

Editor's Gloss: The Process of Shared Knowledge Creation

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Abstract: This issue is an exploration of the ephemeral—the stray thoughts, the side conversations, the discarded scraps, and false starts that inform a published work of scholarship, usually invisibly. In putting together this collection of work, I wanted to make these traces the focal point, since so much of our actual thinking takes place in spaces of indeterminacy and interpersonal connection. These momentary and provisional collectives—what Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing describes as “patchy assemblages”—spark new modes of working, thinking, and being together in higher education as well as sharing the outputs of such collaboration.¹ The pieces in this issue collectively ask the following: What emerges from connection, engagement, amplification, thinking-together across disciplinary spaces and ways of knowing? How do we make manifest the relationship- and process-oriented modes of working that shape scholarly thought? And, conversely, how are our thoughts and ideas circumscribed by the institutional, hierarchical, and infrastructural systems we have inherited, as well as the tools and technologies we work with?

Keywords: ephemera, collaboration, experimentation, community, joy

This patchy assemblage of scholarly musings has its roots in the Inkcup Collective, an informal gathering of practitioners in and around higher education who share a frustration with the status quo and a hope that things can be better. We value curiosity and care, equity and mutual sustainability, messiness and beauty. The group is a space of abundance and overflow, where desires exceed institutional parameters. It is predicated on critical hope: a hope that does not overlook the challenges of our current social, economic, and environmental conditions. We believe that educational institutions can support research, exploration, teaching, and human development without falling into

1. See Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015); or, more recently, Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing et al., *Field Guide to the Patchy Anthropocene: The New Nature* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2024).

lockstep with market forces. Higher education can be a space that resists these forces and instead upholds the values of curiosity, delight, and shared human flourishing.

This journal issue is one outcome of these shared imaginings. The contributions here represent an assortment of approaches—from theoretical to playful, from traditional articles to creative interventions. The pieces are by turns individual and collaborative, formal and colloquial. A hybrid peer review process combined anonymous and open peer review, so each contributor has also participated in the editorial process, reading and commenting on other work within the issue. The structure of peer review for this issue was a reflection/refraction of the intentions of the issue itself: a way for authors to collectively engage with one another to shape and strengthen the entire project. We saw this as an opportunity for review to be not merely an exercise in gatekeeping, but part of a broader and ongoing dialogue that extends through and beyond each written contribution.

This array reflects the many ways we gather and the many ways our thoughts take shape. Form and structure are objects of inquiry in many contributions, with creative and critical examinations of what relational scholarship looks like through postcards, invitations, podcasts, and multivocal pieces. Many contributors used the space to engage in collaborative work that self-reflectively considers the possibilities of collaborative writing. Others reflect on design studios, on academic administration, on grant writing, on queer bibliography—all in order to better understand how we might bring about more justice, joy, and sustainability in our scholarly lifeworlds.

These are not your typical scholarly articles, and a number of questions and challenges arose in putting together such a beautifully nontraditional issue within the rubric of a formal journal. Sometimes the desire to push boundaries outstripped the technical capabilities of what the platform could offer, and authors found they needed to temper their experiments. Some peer reviews expressed concern about rigor and formality, unsure of how to assess the experimental modes the authors presented. Life events happened, causing timelines and capacity to shift. As editor, I understand all of these challenges to be part of the intellectual and social experiment, signposts that bring to light the friction between possibility and constraint. How do those structures shape our thinking—both as writers and as readers? How does that friction both inhibit movement and make it possible?

I want to acknowledge the tremendous amounts of work—most of it uncompensated—that goes into making an issue like this possible. I am grateful to *JEP* editors Janneke Adema and Alyssa Arbuckle for making space for this issue and for allowing me the freedom to explore where we could bend existing norms and structures and where we needed to conform to existing systems. I want to thank the peer reviewers for undertaking the sometimes challenging task of evaluating work that does not stick to traditional forms, for offering constructive feedback not only on matters of

scholarship and argument, but also on playfulness and exploration. I am appreciative of the expertise of the team at the University of Michigan that managed the production process. I want to thank everyone who is taking time to read some or all of this issue. And, most of all, I want to thank the contributors. I do not take it for granted that they have chosen to share their work here. It requires a great deal of vulnerability, especially for those who took a risk and worked in ways that might not be easily recognized as typical scholarship.

I am proud, now, to share this work more broadly. I hope the mycelial threads it offers take root in your own thinking, leading to unexpected connections and new ways of thinking that exceed our own imaginings.

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