

## Future Publishing: Visual culture in the age of possibility

This is Project 5 of the International Association for Visual Culture (IAVC). This project is constituted as a collaborative and Open Access forum on the possible futures of publishing. The project is published on-line and simultaneously across a number of distinct scholarly, creative, and critical research platforms: the College Art Association's *Art Journal* website, the open-access journal *Culture Machine*, The Institute for Modern and Contemporary Culture (IMCC, University of Westminster), the IAVC, the *journal of visual culture*'s satellite website, *Vectors: Journal of Culture and Technology in a Dynamic Vernacular*, and the Modern Language Association Commons.

Project 5's origins are in a panel we organised in New York City in June 2012 for Nicholas Mirzoeff's 'Now! Visual Culture' event, the Association's second biennial conference. In this event's network of relations and expectations – in the places between NYC, this non-conference, and Occupy - we watched the fermentation of something that felt new and offered new ways forward in our understanding of visual culture, and also in the ways in which it is distributed, accessed, engaged with and acted upon.

The 'future publishing' that we discussed coalesces around the emerging moment in the history of technologies and the adaptive strategies deployed by the disseminators of information to accommodate them. The opportunities and challenges that they seed have extraordinary implications for the distribution and consumption of information; perhaps the most radical since the development of moveable type and its consequent market in reading.

The release of easy to utilise, freely available publishing software presents both challenges and possibilities for publishing as a practice and an industry. The ability to develop and distribute multi-touch interactive 'text books' at no cost through iTunes, for example, at once supports and restricts 'open source' publishing projects and is symptomatic of developments across the sector. The development of new technologies and new platforms for dissemination like the Kindle/tablets means that both traditional formats and networks require rethinking.

Some of the questions we consider include:

- How will changes in format impact on content – the medium is the message?
- What are the challenges for the publishing industry in generating sustainable business models that support author activity?

- How will these new market conditions impact and inflect 'open source' publishing models?
- What are the consequences for the distribution of research and how will it maintain or re-imagine its integrity across and through less formalised, deregulated networks?
- How will authors generate income?

The panellist's engagement with these and other questions are appended here, and we extend a huge debt of gratitude to Katherine Behar, Gary Hall, Kathleen Fitzpatrick, and Tara McPherson for their insights, as well as their willingness to formulate and realise Project 5 as a model of a paradigm for future publishing.

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On 11<sup>th</sup> January 2013, Aaron Swartz was found dead in his New York apartment, having apparently taken his own life. He was 26. A web programmer, co-founder of Reddit, and advocate of free-data, Swartz had been arrested in July 2011, and was being sued for downloading and attempting to release 4.8 million academic articles from the digital library JSTOR. He was arrested in July 2011, charged with data theft-related crimes, and was due to stand trial in April 2013. If convicted he faced over 30 years in prison. On January 9<sup>th</sup> 2013, JSTOR announced that the archives of more than 1,200 journals were now available for, as *Library Journal* puts it, 'limited free reading by the public'. Such free reading amounts to three articles every two weeks. We have a long way to go.

**Mark Little and Marquard Smith**

# Some Theses on the Future of Humanities Publishing, Scholarly and Otherwise

Tara McPherson

## 1. Books will endure

Books do some things very well. They have developed as elaborate support devices for linear, long-form argument. The process of writing a book enforces a winnowing of piles of materials and demands critical synthesis and a careful attention to sequence and to order. These are useful skills, honed through years of practice and well suited to many forms of scholarly expression.

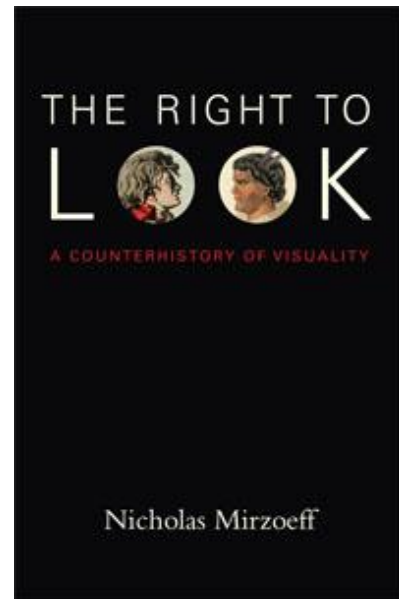
Books are durable and will outstrip the preservation of several existing media formats, many of which are notoriously unstable.

They are lovely and tactile, even smelly. They encourage us to linger, to hold and to reflect.

They are easy to read in the bath.

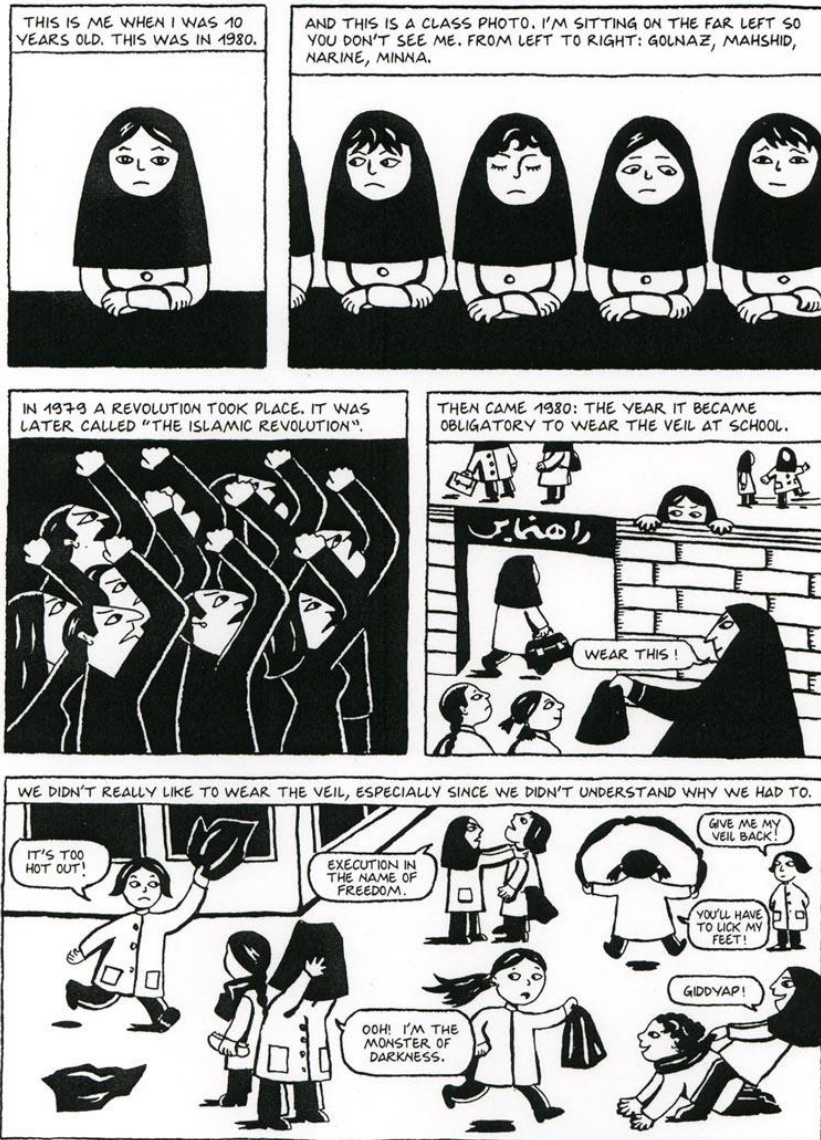
## 2. Books and writing will also expand

They will expand in ways already becoming familiar and banal, into PDFs and e-books of various shapes and sizes. They will glow gently forth from our iPads and our Kindles, encouraging us to search our texts and to think of our libraries as portable and mobile. They may entice us to share our reading practices more openly in public. They will remap form and content in lovely new ways, both on the page and the screen, responding to the heightened visibility of daily life under the weight of the graphical user interface and the proliferation of screens in realms public, private and in-between.



Nicholas Mirzoeff,  
*The Right to Look:  
A Counter-History of Visuality*  
(Duke University Press, 2011)

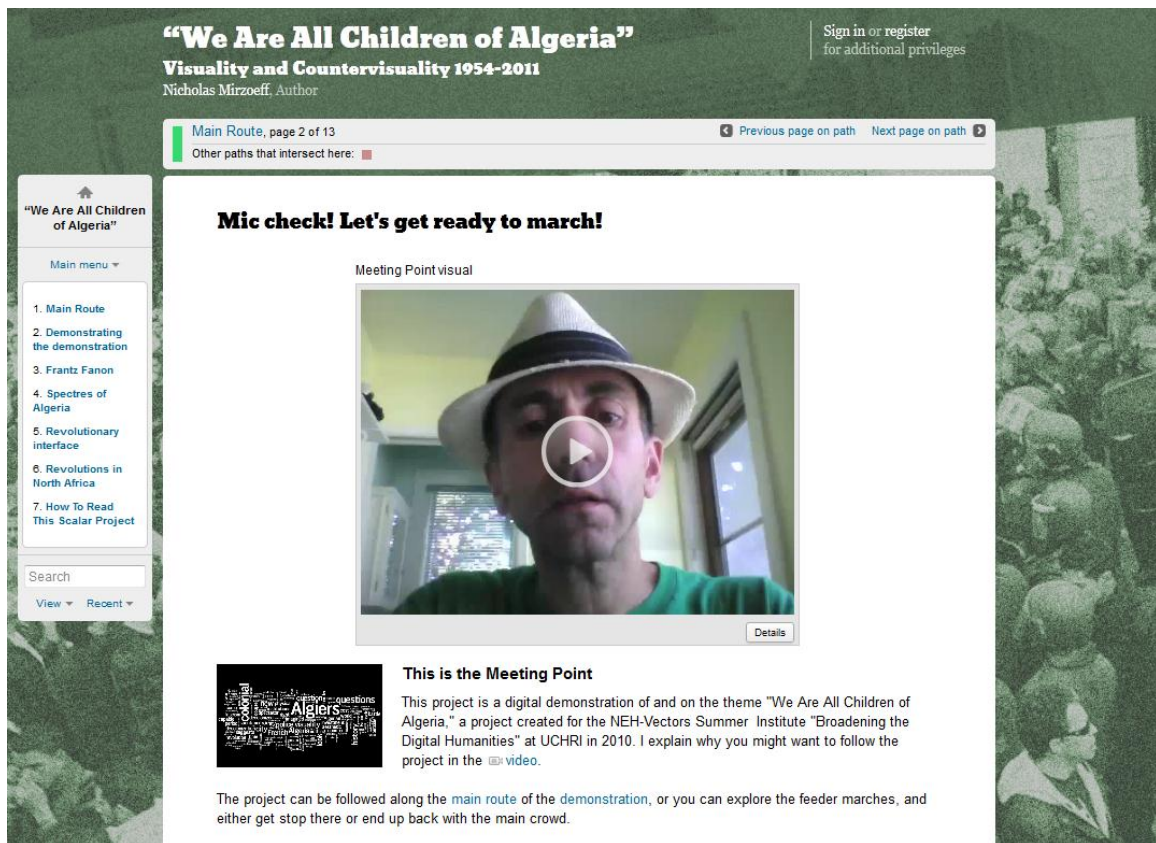
# THE VEIL



The recent explosion of graphic novels and memoirs can be seen as a reaction to and an extension of the increased visualization of daily life wrought in part by digital culture. They provide rich explorations of the relation of form to content, text to image. Image from Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*, (Pantheon Books, 2003.)

They will also expand in ways multimodal and networked, pushing against relentless linearity and against text as the privileged form of expression. Now accustomed to reading in the linked and networked modes dreamed about by Vannaver Bush as early as 1945, we are ready to read along many pathways. We do this as we follow a trail of ideas across the web, traversing linked associations toward new forms of synthetic

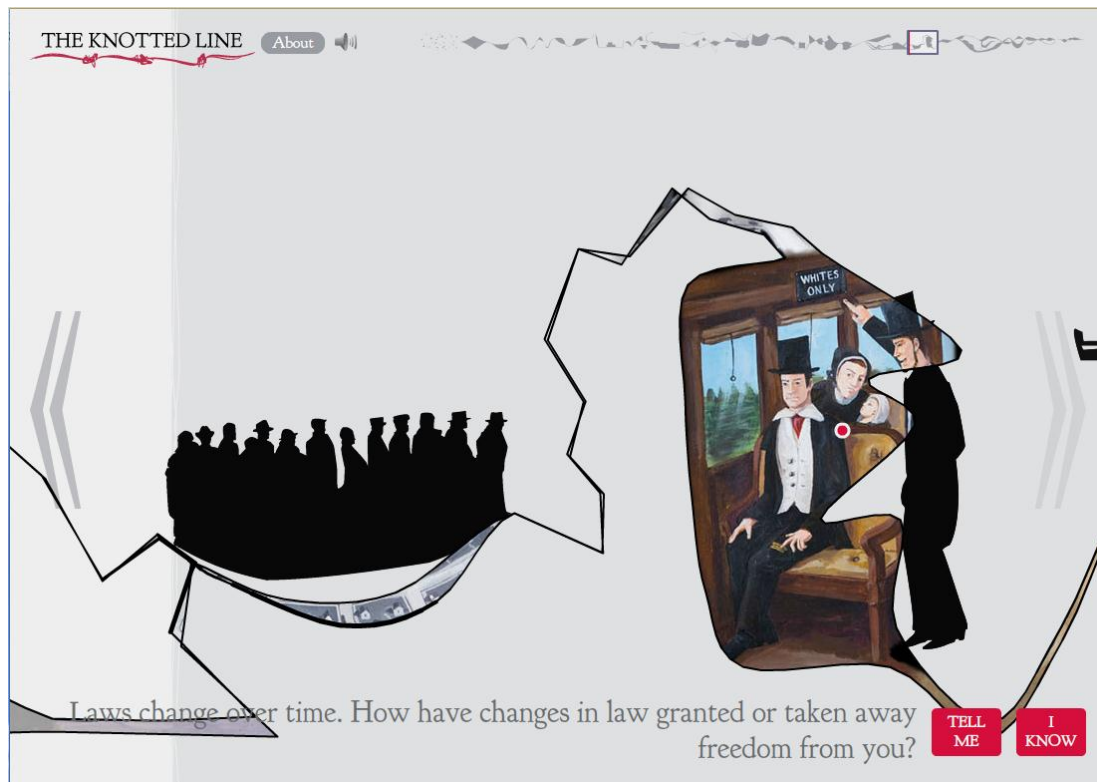
meaning. The book is also poised to expand in such a way, pushing toward less linear forms of prose when such forms prove useful.



This born-digital project extends the author's book, *The Right to Look*, to account for contemporary political movements through a non-linear, multimodal format. Nicholas Mirzoeff, "We Are All Children of Algeria": *Visuality and Countervisuality, 1954-2011*, (Duke University Press, 2012.) <http://scalar.usc.edu/nehvectors/mirzoeff/index>

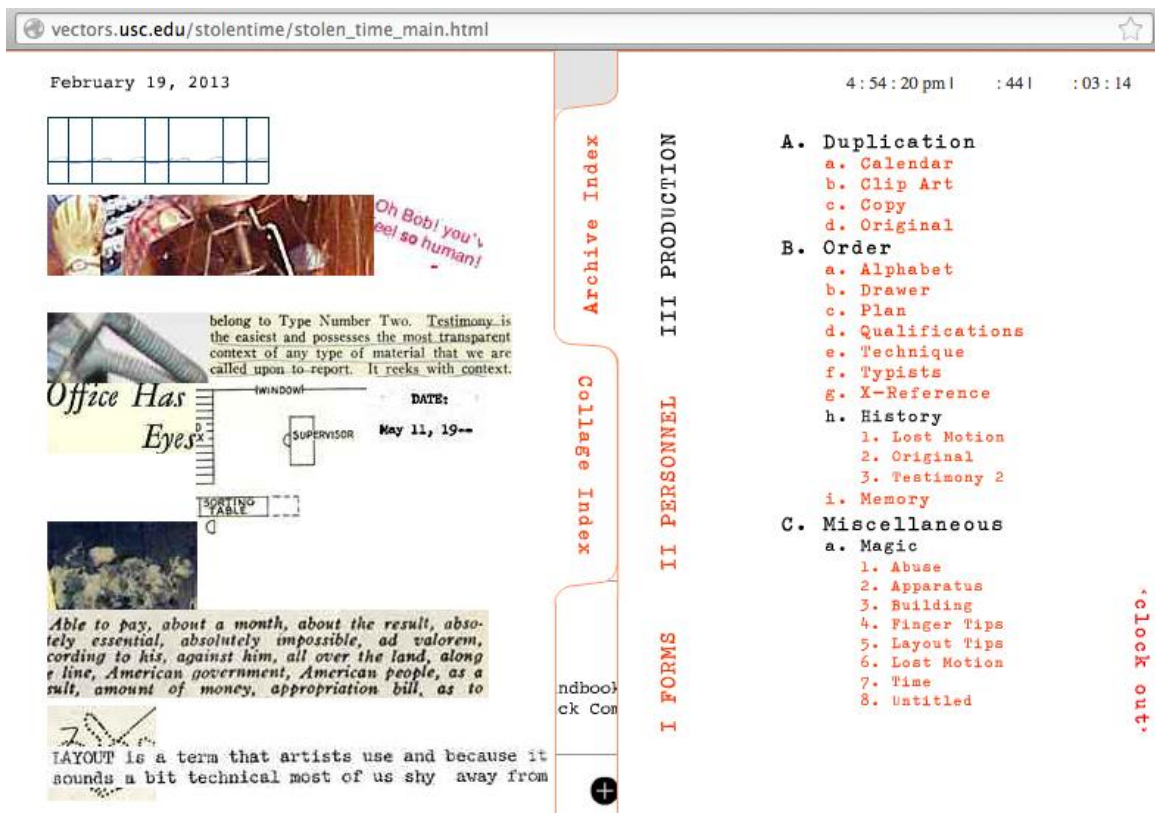
Such experiments are well underway. They include the expanded reading tools developed by Matt Gold and his collaborators at the [Digital Scholarship Lab](#), the [Open Utopia](#) project by Stephen Duncombe and the Institute for the Future of the Book, and many other kindred experiments. They also include the expanded forms of writing supported by [Scalar](#), a collaborative project with which I am involved. Scalar will soon be released as a free, open-source authoring and publishing platform that makes it easier to write long-form, born-digital scholarship that may or may not be linear. Scalar facilitates authoring with and through multiple media, allowing new relationships between visual materials and analysis, between evidence and interpretation.





*The Knotted Line* explores the tensions between freedom and imprisonment in U.S. history through an evocative and tactile interface that re-imagines the timeline and resists a teleological sense of history. <http://knottedline.com/>

Scalar's API also enables more innovative experiments in form, pushing writing and reading into more tactile, sensory and haptic registers, as in [The Knotted Line](#) by Evan Bissell (above). Our work on Scalar draws from the research undertaken with our earlier project, the multimodal journal [Vectors](#). *Vectors* asked if scholarship might look and feel differently, drawing lessons from both vernacular media and experimental art practice. Within *Vectors*' collaborative and expressive frameworks, bookishness begins to flow away, but scholarship continues.



*The Stolen Time Archive* by Alice Gambrell (with Raegan Kelly) considers anxieties around text work through a playful remapping of the archive.

<http://vectors.usc.edu/projects/index.php?project=10>

As our modes of writing and reading increasingly take shape across our various screens, humanities scholars must ask ourselves why we continue to fetishize books and even online text above all other forms within the academy? Because they count and can be counted? Because they are familiar? Because they serve our individual careers? What audiences do we foreclose by holding on to business as usual? What different ways of seeing and knowing do we ignore? Might we think not only of books and publishing but also of new flows of knowledge?

### 3. Knowledge should be connected

As Google and our provosts often remind us, we live in an era of big data and big collections, as the archive mutates into the database. From Flickr to YouTube, the vernacular datasets of the digital era are expansive and rapidly growing even as digital scholarly archives increase as well. For instance, YouTube claims that seventy-two hours of video are uploaded to its servers every minute. We need new ways to engage this material, combining machinic and human interpretation. We need forms of

writing and of communication that better accommodate visual materials. We can imagine a world in which the book and the archive might begin to merge, where the book will connect to the archive and contribute to it.

The screenshot shows the USC Shoah Foundation website's 'Testimony Clip Viewer'. At the top is the USC Shoah Foundation logo and a navigation bar with links: Access, Scholarship & Research, Teacher Education, Witnesses for Humanity, Preservation, About, and Support Us. Below the navigation bar is the title 'Testimony Clip Viewer' and a social media sharing section. A paragraph explains that the archive contains full testimonies averaging 2.5 hours, with segments organized by topics like life before genocide, hiding, ghettos, camps, liberation, life after genocide, and loss of family. On the left is a 'Clip Topics' sidebar with a list of categories; 'Women and the Holocaust' is currently selected. In the center is a video player showing a clip of Julia Lentini, with a progress bar at 00:34 of 04:46. Below the video is the title 'Women and the Holocaust'. On the right is a dark panel with the name 'Julia Lentini' and a description of her testimony. It also lists her personal details: Gender: Female, DOB: 4/15/1926, City of birth: Eisern, Country of birth: Germany, Camps: Schlieben (Germany), Auschwitz II-Birkenau (Poland). At the bottom of this panel is a button to 'Download Julia Lentini's clip'.

The USC Shoah Foundation holds close to 52,000 testimonies of survivors of the Holocaust. This visual history archive offers rich possibilities for our scholarly understandings of memory, trauma, the nation, genocide, embodiment and narrative. <http://sfi.usc.edu/>

The humanities are very much a part of this new world. Humanities scholars have always lingered in the archive, spinning narratives from its boxes and shelves, exploring both its treasures and its absences. But our relationship to the archive has often been vampiric, sucking out the bits we need and imprisoning them within our books and articles. In a world of connected data, our attentions to the archive need not be so uni-directional. Interpretation and annotation might accrue back to the archive, sculpting new relationships between evidence and interpretation. For instance, a scholar working with the Shoah Foundation's collection of Holocaust testimony might not only *write* about the testimony but might also include the testimony within their digital publication, allowing their readers to hear the survivors' voices and to see their expressions, their gestures, and their faces. The scholar might also map her own transit through the archive, curating a pathway through the collection that others might follow, observe and even expand. Our archives might live



and grow, moving from spaces of preservation to also become spaces of sharing, generation and narrative.

As humanists, we need to be involved in the implementation and design of digital archives if they are to serve our needs and expand the terrain for scholarly research. We need to help find ways to connect scattered archives and work across them. We need to communicate what archives we need, and we also need to learn from others what we might do with digital material. It's not simply a matter of digitizing materials and putting them online: we need to engage this material in new ways that we can barely yet conceive. This work has begun. For instance, we might imagine an archive with a point of view, as have David Theo Goldberg and Richard Marciano in the [T-Races project](#). Combining the historical documents of the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC), a federal agency that helped instantiate practices of redlining in the 1930s, with a Google maps application, the project provides a compelling origin story for ongoing practices of segregation in several Californian and North Carolinian cities.



The screenshot shows the Mukurtu website with a navigation bar containing links for Features, Get Mukurtu, Community, About, and Wiki. The main heading is 'Who Uses Mukurtu'. Below it is the 'Mukurtu Community' section, which lists two points: 1. A dynamic group of indigenous communities, archivists, librarians, curators, researchers and software developers actively engaging with the Mukurtu platform to ensure a robust development environment. 2. People using Mukurtu to manage their cultural heritage materials, develop relationships with other collecting institutions, and preserve their traditional knowledge. To the right of this text is a photograph of three people (two men and one woman) sitting at a table with a laptop and other items. Below the text is a blue box with the text 'MOOK-oo-tooers'. Underneath this box, it says 'We are currently engaging with several user groups to test each version of Mukurtu.' followed by a paragraph about the agile software development model. At the bottom, there is a list of user groups: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Data Archive and Dharriwaa Elders Group.

Mukurtu Community

1. A dynamic group of indigenous communities, archivists, librarians, curators, researchers and software developers actively engaging with the Mukurtu platform to ensure a robust development environment.
2. People using Mukurtu to manage their cultural heritage materials, develop relationships with other collecting institutions, and preserve their traditional knowledge.

**MOOK-oo-tooers**

We are currently engaging with several user groups to test each version of Mukurtu.

Mukurtu uses an open agile community development process. The [agile software development model](#) provides a hands on, iterative and generative environment. At every step of the process—designing, building, testing, implementation, and updates—communities will be invited to test and comment on the work in progress, as well as review the outcomes of each development sprint in an online community gathering and demo. (see [our first online demo](#) from December 2011).

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Data Archive
- Dharriwaa Elders Group

Mukurtu is a free, open-source platform for the creation and management of collections and archives that respects the knowledge protocols of indigenous communities. Its design pushes back against neoliberal notions of total access, insisting that context matters in the circulation of ideas. <http://www.mukurtu.org/>

Or we might learn from Kim Christen and her collaborators at [Mukurtu](#). Mukurtu is an archival platform that allows indigenous communities to manage their own cultural heritage materials, resisting the colonial imperative that so often underwrote the archival impulse. The project powerfully reminds us that access comes with costs and that notions of “the commons” often mask imperial assumptions.

#### 4. Knowledge should be multiple

These are not either/or questions. We should push beyond the idea that there is a single right interface to knowledge or one best way to publish. Digitized archives allow us multiple experiences at the level of the interface. At times, a scholar may simply want to access information or digital documents to further his own work, but, at other moments, he might also want to reframe, remix, share, and collaborate, activating the archive along new registers. [The Real Face of White Australia](#) does just this, building out an evocative and beautiful interface that at once serves as a visual finding aid to collections in the National Archives of Australia and as an argument about Australians rendered invisible by the White Australia Policy. The project deploys a face recognition script to cull out thousands of portraits from government documents that reveal the limits of the rhetoric of a ‘white’ Australia. While the interface will take the user back into the government’s records, it is also a powerful argument about what is left out and rendered unseen in official histories.



*The Real Face of White Australia* mines the potential of alternative interfaces for archival materials. <http://invisibleaustralians.org/faces/>

We might analyze 'big data' for empirical facts, but we might also want to reimagine big data for the human spirit. There is much to learn along these lines from experimental art practice. In their 2012 piece *Plant*, the OpenEndedGroup has digitized and spatialized 18,000 photos of the abandoned Packard Plant in Detroit in order to create an immersive 3-D experience that eschews mimetic realism in favor of painterly abstraction. Rather than evoke the nostalgic ethos of the "disaster porn" photography that often chronicles urban decay in Detroit, *Plant* subtly invites the user to reflect on the limits and possibilities of both our Fordist and post-Fordist technological imaginaries. The piece also underscores the power of the opaque, the liminal, and the ephemeral, pushing back against dreams of the humanities as rational data visualization.



Working against the realist logics of much data visualization, *Plant*, by the OpenEndedGroup, spatializes big data in poetic and human registers.  
<http://openendedgroup.com/artworks/plant.html> (A video is alternately available for linking at <http://player.vimeo.com/video/32704089?title=0&byline=0&portrait=0> )

If the Open Ended Group offers lessons for scholars from the arts, the work of Sharon Daniel points to new hybrid productions of art and argument. Her projects [\*Blood Sugar\*](#) and [\*Public Secrets\*](#) each deploy sound, text and interactivity in the service of emergent forms of interactive argumentation about and for social justice. These audio documentaries also insist that scholarship might open out to new voices, decentering privilege and engaging diverse audiences, particularly through open forms of publishing.

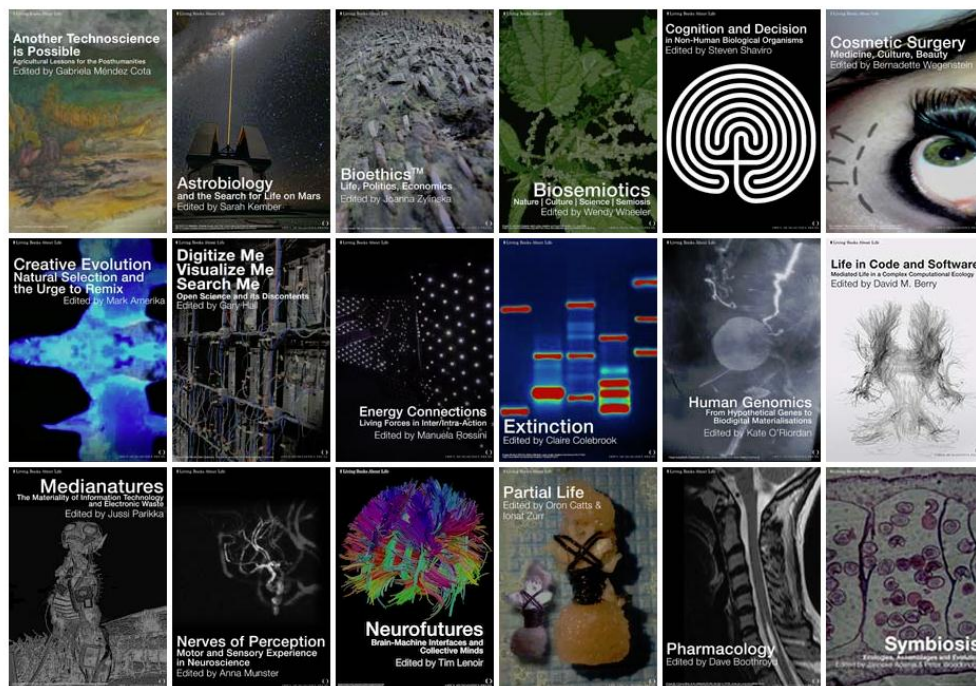


## 5. Knowledge should be open

[Ted Striphas](#) has challenged academics to rethink the ways in which we publish our work, often via companies that operate in modes that are in direct contrast to the political goals expressed in our scholarship. (His example is Taylor and Francis and its parent corporation Informa.) In commenting on the recent suicide of Aaron Swartz, Timothy Burke has argued that “the transformative impact of open access on inequality is already well-documented, and it's in keeping with the obligations and values that scholars allege to be central to their work.” He observes that the “major thing that stands in the way of the potentiality of this change [toward open access for scholarship] is the passivity of scholars themselves.” Striphas, Burke and a growing chorus of other voices urge us to take action.

### Living Books About Life

[Books](#) [Blog](#) [About](#)

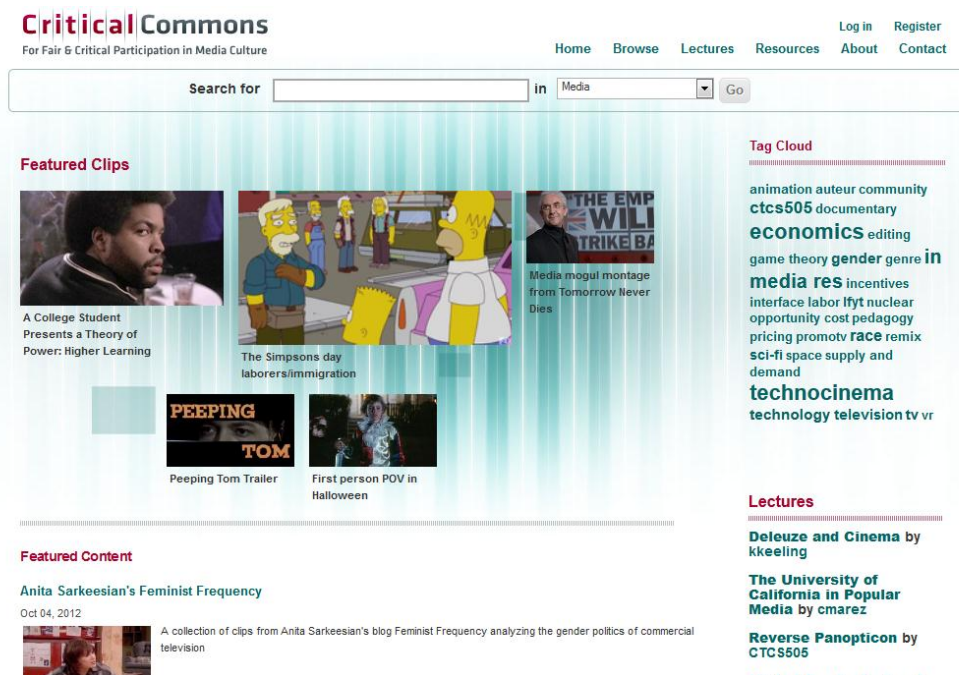


*The Living Books about Life* series expands our notion of the book to embrace emerging paradigms of curation and aggregation while also troubling the boundaries between science and the humanities. <http://www.livingbooksaboutlife.org/>

Gary Hall and his collaborators at the [Open Humanities Press](#) are walking the walk, publishing open access books and journals under the guidance of a distinguished editorial board. They are also experimenting with potential curatorial modes of publication and scholarly aggregation in series like the [Living Books about Life](#), a freely available collection of born-digital volumes that pull together diverse open access

science materials in a manner meant to disturb the rigid academic boundaries between science and the humanities and between open and closed knowledge systems.

Those of us who publish with university presses should feel an obligation to help move these presses toward open access publishing and new ecologies of knowledge. Others might join the initiatives of OHP or other supporters of open humanities publishing such as [Press Forward](#), [Media Commons](#), [Anvil Press](#), the [Public Knowledge Project](#) and many others.



Critical Commons takes up crucial debates about fair use and models new paradigms for sharing, collaboration, and scholarly infrastructure. <http://www.criticalcommons.org/>

A movement toward more open scholarly knowledge systems will also require new modes of infrastructure and sustained engagement with pressing issues such as fair use. Within a U.S. context, such efforts include the work undertaken by [Critical Commons](#) and its founder, Steve Anderson. Functioning as a bottom-up vernacular archive for the viewing, tagging, sharing and curation of video, images and sound, Critical Commons also embodies an argument about the necessity of fighting for fair use and fostering rich collaborations.



## 6. Knowledge should be transdisciplinary

None of the projects cited above are the work of single scholars. As with the books and journals we now tend to privilege within the humanities, these projects depend upon a diverse array of knowledge workers with many different skill sets. If our journals required editors, reviewers, designers and authors, emerging forms of scholarly communication require these skills and more. To realize the possibility of these forms, we'll need database literacies, algorithmic literacies, computational literacies, design literacies and interface literacies. We will need new hybrid practitioners: artist-theorists, programming humanists, activist scholars, theoretical archivists, and critical race coders. We will need new forms of graduate and undergraduate education that foster both critical and digital literacies. We will need to develop ways to evaluate and reward these many modes of working, as [Kathleen Fitzpatrick](#) has argued. We'll need intellectual generosity as we collectively build new projects even as we remember and remake important traditions in critical theory and critique more generally.

The avant-garde composer George Lewis has written compellingly about why he works with computational systems, arguing that by designing with and within systems that overtly incorporate culture we are also opening ourselves up to new registers of being and possibility. From a different arena, the scholar Nicholas Mirzoeff describes writing within the new digital authoring platform Scalar as “depending on a relation of trust” – in effect, animating new modes of knowledge production via a principled engagement with machines and the flow of mediation.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the USC School of Cinematic Arts Institute for Multimedia Literacy. At the top, there is a search bar with the text "Search Search here ...". Below the header, a navigation bar contains links: HOME, ABOUT, PEOPLE, STUDENTS, PROJECTS, EVENTS & NEWS, RESOURCES, and IML PORTAL. The main content area features a large image of a woman wearing headphones and interacting with a large screen. Below the image is a text box titled "New Major in Media Arts + Practice" with the text: "Responding to the vociferous demands of our students, the IML is delighted to announce a new major in Media Arts + Practice! The new BA is for students interested in harnessing the ...". To the right of the main content is a "TWITTER" section with three tweets. Below the tweets is a "FACEBOOK" section with the IML logo and the text "USC Institute for Multimedia Literacy".

The Institute for Multimedia Literacy in USC's School of Cinematic Arts offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in Integrated Media Arts + Practice, combining theory and making. <http://iml.usc.edu/>

Technology needs the humanities, but, as humanities scholars, we must better understand the machines and networks that profoundly impact our lives in countless ways. Capital is now fully if unevenly digital, from our financial systems to our communications infrastructures to our increasingly corporate universities, and the push toward our incorporation into these systems will only become more and more pronounced. If we are committed to a vision of the future that extends beyond the corporatization of everything, we should insist that scholarly knowledge systems strive not only to endure but also to be expansive, connected, multiple, open and transdisciplinary. There are so many ways to begin.

## The Problem with Platforms

Katherine Behar

This paper was originally presented at the Journal of Visual Culture's sponsored session, *Futures of Visual Culture Publishing*, at June 2012's *NOW! Visual Culture* conference in New York City. Set against the event's emphatic "now," the panel introduced questions of possible futures amid an array of articulations of visual culture's present. Here, I'll be posing one such prospect, what I call a "digital one-off." We'll get to the particulars of my impractical proposition shortly, but rather than start in present or future, we'll begin by querying a particular past, that of *Art Journal*, a quarterly contemporary art magazine published by the College Art Association (CAA).

Like many of the publications represented in this cluster, *Art Journal* now finds itself poised on a brink, between a print past and a digital future online. This "now" poses a curious state of affairs: hybrid, transitional, and in perpetual negotiation; a condition that, for *Art Journal*, is embodied in its newly minted website, where the publication has begun exploring the possibilities offered by web-only content, open content, rich media, and artists' web projects. Yet to take up the case of *Art Journal* in asking how a present inflects a future exposes how a present also reflects a past, and in *Art Journal*'s case, the past is a substantial one. Indeed, this spring, while the *Art Journal* website marked its first birthday, the College Art Association celebrated its centennial. Certainly, this hundred-year span of time represents an expanded context for considering online formats. But in this effort to consider publishing "now," I'd like to keep this wider frame of time in mind, and hope to do so by thinking through the lens of the very first feature on the *Art Journal* website.

Howard Singerman's "Art Journal at Fifty" was the first "Web-Only" text *Art Journal* published. At 9000 words, its form is flagrantly atypical of a web text meant to be digested online and consumed at a screen, yet Singerman rewards readers with a detailed history of the publication's "multiple beginnings and refashionings"<sup>1</sup> evolving through various guises and editorial missions, and even titles, from *Parnassus*, to *College Art Journal*, to finally dropping the "college" in 1960 and becoming *Art Journal* as we continue it today.

In his essay, Singerman, a consummate and meticulously thoughtful historian, pours through the archive, to trace *Art Journal*'s process of perpetual self-redefinition. Following, after a fashion, the initial trajectory of CAA's elder publication, *Art Bulletin*,

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<sup>1</sup> Howard Singerman, "Art Journal at Fifty," *Art Journal* 70, web-only (Spring 2011). Available online: <http://artjournal.collegeart.org/?p=54>, accessed October 14, 2012. All quotes are from Singerman, "Art Journal at Fifty," unless otherwise noted.

*Art Journal* (then called *Parnassus*) first filled the part of “the real bulletin of CAA, its newsletter” and developed as a mouthpiece of CAA, both to communicate the organization’s inner workings, and more critically, its competing priorities. To this end, Singerman writes, “*Art Journal*—like its predecessors—has been and in some sense still is a compromise: a compromise for, if not between, the major tensions within CAA itself, between studio practitioners and art historians and art educators.”

Readers like myself who are not especially familiar with the history of CAA, may be surprised by the attention Singerman draws to the organization’s constant role in advocacy and its polemic work in something we might call akin to consciousness raising to direct the growth of then still nascent, now canonized fields within the academy. First championing art history itself, which in the words of Erwin Panofsky, writing in *Art Bulletin* in 1954, “sneaked in by the back door, under the guise of classical archaeology,”<sup>2</sup> CAA and later more specifically *Art Journal* came to function as an organ for advocacy for art and art history to multiple ends.

On a pragmatic level, as *Parnassus*, the journal published early features on sample courses and overviews of significant programs. But beyond this pedagogic focus, still if nominally in place today, Singerman shows how the journal served as an instrumental advocate on a much broader, more programmatic level, as well. For example, *Art Journal* took purposive steps to shape its field by explicitly bringing contemporary art into the fold as a valid field of “historical” study in art history. The contemporary is now one of the most popular specializations in art history, but in following Singerman’s account, we find that *Art Journal*’s pages illuminate the fierce, ongoing work that was required to meet the contemporary’s first skeptical reception.<sup>3</sup>

For example, in 1941, the first issue under the title *College Art Journal* included Alfred Barr, Jr.’s “Modern Art Makes History, Too,” an argument “for the study of modern art history,” or in Barr’s words, “the art of our own time”<sup>4</sup> which Barr endorsed as no less than a graduate field of study, “touch[ing] off a discussion that extends over four numbers.” Then, beginning in 1949, the journal began to run various series to feature accounts of contemporary art written by contemporary artists, including “Contemporary Documents,” “Artists’ Writings,” and “Artists’ Pages.” Penned by artists themselves, the content in each of these series demonstrated both that the contemporary “was both literate and difficult ... worthy college material,” and—

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<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Singerman, *Ibid.* See Erwin Panofsky, “Three Decades of Art History in the United States: Impressions of a Transplanted European,” *College Art Journal* 14, no. 1 (Fall 1954): 10.

<sup>3</sup> Indeed, *Art Journal*’s commitment to 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century art was only solidified in print in an editorial statement in 2003.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Singerman, *Ibid.* See Alfred H. Barr, Jr., “Modern Art Makes History, Too,” *College Art Journal* 1, no. 1 (November 1941): 3.

equally important—that artists might be “quite smart and philosophical” in parsing the nuanced issues of contemporary work.

In these efforts, *Art Journal* undertook to actively promote the role of studio art in general education, and the role of the artist in society at large. Perhaps most definingly, Singerman details the publication’s investment in “essays on how art—both history and practice—might fit within the scope and the goals of the broader university,” thus drawing attention to the relationship between art history, theory, and criticism and art studio practice. In sum effect, *Art Journal* leaves us with this among its legacies: by defining itself as the journal for contemporary and studio art, *Art Journal* defined contemporary art history and art practice as “publishable” scholarship.

But why, beyond the rather unremarkable fact it was published online, should we be dwelling here on Singerman’s pre-digital history of this journal? In other words, what does any of this have to do with digital publishing for visual culture “now”? In no small part, *Art Journal*’s value for this discussion lies in the way it assumed the responsibility to find and define a place for the “now” in the academy. It opened a discursive territory—in many ways a visual cultural territory—where art historians could address what others are doing “now” (i.e., contemporary art) and where artists could address what they are doing “now” (i.e., making art). In short, it ushered in the active, now, present.

Before we continue, a word of caution: It is a foregone conclusion that the “futures of visual culture publishing” will mean, in one form or another, publishing digitally. But I wish to make clear that when I talk about publishing “now,” I am not talking about the instantaneous. The “now” I am evoking is something quite different—drawing out and sustaining moments through activity in the present. It’s the “now” of practice. This “now” is opposed to the instantaneous erasure of moments, as when we so often hear, in the incitement to publish digitally, a suggestion that the unpleasant long delays between submission, peer review, and print can be reduced if not eliminated. While this sounds very much like a literal promise to publish digitally “now,” it seems to me that more important to understanding the long, practice-based “now” for publishing digitally are two questions that *Art Journal* was dealing with all along:

*First, what will we count as appropriate scholarship?* For *Art Journal*, a prime question was: Should the contemporary count? Those of us concerned with publishings’ futures might ask: Is publishing online as tenure-worthy as publishing in print?

*And second, what can or should we do about alternative material forms of scholarly investigation?* *Art Journal* posed the question: What is the place of studio art in the



academy? Following suit, we might ask: Will there be a distinction between *using* new publishing platforms, and *creating* new publishing platforms?

Singerman's history shows how *Art Journal* pursued these questions in the medium of print, and in my opinion, they remain critical for the digital—which is to say, “now.” So, what I would take forward from Singerman's look back is the story of a publication modeling the publication it wants to make publishable. For visual culture—and, I'd add, artists—this is how the world works. It's about doing advocacy in a way that goes beyond argument to artifact.

The real question then becomes, what do we want to *do* “now,” to make *in* the “now”? To my mind, the most provocative and encouraging feature of digital publishing is that it seems to open up the question of form. We can deal with a greatly expanded range of temporalities, and modalities than the medium of print alone can afford. Digital publishing's much touted flexibility could allow each specific piece of content to invent its own specific form. On a personal level, as an artist, this prospect excites me because it suggests that publishing can be more like art-making.

And yet, this is not frequently how it plays out. The most frustrating aspect of digital publishing is its over-dependence on platforms. Rather than the vast array of forms we might expect and welcome, we find that systems are standardizing forms. Publishers cater content to content management systems and to users' end devices. Without question, *Scalar* and *Vectors* are important exceptions, yet *WordPress* and the eBook are already over-dominant, and have in many ways become synecdochically synonymous with “digital publishing.” Moreover, independently published journals face mounting financial pressure to migrate to large-scale co-publishers who promise to drive down costs by “buying in bulk” on behalf of coalitions of publications. Such arrangements mean further standardizing content—this time from multiple publishers with disparate priorities—and further conceding opportunities for custom content. Publishing, like every aspect of digital culture, seems entirely pervaded with platforms, to the extent that to suggest an alternative sounds like fainting with the inevitable.

But for this reason, in the face of their increasing impact, the goal for publishing digitally “now” should be to disavow platforms, to instate the active, now, present in publishing, much as it is practiced in studio art. This is a lesson not just from art, but also from visual culture more broadly, insofar as to understand content as artifact is to understand publishing, too, as a practice of making artifacts. For artists, the artifactual side of content is never a given—that's the point. Each project prompts a whole new investigation. Fresh content demands fresh form. I would like to see publishers engage the “now” in this sense: What are we doing now? Or: *Now* what are we doing?—which is to say, in the way artists do.

For publishing, this means inventing new platforms, not relying on standardized ones. It may also mean one-off designs and inefficiency. Reinventing the wheel. Constantly. On this matter, the artist in me is in direct conflict with my editorial self, because of course this is not how I designed the *Art Journal* website, and in fact I am hard pressed to think of a digital publisher who does one-offs. Surely, it's a crazy idea—the kind of wildly inefficient thing that only artists would undertake!

In turn, however, the digital one-off will also require a different kind of knowledge than editorial expertise. In debates in the digital humanities, which I've previously described as split between aspiration and anxiety,<sup>5</sup> we hear a lot of anxiety as to whether building tools can count as “scholarship,” and some would dismiss the idea of “tool-building” wholesale. And to a certain extent, I agree—I would like to see the emphasis placed not on *building tools* but on *crafting experiences*. The knowledges we need to cultivate in publishing are an ability to make—to code and to craft—and to do all of this with a sensitivity to the inner relationships of *experiencing* content *through* form, which are of course, the relationships artists continually query. Like *Art Journal's* history of self-redefinition, the “now” we should seek means this constant self-reinvention.

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<sup>5</sup> Katherine Behar, “*Art Journal* and the Digital Humanities,” unpublished paper presented at “Art History Meets the Digital Humanities,” a panel sponsored by Scalar at the College Art Association Annual Conference, Los Angeles, February 25, 2012.

## Scholarly Communication and Scholarly Societies

**Kathleen Fitzpatrick**

I've spent the last several years exploring issues surrounding digital scholarly publishing from a number of different directions for a while now, both in a hands-on way through MediaCommons and through my recent book, *Planned Obsolescence*. This is not the work I set out to do at the start of my career; like most scholars, I imagined that our publishing systems - which seemed to have been functioning more or less as they were since time immemorial - would ever be thus: something of a black box into which I sent manuscripts and, if I was both determined and lucky, out of which would come publications. Finding myself at a key moment determined but unlucky, and faced with a system that seemed to have broken down, I decided to open the box, and start thinking directly about what was inside.

I've learned a tremendous amount from this work - not least that our communication systems have come to be the way they are through a series of historical processes and human decisions, and thus that they can be changed. Of course, I've also learned just how difficult such change can be; it will take a great deal of rethinking, of advocacy, and of support in order for any new way of working to take root. These changes, after all, aren't just a matter of developing and implementing new technologies, but instead require much deeper and more difficult forms of social and institutional change. It was the opportunity to help create that kind of change - and because, let's face it, it's not every day that someone walks up to a scholar in the humanities and says "these are some interesting ideas you have; let's see if they work!" - that led me to take on the role I now have, as director of scholarly communication of the Modern Language Association.

The office of scholarly communication was established by the association's executive council in 2011, and was charged with bringing together and reimagining the former book publishing program and the web editorial functions of the MLA. It's a structure that is meant to grapple with a new way of understanding that scholarly communication, rather than publishing, is what scholarly societies do; as such, the new office touches every part of the organization, from its continuing publishing activities to member relations to taking policy to the convention. The office has two primary responsibilities: thinking about the future of our book publications as our means of production and distribution become increasingly digital, and thinking about the born-digital modes of communication our members will need us to support in order to facilitate developing scholarly practices.

The relatively easy part of that first area involves getting our book publications up to speed with developments in e-books, as well as taking projects that have to this point existed only in print and thinking about how the digital might enable us to do more, better work with them. For instance, we have recently closed entries on the *New Variorum Shakespeare Digital Challenge*, in which we released the XML from our most recent *Variorum* volume under a Creative Commons license and encouraged scholars to produce the most exciting interface or API or visualization using it, enabling us to see more of the future possibilities for the *Variorum*. There's a lot to be done on this end of our charge, and the questions of business model and revenue production and open access loom large, but at least we do know what those questions are.

The other half of our charge is a good bit more complicated, however; it calls for us to rethink the role of the scholarly society in the digital age. For instance, it calls for us to contemplate moving the locus of a society's value from providing closed access to the products of the society to facilitating the broadly open distribution of the work done by its members. This is a profound shift, and not just for us, but for our members: the scholarly society may be changing from a model in which one becomes a member in order to get the journal to a model in which one becomes a member in order to get one's own work out to the world, surrounded by and associated with the other work done by experts in the field.

We've chosen to begin that transition by building *MLA Commons*, a platform that will be able to support a wide range of forms of member-to-member communication. We have received a grant from the Mellon Foundation to support this work, and are benefiting from the generosity of the CUNY Academic Commons team, who are in turn supported by the Sloan Foundation in the development of the *Commons in a Box*. The Commons software is based on proven open-source tools -- *WordPress* and *BuddyPress*, with a host of associated plugins -- and both CUNY and the MLA have the goal of releasing the software and opening the platform to other organizations and associations once it's complete.

Any member of the MLA will be able to activate their account on the Commons, and with that account they'll be able to create a profile, join both formal and informal discussion groups, publish an individual blog or work on a group blog, post and share documents, work collaboratively on projects, and a number of other things besides. Groups on the Commons can be open- or closed-membership, and can do their work openly or in private; in this way Commons groups will support the work of MLA committees, of the existing divisions and discussion groups within the organization, and of ad-hoc groups of scholars who come together around particular projects. (This in particular will enable us to develop a more fluid structure for the organization;

currently our divisions and discussion groups change only in an additive way, and once created never really disappear.)

We're hoping that there will be lots of unfiltered, open content produced in the network, but we're also developing a set of possible workflows that will enable groups to implement whatever kinds of editorial filtering they wish to employ, highlighting the best stuff going on in the Commons as a means of creating a sort of post-publication peer review. So, for instance, the division on 19th century American literature might work with us to develop a site on which it can aggregate the best writing being published on *MLA Commons* in that field; we can then represent that status on the writing so selected, as well as on the profiles of its authors, providing a mode of post-publication review and credentialing for that work and the scholars who produce it. We will also have available a range of templates allowing more traditionally edited publications to develop.

We're still in the alpha stage in our development path, and we are in the process of developing our authentication API as well as the site's design and other elements. We have on our agenda for future development a range of projects that will enable the Commons to connect with other major MLA resources, including the convention and the Bibliography. We're also actively thinking about how MLA Commons will be able to connect and work with other in-development projects and tools like Scalar, or like CHNM's *PressForward*; as our partnership with CUNY might suggest, we have no desire to reinvent the wheel, but rather want to help projects like these develop and gain purchase within MLA fields.

But we're also thinking about what I think will be the most important challenge we face: how to create buy-in amongst the membership for using the platform. Other scholarly societies have attempted to roll out platforms for member communication, only to discover that if you build it, they will not necessarily come. Users of social media face "profile fatigue," and those most likely to adopt online modes of communication often already feel their needs met through existing channels. We're using our testing process as a means of establishing what our members do and don't need in the platform, as well as a means of getting early adopters to help us by creating some exciting content, by demonstrating what the platform can do, and by pushing at its edges.

My sense is that a network such as *MLA Commons* will come of age when its users do things with it that we never would have predicted. And this is the crucial role, I believe, for scholarly societies: supporting members as they communicate today, and as they work together to develop the profession's future.



# The Philosophical Impossibility of Unliking the Cultural Industries in the Mind of Someone Writing

Gary Hall

Publishing, and especially the shift toward publishing research and scholarship digitally, can often appear as a specialist interest - something that, as critical media theorists, we can choose to be either involved with or not.<sup>1</sup> What I want to show you today is how publishing actually shapes *fundamentally* the way we work, act and even think.

We've been asked to speak about the 'challenges and possibilities for publishing as a practice and an industry that emerge from the changing technical landscape'. Such a remit immediately raises the issue of the relation between different media technologies and time. So I'm going to begin by turning to a theorist who has paid quite a lot of attention to this relation.

Building on the philosophy of Jacques Derrida, Bernard Stiegler argues that the relation of the human to technology is one of originary technicity. What this means is that, contrary to the classical Aristotelian view, technology is not something that is added to the human from the outside and only after the latter's birth, as an external tool or instrument used to bring about certain ends. The human is rather born out of its relation to technology.

Now, as far as Derrida is concerned, the association of time with the technology of writing means this originary relation between technology and the human can be understood as a form of writing or arche-writing (i.e. writing in general, which is 'invoked by the theme's of "the arbitrariness of the sign" and of difference' - as opposed to any actual historical system of writing).<sup>2</sup> For Stiegler, however, such an understanding universalizes arche-writing and underplays the specificity of different media technologies and their relation to time. Instead, he emphasizes the historical and contingent nature of this relation. Put simply, because the human is born out of a relation to technology, and because time is only possible and can only be accessed and experienced as a result of its prior inscription in concrete, technical forms, the nature of consciousness changes over time as media technologies change. Stiegler thus stresses that we must distinguish between:

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<sup>1</sup> A first version of this paper was presented at *Now! Visual Culture* a conference of the International Association for Visual Culture, New York City, May 31-June 2, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976, p. 57.

- the reproducibility of the letter, first handwritten and then printed;
- analog reproducibility (i.e. photographic and cinematographic), which [Walter] Benjamin studied extensively;
- digital reproducibility.

It is 'these three great types of reproducibility', he insists, that 'have constituted and overdetermined the great *epochs* of memory' in the west, producing eras in which subjects are created with *different* forms of the awareness of time.<sup>3</sup>

As far as the contemporary epoch is concerned, Steigler presents the cultural industries as subordinating the subject's consciousness and experience of time to the pre-programmed, standardized, reproducible and controllable patterns of their *temporal industrial objects*. The cultural industries, and particularly the program (radio and television) industries within them, achieve this by connecting people and their attention to the same daily radio programmes, live TV broadcasts and so forth on a mass basis. Accordingly, there is too little scope for the event, for singularity - for the 'welcoming of the new and opening of the undetermined to the improbable', to play on his 'idea of value defined as knowledge'.<sup>4</sup> Newspapers, for example, are described here as being merely machines 'for the production of ready-made ideas, "clichés"', motivated by the demands of short-term profit.<sup>5</sup> As a consequence, the cultural and program industries interfere with the ability of each subject to singularly appropriate and transform what Steigler, following Gilbert Simondon, calls the *pre-individual fund*, which is the process that results in the psychic individuation of each individual. So much so that in a recent essay Steigler is able to show how they function to suffocate desire and destroy the individual:

As heritage of the accumulated experience of previous generations, this pre-individual fund exists only to the extent that it is singularly appropriated and thus transformed through the participation of psychic individuals who share this fund in common. However, it is only shared inasmuch as it is each time *individuated*, and it is individuated to the extent that it is *singularised*.

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<sup>3</sup> Bernard Steigler, 'The Discrete Image', in Jacques Derrida and Bernard Steigler, *Echographies of Television*, Cambridge: Polity, 2002, p. 155.

<sup>4</sup> This idea of value conflicts with that 'measured through the concept of information and consequently conceived of as calculable', as the 'determination of the undetermined' (Bernard Steigler, *Technics and Time, 2: Disorientation*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2009, p. 98).

<sup>5</sup> Steigler, *Technics and Time, 2*: p. 112.

The program industries tend ... to bring about a hyper-synchronisation constituted by the programs, which makes the *singular* appropriation of the pre-individual fund impossible. The program schedule replaces that which André Leroi-Gourhan called socio-ethnic programs: the schedule is conceived so that my lived past tends to become the same as that of my neighbours, and that our behaviour becomes herd-like.<sup>6</sup>

One of the most important things we learn from Stiegler is that the way to respond responsibly to this 'industrialization of memory' is not by trying to somehow escape or elude media technologies or become otherwise autonomous from them. Originary technicity means there is no human without technology, as the '*who* is nothing without the *what*, since they are in a *transductive* relation during the process of exteriorization that characterizes life'.<sup>7</sup> Any such response itself therefore needs to involve such technologies. But, by the same token, neither can we proceed in the hope that the mass media of the cultural and program industries are eventually going to disappear or be abolished; or that we can address the issue by endeavouring to replace them and the alienating affects of their one-to-many broadcasting model with the apparently more personal, participatory, many-to-many model associated with the dominant social media and their fast-emerging monopolies. Hence the way a small number of extremely large corporations, including Amazon, Facebook and Google, are currently in the process of supplementing, if not entirely superseding, Murdoch and the 'old' cultural and program industries when it comes to the subordination of consciousness and attention to pre-programmed patterns of information conceived as calculable, as merchandise. Instead, Stiegler presents such technologies as Foucauldian *dispositifs*: i.e. forms of *mnemonics* (cultural memory) - what Plato described as *pharmaka*, both poisons and cures. Rather than reject or critique them outright, he suggests we need to explore how some of the *tendencies* of which our current economy of the *pharmakon* is composed can be deployed to give these technologies new and different inflections.

The question that is raised by this panel for me, however, concerns the medium Stiegler himself most often deploys to analyze and critique the specific changes in media technology that are helping to shape subjectivity in the era of digital reproducibility. To what extent is it appropriate for Stiegler to do so as if he himself were in the main living and working in the epoch of writing and the printed letter? Is

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<sup>6</sup> Bernard Stiegler, 'Suffocated Desire, or How the Cultural Industry Destroys the Individual: Contribution to a Theory of Mass Consumption', *parresia*, Number 13, 2011, pp. 52-61, [http://parresiajournal.org/parresia13/parresia13\\_stiegler.pdf](http://parresiajournal.org/parresia13/parresia13_stiegler.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Stiegler, *Technics and Time*, 2, p. 6. As Stiegler notes, technics and the human are here joined together in what Gilbert Simondon refers to as the 'transductive' relationship, 'a relationship whose elements are constituted such that one cannot exist without the other - where the elements are co-constituents' (p. 2).

Stiegler - like Derrida before him, on his account - not in his own way privileging writing, and the associated forms and techniques of presentation, debate, critical attention, observation and intervention, as a means of understanding the specificity of networked digital media technologies and their relation to cultural memory, time and the production of human subjectivity?

Stiegler's conception of originary technicity, for example, should undermine any Romantic conception of the self as separate from those objects and technologies that provide it with a means of expression: writing, the book, film, photography, the Web, smart phone, tablet and so forth. Yet from the very first volume of *Technics and Time* (originally published in French in 1994) through to 2011's *Decadence of Industrial Democracies*, and beyond, Stiegler to all intents and purposes continues to act as if he genuinely subscribes to the notion of the author as individual creative genius associated with the cultural tradition of European Romanticism. He persists in publishing books, including a number of multi-volume monographs, devoted to the building of long-form 'arguments that are intended to be decisive, comprehensive, monumental, definitive' and, above all, *his*.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, at least in their compulsive repetition of the traditional, pre-programmed, ready-made methods of composition, accreditation, publication and dissemination, his books very much endeavour to remain the original creation of a stable, centred, indivisible and individualized, humanist, proprietorial subject.

It is not only Stiegler who *acts out* what it is to be a critical theorist or radical philosopher by writing and publishing in this fashion – much the same can be said of Virilio, Rancière, Žižek, Laruelle, Malabou, Meillassoux – in fact most thinkers of media, culture and philosophy today.<sup>9</sup> This point even applies to those theorists of digital media who know how to code and produce experimental e-literature, such as Alexander R. Galloway and N. Katherine Hayles (as well as many of us at this conference). *How can it not* when academics in the humanities generally need at least one monograph published with a reputable print press to secure that all important first position, promotion and tenure?<sup>10</sup> Is this not how we acquire much of *our* authority,

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<sup>8</sup> I am here partly paraphrasing Stanley Fish's argument in 'The Digital Humanities and the Transcending of Mortality', *New York Times: Opinionator*, 9 January 2012, <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/01/09/the-digital-humanities-and-the-transcending-of-mortality/>.

<sup>9</sup> The 'construct' known as 'Stephen Hawking' is perhaps the most obvious contemporary example of how this romantic conception of the subject works to separate the author from those objects and technologies that provide it with a means of expression. See Helene Mialet, *Hawking Incorporated: Stephen Hawking and the Anthropology of the Knowing Subject*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012.

<sup>10</sup> Anyone who doubts the power with which such discourses are enforced should listen to 'Episode #2: On Tenterhooks, On the Tenure Track', *3620 Podcast*, Annenberg School for Communication, September 17, 2012: <http://podcast.asc.upenn.edu/2012/09/up-next-on-tenterhooks-on-the-tenure-track/>. That said, and as I have shown elsewhere, an author's ability to create with computer

too: by acting romantically as if we still live in the epoch of writing and print? Would we have heard of Stiegler or attach quite the importance to his work we do, would we even consider him a serious thinker and philosopher, if he had not (single-)authored so many print books and operated instead merely as part of the *Ars Industrialis* association of cultural activists he formed in 2005<sup>11</sup> (or any of those other centres and institutions he has worked at and with, such as the INA, IRCAM and IRI [Innovation and Research Institute] at the Georges Pompidou Center)?

Now a great artist or philosopher, for Stiegler, is somebody 'really specific, singular—somebody who is recognized as a singularity who has created a new type of circuit on which other people can come and continue the circuits.'<sup>12</sup> It is a description that without doubt in many respects applies to Stiegler himself. Nevertheless, much of what Stiegler writes is concerned with the importance and value of paying attention and taking care, along with the need to raise the issue of knowledge and its relation to subjectivity afresh in the era of digital reproducibility. The question therefore arises, just as Stiegler in his account of how Western philosophy has excluded technics in *Technics and Time, 1*, sees Heidegger as having forgotten Epimetheus, who himself forgot *dynamis*, is there something Stiegler has perhaps forgotten? Has he forgotten to take enough care regarding the extent to which the publishing of articles, monographs and 2, 3 and even 5 volume series of books submitted to learned journals and university presses *does not* take place outside and apart from the domain of the cultural industries, but is *itself* heavily implicated in the control and homogenization of *our* thought, memory, consciousness and behaviour through its media technologies? In short, is it possible Stiegler has neglected to pay sufficient attention to the cultivation of his own self: specifically, the way *his* subjectivity as a philosopher and academic is born out of a relation to technics and time? I am thinking in particular of that aspect of our rapidly changing media environment that is associated with the print journal and book publishing industry, and the network of economic, social, legal and infrastructural links and connections that help to shape the conditions in which knowledge and research can and cannot be created, performed, organized, categorized, published and circulated.

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media is often perceived as giving their written work extra authority and intellectual cache. See Gary Hall, 'Notes on Creating Critical Computer Media', *Digitize This Book!: The Politics of New Media, or Why We Need Open Access Now*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.arsindustrialis.org/>

<sup>12</sup> Bernard Stiegler, in Bernard Stiegler and Irit Rogoff, 'Transindividuation', *e-flux journal* #14, March 2010.

Stiegler draws attention to the 'growing danger' represented by the privatization of the Web and the attentional forms it constitutes.<sup>13</sup> He does so because the issue 'is first and foremost political', due to the fact that the Web has become the new space of 'the articulation between psychic individuation and collective individuation, and the site of fights to control the latter.'<sup>14</sup> Yet that part of the publishing industry responsible for producing traditional *print-on-paper* academic journals and books is hardly free from the danger of privatization. Consider the increasing dominance of the market-led model of a small number of transnational corporations. Reed Elsevier, Springer, Wiley-Blackwell, and Taylor & Francis/Informa are far more concerned with productivity, efficiency, instrumentality and the pursuit of maximum profit than increasing circulation and making knowledge and research available to those who need it. Witness their already extremely high and still increasing journal subscription charges, for those in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) especially;<sup>15</sup> 'Big Deal' multi-year contract bundling strategies, which insist institutional libraries buy large numbers of publisher-generated packages of journals, many of which are not necessary for their collections, rather than individual titles, and which prevent institutions cancelling subscriptions to even a single title; and protection of copyright and licensing restrictions, not least through their support for measures such as SOPA (Stop Online Piracy Act) and PIPA (Protect IP Act).

The related 'dismantling' of the kind of enclosed, disciplinary publishing organisation designed more with a view to serving charitable aims and the public good - scholarly

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<sup>13</sup> Stiegler Bernard Stiegler, 'Bernard Stiegler, director of IRI (Innovation and Research Institute) at the Georges Pompidou Center, and www2012 keynote speaker', *21st International World Wide Web Conference*, Lyon, France, April 16-20, 2012:

<http://www2012.wwwconference.org/hidden/interview-of-bernard-stiegler/>

<sup>14</sup> Stiegler, *World Wide Web Conference*.

<sup>15</sup> There is neither the time nor the space here to go into the political economy of academic publishing in any great detail. To quickly provide some recently collected figures, however: journal prices in the United States increased by 10.8 per cent in 1995, 9.9 per cent in 1996, 10.3 per cent in 1997, and 10.4 per cent in 1998. According to other survey data, the average serial unit cost more than tripled between 1986 and 2003, increasing from US\$89.77 to US\$283.08. This increase far outpaced the 68 per cent rate of inflation during this same period. In terms of overall serials expenditures, libraries had increased their average serials budgets by just over 260 per cent from almost US\$1.5 million in 1986 to slightly more than US\$5.3 million in 2003. In comparison, monograph expenditures actually declined about two per cent when adjusted for inflation – US\$1.1 million in 1986 to US\$1.85 million in 2003....

Even in the most recent years following the global economic meltdown of 2008, serials prices rose at rates between four and five per cent, well above the negative rate of inflation in 2009 and the 1.6 per cent level of inflation in 2010. According to EBSCO, between 2007 and 2011 journal prices increased by almost 30 per cent for U.S.-based titles and almost 34 per cent for non-U.S. titles.

(Wilhelm Peekhaus, 'The Enclosure and Alienation of Academic Publishing: Lessons for the Professoriate', *tripleC*, 10(2), 2012: 577-599, p. 582: <http://www.triple-c.at/index.php/tripleC/issue/current>).

associations, learned societies, university presses, non-profit and not-for-profit publishers – provides still further evidence of the dangers of privatization facing that part of the publishing industry responsible for producing traditional *print-on-paper* academic journals and books. The high and increasing costs of subscribing to journals,<sup>16</sup> combined with cuts to library budgets, subsidies and other sources of funding, has ‘strangled libraries and led to fewer and fewer purchases of books/monographs’.<sup>17</sup> This has produced a ‘monograph crisis’, which is shorthand for the way the already uncertain sustainability of the print monograph is being placed at further risk by the ever-decreasing sales of academic books.<sup>18</sup> The fall in demand for academic monographs has in turn resulted in presses producing smaller and shorter print runs. As a result, those volumes that *are* published are not distributed as widely as they may have been in the past, with many going out of print after 18 months or so.<sup>19</sup> Some academic publishers are now moving much of their focus away from advanced level, full-length research monographs to concentrate on text books, readers, introductions, reference works and more fashionable, commercial, marketable titles. There has been a recent boom in the UK and US, for instance, in short academic/trade books focusing on particular films and TV programmes, such as *Lost in Translation* and *Dr Who*,<sup>20</sup> academic publishers thus tying themselves ever closer to the cultural industries and the system they form ‘with industry as such, of

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<sup>16</sup> According to Robert Darnton:

Between 1986 and 2005, the prices for institutional subscriptions to journals rose 302 percent... Faced with this disparity, libraries have had to adjust the proportions of their acquisitions budgets...they used to spend about half of their funds on serials and half on monographs. By 2000 many libraries were spending three quarters of their budget on serials. Some had nearly stopped buying monographs altogether.

(Robert Darnton, ‘The Library: Three Jeremiads’, *New York Review of Books*, December 23, 2010,

<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2010/dec/23/library-three-jeremiads/?page=1>)

<sup>17</sup> Jean Kempf, ‘Social Sciences and Humanities Publishing and the Digital “Revolution”’ unpublished manuscript, 2010, [http://perso.univ-lyon2.fr/~jkempf/Digital\\_SHS\\_Publishing.pdf](http://perso.univ-lyon2.fr/~jkempf/Digital_SHS_Publishing.pdf); John Thompson, *Books in the Digital Age: the Transformation of Academic and Higher Education Publishing in Britain and the United States*, Cambridge UK, Malden MA: Polity Press, 2005, pp. 93-94.

<sup>18</sup> ‘Greco and Wharton state that the average library monographs purchases have dropped from 1500 in the 1970s to 200-300 currently. Thompson estimates that print runs and sales have declined from 2000-3000 (print runs and sales) in the 1970s to print runs of between 600-1000 and sales of in between 400-500 nowadays’ (Janneke Adema and Eelco Ferwerda, ‘Open Access for Monographs: The Quest for a Sustainable Model to Save the Endangered Scholarly Book’, *LOGOS*, 20/1-4, 2009, p. 182, n.10. See also Janneke Adama and Gary Hall, ‘The Political Nature of the Book: On Artists’ Books and Radical Open Access’ [unpublished]).

<sup>19</sup> ‘In the 1970s average print runs of 2000 books were quite common, whereas at the start of the new century, figures of around 400 copies have become more commonplace’ (Janneke Adema and Eelco Ferwerda, ‘Open Access for Monographs: The Quest for a Sustainable Model to Save the Endangered Scholarly Book’, *LOGOS*, 20/1-4, 2009). See also Janneke Adama and Gary Hall, ‘The Political Nature of the Book: On Artists’ Books and Radical Open Access New Formations’ (forthcoming).

<sup>20</sup> Diane Negra, ‘Mini-series’, *Times Higher Education*, 17 June 2010, <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storyCode=412040&sectioncode=26>.



which the function consists in manufacturing consumption patterns by massifying life styles'.<sup>21</sup>

Traditional print academic publishing cannot thus be said to be explicitly dedicated to promoting the longevity, heritage and intra-generational transmission from old to young – a process that, for Stiegler, forms an integral part of the production and selection of pre-individual funds. Certainly, when it comes to the threat of privatization and fights to control the space of articulation between psychic individuation and collective individuation, then, 'print' and the 'Web' cannot be simply contrasted in terms of an offline-online dialectic. In fact, concepts and values inherited from the era of writing, the book, and especially the industrialisation of printing which took place from the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards – the indivisible and individualized proprietorial author, mass printing techniques, uniform multiple-copy editions, 'fixity', the long-form argument, originality, author's rights, copyright and so on – constitute some of the *main* ways in which knowledge, research and thought is being commodified and corporatized by academic publishers; publishers whose business models nowadays very much depend on turning even the publically funded thought and labour of radical philosophers such as Stiegler into marketable commodities.<sup>22</sup>

All of which raises a number of questions for Stiegler himself. For in this respect, academic monographs, to take just one example, also appear as machines 'for the production of ready-made ideas, "clichés"', motivated by the demands of short-term profit, whose 'criteria of selection are aspects of marketability'.<sup>23</sup> Monographs, too, are a means of standardizing and controlling thought, memory and behaviour (e.g. regarding authorship, originality, copyright, intellectual property), 'through the formatting and artificial manufacturing of desires' of the individual theorist or philosopher, including those for pre-eminence, authority and disciplinary power.<sup>24</sup> (It is a desire or drive that goes a long way toward explaining the situation whereby the vast majority of even politically radical authors are perfectly willing to turn a blind eye and concede to the insistence of publishers that the rights to turn their text into a commodity that can be bought and sold for profit be transferred to them: because in exchange the author will have their work edited, copy-edited, proofed, typeset, formatted, published, distributed, marketed, promoted and sold, and thus hopefully

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<sup>21</sup> Stiegler, 'Suffocated Desire'.

<sup>22</sup> As Peekhaus points out:

One particularly potent mechanism of control is the almost universal practice among commercial journal publishers to make publication of scholarly articles contingent upon the author agreeing to transfer the intellectual property rights in a work to the publisher. This ability to demand ownership rights in the work of academic labourers has been partly facilitated by a relatively conservative system of tenure and promotion that reinforces the *status quo* of corporate controlled journal venues.

(Peekhaus, 'The Enclosure and Alienation of Academic Publishing')

<sup>23</sup> Stiegler, *Technics and Time*, 2: p. 112.

<sup>24</sup> Stiegler, 'Suffocated Desire'.

read, recognized and engaged with by others.) In continuing to invest his time, care and attention so heavily in the writing and publishing of conventional print books can Stiegler not therefore be said to be exhibiting some of the very herd-like behaviour, the '*generalised herdification*', he condemns the culture industry for producing in consumers?<sup>25</sup> After all, the back cover blurb of *Technics and Time, 2: Disorientation*, refers to his having published seventeen in 'the last five years alone'. Is this not a variation on the '*liquidation of the exception*'?<sup>26</sup> By being deprived of their individuality in this fashion, are even radical theorists and philosophers such as Stiegler - like the consumers of hyper-industrial capitalism - 'lacking becoming, that is, lacking a future'?<sup>27</sup> In short, is there insufficient scope here too for the event, for the singularity, for the 'welcoming of the new and opening of the undetermined to the improbable'?

To put the above in the more obviously political terms of this New York conference and its concern with the Occupy movement in particular: in recent years a number of critical theorists and radical philosophers, including Franco 'Bifo' Berardi, Jodi Dean and Sherry Turkle, have positioned networked media technologies as contributing to the formation of a new kind of human subjectivity. It is a subjectivity that is supposedly suffering from attention deficit disorders, and rendered anxious, panicked and deeply depressed by the accelerated, over-stimulated, over-connected nature of daily life and work under 21<sup>st</sup> century capitalism.<sup>28</sup> Meanwhile others, such as Felix Stalder, David Harvey and Manuel Castells, have been keen to portray the Arab Spring, anti-austerity and student protests as expressive of new ways of being human that are markedly different to those generated by neoliberalism.<sup>29</sup> Yet in the era of phenomena such as Anonymous and Occupy, with their explicit rejection of the drive toward individual fame that constitutes an inherent part of modern capitalist society, and emphasis on non-hierarchical forms of organization, do we need to critically explore new ways of

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<sup>25</sup> Stiegler, 'Suffocated Desire'.

<sup>26</sup> Stiegler, 'Suffocated Desire'.

<sup>27</sup> Stiegler, 'Suffocated Desire'. Of course, as Stiegler makes clear, when 'selection becomes industrial', as it has in the academic publishing industry, which makes decisions as to what to publish increasingly on economic grounds:

It integrates a vast array of equipment controlled by economically determined calculations that thus from the very beginning attempt to dissolve the undetermined. But because this industrialization ends in the development of different identities, such a dissolution is not possible. In other words, two indissoluble tendencies confront each other in this transformation. The future consists of their negotiation.

(Stiegler, *Technics and Time, 2*: p. 100)

<sup>28</sup> Franco 'Bifo' Berardi, 'Cognitarian Subjectivation', in Julieta Aranda, Brian Kuan-Wood and Anton Vidokle (eds), *Are You Working Too Much? Post-Fordism, Precarity, and the Labor of Art*, Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2011; Jodi Dean, *Blog Theory: Feedback and Capture in the Circuits of Drive*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010; Sherry Turkle, *Alone Together: Why We Expect More From Technology and Less from Each Other*, New York: Basic Books, 2011.

<sup>29</sup> Felix Stalder, 'Enter the Swarm: Anonymous and the Global Protest Movements', *Neural*, issue 42, Summer, 2012; David Harvey, 'Spaces of Anti-Capitalist Transition', *Spaces of Transformation: The Vast Space-Time of Revolutions Becoming*, Tate Modern, 12 May 2012; Manuel Castells, *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age*, Cambridge: Polity, 2012.

*being theorists and philosophers too?* Ways that are *unlike us*, at least as we currently live, work and think, in that they are not quite so tightly bound up with the logic of neoliberalism? This includes ways of being theorists and philosophers that depart from the neoliberal model of the self-disciplining entrepreneurial academic that is currently being imposed on us with the assistance of networked digital technologies and corporate social media. But it also includes ways of being that are *unlike* the traditional, Romantic, humanist, liberal model, with its enactment of clichéd, ready-made ideas of authorship, originality, the book, intellectual property and copyright. For in their different ways *both* of these models are involved in the subordination of our agency and consciousness to the calculable, controllable, pre-programmed, standardized patterns of the contemporary cultural industries.