



What we publish in *Metascience*

K. Brad Wray¹ · Lori Nash¹ · Jonathan Simon²

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As our regular readers know, *Metascience* publishes book reviews of recently published books in the history of science, medicine, and technology, philosophy of science, sociology of science, and science studies. As is apparent from the many reviews we have published in the recent past, we interpret these categories quite broadly. So, for example, in addition to reviewing books in research ethics, a topic that is, without a doubt, one we would cover, we might also commission a review of a book on theoretical or applied ethics, provided it draws on research in the sciences.

It is worth drawing the attention of prospective reviewers to the types of reviews we publish. We have principally five categories of pieces. (I) Book Reviews: most of our reviews are standard book reviews. They run from 1200 to 1500 words. Reviewers are expected to give readers some sense of the content of the book, perhaps comparing it to existing books in the same subject area, and then provide some sort of assessment, which may include criticism. (II) Some of our reviews are Book Notes. These are shorter reviews, usually 500–800 words, and the principal task in a Book Note is to provide a summary of the content of the book. We often commission Book Notes for books that have been in print a little longer, and thus may have been reviewed more extensively already elsewhere. Our aim is ensure that the book gets the attention it deserves. (III) We occasionally commission Essay Reviews. These are longer than our standard reviews, usually running from 2200 to 3000 words. The length of the Essay Review allows the reviewer to engage in greater detail and depth with the book. We commission Essay Reviews on books that we anticipate will be of interest to many of our readers. (IV) The fourth category is the Book Symposium. These are quite uncommon, and they usually involve three critical pieces and a reply piece from the author of the book. Symposia have proved to be quite challenging to

✉ K. Brad Wray
kbwray@css.au.dk

Lori Nash
lorinash@css.au.dk

Jonathan Simon
jonathan.simon@univ-lorraine.fr

¹ Centre for Science Studies, Aarhus University, Aarhus, Denmark

² Archives Poincaré, Université de Lorraine, Nancy, France

coordinate, and they involve a lot of planning on our part. Again, for Symposia, we tend to focus on books that we believe will be of interest to a wide readership. The critical pieces usually run from 2000 to 3000 words, and the author's reply usually runs from 2500 to 3500 words. (V) Finally, on occasion we publish reviews of older books, in celebration of their significant whole number anniversaries. These pieces are reserved for books that have had a large and enduring readership and significant impact on the field. They are intended to provide a comprehensive and updated overview of the reception and legacy of the book in question. Two recent examples of anniversary reviews are Stathis Psillos' review of Bas van Fraassen's *Laws and Symmetry* (thirtieth anniversary) and Bas Van Fraassen's review of Stathis Psillos' *Scientific Realism: How Science Tracks Truth* (twentieth anniversary). Both published in our March 2019 issue.

In the last four years, we have also been publishing English language reviews of some books published in languages other than English:

- Silvina Paula Vidal reviewed Pietro Omodeo's *Amerigo Vespucci e l'annuncio del Nuovo Mondo* (2018);
- Alex Levine reviewed Juan Vicente Mayoral's *Thomas S. Kuhn: La búsqueda de la estructura* (2018);
- Thierry Hoquet reviewed Marc J. Ratcliff's *Genèse d'une découverte: la division des infusoires (1765–1766)* (2019);
- Jonathan Simon reviewed Delphine Gardey's *Politique du Clitoris* (2020);
- Hugues Chabot reviewed Edgardo D. Carosella's *Sous le sceau du secret, les plis cachetés de l'Académie des sciences* (2021);
- José Pardo-Tomás reviewed Juan Pimentel's *Fantasmas de la ciencia Española* (2021);
- Phillip Roth reviewed Désirée Schauz's *Nützlichkeit und Erkenntnisfortschritt. Eine Geschichte des modernen Wissenschaftsverständnisses* (2021);
- Enric Pérez Canals reviewed Luis Navarro's *El desconocido Albert Einstein. Sin rastros de relatividad* (2021);
- Clara Florensa reviewed Antonio González Bueno and Alfredo Baratas' *Ciencia útil. Investigación básica y aplicada en Farmacia y Ciencias de la Vida durante el Franquismo* (2022); and
- Alfred Nordmann reviewed Hans-Jörg Rheinberger's *Spalt und Fuge. Eine Phänomenologie des Experiments* (2022)

We generally invite reviewers to review books for the journal, but we also encourage people to approach us if they are interested in reviewing a particular book or any new book in a specific subject area. Indeed, we truly welcome unsolicited contact from eager reviewers. With that said, there are some restrictions we try to enforce. We want to avoid conflicts of interest, or perceived conflicts of interest. Thus, we discourage people from reviewing books by their supervisors, former supervisors, students, former students, or colleagues. So please do not ask us for the opportunity to review your colleague's new book, whether you love your colleague or hate them. Further, when you contact us with a proposal to

review a book, please, first, check whether we have already published a review of the book.

The people who review books for us cover the whole range of career stages. We have emeriti professors who still enjoy reviewing books, people late in their career, those in the middle, and early career people as well. We do welcome reviews from graduate students as well. What we expect of a reviewer is that they have some expertise in the field in which the book under review is published. The best evidence of this is that they have published in respectable journals on the subject. But for earlier career contributors, especially graduate students, it is expected that you are doing current research in the area.

There are some general stylistic features that we ask for in the reviews we commission. First, we do not want footnotes or endnotes. The reviews are meant to be accessible to non-specialists, even in cases where the book under review is really only appropriate for specialists. With that said, reviewers are welcome to cite other works in their book reviews, and include them in a list of references at the end of the review. Second, we want reviewers to avoid rhetorical questions. Rhetorical questions have the tendency to shift the burden of proof to the opponent, and often not in a legitimate or satisfying way. It is better, at least from our perspective, to assert your criticism explicitly, and then support it with good reasons and evidence. Third, we also want reviewers to avoid contractions, like don't, we've, and shouldn't. It is our view that, as a profession, we've used far too many contractions, and they don't improve our writing. So we shouldn't use them anymore.

Naturally, we expect the reviews to be respectful, even when they are critical. Anyone who has authored a book, or edited a volume, knows the hard work that has gone into getting a book published. Still, we do encourage our reviewers to be critical when a critical appraisal is warranted. The reviews in our journal are sometimes used by our colleagues to make recommendations to librarians about what to acquire for their University library collections. Hence, the review you write can have a significant impact.

We also remind authors to alert us to their own new books. We do have ways of keeping abreast of new books in our subject areas, but we are clearly incapable of knowing about all the new books published in a wider domain. In the past, many authors have alerted us to their new books, and we have in fact commissioned reviews of them. Also, book authors, we encourage you to communicate with your publishers to ensure that we can get a hard copy of your book for the person who has agreed to review the book. Although some reviewers are keen to review e-books, most of the people we ask to write a review expect a hard copy of the book. And we think that is a reasonable expectation. Further, we discourage book authors from recommending potential reviewers as this may lead to conflicts of interest.

A word of warning to those authors who do alert us to their new books which, in fact, applies to all book authors: we cannot promise that we will publish a review of your book in *Metascience*. We can only devote a limited amount of time to searching for an appropriate reviewer. If we make repeated invitations and they are declined, at some point we have to draw the conclusion that we will be unable

to find a reviewer in a timely fashion. The journal publishes between 100 and 120 reviews a year. This represents a considerable amount of work for the editors, but, overall, it is gratifying to know that we can provide this valuable service to the academic community.

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