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Mélanie Jouitteau

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1 **Human frontiers**

2 **This is an act of smuggling across social borders**

3 Mélanie Jouitteau, CNRS, UMR 5478

4 Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour

5 Université Bordeaux III¹

6
7 This article examines the possibility of communication between human groups, including
8 academic scientists addressing non-academics about topics they feel are important for all.

9 This is a study of the effects of boundaries between human groups, and of potential resistance
10 strategies to them. I show that the concrete knowledge anyone has of geographical borders
11 applies to the boundaries created by the categorisations across human groups. Any power
12 relationship leading to categorisation among humans leads to the creation of social frontiers:
13 rich *vs* poor, heterosexuals *vs* non-heterosexuals, professors *vs* students, able-bodied *vs*
14 disabled, men *vs* women, whites *vs* non-whites, centres *vs* peripheries, young *vs* old. These
15 frontiers can be apprehended fundamentally like geopolitical borders. Approaching human
16 categorisations from the angle of geopolitical borders has several advantages. First, it is an
17 undeniably well-grounded parallel because geopolitical borders indeed create a categorisation
18 among humans: maps are their most famously visualized manifestation. Second, the analogy
19 is useful, because the spatial dimension of geopolitical borders makes them easier to grasp,
20 compared to other types of human categorisations. Finally, this metaphor proves efficient for
21 thinking change, by building a dynamic vision of power relationships and categorisations.

22
23 The paper is organized into three parts. In the first part, I argue for the hypothesis that
24 geopolitical boundaries are basically of the same nature as other boundaries between humans
25 in social groups. I show that the organized knowledge humans have about geopolitical
26 boundaries applies to hierarchical boundaries between human groups by reviewing the
27 paradigmatic field of borders: renegotiation of border outlines, passports and identity
28 documents, work visas, immigration, tourism, signposts, customs and tariffs, smugglers,
29 stateless persons, border populations. In the second part, I propose the following three
30 qualitative parameters to distinguish between these borders: (i) visibility of categorization
31 criteria, (ii) opportunities for individuals to elude the border paradigm, and (iii) spatial and
32 temporal dimensions and their effects on spaces of intersection. I demonstrate how multiple

¹ My thanks go to my reviewers among which Milan Rezac, as well as Pierre-Guillaume Prigent and Glen Falch'on for discussion about the position of pro-feminist men.

33 frontiers interact. In the third part, I show how an analysis in terms of borders captures reality
34 by offering a case study, that of smuggling and smugglers.

35

36 This article does not pretend to discover new phenomena. It claims to provide, in clear
37 language, a way to think about the boundaries between categorized human groups. In the
38 following, identity is not represented as immanent or unalterable. The concrete barriers to the
39 freedom of individuals are named, acknowledged and given a greater degree of visibility. The
40 analysis thus addresses the question of social categorisation in doing away with essentialist
41 and/or fragmentary visions of the notion of identity. Moreover, it leaves an avenue for
42 individual or collective resistance strategies against categorisations such as racialisation or
43 *sexage* (Guillaumin 1992), without falsely implying that an individual creates the effects of
44 the social world on herself, or can performatively uncategorise herself. In the line of
45 Foucault's work, State power is not treated as fundamentally different from other
46 instantiations of power between humans. Power produces reality, namely here the categories
47 of human groups. It is all the more effective when hidden, and bringing it to light helps
48 prevent us from succumbing to its pitfalls and paradoxes. This reflection is necessarily
49 interdisciplinary, and the article takes illustrations drawing on the fields of sociology,
50 linguistics, political science, gender studies, autobiographical novels and contemporary art.

51 **I. Frontiers: concrete and real**

52 This first section aims at establishing that if a person knows what a geopolitical border is, she
53 is well-equipped to understand the categorisations power produces between humans. I will
54 argue that the body of knowledge about the former makes correct predictions about the latter,
55 in reviewing the paradigm of geopolitical borders and showing how these make sense in the
56 field of categorizations among humans.

57 **Permanent renegotiations of boundaries**

58 The boundaries between human groups, some of which are spatial, are permanently subject to
59 renegotiations. Before December 2013, women of the Great Mosque of Paris used to pray in a
60 dedicated area within a large room with men, but the mosque authorities then decided to
61 reduce male/female proximity by creating a dedicated space for women in the basement.
62 Women took action to reappropriate their space with a public petition, a *Facebook* group, and

63 a legal complaint.² This fight did not question the sexual partition of space, but it negotiated
64 the course of the spatial boundary line man/woman.

65 Such negotiations are also easily identifiable with non-spatial boundaries. The dividing line
66 between locals and immigrants in a given society varies according to changes in laws for
67 access to employment, health care, civil rights - each a milestone on the border between these
68 two categories. A given immigrant can become a local insofar as her rights arise at full
69 coincidence with those of other locals. A given local person can also become an immigrant:
70 Cohen (1972) describes how, as a child of Greek immigrants integrated in Marseille, he
71 discovered he was becoming racialized as a Jew during the Second World War. His parents
72 had crossed the border from local immigrant to local, yet he experienced it the other way
73 around, in discovering for himself a novel criterion of categorization. There are human
74 categorizations sometimes considered irrevocable, ontologically based on criteria designated
75 as immutable, like sex or race, for which Nature is invoked.

76

77 These separations, however, also have fluid and negotiable boundaries: a given border zone
78 individual may fall to one side or the other of the race or gender border during his life,
79 sometimes to her own surprise. In the US, positive discrimination implies racial classification
80 is founded in law. Inspection of classification criteria shows that, far from encoding an
81 immanent Natural Order, the law uses a patchwork of conflicting and tinkered criteria that
82 mix disparate notions of genetic descent, cultural pattern, language or self-identification by an
83 individual or a community. In the early twentieth century, the *one-drop rule* required a
84 particular person with a drop of so-called "black blood" be considered Black. The drop of
85 blood is interpreted as the presence of a black person in ascendants, but logically qualification
86 of this ascendant also, and so forth up the lineage tree. Additionally, these rules do change
87 and a person considered Black in the early twentieth century by the *one drop rule* may no
88 longer be considered as such. In the twenty-first century, it is the presumed race of the mother
89 that is transferred to the birth certificate of a child (Cloos 2010:91). It is then always the case
90 that after a few generations, the official race of an individual matches only that of one of his
91 great-grandmothers. In the contemporary US business world, the "Minority Business
92 Certification" (nmsdc.org) verifies a company is owned by a person from a "minority". This
93 certificate concerns US citizens who can prove: 25% origins of any of the "black racial groups
94 of Africa", or backgrounds "from Pakistan or India", or "Spanish-speaking regions of South

² Source: their press release of 2013, Dec. 26.

95 America, "or a person officially recognized by his own community in the case of "Native
96 Americans". Ancestry and self-reported cultural identification are criteria that can correlate or
97 contradict each other. We can scientifically observe and quantify these contradictions. Death
98 acts in the US are also written in terms of racial classification, operated either by a close
99 relative or visual estimation by a doctor or funeral director. This obviously leads to
100 contradictory results (Krieger et al., 2003, cited in Cloos 2010), each case raising the issue of
101 the particular outlines of the border of racial categorization: who owns a passport to which
102 categories and what are the criteria of eligibility?

103 **Passports and identity documents**

104 A passport certifies the status of an individual, included or excluded, in relation to a group
105 boundary. Social boundaries also use passport systems. Some highly valued degrees serve as
106 class passports, if their production means integration to a higher class (although possibly at its
107 margins). The property inheritance system of ascendants is a class passport based on
108 birthright. Many official documents attest to the membership or non-membership of an
109 individual to a race; for example, the certificate of non-membership of the Jewish race
110 required in the French state under the Vichy government (Estèbe 1996:58). Such passports
111 also exist on the man/woman frontier. Female mutilations (clitoridectomy and infibulation,
112 foot reduction, neck elongation, lips stretching, plastic surgery of the labia minora,
113 mammoplasty, etc.) are typically culturally justified by a desire for sexual differentiation: a
114 person classified as woman has to comply in order to be a "real woman". These irrevocable
115 physical marks literally embody passports for the *Woman* category. Such passports also exist
116 in administrative and judicial form. As detailed in Bohuon (2012), since 1968, international
117 sports athletes in the woman category are in mandatory possession of a "Certificate of
118 femininity valid for life" (see also "sex passport" or "femininity passport", Bohuon 2012: fn2,
119 p65). Obtaining this certificate depends upon examination of various anatomical, hormonal or
120 chromosomal criteria, whose definitions vary over time, which results in cases of passport
121 withdrawals. Athlete Ewa Klobukowska has had a woman's passport ("for life"), which was
122 withdrawn and later restituted. She passed the test in 1964 and was twice an Olympic
123 medallist in Tokyo. She next failed the Barr test in 1967: six doctors unanimously decided
124 she was not physiologically a woman, and her femininity certificate was withdrawn along
125 with her gold and bronze medals. In 1970, her case was recognized as (probably) a case of
126 Mosaism, which means the presence of an extra Y chromosome, offering no sporting
127 advantage over humans defined as women by possession of two X chromosomes. By decision

128 of the IAAF, International Association of Athletics Federations, her competition ban was
129 lifted and Ewa was reassigned as *Woman* (Bohuon 2012:74). This passport directly affected
130 her ability to work.

131 **Work visas**

132 The equivalent of work visas exist in language, which serves as a marker of different social
133 groups. Candea (2013) points out that in French, the names of poorly paid occupations have
134 different grammatical masculine and feminine forms (shoemaker, *cordonnère*, *cordonnier*, or
135 unemployed *chômeur*, *chômeuse*), according to the supposed biological sex of the person.
136 Grammar adapts easily to men occupying roles traditionally assigned to women (nurse
137 *infirmière/infirmier*, pediatric nurse, *puéricultrice/puériculteur* with the exceptions of
138 midwife *sage-femme*, and nanny *nounou, nourrice*). In the twentieth century, some women
139 gained access to male jobs (president, director, researcher, engineer), but their legitimacy is
140 still under negotiation. Language, both indicative of the negotiations and battle field for them,
141 resists precisely where it could legitimise women's accession of these occupations. Only for
142 low status titles are the morphologically feminine forms of both the title and its determiner
143 authorized (President of the Gymnastics Association, school principal, job seeker). However,
144 the corresponding honorific titles become allowed with morphologically masculine forms
145 (President of the Republic, Director of Cabinet, scientific researcher).

146

- 147 (1) *Madame le président de* (* *l'association de gymnastique* / ✓ *de la république*)
148 *Madame le directeur de* (* *l'école* / ✓ *cabinet ministériel*)
149 *Elle est chercheur* (* *d'emploi* / ✓ *au CNRS*)

150

151 It even becomes possible, when referring to the function, to refer via a masculine pronoun (*il*),
152 which is otherwise perfectly ungrammatical in French. These exceptions to grammar rules
153 bear the strong sociological subtext that a woman is performing a male's job. Language tags
154 the individual as outside her assigned gender class, occupying an illegitimate space.³

155

- 156 (2) "...le **premier ministre** [masc, sing.] [of Britain at the time, Mrs. Thatcher], il est vrai, n'avait pas
157 caché, en s'installant au 10 Downing Street, que la période qui s'ouvrait serait plus marquée par le sang,

³ See the English contrast: *John is (a waiter/#a prince) and Mary is too*. For a state of the art of feminisations in French, see Baider et al. (2007).

158 la sueur et les larmes que par la facilité. Il [masc, sing.] peut, en outre, faire valoir que nombre de ces
159 difficultés ont été héritées des travaillistes..."

160 "The Prime Minister, it is true, did not conceal, when she moved into 10 Downing Street, that the
161 period then to begin would be marked more by blood, sweat, and tears than by facility. He could,
162 moreover, rightly maintain that some of these problems belonged to the Labour legacy."

163 (Le Monde, leader column, p. 1, 21-5-81, cited in Cornish 1986:252)

164

165 Systematic exogenous labelling of a person inside a group in which she is tolerated for work
166 reasons basically amounts to a work visa: it allows limited traffic in an otherwise forbidden
167 area. The period of validity for the visa, and its revocability, depends on the authority
168 regulating flows between segregated groups. Women who refuse to be assigned such a work
169 visa develop resistance strategies. On January 15, 2014 in the French National Assembly,
170 Deputy Julien Aubert addressed Deputy Sandrine Mazetier with *Madam*, followed by the
171 masculine form for President, which she corrected with the feminised form. The male deputy
172 next addressed her five times in his speech with the masculine form, reserving the same
173 treatment for the female minister. Deputy Mazetier responded by addressing him with a
174 grammatically unprecedented creation: *Mr. the(feminine form) Depute*. The next day, Deputy
175 Aubert publicly stated that this term "violated [his] identity" and was "aggressive" and
176 "offensive". His response is consistent with the hypothesis that this is basically the imposition
177 of a work visa.

178 **Immigration**

179 Some migrants are thought to be perfectly integrated into the target group, even in cases
180 where the border separates between saliently differentiated groups. In Northern Albania,
181 Kosovo and Montenegro, a person categorised as *Woman* can live almost entirely a man's life
182 (Hérault 2009). These so-called "sworn virgins" can take a wife, and have children with her
183 regardless of the genetic material used. Sworn virgins perform traditional masculinity,
184 providing a clear example of the migration of a group across a sex/gender border. This
185 immigration is integrative, and there is no return option.

186

187 Other types of migration take place in the context of work place, and raise the question of the
188 possibility of return. In the 70s in France, young middle- or upper-class Maoist activists were
189 encouraged to join the working class in the factories in order to, among other things, organize
190 class warfare (Rolin 1996). Many people, called "*les établis*", made this choice and remained
191 workers after the economic crisis. Immigration across a class line, like geographic

192 immigration, can be thought of under the angles of family reunification or the hope of return.
193 Migrations across sex borders can also be observed in the work place: women occupying
194 places characterized as "for men", and men working as nurse or *midwife*. Some immigrations
195 can be of shorter duration, or clandestine, repeated or not. The ability to make undetected day
196 trips to the other side of a border is called "passing", literally taking this spatial image we are
197 investigating. This term applies to racialized persons passing for white, to transgender and
198 transsexuals, or to social classes, when not a mix of the above.

199 **Tourism**

200 Border crossing can be purely exploratory and aimed solely at personal enrichment. Tourism
201 is overwhelmingly committed by individuals from dominant groups. Christian Seidel became
202 the transvestite Christiane in an exploratory manner over a period of two years. He tried to
203 broaden his understanding of the world, perceive it from a different posture: as a woman. As
204 Christiane, he partied with supporters of Bayern Munich, walked in the streets of San Remo,
205 interacted with close friends and in his heterosexual couple (Seidel 2014, ZDF, 2013). The
206 practice of *disability for a day*, allowing one to experience social spaces with a wheelchair,
207 or without sight, has the same exploratory character.

208 **Border crossing signs**

209 The boundaries of human categories are marked by specific, widely recognized signs:
210 costumes, headdresses, (levels of) languages. Posting these signposts sends a clear signal.
211 These signposts are not fundamentally attached to a given border, and evolve depending on
212 location and time. This is the case of wearing pants in Europe, which long stood as a border
213 sign between men and women, but no longer does. Like a signpost saying "Italy 200m" has
214 nothing fundamentally Italian, signs and markers of social categorizations are purely
215 conventionally attached to the group whose delimitation they signal. Pants have nothing
216 intrinsically male or female, they mark bipedalism at most. Like the Italian signpost, it is only
217 the border system that gives them meaning. These signs are not an expression of essence of a
218 particular group, but they can deeply impact the body. They affect voice, posture, gait,
219 (un)authorized gestures, how one occupies space, the amount of food that one swallows, even
220 the pace of ingestion. Some signs seem so deeply pertaining to a particular category, they can
221 be tempting to essentialize, like voice pitch, a common marker of male/female borders. Such
222 literally embodied differences have categorical internal meaning, but no more than an
223 arbitrary frontier signpost. The same way, a river can mark a geopolitical border. In neither

224 the river nor the salmon in the river is there anything fundamentally linked to the way humans
225 from both sides decide to live their civil rights. The presence of the river is opportunistically
226 used by humans, who consequently invest it with categorizing meaning. Physical and cultural
227 attributes become attached to either side of categorical boundaries, with a fairly wide
228 variation, although some constants emerge: hierarchically subordinate groups are generally
229 associated with a greater capacity and taste for difficult, dangerous, and poorly paid work
230 (e.g., supposed flexibility of children's fingers in carpet weaving, supposed physical
231 endurance of slaves/colonized people/peasants, supposed tendency of women for abnegation,
232 etc.). The dominant groups are often associated with elements morally justifying their
233 privileged position (e.g., intelligence, merit won generations ago, responsibility, etc.). The
234 principal function of these signposts is to justify the demarcation of the border and the related
235 hierarchy. They are no more intrinsically linked to a given group than other signposts.

236 **Prohibitions and passing regulations, customs duties**

237 Crossing from one group to another is prohibited by definition. This does not mean that
238 crossing is impossible, but that it is potentially dangerous or expensive. A group of smugglers
239 will set their price. Prices may rise in places over which passage is easy to block, like
240 mountain passes or maritime straits. Three parameters are at play:

241

- 242 (i) tolerance of offences the threshold beyond which a repressive system is activated,
- 243 (ii) type of punitive system set in place when the tolerance threshold is exceeded, and
- 244 (iii) financial and human cost of the passage itself via a public tax border system or
245 through the private sector.

246

247 Consider the case of a human assigned to the *Man* category who crosses various social spaces
248 with conspicuous attributes of femininity (dress, high heels, makeup, etc.). He will test the
249 extent to which his presence is recognized and tolerated (i), and, beyond that, the type of
250 repression triggered if any (ii). All economic actors whose profits are directly related to the
251 existence of the border and the difficulty of crossing it levy the equivalent of customs duties.
252 The financial and human cost of the passage in (iii) depends on many factors, but entire
253 industries are built on this passage in particular: permanent depilation, facial remodelling
254 surgery, hormone treatments, mandatory psychological evaluation in the event of a sex
255 change operation, etc. On racialisation borders, we find skin bleaching industries (cosmetics
256 and chemical), hair straightening institutes, various surgeries designed to shape the body to a

257 Caucasian referent type, or the administrative cost of a name change. On the border of social
258 classes, school systems act as customs: they are given the task of regulating, and limiting, the
259 flow of individuals and their descendants from one social class to another.

260 **The invisibles : stateless persons and unclassifiables**

261 A categorization criterion separating humans into two distinct groups without intersections
262 presupposes that every human can be categorized according to this criterion. Such a system is
263 weakened by any individual it visibly fails to categorize.

264

265 In the toughest cases, the very existence of the deviant individual is entirely forbidden. There
266 is an international ban on States producing stateless individuals. National systems can tolerate
267 a minimal set of "accidentally" stateless people, but if they were too numerous, it would
268 endanger the entire system. In these rigid cases, the deviant individual has to comply to
269 survive, and endure physical transformation if necessary.

270

271 In pre-industrial societies, cultures commonly assume at least three official genders. In the
272 Americas, the sexual physiology of the *berdaches* does not have to match man/woman
273 gendered activities. Roscoe (1991:5) listed them in more than 130 North American tribes, in
274 societies as diverse as nomadic Alaskan tribes and Florida city states. In contrast, in societies
275 where only two fundamental sexes and genders are tolerated, the man/woman partition is
276 thought of as natural and effortless. This fundamental belief is maintained at a very high cost
277 in order to dissimulate humans most visibly failing the bipartition: intersexes and
278 transsexuals. Reassignment to the male/female gender duality is overwhelmingly the norm for
279 intersexes in all countries in which these operations are clinically feasible (Lahood 2012). In
280 France, transsexuals have access to identity documents in accordance to their chosen gender if
281 they are subjected to enforced surgical assignment (evidence of a sex change operation), itself
282 subjected to a psychological testing of supposed adequacy with the requested gender. In more
283 flexible cases, presence of a deviant individual is tolerated if they are invisible, *öpassingö*. In
284 societies "tolerating" homosexuality, homosexuals still have to be discreet and not challenge
285 the heterosexual norm. They are *ötoleratedö* as long as they respect the normative dimension
286 of the border. The outline of this border remains under the monopolistic control of an easily
287 identifiable group (Lifshitz 2012). The threshold can come with a quota system, beyond
288 which "enough is enough" (enough homosexuals, women, immigrants, impoverished people
289 ...). Once invisibility fades away, so-called tolerant societies can respond with great violence.

290 Exogenous individuals may occasionally reveal their presence, to the extent they propose a
291 personal formula to avoid challenging the established order (humour, counter-signals,
292 participation in the repression of their peers, etc.). It is important to note that the deviant
293 individual remains entirely in charge of the invisibilisation process. Individuals fleeing their
294 category have to take charge of completely switching their overt categorical symbols
295 (costume, language, food habits, cultural reflexes, etc.) in order to avoid social isolation.
296 People with disabilities quite commonly report such impossible assimilation strategies where
297 they are tolerated in the exact extent to which they take their self-effacement (Vigand 2011).⁴

298

299 This first section has established that borders between social groups can be approached as
300 fundamentally similar to geopolitical boundaries. However, be they geopolitical or otherwise,
301 borders are not uniform and do not all produce the same effects. I now propose three
302 parameters that distinguish the between border types.

303 **II. Border parameters of differentiation**

304 Borders differ in their corresponding evasion loopholes: clandestinity, viable escape
305 strategies, and extent of no man's lands.

306 ***II.i. Visible sorting criteria and clandestinity***

307 Boundaries organize around a discrimination criterion. Visible criteria (morphological
308 features of the body, skin colour, shape of the face, age) do not produce the same effects as
309 concealable/invisible criteria (shape of the genitals, sexual orientation, culture, or to a lesser
310 extent, social origin or language). For a given individual, the invisibility of a criterion opens
311 strategies of clandestinization, allowing them to move in an exogenous space as long as the
312 difference is not revealed. French colonization of Martinique and Brittany gave rise to
313 fundamentally different colonial experiences, because the Breton people, while combining
314 stigmas of language and social background, could access clandestinity by mastering French
315 without identifiable accent, and dress like the settlers. A given person may choose to reveal
316 her origin or hide it, change her mind several times, reveal it to some but not others, etc. This
317 strategy is rendered far more difficult by a non-concealable criterion like skin colour. The
318 danger of a strategy of clandestinization is the imperative of non-existence, and it poses the

⁴ People with handicaps face one additional challenge, for to be recognized as such, and potentially helped, disability has to remain conspicuously visible. This paradox puts people in a double bind situation, whose cost is still dependent on them. The same paradox arises for racialized persons who want to claim the benefits of positive discrimination.

319 question of secret recognition signs. In the case of sexual orientation categorization,
320 individuals must also meet to live their sexual orientation. Therefore they collectively develop
321 ways of finding each other in a crowd, while organizing their own invisibility at the same
322 time.

323 ***II.ii. Totalizing paradigms and interstitial spaces***

324 Border systems universally make totalitarian claims to categorize all available space. The
325 claim is widely performative but also rarely true. From the point of view of a given
326 individual, they vary according to the (un)availability of gaps and margins, to the
327 opportunities available to escape the paradigm (even at the cost of marginalization). The
328 borders between countries exhaustively partition the finite land space of the planet. This
329 situation is new for humans, who have evolved for most of the known history of humanity in
330 spaces with many relatively accessible margins for off-category individuals (deserts, steppes,
331 forests, islands, mountains, wetlands, etc.). Withdrawing from social areas in geographical
332 space had a cost, but was possible. In the last century, these interstitial spaces underwent a
333 drastic reduction and the impact of geopolitical boundaries and of socially totalizing
334 categorisations grew accordingly.

335

336 Deviant individuals undergo a symbolic decategorisation out of humanity. The paradigm is
337 that of the *Other*, of the unknown, of liminality, madness, of sub-human monsters. A bearded
338 woman is not considered as bordering the *Man* category, a move which would benefit her on
339 many levels, but as bordering humanity. Intersexes testify of inhumane treatment of violent
340 sex reassignment (Gosselin et al. 2008). In an analysis in terms of border crossings, the
341 autobiographical story of Beatriz Preciado who self-administered testosterone for a year,
342 could be understood as a clandestine immigration process across the woman/man border, but
343 she stressed that taking testosterone did not include her into the *Man* category: "I do not take
344 testosterone to turn myself into a man, but to betray what society wanted to make me, to add a
345 molecular prosthesis to my low-tech transgender identity made of dildos, text, moving
346 images"⁵. She precisely describes a passage from the *Woman* category to a new one labelled:
347 *Other*. Some transgender or transsexual people who escape the woman category also oppose
348 the "female to male" path, instead favouring the path from "female to unknown", a term that

⁵ "Je ne prends pas la testostérone pour me transformer en homme, mais pour trahir ce que la société a voulu faire de moi, pour ajouter une prothèse moléculaire à mon identité transgenre low-tech faite de godes, de textes, d'images en mouvement".

349 best expresses the category they feel they embody (Binard 2006:398). The semantic field of
350 robotics and digital technology is also invested. Haraway (1991) proposed the concept of
351 cyborg, the new being overtaking the woman subject. Marginality figures often combine with
352 spatiotemporal peripheral figures: the night, the bush, the wasteland. These concepts have in
353 common an implied space beyond the usual, where human visions of self find a symbolic area
354 to grow away from predetermined categories, a place where one's choices open. Logically,
355 these exploratory positions are overwhelmingly represented in science fiction (see Ursula K.
356 Le Guin). When a margin space offers refuge for a set of humans, their liminal visions
357 crystallise in marooned identities and create still more borders within the margins. The power
358 system can work around these margins provided they stay small and reasonably far apart.
359 Some margins have higher potential to integrate individuals, and potentially short-circuit the
360 entire system. Monique Wittig (1980) noted that the *Wife* or *Human reproductive*
361 understanding of the *Woman* category excludes lesbians, and joyfully concluded that lesbians
362 are not women, with the logical implication that lesbians were therefore free from compliance
363 to womanhood. By doing so, Wittig opens a peripheral space with the potential to entirely
364 bleed the *woman* category, which by parity of argument suddenly excludes bisexuals,
365 pansexuals, heterosexuals without children, or anyone departing the slightest from the
366 prototypical feminine image. Ultimately, the category reduces to an abstraction *THE*
367 *Woman* revealing its essence. The category does not exist in itself, it is merely the result of
368 an active and arbitrary act of categorization of individuals, perpetually recreated by a global
369 hierarchy system among humans (Butler 1990). For those that society categorizes as women,
370 the category manifests itself by its concrete effects (subordination, limitation of individuals,
371 economic exploitation, etc., see Gunnarsson 2011).

372

373 New interstitial spaces emerge with social global changes. Internet for example offers new
374 liveability solutions for category refugees. When lacking interstices, these small margins,
375 uncomfortable as they may be, the only option remaining for individuals who cannot hide in
376 plain sight is to settle on the dotted line of the border, that is, inside the bordersø intersection
377 space.

378 ***II.iii. The borders' intersection space***

379 Radical geographical theory attempts to articulate the relations between spatiality and the
380 relations of power and domination (Harvey 2008, Soja 2009, Gervais Lambony & Dufaux
381 2009). It is in this context I note that spatialisation of borders reduces their intersection areas.

382 Some borders are inherently spatial, like geopolitical borders or the categorisation between
383 urban centres and peripheries. Some borders are only partially spatialized. During forty years
384 of apartheid in South Africa, some areas were segregated and some shared. The man/woman
385 border is clearly spatialized in public toilets, but heterosexuality induces sharing other spaces.
386 The constant is that the more spatialized borders are, the harder it is to live inside their
387 intersection space. Border spatialisation implies absence of intersection of categorized groups
388 but not the reverse: two non-intersecting groups may co-exist in the same space provided the
389 tight separation line is time. In an office space, management and maintenance teams can work
390 completely separate hours, without time intersection space. Such categories can even be
391 profoundly antagonistic. During the Rwandan genocide in mid-April to mid-May 1994, Hutu
392 people of the Nyamata Hills "worked" every day, precisely from 9 am to 16:30, murdering
393 Tutsi people. On this schedule, the surviving Tutsis hid in another space, marshes, where they
394 took cover under papyrus or sank into the mud. Outside the Hutu "working hours", some
395 Tutsis slept in their homes or in the village school, heading back to the marshes at 5am
396 (Hatzfeld 2000:81,177). The same space thus was constantly crossed by individuals from two
397 strongly opposed groups, but during blocks of time that carefully prevented their intersection.

398

399 However, the temporal dimension may also create an intersection along a spatial line. At a
400 given time, when a categorical border is drawn in a space, a person can belong to both
401 categories at the same time. Once we add the temporal dimension to space, in accordance with
402 the actual conditions of human life, we see that a person can go from one side of a border to
403 the other, without doing anything. Passing creates, within a human, an intersection between
404 the categories. The intersection of spatially separated borders is to be found in the story of
405 humans who cross these borders.

406

407 Humans have both individual and collective history. From the human point of view,
408 belonging to two spatial categories lacking spatial intersection is thus difficult to avoid. Some
409 humans even have several passports from different countries which officially state they
410 belong to several non-intersecting geopolitical spaces. The importance of an exogenous space
411 can also be purely symbolic. A human living on an island likely has a cultural symbolic
412 system organized around sea/continent concepts. Moreover, the most watertight boundaries

413 are precisely those that create a strong symbolic elsewhere. The limit of the hypothesis (3)
414 could come from real cases where the border is never crossable, even in thought.⁶

415 ***II.iv. Multiple intersections***

416 With our typology of borders in hand, it is now important to emphasize that it is not
417 empirically correct to analyse a human in terms of a single border system. A social being is
418 always in tension between multiple borders, crossed by some, bypassed by others,
419 categorizing her as dominant in one criterion and dominated in another. The result of this
420 weaving is very different from that of addition or stacking of unique borders. How borders
421 form between various category boundaries changes their social content, their impact on
422 individuals and therefore the possible strategies of resistance. This brings us to the study of
423 intersectionality, the dimension that is a major academic research field, originating from
424 Anglo-Saxon women's studies (McCall 2005, Phoenix, A. & P. Pattynama 2006 and
425 references therein), and irradiating now well beyond (including Dorlin 2006, 2009, Anthias
426 2013, among many others). I give here only a few examples extending those mentioned
427 above, emphasizing the different effects of intersectionality.

428

429 Borders are designed against each other and are mutually dependent. In the case of
430 geopolitical boundaries, with rare exceptions such as Australia, passports or national identity
431 documents indicate the male/female. A person who crosses gender borders automatically
432 loses her citizenship rights. Similarly, a person switching social class must precisely revise
433 her gender behaviour, because these are coded differently for each social class. The
434 intersections of borders also change their alignment. In Northern European areas with
435 significant low-income economic immigration, a racialized person will likely also suffer
436 social stigma, and categorization as poor. She will suffer discriminations carried out on the
437 basis of both race and social class. In emigration areas such as rural Brittany, where economic
438 relations do not bring in new people, but rather subtracts them, economic immigration is very
439 limited. Rural lack of variation in humans morphology means that someone non-racialized in
440 urban space may become racialized a few kilometres away. Crossing the spatial border of
441 labour pools, an individual can also cross the border of race categorization, which inevitably
442 will redefine her experience of the four areas cut across by these two borders. Similarly,
443 Bohuon (2012) points out that the criteria of what constitutes a "real woman" for sport
444 competition specifically draws from Western culture's femininity. Historically, the suspicions

⁶ Such examples could be looked at in the domain of classes and castes (cf. Delphy 2005).

445 of non-womanhood foisted on athletes heavily targeted athletes from Eastern countries during
446 the Cold War, next extending to all non-Westerners (Philippines, Brazil, Niger, etc.). The
447 effects of categorization may also differ in their content. Out of Breton industrial employment
448 areas, racialized groups consist mostly of children adopted by local middle class families and
449 doctors and nurses working in hospitals. The attached social stigma is potentially different
450 than in high-immigration areas, which in turn creates changes in the classist content
451 associated with the racialisation. In Huelva, Spain, production of winter strawberries is
452 performed by an imported Moroccan workforce, under the "contracts in origins" negotiated
453 between the town halls of production locations and Moroccan state. Because Spanish
454 producers have a gendered representation of Moroccan women as submissive, they restrict
455 these contracts to women, and because the municipalities have a gendered representation of
456 parenthood, they first target women with young children in order to ensure they will return to
457 Morocco. Since producers and institutional actors have an installed colonial representation of
458 Morocco, they impose conditions of work and, nearly, detention on workers, while enjoying
459 the moral benefit of the white liberating symbolic position against the supposed more intense
460 sexism of Moroccan men (Zeneidi 2013). Inside the cramped boundaries of the workplace,
461 trapped in a scissor-pinch at the intersection of racialisation and gender assignment,
462 Moroccan workers attempt individual liberation moves. These strategies cannot be understood
463 without understanding precisely how the colonial and gendered dimensions of their
464 oppression articulate and modify for them the understanding of *Woman* and *Moroccan*
465 *immigrant*. The social content of the categorization borders is transformed by the interaction
466 between the two. Social border intersections logically also affect their resistance strategies.
467 Living in Barcelona as a white undocumented migrant profoundly changes the experience of
468 hiding, opening the possibility of invisibility (Ressler & Begg 2014). Some humans
469 categorized as women in Arab societies are organized in feminist movements and meet
470 resistance, like any feminist movement. The novelty is that the neo-colonial context of Arab
471 societies creates a context for the accusation that Arab feminists are colonial in essence,
472 which profoundly modifies Arab and Islamic feminist strategies of resistance (Ali 2012).
473 Regardless of the real or fantasized nature of Western collaborations, this accusation is
474 impossible to refute because only illegitimate beings have to prove their legitimacy. Such
475 prerequisite, impossible proof marks all struggles at the intersection of multiple borders. In
476 Northern Europe, the prerequisite imposed on Marxist feminist movements is evidence of
477 non-betrayal to the class struggle (Delphy, 2002:174). The same presents itself in national
478 liberation struggles. By the end of 2013 in Brittany, following massive layoffs, a social

479 movement demonstrated in Quimper and marshalled Breton nationalist slogans claiming the
480 right to live and work in the country. They called themselves "red bonnets" in reference to a
481 seventeenth century Breton struggle to abolish serfdom that was bloodily repressed by the
482 French army. The French press and French social unionists noted the presence of Breton
483 employers at the event and presented a class collaboration charge. Media and union structures
484 tasked with representing the discourse of demonstrators actively made it unintelligible. French
485 national class collaboration for resistance to the German occupation during WWII is highly
486 praised by the same groups, showing they can otherwise easily accommodate class
487 collaboration. Demonstrating workers in Quimper are portrayed by their own social camp like
488 big business puppets, and in the same strategic move, veiled women are successively
489 portrayed as puppets of patriarchy/western world.

490

491 From the perspective of power, intersectionality in others favours division between people
492 upon whom power is imposed: "dividing and conquering". From the perspective of an
493 individual combining different dimensions of domination, intersectionality profoundly
494 modifies the apprehension of domination, and possible strategies of resistance.

495 **III. Smugglers**

496 Never are power systems as powerful as when they are invisible or unspeakable. A
497 geopolitical border is not invisible, and we each have a body of knowledge organized around
498 it. Now that we have seen these borders are not fundamentally different from other
499 categorisation lines between humans, and we have a typology of borders articulated in an
500 intersectional framework, we should be able to test this framework in a case study: the
501 complex phenomenon of smuggling. Who are the smugglers of social relationships? Who
502 develops a personal interest in crossing borders? What is the motivation for this activity?
503 What is exchanged and for what price? Can smuggling be a source of political change?

504

505 Smuggling arises from supply and demand between groups or individuals on both sides of a
506 border. Smugglers inhabit the dominant classes and develop traffic directed toward a
507 neighbouring dominated category. Popularization of science, popular education theatre,
508 progressive intellectuals or pro-feminist men movements are examples of smuggling where
509 knowledge and practices are passed on from one group to another. The smugglers come
510 mainly from near the border for two reasons: first, populations living near a border of a given
511 class are closer to their target; they are not the privileged lot in their own group. From their

512 point of view, smuggling activities do not put them at risk of a repression experienced as
513 important. A number of pro-feminist men demonstrate peripheral masculinities that keep them
514 distant from male power centres (Thiers-Vidal, 2010). Second, proximity facilitates
515 smuggling. Near border inhabitants have the necessary intimate knowledge of the terrain to
516 initiate meaningful exchanges with the other side (panel signs, no man's lands, landmine
517 words). The French State is heavily centralized and a human from the capital will struggle to
518 generate any trade interest if using the words "province", "region" or "periphery", terms
519 associated by her interlocutor with denial of identity and symbolic takeover. The lower-
520 middle class is adjacent to the peasant or working class, and logically provides large numbers
521 of political activists directed toward these classes. In countries where universities have
522 moderate registration fees and low wages, university executives, scientists and the so-called
523 intellectual class populations are significantly more oriented towards popular classes. In
524 contrast, the North American system organizes the debts of its students, who will repay them
525 by purchasing very high academic salaries, which in turn ensures distance between academics
526 and average-wage non-academics, consequently reducing the conditions of smuggling
527 possibilities, among which the diffusion of their scholarship through the population. The
528 proximity necessary for smuggling can also come from friendships or love, solidarity bonds,
529 common resistance experience at another border, or family ties (when the youngest explains
530 the Internet to grandpa). Proximity is necessary but not sufficient: social workers or bailiffs
531 are not inherent smugglers. Various smuggling techniques allow smugglers to loosen the links
532 between two terms of trade: in coastal marine settings, recipients recover the goods on the
533 beach or over the water. The content of books, films and songs can be analysed in these terms,
534 which poses scientists and artists as good potential smugglers. The smuggler does not always
535 know the nature of what is exchanged: she can believe she sells forbidden goods when really
536 people just want a glimpse of life on the other side of the border. There are different trading
537 currencies. Chomsky (1967, 2002) for example poses that there is a moral responsibility for
538 intellectuals to use their analytic tools to uncover the actions of the State and reveal it to the
539 people. In these terms, the smuggler is paid in moral value, which is itself subject to cyclical
540 inflation or deflation. As every worker conscious of her interests, a smuggler can recycle
541 when she finds better sources of income, or greater job/status security. Reorientation of the
542 French leftist intellectuals from 1968 to 1981 toward the right wing and anti-revolutionary
543 values is concomitant with the Socialist Party integrating them into power enrichment
544 systems. They abandoned radical political struggle and its moral value payments for income
545 raise and security.

546

547 Does this mean betrayal is inherent to smuggling? Smuggling is doubly linked to the concept
548 of borders in contradictory ways, both against and for the border. On the one hand, smuggling
549 opposes the border. It creates exchanges precisely where they are banned. Having personal,
550 political and/or emotional reasons against the establishment of the border facilitates
551 smuggling. On the other hand, the border is the very thing that makes smuggling possible.
552 Smugglers develop a personal interest in its preservation. Having personal, political and/or
553 emotional reasons for the preservation of the border also facilitates smuggling. This paradox
554 embodies perfectly the revolutionary paradox: one wants a border to disappear, but it implies
555 wanting one's own disappearance (or individual transformation). It concretely means wanting
556 to lose the conditions of possibility of the installed exchange, and lose the benefits drawn
557 from them. Smuggling reaps the benefits of an unequal relationship. A person who can cross
558 the border exchanges precisely with people who can't. From the smuggler's point of view,
559 growing in this relationship means finding moral benefits in always having the place of offer
560 in the exchange, an insurance to interact with people she is not equal with. Potential
561 disappearance of the border would make equality possible and radically redefine the terms of
562 the trade, plausibly by removing its necessity. What then of individuals specialized in
563 smuggling? Thiers-Vidal (2010, 2013) has superbly pointed out these contradictions in his
564 analysis of pro-feminist men's groups. Scientists-as-smugglers face the same problem. In
565 progressive academic representation, science decrypts the world and its results are used by
566 democratic human governments for the good of all. However, the most rewarding works for
567 scientists are either those written in a dominant language and published in books with
568 prohibitive prices inaccessible to citizens, or those that sell well to large industries whose
569 work is most detached from common good. A given society might wonder what alternative
570 political reward systems could be put in place to ensure a massive smuggling of scientific
571 knowledge toward the population.

572

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