

Andreas Sell is the only person in the olive grove at the hill slope of Mount Lepetimnos, and he knows the area around his house well by now. Still, he is afraid when it is dark. Within this familiarity could lurk something unknown or hostile. It could torture him and destroy his existence. There are many images in his head and he cannot sleep because the terror could become real at any moment. What will happen, if he cannot discipline himself against those nightmares and continues imagining them? He has never permitted this and instead directs his thoughts towards something else. The worst visions are those that feign reality and are in the same room. It is night, and there is something evil in his presence that he cannot see. It comes closer; it is powerful; he can hear and feel it while it targets him; he cannot flee; he is paralyzed...He takes all his energy and throws it into the room with a scream. Then he usually wakes up in the room where it all happened. He isn't sure if it really took place, if the creature is still preying upon him, and he is still alone on that hill slope, and it is still dark. He cannot see.

In search for exile, Sell found a lonely, desolate place to build a small house made of plastic tarp and wooden slats; a hermitage of sorts. Traditionally built for religious seclusion, hermitages are where monks and nuns go to find themselves, to find God, and to turn away from the mundane since in isolation we are forced to face ourselves. With the lack of external influences, our own thoughts come to the foreground. The confrontation with one's own thoughts to such a strong degree as nuns and monks do in hermitages goes against human nature. If communication is taken away from a human, regulated structures and mental discipline serve for psychological wellbeing.

Sell built his house in, what was to him, a foreign place and in an unfamiliar culture, yet there he is by himself. Undisturbed, he works in the olive grove and loses himself in different activities. This place of isolated freedom is an enclave where he can turn inwards, and talk to himself while looking at the sea or communicate with things rather than people. His activities are not profit-oriented and do not contribute to society; rather, he does it for himself. He cares for his house which he created to live outside of a social system, a place where he can stay and of which he thinks insofar he is not there. Sell is afraid of this place while at the same time looks forward to it, and he invites people there to neutralize it.

Martin Heidegger describes the meaning of a "building" and regard for the "fourfold" in his essay, "Building Dwelling Thinking," and explains:

"By a primal oneness the four - earth and sky, divinities and mortals - belong together in one. [...] staying with things is the only way in which the fourfold stay within the fourfold is accomplished at any time in simple unity. Dwelling preserves the fourfold by bringing the presencing of the fourfold into things. But things themselves secure the fourfold only when they themselves as things are let be in their presencing. How is this done? In this way, that mortals nurse and nurture the things that grow, and specially construct things that do not grow. Cultivating and construction are building in the narrower sense. Dwelling, insofar as it keeps or secures the fourfold in things, is, as this keeping, a building."¹

Accordingly, Sell has built something – something to save the earth on an island, to receive the sky on an island, to expect divinities on an island and to guide mortals on an island.

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1 Translated from: Martin Heidegger, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" (summary). Bauen und Wohnen, Eduard Föhr, Waxmann Münster/NewYork/München/Berlin, 2000, S.36ff