

THE JOURNAL OF AESTHETICS AND ART CRITICISM

We are writing in response to your call for public comment on Plan S, the Open Access initiative. Although we shall be brief, we trust that you will understand that we do not take lightly the issue of accelerated open access.

We are the officers of the American Society for Aesthetics and the editors of The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, which is the official scholarly journal of the Society. We have published without interruption since 1941. We are a specialized field, with society membership of fewer than 1000 members. Despite the name of the society, the majority of the researchers published in the Journal are from outside the United States.

While some of the work that we publish is funded by grants that would fall within the scope of cOAlition S, many of the research articles that we publish are not grant funded. We are an interdisciplinary humanities journal, and we currently operate under the rules of “Green” access.

Your plan offers us two equally bad choices: cut off publishing of any scholar receiving funding from cOAlition S sources, or become an open access journal, depriving us of our primary source of income. The plan you had devised, Plan S, will fall far short of sustaining the income currently received by our current publishing model.

The first of the two options would mean that a number of scholars, especially those based in the U.K. and Europe, would no longer send us their work. Although we are currently the highest-rated journal for academic impact in the area of aesthetics and philosophy of art, these scholars could no longer turn to publication in the Journal for the sake of tenure, promotion, and the ranked standing of their own academic departments. For our field, your plan will have a decidedly negative impact on a number of scholars, especially junior scholars, whose careers are advanced by publishing with us.

The alternative proposal is to expect us to move to full open access in order to continue to accept the work of scholars funded by cOAlition S resources. This is the equivalent of asking us to surrender the income base that makes our work possible. Besides funding multiple annual conferences, we support many small and regional conferences dealing with aesthetic theory and philosophy of art; many of them are interdisciplinary in nature, providing scholarly opportunities for many individuals who will never receive funding from cOAlition S sources.

In short, your plan is a disaster for small, specializing societies, especially those in the humanities and those dealing with the arts. We urge you to delay implementation of your proposal until you have adequately addressed the unintended consequences of your plan.

Sincerely,

Robert Stecker and Theodore Gracyk, Co-Editors, The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism

Susan Feagin, President, American Society for Aesthetics

Julie Van Camp, Secretary-Treasurer, American Society for Aesthetics