Text/Image Border Nodes:
The Bridge as a Splitting Place[*]

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Abstract:
The present article approaches the *bridge* as a transitory *place*, establishing that mobility can be undertaken from the point of view of *figurative nodes* (centrifugal dissemination of the imaginary/ centripetal-attractor, stereotypes, socio-cultural symbols). From the dossier dedicated to the *bridge* as a metaphoric relational place, the present intervention verifies the hypothesis according to which the *bridge* can be seen as a *splitting place*, a "heterotrophy", a formula for (de)territoriality acknowledging the simultaneous *representations* of the space distributed in symbolic places. Beyond the *splitting effect,* the border nodes involve a trans-cultural mapping of a *re-knotted place* as a correlation of spaces with reflexes *towards something which might project one over/beyond the limits/ borders*.

Keywords: splitting effect, border, bridge, nodes, place

A Preamble: about Nodes and Places – a necessary (con)textualism

The present intervention might elicit from the start an assignation of the statutory *method* applied for clarifying and offering arguments for deploying conceptual landmarks upon the offering re-signification of both *node and place*, but also for a new interpretation of symbolically-replaceable acceptations of the bridge notion.

This opportune situation allows us to renounce the status of a unifying concept, glue or conciliatory mediator/instrument which could be attributed to the bridge, in order to re- invest it with a distinctive sense of *splitting effect.*

Why *node*?

The explanation could be based upon *placing the nodal* within a succession of centers, a concept generating a double physiognomy,

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replayed by: *nodal space* (conceived as open interiority) and *attractor space* (marked by implosion and nodality).

Cultural nodes are the metaphorical alternative for organically-investigational networks. Launched by Marcel Cornis-Pope and John Neubauer (2004), these [*cultural nodes*] designate confluence points created within the cultural-historical network and constituting a source of generative event tensions.

Temporal nodes (as limiting landmarks of historical periods and events) – *institutional nodes* (social structures controlling cultural literature) – *topographic nodes* (centers with centrifugal dissemination roles for the imaginary/ centripetal – attractor centers) – or *figurative nodes* (connotations with extensions in history, the imaginary, stereotypes, texts, social-cultural symbols) are considered to be instruments used for structuring a cultural topography.

If, in Baudrillard's (2008) opinion, any mapping of *the real-never-more-than simulation* has to be accepted as *access node*, then the concept of *border nodes* can be used (here) through a needed connection, as structuring instruments for a cultural topos.

Acknowledging any marks given to a space (which is continuous, homogenous, isotropic or quantifiable) facilitates access to *the place* – named here a horizontal-flat surface, charged with messages, accepting a vertical opening towards a (re)consideration of the *chronotropic* as a way of investing space with signals and reactions (messages) of our personal world.

Why *place*?

On the same note of (*con*)*textualism* launched by Thomas Schumacher (1971) and reinterpreted by Christian Norberg-Schulz (2003), *the place* adds up to the totality of real things, created from material substances, and thus constitutes a *total qualitative phenomenon* (impossible to reduce, without losses, to its properties/spatial relations) which signifies both *a (political) practice and a (poetical) atmosphere.*

Place achieves (with an interest in our present theme) a *splitting effect*, by orienting and channeling towards its sub- centers, through *vectorial* translation and an accent on identification as a *pattern* for transferring one particularity from an object to/towards another (Augustin Ioan, 2005).

If *the place* accepts the potential of receiving different contents, the bridge as *splitting place* is perceived as *a way of traveling through/dividing spaces which can have either a constantly equal quality or different values.*

In fact, the bridge is an expression of operating distinctive formulations, in a Heideggerian (2005) manner, between the *corporeal*

object and it's *positioning in regard to the bridge*, as well as between *the actual image of the object itself* and *the mental representation occurring when we describe (imagine) the bridge*.

The Poetics of the Bridge as a Splitting Place: Text Border Notes

Covering the *phantasmatic* registry of debates taking place in the Cluj center (The Center for Imagination Studies[12]), as a mod(ality) of knowing diagnoses for the postmodern symptom of airtight building breakage, seen as inter-domain landmarks, *the metaphor of the three-headed bridge* seems the most appropriate trope for certifying an inclusion within postmodernity's tide, or, in Cornel Vâlcu's acceptation, the *chance of being on the bridge* means being far from any *hard* settlement, means being equally disputed and absorbed by the three pillars: *the object, the subject and the constitutions functioning as language*.

In fact, the score used here is largely similar to the Humboldtian formula centered upon the triad of ontological *actantes* and textual alterity, which acknowledges a certain tension between *time and its anterior histories*. The tension between time and anterior histories, although maintaining the impossibility of both conceptual categories/values being true at the same time, offers the presupposition of a third variable between P and non-P, leaving place for an inside/outside already transmuted into the dream of *a third* subsuming *the second.*

Trying to explanatorily justify his preference for the *three-headed bridge metaphor*, Cornel Vâlcu confessed his intrinsic motivation for an idea materialized in an answer with the structure of "*here, here, here*" to any problems the relationship established between *generic terms a, b, c* might pose.

The theorized tension investigates postmodernity's slippage towards/through different margins (*three heads, three edges!* our note) in order to appraise the *hard* qualities of a definit(ive) settling in which the postmodern condition (totally detached from any conceptualizations Harvey or Lion might launch) could be considered also an absorption, a reduction to primordial essences, a return to the *original place* , a downward attraction towards the bridge's three pillars as the subject tries to avoid being dominated by a narcissistic reflection.

Hopping from one foot to their other would be a feasible solution for the indicated situation.

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[12] See for more details: http://phantasma.lett.ubbcluj.ro/?p=3380.

Changing the position of one's feet will state that "when you are safe you are not on the bridge" in the context in which the bridge is not invested with the expressive signification of a relationship metaphor, but acquires a connotation of divisible, separating, unsettling and destabilizing factor, an exponent of de-relationalization and de-territorialization.

The few qualities already cited can be included within a characterization of role and its special mission, attributed to a construct/construction: "a being who gathers materials for building a bridge but, instead of starting to build, he wastes it by throwing it, from time to time, towards those who happen to pass by him".

One has to note Humboldt's opinion about the involvement of objectivity in the relationship between subject and object. If alterity exercises a double pressure upon the subject – determinist and final – in the acceptation of communication as an attribute/ distribution of *the one* – objectivity occurs in the *third moment/semiotic account: if the first two ask/demand comment, the third reclaims interpretation*.

With a recourse to synonyms established through the "rule of either/or" – either *thirdness or still nature* – the concepts (as light interpretations of the *eidos* with restrictive ramifications in the sense and content of words) reclaim a conjugated existence for both the subject and its imprint, message reception by the partner and any effect the word might have as a solid-sense unit and also as a linguistic sign. Equally divided, the relationship notes the interdependence between *object – subject – language*.

Affording a priority position to *the poetical* (to the detriment of *the political*) the image of a *three- headed bridge* suggests a dynamic connection/ pre- established movement between/from the three constitutive agents [*object- subject- language*] whose status is not entirely clear but continuously modified by contacting alterity.

Amended – from the perspective of a relationship we have already discussed – Cornel Vâlcu's metaphor proves that the ego represents the strongest category within the triple equation of ontological agents, the one accepting doublings, being at once an author of the synthesis and the headquarters of phenomena, divided between *alter* and *ego*: the *always-dislocated ego is/remains one: the two anticipates the third-order plan of language (signifier – designate – sense) and the third underlines, in an Aristotelian manner, the dynamics/energhia of the already- implemented relationships*.

80

The Politics of the Bridge as a Splitting Place: Image Border Notes

From the perspective of the same *three heads/ three borders* [*object – subject – language*] subsumed to the *splitting effect sense*, the three TV series – the original *Bron/Broen* and its later variations, seen as geographical remakes – *The Tunnel* and *The Bridge* – illustrate *the object* through the image of an inanimate corpse on the border, discovered, as the case may be, in the tunnel or on the bridge.

The body on the border, the presence of *two* body halves belonging to *two* different women, fragments which symbolically become a pretext-offer a formulation for the investigation of cultural, social, economic, attitudinal-psychological and political halves existing between two distinct spaces. A connection to the *immediately- near-the- center space* is thus presented, seen here as *a blurred edge* with a double role, both of *rejection*, even exclusion, but also of *reassembling or total unification*.

In *Bron/Broen*, on the Oresund bridge *uniting* the Swedish town of Malmo and the Danish capital Copenhagen, a strange corpse is abandoned *exactly on the border line*; it comprises two halves which, before the crime, belonged to two different women and will be identified as: *one half belonging to a Swedish politician and the other half to a Danish prostitute*.

The French series *The Tunnel* takes over without effecting any modification the social status of the murdered feminine persons, placing the body in different spot, *on* the Channel Tunnel (the bridge tunnel between Folkestone and Calais) on the border separating France form England (the identified *halves* belonging this time to *a French politician and an English prostitute).*

In exchange, the American production *The Bridge* modifies the profile of the deceased women, operating upon certain differences (compared with the other two series) which deal with the identity of contextual characters (partially modifying and nuancing the socio-professional status of the victims) but keeping the special circumstances in which the composite body is discovered: on the Bridge of the Americas, connecting El Paso in Texas and Ciudad Juarez in Chihuahua; and the body – reconstituted from two fragments – *reunites the upper part of judge Lorraine Gates and the lower part of a Mexican immigrant prostitute.*

The bridge/ tunnel/ border can be seen as heterotopic (Foucault, 2009) constructs, of cutting- neutering structures juxtaposing multiple spaces upon one place [place] which allows the existence of double-circulatory systems – both closing and opening, and whose functioning is almost certainly dependent upon the type of society/culture within

81

whose context it develops. Also, being [heterochronistically] dedicated to isolating and permissive space - time transformations, it will apply the coordinates of a *known or imagined place* to its *reclaimed space- time.*

The *politics of border imagery* uses an exposure mechanism (in)*corpore*(ated) and unable to avoid ideological inflections, and thus it cultivates an a-centric strategy of eluding cultural mediation and keeping intact (just) the communitarian reality already involved in the relationship.

Bron/Broen presents the perspective of the *bridge as a splitting place* intersecting both the parody zone and the representational. In Linda Hutcheon's (1989) opinion, parody critically signals present representations as they occur from older ones and accepts any ideological consequences derived both from continuity and difference and with a particular accent upon the singularity of representational politics.

In fact, using the vehicle of the above-mentioned series, we are in the presence of two divided couples and a divided *subject*- on one side, the victims, on the other the investigators: Saga and Martin – opposed hard personalities who transmit easily-decipherable stereotypes by their way of reaction – cold, distant, reserved, obeying official politics – for the Swedes; or, on the contrary, amiable, cool, instinctive for the Danes. A double division, the northern border flaunts the differences and maintains a form of traveling along the edge (see the lack of formalities/political tensions when crossing the border from one side to the other).

If the bridge in *Bron/Broen* is valued through impressive imagery using spectacular theatrical techniques (lights resembling stage illumination, a graded projection of images seen from afar) *The Tunnel* is defined by its hidden, enigmatic substitutes, placed upon reverse coordinates, in the shadows (under the sea), becoming thus a messenger of claustrophobic proportions.

In a Lyotardian note, impulses are transmitted to the plate body, in order to achieve a blockage and/or exclusion, and to deepen the sexualizing tensions seen as a differentiating landmark (we offer as an example Karl's adventure on the other side of the Chanel or Elisa's dysfunctional sex-appeal). On a psychoanalytical note, the complex of identity implies a dissipation risk for the central self, needing a way of repression and active involvement through effective action, and suggests a subliminal appeal to a reverse formulation which would ensure an equally intense affirmation of its own identity.

Preferentially applied, the linguistic interaction becomes the central pillar of *The Tunnel*; if (in *Bron/Broen*) Saga and Martin integrate and

82

accept the flood of communication through accessing a common idiom, Karl is denied the possibility of joining the conversation when Elise addresses her colleagues in French.

Languages thus state that the postmodern primacy of double conscience affects the status (complete with schizoid symptoms – targeting the feminine heroine in all three variations of the series) of the individual – seen here in his quality of exponent/subject for a cultural conglomerate, the one who lives, simultaneously, on multiple planes and who has access (premeditated in the victims' case, and ad-hoc in the investigative team's case) to double identities/representations.

The bridge/border between El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua and the *soft atypical relationship* between Sonya Cross and Marco Ruiz offer *The Bridge* series a role of maximizing expressions of cultural division and social tensions. Without avoiding statistics, the series identifies Ciudad Juarez – a space controlled by drug cartels and corruption – as the place where immigrant women suffered, a no-hope area where , starting in 1993, hundreds of women were killed and too many – kidnapped; and establishes El Paso as a nodal space of debates about immigration reform.

The significance of the bridge/tunnel can be interpreted as a place/bridge/transfer formula or as a unifying glue for spatial/ temporal and/or contextual movement, but also as transporting space (both connecting and separating), with a clear disposition towards inter-relationships between opposing forces and separate directions.

Not surprising, such a construct is larger than the *simple state of formatting the reunified place*, in the sense in which its re- projected structure changes the formula of space itself. If the *bridge* denominates an actual urban/rural space, *the tunnel*, as a hidden, cryptic, enigmatic space, only deepens the idea of separation, claustrophobia, physical distance.

The Splitting Effect – Poetics and Politics

Through the prism of three registries represented by constructional landmarks: *object – subject – language*, theorized by the *metaphor of the bridge with three heads* and applied to the image of TV series we use as a support for our study, the immediate conclusion is that *the bridge* can be a construct with a high degree of secondary, a separating place limiting both ordering *poetics* and *politics*. Caught in an unequal relationship both with *hard centrality* and the *soft edge* of power relations which it mediates and separates, the bridge as glue for limiting, marginal spaces can be seen as a hostile adversary of the center, reticent and keeping its distance from anything positioned-in-the-middle.

83

Ciprian Mihali (2006) signals the constitutively- irreducible tension of limit-spaces, which he considers as pressure generated by the double registry of formulas both uniting and separating *the place*, extracted and replaced inside any influence the center might extend upon it. With an interest in the three TV series already discussed, one can accept there is no such thing as an inside and an outside, but only positioning upon the separating line and/or confounding the interior and exterior, in the idea of contaminating, contesting or denouncing old ways of thinking, old customs and neighboring patterns of behavior.

The clearly indicated place – *on the bridge* – becomes an edge of transgression, an inner separation of limits and an attractor from the outside towards the inside/ center, in order to be taken into possession – an endeavor offering the possibility of meeting between norm and limit: the edge confirms the rule , but also unveils and denounces its precarity. In fact, *a place of tensions* for an apparent *identity* contact is maintained – as uncertain and vulnerable as they might be.

In a sociological vision, *the poetics and the politics of the bridge* seem more interested in fragmentation, taking into account the fact that they recognize and establish spaces/ places included in the melting process *from the middle*, while signaling certain repercussions in the re-inflamed and revigorated, ontologically secure feeling – in equal measure artefact, creator or conductor for values/cultures and esthetic qualities.

A first objective of this construct would take into account, from a Simmelian (1994) analytical perspective, just the escalation of visibility through reuniting time and space, re-assembling the two separated halves, an interdependence of ambiguous functions and forms akin to a power laboratory seen as a way of inclusion/exclusion.

The incarnate or experimented space as place – the bridge – can be approached in a Heidegerrian way as a socio-cultural matrix and interrelating formula for distant networks, through a recourse to rational and calculated doses of maximal costs.

The bridge is also seen as a stage of horizontally-vertical transversally and rhisomatic landmark, in Deleuze and Guattari's (1980) acceptation, without restrictive or fixed limits, and defined in the following terms – a dynamic, non- heterogeneous, non- dichotomous separation, with a beginning and an open end, a stimulus for nomad tides while being a neutral middle landmark in itself.

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