



Cross-Cultural Analysis of Interaction between People and Unconventional Places and Objects of Veneration

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INTRODUCTION

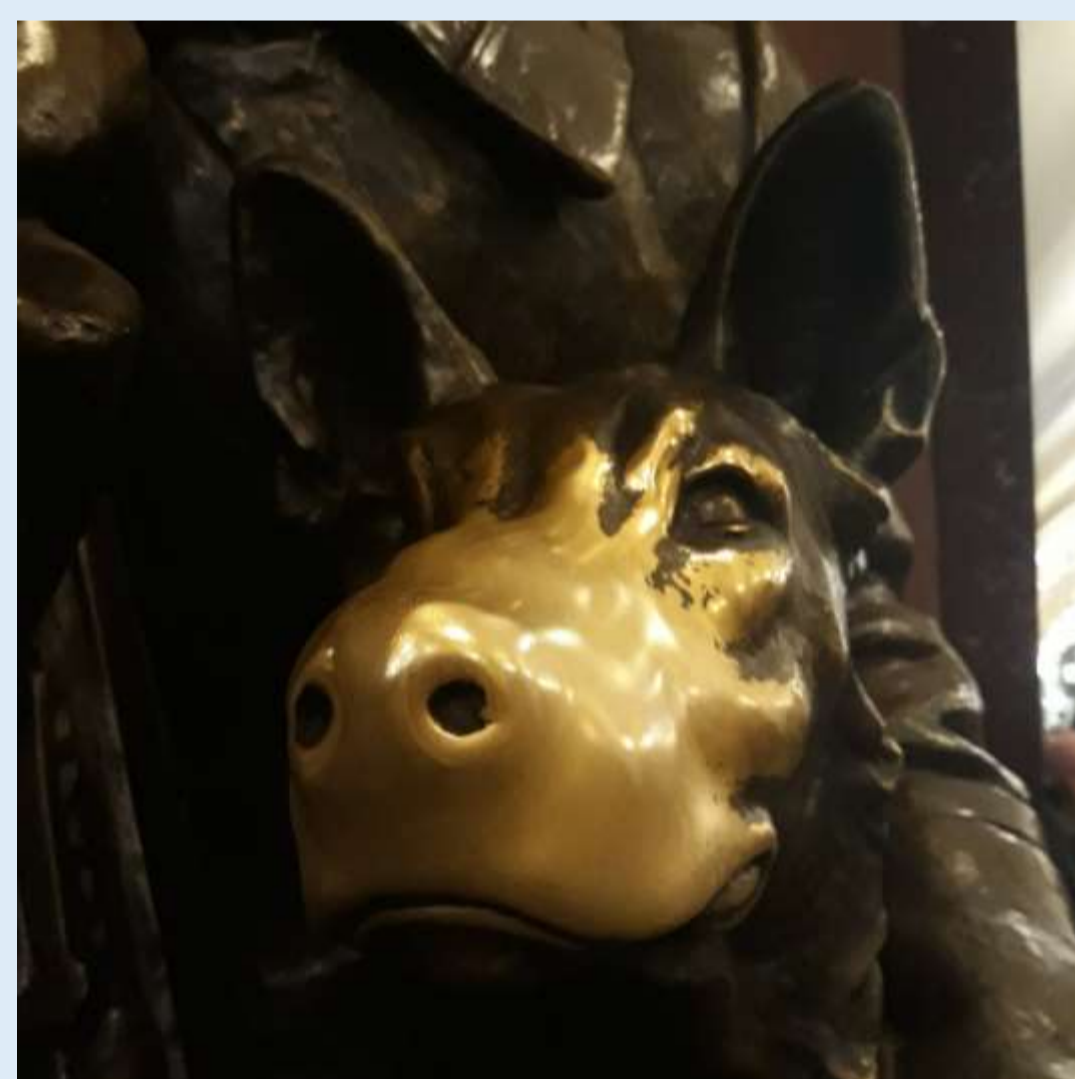
The project concerns a wide spread phenomena of touching objects to attain a positive transfer of energy and good influence on the future. People often interact in various ways with monuments, statues, stones, trees etc. In many cultures, including Russian, they even leave coins, flowers or food. The ultimate aim of these actions is to bring a positive effect, for example to gain luck in love, to restore health, to increase the level of fertility, to pass the exam...

These actions are conducted on public objects, not recognized by official religion, which usually labels them as superstition or a form of paganism. Some of these objects are located on every-day commutes and hundreds of passers-by interact with them daily. Others are more isolated, thus being specially visited. Each object is related with a distinct set of elaborated and predetermined actions, hence the complex of these actions can be treated as a specific ritual.

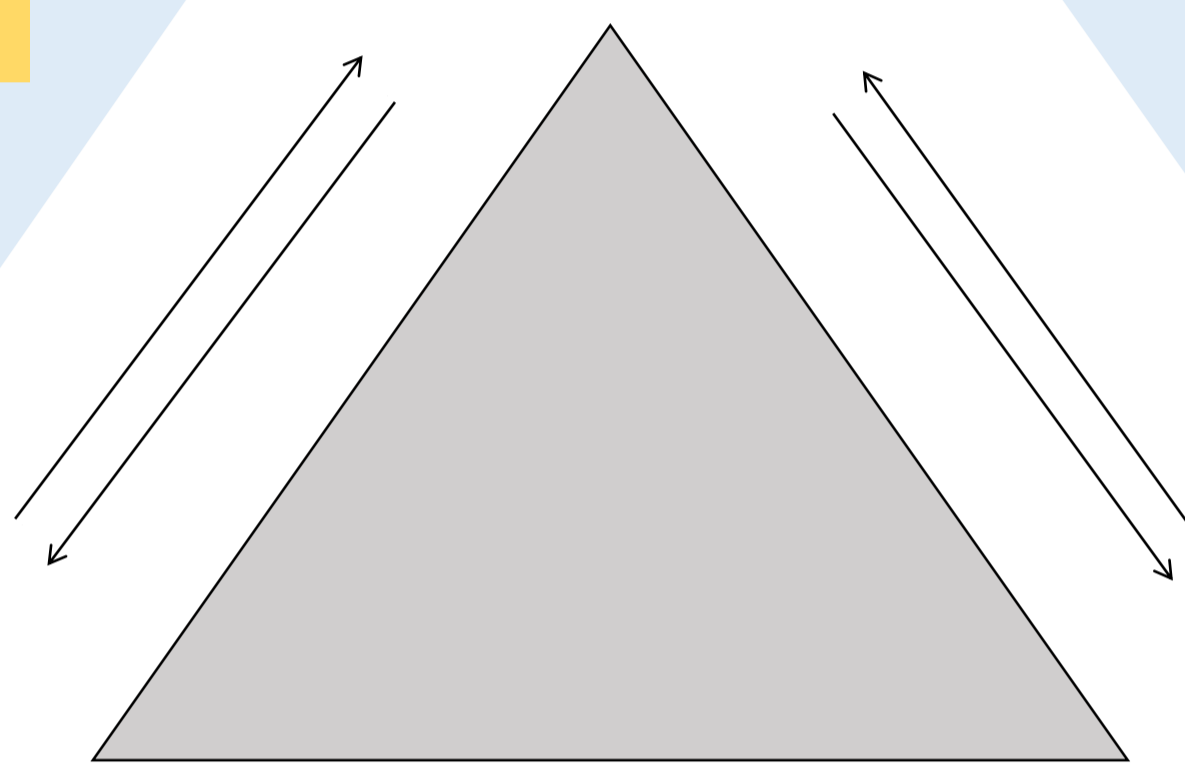
ELEMENTS OF THE RITUAL

OBJECT

The form and the type of the object has effect on the interaction and the kind of actions performed on it and around it. For example, zoomorphic statues often involve petting or feeding. Stones with a specific size and shape are often considered to be powerful sources of energy. People sit on them, leave coins and food in order to obtain this energy (Petrov 2018).



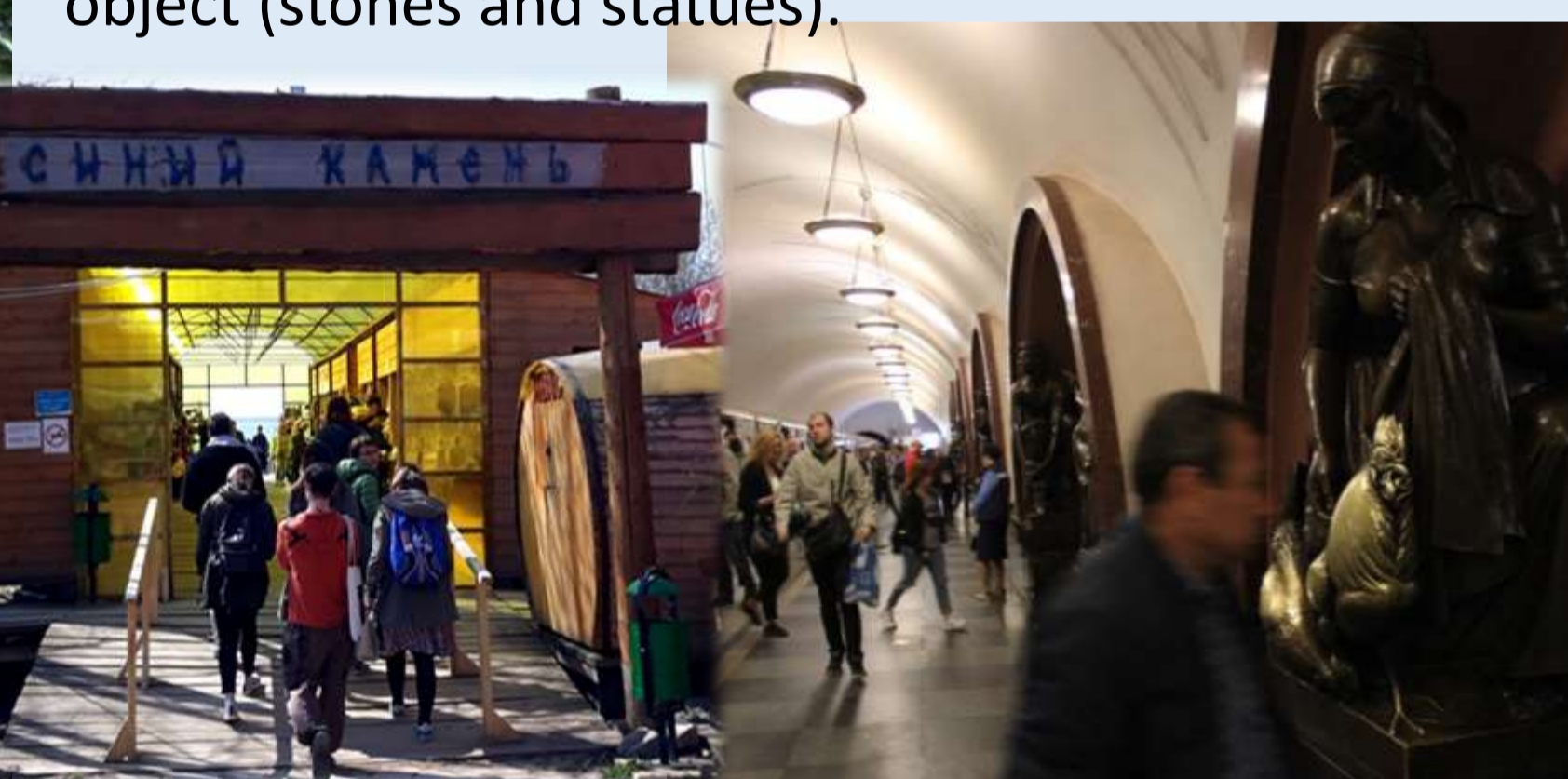
OBJECT



SPACE

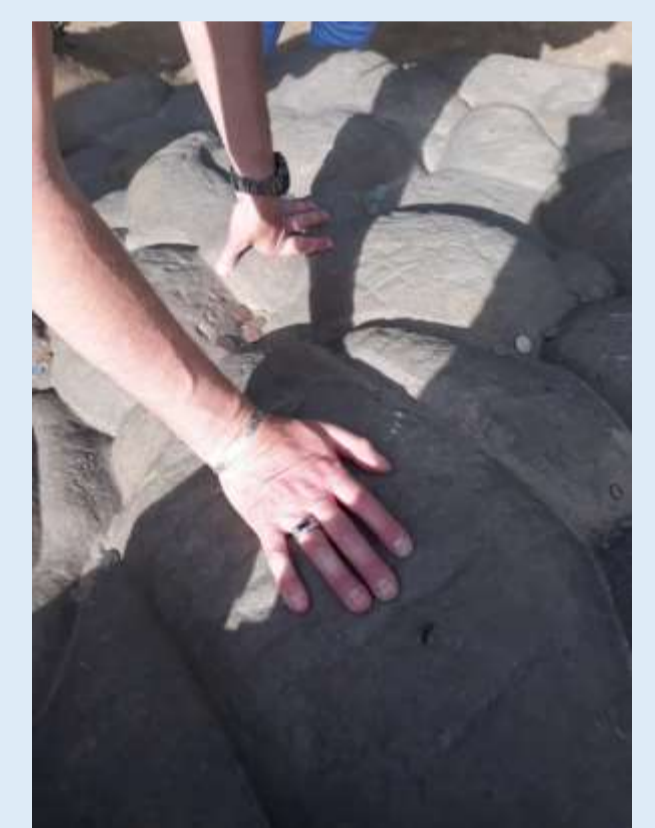
SPACE

The setting of the space makes specific trajectories more probable. For example, people believe that the statues at the metro station bring luck. Thus, some would run out of the train in the metro station, touch the monument, and run back to get in the same train. When the object is located in non-urban surroundings, it is notable that the space slowly becomes modified. The area of influence is spreading in circular zones: the space in the nearest zone around the object is subject to the strongest modification (planting flowers, leaving candles, coins, tying ribbons around the stones). The practices are being replicated on the objects near by the main object (stones and statues).



PARTICIPANTS

Participants can come individually, or organized in groups. Dynamics of the interaction between them and with the object is shifting. For example, in a case of visiting a stone, interaction between participants is related with the number of people present. For instance, if there are many people, they participate at the same time, but if there are only a few people at the location, some would often wait for the others to finish sitting, in silence.



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How do **participants organize their physical presence** around the object at the place of veneration?
- How does the interaction between participants emerge, what are the **patterns of their communications**?
- How does the position of the objects in their surroundings impact visitors' **trajectory** (approaching the object, moving around the object, leaving the object)?
- What are the principles of **space modification** influenced by the object of veneration?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3 principal commitments of social action and activities (Heat & Luff 2009)

- 1) *"situated" character of the practical action*
 - * context
 - * circumstances
- 2) *direction of the action*
 - *the way in which social activities are accomplished
 - *how action and activities produce themselves moment by moment
- 3) *explicating the social organizations*
 - *accomplishing activities by participants in concern and in collaboration with others

DATA

Data : video, audio, interviews and photos.

Data collected at following locations: Moscow metro station Ploshchad Revolyutsii (76 statues), Moscow park Kolomenskoe (Gus stone and Devuy stone).

Future data: Russia, Serbia, Switzerland

METHODOLOGY

- Multimodal interaction analysis of video data
 - participants observation (moderate participation)
 - walking with video (Pink 2007)
 - semi-structured interviews
- Develop new methodological framework**

REFERENCES

- Heat & Luff – Heat C, Luff P. (2009). Video and the analysis of work and interaction. In: The SAGE Handbook of Social Research Methods, 493-505.
- Petrov – Петров Н.В. (2018). Памятники в пространстве Москвы // Живая старина. № 2, 44-48.
- Pink –Pink, S. (2007). Walking with video. In: Visual studies. Vol. 22, No. 3, 240-252.