FEDERICO FRESCHI AND SCOTT KLENNER

Editorial: 'inter-'

FEDERICO FRESCHI AND SCOTT KLENNER

Editorial: 'inter-'

This issue of *Junctures* invited authors to explore questions and challenges around the theme of 'inter'. The theme encouraged an exploration of various issues, including questions like: what benefits can investigating the spaces between opposing ideas offer an often divided world? How can we envision alternatives by examining these in-between areas, whether in disciplines, philosophies, arts, politics, or cultures? What democratic and empowering forces might exist in the fluid gaps between established meanings?

The seven articles in the 2023 issue of *Junctures* present a range of ways of exploring these questions from different fields and through a variety of lenses. For some authors the theme invoked issues of social justice, for others the inspiration to create, design and construct both ourselves and representations through art and science. Perhaps what is common in much of the work here is the urge to think and see the world differently, in ways that blur the ontological lines that separate one from the other.

In the opening article: "Aligning the vibrations: resounding matters," Joe Citizen weaves discussions of te ao Māori ontologies and recent Western challenges to human-centrism. Citizen's article presents an innovative and speculative consideration of the influence of both the sound and structure of language and the diverse ways these linguistic moves call reality into shape. In turn, he calls into question the atomistic binaries implied in the concept of 'inter' as a space between two independent entities, instead suggesting a more relational ontology through concepts such as 'intra' and the vibrational energy within the Māori concept of oro. Furthermore, he contrasts Eurocentric notions of symbols and writing with the Māori perspective, where sound and relationality are central. The article also critiques the Eurocentric separation of the intangible from materiality, raising questions about its implications in Information Technologies and artificial intelligence. Ultimately, Citizen advocates for a more relational and eco-centric understanding, challenging the cultural specificity of human exceptionalism and positivist norms of prediction in knowledge production.

Staying with the theme of language, Tarunna Sebastian and Angela Giovanangeli's paper investigates the dynamics and challenges that arise when different knowledge systems intersect

in the revitalization of Aboriginal languages in New South Wales (NSW), Australia. They explore the concept of intersectionality as it relates to the shaping of experiences involving oppression, resistance and privilege and addresses systemic inequalities and discrimination. Focusing on the critical role of community elders and Traditional Custodians in the NSW school system, they emphasise the importance of preserving and revitalizing Indigenous languages, citing the historical context of over 250 distinct languages and government efforts to support language education, including the Aboriginal Languages Act in NSW. Sebastian and Giovanangeli's study explores the challenges and complexities of Aboriginal language revival and highlights the significance of local knowledge, cultural protocols, and community consultation in language teaching. They underline the need for a pedagogical approach that recognises the political and symbolic dimensions of language revival. Ultimately, they stress the vital role of educators and community initiatives in preserving Indigenous languages, and highlight how the intersection of Aboriginal language education becomes a site of tension where Aboriginal educators challenge the enduring impacts of colonisation.

Hinemoa Watene, Jeremy Hapeta and Anne-Marie Jackson examine the experiences of wāhine Māori (Māori women) in rugby using autoethnography to explore the intersections of ethnicity, culture, and gender, and advocating for more inclusive environments that respect their values and cultural perspectives. The authors use a Kaupapa Māori research methodology and an 'interface' approach that integrates Western and Māori worldviews. They conclude by emphasising the need for structural changes in rugby to support and recognize the cultural identities of wāhine Māori and create more inclusive environments within the sport. Ultimately, they call for greater representation and platforms for marginalized groups in the world of sports.

Moving to Malaysia, Helen Guek Yee Mei draws on micro-historical methods to investigate the multiplicity of identities experienced and constructed in being and becoming migrant Chinese in Malaysia. She considers how these identities intersect through fluid and overlapping belongings and connections, delving into language, education, culture and religion, all of which contribute to the rich diversity of Malaysian Chinese identities. She notes the changing dynamics of Malaysian Chinese identity, with a younger generation expressing a stronger national identity, often identifying as 'Malaysians first.' She introduces a series of artworks and explores the personal and familial narratives that emerge from them to make sense of the blurred identities of self that emphasize the intersection of diverse cultural elements that shape individual identities. In conclusion, Mei highlights the fluid and evolving nature of Malaysian Chinese identity, with a focus on the complex intersections of these identities within the context of 'Bangsa Malaysia.'

Staying in Malaysia, Giselle Su Hong Gick and Harold Thwaites' article introduces a research-creation project to develop a Virtual Reality (VR) educational tool addressing the intergenerational gap in Malaysia. The project adapts a role-playing simulation game, the "Aging Game," into a storytelling-based VR experience to help younger individuals understand the challenges older people face with technology. The aim is to bridge generational divides and raise awareness of intergenerational issues. The authors discuss the potential of VR as an "ultimate empathy machine" and detail the design progress of the prototype VR tool, which employs environmental storytelling to immerse users in the experiences of an elderly woman in a Malaysian fishing village. They conclude by highlighting the potential of VR environmental storytelling in fostering intergenerational understanding and bridging generational divides in communities.

Cecilia Novero's article explores the notion of inter-species communication focusing on human interactions with birds, specifically through the experiences of German author Monika Maron and artist Hara Walther. These collaborations, which Novero frames as instances of "zoöpoetics," reveal the transformative nature of interactions with animals, and emphasise the reciprocity and interjections involved. Maron's account, *Krähengekrächz* (crows cawing), initially intended for a novel, evolves as she forms a genuine connection with crows in Berlin, blurring the lines between species and challenging traditional symbolism. Walther's journey into falconry and art reflects a predestined path, where she merges her roles as an artist, falconer, and educator, fostering connections between children and falconry through art. Her artworks challenge conventional representations of falcons and incorporate physical traces from her collaboration with her falcon, Sicilia, highlighting the vulnerability and impermanence of life. Novero emphasises the dynamic and reciprocal nature of zoöpoetics, where human-animal interactions shape shared worlds and encourage new forms of communication and understanding. Ultimately, she argues that engagement and attentiveness lead to unique forms of connection that disrupt and blur the ontological boundaries between species and which are affective in shaping social identities and representation.

The final article by Sue Taylor delves into the impoverished and neglected inner-city neighbourhoods of Johannesburg, South Africa, particularly Cleveland, Denver, and Jeppestown and examines the enduring effects of social and economic inequality in South Africa. Utilizing an autoethnographic approach alongside Google Earth and Google Earth Street View, Taylor uncovers 'interstitial spaces' – the areas between developments inhabited by the urban poor that serve multiple functions but often go unnoticed. She shows that while the technology of Google Earth helps access unsafe or hidden locations, it raises ethical concerns about voyeurism and privacy when studying poverty and informal settlements. She exposes various survivalist economic activities and housing issues in these neighbourhoods, emphasising the dire living conditions and complexities faced by the urban poor in these "in-between places." Taylor concludes by noting the potential for these images to inspire artists and writers working in various genres, showcasing the dramatic backdrop of neglected urban landscapes with intricate historical, political, and socio-economic dimensions.

For these authors, the notion of 'inter' in effect became something of a critical juncture where the real becomes less defined by the independence of entities we can look between than by its relational integrity, in much the same way that the reality of each musical note is only meaningful in light of its relative intervals.

Professor Federico Freschi (ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9515-3303) is Head of College | Te Maru Pūmanawa College of Creative Practice and Enterprise, Otago Polytechnic Te Kura Matatini ki Otago Dunedin, New Zealand & Visiting Senior Research Associate, NRF SARChI Chair in South African Art and Visual Culture, University of Johannesburg, South Africa.

Scott Klenner is Director Rakahau, Research & Postgraduate Studies and Postgraduate Studies at Otago Polytechnic Te Pūkenga.