Conclusion

In his memorable parable of the downfall of art since the spiritual synthesis of the Gothic cathedral, Adolf Behne captures the sense of loss that haunts modern art (see chapter 7). He charts the spirit's descent from collective creation to the individual artwork as a progressive materialization that finally imprisons art in the picture frame, apt symbol of the framing of art as aesthetic object and valuable commodity. The frame, with its separating and isolating function, appears as the antithesis of the lost unity of the arts—the recurrent reminder that the commercialization of production and the privatization of reception have alienated art from its true purpose and end. Modern art is art with a bad conscience, haunted by the dream of self-redemption projected into the artwork of the future. In this sense we can speak of the idea of the total work of art as both specter and founding myth of aesthetic modernism, the redemptive dream of the avant-gardes that brought the totalizing aesthetic and political revolutions of the first third of the twentieth century into the closest proximity.

The *Götterdämmerung* of the Third Reich thus marked in suitably apocalyptic fashion the end of the totalizing tendencies of the whole epoch projected into the idea of the total work of art. What came to an end was not the total work of art as such, as a permanent possibility of modern art, but the total work of art of European modernism, that is, an emphatically historicist conception of the total work, tied to the question of the destination of history and of art. Looking back over the

150 years from the French Revolution to the German revolution, certain fundamental features of the total work stand out:

i. The total work as the product of the historical caesura of the French Revolution and as the response to the secularization of religion, and to politics, in the modern period
ii. The total work as organon of philosophies of history
iii. The total work as the performative re-fusion of art, religion, and politics
iv. The total work as the bearer of holistic, redemptive-revolutionary visions of modernity
v. The translation of the idea of the total work from the Old to the New World after the Second World War as signifying a rebirth of the total work under the new conditions of mass culture

Let me elucidate briefly each of these features.

First, politics and art in the modern sense not only presuppose the loss of religious legitimation, reinforced by the overthrow of the ancien régime in the French Revolution; they both lay claim to the inheritance of religion in their own right. If the importance of this profound transformation of society is not in doubt, the meaning of *secularization* remains contested. All interpretations, however, have one thing in common: secularization is grasped as a historical phenomenon whose meaning can be determined only in relation to a philosophy of history. Secularization signifies the process within which man is henceforth comprehended as historical, and humanity moves to center stage as the subject of the historical drama of emancipation. The deeply contested self-understandings of modernity all derive directly or indirectly from this historicizing of history, which makes history into its own explanatory principle. Europe since the Enlightenment is thus the first wholly historical and self-historicizing society, which turned to philosophy of history in order to give meaning to historical existence. Who will deny, asks J. L. Talmon, that "all modern ideologies—all of which incidentally emerged in the age of Romanticism—are in essence visions of history."[1]

Hegel spells out, as we have seen (in chapter 2), the meaning of secularization for modern art. In his account the historical-logical progression from Greek classical art and the romantic art of Christian Europe to its philosophical comprehension has brought the essential history of art to an end. Severed from its union with religion, modern art reaches its terminus in and as *art history,* because art in Hegel's eyes is now a thing of the past. It continues to exist as nothing but art, that is to say, as the product of the cultural process of secularization within which art is now comprehended as history. It is thus the antithesis of the art religion *(Kunstreligion)* of the Greeks, which signified that art itself is *the* religion. As opposed to the *art religion* of the Greeks and the *religious art* of the Middle Ages (art in the service of the higher, invisible truths of revealed religion), modern art for Hegel precludes

1. J. L. Talmon, *Romanticism and Revolt: Europe, 1815–1848* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1967), 163.

any essential or necessary relation between art and religion. It signals in this respect a fundamental break with the past: modern, autonomous art no longer possesses or needs a legitimizing social function. But that also means that aesthetic modernism can only be fully comprehended in terms of its founding paradox, summed up in Hegel's declaration that the essential history of art has come to an end. Secularization spells out the *constitutive truth* of modern art: it is now profane art, its place is outside the temple (*pro-fanum*). But this truth is equally the *constitutive untruth* of modern art: it is now the art that is nothing but art and therefore, Hegel says, incapable of retaining our highest interest.

The attempts to escape this essential contradiction, this founding paradox, of modern art gave rise to the recurrent dreams of the transcendence of an art that had become sovereign but that (like the vacant place of sovereignty in modern politics) cannot make its own essence visible. Thus just as the *visible* masterpieces of the past, embodying the timeless classical idea of beauty, pointed to the absolute work, the *invisible* masterpiece (Belting) to come, so the *Gesamtkunstwerk* of antiquity or of the Middle Ages, embodying the unity of society, religion, and art, pointed to the total work to come. It is precisely this utopian—redemptive and revolutionary—projection that made the artwork of the future, in its twin guises as absolute and total work of art, the telos of the avant-gardes and the vanishing point of modernism.

Second, in his account of the genesis of the idea of the total work of art Odo Marquard identifies three historical preconditions (but not the most important—the French Revolution—because the genesis he has in mind derives from aesthetics and philosophy): (a) the migration of the concept of good works from the sphere of reformed religion to find a new home in the sphere of art in the second half of the eighteenth century; good works become artworks, entrusted now with the task of human self-redemption; (b) the emergence of a new philosophical concept of totality to take the place of God and his creation; (c) the fusion of the first and second preconditions such that the philosophical system becomes artwork; and the artwork, system. This fusion was accomplished by German idealism, namely by Schelling with his declaration that *art is the only true organon of philosophy* (see chapter 2). The idea of the total work of art thus begins with the "most aesthetic" system of German idealism, Schelling's (short-lived) identity system, aesthetic because Schelling recognized that absolute, intellectual intuition is only possible in the work of art.

Marquard brackets what Hans Blumenberg in *Work on Myth* has called the fundamental myth of German idealism: the replacement of the perfect knowledge residing in God by the historical process through which knowledge becomes absolute by way of the detour through time. "This is why the fundamental myth of Idealism includes a philosophy of history" in the form of "the representation of autogenesis, of the subject's self-production."[2] To Marquard's deduction of the total

2. Hans Blumenberg, *Arbeit am Mythos* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1979), 112–14.

work of art we can add with Blumenberg its complement in philosophy of history. Where Schelling defines the *work of art* in relation to his identity system as the only true organon of *philosophy,* we can now define the *total work of art* in relation to *the self-production of the subject* as the only true organon of *philosophy of history.* It is important to stress that we are talking here of *romantic* philosophies of history, predicated on a sense of epochal crisis and expectations of redemptive renewal and regeneration, summed up in Saint-Simon's opposition of critical and organic epochs, as opposed to philosophies of history from the Enlightenment through to Kant and Hegel, predicated on the idea of progress. From Schelling and the German romantics on, the artwork of the future is tied to romantic metanarratives of crisis and regeneration, underpinned by the apparently irresistible analogy between aesthetic synthesis and social integration, such that art is elevated to the pledge and justification of philosophy of history.

The nexus between the idea of the total work and romantic visions of history appears most clearly in the *manifestos* that announce the artwork of the future across the nineteenth century. Implicit or explicit in all these conjurations of the total work to come is the projection of the total work as the "last and greatest deed of mankind" (to borrow the striking formulation of the oldest programme of German idealism), which will bring the modern world of alienation to an end and effect the consummation of history through the synthesis of the ancients and the moderns. Hölderlin evokes the return of the golden age as the oldest and final myth; Saint-Simon and Compte deduce the necessity of a new religion; Mazzini prophesies the reunion of art and religion in a coming organic age; Wagner anticipates the end of the political state and the revolutionary liberation of humanity to be consecrated by a performance of *The Ring;* Nietzsche dreams of the rebirth of antiquity and a state founded on music; Mallarmé of a final cult in which the universe and humanity come to self-knowledge. These historical-philosophical dreams of the self-production and the self-redemption of the subject reveal the fundamental myth of German idealism to be that of European modernism, which reached its ultimate self-negating and self-destructive expression in Jünger's figure of the Worker. We can indeed speak here with Marquard of fantastic creators and of the aesthetic image of creation as central to European modernism. Nevertheless, it is not solely art as compensation for a deficient reality that explains the power of modernism's aesthetic utopias. As the image of the whole, as the promise of totality, the total work of art served as a bearer since the French Revolution of the longing for community.

Third, if the invention of the *museum* announced the transformation of the art of the past into *art history,* whose retrospective gaze reduced all past works of art into "art" in the modern sense, that is, into objects of aesthetic contemplation, divorced from their social and religious context, the *avant-garde,* by contrast, was drawn to the idea of art not as work but as *performance,* whose horizon is the ever-renewable present of collective participation. Museum and theatre thus entail different, even

opposed conceptions of modern art and of the history of modernism; they entail, moreover, different hermeneutics, as we can see from Hans-Georg Gadamer's critique of modern aesthetic art and consciousness. Gadamer derives his critique from Hegel's concept of the Greek art religion, in which "art exists not as art but as religion, as the presence of the divine, its own highest possibility." This insight allows Gadamer to distinguish modern, aesthetically differentiated art from the aesthetic nondifferentiation of premodern art in order to recover the "real experience of art—which does not experience art as art." He argues that even though Hegel's art religion is a thing of the past, the experience of art that it embodies is not past, since the experience of the *presence* of the divine transcends history. Although his distinction between aesthetically differentiated and nondifferentiated art concedes the secularization of art, secularization must nevertheless call itself into question, since a "work of art always has something sacred about it."[3] For Gadamer, art is still religion (but not *the* religion), because it shares with religion the same truth of *parousia,* revealed in *play.* Play is Gadamer's key concept for reconstructing "the real experience of art." It incorporates the *mode of being common to artistic performance and religious rite.* In play we encounter the divine in a life-changing experience of a reality that transcends actors and audience and signifies the passage into a new world, distinct from the profane everyday world and its temporality. "My thesis, then," Gadamer explains, "is that the being of art cannot be defined as an object of aesthetic consciousness because, on the contrary, the aesthetic attitude is more than it knows of itself. It is part of the *event of being that occurs in presentation,* and belongs essentially to play as play."[4] Gadamer's three anthropological bases of the experience of art—*play, symbol,* and *festival*—present the three faces of return, of making present again.[5] If all works of art impose their own temporality on us, as Gadamer claims, it is because they still participate (however distantly) in the heightened collective experience of the time of the festival. And this means that art as play still carries the trace of this unifying experience of communal presence and fusion, for which the paradigm is the festival's suspension of social divisions. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht can therefore distinguish between a (modern) *meaning culture* and a (premodern) *presence culture,* where performance signifies representation, the renewed presence of that which had been temporarily absent.[6] Play, symbol, and festival are thus central to the *social and symbolic function of art:* the representation of the community to itself in a symbolic action that infuses meaning by

3. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method,* trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, 2nd rev. ed. (London: Sheed & Ward, 1989), 573, 180.

4. Ibid., 116.

5. Hans-Georg Gadamer, "The Festive Character of Theater," in *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 12–49.

6. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, "Production of Presence, Interspersed with Absence: A Modernist View on Music, Libretti, and Staging," in *Music and the Aesthetics of Modernity,* ed. Karol Berger and Anthony Newcomb (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005), 343–55.

re-fusing performance, to quote Jeffrey Alexander's apt formulation.[7] By re-fusion, Alexander understands the temporary recovery of the ritual process, which merges text, context, and actor in a social action or performance. It is re-fusion alone that can sustain myth; without it social life would be impossible. Such a hermeneutics of participation (Gadamer) or presence (Gumbrecht) or performance (Alexander) stands as the antithesis of the hermeneutics of high culture, which revolves around the concept of the artwork as objectivation.

The hermeneutic triangle (author-work-recipient) of high culture presupposes not only the autonomous subject but also the public sphere.[8] The production and reception of works of high culture depend on a common space of debate and discussion, which depends in turn on media of reproduction. This common space of *society* is fundamentally other than the common space of *community.* Charles Taylor's distinction between the *topical* space of community and the *metatopical* space of society is relevant here.[9] Although the distinction between the two spaces can only emerge in modernity, this does not preclude their coexistence in modern society. It would seem self-evident that the arts of presence (opera, drama, dance) live from the topical space of community. Not for Gadamer, however. Modern aesthetic consciousness has its own special sites for simultaneity: "the 'universal library' in the sphere of literature, the museum, the theater, the concert hall, etc.,"[10] sites that enshrine the artwork's *loss of its world and its place in it.* The apparently topical space of modern theatre is for Gadamer the worldless space of production/reproduction in sites of simultaneity that fail to achieve the contemporaneity of the true common space, constituted by the "real experience of art." The idea of the total work is thus tied to the topical space of community—or rather, the consciousness of its loss in modernity. This is why modern theatre is haunted by the desire to break out of the objectifying *frame* of art, which separates stage and audience, in a perpetual quest for the lost common space of collective participation. It is a phantasm that haunts modern politics no less than modern art. And that is why the "real experience of art" demands the circle of catharsis and communion: the mode of being common to artistic performance and religious rite but also political assembly. The hermeneutic, or better, the antihermeneutic, of the total work is that of *communion* as opposed to *communication.*

Fourth, the total work of art as the projection of the idea of community bears witness to the totalizing conceptions of democracy that emerged in the French Revolution, as opposed to the pluralist versions of democracy that emerged in the

7. Jeffrey C. Alexander, "Cultural Pragmatics: Social Performance between Ritual and Strategy," in *Social Performance,* ed. Jeffrey C. Alexander, Bernhard Giesen, and Jason L. Mast (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 29–90.

8. György Markus, "The Paradoxical Unity of Culture: The Arts and the Sciences," *Thesis Eleven* 75 (November 2003): 7–24.

9. Charles Taylor, "Modern Social Imaginaries," *Public Culture* 14 (2002): 113.

10. Gadamer, *Truth and Method,* 86.

wake of the English and American revolutions. The radical revolutionary imaginary that originated in France looked to revolutionary activity as the key to overcoming the tensions and contradictions of modernity and was readily associated with "the quest for total renovation, for the total destruction of the old and the constitution of a new order, of the total transformation of man and society."[11] This revolutionary-redemptive longing is evident in what Gadamer calls in relation to the "real experience of art" the life-changing experience of the divine as the passage to a new world. The three types proposed by Marquard in his typology of the total work all spring from this longing for a breakthrough to totality.

Marquard's *first type* is derived from Wagner. His analysis, based on quotations from Wagner's writings, exemplifies our argument. Through the reunion of the individual arts in the "great universal artwork of the future" the "egoist will become communist, the individual the whole, the human being God, the arts art." The total work will be the "new religion," the "religion of the future." The theatrical alliance of art and religion advanced by Wagner thus stands as the *anticipatory presentation and aesthetic experience of the self-production of the subject,* of the historical process by which man becomes God. In this sense Marquard's first type is always the artwork of the future and the religion of the future. Wagner's revision of his revolutionary hopes for the artwork of the future in his late, paradoxical but profound, historical theory of the relationship between art and religion *after* secularization provides the starting point for a number of exemplary analyses in part 2: Scriabin's dream of the ultimate artwork as the fusion of humanity and the divine that will bring time to an end; Kandinsky's expectation of a new organic age that will realize "the spiritual in art"; Taut's archaic-futurist dream of the cathedral once more crowning the ideal city; Claudel's drama of man's calling to unify God's creation; Brecht's world theatre of the self-sacrifice of the individual in order to realize the Communist goal of history; Artaud's return to the sacred origins of theatre as the condition of the integral renewal of man and culture.

If we can speak—in relation to Kandinsky and Artaud's theory of art or the world theatre of Claudel and Brecht—of the total work of art as a model of knowledge, Marquard's *second type*—the total anti–work of art, directed to the destruction of the arts and the overcoming of the separation of art and reality—presents the total work as a model of action.[12] This second type captures the radically new element that belonged to the revolutionary years of the avant-garde (futurism, Dada, surrealism), inspired by the apocalyptic longing for a breakthrough to totality. Thus Rolland and d'Annunzio were driven by the desire to transform theatre

11. S. N. Eisenstadt, *The Great Revolutions and the Civilizations of Modernity* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 145.

12. Marcella Lista, *L'oeuvre d'art totale à la naissance des avant-gardes (1908–1914)* (Paris: CTHS, 2006), 6.

into life. D'Annunzio, Marinetti, and Jünger greeted the First World War as the entry into authentic being (part 3).

Marquard's *third type*—the staging of the state of emergency—is that of the absolutized revolutionary situation, in which the breakthrough to totality is staged as the creation of the New Man and the New Society. The festivals of the French Revolution, in particular the Festival of the Supreme Being, are the prototype of the projection of the People-as-One and of Power-as-One. The revolutionary tabula rasa, the empty space of power (Lefort), served as the stage for the presentation of the self-creation of society. The two totalitarian expressions of the state of emergency analyzed in part 3 are Hitler's creation of the New Germany as a triumph of the will and Stalin's staging of permanent revolution as the purging of the body politic.

The fatal affinity with totalitarian politics has cut the knot between the total work of art and philosophy of history. The total work of European modernism is now history. It can only be presented as a historical exhibit, a citation of the ghosts of the past. Hans-Jürgen Syberberg's film of Wagner's *Parsifal* (1982), one hundred years after its premiere in Bayreuth, undertakes this work of historicization. History invades the hermetic space of the "consecrated stage": the whole German romantic tradition up to the Third Reich is now reduced to the detritus of historicism's curio shop, just as the film's own "holy relics," which pass in the solemn Grail procession before Parsifal, are assembled from the theatre props of the original Bayreuth production. And the consecrated stage itself has become literally the death mask of Wagner. There remains, says Syberberg, "utopia as the society of the dead, liberation at the end of myth as recollection, myth as memory."[13] In this utopia, *Parsifal* enters into its afterlife as its own *revenant.* With Syberberg the birth of tragedy from the spirit of music mutates into the birth of the *Trauerspiel* from the spirit of film.

Syberberg calls his act of mourning liberating. It liberates the idea of the redemptive work from the self-deceiving mirage of philosophical-historical realization. It represents in this sense the end of myth through which *Parsifal* returns to its spiritual home in the imaginary theatre of Wagner's inner world. This "journey inward again, the world after its downfall," is to be understood as returning the romantic dream of the great collective work after the German catastrophe to its utopian homelessness. At the same time the journey inward is the romantic operation par excellence, conceived by Syberberg, however, not as the romanticization of the world, as with Novalis, but rather, as with Friedrich Schlegel, as the self-critical reflection of the work in a "constant alternation of self-creation and self-destruction" (*Athenäum,* frag. 51). Syberberg's critical reflection is faithful to Schlegel's definition of the idea as "a concept completed through irony, an absolute synthesis of absolute

13. Hans-Jürgen Syberberg, *Parsifal: Ein Filmessay* (Munich: Heyne, 1982), 13.

antitheses" (*Athenäum,* frag. 121). Wagner plus Brecht is Syberberg's formula for his filmic method, which combines the greatest possible distance and artificiality with the simultaneous consciousness of our location in Wagner's imaginary theatre.

Syberberg understands his postmodern *Trauerspiel* of disenchantment and re-enchantment, located both within and outside the paradigm of the redemptive artwork, as the rescue not only of Wagner's *Parsifal* but of the whole tradition of the total work of art from its false, indeed fatal, entanglement in history. He poses once more the question of redemption, but now as the "redemption of an *old dream* in the creation of an *artificial counter-world to our reality.*"[14] He poses once more the question of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* embracing all the genres and all the arts, but now by means of filmic transformation into a theatre of the imagination, "inventions for the inner eye." Above all, Syberberg intends his rescuing critique as the rescue of film from Hollywood, the culture industry and consumer society. And so the Grail is offered once again in Syberberg's *Parsifal,* and once more it evokes Hegel's chalice of recollection: the liberating knowledge that comes at the end—as the work of mourning.

Fifth, like Hollywood, Marquard's *fourth type* of the total work is both internal and external to the modernist epoch. It is internal in that its defining feature—the capitalist production and justification of the world as aesthetic phenomenon—emerged in the course of the nineteenth century. Benjamin's Arcades Project maps the capitalist enchantment of the world from shop windows, and department stores to world exhibitions, from fashion and photography to advertisements. It is external in that it has no ambitions to a redemptive worldview. This absence of a totalizing metanarrative distinguishes the postmodern version from its predecessors. The ubiquitous commodification and aestheticization of the lifeworld, built into capitalism's own postindustrial Arcades project—the transformation of material into symbolic production, or its simulation, if we follow Baudrillard—reveal a pluralizing rather than a totalizing alliance between capitalism and desire. The transition from the modernist to the postmodernist *Gesamtkunstwerk* means that we must speak of a change in kind, comparable to the distinction that Guy Debord draws between the *concentrated* and the *diffuse* spectacle. The modernist total work aimed in general at forms of social-symbolic performance that led to fusion between actors and audience in the name of collective values. It is precisely this defining element that disappears in the capitalist type, leaving in its place an ever more elaborate multimedia technology directed to the potentiation of illusion. Although the contemporary proliferation of art festivals could be thought of as a vindication of Bayreuth, the contemporary art festival not only domesticates the original festival idea but has become in the realm of the performing arts the equivalent of Malraux's imaginary museum. In fact, we can speak of a festivalization of the theatre

14. Ibid.

and the museum, consecrated to the mutually rewarding union of a secular religion of art and the culture industry. The line that connects Bayreuth to contemporary festival culture signifies a *de-fusion* of the original ideas of a regeneration of society through a regeneration of art and culture.

The two main forms of the total work of art—the theatrical and the architectonic—are radically refashioned in the New World. Hollywood continues the Wagnerian project, recycling myths and epic adventures, spiced with the indispensable special effects, at the same time as it replaces the Wagnerian music drama with the musical—faithful at least to the fact that popular theatre has always had its basis in song and dance, has always been multimedial in nature. The postmodern museum as the cathedral of culture is the most obvious successor to the architectonic model. The transformation of old and new city centers into tourist precincts signals in turn a musealization of the city, with Las Vegas as the flamboyant crossover between the European city-museum and the theme parks pioneered by the Disney corporation. The continuity with the nineteenth century's historicist copies of architectural originals is evident in the migration of the art religion, the myths and historicist decor of the long nineteenth century into the postmodern "society of the spectacle." Benjamin's arcades have mutated into the total environments provided by shopping and entertainment centers, blurring the boundaries between art and life, illusion and reality. Marketing logic and customer appeal converge in the indifferentiation of authenticity and simulation. If capitalism has taken to heart the axiom that in the age of the mass media every business is show business, politics and religion are not far behind. It is clear that we are dealing here as much with discontinuities as continuities.

We can think of this interplay between continuity and discontinuity in terms of *dis/appearance*. By dis/appearance I understand the negative of sublation, that is, the process through which modernism and its socioaesthetic categories (artist, work, creativity, the avant-garde, the bohème) disappear in their original adversarial incarnation to reappear in a new generalized and affirmative form. Thus the antagonism of capitalism and culture, art and technology, disappears in the new "creative economy," just as the antagonism of bourgeois society and bohemian subculture disappears in the creative economy's new cultural class.[15] Artistic inspiration and the unique artwork turn into the collaborative project and collective creation, the avant-garde into institutionalized innovation. The aesthetic sphere dissolves into the aestheticization of the creative economy and everyday life: a reflection of the conjoined working of democracy and capitalism, which ratified the *secularization* of modern art and culture, emanating from the United States and spreading to Europe in the wake of the youth culture and student protests of the 1960s.

15. See Daniel Bell's analysis of contemporary cultural developments in his 1996 epilogue to *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1996).

We can trace this process of dis/appearance in the radical transformations of the total work of art after 1945 in the United States. This is of course not to deny the continuities, evident in the illuminating parallels Matthew Smith draws between Disneyland and Bayreuth, Warhol's Factory and the Bauhaus, the digital unification of the arts and the Wagnerian artwork of the future.[16] These continuities highlight at the same time the fundamental sea change evident in the translation of the idea of the total work of art from the Old to the New World. If, in Smith's words, the opening of Disneyland in July 1955 marked "the rebirth of the total work of art in the wake of its catastrophic realization in the Third Reich," it was a rebirth that exchanged the monumental German sublime for the "monumental American ridiculous" (115). Even though Disney understood his "Total World" as part of a grand project of reharmonizing humanity and nature, it was tied from the beginning to commercial goals and represented "the most decisive entrance of the total work of art into mass commodity culture" (116). Andy Warhol eschewed Disneyland's "architecture of reassurance" in his staging of the dis/appearance of the cultural contradictions of capitalism into a total celebration of consumer culture. What Smith calls the "Total Vacuum" of Warhol's project signaled the terminus of the utopian impetus of the European avant-garde. "Purged of the political and ideological idea that artistic intervention in the sphere of production and consumption would enable collective social progress," Warhol's Factory led the way in demonstrating that "the cognitive and perceptual devices of modernity would have to be deployed simply for the development of a new commodity aesthetic."[17] And so in the Factory art becomes the object of mass production, designed, in Warhol's words, to get more art to more people: "Art should be for everybody." Not only are the distinctions between art and nonart, high culture and mass culture, canceled, but the total critique and the total affirmation of the marriage of art and commerce become indistinguishable in what Warhol sardonically termed the Business Art Business. But, as Benjamin Buchloh reminds us, Warhol the entrepreneur is also the consumer, the "all-round reduced personality," who is invited to identify with his image as erased subject in Warhol's serial productions.[18] And when we turn to Smith's third avatar of the total work of art, the virtual reality of cyberspace with its promise of "Total Immersion," the audience of the digital artwork is but a parody of the intentions of the Wagnerian collective artwork. The computer-generated, multimedia space of immersive, simulacral experience, directed to the projection of a techno-utopian vision of mastery, addresses "radically localized, dispersed, and fluid subjects" that are about "as far from a revolutionary proletariat as they are

16. Matthew Wilson Smith, *The Total Work of Art: From Bayreuth to Cyberspace* (New York: Routledge, 2007). Parenthetical page references in the text refer to this work.

17. Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, "Andy Warhol's One-Dimensional Art, 1956–1966," in *Andy Warhol,* ed. Annette Michelson (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2001), 5.

18. Ibid., 36.

from Wagner's conception of a *Volk*" (168). Smith argues that cyberspace can offer no more than an ironic realization of the total work. The ultimate unification of the arts made possible by digitalization operates in a landscape without essential content, just as in comparable fashion the communal nature of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* appears only as a "universality without totality," which dissolves the old dream of the representative audience into the decentered and unpredictable growth of users/consumers (169).

The American developments charted by Smith reflect Jacques Attali's contrast between the representative and the repetitive stages of music.[19] *Representative* music belongs to the bourgeoisie and functions as the image of social harmony and the medium of the emancipation of the artist; *repetitive,* that is, recorded, music belongs to the market and its capitalist producers and functions as a medium of commercial exchange. With the rise of the repetitive music of mass culture the representative dimensions of the total work of art lose their purchase. This does not mean, however, that the idea of the total work of art has exhausted its potential. As Smith shows, new serial forms—from the theme park to video games—have emerged from the encounter with mass culture, while mega-events such as Woodstock or the ceremonies of the Olympic Games still live from the spirit of the festival. At the same time there have also been challenging European and North American revisions of the representative *Gesamtkunstwerk,* which range from the retrospective to the futuristic.[20] Nevertheless, the hold that the artwork of the future (and the idea of art) exercised over artists and thinkers must be seen as unique to the bourgeois era. Not only did this longing for the total work of art traverse the whole era from its revolutionary beginnings to the antibourgeois revolutions of the twentieth century; the conception of art inherent in the idea of the total work challenged all the received assumptions of modernism.

19. Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985).

20. The *retrospectives* include Thomas Mann's judgment on the idea of the total work of art in *Doctor Faustus* (1949), Syberberg's postmortems in *Parsifal* and *Hitler: Ein Film aus Deutschland* (1977), and Peter Weiss's anarchic demolition of the dreams of revolutionary liberation in his play *Marat/Sade,* best known from the film version of Peter Brook's Royal Shakespeare Company production (1967); the *futuristic* include Kubrick's science-fiction masterpiece *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), the collaboration between the composer Philip Glass and the director Robert Wilson in their epoch-making production of the opera *Einstein on the Beach* (1976), and the syncretic mythologies and cosmologies of Murray Shafer's twelve-part music-theatre cycle *Patria* (1966–) and Karlheinz Stockhausen's seven-part opera cycle *Licht* (1978–2003). Thus the epilogue to the *Patria* cycle recalls Scriabin's *Mysterium* with its elimination of the distinction between audience and performers: the participants/initiants spend eight days in the forest engaged in rituals. For Kubrick, Glass and Wilson, Schafer and Stockhausen, a first point of reference is given by the Wikipedia entries with bibliographies and discographies; see also www.patria.org and www.stockhausen.org.