Politics and Art in Deleuze
2015 Nov 25 – 26
Female Orphan School
Building EZ.G.23, Parramatta campus

Symposium Program

Day One: 25th of November

10.15 for a 10.30 start

Session One
Chair: Simone Bignall

Keynote Speaker

Cesare Casarino — ***Images for Housework: Expression, Representation, and the Time of Domestic Labor in Gilles Deleuze's Study of the Cinema***

12.00 noon Short Break

Session Two
Chair: Cesare Casarino

Simone Bignall — ***Indigeneity, Nomad Thought and Posthumanism***

Jon Roffe — ***Art minus politics: on the absence of a normative politics in Deleuze's work***

1.30pm — 2.30 Lunch

Session Three
Chair: Sally Macarthur

Joseph Williams — ***The Political Force of Music in Deleuzian Terms: Arranged Marriages and Utopian Becomings in the British and Irish Folk Music Revivals***

Michelle Stead — ***Non-normative Listening Subjectivities and the Politics of Listening to Electroacoustic Music.***

Ian Stevenson — ***Proust and the politics of listening***

4.30 —4.45 —Afternoon Tea

Session Four
Chair: Justin Clemens

Craig Lundy — ***From* Mystique *to* Politique*: Artistic Expression and Political Incarnation in Péguy and Deleuze***

5.30pm finish

Day Two: 26ᵗʰ of November

9.15 start

Session One
Chair: Ian Stevenson

Sally Macarthur— ***The Minor and the Political: Women Making Women's Music***

Christina Green — ***The Lesbian Composer through a Deleuzian Lens***

10.45 —11.15 Morning Tea

Session Two
Chair: Paul Patton

Hannah Stark — ***Love and Utopia in John Cameron Mitchell's Shortbus***

Gregory Flaxman — ***Off-Frame***

12.45 — 1.45 Lunch

Session Three
Chair: Hannah Stark

Paul Patton — ***Political concepts, aesthetics and the method of dramatization***

Norma Lam-Saw — ***Deleuze's New Christ, Bartleby the Scrivener***

3.15 — 3.30 Afternoon Tea

Session Four
Chair: Gregory Flaxman

Justin Clemens — **Deleuze's Quartenary Epic**

Sabrina Achilles — ***The art of living in art: Becoming and art's immanent ethico-politics.***

5.00pm finish

Keynote Speaker: Cesare Casarino

Images for Housework: Expression, Representation, and the Time of Domestic Labor in Gilles Deleuze's Study of the Cinema

This lecture argues that Gilles Deleuze's two-volume study of the cinema pivots around two interrelated theses, namely, that cinema is a medium of expression and that cinema is the expression of time. Further, this lecture argues that in articulating these two interrelated theses about the cinema, Deleuze's study of the cinema constitutes a 'sequel' and a re-elaboration of his earlier investigations of Baruch Spinoza's philosophy in *Expressionism in Philosophy*. Finally, this lecture investigates the crucial role played by the time of domestic labor in Deleuze's theorization of cinema as medium of expression and as expression of time.

Cesare Casarino is Chair of the Department of Cultural Studies and Comparative Literature at the University of Minnesota. He is the author of *Modernity at Sea: Melville, Marx, Conrad in Crisis* (2002), co-author (with Toni Negri) of *In Praise of the Common: A Conversation on Philosophy and Politics* (2008), co-editor of the volume of essays *Marxism Beyond Marxism* (1996), as well as senior editor of the journal *Cultural Critique.* He has published widely on literature, cinema, and philosophy.

Sabrina Achilles
The art of living in art: Becoming and art's immanent ethico-politics.

It is not surprising that Deleuze and Guattari begin their chapter on Becoming — *1730:Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible*... with two ornamented ceramics from antiquity depicting canid-man images, possibly those of Wepwawet. But, as this paper explores, it is not the fact of becoming in antiquity that is of most import in the placement of these ceramics but their depiction per se of becoming. In these images is a performing, already found in Lion Man of 40,000 years ago, of becoming, showing a significant link between the graphic and or rhythmic in art and becoming.

This paper, then, considers this significant relationship of art and becoming, in particular, in relation to the assemblage-sign in art and its subsequent immanence, which in turn results in an ethico-politics. Where becoming is frequently discussed in terms of a movement away from Humanism etcetera, this paper, then, considers the way in which that movement in art is towards ethico-politics.

The paper considers becoming as the art of living and the art of living in art. The aesthetic is considered in terms of becoming, and art in terms of a tension between becoming and the molar forces that impinge upon becoming.

The paper considers Lars von Trier's *Melancholia* (2011) and *Nymphomaniac* (2013) in all the above respects.

Sabrina Achilles is a lecturer in the School of Humanities and Communication Arts at Western Sydney University. Her key publications consider the literary in terms of an ethics for a concern for the self, these include *Waste* (a novel, 1996), and *Literature, Ethics and Aesthetics: Applied Deleuze and Guattari* (Palgrave, 2012).

Simone Bignall
Indigeneity, Nomad Thought and Posthumanism

Are the New Humanities inclusive of Indigenous perspectives and experiences of existence? On the one hand, so-called 'posthumanism' in Continental Philosophy describes features also at the heart of internationally shared Indigenous conceptualisations of *their* humanity as being constituted in inextricable relations with the non-human world. Such philosophies include a refusal of anthropocentrism and human exceptionalism; a constructivist blurring of the subjective boundaries of identity, along with an acknowledgement of trans-species interdependence in interactive social worlds co-inhabited by human and non-human beings; an expressive and process-oriented ontology accompanied by an ecological understanding of the interconnected forces, including non-human agencies, operating formatively within a complex system; and an associated materialist and vitalist ethics of human responsibility, which registers an intimate and ontological connection of humanity with the ecological health of the environment that sustains life and diversifies creative potential. These 'more-than-human' ways of knowing, being and acting have characterised Indigenous ontology, epistemology, axiology and ethology since time immemorial, and today they constitute a significant site of shared identification across the Indigenous world. And yet on the other hand, certainly as it emerges in the Western academy, posthumanism does not acknowledge the prior existence of Indigenous knowledge of this kind. In a solipsistic gesture long typical of Western imperialism, posthumanist theory excludes Indigenous cultural and intellectual authority by remaining blind to the continuing presence and contemporary force of Indigenous concepts of human existence. This exclusion allows Western philosophy to claim the 'New Humanities' as its current 'discovery' and 'establishment', but this apparently 'new' intellectual frontier in fact traces an ancient philosophical terrain already occupied by Indigenous epistemologies and associated modes of human experience. By bringing an Indigenous conceptualisation of 'more-than-human' being into alliance with Western 'posthumanism', my aim in this presentation is to contribute to the ongoing task of intellectual decolonisation in post-colonial contexts such as Australia, where Indigenous and settler peoples continue to struggle with and against the complex legacies of European cultural and territorial imperialism.
Insofar as Western posthumanism and the new Humanities have emerged strongly influenced by the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari, I enquire about the role played by their philosophy in the continuing elision of Indigenous ontologies. In fact, contrary to more recent posthumanist developments, Deleuze and Guattari explicitly acknowledge Indigeneity as an influence or an inspiration by linking their creative philosophy, conceived as a dynamic constructivism, to the notion of a

'nomad' image of thought. This is not a representational or metaphorical linkage; instead, there is a *constructivist* use made of Indigeneity, which is an idea employed by Deleuze and Guattari as an important element in their philosophical nomadism and their associated political account of the deterritorialising operation of the nomadic war-machine. However, viewed through a critical postcolonial lens, I suggest that Indigeneity receives a concerning expression as a consequence of the cluster of associations Deleuze and Guattari create, as well as by the structuring or constructive role Indigeneity plays in this assemblage. In reality, Indigenous subjectivities are not essentially void, placeless or itinerant; they can be expressively replete and place-based, as we can see in Indigenous Australian concepts such as 'Speaking as Country'. Postcolonial philosophers might fruitfully ask: what is at stake politically when Indigenous subjectivities are imagined erroneously as itinerant and placeless, when (Western) subjectivities are constructed as 'nomad' but nomadism is no longer marked as mode of existence special to Indigenous humanity, and when (Western) subjective transformation is construed as a process of 'becoming-autochthonous'? Who benefits from this construction, and how?

Simone Bignall is Senior Researcher in Indigenous Strategy and Engagement at Flinders University in South Australia. She is the author of *Postcolonial Agency: Critique and Constructivism* (Edinburgh 2010). She is co-editor of *Deleuze and the Postcolonial* (with Paul Patton); of *Agamben and Colonialism* (with Marcelo Svirsky); and of *Deleuze and Pragmatism* (with Sean Bowden and Paul Patton). She is currently completing a book titled *Excolonialism: Ethics after Enjoyment*.

Justin Clemens
Deleuze's Quartenary Epic

Two remarks. First, Deleuze tells us we are to begin in the middle, in the milieu. Second, he proposes to us not only a genealogy, but a geology of morals. Hence the title of this paper. The genre of 'epic' always begins 'in medias res,' that is, in the middle. The 'Quartenary,' in the geologic time scale of the International Commission of Stratigraphy, runs from 2.5 million years ago to the present, and marks an epoch of relatively stable continental tectonics, during which, moreover, human beings emerged. This paper thus sets out to articulate these two elements of Deleuze according to the thinking of art, whereby life and epic, non-linearity and fabulation, ethics and aesthetics, cross.

Bio: Justin Clemens is an Associate Professor at the University of Melbourne. His recent scholarly monographs include *Psychoanalysis is an Antiphilosophy* (Edinburgh UP 2013) and, with A.J. Bartlett and Jon Roffe, *Lacan Deleuze Badiou* (Edinburgh 2014). His long poem *The Mundiad* (Hunter 2013) was shortlisted for the 2014 Kenneth Slessor Prize for Poetry.
University Site:
http://culture-communication.unimelb.edu.au/about/staff/assoc-professor-justin-clemens

Gregory Flaxman
Off-Frame

While film scholars traditionally use the term "off-screen" (or "off-frame") to designate the space—at once invisible and contiguous, imaginary and specific—that lies beyond the projected frame, this paper contends that the off-screen characterized the history of painting (and related visual arts) well before it ever became a photomechanical property. In relation to the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze, I argue that this peculiar conceit emerges as a consequence of two factors, namely, (1) the deterritorialization of the frame (from architecture) that renders images portable and exchangeable; and (2) the imposition of perspective (the *construzione legittima*) that effectively reterritorializes the image. By drawing on the history of aesthetics and capitalism, *pace* Deleuze, I endeavor to explain how the off-frame came to determine the regime of modern vision—and why, today, we are witnessing its dissolution.

Gregory Flaxman is an Associate Professor in the Department of English and Comparative Literature. He is the author of the author of *Gilles Deleuze and the Fabulation of Philosophy (*University of Minnesota Press, 2011) and the editor or *The Brain is the Screen* (University of Minnesota Press, 2010). His latest book (coauthored with Robert Sinnerbrink and Lisa Trahair) on "cinematic thinking" will be published by Edinburgh University Press in 2016. Currently a fellow at the Humanities Research Center (Rice University), he is working on a short monograph about biopolitics and American history and a long project about the history of off-screen space.

Christina Green
The Lesbian Composer through a Deleuzian Lens

This paper focuses on the work and compositional processes of three lesbian composers, Pauline Oliveros, Eve Beglarian and Christina Green. Working with Deleuzian thought as a 'philosophy of difference', and in particular, the Deleuzian idea that difference is positive and productive – that which produces life – allows a view of the lesbian composer as 'multiple' – both severally as traversing a gamut of lesbian subjectivities, and individually as manifesting or 'performing' her sexuality differently at different times and in different contexts. It offers a way to think identity that is fluid rather than fixed and static.

Each of the three composer subjects has her own stance in relation to the political and its intersection with the aesthetic, and this will be addressed, drawing from interview, musical and other material. All three composers also demonstrate the potential of the lesbian composer, from her position of being doubly 'minoritarian' (as a woman and as a lesbian) in Deleuzian terms to destabilise the norms of the dominant music – in particular, music being created in the contemporary classical sphere, if mostly on its experimental margins. This will be explored with reference to musical examples, including Beglarian's *Boy Toy/Toy Boy*, which critiques the

male dominance of the New York experimental scene, Oliveros's *The Gender of Now*: *There But Not There*, which works with multiple/shifting 'identities' for the two instrumentalists (trombonist and pianist), and Green's *The Fallen Angel*, the first in a series of songs bringing together inspiration from both queer life and the Deleuzian idea of the nomad/nomadism.

The paper will conclude with a look at recent works by Green in which Deleuzian concepts have begun to inform the compositional process, including *No Excuses!,* a song suite/performance project foregrounding stories of women who have experienced family violence supported by Melbourne's School of Hard Knocks.

Norma Lam-Saw
Deleuze's New Christ, Bartleby the Scrivener

In his essay "Bartleby; or The Formula," Gilles Deleuze identifies the titular character of Herman Melville's "Bartleby, the Scrivener," as an expression of resistance. However in Melville's narrative, Bartleby is portrayed as fundamentally passive. Bartleby does little more than repeat the phrase, "I would prefer not to," which is seen to passively refuse his employer's requests, before he dies alone in prison at the end of the narrative. How then is Bartleby's resistance possible? While the philosopher Giorgio Agamben identifies a withdrawal, or an absence in Bartleby's passivity, which leads him to describe Bartleby as a new Messiah who saves what never was, Deleuze sees the creation of a new logic in Bartleby's "I would prefer not to," a logic that "bourgeons and proliferates." For Deleuze, Bartleby's "I would prefer not to," performs a formula that resists and abolishes all symbolic references. This agrammatical resistance not only opens up to this new logic or language, but further finds itself a political expression for Deleuze in paradigmatic image of the son under the authority of the father. The radical singularity of Bartleby's formula thus resists the arboreal structures of patriarchal hegemony for Deleuze, who sees in Bartleby a New Christ, who points towards the creation of a new political community of brothers without a father.

In this paper I will distinguish Agamben's reading of Bartleby as a new Messiah to Deleuze's recognition of Bartleby as a new Christ. I will then seek to examine the ways in which Bartleby's fundamental passivity can be a leading to resistance for Deleuze.

Norma Lam-Saw is a PhD Candidate in Comparative Literature and Continental Philosophy at Western Sydney University. Her research examines the paradox of passive resistance in the titular figure of Herman Melville's "Bartleby, the Scrivener," through readings offered by continental philosophers such as Giorgio Agamben, Gilles Deleuze and Antonio Negri.

Craig Lundy
From **Mystique** *to* **Politique***: Artistic Expression and Political Incarnation in Péguy and Deleuze*

In the introduction of *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze begins by drawing on two examples from Charles Péguy to articulate a notion of repetition free of generality. One of these concerns socio-political affairs (Bastille Day), while the other has to do with art (Monet's *Nymphéas*). In this paper I will examine some of the political and artistic dimensions of Péguy's work, with special attention given to his conceptual set *mystique/politique*. Although these terms are not explicitly mentioned by Deleuze, the second part of this paper will explore how Deleuze engages with Péguy to develop similar yet distinct dualisms as part of his broader theories on repetition and the event.

Craig Lundy is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the School of Humanities and Social Inquiry at the University of Wollongong. He is the author of *History and Becoming: Deleuze's Philosophy of Creativity* (2012), *Deleuze's Bergsonism: A Critical Introduction and Guide* (forthcoming) and co-editor with Daniela Voss of *At the Edges of Thought: Deleuze and Post-Kantian Philosophy* (2015), all published by Edinburgh University Press.

Sally Macarthur
The Minor and the Political: Women Making Women's Music

This paper will argue that women making women's music disrupts the dominant narrative of Western art music history, deterritorialising it with an idiosyncratic, untimely, antihistory understood as the minor and the political. It maps a non-linear cartography of women moving forward through music to open up a genealogy of women's music. It illustrates the ways in which women's music politicises the feminine by engaging with the molar form and making it minor. It approaches women's music as a minor practice through considering the concept of the minor as set out in Deleuze and Guattari's book on Kafka in which they posit three characteristics that constitute a minor literature: 'its language is effected by a high coefficient of deterritorialization'; 'everything in a minor literature is political'; and in it 'everything takes on a collective value.' The paper will argue that women's music is an open term in becoming. Accordingly, women making music write without a standard notion of music, as a voice of what is not given, and as a 'people to come.'

Jon Roffe
Art minus politics: on the absence of a normative politics in Deleuze's work

This paper argues for a thesis that can be put quite simply: there is no politics in the work of Gilles Deleuze. That is, if we consider the whole of Deleuze's work from start to finish, we do not find any substantial argumentation that would support a Deleuzean politics possessing a normative dimension. This becomes particularly clear when we consider those texts – in and around *Difference and Repetition*, *Anti-Oedipus*, the *Cinema* volumes, and *What is Philosophy?* – in which art is considered from the point of view of its political potential.

I will support this thesis, in the first instance, by examining these texts themselves, which – I would like to show – rule out any direct connection between artistic practice and normative political activity. This examination casts a stark light on Deleuze's uses of the term 'politics', and leads to two conclusions: 1) that art and politics must be thought separately when we read Deleuze, and 2) that politics is primarily a descriptive term when we find it in Deleuze.

Jon Roffe is a Vice-Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of New South Wales. He was the founding convenor of the Melbourne School of Continental Philosophy, and is an editor of *Parrhesia: A Journal of Critical Philosophy* (www.parrhesiajournal.org). The co-editor of a number of volumes on twentieth-century French philosophy, Jon is also the author of *Badiou's Deleuze* (Acumen 2012), *Muttering for the Sake of Stars* (surpllus, 2012), *Abstract Market Theory* (forthcoming, Palgrave), *Gilles Deleuze's* Empiricism and Subjectivity (forthcoming, EUP), *The Works of Gilles Deleuze* (forthcoming, re-press), and the co-author of *Lacan Deleuze Badiou* (EUP 2014) with AJ Bartlett and Justin Clemens.

UNSW website: https://research.unsw.edu.au/people/mr-jon-roffe

Paul Patton
Political concepts, aesthetics and the method of dramatization

Iain Mackenzie and Robert Porter argue in *Dramatizing the Political: Deleuze and Guattari* (Palgrave 2011) that the distinctive contribution of Deleuze and Guattari's political philosophy flows from the 'method of dramatization' that animates their work. This method, they suggest, invites us 'to take seriously the idea that philosophical-political thought, or the very formulation of political concepts, implies an aesthetic moment, a drama that necessarily and inevitably plays through conceptualization as such' (9). This paper will examine their claims in relation to the method of dramatization and the aestheticism of Deleuze and Guattari's political philosophy. It will explore this dimension of their constructivist approach to political concepts and consider examples from their own work as well as that of liberal normative political philosophers such as Rawls and Habermas.

Paul Patton is Scientia Professor of Philosophy at The University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia. He is the translator of Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* (Athlone, 1994) and author of *Deleuze and the Political* (Routledge, 2000) and *Deleuzian Concepts: Philosophy, Colonization, Politics* (Stanford, 2010). He is editor of *Deleuze: A Critical Reader* (Blackwell 1996) and co-editor of *Between Deleuze and Derrida*, (with John Protevi, Continuum, 2003), *Deleuze and the Postcolonial* (with Simone Bignall, Edinburgh 2010) and *Deleuze and Pragmatism* (with Sean Bowden and Simone Bignall, Routledge 2015).

 W https://hal.arts.unsw.edu.au/about-us/people/paul-patton

Hannah Stark

Love and Utopia in John Cameron Mitchell's Shortbus

In *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari write about desire, love and sexuality in ways that are useful for feminist and queer politics. They advance what they call, after Marx, a "'nonhuman' sex" (1983, 294), which operates within human sexuality. Here they contrast human sex, which is caught up with unconscious investments in the social field, specifically with the economy and the workings of power in a particular socio-historical context, and the molecular sexuality of the desiring machines. Occurring beneath the level of the human person, desiring machines enact a "microscopic transsexuality" (1983, 295) in which far stranger, non-anthropomorphic nuptials take place. "Making love," they write, "is not just becoming as one, or even two, but becoming as a hundred thousand. Desiring machines or the nonhuman sex: not one or even two sexes, but *n* sexes" (1983, 296).

This paper utilises Deleuze and Guattari's work on desire, love and sex to read John Cameron Mitchell's 2006 film *Shortbus*. While this film is infamous for its explicit representation of sex, this paper engages instead with the vision of love, intimacy and intimate community at its centre. It reads *Shortbus* as a text motivated by the queer utopian impulse, described by José Esteban Muñoz, to "dream and enact new and better pleasures, other ways of being in the world, and ultimately new worlds."

Dr Hannah Stark is lecturer in English at the University of Tasmania where she teaches "Literary Theory", "Utopian and Dystopian Visions", and "Fictions of the Non/Human". Her research interests include the work of Gilles Deleuze, feminist and queer theory, philosophies of love, the nonhuman, cultural representations of climate change, and the emergence of the Anthropocene as a key conceptual framework. Most recently she co-edited *Deleuze and the Non/Human* (Palgrave Macmillan 2015) with Jon Roffe. She is currently working on *Feminist Theory After Deleuze* for Bloomsbury and, with Arun Saldanha, a special issue of *Deleuze Studies* on "Deleuze and Guattari in the Anthropocene."

Michelle Stead
Non-normative Listening Subjectivities and the Politics of Listening to Electroacoustic Music.

The short history of electroacoustic music is a history, which, in many ways, shares in and benefits from the Eurocentric and androcentric grand narratives of centuries of art music. Yet, paradoxically, it operates on the margins of music because it directly challenges common-sense approaches to music practice that enculturates the privileging of melody and harmony as universally applicable. In this sense, electroacoustic music inhabits a strange space, a non-normative space, which is not-fully-majoritarian and not-quite-minoritarian.
One of the many criticisms of electroacoustic music is that because it does not follow the same conventions of music (that often there is no melodic or harmonic development) listeners therefore require specialist skills that are different to those

that have come to be considered 'natural'. This difference *from* is negative. Electroacoustic music is therefore implicated in a complex process of identification for listeners and their experiences because it directly disrupts and destabilises centuries of immutable assumptions about how listeners are supposed to listen and, it makes these immediate to the listener. This paper will therefore consider what a non-normative listening experience *does*. How can listening to electroacoustic music be considered disruptive? And, what role does this have in the identifactory processes of listening subjects? I argue that the transformative potentiality of listening to electroacoustic music opens out to new ways of listening and makes possible new, immanent listening subjectivities.

Michelle Stead is currently in the final stages of writing a PhD at Western Sydney University where she graduated with first class honours and also lectures/tutors into the music degree. Her PhD is broadly concerned with how knowledge about listening is constructed within electroacoustic music discourse and considers how this discourse impacts the way we listen. Michelle also has a chapter in the forthcoming book (2016) *Musics Immanant Future: The Deleuzian Turn in Music* edited by Sally Macarthur, Judy Lochead and Jenny Shaw.

Ian Stevenson
Proust and the politics of listening

This paper draws on a reading of sound and listening in Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*. Proust's seven-volume fiction has produced innumerable readings by leading theorists and philosophers. Principal themes in these accounts attend to the construction of narrative, time, memory and signification.

In contrast my work focuses solely on the construction of sound and listening in Proust's narrative. For Proust, audition is made to serve the role of medium for the exploration of habit, the multiplication and differentiation of the subject, and importantly the vehicle of memory in its various guises. Focusing on listening allows me to ask specific questions related to Proust's conception of sound. For example: how does listening figure in the politics of class, gender and aesthetic taste; the mobilization of an individual persona; the multiplication of subjectivity; and the conceptualization of art and the role of the artist.

In exploring these concepts I employ aspects of Gille Deleuze's encounter with Proust's text. Deleuze's work *Proust and Signs* is in two parts. The first, produced around 1964, focuses on the process of semiosis, which Deleuze refers to as "the emission and interpretation of signs". The second part produced almost ten years later replaces this concern for interpretation with a focus on "the production and multiplication of signs themselves". The issue which links these two approaches and which is initiated in the first part is what Deleuze refers to as "the image of thought" that he asserts underpins both the history of philosophy and arguably underpins all liberal or modernist politics. This critical approach that overturns commonsense allows me to observe Proust's listeners and importantly the sonic effects of the

audible as expressions of an anti-logos. Proust's account of the audible as "simultaneously in the present and in the past, real without being actual, ideal without being abstract" provides a powerful formula for the exploration of the political implications for those who enter the process of listening.

Ian Stevenson is lecturer in Sound Technologies in the School of Humanities and Communication Arts at Western Sydney University. He recently completed a PhD in 'radical sound design' at the University of Sydney. His research interests and writing are in sound studies, the philosophy of sound, sonic communication and sound design. In recent years he has produced and engineered a number of CDs of contemporary chamber music, produced hybrid gallery installation works and completed a series of collaborative projects with performer Tess De Quincey and author/academic Jane Goodall. Prior to joining Western Sydney University he held a variety of positions in product and information management for leading Australian technology companies and worked in theatre sound design, music and broadcast engineering in Australia, the UK and Europe.

Joseph Williams

The Political Force of Music in Deleuzian Terms: Arranged Marriages and Utopian Becomings in the British and Irish Folk Music Revivals

Music requires no special intent in order to be made political since it necessarily entails politically oriented dimensions whether they are acknowledged or not. The political force of music has been recognised in philosophy since ancient times: as Plato wrote, "[t]he introduction of novel fashions in music is a thing to beware of as endangering the whole fabric of society, whose most important conventions are unsettled by any revolution in that quarter." That Deleuze advocated various reversals of Platonism is well known. Thinking about the political dimension of music through a Deleuzian framework highlights a less obvious aspect of this reversal, namely that Deleuze often attached musical value to its deterritorialising functions. Music is utopian for Deleuze (and Guattari) precisely because it resists the present and already-known forms of subjective and social organisation, opening the future to unpredictable possibilities. In this paper I will explore the futility of arranged marriages between music and politics as well as pointing to the radical utopian potentials of music's inherent political force within the musical-political context of Britain and Ireland's mid-twentieth century folk music revivals. By thinking through the categories of nihilism and eternal return that Deleuze identified in Nietzschean philosophy (and incorporated into his own project of a philosophy of difference and becoming), I will show how contrived couplings of music and politics—such as Ewan MacColl's vision for industrial working class solidarity through British folksong, and Eamon de Valera's attempt to harness Irish traditional music to a pastoral national identity and Catholic morality—are ultimately self-defeating, and that music's political force becomes active only once it escapes such rigid territorialisations.