

■ Living Books About Life

Creative Evolution Natural Selection and the Urge to Remix

Edited by Mark Amerika



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Creative Evolution

Natural Selection and the Urge to Remix
By Mark Amerika

Introduction: What is Creativity?

In his *Process and Reality*

Alfred North Whitehead writes that

Creativity is the principle of novelty.

The concept of novelty or more specifically novelty generation as the modus operandi of all living creatures mutating in the remix pool relates to current trends in networked art where the artist-as-medium postproduces the Source Material Everywhere as part of a larger co-poietic unfolding inside the networked space of flows

This ongoing remix practice procured by all living creatures feels like an innate biological imperative

one that indicates an aesthetically charged culture of intersubjective jamming where the cut-and-paste as-you-go open source lifestyle practice of the artist-as-live-medium stimulates the creative environment to the point of excess

In an interview titled 'The Creative Urge' Elizabeth Grosz is quoted as saying:

That's right, there's something about art that is an abundance of excess. Art is the revelry in the excess of nature, but also a revelry in the excess of the energy in our bodies. So we're not the first artists and we're perhaps not even the greatest artists, we humans; we take our cue from the animal world. So what is it that appeals to us? It's the striking beauty of flowers, it's the amazing colour of birds, it's the songs of birds. In a way, it's that excess which, I think, is linked to sexuality rather than to creation or production directly.

Which then gets me thinking about the formation of an uncanny sense of measure (an intuitively generated aesthetic fitness) artists unconsciously manifest / *em*-body while navigating the networked space of flows

Aesthetic fitness as an outcome of overflowing sexual urgency?

Randomly Google-searching the phrase 'aesthetic fitness'

my click-happy networked persona comes up on this:

If art is an adaptation, what possible function could it have served? From the viewpoint of current animal communication research, art is a signalling system. There is a signaller (the maker of the art), and a set of receivers (who perceive the work of art). The prototypical functions for animal signals include long-range sexual attraction, short-range sexual courtship, sexual rivalry, territorial conflict, begging by offspring to solicit parental investment, warning signals to deter predators, and alarm signals to alert relatives of danger.

And a bit further:

What sort of evidence could support this sexual selection theory of art? One clue would be an example of convergent evolution: the independent evolution of art-like abilities in another species through sexual selection. Bower-birds offer strong evidence along this line.

Bower-birds are natural collage artists
caught in their perpetual blue period
who create readymade nestworks
to attract attention to themselves
in hopes of finding their soul-mate
(or maybe just an on again off-again

affair with their love bird)

They are naturally inclined *remixologists*
(cut-and-paste as-you-go synthesizers
abstractly expressing their need to attract
sexual partners in search of beautiful experiences)

They do not need paint or canvas or verbal
constructions
to make the point nor do they need a white cube
to exhibit their animal instincts *in*

But we digitally connected humans treat
our remix / compostproduced / readymade art
in a quite different manner—no?

In contemporary networked and mobile media culture
Remixology presupposes the prophetic act of
making things with and out of code
whether it be a poet's direct presentation
a programmer's hacking aesthetic
a net artist's targeted action scripting
or a live A/V artist's patchwork performance

Whatever the mediumistic delivery mechanism
(and here artists can morph at will)

it still comes down to a root measure
a random association of selected thoughts
coming to the fore via intuitive memory trance
(an admixture of habit and novelty that informs
the remixological gestures of the artist-medium
as they perform the pseudo-autobiography of their
"always becoming" narrative-in-the-making)

Words rolling off the tongue
images conjured at the keyboard
sounds blasting through headphones
bodies bobbing off the balls of their feet
while *qi* electrical impulses structure
every pivotal move into makeshift
choreographed trance ritual space

In his lecture 'The Creative Act'
the artist Marcel Duchamp
refers to the artist as a medium:

To all appearances, the artist acts like a mediumistic
being who, from the labyrinth beyond time and space,
seeks his way out to a clearing.

Duchamp expands on his notion of the creative act:

In the creative act, the artist goes from intention to

realization through a chain of totally subjective reactions. His struggle toward the realization is a series of efforts, pains, satisfaction, refusals, decisions, which also cannot and must not be fully self-conscious, at least on the esthetic plane.

The result of this struggle is a difference between the intention and its realization, a difference which the artist is not aware of.

The artist-as-living-medium is not aware of this difference between intention and realization since they are performing their always-live remixes via unconsciously triggered states of intuition

Duchamp writes that

the artistic execution of the work rests with pure intuition and cannot be translated into a self-analysis, spoken or written, or even thought out.

Biologically speaking
what does it mean to intuitively
generate an aesthetic experience
and how would this creative act
get translated as the ultimate turn-on?

Put differently: what is the unconscious
readiness potential that triggers

Creativity as the principle of *novelty*?

Is it related to feeling a sexual urge?

When asked in an interview 'What is creativity?'

Russian dancer Rudolf Nureyev gave the following answer:

It is something born from within you. It's as though you felt a need to do something, to say something, to utter, and you cannot live without uttering this sentence or writing this piece of music. It just begs to manifest itself. It is a need to express yourself first, and then to rationalize this expression. It is irrational first, rational after. I am sure Einstein had an inkling about something unknown and then came to his theory of light. And I am sure everybody has had this impulse, very much akin to sex, sexual drive, or sexual appetite, if you wish.

Intuitively acting on this impulse

the fidgeting digits of the digital nomad

transfigured in trance narrative space

execute their high performance keyboard gestures

while generating what the poet Allen Ginsberg terms

'prophetic illuminations' running parallel to

physiological currents subtly manipulating

psychosomatic flow

Artists caught in the heat of ecstatic release

can relate to this ongoing creative process
triggering the continuous launch of
neuro-aesthetic forms of expression
finding their way in and out of the body
as it shape-shifts *while playing*

Vilém Flusser has a different take on
this Duchampian 'creative act'
referring to it as *The Gesture of Writing*
but for Ginsberg this ecstatic expression
catalyzes into spontaneous transmissions
emitting from a body experiencing 'physiological
spasms'
in a heightened state of emerging-agency

The State of Emerging-Agency is not very different
from an endless State of Creative Emergency
(Emergency being a heightened state of emerging-
agency
where the 'always live' artist-medium gives itself
extensive powers to develop an integrated
open source lifestyle practice that customizes responses
to
these hyperimprovisational projections from the
creative unconscious
that seemingly come out of nowhere and require

one's immediate remixological attention)

If you are practicing spontaneous transmission
(Ginsberg lectures all wannabe bards)
and by this he means to say
'transmission of your thought'
'how do you choose then what thoughts
you need to put down' while in trance?

The answer (he says—playing Guru)
'is that you don't get a chance to choose
because everything's going so fast.'

'It's like driving on a road
you just have to follow the road;
And take turns, "eyeball it"
as a carpenter would say.
You don't have any scientific
measuring rod, except your own mind.

I don't know of any scientific measuring rod
that's usable. So you have to chance
whatever you can and pick whatever you can.
So there's also a process of automatic selection.
Whatever you can draw in your net is it,

is what you got.'

Remixology forms as a process of
natural selection

intuitive netting of the source material

which then can be mutated into
the physiological form of ecstasy
during your ongoing postproduction sets

(a beautiful experience?

autoerotic musing?

this interiorized postproduction process
turns the pure mobility of ones durée
into the ongoing satisfaction of becoming
more source material / experiential data
and during a heightened state of emerging-agency
can lead to what Alfred North Whitehead
refers to as *Higher Phases of Experience*)

Creativity as a form of novel advance
becomes an 'always live' performance art movement
especially when embodied by the postproduction

medium
whose spontaneous transmission
is transcribed into *more source material*

more hard code

that then gets mashed up further
into a remixological composition style
that transfigures the measuring rod
into a conceptual DJ tool
whose job it is to **intervene**

(William Carlos Williams:
'The measure intervenes,
to measure is all we know.')

This measuring rod is the instrument
used in the principle of natural selection
'so you have to be a little athletic about that'
says Ginsberg

(If the species *remixologist*
is about anything at all
it's about aesthetic fitness
i.e. the ability to transmit

an embodied sense of measure
as an intense [beautiful?] experience
so as to attract those whom might appreciate
such transmissions as indicative of
an energy-medium seeking sexual satisfaction)

The measuring rod vibrates
as a *sense of measure*
physiologically rooted
in the digital gesture transcribed
while writing (playing-performing-remixing)
and inhabits a transliminal space
where everything is biochemically
bleeding into everything else it connects with
and is subject to electro or alchemical
manipulation during its state of emerging-agency

This biochemically charged state of emerging-agency
can now be felt in the networked space of social flows
or what pre-Internet Ginsberg referred to as a 'mind
bank network'
in whose neurosis we tell the story of Remixology
where the act of transmitting ones Creativity
takes place via continuous improvisation and revision

As Robert Creeley wrote in relation to Whitman

'[his] constant habit of revisions and additions would concur, I think, with this notion of his process, in that there is not 'one thing' to be said and, that done, then "another." Rather the process permits the material ('myself' in the world) to extend until literal death intercedes.'

~~Remixology challenges yet merges with the life sciences by performing a creative misappropriation of impenetrable scientific discourses loaded with hegemonic ideology resituating the aesthetics junky as an 'always becoming' biopolitical animal instinctively looking for its next systemic hack~~

'Do I contradict myself?
Very well, then I contradict myself.
I am large, I contain multitudes'

In this regard
as we watch our(so-called)selves
randomly morph into any number of
remixiologically reconfigured conceptual personae
we cannot help but ask

'What does it mean to become an artistic energy / living medium?'

or:

'What do we do with the surplus energy that fills our bodies as they crave more aesthetic sexual / 'connectual' satisfaction?'

In its many iterations of *becoming Philosophy*
Remixology envisions the artist as a postproduction
Medium
who becomes instrument while performing
radical experiments in unconsciously projected
Creativity

Performing in a shared headspace of
hyperimprovisational co-creation or co-production
one that feels like it takes place
in asynchronous realtime

opens up the creative process to external influence
but an external influence that is being parallel
processed

internally by all of the other players
intersubjectively jamming in the co-poietic mix

Think of it as simultaneous and continuous experiential
tagging
in a massively modular remixological network

Or how about 'call-and-response' *metamediumystic*
performance art networking that happens so fast
you end up in a parallel universe that looks and feels
like this world you know all too well but that also
now reveals an unconsciously generated underworld
full of prophetic bioluminescence?

The dancing pulsations of literary bodies
socializing the network while mirroring neurons?

Imagine transforming individual talent
into an ongoing remixological potential where
the artist as postproduction-medium triggers
socially constructed forms of novel togetherness
by mirroring neurons while aesthetically manipulating
the environmental data our conceptual personae
perform in

Immersed in the depths of this remix underworld

co-poietically unfolding in the 'mind bank network'
the living remix creature would become
more networked source material
that can be sampled from at will
suggesting that for artist-mediums
who intentionally build mosaics of meaning
out of renewable forms of energy [source material]
there is no longer an inspirational source
to turn to for enlightened expression
rather it's more of a co-conspiratorial practice
fed by a reservoir of living datum
that one *hacks into* and *samples from*
to create novel forms of aesthetic intensity
that may lead to . . . sexual experiences?

To perform this interventionist measure *on* measure
remixological hackers must attune their bodies
to the neural resonance of their relationships
with other creatures in their social network
as well as the accompanying neural resonance
they may have with all of the artworks they encounter
when engaging with activist reality hackers
whose aesthetic agenda includes designing
the distribution channels that these tactically
administered
artworks continuously pass through

What would an applied remixologist
intersubjectively jamming with their ludic crew
distributed in the networked space of flows
have to contribute to the collective unconscious
especially in the name of deep research
into the forever-remixed ('living') creative act?

Ginsberg deliberate in his prose
tells us that we have to stretch things
as far as we can take them
'-- you go so far out you don't know
what you're doing, you lose touch
with what's been done before by anyone,
you wind up creating a new poetry-universe.'

The bottom line is that

to remix Miles Davis who once said

Sometimes you have to play a long time to be able to
play like yourself

sometimes it takes a long time
to become a postproduction medium

a novel entity

a rhythm scientist

ADDENDUM:

This introduction cannot end here. There is always more. There is always an excess.

Natural Rhythms, Embodied (After Henri Lefebvre)

A rhythm invests in places, but is itself not a place: it is not a thing, nor an aggregation of things, nor yet a simple flow. It embodies its own law, its own regularity, which it derives from space -- from its own space -- and from a relationship between space and time.

What we live are rhythms -- rhythms experienced intersubjectively.

Every rhythm expresses the body's inventiveness and when ported through an illuminative sense of measure can trigger higher phases of experience.

The body reveals these rhythms as varying forms of

aesthetic fitness.

Rhythms in all their multiplicity interpenetrate one another compositing the 'nature' one is becoming while in auto-remix mode.

This auto-remix mode feels natural and the rhythms that layer and multiply the experience of *feeling natural* (while living) have to do with needs, with feelings, with urges, with tendencies toward some creative action that may be filtered into more metamediumsytic becomings.

These metamediumsytic becomings ('prophetic illuminations' sometimes experienced as 'physiological spasms') are triggered by the unconscious readiness potential of the living remixologist who appropriates the rhythms of the body engaged in its ongoing spatial practice.

Fortunately for the forms of Creativity advancing into novel states of emerging-agency, the end is never the end, because Creativity simultaneously and continuously infects the all of the bodies that remix it, and in doing so, survives.

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The Creative Urge: Elizabeth Grosz

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