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Crossing Spaces in a Brief Encounter

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Crossing Spaces in a Brief Encounter

Masuda Qureshi

I really must, in justice to Jane, apologise for her writing so short a letter — only two pages you see — hardly two — and in general she fills the whole paper and crosses half.

Jane Austen, *Emma*¹

Often, we write and cannot express what we fully mean. We may become frustrated wanting to cross out our own work. However, sometimes we succeed: even with the crossing. This issue of *Brief Encounters* is loosely based around this concept, and asks what it means ‘to cross’ through the various academic disciplines that make up the CHASE consortium. Through the act of writing, scholars draw out the interdisciplinary nature of academic research; they pass across, and even intersect, with the work by other scholars, and departments, as well as scholarship undertaken in various forms of media; they occasionally cross and meet in the middle, whereby scholars actively engage with critical literature in their field. For example, within this issue, Gabriel Chin’s article compares the work of Murakami Haruki and Don DeLillo to examine their concern with the status of literature and representation.² Chin, in particular, focuses on the intersection at which these writers cross between Japanese and American contexts and demonstrates the pressing scholarly need to address literary writing from a variety of cultural perspectives. Megan King, for example, examines the extensive process that emboldened American colonists to understand the different pathways of mobilisation, while Daniel Barrow focuses on intersecting academic disciplines, to assess the ways that scholarly examinations of time and commodity have the potential to illuminate both the history of art and literary studies, particularly in the work of Tom McCarthy.³ Finally, Sophie Jane Buckingham’s article focuses on the crossing between two eras: that of the ancient and the early modern periods. Buckingham determines that Ovid’s *Tristia* had traces in

¹ Jane Austen, *Emma*, ed. by Alistar M. Duckworth (New York: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2002 [1815]), p. 135.

² Gabriel Chin, ‘Mining for Reality in Late-Stage Capitalism: Reading Murakami Haruki and Don DeLillo Towards a New Literary Realism’, *Brief Encounters*, 3.1 (2019), pp. 1-13. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.24134/be.v3i1.144>> [accessed 20 February 2019].

³ Megan Elizabeth King, ‘Communication and Collective Mentality: Pathways of Mobilisation in Colonial America’, *Brief Encounters*, 3.1 (2019), pp. 14-28. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.24134/be.v3i1.137>> [accessed 20 February 2019].

Daniel Barrow “‘Our old enemy the commodity’: Image, Narration, Spectacular time’, *Brief Encounters*, 3.1 (2019), pp. 29-38. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.24134/be.v3i1.149>> [accessed 20 February 2019].

Renaissance England, and suggests that poets were indebted to Ovid's 'exile poetics', which inspired their own compositions.⁴ These articles are varied, and represent the interdisciplinary nature of the CHASE consortium and the wide range of scholarly disciplines it encompasses.

The second concept contained within this issue is that of physical space. Articles by Diana Wilkins, Tallulah Harvey and Hannah Huxley question how scholars can define and use theoretical approaches to space to aid critical research: can it be useful in understanding the history and geography of a particular area? Diana Wilkins, for example, considers how the history of the Charleston's Attic Studio is a space of value that illuminates Vanessa Bell's career and paintings.⁵ Tallulah Harvey also provides a striking analysis of space while focusing on the Anthropocene in science fiction; by exploring the relationship between literature and environmental politics in the dystopian literature of Philip K. Dick, she suggests that Dick's fiction does not look towards the stars, as the barren landscapes of Mars and other planets offer no comfort, but, rather, looks at earth and deems that there is no future for humanity.⁶ Harvey's work focuses on the notion of changing spaces. Finally, Huxley redefines the space of Harlem, recounting, as she terms it, 'Horizontal Harlem, Told Vertically'.⁷ Her article considers Harlem — from its literature to its diversity — as a space of spatial and aesthetic growth, and particularly focuses upon the published work of Latin-American author Valeria Luiselli, to discuss the transnational dimensions of her novel and the re-definition of Harlem as a space without aesthetic or spatial boundaries. For these writers, space is a place of change, constantly merging and defining itself, enriching critical studies.

The reviews and creative encounters included within this issue of *Brief Encounters* are particularly exciting, and similarly encompass the broad themes of 'crossing' and space. Dylan William's review of Theodoros Chiotis's *limit.less an assembly of the sick* focuses on Chiotis's poetics recognising that its

⁴ Sophie Jane Buckingham, 'An Ovidian Poetics of Exile: Renaissance Crossovers with the Tristia', *Brief Encounters*, 3.1 (2019), pp. 39-47. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.24134/be.v3i1.150>> [accessed 20 February 2019].

⁵ Diana Wilkins, 'Vanessa Bell's Creation of Charleston's Attic Studio and its Influence on her Later Paintings' *Brief Encounters*, 3.1 (2019), pp. 48-63. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.24134/be.v3i1.135>> [accessed 20 February 2018].

⁶ Tallulah Harvey, 'Staying Alive: Science fiction in the age of the Anthropocene — Philip K. Dick's pessimistic humanism', *Brief Encounters*, 3.1 (2019), pp. 64-73. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.24134/be.v3i1.147>> [accessed 20 February 2019].

⁷ Hannah Huxley, 'Inhabiting Relingos: Horizontal Harlem, Told Vertically', *Brief Encounters*, 3.1 (2019), pp. 74-85. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.24134/be.v3i1.154>> [accessed 20 February 2019].

depiction of defeat can be a departure point.⁸ Alice Horne also focuses on the concept of crossing in her review of Lorin Stein’s English translation of Édouard Louis’ *History of Violence*. By comparing Stein’s translation to Édouard Louis’ *Histoire de la Violence*, she suggests that, whilst a translation cannot be a faithful equivalent, it can, nevertheless, show some raw emotion to the reader.⁹ Jessica Lana Houlihan’s review of the exhibition *Dorothea Lange: The Politics of Seeing*, at the Barbican Art Gallery, draws attention to the exhibition space, and particularly focuses on how Lange’s work emphasises the themes of migration, social injustice, and displacement in an attempt to showcase modern America.¹⁰ Finally, the creative encounter for this issue — Nicholas Gray’s ‘*Ardhanariswara: A Composition-as-Research Project for String Quartet and Dance*’ — provides a musical exploration of the female-male forms of the Hindu god Shiva through the medium of string quartet and choreography. Gray’s piece merges multimedia forms as the music makes use of the gendered voices of the string quartet medium, mirroring the soprano, alto, tenor, bass (SATB) format of a choir, and also explores interlocking techniques derived from Balinese gamelan music, including the quartet of metallophones, and *gendér wayang* that accompanies shadow plays.¹¹

The diverse submissions that comprise this issue of *Brief Encounters* all provide a brief insight into a specific idea; they suggest that we are, as scholars, increasingly crossing disciplines and multimedia as we endeavour to better understand the world, and multivalent spaces, in which we live.

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⁸ Dylan Williams, ‘Theodoros Chiotis’s Atemporal Crossroads: A Review of limit.less_an assembly of the sick’, *Brief Encounters*, 3.1 (2019), pp. 86-91. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.24134/be.v3i1.143>> [accessed 20 February 2019].

⁹ Alice Horne, ‘A Review of History of Violence’, *Brief Encounters*, 3.1 (2019), pp. 92-96. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.24134/be.v3i1.153>> [accessed 20 February 2019].

¹⁰ Jessica Lana Houlihan, ‘A review of the exhibition Dorothea Lange: The Politics of Seeing’, *Brief Encounters*, 3.1 (2019), pp. 97-101. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.24134/be.v3i1.157>> [accessed 20 February 2019].

¹¹ Nick Gray, ‘Ardhanariswara: A Composition-As-Research Project for String Quartet and Dance’, *Brief Encounters*, 3.1 (2019), pp. 102-107. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.24134/be.v3i1.140>> [accessed 20 February 2019].