'Just One Day of Unstructured Autonomous Time': Supporting Editorial Labour for Ethical Publishing within the University

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Abstract: Universities have traditionally supported the distribution of critical and cultural theory through departmental and centre publishing (e.g. *Working Papers in Cultural Studies*) and the establishment of university presses. However, over recent decades publishing has been increasingly outsourced to commercial providers, buttressed by volunteer academic labour extracted for profit by the publishing industry. At the same time, faced with ongoing casualisation and ever-increasing workloads, the labour required for academic publishing is severely undervalued by the university and in a permanent state of crisis. In this article we put forward a radical proposal for universities to provide scholars dedicated time to support publishing as part of their academic service work. We intervene strongly into discourses that approach the publishing labour crisis by arguing for calculative solutions in the form of payment or credit. Instead, this article explores reorienting the labour underpinning academic publishing within the university itself by positioning it as an integral part of scholarly research and what it means to be a researcher. We make this argument through an in-depth engagement with debates on academic citizenship on the value of service work and discourses on academic labour derived from within critical university studies. We further support our argument by drawing on discussions on labour and open access (OA) publishing, referencing various alternative models currently being developed that, based on scholar-led, library-led and 'new' university press publishing, are experimenting with innovative ways to value and perform labour relations as part of community-controlled collective organisations. As universities are increasingly financially and infrastructurally supporting such initiatives, particularly with recourse to library budgets, we explore how this in many ways has left labour issues for publishing as a service performed as part of an academic's workload unaltered. We therefore argue for the urgent need to reconfigure how universities view the labour behind academic publishing, to support more ethical engagements and relations with publishing, bring knowledge production back under the control of academic communities, and to support greater academic autonomy within universities.

Keywords: Editorial labour, academic citizenship, academic publishing

The labour required for academic publishing is in a permanent state of crisis. Universities have traditionally supported the distribution of critical and cultural theory through departmental and centre publishing (e.g. *Working Papers in Cultural Studies*) and the establishment of university presses. However, having been marketised over the past four decades, academic publishing is now a highly consolidated industry that is propped up by extracted and (largely) unremunerated scholarly labour. This development has marked a transformation from academic publishing as something that was a service to scholarship and that needed support and subsidy from learned societies and universities, to something that could generate income.[1] Although publishing is a labour-intensive process, for peer review, copyediting, typesetting and editorial work (among other things), commercial publishers have either outsourced or automated much of this work, relying on the longstanding tradition that academics are not directly paid for authoring articles or peer reviewing and editing publications. As academics undertake increasing amounts of editorial work for scholarly publishing, in addition to teaching, research and service expectations, the resulting labour obligation becomes unsustainable under the current conditions of higher education.

The relationship between academic time constraints and commercial knowledge production is well illustrated in the current peer review system in which the number of reviewers accepting requests cannot keep up with the ever increasing number of papers being submitted to journals.[2] This situation is being blamed for lengthy publication times and, particularly during the pandemic, an unfair burden being assumed by women for peer review work (in relation to overall article submission data).[3] Although peer review is an expectation of academic work, it is not something directly rewarded as part of one's position within the university, meaning that there are no tangible benefits to the academic who peer reviews more than average.[4] The social infrastructure for peer review is therefore an unevenly distributed burden within the university, while being indiscriminately extracted and monetised outside of it by the publishing industry.

Indeed, there are approaches to alleviating the peer review burden by transactionalising it in the form of payment for reviewing, such as the $450 movement in the USA,[5] or metricising it in the form of credit, reviewer ratings, or badges through services like Publons, whereby reviewers can post their peer reviews online, and ORCiD, which automatically links a user's peer review activity to their public profile. These solutions are based on the idea that researchers *want* something in return for peer review, not that it is an inherent part of academic work. Such approaches reflect the stagnancy of the imagination around how labour gets rewarded in contemporary higher education and instead just rehearses the values of marketisation, metrics and individualised forms of credit within the peer review process itself. Although there are good arguments for publishers paying academics for whom peer review is not considered part of their work, a more radical approach to

1. Aileen Fyfe, Kelly Coate, Stephen Curry, Stuart Lawson, Noah Moxham and Camilla Mørk Røstvik, *Untangling Academic Publishing: A History of the Relationship between Commercial Interests, Academic Prestige and the Circulation of Research*, Zenodo, 2017.

2. Lynn E. DeLisi, 'Editorial: Where Have All the Reviewers Gone?: Is the Peer Review Concept in Crisis?', *Psychiatry Research*, 310, 2022, p114454; Maria Petrescu and Anjala S. Krishen, 'The Evolving Crisis of the Peer-Review Process', *Journal of Marketing Analytics*, 10:3, 2022, pp185-186.

3. Flaminio Squazzoni, Giangiacomo Bravo, Francisco Grimaldo, Daniel Garcia-Costa, Mike Farjam and Bahar Mehmani, 'Gender Gap in Journal Submissions and Peer Review during the First Wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Study on 2329 Elsevier Journals', *PLOS ONE*, 16:10, 2021.

4. As Tomaselli has argued, peer review is an 'absent category on performance management templates'. Keyan G. Tomaselli, 'Peer Review Is Academic Citizenship', *South African Journal of Science*, 116:9-10, 2020, pp1-2. (Hereafter *Peer Review*.)

5. Jeffrey Brainard, 'The $450 Question: Should Journals Pay Peer Reviewers?', *Science*, 1 May 2021.

6. Bruce Macfarlane, 'Defining and Rewarding Academic Citizenship: The Implications for University Promotions Policy', *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 29:3, 2007, pp261-73. (Hereafter *Defining and Rewarding Academic Citizenship*.); D. Coldwell, E. Papageorgiou, C. Callaghan and A. Fried, 'Academic Citizenship and Wellbeing: An Exploratory Cross-Cultural Study of South African and Swedish Academic Perceptions', *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 30:1, 2016, pp80-105. (Hereafter *Academic Citizenship and Wellbeing*.)

7. Academic citizenship connects to the traditional civic missions of universities of providing equitable access to higher education and contributing more widely to social, economic and vocational needs. This mission has been prevalent in UK and US universities, see Oxbridge with its ideals of autonomy and self-governance (an internal institutional dimension of service) and US university traditions that highlight the civic and public service dimension of scholarship. Bruce Macfarlane, *The*

editorial work within the university itself is necessary to undermine profit-based publishing and bring knowledge production back under the control of academic communities.

But rather than approaching this problem by transactionalising this work as many are attempting, is there a better approach to supporting editorial labour for humanities publishing within the university itself? Might the increasing popularity of scholar-led and 'diamond' (no author or reader fees) forms of open access (OA) publishing offer a productive avenue to reconfigure how this work is carried out, given the innovative ways in which they are valuing and performing labour relations within publishing?

In this article, we explore the possibility of reorienting the labour underpinning academic publishing *within* the university by positioning this work as an integral part of what it means to be an academic researcher. We make this argument by engaging with debates on academic citizenship on the value of service work and how this can be better supported from within universities. We also base our analysis on discourses on academic labour derived from within critical university studies, and further draw on discussions on labour and OA publishing within scholar-led publishing. We support our argument with reference to a variety of different examples of scholar-led, library-led and 'new' university press publishing, alongside forms of collective organisation put in place by scholar-led collectives. As universities are now increasingly starting to financially and infrastructurally support such initiatives, particularly with recourse to library budgets, we explore how these new publishing ecologies in many ways leave labour issues for publishing as a service performed as part of an academic's workload unaltered, when in fact they necessitate a reconfiguration of how we view the labour behind academic publishing.

In making this argument, we are writing from the position of two UK scholars, both on full-time permanent contracts, one of us located at an academic library and the other at a post-92 university. We are working within the wider tradition of arts and humanities research, but align ourselves more directly with thinking in scholarly communications, publishing studies, cultural studies and critical theory. However, although some of the examples and the experiences we draw on in this article derive from a UK context, most of the literature and projects we are in conversation with and draw upon very much operate in a wider (global) context. As such we strongly believe that the argument we are making here will be more widely applicable, in different research and education contexts, in different fields, and in different local and regional contexts, albeit of course with specific situated adjustments to take into consideration distinct working conditions.

ACADEMIC CITIZENSHIP

Within a university setting, the support that academics provide towards scholarly publishing is conventionally perceived as being part of the 'service'

dimension of academic work. Together with teaching and research, service is seen as one of the three historic purposes of universities around the world.[6] Within higher education studies this service dimension[7] has been widely debated in relation to the concept of *academic citizenship*, which concerns the roles, functions and activities academics generally conduct and offer outside of teaching and research to the university (internal service), discipline or profession, and/or to wider society (external service). It includes anything from sitting on institutional committees, to writing references, peer reviewing, editorships of journals, board membership of learned societies, and public engagement and outreach.[8] Academic citizenship is seen to support the 'infrastructure of academic life' as the 'glue' that keeps academic communities and universities together and connected to society.[9] Beyond being employed by an HE organisation, informal disciplinary connections foster academic belonging to an 'invisible college' across institutions.[10] Yet the infrastructural upkeep of this invisible disciplinary collegium (e.g. running scholarly associations, journals, presses) predominantly depends on volunteer labour from academics, working beyond the strict confines of their institutional contractual obligations, to sustain its effective functioning. Most if not all the publishing tasks academics regularly undertake to support the scholarly communication system, would thus fall under the remit of service or academic citizenship, including peer review, editorships, board memberships, outreach activities, etc. The debate around academic citizenship, which focuses predominantly on issues of (normative) ethics, identity and governance, provides us with some important insights and potential ways forward in relation to the argument we want to make in this article, around whether and how we can reorient the labour underpinning academic publishing within universities. Yet at the same time this debate suffers from several blindspots, which, alongside some of the debate's key insights, we want to shortly outline more in-depth underneath.

Academic citizenship is seen to involve membership of a series of overlapping communities both within and outside the university (from students to colleagues, institutions, disciplines or professions and the wider public). According to a normative perception of citizenship, it brings with it certain duties (e.g. service work) that reciprocate the benefits that membership brings (e.g. academic freedom). Commitment to these duties is then what it means to be an academic citizen (*The Academic Citizen*; *Academic Citizenship and Wellbeing*). This focus on the ethical responsibility or obligations academic citizens have, based on virtue ethics, leans heavily into the moral character of academics (e.g., collegiality, guardianship), which is seen as being central to their commitment to service connected to a sense of 'communal obligation' towards the overlapping communities academics are a member of as well as towards wider society.[11] Yet as Dean and Forray have argued 'community, tradition and moral suasion are no match for institutional pressures and a continued lack of recognition in formal rewards systems' and in this sense

12. Kathy Lund Dean and Jeanie M. Forray, 'The Long Goodbye: Can Academic Citizenship Sustain Academic Scholarship?', *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 27:2, 2018, p2.

13. Mathew Davies, 'Academic Citizenships', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 71:1, 2017, p4.

14. Erik Blair, 'Rebundling Higher Educational Research, Teaching and Service', *Confero: Essays on Education, Philosophy and Politics*, 6:1, 2018, p8. (Hereafter *Rebundling Higher Educational Research, Teaching and Service*.)

15. Tite Tiénou, 'Faculty as Institutional Citizens: An Invisible but Essential Aspect of Vital Sustainability', *Insights Journal*, 4:1, 2018, pp25-32.

16. Sevil Sümer, Pat O'Connor and Nicky Le Feuvre, 'The Contours of Gendered Academic Citizenship' in Sevil Sümer (ed.), *Gendered Academic Citizenship: Issues and Experiences*, Springer International Publishing, 2020, pp1-36. (Hereafter *Gendered Academic Citizenship*.)

17. Ugo Rossi, 'Being Here and There: In-Betweeness, Double Absence, and the Making of a Multi-Layered Academic

structural underfunding, increased workloads and an audit culture, have damaged social and moral responsibility.[12] Instead of foregrounding models of 'academic heroism', others therefore have focused on academic citizenship through the lens of care ethics, and on how for example it is necessary to accept our ethical failure as academics given the ongoing constraints on our time and labour. This while being conscious of how as academics, we are entangled in the manifold social relationships that shape and support us, which requires us to remain aware of 'the harm that our ethical failures cause towards our disciplines and institutions'.[13]

Notwithstanding the ideal of the 'all-rounder' academic who incorporates the three dimensions of teaching, research and service – a 'classic trinity' that 'has never really held'[14] – the boundaries of these traditional notions of academic work have become more blurred. The current trend towards the 'unbundling' of academic roles has further hampered any sense of a common autonomous academic 'culture'. New more specialised roles have appeared in HE, with the responsibilities of the all-rounder academic being split up into for example teaching and research-only roles. While universities chase excellence in both teaching and research (but not necessarily in service) this has created a 'hollowed out' academic where 'the unbundling of academic identity has left individuals conceptualising their role in response to others' (*Rebundling Higher Educational Research, Teaching and Service*, pp8-9). As Albia and Cheng argue, constructions and understandings of academic citizenship are formed within the overlapping communities academics inhabit, but perhaps more importantly, this is where academic identity is established and validated (*The Notion of Academic Citizenship*, p6). The feeling of belonging is seen as essential here.[15] Yet who actually gets to enjoy full academic citizenship is important to highlight, where it is mostly only those on permanent, full-time, or tenured contracts that are entitled to this and/or who are recognised as academic citizens. Female and minority academics, PhD researchers, those on fixed term and casualised contracts, or operating outside of universities, risk becoming 'non-citizens' of the academy, lacking autonomy, a feeling of belonging and the basic rights that come with membership of academic communities, which are only accessible to tenured 'full academic citizens'. Sümer et al. have therefore highlighted the subtle processes and complex practices of inclusion and exclusion that a concept such as academic citizenship frames in relation to gender and multiple inequality structures.[16]

Within the discourse on academic citizenship a focus has thus been on how universities as spaces can foster academic citizenship and identity. The hollowing out of academic identity has weakened the internal unity of the university as a community, where many academics tend to express a 'limited and "opportunistic" loyalty towards the academic institution'.[17] Among a number of competing spatialities and positionalities, they are increasingly likely to relate to disciplinary colleagues remote from their immediate university environment, resulting in a weaker sense of institutional

community and identity (*The Disengaged Academic*, pp306-307). A broader conception of academic citizenship, focusing on issues of inclusion, participation, and belonging, and recognising multi-situated academic identity, is seen as essential to start to address this issue, which would heed Rossi's call for a 'plural and multi-layered academic citizenship', alongside Sümer et al.'s gendered academic citizenship, and Blair's proposal to again rebundle the three core aspects of higher education – research, teaching and service – which would allow for a more holistic conception of academic citizenship (*Being Here and There*, p405; *Rebundling Higher Educational Research, Teaching and Service*, p1; *Gendered Academic Citizenship*, p19).[18] In this context Nørgård and Bengtsen argue that it is crucial that universities become 'placeful' institutions, places that care, are welcoming, and that invite and recognise the place-making activities of their academics (multi-situated inside and outside the institution) otherwise 'they may come to experience themselves as homeless at the university'.[19]

One key oversight of the academic citizenship debate would have to be how in all its critique of the way academic identity is established, it has a hard time imagining or speculating on any form of academic citizenship that exists or is established outside of or disconnected from the university. As we will come back to when discussing scholar-led presses, such a move might further help broaden and reconfigure notions of academic citizenship. Similarly, the focus in this debate remains predominantly on academics as *citizens*, not as *workers*, where this continued focus on academia as a vocation and a mission is further distracting from the urgent political issues of labour and value that underlie our current predicament. From a different perspective then, academic citizenship is in decline not due to a lack of virtue or a lack of participation as a member within a community, but due to ever-increasing workloads in public institutions and the casualisation of labour.

VALUING SERVICE WORK

The main issue we have to contend with in this context is the purported decline in academic citizenship or in the amount of service work academics do, caused amongst others by a 'relentless performative culture in academia that privileges research outputs and certain forms of academic work over others' (*The Notion of Academic Citizenship*, p10). Service or 'administration' work is often perceived negatively, as non-core and not fully recognised in university reward and promotion guidelines, and as such as a distraction from research and teaching. In this context academics find it difficult to integrate their research and service functions.[20] Certain forms of service such as external and public service work are also privileged, given their status and/or due to being more visible, over on-campus service activities or peer reviewing, labour that is often invisible and disproportionately fulfilled by women and academics from historically excluded communities.[21] Even where

Citizenship', *Area*, 40:3, 2008, p404. (Hereafter *Being Here and There*.)

18. It is curious how as part of the call for a broader conception of academic citizenship, there has not been more focus on how problematic the term 'academic' itself is in this context, where this excludes scholars that are not part of academic institutions, including PhD researchers, 'alt-ac' scholars, para-academics and those on casualised and fixed term contracts.

19. Rikke Toft Nørgård and Søren Smedegaard Ernst Bengtsen, 'Academic Citizenship beyond the Campus: A Call for the Placeful University', *Higher Education Research and Development*, 35:1, 2016, p8.

20. Maria Rita Tagliaventi, Giacomo Carli and Donato Cutolo, 'Excellent Researcher or Good Public Servant? The Interplay between Research and Academic Citizenship', *Higher Education*, 79:6, 2020, pp1057-1078. (Hereafter *Excellent Researcher.*); Andrea M. Armani, Christopher Jackson, Thomas A. Searles and Jessica Wade, 'The Need to Recognize and Reward Academic Service', *Nature Reviews Materials*, 6:11, 2021, pp960-962. (Hereafter *The Need to Recognize.*)

21. Cassandra M. Guarino and Victor M. H. Borden, 'Faculty Service Loads and Gender: Are Women Taking Care of the Academic Family?', *Research in Higher Education*, 58:6, 2017, pp672-694. (Hereafter *Faculty Service Loads and Gender*.)

22. *How to Be a Good Academic Citizen*; Nicola J. Beatson, Meredith Tharapos, Brendan T. O'Connell, Paul de Lange, Sarah Carr and Scott Copeland, 'The Gradual Retreat from Academic Citizenship', *Higher Education Quarterly*, 76:4, 2022, pp715-725. (Hereafter *The Gradual Retreat*.)

23. UCU, *Workload Survey 2021: Data Report. A Report by University and College Union*, 2022, p32.

24. Andrea E. Pia et al., 'Labour of Love: An Open Access Manifesto for Freedom, Integrity, and Creativity in the Humanities and Interpretive Social Sciences', *Commonplace*, 2020. (Hereafter *Labour of Love*.); *Peer Review*; *The Need to Recognize*.

the importance of service is acknowledged, most service activities cannot be measured in standardised units or easily evidenced in the form of 'outputs', such as courses taught, articles published, or grants won, which results in faculty creating a hierarchy of priorities where academic citizenship tends to rank last.[22]

In addition to that, academic workloads for the academic 'all-rounder' including research and teaching alongside service and administration, have reached untenable levels. This has led to higher levels of stress, exhaustion and burnout, and much lower levels of commitment of academics to their organisations (*The Gradual Retreat*). In the UK, for example, staff at universities faced with increasing workloads and insecure working conditions are doing the equivalent of at least two days unpaid work every week (with staff on the most casualised contracts reporting the highest FTE working hours). The UK higher education trade union UCU (University and College Union) conducted a workload survey in 2021, which showed that the proportion of staff time spent on activities including teaching, supervision and marking, and department and student admin and meetings, had all increased since 2016. Although not included as a separate category in the survey, external forms of academic citizenship and publishing activities are reflected in staff time spent on activities such as peer review (from 1.9 to 1.6 per cent), networking (from 1.7 to 0.9 per cent), self-directed study or scholarly activity (from 2.4 to 1.2 per cent), and external meetings and communications (from 3.1 to 2.9 per cent), which all have declined since 2016 (from what were already low percentages).[23]

This is strengthened by the perspective that service work is seen as volunteer work, something undertaken after hours, outside of and not a formal part of an academic's contractual duties, something academics engage with because they are passionate about the related activities, as a labour of love.[24] Yet the power imbalance here can lead to excess requests and pressure to take on more service for historically excluded groups and those on fixed term contracts, who are unable to refuse service requests due to the structure of inequity in academia, putting additional pressure on achieving a sustainable work-life balance (*Faculty Service Loads and Gender*, p19). Time is also increasingly allocated by universities to internal work connected to their increasing reliance on a casualised and part-time work force, which leads to a situation where 'many vital pro bono activities' to communities beyond the campus, 'may wither' (*The Academic Citizen*, p7). These issues of labour and workload further contribute to negative perceptions of service, where a balanced workload where 'service is not provided at the expense of career progression' is actually 'critical in the pursuit of a more equitable and inclusive academic environment' and to promote activities that enable the academic ecosystem to survive (*The Need to Recognize*, p960).

In response to this situation, the solution being proposed within the literature on academic citizenship seems to predominantly focus on further

quantifying or metricising academic service (instead of critiquing the ongoing metrification of academia, for example), following the argument that 'in the context of competitive commodification of academic activities, everything needs to be visible and calculable' (*Gendered Academic Citizenship*, p14). This includes efforts to classify the varied types and scope of academic service in order to 'quantitatively evaluate service within the context of an academic portfolio' (*The Need to Recognize*, p960) to establish equivalent analytical metrics for excellent service (*Excellent Researcher*; *Defining and Rewarding Academic Citizenship*).

Metricised approaches to indeterminate labour, as Peter Fleming argues, overlook the 'unmeasurable background activity – including cooperation, goodwill and collegiality – and artificially sequester staff from their organisational surroundings'.[25] They also, Fleming argues, favour 'immediacy' and foreground short-term effort over longer term, thick, social commitments, reducing service work to a box-ticking exercise. For Richard Hall, the increasing number of these metricised service demands reproduces the 'expanding terrain of hopelessness' inside the university, contributing to its nature as an *anxiety machine* in which one is, by design, unable to keep up with service demands.[26] Yet at the same time, writes Hall, academics are losing their ability to control how they work, which is now instead 'increasingly managed bureaucratically rather than collegiately, and based upon a weak understanding of the realities of academic labour, in terms of time allocation and sequencing' (*The Hopeless University*, p72).

The labour for publishing is therefore caught between conceptions of unmeasurable service work and metricised performance targets. It is affective, open-ended, collegiate labour, while also being quantified and monitored as anxiety-inducing performance management. Between these two understandings, editorial work is undervalued by the university in a way that allows it to be extracted by the publishing industry and ultimately sold back to universities as a form of research assessment and credentialing. Further still, Rebecca Colesworthy illustrates how the commercialisation of academic publishing also leads to poor remuneration of paid publishing employees who are often so overworked that core job functions get 'relegated to nights and weekends'.[27] From either the perspective of academic workers or publishing professionals, the open-ended, relational nature of publishing means that it is open to exploitation by market actors.

And yet, many of the organisations seeking to resist inappropriate usages of metrics and to advocate for assessment processes that value a range of academic contributions are also ill-equipped for the kind of political work needed to truly effect change. For example, the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA) seeks in part to 'recognise the diversity of contributions to, and careers in, research' by reforming assessment processes within the university.[28] This initiative – led by a global coalition of research organisations – prioritises reform more as an epistemological issue rather

25. Peter Fleming, *Dark Academia: How Universities Die*, Pluto Press, 2021, p72.

26. Richard Hall, *The Hopeless University: Intellectual Work at the End of The End of History*, Mayfly Books, 2021, p42. (Hereafter *The Hopeless University*.)

27. Rebecca Colesworthy, 'Navigating the Changing Landscape of Scholarly Book Publishing in Literary and Cultural Studies, Part 6, Labor' *The H-Net Book Channel. Feeding the Elephant: A Forum on Scholarly Communications*, 2022: https://networks.h-net.org/node/1883/discussions/10163401/navigating-changing-landscape-scholarly-book-publishing-literary.

28. CoARA, *Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment*, 20 July 2022: https://coara.eu/agreement/the-agreement-full-text/.

29. https://sfdora.org/

30. Holly Else, 'Row Erupts over University's Use of Research Metrics in Job-Cut Decisions', *Nature*, 592:19, 2021, p19.

31. Marta Teperek, Maria Cruz and Danny Kingsley, 'Time to Re-Think the Divide between Academic and Support Staff', *Nature*, 14 April 2022.

32. Janneke Adema and Graham Stone, *Changing Publishing Ecologies: A Landscape Study of New University Presses and Academic-Led Publishing*, Jisc, 2017; Janneke Adema and Samuel A Moore, 'Collectivity and Collaboration: Imagining New Forms of Communality to Create Resilience in Scholar-Led Publishing', *Insights the UKSG Journal*, 31:3, 2018.

33. Although various scholar-led presses (also) support multiple members of paid staff. Eileen A. Fradenburg Joy and Vincent W. J. Van Gerven Oei, 'What Is Your Threshold? The Economics of Open Access Scholarly Book Publishing, the "Business" of Care, and the Case of Punctum Books', *The Journal of Electronic Publishing*, 26:1, 2023, pp2-3. (Hereafter *What Is Your Threshold?*)

than a labour one, focusing on research 'quality' over working conditions and workloads. For CoARA, rankings, journal impact factors and current assessment procedures are regressive because they work against *good* research. While this is no doubt true, CoARA fails to foreground the bigger issue of academic workloads, labour conditions and their relationship to the marketisation of higher education.

Similarly, the Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), an organisation designed to 'improve the ways in which researchers and the outputs of scholarly research are evaluated',[29] adopts a stance of mediation between universities and unions. In a recent dispute in the UK between Liverpool University and the UCU in which the university attempted to make academics redundant based on bibliometric indicators, DORA intervened to highlight the irresponsible usage of such metrics. Crucially, they did not publicly object to the overall context of redundancies based on performance but instead saw their role as helping to provide the correct indicators by which to make their decisions to terminate staff employment.[30] This is not to say that DORA were in any way supportive of redundancies, but more that their organisational strategy prevented them from publicly siding on behalf of academic workers. Instead of trying to determine the best or fairest way to assess, metricise and discipline researchers, a more appropriate approach to academic workloads and service work would be to advocate for greater governance and more freedom to pursue the kinds of practices that academics feel have scholarly value (such as editorial work). This is separate from, but related to, the current push to collapse the distinction between academic and 'support' staff, many of whom undertake and contribute to scholarly research in a range of ways.[31] Yet rather than supporting top-down initiatives that seek to speak on behalf of precarious and under-supported colleagues, we wish to situate this issue as illustrative of the need for greater governance as part of the overall democratic function of the university.

SCHOLAR-LED PUBLISHING: A LABOUR OF LOVE

The undervaluing of publishing labour both by universities and by publishers, especially the often invisible and unremunerated work that is done by scholars to support publishing – labour that is further extracted for profit by commercial publishers – has been one of the key triggers behind the rise of scholar-led publishing in the last two decades. Many scholar-led OA journals and presses in the humanities and social sciences, beyond providing venues for open scholarship, have been set up in response to the growing hegemony of commercial publishers, to provide scholar or community-owned and controlled alternatives for authors to publish in that are not profit-driven. Lacking support from within universities to set up and maintain presses or journals has been another key motivation, in combination with a desire to autonomously control and manage them, often as part of (disciplinary)

collectives across universities (e.g. Mattering Press, Feral Feminisms, Open Humanities Press). In addition to this, infrastructural developments have made it easier for scholars to publish themselves (e.g. freely available open source journal publishing software such as Open Journal Systems, the development of print on demand for books enabling the printing of single copies of books). All of the above have contributed to the rise of scholar-led OA publishing as a model distinct from, for example, university or learned society publishing.[32]

Although independent scholar-led publishing initiatives are often (purposefully) small and have introduced various innovations in the ways publishing labour is organised, they tend to rely heavily on community support and volunteer labour.[33] The issue of the precariousness of the publishing labour involved in the creation and maintenance of these initiatives, especially in relation to how this connects to issues of labour within universities, remains essential to consider.[34] Beyond volunteer labour, writes Marcel Wrzesinski in relation to journal publishing, there are still various costs involved in running these initiatives well:

> To be clear, this labour is neither trivial nor quickly done, as it includes a variety of editorial work: calls for papers are drafted and circulated, submissions collected and evaluated. The peer review process must be administered and overseen to ensure high quality content. And when the final papers are ready after rounds of revisions, the meticulous copy editing, proofreading and formatting process is to be done. Once a journal issue is uploaded and published, it needs to be archived, distributed, as well as promoted.[35]

In the context of 'diamond' forms of OA (i.e. those journals and presses that do not charge for reading or publishing), the model that many scholar-led independent publishing initiatives adhere to, issues of labour are even more crucial to understand and account for. Diamond OA is often framed as a response to the commercial publisher-driven landscape of article/book-processing charges and the resulting inequities of 'paying to say' that such models enforce.[36] While there are a variety of financial models for supporting diamond OA without recourse to the simple commerciality of author payments, there are clear challenges that arise from eschewing these dominant and scale-able approaches to funding.[37] To be clear, the lack of easily workable models is what makes diamond OA – particularly in scholar-led and non-commercial forms – a vital model for exploration and support. Independent, scholar-led publishing goes against the grain of the dominant forms of publishing represented by processing charges and the 'transformative' agreements with commercial publishers that are quickly becoming the norm in higher education. From the perspective of scholars providing both the free labour that buttresses the commercial publishing

34. Our focus here is not on volunteer labour making for less sustainable publishing models, indeed as we will outline in what follows it can even make publishing more resilient in the right configurations, while we have to remember that commercial publishing also relies heavily on volunteer labour.

35. Marcel Wrzesinski, 'Open Access Futures: Time to Push for Scholar-Led Publishing – Digital Society Blog' *HIIG*, 2019: https://www.hiig.de/en/open-access-futures-time-to-push-for-scholar-led-publishing/.

36. Becerril, Arianna et al., *OA Diamond Journals Study. Part 2: Recommendations*, Zenodo, 2021, https://zenodo.org/record/4562790. In particular where it concerns Book Processing Charges (BPCs), not only are these unsustainable given current library budgets (especially as they are increasingly set according to market mechanisms, i.e. the brand of the publisher), they are not equitable either as they exclude PhD researchers, scholars from institutions that cannot afford BPCs (often those that have been historically marginalised), those who are not employed by universities, or are on fixed term contracts or in 'alt-ac' careers.

37. Quentin
Dufour, David
Pontille and Didier
Torny, 'Supporting
Diamond Open
Access Journals.
Interest and
Feasibility of
Direct Funding
Mechanisms',
bioRxiv, 4 May 2023.

38. While at
the same time
contributing to a
negative perception
of OA publishing
seen as both
mandated and paid
for by author fees.

39. Simon
Batterbury, Gerda
Wielander and
Andrea E. Pia, 'After
the Labour of Love:
The Incomplete
Revolution of
Open Access and
Open Science in
the Humanities
and Creative
Social Sciences',
Commonplace, 2022,
p7.

system, while at the same time paying for publication, these developments have arguably made the issue of labour more visible and urgent to them.[38]

In response to this situation a collective of scholars representing scholar-led academic HSS journals published a collaboratively-written manifesto in 2020 to promote further discussion about the political implications of labour and value in OA publishing. Again, this in an effort to repoliticise these issues and to move the discussion around OA publishing away from a focus on research *outputs*, to instead extend our notions of research to include 'building and maintaining the systems, processes, and relations of production that make scholarship possible' (*Labour of Love*, p3). The manifesto laments how publishing tends to be outsourced, creating a disconnect and disengagement between scholarship and its multiple publics, where the discussion around (OA) publishing needs to be urgently refocused on issues of 'financing, ownership, and, above all, values'. For the manifesto's authors however, a key focus is exactly on how the alternative future they have been prefiguring through their publishing practices, away from corporate enclosures and towards 'a more accessible, ethical, transparent, and creative form of scholarly communication', largely relies on 'a labour of love', which they describe as 'unremunerated, off-work time that is freely given as a result of political, emotional and otherwise idealistic investment in projects that transcend the quest for academic prestige and seek to transform the publishing system from within' (*Labour of Love*, p4).

What is interesting here is how this publishing 'labour of love' is explicitly framed within the manifesto as 'off-work' time, which we interpret here as work done outside of the work academics tend to do for their universities. The manifesto does argue for more institutional support from universities, libraries and other like-minded organisations, but not in the first instance it seems in relation to the labour scholars tend to do 'off-work' according to the manifesto, including 'the carefully-argued analysis, the peer review, and the editorial work', but more in relation to archiving and to 'meet the challenge of the digital information era' (*Labour of Love*, p4). Although the manifesto offers many valuable suggestions of how to address issues of labour in OA publishing (some of which we will discuss more in depth next), including collective efforts, mutual aid relationships, supporting community owned open infrastructures and pooling resources, little attention is given to how universities might be able to support these initiatives by providing academics the time to perform publishing and editorial work. A later update of the manifesto does clearly highlight, but perhaps doesn't further unpack, how 'most commonly, we find time to participate in publishing as part of our paid or unpaid academic work, on borrowed time'.[39]

In the next section we want to contribute to this discussion by trying to further unpack both the notion of indirect university support through 'borrowed time' (and how to both address and extend this in ways that go beyond 'finding time'), as well as through some of the other ways in which

universities are now supporting OA alternatives to commercial publishing. These alternatives exist not only in university presses and library-based publishing, but also in the kinds of models that scholar-led publishing has pioneered. Instead of outsourcing publishing to a commercial industry, we illustrate how supporting these alternatives can contribute to the public mission of the university, while benefiting scholars and the research they produce. By making the call here for universities to support the publishing labour of their academics directly, we are intervening in the debate around funding for scholar-led and diamond OA publishing that has focused more on alternative funding options. At the same time, we hope to contribute and create alternatives to the various revenue/business models that are currently being used, developed and proposed in discourses on scholar-led and diamond OA publishing. Although the argument we are making here is not uncontroversial, especially given existing academic workloads, we feel the urgency of the need to find ways of supporting scholar-led and other non-commercial forms of publishing, especially as a way for universities to develop more ethical engagements and relations with publishing by supporting and adopting such alternatives.

SCHOLAR-LED PUBLISHING AND UNIVERSITY SUPPORT: TAKING BACK CONTROL

As explained in the previous section, much of the volunteer labour that scholar-led publishing draws on is based on 'borrowed' or even 'stolen' time from what is normally allocated to working academics.[40] As Gary Hall writes in relation to Open Humanities Press, which he co-directs: 'Most of OHP's funding comes indirectly: from publicly funded institutions paying our salaries as academics, librarians, technologists, and so forth (although not everyone who is part of OHP works for a university). We are simply using some of the time we are given to conduct research to create open access publishing opportunities for others.'[41] There are also situations where, for example, editorships come with buy-out time for academics from their research and teaching duties, or in some cases support from research assistants. We do not wish to downplay how much work is actually done outside allocated academic work time, and the fact that indeed much of the labour in scholar-led publishing is upheld by PhD researchers, early-career researchers, those outside of universities, para-academics, or those in 'alt-ac' careers. Instead, we want to highlight how allocating time for academics to pursue publishing activities as part of their academic job does not have to be too time-consuming, can support a more resilient and ethical publishing system and can connect well to the university's mission to support public scholarship and a wider engagement with society.

One of the main ways in which scholar-led presses support their work is by freeing up their labour by withdrawing it from commercial, extractive,

40. Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study*, Minor Compositions, 2013. (Hereafter *The Undercommons*.)

41. Gary Hall, *Pirate Philosophy: For a Digital Posthumanities*, MIT Press, 2016, p221.

or non-ethical publishers, and moving it towards community-controlled alternatives. For example, off the back of the international 'Cost of Knowledge' boycott of the publisher Elsevier, the mathematician Tim Gowers launched the community-led overlay journal *Discrete Analysis* as a 'DIY' alternative to commercial journals.[42] Originally supported by the University of Cambridge, where Gowers is based, the journal squats within the infrastructure of the arXiv preprint server by peer reviewing, contextualising and linking to papers already uploaded there. Such an approach can be seen as part of a now rich tradition of editors resigning their labour (often *en masse*) from commercial journals and starting their own community-led initiatives from within the university and library settings.[43] But rather than simply infrastructuring these projects, universities can also incentivise academics to redirect their labour time by supplementing it as service work from within the university too.

A further way in which scholar-led publishing can be a more efficient way of publishing is evidenced by some of the new organisational models they have initiated. For example, Mattering Press, Open Humanities Press and Language Science Press have all been set up in different ways to function as international publishing collectives, in which often autonomous groups of editors take responsibility for one specific book, or series, or journal, distributing the workload of running a small press and making the process of publishing more manageable. In addition, these presses tend to work in a non-rivalrous, non-competitive manner, meaning that they tend to collaborate with each other by sharing knowledge, skills and resources or even through setting up consortia or mutual aid networks. Prime examples of this are the ScholarLed collective of presses and the Radical Open Access Collective, who are both in different ways building horizontal alliances between OA publishing projects. They exemplify the organisational principle of 'scaling small', what we have elsewhere outlined as horizontal and vertical alliances 'between community-driven projects that promote a bibliodiverse ecosystem while providing resilience through resource sharing and other kinds of collaboration' which makes publishing both more resilient we argue, encourages bibliodiversity and complements the specialities of the presses and the scholars that run them.[44]

This free sharing and gifting of labour in this way is also based on the adoption of a care logic, instead of a calculative or choice-based logic, as part of most scholar-led projects, as theorised by Mattering Press, punctum books and Goldsmiths Press, among others.[45] We have attempted so far in this piece to illustrate that the work of publishing does not fit well into the measurable, calculative forms of labour so desired by the neoliberal university and the commercial publishing industry. It is, instead, care-ful and affective in its indeterminacy and open-endedness reflected in how these presses are, as Joe Deville of Mattering Press writes, 'taking care of not just the human relations we instantiate, but also the material (e.g. payment, production and reviewing models, the printed texts themselves, the digital texts, how these circulate,

42. 'The Future of Mathematics Publishing: An Interview with Sir Timothy Gowers', *Forbes*, 30 April 2016.

43. Anna Fazackerley, '"Too Greedy": Mass Walkout at Global Science Journal over "Unethical" Fees', *The Observer*, 7 May 2023.

44. Janneke Adema and Samuel A. Moore, 'Scaling Small; Or How to Envision New Relationalities for Knowledge Production', *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture*, 16:1, 2021. (Hereafter *Scaling Small*.)

45. *What Is Your Threshold?*; Sarah Kember, 'Why Write? Feminism, Publishing and the Politics of Communication', *New Formations*, 83, 2014, pp99-116. (Hereafter *Why Write?*); Joe Deville, 'Open Access Publishing and the Future of the University' in S. Moore and Mattering Press (eds), *The Commons and Care*, Post Office Press and Rope Press, 2018, pp6-15.

the work involved in making them circulate)' (*Why Write?*, p112). Care-ful publishing is experimental and exploratory and so cannot be undertaken with respect to cookie-cutter templates and rigid workflow patterns. This kind of approach to publishing is, as we have argued elsewhere, antagonistic to market forms of scale-ability and sustainability and finds a good home within the forms of labour we are making a case for here (*Scaling Small*). Most scholar-led publishing is 'care-ful' precisely because it does not need to rely on revenue-generating models, economies of scale or labour-devaluing processes. Instead, it offers the opportunity to publish in a way that best fits the material and the vision of its author(s).

It is in vertical alliances between different stakeholders in academic publishing that further support for scholar-led publishing has been sought too, for example through collective funding models, which have been devised as alternative ways to support diamond OA publishing where libraries collectively fund OA, as an alternative to BPCs. See innovations such as the Open Book Collective (or similar models) in this context, a member-led value-based organisation which brings together publishers, infrastructure providers, and libraries to support the publication of OA books and the open community-owned infrastructures to sustain them.[46] Latin America has a long tradition of resistance against commercial publishing while providing alternatives in the form of institutionally-supported publishing initiatives, platforms, collectives and infrastructures that provide and sustain no-fee diamond OA publishing, including Scielo, CLACSO, Redalyc and AmeliCA. These kinds of models provide inspirational examples of how community-led and university-supported more ethical forms of OA publishing have been put into practice and are supporting publishing on a regional scale, where 'by 2019, the region had the highest percentage of open access scientific articles in the world, almost two-thirds of its production'.[47]

It is also worth considering the role of libraries in nurturing DIY and scholar-led approaches to diamond OA. In the UK, for example, scholarly communication work has been increasingly reoriented around policy-led notions of compliance monitoring, primarily in response to the funding councils' OA policy for the Research Excellence Framework, but also for 'Plan S', the complicated and ever-evolving European approach to OA policymaking.[48] UK libraries are now required to operate a series of efficient mechanisms for facilitating compliance with these policies, based on a range of software packages and guidance documentation. In addition, in response to this shift to OA and the need for researchers to continue publishing in their desired journals, libraries are in the process of replacing many of their journal subscriptions with publishing agreements that bundle OA publication with research access. This shift in many ways simply reinforces the current dominance of a handful of commercial publishers in the open landscape.

Alongside helping to shore up the consolidated publishing industry, the policy-based cultures of OA have arguably redirected library labour

46. Livy Onalee Snyder and Judith Fathallah, 'Sustainable Futures for OA Books: The Open Book Collective', *The Journal of Electronic Publishing*, 26:1, 2023.

47. Bernard Rentier, 'Will Plan S Support or Pervert Open Access ?' *Ouvertures Immédiates / Immediate Openings*, 2021, https://bernardrentier.wordpress.com/2021/01/04/will-plan-s-support-or-pervert-open-access/.

48. Stuart Lawson, 'Open Access Policy in the UK: From Neoliberalism to the Commons', unpublished PhD thesis, Birkbeck University of London, 2019.

49. Samuel A. Moore, 'Common Struggles: Policy-Based vs. Scholar-Led Approaches to Open Access in the Humanities', King's College London, 2019; Dan DeSanto, 'Carrots and Sticks: A Qualitative Study of Library Responses to the UK's Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021 Open Access Policy,' *College & Research Libraries*, 84:3, 2023, p315.

50. Lorraine Estelle, Dave Jago and Alicia Wise, *How to Enable Smaller Independent Publishers to Participate in OA Agreements*, Wellcome Trust, 2021, https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.14731308.v1.

51. Lisa Peet, 'White House: Make Public Access to Research Immediate', *Library Journal*, 26 September 2022.

52. See: https://librarypublishing.org/lp-directory/

53. As Ted Striphas has highlighted, ironically the book publishing industry was fundamental to the institutionalisation of cultural studies in the UK, where funding from Penguin Books (rumoured to be a thank you from Allen Lane, Penguin's founder, to Richard Hoggart, the founder and first director of the CCCS, for testifying in the *Lady Chatterley's Lover* censorship trial) and

away from supporting alternative in-house publishing approaches towards the more urgent need to monitor compliance. Libraries have reported the huge amount of staff time needed to adequately implement OA policy compliance, which for some has entailed shifting work away from hosting and supporting scholar-led journals within the library.[49] The UK government provides a block grant of funding to institutions to enable compliance with their policies, which can be used to pay for staff, infrastructure or article-processing charge payments (or anything that can justifiably be said to support policy compliance). For better or for worse, huge sums of public money are being spent on facilitating OA through repositories – the staff-intensive 'green' route – or those that often entail payment to a publisher (the commercially-captured 'gold' route).

However, although the UK is at the forefront of maximalist approaches to OA policymaking, the issue of library staff time being redirected to commercial and policy-based initiatives is not unique to UK universities. In Germany, for example, much library work is spent on 'Projekt Deal', a consortium approach to negotiating publishing agreements with larger commercial publishers, to the detriment of smaller, non-profit publishers that are not able to negotiate on the same terms because of their size.[50] Similarly, in the USA, following the recent announcement by the White House of their new policy requiring immediate OA to federally funded publications, some have pointed to the fact that librarians will now become 'compliance experts' in facilitating the policy, again potentially redirecting their work away from scholar-led publishing initiatives.[51] As the policy landscape rapidly matures towards requiring immediate OA for all scholarly articles, libraries across the globe will feel pressure to devote more staff time to compliance and publishing agreements with commercial presses.

Yet at the same time, in normalising the broader move to OA and providing finances to facilitate this move, there is also a *resurgence* of interest within institutions of supporting library-led and other institutional forms of publishing, including efforts such as Open Library of Humanities and Peer Community In that are funded by library consortia. Presses such as those within Goldsmiths, UCL, Stockholm and Helsinki have been launched to facilitate university-based OA book and journal publishing, while many universities across the globe also host OA journals through a range of publishing services, many of which documented by the Library Publishing Coalition.[52] While often very basic and small-scale, universities can be potentially developing these services with more staff and to further support copy-editing, translation, open-source software development and other labour-intensive activities. In other words, although there are clear challenges within the post-'transitional' framework of OA, and it is difficult to assess whether the policy landscape itself is a net positive or negative, there are notable opportunities for facilitating the kinds of publishing projects we are arguing for in this article.

BLURRING BOUNDARIES BETWEEN RESEARCH AND PUBLISHING

Yet beyond the arguments we have outlined above for universities to support a more ethical and bibliodiverse publishing system, amongst others by acknowledging and legitimating the labour academics perform to support it, we want to return here to perhaps a more integral argument around why universities should see publishing as part of their mission, connected to how the modes and relations of production and publication of research should be seen as closely linked. In this sense we want to make the argument here that the material infrastructures of publishing, their upkeep and maintenance, should be seen as fundamental to scholarship, as an essential part of what doing research is.

For a pertinent historical example or anecdote from within cultural theory of how research and publishing are integrally connected and can support each other, one can look at the publishing endeavours of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS).[53] One of the innovations that developed within the framework of the Centre and its practice was that the research was divided into several research groups (or sub-groups) organised around particular themes, a model through which collective work took place.[54] This 'collectivisation', as Stuart Hall called it, or division into specialised alongside general work, enabled a more sustained engagement with specialist research. This research set up was then mirrored in their publishing activities or in the way the Centre organised itself and its work and put it into practice:

> It made it possible, for example, to develop particular issues of our journal, and more recently of our book series, around particular themes, based on, even if not exclusive to, the specialized work of the different research groups. From these groups developed projects on which individual group members worked, which then retrospectively rephrased their particular research and thesis topics, giving them a more integral relation to the collective interests of their grouping, as well as a degree of collective support (*Cultural Studies and the Centre*, p33).

This publishing set up, controlled and managed – at least in its heydays – by the Centre (CCCS' publications were produced and copied inhouse on a Gestetner mimeograph machine) supported a practice of collective writing, or experiments with new forms of collective intellectual practice which included staff as well as students and mirrored the values and organisational politics the Centre developed during the 1960s and 1970s (*Birmingham's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies*, p297). As such it can be argued that the success of the CCCS was not only down to its intellectual legacy, but also deeply connected to the way in which the Centre's research was published and circulated.[55] Reports of the sub-groups might lead to seminar presentations and from there might become one of the Centre's *Stencilled Occasional Papers*

Chatto and Windus, the publishers of Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy*, enabled the set up and running of the Centre for the first seven years when financial assistance from the University of Birmingham was not forthcoming. Ted Striphas, 'Banality, Book Publishing, and the Everyday Life of Cultural Studies', *Culture Machine*, 2:0, 2000. (Hereafter *Banality*.)

54. Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Studies and the Centre: Some Problematics and Problems' in Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe and Paul Willis (eds), *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972-79*, Routledge, in association with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham, 2003, p33. (Hereafter *Cultural Studies and the Centre*.); Kieran Connell and Matthew Hilton, 'The Working Practices of Birmingham's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies', *Social History*, 40:3, 2015, pp288-289. (Hereafter *Birmingham's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies*.)

55. Ted Striphas and Mark Hayward, 'Working Papers in Cultural Studies, or, the Virtues of Grey Literature', *New Formations*, 78, 2013, pp103. (Hereafter *Working Papers in Cultural Studies*.)

(which functioned as internal working papers) or, if developed further, a paper in the Centre's journal *Working Papers in Cultural Studies*, which included more finalised work (*Birmingham's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies*, p298). These various modes of publication and textual production enabled collective work, the presentation of work-in-progress, as well as rapid response to current affairs, and evidenced a 'commitment to acknowledging the provisionality, partiality and dialogic nature of the project of cultural studies as captured in these publications' (*Working Papers in Cultural Studies*, p109). As Striphas has argued, publishing has been an important site where 'cultural studies, as an intellectual formation, gets negotiated and defined' (*Banality*) and what is evident is that within the Centre, texts were seen as 'deeply social rather than solitary objects', and their sociality and mode of production was 'seen as central to the "work" of cultural studies' (*Working Papers in Cultural Studies*, pp113–114).

The deeply social nature of publications is perhaps only becoming more evident in a digital environment, and especially within and as part of digital, multimodal and more experimental forms of research and publishing (the publication of which scholar-led presses have very much been at the forefront of). In a digital environment boundaries between research and publishing are increasingly blurring or falling away now that scholars are more and more publishing research in process (as part of blogs, tweets, conference recordings, on preprint servers etc.), can update it both before and after formal publication, and can work collectively on collaborative documents, where new digital publication platforms can make it more visible how content and form are integrally entangled (in other words media forms, workflows and infrastructures are never 'neutral'). These developments complicate the question of at what point scholarship is formally 'published', and problematise our established conventions around this, especially when many digital scholarship projects are openly developed online. Given these developments we would argue that it is essential to support publishing as an activity and practice that is an integral part of scholarly research and something that scholars should remain in control of.

CONCLUSION

In this article we have, by engaging, drawing on and analysing how academic publishing labour has been discussed within discourses on academic citizenship and within critical university studies, and has been practised within scholar-led publishing models, put forward an argument for bringing knowledge production back under the control of academic communities by supporting editorial labour for humanities publishing within the university itself. We have done so by highlighting how supporting a more ethical publishing system, autonomously controlled by academics, can tie in with the mission of public universities to promote public engagement with research

and facilitate knowledge outreach to the wider society. Yet beyond that we have outlined how from the perspective of the public university, this move could help academics' sense of belonging to the university as a community, as part of a broader conception of academic citizenship and identity, which can strengthen the autonomy of academics that has been whittled away in the neoliberal university. Valuing publishing labour could support a more equitable and balanced workload, instead of publishing service often falling on the most casualised scholarly workforce. We have also outlined how scholar-led publishing has been experimenting with new models of relational labour, based on publishing models that are community-led and owned, that promote bibliodiversity and more ethical forms of publishing. They do so amongst others by gifting their labour to non-profit driven publishing alternatives, by setting up horizontal and vertical alliances, by developing new funding models, and by maintaining the open infrastructures that support academic publishing. They put forward imaginaries for a publishing ecosystem based on care instead of on calculative logics, and for seeing publishing as being an inherent part of research and not something that we outsource to commercial stakeholder-led publishers.

In his article, 'Universities After Neoliberalism: A Tale of Four Futures', Christopher Newfield identifies possible futures for higher education based on different social and political scenarios (from 'fragmented decline' to 'abolitionist'). For Newfield, these scenarios are not mutually exclusive, nor are they natural states of affairs, but require active decision-making and influence from a range of actors (internal and external). The future of the university can be, for example, simultaneously reformist and revolutionary, drawing on a range of social interventions and contexts. We wish to situate our argument in a similar, complicated future of higher education, one that both 'sneaks' into the unsalvageable university and 'steals' what it can – as per Harney and Moten – but also, per Newfield, strives to salvage it through reform and political struggle.[56] Our contribution here is at once an appeal to scholars, library workers, university administrators and policymakers: the labour for academic publishing needs to be recognised and supported by the university as fundamental to scholarship.

Yet our suggested approach for how to (better) accommodate this, also draws on distinct postwork imaginaries (while diverting from these too) and shows similarities with what Kathi Weeks calls a 'utopian demand'.[57] A utopian demand, such as for shorter working days or for a basic income, functions as a provocation, it asks us to imagine alternative futures for work, while at the same time being performative, where the demand itself prefigures a different world. As Weeks argues, utopian demands are 'mechanisms by which to advance critical thinking, inspire political imagination, and incite collective action' (*The Problem with Work*, p225). In the context of this article our argument can be perceived as a utopian demand, as we both imagine and make a strong appeal for a different future for scholarly communication.

56. Christopher Newfield, 'Universities After Neoliberalism: A Tale of Four Futures', Radical Philosophy, 2:10, Summer 2021; *The Undercommons*.

57. Kathi Weeks, *The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries*, Duke University Press, 2011. (Hereafter *The Problem with Work*.)

While we challenge the dominance of metricised and quantified indicators to assess what aspects of academic work are valued within our higher education institutions (and how whatever is immeasurable, isn't valued and is seen as insignificant, leading 'immeasurable' scholarly activities to increasingly become invisible, supported by volunteer labour, by a labour of love) we have also aimed to showcase alternative relationalities and different ways to organise, value and support the productive and reproductive work that underlies and maintains our myriad forms of scholarship. However, where postwork discourses and imaginaries are mostly focused on how we can value and organise this kind of work differently *outside* of waged academic labour, or while borrowing from it or scaffolding on it (as many scholar-led publishers, for example, have been doing – often out of necessity), this approach also poses risks in the context of academic publishing where the outputs of this work are actively extracted for profit by the commercial publishing industry or utilised to rise in the rankings (to attract more students and funding) by our higher education institutions, which further extract value from them in their metricised assessment frameworks.

Hence what we are argue for is akin to a utopian demand, it is a demand for both a different publishing system that is set up with a focus on care and alternative relationalities and that is value-driven and community-led, and a demand for more autonomous unmeasured and dedicated time for academics, provided by their institutions within allocated workloads (instead of outside of them), to support these kinds of publishing endeavours. We want to argue for different ways in which time for this kind of work is both allocated and can be self-managed by academics. With this we hope to achieve a change in how this kind of work is valued, in which the labour that is needed to sustain our research communities, the actual production, publication and sharing of knowledge (and the various people and agencies involved to support this, from editors to designers to our research infrastructures), is supported. It should not just be our measurable publishing outputs, our articles and book objects, that count for our institutions.

While we are aware that supporting the labour in-house for academic publishing will clearly not resolve everything that's wrong with publishing in the humanities or more widely, we also have illustrated throughout that valuing this labour is both possible and desirable. Firstly, and most directly, it could be one way of supporting scholar-led publishing and many other more ethical, non-commercial publishing initiatives. It would value these approaches as more than the labour of love they often are, as more than just undertaken in one's spare time and extracted and showcased by the university as public scholarship and research 'impact'. Instead, if you give scholars (for example) one day of unstructured autonomous time a week to work on scholar-led publishing projects, a burgeoning, community-controlled ecosystem of publishing projects could flourish. They could, as we have identified in the piece, work together jointly and in new kinds of collectivity, foregrounding

an ethic of care for publishing over a commercial logic of choice. This, we hope, would encourage others to do likewise by redirecting the work they do for commercial actors towards in-house alternatives.

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