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The place discovered

Sequences of arrivals

DLA-dissertation thesis

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THESES

Introduction

The place discovered. Dissertation entitled Sequences of arrivals is examining the relationship between the art and the place based on my experiences and lessons I acquired during my several years on my creative path.

The main pursuit of this research is exploring deliberately and systematically what kind of principles pervade and define the fine art practices on different locations. Periphery, Community, and Home are this essay's main chapters and at the same time, they indicate categories that may lead towards different morals from our topic's point of view, because of their different natures. This study is not only exploring separately these special differences - from which the particular principles originate- but is also aiming to demonstrate the connections that mainly in the context of creative process pervade the internal relationship of these three concepts. Moreover, it is also highlighting that in case we would like to define this anthropological equivalent of the conceptual triad of Periphery-Community-Home¹, then we can conclude at Own-Other-Stranger semantic fields. This connection carries the probability that all conclusions that were drawn in the course of personal creative experiences and academic research, provide new and relevant knowledge not only in the relation concerning fine arts and place, but essentially between human and place as well.

Periphery

In the first phase of Chapter Periphery, I aimed to introduce how the society's perception on the so-called no-man's-land changed by ages, and which constant forms of this approach remain relevant today². The key word of this part of the writing is the stranger³, since the visual artist is also firstly processing the stages of the state of strangeness while arriving into the medium of the periphery. Alterity life experience originating from strangeness is of crucial importance concerning the relation of creation and periphery⁴.

¹ Kunt Ernő 1994-ben Kulturális másság címmel megtartott konferencia előadásából <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MTIDM56dTcg>

² Foucault, Michel (1967): Más terekről, Heterotópiák.EXINDEX. 2004.08.08. <https://exindex.hu/nem-tema/mas-terekrol>.

³ Simmel, Georg(2004): Exkurzus az idegenről. In: Biczó Gábor (szerk.): Az Idegen, Variációk Simmeltől Derridáig. Csokonai Kiadó, Debrecen. 56.

⁴ Bauman, Zygmunt (2004): A zárándok és leszámazottai: sétálók, csavargók és turisták, In: Biczó Gábor (szerk.): *Az Idegen, Variációk Simmeltől Derridáig*. Csokonai Kiadó, Debrecen. 192-206.

Henceforward I am trying to outline the processes during creation, how the periphery as a space will be transformed into place. During the fine arts work, the artist accomplishes all this by giving new contents, and resulted from these relations breaking the homogeneity of the periphery and creates an original spiritual centre.

Artwork on the periphery gives scope for a better understanding of the nature of creative processes themselves, since it approaches from a special viewpoint, where the artwork builds such relations, which create 'place'⁵ in the homogeneous space. Thus, the substance of creating in the peripheral spaces actually lies in the disposal of the periphery itself. In connection with fine arts practices 'disposal' is actually an inaccurate term, as it ties into the space's aesthetic fabric new, own relationship system - built on a space and time scattered, non-existent connection system and symbolics –, so the former homogeneous space will not merely be disposed, but rather will be converted, transfigured.

Then, I am going to examine more specifically the periphery's impact on the artwork, more precisely all those things that, as to my experiences, the artist experiences during being exposed in the creation of 'no-man's-land'. I am going to explain how and why the periphery is the topsoil of the story (tale), beyond that through what inner principles does it give scope for these stories⁶ to be elaborated into fine art creations.

After all, we get to the problems of autonomy⁷ and heteronomy that relate with the creating on the periphery along the question: To what extent can we talk on wholly autonomous creative processes in a situation defined by the unknown and unpossessed? Whatsoever can a place be captured in its full complexity without being part in the creative processes the people's life experiences who take these places as their own, as their home? At this point, the thesis leads towards the topic of the next chapter that examines the relation of the artwork and the places in the dimension of the community.

The main theses of Chapter Periphery

- Periphery is a homogeneous medium for a creator who come by as a stranger, ignorant person. This homogeneity derives from the lack of centre. The creator portrays the centre in itself, along the interference in space and the resulting relationships, as the

⁵ Augé, Marc (2012): *Nem-helyek, (Bevezetés a szürmodernitás antropológiájába)*, Múcsarnok, Budapest. 47.

⁶ De Certeau, Michel (2010): *A cselekvés művészete. A mindennapok leleménye*. Kijarat Kiadó, Budapest. 133.

⁷ Szmeskó Gábor (2019): *A spontaneitás értelmében vett szabadság kritikája Lévinas teljesség és végtelen című művében*. In: Fried István szerk.: *A tudományos hálózatoktól a hálózatok tudományáig*. SZTE Egyetemi Kiadványok, Szeged. 185.

source of the directions of attention; the executor of the actions, spatial exercises breaks the homogeneity of space.

- Creating on the periphery gives scope for knowing better the nature of the creative processes, since it is approaching from a special viewpoint, where the artwork is building relationships that create 'places' in the homogeneous space. Thus, the substance of creating in the peripheral spaces lies in the disposal of the periphery itself.
- The absent of the periphery, its emptiness what it stands for, a symbol, narrative, so after all the periphery's futility, its out of use is the means of its message. Periphery is not solely space, but also time experience. Slowness, self-care and the atmosphere of silence penetrate the time experience of the periphery. In respect of fine arts, the experienced presence of strangeness on the periphery during creative processes raises issues of autonomy and heteronomy.
- A condition of creating on the periphery is to refuse our instinctive urge to defend ourselves. Behind this urge is that we do not want to become strangers, because then we would have to commit ourselves of being exposed and experiencing otherness.
- As a special stranger, the graphic artist has the power on the periphery to work out the methods that enable him/her to experience productively the existence of otherness. Meanwhile lessons may be experienced and expressed in connection with human and no-man's-land.

Community

Consequently to the practice, in which other communities', persons' prosperity is in the centre of creation were led by the observations of the peripheral location. All of this determined the human and creator position, from which I approach the community or participation based fine art processes. In this part of the dissertation, the theoretical research's main questions were the following: In what form is the other person present in the collective action⁸? To what extent do these acts constitute our shared lives, or do they diverge from it through the eminence of creation? What effect should this have on our relationships, on the ethical and moral relationships that exist between us? Emmanuel Levinas's work entitled *Totality and Infinity*⁹ was a great intellectual source while answering these questions. It was by his influence that I was able to grasp the most important thesis that permeates and defines my approach to

⁸ Debord, Guy (2006): *A spektákulum társadalma*. Balassi Kiadó-BAE Tartóshullám, Budapest.

⁹ Levinas, Emmanuel (1999): *Teljesség és Végtelen*. Tanulmány a külsőről. Jelenkor Kiadó, Pécs.

collaborative creative practices, and from which almost everything else follows: the presence of the other person itself provides a transcendent nature to the community art processes.

Furthermore, in the course of this chapter, I would like to present the main theoretic and art theoretical background that defines the perception of art nowadays. Moreover, I will also describe the parallels with art therapy as a defining interdisciplinary.

Concluding the current chapter, I am going to approach the outlined genre from a specific point of view, which presents the possible forms of involvement based on creative practices from the perspective of personal rite as a phenomenon in his own living space.

Main theses of chapter Community

- The message resided in a particular place cannot be expressed in its full complexity without knowing the experience of the people who live there as a living space, as a home. Another person's presence in itself has a transcendent nature, when it comes to the creative processes.
- In each communal artistic process, the creator has to face moral lessons and experiences. resulting from preserving another person's freedom¹⁰ as well as from the mistake of abusing it.
- The realization of communal art reaches the highest impression of its message and credibility, where the confrontation with the other and the stranger is as intense as possible, where, just like in the case of the periphery, we leave behind our defensive walls (in the personal and social sense) and take the risk of exposure. Just as a border crossing is periphery is in the relation between a work of art and a place, so the communal art is at least as much a series of real border crossings in relation to our human relationships.
- The inner state of the persons and communities involved in the creation, which, being in crisis or temporary, is revealed in the midst of the adversities of the interpersonal war (crisis), questioning the claim of art itself in their lives, but moreover in the broader perspective of society as well.
- Just as 'morality is not just a branch of philosophy, but the first philosophy itself'¹¹, so being part of a community, a creation, and a higher development of evolving with the

¹⁰ Epiktétosz (1978): *Kézikönyvecske*. Európa Könyvkiadó, Budapest. 5.

¹¹ Levinas, Emmanuel (1999): *Teljesség és Végtelen (Tanulmány a külsőről)*, Jelenkor Kiadó, Pécs.

members through various actions is not a 'new' branch of art, created from the second half of the twentieth century, rather the very first art, the foundation of artistic presence.

- The motivation to seek the other (within the structures of the fine arts) is therefore, on the one hand, to confront the alterity, and on the other hand to explore the lessons of the experience of being inherent in the other.
- The spirit of communal art does not set a limit to the spheres of life and art, all the more, it aims to expand and eliminate these existing boundaries. In these works, the artist renounces the omen of himself, the one that highlights and determines his social role and even his image of himself. According to my observations, without these kinds of abnegations in a community, the authentic artistic presence cannot appear.
- The 'authenticity' of things is a specific and prominent feature of the community art processes taking place in the outer locations. These used items are not mere props. The setting is not a set scene, and the people involved are not mere actors either, as without reference to the continuity and creative activity, their severely real relations gives the nature of their presence that goes beyond that.

Home

While cooperating on exterior locations and with other people, communities, I have come to the end of the autonomous creative presence. My PhD research would not have been complete without me arriving to its own quality with human- place relation. The final location of this dissertation and the art project behind is the home. In connection with chapter Home it was my major pursuit to define this concept –that is immensely extended and present almost in everything - in the context of my own research, emphasizing its dual nature, where it appears in its spiritual and concrete physical form¹². Subsequently my intention was to present in details the process I tried to experience and investigate in my own life and simultaneously in my fine arts work, the different forms and prospects of finding home. Meanwhile our own house, home and its environment, the surrounding landscape and the village community became the base of experimenting. During this final arrival was the time to get to know the own place, the Home, on the level of the experienced life, theoretical research and artwork. Herewith it became complete in the context of place and artwork the conceptual triad of Periphery-

¹² Eliade, Mircea (2009): A szent és a profán. Európa Könyvkiadó, Budapest. 16.

Community-Home, which correspondences are valid with the relations of Own-Other-Stranger¹³ with the relation of human and place.

The main theses of Chapter Home

- The main hypothesis of this chapter is that putting the objects and places of the home into artistic practise may result in experiencing an intense, greater comfort.
- A part of this writing is the inner processes in the creator as a newcomer, and at the same time the unfolding relation with the external, environment during the creations' concrete materializations.
- In case the creator's own home becomes the scene of the research; exploring, finding the symbols of the personal space is the process that leads down on a path of deeper recognition.
- The conceptual triad of 'Own-Other-Stranger' used by Ernő Kunt relates to each other and are pervaded by principles just like the triad of Periphery-Community-Home I have outlined, and these are the equivalents of the 'anthropological' notions projected as 'places'.

Summary

I came to the following realization during my creative exercises in the periphery. The meaning inherent in a given location cannot be expressed in its full complexity without getting to know the everyday life experience of the people who live in that place as a living space, as a home. In relation to space, the breakthrough of homogeneity leads to the establishing of the place, meanwhile in relation to the person, the breakthrough of foreignness leads to the experience of being part of a community.

While I was being a part of creating the community art works, I became aware that participation based fine art processes need to be analysed primarily along ethical criteria systems. This dissertation's intellectual source was hugely affected by the philosophy and ethical approach of Emmanuel Levinas. His way of thinking shows most effectively the experience I had during the creation, that even the mere presence of the Other weaves transcendent relationships into the processes. This ethical relationship is based on the fact that the persons and social groups involved in the cooperation have experiences and observations,

¹³Kunt Ernő 1994-ben *Kulturális másság* címmel megtartott konferencia előadásából. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MTIDM56dTcg>

that are completely unknown to me due to their individuality, which I can only approach with a high degree of caution and attention, along with renouncing any prior theories or ideas (my hypotheses and prejudices). The main thought about this renouncing, its nature, forms, goals and consequences, is in the chapter on community of this dissertation.

After creating with collaborative approach at external locations, both practical creative work and theoretical research were continued in the environment of the Home. The lessons learnt primarily through experiencing confirmed to me the main hypothesis of the Home chapter as: the creative processes in fine arts can become means of finding home in a deeper sense.

The main aim of this research is exploring consciously and systematically the laws that permeate and define fine art practices on different locations. Periphery, Community and Home appear as the main chapters of this writing, while they also indicate categories that by their different natures may lead to different morals relevant of our topic. The thesis not only separately explores these special differences from which the specific laws arise, but also attempts to present the connections that permeate the interrelationships of these three concepts, primarily in the context of creative processes.

These connections hold the possibility that all the conclusions that have been reached in the course of the creative experience and theoretical research, may lead to new and relevant knowledge, not only in the relation between fine art and place, but also, basically, in the relation between man and place. Studying all this is necessary in order to develop a creative attitude that can lead to the creation of authentic works of art, revealing and demonstrating the complexity of a particular place, and the symbols and morals that reside in it.

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