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The Oslo Museum Puzzle

Reflections on the relation between culture and economy

Abstract

The decision has been made to relocate several cultural institutions in Oslo, without any existing plans for the old premises. In this article, the supportive arguments are analysed against the backdrop of the critical voices. The critics want to preserve the old buildings because they are embedded in the nation's collective memory and have value as history. The supporters of the plans argue that the new buildings are bricks in a bigger city renewal project and shall generate synergetic effects beyond just functioning as cultural institutions. Critical discourse analysis is used eclectically as a methodological framework with a specific focus on what structural patterns of social change the arguments imply. The conclusion is that economy's entry into the cultural sphere may be a threat to the cultural heritage.

Keywords: Culture, economy, architecture, museums, interdiscursivity.

Introduction

In recent years, organizational merging has been a popular instrument in order to achieve the benefits of large-scale concerns. Many advantages as well as disadvantages may be related to this development. In this article I will focus my attention on the merger of the previously autonomous sections of The National Gallery, The Museum of Contemporary Art, The Museum of Decorative Arts and Design and The National Museum – Architecture. A parliamentary report from the Ministry of Culture argues in favour of the merger of these cultural institutions in order to develop a common strategy and a more efficient museum unity. The instrument is a common organizational platform (Kulturdepartementet 1999:112-113). The report was debated in Parliament on 1st December, 2000, and was unanimously adopted. The new museum is called The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design. The first statutory board meeting took place on 11th February, 2003, and the task of restructuring the museums from four separate sections into one functionally divided organization was launched (The National Museum 2010). On 1st July in the same year, the museum is established as a foundation, and the merger is a fact (The National Museum 2010).

The new museum has been troubled by conflicts – of art and organization – from the very beginning. In particular, the new permanent exhibition *Kunst 1* at The National Gallery was a target of criticism. A heated media debate took place from the opening in February, 2005, until the exhibition was dismantled in January, 2007[1]. The first director of the museum – the Swedish art critic and curator Sune Nordgren – announced that he resigned his office on 26th August, 2006. The new director was recruited from a corresponding position at the National Gallery of Denmark, and Allis Helleland succeeded Nordgren on 1st August, 2007. Her time as director also turned out to be brief, and she resigned office on 11th August, 2008. While the criticism of Nordgren's time in office was mainly related to the priorities in art, Helleland's departure as director was instead caused by the challenges of organizational management – personal conflicts and tension between the employer and employees (Sandberg 2008:93-117)[2]. After a laborious recruiting process it was announced that former Deputy Director of Art Museums of Bergen – Audun Echoff – had accepted what has been called the toughest job in Norwegian culture: Director of The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design (Madsen 2009:2). Echoff is now facing the task of restoring order in the organization. There are no signs that this will be an easy task. In fact, a matter of debate has been submitted to him – the decision of relocating The National Gallery, The Museum of Contemporary Art

and The Museum of Decorative Arts and Design to a new building at the West Railway Station site in Oslo. This issue – in addition to the decision of moving other institutions of museum and culture in the capital – will be my focus in this article. I will try to identify what cultural strategies are involved in the relocation plans. I will also try to show how they are an expression of structural change.

The museum puzzle

The relocation issue has quite a long past. The National Gallery's middle building – originally a sculpture museum – opened in December, 1881 (Willoch 1936:93). The building was later enlarged with the addition of two wings – one heading north, and one heading south. The building – as we know it today – was completed in 1924. The area, however, soon proved too small, and an architectural competition regarding an extension on the adjacent plot, Tullinløkka, was scheduled for the late 60s (Sandberg 2008:119). The architectural firm Lund & Slaatto won the competition in 1972. However, for various reasons, the building was never put up. Another competition was arranged in 1995, which was won by the architectural firm Telje-Torp-Aasen, but the winning sketch did not result in the erection of a new building on the tarred parking lot west of The National Gallery (Sandberg 2008:119). After the merger was effected, Minister of Culture, Trond Giske, blew new life into the building plans, but soon after he chose to halt the process due to internal conflicts at the museum. It was therefore quite surprising that Trond Giske in May, 2008, announced that the building plans were once again put on the agenda. The greatest surprise, however, was the news that The National Museum was not to be built at Tullinløkka. A conflict which had lasted for forty years was allegedly settled by the location of the new museum on the West Railway Station site further south, at the mouth of the business area, Aker Brygge. This site was previously reserved for the main library Deichmanske, and the architectural firm OMA/Rem Koolhaas, in cooperation with the Norwegian Space Group, had already won an architectural competition for the library in 2001. The winning sketch was now scrapped. In order to solve the puzzle, Minister of Culture – in collaboration with City Council Head, Erling Lae – had agreed that the site owned by the county should be sold to the state, as the library was a local concern and The National Museum a national concern. At the same time, it was announced that the main library was to be relocated to Bjørvika, just behind the Opera House, and that The Munch Museum and The Stenersen Museum were to be merged and moved from their respective premises in Vika and Tøyen and relocated to a new building on the plot east of the Opera House. Thus, almost overnight, a new master plan had been introduced, which involved the relocation of many of the most powerful cultural institutions in Norway to the old harbour areas in Oslo, where they are expected to play important parts in the great city development project called the Fjord City. In the weeks after the announcement the response of media voices – through interviews and articles – was largely positive. People were even happy, in particular because the year-long conflict about the development at Tullinløkka now seemed to be solved and open up for a new building. To accelerate the pace of the relocation process, the work of arranging three international architectural competitions was immediately started – one for a new Munch and Stenersen Museum, one for a new main library, and one for a new National Museum. The Spanish firm Juan Herreros Arquitectos/LPO won the first-mentioned competition with the winning sketch "Lambda" – a 14-storied concrete building with glass panelling. The sketch "Diagonale" from Norwegian Lund Hagem Architects, in cooperation with Atelier Oslo, was honoured as the winning contribution to the Deichmanske main library. For a while, three winning sketches were "in the game" and given further evaluation in the competition for a new building for The National Museum – "Forum Artis" from Kleihues + Schuwerk Gesellschaft von Architekten, "Urban Transition" from JAJA Architects ApS and "Trylleesken" from Henning Larsen Architects AS. Recently, it became

clear that the first one mentioned won the competition (Statsbygg 2010). However, it should not be taken for granted that any of these buildings will be put up – and by no means according to the intended shape. Parallel to and after the competition many participants have exerted all their energy in an effort to have the plans re-evaluated.

The empirical selection

With this historical backdrop in mind, it is soon time to introduce the arguments for and against the relocation plans. A selection has been made of available documents and utterances of debaters in various media – mainly newspapers[3]. The empirical material is largely made up of letters to the editor, articles, comments, news journalism, and information from web pages. As the material is quite extensive, only a limited number of contributions have been selected[4]. The quotes referred to are rarely just fragments of texts – they represent prevailing sentiments in the empirical material. Therefore, the emerging polarization is primarily an empirical distinction rather than an analytical construction – even though a degree of simplification is unavoidable. Some deviations and nuances are not included in my analysis, since my attention will focus on the major patterns. It is rarely appropriate to consider the aspect of representativeness – in a statistical sense – in a qualitative study. Those who take part in the debates do not represent a cross-section of the population – which does not, however, make an analysis of the debate less interesting (George & Bennett 2005:30-31). It is the substantial interpretation of the contemporary cultural currents implied which is my primary concern. An argument for viewing the selection as fairly balanced may be supported by referring to a saturation point, which is analogous to Daniel Bertaux' (1982) study of French bakers[5]. Correspondingly, the marginal benefit of my empirical material – beyond a certain stage – has declined. After some time, arguments on both sides, tended to become repetitive, thus adding little new information. In the following passages, the relocation conflict will be described relatively descriptively. However, nearly halfway in the article, the material will be elevated to a more theoretical level, and a more thorough analysis will be made of what social changes are implied by the conflict.

The renounced historical symbolism

When the winning sketches possibly materialize, the intention is to relocate the institutions previously mentioned to their new buildings, and to use the old premises for new purposes. As far as the National Museum is concerned, this was not necessarily the idea when Tullinløkka was the selected site. At the very least, these plans were not made as explicit as they were now. No provisions were made about the use of the old buildings when the cultural puzzle was laid, and this remained to a great extent an open question. It soon turned out that, for this very reason, the relocation plans were imbued with a certain degree of decision zeal. The plans did not give due consideration to what these buildings and institutions mean to the city and people. The primary argument for the relocation of The National Gallery, The Museum of Contemporary Art and The Museum of Decorative Arts and Design was that, for technical and material reasons, the old buildings were unfit to preserve and exhibit art. The National Gallery in particular is said to be in such poor shape that it cannot be renovated within justifiable economic limits. In an article in *Aftenposten* 14th February, 2009, former Minister of Culture, Trond Giske, sums up the arguments in favour of the relocation plans:

> The plan was to put up a new building for The National Museum at Tullinløkka. The main reason was that The National Gallery with its long traditions is situated there. In renovated and upgraded shape the old National Gallery, together with new and old buildings around and below Tullinløkka, would represent a kind of overall solution. The demand for improved physical conditions is obvious. For a long time, the museum has been facing the problems of inferior building conditions. Many rooms for exhibitions are too small and unsuitable. The

> workshops are by no means in satisfactory shape. A considerable part of the building lacks the climatic conditions necessary for the long-term storage of valuable works of art. (...) The West Railway Station site offers other opportunities than Tullinløkka. The idea was born and launched. However, an important element remained unsolved. An investigation, including external quality assurance, had to be carried out in order to assess the suitability of the West Railway Station site. The report is now available, and the conclusion is evident: In terms of quality as well as economy, the West Railway Station site is the winner. The costs of a new building for a merged National Museum at the West Railway Station site will be approximately 1 billion Norwegian "kroner" below the costs of a corresponding project at Tullinløkka. (...) A long relay has come to an end. The Government has drawn the conclusion. A new National Museum is to be located at the West Railway Station site (Giske 2009:4).

As we can read, Giske argues that a project at the West Railway Station site is cheaper and better, but not everybody agrees with him on this point. A campaign has been launched – Save the National Gallery – representing architects, artists, and academicians who were opposed to the plans[6]. A total of 12000 signatures supported the protest against the closing of the National Gallery. The signatures were handed over to Giske in late April, 2009. They have also prepared a counter-report to Giske's report worked out by architects, landscape architects, students of architecture, and graduate engineers. The report is partly funded by the Fritt Ord Foundation. According to the opponents, the report proves that the renovation of the National Gallery is cheaper than a relocation of the museum to the West Railway Station site:

> The total floor space of the National Gallery from the lower ground floor to the 2nd floor is about 9000 m2. If this area was removed from the floor space of the huge building complex which is planned at the West Railway Station site, the pressure on the area would be reduced by 17 %. This would be beneficial in view of the huge size of the competition projects. If the costs per m2 of a new building at the West Railway Station site – stipulated by Statsbygg at 58.000 Norwegian "kroner" per m2 – were spent on the National Gallery at Tullinløkka, we prove that this would result in an efficient museum (Save the National Gallery).

In addition to this calculation, the report also includes detailed descriptions of how problems of moisture could be remedied – as well as the general renovation of the building. The conclusion is that a renovation of air, including problems of moisture, is practicable. They admit that it is complicated, but argue that it is not impossible (Save the National Gallery). At the same time, they criticize Giske's report for failing to include more qualitative aspects:

> It is interesting to note that the value of the National Gallery as a national symbol is not included in the discussion. The focus is merely operational benefits and space. This is a great weakness in the alternative analysis. (…) The symbolic value of the vacated National Gallery is not included in the analysis (…) The National Gallery is one of the city's icons – and they are rather few. In the development of the new city – Linstow city – the focus was moved from Kvadraturen to the Karl Johans gate. Here the new city plan was based on important axes – Karl Johans gate – and important buildings: The Royal Palace, The Parliament, The National Theatre, The University and The National Gallery. About 100 years later, Oslo City Hall was deliberately embodied in the city plan by its location in the cross axis – Stortingsgaten. These buildings and their contents became important symbols in Oslo's city plan. Intruding on them is an act of sacrilege. It reveals a spirit of unculture which our nation does not deserve! (…) It is an act of unculture to move most of the city's museums to the waterfront of the city (Save the National Gallery).

The members of this campaign argue against Giske's qualitative arguments – or lack of such – for relocating the National Gallery to the West Railway Station site. This building is the embodiment of the nation's collective memory and represents a unique aspect of cultural

history. This is the view not only of the supporters of the campaign. In an interview in *Aftenposten* art sociologist Dag Solhjell emphasizes the importance of attending to the building and its use. He argues that the National Gallery is the only building in Norway that was erected as an art museum in the 19th century, and that the intimate relationship between architecture and art is unique and has to be preserved (Hellesøy 2010:8). Archeologist Sjur Harby also focuses on preservation. He argues:

> There is something feverish about the reorganization of the Norwegian museum system these days. Things are developing at express train speed. It is creaking in every joint, winds are blowing on the tops (…) The Munch Museum is ordered to move from Tøyen to Bjørvika, while the National Gallery is ordered to the West Railway Station site. In a few years, the city's attractions will be concentrated at the waterfront (…), while the remaining part of the city is delivered up to sack. It is the jewels of the Norwegian cultural heritage that the Minister of Culture and his accomplices are now violating. (…) Of course there will be a fight. It has already commenced. A merged National Museum at the West Railway Station site is a decision without arguments (Harby 2009:3).

Thomas Willoch voices an analogous view when arguing as follows:

> When we see how a number of European capitals have solved their problems of development, it is obvious that the challenges can be dealt with in various ways. What they have in common, however, is that the old buildings are recognized as a resource in a new setting – reorganized and supplied with what is considered necessary to face new situations. In Copenhagen, London, Berlin and Paris, new solutions are found which are based on the established buildings (Willoch 2009:25).

The members of the campaign Save the National Gallery call upon all those who want to preserve the institution to gather in front of the building on 28th March, 2009. Five hundred people showed up and formed a symbolic circle around the museum by holding each other's hands. The circle surrounded the building in more than two rows. Obviously, the relocation issue has caused great emotional involvement among those who are against the plans. Cultural journalist in the newspaper *Morgenbladet*, Lena Lindgren, shares her frustration with her readers on 12th June, 2009, in the following passage:

> To create order out of chaos, you raise your eyes. History gives us the right proportions. History is greater than ourselves, although it is our duty to take care of it here and now. It determines what we have to carry on, and what has to be brought to an end. Thus, the answer is obvious. At Tullinløkka, there is a public property which has always attracted the most visitors of all Norwegian museums, one of the few cultural institutions that Norway has established for this purpose. And we are about to demolish it! It is madness. (…) Actually, nobody is enthusiastic about the collocation in itself. But still the process is thundering on, like a train without a guard – a study in powerlessness. That is what makes the opposition so despairing (Lindgren 2009:23).

The general consensus among those expressing views on the issue – in my empirical material – is that the National Gallery should not be relocated, and that the building ought to be renovated and preserved as an exhibition arena for historical art. As for the Museum of Decorative Arts and Design, the scarcity of space in the museum has been one of the main arguments for relocation. This problem seems to be solved by the relocation of part of the adjacent building – previously housing The State Academy of Art and Craft Industry – to a vacant canvas factory further east in the city. Thereby, The Museum of Decorative Arts and Design will get the opportunities for necessary expansion. The museum building, dating back

to 1903 (the institution dates back to 1876), is one of the oldest museums of applied arts and crafts in Europe, and represented a major element in the process of nation building. It is the wish of many people to keep the building in line with its original function. Lauritz Dorenfeldt, head of the museum's friend foundation, shares his concern with a journalist for *Aftenposten*. He argues that Oslo will be a poorer city of culture if the National Gallery and The Museum of Decorative Arts and Design are jointly relocated to a building at the West Railway Station site (Andreassen 2009:6). He states that both buildings possess outstanding qualities in the choice of material because they were designed as national symbols for the exhibition of art. He compares moving out of these two monumental buildings with moving out of The Royal Palace because it was no longer suitable (Andreassen 2009:6). He argues that by taking over The State Academy of Art and Craft Industry, they will receive the 5000 m2 the museum requires, a view supported by the head of the National Gallery's friend foundation.

An oppositional consensus

In addition to the criticism for excluding historical and symbolic aspects – as well as questioning the economic postulate in Giske's report – other more profane arguments are introduced against the relocation plans. One argument is that the West Railway Station site offers too little space even before the building process has commenced. This view is supported by reference to the planning of an office building for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in the north-western corner of the site. Besides, the preserved station building, which today houses the Nobel Peace Center and a preserved station manager residence, is situated on the same plot. Therefore, there will be no opportunities for expansion on this site, and the National Museum will be squeezed between houses already built and houses intended to be built. In an article in *Aftenposten,* city inspector Marte Boro criticizes the premises of the architectural competition for the National Museum:

> Despite the fact that one of the main problems concerning the results of the previous competition for the West Railway Station site was a too spacious building volume, the volume has now been further enlarged. (…) The lemon has been squeezed to its last drop by the allotment of room for an office building for MFA on the museum site! Yet, it is not too late to implement the conclusion of the practical analysis conducted by 236 architectural firms all over the world, and which has resulted in six proposals for a solution: The programme is too big! Only by removing the 40 000 m2 in MFA's office building can we find a solution where the National Museum is given the space required and the architects the room necessary to design a museum combining a strong personal expression with a scale which is in harmony with its surroundings (Boro 2009:26).

Boro here illustrates what I choose to call a general consensus that the West Railway Station site is too small a site for the National Gallery, the Museum of Decorative Arts and Design and The Museum of Contemporary Art – if the premises of the site remain as they are today. A striking consensus has crystallized that only the Museum of Contemporary Art needs new premises (the others may be renovated and supplemented with new buildings of various kinds). The Museum of Contemporary Art is situated in one of the three old premises of The Central Bank of Norway, and is not – like the National Gallery and the Museum of Decorative Arts and Design – designed for its specific purpose. It is not appropriately suited as an exhibition arena for modern art. Many debaters, therefore, suggest the idea of reserving the West Railway Station site for a new building for the Museum of Contemporary Art – while upgrading the other buildings for the same use as today. In this way, the space problems at the West Railway Station site will be solved at the same time. By excluding two museums, you ensure that a good museum of modern art can be built – with the opportunities of expansion required – and you avert the squeeze between the preserved station buildings and the office

building of the MFA. This view is enforced by the fact that the merged museums can never function materially as a whole. The National Museum – Architecture, has recently moved into the oldest of the three buildings of the Central Bank of Norway previously mentioned. The building, dating back to 1828, designed by architect Christian H. Grosch – and supplemented with a pavilion by Sverre Fehn in 2008, will not be moved to the West Railway Station site in any case. This museum has been met with appreciation from professional circles, critics, and visitors. It is therefore not justifiable – and by no means desirable – to relocate this museum to the already squeezed site at the West Railway Station. Kaare Stang illustrates this view when arguing that the collocation of all museums of visual art at the West Railway Station is not a good idea:

> Another important question should be asked: Why is it justifiable that the National Museum – Architecture, remains a satellite (…) at Bankplassen, whereas the National Gallery and The Museum of Decorative Arts and Design have to move? Where is the logic? (...) Alternative solutions still exist, which by no means imply the dissolution of the National Gallery. At the West Railway Station, you may build a new Museum of Contemporary Art. At Tullinløkka the National Gallery will get new storehouses and a sculpture park. The Museum of Decorative Arts and Design gets new storehouses and exhibition rooms in empty adjoining rooms after the former State Academy of Art and Craft Industry has moved out. (…) In this matter the final destination is not necessarily the West Railway Station (Stang 2009:5).

Stang adds that it is also important for the city development to spread galleries and museums in the city, and that it is not a good idea to relocate all of them to the same place (Stang 2009:5). Former minister of culture in the Willoch Government, Lars Roar Langslet, also enters into the debate and voices a similar consensual view:

> (…) the plan for moving the entire National Gallery there (probably with the exception of the architectural section?) leaves a bitter taste. It will be a catastrophe for Oslo's city development if the city's few grand museums are left behind as empty shells, and then rebuilt for purposes quite different from those they were once designed for. The small number of monumental buildings that Oslo exhibits has to be protected from drastic and impious intervention. My impression is that this view is shared by an increasing number of people – those few who might support the policy of complete relocation have been oddly taciturn. (…) The old buildings probably require expensive renovation, but this will also be the case if they are to be used for other purposes. What we are in most urgent need of today is a big museum of modern art (…) That task is big enough – also regarding space – for the new building at the West Railway Station (Langslet 2009:23).

In the media, Giske is criticized for not listening to the arguments against the relocation plans. In an interview with *Dagsavisen,* Giske says that listening does not mean changing one's mind (Tretvoll 2009:33). He adds that those who argue in favour of building at the West Railway Station site and of keeping the National Gallery believe in a castle in the air (Tretvoll 2009:33). To those people circling the National Gallery, Giske's message is that their view will not prevail, and that a division of the National Museum will not take place (Harbo & Lund 2009:6). The Liberal Party (V) politician, Trine Skei Grande, opposes Giske's master plan, claiming that the collocation is also an idea without any political foundation (Kulås 2009:24). Some months later, the opposition parties in Parliament, of course with different motives, join in expressing harsh criticism of Giske's handling of the building issue (Brække 2009:30). They resent the fact that the issue has not been submitted to Parliament for discussion. Skei Grande argues that an important matter like this has to be founded on something more than a governmental sub-committee (Brække 2009:30).

On 20th October, 2009, Giske assumes another ministerial post, and fellow party member Anniken Huitfeldt takes over as Minister of Culture in the majority Government consisting of the Labour Party (AP), the Centre Party (SP) and the Socialist Left Party (SV). To the newspaper *Klassekampen,* she signals that she is not particularly keen on altering decisions made by Giske as Minister of Culture, and she refers to the year-long quarrel about the localization of the National Museum as an example. That course is determined, and it is the new building at the West Railway Station site you have to relate to (Østrem 2009:18). Therefore it is rather astonishing that, about half a year later, fellow minister and party leader, Liv Signe Navarsete, blows new life into the debate by announcing that the party no longer supports the collocation at the West Railway Station site, and that the building plans should not be carried out as intended. They are now pursuing a building of modern art alone on the site, and want to restore the National Gallery and the Museum of Decorative Arts and Design – quite in line with the consensus view (Endresen 2010a:9). When asked by the press, Huitfeldt did not want to comment on this initiative, except for a brief e-mail where she confirms that the Government's decision of a collocated National Gallery at the West Railway Station site stands firm (Endresen 2010a:9). In a leading article one week earlier, cultural journalist in *Aftenposten*, Lotte Sandberg, had observed that "there are signs indicating that the enthusiasm about a collocation of the National Museum is abating, maybe even in the government parties", and that Huitfeldt is in need of arguments for the collocation (Sandberg 2010:2). The concern of Lena Lindberg previously mentioned perhaps sums up the opposition to the plans in the best way: "There is nobody today who is burning for a collocation in itself. Still, the process is thundering on, like a train without a guard – a study in powerlessness. That is what makes the opposition so despairing" (Lindgren 2009:23). Is it really a fact, however, that one man – Giske – or one woman – Huitfeldt – can force a decision through which a major part of Culture-Norway is opposed to? It may be true that Giske has a flair for having political motions carried, knowing that politicians are judged by decisions and resolutions. This is also the view of many people. Yet, accusing Giske alone of political trickery is a reductionist simplification which does not contribute to a general analysis of the major motives of the relocation plans. Individuals are involved in big institutional structures and do not act in an ahistorical vacuum; compare Charles Wright Mills's (1959) classical essay "The Sociological Imagination". Individuals act within a given historical context – whether of a limiting or expanding kind – which is bigger than the individuals themselves. What about the voices which – despite their prevailing minority – represent the pros of the relocation plans? What do these arguments imply about larger structural patterns active in the city development? What forms of social change may be derived from the arguments? It is these questions, after a short methodological discussion, I shall turn my attention to – not to the mazes of political power in Parliament or the City Hall.

Discourse and social change

After the discussion of the debate up to the present time, I will now enter into the more analytical part of the article. For this purpose, I will briefly introduce Norman Fairclough's (1992) approach to critical discourse analysis. Fairclough methodologically distinguishes between the close reading of texts, analysis of discursive practices, and analysis of social practices. This means that you consider the text as text, the way discourses circulate in society, and the way discourses relate to the larger social practices they are part of. Discourses are shaped and constrained by social structures, but discourses are also socially constitutive and can bring about change (Fairclough 1992:64). Discursive practice mediates between texts and social practices. By studying the dialectical relationship between these parts, he tries to uncover ideologies and power relationships in society, and the way this is reflected in the actual use of language. At the same time, Fairclough attempts, by the use of this three-

dimensional model, to bring together different analytical traditions – close textual and linguistic analysis, the interpretivist tradition of seeing social practice as something which people actively produce, and the macrosociological tradition of analysing social practice in relation to social structures (Fariclough 1992:72-73). In order to illustrate what social practices emerge in various discursive practices – and this is exactly my issue – the text analysis has to be supplemented with additional social and cultural theory (Fairclough 1995:134)[7]. However, in contrast to Fairclough's use of social practice as a discourse-analytical supplement, the relation between discursive and social practice will be my main concern. Consequently, Fairclough's linguistic analysis will not be included. In critical discourse analysis, theory as well as methodology can be regarded as eclectic (Wodak & Meyer 2009:31). It is not unusual to claim that critical discourse analysis has never been and has never attempted to be one single or one specific theory or methodology (Wodak & Meyer 2009:5)[8]. Simplified, one can distinguish between more cognitive-socio-psychological and more macro-sociological-structural approaches (Wodak & Meyer 2009:21). In the remaining part of this article, I will concentrate on the latter. My use of Fairclough's insight will serve to illuminate different political, cultural, and economic patterns visible in the substantial discursive practice. This methodological eclecticism is justified by the fact that my empirical material is partly made up of secondary sources, i.e. newspaper interviews. In many cases, linguistic close reading would therefore result in an analysis of the media version of the museum puzzle, rather than an analysis of the various views the way they were expressed. Another disadvantage of Fairclough's linguistic close reading – in my case – is the high level of detail, which requires a thorough examination of relatively few texts (Jørgensen & Phillips 1999:153). My empirical material is too extensive to suit analyses of this kind – in particular when my aim is to focus on the larger patterns. On the other hand, the absence of close reading may make it difficult to see what concrete tools have been used in the analysis (Jørgensen & Phillips 1999:153). This problem, however, may be remedied by reading the analysis in the following passages as a hermeneutic exercise, rather than a breaking down of arguments into formal linguistic categories.

Having presented an understanding of my level of analytical abstraction, I briefly want to introduce the concept of "interdiscursivity". To Fairclough, the analysis of the degree of interdiscursivity – the way discourses overlap and draw on each other – is an appropriate tool with which to identify social change (Fairclough 1992:68). A high degree of interdiscursivity suggests a field in change, whereas low interdiscursivity suggests reproduction of the established order. Interdiscursivity can be applied at various levels – in language as form, like genres and styles, at the societal order of discourse, and at the institutional order of discourse (Fairclough 1992:124). I will search mostly for interdiscursivity at the societal and institutional orders. The arguments for and against the relocation plans draw on greater ideologies and structural patterns – whether recognized or not – whether implicit or explicit. I shall now attempt to identify them by means of various social and cultural theories – while I shall also try to show how they are opposed to as well as overlap one another – in new forms of interdiscursive relations.

The ideological backdrop of the master plan

For a long time a trend has prevailed where star architects – so-called starchitects – design cultural buildings and museums all over the world. The best-known is perhaps Frank O. Gehry's Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao. The idea is largely that these spectacular buildings react on and transform the city, make it attractive to tourists, and generate positive output. The new Opera House is a good example of this, where thousands of visitors walk on the roof every day in the summer, viewing the magnificent white marble building at the surface of the

water. Former City Council Head, Erling Lae – Giske's partner in the museum puzzle – reports about the relocation plans to a journalist in *Aftenposten*:

> In 2013 the Munch museum will be located here, he says, pointing to a space between Bispevika and Bjørvika. And the main library will be built between the waterfront of Oslo Central Station and the Opera House. The entire area will be an area of culture, with the best library in the world beside the best Opera House in the world, and with the splendid Munch Museum as their neighbour. (…) The three different cultural institutions will have a positive influence on each other (...). Now we have seen the light, Erling Lae says, smiling, as he points and explains from the roof of the Opera House (…) only when we saw the Opera House completed did we realize that this was the best solution. We give one of the most notable art museums in the world the premises and the location it deserves (Westerveld 2008:6).

By the explicit use of the noun *world,* Lae is evidently keen on viewing Oslo in an international context. At the same time, he argues that the relocation to the fjord will generate positive output of some sort. Culture section leader of Oslo City Council, Torger Ødegaard – who also played a part in solving the cultural puzzle – similarly evokes an international perspective when stating that the Munch Museum, Stenersen Museum and Deichmanske main library in the Opera House area will make Oslo an important city of culture by European standards (Sandve 2008:40). He adds that the relocation will draw more visitors (Sandve 2008:40). The two conservative politicians jointly write that they "ensure the synergies of juxtaposing the nation's most famous artist of international calibre – Munch – and the nation's most spectacular cultural building – the Opera House" (Lae & Ødegaard 2008:47). The architect behind the winning sketch of the new Munch Museum displays his international ambitions, arguing that Oslo has the same potential as Barcelona of becoming an attractive fjord city, drawing visitors in huge numbers (Halvorsen 2009:8). Former Head of National Association of Norwegian Architects, Jannike Hovland, argues that Spain has made use of architecture to upgrade entire cities, in Barcelona as well as in Bilbao, and adds that Bjørvika will be an exciting experience for tourists (Halvorsen 2009:8).

In these arguments, culture has become a kind of cultural industry where you produce symbols of culture – a kind of symbolic economy. The concept is perhaps most commonly used by the American sociologist Sharon Zukin (1995). She interprets the interaction between culture and capital as basic to the capacity of competing with other cities, stating that "culture is intertwined with capital and identity in the city's production systems" (Zukin 1995:12). A main focus of hers is the recognition that the representatives of the cultural industry emphasize culture as an engine of economic growth. She refers to important museums which are particularly attractive because they generate profit and power (Zukin 1995:14-15). In line with such an observation, Lae and Ødegaard write that "institutions of art and culture are an important engine in the city development along Oslo's waterfront" (Lae & Ødegaard 2008:47). Stian Berger Røsland – fellow party member and Lae's successor as Head of Oslo City Council – argues that the art of Munch "belongs in a signal building which is visible, which does not apologize for its existence, and whose location tells us that the building contains something important" (Røsland 2010:4). In a comment on the winning sketch "Forum Artis" of a new National Museum at the West Railway Station site, Minister of Culture Huitfeldt says that it is a very exciting building which will attract visitors (Brøymer 2010:12). About half a year later she adds that the new museum is an inviting open arena which will trigger people's curiosity (Sørheim 2010:20). The cultural journalist in *Aftenposten* comments on the development in a leading article:

> To a number of cities, the so-called Bilbao effect turned out to be the solution to unsolved problems: Spectacular buildings of culture which draw new businesses, new money, and

> crowds of tourists. Branding is now the common term when the cultural building cannot be showy enough. All cities and even small towns with self-esteem know this. (....) (Sandberg 2009:2).

Social scientist Erling Dokk Holm also comments on this development:

> (…) All important art in Oslo is concentrated in a belt along the fjord in areas where hardly any people live. This is the way the new city is carved out, a city marinated in balsámico and Chablis, local tourism and cruise tourism. The role played by art now becomes the "branding" for the nation and the city; superbly adjusted to the elevated middle class preferences of elegant surroundings. Welcome (Holm 2009)!

It may be aptly stated that the arguments in favour of relocation are wrapped up in a discourse of symbolic economy attacked by these writers. The relocation of the museums has become a tool for providing a spectacular waterfront in order to attract tourists to the city and the country – as well as generating cultural and economic growth by means of anticipated synergies. Zukin claims that the "cultural strategies of redevelopment are complicated representations of change and desire. Their common element is to create a 'cultural' space connecting tourism, consumption, and style of life" (Zukin 1995:83). She further argues that "culture is both a commodity and a public good, a base – though a troubling one – of economic growth, and a means of framing the city (Zukin 1995:113). But what exactly is the troubling relation between economic growth and culture that Zukin describes? Is it just negative effects upon culture following from the merging with economic growth? The question that needs to be answered is, therefore, what will be lost if the master plan gets materialized, i.e. what will be the consequences – both for the city and for culture.

Bell and the realms

In theories of classical modernity, it is often argued that modernity has become differentiated into more or less autonomous spheres. With Jürgen Habermas the system – bureaucracy and the market, with its instrumental logic – has been differentiated from the communicative aspects of the lifeworld (Habermas 1987:153-197). To him, this is positive to the point where the system recoils and colonizes the lifeworld, subjecting it to a limiting economic rationality and instrumental logic (Layder 1994:196-198). In an analogous way – however, with more emphasis on culture as the basic and integral component of the lifeworld – Daniel Bell in *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (1978) divides modernity into three different spheres – Techno-economic structure, Polity and Culture. He interprets the rationality of these fields as basically different and with different rhythms: "The nature of change in the techno-economic order is linear in that the principles of utility and efficiency provide clear rules for innovation, displacement, and substitution (...) (Bell 1978:12-13). In culture – on the other hand – there is always a *ricorso* and things may repeat themselves – "Boulez does not replace Bach" (Bell 1978:12-13) Culture repeatedly returns to the central questions of human existence (Waters 1996:36). Culture, unlike the economic order, never rejects its past (Waters 1996:36). There is no unambiguous principle of change (Bell 1978:13). To Bell, this also implies that the cultural sphere and the techno-economic structure have different time orientation – the economic rationale is future-orientated – heading for innovation and growth, whereas culture is constantly recreated, representing a reservoir which is not antiquated like the budget of the previous year. To Bell, the structures of the spheres are so different that only the chance of history can ensure that their internal logic is "playing on the same team". There is a basic tension between culture and economy, which is the cultural contradiction of capitalism. Bell stresses that there is no simple determinate relation among the realms and that the contradiction can take many forms in different societies at different times.

Of course, it is disputable whether Bell's spheres correspond to the empirical reality or whether they represent analytical constructions. They are probably representations of both. Anyway, the distinction is an appropriate analytical tool for elucidating part of the backdrop of the conflict about the relocation mess. We are justified in assuming that the supporters of relocation do not identify a distinction between culture and economy postulated by Bell. On the contrary – in line with symbolic economy – they argue in favour of a fruitful symbiosis. What is going to take place inside the museums and other cultural institutions has been a rare topic of discussion – it is rather the way they enter into urban development processes which is emphasized as the most important function. The arguments are interwoven with a market discourse which is directed outwards – to the fjord, tourism, and capital. They want to invite and attend to as many people as possible. The objective is to enable the institutions to produce synergetic effects and marketing of the city and the country. Despite the relatively few who defend the relocation of the cultural institutions, the disjunction between the realms is a source of tension in society and, therefore, a fulcrum of change (Waters 1996:37). In view of this, the relocation quarrel may be said to express the penetration of the economic logic into the cultural sphere more than we were previously used to. This implies that there is interdiscursivity between the two spheres. A new form of social practice is made visible through discursive articulation, which contributes – dialectically – to the strengthening of the market ideologies involved.

With Bell's different time orientation in mind, we see that this might cause a clash of interests: If economies are future-orientated – while culture does not reject its past, tension between preservation and innovation may occur from time to time. Also Zukin has noticed this and writes that "the conflict between producing symbols through historic preservation and producing space through speculative development makes strange bedfellows (Zukin 1995:124). She tells about a case in Harlem where The Landmarks Preservation Commission fought for the preservation of the historic site Audubon Ballroom, where Malcolm X was assassinated in 1965:

> The history embedded in these sites is not the history of architecture, it is a political history. It responds not only to a community's need to construct its own political identity, but also – in this case – to a rejection of Columbia University's plan to use the Audubon site to build biotechnology laboratories (Zukin 1995:126).

In analogy to Zukin's description, Thomas Willoch also argues that the old buildings represent something more than sheer materiality:

> Oslo as capital – with the ambition of becoming a kind of European culture capital – can by no means take the liberty of ignoring the importance of taking respectful care of historically important urban and cultural elements as part of our national heritage (Willoch 2009:20).

Sjur Harby shares this view and firmly states: "It is our gallery. Our paintings. Our house. Our money. Our heritage", and concludes that the National Gallery has to be preserved (Harby 2009:3).

Vice president of Statsbygg, Hege Njaa Rygh, says that there are no definite plans for the use of the old buildings (Endresen 2010b:6). Conservative cultural policy spokesman, Olemic Thommessen, even argues in favour of repealing the preservation resolution for the station building at the West Railway Station site in order that the building might be demolished and thus give the National Museum more space (Brække 2009:30). The Chief Inspector at the Central Office of Historic Monuments replies by explaining that the West Railway Station building is not preserved because of its unique architecture, but because it is a central part of the history of transport in Oslo (Christiansen 2009:6). The common

denominator for the opponents of the relocation plans is that the old buildings represent something more than their physical appearance. They are sediments of the past, and provide historical pegs for our collective memory. This implies a time orientation that is not only future-orientated and where "Boulez does not replace Bach" (Bell 1978:13). To be willing to erode the function and meaning that these old buildings have is a form of deictic decoupling. Charles Peirce described the index as a sign which stands in a causal relation to what is signified – like smog and fire (Peirce 1992:226). The connection can also be a result of a convention established over time. This is quite analogous to Heidegger's discussion of the meaning of being. He is focused on the character of unity – on being as a structured whole. The presence of being is not only directed towards the future, it is also directed towards the past – besides including the present. In the presence of being all this is represented – past, present, future (Næss 1965:177-178). The wish to preserve the old buildings and institutions in Oslo – symbolically and materially – is in line with such a holistic understanding of being.

Despite the fact that Bell has first and foremost developed a theory of institutional differentiation – while Heidegger has first and foremost developed a phenomenological interpretation of man's hermeneutic relation to the world – they are complementary in illuminating the background of the critical voices against the relocations plans. It is a discourse of history that is put into play in their arguments. Viewed in the perspective of an economic rationale, however, it is the future which is important. History loses its value as history, and you are looking ahead – into the future. This may look like a disenchantment of the world, where the historical aura is peeled off. However, there is reason for arguing that a new fascination is under way – clusters of dazzling buildings along the waterfront, and wrapped up in a discourse of the experience economy of the future.

Towards a dedifferentiated society

To Bell, there is a kind of historical chance in the tension between the cultural and economic spheres. Primarily, they are rather diachronically opposed to each other, and only periodically – in certain contextual circumstances – will they synchronize. To Fairclough, such structural change will rather be the result of discursive work in a dialectical relation to institutionalised social practices – in a less mechanical way – without failing to include the structural level in the analysis. Pierre Bourdieu is also preoccupied with the cultural sphere – or the field of cultural production, as he chooses to call it – and his major contribution is the description of the field's structural logic of progress (Bourdieu 1996:112-130). The field of cultural production is relatively autonomous – which implies that the field is reacted on by other social changes – but then through a refraction coefficient. Like a refracting prism drawing something and dismissing something else (Bourdieu 1996:112-130). In such fields, a specific internal structure is developed, possessing antagonistic poles – between the autonomous and the heteronomous – between the pure and the commercial (Bourdieu 1996:124-125). In the field, there is a latent opposition between those who produce for other producers and those producing for a market. The field of cultural production is an economic world reversed (Bourdieu 1993:29). A bestseller is not automatically recognized as a legitimate work, and commercial success may have rejection value (Bourdieu 1996:97). A reasonable interpretation of the relocation conflict suggests that the refraction coefficient of the field has changed, and that the economic pole has been invigorated – or that the field, in a dialectical pattern of progress, expresses a new economic dominance.

Fairclough interprets changes in contemporary capitalism as a re-structuring of the relations between economic, political and social domains, where new areas become subject to the economic logic of the market (Fairclough 2003:4). The new urge to invite people to the museums is not primarily directed towards those who want to preserve the established order – in this case, the old buildings – but rather towards the interests of average people. One of the

many definitions of postmodernism is that the distinction between high-quality art and popular art is blurred. Here attention is paid to the levelling of symbolic hierarchies, the undermining of established bases, and instances of cultural declassification (Featherstone 1992:74). Scot Lash has interpreted this as a reversion of the differentiation mentioned above, and which many theoreticians identify as peculiar to modern society. He therefore introduces the concept of dedifferentiation, which implies a reversion in support of the aesthetics of desire, experience, and spontaneity, as well as doing away with the aura of art (Featherstone 1992:79). Aesthetics here merges with the world at large – an origin Lash connects to the growth of the consumption culture in the big cities of capitalist societies from the mid-19th century (Featherstone 1992:80). He also argues that important changes are taking place within those institutions which were earlier educational institutions devoted to the "bel-esprit" and the serious spectator, the museums, and that today emphasis is put on excitement, installations and montage – rather than on the inculcation of canons and symbolic hierarchies (Featherstone 1992:80).

In a similar way, Fairclough has referred to dedifferentiation as the breaking down of distinctions and barriers (Fairclough 1992:222). He calls this process democratization of discourse. By this he means the removal of asymmetries in different groups of people's discursive and linguistic rights (Fairclough 1992:201). Those who are invited to the museums and other cultural institutions do not represent a cultural élite. The new social practice of using market models in the cultural field causes everybody to become potential customers. Money is money – no matter by whom it is spent. By Fairclough this new economic intrusion into earlier more non-pecuniary spheres is called commodification of discourse:

> Commodification is the process whereby social domains and institutions, whose concern is not producing commodities in the narrower economic sense of goods for sale, come nevertheless to be organized and conceptualized in terms of commodity production, distribution and consumption (...) In terms of orders of discourse, we can conceive of commodification as the colonization of the institutional order of discourse, and more broadly of the societal order of discourse, by discourse associated with commodity production (Fairclough 1992:207).

The implications of my use of the theoreticians referred to are quite obvious here: An economic logic is penetrating into the field of cultural production. A pecuniary ideology is drawn upon by those who advocate the relocation plans, and this ideology is placed in a discourse of symbolic commodities and experience economy – in sharp contrast to the critical voices united in a discourse of history and culture as inextricably connected. Interdiscursivity is identifiable in the new cultural strategies, where culture and capital are interwoven in new ways. It is important to note that all institutions – the National Gallery, the Museum of Decorative Arts and Design, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Deichmanske Main Library, the Munch Museum and the Stenersen Museum – already exist. Consequently, the issue is not new establishments. The collocation of these buildings in central areas close to the fjord, in contrast to relocating a few and renovating the others *in situ*, is expected to produce advantages of some kind – in this case, synergetic effects and other effects not primarily related to the commission of the museums – to manage, preserve, and impart knowledge of the cultural heritage in a proper way. Even though most people agree that the Munch Museum and the National Gallery should be renovated and extended, few people support the relocation of all cultural institutions to the same area. Therefore, the primary motives of the master plan cannot be cultural gain as far as preservation and materiality are concerned. First and foremost the rhetoric seems driven by what Fairclough calls a wish to establish an industry concerned with producing, marketing and selling cultural commodities to their consumers (Fairclough 1992:207).

Human geographer Heidi Bergsli criticizes the development, writing that the location of the Munch Museum at Bjørvika will probably be a positive experience for the tourists arriving by cruise ships. They will have the opportunity to view the attractions before the cruise ship leaves the port of call, after its brief stop. She adds that this part of the city is turning to the sea and away from the city behind – which can be seen as having a symbolic dimension. Bjørvika turns to the world and the tourists – rather than to its citizens (Melgård 2009:75). This trend is triggered by neo-liberal practices and new cultural strategies. No doubt, the new museums in Oslo – if they materialize – will enjoy good conditions for the exhibition of art. It is worth noting, however, that it is not this fact which is regarded as the most important gain of the relocation. It is rather the phantasmagorical magnetism of the museums – and their ability to draw people – which is emphasized. The function of the museums as tourist attractions is as important as their role as institutions of preservation and intermediation of art. Through discursive articulation, the new social practice may have great material consequences for the future look of Oslo.

Concluding remarks

In the previous analysis, I have focused on an empirical case which identifies interdiscursivity between the economic and cultural spheres. The theoreticians referred to treat this matter in slightly different ways, but viewed in the context of the empirical material, they provide analogously concurrent conclusions: The instrumental logic of economy is penetrating into the cultural field. Provisions are made for integrating the museums into urban development processes, and enabling them to serve as engines of growth and synergies of various kinds. Culture is about to lose its value as culture *per se*. At least, it has to play roles other than attending to its own self-preservation. It is entangled in major cultural strategies and wrapped up in neo-liberal market ideologies and circulated as a hybrid discourse. I have tried to show how this may affect Oslo and the nation's cultural heritage. The instrumental logic of economy is unaware of any phenomenological side of itself. Culture, however, reacts on the lives of people and deals with eternal questions. The buildings of the National Gallery and the Museum of Decorative Arts and Design are rooted in the collective memory of the nation. They are something more than sheer materiality. They represent an experience which cannot be measured by its money value. Holistic reasoning supports the policy of preserving the old institutions – symbolically and materially.

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[1] In the period between Nordgren and Helleland, senior curator Anne Kjellberg became Director of The National Museum.

[2] The debate over Nordgren's period as Director was triggered by the decision to dismantle the permanent chronological exhibition in favour of a thematic presentation. Now, suddenly classical and modern art hung side by side under headings like "landscape", "figure composition" and "light". For an analysis of this exhibition, see Skrede 2007, 2009.

[3] All empirical material in this article, whether in quotation marks or not, is translated from Norwegian into English by me. In addition to the written material, I have attended different public popular meetings where the issue has been debated.

[4] Most of the data are collected from "Retriever" – the Nordic region's provider of news monitoring – independently of whether it comes from printed newspapers, magazines, TV/radio or Internet. The data are collected through the use of different keywords with truncation, and the total amount of raw material is counted to about eight hundred pages, almost half of which was relevant.

[5] Through interviews Berteux tried to find the reason why young men willingly accepted the tough job as bakers. He was sure that he had achieved sufficient insight into the reproductive mechanism of this trade when the stories – after some time – ceased to add more information, when the stories became repetitive (Bertaux 1982:132-133).

[6] The report is signed by Erik Collett, Kristian Vårvik, Fredrik Torp, Victor Lind, Ina Blom, Jon Dobloug, Frantz Widerberg and Nico Widerberg.

[7] According to Fairclough, social practices also include non-linguistic elements – which are opposed to the view that everything is discourse – perhaps most clearly defined as an epistemological premise by the more poststructuralist-orientated Laclau and Mouffe (1985:107). Fairclough's approach is done within a critical realist philosophy of science (Fairclough 2003:14-23). This implies that reality cannot be reduced to our knowledge of reality. This does not mean that you cannot produce knowledge of reality, but that no analysis of a text can tell us all there is to be said about it (Fairclough 2003:14-23).

[8] Of course, there is a higher degree of consensus within each discourse-analytical approach than in the entire field as such. Still, I have chosen not to limit myself to one approach; I have instead adjusted my method to the questions I have tried to answer.