

Editorial

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"The reviews are thoughtful, detailed, and interesting. You are providing an important service to the qualitative research community" (Publisher).

The special issue published today (which comes in addition to the regular issues in January, May, and September) is the fourth one dedicated to *FQS* Reviews. Over 30 books are reviewed in *FQS* 7(2). Since we started *FQS* Reviews in April 2000, about 300 reviews and review essays had been published, written by approximately 150 authors from more than 20 countries: as mentioned in the epigraph, *FQS* has become an important resource for qualitative researchers also as far as book reviews are concerned. [1]

But we are not only pleased about the number of reviews published. Our interest is more generally to give our readers detailed information about books and the fields of research to which they refer. In our opinion, book reviews play a crucial role, similar to peer review for manuscripts submitted for publishing; as critical commentaries on published work they help to secure the quality of scientific publishing. [2]

Using the Internet as a "scholarly review resource" (see MEY, 2006 for further details) was an important aim of *FQS* Reviews from the outset. Our hope is that book reviews are no longer regarded as "second-class citizens of scientific literature," a connotation they often carry in print journals. [3]

The issue published today should be another step to ensuring that they are much more than this, and others will follow: there are currently about 30 [reviews in preparation](#), and many German- and English-language books wait for new reviewers (see <http://www.qualitative-research.net/fqs/book-reviews/review-liste-e.htm>). In addition to cooperating agreements with more than 20 publishers from Austria, Germany, Great Britain, North America, and Switzerland (see MEY, 2002), we are currently in discussions with publishers from Spain and South America with a view to including Spanish books in *FQS* Reviews in the future. [4]

This means new authors are welcome to contact us and to publish in *FQS*. In the past, authorship has resulted in close and extended collaboration: there is a growing number of authors publishing more than once in *FQS* (about a third of total of 150 book reviewers have published with us at least twice, and in the current issue this is the case for around half of the reviewers). Additionally, former reviewers became *FQS* editors: Kip JONES and Iain LANG, who co-edited this issue, first contacted *FQS* to review books: Kip's first review was published in 2000 (JONES, 2000), Iain's first in 2003 (LANG, 2003); Kip joined the editorial staff in 2001, Iain in 2004. Daniel DOMÍNGUEZ FIGAREDO, Associate Editor

FQS Reviews (Spanish), published his first review essay in *FQS* 7(2) in both English and Spanish. [5]

That book reviews have the power to cause debates is obvious in the case of a review essay, written by Jaan VALSINER, who discussed a book on "Neue Medien in den Sozial-, Geistes- und Kulturwissenschaften. Elektronisches Publizieren und Open Access" [New Media in the Humanities. Electronic Publishing and Open Access: Current State and Future Perspectives] (MRUCK & GERSMANN, 2004); a response by Wolff-Michael ROTH is published today (ROTH, 2006a), and others will follow. As editors of *FQS* we especially appreciate this debate, because we have signed the [Budapest Open Access Initiative](#) and have supported the international open access movement from the very beginning (see MRUCK, GRADMANN & MEY, 2004). It is our hope to initiate a debate about the concept, practice and importance of open-access publishing more deeply, because it is pretty clear that without the decision to publish *FQS* as an open access journal things would be completely different as far as the variety and reach of *FQS* are concerned. Currently more than 6,100 colleagues have subscribed to receive the monthly newsletter (which has contained news about open access since 2003). Authors publishing in *FQS* get in touch with an international community, as we know from the analysis of the access data and from individual responses. Two responses, one from a young German colleague and one from an experienced American researcher, should serve as examples:

"... By the way, I owe the invitation to the events to *FQS*. Two days after my article was published I received a mail from [...], India. Somebody read my article and obviously enjoyed it ..."

"... We believe that it is important to make this paper available to a wider audience and we know that we can achieve this goal through your journal because of its readership and reach. This is why publication in *FQS* is so important. [...] Just to illustrate the power of your journal's reach, [...] I continue to receive many emails from novice [...] researchers from literally every continent who have read the [...] paper that you published ..." [6]

The exchange possible in an open access journal is also evident in the continuing debate on constructionism that started with an interview with Ken GERGEN (MATTES & SCHRAUBE 2004) published in *FQS* 5(3), and which was commented upon by Carl RATNER and Barbara ZIELKE. In *FQS* 7(2), Jürgen VAN OORSCHOT and Lars ALLOLIO-NÄCKE try to clarify the theoretical positions important for this debate and suggest a possible integration of the former discussion—which probably means not the end of the debate but a new starting point. [7]

FQS 7(2) additionally contains a single contribution, a conference report, and several new articles, belonging to the *FQS* Debate "Qualitative Research and Ethics," which started in 2004. In a way the articles published today are a special issue within the special issue; see, for an introduction, Wolff-Michael ROTH's

Editorial "Responsibility, Solidarity, and Ethics in Cogenerative Dialogue as Research Methods" (ROTH, 2006b). [8]

We would like to thank all who worked with us on this special issue and hope that you, the readers, will find the reading material interesting! The invitation of ROTH at the end of his Editorial to join the ongoing debate on "Qualitative Research and Ethics" fits FQS 7(2) in general: we hope that readers take this new issue "as an occasion to continue the debate wherever they are located (positioned!) in the world." [9]

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