

Introduction: Transcending Boundaries

When the editorial process on this issue of the St Anne's Academic Review began, many certainly perceived the relevance of boundaries, borders and boats. The migration of tens of thousands of refugees and asylum-seekers from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan, not to mention the continued voyages across the Mediterranean from North Africa, brought to the political forefront the issues of whose borders bore safety in crossing, which restricted movement of people, and the means by which migrants reached these liminal junctures. Current political debate finds Great Britain at the periphery of the continent, awaiting the decision to drift away or remain anchored to its closest neighbour.

Meanwhile within Oxford graduate students focus on revisions and exams, all while sharing a common space that transcends boundaries. International students come together within the borders of colleges and libraries, yet these neither define them nor limit their capabilities for original research and scholarship. As this volume exhibits, students across disciplines observe that boundaries exist (or do not) and recognize the mechanisms through which humankind strives to transcend them (or already has). Whether these appear as limits of scientific enquiry or ambiguous distinctions between people or ideas, boundaries do not result in definitive conclusions upon discovery, but rather serve as the points where enquiring minds question their very existence.

Whatever the anxieties of Britain post-referendum, the truth remains that universities like Oxford serve as an arena of ideas and cultures, personalities and nationalities, regardless of issues faced in crossing the threshold into these higher institutions (as Edward Hicks investigates). This transcendence of boundaries has created a rich environment of cultural and intellectual exchange that helps break down our own physically-enforced limits to understanding and knowledge, and it is the hope that these kinds of movements may continue to form a significant part of our academic endeavours.

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Bradley Blankemeyer
Academic Affairs Officer