

Review of Tomáš Nezveda's BA thesis *Place, community, scene: an ethnographic study of Prague's Cross club*

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Tomáš Nezveda's BA study of Prague's *Cross Club* offers an intriguing approach to the anthropological and ethnographic study of music venues from the theoretical perspective of place/space. Nezveda's analysis of relations between place/space and club experience and community/scene in this regard illuminates some relevant issues and topics in the area of youth culture studies and electronic dance music (EDM) culture studies. The student in several parts successfully interweaves theory and ethnography and in this way provides for an engaging and vivid representation of *Cross Club's* scene and experience. However, there are also several problems in his work as related to goals of the thesis, theory, methodology, structure, language, and style.

Nezveda's work advances an important research question which aims to explore the relation between place/space and community/scene (»How does Cross club facilitate a scene and its various communities that regularly or temporarily gather in it?«, see page 7), and he uses some relevant theoretical perspectives that help him strengthen his interpretations in this regard. He achieves this goal partially in sections about decorations/lights, and advertisement (Chapter One), and in the parts about door policies and program policies (Chapter Three), but this aim should be brought more to the front in the whole discussion. The thesis instead often veers more into the direction of the relation between place/space and *individual* personal experience, which adds an important dimension to the thesis, but the research question should then also be reworked so that would better correspond with the results presented in the text.

Further, Nezveda in his work often presents intriguing ethnographic analysis that is in some places successfully interwoven with theory, particularly Chapter Two, in the parts about multifaceted place, erasure of time, atmosphere, and anonymity (and as related to theories by Sterne, Thornton, and Malboun), and also briefly in Chapter One, as related to the discussion of gentrification (Holt). However, the student also has occasional problems in explaining theory in clear and well-articulated manner, most noticeably in parts about community/scene (page 7), in the theoretical framework of Chapter Two (page 29), and in his discussion of Valentine (page 42), and Holt (pages 15, 16, and 42). As related, Nezveda also fails to properly introduce the topic of *Cross Club's* ideology in Chapter Three. He refers to it as »multicultural center« approach on page 43, but better elaboration of values and ideologies behind this model would be needed in the introduction of that section. Moreover, the student could also offer a more critical perspective on club's practices and ideologies in Chapter Three (beyond his discussion of club's problematic practices, which he relegates to the past), as he mostly operates only with management's quotes in that part, as well as with some additional positive remarks from the clubbers themselves. It is instructive, for instance, to look at the visitors' comments about *Cross Club* on tripadvisor.com, as they reveal some interesting complaints about the club in that regard (but more critical views could probably also be found on other websites, and through ethnographic work). This also brings me to the topic of methodology.

Nezveda mostly articulates well the methodology in the introduction of the thesis, although it is important to recognize that the goal of triangulation is not only to reduce the reactivity and to improve the validity of data (as Nezveda writes on page 9), but particularly

important for anthropology, also to enable more »thick description« (to present cultural complexity; to present layers of meanings and perspectives). Otherwise, it also seems that Nezveda could do more than three extensive interviews with visitors for his study (see page 10), while his work would also benefit from some extensive interviews with sub-organizers, from an addition of more in-depth case studies, and from more rigorous analysis of *Cross Club's* monthly programs (e.g., how many of each genre's events they organize per month, or how many of »bigger« performers per month, etc). Further, the part about positionality illuminates some important issues (author's biases as related to his occupation, and taste), but should also be expanded to incorporate some other important categories (gender, class, nationality). Positionality is also discussed twice in that section, and should merged into one section. In addition, the ethics part should also incorporate some examination of the problem of drug use and drug references by the visitors of the club.

Finally, in relation to language and style, it should be noted that the thesis in many places exhibits poorer language level which affects the clarity of ideas in those sections. There is also a problem with translations with several of the quotes that were originally recorded in Czech (particularly on pages 22, 28, 39, 43, 54). In addition, there are also some minor issues with citations (pages of referenced works missing on pages 30, 38, 46), and with formatting (Czech quotes in footnotes should be in italics; block quotes should all utilize single-spacing, c.f., page 46).

In sum, Nezveda's positive contributions in the thesis (relevant theoretical discussion and ethnographic analysis of relations between place/space and community/experience) outweigh some of its more problematic parts (goals, theory, methodology, language). Therefore, I recommend grade 2 for the achievement.