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## EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

# *A CREATIVE LIFE*

Felicity Colman  
Charles J. Stivale

In seeking authors who might address the relationship between the notions of philosophy and of creativity, the call for papers for this special issue of *Angelaki* invited consideration of the physical terms of each of these pursuits – philosophy and creative invention. The daily praxes of individual authorial and artistic pursuits are what have drawn us close to these selected texts. Individual authors' obsessions and obsessive interests highlight the immense variation in how aesthetics operates as a determinant mode for those individuals and the communities with which they choose to engage.

Aesthetic pursuits might be found to be a guilty pleasure in this moment of the history of the world. Yet through diverse articulations of such pursuits and pleasures, the situations of the world might come into clearer relief, to be able to be seen, heard, and understood more readily, through another's observations, through another's perspectives, through another's aesthetic forms. Many essays in this volume call for the utilisation of the knowledge that creative forms can pass to us, and through their historical witness, and subjective confession, they become artefacts of processes operating the creation of thought. Many essays make connections across theoretical and practical lines, creating vectors of creativity themselves and showing how writers and artists have done so in contemporary writing and art. Above all, it is the play with language, and the functions of language – walking the lines of the text- that enable these stories of creative forces to unfold most fully.

At the heart of this pursuit might lie the descriptions and allegories these authors bring to bear upon their interests – their passionate and vested interests in exploring worlds and expressing them in diverse ways that attempt to reach beyond the standard metaphysics of much contemporary philosophical writing. The ontologies expressed within are not insensitive to life’s pleasures – stimulation of the senses as well as intellect through our landscapes, architecture, music, art, friendship, love, the cinema, the novel, communication of intellectual and sensory pursuits, pleasures and pains.

To pursue the often inadvertent construction that constitutes the creative process without finality or absolute status, Zsuzsa Baross provides several examples of how creativity is not necessarily governed by the power of subjectivity. In this way, she establishes a context for discussing a subjective displacement *par excellence*, innovative cinematic creation through found footage. In contrast, Karen Houle and Paul Steenhuisen discover the potential for performative creation in Steve Reich’s “Clapping Music for Two Performers.” In sharing the challenges that this engaged activity presents for two writers/clappers/musicians, they too explore the displacements of the subject in the creative processes of performance, but also how such collaboration can generate more affective sharing and joy.

In the issue’s closing essay, Santiago Colás walks the reader beside the Argentinian poet-writer Julio Cortázar, laying hands upon Cortázar’s texts over a period of months, and years, and thereby constructs a cut-up text, mediated by whim, and edited by us for length as much as content. In this way, continuity exists in the imagination of the reader to lengthen the situated shadows drawn and the psychological curtains opened by Colás, the creation of a community of thinkers, of creative philosophers. As Colás writes of Cortázar’s invitation to communicate not only for others, but for oneself becoming others, ‘If we could see words this way: not as snapshots of things but as things themselves, “coming and going”, that touch people, that produce effects, the way that kisses and music make you shiver or laugh or dance, then perhaps our words would carry the germ of life, infecting and enriching our angels.’

Between these liminal essays, we locate other and multiple approaches to the activities and constraints of creative production. To describe these angles of approach, we note that the Deleuzian concept of difference through repetition comes to the fore within these myriad creative practices. The authors apply this principle to the scope of inventions and actions taken and proposed by creative variations, and to the effects that emerge within the epistemological histories of time, space, technique, relations within/through the body, subjectivity, and affect, and finally, discourses of contemporary art.

Charles J. Stivale queries the dynamic relations in Deleuze’s work between the concept of “zigzag” and the complementary concepts of creation, friendship and life that emerge most notably in the

eight-hour video interview, “L’Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze” (Gilles Deleuze’s ABC Primer). Ranjan Ghosh explores a different kind of creative zigzag in a few more of the angels-of-life to which Colàs refers. More than a juxtaposition of two theorists of poetry through Carlyle’s “Hero as Poet” and the illuminating perspectives of Sri Aurobindo’s poetic theory, Ghosh’s reading offers a profound reflection on the sense of creativity as a problem of harmony, of consciousness, and of self-consciousness.

A number of authors in this volume have taken up this investigation through philosophical and creative reflection upon the repetition of time and creative facets of technologies. Michael Goddard’s essay tackles the thinking of the legendary group Laibach’s political industrial music through the principle of difference through repetition, one that Goddard identifies as a principle of time itself. Ben Roberts explores further the relationship between duration and sound modes of temporality by looking at Bernard Stiegler’s thesis on the activities of imaginative variations to memory, enabled through specific technics and technologies.

The question of technique has been central to many creative practices, including the writing of philosophy, and each in his own way, Graham MacPhee, Warwick Mules, and Aden Evens explore this central question, with divergent outcomes. MacPhee’s essay calls for a revision of the ways that Benjamin’s infamous essay ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility’ have been approached, calling for a recontextualisation of the Arendtian terms of the production of any aura of ‘art’. Warwick Mules takes Benjamin’s early essays as a locus for discussing creativity, singularity and *techné*, emphasizing with Benjamin that the search for the absolute in experience starts on the discursive terrain, to open linguistic expression in order to cognize knowledge itself as a unique expression of this experience. Aden Evens approaches technique from a very different angle, considering the inherently creative processes involved for thought, both bounded and unbounded, through the translation of high-level language into machine code.

Another concern of authors has been the co-extensive degree to which creative potential simultaneously intersects with the aesthetic production of specific locations as a mode of socio-political mediation. Just as MacPhee’s essay attends ultimately to “the shifting global topography of inequality and injustice,” Adrian Parr’s essay addresses the question of designing public spaces and inhabiting them, in our contemporary situation of political instability and the increasing incidences of terrorist warfare upon vernacular public sites. Parr sites author Arundhati Roy’s calls for the pursuit of memory, beauty, and love, noting the power of the observation of the everyday to situate the dreams of an individual life. Hélène Frichot explores questions raised by architects in grappling with generative means of form-making determined by novel design processes through creative philosophy – notably, Deleuze and Guattari’s -- and its intersection with contemporary experiments in architectural practice. Linda Walker discovers and relates a relationship with the creative situation of

the land, writing of multiple relations -- of friendship, of an indigenous people who withstood genocide and whose creative technics of living are still only marginally noticed.

The praxes of each methodological approach to both the history and the future of writing the intensive systems of art forms are concerns of several authors: on one hand, Diran Lyons, Simon O’Sullivan and Ola Stahl, Stephen Zepke, Felicity Colman, and Mysoon Rizk all explore questions of aesthetic conduits and the articulation of the various philosophies of art and the moving sound-image; on the other hand, Rick Dolphijn and Anna Hickey-Moody envisage the separate affective points of creative life – in food and in dance, respectively – in order to articulate the intensive orders of the body.

All of these essays foreground a methodology of the creative in conjunction with philosophical activity, as a way of *suggesting* an open state for thinking. However, we must stress that the essays subscribe to no singular school of thought, or methodological praxis. Rather, these essays were chosen on the basis of their *comments on a creative theme or practice* of the author’s own choosing. As such, the essays are singularly *intercesseurs* in *and for* thought, offering an ungrounding of epistemologies, of points of difference, a discussion of intensities, of impossible worlds. As Linda Walker writes in her concurrent letter to Derrida, an ode to islanding, and a reflection upon the indigenous cultural resonance of the ancient area of the Coorong in South Australia, “One’s thoughts are up for grabs – this is alarming and tiring, and, if one (as thought) becomes unhinged/detached, then one’s thoughts are forever (or infinitely) undergoing *delays*, or *border disputes*, or *joyous solitary encounters*, or *swift deaths*, or *cravings to flee*; one’s self as subject is at risk, at risk even in naming itself ‘self’ ...”

The creative process is one that obsessively engages this “relentless” pursuit – in search of forms that will give us creative folk happy hours to ponder...

Enjoy! Or as Baudelaire suggested, “Enivrez-vous, . . . à votre guise!”



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