

## Trespassing the Nation

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There has always been tension inside (and outside) the confined borders of the nation. This tension arises from historical, cultural and ethnic grounds and hinges on the question of belonging to national boundaries. The nation is dependent on both a physical space, which is the nation-state, and an imaginary, immaterial, abstract space where the nation and the national manifests in social practices. This imagined, abstract, national space accommodates an ideal of the nation. The imagined national ideal urges the creation of national norms, in Homi Bhabha's terms "national narratives," which differentiate between those who are exceptions and misfits. Legal and illegal immigrants, minorities, ethnic identities and queer sexualities are those misfits that trespass the national ideal and challenge the seamless official national narratives.

In this sense, the inaugural issue of *Trespassing Journal* accommodates nine articles that challenge the national grounds of various media including cinema, literature, television, graphic novels and fashion. The national burden weighs upon all of these forms through normative or trespassing representations of gender, transnational and supranational entities, legal or illegal immigrants, ethnicities, diasporas and minorities. The articles published in this issue demonstrate that cinema and cinematic representation is one of the major sites where national tensions are revealed. For instance, James Steele's article titled "Cinema without Borders" focuses on Francophone Belgian directors Jan-Pierre and Luc Dardenne, whose films deal with immigrant identities within the body of Belgian cultural identity. Steele questions the so-called "New Europe" which could not free itself from the paranoia of mass migration. Thus, as Steele writes, the uncontrolled "migration is perceived as an eternal threat to the national identity". However, he claims that, with Schengen agreement, there is more relaxed border control across European member states and that, as a result, cinema across Europe became borderless. More importantly this "cinema without borders" is especially crucial with its "regional" dimension that addresses immigrant identities. Through analyzing the films of the Dardenne Brothers, Steele uncovers the "regional" aspect of cinema in relation to national and transnational perspectives. Fernando Ramos's article titled "Writing about a Common Love for Cinema" analyzes cinephilia in an historical, social and political context. Ramos first lays the groundwork for a historical perspective on cinephilia by discussing the shift from a classic to a modern form of cinephilia. He then focuses on the formation of "modern cinephilia" as a politicized form and examines the relationship between modern cinephilia, film studies and the formation of

national cinemas. Through analyzing cinephilian discourses in Spain and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) at the beginning of the 1960s, Ramos's article provides a significant contribution to the historical research on cinephilia studies.

While Ramos is concerned with the historical forms of cinephilia, James Ho's article "Enlivening New Taiwan Cinema" focuses on New Taiwan Cinema and the concept of the postnational. Ho argues that the New Taiwan Cinema trespasses national cinema models by representing colonial memories not as wounds or scars, but as alternative modes of the cultural imaginary and the postnational imagination. Like Steele, Ho also underlines the significance of the "regional" and "locality" in cinema and he claims that the concept of the postnational accommodates different possibilities for the established grounds of national cinema.

After three articles that address national conflicts in cinematic form, Line Khatib's article titled "Transnational Identity in a Changing Arab World" carries the discussion to the context of television. In her article Khatib looks at the relationship between translation and national identity by analyzing translations of American Entertainment programs and movies in Arab media. She emphasizes that by manipulating the source text, translations of American programs and movies are, consciously or unconsciously, homogenizing Arab culture. Presenting her own research and findings, Khatib claims that translation is political and should be recognized as such. She also questions the effect of translation on national identity.

Literature is another medium that wrestles with national norms. For instance, Mary Ryan underlines the problematic and delicate issues of Irish national identity through the genre of Irish chick lit. Ryan demonstrates that Irish national identity is challenged through the representation of female and homosexual characters. In her article titled "Trespassing on Ireland's 'Norms'" the idea of the nation is trespassed through violations of the conservative boundaries of gender as well as the roles of women in society. Gender conflicts are thus not only negotiated on the social level, but also in relation to the national ideal. Ryan also examines the ways the nation may exclude homosexual identities along the same lines as ethnic communities and minorities.

Simon Bacon also deals with minority identities, yet he looks at those identities through vampire narratives focusing specifically on Guillermo Del Toro's *The Strain Trilogy*. He asserts that no matter how hybrid, alien or "other" the vampire characters are in the works he analyzes, they still consume beyond control, which links them to the system in which they operate. In this way, they reinforce the narrative's colonialist intent because vampirism is similar to consumerism, which can make its home anywhere. But for Bacon, the only way to "bite back" is not through conquering, but rather through trespassing or infecting.

Another article on a literary work comes from Francisco Delgado. In his article Delgado analyzes John Okado's novel *No-No Boy*. Delgado carries the national conflict to Asian American literature as well as to Asian American identities. He focuses on the "arbitrariness of race relations in America" and emphasizes that for Japanese identities in the U.S., and especially for those who did not agree to serve in the armed forces of the American army in world war II (aka the no-no boys), recognition as an American fellow could

not fully be extended to the Japanese primarily due to judgments on physical traits. Elaborating further on the conflict between no-no boys and the Nisei veterans, Delgado's article explores a complex web of racial conflict in the 1950s U.S.

In addition to literary works, Katherina Polak's article "It Accreted Around Me: Created Space and the problem of the Name in *Lucifer*" focuses on a graphic narrative where the boundaries of each panel stand for the imagined boundaries that create the nation. Thus the nation prevails not only on the level of content but can also be interpreted on the level of any form that brings a limit to representation. Focusing on creation narratives, and specifically Mike Carey's *Lucifer*, Polak emphasizes that the graphic narrative has significant potential for further research as the space in each panel can be subverted or trespassed in terms of a traumatic nationalist pedagogy.

Lastly, Damla Bayraktar-Aksel's article entitled "The Art of Huseyin Chalayan" points out that fashion is an artistic medium that has a transnational character. Although fashion was looked down upon in modern literature, as it was coming from "above" rather than representing society at large, Aksel argues that Huseyin Chalayan's works combine fashion and art, and they reflect social concerns such as immigration, multiculturalism and identity. The articles and reviews that comprise our inaugural issue expose the fact that the nation and the national is an occurrence that does not remain fixed within a specific space, genre, form, gender or within any designated borders. Although it might still demand a national fictive ideal, that ideal only exists to be trespassed over and over again. In this way the borders of the national can only be permeated to the extent that they are trespassed. The contributors of *Trespassing Journal* also demonstrate that trespassing is a significant juncture to be explored not only on the national level, but also across concepts such as the trespassing of genre (which will be covered in our next issue), as well as trespassing gender, trespassing time, trespassing space and more significant and intriguing issues that our readers and contributors will raise in the future.

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