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Punctuality, Facelessness and Boundlessness in Visual Representation

Theses

The dissertation is an examination of how point-likeness appears as a philosophical figure in fine art. Point-likeness is a figure that can be interpreted not only as a face, but also as any center. The connection of the “point-like” face and boundary is a specific metaphysical pair sign. At the center of this relationship is the face, which appears not only as an anthropological or iconographic element, but also as a kind of dividing boundary. In this interpretation, the face becomes a metaphor for creation, evoking the epiphany of the face of God, and also represents an image that is a “face-making” representation appearing in folk culture, which manifests itself in its hiddenness. Such faces or figures can be read as a metaphysical unit through their point-likeness.

This metaphysical structure examined in this dissertation, which interprets face and boundary as interwoven, creative point-likeness, is part of a fundamental ontological order. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, as well as Jacques Derrida, develop theoretical frameworks that aim to eliminate the metaphysical search for origin and unity through “facelessness” and “boundlessness”. They strive to consciously resolve the embedded metaphysical duality of this unity (oneness/multiplicity (plurality), center/periphery, face/facelessness). Point-likeness, as a central or starting unit, is for them a means of fixing thought and subjectivity, which must be discarded in favor of immanent, boundless, non-hierarchical systems. These philosophical trends therefore reject any kind of attachment to a transcendent center and seek the possibilities of thought in constantly moving, divergent, open systems of relations.

By colliding these two opposing metaphysical structures, the dissertation attempts to map the layers of meaning of point-likeness and boundary in visual representations, while also examining how the aesthetics of “boundarylessness” appear in contemporary visual patterns that are shaped by the accelerated technological environment and digital network systems.

In the middle and at the end of the paper – along the philosophical opposition of the point and the line – the words of Béla Tábor return again. Tábor’s philosophical reflections and the works of Béla Veszelszky, as well as the visual motifs of folk culture, offer

interpretations that carry the possibility of meaning concentrated in the center. The holes of the folk sieve as a cultic and functional object exemplify the symbolic point where the role of the center is preserved.

The aim of the thesis is to draw a metaphysical map along these concepts (face, boundary, point-likeness) that preserves the possibility of fixing meaning, in contrast to the idea of the "boundless work" that has appeared in fine art, which seeks to dissolve the location and contours of meaning.

1. First, I relate the end-time view of the religious life of the peasantry to the traditional schemes of pictorial representation, which outline a kind of metaphysical structure. The marking of boundaries in the pictorial formulation plays a role in its structure, such as the fact that the structure of the alms box is three-part, or that it has a hierarchical system. The "facialization" appearing in peasant depictions, such as the painterly expression that appears hidden on a particular object of use, establishes this unity and, at the same time, a hierarchy.

2. To illustrate the "face-making" painterly expression, I will give an example of a chest with a fringe, the surface of which forms the basis of the composition. The two symmetrically placed flower wreaths pattern two hidden faces on the base. This representation consists of a continuous, endless layer (the fringe) and another uniform composition (the flower wreath), which thus creates a complete compositional unit with its double contrast. The fringe becomes a vibrating, "moving" surface due to its monochromy, while the flower composition, made up of many details, which also forms a face, is an enclosed, delimited form. The details ("its multitude") loosen this enclosed "face-making", which is why this delimited part remains somewhat hidden. I conclude from its formal properties that this dual system is composed in such a way that there is both a moving and a static pattern, which can be characterized as the "Plurality" that ensures movement, and the wreath of flowers, which appears as "Oneness".¹ This duality again represents a compositional unity, it forms a "Oneness". The flower wreath as a "Oneness" consists of the flower wreath and its components ("plurality"). The face is also composed of itself as a "Oneness" and the flower wreath and its parts. The process, the transition of the parts into a whole is an intermediate state that creates this movement and continuity. Thus, every "Oneness" consists of a

¹ "Oneness" and "Plurality" here are the author's own terms which represent a compositional duality.

“Oneness” and a “Plurality”. The wreath and the face are each an axial point where the process of transition swings, therefore they can be considered as boundaries.

3. In the subsection on the face appearing at the horizon, I examine the conceptual pair of face/boundary along the lines of tradition. Tradition links the appearance of the face to the moment of creation, which evokes the moment of separation of heaven and earth. The fixed moment of revelation sets the center and the time that follows opens the space of “continuity”. These two enter into a symbolic relationship with the duality of heaven and earth, where separation and mutual reference become simultaneous. The appearance of the face of God and “continuity” as temporality draw a recurring pattern. This repetitive rhythm forms the world of thought of apocalypics, which Jacob Taubes analyzes in detail in his work *Western Eschatology*. According to him, apocalypics are based on gnostic systems, the essence of which is circular transformation: the invisible becomes visible, the bad world arises from the good God, and finally returns to him. The spirit becomes a body, then transforms back, the eternal becomes temporal, the one becomes many, and the many become one again.²

4. The chapter entitled *Deconstruction and Pattern* introduces the conceptual content of “punctuality”. The rejection of punctuality is the rejection of the center in the context of Jacques Derrida’s deconstruction theory. Instead of a static meaning-making that designates the center, Derrida represents a critical way of thinking that emphasizes the continuous shift and permeability of meaning. A vivid example of this is the image of the sieve in the *khôra* (symbol: x) in *Timaeus*, which Derrida recommended as an inspiring sketch for the architectural plans of the Parc de la Villette. The drawing – which can also be interpreted as a grid – is not only a formal idea, but also a spatial metaphor of deconstruction: a structure operating on the principle of filtering, letting go, fragmentation, which is opposed to traditional models of meaning linked to the metaphysical center and unity.³

5. In the art and world of Béla Veszelszky, point-likeness plays a central role in both the literal and concrete sense. In several cases, his works were inspired by folk art, which serves as an inexhaustible theme for him to depict this center, the condensed point. One of his works, a sketch made on a French checkered sheet, depicts a rooster, which is projected from

² See Jacob Taubes, *Nyugati eszkatológia*, Budapest: Atlantisz Publishing, 2004, p. 51.

³ See Jacques Derrida, *Esszé a névről*, Pécs: Jelenkor Publishing, 2005.

the vanishing point along lines that converge in perspective. The rooster is built up with x signs, which for him symbolize multiplication and multitude. The + sign also often appears in his works, which carries the meaning of addition, that is, summation. The vanishing point of the rooster drawing is located on the horizon, and thus unites the components of the doubled world – sky and earth, transcendent and immanent. This point is therefore the place of addition, of “Oneness”. Thus, the shape of the rooster starting from the vanishing point can also be interpreted as a kind of point, a point-like unity.

6. The chapter entitled Nomadology and Art deals with the expansion of the nomadic circle of thought, which is associated with the names of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. In their joint work, *A Thousand Plateaus*, they elaborate on this theory in detail. The book is not only a theoretical treatise, but also offers practical approaches and its central theme is the introduction of a continuous, limitless model of movement, which rejects point-likeness and fixed metaphysical structures. The delimitation of the subject as a face (“facialization”) appears here as an organizing principle, which nomadic thinking is trying to dismantle. Nomadology therefore offers an alternative to central organizations, emphasizing forms of continuous transition, displacement and resistance. This way of thinking also opens up new possibilities of expression in art, especially for those who seek spaces of openness and variability in opposition to the fixity of meaning.

7. In the dissertation, in the subsection “Body without Organs”, I compare the chapter of *A Thousand Plateaus*, *How to Make Yourself a Body without Organs?* with the functioning of generative art and images created by AI. According to Deleuze and Guattari, the body without organs is not a negation of a biological body, but a dynamic field that is freed from the rule of fixed functions and hierarchies and carries the possibility of continuous rearrangement. The operation of generative algorithms – especially in the case of visual products created by artificial intelligence – is organized along a similar principle: these works are not built around a single meaning or form, but rather present a continuous self-expanding, potentially infinite structuring. This “limitless” movement is the aesthetic equivalent of the dissolution of the “point-like” center, where the work does not close, but is constantly reshaped, either by the viewer or by the generating system itself.

8. Point-like and line-like appearances represent fundamentally different directions of thought. In Deleuze and Guattari's theoretical work, lineality as continuity and movement is given a prominent role, but at the same time they do not avoid examining point-likeness as a metaphysical form. They map out in detail the layers of meaning associated with point-likeness, thereby opening up the possibility for phenomena highlighted from traditional symbolic systems – such as the concepts of the face, the center or epiphany – to become the object of analysis.

Conclusion

Mindezekből kiindulva levonható az a következtetés, hogy a pontszerűség filozófiai megközelítésén keresztül értelmezhető képzőművészeti mintázatok dialektikusan kétféle irányt képviselnek: vagy az egységre törekvő, középpontba szervezett struktúrákhoz kapcsolódnak, vagy pedig a folytonosság elvén alapuló, nyitott rendszerekhez. Az ábrázolás jellege – például az, hogy statikus, zárt kompozícióként jelenik meg, vagy inkább folytonos, széttartó elemekből építkezik – meghatározza, hogy milyen módon kapcsolódik a mögöttes metafizikai struktúrákhoz. A kortárs művészetben ezek a különbségek nem pusztán formai kérdések, hanem mélyebb jelentésképzési elvekhez kötődnek, amelyek tükrözik a hagyomány és a dekonstrukció, illetve a nomadológia elvei között feszülő viszonyrendszert.

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