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*Harajuku fantasyscape in the past and now – a transcultural approach to the phenomenon*

The subject of this dissertation is Harajuku, understood both as a physical space in Tokyo, which was the cradle of street fashion in Japan and the birthplace of youth alternative groups, as well as *Harajuku kei* – a symbolic concept referring to the Harajuku culture regardless of its physical location. The phenomenon both nowadays and in the past is analysed through a transcultural perspective, by which I mean the transculturality of methods, the concept of culture and the characteristics of Harajuku itself.

The dissertation contains a methodological part that deals with the issue of cultural studies as a humanistic transdiscipline and the concept of transculturality with its relation to postmodernism. It also presents an outline of transcultural mechanisms based on the concepts of transcultural spaces, networks, landscapes, components and transcultures. The mechanism of transculture creation based on fascination (*akogare*) preceded by transcultural experience caused by factors of presence or closeness toward a foreign culture is also an important theoretical issue. In this theoretical reflection I refer both to Japanese culture, because of its transcultural characteristics and to Harajuku understood as a transculture created in the transcultural space of fantasy flows (*fantasyscape*).

Transcultural interpretivism, as I call my research attitude applied to the Harajuku phenomenon in this dissertation, is characterized by: the transculturality of perspective, moderate relativism, reflective and understanding approach to the subject of research. Basing on literature, document analysis and qualitative field research, I present Harajuku in macro (the history of Harajuku, current state of the phenomenon) and micro perspective. By micro perspective I understand the analysis of *Harajuku kids* participation through descriptive analysis, thematic analysis (Harajuku as a post-postsubculture, the multiplicity of motivations and ways of participation in the phenomenon) and interpretation (the transcultural approach to Harajuku by the category of space and belongingness).

The dissertation combines theoretical reflection on the theory of transculturality, research attitude and methods with the results of bottom-up interpretative Harajuku research. The aim of this research is to create the image of the phenomenon with which the subjects themselves would be able to identify.

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