

ADAPTING LANDSCAPE AND PLACE IN TRANSCULTURAL REMAKES: THE CASE OF *BRON|BROEN*, *THE BRIDGE* AND *THE TUNNEL*

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ABSTRACT

Although place tends to be overlooked as a narrative component in audiovisual fiction, it is undeniable that landscapes, settings and locations play a defining role in television series. Not only are these forms of place central to reinforcing the genre, themes and plots of the story; they also serve to reflect the characters' emotions and cultural identities. Therefore,

when a scripted format is remade in a foreign country, the narrative dimension of place is one of the elements that need to be relocalised to a new sociocultural environment. This paper aims to examine how the significance of place is adapted in the specific case of transcultural televisual remakes. In order to do so, the study will present a comparative analysis of the Swedish-Danish co-production *Bron|Broen* (2011-) and its two remakes: the American *The Bridge* (2013-2014) and the Anglo-French *The Tunnel* (2013-). More specifically, the representations of place in these three series will be studied in relation to other narrative components, such as genre conventions and aesthetics, characters, and dramatic conflict. Ultimately, this paper will prove that, when you take a story built for a specific setting and relocate it elsewhere, that new context informs the architecture of the story itself.

Over the last decade, Scandinavian crime fiction in literature, film, and television has been the object of increased interest all over the world. Although the genre itself is not new, the labels “Nordic noir” or “Scandi noir”¹ have been coined in recent years to describe dark and complex crime narratives set in Scandinavian countries. Within this current framework of popularity across different media, Nordic noir television series such as *Forbrydelsen* (2007-2012), *Wallander* (2005-2013) or *Bron|Broen* (2011-), which position place as an essential element in their narratives, have not only become quite successful when broadcasted abroad; but their formats are also being optioned and adapted in different countries.²

And yet, even when they play a significant role in these series, Nordic landscapes and settings are often seen as mere dormant backgrounds. As Waade has observed, ‘setting is an important, yet often undervalued component of crime fiction and fiction in general, and location in TV drama has typically been considered subordinate to the narrative’ (2011a:48). This is due to the fact that, traditionally, the element of place tends to take a backseat in mainstream writing for film and television, where characters, plot structure, and dialogues drive the screenwriting process.

In spite of this, a setting is not just a mere backdrop for a scene or a dialogue, and it can also serve a ‘myriad of narrative purposes beyond the generic, decorative or touristic’ (2014:42).³ To illustrate this, Murphy argues that, at least in the case of American independent cinema, place tends to be intrinsically present in screenwriting practices (2014:28). This is something that could certainly be extrapolated to television, especially in the case of transcultural remakes⁴ of scripted series, as landscapes and locations need to be interwoven in the narrative from the very beginning of the adaptation process.

1 The label “Nordic noir” can also be understood as a brand, or within the realm of place branding culture (see Waade, 2011b). However, this article will mainly refer to “Nordic noir” as a narrative genre, and will further explore its defining traits within this framework.

2 Although this article will not focus on the reasons that might be behind the recent international success of Nordic noir television, some authors have offered insightful ideas on this topic, especially in regards to fiction series produced by DR (Denmark’s public service broadcaster). See: Bondebjerg and Redvall (2011), Redvall (2013) or Jensen and Waade (2013a, 2013b).

3 In fact, Murphy goes on to explain that ‘place can be intrinsic, integrative, stylistic, structural, conceptual and thematic’, thus establishing six different (and coexisting) functions that place might have in any given story (2014:42).

4 The term “remake” is used to refer to a very specific form of adaptation, sustained by Leitch’s definition of film remakes as ‘adaptations of a given story to a new discursive incarnation within the same mode of representation’ (1990:138). Therefore, the specificity of remakes resides in the adaptation of a story (or fable) taking place within the same mode and medium (which, in this particular case, is long-form television).

Taking this into consideration, the aim of this article is to explore the narrative role that setting plays in the specific case of transcultural remakes of Nordic noir formats. In order to do so, I have focused on the Swedish-Danish co-production *Bron|Broen* (2011-), one of the most successful and paradigmatic cases of Scandinavian crime fiction in recent years, and its two transcultural remakes: the American *The Bridge* (2013-2014) and the Anglo-French *The Tunnel* (2013-). Mainly drawing from screenwriting theory and format adaptation studies, I have conducted a comparative textual analysis of the first season from each of these three series, specifically looking at how setting interacts with genre, aesthetics, characters and dramatic conflict.

The premise of *Bron|Broen* sets the story in motion with the discovery of a dead body in the middle of the Øresund Bridge, which connects the countries of Sweden and Denmark. In the case of *The Bridge*, the premise is relocated to the Bridge of the Americas between Texas and Mexico, while *The Tunnel* replaces the bridge with the Eurotunnel that links England and France underwater.

Among the different locations portrayed in *Bron|Broen*, the actual Øresund Bridge emerges as a symbolic setting with considerable narrative relevance within the story. In fact, Agger believes that this moving of the bridge to ‘the very centre of the narrative [may justify the series]’ steady invitation to remakes in the context of other nations: a bridge is not only a geographical fact, but a metaphor loaded with significance and emotions reminiscent of cultural clashes as well as cooperation’ (2016:148). Therefore, in this study of *Bron|Broen* and its two remakes, particular attention will be given to the role of the bridge (or the tunnel) as a narrative figure, which is characterised by the duality of a simultaneous connection and separation between two countries.

Ultimately, this paper will argue that setting, landscape and other forms of place inform the narrative of TV series, constituting an essential factor in screenwriting for television. Due to its significance, place must be especially taken into account in the case of transcultural remakes, as the adaptation of a scripted series in a different country presents a set of specific challenges in relation to the global/local dichotomy that characterizes television formats.

01 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Even though the main goal of this paper is not to wade deeper into ongoing theoretical discussions surrounding place

TELEVISION SERIES	BROADCASTED BY	PRODUCED BY	MAIN SETTINGS	LANGUAGES
<i>Bron Broen</i> (2011-)	DR1 (Denmark) SVT1 (Sweden)	DR and Nimbus Film (Denmark) SVT and Filmance Intl (Sweden) (Co-funded by Norwegian NRK or German ZDF, among others)	Copenhagen (Denmark) Malmö (Sweden) Øresund Bridge	Danish and Swedish
<i>The Bridge</i> (2013-2014)	FX (USA)	FX Productions (USA) Shine America (USA)	El Paso (Texas, USA) Ciudad Juarez (Mexico) Bridge of the Americas	English and Spanish
<i>The Tunnel</i> (2013-)	Sky (UK) Canal+ (France)	Sky Atlantic and Kudos (UK) Canal+ and Shine France (France)	Folkestone (England) Calais (France) Eurotunnel	English and French

△ TABLE 1. PRODUCTION DETAILS OF *BRON|BROEN*, *THE BRIDGE* AND *THE TUNNEL*

and television formats, it does seem necessary to briefly clarify the use of certain concepts, so as to explain their pertinence (and how they will be used) in the analysis of *Bron|Broen*, *The Bridge* and *The Tunnel*.

1.1 Considerations on space, place, landscape, setting and location

The terminology widely adopted to describe space as it is portrayed in film and television presents particular nuances that go beyond the geographical, and therefore need to be precised. For instance, Lury establishes a clear and useful distinction between space and place⁵ in television. According to this critic, “space” refers to somewhere more abstract, global and ‘all-at-once-anywhere’, while “place” is used to define a more tangible, familiar environment (2005:147-150). For Murphy, ‘place has cultural, historical and personal implications. (...) It implies a location or setting that elicits a specific or unique identity or personality’ (2014:34). Indeed, those contextual implications inform place and, consequently, have a crucial impact on the narrative of a film or television series. Therefore, in the case of transcultural remakes, the ‘unique identity’ of a specific place will condition the adaptation process.

In regard to the study of landscape, and as editor of the book *Landscape and Film* (2006), Lefebvre offered theoretical contributions that are still considered a cornerstone of landscape studies. Even when this author focused on the relationship between landscape and film, his observations have also been applied to other fields, including TV studies. For

Lefebvre, setting does not only refer to the actual locations or ‘spatial features’ where a story takes place, but also to the way in which they are represented and interpreted (2006:21-22). And yet, Lefebvre also remarks that ‘in mainstream cinema, natural or exterior spaces tend to function as setting rather than landscape in the vast majority of cases’ (2006:24). How can a distinction be established between these two concepts, then? After a thorough analysis of the depiction of landscape in art history, Lefebvre concludes that filmic landscape is manifested in an ‘interpretive gaze’ (2006:51), and that ‘it is the cultural context that makes it possible to direct the “landscape gaze” onto the narrative spaces of fiction films’ (2006:48).

In her analysis of Lefebvre’s theoretical reflections on landscape and setting, television scholar Waade further muses that ‘*setting* concerns the narrative representation and the diegetic world, while *landscape* concerns aesthetic representation and extra-diegetic layers derived from the “landscape gaze”’ (2011a:49). In more general terms, it could be stated that landscape and setting are two different spatial forms that represent a given place in a way that is more abstract or concrete, respectively, but always within an interpretive frame informed by their contextual implications.

Lastly, the term “location” is usually understood as the actual, spatial ubication where a story is set. Along these lines, Murphy points to location as a ‘geographical coordinate’ (2014:34), while Waade also notes that this concept ‘is related to the film production and describes the physical place where the film is shot’ (2011:49). Even though the exploration of these terms could certainly be developed further, the ideas quoted above should merely be taken as broad strokes that serve to illustrate the way in which these concepts will be used in this article.

5 For additional reflections on the notion of ‘place’, Casey (1997) has reviewed the historical evolution of this concept from the standpoint of philosophical thought.

1.2 Format adaptation in television

The comparative analysis of place in *Bron|Broen*, *The Bridge* and *The Tunnel* needs to be contextualised within the bigger picture of worldwide format trade. As Moran and Malbon have illustrated, current television markets are clearly defined by a ‘dynamic of adaptation’ (2006:11), where both scripted and non-scripted formats are optioned, sold, and localised across the globe.

Even when Anglo-American formats are still the defining axis of the television world market trade, formats are now travelling in many different directions, more than ever before. The multiple adaptations of stories like the Colombian telenovela *Yo Soy Betty, la Fea* (1999-2001), or the Spanish “whodunit” series *Los Misterios de Laura* (2009-), among others, reflect the worldwide increasing interest in formats produced by non-English speaking countries. Furthermore, these format adaptations are no longer limited to the West, and are also being carried out by countries from very different regions.⁶ Thus, the adaptations of Nordic noir television series, such as *Bron|Broen* or *Forbrydelsen*, emerge as another clear example of this dynamic.

Within the realm of format adaptation studies, academics usually refer to “glocalization” (that is, the symbiosis between the global and the local, or the specific and the universal) as a defining trait of this phenomenon. It is assumed, then, that when a television series is remade in another country, the universal elements of that format will interact and dialogue with the local factors that arise from its new local context. The relevance that context has in the study of television becomes even clearer when a long-form series is remade in a different country, since all of its narrative elements must be transformed according to the defining coordinates (whether they are historical, sociocultural, political or related to the broadcasting industry) of this new context. Furthermore, as Beeden and de Bruin have argued, transcultural remakes might enable the articulation of local identities, and ‘the success of an adaptation may [in fact] be linked to its ability to reflect and interpret its new context’ (2010:5).

And yet, while the study of context remains a pivotal focus of television studies, the notion of the universal tends to be belittled. Even though the word “universal” is not exempt from controversy and can be deemed problematic, television critic Knox has called for academics to revisit this term:

‘Yes, it is not unproblematic as a concept; but it is also *here*, and it needs careful critical engagement, not least because

engaging with the universal offers the opportunity to develop a multi-disciplinary conceptual framework, in which the universal and the particular/local are understood as conceptually intertwined. (...) Engagement with the universal opens up opportunities to understand developments in contemporary television in terms of their positioning within a wider and long-standing tradition of storytelling’ (2013: 105).

Moreover, ‘universal is also a term that has currency within industry discourses, getting comfortably invoked by broadcasters, producers, buyers and sellers’ (Knox, 2013:105). For instance, while dissecting the current international success of Nordic series, producers and TV executives such as Christian Wikander (Head of Sweden’s SVT Drama department), have argued that ‘viewers abroad are especially taken by the universal relevance of the narratives’ (Jensen, 2013:24). Hans Ronssiné, Head of Norway’s NRK Drama department, further states that ‘we have managed to give universal issues a local flavour, reflecting the Scandinavian way of life with its own editing, pace and narrative styles’ (Jensen, 2013:24).

One could even argue that the presence of those “universal issues” in any given television series is what might actually enable its subsequent adaptations in different countries around the world. Therefore, the universal elements that might be present in a scripted format across its different retellings should not be avoided; they should not be treated in a generic manner, either, but their interactions with any pertaining local factors must be analysed critically. “Universal” does not necessarily imply a global homogenization, after all. Casey has noted that, in Western modern culture, where ‘sameness-of-place’ might be seen as a direct consequence of globalization processes, there is nevertheless an actual ‘active desire for the particularity of place – for what is truly “local” or “regional” – (...) [because] place brings with it the very elements sheared off in the planiformity of site: identity, character, nuance, history’ (1997: Preface, xiii). This ‘active desire’ for the local (and for a subsequent articulation of local identities) is something that can be clearly perceived when a television series is remade elsewhere. Consequently, the need to reinterpret universal narrative elements according to the specifics of place will always be part of this type of adaptation process.

Taking these reflections into consideration, the following research aims to better understand the engagement between the global and the local in transcultural remakes of television series. By actually focusing on the adaptation of place, this article will try to shed some light on how specific landscapes and settings interact with universal narrative elements in the case of Nordic noir series and their remakes.

6 See Oren and Shahaf, eds. (2012)

02 THE NARRATIVE ROLE OF PLACE IN *BRON|BROEN*, *THE BRIDGE* AND *THE TUNNEL*

Swedish director Victor Sjöström, one of the most prominent Scandinavian filmmakers from the silent era of film history, has often been cited as a pioneer in the use of landscape and setting with narrative purposes, especially in relation to the depiction of a film's main themes and the inner worlds of its characters:

'The relation to Scandinavian landscape [was] perhaps the feature most often pointed to as main characteristic of Sjöström's earlier films (...) According to Peter Cowie,⁷ landscape in *Terje Vigen* (1917) –for the first time in film history– consequently reflects the conflicts both within and between the characters in the narrative' (Florin, 2009:2).

Later on, other Scandinavian directors, from Dreyer to Bergman, drew from Sjöström's work and applied these narrative functions of landscape and setting in their own films. This cinematic heritage still lingers nowadays, not only in Scandinavian cinema, but also in many of the television series produced in that region, including *Bron|Broen*. The narrative dimension of place initially developed by Sjöström has therefore been integrated in, and further expanded by, storytelling in Nordic television.

Along with this observation, it must be said that any form of place in television seems to be defined by the local variables of its specific context. As this article will illustrate, the cold Scandinavian landscapes in *Bron|Broen*, the asphyxiating desert in *The Bridge*, and the English and French settings in *The Tunnel* shape the narrative of their respective series at different levels. In order to explore how place is adapted in television, this paper will now look at the narrative roles that different forms of space hold in *Bron|Broen* and its two remakes. More specifically, the focus will be placed on how locations, setting, and landscape interact with other narrative elements, namely (1) genre and aesthetics; (2) characters; and (3) external dramatic conflict. This analysis will thus shed some light on how the universal elements of the format, understood as a metatextual entity, engage with specific local contexts in each series.

2.1 Place, genre and aesthetics

As a narrative genre, Nordic noir is fostered by well-established literary and cinematic traditions in crime fiction. Swedish au-

thors Maj Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö's Detective Beck 10-book series, written in the 1950s and 1960s, is widely considered to be the first precursor of what is now called Nordic noir.⁸ In the past decades, there has also been a significant proliferation of Nordic crime fiction novels, which have reached noticeable international success. Some of these novels, like Stieg Larsson's *Millenium* trilogy or Henning Mankell's *Wallander* series, have even been adapted for television and/or for cinema screens.

In film and television, the audiovisual language of Nordic noir draws from the genre conventions, iconography and aesthetics traditionally associated with film noir.⁹ While there is a clear appropriation of film noir imagery in Nordic noir, some academics have also tried to delve deeper into its localized conventions, in order to define its specificity. For instance, Creeber argues that Nordic noir is 'best understood as a broad umbrella term that describes a particular type of Scandinavian crime fiction, typified by its heady mixture of bleak naturalism, disconsolate locations and morose detectives' (2015:21). Jensen and Waade have further stated that 'a specific use of Nordic imagery and a feeling of melancholy are created through landscapes, climate, architecture, colours and light' (2013a:262), all of which these two authors consider to be production values that 'serve strategic as well as aesthetic purposes' in the production of Scandinavian crime series (2013b:190). Agger believes that 'the Scandinavian touch can be labelled contemporary crime fiction with a social conscience and a Nordic setting' (2010:2), and she has further identified bleak urban and rural settings as defining traits of Nordic noir (2016). Even when the academic debate surrounding the conventions of both Nordic noir and film noir is still ongoing, these quotes illustrate that there seems to be a consensus in regards to place being an essential factor within these two genres.

The way in which the aesthetics of space (in all of its different forms, from location to setting to landscape) is portrayed in film noir can also be recognized in the case of Nordic noir. Place interacts with other elements of audiovisual language and storytelling (such as cinematography, mise-en-scène and sound) to recreate the very specific tone and unsettling atmosphere that characterises this genre, while at the same time giving it its own spin. According to Creeber, that Nordic noir tone relies on:

'A sense of the cinematic [that] can be defined by a rather slow and understated pace, the dialogue often sparse (...) and

7 In this text, Florin paraphrases the following quote by Cowie: 'Dans *Terje Vigen*, le cadre naturel reflète, pour la première fois dans l'histoire du cinéma, la lutte entre les personnages et le conflit intérieur de chaque personnage' (1990: 109).

8 The origins of Nordic noir, both as a narrative genre and as a recent label, have been widely covered by a variety of authors, such as Peacock (2014) or Agger (2016).

9 For more on the defining traits of film noir, see Spicer (2002).

the lighting frequently muted. While there is clearly action (it is, after all, part of the crime genre), its drama also allows for long moments of stillness and reflection' (2015:24-25).

Furthermore, these Nordic settings and their aesthetic traits are also intertwined with classic noir themes, such as the exploration of a dark world that is filled with crime, deception and alienated characters. As Hernández Pérez has noted, Nordic noir narratives invoke classic noir cinema, not only on a formal level, but also on a thematic one, since these stories function 'as a metaphor for the anxieties and social fears present in the context in which [they] have originated' (2014:43).¹⁰ Jensen and Waade have also pointed to the pervasiveness of certain thematic elements in Nordic noir, which might include exploring the darker side of the welfare state, social criticism and the juxtaposition between individualism and society.

Many of the aesthetic and thematic features mentioned above can in fact be seen in *Bron|Broen*. It could even be said that, in this specific case, the Swedish-Danish coproduction also looks at the dynamics of frontiers and border towns, another trait that was part of certain noir films [such as the classic *Touch of Evil* (Welles, 1958)], and which has sometimes been defined as "border noir". Indeed, setting a story on the frontier between two countries enables the exploration of different cross-cultural issues and conflicts, and presents a premise that has the inherent potential to be exported to other bordering countries or regions.

Having said that, what happens when a Nordic noir television series is adapted in a different country? According to Gemzøe, the remaking of series like *Bron|Broen* is part of 'a remake trend that, on the one hand, is inspired by all things Nordic, but on the other hand, actively engages in removing the Nordic feel from the remade productions' (2013:283). That "Nordic feel", as it is found in this genre, is usually replaced by local identifiers and details from the country where the series is being remade. Yet both Gemzøe (2013:293) and Jensen and Waade (2013b:194) point out that, for instance, the "Nordic-ness" and tone of *Forbrydelsen* are still present in its American remake, *The Killing* (2011-2014). In terms of setting and aesthetics this makes sense, as the Danish climate and Nordic atmosphere do share some similarities with the gray, rainy streets and skies of Seattle, where the American retelling is set. Even though the case of *The Killing* is only being mentioned here as a brief example, it does seem to highlight a paradigmatic pattern, where the "Nordic-ness" of

the format becomes a global trait that coexists with local re-interpretations of place. And, as this article will demonstrate, that *glocalizing* pattern can also be perceived in the case of *Bron|Broen*, *The Bridge* and *The Tunnel*.

Before delving into the specific analysis of *Bron|Broen* and its two remakes, it must be clarified that, while *Bron|Broen* is Nordic noir, *The Bridge* and *The Tunnel* would not really fit that label, as they are neither produced nor set in any Nordic countries. Although they also borrow and share elements from the noir tradition, it might be more appropriate to refer to them as crime fiction, or noir detective drama. These three series do share some of the universal genre and aesthetic conventions mentioned above, such as gritty settings, a slow narrative pacing, and unstable compositions. They also use plenty of bird's eye shots and tracking shots to present the bridge (or tunnel, in the case of the Anglo-French series), in order to underline its role as a physical and metaphorical frontier between two different countries. However, in spite of these universal denominators, the settings, aesthetics, and colour schemes in each series have also been adapted to fit the specific local traits of each country.

For instance, in *Bron|Broen*, the cold, grey cityscapes and the isolated rural landscapes depict a feeling of melancholy [or, as Peacock also puts it, a 'sensation of loneliness' (2014:104)] that Jensen and Waade see as a trademark of Nordic cultural products (2013b:192). Instead of the traditional chiaroscuro lighting typical of classic film noir, lighting in *Bron|Broen* tends to be quite homogeneous and dull in tone, which Hernández Pérez identifies as a visual representation of the social cynicism and general uneasiness present in the series (2014:51). This author also notes that the unstable compositions in *Bron|Broen* contribute to portray landscapes as overwhelming, and even threatening, since people appear to be quite small (and easily swallowed by nature) in comparison (2014:52). Along with reinforcing the melancholy, disaffection, and individualism mentioned above, this aesthetics also discredits the collective perception of a socially ideal Scandinavia, exposing its darkest problems instead.

In *The Bridge*, the grey and the cold are replaced by the dry heat and the grittiness of the desert in the Mexican-American border. However, in spite of the bright yellow hues of the desert sun, this setting can be as dark and unnerving as the Nordic winter. The desert portrayed on *The Bridge* is asphyxiating, and makes it clear that we don't really need the cold to reflect despair and human darkness. Or, as journalist Sam Wollaston puts it, in his review of "British noir" series *Shetland* (2013), 'constant light is very nearly as oppressive

10 Original quote by Hernández Pérez: 'como metáfora de las angustias y miedos sociales del contexto en el que se originan' (translated by the author).

and depressing as constant dark' (2014). It must also be noted that in the American series there is also a clear willingness to recreate a juxtaposition between the orderly settings of El Paso and the chaotic streets of Ciudad Juárez (even when, due to safety reasons, the series was mostly shot in Los Angeles and its surroundings).

Lastly, in *The Tunnel*, the bridge is replaced by the Eurotunnel, a dark, enclosed space that generates uneasiness and a certain sense of claustrophobia. These feelings are emphasized by the use of high angle shots and unstable frame compositions inside the tunnel. At the same time, both Calais and Folkestone offer plenty of industrial coastal town imagery, but misty landscapes of the French city tend to be presented in contrast to the more desolate and neglected English town of Folkestone. For the most part, the colour scheme in this series relies on cold greys, blues and greens; but even when lighting and tone might not be quite as dull as in *Bron|Broen*, these tools of visual language (combined with the chosen settings) still contribute to generate a similar feeling of discomfort in the viewer. Therefore, it can be concluded that these three series possess certain universal elements (in relation to tone, genre conventions and the narrative functions of place, among others) that interact with specific relocations of landscapes and settings. Once again, this serves to highlight the global/local dichotomy present in all transcultural remakes, and corroborates the significance of the globalization process.

2.2 Place and characters

Since *Bron|Broen*, *The Bridge* and *The Tunnel* are crime fiction series, considerable importance is placed on their crime plot. This main plot, complete with twists, turns, and red herrings, is developed all throughout the first season of each series until its resolution. In spite of this, *Bron|Broen* and its two remakes are ultimately a work of character study, one that explores the friendship that unfolds between two very different detectives from two different countries who are forced to work together. The relationships between Swedish Saga Norén (Sofia Helin) and Danish Martin Rohde (Kim Bodnia) in *Bron|Broen*; American Sonya Cross (Diane Kruger) and Mexican Marco Ruiz (Demián Bichir) in *The Bridge*; and French Elise Wassermann (Clémence Poésy) and English Karl Roebuck (Stephen Dillane) in *The Tunnel*, are the central axis of each respective story. This section of the article will explore how landscapes and settings are used in each series to reflect the tensions between these two main characters, as well as their inner worlds and states of mind.

Although this archetypal dynamic between two opposite characters has been present in many crime fiction series since the 1970s (Hernández Pérez, 2014:47), Creeber identifies this specific double-protagonist stance, in which 'two policemen of similar rank who bring different and contrasting skills to an investigation' and who 'not only represent very different sides of policing, but two types of moral and ethical codes' as a particularly defining element of Nordic noir series (2015:23). Furthermore, these two characters 'represent a reversal of traditional gender stereotypes', which is something that Agger also finds typical of Nordic noir (2016:137). The emotions and traits that are generally associated with men (being level-headed and distant) are seen in the female protagonist, while the ones traditionally associated with women (being emotional and caring) are exhibited by the male protagonist.

Saga and her counterparts, Sonya and Elise, are three extremely methodical, intelligent and hard-working single police-women devoted to their jobs. Although it is never mentioned explicitly in any of the series, there seems to be a wide consensus in reference to these characters having (or being within the spectrum of) Asperger's syndrome.¹¹ This can be inferred from their difficulty to identify the emotions of others (cognitive empathy), their struggles with social etiquette and social expectations, or their inability to comprehend irony or white lies.

TELEVISION SERIES	CHARACTER	ACTRESS	CITY AND COUNTRY
<i>Bron Broen</i> (2011-)	Saga Norén	Sofia Helin	Malmö, Sweden
<i>The Bridge</i> (2013-2014)	Sonya Cross	Diane Kruger	El Paso (TX), United States
<i>The Tunnel</i> (2013-)	Elise Wassermann	Clémence Poésy	Calais, France

△ TABLE 2. FEMALE PROTAGONISTS IN *BRON|BROEN*, *THE BRIDGE* AND *THE TUNNEL*

On the other hand, Martin, Marco and Karl are extroverted, charming and empathetic policemen who believe that, in

11 This is often a recurrent issue in interviews with the actresses who play these roles. For instance, Sofia Helin has admitted that playing Saga Norén as someone within the spectrum of Asperger's 'was always intentional – the writer gave her clear instructions about the character's emotional parameters, although he told her it was not something Saga was aware of herself. Helin also conducted her own research, reading books by people with Asperger's syndrome, and said it helped her to understand the thought processes of her character better' (Khaleeli, 2012).

order to do the right thing, sometimes you don't have to necessarily follow the rules. Even though they love their respective families, they struggle with being faithful to their wives, as well as with establishing a bond with their oldest son.

TELEVISION SERIES	CHARACTER	ACTOR	CITY AND COUNTRY
<i>Bron/Broen</i> (2011-)	Martin Rohde	Kim Bodnia	Copenhague, Denmark
<i>The Bridge</i> (2013-2014)	Marco Ruiz	Demián Bichir	Ciudad Juarez, Mexico
<i>The Tunnel</i> (2013-)	Karl Roebuck	Stephen Dillane	Folkestone, England

△ TABLE 3. MALE PROTAGONISTS IN *BRON/BROEN*, *THE BRIDGE* AND *THE TUNNEL*

Settings can also serve different narrative purposes in the smaller scale of these characters' worlds. As Murphy has mentioned, 'the places that characters inhabit in a story world can very much define who they are, as well' (2014:42). This can be clearly seen in the homes and the cars of the main characters. In all three series, Martin's (and his counterparts') car is very messy, while Saga's car is nice, clean and tidy. At the same time, Saga's one-person apartment in the city is cold and functional, while Martin's family home in the countryside (which he shares with his wife and kids) is rustic, warm and welcoming. Their personal spaces tell us about their personalities and serve as a visual reminder of how different these two characters are.¹²

Furthermore, the two protagonists of each series present two completely different inner worlds. As Karl jokingly muses in *The Tunnel*, when he is talking to Elise: 'This might come as a bit of a shock to you, but I suspect our inner landscapes differ quite significantly' (*The Tunnel*, episode 1.03). Consequently, the two main characters in these three series clash quite strongly at the beginning, both personality-wise and on a cultural level. However, little by little they learn to trust and support each other, and their relationship blossoms into an unusual friendship that will not only contribute to the solving of the crime plot, but which will also help them with their own personal struggles (propelling the development of their respective transformational arcs). Creeber notes that the understanding of the series' narrative structure, with its dual pro-

12 This observation can also be extended to other specific settings, like Martin's wife's studio, the journalist's home or the killer's secret lair, which also mirror their respective personalities.

tagonist axis, 'is crucial in uncovering the philosophy that lies at the heart of Nordic noir. In particular, it reveals an intensely complex and divided world that can only be healed through a combination of tolerance and cooperation' (Creeber, 2015:24), both between characters and between nations.¹³

Along with reflecting the characters' emotions and personality traits, landscapes and settings (with their local and cultural identifiers) can influence the identities of the characters that inhabit them. Thus, the focus should not just be placed on their "inner landscapes", but also on how the outer landscapes that they live in affect them. Despite the universal traits that we have seen in the two protagonists across the three series, these characters also reflect certain national themes and stereotypes, and are consequently informed by specific cultural denominators that make each character different. A useful example to illustrate this would be Karl's self-deprecating English humour, or Marco's personal conflict in facing corruption within the Mexican police force.

Once again, the adaptation of place enables a dialogue between the global and the local. Furthermore, the way in which local landscapes and settings are portrayed contributes to articulate the glocalization of characters at various levels. As Agger has stated, 'the representations of landscapes and cityscapes are linked not only to emotions inherent in the characters, but also to emotions supporting the plots in ways which cause distinctive national features to negotiate with features possessing a transnational appeal' (2016:134). This becomes even more evident in the case of transcultural remakes, where the global features of a character negotiate in different ways with the specific cultural traits portrayed in each new adaptation.

2.3 Place and external conflict

Another essential factor that should be taken into consideration when remaking a television series is the adaptation of dramatic conflict, because the resonance of conflict can be enhanced through the use of local settings and landscapes. For instance, in his analysis of the Danish film *Brødre* (2004)

13 It is worth noting that these social connotations are woven into the narrative as a key part of what DR executives call the "double story" (or "double storytelling") dogma. This refers to the combination of an entertaining plot with social, ethical and/or moral issues. As Jensen and Waade have observed, due to the fact that *Bron/Broen* is a coproduction, DR's in-house production philosophy only has an indirect role in this specific case (2013b:195). In spite of this, it could still be said that DR's principles are very much present in this series. [For more information on DR's production dogmas, see Bondebjerg and Redvall (2011), and Redvall (2013)].

and its American remake, *Brothers* (2009), Gemzøe notes that ‘while *Brødre* is set in the big city with all its lights, bars and public transportation, *Brothers* is set in a small-town American environment in Minnesota’, where certain themes, conflicts and values linked to American cultural tradition and identity can be better explored (2013:291). This choice, which was one of the changes ‘deemed necessary to make something entirely Danish work in an American context’ (2013:283), illustrates a significant correlation between landscape and place in the case of transcultural remakes, both cinematic and televisual.

McKee has argued that a story’s setting is always made of four dimensions: time period, duration, location and level of conflict. In fact, it is essential to take conflict into consideration in the study of setting, because, ‘no matter how externalised in institutions or internalised in individuals, the political, economic, ideological, biological and psychological forces of society shape events as much as period, landscape or costume’ (1997:69). According to screenwriting theory, there should always be three types or levels of dramatic conflict intertwined in any scripted work: the inner conflicts (related to a character’s personal struggles), the interpersonal or relational conflicts (established between characters) and the extra-personal conflicts (which refer to external problems and threats -originated by the antagonist or otherwise- present in the storyworld). The previous section of this article (2.2. Place and Characters) has briefly addressed some of the inner and relational conflicts present in these three series. In this final segment of the paper, the focus will be placed on how the choice of specific locations and settings, along with their metaphorical implications, contributes to the development of external dramatic conflict in *Bron|Broen*, *The Bridge* and *The Tunnel*.

2.3.1 The bridge or tunnel as metaphorical

The two bridges and the tunnel that appear in these three series go beyond being mere props for the characters to cross from one country to another; they also reflect the cultural clash that is at the centre of each story, not only between the two main characters, but also between their two nations. In fact, as Agger notes, the figure of the bridge acts both ‘as a vehicle and a metaphor’ for the exploration of the negotiations that take place between two countries (2016:152). These human constructions connect Sweden and Denmark, the United States and Mexico, and England and France, respectively, bringing these countries closer and enabling them to collaborate with each other. At the same time, however, the

bridge (or the tunnel) highlights the distance that separates them, pointing to their unavoidable differences. Due to this, the figure of the bridge (or tunnel) is also useful to reflect deeper issues and identity traits that are ingrained in the sociocultural tapestry of each country.

The relevance of the bridge as a narrative figure begs the following question: Why is the premise of this series set on a bridge? Border towns and frontiers can be connected in many different ways, both geographical (like mountains or rivers) or man-made (like bridges, metallic fences or walls). It would seem that the act of building a bridge points to the willingness of two countries to negotiate and establish amicable relations between them, as opposed to the imposition of a wall, such as The Berlin Wall, that only aims to separate and divide. In order to solve conflicts, as Creeber states, ‘bridges have to be built’ (2015: 24).

In spite of their similar symbolism, these three constructions also offer nuanced differences. In *Bron|Broen*, the Øresund bridge that links Sweden and Denmark appears to be fairly easy and simple to cross, either by car or by train. As opposed to this, the Bridge of the Americas between El Paso and Ciudad Juarez portrays a harsher scenario, with immigration control officers enforcing boundaries much more strictly. Finally, while the Eurotunnel also represents human willingness to conquer natural barriers in order to bring two countries closer to each other, it also implies a different set of connotations. Even though it can be crossed by train and by car, the scenes of *The Tunnel* in which we see the protagonists waiting for their car to be allowed to cross to the other side also reinforce a sense of uneasy tension, evoking a somewhat strained connection between England and France.

In these three series, the cultural clashes and conflicts between two countries are represented through the coordinates of specific linguistic barriers, socioeconomic tensions and, ultimately, themes that deal with nation and identity. Åberg points to ‘the national as an essential ingredient’ in *Bron|Broen*, adding that in its remakes ‘the intercultural thematisation of nation also follows the same pattern, but adapts the specific signifiers of nation and national difference’ in each respective case (2015: 101).

While the divide between Sweden-Denmark and the Anglo-French rivalry are both subtler and rooted in a shared history that spans centuries, the American production opted to set the story between two countries that are radically different, so as to explore the conflicts and tensions that are specific to the Mexican-American scenario. Initially, *The Bridge* was going to be set on the frontier between Canada and the United

States, in order to present a similar conflict as the one seen in *Bron|Broen*. But as co-executive producer Meredith Stiehm explains, they realized that ‘there’s not a lot of cultural or political conflict going on between Canada and the US.’ So they chose the Mexican border instead, because their ultimate aim was to actually ‘tell the story of two border towns separated by a whole world’ (Sepinwall, 2013). This decision entailed considerable narrative changes, which will be addressed in the next section, and which will illustrate that the choice of setting necessarily affects the development of dramatic conflict.

2.3.2 Setting and external conflict in the main plot

In *Bron|Broen*, the main crime plot brings Saga and Martin together in order to stop the antagonist of the series, the so-called “Truth Terrorist”, who seemingly plans his murders so as to highlight five different social problems (his “five truths”). These social issues, which shed some light ‘on those that have been forgotten and abandoned by the institutions’ (Hernández Pérez, 2014:48)¹⁴ are particularly relevant to Scandinavian culture and society: (1) inequality before the law, (2) homelessness, (3) disregard for the mentally ill, (4) failure to integrate second-generation immigrants, and (5) Western hypocrisy in regards to child labour. Therefore, it could be said that the main external conflict in the crime plot seems to be informed by local denominators from the cultural context in which the story is set.

The Tunnel followed this same main-plot pattern and kept most of the social problems and causes claimed by the antagonist, with the exception of the homeless, which they replaced with improper care for the elderly. These are understandable narrative choices, as the aforementioned social issues are actually present across most Western European countries. They are just re-localised to the specifics of the Anglo-French context (for instance, most of the troubled youths in the “fourth truth” are linked to the London 2011 riots). Apart from these “five truths”, and as the Swedish/Danish series also did, *The Tunnel* briefly addresses other social and political issues that are relevant to its cultural context, such as the current economic crisis.

However, although *The Bridge* did keep certain references to some of the antagonist’s social vindications at the beginning, it ultimately did not follow the same narrative pattern.

The American series carved its own path, which included adding a significant subplot featuring an underground tunnel for the illegal smuggling of immigrants, weapons and drugs. They also introduced the antagonist much earlier, and the moniker “The Truth Terrorist” was never used to refer to him. The American series provides as much social criticism as *Bron|Broen* and *The Tunnel*, but does so without using the killer’s “five truths” as a narrative device. Instead, this series opted to delve into the bigger picture of its context, adding new characters, subplots and conflicts that respond to its new settings. Consequently, issues such as illegal immigration, socioeconomic inequality, or the disappearances and murders of hundreds of women in Ciudad Juarez, took a central role in this adaptation, and kept on doing so in the second season of the series. Therefore, it can be argued that local representations of setting do play an essential role in the narrative development of television adaptations.

And yet, even when these very specific cultural differences apparently define the main conflict that moves the plot forward in *Bron|Broen*, *The Bridge* and *The Tunnel*, a narrative twist unveils that nothing is what it seems to be. When the true intentions of the antagonist are revealed, we find that his crusade for the aforementioned social injustices was just a mere excuse. The real reason behind his crimes was a universal tale of revenge, a personal vendetta which is very much present in all three series, and which can ultimately be extrapolated to any country. And this is the point where the dynamic between the specific and the universal elements of the narrative emerges more clearly, illustrating how glocalization is articulated in the adaptation of television formats.

CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

As we have seen, landscapes and settings in these three television series are not only used to establish the geographical context of the story. They also have social and cultural dimensions, and they interact with other tools of audiovisual storytelling in order to reinforce and enhance the genre, themes, and plots of the series. Beyond that, they can be used to reflect the characters’ emotions and identities, as well as their inner conflicts and struggles. Due to this, screenwriters and producers should take into consideration the narrative relevance that their chosen locations and settings hold in

14 Original quote by Hernández Pérez: ‘señalar a los que son “olvidados” y abandonados por las instituciones’ (translated by the author).

the storytelling process of any given television series¹⁵ This becomes even more significant in the case of transcultural remakes, where those narrative roles of place need to be consistent with the sociocultural, political, and even industrial dimensions of their new context.

There are other aspects adjacent to place that have not been mentioned in the analysis of these three series, but that should definitely be addressed in further research. For instance, both *Bron|Broen* and *The Tunnel* are coproductions between different countries and companies. Agger (2016:148) states that *Bron|Broen* (and it can be assumed that, by extension, *The Tunnel*) is a “natural coproduction”, according to Hjort’s definition of the concept. The stories presented in these television series necessarily rely on the ‘participation on the part of two nations, (...) [thus] constituting a kind of “natural” invitation to economic collaboration’ (Hjort, 2005:196). On the other hand, although *The Bridge* did have a considerable number of Mexican cast and crew members, the series was exclusively produced and shot in the United States. This raises some questions in regards to the economic, industrial and cultural negotiations that can be established between different countries and their television markets, and they should therefore be explored in the future. Similarly, the bilingualism present in all three series also merits further consideration, since the linguistic tensions between Danish and Swedish, English and Spanish, and English and French, respectively, play a rather relevant role in each series.

Ultimately, this article has proven that place can function as a character, in and of itself. That is certainly the case in the metatextual universe of *Bron|Broen* and its remakes, where the Øresund Bridge, the Bridge of the Americas and the Eurotunnel are a constant presence throughout each respective series, starting with the titles of the series themselves. The two bridges and the tunnel, which always appear at key moments of the narrative, are brought to life, becoming eerie characters that play a central role in their respective stories. And every time they appear on screen, they are a reminder of the constant conflicts and negotiations that take place between characters, cultures, and countries.

15 Although this paper has focused on Nordic noir, the analysis conducted here can also shed some light on the role of setting as a whole, and should be expanded with further research on other television genres.

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