



Thinking on Thresholds

The Poetics of Transitive Spaces

Edited by Subha Mukherji

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Description

Why does the position of the threshold exert such a compelling hold on our imaginative lives? Why is it a resonant space, and so urgently the place of writing – the place where one may remain, avoid speaking or naming, yet speak from? Through a combination of case studies and theoretical investigations, *Thinking on Thresholds* addresses these questions and speaks to the imaginative power of the threshold as a productive space in literature and art.

'Borders suggest both crossings and blockades, but they are not a place to pause, as a threshold is. This book luminously explores a large range of such pauses in literature, art and music – moments of hesitation between physical spaces, between languages, between cultures, between texts, between stories, between then and now, between sleep and waking, between life and death, between gods and humans. The critical and theoretical approaches represented are rich and varied, and most marvellous of all, the threshold never becomes simply a metaphor or remains simply a solid location. That, among other things, is what thinking on it means.' —*Michael Wood, Professor of Comparative Literature and Acting Associate Chair, Department of English, Princeton University*

'Windows, national and racial borders, the hymen, the barrier between stage and auditorium, music as threshold between past and future, the outer, inner and middle ear – this innovative collection of essays on liminality crosses literature, drama, music, and the visual arts, moving across genres and languages, so that the book itself is a series of meeting points and thresholds. Liberated from the customary categories of criticism, the writers look deeply into the constellation of meanings conjured by the threshold. From narratological thresholds to the threshold of the body, readers will find that they look with a new intensity at the idea of the border, the barrier, the in between, the gap, the pause, crossings, meeting points.' —*Isobel Armstrong, Emeritus Professor of English at Birkbeck, University of London and Senior Research Fellow of the Institute of English Studies, University of London*

'In essay after mind-stretching essay, this book demonstrates the virtues of lingering on the threshold, that enigmatic in-between space in life and art which frames our encounters even as it shapes the ways we think.' —*Richard Scholar, Fellow in French, Oriel College, University of Oxford, and author of Montaigne and the Art of Free-Thinking*

'This collection of vividly written and critically lively essays re-energizes the notion of the "threshold" in unexpectedly fresh ways. It skilfully illustrates how a theoretical concept can be applied to a variety of texts, issues and disciplines through essays that are imaginative, astute and immensely pleasurable to read. The appeal of the book is the balance achieved between intellectual depth and accessibility; this is thoughtful, engaging scholarship.' —*Tamara L. Follini, Clare College, Cambridge*

Readership: Students and scholars of literature, comparative literature, aesthetics and cultural studies.

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