

EDITORIAL

## **ACCESS: Critical Perspectives on Communication, Cultural and Policy Studies incorporated with EPAT**

This issue of ACCESS is the first to be published by Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, under the new scholarly arrangements with Educational Philosophy and Theory and the Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia (PESA). This editorial offers an opportunity for a brief reflection on ACCESS; where it has come from and where it is going. The incorporation of ACCESS into the EPAT series provides ACCESS with a significant opportunity to strengthen its mission and to grow into the future with confidence. I wish to acknowledge the strong support for this new venture from the PESA, and to thank in particular the Executive Editor of EPAT, Prof. Michael Peters, for negotiating, supporting and assisting with the incorporation of ACCESS with EPAT, and Routledge, of Taylor & Francis Group, for their confidence in this new publishing venture.

### **ACCESS Mission and History**

The mission of ACCESS is to publish scholarly articles on cultural and policy analysis, communications research, creative arts, the politics of knowledge, with an applied focus on education. A brief synopsis of the life of ACCESS will serve to position it within its new scholarly home where it is to be published twice yearly. ACCESS is now 33 years old. It was established in 1982 by James Marshall and Colin Lankshear, at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. There, the Cultural and Policy Studies academic group organised and published the journal for 20 years. It went through several title variations: first *Access*; then *ACCESS: Critical Perspectives on Education Studies*; then *ACCESS: Critical Perspectives on Cultural and Policy Studies in Education*. During these years, Michael A. Peters undertook the principle editorial role consolidating a focus around policy studies and philosophy of education. In 2001, Michael's editorship came to an end as he had taken a post at the University of Glasgow. The editorial and management responsibilities moved to the Centre for Communication Research at Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand, and this is when I was appointed as editor, with management support coming from the Communication Research Centre. The two previous editors, James Marshall and Michael Peters, became consulting editors. In 2002, 'communication' came into its title: *ACCESS: Critical Perspectives on Communication, Cultural and Policy Studies*. The aim was to include research on communications studies with ongoing application to educational contexts. With establishment of an international Advisory Board, the journal was reaching a wider international audience.

In 2005, the journal migrated across the Tasman, following my appointment to Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) University, Melbourne. There the journal continued to consolidate its mission of publishing scholarly research on communications, cultural and policy studies, with application to educational issues and concerns, and increasingly with the inclusion of images not merely to illustrate the text but to extend the domain of creative scholarship. Fields attracting scholarly contributions, during the RMIT years, were the creative arts, creativity in education, aesthetics and arts education—coinciding with the growth of these disciplinary interests in higher education. The RMIT years were significant for ACCESS as within a few years, it was validated as A-quality in the Australia Research Council journal rankings, placing it with other top-quality international journals.

In 2013, ACCESS published a partially annotated bibliography of issues from 1982 to 2013 featuring the names of many well-known scholars who have contributed articles or taken roles as guest editors. Cultural and policy analysis was a strong focus through the 1980s and 1990s—particularly during the significant policy changes in New Zealand education with the Picot Report in 1988 and reforms to education under New Zealand’s Fourth Labour Government with David Lange as Minister of Education, and the neoliberal restructuring of education. From its grounding in the philosophy of education and policy analysis, other themes became manifest: they included Maori and indigenous education; sociology and history of education; critical pedagogy and critical literacy; education and democracy; science and technology; Marxist and Freirean studies; neoliberalism and the knowledge economy; aesthetics and design; human capital theory; creativity and art education; media and communications; school counselling; the politics of research governance; and poststructuralist research featuring scholarship on Nietzsche, Heidegger, Derrida, Foucault and other twentieth-century Continental philosophers and critical theorists.

ACCESS has always played a role in mentoring new writers and continues to welcome work from PhD scholars and their supervisors, and through this it maintains the respect of a broad-based academic community. It has also provided a publishing vehicle for papers from symposia or conferences, such as the World Creativity Summit of the World Alliance for Arts Education in Taipei; a Global Cities Research Institute symposium on urban art and globalisation, later extended into a monograph; an issue from two international symposia in Victoria and London on ‘drawing’ as an applied philosophical and practical field; another on threshold concepts in education from a symposium in New South Wales; and an issue from two symposia in Melbourne and Indonesia engaging critically with cultural and political aspects of identity formation via theatre and performance studies in the Asia-Pacific region.

### **This Issue of ACCESS: Activating Aesthetics**

The central theme for this issue of ACCESS is ‘Activating Aesthetics’. In bringing together the six papers featured here, the aim was to address the question of aesthetics to consider aesthetics and its application in educational fields from different perspectives. The aim was not to predetermine any meaning for aesthetics, but to allow investigations from a range of scholarly fields to speak discursively to aesthetic debate and concerns—and, out of this, an understanding of aesthetics may become apparent. The writers in this issue enliven different ways of thinking about aesthetics, or educating through aesthetics, or questioning aesthetics, to the extent that difference starts to mark the aesthetic terrain.

Broadly speaking, aesthetics, from Greek *aisthesis* perception, is a branch of philosophy that addresses the sensory conditions in perceiving or accessing an object, artwork or artefact, or natural phenomena, such as conditions of beauty, ugliness or the sublime, with a view to establishing some sort of value through critical perspectives or judgement. There is an assumed separation between the human subject and the object being perceived. It is in the logic of this separation between one entity and another that philosophical questions arise. If the entities, as substance in the world, are available for critical analysis or subjective judgement, then the logic of meta-physics is at work; on the other hand, if the separations are dismantled, then questions of such logic arise. The articles in this collection explore that terrain by engaging with a range of disciplinary positions. At base, in the tradition of analytical aesthetics, the object of aesthetic judgement or taste is inextricably an object of art or other art form. The writers in this collection grapple with questions of aesthetics through a range of disciplines: art history, creative practice-based arts, film, communications studies and philosophy of education. Their ‘objects’ of analysis encompass the built environment, film, fine art, painting, literature, subjectivity and the object of philosophy itself. Overarching questions may be identified: If theories of aesthetics are examined and put to the test, how may aesthetic activations arise; and what conditions of knowledge or being may be disturbed?

In 'Rendering Visible: Painting and Sexuate Subjectivity', Linda Daley considers this question through Luce Irigaray's 'sexual difference'. Daley shows how Irigaray works with the question of representing the invisible by working beyond representation itself. Irigaray draws from phenomenological and psychoanalytical approaches to art and sexual identity to exceed these intellectual positions. Daley points out the similarity of Irigaray with Gilles Deleuze's philosophy of art, in that art's task (if there is one) is not to make claims or judgements upon the world, but to 'render the aggregations of sensations that our being-in-the-world effects'. Thus for Daley, as for Irigaray, aesthetics is a matter of going beyond our normative understandings of the visible and towards the invisible forces of 'sexuate' being and becoming. And it is here, beyond patriarchy's perspective and beyond metaphysical modes of perception, that art making and artistry may open up a site of invisible sensations of being.

In that site of 'artistry', Nuala Gregory works as an artist-researcher. In 'All Things Out of Rule', Gregory activates aesthetics through her art practice as a painter by drawing together the act of mark-making in painting and the writings of eighteenth-century novelist, Tristram Shandy. It is in the free-play of the drawn lines, be they textual or graphic, that the notion of 'out of rule' finds its situating formation. The lines create an entire typology throughout both Sterne and Gregory's works: fractal, nomadic, rectilinear and hylomorphic as well as the decisively incised line. Gregory argues that, in the proximities of writing and drawing, the passage of lines formulates a differential ontology; an ontology of becoming as exposed by the work of Heidegger and Deleuze.

Extending aesthetics to the spatial environment, Kirsten Locke investigates relationships between architectural design, the built environment and education in 'Activating Built Pedagogy: A genealogical exploration of educational space at the University of Auckland Epsom Campus and Business School'. Locke positions aesthetics in an active relationship with educational policy and practice by considering different kinds of architectural environments, disciplinary practices and teaching pedagogy. Her historical discourse in its 'vibrant materialities' draws from a Nietzschean genealogical methodology, with specific reference to university environments for learning. The article argues that teaching spaces and the built environment are never neutral; in their activations, they embody the values and purposes of education as an ideological terrain. Aesthetic and social relations are working actively to constitute pedagogies of practice in this genealogical account of different disciplinary practices and values, those of business and education, in the presentation of a rich and critical perspective on 'built pedagogy'.

David Bell's 'Katsushika Hokusai and a Poetics of Nostalgia' brings an art historical perspective to the activation of aesthetics. The objects of analysis are the literary and pictorial arts of Japan. Bell takes the reader to the mediaeval courts of Japan and the 'sense of *aware*' permeating the reflection on the pathos of things. This sensibility is exemplified by court verse, and the projects of ukiyo-e 'floating world picture' by artist Katsushika Hokusai. An aesthetic discernment activates social and cultural values as a guiding force in Japanese culture, evident from the Fujiwara court to an aesthetic consciousness informing social codes today. Bell undertakes a close examination of four artworks to identify the ways aesthetic sensibilities trace through the visual and poetic of historical memory to activate cultural codes and attitudes.

From arts of Japan to film, Laura D'Olimpio takes the reader to a consideration of contemporary film, scrutinising the criticism of film as a mass art form in 'Thoughts on Film: Critically engaging with both Adorno and Benjamin'. D'Olimpio focuses on the dialogue between Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin with regard to positive and negative associations of film and the role of the critical thinker as viewer or receiver of the film medium. Philosophical thought experiments may have a place in film when screened to the masses, and in this, film may engender a critical consciousness relevant to living in the everyday world. Here film has a social role, and its ethical values, or otherwise, may be understood and enlisted by critical reception and dialogue.

In 'Activating Aesthetics: Working with Heidegger and Bourdieu for Engaged Pedagogy', Elizabeth Grierson investigates aesthetics through the ontology of difference alongside an

epistemological position. By providing a brief synopsis of the way aesthetics has been positioned and theorised by successive philosophers, the article positions the different approaches to aesthetics from Heidegger and Bourdieu. The aim is to put aesthetics and its traditional analyses and interpretations to the test by activating aesthetics in other ways. The discussion asks how art may work to activate urban place and the human subject via an account of ontological difference, through Heidegger, and dispositional capital, through Bourdieu. To exemplify the two vastly different philosophical positions, the article assigns ontological and epistemological argument to actual works of art and design in urban space. Ultimately, the argument shows how the activation of aesthetics, in the ways outlined, may in turn stimulate engaged forms of pedagogy.

## **To Conclude**

In bringing this issue of ACCESS to readers of philosophy of education, it is hoped that the place of aesthetics in philosophy and the philosophy of aesthetics in education may find a perspicuous position. Drawing from their different fields of expertise, the writers in this issue address questions of aesthetics in challenging and diverse ways. And thanks to this new publishing venture, a wider audience will have access to these articles.

After more than 30 years of publishing, we wanted to assure ACCESS a robust future. Thanks to Routledge, Taylor & Francis, for their commitment to this publishing enterprise, and to the PESA, for their recognition of the value of ACCESS, we are satisfied that this aim will be achieved. ACCESS thanks the writers featured in this issue, and welcomes further submissions on cultural and policy analysis, creative arts in education, the politics of knowledge and critical perspectives on education. The support of a community of scholars, both writers and readers, will assure ACCESS of a strong future.

Elizabeth M. Grierson

*Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) University*

## **ARTICLE HISTORY**

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