

Crossings Editorial

Volume 5

When *Crossings* was first conceived, we thought that the critical research engagements and discoveries that are the hallmark of an education in the Arts deserved a life beyond the term paper. We thought that the building up of critical scholarship ought to include the thought of undergraduate and graduate students working at The University of Winnipeg at a particular moment in history, and within our very specific and special context. Over the past five years, University of Winnipeg students engaged critically and collaboratively in subject matter of profound societal importance—such as Indigenous resurgences, climate action, social media, to name but a few. Today, due to COVID-19, our physical encounters with one another in an unmediated fashion are seldom. At the time of writing we are anticipating return to our physical classrooms, a place we believe that still can afford the kinds of discussions and encounters—with texts and with one another—that lead to personal and social transformation.

This volume grows out of a time of upheaval. Not only does it represent the only volume to date completed entirely under lockdown, its production was also punctuated by the kinds of world-altering events that make the quest for knowledge all the more urgent, and for many students, all the more existentially relevant: George Floyd's murder, the Atlanta killings, the revelation of what Indigenous leaders and others have long grieved as the unmarked, mass graves of thousands of children murdered at Residential and Indian Boarding Schools across Turtle Island, climate catastrophes such as wide-scale forest fires and heat waves in Canada, and, of course, an opportunistic pandemic that shows no signs of being

eliminated. Yet students continue to read, to think, and to write. They continue also to resist. This volume represents such resistance.

It goes without saying that many of us turn to scientists in times of health crisis, like that the world has seen for nearly two years. Speaking on behalf of ourselves, much of the medical and scientific research breakthroughs, data collecting, and care we have witnessed since the earliest days of COVID-19 has been inspiring. But here, we would also like to signal the work and necessity of students, colleagues, and community members who (also), through their training in social sciences and humanities, teach us tenacity, even in the face of such tumult, insecurity, grief, and danger. Ours is a community of thinkers that encourages critical engagement with social phenomena, power inequities, and the recognition of the necessary ways we can make sense of the world with which we today engage.

“What will you do with your degree in Arts?” is a question our students are often cornered into answering, from family members, friends, and even peers within their same programs. This volume shouts a resounding response: We can interact and analyze the effects of large (and small)-scale phenomena; we can celebrate and encourage beauty and creativity; we can insist and adapt to ever-changing contexts because we are adept critical thinkers primed and trained to try to make sense of the world.

It should come as no surprise that during lockdown, people binged the film and television arts on their ever-growing to-be-watched lists. That when people of colour and/or Indigenous people again rose up in defense of their communities, libraries and bookstores could not stock their shelves with books of cultural criticism and creative works by BIPoC authors quickly enough. That visual art galleries took their content online, innovating—and (to some degree) making—their content more accessible to audiences.

We called upon journalists and content creators to provide information. We turned to social scientists and others to keep us apprised of the disproportionate risks faced by 2SLGBTQIAA+ individuals and/or immigrant individuals and/or precariously employed individuals, et cetera. In other words, we quietly appreciated the work that those trained in various humanities and social sciences disciplines have always been doing. We had the time to stop, pay attention, and learn.

The Faculty of Arts students whose work is featured here, as well as those whose work is not, should be bolstered by what this moment represents. It is a time when the impact of higher education and all its faculties are undeniable. A time when they can celebrate their peers in the sciences, as they in turn ought to be appreciated for their different, though complementary, contributions. If asked, “What will you do with your degree in the Arts...especially during pandemic?” We hope the authors featured here and their Arts Faculty colleagues might say: “provide the context in which we might sustain ourselves and create the context from which we might build something anew.”

Because they will. They are.

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We wish also to thank the inspired work of artist melannie monoceros, whose work, "Tuning the Ocean: 55" graces the cover of this issue.

Very special thanks are due to Michael Hohner of The University of Winnipeg Library whose work in copyediting and formatting is always done with great precision and good cheer.

This is Jane's last year as editor of this journal, although she hopes to stick around as a resource person as this work is taken up by our excellent colleagues, Drs. Tracy Whalen and Andrew McGillivray. We thank them for taking on this work and we have no doubt that *Crossings* will flourish under their leadership. Thank you to the students who have contributed throughout the years and to the Faculty of Arts office, which has offered its unwavering support.

Jane Barter

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