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TRANSITION/TRANSGRESS

Introduction

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Introduction: Transition/Transgress

Rachel Walerstein, Reviews Editor

This year's edition of *Iowa Journal of Cultural Studies* considers the "Transitions and Transgressions" that follow from, as well as structure, our encounters with film, literature, and the quotidian. Whereas transitions imply movement (between, amongst, and beyond), transgressions suggest a violation (of boundaries both real and metaphorical); what might appear to be a transition to some may indeed be transgressive to another. This issue takes seriously that possibility: the dangers, the promises, and the unknowns that arise in the interstitial space created by the perspectival ambiguity, of the "and," of the transitory, of the transgressive. It may go without saying that our current historical moment— when people in transition are considered transgressive and held in precisely that liminal space that is on, but not quite across, the border; when humanities departments are seen as both necessary sites for the cultivation of empathetic citizens and dangerous hotbeds of liberal bias; when the call for a life to matter is heard as both terrorizing and as justifying— is rife with transitions and transgressions. But such a claim also too readily simplifies the torsions to logic that continue to upend our sense of things to come. Like past issues, the refereed articles, the essay highlights from the graduate student run Craft, Critique, Culture Conference, and the book reviews provide insight into ways of knowing, seeing, and being which may ultimately offer some ways forward.

The first section illustrates the nexus created by experiments in content and form aiming to mobilize new modes of reading. Sarah E. Beyvers and Florian Zitzelberger argue, for instance, that the films *Birdman* and *The Hateful Eight* are keen examples of the way the incorporation of theatrical modes in cinematic feature-length films expose film's constructedness; they insist that by drawing on audience expectations for formulaic genres, the two films are also commentaries on the commercial enterprise that is the entertainment industry. Also emphasizing the role of the audience in *Safe Haven*, Adam Lovasz argues that in its transmission of knowledge through handheld cameras, the film challenges the ability for visual representations to assist in maintaining a subject's integrity. An integrity, as Nicholas Manai posits in his reading of *The Corrections*, that in fact must be self-sustained through the kind of reflexivity

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that leads to insight. Taken together, the three articles emphasize the dark sides of transgression, and the hopeful transitions they may inspire.

The second section is a collection of presentations which run the gamut from Victorian literature on the body and the voice, to the demands for a better world articulated by Trans women, to strategies for overcoming dispossession at sea. Papers were nominated by CCC panel moderators, after which IJCS staff invited the papers we felt merited wider recognition to be shared here. The final section of book reviews provides a selection of recent texts that radically rethink their fields. From Sound Studies to Queer Theory, from literature to the afterlives of slavery, the reviews demonstrate the exciting new directions in which scholarship across the disciplines is moving.

Lastly, we at Iowa Journal of Cultural Studies would like to congratulate the authors and conference participants on their excellent work this year. We would also like to thank the staff and faculty who support the graduate student labor that makes opportunities like IJCS possible, especially Mark Anderson and David Wittenberg. It has been a year of so many changes not just here in Iowa, but everywhere. In light of such transitions, it is always inspiring to be reminded of the community that persists after the final page has been published.