6

MUSEALISATION

Everyday life, temporality and old things

> All these old things have a moral value.
>
> Charles Baudelaire[1]

This chapter takes up the debate about the proliferation of heritage in Europe by looking especially at the 'musealisation' of everyday life. That is, it looks at a specific dimension of the memory phenomenon: the collection and display of objects and sites of banal, if vanished or disappearing, daily domestic and workplace existence. Why, we might ask, should people decide to gather up, preserve and display the ordinary stuff of mundane everyday life? Here, I present a range of theoretical perspectives that, I suggest, can complement those we have discussed in previous chapters and that can help shed light both on the memory phenomenon more generally as well as this particular, widely found, heritage-memory-identity formation.

I begin with theories of musealisation. Although these were not developed specifically to address the topic of everyday life, this is a major, though often implicit, theme; and these theories deserve attention in any case for their attempt to characterise and explain the growth of popular interest in the past. I then outline the development of museums of rural, folk and everyday life in Europe – highlighting both commonalities of form and motive as well as some more spatially and temporally specific developments – before turning to analyse a specific folklife museum in more depth. My aim in the latter is to further examine musealisation theories and also to complement them with further theorising, especially that concerning temporality, and the affordances and potentials of objects.

Musealisation

The notion of 'musealisation' is used most frequently in German scholarship – *Musealisierung* – though it has seen increasing use in other European languages, including English. In German, the first use of *Musealisierung* is usually said to be Joachim Ritter's essay 'Musealisierung als Kompensation', first published in 1963 (Ritter 1974; see also Sturm 1990: 99). A philosopher, Ritter employed the term to describe how pasts that were once tradition and part of organic *Lebenswelten* (life-worlds) come in modernity to be institutionalised. From the late nineteenth century, he argues, the humanities and organisations such as historical societies and museums increasingly take over roles of cultural memory in a functional compensation for the erosion of tradition.

Taking up this thesis, another German philosopher, Hermann Lübbe, sees an intensification of musealisation underway since the publication of Ritter's essay. Writing in the 1980s, in work that has been very influential in German heritage and museum debate, Lübbe notes a 'dramatic increase' in numbers of museums in Germany, and over much of the Western world, occurring especially over the previous decade (Lübbe 1982, 1983). This increase, he argues, is just one symptom of an accelerated institutionalisation of the past that is articulated to changing temporal sensibilities (*Zeitverhältnisse)*. New technologies, rapidly changing city-scapes and the fact that many fewer people live lives connected to the land, contribute to a relentless experience of change in which the past becomes markedly different from the present much more quickly than ever before. This means that there is *more* past than there used to be – events and practices become history sooner – and so there is ever more to be musealised, and ever more immediately. Lübbe notes this as constituting a particular challenge for technology museums.

Another consequence of this temporal acceleration and sense of unexpected change, argues Lübbe, is that the future becomes less predictable and less rooted in the present. The combined effect of the burgeoning past and the unruly future is a 'squeezed present', relatively disconnected from past or future. This is unsettling for individuals, especially as it is coupled with other associated changes, such as greater difference and conflict between generations, and having to put more trust in formal systems rather than direct knowledge of individuals. Lübbe argues that the sense of past values vanishing or being on the brink of doing so prompts responses such as the proliferation of regulations and practices of heritage protection (*Denkmalschutz)*. These act as forms of 'cultural compensation' for the dwindling of social trust: we rely on explicit rules and regulation as we cannot do so on direct personal knowledge. Musealisation, thus, can be seen as a form of temporal anchoring in the face of loss of tradition and unsettlement brought about by the increased tempo of technological and related change.

The agony of the real

Also writing in the 1980s, Jean Baudrillard discusses some of the same phenomena under the label of *museumification* (*museification* in the original French) – a term that he prefers due to its allusion to 'mummification' (1983). His characterisation is broader than that of Lübbe in that he includes not only phenomena such as the historical theming of townscapes but also simulations more widely, such as the creation of a perfect replica of the caves of Lascaux, with their prehistoric paintings, and Disneyland. Museumification for Baudrillard is about what he calls 'the agony of the real': it is the creation of the apparently real in the face of a breakdown of the distinction between the authentic and the simulated. This breakdown is partly a consequence of a technological capacity for accurate reproduction but is also of a postmodern dwindling of faith in the superiority of the real and in any sense of progressive futurity – there is, he claims, only a belief in imminent catastrophe. For Baudrillard, then, museumification is an afunctional symptom of the turmoils of the real in which people are likely to feel either disturbed or exhilarated by the instabilities of the real and the simulated. There is none of the sense of soothing compensation that Lübbe regards as the core function of musealisation.

In *Twilight Memories* (1995), German cultural studies scholar Andreas Huyssen discusses the compensation and simulation accounts of Lübbe and Baudrillard respectively in relation to a set of arguments that he calls *Kulturgesellschaft* – 'culture society'.[2] In these, the museum is not positioned as standing *against* modernisation – as a kind of bulwark against change or a freezing agent – but as part of the culture industry, serving late modern society by offering opportunities for individuals to create distinctive lifestyle choices and gain experiences through consumption. The proliferation of museums – and the proliferation of their provision of different kinds of consumer experiences – is part of an expansion and diversification of what German sociologist Gerhard Schulze in 1992 theorised as the *Erlebnisgesellschaft* – the experience society. From this perspective, as Huyssen develops it, what museums offer as part of their distinctive niche, is an experience that is distinguished from the less material, more ephemeral media of television and film. At the same time, however, it is able to satisfy the 'scopic desire[s]' of an audience brought up on the visual. The museal, thus, offers a distinctive experience in a changing media landscape, and is capable of incorporating other media (such as film or computerised exhibits) as part of its specific offer. The quest for this experiential difference is why the number of museums and other three-dimensional representations of the past have expanded rather than – as anticipated by many – retracted in the face of the increase of other media such as television.

Registers of reality

Huyssen draws insights from each of these positions. He rejects compensation theory as unable to account for many of the developments in museums as

well as beyond them – theirs is a rather traditional vision of the museum, perhaps one full of old tractors rather than the dynamic, varied heritage 'scene' of today's Europe. Nevertheless, he concludes that 'the popularity of the museum is ... a major cultural symptom of the crisis of the Western faith in modernisation as panacea' (1995: 34). This motivates the emphasis on *the past,* providing an alternative vision of how the world might be and also an illusion of remembering in the face of cultural amnesia. Where his argument differs from the compensation theorists, however, is in seeing the museum, or musealisation more generally, not so much as the provision of a settled vision to calm our modern unease, as a site offering up opportunities for reflecting upon, and commenting upon, issues such as change and unsettlement. As he puts it: 'the museum [is] ... a site and testing ground for reflections on temporality and subjectivity, identity and alterity' (1995: 16). Although he does not say so, presumably there may well be differences between different kinds of museums here too – some offering more reflective and provocative accounts and others relatively cosy ones. This is something to which our next levels of theorising need to be increasingly attentive.

What Huyssen takes from Baudrillard and the Kulturgesellschaft theories is a concern with questions of authenticity, the real, our experience of them and the relationship of the museum to other media. What museums offer through the museum object – and what musealisation encodes – is what he describes as 'a register of reality' (1995: 33). As such, he writes, the 'gaze at museal things ... resists the progressive dematerialisation of the world which is driven by television and the virtual realities of computer networking' (1995: 34); and in this way it 'revokes the Weberian disenchantment of the world in modernity' (ibid.). But if we see the museum too as a site of (often implicit) commentary, we can understand its own uses of such media as not simply an aberration or distraction but, at least sometimes, as part of an offering of opportunity to reflect upon the differing affordances and implications of the media themselves.

These theorisations are useful for understanding what Huyssen describes as the 'relentless museummania' that has been underway as part of the memory phenomenon since the 1970s especially but not only in Europe. They supplement attempts to explain the phenomenon in terms of the rise of identity politics, in which groups variously seek recognition through the medium of the museum.[3] This analysis is certainly relevant to many cases, as evident in other chapters in this book, but the expansion of heritage is over-determined and as such needs to be understood through a range of possible theorisations. Another of these is the 'heritage industry' thesis, formulated in relation to the heritage boom in Britain in the 1980s, discussed earlier. This saw increased musealisation as a consequence of the marketing of safe pasts of stable social relations in the face of industrial decline and increased social unrest. Putting it crudely, the past was being sold, and being used to sell places as tourist attractions, as manufacturing industry had declined and there was not much else left to flog.[4] Again, this perspective seems to have at least partial validity for some cases. It also helped

explain some of the particular forms that the heritage boom was taking – in particular, an emphasis on industry and community. The heritage industry critique was also insightful on the way in which these themes were often represented in romantic and nostalgic ways that ignored or downplayed some of the harshest aspects of life and class conflicts. Its emphasis on the managed and manipulated dimensions of heritage production for commercial ends can also provide insight into other cases, as, for example, Sybille Frank argues and demonstrates well in an analysis of conflicts over tourism at Checkpoint Charlie in Berlin (2007). More generally, it usefully brings political-economic dimensions of the display of the past to the fore. But it does not work for all or at least it does not exhaust all of the relevant dimensions – as we saw in examples in the previous chapter. As such, it needs supplementing with attempts to grasp the shifting temporal and ontological sensibilities that theorising such as that of Lübbe aims to provide. This also helps to refine further understanding of the particular *forms* that musealisation may take.

The musealisation of folklife

Here, the form that I explore further is that of the everyday life of 'ordinary folk'. This is not a conventional museum designation, at least not in English, and my use is intended to be fairly loose, to incorporate museums that are concerned with the stuff of everyday domestic and working life – the kind of subject-matter that challenges ideas of the museum as selector and preserver of a culture's most singular and valuable items.[5] In a discussion of the notion of 'everyday life' in Norway, Marianne Gullestad makes the important point that this concept should not be taken for granted, and that its meanings may change over both time and location (1991; see also Bennett and Watson 2002). In the case of Norway, she argues that popular and academic discourses about everyday life changed during the 1980s from distinguishing everyday life from that of the festival to demarcating it from a wider socio-political 'system' (1991: 481). In what follows, it should, therefore, be noted that while museums of past or passing everyday life clearly have something in common, there are also differences in their detail and significance in different times and locations.

Across much of Europe a 'first wave' of museums dedicated to this form began in the late nineteenth century – a period of wider expansion of museums more generally and also of the formation of the nation-state. These museums were part of a broader institutionalisation of the past. More specifically, however, they were also part of a materialisation that helped make the new nation-states imaginable. As has been discussed by many scholars, museums helped to furnish the new nation-states with histories and shared national property, as well as providing a venue for a visiting public of new 'citizens'.[6] In the case of museums of folk life, these often had the explicit aim of salvaging ways of life within the nation that were seen as on the brink of disappearing. As Mark Sandberg – in a detailed analysis of the development of Scandinavian folk

museums – insightfully points out, the notion that 'culture is the sort of thing that can vanish ... should not be taken as obvious' (2005: 159):

> it is only one of many possible ways to conceptualize cultural change. In contrast to these images of cultural 'dilution,' 'dispersal,' and 'extinction,' alternative metaphors of change are possible, such as 'translation,' 'hybridization,' 'transplantation,' or 'cross-fertilization.' The particular metaphor that dominates the discourse in a particular time and place thus keys into some very fundamental assumptions about the way culture is perceived.
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> (Ibid.)

In the late nineteenth century, he goes on to suggest, Darwinian ideas 'helped to conceptualise the competition between cultural forms, especially between the old and the new, as a struggle for survival in which only one outcome was likely' (ibid.). In some ways what was involved, therefore, was that some features that ensured the success of the nation – its modernity and rationalisation – were also conceptualised as responsible for extinguishing its distinctive culture. This was a deep dilemma and helped set up an enduring ambivalence about modernity and rationalisation themselves. It also helped fuel quests to salvage traditional culture and restore them to the nation. As such, folk-life museums were also part of broader patterns of salvage and attempts to 'hold on' to and even reclaim traditional forms. They were thus a museological counterpart to the turn to vernacular languages, to the collection of folk tales and music, and to using these as inspiration for new compositions, which in many European countries were intended to be part of a new (already old) national heritage. Within this complex, however, not all forms operated in quite the same ways or played identical roles. What museums allowed, for example, was a particular kind of 'visitable' three-dimensional experience in which traditional life could be both viewed and entered but also exited, and left behind.

Many of the museums that developed in the late nineteenth century took conventional museum form, collecting and displaying objects such as craft and costumes in glass cases; others, such as Skansen (founded 1891) in Sweden, were open-air, recreating and displaying different styles of buildings. Some newly forming nation-states developed a national version of such a museum. The Austrian Museum of Folklore, for example, was founded in 1895 and the Hungarian Museum of Ethnography – which concentrates on Hungarian peasant life – was a specific section of the Hungarian National Museum from 1872. Interestingly, the possession of a national folk-life museum did not seem such an essential part of the new national identikit as other kinds of museums, such as a national art gallery; and in many cases folk-life museums came later and sometimes not at all. For example, the Museum of the Romanian Peasant was opened in 1906; Latvia founded its Ethnographic Open-Air Museum in 1924, and Lithuania founded its open-air Museum of Folk Life in 1966. In

FIGURE 6.1 The Village Hall (Folkets Hus) in Skansen open-air museum in Sweden. Photograph by Marie Andersson, reproduced courtesy of Skansen Museum

FIGURE 6.2 Domestic interior in the Latvian Ethnographic Open-Air Museum, Riga. Photograph by Sharon Macdonald, reproduced courtesy of the Latvian Ethnographic Open-Air Museum

France, where the Musée des Arts et Traditions Populaires was only founded in 1937, Martine Segalen points out that nation-formation entailed a centralising impulse that sought to eradicate difference and that unlike in Scandinavia, where 'national identity could be embodied in the collection of rural houses' (2001: 77), peasant cultures were equated with 'the savage' (2001: 77–78).[7] Britain or England never formed such a museum at all, as I discuss further below.

Heimat

Alongside the national versions of such museums were also smaller local rural or urban ones. In Germany, for example, which unified as a nation in 1871, there was a proliferation of museums of *Heimat* in the subsequent years – 357 such museums being founded by 1914 (Confino 1997: 134 and p. 244: fn.33) – in what was, at the time, referred to as a 'mania' (1997: 134). These were museums of the 'homeland' locality – museums that collected items relating to the history and natural history of the village, town or community and displayed them in 'a mode of exhibition, a humble space crammed with exhibits, that was informal, unpretentious, and did not impose strict manners or etiquette' (Confino 1997: 139). As Confino argues, and as is surely the case for similar such museums in other countries too, these museums should not be seen as necessarily expressing identities at odds with the new national ones. Neither is it simply the case that local museums of *Heimat* straightforwardly represented 'the nation writ small' (1997: 136). Rather, he contends:

> the fundamental aspect of the Heimat museum phenomenon [was ...] that it articulated, based on the metaphor of whole and parts, the relationship between the locality and the nation, between hundreds of divergent local histories and one single national history ... As a national phenomenon, Heimat museums constructed a particular local Heimat identity that could be placed within the national Heimat. The fundamental factor of Heimat museums was that although they represented hundreds of different local pasts, their representation shared basic common denominators in terms of objects displayed, content, and meaning. Heimatlers, by displaying everyday life instead of big historical events, ordinary people instead of elites, and the historical origins of the community, constructed a pattern to understand national history, a national narrative. By reclaiming the local pasts, they in essence represented the locality as the location of the origins of the nation.
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> (1997: 136–7)

Heimat museums were, therefore, part of a new memory cartography in Europe in which the local and everyday were regarded as integral – but not reducible – to the nation-states. The whole–part relationships were of a particular kind: neither microcosmic nor fractal nor divided by function.

Rather, the numerous parts demonstrated a lived belonging on which the whole – the nation – implicitly depended, and which acted indirectly to bring the nation 'home'. These relationships, and folk-life museums, were replicated throughout Europe, producing numerous instances of specific local memories and belonging within a broadly common model.

Museums of everyday life

Like Germany, many countries experienced particular periods of relatively intense activity. In Britain, for example, the 1920s and 1930s saw an increased museological 'turn to the everyday' (Kavanagh 1990: 22). Kavanagh sees this as evidence of the public's desire 'to put behind it, or at least out of its mind, the war, the depression, social division, industrial strife and the frightening changes taking place in Nazi Germany' (ibid.). In an interesting recent analysis, Bridget Yates sees the expansion as 'one manifestation of a trope of Englishness that saw the rural community as the embodiment of the nation' (2011: 204). The same trope, she suggests, was bound up with 'the continual failure of attempts to set up an English Folk Museum' (Yates 2011: 215). This was despite numerous attempts over the years, including by figures such as the Egyptologist Sir Flinders Petrie in 1896 (2011: 165), Pitt-Rivers Museum Curator Henry Balfour, for example in his 1903 Museums Association speech (2011: 169), and many since. It was only after World War II, 'when the rural community was no longer seen as the embodiment of the nation' (2011: 277), that the Museum of English Rural Life was opened (in 1951), though still not as a national museum. Both Wales and Scotland also opened museums of rural life soon after the war: the Welsh Folk Museum, St Fagan's, in Wales in 1948 and the Scottish Agricultural Museum in 1949 (which became the National Museum of Rural Life in 2001). That each country created its own museum – rather than some central 'British' one – spoke also to the fact that *everyday* and *rural* life made more sense at these more intimate national levels.

From the 1970s the numbers of museums of some kind of 'ordinary, everyday life' have escalated in most European countries, the great majority of which are local – of village, town or region. Museums of everyday (*Alltag*) and village life opened in Germany at an even greater rate than in the first wave (Schöne 1998; Janelli 2012: 16–17); as did their counterparts in Britain (Yates 2011: 363). In France, the idea of the 'ecomuseum' was formulated in the 1970s (Segalen 2001; Poulot 1994). This partly characterised an ongoing movement – of locally run museums concerned with preserving a community's heritage and identity – but also served to propagate it still further both within France and in other European countries. While rural life has been the focus of some of these developments, the 1970s boom also saw a turn to the more industrial, as noted above. Communities in towns and cities looked to their industrial past; and old mills, pits, canals and factories were turned into sites of heritage.[8] There were also shifts of interest towards the industrial past, as Jeanette Edwards observes

in her 1980s fieldwork in 'Alltown', a town in Northern England, where the locally-run museum shifted its original principal focus on natural history to the industrial past:

> The museum opened in 1873 with a natural history collection (including, among other things, blown bird eggs, stuffed small mammals, pinned butterflies, and glass-encased birds, insects and reptiles). By 1987, this collection had been relegated to the margins of the museum, and the paraphernalia from a more recent industrial and post-industrial era had taken pride of place. Today, the museum is filled to bursting point with artefacts. Machine parts, gadgets, items of clothing and jewellery, household furniture and fittings, kitchen utensils, gas masks, wooden toys, pharmaceutical, dental and medical instruments, postcards, cigarette cards and letters, slippers, shoes and clogs manufactured in Alltown factories, models, ornaments, and embroidered samplers made in Alltown homes, are just some of the things that jostle for space in drawers and in cases, hanging from the ceiling and on every available surface.
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> (1998: 151)

If in the period of industrialisation, preserving the natural landscape – or, elsewhere, peasant and folk-life – were the priorities, by the 1970s, in the face of de-industrialisation, it was life in the industrial age that had itself become the focus of musealisation.[9] The sheer plethora of what was deemed collectable was also characteristic of this turn to the more recent past. It was at once part of the democratisation of the past that the turn to 'ordinary things' represented but also a reflex of the massive expansion of 'things' that industrialisation itself produced.

This kind of development was the case not only in Britain but across many other parts of Europe. It sometimes took specific inflections, as in museums dedicated to particular forms of working life, or as in the museums of everyday life under socialism that grew up in many post-Socialist countries and that have been seen as expressions of post-Socialist nostalgia (discussed in Chapter 4). Implicated in the development was the spreading of the model of museums as modes for articulating identity and as venues for 'collecting' – especially in relation to ideas of community, locality and place; and also a valorisation of ordinary forms of life – especially those deemed as having recently vanished. Typically crammed with objects, museums acted as densely material reminders of how much stuff was disappearing, as well as repositories for its preservation. In addition, they were, and are, *concentrated* spaces, in which everyday objects are separated from existing everyday life, and offered up for a different form of experience.

Objects

Objects come to museums such as these after a previous life of regular use. In one folklife museum in Scotland, the man running it directed my gaze to the

FIGURE 6.3 Traditional Heritage Museum, Sheffield. Photograph by Sharon Macdonald, reproduced courtesy of Professor John Widdowson, founder of the Traditional Heritage Museum

handle of a peat-cutting implement where a shinier and slightly indented area of wood indicated years of use. As he did so, he told me to think of the back-breaking labour, out on the moorland in maybe poor weather, that this tool would have experienced. It was as though it was a witness, telling me, if I had the will to listen imaginatively, about what it had lived through. This prior existence is a key aspect of their specific 'aura', to use a term from Walter Benjamin (1992/1955). As in Marcel Mauss' discussion of the Maori concept of *hau* – a spirit of the giver that is carried by an object that is given as a gift – the aura of an object is an ineffable quality gathered during its history (1967/1923). This idea informs Annette Weiner's concepts of 'symbolic density' and 'inalienable possessions' discussed in the previous chapter; but unlike most of the 'inalienable possessions' discussed by Weiner, these things do not begin their lives as special and neither, for the most part, is this specialness slowly accumulated: rather it is effected by their movement to the museum. Furthermore, paradoxically perhaps, it is their very 'ordinariness' that allows them to be special in this specific context. "送去博物馆"这件事让"普通"事物变得"特别"。平凡 = 特殊

Although museums of rural life contain many craft items, most of these, as well as the mass-produced goods (e.g. Staffordshire pottery, Sheffield cutlery, Oxo cube tins) that also, and increasingly, populate them, would at some point have been commodities. All museums remove objects from circulation and

daily use, and from their 'candidacy' to participate as such (Appadurai 1986: 13). They only occasionally sell or gift objects from their collections, and this is nearly always accompanied by unease, criticism and self-justification (perhaps involving claims that this is being done out of dire necessity and to help preserve remaining objects in the collection or some such). Demonstrating the use of their objects – of a spinning wheel or steam engine – is not itself generally taboo for folklife museums; and indeed some are to varying extents what are called 'living museums', where previous activities are acted out for visitors. But to return something to ordinary daily use – to lend a farmer a scythe from the collections to help with the harvest, or to borrow a cup from the dresser to drink tea – should not really be done.[10] Once objects are in museums, they are in a sense sacralised. Their disconnection from use not only stabilises them but also, as Weiner argues of inalienable possessions more generally, enables them to act as 'stabilising forces' in social relations (1992: 9). As many of these were objects that were once part of the swift cycles of mass production and consumption, this act of stabilising is, I suggest, particularly significant, and is part of what has made these museums a compelling form.

To explore the role of objects further I turn to Janet Hoskins' discussion of 'biographical objects' (1998) for this shows well how objects can act as modes of telling about people's lives. Hoskins' interest in objects in her fieldwork among the Kodi of Indonesia began when she found that people did not tell 'life histories' – or respond to requests to produce these – but they did talk at length about objects, effectively narrating their concerns and lives through material things. As she puts it: 'stories generated around objects provide a distanced form of introspection … and a form of reflection on the meaning of one's own life' (1998: 2). Although the Kodi did not story their lives into 'life histories' of the form that have become familiar in modern Europe, Hoskins argues that they nevertheless seek some kind of narrative completeness in their object-focused story-telling. In doing so, they equate certain objects, especially those that can be categorised as 'possessions', with persons, individuating both through the analogy and through their biographical accounts of the objects. While on the one hand this looks similar to Western notions of possessive individualism, it also diverges in that a major preoccupation of the biographies is gender differentiation and the bringing together of male and female in the narrative closure of the stories.

Hoskins' notion of 'biographical objects' is derived from the work of French sociologist, Violette Morin (1969), who was concerned with a distinction between kinds of object relations that she saw as significant in 'this society of abundance' (Morin 1969: 132–3), namely, between the *biographique* – a personalised form of subject-object relations, in which an object may indicate the subject's identity – and the more formulaic *protocolaire*, in which the object does not form a personal relationship with the subject. The distinction here is a version of that encountered in the previous chapter between objects as commodities (indeed, Hoskins renders the *protocolaire* through the notion of

'public commodity') and other kinds of things, variously characterised as gifts, inalienable possessions and, in this case, biographical objects. As we saw earlier, making such a distinction is widespread in past presencing in Europe as well as analytically (see also Carrier 1994). While the characterisation of certain objects as gifts or inalienable possessions understands them primarily in relation to exchange – being removed from market relations – that of biographical objects especially emphasises their role in storying persons and social relations. As we will see below, both of these are significant in museums of everyday life – institutions that essentially salvage what were once commodities and otherwise more or less ordinary things and make them the centre for story-telling. To further explore this, and the capacities of such museums more generally, I examine a particular case from my fieldwork in the Isle of Skye, Scotland. In doing so I consider the museum and its objects, and also how it is talked about by its creator; framing this through what Morin variously refers to as 'fields' or 'levels' of 'mediation' through which objects may be 'recomposed' and their consumers mutually 'recomposed through them' (1969: 134). These are, loosely expressed, time, space, and ownership/consumption.[11]

The Skye Museum of Island Life

Opened in 1965, the Skye Museum of Island Life is a precursor to the bigger museum phenomenon that was to follow, though it was also considerably expanded over the years since its opening. It was established by a local Gaelic-speaking man, Jonathan Macdonald, who was born in the 1930s. Like many islanders, Jonathan Macdonald made a living from a range of occupations, one of which was running a craft shop, specialising in sheepskin goods. As he tells the story – and he is an excellent storyteller, with a poetic turn of phrase – he kept a small collection of local items in the shop, including those that could illustrate the processes of craft production, and this expanded over the years. At some point he visited the Highland Folk Museum at Kingussie. This had opened in 1944, founded by the eminent folklorist of Highland life, Isobel Frances Grant (1887–1983). She in turn had been inspired to create the museum after visiting other such museums in Europe, especially Skansen.[12] Jonathan Macdonald's museum initially consisted of his collections in a single 'blackhouse' – a one-storey thatched-roofed stone dwelling of a style that was then beginning to vanish from the landscape as people moved to more modern dwellings. Over the years he added more blackhouses to his site, carefully disassembling local houses that were condemned for demolition and moving and rebuilding them 'stone by stone'. By the 1990s there were five such houses, each packed with what Jonathan Macdonald repeatedly and lovingly refers to as 'old things'. These include old agricultural implements – stacked in profusion, some rusting; tools for weaving or blacksmith work; domestic household items – crockery, cutlery, furniture; photographs and books; and reconstructions using mannequins (made by Jonathan Macdonald himself) depicting scenes

FIGURE 6.4 Skye Museum of Island Life. Photograph by Christine Moon. Reproduced courtesy of Christine Moon and Jonathan Macdonald, Skye Museum of Island Life

of everyday life and work. Some of the numerous objects are historically unique and even precious – such as some mementoes of Flora MacDonald, of Bonnie Prince Charlie fame, who lived in this area – but the great majority are the ordinary things of the daily work and domestic life of the majority of the population.

So how are these ordinary things mediated or 'recomposed' by this museum – and others like it? And what are the effects of such mediation or recomposition? In considering these questions in relation to the museum, I look both at the materiality of the museum itself and at Jonathan Macdonald's commentary on it.

Time

While 'biographical objects' age along with their owners, and 'public commodities' remain 'youthful', according to Hoskins and Morin, museum objects have previously aged as part of everyday lives but in the museum come to a temporal standstill. Sometimes, museums seek to 'return' objects to their earlier state, to remove the rust or to repaint, though others leave them as they were found, even if this state is a consequence of years of neglect rather than of use itself. It should be noted, however, that a specific historical consciousness cannot simply be 'read off' from whether objects are restored or not. As Jane Nadel-Klein observes in a fishing museum in Anstruther in North-East Scotland, the cleaning and restoration of certain objects did not signal its temporal isolation but, rather, the fact that these had remained constantly in

use and would, therefore, have been cleaned and repaired. Such cleaning was, moreover, a matter of pride, and to display them dirty was seen by fisherfolk as 'wrong' (2003: 197).

At the Museum of Island Life, there is evidence of both of restoration and purposeful neglect – houses have been rethatched and repaired but tools have an ever increasing patina of rust. There is a mix of reasons entangled here: if roofs are not repaired they will quickly become further damaged, as will their contents; repaired roofs still look old, as thatch is no longer used; keeping rust off metal items is relentless and shiny rust-free tools are not easily distinguished from new ones. From the way in which Jonathan Macdonald talks about the objects it is clear that what is most important to him is the fact that they are *old*: they have lived through time and been part of an earlier way of life. The word 'old' – and especially 'old things' – beats through his narration like a metronome. Here, for example, is how he describes how he started to collect and form the basis of the museum:

> Many, many years ago when I had just left school I started off doing weaving in the local weaving factory and ... after that, around 1950 ... I started a craft shop, a little craft shop down the road, and I had to buy crafts from various people. And part of that shop I put aside for old things because I had an interest in old things. And I began collecting around that time and it was an interest I had all my life – collecting old things, and hearing old stories and history and old songs and so on. And anything old interested me and I began a collection in a corner of that shop. And in 1965 ... I moved the lot of the artefacts in here and it started from there. And of course ever since then I have always collected old things, collecting all the time. I never seemed to be far from old things and collecting more.

The 'old things' that Jonathan Macdonald collected were not confined to a very specific time-period and the museum itself contains artefacts ranging from several hundred years ago (as with some of the Flora MacDonald memorabilia) to fairly recent (e.g. coronation memorabilia of Elizabeth II). The majority, however, are from what he describes as 'the period before the white houses and the comforts that we have'. This is a world that he caught glimpses of as a child – for example at the ceilidh house (house for meeting, singing and telling stories) that he sometimes attended when young – and that his parents and grandparents had lived through. Gathering the artefacts of this period was a means of salvaging a way of life that was on the brink of vanishing:

> It was firstly a case of trying to keep together something that I saw disintegrating and *fast* disappearing. Because when I was a young boy growing up people were very, very anxious to get new things – new houses, new comforts, everything new, piped water, roads, cars, tractors.

> Everything they could find, they were striving hard to get them so that they could get out of the old way of life and into a better and more comfortable way. And this [the museum] was something here that I believed would keep the best of what we had lost or were about to lose.

The attempt to salvage a way of life that has just been swept away by gathering up its material remains is characteristic of many such museums, whether they deal especially with rural life or with industrial heritage. This fits well with Lübbe's cultural compensation thesis. By maintaining the objects of such lives through time – musealising them – the ways of life themselves in a sense live on. This idea is often explicitly expressed in the making of the museum, as variously observed in ethnographies of local museums and museum-making by Marta Anico in Loures, Portugal (2009), Jane Nadel-Klein in North-East Scotland (2003) and Elsa Peralta in a Ílhavo, Portugal (2009) – though the latter especially also points out what is forgotten amidst the ambition to materialise remembering. As Jonathan Macdonald puts it in talking about generations and the effect that he hopes his museum to have on young people:

> I thought of it as being a museum that people, young people of Skye, you see, who were coming through a major change, would see how their parents and their grandparents, and their forefathers lived. And I was hoping very much that people in Skye would come here and say this is how my people lived earlier on. And that would be something for them to keep alive, keep alive their history.

Evident in Jonathan Macdonald's account, and in his museum and so many others, is an attempt to rescue certain ways of life from transience. Rapid social change has rendered whole ways of life ready to be discarded like so many commodities. The constant emphasis on the 'new', which Jonathan Macdonald sees in the desires of so many people around him and which Morin sees as typical of 'public commodity' relations, risks, in this account, failing to hold on to anything of value from the past. By literally preserving 'old things' – artefacts which would otherwise be thrown away – it is as though the way of life and the people of that time are 'de-alienated', removed from the kind of social relations that are imagined as typical of a more modern 'consumerist' society. To be forgotten is conceptualised as a kind of death; but by employing objects as mnemonic devices, capable of 'carrying' the past, the past is brought into the present and, with the 'young' generations who are part of the museum creator's hoped for audience, into the future. The museum and objects in it thus act as a denial of ephemerality – as a symbolic counter to the transience of a world in which 'the new' threatens to predominate and even overwhelm. In a period in which it is widely perceived that 'all that is solid melts into air', as Marx and Engels so famously expressed it, museums of everyday life, rather literally, 'resolidify'.[13]

FIGURE 6.5 Croft House in the Skye Museum of Island Life. Photograph by Christine Moon. Reproduced courtesy of Christine Moon and Jonathan Macdonald, Skye Museum of Island Life

FIGURE 6.6 Dresser in the Croft House. Photograph by Christine Cassanell. Reproduced courtesy of Christine Cassanell and Jonathan Macdonald, Skye Museum of Island Life

Space

Museum space is also a time-space: its layout and contents typically evoking a frozen moment of time or a historical progression. Its spatial organisation also bears a distinctive relationship to the locality in which it resides. At first glance, the Skye Museum of Island Life appears to emulate a community of dwellings – it could almost be a continuation of the nearby township. But it is also marked off from its surroundings, by its own boundary and by the fact that it is relatively self-contained, its buildings relating to each other in a perfect mini-community, rather than to those outside. Likewise, its internal organisation could *almost* be that of a 'real' village – its five houses divide by function into the croft house (a domestic space, containing a kitchen and bedroom); the barn (full of agricultural implements); the weaver's cottage; the smithy; and the ceilidh house (full of photographs and text about the history of life in the area).[14] As such, it is a representative space of the functional division of life in the locality – tokens of particular types – though no township itself would have just five buildings of this kind, or with quite these contents.

This subtle but nevertheless apparent distinguishing from outside space is partly what enables the transformation of objects that cross its boundary. Paradoxically, however, their removal from their previous life in the locality and recomposition in the museum renders them *more* emplaced into the locality rather than less so. This is because the museum acts as an emblem of a particular place. In the case of the Skye Museum of Island Life, that place is Skye, as the

FIGURE 6.7 Weaver's cottage. Photograph by Christine Moon. Reproduced courtesy of Christine Moon and Jonathan Macdonald, Skye Museum of Island Life

name of the museum implies, and as the museum's creator often invokes in his accounts, though place is also conceived at a still more local level, as when he talks of the specific townships from which particular objects have come. As is characteristic of the discourse of place in the Scottish Highlands and in many parts of Europe (and some anthropology of Europe), place is to a degree conflated with community.[15] To be 'of the place', as would be said in Skye, is not simply to live in a particular area but to be bound into a set of social relationships. To be 'of the place' is to 'belong' – to use a possessive term that is both used indigenously and has been the focus for some insightful anthropological accounts of identity especially in areas of Britain (Cohen 1982).

The objects in the Museum of Island life are 'of the place' not so much because they have been made there – very many have not – but because they have been implicated in social lives in the locality. Ploughs have furrowed the nearby soil, tea cups have been drunk from in former homes nearby, bibles taken to churches in the vicinity. As such, the objects in the museum evoke (usually in general and unspecific ways) these lives and social relations; and in the special, concentrated, place-flagging space of the museum they simultaneously demarcate the objects that are there as *of* the place – as things that belong – wherever their origins may be. In this way, a mass-produced object, produced perhaps in China, comes, through the mediation of the museum, to be primarily *of* the locality instead. The profusion of objects that is typical of such museums speaks partly to this too – each helps to instantiate the locality, more things meaning more place and more history. As Maleuvre writes of another context of museum clutter, it is only ownership that unifies it (1999: 97).

One aspect of narratives of belonging, exemplified in such museums as well as in the anthropology of Europe, is an attempt to reclaim both difference and independence in the midst of changes that are widely believed to threaten both. In popular discourse this threat is often envisaged particularly in relation to material culture: mass-production and mass-consumption being cast as obliterating distinctive identities, as, for example, regionally distinctive clothing is replaced by jeans and tee-shirts, and local foodstuffs by burgers and cola. In Jonathan Macdonald's account, 'new' products and 'comforts' 'from outside' are regarded as threatening local integrity. He tells me that he wants his museum to tell local people:

> that it is always a good idea to hold on to the good things of the past. And to really show them, you see, how people were so ingenious and how they did things for themselves. They weren't dependent on the outside world. They were dependent on their own resources. But they relied on themselves, you see, and what was around them. You see, even in the building of a house there was nothing brought in except pieces of wood, perhaps, from the shore. Everything else, you see, was there and they used it. They had to be resourceful. I think that this is something that young people have to learn nowadays – to be more resourceful and to use what

> is available to them – to be more concerned really, not to really look to the outside world for everything. They should be more looking to themselves, to create and to use and to establish things from what they have ... You see, I'm *ashamed* when I look at the island that we live in now. Even all of the milk that we drink every day is from outside; all our vegetables brought in, everything – butcher meat, bread, whatever, brought in from outside. And we do so very little for ourselves. We are so *reliant* on *other people*. And this is the example and lesson I think that this portrays, that people were very versatile and could put their hand to everything. [Italics indicate words that he emphasised]

As is done in the museum, then, presenting a locality's 'own' objects – especially those which demonstrate local production (the looms, the ploughs, the sheep-shearing clippers) – stands as a testament to local resourcefulness and independence from the 'outside' which is regarded as threatening to engulf the local.

At another level, however, museums of this type often simultaneously refer to a way of life that is broader than the locality – e.g. 'island life', 'rural life', 'the industrial age'. This has two dimensions. First, it metaphorically extends the significance of the local in a process of 'semantic reach'. Second, moving metonymically and 'intensionally' (as opposed to extensionally), it makes broader ways of life and social processes visible and 'grasp-able' at a local level. The museum – located in a discrete and 'over-see-able' space – presents itself as a partial microcosm; and the visitor is invited to enter not just a few old houses from a local township, or a mill from this particular industrial town, but something conceived as representative of a broader way of life. At the same time, this spatial mediation can serve to help 'de-alienate' those wider processes by inserting locality and the idea of human presence into them, reminding us that we are not dealing with 'mere' objects or 'mere' technologies but with people's lives.

The fact that museums themselves occupy a terrain helps to convey this idea: the visitor literally becomes present in the space and by physically moving through the space of the museum – strolling from one black house to another – is brought into proximity to past lives. The recreation of domestic interiors, with their carefully constructed *Marie Celeste* impression of being only temporarily vacated (knitting still on the chair, a half-eaten meal on the table), is one of the most powerful ways in which this sense of proximity is effected. As in many parts of Europe, especially since the nineteenth century, the domestic interior has become a private, 'inner sanctum' – a spatial correlate of the 'inner depths' of the 'modern identity' (Taylor 1989) – allowing access to this is a particularly effective, and affective, way for museums to exhibit the everyday as special.[16] Moreover, it presents a relational 'layering' of spaces in terms of belonging, with domestic space as the most intimate, followed by locality or community, and layering out to national and then global space. The depiction of an anonymous

domestic interior in the museum – an interior which acts as a token of many such interiors – is thus also one of the ways in which we are enabled to think layered space; and thus bring wider spaces 'home'.

Ownership/consumption

Who is the 'owner' of the museum object? Part of the museum effect is to move objects from individual ownership into what is conceived as a more collective ownership – ownership by the locality. Although the Skye Museum of Island Life, for example, has been executed largely by one person (with no external funding, as he repeatedly notes), he talks about doing this as though on behalf of 'the people of Skye'; and when people bring him artefacts for the museum, they do so not as a personal gift but as contributions to a local resource.[17]

In museums, ownership and consumption are potentially separate. However, they are almost always conceptualised as to a degree overlapping, and the imagined collective 'owners' are nearly always claimed as the most important audience. Talk of 'the community' and attempts to involve 'the community' are very widespread in these kinds of museums. Jonathan Macdonald, for example, recognises (and values) that the Skye Museum of Island Life attracts tourists but he emphasises that it was not *for* tourists that he began the museum: it was 'for the people of Skye'. And although the museum is a public space, it acts as a biographical object in just the way described by Morin: as a witness to the unity of its 'owners' and as a making of their everyday experience 'into a thing' (quoted in Hoskins 1998: 8). As a collection of objects that are 'kept', the museum is a manifestation of the very existence of the locality to which it 'belongs'. Moreover, it literally 'objectifies' the everyday experience, and very existence, of the locality by representing it through a collection of things in a manifestation of 'possessive collectivism'.

In museums of everyday life, then, objects are to some extent contrasted with the relationships that are stereotypically regarded as characteristic of 'public commodities'. Ownership is collective rather than individual, objects are salvaged and preserved rather than bought, sold and thrown away, and those who come to 'consume' – i.e. visit – the museum do not literally take the museum's objects away with them. In this way, the act of collection and the very institution of the museum act as important symbolic counterpoints to – and as a cultural commentary upon – other kinds of relationships to objects that are perceived as alienating and ephemeral. Moreover, because objects are associated with personal and collective identities, museums of everyday life can also intimate the possibility of retaining personal and collective values in an increasingly 'throw-away' society. Museums offer the promise of 're-enchantment' in the face of social processes that are widely perceived as 'disenchanting' (in Max Weber's terms).[18]

The elision of 'owners' or 'producers' with 'viewers' or 'consumers', so important to the rhetoric of museum creators and managers, is important to

this attempted re-enchantment. So too, I suggest, is an emphasis on *experience,* so often privileged in advertising leaflets and museum-makers' accounts. Experience is not just looking: it is 'being in touch with', transcending the boundaries between past and present, viewers and viewed. The spatial layouts of such museums, entailing not just gazing upon a scene set out in a diorama behind glass but actually entering an original black-house, mill or factory – placing oneself *within* – configures the audience not as 'outside' (as in the 'window-ethic' mode of seeing; Adam 1995: 131) but as 'implicated' (ibid.).[19] The presence of *everyday* objects, and the representation of 'ordinary' lives ('we' as viewers would probably have lived or worked like this), is a further dimension of the mutual implication of subjects and objects. Viewers are being invited here not so much to gaze upon 'others' but on themselves as they might have been: they are being asked to *identify* rather than to position themselves as distanced subjects. The domestic interiors, and perhaps especially those artefacts that visitors remember from their own childhoods or from those told by their grandparents (those Oxo-cube tins, inhaling devices for Vick's Vapour-rub, an advert for Birds' Custard Powder, the mangles, the irons), are particularly effective in generating a sense of semi-familiarity and thus mediating the divide between subject and object. And even in unfamiliar contexts for most visitors, such as a mill or pottery factory, the exhibitionary strategies, accompanying text or guide will probably work, with varying degrees of success, at trying to generate a sense of imagined implication ('You lad, how old are you? Ten? Well, you'd have been working here, then. Up at six, not knocking off until six or after ...'). Telling stories about and around the exhibits – stories that may change according to the particular interlocutors – is central to the experience of some kinds of museums, according to Angela Janelli in her in-depth ethnographic study of a selection of small, amateur museums. In a distinction from what she calls 'scientific' museums, she uses Lévi-Strauss' notion of 'wild' to characterise museums whose form of knowledge-formation is 'non-scientific but not irrational' (2012: 24, my translation). The talk generates a profusion of meanings; and also itself constitutes part of the sensory, community-evoking, convivial experience of such museums.[20] The cluttered style typical of such museums is also part of this, seeking not to provide indicative 'types' or neatly pre-packaged narratives. When some local people told me of their preference for the Skye Museum of Island Life over *Aros* (discussed in the previous chapter), it was this open-endedness, which meant that no visit would be a repeat of that before, which attracted them.

The Skye Museum of Island Life began its own life as a collection in a craft shop, as noted above. The presence of 'old things' that were not available to be bought or sold within a shop, the main purpose of which, by definition, was buying and selling, can itself be seen as an attempt to mediate some of the usual connotations involved in commodity relations. In her account of 'inalienable possessions', Weiner suggests that their presence can alter the meaning of other kinds of exchange or relations in their vicinity (1992). So too, the 'old things' in

the craft shop helped to transform this from being a site of 'mere commercial exchange' and the objects for sale from being 'mere' ephemeral goods. With their symbolic weight of age, stability and locality, the 'old things' helped to suggest that visitors too could buy something which might one day become an 'old thing' – unlike most mass-produced fast-discarded artefacts – as part of the personal collection of its purchaser perhaps.

Museums today nearly always have a shop, and museums of everyday life, including the Skye Museum of Island Life, are no exception. Within the perspective that has been pursued in this chapter, such shops can be seen not as a separate subject for analysis but within the same framework (Macdonald 2011). It is notable that such shops do not contain just any objects: rather, these are specially selected and generally play upon the similar sets of ideas to those represented in the museum, perhaps also within similar presentational styles. At the Skye Museum of Island Life, for example, the shop is also contained in a black house, and a dresser – similar to that in the reconstructed domestic interior – is used to present a selection of pottery, jams, shortbread and other products for sale. Almost all of the items displayed are in some sense 'local' even if this is construed here as more generically 'Scottish Highland' (as in the tartan-boxed shortbread). They may have been locally-produced, or may depict local scenes (postcards and watercolours of nearby landmarks), or at the least (as with key-rings, pencils, purses, miniature tool-kits) have the name of the museum printed on them.[21] In some museums of everyday life, reproduction – or in some cases real – 'old things' are on sale; as, for example, with bobbins in many mill towns in the North of England and crockery in museums in the Potteries; and occasionally products of the museums themselves can be bought (e.g. flour from a windmill in Nottinghamshire, scissors from a workshop located in a Sheffield industrial museum). This could, of course, be seen as a cynical marketing ploy but even if it is (and I suggest it only sometimes is), it draws nevertheless on a powerful popular drive to make consumption meaningful, to remove it from alienating social relations, to 'sacralise' it, to endow it with the *subjective*.[22] Museums, which transform objects of everyday use into objects of devotion, are a key space for effecting this; and their shops, which invite visitors to buy artefacts of the locality – objects which can themselves act as mementoes, carrying one time into another, even turning their owners into collectors – are another space in which objects can be rescued from the fate of being 'mere' commodities.

The fetishisation and musealisation of everyday life

Taking 'ordinary', 'mundane' objects of the recent past and putting them on display in museums might be seen as a kind of fetishisation of past everyday life. Collecting such ordinary things and displaying them, typically in densely massed profusion, speaks to a profound and affectively meaningful relationship with objects. According to Freud, fetishism involves desires that should be directed

at people being misplaced onto objects instead; and he sees this as a 'pathology of everyday life' (1990/1901). Marx too views fetishism as a problematic relationship with objects, not as a focus only on their *material* nature, as he is sometimes misunderstood as saying, but a relating to them only in terms of their abstract, de-materialised values, that is, as commodities (Marx 1976/1876; see Stallybrass 1998). Anthropologists, however, have more usually sought to understand what is involved in these 'irreducibly material' objects of apparently 'irrational' devotion (Pietz 1985: 7; Spyer 1998).

Putting familiar everyday objects and everyday lives on museological display has flourished especially in parts of Europe that are relatively marginal within late capitalism, though which were often once more central. In providing a close-reading of one particular museum in a now marginal part of Europe, my aim has been to approach it both from 'within' (i.e. from the point of view of some of those involved) and comparatively (i.e. in relation to various other kinds of object-practice), rather than to try to read off the practices involved off from wider contextual change as does Lübbe's compensation theory. One consequence of this close approach is that it enables understanding of the practices not simply as *outcomes* of certain broader developments but as active commentary upon them. This commentary may entail familiar romantic allegories of resistance to potentially alienating social change, but this makes it no less deserving of anthropological attention. This attention – involving a comparative approach – highlights the web of knowledge and practice, entailing culturally-specific ideas about time, space, objects and identities, involved.

The idea that the post-war period has entailed considerable and dislocating social change is widespread; and has been the subject of extensive social and cultural theorising. Many of these accounts have suggested that this period (be it described as post-Fordist, post-Modern, late-Modern, liquid modernity, the time of flows or whatever) is one in which our very conceptions of time, space and identities – the foci of this chapter – have been transformed. In a period in which time and space have been claimed to be 'compressed' or 'distanciated' and identities 'fragmented' or 'disembedded', an increase in cultural practices seeking to provide existential anchors is not surprising, as Lübbe and others have argued.[23] Of particular interest, however, are the forms that this has taken. In the case of museums of everyday life this has involved the 'irreducible materiality' of object fetishism – a form that, I have suggested here, should be understood at least partly in relation to other kinds of object relations, particularly 'commodity fetishism' and 'materialism' (as popularly understood, as an undue concentration upon superficial material things). The emphasis on *everyday* things (and lives) is an ultimate extension of this idea – *everything* can be salvaged, everything turned into a collector's item, and all lives given recognition (in an appropriate identity-displaying agency such as a museum). It is witnessed too in the massive expansion of what Gregson and Crewe call 'second-hand worlds' – car-boot sales, antiques shops, jumble sales, flea markets, charity shops and so forth (2003). It is also a function of the rapidity of commodity obsolescence which generates ever more

'old things'; a phenomenon which also has a practical dimension in that it is now possible to start a museum with little more than a garage-full of 'junk'.

Many elements are implicated in the musealisation of everyday life – more, as I have tried to show, than have been discussed in the theories of musealisation with which this chapter began, and even more than included here. Some of them are relatively longstanding (such as possessive collectivism, the interiorisation of identity and the idea that objects can act as repositories of memory), and others are more recent (such as the salvage of newly 'old' things and the attribution of all kinds of social ills to the lust for 'new' things). My analysis of this cultural practice has sought to highlight further assumptions involved. These include storying personal and social identities and lives through stories of and around objects; presencing the past as something that can be 'experienced'; expressing senses of belonging in material form; regarding 'culture' as something that can 'vanish' or 'be preserved'; valuing 'thing-knowledge' of a form that is neither conventionally scientific nor economic; and believing that it is possible to 'de-alienate' commodities (and that they are 'alienated' in the first place). Some of these are widespread in both time and space; others flourish especially at particular moments and locations. The museum of everyday life is but one location in which these operate. It is nonetheless a particularly distinctive and powerful medium that is not only a reflex of wider developments but itself an active ongoing intervention into past presencing. The following chapter turns to another, expanding, museum interventions and thus probes further the workings and potentials of specific forms of past presencing within Europe's memory complex and memory phenomenon.