SCMS

IN FOCUS: Film and Media Studies and the State of Academic Publishing

Introduction

by Emily Carman and Ross Melnick

In the winter of 2013, editors from five university presses provided their insights regarding the changing nature of scholarly publishing for *Cinema Journal*'s In Focus. Topics included intellectual property, fair use, and detailed assessments of how digital technologies and pipelines (namely e-books) were already transforming their work. While acknowledging these and other changes in the publishing business, each editor confirmed that the mission of an academic press had remained fundamental: to publish rich and varied scholarship that generates intellectual debate, critical engagement, increased readership, and, yes, library and retail sales.[1] A few months later, Columbia University Press published Thomas Doherty's *Hollywood and Hitler, 1933–1939* (2013) and Harvard University Press published Ben Urwand's *The Collaboration: Hollywood's Pact with Hitler* (2013).[2] While Columbia University Press backed *Hollywood and Hitler* with a strong, traditional marketing campaign, Harvard University Press employed an outside publicity firm for *The Collaboration* to garner press attention, in part by critiquing Doherty's competing book. "Perhaps I'm naïve about academic publishing," David Denby wrote in the *New Yorker*, "but I'm surprised that Harvard University Press could have published anything as poorly argued as Urwand's book; and I'm surprised still more that Harvard or Urwand (or both) hired a commercial book publicist, Goldberg McDuffie, which, in its press release for Urwand's

1 Mary Francis, ed., "In Focus: Scholarly Publishing," *Cinema Journal* 52, no. 2 (2013): 114–137.

2 Thomas Doherty, *Hollywood and Hitler, 1933–1939* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013); Ben Urwand, *The Collaboration: Hollywood's Pact with Hitler* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).

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book, attacked Doherty's work on the subject. . . . In the past, disputes between scholars were hashed out in academic journals and conferences, not by hired guns."[3]

With the ensuing controversy over *The Collaboration* (and its public relations campaign) in mind, we (along with Anne Helen Petersen, originally a coeditor who now writes for BuzzFeed) were inspired to ponder the many ways in which film and media studies scholars navigate a complex set of questions for writing, publishing, and promoting their work, especially in an increasingly digital landscape where much of the controversy over *The Collaboration* played out. This led us to a series of questions: What are our roles as authors? What kind of promotion is appropriate for us to commit to for our books? How can we best work with editors to ensure that we are meeting their expectations for both rigorous scholarship and strong promotion at a time when academic presses are increasingly under financial constraints and adapting to new business models? This engagement between academic press and author is indeed a collaboration, and of a very different kind. Thus, we asked fellow scholars and scholars who are also editors to discuss the current state of academic publishing from this side of the fence with particular attention to how marketing academic books has changed in the era of social media and how the pressures of publishing fit into the demands of an ever-changing academic landscape.

This In Focus, therefore, is centered on academic books in film and media studies and the changing ways in which scholars work with editors, marketers, social media, journalists, and their colleagues to expand their research and audience in the twenty-first century. The articles in this section also consider how the work of contemporary film and media studies scholars has changed over the past decade as academic presses, search committee expectations, tenure requirements, contingent labor duress, university cultures, and the field itself continue to transform in challenging, exciting, and unexpected ways. Video essays, academic blogs, social media, popular writing, and spatial and data visualizations are just some of the many ways in which new models of scholarship are joining more traditional avenues like academic journals, edited collections, and—of principal interest here—books. Yet many of these digital publishing options are not counted as highly as the staple outputs of academic research: the peer-reviewed article, chapter, or—again—the book. Still, the changes brought about by the digital transition, the influence of digital humanities, and the move to both closed and open-access digital publishing have created a new set of opportunities for and challenges to traditional academic presses and to traditional scholarship. There is also a significant upheaval in academic journals amid shrinking library budgets and the rising costs of these subscriptions, as evidenced by the resignation of all six editors and the entire thirty-one-member editorial board of the linguistics journal *Lingua* to protest its owner and publisher Elsevier's refusal to grant "fair open access" to its scholarship.[4]

3 David Denby, "How Could Harvard Have Published Ben Urwand's 'The Collaboration?'," *New Yorker*, September 23, 2013, http://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/how-could-harvard-have-published-ben-urwands-the-collaboration.

4 Mathew Ingram, "Elsevier Mutiny: Cracks Are Widening in the Fortress of Academic Publishing," *Fortune*, November 2, 2015, http://fortune.com/2015/11/02/elsevier-mutiny/.

What's more, there is increasing pressure on newly minted PhDs and adjunct faculty, as well as junior scholars on the tenure track, to publish their first book with less institutional and/or financial support—all while juggling teaching and administrative work. Education columnist Rebecca Schuman has called the academic book an "expensive, nihilistic hobby," as scholars—especially those without tenure or a tenure-track appointment—often dig into their own pockets to fund their academic research, copyediting, rising image and content licensing fees, and indexing.[5] Regardless of this critique, the academic book remains the linchpin of a tenure review and an increasingly prevalent item (at least in contract form) on curricula vitae for academic positions. The book is, quite simply, the culmination of years of work that represents not only a chapter in an academic career but also a chapter play in a scholar's life.

Hence, our vision for this forum is to investigate the ways in which scholars navigate the many phases of an academic book (and their own careers) in 2016 and how scholars can work successfully with academic presses to market and/or position their research. The scholars included here range from junior to full professor, and their experience ranges from books-in-process to years as published authors and editors. Writing from the perspective of a junior scholar at the beginning of his professorial career, Joshua Gleich contemplates the challenges and opportunities available to young film and media scholars who must simultaneously establish themselves within the academy and outside it in the contemporary media landscape vis-à-vis their written work. On the heels of her "crossover" book *The Writers*, published by Rutgers University Press in 2015, Miranda Banks discusses how authors can promote their books, both to the academic community and beyond, as well as how to make their writing palatable to a broad range of audiences.[6] Formerly an editor at the University of California Press, Eric Smoodin offers key insights into the practicalities of writing a book and working with academic publishers that have been a mainstay throughout his career. Thomas Schatz has published an array of scholarship with academic and trade presses over the past four decades and has been a series editor at the University of Texas Press for more than twenty years. Here he ruminates on his experience as an author and editor to provide his take not only on the current state of academic publishing but also on the rift that has emerged between scholarly and trade presses, even as both industries are in the throes of major technological and industrial change in the digital age.

This In Focus intends to be a snapshot, a representative but not comprehensive sampling of the wide range of experiences of film and media studies scholars adapting to tectonic shifts in academic publishing and to academe itself. In 2013, editor Mary Francis looked back to a previous 2005 In Focus centered on publishing, "nodding in greeting about familiar challenges" but noting the already "significant economic challenges and radical changes in the habits of readers and writers."[7] As the contributors to this In Focus note in their essays, the technological, industrial, and economic changes in academic publishing have already generated new opportunities

5 Rebecca Schuman, "The Academic Book as Expensive, Nihilistic Hobby," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 23, 2015, https://chroniclevitae.com/news/1169-the-academic-book-as-expensive-nihilistic-hobby.

6 Miranda Banks, *The Writers* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2015).

7 Mary Francis, "Introduction," *Cinema Journal* 52, no. 2 (2013): 114, 116.

to promote one's ideas to a widening spectrum of audiences and constituencies. There are certainly more challenges ahead, but there are also abundant opportunities for reaching audiences amid the inherent chaos, from podcasts to blogs to social media to video essays and many other outlets for both scholarship and dissemination. One doesn't need to simply think outside the box. Perhaps today, to paraphrase *The Matrix*, there is no box. ✻

Write First, Ask Questions Later: Publishing and the Race to Tenure Track

by Joshua Gleich

The term "assistant professor" implies that one becomes a true professor only after demonstrating the ability to put the earned wisdom of a graduate education into action, through scholarly publications met with the rigorous review of one's peers or, more accurately, the tenured faculty whom a recently minted PhD aspires to join. Graduate students, recent PhDs, and young faculty often struggle to imagine this historical conception of tenure, not because of a naïveté about the realities of "publish or perish" but because many of us have been publishing or perishing since we were master's students. And the dizzying rate at which those of us left standing have converted recently acquired knowledge into every type of published work, ranging from academic branding on Twitter and Facebook to peer-reviewed articles and published manuscripts, will continue to have profound implications for the future of film and media studies in the university system.

As early as 1998, Leonard Cassuto sounded the alarm over the growing professionalization of students forced to publish frequently during graduate school in order to compete not only for tenure-track jobs but also for admissions into top graduate programs. He suggested, "The contraction of the academic job market over the past several years has led young would-be faculty members to present themselves at hiring time not as apprentice scholars, but rather as fully formed professors."[1] Consequences included a longer time spent in

1 Leonard Cassuto, "Pressures to Publish Fuel the Professionalization of Today's Graduate Students," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 27, 1998, http://chronicle.com/article/Pressures-to-Publish-Fuel-the/5317.

graduate school by students seeking additional time to publish articles and perfect their dissertation, as well as a movement toward rapid specialization among young scholars. The continued contraction of the academic job market in the humanities, coupled with other forces like "adjunctification," declining graduate school funding, and rising student debt, has eroded the cold comfort of a lengthy stay in a PhD program for most students. And securing a tenure-track job as an "all but dissertation" (ABD) has become increasingly rare, incentivizing students to complete their doctorate even without employment prospects in sight. In these circumstances, many graduate students finish their degree as quickly as possible while publishing as frequently as possible along the way. And with fewer faculty members covering the growing span of film and media studies curricula in most departments, young scholars must prove themselves to be generalists as much as specialists.

Before proceeding, allow me to offer the requisite disclaimers on the tricky subject of academic publishing (and employment). I am thrilled and very fortunate to work as a first-year, tenure-track assistant professor of film and television. I will not try to offer strategies on how to do the same because, as I will get to later, frequent publishing before achieving tenure track is a current reality, not a guarantee or necessarily a condition of employment. Finally, I do not want to add yet another lament or rationalization for the current state of academia. This is a fraught climate that nonetheless shapes rising scholars and continues to generate remarkable new work and precocious new thinkers. Rather, I want to emphasize the unique challenges and opportunities for young media scholars who must simultaneously establish themselves within and without the contemporary media landscape.

Currently, an academic can become a public intellectual well before he or she becomes a private one. Opportunities for online scholarship, from popular criticism to more rigorous blogs and websites, are available even to undergraduates who may have just discovered formal analysis in their first college film class. Upon entering a master's program, less formal but academically curated online publications, like *Flow*, *Antenna*, and *In Media Res*, provide opportunities for established scholars to test out ideas and explore topics outside of their current specialization or book project. For the graduate students who help run and contribute to such journals, these serve a different purpose, as ports of entry into their own academic writing. Another early career opportunity is reviewing books, as many of us did at the University of Texas at Austin while editors of the *Velvet Light Trap*, perhaps a more traditional half step toward a full scholarly article. In other words, graduate students can incrementally write their way from more popularly accepted formats—blogs and reviews—to the traditional format of the peer-reviewed article at the same time that tenured faculty may be pushing the boundaries in the opposite direction from a scholastic to a more popular, conversational style. This can be a confusing landscape, and its boundaries grow even more fluid as former graduate students and PhDs outside of academia popularize more careful and theoretically informed media criticism on sites like BuzzFeed, Slate, and the now-shuttered Grantland.

Social media adds another layer to a young scholar's identity. While few consider a tweet or a Facebook post an academic act, this nonetheless provides an early and on-going tool for graduate students to develop an online presence as experts in their field

before they have a CV to match. Some young scholars build impressive networks of like-minded thinkers and only later fill in the blanks of an established identity with published work. These networks can often lead to chapters in edited collections that help flesh out an identity previously established through conferencing and social networks. Furthermore, with academics at every level facing the pressure to publish, graduate students and pretenured faculty serve as some of the most eager and reliable participants in collaborative work. (I certainly did not hesitate to take part in this In Focus, nor did the opportunity come from outside of my broadening academic network.)

With so many opportunities to slowly wade into academic publishing, there is an equally strong incentive to jump in headfirst. While the pressure for ABDs to publish is well known, a similar pressure builds from the moment one enters graduate school. Most PhD cohorts have at least one student who secured a book contract for a project separate from his or her dissertation—a student may not have even chosen a dissertation topic before embarking on the first manuscript. Master's students compete for spots in the PhD programs of their choice, often by attending SCMS, submitting articles for peer review, or publishing in peer-reviewed journals to stand out to the selection committee. I attended a phenomenal master's program in film studies at Emory, but knowing there was no PhD program there, I realized I had less than two years to establish my bona fides in the larger field to reach the next program. I fortunately found a rich topic of research there—Jim Brown's film career—and the dedicated faculty support to help turn my first final paper as a graduate student into, eventually, my first peer-reviewed journal article.[2] I pushed to learn how to publish before mastering a number of other critical skills, but as job competition in academia remains fierce, is it fair to save this lesson for late in a graduate student's career?

Blind peer review lets younger scholars test their professional prowess before they have earned almost any of the necessary credentials to become a professor. Publishing in general offers the rare sense of controlling one's own destiny, of entering a fair market of ideas like Marx's proverbial worker at the open labor market.[3] This is a guiding myth that often drives today's aspiring professors, who hope that they can outwork or outpublish their peers to earn a coveted spot in the program of their choice and, later, a tenure-track position.[4] Is the program a great fit as a graduate student or as a job applicant? Questions like these cause cognitive dissonance for the prolific aspirant. Candidates with shorter CVs getting jobs or admissions must be the occasional flaws in the system, right? Enough publishing, particularly in multiple areas of film and media studies, should overcome the reality that there are too few positions and that each one comes with unique institutional needs. Publishing, though, cannot outweigh experience, even if experience now comes at the steep cost of years of

2 Joshua Gleich, "Jim Brown: From Integration to Re-segregation in *The Dirty Dozen* and *100 Rifles*," *Cinema Journal* 51, no. 1 (2011): 1–25. Emory University also provided tuition waivers for master's students, reducing the student debt that further drives frantic publishing, as graduate students invest tens of thousands of dollars before even securing entry into a PhD program.

3 Karl Marx, *Capital, Volume I* (London: ElecBook, 2001), 252–255.

4 For a recent invocation of this myth that reveals much of its psychological hold on young academics, see Brian Ray, "Confessions of a Young, Prolific Academic," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 3, 2014, http://chronicle.com/article/Confessions-of-a-Young/149815/.

nomadic work as a visiting professor, postdoc, or adjunct instructor. Job calls seeking candidates who may not exist, mythical figures equally adept as filmmakers, theorists, historians, and new media scholars, drive young academics to further publish and publish further afield of their most focused research and expertise. Only rare luck or a rare dissertation topic prepares a graduate student for the range of preferred qualifications in a typical job call; additional publications help certify additional skills.

In short, I am part of a generation of academics incentivized to write while they learn, to read new works and ideas and to quickly adapt them into polished scholarship. We take our uncertain or unfinished ideas and turn them into exploratory pieces for online journals and less formal academic forums. We discover our academic identity after trying on several hats, and then creatively incorporate our previous work into this identity. This is what quickly professionalized academics look like, although, to our credit, most of us entered with our eyes open. We saw an opportunity to combine a love of knowledge, research, writing, and, of course, media into a rewarding career and fought to get there before that opportunity for a tenured life disappeared.

A rush to publish early and frequently has its advantages. Graduate students who write their way through new concepts and coursework tend to become both generalists and specialists, figuring out how to professionally address a range of topics before choosing where to deeply focus. This process is an asset for any department, preparing new faculty members to teach a range of courses and find a wider array of publishing opportunities. With my dissertation, I shifted emphases from racial representation to urban representation, but my teaching responsibilities at the University of Arizona cover both topics and several others, as may future publications. The need to always expand one's public profile among academics and wider audiences encourages scholars to continue writing and refining their identity. When I served on my first search committee, we hoped to find someone who could cover a number of different areas, as the breadth of what film and television studies must cover expands, but oftentimes, the number of faculty members does not. One of the redeeming aspects of becoming a young generalist is moving closer to the work of mentors who preceded the trend toward hyperspecialization. At Texas, I worked with scholars like Tom Schatz and Janet Staiger, whose writing has spanned the silent era to the present, who have changed methods, and who have provided broad and comprehensive works of history and theory. The ability to write big and wide may be returning, albeit as a result of a far different academic economy of fewer tenured faculty and more intensive publication for a wider readership.

There are also clear dangers to spending one's graduate studies and early career actively publishing. The most common complaint, the loss of pure intellectual engagement and enjoyment as students, is the least relevant. This ideal is both impossible in the current competitive environment and disparaging to the young academics who remain passionate and rigorous thinkers amid professional pressures.[5] A more fundamental challenge is that frequent publication publicizes one's intellectual development. In other words, to quickly establish a professional identity, rising scholars

5 Choosing to pursue a PhD in the humanities in their current state is a rather strong commitment to the world of ideas, with few illusions of an inevitable cozy future.

have to begin before they fully learn what that identity will be or how further research will reshape their ideas.

Crossing the line into overpublishing is impossible to discern for a young scholar, in part because there is no consensus among job committees at different institutions where media studies occupies such different places. A long list of articles on different subjects may prove attractive to social scientists in a communications department but may seem unfocused to faculty in the liberal or fine arts. Other departments may simply prefer postgraduate teaching experience, inaccessible to ABDs, who may overcompensate with further publishing. Early-career academics have limited control over what subjects they teach, and publications may provide the only opportunity to demonstrate certain areas of expertise. On the surface, emphasizing quality over quantity is the best strategy, but this can delay an accelerated process and requires a formidable amount of confidence for someone trying to find an academic voice; it also falsely presumes that standards of quality are consistent across departments.

Getting one's first article accepted can be as inspiring as it is potentially misleading. It is easy to credit the topic over the execution as the defining factor, and, as a student editor for *Velvet Light Trap*, this was a common point of debate. Was this excellent scholarship or just an important or novel topic? Graduate students often figure out only in retrospect that they chose the wrong journal rather than the wrong piece. Facing the palpable anxiety of a shrunken job market, it is only human to follow positive feedback, hoping to let the market choose the best direction for one's work. This creates legitimate fears among established academics about younger scholars' intellectual conformity and dogged pursuit of new trends in a particular field.[6]

The breadth and mutability of film and media studies creates peculiar challenges for choosing a path of specialization early in one's career. SCMS Scholarly Interest Groups (SIGs) and similar structures provide graduate students with welcome introductions to like-minded thinkers and sympathetic audiences for their budding scholarship. Serving as the graduate representative for the Urban Studies SIG was an invaluable experience, allowing me to build a close network of peers and senior scholars to engage with, to critique and promote my research, and, later, to offer publishing opportunities. Ironically, this can be an ineffective audience for a job seeker, as departments rarely hire two professors with the same specialty, particularly with a broad spectrum of film and media studies to cover. A supportive group cannot always prepare someone for the often highly generalized audiences of search committees, tenure and promotion committees, and academic presses.

Pursuing a trending topic, particularly after early encouragement, can be treacherous considering that even an efficient graduate student faces nearly a decade from starting a master's program to landing a tenure-track job. We inevitably try to read the tea leaves of a given hiring season and scrutinize apparent spikes in a growing area of study, such as social media or digital humanities, perhaps regretting the course we set years beforehand. This sentiment reveals another fine line between professionalization and "preprofessionalization." Choosing a topic pragmatically can

6 See Leonard Cassuto, "The Problem of Professionalization," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 23, 2015, http://chronicle.com/article/The-Problem-of/228633/.

be hard to distinguish from letting a popular topic choose you. While adapting your work ex post facto to changing conditions in the field and the academic market may seem like a shallow rebranding, it may not only be necessary but also may actually improve your scholarship. Fighting for the relevance of one's research in a shifting media and media studies landscape has centripetal force—it has the potential to bring fields that have drifted apart back into conversation.

As a film and television historian, I find that perhaps the most deeply felt danger of frequent publishing is the relative ease of falling into presentism. Posting a piece for *In Media Res* struck a strange chord for me. On the one hand, I was thrilled to be able to immediately add historical context to *Django Unchained* (Quentin Tarantino, 2012), a film that references black Westerns of the 1970s, whose titles like *The Legend of Nigger Charley* (Martin Goldman, 1972) have precluded wide circulation on video, and thus severed access to this history for most contemporary viewers.[7] Yet writing before *Django* premiered, with only a trailer as a text, I waited in horror to see whether the film's full text and popular reception belied my conclusions. And when a *Slate* piece raised a similar point, for the first time I questioned whether I had crossed the line from scholarship to journalism. Of course, the title *In Media Res* defends against potential criticism, freeing scholars to join relevant, current discussions of emerging media objects and trends without worrying if their quick take stands the test of time.

But I do worry, not about *In Media Res*, which is a productive and unique opportunity for scholars, but about whether the current speed and volume of publishing by pretenure scholars inevitably leads to an overemphasis on the present. As with journalism, the pace and competiveness of current academia leads to fears of getting "scooped" or pushed off the front page. It trains us to anticipate the next trend and respond as quickly as possible. Contemporary topics provide new data each day, always bringing new publishing opportunities for a quick hand. New subdisciplines provide enviable opportunities to establish expertise in yet-to-be-overcrowded discussions.[8] The growing range of academic publishing in film and media studies, whereby scholars regularly engage informally with broader audiences, whether in shorter form on academic sites or in community engagement that helps establish a department's branded identity, has changed the entrenched overspecialization of scholars. Both by publishing on various topics and by generalizing one's specific research to larger audiences, there are more opportunities to speak beyond an elite niche. But the opportunity to generalize beyond the moment, to connect ideas across an amoebic film and media studies field and beyond a moment in history, has arguably become harder. I certainly lack such a long view of scholarly publishing, but I hope this perspective from a new assistant professor provides a new perspective to those who do. ✻

7 Joshua Gleich, "*Django Unchained* Signifier," *In Media Res*, December 18, 2012, http://mediacommons.futureofthebook.org/imr/2012/12/18/django-unchained-signifier.

8 Anecdotally, my article on Luc Besson, a contemporary figure, brings far more traffic on my Academia.edu page than does any other article or review. See Joshua Gleich, "Auteur, Mogul, *Transporter*: Luc Besson as 21st Century Zanuck," *New Review of Film and Television* 10, no. 2 (2012): 1–23.

The "Boring Detail"

by Miranda J. Banks

Two years ago, when I turned in the full manuscript of my monograph to press, I felt a sense of profound relief and pride. The book I had dreamt of writing now existed in its entirety, bound—if only digitally at this point—within a single .zip file. I was sending it off to a brilliant editor at a well-respected university press. A month later, the editor wrote back. The e-mail's subject: the introduction. Phrases like "still needs quite a bit of work," "major overhaul," and "such boring detail" left me in what I can only describe as abject anxiety. After three days of cycling through the Kübler-Ross stages of grief, I mustered the will to trust the words of my editor and find a way to rip apart the seams of my carefully constructed manuscript and do the detailed work necessary to produce a better book. Although I wrote the book that I wanted to write, now I needed to write the book my audience would want to read.

Our work as media studies scholars is to bring to our editors our highest-quality work. Of course, that is easier said than done. First we pass through the gauntlet of a book contract and completing a full manuscript. But there are a series of other complicated steps related to publishing and marketing our books: we engage in a rigorous process of peer review, the exacting mechanics of copyediting, the mundane task of scanning page proofs for minor mistakes, and the peculiar art of indexing. Then we compile lists. We fill out questionnaires and metadata for the marketing department, considering which professors in what disciplines might adopt our book for their courses. When the book is released, most of us post a picture of the cover on Facebook, we tweet about it for a week or two, we add a link to the book in our email signature, and, if we are lucky, we give a handful of talks locally or host a book party. Then we dust off our notebooks, and dive back into the archives, the media libraries, or the trade presses to begin work on our next manuscript. I struggle to think of many media scholars who have gone on book tour, who have made best-seller lists, or who have been interviewed by Terry Gross. One colleague said, "There's nothing more silent than the fanfare surrounding an academic book being published." It can be six months to a year for a review of your book to appear in an academic journal. If we expected fame and fortune, we went into the wrong profession.

For most scholars in media studies, our central publication goals are for our book to be picked up by a respected press and for our books to be well reviewed in notable journals. A book is a significant step in a path toward promotion—and publication and reviews carry

great weight along one's career path. Another common goal some scholars have is to be discussed, debated, or at least cited in future scholarship. Out of the process of publishing, academic authors often find that they are more regularly invited to give talks, to write for journals, to publish on a particular topic, to serve on committees, or to speak at conferences.

But what about those of us who want our work to speak to other scholars outside our central discipline, to undergraduate students who are new to this field of study, to professionals in the subject areas we write about, or to people tangential to the media we study—such as librarians or media regulators or art curators? If your aspirations for finding or building a readership for your work go further, I offer one suggestion: a book is a conversation between an author and a reader, so as you write, consider your readers.

We are our own first reader. Sentence by sentence we write, we look back, we edit, we move forward. We spend a great deal of time honing our arguments, teasing out details, and framing our work. Though our scholarly work is often a conversation with other texts, other authors, and other media makers, it exists as a one-sided conversation. We write our side of this discussion as a monograph with the idea that others will respond. The text itself, though it may have taken years to write, must hold together as an entire book with a clear thesis, a compelling argument, a beautiful structure. We can be cruel readers of our own scholarship—on bad days seeing only its shortcomings—but we also are our own best readers, easily filling in the blanks in our thought processes with precisely the correct concepts that never actually made it to the page. Therefore, as we read and edit our work, we would be well served to consider whether the book we have written is the one we wanted someone to write. Have we answered the questions that needed to be explored—and have we written it in a style that is lucid, thought provoking, and wise?

Your second audience is your peer reviewers. While the peer-review process is shrouded in anonymity, you can try to use the experience to help test the depth of your argument and also the breadth of your audience. If you know that you are trying to reach people in specific subareas of the field, let your editor know. Asking for readers from other disciplines can help you test the rigor of your thesis and the clarity of your argument. If your scholarship sits between two fields, request that your reviewers come from both of these areas. An editor will have their own ideas of who to reach out to, but making such a request for depth and breadth in your peer review might inform your editor of the seriousness of your interest in reaching a hybrid audience. Alternately, you can create your own review process—asking a diversity of colleagues with distinct specialties or who surround the periphery of your discipline to read your book (or at least the introduction). Ask them if there is something missing that their readership would need or want in order to best engage with the book.

The third audience is your editor. The editor could be seen as your second reader, but in my experience, the most fruitful conversations with my editors came after we had heard back from the readers. While writing an academic book is a scholarly pursuit, as an author you need to remember that book publishing is a business. It may be nonprofit, and it may be a small-business model, but university and academic presses are concerned about numbers, and it is best to be honest with your editor and

with the marketing department about your role and theirs from the outset. And here I return to my terrible tale of "such boring detail." When I went back to that e-mail, I realized that my editor was criticizing my introduction—not the entirety of the book. Her disappointment in the introduction was in part because of a level of expectation that she and I had agreed on about the audience for the book. Because I was writing about film and television writers, we hoped that my book would appeal to current and aspiring screenwriters. On reading my introduction again through this lens, I realized that I had written an introduction to an academic book. What she expected was something that would not just interest a media studies scholar but also had the energy and drive to pull in a screenwriter too.

With this audience in mind, I found two problems to address: content and language. I knew it was necessary to explain my methodology, to address and grapple with previous scholarship, and to define the boundaries of this study. And yet to the average screenwriter, this content would be the "boring detail." The solution I found was to extract my section on methodology from the introduction and place it in an appendix. Scholars would willingly go to the back of the book to read an appendix—in fact I know some people who tend to read academic books backward—starting with the index, then the bibliography, and then to the text. This then freed up my introduction to truly be introductory—not just to an academic but also to a lay audience.

This led to the second problem with the introduction: the language. Here I pored over the entire text looking for unnecessarily complicated writing or disciplinary jargon. Granted, sometimes complex ideas demand specialized language. But often academics routinely use intricate language unnecessarily. And for academics, this complexity of language is sometimes hard for us to notice. So I turned to my sister and begged for a favor. A brilliant journalist and a beautiful writer, my sister Gabrielle has a knack for words. She read through my introduction word by word, hacking away at unnecessary bon mots, streamlining the places where concepts had become tangled together. My heart broke a hundred times as I saw turns of phrase chopped down to digestible nuggets. And yet, sentence by sentence, I saw the language come alive. The ideas were all still there, but they were invigorated, no longer bogged down by the usual language we use to examine, study, explore, argue, clarify, enumerate, and so on. In its new form, the introduction was everything I had originally wanted it to be—but so much more readable. By changing the language without changing the meaning, I created the opportunity for another kind of reader. An introduction is not just there to situate the arguments. It is also designed to grip an audience.

Take a moment, grab from your shelf a few of your favorite academic books, and look at how they start. I offer a few favorites. The first, a book that made me fall in love with cinema studies: Richard Dyer's *Heavenly Bodies*.[1] "Eve Arnold's portrait of Joan Crawford gathers into one image three dimensions of stardom." Dyer instantly captivates his reader, gripped by the complexity of a star's image and the layered nature of its meanings. Second, Bambi Haggins's *Laughing Mad*.[2] She begins with the

1 Richard Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies* (New York: Routledge, 1986).

2 Bambi Haggins, *Laughing Mad: The Black Comic Persona in Post-Soul America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007).

shared language of two men who could not have been more different, Richard Pryor and her father: "One a comedy icon who profanely and profoundly gave voice to the black experience and lived life with operatic bravado, the other a strong, gentle working man, who was raised in the segregated South, served in World War II, a former sailor, whose idea of 'hard' language was 'hey, fella,' and who, along with his wife of forty-nine years, struggled to make sure that his six daughters attained a larger piece of the American Dream."[3] Maybe I'm a sucker for a good story, but both of these books are not only gorgeously written, they are tremendous pieces of media scholarship. Haggins's book won the SCMS Singer Kovacs book award, and SCMS celebrated Dyer's contributions to the field with an honorary life membership. From James Tweedie's *The Age of New Waves* to Siva Vaidhyanathan's *The Googlization of Everything* to Charles Acland and Haidee Wasson's anthology *Useful Cinema*, there is a vast diversity of exceptional academic writing that also offers a terrific reading experience.[4] Outstanding and accessible writing should always be our goal. With clarity of writing comes clarity of argument, and isn't that what we want—for varied audiences to access our ideas?

Our primary audience is people in our discipline or subdiscipline of media studies. But here they are the fourth audience. This includes professors and graduate students. A number of academic friends have pointedly stated that they have no publishing ambitions beyond reaching key scholars in their subfield. If those scholars read the book, great; if they cite the book, fantastic. And if those scholars assign it to their graduate students who are interested in this area of study, excellent. Editors at university presses often have little time or funding to help authors promote their books. So, once your book has been published, authors can assist those university presses. Start collecting the names of scholars who might be interested in purchasing your book or using it for classes. If there is someone who you dream of reading your book, do not wait for them to find it. Send them a signed copy. If they like it and find it useful, maybe they will suggest it to a few others who will buy it or order it for their library. Buying extra copies of your book is an investment in your career. Send some out to people—and save a box or two and put them away in a closet. A few years ago, our book *Production Studies* was virtually impossible to find. A colleague called me to ask if I had copies of the book—he had wanted to assign it to his seminar and his graduate students couldn't order copies. He ended up sending me a check and I sent him ten copies. A few months later, it went into another printing.

The fifth audience is those in crossover fields. We are drawn to a book that has been recommended by an academic whose scholarship we admire. So along with those scholars who are respected within your subfield, consider reaching out to your subjects—or to the media makers, authors, journalists, or critics who might hold sway with the fifth audience you want to reach. This could be academics in other disciplines, from history to Spanish and Portuguese, women and gender studies, law, linguistics,

3 Ibid., 1.

4 James Tweedie, *The Age of New Waves* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Siva Vaidhyanathan, *The Googlization of Everything (And Why We Should Worry)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); Charles Acland and Haidee Wasson, *Useful Cinema* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).

or philosophy. Contact scholars and ask them to help you promote the book—either getting names of people to send marketing material or to see if they will recommend the book. The marketing department of your press might have further suggestions, and might help you locate readers to write blurbs. But if you have control here, take it. If your book explores the work of media makers, artists, executives, government officials, community members—in other words, if your book is about other people and their work—consider reaching out to your own subjects and asking them to endorse your book. While I wrote *The Writers* primarily for media studies scholars, I hoped that professional screenwriters and others in the media industries, as well as aspirants, would read it. Some of them were particularly curious about my work-in-progress—and so when I had my completed book in hand, I reached out to them for endorsements. I interviewed both Mel Brooks and Carl Reiner; both of those interviews went very well, and a year later, when I finished the book, I contacted both of them individually to endorse it. I hoped one would say yes, and to my delight, both enjoyed it and wrote lovely blurbs. While both have thousands of scripts piled up in their offices, the number of books they had on the history of their profession was decidedly slim, so they welcomed a new one. I also reached out to a journalist and documentary filmmaker, Matthew Tyrnauer. I am a fan of his work, and I wanted to court an audience interested in creative industries that might normally be drawn to more journalistic books on media history.

You may begin considering your readers as you start your manuscript, or they may be a (welcome) afterthought. But after the book has gone to press, you begin to enter territory where few academics I know feel comfortable: the world of self-promotion. "Promotion" for most of us signals academic rank rather than a sales strategy. I have always recoiled at the idea of self-promotion. For my two coedited anthologies and my monograph, I had high hopes for them to reach a diverse audience—and I expected the presses to take the reins in promoting the books. On each occasion, the press sent a series of e-mails, mailed a handful of copies to a few key academics, and promoted it on their table at conferences. A few times, I even saw my books in bookstores.

An author friend told me that no one could sell my book better than I could. Not listening, I toyed with the idea of hiring a public relations rep. After a twenty-minute conversation that left me tepid, I asked what I should have asked at the start: how much? Within two minutes I was off the phone. The price for six months of promotion: 10 percent of my salary. Now I was convinced: no one I could *afford* could sell my book better than I could. I picked up the phone, I sent e-mails, I put myself—and my book—out there. I have seen other people have success with this approach as well. An academic sent an e-mail a year ago to about twenty people in New England, saying he would be coming through the area, and would anyone be interested in having him give a book talk? I have always loved his writing, and when he presented the idea, I jumped at the chance to get him on campus. I don't think I would have thought to bring him before I got the e-mail—and yet, in the end, my college was even able to give him an honorarium. Sometimes it takes asking in order to get something.

The best press responses I have gotten for my books have been a combination of hard work, chance encounters, and good luck. And I could say the same about my best

experiences as a researcher, as well. From the very germ of an idea to the very end of a full publication cycle—perhaps a full two years after a book comes out—the entire process is all about hard work, chance encounters, and good luck. So I wish you good luck and good chance. And I will look forward to reading your books. *

"What Am I Gonna Write About? What?" Some Thoughts on the Future of Academic Publishing

by Eric Smoodin

I've taken the title of these comments from Billy Wilder and Charles Brackett's *Lost Weekend* (1945), and from Don Burnham, as played by Ray Milland, agonizing about his future as a novelist. The film, of course, is a melodrama about alcoholism, but many of us can relate to Don's more mundane fears about writing, and we know what he means, even if we no longer use typewriters, when he says, just a few moments before, "I'll be sitting there, staring at those white sheets, scared!" Gazing at blankness might also work as a metaphor for thinking about the future of academic publishing, because so much of the field seems so mysterious and unknowable to so many. With this in mind, I intend my own comments on the present and future of academic publishing as a way of giving some modest advice about writing books and working with editors.

Of course things have changed in academic publishing over the years, and I'm coming at this as someone who has been working at universities for the past thirty years and also spent three years, pretty much in the middle of that span, as an acquisitions editor at the University of California Press. New technologies have made it easier to print (and reprint) books and to reproduce illustrations. Fields have changed or merged or gone away. And the ongoing corporatization of the university has affected the place, status, and budget of the academic press and also produced a permanent adjunct class of instructors with little time or support for their scholarship. I would propose, though, that some very important things have stayed the same, and you can use them strategically and to your advantage in trying to publish your monographs.

Marketing, Writing, and Sales, Oh, My! All of the stages in writing a book, and then seeing it published, can seem a little daunting. So let's break things down a bit. The most important part of writing a book

is the conception of the project, and here, I can't stress enough the same advice that I would have given fifteen years ago: talk to editors at the very beginning. Good editors have a great sense of how a book ought to be shaped, about what even constitutes a book, and about topics that might be more or less marketable.

I would guess that most of us appreciate the benefits of collaborative work. But we probably tend to think about collaboration in terms of joint authorship, in the actual writing process, or perhaps working with someone to put together a collection of commissioned essays. I would suggest another kind of collaboration—making your editor a collaborator in the conception of your project. Editors never object to queries from authors about book projects, although these usually come when a book is well under way. Instead, start talking to editors as soon as you start thinking about your book. Get them involved early, and listen to them when they tell you how the ideas you have can coalesce into a monograph. Some editors might be overextended and might put you off, or might have too many books already in the fields you're writing about. In that case, you might want to get creative in thinking about presses, and consider talking to an editor who doesn't yet have a fully established list in your scholarly area but who might be interested in building one.

I would give much the same advice to anyone who has finished a dissertation and hopes to get it published. I've spoken with so many recent PhDs who understand what comes next as an intensely isolating project. They plan to work on their own, redrafting their dissertations until they're ready to be etched in stone, and only then contacting editors. Instead, I'd urge anyone in this position to do the exact opposite. Start talking to editors right away, and get their ideas about the direction your dissertation might take and about precisely what makes it possible as a book. There are editors who, beyond these early discussions, don't want to consider dissertations until they've been turned into books. But there are others who might want to send your dissertation out to readers, for reports, in which case you'll begin the redrafting process with readers' comments in hand—which is a vastly better way of going about things than rewriting—and only then hope to get readers' reports (which invariably will call for yet more reshaping of the material).

You'll Never Get Rich. Our editors for In Focus have asked us to think about the processes of marketing books, and how these might have changed given shifting academic reading audiences and the rise of a variety of social media over the last ten or fifteen years. But I think this request needs just a little modification, and we should think in terms not just of marketing but also of "Marketing, for what?"

At the outset, even as you begin thinking about a book, you should understand quite clearly that, from academic publishing, you'll never get rich. And you should also keep in mind that the press that publishes your book won't get rich, either. The sooner you realize this, the better. In fact, even when you're at the stage of being offered a contract, you need to understand that reputable presses aren't out to fool you and aren't trying to squeeze every available dime out of your work, leaving you with nothing. The contracts these presses offer are fair ones, although there is typically some room to negotiate. If a couple of presses are competing for your manuscript, then perhaps you can get an advance. Perhaps the press has asked for a word limit

that seems too restrictive to you, so you can ask for more, and the same is true for the number of photographs. You should certainly be aware of your royalties, but even here the results—the money you earn—probably won't vary too much.

These economic realities change some of the marketing imperatives. Certainly, the press will be hoping for sales, and so if things are still as they are when I was working in publishing, your editor will pitch your finished book to the press's sales force, and then those people in sales will work on getting your book in stores, on websites, and anywhere else books might be sold. But you now have your own means of marketing, via Facebook, Twitter, and any other platform like them. What, exactly, are you using those platforms for? Certainly your efforts can increase sales, and that's never a bad thing. But even more broadly, you want to increase awareness of your book among those people who might be most important to you, people who share your interests, who might one day teach your book in a class, who might invite you to give a talk, who might share your work with others, or who might even be interested in hiring you. Thus, your own marketing efforts might be understood, really, in terms of building a reputation, of making people aware of your book whether they buy it or not, of having your name associated with a type of work. If all of that work improves sales, then that's terrific. But given the amounts of money that are possible here, it might even be better if that sort of self-marketing produces more intangible results, results that nevertheless become important parts of a career.

Crossing Over. Still, we all want to reach audiences. And many of us have the sense that editors feel increasing pressure to find books that will "cross over" from an academic audience to a popular one. This is something you can ask editors about; too many of us feel as if the editor's job and goals must remain mysterious, but instead my sense is that editors welcome questions about how they imagine their book lists and the kind of monographs they want—and need—to publish. For the most part, you'll probably find out that editors at academic presses are looking for academic books. Books that reach a trade audience are hard to come by, and most of us aren't writing them, anyway. Even if you were, if you publish it with an academic press there's virtually no chance of getting reviewed in the *New York Times*—which acknowledges very few paperbacks and typically only a few cloth-bound books from the most elite academic presses—or many other mainstream places, for that matter.

When we think of a crossover, or trade, book, we probably think of a subject so popular that nonacademics will buy it regardless of the style or intentions of the author. There might have been a time, twenty years ago or so, when any book about Alfred Hitchcock, for instance, would have appealed to the educated but nonacademic reader, but I think that time has passed. More likely a trade book will have a narrative to it, which is what makes biographies, or histories of the Trojan War, for example, so desirable.

I learned this early on as an editor. I was working on acquiring a book by a well-known film historian about American movies of the 1940s: *Mildred Pierce* (Michael Curtiz, 1945), *Double Indemnity* (Billy Wilder, 1944), movies that people knew and loved. The writing was clear and the ideas were terrific. When I presented the manuscript to the press and asked for a contract, I pushed the project as a trade book. I told everyone

there about the quality of the film analyses, about the nuances of the archival work, and about the films that people would want to revisit. When I finished my pitch, the director of the press, a publishing lifer as well as a terrific reader but by no means an academic, asked, "But what story does it tell?" I was stumped. I got the contract, and we published an extraordinarily good monograph. But it was, quite correctly, not marketed as a trade book.

What's Your Story? So, on the one hand, as an academic, you're probably not writing a trade book, and that's fine, and editors will still want to publish you. On the other hand, there are things you can do to broaden your readership, things that, in fact, we can learn from trade books and that academic presses will appreciate. When you begin a project, you might want to start thinking about your narrative. What connects the first chapter to the last one? What makes it necessary for chapter 2 to follow chapter 1, rather than just have chapters that might go in any order? What ideas, people, or products run through the entire book? Working on the story won't turn an academic book into a trade book, but it will make it more readable, more interesting to more editors, and, in fact, much more of a "book" than the usual collection of related but nevertheless disparate case studies that make up so many academic monographs.

You might also want to think of the compelling questions that motivate your book. Can you answer them in ways that make the book broaden out to more readers rather than confine it to a relative few? Are you more attached to the subject of the book, or to the questions you're posing and the issues you're investigating? If the former, then you might not have a really compelling book project. Let me give an example. Let's say you're interested in questions regarding film authorship (perhaps not a growth field these days). Can you pose them about a filmmaker who has something of a reputation and whose films are available for viewing? Or can you imagine thinking about them only in relation to a filmmaker who is more or less unknown and whose films cannot be viewed? In the latter case, there might be no better way to write the book, and you can in fact use the book to make your case. But it's also possible that you might be too enthusiastic about the subject itself, and perhaps less concerned about the compelling questions and issues that might be more broadly applied.

I know that none of this makes writing any easier or frees up more time for you to do it, or removes the pressure many of us feel on our jobs to teach, to do service, and then somehow also find time to write. But I hope it makes the process of being published, as well as the inevitable shifts and changes in publishing, seem a little less mysterious or frightening. And now here, in my own narrative about publishing books, I'll return to the beginning. While you're thinking about narratives, while you're working out the best ways of dealing with the questions that might govern your manuscript, be sure to run all of this by editors. Let them help you at the very start, particularly in terms of the story you might tell and the audiences you might reach. What's the best way of thinking about the future of academic publishing as well as your career as a writer? We might remember how Don Burnham in Wilder's movie needs Helen St. James—Jane Wyman—to help him shape his book. And then, of course without all of the drinking and codependency, we can think of that future as fully collaborative. ✻

Some Thoughts on "The State of Academic Publishing"

by Thomas Schatz

I strongly suspect that I was invited to contribute to this In Focus forum because of my sheer longevity in the film studies arena. This year marks my fortieth in the Radio-Television-Film (RTF) Department at the University of Texas and nearly a half century since I began thinking seriously about "film" as something that might actually be studied. When I started teaching at UT in August 1976, RTF was a small, disreputable, and very lively department, and its steady growth in size and stature has mirrored that of film studies in higher education and in publishing as well. Indeed, the film school phenomenon of the 1970s sparked not only the Hollywood renaissance, as the movie brats with their MFAs stormed the studio gates, but also an explosion in publishing, as both trade and academic presses went after a suddenly surging market of film students and cinephiles.

I experienced that surge firsthand as an author and a book series editor. I have also witnessed a widening rift since the 1980s between academic and trade publishing, which in my view has been one of the most important developments in film and media studies in recent decades. As an author, I've been on both sides of this divide—which by now is a yawning chasm—and as a series editor I know the university press "side" all too well. The aim of this brief essay is to sort out my own experiences and perspectives as an author and editor and to provide my take on the current state of academic publishing—which like the academy itself is in the throes of massive change.

The Rise of Film Studies—An Author's Perspective. I happened into film studies when the field was in its formative stages. After securing two previous degrees in literature, I enrolled in the graduate program "Broadcasting and Film" at the University of Iowa in 1973, shortly after Dudley Andrew launched it (upon the completion of his PhD in comparative lit there at Iowa). Iowa was among the first universities to offer a PhD in film studies, and the new program was hitting its early stride. When I arrived, David Bordwell had just finished his PhD and headed off to Wisconsin, and my grad cohort at Iowa included Phil Rosen, Mike Budd, Jane Feuer, Robert C. (Bobby) Allen, Mary Ann Doane, and several other Young Turks in the nascent field of film studies.

My dissertation on Hollywood film genres was codirected by Dudley and Rick Altman, and after settling in at Texas, I began

thinking about turning it into a book. The publishing prospects were vastly different then than they are today for two main reasons: first, the relative dearth of university (and academic) presses doing film studies, and, second, the fact that trade presses were seriously interested in scholarly and academic books. In fact, trade publishers were well ahead of their university press counterparts in cultivating the new field of film studies—with three notable exceptions, Oxford, Cambridge, and California, which even then were in a class by themselves.

Dudley introduced me to John Wright, his editor at Oxford University Press, who handled *The Major Film Theories* and had just edited the first edition of Horace Newcomb's *Television: The Critical View*.[1] Although Oxford was an extremely attractive option, I went with the Random House College Division. And to further complicate matters—and to underscore how different the publishing world was back then—the so-called trade edition of *Hollywood Genres* was published (in a nice hardback with a dust jacket) by Temple University Press.[2] Neither of these publishing options would be available for long, and in fact Random House sold the College Division in 1989 to the educational publishing giant McGraw-Hill, which handled *Hollywood Genres* for the following two decades (and cut various copublishing deals overseas, including mainland China, where the book still generates royalties, to my utter amazement).

The sale of Random House's academic operation to McGraw-Hill was one obvious sign of the growing split between trade and academic publishers. I was caught in the midst of this turmoil with the publication of my third book, *The Genius of the System*.[3] It was published by Pantheon Books, a specialty division of Random House that handled scholarly work from the likes of Michel Foucault, Noam Chomsky, and Todd Gitlin. Random House was owned by the Newhouse family, which was pressuring all of its divisions to increase profits. In 1989, just as my book was coming out, the executive editor Andre Schiffrin resigned in protest along with all of his senior editors, including Sara Bershtel, who edited *The Genius of the System*. Sara eventually moved to Henry Holt, where she has her own imprint, Metropolitan Books. *Genius*, meanwhile, eventually migrated to its current publisher, the University of Minnesota Press.

My fourth book, *Boom and Bust: American Cinema in the 1940s*, was another signpost along the film studies pathway.[4] It was published in 1997 by Scribner's as the sixth volume in its ten-volume history of American film, and then in 1999 in paperback by the University of California Press. The ten-volume series was a massive project cofunded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Markle Foundation, and it represented both the coming-of-age of film studies as a discipline and a further sorting out of the film publishing arena. After Scribner's "library reference" division handled the high-profile hardback release and the then-lucrative library sales, California focused on academic marketing and sales—an ideal scenario for all involved

1 Dudley Andrew, *The Major Film Theories: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976); Horace Newcomb, *Television: The Critical View* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976).

2 Thomas Schatz, *Hollywood Genres: Formulas, Filmmaking, and the Studio System* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981).

3 Thomas Schatz, *The Genius of the System* (New York: Pantheon, 1988).

4 Thomas Schatz, *Boom and Bust: American Cinema in the 1940s* (New York: Scribner's, 1997).

and another one that is difficult to imagine under the current state of the publishing industry.

In 2004, I edited a four-volume collection on Hollywood for Routledge's Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies series, which is also worth mentioning here. The steady rise of Routledge in film and media studies publishing since the 1980s has been another key development in the field, as has the enormous power of Routledge's parent company, Taylor & Francis, a global operation whose myriad holdings include Wiley-Blackwell, Fitzroy Dearborn, and scores of other divisions that publish close to two thousand books and more than one thousand journals per annum. The company's rise, in my view, has been directly related to the steady withdrawal of the major trade presses from the field. Unlike almost all the university presses—the notable exceptions being Oxford, Cambridge, and California—Routledge and the other Taylor & Francis imprints have the production and marketing resources to ensure both volume and profitability. That said, the sheer number of titles published per year by Routledge tends to diminish the "care and feeding" of individual authors and their work.

The Maturation of Film (and Media) Studies Publishing—A Series Editor's Perspective. Around 1990, I was invited by Frankie Westbrook, an acquisitions editor at UT Press, to launch the Texas Film Studies series. The press had published a few film-related titles and was interested in both increasing and regularizing that output. The series has been fairly successful, rolling out two or three titles per year—which is really all that I have been able to handle in addition to my crowded professional plate. The series's overall impact on the press, meanwhile, has been considerable. Since launching the series, UT Press has steadily expanded its media-related output to some ten to twelve books per year, roughly 10 percent of its annual list, while also publishing the journals *Cinema Journal* and *Velvet Light Trap*. Although Cambridge, Oxford, and California continue to hold their top-tier status among university presses handling film-related titles, UT Press has joined Rutgers, NYU, Columbia, Chicago, and very few others in the second tier.

About a decade ago, the name of my series was changed (at my suggestion) to Film and Media Studies. This move reflected the sweeping changes in our field, of course, although many in the academy as well as in academic publishing are still reluctant to move beyond the film studies paradigm. I have heard a number of trade press editors comment that TV, comic, and video-game fans don't read books. Meanwhile the Ivy League contingent has finally come to recognize film studies as a legitimate academic field, while other media—including television, remarkably enough—remain highly suspect. My own work on the Hollywood studio system (which overcame its own resistance to television decades earlier) necessarily led to the study of television and other "adjacent industries." And in the current age of media conglomerates and convergence it simply makes no sense to see film as a distinct and autonomous medium (or art form or industry).

Thus I began taking on book projects involving film and television and other media fairly early in my UT Press series—well before the revised moniker, in fact. The 1994 series titles, for instance, included Janet Wasko's *Hollywood in the Information Age: Beyond the Silver Screen*, a prescient look at the film industry in the early age of convergence

and media conglomeration.[5] That book was also a copublication with Polity Press, an independent British publishing house founded by the sociologist Anthony Giddens, which is a remarkable publishing success story unto itself. Another significant series title that year was Christopher Anderson's award-winning *Hollywood TV: The Studio System in the Fifties*, which remains (in my admittedly biased view) the single best history-cum-analysis of the movie industry's postwar "conversion" to television production and distribution.[6] In 1995 I edited two excellent books that dealt with the cross-fertilization of popular genres and representations of gender in film and television: Kathleen Rowe's *The Unruly Woman: Gender and Genres of Laughter* (recently revised and expanded under the title *Unruly Girls, Unrepentant Mothers*) and Nina C. Leibman's *Living Room Lectures: The Fifties Family in Film and Television*.[7]

The trend continued in the early 2000s as I began handling books that dealt directly with television, notably Bernard Timberg's *Television Talk: A History of the TV Talk Show* and Megan Mullen's *The Rise of Cable Programming in the United States*.[8] I also edited a breakthrough book examining the home-video industry, Frederick Wasser's *Veni, Vidi, Video: The Hollywood Empire and the VCR*.[9] I continue to pursue projects that range well beyond film studies. Among the notable current examples is Avi Santo's *Selling the Silver Bullet: The Lone Ranger and Transmedia Brand Licensing*, published earlier this year.[10] This truly pioneering study charts the development of the iconic Lone Ranger franchise from its inception as a radio property (created in the early 1930s by a Detroit radio station owner) through its myriad media and merchandising permutations and, finally, to its disastrous reincarnation in 2013 as a Disney movie blockbuster—and a failed franchise "reboot." Another wide-ranging project, currently in press, is Stan Corkin's *The Wire: Space, Race, and the Wonders of Post-Industrial Baltimore*, which melds television studies, urban studies, and cultural geography into a provocative, innovative analysis of this momentous series.

I also edit film books, of course, most of which line up with my own research interests in an industry-based approach to American film history. These include a few prize-winning titles, notably J. E. Smyth's *Edna Ferber's Hollywood: American Fictions of Gender, Race, and History* and Alisa Perren's *Indie, Inc.: Miramax and the Transformation of Hollywood in the 1990s*.[11] And one of our most recent titles is Emily Carman's *Independent Stardom: Freelance Women in the Hollywood Studio System* (2016), a groundbreaking study

5 Janet Wasko, *Hollywood in the Information Age: Beyond the Silver Screen* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994).

6 Christopher Anderson, *Hollywood TV: The Studio System in the Fifties* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994).

7 Kathleen Rowe, *The Unruly Woman: Gender and Genres of Laughter* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995); Kathleen Rowe Karlyn, *Unruly Girls, Unrepentant Mothers* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011); Nina C. Leibman, *Living Room Lectures: The Fifties Family in Film and Television* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995).

8 Bernard Timberg, *Television Talk: A History of the TV Talk Show* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002); Megan Mullen, *The Rise of Cable Programming in the United States* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003).

9 Frederick Wasser, *Veni, Vidi, Video: The Hollywood Empire and the VCR* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002).

10 Avi Santo, *Selling the Silver Bullet: The Lone Ranger and Transmedia Brand Licensing* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015).

11 J. E. Smyth, *Edna Ferber's Hollywood: American Fictions of Gender, Race, and History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009); Alisa Perren, *Indie, Inc.: Miramax and the Transformation of Hollywood in the 1990s* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012).

of female agency and the star system in the classical era.[12] Another recent title worth mentioning is my colleague at UT-Austin, Charles Ramírez Berg's *The Classical Mexican Cinema: The Poetics of the Exceptional Golden Age Films*.[13] This thoroughly revisionist view of authorship, film style, and Mexican filmmaking from the 1930s through the 1950s is an original—indeed, radical—assessment of Mexico's classical era, and it's also a beautifully designed book that contains a staggering 280 images, most of them frame enlargements to illustrate Berg's close formal analysis of individual (canonical) films. The elaborate design and number of illustrations put the production costs on *The Classical Mexican Cinema* well above the norm, but the notoriously cost-conscious press was willing to make that investment because of Berg's solid track record as well as the performance of my series and the film and media studies books in general.

Film and Media Studies and the Current State of Academic Publishing. Like all of higher education, the university press arena is under siege, racked by funding and budget cuts, and learning to operate with razor-thin profit margins—if not debilitating losses, which has been the case with far too many academic publishers. The University of Texas Press appears to be weathering the storm, with its film and media publications providing a reliable source of revenues and, from all reports, consistent (if not sizable) profits. The market has become much tougher on several fronts, particularly with the rapid and rather severe falloff in library acquisitions. Only a decade ago, library sales accounted for several hundred copies, often carrying a scholarly monograph to break even and ensuring a cloth (hardback) run of most titles. Today library sales are well under one hundred for most titles— a number that will probably continue to fall as electronic publishing gains more momentum. This is the main reason that UT Press focuses so intensely on cutting-edge research published in well-designed paperbacks like *The Classical Mexican Cinema*.

The majority of university press titles generate rather meager returns in the way of royalties, and book advances are rare for all but the most seasoned and successful scholars. According to Jim Burr, the UT Press acquisitions editor who has shepherded my series for some two decades, breakeven for the press these days is unit sales in the range of three hundred to five hundred, and a "hit" title enjoys sales of between two thousand and three thousand copies. Quite a few books in my series fall into the latter category—principally books that are ripe for classroom adoption, like Justin Wyatt's *High Concept*, Rowe's *The Unruly Woman*, and Berg's *Latino Images in Film: Stereotype, Subversion & Resistance*.[14] Two other titles that have done extremely well as a result of course adoption are Barry Keith Grant's collections *Film Genre Reader* and *The Dread of Difference: Gender and the Horror Film*.[15]

12 Emily Carman, *Independent Stardom: Freelance Women in the Hollywood Studio System* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2016).

13 Charles Ramírez Berg, *The Classical Mexican Cinema: The Poetics of the Exceptional Golden Age Films* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015).

14 Justin Wyatt, *High Concept: Movies and Marketing in Hollywood* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994); Charles Ramírez Berg, *Latino Images in Film: Stereotype, Subversion & Resistance* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002).

15 Barry Keith Grant, *Film Genre Reader*, 4th ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012); Barry Keith Grant, *The Dread of Difference: Gender and the Horror Film*, 2nd ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015).

Many university press titles are first books, most of which of course are revised dissertations—including perhaps one-third of the books published in my series. Several of these also got their start as doctoral theses that I supervised in the RTF program at UT, which is pertinent here for a number of reasons. One is that I have always seen my supervision of PhD dissertations and my editing of the UT Press series as related endeavors—as has the press, which is one of the reasons I was invited to initiate the series. From early on in the series, with books like Anderson's *Hollywood TV* and Berg's *Cinema of Solitude: A Critical Study of Mexican Film* (1992), I segued from dissertation supervisor to book editor.[16] In those days I did not actively recruit my doctoral students to go with UT Press; on the contrary, I invariably advised them to look first at other top presses. But they, along with a few other of my doctoral students, wanted to go with UT Press and to continue working with me as an editor, and I readily acquiesced. More recently, however, as the stature of UT Press in the film and media sector has grown stronger and as the competition for tenure-track jobs has become more intense, my advice to my doctoral students has changed somewhat. I now encourage them to begin looking for an advance contract as soon as possible (although not until they complete the dissertation), and I encourage them to include UT Press among their prospective publishers.

I also advise my doctoral students to carve at least two or three journal articles (or book chapters for collections) out of their dissertations while they are researching and writing. They clearly need this leverage in today's hypercompetitive job market, and my very strong sense as a series editor is that the exposure of a few strategically placed book excerpts (so to speak) will only enhance the interest in the book project and jump-start the marketing process. I have had a few successful book projects, in fact, which largely comprised journal articles that were eventually reworked as chapters in a book-length study—Ramírez Berg's *Latino Images in Film*, for instance, which has been one of the strongest titles in the series.

As I scan the academic publishing landscape and consider what lies beyond the horizon for university presses, the two big unknowns involve the impact of digital technology and the rapidly changing business of higher education. Digital is already affecting publishing, but like other media industries, publishing remains wed to very traditional, if increasingly archaic, modes of production, distribution, and consumption. When and how (and how quickly) that paradigm inevitably shifts is a most intriguing question. Meanwhile, the business of higher education is witnessing an increasingly sharp distinction between research universities and other types of institutions, while the number of tenure-track faculty positions—and tenure itself in some quarters—is in decline. This is bound to have a significant impact on academic publishing and particularly university presses, which rely on scholarly books and a reward system geared to academic advancement and promotion rather than royalty checks. ✻

16 Charles Ramírez Berg, *Cinema of Solitude: A Critical Study of Mexican Film* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992).

Contributors

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Emily Carman is assistant professor in the Dodge College of Film and Media Arts at Chapman University. She is author of *Independent Stardom: Freelance Women in the Hollywood Studio System* (University of Texas Press, 2016) and coeditor of *Hollywood and the Law* (BFI, 2015).

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Ross Melnick is associate professor of film and media studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. His most recent book is *American Showman: Samuel "Roxy" Rothafel and the Birth of the Entertainment Industry* (Columbia University Press, 2012). His next book project, on Hollywood's ownership and operation of hundreds of foreign cinemas, earned a National Endowment for the Humanities fellowship, and he is also coediting *Rediscovering U.S. Newsfilm: Cinema, Television, and the Archive* for Routledge's AFI Film Readers series.

Thomas Schatz is professor and former chair of the Radio-Television-Film Department at the University of Texas, where he has been on the faculty since 1976 and currently holds the Mary Gibbs Jones Centennial Chair. He has written four books (and edited many others) about Hollywood films and filmmaking, including *The Genius of the System: Hollywood Filmmaking in the Studio Era* and *Boom and Bust: American Cinema in the 1940s*. His writing on film has appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Premiere*, *The Nation*, *Film Comment*, *Cineaste*, and elsewhere. His current book project, a history of conglomerate Hollywood, was recently awarded a film scholars grant by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Schatz also edits the Film and Media Studies Series for the University of Texas Press and is the founder of the UT Film Institute, a program devoted to training students in independent feature filmmaking.

Eric Smoodin is professor of American studies at the University of California, Davis. He is a former acquisitions editor in film studies at the University of California Press and is the author of *Regarding Frank Capra: Audience, Celebrity, and American Film Studies, 1930–1960* (Duke University Press, 2004).

ROUNDTABLE: The Future of Academic Publishing

with participants Caroline Edwards, Kathleen Fitzpatrick, Jason Mittell, and Anne Helen Petersen

moderated by Louisa Stein

In place of a traditional set of book reviews, we offer a conversation on the future of academic publishing among four scholars who have focused their academic, professional, and creative work in this area.

What are some of the potential challenges, rewards, and new directions as we integrate new forms of academic scholarship (scholarship in popular spaces and blogs, collaborative scholarship, multimedia scholarship) into the range of publication possibilities for emerging and established scholars? What are some compelling new models or examples we can point to? What new opportunities and challenges do digital or hybrid publication possibilities offer for collaboration and international dialogue?

Anne Helen Petersen: When I think about this question, I think a lot about my brother, who was a freelance journalist for five years before applying to graduate school. When asked for a writing sample, he didn't feel that his undergraduate work was representative, so he submitted a lengthy cover story he had written for the *New York Review of Books*—one that required him to perform the same in-depth research and immersive study necessitated for a term paper. He was accepted, but a member of the committee later told him that they nearly rejected him because he hadn't submitted a traditional writing sample. Hewing to the word of the guidelines, rather than the spirit, seems to be a way in which we circumscribe the type of thought, writing, and scholarship from scholars almost from the beginning. When I was teaching, I had students produce work that argued theses about media and its history in a variety of forms—on blogs, in video essays, via tweets, in journalistic short essays, and in traditional papers that went through the rigorous review of their peers. This sort of multimodal pedagogy is increasingly becoming the norm rather than

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the weird. Yet most graduate programs still cling to traditional means of evaluation, starting at the admittance process and extending to everything from the term paper to comprehensive exams and the dissertation. Such a traditional approach is, in part, out of necessity—a traditional dissertation is still necessary to get hired at nearly all departments, no matter how radical the chair or members of the hiring committee, due to university-wide standards for application. It'll be difficult to change the standards and modes of scholarship that media studies, as a broad and diverse and invigorating discipline, chooses to embrace, but that change can't just be in conference papers and undergraduate exercises. It has to spread up and down the academic ladder.

Kathleen Fitzpatrick: This story is very familiar to me, Anne, and heartbreakingly so. I've said in several venues that universities, particularly at the undergraduate level, but also in graduate programs, take in bright, energetic thinkers used to working on collaborative projects in innovative formats, and then proceed to educate them right out of collaboration and innovation by teaching them that the only valued form is the seminar paper, and that the only way to produce it is all by yourself. I can't help but wonder what might be possible if our curricula didn't focus on progressively isolating students within their own individual writing projects but instead heightened the kinds of group-oriented, performative work students do earlier in their careers.

Caroline Edwards: I share this frustration. It's truly bizarre that the academy continues to ignore multimodal scholarship while at the same time professing to encourage interdisciplinarity. There's a disjunct here between the form and content of research. We are all obliged to squeeze our research into a tight set of recognized scholarly "objects"—journal articles, book chapters, monographs—forms that emerged within an expanding print culture of specialized academic disciplines. This restriction on legitimate research "outputs" becomes even more perverse at a time when academics are being increasingly required to quantify their research in a managerially driven audit culture in terms of "impact" narratives or case studies that demonstrate public engagement. This is where multimodal scholarship can really help us to liberate our scholarship beyond the narrow confines of the academy. New digitally embedded forms such as video essays, sound recordings, forums for scholarly dialogue, and annotation tools for online articles all stretch the boundaries of the published scholarly "object" in humanities research. Such forms enable us to reposition scholarly ideas within a rich context of the broader research process and help to reveal how collaborative this process is.

Jason Mittell: What Anne and Kathleen point to is part of the widespread conservatism of academia as an institution, where norms change glacially and fear reinforces risk-averse behavior—as Kathleen has said before, the real motto of academia should be "We Have Never Done It That Way Before." So it's kind of remarkable how much has changed in our field since I became a faculty member in 2000. The Society for Cinema and Media Studies (SCMS) added the "M" for "Media" in 2002, in a decision that required a real fight and heated debate, but today it feels like the organization has truly embraced a wide range of media objects and approaches.

Today *Cinema Journal* sponsors a podcast and a journal of video-based scholarship, and frequently publishes work both online and offline that does not resemble traditional scholarship (including conversations like this).

Of course the major hurdle is still the processes of hiring, tenure, and promotion, where risky innovation is presumed to be forbidden—and nobody wants to take the risk of becoming a test case for nontraditional scholarship. But I am optimistic that this, too, is changing, as I have been asked to review tenure cases for SCMS members whose dossiers are weighted toward digital scholarship, and we see more funding opportunities and recognition for the type of scholarly work that only a decade ago would have been seen as a strange hobby at best. And SCMS itself is in the process of drafting a statement of best practices in evaluating digital scholarship, following the exemplary lead of the MLA [Modern Language Association] and American History Association.

Kathleen Fitzpatrick: Jason, I'm very glad to hear about SCMS's work on those best practices, as you're absolutely right that our personnel processes present the most stubborn obstacles to change in scholarly communication practices. If humanities societies can come together around such best practices—and can work together to communicate those principles and guidelines to departments and administrations—we might be able to start charting new paths toward successful careers rather than worrying quite so much about the risks of diverging from old ones.

Anne Helen Petersen: Yes! I'd love to see us approach the future of the discipline from a posture of expansiveness and possibility as opposed to fear and anxiousness.

What are the impacts of digital humanities and/or digital liberal arts perspectives on the current landscape of academic publishing in cinema and media studies?

Jason Mittell: My own experiences have been mixed concerning how digital humanities has intersected with publishing and research in cinema and media studies. On the one hand, digital humanities has had less of a visible impact on our field than other humanities disciplines. I have a few theories on why, including our different relationship to quantitative work, due to our proximity to mass communication and media effects researchers, and our critical skepticism toward the digital, which is derived from treating it as a medium to be analyzed rather than a tool to be embraced. And I admit that when I read some digital humanities work it can feel like a literary scholar thinking that they somehow invented a new method by quantifying cultural works—however, such an approach closely resembles the quantitative content analysis that cultural media scholars have been critiquing for decades.

There is a lot of exciting work being done at the intersection of digital humanities and cinema and media studies, such as CineMetrics and the quantitative study of film style, and the Media History Digital Library, which both makes decades of primary print sources available and provides numerous analytic tools to explore the data.[1] I've

1 For CineMetrics, see http://www.cinemetrics.lv; for the Media History Digital Library, see http://mediahistoryproject.org.

been more involved with digital publishing projects, such as exploring open peer review and alternative ways to present and discuss scholarship via MediaCommons, as well as using Scalar as a multimedia publishing platform to create a video supplement for my print book.

Most exciting for me has been the rise of videographic criticism as a way of expressing scholarly ideas using sound and moving images. Both as cofounder of the journal *[in]Transition* and co-convener of the National Endowment for the Humanities–funded workshop on videographic criticism in June 2015, I have found that expressing scholarly ideas via moving images is more than just a shift in form; it is truly a transformation of method, allowing critics to explore new ideas and make new discoveries by manipulating footage and playing with the raw material that typically stays at a critical remove in our scholarly analysis. This seems to be an area where cinema and media scholars are poised to be true leaders in digital humanities, putting our expertise in images and sounds to innovative use.

Anne Helen Petersen: I'm glad you bring up the Media History Digital Library, Jason, which has most profoundly affected the sort of deep, historical work that I did as an academic (and continue to do, in different forms, for both BuzzFeed and in my nonacademic books). I wrote my dissertation before the Media History Digital Library—and its ever-expanding and fully keyword-searchable trove of fan magazines—went online and can say with great confidence that its existence would have radically altered my research process and significantly altered my conclusions. It's not just that I was fatigued by the microfiche; it's that so many of the materials now available in pristine PDF were not even available: I'd have to travel to them, scattered, as they were, in incomplete form, across the states. Of course I didn't have the money to fund that sort of research and felt jealous of those who did—either from their institutions or from their own private situations. The Media History Digital Library, and digital archives like it, can help flatten the research playing field, as it were. The Media History Digital Library is also, critically, crucially, free. And while there are still parts of its search function that remain opaque to outsiders unpracticed in the fine art of the online database, I've led dozens of journalists in its direction. Primary sources aren't and shouldn't be the unique provenance of the scholar, or someone who can magically afford a subscription to ProQuest, and tools like the Media History Digital Library help us work toward that goal. And I'm very excited about Arclight—the Media History Digital Library tool that lets users search for historical usage of terms across the archive, much like a Google n-gram—and what sort of findings and conversations it will inspire.

Open access is clearly a key issue, and one that emerges as a point of tension between publishers and scholars and students. What are the stakes and how can we move forward productively on issues of open access within the field of cinema and media studies and beyond? Again, what are some compelling new models or examples we can point to?

Kathleen Fitzpatrick: One of the problems with the current thinking about open access is the degree to which it's gotten hung up on one very specific and narrowly

understood business model, which shifts the financial support of the engine of publishing from the reader (usually via subscriptions) to the author (usually via article-processing charges). For better or for worse, this model has taken root in the sciences, in large part because scientists have long been required (and had the ability) to write publishing charges of one sort or another into their grant budgets—and nearly all bench science is funded through such grants. And of course commercial publishers have been happy with this shift, as it's enabled them to keep working as they have without really needing to consider deeper, far more uncomfortable questions about what it is that's actually being paid for and why.

But as I'm sure we all know all too well, the vast majority of research in the humanities is conducted without grant support, and even where such support exists, there is almost never room in the budget for publishing charges. And so conversations about open access in our fields have often gotten stalled out in the impossible hunt for some way to pay for it. (Should libraries stop subscribing to journals and instead hand that funding over to academic deans to distribute to faculty to pay for article-processing charges? I have heard this question raised repeatedly, and every single time I've thought, "You have clearly never had to manage a complex institutional budget.")

If we're going to make any progress on open access in the humanities, we need to put that conversation aside and instead think about other models entirely. After all, there are free and open ways in which scholars are already publishing and communicating with one another that don't require massive budget machinations to support. Many scholars have long had blogs, for instance, and have done serious work on them, either alone or in groups. Scholars have formed or participated in collectives (like MediaCommons or the Organization for Transformative Works) that have worked together to produce new kinds of publications. New platforms associated with scholarly organizations (like my own MLA Commons, of course) are enabling members to share work directly with one another and reach the audiences they most want to be in contact with.[2]

And so on. I'm sure we can all come up with a bunch of other examples. The key thing, though, is that we've got to convince ourselves, our departments, and our administrations to take that work just as seriously as the stuff that goes through the more conventional engines of publication.

Caroline Edwards: I couldn't agree more with Kathleen! The technological innovation in scholarly publishing over the past few years has radically brought down the cost of publishing journal articles to an affordable level (and also books, although scholarly monographs remain difficult to fund, particularly for open-access publishing). Open-source software under licenses such as the GNU General Public License (a nonproprietary, "copyleft" license for software which ensures that software remains free to use) have made it legally possible to copy, distribute, and modify programming code, with repositories such as GitHub facilitating community-level collaboration on

2 See *MediaCommons* (http://mediacommons.futureofthebook.org), Organization for Transformative Works (http://transformativeworks.org), and *MLA Commons* (https://commons.mla.org).

software projects.[3] The days of commercial scholarly publishers being able to hide behind opaque costings for things like copyediting, typesetting, DOI assignation, digital preservation memberships, and the like—which they have freely used to startle academics into accepting profit-driven journal prices that have risen up to 300 percent above inflation since 1986, substantially more than oil companies over a comparative period—are coming to an end.[4] We find ourselves now at a threshold moment in which academics are starting to realize that it is our own labor that adds value to a journal name and that we should not be expected to ask our libraries to shoulder completely unaffordable costs—particularly in the transition to open access.

This dramatic shift in the technological possibilities of digital publishing, however, has unfortunately not been matched in the realm of academic attitudes toward digital publishing—open access or otherwise. Perhaps this speaks to Anne's point above about the difficulties of embedding nontraditional assessment methods into the curriculum. To this end, we really need to confront scholarly attitudes, norms, and values when it comes to where we choose to submit our work for publication and how we rely on such publications as a proxy for "quality," "rigor," or "value." One of the main reasons we have spent the past three decades outsourcing academic publishing—and thereby transferring the dissemination and communication of scholarly ideas from the academy to commercial organizations—is because the system of scholarly publication is tightly entangled with fiercely defended regimes of academic promotion, career progression, tenure, and so on. This has become even more politicized with the rise of national-level research assessment frameworks such as the Research Excellence Framework (REF) in the United Kingdom, the Excellence in Research for Australia process (ERA), the Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (FCT—the national funding agency that supports science, technology, and innovation) in Portugal, and the Valutazione della Qualità della Ricerca (VQR, or Evaluation of Research Quality) in Italy.[5] While assessors and former assessors (now paid exorbitant fees to consult for university departments on an annual basis about their preparations for such assessment processes) assure us that every single article is evaluated on its own scholarly merit, we all know that journal title or publisher brand often stands in as shorthand for quality. This can similarly be seen in the evaluative processes underpinning jobs shortlistings, essay prize nominations, and the acceptance of monograph proposals.

3 GitHub is a collaborative site for software development, including code sharing, review, and management. It has more than eleven million users and is free to use for open-source software projects, although there is a membership fee for private coding projects. For more information, see GitHub's "About" page, at https://github.com/about. For more information on the GNU General Public License, see the GNU website, at http://www.gnu.org/licenses/gpl-3.0.en.html.

4 For just one such evaluation, see Martin Paul Eve, "Tear It Down, Build It Up: The Research Output Team, or the Library-as-Publisher," *Insights: The UKSG Journal* 25 (2012): 158–162, doi: 10.1629/2048-7754.25.2.158. Eve calculates the rise in journal prices since 1986 using the American Research Library statistics correlated against the UK Consumer Price Index of inflation; for comparison, see also University of Illinois Library at Urbana-Champaign, "The Cost of Journals," at http://www.library.illinois.edu/scholcomm/journalcosts.html, although based on slightly older figures.

5 Perhaps not surprisingly, Elsevier has played an influential role in facilitating such assessment frameworks around the world. See Michiel Schotten and M'hamed el Aisati, "The Rise of National Research Assessments, and the Tools and Data That Make Them Work," *Elsevier Connect*, December 17, 2014, https://www.elsevier.com/connect/the-rise-of-national-research-assessments-and-the-tools-and-data-that-make-them-work.

We have to tackle this entanglement of publisher brand with the perceived quality of the scholarship itself—if we don't, we will remain beholden to a radically asymmetrical system in which commercial publishers hold all the cards and can charge exorbitant fees for their subscriptions (which, by the way, have been breaking competition law in the United Kingdom through their use of nondisclosure agreements and variable fees negotiated with universities on a case-by-case basis).

Jason Mittell: I agree 100 percent with both Kathleen and Caroline, who have dedicated much of their energy in recent years toward making positive changes happen within the world of academic publishing. The best way to get beyond stigmas of open-access publication, and broaden the understanding of its potential business models, is to learn about it, and then talk about it with your colleagues. A good parallel is copyright—when I started teaching in 2000, copyright was a topic that only a select few thought mattered to nonlawyers, and it was painful getting students and colleagues to care. But as more of us started talking about it—and the media environment clearly was changing in ways that necessitated this conversation—it has become a significant part of our field, our practices, and our activism. The media environment for academic publishing is similarly in crisis, and thus we need to start having similar conversations about these challenges and potential solutions via open access.

One additional factor concerning the role of open access publishing and credentialing: we need to think about ways to decouple the functions of gatekeeping, peer review, and dissemination. As with many things, Kathleen is my guru here (and anyone interested in these issues must read her book *Planned Obsolescence* immediately!), so I have followed her lead in making review processes public and breaking the conceptual stranglehold of blind peer review as the only guarantee of quality (as there are other possibilities that are arguably better than blind review).[6] At *[in]Transition* we have adopted a standard of open peer review because we see our great contribution to videographic criticism not to be "publishing videos" (which anyone can do themselves easily on Vimeo), but providing a critical understanding of why a given video serves a scholarly function. We believe there is a lot more to be learned by openly discussing the merits of any given piece than hiding such conversations behind a gatekeeping binary of publication or rejection. And we hope that any scholar going up for tenure can point to their *[in]Transition* publication as a site that will provide the essential context for colleagues as to what scholarly contributions their piece makes much more readily than a conventional publication does.

Kathleen Fitzpatrick: Thanks so much for that kind reference, Jason, and for everything you've done with *[in]Transition*; it's been thrilling watching that new—and award-winning!—publication develop and really exciting to contemplate the new forms and networks for scholarly communication that it in turn might inspire.

6 Kathleen Fitzpatrick, *Planned Obsolescence: Publishing, Technology, and the Future of the Academy* (New York: New York University Press, 2011).

Anne Helen Petersen: Back when I maintained my blog *Celebrity Gossip, Academic Style*, its subtitle included the word "proto-scholarship," and that's absolutely how I thought of it: as a place to work through some of my initial thoughts (about a media text, phenomenon, potential dissertation chapter) before they made their way into more formal (and finalized) scholarly form. Back in the glory days of media studies blogging (ca. 2006), the blog absolutely served as a way to bounce ideas off other scholars, who often provided robust feedback and suggestions in the comments. In the decade since, blogging has taken a backseat to the immediate conversations of Twitter, where I've seen them increasingly transformed into longer, "public-facing" pieces for both hybrid publications like the *Los Angeles Review of Books* and more traditional places like Slate, the *Atlantic*, the *New Republic*, Gawker, BuzzFeed, the Awl, and elsewhere. These pieces do crucial "public intellectual" labor—underlining the value of academics to an audience that may mis- or undervalue the work that we do—but they also serve an important pedagogical service, providing undergrads with an access point to ideas that, in original theoretical form, often prove daunting.

What do you see as the future of academic publishing?

Caroline Edwards: The future of academic publishing is still an uncertain one, and we are currently witnessing various germinative possible futures for the dissemination of scholarly ideas. In open access, for example, we're seeing what has been referred to as a renaissance in scholarly publishing—with numerous innovative projects (both scholar and publisher led) rising to the challenge of formulating new business models to tackle the crisis in funding that Kathleen cited above. From my own involvement with the Open Library of Humanities (OLH), I feel positive that we can forge a future for academic publishing that will see power returned into the hands of researchers themselves.[7] The international support we've received at OLH since launching as an idea in January 2013 and quickly building a network of scholars, librarians, programmers, and sympathetic publishers to work on the project has been really encouraging.

It's a hard road, though, and the task remains to undo the willful blindness that we've developed as scholars from the messy questions of how publication of our work is, and should, be paid for. Publishers have dictated the terms under which scholarly journal publishing has operated for too long. The recent example of the Dutch linguistics network, LingOA, is illustrative here. Recently, the editorial board of the network's flagship journal, *Lingua*, requested that their publisher (Elsevier) abide by what they consider to be "fair" open-access publishing, which involved reducing very high article-processing charges for their authors. When the publisher refused, the editorial board resigned en masse to move the journal to another publisher, which led to an argument over who owned the rights to the journal. In its statement, Elsevier argued that it would not transfer ownership of the journal to the editorial board, since it had invested substantial labor in the journal since founding *Lingua* sixty-six years ago.[8] As

7 See the Open Library of Humanities website, at https://www.openlibhums.org.

8 Tom Reller, "Addressing the Resignation of the *Lingua* Editorial Board," *Elsevier Connect*, November 4, 2015, https://www.elsevier.com/connect/addressing-the-resignation-of-the-lingua-editorial-board. I should state my involvement

my colleague Martin Eve pointed out, however, *Lingua* was founded in 1949 by the Dutch structuralist linguists Albert Willem de Groot and Anton Reichling and was originally published by the Dutch publisher North-Holland before it was purchased by Elsevier in the 1980s.[9] This particular example highlights the issues surrounding questions of ownership of a journal—do we think that editors and authors have the right to consider as their collective property an intellectual community and its published outputs that they have built over a number of years, or decades? Or does the publisher own this material, as well as any subsequent publisher that may purchase its publishing activities at a future date? As academics, I think we can't remain ignorant of these questions. Scholarly journals are integral to the way in which we currently understand our research communities to operate across the humanities disciplines, and the way in which we publish such journals is not a pedestrian issue of production. It lies at the heart of how we conceive of the relationship between what is essentially a collaborative process of research and the finished outputs we craft as the result of that process.

In the current climate, funding for humanities disciplines is tight, as we all know too well, and departments are encouraged to compete with one another for scarce resources at the intrainstitutional level, as well as regionally and nationally for state funding via research councils. However, I strongly believe that it is only through cooperation that we can address this situation—humanities disciplines are particularly vulnerable, as many are served by small departments with few fully employed staff who are overburdened. Academics unfortunately, and sometimes understandably, often see the political questions of publishing models and research assessments as driven by top-down agendas shaped by university managers and neoliberal educational policies (such as the Conservative Party's commitment to increasing market competition among UK universities and remodeling students as consumers). However, open access offers the opportunity to revisit our relationship between scholars, publishers, libraries, and readers.

So, cooperation is key, and recognizing that as a highly networked community of scholars we have many of the resources we need to change things and build a new landscape of publishing is a great step in the right direction. The justification for trapping research behind paywalls where only a very limited readership will ever be able to find or access it—just because it's the "right journal" to publish in for an academic's career progression—looks increasingly under threat. Scholars and editors are waking up to the possibilities that digital publishing affords them: from multimedia content to new annotative functionality, social media tie-ins, and the evident symbiotic relationship that can be fostered between the scholarly article and its broader context within scholarly debates facilitated by blogs and digital dissemination.

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here: the new journal that the old editorial board of *Lingua* have recently formed, *Glossa*, will be published by the Open Library of Humanities and its services provider Ubiquity Press.

9 Martin Eve, "Clarifying a Few Facts for Elsevier and Their Response to *Lingua*" (blog), November 5, 2015, https://www.martineve.com/2015/11/05/clarifying-a-few-facts-for-elsevier-and-their-response-to-lingua/.

Jason Mittell: I think one important step toward securing a more just future for academic publishing is getting faculty to think about how they value their labor in a more sophisticated way. I think most faculty understand that there are some tasks that they are willing to do for little to no monetary compensation for the good of their field, such as peer-reviewing articles and books. Some activities have no direct compensation but might factor into your hiring and promotion and raises (if you are so fortunate as to land in an appointment that includes such things), namely writing scholarly articles. While books might actually offer royalties, the vast majority of academic monographs yield no significant income for authors (textbooks are another matter, of course). In all of these activities, scholars are donating their labor and expertise to a system of academic publishing in which not only are they not getting paid but their home institutions are paying often exorbitant fees to access that research.

We thus have to shift the conversation away from the value of money and more toward the value of ideas. None of us enters this profession to make a fortune, so our motives are presumably more driven by the commitment to the ideas we study and our desire to help people learn and think. The more we can highlight that open access and other modes of noncommercial publication are cheaper economically and more valuable in fostering intellectual exchange, the faster we can bring about a future where publishing aligns with our academic goals rather than the institutional interests of a previous era. Such awareness will help guide scholars as to where they want to publish, what journals and presses they want to do reviews for, and toward which future they want to donate their labor.

Anne Helen Petersen: I really like this "value of ideas" paradigm. It reminds me of the websites where you can vet a particular nonprofit, in which the user is asking, "What good can and will my donation do?" What if there was a way for scholars, emerging and well practiced, to consider how the donation of their intellectual labor will be used? If a particular journal is owned by a large conglomerate and extremely expensive to acquire, then perhaps that labor would do more, and feel better, if donated elsewhere.

Kathleen Fitzpatrick: Absolutely! I also hope that we can encourage scholars to think seriously about the cui bono question with regard to their academic labor, not just in terms of the profit model of the publications to which we give our work, but also in terms of the social networks within which we engage. There was a lot of excitement a while back about the ways that Academia.edu took on Elsevier, allowing scholars to engage in the somewhat illicit sharing of publications to which they'd signed away their rights, but not a comparable level of consideration of Academia.edu's own for-profit orientation and what that might mean for the disposition of the work being given to them for free. What might be possible if more scholars were to focus on the value that their labor produces for the field, and work collectively to develop that value as a gift to the field and the public beyond?

Caroline Edwards: Yes, I share Kathleen's point about being mindful of Academia .edu's own for-profit orientation. As one of our OLH editors, Guy Geltner, recently

observed, Academia.edu is moving toward a process of monetizing its website.[10] Having established a valued community of some thirty-six million members, it is now considering charging money for its services along the lines of a "freemium" model, where users are encouraged to pay to upgrade their accounts to receive full benefits of the site. This could potentially involve incorporating advertising onto the site, offering purchasable services such as sending articles to all those followers signed up to particular subject or discipline "tags," and becoming an academic publisher that charges authors article-processing charges. Given the size of Academia.edu's international membership, this should be a cause for concern for us all. The site clearly responds to a need to provide scholars with an integrated social networking site in which personal profiles, the ability to upload research materials, and discussion forums can sit side by side in a slick and easy-to-use site. But imagine if we could liberate this sizable online community from a commercial platform and use it to populate a nonprofit online network. I think that new digital research networks like the MLA's own MLA Commons have the potential to establish such a community for the languages and literatures scholarly communities. And MediaCommons, of course, has been building a prestigious network of international scholars and practitioners in media studies since 2006.[11] Such networks offer the opportunity to open up the entire research process, undoing the strict boundary between finished published research as a static scholarly object and the collaborative process of academic dialogue and labor that feeds into research outputs like articles and books. This is an exciting opportunity in the twenty-first century—why should we remain tied to the seventeenth-century model of print publishing when we have today's digital potentialities at our fingertips?

We've never been in greater need of such radical thinking. As a profession, academia faces substantial challenges just now, not least the grossly underpaid labor of part-time and nontenured academics. In 2014 the British Universities and Colleges Union undertook Freedom of Information requests to gather data on the use of zero-hours contracts in UK universities, revealing that 53 percent of universities in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland confirmed that they employed teaching staff on zero-hours contracts.[12] I think extending access to our research through open access and open scholarship are part of this larger action to address inequality within our universities and remodeling scholarship along nonelite lines. Part of Academia.edu's appeal has been the professional platform it offers junior members who are in insecure employment and may not have a staff profile page yet on an institutional homepage. We need to ensure that scholars can communicate research ideas in an open digital forum that brings the processes of dialogue and publishing closer together without being coerced into a "pay to publish" system. Scholars at institutions with few resources, those researchers who work independently, students, and the broader general public have much to gain from such digital research networks and publishing platforms.

10 Guy Geltner, "Upon Leaving Academia.edu," *Mittelalter interdisziplinäre Forschung und Rezeptionsgeschichte*, December 7, 2015, http://mittelalter.hypotheses.org/7123.

11 For further information about MLA Commons and MediaCommons, see their websites, at https://commons.mla.org and http://mediacommons.futureofthebook.org.

12 Will Pickering, "Zero-Hours Contracts: A UCU Briefing," *UCU*, March 2014, http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/5/0/ucu_zerohoursbriefing_mar14.pdf.

How might Cinema Journal *and the Society for Cinema and Media Studies (SCMS) foster healthy relationships between traditions of academic publishing and new directions?*

Jason Mittell: SCMS has already taken some very good steps in this regard. First off, it publishes *Cinema Journal* through a nonprofit university press rather than a commercial press, like many other societies do. This leads to a much cheaper subscription price for institutions (comparable journals published by Routledge, Sage, and Wiley are two to three times more expensive than *Cinema Journal*), and the publisher revenue supports an educational mission, not corporate profits. *Cinema Journal* has also been smart in partnering with other groups to establish a digital presence, creating its own podcast and making its nonarticle content (like this forum!) free online. I understand that going full open access would cut into the subscription revenue stream for the society, and thus is unlikely to be an option.

Here's one modest proposal: give SCMS members the option to get a digital rather than print subscription to *Cinema Journal*. I'm assuming that I am not alone in finding the years of journals cluttering my shelf more hassle than benefit, and I would be happy to get a quarterly e-mail linking me to the table of contents in Project Muse. This would not only save costs for the press and society; it would help shift the publishing norms toward the digital.[13] If a majority of members opted for digital access, then an author who writes a piece that warrants color illustrations, links to online sites, and/or embedded audio and video might see such features become feasible in the digital version. The more we can offer options and innovations in how we publish, circulate, and consume scholarship, the clearer it will be that the norms that we follow today are more by-products of previous technological and institutional contexts rather than the "natural" way things should be done.

Caroline Edwards: I agree with Jason here: it makes little sense to see film scholars required to incorporate low-quality screen grabs to illustrate the close reading of a particular scene in a film. With digital publishing we can embed film clips, audio content such as directors' interviews, and video essays. It's fantastic that we have growing communities using academic blogs and short-form WordPress journal sites such as *Flow* and *Antenna*,[14] but it would be encouraging to see established peer-reviewed journals publishing multimedia content too—hopefully, then we'll see a shift away from print publishing to digital, perhaps maintaining print on demand.[15] It would be great to see *Cinema Journal* moving toward this kind of digital publishing and helping to bring digital functionality into the journal articles themselves. I think the Critical Commons public media archive and fair-use advocacy network could prove a

13 [This idea was proposed by the *Cinema Journal* editorial team to the SCMS executive in fall 2015 and is currently in discussion. —Ed.]

14 Although, I should note that during the course of writing this roundtable article, *Antenna* has ceased publication as a result of the strain of the "invisible" labor required to sustain regular weekly publication. See "Goodbye to *Antenna*," 4 February 2016: http://blog.commarts.wisc.edu/2016/02/04/goodbye-to-antenna/.

15 These are two great examples of how short-form scholarship published on academic-run WordPress sites can stimulate discussion. See *Flow: A Critical Forum on Television and Media Culture*, http://www.flowtv.co.uk, and *Antenna: Responses to Media and Culture*, http://blog.commarts.wisc.edu.

crucial resource in enabling scholars to upload, share, and embed film clips and other audiovisual files for the purpose of scholarly analysis, on an internationally recognized and legitimate platform.[16]

Anne Helen Petersen: As increasingly more academics move into "alt-ac" and other nontraditional post-PhD roles, SCMS might consider the benefits of keeping those once-and-future scholars, and their perspectives and insight, in the fold. One (perhaps frivolous, who knows!) way would be to award film and media studies labor that falls outside of the traditional academic sphere: best public scholarship? SCMS has demonstrated its commitment to innovative scholarship in its awards system, and while awards may not "mean" much, their existence can speak volumes. Between SCMS membership, conference fees, and room and board, it's often prohibitively expensive to attend SCMS without departmental funding, especially if the participant has to take off work to attend. How might we encourage and incentivize participation? Allow nonacademics to present on Saturdays? Waive SCMS membership requirements? Imperfect answers, but questions to ponder as we continue to consider SCMS's purpose and identity.

Kathleen Fitzpatrick: The relationship Anne points to between academics and the broader public sphere is something that I'd love to see SCMS and *Cinema Journal* explore further, not least because there is enormous popular interest in the materials we study: if there were ever a field that might be able to engage wider audiences, getting them interested in scholarly research, media studies ought to be it! And engaging those audiences is, I increasingly think, necessary to the future survival of the humanities. We've got to find means of demonstrating the significance of the work we do not just within the field, or within our institutions, but to the public at large—to voters, to parents, to public officials, all of whom can in different ways profoundly affect the future shape of colleges and universities. I would love to see SCMS explore new ways to support its members in making their work as broadly public as possible and to support the public in its engagement with that work. This could take the form of open publications and of opening up the conference, each of which could bring the public to academic work, but it could also involve workshops on public writing and presentation, helping to bring academic work to the public. This kind of engagement has got to be understood as a dialogue if it's to be successful, and an organization like SCMS is very well positioned to help facilitate that dialogue.

Further Reading

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Kathleen Fitzpatrick is associate executive director and director of scholarly communication of the Modern Language Association, where she serves as managing editor of *PMLA* and other MLA publications. She also holds an appointment as visiting research professor of English at New York University. She is author of *Planned Obsolescence: Publishing, Technology, and the Future of the Academy* (New York University Press, 2011) and *The Anxiety of Obsolescence: The American Novel in the Age of Television* (Vanderbilt University Press, 2006). She is cofounder of the digital scholarly network MediaCommons, where she led a number of experiments in open peer review and other innovations in scholarly publishing.

Jason Mittell is professor of film and media culture and American studies, and faculty director of the Digital Liberal Arts Initiative at Middlebury College. His most recent books are *Complex Television: The Poetics of Contemporary Television Storytelling* (New York University Press, 2015) and *How to Watch Television* (coedited with Ethan Thompson;

New York University Press, 2013). He is project manager for *[in]Transition: Journal of Videographic Film & Moving Image Studies*.

Anne Helen Petersen is a features writer at BuzzFeed, where she writes about the intersection of celebrity, feminism, and culture. She received her PhD from the University of Texas at Austin. Her second book, *Too Fat, Too Loud, Too Slutty: The Rise and Reign of the Unruly Woman*, is forthcoming from Penguin.