

Editor's Introduction

Crossings, volume four

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When the inaugural group of editors conceived of a name for our journal some five years ago, we were thinking about gratuitous encounters, the kind that Winnipeg—and The University of Winnipeg especially—offer up so generously. We thought of the iconic crossings of Portage and Main, the Red and the Assiniboine, Confusion Corner. But we also thought of the random encounters that university life affords—of students who discover an author in one class and then hear about them again in another. We thought of students who become friends for life in a fourth-year honours seminar. We thought of ideas running at crosscurrents—how Locke on property reads in a special and difficult way on Treaty One. We thought of how the social and political ethos of The University of Winnipeg influences how we perceive everyday signs like gender, extractive resources, pandemic. We thought of how the departments of History and Philosophy are not self-contained, but necessary to one another. We thought of the countless familiar faces that we meet briefly on the escalators in Centennial Hall who enrich our university experience: students, faculty, staff, community members.

As I write this, I am at my desk in my home office, as usual. I am about to enter a set of meetings with graduate students across Zoom. It is not the same. Our “crossings” over ether is necessary and helpful, but they are somehow fraught with the distance that students and supervisors overcome during the long journey that is the writing of a thesis. I find myself nostalgic for those spontaneous and embodied crossings, ones that are not contingent upon my

schedule or software—a glance into the English student lounge where I see students working with actual books; an expertly poured latte from the Hive; the swirling colours of a graduation Powwow; the raising of the Pride flag, and the steady, ancient, and defiant drumming that accompanies its ascent. COVID-19 has not precisely robbed us of these good things, but it has deferred them, and I find myself longing for our community, our encounters, for the mysterious joy that comes when good people, ideas, and political aspirations meet.

This edition represents such encounters. It is the first volume delivered electronically prior to a launch, and it represents a good deal of isolated work and correspondence. But it is also more than this. These essays have their origins in the real encounters between author and reader, between teacher and student, between writer and editor. They represent a struggle with and the joy of difficult ideas, the labour of language, and the positing of novel and promising new ways that have as their aim the transformation of actual life.

At a time in which our institution—the Arts in particular—is under increasing duress, these essays display how profoundly urgent critical and creative thinking is. These essays defy the programmatic and the utilitarian. Instead they call us to a life in which ideas matter, because ideas will ultimately enable us to survive COVID-19 and all the other crises that will befall us.

I am grateful to many people for this fourth edition, which I think represents a full flowering of *Crossings*. Jase Falk and Jude Claude were more than editorial assistants; they were editorial partners. They offered sound and judicious commentary on everything from semi-colons to argument to design. They also reoriented me to the vision of *Crossings* when things became unclear. I am most grateful for their maturity, wisdom, and graciousness.

This year's editorial team was a good dream. My colleagues throughout the Faculty of Arts worked with care and wisdom in preparing the essays that are before you. The process of mentoring students to the stage of publication is a long and time-consuming effort. It is a testament to our faculty's dedication that they so generously volunteer their time to a student journal. I thank Adina Balint, Michael Dudley, Andrew McGillivray, Peter Melville, Peter Miller, and Tracy Whalen for their hard work in producing this volume. I also wish to thank Stephanie Balkwill, Christina Fawcett, Jason Hannan, Jenny Heijun Wills, and Peter Ives for reviewing several of these essays. I thank Michael Hohner of The University of Winnipeg Library once again for his expertise, generosity, and patience in the production of this volume. I thank the Centre for Research in Cultural Studies for offering us space for meetings and the Faculty of Arts, which supports this journal financially.

My final thanks go to the students—the writers and the artists—who contributed to this excellent volume. I have learned so much and I am so proud of the work that you have done. May you continue to raise critical questions. May you always read texts, pretexts, and subtexts with the diligence and care that you have shown in these works. May you forever connect the scholarly with the political. And when we emerge from this pandemic, may all your crossings—like your writings and your art in this volume—be filled with the joy and challenge of deep engagement.

