

## Editorial: Moving Across *Terra Infirma*

The theme of this issue of *Junctures*, “movement”, lends itself to a wide range of perspectives and positions, some of which are presented or suggested in the contributions to follow. While considering significant issues within this body of research, Irit Rogoff’s <sup>1</sup> publication entitled *Terra Infirma: Geography’s Visual Culture* <sup>2</sup> proves useful as she discusses a range of questions that connect to the various issues addressed in this issue of the journal.

An editorial does not usually include a book review, but in the manner of the *London Review of Books* and other such publications, the format of the review can sometimes stand an editor in good stead as a focusing device when the publication under review aligns with, or brings into sharp relief, the issues encompassed within a particular issue of a journal. In this case, the relevant publication is open-ended enough to allow for a wide range of issue-specific thinking, and it responds intelligently to many currently acclaimed theorists working with aspects of movement.

In the first instance, Rogoff consistently acknowledges movement in her own writing practice: “the project’s point of departure is not quite as clearly indicated or grounded as one might wish...[it] seemed an opportune moment for thinking through all the investments and certainties...I wanted the work to reflect somehow the processes which I myself experience as I move back and forth between critical theory, feminist studies and contemporary art practices...certain encounters...would provide a bridge for the next step for thought...”<sup>3</sup> In this issue of *Junctures*, Khyla Russell contributes an article in which she considers her writing as a “roam” on which she should like to take readers and she describes the progression of her scholarly reflection in terms of “movement” in her thinking.

Rogoff explores the notion of *detrterritorialised epistemologies* and she works step by step to instigate an epistemological opening up of the borders around disciplines; the walls around guarded contexts for understanding; and the policed boundaries between (now, arguably, disrupted) knowledge orders. Here, she moves on dangerous ground. On the one hand she argues for “active processes of unlearning which need to be carefully plotted out into active theories of unlearning which can be translated into active positions of unbelonging” in order for critical questioning to take place. On the other hand she acknowledges the need for “an

epistemological inquiry which stresses difference rather than universal truth...[and] understandings regarding belonging and rights.”<sup>4</sup> Elsewhere she states: “I see my task as an attempt to trace a certain [fluid] meeting ground...”<sup>5</sup>; while Russell hopes that contributions in this issue will create “a form of movement understanding.” Russell also suggests her movements between paradigms, whether these be between Māori and European contexts or between disciplines (Anthropology, Education, Indigenous Studies and History); while Rogoff writes about her own efforts to find an uneasy common ground through her “endless movements between English and Hebrew and German”<sup>6</sup>.

Elsewhere, Rogoff writes about “loss as the point of departure for something else...The moment in which loss is clearly marked and articulated is also the moment in which something else, as yet unnamed, has come into being.”<sup>7</sup> She is speaking about the loss of clear navigational principles in the face of “conflict between entities (named tribal) and authorities (named the state).”<sup>8</sup>

Kevin Fisher discusses “loss” in his article on surf subcultures. In an era of late capitalism in which everything easily becomes absorbed into paradigms of utility, some surfers resist through maintaining movement rather than becoming aligned with accumulation economies (Capitalism and Marxism). Fisher writes: “The wave is an unregulated movement and an end in itself. It is good for nothing, and the act of riding each wave is an expression of expenditure that is always singular and irrecoverable. It is thus that movements of expenditure become performances of sovereignty, released from the scheme of utility but simultaneously connected to place.” The recent *hiko*i (protest walks) in Aotearoa/New Zealand also come to mind here.

With regard to “a dance or sequence of music [becoming] the organizing principle through which mapped knowledge is assembled,”<sup>9</sup> Rogoff discusses various forms of the dance; their connectedness to bodies and places; with histories; and with an “epistemology which posits the corporeal as essential to knowledge”<sup>10</sup> as argued for by Ikemefuna Okoye. In this issue, Karyn Paringatai writes about “poi” which “refers to a Māori dance or game performed with a ball-like object [and which has] connections to mountains, rivers, forests, villages, whānau (families), hapū (sub-tribes) and iwi (tribes).” She undertakes an “unearthing of the knowledge of the past” through her exploration of poi and its history and connectedness with bodies and places.

The importance of embodied, “lived experience”, also speaks from Karen Barbour’s contribution to this issue. She explores phenomenology and movement research in dance and articulates a productive view of dance: “lived dance experiences are a source of self-knowledge, a way of knowing about the world, and a way of generating knowledge. Dance is of profound epistemological significance” in recouping the absent body in Western culture. Rogoff quotes Arif Dirlik: “An authentically radical conception of culture is not only a way of seeing the world but also a way of making and changing it...Culture is an *activity*...in which the...relations that are possible but absent, because they have been displaced or rendered impossible...are as fundamental as the relations whose existence it affirms.”<sup>11</sup> (my emphasis)

Elsewhere, Rogoff enters a conversation with James Clifford and focuses on the ubiquity of terms connected to movement in recent discourses: travel; exploration; voyage; migrancy;

displacement; touring; adventure, etc. She writes: “Theory travels; so do theorists. In the late twentieth century the producers and audiences of theory can no longer be situated in a more-or-less stable map...‘travel [can be] seen as a complex and pervasive spectrum of human experiences...this interactive process [is] relevant in varying degrees, to any local, national or regional domain...everywhere one looks, the processes of human movement and encounter are...complex’.”<sup>12</sup> In this issue of *Junctures*, Leoni Schmidt connects research on human displacement to contemporary drawing practices as she presents four “thumbnail sketches” of migratory encounters and the material form through which they manifest in dispersive drawings.

Constance Richard contributes a poem to this issue and obliquely suggests movement rather than writing of it — thereby utilising one of the strengths of poetry. Rogoff writes about the need “...to avoid a discourse which perceives itself as ‘speaking about’ and shift[s] towards a discourse of ‘speaking to’...” even to the extent of re-examining writing practices to alter the objectifying structures by which we organise and inhabit culture.<sup>13</sup>

Rogoff argues for situated knowledge and is conscious of being placed within “...a culture that is working very hard to produce another universal unsituatedness through the global circulation of electronically disseminated information [especially] the fake liberationist claims made for it.”<sup>14</sup> Rodney Browne’s review of *Video Art* by Michael Rush in this issue warns that whether “we speak...of mainstream film, television, the internet, computer games, or domestic video, it is the illusion of motion that is so enthralling as it seduces us into participating in the emotion, drama, visual gratification and deception of the moment.”

“I wanted to set up an exploration of links...thinking through all the investments and certainties [in] the arena] of geography,”<sup>15</sup> writes Rogoff of her own project. Thinking through philosophical positions and the very movement of thought are performed through the conversations between Michel Serres and Bruno Latour in *Conversations on Science, Culture and Time*. Jim Searle’s review of this book concludes this issue of *Junctures*. Searle writes: “to and fro [allows] thought to move quickly and lightly...The problems of communication and semiotics mix themselves with those of navigation and geography. Here we find ourselves *in* (rather than looking upon)...The two men celebrate thinking not only as a tool but also as movement.” I am reminded of the movement in Russell’s thinking i te ata tū (in the wee small hours of the morning).

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(Editor)

- 1 Irit Rogoff is Chair of Art History and Visual Culture at Goldsmith's College, University of London.
- 2 (London & New York: Routledge, 2000).
- 3 Ibid, 9.
- 4 Ibid, 1 & 2.
- 5 Ibid, 8.
- 6 Ibid, 7.
- 7 Ibid, 3.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Ibid, 106 & 107.
- 10 Ibid, 107, quoting from Ikemefuna Okoye, "Shamanic Penumbra: Houston Conwill's Art of Color", *New Observations*, 97, October 1993, 28.
- 11 Rogoff, 152, quoting from Arif Dirlik, "Culturalism as Hegemonic Ideology and Liberating Practice", *Cultural Critique*, 6, 7.
- 12 Rogoff, 48 & 49, quoting from James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 46.
- 13 Rogoff, 32, in response to Trinh T Minh-Ha in "Cotton and Iron", in Russell Ferguson et al (eds), *Out There: Marginalizations and Culture* (Cambridge MA: MIT, 1992).
- 14 Rogoff, 12.
- 15 Ibid, 1-2.