

Policy on Critiques and Replies: *Psychological Review*

Critiques and replies are by their nature potentially volatile. Occasionally, readers and/or one or both authors involved in critiques and replies end up feeling exploited, even if they are not actually exploited. The purpose of *Psychological Review's* policy on critiques and replies is fourfold: (a) to treat both authors fairly, (b) to establish contingencies that maximize objective exchanges and minimize affective exchanges, (c) to have appear in the *Review* only as much as is truly valuable to readers, and (d) to maximize the likelihood that all those involved feel as if they have been treated fairly by the *Review*.

Critiques

The *Review's* policy on critiques is as follows:

1. Critiques that are submitted to the *Review* are reviewed in the normal fashion. The reviewers' evaluation of the critique should therefore be based on the accuracy and fairness of the manuscript and on the magnitude of its theoretical contribution to the field. In addition, the corresponding author of the article commented on is asked to serve as a consultant on the submission. The cover letter addressed to this reviewer acknowledges that he or she may have a vested interest, but that it is important to have his or her comments on the accuracy and fairness of the critique. If the author so wishes, he or she may prepare two sets of reviews: one for transmittal to the author of the critique, and one for the editor's eyes only. Authors who are unwilling to provide the editor with a review of the critique of their article will not be invited to reply to the critique in the *Review*.

2. If the critique is rejected, then the author and reviewers are notified in the usual fashion. The procedure is terminated at this stage.

3. If acceptance of one or more critiques is anticipated, then a decision is made by the action editor regarding whether to seek a reply from the corresponding author of the original article. If a reply is sought, the letter of acceptance to the author of the critique includes the following information:

(a) The author of the critique is notified prior to his or her undertaking final revisions, if any, that the corresponding author of the original manuscript will be invited to submit a reply for possible publication in the same issue as the author's critique.

(b) The maximum number of words for the final critique is specified, as is a date by which the final critique and a signed copyright transfer agreement must be returned to the editor. Failure by the author of the critique to submit an acceptable critique and a signed copyright transfer agreement within the specified period of time constitutes grounds for rejection.

If the critique is rejected, then the procedure is terminated at this juncture.

(c) The final version of the critique serves as the basis for the reply by the corresponding author of the original article. Therefore, the final draft of the critique cannot be revised in any fashion after it is returned along with the signed copyright transfer agreement. Copy editors are instructed not to allow any author alterations, including changes in wording or phrasing, during the production stages. The author of the critique retains the right to reject changes introduced by the copy editor and to correct printer errors.

(d) In keeping with standard *Review* policy, each consulting reviewer (including the corresponding author of the original article) is sent a copy of the reviews and the action editor's decision letter.

Replies

A copy of the final version of the critique is sent to the corresponding author of the original article. (In cases where the remaining changes are entirely superficial, the editor, to expedite the process, may first send the next-to-final version of the critique.) Communication with coauthors of the original article here and throughout is the responsibility of the corresponding author. The corresponding author of the original article is assumed to serve as the corresponding author for the reply unless the action editor is notified of a change; notification must be in writing and must be endorsed by the surviving authors of the original article. The policy governing a reply is as follows:

1. An invitation to submit a reply to a critique does not constitute an acceptance, nor should it bias reviewers toward recommending acceptance when evaluating the scientific merit of the reply. A reply that is limited to expressions of agreement or disagreement and/or to reiterations of points outlined in the original article does not warrant publication in the *Review*.

2. The maximum number of words for the reply is specified, as is a date by which a reply must be received. In most cases, a reply should be submitted within 4 or 5 weeks and should not

exceed half the number of words contained in the critique. Thus, if a critique warrants x words (including references and footnotes) and y pages of tables and figures (1 page of tables or figures \equiv 250 words), then the maximum number of words for a reply would typically be the equivalent of $x/2$ words and $y/2$ tables and figures. However, the decision of the action editor regarding the length of the reply, not the formula used in this illustration, is binding, as is the actual date specified for receipt of a given reply.

3. A reply is subject to review, and the decision regarding its publication hinges on its contribution to psychological theory in the field. In addition, the author of the critique is asked to serve as a consulting reviewer. The cover letter to this reviewer acknowledges that he or she may have a vested interest, and he or she will be asked to comment primarily on the accuracy and fairness of the reply. An attempt is made to expedite the review to ensure timely publication of the critique and, if appropriate, the reply.

4. In keeping with standard *Review* policy, each consulting reviewer (including the author of the critique) receives a copy of the reviews and the action editor's decision letter.

5. If the reply is not accepted for publication, then the critique appears alone.

6. If a final revision of the reply is sought, then the author is given a limited number of weeks in which to prepare a final submission. The purposes of the time constraint are to ensure that articles in the *Review* are timely and to avoid a pocket veto of a critique by introducing unnecessary delays in its publication. Failure to submit an acceptable reply and a signed copyright transfer agreement to the action editor by the specified date constitutes grounds for rejection. In special circumstances, when factors out of an author's control delay completion of a reply, the editor retains the prerogative of publishing the critique as scheduled and the reply in a subsequent issue.

7. No revisions to the reply are allowed once the reply and the signed copyright transfer agreement are submitted to the action editor. Thus, copy editors are instructed not to allow any author alterations, including changes in wording or phrasing, during the production stages. The author retains the right to reject changes introduced by the copy editor and to correct printer errors.

8. When more than one critique on an article is to be published, the policy of the *Review* is to invite the corresponding author of the original article to submit a single reply for possible publication in the same issue as the set of critiques. In all other respects, the policies in this statement remain in force.

Postscripts

The general policy of the *Review* is to limit exchanges to one or more independent critiques and a single reply. In unusual cases, as determined by the action editor, one or more postscripts may be considered for publication as an appendix to the critique(s) and to the reply. The policy governing postscripts is as follows:

1. If a reply is accepted and the action editor chooses to invite the author of the critique to submit a postscript for possible publication, then the author of the critique is sent a copy of the final reply and is allotted 250 words for a postscript (labeled as such), which is appended to the end of his or her original critique. Acceptance of this postscript, as with acceptance of the final version of critiques and replies, is contingent on: (a) the standard *Review* criteria regarding objectivity and scholarly contribution; (b) completion of the postscript within a specified period of time (e.g., 14 days); (c) adherence to the specified restrictions on number of words; and (d) submission of a signed copyright transfer agreement.

2. If the postscript is rejected, not returned within the specified time period, or not submitted with a signed copyright transfer agreement, then the comment and reply appear in the *Review* with no postscripts. If and when the postscript is accepted, no additional revisions or author alterations are allowed.

3. If the action editor chooses to invite the corresponding author of the reply to submit a postscript for possible publication, then this author is sent a copy of the preceding postscript and is allotted 250 words for his or her own postscript, which is then appended to the end of his or her reply. Acceptance of this postscript is contingent on the same four criteria specified above. If the postscript is rejected, then the critique plus postscript are followed by the reply alone. If and when the postscript is accepted, no additional revisions or author alterations are allowed.

4. A postscript does not constitute a separate publication in the *Review*. The primary function of postscripts is to encourage the author of the critique and the author of the reply to be fair and accurate in the treatment of the other's position, because the absence of objectivity or scholarship could be unveiled in a postscript. Hence, in most cases, postscripts are not necessary.

5. Finally, it is recognized that not all disputes can or should be settled in the *Review*.

In adopting the foregoing policies, I want to acknowledge the cooperation and collaboration of my predecessor, Walter Kintsch, who formulated the policies stated above.

—Robert A. Bjork, *Editor*