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## Academic Freedom and the Digital Revolution

By Ashley Dawson

In spring 2009, the University of Michigan Press sent out a letter by e-mail to its authors announcing the end of business as usual at the press. Having entered into an agreement with the university library at Michigan, UM Press, the letter stated, had initiated “a transformative scholarly publishing model” in which all publications are to be made available primarily in digital format, with print-on-demand versions of texts available to bookstores, institutions, and individuals (Pochoda, letter). Long-term plans outlined by editor Philip Pochoda call for books to be “digitized and available to libraries and customers world-wide through an affordable site-license program,” as most academic journals currently are. The announcement stressed the revolutionary potential inherent in the shift online by suggesting that digital publications will be “candidates for a wide range of audio and visual digital enhancements—including hot links, graphics, interactive tables, sound files, 3D animation, and video.” This is not, in other words, simply a change in models of distribution, but also potentially a radical metamorphosis in

modes of scholarship in the humanities.

Over the last thirty years, university presses such as Michigan have been pushed by academic administrators to act increasingly as for-profit publishing ventures rather than like the promoters of heterodox scholarly inquiry that they were originally intended to be (Waters 5). This is but one aspect of a multifaceted transformation of the university that critics such as Sheila Slaughter and Gary Rhoades have termed academic capitalism. As universities have cut back funding for both publishers and tenure-stream faculty appointments, turning steadily more to the precarious labor of graduate students and adjuncts to staff their core courses, the academic presses have become the *de facto* arbiters of hiring, tenure, and promotion in the increasingly pinched world of the humanities and social sciences. The result, as a well-known letter published by Stephen Greenblatt during his tenure as president of the Modern Language Association in 2002 attests, is a crisis in scholarly publishing. As Greenblatt put it, many junior faculty members “find themselves in a maddening double bind. They face a challenge—under inflexible time constraints and with very high stakes—that many of them may be unable to meet successfully, no matter how strong or serious their scholarly achievement, because academic presses simply cannot afford to publish their books.” As Greenblatt’s letter suggested, it has become harder to publish in general, and it is particularly difficult for junior faculty members to find publishers for their manuscripts. At the same time, the remorseless creep towards informal labor in both private and public institutions of higher education in the United States has made it increasingly necessary to crank out books in order to find and keep a job.

The increasingly straitened circumstances of university presses have an impact on academic freedom, although that effect may not be immediately apparent. Key to the first document on academic freedom, Arthur O. Lovejoy and John Dewey’s “1915 Declaration of Principles on Academic Freedom and Academic Tenure,” was an attempt to differentiate the university from a business venture and teaching from private employment. As recent discussions of academic capitalism have documented, the walls separating academia from the dominant mode of information capitalism have been systematically dismantled over the last three decades. This

shift has been particularly apparent in the sciences, which have become an important source of proprietary knowledge production intended to fill university coffers (Washburn). For sectors of the university in which knowledge does not take a concrete, commodifiable form, academic capitalism has meant hard times. In humanities publishing, this transformation of the university has inevitably affected academic freedom. The three key components of academic freedom laid out by Lovejoy and Dewey's declaration include "freedom of inquiry and research; freedom of teaching within the university or college; and freedom of extramural utterance and action" (AAUP 299). Although the publishing crisis cannot be described as a form of explicit censure of inquiry or research, it nonetheless constitutes a structural transformation that imperils academics' ability to disseminate their research. While the crisis may not directly obstruct academic research, that research will simply not get done unless there are venues in which to broadcast the results of such research. The crisis in publishing, it could therefore be argued, menaces academic freedom in a far more insidious and sweeping manner than the high-profile attacks of organizations such as Students for Academic Freedom on prominent radical scholars. In this regard, the publishing crisis may fruitfully be compared to the increasing casualization of teaching in higher education, whose destructive impact on academic freedom has been amply demonstrated in the context of recent labor struggles such as the one that unfolded at New York University in 2005–06 (Krause).

The kinds of digital production and dissemination being pioneered by the University of Michigan Press are germane to issues of academic freedom to the extent that they address the crippling crisis of academic publishing. The potential for significantly democratizing knowledge represented by such developments cannot be gainsaid despite the enduring significant inequalities of access to digital information. We are, however, a long way from such developments becoming the norm. Moreover, there has, to date, been relatively little theorization of this tectonic shift in the modes of knowledge production and dissemination (Hall 16). Professional organizations such as the AAUP have an important role to play in this transformation of publishing. According to a recent survey conducted by the Modern Language

Association, 40.8 percent of the doctorate-granting institutions that responded had no experience evaluating refereed articles in electronic format, and 65.7 percent have no experience evaluating monographs in electronic format. Protocols for evaluating collaborative scholarship, an increasing norm within digital research and publishing, have still not been established (Smith). The situation, in other words, is still very much in flux. Sustaining academic freedom—in the relatively expansive definition of the term I propose adopting—should involve intervening in the nascent realm of digital scholarship to ensure that emerging protocols are based on considerations not simply of freedom but also justice.

### **The Crisis in Publishing Is a Crisis for Academic Freedom**

As most people involved in higher education know by now, academic work has grown increasingly precarious over the last three decades. The story of the downsizing of the professoriate has been told in many places, and will not be recapitulated at length here. For our purposes, it is sufficient simply to note the impact of this transformation on publishing. As the ranks of the professoriate came to be staffed increasingly with precarious workers, publication became more and more important. For those working their way into the profession as graduate students, it is now never too early to start attending conferences and sending off articles to scholarly journals. While this pressure has admittedly produced some at times risibly abstruse scholarship, it has also led to a lot of innovative work. As Tim Brennan recently observed, one has one's most unorthodox ideas as a graduate student, before one is fully socialized—or, should I say, domesticated—by one's disciplinary formation.

The problem here is not so much with the quality of the scholarship, though, but rather with the quantity. As the number of full-time positions has decreased, competition for these slots has of course increased. Just as in other sectors of the labor market, an economically and politically induced glut of disposable workers has placed increasing power in the hands of managers. University administrators have consequently remorselessly upped the publication ante as they seek to strengthen their institution's position in the competitive rankings game. Just as higher

rates of rejections make their institutions look more selective and hence more prestigious on the undergraduate level, so more publications from university faculty stand to improve the institution's position in all-important national rankings and branding wars. In countries such as Australia and Great Britain, the continuing life of the university even rides on such publications since central government funding hinges on the quantity and quality of faculty publications as measured by benchmarking mechanisms such as the Research Assessment Exercise. If benchmarking is not quite so extreme domestically as a result of the United States' mixed public and private educational system, the pressures for publication are equally if not more intense. Even though research universities only constitute one-fiftieth of all institutions of higher education, the influence of the intensifying drive to publish brought to bear on faculty at such elite and well-endowed institutions has trickled all the way down to the nation's community colleges.

In tandem with this pressure on junior scholars, university presses face crisis conditions. Once upon a time there was a virtuous circle linking scholars who needed to publish their research to well-funded university publishing houses that communicated such research to university libraries. These libraries would in turn purchase the scholarly journals and monographs where research was published. No more. Both private and public universities have cut funding for their publishing ventures, forcing them to bear considerations of marketability increasingly in mind when accepting projects for publication (Waters 5). Meanwhile, the cost of subscriptions to journals in the sciences and medicine has risen precipitously, siphoning off funding for book purchases. NYU's library, for example, spends 25 percent of its budget on journals from the European publisher Elsevier-North Holland and another 25 percent on journals from two or three additional for-profit publishers who realize libraries are unlikely to terminate a subscription to a prestigious scientific or medical journal (Waters 29). The University of California system currently devotes less than 20 percent of its budget to books, for instance, and now often recommends that only one copy of a book be purchased throughout the system rather than allowing each campus to purchase a copy (Waters 36). Although academic

presses are not expected to turn the kind of profit of a Bertelsmann subsidiary, their revenues have been hard-hit by diminishing orders from libraries and by the online trade in used textbooks (Pochoda, interview). Academic publishers currently sustain large losses in the publication of scholarly monographs, recouping this money only through their site-licensed journal publications (Wissoker).

What we face, in other words, is a kind of perfect storm in academia. Just as more scholars need to publish their work to win jobs, tenure, and promotion, university presses have been downsized. Moreover, as Phil Pochoda of the University of Michigan Press pointed out, because of the increasingly inflated requirements for tenure and promotion, the sheer number of scholars seeking to publish has multiplied many times over while the number of academic presses has remained virtually the same over the last three decades (Pochoda, interview). As a result, everyone has been doing more with less. Academic presses are publishing historically high numbers of books, but they are selling an average of only 275 copies of each title, as against an average of 1,250 thirty years ago (Waters 36). Faced with these difficulties, publishers have done an admirable job of maintaining their commitment to cutting edge inquiry. Nonetheless, it is increasingly hard for anyone except a small number of academic superstars to publish original work in book form (Hall 5). It's become an open secret among young faculty members that you need to have some sort of an introduction to a publisher from a (preferably famous) mentor just to get your foot in the door these days. Even with such help, however, work that does not play on the latest buzzwords is in most cases destined for the scrapheap.

Guarantees of freedom of research and inquiry similar to those to which the AAUP has been committed historically are increasingly hollow under these conditions. If one cannot find meaningful outlets in which to publish one's research, such work will never have a chance to provoke public debate and, potentially, to need the protections afforded by the protocols of academic freedom. The rights for which the AAUP fights therefore stand to become a dead letter unless the crisis in publishing is addressed. The AAUP's dedication to addressing the conditions of faculty teaching, research, and publication—as well as the public good in

general—suggest that the crisis in publishing should be a matter of concern for the organization. Yet there has been little focused attention paid to the double bind faced by junior faculty members to date. This may perhaps stem from the largely negative definition of professional autonomy defended by the AAUP: freedom *from* meddling is a core tenet of organizational policy, just as it is of the liberal constitutional order in the United States in general. The question that arises under present conditions, however, is whether such negative definitions, as valuable as they are, have ceased to have meaning for the vast majority of contemporary scholars given the structural inequalities that determine the conditions of publication and individual utterance today.

### **The Digital Commons**

Faced with this crisis, many scholars have begun to question current models of publishing. Why, for example, should faculty members struggle to get their research accepted by scholarly journals that continue to appear in paper form but that are predominantly read through restricted, subscription-based online databases such as Project Muse and JSTOR? Since few scholars in the humanities and social sciences expect to turn a profit on their writing, why not make that writing as accessible as possible by avoiding proprietary models of distribution? If this holds true for publications in journals, why should it not also hold for book-length publications as well? Why not simply move the whole dog-and-pony show online, making sure that scholars rather than publishers or administrators retain control of publication protocols?

Such questions are particularly germane given the sweeping changes initiated by digital technologies. As knowledge production has grown more central to the economy of developed countries, production of and control over intellectual property has come to be a defining political and economic issue. A strong movement to maintain and expand open access to what is increasingly described as a networked or digital commons has developed—although the term movement is perhaps inappropriate since it implies a level of hierarchical coordination that is antithetical to the ethos of the digital commons (Bollier 295). This acephalic phenomenon, then,

has developed remarkable forms of social networking, using digital technologies to develop radical collaborative democratic projects such as the Linux operating system and Wikipedia, both of which have been jointly authored by thousands of people working in disparate times and places. The struggle for open access has also been carried forward by legal activists laboring to expand the public sphere through initiatives such as copyleft. Organizations like Creative Commons, for example, have developed institutional mechanisms to ensure that the highly restrictive copyright rules that dampen creative borrowing and invention today are not the only set of rules governing individual and collective authorship (Bollier 283). As Clay Shirky has recently argued, these diverse campaigns for “free culture” have leveraged digital technologies that are lowering barriers to social collaboration, thereby creating radical democratic organizational forms on an unprecedented scale (18). Corporations are of course fighting this movement with all their massive resources, striving to retain proprietary control over the networked commons through steps such as pushing changes in intellectual property legislation in global organizations such as the World Trade Organization and prosecuting college students for downloading songs using now-ubiquitous peer-to-peer networking technologies.

Like transnational corporations, universities have sought to profit from the intellectual property produced in research labs, libraries, and classrooms. This attempt to monetize knowledge has even affected scholars in relatively unucrative fields such as the humanities. In the early part of the decade, for example, Columbia University established a for-profit venture entitled Fathom.com that was intended to make money by disseminating university teaching over the web (Bollier 286). Who exactly owned lectures on Shakespeare and Dante therefore became a burning question, much to the alarm of scholars at Columbia and other participating institutions. Questions about academic freedom followed quickly after those regarding issues of intellectual property. These questions became moot, however, when Columbia’s venture failed after MIT took the radical step of making all of its courses available online for free. In the wake of this tussle over proprietary versus open access models of knowledge dissemination, a broad,



international campaign for open educational resources has developed (Bollier 288–92).

The open access publishing movement hinges on an analogous attempt to exploit the resources of the Internet and of computerization in general to transform research. As the anonymous authors of the recently posted Digital Humanities Manifesto, sounding very much like a radical avant-garde art group such as the Situationist International, argue:

Digital Humanities have a utopian core shaped by its genealogical descent from the counterculture-cyberculture intertwinings of the 60s and 70s. This is why it affirms the value of the open, the infinite, the expansive, the university/museum/archive/library without walls, the democratization of culture and scholarship, even as it affirms the value of large-scale statistically grounded methods (such as cultural analytics) that collapse the boundaries between the humanities and the social and natural sciences. This is also why it believes that copyright and IP standards must be freed from the stranglehold of Capital, including the capital possessed by heirs who live parasitically off of the achievements of their deceased predecessors.

The links between the movement for a radical democratic, anti-capitalist networked commons and initiatives in the Digital Humanities such as open access publishing are laid out quite clearly here. As I discussed in the previous section, the difficult economic conditions faced by university publishers and the managerial prerogatives of academic bureaucrats have imposed an artificial economy of scarcity that affects younger scholars in a particularly dire form. Consequently, the appeal of a post-scarcity digital economy, one grounded in challenging the increasingly restrictive proprietary claims of academic capitalism, should not be particularly surprising.

Notice, however, that the claims of Digital Humanities extend beyond simply making scholarly research more widely available, as valuable as such initiatives are—particularly in terms of redressing the widening knowledge gap between the global North and South. In addition, the digital revolution is represented in the manifesto as transforming the character of research itself, shaking down established disciplinary walls and promoting novel forms of collaborative

inquiry. As the manifesto states, digital technologies promise to push the kinds of data mining and cultural analytics pioneered by scholars such as Franco Moretti in *Graphs, Maps, and Trees* to new levels as it becomes possible to track and interpret large-scale trends within massed cultural artifacts like the novel.

In addition, scholarly research appears to be on the threshold of freeing itself of the stranglehold of printed culture. Humanities scholars can overcome the artificial disciplinary divisions between print, audio, and visual texts to carry out and present research in multiple genres. Journals such as *Vectors* have already pioneered this approach, with articles like David Theo Goldberg and Stefka Hristova's "Blue Velvet" presenting a fascinating blend of text, image, and sound to explore the reconstruction of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. Such experiments are only the beginning. Emerging genres such as the video diary promise to lift blogging out of its predominantly print-based mode and allow for fresh temporalities and novel archival explorations (Coleman). The danger in such initiatives, of course, is that fascination with the new palette for research and representation will lead to research-light digital texts. But this is probably only a byproduct of the birthpangs of Digital Humanities, one that will fade as multiple genres of networked scholarly initiatives gain ground.

A corollary of these new forms of digital research and publication is the transformation of authorship. Although theoreticians have been proclaiming the death of sovereign subjectivity for some time, protocols for evaluating scholarly publication have remained resolutely tied to surprisingly traditional constructions of the author. But how can an article such as Goldberg and Hristova's be evaluated without crediting the many researchers and designers who are involved in producing such a palimpsestic text? On the *Vectors* Web site, Goldberg is credited as author of the article and Hristova is credited as "information architect," but Eric Loyer is also cited as "designer programmer" and a whole series of acknowledgements are appended that include other scholars as well as the people of New Orleans in general. How will such complexly authored textual artifacts be judged by tenure review committees, most of whom, as I have already remarked, remain almost totally ignorant about emerging digital scholarship? To

what extent will the criteria for graduate work, tenure, and promotion shift as younger scholars begin to engage with these new technologies? How will issues of intellectual property and academic freedom be adjudicated when texts are no longer stable and single-authored, but instead take on the multiple layers of Goldberg and Hristova's article, not to mention the incessantly mutable and dizzyingly polyphonic quality of a Wikipedia page? As it becomes increasingly apparent that digital scholarship need not be simply what Gary Hall called a "prosthetic" extension of print culture (10), will current institutional protocols shift in order to enable such changes or will they function as a dampener on the radical possibilities unfolding in the networked commons?

### **Obstacles**

The journal *Social Text*, whose editorial collective I am a member of, is currently undertaking an ambitious expansion into cyberspace. The plan is to establish an online presence that will leverage multiple aspects of the digital revolution to create a more dynamic avatar of the journal. Submissions will be automated, passing through a portion of the Web site that will make logging, distribution, and tracking of reviews of articles far less time and labor consuming. Perhaps more exciting for members of the collective, however, is the ability to return the journal to its counter-cultural roots by diversifying the forms and temporalities of scholarly writing. The print journal, despite its many merits, has become a relatively conventional forum for relatively conventional academic articles. A subcommittee of the collective devoted to the online journal is planning an ambitious portfolio of interventions to challenge *Social Text* contributors to think differently about the form and character of publishing. Although discussions are still very much in process and are likely to evolve as the collective experiments with the journal's online incarnation, initiatives currently being considered include the following: text and video Web logs by members of the collective; a weekly listing of articles, books, exhibitions, and other cultural events of interest to the collective; reviews of books and other cultural and political phenomena; regular online forums

on topical issues such as social networking and activism during the Iranian electoral disputes and the Copenhagen Climate Change conference; and rich media scholarly articles. It would, of course, also be interesting to initiate some truly collectively authored research and publication, using the Wiki program the collective uses to communicate internally to write scholarly pieces of various kinds.

In the course of our deliberations over the move online, the collective has had to confront a number of potential obstacles. A group of collective members circulated a letter encouraging the collective to move the online journal towards open access publication. Although this letter explicitly laid out a plan to maintain proprietary rights to articles for at least a year through a site-license system maintained by our publisher, Duke University Press, the open access plan met a number of objections. The journal's managing editor circulated a very thoughtful letter in which she underlined some of the contradictions of the "information wants to be free" perspective that undergirds the open access movement. Putting the journal online in open access format would, she worried, rob Duke University Press of the subscriptions that they depend upon to publish the journal (Tenzer). This, she argued, would effectively terminate our relationship with the press and would make us dependent on another host institution such as a university library. There is no escape from such subvention since "even without print, publication costs include manuscript preparation, copyediting, proofreading, typesetting for PDF or formatting for HTML, and maintaining a website with a reliable archive" (Tenzer). Open access, she concluded, is likely to provoke resistance from publishers, scholarly associations, and even editorial collectives, all of whom typically need subscriptions or some other subvention to support their journals.

These objections are being taken very seriously by the collective, which, for the time being, is pursuing a hydra-headed approach by creating an online edition to supplement the print journal. We will see the extent to which the tail comes to wag the dog. I should note, however, that interviews I conducted with publishers during the summer of 2009 support some of the objections of our managing editor. Ken Wissoker, editor-in-chief of Duke University Press, for

example, articulated the contradictions that lie behind attempts to move academia away from a monetized publishing model. Viewing publishing as a public good, Wissoker argued that it should be given far greater public subvention than at present. Why, he asked, should libraries be included in university budgets as a regular expense while academic presses are expected to pay their own way? But what, Wissoker asked rhetorically, would happen if presses did become a budget line for universities in a manner analogous to libraries? Wouldn't scholars suffer even more than at present if publishing budgets were slashed in the manner that the University of California system has suffered over the last year? In addition, wouldn't authors and their publishers be more susceptible to political manipulation and attacks on academic freedom than at present if press budgets were subject to approval by university administrators and trustees and by state legislators? Casting aside one set of problematic institutional arrangements does not, in other words, guarantee an escape into absolute freedom. One is simply likely to become subject to a different set of protocols and funding bodies. The implications of these moves need to be thought through carefully since, as Wissoker intimated, they have potentially dramatic implications for issues of academic freedom.

Another significant issue highlighted by the unfolding digital revolution is the role of academic presses as gatekeepers. Like funding and editorial control, this issue is likely to have a significant impact on academic freedom. At present, university presses are the primary adjudicators of scholarly accomplishment. Not only do they organize and pay for peer review of book projects, but they also devote a great deal of energy to tracking and supporting important emerging trends in various academic disciplines (Berger). As Phil Pochoda argued in our interview, like attention to the craft aspect of creating a book, this is a relatively unique vocation of university presses, one with which potential competitors such as libraries have little to no experience. There are, of course, a number of problems with the current system of vetting scholarly work through academic publishers. As Harvard University Press editor Lindsey Waters argued, peer review "emerged from mechanisms of book censorship and quickly became caught up in the production of academic value" (54). Drawing on the scholarship of

Mario Biagioli, Waters concluded that the manner in which we review articles and books today fosters caution and self-censorship in much the way that it did in medieval Europe (54). This is an important critique, but it fails to confront the issue of who should assess scholarly research if it is not scholars themselves. Many of the recent attacks on academic freedom in publishing and teaching have come from groups seeking to impose external, explicitly partisan standards on universities. If we don't want funding for publication to hinge on such external authorities, we certainly cannot cede review capacities to these sources. In addition, as *Social Text's* Sokal Affair underlined, there are instances in which inadequate peer review really does have disastrous consequences for scholarship.

The digital revolution promises to open up many of these issues of review to renewed scrutiny. As Gary Hall has argued, peer evaluation becomes problematic in relation to digital publication. This is true not simply because of the mutable character of the digital text, but also because traditional print-format articles are giving way to new kinds of writing (63). How, Hall asked, are we to evaluate the highly public genre of the blog—as a private hobby, as a contribution to the profession, or as something in between? What are we to do with what Hall called “wikified texts,” texts, that is, that are written collaboratively by many different authors (65)? At present, Hall argued, many online journals are essentially pre-digital since their authority is derived from ink-on-paper, peer-reviewed publishing (59). They are essentially only digitally archived versions of traditional work. For Hall, this continuing paper-centrism threatens to marginalize and even exclude all the features of digital texts and writing that are potentially novel and radical (63).

This is a very real concern. As I indicated earlier, the *Social Text* collective has ambitious plans to support experimental forms through its online avatar, but we do not know yet whether we will manage to get one another, not to mention scholars who are not members of the collective, to embrace these new modes of writing. Although the collective does not use traditional blind peer review, we are still engaged in discussions about how different forms of online contributions will be evaluated. There are many thorny issues to tackle in this regard,

and there has thus far been precious little guidance from professional organizations on such matters. Will members of the collective write blogs if their home institutions don't give them any credit for doing so, for example? What is the concrete payoff for such time-consuming labor if not in the form of tenure and promotion, the traditional primary form of remuneration for academic work? In addition, should writing on a site such as *Social Text online* be protected by the protocols of academic freedom? Is this a form of extra-mural public speech that should not and cannot be protected by the paradigms of academic freedom established by organizations such as the AAUP? What kinds of institutional innovations might be necessary to foster recognition for and protection of such novel forms of writing without submitting them to the far more lengthy temporality of peer review? Must we cling to paper-centric paradigms or is there a *via media* between tradition and anarchy?

## **Conclusion**

Like most things digital, the shift to online publishing of scholarly research is proceeding apace. During late July 2009 I interviewed a member of the Open Humanities Press (OHP). Begun several years ago, OHP, Kyoo Lee explained to me, is an initiative designed to leverage the substantial academic capital of its distinguished international editorial board to support a stable of open access journals. These journals are peer reviewed and publish articles that conform to what Gary Hall would call paper-centrism. The point is thus not so much to experiment with radical new forms of writing but rather to establish the scholarly authenticity of online journals, ensuring that junior academics can feel free to publish online without worrying that their tenure review committees will look askance on such venues. Yet, in tandem with this legitimation project, as Lee argued, OHP intends to push some of the trends towards interdisciplinary work championed in the Digital Humanities Manifesto, a determination reflected in the highly heterogeneous group of journals currently publishing under the OHP e-imprint.

Trumping these exciting developments, however, within less than a week of my conversation with Lee, OHP rolled out an innovation that the two of us had discussed as

something on a relatively distant temporal horizon: a group of online, open access book series. At present there are five discrete series planned, although, as Lee described to me, the number can be expanded almost indefinitely as members of the editorial board see fit. Even more startlingly, the OHP book series is completely dissociated from any press. Instead of such a traditional arrangement, the series is to be published in conjunction with the University of Michigan Library's Scholarly Publishing Office (SPO). Given that, as I explained at the outset of this article, the University of Michigan Press is itself pursuing an online publishing initiative aggressively, it is not exactly clear what the future venue for scholarly publications of all stripes will be. Nor is it clear how all of the institutional arrangements will be handled. Will the proceeds from print-on-demand publications of OHP books be sufficient to cover the costs of managing submissions and conducting peer review? How will the claims to a unique vocational attention to the book as object and to the importance of the collaborative labor brought to books by university presses be handled in the OHP/SPO publication process? And to what extent, finally, will the vexing questions about publishing autonomy and academic freedom raised by editors such as Ken Wissoker come into play if the OHP initiative publishes texts that stoke the public controversy of, say, a Ward Churchill book?

As I have outlined in this article, I believe that the crisis in scholarly publishing is also a crisis for academic freedom, if we interpret the term in an adequately broad sense. Just as the turn toward precarious labor has made notions of academic freedom superfluous for an increasing percentage of the academic workers, so the crisis in publishing has made it progressively more difficult to disseminate one's research and, hence, to intervene in scholarly and public debates. In addition to outlining the intertwined nature of the publishing crisis and issues of academic freedom, I hope to have suggested the extent to which the move online, while it might unplug the bottleneck that afflicts scholarly publishing, raises a host of complex questions related to issues of academic freedom. No doubt additional troubling questions will emerge as online, open access publishing moves forward and, in so doing, reshapes the terrain of scholarship.



Given the quick mutation of the terrain I have surveyed, it is unlikely that theoretical or institutional efforts will ever be able to respond to developments on the ground adequately. Nevertheless, it seems to me that organizations such as the Modern Language Association and the AAUP have a responsibility to reflect on the shifting character of their mandate in relation to the digital revolution. We cannot assume that digital publishing will be a purely liberatory move. As Kyoo Lee put it during our interview, in order for things to be free, something must be unfree. Indeed, David Golumbia has argued at great length recently that the Internet and the realm of computationalism in general is far more a mechanism of surveillance and control today than it is one of radical, grassroots democracy. Questions of who will fund and supervise electronic publications and what sort of mandate they will have to protect academic freedom will inevitably loom larger as more and more scholarly work goes up online. It seems to me that we need to try to anticipate the controversies that are likely to emerge as this paradigm shift takes place. An organization such as the AAUP has a vital role to play in ensuring that the much-vaunted freedom of the Internet is maintained and expanded as scholars conduct increasing amounts of their lives and work online.

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