

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

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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 concerning the same topological element, boundaries are manipulated and articulated each time differently. According to the semiotic experience of users and to the immanence plane they highlight, boundaries change.

From the francophone semiotics, or « *L'École de Paris* », we rely especially on the theory of semiotic practices, literally « *Pratiques sémiotiques* ».

The Theory of Semiotic Practices

Before, semiotics was limited to the analysis of texts. Since 1970, the project of a theory of semiotic practices was undertaken. In fact, according to Fontanille "[...] a plane of experience cannot be converted into a plane of immanence if, and only if, it gives rise to the constitution of a semiotic object". (Fontanille, 2008, p. 18, author's translation); i.e. a semiotic function is possible between an expression plane and a content plane. This theory which was 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. Secondly, it allows experimenting with a boundary as a double-faced interface (Table 1). To explain this model, we will present examples from our corpus of recordings of itineraries or daily practices in Kairouan, the sacred city.

1	Signs
2	Text-utterances
3	Objects
4	Practical scenes
5	Strategies
	Forms of life

Table 1. Interfaces between immanence planes.

1- BOUNDARY AS A DOOR

Interface 3

J. Fontanille and M. G. Dondero, both explain the two movements between objects and practical scenes and vice versa for "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 "text-utterances"), and on the other (face 2) a material substance, which allows them to play an actantial or modal role in practices, at the higher level of relevance". (Fontanille, 2008, p. 23, author's translation)

Face 1

Let's start with the first exploration where the participant-inhabitant (RYA) considers the door as a work of art in « Itinerary 1 » (the *medina intramuros*). Thus, he activates the "Objects level" (Case 1: Excerpt & Figure (1)).


156 i personally for me a door

157 when i see an old traditional door

158 ((points the door with his hand))

159 it's not just a door /

160 it's a work of art that i contemplate




Excerpt 1 : Door in Itinerary 1 - Participant-Inhabitant (RYA)
Video 1 : <https://dox.uliege.be/index.php/s/TY4yozVICjvI9G6>

Case 1

Figure 1. Door > Work of art

Face 2

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: Excerpt & Figure (2))



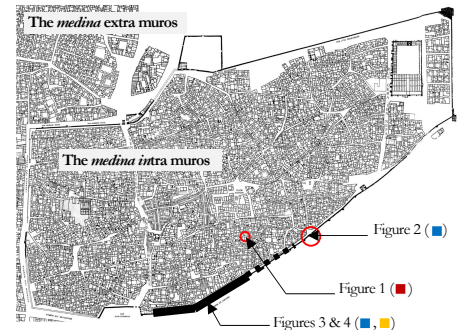
84 sometimes i change my mind i enter through this

85 ((points the door with his finger))

86 sometimes no

Excerpt 2. Door in Itinerary 2 - Participant-Inhabitant (RYA)
Video 2 : <https://dox.uliege.be/index.php/s/3ngNm5VCpyLgWPv>

Case 2



Map. The medina of Qairouan (Tunisia). Location of the four cases.

According to Dondero, it is a question of traces or simulacra. The first case illustrates the *patina*, the result of the traditional door's uses which makes it a work of art. The second involves the *simulacra* of possible actions offered to the users : "to enter".

2- BOUNDARY AS AN ENCLOSURE

From Objects to Practical scenes

Then, he considers the enclosure as a guideline, "I follow it", he says. It is a boundary-object which allows for an action of "following"; this is the level of the practical scene. (Case 3 : Excerpt & Figure (3))

From Objects to Life's forms

Finally, in the forth case, we observed the enclosure's *medina* on a special day of the fasting month of "Ramadhan", a few days before the "Feast of Breaking the Fast" (*Eid al-Fitr*). In this case, the enclosure turns into a showcase for exceptional activities of exposure. It shows the passage from all levels. From the practical scenes level to that of the strategies by adjustment and negotiation, and then, to the higher level of forms of life "through the stylistic schematization, and the iconization of the behaviors". (Fontanille, 2008, p. 31, author's translation) (Case 4 : Figure 4)

8 but i have like the <((in English)) guideline>

9 here i have: [(inaud).]

10 the enclosure is which i follow without thinking

11 as a guide

12 which takes me to awlād farhāne

Excerpt 3. Enclosure in Itinerary 2 - Participant-Inhabitant (RYA)
Video 3 : <https://dox.uliege.be/index.php/s/wYjwAsKpoxWlIm>

Case 3



CONCLUSION

This work shows us how the boundary is manipulated and interpreted according to different planes of immanence. Also, it proves that boundary with its double face, can be grasped as an object (traces) or as giving rise to practical scenes (actions' simulacra) (Figure a).

By activating the immanence plane of "Forms of life", the boundary reaches the higher level containing all the previous ones, which makes possible for porosity to arise between the different levels (Figure b). Thus, the boundary-INTERFACE is highlighted.

Further, we aim to build the hermeneutical model of the interpretation of the boundary.

REFERENCES

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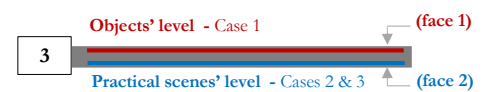


Figure a. Boundary-Interface

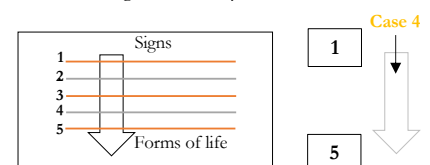


Figure b. Boundary-Interface's porosity