

A still life painting of a desk. In the center, a white marble bust of a person with a large head is the focal point. To its left is a small, dark, realistic head sculpture. To the right is a dark glass bottle. The desk is cluttered with various papers, some open and some folded, and a quill pen. The background is a textured, brownish-grey wall. The entire scene is framed by a dark, ornate border.

PUBLISHING YOUR FIRST RESEARCH ARTICLE

BISA PGN Workshop

Prof. Maria Mälksoo, University of Copenhagen

17 April 2025

Leidener Meister (Jan Lievens?)

Bücherstilleben, um 1628

Zahlreiche, sichtlich gebrauchte Folianten stapeln sich unordentlich auf einem Tisch unterhalb eines Wandbretts mit antiken Gipsabgüssen und einer Tintenflasche und deuten auf die Vergänglichkeit alles Irdischen, auf eitle Gelehrsamkeit und deren Hervorbringungen hin.

Still Life with Books, ca. 1628

Numerous visibly well-used tomes have been piled untidily on a table. Antique plaster casts and a bottle of ink are displayed on the shelf above, hinting at the transience of all things mortal, at vain scholarship and what it brings forth.

OUTLINE

- How to get published? (Write that article and send it out.)
- What should be your publishing strategy during the PhD?
- What are the right outlets for your work? How would you know?
- The intricacies of publishing in academic journals



Post



Neil Renic

@NC_Renic



Writing is made up of a lot of things. Research is writing. Thinking is writing. Storming off, eating a sandwich, lying face down on the floor, staring at birds outside your window is writing.

8:10 PM · Apr 10, 2025 · **34K** Views



5



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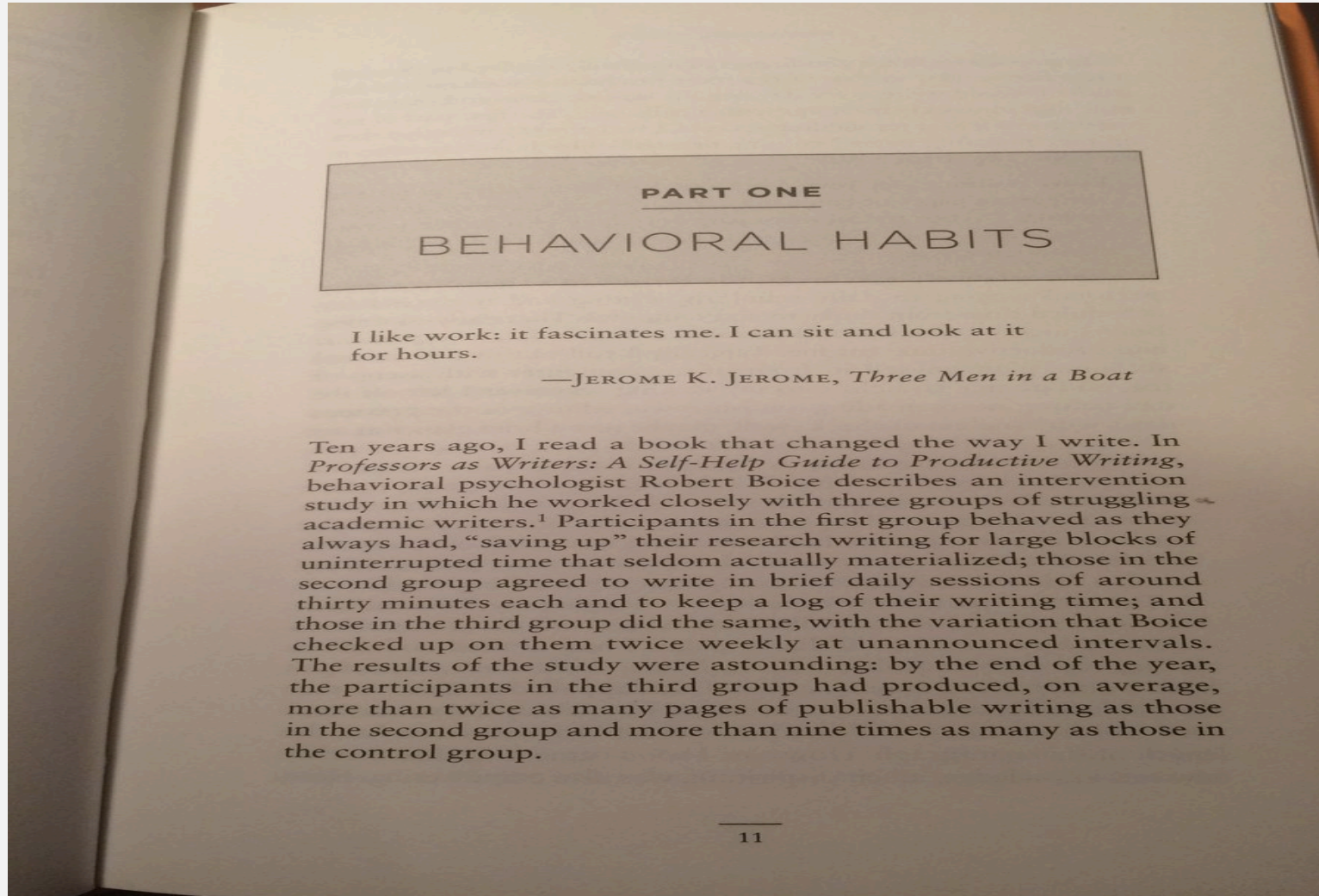


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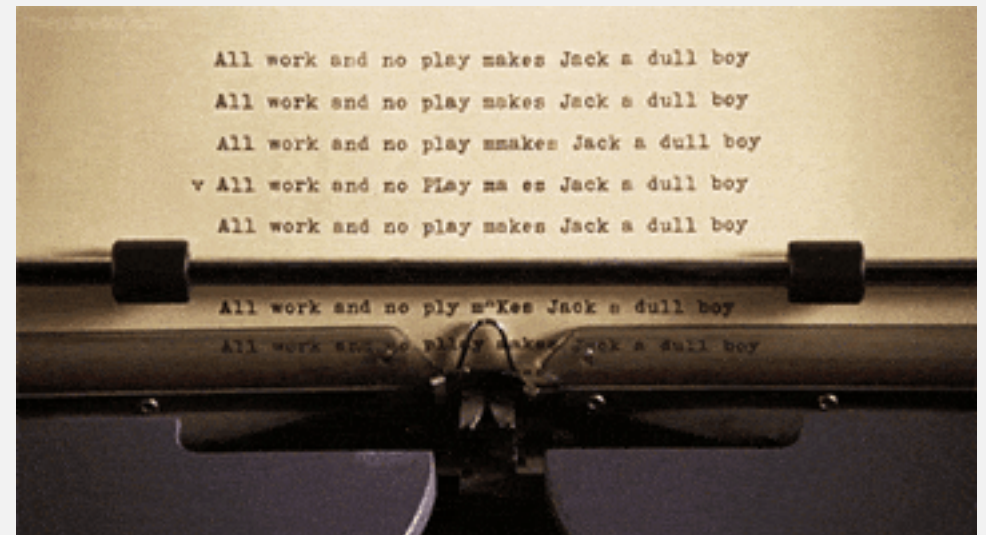
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IF YOU WISH TO BE A WRITER, WRITE. (EPICTETUS)



TOP TIPS

- Schedule short, daily writing sessions every working day
- Limit the time you spend writing
- Keep a writing journal ('scheduled writing'; 'actual writing')
- Set feasible goals by dividing each writing project into a series of manageable tasks
- End each writing session on time
- Get creative
- Reward yourself
- Avoid distractions and prioritize writing
- Check-in
- From a '[drafting shuttle](#)' to a clean document



HOW TO WRITE PRODUCTIVELY?

- Make a schedule and stick to it: you *need* to make time to write
- Set clear goals (project goals, all sorts)
- Keep track of your work
- Reward yourself
- Build good habits
- Make yourself accountable: if necessary, establish a collective agraphia group who can support you – and keep check on your progress (or slacking)

❖ Words of wisdom by **Paul J. Silvia**, ***How to Write a Lot: A Practical Guide to Productive Academic Writing*** (or *How to Write More Productively During the Normal Work Week With Less Anxiety and Guilt*) (Washington, DC: APA Books, 2007).



WRITING A JOURNAL ARTICLE

- You need to learn a formula
- Start with writing **an outline**: how long do you want your paper to be? How much attention do you want to give to past research? Should this paper be a short report/review article or a full-length research article?
- A **good title** balances generality and specificity
- Include **all search keywords in your abstract**
- Start your **introduction** with an overview of the article (1-2 para-s)
- The intro should: (i) provide the rationale for the article; (ii) set up your puzzle in an interesting way; (iii) provide the framework for the reader to understand the rest of the article.

HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT HOME FOR YOUR ARTICLE?

- Where would you like to get published?
- Why in these particular outlets? What determines your choice?
- What are the key outlets you regularly follow/cite/get inspired by?
- Where do your academic heroes publish their work?
- Are you after *solving* a problem or rather *identifying* one, theory-testing or concept/theory-generation?



THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Generalist and specialist journals
- Beware of predator publishers
- Review the editorial teams and editorial boards
- Read **very closely** the journal remit and scope descriptions to find your closest fit
- Line up alternative venues (in order of preference) for your manuscript
- Learn distinct submission types your preferred outlet accepts (e.g., full research articles; review articles; book reviews; theory notes; case notes; field notes; junior-senior scholarly exchanges)
- Maybe also consult [Politics/IR](#) journal rankings and impact factors: good indicators of your piece's 'afterlife'

RIS Review of International Studies

Editors

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Sebastian Kueppel
Nancy McAlone
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Dafina Simanungkalit



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SOME CONTEXT

- Submissions per annum: 350-375
- Desk reject rate: 70%
- Average screening time (desk reject or into review): ca 4 days
- In review: average time to initial decision: 80 days
- Last year's total time from submission to publication (not including author revision periods): 128 days

SENDING STUFF OUT WELL

1. Pay attention to the formal remit of the journal
2. Be mindful of what sort of work your target journal is likely to publish
3. Estimate how big your idea is (i.e. is it for a generalist or a specialist journal?)
4. **Write for the audience, not for the journal**
5. Know your incentive system: you have to be strategic about where you send your work (but these strategies might vary for PhD students, recent graduates, tenure-track early career and mid-career scholars)
6. Know what you can about the place to which you are sending your work

GETTING PUBLISHED

- Establish a **peer network** which can be used for:
 - reviewing abstracts before writing the next big thing (i.e. article, grant proposal) or 'dumb-idea-check';
 - reviewing a second draft of a manuscript;
 - going over your to-do list when you get an R&R;
 - reading your completed revised draft of R&R (and your covering letter to the editors);
 - read the title and abstract in the proofs of accepted articles.

NB! Be ready to reciprocate



REVISING AND RESUBMITTING: GENERAL ADVICE

- Read the letter (and reviews) immediately
- Allow yourself to vent first, BUT put an expiration date to negativity
- Try to learn from the reviews: absorb every detail, and follow the instructions when they are clear (this increases your likelihood of eventually getting published)
- While you do *not* need to slavishly follow all suggestions for revision, you need to address all the points raised – sometimes by providing reasons for *not engaging* the criticism.
- Some [food for thought](#) on the anonymity in the review process



MASTERING THE R&R

- Make a to-do list
- Get your to-do list read by someone from your peer support network
- Edit the to-do list according to the feedback
- Do the to-do list
- Get one more check
- Resend the article
- DO NOT treat R&R as a virtual acceptance: the editor of the journal shows interest, but no commitment with giving you an R&R

DEALING WITH REJECTION IN PUBLISHING

1. **Minimise the chances of rejection:** send your work to the right journals; format it according to the journal house style; make sure you've got the word length and journal remit right; **make sure you make your contribution to the literature crystal clear in the article.**
2. **Anticipate rejection** to dampen the emotional impact when the actual rejection hits you.
3. **Get past the rejection:**
 - Take care of yourself
 - Take care of the article



THE DUTY TO CARE (A NOTE TO SELF)

- Focus on what makes you happy outside of your academic work
- Academic publishing is a hurdle race, but you can still **define your own happiness and success**
- General reflections on dealing with failure: <http://relationsinternational.com/ever-feel-afraid-questions-failure/>
- <http://relationsinternational.com/embracing-our-failures/>

TAKING CARE OF THE (REJECTED) ARTICLE

[Laura Sjoberg's do's and don'ts:](#)

1. *Don't* take it as a statement of your personal or professional worth
2. *Don't* throw the baby out with the bathwater
3. Deal with it
4. Be careful how you respond (if at all) to a rejection letter
5. ***Don't* resend the article to another journal without editing it at all**
6. *Do* try to learn from the reviews and the letter from the editor
7. When to [save or kill the article](#)?
8. There is always the last resort of [terminating the piece](#) and laying it to rest in your desk drawer



SECRETS OF ARTICLE PUBLISHING SUCCESS

- Master the article formula
- Submit pristine first drafts, *but* beware of endlessly perfecting the first draft
- Craft excellent resubmission letters

Decide what you want to do.

Then decide to do it.

Then do it.

William Zinsser, *On Writing Well: The Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction*
(New York: HarperCollins, 2001), p. 285.

JUST DO IT.

