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## **Borders: A conceptual framework**

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# Borders: A conceptual framework

Nathalie Roelens

## Introduction

In the era of globalization, transnational flows, new migration policies and refugee crisis, diversity and border crossing constitute a significant challenge and, as a result, the **need to understand borders has gained in relevance and urgency**. With a total of 45% of non-national residents and 160,000 cross-border commuters, its deliberate focus on fostering and enhancing cross-border connections and opportunities, Luxembourg offers a prime example for these challenges. Hence, this contribution provides some preliminary tools to question borders.

Between the two polarities – on the one hand, a utopia of mobility and freedom in a world without borders and, on the other hand, a militarization of borders in a world of surveillance and control, a whole range of border items can be declined. A border can be broken down into **(1) its ontological nature; (2) its devices and functions** (underlying to negotiations with borders and thus with discourses and practices of displacement) depending on the tripartite size and the role of the border item, according to the Latin etymons: *limis*, *limen*, *zona*. Moreover, each type must be applied not only to **places** but also to **linguistic, social, juridical (norm and exception) or cultural boundaries**. Human sciences envisage unanimously borders as an anthropological constant, which structures the very basis of our thought processes and organises life in society. Declining the concept is then a way to transform this epistemological evidence in a heuristic tool.

An **alphabetic glossary** and other databases (**Border allegories and myths, Border artefacts, Border modelizations**) will be soon available and operational on [www.mis.lu](http://www.mis.lu), section “Resources”), as interactive and freely implementable tools.

## Ontological nature of borders

**Borders are declinable into the following polarities (indicative and not rigid): separating vs joining; horizontal vs vertical; impermeable vs permeable; solid vs liquid; euphorical vs dysphorical; symbolic vs real; mental vs factual; natural vs cultural; sacred vs profane; fixed vs moving, etc.** Behind this typology lies the conviction that, even if they coincide with rivers or mountain ranges, they remain entirely human constructs, constantly redefined, provisional.

### Just a few examples of the horizontal/vertical axis:

- Balzac’s novel *Le Père Goriot* provides us with a case of vertical bordering: The Pension Vauquer embodies the social stratification in levels of the Parisian bourgeois architecture with a “bel étage” at the first floor and the “maid’s room” in the attic. Le Père Goriot is displaced, “downgraded”, from the lowest to the highest floor throughout his progressive decline.
- Luxembourg city is polarized between the so-called “**upper town**”: **plateau Kirchberg/Limpertsberg**, “Ville Haute”, a “raised, enclosed place” (Colas Blaise, e.a., 2011: 111), isolated enclaves for higher social layers (gentrification, wealth, expensive property, conservative oriented, with few foreigners, “Luxusbuerg”) accessible via an ascending route that leads upwards to an elevated island, whereas Pfaffenthal, **Grund**, the **lower** part of Bonnevoie (with its mixed population, red light district, drug and crime zone, community life) accommodates lower social layers (underprivileged milieu, with the highest percentage of foreigners). Peculiar to Luxembourg is that the emblem evolves from a metaphor to a mentality: e.g. a “fortress mentality”.

- The Parisian ring (“*périf*”) is a mental impassable barrier in the eyes of a suburban dweller willing to “**climb**” to Paris and a **high** registration fee of 45.000 € at the Commercial High School HEC is a prohibitive barrier for **middle** class families, etc.

Gilles Deleuze, in his *Différence et répétition*, invokes the motive of the **sluice** or **lock** (“**écluse**”) to embody a philosophy of difference, i.e. “difference of level, of temperature, of pressure, of tension, of potential, difference of intensity” (Deleuze, 1968: 286), It’s the “difference of intensity” or “disparity” (ibid.: 287) which conditions the appearing of a phenomenon. Hence, since the limit is a disjunctive disposal, creating energising thresholds is a condition for individuation (see also Vercruysse, 2016). In our own *Eloge du dépaysement* (Roelens, 2015), we showed (drawing on Kierkegaard’s *salto mortale*) that the Alps can be seen as a lifting of prohibitions for the Northern traveller to the South (Lamartine, Stendhal, Dumas, etc.), inaugurating a “becoming other”.

## Devices and functions

Italian architect Stefano Boeri, in his article “Border syndrome” (2003), starts from the statement that the pervasive fluidity, the smoothness of the geopolitical map, the individuals flowing freely in a liquid society is a widespread utopia overseeing frictions and recent proliferation of “borders, walls, fences, thresholds, signposted areas, security systems and checkpoints, virtual frontiers, specialized zones, protected areas, and areas under control” (Boeri, 2003: 52). Boeri sees population flows and confinements as two extremes of the same process “as symptoms and results of the dialectic between the energies of flows and the enduring power of local identities” (ibid.: 52). Market and exchange globalization, standardization of behaviour, intangible communication are overseeing territorial phenomena, the irreducible specificity of local spaces. A few years later Régis Debray, in *Eloge des frontières* (Debray, 2010) (“In Praise of Borders”) shares the same sentiment that “sans-frontiérisme” is nothing but illusion. He insists on the fact that around the world new and ancient borders are being drawn or redrawn. However, whereas Debray celebrates borders as a way to defend traditions, particularities, and thus otherness, threatened by “globalization” and “globish” (as a new *lingua franca*), “a remedy to indifference”, going back to the sacred gesture of Romulus circumscribing a “*templum*” with a plough in the soil as a foundation act of Rome, Boeri examines the devices themselves: enclaves and exclaves, disputed and neutral zones, improbably straight or old borders almost faded into irrelevance. Focussing on the territories of Israel and Palestine which provide an intense and violent ‘laboratory’ for the working of a territorial and global conflict, he examines extreme conditions in which formal and informal borders organized by national, religious and strategic imperative and the way they affect the everyday life of both Palestinians and Israelis. **Luxembourg is an ideal place to be “sampled” as a laboratory of dynamics and processes that are conditioning many other parts of Europe following the same logic.** The advantage of Boeri’s method is that he sees borders as three-dimensional devices, in all their variety. Once again, we should interpret these material devices as paradigmatic for **identity, language (rhetorical), cultural and imaginary boundaries.**

**Enclosures:** perimeter boundaries around groups of individuals or systems of activities, impermeable, imply isolation, exclusion, security/insecurity. The control is unilateral: only one party controls it.

**Pipes or corridors:** cover a long and circular area, enclose a flow but are entered or exited only from points at their extreme ends: channels or routes that conduct a flow through another territory. Pipes isolate the flow, avoiding contact between the two parties involved.

**Funnels:** boundaries that select and direct flows within a threshold. They orient and/or measure the canalization of a flow from one side of the fence to the other.

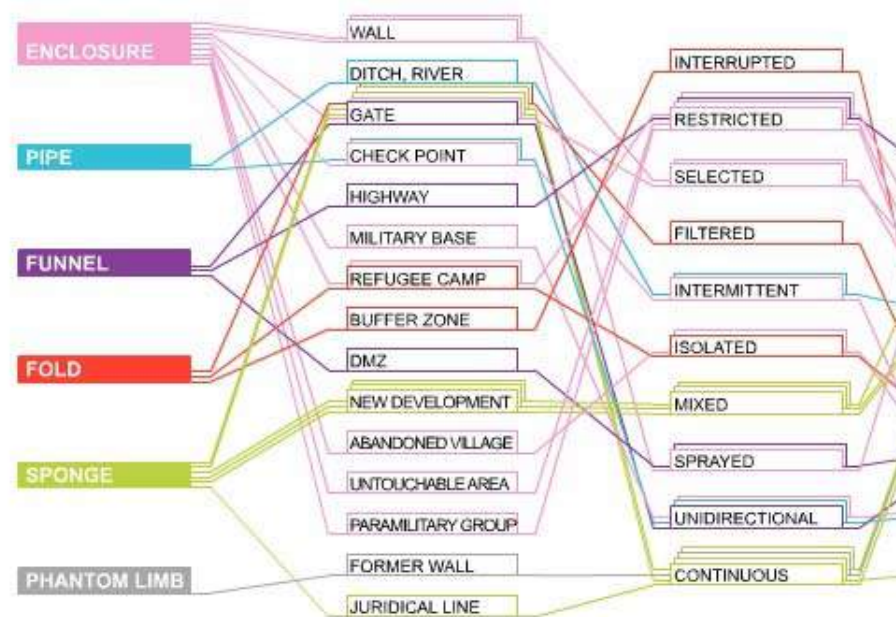


**Folds or sacks:** boundaries that pop up from the doubling up of a principal line and that take on a sort of “third” nature. The two parties involved generate a third area (a non-man’s land, an interstitial or residual place) characterized by its void condition, where the flow is trapped between parties.

**Sponges:** border devices generated around a former border acting as an attractor of flows and programs from both sides and bringing them into a state of permanence, a border-generated strategy, economic and/or political aim.

**Phantom limbs:** conditions generated when a physical border disappears. Often, the memory of a border situation regenerates the border.

Remarkable is that the schema of “Border Devices” (by the collective Multiplicity) presented on the Venice Biennale (2003) immediately shows that the categories are highly interconnected and that few in-between categories are possible.



[http://andyweir.info/photo\\_6974337.html#photos\\_id=6974337](http://andyweir.info/photo_6974337.html#photos_id=6974337) (DMZ: Demilitarized zone).

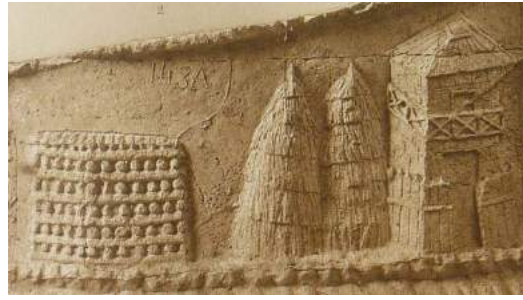
To Boeri’s scheme, we would like to add **three axes** (*limes*, *zona*, *limen*) which are underlying to the logics of displacement. Besides, in each of the three axes we notice cultural requalification and symbolic reshaping of borders through artistic practice.

*Limes*: wall

### *The Limites of the Roman Empire*

The *limes* (latin: *limes*, *limitis*, ancestor of *limit* in mathematics, *limitation* in ethics: to know your limits) was an **impermeable** border defence which marked the boundaries of the Roman Empire at its greatest extent in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century AD, a fortified frontier with a whole apparatus of deforested zones, watchtowers, ditches, forts, civilian settlements, roads, etc., e.g. the *Limes Britannicus*, the Hadrian’s Wall in the north of England, the *Limes Germanicus*, the *Limes Arabicus*, facing the desert, the Antonine Wall in Scotland, and so forth (most of them have been granted a Unesco World Heritage status). It stretched over 5,000 km from the Atlantic coast of northern Britain, through Europe to the Black Sea, and from there to the Red Sea and across North Africa to the Atlantic coast. It had a defensive aim but also a customs ser-

vice one and a political one. After all, the discontinue fortification was more symbolic than efficient, as much a **mental barrier** as a material one, a sacred border beyond which human beings did not transgress, and if they did, it was evidence that they had passed the bounds of reason and civilization. To cross the border was the mark of a savage, e.g. the Alemanni. The *limes* was indeed conceived as a defence against the "Barbarians", *barbaros* meaning non-Greek, antonym of *politès*, citizen, (onomatopoeically: a person speaking a non-Greek language), primitive, uncivilized, living outside, foreigner. The frieze on the Trajan column represents the construction of this "**security system**".



*Limes Germanicus*

### *The Berlin Wall (Berliner Mauer)*

Immediately strikes the rich vocabulary resemantizing the border and hence reconfiguring the initial categories. This four meter high barrier that divided Berlin, constructed by the German Democratic Republic to cut off West Berlin from surrounding East Germany and from East Berlin, was not a **line** (although the memory consider it as such) but an **impermeable zone or device** ("dispositive" in the sense of Agamben) (at the contrary of the Ligne Maginot or the Great Wall of China) including guard towers placed along large concrete walls, which circumscribed a wide area situated on the territory of the GDR "*Hinterland Mauer*", (later known as the "death strip") that contained anti-vehicle trenches, "fakir beds" (bed of nails) and other defences (dogs, automatic guns). The Wall was a metonymy of a bigger apparatus, called "iron curtain" by Churchill in 1945 (from then on separating Western Europe and the Eastern Bloc during the Cold War) and spreading from Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic. The Berlin Wall was officially referred to as the "Anti-Fascist Protection Rampart" by GDR authorities, but in practice the Wall served to prevent the massive emigration and defection, and sometimes referred to as the "Wall of Shame" by the West Berlin city government (term coined by Willy Brandt condemning the Wall's restriction on freedom of movement). Between 1961 and 1989, the Wall prevented almost all emigration from East to West Berlin, although "wall woodpeckers" attacked the Wall with rudimental tools. Around 5,000 people attempted to escape over the Wall, with an estimated death of almost 200 in and around Berlin. Till now the tunnels in the Berlin Wall (Tunnel 29, 1962, Tunnel 57, 1964) allude to the number of fugitives). After the fall of the Wall and its demolition, the border remains as a psychological one.





*A line of grey stones wears the trace of the destructed Wall.*

*Artists (see East Side Gallery) invest this memory representing and narrating stories of border crossing.*



*Gabriel Heimler, Der Mauerspringer, Wall jumper, East Side Gallery, Friedrichshain, Germany, 1989 (restored for the 20th Anniversary of the Fall of the Wall, in 2009). [www.gabriel-heimler.de](http://www.gabriel-heimler.de)*



*Indonesian artist Teguh Ostenrik walks behind four segments of the Berlin Wall at his workshop in Depok, West Java, Indonesia, 7 November 2014. Ostenrik bought the segments a year after the Wall fell in 1989 as part of his ongoing public art installation project called "Patung Menembus Batas" or "sculpture through the boundaries". The artist has a special bond with the Berlin Wall as he settled in West Berlin for 10 years before it fell.*



*Paris Exhibition "Art Liberté – Du mur de Berlin au street art" (15 April - 8 July 2015), Parvis de la gare de l'Est: concrete blocs of 1,20 m x 1 m.*

*« Les trente plaques installées sur le parvis de la gare de l'Est - Ces trente morceaux du mur de Berlin ont été conservé par Sylvestre Verger, collectionneur et patron de SVO Art. Il les a confiés à des grands noms du street art, en phase avec la tradition du graffiti qui a vu le jour sur les parois du mur. 'Je voulais rendre hommage à ces peintres éphémères qui ont défié la dictature avec leurs dessins', a expliqué au Parisien le collectionneur, qui a travaillé en partenariat avec la Ville de Paris et la SNCF. Parmi les artistes ayant accepté de se prêter au jeu se trouvent notamment les Français Christophe Bouchet et Thierry Noir, qui furent parmi les premiers à avoir osé, en 1984, utiliser cette frontière bétonnée en guise de support artistique. 'Pour les Allemands, le mur était tabou, s'est souvenu Thierry Noir auprès du Parisien. Pour nous, peindre était une délivrance contre la mélancolie. Grâce à ces peintures, les Berlinoises ont changé de regard sur le mur'. Les têtes colorées, aux contours simples et aux lèvres charnues de l'artiste sont devenues incontournables sur l'East Side Gallery. Avec Christophe Bouche et Kiddy Citny, Thierry*



*Noir, qui habite toujours à Berlin, a colorisé trois Trabant, les fameuses voitures de l'ex-RDA, qui seront également exposées devant la gare. Outre leur implication pour l'exposition, ils ont aussi effectué un autre geste, pérenne cette fois. Dans la rue d'Alsace, derrière la gare, ils ont peint ensemble depuis fin mars une vaste fresque destinée à rester sur place, pour ne jamais oublier. » (Mathilde Doiezie, « Des fragments du mur de Berlin s'exposent à Paris », *Le Figaro*, 10/4/15)*

### *The Mexico-United States barrier*

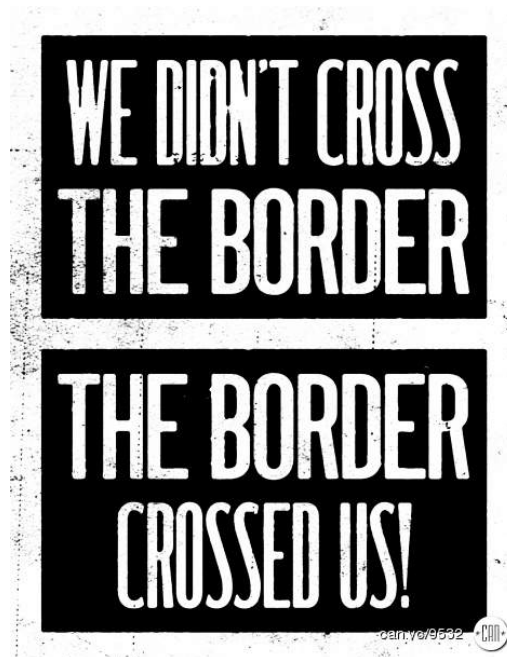
This barrier (**funnel or sponge**), also known as the “Border Fence”, “Border Barrier” or “Triple Wall” is a collection of several barriers, designed to prevent illegal drugs traffic and illegal immigration. The barrier is part of three larger operations: Operation Gatekeeper in California, Operation Hold-the-Line in Texas, and Operation Safeguard in Arizona. The barriers are strategically placed to mitigate the flow of illegal border crossings along the Mexico–United States international border; however, they are generating human traffic and damaging the environment. Besides, this frontier has engendered a new genre: **cross-border movies**, such as Gregory Nava, *El Norte*, 1983 or Chris Weitz, *A Better Life*, 2011.

In 1988, performer Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Emily Hick enacted a “Border Wedding” on the beach across the *Tortilla Curtain* or *Great Divider* between Mexico and the U.S. (San Diego), literally through the border fence, where the Playas de Tijuana meets the Pacific Ocean, with their guests sitting on both sides of the borderline.



*Border State Park / Playas de Tijuana, 1988, <http://www.lepeuplequimanque.org/en/borderscape>*

Guillermo Gómez-Peña, together with the Border Art Workshop / Taller de Arte Fronterizo he founded, realized a lot of performances to denounce the border imposed by the Treaty of Guadalupe (1848) in which Mexico had to cede huge parts to the US. He considers this border as an open wound, and adheres to the motto on a sign held by Chicano migrants in the April 9<sup>th</sup> march in Dallas (2006): “We didn’t cross the border, the border crossed us”.



<http://www.elkilombo.org/the-border-crossed-us/>

### *The Korean Demilitarized Zone between North and South-Korea*

It is a strip of land running across the Korean Peninsula, established at the end of the Korean War to serve as a **buffer zone**, 250 kilometres long, approximately 4 km wide and, despite its name, the most heavily **militarized** border in the world. Since November 15, 1974, the South has discovered that four tunnels crossing the DMZ have been dug by North Korea. The tunnels are believed to have been planned as a military invasion route by North Korea but North Korea claimed that the tunnels were for coal mining; however, no coal has been found in the tunnels. Both North and South Korea maintain *peace villages* in sight of each other's side of the DMZ. Villagers are classed as Republic of Korea citizens, but are exempt from paying tax and other civic requirements such as military service.

### *The Israeli West Bank Barrier*

This 700 km long separation barrier was built by Israel in the West Bank or along the 1949 Armistice Agreement Line (pencilled on a map by Moshe Dayan at the end of the war between Israel and Jordan and remaining until the Six Day war in 1967 after which Israel occupied Palestinian-inhabited territories east of the line), known as the "Green line". The new Barrier supposedly "protects civilians from Palestinian terrorism". It is a multi-layered fence system having three fences, pyramid-shaped stacks of barbed wire on the two outer fences, a lighter-weight fence with intrusion detection equipment in the middle, an anti-vehicle ditch, patrol roads on both sides, and a smooth strip of sand for "intrusion tracking". The barrier contains an on-average 60-metre wide exclusion area. Abraham Yehoshua called the construction of a "**shared**" border "as a necessary preliminary to eventual cohabitation", "a precondition to any political integration" (Boeri, 2003: 53). However, the map shows an area almost completely covered with fences: "war zone barriers, bypass roads that join them up, military zones for the Israeli army, Palestinian villages and cities, refugee camps, areas that have no jurisdiction, [...] a polyarchic territory, impossible to reduce to two areas [...] a gap into which the critical onlookers and negotiators have fallen in their incapacity to escape the rhetoric of symmetry. [...] an empty space" (Boeri, 2003: 54). Barrier opponents claim that the barrier seeks to annex Palestinian land under the guise of security and undermines peace

negotiations by **unilaterally establishing new borders**. As in the other cases the labels are eloquent: in Hebrew the wall is called “separation or security fence” motivated by an argument of self-defence, whereas in Arabic it is called “**Wall of apartheid**”, because perceived as a plan to confine the Palestinian population to specific areas, intended to redraw Israel's borders.

“Sean zone” is the name given to the enclave (**fold or sack**) between the 1949 Green Line and the fence. The humanitarian impact of the Barrier is enormous. The route inside the West Bank severs communities, families, people's access to services, livelihoods and religious and cultural amenities. In addition, the Palestinians living there are separated from the rest of the West Bank by the Wall and often cannot cultivate their own fields on the other side. Farming is a primary source of income in the Palestinian communities situated along the Barrier's route, an area that constitutes one of the most fertile areas in the West Bank. Nevertheless, Israel states that the topography does not permit putting the barrier along the Green Line in some places because hills or tall buildings on the Palestinian side would make the barrier ineffective against terrorism. By contrast, the International Court of Justice states that in such cases it is only legal to build the barrier inside Israel. A report from Physicians for Human Rights-Israel states that the barrier imposes “almost-total separation” on the hospitals from the population they are supposed to serve. The argument of self-defence or the state of necessity has been declared illegal, a violation of international law by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 2004. The ICJ said that an occupying power cannot claim that the lawful inhabitants of the occupied territory constitute a “foreign” threat for the purposes of Article 51 of the UN Charter.

Some Israelis oppose the barrier. The Israeli Peace Now movement has stated that while they would support a barrier that follows the 1949 Armistice lines, the “current route of the fence is intended to destroy all chances of a future peace settlement with the Palestinians and to annex as much land as possible from the West Bank” and that the barrier would “only increase the blood to be spilt on both sides and continue the sacrificing of Israeli and Palestinian lives for the settlements.”

Symbolic and artistic protest flourishes. Between 23 December 2013 and 5 January 2014 a major demonstration against the wall was staged in London, in the grounds of St. James's Church, Piccadilly. The demonstration was entitled “Bethlehem Unwrapped”, and featured a large section of a replica wall, reproducing both the fabric of the Israeli wall, and the graffiti to be found on it. The demonstration took place just days after the death of Nelson Mandela, and prominence was therefore given on billboards to Mandela's statement “The UN took a strong stand against apartheid. We know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians”. The artists invited visitors to add additional graffiti, particularly in the form of prayers for peace. St. James' Church, which allowed the demonstration on its grounds, and permitted its own church building to be almost entirely hidden by the wall, issued a public statement supporting the right of Israel to defend its borders, but condemning the wall, and the suffering, which it caused to Palestinian peoples.



However, the situation is more complex. Even if the wall has been called the “world's largest protest graffiti” (a graffiti on the road to Bethlehem in the West Bank states “*Ich bin ein Berliner*”), some of these have been removed by the Israelis, and sometimes by people on the Palestinian side where graffiti proliferates as a protest against the existence of the barrier and demanding an end to it. Although the graffiti artists felt that they were making a statement with their pieces that would help bring attention and help to the Palestinians, many Palestinians feel that it turns the wall into something beautiful.

But this reluctance did not impede other manifestations.

In June 2004, Francis Alÿs performed a walk with a leaking can of green paint tracing a line following the portion of the Green Line that runs through the municipality of Jerusalem.



*The Green Line: “Sometimes doing something poetic can become political and sometimes doing something political can become poetic”*  
<http://francisalys.com/greenline/rima.html>

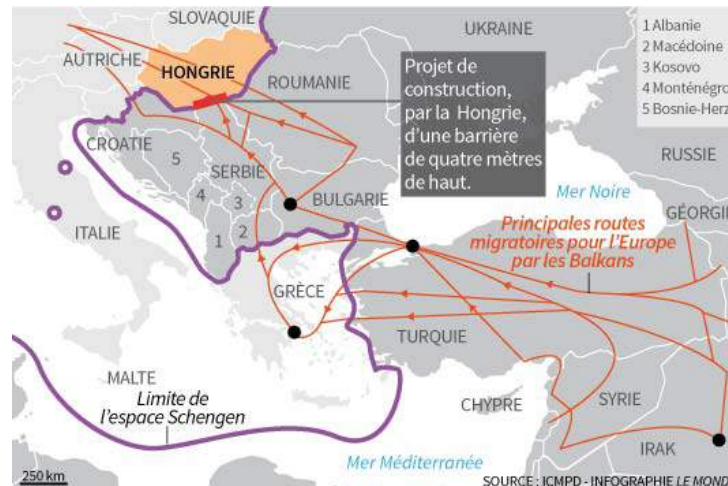
Alÿs’s action of dribbling green paint behind him raised the memory of the now erased Green Line at a time when the separation fence was under construction. He later encouraged various commentators from Israel, Palestine, and other countries to reflect on his action, and their voices, sometimes sceptical, sometimes approving, can be heard while the video of his action is screened. Most importantly Alÿs wanted to ask what the role of poetic acts could be in highly charged political situations. Is an artistic operation a way to break with an overdetermined past in terms of representations, discourses of power and politics?

In August 2005, U.K. graffiti artist Banksy painted nine images on the Palestinian side of the barrier and returned in December 2007 adding new images for the exhibition “Santa's Ghetto in Bethlehem 2007” with the aim of drawing attention to poverty in the West Bank and boosting tourism. On the wall, it features, among other images, a peace dove dressed in a bullet-proof vest that is being aimed at. The Italian artist Blu, also contributor to the project, featured a walled Christmas tree surrounded by a number of stumps. In an expression of frustration, Palestinian artist “Trash” glued the lower part of a leg on the wall that is appearing to kick through it.

On June 21, 2006, when he visited Israel to give a concert, Pink Floyd's Roger Waters wrote “Tear down the wall” on the wall, a phrase from the Pink Floyd album *The Wall*. In 2007, with their project “Face2Face”, French artists JR and “Marco”, organized what was then (until at least 2010), considered to be the largest illegal photography exhibition ever made. In monumental formats, portraits of Israelis and Palestinians of similar professions and backgrounds were pasted next to each other on the wall. The idea was to highlight **similarities** rather than **differences** between the peoples. The project spanned over eight cities on both sides of the wall such as Bethlehem, Jericho, Ramallah and Jerusalem.

### *The anti-migrant wall between Hungary and Serbia*





In November 2015 Hungary completed a four-meter-high fence of 175 km along its border with Serbia (not a member of the EU) to stem the flow of tens of thousands of illegal migrants. Hungary is one of the main points of entry for migrants into the Schengen passport free zone, coming through the Balkans from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq.

Hungary's parliament has also passed legislation, defying UN criticism, to shorten the time for screening asylum claims and to reject applications from migrants, saying it "cannot afford to wait any longer" for the European Union to come up with a solution to the migration crisis. The issue has also become highly politicized, with Viktor Orban's government mounting a billboard campaign stoking fears that foreigners could bring epidemics and snatch the jobs of Hungarians, calling migration "a threat to European civilisation" and suggesting that an EU internment camp should be set up outside the bloc's borders. He has also launched a "national consultation on immigration and terrorism" – condemned by his own European People's Party bloc in the European Parliament – which asks questions such as "Do you agree that mistaken immigration policies contribute to the spread of terrorism?" A pro-immigration billboard campaign replied: "Come to Hungary, we're already working in London". The construction has drawn rebukes from Serbia and the United Nations Refugee Agency, evoking memories of the days of the Iron Curtain that Hungary was the first Communist country to dismantle!, and arguing that it would "place too many barriers" to the "inalienable human right" to seek asylum. See <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/hungary/11680840/Hungary-orders-100-mile-Serbia-border-fence-to-keep-out-migrants.html>

#### **Angela Merkel's position (2015):**

##### **"Building a Fence"**

*At the end of October, she went to a summit in Brussels involving the countries along the Balkan Route, the trail used by most refugees to get to Germany. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who built a barbed wire fence around his country to keep out the migrants, was also there. He saw, and enjoyed, seeing Merkel in a fix. He took the floor and said: "It is only a matter of time before Germany builds a fence. Then I'll have the Europe that I believe is right."*

*Merkel said nothing at first, a person present at the meeting relates. Only later, after a couple other heads of government had their say, did Merkel turn to Orbán and say: "I lived behind a fence for too long for me to now wish for those times to return." Merkel, the refugee crisis has made clear, has found the courage to justify her politics with her own biography. She no longer wants to be the woman without a face."*  
<http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/why-has-angela-merkel-staked-her-legacy-on-the-refugees-a-1073705.html>

### Border Controls Inside the Schengen Zone



*Der Spiegel, Graphic: Moving the Schengen border north.*

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/why-has-angela-merkel-staked-her-legacy-on-the-refugees-a-1073705.html>

### *The Mediterranean as a water wall*

Western history always saw the Mediterranean as a cradle of civilization where different languages and traditions meet in reciprocal respect, a mobile and ‘soft’ area of hybridisation, encounter, blending of traditions, cultures, costumes, with a sea in common. Thisedulcorated image sedimented in books is no longer valid. Today the Mediterranean is no longer a large and liquid network of relations that unite distant peoples linked by a common geographical condition. The coastal points of passage “have become very real **funnels** of populations” (Boeri, 2003: 54), a mix of clandestine migration, cruise ships, and military use, a conglomerate of schematic identities: “the fisherman, the clandestine immigrant, the soldier, the sailor, the tourist” (Boeri, 2003: 54). “The fact that each of these masks leads back to a rigid and not interconnecting system of channels and courses and that these often use common sea paths, but on different levels or at different moments of the day, and that they are invisible to each other, lead us to conclude that the Mediterranean is undergoing a certain ‘solidification’” (Boeri, 2003: 54). The Mediterranean today is a hard space, solid, ploughed by precise routes that move from points equally defined: from Valona to Brindisi, from Malta to Portopalo, from Algeri to Marseilles, from Suez to Gibraltar. A continent “where rigid border definitions prevail over the permeable internal flow. In southern Sicily or along the Pugliese coast, in Croatia, in Cyprus and along the Turkish and Lebanese coast, in Alexandria and Gibraltar, events confirm this transformation and suggest some important analogies with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict” (ibid.). In the meantime, after Boeri’s remarks, the situation has dramatically deteriorated, to that extent that some media do not speak any more about **migration** but about **exodus**. And paradoxically, the more people try to cross this **sea wall**, the less the governments decide to absorb the situation. Following the 2013 Lampedusa migrant shipwreck, the Italian government has decided to strengthen the national system for the patrolling of the Mediterranean sea by authorizing “Operation Mare Nostrum” (named after the ancient Roman name for the Mediterranean Sea), a military and humanitarian operation in order to rescue the migrants and arrest the traffickers of immigrants. During the operation, at least 150,000 migrants, mainly from Africa and the Middle East, arrived safely to Europe. The European Commission provided financial support for the operation with 1.8 million euro from the External Borders Fund. When the Italian government requested additional funds in order to continue the operation, the operation had to end (October 2014) and was superseded by Frontex’s Operation Triton, which operates a smaller search and rescue capability. Hence death rate among migrants to Europe in the Mediterranean increased. Unlike Mare Nostrum, Operation Triton focused on border protection rather than search and rescue, and operates closer to the

Italian coast. The Centres for Temporary Permanence (*Centri di Permanenza Temporanea*), Sant'Anna, Calabria, Crotone, are actually detention centres which present themselves as offering the status of guests to the foreign migrants waiting for regularization:

*The acronym "CIE" in Italian stands for "Centro di identificazione ed espulsione" (Center for Identification and Deportation). These centers were first established in 1998 following the approval by the centre-left government of the anti-immigration law known as "Turco Napoletano", from the name of the promoters. These centers, initially known as "Centri di permanenza temporanea" (Temporary Detention Centers), serve to detain "illegal" immigrants (i.e., those without papers) while the police identify them. The "Turco-Napolitano" law turned the "reception camps" into detention facilities. In 2002, a more restrictive law was passed: the so-called Bossi-Fini law. Moreover, in 2011 the same government passed a law that extended detention times to a maximum of 18 months, nine times longer than in the past. <https://strugglesinitaly.wordpress.com/equality/en-immigrants-detention-centers-in-italy/>*

*"Nonostante i cittadini stranieri si trovino all'interno dei CIE con lo status di trattenuti o ospiti, la loro permanenza nella struttura corrisponde di fatto ad una detenzione, in quanto sono privati della libertà personale e sono sottoposti ad un regime di coercizione che, tra le altre cose, impedisce loro di ricevere visite e di far valere il fondamentale diritto alla difesa legale." <http://www.meltingpot.org/Cosa-sono-i-C-I-E-Centri-di-Identificazione-ed-Espulsione.html#.VheeBnrtlBc>*

Besides, Sangate and Calais ("the Jungle") are new borders of a new sea wall to cross. A movie by Philippe Lioret, *Welcome* (2009), tells the story of a French swimming coach who tries to help a young Iraqi-Kurdish illegal immigrant, whose dream is to cross the Channel from Calais to Dover by any means possible to be reunited with his girlfriend. The Frenchman gives him temporary refuge at his home before the unfortunate attempt by the young man to reach the English coast by swimming. The "Jungle" has partially been dismantled on February 29<sup>th</sup> 2016.

*"Calais jungle camp where 3,000 migrants have lived for years is cleared: French authorities dismantle part of the encampment and relocate migrants to purpose built accommodation. Demolition crews entered the notorious 'Jungle' refugee camp and started clearing southern part. Thousands of refugees have been made to relocate into shipping containers while the camp is demolished. Last week court upheld order to evict hundreds from the sprawling centre, which had its own churches and restaurants. Authorities said they would use force if necessary to move migrants from their temporary homes in the camp". [www.dailymail.co.uk/refugeecrisis](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/refugeecrisis)<sup>1</sup>*

*Zona: zone*

*Zone of exception*

What we notice is that the border, since it is usually broader than a line, becomes a **zone of exception**. Initially the *zona non aedificanda*, for example the one around Paris, was a 250-meter large area around the fortified walls (the wall of Adolphe Tiers) and occupied by barracks and caravans, ragmen and tramps after the war of 1870 and even more after the hygienic strategical Haussmannian innovation plan (see Benjamin, 1939), which relegated the less endowed population to the North and the East of Paris ("zonage").

<sup>1</sup> Read more: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/29/french-authorities-begin-clearance-of-part-of-calais-jungle-camp>



Borders often generate temporary lawless zones, positioned outside of the sovereignty and jurisdiction that surrounds them, beyond the reach of the mechanism of state power, a “**state of emergency / zone of exception**” in the terms of Giorgio Agamben (2003). Its extraterritoriality gives rise to the suspension, overthrow or abolition of the pre-existing juridical order and violation of international law. The individual is deprived of his prior conditions as citizen, as a political being, and, in extreme cases life is whittled down to mere biological existence, to what Agamben calls “bare life”. For Agamben, the category of legal and spatial exception is exemplified by “the camp”, with its most extreme manifestation in the death camp, the place where life does not even have political value and where law is transformed into the cruel situation of an endless series of arbitrary regulations. These quasi-utopian spaces are immune from local jurisdiction and sometimes from taxation (such as tax loopholes, offshore tax havens) in order to liberate economic transactions from the restrictions imposed by the laws of nation states.

Since sovereign law is suspended, the site can be exposed to evil practices of biopolitics, and violence, as we saw in the case of the *limites* we enumerated. (Pirates or human traffickers lurk at the fringes where the coherent functions and sovereign power of the European empires had broken down. But, in the case of state failure to extend its control, the formation of self-governing societies in these spaces or catastrophe zones can be an opportunity for individuals to reaffirm their existence as political beings. Humanitarian zones or ad hoc tent cities become small universes operating by their own rules, a “**humanitarian bubble**” (metaphor coined by Rony Brauman (Brauman, 1996), who founded MSF (Médecins Sans Frontières in 1971). They acquire the potential to challenge the absolute authority of the state. Hence, the “humanitarian bubble” with all its contradictions, could perhaps turn its moral component into a challenge to political sovereignty and signal the possibility of a radical transformation of the relations between power, law and morality. And indeed, the expression could be reactivated into our concept of “**artistic bubble**”.

### *Wastelands*

Reflection on **wastelands** or “**Temporary Autonomous Zones**” (Hakim Bey, 2003) in recent urban semiotics has shown interest for the potential of empty spaces: “urban guerrilla” or “artistic operations” create new territories outside the dominant structured systems. These margins of the city or **interstitial zones**, white zones neutralised by town planners, are sceneries for unforeseen actions, “oxymoric places, cognitively weak, emotionally rich” (Sedda & Cervelli, 2006: 182). The *Manifeste du Tiers paysage* by Gilles Clément focusses on these unexploited fragments of the planetarian garden, a “reserve subtracted to the anthropised territory” (Clément 2004: 15). Clément invites us not to see these wastelands as expecting some allocation or project execution but to keep them living their own destiny, to confer them a “right to avoid planning” (“*droit au non-aménagement*”) (ibid.: 9). If any planning engenders a waste/drop (“*Tout aménagement génère un délaissé*” (ibid.: 21)), this waste must be protected against institutions eager to define their usage. It is important that the inhabitants themselves “invent” their usages, that we leave intact this experimental potential. It is not surprising that artists and writers have invested these places. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, photographer Eugène Adget has figured the inhabitants (the human physiognomy of the place) of this marginal “zone” in Paris situated between the fortified walls and the suburb, between city and countryside, realizing in 1913 the album *Zoniers*.





More recently, Jean Rolin describes in his novel *Zone* (1995) (pertaining to what is called **shanty literature**) his strolling in the most hostile and thankless suburban fringe of Paris, taking up residence in a hotel with a view on the interchanges. Nonetheless, from these areas can sprout the gracefulness of an encounter, a tiny epiphany in the most squalid greyness (he meets a Chinese rice sculptress). Philippe Vasset, with *Un Livre blanc* (2007), requalifies on his turn these so-called shameful places by renaming them.

Stalker, a collective of heterodox architects founded in Rome in 1995, is an Urban Art Laboratory and a nomadic observatory which organizes actions on the field with particular attention for marginal areas, forgotten, abandoned zones or industrial areas, diverting them from the utilitarian and productivity to wellness and creativity, an abattoir becoming a centre for Kurdish refugees and now a cultural centre; *La révolution de Paris* (2014) consists in pedestrian hiking in the suburbs, work of town-planner Paul-Hervé Lavessière, outlining a new geography, proposing new usages of the city, clearing poetry niches in the periphery. The ambition is heritage, cultural but also ecological, discovering ecosystems in urban environment. Artists can intervene in the decisions, collaborating with town planners, acting prescriptively, i.e. showing how to deploy their creativity, transforming squats in art ateliers (see Elsa Vivant, 2015), for example, “Les Frigos” a decentred and disaffected Parisian cold-storage plant reallocated to artists.



*Les Frigos, Paris*

The mechanism of the zone can even be observed in Luxembourg. The **Limpertsberg**, situated on the place where the surrounding walls of the city have been dismantled (after the treaty of London 1867), was a big glacis outside the fortress deprived of edification for strategic

reasons, whose vacancy explains the development of rose gardens, a green and country style belt now densified and gentrified becoming a financial place (Roelens, 2015).

**Belval** is a challenge because as a no-man's-land, it has to create a new identity, to restore a *genius loci*. The "non-place" has to turn into an "anthropological place" (Augé, 1992). Hence, Belval can epitomize the situation of Luxembourg where we find what Massimo Leone in his *Semiotics of belonging* calls the regime of the "nomadic estrangement" (Leone, 2012: 13). This uprootedness is typical for the young internet generation (sharing a euphoric sense of not-belonging) lacking any reference to a home feeling or for the *foreign residents* or *commuters*. Due to the daily crossing of population to and from work without exchange or encounter (European citizens rarely want to integrate or have little contact with the population) and, on the other hand, due to social and urban islands running parallel: finance people, Portuguese, French, native Luxembourgers, new arrived workers, living side by side, generating the semantic path of alienation/suspicion wherein "each subject suspects that other subjects in the same environment do not actually belong, but in doing so they also feed each other's own feeling of non-belonging" (ibid.: 20). In other words, the "exile" of the dynamic subject can be seen as "invasion" by the static one, or even as a "disruption of his own regime of sedentary belonging" (ibid.: 15) thus embodying a "path of alienation" for the former and a "path of suspicion" for the latter (ibid.) or, conversely, the static subject can be "curious" and "tolerant" (ibid.: 18) regarding the dynamic one and accept that he becomes progressively static himself. Leone's theory allows to see the relation between outsider and insider as antagonistic or non-antagonistic, embracing all possible cases, for example: a "feeling of non-belonging surprises the subject while he is at home, surrounded by his own environment, insider among insiders" (ibid.). A real antagonism can probably be explained by a lack of symbolic footbridges between the entities which sharpens the "experience of frontiers between the environment of belonging and an environment of non-belonging" (ibid.: 5) receiving it as a dysphoric or dramatic one. However the tendency in the metropolises, and Luxembourg is "metropolized" (Schulz, 2011), is that the citizens all seem to belong to a post-modern cosmopolitan mentality of citizens of the world in eternal exile. Since they feel no spatial adherence to a quarter or neighbours, the risk is to sink into indifference of belonging. Belval as a new build city is threatened by this tendency.

Nevertheless, historically Belval was located in the area of the foundation of the house of Luxembourg. In 963, a duke named Sigefroi, from the Charlemagne dynasty acquires the abbey de St.-Maximin de Trèves, a rocky promontory dominating the river Alzette and a small burg called "Lucilinburhuc" probably from Roman origin. According to the legend the duke Sigefroi has been united with Mélusine, a mermaid from the European folklore and which would have disappeared in the waves of the Alzette). At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century the area of Belval became a transition zone between South and North Europe, a language shift zone, where the Italian workers had to adapt to the cold weather, the insipid food and the guttural sounds of the "locals". Jean Portante in his novel *La Mémoire de la baleine* (2009) emphasizes the "tunnel" and "wale" metaphor stressing on the "nor nor" position: "nor Italian, nor Luxembourgish", "nor fully fish, nor fully terrestrial animal". Belval is also an industrial paradise (according to Timothy Mitchell's (2013) thesis we could call it a "democracy" since centralized exchange and claiming actions (e.g. strikes) of workers were still possible), now becoming the border of a financial paradise. All these **stratifications** of memory (Westphal, 2007) should be reconsidered to restore density, to resemantise, to reenchant the place. Currently the new campus (cognitive axiology) and artists (cultural axiology) are contributing to this revival.

In his *Invisible cities* (1972) Italo Calvino, dedicates one of his "Continuous cities" to what we can call an anti-allegory of the **zone**. In Penthesilea the entrance of the city is blurred. After passing beneath an archway, you are not yet inside.

*"You advance for hours and it is not clear to you whether you are already in the city's midst or still outside it. Like a lake with low shores lost in swamps so Penthesilea spreads for miles around a soupy city diluted in the plain; pale buildings back to back in many fields among plank fences and corrugated-iron sheds. Every now and then at the edges of the street a cluster of constructions with shallow facades very tall or very low like a snaggle-toothed comb seems to indicate that from there the city's texture will thicken. But you continue and you find instead other vague spaces, then a rusty suburb of workshops and warehouses, a cemetery, a carnival with Ferri wheel, a shamble; you start down a street of scrawny shops which fades amid patches of leprous countryside. If you ask the people you meet, "Where is Penthesilea?" they make a broad gesture which may mean "Here," or else "Farther on," or "All around you," or even "In the opposite direction." [...]. The question that now begins to gnaw at your mind is more anguished: outside Penthesilea does an outside exist? Or, no matter how far you go from the city, will you only pass from one limbo to another, never managing to leave it?" (Calvino, 1974, 157).*

## Waterfronts

**Palermo's Waterfront:** According to Rem Koolhaas "Each Generic City has a waterfront, not necessarily with water – it can also be with desert, for instance – but at least an edge where it meets another condition, as if a position of near escape is the best guarantee for its enjoyment. Here tourists congregate in droves around a cluster of stalls" (Koolhaas 1995: 9.8). This statement of attractive otherness can be reversed when migrants join the coast as a Promised land (if they join). Gianfranco Marrone, studying the meadow of Palermo's Waterfront called "Prato del Foro italico" (Marrone, 2010), shows how it is occupied by foreigners becoming a synecdoche of the revival of the city, after the degradation of the waterfront (wasteland as a result of the amassed ruins of the debris after the bombings of second world war and occupied by tramps and rotten motor's), now becoming an intercultural "lieu de vie", a "third space" "a space which belongs nor to the Palermo indigenes nor to the foreign immigrants but is built, lived, managed by both, who precisely there, – and only there – meet each other and live together peacefully, often mingling together" (Marrone, 2010: 53). They use the vacancy/disponibility of the place for a "critical socialization" (ibid.: 66). They resemanticize the place with interethnic practices, (e.g. the feast the end of the Ramadan), turn it into a improvised stage, which contribute to the "narration of the beloved and regained Palermo" (ibid.: 69).

**Trieste's Waterfront:** Matteo Treleani claims that the Piazza Unità d'Italia (1918: Piazza Unità, 1955: Piazza Unità d'Italia) at Trieste underlines the presumed irredentist and patriotic identity of Trieste in contradiction with the traces of nostalgia of the Austro-Hungarian Empire present in the population and newspapers. (A statue of the Empress Sissi welcomes people at the entrance of the Station). The very Italian connotation and the pure symbolic centralization of the Piazza is in opposition with the multicultural and multinational history of the city, with the spirit of the citizens. The Danubian basin has lost its value, the sense of the place has been emptied. The piazza does not communicate any longer with an elsewhere. No boats are visible in the harbour. Trieste became only touristic and aesthetic, "defunctionalized place" "Sea not crossed by boats and thus deprived of the potentiality of the Elsewhere" (Treleani, 2005: 13). Piazza Unità d'Italia carries thus a rhetoric and political discourse in constant confrontation with the Habsburgs exchange with Otherness through the sea as a vector of identitarian exchange with the elsewhere. The sea, not anymore crossed by boats, having lost its function of connection with the elsewhere, becomes nothing else than "the mirror of the city" (ibid.: 2) the piazza has been enlarged, emptied, opened to the void of the sea. In the 18<sup>th</sup> Century it was the principle harbour of the Habsburger Empire, *portofranco*, economic capital, because of the deep sea, to which flowed thousands of migrants from Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia. It became the cradle of cultures and ethnicities, as a symbol of the whole Empire,



the “Small Vienne on the Adriatic coast”. Trieste is a place of borders, a border between Slovenia (Slavic world) and Italy, between a northern and a Mediterranean city, etc. but transcending any dichotomic logic of non-contradiction. Quoting Claudio Magris, Treleani defines the city as “heterogene living together” “*nebeneinander*”, “confrontation-clash with Otherness” (ibid.: 14). Nonetheless “when the border becomes impenetrable barrier instead of place of exchange, confront and transit, when the sea is no longer Elsewhere but a limit, the city can only close in itself” (ibid.). Let us add that the Triestian literature (Umberto Saba, Italo Svevo, etc.) has introduced the Vienna psychoanalysis into Italy, etc.

**Ostend’s Waterfront:** The strategic position on the North Sea coast had major advantages for Ostend as a harbour, as departure place for commercial exchange with the colonies (Ostend’s Company), but also proved to be a source of trouble. The town was frequently taken, ravaged and destroyed by conquering armies. Very important for the image of the town was the attention it started to receive from the Belgian kings Leopold I and Leopold II. Both liked to spend their holidays in Ostend. Important monuments and villas were built to please the Royal Family, including the hippodrome Wellington and the Royal Galleries. The rest of aristocratic Belgium followed and soon Ostend became known as *the Queen of the Belgian seaside resorts* with a huge seaside esplanade and a styled casino. During World War I, Ostend was occupied by German forces and used as an access point to the sea for submarines and other light naval forces. Consequently, the Royal Navy subjected the port to two naval assaults. World War II involved a second occupation of the town by Germany. Both conflicts brought significant destruction to Ostend. In addition, other opulent buildings, which had survived the wars, were replaced later with structures in the modernist architecture style. Ostend is yet more and more worried by the always-threatening sea. Near the beach is a well-preserved section of the fortified Atlantic Wall. (World War II defensive line). The 2015 edition of the Triennale Beaufort 2015 “**Beyond the Boundaries**” has exploited the **bifrontality** of the waterfront, acts among the remains of the Atlantic Wall and focuses on dialogue, nature & architecture and sustainability, especially the artistic collective “A Dog republic” ([www.belgiancoast.co.uk/beaufort2015](http://www.belgiancoast.co.uk/beaufort2015)).



*A Dog republic, Dogs guardians on the roof of the previous royal villa looking all at the sea, except one turned backwards to prevent the King from escaping his with colonnades surrounded villa.*





*A Dog republic, Iconostase sur jetée, 2015. A byzantine iconostasis is a screen or a wall bearing icons, separating the sanctuary of many Orthodox churches from the nave, the clergy celebrating from the rest of the church, here sanctifying the sea.*

In February 2016 the city of Zee Bruges (on the Belgian coast) feared arrival of refugees:

*Selina Sykes, EXCLUSIVE: "Belgian port to become 'Calais jungle' as migrants dodge security to reach UK", Sunday Express, 15/02/16*

*MIGRANTS are ditching Calais to make their bids for Britain from the Belgian port of Zeebrugge, sparking fears a new Jungle shanty camp is about to sprout up.*



*Increasing numbers of refugees have been heading to the Belgian port of Zeebrugge*

*"Tensions are mounting in the quiet village on the Belgian coast which has seen a spike of refugees settling around its port which runs a P&O route to Hull.*

*And port sources have told Express.co.uk poor levels of security could also make Zeebrugge a soft target in comparison with Calais and Dunkirk.*

*Belgian authorities have stopped 890 migrants without residency papers since January - 450 of which travelled to Zeebrugge, which is seven miles from the tourist hotspot Bruges. Dozens of traffickers have also been detained". Etc.*

*(<http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/643611/Zeebrugge-Calais-Jungle-Belgium-France-migrants-crisis-refugees-Europe>)*

**Singapore's Waterfront:** Since August 2012 colossal solar-powered 'supertrees' breathe life into Singapore's urban oasis, an imposing canopy of artificial trees up to 50 meters high towering over a vast urban oasis. It is part of a 250-acre landscaping project "Gardens by the Bay", an initiative from Singapore's National Parks Board that will see the cultivation of flora and fauna from foreign lands. The man-made mechanical forest consists of 18 supertrees which act as vertical gardens, generating solar power, acting as air venting ducts for nearby conservatories, and collecting rainwater. To generate electricity, 11 of the supertrees are fitted with solar photovoltaic systems that convert sunlight into energy, which provides lighting and aids water technology within the conservatories below.



*Limen*: threshold

*Threshold, frame, skin, ...*

The Latin *limen*, *liminis*, “threshold”, is related to *limes*, being the stone (doorstep) over which one enters or leaves the house, deriving from *\*ligmen*, as in *lien* “tie”. The threshold **ties together** the doorway, but could also derive from *lio* (“to pour”) suffix *-men*: it means literally “to cross the threshold” *intrare limen*, **to eliminate**, put out of the door. Moreover, *limen* means **beginning (liminal)** vs end, termination.

The *limen* covers a rich thematic field including a **frame** (*parergon*: an enunciatinal disposal, which separates from and constitutes the inside as an image vs out of the frame, with de-bordering in camera (*décadrage*: Dreyer) or in painting (*en amorce*, *Las Meninas*, beyond). According to Schapiro (1996) the frame of an image derives from the defence wall of a city. The frame has something to do with “quotation marks” disposal which frames a sentence. The **skin** is also a border between inside and outside (*Le moi-peau* by Didier Anzieu), but always crossable, as in the movies *La piel qué habito*, *The Pillow book*. Another border between inside and outside is embodied in the “*fort/da scene*” by Freud (a child playing with a spool) or the “**transitional object**” by Donald Winnicott, designating the teddy bear, that establishes the relation between the child and his “not-me” environment, restraining the “oceanic feeling” (Freud, 2002). Edward Hall in his proxemics, calls “the hidden dimension” (Hall, 1990), **the personal reaction bubble** surrounding the subject and his body (intimate, personal, social, public).

*Porosity and façades*

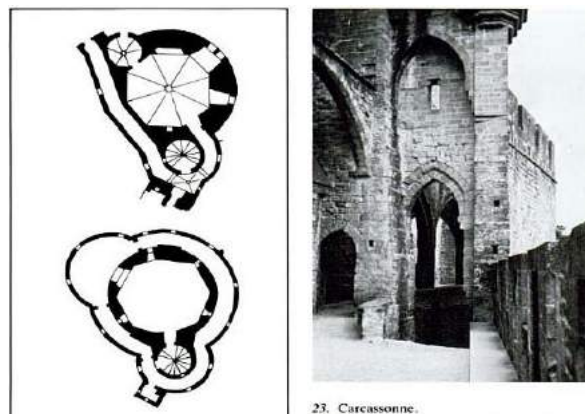
Both André Leroi-Gourhan (1964) and Gaston Bachelard (1957) already defined the human being as linked to his shelter, to his nest, an ontological cradle to which one always turns back (the fold, *Ort*, *Heimat*). However, since the industrial revolution (and the digital revolution has emphasised this tendency) the inside of the habitat is given the priority at the expense of the outside and of its inclusion in a context, so that the inhabitant is cut off from a sphere of human exchange with his neighbourhood, and alienated from his environmental implantation site, losing his “sentiment of belonging” (Leone, 2012). In other words, he distinguishes between private and public sphere, the **threshold** is vanishing. On the one hand, public sphere penetrates in our homes through all types of screens and transitional objects. On the other hand, Marc Augé’s *non-places* engendered by urban and globalized modernity, deprived from “identity, relation and history” (Augé, 2007: 100), i.e. human density, and Foucault’s *hetero-*

*topias* (Foucault, 1994) tend to cannibalise private space in favour of an undifferentiated public space with a risk of dilution of the moments of living together.

Benjamin and Asja Lacis, in the essay they wrote together, *Neapel (Naples)* (1924) poignantly discussed the city of Naples evoking the central image of **porosity**. Describing the city as grown into the rock, they showed that architecture is “as porous as this stone”: “Just as the living room reappears on the street, with chairs, hearth, and altar, so that the street migrates into the living room.” (ibid.) Naples’ architectural spaces resist fixed or designated purposes or functionality and become improvised stages of daily exchange and conviviality. Building and action interpenetrate in the courtyards, arcades, and stairways. In everything, they preserve the scope to become a theatre of new, unforeseen constellations. No situation appears intended forever, no figure asserts its “thus and not otherwise” (ibid.). Everything is anarchical, embroiled, village like, but human exchange is preserved. Yet the opportunities for improvisation and unexpected movement around the city also provided the conditions for the organised crime of the Mafia. Benjamin saw three intersecting networks of power in Naples: the church, the Camorra and the fascist state, the borders all of which were “porous”.



<http://www.ilcirotano.it/2013/05/06/le-donne-dei-vicoli-antichi/>



Henri Gaudin (1983)

In his essay on medieval architecture, Henri Gaudin (1983) describes the same porosity: “Shouldn’t it be better make the material porous to living beings” “to dig alveolus and shelters, to be together in it and out of it, to seal the alliance between inside and outside” (Gaudin, 1983: 11). Gaudin interrogates medieval rhizomatic architecture focusing on the apses, the incrustations (inlays), recycling of walls, straddling and superimposition which builds the city as a “porous body” (Gaudin, 1983: 11), with distortions, gaps and dislocations, deviations, disjunctions, overlaps, slopes, cracks, the trickery ways that the city taps in itself. These “oblique procedures” pertain to “the wisdom of the craftsman who makes only use of his manual skills” (ibid.: 17). The niches, crenels, and loopholes had a military scope: to hide inside the walls. Gaudin, after Lucretius and Michel Serres stresses on the fecundity of a science based on declination, “a thinking which tacks”, “tacking is not losing a direction but leaning on the wind to move closer” (ibid.: 17). He notices the negative, even pathological connotation that bears what is not straight, plumb up, perpendicular: “bias”, “deviation”, “perversion”, “inflexions”. He advocates for local, empirical and not global, axiomatic science, instrumental and not classical reason, for receipts and not organised knowledge, compass and not circle, ruler and not line, astrolabe and not angle (see ibid.: 22). Paola Capone also analysed the passage from an enclosed on slavery based mini society in the Roman antiquity to an open commercial logic of the *faber*, artisan, with boutiques and stalls, shop fronts, displays (Capone, 2015).

François Jullien (2014) evokes the Chinese “kiosk”, open pavilion installed on a path, often on a mountain, at least immersed in nature, never on a summit. The kiosk is “architecture”



through which impregnation and decantation provokes a connivance / complicity / collusion relationship: the transitive action does not differ from the spontaneous. The kiosk is everywhere where I let him come to me, ceding to connivance. He is in the between-landscape, where, reciprocally, the landscape emerges everywhere I find a kiosk. Thus, the kiosk is this undetermined “object”, without closure, without established usage, at the same time inside and outside. The kiosk could be the real form the architect needs to reflect, the external becoming internal, intimate.

Benjamin and Lacis also applied the metaphor of porousness to the Zulu kraal: “What distinguishes Naples from other large cities is something it has in common with the African kraal; each private attitude or act is permeated by streams of communal life.” (Benjamin & Asis, 1924). The Oriental bazaar furthermore exemplifies porousness. A bazaar is a marketing system operating within a permanent market centre, characterised by the diversification and multiplication of roles on all levels (merchants, traders, lenders, brokers etc.). Since it is situated in a designed environment, it resembles a porous city, containing spaces with functional flexibility, facilitating a variety of behaviour related to commercial and social activities.

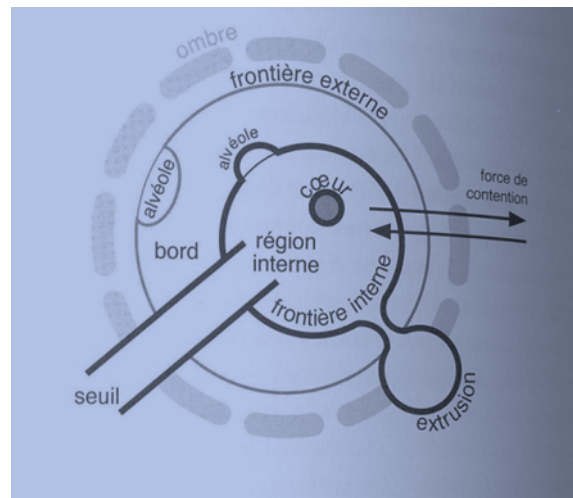
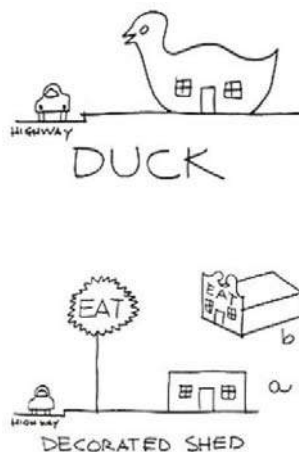
Louis Aragon unveiled already the poetic and imaginary power of the Passage de l’Opéra, endangered by Haussmannian urbanism depriving Paris of “incredible flows of dreams and languor” (Aragon, 1926: 22); Julien Gracq evidenced the erotic affinity between the body and the secret conducts, visceral labyrinth and intimate lairs of the passage Pommeraye inside the “vaste corps urbain”. (Gracq, 1985: 95)

The **façade** seems a privileged *limen* as a border between inside and outside, private and public, but also a vehicle for popular expression: the “face” of the dwelling as “presentation of the self” going back to Ervin Goffman. Goffman, in *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*, (issuing from the “interactionist” movement of the sociologist School of Chicago) already emphasizes the façade. The core of Goffman’s analysis lies in a dramaturgical approach of social interpersonal exchange, between performance and life. In daily life interaction, as in theatrical performance, there is a *front region* where the “actors” (individuals) are on *stage* in front of the audience and where they strive to present themselves positively. There is also a *back region* or *backstage* that can be considered as a hidden or private place where individuals can be themselves and set aside their role or identity in society. Goffman cites the example of a hostess inviting people to a dinner: she will take care of her appearance, her personal *façade* (face, word, gestures, costume) and of the domestic scenery (putting fresh flowers). The lounge and the dining room are the front region; the kitchen is the back region where the hosts can release. In the word *façade* you have the idea of saving, maintaining face, making a good impression. (see Goffman 1959)

The architectural façade is a place for symbolic and semiotic investment. Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown in their *Learning from Las Vegas* (1977), a treatise on symbolism in architecture, argue that all architecture is either what they call a *duck* or a *decorated shed*. It represents, as suggested, two conflicting ways to convey meaning, forms-in-space, on the one hand, symbolism-space, on the other hand. Venturi inspires deliberately from the vernacular, the kitsch reality, the low culture (the *ugly* and the *ordinary*) of Las Vegas to digress American architecture from widespread modernism as to meet the need of symbolic communication from the citizens. Studying the commercial strip and in particular the role that signage plays in giving sense and providing order to the landscape, they discover a strip full of *decorated sheds*, where architecture is seen as a symbolic space (lighting, signs, billboards, iconography, even vulgar mannerist or baroque extravaganza) rather than a form in space. As advocates of the *decorated shed*, the authors propose that by studying and adopting the tactics of commercial strip buildings and signs, architects could enrich the symbolic content of post-modern architecture. The strip is architecture of communication over space, achieved through style and signs. This is a unique condition in comparison to “enclosed space”, which architects are more familiar with (Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, etc.). Venturi defends architecture



based on style and image, on the vernacular, “architecture without architects”, which mixes high and low art, the sacred and the profane. The treatment of the exterior of a building as a whole is aesthetically significant, even if purposefully ugly and boring. Each sign possesses symbols borrowed from another era, and made its own. The Renaissance is full of decorated sheds. The Renaissance piazza was heavily ornamented with mixed-media symbols. Similarly, the billboards that line the highways of Vegas are inspired from the Roman triumphal arch, and share the same propaganda dimension, the same heterogeneity. The other type of architecture, the *duck*, inspired by a duck-shaped duck restaurant in Riverhead, Long Island, USA, is a building, which coincides with its form or sign. According to Venturi, most modern architectures are basically un-admitted *ducks*. The duck paradigm annihilates all possible “extrusion” (Boudon, 2013) of the private sphere within the public one.



(Boudon, 2003)



Venturi & Scott-Brown (1977)

For Landscape architect Bernard Lassus, not only the façade but also the allotment is a vehicle for popular expressivity, a surface, “*support*”, calling for an intervention, “*apport*” (Lassus, 1977:16). The “inhabitant landscaper” “through its ornaments, tries to *divert* from its official arrangement the façades bestowed with uniform abstract and repetitive geometries” (Lassus, 1977: 50). The garden is a similar setting, which is constructed of a stage (the road as public space) and a backstage (the house as private/intimate space). As the audience watches the actor, the passers-by or neighbours watch the garden. Aborigine bodypainting could be seen in the same perspective. Paola Capone (in the wake of Bernard Lassus) has studied the inhabitants as “landscapers” but also the blinds of Battipaglia (Salerno), where the poor merchants paint their goods on the blinds instead of paying a licence to obtain an official store sign. A whole ethnology of working class semiotic expression, close to the symbolic weight of Las Vegas’s banners and neon signs studied by Venturi, is at stake here, which disappears when urban priorities remove popular expressiveness *in situ*. from the shop fronts till the allotments, with their garden dwarfs or furniture (as a discursive procedure, a kind of prologue to the

macro-text of the house, a threshold between the street and the intimate sphere, a prophetic anticipation of the style of the family hidden in the domestic back scenery) (Roelens, 2015).



Pictures by the author

The quarter can be seen as an extension of the façade. If it is true that the quarter is situated at the intersection of an existential, sensorial, bodily and social dialectics between an inside (the core of private space, its original biotope) and a progressively domesticated (*domus*) outside, then it can be seen as an organic increase of the habitat. The quarter protects the inhabitant from the urban space full of codes that overwhelm him. What we currently lose is this tacit agreement or compromise, this *idiorhythmic* tuning between neighbours, mutual loyalty and faithfulness, a “respectful adjustment of our anarchy to the jurisdiction of the other” (Mayol, 1994: 20). If citizens rediscover their neighbourhood and the public space, then conviviality can be restored through “niches” for urbanity, for mutual respect which Pierre Mayol calls “*convenance*” (respectability) (Mayol, 1994), Roland Barthes “*idiorrythmie*” (a balance between loneliness and encounter allowing for living-together as an answer to Foucault’s idea of pervasive power which imposes “dysrhythmia, heterorhythmia”) (Barthes, 1976-1977: 40). Hirschman calls it “commensality” (Hirschman, 1996: 11-32). It seems urgent to re-establish the equation between *city*, *civilisation*, *civility*, *citizenship* and *culture* (Nancy, 2011: 5), to restore the quarter as a pedestrian zone of conviviality, to encourage people to become “pilgrims of their own neighbourhood” (Le Breton, 2012: 27) with the necessary receptivity, so that the usual reveals itself as unforeseen, to make authorities and decision makers sensible to preserving certain urban places from destruction and anthropophagous or naturophagous practices. The symbolic interaction between the inside and the outside of the habitat, embodied in the façade as a vehicle for popular expression and in the neighbourhood as a pedestrian zone for social cohesion, is also threatened in Luxembourg where the “metropolization” (Schulz) has too quickly imposed an inadequate model to the inhabitants (see Cercle Cité exhibition “Luxembourg - une histoire européenne. Kirchberg, porte de l’Europe” (11/07/2015-13/09/2015)).

### *Rite of passage*

Every crossing a threshold can be considered as a “rite of passage”, which is a celebration of the passage involving a significant change of status in society. In cultural anthropology the term is the Anglicisation of rite de passage, a French term innovated by the ethnographer, Arnold van Gennep, in his work *Les rites de passage*, (Gennep, 1960). Van Gennep uses the metaphor, “**as a kind of house divided into rooms and corridors**”. “A passage occurs when an individual leaves one group to enter another; in the metaphor, he changes rooms”. Van Gennep further distinguishes between “the secular” and “the sacred sphere”. Theorizing that civilizations are arranged on a scale, implying that the lower levels represent “the simplest level of development”, he hypothesizes that “social groups in such a society likewise have

magico-religious foundations". Many groups in modern industrial society practice customs that can be traced to an earlier sacred phase. Passage between these groups requires a ceremony or ritual hence rite of passage. He is able to find some universals, mainly two: "the sexual separation between men and women, and the magico-religious separation between the profane and the sacred": pregnancy, childbirth, initiation, betrothal, marriage, funerals and the like. He mentions some others, such as the territorial passage, a crossing of borders into a culturally different region, such as one where a different religion prevails. Rites of passage have three phases: **separation, liminality, and incorporation**, as van Gennep described. "I propose to call the rites of separation from a previous world, *preliminal* rites, those executed during the transitional stage *liminal* (or *threshold*) rites, and the ceremonies of incorporation into the new world *postliminal* rites." In the first phase, people withdraw from their current status and prepare to move from one place or status to another: "The first phase (of separation) comprises symbolic behavior signifying the detachment of the individual or group [...] from an earlier fixed point in the social structure." There is often a detachment or "cutting away" from the former self in this phase, which is signified in symbolic actions and rituals. For example, the cutting of the hair for a person who has just joined the army. He or she is "cutting away" the former self: the civilian. The transition (*liminal*) phase is the period between states, during which one has left one place or state but has not yet entered or joined the next. "The attributes of liminality or of liminal *personae* ("**threshold people**") are necessarily ambiguous. "In the third phase (reaggregation or incorporation) the passage is consummated [by] the ritual subject." Having completed the rite and assumed their "new" identity, one re-enters society with one's new status. Re-incorporation is characterized by elaborate rituals and ceremonies like debutant balls and college graduation and by outward symbols of new ties: thus "in rites of incorporation there is widespread use of the 'sacred bond', the 'sacred cord', the knot, and of analogous forms such as the belt, the ring, the bracelet and the crown". However, as well as group attraction, initiations can also produce conformity among new members. Psychology experiments have also shown that initiations increase feelings of affiliation.

### *Hospitality*

Hospitality (Roelens, 2016) is another reaction to threshold crossing: "L'hôte est un habitant de la lisière" (Montandon, 2002: 21) engendering an erotic and cannibalistic imaginary ("Who amongst the host or the guest will be eaten, first?" (ibid.: 3)). Gustave Flaubert in his short story "**Saint Julien l'hospitalier**" (Flaubert, 2000) explores the limits of hospitality: to offer your bed to a leper. Jacques Derrida claims indeed that hospitality must be unconditional. To be open to the unknown is the first act of philosophy since philosophy is the thinking of the insane, concerned by the apory of the paths. Therefore, Kants *Perpetual Peace. A Philosophical Sketch* (1795) is considered too irenic, too utopian: the inscription in a law of the principle of hospitality is antithetic with the idea that infinite hospitality should resist the law itself, or at any rate go beyond it at the point where it governs it. According to Kant, to the question: "Should I lie to murderers who come to ask me if the one they want to assassinate is in my house?" he answers "yes", one should speak the truth, even in this case, and thus risk delivering the guest to death, rather than lie. It is better to break with the duty of hospitality rather than break with the absolute duty of veracity, fundamental to humanity and to human sociality in general. Conversely, for Derrida (1997), hospitality must be infinite and unconditional. When we enter an unknown place, the emotion experienced is almost always that of an indefinable anxiety. There then begins the slow work of taming the unknown, and gradually the unease fades away. A new familiarity succeeds the fear provoked in us by the irruption of the "wholly other", *hospes* (guest) turns into *hostis* (enemy). To be host consist of consenting to exile, to be deprived of a place. Only who is himself homeless can offer unconditional hospitality, as if hospitality belongs not to the place but to the gesture itself. Language is also

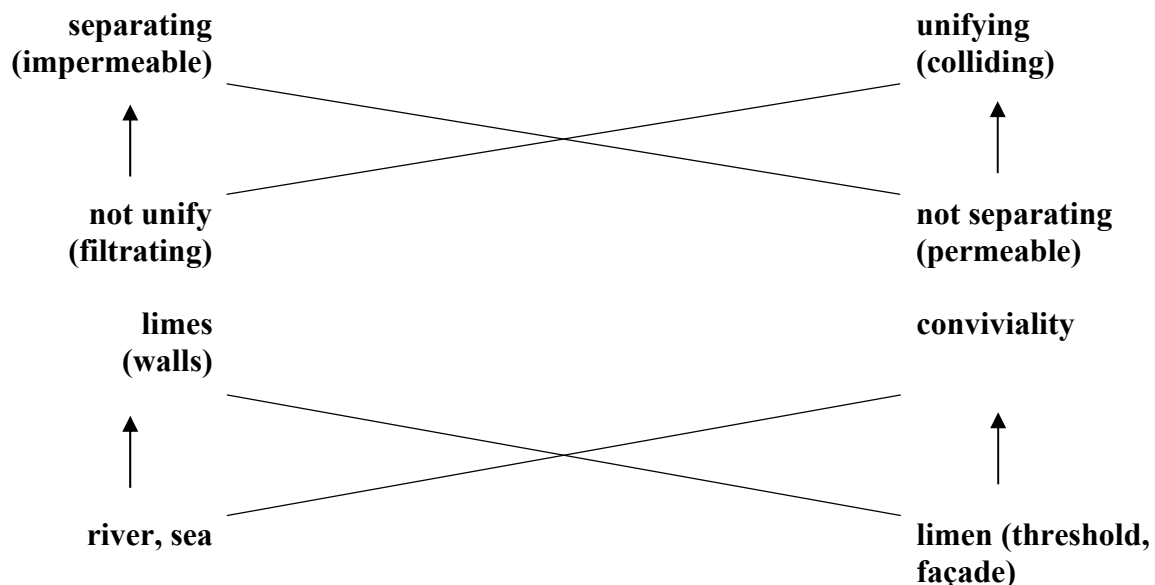


involved. Which is the language that we keep in exile? (Derrida, 1997: 23) He quotes Hanna Arendt who, on the question of a journalist “Why did you stay faithful to the German language despite Nazism?” answered: “What could I do? The German language did not become mad!”; “Nothing can replace mother tongue” But the mother tongue reveals the madness of extreme intimacy: “Il y a la folie du rapport à la mère qui nous introduit à l’énigmatique du chez-soi. La folie de la mère menace le chez-soi.” (ibid.: 24) ; “Il faut rapprocher l’essence de la folie de l’essence de l’hospitalité, aux parages de ce déchaînement incontrôlable envers le plus proche”. (ibid.: 25).

The threshold is also an important topos in literature. Mikhail Bakhtin developed the **chronotope of the threshold** as the time-space of the encounter, of the crisis, of the break of a life Bakhtin identifies the “chronotope of the threshold” as being associated with crisis and break in life; the moment of decision that changes a life, where time is felt as instantaneous ... as if it had no duration: the staircase (in Dostoevsky), the front hall, the corridor, or the street, “place where the crisis takes place, the fall, the resurrection, the renewal of life, the foresight, the decisions which influence a whole life” (Bakhtin, 1957: 21). Tatiana Barazon calls *the thinking of the threshold* or *soglitudo*, the word itself being a metaphor for sudden change in life, fear of “passer le seuil”. Philippe Hamon (1980) analyses the **topos of the window** in 19th Century literature which, due to the new technical possibilities (glass) opens to heterotopic crossing, discovering.

### Modelizations<sup>2</sup>

A semantic square (inspired by Greimas) seems adequate not only to embrace the whole field of border functions but to discover the interrelations in the map of logical possibilities and the displacement strategies to overcome the binary logics at work in bordering:



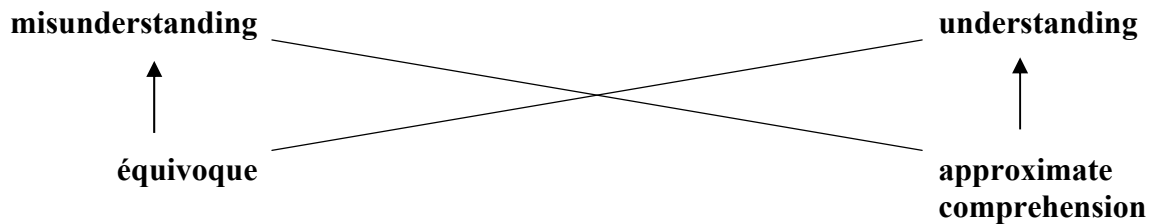
Indeed, semantic polarities become interesting when the cross turns into a dynamic semantic square or butterfly (second generation of semiotic square, with the implication arrow). Such a square allows us to catch the process (displacement) between categories, e.g. from a less to a more rigid position: a filtrating sea (the Mediterranean) becomes an **impermeable wall** (and makes migration a prohibitive action) and conversely the **permeable threshold** becomes a **scenery of hospitality or conviviality** (unifying people).

<sup>2</sup> See also « Border modelizations » in [www.mis.lu](http://www.mis.lu) : RESOURCES.



The escape motif is a topos in literature and movies which play with these polarities. Primo Levi's short story *Passe-Muraille* (1986) deals with an alchemist who reduces his body into atoms so as to pass through the wall of a prison (**impermeable** → **porous**). Carlos Fuentes' *La Frontera de Cristal* (1995) breaks the glass of the Mexico-US Barrier by writing an inter-cultural and multilingual parable. Jean Renoir's *La Grande Illusion* (1937) shows that imprisonment and evasion unify people originating from different social classes (the aristocrat with the worker) or religions (the Catholic with the Jew).

The square, thus, can also be used in a social, generational, political, linguistic or intercultural communication context, involving cross-identity bordering or adaptation:



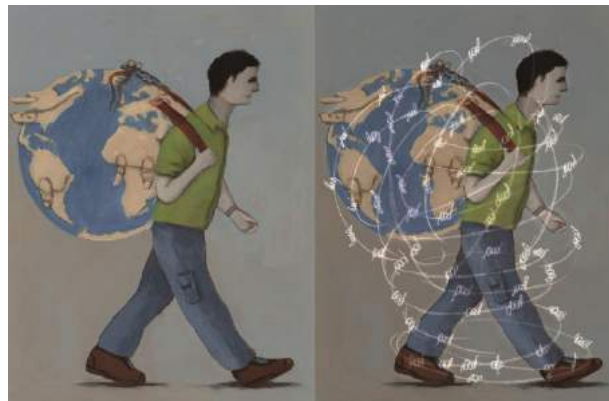
Moreover, the semiotic square also produces so-called meta-concepts, which are compound forms, for example: masculine and feminine, i.e. hermaphrodite, bi-sexual; neither masculine nor feminine, i.e. asexual; or in our case, neither separating nor unifying, in other words, the bridging of frontiers themselves, their sutures, as a meta-concept between alliance and discontinuity. The reaction to the imposed functions of border will be usage, displacement discourses and practices whose logics have to be investigated.

We could revalorize borders on a gradient between a zero degree: uniformization and an n-degree: total impenetrability, between a border resulting of a bilateral decision (as it should be, according to the definition of frontier) or resulting of a unilateral decision. ("Le dessous des cartes. Les nouveaux murs", 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TFhFNQLkPFg>)

*Italo Calvino in The Invisible Cities, dedicates one of the "cities and the exchanges" to displacement practices: "In Chloe, a great city, the people who move through the streets are all strangers. At each encounter, they imagine a thousand things about one another; meetings, which could take place between them, conversations, surprises, caresses, bites. But no one greets anyone; eyes lock for a second, then dart away, seeking other eyes, never stopping. A girl comes along, twirling a parasol on her shoulder, and twirling slightly also her rounded hips. A woman in black comes along, showing her full age, her eyes restless beneath her veil, her lips trembling. A tattooed giant comes along; a young man with white hair; a female dwarf; two girls, twins, dressed in coral. Something runs among them, an exchange of glances like lines that connect one figure with another and draw arrows, stars. Triangles, until all combinations are used up in a moment, and other characters come on to the scene: a blind man with a cheetah on a leash, a courtesan with an ostrich-plume fan, an ephube, a fat woman. And thus, when some people happen to find themselves together, taking shelter from the rain under an arcade, or crowding beneath an awning of the bazaar, or stopping to listen to the band in the square, meetings, seductions, copulations, orgies are consummated among them without a word exchanged, without a finger touching anything, almost without an eye raised. A voluptuous vibration constantly stirs Chloe, the most chaste of cities. If men and women began to live their ephemeral dreams, every phantom would become a person with whom to begin a story of pursuits, pretenses, misunderstandings, clashes, oppressions, and the carousel of fantasies would stop" (Calvino, 1974: 51-52).*

*Another city visualizes displacement: "In Ersilia, to establish the relationships that sustain the city's life, the inhabitants stretch strings from the corners of the houses, white or black or grey or black-and-white according to whether they mark a relationship of blood, of trade, authority, agency. When the strings become so numerous that you can no longer*

*pass among them, the inhabitants leave: the houses are dismantled; only the strings and their supports remain. From a mountainside, camping with their household goods, Ersilia's refugees look at the labyrinth of taut strings and poles that rise in the plain. That is the city of Ersilia still, and they are nothing. They rebuild Ersilia elsewhere. They weave a similar pattern of strings which they would like to be more complex and at the same time more regular than the other. Then they abandon it and take themselves and their houses still farther away. Thus, when traveling in the territory of Ersilia, you come upon the ruins of the abandoned cities, without the walls which do not last, without the bones of the dead which the wind rolls away: spiderwebs of intricate relationships seeking a form. After a seven days' march through woodland, the traveller directed toward Baucis cannot see the city and yet he has arrived. The slender stilts that rise from the ground at a great distance from one another and are lost above the clouds support the city. You climb them with ladders. On the ground, the inhabitants rarely show themselves: having already everything they need up there, they prefer not to come down. Nothing of the city touches the earth except those long flamingo legs on which it rests and, when the days are sunny, a pierced, angular shadow that falls on the foliage. There are three hypotheses about the inhabitants of Baucis: that they hate the earth; that they respect it so much they avoid all contact; that they love it as it was before they existed and with spyglasses and telescopes aimed downward they never tire of examining it, leaf by leaf, stone by stone, ant by ant, contemplating with fascination their own absence. (Calvino, 1974: 75-76)*



Sylvie Serprie, drawing.

[http://www.liberation.fr/planete/2015/12/04/catherine-wihtol-de-wenden-nous-n-avons-pas-encore-realise-a-quel-point-ces-nouveaux-migrants-nous-r\\_1418406](http://www.liberation.fr/planete/2015/12/04/catherine-wihtol-de-wenden-nous-n-avons-pas-encore-realise-a-quel-point-ces-nouveaux-migrants-nous-r_1418406)

## Conclusion

A ‘border’ is a semantically and theoretically heavily charged concept, a “travelling concept” (Mieke Bal, 2002) related to the “travelling theory” by Edward Saïd (1983), never fixed, never open or closed, always crossable under certain conditions. Nevertheless, complexity should not equate confusion: indeed, Edgar Morin (1982) claims that complex thinking is critical, creative and responsible. Besides the refugee crisis of 2015-2016 urges us to redefine our theoretical framework. Even the Schengen zone, as the area comprising 26 European countries that have abolished passport and any other type of border control at their common or “internal” borders, seem to be suspended.

Border thinking could open the gaze of our European or Luxembourgish citizens to a broader cosmopolite view (Kant, De Stael), (1) to the East (Forêt) and (2) to the South (Cassano).

(1) A trade road which passes through Bettembourg (Luxembourg) reminds the Silk Road. Nonetheless, whereas the classical Eurasian Silk Road exchanged goods, skills and ideas, this communication road is exclusively devoted to trade. It would be challenging to rethink the Silk Road (supplanted by the maritime Spice Road since the dislocation of the Mongol Em-

pire in 1450) nowadays: “These vast networks carried more than just merchandise and precious commodities however: the constant movement and mixing of populations also brought about the transmission of knowledge, ideas, cultures and beliefs, which had a profound impact on the history and civilizations of the Eurasian peoples. Travellers along the Silk Roads were attracted not only by trade but also by the intellectual and cultural exchange that was taking place in cities along the Silk Roads, many of which developed into hubs of culture and learning. Science, arts and literature, as well as crafts and technologies were thus shared and disseminated into societies along the lengths of these routes, and in this way, languages, religions and cultures developed and influenced each other.” (<http://en.unesco.org/silkroad/network-silk-road-cities-map-app/en>) Philippe Forêt (University of Zurich) has explored the maps and images of the Silk Route in his conference "Maps and Images: How They Have Transmitted Visual Knowledge Along the Silk Road" (May 14-15, 2004, University of Zurich), see Les cartes et les images de la route de la soie.

*“For two thousand years, the Silk Road has been the most important connection between the Far East, the Middle East and Europe. This network of commercial routes and prosperous states has allowed the diffusion of uniquely complex representations, such as city and country maps, landscape paintings and drawings that have shaped the perceptions of space and time. Astronomical and mathematical sketches have deeply influenced our understanding of the cosmos. Texts and images of deities and holy men have merged into many religious traditions.”*

(2) Franco Cassano, in his *Il pensiero meridiano*, claims a connection between the Mediterranean and “the south of the world” (Cassano, 2005: IX). He suggests therefore to adopt “another gaze” (ibid.: XI), to go beyond “the Atlantic subjugation” (ibid.: XIV) of European politics. The conscience of limits should deconstruct expansive triumphalism of modernity because the limit precisely involves openness, contact with the other, getting in touch with diversity. The Mediterranean has a triple status: “a status of border, of interface, of mediation between people” (ibid.: XXIII). Cassano urges us to “mediterraneanize” our thinking (ibid.: XXV). He goes so far as to say that the Mediterranean leads to a deconstruction of fundamentalisms and continental “solipsism” (ibid.: 22): “The fundamentalism of the continents should be stopped, and this duty should lie with who lives on the border, especially because he is used to be exposed to otherness” (XXVII). Against the paranoia of being enclosed in a continent which leads to a vertical thinking – the Heideggerian *Geviert* we live in as a conjunction of sky, earth, humans and gods, which had led to reactionary dogmatism –, he opposes the “experience of borders” (ibid.: 36) celebrated by Nietzsche: “Build your cities on the Vesuvius, send your boats on unexplored seas !” (ibid.: 38). We can compare this experience with intercultural practice which, as to Dieter Heimböckel, has always to be an openness to astonishment and a questioning of our limited thought: “Das Gewahrwerden der eigentümlichen Andersheit manifestiert sich als Staunen. Es ist ein Staunen einerseits über das Andere, andererseits über das Denken-wie-üblich und seine Begrenztheit. Das Staunen initiiert den Ausbruch aus dem Denken-wie-üblich und setzt damit ein Staunen über die Begriffe des Eigenen und Anderen frei. Das Staunen ist das Vehikel der Interkulturalität. [...] Das Staunen ist Ausdruck der Begegnung mit dem Unvertrauten, eine Weise bewußtwerdenden Nichtwissens” (Heimböckel, 2013: 82).

Shortly, border thinking is a challenge to human sciences proliferating in literature, philosophy, intercultural studies, geography, semiotics, architecture, psychology, law, etc., even generating new topical domains such as “borderscapes” (Brambilla, 2015; Rajaram Prem, Kumar & Grundy-Warr, 2014). Only an interdisciplinary, diachronic and wide ranged view on borders can help us to understand or to solve actual border issues in a global context / in Europe / in Luxembourg / in our personal sphere.

## Annexe

For further information

Rajnish Singh, “End of Schengen could be end of EU, warn MEPs, Opinion, 19/2/2016.  
Suspending Schengen could have disastrous effects, warn MEPs.



*With the Schengen agreement temporarily suspended by several European countries, many MEPs are now worried as to whether it can continue to survive in its original 1995 form.*

*Named after a small town in Luxembourg, the treaty enshrines the free movement of people as a fundamental right of EU citizens. Although the original treaty was signed in 1985 by five countries, Schengen now incorporates 22 member states as well as four non-EU countries.*

*However, the recent terrorist attacks in Paris and an unprecedented influx of refugees have led a number of European countries to reintroduce border checks.*

*From a business perspective, suspending Schengen could have a huge impact on the transport sector. As Latvian ECR transport committee member Roberts Zīle warns: "It goes without saying that the migration crisis impact on Schengen will create enormous costs not only on both the transit of goods and on commuter routes."*

*Zile gave the example of the Øresund bridge between Malmö in Sweden and Copenhagen in Denmark, where border controls "could change the behaviour of the labour force".*

*He also highlights the impact of restrictions on public finances. For several years, investment in cross-border travel has been an important part of EU transport policy. "If Schengen is deteriorating further, this is money down the drain."*

*German S&D transport committee member Ismail Ertug estimates that "going back to pre-Schengen times would add €10bn in costs to business every year in Germany alone".*

*In addition, longer waiting periods for trucks, workers and goods at border crossings would mean, "consumers would have to wait longer and pay more for goods". Zile points out that "border controls will surely leave an impact on the environment as well".*

*Finnish GUE MEP Merja Kyllönen highlights the impact of the refugee crisis on European shipping. "Merchant vessels have had a significant role in rescue operations in the Mediterranean both in terms of volume and activity - so significant in fact, that it is no longer sustainable."*

*The Finn believes member states are to blame for the current crisis. "When every member state is making their own decisions and acting on their own, the whole principle of freedom of movement and the functioning of the single market is under threat."*

*Barbara Kudrycka, Polish EPP Vice-Chair of the LIBE committee adds concerns over the tourist sector. "Dismantling the entire infrastructure of Schengen will be very costly and we cannot afford this expense."*

*Instead, Kudrycka calls on the EU to focus on "protecting external borders against illegal migrants by implementing a European border and coastal guard that can be created*



from Frontex and member states, collection and exchange of data between certain systems as well as an effective returns policy”.

The Pole also complained about the lack of common actions and “solidarity”. She dismissed ideas for a mini-Schengen by some member states as “dangerous” and leading to “further disintegration”.

EPP Vice-Chair of the LIBE committee, Hungarian Kinga Gál agrees, saying, “without protecting the external borders of the Schengen area, it will be increasingly difficult to keep the internal borders open”.

Dutch ALDE MEP Matthijs van Miltenburg, commenting on the problems at Calais, which has seen refugees regularly disrupting truck, ferry and train services says; “A situation with large numbers of refugees housed in ‘jungles’ like Calais is undesirable. It seriously affects the efficiency of our transport systems and leads to unnecessary safety risks. Besides the human tragedy, the economic damage is enormous.”

According to Gál, this proves that “most migrants are not refugees in the classic sense, rather economic migrants with a clear aim of where they want to go”.

Fellow LIBE member, UK ECR MEP Timothy Kirkhope, also warns that border controls are, “in no way the panacea that some people suggest”.

He adds, “most European borders are hundreds of miles long. Erecting border checks at motorways will do little to stop people that have already made the journey from Syria going through a field”. Kirkhope calls for a smarter approach focusing on putting resources into the external border and also “speeding up detention, processing and returns”.

The British deputy also stresses the need for the EU and member states to follow current rules as set out by the Dublin process, meaning a person can only claim refuge in the first EU country where they arrive.

However, Kirkhope admitted that the “migration crisis” was not only affecting politics at an EU level but also “impacting on domestic politics right across the EU”, with “the debate so polarised that the majority of people in the centre are overpowered”.

Even although it is not a member of Schengen, the debate within the UK over continuing EU membership is increasingly shaped by the migrant crisis. “This goes as much for the UK and the referendum debate as anywhere else in the EU.”

However, according to Polish MEP Kudrycka, the debates over the migration crisis and free movement of people has been conflated, turning British society, “not only against irregular migrants coming from third countries but also EU citizens who are in the UK benefiting from the EU right of freedom of movement”.

She warns: “We have to remember that after leaving the EU, everyone will be losers; British society as well as the European community.”

Despite the debate on migration, Italian EFDD LIBE committee member Ignazio Corrao still strongly believes in the free movement of people. “The redefinition of Schengen means questioning the identity of Europe.”

For the Italian, “the EU and member states should deal with the problem jointly, with concrete actions rather than words”.

Ultimately, for Corrao, “the EU should show solidarity, rather than questioning one of the pillars of the EU. If the EU steps backs in relation to free movement of people, it will mean its end”.

Rajnish Singh is Commissioning Editor of the Parliament Magazine <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/opinion/end-schengen-could-be-end-eu-warn-meps>

“No way out”

**Greece starts to fill up as its neighbours restrict the flow of migrants to Germany**

**The Economist.** Feb 27th 2016 | ATHENS |

<http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21693630-greece-starts-fill-up-its-neighbours-restrict-flow-migrants-germany-no-way-out>

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