

Where Have All the Reviewers Gone? Long time passing - Editorial, Volume 12, Part 2

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Where have all the flowers gone, long time passing?
Where have all the flowers gone, long time ago?
Where have all the flowers gone?
Young girls have picked them everyone.
Oh, when will they ever learn?
Oh, when will they ever learn? (Seeger et al., 1962)

Introduction

Welcome to the thirty-first edition of *Exchanges: The Interdisciplinary Research Journal*, our slightly delayed first one of 2025. As always if you are a new reader, thanks for joining us and read on to learn a little more about the journal. Alternatively, if you're a returning reader welcome back too. In this editorial you will find some editorial insight, advice on how you can contribute to future journal issues, alongside an overview of the contents of this issue. There's also an update on our various social media channels for continuing conversations outside these pages.

Reviewer university challenges

If there's one theme I've heard repeatedly from my Board and associate editors over the past year, it's the increasing challenge of getting ready, willing and able peer-reviewers on board to assist us. This isn't a new problem, *per se*, which is one of the reasons why during the onboarding and initial training of new team members I stress how much time, care and attention they'll need to pay during their review stage activities! This learning outcome generally comes shortly before I go on to also explain the potential heartache editors will likely experience after identifying a 'perfect reviewer', only to have the person in question decline to review at best, or simply not respond at worst.ⁱ Practically speaking, we are a small journal meaning we only have a modest database on-hand of previous authors and other willing volunteers potentially able to review for us. Additionally, given our interdisciplinary interests this means this already slender pre-registered database of possibly willing souls is often insufficiently deep or broad to be deployed against freshly submitted manuscripts on topics we've not tackled before. Hence, at times it can

undoubtedly be a considerable challenge to find the right people quickly, and even more so to successfully engage them in assisting with our quality assurance activities.

There are also related issues to consider around those members of the *academic precariat* within our reviewing communityⁱⁱ; typically for *Exchanges* these are those newer scholars who are often on short, fixed-term contracts, often working multiple small jobs across two or more universities simultaneously (OECD, 2021; Pugh & Ioppolo, 2024). Since *Exchanges* has always styled ourselves as being a journal ‘by and for early career researchers’, as a result many of our past authors and reviewers are typically members of this group. Naturally, with shorter contracts they are also motile in their careers, meaning email addresses they registered with us a scant few months earlier are more likely to fall dormant or defunct as their career or employer changes. This is one of the reasons why I try periodically to reach out to our reviewing community to elicit holistically which addresses are now invalid – or indeed to uncover formerly registered reviewers who no longer wish to participate.ⁱⁱⁱ

Incidentally, for any reader who is thinking ‘Don’t you get notified when an email bounces?’ – the regretful answer is ‘No, not when we use the system messaging’. This is a lamentable artefact of the Open Journal System (OJS) platform we use to publish *Exchanges*, and its local configuration. In casual conversation with members of the technical support team I’ve been led to believe these bounced messages, notifying us of a dead account *are* aggregated somewhere on the Warwick University Press’ Journals site. However, it’s never been part of the platform I’ve been able to access, but perhaps one day that will change – I wait in hope!

Unsurprisingly then as the journal continues to grow and evolve, myself and my editorial team spend a lot of time seeking out and approaching new, potentially willing reviewers through our contacts, our editorial community, institutional websites of host and partner institutions and the like.^{iv} Identifying someone who might be a good reviewer for any given paper is rarely an easy, or rapid, task especially when some institutions hide away the key information on their researchers from non-local access! I have lost track of the number of departmental and school pages I have visited comprising simply a list of staff members but lacking in any subject details. Even when we do find someone who looks a potentially good match, some individuals can be less willing to proffer expert opinion outside of their perceived specific disciplinary niche. Given the interdisciplinary nature of many submissions to *Exchanges*, you can understand how this can add to our headaches.

So, hampered by technology, the fissile nature of early career contracts, and the natural challenge of identifying the right people for the reviewing job, there remains the greatest editorial obstacle: getting a researcher to agree to review! How responsive individual academics are to our review invitations varies – some are delighted to be asked – reviewers to be treasured! They are though, in my long experience, the rare ones. Others are less enthusiastic, but willing participants who do an excellent job of work for us. I think I might class myself in this group when I am asked to review for other titles – especially when it happens to be the third or fourth review request, I might have received that month! Sadly, and I speak as someone who has also had to decline a few invitations to review himself, many may have no desire or ability or time to engage with our reviewing tasks. While as an editor this is an operational frustration, as an academic myself I can quite understand. Given how even academics outside the precariat^v have a *lot* of competing tasks on their agenda within personal and professional lives alike, declining a review request or simply ignoring it seems a likely outcome.

Practically speaking though, even once we have found the ‘right’ person – and as we need a minimum of two reviewers an article that should really read ‘persons’ – I suspect, some of my editors might argue a major challenge still remains: getting any willing reviewer to complete their assignment on time. Given there is no contractual or legal obligation upon reviewers to complete any review assignment, just their personal generosity, to encourage them we must simply rely on appealing to their better nature and sense of collegiality across the global academy.^{vi}

Which brings us to the crux of the problem today: fewer and fewer researchers are willing or indeed able to review for us. Like every other journal, we are dipping into a rivalrous, finite and evaporating ocean of talent. Similarly, like most of the academic publishing world, *Exchanges* is built atop an unstable Jenga tower of free-labour.^{vii} One of the underlying assumptions of this model is that while not *every* academic will be willing or able to review, there will always be a sufficiently ‘healthy’ surplus of those who can and do engage so you will *eventually* have sufficient reviewers. Another assumption, or perhaps presumption, is the expectation scholars will demonstrate a collegiality and commitment to the academy in many varied ways over and above their salaried work. Career progression assessments and job interviews used to draw such extra-curricular work into the harsh light of day for scrutiny. So, there was once an enlightened self-interest imperative to be a reviewer, although how effective such an intangible imperative was, varied between individual scholars, their personal perspectives and career trajectories. Arguably though today, such efforts are less recognised, with a focus on research outputs becoming paramount in academics’ career ambitions.

(Irfanullah, 2025; Spector, 2024). This perception has certainly been reflected in my conversations in recent years with scholars old and new.

Presently though, academia is under a series of increasing tensions and stressors, which are serving to disrupt this model and creating significant questions over its sustainability. Take the UK for example, where *Exchanges* is based. Currently unprecedented financial tensions across the university sector are seeing drastic job cuts as institutions seek to balance their financial books due to a near perfect storm of funding stressors (Standley, 2025; Tode-Jimenez, 2025). Thus, good scholars are finding themselves suddenly either mired in inordinately competitive job hunting within or without of the higher educational sector. From my own experiences of recruitment, these are all tasks which take no small amounts of ‘free’ time. Not to mention my understanding that working in the commercial, governmental or non-profit sector means accounting for your employment time even more, being able to ‘gift’ some time to be a reviewer feels like one of many things such people won’t be doing. Even where scholars might like to ‘keep their hands in’ and maintaining a link with the academy through reviewing. Frankly, I would also imagine many of them will also be feeling less than collegiate given the suddenness with which their services may have been dispensed with. Not to mention, practically speaking from an editorial perspective, having left their universities behind, any email address we have for them may also be defunct!^{viii}

Those remaining in the rump-academy are in scarcely a better position; taking on departed colleagues’ teaching, administration and research loads as staffing resources diminish while demands on their productive labour time increases being a common enough consequence. Yet this additional intellectual, educational and administrative labour is being demanded of them while university staff continue to experience a near existential fear over their own continued employment too. For the academics this is a dreadful situation.^{ix} From an editorial perspective it is scarcely better. With even less time, facility and understandably willingness to act as reviewers, our once ocean of potential peer-reviewers is beginning to look at best more like an increasingly evaporating inland sea. Meanwhile, the number of journals continues to rise, even as the ‘publish or perish’ imperative continues to serve as a significant inducement for all scholars to continue to be voluminous in their outputs.

This is a perhaps a simplified assessment of the current impacts of the ongoing financial crisis on the university sector, but these issues do represent a significant threat to the quality-assured scholarly communication field as it is currently configured. Perhaps, with fewer scholars employed, it might be rationalised that fewer papers will be

produced and thus a smaller number of reviewers needed. I fear this is rather a reductionist perspective. More likely it will see journals, such as ourselves, suffer a continued ‘reviewer-drought’ and consequently struggle to progress manuscripts through review in realistic timescales, increasing frustration for authors and editors alike. I would suspect any drying of the reviewer wellspring will be less of an issue for the more ‘prestigious’, well-resourced generally commercially-run titles, where the residual ‘kudos’ for reviewing more likely adheres than for titles like *Exchanges*. While there are researchers, like myself, who pride ourselves on our more ethical choices of whom we will review for, I am under no apprehensions that for many academics a more pragmatic, career-centric mode of operations remains the norm.

All of which conspires to make my job, and that of my editors, ever harder. Bearing in mind the increasingly salinity of our regularly over-fished ‘sea of reviewers’ – and I may be overstraining this aquatic metaphor here – should we perhaps more regularly cast our net wider and further abroad? Some argue this would be a healthy alternative serving to bring more underrepresented regions into the reviewing lens (**Nakamura et al., 2023; Irfanullah, 2021**)! However, there as in our local seas, there are those with much bigger, and more enticing nets! Another suggestion offering hope is to encourage more early career researchers (ECRs) to engage as reviewers. Here at least we have a small home advantage in that from our creation we have encouraged and approached ECRs to become involved in the reviewing process. Yet there are suggestions that many ECRs are reluctant to take up the opportunity, seeing it takes away time from other, more ‘essential’ career progression activities. As noted earlier, reviewing doesn’t offer the same career enhancing benefits as achieving funding or publishing outputs, so you can understand their reluctance. Consequently, reviewing as a routine academic task can be deprioritised or simply ignored by many in the group (**Wróblewska et al., 2024**). I would concur that personal experience running *Exchanges* these past seven years, along with insight from by editorial team members, sadly underscores such perceptions as these as accurate ones.

Depressed by all this? Sorry! While I am somewhat downhearted by this turn of events, perhaps ‘professionally frustrated’ would be a more accurate position.^x This piece began life as a minor investigation and partial explanation to our readers about how and why peer-review can seem to take so long to complete, yet it became something more in the writing. Have I reached a gloomy conclusion that peer-review as we know it is now an endangered species, suffering its own ‘climate collapse’ meaning we must look to pivot to new forms or formats of quality assurance? Perhaps.^{xi}

Nevertheless, *this* represents the background and one of the (many) challenges we face in keeping the journal viable and operational today. It is also why when we do find willing reviewers, and thanks to the considerable efforts of my editorial team we do again and again, who deliver on time and with a scholarly rigour, I find it is a moment worth celebrating! On a related note I was even more delighted recently when our regular collaborators at the National Centre for Research Culture worked with us to put out a call for new reviewers (and editors) to assist us in the production of our 3rd collaborative special issue for them.^{xii} My hope is a few of these research culture reviewers might stay on board and help us look at other papers too...that is assuming their own jobs are any more stable, which is, by no means a certainty.

So, why did I share our woes? Well, as noted, this isn't an issue impacting *Exchanges* in isolation. Speaking to other journal's editors I know they're experiencing the same tensions to a greater or lesser extent. I did it to partly highlight to authors and readers one of the major reasons why it can take so long to progress manuscripts through our review and feedback process. It's also a tribute to those reviewers who do continue to make such contributions to us and other journals, and to whom I am deeply grateful. But in part I also wrote this to hopefully inspire anyone who's read this far in the editorial to consider registering as a reviewer for us if they haven't already! I think my gratitude here will be obvious.

Registering is an easy enough process to complete yourself, but I am also happy to set people up as reviewers on request and even offer some light coaching, if that might be preferable. You may also be pleased to know that as a modest volume journal we rarely make regular or routine demands on reviewers – although I know some enthusiastic reviewers wish we did! Along with my personal gratitude, you might gain the personal satisfaction of helping a scholar-led journal, run entirely for the benefit of its contributors, editors and readers. Helping support a grassroots publishing operation should, if nothing else, make yourself feel justifiably proud of your future contribution and demonstratable collegiality!

Papers

After that exploration behind the editorial curtain, it is time to turn to what you, the reader, are most interested in: the issue's articles. As always, while we hope to bring you more, review outcomes are never automatically positive! Nevertheless, what we do have in this issue are delightful and insightful in equal measure, I think you'll find. A number of articles here were submitted for a potential special issue (Gender & Intersection), which regrettably has failed to coalesce sufficient accepted submissions for an entire edition. As such, they're presented here to celebrate these authors' insights, with one or two more due to appear in our autumn/winter issue of *Exchanges* later this year.

Articles

Firstly, **Sharon Adetutu Omotoso** and **Bolatito Kolawole** bring us fresh insights into the research landscape of Africa. In *Intersectionality and Detrimental Agency in Nigeria's Researchscape*, the authors consider what intersectionality offers in terms of uncovering hidden oppressions within this domain. Taking a historical approach the authors also probe into how intersectionality methodology may have benefitted academia even while it has uncovered restrictive practices within it. They continue by debating the conception of how possession of an 'intersectional wand' confers agency and status on certain research narratives within the realm ([1](#)).

Critical Reflections

Moving to our critical reflective pieces, **Yvette Yitong Wang** and **Simon Gansinger** offer insights into a fascinating symposium which explored how reasoning operates across the disciplines and what the debates revealed to them. In *What Does It Mean to Explain* the authors consider explanation, particularly its relationship to interdisciplinarity moving on to consider if *explanation* can be more powerful than *description* alone? Through these and various other explorations, they reach a final provocation concerning the 'disruptive potential' of authentically interdisciplinary knowledge-exchange forums ([22](#)).

Continuing our interdisciplinary debates are **Abiodun Egbetokun** and colleagues, who share aspects of their own debates and explorations of what it means to embrace interdisciplinary practice: a topic close to our hearts at here *Exchanges*! In *The Labour of Thought* the authors posit how to effectively engage with interdisciplinarity on any practical or pragmatic level can be a complex and complicated endeavour, requiring no-small amount of time and effort. Especially for early career researchers, who are increasingly encouraged to become interdisciplinarians this can be a tricky work/life balancing act. The authors therefore draw on their own experiences, crystalised through a British Academy facilitated event, to

illustrate practical lessons for any early career researchers seeking to become 'interdisciplinary scholars' in an effective and timely manner ([33](#)).

We then move to our two Gender and Intersectionality pieces, with firstly **Anlia Thelekkatte** and colleagues offering us a study on *Gender Equity and Women Empowerment*, in India. In this insightful and fascinating piece, the authors take as their central thesis the pioneering Kudumbashree programme in Kerala. The programme, in seeking to better enable regional women has adopted a micro-enterprise approach, and the authors offer us insights into its operations and ambitions, along with its participants and effective societal impacts. While the programme has achieved some modest successes, Thelekkatte and colleagues offer a critical evaluation and look to the future. In this modality, they propose how having now overcome its early challenges and moved to a successful mode of operations, the programme could be expanded to offer positive support to a much wider range of regional women ([51](#)).

Our final piece this issue is from **Martina Arcadu** and is a tasty consideration of *Gender, Care and Food Practices*. Within the article Arcadu offers critical insights and explorations relating to food activism. They explore how such activism can offer routes for rethinking and re-evaluating traditional gender-based food related roles, despite often deeply embedded cultural contexts and local 'norms' representing challenges for any changes. The author suggests how such food activism can serve positively to create social support mechanisms through which women's roles and activities can be influenced, empowered and restructured. In this way they can achieve not only positive personal outcomes but also gain greater agency and societal influence ([62](#)).

As always, we hope our readers find something of interest or stimulation in this varied and interesting collection of work. Our thanks as always to all authors for their contributions.

Calls for Papers

As always, we would like to remind all readers and potential authors of our various other open calls for papers. You might also wish to register for our email newsletter or engage with following our social media to keep up with our very latest announcements and opportunities – you will find the links for these towards the end of this editorial.

Opening the format

Firstly, I would like to highlight a small revision to *Exchanges'* format submission policies. From the start of May 2025, we have increased the maximum word count at submission for *peer-reviewed articles* of all kinds to 8,000 (previously set at a maximum of 6,000). This follows discussions with our publisher, and a number of authors, in recent years. We hope this increased scope will offer authors an increased flexibility and space to expand on their thoughts, ideas and research findings. Author guidance on the journal site has been revised, and should you want to read more about this change, you will find further details over on our blog. Incidentally, the lower limit for these manuscripts remains at 4,000 words. Word limits for all other formats (critical reflections, conversations and book reviews remains unchanged).

- [Word-Limits Raised to 8,000 for Peer-Reviewed Articles](#)

Open calls for papers

Exchanges also continues to invite and welcome submissions throughout the year on any subject, especially those which can either demonstrate a degree of interdisciplinary thinking or research or are written for a wide-academic audience. Hence, while articles which draw directly or indirectly on interdisciplinary methods, methodologies, praxis and thinking are warmly welcome, this is *not* a pre-requisite. Hence, any topic, written in a manner suitable for a broad, scholarly, academic audience is likely to be accepted for consideration in our pages. Likewise, articles from researchers, practitioners and independent scholars are all equally welcome. See our [Selection Policy](#) for more information.

Deadlines: There are **no manuscript submission deadlines** on our open call and submissions will be considered throughout the year. Manuscripts therefore may be submitted for consideration via our online submission portal at any point.

Formats: Manuscripts can be submitted for consideration as traditional **peer-reviewed** research or review article formats, which will undergo a rigorous, double-anonymised external review process. Alternatively, they may be submitted under our **detailed editorially review** formats – briefer works which often are able to transit to publication faster.^{xiii} Editorially reviewed formats can be especially suitable for first-time authors, or those looking to embrace reflexivity, posit an opinion or share professional insights. It is notable that all article formats receive extensive reader attention and downloads.^{xiv}

- Requirements:** Word counts and requirements for all content formats vary and prospective authors are strongly encouraged to review our Author Guidance ahead of submission.^{xv} Where an exception to these standards is required, authors should discuss their anticipated manuscript with the Chief Editor ahead of submission. Manuscripts passing our review processes and accepted for publication will subsequently appear in the next available regular issue, normally published in spring and autumn.
- Review:** All submitted manuscripts undergo initial scoping (suitability and initial quality) and originality checks by the Chief Editor before being accepted for further editorial review consideration. Manuscripts seeking publication as research articles additionally will undergo one or more rounds formal peer-review by two or more suitable anonymised assessors. Editorial decisions on manuscript acceptance are final, although unsuccessful authors are normally encouraged to consider revising their work for later reconsideration by the journal.
- Authors:** Notably, *Exchanges* has a mission to support the development and dissemination of research by early career and post-graduate researchers (IAS, 2024). Consequently, we are especially pleased to receive manuscripts from emerging scholars or first-time authors, although contributions from established and senior scholars are also welcomed.

Further details of our open call requirements can be found online (**Exchanges, 2024a**). Or to begin your submission journey visit:

- exchanges.warwick.ac.uk/index.php/exchanges/submission

Informal approaches

As Editor-in-Chief, I welcome approaches from potential authors to discuss prospective article ideas or concepts for *Exchanges*. However, abstract submission or formal editorial discussions ahead of a submission are *not* normally a prerequisite, and authors may submit complete manuscripts for consideration without any prior communication.^{xvi} During the submission process authors are encouraged to include a *Note to Editor* outlining the article format or call under which their manuscript is to be considered or any other considerations they wish to bring to my attention.^{xvii}

Author fees

Exchanges is a diamond (or platinum) open-access, scholar-led journal, meaning there are **no fees or charges** for readers and author alike. All published content is made freely available online to readers globally (**Fuchs & Sandoval, 2013; Bosman et al, 2021**). Furthermore, authors retain all rights over their work, granting *Exchanges* first publication rights during submission as a pre-requisite for publication consideration. *Exchanges* is also happy to support translations of our published articles subsequently appearing in other suitable journals, and requests only that a link back to the original piece is incorporated for completeness. Authors may wish to consult *Exchanges'* journal policies for further information on how we handle author contributions (**Exchanges, 2024b**).

Further advice for prospective authors can be found throughout the *Exchanges* and IAS websites (**Exchanges, 2024c, IAS, 2025**), as well as in our editorials, podcast episodes and blog entries.

Forthcoming Issues

I would hope that our next publication won't be too many months away and will comprise one of our special issues currently percolating behind the scenes. As these are each advancing at different rates – largely based on reviewer and author responsiveness – there's a little educated guesswork needed here to suggest which one will appear first. Personally, I suspect it may be the Research Culture '25 issue – but I am quite prepared to be happily surprised by one of the others!

Special issues aside, our next regular issue will be during the autumn, sometime around or just after October. While it is too late to submit a peer-reviewed item for inclusion in that issue, editorially reviewed items submitted up to the early summer months (June/July) stand a very reasonable chance of exiting review to publication readiness by then! As always, watch our social media channels or subscribe to our newsletter for more about our future publishing plans for 2025 and beyond.

Acknowledgements

As always, I would like to offer my thanks to all those people who helped make this issue a reality. A special thanks to Abbie Pritchard who has begun to act as Assistant to the Editor in recent months for her invaluable assistance, insight and exceptional graphical design work! If you haven't yet seen one of our new *Exchanges* calling cards designed by Abbie, get in touch with us.

My thanks too to all our authors for their vital intellectual contributions towards this edition as well. Likewise, my thanks to our Editorial Board for their continued support and efforts on behalf of *Exchanges*, and the [Institute of Advanced Study](#) for their continued underwriting of *Exchanges'* strategic goals and operational missions.

Continuing the Conversation

Exchanges has a range of routes, groups and opportunities for keeping abreast of our latest news, developments and calls for papers. Since the last issue we've had a couple of substantive changes. Firstly, like many in academia we deemed our presence on X/Twitter to no longer be in keeping with the principles of openness and integrity on which this journal is founded. Additionally, Warwick closed the Warwick Blogs site in March, which meant we had to find a new home for our editorial blog – the link to which you'll find below. As many of these socials are interactive, please do make use of them to engage us in conversation!

Bluesky: [@ExchangesJournal](#)
Editorial Blog: [exchangesdiscourse.wordpress.com/](#)
Linked.In: [www.linkedin.com/groups/12162247/](#)
LinkTree: [linktr.ee/exchangesjournal](#)
Newsletter: [www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/wa-jisc.exe?A0=EXCHANGES-ANNOUNCE](#)

The Exchanges Discourse Podcast

The new year has brought a new focus to the podcast. In 2025, alongside inviting on past authors to talk about their papers and work, we've been reaching out to various people doing interesting things in scholarly communications. Hence, we've episodes looking at academic podcasting, early career monographs and the national open monographs scene too. Hopefully, we'll soon have some more, and certainly if you or a colleague think you might like to appear in conversation on our podcast, then do get in touch! All episodes are free to listen on [Spotify for Podcasting](#), and many other podcasting platforms. You can also find a full listing of past episodes from this year, and all previous ones, on the *Exchanges* website.

[exchanges.warwick.ac.uk/index.php/exchanges/podcast](#)

Contacting

As Editor-in-Chief I am always pleased to discuss any matters relating to *Exchanges*, our community, contributions or potential collaborations. My [contact details](#) appear at the start of this editorial.

Dr Gareth Johnson holds a doctorate in cultural academic publishing practices (NTU) and degrees in biomedical technology (SHU), information management (Sheffield), and research practice (NTU). His diverse career spans academic library leadership, applied research, and senior roles within regional and national professional bodies. Since 2018, he has served as Editor-in-Chief of *Exchanges*. Gareth's professional interests include academic writing, scholarly communication, social theory, power dynamics, counter-capitalism, and political economics. He has expertise in editorial practice, distributed team management, strategic leadership, stakeholder engagement, and effective communication. A committed advocate for academic agency, he has long championed scholar-led and community-driven publishing initiatives. He is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, and the creator and host of the long-running podcast *Exchanges Discourse*. Outside academia, he is also co-director of a property management company.



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Dr Changpeng Huan, School of Foreign Languages, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, China

Dr Ignaas Jimidar, CHIS (Chemical Engineering), Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium

Pallavi Joshi, French Studies, University of Warwick, UK

Dr Sven Van Kerckhoven, Business & Economics, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium

Dr Kyung-Hye Kim, Shanghai International Studies University, China

Dr Bing Lu, Faculty of Arts, University of Warwick, UK

Dr Salvatore Monteleone, Niccolò Cusano University, Rome, Italy

Dr Louise Morgan, Centre for the History of Medicine, University of Warwick, UK

Dr Ute Oswald, Centre for the History of Medicine, University of Warwick, UK

Shilpi Pandey, Faculty of Law, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium

Dr Anna Rivers, English and Comparative Literary Studies, University of Warwick, UK

Dr Roy Rozario, Education, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia

Jacob Thomas, Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia

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Endnotes

ⁱ This situation has not been assisted, it is fair to point out, by the ongoing (at time of writing) communication glitch the Warwick iteration of OJS has been suffering with. See more about this issue here: <https://exchanges.warwick.ac.uk/index.php/exchanges/announcement/view/69>.

ⁱⁱ While I've been writing this over the last few weeks, and as more job cuts have been announced across the UK higher education sector, I am beginning to conclude that simply to be *any* academic today in Britain is to be a member of the precariat. A depressing thought.

ⁱⁱⁱ I am currently in the process of running this exercise for 2025 – thank you to all those who responded to my messages! Last time (June 2022) I approached around a quarter of our reviewers – only those without listed research interests, uncovering around 10% of accounts to be associated with 'dead' email addresses. It also revealed around a further 5% who expressly requested we discontinue to call on them for future reviews. For the May 2025 exercise, I've approached around 90% of our reviewers, which seems to indicate about 20% of these account emails are no longer valid.

^{iv} In *extremis* we also ask authors for lengthy lists of potential reviewers for us to pick from. While some major journals use this as a first choice for reviewer identification, for *Exchanges* this is very much a final fallback, as we seek as much to maintain as much anonymity as possible within the reviewing process.

^v See note ii above for thoughts on if anyone is outside this today.

^{vi} I've been asked periodically my thoughts on rewarding reviewers tangibly. This is a very complex issue, to respond might take up the entire editorial, but simply put the crux of my position is (a) once the multi-billion-dollar commercial publishers of the world embrace this position, rather than profiting enormously on the backs of academic free labour exploitation, then I might think about it. Also (b) *Exchanges* makes no income and is run entirely from the generosity of Warwick, and thus there are no discretionary funds from which I could draw any payments. Shifting to embrace some form of revenue generation for our title rather runs directly against my personal and professional ethics, so I'm unsure how we'd ever square this circle. Perhaps the next Chief Editor might have different views though, whenever I depart! See for interest (Irfanullah, 2025)

^{vii} As I mentioned in the previous note, we don't make any income or profit, being rather run entirely for the benefit of our authors and readers, thanks to the generosity of our host institution.

^{viii} I'm aware other countries, such as the United States of America and the Netherlands, also have scholars under existential and career challenging tensions from political shifts which will reduce their ability to be

willing reviewers too. Since I am based in the UK, with a primary experience of this nation's research scholarship, I'm not sufficiently informed to make a similar assessment. Although, I am deeply sympathetic to any scholar finding their career choices under unprecedented assault – and not simply from a pragmatic editorial perspective.

^{ix} And to be honest, all university staff too. I have many friends and colleagues in professional service and administration roles who have been facing some tough work choices and environments in the past few years. My focus is purely on the academic community here as they are our primary 'stock' of reviewers, rather than dismissing the very real problems staff across institutions are facing.

^x There are far more existential and concerning threats to the global population than peer-review, not that I'll need to remind readers who may well have been doomscrolling through the news feeds only moments earlier.

^{xi} In case you are interested in my take, briefly, and with many caveats 'yes'. Although, for *Exchanges* our platform deployment and technical development challenges rather precludes us taking any experimental steps for the foreseeable future. But, I am ever mindful of the potential to embrace new and perhaps more effective routes to maintaining quality assurance in publishing.

^{xii} If you are interested in registering to help us review papers for this issue, or even to get involved as an associate editor, please do get in touch! The editorial work won't be kicking off until early 2026 so there's plenty of time to express your interest.

^{xiii} **Editorially Reviewed Formats:** e.g., Critical Reflections, Conversations (interviews) or Book Reviews. As these do not undergo external peer review, but a detailed editorial review and revision process, they are also usually able to be more swiftly published in the journal. While the acceptance rate is higher for these types of material, those which fail to meet our required standards in any respect will be declined and returned to their authors.

^{xiv} **Top Articles:** This diversity of format interest is frequently reflected in our annual Top Articles list, which appears in the IAS annual report, and on our blog usually in January of each year.

^{xv} **Word counts:** For the purposes of considering a submissions' word count, we do not typically include abstracts, references, endnotes or appendices. Submissions slightly over/under our required word count limits will, at the Chief Editor's discretion, still be initially considered for review. However, any significantly in excess will normally be declined and returned with revision guidance to their authors.

^{xvi} **Expressions of Interest:** We do on occasion solicit expressions of interest ahead of submissions for special issues, as promoted on our Announcements page, blog and other social media channels. For regular (open or themed) issue submissions though, authors may submit their manuscripts without any prior contact.

^{xvii} **Formats:** For more on the formats, word counts and other requirements for any prospective submissions, see: <https://exchanges.warwick.ac.uk/index.php/exchanges/guidance#formats>