

## CFP: Imagination Today: Between Theory and Practice of Phantasia

A special issue of the journal *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* in 2026 will delve into the challenging debates abundant in 20th and 21st-century continental philosophy about the place of imagination not only in aesthetics, but also in metaphysics, epistemology, and practical philosophy, as well as its importance in the separate, yet intricately connected domains of literary theory, cultural studies, psychoanalysis, and the behavioral sciences.

Since the history of the concept of imagination can be traced back to the archaic times of Plato, Plotinus, and Aristotle, and later to the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the ground-breaking treatment of phantasia and imagination in those works surely invites us to go back in time in search of origins. However, to reconsider the value imagination still holds in theoretical – and why not – in practical areas of the human experience, focusing on interpretations mostly related to the traditions of modernity will be a small attempt to narrow our analysis in the vast sea of ongoing discussions about the nature/structure/role/purpose of imagination. We propose, therefore, a specific return to the traditions of Kant and the school of German Idealism though probing those philosophical contributions from the vantage point of modern and contemporary continental philosophy and the relevance of these traditions for the humanities, the arts, and the social sciences. With a look at the Kantian “transcendental imagination” in the groundbreaking *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781; 1787) and the role of imagination in the *Critique of Judgment* (1790), and later the Fichtean “productive imagination,” we would get the sense of preoccupation that Kant and the philosophers after him rightfully ascribe to imagination, not besides, but together with reason. Once the metaphysical and ontological importance of imagination is secured, it will be Nietzsche who will disrupt the status quo that, it might be argued, had been preserved for too long, in order to replace the revered concepts of truth, the good, and reason in the Western tradition with the poetic, the visionary, the Dionysian in the very end of the long 19th century. Europe would react to the Nietzschean revolution not just as a gesture of philosophical dissent, but as an epochal marker of what we call ‘modern’ and ‘modernity’. The long shadows of those philosophers will later re-emerge in the works of Husserl, Heidegger, and Gadamer, to name just a few.

While the German tradition in philosophy is an impressive, challenging line to adopt in the approach to the concept of imagination, the rest of Europe provides just as many interesting contributions to consider: philosophers as different as Bergson and Merleau-Ponty, Sartre and Ricoeur, Bachelard and Bataille, Foucault and the extremely impressive

post-1970 tradition in French philosophy are matched by diverse voices in sociology, anthropology, and literary theory who explore in various ways the role of imagination in their works. But then again, if we limit the scope to the philosophers, we would have omitted equally important psychoanalysts like Freud, Klein, Lacan, and Kristeva who find a combination of the metaphysical, the ontological and the embodied at work in the patient's 'imagines' and imagination.

We invite papers which significantly engage with the works of the modern European thinkers, from Kant onwards, on the topic of imagination, but, at the same time, we would like to see papers which discuss the important re-interpretations which the 20th and 21st-centuries contribute to the analysis of the role of imagination in the humanities and in the production of cultural artefacts.

Please send an abstract (up to 500 words) and a current cv to [artemis.r@unic.ac.cy](mailto:artemis.r@unic.ac.cy) by 1 December 2023. Notifications of accepted proposals will be sent by 5 January 2024. Complete papers (approx. 9,000-10,000 words) will be due by 1 November 2024. For further inquiries, please contact Prof. Rossie Artemis at the email above.

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