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What's the deal with Norway and Munch?

Lambda and institutional dispositif

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Abstract

This research emerges from an ongoing debate about the plans of building a new Munch Museum in Oslo, Norway. In 2009 the proposal *Lambda* won the architectural competition issued by Oslo Municipality, and since then a conflict has accumulated regarding the architectural design, if the building fulfills the normative functions of an art museum, and what role the art museum plays as a knowledge-based institution. In 2011, Lambda was discarded by Oslo City Council, however the debate continues. This research investigates the conflict concerning the functions of the art museum in light of Foucault's understanding of the institutional dispositif. The institutional dispositif is in this research defined as ways the institution articulates and materializes discourse. First, the study examines established functions of the art museum as the basis for art museum discourse. Second, using the method of hermeneutics, arguments *pro et contra* the Lambda alternative are analyzed in order to find a possible coherency between the debate and the institutional dispositif. This study finds that a coherency can be found in terms of knowledge: the participants of the debate are disagreeing with whether or not Lambda materializes art museum discourse, namely in communication of knowledge, articulation of knowledge value, and articulation of knowledge accessibility.

Keywords: Lambda, Munch Museum, institutional dispositif, discourse, knowledge

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1 Introduction

Edvard Munch was one of the great modernist artists, and is still praised around the world for his Expressionistic paintings. When he died in 1944, he bequeathed his entire collection of works to the municipality of Oslo. Little did he know that this act would cumulate a twenty-first debate about art museum's effects and functions in society.

The art museum's public role is currently stirring up a cultural and political debate in Norway, where the plans of a new Munch Museum has evoked questions about architecture, and art museum functions. I argue that when the visual cultural and architectural aspects are isolated, this conflict can be seen as part of a larger discussion of *dispositif*.

1.1 Purpose of research

Currently, the debate is constituted by a multitude of questions and challenges: there are discussions concerning what the discussion should be about; how the architecture of the proposal for a new Munch Museums (*Lambda*) can stimulate educational function; how knowledge about Munch can be optimally communicated; the socio-political functions of localization; who the Munch Museum is of interest to; city development; attracting tourists, etc. This makes it rather difficult to pinpoint the heart of the conflict. The intent of this study is to investigate the conflict concerning Lambda in light of Foucault's understanding of *dispositif* ['apparatus' in most English translations, see also 'deployment'] in relation to the art museum as a knowledge-based institution. Due to the scope of this study, the focus will not include all factors of the *dispositif* to the same extent, but focus on what can be referred to as institutional *dispositif*.¹ My suggestion is that the Lambda-conflict is implicitly concerned with the *dispositif* of art museums, more specifically the articulation of art museum's discursive knowledge and the effects of this discourse. The question that will guide this study is therefore:

How can the Lambda-conflict's concern with the functions of the art museum be understood in light of institutional dispositif?

¹ G. Rose, *Visual methodologies: an introduction to researching with visual materials*, 3. ed., Sage, London, 2012, p. 230

1.2 Background

The following section will give an overview of the relevant background information pending this research. This is meant to give a historic background of the modern museum, and necessary information about the Lambda-conflict. Background regarding previous research is not included, as virtually nothing has been written about Lambda in a scientific purpose. Therefore, what constitutes relevant previous research in this study is the theoretical framework [chapter 3].

1.2.1 A brief history of the modern museum

The evolution of modern museums, and their historical and cultural functions have been closely investigated from a Foucauldian perspective by Tony Bennett in his *The Birth of the Museum* (1995). The public art museum in the late eighteenth century was conceived for numerous different social needs and purposes, ranging from the will to educate the masses to exerting behavioral and governmental control over the public.² In his introduction he cites Foucault's essay *Of other spaces* (1986) where he discusses the museum as a heterotopia of time, a place that is simultaneously physical and conceptual, simultaneously "represented, contested, and inverted".³ Foucault argues that as a heterotopia, the museum is a place and space which aims to accumulate everything from all times, epochs, forms and tastes in one immobile place, and juxtapositions this to the mode of festivals and fairs.⁴ The move from mobile to immobile institutions is viewed as a sign of modernity, and as a will to move from disorder to order, from error to truth.⁵ While the pre-modern exhibitions were more concerned with creating surprise and wonder, the museum institution ambitiously intended to culturally educate.⁶ This ambition came with a more or less explicit intent of positive governmental side effects, for example the notion that the museum institution could function as an antidote to social behavioral problems like drunkenness and crime.⁷ To use Foucault's term, this can be interpreted as a historical disciplinary function of the museum. A societal function of the democratization of culture can also be regarded as an idealistic intent of the modern museum.⁸ However, the rate of success can be discussed when the traditionally homogeneous demographic of the museum is taken into account.⁹

² T. Bennett, *The birth of the museum: history, theory, politics*, Repr. ed. 2005, Routledge, London, 1995, pp. 17-58

³ Ibid, p. 1

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid, pp. 1-2

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid, p. 17-25

⁸ J. Barrett, *Museums and the public sphere*, Wiley-Blackwell, Chichester, 2011, p. 3

⁹ Bennett op. cit., p. 8

1.2.2 The Lambda-conflict

On September 3. 2008, the city council of Oslo passed the motion of moving the Munch Museum (1963) from Tøyen to Bjørvika, due to the Tøyen Munch Museum's lack of exhibition space, low visitor numbers, along with renovation problems [see appendix for map, figure 1.1].¹⁰ The museum at Bjørvika would then hold both the Rolf Stenersen and the Munch Museum's collections. On March 27. 2009, the Spanish architect Juan Herreros won the architectural competition with his proposal *Lambda* [see appendix, figures 1.2 and 1.3]. Since then, local politicians and art professionals have discussed the building's location, size and appearance. The issue of location is often boiled down to centralization of culture, and moving the museum from an eastern part of the city which is traditionally perceived as a worker's and lower class quarter to an area that in the last decade has been viewed as a rising upper class area. This view of Bjørvika as a more upper class area, may be due to the completion of the Opera House in 2008, along with further investments in a new Deichmanske public library, and new apartment and office buildings overlooking The Oslo Fjord. Lambda has been both criticized and praised as an art museum building, fueling the debate on what constitutes a museum's functions and architectural aesthetics. Audience demographics has also been a concern: who is the art museum for? On December 14. 2011, the city council of Oslo voted for an expansion of the Tøyen Munch Museum, and thereby discarded the Lambda alternative. However, the debate has continued, and new proceedings of the case are scheduled to take place in 2013.

1.3 Making this researchable

When dealing with discourse and institutional dispositif of art museums, spanning from textual to visual elements, a certain amount of intertextuality and eclecticism is called for.¹¹ In order to investigate the articulated discourse of the art museum institution, the empirical material must be sufficiently broad so that it is possible to determine a tendency. Therefore, this research will first examine understandings of the functions of art museums as a basis for discourse. The intention of this overview, is to establish a joint understanding of the art museum's role. These functions are important in the studied conflict, as a majority of arguments are concerned with how well Lambda satisfies them. Other functions are also reviewed, as it is my understanding that the institutional dispositif is a function of the art museum. Following the examination of functions, institutional

¹⁰ Oslo Bystyre, *Byrådsak 133: Opsjonsavtale med HAV Eiendom AS - Bjørvika*, Oslo, 2008 <http://www.sak.oslo.kommune.no/dok/Byr%5C2008%5CBR1%5C2008014344-775915.pdf>, last viewed January 7. 2013

¹¹ Rose op. cit., p. 190-191

dispositif will be applied to the conflict, focusing on what ways the conflict may be concerned with how Lambda materializes the discourse of art museum. The intent is to examine arguments, critique and praise of this alternative to a new Munch Museum, and connect these concerns with the notion of institutional dispositif.

An objective form of operationalization is difficult in this case. The results in this research cannot be measured in a positivistic sense. However, I argue that the rate of coherency between the idea of institutional dispositif and the Lambda-conflict can provide a criteria against which the result can be put into context.

1.4 Material

To answer my research question, this research focuses on textual analysis. The texts regarding theoretical aspects by Foucault concerning discourse and dispositif are closely investigated and set in relation to texts about the art museum and its functions. The normative functions of art museums are gathered from *ICOM codes for ethics of museums* (2006), and this material will be presented in strict accordance to the original source. In regards to Lambda as a research object, observation is not yet and may never be possible. Therefore, the research has focused on textual analysis of case documents and statements made by various actors from various professions, along with the limited visual material available through the architecture prospectus. The debate in its entirety cannot be examined here, thus the arguments presented in this study are selected based on the aim to highlight the main concerns.

1.5 Delimitations

The Lambda-conflict will be limited to art and visual culture concerns. This will exclude the political play, i.e. issues that may concern political power-struggle. The Lambda-conflict is in many ways a part of a larger conflict about localization. However, due to the scope of this research, placement concerns are excluded for this study. This does not exclude aspects regarding the current Munch Museum at Tøyen in totality.

The Lambda project was meant to incorporate both Munch's art works and Rolf Stenersen's collections, however the aspect of Stenersen has been rather neglected in the debate. Since the majority of the debaters are purely preoccupied with Munch, this research will not concentrate on the few published text regarding the Stenersen collections.

1.6 Defintions

• **Art museum:** The International Council of Museums (ICOM) defines the museum as “[...] a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.”¹² Thereby, the art museum can be defined as a museum that acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits art as a tangible and intangible heritage of humanity.

1.7 Disposition

Chapters 2 and 3 of this study will introduce the methods and theoretical framework used. Chapter 4 will examine the art museum with regards to functions. Chapter 5 will investigate how the art museum discourse articulated in the institutional dispositif may be the primary concern of the Lambda-conflict. This will be done based on the functions determined in chapter 4. Chapter 6 will conclude the study.

¹² ICOM, <http://icom.museum/the-vision/museum-definition/>, last viewed on November 20, 2012

2 Method

This chapter presents the methodology of the research. Here the method and purpose of *hermeneutics* will be discussed, as well as the use of hermeneutics in this study.

2.1 Hermeneutics

The method of hermeneutics is used in this research as a form of textual analysis. Texts are the primary empirical material, and the hermeneutic method will provide this study with the necessary methodological guidelines on how to interpret these texts.

2.1.1 Purpose of hermeneutics

Hermeneutics is a method that has evolved, arguably, in coherence with the changing understandings of knowledge. As a widespread method for reading and finding the true meaning of biblical texts, it is in contemporary times viewed as a method that focuses on the process of interpretation.¹³ This process in hermeneutics is not viewed as a linear acquiring of knowledge, where the reader begins with no knowledge and ends up with full knowledge.¹⁴ Rather, an important aspect of the method is the theoretical notion of the hermeneutic circle.

The hermeneutic circle is a figural manifestation of how the reading and interpretation process takes its course. As one starts reading a text, one enters the circle with one's own prerequisite knowledge and expectations. Reading the text, one begins to form an understanding, an interpretation, of what the text means or wants to communicate. Here, the understanding moves constantly from whole, to part, and back to whole, affecting, challenging and expanding the knowledge preceding the reading.¹⁵ This process continues throughout the reading, and this is what hermeneutics like Hans Georg Gadamer sees as the process of interpretation. However, the process does, in my understanding, not end with a full knowledge of the truthful meaning of the text. Most contemporary hermeneutics agree on the notion that there is no such thing as an eternal, unchanging, correct interpretation.¹⁶ I see interpretation as an everlasting process, one that is never completed, that can always be supplemented or conducted otherwise.

¹³ A. D'Alleva, *Methods & theories of art history*, Laurence King, London, 2005, p. 122-128

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 125

¹⁵ H.G. Gadamer, 'Om förståelsens cirkel', *Filosofin genom tiderna. 1900-talet. Efter 1950*, K. Marc-Wogau, S. Carlshamre, & L. Bergström, (red.), 2., [rev. och utök.] uppl., Thales, Stockholm, 2008, p. 102

¹⁶ D'Alleva, op. cit., p. 126

As with other circular matters, for example a circular argument, one may feel compelled to ask: doesn't this circular activity have a negative affect on the productivity and acquirement of knowledge? My answer to this critique is undoubtedly no, the hermeneutic circle is very much productive: even though the circle never comes to an end in full understanding and true knowledge, this does not mean that there is *no* knowledge acquired. The continual revision of interpretation expands the possibility of coherence, and according to Gadamer, coherence is constantly the criteria for understanding.¹⁷ Therefore, the hermeneutic circle is a positive circle.¹⁸

2.1.2 The use of hermeneutics in this research

This research takes use of hermeneutics with the purpose of understanding the arguments concerning the Lambda-conflict, by textual analysis and interpretation of a broad material. The hermeneutic circle can therefore be viewed as the process of interpretation: a text will be read with a pre-understanding, the acquired knowledge will be tried against a holistic understanding of the conflict, and this understanding will be put into context with Foucault's theory. The interpretational criteria of coherency is what will determine how the Lambda-conflict can be viewed in light of institutional dispositif. Much can be said about the success of textual communication and the interpretational criteria of coherency. A full examination of the different epistemological views concerning this is not possible here. I suggest that a pragmatic view of coherency is needed in this research, both in establishing discourse, and in the relation between institutional dispositif and the Lambda-conflict. Therefore, I argue that even though the process of interpretation should use coherency as a criteria for cumulative understanding, one should not seek coherence to a point where it is forced, or thought of as having a hidden, true meaning.

The process of understanding in this research is ultimately a double hermeneutic, as I am interpreting other interpretations of the conflict and of Lambda.¹⁹ Therefore, the methodology of this research is not only concerned with interpreting the statements of others, but also *their own* interpretation and understanding. Ideally, the methodology of gathering information in this case would be done by taking a guided tour through the brains of various participants in the conflict, in order to fully understand their cognition. Regrettably, due to the scope of the study this is not possible. Therefore, the methodology must rely on the hermeneutic circle as a sufficient process of interpretation and understanding.

¹⁷ Gadamer, *op. cit.*, p. 102

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 104

¹⁹ D. Ginev, 'Rhetoric and Double Hermeneutics in the Human Sciences', *Human Studies*, vol. 21, no. 3, 1998, pp. 260-261

3 Theoretical framework

The following chapter will present the theoretical framework relevant for the research. The first part of the chapter defines Foucault's notion and purpose of discourse. Although Foucault uses this approach as a method, in this research it is more relevant to use this as a part of the theoretical framework. Still, it is my claim that a review of the methodological aspect of discourse is relevant to understand the theory of discourse. The second part of the chapter consists of defining the concept of *dispositif*, as well as addressing how discourse is connected to *dispositif*.

3.1 Foucault's understanding of discourse

Foucault's understanding of the human subject is relevant for the concept of discourse. It is his conviction that the human subject is produced, as opposed to simply natural and born.²⁰ Foucault is concerned with the discursive social practices and formations that create the subject, all the while not naming this a deterministic process.²¹ Still, the discourse has disciplinary power over the subject, in terms of knowledge and the regime of truth.²²

3.1.1 Defining *discourse*

The term *discourse* “[...] refers to groups of statements that structure the way a thing is thought, and the way we act on the basis of that thinking. In other words, discourse is a particular knowledge about the world which shapes how the world is understood and how things are done in it.”²³ Discourse is what establishes the content of knowledge, and defines what is right, wrong and what is regarded as knowledge. Foucault sees discourse as a form of discipline, which is directly related to the powerful productiveness of discourses.²⁴ Here, institutions play an important role. Along with producing knowledge, the institutions also produce subjects. Furthermore, the discourse has the power to produce societal practices and values.

²⁰ Rose, op. cit., p. 189

²¹ Emerling, op. cit., p. 149

²² Rose, op. cit., p. 193

²³ Ibid, p. 190

²⁴ Ibid, p. 192

3.1.2 Foucault's use of discourse

Foucault names his epistemological method the *archaeology of knowledge*. Archaeology refers to the historical analysis seeking to reveal the discourses operating within the systems of meaning.²⁵ The parallel to the methods of archeologists may clarify Foucault's wording. While an archaeologist penetrates the earth's surface in order to reveal signs of history through artifacts, remains and field patterns, the archaeologist in Foucault's method penetrates the surface of knowledge in search of the foundation of this knowledge as a discourse. Further, the archaeologist of knowledge wishes to find out how this knowledge has become natural, undisputed and self-evident.²⁶ As the discourse establishes and controls knowledge, Foucault regards their origin as relevant to uncover the structures and regulation that are at play when knowledge is constructed and implemented. In the preface to *The Order of Things* (1974), Foucault explains his purpose: "what I am attempting to bring to light is the epistemological field, the *episteme* in which knowledge, envisaged apart from all criteria having reference to its rational value or to its objective forms, grounds its positivity and thereby manifests a history which is not that of growing perfection, but rather that of its conditions of possibility".²⁷

As an institution concerned with education, in a broad sense, the art museum is like other knowledge-based institutions committed to the ordering and classifying of knowledge.²⁸ This urge to order and classify can be viewed as a change in the discourse of knowledge from the classical age to the modern age. In *The Order of Things*, Foucault argues that the modern age began in the early nineteenth century, fitting the time of the museum's birth.²⁹ The modern age's concern with ordering, is a question of

[...] grouping and isolating, of analysing, of matching [...] concrete contents; there is nothing more tentative, nothing more empirical (superficially, at least) than the process of establishing an order among things; nothing that demands a sharper eye or a surer, better articulated language; nothing that more insistently requires that one allow oneself to be carried along by the proliferation of qualities and forms. And yet an eye not consciously prepared might well group together certain similar figures and distinguish between others on the basis of such and such a difference: in fact, there is no similitude and no distinction, even for the wholly untrained perception, that is not the result of a precise operation and of the application of a preliminary criterion.³⁰

²⁵ Emerling, op. cit., p. 147

²⁶ Ibid, p. 147

²⁷ M. Foucault, *The Order of Things: an Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, Repr., Tavistock/Routledge, London, 1992 [1974], p. xxii

²⁸ B. Lord, 'Foucault's museum: difference, representation, and genealogy', *Museum and Society*, vol. 4, no. 1, March 2006, p. 2

²⁹ Foucault, *The Order of Things*, pp. xx

³⁰ Ibid, p. xix-xx

The “preliminary criterion” of ordering, as Foucault names it, is in my understanding what is the interest of Foucault’s archaeological method. Although, a discovery of this criterion is not the key interest here, rather the theoretical understanding of how discourse is articulated.

3.1.3 The use of discourse in this research

In order to answer the research question, I will use established notions of art museum’s functions and art museum discourse. The art museum discourse is productive. For example, it produces art institutions, specialized language, knowledge about art and the art world, but it also participates in the production of subjects like curators, conservators and visitors. The established understanding of art museum discourse will be linked to the *dispositif*, in order to answer the question of how the Lambda-conflict’s concern with functions can be seen in light of the institutional *dispositif*.

3.2 The concept of *dispositif*

Gillian Rose explains the institutional *dispositif* [‘institutional apparatus’] with an ease that may be needed when approaching this theoretical concept. According to Rose, Foucault suggest that the institution functions in two ways, respectively through their apparatus and technologies, where the first is of relevance in this study: “[a]n institutional apparatus [*dispositif*] is the forms of power/knowledge that constitute the institution [...] and the discourse articulated through all these. [---].”³¹ Thus, the *dispositif* is defined by Rose as the forms of the institution that *articulates* discourse. Foucault defines the *dispositif* as

[...] a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions – in short, the said as much as the unsaid.³²

What he is interested in is the connection between these wide range of elements, and *how* they enhance and maintain the knowledge structures that exercise power.³³ In clear text, the *dispositif* is the structures that materializes and expresses the discourse, both through the said and the unsaid, the verbally articulated and the visually expressed.³⁴

³¹ Rose, op. cit., p. 230

³² M. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977*, ed. C. Gordon, Pantheon, New York, 1980. pp. 194-195

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ J. Pløger, ‘Foucault’s *Dispositif* and the City’, *Planning Theory*, vol. 7. no. 51, 2008, p. 52

3.2.1 Interaction between discourse and institutional dispositif

The interaction between the different elements of this theoretical framework needs clarification, that one of Foucault's most known examples, the panopticon, can contribute to. The panopticon stands as an almost iconic manifestation of Foucault's theory of the interaction between discourse and dispositif. Jeremy Bentham's design of the panoptic discipline institution from 1791 consists of a tall tower and a surrounding circular building. The building consists of individual cells with windows that make the prisoner visible from the tower at all times. However, due to the design of windows, blinds, doors and corridors, the inmates are never certain *when* they are under observation.³⁵ The change in forms of punishment provided a new discursive knowledge of penal discipline, where physical punishment was substituted with the power over the subject that comes with the constant possibility of visibility.³⁶ The panoptic building follows this change in discourse, and is with its architectural forms, administrative measures, and scientific, philosophical and moral treatise an institutional dispositif where the discourse of punishment is articulated.³⁷

3.2.2 Comments on the theoretical framework

It is important to point out that Foucault's understanding of discourse, dispositif and power is not merely a negative conception where the means of power is the source of physical and mental subjugation and enslavement of unsuspecting groups or individuals. Foucault underlines that power always includes resistance of power: the human subject has the possibility of opposing the position the discourse consigns.³⁸ This is also the nature of the institutional dispositif, which articulates the discourse, and Foucault has stated that "the architect has no power over me".³⁹ Thus, we should keep the dualistic nature of power and ordering in mind.

³⁵ Rose, op. cit., p. 229

³⁶ Foucault, M. *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison*, Allen Lane, London, 1977, p. 201

³⁷ K. Hetherington, 'Foucault, the museum and the diagram', *The Sociological Review*, vol. 59. no. 3, 2011, p. 459

³⁸ Emerling, op. cit., p. 149

³⁹ Pløger, op. cit., p. 53

4 Functions of the art museum

This chapter will determine the functions of art museums that are of interest in this case. It will therefore not be an exhaustive account of all the normative functions presented by The International Council of Museums (ICOM).

4.1 Normative functions

The art museum is a building that has been induced with multiple functions since its birth in the eighteenth century: conserving and educating the public with regards to national cultural artifacts; shaping moral and civic character; proclaiming national power, etc.⁴⁰ The contemporary normative functions of museums in general are explicitly stated in *ICOM codes for ethics of museums* (2006).

1. Museums preserve, interpret and promote the natural and cultural inheritance of humanity.
2. Museums that maintain collections hold them in trust for the benefit of society and its development.
3. Museums hold primary evidence for establishing and furthering knowledge.
4. Museums provide opportunities for the appreciation, understanding and management of the natural and cultural heritage.
5. Museums hold resources that provide opportunities for other public services and benefits.
6. Museums work in close collaboration with the communities from which their collections originate as well as those they serve.
7. Museums operate in a legal manner.
8. Museums operate in a professional manner.⁴¹

I argue that the functions of the art museum that are of specific interest in this research, can be placed into two overlapping categories, namely educational and societal functions.

4.1.1 Educational and societal functions

According to *ICOM codes for ethics of museums*, research, accessibility and communication of knowledge are some of the most important functions of the museum.⁴² “Museums have an important duty to develop their educational role and attract wider audiences from the community, locality, or group they serve. Interaction with the constituent community and promotion of their

⁴⁰ L. Shiner, ‘On Aesthetics and Function in Architecture: The Case of the “Spectacle” Art Museum’, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 69. No. 1, 2011, p. 35

⁴¹ ICOM, *ICOM codes for ethics of museums*, ICOM, Paris, 2006, p. 1

⁴² *Ibid*, p. 7

heritage is an integral part of the educational role of the museum.”⁴³ As the source for these educational functions, the museum should hold its collection and its significance as primary evidence, and “[t]he policy should not be governed only by current intellectual trends or present museum usage.”⁴⁴ Further, ICOM states that “[m]useums have a particular responsibility for making collections and all relevant information available as freely as possible [...]”⁴⁵ The museum should also use every opportunity to “inform and educate the public about the aims, purposes, and aspirations of the profession to develop a better public understanding of the contributions of museums to society.”⁴⁶

As previously mentioned, the educational and societal functions are overlapping. The educational functions stated above can just as well be understood as societal functions. Also, educating in pursuable and desirable moral behavior and thinking is an important societal function: “[m]useum usage of collections from contemporary communities requires respect for human dignity and the traditions and cultures that use such material. Such collections should be used to promote human well-being, social development, tolerance, and respect by advocating multisocial, multicultural and multilingual expression.”⁴⁷

4.2 Functions of the institutional dispositif

The norms concerning education and societal function describe what should be the intentions of a museum. The expression of discourse concerning the art museum, may indeed be grounded in the normative function of making the knowledge about art accessible and relevant to society.

4.2.1 Ordering of knowledge

The art discourse shapes the practice of art museum. However individual these practices may be, some tendencies can be established. Ordering and classifying the primary evidence, the art collection, is an integral part of the educational practice. The structuring of knowledge, Bennett claims, is always structured after ‘scientific’ and ‘objective’ principles, governed by the discourse.⁴⁸ Ordering and classifying is fairly obvious to those who visit any art museum, and is cautiously done to make the knowledge of the art museum easily obtainable. However, the ‘natural’ and ‘self-evident’ principles of how this order became the ‘right’ order, are more obscure. When the art

⁴³ Ibid, p. 8

⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 6

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 11

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 10

⁴⁸ Rose, op. cit., p. 238

museum orders and classifies, it is both implicitly and explicitly showing and telling the visitors how to look and how to learn.⁴⁹ Hence, the art museum is producing a knowledge about their collection, and may in many ways communicate this as the correct knowledge. In the process of ordering, the architecture and the internal spatiality of the museum can play an important role.

4.2.2 Production of subject positions

The practice of ordering contributes to the production of language: “[b]y limiting and filtering the visible, structure enables it to be transcribed into language.”⁵⁰ The connection between ordering and language is an important factor in knowledge, considering the fact that it is difficult to convey information when there is no appropriate lingual term. This may in turn contribute in producing and articulating different subject positions in the art museum’s institutional dispositif, as everyone does not equally possess this language.⁵¹ Three categories of subject position can be drawn from Bennett: the patrons of the museum, the curators and scientists, and the visitors.⁵² However, an additional produced group should also be considered: the non-visitors of the art museum.

4.2.3 Value of knowledge

Following this trail of thought, *correct* ordering of knowledge, specializing language and establishing different subject positions, the discourse is also producing a value of art and of knowledge about art. As part of the museum’s function, ICOM states that this value should be made evident to the public, in order to broaden the understanding of art museums necessity and place in society.⁵³ From the communication of the knowledge that the art museums hold, and value of the art itself, it follows that the museums are effectively producing a value of knowledge about art. The external architecture can contribute to expressing this value [see chapter 5.3 ‘Value’].

4.2.4 Executing discipline

Discipline, for Foucault, is the mechanism regulating the individual social subjects in society. Foucault’s notion of discipline is implemented in many forms, by regulating and organizing space (e.g. through architecture), time (e.g. ordering through timetables) and behavior (e.g. movement and

⁴⁹ Bennett, op. cit., p. 98

⁵⁰ Foucault, *The Order of Things*, op. cit., p. 135

⁵¹ Rose, op. cit., p. 242

⁵² Ibid, p. 239-240

⁵³ ICOM, *ICOM codes for ethics of museums*, op. cit., p. 11

activities).⁵⁴ For example, the museum will discipline through spatial routing of the visitor, suggesting the optimal trail through the collection.⁵⁵ This discipline is not the discipline of slavery, “[...] based on a relation of appropriation of bodies; indeed, the elegance of the discipline lay in the fact that it could dispense with this costly and violent relation by obtaining effects of utility at least as great.”⁵⁶ The art institution articulation of the value of knowledge can be seen as executing discipline over the social body, and socially managing the subject into what is considered coveted and acceptable activities.

4.2.5 A paradox of functions

From the assessments made in this section, it becomes clear that the art museum is balancing in a paradox of functions. The art museum produces difference with its educational and societal role, and the success of the knowledge accumulation is very much linked to ones placement in the cultural capital hierarchy, to use Bourdieu’s term.⁵⁷ Eilean Hooper-Greenhill has stated that the art museum is a public institution that tries to connect two contradictory functions, “that of the elite temple of arts, and that of a utilitarian instrument for democratic education.”⁵⁸ In many ways this connection seems impossible to make in praxis without excluding parts of society, whether it is the top or bottom of the cultural capital hierarchy. The accumulation of knowledge, and the value of knowledge about art is, according to Bourdieu, very much linked to class distinctions, and can only be apprehended by spectators who are in possession of aesthetic and cultural competence.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ Foucault, *Discipline and Punishment*, op. cit., p. 137

⁵⁵ Rose, op. cit., p. 251

⁵⁶ Foucault, *Discipline and Punishment*, op. cit., p. 137

⁵⁷ P. Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, Randal Johnson (red.), Polity Press, Cambridge, 1993, p. 217

⁵⁸ E. Hooper-Greenhill, ‘The museum in the disciplinary society’, Pearce, J. *Museum Studies in Material Culture*, Leicester University Press, Leicester, 1989, p. 63

⁵⁹ P. Bourdieu, ‘The historical genesis of a pure aesthetic’, *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 46, no. 1, 1987, p. 202

5 *Lambda* and knowledge

This chapter will investigate articulation of art museum discourse in the institutional dispositif in connection to the Lambda-conflict. The functions determined in the previous chapter will constitute the background for this discussion. As previously mentioned, the art museum is primarily a knowledge-based institution. Therefore, the Lambda-conflict's concern with knowledge is the focus of this study.

First, a short introduction of the expressed goals of the new Munch Museum will be provided, along with an equally short overview of the jury of the architect competition's motivation for naming Lambda the winner. The debate will then be structured according to arguments, which I suggest can be divided into three categories: concerning communication of knowledge; concerning value of art and art knowledge; and concerning accessibility of knowledge.

5.1 The goals of the new Munch Museum

Shortly after Oslo City Council voted for relocating the Munch Museum and the Stenersen Museum to Bjørvika, a competition program stating the goals for the new museum building was published. The overall goals range from architecturally functional to cultural political goals, which include expressing the buildings significance as an important target point in the area; making the museum universally available; administering and presenting Munch's art and the Stenersen collection; and developing innovative strategies for imparting knowledge.⁶⁰ The jury report from April 20. 2009, unanimously states that Lambda fulfills these goals, having "all the qualities of a monumental building [---] [with its] distinct external form", and being "developed with great care regarding the needs of the different user groups".⁶¹ Further, the jury states that they were fascinated by the storytelling ability of Lambda, both in terms of telling the story of Munch's art and Stenersen's collection through the exhibition halls, and the story of Oslo and Bjørvika with the grand view over the fjord.⁶²

⁶⁰ HAV Eiendom AS & Kulturetaten, *Plan- og designkonkurranse — Munch-museum og Stenersensamlingene*, [utg. februar 2009], Oslo, 2008, pp. 5-6

⁶¹ 'The Jury Report. Munch Area', April 20. 2009, pp. 21-22 http://www.munch-museet.oslo.kommune.no/bjorvika/munch_stenersenmuseet/juryrapport/, downloaded December 18. 2012

⁶² Ibid, p. 22

5.2 Communication of knowledge

Hallsten Bjercke, city councilman of culture from *Venstre* [Liberal Party], has on several occasions stated that the goal should be to build the museum that is considered museum-academically most suitable.⁶³ What is meant by this may be complimented by art historian Ina Johannesen. She states that the most important factor when choosing a museum building for the Munch collection should be how the interior, spatially, can maintain the needs of the art works, and help ensure that this is optimality communicated to the audience.⁶⁴ After the Lambda-alternative was discarded by Oslo City Council, a broad discussion about whether or not Lambda actually meets the criteria for normative educational functions of the museum has accumulated.

5.2.1 The internal architecture of Lambda

The architecture of Lambda entered the debate rather quickly after the jury announced the winning concept. Interpretations of the architecture's ability to communicate the art have been various and contradictory. As mentioned, the jury unanimously felt that of the competition participants, Lambda was by far the most suitable alternative for exhibiting the collection, explicitly stating that "the project Lambda has had no real competitors among the entries [...]."⁶⁵ Regardless, the debate concerning Lambda has been concerned with the building's capability to impart knowledge.

In May 2011, the current Tøyen Munch Museum published a report about Juan Herreros Arquitectos' Lambda-sketch, concluding that the project is "very well suited as a basis for the continuation of the pilot project, as the museum's room and function program is essentially maintained [...]."⁶⁶ The report states that the building is well suited for communication of the different mediums that Munch used (graphics, drawings, paintings and films), but mentions that the verticality of the building demands a high level of transportation capacity between the floors [see appendix, figure 5.1-5.2].⁶⁷ However, they continue by arguing that the transport between levels gives the audience an opportunity and time for reflection and rest between impressions.⁶⁸

The verticality of the museum building has been one of the most discussed issues, which many claim disturb the educational function. Politician and member of Oslo City Council Libe Rieber-

⁶³ K. Nipen, 'Lambda er blitt folks favoritt', *Aftenposten*, October 22. 2012, <http://www.aftenposten.no/kultur/Lambda-er-bli-tilt-folks-favoritt-7024307.html>, last viewed on December 18. 2012

⁶⁴ 'Spill for galleriet', *Brennpunkt*, television program, NRK, Oslo, sent March 27. 2012

⁶⁵ 'The Jury report. Munch Area', op.cit., p. 22

⁶⁶ Munch-museet, *Museumsfaglig Rapport — Juan Herreros Arquitectos, Skisseprosjekt til nytt Munch museum*, Oslo May 11. 2011, p. 2

⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 5

⁶⁸ Ibid.

Mohn from *Arbeiderpartiet* [Labour Party] has stated that “[m]useum academically speaking, I [...] think it is better with a museum that does not span over 14 stories.”⁶⁹ Architect Fredrik Torp stated in a debate held by the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK), that if Lambda was the best alternative, it should be built.⁷⁰ However, he argues that Lambda’s verticality, with eight exhibition floors, does not give the visitor the ultimate experience.⁷¹ Art sociologist Dag Solhjell agrees with this, stating that the debate should concern how well Lambda can serve the public’s encounter with Edvard Munch, and concludes that the alternative is unfitting.⁷² “The verticality of Lambda imposes the audience with an in-and-out traffic and an on-and-off experience which is educationally destructive and disturbing for the artistic immersion.”⁷³ This argument can be understood from a perspective where the internal architecture would give a *wrong* order to Munch’s art:

The dissemination of Munch’s life and art calls for a horizontal and linear solution in the building where the audience shall meet him in a more permanent and undisturbed interaction. Lambda’s verticality, with its many separate showrooms, sluices, escalators and changes in light regimes, breaks down Munch's art into episodes, techniques, designs, or other categories that were foreign to him.⁷⁴

Solhjell’s understanding can be set into context with discourse articulation and the institutional dispositif, as he claims that the verticality of Lambda will articulate a knowledge about Munch that is not in line with Munch’s own views. From this assessment, the discourse of knowledge about Munch seems to come from Munch himself, and this is what should be materialized in the museum. Therefore, Solhjell’s interpretation of Lambda is that its internal architecture will not disseminate the knowledge about Munch’s art correctly.

This interpretation is both widely agreed and disagreed upon. The decision makers in this case, Oslo City Council, ordered an independent report concerning Lambda in Bjørvika after this debate had persisted through out 2011 and 2012. The report, published November 29. 2012, concluded that the museum-academic demands and functions are 100% fulfilled, and that a high-rise, vertical building largely ensures effective communication paths.⁷⁵ The interest group *Relansering av*

⁶⁹ V.H. Østrem, “Lambda er ikke akkurat pent”, *Aftenposten*, November 3. 2012, <http://www.aftenposten.no/kultur/Lambda-er-ikke-akkurat-pent-7035902.html>, last viewed on January 6. 2013

⁷⁰ *Debatten*, television program, NRK, Oslo, December 13. 2012

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² D. Solhjell, ‘Lambda – passer verken for Munch eller publikum’, *Kunstkritikk*, October 22. 2012, <http://www.kunstkritikk.no/kommentar/lambda-passar-verken-for-munch-eller-publikum/?d=no>, last viewed on December 18. 2012

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ OPAK/Metier, *Ikke-prissatte effekter for nytt Munch-museum i Bjørvika (Lambda)*, November 29. 2012, p. 7 <http://www.kulturbyggene-i-bjorvika.oslo.kommune.no>, last viewed January 8. 2013

Lambda, consisting of mostly art professionals, are lobbying for building the winning concept. In November 2011 they published a pamphlet where they give an overview of what they see as myths and facts concerning *Lambda*. Here, they meet the claim “[m]useums should be horizontal” with the counterclaim that traditional, horizontal museums “force the audience through a long and demanding track of exhibition rooms. A modern, vertical museum building like *Lambda* gives the audience easier access to those parts of the exhibition that they [individually] are most eager to see.”⁷⁶ A similar argument is presented regarding the number of exhibition floors. Contrary to Solhjell’s interpretation, who sees this as breaking Munch down into episodes which will effectively disturb a holistic understanding of his art, they claim this is a positive function of *Lambda* which gives the audience a freedom of choice when visiting the museum.⁷⁷

5.2.2 Internal architecture and the institutional dispositif

From these discussions regarding the internal architecture, a partial conclusion can be drawn. What differentiates the participants in this debate, is the different understandings of whether the internal structuring of *Lambda* expresses knowledge in accordance with the discourse of art museums, and with the discourse of Munch’s art. Further, the interpretation of what constitutes good museology separates the standpoints. On one hand, the jury of the architectural competition, the Munch Museum and the group *Relansering av Lambda*, interpret *Lambda* as being capable of correctly and beneficially communicating the knowledge of Munch’s art to the visitors. On the other, Rieber-Mohn, Torp and Solhjell argue that *Lambda* will not be able to disseminate the correct knowledge, and cannot communicate the correct knowledge to the public. Seemingly, what constitutes art museum discourse in terms of the educational function of communicating knowledge, that is, what is the correct way to convey museum knowledge, does not have a common definition among the debaters. Therefore, it logically follows that also what constitutes materializing of art museum discourse does not have a common ground to stand on. The institutional dispositif of *Lambda* is implicitly being questioned, through the different interpretations of art museum’s educational communication, and through the questioning of whether the correct discursive knowledge is articulated and can be obtained with *Lambda*’s internal architecture.

⁷⁶ Relansering av *Lambda*, *Lambda: Myter og fakta*, November 17. 2012; p. 4 <http://lambda.mono.net/upl/pages/myter-og-fakta/Lambdamyter5.pdf>, last viewed on January 9. 2013

⁷⁷ Ibid.

5.3 Value

Architecture has always been an expressive element of discourse. Historically, the symbolic value of museum architecture was mainly concerned with expressing the value of art, not only the art it contained, but art *per se*.⁷⁸ Today, the dramatic and spectacular architecture of some art museums send a similar message, for example with radical shapes and unusual material.⁷⁹

As previously mentioned, one of the educational functions of the museum, is to disseminate the value of the knowledge the museum holds, and to make the value of the museum institution explicitly known to society. However, this has proven to be rather difficult, and is integral to the Lambda-conflict. In this section, four categories of standpoints will be discussed:

- (1) Munch's art and knowledge about the art is valuable. Lambda will communicate the right value.
- (2) Munch's art and knowledge about the art is valuable. Lambda will communicate the wrong value.
- (3) Munch's art and knowledge about the art is valuable. Lambda will steal focus from Munch's intrinsic value.
- (4) Munch's art and knowledge about the art is not valuable (in comparison to other values). Lambda will express a value that is not equally understood or sought after.

5.3.1 The external architecture of Lambda

The value of Munch's art has been an important factor in the debate. Many have claimed that the main reason for building Lambda, is that the legacy of Munch deserves a high-quality building, which will generate a higher interest and appreciation of Norway's greatest artist.⁸⁰ In their report about the winning concept, the jury underlined the monumentality of Lambda, giving the spectator an immediate sense of the value of Munch's art [see appendix for illustration, figure 5.3].⁸¹ The current Munch Museum agrees with this. As they have embraced the Lambda alternative, it follows that their understanding is that this building will communicate the value of Munch's art, and the value of knowledge about this.⁸² Category 1) needs no further elaboration: they are agreeing with

⁷⁸ Shiner, op. cit., p. 32

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Relansering av Lambda, 'Realiser Lambda nå!', NRK, Oslo, September 20. 2012, http://www.nrk.no/ytring/realiser-lambda-na_-1.8329250, last viewed January 9. 2013

⁸¹ 'The Jury Report. Munch Area', op. cit., p. 21

⁸² Munch-museet, *Museumsfaglig Rapport* op. cit., p. 2

the value of Munch's art, the discourse of art museum's articulation of value of knowledge about Munch, and the way Lambda is materializing this discourse.

As seen in the previous section, some argue that Lambda does not fit the discourse of Munch's art. Similarly, some are arguing that the building is not sufficiently articulating the right value of knowledge. The Norwegian artist and critic Jonas Ekeberg, does not agree with the assessment that Lambda expresses value. Rather, he feels that the building expresses uncertainty.

And then there was "Lambda". Drawn by Spanish Herreros. A high-rise building with a kinked top. It has been objected that it looks like a conventional office building, which is true enough. However, the kink is worse. An unnecessary and affixed form approach which apparently will give the building character, but primarily suggests a big question mark. Exactly. Moreover, the building does not seem to express anything what so ever about Edvard Munch's character or artistic position. On the contrary. It expresses uncertainty, both in relation to the art and the city [of Oslo].⁸³

Ekeberg's understanding of art and art knowledge as valuable is clearly articulated in his text. What is not clear for him, is how Lambda expresses this. As cited, he sees the building as merely a regular office building with a twist, that does not do justice to the value of Munch. Architect Peter Butenschøn agrees with Ekeberg's assessment, when he states

"[...] is Lambda really a cathedral of our time, an iconic building for the community and for the art? It does not seem like many can find such qualities in the computer animated perspectives or photomontages. They cannot picture Edvard Munch and his expressive art placed in a Spanish office building, with a kink on top. They see a slick and boring heavy block [---]. The objections seem rather unison, from young and old, conservative and progressive, architects, art connoisseurs and laymen."⁸⁴

These understandings are placed in category 2) where there is agreement on the discourse of Munch's art as valuable and on the discourse of the art museum's normative function to distribute and disseminate the value of knowledge. However, what is disagreed upon, is whether the external architecture of Lambda materializes and articulates this discourse. 'Office building' is a denotation in both these interpretations, and the connotations put into this wording clearly expresses a different value than what is discursively associated with Munch. Ekeberg and Butenschøn does not seem to agree that Lambda is an iconic building that expresses monumentality, neither towards the value of art nor the value of art museum's knowledge.

⁸³ J. Ekeberg, 'Natt på museet', *Kunstkritikk*, January 18. 2010, <http://www.kunstkritikk.no/kommentar/natt-pa-museet/>, last viewed on January 6. 2012

⁸⁴ P. Butenschøn, 'Hvem elsker Lambda?', *Aftenposten*, January 12. 2010, <http://www.aftenposten.no/meninger/kronikker/article3461893.ece>, last viewed on January 9. 2013

While standpoint 1) and 2) argue that Munch's art deserves a monumental, landmark building, standpoint 3) does not believe that this is necessary. In a chronicle, Mabel Trampe Kjerschow states that while it is commonly understood that Lambda is intended to be a signature building, this should not be considered essential when attempting to attract visitors to view Munch's work.⁸⁵ She is convinced that his art has the ability to attract on its own, and should not have to compete with the architecture for attention.⁸⁶ According to Kjerschow, the current Munch Museum fulfills this function, as it is a museum where visitors can close out the outside world and enter Munch's world in totality [see appendix for exterior of the Munch Museum at Tøyen, figure 5.4].⁸⁷ In a petition campaign started by the group *Munch på Tøyen*, advocating an expansion of the current museum, the same viewpoint is expressed.⁸⁸ Architect Fredrik Torp shares this opinion, and has continuously reminded the debaters holding the other standpoints that the Tøyen Munch Museum was the most visited museum in the Nordic region in 1965.⁸⁹ In our own time, Munch exhibits around the world attract millions of visitors. This fact is held as evidence of Munch's intrinsic value by some. Using Hal Foster's wording, they do not believe Munch benefits from a "gigantic spectacle-space that can swallow any art, let alone any viewer, whole."⁹⁰ These arguments show interpretations of how Lambda may create an effect where the art becomes secondary, fearing that Philip Johnson's assessment of the Bilbao Guggenheim may become the fate of Munch: "if the architecture is as good as in Bilbao, fuck the art!"⁹¹

City council member for *Fremskrittspartiet* [Progress Party] Carl I. Hagen, has been a prominent Lambda opponent, arguing that the Munch Museum should not be prioritized over other institutions that are in need of improvement. Therefore, he is pleading for finding the most inexpensive alternative and ending the conflict. Although this may be more of a financial issue, it is still relevant for the conflict. His understanding is that the value of Munch's art and the value of knowledge about Munch's art should not be granted precedence over the value of decent health care or a high-quality school system.⁹² Even though the logic of this argument, where a new Munch Museum would exclude the possibility of raising the standards of other institutions may be false, his standpoint is clear in terms of value of art knowledge. This is a category 4) position, where the value of knowledge about Munch is not a general and universal matter. This is also a matter

⁸⁵ M. Trampe Kjerschow, 'Utsikt eller innsikt?' *Klassekampen*, Oslo, December 4. 2012

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ 'La Munch-museet bli på Tøyen', *Munch til Tøyen*, <http://www.underskrift.no/vis.asp?kampanje=2999>, last viewed January 8. 2013

⁸⁹ *Debatten*, op. cit.

⁹⁰ H. Foster, *Design and Crime: And Other Diatribes*, Verso, London, 2002, p. 7

⁹¹ M. Filler, *Makers of Modern Architecture*, York Review of Books, New York, 2007, p. 278

⁹² *Debatten*, op. cit.

relevant in terms of articulating accessibility [see chapter 5.4 ‘Accessibility’]. The discourse of Munch and the disciplinary functions of the art museum are being resisted, as the museum institution apparently has failed in effectively articulating the value of art, art knowledge and art museums to everyone in society.

5.3.2 External architecture and the institutional dispositif

These discussions about the external architecture can be interpreted as disagreements concerning institutional dispositif. The category 1) and 2) standpoints are agreeing on the discourse of the art museum, where art and art knowledge is valuable, although they are disagreeing on whether the institutional dispositif of Lambda is expressing this value sufficiently. Category 3) is also agreeing that art and art knowledge is valuable, but believes that Munch’s art is not reliant on a building that articulates the discourse in a monumental way. Munch’s art has the ability to communicate it’s own value, and materializing this in the external architecture may steal focus from what is important in the art museums: the art. Standpoint 4) disagrees with 1), 2) and 3) on the discourse of the art museum, and the discourse is being resisted. Thus, the educational function of highlighting the art museum’s contribution may have fallen through. These arguments all concern the institutional dispositif of the art museum. They are either accepting the art museum discourse and the way Lambda may or may not materialize this, or not accepting the established art museum discourse and actively resisting the articulation of knowledge value. As with the discussions regarding Lambda’s interior, the disagreement may be founded in the lack of a common understanding of the art museum discourse, and of how and if this should be articulated.

5.4 Accessibility

As previously stated in chapter 4, there are paradoxical factors of the art museum discourse that may disrupt the accessibility of knowledge. It should be mentioned that this does not primarily refer to physical accessibility, but rather making knowledge comprehensible to as many as possible.

5.4.1 Differentiation of accessibility

The debate has been concerned with the language and knowledge differentiation between art professionals and laymen, which has fired up a debate about the elitism of art discourse. This part of the debate can illuminate the level of accessibility as a concern in the Lambda-conflict.

Swift reactions from art professionals followed when Libe Rieber-Mohn described Lambda as “not exactly pretty”.⁹³ Art historian Tommy Sørbø replied in a chronicle that words like ‘ugly’ and ‘pretty’ should not exist in professional vocabulary.⁹⁴ Further he argues that people in possession of a substantial amount of cultural capital know that when something is described as ugly or pretty, it says more about the person describing the object than the object itself: “[i]f you don’t like Lambda, it has nothing to do with the building, but with yourself.”⁹⁵ In this part of the debate, subject positions and specialized language produced by the discourse of art are made clear. What separates the standpoints is knowledge about art and architecture discourse, which Sørbø explicitly states by bringing up Bourdieu: “[i]f you know your Bourdieu, you *know* you have good taste. If you don’t know him, you *think* you have good taste [emphasis added].”⁹⁶ Karin Haugen, an editor at the newspaper *Klassekampen*, wrote that these types of reactions from the Lambda-supporters show how “uptight” they are.⁹⁷ She interprets the responses as claims of who has the right to state their opinion, that being art professionals.⁹⁸

This polemic can illustrate how the different subjects positions use language and possess knowledge. Furthermore, it can illustrate the difference in accessibility of architecture that is produced by the discourse, contradictory to the normative educational and societal function of the art museum. It is unproblematic to state that the specialized language of the art museum is not equally accessible to everyone.⁹⁹ Hence, a function that is meant to create order and accessibility, namely specializing language and knowledge in order to ensure how something should be discussed, can exclude certain people. This exclusion can in this case manifest both in terms of the debate, the knowledge of the art museum discourse and the art museum in general. Thus, the fear of making Lambda an undemocratic space is a concern in the debate.

This concern is also relevant with regards to Munch’s art. City council member Carl I. Hagen has on several accounts stated that the art of Munch is not a cultural phenomenon that the majority of the Norwegian people relate to: “[cross country skiing] is for the people, this is popular culture. The paintings, I think they are impressive, yet it is for the elite.”¹⁰⁰ Hagen’s bases his statement on what he interprets as the public opinion: the average citizen is not enthusiastic about Munch, and most people fall under the subject category *non-visitor*. Questions about who the museum is for, is

⁹³ Østrem, ‘Lambda er ikke akkurat pent’, op. cit.

⁹⁴ T. Sørbø, ‘Pent, stygt eller sant?’, *Aftenposten*, Oslo, November 22, 2012 http://www.aftenposten.no/meninger/Pent_-_stygt-eller-sant-7052083.html, lasted viewed January 6. 2013

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ K. Haugen, ‘De lærde strides’, *Klassekampen*, Oslo, November 11. 2012

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, op. cit., p. 217

¹⁰⁰ ‘Spill for galleriet’, op. cit.

relevant for this debate. ICOM states that “[m]useums have an important duty to develop their educational role and attract wider audiences from the community, locality, or group they serve”, and “[m]useums have a particular responsibility for making collections and all the relevant information available as freely as possible.”¹⁰¹ As in the discussions in sections 5.2 and 5.3, there are widespread differences of opinions concerning Lambda’s ability to make knowledge available with its interior, and with making the value of knowledge available through its exterior. In OPAK/Metier’s report commissioned by Oslo Municipality, they claim that visitor numbers are a good indication of whether the societal and educational functions are fulfilled.¹⁰² Many have argued that Lambda would attract more visitors than the current Munch Museum, based on its localization and the effects that comes with monumental architecture.¹⁰³ From 2005, the current Munch Museum has had approximately 107 000-128 000 visitors per year, where 80% of the visitors are tourist, (60-70% foreign tourist).¹⁰⁴ In OPAK/Metier’s report, it was concluded that it is probable that Lambda would have 500 000 visitors per year, although they stress that there is a high level of uncertainty deriving these numbers.¹⁰⁵ Emphasis has been placed on this uncertainty by Lambda-opponents, claiming that the political neglect of Tøyen is to be blamed for the low results at the current museum.¹⁰⁶ No clear conclusion has been put forth to suggest the reason for the relatively low visitor numbers, compared to Munch exhibitions around the world which continuously break records. If this is based on Norwegian disinterest and neglect, understandings of art lacking relevance, or knowledge accessibility remains undisclosed.

5.4.2 Accessibility and the institutional dispositif

Differentiation of accessibility can be viewed as an immaterial materialization of art museum discourse, and thus a part of the institutional dispositif. Based on the discussion, one can conclude that the participants of the debate are disagreeing on whether or not Lambda articulates and fulfills the societal functions of openness and accessibility of knowledge. This is the case both in regards to Lambda’s architecture, and to Munch’s art. The language of architecture has been an issue, where art professionals have criticized the use of laymen’s terms in the debate. In return, art professionals have been criticized for not permitting subjective understandings and disciplining other subject positions by stating what is right and true. The polemic can be interpreted as referring to Lambda’s

¹⁰¹ ICOM, *ICOM codes for ethics of museums*, op. cit, pp. 6-8

¹⁰² OPAK/Metier, op. cit., p. 4

¹⁰³ Relansering av Lambda, ‘Realiser Lambda nå!’, op. cit.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, p. 8

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Østrem, op. cit.

ability to articulate that knowledge is obtainable by everyone. The rate of accessibility concerning Munch's art is often discussed by using visitor numbers as an indication of whether this societal function is fulfilled. In the debate, the comparing of visitor estimates of Lambda and actual visitor numbers of Tøyen is used by the Lambda-advocates in order to emphasize what they interpret as Lambda's superior materialization of accessibility and societal contribution.

It can be argued that this is the fate of the majority of art museum institutions, and not particularly unique for the Lambda-conflict. The museum institution is commonly regarded as a paradoxical institution, as pointed out by Hooper-Greenhill.¹⁰⁷ The Lambda-conflict's concern with the institutional dispositif's articulation of accessibility may illustrate the institution's difficulty of merging discursive dissemination of knowledge and expressing value of knowledge with the normative function of the museum as an open, public institution.

¹⁰⁷ Hooper-Greenhill, *op. cit.*, p. 63

6 Conclusion

This research has examined how the Lambda-conflict's concern with the functions of the art museum can be understood when analyzed from the perspective of institutional dispositif. Based on the presented material, this study concludes that the institutional dispositif is a concern in the conflict. Regarding the functions, it is my claim that materialization of the art museum discourse concerning different aspects of knowledge has been the main focal point of the conflict.

I have argued that the debate about Lambda's internal architecture is concerned with the building's ability to fulfill the normative educational function of communicating the knowledge of Munch's art. The disagreement lies in whether or not the building's internal structure is able to disseminate the correct, discursive knowledge about the museum's collection. I conclude that what is considered to be the correct knowledge and the correct dissemination of this knowledge is integral to the debate, as this is the basis of why its participants are disagreeing on the forms of discourse materialization. Further, the study concludes that debates regarding functions of the external architecture are concerned with the articulation of value, specifically value of art and value of art knowledge. I have argued that the arguments about Lambda's exterior are dependent on the given understandings of art museum discourse and the understandings of value materialization. It is my conclusion that the difference of opinions is founded in the contradicting interpretations of Lambda's capacity to communicate value, interpretations of whether architecture of Lambda's nature is necessary to communicate the value of Munch, and different understandings of the relative value of art and art knowledge. Accessibility is a complex matter for the art museum institution, and this is evident in the conflict. I have argued that the normative functions of accessibility are discussed in terms of the architecture of Lambda, and of Munch's art. This study concludes that through discussions about accessibility of specialized language, relevance to popular culture and probable visitor numbers, the conflict is concerned with whether or not Lambda materializes the societal function of accessibility of knowledge.

The interpretation criteria for this study has been coherency between arguments and Foucault's understanding of the institutional dispositif. I conclude that coherency between the material and the theory has been established. The aspects of the Lambda-conflict presented in this study are concerned with the materializing of art museum discourse, namely communication of knowledge, articulation of knowledge value, and articulation of knowledge accessibility.

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7.1 Electronic resources

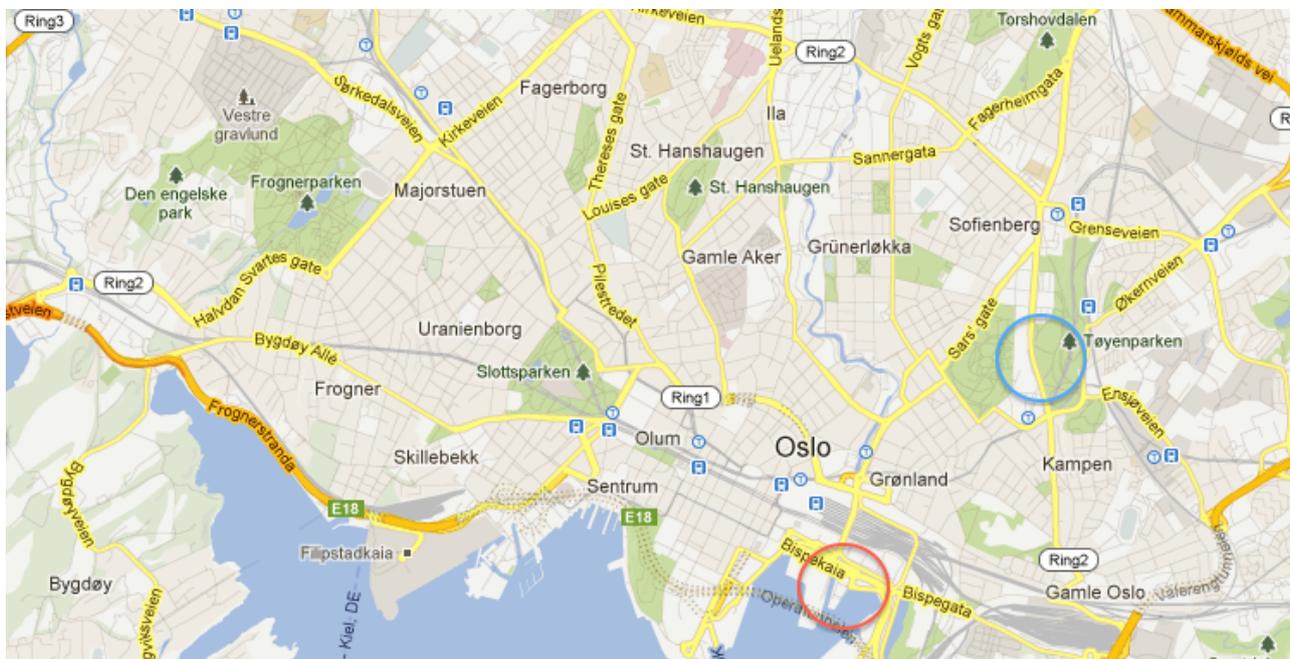
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[All translations where no English translation was available, are my own.]

APPENDIX

Figure 1.1)



Oslo, Google Maps.

<http://www.google.com/maps>, downloaded January 8. 2013

Red circle marks the planned location of Lambda, Paulsenkaia in Bjørvika

Blue circle marks the current Munch Museum at Tøyen

Figure 1.2)



Lambda, Exterior view from the North (Illustration by Artefactorylab/HerrerrosArquitectos),

http://www.herrerrosarquitectos.com/EN_Ind_Proyectos.html, downloaded December 28. 2012

Figure 1.3)



Lambda, *Frontal view*. Derived from ‘The Jury’s Report. Munch Area’, http://www.munch-museet.oslo.kommune.no/bjorvika/munch_stenersenmuseet/juryrapport/, downloaded December 18. 2012

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Figure 5.1)



Lambda, *Interior view | lobby* (Illustration by Artefactorylab/HerrerrosArquitectos) http://www.herrerrosarquitectos.com/EN_Ind_Proyectos.html, downloaded December 28. 2012

Figure 5.2)



Lambda, *interior view* | *Dynamic part*. Artefactorylab/HerrerosArquitectos
http://www.herrerosarquitectos.com/EN_Ind_Proyectos.html, downloaded December 4. 2012

Figure 5.3)



Lambda, *Entrance view between the museum and the opera* (Illustration by Mir/
HerrerosArquitectos)
http://www.herrerosarquitectos.com/EN_Ind_Proyectos.html, downloaded December 4. 2012

Figure 5.4)



Munch-museet, Tøyen. Holm, M./Scanpix

<http://www.dagbladet.no/2012/05/09/kultur/munch-museet/kunst/lambda/kulturpolitikk/21516491/>,
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