EDITOR'S CORNER

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Reviewing journal submissions in our area of interest and/or expertise is something we all do throughout our career—although it is not something that we are mandated or required to do, nor are we compensated for it. Reviews take a lot of time, and if one is thorough and thoughtful, one will be asked to be a reviewer with increasing frequency. As the old adage goes, "Let no good deed go unpunished." Reviewers are not usually given guidelines for any particular or proper way to review an article, although our *American Antiquity* (AAQ) publisher, Cambridge University Press, does provide some general and useful tips, especially for the novice (https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-file-manager/file/5a1eb62e67f405260662a0df/Refreshed-Guide-Peer-Review-Journal.pdf). There is really no right way to review. And if reviewing were made excessively cumbersome by specific guidelines, many reviewers would simply decline to take on assignments. Some journals publish detailed lists of things reviewers should address in their review, whereas others provide no guidelines or suggestions.

Reviewers are carefully chosen by the editor. Authors are encouraged to provide "preferred" reviewers as well as those they do not want to be used. Some authors provide long lists of preferred reviewers, and some provide none. More and more frequently, authors are providing names of people they do *not* want to review their article, and this presents challenges for editors. Often, the reason given for why someone should not be a reviewer is that the reviewer does not agree with the ideas of the author—or, that the reviewer does not prescribe to a particular set of methods and theories used by a research team housed in a university that produces a lot of PhD students, all of whom are trained in the same paradigms. Are these valid reasons for reviewers to be rejected out of hand? Editors struggle with this. Perhaps those with different intellectual lineages or differing points of view are actually the best ones to review a given article. What we do at AAQ is to use one or two of the preferred reviewers and then to choose two reviewers not mentioned by the author. We do not choose reviewers who are put on the do-not-use list, but we are conflicted about this practice.

Finding reviewers who agree to take on an assignment is sometimes quick and easy (for example, the first three asked agree), but more often, it is difficult due to reviewers either declining or simply not responding at all. Although reviewers are asked to suggest other reviewers they might know of, which is helpful to the editor, very few reviewers take the time to provide additional names. We are always grateful for and appreciative of reviewers who agree to review, but life can intervene, and some reviews never come in despite gentle reminders that the review is long past due. At AAQ, our goal is to get three reviews, but sometimes this is near impossible. In those situations, we will go with two, and on rare occasions, one.

Reviewers' styles are as varied as fingerprints. Some reviewers read the article and then write a paragraph or two on the general method, theory, and data presented, giving it either a thumbs up or down. Some reviewers essentially copyedit the article, making comments, suggestions, corrections, queries, and rhetorical retorts throughout using track changes and bubble comments. Some reviewers point out all of the typos and corrections in a separate listing. Some reviewers barely read the article and provide a short sentence or two without any specifics. Reviewers who provide sentence-by-sentence critique and commentary are despised, and in social media,

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they have been dubbed in memes and posts as the "dreaded and hated Reviewer #2."

What are the best practices these days for reviewers? Cambridge Core suggests that reviewers first read through the article and come to a decision regarding its final outcome: accept with minor revisions, accept with major revisions, or reject. Reviewers should then focus on specific issues that brought them to their final conclusion. For minor revision, it is suggested that reviewers provide light editing, request a few clarifications, and suggest additional references or attention to certain key areas of the study to make it stronger. For a major revision, there will likely be some significant issues raised that are structural (e.g., reorganizing the text) and/or substantive (e.g., adding more data, rethinking the argument and theory being used, reworking the analysis of the data). For a rejection, the reviewers can go one of two ways: to simply state that the article is inappropriate for AAQ (due to topic, focus, readability, or importance) or to be more specific about all the ways the study is problematic.

There has been a push from reviewers to make reviewing something that they are paid for. Publishing houses are largely profitable in part because their journals are crafted from unpaid pools of labor made up of authors, editors, and reviewers. Although a few journals (mostly obscure) exist that pay for reviews, most journals do not provide compensation. There are pros and cons on both sides of this question. Some argue that if paid, reviewers would only do it for the money and possibly review subjects in which they are not even that well versed. Paying all reviewers the same amount, no matter how well they do the review, could be problematic. Advocates of privatizing reviewing might expect quicker turnaround and better reviews, but who would monitor the quality of reviews, and how would it be policed?

Halder and colleagues (2021) provide a good overview entitled "Peer Reviewing Made Easier: Your Questions Answered." It is a free PDF download on Scholar.Google.com, and it has a great set of responses to all kinds of questions reviewers might have regarding exactly what is expected of them. Please take a look at it before you review your next AAQ article. You might find it helpful.

Reference Cited

Halder, Neel, Peter Tyrer, and Patricia Casey
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