



## Preface

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In the previous issue of *Inter Faculty* we proposed fragmentation as a thread for discussion. The theme had evolved from the Dialogues in Diversity of the first three volumes and represented a simple observation on the mosaic nature of our world. But now, as it has become evident that globalization is moving more and more towards a world of fragmented identities and values instead of the unified and integrated peace that was expected, this observation has transformed into a pressing question and the Fragmentations of this year's discussion have turned towards a more somber interpretation.

However, on reflection, it is no surprise to find that certain characteristics of fragmentation are also double-edged; here we refer to those aspects which are fractional and indivisible, and which produce impact.

First, let us consider the fractional aspect where each fragment can be seen as an individual element capable of dialogue alongside diversity. This same attribute can also become the Babel of biblical renown resulting in a world that can no longer understand or communicate amongst itself; a world where each language group becomes divided and enclosed; where boundaries and limits are clearly defined and each individual element is isolated, separated, without relation one to the other.

Then, concurrently, we have a second, seemingly contrary aspect, that of indivisibility where each of the individual fragments fuse together to create a greater whole. In this instance each element no longer has an individually recognized characteristic but becomes a uniform compound of a mass which is a source of great strength. Such strength can transform into movements of violence and madness.

Our third aspect is that of impact. As a uniform entity forms it engenders its own specific colour and singularity, and it is precisely this singularity which, when directed outwards, impacts on the 'other'; for dialogue or for conflict.

Such aspects of fragmentation are in direct relation to the constant conflicts of territory, of natural resources, of national, racial and cultural identity, and are a consequence of the inherent desires and longings that are deep within each and every one of us.

This brings us to the research of Elena Bovo and Daniel Lebaud. In ‘Terror or Fascination: the Crowd in Nineteenth Century Europe’, Elena Bovo discusses the problem of the crowd and its perception in the context of nineteenth century French and Italian society in order to establish the impact of collective action on concepts of responsibility and alterity.

These philosophical, psychological and sociological considerations are taken up and analyzed from a linguistic point of view in ‘*Individu, personne, foule, gens: from Designation to Signification*’ by Daniel Lebaud. Lebaud examines the function of the four French words *individu, personne, foule, and gens* to establish a correspondence between the terms used for ‘the individual’ and ‘a crowd’ on the one hand and ‘the private person’ and ‘a people’ on the other in order to gain an insight into questions of identity and alterity. These two articles truly are an example of trans-disciplinary research.

In her paper, Vesna Požgaj Hadži discusses the problem of ‘Language Policy and Linguistic Reality in Former Yugoslavia and its Successor States’. Fragmentation is seen to be profoundly rooted in this region of the world. Each language lays claim to its autonomy just as each state lays claim to its territorial borders. This article explores the crucial question of cultural identity and language and their role in situations of conflict.


Nathalie Wallian and Jérémie Bride also discuss cultural identity in ‘Body Culture and Conflict of Identities: Variations for Dialogue’. They examine the problem of intercultural representation and communication through a comparison of karate and swimming practices in France and Japan. For these authors sports education has great potential to develop dialogue and diversity amongst different cultures.

This issue also presents Research Forums and Field Notes which are the result of ongoing studies under the *Inter Faculty Education & Research Initiative*. In ‘Internationalization of Higher Education in Japan: The Aim and Challenge at the University of Tsukuba’, Ikuko Okugawa presents a comparative study between education in Japan, Europe and the United States. The study will be invaluable in establishing compatibility and correspondence of credits and diplomas in moving towards global education. Her report also highlights the problems facing Japanese universities and gives some suggestions as to how these can be overcome.

The Euro-Japan Networking for Humanities Project is another important research forum. Begun four years ago, the project facilitates exchange between researchers of different disciplines and institutions who then come together to develop their common research topics in periodic forums throughout the year. The 2013 forums, which are reported on here, took up the issues of cultural identity, peace and human security, diversity and fragmentation, and discussed conditions for trans-disciplinary studies with a view to developing New Human Studies and the establishment of a Euro-Asian partnership for research.

Lastly, in Field and Research Notes, Tom Mtenje and Melissa Wanjiru reflect on ‘Learning the Art of Negotiation’ under the Global Negotiation Program. They stress the importance of the different skills they had acquired through this course which extended far beyond their initial understanding of the art of negotiation. Their report has greatly contributed to the development of the program.

*Inter Faculty* is a journal which questions the human being, his society and the wider world, it is a journal which proposes new and original ideas, but mostly it is a forum for discussion. Thank you, you our readers; thank you for posting your comments and questions too!



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