

General Guidelines for Book and Essay Reviews

1 Book Reviews

Length: The preferred length for book reviews is about 800 words. This may be extended slightly for a particularly important book, or reduced for one which does not need extended treatment.

Contents:

- **Background of the author** – an indication of the author(s) or organizer(s)' institutional/disciplinary background.
- **Purpose and organization of the book** – a succinct description of the author(s)' stated purpose *and* how the book is structured/organized. Reviewers should position the work by informing the reader about what is taking place in the topic area the book addresses, the state of knowledge of the subject area, and mention implications of the book for research policy, practice, or theory.
- **Summary and statement of claim(s)** – presentation of the author(s)' argument or claim(s), main concepts and theories. Reviews should be descriptive only to the extent that description is required for analysis.
- **Critique** – Description of the empirical sources and methodology used, and a critical evaluation of the author(s)' success in sustaining his/her claims and fulfilling the stated purpose. Reviews should mention the extent to which the book adds to or changes current thinking, or if it breaks new ground. Good criticism is aimed at the book's contents and not at the author(s). Both strengths and weaknesses of the work should be identified.

A good review may itself become a piece of theoretical work by developing the book author(s)' theoretical ideas, placing it within a larger intellectual or applied context and engaging with the book author(s) in dialogue. However, if the reviewer intends to enrol in an in-depth analysis it is advisable to opt for the format of an essay review (see below).

- **Relevance of the book** - The reviewer should identify the intended audience for the book and say who would find it useful. It is important to address the broadest possible range of readers bearing in mind the diverse readership of *Voluntas*. If the book's explicit focus is not directly related to *Voluntas* fields of research and practice, the review should point out relevant topics for *Voluntas* readers in the book's broader context.

2. Essay Reviews

Length: between 1,600 and 2,400 words.

Purpose: an *extended discussion* of the wider *disciplinary* issues of a book or collection of books that:

- Potentially has a major impact in terms of its empirical or theoretical implications in third-sector studies and practice;
- Opens up a new field or sub-field of research in third-sector studies with promising empirical or theoretical possibilities;

- Brings together existing approaches to the field of third-sector studies which propose a new field or sub-field;
- Proposes a reconsideration of existing knowledge and theories which deserves analysis to remap the field or sub-field of third-sector studies.

An essay review of a collection of books includes 2 to 4 books which may be from the same author, from different authors making compatible contributions within or making different contributions which open up possibilities within a field.

Style: the essay review implies that consideration of the book or collection of books is significant, and worth wide and serious attention. The criticism of the book should be made in terms of the field of third-sector studies and its sub-fields.

3. Form and Style

Please consider the following form and style for book and essay reviews:

- At the beginning of the review, include in the following order, the author, the *title*, the publisher, the place of publication, the year, the number of pages, the addenda (bibliography, appendix, etc.) and the price, as in the example below:

Sohail H. Hashmi (ed.), *Islamic Political Ethics. Civil Society, Pluralism and Conflict*, Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford, 2002, pp. 227, bibliography, index, \$18.95.

- Use double quotation marks around shorter quotes of 40 words or less. Set larger quotations off from the text in a freestanding block with no quotation marks. Acknowledge any change to the original quotation by putting [brackets] around any inserted text and indicating where *italics* have been added by the reviewer.
- Provide a page number for every quotation, e.g. (p. 17). In the case of edited volumes with multiple authors, please also mention the author of any quotations, e.g. (Hashmi, 5).
- Keep references to a minimum and present them at the bottom of the review. For a paraphrased statement simply put the author and the year, e.g. (Jones, 1991), for a direct quote refer to the page numbers supplied, e.g. (Jones: 1991, 56). References should include (in this order): the surnames and initials of all authors, the year of publication, the title of article, the name of the publication, the volume number and inclusive pages.
- Double-space throughout, including citations, and provide one-inch margins.
- Do not include footnotes or tables.
- At the end of the review, to the right of the page, include your name, institution and location.

4. Deadlines for Review Submissions

It is expected that reviews will be submitted within **60 days** of receipt of the book. Consult the book review editor if you have any questions or if you need extra time.

5. Editing of Review

The book review editor and journal editor reserve the right to edit the content for formatting, grammar, organization, and spelling. Otherwise, reviews will be considered “print ready.”



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