

## Note from the Editors

Academic journals exist principally for the sake of communication: they are one of the means of the academic debate. Their functions as career tools and quality measures are only secondary. This is why we introduce a new section of the journal called “Replies”. In this section we hope to publish short replies to our previously published material, and perhaps replies to other writings as well.

Open Access is perfect for academic communication, since the barriers to reading such as paywalls and high subscription costs are no issue.

But how on earth are we to fund this work? NWR relies heavily on volunteer labour, but surely journals as vehicles of communication are important enough for the academic community to warrant professionalism. NWR is under scholarly investigation by its editor-in-chief (who has a background in Open Access-publishing research) and the Open Access-researcher Mikael Laakso from Helsinki School of Business Administration. As a part of this project, a survey was conducted a few weeks before the publication of the present issue. It showed that Open Access is perceived as very important in the philosophical scholarly community. More interestingly, however, in comparison to the responses to a similar survey circulated in 2013, it seems that the hostile attitude of the philosophical community towards paying article processing charges (APCs, fees for publishing instead of for subscriptions) are still strong, but that it is easing up. APCs are a way of flipping the economy. They are not supposed to be paid for by the authors themselves but by their institutions. Perhaps a low voluntary fee to only those authors who has access to such funding would be worth trying after all? The best solution for NWR would nevertheless be gigantic author-independent grants directed at the journal. Today, however, applying for available grants, that are not dimensioned to accommodate the actual work involved in running a journal, requires either even more voluntary labour or time taken from already more than fully engaged academics.

Journal editorship provides a very interesting vantage point for the scholarly sector: What sorts of issues are being discussed, where and by whom? And what kinds of research questions are perceived as important or worth pursuing? Apart from the author of a paper at hand, who else in the world has expertise on these issues?

Being an editor can also be disturbing. I hope to meet many of you at the Kirchberg conference in August. Seeing reviewers, will be great – and authors too! But I may also meet hundreds of authors who have received rejection letters with my name on them. Editors have to live with the stories of dark forces and stained interests at work behind the scenes, the views of editors as generators of unfairness and wrongfulness despite honestly trying, in every detail, to keep the interests of the authors at the very front of the whole enterprise. What we need to do here is probably to work for more openness, by explaining the principles behind our work. But also: would you like to help to review papers? Do sign up at [www.nordicwittgensteinreview.com](http://www.nordicwittgensteinreview.com).

The peer review system, the layout and the editing of papers including the administration and communication involved in these tasks take the most time and effort. Uploading papers is no problem, it's the processes of selection and editorial preparation that take time. We have tried to give many authors the opportunity to have their papers reviewed because the peer review is also a quality improvement process which reaches beyond the pages of a single journal. However, the number of submissions has become so large that we must decrease the number of papers sent to review. Our numbers show that for 15 published article section papers in the last two years, over 100 reviews were completed. The rejection rate is often understood as a measure of quality, and according to this measure, NWR is a high-quality journal. However, the rejection rate may also be the manifestation of a mass psychosis for imagined prestige. Our investigations so far suggest that mostly, 'prestige is in the head': when Nature Publishing group in a recent survey asked what 'high reputation' is made of, scholars answered "Impact Factor and being 'seen as the place to publish the best research by my community,' followed by the consistency of quality

and intriguingly, quality of peer review”.<sup>1</sup> Subtract Impact Factor, which is of limited applicability in the Humanities, and the accessible information on the rest is severely limited or ‘in the head’.

While we wait for prestige and grants *ex nihilo*, we keep on editing, because your work deserves it.

Åbo/Odense/Stockholm, June 21, 2016

*The editors*

*Yrsa Neuman, Anne-Marie Søndergaard Christensen & Martin Gustafsson*

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Todd: “STEM and HSS: The Great (OA) Divide”

<http://connection.sagepub.com/blog/industry-news/2015/10/21/stem-and-hss-the-great-oa-divide/> (accessed June 27, 2016).