedures of symbolic entitlement or investiture, the very value of human life – what makes life worth living and what causes it to matter – is subject to enormous fluctuation" (Santner, 2011, p. xx). That the museum archives – whether actively or otherwise – these fluctuations is well understood. But that it is productive of them is typically overlooked. Being a subject means to be subject to precisely such oscillations, and it is the story of the administration of these fluctuations in early modern and modern societies that Santner attends to in *The Royal Remains*. Santner's (2011, p. xx) argument is that both historically and in the present these have been managed "by means of the logic of sovereignty, according to which, to use Lacan's (distinctly Hobbesian) formulation, a master 'signifier"' comes to represent the subject for all other signifiers, all other bearers of symbolic value."

For Jennifer Rust (2012, p. 5), Santner's work is "most powerful where it urges us to recognize the remains of the 'Mass' (the liturgy of incarnation) at the heart of the social and political forms which constitute the modern 'mass' or multitude." In its original form, the mystical body was confected in the incarnational liturgy of the Mass. Christ's body, Rust writes (2012, p. 7), was made present in and through the sacrament. This ritual, as previously noted, needs to be understood precisely as a form of social bond. Moreover, in the pre-modern Mass participants constituted the Body of Christ as a mystical body. In their immanent participation they were infused with the sublime substance of the divine made flesh.

Appropriated by the singular sovereign and refashioned into or *as* the King's second sublime body, this liturgically generated social flesh then suffered a further dispersal in modernity. As a mechanism of affect, as a collector and producer of those virtually-real fragments or semblances of the real – of surplus *jouissance* – that sustain individual and communal life, the museum is structured along the lines of just such liturgies of incarnation. The museum hails and summons, gives form to matter and matter to form. Te Papa – "Our Place," this place that is about love, this place of changing hearts, minds and lives – exemplifies the Eucharistic ecstasies and fantasies of the (new) museum. The logic of the museum as a liturgical underwriter is on display in Te Papa and it is precisely because of it being *our place* that this logic is able to function so effectively.

As one of those institutions tasked with *incarnating* this *excarnated* principle of sovereignty, the museum *describes* one of these altars. It is one of the functionaries that produces such potent fictions as that of the sovereign People or the fleshy spectre that is the "sovereign subject." Its function must be thought of not simply as epistemic but doxological. It is one of those new apparatuses of knowledge and control that emerged out of an intimation that there was more to manage than "organs" and "tissues" without being able to conceptualise just what was at stake. What could be said to enflame the museum is that it treads – unwittingly in the sense of them being operations that exceed the operational – a precarious line between accumulating, elaborating on, giving form to and, crucially, stimulating this excarnated principle, this surplus of immanence that is the flesh.

9.2.3. The Eucharist, this act of remembrance of Christ's sacrifice of himself on the cross and his commission of the apostles at the Last Supper, is at once a ritual of emulation and a ritual *for* the future. That the Eucharist – word and worship, script and performance – forms a body, the body of Christ, the body of the Christian church, signifies that it cannot be reduced to its content. Eucharistic liturgy, as Rust observed above, makes the church. When read *per* the Eucharist, the modern ideal of the museum to not only represent, as Duncan put it, our "highest values" (which means, in fact, our highest power) but to "to be of and for all" is able to be conceived anew. Of course, the impossibility of this aspiration, which was elaborated on by Clark (1999) and Santner (2011) in their accounts of David's *Death of Marat*, means that it must be understood as a form of pure activity or dream work. As Clark (1999, p. 29) remarked, "No doubt [David] saw in the cult of Marat the first forms of a liturgy and ritual in which the truths of revolution itself would be made flesh – People, Nation, Virtue, Reason, Liberty."

This endeavour was of course a cul-de-sac: “the empty upper half of the image forms not so much a vacancy as the site of an excess of pressure, a signifying stress that opens onto a vision of painting as pure drive” (Santner, 2011, p. 93). The Eucharist, this sharing of and in the sublime flesh and blood – the *second body* – of Christ, or, in more expansive terms, this consumption of those things that underwrite divinity or sovereignty, that serve as (fantastic, mystical) consumable master signifiers, should be understood as a means of magically resolving this representational impasse. This image of the museum providing opportunity for the consumption and enjoyment of sovereignty is one that I would like the reader to keep in mind. Further to this, one of the most notable successes of the new museum could be said to have been the discovery of more effective means of enabling such consumption (for all – and no matter how fantastical).

As a space of representation and resource of representation that produces and regulates symbolic identities, the museum performs a crucial role in liturgically generating, sustaining and managing our social offices and bonds and, indeed, *enjoyment* of these offices and bonds. However, such bonds and offices are always in excess. Our thrownness in the world is not simply a product of finding ourselves in the midst of social formations or structures, such as language, class, family, or gender, or inhabiting offices that we did not choose. Instead, it is a consequence of the fact that these formations – formations that we are addressed and ex-cited by and answerable to – are themselves not only permeated by inconsistency and incompleteness but are always excessive. The symbolic predicates of the liturgy will not only never fit, they will always be too much.

Today, the liberal-progressive museum asks that we perform our own alienation, that we *enjoy* our ideological entrapment. The emphasis on inclusion, tolerance and democratisation (Kletchka, 2018), on shared meals, situates the subject at an impossible angle with respect to “power.” As previously noted, we are not only brought onto the side of power but are asked to think of this in affirmative terms. We are compelled to feel this sovereign immanence as pleasurable. We are supposed to enjoy (in scopic and autoerotic terms) our (imagined) sovereignty. The movement from representation to self-representation and (allegedly) un-mediated affective experience within the museum has, once more, further enflamed this too-muchness.

The Santnerian flesh, as Goodman (2015, p. 2) reminds us, must be understood as “a *spectral substance* that forms *at* and *as* the unstable jointure of the somatic and the normative dimensions of human life.” It is the “stuff” that constitutes the gap between our biological being and the historical forms of life in which human communities unfold. It is, as Schaefer (2017) notes, “through the collective work of fantasy that the ‘enigmatic jointure’ binds

together subjects, making them feel invested in a larger polity." The flesh – that which makes us "hum" – covers over or redeems an absence, a missing foundation at the core of our lives. Sovereign power can never absolve itself of its own groundlessness but must instead work – or work out ways which involve as little expenditure as possible – to cover the gap. It can do this, for example, either through explicitly coercive measures or by the production of compelling fictions, or, most effectively, via the conjuring of fleshy fantasies. As Breger (2012) notes, accounts of the fictive character of authority have tended to miss the ways in which such fictions are sustained by the very real stuff of fantasy. This *very real stuff of fantasy* could be said to be precisely the domain of the museum.

9.2.4. In their integrating of the somatic and semiotic, in their coalescing of "law" and "religion," in their ever-tense coupling of the real and reality, in their uneasy merging of pleasure and stricture, in their manufacture of the (already dialectical) very real stuff of fantasy, the museum functions to structure and sustain our ideological captivation. It is a structure that facilitates the ordering of the fragments of the past and also one that functions as a locus of our vitality. However, this order may be productive of psychopathology and this vitality may be potentially undeadening (Santner, 2001). Those passionate attachments that are in fact – or, better still, are also – defensive fantasy formations and that Santner gave the name Egyptomanical, are assembled and cultivated in the museum. As seen in both *Gallipoli* and *The Great War Exhibition*, confrontation with horror may be an elaborate system of avoidance. The true horror (the *real* of war) is not located on the battlefield but in the systems and structures that precipitated ─indeed demanded – the bloodshed.

Janet Marstine (as cited in Bennett, 2013, p. 16) notes that today's museums, and whether explicitly or otherwise, still aspire to the iconic image of a sacred space: "In the paradigm of the shrine, the museum has therapeutic potential. It is a place of sanctuary removed from the outside world." Further to this, and as Susan Bennett (2013, p. 16) argues, "the idea of the museum as shrine or sanctuary requires passive spectators to complete its purpose." I would suggest, however, that this is a fundamental misreading of sacred space and the liturgies that make such spaces. To describe those lay participants involved in the production of the sacred as passive spectators is to overlook the insight that the Eucharistic liturgy *makes* the church. The idea that today's experiential and participatory models represents a decisive break with the old is a non-sequitur. What is different is the expectation that this interpellation will, with cynical reason in mind, be similarly disavowed *and* enjoyed.

Liturgy – as both source and summit – is precisely the name given to such acts of (auto)doxological participatory constitution. To rework a passage from Mazzarella (2017, pp.

19-20) addressing Durkheim and the concept of mana, the museum's fantasy productions may be deemed a success when – vis-à-vis extimacy *qua* ideology – one is able to conceive of them "in the form of a moral power that, while immanent in us," also represent "something in us that is other than ourselves." Santner (2011, pp. 18-19) provides a bridge between this, *jouissance*, and the real when he writes that "the work of fantasy is the way in which forms of life find and elaborate their imaginary access to this bit of the real that sustains the vibrancy of its resources of representation." In more expansive terms: "The question of world making has never been separable from the question of how worlds recruit and condition subjects that come to understand themselves through, and thus also reproduce, those worlds" (Mazzarella, 2017, pp. 19-20).

9.2.5. Eschatology is that part of theology concerned with last things, with death, judgement, and the final destiny of the soul and of humankind. It deals with questions of immortality, rebirth, resurrection, and the end of time. It also provides a further politico-theological frame with which to comprehend the temporal labours of the museum: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10). First, the museum is tasked with presiding over the dead, beatifying and condemning, resurrecting and making immortal, providing potential sources of nourishment for the future, for the "end times."

More than this, the museum form is an elaborate and ongoing funereal ritual – a requiem mass – for the mortal body (*matter*) and for the sublime body of the endlessly deposed (perpetually crucified) sovereign and for sovereignty itself. The modern museum took on the role of coping with and managing the sublime sacred soma once belonging to the King and now belonging (uncertainly and unevenly) to each and every one of us. Belonging to us, moreover, as rotting flesh. It is in this sense that the museum should be understood as biopolitical. Managing the divine life substance of the People *via* the management of the life of the relics in their collections, the manufacture of "the heritage," and the production of the subject-as-relic, all of these are biopolitical operations.

In the bureaucracy of the modern nation-state, the figure of the doctor, Rust (2012) observes, is:

> invested with powers that blend together the sacerdotal and the scientific, becoming the priests who administer a biopolitical liturgy, the incarnational ritual which invest the bodies of citizens with a 'surplus of immanence' as they negotiate the distribution of the sovereign 'flesh.' (p. 7)

The museum is tasked with turning the debris of human endeavours (natural history) into heritage and then insulating said transmuted debris from the ravages of time. To bring it to something of a formula, the precarious operation the museum is engaged in, and by means of this intoxicating and inexorably estranging heritage (a different form of surplus immanence), is to ex-cite the People and the subject – the sublime flesh of the People and the subject – and then insulate them (hopelessly, failingly, over and over again) from the ravages of time.

The requiem of the museum is seemingly paradoxical in that it is dedicated to the production of more life (glory and grace) via dead life. It is a similarly biopolitical and thanatopolitical operation. It is also at once a mass for the dead and, bearing in mind the subject of the museum is a relic, a mass for the *undead*. It is at this point that the line between Eucharist and eschatology begins to blur, and it is here that the museum's production of glory (via historical debris) is able to be perceived as shading into (a) death-drive. Once again, however, neither *know what they do*: the operations performed by the museum endlessly miss the/ir mark.

As one of the administrators of the modern biocratic (Rust, 2012) state, the museum is tasked with managing and bearing witness to this excessive sacral flesh (the vitality that is in a certain sense *undeadening*) they can neither fully close around nor contain or control. As an official representative of the normative order, the museum is charged with attending to that which is normatively binding. Crucially, however, and as Santner (2020, p. 35) explains, *jouissance* lies at the heart of normativity: "What would seem to exceed the confines of a normative order" needs to be "grasped as being of the same nature as what sustains it, indeed as the very source of the normative pressure exerted by the order on its members." The museum's liturgical acclamations both call this "too much" of the sovereign exception (sovereign *jouissance*) onto the scene and attempt to manage it.

To expand on a formulation already proposed, the exception is analogous not only to the miracle but to *jouissance*. It is that which is neither inside nor outside but produced and determined in a relation of immanent transcendence. Bearing in mind that the state of exception may also be used to describe the "space of indistinction between *symbolic fiction* and *fundamental fantasy*, a space where the primal father *refuses to be refused* and returns in all his fleshy excess and overproximity" (Santner, 2011, p. 26). The museum is precisely predicated on excess and overproximity. It is perhaps *the* site at which this surplus of immanence is "collected" and "represented."

Meanwhile, this exception (this sovereign *jouissance*) being (or appearing to be) loving and affecting and, in a sense, *ours*, rather than overtly terrible (or simply authoritative or at a distance), prompts further degrees of volatility and contortions in the subject of "the great feast." That the mystical conception of eschatology involves the end of reality and, ultimately

and at least in anticipation, a (re)union with that which is divine provides an additional layer of interest here. In other words, the Eucharistic liturgies of the museum are always-already eschatological: the museum's production of "more life" – of *glory* – is inexorably *undeadening*.

9.3. Liturgical Acclamation

9.3.1. Close to the terminus of Frank O'Hara's poem *Ode to Michael Goldberg ('s Birth and Other Births)* (1991, p. 132) is a quotation:

> "the exquisite prayer
> to be new each day
> brings to the artist
> only a certain kneeness"

O'Hara's scant-expansive lines hint at the semiotic stresses and pressures (the "exquisite prayer") that animate and haunt the body; a body that is, whether literally or otherwise, brought to its knees – often ecstatically – by such doxological acclamations, by such acts of liturgical supplication. The focus of the following pages could be said to be how the museum brings us to our knees, how it may be said to incite – in our name and increasingly with our *voice* – "a certain kneeness." "Our" acclamations, in other words, render us *relics*.

Santner's argument in both *The Royal Remains* and *The Weight of All Flesh* was that "societies put to work what does not work in human life, and they do so by a very large extent doxologically." Doxological labour is that work "individuals and societies do to make add up what does not add up, to convert into glory and splendour those *anstössig*, disturbing remainders left to us, precisely, by our life amid enigmatic signifiers" (Santner, 2015, pp. 272-273). With Agamben squarely in mind, Santner suggests that the effluence of sacramental and liturgical actions "that forms the true *subject-matter* of Kantorowicz's *King's Two Bodies* is, in the end, really a sort of sublimated inoperativity."

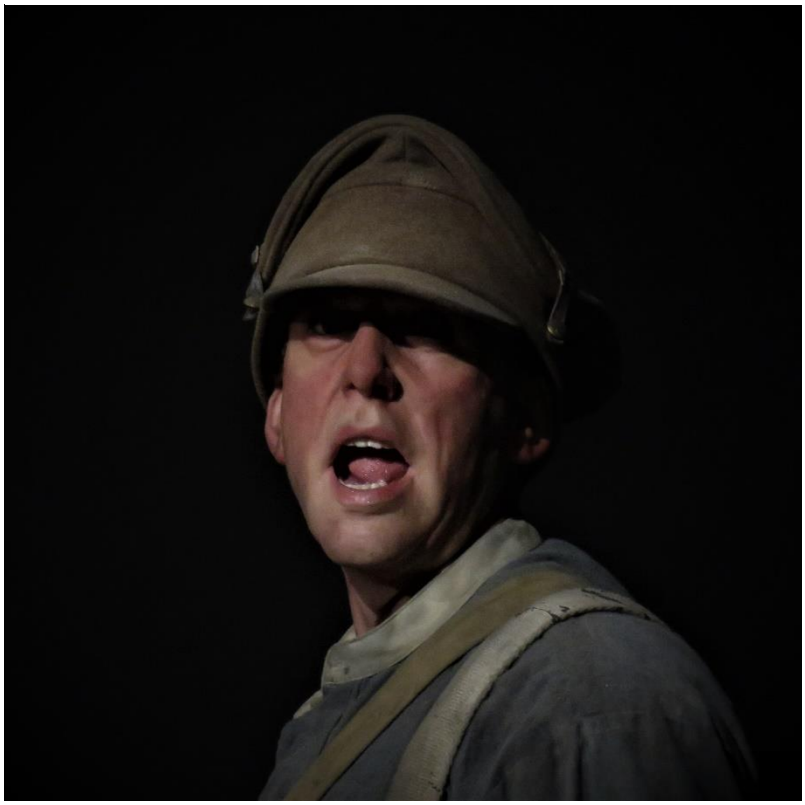
Derived from the Latin *acclamatio*, acclamation is a form of election that does not use a ballot and, evidently, an expression of typically vociferous benediction or approval. To acclaim is to endorse or authorise, to bless, to bestow. I would like the reader to recall Santner's (2015, pp. 102-103) remark concerning the need to strike at the "liturgical labour in and through which the transferential dynamic" of glory production and consumption is enacted, labour that "is

itself always already a response to a call." As one of those liturgical machines of glory that ceaselessly attempts to capture inoperativity within itself, the museum stages call and counter-call in a loop without end.

The liturgies that continually found and are the fundament of the museum are echoes of those performative acclamations that called divinity and sovereignty into being. These museal acclamations are bound together – intimately, fractiously – with *doxa*. Public opinion and public service continually rotate around one another in a sickly carousel. Every public act of the museum is a form of acclamation. Each and every announcement, presentation, display or text may be read as *acclamatio*, as the culmination of an "election" (or as, quite simply, that which has been "elected"). "The museum" forms from the affective elections of the People, from public opinion. Not only does the museum stage and coalesce "the public good" but it – this metonym for the representational order – feeds on it, it feeds on those affective doxological acclamations that comprise "the public good." When doxa is fed through (and understood to be generated by) the sensational and kaleidoscopic prism of affect it becomes a potent and hazardous "substance." It becomes *fleshy*. Acclamation, in this sense, becomes a matter of "pure expression" and "pure energy," a properly *terrible* thing.

Figure Fourteen

"Effigy" from The Great War Exhibition, 2017.



Further to the notion of affective elections, the Eucharist is not carried out as such but *celebrated*. As Rust (2012) noted above, Jesus's instruction to his disciples to repeat the ceremony of breaking bread and sharing wine to remember him after he was gone, this incarnational ritual that makes Christ's body present, is precisely a social bond in and of itself. The people, "doing this in remembrance of me," constitute the Body of Christ as a mystical body. In their immanent participation in that ritual, they are infused with the sublime substance of the divine made flesh. Writing about a particular acclamation that came into use during the Carolingian period, Agamben (as cited in Santner, 2012, p. 46) suggests that because it "promiscuously united heaven and earth, angels and functionaries, emperor and pontiff, [it] was destined to play an important role at the point where profane power and spiritual power, courtly and liturgical protocol met." The museum should be grasped as a continuation of just such an acclamation. Over the following pages I linger over four acclamations: "Lest We Forget," "Enjoy!" and the intertwined "Our Place" and "Our War," with each providing insight into particular aspects of the liturgical business of the museum.

The museum's liturgies, which are similarly matters of evocation and identification, should be understood as existential situations into which one can simultaneously be drawn into and drawn on by. In this way, there is a dialectical process of feeding in and feeding on. The museum and the subject are engaged in a restless exchange of "properties," of "affect." They are bound together in mutually-sustaining activities of attraction and discharge. Meanwhile, Santner's (2012, pp. 45-46) reading of Agamben is that "the monarch's second body – the body that directly incarnates the sublime substance of his sovereignty – is nourished, kept 'alive,' by the activity of glorification enacted in liturgical and profane performances of acclamations."

> The king's second body and the vocal 'object' produced by way of ritualized acclamations [...] are [...] *made of the same sublime stuff*, belong to a single 'metabolism,' a single politico-theological economy in which the surplus element in circulation (and undergoing various changes of state) is the *Herrlichkeit* [glory] that subtends *Herrschaft* [power]. (Santner, 2012, pp. 45-46)

Those liturgical labours dedicated and devoted to the production of sovereignty and in pursuit of the sublime body, (one that is made of a special, immaterial stuff) take many shapes, though that they are of the same metabolism is the essential point.

9.3.2. *Gallipoli* is characterised by a distinctive institutional voice, a soldier-narrator christened "the grunt" by Te Papa staff (Ross, 2015). It functions to synthesise the narrative,

foster a sense of intimacy by way of its direct address and colloquial language, and fill in gaps in the historical record. This device not only condenses, ventriloquizes and mimics the voices of the exhibition's historical subjects but anticipates and, crucially, *vocalises* the voice of the visitor. On the one hand, this narrator may be understood in an interpassive sense as doing the work of remembrance and mourning and, indeed, understanding for us. While on the other, it ensures that we join in. *It speaks with our voice*. This voice of the visitor is, firstly, just as much a literary fiction as that of the historical subject and, secondly, one that comes to function as just such an aforementioned vocal object. The grunt's "we" congeals and coalesces with the swirling mass of affected bodies, forming into a single – charged and ambiguous – acclamation, a hymn of sorts.

The function of the spectres populating the "Trench Experience" and the giants that fill the sepulchral space that is *Gallipoli*, these manifestations of horizontal historiographical methodologies, is primarily doxological. They are the metonymic crystallisations and expressions of public opinion that produce glory. That the giants, these ciphers of "Our War," with their fleshy excess and overproximity, also *refuse to be refused* further intensifies this. Te Papa's "Grunt," this vocal object that speaks of "our place" and "our war," is another such device of doxa, of vital energy, an energy that seems to come from *us*.

"Our war" and "our place" function as pre-emptive devices in the Museum's production of glory and prestige: the museum is *us* and *ours* already. Although those economies of glory and glorification previously mentioned may appear superstructural, they are in fact libidinally integral. Glory shapes and sustains the flesh of the social bond. What is at stake in such liturgical glorification, and whether of the king, or sovereign subject or nation-state or value, is our affective inscription in the symbolic. There is no power and no office without the liturgical production of glory. For Agamben, and as Schaeffer (2017) argues, these liturgical operations "are tools that both instrumentalise and, at the same time, mask man's fundamental 'inoperativity,' his absence of aim or purpose." Our ceaseless worship at the biopolitically administered temple of value, for example, "amounts to nothing but the fetishistic disavowal of the absence of purpose in human life" (Schaefer, 2017). Meaning respect or admiration, prestige derives from the late-Latin *praestigium*, meaning illusion, and from the Latin *praestigiae*, conjuring tricks. The business (and problem) of the museum is illuminated by this minor etymological clarification.

Within today's museum, and as by exemplified *Gallipoli*, injunctions such as "Enjoy!" fuse with imperative such as "Feel!" and "Remember!" The liberal-progressive museum is predicated on the democratisation and popularisation – the *enjoyment* – of difference and dissent, of feeling and trauma. Difference is no longer othered or exoticised but personalised.

While trauma, or a semblance of trauma, this "thing" that escapes symbolisation, and which is of the order of the real, is consumed and traded. Every exclamation uttered upon exiting the "Trench Experience," every tear shed upon leaving *Gallipoli*, every affected body that departs Te Papa is so much meat for glory. In this sense affect functions to short-circuit, to circumvent and resolve (in fantasy) the problem posed by their representational remit to be for all, to represent all. Once more, the "egalitarianism" of affect affords further sustenance with regard to hegemonic efficacy.

"Lest We Forget," this Egyptomanical platitude, this acclamation that is at once fantastical and ultimately defensive, is as compulsive as it is punishing. It asks (demands) not that we work through but that we repeat, that we continually return to the "scene of the crime." A "crime scene," moreover, that we do not and cannot know. Although on the one hand our remembrance will always be insufficient, always lacking, on the other there is always *too much*. Carrying a symbolic surplus that cannot digested, remembrance always holds more than can possibly be contained both in terms of the bearing of its burden and in the form or medium of its expression. Once again, *the signifier contains multitudes*. The liturgies of the liberal-progressive museum, liturgies that similarly provide "gifts without end" and the curse of "more life," render the subject a relic. Today's museum is not only a "torture chamber and throne room," as Benjamin (2007, p. 118) once described the lush and leafy studio setting in which Kafka was photographed as a child, but a crypt and theatre too; and one which everyone is welcome to *enjoy*. When knotted together, the imperatives to *enjoy*, *feel* and *remember* form an ever-tightening torque, and one with profound implications for the (absent) subject of the museum.

9.4. Liturgy and the Museum Effect: Making Matter Matter

9.4.1. As theorised by Dana Carlisle Kletchka (2018, p. 300), post-critical museology is envisaged as working to institute an "ethos of radical public inclusion" into museums. Meanwhile for Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius and Piotr Piotrowski (2016), "critical museology" is synonymous with "democratic" aspirations. I reject both of these assertions. Not because they are not admirable objectives, but because they misapprehend the "fundamental purpose" and (liturgical) methods of the museum, the place of the subject within this matrix, and the role of museology. By reprising Svetlana Alpers' (1991, p. 26) idea of the "museum effect," that is, the way the museum "turns all [its] objects into works of art,"

insights into both this situation and the stakes are afforded. In other words, what might this notion provide in terms of theoretical horizons when the subject of the museum has become the – has become *its* – object?

Paul Gilroy (1987, p. 29) once described the "populist impulse" as arising in response to crises of representation. Gilroy also described a language of calculated ambiguities being utilised to foment such populist imaginaries, a language I would add, that relies for its efficacy on the power of affective acclamation. In their provision of opportunity to feast on the captivating scraps of sovereign *jouissance*, populist ideologies are in concert with capitalist branding, with passionate affiliations formed around charismatic attachments. The liberal-progressive museum operates according to the same logic. The subject (that is missing) is asked to invest and to participate as an affected content provider; the (creaturely) subject labours in the service of glory.

In 2004, Preziosi and Farago (2004b, p. 3) styled museums as "essential sites for the fabrication and perpetuation of our conceptions of ourselves as autonomous individuals with unique subjectivities." The affective, participatory and ethical emphases of the liberal-progressive museum have upped the ante in this regard. Firstly, and to expand on a line from Alain Badiou (2001, pp. 25-26), "infinite alterity" and infinite affect are "quite simply what there is." The representational privileging of difference and emphasis on affect and radical inclusion are in no way assurances of "emancipation."

And secondly, the liberal-progressive museum works – restlessly, twitchily, excitedly – to provide new occasions for (auto)doxology, for (self)enjoyment and (self)pleasure, for (self)branding. These occasions for "self-actualisation" need to be thought of as mechanisms of hegemony. The true hegemonic efficacy of inclusive and affective practices resides in external reinforcement becoming superfluous. *We do it (to) ourselves*. *There is no outside*. With the dissolution of the boundaries between what is internal and what is external, resistance becomes increasingly difficult.

That these doxological labours are primarily techniques for covering the absence of a transcendental anchoring point – the core groundlessness that marks the representational order in modernity – is another crucial element in this equation. Shame, it needs noting, lurks at the heart of such efforts. By this ("shameful") act of "doing it to ourselves," we are ideologically secured. This "putting of ourselves to work" turns fundamentally social relations and dynamics of power into – in a subjective sense – internal relations of power, while the objective externality of these relations remains intact. We are turned inwards, forming, in the process, increasingly creaturely postures. That we should end up labouring for whatever there is to cathect to – nation, capital, conspiracy, Trump – should come as no surprise. *We enjoy*

them as ourselves. And that our acclamations – our *loves*, our *likes*, our *hatreds* – appear ever more hysterical and hysterically hopeless seems not just inevitable but entirely appropriate.

9.4.2. Mazzarella's (2017, p. 29) inquiry via the lens of mana into the various ways politics and marketing respond to the "crisis in the self-representation of popular sovereignty by appearing, by means of constitutive resonance, to reconcile eros and nomos, love and law," provides another way of grasping the liturgical business of the museum, this business of *making mater matter*. Situated at just such a juncture, the museum is geared precisely toward the production of such constitutive resonances. Apropos the royal remains, Santner (2015, pp. 23-24) argues, and "to use Freud's locution for the pressures of the drives," that these remnants that were torn free from the sovereign came to be felt most acutely by the new subjects of modernity "as an uncanny *Arbeitsanforderung*, or demand for work." A demand that was – that is – "in excess of any apparent teleological order," and that keeps "one busy beyond reason" (Santner, 2015, pp. 23-24). The "passion" of the liberal-progressive museum, its busyness and its hunger for affect, are symptoms of its hunt for and production of the glorious energy of constitutive resonances, for a piece of (the) flesh.

The following passage, originally used by George Saunders (as cited in Mazzarella, 2017, p. 2) to describe Donald Trump, is worth dwelling on. "He is not trying to persuade, detail, or prove: he is trying to thrill, agitate, be liked, be loved, here and now. He is trying to make energy." The museum today is tasked with "making energy" – with making glory – via persuasion, proof and detail, but it too wants – no, *has* – to thrill, agitate, be liked, be loved, here and now. This energy takes or is given many names, assumes different forms, and comes to be represented by various master signifiers: for example: blood, race, nation, People, or, indeed, "Trump." The Santnerian conception of the flesh captures the contours and coordinates of this force that exists somewhere between the somatic and the semiotic, that is situated at the convergence of libido and trauma, and that both categorically does and decisively does not belong to us. The flesh in this sense should be grasped precisely as *extimate*. The flesh is at once external and intimate. To borrow a line from Mazzarella (2017, pp. 3-4), the flesh is experienced as *part of the world that confronts us and at the same time as something that is palpably, intensely, at the very core of our sense of ourselves*.

To revisit the epigraph that opened this chapter, the museum could be said to be "tasked" with animating and making heightened certain times, people, places, and things, with transforming "mere matter" into "more life," with *making matter matter*. The liturgical business of the museum is precisely to *make meaning that matters* and to *make matter meaningful*. The liturgical business of the museum is – via flesh, blood and relics – to produce ("common")

energy, this glorious stuff that fuels social form/s, and that subjects are able to cathect to, consume and participate in. That this is very much a case of swimming in our own juices should be evident. It is, in a liturgical sense, our own glory that thrills us, our own flesh we consume, our own blood that we drink.

Returning to Trump and certain types of energy, in a campaign appearance in 2022, Kari Lake, the Republican gubernatorial candidate in Arizona, "gushed that her fellow Republicans Donald Trump and Florida Governor Ron DeSantis have 'big dick energy'" (Žižek, 2022). The acclamation may be expressed in a different language, but the energy that Lake is referring to is made of the same stuff as that which the museum – mechanically, manically – pursues. And it is an acclamation that will never be – can never be – enough to fill the empty throne.

9.5. The Glue is also a Solvent

The following passage from Marx and Engels (1973) serves as a postscript to this account of the liturgical effluence that is "the museum," this ceremonial apparatus devoted to (mis)managing the errant and perverse "object" that is the flesh, transmuting blood into glory, and resolving the subject into a relic.

> Modern bourgeois society, with its relations of production, of exchange and of property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells. (p. 39)

The liturgies that the museum similarly calls-ups and delivers are directed precisely (if unknowingly) at this nether world of our own creation: *the glue is also a solvent*. In other words, and as Santner (2001, p. 19) writes, there is "a thin line between the passions infusing our engagement in the world and our defences against such engagement, between what is genuinely enlivening in the world and what is 'undeadening' in it." It is this point of uncertainty – this point that is both source of *drive* and *undeadness* – that has been the object of attention in these pages, a point of uncertainty that "the museum" could be said to occupy. And it is to just such vanishing points that I now turn in the conclusion of this thesis.

Conclusion

Vanishing Points

Prospects and Horizons

This thesis models a methodology for disturbing the liberal-progressive accord in museum practice and for contesting the ascendancy of post-criticality within museology. Together, the liberal-progressive accord and post-critical museology normalise a subject position that, despite appearances of agency, cannot act upon its socio-historical situation. Seeking to re/establish the conditions of existence for (a) critical museology, this thesis asserts the primacy of "the subject" as *the* museological problematic requiring theorisation. The poetical-analytical schema of *flesh*, *blood*, *relic* and *liturgy*, founded in the work of Eric L. Santner, was formulated for the purpose of stress-testing the "emancipatory potential" of liberal-progressive museum practice and for contesting the assumptions of post-critical museology. This schema provides a form of critical scaffolding for contending with the mutations of ideology in the museum and museology, and the methodological means for asserting the primacy of the subject in a manner able to anticipate new capacities for action in that subject.

Emerging from these makeshift settlements are three affirmations addressed to the prospects of (a) critical museology.

1. *A critical museology must transfer crisis into the heart of its language*. First, to contend with the representational impasse around which the socio-symbolic order orbits (and out of which it is formed), a critical museology must bring crisis into its conceptualisation of the museum. This impasse, an impasse that is generative of the flesh, functions as a point of excitation which the museum, as with all representational institutions of modernity, mechanically and manically – and ultimately fruitlessly – revolves. Second, and in more systemic terms, the crisis that *is* capitalism needs to be recognised as such. Capitalism simultaneously draws upon

and is undermined by that same first-order impasse. The instability that capitalism poses to the museum is the bitter truth that museology must recognise, as it takes capitalism as its own event-horizon. Third, and vitally, the *figure of crisis* that is the creaturely subject, a subject that in a compensatory and immunological movement is made into a "relic" by liberal-progressive museum practice, must be the animatory force of a critical museology. The task of a critical museology is to find (a) language capable of striking at both that which produces this figure of crisis and that which resolves it into a relic. In this way, a critical museology needs precisely to be procreative of crisis. It must be generative of a language that has "no place" in normative museological horizons.

2. *A critical museology must attend to that which does not work but which is made to work in the museum*. Emblematic of this is how liberal-progressive museum practice transmutes trauma and traumatic remainders into forms and figures of enjoyment and glory. That which exceeds the intelligible is turned into a source of more – meaning *undeadening* – life. Through attention to such processes of transfiguration, insights into the museum-effect – the source of the "magic" of the museum – are enabled and, as a result, insights into the museum's liturgical power ascertained.

3. *A critical museology must strike at that which is not there*. This Dadaist aspiration is conceived as a means of troubling – in its very articulation – museological normativity. In other words, the aporia that is this "not there" is *just that*. However, and as located in this text, it also has very real (if provisional) application/s. For example, it is precisely that which is "not there" that is constitutive of "the subject" and "the museum." And in more emphatic terms, the spectre that is post-critical museology – a species of museology that cannot account for such absences – also requires striking at.

Envisaged as functioning to disturb the relation between the museum and museology, these affirmations are conceived as a means of arming the subject of the museum with a language by which it may negate that which forecloses upon its ability to act upon its socio-historical situation.

In discussing the communist hypothesis, Alain Badiou (2008, p. 37) wrote of needing to "focus on its conditions of existence, rather than just improving its methods. We need to re-install the communist hypothesis – the proposition that the subordination of labour to the dominant class is not inevitable – within the ideological sphere." Following Santner (2015, pp. 102-103), I argue that by participating in the labour of elaborating on "call and counter-call, doxology and

paradoxology" within the realm of cultural production, one is engaged, however obliquely, in class struggle, one is fomenting conditions for the existence of the communist hypothesis. In this way, my hope is that the affirmations may stimulate the conditions of existence of a (new) critical museology and, concomitantly, the communist hypothesis. Via a summation of the findings of the poetical-analytical schema, these affirmations are teased-out over the following pages.

A critical museology must transfer crisis into the heart of its language

To transfer crisis into the "heart" of the language of a (new) critical museology means, paradoxically, to reaffirm the place of *distance* as a methodological instrument. A number of clarifications are required here. Firstly, crisis is endlessly "on display" in today's museums. However, it is important to note that liberal-progressive museum practice stages crisis, and specifically the crisis of trauma, as (auto)vampiric (auto)spectacle. Crisis is *enjoyed*. Crisis is made *matter*. Crisis is made *glorious*. And, crucially, crisis remains on the level of *content*. The language of crisis deployed by liberal-progressive museum practice operates within the (capacious) bounds of liberal-capitalist normativity. Bringing crisis into the heart of a new critical museological language means to resist the normalisation of the crisis that is normality.

The *mis/use* of outmoded concepts, of concepts that do not cohere with prevailing intelligible structures, of concepts that are strange and estranging, is one way of achieving this. What also needs stressing is that there is a double movement with respect to this notion of the transference of crisis. It functions as a means of addressing both the crisis of the normativity of liberal capitalism *and* as technique for (re)introducing revolutionary futures (futures that "come from the past") into the language of museology. In order for such futures to be possible, the museum and indeed museology must be made strange. In other words, the tropes that comprise the poetical-analytical schema matter because of their potential to host this transference of crisis into the heart of a new critical museology.

The argument that has been put forward in this thesis is that although undeniably compelled by different contextually dependant constraints and imperatives, museums are at the same time animated by a singular logic, that is: by the *(il)logic* of the flesh. The museum-form is an (unwitting) apparatus for enfleshing the subject and it is this enfleshed subject that is the true

object of the museum. Via the objects it collects and displays – these congealed bits of labour, these tokens of natural history – and via the affective performances of its visitors, the museum gives provisional measure and form to the flesh while also (unevenly) (re)distributing and (re)investing this spectral substance.

Crucially, the museum generates, distributes and suppresses the flesh within an endlessly expansionary closed system, a system at once omnivorous and structurally cyclic. That the *informe mass* that is the flesh is both waste and fuel adds a further – tantalising – dimension to this. The too-much that is the flesh can neither be contained by the museum's corporatist wrappings, nor expelled by its immunological procedures. The flesh can neither be confined nor exorcised. *The flesh has no home*.

In more concrete terms, both Tony Bennett (1995) and Carol Duncan (1995) frame the work of the museum in a critically affirmative sense of governmental control and ritualistic activity, with the museum producing docile bodies and "civilized" subjects. My argument is that the liberal-progressive museum is (unknowingly) active, often passionately so, in the production of anxious bodies and nervous disorders. As one of modernity's institutions of symbolic investiture, the museum is engaged in the manufacture of "offices" and "thrones." However, not only are these not made to measure, they are always excessive. They do not and indeed cannot fit. Moreover, as we make our way through modernity – and for reasons outlined in these pages such as the capitalistic annexation of all areas of life, an annexation which demands excess – this representational crisis becomes more pronounced. As a consequence, ever more baroque forms of sovereign creatureliness are called onto the scene.

The museum practices and methodologies discussed in these pages function to further enflame this dynamic. Such practices "liberate" the subject into a paradoxical state of agitated stuckness, into undeadness. Put differently, the museum in the present is captive to methodologies and museologies which model heightened redundancy. There are no *prospects* (in the sense of revolutionary futures) or *standpoints* (in the sense of the production of truth), simply the generation of moments of intensity that look or feel "liberating." With the turn to the affective experience of the visitor, for example, the subject has become a figure of pure *affect(ation).* The remedies proposed and activated by the new museology and expanded on by liberal-progressive museum practice have functioned to amplify the museum's hegemonic efficacy and foreclose on revolutionary futures.

Not long after the advent of the new museology, Sharon Macdonald (1996b, p. 2) noted that although inhabiting a state of insecurity, museums were also revitalised, with a "diffusion of

the museum beyond its walls, a 'museumification' of ever more aspects of culture, and a claiming of the museum by ever more sectors of society." Meanwhile in 2007 (p. xix), Knell, MacLeod and Watson observed that although "it would be foolish to consider museums as unchanging," their "very existence implies a commitment to stasis." Rather than this stasis – which they conflate with the ongoing care of collections – signalling inertia, my argument has been that the museum-form should be understood as involving endlessly repetitive ingestion and expansion. The incessant and convulsive propulsion of the museum, its restless development of and search for new products and audiences, with the two being in some senses interchangeable, is both a consequence of and intended as a means of overcoming its inherent contradictions. This compulsive search for improved visitor experiences also needs to be understood as an echo of the hunt for more objects in the nineteenth century.

In this way, the museum's (inevitable) failure to be representative, whether in terms of a conservative emphasis on People or canon or a liberal stress on difference, is one of the points of impossibility that propels it. A desire to transcend this impossibility was one of the originary impulses of the new museology. The aspiration for authorial abnegation, for the museum to become like us, or be us, to be coextensive with its subjects is, paradoxically, also one of vampiric and cannibalistic engorgement. In other words, the museum's commitment to stasis is today found in its production of undeadness, in its manufacture of *the subject as (a) relic*.

Indexing the absence at the heart of the social order, it is this pressure that drives the museum's oxymoronic static-accumulative passions. To restate a passage found in the introduction to this thesis, a passage that reworks a line from Goodman (2015, p. 9), the museum is charged with the impossible task of indemnifying an order founded upon a core groundlessness and an inaugural violence. Or, and as Santner (2011) argues:

> Because this logic of representation can never absolve itself of its own ultimate groundlessness – its lack of an anchoring point in the real – the normative pressures it generates for its members, the pressures to be recognised as *fit* and *fitting* for the symbolic system in question, are always in excess of what could ever be satisfied. (p. xxi)

If the subject is a relic such impasses are circumvented.

With respect to subject being made into a relic, it needs reiterating that this involves a double movement. The subject is at once rendered inoperative *and* animated. In terms of the latter, the animated subject is so in the sense of being agitated, of being *fleshy*. Like *rex exsomnis*, "the king kept in a constant state of unrest by the vigilance he exercises over his domain"

(Bost, 2017, p. 326), the relic that is the subject of the liberal-progressive museum exists in a state of restless immobility. That relic is precisely "ourselves" in a state of affectedness and interactivity. And it is our affectedness and interactivity that fuels – indeed *makes*, in a liturgical sense – "the museum." Benjamin (as cited in Santner, 2020, p. 33) once wrote with regard to capitalism that there is no day "that is not a feast day, in the terrible sense that all its sacred pomp is unfolded before us; each day commands the utter fealty of each worshipper." In this way, I picture the museum as a liturgical feast to which everyone is summoned, and one at which subjects are invited to "feed" on one another.

The perpetual movement of the museum and its subjects is not a sign of momentum but instead, and to borrow a line Benjamin uplifted from a poem by Gottfried Keller: *erstarrte Unruhe*, "petrified unrest" (Sebald, 2006, pp. 80-82). Benjamin was referring here to what Santner terms the "uncanny admixture constituting the *Schwindel* [dizziness] proper to life amid commodities – these allegorical fragments littering the modern urban landscape […]." The liturgical business of the museum – and bearing in mind that business stems from the Old English *bisignis*, meaning both "anxiety" and a state of "being busy" (busyness) – revolves around just such states of anxious dizziness. As previously stated: *in the very act of eating the flesh and drinking the blood what could be termed the auto-vampiric nature of the social order, its functioning by liturgically "feeding off itself," is brought to light. And it is precisely here that the museum performs its most valuable function, in that the "undead" and "relics" provide everlasting ingredients for a never-ending meal.*

Over the following pages, I further elaborate on the symptomatic performance of crisis in liberal-progressive museum practice as subtended by post-critical museology. To begin with, museums today are envisioned as both soup kitchens (Gurian, 2010), as institutions that "make a difference" (Janes, 2012), and as information brokers (Shelton, 2006), as "nerve centres" for the enablement of frictionless cultural transactions. The paradox of the museum having a more pronounced instrumental role while concurrently privileging the experience of the individual is of course not without precedent, far from it. Foucault (as cited in Dibley, 2005, p. 22), one will recall, described such double-binds – the simultaneous individualisation and totalisation of modern power structures – as being distinctive of modernity. However, when considered in light of liturgy, of autodoxology and prosumption, such analysis takes on even greater significance. For instance, with the museum having shifted from "representing the People" to "catering for popular opinion," the magical "we, the People" is now visible, has been made present and perceptible in ways that differ from Bennett's (1995) account of the scopic model of emulation. The museum's liturgies function as opportunities for the performance and

extraction of "sovereignty." There is, once more, a dialectical process of feeding in and feeding on that occurs.

Meanwhile, and returning to questions of blood and trauma, Gabriele Schwab (2010, pp. 1-2) writes that under "normal circumstances" a person mourns loss by "*introjecting* the lost person or object." Introjection being a process whereby loss is integrated into the psychic fabric. "By contrast," Schwab continues, "a person who refuses to mourn *incorporates* the lost object by disavowing the loss, thus keeping the object 'alive' inside." Incorporation is an essentially defensive operation founded on the denial of loss. "In a fusion of boundaries, the ego comes to identify and merge with the lost object. [...] the person who refuses to mourn 'becomes like the living dead'" (Schwab, 2010, pp. 1-2). However, what is missing in this formulation is that today there *is* an emphasis on loss and trauma, with the subject hailed as a subject *of* and subject *to* wounding, with the subject being made into a relic.

Postone and Santner (2003, p. 11) provide further clarification for us here when they write that in post-war Germany, the "transition from shame and evasion [in the 1970s and 1980s] to an emphasis on the Holocaust as a wound in the national body politic did not, however, signal a deepening of mourning." Instead, it represented a "new form of acting out rather than any form of working through the past." That is to say: "the identification of self as victim was perpetuated." What can be perceived in the museum of today – and as illustrated by *Gallipoli* and *The Great War Exhibition* – is a convergence, a cyclical and self-sustaining conjunction of wounding, acting out and therapy.

Furthermore, and returning to the place of affect in liberal-progressive museum practice, as we heard Zupančič (2008, p. 8) state previously, "far from constituting a direct insight into the real of the subject," emotions "can lie and be as deceptive as anything else." In fact, and with Egyptomania in mind, feeling may provide a screen or alibi. Although writing about laughter, the following passage from Malden Dolar (as cited in Zupančič, 2008) captures the ideological efficacy of feeling and affect.

> It is only with laughter that we become ideological subjects, withdrawn from the immediate pressure of ideological claims to a free enclave. It is only when we laugh and breathe freely that ideology truly has a hold on us – it is only here that it starts functioning fully as ideology, with the specifically ideological means, which are supposed to assure our free consent and the appearance of spontaneity, eliminating the need for the non-ideological means of outside constraint. (p. 4)

The liberal-progressive museological fantasy of occupying a space untethered to ideology (Knell, 2018) is – at least rhetorically – enabled by affective practice. The indeterminate and inalienable nature of affect functions as a means of ideological evacuation, with the true

ideological import of the liberal-progressive museum able to be ("fantastically") (a)voided. However, while we are invited to feel and to be moved, the liberal-progressive museum also functions in a transferential sense to believe, feel, mourn, remember and understand for us, in *our place*. This (double) stitch-up of the ideological horizon, one enabled by post-criticality, is a form of magic. And it is this suturing of prospects, I suggest, that requires unpicking.

The liberal-progressive museum's emphasis on affect, on moved bodies and trauma – the *crisis* of trauma – must also be understood as so many attempts to make the museum itself (and all it "stands for") *matter*. Remembering that the task confronting the new institutions of modernity was that of incarnating "in some ostensibly new way the *excarnated* principle of sovereignty" (Santner, 2011, p. 92). For authority which cannot call on transcendent support to be recognised as such, what could be termed a piece of the real must be (made) available. The museum provides one such source, producing a sense (a semblance) of this little piece of the real and offering subjects a taste of the flesh, the bit of the real that "underwrites the circulation of signs and values" (Santner, 2011, p. xv). In turn, the museum and all it "stands (in) for" is "made (to) matter."

With the production of the subject as relic, liberal-progressive museum practice has found a more direct, efficacious and readily available means of producing such semblances of the real. Firstly, one will recall that the material *factualness* of the human body is borrowed to lend cultural constructs the aura of realness and certainty (Scarry, 1985). Secondly, trauma, this "real thing" that escapes representation, is "mass" produced in the museum. "We," the amorphous mass, give trauma form and reality in our affectedness. We are (made to be) the missing content of trauma. Thirdly, and as Santner (2011, p. xiv) writes, "the normative pressures that arise as part of our inscription into and inhabitation of symbolic orders return or are imagined to return as bodily impingements and violations." That these violations, these excitations are undeadening is the crucial point.

The body within such normative schemas – and whether sacred or real, affected or traumatised/traumatic – is a figure of exploitation rather than potentiation. As Santner (2001, pp. 38-39) explains apropos Kafka's protagonists, the universe they inhabit – both *barely* and *unutterably* – is one animated by messages that cause life to matter "but not in the form of a belief, thought, or meaning." What is at stake, Santner (2001) argues, is a form of expressivity – interpellation without identification – that in the absence of any propositional content nonetheless gets under the skin. It is precisely such forms of expressivity that the subject as relic models.

The moved body is sacramental in the sense of displaying visible signs of grace, while *moved dead bodies*, those figures around which remembrance coalesces, are even more potent given their pliancy. They can be charged, invested one might say, any (which) way. By making the subject undead, the museum is able to have it both ways: the museum can harness our "real" and sell it back to us. By revolving the subject into a relic, the museum is provided with an endless source of excitation without risk of revolt. When the subject is undead the problem of the real being eruptive is enervated.

The new museological "cure" is an idealised repetition of the illness. For example, that we are hooked and sustained by our traumas and our *jouissance*, and that we generally do not (really) want to be cured suggests that methodologies that foreground hurt for the purpose of healing, that emphasise traumatic reality for the purpose of empathy, risk further inflammation. As Shakespeare's Richard II declared on handing his crown to Bolingbroke: "You may my glories and my state depose but not my griefs; still am I king of those." To cure oneself may imply, as Santner (2015) suggests, giving up an important reality or the dilution of a special event. And it is precisely around such "important realities" (empirical facts) and "special events" (glorious temporal markers) that the museum orbits.

The museum's temporal manipulations – its generation of "a little extra time," its production of undeadness, its production of the subject as relic – need to be considered explicitly in relation to horizons of possibility. Further to this, and as Pietro Bianchi (2023) writes:

> The idea that everything can be remembered and therefore recorded – that nothing can ever disappear – is the nightmare of a civilization where time does not exist, and which therefore not only rejects the past as a place of disappearance but also the future as a place of transformation.

The museum is precisely an apparatus aimed at the construction of an eternal present in which nothing can ever disappear. Switching to an idiom of revolutionary promise and returning to Walter Benjamin, his aim, as Susan Buck-Morss (1991, p. x) puts it, was to "destroy the mythic immediacy of the present," a present characterised by a "mythic, dream state," not by inserting it into a cultural continuum that affirms the present as its culmination, but by discovering that constellation of historical origins which has the power to explode history's continuum. What is demanded here is a language that properly accounts for the true crises of the museum and museology. What is demanded is that the idea that the future as a place of transformation is kept alive.

A critical museology must attend to that which does not work but which is made to work in the museum

Blood is inscribed into the foundations and fundament of the museum. The blood of imperialism, colonialism, and class-struggle course – silently or otherwise – through its halls and inflects and infects its methodologies and imaginaries. In addition, the museum's "civilizing function" (Duncan, 1995) is, precisely, *violent*. Maintaining the norms and fantasies of whichever social reality is currently hegemonic necessitates exclusion, watchfulness, violence (Badiou, 2008). The museum of today also swims in blood. Unsparing in its forensic engagement with empirical reality, historic hurt and trauma have been resolved into spectacle, into methodologies, into opportunities for affective and doxological performance. Trauma is *enjoyed*. More than this, however, blood – this gift without end – *propels* the museum. Once more: *the flesh is stimulated by the blood of the dead, and it is this arousing biopolitical operation that lies at the heart of the work of the museum*.

Haunted by losses we do not and cannot understand, the museum stands as testament to such bewilderment. However, it is not only a pastoral apparatus for managing and ameliorating the (continual) fallout of such (inevitably excessive) loss, but is invested in its production. Loss is economised by the museum, is turned into a source of enjoyment or glory. However, and in a more fundamental sense, it is precisely the inaugural violence at the (absent) heart of the capitalistic liberal order that functions as the (auto)vampiric point of excitation around which "the museum" revolves. The final horror that is the ultimate groundlessness of the representational order of which the museum is the apogee is endlessly circled around.

What Freud called the death drive indexes the uncanny vitality, the too much of pressure that accompanies entrance into the symbolic as well "as the urge to put an end to it" (Santner, 2001, pp. 36-37). For Santner (2001, pp. 36-37), "the *destructive* face of the death drive" is "thus aimed not at life per se [...] but rather at this uncanny, excessive 'life' that comes to human being by virtue of its thrownness amidst enigmatic messages." As Santner went on to set out in *The Royal Remains* (2011), it is precisely such representational impasses that calls the flesh, this hungrily uncanny dimension of our existence, this "dimension that in its elusiveness only ends up all the more binding" (Schaefer, 2017), into being. The lack of orientation that characterises the modern subject is product of an excess of pressure that continually fails to find viable forms of discharge. "What is missing," Santner (2011, pp. 172-173) writes, "is not energy, not affect, but rather the means to put into play psychic energy across viable networks of representations, to facilitate a distribution and dispersion of such

energy." It is this that the museum is (unknowingly) tasked with accomplishing. And it is this the museum incessantly tries and fails to achieve.

Francisco Goya's *Saturn Devouring His Son* (1819-1823), a more equivocal version of Peter Paul Rubens' explicitly oedipal Baroque painting (1636) of the same name, and a painting that seems to descend from the same line as that of Grünewald's *Isenheim Altarpiece* (1512-1516), provides a telling image for us here. Unlike Rubens' Saturn, Goya's seems to feed on his son – on his *subject* – in a state of anxious horror. More than this, he could be said to be feverishly absorbed in his own procedures. I would like the reader to think of the museum in such terms. To refashion a line from Clark (as cited in Santner, 2011, pp. 92-93), confronted by the "endless, meaningless objectivity" produced by its representational techniques not quite finding their "object, symbolic or otherwise," the museum therefore makes do with its own ("glorious") procedures. That said, this "making do" has very real consequences.

What is at stake, Santner (2015, pp. 101-102) writes, "in the doxologies and ceremonials that seem merely to accompany power," is a frantic and "fetishistic disavowal of what does not work in human life."

> Human life is inoperative and without purpose, but precisely [...] this absence of aim make the incomparable operativity of the human species possible. Man has dedicated himself to production and labour, because in his essence he is completely devoid of work, because he is the Sabbatical animal par excellence. (Agamben as cited in Santner, 2015, pp. 101-102)

To tie together the strands of remembrance and energy production and consumption together with this notion of endless, meaningless objectivity, by fashioning the subject as a relic an endless and endlessly new source of glorious energy is called into being. That this operation is performed by the subject herself is the true *coup de grâce*. It is precisely in this convergence of autodoxology and autovampirism that the enchantment of the museum resides. In order to dispel such enchantment, that which produces the subject as relic must be attended to. In this way, insights into the museum effect – that is, the museum's capacity to *make* (surplus) *matter matter* – are afforded, insights that provide orientation with respect to the development of new strikes. The argument put forward in this thesis, an argument modelled in the poetical-analytical schema, is that it is upon attention to the creatureliness of the subject that the relation between the museum and post-critical museology may be disturbed, and hence opportunity to suspend those operations that produce the subject as relic enabled.

A critical museology must strike at what is not there

In terms of the "very real" application of this aporia, there are a number of points that require elaboration here. Firstly, different and often displaced or dislocated lineages coexist – sometimes discordantly, sometimes melodiously – "within" the museum, and are carried in the name. As sites of communal and individual identity formation, museums operate in ways which reflect and mobilise "corporate commitments based on the dynamics of recognition, identification, and affirmation" (Simon, 2006, p. 113). However, these operations also need to be understood as matters of libidinal investments and certain kinds of energy. The history of the modern museum is primarily a history of an unknowing struggle to give form to, to manage and put to work, to make matter one could say, the excarnated principle that is the flesh. *To strike at what is not there* means in this context to elaborate on those liturgical structures and processes that simultaneously produce, harvest and distribute (and *fail* to produce, harvest and distribute) the "little extra life" that *is* the flesh. Important to bear in mind is that the flesh in the museum of today is similarly unleashed (feel free!), encircled (there being only forced free choices), and relentlessly policed (both exogenously and endogenously and both subjectively and objectively).

Further to this, that the museum, Hal Foster wrote in 2015 (p. 34), "is mostly ruined as a coherent system in [the] public sphere is generally assumed." Foster's contention, and side-stepping the question of whether it has ever been wholly legible, in no way suggests, firstly, that the museum's influence on the global cultural landscape has diminished. In fact, its conceptual plasticity and functional diversity – its passionate indeterminacy – has, I have argued in these pages, strengthened rather than weakened its ideological efficacy. It is precisely such ambiguity that enables "all flesh" to hum. Secondly, and despite post-critical and historicist assertions to the contrary, "the museum" as master signifier continues to stalk the space of representation.

To continue with the first of these points, although Huyssen (1995, p. 16) suggests that "the institutional critique of the museum as an enforcer of the symbolic order does not exhaust its multiple effects," it is precisely because of these multiple effects and because of its "welcome" vis-à-vis difference that the museum functions so successfully as an ideological instrument. What could be termed the charged opacity – the *fleshiness*, in a word – of political formations, signifiers and spectacles is the very source of their potency. As with representations, so too with institutions of representation. And it is just such "nowhere bits of power" that the museum collects and, indeed, which it supplies and in which it trades. That is to say, its business is the

liturgical manufacture of (enigmatic, uncanny, electrifying) hooks that we (can) hang ourselves on, that we are hung on. Its business is to be *our place*.

"Our place" could be said to exist as the pre-emptory and indeed peremptory acclamation of the contemporary museum. The antinomies that mark the museum are able to be (rhetorically) dispelled and put to work with the assistance of such a magical formulary. The issue of authority being "faceless" is overcome because authority bears *our* face. The cipher of power that is the museum is thus able to be "fully-present, fully responsive, and fully isomorphic with the agitated flesh of the multitude" (Mazzarella, Santner and Schuster, 2020, p. 3). In this way, the flesh is able to be (partially) reified and (re)vivified. The flesh is able to be (temporarily) invested – with unpredictable consequences – in objects, in signifiers, in subjects before being let loose and before letting loose once more. To strike at what is not there means in this instance to catch such processes in the act.

Santner (2011, pp. 29-30) writes that what is fundamentally at issue in the immunitarian paradigm "is not so much the protection of life from death but of the body from the flesh" (Santner, 2011, pp. 29-30). The liberal-progressive museum's (unwitting) production of the subject as relic comes into stark relief here. In a first movement, it can be perceived as a means of coping with the fleshy creatures of modernity. However, and crucially, in a further (liturgical) movement, the flesh of these relics – and bearing in mind that the immunitarian paradigm cannot but fail in such operations – is harnessed for the purpose of the production of glory. This glory is aimed (haplessly) at stopping-up – precisely via glorification – the core groundlessness (the absent centre) of the very order that produces the flesh.

To turn this line of thought into the path of blood, in writing about the dimension of the messianic in Benjamin's thought, Santner (2006, p. 88) suggests that such a dimension "cannot be understood on the model of an exchange, of a simple conversion of loss into gain, death into life." In other words, ways to suspend such transferential dynamics, such conversions of flesh and blood into glory, must be found.

> To use one of Benjamin's favourite formulations, the *awakening* at issue in the messianic advent should be understood not as a resurrection, an animation of the dead, but [...] as *a deanimation of the undead*, an interruption of the 'ban,' the captivation at work in the spectral fixations – the petrified unrest – that cringes/curves the psychic space of human subject. (Santner, 2006, p. 88)

The task of (a) critical museology is to strike at that which produces the surplus animation that cringes the subject and, in turn, to strike at that which renders this subject a relic. To bring it to something of a formula, the task of (a) critical museology is to disturb "our place," is to

provide the conditions of existence by which the subject of the liberal-progressive museum and post-critical museology may act, may (go on) strike, may strike at what is not there: *itself*.

Epitaph

The poetical-analytical schema of flesh, blood, relic and liturgy was conceived for the purpose of the locating the limitations of post-critical museology and stress-testing the emancipatory promise of the liberal-progressive museum. The argument/s that unfurled over the course of this thesis, arguments that pivoted on the work of Santner, can be summarised as follows. In forgetting the flesh and blood, in the (a)voidance and excarnation of the creaturely subject, in misapprehending the way ideology mutates, in overlooking the representational impasses and crises – and core groundlessness – of the social order, in refusing "the museum," post-critical museology and its manifestation, the liberal-progressive museum, cannot but occupy administrative rather than critical positions. They are condemned to the roles of biopolitical functionaries, merely massaging "the brand."

Underpinning this thesis is the assertion that the creature that is "the subject" and the liturgical effluence and master signifier that is "the museum" require theorisation rather than abandonment. Without "the subject" and without "the museum," museology is sentenced to drift in a play of (identitarian and affective) differences which, and as Badiou (2001) has pointed out, *is just what there is*. To intervene in this play of differences – to insert crisis into its language – is precisely the task of (a) critical museology. To write the epitaph for the (absent) subject of post-critical museology and the liberal-progressive museum means, as I have argued here, to be engaged in class struggle. It means to attempt to negate the negation of the subject and to refuse those transferential relations that render this missing subject an (auto)doxological labourer. To act on behalf of creaturely life is the true task of (a) critical museology. My hope is that this thesis, this text formed from a constellation of outmoded concepts, this labour devoted to establishing the groundwork for *striking at what is not there*, may – in however minor a way – provide points of orientation that assist in contesting the limits on thought and action imposed by the post-critical hegemony and, concomitantly, that work to foster the conditions of existence for (a) critical museology.

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