

Introduction

Transgressing Borders/Boundaries: Gendering Space and Place

Cluster Editors

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To what extent are topics common in Women's and Gender Studies (WGS) actually questions of spatiality? Power is negotiated after all in and across space and place, whether that is in a 'home,' a courtroom, a public bathroom, or on the streets. Frequently, it is the transgression and maintenance of borders and boundaries that lend themselves to a feminist analytic, an approach which we seek to explore in this thematic cluster. Feminist geographies offer rich conceptual frameworks through which to understand how gendered relations of power are produced in and through sexuality, race, ethnicity, and citizenship, among many other positionalities. How does the recognition of relations of power as spatially dependent (at least in part) shift approaches to critical feminist inquiry? What does the use of key concepts like scale, topography, mapping/cartography, landscape/waterscape, counter/memories, spatial memory, spatial interconnection, imagined communities, diaspora, and space/time contribute to feminist knowledge production about borders, boundaries, and their transgressions?

The co-emergence and intermingling of the fields of feminist geography and WGS provide an opening to examine these relationships, and the articles in this special cluster make empirical, theoretical, and methodological contributions that demonstrate how these fields enrich one another. The interconnections between feminist thought within geography and feminism more broadly have been previously articulated (Hanson 1992; Rose 1993), but in this cluster, we hope to bring attention to the ways in which these interconnections are currently developing through Women's and Gender Studies scholarship. For example, like the field of WGS, feminist geography has been absorbed with and transformed by questions of intersectionality. Researchers working in both these areas usually approach the production of identity and space through multi-dimensional understanding of relations of power, such as race and racism, sexuality and hetero/homonormativity, able-bodiedness and gender. In their exploration of

intersectional research, feminist geography and WGS invoke and challenge the production of identity in place. Thus, the articles in this special cluster are inspired by border and boundary regulation through topics, such as embodiment, (re)production, un/paid work, violence, cultural and visual practices, (re)membering, political action, nationalism, transnational migration, global economies, global governance, and (neo)colonialism, among other areas.

The first three papers in this cluster astutely reflect a range of current concerns in the intersections of feminist geography with WGS. All of the articles offer insights on how built environments impact social equalities. The authors offer empirical work on three different studies of public space including the architectural design of mixed-use spaces in a university town; girls' use of schoolyards and other sites of play in Catalonia, Spain; and single-sex public washrooms in North American and European airports.

In her paper, "Safety is just a thing men take for granted': Teaching a Spatial Vocabulary of Equality to Architecture Students," Karen Keddy takes on the practice of sensitizing future architects to equity and social justice in the design of built environments. As her pedagogical point of departure, Keddy draws on Gill Valentine's (1989) early analysis of women's fear in public places as well as case studies on downtown Toronto, Canada (METRAC 2015), Mumbai, India (Phadke 2012), Christchurch, New Zealand (Pawson and Banks 1993), which demonstrate how and why configurations of public spaces can be threatening to women or be perceived as such. Keddy demonstrates the value in having students conduct safety and security audits on campus as way to highlight the relationship between privilege, insecurity, social inequality, and public space. Students are also asked to think of potential solutions for the problem spots that they uncover. In so doing, architecture students learn that built environments are inherently political, rather than neutral spaces.

The second paper, "We are Gunslinging Girls': Gender and Place in Playground Clapping Games," Albert Casals and Joanna Riera turn to a very localized, but politically contextualized, geography of children's 'clapping games' in Catalan playgrounds. Using Rice's (1987) classic ethnomusicological approach, which asks the question: "Historically, how has music been constructed, maintained socially and individual-

ly experienced by human beings?," the authors investigate both the predictable and curious ways in which girls (and some boys) define both spaces and gender identities through the use of music and clapping games. As the playground is understood as a site that is conditioned by historical, cultural, and political forces, they argue that the socio-cultural meaning of gender identity produced through clapping games changes over time. Yet, the paradox they uncover remains consistent; even though clapping games are viewed by Catalans as a highly gendered activity in which primarily school girls participate, the songs and games themselves can be transgressive in terms of challenging cultural norms around gender and sexuality.

Mark Castrodale and Laura Lane's "Finding One's Place to Be and Pee: Examining Intersections of Gender-Dis/ability in Washroom Signage," examines how the discursive production of the hegemonic cis-gendered, heteronormative, and able-bodied subject of washroom signage impacts the use of the physical space of washrooms. Through their analysis of washroom signage in select airports in North America and Europe, the authors show how the constructions of family, caregiving roles, and culture largely serve, produce, regulate, and exclude all those who are "mis-fitters" (Garland-Thompson 2011). Misfitting occurs when those who do not easily conform to the hegemonic subject encounter architectural barriers, such as washrooms, that produce a socio-spatial-bodily mismatch. The authors produce an effective spatial analysis of the symbolic regulation of public bathrooms through an intersectional approach that considers family/care-giver status, citizenship, gender, and dis/ability.

The final two papers in this cluster are indicative of the robust literature on spatiality and feminism from within visual and cultural studies, using the moving image as a key site of investigation. Through their analysis of films by Asghar Farhadi and Ang Lee, the authors explore how the representation of nationalism and globalization create and negate cultural and legal spaces of belonging. While processes globalization and nationalism often transverse borders, they can simultaneously reinforce boundaries with regards to gender, race, class, and sexuality.

In "Gender, Nation, and Belonging: Representing Mothers and the Maternal in Asghar Farhadi's *A Separation*," authors Mehra Shirazi, Patti Duncan, and

Kryn Freehling-Burton argue for renewed focus on national cinema as a site for transnational feminist inquiry. Following Naficy (2001) and Suner (2007), they use *A Separation* as a case study through which to examine themes of transnational migration, borders, belonging, and exile common to exilic/diasporic national cinema. Through the lenses of motherhood and maternalism, the authors explore how the representation of these gendered identities in modern day Iran serve as cultural and geographic boundary markers, whether it be in familial relationships or in the relationship with the state. By deploying a transnational feminist cinematic analysis on national cinema, the film can also be read as a critique of both Iranian fundamentalist nationalism, which demarcates borders and belonging, as well as neocolonial Western feminism which transverses them.

In her paper, "Liberal Spaces: The Costs and Contradictions of Reproducing Hegemonic National Subjects in Ang Lee's *The Wedding Banquet* and *Brokeback Mountain*," Sarah Olutola brings contemporary theorization of homonationalism into conversation with queer visual production of landscape. Based on her analysis of these two very different films about queer acceptance, Olutola argues that the production of queer landscapes in the urban as well as the rural configure the nation as a space of liberalism for queers. Despite the insights of New Queer Cinema (Rich 2013) that segment the historical production and reception of these films, normative discourses of citizenship, equality, and rights complicate queer inclusion.

As co-editors of this thematic cluster, we would be remiss not to point readers to further sources through which to access this thriving intellectual community. We hope that readers will be able to use these essays as a set of diverse entry points to the study of the spatiality of gender. We suggest that readers begin with the ever-growing transnational and multi-lingual *Gender and Geography Bibliography* (2015) as just one example. The articles are a reflection of the evolution of a much deeper relationship than the disciplinary boundaries of either geography or the sometimes partial boundaries /interdisciplinarity of Women's and Gender Studies might suggest. In many ways, certain key debates in feminist geography over the past four decades have intersected with and, in some cases, transcended the boundaries of what issues are thought to be legitimately

within the purview of these fields; hence, the fluency with which these feminist scholars combine inquiry into diverse areas of study.

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