



OPENING EDITORIAL: INTERSECTIONAL APPROACHES, INCLUSIVITY, AND INTERDISCIPLINARITY

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OPENING EDITORIAL: INTERSECTIONAL APPROACHES, INCLUSIVITY, AND ACADEMIC ACCESSIBILITY

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The current issue of *Intersectional Perspectives: Identity, Culture, and Society* reflects the responsiveness of the editorial board to necessary changes regarding the humanities, academia, and research approaches in general. The journal has been previously known as *Assuming Gender* and was founded in 2010 by postgraduates at the School of English, Communication, and Philosophy at Cardiff University, focusing on themes of gender and sexuality. Under the title *Assuming Gender*, the journal was hosted on a WordPress site, publishing eight issues up to the year 2017, before transferring to Cardiff University Press in 2021, publishing a special issue in the same year. All back issues of the journal under its previous title have been archived in the past issues section of our journal platform and can be viewed and downloaded by readers.

2020 was a pivotal year for the development of the journal as the upheaval of the COVID-19 global pandemic called for an examination of global, societal, economic, and academic inequalities that had a greater impact on marginalised groups and disenfranchised members of both local and international academic communities, in addition to the reading public. Global vaccine inequality prolonged the state of crisis as some wealthier nations reserved vaccine production and distribution, leaving lesser-income countries to face devastating health-impacts, which tore at the social and financial structure of their communities.¹ The pandemic further deepened inequalities for marginalised and vulnerable groups, uncovering gendered, classist, ageist, and ableist attitudes that left others at a disadvantage concerning remote work during lockdowns.²

¹ Richard L. Oehler and Vivian R. Vega, 'Conquering COVID: How Global Vaccine Inequality Risks Prolonging the Pandemic', *Open Forum Infectious Diseases*, 8:10 (2021), 1-3 <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ofid/ofab443>> [Accessed 10 January 2022], (p.1).

See also: Amy Maxmen, 'The Fight to Manufacture COVID Vaccines in Lower-income Countries', *Nature*, Vol. 597, 23 (2021), 445-7 <<https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-021-02383-z>> [Accessed 05 January 2023], (p.445).

² Suchismita Chattopadhyay, 'The Pandemic of Productivity: The Work of Home and the Work from Home', in *Anthropology in Action*, 28:1 (2020), 47-51 <<https://doi.org/10.3167/aia.2021.280109>> [Accessed 15 January 2023].

See also: Annette Clancy, 'On Mothering and Being Mothered: A Personal Reflection on Women's Productivity during COVID-19', in *Gender, Work and Organization*, 27: 5 (2020), 857-59 <<https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12486>> [Accessed 07 January 2023].

See also: Maria do Mar Pereira, 'Researching Gender Inequalities in Academic Labor during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Avoiding Common Problems and Asking Different Questions', *Gender, Work and Organization*, 28:2, 498-509 <<https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12618>> [Accessed 07 January 2023].

And Kathryn Wagner, Summer Melody Pennell, Meike Eilert, and Stacey R. Lim, 'Academic Mothers with Disabilities: Navigating Academia and Parenthood During Covid-19', *Gender, Work & Organization*, (2021), 1-11 <<https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12751>> [Accessed 09 January 2023].

In academia, not only were academics ‘firefighting’ the abrupt changes to delivering education, but they and students alike were abruptly required to adapt to new learning technologies, bringing into discussion issues of accessibility and economic disadvantage. Personal and professional lives were disrupted, leading to many pandemic-related interruptions with authors and peer-reviewers across the world. University Presses were particularly affected through the sudden move of research and teaching online, with rising financial pressures on the higher education institutions to which they belong, and a ‘mass movement towards creating a more equitable and anti-racist society’.³ In face of these building pressures, our publication responded by adapting to digital technologies and focusing our commitment to social justice.

In 2021, the editorial board made the decision to restructure the journal and transfer it to Cardiff University Press to realise its potential. We decided to change the name of the journal to *Intersectional Perspectives: Identity, Culture, and Society* (IPICS). This decision was made due to public response at the time regarding the outdatedness of the previous title *Assuming Gender* as it had evolved into a transmissic term that was incongruous with the journal’s commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion. The new title of the journal also acknowledges the intersections of various identity markers beyond the gender and sexuality focus that our previous title implied. *Intersectional Perspectives: Identity, Culture, and Society* reflects our interest in other markers of identity such as race, class, disability, and neurodiversity. This change simultaneously widened the scope of the journal to seek out publications that take into consideration additional identity factors and viewpoints. It is also a nod to Kimberlé Crenshaw’s theory of intersectionality.⁴ Intersectionality, as Patricia Hill Collins aptly summarises,

is a way of understanding and analysing the complexity in the world, in people, and in human experiences. The events and conditions of social and political life and the self can seldom be understood as shaped by one factor. They are generally shaped by many factors in diverse and mutually influencing ways. When it comes to social inequality, people’s lives and organization of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division, be it race or gender or class, but many axes that work together and influence each other.⁵

Hence, *Intersectional Perspectives* is our way of creating a platform for comprehending and examining the intricacies present with individuals, human encounters, and the world. Rarely can the circumstances that shape identity, social and political life, and cultural practices be reduced to

³ Charles Watkins, ‘University Presses and the Impact of COVID-19’, *Learned Publishing*, 34:1 (2021), 17-24 <<https://doi.org/10.1002/leap.1352>> [Accessed 08 January 2023].

⁴ Kimberlé Crenshaw, ‘Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: a Black feminist critique of anti-discrimination doctrine, feminist theory and anti-racist politics’, *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1 (1989), pp.139-167.

⁵ Patricia Hill Collins, *Intersectionality* (Cambridge: Polity, 2016), p.2.

a single factor. They are commonly shaped and compounded by multiple factors that interact and impact each other in numerous ways. While also hinting at Crenshaw's framework of intersectionality where it concerns identity and societal influences, 'intersectional', as we see it, is not limited to intersectionality and the social sciences. Where it concerns identity and social issues, *IPICS* encourages publications that move beyond a 'single axis' or category to better grasp the complexities involved in such discussions. 'Intersectional' further speaks to interconnecting viewpoints and multi-layered analyses and contributions. It also allows for apertures and ruptures, as well as leakages and slippages, within such paradigms and standpoints.

Accordingly, *IPICS* remains an open-access double peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary, and multidisciplinary journal as we encourage representations of identity and social categories in not only literature and society, but also in various cultural expressions, including multi-media and art. Through our new journal platform, *IPICS* can publish sound-essays and art-based pieces, while keeping in mind the different accessibility needs for our readers. To accommodate the verve of these dynamic perspectives, the editorial board expanded publication types to include systematic reviews, special features, creative research, and commentaries. Our target readership has also been expanded to include members of the public who are welcome to submit to the journal.

Not only this, but *IPICS* is also committed to addressing the exclusivity of some academic publishing circles, who have long been criticised for their elitism.⁶ The academic publishing process often favours scholars who are affiliated with prestigious universities or who have access to resources and networks that give them an advantage. Consequently, the voices and perspectives of emerging scholars from less privileged backgrounds or researchers who receive little to no funding may be marginalised or excluded altogether from academic journals that charge publication fees. Hence, *IPICS*, in alignment with Cardiff University Press' commitment to ethical social awareness, does not charge journal authors for publishing through our platform and retains their rights through our application of Creative Commons licences to all our publications. Publications are also Open Access and free of charge for readers. This provides many advantages for our authors, including increased visibility and impact for their publications, greater accessibility to their publications on both a local and international scale, long-term preservation of their contributions through archiving the work in digital knowledge repositories, and reduction of financial burdens on individual researchers and institutions by eliminating subscription fees for authors and readers. And so, *IPICS* encourages submissions that empower marginalised voices

⁶ See Louise Morley and Sarah Aynsley, 'Employers, Quality, and Standards in Higher Education: Shared Values and Vocabularies or Elitism and Inequalities?', *Higher Education Quarterly*, 61:3 (2007), 229-249 <<https://doi/pdfdirect/10.1111/j.1468-2273.2007.00353.x>> [Accessed 10 January 2023].

and perspectives, while actively addressing some of the barriers of the academic publishing industry.

Another commitment of the journal is its adherence to academic excellence, integrity, and purpose in accordance with Cardiff University Press' philosophy of 'Rigour, Diversity, and Relevance'.⁷ We espouse high standards for assessing quality research and submissions, and where relevant, encourage authors to revise and resubmit papers if they do not meet our requirements during the first or second round of peer review. We accept academic articles upon merit, based on the assessment of our expert peer-reviewers who evaluate the articles through a rigorous two-stage anonymised peer-review process. In our own commitment to diversity, we, as an editorial board, reflect the diversity of the academic community at Cardiff University, as we are of various backgrounds and viewpoints and are constantly updating our inclusion practices and policies. Our commitment to relevance is seen in our open invitation for guest editors to process and publish a self-contained special issue, as was the case with the first issue published under our new title and affiliation in 2021. Relevance is also evidenced through the editorial board's upcoming work on a special feature that explores the intersections between identity and creative and performative spaces from our local and regional perspective.⁸

We open our current issue with a research article by Aswathi Moncy Joseph and a book review by Dyuti Chakravarty. Joseph's '*It's Not About the Burqa: Transversing Heterotopia and Hypomnemata in Muslim Women's Life Narratives*' challenges homogeneous and stereotypical representations of transcultural and displaced Muslim women. Joseph engages in an intersectional analysis of race, gender, and religion in displaced Muslim women's life narratives through selected readings of Mariam Khan's 2020 edited anthology *It's Not About the Burqa: Muslim Women on Faith, Feminism, Sexuality and Race*.⁹ Joseph raises two crucial questions: How do these women's life-narratives challenge the oversimplified and reductionist perceptions of their identities, which solely focus on religion as a single axis of social and political analysis? And how do these women create unique stories that challenge these representations to reflect the many nuances of their identities, and the multiple factors that shape them? Joseph proposes answering these questions through Foucault's concepts of heterotopia and hypomnemata, arguing for the transversal potentialities of the two. Heterotopia within the context of Joseph's

⁷ 'Research Integrity', Cardiff University Press, available at <<https://cardiffuniversitypress.org/site/research-integrity/>> [Accessed 15 January 2023].

⁸ Work related to this upcoming special feature can be seen at <https://intersectionalperspectives21.wordpress.com/>.

⁹ Mariam Khan, *It's Not About the Burqa: Muslim Women on Faith, Feminism, Sexuality and Race* (London: Pan Macmillan, 2020).

article refers to the ‘worlds within worlds’ that these Muslim women inhabit, whereas hypomnemata indicates the women’s own inner worlds, expressed through their personal notes and meditation. Therefore, Joseph argues that the Muslim women’s life-narratives in *It’s Not About the Burqa* ‘extend into a subjunctive space for reading and re-reading’ their subjectivities, thus becoming a site for heterogenised meaning-making for ‘transculturally scattered’ Muslim women. Joseph’s article provides a much-needed analysis of Muslim women’s life narratives, thus acknowledging their agency in telling their own stories at the intersections of gender, sexuality, religion, and race.

Also engaging with the theme of meaning-making, Chakravarty provides an insightful review of Laura Engel’s *Women, Performance, and the Material of Memory: The Archival Tourist, 1780-1915*, through her discussion of the book’s conceptualisation of an ‘archival tourist’. This figure, Chakravarty points out, provides a nuanced understanding of archival records and spurs generative meanings through the embodied existence of the archive. Chakravarty further brings attention to the interdisciplinary methodology of the book, which enables one to imagine the multifaceted relationship between the materials of the archive and the archive’s spatial, theatrical, and visual dimensions. Through an analysis of the four case studies of *The Archival Tourist*, Chakravarty concludes her review by reflecting upon the interdisciplinary strategies of Engel’s study, which she explains attempts to repair the difficult relationship that marginalised people had with the archive in terms of their identities that materialise through it or remain hidden.

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