

Feeding Back, Looking Forward: Editorial, Volume 10, Part 3

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I have no inhibitions in saying that out of the 6 peer-reviewed publications, and the 9 rejections (including an initial editorial rejection) I have had, Exchanges has been the most author-friendly experience by quite a margin. (User #5 Feedback Comment, Johnson, 2023a: 11)

Introduction

Welcome to the twenty fifth edition of *Exchanges: The Interdisciplinary Research Journal* – yes, we have reached a quarter century in issues. If you are a new reader, then you are especially welcome although naturally a hearty greeting to our longstanding readers too. This editorial, as is normally the case, offers an introduction to this issue’s contents alongside some insights into recent developments at the journal. Naturally, it also contains information for potential authors looking to make a contribution to future journal issues. Alongside this there’s also a guide to our various social media presences – and most notably – news about our new direct announcements mailing list too.

Twice in a Lifetime

No, you haven’t imagined it – this is another issue of *Exchanges*, relatively hot on the heels of our very recently published special issue on the *Anthropocene and More-Than-Human world* (**Exchanges, 2023a**). Such is the slightly indeterminate nature of adjudging when a special issue will be publication ready, that this previous issue and the one before you have ended up being released rather closer than we might normally prefer. However, it was wonderful to be able to bring the preceding issue to our readers and judging from the extremely positive reactions I’ve witnessed on social media, certainly a very well received one. I am hopeful that readers will similarly enjoy and learn from the content in this issue too.

Knowing Me Knowing You

One of the earlier things I instigated when I took over running *Exchanges*, was to approach every author who had successfully published with us to share personal insights on this experience. I brought this in, partly because

I come from a tradition where user experience and perception feedback are crucial markers for value. However, another key driver were my own initial perceptions of a journal operating within its own bubble.

Hence, offering authors the opportunity to reflect and share their insights on areas such as how they found us, literally as well as operationally, was an essential part of my initial process review activities for *Exchanges*. Since then, we have continued to ask authors following each issue's publication for their thoughts, with the format becoming standardised some three years previously. Now while we do invite all contributing authors, not just those who are listed first, for their thoughts not all of them take up the offer. However, many of them do, and I'd like to express my deepest gratitude to those who have for generously taking the time. In recent months I myself was finally able to dedicate a block of time to collate and review the past few years of this feedback. So, for authors across all of our issues published during 2020-2022, seven in total, I had the opportunity to establish what general lessons there were to be learned (**Johnson, 2023a**). I am gratified that over half (53%) of all authors featured in these issues responded, which has permitted me to create a snapshot of the journal's perceptions within its core contributing community. ⁱ

Some of you will have already read a summary of the findings on the *Exchanges* blog (**Johnson, 2023b**), but I wanted to highlight them within the pages of the journal too. The headline results were wonderfully positive, and a testament to the continued efforts behind the scenes by my editors, and reviewers alike. Certainly, while I was relatively confident from my conversations with authors that the results would be broadly positive, I certainly was not expecting the comments to be quite *as* positive as they were. Personally, as Editor-in-Chief (EIC), I was especially interested in establishing how authors not only located but selected *Exchanges* as the potential home for their writings and was perhaps not unsurprised by the results. Personal recommendations and interactions with people associated with the journal are written large here, although a sizable minority of authors find us through direct searching too. As I have long suspected, the conduct and interactions my Board, editors and myself enjoy with scholars are crucial elements of the journal's success.

Now, while I won't belabour the full findings in detail, what these results have clearly demonstrated is how *Exchanges*, along with its EIC and Editorial Team, working within its present operational ethos are all strongly valued. ⁱⁱ I was especially gratified to see how *Exchanges'* operational transparency, interdisciplinary remit and editorial regime were identified by our authors as particular strengths of the journal. Certainly, where authors have experience of other journal editorial processes, *Exchanges* scored especially highly against any comparators.

These laudatory opinions are aspects which have come up in casual conversations and podcast interviews with past authors, but to have them so notably evidenced in formal feedback makes them all the more satisfying.

However, no journal, most certainly including *Exchanges*, is without its flaws. Much of my time as an EIC is spent dealing with and seeking to alleviate the recurrence of any problems with the journal and its workflows and processes. Here I must acknowledge that this author survey was by its nature biased towards those individuals who had successfully completed their transit to publication with us. Undoubtedly those potential authors whose work has yet to be accepted or were even declined by the journal may have fewer valedictory comments to offer. In this respect, I try to listen and learn from encounters with these individuals too, even if formally surveying is for the time being not on our agenda. Yet we are aware even those authors who are basking in the glow of a having successfully completed the editorial journey to publication will have experiences which are less than satisfactory. Within the survey sample though few such problematic areas were identified, with aspects of unsatisfied technical or procedural development being singled out for constructive criticism. Certainly, chief among them, continued efforts by myself and my Editorial Team in terms of publication turnaround were seen as being especially advantageous. I would certainly concur with that wish, and can assure our readers we are currently increasing efforts to address this issue.

Beyond their concerns though, we also looked to the future, asking authors what new services, options or features they would like to see developed by *Exchanges*. More themed special issues or thematic calls for papers were the aspects with most uniform degree of high interest, which is gratifying. I really relish working with colleagues on special issues, as editorial leads and associate editors alike. Special issues are also an area which I strongly believe allows us to not only deliver on our title's missions (**IAS, 2023a**), but to go beyond them and offer a far greater value to our academic communities. Themed issues are more of a challenge though, as we have had limited success with such calls in recent years when unallied to a special issue initiative.

In terms of features, while altmetrics were much desired, I was happy to report by the time of the report's collation that these had already been introduced to the journal platform at the start of 2023. Conversely, the ability to comment on articles had some modest support, but for now remains not technically possible on our iteration of OJS. Moreover, there are also operational and ethical questions around its introduction, although sites such as *PubPeer* do exist as an alternative approach. Not to

mention a plethora of *Facebook*, *Mastodon*, *Twitter* and other social media channels and groups dedicated to such discourse should scholars wish to open up a broader debate. ⁱⁱⁱ However, what support there is for this idea remains relatively low, and for now it remains an idea rather than a strategic objective for us to pursue.

I am pleased to say there was far more limited interest in terms of hard copies of the journal being produced. Pleased, because arranging print production is not currently that straightforward an endeavour and moreover would introduce new operational costs for us to satisfy in terms of production and distribution. I remain personally unconvinced as to its value, beyond acknowledging a certain satisfaction as an author in holding a tangible version of one's endeavours in your hands. However, I would be lying if I did not report the occasional direct approach from authors and readers alike enquiring about the possibility. Perhaps the exploration of a print on-demand service for the title is something we could delve into in the future alongside our fellow Warwick University Press Journal's family members.

Beyond the feedback, the survey and analysis have offered a number of lessons for the Editorial Team going forward, not least of which being a light-refresh of the survey instrument itself. Furthermore, the results have also underscored the importance for continued attention on increasing the visibility and breadth of *Exchanges* with potential contributors. I continue to strongly suspect there are many, many authors who would greatly value discovering *Exchanges*, but how and where we reach them has always been a challenge. I'm happy to report I am currently talking actively with the IAS itself along with fellow journal editors at Warwick about just how we raise our collective heads further above the parapet. Nevertheless, from this survey the overall message to myself and the team has been a clear and positive one: publishing with *Exchanges* is an excellent authorial experience even if authors need to know we exist before they can experience it!

Papers

Having dispensed with introductions and looking back, let's turn to face the future and consider this issue's articles. There is somewhat of a literary theme running through this issue, which is a rather serendipitous outcome rather than anything we actively planned. Naturally, I am still just as delighted as ever to present a range of intriguing scholarship and debate among which I expect most readers will find something to pique their interests.

Articles

We open the issue with a topic seemingly as relevant today as ever with the use of Orwellian language within modern British parliamentary debate.^{iv} In *Literature in Politics*, **Imogen Birkett** explores the relationship between the language of debates and that of Orwell's chillingly prescient and ever relevant *1984*. The author illustrates how fictional constructs and discourse is employed and deployed in support of political argument and counterarguments utilising Finlayson's Rhetorical Policial Analysis (RPA) approach in their analysis. In this way, the piece demonstrates how fiction is actively used as a strategy of political argument, and counters that perhaps greater care should be taken by the political class in its deployment. Additionally, the author also has taken particular care to append the dataset upon which her analysis is derived for consideration by future scholars in this field ([1](#)).

Our second article this issue comes from **Ambra Minoli**, and excitingly offers *An Aesthetic Portrayal of Republican-era Shanghai* framed within the work of Chinese intellectual Zhang Ruogu. From Ruogu's work Minoli draws on differing concepts of beauty in *cijimei* (exciting) and *podiamomei* (discordant) and locates them within the Shanghai experience. In this way, the author argues, it is possible to better understand the representation of Republican-era urban culture within the city, as framed within Ruogu's writing ([48](#)).

In our final article this issue, **Mark J. R. Wakefield** considers the work of John *McGahern: Lover of words, creator of worlds*. With particular attention to notions of utopian thinking and conscious liberation of false value notions, the author offers a rich exploration and illustration of each of McGahern's individual works. Wakefield considers both the resonances and departures from theme which exist within and between the corpus of McGahern's writing, and how this speaks to his literary legacy ([62](#)).

Critical Reflections & Conversations

We shift gear into our shorter papers one critical reflection and conversation piece alike. In our first, *The Use of Miro in Teaching Practice*, **Raad Khair Allah** explores the value and application of the Miro platform from a pedagogical and practical standpoint. Utilising a post-pandemic framing of Miro as a tool for motivating student literary creativity, the author illustrates how educators can also deploy Miro to increase student engagement and learning needs alike. The author is hopeful that this article can offer a valuable starting point for other educators and practitioners looking to utilise an effective online learning tool within their pedagogical practice ([77](#)).

Then, **Abdelhafid Jabri** brings us a conversations article featuring an interesting debate with an author who straddles disciplinary boundaries in their life and practice. This is embodied within a discussion with Moroccan medical scholar and literary author, *Intissar Haddiya*. Contrasting her work and academic life with career as a fiction writer, the discussion explores Haddiya's motivations, inspirations and output. It also critically considers the intersection between being a writer and a medical doctor, and crucially her hopes towards how her own experiences can serve as an inspiration for emerging female literary talent (92).

Books Reviews

Finally, closing out the issue, we bring you a book review – something you will note in the section below we are hoping to include more of in future volumes. In their *Review of Wang and Munday (2021) Advances in Discourse Analysis of Translation and Interpreting*, **Ran Yi** considers a text resplendent with rich 'cross-fertilisation of linguistics and sociology. In considering the contents, the author concludes the text will be of value to scholars and practitioners alike with an interest in communicative, social, and cultural discursive practices (99).

Calls for Papers

Looking forward to future issues, I thought it would be worthwhile to revisit our two main current calls for papers. Naturally, authors are also advised to keep an eye out between issues on our social feeds, announcements page and newsletter for additional contributor opportunities.

Authentic Interdisciplinarity: Anniversary Issue Call for Papers

Tying into the 10th anniversary issue of *Exchanges: The Interdisciplinary Research Journal* (Late Autumn 2023) we are still seeking contributions which seek to celebrate, challenge or define ideas around authentic interdisciplinarity. While the deadline for peer-reviewed articles has now passed, there is still time for authors to contribute a shorter piece for consideration. Potential authors looking for further inspiration to frame their articles are encouraged to download the full text of the call, which is available on the journal's site (**Exchanges, 2022a**). As is *Exchanges'* tradition, we will potentially consider any work which its authors choose to present which seeks to address the themes evident within this call. As always, authors are welcome to discuss their submission proposal with the Editor where desired.

Deadline:

- **Critical Reflections, Conversations (interviews) or Essays:
30th June 2023**

Open Calls for Paper

Thematic call aside, *Exchanges* continues to invite and welcome submissions throughout the year on any subject. Articles passing our review processes and accepted for publication will subsequently appear in the next available issue, which are normally published, in or after, late April and October each year. *Exchanges* readers have a broad range of interests, hence articles from any discipline or tradition written for a broad, scholarly audience will be considered. However, articles which explicitly embrace elements of interdisciplinary thought, praxis or application are especially welcome.

Manuscripts can be submitted for consideration as a peer-reviewed research or review article formats. Alternatively, manuscripts can be submitted for consideration within one of our editorially reviewed, shorter formats: e.g., as a critical reflection, conversation or book review.^v These latter formats are often able to transit to publication faster and make an ideal first article for authors who may not have published a scholarly article before or for those looking to embrace a vein of reflexivity into their professional output. Notably, both peer-reviewed and editorially reviewed articles in the journal receive extensive reader attention and downloads.

As *Exchanges* has a core mission to support the development and dissemination of research by early career and post-graduate researchers, we are especially pleased to receive manuscripts from emerging scholars or first-time authors. However, contributions from established and senior scholars are also welcomed too. Further details of our open call requirements can be found online (**Exchanges, 2022b**).

There are **no submission deadlines** as manuscripts for general consideration are accepted for review throughout the year.

Introducing Book Reviews

Exchanges has been approached a few times recently by authors asking if we would consider publishing critical and evaluative reviews of recent or significant texts. Looking back, over past issues, we have had articles which broadly fell into this category published as critical reviews but hadn't to date set up a separate category of book reviews. After a little consideration, we are happy to announce that from this issue onward we are formally inviting authors to submit reviews of worthy and ideally recently published academic research texts. These may be author monographs, multivolume works or even textbooks.

Book review articles should be crafted by authors to offer an introductory overview of the work under consideration to unfamiliar readers. Notably, as with all our articles, reviews must be addressed to a broad and interdisciplinary audience, meaning jargon and domain specific concepts or terms will need exploring, clarifying and unpicking within the text. Ideally, and initially, *Exchanges* is more interested in reviews of books published in the last few years, given their relative topicality and impact on scholarly discourse. However, we may consider reviews of older, established works or those of a more literary configuration too, but authors are advised to consult with the EIC ahead of submission to avoid disappointment. Conversely, authors looking to review a spread of literature within a field, would be expected to submit a review article.

Exchanges reserves the right to decline for publication any book review submissions which do not meet our base quality controls, journal scope or other policy requirements. Moreover, while book reviews will be subjected to an editorial review and revisions process before consideration for publication acceptance, they will not undergo external peer review.

We look forward to reading your future submissions to this new category.

Informal Approaches

As Editor-in-Chief I welcome approaches from potential authors to discuss prospective articles or article ideas for themed or regular issues of the journal. ^{vi} However, abstract submission or formal editorial discussions ahead of a submission are *not* a submission prerequisite, and authors may submit complete manuscripts for consideration without any prior communication. Authors are always encouraged to include a note to editor indicating the [article format](#) under which their manuscript is to be considered and any other matters they wish to bring to my attention.

All submitted manuscripts will undergo initial scoping and originality checks before normally progressing to editorial review. Those manuscripts seeking publication as research articles will additionally undergo one or more rounds formal peer-review by suitable external 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.

Advice for prospective authors appears frequently in our podcasts, editorials and throughout the *Exchanges* and IAS websites (**Exchanges, 2023b, IAS, 2023b**). Authors may wish to also familiarise themselves with *Exchanges'* journal policies for further information on how we handle author contributions (**Exchanges 2023c**).

Lastly, *Exchanges* is a diamond open-access, scholar-led journal, meaning there are no author fees or reader subscription charges and all content is freely available to anyone with an internet connection (**Fuchs & Sandoval, 2013; Bosman et al, 2021**). Furthermore, authors retain copyright over their work but grant the journal first publication rights as a submission requirement. *Exchanges* is 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.

Forthcoming Issues

Our next scheduled issue will be our tenth birthday anniversary issue in the mid-autumn. Naturally, we are looking forward to celebrating this milestone with our readers and contributors. However, hopefully ahead of that issue, we are looking to bring you our *Pluralities of Translation* special issue which is edging towards being publication ready. While we don't have an exact date for this one, we will be announcing it via our various social channels detailed below – so keep an eye out for it!

Acknowledgements

My thanks goes out to all our authors and reviewers for their vital and often timely intellectual contributions towards this issue. Without these people, producing a quality-assured, peer-reviewed, scholar-led publication would not be possible.

My continued thanks to the members of our Editorial Board for their suggestions for suitable reviewers during the production of this issue. I would like to note an especial thanks to **Truong Dinh**, University of Warwick who stood down from the Editorial Board in recent months. Dr Dinh was a member of the Board before I joined the title, and hence was one of our longest serving members. The Board and I, naturally wish them every future success!

Finally, my gratitude too to **Fiona Fisher** and the [Institute of Advanced Study](#) for their part in continuing to strategically and operationally supporting *Exchanges'* mission.

Continuing the Conversation

Exchanges has a range of routes, groups and opportunities for keeping abreast of our latest news, developments and calls for papers. Some of these are interactive, and we welcome comments from our readership and contributors alike. Some of these include:

Editorial Blog: blogs.warwick.ac.uk/exchangesias/

Linked.In Group: www.linkedin.com/groups/12162247/

Twitter: [@ExchangesIAS](https://twitter.com/ExchangesIAS)

Mastodon: [@ExchangesIAS](https://mastodon.social/@ExchangesIAS)

Email Newsletter

As well as these, our regular journal newsletter continues to appear at the start of each month, encapsulating all the latest news from the journal in one place. At time of writing the May issue will just have gone out, but you can register to receive future messages along with accessing all previous ones. Register your interest in subscribing via the link below.

www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/wa-jisc.exe?A0=EXCHANGES-ANNOUNCE

The Exchanges Discourse Podcast

We recorded a new episode of the podcast, chatting with **Dr Rebecca Stone**, a Warwick scholar and past author, in recent days which went live around the time this issue will be published. You will be able to find a link to this discussion – focussing on digital pedagogies, student experience and historical perspectives on the US presidency – on our *Exchanges Discourse* podcast homepage along with the journal site too. There is still a chance to enjoy the lengthier discussions of our recent panel debate on interdisciplinary publishing too – highly recommended for all newsletter readers.

In the meantime, we are in the process of scheduling conversations with authors who have appeared in Volume 10.2 and 10.3 during May, so make sure you are subscribed to the podcast to catch each and every episode as they drop.

All past episodes of the *Exchanges Discourse* podcast are hosted primarily on [Spotify for Podcasting](#), and can be found on [Spotify](#) and [Apple podcasts](#). All episodes are freely available to stream and listen, and a handy list of [past broadcast episodes](#) is also available

- **Podcast Home:**
podcasters.spotify.com/pod/show/exchangesias

- **Episode List:**

exchanges.warwick.ac.uk/index.php/exchanges/podcast

All episodes are free to stream and listen to at your leisure. We welcome approaches suggestions for topics we could address as part of future episodes, although, the easiest way to be invited to appear personally is to author an *Exchanges* article!

Contacting

As Editor-in-Chief I am also always pleased to discuss potential publications, outline special issue ideas or other collaborative opportunities. I also welcome invites to contribute to workshops, lectures or sessions talking about our activities or publication, authorial or editorial praxis. Similarly, I am delighted to contribute to any other publications on these topics too. You can find my contact details at the start of this editorial or via the journal's site.

Gareth has been *Exchanges'* Editor-in-Chief since 2018. With a doctorate in cultural academic publishing practices (NTU), he also possesses various other degrees in biomedical technology (SHU), information management (Sheffield) and research practice (NTU). His varied career includes extensive experience in running regional and national professional bodies, academic libraries, project management and applied research roles. He retains professional interests on power-relationships within and evolution of scholarly academic publication practice, within social theory and political economic frameworks. He has aptitudes in areas including academic writing, partner relationship management and effective communication praxis. An outspoken proponent for greater academic agency through scholar-led publishing, Gareth is also a Fellow of the *Higher Education Academy*, and regularly contributes to a various podcasts and vodcasts.



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Endnotes

ⁱ For those curious about the results of the reader survey we ran a year or so back, the response rate was disappointingly low – in single figures. As such the data gathered while modestly interesting, was insufficiently detailed from which to draw any insights. Clearly, a survey instrument was not a compelling or effective way to gather this sort of information for the journal.

ⁱⁱ If anyone is especially interested in the details of the feedback analysis, I'd direct you to the blog entry or to drop me a line directly.

ⁱⁱⁱ As a scholar with a healthy professional interest in scholarly communications of all types, part of me is curious if short form debates on platforms like *TikTok* or *Instagram Reels* also have their place in this discourse? I suspect not, but doubtless someone, somewhere is exploiting such platforms in this manner to great utility!

^{iv} That this issue has achieved publication on the same day as the UK Local Elections in 2023 is once more, mere coincidence.

^v **Word counts:** For the purposes of considering a submissions' word count, we do not typically include abstracts, references, endnotes or appendices. While submissions just over or under their word count will still be initially considered for review, any significantly in excess will normally be declined and returned to their authors with advice for revision.

^{vi} **Contact Details:** The EIC's address is given at the head of this article, and on *Exchanges'* Contact pages. <https://exchanges.warwick.ac.uk/index.php/exchanges/about/contact>