

# **Annotating Publishing**

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Publishing as  
instituent practice

*Reading and  
Commenting*

# Annotating Publishing

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## Publishing as instituent practice

This Reader is based on a broad concept of publishing, which is neither a linear process nor a single moment, but an interplay of interwoven processes, institutions, actors, and practices: Publishing circumspects research, reading, content creation, production, circulation, and reception (e.g., through commenting and sharing). The traditional boundaries between these activities due to new modes of writing and sharing contents (e.g. on platforms like google.docs and social media) have moved closer together, both temporally and formally.

The title of the Reader picks up one of the key theoretical models of the project Institutions as a Way of Life, which it is part of: the instituent practice. For Gerald Raunig, an “instituent practice” is a form of institutional critique that not only optimizes but also changes the object of its critique, a form of critique that is able to escape its object and in this flight to change the conditions of the discussion. Against this background, this Reader focuses on instituent forms of publishing in academia reflecting their conditions and putting them up for discussion.

The Reader is assembled from a number of texts that analyze the current conditions of academic publishing and academia in general: In the context of an increasingly branding-focused, market- and profit-driven academic knowledge industry—and their (only nominal) insistence on global openness pushed forward by forms of top-down, policy driven Open Access publishing entirely predicated on the penchants of the neoliberal knowledge economy—these authors look at how systems of academic knowledge production and communication (of which publishing is a part of) perpetuate and create modes of exclusivity, inequality and precarity related to e.g. gender, class, citizenship and ethnicity.

Taking into account these circumstances the authors conjoined in this Reader reflect on how far the instituent, interventionist, and speculative capacity of counter-hegemonial (e.g. artist, feminist, intersectional) publishing could be beneficial for questioning and challenging the status quo. Publishing, for them, potentially is a way to intervene into existing research, writing, and publishing (and therefore also collaboration and communication) systems, and to propose and enact ways of knowledge(s) production, circulation, and consumption that adhere to different ethics and value systems.

A major part of the authors we selected for this Reader — Janneke Adema, Gary Hall, Stephen Shukaitis, Gerald Raunig — is involved in publishing initiatives like scholar-led publishing houses or university presses. There they demonstrate the need for a reassessment of the cultures of knowledge production, not just accessibility of research. They also acknowledge that challenging the fixtures and blind spots of contemporary academia that are reflected within the practices, procedures, and institutions of conventional publishing.

In their texts, they write about their own practices, reflect them, and highlight the problematics and struggles occurring through them. They speculate about new ways for academic publishing, and suggest alternative perspectives. This results in a certain urgency: the selected texts have manifesto-type characters. And just like the practices of the authors, they are meant to intervene into the status quo of publishing.

Inspired by a long tradition of feminist critique of knowledge production and their attention to “making a difference” as well as to “retaining differences”, with this Reader we aim to ask how to institute publishing differently: as a movement towards marginalized groups, non-canonized knowledges, alternative forms of knowledge production and transmission. Beyond the geo- and ego-politics of academic knowledge; within and beyond academia, within the practices of researching, reading, writing and communicating (by — within publishing and through circulating publications — addressing and making publics).

The presses and networks referred to in the articles selected for this reader suggest that to publish differently is never conclusive or contained but is an ongoing struggle. It is a struggle that calls for a reassessment of our everyday practices of research, reading and writing, of the

chrononormativity publishing is determined by: it calls for reconsidering who and what we become involved with when we publish, and who and what not, and to whom and to what we open up within publishing and publications; "of who counts in publishing and what counts as publishing not only taking care of just the human relations instantiated within and through publishing but also the material". It calls for a reassessment of our self-understandings as academics, writers and artists. For only if the motivations, ambitions and expectations that are generally associated with publishing are reconsidered can we think that alternatives to publishing in and with the university be worked out. Rather than insisting on a presupposed “open for” we aim to suggest to verbalize open(ing), to perpetually perform it through situated practices of relating.

Rebekka Kiesewetter, PhD researcher at the Centre for Postdigital Cultures (CPC) at Coventry University

Lucie Kolb, artist and post-doc researcher in the project “Institutions as a Way of Life”

# Annotation Scores

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Annotating traditionally is understood as a by-product of attentive reading. It is a manifestation of critical literacy and learnedness. A commentarial, interpretative layer distinct from the text's body—materially (how and where it was written and produced), temporally (when it was written and produced) and auctorially (by whom it was written and produced). Annotating, as an activity that evolves subsequently to a text's writing, editing and publishing, predominantly is leaving the text's status as an authority and as a secluded work untouched. But as much as a critical editing practice involves more than selecting, framing and circulating texts, a critical reading should not merely be concerned with intellectually processing/absorbing written sentences.

What if annotating were understood as a possibility for a grounded, reflexive and self-critical encounter with, within and beyond a text—its political, ideological, economic and institutional underpinnings; its materiality (from its production

to its manifestation as a physical artifact); the human and non-human agencies involved in its becoming and the ones that are not? Can annotating become a ground for more intimate and less alienated ways of relating with different knowledges and agencies, for thinking and making together? Consequently, we aim to propose annotating as an act of intervention; as a form of co-production in dialogue with the text itself, with what is already there and with what is not there perpetually instantiating relationships with and openings towards what has been hidden, neglected, not-recognized, silenced and overrun. To facilitate this somewhat uncommon "messing" with texts instead of "processing" and "consuming" them, we provide a couple of scores. They are an invitation for the readers to enter texts as social spaces of study, and facilitate entering into an active intellectual, material and physical relation with the texts. The scores are not prescriptions nor standard procedures. They are also not meant to "program" the reader's/co-producer's gaze along with our intentions. Rather they are performative props, tools and support structures that allow to grasp, sense and touch these texts physically, viscerally and mentally, to enter them together and alone. The scores oppose a purely abstract understanding of the text with one that does not understand the text in isolation from its paratexts and its materiality. This includes any illustrations, biographies of authors, publishing stories, footnotes, quoted sources, but also paper quality, format, typography, colourfulness and odour. When reading, however, it is important not only to include what is available, but also to ask what is missing.

Working with the "Annotation Scores" will leave traces in the text, or scars if you will, through which a text can be reassembled. It will put the text into play, and open a new set of relations, a new way of being together, thinking together. The score is only important insofar as it helps you to enter.





**2**  
**Re-assemble,**  
re-tell, re-write, re-perform  
the text  
collaboratively by  
memory based on your  
experiences during  
score 1. Use any means  
and media at your disposal.

**3**  
**Imagine** this text as a "meaning  
making machine". Represent the agency  
that runs and services the  
machine pictorially.

Form a group. Draw a table  
with x columns. On top of each column  
put one of the elements that align  
to produce and sustain the meaning  
conveyed through this text.

Cut the text up and try to assign all  
text parts (that can be words, sentences,  
representations of things that  
only are implicitly present in the texts)  
to a column. Explain your decisions,  
in case this is needed.

Change at least one of the  
column headings. Discuss what this  
change might effectuate.

# POLITICAL NATURE OF ARTISTS' BOOKS AND RADICAL

*Jammeeke Adenna and Gary*

**ON  
ACCESS**

*this essay we argue that the medium of the*

17. James Langdon (ed), *Book*, Birmingham, Eastside Projects, 2010

18. Ulises Carrión, 'Bookworks Revisited', in James Langdon (ed), *Book*, Birmingham, Eastside Projects,

19. Drucker, *The Century of Artists' Books*, op. cit., pp3-4

20. *Ibid.*, p360.

21. Tom Sowden and Sarah Bodman, *A Manifesto for the Book*, Impact Press, 2010, p9.

22. Drucker, *The Century of Artists' Books*, op. cit.



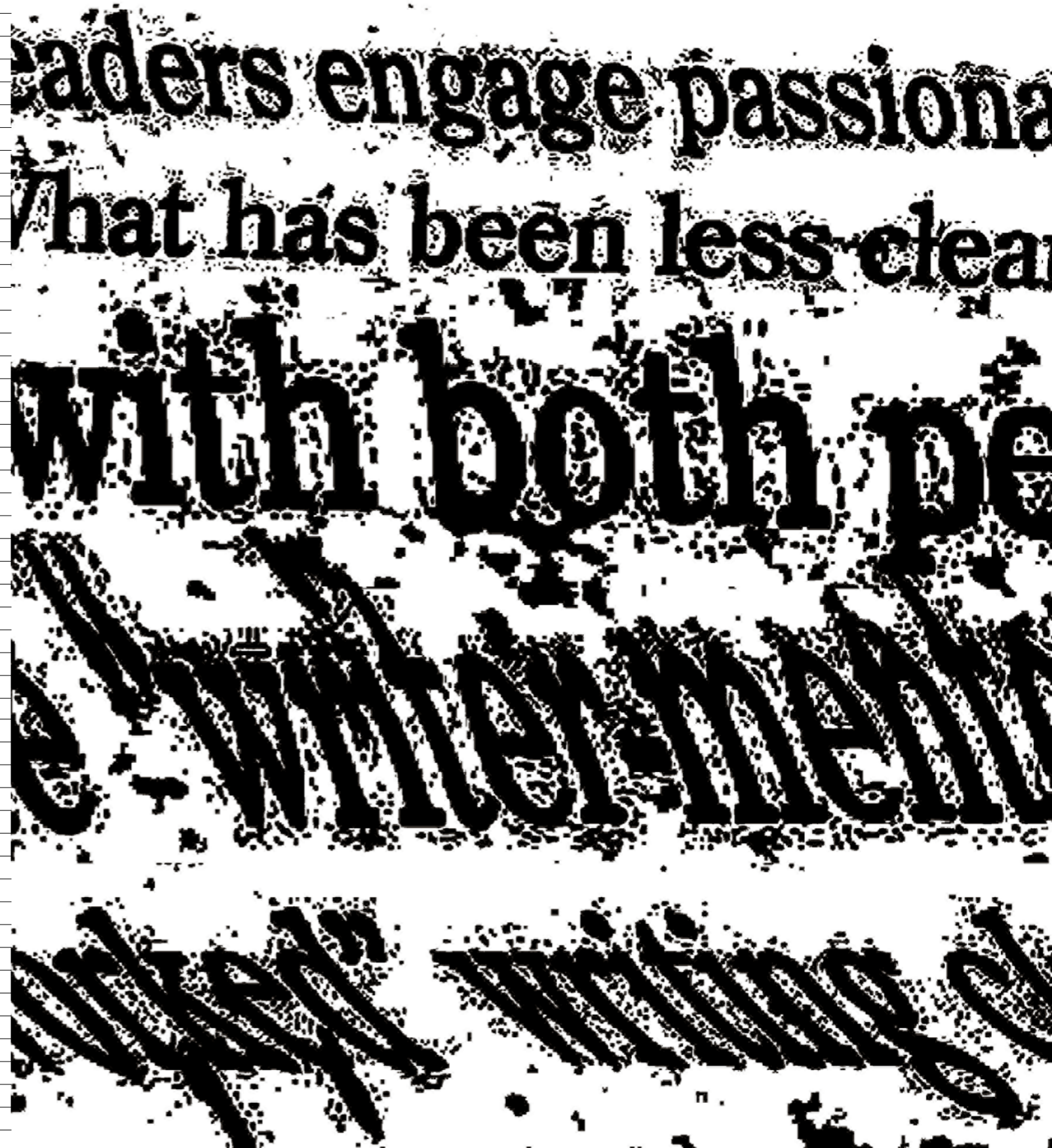
4

**Perform/enact**

a conversation  
(e.g. around responsibility,  
positionality,  
accountability, accessibility;  
authorship, publics)  
between the actors that take part  
in this text's creation,  
production and distribution,  
including yourselves —  
as readers/public, further actual  
and potential publics,  
and the author.

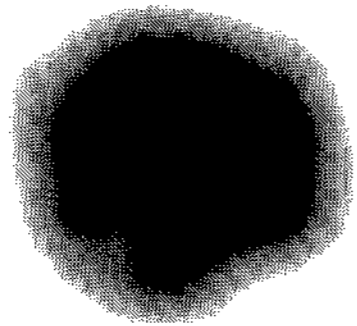
5

**Use** an incorrect word  
in place of a word with similar  
sound & read it out loud.





**6** Delete all punctuation & read it out loud.



**7** Use a translator program such as DeepL, translate the text into another language, use the new text to translate into another language. Repeat this three times and read out loud.

things observed  
Victorian London  
son's study, w  
actual  
as theorized b  
rital spaces.  
ly with both pe  
what these  
in university  
engagement with literar  
of interactive pedago  
s written, "conne  
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ing  
many, seeing vernacular enoages  
formal education mean to teach  
s online is clear. What has been le  
e evidence that readers engage p  
uch as Stuart Hall and Janice Radw

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8

# Omit all the gender pronouns & read the text out loud.

Media scholars such as Henry Jenkins (2006) have long studied how the "convergence culture" of stragging analog texts in digital contexts and texts. Other scholars

ular textual engagement online

or. In her analysis of Sherlock

example, Roberta Pearson

(1997) identifies the boards used networks

to produce or "Conan Doyle

scholarshi...ions" to the charac-

ters (some of... readers. Lisa her-

self (Nakamura... how online discus-

sion and curation of... like GoodReads

.com blend literary per... play. Such work impor-

tantly extends earlier di... role of textual circulation in

the constitution of vern... publics, as theorized by schol-

re powerful... way, into digital spaces.

omnience of... with both peers and

vs of publishing... with

pen, *Gratis*, *Lib...*

For many, seeing ver... as offering a radi...

has fueled a hunt for... ractive pedagogies that

Michelle D. Miller (2... "connect students *socially*

and fire them up *emo...* at least the 1980s, when experi-

mental pedagogues... extremely high... g student paper drafts over

shared computer terr... se their work free...

the teacher-student... interactions afforded in net-

worked environme... inductive and progressive. Pre-

saging contemp... worked pedagogy such as

Cathy Davidson (2... and (2013), Edward M. Jennings

(1990, 47) wress... not demand, norms and

simultaneitynd c... hierarchy. Ne... but cannot guarantee,

individualizing... predictability, an... relationships." Like the

Sherlocki... Pearson's study, v... elaborate communal

historio... es of Victorian Lond... ing over their favor-

ite my... es, Jennings observed... in his early "net-

work... writing class learned thro... and commenting on

each... ner's work in progress online... the "writer-mentor"

rel... nship of the traditional classroom. In optimistic accounts of

er... networked readers and writers like these, the digital space was

9

# Publish and design a text in a way so no one will ever read it. Discuss it with others.

~~"Sherlockian scholarship" or~~

~~building "personal connections"~~

~~ic in nature) and with other~~

~~as published previously on how~~

of digital distributio

potentially tech digitiz

ion from

(bd) and t

Academia

level of

at

into a network of online women of color feminism, a community  
learners and vernacular educators who are dedicated to enacting  
social justice by sharing radical texts and engaging in long, written  
10 about them. This digital consciousness raising on Tumblr  
Work in pairs of two. but one in which nobody—not the  
Write individually an annotation forers who scanned and  
to one of the texts of the feminists of color writing and cri-  
Reader, include references. Exchange providing his educa-  
texts. Draw a map of the references, on Yahoo which  
what do they stand for and what do they  
leave out? Discuss in pairs of two.  
Contrast these two pedagogical scenes, just to make an  
ment about technological change between the 1980s and today. It  
so to bring a critical function of *This Bridge* its capacity to repre-  
and interpolate a network of socially engaged readers and peer  
educators—into conversation with scholarly debates about digital  
pedagogy and academic labor. By looking at *This Bridge*, in both ana-  
and digital forms, as a networked pedagogical object, we trace  
it calls attention to the social conditions of its production as part  
s larger argument about the importance of circulation and connec-  
for “third world” women’s narratives. *This Bridge* invites readers  
become vernacular educators, prefiguring the world of digital peda-  
gy by invoking the power of networked learning for minoritized  
learning communities. At the same time, both the legally distributed  
text and the pirated version online raise ethical concerns about the  
uneven distribution of work, ownership, and social power in pedagogical  
spaces. For scholars and teachers thinking through the transfor-  
mative potential of digital pedagogy, an examination of *This Bridge*  
its vibrant social networks calls us to construct new norms of  
remuneration, and remuneration for women of color doing unpaid  
educational labor online.

11  
Scan one of the texts in a copy  
machine of an institution  
(university, library, shop etc.),  
leave the original in the machine.

Bring it to her students as a  
university's campus bookstore.

Such a conversation is overdue, in no small part because many of

# References

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Lisa Nakamura and Cassius Adair both are teaching and researching at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Their text traces the circulation (and versioning) of and the informal networks unfolding around the official and unofficial editions of the woman of color feminist anthology *This Bridge Called My Back*, as it has migrated from licensed paper to PDF format. Against this background they discuss analog and digital forms of open-access woman of color pedagogy promoting the free circulation of knowledge in opposition to hierarchic content distribution and educational systems. There-with the authors aim to shed light on the “literary and social labor of networked marginalized readers and writers who produce it”, and call for a reconsideration of academic labor and the modeling for alternatives to neoliberal university systems.

**ADAIR, Cassius, and Lisa Nakamura.** “The Digital Afterlives of This Bridge Called My Back: Woman of Color Feminism, Digital Labor, and Networked Pedagogy.” *American Literature* 89, no. 2 (June 2017): 255–78. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00029831-3861505>.

Gary Hall is one of the directors of the international, not-for-profit, scholar-led open access publishing collective Open Humanity Press. Together with Janneke Adema he is also a member of the Editorial Board. Both are among the initiators of the Radical Open Access collective, “a network of publishers, theorists, scholars, librarians, technology specialists, activists and others, from different fields and backgrounds, both inside and outside of the university who are exploring a vision of open access that is characterised by a spirit of on-going creative experimentation, and a willingness to subject some of our most established scholarly communication and publishing practices, together with the institutions that sustain them (the library, publishing house etc.), to rigorous critique.” The text exemplifies how “a reading of the history of the artist’s book can be generative for reimagining the future of the scholarly monograph, both with respect to the latter’s potential form and materiality in the digital age, and with respect to its relation to the economic system in which book production, distribution, organisation and consumption takes place”. Against this background the authors call for a re-consideration of the modes, formats and politics of scholarly publication and publishing — trajectories that they seek to implement in their manifold publishing initiatives.

**ADEMA, Janneke, and Gary Hall.** “The Political Nature of the Book: On Artists’ Books and Radical Open Access.” *New Formations* 78, no. 78 (July 1, 2013): 138–56. <https://doi.org/10.3898/NewF.78.07.2013>.

A companion text could be thought of as a companion species, to borrow from Donna Haraway’s (2003) suggestive formulation. A companion text is a text whose company enabled you to proceed on a path less trodden. Such texts might spark a moment of revelation in the midst of an overwhelming proximity; they might share a feeling or give you resources to make sense of something that had been beyond your grasp; companion texts can prompt you to hesitate or to question the direction in which you are going, or they might give you a sense that in going the way you are going, you are not alone. (Ahmed, Sara. *Living a Feminist Life*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017, p. 21.)

**AHMED, Sara.** *Living a Feminist Life*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017.

Albornoz, Denisse. “The Rise of Big Publishers in Development and What Is at Stake.” *The Knowledge G.A.P.* (blog), October 1, 2017. (<http://knowledgegap.org/index.php/2017/09/20/the-rise-of-big-publishers-in-development-what-is-at-stake/>.) Ángel Octavio Álvarez Solís is a professor at the Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City. His text looks into the concepts of the 20th and 21st Century university in Europe, North and Latin America. He discusses the university as a contradictory system creating exclusions while, at the same time, promoting the democratization of knowledge (whereas democracy itself can be considered as a product of Western enlightenment). The author also discusses how the university’s function as an allegory of state politics has been dissolved by an overpowering “managerial dispositif”.



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Sarah Kember is the publisher of Goldsmith press. She analyses the situation for institutional publishing and stresses the need for a re-politicization of this area that reenacts specifically feminist agendas and investments in care ethics, agency, responsibility, experimentation and intervention.

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Gabriela Méndez Cota is a researcher at the Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City. From her standpoint of an early-career female researcher from the Global South, she discusses the concept of scholarship, its accessibility and the implications, conditions and consequences of being expected to participate in it.

MÉNDEZ Cota, Gabriela. "On Being Heard: The Content and the Form of Geopolitics." In *The Geopolitics of Open*, 16–25. Coventry: Post Office Press, Rope Press and Culture Machine, 2018.

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This is an unpublished manuscript of a lecture held in the framework of the conference "After Audience" on June 9 2018 at Belvedere Vienna. The conference was convened by eipcp as part of the Midstream project aiming at questioning the concept and practice of audience. It was intended to ask questions about the successors to the figure once called an audience. Raunig's lecture outlines a form of para-academic publishing practice that seeks to rethink the concept of the audience. We have selected the text not least because Raunig and eipcp recently founded a publishing initiative named transversal texts that actively intervenes in the realm of academic writing and publishing.

RAUNIG, Gerald. "Abschlussakte After Audience, 9. Juni 2018," June 9, 2018.

READ-IN, and Hackers & Designers. "Why Are the Authors of the Books I Read so White, so Male, so Eurocentric?" *Feminist Search Tool (blog)*, n.d. <https://feministsearchtool.nl/>.

This text by Stevphen Shukaitis was published by eipcp as part of a thematic issue on publishing titled "aufstand der verlegten" (insurrection of the published). The issue outlined a fundamental crisis in the publishing industry triggered by a domestication of styles, forms and formats, and hegemonic mechanisms of exclusion like peer reviews, impact factors, ranking, and rigid copyright regimes. Shukaitis puts the imperative in the title of the issue in a question mark. He discusses 10 aspects necessary to consider for an insurrection of the published to become reality. Shukaitis himself is a publisher, he is the founder of minor compositions.

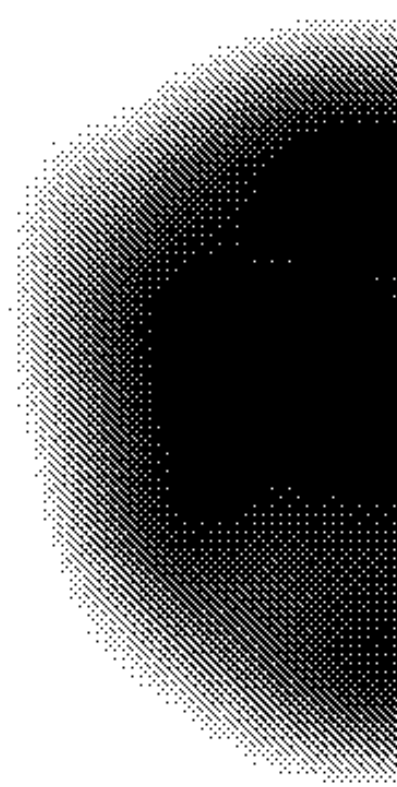
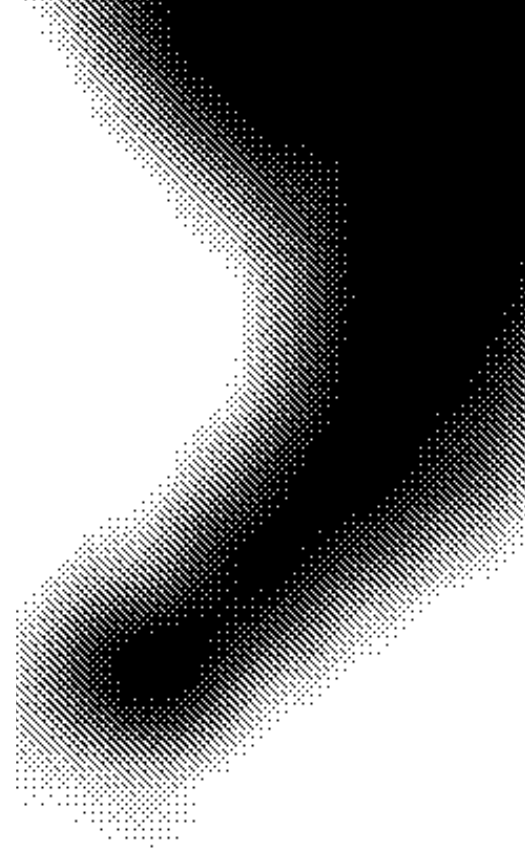
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**———. "Sarah Kember: Rethinking Where the Thinking Happens." *Andpublishing* (blog), n.d. <http://andpublishing.org/sarah-kember-rethinking-where-the-thinking-happens/>**





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Each publication is the result of a workshop and discussion among the contributors, with the aim to elaborate and explore perspectives on institutional practices.

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In 2023, the publication was reunited and reuploaded at [annotatinginstitutions.multiplace.org](https://annotatinginstitutions.multiplace.org), for which we are grateful to the wonderful hosts.