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The Limit as Centre: Some Considerations on the Political Imagination of the In-Between, Starting from the Central Symbol of the Crime Series *Bron/Broen* – The Bridge

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Abstract. The crime series *Bron/Broen* [The Bridge], co-produced in 2011 by the public televisions of Denmark and Sweden, located at the centre of the bridge over the Øresund/Öresund maritime strait which represents the border between the two states, offers one of the most prolific thematizations of in-between-ness in the popular culture of the last decade. The fact that it struck a chord of global collective imagination is revealed in its quick transformation into a highly successful international TV format, relocated on various other state borders. More than a theme, the series proposes an entire aesthetics of the in-between organized around the symbolic constellation of the bridge. A bridge simultaneously divides and reunites, generates empathetic fusion but also ushers in reflexive distancing. But, above all, as it is narratively and poetically framed in the series, it transgresses its common understanding as a connective interspace and tends to become a world to itself. A rather dangerous one, for that matter, since within its confines the usual distinctions between right and wrong are seriously called into doubt. From a space of transit, the bridge becomes – the distinction is essential – a space of transition, of change, of becoming. A space replete with risks but, essentially, a space of freedom. The essay attempts to unpack political implications less explored until now of this core symbolism.[1]

Keywords: Nordic noir, frontier, transgression, crime series, ideology, centre

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The Bridge (2011–1018) is a four-season murder mystery series co-produced by DRK and SVT, the public televisions of Denmark and Sweden, and set at the frontier between the two countries. Following the path of the already established Nordic noir brand, it enjoyed a prodigious global success in itself, but it also became the first Scandinavian truly international and transcultural television format with a number of transpositions and relocations on different borders around the world: "The audience share in Denmark was about 50%. It has been sold to more than 50 countries all over the world and has also been remade in a British/French version (*The Tunnel*, Sky Atlantic/Canal+, Britain/France, 2013, 2015) and an American/Mexican version (*The Bridge*, FX, USA, 2013-14)" (Eichner and Waade 2015, 7).

The list of remakes has expanded in the meanwhile, now including the Russian–Estonian *Most/Slid* (2018); the Malaysian–Singaporean *The Bridge* (2018); the German–Austrian *Der Pass/The Strait*) (2019). Beyond direct remakes, we might hypothesize the stimulating pre-eminence of the format on a whole international wave of series packaging the complex symbolism of state borders/limits in crime narratives: *Wataha/The Pack*, set at the Polish–Ukrainian border (2014–2017), *Okkupert/Occupied*, premised on a possible overtake of Norway by Russia (2015–2017), *Fauda*, which boldly confronts the moral intricacies of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict (2015–), *Sorjonen/Bordertown*, located at the border between Finland and Russia (2016–2019), *Grenseland/Borderline*, involving the Norwegian–Finnish border (2017), and German productions such as *Wolfsland/Land of the Wolf* (2016–), set on the German–Polish border.

Given this broad sphere of expansion, it is understandable that the scholarly interest – in the light of what begins to be known as "border aesthetics" (Agnese and Amilhat Szary 2015) – concentrated on the play of signifiers occurring when the format was adapted to new cultural and intercultural contexts (Eichner and Waade 1015, García Avis 2015, Åberg 2015, Waade 2016, Jensen, Nielsen, and Waade 2016, Steiner 2017, McCabe 2019). In the following considerations, I will adopt the complementary position of focusing on what is "repetition" rather than "transformation" – in the terms of the opposition considered as defining for adaptions by Hutcheon and O'Flynn (2013, 114). This is to say, I will attempt to discern the core magnetism of the *Bron/Broen* format, which made it travel to such distances, through a phenomenological approach of "the bridge" as seminal symbolism and conceptual crux of the series. This course of interpretation is inspired and led by the paradox that a definite limit, and process of delimitation, the form in which a state border is usually conceived, can acquire the semantic corollary of a cohesive Centre. The analysis will be therefore concentrated on the bridge – neither as a *physical* place, as the architectonic structure that connects Denmark and Sweden over the maritime strait called Øresund in Danish and Öresund in Swedish, nor (mainly) as a *mediated* place (i.e. the manner in which

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the real place is represented) but first of all as an *imagined* place that works as a powerful metaphor (I follow here the distinction between physical, mediated, and imagined place, based on Peirce's semiotic triangle, formulated in Eichner and Waade 2015, 6).

Following the principles of phenomenological reduction, I will concentrate on the emerging symbolism of the bridge in the first season of the series, the one that founds and organizes the fictional universe. This is an extension of a principle formulated by Mittel (2015, 56) with respect to pilot episodes, which "must orient viewers to the intrinsic norms that the series will employ". Hermeneutical instruments will be used to explore the political imaginary coalesced around the central symbol of the bridge. There is a wide consensus that the series promotes a political agenda aptly synthesized by Jenner: "contemporary Danish detective dramas like *The Killing* (*Forbrydelsen*, DR, 2007–12) or *The Bridge* (*Bron/Broen*, DR/SVT, 2011–) are shaped by their contexts as Danish public service broadcasting, national debates surrounding feminism and immigration, foreign politics and the relationship between Denmark and Sweden" (2016, 3).

On the other hand, political theory has been applied on *Bron/Broen* and its subsequent variations from a gender perspective (e.g. Manolache 2018, McCabe 2019). While acknowledging the relevance of the above, my framing of the matter will be different. I will attempt to interpret the layers of meaning of the bridge not according to poststructuralist political theories but starting from an Aristotelian view of political order as general equilibrium, and of *mesoi*, the "people at the middle", as the most likely to keep checks and balances working. I argued elsewhere the significance of this vision for understanding the strategic value of representational arts for the imaginary foundation of modern polities (Dobrescu 2000, 2006, 2015). My present approach is articulated with the prospective conceptualizations of a centrist political philosophy, which – with the words of Dahrendorf Forum scholar Alexandru Filip – "may be what European politics needs to revive trust in compromise, moderation, and mature reform" (Filip 2018).

With the conceptual framework and analytical focus clarified, we can turn now to the bridge itself, the physical, mediatic, and, most of all, symbolic one. The real object, with its good eight kilometres, is the longest automobile and railway bridge in Europe, but aside from this its structure is also unique: after advancing from the Swedish coast to an artificial island set in the middle of the Øresund/Öresund maritime strait, it continues through a four-kilometre tunnel to a Danish island set in the immediate vicinity of Copenhagen (O'Dell 2003, Bucken-Knapp 2003). Mediatically, the first season offers a rhythmic alternation of broad views and close-ups, taken from a fluid variety of angles, of the architectural elegance of the bridge. The panoramas and close-ups are blended in the intro in a manner that immediately transports the viewer from the physical

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to the imaginary level. That is to say, the bridge appears from the very beginning as defying the commonsensical demarcation between two states. The frontier, prominently represented in the social imaginary as a dividing frontal line, is transmogrified into a bizarre route on which you are supposed to advance. The intro could be construed as a visual essay that echoes the mental unrest with respect to borders' imagination expressed by Austrian-Swiss sociologist Dagmar Reichert: "The limit, the frontier, the boundary, time-series of boundaries, or ditches, the void, or *différance*, they are all modifications of the line, the form of topo-logical thinking. Can we escape this thinking in terms of spatial metaphors? Must thinking be visual? I am asking you. I don't know myself. So strong am I bound to the picture of spatial metaphors" (1992, 95).

The opening visual experience of the pilot episode is not an attempt to escape the visual but to transform it, by substituting the crossing of the frontier with an advancement, seen through a car screen, into the night, into the unknown and the undetermined. The identification with this sense of immersion has a mind-setting power, even if we will soon learn, assumedly with a cold shiver, that that was the perspective of the killer. The frontier imaginary glides towards the diaphanous concreteness of a no man's land, towards a space that literally emerges from the sea and generates a strange regime of physical suspension as well as a suspension of moral limits and conventions.

This immersion ends in a total blackout, which will soon prove to be a provoked 48-second power break. When illumination is restored, it exposes a female body placed at the exact middle of the Øresund/Öresund Bridge. Through this macabre manner of emphasizing the otherwise loose demarcation between Sweden and Denmark and through the police investigation that will follow it, an invisible, impalpable separating curtain suddenly becomes dense and forbidding, thereby freezing and completely reconfiguring the fluid nocturnal space in which we were initially lured. The bridge is rapidly turned into a crime scene, more precisely, into a forensic operational theatre. The investigators soon learn that they are not confronted with a normal corpse but with a *cadavre exquis*, a grotesque anatomical montage: the superior part belongs to Kerstein Ekwell, president of the city council of Malmö, while the inferior one to Monique Brammer, a Danish drug-addicted sex worker. The juxtaposition of administrative jurisdictions is thus ostentatiously duplicated by the juxtaposition of polarized social statuses: the pundits and the pariahs.

The start of the investigation procedures introduces us to the lead characters: Saga Norén from the Malmö criminal police, played by Sofia Helin, and Martin Rhode representing the Copenhagen public force, brought to life by Kim Bodnia. Both seem (calculatedly) ill-suited for the general conventions of the noir genre. Saga manifests a condition identified by various commentators (but never by the creators themselves – Townsend 2015) as the Asperger syndrome: she is incapable

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of empathy and has a limited and abstract understanding of human emotions – hence her Apollonian incapacity of resenting fear or feeling depressed. At his end, Martin Rhode is highly emotional but at the same time displays a zest for life contagiously expressed in his outbursts of laughter, a disposition that sets him manifestly apart from the "miserable detective" stereotypical of noir movies. His Dionysian vitality is antinomically underlined by the fact that he has recently underwent vasectomy, indeed, after having acquired a substantial progeny from successive marriages.

The two central characters stand for classical attributes of consciousness whose harmonization is as difficult as it is necessary. The series reverses gender stereotypes, attributing to the female character an almost inhuman logical consistency, consubstantial with a sense of condemnation and punishment, while the male character becomes the agent of empathy, of comprehension, of care and tolerance. Their difficult relationship is expressive both of the fragility of every truce between intelligence and empathy and of their imperative reunion. In the plain words of *Guardian* TV blogger Vicky Frost: "While all the murder and mayhem has been going on around them it's the bridge they've built between their impossibly dissimilar personalities I've found compelling" (Frost 2012). Indeed, the bridge also represents the difficult but necessary relation between the two characters and the two archetypes they stand for – an intermediate, connective space between the ethics of conviction and an ethics of responsibility.

The tissue of meanings woven around the bridge includes, quite saliently, thanatic and psychopomp ones – clearly exposed in the subtitle given to the series on German ZDF television: *Transit in den Tod* (Transiting to Death). The "audacious opening moments of the Danish-Swedish television co-production *Bron/Broen*" create a powerful link between "transnational in-between spaces of somewhere and anywhere, where jurisdictions collide, otherness is encountered and cross-border cooperation demanded" and the "female fatality – with a body that quite literally splits in two before our very eyes" (McCabe 2019). The surgical theme is accentuated by the creators by placing among the vehicles waiting on the Øresund/Öresund Bridge because of the forensic investigation an ambulance with a patient in urgent need of a heart transplant. An ambulance uncompromisingly blocked by Saga but permitted to cross by the empathetic Martin. Actually, this transplant involving property developer Göran Söringer will develop into a subplot which enlarges the symbolic constellation around surgery by acquiring overtones of life celebration but also of blind greed – the latter, through the cynical pressures of Charlotte, Söringer's wife, for obtaining a new heart for her husband.

Returning to the obsessional image of the corpse on the Bridge, we could read here the suggestion of an aggression of the abstract, defined by the cruel precision of the anatomical cut, over the world of life. The sybillinic *signifié* that uses corpses as substance of its *signifiant* is an expression of radical logic typical for

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a terrorist mind-set, as dependent on manifestoes as the next Avant-guard group (Kubiak 2004). On the one hand, the message of the original cut, of the beastly but hyper-lucid section of the two female bodies (a motive instrumental to both horror and noir fiction) and, on the other hand, the would-be body placed with precision on the frontier jointly suggest a ritual, or an alchemic procedure through which the abstract and impersonal power of the state is extracted, distilled, and subversively turned against itself.

The hypnotic, if not hallucinatory image of the corpse, or, shall we say, meta-corpse, placed on the frontier concentrates the attention on a line of division and, actually, on a "non-place" (Augé 1995). This limitation-as-section, as dissection, or bi-section – if we consider that there are two bodies involved (and, virtually, countless bodies, potentially processed into anonymization and reification) – is meant to anarchically suspend all spatial determinations. But the compensatory and therapeutic universe of the bridge absorbs the trauma of the line-limit, of the abstract delimitation that became in the meanwhile a bleeding wound, into a Centre – a virtual space that also seems to lack dimensions, but which also seems open towards a symbolism of regeneration.

At first, the no man's land, the in-between, to wit non-space of the bridge seems to offer the operational basis for kamikaze attacks against established order. And almost through the end of the first season (an end that shifts briskly from an ideological to a private motivational range), the anti-system rhetoric is the only justification for the killer's choice of the precise middle, both irradiating and sectional, of the Øresund/Öresund Bridge. Starting from this premises, all the means that the creators of the series assemble in order to dismantle this infernal symbolic machinery can be construed as a counter-offensive meant to reconquer this in-between space (and to capture the very essence of in-between-ness).

In spite of the concentration of public sympathy on the couple of investigators, and especially on Saga Norén, with her emotional silence brilliantly played by Sofia Helin (Nicholson 2014), the perspective of the criminal is tantamount to the semantic economy of the series. The focus is on an individual predator, a solitary and maleficent genius clearly resounding not so much with the classical film noir but with popular narratives of the turn of the twentieth century such as *Fantomas* (Dall'Asta 2009) – though filtered through the mythology of poetic and sophisticated serial killers the prototype of whom is, presumably, Hannibal Lecter (Brown 2013, 202–214). Actually, the villain of the first season can be seen as a phantasmagoric projection feeding on collective frustrations; what really matters is less his personality as such and more the aura generated around him. Up to a point, the magnetism, the ambiguous darkness of his criminal strategy exerted over the public represented in the fictional world is meant to equally take in its grip the real-life audience. *Guardian* TV blogger Vicky Frost, already evoked in these pages, displays his response with genuine clarity: "Many times in these

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two episodes [five and six] the message was repeated: the killer's methods are not right, but his motivation is not without merit. It's a thought-provoking twist on the standard Scandi-crime motif of social comment. Only this time, the social commentary is coming from the bad guy" (Frost 2012).

This is to say that the criminal effectively presents crime as a trope of a rhetoric of social justice. With the help of Swedish journalist Daniel Ferbé, with whose lack of scruples the killer toys at will, hideous crimes come to be packaged by the denizens of the Internet as deeds of "The Truth Terrorist," *Sandheds Terrorist* in Danish or *Sanningsterrorist* in Swedish – an evolution which, in my view, goes far beyond "social commentary coming from the bad guy". It actually opens a new perspective on the topic of social justice, commonly associated with Nordic noir (Hansen and Waade 2017, 82; Robbins 2017; Stougaard-Nielsen 2017), from a sharp, uncomfortable, to wit sarcastic angle. The Truth Terrorist feigns to share major articles of the faith of social activists while fashioning himself as a secular angel of the Apocalypse. In fact, he is an enemy of the polis similar to the tyrant whom classical political philosophy epitomizes as a rabid beast (on the classical vision of the tyrant, see Avramescu 2009, 199–204).

His chiasmic modus operandi appears from the manner in which his criminal imagination transposes into criminal scenarios the five points of his programme diagnosing social scourges: lack of equality before justice, into the killing of two women from opposite social stands and the squalid mixing of their bodies; indifference to homeless people, into planting bottles with poisoned wine that will kill ten persons of the ranks of those whose cause he pretends to embrace; the inacceptable treatment of mental illnesses, into transforming persons suffering from paranoid schizophrenia into his minions and prompting them to assassination and arson; discrimination against immigrants, into moving a family of refugees to revenge the death of their son who died in police custody; exploitation of children, into inciting radicals to set fire to five companies presumed to tolerate and cover this practice in their overseas venues. One of the most ostentatious and suggestive of his acts, a kind of supplement, as it appears, to point number two, is the kidnapping of a homeless person that he promotes to notoriety through cruel and unusual procedures: the victim, a certain Bjørn Rasmussen, is tied to a chair, with open hand veins, while the public can follow his slow agony on the Internet. An ordeal to which the Truth Terrorist is not going to put an end unless four major real estate enterprises agree to jointly donate five million crowns to charities.[2] This anti-system statement is part of an agenda which European artistic and intellectual contrarian élites traditionally identify with. But the message is strongly jammed by the conflict between the social goals and the morally abhorrent means – a

2 The topic of anti-capitalist terrorists trying to extort money from a billionaire based on the menace of random killings was first introduced in 1901 by Jack London, in his novella *The Minions of Midas*.

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conflict that should be obvious to the real audience but seems far less so to the public opinion represented in the fictional world. From this latter perspective, the Truth Terrorist is increasingly perceived as a cool vigilante, who uses distorted mirrors in order to expose the quintessential inhumanity of a robbing upper class. Actually, the creators of the series hold to the audience with a penchant for activism, presumably attracted by the Nordic noir social commitment reputation, a mirror in which it can contemplate the risk of mob psychology and crowd psychosis potential in its own self-righteous militancy.[3] The first season of *The Bridge* carefully follows this process of public radicalization cum growing moral entropy. The mounting sympathy for the Truth Terrorist is paired with a gradual raise in insensitivity to the cruelty that he liberally dispenses. This insidious penetration reaches the most profound fibre of the narrative when the elder son of the Danish detective Martin Rhode is lured via e-mail into a personal relationship with the Truth Terrorist, a relationship with devastating consequences.

Actually, an essential in-between space emerges from the reflexive self-distancing induced to an otherwise self-righteous public opinion and from the interplay between the representation of civic participation as an expression of emancipatory reason as well as its representation as a chain of conditional reflexes and scapegoating mass impulses. A distancing, or in-between-ness, induced by art in order to facilitate public self-scrutiny and to foster, at least in a horizon of hope, a prudential and considerate public debate. Since maturity and wisdom almost fatally command a touch of metaphysical melancholy, this could also begin to explain the connection between this centrist philosophy and the resurrection of the noir genre.

The in-between-ness of the Bridge creates a space of suspension(s), but not of the kind that would evacuate social or personal drama. This becomes obvious

3 It is noteworthy that the Anonymous movement, still vigorous at the time when the first season was released, is premised on the resuscitation of a popular (anti)hero of early modernity: the famous conspirator Guy Fawkes, mastermind of the 1605 Gunpowder Plot set to blow up the British Parliament while in session. The history of the perception of this radical icon is relevant in the present context. In Britain, Guy Fawkes Day, or Night, is celebrated on the 5th of November and, even if originally instituted as a government propaganda manoeuvre, it became in time a genuinely carnivalesque form of relieving both social tensions and fears of social violence through playful fireworks and the burning of allegorical puppets (Sharpe 2005). A mutation occurred in the 1980s, when writer Alan Moore and graphic artist David Lloyd released the comics series *V for Vendetta*, thus reviving, without explicitly naming it, the myth of Guy Fawkes in a dystopian neo-fascist and theologically abusive Britain of the future (Moore and Lloyd 1988). For Alan Moore, the anonymous vigilante is intensely ambiguous since, on the one hand, it epitomizes the radical vanity of considering himself beyond and above good and evil, and destined to unleash limitless violence in the name of social justice; on the other hand, because it symbolizes the power (or at least the legitimate aspiration to it) of the human individual confronted with massive political machines and machinations (Keller 2008). The popular enthusiasm of the Occupy and Anonymous movements has adopted only the latter sense when turning the mask of the character imagined by Alan Moore and drawn by David Lloyd into their effigy.

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with the grand finale of the first season, which symbolically takes places at the same midway between Denmark and Sweden. The criminal has attracted Rhode, by kidnapping his son, to the scene of his first displayed murder and urges the detective to shoot him and thereby become guilty of murder. This is the climax of what was revealed to be a plan of personal revenge of the Truth Terrorist, hidden under the appearances of a moral crusade, against a man who had seduced his wife and whom he considers guilty of the accident occurred years ago on the Bridge, in which she lost her life together with their child. However, the concluding act of the criminal performance should be equally located on the bridge. It implies revealing to Martin the murder of his son as a ransom for the other child's life, thereby committing a suicide of sorts since Martin was supposed to take immediate revenge and ironically end up in prison for murder himself.

In the course of the series, the bridge was generally flash-crossed in both directions, according to the urgencies of the inquiry, somehow recalling the thoughts of Nigel Thrift on the effect of mobilities on the human sense of place: "What is place in this 'in-between' world? The short answer is – compromised: permanently in a state of enunciation, between addresses, always deferred. Places are 'stages of intensity'. Traces of movement, speed and circulation" (1994, 212). But in the end speed and turbulence are suspended, and everything freezes again. The bridge is transformed into a place of freedom – fragile, discomforting, even hurtful, such as the authentic experience of freedom always is. At the ends of the bridge, there are administrative accretions, the police precincts of Copenhagen and Malmö and beyond them state apparatuses that define and maintain moral order. But the bridge as such is a space of anomia because here the distinction between right and wrong is not premised on consensus, conventions, and procedures. The Centre is a space of moral freedom, under attack from all kinds of rage and despair.

The vital symbolic value of the Centre in imagination does not need to be demonstrated. Mircea Eliade notoriously connected it to the ineluctable search for an *axis mundi* (1961). Humanist geographer Edward Relph memorably stated that: "The essence of place lies in the largely unselfconscious intentionality that defines places as profound centers of human existence" (1976, 43). In the present context, I would, nevertheless, underline some of its political implications – political, in the basic meaning of the notion, which implies the search for a cornerstone of social cohesion. The acute sense of the dissolution of the Centre is notoriously expressed in W. B. Yeats's poem "The Second Coming," first published in 1919, in the short intermission between the ceasefire of WWI and the wake of the Irish War of Independence. Yeats conveyed a feeling of disaggregation that extends from the political to the most intimate existential recesses, a state of mind largely shared by the intellectual and artistic élites of the epoch, which acutely perceived the end of the European *ancien régime* without being able to

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imagine the sources and forms of a new, more hospitable political and ethical legitimacy (Mackaman and Mays 2000). Hence the famous lines:

> Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
> Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
> The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
> The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
> The best lack all conviction, while the worst
> Are full of passionate intensity. (Yeats 1996, 89–90)

It is very tempting to discern here splinters of the *noir* imagination, be it classical or contemporary. But even if the general sense of threat, of a Centre that cannot hold anymore, as well as the image of the tide of blood, which mark the torturing premonitions of Yeats seem to resonate with the wave of interest in crime fiction, and in Nordic noir in particular, the pessimistic conclusion of the weakness of "the best" in front of the devastating passions of "the worst" is not unproblematically transferable to the present; at least, not as far as the political imagination of *The Bridge* is concerned. It is true that the "passionate intensity" of the killer represented in the series proves to be disquietingly able to manipulate proficiently the language of virtue and justice and to shake the mental foundations of civilized existence. But, unlike Yeats's poem, the series opens a horizon of hope through the difficult, prudent, painful internalization of uncertainty. An attitude captured in the lines of the musical intro of the series *Hollow Talk* performed by the Danish band *Choir of Young Believers*. Even if ambiguous, dark, and touched by an apocalyptic mood not dissimilar to Yeats's own, the poem hypnotically intoned by Greek-Danish vocalist Jannis Noya Makrigiannis ends in powerful, even if painful, suggestions of regeneration and healing:

> Never said it was good, never said it was near
> Shadow rises and you are here
>
> And then you cut
> You cut it out
> And everything
> Goes back to the beginning

As a cultural and social phenomenon, *The Bridge* helps us understand that the magnetism of Nordic noir is not limited, as commonly stated, to an extensive social agenda and to the revelation of that "something" that is "rotten in Denmark", i.e. into the mythical Scandinavian welfare state (as argued, for instance, in Jensen 2013, Robbins 2017, Syvertsen, Trine, Gunn, Oleand Hallvard

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2014). *The Bridge* demonstrates that Nordic noir is intimately related to the consciousness of the fact that the Scandinavian area has been the stage of a fringe civilizational experiment in egalitarian, grassroots democracy (on the intellectual history of Scandinavian utopianism, see Witoszek and Sørensen 2018). Within this experiment, the utopian impulses are always close to trespassing the limits, to committing a hubris. Therefore, the empathetic, fallible but self-amending rationality of the Centre should mount a permanent watch. *The Bridge* seems to mediate between the intensity of passion, which can be pushed to the extreme of murderous redeeming psychoses but is still essential for a life that is worth living, and the equally vital vibration of prudence, responsibility, and sceptical tolerance – which is in itself a proof of the fact that the noir genre has the capacity of exploring and configuring spaces of in-between-ness with a significant potential for political, moral, and existential regeneration.

The series does not explicitly stress the political implications of the emergence of the Centre as an in-between space, as circumscribed ethical and cohesive uncertainty. Nevertheless, I would point out the concomitance and affinities between *Bron/Broen/The Bridge* and *Borgen/The Castle*, a Danish series highly praised throughout Europe that presents the accession to and the complicated maintenance of power ("Borgen", the Castle, being the familiar name given to the Copenhagen siege of the Danish Government), of a fictional Centre, led by the charismatic politician Brigitte Nyborg – a character interpreted by Sidse Babett Knudsen that has become an emblem of the new Scandinavian quality TV almost as salient as Sofia Helin's Saga Norén. The connection between this political series and *The Bridge* should be the object of a separate analysis, but still it is worth reminding their insistent pairing at the first Nordicana festival meant to celebrate the modern overtake, this time conducted exclusively with peaceful multimedia means, of the British Isles by Scandinavians (Frost 2013). What is revealed in the associated ascension of the two series is the very special political significance of the Centre – i.e. of an in-between space of systematic doubt that is not articulated in retractile, defensive terms, as doubt is commonly figured, but is assertive, vibrating, attractive, and irradiating.

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Grenseland/Borderline (2017, Norway: TV2 Norge).
Most/Slid (2018, Russia/Estonia: NTV).
Okkupert/Occupied (2015–2017, Norway: TV2 Norge).
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Spreewaldkrimi/Crimes of the Spree Forest (2006–, Germany: ZDF).
The Bridge (2013–2014, US: FX).
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The Tunnel (2013–, UK/France: Sky Atlantic/Canal +).
Wataha/The Border (2014–2017, Poland: HBO Europe).
Wolfsland/Land of the Wolf (2016–, Germany: Das Erste).

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