

CORVINUS UNIVERSITY OF BUDAPEST
DOCTORAL COUNCIL OF LIFE SCIENCES
PHD IN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
AND LANDSCAPE ECOLOGY



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POSTMODERN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
THE THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND THE MAIN FORMS

PROPOSITIONS OF DISSERTATION

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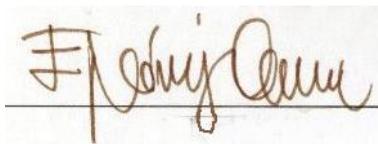
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The applicant met the requirement of the PhD regulations of the Corvinus University of Budapest and the thesis is accepted for the defence process.

I. Prerequisites and aim of the paper

The work opens with posing a problem, which is materialized in the question about the essence and meaning of postmodern landscape architecture. Several research works have come into being regarding postmodernism within the spheres of science and art. However there is a lack of works concerning the postmodern period in landscape architecture even though we are familiar with the term and use it. There is a lack of systemizing and summarizing research " ..in landscape architecture the postmodern in landscape architecture theory has not been defined "¹ The first and foremost aim of this thesis is to fill in this gap and to provide a helping tool in teaching by putting together material which presents the elements that determine the postmodern in landscape architecture through the adequate works of open-air architecture. Since I have not been able to connect with former research done in this field, I have had to resort to the theoretical grounds of different special fields and find the connections on which I have been able to build and derive the theory of postmodern landscape architecture.

The central aim of the thesis is to shed light on *the scientifically grounded theoretical background of postmodern landscape architecture and its forms of manifestation by the stylistic analysis of the relevant landscape architecture projects*. The central aim of the thesis comprises several subsidiary aims:

¹ Corner, James (2005): in. Richard Weller in *Room 4.1.3 Innovations In Landscape Architecture*, Philadelphia, 2005, 2-9.

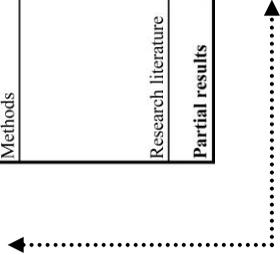
1. Defining the notion of the postmodern as exhaustively as possible by presenting a synthesizing multidisciplinary speciality literature.
2. Establishing the theoretical background of postmodern landscape architecture by drawing on the common ground of the usage of notions by the main theoreticians.
3. Establishing the categories for the main forms of manifestation of landscape architecture by relying on the principles of composition and means of design
4. Providing a system for the interpretation and analysis of postmodern landscape architecture
5. Establishing the definition of postmodern landscape architecture

The thesis consists of **three** well separated but strongly interconnected parts. *The first part* focuses on researching the postmodern epoch and the definition of the notion of postmodernism. *The second part* researches the theoretical background of postmodern landscape architecture and its forms of manifestation, *the third part* dwells on bringing to light the results of the research and their evaluation.

II. The structure of the research

The structure of the research

Proposition	1	2	3-8
	The two basic pillars of approaching postmodern notion. General result:synthesis of the definitions of the notion of postmodernism	Establishing the characteristics of postmodern landscape architecture	A posztmodern tájépítésezet jellemvonásai
Results			
	Casting light on research literature by synthesis	Creating an interpretation and evaluation system	Analysis of the research results /Looking for connections . drawing conclusions
Methods			
	Multidisciplinary research of specific literature (writings of 40 authors)	Defining key notions by common intersecting points Ihab Hassan Charles Jencks Robert Venturi	Research literature, my own publications
Research literature			
Partial results	1	2, 3, 4	5



III. Material and methods

The material of the thesis can be divided into **three parts**: written resources, picture resources and research data. The works dwells on **two approaches**: the approach of synthesizing and interpretation and the analysis approach of my own evaluation system. I have tried to make the analysis of the evaluation results more understandable and expressive by the use of statistical methods (diagrams) .One of the focuses of the paper is laid **on two main interpretation works** : in the first chapter due to the unraveling of the notion of postmodernism, the great amount of material which emerged in the course of the multidisciplinary study of research literature has been analyzed through a chronological table. In the second chapter I have carried out **the stylistic analysis** of the postmodern landscape architecture projects with the help of written and image resources through **the analytical/ interpretive/ investigative system** set up by me. The other emphatic point of the thesis is the research part. In part III I set up a **research system** (analysis) system with the help of which I analyze 27 postmodern works looking for relationships on the basis of the established characteristics in order to exhaustively dwell into the postmodern landscape architecture. The study table for the numerical evaluation of the projects constitutes the theoretical background , it comprises the categories concerning the principle of ordering the composition and the means of design.

IV. Results of the research

As a result of the research I have mapped the description of the notion of postmodernism by paramount theoreticians and proceeded to define the key words of the theoretical background of postmodernist landscape design. I elaborated a system for analysis and evaluation, with the help of which it can be assessed to what extent a landscape design project will display (carry) the characteristics of postmodernism. The results of the research comprise the diagrams showcasing the results of the evaluation, explanatory graphics.

A postmodern fogalom használatának kronológiai elemzése										
Év	Ország	Építész	Ismerkedési terület	Építészeti munka	Stílus	Legfontosabb jellemzők	Formális elemek	Strukturális elemek	Tematikai elemek	Anyagi elemek
1965	USA	Richard Buckminster Fuller	USA	Geodesic dome	Postmodern	Geometric forms, Rationality, Functionalism	X	X	X	X
1968	USA	Robert Rauschenberg	USA	Abstract painting	Postmodern	Color, Texture, Layering	X	X	X	X
1971	USA	Robert Rauschenberg	USA	Abstract painting	Postmodern	Color, Texture, Layering	X	X	X	X
1973	USA	Robert Rauschenberg	USA	Abstract painting	Postmodern	Color, Texture, Layering	X	X	X	X
1976	USA	Robert Rauschenberg	USA	Abstract painting	Postmodern	Color, Texture, Layering	X	X	X	X
1977	USA	Robert Rauschenberg	USA	Abstract painting	Postmodern	Color, Texture, Layering	X	X	X	X
1978	USA	Robert Rauschenberg	USA	Abstract painting	Postmodern	Color, Texture, Layering	X	X	X	X
1979	USA	Robert Rauschenberg	USA	Abstract painting	Postmodern	Color, Texture, Layering	X	X	X	X
1980	USA	Robert Rauschenberg	USA	Abstract painting	Postmodern	Color, Texture, Layering	X	X	X	X

Research of Postmodern's idea



Sheet Analysis of Parc de La Villette

Proposition 1: Postmodern landscape architecture is an epoch style of landscape architecture, it is to be found between the modern and the "contemporary" landscape architecture, it comprises the period from the 1970's to the end of the 1990's, and evinces specific characteristics.

Postmodernism is a style trend that also spread to different scientific, religious and artistic fields. This short-lived but intensive trend can be generally placed between the 1970's and 1990's. The postmodern epoch has strong stylistic characteristics, which can be found and defined in the creations of landscape architecture as well. The beginnings of both postmodern architecture and landscape design can be placed at the beginning of the 1970's, when garden design projects were still hallmarked by modern composition elements, postmodernism reached its peak in the 1980's and 1990's, but its influence can be felt to the present day. In chapter 6 of the thesis I discussed in detail the possibilities of chronologically analyzing the postmodern epoch within the realm of architecture and landscape design. The evaluative analysis cast light on the fact that the outstanding part of the works came into being at the beginning of the 1980's and 1990's (71%). Among the postmodern works discussed in this paper, those that came into being in the 1970's partially present characteristics of the late modern period. The first internationally recognized postmodern work, the Piazza d'Italia in New Orleans came into being in 1978. The archetype of postmodern parks is the Parc de la Villette in Paris which is a good work to exemplify the landscape architecture style of postmodernism since it bears most of its characteristic traits.

Proposition 2: The postmodern landscape architecture can be described by the key notions derived from the outstanding theoreticians of landscape design (Hassan, Jencks, Venturi) and by the composition approach and design tools defining the postmodern. The characteristics of postmodernism are the following: narratives, indetermination, pluralism, playfulness, collage-technique, anti-hierarchy, abandoned industrial sites, thematic space, diagonal, different space levels, unusual constructions, water architecture, sculptures, plants as symbols / sculptures, strong colours, pavings with geometrical forms, variety of materials/ steel frames.

The basis for the theory of postmodern landscape architecture is the use of narratives, the principle of collision, i. e. the principle of indetermination, pluralism, playfulness. The forms of manifestation of the postmodern are given by the composition arrangement and the specific design tools. The compositional system of the postmodern creations is characterized by collage like space design, thematic spaces, the micro-world of space parts, dynamic diagonals, construction of different space-levels, unusual water architecture and unusual constructions as well as unusual sculptures. A characteristic features of the epoch is the re- building of delapidated industrial sites, the pre-existing structures being a defining principle of the composition; thus the industrial constructions become a tool of design. The design tools of the postmodern works comprise plants as symbols, as sculptures, the use of strong colours, pavings with geometrical forms and use of steel constructions.

Proposition 3: The theoretical background of the works of landscape architecture is more emphatic as compared to the forms of manifestation, to the principles of composition and to the tools of design, which shows the strong theoretical foundation of the epoch.

The results of the research shed light on the fact that theory has the highest value among the notions defining postmodernism- theory - composition- design; in the context of the analyzed creations theory holds 88%, i.e. the highest value. As to the theoretical concepts of postmodernism " indeterminacy " is present in 94 % of the cases, " playfulness " in 93 %, " narrative" in 88 %, while " pluralism " is present in 77 % of the cases. The size of the analyzed spaces shows no correlation to the proportion of the notions " narratives", " indeterminacy", " pluralism". We can say there is no determining connection between the manifestation of theoretical principles and the size of the space. In the research table there are 12 works, where the four theoretical backgrounds hold 100 % and among these 9 are typically postmodern works, i. e. they carry the characteristics of postmodernism to the greatest extent. The 9 works are the following :Jardin Atlantique, Landschaftspark Duisburg-Nord, Piazza d'Italia, Tsukuba Center, Parc de La Villette, Cambridge Center Garage Roof-Garden, Parque de la Espanya Industrial, Parc de Clot, Parc de Citroen. This also proves the extent to which the theories, the ideologies of the epoch influenced the designers. This fact proves the necessity of thoroughly researching the theoretical background.

Proposition 4: The paramount characteristic of postmodern landscape architecture is the design of space based on collage as principle of the composition; this can be looked upon as the innovation of the landscape architecture of the respective epoch.

The collage technique as a means of composition came into being as an answer to the modern epoch; the denial the principles of abstract ideology, of strict order gave way to the emergence of the opposite: colourful complexity and playfulness. The use of collage is a technique, an approach to composition which is directed against inner coherence, there is no unity, instead the parts become individual and independent.² The collage technique is not only used in individual works, but in works of a greater scale, in a city hence³ we can draw the conclusion that the collage became a structure determining the structure of city life. Landscape architects took over the collage technique in landscape architecture from the art of the 20th century. In the course of my research I have come to the conclusion that it is characteristic of 21 of the analyzed works; 15 works envisage the collage technique as the most important characteristic, to an extent of 100 %. The collage technique is a defining characteristic The most typical postmodern works use the collage technique as a defining trait and this technique is in strong connection with the principle of bringing new life to the dilapidated industrial sites. (6.)

² Osborne, Harold (1981): The Oxford Companion to twentieth century art, Oxford University Press, New York, 1981, 118.

³ Tamás, Lukovich (1997):A posztmodern kor városépítészeti kihívásai, Szószabó Stúdió, Budakalász, 1997, 16.

Proposition 5: Analyzing the works of postmodern landscape design we have reached the conclusion that some of the works contain more of the characteristics of postmodern landscape design than others; thus we can look upon the former as the most indicative examples of postmodern landscape design.

The stylistic analysis and research evaluation of the works of postmodern landscape design cast light upon the fact that in the case of 14 examples the postmodern characteristics are to be found in a proportion of more than 80%. The most characteristic postmodern works illustrate theory (92%) and composition and design elements (80%) (to the greatest proportion). From among the researched postmodern parks the most relevant one which carry postmodern characteristics to the largest extent (>80%) are the following: (in increasing order in percentage): *Parc de Bercy (81%)*, *Cambridge Center Garage Roof Garden (81%)*, *South Cost Plaza Town Center (81%)*, *Diagonal Mar Parc (81%)*, *Piazza d' Italia (82%)*, *Jardin Atlantique (83%)*, *Landschaftspark Duisburg (83%)*, *Parque de la Espanya Industrial (85%)*, *Parc Central de Nou Barris (85%)*, *Parc de Clot (86%)*, *Parc Andre Citroen (86%)*, *Getty Center (87%)*, *the Tsukuba Center (92%)*, and finally *Parc de La Villette (97%)* which can be seen as a typical example.

Proposition 6: The abandoned industrial sites gave excellent opportunity to the creation of postmodern landscape design works, since the old factory buildings, structures were preserved due to the fact that they were considered monuments;hence their use showed great potential in design.

The renewed factory sites had narratives that conjured up the past, the clash between the new and old elements and thus contain indeterminacy, pluralism by the merging of new and old styles; the old elements acquire new function which leads to the potential of playfulness. As to composition, the collage technique comes into being by combining old and new elements; old structures are often given new themes, like thematic spaces, space parts. The industrial elements carry within themselves spatial surprises; different levels of space are present due to the existence of scaffolding, passages and unusual structures.

The greatest number of parks that came into being on industrial sites is to be found in Paris. Best known are the Parc de La Villette and the Parc Andre Citroen. The other two postmodern parks that are less known internationally are the Jardin Atlantique and the Parc de Bercy. What is a common trait of these parks is that the postmodern theory is present to 100 % in these parks .Besides, the parks are characterized by space design using the collage technique and hence anti-hierarchy, thematic garden part are also present to 100%. As to the spacial surprises different levels of space are also to be found in 100% of the parks.

Proposition 7: As compared to international landscape architecture, Hungarian postmodern landscape architecture emerges for the first time in the form of spatial surprises/ unusual structures and sculptures as well as in sculptures in public spaces especially in Budapest. Characteristically postmodern works are few in number and they come into being after the year 2000.

We cannot speak of Hungarian postmodern landscape architecture until the end of the 1970's and 1990's. Looking at the examples in Budapest in the 1960's, we witness the emergence of modern outdoor architecture works which contain elements of the postmodern as to their content and style. It is interesting to note that from the end of the 1970's several of the open-air sculptures in Budapest contain postmodern characteristics. Several postmodern sculptures are placed into the public spaces of Budapest at the beginning of the 1980's and they are characterized by spatial surprises/ unusual structures.

From among the Hungarian postmodern works I researched the public spaces and parks of Budapest; the intensive city development of the capital gave rise to projects created under the influence of the international modern and postmodern epoch. The aim of the research has been to analyze to what percentage these works carry the characteristics of postmodern landscape design and to what extent they can be viewed as postmodern works despite the fact that they came into being in 2000 and after.

From among the public spaces in Budapest , the postmodern characteristics are to be found in the following proportion: the Millenáris Park in 92%(Új Irány csoport, 2000.), the park of the National Theatre in 84%-ban (Török Péter, 2001.) and the FerencSquare in 77%-ban (Sági István, 2005.)

The Millenáris Park is a relevant counterpart of the Parc de La Villette (97%). After analysing the table set up to discuss the examples in Budapest we can draw the conclusion that they carry postmodern attributes in a percentage of 84%.

Proposition 8 : Postmodern landscape architecture became part of the desacralization of the garden spaces " the old is no longer good, the new has not appeared yet" is a statement that can be applied. The way out can be a horizontal connecting system (design based on participation of the community, the designing individual) and the vertical connection (nature, the supernatural). Regarding garden history the 1990's mark a change : the postmodern stylistic trend is followed by something new since postmodernism was not really able to give an answer to the important question of the epoch " What next ?",it was not able to renew itself in form and content, the " reversal" (change) was lacking.

The inheritance of postmodern landscape design can be seen in the works of this epoch. The experiences, the truths, the spirit of the age are expressed in the characteristics of landscape architecture. To cast a light on the postmodern spirit, we have to take into account several dimensions when analyzing and interpreting postmodern works. According to the philosophical four dimensions of existence the horizontal plane is determined by the healthy relationship between the individual and himself as well as other people. The vertical plane is determined by the relationship to the supernatural and the natural world. Regarding these four planes , the postmodern tackled only the ways in which the creative individual expressed itself; implying the community of people into the creative process was not among its aims, and

the local natural environment, the flora, the geographical assets had little importance within the design process.

Some of the theoreticians of the postmodern epoch were able to see the optimal line of development: nature and humanity lie in the centre of the writings of Gilles Clement. According to him, humanity, the community of city dwellers needs new forms in building their environment .⁷ Besides this, Gilles draws attention to the importance of the human habitat of landscape design; a designer has to become a multi-faceted personality - this being a pre-requisite for the design of gardens that are in harmony with what human communities really need.⁸ Paolo Portoghesi, the host of 1980 Venice Biennale about the elements of postmodern architecture states that " the basic theme of the garden is sacred existence.....When an architect designs a garden, he has to know that that garden is the symbolic expression and manifestation of the connection between humans and God." Meggyesi Tamás considers the designing activity as being a sacred process:" it is not less than creation, the analogy of becoming human "⁹

According to the ars poetica of the designers,the relationship to the supernatural does not surface in postmodern architecture, which can account

⁷ Clement, Gilles (2005): "The Planetary Garden" and Other Writings Gilles Clément. Translated by Sandra Morris. Foreword by Gilles A. Tiberghien, University of Pennsylvania, 2015, vii-xx.

⁸ Clement, Gilles (2005): "The Planetary Garden" and Other Writings Gilles Clément. Translated by Sandra Morris. Foreword by Gilles A. Tiberghien, University of Pennsylvania, 2015, 89-93.

⁹ Tamás Meggyesi (2014): in. Lukovich Tamás: Bevezetés az építészetelméletbe, TERC, Budapest, 2014.

for the fact that in the end postmodern landscape design " lost its stamina and became a game to its own end at the end of the 1990's".

IV. Conclusions

The multidisciplinary approach of the postmodern notion and its use made it possible to find the key notions which are mostly characteristic of postmodern landscape design; by stylistically analyzing the works of the postmodern epoch I succeeded in mapping the composition systems and design tools of postmodernism , by their synthesis I set up the definition of postmodern landscape architecture. My research work shed light on the fact that besides studying the research literature and using my own experience, the viewing of different scientific branches is vital to arrive at the essence of postmodern landscape architecture. The research approach used by me is suitable to make it possible to find out to what extent a work shows postmodern characteristics.

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2. Brigitta Oláh: Kortárs közterek rajzos elemzése Budapesten Rajzban felfedezni, elemezni és megérteni - Kertművészeti műhelygyakorlat
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