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ACCESS

Value 2.0

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ABSTRACT

Price, market and 'value' are examined here as a way of focusing on the historical contribution of the ACCESS journal to the philosophy of education. I reflect on the value of the journal for its critical engagement with the politics of education, by drawing special attention to Volume 23, Issue 1, 'The Will to Certainty: Teacher Education and the Politics of Censure', and in particular the presentation of the educational subject already in chains predetermined by the rationalised censure of knowledge. The articles in that special issue serve as an antidote to the condition of homo economicus, in that they scrutinise the relations between political ideologies and politics and their inscription in the practices of teacher education. They question the ideological content of assumptions about education from the market perspective, exposing the conditions of policy and practice in teacher education, thus posing counter-narratives to official narratives of education. As these issues continue to be relevant regarding the terms on which educational value could be set they deserve further reflection as presented here.

Introduction

This paper begins with a brief examination of 'price', 'market' and 'value' as a context for a special issue of *ACCESS, 23*(1), which I co-edited in 2004. In this paper I am drawing in particular upon the writings of Raj Patel in *The Value of Nothing* (2009), in which he points to the distortions and blindness of market fundamentalism. The costs of things we could easily live without are inflated while no value is assigned to resources we all need to survive. In this context, and with the notion of 'value' to the fore, I reflect, from a personal point of view, upon the attributes of ACCESS to the field of education generally, and then more specifically upon the value of that particular issue in 2004 devoted to teacher education, the politics of censure and governance, and the "will to certainty".

Price, market and value

Raj Patel begins his book *The Value of Nothing* thus:

> Now a fourfold vision see,
> And a fourfold vision is given to me;
> 'Tis fourfold in my supreme delight,
> And threefold in soft Beeulah's night,
> And twofold Always. May God us keep
> From single vision, & Newton's sleep!
> WILLIAM BLAKE, 'Poems from Letters'

(cited in Raj Patel, 2009: 3)

The global economic recession, begins Patel, comes not from a deficit of economic knowledge, "but from too much of a particular kind, a surfeit of the spirit of capitalism" (Patel, 2009: 3). We are taken by "the dazzle of the free markets [which] has blinded us to other ways of seeing the world". Near the turn of the last century, Oscar Wilde wrote in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, of the cynic who claimed, "Nowadays people know the price of everything and the value of nothing". Perhaps he, the cynic, has a more discerning judgment than many. Or possibly his approval helps to set the value of the thing he is looking at. With prices having been revealed as "fickle guides", and the financial crises having occurred in the same year as crises in food and oil, we still "seem unable to value our world except through the faulty prisms of markets" (Patel, 2009: 3-4). Such a discrepancy "between the price of something and its value" is unfixable by economists, claims Patel, "because it's a problem inherent to the very idea of profit-driven prices" (2009: 10).

Education has fallen sway to the values of *Homo economicus,* as other have written. *Homo economicus* could be cast as greedy, lacking in gratitude with value's intrinsic to the free market ideologues of the Business Round Table, in a New Zealand setting but with wider implications, where their approval managed to set the 'value' placed upon certain qualities or aspects of New Zealand education while willfully blind to the value of others. Such values were imposed upon education and teachers, and indeed upon societies in what can be called 'selfish' capitalist countries. In dwelling upon the dangers of *Homo economicus*, Patel quotes from William Shakespeare's *King Lear*: "Tis the time's plague, when madmen lead the blind" (cited in Patel, 2009: 25).

Do we, as 'valuers' in education, act like valuers of property or jewellery, and like Oscar Wilde's cynic, to merely "know the price of everything and the value of nothing"? It is through prices**,** as believed by controllers of global financial exchange, that we can discern the "collective wants and resources of our small planet" (Patel, 2009: 8), defining a particular approach to the question of value.

In a world where prices dominate value, where it is evident by the magnitude of economic crises the degree to which global society has been mesmerised by free market culture, and where "the licence to pollute becomes a commodity**"** in the domain of fund management, there is constant "confusion surrounding what something is worth [making] some people very rich" (Patel, 2009: 1) Profits are privatised while risks are socialised. This is regardless of plentiful economic evidence within counter-narratives to reject the 'truth' of the suggestion, the notion of efficient markets pervaded governments (see Patel, 2009: 11-15).

Yet as Patel argues, "there is nothing *natural* about markets about buying and selling things for profit, and allowing markets to determine their value" (2009: 17). There is an uneasy parallel between what Patel refers to as the "perpetual request for economic growth [that] has turned humankind into an agent of extinction, through the systematic undervaluing of the ecosystem services that keep our Earth alive" (2009: 20), and the reduction of education to a state where criticality, sociology, philosophy, history, the arts are all but extinguished from primary teacher education and severely reduced in the primary education services. Teachers are being asked, uncritically, to become agents of extinction of some of the most important, exciting, educating, ethical and enlightening aspects of education, while they promote the new hegemony and normalcy of business-speak within their practice. This occurs as capital becomes more avaricious, further unshackled, and the myth that economy and society are two separate domains is widely propagated in order that the self-regulating market is expanded indefinitely (see Patel, 2009). In this ideology, the national and the local play out the political reality that so far, global economic governance has abstracted ethics, and the ethics of care, in particular, from its capitalist equations. This quintessentially involves education (see also Franceschet, 2009).

ACCESS from a personal point of view

ACCESS has spawned a place in which certain educational philosophers have inspired both my reading and writing and my understanding of the politics of research methodology since I was a young mother and student: Jim Marshall, my academic father has been of particular importance to me over the years. He was the earliest instigator and editor of the journal first named *Access*, then named *ACCESS: Critical Perspectives on Education, Culture and Policy Studies*. The inspired leadership of both Jim Marshall and Michael Peters stood out through the journal's approach and content as vital mentors in the philosophy of education. Peter Roberts, Colin Lankshear, Linda and Graham Smith to name but a few, most of whom were members of Cultural Policy Studies at Auckland University, were also important authors in the earlier publications of ACCESS. Mark Olssen, along with Jim Marshall, has been an inspiration over the years with his profound knowledge of Foucault and the politics of education policy. Nesta Devine, Ruth Irwin, Ho-Chia Chueh have been valued contributors, and more recently the academic leadership has been infused with the vision of Elizabeth Grierson (RMIT), a visual art educator who has latterly taken over the editor's role. She has brought an artistic 'wide-awakeness' to the role and encouraged artistic research methodologies as well as encouraging feminist researchers' contributions. The research of *difference* found acceptance in ACCESS under Elizabeth Grierson's editorship which brought together educational philosophers and artists alike, and has given the artists and musicians among us, who are also teachers, an academic place from which "practices of dislocation evermore layered, multifarious and volatile" (Charlesworth, 2012b: 122) can be expressed, aired, viewed and debated. This contribution to ACCESS and to academic leadership has been invaluable to educational philosophy and the arts in education.

What has stood out in the contributions of all these scholars in ACCESS, for me, personally, is that ethical and moral reasoning must be part of the constitution of global governance via education and cultural policy. Ethics is an imperative in challenging the problems of world economic order and political realities as they impact upon education, and their abstraction from global economic governance has had profound consequences in every field of endeavour: as Antonio Franceschet suggests, "a politics separated from ethics, however demanding, is unacceptable and dangerous" (2009: 2).

General comments about ACCESS

Faced with these conditions and contexts, ACCESS: *Critical Perspectives on Communication, Cultural and Policy Studies* has provided the impetus and space for an understanding of unequal power relations and their multi-dimensional nature (a vital element in the understanding of teachers). There is encouragement of the will and philosophy in teacher educators and young teachers to confront these inequalities particularly as they affect daily educational practice, and to ask questions of curriculum about what is of value, and who decides what is of value. There seems a deeply held value that we must work to make the educational world a fairer place. Anathema to the extreme Right, politicians and 'acontextualists', it challenges patience and passivity, which is what we have been surrounded by and coaxed hegemonically to accept. There seems also a latitude in attitude, which proliferates from contributors to ACCESS, enabling us to understand the inadequacy in imagining that democracy and the economy are separable (see Patel, 2009). Today's market society becomes an object of criticism from many of the journal's writers who are cognisant of the ideology that "those who challenge the fragile consensus around the market cannot be tolerated" (Patel, 2009: 176). ACCESS is very much part of this challenge. As Patel argues, "turning dissenters into criminals (peasants and shackdwellers) into criminals and hooligans doesn't happen by magic"—it happens because of an ideology. As activist Abbie Hoffmman once observed, "You measure democracy by the freedom it gives its dissidents, not the freedom it gives its assimilated conformists" (cited in Patel, 2009: 177).

This academic journal, ACCESS engages contributors, both readers, writers, and philosophers and sociologists of education, along with artists and educators in the performing arts, who, since its inception, it would be fair to say, are not "blind in the right eye" (*Guardian,* Tues. July 3, 2012), but embrace somewhat richer assumptions about human nature, about the nature of education, and have richer imaginations about different ways of mooring our expectations of society, ones that do not rest merely upon prices and received ideologies governing the exchange of goods and services. These writers and readers have not stared, like "the masters of the universe on global financial exchange … down monitors, their eyes darting from screen to screen, trying to see through the world and profit" (Patel, 2009: 8). The journal offers an antidote and political Resistance with a capital 'R' to such ideologies which impact on the nature and quality of education permitted. Underlying assumptions are likely to concur with Patel when he writes that "the price of something doesn't measure its value at all" (2009: 11).

In thinking about value, ACCESS journal is of instrumental value to teacher educators and prospective teachers in the heady process of beginning to pull apart the great deal of ideological and political work that it has taken to make given policies part of government's conventional wisdom, which is then passed on to teachers and imposed upon them via education policy, including curriculum. As a result, its research practices and processes and the knowledge generated, however, are valued less by government than the more political game-playing 'scientific' or empirical approaches by official policy-makers for whom education appears merely of instrumental value in achieving economic goals for a globally competitive world.

The "profit-driven markets and corporations we've allowed to flourish create a deeply flawed system for valuing the world" (Patel, 2009: 173). Patel, in rejecting the acceleration that capitalism had brought to food, for instance, importantly points not to the Fast Food but to the Slow Food Movement insisting that food should be produced in consonant with the environment and respect for the labour that produced it (2009: 183). With the production of Fast Food, there is a parallel here with the constant acceleration—the fast and 'urgent' improvement demanded in teachers' work—fast, efficient 'productive' performance. "Urgency is quick. Insurgency takes much longer". The critical education of teachers within a broader liberal humanist tradition takes longer than the technicist, urgent, efficient, competency model, which merely concentrates upon a quick and productive pedagogy, the 'how to' of curriculum delivery.

It is here that ACCESS has been so important in teacher education in that it promotes in educators the knowledge and the will to imagine a different kind of society and it encourages teachers and students to probe deeper into why the status quo looks the way it does. Co-operation and trust will not be promoted and built upon 'performance pay' with its implied threats and economic sanctions if one does not perform well. As Patel argues, "When you don't threaten me with a fine, I tend to give more money than I would if there were a possibility of a fine. So having the ability to punish but choosing not to increases cooperation and trust" (2009: 34). Unlike Economic Man, people, including teachers and educators at all levels seem to value *intrinsically*, fairness, trust, altruism and reciprocation for their own sakes. Without them, educational institutions cannot operate at all. "While *Homo Economicus* has only an instrumental interest in these virtues, recent research is beginning to show that our ability to appreciate the intrinsic value of generosity, sharing and selflessness is central to maximising our well-being", Patel states (2009: 34; see also Wilkinson & Pickett's *The Spirit Level*, 2010; and Jeremy Rifkin's *The Empathetic Civilization,* 2009). We, children and teachers at all levels, flourish in a social context in which involvement in that social context is a vital part of "putting the genie of pecuniary values back into the bottle, and of developing a politics of value that comes from a particular value of human nature" (Patel, 2009: 175). Of course, recognising the embeddedness of market in society, and of market society in ecology, challenges the modern mechanics of value" (Patel, 2009: 175).

ACCESS, through its detailed examinations of education policy, has played its part in revealing the governments' engagement in the daily political practice of controlling value, including

educational value, wealth and resources distribution. The journal and its contributors have long accepted the necessity of the role of opposition and conflict and complexity in creating a valuable context for educational and cultural change. It has provided an academic space from which to speak about education freely and democratically, to exercise the virtues of critical reason, and a place where contributors to philosophy of education have been able to craft imaginatively the terms on which educational value could be set. Teachers are challenged at every level to reclaim the ground as important architects of value in education. Shaping the terms on which value is set is not unteachable, but market society deems this superfluous. "School is for learning how to be productive, follow instructions and respond to control—the last thing standardized tests encourage is a healthy questioning about how to govern oneself" (Patel, 2009: 187). Teachers, therefore, need to reclaim ground as important architects of value in education. This has been removed progressively by governments in New Zealand largely since and including the years of New Zealand's *Picot Report* (Ministry of Education, 1988) and the educational reforms of *Tomorrow's Schools* (Ministry of Education, 1988) when there were deliberate moves to de-professionalise teachers' work.

A deeper understanding of the context of the teaching profession (historical, political, economic and social, artistic and aesthetic) is promoted via the journal, engaging critically with other ways to value the world around us and education within it. This, many writers in the journal, argue, will require us to overcome our "current economic and political blindness" (see Patel, 2009), if we are to flourish educationally, as well as preserve our planet from destruction. Fantasies can be interrogated about the free market or the promoted value of 'relevant', 'classroom-based' research over philosophy, in the service of what is dubbed an 'effective' education for employability. Educational priorities and possibilities viewed in terms of prices blurs, or blunts, our thinking about education. ACCESS reveals this politics and arms us with the capability of engaging other senses to know the world. As Patel suggests, "discussion, regulation, trust, generosity and forbearance are ways to reclaim what the market has taken from us psychologically" (2009: 192). All these dimensions of humanity are practised in classrooms on a daily basis at grass-roots level and so are dimensions in which education is deeply implicated.

ACCESS, through its critical approach, has potential to reveal and draw out from teachers what is already there within: the imagination, creativity and courage, which will be needed in the development of our political selves (Patel, 2009: 193). What is offered is a forum for a transformative potential that does not accept what Fiona Robinson terms "lopsided obsessions of contemporary theories of morality with universal and impartial conceptions of justice and rights [which have] ... relative disregard for the particular interpersonal relationships based on partiality and affective ties" (1999: 23). It represents alternative views of ethics with an appreciation and valuing of the many dimensions of difference, including an understanding and application of the "aesthetics of difference" (Mansfield, 2000).

What is opened up, through ACCESS, is what is submerged beneath our social vision for society, for moral questions involve not only the individual, but are social and political questions. Many of its educational philosophers and authors seem deeply cognisant of the facts that we have been "groomed since birth, christened in consumer culture and loaded with material desire until we die" (Patel, 2009: 193). Such writers place educational change and policy within this context, insisting, therefore, that we ought not see education as a neutral process. The values of individualism and autonomy as solitary educational goals are scrutinised and criticised as the journal, at the same time, promotes an understanding of the role of education in helping us to engage in more democratic politics that will assist us in valuing the future together.

Reflecting on 'Teacher Education and the Politics of Censure', ACCESS Vol 23(1), 2004

The pervasively global economic crisis has impacted on education in New Zealand via sizable cutbacks in welfare, teacher education, staffing, and controls on curriculum content at every level.

This particular issue in 2004, ACCESS, 23(1) continues to be of assistance to those involved in teacher education in that it aims to "assess the construction of governance of knowledge policies and their implementation in teacher education" (Grierson & Mansfield, 2004: 1). We attempt here, to reveal and interrogate the *politics of censure* within policy as a prelude to practice in relation to the educational terrain within New Zealand, showing how "teacher education is not isolated from the varied reformative reports and propositions within twentieth century governance in New Zealand" (Grierson & Mansfield , 2004: 1). The essays, in this collection, scrutinise the relations between political ideologies and politics and their inscription in the practices of teacher education. They serve in some ways as an antidote to the pitfalls of *Homo economicus*.

Educational governance has included as part of its rhetoric the aim of improving the quality of teaching for all students. The regulatory relations between local and global networks of policy and practice involve teacher education in the performative logic of global exchange "with its implicit demands for measurable, 'quick-to-market' results" (Grierson & Mansfield, 2004: 1). Reforms in teacher education are part of a wider reform agenda propelled by globalised economic rationalism.

What the essays is this particular issue of ACCESS do, is reveal that despite the greater need now for criticality in knowledge and for students to be responsive to the complexity of global conditions, it is this very criticality which might "expose the *non-neutrality* of educational processes [that] has been side-lined, even censured out of existence, in the educational climate of competition and accountability that marks the local/global knowledge terrain within which education now operates" (Grierson & Mansfield, 2004: 1).

By opening up the regulating conditions of practice to question, student teachers may then be cognisant of the political constructions of their employment under policies of devolution and other managerialist moves, and recognise the kinds of institutional pressures that derive from them. Teacher education, experienced thus, would empower student teachers "to question, interrogate, resist and displace the 'value-added' model of educational provision. It would be one that encourages critique and critical debate of policy and its historical positioning in the interests of equity, diversity and other forms of social justice" (Grierson & Mansfield, 2004: 2).

This issue, importantly, places notions of educational blueprints and conditions of subjectivity under scrutiny as it questions prescriptions for educational 'production' for a growing 'enterprise culture' engineered by local and global politics. Core philosophical assumptions about education viewed from the market perspective need to be questioned for their ideological content, for the market with its instrumental values is not so smart in this domain. The issue shows that "the liberal human subject of freedom and autonomy reinscribed as neoliberal free market subject of the 1980s and 1990s, is now not a 'free' subject but is already in chains, predetermined by the rationalized censure of knowledge in the crossfire of functional, technocratic and managerialist discourses through which, it seems, education is now valued" (Grierson & Mansfield, 2004: 2).

As questions of subjectivity, difference, equity and justice and citizenship are side-lined, how does the student teacher understand, in today's conditions of technological networks, cybermedia, and globalisation, what the "radical subjectivities" and "hybridised, globalist, human subject" with their hybridised cyber-identities might mean for teaching practice (see Grierson & Mansfield, 2004: 2-3)? How do they prepare for dealing with this identity process and how should it be opened out for discussion and analysis? How, too does the workings of power in the economic sphere crucially impact, inflect and influence educational practice as a site of knowledge and identity? How do the socio-economic, political and cultural formations seen in the corporatisation of public institutions, the effects of economic rationalism, and corporate complexities shape and mould education? The ways education *takes account* of them are matters of vital concern to critical practice in teacher education.

Gender and relations of power too, are still crucially relevant as a site of struggle within this globalised age of performative and hybrid subjectivities, and "it is in the political lineage and formations of gendered subjects that our teacher educators must operate to negotiate the

individual needs of their students and themselves with all the complexities of public and private expectations" (Grierson & Mansfield, 2004: 3).

A relational ontology involves *difference* as a way of relating and knowing, and goes beyond the call of just tolerance; "the stranger without and within must be accepted along with the vulnerabilities of students". Working *with* questions of diversity requires a critical attitude to aesthetics—appreciation of the "aesthetics of difference" (Mansfield, 2000) in customs, cultural practices, politics and language, to enable the interrogation of dominant cultural assumptions that affect practice, including those of ourselves as teachers.

The "will to certainty" now operates in education where the teacher becomes the constructed agent of processes of excessive rationalisation of resources and knowledge transfer. Rigorous questioning and revisioning are needed as *censure* underlies the construction of knowledge, an "*a priori* condition of thinking, determined by government policies where, by and through language, the blueprint for educational practice and purpose is set, thereby diminishing alternative possibilities" (Grierson & Mansfield, 2004: 5). It is via that modernist "will to certainty" (Mansfield, 2003: 64), that the politics of censure operate (see also Grierson & Mansfield, 2004: 5).

Educational historians, valued participants in ACCESS, put the 'present future' in the context of a past within revisionist efforts as they wrestle and expose what could be termed a 'politics of amnesia'. In doing so, they inflect knowledge with wisdom. Historians of education help to put what may be "a hallucinatory diagnosis of a moment" in terms of education policy, in an historical context (Miéville, cited in Charleworth, 2012a: 118). Contributing writers in ACCESS 23(1), Roger Openshaw, Ann-Marie O'Neill, John Clark, John O'Neill, Joce Jesson and Brian Findsen each focus on an aspect of censuring in teacher education. For Roger Openshaw it is through the deletion of curriculum history and the critical components of educational studies that political censure operates; for Ann-Marie O'Neill, the censure operates through an elevation of the 'how-to-do-it' approach of the *Technology Curriculum* and the absence of a contextual, critical and theoretically vigorous curriculum; for John Clark censure works through the limitations of training teachers to merely accept Ministry-driven positions in The New Zealand Curriculum Framework (Ministry of Education, 1993) and through the absence of critical knowledge in political change in education; for John O'Neill, what is censured is "a critically informed analysis of official curricula in pre-service education" and "silencing of discussion in contemporary teacher education around 'issues of purpose and agency'" (see Grierson & Mansfield, 2004: 7); Joce Jesson laments the absence of citizenship education arguing that a critically engaged understanding of employment rights and working conditions is vital in the transition from a "Keynesian Welfare state towards a more Schumpetarian Workforce state in a globalised economy" (see Grierson & Mansfield, 2004: 7); Brian Findsen elaborates "the underlying ideology of instrumentalism" criticising the way teachers' professional behaviour is being framed as a behaviourist model of teacher education is "smuggled into academia" by stealth. There is a censure of time for deep learning.

The conditions of policy and practice have been exposed in teacher education throughout these essays, as 'official' narratives have been presented and critiqued while counternarratives have been interposed through the exercise of a 'critical will'. Hopefully, through this issue of ACCESS, "Censure and Governance in Education: Policy Contexts", by the way it dwells upon teacher education and the politics of censure, and through my present reflections upon it, the ground will open for further analysis and response.

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