

FLATPAGE

Manuscript Assessment/Developmental Edit Report

Author name [REDACTED]

Project title "[REDACTED]"

Editor's Zoom availability (within 14 days of delivery)

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Client instructions

This is a draft of a journal article that I wrote ten years ago and I want to update it. I would like to seek help organizing and sharpening my arguments so that they fit in peer-reviewed journals. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Overview

Argument

The article presents several key developments in [REDACTED] [REDACTED], many with important links to political movements or beliefs, and reaches forward to the debates these changes introduced or influenced across the later part of the twentieth century. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Theoretical framework

The primary framework used for presenting this material is historical. There's an emphasis at the outset on historical periods and shifts between schools, decades, and influences. Such a frame is useful for presenting a range of material, as is the case here, but is less compelling for journals that prioritize articles organized around critical interventions or claims. One thing to consider for a revised version, then, is how this historical information supports a claim that you want to make in the text.

Intended audience

Given that the aim is to publish in either [REDACTED] or [REDACTED], the chief audience is scholars interested in [REDACTED]. Both journals are committed to a global understanding of [REDACTED], yet their main readers won't be specialists in [REDACTED]. Paying more attention to how to solicit readers' interest will be part of the revision process, I think. Two key questions to ask as you think about how to reframe the work are: Who are the best readers of this article? What ongoing scholarly conversation am I joining with this piece?

Editor's Assessment

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] To successfully navigate the review process, a different structure for the piece will be necessary, one that creates a more explicit hierarchy in terms of how the information is presented. Rather than a reflection, in other words, you'll want to organize the material under the rubric of argument, one which will then create an explicit logic of inclusion and generate a reading experience that is less exploratory. It is not always necessary to write in this particular way, of course, but it is the preferred style for the journals specifically mentioned. In the sections that follow, I will

gesture to some ways that I think significant revision will enhance the information you present.

Thesis

In its presentation iteration, the article has abundant information but is under-argued. What I mean by that is that it's not quite clear what the specific thesis you want to introduce about this subject might be. There are a number of compelling possibilities—[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]—but none of these yet rises to the level of specific contribution.

That is, however, not what this draft sets out to do! Right now, the draft offers an overview. If it is the case that you are committed to this broad overview of the terrain, then it would make sense to re-evaluate your choice of journals.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Organization

The article's current organization—numbered sections and subsections; bullet points—is more appropriate to American journals in the social sciences than the humanities. While sections are always useful to readers, I'd strongly recommend dropping the outline format, replacing them with sections that are shaped more by narrative. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Engagement with scholarship

I'll start with the question you posed, about bringing the scholarship up to date. The simple answer to that is, yes. The article needs to review current work on its subject, including exhibitions as well as monographs or articles, and shift the rhetoric of recent accordingly.

[REDACTED]

Authorial tone and voice

[REDACTED]

Images

I agree that the total number of illustrations will need to decline—significantly, in fact, from the more than sixty currently referenced—but the choice of which images to retain will depend on the way the argument is revised. [REDACTED]

[Redacted text block]

Title

It is my sense that the title will need to change as your argument comes more powerfully to the fore. [Redacted text block]

Article sections

Introduction

It is often the case that editors know that they are going to reject an article after the first two or three pages, so it is crucial that these pages communicate several things quickly and clearly:

- the article's topic *and* contribution
- the ongoing scholarly conversation the article is engaging (or, if it is reviving a conversation that has fallen silent, the reason for starting it up again)
- the author's commitment to the argument
- something about its methodology.

[Redacted text block]

Sections

Once the new focus is determined, it will be easy (I promise!) to determine how to reorganize the sections. There will be less material to survey and some will almost organically fall out of the article. Giving each section a title, one that communicates to readers what it argues, will also help establish priorities and connections.

[Redacted text block]

Conclusion

[Redacted text block]

Next steps and revision plan

Before beginning to revise, I'd strongly recommend spending some time immersed in articles on related topics that these two journals have published in the last few years. This will help to clarify the kind of structure they expect (and reward with publication) from articles. [Redacted text]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Then I'd look and see if there's new research on the article's new focus. What are scholars saying about these works? If there's no new work on them, why might they be ignored? Do you agree with what's been said? Frustrated by what's left out?

[Redacted]

Editor's conclusion

Thank you very much for sharing your work with me. I learned a great deal from reading it and look forward to our conversation. I hope, too, that the above comments will prove generative as you work on the next iteration of the piece. There is so much material to develop and I'll be excited to see where you decide to take this next!

Sincerely,
Elizabeth