

Editor's Note: Trespassing Gender

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Of all the symbolic acts characterizing the history of gender activism, boundary crossing has probably been the most definitive one. Suffragettes crossed the boundaries of masculine citizenship, struggling for women's right to vote in the late 19th and the early 20th centuries. In the 1970s, second wave feminists initiated a long march into the public sphere, encouraging all women to cross the gender boundaries between the private and the public spheres. In the recent decades, queer, intersex, and transgender activism have contested the notions of man and woman, as well as the boundary between the two, destabilizing conventionally established binaries of sex/gender.

The notion of boundary is also central to the study of gender. Defined as "the complex structures -physical, social, ideological, and psychological- which establish the differences and commonalities between women and men, among women, and among men, shaping and constraining the behavior and attitudes of each gender group" (Gerson & Peiss 318), gender boundaries offers a conceptual framework for the study of boundary crossing as well as the institutionalization of gender. Indeed, gender scholarship, from its inception, analyzed the boundaries and binaries of gender to demonstrate that both are socially constructed. Since then, the literature on gender boundaries proliferated. A large variety of studies focuses on how large-scale forces such as wars, social movements, and globalization affect the gender boundaries. Studies in this vein, also investigate the ways gender boundaries are activated, maintained, imposed, violated, challenged, and transformed in different settings such as workplace, family, and politics.

A vivid and powerful image, boundary brings in the notion of inequality to the center of gender studies. Scholars adamantly argue that the gender boundaries manifest practices of social closure, since the authorities and dominant groups employ dichotomous categories of woman and man barring underprivileged groups from accessing to opportunities and resources. Building on this insight, scholars illustrate different ways in which gender boundaries reinforce the exclusion and marginalization of gendered groups. In this context, Black feminist theory, which showed that the boundaries of gender always interact with that of race and class opened up a fertile terrain for the study of intersections. Intersectionality is still the focus of a growing scholarship, which explores how boundaries of gender, class, and ethnicity intersect in the production of social hierarchies.

The scholarship on gender boundaries also provides a conceptual framework to understand the dynamics of personal and collective identities, which attracted much attention in the contemporary political context of the ubiquity of identity politics. Drawing on the concept of symbolic boundaries, which refers to the “conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize object, people, practices, and even time and space” (Lamont & Molnar 168), scholars explore how symbolic boundaries that are formed in interactions, institutions, and organizations enhance the control and regulation of gender identities. One important stream of boundary research is concerned with the link between boundary-work and gender identity. In taking up this issue, scholars investigate how social actors mobilize interpretive strategies to draw symbolic boundaries between themselves and others, defining who they are and who they are not.

The fifth issue of *Trespassing* aims at exploring uncharted dimensions of gender boundaries. A notable feature of the articles in this issue is that all authors reckon with the multiplicity of interacting boundaries and analyze gender boundaries in the institutions, social movements, fictional products, and women’s journals through an intersectional lens. Exploring how actors create, violate, navigate, and destabilize gender boundaries and binaries is another common theme animating the articles that follow. Kathryn Quinn-Sánchez and Paul Walker, whose articles carry autoethnographic undertones and insights, offer powerful personal accounts of the different ways individuals negotiate gender boundaries in institutions. While Quinn-Sánchez, a woman of color and a professor, relays various ways in which she negotiates gendered and racialized boundaries in the university with the aim of achieving an inclusive feminism, Walker, who leaves the Mormon Church, reflects on the complex ties among the religious institution, sex boundaries, and masculinity. Shifting between memory and reflection, Walker’s piece also throws light on the relatively private world of Mormonism.

Focusing on two prominent women’s movements in Turkey, İclal Ayşe Küçükırca examines configurations and changes in class and ethnic boundaries. Based on an original fieldwork, Küçükırca’s study explores the cases of Feminist Movement in Turkey and the Free Woman’s Movement in Kurdistan to highlight how concepts of difference and equality are fundamental to dismantling of the ethnic/political boundaries. Melike Güngör’s work focuses on Turkey too. In a discursive analysis of *Women’s Journal* published in the 1950s, she explores how gender boundaries between man and woman are reinforced with the idealization of middle-class Turkish family formed at the intersection of modernity and tradition.

Oindri Roy’s study articulates the question of embodiment with that of gender fluidity. Roy examines Kate Bornstein’s *A Queer and Pleasant Danger*, Jeffrey Eugenides’ *Middlesex* and Devdutta Pattanaik’s *The Pregnant King*, highlighting alternative means of trespassing gender boundaries. Exploring the embodied experiences of transsexuals and intersex, Roy’s work expands the scope of queer studies.

We conclude *Trespassing Gender* issue with a discussion on feminism and femininity. Çiğdem Akgül revisits the Second Wave Feminists’ critique of nationalist feminism active in

the World War I and offers an account of how women's wartime efforts transformed the gender boundaries in Europe.

Works Cited

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