

Megan Taylor

#N00437762

Integrative Seminar 2/ Spring 2017

Instructor: Sinead Petrasek

08 February, 2017

Reading Table #2

(“Introduction” in Extrastatecraft: The Power of Infrastructure Space, pp. 14-38).

Observation 1). The concept that infrastructure is not merely a physical entity is presented.

Location 1). “The shared standards and ideas that control everything from technical objects to management styles also constitute an infrastructure.” (pg.1).

Interpretation 1). When I read this statement, I was initially annoyed with the redundant theme I seem to run into with readings in general- (the over-analyzing bit of their own stances).

However, although the literal definition for infrastructure is: “The basic physical and organizational structures and facilities needed for the operation of a society or enterprise;” I can definitely see how infrastructure can also be intellectual or social. Many times, (from personal experience)- a building is absolutely worthless; represents zero function- without the people, attitudes, and philosophies that fill it. So I guess I would have to agree.

Observation 2). An author declares in a novel the assumption that literature, books, and written word will take over the grandiosity of infrastructure and belittle its significance.

Location 2). “In Notre-Dame de Paris, Victor Hugo famously observed that “architecture [like that of the cathedral] was developed in proportion with human thought; it became a giant with a thousand heads and a thousand arms, and fixed all this floating symbolism in an eternal, visible, palpable form.” The novel proposed that Gutenberg’s new technology threatened the giant; the

printed word usurped architecture as the vessel of cultural imagination and stole its super natural power. Hugo prophesied, “This will kill that. The book will kill the edifice.” (pp. 1-2).

Interpretation 2). Whilst reading this; I wasn’t sure if the idea was in reference to buildings in general, or cathedrals like that of Notre-Dame. However, if I look at this from a religious and historical standpoint, Gutenberg’s printing press (in a way) did destroy the edifice. It fragmented the cathedrals, and caused tension to arise in the Catholic Church. Many people who were not permitted or educated enough to read Latin for instance, were gifted with the printing press of Gutenberg- giving them the ability to read in their native tongue. Hence, militant and violent behaviors arose between Protestant and Catholic movements. Therefore; can written word undermine and challenge infrastructure? Most certainly.

Observation 3). What seems to be an opposing view is presented, by simultaneously saying that infrastructure is fully active and purposeful but at the same time gives overt limitation.

Location 3). “And while we also do not typically think of static objects and volumes in urban space as having agency, infrastructure space is doing something. Like an operating system, the medium of infrastructure space makes certain things possible and other things impossible.” (pg. 2).

Interpretation 3). From my own thinking, this sentence makes hardly any sense. Either infrastructure is an active property or it’s not. Yet, by orthodox definition of “Infrastructure space”, I would have to say, no. Infrastructure space is not “doing something.” It is merely a vessel- without external forces of energy occupying this building, it serves no purpose in any practical way.