

Contemporary Aesthetics

Volume 14 (2016)

2016

Editorial

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Editorial

Contemporary Aesthetics was one of the first open access scholarly journals on the Internet and the first of its kind in aesthetics. After thirteen years of continuous publication, CA has achieved a considerable degree of stability, as much as one can hope for in what is essentially an ephemeral publication in an ephemeral medium. How impermanent electronic publication is, however, may not be immediately apparent. Print publication of journals (and, indeed, of books, as well), which has been the scholarly standard, is losing its place, and its life span is often less than that of its material base. Libraries and individuals no longer desire to devote permanent shelf space to publications that are easily available and more readily usable in electronic form, and archival systems can ensure the preservation of those data. Senior scholars wishing to pass on to others their extensive accumulation of print journals cannot find recipients.

The obsolescence of print publication, especially of journals, we think, is likely the rising wave of the future. As long as we have a democracy of the Internet, the acquisition and dissemination of information are relatively easy and voluntary. And commercial intrusion into the process is tiny in comparison with the costs involved in printing and distributing the print and paper products of scholarship. Individual scholars, moreover, are no longer obliged to subsidize that system by freely giving their journal articles to the commercial economy through which others profit from their efforts, while they receive no payment for their work and, in fact, sometimes are required to pay for its publication.

Contemporary Aesthetics is pleased to report that its usage over the past year has continued to increase significantly. As in each of the previous years, the number of visits (not hits) to our site has grown. In 2014 it was 119,000; in 2015 it was 165,000. We began issuing our quarterly newsletter of recent and forthcoming publication in 2013 to 148 subscribers. The list is growing slowly but steadily, and our newsletter is now sent to 449 subscribers.

This year, in addition to reporting on our accomplishments over the past volume year, I would like to exercise editorial privilege and say something about the ethics of journal publishing as it applies to *Contemporary Aesthetics*. These reflections were stimulated by the response of an author whose paper was not accepted.

Most scholars in that situation justifiably expect that the grounds for the decision are clearly described in the reviews of their paper. Not only do our reviewers provide detailed justification for their recommendation, but they go to some effort to offer information and guidance to the author. Thus the reviews tend to be valuable not only as an indication of how a well-disposed peer would objectively assess their work (all our reviewers are well-disposed!) but, even more important, how that work could be improved. At CA we

consider the review to be a didactic process that will benefit the author, as well as be a constructive effort for the reviewer.

The author of whom I am writing protested that CA was slanted in favor of work that showed an orientation favoring analytic philosophy. Our editorial policy is self-consciously receptive to all philosophical orientations, as can easily be seen in the range of papers we publish. This response was also surprising because we go to great effort to find readers who are knowledgeable in the philosophical area and subject of the submission. In this case, we were fortunate to find two such readers, one of whom is especially competent in the author's orientation and the other in the subject with which the paper dealt. And, coincidentally, neither reviewer could remotely be considered an analytic philosopher.

While it is not our practice to discuss reviews with authors, the irony of the case in question led us to offer an explanation and, in the event, even provided a subject for this editorial! It is important to articulate our editorial process to make it clear that, as much as possible, no hidden factors govern our decisions. (Our editorial impartiality has also been independently recognized in the gender balance of our authors. See the editorial for Vol. 13.) Of course, *Contemporary Aesthetics*, like all scholarly journals has its purview and that is explained in our statement of editorial policy. This appears on our home page as well as in our very name, and we keep our mission clearly in mind as we go about our work. It is disappointing, to be sure, to have one's work not be accepted, something surely every scholar has experienced at one time or another. Our effort at CA, however, is to make the submission process a constructive experience that will benefit everyone engaged in it.

I am pleased to recognize many of the reviewers who have contributed their valuable assistance over the past year. These include Christophe Bruchansky, John Carvalho, Stephen Davies, Barbara von Eckardt, Ivan Gaskell, David Goldblatt, Carolyn Korsmeyer, Thomas Leddy, Mara Miller, Ossi Naukkarinen, Sherri Ross, Larry Shiner, Amie Thomasson, Mary Wiseman, and Rachel Zuckert. I am deeply grateful for their advice. And, of course, I want especially to recognize our Associate Editor, Yuriko Saito, and our Editorial Board, through whose efforts and good counsel this journal continues to benefit. We have also received valuable counsel from a number of dance scholars who have suggested work for us to consider for the video on the homepage of our new volume. I would like to acknowledge with thanks the suggestions of Aili, Bresnahan, Renee Conroy, Rebecca Farinas, Joan Kunsch, and Julie Van Camp.

In our last editorial we announced the forthcoming reverse publication of work in print form that first appeared in *Contemporary Aesthetics*. That volume is nearly complete and we expect publication of *Perspectives on Contemporary Aesthetics* in mid-January. This will be announced in Recent Publications. We look forward to another year of strong and innovative work in aesthetics to share with the scholarly community.

Arnold Berleant, Editor

