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### **Acknowledged Goods:**

#### **Cultural Studies and the Politics of Academic Journal Publishing<sup>1</sup>**

by **Ted Striphas**, Indiana University, USA

"Between the intellectual and his [or her] potential public stand technical, economic, and social structures which are owned and operated by others."

—C. Wright Mills, *White Collar*<sup>2</sup>

"Our textual products...overwhelmingly confirm a writing that *does not exceed* what is expected of it."

—Sande Cohen, *Academia and the Luster of Capital*<sup>3</sup>

"You, too, can become a broom of the system."

—Lindsay Waters, *Enemies of Promise*<sup>4</sup>

Cultural studies exists only within specific contexts of scholarly communication. There is, nevertheless, an odd habit of referring to the field as though it were a diffuse or free-floating intellectual formation. "It shouldn't be necessary to say this, but apparently it is: Cultural studies is a set of writing practices; it is a discursive, analytic, interpretive tradition," Cary Nelson has argued.<sup>5</sup> In his later work with Stephen Watt, Nelson has demonstrated a much keener sensitivity to cultural studies' relationship to the book and journal publishing industry.<sup>6</sup> Here, however, he abstracts the field and its writing practices from the material conditions by which they are produced, distributed, exchanged, and consumed. It is as if cultural studies publications appeared magically, as "free economic inputs," independent of an increasingly consolidated, profit-intensive wing of the culture industry.<sup>7</sup>

This type of thinking is symptomatic of the sense of alienation I suspect many

people in cultural studies feel from the instruments of production, distribution, and propagation of both our work and our field.<sup>8</sup> We access these instruments all the time. We depend on them significantly for our livelihoods. What would cultural studies be without its publications, and without the formidable network of social, economic, legal, and infrastructural linkages to the publishing industry that sustains them? Nevertheless, many of us are reluctant to pause long enough to take stock of the choices we make—or that are made for us—when publishing our work, much less to consider how those choices may reverberate well beyond the immediate confines of cultural studies.

This essay explores the changing context of academic journal publishing and cultural studies' envelopment within it. It is a companion piece to an article I published some years ago on the field's relationship to the book industry,<sup>9</sup> which is a facet of academic publishing I will address here only insofar as it overlaps with journals. My specific interest in the field's relationship to journal publishing is motivated by two primary concerns: first, by the sense of alienation I have just mentioned, in which cultural studies scholars either forget or ignore our interdependence on the academic journal publishing industry; and second, by a desire for better access not only to the instruments of production of cultural studies, but also to the strategic knowledge we, its practitioners, do our best to produce.

Apropos of the latter concern, I am reminded of a moment in Stuart Hall's essay, "Cultural Studies and Its Theoretical Legacies." Reflecting on the work of Antonio Gramsci, Hall asserts that the first task of the political intellectual is to know more than the other side. He adds that the equally important task is to communicate that knowledge widely and effectively. "[U]nless those two fronts are operating at the same time," Hall concludes, "you can get enormous theoretical advance without any engagement at the level of the political project."<sup>10</sup> "Knowing more than the other side" surely is difficult business, and doing so is where cultural studies' energies would seem to predominantly lie. But taking my cue from Hall, I want to spend some time reflecting on the conditions under which scholarship in cultural studies can—and increasingly cannot—circulate.

The scholarly journal publishing industry of today barely resembles what it was a generation ago. It is both larger—in terms of the sheer number of journals now being produced—and smaller—in terms of the total number of publishers now producing those journals. It is more profit-minded and business savvy than ever before, yet it is also facing unprecedented competition from alternative publishing models. It looks increasingly to electronic media as key sources of revenue, even

while it obsesses about unwanted fallout from electronically distributed journal content. Most insiders seem to agree that scholarly journal publishing has been undergoing a seismic shift in recent years, and an increasingly vocal group of activist-critics contends that the whole apparatus of scholarly communication now finds itself on shaky ground. Given cultural studies' longstanding interest in the politics of media, it is surprising how few of us have raised questions about these changes, much less added our voices to the conversations that have ensued.<sup>11</sup> Instead, academic librarians, along with committed individuals and groups in economics, geography, mathematics, medical science, the natural sciences, and elsewhere, have led the effort to make sense of and respond critically to the journal publishing industry's transformations.

Building on and extending their work, I want to explore five major trends affecting scholarly communication today: alienation, proliferation, consolidation, pricing, and digitization. Each one comprises a subsection of this essay. My argument is that recent changes in the political economy of academic journal publishing have had the unfortunate effect of impinging on cultural studies' capacity to transmit the knowledge it produces, thereby dampening the field's political potential. I further contend that cultural studies' alienation from the conditions of its own production has resulted in the field's growing involvement with interests that are, at times, rather at odds with its own political proclivities.

### **Alienation**

Most of us probably have done it at one time or another. By "it" I mean signing a publication agreement for a recently accepted journal article without reading the document carefully, or without pausing to consider the meaning and consequences of all the warrants, indemnities, and clauses ending with those ominous sounding words, "in perpetuity and in any form." Like me, you probably resigned yourself to committing to the agreement, since the publisher told you, perhaps through a low-level editorial contact at the journal, that publication of your piece was contingent on your doing so without delay. Signing on the dotted line is "policy" she or he probably told you, politely but firmly, and if you do not do so promptly you are liable to hold up production on the issue in which your work is scheduled to appear. Worse, if you hold out for too long, you risk having your essay dropped altogether. And so begrudgingly you sign, because keeping the process moving along would seem to outweigh whatever benefits might come from making an issue of it.

To me, this is among the most profound—and profoundly alienating—moments of academic labor. I mean this in both the Marxian sense of "alienation," in which participation in the system of objectified wage labor existentially impoverishes of

one's species-being, as well as in the more strictly legal sense of the term, as defined by Margaret Jane Radin: "a separation of something—an entitlement, right, or attribute—from its holder."<sup>12</sup> Beyond these definitions, the ritual signing of journal publication contracts is alienating in at least three specific ways.

First, the extreme sense of urgency that tends to surround the whole process is incommensurate with the time it takes for most academic articles to appear in print. In my experience, this interval can last anywhere from six to eighteen months from the day I sign a publication agreement; in rare cases it has been shorter, and I know of myriad instances in which it has taken even longer. The atmosphere of last-minute-ism may help keep the publication process running smoothly. On the downside, it can preempt academic authors from reflecting critically on the legal documents we are charged with signing, which can in turn lead to the hasty forfeiture of key rights and entitlements—assuming we are even aware of them.

Second, the process cultivates a habitus in which we are perpetually disposed "to take one for the team." Practically no one wants to be the curmudgeon responsible for delaying an entire journal issue while trying to negotiate terms of publication. Publishers recognize this. Consciously or not, they leverage this goodwill by persuading authors to sign away our rights in the name of a collective interest (i.e., timely publication). They do so by capitalizing on an incentive structure in which, ironically, a desire to be perceived as "collegial" and "professional" compels academic authors to deprive one another of the chance to question journal publishers, attorneys, or others about the legal ramifications of publishing our work.

Finally, the contractual moment alienates us scholars from the products of our labor. It customarily involves the transfer of key rights (e.g., ownership, duplication, derivation, etc.) from author to publisher, in whole or part, in exchange for a variety of value-added services (e.g., typesetting, copyediting, marketing, etc.) and indirect rewards (e.g., promotion, tenure, professional recognition, etc.). Those benefits notwithstanding, signing on the dotted line transforms our labor into economically valuable intellectual property and, down the line, capital—assets publishers use to compete with one another in the marketplace.<sup>13</sup> Our signatures allow journal publishers to disavow liability in matters of copyright infringement, obscenity, and so forth, moreover, thereby endowing them with deep ownership rights over material for which they accept only shallow legal responsibilities. An added "bonus" is that academic authors typically must shoulder all of the costs related to reproducing copyrighted images, song lyrics, and related materials, even though it is the journal publisher who reaps any financial rewards. In these cases,

we are not merely giving our labor away, essentially for free; we are effectively paying a third party for the "privilege" of doing so. Journal publication contracts thus are magical documents indeed. They transfigure good knowledge into saleable knowledge goods, in a series of moves that implicate us in, while keeping us at arm's length from, the noisy sphere of industrial production.

Little wonder, then, how easy it has become for scholars in and beyond cultural studies to disregard "how academic practices are increasingly enmeshed with capitalist social relations through their links with, and dependency on, multinational publishing companies."<sup>14</sup> Our bibliographies betray this point. Chicago, Harvard, AAA, APA, MLA, and other reference styles common in cultural studies require authors to identify book publishers' names and locations. None, however, has a comparable expectation in place when it comes to citing scholarly journal articles. Why, despite a litany of detailed publication information, are the names and headquarters of journal publishers excluded from most reference lists? The reasons may not be immediately apparent, but the effect of these omissions is fairly clear. They encourage scholars to overlook the fact that specific presses—increasingly, private, for-profit corporate entities—are responsible for packaging and delivering most academic journal articles.

In fact, many academic journals are owned by corporations whose interests far exceed intellectual pursuits. Consider this: shares of Taylor & Francis/Informa plc, which trade on the London Stock Exchange, closed at £239.75 GBP on Friday, January 30, 2009, up from a twelve-month low of £140. Its revenue topped £1.1 billion GBP in 2007, an increase of 9% over the preceding year. One of Informa's subsidiaries, Adam Smith Conferences, which is indeed named for the patron saint of economic liberalism, specializes in organizing events designed to open the former Soviet republics to private investment. Other divisions of the company provide information, consulting, training, and strategic planning services to major international agricultural, banking, insurance, investment, pharmaceutical, and telecommunications corporations, in addition to government agencies. Take Robbins-Gioia, for instance. The United States Army recently tapped this Informa subsidiary during an overhaul of its command and control infrastructure. The firm was brought in to assess how well the Army had achieved its goal of "battlefield digitization." The United States Air Force, meanwhile, tapped Robbins-Gioia when it needed help improving its fleet management systems for U-2 spy planes. Other aspects of Informa, such as the Monaco Yacht Show, are perhaps more benign.<sup>15</sup> Nonetheless, Informa is a significant global player whose business ventures extend into some of the most important geo-political and economic realignments of our time.

Now, it also happens that Taylor & Francis/Informa publishes some of the most esteemed journals in (or that are at least sympathetic to) cultural studies. These include *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*; *Continuum*; *Cultural Studies*; *Culture, Theory, and Critique*; *Feminist Media Studies*; *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*; and *Rethinking Marxism*. My purpose in drawing this connection is not to scandalize cultural studies' embeddedness in an organization like Informa, some of whose interests would seem to be at cross-purposes with its own. (This statement should not preclude moral outrage, however, or a desire to see Informa divest itself of these interests.) Odd couples such as these have been a facet of scholarly publishing since before the middle of the 20th century. As Mills observed, in 1951: "The political intellectual is, increasingly, an employee living off the communication machineries which are based on the very opposite of what he [or she] would like to stand for."<sup>16</sup> My purpose, rather, is to take stock of the cognitive dissonance that results when scholars are pressured or even compelled to operate within a professional context of "merchantable knowledge."<sup>17</sup> In that fateful moment when pen slides across paper and rights slip away, whose thoughts have not drifted in the direction of, "Why am I not getting paid directly for this?" And who has not then experienced a modicum of regret upon suddenly feeling so...*entrepreneurial*?

### **Proliferation**

Reliable data about the growth of academic journal publishing is difficult to come by, in part because of disagreements over what counts as an academic journal.<sup>18</sup> Nonetheless, the available data are revealing. A conservative estimate places the total number of peer-reviewed scholarly journals now in existence at around 20,000.<sup>19</sup> Over the last century, their total number has grown at an average rate of about 3.6% annually, which means that the number of peer-reviewed scholarly journals doubles just about every 20 years.<sup>20</sup> The upsurge, however, can vary widely by discipline. Take economics, for example, where the total number of English-language journals increased tenfold between 1960 and 2000,<sup>21</sup> and the doubling occurred on average around every 12.5 years.

A similar trend is apparent in cultural studies. Since the founding of *New Left Review* (1960), *Working Papers in Cultural Studies* (1972), and *Social Text* (1979), the field's apparatus of scholarly communication has undergone significant expansion. The late 1980s saw an uptick in the number of professionally produced cultural studies journals, with the launch of titles such as *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies* (1987), *Cultural Studies* (1987; née *The Australian Journal of Cultural Studies*, founded in 1983), *New Formations* (1987), *Public Culture* (1988) and *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* (1989). Even more rapid expansion occurred in the mid 1990s and early 2000s, with at

least nine new journals appearing within the span of a decade. These include *The Cultural Studies Review* (1995), *Soundings* (1995), *Topia: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies* (1997), *The European Journal of Cultural Studies* (1998), *The International Journal of Cultural Studies* (1998), *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* (2000), *Cultural Studies* ↔ *Critical Methodologies* (2001), *Feminist Media Studies* (2001), and *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* (2004). On the basis of this list alone, the number of cultural studies journals published by scholarly presses grew at an annual rate of 6.3% between 1960 and 2004. This means that the number of journals in the field has doubled about every 11.5 years, far outpacing the average.

<sup>22</sup>

Growth such as this is, in part, a positive indicator of cultural studies' diversity and wellbeing. It also coincides with a net expansion of the population of academic and non-academic researchers worldwide, who otherwise would have to vie for journal space diminishing in real terms.<sup>23</sup> But while there are pragmatic reasons behind the sprawl in academic journal publishing, in cultural studies and beyond, they are only part of the story. Over the last two decades, academic journal publishing has followed the general pattern of other media industries in segmenting its audience and increasing its number of outlets. The change has been complemented on the university side by the fragmentation of academic departments and the rising tide of interdisciplinarity, which have helped to foster a more niche, or boutique, oriented approach to scholarly communication.<sup>24</sup>

However fractured scholarly communities may be becoming, it still seems reasonable to assume that more journals would translate more or less straightforwardly into new opportunities for scholarly engagement. Yet, the one does not necessarily follow from the other. The complicating factor is the structure of journal pricing, particularly as set forth by large, for-profit publishers. I will have more to say about this issue, below. The relevant point for now is this: "journal publishers have discovered that they can set their prices far above their average costs. These high prices reduce their number of subscribers but increase their profits, since the proportionate effect on quantity is less than the proportionate price increase."<sup>25</sup> On the positive side, new journals may help emergent or historically marginalized scholarly groups to gain public voice, and hence recognition. On the downside, the compulsion to maximize profits can also lead some publishers to restrict the audiences for both newer and older journals to an economic elite, thereby undercutting what would seem to be a prime motivation for expansion (from a scholarly standpoint, at least). Ironically, the recent proliferation of scholarly journals may be an indicator of "the industrial logic of market discrimination" at work.<sup>26</sup>

Lest proliferation sound like some sort of journal publishers' conspiracy, it is worth reflecting briefly on how the demands of contemporary university life complicate this phenomenon. In his 1918 polemic *The Higher Learning in America*, Thorstein Veblen bemoaned higher education's drive toward "accountancy" and disparaged the university for having assumed many of the trappings of "a business house."<sup>27</sup> But the transformations that so disturbed Veblen nearly a century ago — the introduction of course credits, for example — seem almost quaint in comparison to those confronting universities and their employees today. These include deep cutbacks in state higher education subsidies; the casualization of the academic labor force; the creation of a vast, "disposable" graduate student population, particularly in the humanities; the privatization of facilities and services at public universities; and the licensing of intellectual properties. These and other changes evidence the explosive growth of "academic capitalism," which has beset universities in recent years.<sup>28</sup> Broadly, the goal of present-day academic capitalism is not merely to apply business precepts piecemeal to the running of academic institutions, as seems to have been the case in Veblen's time. Instead, the goal is to make the latter over in the image of the former, fundamentally, by imposing new norms of efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness on university employees.

A principal way in which academic capitalism manifests itself is through what Les Levidow calls "qualification inflation."<sup>29</sup> The phrase refers specifically (and unflatteringly) to the heightening of standards for scholarly promotion and tenure, and more generally to the diktat that universities maintain across-the-board "excellence" by upholding ever-increasing levels of institutional prestige.<sup>30</sup> Qualification inflation is a function of the degree to which universities have become obsessed of late with promoting competition internally among academic units, engaging in it externally with peer (or better) institutions, and encouraging it cross-generationally by raising promotion and tenure requirements every few years.<sup>31</sup>

Thus, while the explosion of new scholarly journals evidences a desire among publishers to carve out new niches for themselves, it also — and relatedly — evidences a "crisis of overproduction" endemic to academic capitalism today.<sup>32</sup> As Lindsay Waters, Executive Editor at Harvard University Press puts it: "Product is all that counts, not the reception, not the human use. This is production for its own sake and precious little else."<sup>33</sup> While he may be faulted for overstating the level of inattention given to the reception of scholarly work, Waters nonetheless raises an important point. Under institutionally-mandated conditions of overproduction, the chances of any given academic journal article getting noticed by one's colleagues —

let alone outside of academe — diminish. What results are "mountains of unloved and unread" studies<sup>34</sup> whose formal designation as "published" obscures their actual existence as interred.

### **Consolidation**

While the number of academic journals has risen substantially over the last 30 years or so, the number of academic journal publishers has shrunk appreciably over the same period of time. These crosscurrents have radically altered the political economy of the journal publishing industry and arguably have helped to produce "the industry" as such. The field of academic journal publishing used to be composed primarily of small, nonprofit presses, which historically maintained strong ties to, or in many cases were the organs of, specific scholarly societies.<sup>35</sup> That is no longer the case. Today, academic journal publishing is dominated by a handful of large, for-profit corporations, who control the instruments of scholarly communication to an unprecedented degree.

Topping this list are Reed Elsevier, Springer, Wiley-Blackwell, and Taylor & Francis/Informa, which publish about 6,000 journals between them.<sup>36</sup> Collectively, these and other for-profit publishers have a stake in 62% of all peer-reviewed scholarly journals. Based on the conservative benchmark of 20,000 journals mentioned above, this means commercial entities as a whole control some 12,400 of them, two-thirds of which they own exclusively.<sup>37</sup> Yet, even these figures paint a somewhat subdued portrait of today's journal publishing industry, because they say little about the level of economic concentration among the topmost commercial publishers. According to Raym Crow, a consultant with the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC), a privileged few holds disproportionate sway over the industry as a whole. In 2006, a mere six companies "account[ed] for over 60% of the market's total revenue,"<sup>38</sup> giving them competitive economic advantage over both their commercial and nonprofit rivals.

Like many media industries, academic journal publishing today shows clear signs of becoming an oligopoly. Take Springer, for instance, which was born of a series of deals involving Bertelsmann, Candover & Cinven, and Kluwer, beginning in 1999. When the dust finally settled, in 2003, more than US\$1.7 billion had changed hands.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, Wiley-Blackwell was formed in 2007 after John Wiley & Sons acquired Blackwell Publishing, Ltd. (a regarded publisher of cultural studies books, albeit none of the field's major journals) for more than US\$1 billion.<sup>40</sup> The economic magnitude of these deals is as important to underscore as the consolidations they are producing industry-wide. It may surprise some academic authors, who almost never receive direct monetary reward for the articles we

publish, to discover that scholarly journal publishing is hardly the pecuniary backwater we have been led to believe it is!<sup>41</sup>

Even more significant than these high-stakes mergers and acquisitions is the cascade effect they have set in motion. Scholars have come to know this phenomenon for the most part indirectly, chiefly in the form of seemingly helpful, value-added services. These include online journal archives, full text search capabilities, electronic table of contents alerting, citation tracking, and more, which undoubtedly have made keeping up with the literature and monitoring one's scholarly impact more expedient than ever before. The more scholars come to rely on these and other high-tech features, the less they seem like options or amenities—and herein lies a problem. These services are capital-intensive, so much so that few small-scale journal publishers can afford the investment. Nonprofit scholarly societies feel especially pinched, because most of those who do publish journals maintain modest lists.<sup>42</sup> How can they and the smaller presses hope to keep the readers of their journals happy, when the marginal costs for setting up and maintaining high-tech infrastructure are prohibitively high?

Confronted with this dilemma, some scholarly societies have opted to make a devil's bargain. They have begun outsourcing the business and production aspects of their journals to large, for-profit corporate publishers—often the very same companies whose business practices have pressured them to contemplate outsourcing in the first place. For example, Taylor & Francis/Informa assumed control of the National Communication Association's journal operations in 2004, after the Association had run them independently for 90 years. Likewise, in September 2007, the American Anthropological Association inked a five year contract with Wiley-Blackwell to publish the organization's 23 journals and newsletters.<sup>43</sup> All told, roughly 20% of all peer-reviewed scholarly journals were produced under similar arrangements as of early 2006.<sup>44</sup> This is the culmination of a trend whose beginnings Mills identified almost sixty years ago: "the means of effective communication are being expropriated from the intellectual worker."<sup>45</sup> It is a vicious circle indeed: consolidation has helped to foster deep competitive asymmetries among academic journal publishers, which have in turn prompted further industry consolidation.

### **Pricing**

The third major trend is perhaps better imagined as a constellation of issues, all of which coalesce around the vexed matter of journal pricing. The short version of the story is this: academic journal prices have risen steadily—indeed, alarmingly—over the past two decades. According to the Association of Research Libraries (U.S.), the

cost of serials rose 180% between 1986 and 2006, or 5.3% per year on average.<sup>46</sup> The U.S. consumer price index (CPI) rose 84% during the same period, which translates into an annual growth rate of just over 3%.<sup>47</sup> Academic journal prices thus have far outpaced the U.S. CPI for 20 years. The pattern shows few if any signs of reversing.

With consolidation comes a winnowing of competition, giving the large journal publishers who remain ample room to flex their muscle in the marketplace. This may help to account for the bloated price of scholarly journals in general. Mark J. McCabe, an economist who studies the business and legal dimensions of academic journal publishing, has found that "for journals sold by commercial publishers ... prices are indeed positively related to firm portfolio size, and that mergers result in significant price increases."<sup>48</sup> Economist Theodore C. Bergstrom and biologist Carl T. Bergstrom have reached a similar conclusion. Writing in the web forum of the journal *Nature*, which has been a key hub for discussions about the wellbeing of scholarly communication, the Bergstroms have noted that the per-page cost of commercially owned academic journals on average is between four and six times that of journals published under the aegis of not-for-profit scholarly societies.<sup>49</sup>

In fact, so serious are these pricing issues that a proposed US\$9 billion merger of Reed Elsevier and Wolters Kluwer (now Cinven), in 1997/1998, caught the attention of the European Commission and the antitrust division of United States Justice Department. The deal eventually collapsed, mainly because the EC had pressed both companies to divest themselves of key publications and services before it would grant regulatory approval. Had the merger proceeded as planned, the resulting mega-firm, Elsevier Wolters Kluwer, not only would have commanded extraordinary market share. Given the regulatory concerns raised by officials on either side of the Atlantic, it seems reasonable to surmise that it also would have created conditions ripe for anticompetitive behavior.<sup>50</sup>

To what extent do the aforementioned pricing trends hold true for cultural studies? Tables **one** and **two** survey the prices and publishers of leading journals in the field. Here is the good news: the cost of an institutional subscription to even the most expensive cultural studies journals, *Continuum* (US\$910/year, or US\$227.50/issue) and *Media, Culture, and Society* (US\$1366/year, or US\$227.67/issue), does not come close to the most notoriously priced scholarly publication I know of. *The Journal of Applied Polymer Science*, which is published twice-monthly by Wiley-Blackwell, in 2008 cost institutions US\$19,935, or US\$830.63/issue.<sup>51</sup> The bad news is that, as with the rest of the journal publishing industry, subscription costs tend to increase relative to the size of the journal publisher. The average price of

an institutional subscription to one of Taylor & Francis' cultural studies periodicals, for instance, is more than three-and-a-half times that of Duke University Press, and more than seven times that of Wilfrid Laurier University Press—publishers of the least expensive cultural studies journals by far. In the case of Sage Publications, institutional subscribers can expect to pay five times more on average than they would for a Duke title, and in excess of ten times more for Wilfrid Laurier's sole cultural studies title. The gap closes somewhat when one compares *New Left Review*, which is an independent, "one-off" journal, to Taylor & Francis and Sage, with whom an institutional subscription costs on average one-and-a-half and two times more, respectively. Lawrence & Wishart, publisher of *New Formations* and *Soundings*, falls somewhere in between Duke and *New Left Review* in terms of journal pricing.

Several conclusions follow from this data. First, journals published by Taylor & Francis and Sage, who own the lion's share of cultural studies titles, cost between 50% and 1000% more than those at the bottom end of the pricing scale. There is a striking imbalance in the price of cultural studies knowledge goods (i.e., journals and journal articles), which in turn begs some obvious yet rarely asked questions: is their cost commensurate with their value? Is an article published in, say, *The International Journal of Cultural Studies*, really worth four times more than one appearing in *Social Text*? Is *New Left Review* only half as good as *Cultural Studies*—→*Critical Methodologies*? And so on. Second, the price imbalance cannot be attributed solely to corporate ownership, since Sage is a privately owned, and therefore independent, press. Third, and relatedly, "independent" can mean quite different things, depending on a firm's size and its total number of assets. Finally, as McCabe notes, the size of a press' journal portfolio is probably the most consequential factor when it comes to determining journal prices.<sup>52</sup> Larger portfolios generally correlate with higher priced journals, and vice-versa. The only possible exception here would be *New Left Review*, whose moderately high cost is most likely attributable to its "one-off" status and lack of other forms of subvention.

The implication, then, is fairly clear. Big publishers charge more for their journals because they *can* charge more. Now, one might respond by saying that the cost of paper, petroleum, and other natural resources has risen, driving up journal prices. One also might respond by saying that the journals themselves do not actually cost more. Rather, what drives up journal costs are the aforementioned value-added services we scholars have come to expect, which the larger publishers generally are better equipped to deliver. There is truth in each of these responses. Yet, the shift of focus to inputs and end-users obscures the techniques these publishers

employ to regulate demand and inflate prices.

Their ability to do so begins with the relative inelasticity of the market for scholarly journals.<sup>53</sup> In economics, the term "elasticity" refers to the degree to which a product or service is fungible, or how easily (or not) it can be substituted for others of its kind. So, for example, if I venture off to the supermarket in search of all purpose flour, and discover the brand I usually buy has sold out, no bother: I will just choose another one. To me, all purpose flour is basically all purpose flour; the variety makes little difference. As an easily fungible commodity, its market therefore is highly elastic. But the market for academic journals works differently than the one for all purpose flour. Most journals have fairly specific missions or identities; are associated with particular leaders in a field; and perhaps most important, have accrued a unique reputation or level of prestige within a given scholarly community. For marquee or "brand name" publications especially, reputational status both carries and confers a singular, if intangible, type of cachet.<sup>54</sup> There may be alternatives to these serials, generally of inferior status, yet rarely are there bona fide substitutes for them. Indeed, Brown, Griffiths, and Rascoff claim that flagship journals often develop into "highly resilient niche 'monopolies,'" <sup>55</sup> given their propensity to become the publications of choice in their fields.

The inelasticity of the journal market is not a major problem in itself. It becomes one, however, owing to the clever strategy large publishing firms use to sell their journals to institutions. The technical name for this strategy is "bundling," but research librarians and other critics of the journal publishing industry refer to it colloquially as the "big deal." With big deals, companies like Elsevier, Springer, Wiley-Blackwell, Taylor & Francis/Informa, and others sell packages consisting of multiple journal titles, typically in both print and electronic form, to libraries. On the positive side, prices for bundled journals are often discounted from the standard institutional subscriber rates, potentially resulting in savings. Bundling also helps fledgling journals to find an all-important institutional subscriber base, since they usually come tied to more prestigious titles. In theory, then, the practice may help to broaden the scope of scholarly communication. There are numerous drawbacks to big deals, however, which can quickly undercut these benefits. Bargaining power depends chiefly on one's ability to reject the terms of a deal and ultimately to walk away altogether. Yet, with scholarly journals, walking away is hardly an option. The inelasticity of the market demands that university librarians make unfavorable concessions to large journal publishers in order to ensure continued access to "must have" periodicals.

What is additionally worth noting is that although libraries purchase hardcopies of

journals outright, and thus maintain ownership of them in perpetuity, typically they lease access to the journals' online editions on a time-limited basis.<sup>56</sup> Should a library choose not to renew a particular publishers' lease, the corresponding portion of the library's electronic journal archive does not simply leave off where/when the agreement expires. It vanishes into thin air, because leasing only entitles the library to access, and not ownership, rights online. Librarians and large journal publishers alike recognize that researchers have come to expect and even depend on electronic journal content. Losing e-access to past or current scholarly literature would be unacceptable to most. Consequently, librarians arrive at the table with significantly less leverage compared to the publishers with whom they are negotiating.

Cultural studies has barely registered all the uproar over journal pricing. Troubling though this may be, apathy alone is not to blame. The structure of scholarly communication in the humanities plays a significant role as well. Journals are the primary and sometimes sole vehicles of scholarly publication in the scientific, technical, and medical disciplines. The humanities uses a mix of journals and books, in contrast, with the latter widely recognized to be its publishing "gold standard."<sup>57</sup> The humanities' enduring commitment to books thus has shielded its constituent disciplines and fields, cultural studies included, at least somewhat from the harshest effects of academic publishing's recent transformations.

This is hardly a reason for cultural studies to stand idly by. The rising cost of serials has exerted downward pressure on other aspects of library budgets.<sup>58</sup> Chief among them are the funds they use to purchase scholarly monographs. Between 1986 and 1998, the number of monographs purchased by members of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) fell by 25%. Monograph acquisitions since then have been following a generally upward trend, though celebrating the turnaround would be premature. By 2006, ARL monograph purchases managed to eke out just a 1% increase over 1986 levels, compared to a 51% increase in the number of serials.<sup>59</sup> The writing, therefore, is on the wall. One of the most important markets for cultural studies books is at best stagnant and at worst, drying up. Course adoptions have absorbed some of the shortfall but also have shifted publishers' expectations of what constitutes a viable cultural studies title. Many now prefer anthologies and textbooks over more cutting-edge research — especially the commercial scholarly presses.<sup>60</sup> Given these transformations, it seems reasonable to surmise that, in the near future, journals will come to occupy an even more prominent — and perhaps privileged — position within cultural studies' apparatus of communication.

Shifting the discursive locus of cultural studies squarely to journals would be

undesirable for at least two reasons. The move would help to tighten (however minimally) the large journal publishers' hold over university research libraries and the institutions to which they belong. It would also have the unintended effect of subjecting cultural studies' critical-interventionist tides to an increasingly anti-political undertow. To be clear, there is no evidence to suggest that large journal publishers have any intention of explicitly censoring the work of cultural studies scholars, either now or in the future. The political problem stems, rather, from the publishers' ability to take the library market — which is essentially a captive audience — for granted. Given the size, predictability, and relative stability of this market, journal publishers lack incentive to publicize their titles to individuals and groups outside of the academy. Their promotional materials almost always state, "recommend 'X' journal to your library"; almost never do they mention, say, a labor union, an environmental group, or some other type of advocacy organization — even in cases where the subject matter may be germane to the work these organizations do. These fliers, therefore, are not only advertising. They are harbingers of a future cultural studies, one dominated by journals and thus structurally predisposed not to connect.

### **Digitization**

By "digitization" I refer broadly to the growing prevalence and import of electronic publishing, and more specifically to the electronic life and afterlife of academic journal articles online. The increasing availability of these digital materials, combined with sophisticated search engines and related tools for mining them, surely have been a boon. For publishers, digitization has opened up revenue streams above and beyond whatever returns the selling of printed journals and the licensing of reprints might yield for them. It thus has proven to be an incredible financial windfall, especially for larger firms that have invested heavily in proprietary digital journal infrastructures. For researchers in cultural studies and beyond, digitization has helped to make finding and keeping up with the "relevant scholarly literature" easier, or at least more manageable, even with the sprawl in journal content. It has also helped facilitate the distribution of one's published research through email, peer-to-peer file sharing services, websites, courseware, public research repositories, and more.

In principle, anyway. Just as digitization has invested scholars with newfound capabilities for exchanging their published research, so too has it afforded large journal publishers fresh opportunities for managing the accessibility and circulation of journal content. E-embargoes represent the less pernicious side of this phenomenon. With these, authors are contractually barred from making certain iterations of their work publicly accessible in electronic form for designated periods of time. Taylor & Francis/Informa, for example, requires contributors to its social

sciences and humanities journals to wait 18 months from the time of publication before making electronic copies of their essays accessible online. Even then, authors are prohibited from posting "the publisher-created...definitive, final version" (typically a PDF file) and instead must substitute a word processing document or similar "text version" of the final manuscript, which also must direct readers to the published article.<sup>61</sup> Sage Publications has an almost identical policy in place for its journals, although the duration of the embargo period, 12 months, is shorter by a third.<sup>62</sup> The purpose of e-embargoes such as these is to legally — and artificially — manufacture scarcity out of a "nonrivalrous" digital plentitude.<sup>63</sup> Even so, they represent a not altogether unreasonable attempt to balance commercial and scholarly interests, given the important, if still somewhat limited, exceptions they include to foster the circulation of scholarly research.<sup>64</sup> If there must be embargoes of any kind, that is to say, they should be leaky instead of air-tight.

Digital rights management (DRM) schemes, which rely on various forms of encryption to restrict the circulation of journal e-prints, represent the more pernicious side of digitization. Unlike their colleagues in the music and movie industries, journal publishers have yet to deploy DRM technologies widely. And for now, at least, they have not applied them directly to any major cultural studies periodicals that I know of. Experiments, however, are already underway. If successful, DRM is apt to seal up leaky e-embargoes, rollback authors' rights, impede scholarly communication, and alienate us even more profoundly than we already are from the products of our labor. It is the technological counterpart to what Andrew Ross calls "the rush to propertize knowledge," which he considers to be among the most dangerous constraints on academic freedom today.<sup>65</sup>

Evidence of DRM in action in the world of humanities journal publishing is spotty, but telling. As Jonathan Sterne reported in 2006 on his blog, Sage Publications sent him the offprint of an article he had just published in one of its journals, *New Media and Society*, neither in the customary hardcopy form nor in PDF. It came to him, rather, as a digitally-rights managed executable file. The proof essentially locked to his computer and restricted the number of times he could pass it on to colleagues to 25. Printing was unlimited, but to access the offprint Sterne and those with whom he shared it first had to download special proprietary software from Sage. The company made no promises about the program's security and was vague about its operating system compatibility. Sterne noted that the publication agreement he signed "says nothing about 25 digital copies, proprietary formats, or anything else."<sup>66</sup> This is in keeping with a growing trend among large media organizations. Many now use DRM technologies to micromanage the circulation and use of copyrighted content to unprecedented degrees. In the process, the possibility of exercising

one's fair-use rights and related entitlements is slowly getting "coded" out of existence.<sup>67</sup>

### **Conclusion: What Does Cultural Studies Want from Journal Publishing?**

The foregoing analysis may lend itself to a banal conclusion, namely, that academic journal publishing is "broken" and that the system consequently needs repair. But this conclusion is only half-right. In fact the system is functioning *only too well* these days — just not for the scholars it is intended to serve.<sup>68</sup> The Association of American Publishers' PR front, PRISM, only reinforces the point. Launched in early 2007, the organization's goal is to fight those seeking to preserve, and even to improve, the accessibility of scholarly journals.<sup>69</sup> The changes I have explored above thus are not the result of abstract "market forces," much less of a broken journal publishing system; they are the outcome of a concerted political and economic project.

Sadly, many of these changes have occurred on cultural studies' watch, and further transformations lie ahead on the horizon. Given the unique theoretical and analytical resources the field has at its disposal for exploring the relations among media texts, institutions, apparatuses, and audiences, it would be a shame for its practitioners to remain on the sidelines. Should we choose to become more involved, though, it is important to bear in mind that studying how scholarly knowledge is represented, industrialized, and communicated is not the same as scrutinizing how those processes occur with objects perhaps more familiar to cultural studies (e.g., motion pictures, television shows, etc.). Scholars generally maintain much closer ties to publishing than they do to other media industries. Consequently, a certain pragmatism seems to be called for here. This pragmatism should consist of recognizing ourselves not as outsiders to the journal publishing industry (i.e., as a "mere" academic contributors or readers), but rather as no more and no less insiders compared those who work in, say, Taylor & Francis/Informa's journal marketing department. It also should involve our taking a more hands-on approach to solving problems of scholarly communication, instead of critiquing matters from afar and leaving the task of fixing things up to others. A pragmatic disposition should compel us not to rail against some abstract system "over there," but instead should focus our attention on making meaningful interventions "right here"—in our everyday labor practices, in the scholarly societies to which we belong, in our uses of technology, and more. This is a rare moment of opportunity indeed—a chance for cultural studies to ask fresh questions about academic journal publishing, to contemplate anew what we may want out of it, and as appropriate, to re-engineer it so as to better suit our needs.

First, we must read all publication agreements closely, ask questions, and, wherever possible, negotiate terms of access and circulation. Do not accept the path of least resistance. Some journal publishers will allow authors to retain copyright in our published pieces, for instance, provided we make a formal request in writing.<sup>70</sup> The SPARC website also offers a downloadable "author addendum" and other resources to help academic authors to achieve more acceptable terms of publication.<sup>71</sup> Of course, there is no guaranteeing that a publisher will grant our requests. Doing so repeatedly, however, and encouraging our colleagues to do the same, will show journal publishers (especially the larger ones) that they are dealing not with a fractured and quiescent population, but with a bona fide movement that demands respect.

Second, we must exercise the power conferred on us as cultural intermediaries.<sup>72</sup> Although it is unsexy grudge-work, we may wish to consider serving on the publication boards of our respective scholarly or professional societies. These are key bureaucratic posts in which important decisions—too often ill-considered ones—about the future of scholarly communication are getting made. We may also wish to refuse to review manuscripts or otherwise work for what Theodore C. Bergstrom calls "rogue journals."<sup>73</sup> These are academic journals that fail to respect the rights of academic authors, the institutions for which we work, and the public responsibilities of research libraries.

Next, we should support open access. "Open access" is an umbrella term encompassing an array of approaches to academic journal publishing and other forms of scholarly communication. They vary widely, from the research authors may post to personal websites to highly accessible, peer-reviewed journals, and from repositories for working papers and published research to systems in which authors, their institutions, and/or third parties pay journal publishers for the right to disseminate published articles without restriction.<sup>74</sup> All share in common a commitment to making research publicly available to readers, typically for free, in a manner akin to open source software.<sup>75</sup> Many open access ventures already exist, such as the Social Science Research Network, the Public Library of Science, and, at my home institution, the recently launched Indiana University ScholarWorks site. For cultural studies, the most exciting open access developments are the new Open Humanities Press initiative, which brings together seven peer-reviewed online critical and cultural theory journals, and the Cultural Studies Electronic Archive, which is an online research repository. Both were co-founded by the field's own publishing visionary, Gary Hall.<sup>76</sup>

Fourth, we should experiment with the form, content, and process of scholarly

publication. At present, a preponderance of digital publications largely reproduces material otherwise available in printed journals. Yet, there seems to me no compelling reason why online journal content must, perforce, conform to longstanding "paper-centric" conventions.<sup>77</sup> Early television took many of its cues from radio, for example, but did not remain an audio-only medium. Analogously, why not make better use of the web's interactive features, such as commenting, instant messaging, linking, sharing, social networking, tagging, trackback, wiki-ing, and so forth, within the context of scholarly communication? Even more radically, we may wish to dare ourselves and our colleagues to reconsider what "peer review" means and how best to go about it. A well-architected digital journal platform, combined with a robust enough network of online readers, could open up opportunities for forms of quality control and endorsement far exceeding those available in the current print-based system.<sup>78</sup> Any such technological fixes of course would demand significant institutional changes in terms of defining exactly what scholarly contributions are and how they should be assessed.

Fifth, we should scratch below the surface. As the preceding examples suggest, discovering just who the corporate parents and siblings of academic journal publishers are may surprise, and even alarm. Here is a final one worth mentioning: Reed Exhibitions, the event planning arm of journal giant Reed Elsevier. Until 2007, Reed Exhibitions staged the annual Defense Systems and Equipment International (DSEi) event in the London Docklands and similar events worldwide. The irony of a major publisher of medical and critical social science journals facilitating the global arms trade was hardly lost on the company's critics.<sup>79</sup> With Elsevier, Taylor & Francis/Informa, and other such publicly held companies, this type of information usually is hidden in plain sight, on their websites and financial disclosure statements. It is ignored at the cost of our compromising the integrity of the politics we espouse.

Finally, and relatedly, we must unite. I have already indicated that large academic journal publishers are unlikely to transform their practices if they perceive pressure coming from isolated individuals only. Change will come from well-organized campaigns involving authors, editors, reviewers, journal subscribers, professional societies, librarians, and others, from a range of communities. This type of activism is exactly what prompted Elsevier to divest itself of the arms trade. The decision followed a two-year mobilization, which was spearheaded by the activist organization Campaign Against Arms Trade, along with groups of scholars associated with *The Lancet*, *Political Geography*, and other Elsevier journals who publicly opposed the company's involvement with the DSEi event.<sup>80</sup> Now, I realize that it may be harder to muster the same level of moral engagement when issues

such as journal pricing and intellectual property rights are at stake. Still, the gravitas of *realpolitik* should not lead us to dismiss the significance of these and other issues, much less to shrink from the responsibility of finding collective ways of bringing academic journal publishing back into a more sustainable equilibrium.

Almost two decades ago, Stuart Hall noted cultural studies' frustrating lack of political effectivity—"its insubstantiality, how little it registers, how little we have been able to change anything or get anybody to do anything."<sup>81</sup> Given the scant attention the field's practitioners have paid to its apparatus of scholarly communication, especially to journals, these feelings of ineffectiveness should hardly surprise. The instruments of production of cultural studies have transformed dramatically in recent years, yet the field as a whole has opted to ride rather than to resist this latest publishing wave. A strange and disturbing paradox results: more cultural studies, yes, but with diminished circulation and uptake. This is exactly the situation Hall warned about—a structural asymmetry in which cultural studies may "know more than the other side" but is barred from communicating that knowledge as freely and as accessibly as possible. Unless cultural studies takes major steps toward reinventing its journal publishing practices, I fear that it will only continue in a long, listless drift.

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## Peer Review

Fold

Anonymous (98.223.184.x)

Could you say more about what you mean by "reconsider[ing] what peer review means and how best to go about it?"

[Reply](#) | [Options](#)

## Re: Peer Review

Fold

;-) [striphas](#)

Thanks for your comment, anon. The question you raise actually will be the focus of the next piece I intend to write, so I'm not sure how complete a response I'll be able to provide here. I'll give it a try, though.

Part of my frustration with academic journal publishing (and I'm sure others share this frustration, too) stems from the narrow conception of "peer review" that seems to predominate today. Now, I should preface what I'm about to say by noting that I've had mostly good experiences with peer review, so I'm

not advancing this criticism to express "sour grapes." Instead, I think it's worth questioning the extent to which assessment by two or perhaps three anonymous "experts" constitutes a "peer review." I also think it's worth thinking about the conditions under which this particular system of review arose. They seem to me quite different, technologically speaking, compared to the prevailing conditions today.

So instead of resting on our laurels, why not begin thinking about how to make peer review work *even better*, given the current technological context we inhabit? Here I'm imagining a system that would utilize some form of crowdsourcing as the platform for peer review. Now, I know that opens up a whole can of worms, one I'll need to deal with in the next paper. But all the same, there seem to me untapped opportunities to make "peer review" a more genuine, and indeed rigorous, *peer* review.

**Reply** | Options

Add a New Comment



## Footnotes

1. For a much-truncated, early version of "Acknowledged Goods," including comments, [please click here](#).
2. C. Wright Mills, *White Collar: The American Middle Classes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951), 149-150.
3. Sande Cohen, *Academia and the Luster of Capital* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 25; emphasis in original.
4. Lindsay Waters, *Enemies of Promise: Publishing, Perishing, and the Eclipse of Scholarship* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2004), 55.
5. Cary Nelson, "Always Already Cultural Studies: Academic Conferences and a Manifesto," *What Is Cultural Studies? A Reader*, ed. John Storey (London: Arnold, 1996), 278.
6. Cary Nelson and Stephen Watt, *Academic Keywords: A Devil's Dictionary for Higher Education* (New York and London: Routledge, 1999).
7. Malini Johar Schueller and Ashley Dawson, "Academic Labor at the Crossroads? An Interview With Andrew Ross," *Social Text* 25(1) (Spring 2007), 121.
8. For a broader picture of the ways in which alienation pervades academic labor, see the recent special issue of *Social Text* (#90) on academic freedom. Malini Johar Schueller and Ashley Dawson (eds.) "The Perils of Academic Freedom," *Social Text* 25(1) (Spring 2007); and Sheila Slaughter and Gary Rhoades, *Academic Capitalism and the New Economy: Markets, State, and Higher Education* (Baltimore and

London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 15-16.

9. Ted Striphas, "Banality, Book Publishing, and the Everyday Life of Cultural Studies," *The International Journal of Cultural Studies* 5(4) (November 2002), 438-460.

10. Stuart Hall, "Cultural Studies and Its Theoretical Legacies" *Cultural Studies*, ed. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula Treichler (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), 281.

11. A key exception is Gary Hall, *Digitize This Book! The Politics of New Media, or Why We Need Open Access Now* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

12. Karl Marx, "The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844," *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed., ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1978), 70-81; Margaret Jane Radin, *Contested Commodities: The Trouble With Trade in Sex, Children, Body Parts, and Other Things* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1996), 16.

13. John B. Thompson, *Books in the Digital Age: The Transformation of Academic and Higher Education Publishing in Britain and the United States* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), 31.

14. Paul Chatterton and David Featherstone, "Intervention: Elsevier, Critical Geography, and the Arms Trade," Editorial, *Political Geography* 26(1) (January 2007), 5.

15. "Share Information," Informa, [http://www.informa.com/investors/share\\_information](http://www.informa.com/investors/share_information); "Financial Review," Informa, <http://ar2007.informa.com/financial-review>; Adam Smith Conferences, <http://www.asi-conferences.com/>; "Clients: United States Army," Robbins-Gioia, <http://www.robbinsgioia.com/clients/army.aspx>; "Clients: United States Air Force," Robbins-Gioia, [http://www.robbinsgioia.com/clients/air\\_force.aspx](http://www.robbinsgioia.com/clients/air_force.aspx).

16. Mills, *White Collar*, 159.

17. Thorstein Veblen, *The Higher Learning in America: A Memorandum on the Conduct of Universities by Business Men*, (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1918; reprint, New York: Sagamore Press, 1957), 62.

18. Michael Mabe, "The Growth and Number of Journals," *Serials* 16(2) (July 2003), 191.

19. Raym Crow, "Publishing Cooperatives: An Alternative for Society Publishers," *SPARC Publications* (February 2006): 4, <http://www.arl.org/sparc/>; see also Michael Mabe, "Growth and Number of Journals," 193. He estimates the number of active peer-reviewed journals at around 14,700, though his figure is three years older than Crow's. C.f.: Richard Edwards and David Shulenburger, "The High Cost of Scholarly Journals (And What to Do About It)," *Change* (November/December 2003), 11-12. They place the number of journals at well over 100,000, though their figures likely are inflated due to their inclusion what some call "gray literature," i.e., working papers, conference proceedings, and other such "informal"

publications.

20. Mabe, "Growth and Number of Journals," 193.
21. Theodore C. Bergstrom, "Free Labor for Costly Journals?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 15(3) (Summer 2001), 188.
22. My calculations were made on the basis of excluding *Working Papers* from the final tally, since it folded in 1979. The growth in cultural studies journals seems to have plateaued for the time being.
23. Mabe, "Growth and Number of Journals," 195.
24. Joseph Turow, *Niche Envy: Marketing Discrimination in the Digital Age* (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press); Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1996); Laura Brown, Rebecca Griffiths, and Matthew Rascoff, "University Publishing in a Digital Age," *Ithaka Report* (July 2007): 9, <http://www.ithaka.org/strategic-services/Ithaka%20University%20Publishing%20Report.pdf>.
25. Theodore C. Bergstrom, "Free Labor for Costly Journals?" 191. See also Richard Edwards and David Shulenburg, "High Cost of Scholarly Journals," 14.
26. Turow, *Niche Envy*, 127.
27. Veblen, *Higher Learning*, 75-76; 62.
28. Slaughter and Rhoades, *Academic Capitalism*; see also Gary Rhoades and Sheila Slaughter, "Academic Capitalism, Managed Professionals, and Supply-Side Education," *Chalk Lines: The Politics of Work in the Managed University*, ed. Randy Martin (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998), 33-66.
29. Les Levidow, "Marketizing Higher Education: Neoliberal Strategies and Counter-Strategies," *Cultural Logic* 4(1) (Fall 2000), ¶13, <http://eserver.org/clogic/4-1/levidow.html>; see also Marc Bousquet, "The Waste Product of Graduate Education: Toward a Dictatorship of the Flexible," *Social Text* 20(1) (Spring 2002), 96; Nelson and Watt, *Academic Keywords*, 294-296; Slaughter and Rhoades, *Academic Capitalism*, 183-184; Waters, *Enemies of Promise*, 7-8 50.
30. Readings, *The University in Ruins*, 3. The most absurd example Readings offers? An award bestowed by Cornell University for "excellence in parking" (24).
31. Waters, *Enemies of Promise*, 50; see also Bousquet, "Waste Product," 96.
32. Randy Martin, "Introduction: Education as National Pedagogy," *Chalk Lines: The Politics of Work in the Managed University*, ed. Randy Martin (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998), 11.
33. Waters, *Enemies of Promise*, 36.
34. *Ibid.*, 7.
35. See, e.g., Theodore C. Bergstrom, "Free Labor for Costly Journals?" 188, 192.
36. David Glenn, "Planned Merger of Two Big Journal Publishers Worries Academic Librarians," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (December 15, 2006), A15.
37. Crow, "Publishing Cooperatives," 4. These companies produce the remaining third of these journals under contract with various learned societies.
38. *Ibid.*, 5. This number has since shrunk to five, after publisher John Wiley &

Sons acquired Blackwell in February 2007.

39. Mary H. Munroe, "The Publishing Industry: A Story of Merger and Acquisition" (March 13, 2007), n.p., <http://www.ulib.niu.edu/publishers/index.htm>.

40. David Glenn, "Planned Merger of Two Big Journal Publishers Worries Academic Librarians," A15.

41. Or, consider this: a rough estimate places the average revenue for each published academic journal article at about US\$4,000. This figure is skewed by scientific, technical, and medical (STM) publishing, where journal subscriptions tend to cost significantly more than those in the humanities and social sciences. Nonetheless, it should put the value of academic labor, whatever the discipline, into better perspective. Andrew Odlyzko, "Competition and Cooperation: Libraries and Publishers in the Transition to Electronic Scholarly Journals," *The Journal of Electronic Publishing* 4(4) (June 1999), n.p., <http://www.press.umich.edu/jep/04-04/odlyzko0404.html>.

42. The specific figure is three titles or less on average. Crow, "Publishing Cooperatives," 5.

43. I thank Jason Baird Jackson for sharing this information with me.

44. I've extrapolated this figure from: Crow, "Publishing Cooperatives," 4; and Mabe, "Growth and Number of Journals," 193.

45. Mills, *White Collar*, 152.

46. This is down from the year 2000, when serial costs peaked at 226% over the 1986 benchmark. "Monograph and Serial Expenditures in ARL Libraries, 1986-2006," *Association of Research Libraries*, n.p., <http://www.arl.org/bm~doc/monser06.pdf>.

47. Consumer Price Index, U.S. Department of Labor, available: <ftp://ftp.bls.gov/pub/special.requests/cpi/cpi.ai.txt>. Calculations appearing in text are my own.

48. Mark J. McCabe, "The Impact of Publisher Mergers on Journal Prices: A Preliminary Report," ARL Bi-Monthly Report 200 (October 1998), n.p., <http://www.arl.org/resources/pubs/br/br200/br200mccabe.shtml>. In a subsequent paper, McCabe qualifies his position slightly. He states: "this conclusion, that academic publishing mergers are generally associated with price increases, needs to be at least partially qualified... . [S]ome of the 'merger effects' may be related to other contemporaneous factors, such as a decline in firm-level demand elasticities or an increase in journal quality." Mark J. McCabe, "Journal Pricing and Mergers: A Portfolio Approach," *The American Economic Review* 92(1) (March 2002), 267.

49. Theodore C. Bergstrom and Carl T. Bergstrom, "Can 'Author Pays' Compete With 'Reader Pays,'" *Nature Web Focus* (May 20, 2004), n.p., <http://www.nature.com/nature/focus/accessdebate/22.html>.

50. Kenneth N. Gilpin, "Concerns About an Aggressive Publishing Giant," *The New York Times* (December 29, 1997), D2, Lexis-Nexis; Andrew Ross Sorkin, "Two European Publishing Giants Cancel Their Plans for Merger," *The New York Times* (March 10, 1998), D3, Lexis-Nexis. See also McCabe, "Journal Pricing," 268. On the

- legal and economic effects of academic journal publisher consolidation, see Aaron S. Edlin and Daniel L. Rubinfeld, "Exclusion or Efficient Pricing? The 'Big Deal' Bundling of Academic Journals," *Antitrust Law Journal* 72(1) (2004), 128-159.
51. "Journal of Applied Polymer Science Institutional Subscription Rates," Wiley InterScience, <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/30035/home?CRETRY=1&SRETRY=0>.
52. McCabe, "Impact of Publisher Mergers"; and McCabe, "Journal Pricing," passim.
53. Edwards and Schulenburger, "High Cost of Journals," 11.
54. "As throughout American society, what counts [in academic journal publishing] is the brand name, not whether the car will get you across town." Waters, *Enemies of Promise*, 21.
55. Brown, Griffiths, and Rascoff, "University Publishing," 9.
56. Christine L. Borgman, *Scholarship in the Digital Age: Information, Infrastructure, and the Internet* (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 2007), 112.
57. *Ibid.*, 181, 214.
58. Edwards and Shulenburger, "High Cost of Journals," 14. Another important factor is the rising price of scholarly monographs. See "Monograph and Serial Expenditures in ARL Libraries," n.p.; Waters, *Enemies of Promise*, 29.
59. "Monograph and Serial Expenditures in ARL Libraries," n.p.
60. Striphas, "Banality and Book Publishing," 446-447; Hall, *Digitize This Book*, 42; Nelson and Watt, 226-232.
61. Significantly, this stipulation does not preclude "the right to share with colleagues (but not on a commercial or systematic basis) copies of an article in its published form as supplied by Taylor & Francis as an electronic or printed offprint or reprint." "Copyright Transfer FAQs," Informaworld, [http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/authors\\_journals\\_copyright\\_transfer~db=all](http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/authors_journals_copyright_transfer~db=all).
62. "Copyright and Permissions," Sage, <http://www.sagepub.com/authors/journal/permissions.sp#cpg0>.
63. "Nonrivalrous" resources are goods whose use by one does not preclude or lessen their use by another. Lawrence Lessig, *Code Version 2.0* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 181.
64. Taylor & Francis/Informa and Sage Publications' contracts do not preclude using a PDF or photocopy of an author's own article in a course she/he is teaching, nor do they prohibit her/him from distributing it via regular or electronic mail to a small number of colleagues. Moreover, neither publisher restricts the posting of "pre-print" or pre-peer reviewed versions of the manuscript online.
65. Schueller, Dawson, and Ross, "Academic Labor at the Crossroads?" 120.
66. Jonathan Sterne, "But Wait, it Gets Better," *Superbon! Another American in Montreal*, September 30, 2006, n.p., <http://superbon.net/?p=449>. See also: Jonathan Sterne, "Sage Update," *Superbon! Another American in Montreal*, October 28, 2006, n.p., <http://superbon.net/?p=461>; and Jonathan Sterne, "New Text +

Sage Update," *Superbon! Another American in Montreal*, December 1, 2006, n.p., <http://superbon.net/?p=487>.

67. Tarleton Gillsepie, *Wired Shut: Copyright and the Shape of Digital Culture* (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 2007), 63; Lessig, *Code 2.0*, 116; and Ted Striphas, "Disowning Commodities: Ebooks, Capitalism, and Intellectual Property Law," *Television and New Media* 7(3) (August 2006), 231–260, esp. 249.

68. I have adapted this argument from Bousquet, "Waste Product," 88, who develops it within the context of the academic labor market.

69. PRISM stands for the Partnership for Research Integrity in Science and Medicine. It was created by "PR pit bull" Eric Dezenhall, whose firm, Dezenhall Resources, has represented the likes of former Enron CEO Jeffrey Skilling and ExxonMobile. It's worth underscoring that Cambridge, Columbia, and Rockefeller University Presses, all members of the Association of American Publishers (AAP), did not condone the AAP's moves to fight open access journal publishing. Jim Giles, "PR 'Pit Bull' Takes on Open Access," *Nature* (January 25, 2007), 347; Rick Weiss, "Publishing Group Hires 'Pit Bull of PR,'" *Washington Post* (January 26, 2007), A19; Susan Brown, "Publishers' Group Reportedly Hires P.R. Firm to Counter Push for Free Access to Research Results," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (January 26, 2007), n.p., <http://chronicle.com/daily/2007/01/2007012601n.htm>; Jennifer Howard, "Publishers' Group Revises Anti-Open-Access Campaign," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (September 28, 2007), A12.

70. This is the case with Taylor & Francis/Informa, for example. "Copyright Transfer FAQs," Informaworld, [http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/authors\\_journals\\_copyright\\_transfer~db=all](http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/authors_journals_copyright_transfer~db=all); see especially the section, "What if I want to retain copyright in my own name?" This also used to be the case over at Sage Publications, although the policy may have changed. At present, Sage's website states: "Before we will publish any article, we require the rights holder to sign a contributor agreement transferring copyright to the publisher." "Copyright and Permissions," Sage, <http://www.sagepub.com/authors/journal/permissions.sp#cpg0>.

71. "SPARC: The Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition," <http://www.arl.org/sparc/>.

72. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 91.

73. Bergstrom, "Free Labor for Costly Journals," 194–195. Here, he refers to a "rogues gallery" of costly journals. Bergstrom uses the specific construction, "rogue journals," on his website. "Ted Bergstrom's Journal Pricing Page," <http://www.econ.ucsb.edu/~tedb/Journals/jpricing.html>.

74. Borgman, *Scholarship in the Digital Age*, 100–101.

75. A guiding assumption of open source is that more accessible, more circulable code is code that can be tested and improved upon more productively. Open access proceeds under basically the same assumption, except that "knowledge"

substitutes for "code."

76. More information about these resources can be obtained online from: the Social Science Research Network (<http://www.ssrn.com>); Public Library of Science (<http://www.plos.org>); IU ScholarWorks (<http://scholarworks.iu.edu>); and the Open Humanities Press (<http://openhumanitiespress.org>); and the Cultural Studies Electronic Search Archive (<http://scm-rime.tees.ac.uk/CSeARCH>).

77. Hall, *Digitize This Book*, 20.

78. Borgman, *Scholarship in the Digital Age*, 61-62; Kathleen Fitzpatrick, "On the Future of Academic Publishing, Peer Review, and Tenure Requirements," *The Valve*, January 6, 2006, n.p., [http://www.thevalve.org/go/valve/article/on\\_the\\_future\\_of\\_academic\\_publishing\\_peer\\_review\\_and\\_tenure\\_requirements\\_or](http://www.thevalve.org/go/valve/article/on_the_future_of_academic_publishing_peer_review_and_tenure_requirements_or)

79. Gene Feder et al., "Reed Elsevier and the International Arms Trade," *The Lancet* 366 (September 10, 2005), 889; Richard Smith, "Reed-Elsevier's Hypocrisy in Selling Arms and Health," *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 100(3) (March 2007), 114-115; Chatterton and Featherstone, "Elsevier, Critical Geography, and the Arms Trade," 3-7.

80. Feder et al., "Elsevier and the International Arms Trade," 889; Chatterton and Featherstone, "Elsevier, Critical Geography, and the Arms Trade," Editorial, 3-7. See also: "Reed Elsevier to Exit the Defence Sector," press release (June 1, 2007), n.p., <http://www.reed-elsevier.com/mediacentre/pressreleases/2007/Pages/Defenceexhibitionssectorexits.aspx>; "Reed Elsevier Completes Sale of Defence Exhibitions," press release (May 29, 2008), n.p., <http://www.reed-elsevier.com/mediacentre/pressreleases/2008/Pages/Saleofdefenceexhibitions.aspx>;

81. Stuart Hall, "Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies," 285.

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