Interdisciplinary Legacies: Critical Theory and Authoritarian Culture

This chapter considers one of the most salient aspects of contemporary critical humanistic scholarship and cultural practice: its imperative to push beyond the limits of single disciplines towards the "interdisciplinarity" necessary to apprehend complex sociocultural phenenoma. If the current demand for interdisciplinarity has reached a new peak of intensity, it also has a deeper history in the legacy of critical theory. In a tribute article for Georg Simmel in 1918, Lukács had already identified as a crucial distinction of Simmel's work his methodological pressure on separate disciplines, his opening up of "new subject areas" through close attention to the "qualitative and unique" aspects of concrete objects and phenomena and the "manifold and intricate connections" between them.[1] Lukács goes on to note the impact of Simmel's interdisciplinary thrust on other key figures of German sociology: "A sociology such as is undertaken by Max Weber, Troeltsch, Sombart and others has become possible only on the ground laid by him, however much [they] may differ from him methodologically" (149). Such interdisciplinary impulses are true as well of the early twentieth-century radical intellectual circles of Budapest, including the Galilei Circle[2] and Lukács's own Sunday Circle,[3] which impacted fields such as sociology, philosophy, history, economics, film theory, and art history through figures of the later Hungarian diaspora including Karl Mannheim, Arnold Hauser, Oszkár Jászi, Karl Polanyi, Michael Polanyi, Béla Balázs, Charles de Tolnay, and Johannes Wilde. Even more enduring and influential as an interdisciplinary formation, however, was the Institut für Sozialforschung, the "Frankfurt School."

In what follows, I first offer framing observations about the Frankfurt School's conception of interdisciplinary research and its relation to interdisciplinary research in the humanities and interpretative social sciences today. I suggest that while the American reception of the Frankfurt School, particularly in the humanities and in cultural studies, has been

extensive, this reception has also been one-sided and based on the prestige of a relatively small number of English-language translated texts by three major individuals within the larger group: Benjamin, Adorno, and Marcuse. In addition, I argue, the Institut für Sozialforschung itself incubated at least two distinct types of interdisciplinary research—an individual and a group research model—which were held in tension rather than synthesized into a unitary framework. Yet only one of these models has had a significant impact on present-day humanities research, at least in Anglophone universities. Though I do not question the productivity of that reigning interdisciplinary paradigm, I also wish to recall the group dimensions of interdisciplinarity that characterized the Frankfurt School's research activity and consider whether they might have value as alternatives within discussions and debates about disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity in the contemporary university.

In the second section, I take up the case of an explicitly interdisciplinary special project of the Institut für Sozialforschung, published in 1936 as *Studien über Authorität und Familie*, which engaged a wide range of expertise across disciplines and demonstrated the methodological implications of the pre–World War II Frankfurt School's vision of interdisciplinary research.

In the third and final part of the chapter, I depart from the Frankfurt School framework to consider a more contemporary analogue to their interdisciplinary focus on authoritarianism: the post-socialist musealization of "totalitarianism" by digital artist George Legrady (*An Anecdoted Archive of the Cold War*, 1993) and film designer and architect Attila F. Kovács (Budapest's *Terror Háza*/House of Terror and his related *Emlékpont*/Memory Point in Hódmezővásárhely). I consider Legrady's and Kovács's problematic interdisciplinary approaches as complementary if antithetical perspectives on Hungary's dictatorships, which continue to resonate in post-socialist artistic attempts to come to terms with the historical traumas of the twentieth century.

The Frankfurt School and Models of Interdisciplinarity

The Institut für Sozialforschung was centered on its director and his inner circle of about six to eight close collaborators, an advisory and editorial circle including representatives of several specialized disciplines. This inner circle made assignments and assessed the written studies of an outer layer of affiliated contributors. There was also a much wider circle of scholars friendly to their project with whom they remained in looser contact, mostly through the extensive review section of the

journal and occasional collaboration and consultation on particular studies and projects; as noted, even Lukács figured among this outer circle of contributors. Among the Frankfurt School's principal scholars, however, there developed two major analyses of the *limits* of specialized disciplinary knowledge in the modern age and two models of how to go beyond these limits and practice interdisciplinary research. These two models were held in tension in the operation of the Institut: on the one hand, there were *topical*, *problem-based* ventures into interdisciplinary criticism by individual scholars, and on the other hand, the larger *group-oriented* inter- and multi-disciplinary research activity represented by the Institut as a collective, embodied most importantly in the editorial practice of its journal, the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*.

In the first model of interdisciplinary criticism, the individual scholar deploys a variety of disciplinary materials and frameworks in a unique, singular constellation to analyze and criticize a particular object of study—for example, in Adorno's case, his critique of popular music that constellates Lukácsian-Marxist concepts of reification and commodity fetishism with Freudian psychoanalysis, formal analysis of music, and sociological study of listening. This model has proven very influential in the contemporary humanities. Recent scholarship has carried the thought of Benjamin and Adorno into a wide range of otherwise diverse approaches, including cultural studies, film theory and criticism, visual culture studies, and historicist literary criticism. Martin Jay aptly describes the Benjamin-Adorno model as deriving from a preliminary *acceptance* of the irreducible multiplicity of disciplines and disciplinary knowledge, a condition that Lukács had also confronted in his early work in Heidelberg with Weber and the neo-Kantian philosophers there. As Jay writes, there is "no methodological remedy to the fragmentations of knowledge expressed in the chaos of competing disciplines. The goal of a fully integrated interdisciplinary project [is] thus unattainable at present."[4] Rather than striving towards a reconstructed totality by developing a new, holistic interdisciplinary paradigm, Benjamin and Adorno proceeded, like the early Lukács, provisionally and essayistically. In their view, Jay concludes, "the dissonant juxtaposition of disciplines rather than their smoothly integrated harmonization was more genuinely critical in this time of social and cultural detotalization" (115). Benjamin's articulation of this model for his massive, uncompleted cultural history of nineteenth-century Paris was closely related to his outsider position as an independent researcher and journalistic writer who made idiosyncratic use of academic writing and who felt no necessity to conform to the disciplinary protocols of the German university that had excluded him, first as an individual who failed in a key

phase of his university credentialing and after 1933 as a left-wing intellectual and exiled Jew. Adorno, in a sense, brought Benjamin's outlaw methodology partially back into the fold of the academic institution. If Benjamin's version of this paradigm was fully extra-academic and linked to avant-garde artistic procedures of collage and montage in his handling of historical material, Adorno evolved a micrological, almost cubistic style of philosophical interpretation.

Already back in the 1930s, Benjamin's and Adorno's approaches presupposed the contemporary crisis of social science and humanistic disciplines and loss of a master discourse of totalization once fulfilled by philosophy, a crisis analyzed in various ways by Weber, Heidegger, and Edmund Husserl in the first few decades of the twentieth century. This sense of fragmentation, loss of authoritative frameworks, and discrediting of metanarratives has returned in intensive ways in postmodernist and poststructuralist-influenced interdisciplinarity in the humanities since the 1980s. For scholars who have wanted to hold onto a way of lending their research relevance with respect to social and political contexts, Benjamin's and Adorno's example offered powerful theoretical tools and helped open new themes and social problematics for humanistic research. It has vastly increased communication between disciplines such as literature, history, art history, film, and media studies, and it has given scholars new interpretative means for relating individual works of art and culture to emancipatory interests, ideologies, and agents.

This model of interdisciplinarity as practiced by an individual scholar, we should note, has also been encouraged and rewarded by Anglo-American university institutions since the "theory boom" started in the late 1970s. The work of Benjamin and Adorno has been absorbed by the most prominent figures of literary and cultural theory—for example, in the enormously influential work of Jameson, whose critical essays on everything from nineteenth- and twentieth-century novels to architecture, video, and film helped teach the work of the Frankfurt School to more than one generation of literary scholars. We might also single out the work of Jay, who moved organically from being a disciplinary intellectual historian writing about the interdisciplinary research of the Frankfurt School to himself practicing erudite interdisciplinary scholarship in later books such as his 1993 study *Downcast Eyes*, which lent important impetus to the establishment of "visual studies" as a new field with its own journals, conferences, programs, and even departments. Such qualities as breadth, scope, and range—understood in terms of this individual interdisciplinary paradigm—are essential for many academic humanities departments in defining new positions and evaluating new hires; they are also crucial to demonstrate if one is to succeed

in publishing in the most prestigious journals and university presses. There is, however, another model of interdisciplinarity to which I have alluded, a sort of "road not taken," at least within the humanities in the United States, where group projects, research teams, and independent research institutes with defined, collectively executed and authored projects remain marginal to the production of humanistic knowledge (though work in the digital humanities may represent a new inroad in this direction).

In his inaugural address entitled "The Present Situation of Social Philosophy and the Tasks of an Institute for Social Research," delivered upon his assumption of the directorship of the Institut in 1930, Horkheimer evoked a situation in which the accumulation and differentiation of disciplinary research had outstripped the capacity of any individual researcher. Yet he retained an orientation towards the social totality as the context within which the data and results of disciplinary research reveal their social meaning and value and could be assessed for their contribution to social emancipation. As Horkheimer said:

> the question today is to organize investigations stimulated by contemporary philosophical problems in which philosophers, sociologists, economists, historians, and psychologists are brought together in permanent collaboration to undertake in common that which can be carried out individually in the laboratory in other fields. . . . [Q]uestions become integrated into the empirical research process; their answers lie in the advance of objective knowledge, which itself affects the form of the questions. In the study of society, no one individual is capable of adopting such an approach, both because of the volume of material and because of the variety of indispensable auxiliary sciences.[5]

Horkheimer believed that this function could be carried out by social research only if it moved beyond disciplinary limits, but also only if it moved beyond the capacities of the traditional individual scholar in a new organization of knowledge that would be not only interdisciplinary, but also trans-individual. The new "subject" of social knowledge would be a research team, bringing together individual disciplinary expertise within planned projects, in which group discussion would clarify the problems to be pursued, the methodologies, the disciplinary contributions and their limits, and the synthetic outcomes of the collaboration.

This interdisciplinary group work was dramatically embodied by the Institut's journal, the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* (Figure 9.1).[6] The commissioning of articles followed from the theoretical presuppositions of the group and the editorial collective's decisions; all articles were read and discussed by the core group as well. Taking as an illustration the major essays from the first year, 1932, we can see the impressive range

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Figure 9.1   *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung 1* (1932), table of contents.

of specialized topics contributing to the synthetic picture of the social situation of the age. Even more important for the practical implementation of interdisciplinarity, however, was the book review section, which encompassed half the journal's page-space and averaged more than 350 reviews a year. As Habermas remarks in an essay about the *Zeitschrift*:

> The literature deployed and discussed in the book review section provided the difficult material that fits almost naturally into the theoretical framework; it provided a test for the organizing power of the central research interests. The book review section was divided into Philosophy, General Sociology, Psychology, History, Social Movement, Social Policy, Specialized Sociology, and Economics. Subdivisions of Specialized Sociology included political science, cultural anthropology, and theory of law. Never again . . . has the unity of the social sciences been so convincingly portrayed as here, from the perspective of an unorthodox modified "Western Marxism."[7]

We can draw a few tentative conclusions about these two models of interdisciplinarity represented by the Frankfurt School and held in unresolved tension in its activities. First, the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* demonstrates how much is required to achieve such a comprehensive and multi-perspectival interdisciplinary view. The *Zeitschrift* was the

focal point of group activity, with an editorial collective totally involved with all that appeared in the journal, and at least two concentric circles of contributors sustaining its very extensive range of studies and reviews. At the same time, as a focal point of a vast amount of social science theory and research in several specialized fields, the journal was also to serve as the *pedagogical* instrument for developing the interdisciplinary competence of editors, contributors, and ulterior readers. Second, it is not accidental that the Institut für Sozialforschung, though loosely associated with universities, was autonomous in its funding and animated by concerns to resist fascism and antisemitism and to advance social and political emancipation. A journal of this sort demanded a tremendous amount of work and personal sacrifice, and for a time, the scholars involved set aside their individual professional ambitions to a substantial degree in pursuit of these collective aims. Finally, in the legacy of the Frankfurt School in the present-day American academy, this collective model of interdisciplinary research has been largely eclipsed by the individual model I described earlier, which, as I have suggested, is more in tune with the evaluation and reward system of university institutions, at least in the humanities and some social science disciplines. Even with current gestures towards strengthening interdisciplinary collaboration, coauthored publication, and group work in these disciplines, it remains to be seen whether the institutional conditions to support such work sustainably are anywhere on the horizon.

Authoritarianism as Interdisciplinary Object: *Studien über Autorität und Familie*

In the mid-1930s, as fascism spread across Europe, the Institut für Sozialforschung published a compendious "research report" on the topic of "authority and the family," an important precursor to Adorno's post–World War II social psychological group study *The Authoritarian Personality*.[8] Completed in New York in 1935 and published the next year in 1936, the report attempted to bring to light the wide-ranging investigations of the Institute and its collaborators concerning authority and its social and psychological genesis within the European family. Horkheimer notes that, despite its fragmentary character—a product of the displacement of the research organization and its members— the study carried an "essential programmatic character." The rise of authoritarianism in Europe, the direct cause of the upheavals in the Institute's scientific activities, made the question of authority not only of holistic, interdisciplinary, and international interest, but also of political

and personal survival. In the textual architecture of an extensive (900 pages) publication on a single critical social-cultural topic, the project instantiated the methodological premises of the critical, interdisciplinary group research that Horkheimer had announced in his inaugural address on assuming the directorship of the Institute, "The Present Situation of Social Philosophy and the Tasks of an Institute for Social Research" (1931), which I quoted above.

Horkheimer underscores the project's collaborative nature, noting that the identification and articulation of the theme authority/family had taken place through "seminar-like meetings in the Institute" and that it consequently "belongs to no sole member of our group"; he does single out Erich Fromm, Leo Lowenthal, the economic historian Karl August Wittfogel, and the leader of the Geneva Office of the Institute, Andries Sternheim, as particular important voices in those discussions. The book is complexly designed, composed of three major sections: the first a three-part "Theoretical Outline" of the problem of authority and the family, primarily edited by Horkheimer; the second, a presentation of surveys on family structure, character structure, and attitudes towards authority, edited primarily by Fromm; and a set of individual contributions and literature reviews, edited primarily by Lowenthal. Further spinning the web of collaboration, as Horkheimer notes, was also an extensive correspondence on key issues with contributors, whose work often existed in multiple redactions.

Horkheimer mentions that the whole second ("empirical") section was informed by new experiences gained through very recent contact with American social scientists, using methods that were largely unfamiliar to the European investigators. It has, he says, the "character of an experiment," and rather than offering solid statistical proof, should be seen as means to a "productive construction of a typology" (*Studien*, x). The surveys were in fact, for the most part, never applied beyond a small pilot population. The third section, comprising more than half the book's pages, is composed of commissioned studies and literature reviews rich in scope and relevant perspectives on the authority/family nexus. It includes Wittfogel's study of the economic historical bases of the development of family authority; several essays touching on various historical, legal, and political aspects of the family in France, Belgium, Germany, and Austria; an essay by the neuropsychologist Kurt Goldstein on the significance of biology in the sociology of authority; a literature review by Marcuse about authority and the family in German sociology up to 1933; an essay by Hans Meyer on authority and family in anarchist theory; and much more. Yet as Horkheimer suggested in correspondence, these were intended above all to expand

the perspectives of the Institute's members, and accordingly there is little organic integration of this extraordinarily diverse assemblage of expert knowledge into the theoretical contributions by Horkheimer, Fromm, and Marcuse—as would have been the case had Horkheimer genuinely realized his programmatic aim of a mutual productive dialectic of theory and empirical research across disciplines. Several commentators have noted this relative lack of constructive integration of the parts of the book, which renders it more an anthology of loosely related, yet substantially heterogeneous materials rather than an achieved architecture of interdisciplinary research.

The project represented by "Studies on Authority and the Family" is rightly seen as a landmark in Horkheimer's early interdisciplinary research program, second only to the editorial structure and process of the Institute's journal, the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, which remains the greatest achievement of this collaborative intellectual complex. Yet its character, as several commentators have pointed out, was incomplete and more valedictory than catalytic of further work of the sort. As Leo Lowenthal noted in a conversation with Helmut Dubiel:

> The work was uneven. Yet the first part, containing the theory of authority in modern society . . . would presumably have remained unchanged in a more developed version of the project. I myself would probably have written more on how this program was reflected in literature. And were it not for Hitler, the empirical research would have included additional sections. . . . Had we the means and personnel, we would have undertaken comparative studies in other European countries. . . . Perhaps all of this might have developed in such a way that the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* would have published research reports on other inquiries. The book was not very successful. But how could it have been otherwise?[9]

No other collective publication of the sort would appear from the Frankfurt School for many years, and it marks a turning point from the early program of an emancipatory, interdisciplinary social science towards the theoretical directions represented by Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, focused upon human reason's self-destructive dynamics and the abolition of freedom in the manipulated thought-schemas of fascism and industrially produced culture. Whether, like Dubiel, one believes that this programmatic ideal can be reconstructed and the shortcomings of *Studies on Authority and the Family* measured against this ideal,[10] or whether, like Wiggershaus, one finds in it evidence for skepticism about whether the program ever coherently existed,[11] we can in any case conclude that the *Studies* are an incomplete and inconclusive monument, despite their impressive scope and bulk. Wiggershaus even implies that the gesture towards empirical work was

something of a mask for Horkheimer's consolidation of a philosophically oriented theoretical project, articulated in concert with a limited circle of collaborators including Marcuse, Lowenthal, and ever more prominently, Adorno.

The theoretical section, indeed, can be situated in the core of the Institute's theoretical concerns, both before and after the appearance of the *Studien*. The most obvious context and, in many cases, explicit thematic focus of this theoretical work as well was the accession to power of authoritarian states in Europe, both in the form of state-corporatist fascism and Nazism and in Stalin's consolidation of Soviet communism, which had seen intensive industrialization, collectivization of agriculture, bureaucratization, and state terror in the late 1920s and 1930s. The theoretical section contains a "general part" written by Horkheimer, a "social psychological part" written by Fromm, and a "history of ideas part" written by Marcuse.[12] There was to have been a fourth theoretical essay on economics by Friedrich Pollock, another member of the institute's inner circle, but it was considered incomplete at the time of publication. All three essays published in this section synthesize insights developed earlier by Horkheimer, Marcuse, and Fromm, and would receive subsequent elaboration, notably in essays in the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*.

Horkheimer's introduction, as already noted, explicitly referred to his program for interdisciplinary social research, which also tacitly counterpointed authoritarianism's concentration and forcible integration of separated liberal political, economic, and cultural spheres. Moreover, it drew upon his own historical accounts of the contradictory evolution of bourgeois political and moral thought, such as his study, "Egoism and the Freedom Movement," published in 1936 in the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*. Horkheimer would continue this focus as his American exile extended into the war years in essays such as "The Authoritarian State" (written in 1940) and "The End of Reason" (1941).

Similarly, Marcuse developed a consistent thread of reflection on authoritarianism throughout the 1930s. In his essay "The Struggle against Liberalism in the Totalitarian View of the State," which appeared in 1934 in the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, Marcuse analyzed the displacement of liberal capitalist ideology by a new *Weltanschauung* supporting the authoritarian abolition of liberal divisions between public and private, culture and politics, the individual and the community, the party and the state. In his well-known essay "The Affirmative Character of Culture," published a year after *Studien über Autorität und Familie*, Marcuse likewise explored the shift in function undergone by culture in the transition to the authoritarian state. Under liberal capitalism, in

Marcuse's view, culture had offered an illusory, idealistic, and socially harmless haven from the conflicts of the economic and political realms; under authoritarianism it was losing even this feeble capacity, as a no longer even relatively autonomous culture was integrated into state and communal functions as a direct instrument of domination.

Fromm, building upon his Marxist-Freudian social psychology in essays such as "The Method and Function of Analytic Social Psychology: Notes on Psychoanalysis and Historical Materialism" and "Psychoanalytic Characterology," both published in 1932 in the *Zeitschrift*, and further influenced by Wilhelm Reich's *Character Analysis* and *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, introduced in *Studies on Authority and the Family* the concept of the "sado-masochistic character type" as the characterological correlate of authoritarian social structures and their supporting ideologies. Fromm suggested a dialectical interplay between authoritarian social and political developments and this authoritarian character type: the sado-masochistic type at once internalized social authoritarianism within the structure of the individual psyche and actively contributed to the preservation of authority by making it an object of desire and motivation.

I will focus my remaining discussion on Horkheimer's contribution, which I consider the most theoretically innovative of the three (despite Fromm's influential framing of the authoritarian character type, which would be further, and differently, elaborated by Adorno in *The Authoritarian Personality*). Horkheimer's theoretical essay, a general introduction, is set out in three sections: "Culture," "Authority," and "Family." He thus somewhat misleadingly suggests a correlation with the tripartite organization of the book as a whole, though closer consideration reveals that this is not the case, since the macro-structure is, as I have already indicated, a theoretical section, a section encompassing survey questions and preliminary data, and a capacious sample of specialized research and surveys of disciplinary literature. Since his inclusion of headings on "Authority" and "Family" are rather self-explanatory in a general introduction to a book on authority and the family, it is the first heading, on "Culture," that stands in need of explanation. Indeed, Horkheimer begins his essay in a surprising way: with a reflection on historical periodization and the categories by which we divide and order historical processes:

> The history of mankind has been divided into periods in very varying ways. The manner in which periodization has been carried out has not depended exclusively on the object . . .; the current state of knowledge and the concerns of the knower have also played a part. Today the division into antiquity, Middle Ages, and modern times is still widely used. It originated in literary

studies and was applied in the seventeenth century to history generally. It expresses the conviction, formed in the Renaissance and consolidated in the Enlightenment, that the time between the fall of the Roman Empire and the fifteenth century was a dark era for mankind, a sort of hibernation of culture. . . . In contemporary scholarship this particular periodization is considered highly unsatisfactory. One reason is that the "Middle Ages" were in fact a time of important progress even from a purely pragmatic viewpoint, since they saw decisive advances in civilization and produced revolutionary technical inventions. A further reason is that the usual criteria for making the fifteenth century a dividing point are partly indefensible, partly applicable in a meaningful way only to limited areas of world history.[13]

What, we may justifiably ask, does this have to do with authority and the family? Horkheimer goes on for several pages in this highly abstract vein before we begin to get an inkling of what might be his intention here.

Horkheimer, it transpires, seeks to negotiate a role for culture in our concepts of history that would avoid, on the one hand, classical Marxism's underestimation of culture's efficacy in relation to the transformations impelled by the economic forces and relations of production; and on the other, idealist conceptions of history that hypostatize culture into period "essences," as in German *Geistesgeschichte* and *Kulturmorphologie*. Horkheimer wants to account for the role that culture and its institutions play in the processes of historical change that should be reflexively incorporated into periodizing concepts. He raises the possibility of a differential historicity that traverses the social whole, impacting back on the concepts by which we understand history: "The process of production influences men not only in the immediate contemporary form in which they themselves experience it in their work, but also in the form in which it has been incorporated into relatively stable institutions which are slow to change, such as family, school, church, institutions of worship, etc." (54). We can note that these institutions, though Horkheimer does not yet explicitly say so, are those we typically see as framing relations of authority: parent to child, teacher to pupil, priest to follower, and so on. Horkheimer does, however, suggest that such cultural institutions "in so far as they influence the character and behavior of men at all, are conservative or disruptive factors in the dynamism of society. Either they provide the mortar of the building under construction, the cement which artificially holds together the parts that tend toward independence, or they are part of the forces which will destroy the society" (54).

It is only in the second section of the essay that Horkheimer explicitly connects these reflections to the matter of authority, which he sees as one of the primary mechanisms by which the conservative, or disrup-

tive, effects of culture express themselves through human actions and choices:

> [T]he strengthening or weakening of authorities is one of those characteristics which make culture a dynamic factor in the historical process. The weakening of relationships of dependence which are deeply rooted in the conscious and unconscious life of the masses is among the greatest dangers that can threaten a societal structure and indicates that the structure has become brittle. Conscious exaltation of the status quo is evidence that a society is in a critical period and even becomes a "main source of danger." (72)

The rest of the essay is dedicated to two further themes, which are fairly familiar elements of Frankfurt School thought: the gradual shift from bourgeois emancipation from traditional authority to the reinvention of the authority of the "free market," up to the current crisis in which bourgeois liberalism is being abolished by authoritarian state capitalism; and the historical role of the family in the psychic economy of authority for the bourgeois individual.

More novel, however, is Horkheimer's motif of culture itself, which as articulated through authority, becomes a conservative or disruptive force in the historical process. Although he does not quite use these terms, implicit in his essay is the idea that authority, invested in culture and effectuated through institutions, may slow or accelerate the pace of historical change due to its fundamental impulse, as Horkheimer's underlying Marxist orientation suggests, from the forces and relations of production at a given moment and place. It is fairly evident that Horkheimer views authoritarian tendencies in modern societies—as well as the open authoritarian developments on the European continent—as "frustrations" laid upon a history that should, by its underlying economic, technological, and organizational features, be tending towards socialism, and this is no doubt the dominant and rather pessimistic *Grundton* of his essay. Yet Horkheimer leaves open the question of a potential conjunction of culture and authority in the direction of an acceleration of history as well, as a disruptive force that breaks the lock on historical development and allows its rapid surge forward.

Did Horkheimer in 1936 imagine an alternative convergence of culture and authority that could restart and accelerate a stalled history, an authoritative political will-formation that could oppose itself to the reactionary authoritarianism that was everywhere in evidence? It is difficult to say. By 1940, in any case, very little room remained in Horkheimer's perspective to mediate critical theory and historical action, which, as he himself had suggested, might depend on the exercise of political authority. Horkheimer is thus constrained to give witness to the debilitation of political will and the absence of any practical

emancipatory direction. An exemplary expression of this predicament is his essay on "The Authoritarian State," which he intended to publish in a memorial volume for Benjamin, who was one of the tragic victims of the current historical circumstances:

> The readiness to obey, even when it sets out to think, is of no use to theory. . . . Thought is not absolutely opposed to command and obedience, but sets them for the time being in relationship to the task of making freedom a reality. This relationship is in danger. Sociological and psychological concepts are too superficial to express what has happened to revolutionaries in the last few decades: their will toward freedom has been damaged, without which neither understanding nor solidarity nor a correct relation between leader and group is conceivable.[14]

Totalitarian Interdisciplinarity: Critical Art and Post-Socialist Cultural Politics

Many practitioners of contemporary art in the United States and Western Europe have embraced interdisciplinarity as a programmatic basis of their artistic practice, and in parallel, research into the arts has developed a number of interdisciplinary tributaries, including new museological studies and visual cultural studies. Such developments, similarly, have not been lacking in the artistic and art-scholarly spaces of former socialist "East Bloc" countries or in "unaligned" nations such as the ex-Yugoslavia. However, given the particular histories—nationalist, fascist, socialist, and post-socialist—that transpired in these countries, the nature and content of contemporary interdisciplinarity may be significantly different there than in apparently similar cases elsewhere.

In recent art-critical discussions, interdisciplinarity in the arts is often seen as a response to the boundaries drawn by traditional and modernist presuppositions about medium specificity, decontextualized form- and style-concepts, and context-insensitive narratives of "art history." While it is indeed true that traditional and modernist criteria prevailed for many years under state socialism and have substantially persisted in post-socialism, interdisciplinary investigation has received impetus from an unlikely quarter: from artistic engagement with the historical legacy of "totalitarian" culture and the totalizing conceptions of cultural politics that legitimated it. Both Nazi-fascist culture and Stalinist culture have provided material for contemporary post-socialist projects that mix artistic practice with historical and museological reflection, the most striking of which is the Slovenian neo-avant-garde movement *Neue Slowenische Kunst* and its affiliated entities such as the Irwin

artist group and the Laibach rock band.[15] Such projects are, in a sense, intrinsically "interdisciplinary" because of the unifying, concentrating nature of totalitarian conceptions of culture that they take as their object of reflection and formal inspiration, in however ironic and subverting a way. Such artists investigate historical forms of culture which, in instantiating the programmatic desire to remake the whole domain of culture and everyday life in the image of the ideology of the total state, had *already* programmatically blurred disciplinary boundaries—the lines between image and discourse, art and publicity, education and political indoctrination, visuality and performativity, and popular and elite culture in collectively lived space. Moreover, their contemporary works reflexively employ those discipline-crossing (multi)media in which the greatest utopian aspirations were originally invested by artists of the politicized avant-gardes, especially architecture and film (or its latter-day avatars in the digital sphere).

Péter György notes that after the imposition of dictatorship in Hungary in 1949, the adjective "Soviet" took on an omnipresence in many spheres of cultural life. In his examples of Hungarian publications started during these years, we catch a glimpse of a monistic will to reunify under "Soviet" the division of labor and fragmentation of specialized, professionalized disciplines conceived to be the hallmark of modernity in the classical social theories of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim.

> *Soviet Culture*, *Soviet Architectural Review*, *The Soviet Village*, *Soviet People*, *Soviet Youth*, *Soviet Applied Arts*, *Soviet Art History*, *Soviet Ethnography*, *Soviet Linguistics*, *Bulletin of Soviet Medicine*, *Soviet Archaeology*, *Review of Soviet General Industries*, and *Collected Studies on Soviet Law*.[16]

The word "Soviet" here functions as a signal that any division between spheres of knowledge and culture, any incommensurability or incommunicability among their respective discourses, is only apparent. The governing heights of the Party-State and the oversight of science, culture, economy, and everyday life by centrally coordinated organs guarantee that everything will be connected to everything else in a maximally productive way. As Claude Lefort writes in his essay "The Logic of Totalitarianism," "What is being created is the model of a society which seems to institute itself without divisions, which seems to have mastery of its own organization, a society in which each part seems to be related to every other and imbued by one and the same project of building socialism."[17]

I will discuss in greater detail two significant examples from the years following the 1989 political changes in Hungary that engage the legacy of Hungarian socialism and its relatively brief "totalitarian"-dictatorial

aspirations from 1949 up to 1953, along with the Soviet invasion in response to the 1956 uprising. These are: George Legrady's digital *Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War*, which superimposes a personal collection of Eastern European and communist materials with the virtual floor plan of the now-closed Museum of the Worker's Movement, a socialist educational and propagandistic display; and Attila F. Kovács's self-reflexively totalizing, architectural-museological and propagandistic *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the Budapest "House of Terror" on historic Andrassy Avenue, which was opened by the right-wing government of Viktor Orbán amid the contentious 2002 elections that ushered in a short-lived coalition government of socialists and free democrats. To anticipate my conclusions: despite being made by skilled and highly conscious artists and being, as such, accomplished works of art, both works remain highly problematic. Not for formal-artistic reasons, but rather because in light of their relation to their historical and political contexts they struggle to find a perspective—to use a Lukácsian concept—from which to form and illuminate the historical material they encompass. In making this judgment, however, I also want to suggest that their respective artistic difficulties lend greater critical insight into the problem of "totalitarianism" than a more evident museological or historiographic "success" might have. The artists' struggles to master this historical material points to the conceptual instability in the very notion of totalitarianism—which also raised problems even for its most brilliant theoreticians, such as Arendt and Lefort—for its disquieting combination of novelty and extirpation of creativity, its totalizing and atomizing impulses, its claims to omnipotence and its internal inefficiency. One is inclined to agree with Žižek when he claims that "the notion of 'totalitarianism,' rather than a theoretical concept, is a kind of discursive *stopgap*: rather than enabling insight into the historical reality it points to, it puts obstacles in the way of understanding, or even actively produces blindspots."[18]

Moreover, such difficulties in wrestling meaningful narratives or artistic forms from totalitarian culture points us back to a basic issue of interdisciplinarity, the degree to which success in moving across disciplinary lines and fusing the hermeneutic horizons of specialized discourses and practices depends on particular constellations of institutional and political forces. Without an authorizing framework, interdisciplinarity can fall into mere dilettantism or arbitrary montage. Yet if that authorization is overly strong, it becomes a compulsory fusion that overwhelms the internal criteria of scientific knowledge, short-circuiting it in the name of an ideological project, as with proletarian science or more recently, the merger of theology and biology in the notion of "intelligent design." To a crucial extent, interdisciplinarity hinges on the relation between the

relatively impersonal, falsifiable, and iterable domain of knowledge and the collective, institutionally articulated "subjectivity" that authorizes it and renders it socially communicable. I want to suggest, then, that it is not accidental that Legrady's and Kovács's works shuttle between two key metaphors for how culture under dictatorship was individually experienced, *chance* and *terror*. For "totalitarianism" is a kind of placeholder for a range of "pathologies of reason" (Honneth) in the relationship between knowledge and collective authorization. Chance is the avatar of total historical contingency, here marked by the witty allusion of Legrady's title to Daniel Spoerri's Fluxus-oriented work (originally from 1962 though changing and growing in subsequent editions, hence paralleling the development of the Kádár regime): the *Anecdoted Topography of Chance*,[19] which suggests disorder and arbitrariness underlying the rigid ideological architectonics of an official socialist history museum. Terror, in contrast, marks the logic of inexorable historical necessity driven by a coercive ideology. Notably, the notion of totalitarianism fuses these two polar extremes. In totalitarianism, chance and terror become indiscernible as authorizing instances of knowledge and culture, which in turn reflexively creates problems for giving a coherent theoretical or artistic account of that which has been designated by the term "totalitarian." It is thus above all in the "objective" historical material itself and not in any practical shortcoming of the artists that the problematic character of Legrady's and Kovács's works resides.

Legrady: *An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War, 1993*

George Legrady was born in Budapest in 1950 and left Hungary with his family in the wake of the 1956 uprising; he grew up in Canada and now teaches digital arts at the University of California in Santa Barbara. Legrady speaks of *An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War* as a "non-linear index" that allows access to Cold War history through his own "particular hybridized history in relation to the Cold War." The "anecdoted archive" is closely tied to his personal family history and incorporates several intimate items: home movies, artifacts, ID cards, drawings of family memories, photographs of their residence. Also included are items of more distant connection, including propaganda materials, official photographs, street signs, books, and money. It is the conjunction between the materials and the contingent (but not arbitrary) meanings they generate in their shifting associations that is of interest to Legrady.[20]

In his discussion of the work, Legrady has made explicit his interest in its disciplinary or classificatory aspect, which is also signaled by his use of the metaphor of the museum, through the incorporation of the layout of the floor plan of the defunct Museum of the Workers' Movement as the virtual "architecture" of his digital design. Notably, also, for a decade following the closure of the Museum of the Workers' Movement, its space in the Buda Castle housed the Ludwig Museum of Contemporary Art, which makes Legrady's mapping of his own contemporary digital art onto pre-digital propaganda all the more resonant.

Legrady self-consciously addressed his work to the problem of meaning-making out of the recalcitrant material of a fragmented, traumatically charged, and often falsified or repressed historical past. In a 2001 interview with Sven Spieker, Legrady said of the *Anecdoted Archive*:

> The initial idea with the *Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War* was to create an archive that would integrate all the odd bits of information I had at hand (and in storage) about my leaving Hungary and growing up in Canada during the Cold War. The challenging question for the work was "how can I develop a coherent narrative out of odds and ends and multiple ideological and cultural perspectives?" or "How can I make sense of my own history through these things I have kept and is it possible to convey the personal value they have for me to others." The first solution was to come up with an organizing device that also had a multiple play of expectations. I used the floorplan of the Budapest official propaganda museum as a way to organize all my things to be included in the archive. In this official symbolic structure, I inserted official and personal material, a lot of which you would normally not find grouped together.
>
>   I realize of course that any story I construct with these scattered objects cannot be comprehensive or complete. All that can be done is a kind of sampling, organizing a particular set of data into some kind of system or logic. . . . The thing about digitalization is that through databases and through various forms of information processing and data mining you can very effectively organize data and reduce the differentiating markings that separate official and personal sources. So my idea was to construct a digital archive where if you select one thing the program goes and dynamically tries to find other related things, similar to search engines today. That was the original plan but I didn't have the means to realize it at the time.[21]

About the classificatory aspect of the work, he points to his interest in Foucault's account of classificatory change in *The Order of Things*. He also notes how, after 1989, with the simultaneous fall of the Berlin Wall and the death of his father—the loss of both a personal and a collective symbolic order, as it were—digital technology offered remediation of the broken connection of the personal and historical:

> The project's primary intent was to give coherent form to the diverse set of references and 'invested objects' at hand that defined my sense of history following the collapse of the Berlin wall which coincided with the death of my father. I am not a historian, sociologist, archivist, or museologist but made use of methodologies borrowed from these disciplines to produce this interactive archive. It is not intended as an official history. It is rather about a way to situate stories through technological media. For instance, to create a platform where one's stories can engage in discourse with official history since one of the capabilities of the digitization process is that it reshapes information, erasing differences traditionally easily identifiable as belonging to official or personal documents.[22]

Legrady goes on to discuss the non-linear, interactive quality of the archive, which renders the meanings of history not necessary but contingently possible, a product of chance and choice. In this sense, the anecdoted archive—as opposed to the official propaganda museum that it supplanted—dramatizes in microcosm the liberal pluralization of state socialism's ideologically structured past, as individuals make of the historical archive what they can and will, in interaction with the capacities of digital media for unexpected remixes of materials. "Based on chance, and the choices that viewers follow," he writes, "each viewer walks away with a slightly different story from this Archive based according to their own ideological beliefs. . . . In other words, the sequence and choices that each viewer selects becomes a visible reflection of their own cultural/political perspective."[23] Yet despite this interpretation of his chosen medium, conceiving the *Anecdoted Archive*'s digital interactivity as sort of miniature "open society," a tension persists between the two statements just quoted. For in a certain sense, Legrady ascribes to the new artistic technologies a utopian ability to overcome—or at least mitigate—the splits that constituted his own family history (and perhaps in a more personal sense, to pay memorial homage to his deceased father). Notably, however, he discusses such an overcoming of this division in terms that might describe the very cultural and political dynamics of totalitarianism, its erasure of the differences between the official and the personal, the collapse of the distance between the ideological-political and the "social" sphere of production and everyday life.

It would be unfair to exaggerate the degree to which this "totalitarian" trace is technologically actualized rather than latently reflected in Legrady's archive, as if his "anecdoted archive" were to bear out Žižek's sinister assertion that "The digitalization of our daily lives, in effect, makes possible a Big Brother control in comparison with which the old Communist secret police supervision cannot but look like primitive child's play" (*Did Someone Say Totalitarianism?*, 256). Yet it must also be admitted that the "freedom" offered by its interactivity—especially

viewed from the distance of almost thirty years of rapid development of digital arts technology—remains unrealized. As Legrady himself notes in his interview with Spieker, mobilizing the estranging powers of digital technologies and their capacity to associate data in unexpected ways was a technical challenge he could take up only in subsequent work. What is of greater consequence, and perhaps the most authentic achievement of the work in retrospect, is its highlighting of just this unresolved presence of opposed impulses in a work dealing with the historical legacy of East–Central European state socialism. Legrady's work illustrates poignantly, to adopt Adorno's famous metaphor, how difficult it may be, despite subjective intentions, to reassemble its torn bits into a coherent whole.

Attila F. Kovács: House of Terror Museum, Budapest, 2002, and Memory Point Museum, Hódmezővásárhely, 2006

Attila Kovács, born in 1951, is almost an exact contemporary of Legrady, although unlike Legrady, he remained in Hungary and was associated with the skeptical, semi-dissident art scene of late socialism. He designed film sets for such directors as István Szabó, Sándor Pál, and András Jeles, including his renowned "Stone Room" for Jeles's banned film *Dream Brigade* (Figure 9.2), which as György has pointed out, offered one of the most effective images of the stagnation of society in the late Kádár period, while resonating with other Central European

Figure 9.2   Attila F. Kovács set from András Jeles, *Dream Brigade*, 1983. Film still.

socialist bloc works of this period such as the "Dead Class" of Tadeusz Kantor.[24] Kovács also helped Jeles create a brilliant visual allegory of an orthodox bureaucratic society in the Byzantium section of the film *The Annunciation*, which adapts Imre Madách's nineteenth-century drama *The Tragedy of Man*. In the recent socialist past, Madách's historical dream-vision had been the object of one of Lukács's most notorious critiques, on grounds of its "anti-democratic world-view" and its "pessimistic lack of perspective." Lukács's essay, reportedly, was written on the prompting of the Stalinist leader Rákosi[25] and may have justified the official ban on its performance during socialism (although, it is worth noting, Lukács had harshly criticized Madach's play on similar grounds already in his early *Developmental History of Drama* in 1910–11).[26] Jeles's film also includes an episode representing the terror in the French Revolution, which, along with Madach's negative representation of a future phalanstry, no doubt offended the ideological sensibilities of socialist Hungary's authorities. Kovács's 1987 exhibition *Necropolis* similarly presented geometrical, industrial forms in tarred metal as sculptural depictions of the static, lifeless space of the late socialist environment. His work at this juncture heightened to oneiric uncanniness the banal, impoverished environments of everyday life and work under state socialism. His artistic presentation of socialism finds parallels in recent scholarship about late and post-socialism that highlighted the strange, even delirous aspects of Soviet and East Bloc socialist culture— for example, Susan Buck-Morss's *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West* and the work of anthropologist Katherine Verdery on post-socialist reburials.[27] Kovács has made several important theatre and opera set designs, including the paradigmatic Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the *Ring* cycle. He is also a notable architect and interior designer for private and commercial spaces. Following the opening of Budapest's House of Terror, four years later Kovács designed a satellite museum of socialism in Hódmezővásárhely, in southern Hungary, called Memory Point (Figures 9.3 and 9.4).

The Budapest House of Terror, however, remains his most ambitious and accomplished work, and it is by this work that his reputation will undoubtedly be measured. The House of Terror opened in the midst of the election campaign in February 2002, with a rally of Orbán supporters outside, a videotape of which now concludes one's museum visit. It is important to emphasize this post-socialist political context, because there are many respects in which the presentation of the history of "terror" in Hungary is propagandistically arrayed against the (now oppositional) Hungarian Socialist Party in the present, depicting today's socialists as the immediate heirs of a grim tradition of terror, and Orbán, a perfected
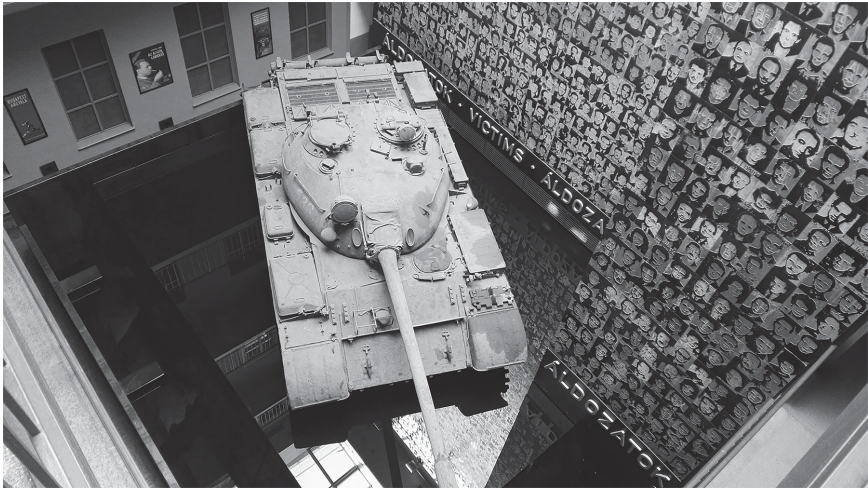
Figure 9.3   Central foyer of Terror Háza Muzeum, Budapest. Fred Romero, 2017. Permission for use by Creative Commons Attribution Generic 2.0 License.

Figure 9.4   Statues in courtyard of Memory Point, Andrassy Street 34, Hódmezővasárhely. Unnamed photographer ("Globetrotter19"), 2021. Permission for use by Creative Commons Attribution Share-Alike 3.0 License.

instance of what Solzhenitsyn termed the Egocrat, as Hungary's elected savior from it. Kovács's architectural and display designs are not only spatially complicit with this tendentiously ideologized historical presentation, they are powerful, compulsory, dynamic embodiments of it.[28] Although clearly a walk through a museum in present-day Budapest is a far cry from the real fear and violence people suffered during the years of the dictatorship or the clampdown following the 1956 revolt, the point remains: while seemingly denouncing the history and means of terror, the museum itself draws its aesthetic sustenance from totalitarian means, including state propaganda and terror. This paradox of an artistic critique of totalitarianism being instrumentalized in the service of an increasingly authoritarian "foe" of totalitarianism had, indeed, already been anticipated in the suppression of the Soviet political avant-gardes by the official aesthetics of the Stalin era, as Boris Groys has suggested. Socialist realism's apparent reversal of the early Soviet avant-garde in fact covertly completed that which the avant-gardes themselves could only imperfectly realize: total homologization of the artistic field with the field of politics.[29] Kovács's neo-avant-garde treatment of totalitarianism is a microcosmic image of a Hungary in which the Orbán government's instrumentalization of media and culture has been fully consummated.

I believe this to be key to Kovács's museum-*Gesamtkunstwerk* in two important senses. The first is epistemic and relates to the question of interdisciplinarity raised at the outset. The artist has put all the means at his command, from architecture to scenography, and from sculptural installation to digital technology, in the service of a monolithic, pseudo-historical narrative. Interdisciplinarity is thus subsumed by a tautological intent, to demonstrate viscerally that terror feels terrible, and that "socialism" is the proper reference of this terrible gut feeling. In case it be thought that I am exaggerating the crudely tautological nature of the message that underlies the museum's sophisticated aesthetic means, consider this quotation from the *International Herald Tribune* attributed to Maria Schmidt, a historian who is the museum's director and adviser to Orbán: "Is there anything in history that is not related to politics? . . . The political motivation of those who work here is to show that the system of terror was terrible—the Communist terror was terrible."[30] There is, in fact, no historical narrative to expound; the House of Terror is an environment for instantiating the timeless, because tautological, proposition that "terror is terrible."[31]

The other sense in which the museum mimics the logic of totalitarianism is its purgation of contingency by imposing a spatialized necessity onto the historical past and present. As Lefort suggests in his analysis of the logic of the Terror in the French Revolution, terror-space is strictly

binarized and moralized, with the position of the revolutionary closely locked to that of the enemy.[32] Dramatically redoubling the structure of terror putatively to criticize it, the Budapest House of Terror replicates the oppressive bunker-like closure of its overall architecture and its mandatory "no exit" trajectory within the rigidly organized "cells" of its displays. Artistically, the tautological yet compulsory nature of the content is realized in an exhaustively spatialized image of Hungary's recent past and contemporary history, petrified into an unchanging, unambiguous geometry of political fear.

This already begins with the choice of the museum's location, 60 Andrassy Avenue, which possesses a special *genius loci*, having been the offices first of the Nazi collaborationist Arrow Cross movement, then the Gestapo headquarters, then the communist secret police headquarters and interrogation center; in the later, less repressive Kádár years, it was a communist youth center. Although it might be argued that this history makes it appropriate as a site of memory, Kovács's Terror Museum also mobilizes this history as part of its aesthetic frisson of "Terror"; even its signature architecture, which includes the symbolically connotative "blades-walls," literally projects the rigid signifier of Hungary's recent past into the public space of Budapest's post-socialist present (Figure 9.5). As István Rév describes:

Figure 9.5   Exterior view of Terror Háza Muzeum, Budapest. Fred Romero, 2017. Permission for use by Creative Commons Attribution Generic 2.0 License.

> Around the completely grey façade of the House of Terror (even the glass of the windows is painted grey) the architect designed a black metal frame. . . . Around the roof, as part of the black frame there is a wide perforated metal shield with the word "TERROR," inscribed backward, the five-pointed star [symbol of communism] and the arrow-cross [symbol of Hungarian Nazi-fascism]. When exactly at noon, the sun is supposed to shine through the perforation, the word "TERROR" and the signs of autocracy hypothetically cast a shadow on the pavement. The presumed "Darkness at Noon" harks back to the Hungarian-born Arthur Koestler's Nicolas Salmanovich Rubashov, the most famous fictional Communist show trial character.[33]

One is meant to enter the House of Terror as a haunted space, full of dark nooks and luminous apparitions, and though a few rooms are perfunctorily dedicated to the Nazi Arrow Cross movement, the specter haunting the House of Terror Musuem is emphatically that of communism. Moreover, the choice of *genius loci* is not an innocent one with respect to the history of terror in Hungary. By focusing on the Arrow Cross movement, which took over the building in 1937, it could be conveniently forgotten that there was *already* a substantial history of terror in Hungary that preceded the Arrow Cross regime, including Red terror during the short-lived socialist commune of 1919 and the White terror that followed under the Horthy regime, which saw, for example, antisemitic pogroms as well as the institution of forced labor for Jews well before the Nazi collaborationist regime was established. Horthy has been recanonized by the Hungarian nationalist right as a patriot and national savior, rather than a clerico-military fascist strongman and, in his own way, an important ally of Hitler.

The museum depends on a highly codified pathway through its displays, including an obligatory final descent from the first floor in a slow elevator into the basement, where dungeon-like interrogation and torture cells are on display. In a literally architectural sense, the House of Terror instances that defining feature of totalitarianism that Lefort aptly called "the phantasmagoria of the Plan" (288). Indeed, the floor plans are included on the House of Terror's website, and incorporated into them are arrows indicating the obligatory pathway museum visitors must follow to animate the intense but iterative messaging of its displays and spaces. The plan incorporates the museum spectator into its artificial, sublimely overpowering body, which is traversed by strange bursts of light and sound, material textures, colors, and darknesses (Figure 9.6). In one of the most remarkable parts of the museum—with a nod to Joseph Beuys's sculptures in fat such as "Fat Chair" (1964) and "Fat Corner" (1968), which themselves index the confrontation of Nazi and Stalinist dictatorships in World War II—Kovács even concretizes this

Figure 9.6   Permanent installation at Terror Háza Muzeum, Budapest. Unnamed photographer ("n1207"), 2017. Permission for use by Creative Commons Attribution Share-Alike 3.0 License.

bodily metaphor with a rubberized wall representing bricks of pork fat, referring to a campaign of agricultural expropriation in which János Kádár had a hand. The message is that Kádár was part of the pre-1956 dictatorial terror as well as the presiding figure of post-1956 "Goulash communism." Therefore, his socialist party successors—such as Orbán's 2002 election rival Péter Medgyessy—are also heirs of terror. From vantage after vantage, the same statement is repeated: socialism is terror, and terror is terrible.

A Provisional Conclusion

In the museological artworks of both Legrady and Kovács, we detect that the primary problem of the artists in confronting the material of totalitarianism is not, first and foremost, a technical one. It is, instead, what Lukács called "perspective": namely, what stance does the artist take towards his material in order to achieve a "truthful" presentation of it? One is tempted to translate the respective approaches of Legrady and Kovács, chance and terror, into Lukács's Hegelian vocabulary, and

argue that they fall into the twin but complementary traps of *subjective immediacy*, in which the link between the individual artifact or memory and the historical context remains arbitrary, and *abstract subjective idealism*, in which the necessary linkage of individual and history appears imposed and willful. Certainly other approaches are possible that would offer solutions to the problem of perspective, and one might imagine different treatments of this same historical material. However, we should also be led to ask whether it is merely accidental that these two Hungarian artists of the same generation, both making museological works about that country's socialist legacy, should have foundered on just this problem of perspective. The thinking and feeling subject, as Adorno reminds us, is also a historical product and, like the work of art, a complex resultant of relations of domination. Beyond any subjective shortcoming or artistic error, in the limits of these works, we glimpse the subjective costs that state socialism continues to exact from artists, even as the system itself fades into collective memory and selective musealization.

Notes

1. Georg Lukács, "Georg Simmel" (1918), trans. Margaret Cerullo, *Theory, Culture & Society* 8 (1991): 148.
2. On the Galileo Circle, see Péter Csunderlik, *Radikálisok, szabadgondolkodók, ateisták. A Galilei Kör története*, 1908–1919 (Napvilág Kiadó, Budapest, 2017).
3. On the Sunday Circle, see: *A Vasárnapi Kör. Dokumentumok. Összeállította*, eds. Éva Karádi and Erzsébet Vezér (Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó, 1980); Zoltán Novák, *A Vasárnapi Társaság* (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1979); Júlia Bendl, *Lukács György élete a századfordulótól 1918-ig* (Budapest, 1994, Scientia Humana Társulás); Lee Congdon, *The Young Lukács* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983); Mary Gluck, *George Lukács and His Generation, 1900–1918* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).
4. Martin Jay, "Positive and Negative Totalities: Implicit Tensions in Critical Theory's Vision of Interdisciplinary Research," in Jay, *Permanent Exiles: Essays on the Intellectual Migration from German to the America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 114.
5. Max Horkheimer, "The Present Situation of Social Philosophy and the Tasks of an Institute for Social Research," in Horkheimer, *Between Philosophy and Social Science: Selected Early Writings*, trans. G. Frederick Hunter, Matthew S. Kramer, and John Torpey (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1993), 9–10.
6. For discussion of Frankfurt School-style "interdisciplinarity" see also, along with Martin Jay's essay cited in note 4, Richard Wolin, "The Frankfurt School: From Interdisciplinary Materialism to Philosophy of

History," in Wolin, *The Terms of Cultural Criticism: The Frankfurt School, Existentialism, Poststructuralism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 45–61.

7. Jürgen Habermas, "The Inimitable *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*: How Max Horkheimer Took Advantage of a Historically Oppressive Hour," *Telos* 45 (1980): 117.

8. Max Horkheimer et al., *Studien über Authorität und Familie*, reprint of 1936 Paris edition (Lüneberg: Dietrich zu Klampen Verlag, 1987). Cf. Theodor W. Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950).

9. Leo Lowenthal in *An Unmastered Past: The Autobiographical Reflections of Leo Lowenthal*, ed. Martin Jay (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), 73–74.

10. Helmut Dubiel, *Theory and Politics: Studies in the Development of Critical Theory*, trans. Benjamin Gregg (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1985).

11. Rolf Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School: Its History, Theories, and Political Significance*, trans. Michael Robertson (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1994), 149–56. For further discussion of the *Studien*, see Chapter IV of Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923–1950* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973), 113–42; and Emil Walter-Busch, *Geschichte der Frankfurter Schule: Kritische Theorie und Politik* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2010), 116–37.

12. Marcuse's essay was reprinted in English translation as "A Study on Authority," in Herbert Marcuse, *Studies in Critical Philosophy*, trans. Joris de Bres (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), 49–155.

13. Max Horkheimer, "Authority and the Family," in *Critical Theory: Selected Essays* (New York: Continuum, 2002), 47.

14. Max Horkheimer, "The Authoritarian State," *Telos* 15 (1973): 19–20.

15. See Alexei Monroe's 2005 study, *Interrogation Machine: Laibach and NSK* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2005).

16. Péter György, "The Mirror of Everyday Life, or the Will to a Period Style," trans. Chris Sullivan, in *Art and Society in the Age of Stalin*, eds. Péter György and Hedvig Turai (Budapest: Corvina, 1992), 16.

17. Claude Lefort, "The Logic of Totalitarianism," in *The Political Forms of Modern Society: Bureaucracy, Democracy, Totalitarianism*, ed. John B. Thompson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986), 284.

18. Slavoj Žižek, *Did Someone Say Totalitarianism?* (London: Verso, 2011), 3.

19. See Daniel Spoerri, *An Anecdoted Topography of Chance*, trans. Malcolm Green (London: Atlas Press, 1995).

20. Though he is not directly discussed, Sven Spieker's study *The Big Archive: Art from Bureaucracy* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2008) provides critical and historical context for Legrady's project in a broad spectrum of modern and contemporary art's dialogue with archives. See also Spieker's 2001 interview with Legrady, quoted below.

21. Sven Spieker, "Pockets Full of Memory: A Conversation with George Legrady," *ArtMargins*, December 15, 2001, https://artmargins.com/pockets-full-of-memory-a-conversation-with-george-legrady/ (accessed December 31, 2021).

22. From George Legrady, "Concept: An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War, 1993," https://www.mat.ucsb.edu/~g.legrady/glWeb/Projects/anecdote/Anecdote.html (accessed December 31, 2021).

23. Ibid.

24. Péter György, "Hungarian Marginal Art in the Late Period of State Socialism," in *Postmodernism and the Postsocialist Condition: Politicized Art under Late Socialism*, ed. Aleš Erjavec (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), 197.

25. According to István Eörsi, "The Unpleasant Lukács," *New German Critique* 42 (1987): 3–4.

26. György Lukács, "Madách tragédiája," in Lukács, *Magyar Irodalom, Magyar Kultúra* (Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó, 1970), 560–73. For Lukács's early critique of Madách, see *Entwicklungsgeschichte des modernen Dramas*, 542–43, where he argues that *The Tragedy of Man* is no drama, but rather an unsuccessful mélange of epic and didactic poetry—a criticism that echoes Lukács's later view of Brecht. For discussion of Lukács's criticisms of Madách, see also János Kelemen, "Art's Struggle for Freedom: Lukács, the Literary Historian," in *Georg Lukács Reconsidered: Critical Essays in Politics, Philosophy and Aesthetics*, ed. Michael J. Thompson (London: Continuum, 2011), 123–25.

27. Susan Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2000); Katherine Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999). See also the catalogue and essays from the Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt's exhibition *Traumfabrik Kommunismus/Dream Factory Communism: The Visual Culture of the Stalin Era*, eds. Boris Groys and Max Hollein (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2003).

28. For discussion of the House of Terror's ideological presentation of history, see Magdelena Marsovszky, "'Die Märtyrer sind die Magyaren': Der Holocaust in Ungarn aus der Sicht des Hauses des Terrors in Budapest und die Ethnisierung der Erinnerung in Ungarn," in *Die Dynamik der europäischen Rechten: Geschichte, Kontinuitäten und Wandel*, eds. Claudia Globisch, Agnieszka Pufelska, and Volker Weiß (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2011), 55–74; Anna Manchin, "Staging Traumatic Memory: Competing Narratives of State Violence in Post-Communist Hungarian Museums," *East European Jewish Affairs* 45/2–3 (2015): 236–51; and Zsófia Frazon and Zsolt K. Horváth, "The Offended Hungary: The House of Terror as a Demonstration of Objects, Memorial, and Political Rite" (2019 republication of 2002 original), http://mezosfera.org/the-offended-hungary-the-house-of-terror-as-a-demonstration-of-objects-memorial-and-political-rite-2002/ (accessed December 31, 2021).

29. Boris Groys, *The Total Art of Stalinism: Avant-Garde, Aesthetic Dictatorship, and Beyond*, trans. Charles Rougle (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

30. Maria Schmidt, quoted in Thomas Fuller, "Stark History/Some See a Stunt: Memory Becomes Battleground in Budapest's House of Terror," *The New York Times*, August 2, 2002, https://www.nytimes.com/2002/08/02/news

/stark-history-some-see-a-stunt-memory-becomes-battleground-in-budap ests.html (accessed December 31, 2021).

31. The literature on museums and memory politics is vast. I will mention here only two works that deal with historical debates in the analogous context of memorialization of the Nazi past in post-war, divided, and post-reunification Germany: Charles S. Maier, *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust, and German National Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988); and Jeffrey Herf, *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).

32. Claude Lefort, "The Revolutionary Terror," in *Democracy and Political Theory*, trans. David Macey (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 81.

33. István Rév, *Retroactive Justice: Prehistory of Post-Communism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 282.