The boundary-INTERFACE : A Passage between the Levels of the Semiotic Practices Theory

Imen HELALI - PhD student (Cotutelle). University of Carthage (UCAR), National School of Architecture of Tunisia (ENAU) & ULiege. Belgium. Contact : imen.helali@uliege.be

This research questions the boundary, as an elementary object of architecture, by which users and inhabitants of the space developed their appropriations, meanings, and senses. Despite the same topological element, boundaries are manipulated and articulated each time differently from the previous one. According to the semiotic experience of users and the immanence plane that they highlighted boundary changes.

From the francophone semiotic, or « *L'École de Paris* », we rely especially on the "Semiotic practices theory ", litteraly « *Pratiques sémiotiques* ».

## The Theory of Semiotic Practices « *Pratiques sémiotiques* »

Before, the semiotic was limited to the text. Since 1970, the exceeding project of the semiotic of practices was undertaken. It proceeds by the integration of signs into life's forms in an ascending way. The opposite direction, from life's forms to signs, is that of composition. We will focus on the first one. This theory which is formulated mainly by Jacques Fontanille has two benefits. Firstly, the boundary is manipulated according to different planes of immanence that is to say different phenomenological and semiotic experiences (Table 1). Secondly, it allows experimenting with a boundary as an interface with double faces (Table 2). To explain this model, we will present examples from our corpus of recordings of daily practices or itineraries in Kairouan.

Table 1. Immanence planes.

Table 2. Interfaces between immanence planes.
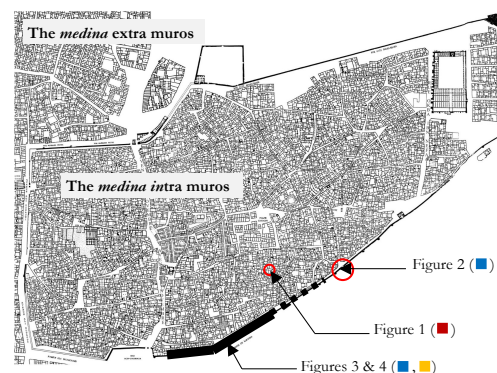
Map. The *medina* of Qairouan (Tunisia).

1- BOUNDARY AS A DOOR

J. Fontanille as M. G. Dondero, both explain the two movements between objects and practical scenes and vice versa (Interface 3).

For Fontanille : *"[…] on one side (face 1), a local syntagmatic form (the surface or the volume of inscription), capable of receiving significant inscriptions (as a support for "states texts"), and on the other (face 2) a material substance, which allows them to play an actuarial or modal role in practices, at the higher level of relevance "*. (Fontanille, 2008, p. 23, author's translation) (Figure a)

From Objects to practical scenes and vice versa

Let's start with the first exploration where the participant-inhabitant (RYA) considers the door as a work of art in the « Itinerary 1 » (The *medina* of Kairouan *intramuros*). Thus, he activates the "Objects' level" (Case 1: Extract 1 & Figure 1). In opposition, in his second performance, « Itinerary 2 » (The *medina* extramuros). He considers the door in the enclosure as an entry to the medina. Thus, he activates the "Practical scenes' level". (Case 2 : Extract 2 & Figure 2)
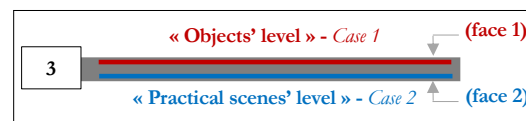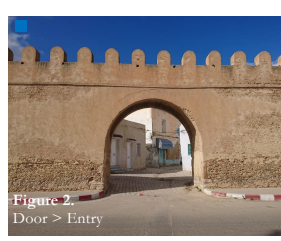

Figure a. Boundary-Interface

Extract 1 : Door in Itinerary 1 - Participant-Inhabitant (RYA)

Extract 2. Door in Itinerary 2 - Participant-Inhabitant (RYA)

Figure 1. Door > Work of art

Figure 2. Door > Entry

According to Dondero, it's a matter of simulacra or traces. In the first case, the traces constitute the "*patina*" produced by the uses on the traditional door. This is why it is considered a work of art. In the second case, the attention is focused on the simulacra of possible actions proposed to the user " to enter ". Thus, it is an entrance to the medina.

2- BOUNDARY AS AN ENCLOSURE

From Objects to Practical scenes

The enclosure is a guideline, « I follow it », says the participant. It is an object which allows an action; this is the level of the practical scene. (Extract 3 & Figure 3)

From Objects to Life's forms

We observed the boundaries of the medina on an extra-quotidien day of the month of fasting "*Ramaḍān*", a few days before to celebrate the "Feast of Breaking the Fast", *Eïd al-Fitr*. The enclosure turns into a showcase and support for exceptional activities of exposure. This case shows the passage from all levels.

We especially underline the passage from the level of the practical scenes to that of the strategies. Then to the higher level of life's forms, "*through the stylistic schematization, and the iconization of the behaviors*". (Fontanille, 2008, p. 31, author's translation) (Figures 4 and b)
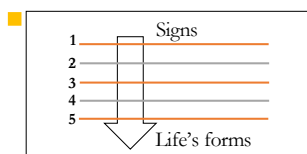

Figure 3. Enclosure > Guideline

Extract 3. Enclosure in Itinerary 2 - Participant-Inhabitant (RYA)

CONCLUSION

The work shows how the boundary is manipulated and interpreted, as a material object, according to different planes of immanence.

Also, it shows that boundary with its double face can be practiced as an object (traces) or by practical scenes (actions' simulacra).

By activating the immanence plan of Life's forms, the boundary reaches the higher level containing all the previous ones.

Thus, the work made it possible to highlight the porosity between the interfaces of the different levels.

Figure b. Boundary-Interface's porosity

Figure 4. Enclosure > Showcase

REFERENCES

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