THE APPEARANCE OF AN UNDERGROUND ELECTROMUSIC SUBCULTURE IN THE CULTURAL SPHERE OF THE CITY

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Abstract: The author analyses the existence of a youth subculture, as it appears in two subcultural spheres on the basis of interviews and her experience of fieldwork carried out in a city in Central Europe. Values and experiences which are connected to the underground electromusic actions are discussed, while the places and modes of cultural actions are studied. The subcultural patterns which increasingly influence the youth of the cities reflect an estrangement from the city life. The liminal phases of estrangement recur in the life of the individual, they provide a possibility to gain communal experiences and to establish special subcultural values. These are possible only with the adaptation to the cultural pattern and with the acceptance and usage of subcultural activities.

Keywords: subculture, youth subculture, party culture, cultural patterns, cultural minority, cultural sphere, Szeged (Hungary)

SUBCULTURES, YOUTH SUBCULTURES

Subcultures appear in the cultural sphere of the dominant society. They put one of its values or value complexes in the centre, and on the basis of this they choose cultural activities which differ from the dominant culture but are the same inside the group.

The formation of the groups is a collective solution finding, and it is possible along similar value and activity orientations. The cultural responses to a deficiency are represented for the individuals by the subcultures. The cultural solutions and the security of belonging to a community makes it possible for a person to accept an activity which is different from the dominant. In the sphere of the dominant culture a number of subcultural solution-models can be chosen, and this selection depends on the subjective value preferences, on the width of intellectual horizon and on numerous decisions. After selection the identification of the individual is also gradual, the development of a subcultural career does not happen at once.

Subcultures are problem-solving models in which the individuals can assert themselves (RÁCZ 1989: 25) and express their difference from others. The group offers ready-made cultural responses (HOPPÁL 1984: 386) giving rise to a positive inner atmosphere which creates the feeling of interdependence. But outwards it is closed or hostile (BREWER 1999). Common group norms, cultural taste and consumption, symbol system and language symbol system are the characteristics of subcultural groups. Basically these are different from those of the majority society's,

although inside the group they are not homogeneous, because the different individuals identify themselves with the subcultural patterns in different ways and to different extent.

Subcultures are not independent of the culture and norms of the majority society. They can rather be considered as condensation points inside it. Parallel to this the cultural patterns introduced by the subcultures must be treated as cultural texts, in which the culture's language is all the mental and material product created by participants and group members, who are also part of the dominant culture as individuals.

In this way, the majority society and the other subcultural groups which appear in it are the context of the examined subculture. The examined subculture can be interpreted only in this context, in momentary space and time context. We have to consider this during the examination. The pictures constructed by the researcher create a non-existent world from the information which is gathered over a long period of time. There is a possibility to grasp the aspect, lifestyle and cultural patterns of those who participate in the subculture as they appear in the social context.

However, these are all one-time and unrepeatable constructions. When we are interpreting these one-time phenomena we can observe that when the actions appear as reactions to physical or psychic stimulation their arrangement follows certain cultural patterns. These cultural patterns are solution models of a cultural-social reality. When we examine these models we make them palpable and we slice up reality. The patterns make sense only in relation to each other (see also HEBDIGE, 1989: 130). They differ from each other, and if one pattern is dominant from one aspect it can be inferior from another (subcultural aspect).

APPROACHING YOUTH SUBCULTURES

Subcultures create subcultural models along a given linguistic, ethnic or social status dimension. Youth subcultures choose from different patterns in a nearly identical social reality, although the above-mentioned elements can stimulate some kind of selection. However, this stimulus is more like an offer of a given spectrum from the models.

For the researcher, youth subculture appears as speciality or oddity in the society, that is "it is embedded in a common reality context, which is known to the researcher and also to the researched" (NIEDERMÜLLER 1984; HARMAN 1998; THORNTON 1996). And if this context exists its interpretation and the characteristics of subcultures have very restricted codes. The reality becomes obvious only in the discourse between the examined culture and the researcher and between the researcher and the reader. To help this an intersubjective set of definitions has to be constructed with the means of interpretation, which consists of observation and participation.

YOUTH SUBCULTURES

Youth subcultures appear in the sphere of city cultures, and they can be considered as changeable configurations which have short histories. They create a behaviour pattern which is characteristic only of them, and "although the individuals are naturally different, the style of the given culture creates a lifestyle considered to be homogeneous and ideal, and forces the individual to follow it. […] At the same time a basic ethos arises in the community which affects the daily spheres of behaviour in the same way as it affects the spheres of festive rituals" (HOPPÁL 1984: 375).

The cultural patterns which are consistent with youth subcultures appear in the sacred constellation of space and time which stands out from the everyday world. These sacred constellations do not appear in connection with the life cycle and the events of life, but they can be opened at any place where people of the same age gather, and where they can experience the moments of being together. The cultural pattern also affects daily life, but subcultural activity is manifested in the subcultural sphere. This sphere has characteristics that are attributed to liminal spheres.

The place and time of actions can be considered liminal, as it is far from the daily sphere of workplace – school – home. The emphasis is on night and the weekend in contrast to daytime and weekdays. The young are together, and they behave according to their own rules among themselves and to consensual patterns. There is no hierarchy, they are egalitarian. Norms, structures, roles, personalities of the weekends are replaced with those which are formed and confirmed in the liminal sphere.

This is different from the traditional Turnerian liminality (TURNER 1977; TURNER 1998; PENTIKÄINEN 1981) in that the transition appears between weekdays, and the participant comes back from the liminal sphere to an unchanged situation. Here the transitional phase does not connect periods of life but it is a continuous return and repetition of an important event (stress easing – social gathering) in one's life.

The young leave the usual norm and structure system behind when they enter the preferred, sacred sphere, where they are reduced to an identical state, and where they can adopt behaviour patterns. In connection with the adoption of behaviour patterns we can mention the subcultural career interpretation. This means that individuals consume from the possibilities offered by the subcultural patterns in different proportions, which creates chances to build prestige careers inside the group. This career can be an alternative to other legitimate careers in the dominant society. The individuals also interpret the participation and the degree of integration to the common pattern along this career.

The manifestation of the common liminal sphere provides an opportunity for the individuals to appear in their own liminality, which means that their own, constructed selves and their narcissistic phantasmagoria appear in these spheres. After leaving the separate sphere which is preferred by the people of the same age they return to the normal weekdays, which are ruled by the norms of the adults.

The liminal spheres of the youth subcultures provide experiences for the young

which make them return to it. The experience and the participation in subcultural actions are especially important. However, the experiencing and the mode of its consumption are even more important. Experiencing and the depth of cultural knowledge are emphasised in the life of the subculture I examined, because the prestige and its relative value is determined with them. I shall examine a specific area of experiencing, the trance technique in a later part of my paper.

HIP-HOP AS A GLOBAL YOUTH SUBCULTURE

In the majority society these cultural patterns appear as subcultures, however, in nearly every corner of the world they appear in more or less the same way. The value preferences and the action patterns bordered by cultural patterns are connected to each other almost on an ideological level, and in this respect the groups in other parts of the world are not more different from each other than the individuals in a given community. The rules, signs and communicational codes of subcultural groups which are far from each other are more similar to one another than the rules, signs and communicational codes which are in the same area, but which stay far from each other in the cultural sphere.

The values of the subcultural models which are aligned with the subcultural pattern of *hip-hop*[1] and the *underground electromusic*[2] trends are nearly identical. Moreover, this identity is uniform on a global level. It opposes self-destruction, technocracy and its world of mutilating people to uniformity. It also offers alternatives which make the subculture itself a self-destructive, technocratic, homogeneous mass from the majority's point of view. It is the place for open works, for the psychedelic[3] and cyber philosophies,[4] and that is why it is not local, but egalitarian and tolerant, moving beyond the concept of "border".

Hip-hop is both a music and performing style, and the life model behind it. All these appear in a lifestyle conception, which became recognisable and interpretable with the interviews and participant observations made in the liminal spheres. The interpretation with the context made it possible for the value orientations and cultural patterns to become palpable in the motives of actions. The acceptance of the value-system determined by the cultural response is accompanied by the acceptance of subcultural actions, with its integration into the life of the individual.

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[1] Electromusic style and the lifestyle-pattern named after it. It is a special form of rhythm patterns and effects, which is created by the DJ. There is a lifestyle-model with Afro-American roots which is connected to it, and this will be examined later.

[2] It is a (progressive) electromusic created with technical means without the claim of popularity.

[3] Ideas about how to enlarge the mind of which we use only a small part.

[4] A futuristic philosophy about the technocratic world in the near future. It reinterprets intelligence and the relation between people and machines.

THE APPEARANCE OF THE UNDERGROUND ELECTROMUSIC SCENE IN THE CULTURAL SPHERE

Even if we disregard the historical summary about the appearance of the hip-hop lifestyle-model we can explain how it appears in the East European, Hungarian cultural sphere. In the beginning it is part of a common scene with other electromusic trends. The lifestyle-model of hip-hop was based on the values of electromusic trends. Nowadays, the hip-hop subculture is only a small part of the electromusic subculture, although it is a significant part.

That is why I am going to introduce the hip-hop lifestyle-model as part of the underground electromusic scene. I am going to focus on the fact that the participants in the former are organically integrated into the latter. They appear in the same cultural sphere. The definition of participants, which became possible with the musical definition is difficult because the cultural sphere of the city is very complex. The heterogeneous, changeable community of people, who had to be considered relevant during the research should be circumscribed with the interactions between the individuals and small groups. This community can therefore be considered a construction of the researcher, and the interpreted reality is the synthesis of realities constructed by the participants, the "natives".

The fieldwork was carried out mainly in groups in Szeged[5] between 1998 and 2002. These groups appear in the cultural sphere of the city, but separately. The groups in this sphere are a minority, but the participants consider this an advantage, and they define themselves as the possessors of a special value or knowledge. That is why they are relatively closed, and it has an influence on an area that is small even in the sphere of youth culture. Besides participant observations I conducted interviews in the groups. The following chapters are the summaries of my fieldwork experiences.

TWO CULTURAL SPHERES – COMMON PARTICIPANTS

Hip-hop as subcultural lifestyle is not restricted to situations of life. It is more proper to say that it forms the lifestyle of the individual. It affects the way of life according to the degree of identification (the degree of subcultural career). Participation in subcultural activity can be limited to free time, but its value-system might also affect the way of life. Subcultural activities can create subcultural liminal spheres for the groups and the individuals. In these spheres the in-group and out-group orientations can be clearly observed (BREWER 1998).

One part of the subcultural actions belong to everyday life, while others happen in the inverse time, but definitely in the liminality. The subcultural actions and their participants create this liminal situation for themselves. The experiencing of this

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[5] A city in the southern part of Hungary in Central Europe.

liminal situation is the same for the participants in that they arrive to a liminal state of their personalities and norm-systems, and this is independent of the degree of participating in subcultural actions. The latter can be considered a career, which is the amount and quality of selection from the spectrum of subcultural activities, and with it the individual can get prestige-values inside the subculture. This kind of prestige-value can be an alternative to another in the dominant culture society, which can be reached by developing a strategy of reception – experiencing – consuming. Entrance into the sphere of the subculture begins with a confrontation with a cultural pattern. The reception of this is the first stage towards the possibility of the subcultural career. The cultural pattern which is to be introduced contains a wide spectrum of activities, which are connected on a common ideological level. From the participants' point of view this ideological level is the value-system of hip-hop, which is expressed in musical, textual and visual form. Participation in the actions requires the acquisition of a cultural knowledge, and the individual experiencing level is accepted along this. Integration into the values and the groups take place in parallel with each other. The starting point is an aesthetic-existential revolt appearing on the level of individual aesthetics and demands. This revolt meets lifestyle conceptions. The participants can be organised in concentric circles according to their initiatedness (experiencing strategy) in the researcher's construction (which reflects the reality to some extent). Those who participate intensively in the subcultural activities appear in the mainstream or centre of the subculture. They are the DJs,[6] MCs,[7] professional graffiti artists, whose works are of high quality and those who are doing extreme sports. Those who are present almost constantly or for a long period of time also belong here. The next stage is represented by the initiated but not constantly present participants, while on the following level we can find all the people who are not initiated, even by the broadest definition of initiatedness. The people on this last level adapted to the cultural pattern (pattern followers) outwardly or in some form of actions, but they did this without attaining cultural knowledge.

The two cultural spheres that I am going to examine are identical in some respect. First of all the community of the participants is nearly the same, which means that they appear in the two subcultural spheres similarly. Another similarity is the electromusic, because it is part of both subcultures, and the participants follow a consuming pattern and value-preference which is attached to this music. First, I am going to examine the virtual and liminal scene of the hip-hop's subcultural actions. Secondly, I am going to examine the party area attached to electromusic, in which people who participate in the hip-hop subculture also appear, but they are not the only group which is present. The electromusic scene is a much more mixed cultural sphere, it attracts a number of cultural tribes, and hip-hop is only one of them. However, hip-hop is also a collective name of a very mixed subcultural pattern.

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[6] The DJ continually reshapes the musical effects on the vinyl records and sound patterns, and gives a new meaning to them with the help of technical means. He creates the atmosphere of the party by forming an individual aesthetic conception within the limits of styles and consumer demands.

[7] The MCs control the music and the performances, they are the performers of rap texts.

HIP-HOP AS SUBCULTURAL ACTIVITY

The taste, the drug-using habits, the common language and the trends of cultural patterns to which subcultural traditions are joined determine the subcultural activity of groups which can be well defined also with a musical form. The activities have symbolic and practical significance. The significance also refers to the degree of initiatedness. The participation in each activity implies (has to imply) the acquisition of cultural knowledge, which also means the comprehension of the connection between activity and the subcultural value-system. The individual's own subcultural reality is constructed along the dimension of interpretation, consuming, selection. All these unique selections are united along a cultural pattern.

The *lifestyle* and the *value-system* appear in the narrations of the participants as lifestyle- and value-conceptions, which are organised along key motives in the whole group. During the observation of subcultural activities many values could be seen, and the interpretation of these values often consists of opposing facts (see JANKOWSKI 2001). It is against civilisation because it considers some facts as the result of civilisation, but it rejects these facts, like the effect of technocracy which makes people homogeneous. On the other hand it uses high technology in every respect. It is non-conformist if we look at the fact that it works as an opposing culture in the field of youth subcultures. However, on the level of the individuals conformity is also present. It is egalitarian in the activities of the subculture, and it is open towards the companions, but this is not really demonstrable in the bipolarity of youth and elder people, professionals and amateurs, boys and girls. It is egalitarian among the participants of the subcultural activity if their performance is similar or if they are equally initiated. In the beginning the interpersonal relations are open, and there is no prejudice in them. However, this is realised without conditions only on the level of the in-group. Health is especially important, but its interpretation is different from the traditional sense. The fitness of the body is connected to the capability of moving, and its decrease can be due not only to locomotor disorders. It is a disorder for the participants only if the level of activity decreases. However, if the decrease of activity is due to the effect of drugs it is not considered a disease. The mental, spiritual health depends on the experience and reception, and the openness to reality.

Hip-hop can be defined as an electromusic style which is closely connected to a performing style called *rap*[8]. The renewed styles affected hip-hop musically. It can rarely be found alone, it is more like a collective name of styles and of a value-system, which is manifested in the texts of rap. In rap, as in the verbal language a special subcultural form of pidgin is spoken, which means that English expressions are adapted to the Hungarian linguistic context. During the linguistic encoding the in-group communication is subcultural, it can be decoded mainly in the social environment, because it uses a lot of pictorial experience, and in terms of the expressions

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[8] The performing form of hip-hop. It is a fluent and rhythmic chatter.

it depends on situations often associating to common experiences. The reception of signs in our culture happens here and now. Experiencing and not interpretation has become important. The multi-channeled reception of information and non-verbal communication have become natural.

One of the means of non-verbal communication is graffiti. Its signs which are coded with aesthetic care have symbolic, signifying, group cohesive and reputation-acquiring function (NAGY–RÁCZ 2001). The identification with a group also appears in gestures and in dressing. Dressing follows the mainstream of the subculture. Here, the quality is more important than the price, and sometimes the limits of possibilities are passed. However, with the help of this the identity, or at the best the symbol which expresses the identity can be chosen, bought and taken home. In the culture of movements we can easily separate the forms which are attached to the subcultural activities: break dance, roller skating and skateboarding, BMX, snowboard, snake-board, roller, yo-yo and footbag.[9] These are the so-called extreme sports, all of which have a small-group integrating role. They integrate groups which are connected to the functioning of global culture with these activities in the form of competitions and pattern-following practice (NAGY 2001).

The examination of alcohol- and drug-using habits is closely connected to the interpretation of the group's world views. The techniques of modifying consciousness in a wider sense are aimed at experiencing and getting to know reality. In the liminal spheres these techniques are practically legalised with the subcultural patterns. The use of marijuana, stimulants, hallucinogens[10] and legal herb drugs is accepted and preferable, especially as a means to gain or catalyse experience. Experiencing and initiatedness are definitions which are not separated from each other in the subcultural sphere. The individual's career can be interpreted along them. In the group the prestige of the individual develops with the attaining of cultural knowledge, and for the groups there are some preferable values or activities along which the prestige can be determined. The subcultural career appears along the separation from the values of the dominant culture and in the integration into a community. There are two forces here which affect the individual in parallel: the identification with something and standing out from it. In the subcultural sphere the chances to make a good career are better for boys. Girls are on the periphery, because in the group they doubt whether girls are able to attain the cultural knowledge. Inside the group the communal mentality of liminality and between the groups rivalry is dominant. However, in the interactional relation between the subculture and the dominant culture the groups which are connected to underground electromusic appear more uniform (in co-operation if needed).

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[9] Break dance: futuristic dancing movement. Snakeboard: a special form of skateboard. Footbag: small textile ball for individual as well as social games. The yo-yo is becoming increasingly popular again but technically it has changed.

[10] Mainly amphetamine, ecstasy, LSD.

THE WORLD OF UNDERGROUND PARTY

Party is the place for music, dancing, social and narcissistic coexistence, which can be interpreted as experience consumption. At the same time it functions as a liminal sphere in which initiatedness and experiencing are especially important. The music that is realised by the DJ is enchanting. It represents a feast in the weekdays, and it is the medium of trance, transpersonal communication in the liminal sphere. With music the DJs transmit experience and atmosphere, create a game and take the participants of the party with them to the reflection of an existing world or to a psychedelic experience,[11] which shows the future or opens a new dimension of the world. The continuos and seemingly monotonous rhythm of electromusic, the drumbeat, the variety and effects of sound patterns, the structure of chaotic motives are created by the DJ with technical instruments (record-player, equaliser, sampler) and with vinyl records (BOCKIE–FEVER 2001). The almost infinite number of possibilities of dealing with music created a scene for many formalised styles and for adventuring between them. The sound effects are aimed at reaching an ecstatic state. The musical trance technique is based on the fact that the repetition of musical snippets, and the gradual acceleration of rhythm stimulates the rhythm of the heart, although this depends on the intensity of participation and on initiatedness. The music and the DJ are in direct interaction with the participants of the party, who control the music which is considered receivable, and who are present as a crowd but do not have the taste of a crowd. The experiences offered by the DJ are elastic and can be easily shaped within the limits of the style and form. Rhythm as trance technique is very important. Two rhythms are significant: the one which is added to the music with the percussion instruments, and the other is the rhythm of the music controlled with the equipment of the DJ.

Here the trance is examined as the only way to attain cultural knowledge. The participants in the subculture spoke about the party and the music, saying that music has a meaning which appears during the ecstasy experiencing. The participants are able to possess the common subcultural knowledge in the liminal situation of altered consciousness, but there are many ways to achieve this. By using different ways they approach the same goal, which they often call the meaning of life. The music is also about this, and they also express this with dancing and happiness. It would be difficult to define what this reality is, because the narrators who come back from the trance describe only positive and negative feelings, and a chaotic but at the same time perfectly organised world (see KÖMLŐDI 1999).

Trance refers to an altered state of consciousness, which cannot be controlled, although in most cases people try to influence it positively by changing the setting factors. It seems to have no rules, and it is uncritical and incomprehensible. It offers the possibility of experiencing for comprehension (GRYNAEUS 1998; VOIGT 1998).

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[11] With these experiences the difference of mind and body, the collective conscious and knowledge, the transcendent are realised.

There are three ways to reach a trance, which are independent of one another, or successful ecstasy can be achieved with a combination of them. The three modes are concentration and self-hypnosis, rhythmical movement and music, hallucinogens (GRYNAEUS 1998). The characteristic of the altered state of consciousness is the changing of breathing. Its deliberate altering is accompanied by excessive moving, strong stimuli of pain and heat, loss of fluids and low blood-sugar level. Any one of these is enough to start the process and to induce others (GRYNAEUS 1998).

In the subculture of our research the trance techniques and the physiological characteristics (mentioned above) are also present. During the experiencing of music the rhythm starts to possess the body, and it puts the "travellers'" mind in its own tune. This is accompanied by rhythmical movements. At the parties we can observe that the initiated "travellers" are using elaborated movements, which are repeated monotonously, and which become faster with the rhythm. The musical trance techniques which are not based on rhythms rely on the self-hypnotism of looking inwards (narrowing the attention: LAJTAI 2000). Introspective behaviour is often coupled with narcissism, which can be regarded as a recurring motive in the cultural sphere of the party. The combination of the individuals' narcissism and their individualities created to the sphere of liminality helps the complete separation from the world even more (for all these: FEJÉR 1997; LAJTAI 2000).

This is assisted with the selection of hallucinogens and stimulants. So, the desired experience-complex can be chosen (from a rather wide range of possibilities) if someone possesses the required knowledge to alter the state of consciousness deliberately. The proper or wrong selection of experience – drug compatibility may lead to a good or bad experience, or to a successful ecstasy. The participants are able to choose the way they approach the trance and how they experience it according to the level of their initiatedness.

The altered state of consciousness subculturally means an openness in the mind which makes it possible to recognise other dimensions of the real world. The narratives are about understanding and experiencing things which we cannot understand consciously. With experiencing trance an understanding becomes possible which is intuitive and which lacks norms. The harmony of the world's phenomena appears here.

The trance acts towards the usual mode from the trial along the strategy of reception – experiencing – consuming. This also refers to the quantity of selection and consumption of cultural activities. This means that not consuming can also be interpreted as a "consumer behaviour".

The party is a gathering which lasts 7–12 hours or sometimes even longer. Next to dancing and music the visual experiences also have an especially important role. The people at the party participate in an unusual activity where there are many informational channels. These channels help the participants to reach the trance and to make use of their physical and psychic self together, however, each channel would be capable of doing this alone.

The psychically excited public reaches ecstasy with audio-visual experiences, by experiencing itself as a part of the music and the rhythm. Most of the interviewees

said that they became united with the rhythm. Rhythm wants to possess the whole body, and it is capable of this by piercing into the body through its peripheries. After the rhythmical moving of the hands, legs and head many people mentioned that they also "feel something" inside. This is primarily concentrated on the heart, because the rhythm of the music is nearly identical to the rhythm of the heartbeat in the warm-up stage. Afterwards, however, it becomes gradually faster. The simultaneous acceleration of music and heartbeat and the excitement caused by the visual experiences lead to a kind of ecstasy.

The composition of music and rhythm in its entirety, and the warming up of the participants is the process of creation. As in the case of traditional popular works where communal creation and individual creativity were combined and a creation which is acceptable for both was formed, the DJ and the participants also create a work by controlling and by paying attention to each other. This work shows the technical and musical skills of the DJ, forgetting about the other side. As the underground DJ's works are created in the present, and they cannot be reproduced in the future (they are for one time) we have to see that the participants also have a role in the process of creation. They constantly give feedback about the experience, whether it is a good experience or not, and whether they are able to receive the signs and decode them at all.

Party means one thing: getting rid of stress and gaining lots of experiences. To do this perfectly the DJs provide experiences musically, and with their helpers visually. The work "becomes finished in an interpretation, which also becomes a creation because it was selection and composition, although these were the result of activities which demand selection and composition. [...] the more conscious the aim becomes to identify and select the experiences in the wide context of events to recognise them and reproduce them at least mentally, the more evident the aesthetic quality becomes. This is the examination of coherence and unity in the direct chaotic variety of the events. It is a search for a finished totality in which the parts "have to be combined in such a way that taking or adding one part would cause the collapse and confusion of the whole" (Eco 1998: 240).

The forwarding and the reception of the entire experience creates a special communal feeling, a tribal feeling in which everybody expects to find relief by concentrating on his or her own experience. However, communality, which means that many people enjoy the same thing also plays a part. Finding relief in communality is often mentioned as losing the individuality, but most of my interviewees convinced me of the contrary. They experienced that through their individuality they saw the world and the other participants in many ways, and they described a way of seeing things with a much wider spectrum. They thought that they are equal members of the community in which the common ecstasy experience is preferred.

The party is the organisation of many components of space. Necessarily it contains a centre which is the scene of dancing and dance movements. On the periphery the participants become engrossed in other trance techniques. This is the place for the appearance of the music, music – drug, music – drug – experience preferences. Moving in this space provides opportunity for contacts and interactions.

There are other space-combinations which are also very important components in the physical composition of this cultural sphere: the chill-out room[12] where you can sit and talk, the frequented places of the snack bar, the toilet and the entrance with the place outside it are special areas for meetings and interactions.

The visual experiences stem from the light effects of the party-technique, from the film shown on the screen and from the sight of the other participants. The visual experience created by the light of the stroboscope constructs a special kind of body-art. These are the moments of narcissistic dance-movements. The sight of the companions can be interpreted as a setting factor. Here the individual's mood is affected by the other participants' mood and the positive or negative reception of them. This can work as a self-inducing process. The smoke produced by the special machine and the lights refracted in the smoke create the chaos of visibility and concealment, in which the narcissistic and the communal feelings are mixed. The use of stimulants and hallucinogens is considered legal according to the norms inside the subculture. Their consumption to help the party feeling is natural. Getting to know the habits of consuming led to the reinterpretation of the deviant and normal in the context of the subculture. The interpretation had to be made along the dimensions of the philosophy of the cultural pattern, the individual and communal drug preferences, the collective or cognitive seeking of ways and means. The importance of experiencing in the cultural sphere of the party and in the actions connected to it is emphasised and mentioned many times by the interviewees. The use of drugs is part of an experience-oriented, maximalist and initiated ritual. Around consuming strategies and in the virtual sphere post-modern tribes have been formed, which are established along certain lifestyles, music and experience. The conscious usage of the experience – music – drug compatibilities is partly bound (recommended) to the desired experience complex, but they are optional towards an uncertain experience. The drugs appearing at the parties produce euphoria and supersensibility in the users, whose introspective and experience-oriented behaviour create a feeling in which the set and setting factors affect the individual experience. The projection of someone's own experience (and the feedback) constructs a special community (TURNER 1998). The experience becomes transpersonal, which is available for everybody. The participants obtain information through many channels (without the traditional communicational channel). The pieces of information get stuck in the unconscious, and the individuals think that they can be raised back into the consciousness with the expert and specialist use of drugs (FEJÉR 1997: 18).

The "party travellers" prepare themselves for the experience which is waiting for them in a special way. They wait, make contacts, and they talk about the possible experiences. They draw on their earlier experiences. The collective experience, the common consciousness enters a place which is freed from stress, the place of horror vacui experience, and it is integrated according to expectations. The comprehension

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[12] A place separated in the space of the party, which makes it possible to calm down, to rest and to recreate. It is different from the centre of the party in its effects of light and sound. Soft lights, pleasant voices and aromas, teas and fruits, armchairs and beds make this place comfortable.

of the integrated experience is possible in the liminal situation, when status and hierarchy fall silent, and only equality remains. After getting away from the party-feeling there is little possibility to experience it. Everyday stress reoccupies its place. However, the positive feelings of the liminal experience orient the individual towards repetition. The participants do not treat this consciously, so they can tell only whether it is good or bad. They cannot tell what they experience. Therefore the experience gets into the place of stress which was freed by the trance technique, in so far as it is the condition of the trance experience and this mode of sensing reality to receive it without tension.

The liminal situation of the party recurs in the life of the individual more or less regularly.

The body transmits the meaning between the world and the (sub)conscious. The symbolically constructed system which is not conscious in the sender and the receiver manifests itself in the body. It fills the space between the sender and the receiver, and it is realised there while it is bombarding the two sign-manipulators with feelings, because it cannot do anything else with them.

The resulting vision is a subjective experience from one point of view, and from another it is a vision about a reality beyond reality, which was influenced by the world view (see also psychedelic experiences). The feelings do not work with strict codes. Meanings with a wide spectrum appear as associations. The interpretation is influenced by the physical environment (e.g. the spectacle) and the social environment, because the atmosphere created by these influence the experience.

Barely conscious reality experiences are described by shamans when they hover between the real and transcendent, between life and death, and are under the influence of hallucinogens. This liminal interval perhaps most closely resembles the experiences of the party participants, independently of whether the latter used any kind of consciousness altering drug.

So, contrary to the liminality of Turner the participants of the party experience the transition in a way that does not lead from one period of life to another, but is an interval between weekdays, which is especially important. In this case the main function of the liminal phase is not the new, the advancement in social status, but *the liminal phase itself acquires a special role* in the life of the individual. Being together, the equality and the sensation of different legitimate norms are the attraction in this state.

In the party community everybody is equal but not identical. Acting in the present provides a possibility to appear as something different. Equality provides a possibility to get to know others and then go away. The legitimate norm-system applied is not complex. Apart from the basic appreciation and esteem, the most important is that the participants should be present in such a way that they do not hurt others (see control without control: COHEN 1969: 277–278). We can say that a norm is legitimised which is controlled but dynamically changed by the group. The force of being close to each other creates control and also flexibility.

The more possibilities the community's directness and egalitarianism create to receive the collective knowledge equally the more the communitas succeeds at the

party. Actually, the participants are present as individuals, as separate entities. The interaction among them is incidental, often rooted only in liminality. There is no place for it beyond liminality.

The travellers of the party are alone, and they interpret the environment as something which goes with the spectacle. The presence of friends and acquaintances helps to develop positive or negative feelings. On the way to ecstasy everybody is alone, sensing is relative, everybody is experiencing their own reality, which is a construction influenced by the setting factors and the expected experiences.

Moving does not depend on partners here, but moving together is necessary. The feeling of loneliness is more depressing in a community than in a normal structure. It is more natural there. Presence is not enough, the presence of mates is not enough. The intensive effects present in the atmosphere have to be experienced.

The depth of experiencing can often be measured with the intensity of looking inwards. The participants of the party are listening to feelings consciously, not with interpretative attitudes but by relying on a transpersonal experience which is considered more natural, and in which the concealed dimensions of the world manifest themselves.

While looking inwards the participants get (audio)visual experiences which are independent of the physical environment or which associate to it. They are described as fragmented pictures or fractal graphics.

The depth of initiatedness is indicated by the extent to which the visual experiences which were fragmented by the stroboscope, the chaotic thoughts, the monotonous electromusic and the feelings freed by the trance create a uniform picture. The unification is considered achievable with the help of drugs used as consciousness enlargers, which make it possible to see the world, and which show deeper interdependencies.

The trance technique which is independent of drug use also helps the individual to reach initiatedness. The state and meaning of initiatedness is not obvious. Its first step is the one-time entrance, when the experience can create a picture about quality. The following levels are the levels of understanding and the process of internalisation. The object of the process is unknown, and usually it is a phenomenon which is hard to define. Its essence is a collective wisdom which can be possessed by the initiated person, and which cannot be possessed by everyday sensation. It is said that to own it we need the values and the openness of the liminal phase and we should stay clear of the values of normative society.

These values cannot be taken beyond the liminal phase. The intensity of the relations is also concentrated in this sphere. It moves away from the liminal phase with positive and necessarily sometimes with negative feelings during the integration. The traveller of the party returns to liminality or recreates it because of the special nature of the experience, if it includes positive experiences. Consequently, the breakaway from integrity and regularity is a recurring experience. It depends on the maturity of the personality whether the experiences of the liminal phase are considered as positive experiences which stand out from everyday life or as cold and empty ev-

eryday events. In any case it can be seen that the party travellers are inspired to return in both cases (Lajtai 2000).

All the things which were mentioned in connection with the party as liminal phase are also present in other spaces and times appearing in subcultural activities, although not in the same proportion.

SUMMARY

In my fieldwork, which was carried out in many subcultural spaces and activities I concentrated on the initiatedness and the strategies connected to it. In my interpretation the definitions of openness and consuming habits also played a role. These definitions are in opposition, and they also appear in the reality-constructions of the participants. It is obvious from these along what kind of value-focuses the cultural patterns which greatly influence the youth subculture of the present, and which are connected to underground electromusic scenes are organised.[13]

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