**The Dead Zone as a Place Consciousness Site**

*In the current environment, it is difficult to make claims about the cultural power of texts, and in most cases, single texts likely do not have the same significance once reasonable presumed.  Rather, broader questions about the intersection of text and industrial practices may prove more suitable for investigating cultural power.*[1]

The *Pame Kaimakli or Let's go to Kaimakli - An Urban Playground*, Festivalhttps://www.facebook.com/pamekaimakli/, was initiated in 2013, in this bordering location of Nicosia's divide. The buffer zone, denotes not a barren land but rather, a big area of agricultural land which prior to the 1974 division, was cultivated by the Kaimkliotes (people of Kaimakli). Today, this is patrolled by the UN peacekeeping force in Cyprus.  A small south/western Greek Cypriot (GC) and an equally small north/eastern Turkish Cypriot (TC) community populate it.  One of it's main avenues named Synergasia (Collaboration) abruptly interrupts upon this border.

No man's land, which partitions the region, is that man's land which now lies uncultivated, unengaged and unloved.  This disconnection from the land is not without its repercussions, people which frame the borders of Kaimakli, have shifted their area further by purposely or subconsciously shying away from it (figure a).  In an attempt to illuminate the factors which determine this, I shall be looking at the discourse around living near borders, how the festival has come to symbolize transformational change, in cultivating civil society engagement, and impact politics, by the festival's organizers, Urban Gorillas.  Shall also be focusing on a parallel event, by feminist activist group, HAD.

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[1] Amanda Lotz, 'Unpopularity and Cultural Power in the Age of Netflix: New Questions for  Cultural Studies' Approaches to Television Texts', *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 24 (2021), p. 896.

The hidden, intangible aspects of living on borders, of building those bridges within the community by creating both a spontaneous and ephemeral urbanism through fostering and advocating inclusivity.  In voicing the voiceless immigrants, the elderly, the New Romantics, who have chosen to call it home. These different lenses, of bottom up community engaged activities, bring an urban vibe to this somewhat rural bordering area.



figure a

The parallel event, *The green line as a place consciousness site*, initiated by the oldest bi-communal GC and TC feminist group on the island, Hands Across the Divide (HAD). The scope was in enticing a re-connection with the divide in reclaiming it, at least the borders of that, untrespassed and untamed land which keeps communities divided. Primarily, and through women's visibility, a reshaping of identity was sought for this common green garden of wilderness, where each, was invited to seeks a reflection of his own identity.   However this process occurs, a caution alerts the spectator, what ground will you choose to occupy, and how will your positioning, reflect on those who are closely being studied or watched. What methods of cultural borrowing will equip your positioning and if loyalties lie on either side of a wall, how do you engage your neutrality in clarifying rather than mystifying your findings.[2]

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[2] Jane Mulcock, Ethnography in Awkward Spaces: An Anthropology of Cultural Borrowing, (Winter 2001), Vol.23, No.1 pp.38-42.

**The Festival**

*Culture is a system of interpretations*

*Stuart Hall* [3]

The main focus of the festival's curators was in transforming these underutilised border/public spaces into lively, innovative and inclusive hubs, in an effort to break down barriers of exclusion which prevail within areas of diverse demographics groups, free of preconceptions.

Activities such as an up-cycling workshops for children, art installations, a pot-luck dinner, a community planting activity (figure b) a treasure hunt, kite making workshops (by visiting Japanese kite makers), an ecology flag made by hammering juicy specimens of plants, leaves and flowers found by exerting emotions of injustice, division and inequality (figure c) and a kite flying event along the buffer zone, involving both communities across the border.



figure b                                        figure c

*The laugher that greeted and celebrated what remains freshly recognisable in the film, as it speaks to intersectional politic of labour, racialisation and sexuality (…) was a delight that should not have surprised us, but was a welcome surprise.* [4]

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[3] Stuart Hall, Essential Essays, Volume 1 : Foundations of Cultural Studies, edited by David Morley, Duke University Press, (2019), ProQuest Ebook Central, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/kcl/detail.action?docID=5609562.

[4] S. Mayer, & S. Robertson, (2020). Revolt, she said: Queer feminist film curation and the freedom to revolt. Film Studies, 22(1), 76-97. doi:https://doi.org/10.7227/FS.22.0006.

figure d

A pop-up cinema, where pictured immigrant boys on bicycles (figure d) stop to watch a film in their mother language, Arabic, showing bicycling boys moving around within the film, reflecting themselves… they belong!  Through this, an understanding is imminent, based on a new eco-system whereby film is no longer the object but rather, as something produced by people, a political motivation here to seeing both filmmaking and film curation as an activist enterprise.[5] These creative stages of preparation, cultural production and dissemination of the festival. The holistic sense of inclusion that de-centres dominant voices, as Dawson reflects on them, into horizontal structures of flat organisational structures, where all are equal (figure e). These structural and transformational accessibility factors are where change and inclusion occurs, among marginalised groups,   those divides intersect across nationality, geographical locations and spaces, be they in physical or digital form.[6]

Those open forums of festivals where change is given an opportunity to evolve and shine, the open 'third places' or intergenerational discussion on all issues, be they climate policy or social policy, where agency is promoted and re-claimed by the communities.  In creating forces beyond the museums into the urban or rural where politicising the context is hardly posed as an issue of controversy, as is the case of most museums, where a non-anthropogenic outlook is cultivated around these topics.  By evolving the dialogue to non academic jargon and excluding practices of

[5]  Girish Shambu,  People's Platforms: Three Streaming Projects, Quorum (5 August 2021) [accessed 21 June 2022].

[6]  Leanne Dawson,  Culture In Crisis: A Guide to Access, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in Festivals, Arts and Culture, October 5, (2020).

marginalising. [7] A *ghettoising of the ivory tower,* a term toyed by Rihanna Walcott for her Project Myopia interview, so tactfully phrases how  these radical histories are approached.[8]

*Interpretation is dependent on historical and cultural context*

*Stuart Hall*[9]



figure e

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[7]  Catherine Henry, Kate Carter. "Communicating Climate Change Content in Small and Mid-Sized Museums: Challenges and Opportunities." Journal of museum education 46.3 (2021): 321–333. Web.

[8]  Rihanna Walcott, Project Myopia, Interview by Dr. Clara Bradbury-Rance, [accessed 15 July, 2022], KCL.

[9]  Stuart Hall, Essential Essays, Volume 1.

**The Green Line as a Place Consciousness Site**



figure f

Place-consciousness is a learning method engaging environmental, cultural, historic and geographic context experiences of a place. In doing so, a broader critical outlook of understanding is encouraged, where the focus lies more on community and place, social and ecological viability or justice. These concepts of engagement, enhance an appreciation of the natural world, and a commitment of serving as an active contributing citizen. Cultural artifacts of physical engagement, sensory stimulants within places or buildings, trigger these bonding experiences and have a subsequent sensory impacts. [10]

Within this philosophy, lies a deeper reorientation towards a local community, and in better restoring and democratising humanity and adaptability to changing conditions. These place - consciousness locations and experiences, act as abstract notion of who belongs and where, allowing for diversity,[11] within civic engagement to environmental activism. Place-consciousness models might reflect more rural engagement practices and urban engagement more critical role approaches, however, in border locations, the one complements the other. The urban critical approach can act upon cultural decolonisation, while the place-based approach can

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[10] Eco-Admin - Resources toward Developing a Place-Conscious Writing Program, https://ecowpa.wordpress.ncsu.edu.
[11] D.A. Gruenewald & G.A. Smith, Place-Based Education in the GLobal Age: Local Diversity, (2008).

lead towards more ecological reinhabitation.[12] This approach, also challenges traditional masculinist constructions of place and nature, paving the way for more inclusive feminist education approaches within rural or border settings. Discouraging nationalist and nostalgic notions of place and transrhetorical approaches, moving beyond, to more activist oriented, economic, and ecological sustainable approaches. An almost echolalic effect is needed to reflect both location and community, for these results to be both embraced and adapted, by owning them.

**Eco - Feminism and Culture**

The need to find sources of outlet remains, for the feminist political dialogue. Finding progressive ways of restoring national identity and self-representation, versus being dominated by commercialised or institutionalised practices. These find resonance in cultural outlets. That reclaiming of a space for self or community, and in enabling a quilting of resources and emotions which together can form the dynamics of change. [13] That discourse of a common, hope filled horizon is the Ithaca that most community-building initiatives of solidarity have at heart. Dissemination across borders and languages, through social media visual capacity, has further enabled a widened reach in comparison to static forms of dissemination of the past. A pile of old painted tires and wild growth, as is the case of the *The Green Line as a place consciousness site,* has an impact, well beyond anything else communicated through the wording, it portrays scope, sentiment and emotions. Perhaps the best example one can reflect on here is the Pussy Riot[14] on how the power of digital technology penetrating national borders was best represented.

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[12] Charlotte Hogg, Beyond Agrarianism: Toward a critical pedagogy of place, Southern Illinois University Press, (2007).

[13] Creativity Pleasure and Ethics in Academic Work 2021 online.

[14] PeachesTV, Free Pussy Riot! #freepussyriot, online video, YouTube, (2012) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SaJ7GzPvJKw> (accessed 18 March 2022).

Collective activism is nothing like political realism, people demand more engagement with power and in enabling scientific realism to finally take its rightful place in this dialogue.   In connecting with a wider audience, by prioritising behavioural or economic changes, which ensure that the racialised or marginalised, are not also victims of physical, psychological and reproductive violence.  Women's vulnerability in climate change, in sensitivity to intersectional sustainability, gives women scope to engage in environmentally related activities.   Women environmentally related involvement, in policies through mainstream political spaces, not only as 'women topic' spaces.  Aiming for more involvement in fields of STEM or Social Studies to both understand how the world works, but more so to understand why our world matters.[15]

A certain parallelism,  of politicising of the pastoral is also attempted by, *cropping the pastoral,* in putting old forms to progressive users.  The focus, was on how the land, can act as a healing site specific location.  Where love and a cohabitation of healing, within nature, enabled an empowered life for the disabled.   That reconnecting with the natural senses of the environment, where all seemed possible.  This is not romanising, the natural rural environment but rather it employs, a senses approach for those who might be seen as social or sexual outcasts within a society.  Cultural Imperialism in a struggle with Cultural Imaginary, as key dynamics, to assess which one enables political transformation.[16]

This restorative striving of Warner's perspective of nature and disabilities, acted as a soother to the despair or fear otherwise experienced by those marginalised.   A location of rebuilding bodies or minds.  The communal life, and outskirts or rural society, is more accommodating of the non structural versus industrial model of being.  Those modernity models, where disabilities and diversity were best kept on

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[15] Jamie L. Gloor, Eugenia Bajet Mestre, Corinne Post and Winfried Ruigrok, We Can't Fight Climate Change Without Fighting for Gender Equity, July26,  (2022) Harvard Business Review.

[16] Sylvia Townsend Warner, Cripping the Pastoral, MFS Modern Fiction Studies, Volume 65, Number 1, Spring 2019, Johns Hopkins University Press, Project Muse.

the margins of society, insulating from the hostility of the able-bodied whole eugenicists, of the early twentieth century. An *out of sight, out of mind*, approach.

*All Her Beautiful Green Remains In Tears*[17]

I love that delicate bark, it was the only source of fresh tears.

I spent the last part of the day crying until I cast a certain tree over.

I wanted to wrap my body around the tree and cast it away.

I didn't want to walk away from this tree branch, but I had no choice but to follow orders.

For the moment all is calm and serene.

And yet thee is violence here, sudden death.

Nature is concerned not with the individual but with the preservation of the species.

 So some must die that others may live.

Several kites are being flown side by side in a dark sky (figure e)



figure e

*Materials for building take many forms. The spiders make their own. Still, their silk is not always used for web-making. The crab spider, for instance, uses the silvery strands of an aerial highway, over which he travels from flower to flower. To begin*

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[17] Anna Ridler, Coder, Neural Network, Narrator, Leafcutter John, Sound, Cutler / Ridler / Neural Network, Script.

*he nests, the leaf-cutting bee slices out a perfect circle. And the swallows can always find an abundant supply of mud - the mortar for their cliff dwelling.* [18]

**On Team-Work and a Wall like Border**

Those restrictive minds which steer the focus on what education and the elite few can achieve by their privileged upbringing or resulting opportunities should re-engage with how even education and culture is ordinary and should be made available to all. The purpose of these festivals is that culture lies in all classes and grows out of that common culture. In placing emphasis not upon the ladder but the common highway, for every man's ignorance diminishes me, and every man's skills is a common gain of breath.[19]

That powered wall of structural rule where policy subtly bounces off it, in communicating the community dynamics, reflects what the wall invites you to mirror. No room for rebellion, rationalised and theorised concrete views prevail. Common struggles, collectively resolved are under construction, when these festivals are underway. Communal togetherness is the social connection of fighting walls origin again.[20] Money empowerment easily facilitates impact, however, it is that grouping of people whose power lies in their numbers, where communication is owned by them, a society owned, of individual participation and not commercialised by the minority monied individuals.

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[18] Anna Ridler, Coder, Neural Network, Narrator, Leafcutter John, Sound, Cutler / Ridler / Neural Network, Script.

[19] Raymond Williams, Resources of Hope : Culture, Democracy, Socialism, Verso, (2016) ProQuest Ebook Central, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/kcl/detail.action?docID=5177319, chapter Communication and Community.

[20] Raymond Williams, The Social Significance of 1926, (1977).

Activists keep the locale alive, reviving it by introducing connectivity, in resistance to segregation. As in the Free Pussy Riots a de-nationalised approach rather than a transitional one, across multiple global spaces. This is apparent both in feminist activism and digital feminisms, in how the digital facilitates a change evolution around body politics and the racialised bodies, a digital disembodiment.[21]

**Dead Zones - Borders / Maps**

Dead Zones act as barriers between one place and another, (de) constructed differences between people and cultures, containers and confinement, separations and edges, to be near or adjacent to, limits places upon the contents of something, somewhere, or someone. Dead Zone - invisible and tangible, felt and (re) imagined, enforced and challenged, reproduced and recreated, online and offline.[22]

In this interconnection, Jean Baker Miller's (1976) Relational-Cultural Theory (RCT) re emphasises that to *be human is to be in a community*. Empathy of growth through sharing our strengths while joining in support of our challenges. The economic and social viable solutions, within these less catered for with specialised services,

[21] Carrie Smith-Prei, Awkward Politics : Technologies of Popfeminist Activism, McGill-Queen's University Press,(2016), ProQuest Ebook Central, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/kcl/detail.action?docID=4513202.

[22] Francesca Sobande, The Digital Lives of Black Women in Britain, Springer International Publishing AG, (2020), ProQuest Ebook Central, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/kcl/detail.action?docID=6303604.

economically viable initiatives or declining industries, further marginalise residents. Through Relational-Cultural Theory, an engagement with the true authentic self, could potential lead to structural changes, that *reclaiming of the conversation* of both embodiment and representation.[23]

Officially, as with maps, the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots live in a divided town, Nicosia. *Maps, like memories, come in parts.* Finding a map of the whole town is challenging.  Purposely the *other* half is often erased (figure h/i). Even talking about this peace issue had a repercussion of a missed interpretation, an overuse of hollowness and unfulfilled promises.  What remains, is the language of pain, other issues or matters are never as important as the Cyprus problem, and the baggage of pain it carries. Parallel to the pain, is the shame with which one is overwhelmed, if one **chooses** to engage with or within that Dead Zone.  A shame in **tending** to the flowers or trees within it, of not confronting their fears or embracing their humanity. Breaking the silence, is breaking the shame of  these difficult conversations both sides need to voice. Pyla, the only bi-communal village on the island, sits within the Dead Zone,strangely the word Pyla in Greek denotes a gate, in Ancient Greek Pylos was the gate to Hades, the Zone of the Dead…[24]

*The singer in the fish tavern began his song in Turkish, switched to Greek in the middle and finished in Greek.* The impossibility of separating which is what and who owns it.  Only through sharing do they both come to own part or all of it. A Dead Zone, very alive with waiting, wanting, anticipating and an undrained hope.

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[23] M. Corbett, & D. Gereluk, (2020) Rural teachers education: Connecting land and people. Springer Singapore Pte. Ltd  https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-2560-5_7.

[24] Yiannis Papadakis, *Echoes from the dead zone, Across the Cyprus Divide,* I.B. Taurus, London, New York (2005).

figure h                    figure i

## Conclusion

Taking responsibility for curational practices, where building a social wold is only feasible by collective engagement, we need to start making sense of the world, in broadly speaking in the same way.  Cultures are like maps of meaning, those intelligibility frameworks, enable us to make sense of the world.  Those shared conceptual maps make up the meaning of a cultured society.[25]

The festival comes to you and allows you the engagement through the entitlement of belonging within that community.  Accessibility to activities which ensure a positive role in maintaining mental health and well-being are not discountable for the most needy, rather we must work towards changing the often silenced working-class voice. [26]

What culture, denotes more in its ordinary sense, is the nature of a culture, transitional and creative.  How one chooses to live, the notion of discovering creative ways, of interacting within a system, where values are often dominated by class, and contrary to the broadness of the meaning of culture, the masses are excluded. Those opportunities, presented to the otherwise, lower class of exceptional cases,

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[25] Stuart Hall, Essential Essays, Volume 1

[26] Leanne Dawson, Culture in Crisis: A guide to access, equality, diversity and inclusion in festivals, arts and culture, October 5, (2020).

can not be an indicator of the broadness of what culture should seek to represent. And how otherwise can culture remain relevant, if not what comes out of voicing it by the many, be they ignorant or in the knowhow, of all social manners and skills. Being well read makes not a better cultured opinion, than being illiterate, the difference, often lies in how one articulates his cultural narrative, not if he has a voice to voice what needs to be voiced.

*Real independence is a time of new and active creation: people sure enough of themselves to discard their baggage; knowing the past as past, as a shaping history, but with a new confident sense of the present and the future, where the decisive meaning and values will be made culture democracy socialism.*[27]

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[27] Raymond Williams, Resources of Hope : Culture, Democracy, Socialism, Verso, 2016. ProQuest Ebook Central, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/kcl/detail.action?docID=5177319, chapter Communication and Community, (1961).

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