

Editorial

Herewith the second issue of *Prometheus* in its new colours. Our first issue with Pluto Journals (March 2020) coincided with the onslaught of Covid-19 and all the horrors this has brought. One would have thought that an academic journal would be reasonably insulated from such dislocation with just about everyone accustomed to working from home. But the supply line is long and winding and there are often no alternative paths. Problems are everywhere. Kush Westwood, our production editor, succumbed to the virus and has soldiered on regardless. We wish her a complete recovery from a particularly foul disease.

In the trusty hands of Simon Dunn, the *Prometheus* website (www.prometheusjournal.co.uk) continues its development. The challenge is great. For reasons best known to itself, JSTOR, our distributor, gives access to *Prometheus* material published after 2013, but refuses to make available material published between 1983 (when *Prometheus* was launched) and 2013. So, *Prometheus* must do this itself on its own website. Some advised making the material freely available: others advised setting a charge. We settled on an uneasy compromise, a Pay What You Want shop, which is just as happy if you offer £0 as if you offer a greater sum. We will see how this works.

This issue begins with a paper from Silas Mvulirwenande and Uta Wehn on water, or rather frugal innovation in a watery context. The paper should have been published in the March issue of *Prometheus*, but became a casualty of my incompetence. The paper looks at programmes to encourage the frugal innovation that can have such a positive impact on development. Incubation is the key, but so, too, is the innovation environment. These provide the framework for Mvulirwenande and Wehn; the work of Via Water, a Dutch organisation providing water for African cities, provides the example. Mvulirwenande and Wehn find that innovation capabilities in developing economies tend to be weaker than those in developed countries. Consequently, incubation programmes must compensate by allowing frugal innovators to make competitive use of local knowledge and creative ideas.

Michal Tal-Socher and Adrian Ziderman investigate the data sharing policies of academic journals, and compare practices across disciplines. They have examined the websites of 150 journals, drawn from 15 disciplines, to find the policies of these journals on data sharing. The biomedical sciences lead the way in encouraging data sharing: arts and humanities trail. In between are the social sciences and, perhaps surprisingly, the physical sciences. Where data should be kept so they are available for sharing is a perpetual problem – specialized repositories, general repositories or publishers' hosting areas being the most common solutions. The large academic publishers are not particularly supportive of data sharing.

Productivity in drug discovery is poor and has been for decades. One possible reason for low productivity is that it is still difficult for drug researchers to evaluate and select physiological mechanisms that could be drug targets. Ryo Okuyama and Masaharu Tsujimoto suppose that the experience of researchers in investigating disease causes and existing drug action mechanisms contributes to enhancing their insights into druggable physiological mechanisms. Their methodology includes comparison of the successful development of a new drug with an unsuccessful attempt. Inevitably, management practices have a part to play and are scrutinised.

Kjetil Hatlebakk Hove investigates funding at a defence research establishment in Norway. To what extent is research there influenced by the source of funding? It was anticipated that external funding was more likely than internal to compromise research. In fact, it does not, though external funders do like to badge findings from the research they have funded with the logo of the government research laboratories. Far from external funders expecting the 'right' results, Hove finds a reverse effect: researchers can have a significant influence on research funders.

Lastly, Eric Dahlin looks at the importance of feedback to and from the stages of innovation. He works with a sample of 113 large biopharmaceutical firms. The key findings are that product development generates positive feedback for product implementation and *vice versa*, and engaging in activities at multiple, alternative stages simultaneously generates benefits at the focal stage. Reciprocity between stages provides compelling evidence for the importance of seeing innovation through the lens of relational theory. Interviews with industry informants confirm the importance of fluidity between innovation stages and of fostering social interactions and communication among those involved in innovation.

And then we have a handful of book reviews and a lengthier review essay by Robert Holton of Bernard Stiegler's new book, *The Age of Disruption*. Holton seizes the opportunity and says a good deal about Covid-19. A few of the book reviews are embarrassingly ancient, their publication delayed by our transition from Taylor & Francis to Pluto Journals as our publisher. Apologies to the reviewers. Our current book review editor, Steven Umbrello, is wonderfully efficient and is sure to see that this embarrassment is not repeated.

Stuart Macdonald
General editor